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Students' perception of social entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the results of an online survey among students of Russian universities. This survey showed that only 34.8% of respondents are familiar with the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship, but the essence of social entrepreneurship is clear to everyone. Sources of information on social entrepreneurship are identified; the author's interpretation of the concept is given.

KEYWORDS: entrepreneurship, students, information sources, university

Percepción de los estudiantes sobre el emprendimiento social

RESUMEN

El documento presenta los resultados de una encuesta en línea entre estudiantes de universidades rusas. Esta encuesta mostró que solo el 34.8% de los encuestados están familiarizados con el fenómeno del emprendimiento social, pero la esencia del emprendimiento social es clara para todos. Se identifican fuentes de información sobre emprendimiento social y se da la interpretación del concepto.

PALABRAS CLAVE: emprendimiento, estudiantes, fuentes de información, universidad.

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to find out how social entrepreneurship is known among students. In accordance with the goal, the following tasks were set in the study: to find out whether this phenomenon is known to students; among those surveyed who are familiar with social entrepreneurship, find out what they exactly know about social entrepreneurship; identify the main sources of information on social entrepreneurship.

The moral values of young people are easily changed through the media (Abylkassymova et al., 2019), and by promoting them on social networks and other sources relevant to youth, we can count on an increase in the number of social projects.

Social entrepreneurship as a phenomenon has existed for a long time. However, according to Igropulo & Shapovalov (2016), interest in it as an object of study appeared only at the end of the last century. The work of Short, Moss & Lumpkin (2009) indicates that the number of publications on this topic has seriously increased in leading refereed journals (by 75% over 18 years), which clearly indicates an increase in interest in this social phenomenon.

In the work of Saebi et al. (2018), a study of 395 sources on social entrepreneurship was conducted, which once again confirms a surge of research interest in this topic. Researchers solved specific problems of enterprises guided by social goals, and not just the need to make a profit. For example, Pattinson (2019) shows the use of business model thinking to create a sustainable social enterprise.

Social entrepreneurship is supported in many countries. In the work of Kim et al. (2014), the role of the Korean government in promoting Korean social entrepreneurs was explored. They identified regulatory mechanisms to support Korean social enterprises (Yoon & Kim, 2016). Public policies adopted in the UK and Denmark in support of social entrepreneurship were studied by Ladeira & Machado (2013). The positive impact of government support on the development of social entrepreneurship is shown in Stephan et al. (2015)

Social entrepreneurship is supported at various levels both abroad and in Russia. One of the funds that purposefully support social entrepreneurship in Russia is the "Our Future" Fund. The fund holds the All-Russian contest of projects "A Social Entrepreneur", the results of which are financing in the form of interest-free loans in the amount of up to 10 million

roubles. In addition, one of the forms of their support is investing in projects by purchasing shares in equity or stocks in social enterprises.

However, the term “social entrepreneurship” itself is not enshrined at the state level. The only mention of this type of entrepreneurship is found in the Order of the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia dated 24.04.2013 No. 220 (as amended on 16.05.2013) “On the organization of competitive selection among the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, which budgets are provided in 2013 with subsidies from the federal budget for state support of small and medium-sized enterprises by the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.” This document states that social entrepreneurship “is a socially responsible activity of small and medium-sized enterprises aimed at solving social problems...” The following are the conditions that allow attributing a business entity to social entrepreneurship (Fig. 1).

