



Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey



ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF STUDENTS AT BELGIAN UNIVERSITIES

GLOBAL UNIVERSITY ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT STUDENTS' SURVEY 2016

NATIONAL REPORT BELGIUM

Vincent Molly
Eddy Laveren



AUTHORS

Prof. dr. Vincent Molly

Co-Academic Director of the Family Business Community at Antwerp Management School; Professor of Entrepreneurship & Family Business at KU Leuven

Prof. dr. Eddy Laveren

Co-Academic Director of the Family Business Community at Antwerp Management School; Professor of Financial Management & Entrepreneurship at University of Antwerp

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank Antwerp Management School for sponsoring this study, and our Belgian partner universities (University of Antwerp, KU Leuven, Université de Namur and Université Catholique de Louvain) for their willingness to participate in the survey and disseminate the survey among their students. In addition, we are very grateful to our colleagues prof. dr. Marcus Dejardin (Université de Namur) and prof. dr. Frank Janssen (Université catholique de Louvain) who supported us in gathering the data for this project. And finally, we would also like to thank all those students who took time to complete the online survey.

CITATION

Molly, V. & Laveren, E. (2017). Entrepreneurial intentions and activities of students at Belgian universities. The Belgian Report of the 2016 GUESSS Project, Family Business Community, Antwerp Management School, Belgium

THE INTERNATIONAL REPORT WAS SUPPORTED BY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- LIST OF FIGURES 4
- LIST OF TABLES 4
- 1. Introduction 5
- 2. The Research Project GUESSS 6
 - 2.1 Respondents..... 6
 - 2.2 Sample characteristics..... 6
- 3. Career choice intentions 8
 - 3.1 General overview 8
 - 3.2 Career choice intentions across fields of study 10
 - 3.3 Career choice intentions across gender 11
- 4. Students and Entrepreneurship 13
 - 4.1 The university context 13
 - 4.2 The family context..... 15
 - 4.3 Locus of control, attitude, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy 15
 - 4.4 Entrepreneurial competences and skills 17
 - 4.5 The society context 17
- 5. Nascent entrepreneurs 19
 - 5.1 Characteristics of the nascent founders..... 19
 - 5.2 Motivation and goals..... 19
 - 5.3 Business idea 21
 - 5.4 Foundation partners..... 22
 - 5.5 Industry sectors 23
 - 5.6 Steps taken to found the business 23
- 6. Active entrepreneurs..... 25
 - 6.1 Characteristics of the active founders..... 25
 - 6.2 Motivation & goals 25
 - 6.3 Foundation partners..... 27
 - 6.4 Industry sectors 27
 - 6.5 Performance ratings 28
- 7. Potential successors 31
 - 7.1 Family business characteristics 31
 - 7.2 Future succession 33
- 8. Conclusion and summary 37

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Fields of study	7
Figure 2: Career choice intentions: immediately after studies and 5 years after graduation... 9	9
Figure 3: Career choice intentions right after graduation by fields of study.....	10
Figure 4: Career choice intentions five years after graduation by fields of study.....	11
Figure 5: Career choice intentions right after graduation by gender.....	12
Figure 6: Career choice intentions five years after graduation by gender	12
Figure 7: Statements about the university environment	13
Figure 8: The courses and offerings I attended.....	14
Figure 9: Attending entrepreneurship course or program.....	14
Figure 10: Family background	15
Figure 11: Founding intentions	15
Figure 12: Students self-efficacy and locus of control	16
Figure 13: Competences and skills	17
Figure 14: If you would pursue a career as an entrepreneur, how would people in your environment react?.....	18
Figure 15: I will create my firm in order... ..	20
Figure 16: Practices and attitudes as a nascent entrepreneur.....	21
Figure 17: Origin of ideas	22
Figure 18: Industry sectors of nascent founders.....	23
Figure 19: Steps taken to found a business.....	24
Figure 20: I will create my firm in order... ..	26
Figure 21: Practices and attitudes as a firm founder	27
Figure 22: Industry sectors of active founders.....	28
Figure 23: Satisfaction of active founders	29
Figure 24: Comparison between own business and the business of competitors	29
Figure 25: Insight into business performance	30
Figure 26: What is your personal ownership share in the business?	31
Figure 27: Sector the parents' business is mainly active in	32
Figure 28: Performance evaluation of the parent's business over the last 3 years	32
Figure 29: Succession intention findings.....	33
Figure 30: Findings of the perception towards being a successor	34
Figure 31: Reaction of environment regarding succession	34
Figure 32: Driving factors regarding the relation with siblings in the case of succession.....	36

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Career choice intentions: Expected changes in 5 years.....	10
---------------------------------------------------------------------	----

1. Introduction

The Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey (GUESSS) is an international project to investigate entrepreneurial intentions and activities among students in different countries. It was founded at the Swiss Research Institute of Small Business and Entrepreneurship at the University of St. Gallen (KMU-HSG) in 2003, and is now coordinated by the University of St. Gallen and the University of Bern (Switzerland, IMU). GUESSS generates insights into entrepreneurial aspirations and conditions for entrepreneurship by examining, for example, the role of individual attitude, motivation and family background, university entrepreneurial environment and learning, as well as social and cultural factors that might affect the choice of an entrepreneurial career. In 2016 the 7th survey was organized in which 50 countries participated resulting in completed questionnaires of 122,509 students.

Entrepreneurship is of increasingly high importance for the Belgian economy. According to Belgian start-up statistics nearly 90,000 new enterprises have been created in 2016, which means a growth of almost 9% in comparison to 2015¹. In this era of entrepreneurship, it can be expected that a significant part of the entrepreneurial activity comes from people from the Y and Z generation, who are inspired by successful (inter)national entrepreneurs and role models. A study on the entrepreneurial ambitions and career intentions of young people is therefore warranted.

The current report gives insight into the entrepreneurial intentions and activities of 771 students from more than five Belgian universities, university colleges or business schools, among which University of Antwerp, Antwerp Management School, KU Leuven, Université de Namur, and Université catholique de Louvain. Taken together, this edition of GUESSS provides novel and unique insights into various important aspects of student entrepreneurship in an international and Belgian context.

¹ UNIZO – Graydon Belgium – UCM, Startersatlas 2017, 64 p.

2. The Research Project GUESSS

2.1 Respondents

The Belgian report is based on 771 questionnaires from students from more than five Belgian universities, university colleges and business schools. Although in total more than 1.700 answers were received, only questionnaires that have been completely filled in have been taken into account for this study. Where relevant, a comparison is made with the total sample of 122.509 students from the international report.

2.2 Sample characteristics

Age

The students who participated in GUESSS Belgium 2016 are on average 22,7 years old. The age profile shows that almost half (44%) of the Belgian respondents can be found in the age category “until 21 years”. 38% are between 22 and 24 years old, and the remaining respondents (18%) are older than 24 years. The Belgian student population is somewhat younger than the international sample in which the average age of the students is 23,9 years.

Gender

In terms of gender, more female (62%) than male (38%) students participated in the Belgian GUESSS 2016. This is 3 percentage points higher compared to the international sample where 59% of the respondents are female. The higher percentage of women has to be taken into account in country comparisons as the female entrepreneurial intention is usually lower.

Nationality

The large majority of the respondents (86%) were Belgian citizens, followed by Dutch (3%) and Spanish (1%) students.

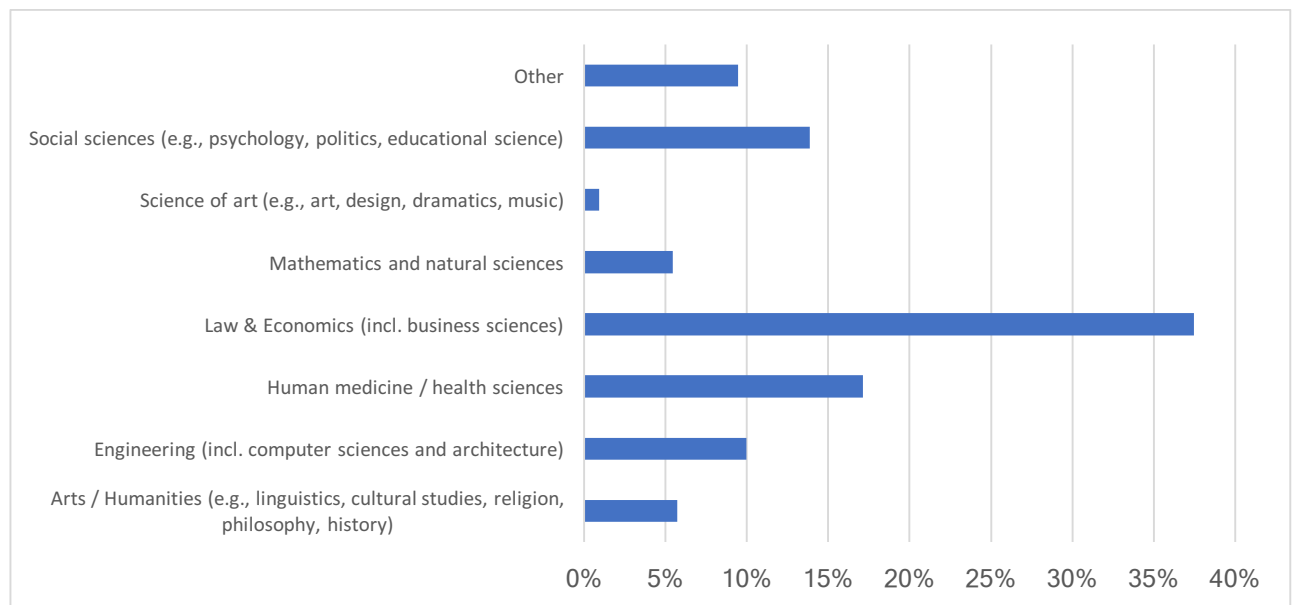
Level of studies

More than half of the students are enrolled in a bachelor program (63%), followed by students studying at the master level (32%). Only 5% of the respondents are enrolled in a MBA or PhD program. Compared to the international sample, Belgian Master students are more strongly represented in this study.

Fields of study

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of the aggregated fields of study. Most of the students are studying Law, Economics or business sciences (37%), followed by Human Medicine/ Health Sciences (17%), Social sciences (14 %) or Engineering (10%). Especially the latter field of study (engineering) is less strongly represented compared to the international sample (where engineering students comprise 25%), while Belgian students in Human medicine / Health sciences are somewhat stronger represented compared to the international sample.

Figure 1: Fields of study



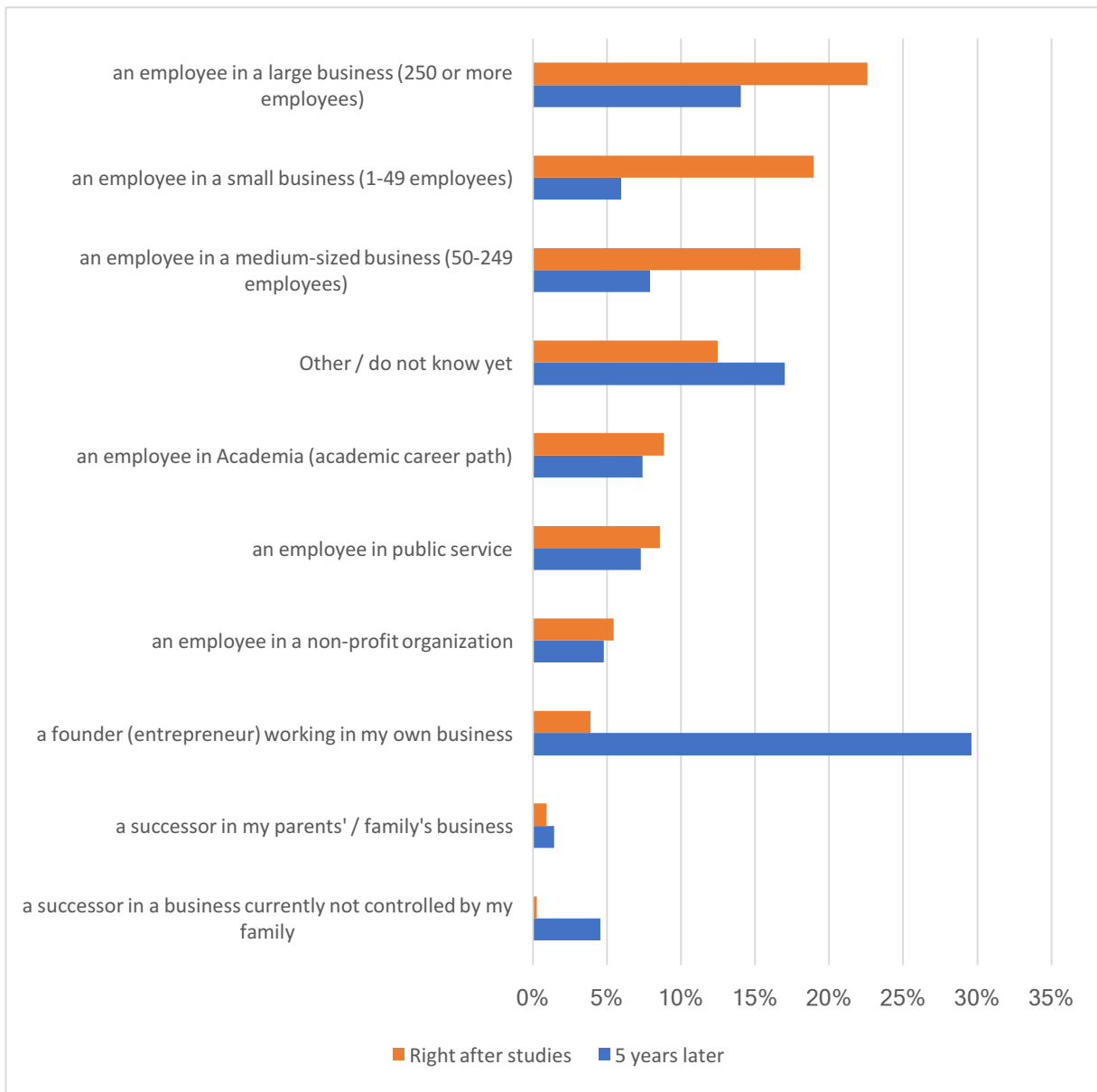
3. Career choice intentions

3.1 General overview

As Figure 2 illustrates, immediately after graduation 83% intend to start their career as an employee in the private or public sector. 37% intends to start a career in an SME, and 23% prefers to work in a large firm. Another 9% of the respondents prefer an employment in the public service. An academic career path is preferred by 9%. The non-profit sector is the most likely career option for 5%. When turning to entrepreneurship, 4% wants to found their own business. About 1% aims to take over an already existing company (0.9% successor in parents' / family's firm and 0.3% successor in a firm currently not controlled by the family). Especially the figure of 4% of intentional founders among Belgian students is considerably lower than the 9% intentional founders in the international sample.

