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## The impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intention of students at the International University of Excellence in Mali: an exploratory study

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## **The impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intention of students at the International University of Excellence in Mali: an exploratory study.**

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### **Abstract**

This paper is research devoted to the self-employment of students of the International University of Excellence of Bamako through the teaching of entrepreneurship as a factor in the development of entrepreneurial intention among students in training. This choice is explained by several factors: the State's recruitment capacities in the public service are limited; the modern private sector which constitutes the natural outlet for young graduates is not in a position to offer employment for the many promotions of students trained annually who constitute thousands of people who increase the non-working population. It is becoming necessary to put in place systems that allow young graduates, especially those in training, to set up their own account through entrepreneurship. The practical study led us to consider the case of the International University of Excellence of Bamako. To study it, we focused our

work on teaching entrepreneurship as a factor in the development of the entrepreneurial intention and self-employment of Students. As the parent population, we have a database of 236 students, from first to third year undergraduate students of the 2019 - 2021 academic years. This population is distributed between the different fields (Finance - accounting, Projects and organizations Management, Money - Finance - Banking and Insurance, Marketing-Communication, International Trade, Logistics - Transport, Business Intelligence). The information collected and processed will allow us to have a series of data on the possibilities offered by the teaching of entrepreneurship in terms of productivity of students of the International University of Excellence of Bamako before obtaining a university degree but also, to have an overview of self-employment and the teaching of entrepreneurship as a factor in the development of entrepreneurial intention and self-employment of the students of the International University of Excellence (IUE).

**Keywords:** Self-employment, Education, Entrepreneurial Intent, Student, University.

## Introduction

Mali<sup>1</sup> is a vast landlocked country of 1,241,238 km<sup>2</sup>. A largely desert country with a sparse population, it has a poorly diversified economy that is vulnerable to fluctuations in commodity prices and the consequences of climate change.

Unemployment is a nationwide concern in Mali. The causes of unemployment are multiple and variable. In most developing countries, unemployment is due to high demographics and the inability of the economy to create more jobs.

From an economic perspective, unemployment is the result of an imbalance between supply and demand in a labor market.

Three criteria are used by the International Labor Office to consider an individual as unemployed: being unemployed during the reference period; having taken steps to look for work during the reference period; being ready to work immediately if the individual finds work (usually within 15 days).

If the second criterion is ignored, the situation is one of extended unemployment. In 2015, the extended unemployment rate is estimated at 9.6% of the labor force. This rate is higher than in 2014, when it was 8.2% (National Institute of Statistics of Mali, 2014). This rate exceeds that of 2010, which is estimated at 8.8% (National Agency for the Promotion of Employment, 2010).

According to International Labor Office (ILO)<sup>2</sup> standards, individuals in a situation of long-term unemployment are those who spend at least one year in unemployment. Thus, in Mali, 56.6% of the unemployed are in a situation of long-term unemployment. Among the unemployed with higher education, more than 9 out of 10 are in a situation of long-term unemployment, compared to nearly 2 out of 10 for those with primary education. Primary school graduates (46.8%) have a short duration of unemployment (less than one year) almost identical to those with no education (46.1%). On the other hand, secondary school graduates (18%) have a short duration that is twice as long as those with a higher level (9.4%). Moreover, the most highly educated have a relatively high duration (3 years and more) compared to those with a low level of education or no level. These results confirm the extent of the phenomenon

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<sup>1</sup> : World Bank Mali Database P.6 (April 2017).

<sup>2</sup> : International Labour Office report, 2016.

among graduates. The average duration of unemployment is almost identical for unemployed secondary school graduates (34.8%) and those with a higher education level (35.6%).

Higher education prepares qualified specialists and researchers in various branches who are capable of carrying out creative work in the social, scientific and technological fields. This order contains training institutes, colleges and universities.

In recent years, higher education has suffered not only from the high number of students, but also from difficulties in integrating graduates (failure to reduce the high number). It is part of the reform that diversifies the training offer at the level of public schools, and also the adaptation of higher education products to the needs of the labor market. The prestigious universities have been given a new status which allows them to provide high-level management training and to provide continuing education.

The unemployment rate must be reduced to support the Malian economy and increase economic growth.

