

Bedouin of Silicon Wadi: A Case Study Analysis of the Multi-Level Perspectives and Factors Affecting Bedouin Entrepreneurialism as Obstacles to Entry into the Israeli High-Tech Industry

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Abstract : Israel is a nation of cultural and historical diversity, yet the success factors for a modern Bedouin-Arab high-tech entrepreneur seem to be different from those of other Jewish-Israeli citizens. The purpose of this descriptive narrative case study is to explore how an Arab-Israeli all Negev-Bedouin technology company has succeeded in the Israeli high-tech industry by utilizing technology and engineering career opportunities available to Bedouin youth for 'Sadel Tech,' at Be'er-Sheva, the Negev, Israel. Methods: The strategy of inquiry seeks to explore real-life contextual understandings, multi-level perspectives, and the cultural influences of personal, community, educational, and entrepreneurial factors. The research methodology includes in-depth one-on-one interviews, focus group sessions, and overt observation to explore the meaning and understanding of the constructs toward determining the effect all or a few of the elements may have on the overall success factors of the company. Results: Study results indicate that the state-run educational system in Israel fails to adequately integrate important aspects of Bedouin culture into the learning environment. However, Bedouin entrepreneurs are finding ways to compensate for these inadequacies by utilizing non-traditional methods of teaching, learning, and doing business. Government incentives for Bedouin start-ups are also recognized as contributors. Employees of Sadel live and work in the Negev, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank, further informing the study that the traditions of tribal etiquette continue to contribute to modern Bedouin-Arab business culture. Conclusion: Bedouin's business success in Israel is a multi-dimensional concept. While cultural acumen plays a prominent and unique role for both Arab-Israelis and Jewish-Israelis in economic and entrepreneurial pursuits, the marginalization of the Bedouin continues to contribute to the lack of educational and professional opportunities for Bedouin in Israel. Although recognized as important at the government level, programs necessary to implement the infrastructure required to support Bedouin entrepreneurship in Israel remain infantile. The Israeli Government is providing opportunities through grants and other incentives for Bedouin entrepreneurial start-ups, indicating that Israel has recognized the impact of this growing demographic. However, although many Bedouin graduates from University each year with advanced degrees, opportunities for Bedouin within the Israeli high-tech sector remain scarce.

Keywords : Bedouin education, Bedouin entrepreneur, economic anthropology, ethnic business opportunities, Israeli tech, Silicon Wadi

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