

The Origin and Development of Entrepreneurial Cognition: The Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Cognitive Style and Subsequent Entrepreneurial Intention

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Abstract : Entrepreneurship plays a significant and imperative role in economic and social growth, and therefore, is stimulated and encouraged by governments and academics as a mean of creating job opportunities, innovation, and wealth. Indicative of its importance, it is essential to identify factors that encourage and promote entrepreneurial behavior. This is particularly true for developing countries where the need for entrepreneurial development is high and the resources are scarce, thus, there is a need to maximize the outcomes of investing in entrepreneurial development. Entrepreneurial education has been the center of attention and interest among researchers as it is believed to be one of the most critical factors in promoting entrepreneurship over the long run. Accordingly, the urgency to encourage entrepreneurship education and develop an enterprise culture is now a main concern in Egypt. Researchers have postulated that cognition has the potential to make a significant contribution to the study of entrepreneurship. One such contribution that future studies need to consider in entrepreneurship research is the cognitive processes that occur within the individual such as cognitive style. During the past decade, there has been an increasing interest in cognitive style among researchers and practitioners specifically in innovation and entrepreneurship field. Limited studies pay attention to study the antecedent dynamics that fuel entrepreneurial cognition to better understand its role in entrepreneurship. Moreover, while many studies were conducted on entrepreneurship education, scholars are still hesitant regarding the teachability of entrepreneurship due to the lack of clear evidence of its impact. Furthermore, the relation between cognitive style and entrepreneurial intentions, has yet to be discovered. Hence, this research aims to test the impact of entrepreneurship education on cognitive style and subsequent intention in order to evaluate whether student's and potential entrepreneur's cognitive styles are affected by entrepreneurial education and in turn affect their intentions. Understanding the impact of Entrepreneurship Education on ways of thinking and intention is critical for the development of effective education and training in entrepreneurship field. It is proposed that students who are exposed to entrepreneurship education programs will have a more balanced thinking style compared to those students who are not exposed. Moreover, it is hypothesized that students having a balanced cognitive style will exhibit higher levels of entrepreneurial intentions than students having an intuitive or analytical cognitive style. Finally, it is proposed that non-formal entrepreneurship education will be more positively associated with entrepreneurial intentions than will formal entrepreneurship education. The proposed methodology is a pre and post Experimental Design. The sample will include young adults, their age range from 18 till 35 years old including both students enrolled in formal entrepreneurship education programs in private universities as well as young adults who are willing to participate in a Non-Formal entrepreneurship education programs in Egypt. Attention is now given on how far individuals are analytical or intuitive in their cognitive style, to what extent it is possible to have a balanced thinking style and whether or not this can be aided by training or education. Therefore, there is an urge need for further research on entrepreneurial cognition in educational contexts.

Keywords : cognitive style, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurship education, experimental design

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