

# The perception of entrepreneurship culture by internal university stakeholders

Internal  
university  
stakeholders

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – As nowadays the knowledge economy puts a strong emphasis on the universities' role in the present economy, the recent challenge focuses on the interrelations between entrepreneurship culture and academic engagement. This study aims to investigate the new role that universities are assuming as entrepreneurial entities and gather information taking place internal university stakeholders and students' perception on entrepreneurship education. The research hypothesis stands entrepreneurship is mainly supposed as being professionally and educationally active rather than setting up a company.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The present study carries out a study on the perception of entrepreneurship education conducted among students of the University of Economics in Krakow in the winter semester of the academic year 2017/2018. The selected target group meets the criteria of the different national country origin of the respondents. Another criterion for selecting the target group was diversity in the field of students' academic interests.

**Findings** – The results of the study give a clear view of the still valid confirmation of the growing academic role in terms of entrepreneurship culture development that appears necessary to address the demand for global competitiveness. In particular, it is possible to categorize two groups of people, moderate and strong supporters of recognition that entrepreneurship is not only about starting a company but also at the same time that it is an expression of its own dynamic and entrepreneurial attitudes.

**Practical implications** – As the importance of entrepreneurship in the context of an entrepreneurial university is rising and the definition of entrepreneurship goes beyond its understanding of starting a business, universities and academic engagement can and have to better address and focus their planning of the courses and their contents.

**Originality/value** – The study sheds some light and gives some interesting perspectives on the issue of different levels of entrepreneurship education expectations against different levels at which this education should be provided. In addition, it is in line with the EU entrepreneurship competence framework (EntreComp) aimed at defining tools to improve the entrepreneurial capacity and culture of EU citizens and organizations by means of consensus among stakeholders and by establishing a bond between education and study.

**Keywords** Entrepreneurship education, Higher education, Internal stakeholder, Innovation, Poland

**Paper type** Research paper



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## Introduction

Culture represents the mixture of a shared philosophy that distinguishes actors belonging to various groups (Hofstede, 1991): considering cross-cultural issues appears especially important for organizational knowledge management (Huang *et al.*, 2013). The entrepreneurial culture is of a strong need and this does not just refer to the present day. It has been so in the past, it is at present and it can be assumed, respectively, that this will not necessarily change in the near future.

A stakeholder represents an individual that affects or is affected by the firm aims and the key is to identify, which stakeholder group is likely and unlikely to dynamically participate in an organization system (Byrd and Gustke, 2011; Freeman, 1984). Then, stakeholder engagement signifies a powerful driver for value creation at the firm, stakeholder and local level (Pucci *et al.*, 2018).

Innovation processes and entrepreneurship culture are becoming crucial drivers necessary in organizations all over the world. In the past decades, new degree programs are dealing with these innovative cultural approaches: entrepreneurship has been incorporating in educational curricula from primary to higher education (HE), thus becoming a key aspect to address in the education systems.

Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan (EC, 2013) tries to reignite the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe because Europe has been suffering the effects of the severe economic crisis of 2008. Indeed, entrepreneurship culture represents a powerful driver of economic growth and job creation. One out three areas of the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan is just entrepreneurial education and training to eradicate existing impediments and to revolutionize the culture of entrepreneurship in Europe.

Innovations in entrepreneurship education may be of wider application within education, entrepreneurship, higher education institutions (HEIs) and policy communities (Mallett, 2019; González-Tejerina and Vieira, 2018; Matthew *et al.*, 2012). However, only adequate interconnections among stakeholders allow implementing effective and innovative activities (Kristjánsdóttir *et al.*, 2017). Stakeholders' relationship management is generally enhanced by means of stakeholder partnerships, relationships and interactions (Shams, 2016; Franco and Haase, 2017).

The idea of the entrepreneurial university aims to transfer academic knowledge to firms and stakeholders (and vice versa), and to foster socio-economic development. Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford were the pioneering universities in the USA with the purpose of identifying a university-wide patent policy, by implementing a technology-transfer policy, setting up university-business partnerships and churning out new companies (Dalmarco *et al.*, 2015).

