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ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND UNIVERSITIES: A PLACE OF ACADEMIC BUSINESS INCUBATORS

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Abstract

The article examines the issues of entrepreneurship support through the development of academic (university) business incubators. The experience of foreign universities in supporting entrepreneurship of students, graduates and university staff has been studied. The mechanism of creation of an academic business incubator within the limits of realization of the program on assistance to creation of a steady network of business incubators in Zaporizhzhia region is considered. Trends in the development of academic entrepreneurship based on of Berdyansk State Pedagogical University in the conditions of quarantine restrictions are determined.

The use of incubators and accelerators as institutions to promote the development of new business enterprises has grown worldwide in recent years. There is a significant increase in the number of (academic) university business incubators, which are incubators located in universities and closely integrated with the activities of universities for the development and dissemination of knowledge.

The universities and the education system must create an enabling environment for young people to develop their thinking as an employee and an employer. It is necessary to prepare students and teachers to improve entrepreneurial skills and knowledge to create jobs.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, university, academic business incubator, entrepreneurial skills, training.

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ПІДПРИЄМНИЦТВО І УНІВЕРСИТЕТИ: МІСЦЕ АКАДЕМІЧНИХ БІЗНЕС-ІНКУБАТОРІВ

Несторенко Т., Остенда А., Кравчик Ю., Несторенко О. Підприємництво і університети: місце академічних бізнес-інкубаторів. *Український журнал прикладної економіки та техніки*. 2022. Том 7. № 1. С. 63 – 71.

Анотація

У період економічної невизначеності, періодичного введення карантинних обмежень у зв'язку з пандемією, суб'єкти господарювання стикаються з необхідністю пошуку нових альтернатив для покращення ситуації із зайнятістю. Одним із рішень є розвиток підприємництва у вищих навчальних закладах (університетах), забезпечення умов для формування підприємницьких здібностей у студентів та викладачів. Університет має не лише функцію підготовки студентів. Його діяльність виходить за ці межі, оскільки відіграє важливу роль у передачі знань суспільству. Хоча кілька років тому підприємництво було не дуже поширеним в українських університетах, зарубіжний досвід та досвід деяких українських університетів останніх років підкреслюють важливий інтерес до таких ініціатив. В статті досліджуються питання підтримки підприємництва шляхом розвитку академічних (університетських) бізнес-інкубаторів. Досліджено досвід закордонних вишів з підтримки підприємництва студентів, випускників та працівників університетів. Розглянуто механізм створення академічного бізнес-інкубатора в рамках реалізації програми зі сприяння створенню сталої мережі бізнес-інкубаторів в Запорізькій області. Визначено тренди розвитку академічного підприємництва на базі Бердянського державного педагогічного університету в умовах карантинних обмежень. Використання інкубаторів та акселераторів як установ для сприяння розвитку нових бізнес-підприємств за останні роки зросло у всьому світі. Зокрема, значно збільшується кількість (академічних) університетських бізнес-інкубаторів, які є інкубаторами, розташованими в університетах і тісно інтегрованими з діяльністю університетів для розвитку та поширення знань. Університети та система освіти повинні створити сприятливе середовище для розвитку молоді як працівника та роботодавця. Необхідно підготувати студентів та викладачів до вдосконалення підприємницьких навичок та знань для створення робочих місць.

Ключові слова: підприємництво, університет, академічний бізнес-інкубатор, підприємницькі навички, тренінг.

JEL classification: A22; I21; I23

Formulation of the problem

In the period of economic uncertainty, periodic introduction of quarantine restrictions due to the pandemic, economic entities face the need to find new alternatives to improve the employment situation.

One of the solutions is the development of entrepreneurship in higher education institutions (universities), providing conditions for the formation of entrepreneurial skills in students and teachers. The university has not only the function of preparing students. Its

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activities go beyond these limits, as it plays an important role in the transfer of knowledge to society. Although a few years ago entrepreneurship was not very common in Ukrainian universities, the foreign experience, and the experience of some Ukrainian universities in recent years underscores the important interest in such initiatives.

The importance of creating conditions at the university for the development of entrepreneurial skills of students and teachers is highlighted in the Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine for 2021-2031. The vision of higher education in Ukraine emphasizes its entrepreneurial component – cooperation of universities with research institutions and the business sector to form the professional and scientific-educational potential of the nation based on continuous professional and personal development, focused on the highest achievements and practices [18, p.69]. This document also emphasizes the need to include in the educational standards of entrepreneurial competence, considering the subject area of specialties [18, p.44].