Five years after graduation the picture looks different. The percentage of the Belgian students, who tend to be in employment either in the private or public sector drops to under 50% (14% in a large firm, 14% in a SME, 7% in the public sector, 7% in academia and 5% in a non-profit organization). 30% of the respondents intend to found their own company 5 years after studies and 6% of the students are interested in taking over an existing company as a career option. Also here, the 30% of intentional founders in Belgium 5 years after graduation is considerably lower than the 38% of intentional founders in the international sample.

Figure 2: Career choice intentions: immediately after studies and 5 years after graduation



To see whether students' preferences for their intended career path remain stable during the first five years after the completion of their studies, the career options were grouped in 6 categories (Employees in SME, Large Firms or Public/Non-Profit Organizations; Self-Employed, Successors and Other/Do not know yet). Table 1 reveals that only 19% of the students who consider starting their career in a small- or medium-sized firm (SME) think they will also work there 5 years after their graduation, while 32% intends to start their own business. Similarly, 28% who intends to start as an employee in a large firm think they will also work there 5 years after their graduation, and 35% of these

students expects to start their own business. About 1 out of 2 students who want to be self-employed right after studies also intend to stay in this career path 5 years later. Thus, we see a shift taking place especially from employment in SMEs and in larger enterprises towards self-employment.

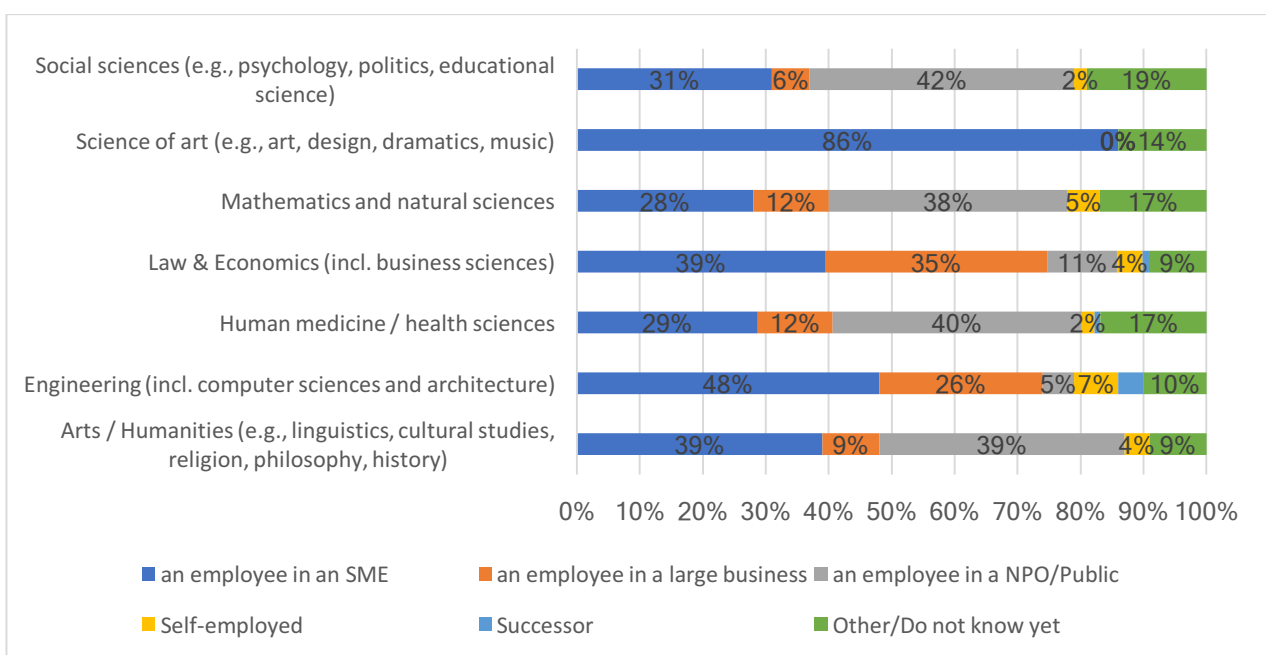
Table 1: Career choice intentions: Expected changes in 5 years

Right after studies	5 years later					
	Employee (SME)	Employee (Large)	Employee (NPO, Public)	Self-employed	Successor	Other/do not know yet
Employee (SME)	19%	16%	13%	32%	9%	12%
Employee (Large)	13%	28%	11%	35%	7%	6%
Employee (NPO, Public)	13%	3%	44%	22%	2%	16%
Self-employed	10%	13%	13%	50%	7%	7%
Successor	0%	0%	0%	56%	33%	11%
Other/do not know yet	6%	2%	15%	19%	1%	57%

3.2 Career choice intentions across fields of study

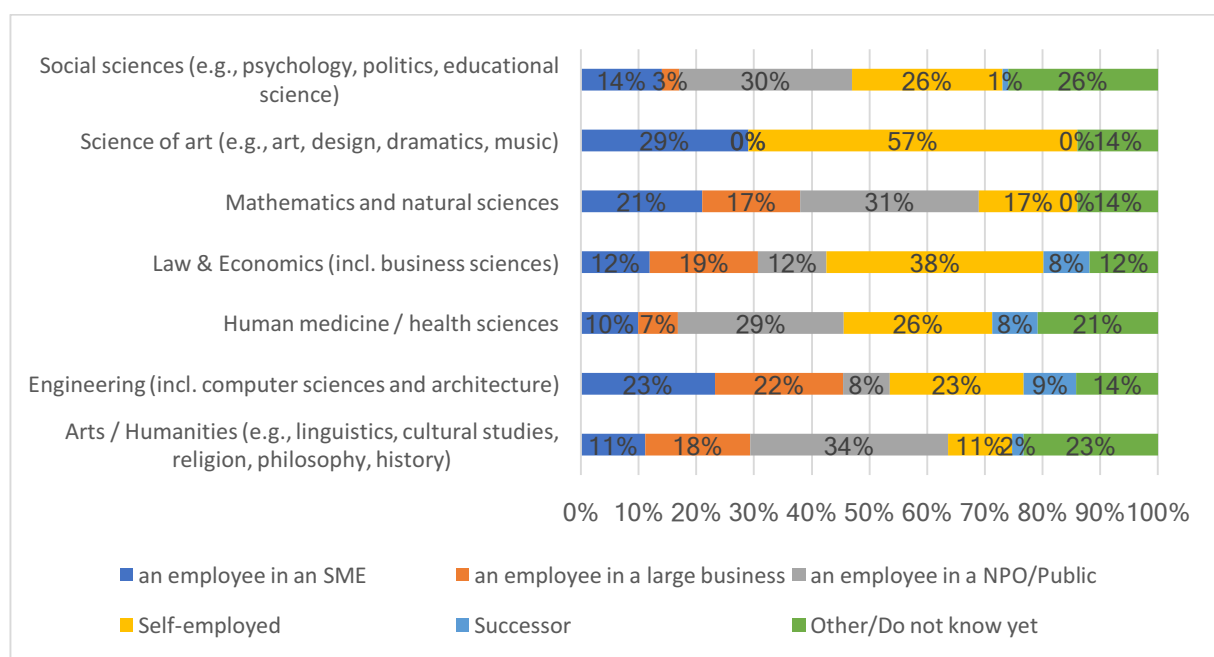
Figure 3 illustrates the career choice intentions immediately after studies depending on the field of study. It can be stated that the intention to found or succeed a company right after studies is more or less the same in the different fields of study, except for students in the field of Science of art, Social sciences and Medicine & Health, who show a lower rate of founding intention.

Figure 3: Career choice intentions right after graduation by fields of study



Five years after graduation the career option “self-employment” seems to become more important, compared to career paths in established organizations (mostly SMEs and large firms). The intention to found one’s own company or to take over an existing business increases markedly in all study fields. 57% of students of Science of art, 38% Law and economics, 26% Social sciences, 26% Human medicine and health sciences, 23% of Engineering students, 17% of Mathematics and natural sciences, and 11% of Arts/humanities perceive self-employment as a desirable career path.

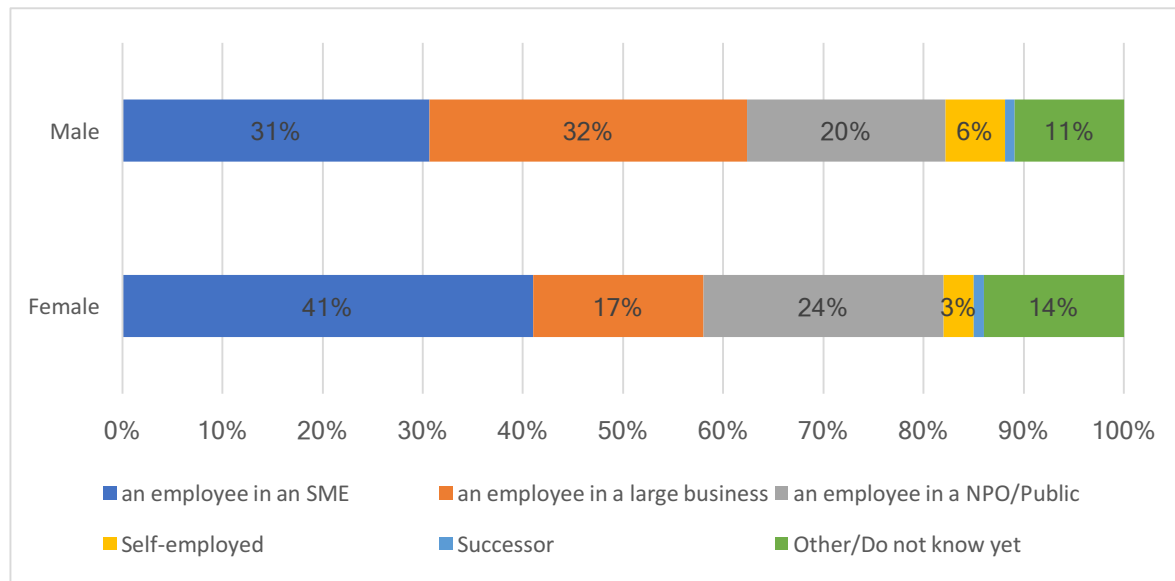
Figure 4: Career choice intentions five years after graduation by fields of study



3.3 Career choice intentions across gender

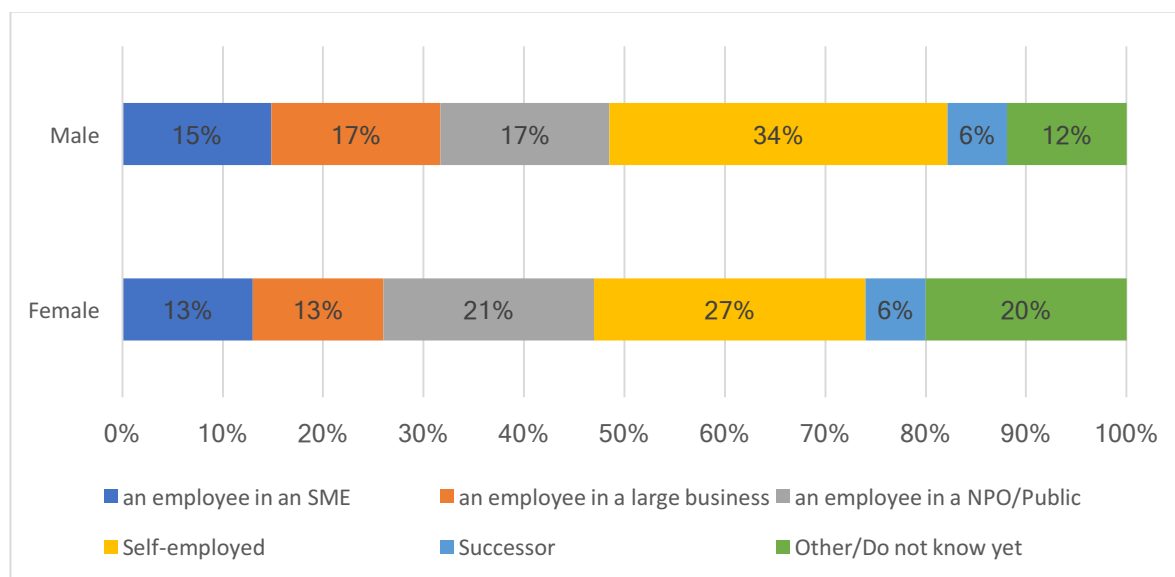
Immediately after graduation 7% of the male graduates, but only 4% of the female graduates intend to start an entrepreneurial activity (either as a founder or successor). A similar gender effect with a much larger entrepreneurship intention among male students than female students is also visible from the international sample. Figure 5 also illustrates that in Belgium female students after graduation show a stronger intention to work for an SME compared to male students, and the opposite counts for large companies.

Figure 5: Career choice intentions right after graduation by gender



In a five-year perspective (see Figure 6) 40% of the male and 33% of the female respondents plan to pursue an entrepreneurial career (either as a founder or successor). It can be stated that a gender gap still exists, given the higher percentage for male than female students, but the gap begins to narrow when comparing to the figures immediately after graduation.

