

ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT TERMINOLOGY

ZOFIA POMIRSKA – JOANNA SADKOWSKA

Abstract: *Project Management has in the recent years become one of the most effective management ideas offering different tools to increase business competitiveness. However the aspect of Project Management (PM) terminology has not been broadly highlighted in the scientific discussion. This paper analyzes the relation between the knowledge of terminology in the area of PM and the attitude towards entrepreneurship of young people. A thesis has been proposed that young people with better consciousness and understanding of the aforementioned vocabulary are also characterized by higher entrepreneurship level measured by their activity in projects.*

Keywords: *Project Management, Project Management terminology, entrepreneurship*

JEL Classification code: M00

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays development of particular economies is influenced by a number of different factors. Those factors can be grouped into different categories according to the selected criteria. The most often used classification is the one which groups them into: economic, political and social determinants. In the studies of the aforementioned elements, also another factor is definitely worth considering which the level of entrepreneurship observed in those economies is. For the recent decades entrepreneurship has been regarded as a key-driver of economic and social development. The aforementioned is also reflected in literature studies. Many researchers emphasize that companies in their activities cannot rely only on strategy or entrepreneurship but instead must engage into strategic entrepreneurship [webb, ketchen, ireland, 2010, p. 68]. This paper tries to identify and track a kind of chain that can be built in this area. Primarily, entrepreneurship at the level of the whole economy is built by entrepreneurship of its society with young people being the most important group. Secondly, youth entrepreneurship is, to a high extent, created by their activities in different projects, both from business and personal life. The most important question that comes from the above is that the level of entrepreneurship could be increased in case of higher project activities of young people. In addition to this, light has been put on the aspect where activities of young people within projects may be determined by their understanding and knowledge of project related terminology. Following this, a thesis has been proposed, that students with better knowledge of project management terminology are also more active within projects.

2. EDUCATION AND ITS ROLE IN INCREASING ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF YOUNG PEOPLE

In literature there is a broad understanding and common consensus on the role of entrepreneurship in building innovativeness of economies. At the same time, many researchers see the complex character of this term which causes that entrepreneurship is influenced by many

elements, each of them having different background. Also, it is worth underlining that the above set of factors includes those related to the environment in which a particular person functions but also those closely related to this person's personality and character. To give an example, authors of the paper 'Psychological factors, behavioral variables and acquired competencies in entrepreneurship education' seem to emphasize the role of psychological and behavioral factors [Chiru, Tachiciu, Ciuchete, 2012, pp. 4011-4012]. Similarly, the results of the analysis carried out by F. Ghasemi, A. Rastegar, R. Jahromi and R. Marvdashti indicate the existence of a positive relation between students creativity and entrepreneurship (365 students were surveyed in the study) [Ghasemi, Rastegar, Jahromi, Marvdashti, 2011, p. 1291]. According to the cited authors, educational system strongly determines societies destiny in the long run [Ibidem, p. 1261].

In literature there is a common agreement on the significance of the positive relation between entrepreneurship and economic development. To give an example, A. O'Connor indicates that education within entrepreneurship is one of the most important steps that can be taken to stimulate increase within economic activities [O'Connor, 2012]. The cited author also draws some important conclusions referring to education and its role in building strong entrepreneurship of societies. He especially underlines the fact that policy makers should support education within entrepreneurship by implementing proper educational programs [O'Connor, 2012].

This paper tries to seek an answer to the question referring to the relation between education and project activity. In particular, analysis has been concentrated on understanding of the vocabulary related to projects. For this purpose a thesis has been proposed that young people, currently in their studies, with better knowledge and understating of Project Management vocabulary are also those with higher activity and engagement.

3. KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT TERMINOLOGY VERSUS STUDENTS PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Understanding words is a translation of language form to the meanings available in the receiver's internal experience on the perception level and in the operational memory. Therefore it refers to the language organization of human's experience and it depends on the state of his active and passive dictionary.

There is a significant number of definitions of the process of understanding, inter alia philosophical, psychological, linguistic. Kreutz's definition has been assumed here, according to which, 'understanding a word means being aware of the object's introduction defined with the word and understanding a sentence means that you have a thought in your consciousness that is expressed in the sentence [Ibidem, p.28]. In the Kreutz's depiction, understanding a word means creating in the thoughts a perceptive performance based on the memory of your experience or memory imagination, fanciful. In case of an abstract phenomenon during understanding in thoughts, there should appear a reminder of a conception (a collection of the most important features). Agreeably with the depiction, if someone doesn't understand something, either nothing or something else appears in his consciousness. Therefore understanding is a reconstruction of meanings, information intended by the sender of the text in the receiver's consciousness, coded in language signs.

