



## MobI<sup>UP</sup> - Transfermaterial No. 2

### ***Target groups „Waverer“ & „Female Students“: Description and Suggestion for the Utilization of Starting Points***

Astrid Lange, Research Assistant  
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© Astrid Lange, [Astrid.Lange@tu-cottbus.de](mailto:Astrid.Lange@tu-cottbus.de)  
Prof. Dr. Christiane Hipp, [hipp@tu-cottbus.de](mailto:hipp@tu-cottbus.de)

Chair of Organization, Human Resource Management & General Management  
Faculty 3 – Mechanical, Electrical and Industrial Engineering  
Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus

Postal Address: P.O. Box 10 13 44  
03013 Cottbus  
Germany

E-Mail: [ls\\_personal@tu-cottbus.de](mailto:ls_personal@tu-cottbus.de)  
URL: [www.tu-cottbus.de/personalmanagement](http://www.tu-cottbus.de/personalmanagement)



## Transfer Mobil<sup>UP</sup> – Materials

Lange A./ Chair of Organization, HRM & General Management (Prof. Dr. Ch. Hipp)

### Material 2: Target groups „Waverer“ and „Female students“

- ① The present material provides an overview of specifics of the target group of business start-up undecided students, based on the research results from the project „Mobil<sup>UP</sup>“. The project was theoretically based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991)<sup>1</sup>, social cognitive theory (e.g., Bandura, 1991)<sup>2</sup>, and attribution theory (e.g., Weiner, 1985)<sup>3</sup>. The implications for the mobilization of start-up potentials in this target group derive from the research results, but are to be examined in their effectiveness, and in this respect they are to be conceived as initial suggestions. It should be considered that the results are solely based on the examination of mainly German students from technical and economical fields of study. A transferability of the results to other fields of study as well as student populations from other countries is also yet to be examined.
- ① Waverer are students, who take a negative or ambivalent view of the possibility to establish their own business at some point in their life. They differ from the target groups of conditional willing students (with the intention to establish their own business at some point, but no or an ambivalent intention to do so within the next few years) and the manifest willing students (with the intention to establish their own business within the first five years after graduation).
- ① The denomination of target groups goes back to the designations of Braukmann and Schneider (2007)<sup>4</sup>, since the denomination appears to be very accurate in the light of the empirical project results generated here. In future, it has to be clarified to what extent the target groups may be considered as analogous.
- ① Beyond that, the present material also introduces the specifics of women as a target group of measures for the promotion of entrepreneurship, that goes beyond the intention based target groups.

### ADDRESSEE OF THE MATERIAL

The material addresses those, who want to promote entrepreneurship within universities on many levels and who want to initiate, support or conduct entrepreneurship promoting measures, which particularly reach those students, who comprise the so-called „untapped potential“ of entrepreneurship.

The material also addresses persons, who want to initiate deliberative processes, which support the establishment of entrepreneurship-friendly thinking.

The material addresses those, who want to purposefully support career chances of women and female entrepreneurship within universities.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE UTILIZATION OF THE MATERIAL

- Superordinate objectives
  - Awareness rising for the scope of entrepreneurship
  - Promotion of entrepreneurship at universities
  - Target group specific measures, which meet particular needs and apply to specific requirements
  - Explicit consideration of female entrepreneurship
- Individual objectives
  - Support the career chances of female graduates with needs based measures.
  - Provide basic principles, in order to create established measures for the large-scale support and examination of entrepreneurship. In this case, large-scale means to reach preferably all students via target group appropriate measures which build upon group specific requirements and needs.
  - The first step to create measures is the analysis of the target subjects and their study needs (analysis of conditions). This step has been achieved by the aforementioned research project. The results for the target group of waverer are described here. The description serves as a background to derivate particular measure targets and the respective steps to reach these measure targets.
  - Knowing conditions and specifics of the target group “waverer”.
  - Knowing conditions and specifics of the target group “female students/ graduates”.

## First general description of the waverer

- Waverer are defined by the fact that they have no global (lifetime-related) entrepreneurial intention. They take a negative or ambivalent view of the statement: “One day I will establish my own business”.
- Proportionately, this is the biggest group of students.
- Within this target group, there are conspicuously many women.
- Within this target group, many gender differences are identified. As a consequence, a further differentiation in the target groups „undecided women“ and „undecided men“ with the respective specific description and their own measure targets is reasonable.