Figure 6: Career choice intentions five years after graduation by gender

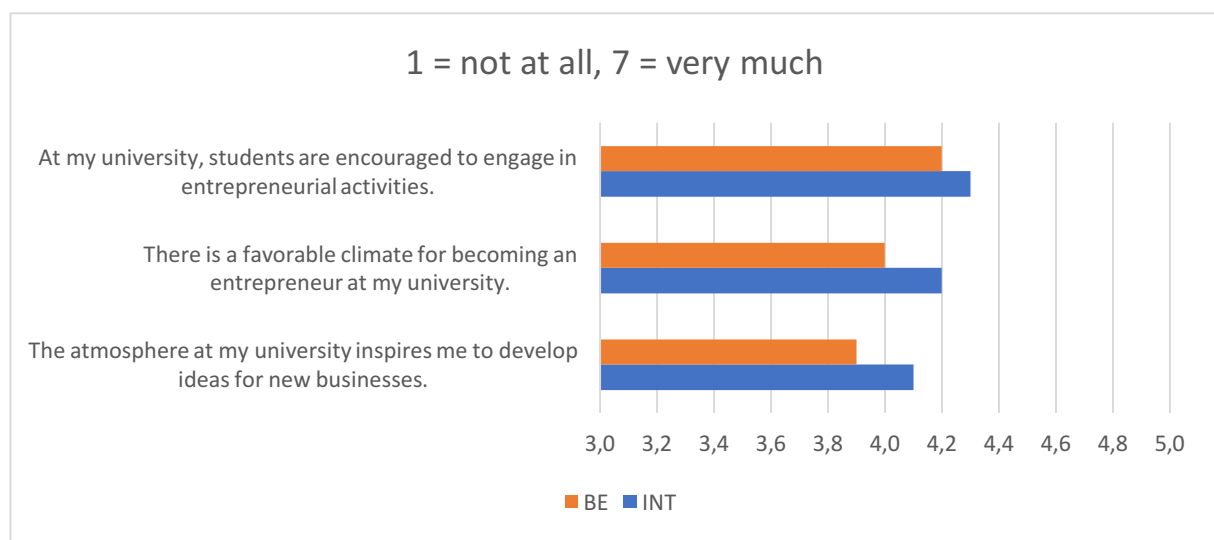


4. Students and Entrepreneurship

4.1 The university context

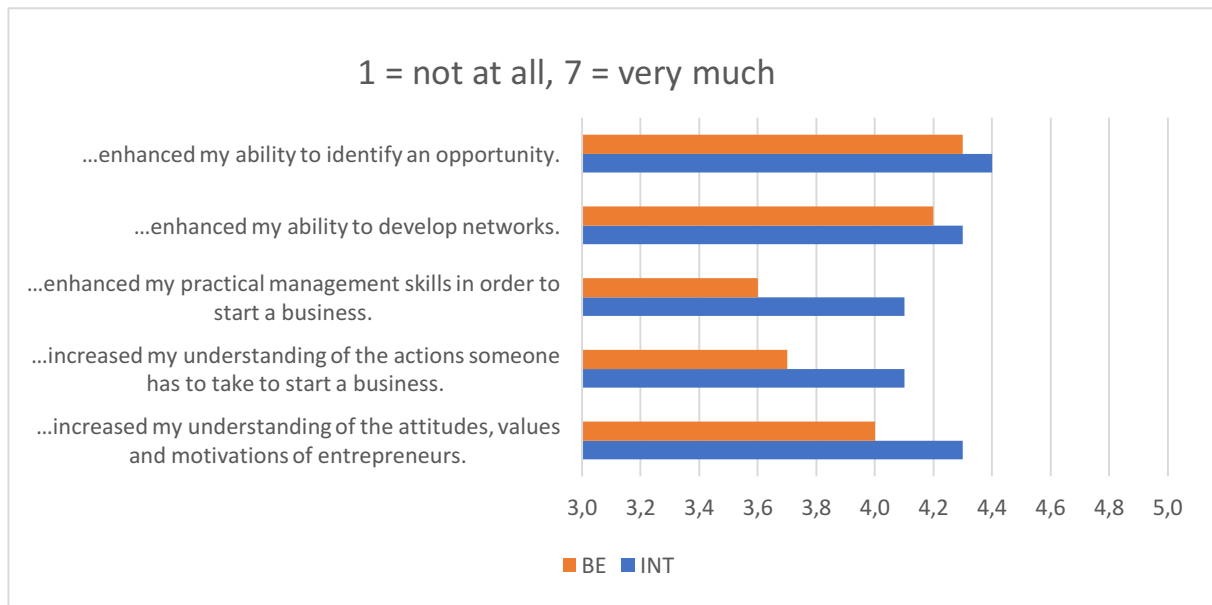
The study analyses students' perceptions of the university environment concerning the encouragement of entrepreneurial intentions and activities. Respondents were asked to assess their level of agreement with statements on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from "1 = not at all" to "7 = very much". Overall, the entrepreneurial university climate looks quite favorable (see Figure 7), especially with regard to the encouragement to engage in entrepreneurial activities. When comparing with the international study, the Belgian university context is somewhat less entrepreneurial.

Figure 7: Statements about the university environment



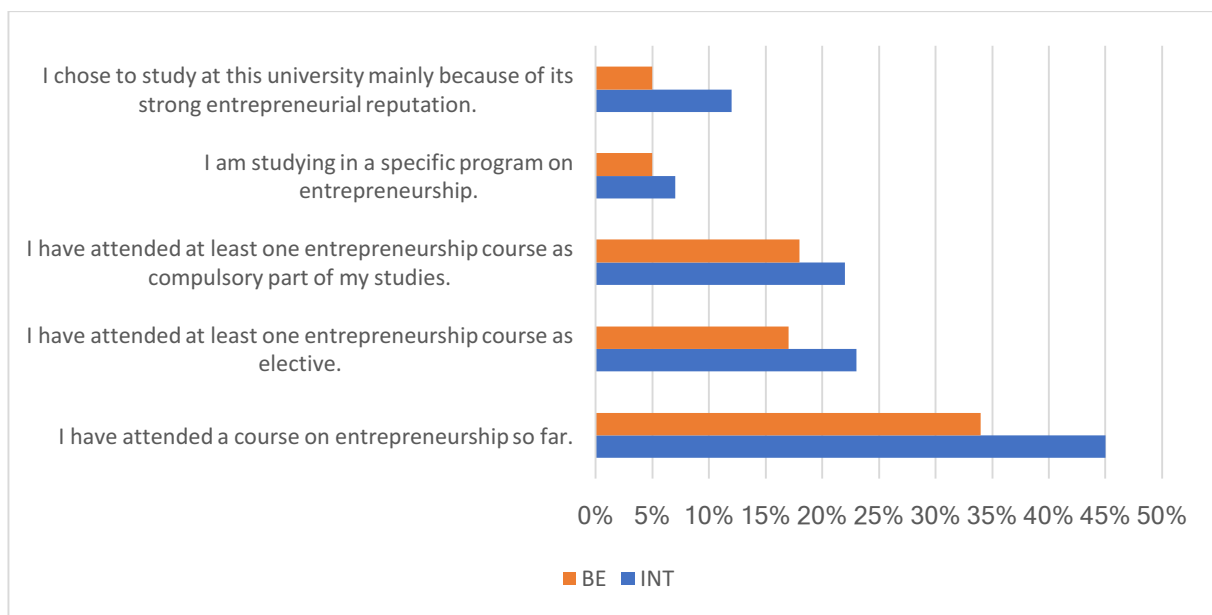
Educational programs and courses at the university level could foster the development of entrepreneurial motivations, intentions and skills. The study surveyed the self-assessment of students' entrepreneurial competency development related to attended university courses and offerings (Figure 8). Overall it can be seen that the university context mainly enhanced the "ability to identify an opportunity" and the "ability to develop networks", followed by a better "understanding of entrepreneurial attitudes, motivations and values". Also here, the Belgian scores are lower compared to the international sample of students, especially with regard to practical management skills and knowledge on the actions to start a business.

Figure 8: The courses and offerings I attended...



As Figure 9 illustrates, only 1 out of 3 Belgian (34%) students has attended a course on entrepreneurship so far, which is about equally spread across compulsory and elective courses in their program. In the international sample a higher share (45%) of the students have been involved in an entrepreneurship course.

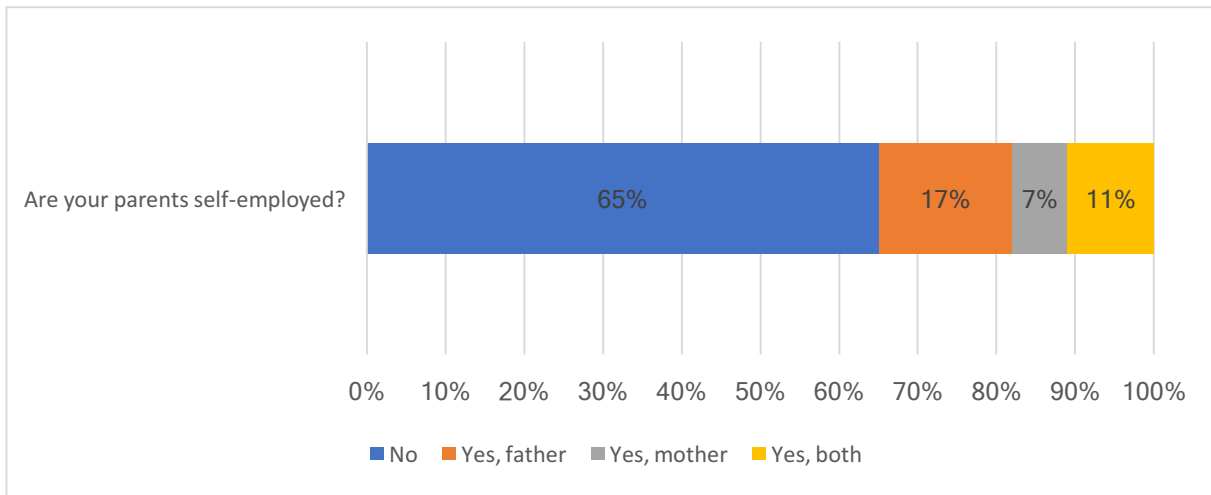
Figure 9: Attending entrepreneurship course or program



4.2 The family context

Figure 10 indicates that about 1 out of three students in our Belgian sample have a parent/parents who is/are self-employed, which is comparable to the international sample.

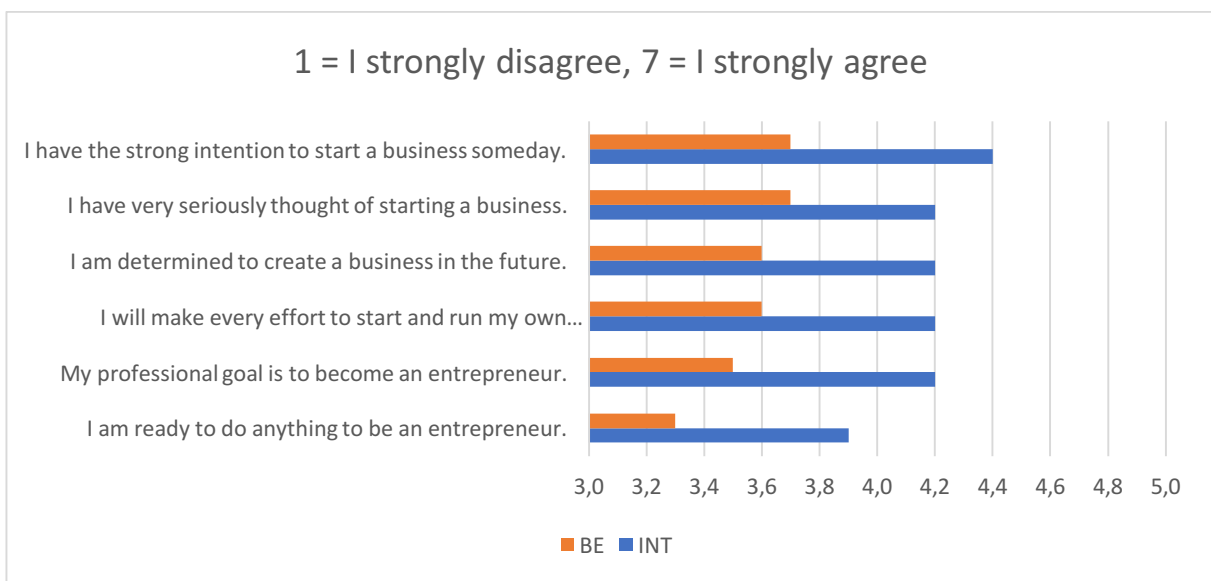
Figure 10: Family background



4.3 Locus of control, attitude, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy

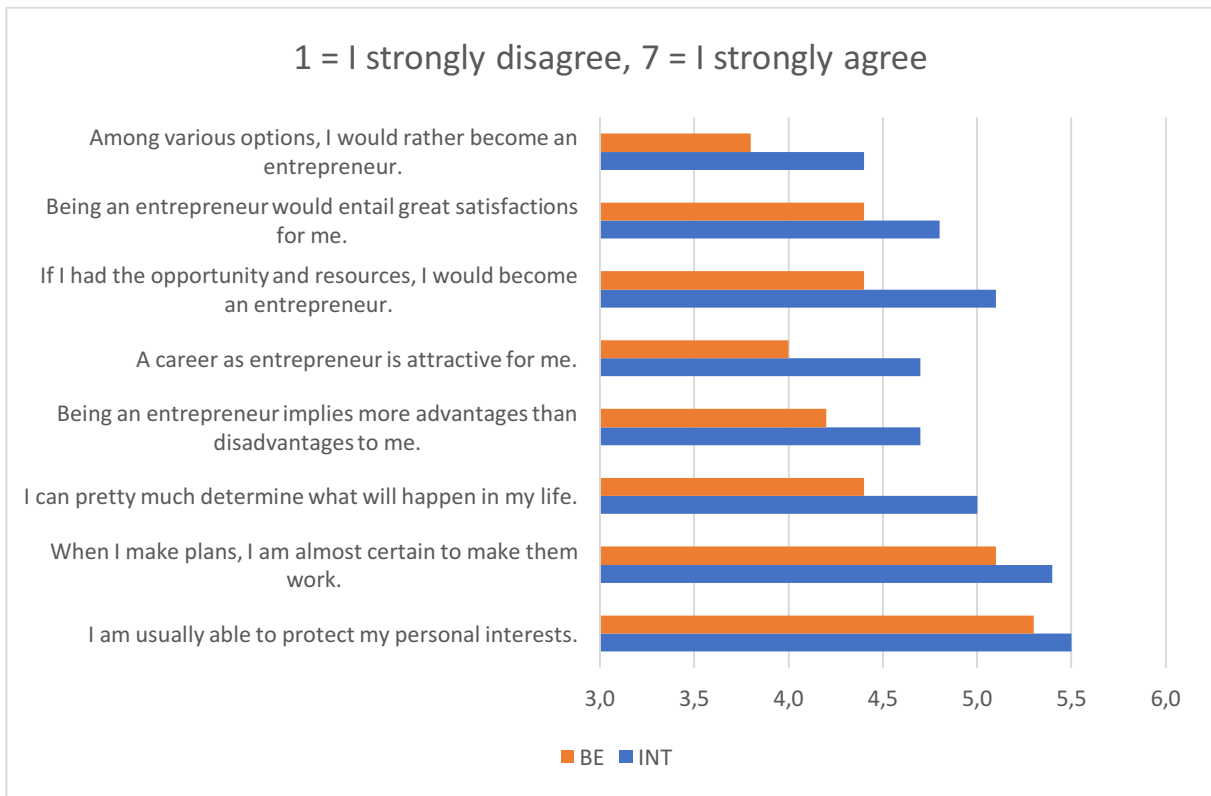
Figure 11 shows the items of the entrepreneurial intention construct. Also here it becomes clear that Belgian students have a lower appetite for entrepreneurship compared to the international sample.