Understanding a word is related to lexical and understanding processes. Lexical processes comprise of lexical access, that represents an identification of the word (graphic and phonological), that allows getting to the meaning of the word stored in our mind lexicon. Semantic coding, in other words bringing out words from a memory is a factor of the understanding process. During the lexical access we identify words on the base of a letter combination and thereby we activate the memory of these words and in the process of semantic coding we get to the stored in the memory word meaning [Sternberg, 2001].

There are many factors with a noticeable influence on the understanding of words, from which the most important are:

1. word's frequency,
2. level of the meaning's generality,
3. word's ambiguity,
4. connection between a particular name with a category,
5. efficiency of receiver's mind,
6. receiver's knowledge,
7. knowledge of the material and language constructions used in the given field.

For the purpose of this paper the most important is the last of the mentioned factors, because it indirectly shows the relation between the level of vocabulary assimilation from the given field and the activity in this field. In the presented studies it's been assumed that there is a connection between understanding words forming semantic field connected to projects and project activity. A thesis has been proposed that young people with higher awareness and understanding of technical vocabulary also represent higher level of entrepreneurship, measured by their commitment in the projects.

The analysis has been conducted with a questionnaire method among 100 students in their first year of studies at the Management Department of Gdansk University's. Questioned students have been asked to suit definitions to ten given terms from the project management field: project, schedule, budget, stakeholder, project manager, project's life cycle, project assignment, qualified expenses, project risk, project beneficiary.

It turned out that none of the questioned student has known all of the mentioned terms. The most identified were terms from the economy field: budget (96% of right answers), risk (93% of right answers), and schedule (89% of right answers). 1/4 of the questioned students had problems with the term project, which is a key for managing projects. This term was often identified incorrectly as a result of a common understanding of this term, it's also possible that ambiguity of the term in Polish language had an influence on the problem. Dictionary definition of the word 'project' identifies it as a: plan of action, preliminary version of something, document that contains calculations, drawings etc. that apply to making an object or device. All of these explanations unfortunately do not apply to the understanding of the term 'project' applied to PM techniques.

Another key term in this field is Project Manager. It wasn't positively identified by almost 1/5 of questioned students, however this term appeared in the polish language along with generalization of project management and it's strictly connected.

Almost 1/3 of the researched students couldn't handle understanding of the following terms: 'stakeholder (27% of wrong answers), and eligible expenses (28% of wrong answers). A notable number of questioned students had difficulties in understanding the following terms: project's life cycle and project assignment (in both cases 22% of wrong answers). However the most difficult appeared to be the meaning of the word 'beneficiary'- this was not known almost by the half of the questioned students (46% of wrong answers). It may suggest, that these students won't be able to fill a project application, even if it's directed to the students, because the mentioned term constitutes their integral part.

In light of the information presented above, also students activity within projects is worth deeper analysis. Out of 100 respondents, currently all of them in their first year of studies, 46 students have been project active (which means that they have at least once taken part in a project). In this group, the majority were males, women amounted for 46% of active students. What is also worth underlining is that, out of 46 respondents, only 7 were studying at more than one faculty. In the researched group 12 students were also working. Similarly, out of 46 students who have ever taken part in a projects at the time of the research, only 13 were still project active and only 5 declared their project activity on a regular basis. Following this path, specificity of projects that young people were engaged in, is worth taking a look at (chart 1).

Analysis of the information from the table above indicates that the majority of students activities within projects were those related to students interests and passions. On the other hand, projects done in the process of

Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship in Light of the Knowledge of Project Management Terminology

studies amounted only for 35% which should be evaluated as low. What brings questions is the appearing inconsistency between the level of students activity within projects at the university and projects in their private life. The above can also indicate low engagement of the university into promoting projects as well as the fact that the university does not create opportunities to develop engagement in different project types.