It should be noted that in the process of entering the business process, students, graduates, university professors face many problems - legal, organizational, financial, marketing, and others. The solution of these problems will be facilitated by the active operation of the academic business incubator, where start-up entrepreneurs at the start of their activities can get opportunities to develop their own business and ongoing consulting support during the initial period of work. Such support for academic entrepreneurship is dictated by the need to create conditions for the economically active population in the region (city) and their real participation in the development of the region (city).

Therefore, the university can and should create conditions and implement programs in various formats for the formation of entrepreneurial skills in the process of obtaining higher education. One of the mechanisms for the development of entrepreneurial skills of students and teachers, as well as the support of newly created businesses by students and teachers, is the creation of academic business incubators.

Literature review

The works of Ukrainian and foreign researchers are devoted to the problems of development of entrepreneurial skills of students and teachers at universities, introduction of mechanisms of support of university entrepreneurship [4; 8; 12]. Universities around the world are implementing initiatives to support and develop entrepreneurship, such as university business incubators, university branches, mentoring (expert advice), business angels (agents who bring money or experience to future entrepreneurs), etc. [20]. The academic business incubator is an integral part of the city's business infrastructure, its integral element [9].

In recent years, university-based business incubators have become increasingly influential in entrepreneurship. Since they play a significant role in the creation of human capital and knowledge, these centres are generators of innovative startups with a high probability of success. Incubators, as Gorączkowska proved in her research, promote the growth of product innovation by enterprises and research. Support for the innovation process was much more frequent only in the case of technology incubators. At the same time, the researcher noticed that only academic incubators increased the chances of product innovation on a global scale [5].

Business incubators operating in Ukrainian universities are mostly called "academic business incubators".

In Ukraine, the legislative field defines an innovative business incubator, which means the subject of infrastructure to support small businesses engaged in innovation (implement innovative ideas and inventions in the initial stages of their commercialization and implement innovative projects on this basis) that supports entrepreneurs at an early stage of their activities by renting non-residential premises and providing consulting, accounting, legal and other services [15].

In the scientific literature, academic business incubators or academic business incubators (AIP) are structures created voluntarily in scientific and educational institutions with the assistance of local authorities and foreign organizations to support the development of small businesses in the region. Their activities are provided on parity and regular basis, based on the principles of social partnership, cooperation of employees of local governments, associations of entrepreneurs, public and trade unions of employees of the private sector [2].

Poland has had an entire ecosystem of support for start-ups since 2004, called the Academic Business Incubator Network. This network is the largest in Central and Eastern Europe [2]. There is a model for testing business ideas without the need to register companies with many tools aimed at developing them into global projects. The Academic Business Incubator Network supports the development of the company at every step not only through legal and financial services but also through a mentoring program. The Academic Business Incubator Network has a special benefits program that allows start-ups to use products and services that would be very difficult for them to access on their own. But the Academic Business Incubator Network is not directly related to universities and operates on a self-sustaining basis.

In most foreign universities, existing business incubators are mostly called *university business incubators* (UBI). From our point of view, the names *academic business incubator* (as it is accepted in Ukraine) and *university business incubator* (as it is accepted abroad) are synonymous.

Academic business incubator should be considered as a structural unit of a university, which under certain conditions and for some time provides resource support, consulting, and other assistance to small and medium enterprises at the initial stage of their activities [3, p. 63]. Resource support includes, first of all, the provision of premises and other property (office or production equipment, appliances), as well as finance (financing of innovative projects – start-ups). Consulting support of the business incubator is the implementation of educational activities, training services, consulting, and mentoring in the implementation of business projects.

University business incubators have additional goals related to student education and the commercialization of intellectual property in universities. This divergence of stakeholder goals creates unique challenges for UBI, which are addressed through a wide range of structures, processes, and governance models [11].

According to Huda & Rejito, university business incubators are used by universities to carry out the knowledge transfer process to support small and medium-sized businesses [7]. The authors of the study singled out the model of a university business incubator, which consists of four components, namely preparation, pre-incubation, incubation, and post-incubation.

University business incubators are born as tools of the academic world to obtain marketing research results, technology transfer, and promotion of entrepreneurial spirit. In these contexts, the exchange of knowledge between entrepreneurs can be the main factor for the development and success of their business. In their study, Redondo & Camarero argue that complementarity, complementarity, and resource transfer, the incubator's commitment to business are fundamental to knowledge sharing, entrepreneurship, and innovation [16].

Some researchers argue that university business incubators have unique opportunities to promote transnational entrepreneurship and the evolution of business and technical communication practices in the world [13]. Such business incubators facilitate the launch of start-ups by professors, students, researchers, and local entrepreneurs.

