

Bożena Wójtowicz

Institute of Geography
Faculty of Geography and Biology
Pedagogical University of Cracow
bwojt@neostrada.pl

**THE STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS AND ATTITUDES
TOWARDS THE ROLE OF THE ENTERPRISE IN TERMS
OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION**

Abstract: The concept of the European integration has been increasingly used since it became more and more valuable. This term is mainly employed in case of the process of the regular integration of countries within Europe dealing with several spheres, such as: economic, legal and political. The greatest success of the European integration is, first of all, the function of the European Union. Europe, or we should say the countries that integrate there have several objectives, which refer to the promotion of the economic and social progresses as well as strengthening of the economic cooperation, moreover, strengthening the union concept as the political creation, improving and increasing the standards of living, developing the areas of the freedom, security and justice, leading to the origination of the European citizenship and also creating one huge economic structure. The European integration has been developing increasingly and it has been successful in many spheres.

There was the investigation among students carried out in order to find out the basis of the preparation and decision-making associated with the principles, directions and pace of the perspective development of the education in the field of the foundations of the enterprise in favour of the society functioning in the sphere of the European integration. The deficiencies in the range of the enterprise and the European integration were discovered on their basis. Choosing a young age group, as a target group in this case is justified by the role they play in the society, and therefore, in the process of creating the European society.

Key words: enterprise, integration, personality, entrepreneurial attitude

INTRODUCTION

The enterprise is one of the most crucial characteristics of people, who live and cope with situations in the world considering the conditions of the market economy. In today's world the economic activity associated with the production and the exchange, is dealt with by many business entities competing with one another. The world economy has been becoming more and more common due to the process of globalization and more and more undividable thanks to the integration. The concept of the European integration has been used more often because it has become more and more valuable. The term is primarily used to determine a process of regular integration of the European states – countries. The term is mainly employed in case of the process of the regular integration of countries within Europe dealing with several spheres, such as: economic, legal, political and educational. The countries that are integrating there have several objectives, which refer to the promotion of the economic and social progresses, moreover, strengthening the union concept as the political creation, improving and increasing the standards of living leading to the origination of the European citizenship and also creating one huge economic structure so as to strengthen the economical cooperation. Such economy requires great entrepreneurship from people. The human activities should be especially entrepreneurial if they are related to their everyday lives in their households and businesses, both as employees of various professions and entrepreneurs. In the economic sphere, being entrepreneurial allows to undertake the enterprises and run business activities, furthermore, create the ability to participate in them. People, who are entrepreneurial, undertake and develop the entrepreneurial business entities as well as appear to be the most successful.

THE OBJECTIVES AND THE RESEARCH ISSUES

Possibly, the first manifestation of being entrepreneurial, appeared to be the attempts of the 'nature subjugation' made by primitive humans. Thanks to the progress of the civilization and the gradual discoveries of the laws of nature, people have been increasingly interfering in the individual elements of the natural environment. Construction of new tools as well as improvement of the existing ones, furthermore, ability of maintaining the natural resources have become the major demonstrations of the entrepreneurial activities and of the increasing human population.

The improvement of the public awareness and technological advances are possible due to the human activities, which aim at fulfilling the growing needs of people with limited resources of the Earth. The present market economy

specially requires the entrepreneurial people owing to high competition in the market along with the constant progress of technical, organizational and economic processes. The process of the entrepreneurship is usually identified with high activeness, resourcefulness, quickness and regularity, as well as ingenuity. Therefore, the question, of students' expectations and attitudes towards the role of the entrepreneurship concerning the background of the ongoing social and economical changes referring to the conditions of the European integration, is appropriate. The conducted studies aimed at understanding the current level of interest in the prospective development of the entrepreneurship education in favour of the society that functions in the European integration circumstances in terms of the geographical studies.

The main research objective was to demonstrate the motives of education in the range of the entrepreneurship in two academic centers in Poland, moreover, to evaluate the role of the entrepreneurship in terms of the European integration relating to the further educational opportunities and professional work.

