

## INFLUENCING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Monika Fantová<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ing. Monika Fantová, Univerzita Jana Evangelisty Purkyně, Fakulta sociálně ekonomická,  
Monika.fantova@ujep.cz

**Abstract:** Entrepreneurship is one of the possible solutions to the pan-European problem of youth unemployment. The objective of the research was to identify differences between male and female entrepreneurs in their opinions of entrepreneurship of young people. We wanted to find out whether male and female entrepreneurs would recommend young people to do business and what factors in their opinion can influence the fact whether young people start business. To collect data, we used a questionnaire sent to entrepreneurs from the whole Czech Republic. The most important barrier identified by entrepreneurs was frequently amended legislation, complexity of administration, poor enforceability of law and a lack of funds. The most important incentives of young people according to entrepreneurs is particularly the vision of opportunities in business. Another important incentive is becoming more independent. Statistically significant differences in the responses of men and women were found in the barrier related to the personal knowledge of an unsuccessful entrepreneur and in the incentive of the necessity to start business due to the lack of a job. Sufficient funding and possessing business premises were factors in which statistically significant differences in the responses of men and women were found, too. This research emphasises factors which women and men can find important in making a decision on starting business or being employed.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial intent, Gender, Self-employment

**JEL Classification:** J16, J23, J24, M13

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### INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment is a problem currently being faced across the whole of Europe and one which should be addressed. One of the possible solutions is youth entrepreneurship. A survey conducted in EU states (twenty-five Member States), US, Norway and Iceland established that since 2004, the European population has not changed their preference to become self-employed (45% of Europeans prefer being self-employed and 50% prefer employment). Comparing the US to the EU 25, Europeans prefer being employed, whereas Americans prefer being self-employed. The age group of 15 – 24 year-olds shows a greater inclination to entrepreneurship than other age groups. More than half of people in the 15-24 group (51%) wish to have their own business. The 25-39 age group shows that 41% are willing to have a business, with this figure falling below 30% in other age groups (Eurobarometer, 2007). A positive development

is seen in the number of people below 35 years of age who started a new business. This number has been increasing since 2006. Considering gender, 2.6 times more men than women do business in the Czech Republic, whereas this figure has not changed compared to 2011 and there is a significant dominance of university graduates (Lukeš, Jakl & Zouhar 2014). On average, the proportion between men and women is 1.9 (Koellingr, Minniti & Schade, 2013). It shows bigger differences between genders, rather than in the other prevailing countries (Lukeš, Jakl & Zouhar, 2014).

The objective of the article is to identify the differences in the opinions of male and female entrepreneurs of youth entrepreneurship. Would they recommend to young people to do business today and where do they see significant factors, incentives and/or barriers which can have an influence on youth entrepreneurship.

## **1. FACTORS INFLUENCING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

It is not that easy to interpret the notion of entrepreneurship. It is interpreted in different ways (economic, psychological, sociological or legal). The economic concept emphasises that it is a dynamic process creating added value. The psychological concept emphasises that entrepreneurship is an instrument for achieving self-fulfilment, cutting loose, becoming independent, etc. The sociological concept understands entrepreneurship as creating prosperity for all those interested, looking for ways to better use resources, creating jobs and opportunities, while the legal concept is based on effective legislation (Veber & Srpová, 2012). The research, focusing on different incentives to do business considering gender aspects, confirms that more men tend to be self-employed than women (Koellingr, Minnity & Schade, 2013; Cañizares & Fuentes García, 2010). The research conducted by Koellingr, Minnity and Schade (2013) established that women tend to do business in specific industries and use a lower amount of capital at the beginning. Companies owned by women also feature restricted growth. They point out that women own far fewer businesses than men. However, the reason is the fact that women tend to do business less than men rather than the chance of survival between businesses owned by men or women (Koellingr, Minnity & Schade, 2013). Cañizares and Fuentes García came to these conclusions in their research (2010), i.e., that more men are willing to start their own business in the future than women. Their research was conducted among students at a Spanish university and established that 16.4% more men are considering starting their own business in the future (Cañizares & Fuentes García, 2010). Despite the conclusions of the research that fewer women tend to start their own business, it should be noted that the number of active female entrepreneurs has been growing continually in the Czech Republic, unlike the number of active male entrepreneurs, which has been stable since 2011 (AMPS ČR, 2016). It was also established in 44% of respondents in the age group between 15 and 24 years that