The connection between universities and business incubators creates an environment where students, researchers, and entrepreneurs can help others translate their new ideas, special skills, and abilities into new businesses. According to Hassan N., the role of traditional universities has changed, and now entrepreneurs are needed to redirect new knowledge for economic development through a business incubator [6]. The introduction of revolutionary

ideas into business proposed by the academic environment can allow "pioneers" to make extra profits, and small firms will turn into large companies [10].

University business incubators are being developed in many countries. For example, Saudi Arabia has taken decisive steps to develop and improve the local business ecosystem by creating and developing business incubators, especially university business incubators [19].

Research analysis shows that in many countries, the creation of business incubators by universities is an effective mechanism for developing entrepreneurship and developing entrepreneurial skills in students and teachers. Further research is required to analyse the implementation of foreign experience by Ukrainian universities.

The article aims

The article aims to study the state and prospects of the development of academic incubators in the Zaporizhzhia region (on the example of Berdyansk State Pedagogical University).

Results

In recent years, Ukraine has been actively promoting the idea of involving universities in the development of entrepreneurial culture, the formation of entrepreneurial skills in students and teachers. The mechanisms for implementing such ideas are the development of start-up projects and business incubators at universities. Thus, at the beginning of the academic year 2021/2022 in Ukraine a new wave of start-up movement was launched in higher education institutions "Entrepreneurship University". This academic year, the discipline "Innovative Entrepreneurship and Management of Start-up Projects" [14] will be taught in 85 free economic zones. The main goal of the project is the development of entrepreneurial culture in Ukrainian higher education institutions and the demonstration of their own business as an alternative to hired work. In particular, the start-up wave will develop entrepreneurship education at several levels: spreading the trend of creating start-ups among students, improving the skills of teachers, and actively involving university administrations in creating systemic change.

Entrepreneurship University is an initiative aimed at creating entrepreneurship universities in Ukraine, i.e. universities with a strong business culture and start-up infrastructure. The initiative is implemented by the network of start-up incubators YEP together with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Start-up Fund, with the support of the USAID Competitive Economy of Ukraine Program.

YEP! is a network of academic start-up incubators in which students and young scientists learn to create their start-ups. Students and educators can try their hand at entrepreneurship without risk and start their start-up in 3 months [21].

A university participation in the YEP! network is available in any program:

1. yep!Club – a team of students and teachers who develop the local business ecosystem at their university.

2. yep!Starter is an international entrepreneurship program that will give students and teachers the knowledge they need to start their own business.

3. yep!Acceleration is an acceleration program that helps resident start-ups reach a new level of product development.

YEP! programs are supported by Cisco, Deloitte, Lucky Labs, the Embassies of Estonia and Israel, the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade [21]. Student start-up clubs of Berdyansk universities are also the members of the YEP! network (Fig. 1).

At the regional level, entrepreneurship development programs are also implemented based on universities. In the summer of 2016, the idea of creating a new institution in

Berdyansk to support small businesses – an academic business incubator, ways to integrate science and business based on one of the city's educational institutions was actively discussed. The discussion was initiated by the Regional Fund for Entrepreneurship Support in the Zaporizhzhia region. This state organization has been active since 2001. The Fund is an instrument and the main organizer of the implementation of state policy in the development and financial support of small and medium-sized businesses as a promising sector of the economy in the region [17].