Figure 11: Founding intentions



The decision to pursue an entrepreneurial career depends on many factors. An important factor is the perception of the desirability of an entrepreneurial career path. The following questions (Figure 12) survey the student’s attitudes towards an entrepreneurial career path in comparison to other possible occupations.

Figure 12: Students self-efficacy and locus of control

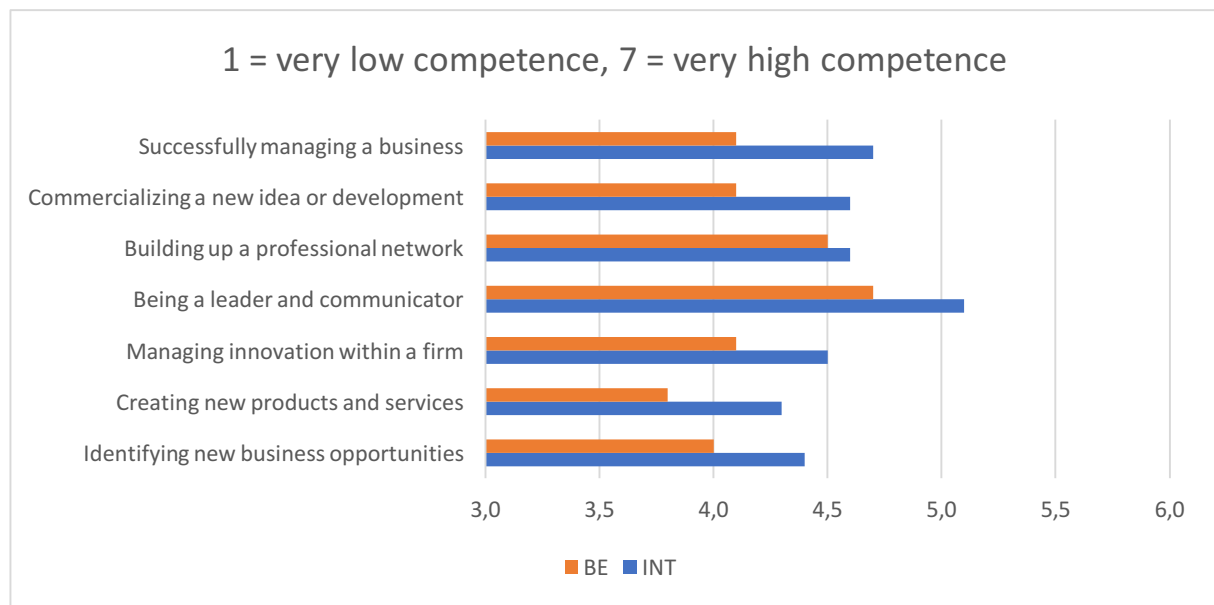


The items “When I make plans, I am almost certain to make them work”, “I can pretty much determine what will happen in my life” and “I am usually able to protect my personal interests” survey the self-assessment of one’s own internality with regard to work and life in general (locus of control). We can see that Belgian students score somewhat lower than international students. The difference between the two samples becomes even sharper if we look at the other items which focus more on the internality associated with an entrepreneurial career.

4.4 Entrepreneurial competences and skills

Competences and skills play an important role in the successful creation of new ventures. To identify new business opportunities, to communicate effectively with customers and to build up a professional network are essential competences and skills in the context of start-ups. Figure 13 evaluates the self-assessed competences of Belgian students in comparison with international students, where international students score higher on all items compared to the Belgian sample.

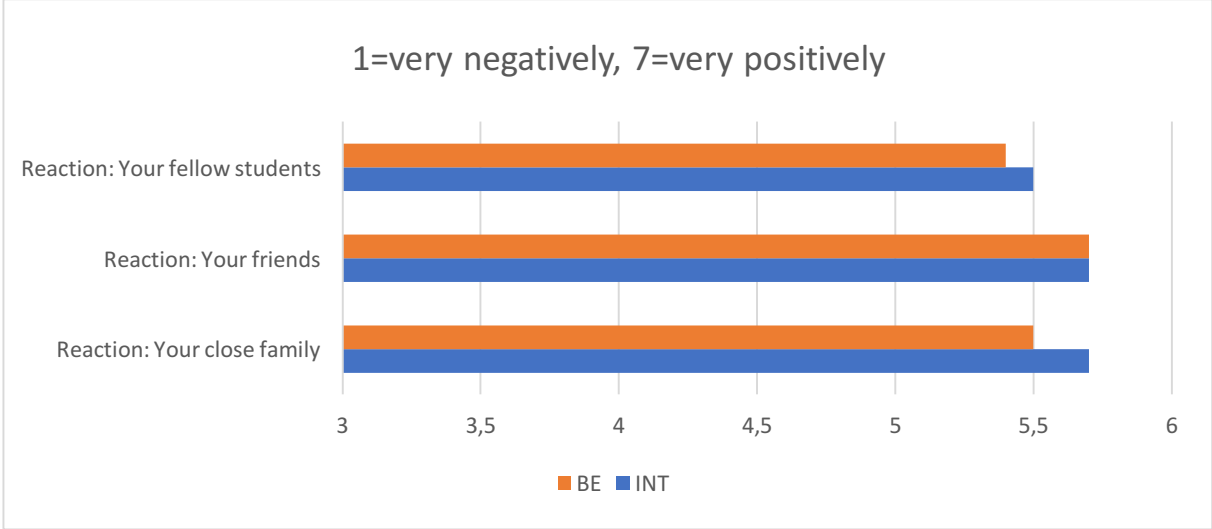
Figure 13: Competences and skills



4.5 The society context

The external environment can influence the decision to pursue a career as an entrepreneur. Thus, the following questions exhibit the perceived reaction of friends, students and family when the decision is made to found a company. As Figure 14 illustrates, almost no differences can be detected between Belgian and international students. Overall, a favorable opinion exists on the intention to start an entrepreneurial career.

Figure 14: If you would pursue a career as an entrepreneur, how would people in your environment react?



5. Nascent entrepreneurs

9,6% of the Belgian respondents (74 students) are nascent founders, meaning that they are currently taking some steps in trying to start their own business or to become self-employed (21,9% in the international sample).

5.1 Characteristics of the nascent founders

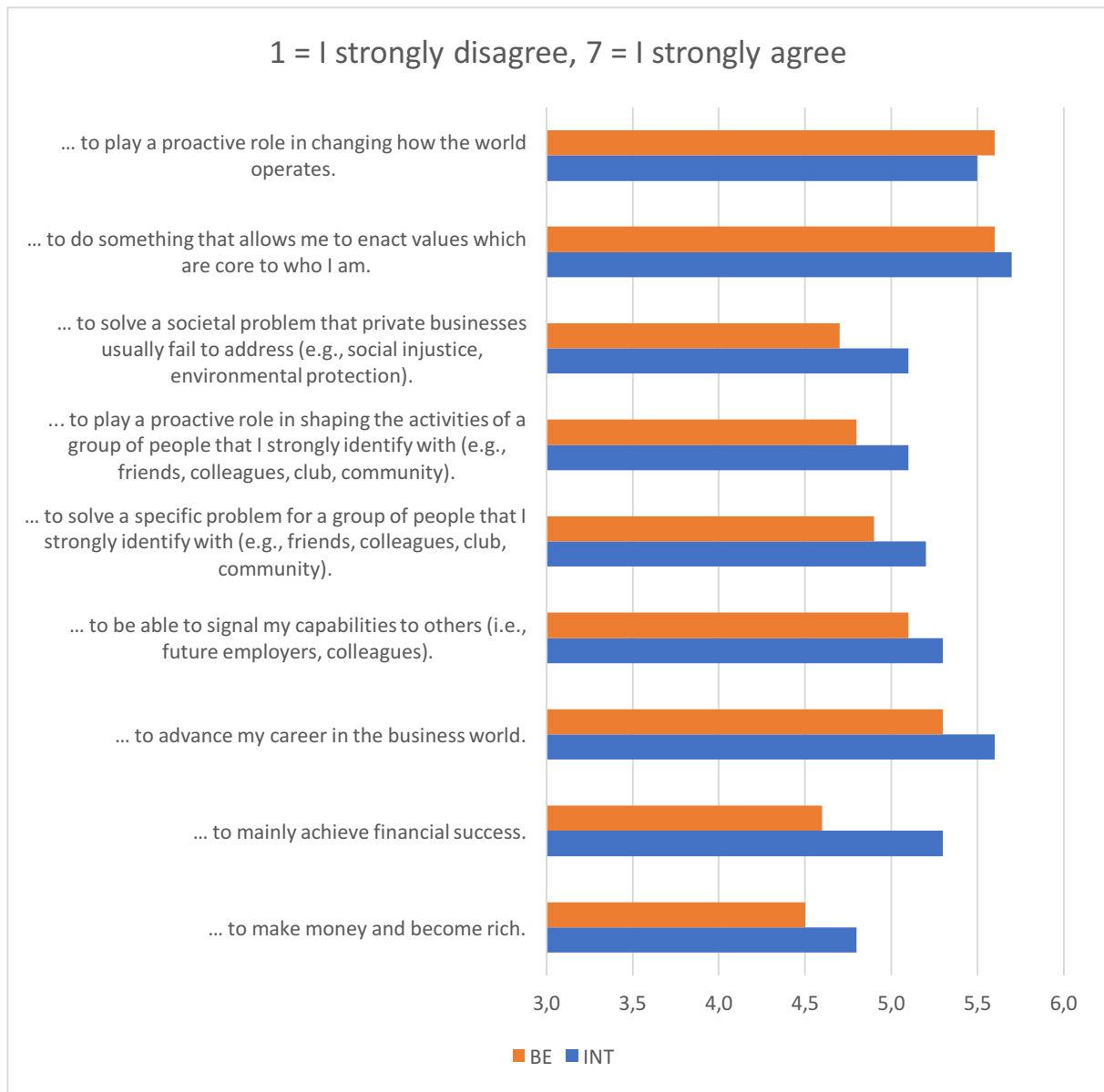
The average age of the nascent founders is 23,7 years. 37% of them are women. 50% of the nascent founders are studying Law or Economics (incl. business sciences), followed by 16% who are studying Engineering (incl. computer sciences and architecture).

15% of these nascent founders intend to found their own business within the next 1 to 6 months. 39% see 19 to 24 months as a realistic time span for their business start-up. 62% of the Belgian students want this to become their main occupation, which is similar to the international sample. 18% of nascent founders have already founded a firm in the past.

5.2 Motivation and goals

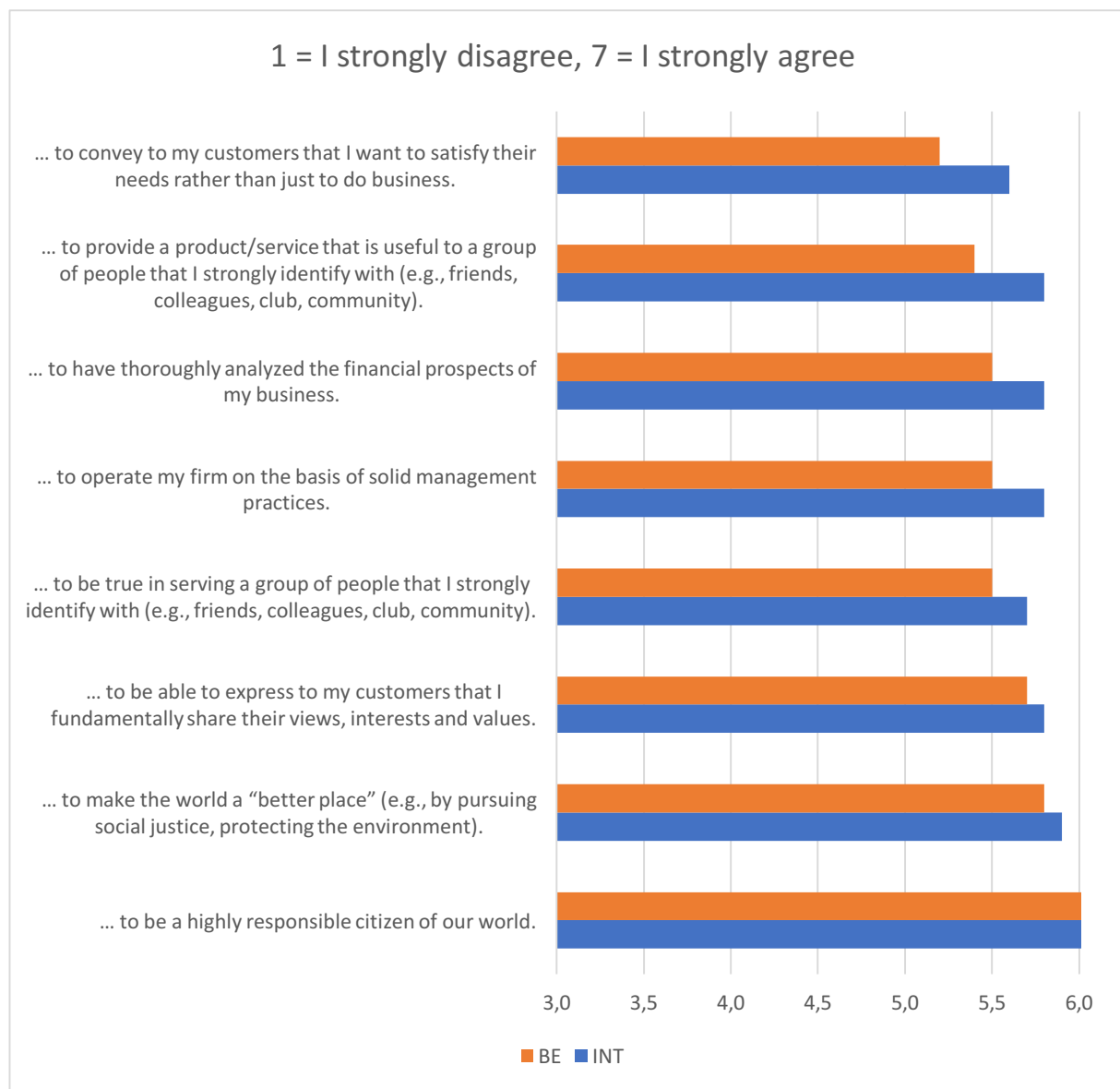
New firms are created due to different motives and goals (see Figure 15). The following statements survey the agreement of nascent student-entrepreneurs concerning different individual motives and goals. The highest scores, and thus the most important motives to create a firm is for both Belgian and international student groups “to do something that allows me to enact values which are core to who I am”, “to play a proactive role in changing how the world operates”, and “advance the career in the business world”. Other motives (e.g. “making money and becoming rich”, or “achieving financial success”) play a minor role for nascent entrepreneurs.

