

Public support and administration barriers towards entrepreneurial intentions of students in Poland

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Abstract: *The extant literature on entrepreneurial intentions has examined the relationship between human entrepreneurial activity and entrepreneurship policy, especially in terms of institutional environment and institutionalism or the role of supporting policies. The aim of this article is to empirically verify the impact of perceived public support and institutional barriers on students' entrepreneurial intentions. The article uses the quantitative approach typical for social sciences. Based on a literature review, two hypotheses were retrieved, and then empirically verified. The primary tool was a survey conducted on a relatively large sample of 719 students of seven different universities from Krakow (Poland). The multiple regression was applied as a leading tool for hypotheses verification. The results confirmed that positively perceived public support in favour of entrepreneurship strengthens the young generation's entrepreneurial intentions to start their own business, while negatively perceived administration barriers against entrepreneurship blunts the young generation's entrepreneurial intentions to start their own business. Therefore, this article's contribution to extant literature is the replication of research from well-advanced economies in the discussed scope and its transfer to the realities in Poland. Furthermore, the contribution of this article is a verification of the postulated negative perception of institutional barriers, and not just obstacles related to obtaining financial support, as it is the case in various articles.*

Keywords: public support, administration barriers, institutional barriers, entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intentions

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Introduction

Although derived from social psychology, intention-based models are successfully applied in management research, particularly in entrepreneurship studies. On their basis, we can predict future behaviour, which is essential both to

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managers, economic analysts, and decision-makers responsible for shaping an appropriate system of support for entrepreneurship, including its important element, namely entrepreneurship education (Bartha *et al.*, 2018; Wach & Głodowska, 2019) whose main task is to shape proper entrepreneurial attitudes. An appropriate education system stimulating entrepreneurship is significant for economic practice (Gubik & Bartha, 2018), the European Union has recommended such solutions for many years, but also in Poland the implementation of those recommendations is becoming more and more critical, not only at economics universities but also in non-economic fields of study (Płaziak & Rachwał, 2014), especially in the aspect of the internationalization and Europeanization of Polish universities (Dobbins & Kwiek, 2017). In this context, Sułkowski *et al.* (2020) notice the necessity for the adequate transformation of Polish universities, especially in the context of demographic changes (Sułkowski *et al.* 2019). One of university's tasks is to shape entrepreneurial attitudes, inspire to think creatively and stimulate entrepreneurial intentions among university students (Kuehn, 2008). As Nowiński *et al.* (2020) emphasize, in shaping entrepreneurial attitudes not only education in the area of entrepreneurship is important but also the perception of public support and barriers. Wannamakok *et al.* (2020) based on their empirical study, observed that each dimension of the institutional environment plays a decisive role in Estonian university 'students' entrepreneurial intentions.

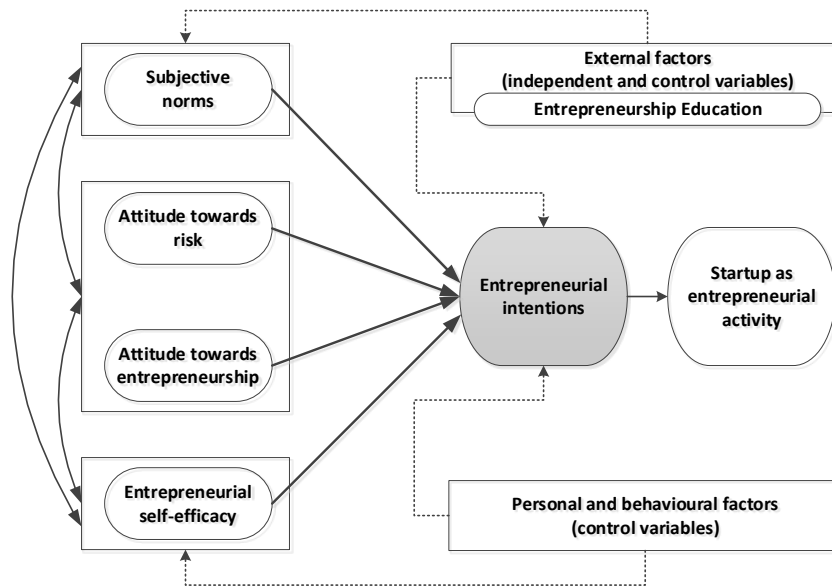
The aim of the article is the empirical verification of the impact of the perceived public support and administration barriers on entrepreneurial intentions of students. The primary tool was a survey conducted among students ($n = 719$) of a few universities from Krakow (Poland). The survey results were subject to statistical processing with the use of the Statistica® software.

