Ассоциация бизнес-образования

GUESSS
Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey

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Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey

National Report

Republic of Belarus 2016

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1 Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have enormous potential for innovation and growth at least on a national scale, which is manifested in educated students, graduates and knowledge creation and accumulation capabilities. At the same time, HEIs are required to effectively foster entrepreneurial values, mindsets, attitudes among the academic community and mobilize entrepreneurial careers (Markowska, 2014) since the current dynamics of change and the creation of higher degrees of uncertainty and complexity for governments, organizations, communities and individuals demand entrepreneurship capital (Gibb, 2002; Audretsch & Keilbach, 2004). However, contributing to entrepreneurship capital and supporting entrepreneurial actions are often new tasks for the majority of HEIs, which have to become entrepreneurial and innovative themselves.

This mandate of HEIs is arguably more critical in the context of post-Soviet economies (McMillan & Woodruff, 2002). Thus, the Belarusian economy is characterized by unsupportive institutional environment (Ivanova, 2005; Rees & Miazhevich, 2009) and the underdeveloped entrepreneurial sector (UN, 2011). At the same time, playing this role, the HEIs need to be flexible, entrepreneurial and innovative something which is often at odds with their governance, promotion and remuneration systems as well as with their values and perceived missions.

Belarus has a well-developed higher education sector represented by 43 public and 9 private institutions with the student population of approximately 420,000[1]. The HEI are not uniformly distributed across the different regions of the country. Thus, 28 HEIs or about 54% of HEI are located in the capital city – Minsk, which hosts 8 private and 20 public HEIs. Public HEI institutions offer educational

[1] Website of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus http://edu.gov.by/

programs at all levels in a wide range of profiles and fields of study thus satisfying demand of the national economy.

According to World Bank data, the gross enrolment rate in tertiary education is extremely high, reaching 91% in 2012, while the percentage of the population between 30-34 having completed tertiary education is substantially lower – 28,4% (Belstat). However, it is fair to argue that Belarus has a well-educated labour force in comparison to European and former Soviet countries.

In 2015, on behalf of the Association of Business Education, the School of Business and Management of Technology of BSU became the country coordinator of the GUESSS project. This allowed to conduct the first country-wide survey of the entrepreneurial intention and activity of Belarusian students.

1.1 GUESSS overview[2]

GUESSS stands for Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey and is a research project about the context of Entrepreneurship. Its general purpose is to grasp the entrepreneurial intent and activity of students using a geographical and temporal comparison.

The aims of GUESSS can be summarized as follows:

- Systematic and long-term observation of entrepreneurial intentions and activities of students;
- Identification of antecedents and boundary conditions in the context of new venture creation and entrepreneurial careers in general;
- Observation and evaluation of HEIs' activities and offerings related to the entrepreneurial education of their students

GUESSS intends to create value for different stakeholders:

[2] Based on information on the website of the project http://guesssurvey.org/

- Participating countries generate insights on their respective basic conditions for entrepreneurship in general
- They also learn more about the entrepreneurial power of their students Participating HEIs are enabled to assess the quantity and quality of their offerings in the context of entrepreneurship
- Politics and public are sensitized for entrepreneurship in general and new venture creation in particular, and hopefully identify need for action
- Students can benefit from the implementation of respective actions in the long term

The first survey wave took place in 2003, and the seventh one has started in Spring 2016. The project lead of GUESSS is in the hands of the Swiss Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship at the University of St. Gallen (KMU-HSG) in Switzerland (represented by Prof. Dr. Urs Fueglistaller).

The survey is conducted every two years. The core is comprised of reference frameworks including central panel questions that are asked during every international survey. The basic framework is supplemented by unique internationally relevant focus questions. Finally, it is also possible to consider individual country-specific questions. The survey is based on a web-based survey and can therefore be conducted very efficiently.

Over the past years, the project has steadily grown. In the 2016 edition, 50 countries are taking part.

The results are published in the form of an international final report, national final reports, and other publications such as practitioner, conference, and journal article contributions.

The theoretical foundation for the GUESSS project is the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2002).

The approaches of TPB are frequently employed in studies on entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention (Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999; Iakovleva et al., 2011; Liñán et al., 2011) and by the GUESSS. In general, the TPB posits that intentions to pursue certain behavior are impacted and shaped by three main factors such as attitudes, subjective norms, or perceived behavioral control, whereas intentions are arguably the single best predictor of behavior (Krueger Jr. et al., 2000). Thus, the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm and the greater the perceived control, the stronger is a student's intention to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 2002) that is in our case an entrepreneurial activity.

In compliance with postulates of the TPB (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2002), the attitude towards entrepreneurship is the attractiveness of this activity or personal valuation about being an entrepreneur, while subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressures from family and friends to carry out entrepreneurial activity. Finally, the perceived behavioral control measures the perceived easiness and ability of becoming and successfully launching an entrepreneurial venture (McGee et al., 2009). The framework is depicted in Figure 1.

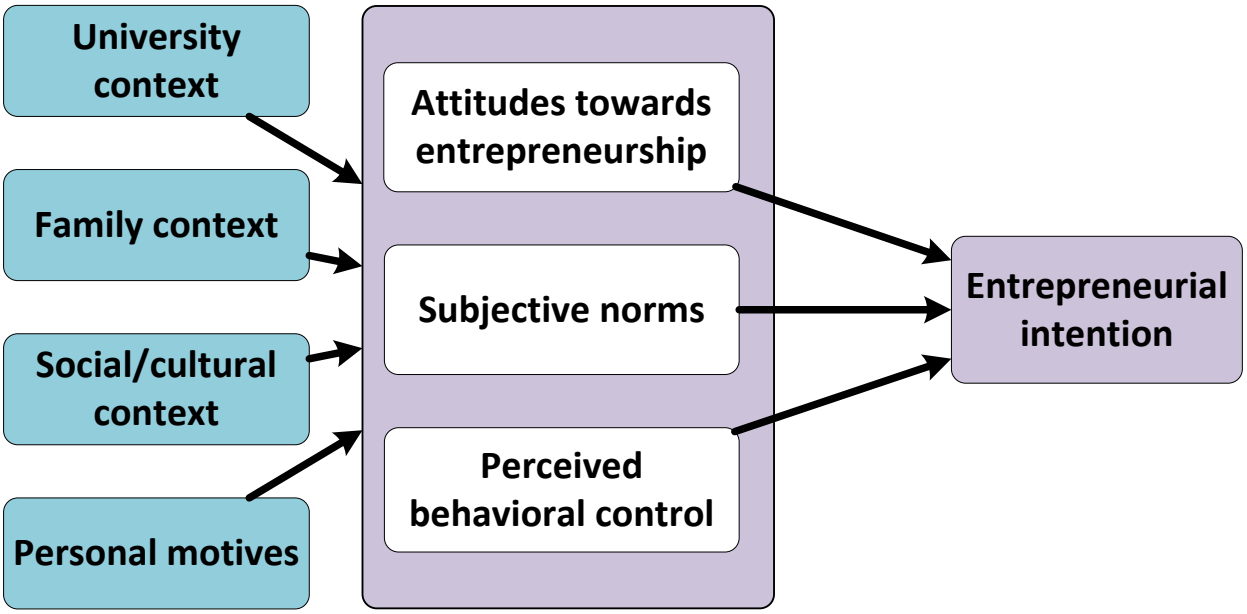

Figure 1. Theoretical framework of GUESSS

1.2 Project organization and data collection procedure

The GUESSS project is organized by the KMU-HSG at the University of St.Gallen (Switzerland). The responsible project manager is Assistant Professor Philipp Sieger. The supervisory board consists of Prof. Urs Fueglistaller (President), Prof. Thomas Zellweger, Prof. Norris Krueger, and Dr. Frank Halter.

In 2016, 50 countries and 120,000 students participated in the survey. Every participating country is represented by one main country team or a country delegate. These country teams, in turn, recruit other HEIs in that country that also would like to take part in the data collection. Thus, Association of business education contacted representatives in 15 Belarusian HEIs and proposed to disseminate information about the survey and the link to the online questionnaire among students. Data collection was carried out from April till July 2016

2 Participants and sample

2.1 Participants

The first survey in Belarus attracted 1312 responses from over 15 HEIs. After deep exploration of the responses by the international coordinators, 716 completed and valid observations remained. As a result, Belarus was ranked 31th out of 50 countries in terms of the total number of responses.

The distribution of the sample is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. The Belarusian sample

#	HEI	Amount of responses	Percent in total responses
1	Belarusian State Academy of Agriculture	2	0,3
2	Belarusian State Technological University	11	1,5
3	Belarusian State University	166	23,2
4	Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics	8	1,1
5	Belarusian State University of Transport	37	5,2
6	Belarusian National Technical University	25	3,5
7	Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives	15	2,1
8	Vitebsk State Technological University	38	5,3
9	Grodno State Agrarian University	5	0,7
10	Grodno State University named after Y. Kupala	113	15,8
11	School of Business and Management of Technology of BSU	128	17,9
12	Institute of Parliamentarianism and Entrepreneurship	6	0,8
13	Mogiliov State University named after A. Kuleshov	10	1,4
14	Polessky State University	23	3,2
15	Polotsk State University	62	8,7
16	Other	67	9,4
Total		**716**	**100**

The response rate for Belarus is estimated to be 2.2% as approximately 35,000 students were addressed.

2.2 Sample characteristics

The majority of participants (86.2%) were born after 1991, while the category of participants older than 25 accounts for 13.8%.

In terms of gender, more female than male students participated in the GUESSS survey: 73.5 % vs. 26.5 % respectively (58,5% vs 41,5% in the global sample). In comparison with the international GUESSS survey, this our sample is overpopulated with female students[3]. There were minor differences when comparing the sample from Belarus with the 2013 Russian sample (69,5% of female) by gender of respondents.

Most of the respondents (93,6%) indicated their nationality as being Belarusian. The next largest nationality was Russian, with 1.5% (see Figure 2).

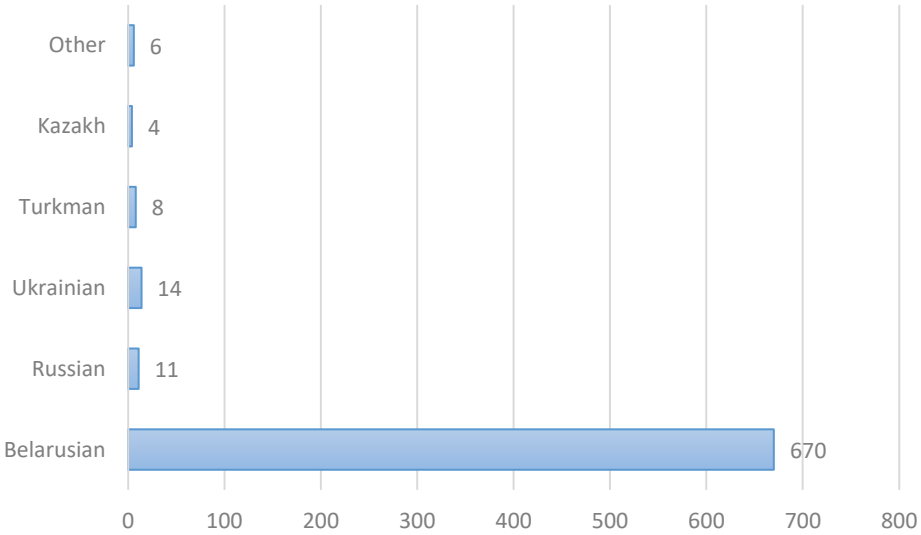

Figure 2. Nationality of students

With respect to the level of study, the majority of students (79%) in our sample was enrolled in undergraduate programs (see Figure 3).