## The Waverer

- Compared to other examined target groups, hardly any contemplation about own professional career possibilities took place. Undecided students have hardly considered their own professional track so far.
- Compared to other target groups, the most marginal contemplation about the options of own entrepreneurial activities took place. This means that the refusal, to be a self-employed entrepreneur at any time, occurs without reflecting about this professional chance.
- From all examined target groups, waverer perceive themselves as the least self-effective.
- According to their self-description, waverer rather have no entrepreneurial ideas; however, if they do have entrepreneurial ideas, they express their willingness to pass them over to other persons who are interested in company foundation.
- Even though waverer have not extensively thought about the perspective of a „business foundation“, they express a negative overall attitude towards their own business foundation.
- In the personal beliefs of which consequences their own entrepreneurial behavior might have, the negative consequences are evaluated as more aversive and the positive consequences are evaluated as less desirable than in other target groups.
  - For instance, the possible consequence of a high self-determination is evaluated as less desirable, while the financial-economical risk and burden demands are evaluated as more undesirable.
- In the personal beliefs of which consequences their own entrepreneurial behavior might have, the negative consequences are evaluated as more likely than in other target groups.
  - For instance, the possible consequences to suffer from a professional failure, to spoil professional alternatives and to be disappointed are evaluated as more likely.
- Even though waverer have not extensively thought about the possibilities of their own company foundation, they are less persuaded than other target groups, that their family and friends would endorse their own entrepreneurial behavior.
- Even though waverer have not extensively thought about the perspective of an own business foundation, they perceive a minor behavioral control for themselves. This means that overall they rather don't believe that they would be able to go into business for themselves in a defined period of time.
- While there are no peculiarities in the attribution of supporting and inhibiting effectivenesses of the several control factors, the waverer evaluate the likelihood of occurrence of the factors as disadvantageous.
  - The likelihood of occurrence of unfavourable societal tendencies is evaluated higher than by other target groups.

- The likelihood of occurrence of supportive control factors in the persons themselves is evaluated as lower. For instance, waverer consider own positive work related attitudes and own creativity as less likely.
- The likelihood of occurrence of supportive control factors outside of the persons is evaluated as lower. For instance, waverer do less believe in being able to receive social and institutional support. They also consider the existence and finding of an innovative business idea less likely than other target groups.
- The question, whether entrepreneurship-related topics should become part of the regular teaching at universities is rather approved –even when it is to a lower extent than by other target groups.
- Waverer express a study need to that effect, that they want to learn the dealing with entrepreneurial opportunities. Male waverer would also like to experimentally test theirthelves as would-be entrepreneurs. Female waverer also express the need to stronger broach the issue of entrepreneurship-relevant factors in the entrepreneur itself and also in the entrepreneurial process.

## Undecided women

- If not otherwise mentioned, above listed issues apply for both men and women of the target group „waverer“. The following points concern the distinctive characteristics of the undecided women compared to the undecided men.
- Within this group, the lowest existence of entrepreneurial ideas is paired with the highest willingness to pass over own business ideas.
- The self-efficacy of undecided women is even lower than that of undecided men.
- The possible consequences of entrepreneurial behavior are evaluated differently by women than by men in the group of waverer.
  - Undecided women evaluate the possible consequences of the self-determination and the mastery of challenging demands by trend as more likely.
  - The possible negative consequences of financial-economical risk are also considered as more likely.
  - In the evaluation of possible consequences as desireable or undesirable, undecided women evaluate negative consequences, such as personal-occupational risk, financial-economical risk and burden demands, as more aversive.
- Undecided women take the supposed behavioral expectations of relevant others as more serious than the undecided men. The women rather want to meet and fulfil the expectations of others.
- The overall assessment of their behavioral control for own entrepreneurial behavior is even more disadvantageous as in the group of undecided men.
- Undecided women belief more that they would lack role models and industrial networks, even when they exert themselves for it.

- Female waverer judge the control factors „poor economic conditions“, „lack of sectoral networks and role models“ and „unfavourable societal tendencies“ as more impeding than the undecided men.

## Characteristics of female students beyond the target groups

- The project results indicate some general aspects of women that go beyond the target groups, which seem to be important for the mobilization of particularly businesswomen potentials. This applies for the following issues.
- Female students are disproportionally more frequently to be found in the target group of waverer. Women feature both a less global (lifetime-related) and a less specific entrepreneurial intention. In contrast, their overall entrepreneurial openness does not differ from that of the male students.
- Women feature a lower self-efficacy.
- Women feature a high motivation to fulfil the perceived opinions of relevant others.
- When forced to attribute reasons for entrepreneurial failures, students more often referred to the lack of aptitude when explaining the failures of women.
  - This applies both for the explanation of the failure of female others by women and men and for the reasons of own anticipated failure by the women.
  - The explanation factor „aptitude“ lies within the acting persons themselves and is to be considered as comparatively stable. Thus, failures of women tend to be explained with reasons outside the sphere of their influence. As known from attribution literature, attributional pattern influence several areas of action, and among other things, they also affect self-efficacy expectations (cf. e.g. Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2010, Ch. 3)<sup>5</sup>. In conformity to these argumentation, the self-efficacy scores are consistently lower in women than in men.
- This impression is confirmed by the stereotype perception of typical entrepreneurs. Students rate the typical, successful entrepreneur as being high distinctive in terms of positively valued, stereotypically masculine attributes. This image of “the entrepreneur” differs extensively from the average self-perception of students and in particular from the self-perception of female students in reference to these stereotypical masculine features.