their education and training played an important role in their interest in starting their own business. However, there are great differences between men and women. 30% of men believe education and training played an important role in their interest in starting business, compared to 26% of women (Eurobarometer, 2007).

To start a business and continue the activities, people must be motivated. According to Jirovská (2003), people start doing business as a result of two causes - either due to negative events and dissatisfaction at work, risk of unemployment or no opportunity for personal growth (so-called push theory), or because of attractive opportunities available on the market (so-called pull theory) (Jirovská, 2003). Williams, Round and Rodgers (2009) are critical about this classification of entrepreneurs to those "forced" to do business and those who use market opportunities. People usually decide to do business based on a combination of push and pull factors, and the incentives of entrepreneurs change over time (Williams, Round & Rodgers, 2009). The optimistic outlook is that people see their self-employment as an opportunity. In the EU 15 (as well as the EU 25), almost 60% of respondents think starting a business is more an opportunity than a necessity. The USA still comes before the EU 15 (as well as the EU 25) in this respect, but the development is optimistic (Eurobarometer, 2007). It was established within Global Entrepreneurship monitor (GEM) that different socio-demographic groups have different incentives to start a business. Young men start doing business solely because they see an opportunity. However, a great number of older women become self-employed out of necessity (Lukeš, Jakl & Zouhar, 2014). Entrepreneurship opens the possibility to substitute a part-time job and inaction on the labour market for women. This is specific for women due to different opportunities on the labour market as well as the work strategies of women (Georgellis & Wall, 2005). There is a long-term trend in the Czech Republic, with a growing number of self-employed people who do business as a secondary activity. The number of people whose business is their core activity is decreasing (AMSP ČR, 2016).

The GEM research also concluded that being more independent is a more frequent incentive than earning a higher income (Lukeš, Jakl & Zouhar, 2014). Douglas and Shepherd (2002) found that a positive attitude to risks and a preference for independence are connected with the strength of the intention to become a businessman. The bigger the tolerance of risk and the more positive the relationship to independence in decision making, the stronger the intention to start up business. On the other hand, people do not expect to earn more than employed people (Douglas & Shepherd, 2002). Staniewski and Awruk (2015) identified as main factors motivating people to start their own business personal self-fulfilment and self-satisfaction, the possibility of higher earnings and independence in decision making, by interviewing people who planned to set up their own business. The relationship between gender and incentives was examined. No statistically significant differences between gender and incentives of potential entrepreneurs were identified (Staniewski & Awruk, 2015). Significantly different results were concluded by Stefanovic, Prokic and Rankovic (2010) in the research conducted by them in Serbia. The respondents claimed that their greatest incentive was earning a higher income. Personal freedom came sixth out of the specified incentives (Stefanovic, Prokic & Rankovic, 2010). Flešková, Babiaková and Nedelová (2011) established in interviews with university students in Slovakia that female students expect to work more with people than male students in entrepreneurship and male students associate entrepreneurship particularly with being part of a recognized social group, working for society and a possibility for their dreams to come true.

