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YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND STARTUP CULTURE: GLOBAL EXPERIENCE AND LESSONS FOR UZBEKISTAN

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Annotatsiya. Maqolada yoshlar tadbirkorligi va startap madaniyatining shakllanishi ilmiy adabiyotlar tahlili asosida ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadbirkorlikning innovatsion mohiyati haqidagi klassik nazariyalar, "tejamkor startap" yondashuvi va tadbirkorlik ekotizimi konsepsiyasi tahlil qilinadi. AQSh va Isroil tajribasi misolida startap madaniyatining ijtimoiy va institutsional omillari aniqlanadi. O'zbekistonda raqamli iqtisodiyot va innovatsion faoliyatni rivojlantirishga qaratilgan normativ hujjatlar o'rganilib, yoshlar startaplarini qo'llab-quvvatlash bo'yicha amaliy takliflar ishlab chiqiladi.
Kalit so'zlar: yoshlar tadbirkorligi, startap, innovatsiya, tadbirkorlik ekotizimi, venchur kapital, raqamli iqtisodiyot, O'zbekiston.

Аннотация. В статье на основе анализа научной литературы рассматривается формирование молодежного предпринимательства и стартап-культуры. Анализируются классические теории об инновационной сущности предпринимательства, подход «бережливого стартапа» и концепция предпринимательской экосистемы. На примере опыта США и Израиля выявляются социальные и институциональные факторы стартап-культуры. Изучаются нормативные документы Узбекистана, направленные на развитие цифровой экономики и инновационной деятельности, и разрабатываются практические предложения по поддержке молодежных стартапов.
Ключевые слова: молодежное предпринимательство, стартап, инновации, предпринимательская экосистема, венчурный капитал, цифровая экономика, Узбекистан.

Abstract. The article examines the formation of youth entrepreneurship and startup culture on the basis of a review of scientific literature. It analyses classical theories of the innovative nature of entrepreneurship, the lean startup approach and the concept of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Using the experience of the United States and Israel, the social and institutional factors behind startup culture are identified. Normative documents of Uzbekistan aimed at developing the digital economy and innovation are studied, and practical proposals for supporting youth startups are put forward.
Keywords: youth entrepreneurship, startup, innovation, entrepreneurial ecosystem, venture capital, digital economy, Uzbekistan.

Introduction

Over the last two decades the word "startup" has moved from the specialized vocabulary of Silicon Valley into everyday speech in many countries, including Uzbekistan. Behind this change stands a deeper shift in how young people think about work. For earlier generations the most desirable career usually meant a stable position in a large organization, whereas today a considerable part of young people regard starting their own business as a normal and even attractive path. This is particularly important for Uzbekistan, where young people make up a large share of the population and where the economy must create a great number of new jobs every year. The state has responded to this challenge with a series of reforms. The Digital Uzbekistan 2030 Strategy sets out measures for developing the IT sector, digital services and the infrastructure that technology companies need [1], the Law "On Innovation Activity" established the legal basis for innovation projects and their financing [2], and the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 includes the support of youth entrepreneurship and the growth of the private sector among its main goals [3]. Nevertheless, laws and programmes alone do not create a startup culture. Experience of other countries shows that the willingness of young people to take risks, the attitude of society to failure and the presence of mentors and investors matter as much as formal institutions. The aim of this article is to analyse, on the basis of the scientific literature, the main features of successful startup cultures in the world and to determine which lessons may be useful for Uzbekistan.

Methodology and literature review

The research is theoretical. It is based on the analysis of scientific publications, international reports and normative legal acts and on the author's own interpretation of these sources; no empirical surveys, interviews, observations or experiments were carried out. The methods of content analysis, comparative analysis and generalization were applied. Sources were chosen so that the classical theory of entrepreneurship, modern management approaches, case studies of leading startup countries and the Uzbek legal framework would all be represented. The theoretical foundation of any discussion of entrepreneurship remains the work of J. Schumpeter, who saw the entrepreneur as the agent of "new combinations", that is, of new products, methods, markets and forms of organization, and who connected economic development with this creative activity [4]. Schumpeter's approach is useful because it separates the entrepreneur from the ordinary owner of capital and places innovation at the centre of business activity. P. Drucker developed this line of thought and argued that innovation is not a matter of inspiration but a discipline that can be learned and practised systematically; in his view entrepreneurship is a behaviour rather than a personality trait [5]. This idea has direct consequences for education, because it implies that entrepreneurial skills can be taught to young people. E. Ries, in his book "The Lean Startup", offered a practical methodology for new ventures that operate under extreme uncertainty, based on building a minimum viable product, testing assumptions with real customers and quickly correcting the course [6]. The ecosystem perspective is presented in the work of D. Isenberg, who argues that no single factor creates an entrepreneurial economy and that governments should develop a combination of