## Implications to the mobilization of entrepreneurial potentials of the waverer

- To force the stereotypical attribution of characteristics of “the entrepreneur”.
  - Demonstrate the diversity of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs (via role models, emphasis of the various forms of entrepreneurship as team start-ups, part-time start-ups, entrepreneurs with parallel careers outside entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, knowledge-intense innovative entrepreneurship, female entrepreneurs in male-dominated fields, male entrepreneurs in female-dominated branches, takeover, and so on).
  - “Unmask” well-known persons (e.g. professors at universities) – of course only with their approval – as entrepreneurs. Here, an impression to the personality traits already exists and it is partly surprising which persons are casually entrepreneurial active. This „discovery“ contradicts with the imagination that there is one particular type of “the entrepreneur”.
  - Point to the convertibility of characteristics, for example via behavioral trainings.
- Question the definite meaning of a certain personality profile in the context of entrepreneurial action.
  - According to current models (e.g., Baum et al., 2007)<sup>6</sup> the meaning of particular ranges of key changes within the entrepreneurial process. Personal features are thus the most significant in the pre-start-up stage.
  - Team start-ups are a great example for the fact, that not all the entrepreneurial active persons need a certain profile: The particular division of labor and the sharing of responsibilities determine the specific requirements.
  - For instance, there are sectoral differences about how important even such consistently mentioned characteristics, such as eagerness to learn, are. While the eagerness to learn seems to be essential for knowledge-intense start-ups, it is not generally the key to success for non-knowledge-intense start-ups .
  - A promising measure to dispose students to concentrate on such questions is the announcement of respective term papers or final year theses.
- Support consideration and reflection about their own professional career. Also broach the issue of the diverse options for own entrepreneurial activities. Create situations were the students are forced to reflect about their entrepreneurship-related attitude and views. In this process, challenge inappropriate and onesided ideas, as well as ideas that are based only on prejudices.
  - For instance, support offers at own universities, which inform about general career opportunities and chances, including the options of entrepreneurship.
  - For example, motivate and promote faculties to address the topic of career chances actively – and most of all gender-equitable – in and outside the courses and to present manifold career paths.
  - Offer consulting possibilities, in order to confirm individual career decisions.

- Demonstrate the variety of career possibilities and show that career paths are not about “either... or”, but can also run parallel or that different paths which are at staggered intervals can be pursued.
- Comprehensive development of competencies, which are applicable beyond the entrepreneurial context.
  - In this process, concentrate (a) on the subjectively perceived enabling control factors within persons (positive work-related attitudes and goal orientation, creativity, exposure to risks, intuition/gut instinct) as well as further person-intern factors in the entrepreneurial process (planning and conceptual design of businesses; to compile skills and knowledge self-dependently) and (b) on the dealing with the subjectively important environmental factors (identifying and using networks, finding role models, generating financial support, or matching team partners).
- Highlight the diversity of consequences of entrepreneurship and point out, that specific consequences depend on each individual business terms and conditions.
- Stimulate the individual dealing with personal aims in life, values, and thoughts.
- Create opportunities for the “relevant others” to speak and to represent their views on entrepreneurship.
  - Try to cooperate with university leaders, lecturer, and professors, and when they highlight the high significance of innovativeness and entrepreneurship (in the broad sense that goes beyond business foundation, that includes a kind of open mentality, creative atmosphere, taking responsibilities), let them make it public.
  - Embed entrepreneurship broadly in universities as an important eligible topic; actively communicate a basic mentality at the university that is pro-entrepreneurial.
- „Collection“ of entrepreneurial ideas in the target group of waverer, since this group – and in particular the women – have a very high willingness to pass over their entrepreneurial ideas.
  - Maybe one can create idea competitions; the winners can be announced as innovation people, which might strengthen their belief to be creative-innovative.
  - Editing of collected ideas for interested students and thus demonstrating the undecided students that (good) business ideas must not always come from oneself.
- Create opportunities for the students where they are allowed to experimentally try out to act like an entrepreneur. For example, allow for experiences in training firms, or initiate partnerships with real entrepreneurs.
- Offer possibilities to learn how to identify, develop, deal with or evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities



## Implications to the mobilization of entrepreneurial potentials in women

- As with male students, the majority of female students is among the group of waverer. In that case, women are disproportionately more frequently found in the target group of waverer. Considering the whole sample of examined students, 50 to 65% are classified as waverer. The share of the women is between 60 and 72%. In this respect, measures for the support of entrepreneurial potentials in the group of waverer are generally also measures, which address women in particular. Beyond that, some implications can be formulated for women in general as well as especially for the female waverer, and these implications are introduced in the following.
- Sensitizing and breaking down the stereotypical ascription of masculine characteristics to entrepreneurs; primarily when these ascriptions lack own experiences.
  - Raise an exchange on real businessmen and businesswomen in the circle of acquaintances of the students.
  - Demonstrate the diversity of entrepreneurs via the presentation of various female role models. Display women in industries that are non-specific for women.
  - Align the own verbal as well as written speech explicitly to both genders, address women unambiguously. Pure male speech generates male-oriented images in the minds (cf. Stahlberg & Sczesny, 2001)<sup>7</sup>.
  - Demonstrate the variety of career chances: businesswomen are also (at the same time, before, afterwards) managers, employees, scientists, apprentices, housewives, etc.
- Strengthen self-efficacy.
  - For instance, offer appropriate trainings, workshops, and coachings.
  - Support self-serving attributions (see below).
  - The speech has to uncover the accomplishments of women (see above).
- Promote self-serving attributional patterns, especially in dealing with (expected, real) failures.
  - Integrate the topic of attributions as an important theme, for instance by offering respective integration modules in the frame of regular courses or embedding such integration modules as well into other, extracurricular qualification measures that specifically appeal to women.
  - Uncover individual styles of explaining failures and mistakes. Illustrate the consequences of such patterns of explanation.
  - Illustrate the diversity of possible causes for entrepreneurial results.
  - Create a constructive „error management culture“, highlight failures as a learning experience, for instance via the illustration of successful entrepreneurs who once failed but stood up again.
  - Allow (female) students to make “mistakes”, for instance at experimental “being-an-entrepreneur”-trials. Demonstrate the learning effects on real-world and own-experienced – examples.

- Force the tendencies of women to fulfil the ideas of others, even when the others are not closely connected to them.
  - Associated fields of skill development are for example: strengthen self-efficacy, learning to say „no“, define the own social role outside of the gender-typicality, etc.
  - Associated with this is also the issue, which roles are assigned to women from other people around them. In this case trainings for women – which go beyond the sensitization of business start-ups – would be imaginable, which broach the issue of dealing with the expectations of other people, which encourage the defense of own positions and “allow” women to act independent from the expectations that others have of them.
  - Reflection of the ideas of the relevant others (do they really expect, what is assumed of them?).
- Female waverer displayed a particular extreme evaluation of both supporting and inhibiting control factors is displayed. These extreme evaluations should be relativized by means of information providing courses and media.
- Female waverer evaluated the possible negative consequences of entrepreneurial behavior as specifically aversive. This could be scrutinized in small courses, in which the consequences are further approached. Likewise, female entrepreneurs could get a chance to speak and report about the dealing with possibly existing negative consequences. It should be pointed out that consequences are (also) a matter of the management.
- Of all examined target groups, the female waverer declare that they have the least entrepreneurial ideas. In this case, information could be communicated, from which fields ideas can come from; also trainings for enhancing these competences can be carried out.
- In general, opportunities should be created to introduce female models for career chances. Here, the diversity should be in the foreground, in order to communicate that the women can make self-determined decisions. Thus, different career paths can be pursued parallel or consecutively. In respect of business start-ups, there are women who found a business due to their own procreation plans (in order to be able to organize their own time flexible and self-determined) and women who will not found a company due to the same reason (expectations of an increased time-intensiveness). Such examples may be appropriate to support the consideration of the own professional future and the career chances, especially in the group of undecided women.

## Contact:

**Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus (BTU)**  
*Department of Business Science*  
*Chair of Organization, HRM, and General Management*  
*Astrid Lange/ Project MobI<sup>UP</sup>*  
Erich-Weinert-Straße 1/ LG 10/ R422  
03046 Cottbus  
Germany  
[Astrid.Lange@tu-cottbus.de](mailto:Astrid.Lange@tu-cottbus.de)  
[www.tu-cottbus.de/personalmanagement/](http://www.tu-cottbus.de/personalmanagement/)  
[www.mobiup.de](http://www.mobiup.de)

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