

# Self-Assessment of Entrepreneurial Potential and Actual Intentions to Start a Business Depending on the Chosen Field and Language of Study

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**Abstract:** **Background:** This article aligns with contemporary approaches to defining entrepreneurship by examining not only its core essence but also the entrepreneurial potential, personality traits, and behavioral dynamics necessary to identify an individual as entrepreneurial.

**Research objectives:** By examining the entrepreneurial landscape among students at the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszow (UITM), the article explores the connections between academic specialization, field of study, and entrepreneurial aspirations, focusing on both the potential and intention to initiate business ventures. Based on data from a survey of 1,526 students, representing 29.8% of UITM's total student population, the study offers a representative and comparable research sample encompassing various educational paths in both Polish and English programs.

**Results:** The research findings reveal how students' entrepreneurial potential is distributed across various academic disciplines, emphasizing the correlations between their chosen field of study and entrepreneurial potential. Additionally, the article examines the relationships between the urge to start a business and factors such as employment status, language of study, and field of study. It also summarizes the impact of academic programs in specific specializations, as well as support mechanisms, on entrepreneurship development.

**Conclusions:** The study validates two research hypotheses: first, that the chosen field of study affects entrepreneurial potential and the likelihood of starting a business; and second, that the language of study influences the intention to launch one's own business in the near future.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial potential of students, starting a business, entrepreneurial behavior, entrepreneurial person

JEL Codes: L26, J16

## Suggested citation:

Boratyn, J., & Mróz, M. (2024). Self-assessment of entrepreneurial potential and actual intentions to start a business Depending on the chosen field and language of study. *Social Entrepreneurship Review*, 2, 92–106. <https://doi.org/10.15678/SER.2024.2.06>

## 1. Introduction

The post-pandemic economic landscape, coupled with evolving trends in the job market and significant geopolitical transformations, has necessitated the development of a highly adaptive and flexible entrepreneurial perspective on employment. In this context, young individuals, empowered by access to global information and social media platforms, increas-

ingly recognize the importance of self-reliance. They are more inclined to take control of their careers, pursue self-employment, and establish their own businesses to realize their potential.

The structure of this paper is organized as follows: it begins with a review of the existing literature. This is followed by a presentation of the data collected for the empirical analysis, conducted by the research team from the Department of Entrepreneurship at the University of Information Technology and Management (UITM) in Rzeszow, Poland. The subsequent section outlines the methodologies applied in the research and the derived results. The paper concludes with a discussion of the findings and a summary.

## 2. Literature Review

Entrepreneurship, as a concept, is rich in its multidimensional nature and plays a crucial role in various domains. It has become a focal point of scientific research, attracting scholars from diverse fields such as management, economics, sociology, and psychology. A review of the literature suggests that researchers aim to explore its characteristics, interdisciplinary nature, multifaceted applications, and definitions, striving to understand the complexity of the concept and its wide range of applications (Łuczka & Rembiasz, 2016; Rembiasz, 2017).

The particularly strong impact of entrepreneurship is evident in shaping both economic and social dimensions. From the perspective of economic sciences, its influence extends far beyond conventional economic indicators, acting as a catalyst for innovation, economic growth, and employment potential. Simultaneously, in the realm of social sciences, there is a marked interest in examining human traits, particularly soft skills and innate abilities, that contribute to fostering entrepreneurial attitudes (Wyrwa & Sołtysiak, 2016). According to Bławat (2003), this perspective, viewed through a humanistic and personalistic lens, defines an entrepreneurial individual in terms of specific characteristics and relatively stable behavioral traits.

Another perspective on defining entrepreneurship is offered by Mrozowicz (2008), who views it as an inseparable, creative, and essential aspect of an individual's personality and character. Mrozowicz considers entrepreneurship to be a set of personal values, primarily evident in socially or professionally shaped roles. Additionally, the researcher highlights a strong and stable connection between behaviors influenced by innate personality traits and those shaped through social and situational factors.

