



Entrepreneurial Intentions and Behaviour of Students attending Swedish Universities

Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey 2016

- National Report Sweden



UNIVERSITY OF SKÖVDE

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Last but not least, many thanks to our colleagues at the University of St. Gallen and University of Bern who managed the international project.

This is the first year the Swedish team is part of the GUESSS project. Therefore, we have looked at how other teams have developed and structured their material. The present national report hence has been inspired by other GUESSS reports especially by the Danish GUESSS report.

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¹ The full report of the 2016 International GUESSS Survey is available on: <http://www.guesssurvey.org>

² Further information about the University of Skövde can be found on: <http://www.his.se>

1 Introduction

GUESSS (Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey) is an international research project that aims to investigate the entrepreneurial intention and activity of students. The overall research design is managed by the Swiss Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland. The international research project was started in 2003 and is repeated every 2-3 years. The reference frameworks include central panel questions that are asked during every international survey which enables a geographical and temporal comparison.

In 2016 the seventh survey was conducted involving 50 countries which resulted in 122'509 completed responses.

1.1 Main aims of the survey

The main aims of GUESSS 2016 can be summarized as follows:

- Systematic observation (panel) of entrepreneurial intentions and activities of students
- Identification of antecedents and boundary conditions taken into account different factors (i.e. individual, family, and institutions) and types of entrepreneurship (e.g. new venture creation and family business succession)
- Observation and evaluation of Universities' activities and offerings related to the entrepreneurial education of their students

In addition, an emphasis was put on the further refinement of theoretical basis, which in the case of GUESSS are the Theory of Planned Behavior and Entrepreneurship education.

1.2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical foundation behind GUESSS is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991, 2002; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The theory's underlying argument is that the intention to perform a specific behavior is influenced by three main factors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

GUESSS focuses on general career choice intentions and entrepreneurial intentions of students. Additional factors that may impact the evolvement of career choice or entrepreneurial intentions are investigated through the three main elements of TPB. Examples are the university context, the family context, personal motives, and the social/cultural context. The overall theoretical framework is shown in Figure 1.

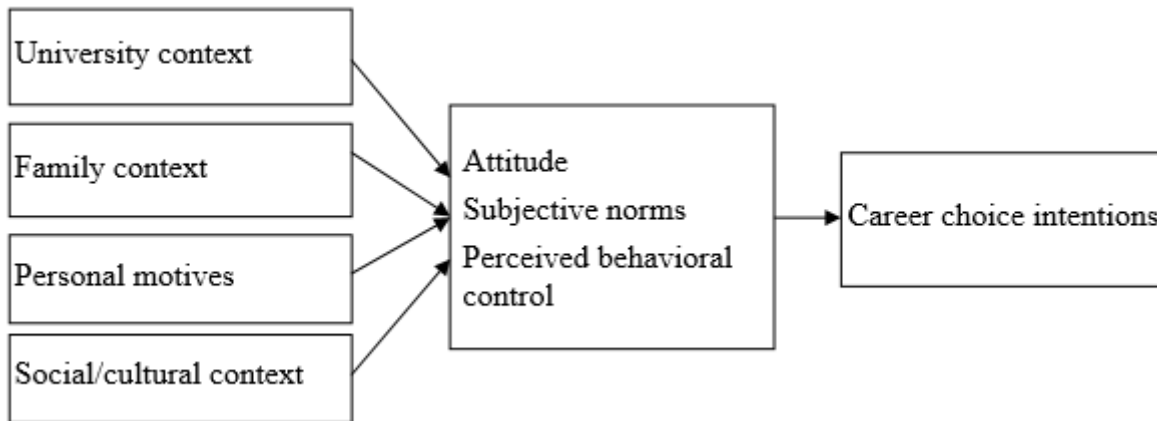


Figure 1. The theoretical framework of GUESSS 2013/2014 (Sieger et al., 2014, p. 7)

1.3 Structure of report

The report is structured as follows: In the next section, a brief overview of the research design and methodology including basic descriptive statistics about the Swedish GUESSS sample is given. Section 3 GUESSS' main question about students' career choice intentions followed by the determinants of entrepreneurial intention and its relationship to different factors of the theoretical framework. A more detailed analysis on nascent entrepreneurs, those students in the Swedish sample currently in the process of starting a business and becoming self-employed, will be addressed in section 5. The same focused analysis will be applied in section 6 addressing active founders, those students who have already started their own business and are self-employed. Potential successors are those students whose parents are self-employed and/or are major shareholders of a business. Insights into those students and their intentions are presented in section 7. Section 8 concludes the first Swedish GUESSS report.

2 Research design and methodology

The international GUESSS project is organized by KMU-HSG at the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland). Each participating country is represented by a country team. In Sweden, it is a team consisting of Susanne Durst and Jan Sedenka from the School of Business Studies at the University of Skövde. During the study's preparation, all Swedish universities were contacted, which led at the end to a total of nine universities/departments which had expressed their willingness to participate in the survey. Accordingly, emails with introduction details to GUESSS were forwarded to all the participating universities. The universities were then in charge of forwarding the survey link to their selected students. The survey was open from April 2016 to the beginning of June 2016.

In Sweden, approximately 21.315 questionnaires were sent out to students of different type, e.g. part-time students like MBA, diploma students, and students taking single courses. With 606 completed questionnaires, the response rate amounts 2,84 per cent. In total, we received 1,340 questionnaires, but only 606 of them were completed. This suggests that the length of the questionnaire may correlate negatively with the response rate.

2.1 Sample characteristics

In the following, the demographics of the Swedish GUESSS sample are presented.

2.1.1 Age

GUESSS Sweden 2016 respondents' mean year of birth is 1989,04 years (median=1991) which is 3,1 years lower than the average of the international GUESSS dataset (median=1993). A reason for a lower average age may be due to that Swedish students, on average, start studying earlier than students in other countries.

2.1.2 Gender

The Swedish GUESSS 2016 sample consists of more female (66.4%) than male (33.6%) students. The distribution of the overall international GUESSS 2016 is comparable but on a lower level: female (58,5%) versus male students (41,5%)

2.1.3 Nationality

The majority of respondents (85.3%) are Swedish citizens. 13.7 per cent of the students are from other foreign countries and the remaining students stated to have Bosnian, Russian or Croatian/Serbian/Macedonian/Slovene citizenship. Only 2.64 per cent of the respondents are exchange students.

2.1.4 Level of studies

The distribution of the level of studies among the participants of GUESSS Sweden 2016 is as follows. Approximately three-quarters of the students (74.5%) are enrolled in an

undergraduate study program (bachelor), followed by master students in graduate programs (18,4%%). The remaining students (7,1%) study on a Ph.D. or MBA level.

2.1.5 Fields of study

Figure 2 shows the distribution of study fields in the Swedish sample. As shown most students are enrolled in the fields of Law & Economics (24,4%), Engineering (18,3%), and Social sciences (16,80%) taking each more than 15 per cent of enrollment.

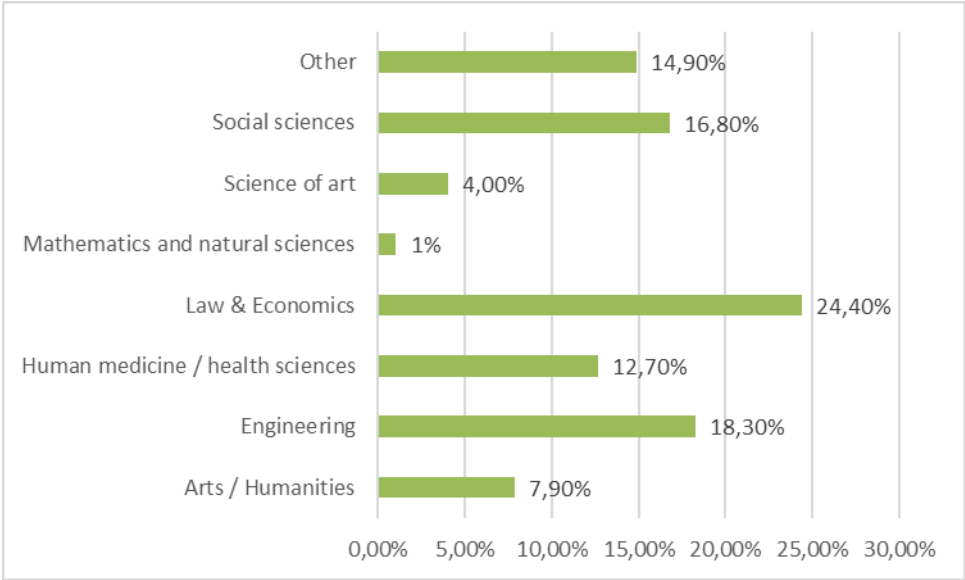


Figure 2. Study fields (n=606)

Figure 3 shows the distribution if gender is involved. The figure clarifies that female students dominate all fields but Engineering. This dominance of women students at universities is in line with European-wide developments (cf. Eurostat).

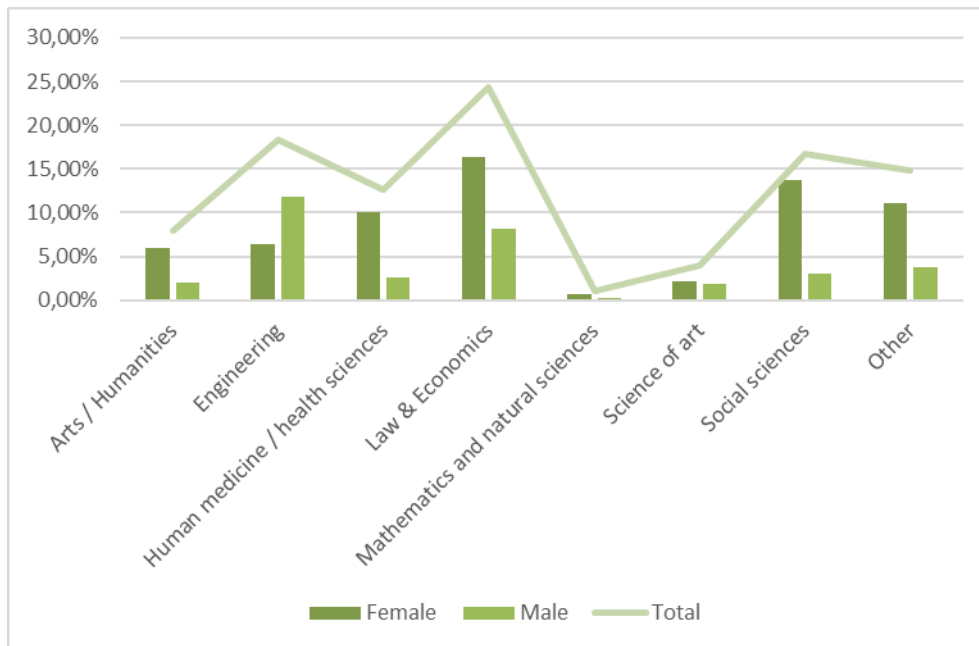


Figure 3. Study fields by gender (n=605)

2.1.6 Period of study

On average the participants have started their studies in 2014 and plan to have them completed by 2017.

3 Career choice intentions

3.1 The general overview

One central aim of GUESSS is to develop an in-depth understanding of students' career choice intentions of students. Therefore, the following questions are of relevance: What do the students intend to do after their studies. Which career path do they plan to follow? What do they want to do directly after completion of their studies, and what is their long-term career plan?

Figure 4 reports what the students in the Swedish sample want to be right after completion of their studies (dark green bars) and 5 years later (light green bars). The figure provides insights into career paths as an employee in the private sector, in the public sector, or in a non-profit organization. Being employed in a small, medium-sized, or large firm together with being employed in public service are clearly the most preferable intentions directly after studies. Referring to five years later, it can be noted that the attractiveness of these option decreases significantly. An exemption represents the employment in a large business. Here one can spot a slight increase in attractiveness. This may be due to the extensive and diverse range of responsibilities larger firms can offer compared to the other career paths. Referring to founding intentions, only 5.3% of all students report that they want to work in their own firm right after studies. Five years after completion of studies, 22.4% of all students want to have their own firm, which is an impressive number.

Becoming a successor as an alternative path to entrepreneurship does not seem to be an option or is something the Swedish students are not aware of. One per cent of all respondents stated that being a family successor could be an option after five years, and 1,3 per cent reported that in the context of a non-family successor. These figures are very low considering the number of Swedish owners that will withdraw from their business in the next years (Företagarna, 2011; LRF Konsult, 2014).

Roughly 8 per cent (7,9%) of the students falls into the group of students that are undecided what to do after studies. Five years later this figures grows to 12 per cent. Therefore, more potential entrepreneurs might be found in this group.

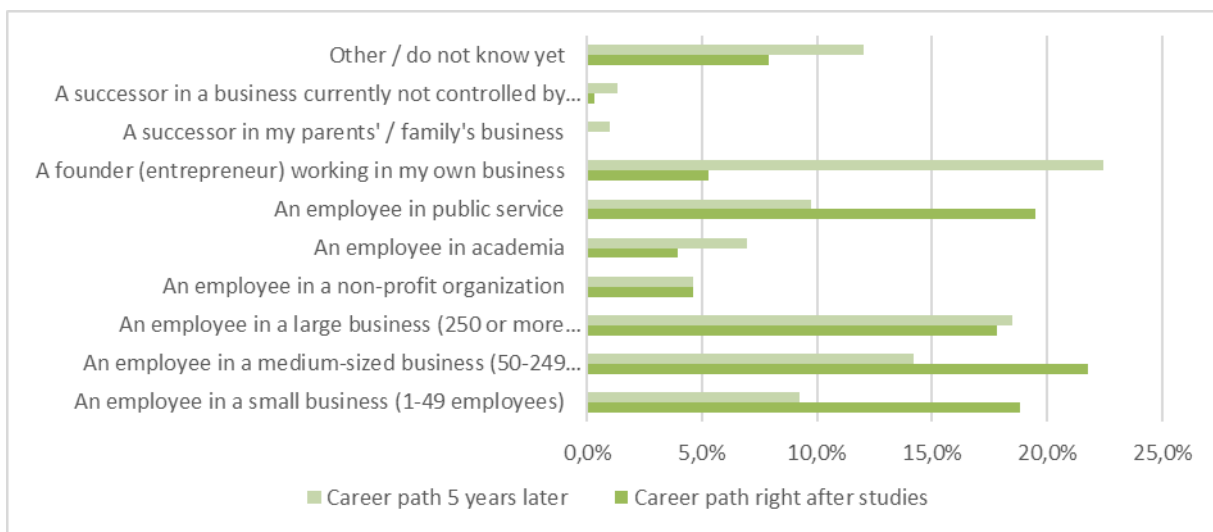


Figure 4. Career choice intentions of Swedish students (n=606)

3.2 Career intentions across fields of study

The field of study is a decisive factor in the context of general career choice intentions and entrepreneurial intentions. Hence, the career choice intentions were split between the fields of study (Figure 5).

The figure clarifies that students of Law & Economics prefer being employed in a small, medium-sized or large company. Students of Engineering also prefer an employment in the private sector, with an emphasis towards larger companies. On the other hand, and not surprising, students of human medicine/health sciences and Social Sciences see the public sectors as suitable employer after graduation. When considering entrepreneurial intentions here too, students of Law & Economics and Engineering are the ones who are most interested.