RESEARCH METHODS

The carried out diagnostic research among the students created the foundation for the preparation and decision making issues dealing with the principles, directions and pace of the perspective educational development considering the enterprise bases in favour of the society living in the circumstances of the European integration. Choosing the young generation, as a target group, is reasonable due to the role it plays in the society, therefore, also in the process of creating the European society.

The aims of the investigation included also the recognition and evaluation of:

- how the geography students understand the concept of 'entrepreneurship';
- what personal characteristic an entrepreneurial person should have;
- what, in their opinion, the role of education in creating the entrepreneurship is;
- how they understand the concept of 'European integration';
- what functions of the European integration in the contemporary world are;
- what kind of role the entrepreneurship plays in creating the pro-European society;

The questions demonstrated in the survey were arranged in the following subject-matter groups:

- the concept of entrepreneurship and its dimensions (process, set of characteristics);

- the characteristic features (personality) of the entrepreneurial person;
- attitudes and skills of the entrepreneurial person;
- the role of the entrepreneurial person in the social and economic development of the country / state and in the European integration;
- the role of the European integration in the geography education, considering university education in terms of the entrepreneurship;
- the evaluation of knowledge and mastering of certain skills as well as the attitudes in the range of the entrepreneurship during their geographical studies and further career plans.

The diagnostic research involved 78 men and 132 women. The largest number of male students were the students of UP. Students (210 people) of the following background were questioned: BSc 3-year undergraduate studies – licentiate studies (75.4%), 5-year MSc studies (4.9%), and MSc complementary studies after the undergraduate studies (19.7%). The respondents who took part in the survey studied in one of the two universities: UP in Krakow and UJK in Kielce. Almost half of them came from rural areas (43.2%) and towns with the population of under 50,000 residents (22.1%). Over 26% of students came from big cities, i.e., with the population of over 500,000 residents and cities within the population ranging from 100,000 to 500,000 residents (8.7%). In order to gather the empirical material a questionnaire was used. Prior to the investigation a survey had been conducted to test the research tool. The final questionnaire included 17 questions that were divided into four subject-matter groups. There were two kinds of questions: 6 closed ones and 11 open ones. The questionnaire was anonymous and conducted under the supervision of the university staff. The first subject-matter group focused on the concept of ‘entrepreneurship’ and its two dimensions (process and a group of characteristic features of the entrepreneurial person in his/her personality). According to the *New Great Universal Encyclopedia PWN*, ‘entrepreneurship’ “is a set of characteristics and attitudes primarily typical of business people” (PWN, 1998: 361). ‘Entrepreneurship’ is also understood as “... the willingness and ability to face and solve, in a creative and innovative ways, new problems, the ability to use existing opportunities and chances, as well as flexible capability of familiarizing with changing conditions of functioning” (www.newtrader.pl). Geography students mainly understood the entrepreneurship as: the ability to get by in the contemporary world in such a way that using one’s characteristics (virtues) one could provide themselves with the satisfactory level of life (9% of respondents), the ability of creative thinking in the field of economics (7.1%), the ability to cope with life in its various fields (9.5%), the ability to adapt to new conditions (4.5%), the mobility (5.9%), the sensible use of the economic values associated with economic resources (15.7%). However, there were also the following statements: to earn without

too much effort (7.3%), the ability to get the maximum benefit from all available sources and funds (9.5 %), 'entrepreneurship' – the school subject, i.e. in high school (15%). Nearly 16.5% of the respondents did not provide us with any definition of 'entrepreneurship' (fig. 1).

