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PERCEPTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ITS CONDITIONING

1. Introduction

The process of life consists of many different processes which often occur simultaneously. The man perceives them in different ways, depending on nurture and force of habit. Some of them stimulate the entrepreneurial behaviours but some are rather of conservative character and may create a sort of an internal barrier or even hurdle. Hence, the conditionings of perceiving entrepreneurship seem to be of the utmost importance, influencing the future economic life of individual households and then enterprises. Thus, the immediate or intuitive recognition within the perception should stress the positive emotions enabling the continuous process of favourable performance, regarding perseverance.

2. Question of perceiving entrepreneurship

The issue of perception, first of all, refers to the proper understanding of the key word. Thus, traditional definition of perception states that it is the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses. The notion of *perception* comes from the Latin words *perceptio* and *percipere* meaning to seize, to understand. Perception may be defined as a state of being or a process of becoming aware of something, an act of apprehending by means of the senses or of the mind, as well as a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting the problem or phenomenon. Hence, we may conclude that perception is a kind of cognition and a mental impression, stressing the quality of the intuitive understanding and insight. Entrepreneurship, in turn, in a traditional meaning, concerns the ability of a person to set up a business, to organize and manage it, taking on greater than normal fi-

nancial risks, considerable with such initiative. The word is derived from French *entreprendre* meaning to undertake. An entrepreneur is often associated with a person who is responsible for organizing and managing a commercial undertaking and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise but in fact, an entrepreneur should be especially alert to these gaps in the market that the others do not see, which requires the high level of perception [cf. Koreleski 2006]. In a wider range, entrepreneurship may be even considered the equivalent of managing the life, i.e. life resourcefulness. Thus, the perception of entrepreneurship may be treated on the personal plane, as well as business plane, but there is only one point of reference referring to the attitude of a man to self-, household or business management.

3. Perception of conditionings

The perception of the process of cognition is of a complex character and consists in expressing by men their reactions to objects, phenomena and processes. It is a result of the action of the defined stimuli and their impact on the senses. Hence, we may say that perception is a single, unified awareness derived from sensory processes while a stimulus is present. Thus, the point is what sort of stimulus it is, how long it will be present and what are the exact conditionings of this relation? A man perceives the world, including economic conditionings, depending on his or her own experience and nurture, i.e. force of habit. This force of habit, called *consuetudo*, makes a kind of modification on the man's nature. Hence, the nature denotes certain inclinations while nurture refers to the processes within the *consuetudo* phenomenon. These processes, in turn, bring the man the feeling of security, satisfaction, comfort and psychical welfare, i.e. stabilization. There are many determinants of the *consuetudo* phenomenon which refer to the social, cultural, economic, historical, ethnographical, physiographical and other aspects. If some habits are going to be changed under certain specific conditionings the man's perception recognizes it as a certain threat or even direct danger in terms of immediate implementation. Hence, at that time we face the problem of flexibility or even psychical elasticity to changes in processes within the phenomenon of *consuetudo*. This mechanism shows the psychical constitution of a man, which is of intrinsic importance while considering the entrepreneurial behaviours. The problems, especially in rural areas, with the conservative (traditional) way of thinking form the mentality barriers which may block entrepreneurship. The actions conducted by extension services have a chance to be successful, taking into account the role of the "new nurture", i.e. trying to get people accustomed to entrepreneurial processes indicating a new way of life. But, unfortunately, in certain cases it may be quite difficult or even impossible to make people get used to situations or even processes which are in contradiction to their nature. The opportunity consists in convergent combining people's needs, wants and cravings with the necessity of entrepreneurial attitudes.

Obviously, the results of entrepreneurship are of the distinctly economic character, but the process which leads to the results and the roots of success are rather of psycho-sociological quality. Thus, the conditionings of entrepreneurship may be perceived from the interior, treated then as nature, or from the exterior, handled then as nurture, including the force of habit, i.e. *consuetudo*. The point is to find the proportions between nature and nurture. An example has been provided by B. Devlin who, analyzing over 200 scientific works, came to the conclusion that genes determine no more than 48% of Intelligence Quotient (IQ), whereas 52% is a derivative of prenatal care, environment and education [Gelb 1998]. Hence, we may notice the fifty-fifty proportions between nature and nurture influencing in consequence the inclinations for entrepreneurship. Such surveys on IQ or SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), whose aim is to measure intellectual ability, also in terms of the entrepreneurial predispositions, are popular in the United States, thus indicating the significance of this problem in the contemporary world.

4. Principles of Leonardo da Vinci vs. entrepreneurship

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) the genius of versatility, in his extremely creative life presented seven universal principles regarding the mechanisms of human activities. Michael Gelb [1998] mentions them in the following way:

1. *Curiosità* – unlimited life curiosity and, consequently, craving for science;
2. *Dimostrazione* – consistent verification of knowledge by experiments, perseverance in learning from mistakes;
3. *Sensazione* – continuous sharpening of senses (perception), reinforcement of impression;
4. *Sfumato* – readiness for accepting the ambiguity, paradox and incertitude;
5. *Arte/scienza* – balance between art and science, imagination and logics – “full brain thinking”;
6. *Corporalità* – shaping of charm, ambidexterity, physical condition;
7. *Connessione* – cognition and understanding the interactions between objects and phenomena – systemic thinking [Gelb 1998].