Following the humanistic perspective on entrepreneurship, it is important to highlight a fundamental view that frames it as the ability to navigate effectively through various life situations. This perspective portrays entrepreneurship as a skill that individuals can develop and refine through a dynamic process of learning and experiential growth (Piecuch, 2010).

Another perspective on defining entrepreneurship is the classical approach of Drucker (1992), who views entrepreneurship as a unique approach to management. Drucker emphasizes the role of the entrepreneur, highlighting traits such as innovation and creativity that drive the introduction of new ideas while optimizing the use of available resources and laying the foundation for future business growth. In this view, the entrepreneur is depicted as someone who actively seeks change, responds proactively, and capitalizes on emerging opportunities. Building on the humanistic perspective of entrepreneurship and innovation, Gąsiorowska-Mącznik (2017) argues that the essence of entrepreneurship lies in individuals' abilities and skills to introduce market innovations. This classical perspective underscores the intrinsic relationship between innovation and entrepreneurship.

Building on the values mentioned above, Timmons (1990) offers valuable insights into this perspective. The author defines entrepreneurship as the process of creating or recognizing opportunities and utilizing them regardless of available resources. He emphasizes that entrepreneurial acts are creative undertakings where entrepreneurs dedicate energy to initiating and building organizations beyond ordinary description and analysis.

Some authors, such as Simons (1999), directly link entrepreneurship and creative novelty in the market with the inherent risks of conducting economic activities. Simons characterizes entrepreneurship as a unique venture defined by risk-taking. Entrepreneurs are often identified as individuals willing to embrace risk in their economic pursuits. However, the organizational dimension of entrepreneurship focuses on the processes of identifying and exploiting opportunities, where the individual's personality traits and abilities play a crucial role (Baran & Bąk, 2016).

Continuing to view entrepreneurship as a system of human characteristics, behaviors, and actions, Guliński and Zasiadły (2005) provide an intriguing description. They define commonly understood entrepreneurship as the ability to undertake various initiatives – a trait of energetic and active individuals that manifests at different stages of life. This perspective aligns with psychology, which classifies entrepreneurship as a psychological trait that conditions an individual's ability to succeed as an entrepreneur. Consequently, an entrepreneurial person can be described as someone who naturally excels in organizing and subsequently managing various enterprises.

Entrepreneurship arises from personalized, individual values, including talents, creativity, dynamism, skills, readiness to take risks, and external stimuli influencing the individual, such as economic traditions, resource availability, societal reactions to business initiatives, and socio-economic policies (Dąbrowska & Skowron, 2015; Wach, 2015; Skica, Mikuš, & Holienka, 2022).

In summary, entrepreneurship represents a dynamic and ever-evolving field of study that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Its multidimensional nature – encompassing economic, human, and organizational aspects – enhances its status as a complex and dynamic phenomenon. This multidimensionality underscores its fundamental strength and value as a driver of socio-economic progress (Cieślik, 2014). However, it is equally important to emphasize another critical dimension of entrepreneurship: the humanistic perspective, which centers on the individual, their potential, behaviors, and actions. This raises a compelling question: Who is an entrepreneurial person? How can we describe individuals characterized as entrepreneurial in the literature? First, every attempt to define an entrepreneurial individual highlights a set of traits that facilitate effective engagement in entrepreneurial activities. Below are the key traits identified in the literature review.

- Innovation and Creativity: These traits are understood as the ability to generate innovative ideas and adopt a creative approach to problem-solving (Śledzik, 2013; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; West & Farr, 1989).
- Action and Energy: These qualities are characterized by a propensity to take action, an energetic approach to challenges, and an active stance in achieving goals (Huczek, 2018; Gartner, 1988; Frese & Gielnik, 2014).
- Risk Resilience: This trait is described in the literature primarily as a willingness to take risks and the ability to manage uncertainty. It is most commonly discussed in the context of running a business (Simons, 1999; Miller & Friesen, 1982; Knight, 1921; Ferreira, Coelho, & Moutinho, 2020).