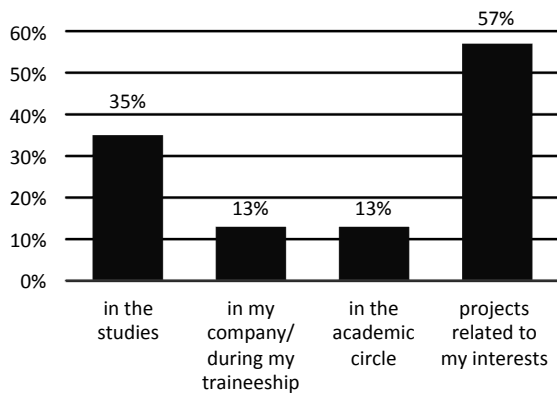


Figure 1 Project activity of the researched group of students, by project type
Source: own calculation

In the second part of the survey, respondents (both project active and not project active) were asked to determine sources of their knowledge of Project Management terminology. In the analysis of the results obtained, the following aspects need emphasizing. The main source of project related terminology were: the school the respondents have graduated from (63%), and family house (46%). Similarly, 23% of students declared other classes at the university as the source of their knowledge. What also deserves underlining is that books as the source of knowledge on projects were identified by 34% of respondents. On the other pole in the survey were: trainings (7%), language courses (9%) and stays abroad (6%). What brings attention in the obtained results is the relationship between three sources of knowledge: school of graduation, family home and other classes at the university- where the last factor was indicated by only 23% of respondents. The aforementioned can results from the fact that either 1. there is not enough attention paid to Project Management issues in the educational program or 2. students will have more teaching on these issues in the later years of their studies (at the time of the research they were in the second semester of studies).

In the studies of different factors which determine project activities of young people, there is also other relation worth paying attention to. In this paper a question has been asked whether there can be drawn any relation between project activity and the knowledge of project related vocabulary. A thesis has been proposed that students with higher attitude towards projects are also those with better understating of project terminology. The results of the pilot survey have been depicted in the table below.

Analysis of the information presented in table 2 allows us to observe some interesting occurrences. The most significant of them seems to be the one referring to the fact that students with project experience do not have, in

general, much better knowledge on project related vocabulary than students who have never participated in projects. What is especially interesting, is the fact that the knowledge of words such as: project, project timetable, budget was better in the second group of students. Additionally, in case of terms typical of Project Management (stakeholders) the non- active group of students had worse understanding which may be evaluated as a typical one. However, on the other hand, the same group of respondents had better understanding of more commonly known terms such as: project and project timetable.

Table 1 The relation between respondents activity within projects and their knowledge of PM terminology

Project Management vocabulary	Knowledge of the project vocabulary by:	
	students with project activity, %	students with no project activity, %
Project	74	76
Timetable/schedule	87	91
Budget	93	98
Stakeholder	80	67
Project Manager	83	81
Project life cycle	78	78
Project task	78	78
Eligible expenditures	78	67
Project risk	96	91
Project beneficiary	63	54

Source: own calculation

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Observation of the recent research results that have been presented in literature clearly shows the increasing role of entrepreneurship (or strategic entrepreneurship) over business development [Compare: Webb, Ketchen, Ireland, 2010, p. 68]. Following this path, sources for the aforementioned strategic entrepreneurship are worth looking for. Studying the topic of entrepreneurship and its determinants it has to be emphasized that It is influenced by a significant number of factors. The above is confirmed by the type of studies run by different authors. To give an example, some researchers concentrate in their studies on gender and its influence over attitude towards entrepreneurship [Zhang, Zyphur, Narayanan, Arvey, Chaturvedi, Avolio, Lichtenstein, Larsson, 2009, p. 93]. The results of the pilot survey allow us to draw some significant observations. The first one is the fact that the level of students project activities is rather low- more than half of the surveyed young people has never taken part in any project. But on the other hand, this group of respondents does not have much worse knowledge of project vocabulary- in comparison to those project active. Trying to sum up, it's a quite surprising result, especially considering that the respondents were students from the Management Department, who are most probably planning their careers within business.

This brings us to think that the education at the university, at least in the first part of studies, does not offer many classes dedicated to Project Management issues. Similarly, low level of students project activities may, to a high extent, result from the fact that the university does not offer sufficient opportunities to participate in school-organized projects (most of respondents marked private life projects as their activities).

Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship in Light of the Knowledge of Project Management Terminology

IN LIGHT OF THE AFOREMENTIONED CITINGS AS WELL AS THE RESULTS COMING OUT FROM THE STUDY RUN IN THIS PAPER IT CAN DEFINITELY be said that one of the key-factors in the area of building and encouraging societies attitude towards entrepreneurship is educational system. The educational path can either stimulate or not positive

attitude of pupils and students towards projects and project participation. At the same time, intense activity within projects should be treated as one of the most important steps towards shaping high entrepreneurship of young people in a long term.

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Zofia POMIRSKA, Ph.D.

Gdansk University, Faculty of Languages, Department of Applied Polish Language
e-mail: zofia.pomirska@ug.edu.pl

Joanna SADKOWSKA, Ph.D.

Gdansk University, Faculty of Management, Business Economics Department
e-mail: joanna.sadkowska@poczta.fm