

## **Effect of extracurricular interest of students in the field of physical education and sports on the development of entrepreneurial skills**

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### **Abstract**

**Introduction:** The development of entrepreneurial skills is a necessity of contemporary times and a safe premise for the economic development of every society. In Romania, economic education and the development of entrepreneurial skills was implemented weakly, haphazardly and incompletely. In the absence of a clear strategy to implement the development of entrepreneurial skills at the level of the young generation, the Romanian school tries to access extracurricular projects and programs to implement economic education. The present study is based on the analysis of the activity of a group of students with a sports profile and physical activities, within the POCU project, ID 125165. The purpose of the study is to find out to what extent the university training environment is able to influence the entrepreneurial intention (launching the first business in life), to university students in sports and physical activities. **Subjects:** 12 students of physical education and sport university programs. **Methods:** pedagogical observation and interview investigation, carried out as a result of a teacher-student mentoring process. **Results:** There is a low interest of sports and physical activities students in developing their entrepreneurial skills in the extracurricular system. Only 28% of potential beneficiaries accessed the mentioned project. Entrepreneurship education reduces the skills mismatch of university training, with only 42% of subjects intending to open their first business in the training field. Most of the students prefer to start the business in the field of services, usually in the legal form of a commercial company with limited liability, they rely mostly on the financial support provided by the family and believe that they can essentially rely on their ability to work. The research has important limits determined by the beginning of the implementation of entrepreneurial education at a regional university in Romania, the small number of investigated subjects or the quality of mentoring.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurial intention, university education, business, management, sport industry

### **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship is a characteristic of all societies around the globe, valuing the initiative of individuals, individually or in teams, perceiving and creating new economic opportunities. A distinct feature of developed economies is represented by the vital role of entrepreneurship as a central pillar of economic growth (Năstase, 2011). On the other hand, entrepreneurship provides jobs, increases national productivity and improves the quality of life (Virasa et al., 2022). The development of entrepreneurship is influenced by institutional factors such as political stability, government effectiveness, quality regulations, a solid rule of law, the ease of starting a business, and the ease of obtaining credit (Sendra-Pons et al., 2022).

Although entrepreneurship is as old as humanity, the theorization of the concept was done much later, beginning in the 17th century in France, through Richard Cantillon. Later, theorists and economists such as Jean Baptiste Say (1803), Schumpeter (1954), Peter Drucker (1964), Albert Shapero (1975), Karl Vesper (1980) or Wennekers and Thurik (1999) manage to comprehensively define the functional roles of entrepreneurs and their fundamental role in the development of society as a whole (Mariotti, 2012).

The development of entrepreneurship in Romania currently suffers as a result of an unfavorable culture. The country's communist past did not favor the development of economic entrepreneurship, and the fact that free initiative was punished by law during the years of communism has educational and behavioral connotations today. Changing the mentality of the population in the sense of cultivating initiative, launching businesses and taking life into their own hands must be carried out in the most effective way starting from the education of the younger generation. In the decades after the 1989 Revolution, in the absence of minimal knowledge of how to do business, Romanian entrepreneurship often led to bankruptcy, collapsing not only personal fortunes but also large economic objectives with potential. During this period, the Romanian education system did not correctly perceive the need to implement entrepreneurial knowledge at all levels of education. Currently, the Romanian education system focuses quite weakly on the development of entrepreneurial skills, resulting in the poor development of domestic businesses. Increasingly frequent concerns try to focus on the development of entrepreneurial skills in the young generation (Heyne, 2011).

The national economy of a country is often closely related to the level of entrepreneurial development (Bacigalupo et al., 2016), with entrepreneurs representing the backbone of a society (Singh & Mehdi, 2022). Although world globalization accelerates the borrowing of innovative ideas (Şimşit et al., 2014), there are great differences in entrepreneurship across the globe. Analyzing 49 national economies representative of all regions of the globe in 2018, it can be seen that (GEM, 2018): 12.6% of adults are in the early stages of an entrepreneurial activity, and 3.7% of them have generated jobs the work; 18.7% of entrepreneurial activity is generated by familiar businesses and 9% of businesses are individual; the highest shares of individual businesses are found among entrepreneurs in Brazil (53%), followed by the Netherlands (23%).

According to the data analyzed at the WORLD Economic Forum (Porter et al., 2001), Romania ranks unfavorably at 61 out of 75 countries analyzed for economic competitiveness. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2021/2022 provides us with interesting data about the state of entrepreneurship in Romania: The per capita income ranks Romania in the second half of the ranking of all countries on the globe, only 27% of Romanians consider it easy to launch a business, half of Romanians believe that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to open a business, and very few people start a business without having had another job before (GEM, 2022).

