

THE INFLUENCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND PREVIOUS ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERIENCE ON STUDENT'S DESIRABILITY TO SELF-EMPLOYMENT A CASE OF HEIS IN DHOFAR REGION IN OMAN

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***Abstract:** Entrepreneurship education is always considered as one of the tools to increasing the awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship in economic growth and sustainable development. Few researches have been conducted in Oman concerning entrepreneurship but, no attention has been given to entrepreneurship education. The main objective of this research is to spot light on the Influence of the entrepreneurship education and previous entrepreneurial experience on student's carrier intention in HEIs in Dhofar Region. A survey has been conducted to collect data. The data has been gathered through questionnaires of 341 students from different specialization from Dhofar University, College of Applied Sciences and Technical College in Dhofar Region.*

To test hypotheses of this research; researchers use descriptive analysis, factor analysis and two way ANOVA to test the effect and compare the means of respondent students between universities using SPSS 21.

After the data has been analyzed, the main results reveal that most of university students consider desirable to create a new firm and there is a statistical significant and positively relationship between student's capabilities on the intention construct. Also, the entrepreneurship education has no positive significant impact on student's career intention.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Education, Intention, student's capabilities, HEIs, Oman,

JEL Classifications: G35, G35, M45.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is considered as vehicles for economic growth and sustainable and regional development in many countries. It is play a significant role in job creation for citizens and important for improvement of their life. (Blessing and Dafe, 2014) showed that

“the growing importance of the role of Entrepreneurs in a country’s economic growth and development has stirred up both developed and developing countries to formulate policies that would promote its development in their economies”.

In this regard, the government of Oman has given attention to entrepreneurship to diverse the economy and to be force for employment creation instead of depending on public jobs that created by government Corporations. The government announces for many procedures to prepare environment for entrepreneurship such as establishing Al-Rafd Fund and encouraging financial institutions to introduce finance for entrepreneurs, directive all public corporation to give them chance to participate in support services beside big companies, encouraging the universities and colleges to disseminate entrepreneurship culture among the students, etc.

Entrepreneurship education is crucial to increasing the awareness and skills of individuals and students to be able to run their own entrepreneurship and encourage the other to be entrepreneurs. The Entrepreneurship education assists the students to have the ability to develop their ideas and promote new products and services that create new businesses. It is expected to provide students the awareness and practical skills that help them to be able managing their own business and to be self-employed.

A model has been developed by (Shapero and Sokol, 1982) they claimed that entrepreneurship intention is influences by life change and sequent behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explored by (Ajzen, 1991) there is a relationship between beliefs, attitudes and carrier intentions, people’s beliefs and attitudes regarding a particular behavior will influence their intention to be entrepreneurs.

As shown by previous research that there are essential factors have important role in encouraging a person to select whether to be entrepreneurs or to searching for a job.(Dyke *et al.*, 1999) shown that there is strong correlation between individuals past business experience and carrier intention. Many studies investigating the reasons behind why individuals become entrepreneurs have also identified previous experience in business as what was mentioned by (Carsrud, Gaglio and Olin, 1986) and (Kets, 1977).

University student’s background is different, which might lead variance in their self-employment intentions. Recently, most universities and higher colleges in Oman have started to offer entrepreneurial education particularly in business schools as a part of their curriculum. In this research it is considered that both entrepreneurial education and previous entrepreneurial experience will influence the carrier intention

of undergraduate students to being entrepreneurs after graduation (Robinson and Sexton, 1994).

The impact of entrepreneurial education on the desire of students on the creation of their own businesses is one of the topics that have not yet been resolved internationally and only very a few research are focusing on it in Oman. The research is expected to fill this gap in the literature. The importance of research stems from the importance of entrepreneurial education that comes from today's students is the pioneers of the entrepreneurship in the future who are expecting to be leaders of this project. There is no one knows about the interest of students in Oman toward career in entrepreneurship. The findings of the study will create policy that may help more students to start their own business.

The main purpose of this research is to find out the influence of entrepreneurial education on interest of students to being entrepreneurial after graduation in some higher Education's Institution (HEIs) in Dhofar Region namely, Dhofar University, Applied College and Technical College and to examine the influence of undergraduate students' perceived desirability of self-employment and students' perceived entrepreneurial capabilities on self-employment intentions. In addition, the research tries to compare the entrepreneurship interest between male and female students.

This research is an attempt to explore the effect of entrepreneurship education and the level of previous experience in business on the carrier intention of graduate student in HEIs in Dhofar Region. Research questions are as follows:

1. Discovering the extent of the implemented entrepreneurial education in the universities included in this research lead to strong a tendency of students to setting up their own business.
2. Discovering the extent of the capabilities of the university student (which is considered as a potential effect on his intention of self-employment).

2. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

This research considers entrepreneurial education and previous entrepreneurial experience, and gender as factors explores their influence stimulating student attitudes towards entrepreneurship careers. (Hatten and Ruhland, 1995) claimed that entrepreneurial Educational program improved students' entrepreneurial attitude. A long the same line others such as (Peterman and Kennedy, 2003) and (Krueger, 1993) report that entrepreneurship education is an important factor to encourage students toward intentions to run their own business.

Many authors like (De Wit and Van Winden, 1989) and (Matthews and Moser, 1996) have concluded study on business graduates in the US; they concluded that males have higher aspirations and interest in build their own enterprises than females.

(Kolveroid and Isaksen, 2006) argued that subsequent actual behavior is strongly associated with new entrepreneurs to become self-employed. In addition, (Armitage and Conner, 2001) confirmed that capabilities are more succinctly defined and more strongly correlated with intention than perceived behavioral control, and that perceived feasibility of self-employment and perceived entrepreneurial capabilities whilst not identical are highly correlated.

- **H₁:** There is no significant impact of student's involvements in entrepreneurship's courses on his intention of self-employment.
- **H₂:** There is a significant impact of student's capabilities on his intention of self-employment.
- **H₃:** There is a significant impact of the mutual influence between the course of entrepreneurship and student's Capabilities on his intention of self-employment.

The research is organized as follows; the second section (2) reviews some of the literature in the field of entrepreneurial education and previous entrepreneurial experience. Section (3) provides the methodology and the required review of the study data, followed by section forth (4) that deal with the empirical findings. Moreover, last section (5) offers the most important conclusions of the study and some recommendations.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to (Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990), entrepreneurship is the process by which individuals pursue opportunities without regard to resources they currently control. However, different authors have defined entrepreneurship in different ways. (Krueger, Reilly and Carsud, 2000) defined entrepreneurship as a way of thinking that emphasizes opportunities over threats. (Drucker, 1993) asserts that entrepreneurship rests on a theory of economy and society; the theory that sees change as normal and healthy. In that context the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it and exploits it as an opportunity (Drucker, 1993). Generally, intention is the cognitive state immediately prior to executing a behavior (Douglas and Shepherd, 2002).

3.1. Entrepreneurial Education

Entrepreneurial education is focused on developing youth with the passion and multiple skills. It aims to reduce the risk associated with entrepreneurship thought and guide the enterprise successfully through its initial stage to the maturity stage. According to (Brown, 2000) entrepreneurial education is designed to communicate and inculcate competencies, skills and values needed to recognize business opportunity, organize and start new business venture. The interest of students on Entrepreneurship

has been focused by early research. (Scott and Twomey, 1988) considered the intention of students in US and showed only 24.6% of students desired to be self-employment and run their own business in the early 1980s. Studies in other countries indicate similar results. Also they studied the tendency of students to be entrepreneurs after graduation in the UK and the result illustrated that 40.7% of students and 34.3% of Irish students were interested in starting their own business in the early 1980s. (Davies and Gibb, 1991) made a big survey and concluded that 40% of students interested to set up their own business after graduation and only 5% already were business owner. Most previous studies have indicated a strong significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and career intention. For example, (Kolvereid and Moen, 1997) has shown that Students who are studying in business more desire to being entrepreneurs and are likely to set up their own business compared with students in other major. In addition, (Noel, 2001) confirmed that students who graduated in entrepreneurship specialization show higher interest entrepreneurial desire and intention than students who graduated in other disciplines. In addition, (Ekpoh and Edet, 2011) test the impact of entrepreneurship education on career intentions among 500 students in selected universities in Nigeria, the results show that there was a strong relationship between entrepreneurship education and intention of students to being entrepreneurs after they will be graduated. Along the Same line (Izedonmi and Okafor, 2010) confirmed that the students' who receive entrepreneurship education has positive influence on the students' entrepreneurial intentions.

Many authors such as (Maki, 1999), (Douglas & Shepherd, 2002) and (Dean, 2004) claimed that entrepreneurial education increases the intention to start business among University undergraduates. Wang, C.K.; Wong (2004) examined the level and determinants of interest in entrepreneurship among university undergraduate students in Singapore While the study finds a high level of interest, inadequate business knowledge and perceived risk are found to be significant deterrents. Other studies like (Gorman *et al.*, 1997) and (Kourilsky and Walstad, 1998) claimed that entrepreneurship education considered as a crucial factor that assist students to think about fostering an entrepreneurial attitude in the future after graduation.

