



Spreading The Entrepreneurial Mindset and The University's New Role in Building the National Economy

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to shed light on the university's new role, which now goes beyond education and training to include contributing to the construction of the national economy. This is achieved through promoting and developing the entrepreneurial spirit within university communities by relying on a set of mechanisms, and creating spaces dedicated to entrepreneurship education such as the Entrepreneurship House, business incubators, scientific clubs, as well as forums and academic seminars related to enhancing the culture of entrepreneurship among university students. This strategy is likely to embrace students' ideas and projects and bring them to life, allowing students to become entrepreneurs with the support of various state-backed institutions and structures designed to assist emerging projects.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, University, Economic and Social Development.

Introduction

The entrepreneurial mindset is increasingly gaining importance in our era. Entrepreneurship is one of the most significant driving forces of economic development. It creates new job opportunities, stimulates innovation, and enhances market competitiveness.

The Algerian state plays a pivotal role in supporting entrepreneurial thinking as a core driver of economic and social development, particularly in light of the economic challenges it faces. Entrepreneurship has thus become an effective tool and strategy to encourage youth innovation and wealth creation, contributing to reduced unemployment and diversification of the national economy beyond the hydrocarbon sector. To achieve this, the state has recently established numerous programs and policies to fund start-up projects and relied on various spaces to promote the entrepreneurial mindset. The university is considered the most important institution targeted by the state to achieve these objectives, as it serves as a locomotive for development. Its role has significantly evolved beyond being a mere educational institution focused on traditional academic curricula to becoming a central hub for developing a culture of entrepreneurship. This is accomplished by equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills, offering training programs and workshops, organizing competitions for young entrepreneurs, and fostering competitiveness to encourage them to launch their own projects. This is made possible through the provision of a supportive university environment, as most universities across the country now have platforms for supporting innovative ideas and encouraging entrepreneurial thinking. These include business incubators, technology and innovation support centers, patent protection offices, Entrepreneurship Houses, university-industry liaison offices, and artificial intelligence centers. These structures provide the necessary consultations to help students bring their ideas to life, turning them into real projects that contribute to the growth of the national economy.

In this context, this article seeks to address the following research question: Does spreading the entrepreneurial mindset at the university level contribute to achieving economic and social development? And what mechanisms are used to achieve this?

To answer this question, the article is divided into the following parts:

- First: Definition of concepts
- Second: Requirements of entrepreneurship
- Third: Mechanisms for activating entrepreneurship within university settings
- Fourth: The economic and social impacts of entrepreneurship

First: Definition of Concepts

1. The Concept of Entrepreneurship

There are many definitions related to the concept of entrepreneurship in form, but they converge in meaning and content. Some view it as a domain for innovation and creativity, others see it as a lifestyle or behavior, and some consider it a way to seek adventure and take risks. Among the most well-known definitions are:

- The French researcher Alain Fayolle defines entrepreneurship as a dynamic process that involves identifying opportunities and creating value through innovation and resource organization in various contexts, whether within existing institutions or start-ups.¹
- One of the pioneers of entrepreneurship theory, Joseph Schumpeter, defines it as the process of innovation and introducing new changes in the market by developing new products, services, or production methods, thereby triggering economic transformations.²
- Robert Hisrich defines it as a process aimed at producing a new, valuable product by devoting the necessary time and effort and bearing the associated risks (financial, psychological, and social), in exchange for both material and moral satisfaction.³
- Entrepreneurship is also defined as an activity aimed at establishing a new project that offers added economic value by efficiently managing available resources to provide a distinguished new product or by innovating a creative economic activity that involves risk-taking.⁴

Based on the previous definitions, an operational definition of entrepreneurship can be formulated as follows: It is the process of innovating and realizing a new project on the ground, relying on the exploitation of opportunities, effective use of available resources, and risk management. This process creates added value for society with the aim of achieving economic goals or solving social, environmental, or technological problems—such as inventing technologies and applications to develop products and services using innovative and modern techniques.