Lack of funds was found to be the main obstacle in doing business (Eurobarometer, 2007). This obstacle was also seen as most important by students of a Spanish university (Cañizares & Fuentes García, 2010). Further obstacles are complexity of administration as well as insufficient information on how to start a business (these three barriers were found to be the most serious compared to 2004) (Eurobarometer, 2007). Women feel prevented

from starting business by a combination of a greater fear of setback and lower entrepreneurial self-confidence. Greater confidence in entrepreneurial skills and competences was established in males in all 17 monitored countries. Unlike men, women show a significantly lower probability of knowing other businessmen (Koellingr, Minniti & Schade, 2013). The GEM research made the same conclusions, i.e., that women have significantly lower self-confidence in business. It is reflected in conjunction with other factors (fear of failure, seeing opportunities and knowing someone who was successful in starting a new business) in a lower probability that women would start doing business. People with elementary or incomplete secondary education also feature lower self-confidence. Unlike this group, people from a wealthy background show higher entrepreneurial self-confidence as well as self-employed (Lukeš, Jakl & Zouhar, 2014). Koellingr, Minniti and Schade (2013) found a great difference in seeing opportunities, with 41% men stating that there are good opportunities in the following 6 months to start a business in the area where they live. Only 33% of women think the same. The differences in seeing opportunities are significant in all 17 monitored countries. Men also personally know someone who does business in all monitored countries (43% of men compared to 31% of women) (Koellingr, Minniti & Schade, 2013). Staniewski and Awruk (2015) identified as the main factors in potential businessmen preventing them from starting business a lack of experience, capital and the risk of failure. However, they did not identify a statistically significant relationship between barriers and gender (Staniewski & Awruk, 2015). The research conducted at Slovak universities concluded that students who are willing to start a business after graduating do not feature any statistically significant number of parents or friends doing business. If, however, their parents or friends do business, they are successful in their entrepreneurship (Flešková, Babiaková & Nedelová, 2011).

Female students attach importance to their lack of know-how and fear of failure and ridicule, and they also tend to have bigger doubts in

terms of their business skills. Unlike female students, male students are more concerned as far as the tax load and they also find a big obstacle in the number of hours worked. (Cañizares & Fuentes García, 2010). Female students are more sceptical and are aware of the amount of work associated with doing business. Male students anticipate more stress in doing business (Flešková, Babiaková & Nedelová, 2011).

## **2. DATA AND WORK METHODOLOGY**

A questionnaire research was conducted in April 2016. The objective of the questionnaire research was to identify differences in the opinions of self-employed males and females of youth entrepreneurship. The questionnaire comprised a part identifying incentives and barriers perceived by entrepreneurs at the beginning of business. Entrepreneurs were then asked if they could recommend entrepreneurship to young people. If so, what are the most important incentives which can play an important role in the decision-making of young people concerning entrepreneurship. If they did not recommend entrepreneurship to young people, what are the greatest barriers for young people to starting a business today. Entrepreneurs were also asked what they find important for youth entrepreneurship nowadays. Is it, for example, graduation from a secondary school or university, successful entrepreneurship of their parents, sufficient funding, etc. The questionnaire also contained identification details, specifically gender, age, the highest level of accomplished education, etc.

Respondents of the questionnaire research were Czech entrepreneurs. They were selected subject to a quota selection from the Merk database of companies and sole traders of the Czech Republic. The selection criteria of entrepreneurs were the legal form of natural entities, limited liability companies, turnover over CZK 1 million and a maximum of 49 employees. Electronic questionnaires were sent out to the respondents afterwards with computer-assisted telephone interviewing to increase the returns of questionnaires (CATI). 325 filled-in questionnaires were returned. The questionnaire was filled in by 250 respondents

from male entrepreneurs and 75 from female entrepreneurs, the most frequently represented age category was 45 to 54 years (36 %), followed by the age category 55 years or older (28 %), and 35 – 44 years (26 %), while the fewest respondents were from the age category 25 to 34 years (10 %) and there were no respondents in the category 18 to 24 years.

The identified research question is: What are the differences between the opinions of male and female entrepreneurs of youth entrepreneurship?

### **Partial questions and hypotheses:**

Is there a difference between male and female entrepreneurs regarding whether they would recommend entrepreneurship to young people?

**H1:** The responses to whether they would recommend doing business to young people differed in whether they were answered by men or women.