Figure 15: I will create my firm in order...



The following statements (see Figure 16) further assess how important nascent founders perceive different activities, abilities and attitudes in relation to their start-up and the world in general. For nascent founders it is important to “be a highly responsible citizen to our world”, to “make the world a better place”, and to “be able to express to my customers that I fundamentally share their views, interests and values”.

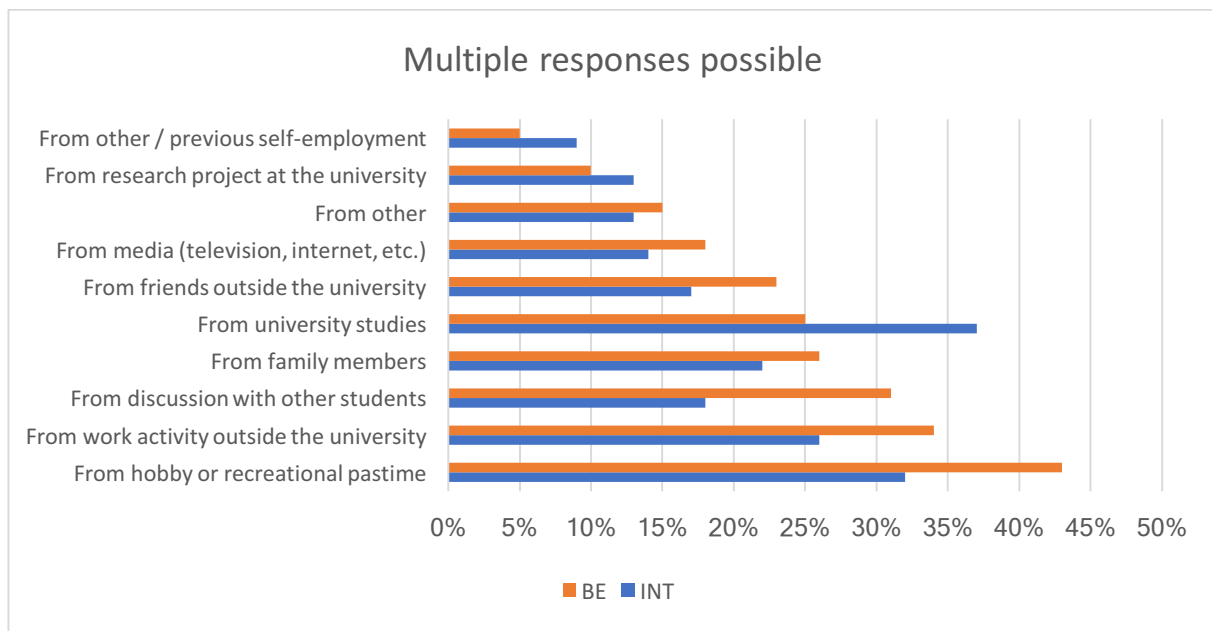
Figure 16: Practices and attitudes as a nascent entrepreneur



5.3 Business idea

Where do the nascent entrepreneurs have their business idea from? In several cases, the idea was developed in the university context. Taken together, university studies, discussions with other students, and university-related projects are frequently mentioned. However, in comparison to the sample of international students, Belgian students get their idea somewhat less from their university studies. The most frequently mentioned source for Belgian students is the hobby or recreational pastime, with a score much higher compared to the international sample.

Figure 17: Origin of ideas



5.4 Foundation partners

75% of the nascent founders plan to found their firm with one or more co-partners, 38% is planning to do that with only one co-founder. Only 25% intend to start their business as a solo entrepreneur. This percentage is larger than in the international sample, where only 19% will start their business on their own.

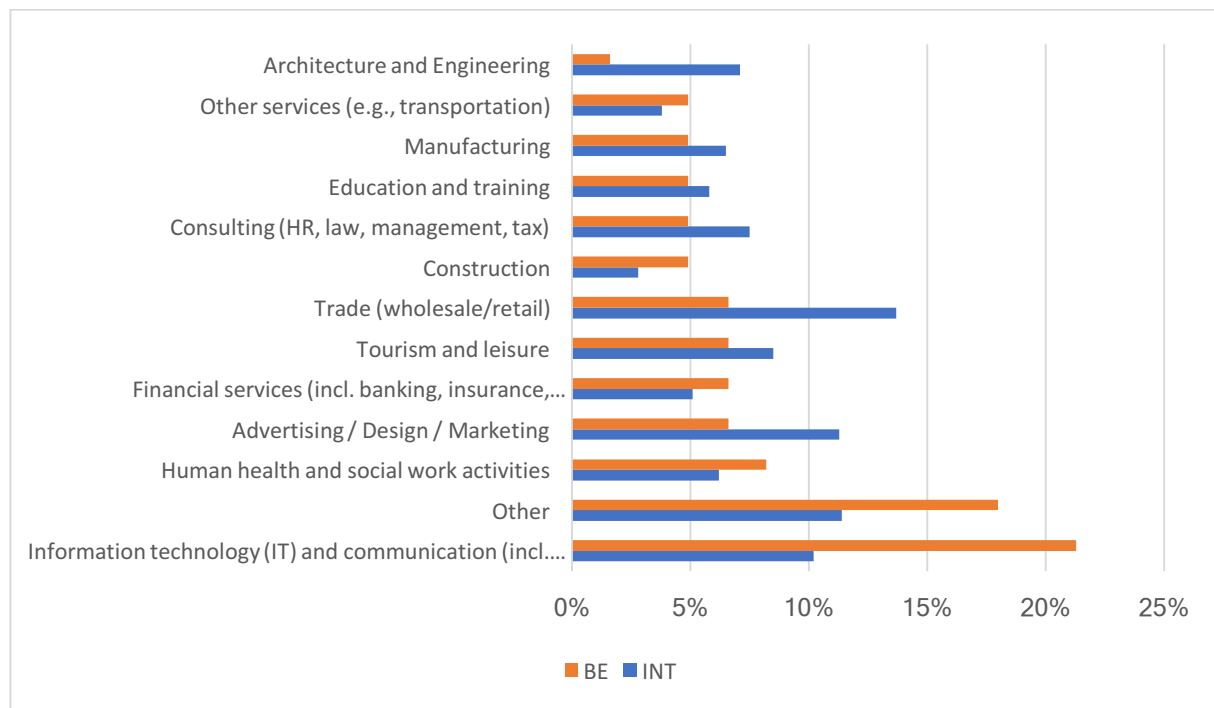
The distinction between male and female nascent founders exhibits major differences in the propensity to found their company in a team. More than 40% of the nascent female entrepreneurs (41,7%) intends to start their business alone, compared to 13,5% of their male counterparts.

Our analyses also show that the university context is most important to meet potential start-up partners. 49% of nascent entrepreneurs intend to start their firm together with a fellow student. In comparison only 27% intend to found together with their relatives.

5.5 Industry sectors

As Figure 18 illustrates, the preferred industry sector of the nascent founders among Belgian students for their start-up is by far information and communication technology (21%). This sector is significantly stronger represented compared to the international sample.

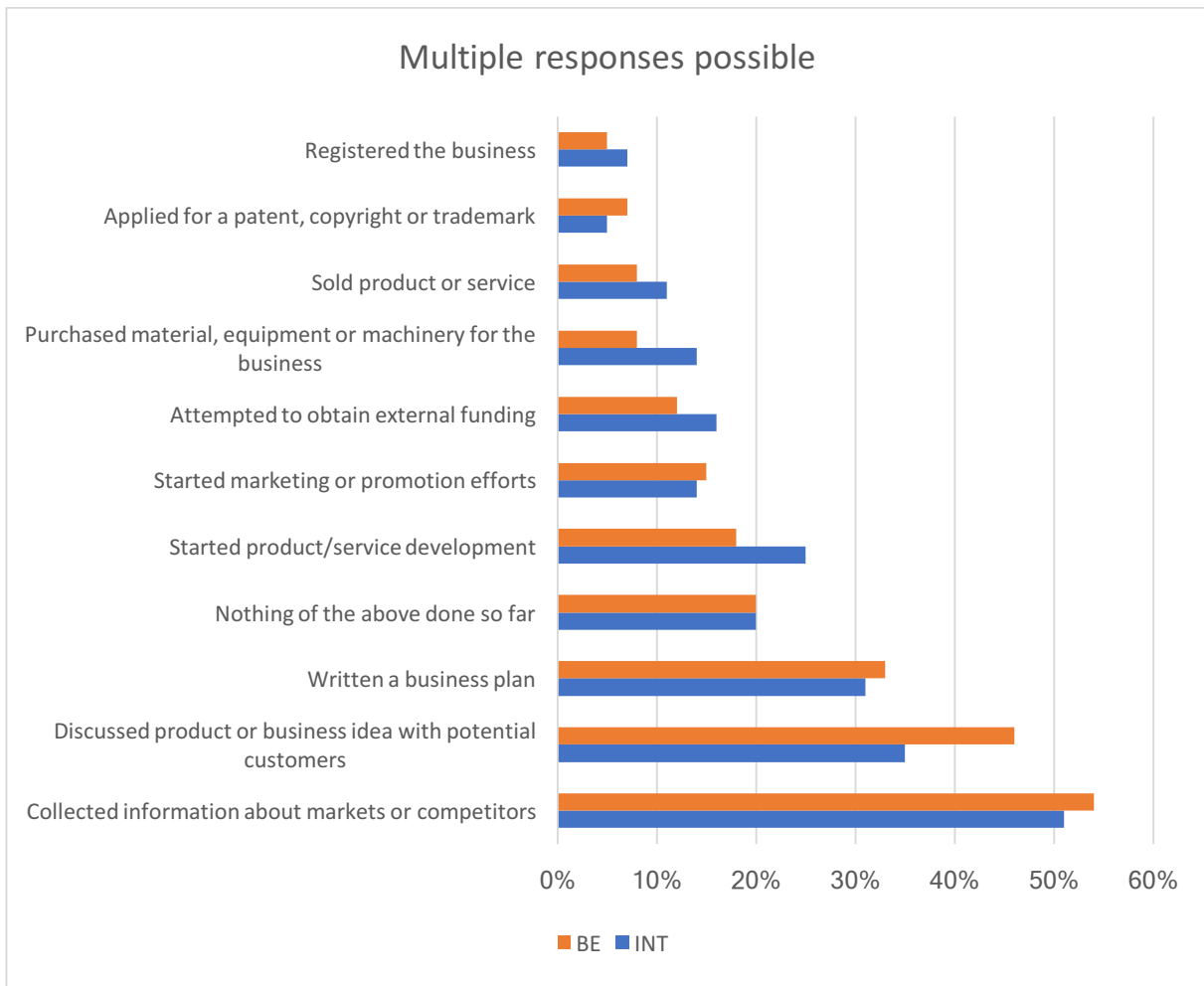
Figure 18: Industry sectors of nascent founders



5.6 Steps taken to found the business

The bulk of nascent entrepreneurs have already collected information about markets or competitors (54%), and discussed the product or business idea with potential customers (46%). Especially the latter figure is somewhat higher compared to the international sample. A third of the Belgian students already wrote a business plan. 20% of nascent entrepreneurs have stated that they have nothing done so far (See Figure 19).

Figure 19: Steps taken to found a business



6. Active entrepreneurs

3% of the respondents in the Belgian sample (23 students) are already active founders, meaning that they are already running their own business or are self-employed. This is considerably lower than in the international sample (8,8%).

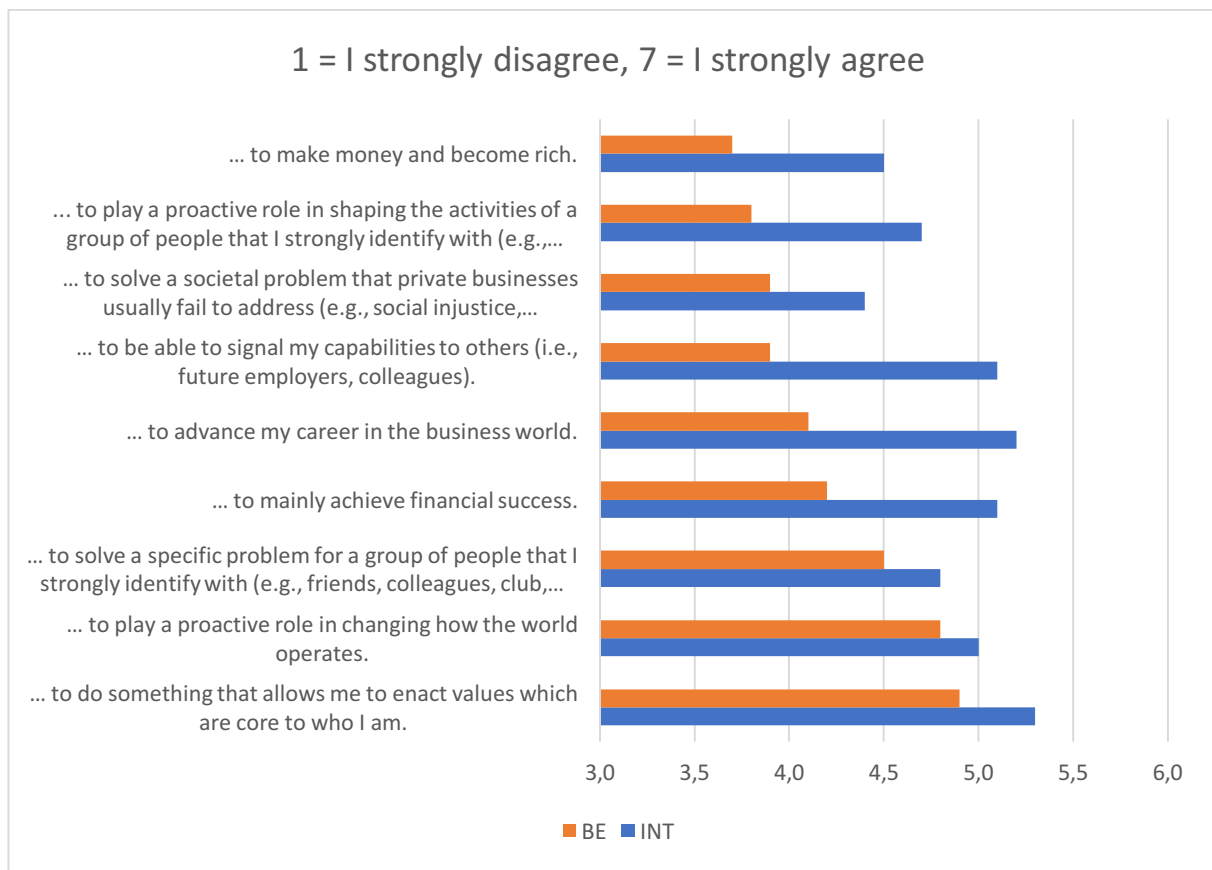
6.1 Characteristics of the active founders

The average age of the active founders is 26 years. 39% of the active founders are studying Law & Economics (incl. business sciences), followed by Engineering (22%) and Human medicine / health sciences (13%). Most of the active entrepreneurs (68%) founded their start-up within the last three years; 14 % of them founded their firm in the current year. The active founders employ 3,6 people on average, which is somewhat lower in comparison to the international sample (6,3 employees). 38% of the firms in the sample do not have employees at all (27% in the international sample), 43% have between 1 and 3 employees.

