# Analysis of Trends in Young Entrepreneurial Initiative in Romania in the Context of Contemporary Challenges and European Development

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***Abstract***

*This study analyses the trends among young people with entrepreneurial initiative in Romania, in the context of current economic and social challenges, as well as the processes of European integration and development. The research aims to identify the motivations, obstacles, and opportunities faced by Romanian youth with entrepreneurial intentions, highlighting the role of education, digitalization, and state support in shaping the entrepreneurial journey. Data was collected through a questionnaire administered to a sample of 76 young Romanians aged between 18 and 35. The results show that the desire for financial independence and the need for self-fulfilment are the main drivers of entrepreneurial initiative. The lack of financial resources, fear of failure, political instability, and economic uncertainties are perceived as significant barriers. At the same time, digitalization is seen as a key factor in increasing business competitiveness, and government programs such as Start-up Nation are perceived as necessary support among young people. This paper offers a fresh perspective on how Romanian youth with entrepreneurial initiative perceive the current business environment, with its opportunities and threats, outlining concrete directions for improving the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.*

**Keywords:** *entrepreneurship; Romania; youth; digitalization; education; European Union; crisis.*

**JEL classification:** I25; M21; O12; F2; M1.

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## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship primarily involves taking a risk, starting a business, being resilient and able to withstand unexpected situations, being innovative, with the goal of generating a profit.

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Entrepreneurship is a natural phenomenon in business, and through it, the economy and technology develop, leading to diversity in entrepreneurial activity. To maintain good performance in entrepreneurship, it is necessary to harness entrepreneurial skills. Moreover, a good entrepreneur is one who is resilient and anticipates problems or obstacles long before they arise (Diandra & Azmy, 2020).

Entrepreneurship is a discipline and functions as an independent, managerial, and interdisciplinary activity. It also involves the artistic side of the entrepreneur, as it is an activity that demands creativity and adaptability, thus adding value to society. Ultimately, entrepreneurial activity creates new job opportunities and contributes to economic development (Hessels & Naudé, 2019). Another important aspect of entrepreneurship is education, as it holds the power to transform and develop society (Ratten & Usmanij, 2020).

There are two types of entrepreneurs. The first type is the opportunity-driven entrepreneur, who sees a business idea as a chance for personal and professional growth. The second type of entrepreneur is driven by the lack of a source of income and, in hopes of improving their financial situation, resorts to starting a business. Entrepreneurs in the second category do not value or appreciate entrepreneurship to the same extent as those in the first category, who later strive to develop both their business and their entrepreneurial and educational skills.

To develop an entrepreneurial mindset, it is necessary to use both the left side of the brain, responsible for problem-solving, and the right side, responsible for creativity. The entrepreneurial mindset includes qualities such as empathy, risk-taking, flexibility, adaptability, creativity, innovation, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Biney, 2023).

At the international level, entrepreneurship has been thoroughly studied as a generator of prosperity, a method of economic development, and a means of creating new jobs, thereby reducing unemployment and mitigating economic crises. Globally, there are 583 million entrepreneurs. According to studies, 22.6% of companies fail within the first year after launch (Khan et al., 2021).

## 2. Literature Review

The European Union supports youth entrepreneurship with the goal of encouraging young people to develop new businesses, thereby creating new jobs. Through entrepreneurship, young people have the opportunity to improve their standard of living (Mocanu et al., 2020).

The energy of young people and their potential to innovate can be greatly amplified through entrepreneurial activities. Being self-employed helps young individuals gain self-confidence and develop their entrepreneurial skills to become successful entrepreneurs—and an inspiration to other youth (Stăiculescu et al., 2022). Factors that can influence youth entrepreneurship include social and cultural attitudes, entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial role models, access to start-up funding, and support and assistance in entrepreneurship. Lack of funding can be a major barrier for young people when starting a business (Kyurova &

Koyundzhiyska-Davidkova, 2023). It is worth noting that the quality and context of the education system foster the development of managerial and entrepreneurial skills. Moreover, the current global geopolitical instability may discourage young people from pursuing a career in entrepreneurship.

In Romania, most young people face challenges caused by the geopolitical situation at the border, as well as by potential changes related to the implementation of new artificial intelligence technologies in the economy. According to a 2021 study conducted by Romanian Business Leaders on 1,200 young people aged between 16 and 24, 53% stated that they lack sufficient entrepreneurial education, 74% do not have the necessary financial resources, 59% lack mentors to guide them, and 55% need an entrepreneurial role model to follow (RBL, 2021).