- Independence and Decision-Making: These qualities are perceived in the literature as the ability to make decisions independently and to direct actions and initiatives autonomously. Furthermore, they support the process of independently creating or recognizing opportunities and capitalizing on them (Saravathy, 2001; Busenitz & Barney, 1997; Shepherd, Williams, & Patzelt, 2015).
- Communication and Relationships: The key aspects of these traits include the ability to develop effective social networks and business relationships. Central to this is the capacity to navigate the socio-economic environment where specific actions are undertaken, particularly in the context of social networks (Wach, 2015; Podolny, 1993; Phelps, Heidl, & Wadhwa, 2012).
- Strategic Thinking and Goal Setting: These traits are described in the literature as the ability to establish a long-term vision for actions and initiatives, particularly in economic contexts. This aptitude enables individuals to set clear business goals, both in the short and long term (Collins & Porras, 1996; Krueger, 2003; Kóska-Wolny, 2023).

The humanistic perspective and the characteristics of an entrepreneurial individual should be complemented by the concept of entrepreneurial potential. This potential is considered the cornerstone of successful business ventures, enhancing the ability to leverage one's attributes and skills in entrepreneurial activities. High entrepreneurial potential is particularly crucial for identifying and capitalizing on profitable business opportunities. The synergy between personal attributes and entrepreneurial potential is vital for achieving business success (Kuckertz et al., 2020; Obschonka et al., 2020; Obschonka & Stuetzer, 2017). According to Shepherd and Patzelt, key features of this approach include creativity, perseverance, adaptability, and a willingness to take risks. These traits form the foundation of resilience and adaptability, which are especially important for navigating the complexities and uncertainties inherent in the business environment (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2018). This version ensures smoother transitions, logical structuring, and a professional tone while retaining the original meaning and references.

Beyond individual traits, the socio-economic aspect plays a crucial role in the entrepreneurial approach. The environment significantly influences the development of entrepreneurial potential, with supportive policies, access to capital, and a favorable business climate serving as essential pillars that foster and amplify entrepreneurial aspirations (Binder & Coad, 2020; Stam & Spiegel, 2016; Estrin, Mickiewicz, & Stephan, 2016). The combination of individual characteristics and external factors, particularly the interaction between them, is a key determinant of entrepreneurial success, as emphasized by Krueger and Brazeal (2018). Moreover, self-assessment of one's entrepreneurial abilities emerges as a critical factor influencing the likelihood of establishing a business. Research indicates that a positive self-assessment enhances willingness to take risks and engage in entrepreneurial activities (Krueger & Brazeal, 2018; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Ferreira et al., 2020).

In conclusion, it is worth noting that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial potential arise from the interaction between individual traits and external factors. Exceptional individuals, equipped with the specific skill sets outlined earlier, demonstrate the ability to adapt to changing environments and socio-economic conditions. This adaptability enables them to effectively transform their potential into success, defined by the establishment of a thriving business.

### 3. Research Method and Data

The survey was conducted among 1,526 UITM students between January 17 and March 21, 2023, representing approximately 29.8% of UITM's student population. Each field of study was represented by at least 20% of the students, ensuring representativeness and enabling comparisons across disciplines.

The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with experts in economics, sociology, and psychology. The survey consisted of three parts. The first part included 28 questions grounded in existing literature and validated by sociologists, aimed at examining the entrepreneurial potential of students. The second part, comprising 8 questions, focused on students' evaluations of UITM's entrepreneurial support offerings and their needs in this regard. The third part gathered demographic data such as gender, age, professional status, study mode, specialization, country of origin, and level and field of study.

