

The Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Student Success: Evaluating Outcomes in Higher Education.

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of entrepreneurship education on student success within Moroccan higher education institutions. The research examines how entrepreneurship programs contribute to developing essential skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and resilience, ultimately enhancing students' employability and capacity for innovation. Data were collected from a diverse sample of 120 students and recent graduates from several universities across Morocco, providing insights into both perceived opportunities and challenges in implementing effective entrepreneurship education. Opportunities include fostering entrepreneurial mindsets and enhancing career prospects, while challenges center around a lack of practical training, mentorship, and financial support. To address these issues, respondents suggested increased collaboration with industry partners, integrating practical modules, and providing access to funding for student-led initiatives. The findings suggest that a well-structured entrepreneurship curriculum, supported by institutional and external resources, could play a significant role in promoting student success and economic development in Morocco. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of entrepreneurship education on student career outcomes.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, student success, professional outcomes, innovation, higher education programs, program evaluation.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is increasingly at the center of economic and educational discussions due to its crucial role in driving innovation, creating jobs, and fostering the development of local and global economies. Once primarily associated with business professionals, entrepreneurship is now recognized as a transversal skill that spans various domains, influencing sectors such as education, healthcare, and technology.

Thus, integrating entrepreneurship into educational programs has become a strategic necessity, particularly at the university level, to prepare students to face labor market challenges while equipping them with the essential skills to become tomorrow's value creators. Promoting entrepreneurship through instilling entrepreneurial culture and a spirit of innovation in younger generations—especially at universities—is vital to fostering a creative, autonomous, and employable human capital, as well as cultivating future entrepreneurs capable of driving the economy through wealth and job creation.

In this context, entrepreneurial training at the university level is no longer limited to teaching the technicalities of business creation. Instead, it aims to shape individuals who can identify opportunities, innovate, and actively contribute to society, regardless of the sector they choose. Consequently, entrepreneurial education programs focus on developing a diverse set of skills: leadership, complex problem-solving, critical thinking, project management, and interdisciplinary collaboration. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives is subject to debate, as pedagogical models vary significantly across institutions, and their practical outcomes are not always consistent.

This study seeks to address the following research questions to illuminate the various aspects of integrating entrepreneurial education into the Moroccan university system:

What are the effects of entrepreneurial education on the development of students' soft skills, such as creativity, innovation, and leadership?

To what extent does entrepreneurial education prepare students to create their own businesses or enhance their employability in the labor market?

What are the main obstacles to effectively integrating entrepreneurial education into Moroccan university curricula?

What strategies can be implemented to overcome these obstacles and optimize the impact of entrepreneurial education on students' personal and professional development?

How do employment and business creation prospects differ between students who have participated in an entrepreneurial education program and those who have not?

The structure of this article is designed to systematically and thoroughly explore these questions. The second section will focus on synthesizing existing research on entrepreneurial education, highlighting the various theories and models used to assess its impact on skill development among students, as well as the specific barriers to its integration in the Moroccan educational context. A review of prior studies will provide a solid foundation for our research.

The third section will detail the research methodology. We will present the data collection methods and analytical techniques used in this study, along with specific information on the targeted population and instruments employed to measure the effects of entrepreneurial education on students. This approach ensures transparency and scientific rigor.

The results and discussion of our findings will be presented in the fourth section. We will share the outcomes of our survey and analyze their implications for the effectiveness of entrepreneurial education in skill development among students. This section will also explore the practical implications of these findings for educational policy and entrepreneurial support initiatives in Morocco.

Finally, the fifth section of our article will provide a summary of the study's key conclusions. We will revisit the initial research questions, highlighting the contributions of our work to the existing literature on entrepreneurial education. Additionally, we will identify the limitations of our study and suggest directions for future research in this ever-evolving field.

Literature Review

1. Entrepreneurial Education

Entrepreneurial education has undergone various methodological approaches, evolving from Ignatius of Loyola's "traditional education"—characterized by a standardized teaching-learning process and teachers as transmitters of knowledge—to the current competency-based model. The latter emphasizes the flipped classroom approach, where learners become active builders of their own knowledge (Anses Munte, 2015). Historically, efforts to train business

professionals date back to the 19th century. However, it was not until the 1970s that entrepreneurial education became a hallmark of U.S. business schools, a model later adopted and implemented in other regions worldwide (Shane, 2000; Jordan et al., 2014).

Entrepreneurial education and training comprise formal academic teaching and training programs. While both aim to develop entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial activities, their specific objectives differ. Formal education generally focuses on acquiring knowledge about entrepreneurship, whereas entrepreneurial training programs—often conducted outside the formal education sector—are designed to provide the skills necessary to start a business (Sherrard & Alvarado, 2017).

1.2. Challenges and Objectives

The modern world has undergone significant economic and social transformations, including pervasive globalization, the tertiarization of the economy, and the rise of individualism. These changes have created new needs and imposed new demands on individuals, the economy, and society. Within this context, entrepreneurship emerges as a primary driver of economic growth and an effective weapon against unemployment, facilitating job creation and self-actualization. Consequently, entrepreneurial education and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset have become urgent priorities for economies, societies, and individuals alike.

