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The University as a Socio-Cultural Catalyst for Entrepreneurial Mindsets: A Field Study at Ghardaia University (Algeria)

Abstract

This study examines the role of the university as a socio-cultural institution in fostering an entrepreneurial culture among students, with a particular focus on Ghardaia University in Algeria a region rich in cultural heritage and educational traditions. The research explores how the academic environment, rooted in local educational values, along with entrepreneurial education and institutional support, influences students' entrepreneurial mindsets. Adopting a quantitative approach, data was gathered from a representative sample using structured questionnaires. Findings reveal that university entrepreneurship centers, culturally adapted learning strategies and supportive institutional frameworks significantly shape students' aspirations toward innovation and self-employment. The study concludes with policy recommendations to enhance entrepreneurial education through a culturally grounded and socially responsive approach in Algerian higher education.

Keywords: *entrepreneurial culture, university, higher education, innovation, cultural context*

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Universitetin sahibkarlıq düşüncə tərzlərinin formalaşmasında sosial-mədəni katalizator rolunda: Əlcəzairin Qərdayə Universitetində sahə araşdırması

Xülasə

Bu araşdırma universitetin sosial-mədəni institut olaraq tələbələr arasında sahibkarlıq mədəniyyətinin formalaşdırılmasındakı rolunu araşdırır. Xüsusilə, zəngin mədəni irsə və təhsil ənənələrinə malik olan Əlcəzairin Qərdayə Universiteti nümunəsində tədqiqat aparılmışdır. Təhsil mühiti, yerli təhsil dəyərləri ilə köklənmiş akademik mühit və institusional dəstək strukturlarının tələbələrin sahibkarlıq düşüncəsi və niyyətlərinə təsir etdiyi araşdırılmışdır. Kvantitativ metodologiya əsasında strukturlu sorğular vasitəsilə təmsilçi tələbə nümunəsindən verilənlər toplanmışdır. Əldə edilən nəticələr göstərir ki, universitet sahibkarlıq mərkəzləri, mədəni kontekstə uyğunlaşdırılmış öyrənmə strategiyaları və dəstəkləyici institusional siyasətlər tələbələrin innovasiya və özünü işlə təmin etmə arzularına əhəmiyyətli dərəcədə təsir edir. Tədqiqat, Əlcəzair ali təhsil sistemində mədəni uyğunluq

və ictimai cavabdehlik əsasında sahibkarlıq təhsilinin gücləndirilməsi istiqamətində strategiya tövsiyələri ilə yekunlaşır.

Açar sözlər: sahibkarlıq mədəniyyəti, universitet, ali təhsil, innovasiya, mədəni kontekst

Introduction

The university is regarded as one of the most important institutions in the state, relying on the output of its students in diverse fields of study to drive development across all economic, social and even cultural levels. Indeed, this has created a significant challenge, pushing universities to continually strive for the advancement of their work and functions, moving away from traditional activities such as teaching or academic education, and even analyzing a wide range of societal issues. Instead, they have evolved their performance to be more open to the socioeconomic environment, with the goal of contributing to society's progress and meeting its economic, social, and even cultural demands through the teaching of university students who contribute to the finding of solutions for their communities.

With the increasing numbers of unemployment among youth, including graduates from educational institutions in general and universities in particular, and in the face of the state's limited capacity in various public and private sectors to absorb the massive numbers of young graduates, many countries, similar to European and developed countries, have sought to formulate new approaches in their educational and training systems. These approaches aim to create innovative methods that capture the interests of young students, develop their inclinations, and guide them toward the option of self-employment achieved through the creation of private projects as an alternative to paid work in public and private institutions. Furthermore, the large number of Algerian university students graduating each year in numerous disciplines may place a huge strain on the job market, which has grown unable to absorb this youthful potential. Faced with this difficult socio-economic scenario, it became critical for the Algerian government to find a solution by supporting efforts from skilled and qualified individuals to establish small projects that may contribute to the economic and social growth of society.

Within this context, the university has played a major role in qualifying students and developing their entrepreneurial culture, and providing them with the characteristics of the creative contractor that would push them to entrepreneurial work and innovate special projects that would benefit them and their society and ensure the sustainable development of their country. It is important to note that any discussion about promoting entrepreneurial culture among university students cannot be separated from the broader context of the university's ability to adapt to technological transformations. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed significant weaknesses in the digital and pedagogical infrastructure of Algerian universities. A field study conducted at Ghardaia University highlighted that both faculty members and students still heavily rely on traditional teaching methods, despite having access to some digital tools and platforms. This situation presents a substantial obstacle to the creation of a university environment that fosters innovation and entrepreneurship. Indeed, a digitally underprepared academic setting may hinder students from experimenting with ideas, developing projects, and acquiring the practical skills necessary for entrepreneurial success (Aouissi, 2024).