Furthermore, it is noticed the gap between educational results and global high-tech labor market requests (characterized by innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity) represents the first central issues in the ground of educational planning and policymaking (Al-Ani, 2017). Therefore, HEIs have to make sure that their curricula stem from the needs of the stakeholders, to understand the role, define principal stakeholders and apply corresponding strategies to deal with them (Tetřevová and Sabolová, 2010).

This paper proceeds with the literature review, firstly, focusing on the link among culture, innovativeness, entrepreneurship and academic engagement; then, the following section gives a presentation of the methodology and data used in the research analysis on the entrepreneurial education expectations, followed by a quantitative data analysis and a discussion of the major findings. The last section draws some conclusions with some directions for further research and policy implications.

## Literature review

Universities are becoming managerial organizations preoccupied with facing global competitiveness by creating profits and local, regional and national economic impacts starting from the knowledge spillover theory of entrepreneurship (Mok, 2015). Even if promoting entrepreneurial activities within HEIs is generally linked not only to national legislature and science and technology policies but also increased involvement of universities in national and regional innovation systems for micro and macroeconomic development (Budyldina, 2018).

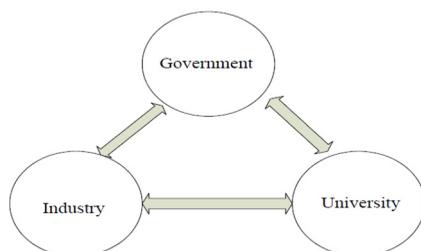
However, at present, educational institutions in other countries seem lagging when it comes to resource-based new program/degree development processes (Bosman *et al.*, 2019; Giacomarra *et al.*, 2019) and there are several weaknesses and limitations in the expansion of innovation and entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities characterized by too much theoretical teaching than practical activities (Cao and Zhou, 2018). Lombardi and other scholars carry out a two-way comparison between Italy and Singapore to investigate how these countries conceive and implement an entrepreneurial culture just highlighting Singaporean is one of the leading national investor in entrepreneurial education (Lombardi *et al.*, 2017).

Virtuous examples are from Russia and UAE where educational policies are promoting entrepreneurship to improve and sustain self-employment among youth: in several universities, entrepreneurship and innovation are mandatory courses for all streams of education (Saji and Nair, 2018; Budyldina, 2018). In Brazil, most academic start-ups are based on the entrepreneur's own technologies, rather than on the university's patents (Dalmarco *et al.*, 2015).

In this context, the market should drive forces for creating an innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem based on the triple helix structure as follows: industry, university and government (Figure 1). Mobility and connectivity have to be implemented for talent, creativity and capital.

Fuller *et al.* (2019) also stress the role and its different interpretations of the third stream activity (TSA) that is progressively significant in UK universities through innovation and entrepreneurship; future government policy should promote interventions that drive toward different TSA types.

A recent Jordan paper (Alakaleek, 2019) investigates developmental levels of entrepreneurship HE by surveying 29 universities, including their course plans, educational programs, departments and centers. Results show Jordan entrepreneurship education is still at an early stage of development with very few courses dealing with small business and entrepreneurship topics. Bosman *et al.* (2019) implement participatory research by means of photovoice, photo-elicitation and focus groups that involve students for collecting qualitative data. Students worth the following key-attributes: learning style (agency and choice, active hands-on learning and real-world applications) and learning context (technology and design-



Source: Cao and Zhou (2018)

Figure 1.  
Three helix structure

focused assignments, integration of humanities and self-selected disciplines of interest) (Bosman *et al.*, 2019). Another trend addressed by research is lining up strategy with sustainable development goals in HE for sustainability-driven entrepreneurship action where key competencies, as well as deeper levels of knowledge, are crucial for enabling work performance (Biberhofer *et al.*, 2019; Fleacă *et al.*, 2018).