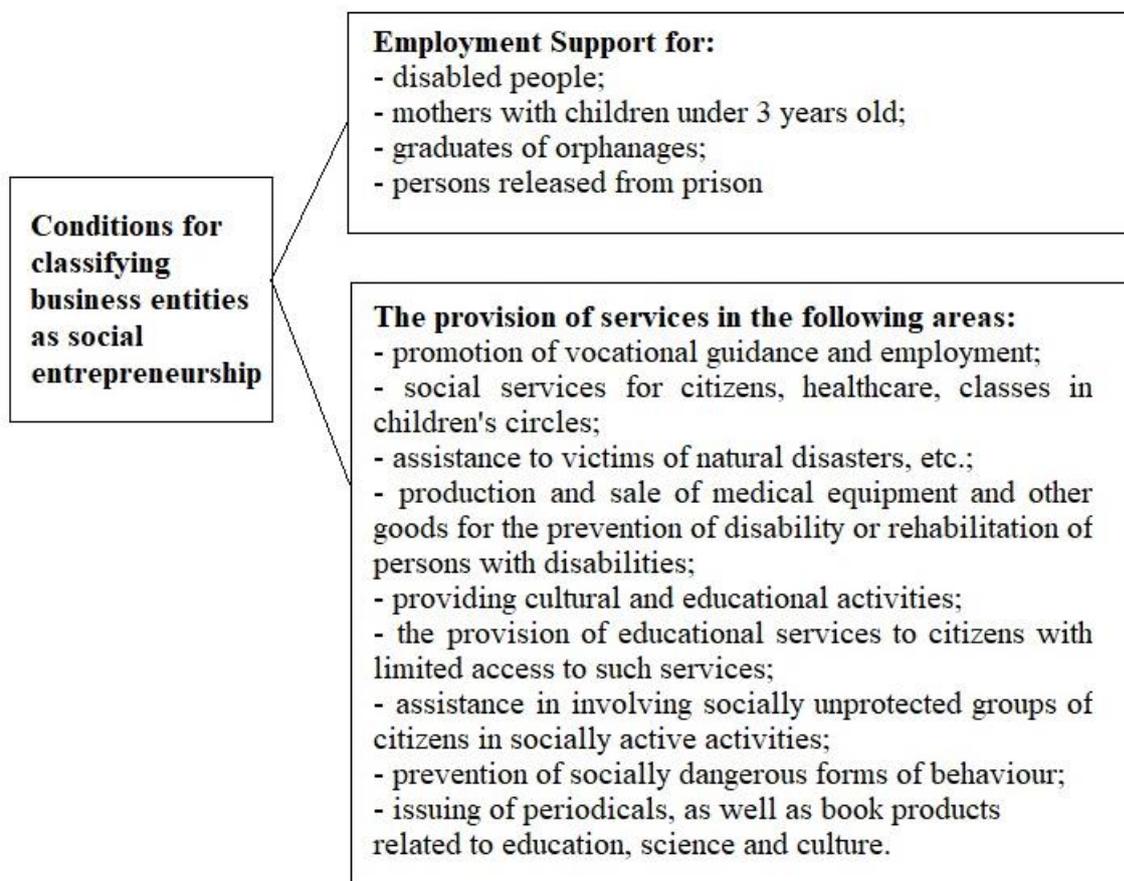


Fig. 1. Conditions for classifying business entities as social entrepreneurship

Even if at the legislative level this social phenomenon has not yet been described in sufficient volume (the document has not yet lost its legal force, but the 2013 subsidies have been completed), what can we say about its fame among the general population (and especially among students who represent future of our society) not related to the categories of population specified in paragraph 5.20.1a of the aforementioned law (persons with disabilities, mothers with children under 3 years old, graduates of orphanages, and persons released from places of deprivation of freedom).

In this regard, a hypothesis appeared about the fame of this phenomenon in Russian youth society.

1. Development

The survey involved 86 people: students of G.V. Plekhanov Russian Economic University and Moscow State Pedagogical University. The survey was conducted from September 20 to September 24, 2019 through an online questionnaire. A link to the questionnaire was sent to students of all courses (from 1 to 4) and various areas of preparation (logistics, marketing, physics and computer science).