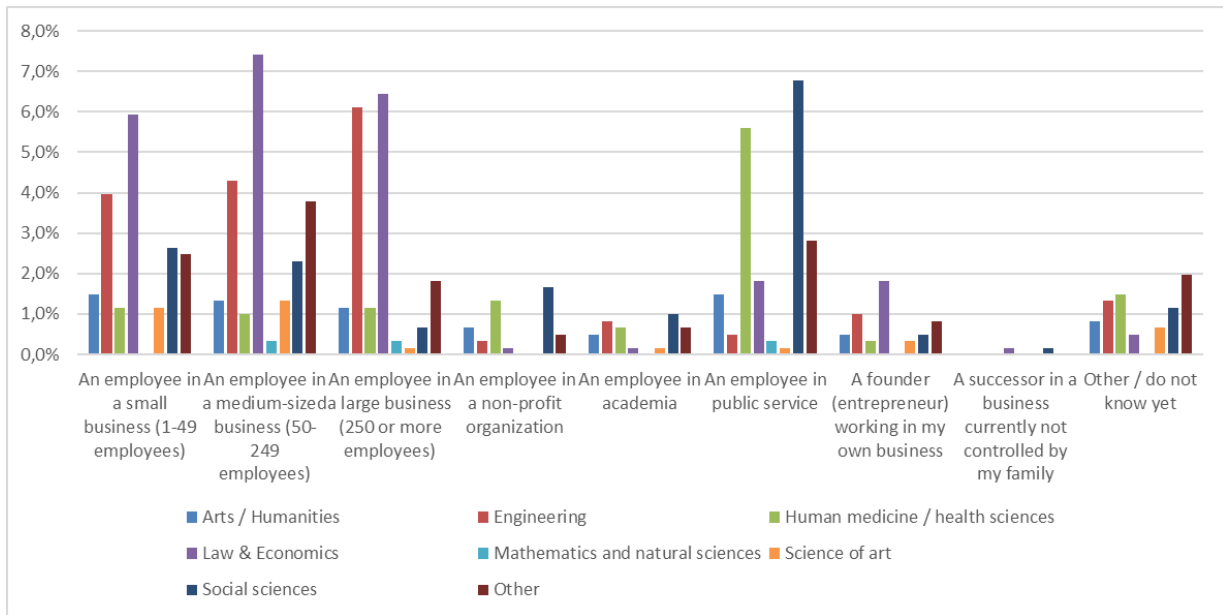


Figure 5. Career choice by study fields directly after studies (n=606)

Five years after graduation the career paths intentions reveals changes (Figure 6). What could be highlighted is that fewer students of Law & Economics intend to become an employee but more plan to become founders. Overall, the intention to start an own firm increases in all study fields. Also, the share of students who want to be a successor increases across the fields of study, but on very low levels.

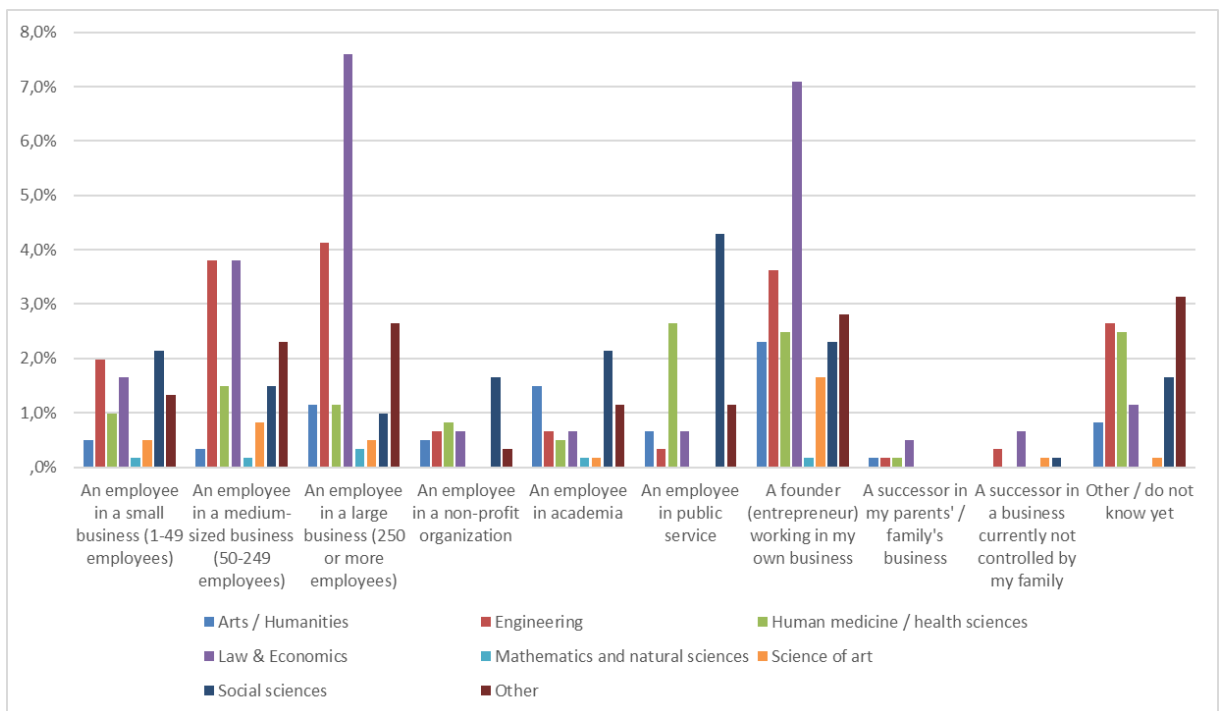


Figure 6. Career choice by study fields after 5 years (n=606)

3.3 Career intentions across gender

The career choice intentions were also split across gender to address the increasing interest in gender perspectives of Entrepreneurship. International studies (e.g. Amorós & Bosma, 2014) have found that a larger share of males is engaged in entrepreneurship compared to females (measured as an intention to start a new business).

Figure 7 depicts the career choice intentions of male and female students directly after studies. It shows that the share of intentional founders among males is higher than among females (3.3% versus 2%). The career path of a successor is less attractive for both female and male students (0,2%). Larger differences between female and male students can be seen in the public sector (15,4% versus 4,1%), being employed in a medium-sized enterprise (16,4% versus 5,5%) and in a small company (12,1% versus 6,8%).

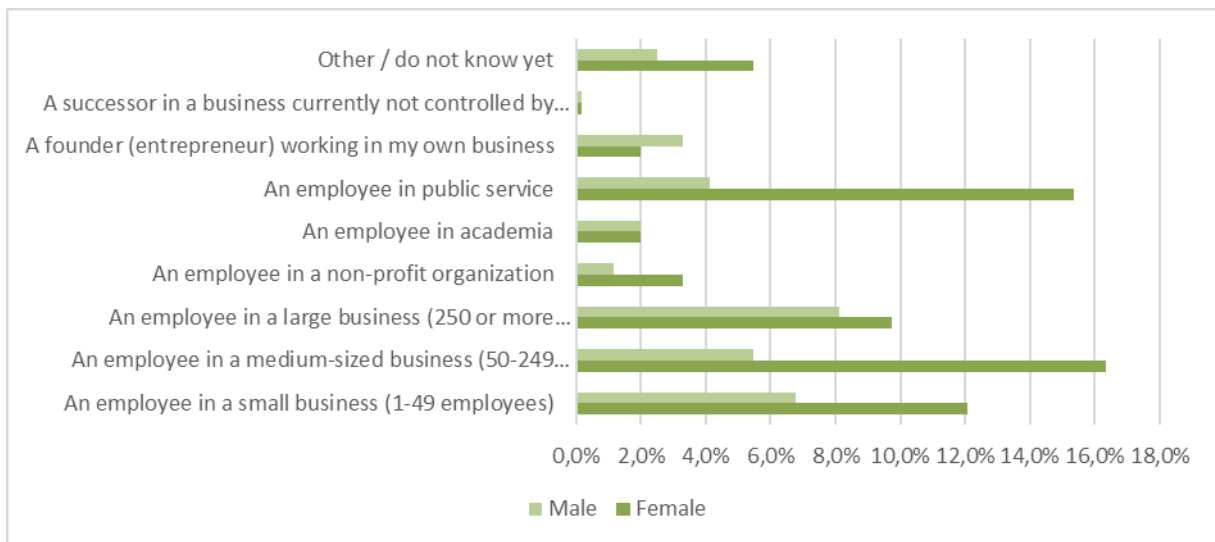


Figure 7. Career choice intentions by gender right after studies (n=605)

After five years, the career intentions for both genders change (Figure 8). It is interesting to see is that then more female students than male students intend to become a founder (12,9% versus 9,6%). Compared with the Global GUESSS, this represents a difference, as it shows that male students show greater entrepreneurial intentions, directly after studies and five years later.

One can also see that female students are more interested in being an employee in academia than male students. This represents a change to the intentions presented before, which showed equal numbers.

Concerning employment in the private sectors, after five years, preferences are given to large companies; this applies to both female and male students.

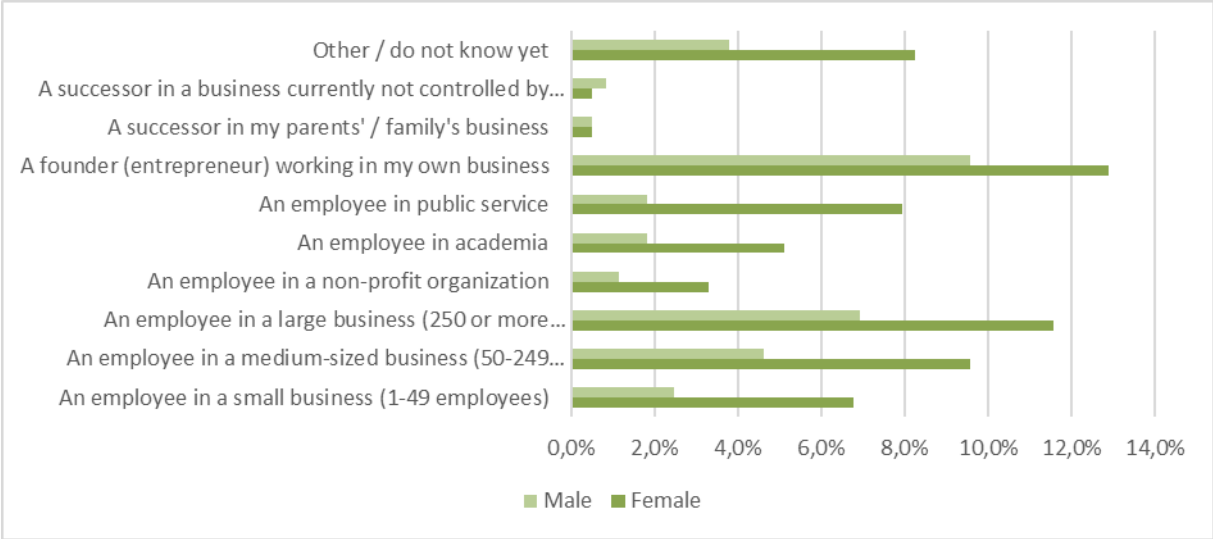


Figure 8. Career choice intentions by gender five years after studies (n=605)

4 Determinants of entrepreneurial intentions

4.1 The general level

The career intention to become an entrepreneur depends on several factors. The GUESSS study considers the university context, locus of control, attitude, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, family background, and the society.

4.1.1 The university context

An important element of the GUESSS research model is the role of the university in the context of entrepreneurial intentions.

The students were asked about the entrepreneurial climate and atmosphere found in their respective universities. Thereby, the students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree to the statements listed in Table 1 (Luethje & Franke, 2004). Answers ranged from 1 (do not agree at all) to 7 (very much agree).

Item number	Statement
1	The atmosphere at my university inspires me to develop ideas for new businesses
2	There is a favorable climate for becoming an entrepreneur at my university
3	At my university, students are encouraged to engage in entrepreneurial activities

Table 1. Items to assess university's entrepreneurial climate

The entrepreneurial climate scale is generated by calculating the mean of all three answers (Figure 9), in the case of the Swedish sample it is 3,94, which suggests an average entrepreneurial climate.

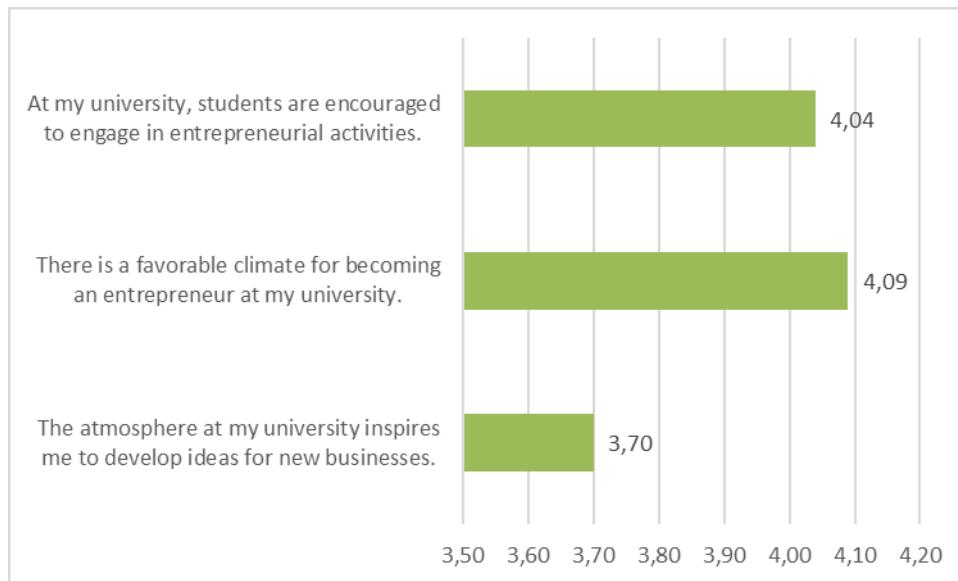


Figure 9. The influence of the university context on entrepreneurial activities
(1=do not agree at all, 7=very much agree)

Considering the last item, the finding clearly indicates room for improvements. Universities interested in fostering entrepreneurship may reconsider the existent university atmosphere. The answers, however, should be taken with caution, given the heterogeneity of participating universities/institutes in the Swedish sample.

In addition, there is an interest as to how much the students have been learning about entrepreneurship at their universities. Therefore, the students were asked about the extent to which they agree to a few statements about their learning progress during their studies (1=do not agree at all, 7=very much agree). The question started with “The courses and offerings I attended...” and then continued with the following statements (cf. Souitaris et al., 2007):

Item number	Statement
1	...increased my understanding of the attitudes, values, and motivations of entrepreneurs.
2	...increased my understanding of the actions someone has to take to start a business.
3	...enhanced my practical management skills in order to start a business.
4	...enhanced my practical management skills in order to start a business.
5	...enhanced my ability to identify an opportunity.

Table 2. Items to assess entrepreneurial learning at the universities

The entrepreneurial learning scale is generated by calculating the mean of all five answers (Figure 10), which led to a mean of 3,45 that can be considered unsatisfactory.

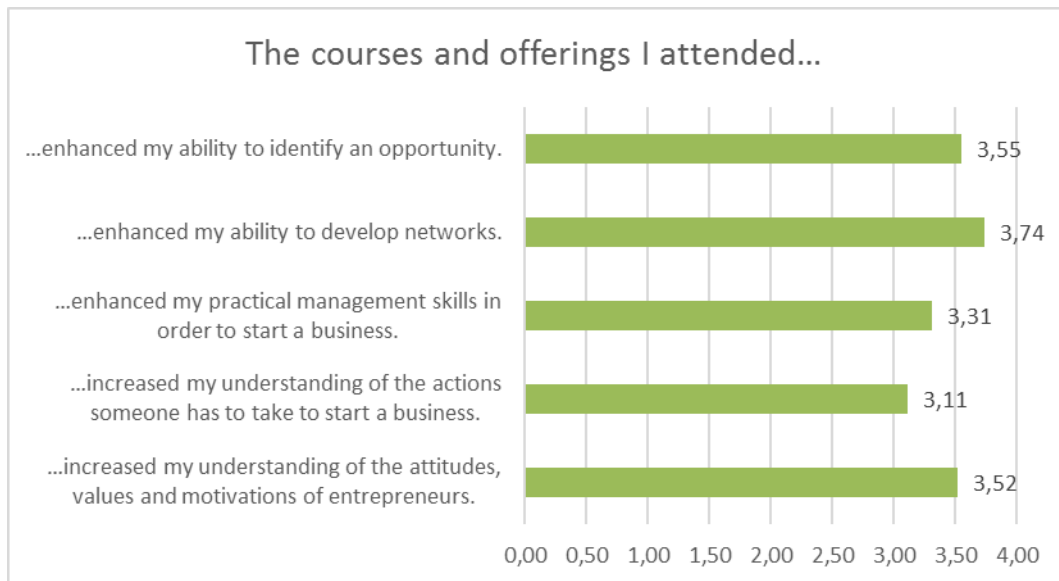


Figure 10. Entrepreneurial learning assessments

(1=do not agree at all, 7=very much agree)

Figure 10 clarifies that entrepreneurial learning at Swedish universities offers further room for improvements. The findings suggest that so far entrepreneurial learning in the participating universities/departments results in slightly below average outcomes.