[3] Female are the majority in the population of Belarusian students. According to the Statistical Committee of Belarus, in 2012 female accounted for about 58% students.

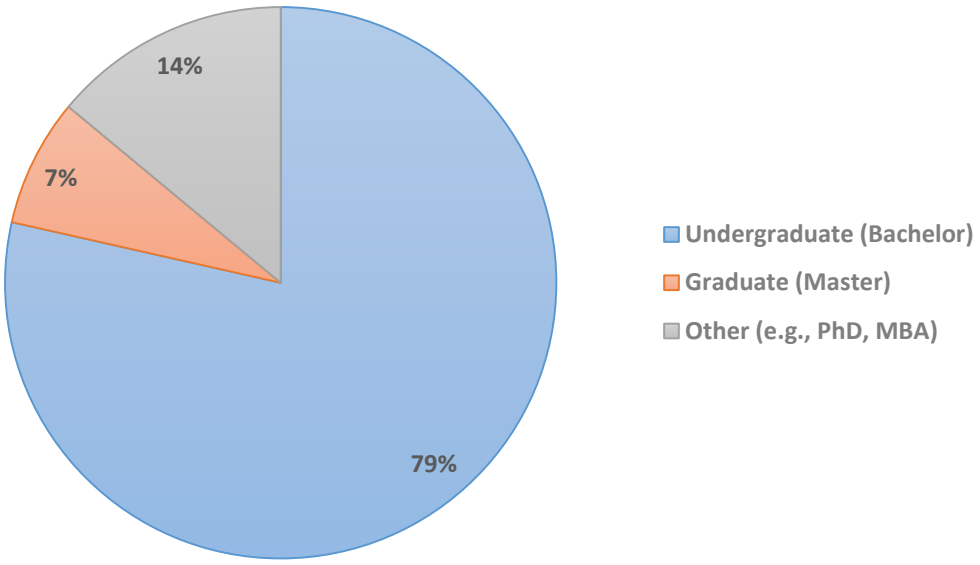

Figure 3. Level of study

Figure 4 gives an overview of the different fields of study among the respondents in the Belarusian. The field of study is proved to be one of the key factors for career choice intentions and, in particular, for entrepreneurial intentions.

In the Belarusian sample the proportion of students studying Law & Economics (incl. business sciences) was high – 79% (Figure 4). This may reflect the contacts used for the survey that was conducted predominantly by members of the Association of Business Education. Moreover, the higher proportion of students interested in completing a survey on entrepreneurship coming from business and management studies because such students are more interested in entrepreneurial issues.

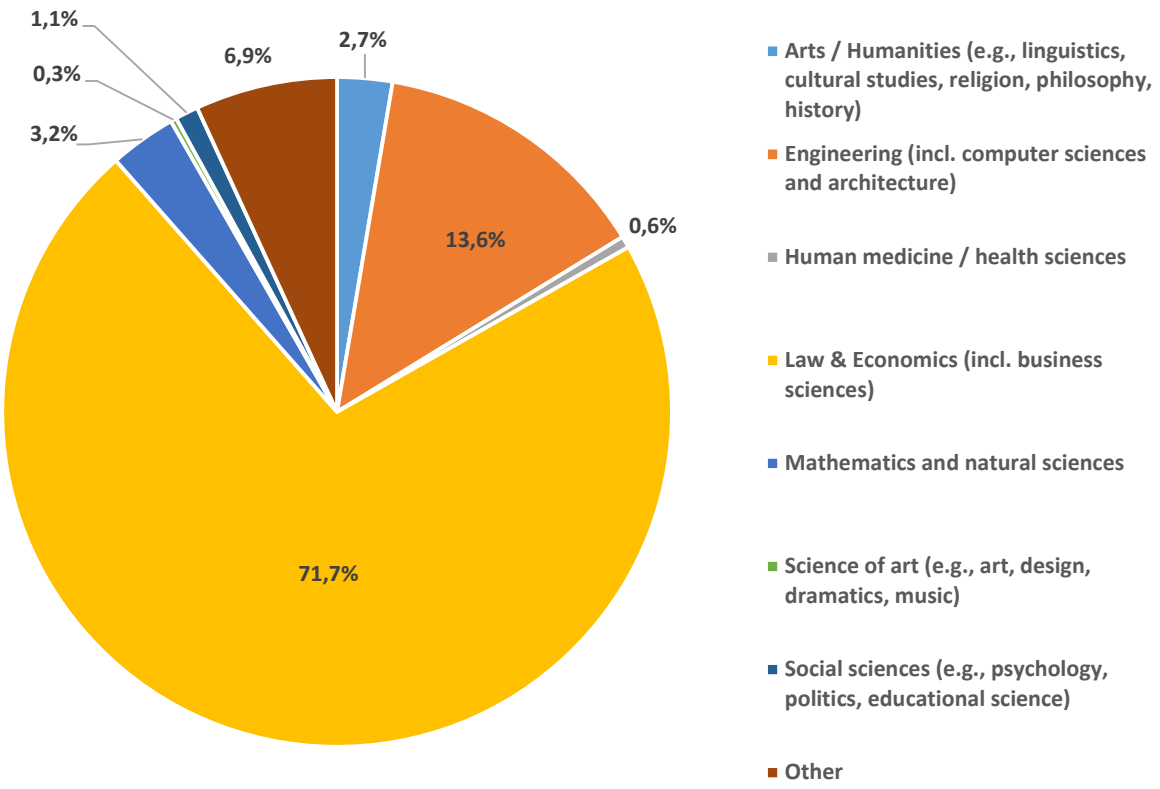

Figure 4. Study field

3 Entrepreneurial intentions of students

One of the main objectives of the GUESSS project is to assess students' entrepreneurial intentions. This section analyzes students' career choice intentions, their entrepreneurial intention, level of motivation to become entrepreneurs, the effects of the context on their entrepreneurial intentions, their self-perceived level of competency of entrepreneurial related tasks, and their risk tolerance.

3.1 Career choice intentions

Table 2 shows changes in the career choice intentions of students, comparing their intentions immediately after graduation with five years later. While after graduation the vast majority of students in Belarus prefer to work as employees in

in enterprises – 73,1% (including 17,2% - in small-sized, 32,4% - in medium-sized and 23,5 in large-sized firms), five years after graduation 56,8% intend to be entrepreneurs working in their own firms. The least attractive career path both immediately after graduation (0,7 %) and 5 years later (0,7 %) is employment in public service followed by employment in non-profit organizations (1,8% and 1,4% respectively)

Table 2. Employment intention

Employment Intention	After studies		5 years later	
	Number	%	Number	%
an employee in a small business (1-49 employees)	123	17,2	18	2,5
an employee in a medium-sized business (50-249 employees)	232	32,4	38	5,3
an employee in a large business (250 or more employees)	168	23,5	115	16,1
an employee in a non-profit organization	13	1,8	10	1,4
an employee in Academia (academic career path)	18	2,5	10	1,4
an employee in public service	5	0,7	5	0,7
a founder (entrepreneur) working in my own business	64	8,9	407	56,8
a successor in my parents' / family's business	20	2,8	16	2,2
a successor in a business currently not controlled by my family	13	1,8	17	2,4
Other / do not know yet	60	8,4	80	11,2
Total	716	100,0	716	100,0

The key finding driven from these data is that a relatively low – 8,9 – percent of students intend to start up a business as soon as they graduate. This is very close to the world average in 2016 – 8,8%. At the same time, in five years the number of students who see themselves as founders increases sixfold to 56,8 (the world average score is 38,2). This is a remarkable change in intentions confirms the necessity to embed development of entrepreneurial skills and competences within academic curricula of different study fields.

The share of intentional founders among male students immediately after studies is considerably higher than among female students (18,1% vs.5,7%) (see Table 3). Five years after graduation, the difference becomes smaller: 66% of male students and only 53,5% of all female students see themselves as founders of own firms. No male student want to be employed in a public service regardless of the career stage.

Table 3. Employment intention by gender

Employment Intention	After studies		5 years later	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
an employee in a small business (1-49 employees)	17,1	17,0	2,5	2,7
an employee in a medium-sized business (50-249 employees)	36,2	22,3	6,5	2,1
an employee in a large business (250 or more employees)	23,6	22,9	17,7	11,2
an employee in a non-profit organization	1,9	1,6	1,1	2,1
an employee in Academia (academic career path)	2,9	1,6	1,7	0,5
an employee in public service	1,0	0,0	1,0	0,0

a founder (entrepreneur) working in my own business	5,7	18,1	53,5	66,0
a successor in my parents' / family's business	2,3	4,3	2,3	2,1
a successor in a business currently not controlled by my family	1,3	3,2	2,5	2,1
Other / do not know yet	8,0	9,0	11,2	11,2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

3.1.1 Career choice intentions right after graduation

Figure 5 shows career intentions right after graduation across different fields of study. The highest level of intention is observed among Medicine and Health Sciences students (25%), however, only 4 students from this field took part were surveyed. As for other fields, the higher levels of interest in founding a business were demonstrated by respondents studying Arts / Humanities (10,7%), Law / Economics (10%) and other fields (10,2%). It is worth noting that these differences are relatively small.

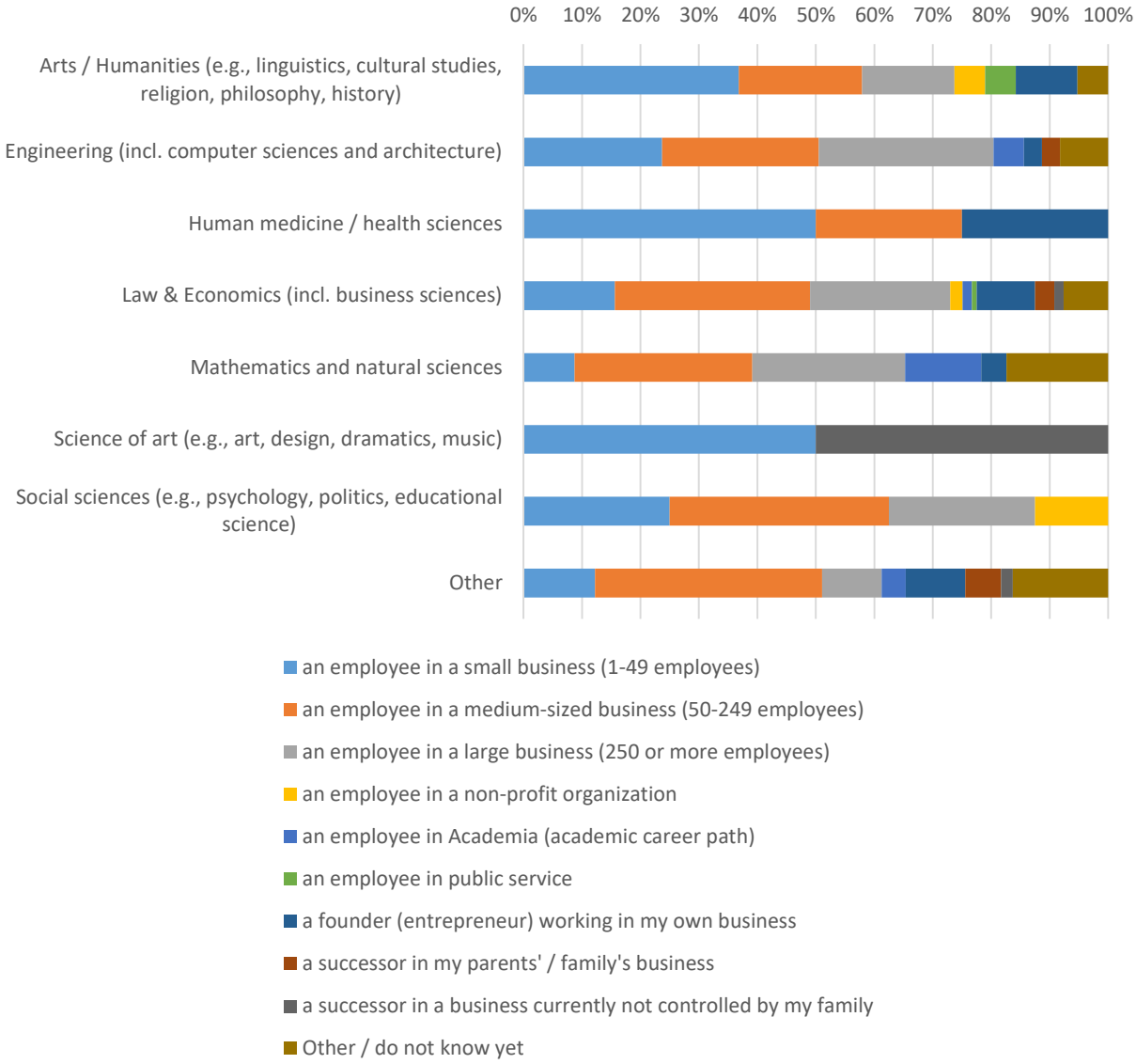

Figure 5. Career choice groups by study field directly after studies

3.1.2 Career choice intentions five years after graduation

As it was mentioned before, the level of entrepreneurial intentions is substantially higher five years after graduation. This is true for students representing different fields (Figure 6). Thus, 3 of 4 or 75% of Medicine and Health Sciences students intend to run a business. The second place take Law / Business students (60%). Slightly behind them are students who indicated "Other" as their fields of study (59,2%) and Arts / Humanities (52,6%).