According to another study, the main reasons for becoming an entrepreneur among young people in Romania are the freedom to choose their own workplace, independence, and better financial income. In the case of young people from the European Union, the reasons are the freedom to choose their own workplace, independence, and personal satisfaction from innovating. The main reasons why young people aged between 15 and 30 in both Romania and the European Union do not become entrepreneurs are the lack of knowledge on how to run a business, the lack of financial capital, and the financial risks to which a company is exposed. In the same study, Romanian youth mentioned that the main financial sources for starting a business are personal savings, bank loans, and money from family or friends. Young people from the European Union cited personal savings, bank loans, and savings from their current salary as their main sources of funding for starting a business (Boldureanu et al., 2024).

Although today there are numerous Romanian entrepreneurs who have created successful business models in various sectors, Romania still ranks among the last in terms of entrepreneurship compared to other European Union member states. The main obstacles for entrepreneurs remain bureaucracy, corruption, access to financing, and outdated and complex legislation (Lucian & Șoaită, 2023).

Until 1989, entrepreneurship in Romania was virtually non-existent. Only after that year did the country begin to take small steps toward a market economy and capitalism. The first law established for commercial activities was Law no. 31/1990, which is still in force today. Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007 marked a major leap forward in entrepreneurship, as it introduced concepts such as intellectual property protection and increased transparency in the Romanian legislative framework. Additionally, the financial funds provided by the EU served as a real launchpad for Romanians with entrepreneurial intentions. One important aspect to highlight is that starting in 2007, Romania experienced a significant loss of its workforce, as many Romanians chose to move to Western Europe in search of better salaries and, thus, a better life. In the early years, this westward exodus consisted mostly of unskilled or low-skilled individuals without formal education. However, in the following years, Romania began to lose doctors, economists, and teachers. Along with this wave of intellectuals, the country also lost a large number

of potential entrepreneurs who could have contributed to its economic development. According to various studies, in the coming years, Romania is expected to shift from a country of emigration to one of immigration. By the end of 2022, there were 113,520 non-EU citizens living in Romania, marking a 110% increase over the past five years (High, 2009).

Romania ranks among the last in terms of entrepreneurship within the European Union, primarily due to the lack of an entrepreneurial culture. For many years, entrepreneurship was unattractive, as Romanians lived under 50 years of communism, where they were employees, and risk-taking and decision-making are still underdeveloped traits among the Romanian population. In terms of innovation as well, Romania holds one of the lowest positions among EU member states. For example, in 2023, according to the Performance of EU Member States' Innovation Systems – 2023 report, Romania ranked last, behind Poland, Latvia, and Bulgaria. Moreover, one of the reasons why international consumers and other countries have limited access to Romanian products is that Romania's commercial horizon is largely confined to the EU internal market, with expansion to other continents being poorly developed.

At the macroeconomic level, there are various opportunities and possibilities for young entrepreneurs in Romania, especially following the implementation of digital technology in economic activities (Dincă et al., 2021). Through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), agriculture and young people who wish to invest in agriculture are directly supported. In addition, the Romanian Government provides financial assistance for the digitalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Through the Ministry of Investments and European Projects, non-IT SMEs are offered grants ranging from €10,000 to €20,000 to digitize their activities.

Young entrepreneurs tend to start their first businesses in areas such as online commerce, coffee shops, and organic farms (Iacob et al., 2024).

### 2.1 Digitalization and Entrepreneurship

The health crisis accelerated the digitalization process in European countries, as they were among the most vulnerable during the crisis period. Digitalization is considered the most effective path to enhancing competitiveness and reducing the gap between the European Union and the United States. Through digitalization, the European Union can foster investment and facilitate the creation of a more innovative environment. Technologies influence entrepreneurship by helping companies identify solutions more quickly and create value. Additionally, digitalization promotes increased productivity across many areas of entrepreneurship by improving efficiency and effectiveness. Digitalization can also serve as an innovative and exceptional means of supporting businesses in their expansion process and helping them gain visibility and recognition in local or international markets. As a result of integrating digitalization into economic development, companies operating in the market are becoming increasingly

competitive. The emergence of e-commerce, coworking spaces, and remote work or telecommuting are all positive outcomes of digitalization and technological advancement (Galindo-Martín et al., 2023).