1. Theoretical background and literature review

In order to understand what mechanisms govern entrepreneurial intentions of individuals, it is worth using a well-established psychological and sociological concept dating back to mid-1980s – the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991). According to this theory, intentions to perform behaviour depend on three antecedents (i) what attitude we have towards this behaviour, (ii) perceived behavioural control, that is feasibility, and (iii) social norms which shape the perception of this behaviour. The first two factors, namely the attitude towards given behaviour, or rather results related to that behaviour, and the perception of social norms towards this behaviour, reflect the purpose and desire for the occurrence of such behaviour. The third factor reflects the personal perception of the possibility to control given behaviour and is identical to the sense of self-efficacy. However, it is worth expanding this model with external factors inherent to the external environment (Figure 1) and to separate attitude towards risk from the general attitude towards entrepreneurship, as risk-taking is one of the key features of entrepreneurial orientation (Głodowska *et al.*, 2019; Kusa, 2020). Although numerous times applied and tested, but this model is not conclusive all

read the globe, and some researchers noted different relations (Zamrudi & Yulianti, 2020; Udayanan, 2019).

Figure 1. The extended theory of planned behaviour by Icek Ajzen



(Source: developed from Ajzen, 1991, p. 182)

This general concept of the intention to perform given behaviour was applied to analyze entrepreneurial intentions which are defined by Thompson (2009, p. 367) as the realized by oneself conviction about setting up a business venture and conscious planning to initiate or create this process in the future. Krueger (1993) defines entrepreneurial intentions similarly, as the propensity and possessing potential to start one's business activity in the near future. Koçoğlu and Hassan (2013) emphasize that while entrepreneurial intentions depend on those three mentioned variables (entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control), they also depend on personality traits, mainly on how an individual perceives his or her conditions and capabilities leading to the desired state (Ajzen, 1991). Byabashaija and Katono (2011), as well as Bae et al. (2014) stress an essential role of situational factors (such as the ability to employ or the ability to make sacrifices and commitments) and characterological and personality traits (purposefulness, feasibility, efficacy) in stimulating entrepreneurial intentions and their transformation into specific behaviour - the establishment of one's own business activity (Tamulevičienė & Androniceanu, 2020). It can be confirmed by results obtained in research of discrimination in employment – it is higher for the young employees and often has form of limited possibilities of successful career planning and decent remuneration (Bilan *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, in countries with essential barriers to start own business and narrowed perspectives for successful

employment growing migrants' outflows of the youth are observed. Appropriate institutional support in the receiving countries becomes an essential driver for youth migration intentions (Mishchuk *et al.*, 2019).

To mitigate the problem of youth human capital effective usage and to increase the entrepreneurial aspiration of students, entrepreneurship course in the universities have risen. As it proved by Eysel *et al.* (2020), the effectiveness of these courses differs for public university students and foundation university students, however, the tendency for increase of entrepreneurial incentives and values is common for all groups engaged in the courses. No doubts, entrepreneurial aspiration can significantly differ depending on social conditions and family experience. Kumar *et al.* (2018) argue that attitudes towards business establishing have links with income of household, years of schooling and even experience of unemployment of household heads. While in this research gender differences have not been found, other researchers stress that male students declared a statistically higher interest in entrepreneurial activity as compared to female students (Çera *et al.*, 2018). These findings are important to design study programs in entrepreneurship more sensitive to gender needs in order to increase entrepreneurial participation.

Recent empirical evidence also linked leadership with the entrepreneurial intentions (Fauzi *et al.*, 2021). Psychological profiles and personal traits are important not only for potential entrepreneurs, but also for nascent entrepreneurs and mature entrepreneurs (Wach & Głodowska, 2021; Basuki *et al.* 2021; Reissová *et al.*, 2020). Wardana *et al.* (2021) emphasize that entrepreneurial culture, as a part of widely understood socio-cultural environment in a particular country, successfully affects students' intention to start their own business.