For the development of entrepreneurial skills, the University of Pitesti carried out in the period 2020-2022, a project aimed at providing students of various specialties with educational assistance, entrepreneurial counseling and mentoring, respectively financial support, a project co-financed from the European Social Fund through the Human Capital Operational Program (2014-2020), abbreviated ACTIV-PRO-Upit (Diaconu et al, 2020).

Sport and physical activity represent a field that excels in personal development, favoring the development of social relationships (Fernandezrivas & Espada, 2020), being also a cultural laboratory (Madonna et al., 2020), encompassing the historical evolution of humanity, up to the current tumult of the world today's business. The specific industry of sport and recreation today represents an increasingly attractive area of the business environment (Widawska-Stanisiz, 2021). Increasing financial capital is pouring into the sports industry, with an ever-evolving market, business models, and operating strategies (Hou & Dong, 2022).

**The purpose of the research:** Analysis of the entrepreneurial profile and entrepreneurial skills of students in the field of physical and sports education.

**Subjects and context:** 12 students from the physical education and sports study program voluntarily enrolled in the project POCU ID 125165 entitled "Activities and integrated measures of educational assistance, professional counseling and mentoring, respectively financial support for increasing participation in tertiary education in South-Muntenia region in conditions of non-discrimination and social equity (ACTIVE PRO-UPit)" held by the University of Pitesti in the period 2020-2022. Based on this project, recruited students benefited from mentoring, educational assistance, entrepreneurial counseling and financial support (for students from vulnerable backgrounds).

**Methods**

An entrepreneurial skills trainer (university teaching staff) delivered extracurricular, to a group of 12 students from the sports and physical activities university training field, entrepreneurial knowledge through 28 hours of lecture, 28 hours of seminar and 28 hours of laboratory, between March and June 2020. The application part of the program was 67% of the total training hours. During the course hours, knowledge related to concepts, theories, strategies, methods and techniques specific to entrepreneurship was transmitted. In the seminar classes, the students carried out case studies, role-plays and were involved in debates and challenges in solving them.

Between September 2021 and April 2022, the 12 students carried out their first business plan, based on a business idea they consider viable. The field of university training did not represent a limitation in choosing the business that the students proposed to analyze through the business plan! Each student benefited from 21 hours/month of activities with the mentor, individually or by working in teams of 3 students/session.

The present research refers to the pedagogical observations and interview investigation of the 12 students at the end of the business plan design module (in April 2022).

**Result**

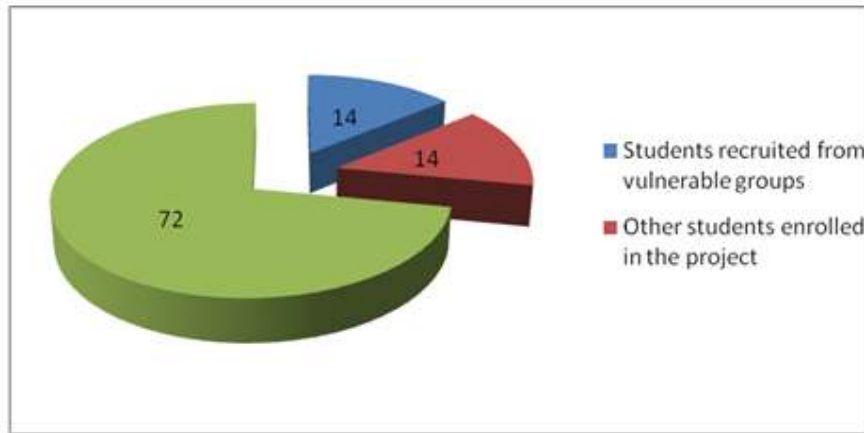
**a) Analysis of students' interest in developing extracurricular entrepreneurial skills**

Table 1. Data of interest shown (no)

Total students enrolled and recruited	Students recruited from vulnerable groups	Other students enrolled in the project	students in the number	Total potential students	of group students interested	Total vulnerable students not interested	Totally uninterested students
12	6	6		43		8	31

The present research shows that the group of young students is not determined enough to develop their entrepreneurial skills! Only 28% of young students enrolled in the physical education and sports program were interested in developing their entrepreneurial skills (as shown in graph 1). An explanation could be that the proposed activities were carried out in the extracurricular system, and the students are mainly focused only on completing their university studies. However, it must be taken into account that the prospect of employing

students in a traditional system (physical education and sports teachers) is low, as the positions in this system have extremely low employability. Thus, the small share could seem paradoxical, since the employability of students based on an initiative represents an extremely viable possibility, all the more so since the level of sports services in Romania has a promising market.