Digitalization not only streamlines existing processes but also redefines how firms create and capture value in highly competitive markets. By adopting cloud computing, advanced analytics and platform-based business models, entrepreneurs unlock new revenue streams and enhance their operational agility. Within the EU, regions that invest in ubiquitous high-speed networks and comprehensive data-literacy programs report faster diffusion of digital innovations across diverse industries, thereby narrowing the productivity gap with global leaders (Kraus et al., 2019).

In crisis scenarios, digital tools become indispensable for entrepreneurial resilience. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, SMEs that had already implemented cloud-based supply-chain platforms and customer-relationship-management systems were able to pivot almost overnight, safeguarding both revenue streams and employment levels. Embedding such digital capabilities from a venture's inception lowers start-up costs, fosters scalability and enables rapid entry into international marketplaces, turning disruption into an opportunity for sustainable growth (Papadopoulos et al., 2020).

Investments in human capital or specific talents often influence the differences between entrepreneurs through the quality of their ideas, as well as the direction of their decisions and actions. By investing in talent, one can take advantage of the opportunities offered by technology, as entrepreneurs trained in digitalization use their acquired knowledge to bring added value to the market through skilled and high-quality work (Dorasamy, 2021). Governments can play a role in encouraging companies' access to digitalization and can also support the growth of innovative start-ups by allocating grants or subsidies.

It is projected that the Metaverse platform will become a $5 trillion industry by 2030, and this platform is expected to transform the entrepreneurial landscape. Several well-known companies have already established virtual businesses in the Metaverse, such as Adidas and even the New York Times. Entrepreneurs who have already invested in this concept see it as a valuable investment for the future, one that will bring numerous opportunities (Weking et al., 2023).

### 2.2 Youth Education in Entrepreneurship

Globally, attention is focused on young entrepreneurs, as they are the most vulnerable to unemployment and risk-taking. Entrepreneurship is an excellent means of accelerating the economy and creating new jobs. Education in entrepreneurship is the foundation for creativity and innovation, enabling young people to generate ideas for their projects in today's world (Lindner, 2020). Youth entrepreneurship helps combat unemployment, especially among higher education graduates in Africa (Biney, 2021). Young people represent the demographic with

the greatest potential in entrepreneurship, and one of the most effective ways to integrate more youth into the labor market and reduce poverty is through the creation of businesses. It has been found that most young entrepreneurs view entrepreneurship as the ideal way to create their own job and build a successful career. The entrepreneurial mindset is characterized by the desire and initiative to become self-employed. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), youth education is a continuous, long-term, lifelong process. Education among young people means preparing individuals to become socially, economically, and politically responsible citizens (Oduro-Mensah, 2009).

Entrepreneurship education thrives when students tackle real ventures rather than just theory. Embedding short, project-based modules, where learners pitch ideas, collaborate with local start-ups and receive peer and expert feedback, builds the creativity and resilience essential for new-business creation Cross-disciplinary courses that blend economics, design thinking and digital skills further equip youth to spot and seize market opportunities (Nabi et al., 2017).

Equally important is mentorship and ecosystem support. Pairing aspiring founders with experienced entrepreneurs or alumni offers practical guidance on everything from legal setup to customer discovery, boosting confidence and reducing early-stage risks. Publicly backed incubators and accelerator programmes, in partnership with universities, can provide co-working space, seed-funding workshops and clear success metrics, ensuring more student ventures survive and scale (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008).

According to a study conducted by the Kauffman Foundation, the entrepreneurship rate is higher among those aged 55 to 64 than among those aged 20 to 34. In order to motivate young people to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, there is a global need for education, training, and mentorship. The more a country invests in entrepreneurial education for youth, the higher the percentage of young people who start their own businesses. Governments can also contribute to entrepreneurial education by organizing workshops, seminars, management boot camps, business training, or farmer training programs. This significantly increases the chances of new start-ups being created. According to Nafukho and Muyia (2010), students who have taken entrepreneurship courses are more creative and innovative and aim to become job creators rather than job seekers. Entrepreneurship can be a solution to the high youth unemployment rate, which has been exacerbated by the economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 health crisis.

### 2.3 Factors Influencing Entrepreneurial Intention

According to studies, there are numerous factors that influence entrepreneurial intention. For example, a high level of self-efficacy can determine a person to take the initiative to start a business. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's inner drive that enables them to assume the entrepreneurial role, thereby fulfilling their goals and aspirations. If a person possesses a high level of

self-efficacy along with a solid education, they can acquire sufficient information to establish a business. As a result, the entrepreneur will also gain enough self-confidence to pursue their venture.