Research

Recognizing the importance of this role, international universities have adapted and developed their teaching programs, incorporating specific measures that emphasize the explanation and promotion of entrepreneurship. Consequently, they have shifted from a traditional academic focus to a crucial objective of nurturing entrepreneurial students capable of executing real-world projects and contributing to the development of their nation. This accomplishment has proven elusive for many developing countries, and Arab universities continue to face challenges in achieving it to this day.

Recent global research has increasingly emphasized the transformative role of universities in developing entrepreneurial mindsets and skills among students, positioning higher education

institutions as key drivers of innovation and socioeconomic development (Sieger et al., 2021; Ratten, 2020). The concept of the “entrepreneurial university” has gained significant attention in the international literature, highlighting the necessity for universities to go beyond traditional educational models and actively cultivate an environment that supports creativity, risk-taking, and the practical application of knowledge (Al-Omouh, Orero-Blat, & Ribeiro-Soriano, 2020). Despite this growing trend, there is still a lack of empirical research addressing how Algerian universities—particularly those outside major urban centers—contribute to the promotion of entrepreneurial culture and support students in launching their own ventures. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this research gap by examining the specific mechanisms and challenges involved in fostering an entrepreneurial culture at Ghardaia University

This field study aims to determine the extent of the Algerian university's contribution to fostering entrepreneurial culture among university students, through

The main research question addressed in this study is:

Does the university environment play a role in equipping university students with an entrepreneurial culture?

To further clarify and structure the research, the following sub-questions have been formulated:

• **Does university education play a role in enhancing the components of entrepreneurial culture among students?**

• **Has the Entrepreneurship Center contributed to consolidating the entrepreneurial culture among university students at the University of Ghardaia?**

These questions are grounded in contemporary literature that emphasizes the pivotal role of higher education institutions and dedicated entrepreneurship centers in shaping students' entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors (Sieger et al., 2021; Ratten, 2020)

Based on these research questions and supported by previous findings, the study posits the following hypotheses:

Main Hypothesis:

• The university environment contributes through effective methods to disseminating entrepreneurial culture among students at the University of Ghardaia.

Sub-hypotheses:

• The greater the emphasis placed on entrepreneurship in university education, the higher the level of entrepreneurial culture among university students.

• The Entrepreneurship Center at the University of Ghardaia plays a significant role in instilling entrepreneurial culture in students.

This approach ensures that the research is both theoretically grounded and empirically testable, providing a clear framework for data collection and analysis.

1. Chronology of Entrepreneurship Education at the University:

The teaching of entrepreneurship as a subject in university courses has passed through several significant historical milestones." Entrepreneurship education at the university level dates back to 1947 when Myles Mace taught the first entrepreneurship course at Harvard University's Business School (HBS). This course piqued the interest and admiration of 188 second-year master's degree students out of a total of 600. Despite the instructor's initial skepticism regarding its academic effectiveness, it became enormously popular (Bouslikhane, 2011). And with the beginning of the 1970s, business schools offering entrepreneurship courses witnessed a radical transformation. Sixteen universities started offering this course, and this new course coincided with the emergence of magazines focusing on entrepreneurial studies, such as 'In-Business In-Entrepreneur.' As a result, the concept of the term 'entrepreneur' shifted from notions of greed, exploitation, selfishness, and disloyalty to creativity, innovation, and profitability (Zidan, 2003).

However, starting from the mid-1980s, entrepreneurship education and academic programs began to rapidly evolve and prosper. The number of universities offering entrepreneurship courses increased to more than 250 universities, with entrepreneurship becoming a genuine and effective academic field within the university environment until the end of the 1980s (Bouslikhane, 2011). With global developments and the changes witnessed in the world, the number of universities and

colleges offering entrepreneurship courses increased to 400 by the year 1995. Entrepreneurship has not remained in its traditional form; instead, its goals, roles, and teaching methods have diversified in universities and even private institutions. In the latter years of the twenty-first century, there has been a growing number of universities that recognized the necessity of teaching entrepreneurship as a core subject. There are more than 1600 American universities with various academic levels where over 2200 entrepreneurship courses are taught, along with more than 100 specialized entrepreneurship centers in the United States (Zidan, 2003).

