

**REINFORCE THE ENTREPRENEURIAL AND DIGITAL SKILLS OF STUDENTS  
ENHANCING THE MODERNIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.  
CRITICAL SATISFACTION ON STUDENTS TARGET GROUP**

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**Abstract:** *Modern computer tools significantly increase the attractiveness of the educational process, with reference to the business administration field, which is the driven mechanism for the all the processes in the economy. This study is the result of extensive research of the survey for the analysis of students' perception and satisfaction regarding the level of satisfaction concerning the acquired digital and entrepreneurial skills in the university. Along with the digital required competence, the study outlined the main skills a graduate should have in order to be competitive on the labour market and to achieve success in his/her entrepreneurial career.*

*The study was conducted on the basis of the empirical data at Alecu Russo Balti State University, within the project: **Reinforce entrepreneurial and digital skills of students and teachers to enhance the modernization of higher education in Moldova** (No. 585353-EPP-1- EPPKA2-2017-1-E-CBHE-JP).*

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurial Education, Digital Skills, Soft Skills, Statistical Data Analysis.*

**Introduction.** In a changing world, business education turns out to be a necessity and a priority of education strategy of the modern universities and is the key to employability for economic success. Entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions is promoting the entrepreneurial culture and innovative thinking by changing teachers and students mentalities. The universities usually have been dedicated to ensuring that students can secure future jobs – not become entrepreneurs. In the meantime, globalization, the fast development of technology have entirely changed the nature of the employment. It is no longer sufficient to train students for a career. Universities must prepare students to work in a dynamic, rapidly changing entrepreneurial and international environment.

**Survey methodology.** The survey was designed to assess the quality of economic education within USARB through the vision of students from the Department of Economic Sciences involved in teaching process. The study targets to analyse students' attitudes and perceptions, and to collect relevant learning needs with respect to entrepreneurship and digital skills. For questioning students we have used Google forms tools [2].

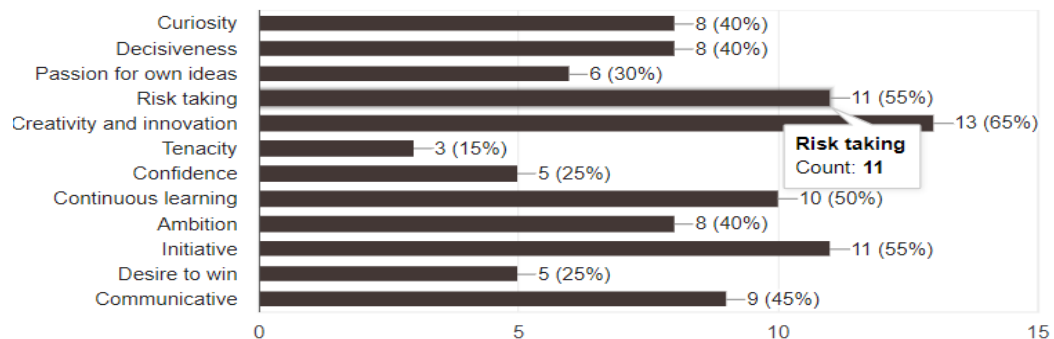
The students' survey was structured in 4 chapters, as follows: the first chapter – examines the profile of the respondents and their contact details, the second aims at the perception about entrepreneurship (5 questions), the third – the assessment of learning and teaching methods used for learning Entrepreneurship and learning resources and the last one dedicated to the self-evaluation of 12 skills, grouped in 4 categories (Social, Personal, Methodological and Digital).

For each questionnaire, was developed an evaluation system (points) according to the specific question and the problem approached.

To summarize the data and to formulate the conclusions, the results obtained with the electronic tools were processed via Google forms for students [3].

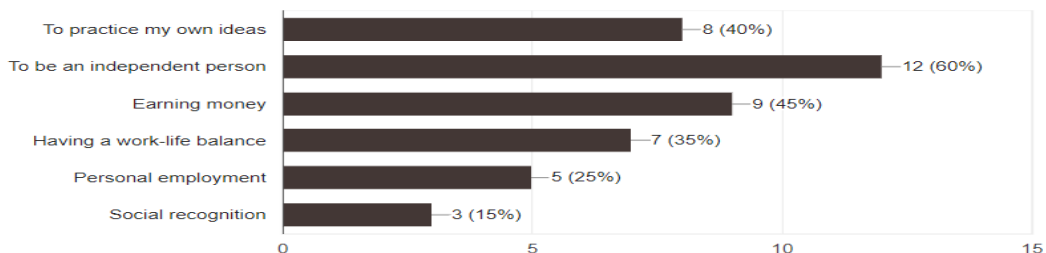
The target group of the survey were 20 students enrolled in Master programme in Business and Administration from the Faculty of Exact, Economic, and Environmental Sciences. According to the gender, there were interviewed 17 females (85%) and 3 males (15%).