(Postigo and Tomborini, 2004) explained that It is commonly believed that entrepreneurship education has make a positive influence enhancing the entrepreneurship orientation of people, providing all tools necessary for starting up new business.

3.2. Entrepreneurial Experience and Self-Efficacy

Other factors were well documented by many researchers, according to (Shapero and Sokol, 1982) pointed out the desirability of entrepreneurship affected by their own personal attitudes, values and feelings, which are a result of their unique social environments (*e.g.* family, peer groups, educational and professional influences). In

other words, an individual need to first see the act of self-employment as desirable before it is likely self-employment intentions will be formed.

(Taylor and Thorpe, 2004) explored that personal, family and peer influences can affect graduates' entrepreneurial motivation and career aspirations.

Many previous studies mentioned that there is a strong association between entrepreneurship education, previous entrepreneurial experience and entrepreneurial intentions only if they change their attitudes and perceptions such as, perceived desirability of self-employment and entrepreneurial capabilities. (Ardichvili, Cardozo, Ray, 2003) developed a framework to further the theory. The model shows entrepreneurial alertness to be influenced by personality traits, such as creativity and optimism, social networks, relevant prior knowledge and experience (Kets, 1977).

(Shapero and Sokol, 1982) claimed that the individual's perceptions of desirability and perceptions of feasibility is related to new venture formation and its influence by life path changes. It follows that a goal of entrepreneurship education would be to develop in students, a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship perceived desirability of self-employment as in (Douglas and Shepherd, 2002) who identified perceived desirability and feasibility as two other critical antecedents of entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, (Bird, 1988) considered desirability to be formed through 'intuitive thinking' in the intentions process, and feasibility, discussed next, as 'rational thinking'. Perceived desirability of entrepreneurship is an affective attitudinal judgment (as an emotive response) and entrepreneurs use such judgment to make decisions on whether or not to act (Mitchell *et al.*, 2002).

Self-Efficacy is originally defined by (Bandura, 1994) as

"one's beliefs in their abilities to perform a certain level of performance or desired outcomes that influence situations that affect their lives",

It is related to self-confidence and individual capabilities, which are dependent on prior experience, vicarious learning, social encouragement, and physiological issues (Bandura, 1982). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) relates to the individual's confidence that they can successfully accomplish tasks associated with individual entrepreneurship, and ESE has been found to be related to the formation of entrepreneurial intentions.

In addition, self-efficacy has been associated with opportunity recognition and risk-taking (Krueger and Dickson 1994) as well as career choice (Krueger and Dickson 1994).

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

As the main objective of this research is to assess and analyze the impact of entrepreneurial education and capabilities of students on their intention to be an entrepreneurs between higher education students.

A survey has been conducted to obtaining data from students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Dhofar Governorate (Dhofar University, Applied Science College and Technical College in Salalah). The data was gathered through questionnaire. The sample size of 341 undergraduate students from different major from second year in different specialization namely, Computer Science, Business, Engineering, Arts, Applied Sciences and law in this HEIs in Dhofar Region has been selected randomly. The valid questionnaires are 303 (see Table 1). As it excludes undergraduate students in the first year from the survey because we thought that they were not exposure to the entrepreneurial education and they offering only foundation subjects.

The questionnaire is a closed questionnaire and consists of two sections. The first part concentrated on personal, demographic and economic characteristics information from the respondents that was deemed necessary to achieve the objectives of the study. The second part of the questionnaire ask respondents to rate the relative to each specific question.

To test hypotheses of this research; the researchers use descriptive analysis, factor analysis and TWO Way ANOVA to test the effect and compare the means of respondent students between universities using SPSS 21.

The questionnaire is distributed to the study sample and resulted in the distribution and sorting the results as shown in the table below.

Table 1
Distribution of the questionnaire on the study sample

Questionnaires	No.	%
Distributed	342	100
Recovered	342	100
Analyzable	303	88.5%

Table 1 gives more information about the research sample as 341 questionnaire were distributed and the recovered questionnaires were 100% as all faculty members were very collaborated, but the valid questionnaires for analysis were 303 (88.5%).

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is done using descriptive analysis, factor analysis for the intention construct and Two Way Anova of the proposed model.