The problem of professional integration of higher education graduates in Mali dates back to 1983, when automatic recruitment (just after training) into the civil service was abolished. This abolition was due to the fact that the number of young graduates increased from year to year, thus exceeding the State's capacity to absorb them into the civil service. Thus, this recruitment system has been replaced by a system of recruitment by direct competition in the civil service, which constitutes a barrier to entry for young graduates. As a result, we are witnessing a considerable increase in the number of unemployed young graduates.

Since its creation in 2019, the International University of Excellence (IUE) has welcomed students from all regions of Mali and the sub-region. The number of students is growing year after year. This is why the board of education of the IUE has decided to create an incubator called Incub UIE to allow students to take charge of their own business during and after their training.

After a few entrepreneurship courses at the IUE, we found that most of the students did not have any entrepreneurial intentions at the beginning. They all wanted to work for the state or a private organization. They thought that entrepreneurship for its own sake is a demanding and difficult activity that is not suitable for a student in training.

Teaching entrepreneurship does not seem to be a priority for the university authorities because it does not exist in the curriculum; there was no sufficient policy implemented by the board of education on entrepreneurship at the IUE.

This paper aims to analyze the impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intention of students at the International University of Excellence in Mali.

## **I - Materials and methods**

### **I.1 - Presentation of the study environment**

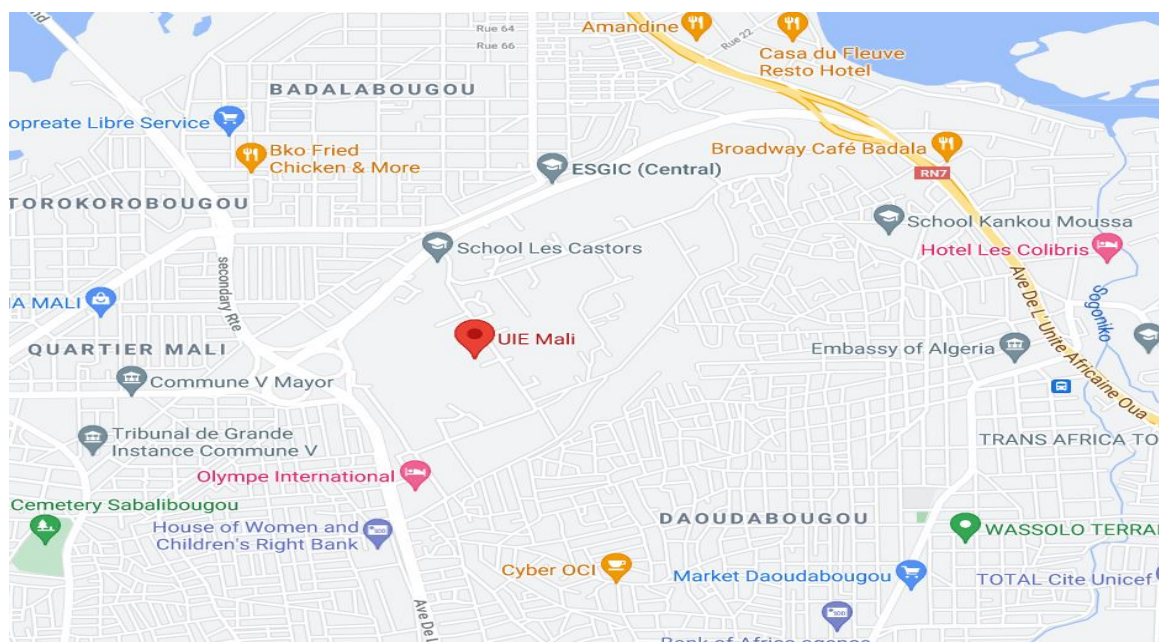
The study was conducted between March and May 2021 in Bamako, more precisely at the International University of Excellence (IUE) of Mali.

Created by Ordinance No. 78-32 / CMLN of 18 August 1978, modified by Law No. 82-29 / AN - RM of 2 February 1982, Commune V is located on the right bank of the River Niger. It is bounded: To the north by the Niger River; To the south by the airport area and the commune of Kalaban - Coro (Kati); To the east by the commune VI and the Niger River; And to the west and south-west of the commune of Kalaban - Coro.