2. The Importance of the University in Establishing an Entrepreneurial Culture for University Students.

The university has today assumed a significant social responsibility towards its community. It has become imperative for it to strive to instill entrepreneurship values in its affiliated students. With various mechanisms at its disposal, the university can achieve a high percentage of qualified and creative students capable of undertaking significant projects for the development of their society. Teaching entrepreneurship and imparting it to students can bring prosperity and stability to the community. Among the characteristics of this importance, we may mention the following:

- Entrepreneurial education solidifies students' self-confidence and supports their desire and ability to establish their own projects.

- This type of education trains students on how to create a business plan and properly plan for human and administrative resources in general.

- The importance of entrepreneurial education lies in the development of students' human characteristics and skills that shape their personalities and leadership thinking, such as creativity, initiative, risk-taking, independence, self-confidence, leadership, and team spirit.

- It increases students' awareness of harnessing their hidden abilities and investing them effectively in their future projects.

- It involves conducting applied scientific research and providing counseling and guidance services to university students (Al-Hammali & Al-Arabi, 2016).

- Entrepreneurial education equips employees in established institutions with rare and innovative skills that enable them to achieve a significantly higher sales growth rate than their counterparts.

- Entrepreneurial education leads to an increased likelihood of graduates having ideas for high-tech business projects that contribute to building a knowledge-based society and reducing unemployment.

- Entrepreneurial education generates numerous opportunities related to knowledge-based technological advancements. Arizona State University has emphasized that entrepreneurial education at the university has added value to the community, as evidenced by the increased number of student-led projects that serve their communities and contribute to overcoming unemployment. Most of these projects fall under the category of knowledge-based initiatives, which has contributed to the building and development of the knowledge society (Adel Eid, 2014).

3. Concepts of the Study

A clear understanding of key concepts is crucial to frame the scope and direction of this study. The following definitions reflect both international scholarship and the context of Algerian higher education.

3.1. Entrepreneurship:

Entrepreneurship is broadly defined as the process of creating innovative economic organizations to achieve profit or growth, often under conditions of uncertainty and risk (Dollinger, 2008) emphasizes that entrepreneurship involves the creation of economic and social wealth in situations characterized by uncertainty and risk, where individuals with a propensity for change, initiative, and risk-taking play a central role (Fayolle, 2003).

3.2. Entrepreneurial Culture:

Entrepreneurial culture refers to a set of consciously guided values, beliefs, and knowledge that inform the behavior of individuals and institutions regarding project creation and development (Ruel, 2007). It encompasses the practical principles and attitudes embraced by entrepreneurs to

achieve economic goals, overcome challenges, and contribute to community development (Boufalta & Azizi, 2019).

3.3. Business Incubators:

Business incubators are specialized institutions or units designed to accelerate the growth and success of innovative ideas and entrepreneurial projects by providing essential resources, such as workspace, funding, training, services, and networking opportunities. They play a vital role in supporting small business creation under professional guidance (Al-Hammali & Al-Arabi, 2016).

3.4. Entrepreneurship Center:

An Entrepreneurship Center is a university-based entity dedicated to training, motivating, and supporting students and researchers in establishing small enterprises. In Algeria, the first such center was established at the University of Mentouri, Constantine, in 2007, following the initial European model at the University of Grenoble, France, in 2003 (Houari & Abidi, 2016).

3.5. Entrepreneurial Education:

Entrepreneurial education focuses on fostering entrepreneurial mindsets and cultures, promoting innovation, problem-solving, active citizenship, and self-confidence among individuals. Its ultimate aim is to prepare young people to become innovators and active participants in the labor market (Masr, 2010).

4. Methodological Framework and Field Study

4.1. Limits of the Field Study

4.1.1. Spatial Scope:

This study was conducted within selected departments at the University of Ghardaia, including Sociology, Psychology, Media and Communication, Management and Economics, and Technological Sciences.

4.1.2. Temporal Scope:

The data collection took place from May 2, 2024, to May 11, 2024, providing a representative snapshot of student perspectives during this period.

4.1.3. Human Scope:

The human scope of the study included students from the five aforementioned disciplines. Out of approximately 700 students in the target population, 150 questionnaires were distributed, and 111 completed questionnaires were returned and included in the analysis. This sample represents over 15% of the total student population.

4.2. Study Instrument

A structured questionnaire was utilized as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections:

- **A) Personal Data:** Addressed in the first section.