Family support also plays a key role in shaping entrepreneurial intention. The role of the family is crucial in encouraging children to build a business. Family support is a constant source of motivation for an entrepreneur's attitude and drive. Children of entrepreneurs tend to develop entrepreneurial skills because they grow up in an environment that fosters entrepreneurial intention, and over time, their parents often become mentors.

It is worth noting that institutional support plays an important role in the decision to start a business. Institutional support can be provided through workshops and seminars. Therefore, entrepreneurial education has become a standard to be met by universities with an economic or entrepreneurial profile (Martins et al., 2023).

### 2.4 Entrepreneurship in Times of Crises

Crises include natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and financial collapses, which have persisted throughout history. These crises inevitably impact human lives. The COVID-19 pandemic is also a living example of such a crisis (Bendell et al., 2020). Crises also affect businesses, with small companies being more vulnerable to failure during crises compared to large firms (Bărbulescu et al., 2021). For example, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the daily number of users on the Zoom platform and other video conferencing systems has skyrocketed, turning IT service providers in this field into billion-dollar companies. The major crises humanity has faced in the last 30 years include the Asian financial crisis of 1997, the global financial crisis of 2007–2008, the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, as well as wars, political conflicts, natural disasters, and local economic crises.

There is uncertainty regarding whether crises have a negative or positive impact on entrepreneurship. Following a crisis, a company may fail or go bankrupt or, on the contrary, it may identify new business opportunities. At the same time, economic crises can motivate people to start their own businesses in order to avoid dependence on others and to secure their own financial income.

## 3. Research Methodology

The sections will have to respect the following editorial rules, which are compulsory: There are already various studies on the trends among young people with entrepreneurial initiative, both in Romania and abroad. This study aims to identify the current trends among young individuals with entrepreneurial skills and intentions, within the context of today's global environment shaped by inflation, energy crises, military conflicts, economic downturns, and more.

The participants in this study were young individuals with entrepreneurial initiative from Romania, aged between 18 and 35 years old. Data was collected between October 2024 and January 2025, using a multiple-choice questionnaire distributed to the study participants. The authors received 80 completed questionnaires; however, after data selection, a total of 76 responses were accepted as material for this article.

The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions and focused on topics such as the level of entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial experience, motivation to become an entrepreneur, sectors of interest for a future business, how the Romanian state can support entrepreneurship, and the obstacles to starting a business. The quantitative research was based on an in-depth analysis of the relationship between having an entrepreneurial family background and occupation; motivation and the determining factors for starting a business; entrepreneurial education and the factors influencing business initiation; the sector of interest for a future business and entrepreneurial motivation; as well as the obstacles to starting a business and entrepreneurial education. This analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics and Google Drive software tools.

## 4. Findings & Discussions

The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions and focused on topics such as the level of entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial experience, motivation to become an entrepreneur, sectors of interest for a future business, how the Romanian state can support entrepreneurship, and the obstacles to starting a business. The quantitative research was based on an in-depth analysis of the relationship between having an entrepreneurial family background and occupation; motivation and the determining factors for starting a business; entrepreneurial education and the factors influencing business initiation; the sector of interest for a future business and entrepreneurial motivation; as well as the obstacles to starting a business and entrepreneurial education. This analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics and Google Drive software tools.

**Identification of Respondents' Information in the Survey**

**Table 1**

| **Education** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** | **Occupation** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| High School | 6 | 7,9 | Pupil | 1 | 1,3 |
| Vocational Study | | | Student | 6 | 7,9 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 1 | 1,9 | Employee | 45 | 59,2 |
| | | | Entrepreneur | 18 | 23,7 |
| Master's Degree | 22 | 28,9 | Freelancer | 6 | 7,9 |
| Doctorate (PhD) | 44 | 57,9 | | | |
| | 3 | 3,9 | | | |
| **Gender** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** | **Entrepreneurial Experience** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** |
| Female | 46 | 60,5 | Yes | 35 | 46,1 |
| Male | 30 | 39,5 | No | 41 | 53,9 |

