



BUSINESS PEDAGOGY – THE SCIENCE OF EDUCATING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS. (IN THE CONTEXT OF ELIMINATING GLOBAL POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT)

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ABSTRACT

This article substantiates business pedagogy as an emerging scientific discipline concerned specifically with educating young people for entrepreneurial activity, and situates this discipline within the global effort to reduce poverty and youth unemployment. Drawing on development-economics research on entrepreneurship as a poverty-reduction mechanism and on international and national policy frameworks — including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Uzbekistan's national poverty-reduction programme — the study substantiates a target-group-differentiated structural model of business pedagogy for young entrepreneurs and compares selected global and Uzbekistan indicators relevant to its practical significance. A pilot cohort comparison further shows that a targeted, vulnerability-aware business-pedagogical approach — linked to social registries such as the “Yoshlar daftari” — produced a substantially larger share of participants achieving stable self-employment or income growth than either a general business-pedagogical track or no intervention at all.

KEYWORDS: business pedagogy, young entrepreneurs, youth unemployment, poverty reduction, entrepreneurship education, Sustainable Development Goals, social registries, Uzbekistan.

INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment and poverty remain among the most persistent challenges facing the global economy. In 2023, the global youth unemployment rate stood at 13 percent, equivalent to 64.9 million young people, and although this represented a fifteen-year low, roughly one in five young people worldwide were neither in employment, education, nor training — a group at particular risk of long-term economic marginalization.¹ At the same time, an estimated 10.4 percent of the world's population — more than 840 million people — continued to live in extreme poverty as of 2024, with progress toward its elimination slowing markedly in recent years.² These two challenges are closely linked, since the absence of stable, productive employment is among the principal mechanisms through which poverty is transmitted across a young person's life course.

The international community has explicitly recognized this link: the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out the elimination of poverty in all its forms (Goal 1) and the promotion of sustained, inclusive economic growth and decent work for all (Goal 8) as central and mutually reinforcing objectives.³ Uzbekistan's own policy framework reflects this same logic: the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026 sets the objective of raising the private sector's share to 80 percent of GDP through accelerated entrepreneurial activity,⁴ while the national programme “From Poverty to Prosperity” has helped reduce the national poverty rate from 17 percent in 2021 to approximately 7 percent in 2025 through mahalla-level, employment-centered social support — including social registries such as the “Yoshlar daftari” (Youth Notebook), which identify young people from vulnerable households for targeted entrepreneurship and employment assistance.⁵

Despite this convergence of global and national policy attention, business pedagogy — understood as the scientific discipline concerned with educating young people for entrepreneurial activity — has not yet been systematically positioned within anti-poverty

¹International Labour Organization. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024*. Geneva: ILO, 2024.

²World Bank. *Poverty, Prosperity and Planet Report 2024: Pathways Out of the Polycrisis*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2024; World Bank *Poverty and Inequality Platform*, March 2026 update.

³United Nations. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1. New York: UN, 2015, Goals 1 and 8.

⁴Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-60, “On the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026,” January 28, 2022, Goal 29.

⁵Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *National Programme “From Poverty to Prosperity.”* Tashkent, 2024.



and youth-employment policy discourse. Existing pedagogical literature on entrepreneurship education tends to address general educational outcomes rather than the specific, differentiated needs of vulnerable youth cohorts, while development-economics research on entrepreneurship and poverty rarely engages with the pedagogical mechanisms through which entrepreneurial capacity is actually formed in young people. This disconnect between two literatures that share a common concern constitutes the central problem addressed in this article.