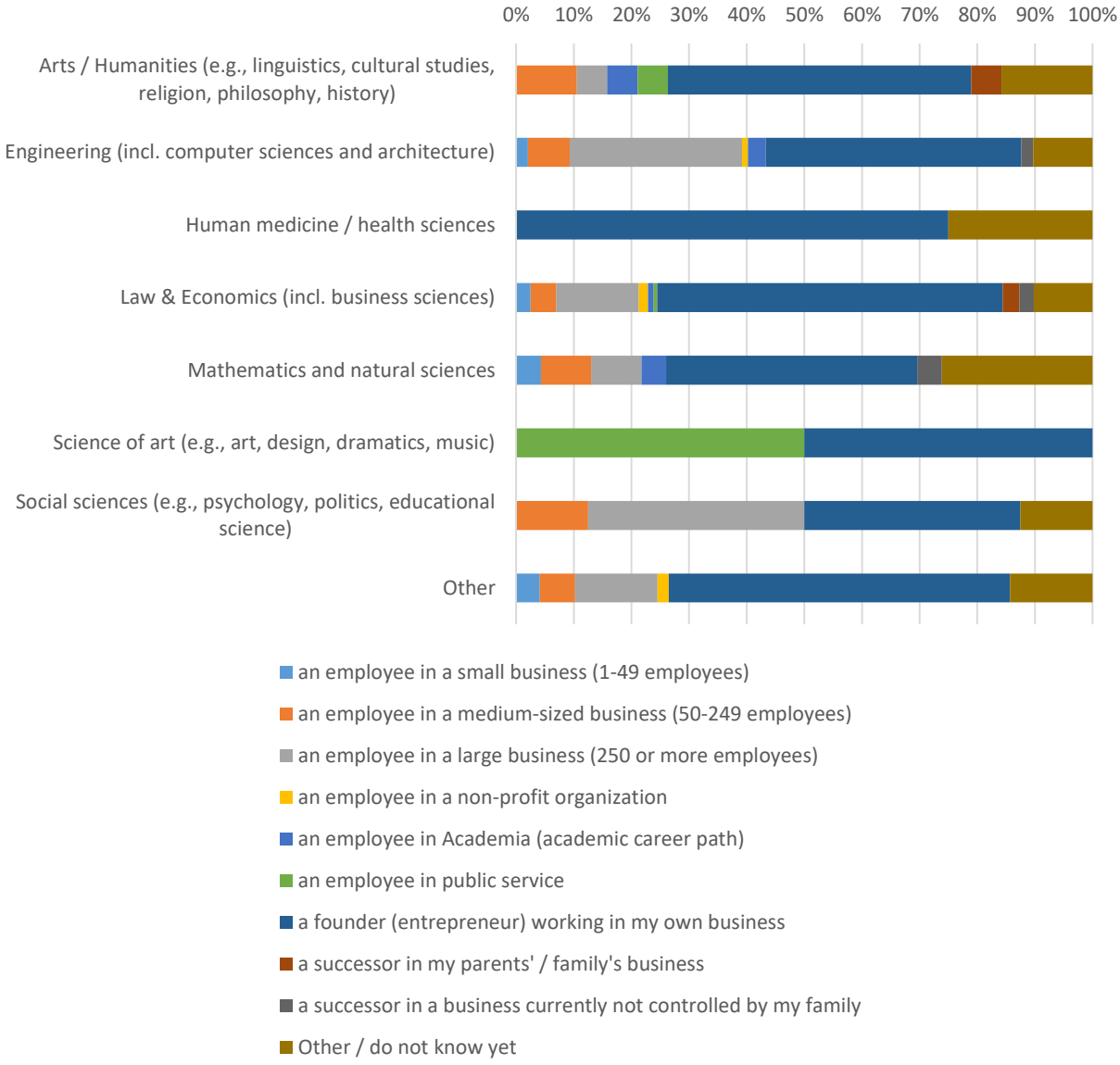

Figure 6. Career choice groups by study field 5 years after study

3.2 Entrepreneurial intentions

The entrepreneurial index captures the extent to which students intend to start their own business in the future. The index is an average of six items (Figure 7), with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). If Belarusian students participated in GUESSS 2013, the country would take the 5th-6th place with 4,57 close to Russia.

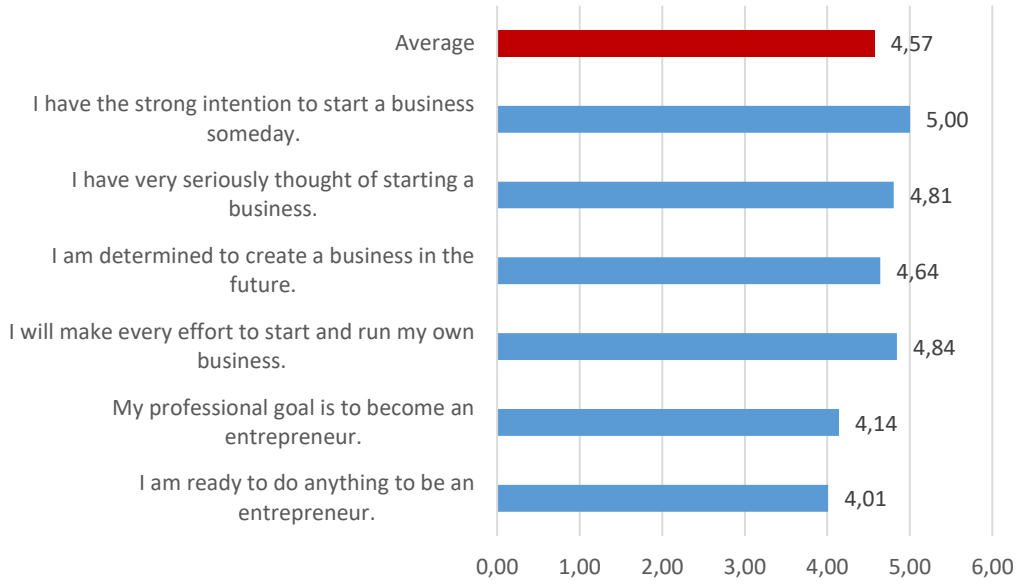

Figure 7. Entrepreneurial intentions

Not surprisingly, a higher level of entrepreneurial intentions is observed among male students (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Entrepreneurial intention by gender

3.3 Nascent and active entrepreneurs among students

Comparatively high share of Belarusian students are engaged in entrepreneurial activities. Thus, 22,9 percent reported that they were trying to start their own business or to become self-employed. From the gender perspective, 16,4% of female students are starting their business, while there are 41% of nascent entrepreneurs among male students – twice higher than in the international sample.

If we compare this share with the international sample of the GUESSS 2016, we can deduce that Belarus takes the 22nd place in the world between FYR Makedonia and Uruguay, below Russia (19th) and Ukraine (20th).

7 percent of students were already running their own business or were self-employed at the moment of the survey. This share is lower than global average in 2016 (8,8%), and Belarus takes the 29th place. This may signify that a way from nascent to active entrepreneurs is more complicated in Belarus.

Again, we observe substantial differences between female (4,4%) and male students (14,4%).

It is reasonable to compare shares of nascent and active entrepreneurs across fields of study (Figure 9). Surprisingly, among fields that were represented by more than 10 respondents students studying Arts/Humanities appeared leaders as both nascent and active entrepreneurs followed by "Other" fields.

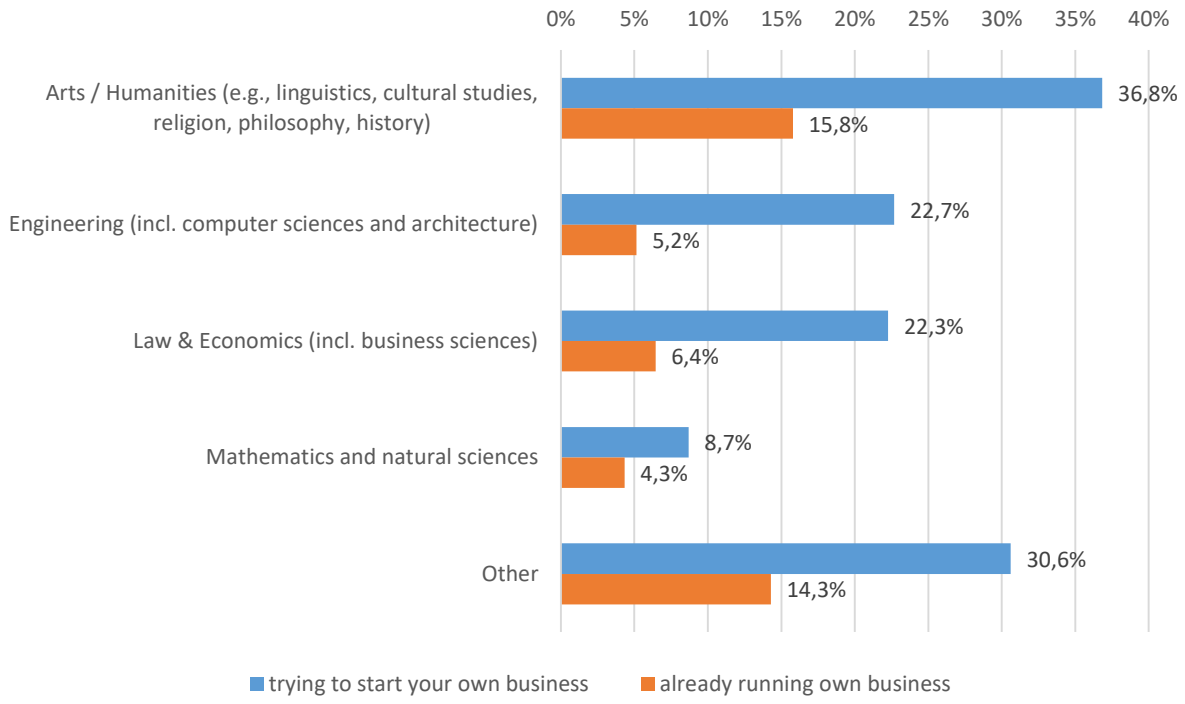

Figure 9. Nascent and active entrepreneurs by fields of study

4 Drivers of entrepreneurial intentions

4.1 HEI context

As it was mentioned before, HEI play the vital role in creating entrepreneurial potential and stimulating entrepreneurial intentions among students. Therefore, entrepreneurial environment and entrepreneurial education are estimated by asking students to estimate levels of their agreement with a set of statements using a Likert scale from 1 (do not agree at all) to 7 (very much agree). The means are provided in Figure 10.