**Results of the survey analysis. Critical to satisfaction matrix with results of statistical data analysis.** For the perception regarding the most important qualities needed for being successful entrepreneur the students answered as follows: 13 students out of 20 – give priority to Creativity and Innovation; 11 students out of 20 – chose Risk taking and Initiative; 9 students believe that „Communicative” is one of the important qualities for being successful; 8 students go for „curiosity” and „Decisiveness”, the lowest number of students choose as a quality „Tenacity” – only 3 students (to see Chart nr.1).



**Chart no. 1.** USARB Student's perception of the most important qualities needed for being successful entrepreneur

In students' opinion the most important reason for becoming an entrepreneur is „To be an independent person” – 12 answers; „To earn money”- 9 answers; „To practice my own ideas”- 8 answers; 7 - for „Having a work-life balance”; 5 - for „Personal employment” and 3 answers for „Social recognitions”.



**Chart no. 2.** USARB Student's perception of the most important reason for becoming an entrepreneur

According to USARB students, business failure in Moldova is perceived as a barrier for future business ideas – (9 answers); denote the lack of entrepreneurial skills – (4 answers). Moreover, for the top three barriers for starting a new business, students mentioned for the first place: „Fear to failure” – 13 opinions; second: „Corruption in society” – 12 answers and third: „Excessive bureaucracy” – 11 students (Chart no. 3).

The most useful solutions needed for developing the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of students have been chosen in the following way: „Business simulations during training period” – 10 persons; „Entrepreneurship courses and dedicated learning materials” and „Meeting entrepreneurs to find out their experiences” – 9 persons and „Internships in companies” – 8 persons.



**Chart no. 3.** *USARB Student's perception of the business failure in Moldova*

In conclusion, for the questions concerning the perception of entrepreneurship by USARB students, we can determine that creativity and innovation are considered the most important qualities; the reasons to become an entrepreneurship come from the desire to be an independent person and to earn money; the business failure in Moldova is perceived as a barrier for the future business ideas and denotes the lack of entrepreneur skills and the top three barriers to start a new business in Moldova are: fear to failure, corruption in society and the bureaucracy.

The second part of survey measures the preferences of USARB students for the learning and teaching styles. According to the results of the survey students prefer blended learning – 60%; face-to face – 35% and e-learning – 5%.

Concerning the **methodological skills** USARB's students consider very important to be able to identify their learning needs and plan actions to fulfil them and to know what to do to fill the gaps between what they know and what they need to know in order to have a good performance (65%, 13 students out of 20). Also they consider very important to be able choose a variety of information sources appropriate to the scope and discipline of research question and to be able to analyse, synthesize and evaluate the quality of information. (65% - 13 students out of 20). 14 students of 20 consider very important to respond creatively to problem and opportunities (70%) and 12 students consider very important to transform ideas or solutions into entirely new forms (60%).

The results of the self- evaluation of digital skills show that students consider very important to be able to adapt smoothly to new technology and to integrate it into their learning or writing skills and to be able to exploiting technological potentials in order to represent and solve problems (11 students out of 20).

USARB's students from Business and administration master programme consider very necessary to develop along with entrepreneurial the digital skills. According to the students' survey, 9 students out of 20 consider very important to know how to use a searching engine in their research. 12 students out of 20 consider very important to compare, contrast, and integrate information from different sources. The digital skills in data processing and information are considered important and university's curriculum needs to develop these skills.

USARB's students possess digital skills in communication. The capacity to edit information, to communicate it through email, presentation in slides, post in social networks, blog is considered very important.

Also, students consider important to know how to use software packages and web-based collaborative services in their jobs. Students always try to explore new ways and original formats for content creation and they know about copyrights and license rules for intellectual property products.

**Findings and further recommendations.** The research conducted with the help of survey on beneficiaries of economic training services allowed us to analyse the quality of the Master Business and administration program and the efficiency of the economic discipline teaching methods at USARB. The results of the surveys show a good situation on multiple chapters and assessed issues, the result of the permanent interaction of the teachers with the students and employers in the region. Most of the skills created for graduate students correspond to the skills required by employers. Many of the teachers are business owners or part-time employees in companies that motivate them to constantly improve and respond to labour market demands.

At the same time, some results have demonstrated a lower degree of digitization of study programs, a low level of internationalization of economic education and the need to develop soft skills: innovation, creativity, hardworking etc.

**In conclusion**, we can mention that the purpose and objectives of the surveys were carried out. This type of research is important and relevant for our institution, as it provides a documented estimated basis real for the introduction of digital courses and educational programs, for the implementation of new technologies in economic education. Curricular content teaching and learning strategies, through educational software, require in advance a detailed study and a good knowledge of educational reality, provided in this research. Based on the results of the present research, we would like to point out some directions that are considered as future ways of integrating technology into didactic activity, as creating, modernizing and promoting a new methodology for economic curricula at USARB based on the use of ICT, as well as the dissemination of educational tools for initial and in-service training involving the use of modern technologies.

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