The answers to the first question, “Do you know what social entrepreneurship is?” were distributed as follows (Fig. 2);

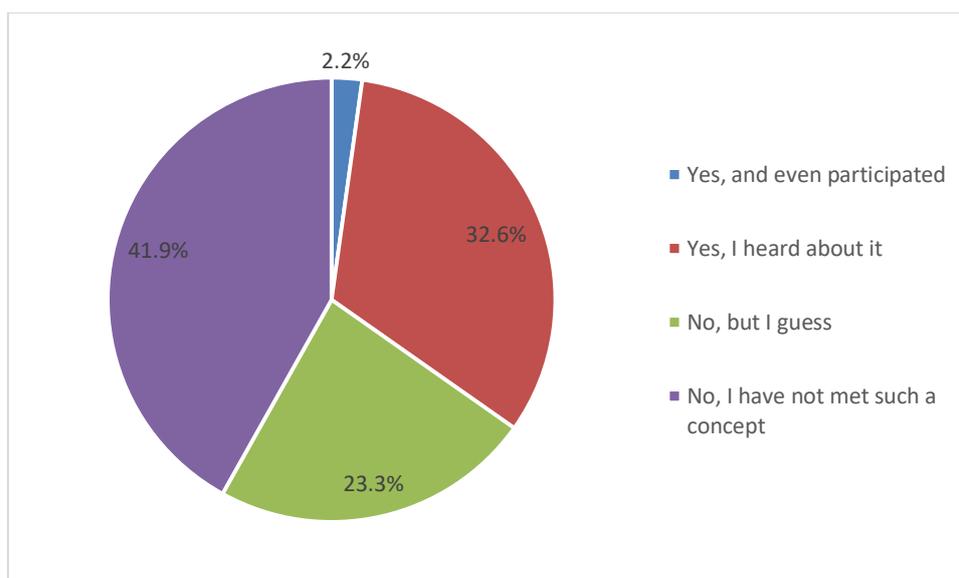


Fig. 2. Answers to the question “Do you know what social entrepreneurship is?”

Only 34.8% of respondents know about social entrepreneurship. The rest either did not meet such a concept at all (41.9%), or did not know, but guess (23.3%). This distribution indicates a low awareness of our youth about social entrepreneurship. It is noteworthy that initially the hypothesis of the study assumed a wider awareness of this phenomenon of women than men; however, the hypothesis was not confirmed. Of the total number of women and men surveyed who are both familiar and not familiar with social entrepreneurship, they were in equal proportions.

The dependence of awareness on age has not been also identified. Equally, students in both junior and senior courses were either familiar or unfamiliar with social entrepreneurship.

Among the respondents, there were two participants who participated in social entrepreneurship. One was volunteered, and another participant worked in a company engaged in social entrepreneurship. Both respondents rated their experience as positive, but did not answer the question “why” (this question was not required to answer).

The main source of information on social entrepreneurship for respondents was the Internet, namely news related to this topic (Fig.3).