However, educational organizations cannot manage in isolation but have to include stakeholders' needs above all the primary university stakeholders (PUSs) that certainly upset the future of a given university. If we consider public university, PUSs can be students, course applicants, employees, Ministry of Education, grant agencies, businesses, other educational institutions (as both partners and competitors) and public stakeholder groups. In the case of private universities, they are also the owners and other investors (Tetřevová and Sabolová, 2010). Therefore, the diverse scopes and extents of stakeholder relationships are crucial in building opportunities in cross-cultural settings, based on organizations interactions and experience with their stakeholders also within a corporate social responsibility business approach (Demetriou *et al.*, 2019). The nature of the tie among stakeholder engagement, innovation management and entrepreneurship development is important to understand these firm foci (Leonidou *et al.*, 2018); knowledge transfer is nurtured by links and collaboration within an environment populated by different stakeholders (Vrontis *et al.*, 2017).

Finally, globalization, innovativeness and internationalization certainly affect the changes of HE that have to progressively implement new approaches, processes and cultural systems to reach strategic goals and face new challenges (Melanthiou *et al.*, 2017).

Entrepreneurship positively affects the actuation of economic development. The entrepreneurial behavior of people is considered in terms of personal characteristics, and also as being driven by people or institutions (Jackson and Deeg, 2008). The entrepreneurial behavior should hopefully lead to entrepreneurial propensity, but to have this obtained the personal intention is required (Linan and Fayole, 2015). As important factors describing entrepreneurship are given not only the ability for opportunity perception, risk propensity but also the ability to adjust to the changes in the environment (Szkopiński, 2016). From the Polish perspective bearing in mind expectations for the quick and dynamic economic growth, the entrepreneurial attitudes and actions are of special need, but the level of innovation is one of the lowest in Europe (Eurostat, 2018). One of the reasons for low innovation levels is access to funding (Baaken *et al.*, 2017). The possibility of accessing funding for setting up a company is such an economic factor, which strongly drives individual intentions in Poland. On the other hand, phenomena could be observed that the funding accessibility did not have an as strong influence on entrepreneurial intentions as could be expected. The reason was that many young people were afraid of restrictions and eventual penalties for wrongly spending of funds they were provided (Teczke and Kusio, 2007). The structure of funding opportunities has expanded and includes the recent crowdfunding option, which, however, is not yet well developed in Poland.

Even those people in Poland who run their company are still short of many abilities such as openness, self-presentation, effective communication, providing of one's expectations in a simple way and speaking in the language of profits, which can be easily understood by business partners (Sadowski and Andrzejczyk, 2018). This underlines the need for continuous improvement of one's own abilities.

The evidence has been made according to which there is a negative correlation between GDP per capita and individual entrepreneurial intentions (Griffiths *et al.*, 2009). In case such a situation had nothing in common with cultural (Eastern European) behaviors then it could be of great value, taking into consideration the low GDP per capita from the Polish perspective. The low GDP per capita in comparison to developed EU countries indicates that

there is still a high potential for entrepreneurial actions of Polish young and active citizens. Taking into account that according to the national Polish research (Banerki *et al.*, 2018) there is a growing positive attitude among Polish society toward entrepreneurs, this could allow indicating the positive image of the entrepreneurial potential in society. Also, 7 out of 10 can see business opportunities every second one has sufficient abilities and knowledge to run a company. This allows indicating the educational gap in a society and especially in terms of entrepreneurial education. Comparing to Europe that is the confirmation of the aforementioned theories that there is still high potential in Polish society for entrepreneurial activities. Another determinant affecting entrepreneurship is the level of fear of a loss, which in Poland is similar to that in Europe and was expressed by around 37 per cent of respondents. The perception of future life opportunities, which refer to the professional activities, as well as positioning of oneself on the labor market may be treated as factors, which can allow identifying the entrepreneurial behavior intentions understood as becoming entrepreneurs. Behaviors of young people in Poland can mainly be connected with their manifested aspirations, but their realization goes beyond individual behavioral conditions (Pluta and Safin, 2016).