2. The Concept of the University

The definition of the university varies according to scholars' perspectives on its function and role in society. Some of these definitions are presented below:

- John Henry Newman views the university as an institution whose purpose is to expand and disseminate knowledge. He considered its primary function to be general education and the cultivation of minds rather than merely training for specific professions.⁵
- Cardinal Newman, in his book *The Idea of a University*, explained that the university is the place where students' minds are cultivated through the study of both the humanities and applied sciences, with a focus on intellectual formation.⁶
- Meanwhile, Clark Kerr described the modern university as a "Multiversity," combining education, research, and community service, while responding to the diverse needs of students and society.
- It is also defined as an institution that plays an important role in preserving, developing, and critiquing knowledge and in supporting creative capacities.⁷
- Some argue that the university, from a social perspective, is a social institution whose activity is directed toward meeting the social demand for higher education and contributing to the social development of society. Economically, it is seen as an institution aimed at preparing the human capital necessary to lead economic development in a given country, at the lowest possible cost and according to principles of rationality, caution, and logical communication.⁸

Based on these definitions, it is clear that the university is not merely a place of education, but rather a center for knowledge transfer, scientific research development, and community service. Accordingly, the following operational definition can be proposed:

The university is an educational and research institution concerned with providing higher and specialized education through diverse academic programs aimed at training students in various fields. It is a hub of creativity in terms of knowledge production and both theoretical and applied research. It also encourages scientific, cultural, and athletic activities, fosters creativity, develops skills, and supports innovation and entrepreneurial projects to contribute to the social and economic development of society.

3. The Concept of Economic Development

Economic development is a broad and multidimensional concept. Scholars have defined it differently based on its economic and social aspects. Some of these definitions include:

- Michael Todaro defines economic development as a multidimensional process aimed at improving the quality of life of individuals in a given society through increased income, equitable wealth distribution, social justice, and institutional and structural changes in the economy.⁹
- Joseph Schumpeter views economic development as the dynamic change that occurs in the economy as a result of innovation, such as the introduction of new products, innovative production methods, and the opening of new markets.

- Paul Baran, in his book *The Political Economy of Growth*, sees economic development as the process of overcoming economic and social barriers that hinder sustainable growth and improved living standards.

- Ibrahim Salama defines development as "a multidimensional process that involves radical changes in social, behavioral, cultural, political, and administrative structures alongside increased rates of economic growth, equitable distribution of national income, and the eradication of absolute poverty in a society".¹⁰

Each of these definitions reflects a particular viewpoint or emphasis on a specific dimension of economic development, whether linked to economic growth, social transformation, or innovation and creativity. Based on this, economic development can be defined as follows:

Economic development is a continuous process aimed at improving the economic and social situation and the standard of living of individuals in society by creating job opportunities to increase productivity. It focuses on infrastructure improvement based on scientific research and modern technologies, enhances economic and human competencies, encourages investment in various sectors, and ensures the optimal use of available resources and capacities to develop the community's economy and achieve the well-being of its people.

Second: Requirements for Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship requires a set of factors, steps, and skills to create and manage a successful project. Some relate to personal traits and skills, others to the nature of the idea or project and its demand in the market, in addition to administrative and technical requirements. Some of these can be summarized as follows:

Personal Requirements:

- **Preparedness:** This includes the psychological traits, attitudes, and values that manifest in the entrepreneur (attitudes, creativity, sense of responsibility, self-confidence, solidarity, leadership, etc.). The need for achievement encourages optimal performance, the pursuit of goals, and the assumption of responsibility. According to David McClelland, the founder of the *Need Theory*, "the drive for human achievement is presumably a good thing, and it should help us know what to pursue and thus avoid chasing illusions in which we have no stake. Opportunities for self-development must be created if we apply motivational principles to achieve our life goals."¹¹
- **Ability to learn and continuously improve and develop skills.**
- **Initiative and creativity:** The entrepreneur should have the ability to innovate new ideas or adopt existing ones and develop them according to current needs and trends. Entrepreneurship becomes a desirable career path, especially for those with exceptional and unique skills. McClelland affirms that the main factor for a country's development is not money or technology, but rather individuals with creative and innovative ideas.¹²
- **Skills, expertise, and knowledge, as well as good interpersonal abilities, especially in the entrepreneurial process.**
- **Determination:** Building a business requires intensive planning and self-motivation. Whether you're starting a new venture or assembling a team of like-minded individuals, you'll need sustained willpower to push yourself forward.¹³
- **Risk-taking ability:** Willingness to bear potential risks. An entrepreneur is someone who can organize and manage a business while taking risks to achieve profit. They may also consult advisors to carry out their tasks.¹⁴
- **Perseverance and patience in the face of challenges, and resilience against obstacles to ensure continuity.**
- **Leadership and management skills, including the ability to manage human and financial resources effectively.**
- **Effective communication skills, with the ability to manage teams and regulate work relationships within the workplace and with partners and clients.**