6.2 Motivation & goals

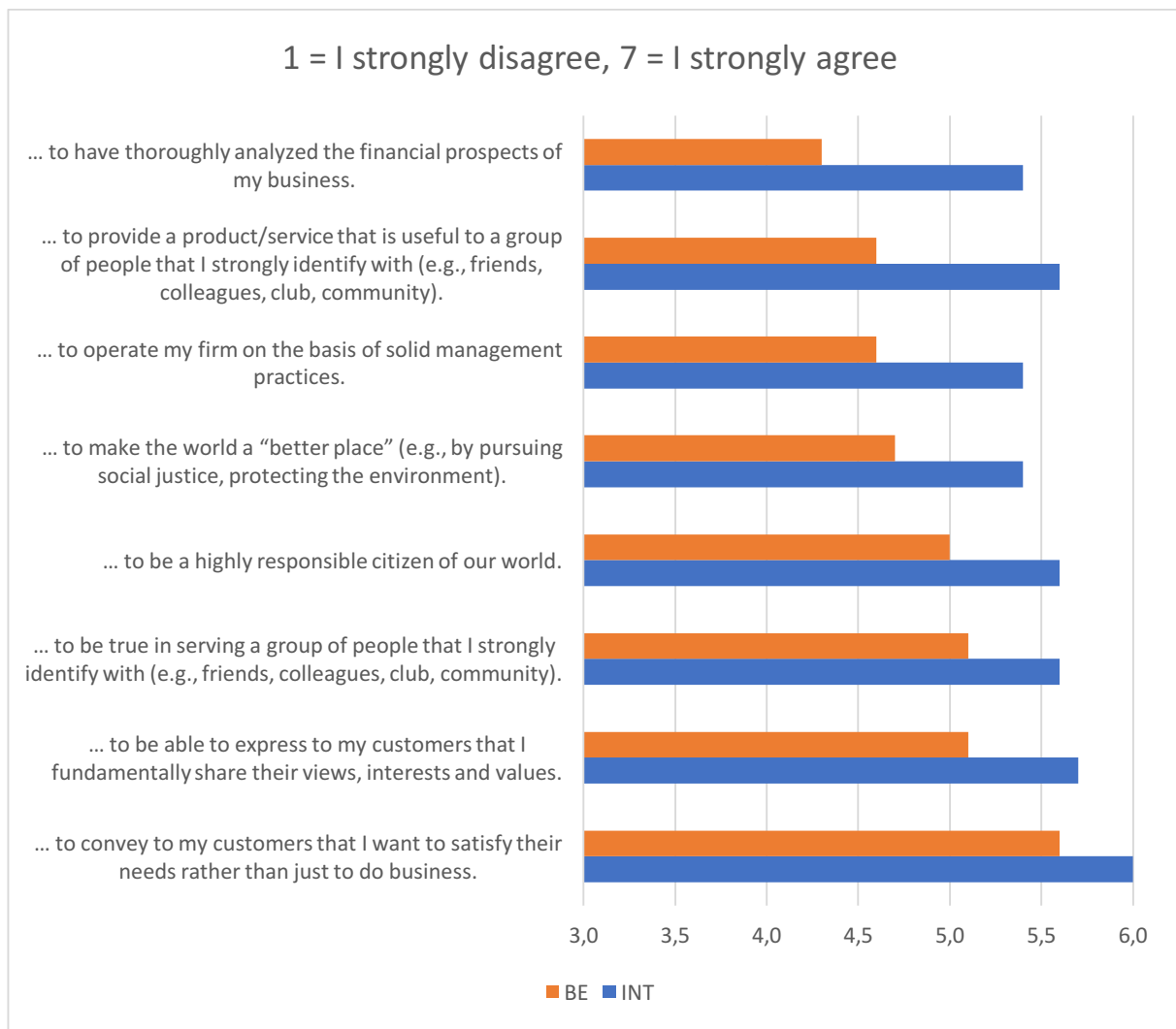
New firms are created due to different motives and goals (see Figure 20). The following statements survey the agreement of active founders concerning different individual motives and goals. The most important motive to create a firm is “to do something that allows me to enact values which are core to who I am”, followed by the motive “to play a proactive role in changing how the world operates” and “solve a specific problem for a group of people”. Another motive such as “making money and becoming rich” plays a minor role for active entrepreneurs.

Figure 20: I will create my firm in order...



The following statements in Figure 21 further assess how important active founders perceive different activities, abilities and attitudes in relation to their start-up and the world in general. For active founders it is important to “satisfy the customers’ needs rather than just doing business”, to “be able to express to my customers that I fundamentally share their views”, and to “be true in serving a group of people that I strongly identify with”. “Thoroughly analyzing the financial prospects of the business” is apparently less important for active founders. In comparison to nascent entrepreneurs (see chapter 5), active founders don’t put the following statements in their top 3: “to be a highly responsible citizen to our world” and “to make the world a better place”.

Figure 21: Practices and attitudes as a firm founder



6.3 Foundation partners

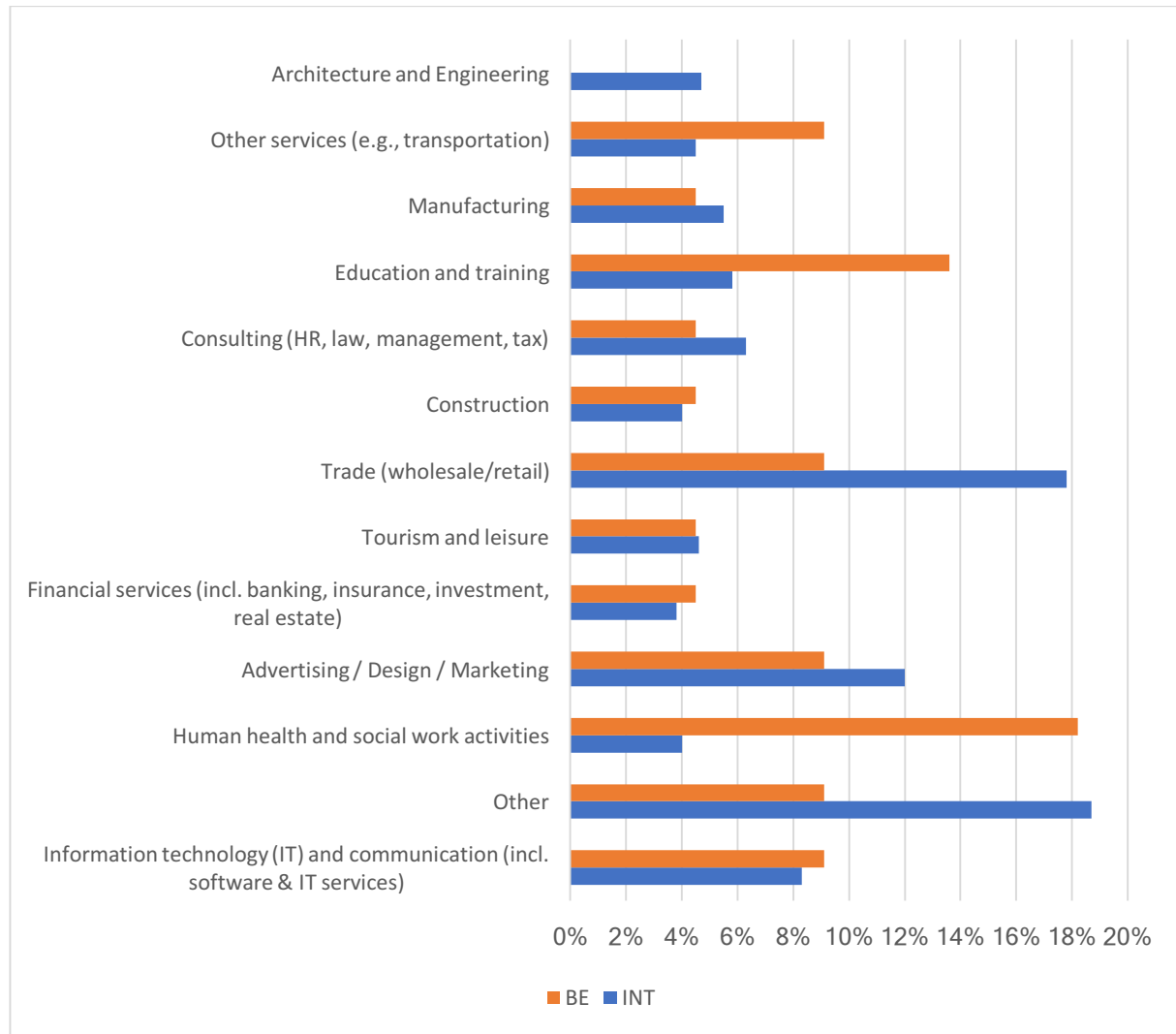
32% of the active founders have set up their business alone. In comparison with nascent founders (see chapter 5) it is interesting to see that the proportion of solo entrepreneurs rises from 25% to 32%. Although the intention to found with partners is prevailing, the results show that in practice there can be problems to find suitable partners for the foundation project.

6.4 Industry sectors

The industry sectors in which most of the active student-founders have started their business are in human health and social work, and in education and training

(see Figure 22). Information technology and communication then follows, and thus scores lower compared to the nascent entrepreneurs (see chapter 5).

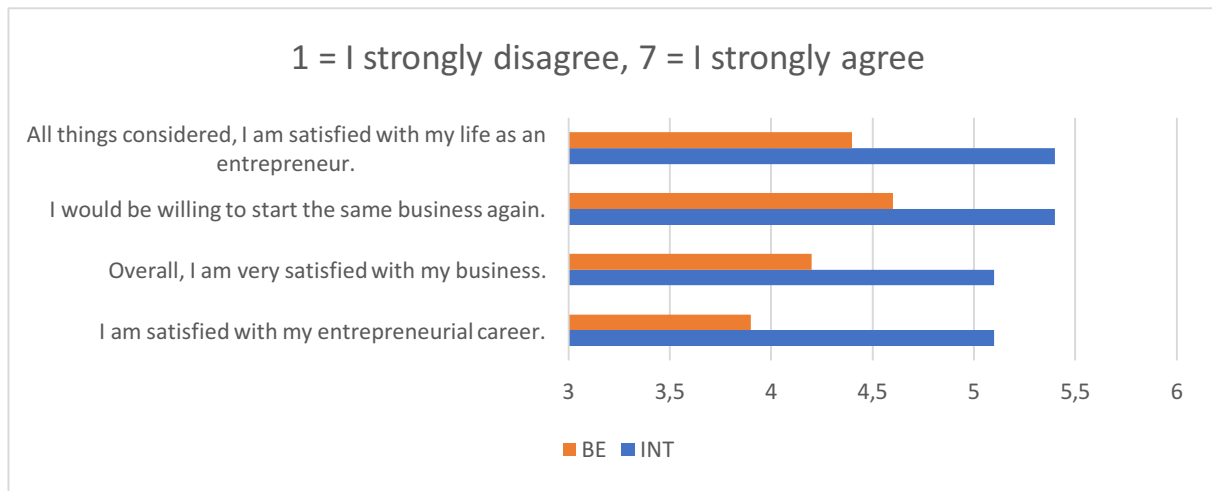
Figure 22: Industry sectors of active founders



6.5 Performance ratings

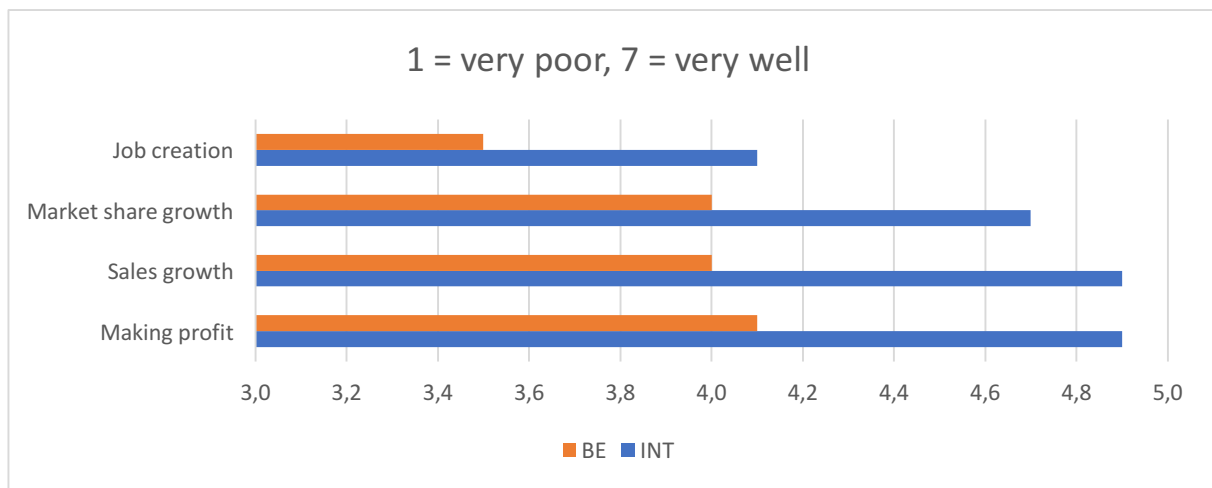
How satisfied are the entrepreneurs with their life as an entrepreneur? They were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements in Figure 23. On all statements, active student-entrepreneurs in Belgium show a rather low satisfaction, with figures (between 3,5 and 4,5) that are much lower in comparison to the international sample.