The International University of Excellence (UIE) is a private institution of higher education which is approved by the Malian State. It is located in Badalabougou, in commune v of the District of Bamako, under the land title n° 20819 of the Directorate of Lands and the Land Registry of the District of Bamako of 8 June 1998. It is assigned a mission of training, production, accompanying each student in the definition and construction of his or her personal and professional project, the creation of production and employment sectors for young people.

The UIE is authorized by the supervisory authorities to award the following diplomas: Marketing Communication, Management of Organizations and Projects, Management of Human Resources, Transport Logistics, Finance Accounting, Money Finance Banking and Insurance, International Trade, Business Economics, Business Intelligence option (System, Networks and Telecoms), Business Intelligence option (Software and Data Engineering), Communication Journalism, Private Law.

**Map 1: Satellite location of the International University of Excellence of Mali located in commune V of the District of Bamako**



Source : Mali - Bamako - Commune V - Reference map  
<https://www.google.com/maps/place/UIE+Mali/@12.6090779,-7.9918466,15z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0x68c1bf859f5e07ba!8m2!3d12.6090779!4d-7.9918466>.

## I.2 - Methods and tools

Our methodological approach consisted of:

### I.2.1 - Documentary research

Several documents (general and specific books, theses, university dissertations, reports, articles and scientific communications) were used. Online resources were also used.

*“To meet the objectives of a research study and to enable others to fully understand the work that has been done”, it remains crucial to define the key concepts in our study, namely Entrepreneurship.*

We propose a definition of entrepreneurship by reviewing its origins and specifying its main manifestations. The definition in terms of opportunity that has become dominant today allows us to identify the different forms of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is a word derived from the name Entrepreneur. It was introduced into the French language at the end of the 17th century (VERIN, 1982). BRAUDEL (1979) notes that its use was relatively rare in the early 17th century. In the middle of the 18th century, it appeared in the encyclopedia of DIDEROT and d'ALEMBERT. It was during this period that it made its appearance in economic theory under the pen of CANTILLON (1755). For MARCHESNAY (2009), the reference to CANTILLON is exaggerated and even usurped. In his physiocrat-inspired work, the reference to the entrepreneur represents only 5 pages out of



a total of 175. In CANTILLON, the entrepreneur is associated with risk-taking, an essential attribute of entrepreneurial behavior. Cognitive approaches show that entrepreneurs do not take more risks, but tend to perceive situations positively (PALICH and BAGBY, 1995; FAYOLLE et al., 2008).

Definition of Entrepreneur in DIDEROT' and d'ALEMBERT's encyclopedia (1755: 732 - 733) ENTERPRISE, v. act. (Gramm.) It is in general to take charge of the success of a business, a trade, a manufacture, a building, Ex. (...) Mr. CADEAU is the first person in France to have undertaken the manufacture of sheets in the Dutch style. This master mason undertook this building, and must return it with the key in his hand.

ENTREPRENEUR, s.m. (Gramm.) it is said in general of one who takes charge of work: one says a Contractor of manufactures, a Contractor of buildings, for a manufacturer, a mason. See Manufacturer, Mason.

A building contractor is one who takes charge of, undertakes, and conducts a building for a certain sum, which is agreed upon with the owner, either in blocks or by the yard.

The contractor, (Marine) is one who undertakes to have a vessel made and supplied all built, under the terms of a certain estimate drawn up between him and the purchaser, for the price they have agreed upon.

To define entrepreneurship, the other key reference is Schumpeter who associates the entrepreneur with innovation. According to Schumpeter, his role consists of “*reforming or revolutionizing the routine of production by exploiting an invention or, more generally, a novel technical possibility (production of a new commodity, or a new method of producing an old commodity, or exploitation of a new source of raw materials or a new outlet or reorganization of an industrial branch, and so on)*” (SCHUMPETER, 1979, p. 180).

We propose to define Entrepreneurship as a process of searching for, evaluating and exploiting opportunities; carried out by an entrepreneur or an entrepreneurial team who; in the context of creation, takeover or development of activities, develops an organization implementing a strategic vision, and contributing to create value.

