



## **Mechanisms for Disseminating Entrepreneurial Thought within the University Environment: The Case of STAPS Students**

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to identify the mechanisms for promoting the entrepreneurial spirit among students of physical and sports activities sciences and techniques. This objective is achieved by integrating and linking entrepreneurial culture with support programs and activities that enable students to acquire various skills, including professional, technical, managerial, and personal skills, as well as attitudes and behaviours conducive to entrepreneurship. The development of the entrepreneurial spirit encompasses initiative, risk-taking, and a culture of self-employment, all of which are nurtured and enhanced through university mechanisms such as entrepreneurship centres. These centres empower students to enter the labour market by offering training courses and providing adequate material and human resources, particularly in the field of applied professional sports, through the creation of small enterprises such as talent development centres, sports training schools, sports media institutions, and commercial sports marketing firms. Such initiatives contribute to raising awareness, providing guidance, and strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit among students of Physical and Sports Activities Sciences and Techniques.*

**Keywords:** mechanisms; entrepreneurial thought; university environment.

## Mécanismes de diffusion de l'esprit d'entreprise dans le milieu universitaire : le cas des étudiants en STAPS

### **Résumé**

*Cette étude vise à identifier les mécanismes permettant de promouvoir l'esprit d'entreprise chez les étudiants en sciences et techniques des activités physiques et sportives. Cet objectif est atteint en intégrant et en reliant la culture entrepreneuriale à des programmes et des activités de soutien qui permettent aux étudiants d'acquérir diverses compétences, notamment professionnelles, techniques, managériales et personnelles, ainsi que des attitudes et des comportements propices à l'entrepreneuriat. Le développement de l'esprit d'entreprise englobe l'initiative, la prise de risques et une culture de l'auto-emploi, qui sont tous encouragés et renforcés par des mécanismes universitaires tels que les centres d'entrepreneuriat. Ces centres permettent aux étudiants d'entrer sur le marché du travail en leur proposant des formations et en leur fournissant des ressources matérielles et humaines adéquates, en particulier dans le domaine du sport professionnel appliqué, grâce à la création de petites entreprises telles que des centres de développement des talents, des écoles de formation sportive, des institutions médiatiques sportives et des entreprises commerciales de marketing sportif. Ces initiatives contribuent à sensibiliser, à orienter et à renforcer l'esprit d'entreprise chez les étudiants en sciences et techniques des activités physiques et sportives.*

**Mots clés** : *mécanismes ; pensée entrepreneuriale ; environnement universitaire.*



## Introduction

In light of the university's openness to its economic and social environment and its role in creating employment opportunities, Algeria is currently moving towards a new path of entrepreneurship on the basis of youth initiatives among university graduates. This approach aims to explore the most effective means of fostering and embedding the entrepreneurial spirit within this group while promoting the concept of establishing small enterprises and overcoming the obstacles and challenges that may hinder their development. This is achieved by bridging the gap between university students and support and guidance structures, such as entrepreneurship centres established within university campuses. This offers opportunities to those with the necessary qualifications and capacity to create their own SMEs, encouraging them to achieve progress and innovation via the most effective methods available.

## Definition of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is defined as "the act undertaken by the entrepreneur, carried out in various contexts and in multiple forms. It may take the form of establishing a new enterprise legally, or it may represent an autonomous and established business" (Goudjil, p. 40).

### 1. Definition of the Entrepreneurship Centre

The entrepreneurship centre is a flexible structure, headquartered within the university institution, whose mission is to promote the entrepreneurial spirit among

students and ensure their initial support in establishing their own enterprises.

It is a property-based project comprising land and buildings dedicated to both public and private research with a strong technological and scientific orientation aimed at encouraging research and development within the university in partnership with entrepreneurs. The centre constitutes one of the most significant mechanisms of interaction between educational and industrial institutions, serving to transfer the outcomes of academic research to the market or scientific community. These centres operate under the authority and supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and maintain membership in international bodies. Their primary goal is to safeguard local industry from decline and to transform student research into institutional projects, thus acting as a vital link between the world of industry and academic science.

## **2. The Entrepreneurship Centre as a Tool for Developing Entrepreneurship within the University Environment**

The role of the university is not limited to filling students' minds with theoretical concepts, which are often far removed from the realities of life, but rather extends to disseminating the concept of entrepreneurship within the university environment. This entails training students to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Providing a vast amount of information, even if it is up-to-date and aligned with the latest research, is insufficient to build a businessperson who possesses the capability and competence to manage a project that can significantly influence the economic trajectory. It is therefore necessary to place the student within the context of the



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actual economic environment that is expected to host their future activity.

This process enables students to identify various opportunities that can be seized while also drawing their attention to the risks and obstacles they may encounter. Such awareness allows them to take preventive measures, avoid pitfalls, or develop strategies to adapt to and mitigate the impact of potential challenges.

Algeria adopted this approach by establishing Entrepreneurship Centres at several universities, the first of which was at the University of Constantine in 2007. The Mentouri University of Constantine represents pioneering experience at the national level through the creation of an entrepreneurship centre, which is responsible for organising conferences and seminars for aspiring entrepreneurs and delivering entrepreneurship courses across all university departments. Other universities followed in 2013, and by 2014, such centres had been generalised across all Algerian universities.