In addition, the students were asked about the extent to which they have been attending entrepreneurship-related courses and offerings at their universities (Figure 11). Multiple answers were possible.

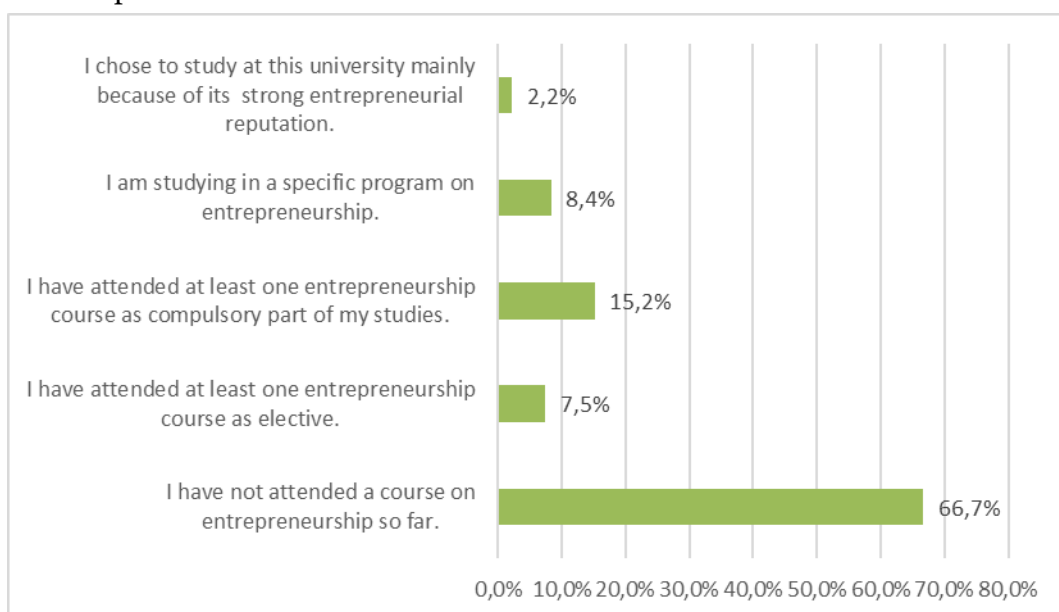


Figure 11. Attendance of entrepreneurship courses

The figure highlights that many Swedish students (66.7%) have not attended a course on entrepreneurship at all. Only 8.4 per cent of the students study a specific program on entrepreneurship; 15.2 per cent have at least one compulsory course as part of their study and 7.5 per cent have attended at least an elective entrepreneurship course. Again, the answers need to be considered against the backdrop of the participating universities/institutes in the Swedish sample. Given that the actual attendance may be even lower.

4.1.2 The family context

In entrepreneurship research, there is a long-standing debate how the occupational background of the parents influences the children's' career choice intentions. Research tends to agree that children of entrepreneurial parents are more likely to become entrepreneurs themselves (Laspita et al., 2012). Against this backdrop, the students were asked if their parents (father, mother, or both) are currently self-employed.

Roughly 70 per cent of the students does not have any self-employed parents (68.3%). 6.9 per cent of all respondents reported that both parents are self-employed. A share of 4.5 per cent has a self-employed mother, and 20.3 per cent of the students have a self-employed father.

In addition, the students were asked whether their parents are majority owners of a business. The findings are presented in Figure 12 which indicates the existence of dispersed ownership.

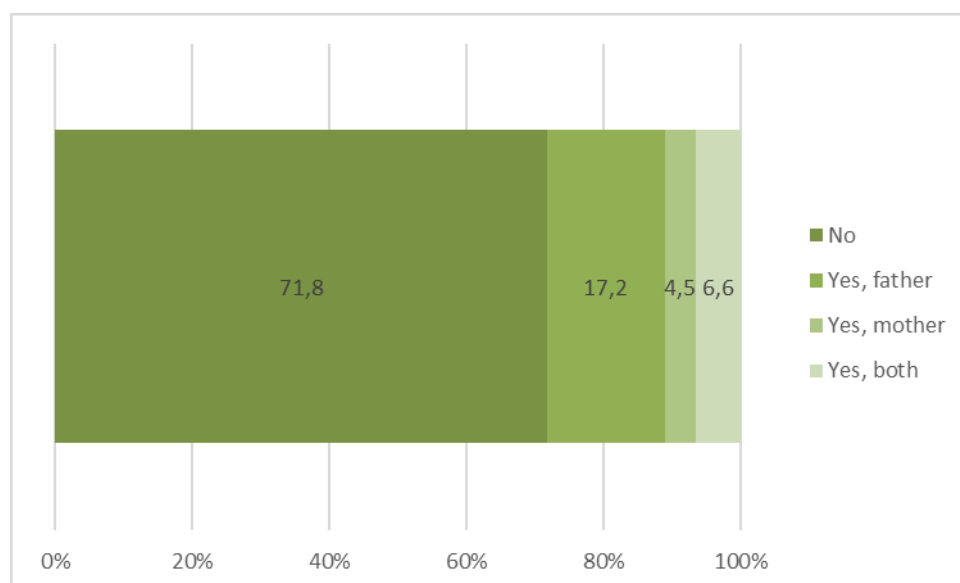


Figure 12. Majority ownership with parents (n=606)

4.1.3 Locus of control, attitude, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy

The students were asked to indicate their level of agreement to several statements that capture their general intention to become an entrepreneur in the future (Linan & Chen, 2009). Table 3 summarizes these statements.

Item number	Statement
1	I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur
2	My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur
3	I will make every effort to start and run my own firm
4	I am determined to create a firm in the future
5	I have very seriously thought of starting a firm
6	I have the strong intention to start a firm someday

Table 3. Entrepreneurial intention items

The findings are presented in Figure 13.

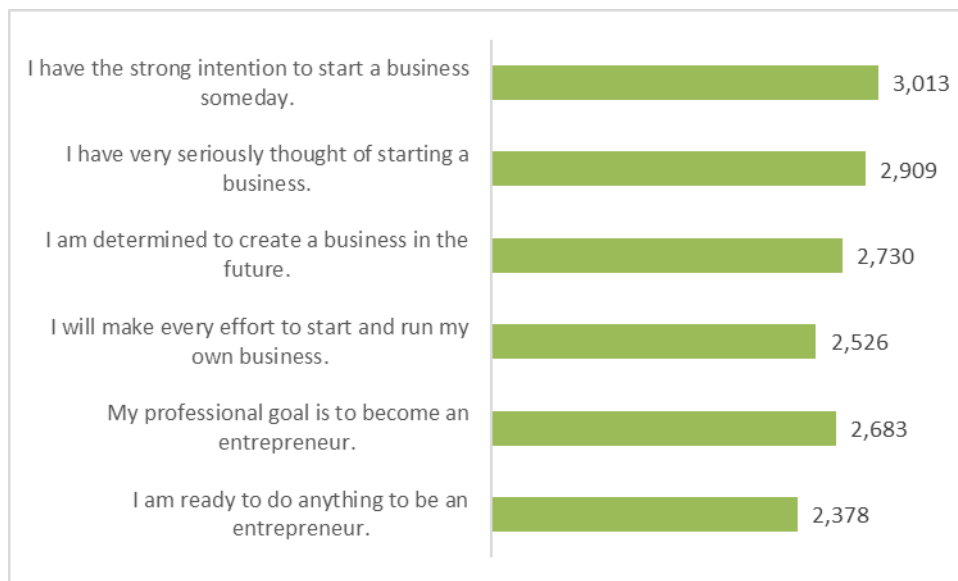


Figure 13. Entrepreneurial intention items – part 1

(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

The findings suggest that the entrepreneurial intention of Swedish students is rather low. The mean of all six items is 2,707, whereas the mean for the international GUESSS data is 4,19.

In addition, the students were asked to indicate their level of agreement to several additional statements intended to capture their entrepreneurial intentions (Table 4).

Item number	Statement
1	I am usually able to protect my personal interests
2	When I make plans, I am almost certain to make them work
3	I can pretty much determine what will happen in my life
4	Being an entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages to me
5	A career as an entrepreneur is attractive for me
6	If I had the opportunity and resources, I would become an entrepreneur
7	Being an entrepreneur would entail great satisfactions for me
8	Among various options, I would rather become an entrepreneur

Table 4. Additional set of entrepreneurial intention items

This resulted in the following finding:



Figure 14. Entrepreneurial intention items – part 2

(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

The findings suggest that being an entrepreneur could be one possibility among many, but it is obviously not the possibility one is striving for.

The students were asked to assess the level of agreement with some entrepreneurial activities (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Assessment of a number of entrepreneurial activities

(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

In comparison with all statements, being a leader and communicator is assessed the highest (even this mean value is on a slightly above average level). Interesting is the value obtained for the statement related to product/service creation, which is the lowest one of all statements and which may be linked to the low level of becoming an entrepreneur as shown in Figure 13. This in turn suggests that a Swedish student may join force with a person that is good at this activity.

Finally, the students were asked about possible reactions of different reference groups if they were to become entrepreneurs (Figure 16).

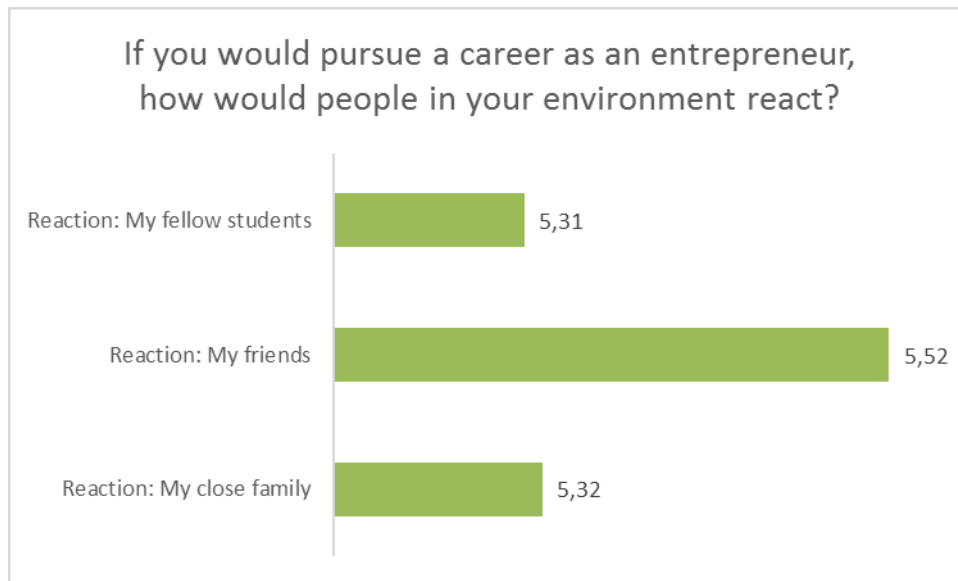


Figure 16. Reactions to a career as an entrepreneur
 (1=very negatively, 7= very positively)

The findings suggest that the students could fall back on a positive supporting environment. Taking into consideration the findings presented before, it becomes clear that there is no correlation between the existence of a supporting environment and action.

4.1.4 The society context

Society is considered as another factor that influences the pursuit of an entrepreneurial orientation. Therefore, the students were asked several questions relating to this factor. The answers for the first set of questions are shown in Figure 17.

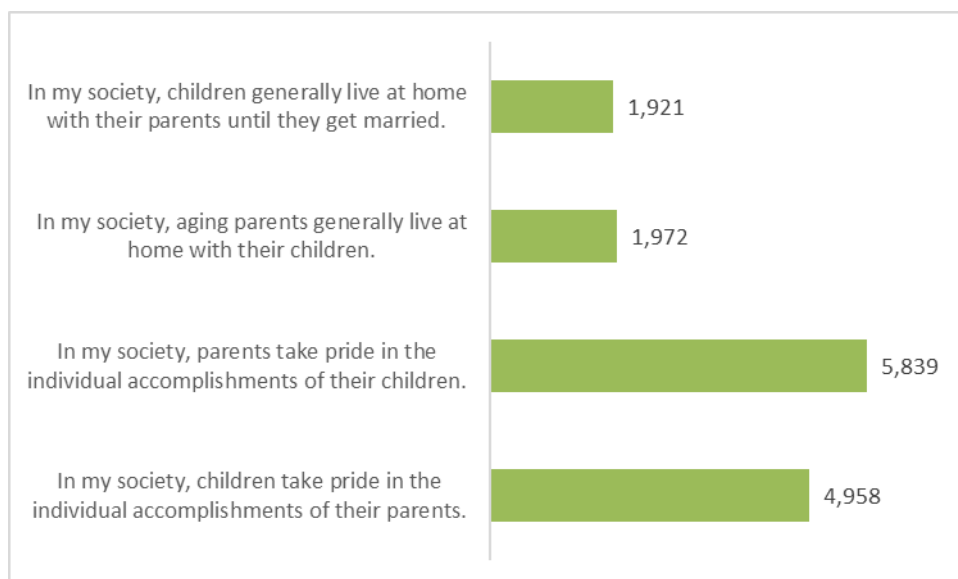


Figure 17. Characteristics of society
 (1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

The findings are in line with factors usually being assigned to the Scandinavian culture regarding independence (Bjerke, 2013).

Additionally, the students were asked to assess their society based on a number of additional statements (Figure 18).

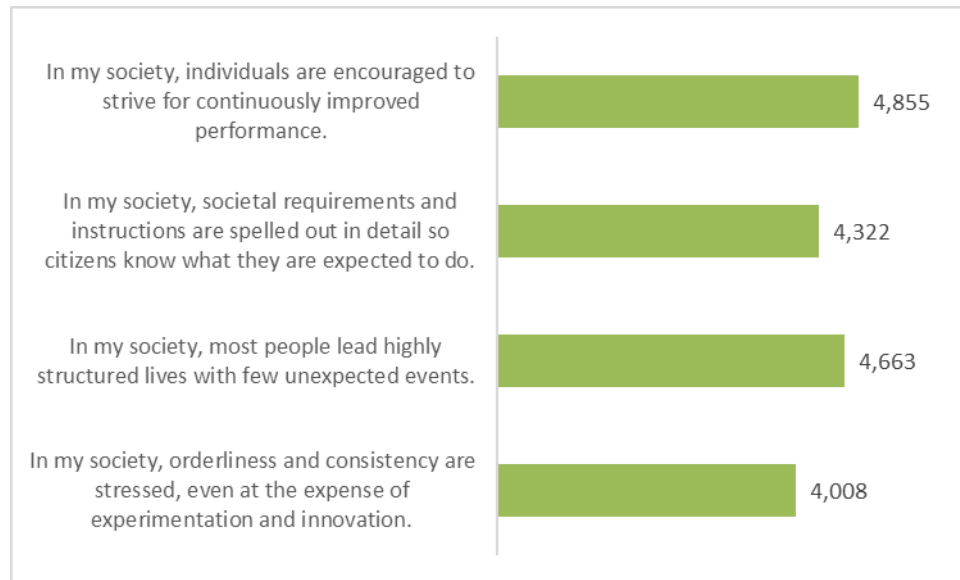


Figure 18. Assessment of society

(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

The findings indicate that the society the students are referring to can be described as a stable one with few ups and downs.