This article analyzes selected aspects of the survey to maintain a clear narrative and focus on topics introduced earlier. A 5-point Likert scale was employed, with 5 indicating "Definitely agree" and 1 "Definitely disagree," allowing students to express their opinions directly and effectively.

The authors conducted Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA tests to graphically represent the research results using box plots. Additionally, C-Pearson and V-Cramer tests were employed to measure the co-occurrence of various studied variables. All collected results were statistically significant, meeting the threshold of  $p < 0.05$ .

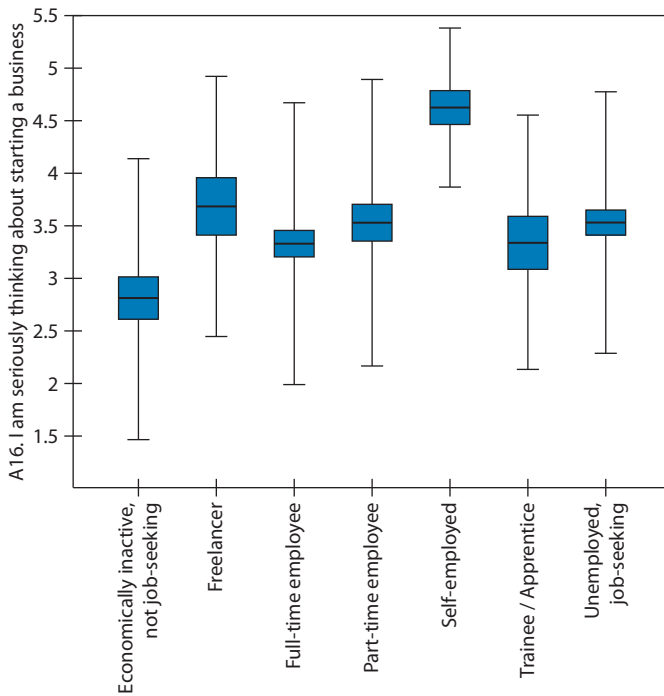
The analysis determined that entrepreneurial potential is directly correlated with self-assessment regarding the urge to start a business. To explore this relationship, the authors included the question, "I am seriously thinking about starting a business," alongside other metric-based questions in their evaluation.

### 4. Results and Discussion

Figure 1 indicates that the highest willingness to start an enterprise is observed among individuals who are self-employed or shareholders in a company, while the lowest is found among those who are economically inactive and not seeking employment.

Among other groups of respondents, most responses are relatively similar. Notably, freelancers exhibit a willingness to start a business nearly identical to that of full-time employees, despite their unique approach to work that blends elements of full-time employment with entrepreneurial activities (Kazi et al., 2014). This similarity supports the longstanding concept of corporate entrepreneurship discussed in the literature (Bouchard & Fayolle, 2017; Kuratko, 2012; Cieřlik, 2015).

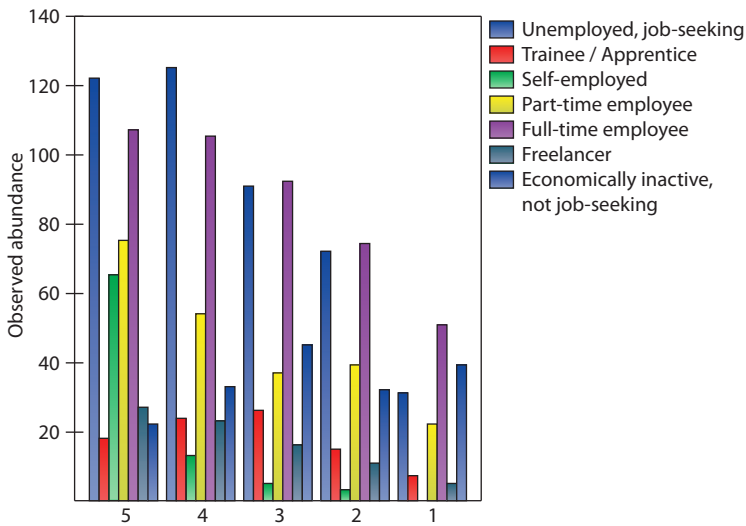
The relationship between employment status and willingness to start a business was analyzed using the C-Pearson and V-Cramer tests (Figure 2, Table 1). The C-Pearson test confirmed a relationship between the two variables. However, the V-Cramer test suggests that additional determinants beyond employment status may influence the willingness to start a business. As highlighted in the literature, proactive behavior, irrespective of employment status, plays a crucial role in entrepreneurial potential (Delle & Monipaak, 2016). Nonetheless, unemployed individuals often have more compelling motivations to start their own business (Startiene & Remeikiene, 2009).