Among various socialization agents—such as family, social environment, religion, and media—education plays a crucial role. This importance is reinforced by political discourse emphasizing the need to cultivate entrepreneurial skills to prepare future generations for a dynamic labor market.

1.3. The Impact of Entrepreneurship Training on Entrepreneurial Spirit

Entrepreneurship is increasingly regarded as an effective remedy for unemployment worldwide, as it fosters job creation, integrates diverse individuals into the professional world, and stimulates economic growth while fulfilling self-achievement needs. As a result, there has been a surge in entrepreneurial education, offered through initial university programs and continuing education initiatives targeting broader audiences.

These programs primarily aim to instill an entrepreneurial culture, boost entrepreneurial spirit, and promote entrepreneurial intention, which is influenced by various demographic, psychological, and environmental factors—and undoubtedly by entrepreneurial education and

training. Tkachev and Kolvereid (1999), cited in Fayolle and Gailly (2009), argue that "Entrepreneurial intentions are determined by factors that can evolve over time... Entrepreneurship courses, training programs on small and medium enterprise management, and networking can positively influence values, attitudes, and social norms" [9]. Such courses and programs aim to enhance students' competencies, attitudes, and motivations, making them more autonomous, ambitious, creative, responsible, and capable of decision-making, thereby increasing their employability.

Fayolle (2007) supports this view, suggesting that "Entrepreneurship education can make a given society more tolerant of risk-taking, innovation, and individual initiative. Beyond fostering entrepreneurial interest and mindset, education can enhance the image of entrepreneurship and businesses while highlighting the entrepreneur's role in society" [1].

Entrepreneurial skills are acquired through theoretical and practical learning, underscoring the importance of introducing entrepreneurial training at early educational stages, such as primary and secondary school. At these levels, the focus is not on developing entrepreneurial competencies but rather on raising awareness and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset (Gorman & Hanlon, 1997) [1]. Fortin (2002), cited in Abdennadher and Boudabbous (2014), concurs, stating, "Developing a true entrepreneurial culture within communities requires the involvement of the school system, which is essential if not indispensable" [10].

Furthermore, higher education institutions must embrace new missions to promote entrepreneurial thinking, competencies, and scientific innovation, surpassing their traditional roles of imparting theoretical knowledge, hard skills, and academic research. As a result, educators' roles become increasingly significant; they must transition from didactic trainers to facilitators, guides, mediators, and motivators. This shift requires rethinking pedagogical methods and adopting an "entrepreneurial" teaching model (Allan Gibb, 1993; 1996, cited in Fayolle, 2017) [11]. The following table summarizes the differences between the two approaches

Methodology

To validate the conceptual model and hypotheses regarding the impact of entrepreneurial education on student success, we conducted a survey using a rigorously designed questionnaire. This questionnaire included 12 questions addressing various aspects of entrepreneurial education in higher education institutions. The main themes covered were:

Entrepreneurial skills acquired by students,

The influence of these skills on their self-confidence and innovation capacity,

The role of entrepreneurship programs in personal and professional development,

Perceived challenges in teaching entrepreneurship,

Future opportunities to integrate entrepreneurship into curricula,

Perceptions of the impact of entrepreneurial education on business creation,

The importance of practical training (internships, projects, etc.) in improving outcomes.

The questionnaire was administered in September 2024 to students and faculty members at Mohammed V University, with a total of 320 participants. Among these, 103 valid responses were retained, ensuring a balanced representation of diverse opinions and enhancing the robustness of the conclusions.

In this research, the adopted methodological approach is qualitative, aiming to explore in-depth the impacts of the integration of artificial intelligence in higher education in Morocco. This choice aligns with a constructivist epistemological stance, which views reality as being constructed through the interaction between individuals and their environment. Therefore, the goal is to understand the perceptions and practices of the stakeholders in the education system through interviews, case studies, and document analysis. This inductive reasoning approach allows for expanding the understanding of the observed phenomena, while taking into account specific contexts, such as local educational policies and the needs of students and teachers in a rapidly evolving technological environment. The use of an inductive approach also facilitates the emergence of new theories and models related to the integration of AI in higher education, rather than testing pre-existing hypotheses. This methodological choice aims to give a voice to the various stakeholders involved and generate practical, contextual knowledge that can inform public policies and educational practices in Morocco.

Statistical Representativeness:

A sample size of 103 participants is statistically sufficient to provide a meaningful estimation of participants' perceptions. This minimizes sampling errors and allows for hypothesis testing with a high degree of confidence.

Variability and Diversity:

The sample reflects the diversity of entrepreneurial education programs offered in various institutions in the region, ensuring a better understanding of varied perceptions regarding the impact of these programs.

Result Precision:

With 103 respondents, we can analyze subgroups within the sample, enabling more precise results on the differences between students with prior entrepreneurial experience and those new to the field.