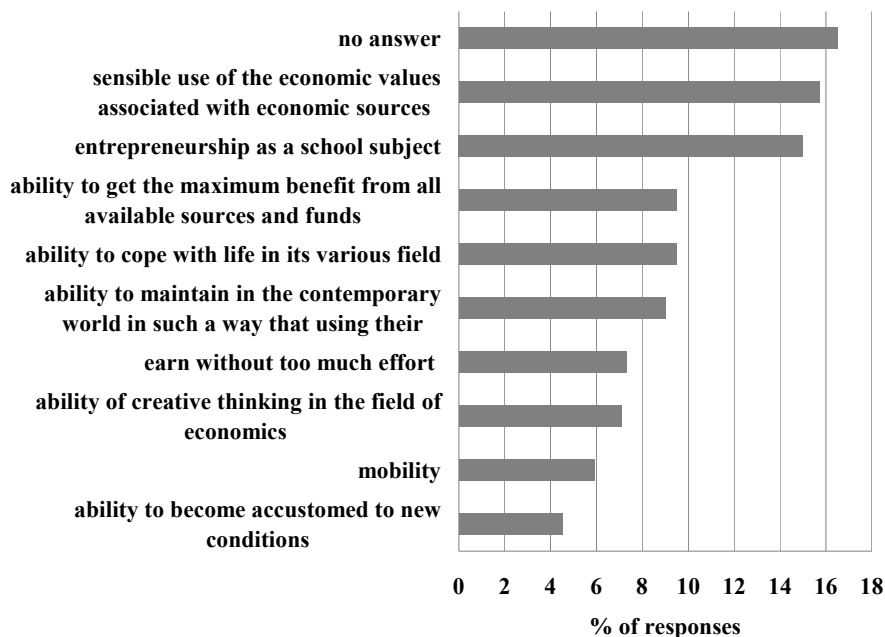


Fig. 1. Entrepreneurship in the respondents' views; source: personal study

The presented definitions show that the students most probably remembered the definitions of 'entrepreneurship' which they had learned during their high school education because the responses were similar to the definitions provided in the textbook for entrepreneurship used in high schools.

The current reality requires continuous changes for the better, higher productivity and efficiency, which can be achieved thanks to entrepreneurial activities. An enterprising person, therefore, must be resourceful, efficient, effective, and at the same time, thoughtful and courageous. 'Entrepreneurship' is associated with certain characteristics. Being enterprising in case of a person must result from characteristics of the personality, from the range of knowledge and skills. Thus, the next question the respondents were asked dealt with the characteristics of an enterprising person. Geography students most often indicated the following characteristics of personality: resourcefulness (45%), perseverance, courage (39%), openness (28%), creativity, ingenuity (25%), sensibility (24%), consistency (19%), taking risk (14.5%), confidence (14%), diligence, ability to work as a team (8%) (fig. 2).

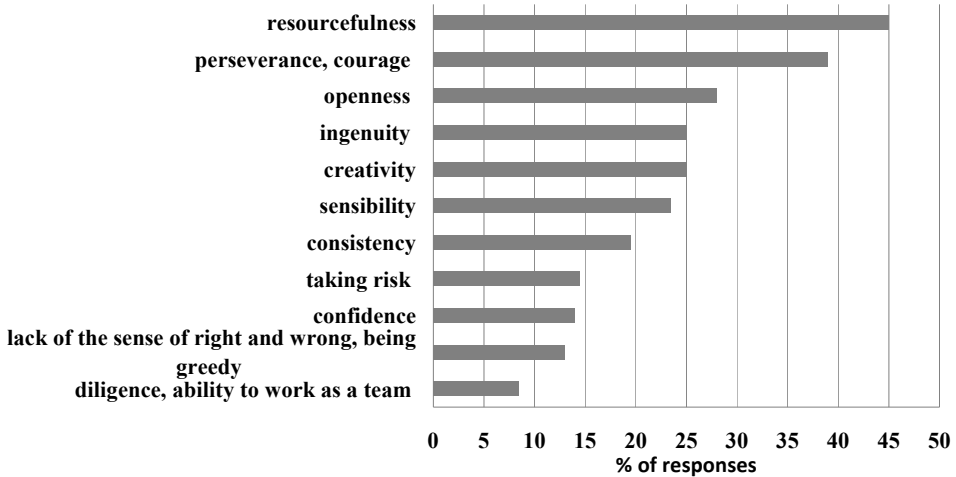


Fig 2. The characteristics of the enterprising person in the respondents' views; source: personal study (respondents could select several answers)