Note. P-value < 0.000001

**Figure 1. ANOVA Test Results in Response to the Question: "I am Seriously Thinking about Starting a Business" Based on Employment Status**

Source: own elaboration.



**Figure 2. C-Pearson and V-Cramer Tests Results in Response to the Question: "I am Seriously Thinking about Starting a Business" Based on Responses on Employment Status**

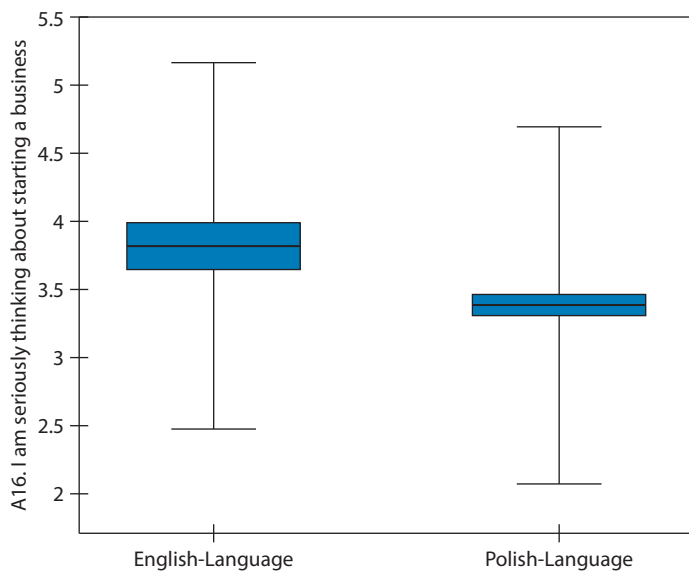
Source: own elaboration.

**Table 1. Results of C-Pearson and V-Cramer Tests Presented in Figure 2**

Indicators	Value
Pearsons-C	0.31
Pearsons-C (max)	0.89
Pearsons-C (adjusted)	0.35
Cramers-V	0.17
P-value	< 0.000001

Source: own elaboration.

The results in Figure 3 illustrate the relationship between the willingness to start a business and the language of study (English or Polish). Analysis of the data indicates that respondents from English-speaking study programs are significantly more likely to consider starting a business. This finding is visually represented in Figure 3.



Note. P-value < 0.000001

**Figure 3. ANOVA Test Results in Response to the Question: “I am Seriously Thinking about Starting a Business” based on Track of Study**

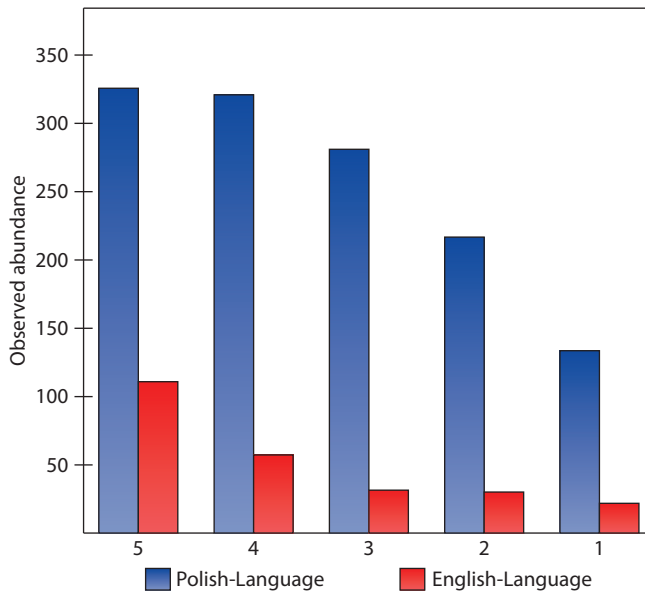
Source: own elaboration.

