

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ACCOUNTING
STUDENTS' CAREER IN THE ARAB REGION:
CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE**

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is to highlight the cognitive skills as an entrepreneurial dimension and to investigate the strength of the relationship between those skills and accounting students' start-ups career in Business schools of Arab region. Cognitive abilities are brain-based skills that students need to carry out any task, it includes; Communication skills, Creative thinking, Problem solving and Logical thinking. The role of educators is to enhance cognitive skills and deliver courses which will affect the process of the Entrepreneurship. Moreover, this study is considered one of its kind as focusing on cognitive skills in business schools of Arab region, no such studies have been conducted regarding encouraging cognitive skills for accounting students to enhance entrepreneurship start-ups. The literature review suggests that the relationship between entrepreneurial education of cognitive skills and Accounting students career of start-ups is subject to further investigation. Arguments and discussions are contradicting; empirical results are not consistent. Despite the inconsistency, the contributions of entrepreneurial education of cognitive skills cannot be denied. From here, it may be stated that entrepreneurship education of cognitive skills can be effectively taught and considered as a successful factor for going through the process of entrepreneurship and starting- up a business. Consequently, the important question here is "how to enhance the delivery of skills for accounting students to meet the needs of the marketplace nowadays". The paper concluded that the traditional image of the university graduate who seeks for a public or private sector job is becoming unacceptable in a very competitive environment due to the large number of university graduates as well as the limited number of available job opportunities. The theoretical framework pointed out the importance of education in teaching cognitive skills needed for entrepreneurship. This paper calls for changing the traditional methods used in accounting education and finding new methods which allow us to teach accounting students important entrepreneurial skills either for personal business or entrepreneurial activities among corporations. This paper opens the door for applied papers to introduce methods needed in this field. We suggest that these issues should be discussed among future studies including accounting curriculums and studying factors that enhance entrepreneurial skills for accounting students. These issues are considered as important factors that would affect economic growth especially in low income countries which aim at investing in education to enhance their economies and social status.

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INTRODUCTION

Decision makers and practitioners have agreed that Entrepreneurship education has an effect on successful entrepreneurial start-ups. It is relatively important to equip students with knowledge and skills necessary for setting up and running their own business (Xie, 2014). According to Drucker (1985) entrepreneurship is a discipline, therefore it can be learned. This confirms what (H.Oosterbeek et al. 2010) have added, that Encouraging entrepreneurial spirit which is represented by the delivery of the required skills may enhance the development of economic growth. Hence, increased levels of entrepreneurship can be reached through education and especially entrepreneurship education.

Educational institutions over the world are expected to be more than just a place for research and teaching, but for preparing generations for better economic future, all issues related to the entrepreneurial process and success should be taught. Existing entrepreneurship courses reflect this thought because they cover a wide range of those topics (Fiet, 2001; Garavan & O'Conne'ide, 1994). Consequently, exploring what delivered skills is a critical factor and would have an effect on entrepreneurship career (Caliendo and Kritikos, 2012).

Referring to the statistical data of Higher education ministries of Arab countries which states that numbers of accounting graduates are exceeding management graduates of universities, an unemployment problem has been emerged in the market-place which needs an immediate solution. Accounting graduates are obliged to search for jobs going through complicated procedures within the regressive economic conditions nowadays in Arab countries.

Entrepreneurship can be an alternative career choice provided that prior intention exists as mentioned by Hattab (2014), and equipping accounting students to start up their own business is one of the effective solutions which the paper suggests as a treatment for the changing marketplace requirements.

The current Paper analyzes the relationship between the delivered cognitive skills by business schools in Arab regions; communication, Creative thinking, Problem solving, Logical thinking and start-ups to keep up accounting university students with their future careers.

FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The following model presents the study framework:

$$\text{Cognitive Skills} \sum_{\substack{\text{Communication} + \text{Creative thinking} \\ + \text{problem solving} + \text{Logical thinking}}} \int \text{Start - ups Career}$$

Much of the literatures have gone through trials to answer the question, if entrepreneurship education can influence entrepreneurial intentions and start-ups as argued by (McMullan et al., 2002; Graevenitz et al., 2010) but Fayolle et al., (2006) has confirmed that there is a positive impact of entrepreneurship education at universities on perceived feasibility of new start-ups initiation. The creation of start-ups is a core issue of entrepreneurship (Gartner, 1988; Low & MacMillan, 1988). It needs basic knowledge

and skills, as well as entrepreneurial behavior. From this perspective, some aspects, if not all, of entrepreneurship can be taught (Kuratko, 2005).