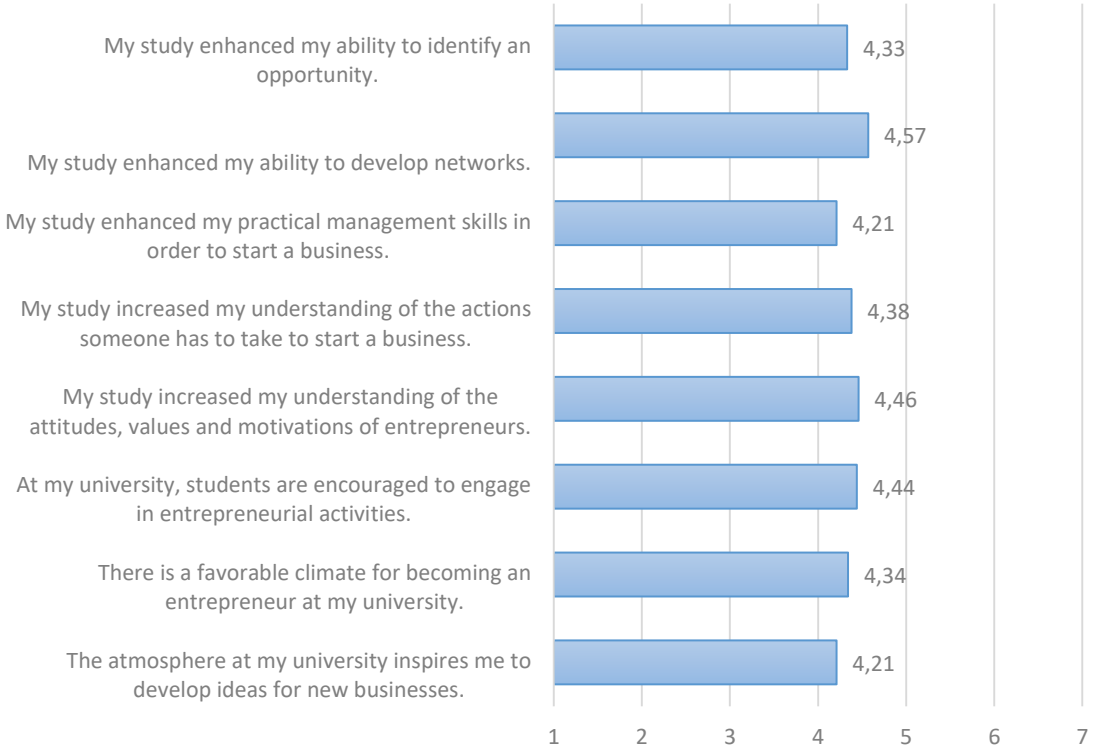

Figure 10. HEI context

In general, the perceived level an entrepreneurship-oriented environment and education is above average – between 4,21 and 4,57 out of 7.

4.1.1 Differences across Belarusian HEIs

If we compare Belarusian HEIs represented by more than 10 students, we observe several differences (see Figure 11-Figure 18). However, these comparisons should be considered and interpreted with caution by several reasons. Firstly, the number of respondents differs substantially across HEIs (from 11 from the Belarusian State Technological University to 162 from the Belarusian State University). Secondly, students were offered to choose between the Belarusian State University and the School of Business and Management of Technology of BSU that is the state educational establishment within the complex of the Belarusian State University. In this situation, a share of students from and the School of

Business and Management of Technology of BSU could indicate the Belarusian State University as their HEI.

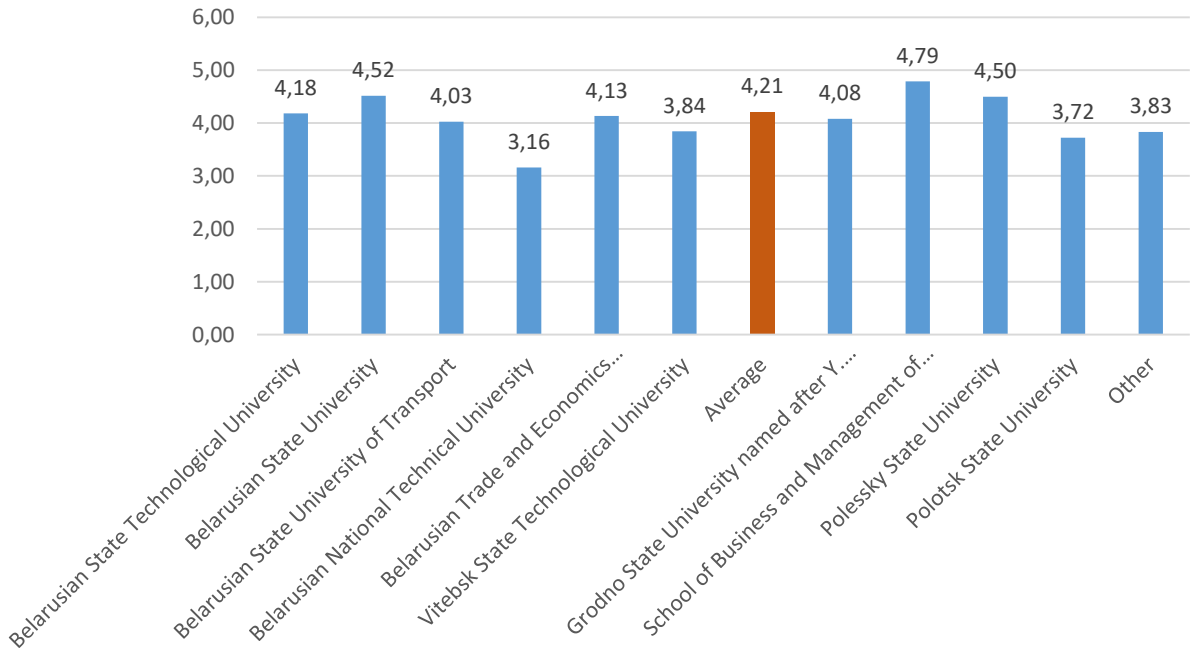

Figure 11. The atmosphere at a HEI inspires me to develop ideas for new businesses

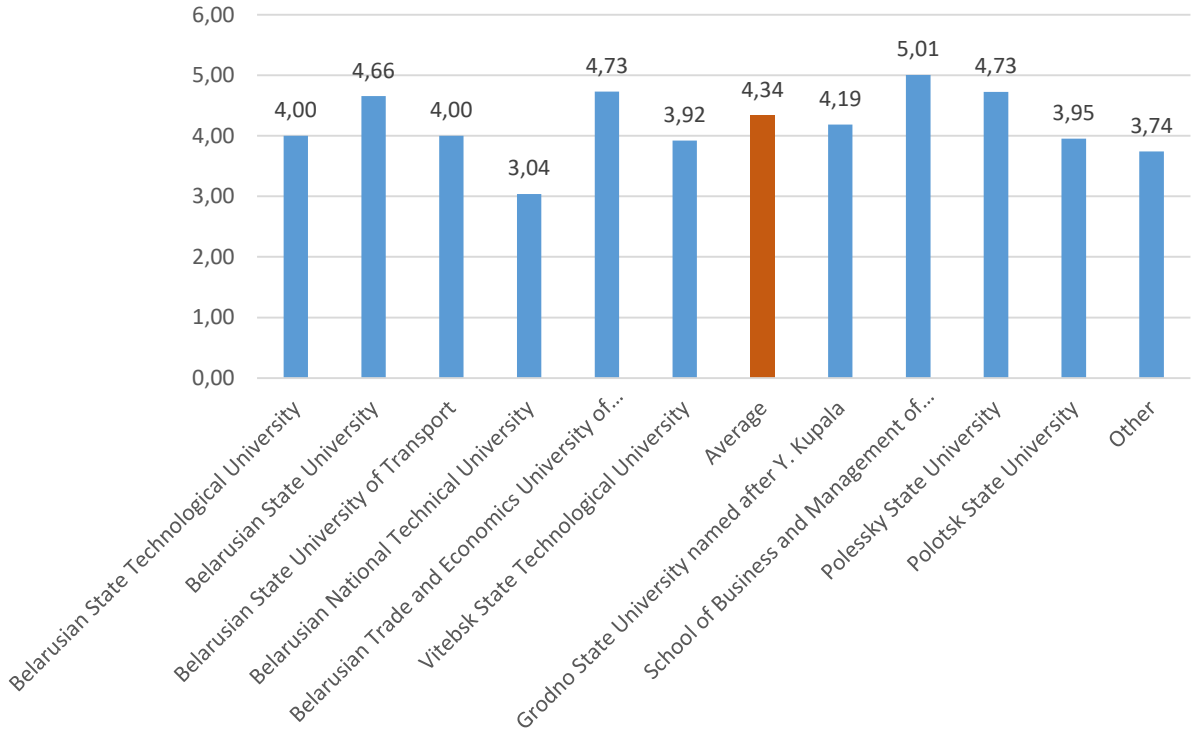

Figure 12. There is a favorable climate for becoming an entrepreneur at a HEI.

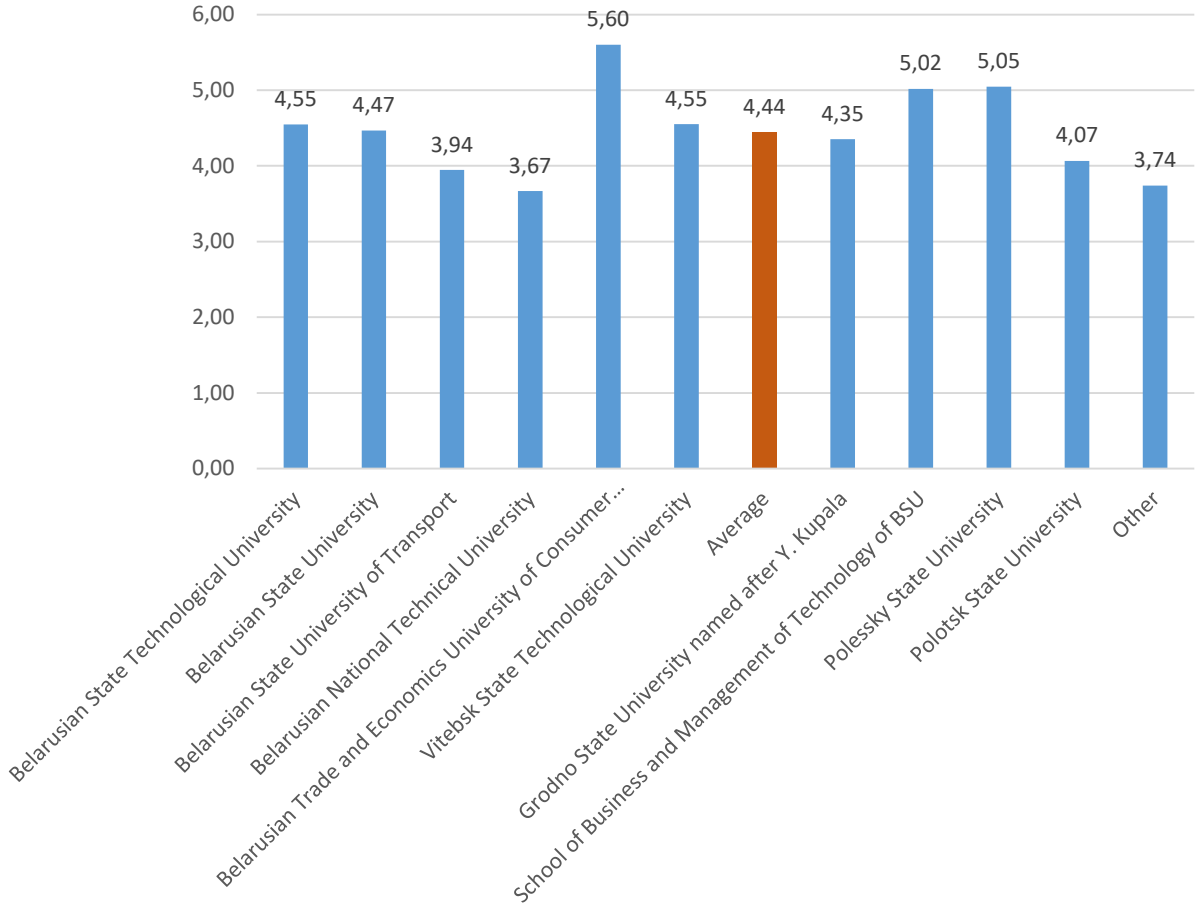

Figure 13. At a HEI, students are encouraged to engage in entrepreneurial activities