The respondents also specified the following characteristics: lack of the sense of right and wrong, being greedy (13%). The respondents, in the next question, were asked to identify those characteristics of an enterprising person, which they believed were the most important. The responses were incredibly varied. The highest position was occupied by the following characteristics: consistency, perseverance and determination (1st place), a quest for the success and personal fulfillment (2nd place), skills of being well-organized (3rd place). The lowest appeared to be: life optimism (7th place), enthusiasm and dedication to work (8th place), empathy (9th place), curiosity concerning the world, desire to learn new things (10th place). Such outcomes may be disturbing, since the respondents were the Geography students (fig. 3). The respondents were also to determine which of these characteristics were the most important to them and justify why it was so. The respondents decided that the most important personal characteristics of an enterprising person were the following: consistency, determination and aspiration, resourcefulness and ability to take risk and solve problems. They justified them in the following way: "consistency, determination are the most important personal characteristics because they make people mobilize and willing to act", "a person should be able to cope with obstacles and adversity", "should be able to handle every single difficult situation." Having the knowledge by an enterprising person has been becoming more and more essential. An enterprising person has to learn constantly. It is due to the increasing complexity of technical, economic and social processes. The entrepreneurship of a person also results from the practical use of knowledge, which involves the ability of the modern technology use as well



Fig. 3. The most important characteristics of an enterprising person; source: personal study

as the mental abilities, such as: effective listening, logical reasoning and speaking, creative thinking, analyzing, searching, etc.

An enterprising person acts smoothly and rationally, making the developments in the range of changes and improving the actions. The characteristics of an enterprising person involve the appropriate attitudes and skills, therefore, the students were asked to explain the concepts of 'attitude' and 'skill'. Unfortunately, only less than 66% tried to define the concept of 'skill'. Among them, students most commonly determine 'skill' as: "the ability to perform certain actions" (33%), "the ability to use knowledge practically" (28.5%), "the ability to perform tasks" (4.5%). Almost 23% of the respondents did not provide any answer or they wrote "I do not know" (11%) (fig. 4).

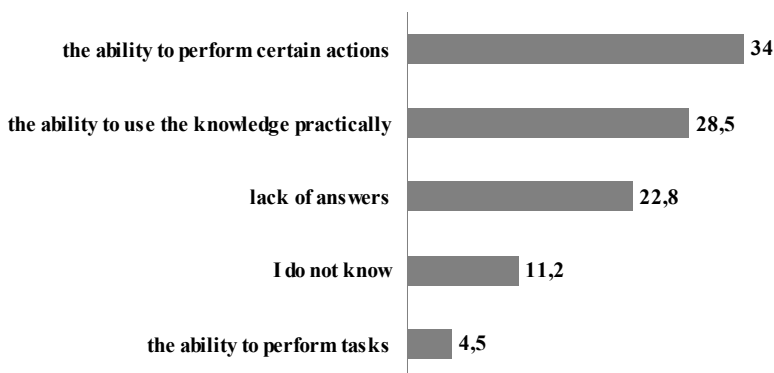


Fig. 4. Definitions of 'skill' provided by the respondents; source: personal study

Even worse responds appeared when they were asked to define the concept of 'attitude'. Nearly 53% of respondents did not provide any answers and only 47% gave a definition of 'attitude'. Most often, 'attitude' was defined as "the conviction in something" (15%), characteristics that allow to fulfill a specific aim (12.3%), a set of conducts typical of a person (8.7%), characteristic way of behaving (7.8%), the entirety of ideas, views, and conduct of a person (3.2%) (fig. 5).

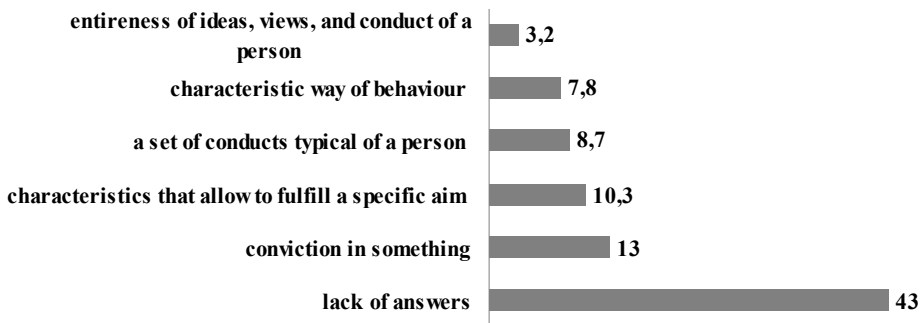


Fig. 5. Definitions of 'attitude' provided by the respondents; source: personal study