- **B) General Data:** Addressed in the second, third, and fourth sections:

- **Section 2:** Entrepreneurship education and fostering entrepreneurial intentions (questions 5–13).
- **Section 3:** University environment and support for entrepreneurial culture (questions 14–22).
- **Section 4:** Entrepreneurial culture among university students (questions 23–34).

4.3. Study Methodology and Sample

To address the research objectives, a descriptive methodology was employed, focusing on examining correlations between variables. Statistical analyses were conducted using descriptive statistics tools and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22. Of the 150 questionnaires distributed, 111 valid responses were obtained and analyzed, representing a robust sample of more than 15% of the target population.

4.4. Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed about the objectives of the study, and their participation was entirely voluntary. The confidentiality and anonymity of all responses were strictly maintained, and no identifying information was collected at any stage of the research. The study adhered to the ethical guidelines and standards for social research.

5. Sample Characteristics

The analysis of the research sample revealed several demographic and academic characteristics, summarized as follows:

- **Gender:**

Female students constituted the majority of the sample, representing 77.5%, while male students accounted for 22.5%.

- **Age:**

The largest age group was between 18 and 23 years, comprising 71.2% of the respondents. Students aged 24 to 29 years represented 15.3% of the sample, those aged 30 to 35 years accounted for 6.3%, and participants above 35 years constituted 7.2%.

- **Academic Specialization:**

The distribution across academic specializations was as follows: Economics (33.3%), Media and Communication (29.7%), Psychology (18%), Sociology (11.7%), and Technological Sciences (7.2%).

These characteristics provide a representative overview of the participants involved in the field study and reflect the diversity of the student population at the University of Ghardaia.

6. Analysis of Field Study Results:

6.1 Entrepreneurial Education and its Impact on Fostering an Entrepreneurial Culture among University Students.

In this section, we will present the most important tables that illustrate the significance of entrepreneurial education received by students in their academic journey and its importance in shaping an entrepreneurial culture that makes them more proactive towards successful projects. Among these indicators are the following:

Table 01: Illustrates the extent of the contribution of entrepreneurial university education received by students to personal project adoption as opposed to employment.

University Training	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Project adoption						
Yes	36	90%	52	73.2%	88	79.3%
No	4	10%	19	26.8%	23	20.7%
Total	40	100%	71	100%	111	100%

Source: A field study conducted by researcher Aouissi Kamel using the spss v 22

This table discusses the relationship between university education that students receive, including entrepreneurship as a significant subject and its impact on their future in fostering the idea of starting a new project instead of waiting for a job, whether in the public or private sector. The table shows that 90% of students who stated that university education provided them with knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship aspire to start their own project. This percentage decreases to 73.2% for those who believe that their university education in entrepreneurship was insufficient or absent altogether. Additionally, 26.8% of students who do not find university education in entrepreneurship useful for their academic journey do not wish at all to start an entrepreneurial project and prefer seeking employment, despite the limited job opportunities in the country.

Table 01 illustrates the relationship between exposure to entrepreneurial university education and students' inclination to adopt personal projects instead of seeking traditional employment. The data indicate that among students who reported receiving adequate university training in entrepreneurship, 90% expressed a desire to start their own project. In contrast, this percentage drops to 73.2% among those who considered their university training in entrepreneurship

insufficient or lacking. Furthermore, 26.8% of the latter group preferred to pursue employment opportunities, while only 10% of students with sufficient entrepreneurial training shared this preference.

These findings suggest a significant association between the quality and presence of entrepreneurship education at the university level and students' entrepreneurial intentions. This observation is consistent with global research indicating that targeted entrepreneurial education and training can positively influence students' aspirations for self-employment and innovation (Sieger et al., 2021; Ratten, 2020).

While a formal statistical test (such as the Chi-square test) could further establish the strength of this association, the descriptive evidence presented here underscores the importance of integrating effective entrepreneurial education within university curricula. It highlights the potential for such training to produce future pioneers in innovation and economic development, contributing to the advancement of the knowledge society.

Based on these results, it is recommended that universities invest in specialized entrepreneurship faculty and practical training programs to empower students with the necessary skills for managing their own projects and navigating an increasingly competitive labor market

Table 2 illustrates the presence of specialized entrepreneurship professors and their role in imparting entrepreneurial skills.