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

Also this table gives more information about the research sample:

1. All students from Dhofar University didn't take a course about entrepreneurship as this course will be implemented starting from academic year 16-17, but this course is implemented for more than three years in

Table 2
Demographic characteristics of the study sample

Variable	Technical College of Salah			College of Applied Science in Salah			Dhofar University		
	No.	%	Total	No.	%	Total	No.	%	Total
1. Gender									
Male	45	60.8%	74	79	69.9%	113	85	73.3%	116
Female	29	39.2%		34	31.1%		31	26.7%	
2. Education related to Entrepreneurship									
Yes	30	40.5%	74	55	48.6%	113	0	0%	116
No	44	59.5%		58	51.4%		116	100%	
3. Self-employed									
Yes	4	5.4%	74	6	5.6%	113	7	6%	116
No	70	94.6%		107	94.4%		109	94%	
4. Parents Self-employed									
Yes	34	45.9%	74	48	42.4%	113	55	47.4%	116
No	40	54.1%		65	47.6%		61	52.5%	

Technical College of Salah and the Applied college, this gives the researchers an opportunity to accurately meet one of the goals of the research.

- The results indicate very low proportion of self-employed students from all universities.
- The results indicate about 50% of parents who are self-employed in each university.

4.2. Factor Analysis for Intention Construct

The initial factor analysis indicated the existence of one dimension (one-factor solution) of intention construct which contains (Desirability, Attractive idea, working for others, Satisfying, objective, Idea Implementation, Encouraging My Collages). All variables seen in table 3 are the principal descriptors of first dimension. As recommended by (Hair, Anderson, and Tatham, 1998), with respect to sample size, items that have a loading of less than 0.4 should be removed.

The final factor analysis shows sound discriminated validity. Loadings ranges from 0.455 to 0.871 showing a clear discriminated validity, in addition the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) equals to .910, and total variance explained is 63.2%, Chi-Square equals to 1221.797 with a degree of freedom of 21 at a significance level of .000. These all indicate that good discriminated validity was established among the intention construct, represents a one dimension which is intention.

Reliability was calculated based on Cronbach's alpha for the main construct enterprise system infrastructure architecture, the result showed a reasonable reliability

Table 3
Factor analysis results of Enterprise System Planning

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Loading</i>
Desirability	.871
Attractive idea	.864
Working for others	.852
Satisfying	.846
objective	.823
Idea Implementation	.768
Encouraging My Collages	.455
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO)	.910
<i>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</i>	
Approx. Chi-Square	1221.797
df	21
Sig.	.000
Total Variance Explained	63.2%
Cronbach's Alpha	.897
N of Items	7

Cronbach's Alpha equals to 0.897 as the measures greater than 0.6 are thought to reach the usual acceptable range (Hair, Anderson, and Tatham, 1998). As the items loaded significantly on one dimension.

4.3. Twoway Anova

The following table gives the results of hypothesis testing using Twoway Anova with full factorial option.

Table 4
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects
Dependent Variable: Intention

<i>Source</i>	<i>Type III Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Corrected Model	38.362 ^a	10	3.836	3.833	.000
Intercept	326.306	1	326.306	326.045	.000
Course	.062	1	.062	.062	.803
Capabilities	24.886	5	4.977	4.973	.000
Course * Capabilities	3.156	4	.789	.788	.534
Error	291.233	291	1.001		
Total	3967.057	302			
Corrected Total	329.595	301			

a. R Squared = .116 (Adjusted R Squared = .086)

From the table above it could be noticed that:

1. The effect of the course of entrepreneurship on the intention construct is not significant as $p = 0.803 > 0.05$ so hypothesis 1 is rejected.

2. The effect of student's Capabilities on the intention construct is significant as $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ($df = 5$ and $F = 4.973$) so hypothesis 2 is accepted.
3. The effect of the mutual influence between the course of entrepreneurship and student's Capabilities on his intention of self-employment is not significant as $p = 0.534 > 0.05$ so hypothesis 3 is rejected.

5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aims at examining the effects of student's involvements in entrepreneurship's education and the capabilities of the university's students on his intention of self-employment. The data were collected from 341 undergraduate students from different major from second year in different specialization in HEIs in Dhofar governorate.

The study was build the hypotheses based on the results of literature reviews. The results of those studies were mixed since some of them indicated significant effects and others indicated no significant effects. The results of statistical analysis indicate that the effect of student's capabilities on the intention construct is significant while there is no strong relationship between entrepreneurship educations and student's career intention.

We believe that some important contributions to the literature have been made. The first one is that the study provides new evidence in the ongoing debate about the impact of student's involvements in entrepreneurship's education and the capabilities of the university's students on his intention of self-employment. Particular, this evidence is coming from Middle East area. Second, we provide evidence for policy makers in Oman to review the entrepreneurship education policies in HEIs.

According to the research results, and by linking them to research objectives, the researchers recommend to conduct more studies about the role of entrepreneurial education in building the spirit of entrepreneurship between the students of higher education in Oman.

The researchers belie the results of statistical analysis indicate of the importance of re-conducting this research to cover all universities across Oman to determine the efficiency of teaching the course of entrepreneurship to find the efficient way to implement it.

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