Figure 23: Satisfaction of active founders



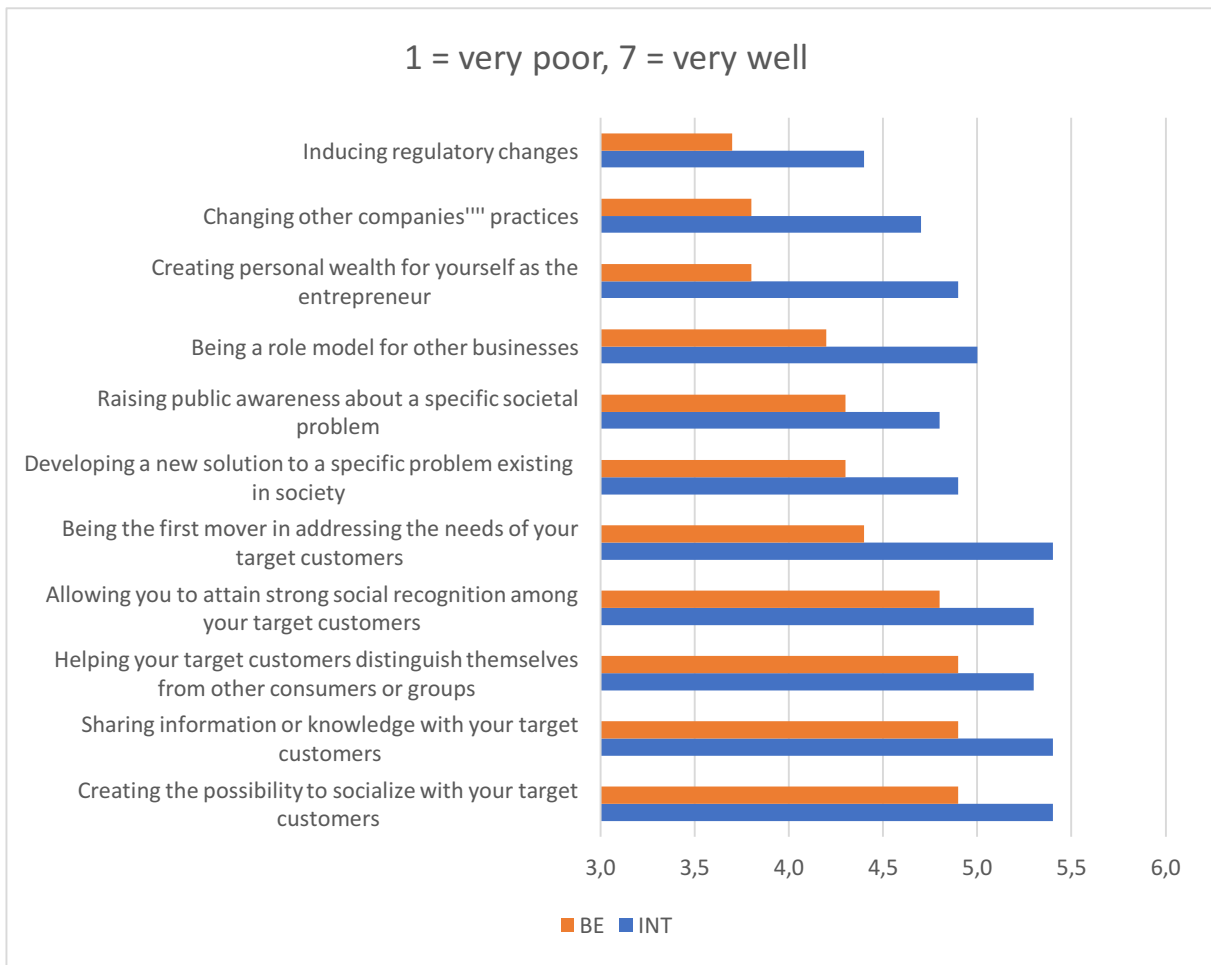
Next, the entrepreneurs indicated how well their companies perform compared to other businesses selling similar products/services. Figure 24 illustrates that the student-entrepreneurs are performing best at the level of profitability. Overall, Belgian student-entrepreneurs perceive their companies' relative performance lower compared to the international students.

Figure 24: Comparison between own business and the business of competitors



Finally, some further insights into the business performance are reported in Figure 25. The entrepreneurs' businesses perform especially well in their relation towards their customers. The lowest performance is identified regarding the inducement of changes in regulation and other business practices, and in the creation of personal wealth for the entrepreneur him/herself.

Figure 25: Insight into business performance



7. Potential successors

The following section focuses on students who are potential family successors, meaning 126 students (16,3%) in the Belgian sample whose parents are self-employed and/or are majority owners of a company that is considered to be a family business.

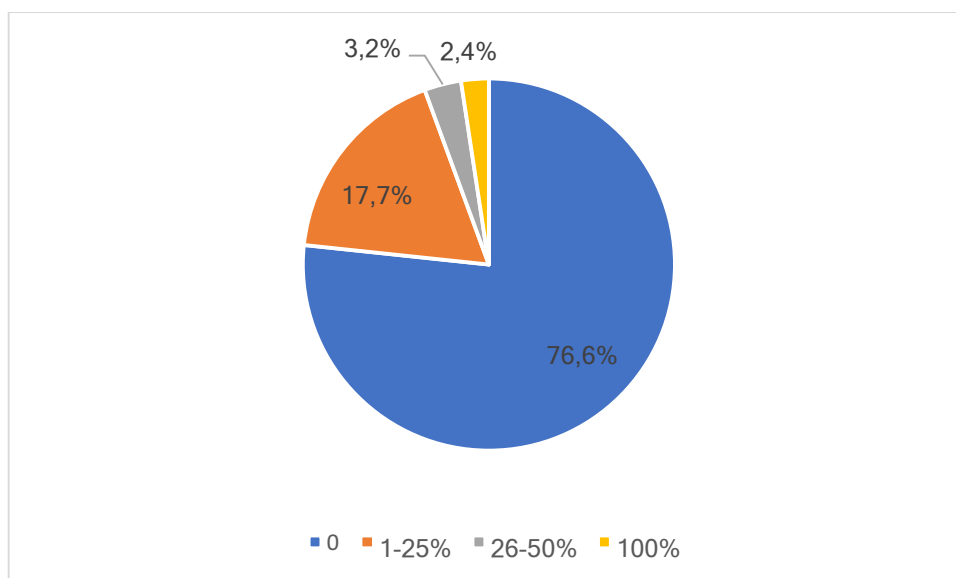
The students were also asked whether they have been working for the parent's business, which was confirmed by 49,6% of the respondents, which is somewhat lower in comparison to the international sample (61,7%).

7.1 Family business characteristics

The students were asked about the year when their parents' business was established. On average, the business was established in 1985 and has on average 15 employees. According to the SME definition of the European Commission, the focus is thus on small companies. In 93% of all cases the father or mother leads the business operationally. Additionally, 90% of the respondents indicate that their family holds the majority of the shares of the company.

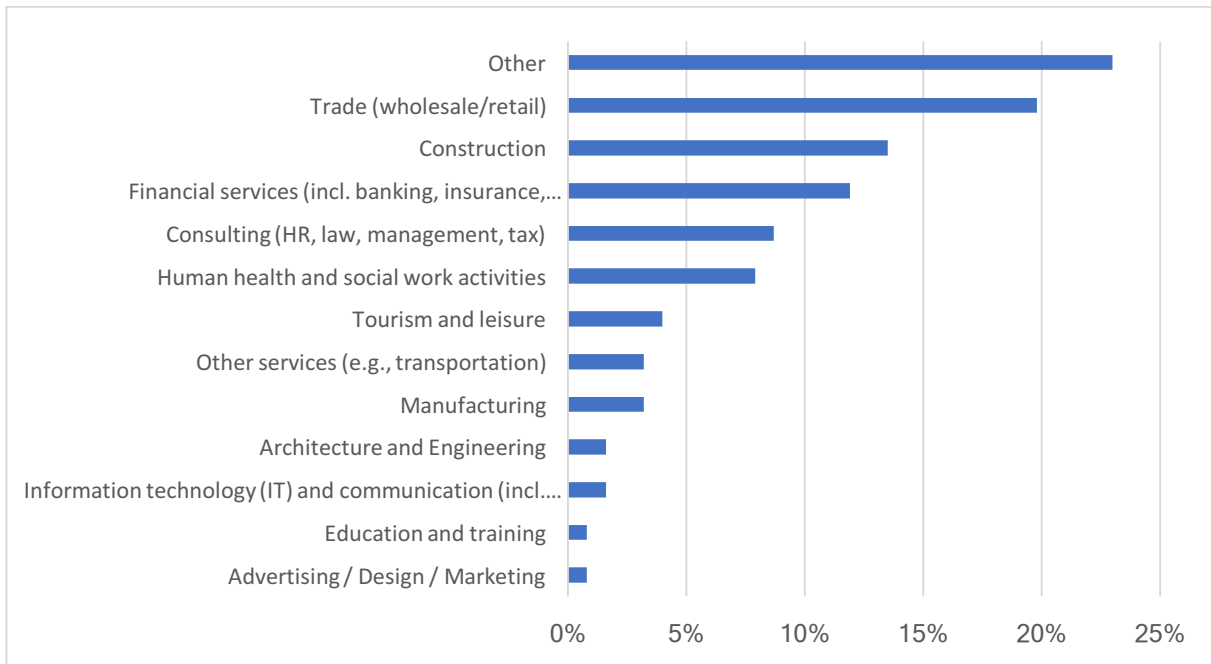
The students were also asked about their own ownership share in the company (see Figure 26). As becomes clear, a huge majority does not have a stake in the company, which is different from the international sample where about half of the students are already involved in the ownership of the firm.

Figure 26: What is your personal ownership share in the business?



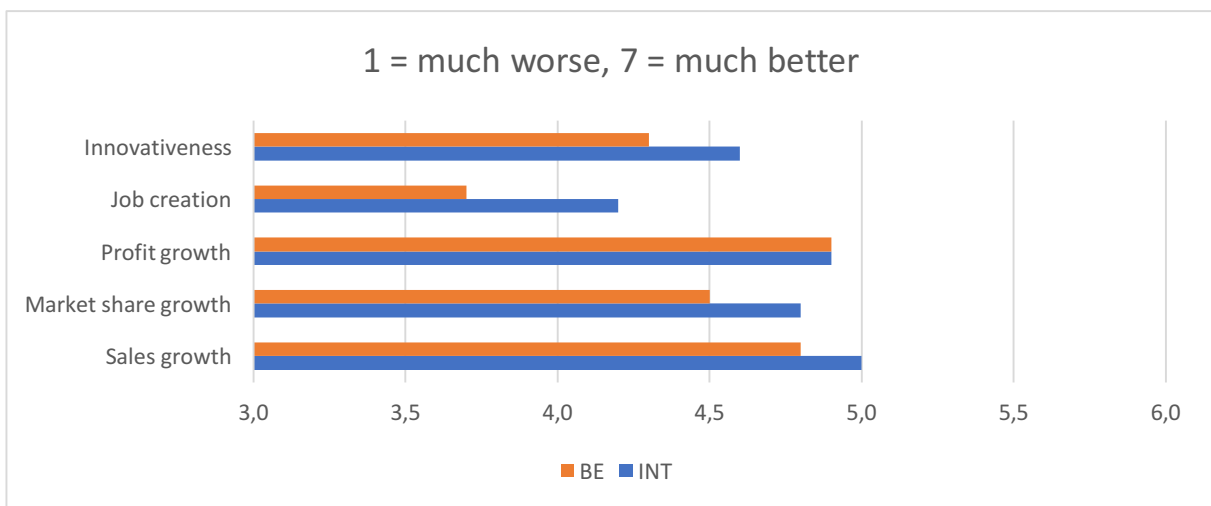
When talking about the sector the business is operating in (see Figure 27), besides “other”, the most important sectors are trade (19,8%), construction (13,5%), and financial services (11,9%).

Figure 27: Sector the parents' business is mainly active in



Additionally, they should assess the performance of the parent’s business compared to its competitors over the last three years. The findings are presented in Figure 28 below. The findings indicate that overall the parent’s business reveals an average performance, which is somewhat lower compared to the international sample.

Figure 28: Performance evaluation of the parent's business over the last 3 years

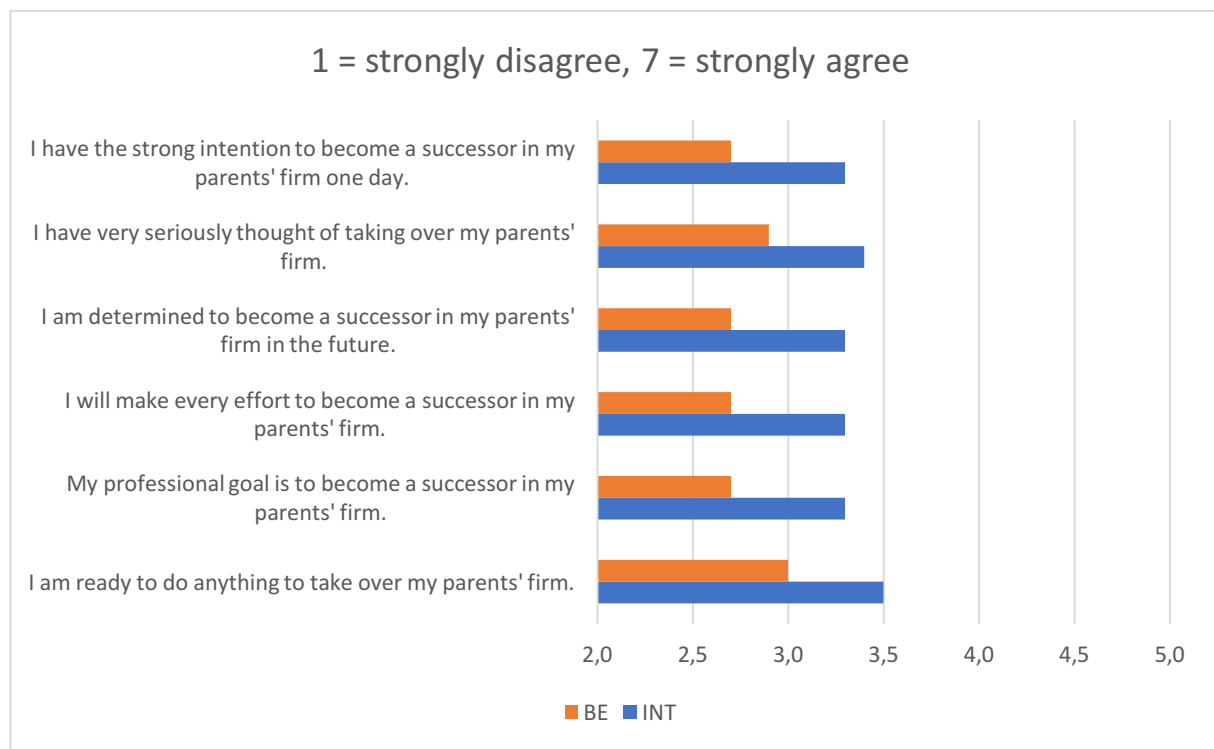


7.2 Future succession

With regard to the future succession of the family business, the majority (59,3%) of these potential successors indicates that the preservation of family harmony is the most important goal, while securing the long-term survival of the firm is the main goal for 40,7% of the respondents. The predominance of family harmony is in line with the international sample.