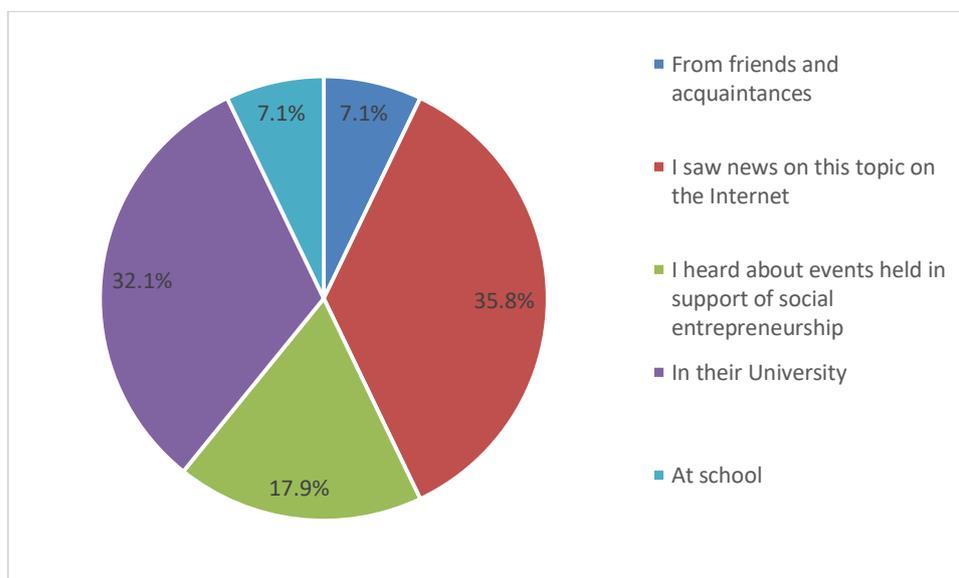


Fig. 3. Answers to the question “Where did you find out about social entrepreneurship?”

The next most popular answer was “At the University” (32.1%), followed by the ambiguous “I heard about events held in support of social entrepreneurship” (17.9%). The least scored were the answers “At school” and “From friends and acquaintances” (7.1% each),

which is not surprising given the low awareness of the population as a whole about this phenomenon. Thus, to popularize social entrepreneurship, the most effective will be the placement of information on the Internet, the organization of events in its support and their wide coverage on news portals, including universities.

The role of universities in the development of entrepreneurship is also great. A study by Bretones & Radrigan (2018) found that university support affects the likelihood of starting a business on its own or in conjunction with other partners. The support of parents, friends, or even state support did not have such an impact on the likelihood of students opening a business. The same work revealed a higher intention of men to open their own business. The studies of Bretones & Radrigan (2018) are confirmed by similar studies of Maximova & Stroganov (2017) in Russia.

The popularity of social entrepreneurship among young people is growing sharply. This is confirmed by the following data (Fig. 4):

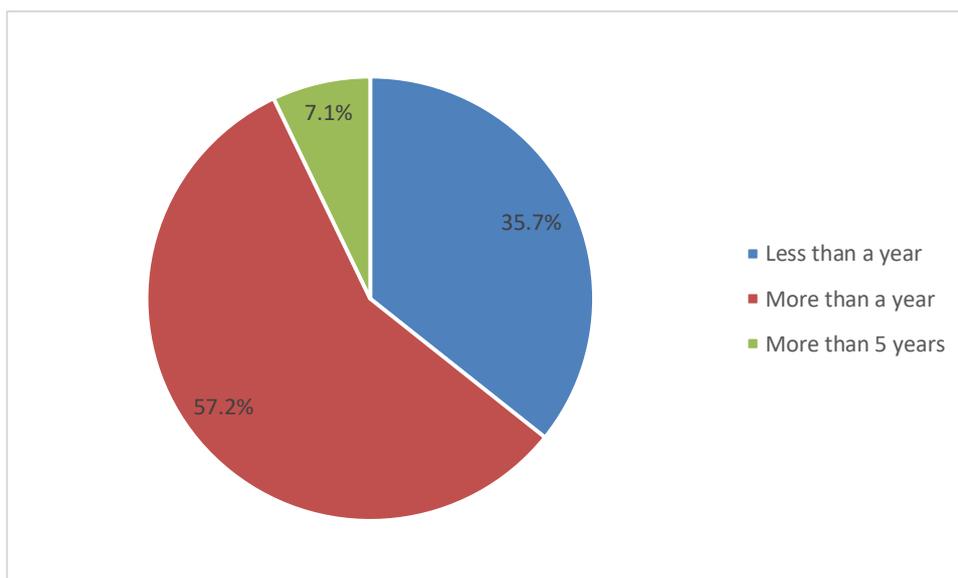


Fig. 4. Answers to the question “How long have you known about social entrepreneurship”?

35.7% found out about social entrepreneurship only in the last year, while 57.2% and 7.1% have known about it for more than 5 years (apparently, those who learned about social entrepreneurship at school).