| **Entrepreneurial Studies** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** | **Motivation** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Economic High School Education | 5 | 6,6 | Additional Income | 31 | 40,8 |
| Bachelor's Degree in Economics | 8 | 10,5 | Wealth Independence | 6 | 7,9 |
| Master's Degree | 22 | 28,9 | Continuing the Family Business | 60 | 78,9 |
| PhD Studies | 2 | 2,6 | Others | 11 | 14,5 |
| Training Courses | 17 | 22,4 | | 4 | 5,2 |
| No Entrepreneurial Studies | 21 | 27,6 | | | |
| Degree in Engineering | 1 | 1,3 | | | |
| **Obstacles Starting a Business** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** | **Factors for Starting a Business** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** |
| Fear of Failure | 21 | 27,6 | Knowledge/Friends | 13 | 17,1 |
| Financial Resources | 29 | 38,2 | Entrepreneurial Opportunities | 34 | 44,7 |
| Limited Access to Financing | 31 | 40,8 | Favorable Conditions | 34 | 44,7 |
| Lack of Experience | 21 | 27,6 | Entrepreneurial Spirit | 43 | 56,6 |
| Lack of Ideas | 8 | 10,5 | Funding Programs | 38 | 50 |
| Uncertain Future in the Country | 41 | 53,9 | Financial Resources | 26 | 34,2 |
| Others | 2 | 2,6 | Other | 2 | 2,6 |
| **Sector of Interest** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** | **Expansion Outside the Country** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** |
| Commerce | 17 | 22,4 | Yes | 37 | 48,7 |
| Consulting | 10 | 13,2 | No | 13 | 17,1 |
| Tourism and Hotels | 9 | 11,8 | I don't know | 26 | 34,2 |
| Construction | 7 | 9,2 | | | |
| Others | 33 | 43,3 | | | |
| **Entrepreneurial Qualities** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** | **Involvement of the Romanian State** | Freq. | Percent. |
| Economic Knowledge | 29 | 38,2 | Funding Programs | 60 | 78,9 |
| Communication and Networking | 32 | 42,1 | Business Incubators | 19 | 25 |
| Creativity and Innovation | 44 | 57,9 | Tax Incentives | 58 | 76,3 |
| Accountig Skills | 17 | 22,4 | Non-repayable Grants | 41 | 53,9 |
| Managerial Skills | 43 | 56,6 | Digitalization | 35 | 46,1 |
| Adaptability and | | | Reducing Bureaucracy | 58 | 76,3 |
| | | | Others | 1 | 1,3 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stress Resistance | | | | | |
| Leadership | 40 | 52,6 | | | |
| Risk-Taking | 33 | 43,4 | | | |
| Long-Term Vision | 43 | 56,6 | | | |
| | 38 | 50 | | | |
| **Entrepreneurial Family Background** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** | **Well-Known European Programs** | **Freq.** | **Percent.** |
| Yes | 19 | 25 | None | | |
| No | 57 | 75 | Non-Repayable Grants | 25 | 32,9 |
| | | | Invest EU | 17 | 22,4 |
| | | | ERDF | 9 | 11,8 |
| | | | Digital Europe | 6 | 7,9 |
| | | | NextGeneration EU | 6 | 7,9 |
| | | | EAFRD | 6 | 7,9 |
| | | | LIFE | 5 | 6,6 |
| | | | | 2 | 2,6 |

*Source*: Authors' own computation

Following the analysis of the 76 questionnaires, addressed to young people in Romania with entrepreneurial intentions, 57.9% of respondents hold a master's degree; 43.4% live in Bucharest; 59.2% are currently employed; 60.5% are women; 29.9% hold a master's degree; 53.9% have no entrepreneurial experience; 75% do not come from families of entrepreneurs; 78.9% are motivated to become entrepreneurs in order to be independent; 57.9% believe that they are creative and innovative; 60.5% believe that they can deepen their economic knowledge through experience at the workplace; 56.6% believe that the most important factor in opening a business is the entrepreneurial spirit; 22.4% are interested in the trade sector; 48.7% of respondents would expand beyond Romania's borders; 79.9% believe that the Romanian state can support entrepreneurship through financing programs; 60.5% are informed about the Start-up Nation program; 32.9% are not aware of any European financing program; 53.9% believe that Romania's uncertain future represents a threat to Romanian entrepreneurship and 60.5% believe that the country's political instability is an obstacle to opening a business.