The results of Pearson’s C-test indicate a relationship between the language of study and the willingness to start a business. However, the V-Cramer’s test (Figure 4, Table 2) suggests that additional factors beyond the language of study influence entrepreneurial intentions.

Notably, most respondents in English-language programs are foreign students who come to Poland to pursue higher education. These students often face numerous challenges, including formal obstacles like obtaining a residence card and cultural adjustments, as studying in Poland represents their first experience in a European country for many, particularly those from

Africa and the Middle East. Overcoming such challenges builds their confidence and motivates them to take on further risks, such as starting a business.

This observation aligns with research by Palimąka and Rodzinka (2018) and Palimąka (2021), which highlights that starting a business is often perceived by students as a new challenge to conquer. Additionally, the necessity to take risks during the study process may contribute to the higher entrepreneurial potential observed among these students (Popescu et al., 2016).



**Figure 4. C-Pearson and V-Cramer Tests Results in Response to the Question: “I am seriously thinking about starting a business” Based on Responses on Track of Study**

Source: own elaboration.

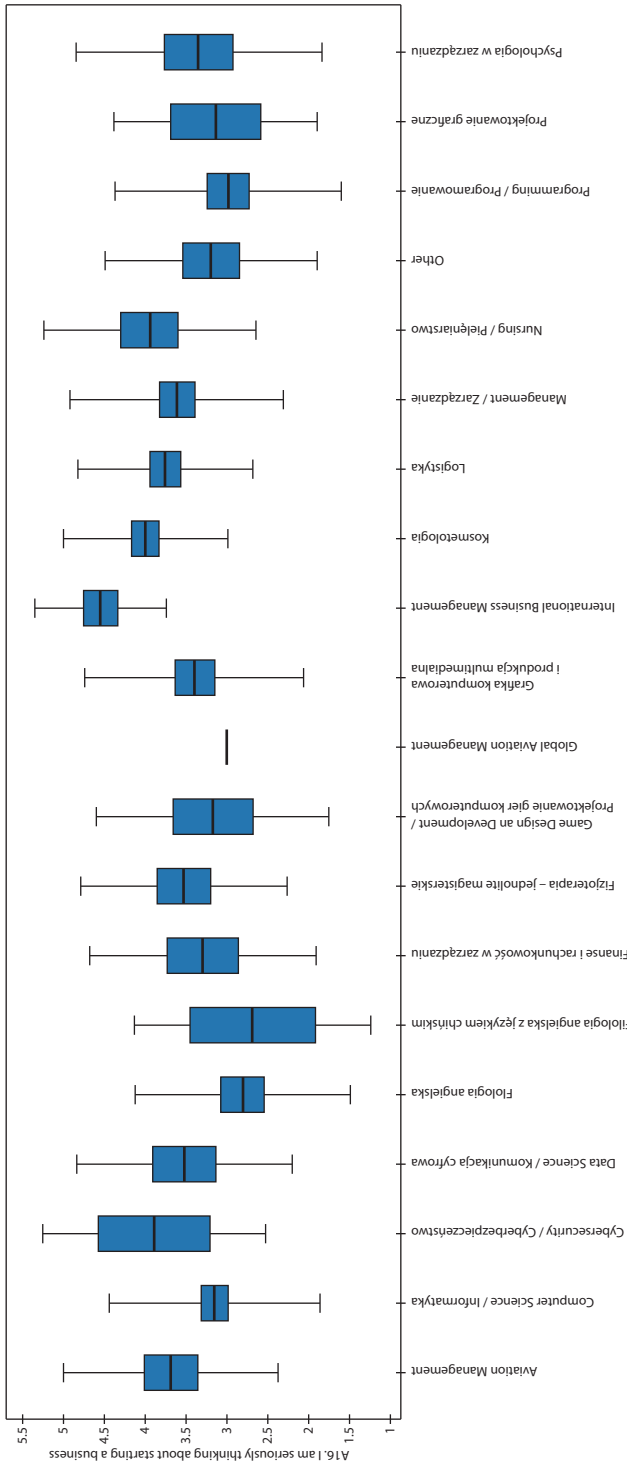
**Table 2. Results of C-Pearson’s and V-Cramer Tests Presented in Figure 4**