What are the greatest barriers today which could influence whether young people start a business or not; are there any differences between the opinions of male and female entrepreneurs?

**H2:** We anticipate statistically significant differences between the assessment of the importance of barriers in entrepreneurship viewed by female and male entrepreneurs.

What are the greatest incentives today which could influence whether young people start a business or not; are there any differences between the opinions of male and female entrepreneurs?

**H3:** We anticipate statistically significant differences between the assessment of the importance of incentives which can influence whether young people start their own business nowadays viewed by female entrepreneurs and male entrepreneurs.

Do female entrepreneurs think that young people pursue the incentive to start a business due to the possibility to work part-time more than male entrepreneurs?

**H4:** Female entrepreneurs think that young people pursue the incentive to start a business due to the possibility to work part-time more than male entrepreneurs.

Are there any differences between the opinions of male and female entrepreneurs of what they

think of the importance of graduating from secondary school for young people as a factor which helps them start doing business?

**H5:** There is a difference between male and female entrepreneurs who tend to think that secondary education plays an important role for young people in entrepreneurship.

Are there any differences between the opinions of male and female entrepreneurs of the importance of graduating from the university for young people as a factor which helps them start doing business?

**H6:** There is a difference between male and female entrepreneurs who tend to think that university education plays an important role for young people in starting their own business.

To test the statistical hypotheses, the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test was used. SPSS software was used to carry out the statistical processing, and the results were analysed at the level of significance of 0.05. The Mann-Whitney U test was used, for example, in the research conducted by Flešková, Babiaková and Nedelová (2011), where, apart from others, differences in preferences of students in a work area were established from the point of view of the gender of the students.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In compliance with the objectives of the research, we wanted to establish whether entrepreneurs would recommend entrepreneurship to young people and whether there are significant differences in the responses to this question between female and male entrepreneurs. It was established in the analysis that there is a probability greater than 5% ( $p = 18.3\%$ ) that such frequency of measurement would occur "by chance". Hence, we accept the null hypothesis that both these variables are independent. The analysis shows that gender has no statistically significant influence on recommendations of entrepreneurs in this area.

The question which focused on whether entrepreneurs would recommend entrepreneurship to young people today was a filtration one. Those who stated they would definitely recommend or rather recommend entrepre-

neurship to young people answered the following question concerning the incentives which in their opinion play an important role for young people in deciding whether to start business or not today. 236 of the 325 respondents answered yes (187 males and 49 females). The others, who would not recommend entrepreneurship at all or rather not recommend it, were then asked what the greatest barriers were which might influence the beginnings of entrepreneurship for young people. This question was answered by 89 respondents (63 males and 26 females).

The question related to barriers in entrepreneurship which make it difficult or can make it difficult for young people to start their own business was construed in such a manner that in the list of individual barriers respondents were asked to answer whether the specific factor / variable was seen as an important barrier by them (the choice of responses was as follows: definitely yes, rather yes, rather not and definitely not). Entrepreneurs think that the most important barriers probably perceived by young people before starting a business are as follows (i.e., selected in the respective factors response definitely yes or rather yes). The greatest barrier identified by entrepreneurs was complicated and frequently amended legislation (65% of respondents). Other important barriers identified by entrepreneurs was the complexity of administration (56%), poor enforceability of the law (54%) and lack of funds (51%). The least important factors were personal knowledge of an unsuccessful businessman (9%), absence of family encouragement (12%), low entrepreneurial self-confidence (14%) and fear of failure and ridicule (14%).

The results can be compared with those from other researches (Eurostat, 2007, Cañizares & Fuentes García 2010), in which a lack of funding was found to be a more significant obstacle in doing business than, for example, the complexity of administration.

The second hypothesis (H2) anticipated that there are differences in what barriers to entrepreneurship are appreciated today by female and male entrepreneurs. The results from the Mann-Whitney U test for all variables are shown in Table 1.