Another issue that characterizes entrepreneurship is its quality and this refers to the kind of actions leading to setting up a company. One reason when the company is being set up is one's own desire to use business opportunities, whereas others have no other option to run the company because of the lack of other alternatives. There is why positive and negative entrepreneurial motivation can be observed. The more positive part of the social motivation is observed the more advantageous the entrepreneurial situation seems to be. There has not been made any research in Poland of the business successes in the long perspective of both types of companies: those being purposefully set up and those being set up by necessity. However, in both cases the abilities and knowledge to run the company are crucial. The education of entrepreneurship might be treated as the solution to those gaps. Nevertheless, the opportunity or the necessity to individually create the career path the adequate level of human potential is needed. Education not only influences the creation of the potential but also its development. This should be started as early as possible and a number of individual and institutional stakeholders be engaged in the processes of improving entrepreneurial abilities in society.

The level of entrepreneurial education in Poland is generally weak. Polish experts assessed the national level of entrepreneurial education at primary and secondary education as the lowest in Europe. What is even worse – the discussed indication has decreased over the years and this refers to the most recent educational situation as is stated in the report (Tarnawa *et al.*, 2018). This stands differently in terms of HE where the situation has been improved as was observed, although still under the European level and still to be improved. The educational programs are not good enough to prepare future graduates enough well to set up and develop the enterprise. The academic entrepreneurship in Poland can be developed by experience-based teaching methods, which positively influence the development of abilities on entrepreneurship, as well as by strengthening cooperation between HEIs and business entities (Tarnawa *et al.*, 2018).

The survey with respondents at the university level has been made on the issue of entrepreneurship and education at higher, secondary and primary levels of education.

### Data and methods

The objective of the survey was to gather information on internal university stakeholders' and students' perceptions of entrepreneurship education. The hypothesis is that entrepreneurship is mainly perceived as being professionally and educationally active rather than setting up a company. For these research purposes, a survey was structured and planned.

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The structure of the research included the following questions:

- Q1. Questions with inconsistent choice.
- Q2. Rating questions with standard Likert 1-5 scale.
- Q3. Questions with irrelevant answer choices.
- Q4. One open question.

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There were 28 questions in total including 3 referring to: age, gender and level of studies, 1 open question and 24 based on Likert scale. There have been 74 answers out of 79 distributed questionnaires, all of them were validated and considered valid for the analytical procedures.

The thematic areas of entrepreneurship perception were based primarily on the two-dimensional view:

- (1) as setting up a company; and
- (2) as being professionally and educationally active.

Following the general idea of the study hypothesis, further analysis was based on the question “at what stage of education the entrepreneurship courses should have been implemented.”

Furthermore, with reference to the ongoing HEInnovate study, one of the thematic areas was used for the purposes of getting individual students’ perspectives on the most adequate methods of teaching entrepreneurship. The questionnaire structure was, therefore, prepared in a way to be able to analyze entrepreneurship perception and the view on its teaching methods.

At the first stage, the set of questions was elaborated and self-assessed under the spelling correctness and the next stage was the pilot survey administrated to experts in the field. As a result of the pilot survey, the feedback was gathered in a form of remarks, mainly from the point of understanding. The pilot survey was made in the form of an open group free discussion. After the remarks, the final set of questions was prepared and distributed in the form of a traditional printed version to students. There had not been any particular time limitation used for the study.