Specialized entrepreneurship professors	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Acquisition of entrepreneurial skills						
Yes	59	80.8	23	60.5	82	73.9
No	14	19.2	15	39.5	29	26.10
Total	73	100	38	100	111	100

Table 2 examines the impact of the presence of specialized entrepreneurship professors on students' acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their readiness to establish projects post-graduation. The data reveal that 80.8% of students who reported the presence of specialized entrepreneurship professors affirmed acquiring the necessary skills for entrepreneurial activity. In comparison, only 60.5% of students who believed their professors were not specialized in entrepreneurship reported similar skill acquisition.

Conversely, a significant 39.5% of students without exposure to specialized professors indicated that they did not acquire relevant entrepreneurial skills, while this percentage dropped to 19.2% among those with access to specialized instruction. These findings suggest a strong relationship between the availability of specialized entrepreneurship educators and students' perceived competence in entrepreneurial skills.

Qualitative feedback gathered through interviews further supports this quantitative evidence. Several students expressed concerns that non-specialized professors tend to focus solely on theoretical knowledge, neglecting practical application and real-world examples. This perceived gap between theory and practice diminishes students' motivation and confidence to pursue entrepreneurial ventures after graduation.

These results align with international research highlighting the necessity of integrating specialized and practically-oriented entrepreneurship education within university curricula to effectively foster entrepreneurial intentions and capabilities among students (Nabi et al., 2017; Ratten, 2020).

The data emphasize the need for universities to prioritize recruiting and developing faculty with expertise in entrepreneurship and to incorporate experiential learning opportunities that bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Accordingly, universities should enhance the professional development of their teaching staff, encourage industry-academia collaboration, and embed practical entrepreneurship modules within academic programs. Such initiatives would significantly contribute to cultivating entrepreneurial mindsets and equipping graduates with the competencies needed to thrive in dynamic economic environments.

Table 3. Illustrates the role of teaching entrepreneurship courses and their relationship to planning for a project with specific objectives.

Entrepreneurship course	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Planning for a project with specific objectives						
Yes	22	48.9	24	36.4	46	41.4
No	01	2.2	05	7.6	06	5.4
Perhaps	22	48.9	37	56.1	59	53.2
Total	73	100	66	100	111	100

Source: A field study conducted by researcher Aouissi Kamel using the spss v 22

Table 3 explores the relationship between teaching entrepreneurship courses and students' readiness to strategically plan a project with clear objectives. The data reveal a complex pattern: while 48.9% of students who reported benefiting from entrepreneurship courses felt prepared to plan a project with specific objectives, a significant proportion (56.1%) of the overall sample remained undecided, indicating uncertainty or insufficient support from their coursework. Notably, only 2.2% of students with positive perceptions of entrepreneurship courses explicitly indicated an inability to plan such projects.

This ambivalence suggests that, although entrepreneurship education introduces valuable concepts and experiences to some students, its overall effectiveness in fostering concrete project-planning skills remains limited. This observation aligns with previous findings in this study, particularly regarding the lack of specialized professors and the predominantly theoretical nature of the course content. International literature also highlights that entrepreneurship education tends to be more effective when it incorporates experiential and practical learning approaches rather than relying solely on theoretical instruction (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Nabi et al., 2017).

Additionally, institutional factors appear to play a significant role in shaping students' engagement and outcomes. The classification of entrepreneurship as an exploratory subject with limited credit and perceived importance leads many students to deprioritize attendance and participation. This, in turn, weakens the impact of entrepreneurship education on students' knowledge and aspirations. Furthermore, resource constraints, such as the scarcity of relevant library materials—particularly in accessible languages—further hinder students' ability to gain practical knowledge and inspiration.

These findings underscore the need for a comprehensive reform in entrepreneurship education at the university level, including upgrading course status, enriching curricular content with real-life case studies and practical projects, improving library resources in multiple languages, and enhancing faculty specialization. Such measures are critical for fostering a generation of students who are not only familiar with entrepreneurial concepts but are also equipped to develop, plan, and implement innovative projects in real-world contexts.

Table 4. Illustrates the extent of availability of specialized entrepreneurship references at the university library from the researchers' perspective.

Availability of specialized entrepreneurship books in the library	Freq	%
Yes	39	%35.10
No	72	%64.90
Total	111	%100

Source: A field study conducted by researcher Aouissi Kamel using the spss v 22

Table 4 presents students' perceptions regarding the availability of specialized entrepreneurship references in the university library. The results reveal that a significant majority, 64.9%, indicated the absence of such resources, while only 35.1% reported that the library holds a sufficient collection of entrepreneurship-related references.