Epistemologically, intention comes from the Latin verb “*inten - dere*” which means “*to tend towards*”. It is the will tending towards a certain goal. The Robert dictionary defines intention as “the fact of proposing a certain goal”. It is characterized by determination, resolution and will. Criminal law accounts for this will. The intention is included in the notion of offence, which is the trigger for criminal liability (DESPORTES and Le GUNEHEC, 1997: 333 and

363). For an offence to exist legally, it is not enough for a material act to be committed; it must also be the work of the perpetrator's will (STEFANI and ALII, 1997: 211 - 215). PRADEL (1995: 500-501) notes that the doctrine has shown that intention is a monolithic and varied notion in which the will to perform an act is very present.

Entrepreneurial intention is a major phase in the process of enterprise creation, subdivided into four stages: propensity, intention, decision and act. It is an individual will that is part of a cognitive process conditioned by the socio-cultural, political and economic context.

### **I.2.2 - Field survey**

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, we used a quantitative approach. The target population was the students of the International University of Excellence from the first year to the third year of the degree course. The 236 students of the IUE constituted our population according to the table below.

**Table 1: Distribution by level and gender of students at the International University of Excellence**

Licence	Female	Male	TOTAL
L1	55	61	116
L2	53	52	105
L3	8	7	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>236</b>

Source: Personal survey of IUE students. (March-May 2021).

### **I.2.3 - Data processing and analysis**

The data from the quantitative survey were processed and analyzed using Word and Excel 2016, SPSS 20 software. At the end of this work, tables were produced to summarize the data collected and identify the main trends.

## **II - Interpretation of the results**

Our main results are as follows:

The distribution of students according to their intention to start a business is shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Distribution of students according to the knowledge of entrepreneurship before the day**

Have any of you ever heard of entrepreneurship before?		Number	Percentage
Validated	Yes	84	35,59
	No	152	64,41
Total		236	100

Source: Personal survey of IUE students. (March-May 2021).

Out of a total of 236 students selected from the first to the third year of the degree course, the negative responses in favor of knowledge of entrepreneurship before today's date are higher than the positive responses.

From the reading of this table, knowledge of entrepreneurship is an "*unknown phenomenon*" for the majority of students at the International University of Excellence.

**Table 3: Distribution of students by intention to start a business**

Intention to start a business		Number	Percentage
Validated	Yes	230	97,46
	No	06	02,54
Total		236	100

Source: Personal survey of IUE students. (March-May 2021).

Out of a total of 236 students selected from the first to the third year of the degree program, the positive responses in favor of the intention to start a business outnumber the negative responses.

From this table, the intention to start one's own business is a project that is widely considered by the majority of students at the International University of Excellence.

The degree of entrepreneurial intention of the students of the International University of Excellence is expressed in Table 3 below.

**Table 4: Distribution of students according to the degree of intention to start a business**

Degree of starting a business		Number	Percentage
Validated	Low	00	0
	Medium	06	02,54
	Strong	30	12,71
	Very strong	200	84,75
Total		236	100

Source: Personal survey of IUE students. (March-May 2021).

While in Table 2 the positive responses dominate the intention to create a company, Table 3 shows the real degree expressed by the students of the International University of Excellence. Indeed, among all the respondents, the strongly expressed, moderately expressed and very strongly expressed degrees are dominant compared to the weakly expressed degrees.

Table 4 below shows us when students want to realize their entrepreneurial intention.

**Table 5: Distribution of students according to when they intend to start a business**

When would you like to start a business?		Number	Percentage
Validated	During studies	110	46,61
	Just after graduation	116	49,15
	Long after graduation	10	04,24
<b>Total</b>		<b>236</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey of IUE students. (March-May 2021).

In this table, the intention to start a business is expressed by at least 226 students, the majority of whom plan to start a project after graduation. This is explained by the lack of awareness among students that they should finish their studies before starting a business.

Another remarkable part is that many students want to have a first experience during their studies. This number represents a rate of 46.61%. Their choice is to actually have the experience while studying. These are students who have clearly made better use of the entrepreneurship courses at the University.

Students' opinions on the capacity of the Malian education system to foster entrepreneurship are presented in Table 5 below.