### **Methodology**

The study on the perception of entrepreneurship education was conducted among students of the CUE campus of the University of Economics in Krakow in the winter semester of the academic year 2017/2018. As for the criteria for selecting the target group for research, it was mainly the need for the national diversity of the respondents. Another criterion for selecting the target group was diversity in the field of students’ academic interests. The research covered the specialty “accounting and controlling,” as well as “modern business management” and “financing innovative projects.” In the fields of “accounting and controlling” and “financing innovate vs projects” the classes are conducted in Polish, and graduates constitute a group of potential employees in the field of controlling, accounting and finance. In turn, students of “modern business management” study in English and students are mainly from abroad, including Erasmus foreign exchange participants. The main study has been followed by the pilot request, in a form of a group discussion, addressed to students participating in it for a short discussion regarding the perception of entrepreneurship education at a higher level. During the discussion survey, the remarks on what should be changed have been gathered, as well as other important information for the

preparation of the final set of questions regarding the definition of entrepreneurship itself, the importance of entrepreneurship in relation to starting a business and own educational and professional activities. Initial observation of the diversity of indications in groups allowed the selection of student groups representing two different educational fields. The results of the study were based on 74 properly completed surveys out of 79 distributed questionnaires, which were supplemented by people from 6 student groups. Most of the respondents were women, 84 per cent (Figure 2), who also represent a larger representation of the entire university.

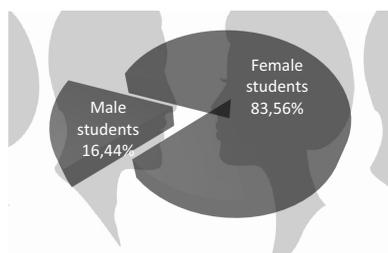
The thematic scope of the survey questions referred in one case to the questions of the HEInnovate questionnaire, i.e. the joint European Commission and OECD initiative, and, on the other hand, to the observations resulting from numerous discussions with internal stakeholders of the university, mainly students.

HEInnovate is European Commission and the OECD joint initiative including the website with a self-assessment tool for HEIs who wish to explore their innovative potential. The questionnaire guides the respondent through a process of identification, prioritization and action planning in eight key areas. HEInnovate also identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses, opens up discussion and argument on the entrepreneurial/innovative nature of the investigated institution and allows self-comparisons. The tool is free, confidential and open to anyone to use. All types of HEIs can use HEInnovate [1].

The source of authors' knowledge of the "entrepreneurial teaching and learning," as well as other parties taking part in the HEInnovate initiative were gathered to obtain the ideas on entrepreneurial activities. In addition, views exchange in the European perspective were useful. In terms of the reference to the HEInnovate initiative, within the questionnaire composition, the internal university stakeholder was asked for their view on "which of the following do you consider as adequate for entrepreneurial teaching methods?" The remaining thematic scope of the questions included establishing an opinion on the subject of "entrepreneurship only as setting up the company" and "to what extent do you consider 'entrepreneurship' as being professionally and educationally active?"

## Results and discussion

The issue of entrepreneurship is largely discussed in the European dimension, in particular, in the dimension of HE. The large European attention paid to the need for entrepreneurship development may be illustrated by the initiatives at the European level of which one is the HEInnovate (2019) initiative. The importance and significance of increasing the level of entrepreneurship are also reflected in the definition of an entrepreneurial university, as well as discussions on the need to introduce entrepreneurship courses in HEIs where such courses have not previously existed. The concept of entrepreneurship is closely related to



Source: Own elaboration

**Figure 2.**  
The structure of  
respondents  
according to gender

the concept of an entrepreneur, i.e. an entrepreneurial person, undertaking the entrepreneurial activity and at the same time closely related to setting up an enterprise. The issue of entrepreneurship, which was noticed only in the perspective of the entrepreneur, as the company's founder – entrepreneurship goes beyond this closed conceptual area. The observations show that in universities aspiring to be entrepreneurial, students perceive entrepreneurship in the perspective of attitude and resourcefulness, and the very establishment of the company is not identified and attributed solely to the entrepreneur. For this reason, the definition of entrepreneurship refers to an entrepreneurial person who at the same time does not necessarily have to be an entrepreneur. It was decided, therefore, to verify the understanding of entrepreneurship in a group of students, among whom there is cultural diversity, and who study different majors. Thus, a study was carried out, the results of which are presented below.