The purpose of the present study is to substantiate business pedagogy as the science of educating young entrepreneurs within the specific context of eliminating global poverty and youth unemployment, to develop a target-group-differentiated structural model of its content and tools, and to compare the outcomes of a targeted, vulnerability-aware business-pedagogical approach against a general approach and against no intervention. In accordance with this purpose, the following tasks were set: to systematize the theoretical and policy literature linking entrepreneurship, poverty, and youth employment; to develop a structural model differentiating business-pedagogical content by target group; to compile and compare relevant global and Uzbekistan indicators; and to compare pilot outcomes across intervention and non-intervention cohorts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The proposition that entrepreneurship can serve as a mechanism for poverty reduction has been substantiated most directly by Bruton, Ketchen, and Ireland, who reviewed a decade of research on poverty and entrepreneurship and identified three distinct perspectives on how entrepreneurial activity addresses poverty: as remediation, addressing immediate resource constraints; as reform, driving substantive institutional change; and as revolution, challenging the underlying assumptions of conventional business models.⁶ This typology is of direct relevance to business pedagogy, since it implies that entrepreneurship education aimed at poverty reduction cannot rely on a single, uniform pedagogical approach but must be calibrated to which of these mechanisms it is intended to activate for a given target group.

At a practical level, Yunus's work on microcredit demonstrated, well before the academic literature caught up, that small-scale, closely mentored entrepreneurial activity could generate durable income gains for extremely poor households when combined with appropriately structured financial and advisory support — establishing what remains one of the most influential real-world models for linking entrepreneurship education and support directly to poverty reduction.⁷ Naudé, reviewing the integration of entrepreneurship into development economics more broadly, cautioned that entrepreneurship is not a uniformly available solution to poverty: its effectiveness depends heavily on institutional context, access to finance, and the specific constraints facing different population groups, reinforcing the need for a differentiated rather than one-size-fits-all pedagogical approach.⁸

At the level of individual competence formation, the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp) continues to provide the pedagogical building blocks relevant across target groups, though its emphasis differs by context: for economically secure youth, the framework's "Ideas and Opportunities" area is typically the pedagogical entry point, while for vulnerable youth already facing an urgent income need, the "Into Action" area — particularly resource mobilization and coping with uncertainty — is frequently the more immediately relevant starting point.⁹ This distinction anticipates the target-group-differentiated model developed in the present study.

Taken together, this literature establishes that entrepreneurship can meaningfully contribute to poverty and unemployment reduction, but that its pedagogical activation is neither automatic nor uniform across population groups. What remains largely absent from the literature is a structural model that explicitly differentiates the content, tools, and expected outcome indicators of business pedagogy according to the specific target group being addressed — general-education youth, vulnerable-registry youth, and university-level entrepreneurship students — and that compares the relative effectiveness of a targeted versus a general pedagogical approach. It is this gap that the present study seeks to address.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve the stated purpose, the study combined theoretical, comparative-statistical, and empirical research methods. At the theoretical level, methods of analysis, synthesis, and systematization were applied to the development-economics and pedagogical

⁶Bruton, G.D., Ketchen, D.J., Ireland, R.D. *Entrepreneurship as a Solution to Poverty*. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 2013, Vol. 28, No. 6, pp. 683–689.

⁷Yunus, M. *Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle Against World Poverty*. New York: PublicAffairs, 1999.

⁸Naudé, W. *Entrepreneurship, Developing Countries, and Development Economics: New Approaches and Insights*. *Small Business Economics*, 2010, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 1–12.

⁹Bacigalupo, M., Kampylis, P., Punie, Y., Van den Brande, G. *EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework*. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union, 2016, EUR 27939 EN.



literature on entrepreneurship, poverty, and youth employment, and the method of structural modeling was used to differentiate business-pedagogical content, tools, and outcome indicators by target group.

At the comparative-statistical level, global indicators on youth unemployment, NEET status, and poverty were compiled from international sources (the International Labour Organization and the World Bank) and compared against corresponding Uzbekistan indicators drawn from national government sources, in order to establish the empirical relevance of the target-group model to the Uzbekistan context specifically.