Technical and Administrative Requirements:

- **Feasibility study and market analysis to identify the target audience and areas of competition.** A feasibility study is a methodology for making investment decisions. It relies on a set of methods, tools, and scientific foundations that enable accurate understanding of the chances of success or failure of a given investment project. It assesses the project's ability to achieve specific goals focused on maximizing returns and benefits for private investors, the national economy, or both over the project's lifespan.¹⁵
- **A clear business plan with defined goals and a strategic approach.** In the fast-paced and ever-changing business world, a business plan becomes the most powerful and influential tool in the hands of creative entrepreneurs. It is not just an organizational document, but a compass that determines direction—a roadmap to success. A business plan is a strategic document summarizing the vision and main goals of any project or company. It defines the steps needed to achieve the desired success and usually includes detailed information on the project's financial and operational aspects, in addition to environmental and market analysis.¹⁶
- **Legal procedures for registering the enterprise, obtaining its approval, and complying with various tax and regulatory systems.**
- **Effective resource management:** Using available resources efficiently to achieve maximum benefit.
- **Adaptability to challenges:** Requires flexibility and the ability to adjust to conditions and changes.

- Building communication networks between students and entrepreneurs to prepare a generation capable of innovation and economic contribution.
- Providing platforms for communication with entrepreneurs and investors.
- Creating digital platforms: Developing digital platforms to provide information related to planning and project management, as well as offering online training courses to disseminate and promote entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.

Market Requirements:

- Marketing skills: The entrepreneur must be capable of effectively marketing the product or service, mastering both traditional and digital methods.
- Opportunity identification: The ability to detect unmet market needs and convert them into opportunities.
- Distribution channels: Ensuring the availability of channels to deliver the product using both physical and digital means.

Financial Requirements:

- Possession of initial capital, whether through personal savings or by benefiting from loans provided by support and mentorship agencies mobilized by the state. These agencies help support youth and promote entrepreneurship, such as:
 - The National Agency for Entrepreneurship Support and Development (NESDA), which supports small and medium-sized projects through funding and assistance at all stages—from training to operation. It also offers tax incentives to beneficiaries.
 - The National Agency for the Support of Microcredit (ANJEM).
 - The National Agency for Investment Development (L'ANDI).
 - Additionally, the Algerian Institution for Youth Support and Entrepreneurship Development, a non-governmental organization aiming to empower youth by providing support and guidance in launching and developing their projects. It offers various services such as free consultations, training, and assistance in securing funding.
- Ability to set an accurate budget to avoid waste and mismanagement of funds.
- Sustainable funding: Once the project idea succeeds, it is essential to seek long-term financing sources.

Although these requirements form the essential foundation for entering the world of entrepreneurship, they are not fixed, as the specific project idea ultimately determines the necessary requirements.

Third: Mechanisms for activating entrepreneurship within university settings

The dissemination of entrepreneurial thinking in universities is no longer a mere option, but rather a necessity to address the economic and social challenges facing societies. By fostering an entrepreneurial culture and providing the necessary mechanisms and resources, universities can play a key role in preparing a generation of youth capable of leading change and driving development. Therefore, investing in entrepreneurship within universities is, in essence, an investment in a more prosperous and sustainable future.

In this regard, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has made substantial efforts to promote entrepreneurship within universities and other higher education institutions. Among the mechanisms adopted are the following:

- Integrating Entrepreneurship Courses and Educational Programs:
Courses and educational units on entrepreneurship and project management have been introduced across various universities, equipping students with the theoretical and practical knowledge required to launch their own projects. The university is the ideal environment for embedding entrepreneurial culture through specialized programs, workshops, and training courses. In this context, *Fayolle* emphasizes the behavioral and cognitive dimension of entrepreneurship, viewing it not merely as the establishment of new businesses, but also as the spirit of initiative and renewal within innovation-driven institutions. He also highlights the role of education and academic research in developing entrepreneurial thinking.¹⁷
- Establishment of Business Incubators:
Business incubators have been set up at many universities across the country. These incubators provide supportive environments for students who wish to turn their ideas into viable and executable projects. They offer guidance and mentoring for student project holders and contribute to their training in the field of startup creation. Additionally, they provide equipped working spaces that encourage innovation, thereby increasing the likelihood of startup success.
- Establishment of Entrepreneurship Houses in All National Universities:
These entities aim to disseminate entrepreneurial thinking among graduating students, serving as a gateway into the world of business and the economic mechanisms that students must understand to build sound entrepreneurial mindsets. Their mission includes raising awareness, training, and motivating final-year students, as well as offering initial support in preparing feasibility studies for the creation of enterprises that