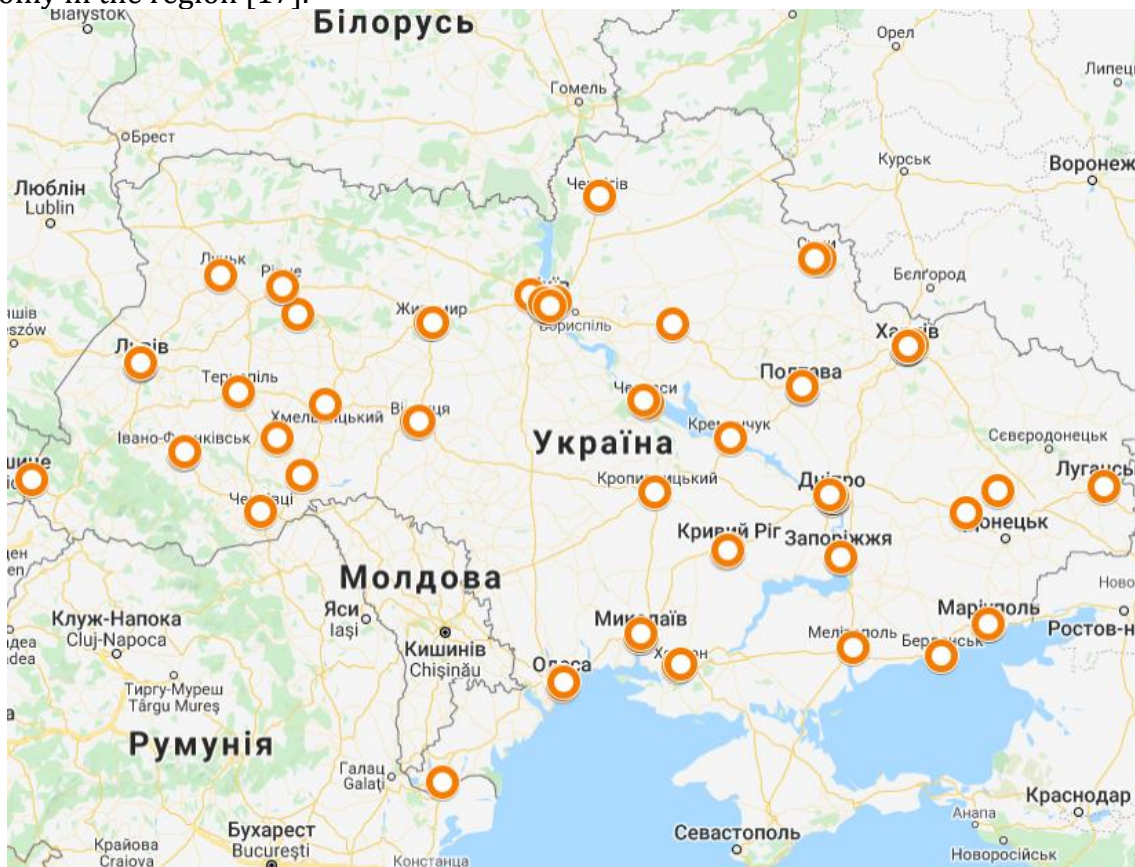


Fig. 1. Network of universities participating in YEP! Programs. Source: [21]

As of September 2018, academic business incubators existed based on universities in almost all cities of the Zaporizhzhia region. The only exception was the city of Berdyansk.

This idea was implemented in 2019 by creating an academic business incubator at the Berdyansk State Pedagogical University (BSPU). This business incubator was established to implement the activities of the Comprehensive Program for Small and Medium Business Development for 2019-2020 and began its work in 2019.

The expediency and necessity of creating an academic business incubator of the Berdyansk State Pedagogical University was based on the results of a survey of university students. In October 2018, a survey of students of all faculties of the Berdyansk State Pedagogical University was conducted – 325 people. 68.6% of respondents mentioned the need to create such an institution at the university. The results of the survey were published during the round table "The path from student to entrepreneur: the place of the business incubator", which was held on November 28, 2018 at the initiative of the NGO "Institute for the Study of Spatial Development" at Berdyansk State Pedagogical University. During the discussion of the place and role of the academic business incubator in the support and development of entrepreneurial initiatives of young people, a decision was made on the feasibility of its creation based on BSPU.

Since 2019, the Academic Business Incubator of BSPU has been conducting cycles of trainings on business psychology, business planning, trainings on business skills development, seminars on economic issues and business taxation. The activities of the BSPU Academic

Business Incubator are, in particular, the implementation of measures aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and starting their own business among students and teachers of the university and promoting youth entrepreneurship in Berdyansk and the region. During their work, 30 students were trained in business fundamentals, who are motivated to start their own business and develop entrepreneurial skills in the future.

In 2019, thanks to the knowledge gained at training and seminars, 15 students wrote their business plans. The authors of the three most promising business plans took part in the competition of business plans. This competition was conducted by the Zaporizhzhia Regional State Administration for participants of university business incubators in the Zaporizhzhia region in early November 2019.

Active work of the BSPU academic business incubator became possible thanks to the support of the State Organization "Regional Fund for Entrepreneurship Support in the Zaporizhzhia region" [17], which also supports the activities of academic business incubators in other universities of the Zaporizhzhia region. production business incubator of Khortytsa National Training and Rehabilitation Academy, business incubator of National University "Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic", ABI of the Enerhodar Institute of State and Municipal Administration named after R.G. Khenokh of the "Classical Private University". In addition, the production business incubator of the multidisciplinary centre of vocational education (Tokmak) also receives support.

It should be noted that the pandemic of 2020-2021 changed the format of the BSPU academic business incubator. Some of the seminars and training were translated into the online format.

Conclusions

The use of incubators and accelerators as institutions to promote the development of new business enterprises has grown worldwide in recent years. In particular, there is a significant increase in the number of (academic) university business incubators, which are incubators located in universities and closely integrated with the activities of universities for the development and dissemination of knowledge.

The universities and the education system must create an enabling environment for young people to develop their thinking as an employee and an employer. It is necessary to prepare students and teachers to improve entrepreneurial skills and knowledge to create jobs.

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