The second, equally often quoted theoretical conceptualization of entrepreneurial intentions is the entrepreneurial event model (EEM), very often called the SEE concept (Shapero's entrepreneurial event) whose foundations were created by Shapero (1975), who then developed it with his collaborators (Shapero & Sokol, 1982), although also Krueger (1993) contributed to its development introducing external factors, thus it is sometimes called the Shapero-Krueger model (Krueger *et al.*, 2000). Shapero model assumes that human activity is guided by inertia until an action disturbing the balance occurs and is most often negative (e.g. the loss of a job). Such impulses motivate to act (Heuer, 2012). In addition to the propensity to act, also the credibility of behaviour is important, understood dichotomically as its desirability and feasibility. The factors shape entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurial intentions in the model are shaped in a broader context, since it is necessary to consider a number of personality and behavioural traits (Elfving *et al.*, 2009).

Schlaegel and Koenig (2013, p. 292) emphasize that "TPB and SEE are two theories most competing with each other, commonly tested empirically in order to explain entrepreneurial intentions (EI)", which is also stressed by the co-creator of the other concept himself (Krueger *et al.* 2000). Models based on

intentions work well not only in social psychology but also in marketing and management (Krueger *et al.*, 2000, p. 416).

Karyaningsih *et al.* (2020) proved that entrepreneurship education impacts entrepreneurial mindsets and entrepreneurial intentions. Based on the recognized international GUESSS survey Gubik and Bartha (2018) observed that educational institutions in all four Visegrad countries support analytical skills, but not social skills for entrepreneurship. Hassan *et al.* (2021) proved that the empowering students during their higher education has a positive impact on their entrepreneurial intentions. Kurczewska *et al.* (2020) observed that graduates' entrepreneurial success is influenced not only by the academic knowledge itself but also by practical skills gained due to cooperation between universities and employers and entrepreneurs. On the other hand, Wagner and Sternberg (2004) underline the role of regional policy and regional milieu in shaping entrepreneurial intentions in Germany (based on REM surveys), while Nowiński *et al.* (2020) underscore that the intentions are shaped by universities and widely understood institutional environment. As there is not a lot of empirical evidence linking the perceived public support and perceived administration barriers, this is why we would like to combine entrepreneurial intentions with these institutional issues. Cong Doanh (2021) observed empirically in Vietnam very interesting dimensional impact of institutional environment on entrepreneurial intentions, which are rooted in cultural issues, and what is more, observed different influence of different dimensions of the environment (regulative, normative and cognitive environment) as well as the important role of social capital in the environment. Baharuddin and Ab Rahman (2021) proved similar relations among students in Indonesia.

2. Hypothesis development and research methodology

The existing literature on entrepreneurial intentions has studied the relationship between an entrepreneurial activity of a human being and the entrepreneurship policy, particularly in the institutional approach (Autio & Fu, 2015; Simón-Moya *et al.*, 2014). Some research focuses on showing the role of policies supporting entrepreneurial intentions (Román *et al.*, 2013; Nowiński *et al.*, 2020). Van der Zwan *et al.* (2016) observed that the perception of public support determined entrepreneurial intentions. Therefore, on that basis, the following hypothesis should be adopted:

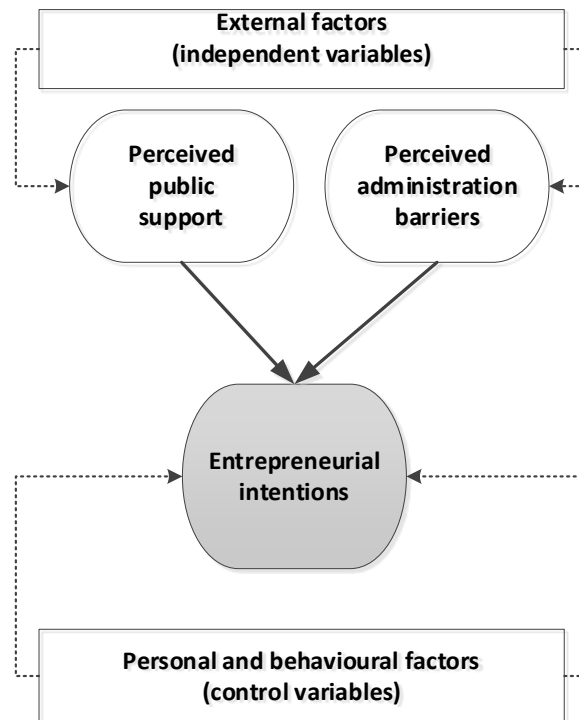
H1: Perceived public support for entrepreneurship strengthens the young generation's entrepreneurial intentions to start their own business.