Leonardo's seven universal principles may be easily referred to contemporary life with all its aspects, stressing the problem of the perception of entrepreneurship. Obviously, the word entrepreneurship, taken from French *entreprendre* meaning *undertake*, did not exist till the 19th century, but the similar concept had not been strange even in the late 15th or the beginning of the 16th centuries.

The above mentioned guidelines also apply to the present idea or rather phenomenon of entrepreneurship. So, we may explain Leonardo da Vinci's principles, regarding contemporary conditionings, in the following way:

1. The market system, with all its mechanisms, causes a kind of challenge or curiosity to dare to be enterprising; contemporary life attracts people to enter the

market game and becomes similar to gambling, with all risk consequences; so as to be competitive in the market a man has to acquire the knowledge, thus, we face a pursuit of knowledge.

2. Performance and its verification during everyday life practical experience are of the utmost importance influencing our own image; obviously each man has ups and downs (a sinusoid curve) that is why we have to be perseverant and continue in spite of difficulties, learning lessons from our mistakes.

3. Interior self-discipline and mobilization is a must in the contemporary life of competitiveness, during the time of "rat race"; the increasing burden of duties requires special perception and divisibility of attention, as well as the ability to concentrate on multi-field dimensions; the positive emotions and the shaping of sensory awareness are significant.

4. Being the entrepreneur means facing the hard reality of the market, i.e. dealing with different hazards and, consequently, the risks; the point is to accept certain incertitude and different ways of perceiving definite phenomena and processes, sometimes unclear and difficult to understand.

5. The equilibrium between science and logic on the one hand and art and imagination on the other, seems to be of intrinsic significance, stimulating the creativity and enlightenment; the proportions are of course subjective, depending on the discipline, but cooperation between the left and the right side of our brain is indispensable, especially regarding the successfulness in business (entrepreneurship).

6. Proper auto-marketing seems to be the key to positive results, regarding entrepreneurship; one should treat the *savoir-vivre* and fitness for entrepreneurs as a way to build a favourable image and performance within the public relations scheme in the business world.

7. The thinking mode of an entrepreneur should be of systemic character; the complexity of the market system, its mechanisms, phenomena and processes demand the use of all principles so as to find the proper interactions between the concept and the business reality and successfully implement the theory into practice whose resultant will be the level of entrepreneurship.

8. Summing up, one may say that the universality of the seven principles of Leonardo da Vinci is still in force and may be implemented with success to the desired entrepreneurial attitudes of people.

5. Final remarks and conclusions

As it has been proven, the phenomenon or rather process of entrepreneurship perceived in different ways refers not only to the professional life but also to the private one. Thus, the conditionings may be of internal (nature) and external (nurture) character. The perception of the process of entrepreneurship requires a closer look at the following processes:

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- the process of continuous perseverance, according to the principle: “Keep going on despite difficulties”;
 - the process of favourable performance, in accordance with the maxim: “Think, believe, dream and dare”;
 - the process of the increasing force of habit (nurture and *consuetudo*), i.e. *processus cotidianus habitudinis* creating *homo consuetudinis*.

Understanding, comprehension or apprehension of the essence of the process of entrepreneurship demands awareness of a wide range of perceptual components based on feelings, intuition, impression or even insight instinct.

The common perception of entrepreneurship drives us away from the imponderables to the quantifiable data. If we wanted to measure the level of individual entrepreneurship of households in Poland, according to the data from the Polish Census Bureau (report of December 2005) we would encounter the following figures:

- 62% of households possess a mobile phone;
- 40% of households are owners of personal computer or laptop;
- 30% of households have the internet access.

In case of enterprises we face the following data:

- 93% of enterprises have personal computers;
- 87% have access to the internet.

Hence, one may assume that the above mentioned data in a way reflect the levels of individual entrepreneurship of households, as well as enterprises in Poland, although it might look like oversimplification and thus be a very risky conclusion.

The measurable aspects of entrepreneurship are the economic results of certain processes whose roots lie in sociology and psychology, being at the same time of humanistic character. Coming down to practice in rural areas and opportunities for implementation of the entrepreneurial actions, as S. Urban [2004] observes, one may distinguish the production and services, as well as agricultural and extra-agricultural activities. The possibilities for the development of rural entrepreneurship lie also in the existing natural resources, environmental and cultural values, as well as in the tradition of local communities. In the range of agriculture the activity of marketing groups is also worth mentioning [cf. Urban 2004].

Summing up, the effects of complex processes leading to a higher level of entrepreneurship in rural areas ought to be positive, presuming the convergence of aims, which enables a simultaneous creation of the positive added value, regarding the phenomenon of synergy and resulting in a positive entrepreneurial attitude of the inhabitants of rural areas.

References

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PERCEPCJA PRZEDSIĘBIORCZOŚCI I JEJ UWARUNKOWANIA

Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia kwestię postrzegania przedsiębiorczości oraz uwarunkowania z nią związane. Wskazuje na istotę zagadnienia percepcji oraz pojmowania przedsiębiorczości. Autor zaprezentował siedem uniwersalnych zasad Leonarda da Vinci w odniesieniu do zjawiska, a raczej procesu przedsiębiorczości. Ukazano ten proces w ujęciu analitycznym, prezentując inne towarzyszące mu procesy. Przedstawiono różnorodne uwarunkowania i mechanizmy wpływające na postrzeganie i kształtowanie się postaw przedsiębiorczych.