**Table 6: Distribution of students according to their opinion on the capacity of the Malian education system to foster entrepreneurship**

Does the Malian education system promote entrepreneurship?		Number	Percentage
Validated	Very negative	10	4,24
	Negative	170	72,03
	Neutral	30	12,71
	Positive	10	4,24
	Very positive	16	6,78
<b>Total</b>		<b>236</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Personal survey of IUE students. (March-May 2021).

This table shows the negative character of the education system as unfavorable to the development of student entrepreneurship. With a high rate of negativity, the majority of students think that the educational system does not allow to encourage students towards entrepreneurship. The introduction of some modules on entrepreneurship in university curricula addresses this problem.

Table 7 below shows the number of students who have followed an entrepreneurial program at university.

**Table 7: Distribution of students according to the completion of an entrepreneurial program at university**

Follow-up of Entrepreneurship or Business Creation Courses at the University		Number	Percentage
Validated	Yes	36	15
	No	200	85
Total		236	100

Source: Personal survey of IUE students. (March-May 2021).

The data show that many students have not taken an entrepreneurship course. The fact that only 15% of the students have taken entrepreneurship training is explained by the fact that some universities have not yet thought of including entrepreneurship modules in their training programs.

The students' opinion on the need to introduce entrepreneurship in the university curriculum is presented in the following table.

**Table 8: Distribution of students according to their opinion on the need for entrepreneurship education in their university curriculum**

Entrepreneurship training in your university course		Number	Percentage
Validated	Yes	210	89
	No	20	8,47
	Total	230	97,47
Missing	System missing	6	2,53
Total		236	100

Source: Personal survey of IUE students. (March-May 2021).

This table shows that most students think that entrepreneurship training is necessary in their university course. This is confirmed by tables 5 and 6.

### III - Discussion of the results

#### Concerning “Entrepreneurship”

Our understanding of entrepreneurship owes much to the economist SCHUMPETER. (1928), as well as to the Austrian school. For SCHUMPETER, an “*entrepreneur*” is a person who is willing and able to transform an idea or invention into a “*successful innovation*”. Entrepreneurship leads to “*creative destruction*” in markets and sectors of the economy because new products and business models come along and replace old ones. Thus, creative destruction is the source of industrial dynamism and long-term growth.

For KNIGHT. F., (1967) and DRUCKER. P., (1970), entrepreneurship is about taking “*risks*”. The entrepreneur is a person who is willing to put his or her career and financial security at risk to implement an idea, to put his or her time and capital into a “*risky venture*”. In 1985, DRUCKER. P., revised his position, smart entrepreneurship is about not taking risks.

The term “*entrepreneurship*” underwent a certain evolution with the development of the entrepreneurial world. It is in this context that PINCHOT III. G., (1985) introduced the term *intrapreneuring* to describe entrepreneurial activities within a large organization.

For VERSTRAETE. T., and FAYOLLE. A., (2005), four paradigms allow us to identify the field of entrepreneurship research: the creation of an organization (not reduced to the creation of a company, the expressions “*organizational emergence*” or “*impulse of an organization*” being more appropriate), the detection - construction - exploitation of a business opportunity, the creation of value and innovation. These paradigms can be combined, rather than opposed. Both authors propose the following definitions:

*“Entrepreneurship: an initiative carried by an individual (or several individuals joining together for the occasion) building or seizing a business opportunity (at least what is valued or assessed as such), the profit of which is not necessarily monetary, through the impetus of an organization that can give rise to one or more entities, and creating new value (stronger in the case of an innovation) for stakeholders to whom the project is addressed.”* (Page 44).

PATUREL and al (2008) propose a syncretic definition of entrepreneurship: entrepreneurship “is, starting from an idea, the exploitation of an opportunity within the framework of an organization driven, created from scratch or taken over in the first instance, and then developed later, by an individual or a team undergoing a major change in their life, according

to a process that results in the creation of new value or the saving of waste of existing value”. In this perspective, entrepreneurship is inseparable from the project approach.

### **On entrepreneurship education and its impact**

Dealing with entrepreneurship education requires clarifying what we mean by it. Thus, in this discussion, we will focus on organizational, pedagogical aspects (phases of teaching, target audiences, objectives pursued and pedagogies practiced), proposed measurement frameworks and some specific aspects related to entrepreneurship.