The students were also asked to assess their respective society based on several pairs. The findings are presented in the following:

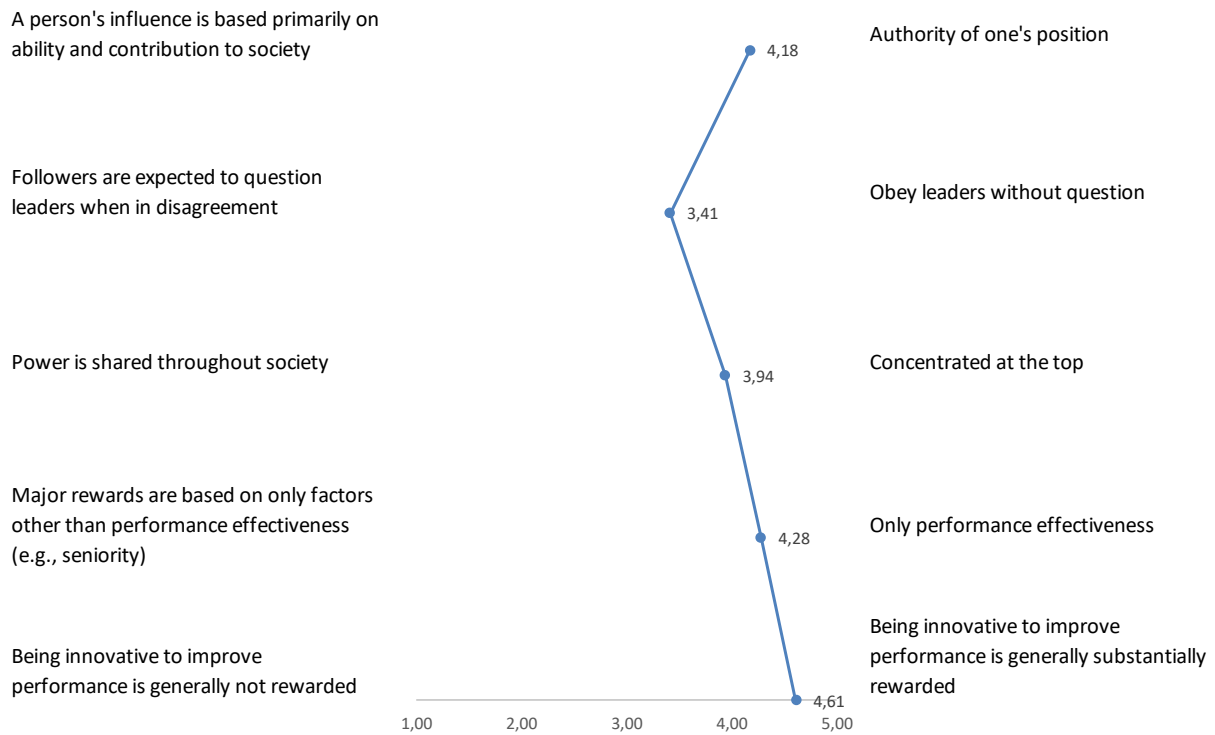


Figure 19. Assessment of society (polarity profile)

(Scale from 1 – 7)

The findings highlight the emphasis that is put on being innovative to improve performance as well as on the role of performance effectiveness. The finding regarding the relationship between leader and follower is in line with the country's score on power distance (Hofstede, 1983).

5 Nascent entrepreneurs

If nascent entrepreneurs are considered, the Swedish sample indicates that only 6.27 per cent of the respondents are currently trying to start their own business or are trying to become self-employed. Compared to GUESSS International this share accounts for less than one third of the international average of 22 per cent. In fact, the Swedish students is at the very end of all participating countries.

The number of students who stated that they already run a business and are self-employed also referred to as active founders, is 6 per cent for the Swedish sample and 9 per cent for the International GUESSS study.

In the following, the responses of this small group of students are presented.

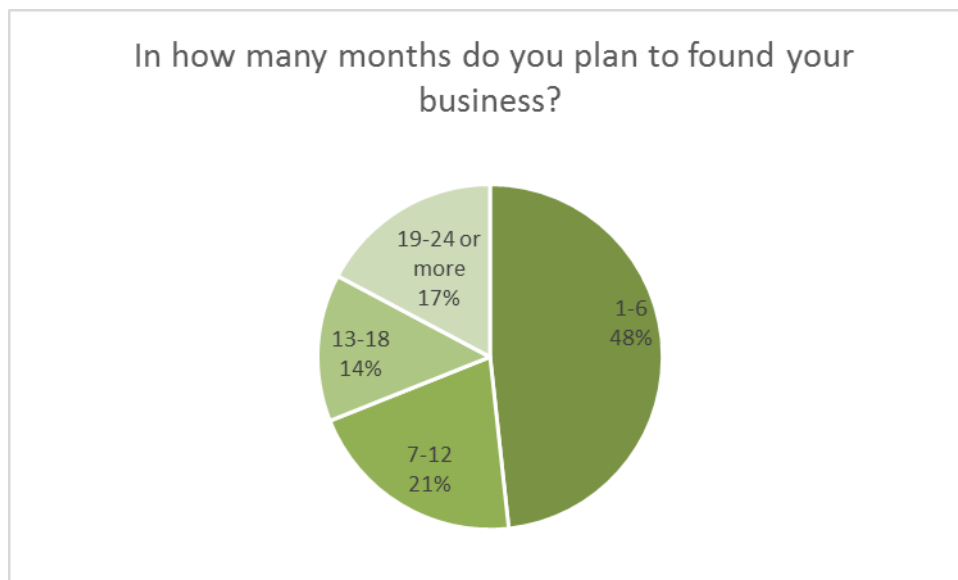


Figure 20. Planned date of foundation (n=29)

The findings show that almost half of this group intends to start their business in the coming six months indicating far developed start-up activities.

The findings also reveal that these planned companies are intended to be the main source of making a living for the large majority of respondents (70%) (Figure 21).

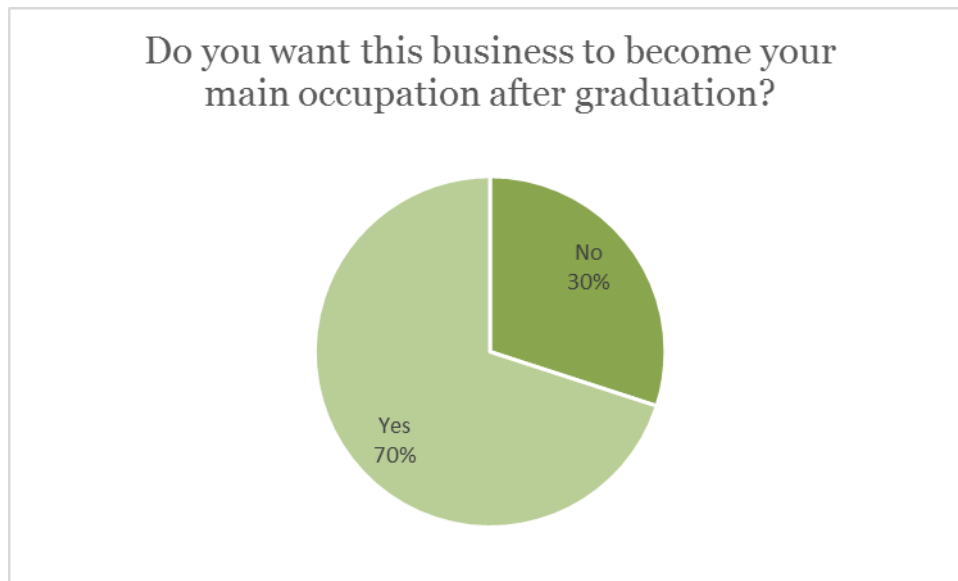


Figure 21. Occupation after graduation (n=30)

These companies also represent the first business foundation for 73 per cent of students.

Regarding the sectors, most businesses will be started in IT and other. The latter was specified as interior design, music, or translation. These sectors were followed by trade and advertising/design/marketing.

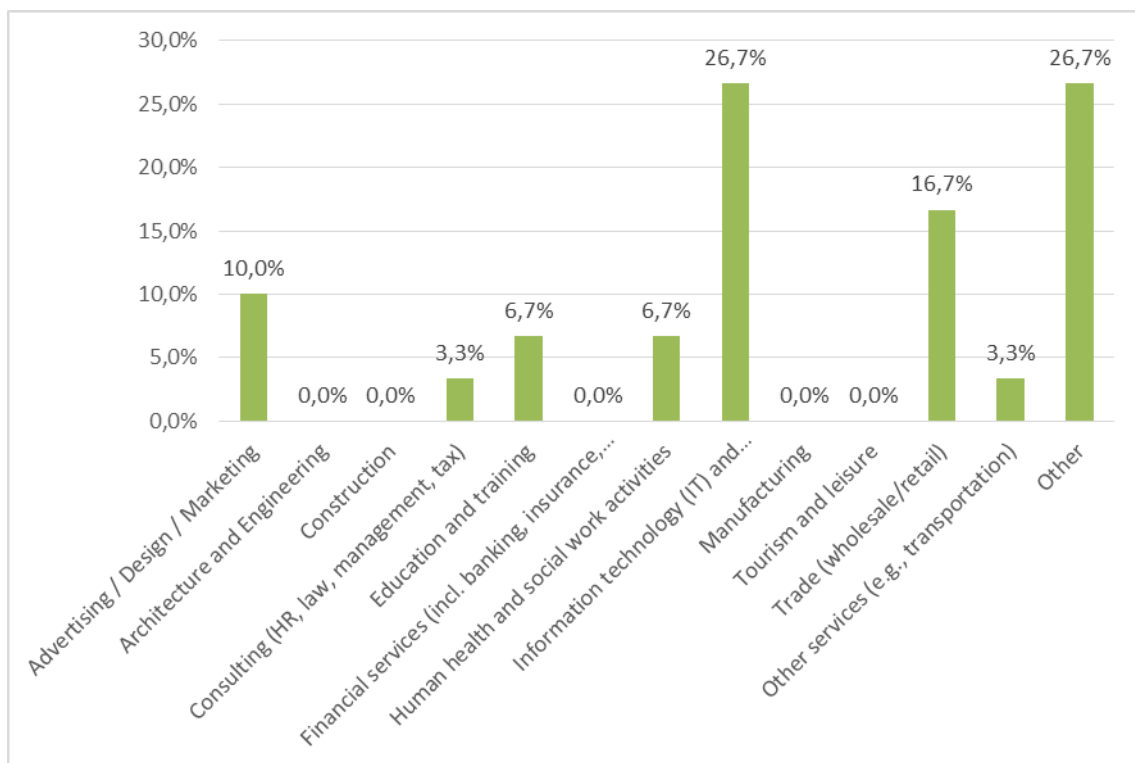


Figure 22. Sectors in which the business will be started

The students concerned were also asked about some start-up activities. The findings are summarized in Figure 23 (Multiple answers were possible).

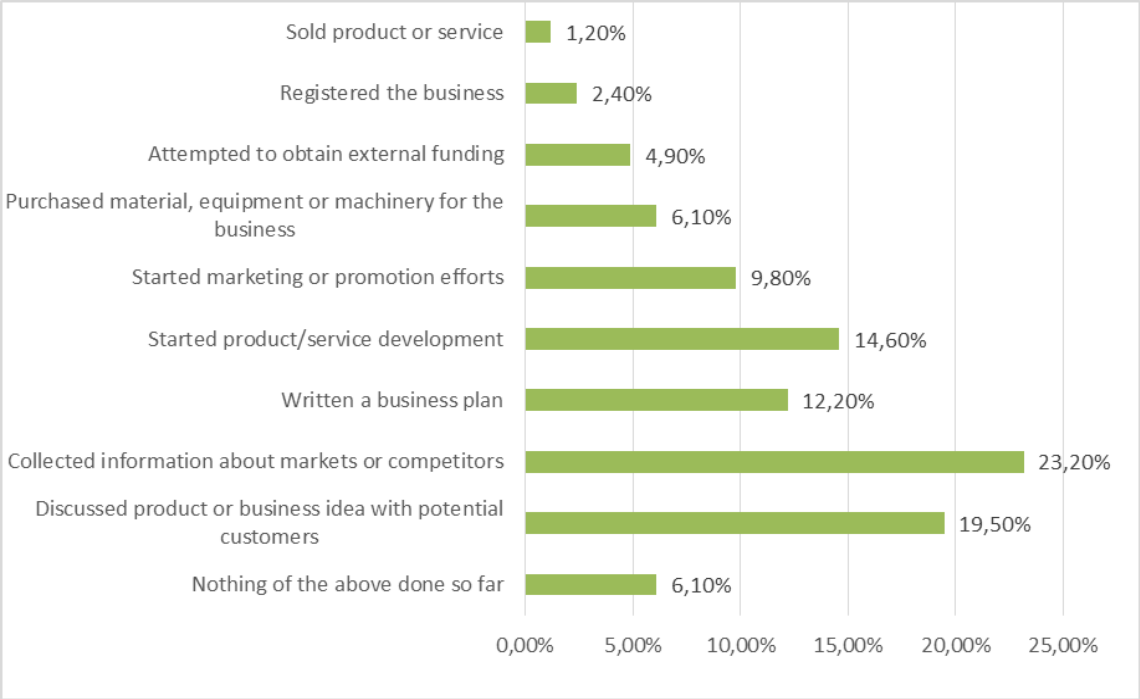


Figure 23. Start-up activities undertaken hitherto

The collection of market information, interactions with potential customers and the start of product/service development are the activities that were reported the most. This is in line with the Global GUESSS. The option *sold products/service* obtained the lowest value (1,2%). Also, *external funding* can be assessed as less relevant which may suggest that the businesses to be started are low tech ones or haven't reached yet the stage of development making this activity a topical option.

The motives behind the foundations are presented in the following:



Figure 24. Motives behind business foundation

(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

The responses clarify that neither societal nor financial issues are the driving forces behind the business foundations.

About the importance of several ideas regarding the management of business, the findings highlight the wish of contributing to customer satisfaction. Followed by offering a product/service that the founders themselves consider as useful and a closeness to customers and their needs and values (Figure 25).

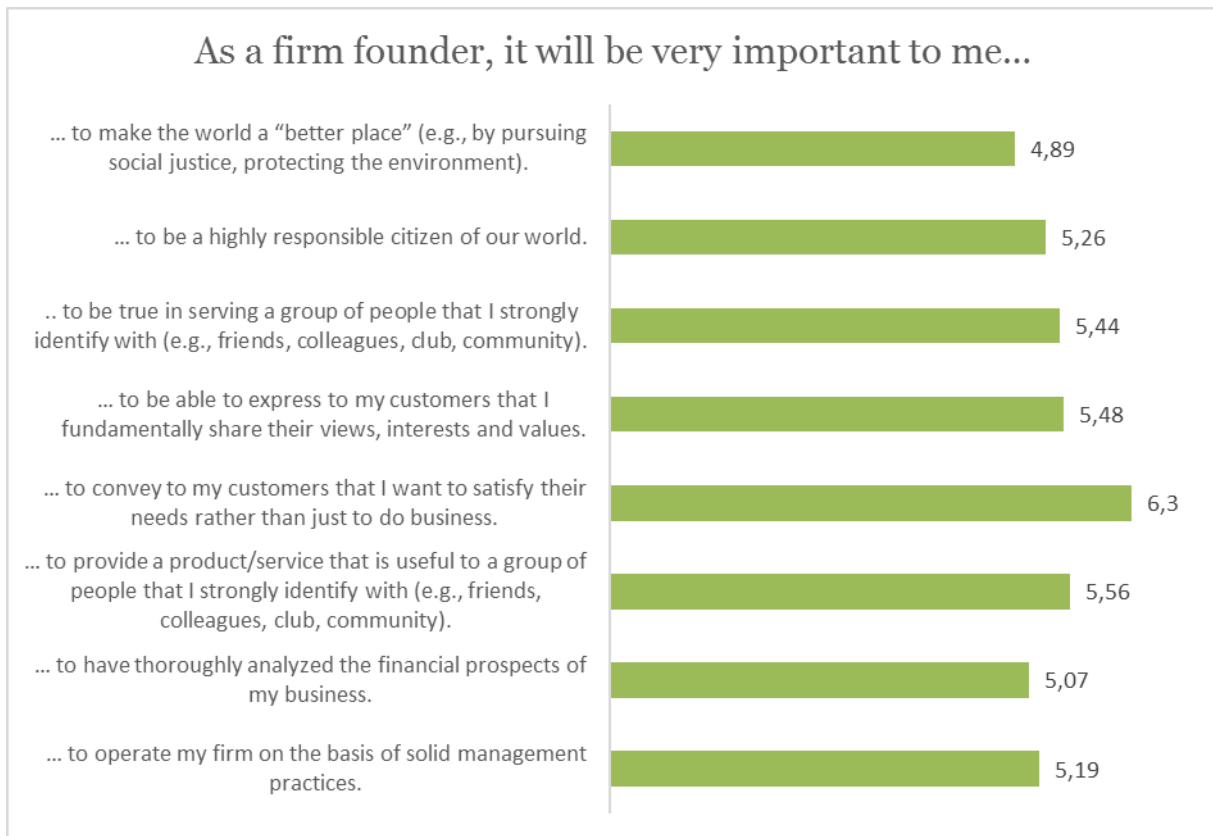


Figure 25. Important aspects of being a founder

(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

The students concerned were also asked to answer questions related to the management of the firm (Figure 26).