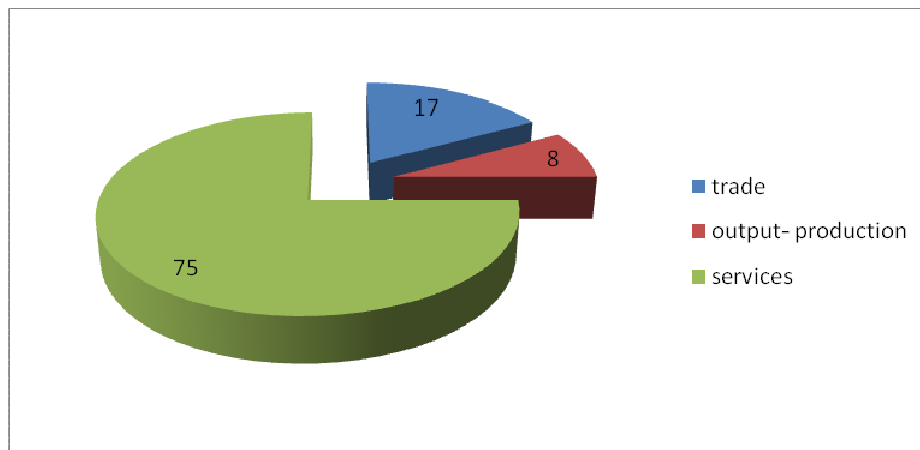
Graph 1. Interest for the development of entrepreneurial skills (%)

**b) The profile of the activities proposed by the students**

Table 2. Profile of entrepreneurial activities

Type of entrepreneurial activity	trade	output-production	services	total
number	2	1	9	12
characteristics	1 grocery store 1 textile store	agricultural products	2-hairstyle and beauty 2 food catering 5-sports services (1 football club; 1 running club; 3 fitness clubs)	

75% of students in the field of sports and physical activities prefer to launch businesses in the field of services, which is in correspondence with the university training profile. It is worth noting that they do not necessarily prefer to open businesses in the field of university training, only 42% of them intending to open businesses in the sports field. 17% would be willing to launch their first business in the sphere of trade and only 8% in the sphere of goods production (much more adapted to engineering university studies)

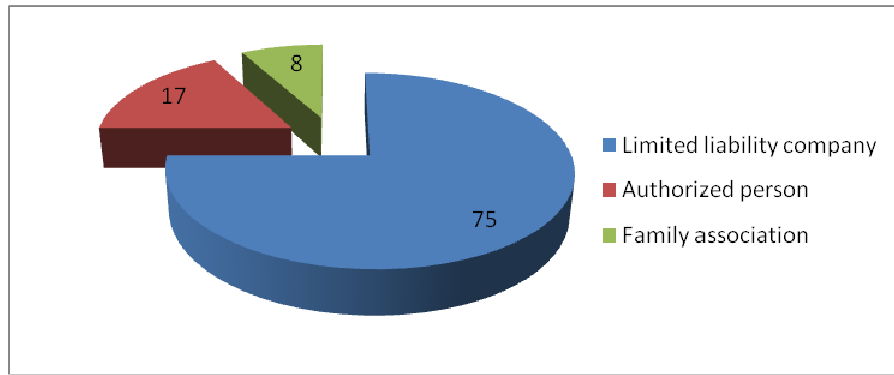


Graph 2. Profile of entrepreneurial activities (%)

**c) Choosing the legal status of the business**

Table 3. Legal status proposal for the business concerned

Proposal of the legal state	Limited liability company	Authorized person	Family association	Total
number	9	2	1	12



Graph 3. Legal statut of bussines (%)

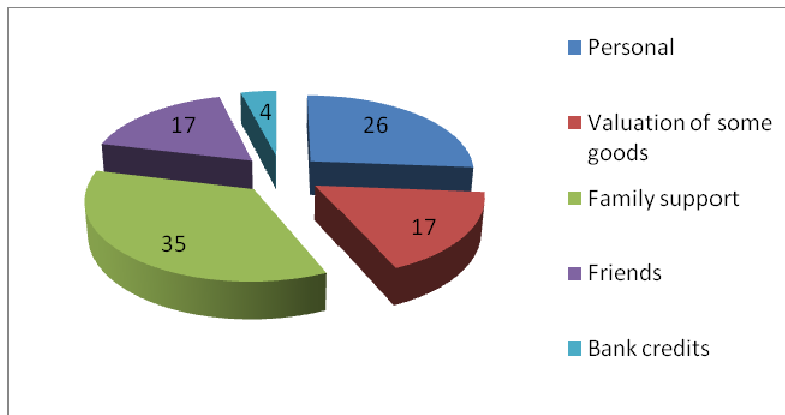
The status of the limited liability company presents for most entrepreneurs the best solution in launching a business. As shown by Bugaian et al. (2010), the choice of the status of authorized natural person, (17% of the answers), reveals a greater caution or a small business, with low launch costs and simpler registration.