This pronounced lack of specialized materials can be attributed, in part, to the limited attention given by faculty members to this field when selecting library resources, as many tend to prioritize materials that serve broader academic disciplines. The scarcity of relevant and up-to-date entrepreneurship books and references may negatively impact students' entrepreneurial orientation, as access to such resources is essential for fostering innovation, independent learning, and the practical application of entrepreneurial concepts (Nabi et al., 2017; Ratten, 2020).

Furthermore, this shortage is particularly concerning given the university's stated objective of producing entrepreneurial graduates capable of developing start-ups, patents, and innovative projects as an alternative to traditional graduation theses. The lack of adequate references may therefore undermine these institutional efforts, limiting students' capacity to engage in self-directed entrepreneurial activity and to develop projects that address the specific needs of their communities.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that universities systematically invest in updating and diversifying their library holdings to include contemporary, multilingual references on entrepreneurship and project management. Collaboration between faculty, librarians, and industry experts can ensure that library collections remain relevant and supportive of the university's strategic mission to foster a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem.

6.2 Accompanying the Entrepreneurship Center and its Role in Enhancing Entrepreneurial Culture among University Students

Recent international research emphasizes the pivotal role that university-based Entrepreneurship Centers play in nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets and supporting the transition of students from theoretical knowledge to practical venture creation (Nabi et al., 2017; Ratten, 2020).

In the Algerian context, the establishment of Entrepreneurship Centers aims to disseminate entrepreneurial thinking and activate an entrepreneurial culture within the university community, motivating students to consider launching their own ventures.

Such centers are designed to produce highly qualified entrepreneurial graduates who are confident in leading innovative projects, thereby shifting students' aspirations away from traditional employment in the public or private sectors and towards self-employment and business creation. In light of this, our study seeks to examine the extent to which the accompaniment provided by the Entrepreneurship Center equips university students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and support to create and sustain entrepreneurial projects beyond the university environment.

Table 5. Illustrates the students' awareness of the existence of the Entrepreneurship Center at the university.

Awareness of the existence of the Entrepreneurship Center	Freq	%
Yes	56	%50.5
No	55	%49.5
Total	111	%100

Table 5 displays students' awareness of the existence of the Entrepreneurship Center at the university. The findings indicate an almost even split: 50.5% of respondents reported that they were aware of the center, while 49.5% stated that they had no knowledge of its existence.

This pronounced lack of awareness is particularly notable, given the vital role that Entrepreneurship Centers are expected to play in supporting students' entrepreneurial ambitions—through guidance, training, access to resources, and connections to wider institutional and governmental support systems (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; OECD, 2017). The fact that nearly half the student body is unaware of the center's existence suggests significant gaps in communication, outreach, and the overall integration of entrepreneurial initiatives within the campus community.

Comparative research in similar educational contexts highlights that the effectiveness of university entrepreneurship support systems depends not only on the resources and services provided but also on the visibility and accessibility of those services to the entire student population (Sieger et al., 2021; World Bank, 2019). Low awareness may stem from limited promotional activities, insufficient collaboration between the center and academic departments, or a lack of direct engagement with students.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that the university enhance the visibility of the Entrepreneurship Center through targeted awareness campaigns, partnerships with faculty and student organizations, and the integration of center activities into regular academic programming. Strengthening these efforts could increase student engagement with the center's services and foster a more entrepreneurial and innovative campus culture.

Table 6 illustrates the Entrepreneurship Center's encouragement for students and its impact on acquiring project success skills.

Entrepreneurship Center's Support Project Success Skills	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	48	77.4%	35	71.4%	83	74.8%
No	14	22.6%	14	28.6%	28	25.2%
Total	62	100%	49	100%	111	100%

Table 6 examines the perceived impact of the Entrepreneurship Center's support on students' acquisition of skills essential for project success. The data show that 77.4% of students who reported receiving encouragement and support from the center believed they possessed the capabilities needed to succeed in entrepreneurial ventures. In contrast, this percentage drops to 71.4% among students who did not perceive active support from the center, indicating a notable gap in self-assessed entrepreneurial competence.

Moreover, 28.6% of students lacking perceived support from the Entrepreneurship Center reported an absence of project management skills, compared to a lower percentage (22.6%) among those who acknowledged such support. This difference suggests that the center's activities—

centered around training, guidance, and ongoing support—play a meaningful role in equipping students with practical skills and confidence for successful project development.

These findings resonate with prior research which emphasizes that targeted institutional support, particularly through dedicated entrepreneurship centers, significantly enhances students' entrepreneurial intentions, skills acquisition, and readiness for self-employment (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; European Commission, 2018). The results further indicate that the more visible and active the center's programs are—especially when extending beyond their premises through promotional events and showcasing success stories—the more effective they become in motivating students to pursue entrepreneurial paths.

