

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship: the point of view of young people

This study examines the entrepreneurial image and potential of South Tyrolean young people. It shows that the young people have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and are considering becoming entrepreneurs themselves in the future. 56% of the young people think well about the entrepreneurs, while only 2% have a bad opinion about the entrepreneurs. Moreover, 40% of the young people can envisage starting a business in general. The self-assessment of young people regarding their suitability as entrepreneurs is like that of their business aspirations: 39% of young people believe that they are made for the entrepreneurial profession, while 17% do not believe that they have such entrepreneurial skills. These positive results are vitally important for the cooperation between economy and society as well as for the economic growth. Furthermore, the results prove that the conditions for successful social partnership and promising economic progress are given.

In general, the same factors are shown to have a positive impact on the opinion of the entrepreneur, the entrepreneur suitability and the intention to start a business. The decisive influence is exerted by the family environment: Thus, young people with self-employed parents have a better entrepreneurial opinion (64% have a good opinion), are more self-confident about their suitability for the entrepreneurial profession (52% feel suitable) and can imagine starting a business more easily (55%).

Gender is also relevant: Although boys and girls have the same good opinion about entrepreneurs, boys often play with the idea of setting up their own business (boys 51%, girls 28%) and

consider themselves more often to have entrepreneurial skills (47%) than girls (30%) do.

Moreover, there is a connection between the school environment and the entrepreneurial image and potential: business college students, vocational school students, technical college students and apprentices have a more positive entrepreneurial image (62% think well of entrepreneurs) than high school students (43% have a good entrepreneurial image). Technical secondary school pupils and vocational school pupils can also imagine setting up a company more often (55%) than the average (40%).

In addition to gender, family and school environment, character-related traits contribute to their entrepreneurial image and their entrepreneurial aspirations. Students who attribute to themselves a high extent of leadership spirit, resilience and decisiveness, think more positively about the entrepreneurs. In addition, creativity and ambition increase the intention and the desire to found a company, and thus increase the self-confidence of the young people with regard to their own entrepreneurial future.

It can be seen that above all, "direct" experiences, such as personal acquaintances with entrepreneurs and collected work experience, make young people open to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial independence.

For this reason, initiatives aimed to bring young people closer to the world of business and entrepreneurs must be increasingly supported in the future. This is important because the image and

potential of entrepreneurs can be improved by sensitizing young people to entrepreneurial thinking. Personal contact with entrepreneurs, the experience of simulation projects within school lessons and the development of character traits such as leadership spirit, resilience and decisiveness must be promoted at school and in leisure time. This is especially true for young people who do not come from a self-employed family, as well as for girls. In this context, role models, especially successful female entrepreneurs, can increase young people's self-identification with the entrepreneurial profession and intensify their curiosity and enthusiasm for being an entrepreneur.