In the continuation of the research, the IBM SPSS Statistics software platform was used for an advanced analysis, in order to analyze the relationship between different categorical variables of the survey, such as coming from an entrepreneurial family, occupation, motivation, determining factors for starting a business, entrepreneurial studies, sector of interest for the future business and impediments to starting a business. The tests were performed following the analysis of 3 tables with numerical values. The Contingency table, to visualize the effective distribution of respondents; The Expected values, to compare the real distribution with the theoretical one and observe significant discrepancies; The Percentage distribution, to analyze the proportions in each category and the Table

with the details of the Chi-square ($\chi^2$) test calculations, to understand the impact of each value on the statistical test. The Chi-square ($\chi^2$) test is a fundamental statistical method used to examine the relationships between categorical variables and test hypotheses in various fields. To identify ($\chi^2$), the formula

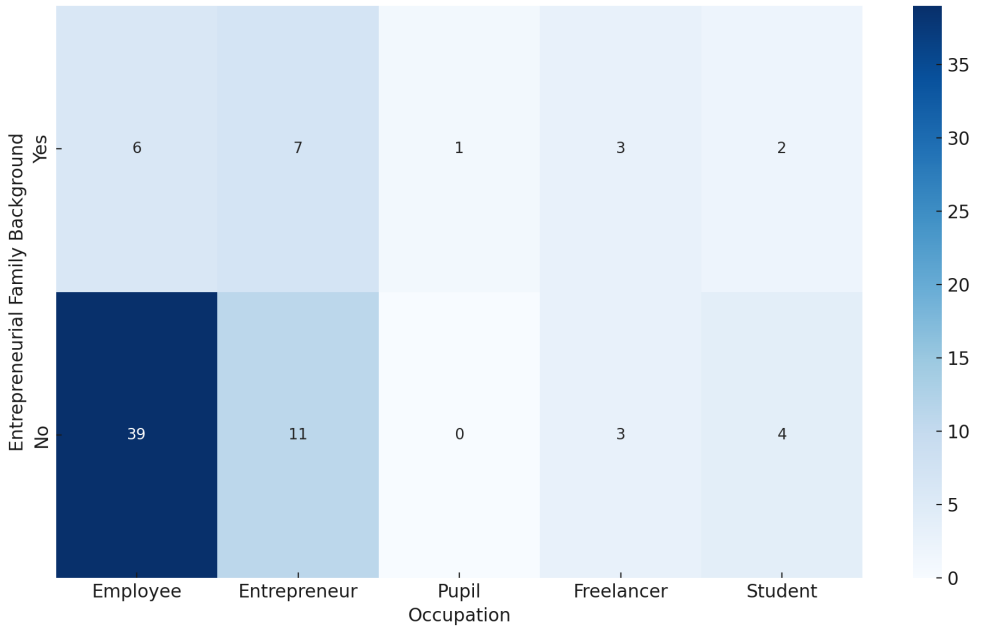
$$\chi^2 = \Sigma [(O - E)^2 / E]$$

was used, where: O = observed values, and E = expected values. Each difference (O - E) is squared, then divided by E. In the case of Chi-square ($\chi^2$), if $p < 0.05$, it means that the result is significant and that there are relationships between categorical variables under analysis. The formula to calculate p-value, the formula

$$1-F\chi 2(\chi 2, df)$$

was used, where df = (nr. rows−1) × (nr. columns−1).

**Chart 1. The Relationship Between Coming from an Entrepreneurial Family and Occupation**




*Source*: Authors' heatmap

The research further analyzed the relationship between coming from an entrepreneurial family and current occupation, taking the observed values (O) from the contingency table, which were subsequently compared with the expected values (E), calculated according to the theoretical distribution, applying the formula

$$\chi^2 = \Sigma [(O - E)^2 / E]$$

and the results of the Chi-square test were $\chi^2 = 10.34$ and p-value = 0.035 ($p < 0.05$, therefore significant). Given that p-value = 0.035, a statistically significant relationship results between coming from an entrepreneurial family and the occupation of the respondents. Thus, people who come from an entrepreneurial family have a higher probability of following independent professional paths (entrepreneurship, self-employment). People without an entrepreneurial tradition in the family are more likely to choose employment in a company or another type of stable job.