The respondents were also asked to determine skills, which an enterprising person should have. The respondents most often provided the following skills: to cope with life, the use of a computer, the knowledge of foreign languages, the skill of negotiation, the will to succeed, to cope with difficult situations, cleverness. The students found it difficult to provide the attitudes, perhaps it could result from the misunderstanding of the concept itself. Only 26% of the respondents determined the attitudes typical of an enterprising person. Most frequently, the respondents mentioned attitudes such as: manners, self-confidence, responsibility, empathy, and honesty. Referring to the attitudes of an enterprising person, the students were asked whether they considered themselves to be enterprising people. Most respondents were unsure of it, which is proven by their responses "rather yes" (47%). Nearly 39% of the respondents answered "I do not know", 11% – responded "yes", and 3% answered "rather no"(fig. 6).

Only 21% of the respondents made an attempt to justify their choice: "to be able to manage time and money", "I do not like wasting my time", "I like educating myself, participating in professional courses", "to be able to do different things", "to be able to take care of yourself and others", "to be able to cope with difficult situations", "to accept others' opinions", "to be able to work with others".

In the economic sphere entrepreneurship allows to start and run businesses, or to participate in them in a creative way. People, who are entrepre-

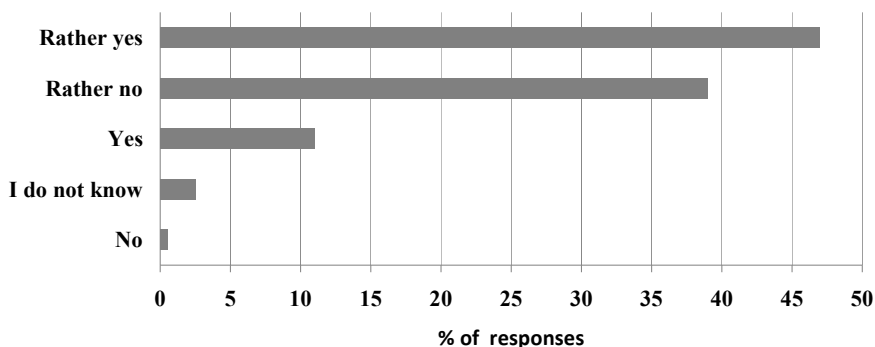


Fig. 6. Personal estimation of the respondents whether they consider themselves to be enterprising people; source: personal study

neurial, undertake and develop business entities, as well as are the ones who are successful. Entrepreneurship is usually identified as the one with high activities, resourcefulness, cleverness and regularity, as well as ingenuity. The modern market economy requires particularly enterprising people, since only they can cope with a great competition on the market and the constant technical, organizational and economic progresses. Therefore, the respondents were asked about the role that an enterprising person should play in the economy. The respondents referred as essential to: discovering new markets and products (35%), searching for new technologies (33%), the reorganization of companies (15%), discovering new resources (9%), moreover, 8% of the respondents indicated that grants had the greatest impact on the entrepreneurship, namely, grants in the form of various programmes, i.e. grants for agriculture, infrastructure development, the ability of training and developing professional skills, integrating different European countries, exchanging experiences. European integration plays a very important role in the social and economic development of Poland and European states. The respondents were asked to provide a definition of 'European integration.' Only about 42% of the respondents answered the question, showing their understanding of integration, specifically: "the unity and cooperation of the European countries/states", "the cooperation with other countries/states", „the union of Europe due to, i.e., creation of the common labor market", "connecting and creating contacts", "widely understood cooperation in the sphere of most activities involving the country/state and enterprises", "connecting and creating relations and interdependences", "common economy and interests", "economical and social cooperation considering the cultural distinctness and identity". According to the students the European integration has contributed to the social and economic development of our country. Such view is presented by nearly 72% of the

respondents (31% 'yes' and 41.8% 'rather yes'), the opposite view was referred to by only 7.2% of the respondents, 14% of the students replied: "I do not know" and 6% did not mark any response at all (fig .7).