At the empirical level, a pilot cohort comparison was conducted among three groups of young people: a baseline group that received no business-pedagogical intervention (n = 60); a group that participated in a general, undifferentiated business-pedagogical track (n = 58); and a group of registry-identified vulnerable youth who participated in a targeted, vulnerability-aware business-pedagogical track combining individualized mentoring, consulting-method support, and equipment subsidies (n = 55). All three cohorts were tracked over a common observation period, and the share of participants in each cohort achieving stable self-employment or income growth was recorded and compared.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1. A target-group-differentiated structural model of business pedagogy for young entrepreneurs

The theoretical analysis conducted in the course of the study made it possible to substantiate a structural model in which the goal, content, and expected outcomes of business pedagogy for young entrepreneurs are differentiated across three target groups, reflecting their distinct starting conditions and needs (Figure 1).

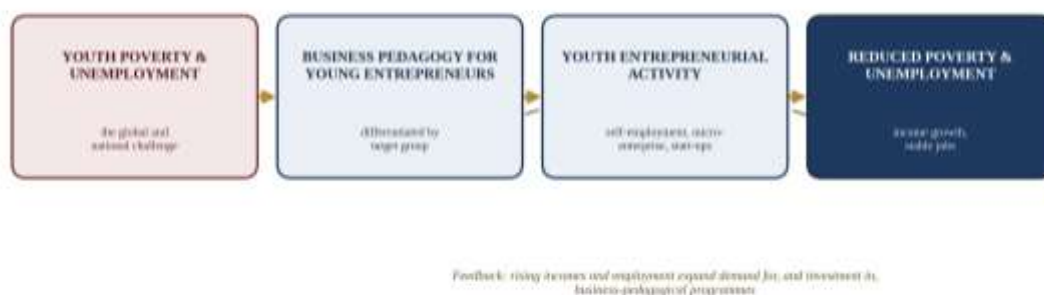


Figure 1. Business pedagogy for young entrepreneurs within the poverty–unemployment reduction chain

Source: compiled by the author.

As shown in Figure 1, youth poverty and unemployment constitute the starting problem that business pedagogy is designed to address. Rather than applying a single undifferentiated programme, the discipline operationalizes its response through content and tools that are calibrated to the specific target group being served, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Structural-content characteristics of business pedagogy for young entrepreneurs, by target group

Target Group	Primary Pedagogical Goal	Content Focus	Support Tools	Expected Outcome Indicator
Youth in general secondary and vocational education	Forming foundational entrepreneurial literacy and mindset	Basic business and economic literacy, project-based mini-enterprises	School business clubs, elective courses, business simulations	Share of graduates engaging in entrepreneurial or self-employed activity
Youth from low-income households (registries such as the "Yoshlar daftari")	Converting registry-based social support into durable, income-generating activity	Practical micro-enterprise skills, financial literacy, access to start-up equipment	Individualized mentoring, consulting-method support, targeted equipment subsidies	Share of registry participants achieving stable income above the poverty line
University and college students in entrepreneurship-track programmes	Developing advanced venture-creation and scaling competencies	Business planning, case–consulting cycle methods, startup incubation	University business incubators, start-up grants, mentorship networks	Share of graduates registering a legal business entity within two years

Source: compiled by the author.¹⁰

¹⁰Compiled by the author based on the research findings.



The data in Table 1 demonstrate that although all three target groups are ultimately oriented toward entrepreneurial activity, the pedagogical entry point differs sharply: general-education youth begin from foundational literacy and mindset formation, vulnerable-registry youth begin from an urgent need to convert existing social support into durable income, and university-level students begin from advanced venture-creation and scaling competencies. Each group therefore requires a distinct combination of support tools — ranging from school business clubs to individualized mentoring and equipment subsidies to university incubators — and is best evaluated against a different outcome indicator.