policy, finance, culture, support institutions, human capital and markets adapted to local conditions [7]. B. Feld, writing from the experience of the American city of Boulder, adds that startup communities must be led by entrepreneurs themselves and require long-term commitment rather than short campaigns [8]. The case of Israel is analysed in detail by D. Senor and S. Singer, who explain the country's remarkable number of startups by a combination of cultural factors, such as informality and tolerance of argument, and state initiatives, such as the Yozma venture capital programme [9]. Comparative international data are provided by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, which measures entrepreneurial activity, attitudes and the quality of entrepreneurial framework conditions in dozens of countries [10]. Together these sources make it possible to consider youth entrepreneurship on three levels: the individual entrepreneur, the startup as an organization, and the ecosystem in which it operates.

Results and discussion

The analysis of the literature allows several conclusions to be drawn. The first concerns the nature of entrepreneurship itself. If, following Schumpeter [4] and Drucker [5], we understand entrepreneurship as the introduction of new combinations and as a learnable discipline, then the main task for Uzbekistan is not only to increase the number of registered businesses but to raise the share of innovative ventures among them. Many young people in the country start businesses in trade and services, which certainly provide income and employment, but the startup in the strict sense is a company that searches for a scalable model based on new technology or a new solution. The lean startup methodology described by Ries [6] is especially valuable for young founders with limited resources, because it teaches them to test an idea cheaply before investing large sums. In the author's opinion, this methodology should become part of university courses in economics, engineering and information technology, and students should be encouraged to develop real projects instead of purely theoretical business plans. The second conclusion is related to culture. Both the Israeli experience described by Senor and Singer [9] and the American experience analysed by Feld [8] show that startup culture rests on a particular attitude to risk and failure. In societies where an unsuccessful business is regarded as a personal disgrace, young people prefer safe careers, while in societies where failure is seen as a source of experience, they are more willing to try again. In Uzbekistan, family expectations often point young people toward stable employment, and this factor should not be underestimated. Changing such attitudes is a slow process, but universities, the media and successful local founders can contribute by speaking openly about both successes and failures.

The third conclusion concerns the ecosystem. Isenberg [7] warns against trying to copy Silicon Valley mechanically, and this warning is relevant for Uzbekistan. The country already has important elements of an ecosystem: the IT Park with its tax preferences and residency regime, programmes for training programmers, legal recognition of innovation activity [2] and strategic documents oriented toward the digital economy [1]. At the same time, the literature suggests that some elements still need strengthening. The most visible gap is early-stage financing, since private venture capital and business angel networks remain small, and the Israeli experience with the Yozma programme shows that the state can stimulate this market by sharing risk with private

investors rather than replacing them [9]. Another gap is mentorship. Feld [8] emphasizes that experienced founders who help newcomers are the backbone of any startup community, and in Uzbekistan the number of such people is only beginning to grow. Finally, international comparisons made by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor [10] show that the quality of entrepreneurial education and the ease of access to markets strongly influence the level of entrepreneurial activity. For young Uzbek founders, access to regional markets of Central Asia and to diaspora networks abroad could become a significant advantage. In the author's view, the lessons for Uzbekistan can be summarized as follows: startup support should combine state initiative with private leadership; entrepreneurial education should be practical and start early; financing instruments should be developed for the riskiest early stages; and society should learn to treat failure as part of learning. The documents adopted in recent years [1; 2; 3] create a favourable framework, but their effect will depend on whether young people themselves become active participants rather than passive recipients of support.

Conclusion

The review of the literature shows that youth entrepreneurship and startup culture are formed at the intersection of individual initiative, organizational methods and the wider ecosystem. Classical theory explains the innovative role of the entrepreneur, modern methodology offers tools for building startups under uncertainty, and the ecosystem approach shows that success depends on the interaction of culture, finance, education and state policy. The experience of the United States and Israel demonstrates that a strong startup culture cannot be created by decree alone, yet thoughtful state intervention, especially in early-stage financing, can speed up its formation. Uzbekistan has already taken important steps through its strategies and legislation on the digital economy and innovation. The next stage should focus on practical entrepreneurial education in universities, the development of venture financing and mentorship, and the gradual change of public attitudes to risk and failure. If these directions are pursued consistently, the large and young population of Uzbekistan may become not a burden for the labour market but its main source of innovation and growth. Further research may be devoted to comparing support instruments for startups in Central Asian countries.

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