Figure 26. Important aspects regarding firm management

(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

An emphasis is put on establishing a strong competitive advantage and outperforming competitors, followed by differentiation towards competition and an achievement for society at large.

Almost half of the prospective founders (47%) will have complete ownership (Figure 27).

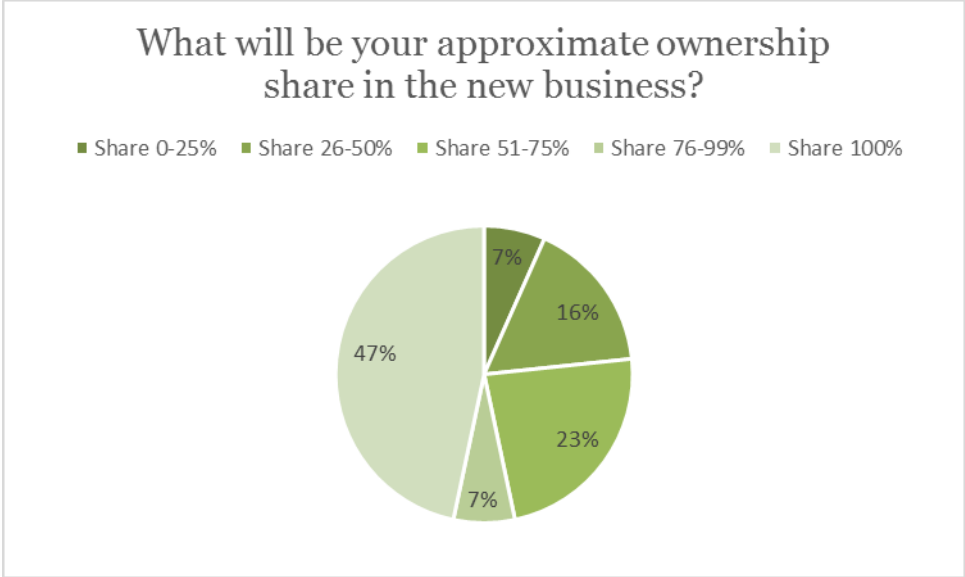


Figure 27. Ownership share in the new business (n=30)

The number of co-founders shows as follows:

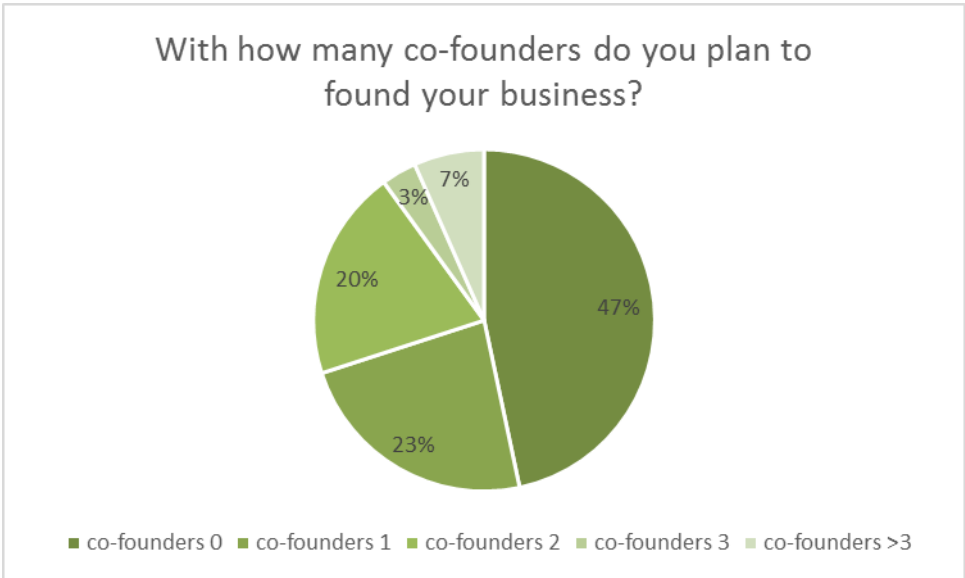


Figure 28. Number of co-founders in the planned business (n=30)

The questions relating to the number of co-founders being female shows that in 38 per cent of all cases one female co-founder is involved.

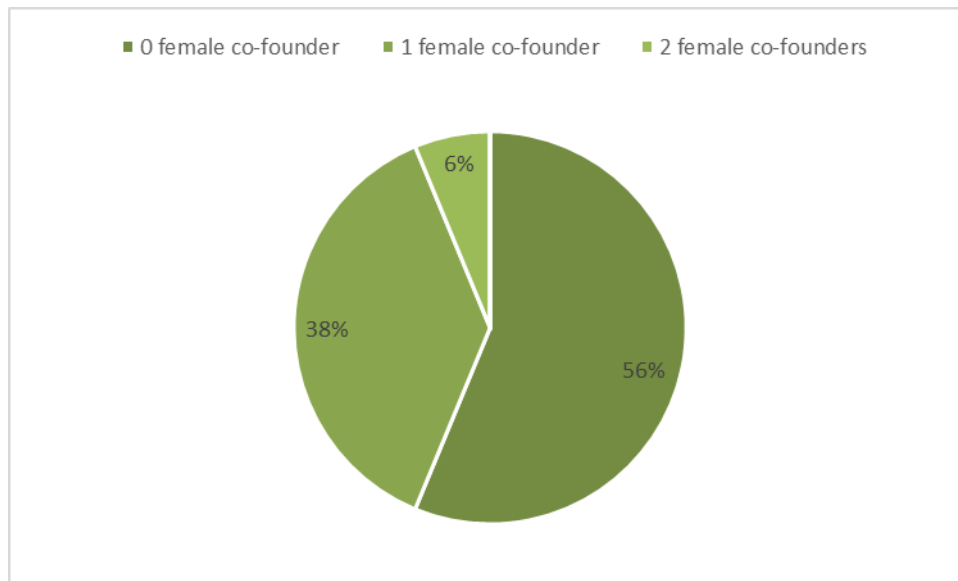


Figure 29. Number of female co-founders (n=30)

In addition, a quarter of all students concerned reported that one co-founder is a relative.

44 per cent of the students concerned reported that they will start their business with one or more fellow students (Figure 30).

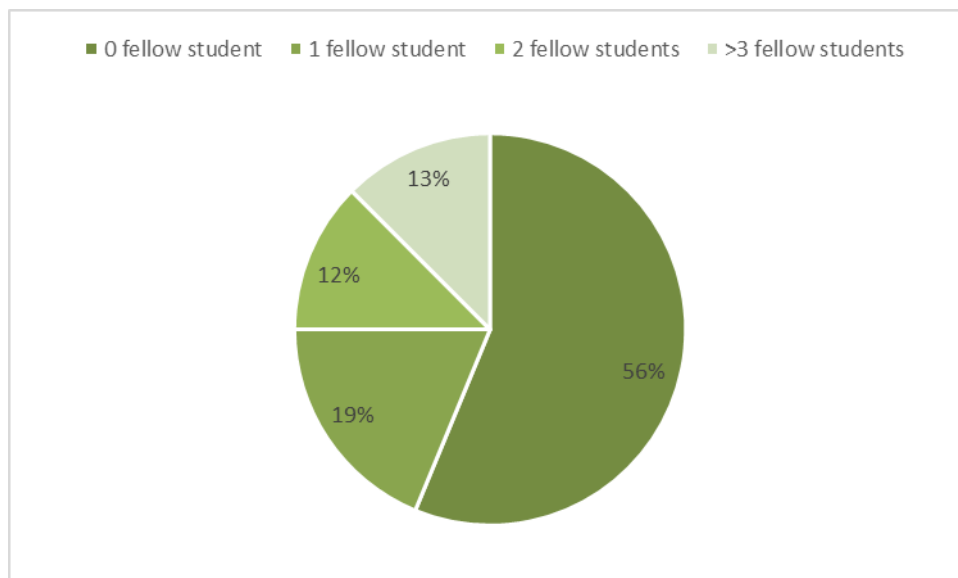


Figure 30. Number of co-founders being fellow students (n=30)

In addition, the students were asked to specify the emergence of their business idea. The findings are presented in Figure 31.

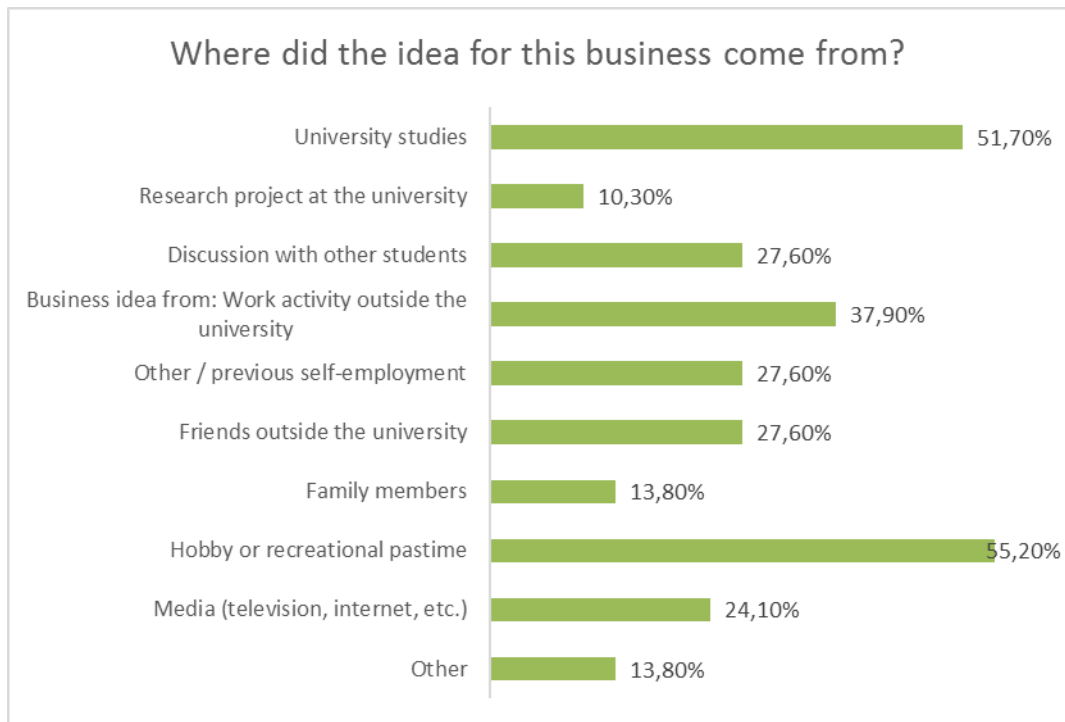


Figure 31. Origin of business idea (n=30)

(Multiple answers were possible)

The findings suggest that the business ideas are primarily an outcome of hobbies/recreational pastime followed by universities studies. Research projects at the university represent an option of low likelihood. These findings are in line with the Global GUESSS.

6 Active entrepreneurs

The active entrepreneurs (n=35) were asked in what year they did found their businesses. The median and the mode are 2013. The mean is 2010,46. In the Swedish sample, 1980 is the earliest and 2016 the most recent founding year.

The active entrepreneurs were further asked about the number of full-time employees they had during the time of the study. The mean is 13,9 employees. Thereby the largest company has 430 employees, while 18 entrepreneurs stated that they have no full-time employees at all. Given the outlier, the Swedish mean is higher compared to the mean of the Global GUESSS which is 6,3 employees. Without this outlier, however, the mean is just 1,71 employees.

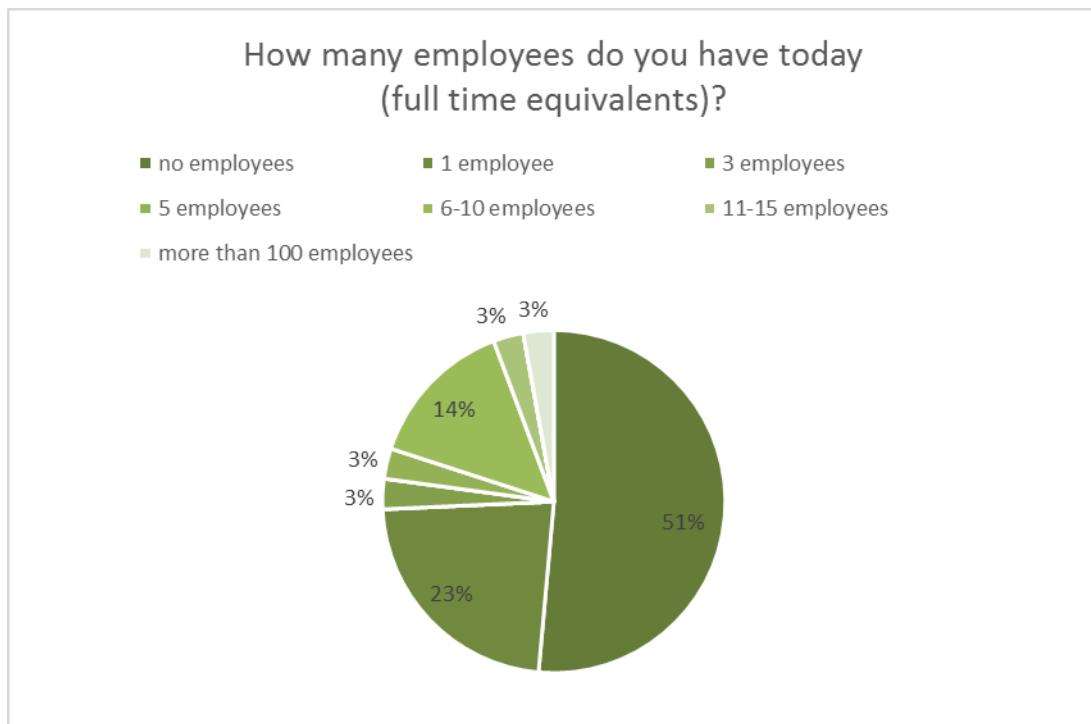


Figure 32. Number of employees (n=35)

Sixty-three per cent of the entrepreneurs reported complete ownership in the business. The division of the remaining shares is presented in Figure 33.

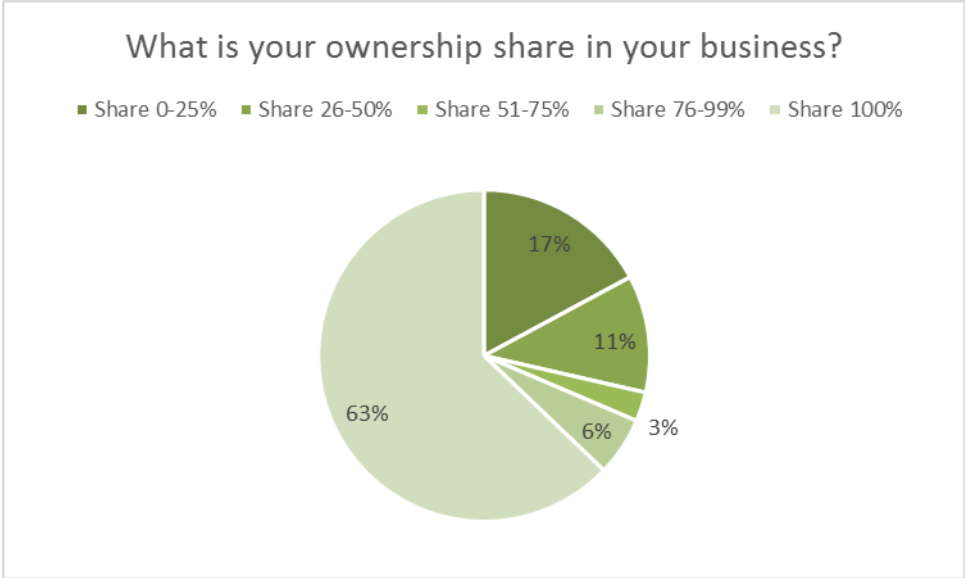


Figure 33. Ownership share in the business (n=35)

Fifty-one per cent of the entrepreneurs stated that they want the business to become your main occupation after graduation.

