

Chapter 56

Internet Entrepreneurship Education and its Role in Online Business: A Case From Iran

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims to analyze the online entrepreneurship education program and its role in developing online business, specifically in Iran. Seeking cost effective strategies from governors as well as developing ICT infrastructures makes it imperative to study how Internet-based methods could help to educate entrepreneurs in Iran. Accordingly, the authors evaluated the current situation of the existing programs on the one hand and reviewed various well-known programs all around the world on the other hand. The critical successful factors and the weakness of Iranian current entrepreneurial courses have mentioned and criticized. The authors developed a theoretical framework relating to online entrepreneurship education program with the purpose of training entrepreneurs through the Internet. The paper concludes by stating managerial implications and governments obligations.

INTRODUCTION

As one of the most effective economic capacity in the human history, “entrepreneurship” has been emerging, being extensively discussed, since the past three decades. According to Shane

and Venkataraman (2000) “... entrepreneurship is concerned with the discovery and exploitation of profitable opportunities” (p. 217). In this way, information and communication are the two basic requirements of every entrepreneurial activity. The venture in launching new entrepreneurial

businesses needs to provide essential information and determine an internal hierarchy as well as external relationships in its chain. By having this in mind, entrepreneurship cannot take place in isolation. It rather requires the recognition of some social needs which in turn involve cultural dynamics, discourse, narrative and identities (Jones & Murtola, 2012). Moreover, in recognizing the needs of entrepreneurial activities, the venture should have an insight into the environment and gain needed knowledge on the solutions proposed around the world to meet the needs. In this situation, it would be helpful, if the ventures to think to find new channels of meeting these goals simultaneously so that they can achieve needed knowledge, information and right relations at their convenience way. We believe Internet by having below mentioned features is the medium that has capabilities to satisfy this goal. Hence, this study is to build a framework which draw on the preliminary antecedents of using Internet to educate entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, the Internet is one of the most important devices for entrepreneurs in the developed world. Those individuals add to their abilities by exploiting the benefits of that network (Cedefop, 2001). The Internet has introduced unique possibilities such as e-commerce and e-learning, which have caused extensive changes in enterprises as well as educational institutions. E-learning, in any of its various forms and through any of the various devices available, including the Internet, can be used to make learning possible at work. E-learning employs Information and communications technology and is not limited to digital libraries. It can rather occur in different forms and incorporate multiple methodologies using software, the Internet, online learning or any other form of online media. Some experts believe that entrepreneurship is learnable (Moore & Kearsley, 2005). As the Internet continues to develop, similar advances take place in entrepreneurship education. Recent activities and advances in development of entrepreneurship education programs and creation

of new businesses are very remarkable and impressive. Educational programs are considered to be one of the strategies for developing and promoting entrepreneurship. Since entrepreneurs have little knowledge on the educational methods and courses, they consider spending time on education to be risky. One possible solution to this problem is to utilize e-learning potentials, such as desirable quality and ease of use, which encourages learners to choose this type of education as the alternative to the traditional education (Juwah, 2000). Online educational materials make it possible to provide a completely new content with a high quality and durability. E-learning rapidly changes organizational training and education while influencing socioeconomic changes, technological changes, and also changes in the behaviors and expectations of learners. There is an increasing demand for flexible and adaptive educational environments which are not dependent on the time and place of the learning (Meso & Liegle, 2000). There are several educational and non-educational organs in Iran which have offered entrepreneurship courses formally or informally at different levels, but most of the entrepreneurship education scholars are not satisfied with the effectiveness of those courses (Al-Khaldi & Ibn Yaich, 2009). The information technology has made it possible to move all the managerial processes from pen and paper toward electronic methods and automatic provision of services (Harrison, 2002). In addition, utilizing information and communications technology (ICT) has made possible quick access to information through communication devices and techniques. Therefore, the importance of optimal use of those possibilities in the development of entrepreneurship education programs cannot be neglected. Regarding the issue raised and considering that the non-local methods for entrepreneurship education are not able to realize the mentioned objectives efficiently, the research poses the following question, and tries to provide possible responses:

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