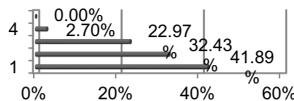
The vast majority of respondents believe that the concept of entrepreneurship should not be attributed to founding enterprises exclusively. As many as 42 per cent rated on 1 (on a Likert scale of 1-5, where 1 means "to a very low extent" and 5 "to a very high extent") that entrepreneurship is understood by them only in the category of starting a business. Less strictly, regarding the negative attribution of entrepreneurship only to set up companies, commented 32 per cent of respondents (Figure 3).

This means that students of an economic university 19-24 years of age do not consider the entrepreneurial attribute as solely referring to the establishment of enterprises. In reference to the question about the perception of the definition of entrepreneurship, the vast majority understand this concept in terms of their own attitudes and coping skills in life. To the question to what extent they recognize entrepreneurship as being professionally and educationally active, as many as 47 per cent responded very positively to this statement, and as much as 40 per cent positively (Figure 4).

When comparing both responses, it is possible to identify two groups of people who may be considered as moderate and strong supporters of recognition that entrepreneurship is not only about starting a company but also at the same time that it is an expression of its own active and entrepreneurial attitudes. As many as 55 per cent of people who firmly decided that entrepreneurship does not only refer to starting a business but also found that entrepreneurship should be treated as a distinctive feature of own activity (Table I).

On the other hand, moderate supporters, the second largest group of people, responded positively to the statement that entrepreneurship is not only about starting a business, and is but also the second largest group that started in a moderately positive way that entrepreneurship should be considered as a personal trait expressing your own activity and coping in life. In turn, the very minority referred less to the above-mentioned statements. Based on the above-mentioned results, one can consider the main hypothesis as justified positively.

**Figure 3.**  
To what extent do you consider "entrepreneurship" exclusively as setting up a company (1-to a very low extent and 5-to a very large extent)?

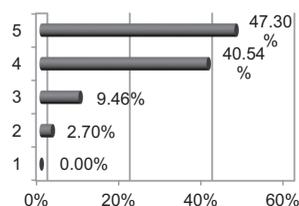


Source: Own elaboration

With regard to the respondents' view on the universities' curricula development taking into account the entrepreneurial course's inclusion (Figure 5), the majority has positively answered that they should be included in the programs of the first study cycle (bachelor). Almost, 56 per cent of respondents answered that this should so to a very high extent (answers at Level 5) and 21 per cent had a slightly less positive reference to this statement (responses at Level 4). Moderate answers, i.e. at Level 3, presented 15 per cent of respondents and a very minority (about 7 per cent) considered this justifiable at a low or very low level.

Regarding the internal stakeholders' view of the need for entrepreneurship courses at the second cycle, half agreed with this statement to a very large extent, and almost one-third to a large extent. Similarly, as in the case of people with moderate views in relation to the first study cycle, also in the case of second-degree studies, it was 18 per cent of respondents. A vast minority recognized that to a small and very small extent these courses should appear in the first or second cycle program. On the other hand, respondents are more likely to agree that the level of these courses is less important at the level of third-cycle studies. 34 per cent of people considered that to a very large extent, 13 per cent – to a large, 32 per cent – did not have such an unambiguous opinion in this matter and almost 20 per cent considered that, to a small and very small degree, entrepreneurship courses should be dedicated to raise the knowledge of PhD. students.

The above results mean that, according to students, entrepreneurship courses at the HE level should be the part of the educational process as early as possible, i.e. in the first



Source: Own elaboration

**Figure 4.**  
To what extent do you consider “entrepreneurship” as being a professionally and educationally active company (1-to a very low extent and 5-to a very large extent)?