The results concerning the number of individuals having an ownership stake in the business are presented in the Figure below.

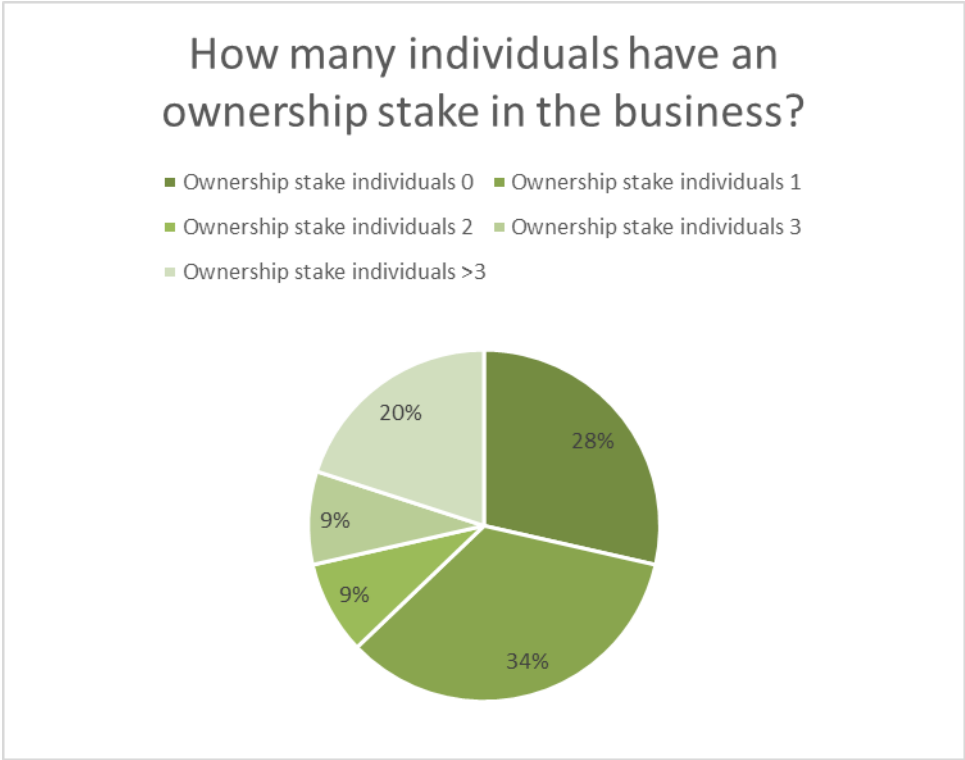


Figure 34. Number of individuals having an ownership stake (n=35)

The majority of firms are active in the IT sector followed by other (e.g. Translation & localization, beauty), trade, consulting and advertising/design/marketing.

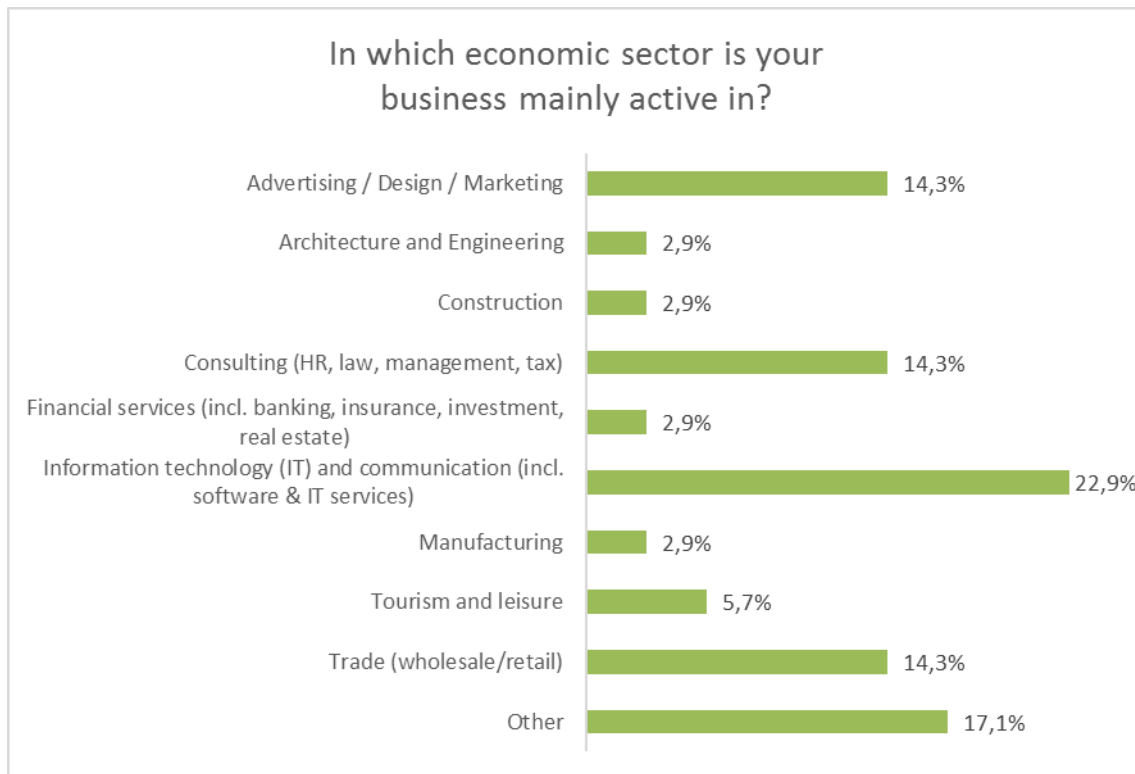


Figure 35. Sector the business is active in (n=35)

The firms were primarily started to do something allowing the entrepreneurs to enact their values and signal their capabilities to others (Figure 36).



Figure 36. Motives for starting the business

(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

According to the entrepreneurs, driving factors were mainly self-realization and showing one’s own capabilities. Solving a social issue was of less importance.



Figure 37. Relevance aspects from the perspective of being a founder
(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

The figure clarifies that customer satisfaction and the provision of products/services which match both the founders’, as well as their reference groups' interests, stand out.

The management of the business is primarily driven to establish a strong competitive advantage and outperform other firms and differentiate from the competition.



Figure 38. Relevant aspects regarding the management of the company
(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

Figure 39 shows that innovation projects are mainly pursued to improve existing products/service and expand the business.

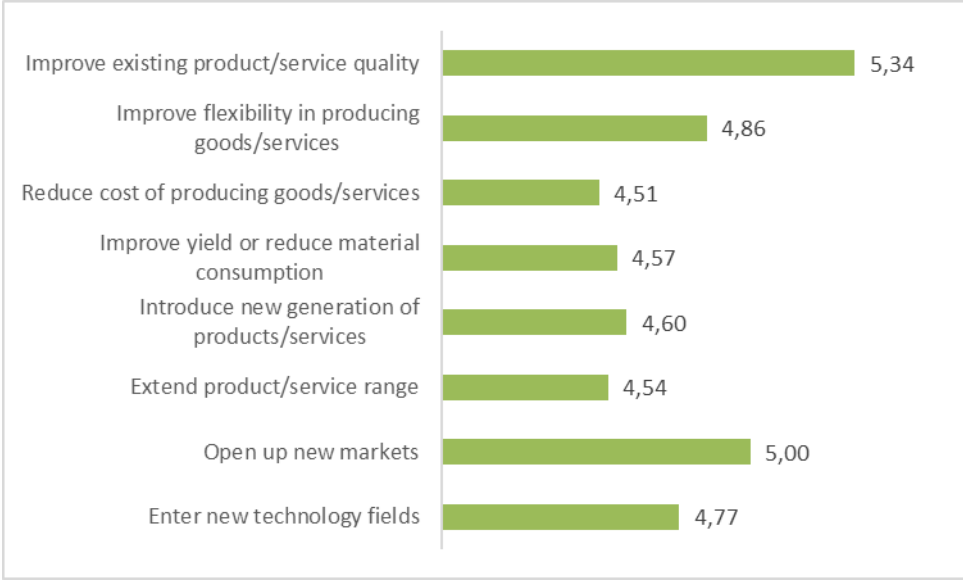


Figure 39. Motives behind innovation projects
(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

Next, the respondents were asked to consider a list of opposing statements. In general, my business as a whole favors:

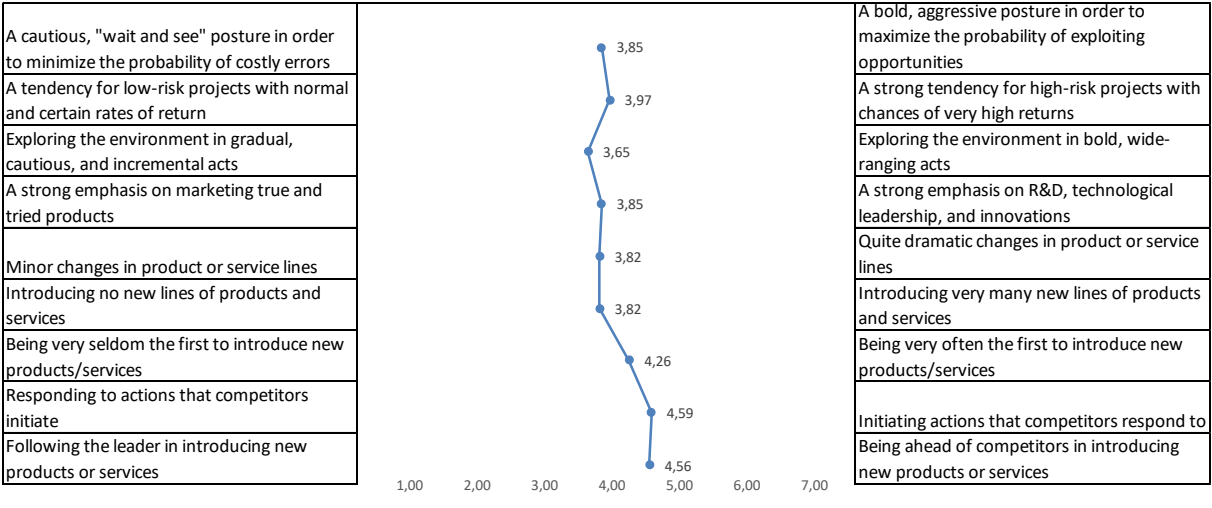


Figure 40. Evaluation of different statements (polarity profile)

The findings suggest a business approach that does not show any form of extremes.

The findings presented below indicate that the businesses operate in more dynamic sectors:



Figure 41. Findings regarding the sector the business operates in
(1=I strongly disagree, 7=I strongly agree)

In addition, the entrepreneurs got performance related questions. 75 per cent of the entrepreneurs reported that they generate sales revenues with their businesses. In addition, 66 per cent stated that the sales revenues also cover the costs. The same percentage of entrepreneurs also indicated that they are making a profit.

Regarding the plans for growth in employment, the entrepreneurs answered as follows.

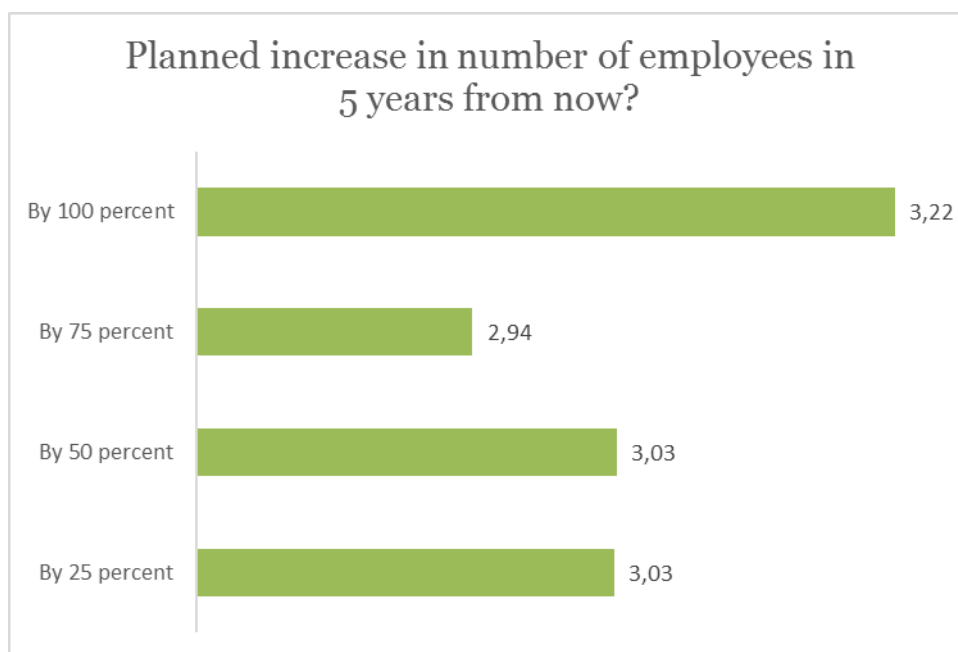


Figure 42. Planned increase in number of employees
(1=Very negatively, 7=Very positively)

The findings indicate certain growth intentions among the entrepreneurs in the coming years.

The participants were also asked about their satisfaction with their entrepreneurial activity, which led to the following results:



Figure 43. Satisfaction with entrepreneurial activity

(1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree)

The findings indicate the existence of relatively satisfied entrepreneurs.

Next, the entrepreneurs should indicate how well their companies perform compared to other businesses selling similar products/services.

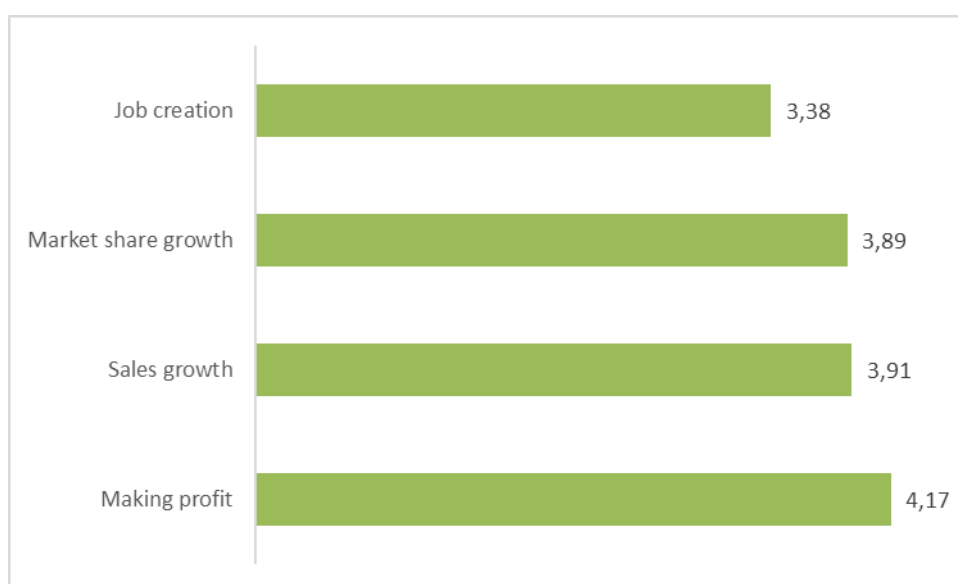


Figure 44. Comparison between own business and the competitors' ones

(1=Very poorly, 7=Very well)

Based on the findings one can conclude that the businesses develop in the same way the businesses of their competitors do.

More insights into the business performance are reported in Figure 45.



Figure 45. Insights into business performance
(1=Very poorly, 7=Very well)

The entrepreneurs appear to be good in responding to the customers' need.

Also, a set of questions was used to obtain some information about the impact of business activity which resulted in the following:



Figure 46. Consequences of business activity
(1=Very poorly, 7=Very well)

In line with previous findings, the businesses do not stick out from the mass.

Regarding the management of the business, the entrepreneurs seem to prefer the development of creative solutions as well as quick actions (Figure 47).



Figure 47. Preferences regarding the firm management

(1=Never/Not at all, 7=Always)

In addition, the entrepreneurs will get things done fast and are future-oriented (Figure 48).