According to Rand (2004) Entrepreneurship education is about developing students' mind and preparing them for the needs of the workplace in a more enterprising and innovative manner. On the other hand Entrepreneurship education is viewed as an effective mean of preparing graduates to move from education into work where the focus is on knowledge, skills and competency development according to Matlay and Westhead (2005). In order to understand and support market needs, Universities must take the role of creating the needed knowledge, skills and competencies to graduate quality students for this sake (Hynes and Richardson, 2007; Kourilsky, 2005). The objective of delivering entrepreneurial skills is to teach students to put theory into practice and to understand what entrepreneurship is about.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) indicates that one of the strong instruments to increase entrepreneurial attitudes is entrepreneurship education of skills (OECD, 2009). Students learn knowledge and skills necessary for their start-ups, such as Communication, Creative thinking, Problem solving and Logical thinking in general business courses. Moreover, effective communication, and critical thinking should be taken into consideration when designing curricula to include courses on those skills (Buli and Yesuf, 2015). Vesper (1982) reported that despite the use of the term "entrepreneurship", most entrepreneurship courses taught in the US were actually aimed at equipping students with information about setting up and running a small business. As a result, teaching entrepreneurship becomes teaching small business management (Garavan & O'Conne'ide, 1994). A study of start-up success factors for SMES in Malta found that, education of skills is more important than creativity and innovation to start-up new SMEs from entrepreneurs perspective. (Baldacchino, Cassar, & Caruana, 2008).

However, not all studies supported the positive effect of entrepreneurship education. Using a sample of 250 college students who participated in a leading entrepreneurship education program, Oosterbeek et al. (2010) found that the program had negative impact on students' intention to become an entrepreneurs and did not improve entrepreneurial skills significantly. They interpreted result indicates that entrepreneurship education may serve as a mechanism for sorting students.

Hynes and Richardson, (2007) end-up with the need for entrepreneurial education in different disciplines as students should have the opportunity of starting-up their own businesses and to be supported by the cognitive skills needed in the workplace.

Meredith, Nelson and Neck (1996) stated that entrepreneurs are considered to be people who have the ability to capture and evaluate business opportunities to find and allocate the necessary resources to take advantage of them and to initiate business and ensure success. And in order to reach this level of success, individuals must be directed and guided with the required education programs toward the development of entrepreneurship practices.

In addition, Hattab (2014) showed that entrepreneurs discover opportunities through obtaining information from education that aim at building knowledge and skills for the purpose of entrepreneurship.

From here we can conclude that entrepreneurship education should mainly be practically oriented in order to cultivate students' proficiency in their skills, as guiding students with the cognitive skills required directs them towards the intention of starting-up their own business. This confirms what Hynes and Richardson (2007) added about the importance of learning skills required for working as an entrepreneur and encourage the students to start their own venture. The last conclusion in this paper refers to the positive relationship between entrepreneurial education of cognitive skills and accounting students in starting up in their own business in Arab region.

The literature review above suggests that the relationship between entrepreneurial education of cognitive skills and Accounting students career of start-ups is subject to further investigation. Arguments and discussions are contradicting; empirical results are not consistent. Despite the inconsistency, the contributions of entrepreneurial education of cognitive skills cannot be denied. From here, it may be stated that entrepreneurship education of cognitive skills can be effectively taught and considered as a successful factor for going through the process of entrepreneurship and starting- up a business. Consequently, the important question here is "how to enhance the delivery of skills for accounting students to meet the needs of the marketplace nowadays".

CONCLUSIONS

Entrepreneurship start-ups has become an important concept in the modern educational systems. It aims at improving the entrepreneurial skills of students which empower them in creating their own jobs for themselves and their colleagues. The traditional image of the university graduate who seeks for a public or private sector job is becoming unacceptable in a very competitive environment due to the large number of university graduates as well as the limited number of available job opportunities in the private sector and the long turnover period in the public sector. The theoretical framework pointed out the importance of education in teaching cognitive skills needed for entrepreneurial and graduate self-employment.

This paper calls for changing the traditional methods used in accounting education and finding new methods which allow us to teach accounting students important entrepreneurial skills either for personal business or entrepreneurial activities among corporations. This paper opens the door for applied papers to introduce methods needed in this field. We suggest that these issues should be discussed among future studies including accounting curriculums and studying factors that enhance entrepreneurial skills for accounting students. These issues are considered as important factors that would affect economic growth especially in low income countries which aim at investing in education to enhance their economies and social status.

As revealed in this paper, many studies highlighted the importance of learning skills required to encourage students for starting up their own venture (Hynes & Richardson ,2007;Hattab,2014; Kourilsky, 2005). Although, the matter of entrepreneurship education of cognitive skills can be effectively taught and considered as a successful factor for going through the process of entrepreneurship and starting- up a business, should be more than this. The objective here is to design educational curricula that include real case studies and projects based on the idea of using cognitive skills in application for implementing start-ups of accounting students. Encouragement of creation

and thinking outside the box is a key factor for executing accounting students' success in their ventures.

In order to reach this level of success, students must be directed and guided with the required skills toward the development of entrepreneurship practices. Effective communication and Critical thinking should be taken into consideration as it creates openness and confidence as to support students for their business intentions (Elmuti et, al. 2012). Moreover, Logical thinking skill is needed to teach them how to attract resources and develop new ideas and follow the vision of the students' venture.

For researchers, it needs to confirm empirically the reflection of educating accounting students and applying cognitive skills on the intentions of starting up a new business. Entrepreneurship can be an alternative career choice for developing our economic future and equipping accounting students by the suitable cognitive skills with real applications and interaction to start up their own business is one of the effective solutions which the paper suggests, as a treatment for the changing marketplace requirements.

ENDNOTES

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