Given these outcomes, it is recommended that the Entrepreneurship Center intensifies its outreach activities, increases collaboration with academic and industry partners, and integrates success stories of student entrepreneurs into university-wide communication channels. Such strategies would likely amplify students' engagement, foster a stronger entrepreneurial culture on campus, and support the transition from job seekers to innovators and project creators

Table 7 shows the Entrepreneurship Center's organization of awareness days to develop students' skills.

The existence of special events in the Entrepreneurship Center	Freq	%
Yes	67	60.4%
No	44	39.6%
Total	111	100%

Source: A field study conducted by researcher Aouissi Kamel using the spss v 22

Table 7 illustrates the extent of student participation in awareness days and events organized by the Entrepreneurship Center. The data show that 60.4% of respondents attended at least some of these activities, while 39.6% did not participate in any events.

Further inquiry into the reasons for non-attendance revealed a diversity of factors. Several students indicated that they did not receive timely or effective announcements from the Entrepreneurship Center, leading to unawareness of event schedules. Others cited logistical barriers such as the distance from the event venue or lack of information about the exact location. Some master's students reported that their heavy academic workload, particularly thesis preparation, limited their availability to attend extracurricular activities. A portion of students expressed a perception that these events offered limited practical benefit, especially given their strong orientation toward traditional employment in the public or private sector. Additionally, certain students attributed their reluctance to participate to the socio-economic and geographic context, noting that the desert environment poses challenges to entrepreneurship and innovation.

These findings suggest that, while a majority of students are exposed to awareness initiatives, there remain significant obstacles—ranging from communication gaps to personal and contextual barriers—that may reduce overall participation and impact. Addressing these challenges requires more effective communication strategies, flexible scheduling, and content tailored to students' real-world needs and aspirations

Table 8. *Illustrates the extent of the Entrepreneurship Center's contracts with support institutions and their impact on fostering the desire to establish projects.*

Concluding cooperative agreements	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
The desire to establish a project						
Yes	54	87.5	32	65.3	86	77.5
No	8	12.9	17	34.7	25	22.5
Total	62	100	49	100	111	100

Source: *A field study conducted by researcher Aouissi Kamel using the spss v 22*

Table 8 examines the impact of the Entrepreneurship Center’s cooperative agreements with support institutions on students’ desire to establish their own projects. The data reveal that 87.5% of students who are aware of such agreements express a clear intention to start a project, compared to only 65.3% among those who are unaware of these partnerships. Conversely, 34.7% of students who lack knowledge of the center’s agreements show no desire to establish a project, while this percentage drops significantly to 12.9% among those who are aware of the agreements.

These findings highlight the strong positive influence that awareness of cooperative agreements and external institutional support has on fostering students’ entrepreneurial intentions. Students cited that such agreements provide tangible incentives and facilitate access to essential resources, making the prospect of launching a project more attainable.

The results also indicate that beyond institutional support, students’ motivation to establish projects is shaped by their individual entrepreneurial culture, access to quality training, and the guidance they receive from ideation through to implementation. Obstacles such as financial barriers and limited support remain, but the existence of cooperative agreements and business incubators serves as a critical incentive for innovation and societal development.

In summary, the data underscore the importance of effective communication regarding the Entrepreneurship Center’s partnerships with external organizations. By raising students’ awareness of available opportunities and support mechanisms, universities can significantly enhance students’ willingness and readiness to embark on entrepreneurial ventures, shifting their outlook from job seekers to project creators

7. Results of the Study:

This study explored the key factors contributing to the enhancement of entrepreneurial culture among university students, with a particular emphasis on entrepreneurial education and the role of the Entrepreneurship Center. The findings reveal that entrepreneurial education stands out as one of the most effective means for familiarizing students with the principles of entrepreneurship, equipping them with the necessary skills, and encouraging them to pursue innovative ventures. Students generally demonstrated a positive disposition toward entrepreneurship, attributing their acceptance and enthusiasm largely to the exposure and skills gained through university courses.

Despite these positive trends, the research also uncovered a noticeable deficiency in both theoretical and practical materials related to entrepreneurship, which may hinder the broader establishment of an entrepreneurial mindset among students at the University of Ghardaia. Although the entrepreneurship courses delivered at the university are primarily theoretical, they nonetheless provide valuable knowledge, experiences, and foster positive attitudes toward entrepreneurial activity.