Figure 48. Preferences regarding business activities – part 1

(1=Never/Not at all, 7=Always)

The entrepreneurs also try to manage the existent resources as good as possible and to be creative. On the other hand, reducing risks to a minimum is in the focus (Figure 49).



Figure 49. Preferences regarding business activities – part 2
(1=Never/Not at all, 7=Always)

Moreover, the entrepreneurs have a positive attitude even in difficult situations (Figure 50).



Figure 50. Behaviour in different business situations
(1=Never/Not at all, 7=Always)

7 Potential successors

The following section focuses on students that are potential family successors, meaning those students in the Swedish sample whose parents are self-employed and/or are majority owners of a business.

The students were asked about the year when their parents' business was established. On average, the business was established in 1991,27 (Median = 1995) and has on average 27,26 employees. According to the SME definition of the European Commission, the focus is thus on small companies. In 85 per cent of all cases does the father lead the business operationally.

Regarding ownership, the following results were obtained:

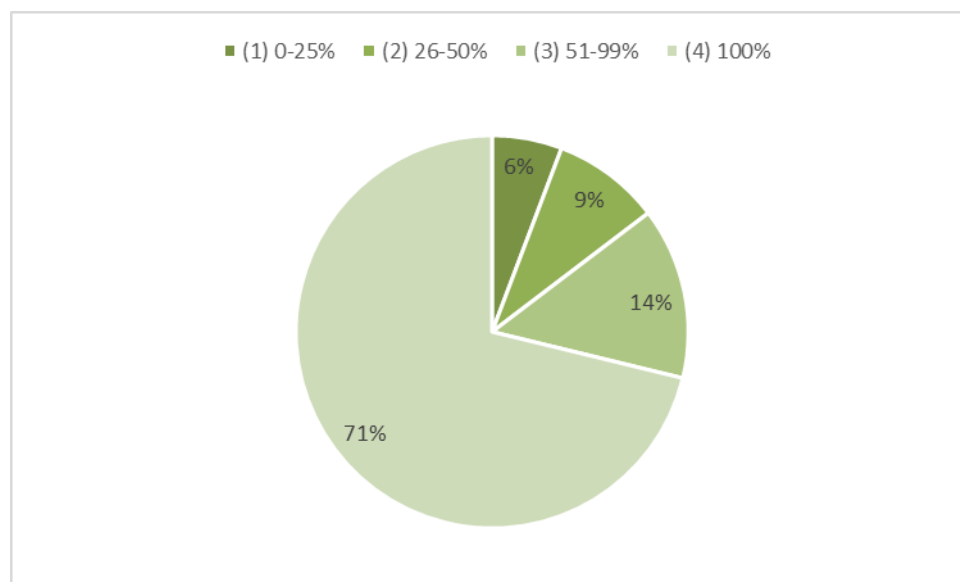


Figure 51. Ownership share in the hands of the family (n=191)

In addition, the students were asked about their own ownership share in the company (Figure 52). As becomes clear a huge majority does not have a stake in the company.

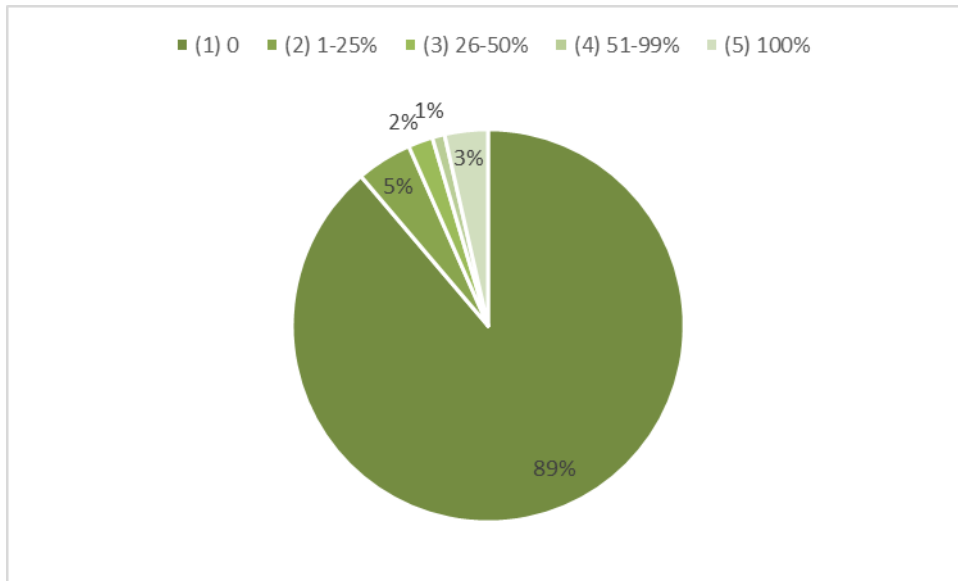


Figure 52. Personal ownership share in the business (n=196)

The question what is a family business is an issue that has been long discussed in the literature, therefore, the students were also asked to indicate whether they consider the business as a family business. The findings are presented in Figure 53.

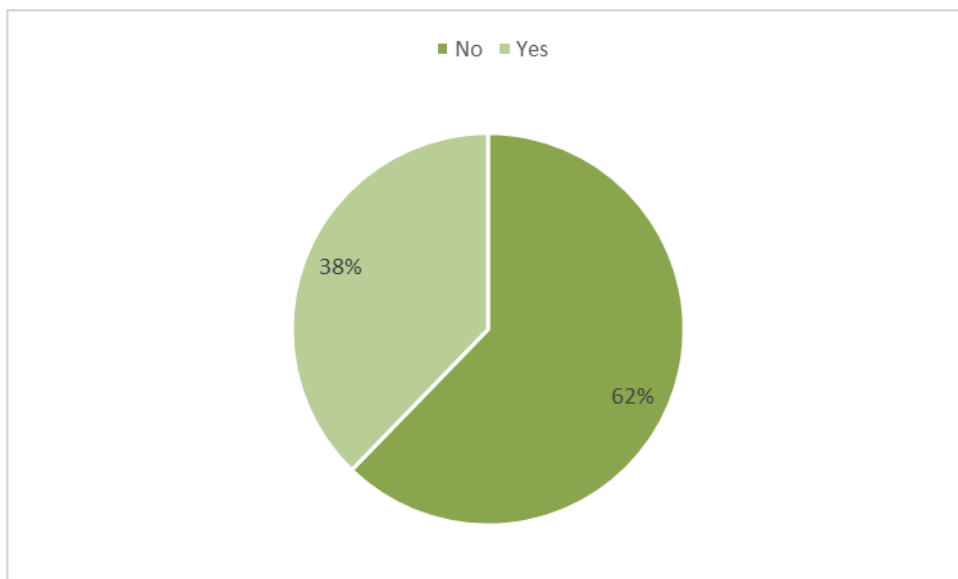


Figure 53. Perception of the business as a family business (n=196)

When talking about the sector the business is operating in, approximately 30 per cent of the businesses were assigned to “other”, which could be forestry, farming or art (Figure 54).

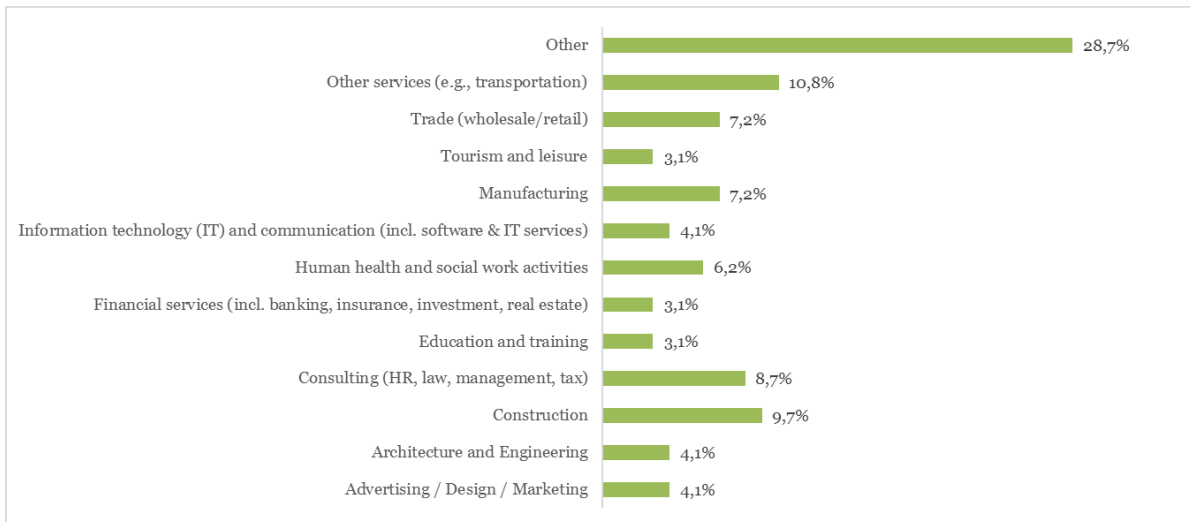
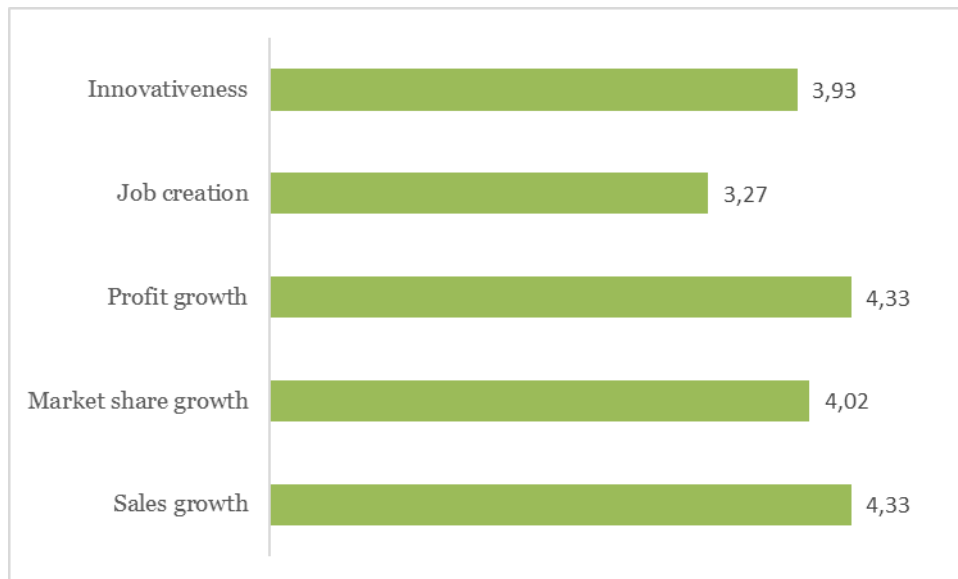


Figure 54. Sector the parents' business is mainly active in (n=195)

The students were also asked whether they have been working for the parent's business, which was confirmed by 44 per cent (n=197). Additionally, they should assess the performance of the parent's business compared to its competitors over the last three years. The findings are presented in Figure 55.



**Figure 55. Performance evaluation of the parent's business
(1= Much worse, 7=Much better)**

The findings indicate that overall the parent's business reveals an average performance.

Questions related to siblings resulted in the following findings (Figure 56 and Figure 57).

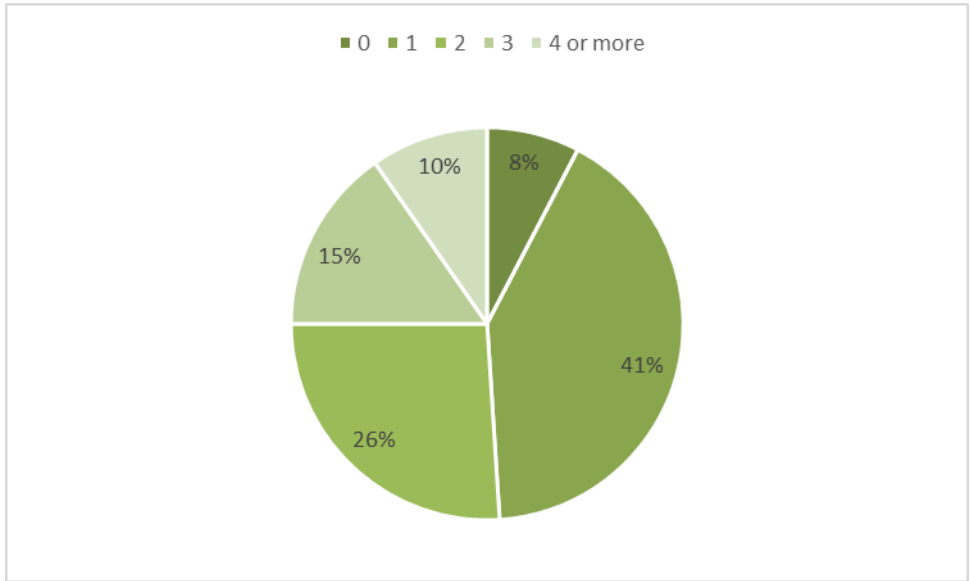


Figure 56. Number of siblings (n=196)

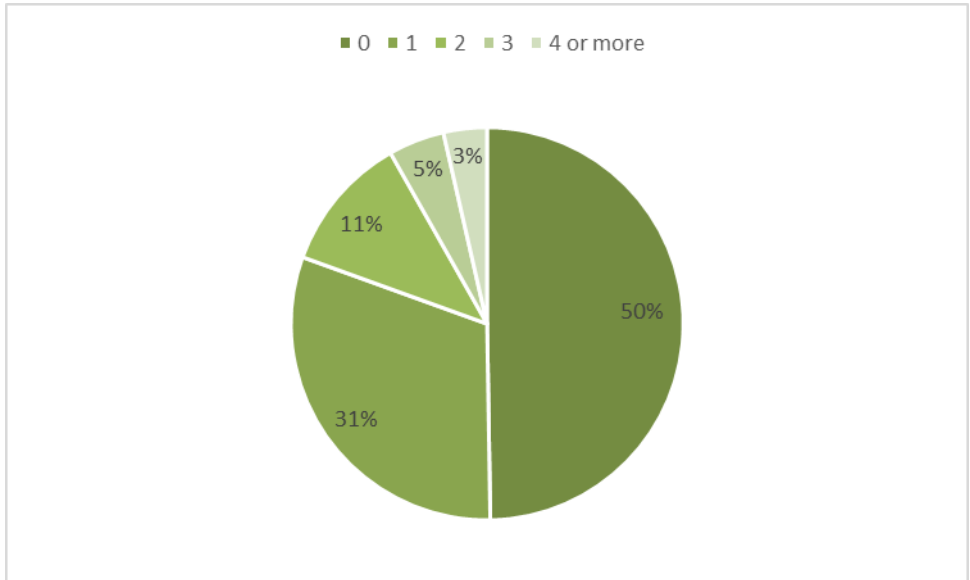


Figure 57. Number of older siblings (n=195)

The students were also asked about their succession intention. Table 5 shows the six statements that were addressed.

Item number	Statement
1	I am ready to do anything to take over my parents' firm.
2	My professional goal is to become a successor in my parents' firm.
3	I will make every effort to become a successor in my parents' firm.
4	I am determined to become a successor in my parents' firm in the future.
5	I have very seriously thought of taking over my parents' firm.
6	I have the strong intention to become a successor in my parents' firm one day.

Table 5. Succession intention statements

The findings are presented in Figure 58.

