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## ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN DESIGN EDUCATION

SCRIPCENCO Angela

Technical University of Moldova, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

*angela.scripcenco@dtm.utm.md*

*The paper considers the problem of development entrepreneurial intention among university students involved in professional studies as is clothing design and technology, fashion design. It's observed that early employment of graduates is low and often is hidden by the fact that more than 90% of graduates are girls which after graduation are occupied with creation families and grown-up children. However, less share of graduates is ready to be employed at industrial entities. The challenge for university curricula is to adapt content of study program in case of development entrepreneurial intention as an alternative for future employability of young generation of specialists.*

**Key words:** SME, entrepreneurial intention, light industry.

### INTRODUCTION

The importance of entrepreneurship to the economic well-being of a country is undeniable. Entrepreneurship plays a significant role in limiting unemployment through job creation and self-employment. Governments in developing countries view entrepreneurship as a remedy for economic and social instability.

### PURPOSE

The aim of this work is to analyze the factors that shape entrepreneurial intentions of students studying the specialties of Clothing Design and Technology; Fashion Design at the TUM and interpolate them to the light industry of the country.

### RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The textile, apparel, footwear and leather industry (TAFL) of Moldova, or light industry, is a key sector of the Moldovan economy, based on its strong industrial past and long-standing manufacturing traditions dating back more than nine decades. First of all, due to the high export potential, which is about 10% of the total exports of the national economy (2023) [5]. On the other hand, light industry has a great social importance in social terms. This sector employs more than 19,240 workers at the end of 2023 [5], which constitutes approximately 4,0% of the total number of employees in the entire economy, 95% of them are women [3].

Despite the fact that the Light Industry is one of the country's most resilient sectors to economic changes, having demonstrated an increase in competitiveness over the decades, it faces certain challenges, the main ones being: the shortage of staff. The total employment of persons, mostly engaged in apparel manufacturing around of 65% [5] has decreased during the last five years by 36%, (from 30 000 employees in 2020 [7] to 19240 in 2023). Over the last five years, the number of companies in the sector has steadily increased, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, is represented by 730 registered enterprises [5]. However, not all of the



companies are operational. The number of operational companies constituted around of 80%, of which more than 95% are SMEs [6]. The big part of enterprises cc 65% are specialized in manufacture of apparel, absorbing 85% of employees from the sector LI [6].

So, the real conjuncture in the Light Industry sector gradually changed from large and medium to small, micro and individual enterprises, which preponderant are working on the own label business model for internal market, more of them are specialized on apparel. In other words, in last five years appeared lot of micro enterprises like as ateliers which are focused on small scale or individual production, instead the large enterprises confronted to economic crises, based on labor force migration, less absorption ability of internal market, limited export ability, and less efficient production system as it Lohn. The large enterprises were gradually transformed in medium category or even low gradated.

From other hand it's obviously the less interest of young generation on graduation in the field of light industry. National professional education does not respond to requirements of industrial medium. However, over the last decade, young people's interest in training in these fields has declined enormously because of the very low remuneration for work in this sector [6]. In that context, even for small among of students which like fashion design and technology the professional education has to adapted the study content oriented on development entrepreneurial skills for young specialists to be able face to economic challenges in highly competitive environment.

### **DEVELOPMENT ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION**

Many scholars (Gelaidan and Abdullateef, 2017) point out the important role of entrepreneurship in the development of a country's economy, and therefore identify the need to study the factors that influence people to become entrepreneurs. Since intentions have been found to be a strong predictor of actual future behavior, many researchers seek to find out which factors have a positive impact on entrepreneurial intentions.

We conducted research (2020 - 2024) in the context of higher education in the field of design, as an auxiliary component of the educational process [3, 10]. At the design faculty of TUM, there was a project on entrepreneurial education, which included a training cycle, a boot camp, a business plan competition, and assistance in obtaining grants. It is generally recognized that education is vital for creating entrepreneurial individuals and, in turn, an entrepreneurial community. Universities, being pillars of knowledge, provide students with a high level of professional knowledge, but do not form the skills necessary for the development of entrepreneurial inclinations. Observations show that personal factors play a leading role in the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. However, the question of what factors influence entrepreneurial intentions among students remains open.

Thus, this study aims to identify individual and contextual factors that influence entrepreneurial intentions among university students. It is important to emphasize the availability and accessibility of educational support, support for relationships with successful companies, such as demonstration of success stories, structural support of the university on the formation of intentions.



Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI) is a state of mind (Passaro et al., 2018) leading an individual to choose self-employment over working for another. Previous studies on individual entrepreneurial orientation (IEO) have mainly focused on personality characteristics such as risk propensity, proactivity, and innovativeness. Risk propensity is believed to help differentiate entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs. Risk taking is the strongest predictor of EI among students [3].

Another characteristic of IEO is innovativeness. A large number of studies report a positive relationship between the level of innovativeness and EI. It can therefore be said that innovative individuals are more likely to become entrepreneurs. The third dimension of IEO is proactivity, which can be defined as the speed of anticipating and responding to customer needs and expectations. This includes staying ahead of competitors by improving existing products, services, processes or creating new ones. Improving or creating new products, services or processes can be associated with innovation; therefore, proactivity can be considered to be associated with innovativeness. Given that the level of innovative behavior in people increases the likelihood of choosing an entrepreneurial path, the same can be said about proactivity. Self-efficacy as the most important cognitive and behavioral abilities for interaction with the environment. Self-efficacy shows focus on a specific task. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is positively associated with students' intention to start their own business.

In order to encourage entrepreneurial behavior among students, it is necessary to develop entrepreneurship programs which provide the necessary knowledge on how to run a business, in turn, inspiring people to become more entrepreneurial and increasing their self-confidence (Mutlutürk and Mardikyan, 2018). Entrepreneurship education can increase students' self-efficacy in starting their own business, with the right education, students will gravitate towards self-employment due to their higher level of self-confidence. Moreover, education is crucial to increasing students' entrepreneurial efficacy by making self-employment more attractive, providing all aspects of business development and supporting them in these endeavors.

Factors that influence students' EI have been found that students are influenced by their environment - their friends and family. In addition, people whose parents own their own business are more likely to have higher entrepreneurial intentions, since they will already have internal knowledge regarding the advantages and disadvantages of such an endeavor. Relational support entails emotional support and financing from friends and family. Whichever form this support takes, the knowledge of support from friends and family leads to higher self-esteem and motivation to undergo an entrepreneurial path. Knowledge plays a key role in a person's decision to become an entrepreneur. An entrepreneurial environment, such as having a parent or close friend who is self-employed, provides a realistic view of the entrepreneurial lifestyle. This environment is a unique source of knowledge about entrepreneurial decision making.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study contributes by identifying individual and contextual factors that influence the entrepreneurial intentions of university students. The study allows us to formulate directions for modernizing the curricula for students, who, while gaining



knowledge in the direction of design and production of clothing, should develop entrepreneurial skills that will ensure their sustainable position on the labor market. Entrepreneurial intentions do not necessarily materialize into entrepreneurship in the future. However, developed entrepreneurial thinking will allow a specialist to be trained to meet the requirements of the labor market of Moldova, where more than 95% of enterprises are SMM. It is important that entrepreneurial intentions are formed during the training and should include a set of activities, such as an educational component (academic disciplines), the formation of a community through various events that allow building horizontal connections with students of related specialties, holding various events with representatives of the business environment to form a holistic understanding of the benefits, risks of self-employment and entrepreneurship.

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