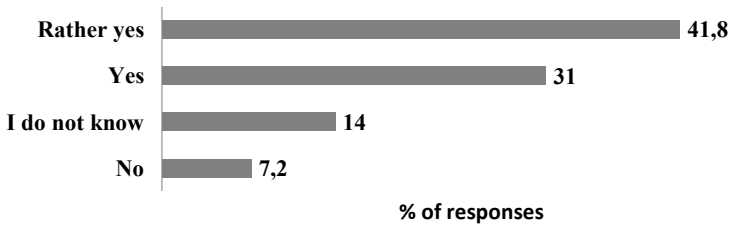


Fig. 7. The influence of European integration on the social and economic development of the country according to the respondents' views; source: personal study

The students, to very insignificant extent, justified their choices (27%). The most important answers were the following: "a lot of new investments", "the exchange of views", "new possibilities are not used", "due to the EU funds, new investments, mainly in the field of the infrastructure, are made", "getting to know new people and subjects", "we can get funds", "we can look for work abroad", "we have the possibility of getting products from all over the world". The respondents could see the strong influence of European integration on the economic development of our country/state (more than 85%). However, in their justifications of such influence, they used only general terms: "the role of integration is significant", "the economy of our country has been developing", "integration influences the faster social and economic developments". According to the respondents, the role of entrepreneurship in creating the pro-European society is important, nevertheless, it should be noticed that only 18% of the respondents provided the answer to the question. The next question was related to the issue of functions that European integration played in the contemporary world. They were to name them. Nearly 48% of the respondents did not give any answer to the question. Most often the respondents provided the following functions: economical, political, cultural (32.9%), moreover, cooperation in various fields (11%), elimination of differences in the economical development among the European countries (8%) (fig. 8).

Due to the fact that European integration takes place at many different levels, among which education is one of the most important, the students were asked to answer a question dealing with changes in the sphere of higher education in the range of entrepreneurship. The responses to the question were very scattered. Only 23% of the respondents said "yes", and 6.8% said "rather yes", over 41% said "no", and 28.8% marked the answer: "I do not know" (fig. 9).

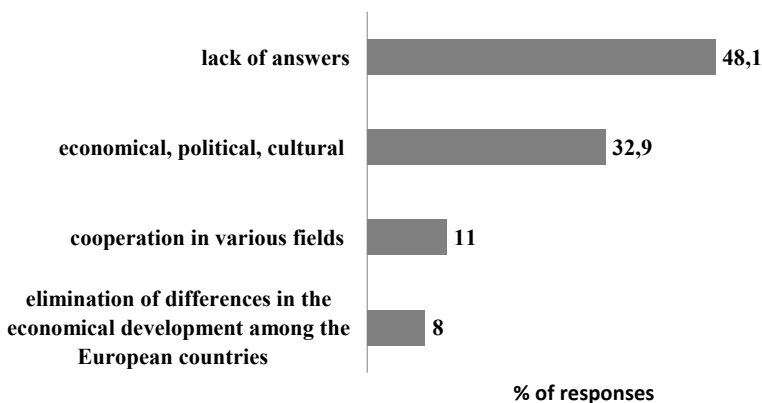


Fig. 8. Functions that European integration plays in the contemporary world; source: personal study

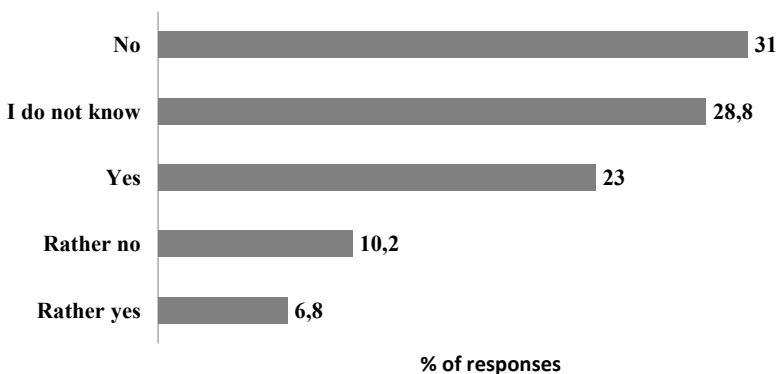


Fig. 9. The changes in the academic education in the range of entrepreneurship; source: personal study