The Entrepreneurship Center plays a pivotal role in guiding students from the ideation stage to the actual establishment of projects, often in cooperation with various support and assistance organizations. However, its overall effectiveness is somewhat constrained by limited promotion and

outreach, restricting its influence to specific university departments. Notwithstanding these challenges, the center has demonstrated a significant impact in fostering entrepreneurial culture among students, notably through the organization of events and workshops throughout the academic year. Furthermore, the Entrepreneurship Center has succeeded in motivating students to develop research-based projects and launch startups, particularly upon the completion of their Master's programs. Its ongoing support, provision of resources, and continuous engagement have contributed to the dissemination of the entrepreneurial mindset, enhancing students' capacities for innovation and increasing their readiness to pursue independent ventures beyond the university setting.

8. Recommendations and/or Implications for Social Work

Based on our findings that entrepreneurial education and the activities of university-based entrepreneurship centers positively influence students' entrepreneurial intentions and skills, several implications for social work practice, policy, and research in Algeria and Africa emerge:

- **Integration into Social Work Education:** Social work programs should integrate entrepreneurial skills and mindsets into their curricula. This will enable future social workers to develop innovative, sustainable approaches for addressing complex social and economic challenges within communities.

- **Collaboration and Partnership:** Universities, social work professionals, and community organizations are encouraged to collaborate in promoting entrepreneurship education. Partnerships with local businesses and support institutions can create practical opportunities for students to apply entrepreneurial concepts in real-life settings.

- **Targeted Support for Marginalized Groups:** Special attention should be paid to marginalized and vulnerable populations, including women and rural youth, by ensuring they have access to entrepreneurship training, mentoring, and resources. Social workers can play a vital role in identifying barriers and advocating for inclusive policies.

- **Policy Development and Advocacy:** Policymakers should recognize entrepreneurship as a viable tool for social development and economic empowerment. They are urged to develop supportive frameworks and funding mechanisms that facilitate student-led projects and community-based enterprises.

- **Future Research Directions:** There remains a need for further research into the long-term impact of entrepreneurship education on graduates' career paths and community outcomes. Mixed-methods and longitudinal studies are recommended to capture the depth and sustainability of entrepreneurial initiatives fostered by universities.

By implementing these recommendations, social work practitioners, educators, and policymakers can contribute significantly to fostering a culture of innovation, resilience, and sustainable development across Algeria and the African continent

Conclusion

In the pursuit of sustainable development, nations continuously strive to fulfill their peoples' aspirations for stability, economic security, growth and prosperity. Within this context, the university stands as the apex educational institution and is entrusted with a pivotal role: fostering an entrepreneurial culture among students across all disciplines and levels. It is imperative that universities nurture and support exceptional students who embody the potential of future entrepreneurs, equipping them with the skills necessary to establish innovative ventures and cultivate creative thinking and developmental behavior.

Transforming the conventional perception of universities as mere providers of theoretical knowledge into institutions that actively engage in practical innovation is essential for national progress. To solidify an entrepreneurial culture among university students, this study offers the following key recommendations:

First, Algerian universities must reform their training strategies to evolve into entrepreneurial universities. This transition requires comprehensive modifications to academic programs and curricula, ensuring that entrepreneurship is embedded as a core objective across all disciplines. It is

equally important to supplement theoretical coursework with practical applications, enabling students to collaborate with institutions and projects that enhance their expertise and creative capacity.

Additionally, universities should implement targeted training programs and academic events in collaboration with Entrepreneurship Centers. These initiatives should actively involve students in planning and organizing, thus fostering an innovative spirit and a sense of ownership. Greater emphasis must also be placed on the entrepreneurship course itself—raising its academic value and credit to motivate diligent participation.

Further, recruiting specialized faculty in entrepreneurship and securing adequate funding—potentially through innovative financing mechanisms—will enhance the effectiveness of entrepreneurial education. Organizing exhibitions and showcases for student entrepreneurs can provide valuable practical experience and facilitate peer learning and consultation.

Diversifying teaching methods and adopting internationally recognized best practices is crucial. Moving beyond traditional pedagogies to include experiential and project-based learning will empower students to develop entrepreneurial skills in line with global standards. Finally, the role of the Entrepreneurship Center should be strengthened and transformed into a dynamic hub for technical support, idea generation, and the realization of innovative student projects.

By embracing these recommendations, Algerian universities can not only cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets among students, but also contribute significantly to the nation's socio-economic advancement.

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