Survey Analysis Results

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Study

Level of Study	Percentage
Bachelor's	24%
Master's	53%
PhD	23%

Source : Results of the questionnaire analysis

The sample shows a strong presence of Master's students, which is consistent with the fact that entrepreneurial education is often integrated at this level of study.

Table 2: Respondents' Perceptions on the Benefits of Entrepreneurial Education

Opportunities Created by Entrepreneurial Education	Percentage
Development of creativity and innovation	31.4%
Improvement in self-confidence and leadership skills	28.9%
Increase in employment and self-employment opportunities	25.7%
Facilitation of new business creation	14%

Source : Results of the questionnaire analysis

The results show that respondents see entrepreneurial education as having a significant impact on personal and professional development, as well as on the ability to create new businesses.

Table 3: Main Challenges in Integrating Entrepreneurial Education in Institutions

Identified Challenges	Percentage
Lack of qualified trainers	37%
Insufficient practical resources and support	29.1%
Weak coordination with industry	18.9%
Lack of funding for programs	15%

Source : Results of the questionnaire analysis

Most respondents highlighted the lack of qualified trainers and the need for better coordination with the industry to support students' entrepreneurial projects.

Table 4: Future Perspectives for Entrepreneurial Education

Perspectives on the Future Impact of Entrepreneurial Education	Percentage
Creation of new businesses by graduates	42.7%
Improvement in graduates' competitiveness in the job market	31.1%
Strengthening problem-solving skills	26.2%

Source : Results of the questionnaire analysis

These results show optimism about the future role of entrepreneurial education in fostering initiative and strengthening the employability of graduates.

Presentation and Discussion of Results

Sample Composition

The analysis of our sample composition reveals a slight predominance of male respondents (59%) compared to female respondents (41%), indicating a balanced gender participation in entrepreneurial education. The most represented age group (22-28 years) corresponds to a relatively young student population, reflecting the diversity of students enrolled in entrepreneurial education programs. In terms of educational level, the majority of respondents are Master's students, followed by Doctoral and Bachelor's students. This distribution suggests that participants have a relatively advanced understanding of the skills required to embark on entrepreneurship.

Perceived Opportunities and Challenges in Integrating Entrepreneurial Education

The results of our survey indicate that entrepreneurial education is perceived as a key opportunity to develop the skills necessary for business creation and to enhance student employability. Among the opportunities identified, respondents emphasized the ability of entrepreneurial education to foster creativity, critical thinking, and resilience in students. However, several challenges were also highlighted, including the lack of financial resources to support entrepreneurial projects and the absence of mentorship or practical guidance within universities. These obstacles suggest that, despite the potential benefits of entrepreneurial education, its effectiveness is limited by structural and financial support deficiencies.

Proposed Solutions to Overcome Challenges

Participants' responses highlighted several solutions to address the challenges associated with entrepreneurial education. Firstly, strengthening partnerships with local businesses and incubators is recommended to provide opportunities for internships, mentorship, and funding. Additionally, respondents suggested introducing practical modules into academic programs, such as business creation simulation workshops and entrepreneurial project competitions, to complement theoretical training. The involvement of the state and industry stakeholders is also crucial to provide students with the necessary resources and allow them to test their ideas in real-world environments.

Perspectives on the Future of Entrepreneurial Education

Participants view entrepreneurial education as a potential driver for boosting the Moroccan economy and fostering innovation. They believe that, if well-structured and supported with adequate measures, entrepreneurial education could not only enhance the employability of young graduates but also contribute to the creation of innovative businesses capable of addressing local socio-economic issues. Furthermore, the introduction of more inclusive entrepreneurial education, accessible to students from various disciplines, is seen as a way to broaden the impact of this field within higher education institutions.

Influence of Entrepreneurial Education on Students and the Educational System

The findings show that entrepreneurial education has a positive influence on the personal and professional development of students. Most participants acknowledged that attending entrepreneurship courses strengthened their self-confidence, risk management skills, and resilience in the face of potential failures. However, some respondents expressed concerns about the lack of continuity between the theoretical knowledge acquired in university and the practical skills needed to create an actual business. These results highlight the need for educational strategies that balance theory and practice to ensure students are fully prepared for their future entrepreneurial careers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study underscores the significant potential of entrepreneurial education in shaping the skills and mindset necessary for students to succeed in the dynamic world of business creation and innovation. While the results reveal strong perceptions of the benefits of entrepreneurial education, including enhanced creativity, resilience, and employability, they also highlight critical challenges such as insufficient financial resources and limited practical training opportunities.

To maximize its impact, institutions must focus on creating well-rounded programs that integrate theoretical knowledge with hands-on experiences. Strengthening collaborations with local businesses, introducing practical modules, and ensuring adequate mentorship and support systems are essential steps forward.

Looking ahead, entrepreneurial education is poised to play a transformative role in driving innovation, boosting the economy, and addressing socio-economic challenges. By fostering an inclusive and supportive environment, higher education institutions can ensure that students are not only equipped with entrepreneurial skills but also empowered to turn their ideas into impactful ventures.

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