As for the issues, which concern them, the respondents mentioned: “more economical disciplines and specialties at universities”, “creating new courses”. Less than 11% of the respondents named the issues they wanted to learn at university. Another question in the survey corresponded to the earlier one and related to subjects during which the students gained the knowledge and skills associated with the entrepreneurship in terms of European integration. The general and contradictory responses dominated there, i.e., there were many of them (23%), there was no such subject (49% of respondents), economic geography (12.9%), land management (4.1%), regional geography of the world (2.1%), interpersonal communication (2%), education dealing with legal basis (2%), and 38% of respondents did not give any answer to the question (fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Subjects during which students gained the knowledge and skills associated with entrepreneurship; source: personal study (respondents could provide us with several answers)

In the group of people one can easily observe that in a specific situation, every person could react in their own individual way. Typically, this kind of reaction is repeated, that is to say, it is an attitude. According to the psychological aspect of this term, the attitude should be understood as some specific, repetitive patterns, according to which a person feels, thinks and acts. Therefore, attitudes involve emotions, thoughts and predispositions in order to act. Attitudes can change, for example, under the influence of a person having the authority or a trust-worthy surroundings. The change of attitudes could also occur as a result of the long process of education. While dealing with other people, if one wishes to achieve specific goals, one must be neither too submissive nor aggressive. A success can appear due to the attitude known as being assertive. Professional career and realization of ambitious projects require manifestation of being initiative and creative. To be in accord with her/his conscience and the standards /norms, an enterprising person should be responsible and honest.

The next two questions concerned the skills and attitudes acquired at university in the range of entrepreneurship in terms of European integration. There were mainly the following answers: “I did not learn any skills” (74%) and “I acquired no attitudes” 82%. Only 26% of the respondents named the skills that they had learnt at university: negotiation (11%) and communication (15%). As for the attitude, the students mentioned: being open (8.9 %) and tolerance (11.3%) (fig. 11).

The students were also asked about the need for gaining knowledge in the range of entrepreneurship, as well as what issues such knowledge should in-

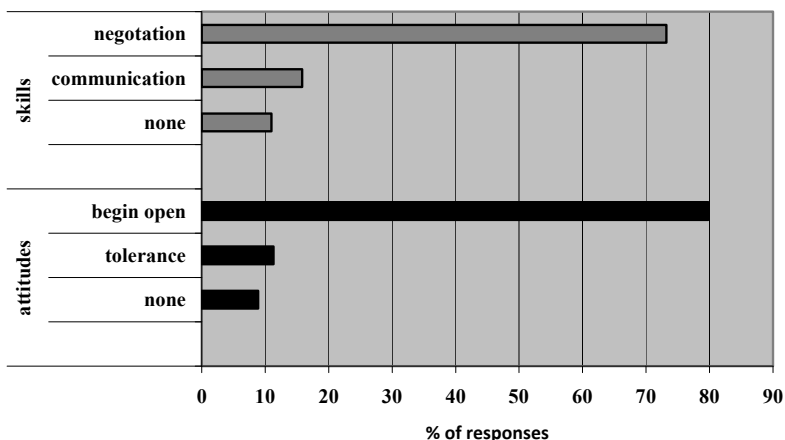


Fig. 11. Skills and attitudes learnt by the respondents during their studies of geography; source: personal study

involve, furthermore, what skills they wanted to shape. Over 85% of the respondents could see the need for education in the sphere of the entrepreneurship, which could be indicated by 78.1% of the answers saying 'yes' and 6.9% saying 'rather yes', only 5% had no opinion on that subject, and nearly 10 % could see no such need (fig. 12). In the next part of the question the respondents were asked to write the issues, which should be included in the curriculum. Since it was an open-ended question the respondents only occasionally provided the answers. Over 43% of the respondents did not answer the question. Most often the students could see the need for acquiring the knowledge during the geographical studies including: financial basis (35.4%), starting their own business (45%), the use of geographical knowledge in business (15%), knowledge dealing with the insurance (4.6%) (Fig. 13).