Tab. 1: Barriers to youth entrepreneurship

Variables	M-W U test	p
Lack of funds	714.500	0.316
Complexity of administration	765.000	0.523
Insufficient information on how to start business	687.000	0.206
Fear of failure	795.000	0.816
Fear of failure and ridicule	741.500	0.458
Personal knowledge of an unsuccessful businessman	574.000	<b>0.018</b>
Low entrepreneurial self-confidence (doubts about own entrepreneurial skills)	811.500	0.939
Lack of know-how	789.500	0.779
Many hours of work (unlimited work hours)	767.000	0.619
Stress from doing business	655.000	0.108
Absence of family trust	663.000	0.126
Corruption	666.500	0.142
Poor enforceability of the law	765.500	0.555
Complicated and frequently amended legislation	762.500	0.433

Source: Own processing

The Mann-Whitney U test could note statistically significant differences in only one item. It was personal knowledge of an unsuccessful entrepreneur, with 13 female entrepreneurs (out of 26 females) and 16 male entrepreneurs (out of 63 males) thinking it is an important barrier. Although this factor was considered as the least important by the respondents (9% of respondents) and then was found to be the smallest barrier of all the specified ones, we established that 50% of females perceive this factor as a possible great barrier in terms of gender opinion. In terms of statistically significant differences in gender opinion, none has been established in other factors.

Incentives important for young people in making the decision to start a business or not, according to male and female entrepreneurs, were assessed by the respondents who answered the filtration question regarding whether they would recommend entrepreneurship to young people today. The assessment of the importance of incentives was within the scale definitely yes, rather yes, rather not and definitely not. The most important incentives seen by the respondents are particularly the opportunity in business (95% of respondents), becoming more independent (94%), earning a higher income (88%) as well as finding a job which would make young

people happy (72%). 60% of the respondents also find personal knowledge of a successful entrepreneur an important incentive. Only 46% of respondents think that the lack of a job (necessity) is an incentive for young people to start business. The least important incentive according to the respondents is the possibility to work part-time (37%) and encouragement by the government (10%). Although entrepreneurs specify different incentives of young people for doing business more important than the possibility to work part-time, it should be noted that the number of self-employed individuals who do business as a secondary activity is growing (AMSP ČR, 2016). None of the respondents chose the answer definitely yes in the assessment of the incentive related to government encouragement. None of the respondents considers government encouragement a decisive incentive in making the decision on whether young people should start doing business these days. The results show that according to the respondents, young people start their own business due to opportunities envisaged rather than out of necessity due to a lack of jobs. They also willing start a business to become more independent rather than to earn more money.

The third hypothesis anticipated that there are statistically significant differences in opinions between female and male entrepreneurs of the

importance of incentives which could play an important role for young people in decision-making about becoming self-employed. The

results from the Mann-Whitney U test for the incentives are shown in Table 2.

Tab. 2: Incentives for youth entrepreneurship

Variables	M-W U test	p
Opportunity on the market	4,541.000	0.914
Necessity (no job)	3,712.000	<b>0.029</b>
Lack of job which would make you happy	4,198.000	0.310
Possibility to work part-time	4,465.000	0.771
Possibility to become more independent	4,175.000	0.283
Possibility to obtain a higher income (salary according to results)	4,559.000	0.954
Personal knowledge / example of a successful businessman	4,213.000	0.353
Government encouragement	3,869.000	0.062

Source: Own processing

The Mann-Whitney U test helped identify statistically significant differences in only one incentive for entrepreneurship, i.e., necessity (failure to find a job). Failure to find a job is seen as an incentive more by female entrepreneurs (61% of female entrepreneurs selected definitely yes or rather yes) than by male entrepreneurs (42% of male entrepreneurs responded definitely yes or rather yes). No statistically significant differences in gender opinion were established in other factors. Hypothesis 4 was negated by us since there are no statistically significant differences in seeing the possibility to work part-time as an incentive between female and male entrepreneurs.