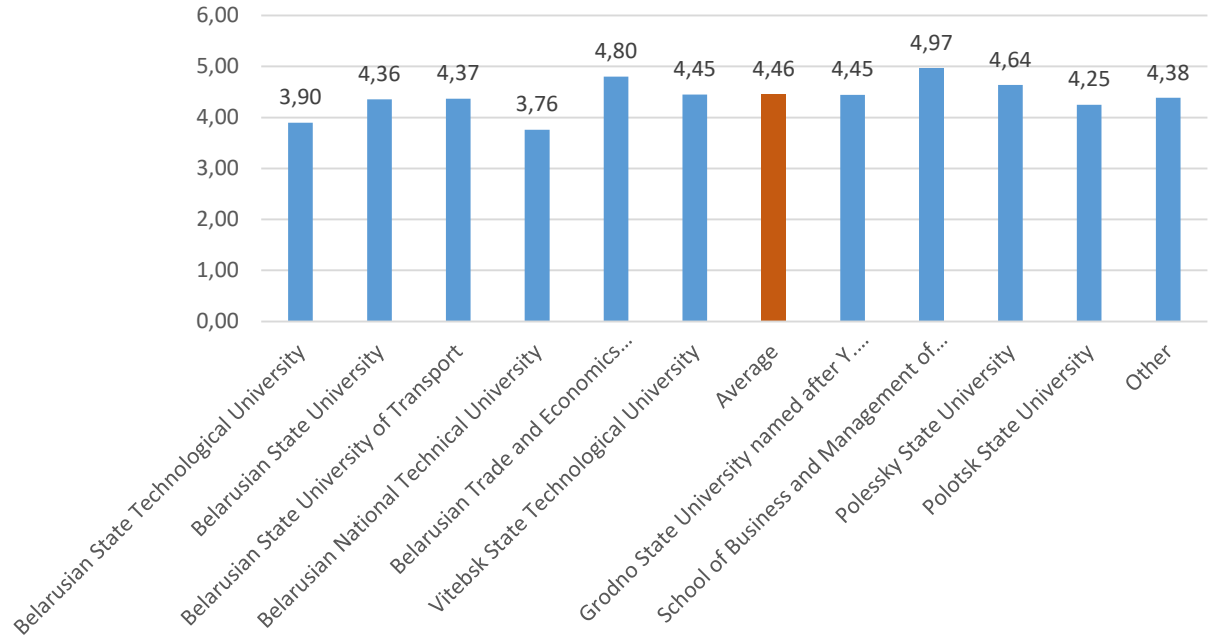

Figure 14. The study increased understanding of the attitudes, values and motivations of entrepreneurs.

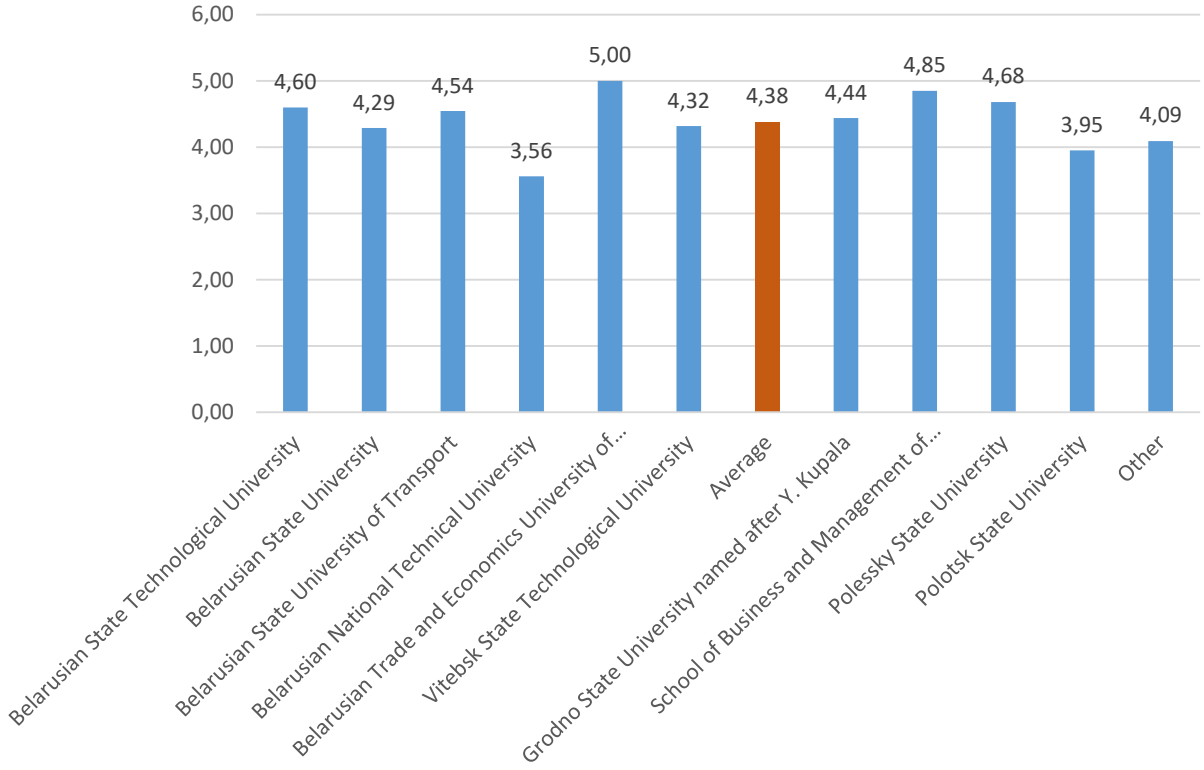

Figure 15. The study increased understanding of the actions someone has to take to start a business.

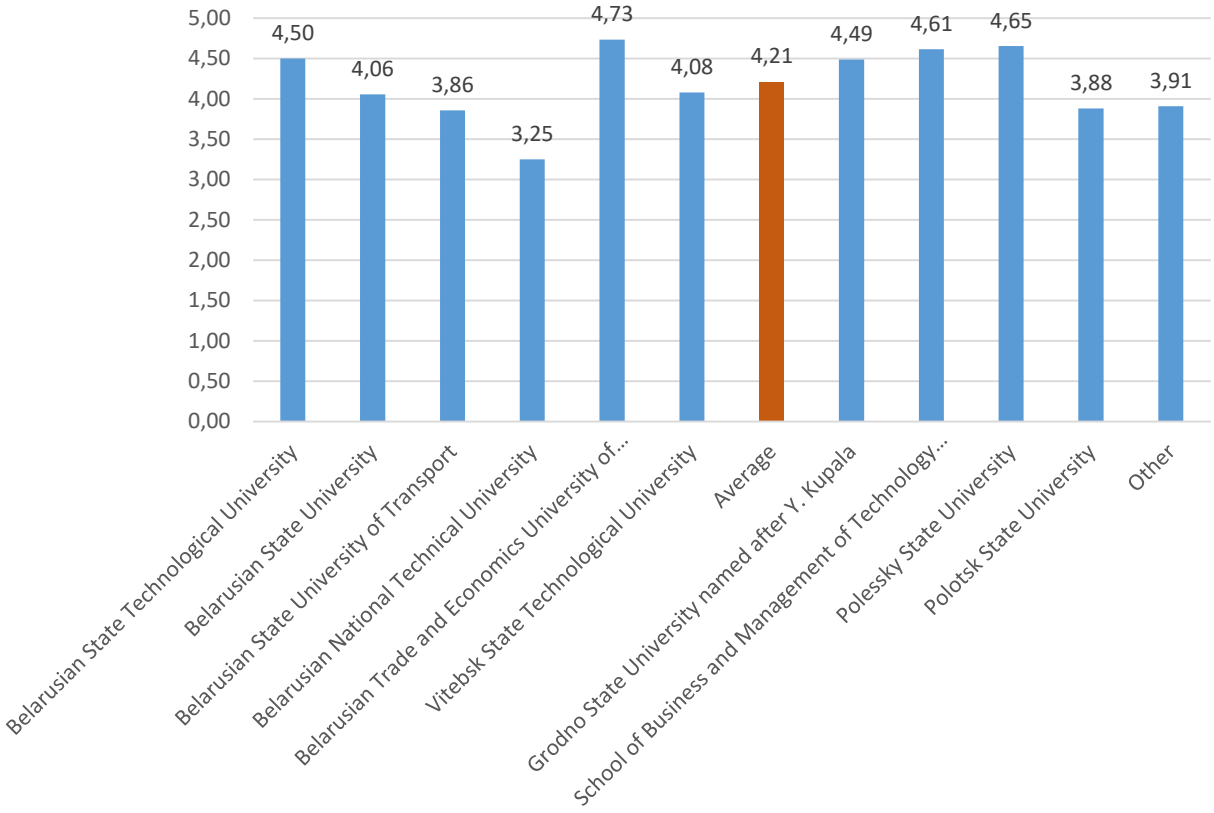

Figure 16. The study enhanced practical management skills in order to start a business.