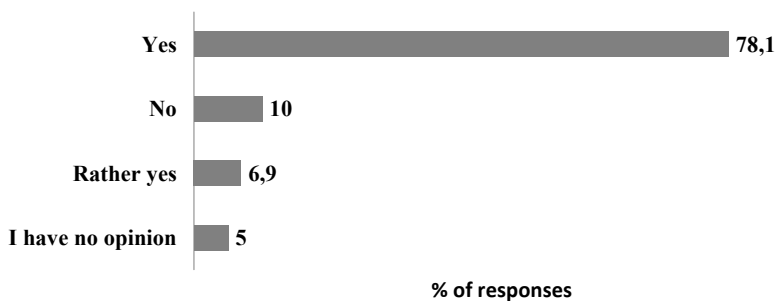


Fig. 12. The need for education in the range of the entrepreneurship according to the students' opinions; source: personal study

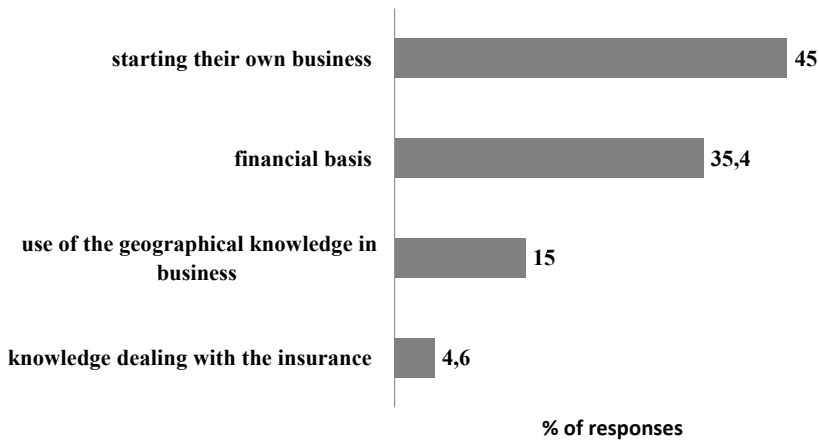


Fig. 13. Issues that should be included in the curriculum according to the students' opinions; source: personal study

The characteristics that are typical of the entrepreneurial personality make it easy to learn the certain entrepreneurial skills, e.g. problem solving, looking for ideas, negotiating, decision-making. In addition to the characteristics and skills that enable the entrepreneurial activities, they named: the use of the opportunities, taking risk, looking for possible and best solutions, taking responsibility, etc. Therefore, the students were asked what skills they had wanted to learn in order to become an enterprising person. Unfortunately, over 67 % of the respondents did not provide any answer to the question. Most often the respondents who answered the question mentioned the following skills: negotiation, managing the stress, taking risk, being open / openness, being creative.

SUMMARY

In the economically developed countries, the era of technocratic and managerial society has ended, that means the one that favours the high-technology and management. Yet the era of the entrepreneurial society has begun, in which the innovation and independence take the priority, consequently, developing the economy and social life. Innovative projects allow to collect the capital for the new technology, which, unfortunately, is becoming more and more expensive. Therefore, new challenges must be undertaken in the field of the academic education. A significant role in such education should be played by geography studies, which requires modification of the curriculum and the

attitudes among the university staff in the range of innovations and changing the labor market.

Enterprising people are needed in every profession and in all areas of human activity, therefore, higher education should prepare young people to be entrepreneurial in terms of European integration. Unfortunately, as the research demonstrated, higher education and its curriculum do not have much in common with the entrepreneurship, both in terms of the knowledge, skills and attitudes.

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