Indicators	Value
Pearsons-C	0.16
Pearsons-C (max)	0.71
Pearsons-C (adjusted)	0.23
Cramers-V	0.16
P-value	< 0.000001

Source: own elaboration.

Analyzing the results shown in Figure 5, it can be concluded that the fields of study where students most frequently consider starting a business are management, cosmetology, nursing, and cybersecurity. For management students, this inclination may be influenced by their academic background, as their curriculum often includes subjects related to entrepreneurship and running a business. The high ranking of cosmetology is also unsurprising, as graduates in this field commonly establish their own service-based businesses, which is a popular career choice.





Note. P-value < 0.0000001

**Figure 5. ANOVA Test Results in Response to the Question: "I am seriously thinking about starting a business" Based on Field of Study**

Source: own elaboration.

The presence of nursing among the top results can be attributed to the legal framework allowing nurses to establish partnerships. Nursing is classified as a „free profession“ under Article 88 of the Code of Commercial Law, enabling graduates to pursue entrepreneurial ventures within their field. Cybersecurity students also demonstrate a strong interest in starting a business. This is likely due to the growing popularity of the field (Crumpler & Lewis, 2019) and the high demand for skilled professionals. This demand allows cybersecurity graduates to explore opportunities in both full-time employment and entrepreneurial or freelance ventures.

The results presented in Table 3 and Table 4 confirm a correlation between fields of study and the desire to start a business. The C-Pearson test indicates a strong relationship between these variables, supporting the findings of Teixeira and Forte (2017). Their research similarly demonstrated that participation in certain fields of study, particularly those with a predisposition toward entrepreneurship or freelancing, significantly influences the willingness to start a business.

**Table 3. Results of C-Pearson’s and V-Cramer Tests Presented in Figure 6**

Indicators	Value
Pearsons-C	0.35
Pearsons-C (max)	0.89
Pearsons-C (adjusted)	0.40
Cramers-V	0.19
P-value	< 0.000001

Source: own elaboration.

Table 4 includes responses from students categorized by their fields of study. The fields demonstrating the highest entrepreneurial potential are Nursing (51%), International Business Management (49%), Finance and Accounting in Management (34%), and Graphic Design (27%).

**Table 4. Cross Table of Responses to the Question: “I Seriously Think About Starting My Own Business” by Field of Study (%)**

	Definitely agree	Definitely disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Rather agree	Rather disagree
Aviation management	30	5	14	39	13
Computer science	14	5	30	40	10
Cybersecurity	17	6	33	39	6
Data science	15	2	22	52	9
English philology	6	2	35	40	16
English philology with Chinese language	0	13	44	38	6
Finance and accounting in management	34	2	34	22	7
Physiotherapy	8	3	44	34	10
Game design and development	6	0	46	29	20
Computer graphics and multimedia production	7	7	35	40	10
International business management	49	4	7	37	4

	Definitely agree	Definitely disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Rather agree	Rather disagree
Cosmetology	14	4	27	46	9
Logistics	24	2	25	41	8
Management	24	7	18	41	11
Nursing	51	7	7	29	5
Other	21	5	28	42	4
Programming	11	3	35	27	23
Graphic design	27	9	23	14	27
Psychology in management	15	0	27	46	12

Source: own elaboration.