Consequently, all respondents were asked about other factors which can play an important role for young people when deciding whether to do business or not today. The assessment showed that of the specified factors education plays the smallest role. Only 48% of respondents consider university education as

an important factor which influences the decision of youth to start a business nowadays. The second least important factor of those specified is a major studied at university which relates to entrepreneurship. However, this factor was assessed as important by 63% of respondents. In terms of education, 69% of respondents consider completion of secondary education as important. Successful business of parents (68% of respondents) was also seen as important by respondents. Respondents also find enough finance (74%) important and possessing business premises (75%). The most important factor was the properties of an entrepreneur, such as determination, single-mindedness, responsibility and others (98%). Despite education being of least importance of the specified factors according to respondents, it should be noted that considerably more university students (Lukeš, Jakl & Zouhar, 2014) are engaged in new business activities, which is proved by the GEM research results.

Tab. 3: Factors influencing youth entrepreneurship

Variables	M-W U test	p
Secondary school completed	9,219.500	0.819
University graduation	8,428.000	0.157
School subjects on entrepreneurship during study	8,428.500	0.155
Parents being successful in business	8,341.500	0.118
Sufficient funding	7,312.500	<b>0.002</b>
Possession of business premises (no credits, loans...)	6,805.500	<b>0.000</b>
Entrepreneurial properties (such as determination, single-mindedness, responsibility)	8,941.500	0.426

Source: Own processing

The Mann-Whitney U test did not find any statistically significant differences between the assessment of importance of completing secondary and university education from the point of view of the gender of entrepreneurs. Hence, we negate hypothesis 5 and 6. However, there were statistically significant differences in responses to sufficient funding and possessing business premises. Sufficient funding was considered an important factor by 41% of female entrepreneurs compared to 19% of male entrepreneurs (they selected the possibility definitely yes). Possessing business premises was seen as very important by 40% of female respondents and 22% of male respondents (they selected the "definitely yes" response).

### CONCLUSION

The objective of the research implemented in a sample of Czech entrepreneurs was to identify how the opinions of male and female entrepreneurs of youth entrepreneurship today differ and in what aspects. It was established that there are no significant differences in the responses of male and female entrepreneurs to the question related to recommendations for youth entrepreneurship.

The greatest barrier identified by entrepreneurs was frequently amended legislation (65% of respondents), complexity of administration (56%), poor enforceability of the law (54%) and lack of funds (51%). The results can be compared with the results of other research (Eurostat, 2007, Cañizares & Fuentes García 2010), in which a lack of funds was assessed as a more significant obstacle in doing business

than, for example, complexity of administration. No statistically significant differences in the responses of men and women were established for the most important identified barriers. The only statistically significant differences in the responses of men and women were in the barrier related to personal knowledge of an unsuccessful entrepreneur, with 50% of female respondents considering it significant.

The most important incentive in young people is particularly the opportunities seen in entrepreneurship (94% of respondents). Another important incentive is becoming more independent (94%). The respondents think that young people start their own business due to envisaged opportunities rather than out of necessity due to the lack of a job. The least important incentive is part-time work, with no statistically significant differences in the responses of men and women. Although entrepreneurs find other incentives for doing business for young people more important, it is necessary to realize that the number of self-employed people who do business as a secondary activity has been growing continually (AMSP ČR, 2016). The least motivating factor which should influence the decision of young people to start a business or not today was encouragement from the government. Statistically significant differences were established only in the responses of women and men who think that failure to find a job is an important incentive for young people. Relatively more women than men find this incentive important.

As to further factors which can have an influence on entrepreneurship of young people, the respondents assessed education and the

successful entrepreneurship of parents as less important (giving them smaller importance) than, for example, entrepreneurial properties, possessing business premises and sufficient funding. These factors should still be taken into account, because the survey results such as the GEM survey obviously show that considerably more university students are involved in new entrepreneurial activity (Lukeš, Jakl & Zouhar, 2014). As to sufficient funding and possessing premises as one of the most important factors, statistically significant differences were found in the responses of men and women.

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