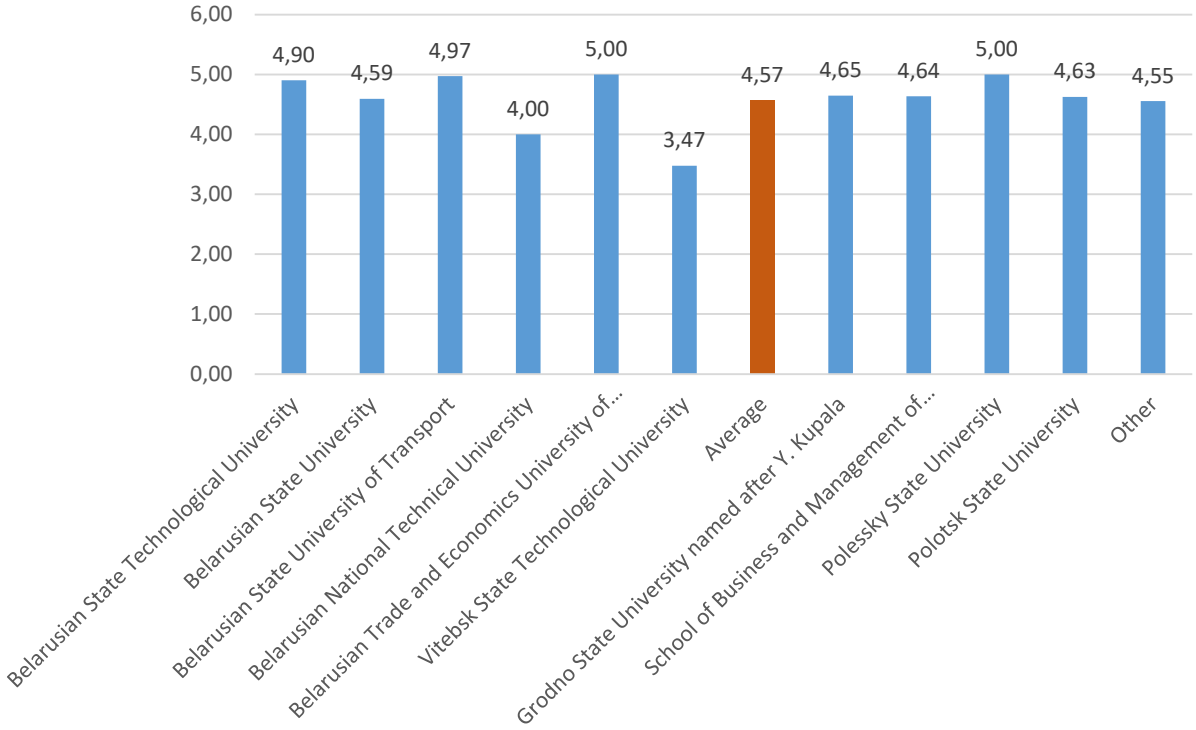

Figure 17. The study enhanced my ability to develop networks

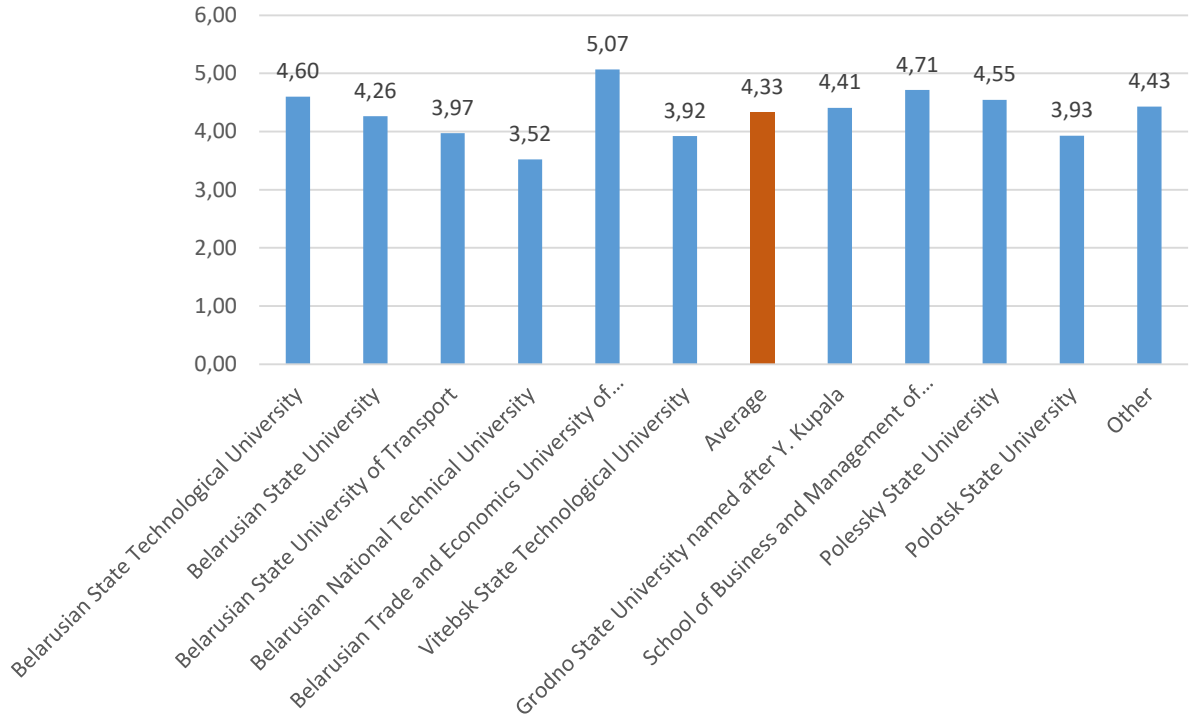

Figure 18. The study enhanced one's ability to identify an opportunity

While only School of Business and Management of Technology of BSU and Polessky State University have all 8 scores above average, Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives demonstrated the highest average score of 8 indicators.

4.1.2 Exposure to entrepreneurship education

Respondents were asked several questions to estimate a level they were exposed to entrepreneurship-related education. In our sample, 53,8 % had not attended a course on entrepreneurship (55,4% - in the global sample). At least one entrepreneurship course as elective had been attended by 10,1% of students. As a compulsory part of studies 29,5% had attended at least one entrepreneurship course, while 4,5% indicated that they were enrolled in entrepreneurship programs.

Interestingly, several HEIs were chosen to study at mainly because of their strong entrepreneurial reputation. Such HEIs with at least more respondents are provided in Figure 19. It demonstrates that School of Business and Management of Technology of BSU has the strongest entrepreneurial reputation among Belarusian HEIs.

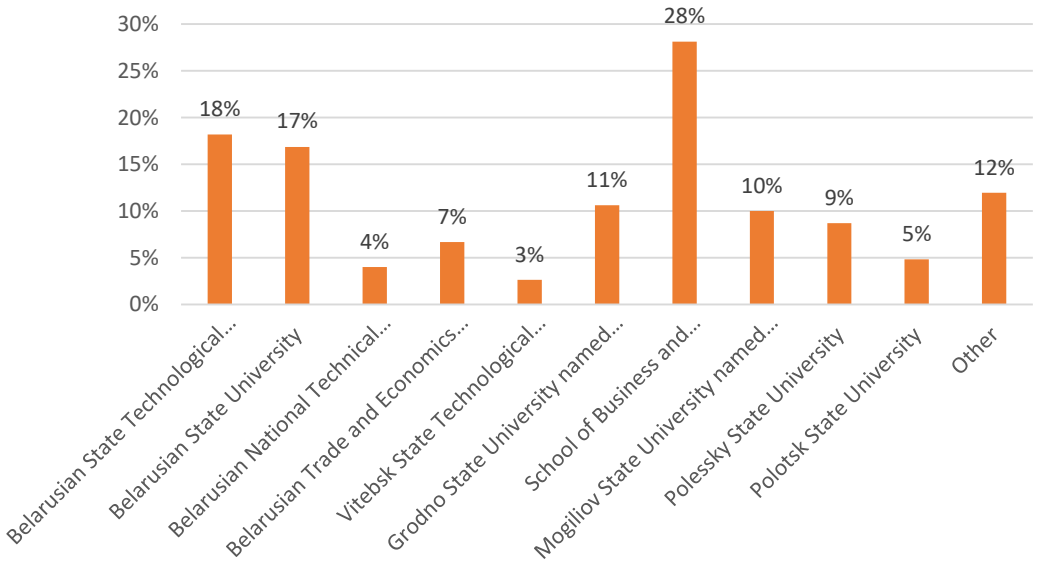

Figure 19. Choice by entrepreneurial reputation

4.2 Attitudes towards entrepreneurship

According to GUESSS, attitude towards entrepreneurship among students was estimated by the extent to which they agreed with a set of statements: 1. 'Being an entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages to me'; 2. 'A career as entrepreneur is attractive for me'; 3. 'If I had the opportunity and resources, I would become an entrepreneur'; 4. 'Being an entrepreneur would entail great satisfactions for me'; 5. 'Among various options. I would rather become an entrepreneur' (Figure 20). A seven point Likert scale was used (1 — strongly disagree to 7 — strongly agree).

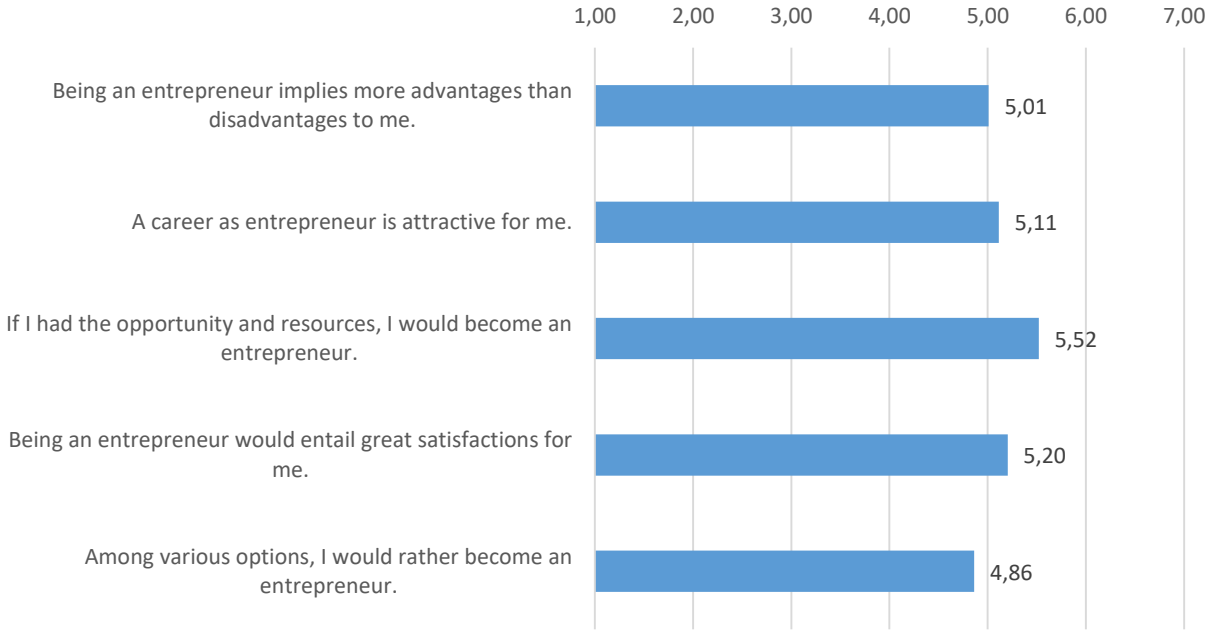

Figure 20. Attitudes towards entrepreneurship

4.3 Subjective norms

To measure subjective norms, we asked students how different people in their environment would react if students would become an entrepreneur. Three groups of people were fellow students, friends, and close family members (Liñan &

Chen, 2009). Using a 7-point Likert scale, reaction was ranged from 1 (very negatively) to 7 (very positively). Figure 21 demonstrates Belarussian students believe that people they interact with will react very positively, if students become entrepreneurs.