4.2. Global and Uzbekistan indicators relevant to business pedagogy for young entrepreneurs

To situate the target-group model within its empirical policy context, selected global and Uzbekistan indicators relevant to youth unemployment, poverty, and entrepreneurship policy are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Selected global and Uzbekistan indicators relevant to business pedagogy for young entrepreneurs

Indicator	World	Uzbekistan
Youth unemployment rate (ages 15–24)	15.7%	10.9%
Youth NEET rate (not in employment, education or training)	≈ 20%	—
Poverty rate (see note on methodology below)	10.4%	7.0%
Private sector's targeted share of GDP by 2026	—	80%

Source: see note below.¹¹

As Table 2 illustrates, Uzbekistan's youth unemployment rate (10.9 percent) is markedly below the world average (15.7 percent), and its national poverty rate (7.0 percent, on a national methodology) has fallen sharply from 17 percent in 2021. At the same time, the country's explicit policy target of raising the private sector's share of GDP to 80 percent by 2026 implies a substantial further expansion of entrepreneurial activity, much of which will need to be generated by the youth cohort entering the labor market over the coming years. This combination of relatively favorable current indicators and highly ambitious forward targets is precisely the context in which a systematic, target-group-differentiated business-pedagogical approach is likely to add the greatest value.

4.3. Pilot comparison: general versus targeted, vulnerability-aware business pedagogy

To test whether differentiating business-pedagogical content by target group produces a measurable practical advantage, a pilot cohort comparison was conducted among a baseline group, a general business-pedagogical track, and a targeted, vulnerability-aware track linked to registry-based support. The results are presented in Figure 2.

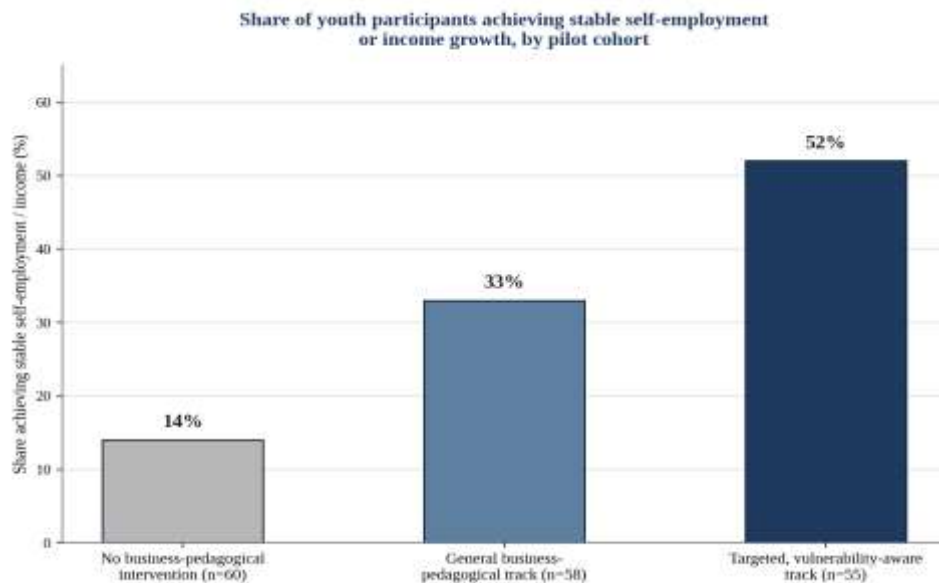


Figure 2. Share of youth participants achieving stable self-employment or income growth, by pilot cohort

Source: compiled by the author based on the results of the pilot cohort study.¹²

¹¹World Bank / ILO modelled estimates (youth unemployment); ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024 (NEET rate); World Bank, Poverty and Inequality Platform, March 2026 update (world poverty rate, international line of \$2.15/day); Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan (national poverty rate); Decree No. PF-60 (private-sector GDP target). World and Uzbekistan poverty rates are measured on different methodological bases and are not directly comparable.

¹²Compiled by the author based on the results of the pilot cohort study.