Q1. To what extent do you consider “entrepreneurship” exclusively as setting up a company?		To what extent do you consider “entrepreneurship” as being smart, active?				Total
		2	3	4	5	
1	Amount	0	5	9	17	31
	% of Q1	0.0	16.1	29.0	54.8	100.0
2	Amount	0	2	13	9	24
	% of Q1	0.0	8.3	54.2	37.5	100.0
3	Amount	2	0	7	8	17
	% of Q1	11.8	0.0	41.2	47.1	100.0
4	Amount	0	0	1	1	2
	% of Q1	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	Amount	2	7	30	35	74
	% of Q1	2.7	9.5	40.5	47.3	100.0

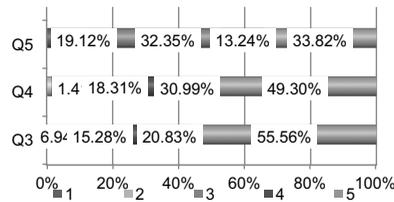
Source: Own elaboration

**Table I.**  
The perception of business plan classes as one of the entrepreneurial teaching methods by those considering entrepreneurship as setting up a company

three years of education. The study did not include a question regarding the view of the period of secondary education – preceding studies. In the area of public debate, the issue about the appropriateness of incorporating elements of entrepreneurship into science programs are discussed and the conclusions are that these programs should be implemented into academic curricula as early as possible. Perhaps, a valuable voice in this discussion would be the opinion of students, which is a guide to expanding questions about the pre-university level. Respondents who found that entrepreneurship should be defined more as a trait referring to their own resourcefulness and less directly to the founding of the company, acknowledged in the vast majority that entrepreneurship can be learned not only during dedicated courses but also regular classes (Table II). However, these classes should appear in a formula that would allow for the acquisition of entrepreneurial competences.

Respondents were, therefore, also asked to respond on what forms of education are adequate for entrepreneurial teaching. The answers are presented in Figure 6 with an indication of the average answers of respondents in relation to particular forms of education.

**Figure 5.**  
Should entrepreneurship courses be the element of the study program at the level of Q3-BA; Q4-MA and MSc; and Q5-PhD (1-to a little extent and 5-to a high extent)?



Source: Own elaboration

**Table II.**

	To what extent do you consider "entrepreneurship" as being smart/active?	Do you think instead of the "clear" entrepreneurship courses, the regular classes can be "entrepreneurially-oriented"?				Total
		2	3	4	5	
The view on regular classes	Amount	0	0	0	2	2
	% of total	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	2.7
"entrepreneurially-oriented" by those respondents who considered entrepreneurship as being smart and active (1-to a very low extent and 5-to a very high extent)	Amount	1	1	2	3	7
	% of total	1.4	1.4	2.7	4.1	9.5
Total	Amount	0	8	12	10	30
	% of total	0.0	10.8	16.2	13.5	40.5
Total	Amount	2	3	16	14	35
	% of total	2.7	4.1	21.6%	18.9%	47.3
Total	Amount	3	12	30	29	74
	% of total	4.1	16.2	40.5	39.2	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

According to the respondents, the methods that best suit entrepreneurship education are internships and job placements, in other words, direct contacts with the activities performed at the workplace. Further items included visits to companies, international projects, and activities aimed at generating business ideas, activities aimed at starting entrepreneurial projects and inviting entrepreneurs as guests conducting classes with students. All the forms of entrepreneurship education mentioned above were rated the highest (average rated 4.0 or more).

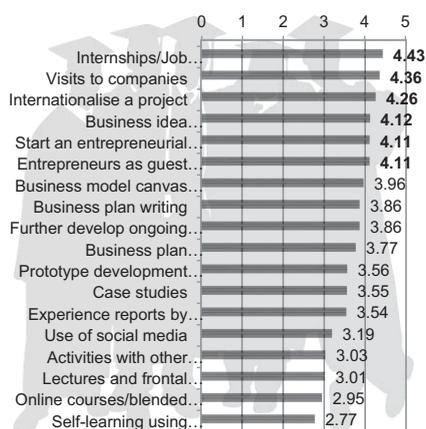
Summing up the above research results referring to internal university stakeholders that are students of the University of Economics in Krakow, it should be acknowledged that the hypothesis formulated at the beginning that *entrepreneurship is mainly perceived as being professionally and educationally active* is positively verified.