add value to the national economy. These Houses also introduce various state-sponsored support and guidance mechanisms and organize training sessions and entrepreneurship competitions.

- **Creation of University-Industry Liaison Offices:**

These offices, recently established in most Algerian universities, work to strengthen partnerships with the private sector. University-private sector collaboration offers students opportunities for hands-on training and access to real-world expertise in entrepreneurship. The liaison office also studies the relationship between universities and the job market, helping bridge the gap between academic education and labor market demands. This contributes to producing graduates who are better prepared and adaptable to rapid economic changes, and who can benefit from partnership agreements that support innovation and technology transfer.

- **Creation of Technology and Innovation Support Centers and Intellectual Property Protection Offices:**

These university-based centers aim to stimulate creativity and innovation, encouraging students to adopt new ideas that lead to innovative projects meeting market needs. This, in turn, boosts economic competitiveness and creates new job opportunities. These centers also promote healthy competition among students by awarding recognition for innovation and helping them gain national and international patents. They assist in documenting intellectual property and obtaining certification from the Algerian National Institute of Industrial Property.

- **Organizing Awareness and Orientation Programs and Events:**

Universities across the country have committed to organizing exhibitions and events that raise awareness about the importance of entrepreneurship and guide students in implementing their ideas. These events provide consultations with entrepreneurship support centers within the university and include conferences dedicated to entrepreneurship to introduce students to investment opportunities.

- **Supporting Startups and Project Holders:**

The Ministry launched the "Startup Diploma" program under *Decree No. 1275*, dated September 27, 2022. This decree defines the modalities for preparing a graduation project eligible for this diploma, aiming to cultivate a generation of students imbued with a spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship. The goal is to create a new generation of entrepreneurs who possess the motivation and inclination to manage businesses and establish innovation-based enterprises. The program seeks to generate wealth and employment instead of merely seeking jobs, while also offering technological, technical, and digital solutions for companies. Obtaining the "University Diploma - Startup" requires students to complete training programs on business planning, which culminates in the creation of a graduation project that can be transformed into a startup.¹⁸

- **Organizing University Competitions and Innovation Challenges:**

Most universities in Algeria now regularly organize competitions for the best entrepreneurial ideas, encouraging creative thinking among students and offering them opportunities to present their ideas to potential investors. Examples include:

- National competitions for the best student project ideas.
- Hackathons across various disciplines to foster innovation—events where experts in project development collaborate intensively.
- The annual *Global Entrepreneurship Week*, organized to instill entrepreneurial culture among youth, particularly university students and vocational trainees. The event is held across all Algerian provinces under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Knowledge Economy and Microenterprise.

These efforts have resulted in the firm entrenchment of entrepreneurial culture, with Algeria ranking at the forefront of global standings in this field. According to the *Global Entrepreneurship Network*, Algeria ranked first worldwide in both 2022 and 2023 for the number of entrepreneurship-related events organized. The country hosted a total of 2,187 activities, the highest among all nations.

This achievement reflects the dynamism of Algeria's entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem and the training efforts spearheaded by the *Startup Accelerator Algeria Venture* in various universities. These training programs reached over 110,000 students, who in turn organized numerous regional initiatives to promote entrepreneurial concepts and unleash student creativity.¹⁹

Attracting rare skills and high-level competencies and empowering their leadership roles contributes significantly to advancing the country's economic and social development.

Fourth: Economic and Social Impacts of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has become a key factor in driving economic and social development due to the numerous positive effects it has on society. The most significant impacts are highlighted below:

1. Social Impacts of Entrepreneurship Include:

- **Individual and Community Empowerment:** The spread of entrepreneurial thinking within universities helps change students' perspectives on work, aiming to eliminate the fear of unemployment by teaching them how to create their own projects. Universities can contribute to reducing youth unemployment rates by helping students create job opportunities for themselves and others. This transforms graduates from job seekers into entrepreneurs who generate employment opportunities.