Schwarz *et al.* (2009) postulate that the perceived barriers to entrepreneurship considerably diminishes the entrepreneurial intentions of people who consider establishing their own business. The quoted literature of the subject inclines to adopt the following research hypothesis:

H2: Perceived administration barriers to entrepreneurship blunt entrepreneurial intentions of the young generation to start their own business.

The empirical research aimed to implement Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour in a group of students in the Polish reality. It is one of the most frequently applied concepts when analysing behavioural intentions (Rantanen *et al.*, 2015; Wach & Wojciechowski, 2016). For the empirical research the quantitative approach was used. As the leading research tool a survey among Polish and foreign students was conducted. The survey questionnaire (Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire, EIQ) was divided into six parts, four of which concerned independent variables (entrepreneurial attitude, attitude towards risk, subjective norms, perceived control over behaviour), one dependent variable (entrepreneurial intentions), whereas the last one included the basic characteristics of the respondent, which served as control variables. The first six parts included from 4 to 7 questions evaluated on the 7-point Likert scale, which were then standardized and given the form of quasi-continuous variables through building aggregated indices. The survey's individual parts were determined in accordance with the developed research model (Figure 2) based on Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour (1991, 2011), extending it with all the control variables and one explanatory variable.

Figure 2. The research model for the hypotheses verification



(Source: own study)

The EIQ survey was conducted in seven different universities in Krakow (out of 21 public and private universities operating in this truly academic city), including: (i) Cracow University of Economics, (ii) Jagiellonian University, (iii) Pedagogical University of Cracow, (iv) AGH University of Science and Technology, (v) Cracow University of Technology, (vi) University of Agriculture in Krakow, (vii) Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow.

Women constituted 66.8%, and men only 33.2% of the research sample. By age, the research sample was dominated by people aged 20-21 (43.6%) and 22-23 (58.9%), only 9.7% of students were below 20, and 8% were above 25. The majority of students were from bigger cities (37.2%), and 26.1% were from smaller towns, whereas 36.1% were from the country. The surveyed students studied mostly at the bachelor level (67%), but also at master's level (25.9%), while PhD students constituted only 7.1% of the respondents.

The results of the survey were subject to statistical processing with the use of the Statistica® software. In order to verify the assumed hypotheses, multiple regression was applied, which enables to show relations between a few explanatory variables and one dependent variable (entrepreneurial intentions), to be more exact, the impact (force, direction if it is significant) of the selected factors on the dependent variable.

3. Empirical findings and discussion

For the analysis, we used one dependent variable ("entrepreneurial intentions") and two explanatory variables (the first one was "perceived public support", and the other one was "perceived administration barriers"). At the level of significance $\alpha = 0.000$, we find that selected determinants together have a significant impact on the surveyed students' entrepreneurial intentions (Table 1). The assessment of the b parameter with the "perceived public support" variable equal to (+) 0.333 means that the positively perceived public support favoured the entrepreneurial intentions of students. The p-value determined for the t test statistic indicates that this variable has a statistically significant impact on the chances of entrepreneurial intentions, which means that the hypotheses H1 was confirmed. The assessment of the parameter b with the variable "perceived institutional barriers" equal to (-) 0.163 means that negatively perceived barriers in the institutional environment were accompanied by reduction of entrepreneurial intentions of students. The p-value means statistically significant effects, which means that we can confirm the hypothesis H2. The disadvantage of the calculations is its estimation, which explains changes in the dependent variable only in 15.1%.

When building Model 2 for estimations we applied three basic variables of the theory of planned behaviour of Ajzen (subjunctive norms, attitude toward behaviour and self-efficiency as perceived behavioural control) and extended the model of two new variables, namely perceived public support and perceived administration barriers, which allowed to explain changes in the depended variable in 65.3% when we treat these five variables together.