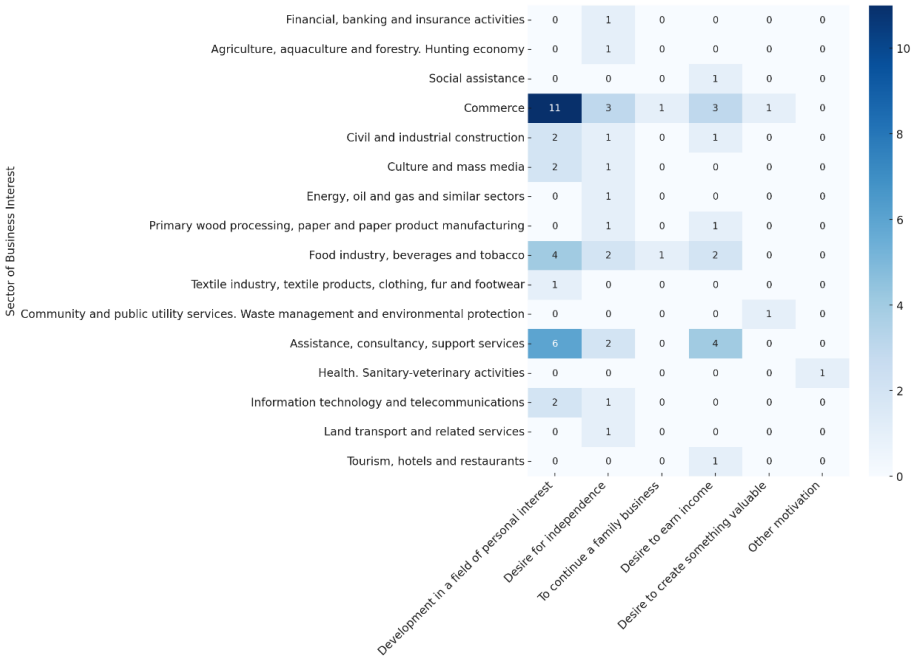
According to the SPSS analysis, a relationship was identified between the motivation of young people with entrepreneurial initiative and the determinants of starting a business. The results of the Chi-square ($\chi^2$) tests = 598.02, where p-value = 0.00058 ($p < 0.05$, therefore significant). Therefore, there is a statistically significant association between the motivation for entrepreneurship and the determinants of starting a business. This result suggests that different factors (such as market opportunities, financing or professional experience) play an important role in shaping entrepreneurial motivation.

The calculations for the Chi-square ($\chi^2$) test applied to the relationship between entrepreneurial studies and the determining factors for starting a business were detailed. The calculation methodology was carried out due to the observed values (O) from the contingency table, being compared with the expected values (E), calculated according to the theoretical distribution. The formula

$$\chi^2 = \Sigma [(O - E)^2 / E]$$

was applied, where each difference (O−E)(O-E)(O−E) is squared, and then divided by the expected value EEE. The sum of all these values is $\chi^2 = 248.90$. Since p-value = 0.034 (< 0.05), we can state that there is a statistically significant association between the level of entrepreneurial studies and the perception of the essential factors for starting a business. People with entrepreneurial studies tend to see different factors (example: access to financing, government support) as more critical for the success of a business. People with advanced entrepreneurial education tend to place more importance on factors such as access to finance, government support, or entrepreneurial opportunities. Respondents without an entrepreneurial education may place more emphasis on personal experience and business knowledge.

**Chart 2. The Relationship Between the Sector of Interest for the Future Business and Motivation**




*Source*: Authors' heatmap

According to the analysis in the IBM SPSS Statistics program, a statistically significant association was identified between the sector of interest for the future business and entrepreneurial motivation, where Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 266.33, and p-value = 0.0051 ($p < 0.05$, therefore significant). Thus, the motivation for entrepreneurship influences the choice of the sector of interest. People motivated by financial independence may be more inclined towards freelancing or IT, and people driven by passion for a field may prefer the creative industry, education or tourism. Young people pursuing financial opportunities may orient themselves towards trade, construction or investment.

Finally, a statistically significant association was identified between the impediments to starting a business and entrepreneurial studies, where Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 248.97, and p-value = 0.0014 ($p < 0.05$, therefore significant). Therefore, the level of entrepreneurial studies influences the perception of the barriers to starting a business. People with advanced entrepreneurial studies may consider that the obstacles are more likely to be bureaucracy, access to financing or competition on the market, while those without entrepreneurial studies may perceive lack of experience or lack of a business idea as the main impediments.

Within the SPSS analysis, no other statistically significant associations were identified between the other variables analyzed ($p > 0.05$ for all tests).

