Olena HRYHOREVSKA,
Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor
Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design

MOTIVATIONAL APPROACHES IN SUPPORTING STUDENT STARTUP INITIATIVES

In modern conditions, universities are increasingly establishing themselves as key centers for the development of innovative entrepreneurship. Support for student startup initiatives is gaining particular importance, as it serves as a practical way to apply acquired knowledge, a means of forming entrepreneurial skills, and a channel for transforming academic results into marketable products. At the same time, one of the main problems remains the creation of an effective system of stimulating students to launch and scale startup projects within higher education institutions.

Motivational approaches in this area should be based not only on financial incentives, but also on intangible factors, in particular academic recognition, opportunities for professional development and self-realization, access to innovative infrastructure, and integration of students into entrepreneurial ecosystems. In view of this, the analysis and justification of modern motivational models for supporting student startup initiatives is relevant both from a scientific and practical point of view [1].

Modern research interprets the motivation of student entrepreneurship as a combination of internal and external incentives. Internal ones include the desire for self-realization, autonomy, creativity, social impact, while external ones include financial support, academic bonuses, access to mentors, investors, and innovation infrastructure [3].

The works of 2023–2025 emphasize that the dominance of exclusively financial incentives does not ensure the sustainable development of student startup activity. A comprehensive motivational model integrated into the educational process and strategic development of the university is much more effective.

The main motivational approaches to supporting student startups:

1. Educational and academic motivation. One of the most effective approaches is the integration of startup activities into educational programs (enrolling the project as a coursework, granting credits (ECTS) for participation in startup projects). This approach forms in students the awareness of startup not as an «extracurricular activity», but as a full-fledged element of the educational trajectory.

2. Financial and economic incentives. Financial motivation remains an important, but not a self-sufficient factor. The most common tools are: microgrants for student teams; startup scholarships and competitions of innovative ideas; patenting and participation in international accelerators.

3. Institutional and infrastructural motivation. The presence of an innovative infrastructure (startup incubators, accelerators, technology transfer centers) in a higher education institution creates an environment of low barriers to entry into entrepreneurship for students. Access to equipment, experts and business networks reduces risks and increases self-confidence, which acts as a powerful intangible motivator.

4. Socio-professional motivation. Social status and professional recognition play an important role. Effective tools include: public recognition of successful student startups; participation in international startup events, exhibitions; formation of student entrepreneur communities and networks of startup alumni. It is social motivation and a sense of belonging to the innovation community that often determine the long-term involvement of students.

5. Value-oriented motivation. The latest approaches (University 5.0) emphasize social responsibility and sustainable development. Students are increasingly motivated by the opportunity to create startups with a social, environmental or restorative effect. For Ukraine, this approach is especially relevant in the context of post-crisis and post-war recovery [2].

Let us dwell on the incentive «Institutional and infrastructure motivation», since the team of the Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design within the framework of the IMPACT-Campus: Innovation Hubs for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Digital Transformation project has its own positive examples of its implementation. The project builds on proven methodologies from initiatives such as Erasmus+ VEHUB4YOU, which provided scalable virtual collaboration tools and improved start-up support mechanisms. This

synergy ensures that the project strategies are based on best practices while addressing specific regional challenges.

Thus, within the framework of this project, a Knowledge Valorization Center has been created, which provides support for startups and their scaling through individual mentoring and the Center's resources, as it connects the university with local enterprises, with local businesses and government organizations, facilitating knowledge transfer; analyzes success factors and facilitates technology transfer to regional industrial ecosystems. Such comprehensive coordination illustrates the role of the Knowledge Valorization Center as a key mechanism for promoting innovation, sustainable development and inclusion in different sectors and regions.

Thus, within the framework of the Knowledge Valorization Center, it is envisaged:

Development of training programs - development of modules on digital and sustainable entrepreneurship (AR/VR, blockchain, Web 3.0), adapted to regional contexts (participants receive practical skills for launching startups and scaling spin-offs).

Support and acceleration of startups - provide mentoring, access to financing and support in the development of business models through hubs (support for 12 startups and creation of 2 startups, promotion of the development of regional innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Strengthening the entrepreneurial potential of HEIs - entrepreneurship curricula and mentoring for startups.

Thus, the motivation of student startup initiatives in higher education institutions should be based on a systematic combination of academic, financial, institutional, social and value incentives. The most effective are those models in which startup activity is integrated into the educational process, supported infrastructurally and reinforced by the culture of entrepreneurship at the university.

For Ukrainian HEIs, a promising direction is the adaptation of European practices taking into account national challenges, in particular the orientation of student startups towards innovations for economic recovery, digitalization and sustainable development.

Literature

1. Свидрук І., Коцупей В. (2025). Роль університетів у розвитку інноваційних підприємницьких екосистем. Економіка та суспільство, (80). https://doi.org/10.32782/2524-0072/2025-80-67
2. World Economic Forum (2025). Innovation Ecosystems: A Toolkit of Principles and Best Practices. URL: https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Innovation_Ecosystems_2025.pdf
3. Secundo G., Mele G., Del Vecchio P. (2024). Student entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems: new challenges for universities. Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 198. URL: https://www.elsevier.es/en-revista-journal-innovation-knowledge-376-pdf-download-S2444569X24000131
4. Etzkowitz Henry. (2004). The Evolution of the Entrepreneurial University. Int. J. of Technology and Globalisation. 1. 64 - 77. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTG.2004.004551.