### Conclusions

The aim of the work was to gather information on internal university stakeholders' and students' perception on entrepreneurship education. The collected material, taking into account literature studies, as well as empirical studies, indicates that the importance of entrepreneurship in the context of an entrepreneurial university is growing, and the definition of entrepreneurship goes beyond its understanding of starting a business. These results certainly can help and better address universities and academic engagement the structure and the contents of the courses by avoiding too much theoretical teaching than practical activities, in line with results highlighted by recent research (Cao and Zhou, 2018). In fact, the methods that best ensemble entrepreneurship education and culture are those characterized by direct contacts with the activities performed at the workplace (i.e. internships and job placements).

Furthermore, in line with other research and strategy policies (Alakaleek, 2019; European Commission, 2013), entrepreneurship courses should belong to the total training process as early as possible, i.e. in the first three years of education.

Entrepreneurship education delivers a combination of experiential learning, skill-building and, above all, mindset shift (Potter, 2008); in fact, entrepreneurship culture represents a crucial competence in the European framework on key competences for



Source: Own elaboration

**Figure 6.** Average of students' answers to the question of which of the following is considered as adequate for entrepreneurial teaching methods (1- to a low extent and 5- to a high extent)?

lifelong learning (2006) and includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking. This entrepreneurship culture approach supports persons in their everyday lives and in the workplace making them able to grasp opportunities within a context that promotes ethical values and good governance. Starting from the above EU framework, the entrepreneurship competence framework (EntreComp) aims at identifying tools to improve the entrepreneurial capacity and culture of European citizens and organizations by raising consensus among all stakeholders and establishing a tie between the worlds of education and work (2016).

The role of HE in entrepreneurship culture “goes far beyond the delivery of knowledge to participating in ecosystems, partnerships and industrial alliances” thus “helping to bridge the gap between education and innovation for industry” (EU, 2013, p. 6). HEIs should make sure curricula trunk from the requirements and necessity of all stakeholders to put on corresponding strategies to deal with them in an effective and productive way (Těřevová and Sabolová, 2010).

Europe can gain the opportunity to learn from models around the world, in a special way from the USA models, and focus on mixing the most appropriate and high-quality practices into HEIs (Dalmarco *et al.*, 2015; Potter, 2008). The focus has to be on entrepreneurship and innovation to promote and strengthen competitiveness, and job creation in SMEs instead of theoretical entrepreneurship culture. Mobility and exchange of experience has to be certainly a keyword in European universities not only among EU universities but also between academia and the business world, by taking the Bologna reform as an opportunity to make universities more innovative and dynamic, in line with the objectives of the Lisbon agenda (OECD, 2008), as well as Europe 2020 strategy.

In the context of the analysis of research results, it is also possible to formulate the scope of further research, namely, at what stage of education, in addition to HE, entrepreneur education should occur and which methods should be implemented for its delivery. Much work remains to be carried out in line with the current policies. Far from being exhaustive, this work presents limits deriving from the small sample but the aim was to shed some light and give first insights on the issue of different levels of entrepreneurship education expectations against different levels at which this education should be provided.

The need for entrepreneurial abilities differs and it seems that the process of learning should be life-long, which has already been well observed and indicated in EU funding programs. Different abilities and not just these strictly referring to the scientific theories or technical knowledge are needed for different levels of individual development. Other abilities are needed for the phase of opportunity perception, still others for the phase of setting up the company or another kind of institution and yet others should be taken into consideration when the running and expansion of the company are discussed. There is why the process of entrepreneurial education should be continuous or long-life. The entrepreneurial abilities also strongly refer to human personality. The starting point should take place as early as possible, which means not even at primary school but even earlier, before the educational level – at home, then being improved at the educational level: pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher and then during different entrepreneurially-designed courses.

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