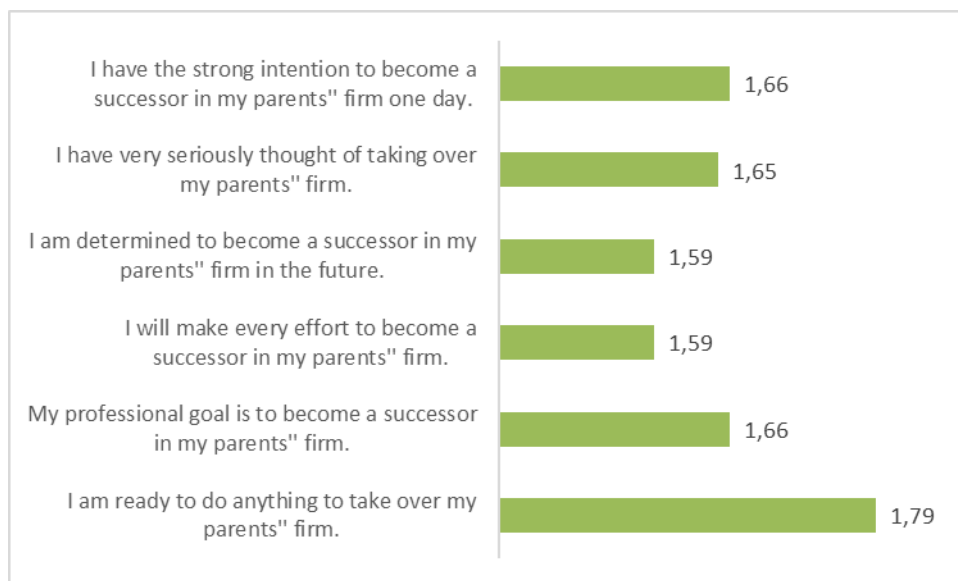


Figure 58. Succession intention findings

(1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree)

The findings reveal that the overall succession intention scale among Swedish potential successors is very weak (mean = 1,657). This is in line with a recent study conducted in the context of the Business Transfer Awareness Raising (BTAR) project which also showed a low interest from the potential successor's side in taking over a company (Durst, 2016).

The students were also asked to indicate their perception of a being a successor. To do so, five statements were presented (Table 6).

Item number	Statement
1	Being a successor implies more advantages than disadvantages to me.
2	A career as a successor is attractive for me.
3	If I had the opportunity and resources, I would become a successor in my parents' firm.
4	Being a successor would entail great satisfactions for me.
5	Among various options, I would rather become a successor in my parents' firm.

Table 6. Statements about the perception towards being a successor

The results of this set of questions are presented in Figure 59.

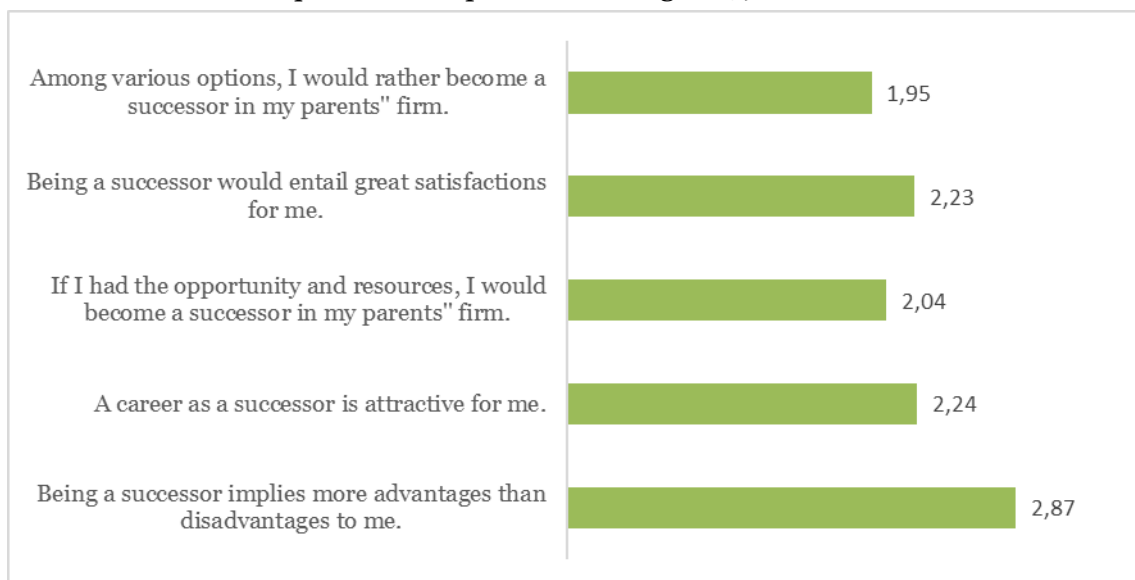
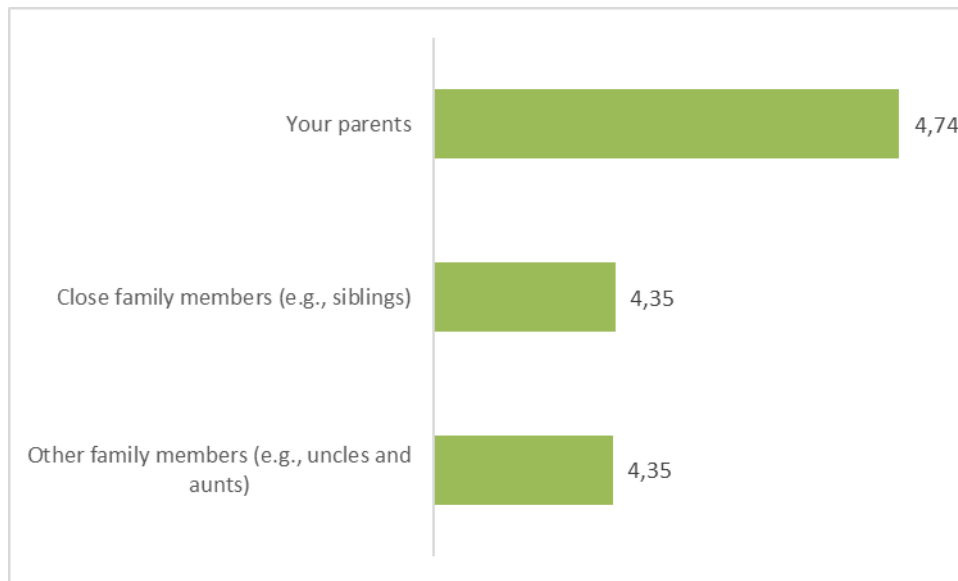


Figure 59. Findings of the perception towards being a successor

(1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree)

The findings indicate that being a successor is not something Swedish students strive for (mean = 2,266). The Global GUESSS resulted in a mean of 3,23.

The students were also invited to assess how the environment would react if they would become the successor the parent's business (Figure 60).



**Figure 60. Reaction of environment regarding succession
(1=Very negatively, 7=Very positively)**

The findings indicate a slightly above average reaction.

Finally, the students were asked to indicate how many years they would take over the business (provided they were to take over the business). On average, this would happen in 2,65 years (n=147).

7.1 Relation with siblings in the case of succession

One group of questions was related to the relationship between the potential successor and their siblings.

One scenario addressed the potential situation that two siblings are interested in assuming the same job in the business, the students were asked to assess this situation based on three statements. Figure 61 presents the results.

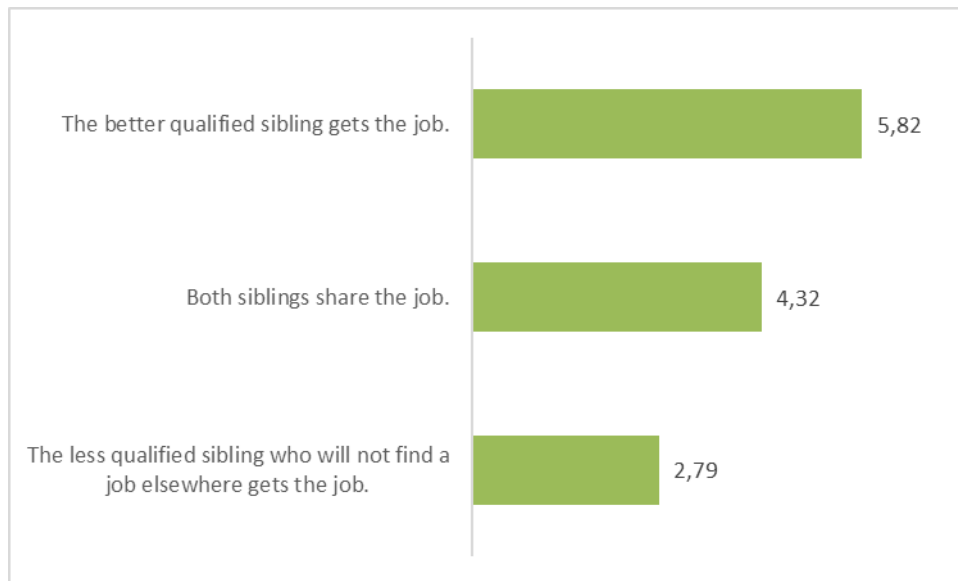


Figure 61. Assessment of different succession solutions
(1= Not fair at all, 7=Very fair)

The findings suggest that the sibling's qualification should matter in the decision process.

Regarding the goals relating to the family succession, the following was obtained:

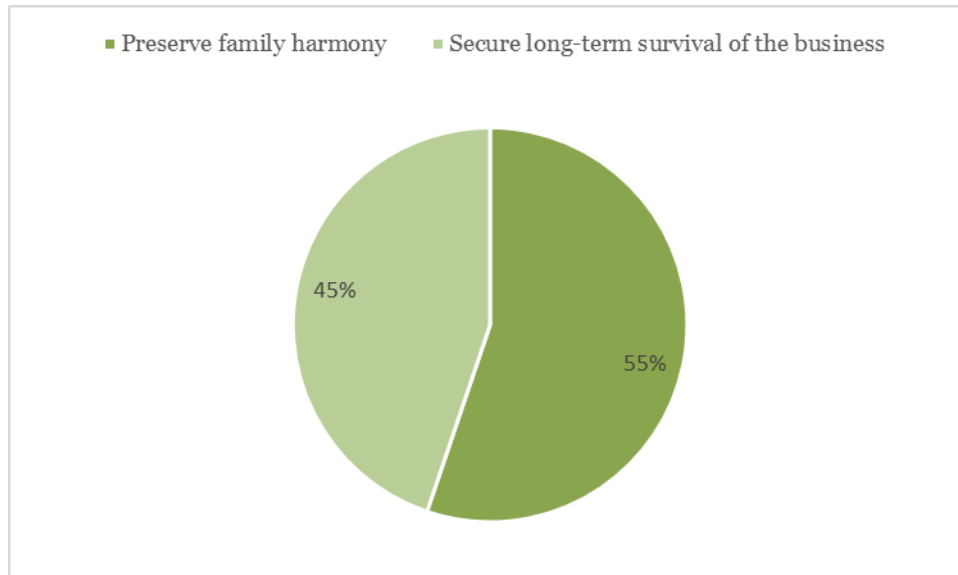
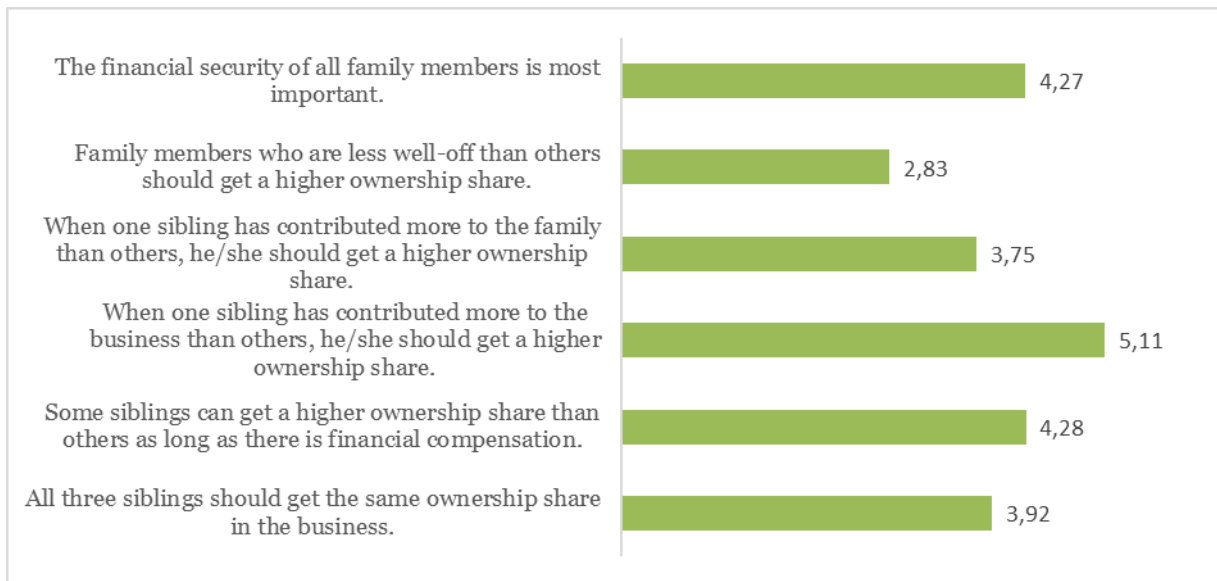


Figure 62. Goals important regarding succession (n=183)

The students were further asked to assess the following scenario:

Assume that you have one highly qualified sibling who is working in your parents' business and one sibling who is currently out of work and assists in your family's household.

Based on this, the students were asked to indicate their level of agreement regarding a number of statements (Figure 63).



**Figure 63. Driving factors regarding the relation with siblings in the case of succession
(1= Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree)**

The findings obtained reveal average assessments.

8 Conclusion

The School of Business at the University of Skövde conducted the survey for the first Swedish GUESSS 2016. About 21.315 students were invited of which 606 finished the questionnaire resulting in a response rate of 2.84 per cent.

The main results of the study are presented in this final section.

The Swedish students' career intentions seem to follow the international pattern of first being an employee and probably later becoming a founder (Sieger et al., 2014).

5.3 per cent of the students in the sample wants to work in their own company right after studies. Five years later this applies to 22.4 per cent of them. Compared to the international GUESSS sample Swedish students have a rather low founding intention. The Swedish students have a low succession intention which is in line with recent research activities of the EU project Business Transfer Awareness Raising (BTAR)³. The values for entrepreneurial intention among Swedish students are quite low as well.

Not surprisingly, Law and Economics students have the strongest entrepreneurial intention. It was also found that Swedish female students have a lower entrepreneurial intention than male students, this, however, changes after five years.

The entrepreneurial climate at the participating Swedish Universities is rated relatively low. The Swedish students neither agree nor disagree to an inspiring and favorable climate. A similar result can be found for the entrepreneurial learning. The results indicate room for improvements in the offered entrepreneurial courses and practical extra curriculum activities.

As expected and in line with the international GUESSS dataset and previous research Swedish students with entrepreneurial parents are more likely to become founders compared with their fellow students who do not have entrepreneurial parents. Self-realization and showing off one's own capabilities are the main drivers behind entrepreneurial career intentions. For Swedish students in general to be one's own boss is not important. This may be explained by the more egalitarian and low hierarchy cultural context in Sweden (Bjerke, 2013).

The social and cultural context plays an important role for career choices. The perceived reaction from family, friends and fellow students if the respondents would pursue a career as an entrepreneur is relatively positive among Swedish students.

6.27 per cent of the Swedish students are currently in the process of starting a business and becoming self-employed. Most of them have already *collected information about markets and competitors, discussed [their] product or business idea with potential customers, started [their] product/service development and/or written a business plan*. Swedish nascent founders plan to start their business in the *IT* or "other" sector (comprising interior design, music, or translation). Fifty-three per cent of the students intends to start their business together with one or more co-founders.

The share of active entrepreneurs – those students who are already running their own business and are already self-employed – is 5.78 per cent. The majority of them do not have

³ <http://www.his.se/en/Research/Enterprises-for-the-Future/KIM/Projects/>

an employee. Most active founders have their business in the IT sector. Thirty-seven per cent have founded their business with a co-partner.

Potential successors are those students whose parents are self-employed and/or major owners of a business. 32.34 per cent of the respondents are potential successors. On average the businesses have been owned by the parents for twenty-five years and in 71 per cent of all cases, complete ownership is given.

The students' succession intention is rather weak and confirms the low share of students for this career path.

Based on these findings one can conclude that start-up and succession intention in Sweden can be improved. Entrepreneurship education at university level should be further stimulated considering specific offers and activities for the different groups of entrepreneurial students (i.e. nascent entrepreneurs, active entrepreneurs and potential successors). This courses/activities however shall also be oriented to students who have not considered becoming a founder/business owner yet. This group of students needs to be stimulated to arouse interest in an entrepreneurial career.

In sum, with this first GUESSS data collection of students' entrepreneurial intentions and activities in Sweden, we have contributed to the ongoing research in the field of entrepreneurship both on a national and international level. We hope that with this report and further following publications we give interesting insights for different stakeholders and thus supporting their activities.

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