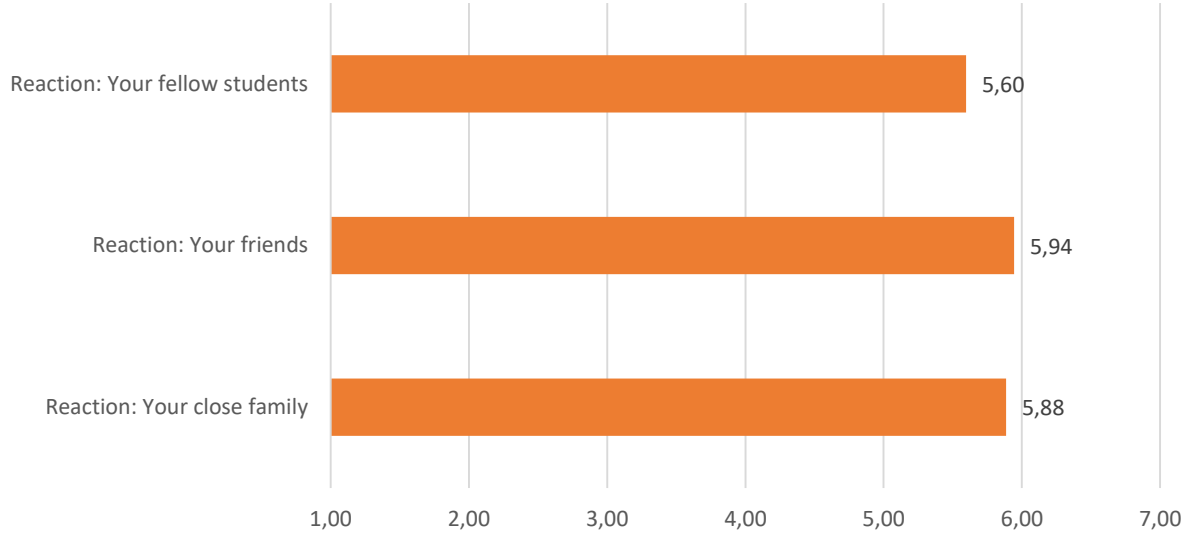

Figure 21. Subjective norms

It is worth mention that almost of 79 percent of parents are not entrepreneurs (Table 4), while they would positively evaluate if their children became entrepreneurs.

Table 4. Self-employed parents

	Number	**%**
None	565	78,9
Yes, father	93	13,0
Yes, mother	25	3,5
Yes, both	33	4,6
Total	**716**	**100,0**

4.4 Perceived behavioral control

Following the methodology of the GUESSS, we measure the perceived behavioral control or self-efficacy by asking students to evaluate their level of entrepreneurship-related competences: 1) identifying new business opportunities, 2) creating new products and services, 3) managing innovation within a firm, 4) being a leader and communicator, 5) building up a professional network, 6) commercializing a new idea or development, 7) successfully managing a business. The variable was measured on a Likert scale from 1 — strongly disagree to 7 — strongly agree (Figure 22). In average, Belarusian students evaluate their level of entrepreneurial competences above average, with the highest average score to "Being a leader and communicator".

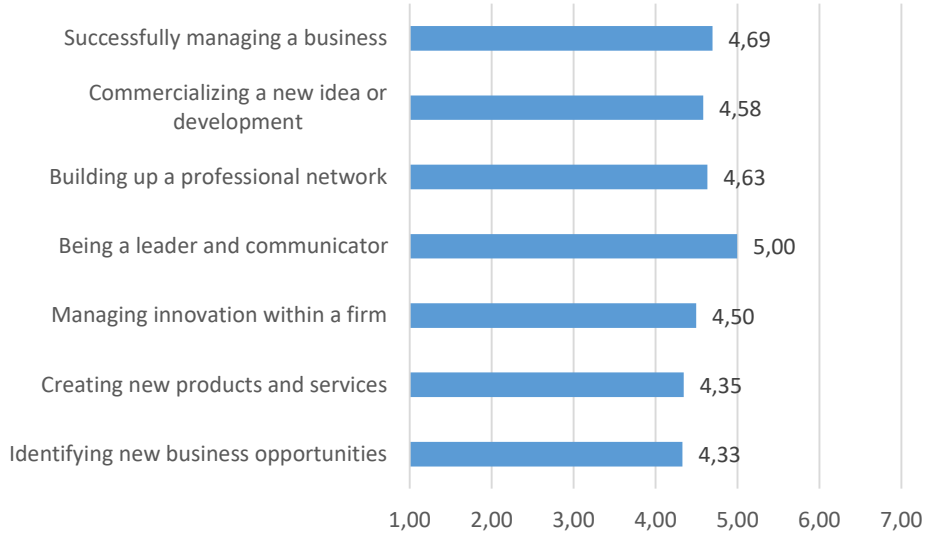

Figure 22. Perceived level of entrepreneurial competences

Figure 23 demonstrates differences between Belarusian students who had not attended entrepreneurship-related courses and those who attended at least one course in terms of a perceived level of entrepreneurial competences. The Likert scale from 1 to 7 was employed.

As it was expected, attending at least one entrepreneurship course increases the perceived level of all selected characteristics.

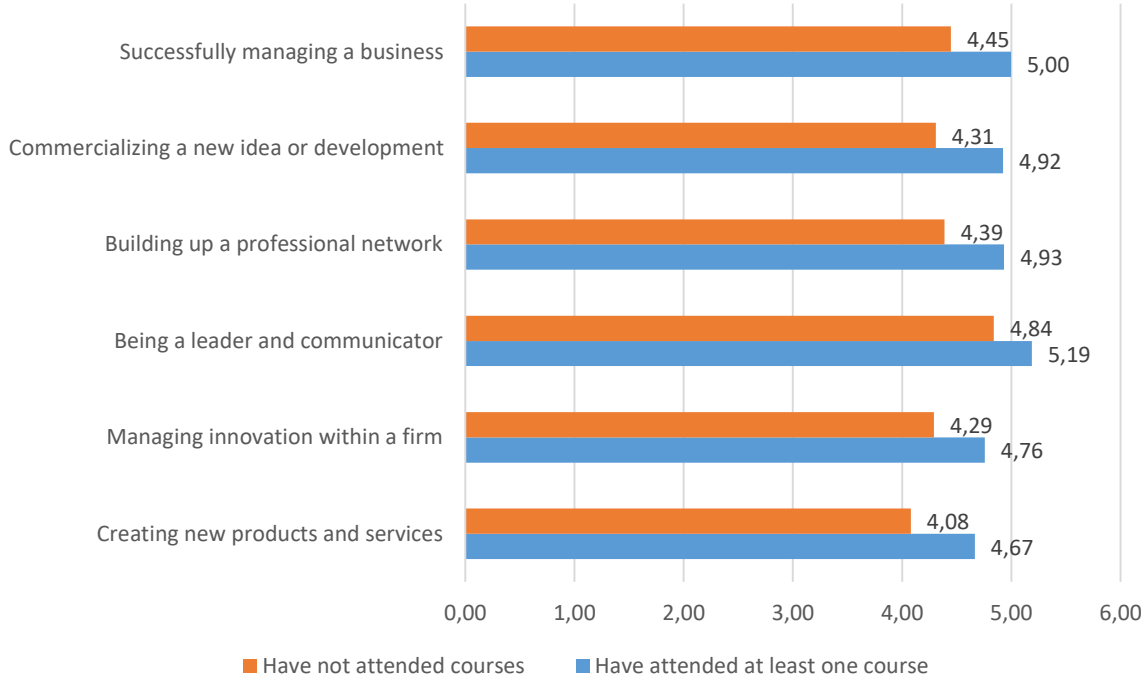

Figure 23. Differences in a perceived level of entrepreneurial competences

5 Entrepreneurial activities

Both groups of students who is already running a business and who is planning to start a business were asked about a sector that their business is operating or will operate in. The largest share of active businesses are related to Advertising/Design/Marketing (Figure 24).

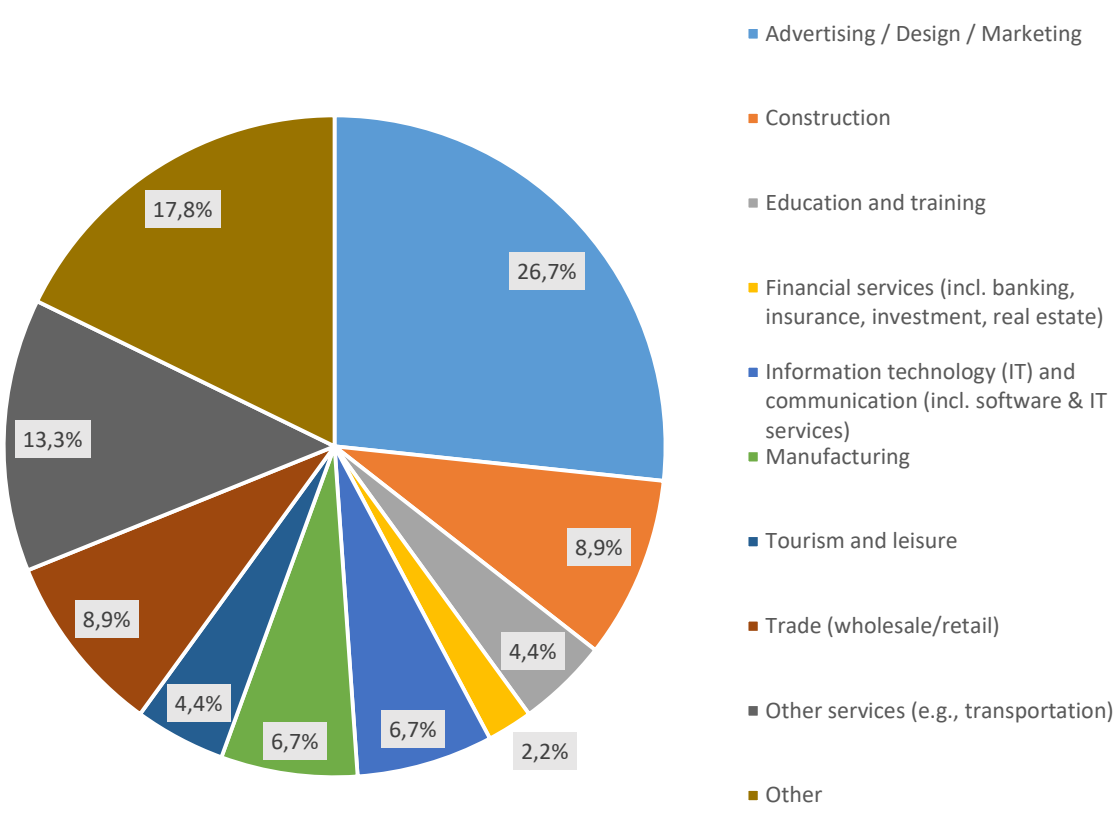

Figure 24. Sectors where students' businesses are operating

With respect to businesses that are being started by students (Figure 25), one fifth of them are expected to operate in Trade that is in line with the global trend (13,7% in the international sample of GUESSS 2016 also aimed at starting a business in Trade) followed by Advertising/Design/Marketing.