**d) Sources of financing**

Table 4. Description of the sources of financing the business concerned

Sources of funding	Personal savings	Valuation of some goods	Family support	Loan from friends	Bank credits
Number	6	4	8	4	1

Family support is the most important source of income in starting a business, and bank credit is the most avoided source.

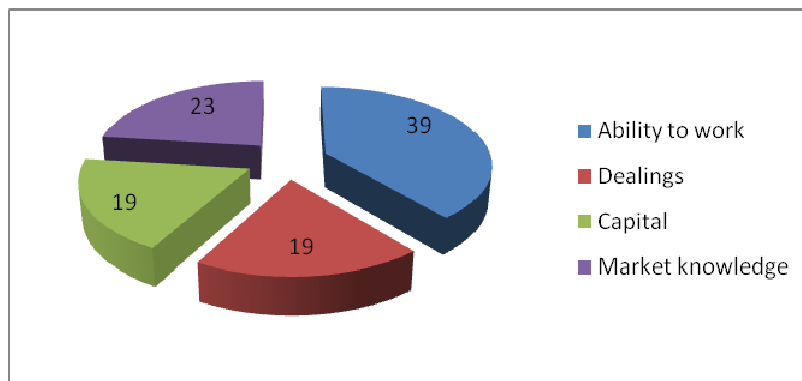


Graph 4. Sources of financing (%)

**e) Personal skills**

Table 5. Strengths in achieving success

Argument	Ability to work	Dealings	Capital knowledge	Market knowledge	Technological knowledge
number	12	6	6	7	-



Graph 5. Personal skills (%)

The university profile of the activity categorically influences individual capabilities. The students of the physical education and sports profile, declare that they rely entirely on their high work capacity, naturally related to the sports training they carry out regularly. Interestingly, 7 students believe they possess market knowledge and to an average extent rely on relationships and capital in launching and achieving business success. Equally interesting is that no student perceives to possess technological knowledge, which predicts the development of business dealings with technical collaborators.

### Discussions

Entrepreneurship education helps individuals to improve their recognition of opportunities in life, develop their skills to cope with a globalized world with changing economies, and is a significant topic of academic studies in the last two decades (Martins et al., 2022). University entrepreneurial activity is considered to be growing globally, but should be encouraged more for its crucial contribution to the economic and social development of an area, job creation, essential means of achieving high levels of competitiveness and innovation on market (Barba-Sánchez et al., 2022). University education influences entrepreneurial intention (Cai et al., 2021) as well as students' entrepreneurial behavior (Cui & Bell, 2022). Academic promotion of entrepreneurial knowledge leads to the reduction of students' skills mismatch as well as the reduction of unemployment among the younger generation (Salamzadeh et al., 2022). The research showed that only 42% of the subjects intend to open their first business in their field of training, which confirms that entrepreneurship education reduces the mismatch of university training skills. Thus it is proven that the personal entrepreneurial intention is not necessarily influenced only by the training skills or the career plan, but is also closely related to other elements such as personal passion for a certain field, previous experience in a job, or experience of life (Nwosu et al., 2022).

### Conclusions

Romania has a great need to perform in entrepreneurial activities. Education, at all levels, is the surest way to develop entrepreneurial skills, and young people are the most suitable group for this endeavor. The emergence and development of entrepreneurial universities in Romania represents a reality and a chance for society to develop and prosper faster.

The present study highlights the fact that the willingness of young students to develop their entrepreneurial skills is quite low. The reasons for this state of affairs could be materialized in an unjustified opinion that starting a business does not require the development of special skills, and entrepreneurial education is boring and unimportant. The inoculation of such beliefs in the population is also due to the excessive popularization through mass media of some controversial characters, who at a certain point developed profitable businesses or had a notable political career, even if they promoted the subculture. On the other hand, purely theoretical entrepreneurship education, carried out by students with a single mentor (who most often only shares their own entrepreneurial experiences), is not sufficiently convincing and motivating for students (Fauchald et al., 2022), requiring also a somewhat more practical approach.

Based on the analyzed data, it can be established that the students of the physical education and sports university profile are to a small extent interested in starting businesses (probably preferring the status of an employee and not an employer). In relation to the profile of the targeted businesses, the analyzed subjects prefer services, usually in the legal form of a commercial company with limited liability, they rely mostly on the financial support provided by the family and consider that they can essentially rely on their work capacity.

### Limitations of the research

The small number of cases taken in the research and the regional spread of the subjects (around a single provincial university center) may distort the objective perception of the profile of the physical education and sports student, regarding the profile of his entrepreneurial knowledge. Future specialists in physical education and sports have a great need to develop their entrepreneurial skills, in order to integrate into the labor market in the field of studies, given that there are few vacancies in the traditional (state) educational field. At the same time, the sports services market is considered to have great growth potential in Romania.

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