**Table 1. The summary of the regression of the "entrepreneurial intentions"
dependent variable among the surveyed students**

Model 1	R= 0.388 R ² = 0.151 adjusted R ² = 0.148 F(2,716)=63.526 p<0.0000 Standard error of estimation: 0.332					
Variables	b*	Std. Err. b*	b	Std. Err. b	t(716)	p
Constant			3.346	0.315	10.615	0.000
Perceived public support	0.332	0.034	0.464	0.048	9.593	0.000
Received administration barriers	-0.163	0.034	-0.244	0.052	-4.699	0.000
Model 2	R= 0.808 R ² = 0.653 Adjusted R ² = 0.650 F(5,712)=268.18 p<0,0000 Standard error of estimation: 0.853					
Variables	b*	Std. Err. b*	b	Std. Err. b	t(716)	p
Constant			-0.355	0.260	-1.366	0.172
Subjunctive Norms	0.016	0.024	0.020	0.030	0.681	0.495
Attitude	0.726	0.025	0.815	0.029	28.046	0.000
Self-efficiency	0.095	0.026	0.123	0.034	3.615	0.000
Perceived public support	0.052	0.024	0.073	0.034	2.124	0.033
Received administration barriers	-0.038	0.022	-0.056	0.034	-1.669	0.095

(Source: own study)

The positive impact of the positive perception of public support on students' entrepreneurial intentions is accordant with findings from other countries of the world (van der Zwan *et al.*, 2016; Román *et al.*, 2013; Nowiński *et al.*, 2020), but also with research into widely understood institutional environment for entrepreneurship (Autio & Fu, 2015; Simón-Moya *et al.*, 2014). What Schwarz *et al.* (2009) postulate only theoretically has been confirmed in this article, therefore negative barriers to the development of entrepreneurship significantly diminish entrepreneurial intentions of people who consider the establishment of their own business.

Moreover, in our empirical study, a number of control variables were used, such as the respondent's gender and age, level of studies, place of residence. Inferring on the significance level 0.01 we can say that any experience in family business in one's own household contributed to higher entrepreneurial intentions among the studied students. This is line with the majority of results round the globe, but there are few exceptions with a contrary confirmation (Moussa & Kerkeni, 2021).

The empirical research was conducted before the coronavirus pandemic. The Covid-19 disease spreading all over Europe throughout 2020, and now, in 2021, totally changes the situation, and Androniceanu (2020) noticed it also caused major changes in EU policies. Due to coronavirus pandemic, one's own business activity is undoubtedly less popular nowadays, thus the studied entrepreneurial intentions would obtain lower values in the survey.

Tartavulea *et al.* (2020), based on the research conducted during the first wave of Covid-19 pandemic in as many as 13 European countries, proved that it has rather a moderate effect on education. In this context, public aid and support for e-learning, in technical issues in particular, seem indispensable (Smatkov *et al.*, 2019), and so is the professionalization of managing universities as public institutions (Sułkowski *et al.* 2020) or also mergers and acquisitions in higher education (Sułkowski *et al.* 2019), especially in the era of international entrepreneurship on universities (Sułkowski & Patora-Wysocka, 2020) and Europeanization of universities (Marques *et al.*, 2020).

4. Conclusions

The statistical results presented in the article allow to adopt the assumed hypotheses. Positively perceived public support for entrepreneurship strengthens entrepreneurial intentions of the young generation to start their own business. Negatively perceived administration barriers to entrepreneurship blunt entrepreneurial intentions of the young generation to start their own business.

As every empirical research based on perception, also the one discussed in this article has its own limitations. Firstly, the research sample ($n = 719$) was relatively big, although it included only students from the second biggest city in Poland, Krakow. It would be worth including the whole population of students in a given country in such research. Secondly, the number of questions in the survey was limited, however, in the future, it would be a good idea to extend it with other research strands. Thirdly, inference based on perception, although fully acceptable by psychologists and management researchers, and what is more, having a lot of confirmations in reality, still does not allow to absolutize conclusions in research into entrepreneurship.

Therefore, firstly, this article's contribution to extant literature is the replication of research within the discussed scope and their transfer to the Polish reality. Secondly, the contribution of this article consists in the verification of the postulated negative perception of institutional (administration) barriers, and not only barriers related to obtaining financial support, as it takes place in different articles (Nguyen, 2020).

The collected empirical material and most of all the research findings indicate possibilities to extend research by new research strands, such as positive and negative motives behind taking the decision about setting up business activity, or problems of the impact of family entrepreneurship on students' entrepreneurial intentions. It is also worth conducting a comparative study of students of different

fields of study, although based on a homogenous sample, the statistical inference is much simpler.

Authors Contributions

The authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication. KW – conceptualisation, methodology, calculations, findings, supervision. SB – conceptualisation and administration.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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