- **Fostering Initiative, Innovation, and Social Responsibility:** Entrepreneurship enhances the spirit of initiative, innovation, and social responsibility.
- **Reducing Poverty:** Entrepreneurship helps improve living standards, contributing to poverty reduction.
- **Providing Solutions to Societal Problems:** Entrepreneurship introduces innovative applications and technological programs to solve societal issues.
- **Achieving Regional Balance:** Startups and small enterprises contribute to the development of rural and remote areas, promoting local development.
- **Social Stability:** Entrepreneurship ensures social security and stability by reducing unemployment and poverty rates.
- **Achieving Sustainable Development:** Projects that take environmental and social factors into account contribute to sustainable development goals such as reducing poverty, ensuring quality education for all, fostering industry and innovation, building infrastructure, and establishing partnerships to achieve these goals, thus contributing to the creation of sustainable local communities.

2. Economic Impacts of Entrepreneurship Include:

- **Strengthening the National Economy:** Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) founded by graduates contribute to diversifying the economy and increasing GDP. They also boost exports and reduce reliance on imports. Maslow argues that the main driver of economic growth is the presence of entrepreneurs and those with creative ideas. He asserts that the most important thing for an underdeveloped society is not having a hundred (100) economists, engineers, or politicians, but having a hundred (100) entrepreneurs with innovative and creative ideas.²⁰
- **Creating Job Opportunities:** Entrepreneurship generates new jobs, helping reduce unemployment, create direct job opportunities, and promote social inclusion. Startups, small, and medium-sized enterprises have become key drivers of employment in Algeria.
- **Encouraging Innovation:** Entrepreneurship promotes the development of new products and services, stimulating economic growth and creating new markets.
- **Fostering Competition:** Entrepreneurship enhances quality and lowers prices, benefiting consumers.
- **Increasing Exports:** By developing competitive products for global markets, entrepreneurship attracts local and foreign investors.
- **Technological Innovation:** Many entrepreneurial ventures focus on technology and innovation, which contributes to industrial development and increased productivity.
- **Diversifying Economic Activities Across the Nation:** Entrepreneurship also directs economic activities to various regions of the country, extending beyond major cities. It diversifies the economy outside the oil and gas sector by encouraging youth to engage in other sectors like agriculture. The Algerian government has recently prioritized this sector, providing resources and removing obstacles to encourage investment. Agricultural expert Ahmed Malha, in a national radio interview, highlighted that the new state strategy aims to establish agricultural hubs, ensuring the proper alignment of support and scientific guidance to avoid fragmented efforts. He also mentioned that Algeria has achieved 80% self-sufficiency in hard wheat, with the goal of complete self-sufficiency by 2025, provided that farmland in the southern regions, rich in water and solar resources, is expanded. This has already led to yields of up to 80 quintals per hectare in some areas, along with modernizing the sector through smart farming practices and the use of modern technologies, as well as relying on youth and startup entrepreneurs.²¹

These positive impacts illustrate how universities can significantly contribute to building the national economy by fostering a generation of innovative entrepreneurs. These efforts enhance innovation, create job opportunities, and support sustainable development, leading to a more dynamic and competitive economy at both local and international levels.

Conclusion

Activating the entrepreneurial culture in Algerian universities is a crucial step towards achieving sustainable development and fostering the spirit of initiative among university students. Through the implementation of various mechanisms, such as introducing entrepreneurship courses, establishing business incubators, and developing partnerships with the private sector, universities have succeeded in enhancing students' skills and supporting their emerging projects. Additionally, specialized centers for innovation and patent protection contribute to enhancing economic competitiveness.

The efforts made by the Ministry of Higher Education in Algeria have yielded tangible results, as Algeria has become a leader in promoting entrepreneurial thinking worldwide. This reflects the growing dynamism of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country. Furthermore, the continued support for startups and the organization of entrepreneurship-related competitions and events enhance the ability of universities to supply the market with qualified personnel capable of adapting to contemporary economic and social challenges.

In conclusion, investing in entrepreneurship within university environments is an investment in a bright future, as these initiatives can contribute to creating new job opportunities, fostering innovation, and building a strong and sustainable economy.

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