The answers to the open question “How do you determine for yourself what is “social entrepreneurship?” were interesting. All respondents indicated in their responses the solution to social problems and the benefit to society (Table 1)

Table 1. Answers of respondents to the question “How do you determine for yourself what is “social entrepreneurship?”

| Respondent | Definition |
|------------|---|
| 1 | This is an entrepreneurship aimed more at gaining a social effect than at making a profit. At the same time, profit is necessary to implement their socially-oriented projects. |
| 2 | A business that gives money, but at the same time brings public benefit |
| 3 | Entrepreneurial activity, profitable or break-even, the direct result of which is the solution of social problems. |
| 4 | Entrepreneurship not directed outright at making commercial profit |
| 5 | Entrepreneurship aimed at alleviating or partially solving social problems |
| 6 | Business solution to a social problem by an entrepreneur |
| 7 | Solving environmental or social problems, mainly on their own initiative. |
| 8 | Entrepreneurship which solves the problems of society, culture and much more, which relates specifically to social life. |
| 9 | The main consumer is society |
| 10 | Using the methods of venture capital companies to develop, finance and implement innovative solutions to social, cultural or environmental problems |
| 11 | Creating a product or service that can be used by all segments of the population, while the entrepreneur also makes a profit |
| 12 | Entrepreneurship of residents of districts, towns, etc. with equal share ownership. The main goal of social entrepreneurship is to become rich TOGETHER with others. |
| 13 | Entrepreneurship as a something between business and charity solving social problems. |
| 14 | A process aimed at developing social responsibility and relationships. |

| | |
|----|--|
| 15 | Investment in public goods |
| 16 | Entrepreneurship, the purpose of which is to solve any social problems |
| 17 | A business that puts the benefit of society above profit |

Among those who did not know for sure, but guessed what is a social entrepreneurship, the ideas were also formed true; this indicates that the term for this phenomenon was chosen quite well: it is briefly and succinctly reflects the content. The answers to the question are given in table 2.

Table 2. Respondents to the question “How do you determine for yourself what is “social entrepreneurship?”

| Respondent | Definition |
|------------|--|
| 1 | Entrepreneurship that solves social problems |
| 2 | Movement for the benefit of people, but with financial investments |
| 3 | Any activity without external financing |
| 4 | Social Assistance Organizations |
| 5 | Solving social problems, charity |
| 6 | Activities partially related to solving social problems |
| 7 | A group of people who decided to engage in general entrepreneurial activity |
| 8 | Work with people |
| 9 | Entrepreneurship that solves social problems |
| 10 | Organization of people for the needs of a project or for obtaining labour |
| 11 | PR in the network |
| 12 | Entrepreneurship for society, the decision of some social problems |
| 13 | Activities related to solving social problems, focused mainly not on profit, but on achieving some kind of social effect |
| 14 | Activities for solving social problems |
| 15 | Entrepreneurship among people |
| 16 | This is an activity aimed at solving social problems. |

| | |
|----|--|
| 17 | Commercial activity in the field of solving socially significant problems or tasks |
| 18 | Activities of entrepreneurs aimed at social and cultural projects |

Conclusion

In general, we see a positive attitude towards social entrepreneurship, however, in our opinion, there is a negative assessment: “PR in the network”. In our opinion, this is due to lack of awareness and some distrust in the distribution of funding in social projects.

Nevertheless, we can definitely say that the term has been formulated very well, but its legislative consolidation is required, and for example, in the Law on the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises. Based on the analysis of the above proposals, we propose to consolidate the following definition at the legislative level: “social entrepreneurship is self-sustaining activity aimed at solving social problems”.

The initial assumption that the number of women who know more about social entrepreneurship is higher than the number of men, has not been confirmed. Also, no correlation was found between the age of the respondents and their awareness about the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship.

Another result of the study was the identification of the main sources of information on social entrepreneurship: this is the Internet and universities. Information on planned and carried out events should be covered as widely as possible on the network, including within the universities, which will attract new participants, especially among young people who are potential entrepreneurs. They form the entrepreneurial future of our country.

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