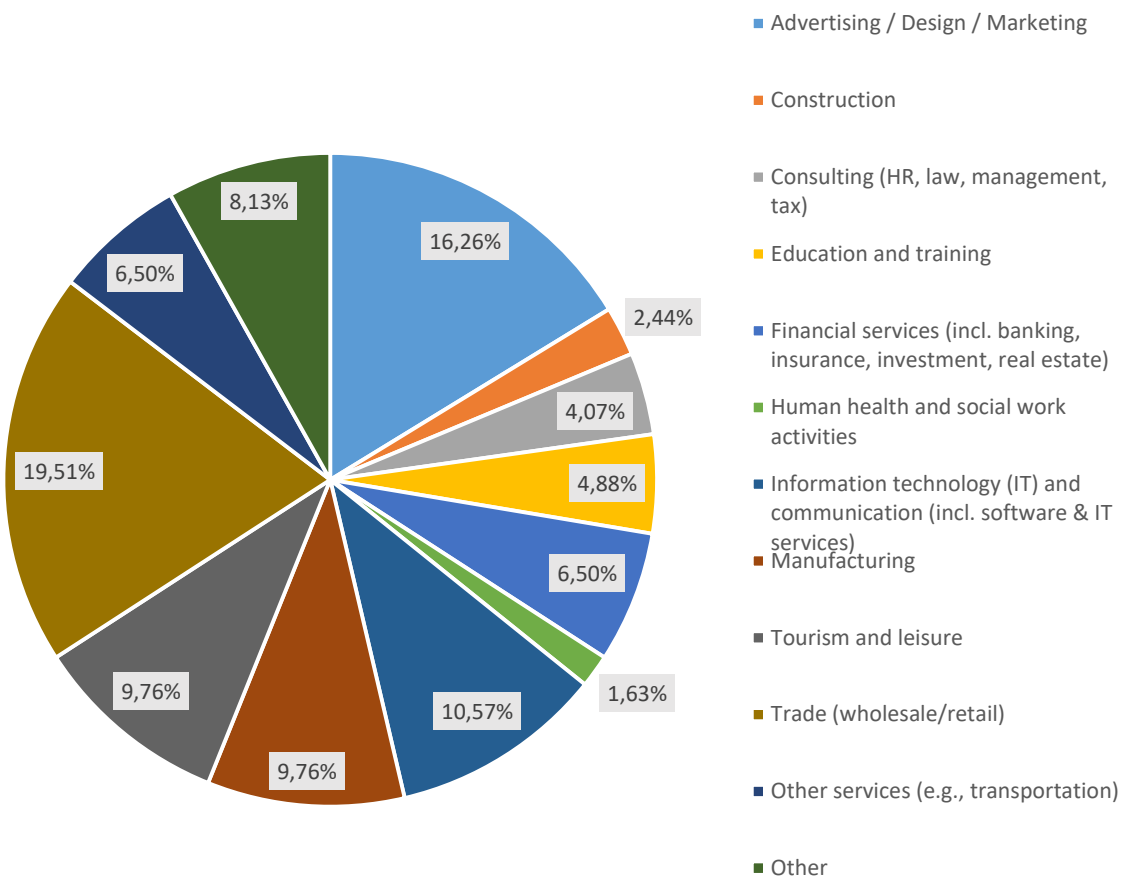

Figure 25. Sectors where students are starting businesses

An important conclusion that can be drawn from these 2 tables is that, although Trade is a quite attractive business sector, it does not appear easy to students to launch a sustainable enterprise in this sector.

In Figure 26, we provide information on steps made by nascent entrepreneurs towards starting a business. 96 percent of them reported that some activities had been performed. The majority of nascent entrepreneurs started with market 49 percent had collected had dealt with marketing issues: 49 percent had collected information about markets or competitors and 37 percent had discussed product or business idea with potential customers.

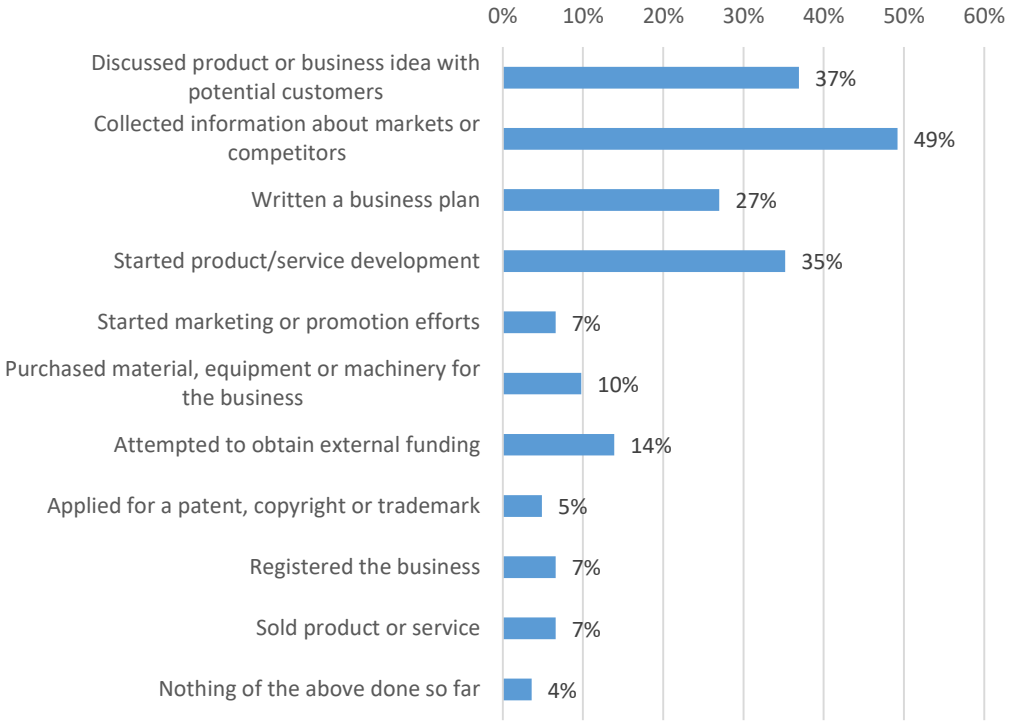

Figure 26. Steps made towards starting a business

Belarusian nascent entrepreneurs tend to found a business with co-founders (Figure 27). Only 21,3% of students plan to start alone, while 40,2 plan to start with 1 co-founder.

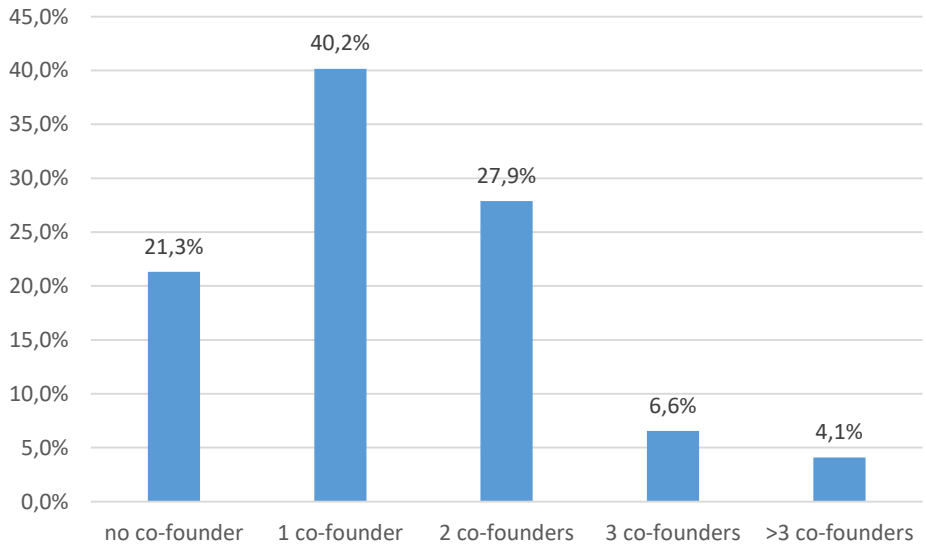

Figure 27. Expected number of co-founders

Important insights can be extracted from information about sources of business ideas that nascent entrepreneurs work on (Figure 28). Thus, the richest source of business ideas are students' hobby and pastime (44,7% of ideas). Many ideas come from HEIs: 30,1% – from studies, 9,8% – from research projects, 24,4% – from discussion with other students.

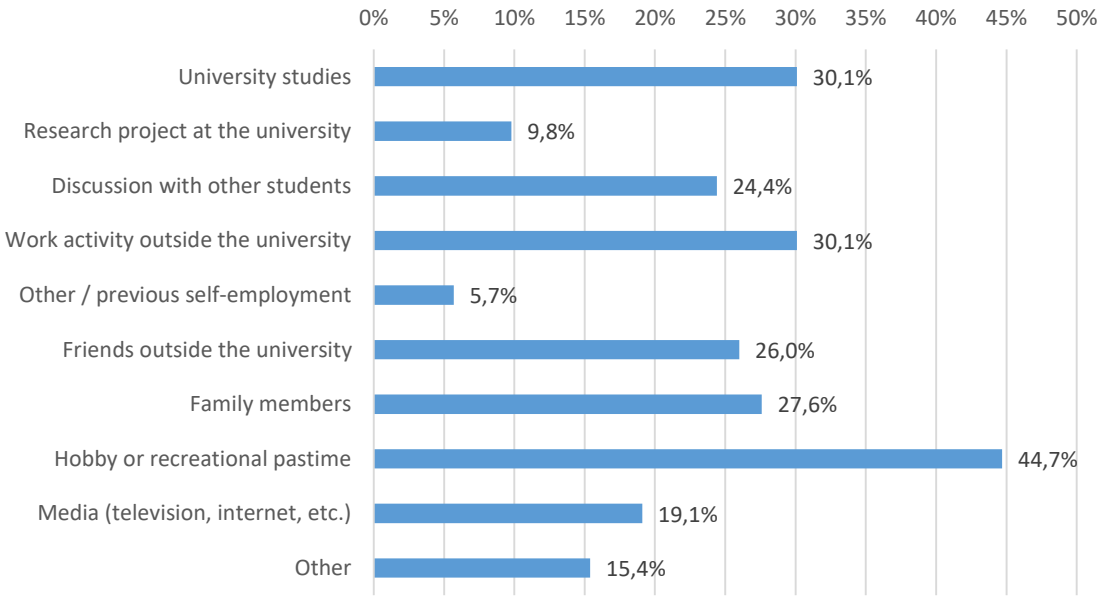

Figure 28. Sources of business ideas

6 Implications and summary

6.1 Main findings

Despite several unsupportive institutional factors, Belarusian students have demonstrated quite high entrepreneurial potential in comparison to other countries under consideration. Thus,

- 8,9% of students intend to start up a business as soon as they graduate; in five years after graduation – 56,8%, while the global average levels in 2016 were 8,8% and 38,2% respectively;
- the higher levels of interest in founding a business immediately after graduation were demonstrated by respondents studying Arts / Humanities (10,7%), Law / Economics (10%) and other fields (10,2%); the higher levels five years after graduation were observed among Law / Business students (60%), and Arts / Humanities (52,6%);
- if Belarusian students participated in GUESSS 2013, the country would take the 5-6 place with 4,57 score, close to Russia in terms of entrepreneurial intentions;
- 22,9 percent of Belarusian students reported that they were trying to start their own business or to become self-employed. Based on that, Belarus takes the 22nd place in the world between FYR Makedonia and Uruguay, below Russia (19th) and Ukraine (20th);
- 7 percent of students were already running their own business or were self-employed. This is lower than global average in 2016 (8,8%) and Belarus takes the 29th place among 50 countries;
- In terms of entrepreneurial environment, Belarusian HEIs are slightly above world average in 2013 (4,3 vs. 4,0 out of 7);
- Belarusian students have been learning more with regard to entrepreneurship than students from around the world (4,4 vs. 4.0 out of 7);

- although Trade is a quite attractive business sector to students, it does not appear easy to students to launch a sustainable enterprise in this sector.

6.2 Recommendations

Belarusian HEIs need to take serious strides to catch up with Western HEIs in terms of creating entrepreneurial ecosystems and thereby being contributors to the socioeconomic development of regions and countries.

It is worth stressing the importance of creating an entrepreneurship-supportive environment within Belarusian HEIs in promoting entrepreneurial activities and enhancing teaching and research missions. State and HEI policies towards creating entrepreneurial ecosystems at HEIs should develop incentives for knowledge-based entrepreneurship and reinforce the perceptions of students and academics that entrepreneurial activity is one of the attractive and feasible career paths.

Consequently, another important issue to be pointed out is a necessity to not only acknowledge and support the three HEI missions but to evaluate and benchmark their outcomes and the changing role of HEIs in Belarusian economy and society (Marozau & Apanasovich, 2015).

Belarusian HEIs should concentrate efforts on providing all members of the academic community with entrepreneurship-specific education to equip them with relevant knowledge and competences as well as with entrepreneurial alertness and risk-taking assets. More enterprising and action-oriented approaches and activities aimed at developing critical thinking, independence and readiness to assume responsibility supplemented with cross-disciplinary projects should gradually supplant traditional passive methods of education aiming at "feeding" learning material to students.

Therefore, HEIs should play the key role in entrepreneurship development processes relying on their experience and competences as well as on national and international networks.

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