AGEPE., (2008) to better understand entrepreneurship to proceed with the realization of job pools, to train students in job search techniques and strategies and entrepreneurship at the end of their school curriculum in Côte d'Ivoire.

Subsequently, entrepreneurship education was introduced as an official discipline in the curricula of vocational training institutions in the late 1990s. Thus, HILLARION., and al (2017), have conducted a reflection on the relevance of this entrepreneurship education in view of the persistence of unemployment and underemployment of graduates. Their study aimed to analyze the influence of the satisfaction of trainees' training expectations on their propensity to undertake. The results establish a monotonically increasing relationship between the satisfaction of trainees' expectations and their propensity to undertake. The results of their study also indicate that the satisfaction of three of the expectations expressed by the trainees has a significant influence on their propensity to undertake. It thus appears that entrepreneurship education is an effective strategy for the social construction of professional integration through entrepreneurship among trainees in vocational training.

SANOGO. B., (2019), in his article devoted to the self-employment of students at the University of Segou through entrepreneurship education as a factor in the development of entrepreneurial intention and business creation among students in training. The results of his study provided a series of data on the possibilities offered by entrepreneurship education as a factor in the self-employment of students in Segou.

TOUNES. A., in his study provides an “*inventory*” of entrepreneurship education that combines its different dimensions (teaching phases, target audiences, objectives and pedagogies used). This study has helped to strengthen and innovate the most appropriate pedagogical practices in entrepreneurship education in France. ALBERT and al (1998), in their work, proposed a method that opens up teaching to the entrepreneurial spirit. BECHARD. J.

P., (1998) proposes a typology of entrepreneurship education around the world. BOURGUIBA. M., (2007) carries out a comparative approach of the intention to entrepreneurial action through French and Tunisian Very Small Enterprises. BOUSLIKHANE. A., (2011) in his doctoral thesis, proposes a paradigmatic look at the entrepreneurial process with regard to entrepreneurship education. CHAHER et al. (2005), in their study show that teaching entrepreneurship at university is a major issue and propose ways to improve it. CARRIER. C., (2009) proposes that entrepreneurship education should go beyond lectures, case studies and business plans.

FAYOLLE. A., (1999) conducts an inventory of the teaching of entrepreneurship in French universities and proposes solutions to facilitate its development. Subsequently, FAYOLLE. A., (2000 b) in his study, highlighted the determinants of the entrepreneurial act among students and young graduates in French higher education.

KRUEGER and al (1993) in their study show that entrepreneurial intention is a cognitive structure that includes ends and means. The work of RAJHI. N., (2011) have allowed the conceptualization of the entrepreneurial spirit and the identification of the factors of its development at the university. SALEH. L., (2011) in her study highlighted the entrepreneurial intention of female students in Lebanon. SANTOS and al (2014) highlighted in their study the contribution of the case method through entrepreneurship education at the university.

## **Conclusion**

Through this exploratory study, we wanted to show to what extent entrepreneurship education can be a factor in the entrepreneurial intention of students at the International University of Excellence (IUE).

Our question: What is the impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intention of students at the International University of Excellence (IUE)?

In our various analyses of the work of this research, we have come to three conclusions. On the one hand, most of the students have entrepreneurial intentions, but they all want to work for the Malian state or a private structure. Even if they think that entrepreneurship is an opportunity, this activity is not for a student in training or for one who has completed his studies. On the other hand, teaching entrepreneurship is not a priority for the university authorities. In some universities, it is a free course or does not even exist. Finally, there is no sufficiently implemented policy by the board of education of IUE to develop entrepreneurship



education. As a result, if no measures are taken, the IUE, which is the first Tunisian - Malian University in Mali, risks resembling the various universities in Bamako, where the unemployment rate among graduates is increasing year after year.

However, it should be remembered that the teaching of entrepreneurship at the International University of Excellence (IUE), despite its optional nature, has allowed many students to acquire entrepreneurial motivation before they graduate. This is a sign that entrepreneurship education is part of the development of the entrepreneurial intention of many graduate students seeking employment.

Our study is far from having identified the problem of self-employment of students at the International University of Excellence (IUE) in all its dimensions. However, it opens up avenues for research on self-employment in other forms.

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