## 5. Conclusions

Entrepreneurship is a complex process that involves risk-taking, innovation and resilience to generate profit and contribute to economic development. It is an interdisciplinary discipline that combines creativity, critical thinking and adaptability, playing an essential role in technological progress and market diversification. There are two types of entrepreneurs: those who see entrepreneurship as a development opportunity and those who start a business out of necessity, without fully exploiting its potential. Entrepreneurial companies can also be innovative, with an openness to the global market, or small, with limited access to resources and reduced competitiveness.

Education plays a key role in training entrepreneurs, and the European Union supports the entrepreneurial development of young people through educational programs and funding (Glaser-Segura et al., 2018). However, lack of knowledge about running a business, difficult access to capital and economic instability are significant obstacles, especially in Romania, where bureaucracy and corruption limit entrepreneurial initiatives.

Digitalization has become a key factor in business competitiveness, facilitating efficiency and access to international markets. Emerging technologies, such as e-commerce and remote work, have transformed the entrepreneurial environment, and investments in digitalization offer new opportunities for entrepreneurs. The Metaverse industry is estimated to reach a value of USD 5 trillion by 2030, bringing new development prospects for innovative businesses. During times of economic or geopolitical crisis, entrepreneurship can be affected both negatively and positively. Businesses that adapt quickly and innovate can find new growth opportunities, while companies that fail to cope with change risk going into decline. Recent examples, such as the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, have demonstrated that only flexible and digitally oriented businesses have been able to thrive.

In conclusion, entrepreneurship is an essential factor for economic progress, but its success depends on access to resources, educational support and the capacity for innovation. Romania has high entrepreneurial potential, but to fully exploit it, it is necessary to eliminate bureaucratic barriers and improve access to financing and entrepreneurial education.

Romania stands at a crossroads: the young entrepreneurs with creativity and determination, yet they often stumble over the same old hurdles of red tape and funding gaps. To change this, policymakers should focus on making it simpler to start and run a business. Imagine a single online portal where, in just a few clicks, you register your company, handle your tax filings and even apply for intellectual-property protection, no more running between offices or waiting weeks for approvals. Alongside this, expanding the Start-up Nation program to include smaller, seed-stage grants (around €15,000) and pairing each award with a mentorship voucher would directly address the funding and guidance that 74% of aspiring founders say they lack. Finally, a short-term tax holiday for newly

registered micro-enterprises, plus government-backed guarantees to encourage banks to lend, would send a clear signal: Romania believes in its young innovators and is ready to invest in their success.

Embedding hands-on entrepreneurship modules into every high-school and university curriculum—complete with live pitching events judged by practicing entrepreneurs, would nurture both the skills and the confidence needed to launch new ventures. Beyond the classroom, establishing publicly supported incubators in each development region, offering shared workspaces, legal clinics and digital-upskilling workshops, would ensure that promising ideas can thrive outside major cities. A national "Young Mentors" network, matching seasoned alumni with first-time founders, would foster a culture of peer support and collaboration. Together, these measures would transform entrepreneurship from a risky solo endeavor into a well-supported pathway to economic renewal.

According to the quantitative research, conducted on 76 young people in Romania with entrepreneurial initiative, 53.9% have no entrepreneurial experience, 75% do not come from entrepreneurial families, 78.9% want to become entrepreneurs for financial independence, 57.9% consider themselves creative and innovative, 22.4% are interested in trade, 48.7% would like to expand their business internationally, 79.9% believe that the state should support entrepreneurship through financing programs, 60.5% are informed about the Start-up Nation program, 53.9% believe that Romania's uncertain future is a threat to entrepreneurship, and 60.5% see political instability as a major obstacle to starting a business.

According to the general conclusion of the statistical analyses performed in the IBM SPSS Statistics program, there are significant relationships between the variables. Therefore, young people with an entrepreneurial family environment are more likely to become entrepreneurs, while those without this environment choose stable jobs. Entrepreneurial motivation is influenced by access to financing, market opportunities and professional experience. Respondents with advanced entrepreneurial studies attach more importance to government support and access to financing, while the others rely on personal experience. The choice of business sector reflects personal motivation: Financial independence → IT, freelancing. Passion → creative industries, education, tourism. Financial opportunities → trade, construction. Young people with entrepreneurial studies perceive bureaucracy and competition as impediments to starting a business, while those without entrepreneurial studies feel the lack of experience and ideas. This analysis shows that the decision to become an entrepreneur is not only a personal choice, but also a reaction to the economic, educational and social context.

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