## 5. Conclusions

Among the theoretical results, several findings stand out:

- Low correlation between field of study and willingness to start a business: This suggests that other factors, such as personal traits linked to entrepreneurial potential, play a significant role. For instance, creativity – a key entrepreneurial trait – is naturally associated with computer graphics students, who demonstrate one of the highest indicators of entrepreneurial potential (Mróz & Boratyn, 2023).
- Higher willingness among English-speaking students: English-speaking students exhibit a significantly greater willingness to start a business compared to their Polish-speaking counterparts. This difference can be attributed to entrepreneurial traits such as a higher risk-taking propensity and persistence in achieving goals. For these students, starting their own business often aligns with their earlier decisions and represents another barrier to overcome in their pursuit of professional fulfillment.

The practical outcome of the study, which the authors emphasize, highlights the significant entrepreneurial potential among UITM students. Importantly, the university's business support offerings should cater not only to students in Polish-language programs but also equally to those in English-language programs. Furthermore, the support system should be tailored to address the diverse needs of students across different study paths, ensuring inclusivity and effectiveness in fostering entrepreneurial success.

Our findings reveal that the fields with the highest concentration of students possessing business-oriented backgrounds and significant entrepreneurial potential are International Business Management, Management, and IT. This trend likely stems from the core curricula of these programs. For instance, International Business Management and Management include subjects directly related to entrepreneurship, providing students with foundational knowledge and skills for running their own businesses. Moreover, these students benefit from additional support, such as specialized training and workshops, beyond basic activities related to business establishment. IT students, on the other hand, are drawn to entrepreneurship due to the streamlined process of setting up businesses in this field and the availability of relatively simple taxation systems (Mencel, 2021).

Conversely, the fields with the lowest entrepreneurial potential are Philology, English Philology with Chinese, and Computer Game Design. This may be attributed to the nature of

future professions in these fields, which often do not demand entrepreneurial traits like risk management or innovation. For example, a career in translation, typical for English Philology graduates, does not inherently require these predispositions.

A different perspective on entrepreneurship focuses on the intention to start a business in the near future. Fields characterized by high entrepreneurial intent include Nursing, Computer Science, Computer Graphics, and Multimedia Production. For nursing students, this intent is linked to the legal framework that classifies nursing as a freelance profession, enabling the establishment of partnerships. In fields such as Computer Science, Computer Graphics, and Multimedia Production, the entrepreneurial inclination is likely due to the prevalence of freelance work in these industries (Skrzek-Lubasińska & Gródek-Szostak, 2019).

The study is based solely on the survey conducted at UITM, a private university, and therefore cannot be generalized to the entire population of students in Poland. Factors such as the specific context of a private university limit the scope of the findings. In the next stages of research, the authors intend to expand the study by administering the survey at a national and even international level, enabling comparisons across various student groups.

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J.B., M.M.: conceptualization, J.B., M.M.: writing, original draft preparation, J.B., M.M.: writing, review and editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

### Acknowledgements and Financial Disclosure

The authors would like to thank Dr. Habil. Tomasz Skica, prof. WSliZ and Dr. Łukasz Cywiński for the entire support with conceptualization and statistical analysis

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research took place without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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**Published by the Krakow University of Economics – Krakow, Poland**

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Ministry of Education and Science  
Republic of Poland

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The journal is co-financed in the years 2022-2024 by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Poland in the framework of the ministerial programme "Development of Scientific Journals" (RCN) on the basis of agreement no. RCN/SP/0391/2021/1 concluded on December 9, 2022 and being in force until December 8, 2024.