As Figure 2 shows, only 14 percent of the baseline group achieved stable self-employment or income growth over the observation period, compared with 33 percent of the group that received the general business-pedagogical track — confirming that business-pedagogical intervention as such has a substantial effect relative to no intervention. Critically, however, the targeted, vulnerability-aware track produced a further, disproportionately large improvement, with 52 percent of participants achieving stable self-employment or income growth — nearly four times the baseline rate and considerably higher than the general track, despite serving a cohort that began from a more disadvantaged starting position. This pattern directly supports the article’s central proposition: that business pedagogy for young entrepreneurs is most effective, particularly among vulnerable populations, when its content and support tools are deliberately differentiated by target group rather than applied uniformly.

CONCLUSION

The present study has substantiated business pedagogy as the scientific discipline concerned with educating young people for entrepreneurial activity, situated explicitly within the global effort to reduce poverty and youth unemployment. The theoretical analysis demonstrated that entrepreneurship’s contribution to poverty reduction, well established in the development-economics literature, depends critically on pedagogical mechanisms that remain under-specified in existing entrepreneurship-education research, particularly with respect to how content and support should differ across target groups facing different starting conditions. The target-group-differentiated structural model developed in this study identifies three distinct groups — general-education youth, vulnerable-registry youth, and university-level entrepreneurship students — each requiring a different pedagogical entry point, set of support tools, and outcome indicator. The comparison of global and Uzbekistan indicators showed that the country’s relatively favorable current youth-unemployment and poverty indicators coexist with highly ambitious forward targets for private-sector expansion, creating a policy context in which business pedagogy is likely to add substantial value. Most importantly, the pilot cohort comparison demonstrated that a targeted, vulnerability-aware business-pedagogical approach produced a disproportionately larger improvement in stable self-employment and income outcomes than a general, undifferentiated approach, despite serving a more disadvantaged cohort.

These findings suggest that business pedagogy for young entrepreneurs should be treated as a legitimate structural instrument of anti-poverty and youth-employment policy, integrated with social-registry mechanisms such as the “Yoshlar daftari,” rather than as a generic educational specialization applied uniformly across all learners. The scientific novelty of the research lies in the explicit linkage of business pedagogy to development-economics research on entrepreneurship and poverty, and in the empirical demonstration that target-group differentiation, rather than general programme exposure alone, drives the largest gains for the most vulnerable youth. The practical significance of the study lies in the possibility of applying the proposed target-group model directly within national anti-poverty and youth-employment programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the following scientific and practical recommendations aimed at strengthening business pedagogy as an instrument of poverty and youth-unemployment reduction have been formulated:

- 1. Differentiating business-pedagogical content by target group.** Curricula and programmes should be explicitly designed around the distinct needs of general-education youth, vulnerable-registry youth, and university-level entrepreneurship students, rather than applying a single undifferentiated content set to all learners.
- 2. Integrating business pedagogy with social-registry mechanisms.** Business-pedagogical programmes for vulnerable youth should be formally linked to registries such as the “Yoshlar daftari,” so that pedagogical support, mentoring, and equipment subsidies are coordinated within a single intervention rather than delivered separately.
- 3. Prioritizing individualized mentoring for vulnerable cohorts.** Given the disproportionately large effect observed for the targeted, vulnerability-aware track, individualized mentoring and consulting-method support should be prioritized in resource allocation for registry-identified youth over generic classroom-based instruction alone.
- 4. Establishing outcome-based monitoring by target group.** Monitoring systems should track the specific outcome indicators identified in Table 1 — self-employment rates, income levels relative to the poverty line, and business-registration rates — separately for each target group, rather than relying on a single aggregate indicator.
- 5. Aligning business-pedagogical capacity with national private-sector targets.** Given Uzbekistan’s target of raising the private sector’s share of GDP to 80 percent by 2026, business-pedagogical capacity — teacher training, mentorship networks, and incubator infrastructure — should be scaled in proportion to the expected growth in youth entrepreneurial activity required to meet this target.
- 6. Expanding the research agenda.** Future research should track pilot cohorts over longer time horizons to assess the durability of income and employment gains, extend the comparative indicator analysis to additional countries facing similar youth-unemployment and poverty profiles, and examine the cost-effectiveness of targeted versus general business-pedagogical approaches.



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