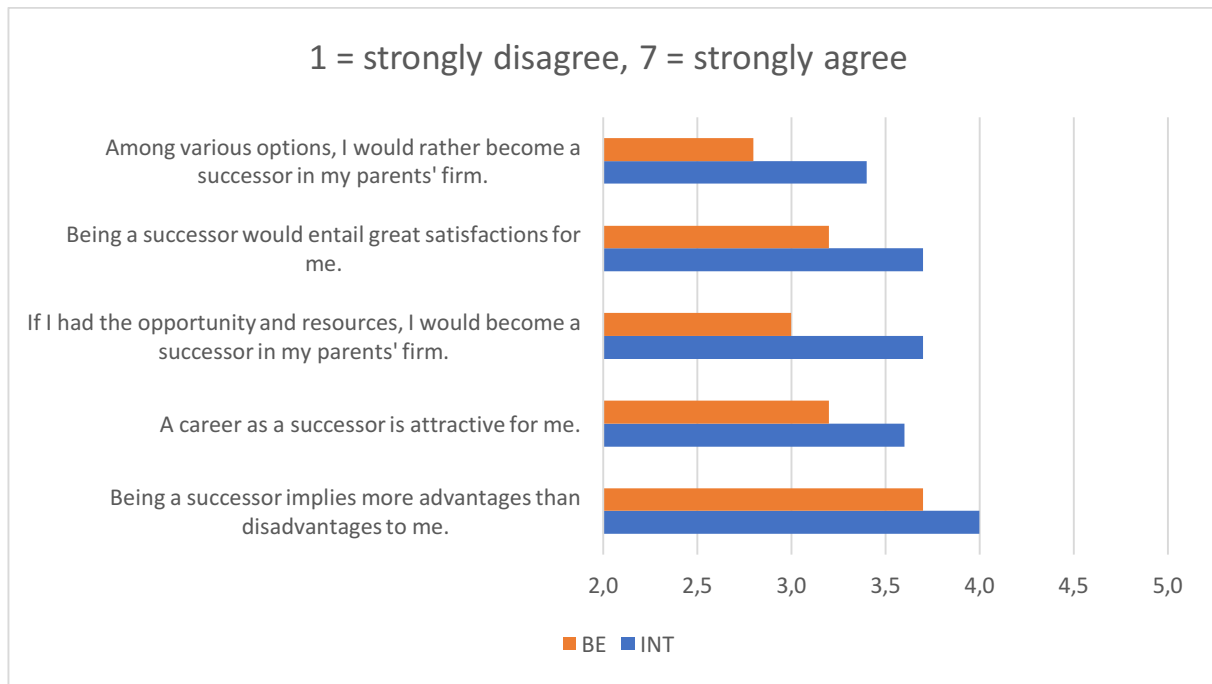
The students were further asked about their own succession intention. Figure 29 shows the six statements that were addressed.

Figure 29: Succession intention findings



The findings indicate that being a successor is not the main intention of most Belgian students with a family business at home. When considering the question whether they have the strong intention to become a successor in their parents' firm one day, 1 out of 5 (21%) answers rather confirmatory (score between 5 and 7). This is somewhat lower in comparison to the international sample where this percentages increases up to 32%.

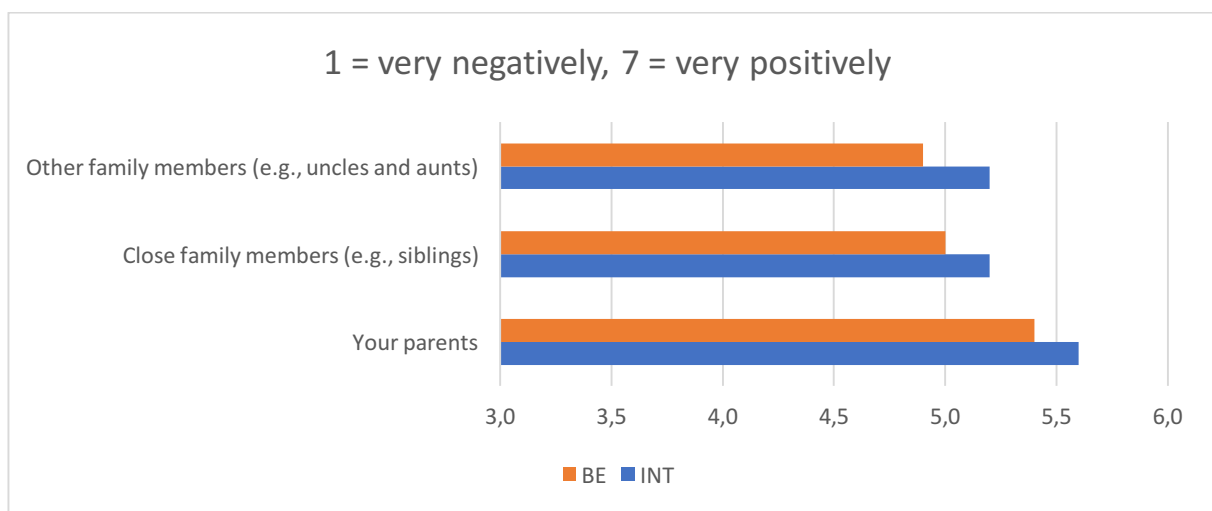
Figure 30: Findings of the perception towards being a successor



The students were further questioned about their attitude of being a successor. The answers are presented in Figure 30. In comparison to the international sample, the Belgian students again have a somewhat less positive perception of being a successor.

In addition, the students were invited to assess how the environment would react if they would become the successor the parent's business (Figure 31).

Figure 31: Reaction of environment regarding succession



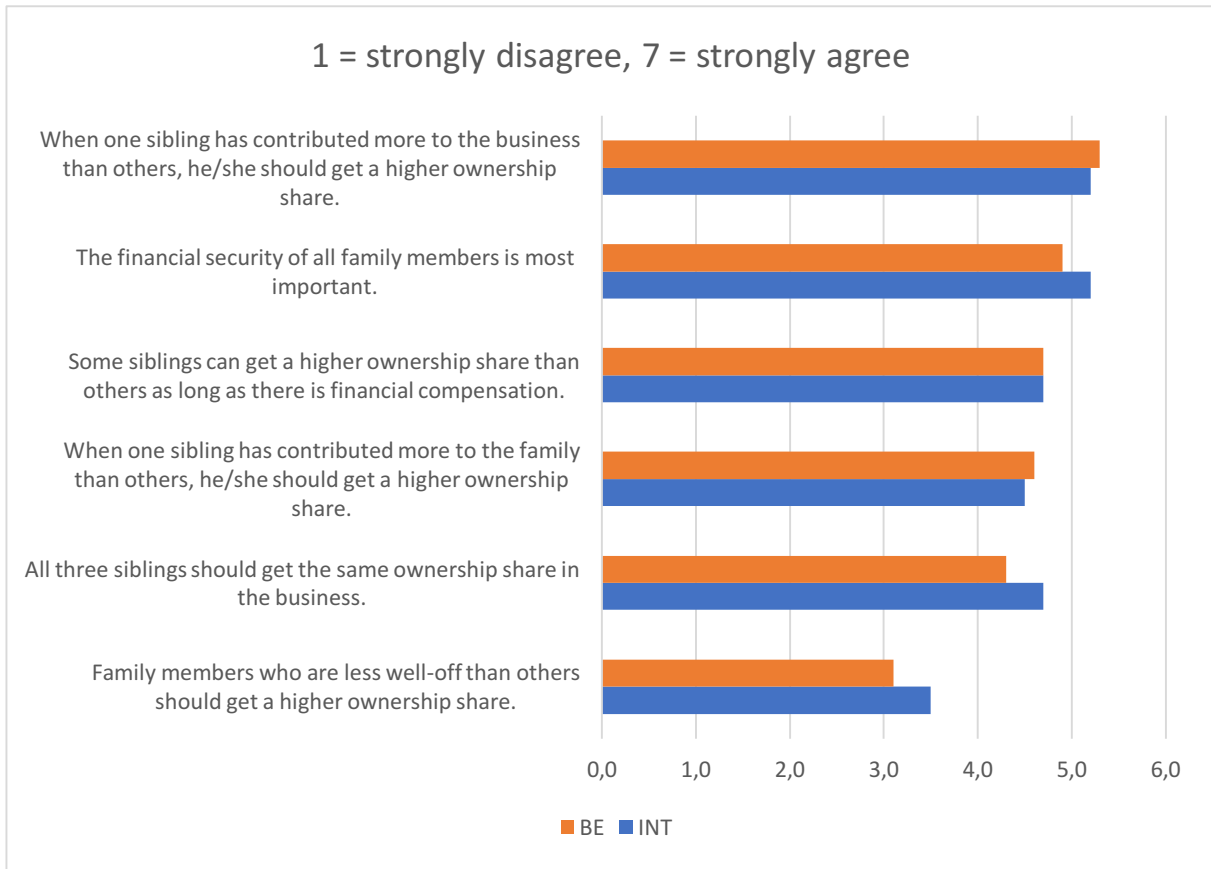
The findings indicate on average a positive reaction, which resembles the perception of the students in our international sample.

With regard to the time perspective of succession, we find that the large majority of the students (77%) who intend to take over their parents' business, expect that this will happen after more than 5 years. This timeframe is even longer compared to the international sample in which 63% expects to take over the family business after more than 5 years.

We further link the performance of the family business (in relation to competitors) to the succession intention of students. In line with the international sample, we find that the more positive the students' perception of their parents' company performance (especially regarding sales and market share growth, and job creation), the higher their intention to become involved as a successor in the family business. We also find a positive correlation between the size of the family business and the intention to take it over as a successor in the future.

Finally, a number of questions are related to the relationship between the potential successor and their siblings. The students are asked to assess the following scenario: Assume that you have one highly qualified sibling who is working in your parents' business and one sibling who is currently out of work and assists in your family's household. Based on this, the students are asked to indicate their level of agreement regarding a number of statements (Figure 32).

Figure 32: Driving factors regarding the relation with siblings in the case of succession



The analyses indicate that the strongest agreement can be found with regard to linking of the ownership share to the contribution to the business, together with the financial security of all family members. The suggestion to have an equal ownership share among all siblings is less supported.

8. Conclusion and summary

The Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey (GUESSS 2016) integrates insights from 50 countries worldwide. More than 122,000 students participated in this study focusing on entrepreneurial intention and start-up activities.

The Family Business Community at Antwerp Management School conducted the study for Belgium with support from other Belgian partner universities (University of Antwerp, KU Leuven, Université de Namur and Université Catholique de Louvain).

This Belgian report is based on 771 completed questionnaires filled in by students from more than five Belgian universities, university colleges or business schools.

The main results are:

- Immediately after graduation 83% of the students in Belgium intends to start their career as an employee in the private or public sector. 37% intends to start a career in an SME, and 23% prefers to work in a large firm.
- Immediately after graduation 4% of the students in Belgium wants to found their own business. This is considerably lower than the 9% intentional founders in the international sample. Belgian students thus have a lower appetite for entrepreneurship compared to the international sample.
- Five years after graduation the situation looks different since the percentage of students in Belgium who tend to be in employment either in the private or public sector drops to under 50% (14% in a large firm, 14% in a SME).
- Five years after graduation the appetite for entrepreneurship sharply increases since 30% of the respondents intends to found their own company. Despite this increase, this figure is still lower than the 38% of intentional founders in the international sample. The lower appetite for entrepreneurship thus remains even 5 years after graduation.
- In line with the international study, we find in Belgium confirmation of a “first employee, then entrepreneur” pattern. Especially a shift takes place from employment in SMEs and in larger enterprises (immediately after graduation) towards self-employment (5 years after graduation).

- A gender difference exists given that immediately after graduation 7% of the male graduates, but only 4% of the female graduates intend to start an entrepreneurial activity. Five years after their studies, 40% of the male and 33% of the female respondents plan to pursue an entrepreneurial career.
- 9,6% of the Belgian students are nascent founders, meaning that they are currently taking some steps in trying to start their own business or to become self-employed, which is significantly lower compared to the international sample (21,9%).
- 75% of the nascent founders plan to found their firm with one or more co-partners. This percentage is smaller than in the international sample, where 81% will start their business with (an)other co-founder(s).
- 49% of nascent entrepreneurs intend to start their firm together with a fellow student. Only 27% intend to found together with their relatives.
- The preferred industry sector of the nascent founders among students in Belgium is by far information and communication technology, which is a stronger preference compared to the international sample.
- 3% of the respondents in the Belgian sample are already active founders, meaning that they are already running their own business or are self-employed. This is considerably lower than in the international sample (8,8%).
- The industry sectors in which most of the active student-founders have started their business are in human health and social work, and in education and training. Information technology and communication follows in third place.
- 16,3% of the Belgian sample are potential family successors since their parents are self-employed and/or are majority owners of a company that is considered to be a family business.
- About half of these potential successors (49,6%) have already been working for the parent's business, which is a lower percentage in comparison to the international sample (61,7%).
- 76,6% of these potential successors does not have an ownership stake in the company yet, which is lower than in the international sample where about half of the students are already involved as shareholder.
- With regard to the future succession of the family business, 59,3% of these potential successors indicates that the preservation of family harmony is the most important goal, while securing the long-term survival of the firm is the main goal for 40,7% of the respondents. The predominance of family harmony is in line with the international sample.

- Being a successor is not the main intention of most students with a family business at home. 21% answers rather confirmatory when considering the question whether they have the strong intention to become a successor in their parents' firm one day. This is somewhat lower in comparison to the international sample where this percentages increases up to 32%.
- 77% of the students who intend to take over their parents' business, expect that this will happen after more than 5 years. This timeframe is longer compared to the international sample in which 63% expects to take over the family business after more than 5 years.
- A positive correlation is found between the students' perception of their parents' business performance and the intention to take over the family business as a successor in the future.