The terms "Centre," "House," or "Institute" evoke academic structures and traditional education, whereas the word "House" connotes a friendly, welcoming, supportive, and value-producing environment. It fosters an atmosphere conducive to the exchange of ideas and the cultivation of initiative and innovation. Consequently, the Entrepreneurship Centre serves as an effective tool for instilling entrepreneurial value, familiarising students with the procedures necessary to realise their ideas, and highlighting high-value-added projects that contribute to the development of the national economy.

The Entrepreneurship Centre is defined as “a meeting point between the university and the National Agency for Youth Employment Support, whose primary goal is to foster the entrepreneurial spirit and consolidate entrepreneurial culture among university students. It strives to stimulate creative ideas within the student community, gradually moving beyond the limited scope of innovative projects toward broader entrepreneurial initiatives that can provide fresh impetus for development. At the same time, it offers the student population opportunities to establish successful enterprises across various fields, thereby engaging in entrepreneurship as the nucleus of economic and social development.”

The entrepreneurship centre emphasises that universities should progressively integrate entrepreneurial values into their objectives and equip students with the intellectual tools necessary to embark on the adventure of enterprise creation. For this purpose, the Entrepreneurship Centre serves as a core mechanism for encouraging initiative and awareness of new enterprise formation.

Initially, the idea of establishing the Entrepreneurship Centre was an expression of partnership between the university and its surrounding environment. Over time, it evolved into an engine intended to mobilise university competencies in pursuit of sustainable economic development.

The entrepreneurship centre relies fundamentally on the competence of its educators and the professionalism of its partners in supporting students in creating and developing small enterprises. It also hopes for the continuous backing of public authorities for its mission of building a sustainable economy that ensures genuine national stability.



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The entrepreneurship sector constitutes one of the most promising avenues for revitalising the Algerian economy. To promote and strengthen entrepreneurship nationwide, authorities have worked to provide the essential conditions for its practice, from legal procedures to the actual establishment of enterprises. However, entrepreneurial thought in Algeria remains underdeveloped compared with that in neighbouring countries due to several key factors, the most significant of which are as follows:

- The marginalisation of the Algerian skilled class in entrepreneurial thinking.
- Young people, particularly university graduates, are reluctant to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset.
- There is a limited inclination towards or weak engagement in private enterprises.

The Entrepreneurship Centre is a flexible institution based within the university. Its missions include raising awareness, training, and motivating students, particularly those in their final years and researchers, while ensuring their initial support in establishing small enterprises within the framework of the National Agency for Youth Employment Support (ANSEJ). The first Entrepreneurship Centre was established at the University of Grenoble in France in 2003. In Algeria, it was created for the first time as an experimental model at Mentouri University in Constantine in 2007 (Mounir, 2012, p. 12).

### **3. The Missions of the Entrepreneurship Centre**

The Entrepreneurship Centre fulfils two primary missions:

### **3.1. Awareness-raising and sensitisation**

Entrepreneurial awareness aims to influence the entrepreneurial aspirations of students or researchers upon graduation or after they have gained professional experience. This awareness process may have a delayed effect over time, as entrepreneurial action generally requires prior professional expertise. Typically, project initiators who hold academic degrees launch their ventures after completing their initial training and education.

In challenging economic conditions, students are encouraged to consider their professional future. The scarcity of job opportunities urges them to contemplate entrepreneurial initiatives. The accelerated economic development of nations motivates students to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. Raising awareness and spreading a culture of self-employment help enable students to develop entrepreneurial intentions through awareness programs. This mission thus consists of sensitising, training, and motivating university students, particularly those in the final phases of their studies.

- Reception, information, and guidance.
- Promoting entrepreneurial thinking and establishing an entrepreneurial culture among students.
- Training students in the spirit of initiative.
- Presenting business project ideas.
- Inform students about the procedures required for establishing an enterprise.
- Spreading a spirit of initiative within academic settings, facilitating technology transfer, and providing feedback for education and training through interactions with entrepreneurs, financial



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institutions, community leaders, university professors, and industrialists.

### **3.2. Support and Supervision**

The second function of the Entrepreneurship Centre is to support students from the conception of an idea to the development of a complete project, starting from reception offices. The centre integrates both pedagogical and technical resources to assist entrepreneurial projects. Its primary objective is to stimulate students' and researchers' entrepreneurial motivation, help them formulate structured business ideas, and link project holders with appropriate support structures such as business incubators and advisory and counselling centres.

The support function includes the following tasks:

- Guiding and assisting students in refining their project ideas.
- Providing initial guidance to establish small enterprises.
- These findings were supported throughout the feasibility study process.
- Supervising project development.
- Facilitating project implementation.
- Offering training on enterprise management techniques.
- In the absence of effective mechanisms for transforming scientific research from theoretical stages into practical products or services, the creation of entrepreneurship centers serves as an appropriate tool to achieve this transformation.

- Participating in market studies, financing, partner identification, and assisting innovators in converting their ideas into marketable products by providing suitable workspaces, offices and laboratories along with necessary equipment, communication tools, secretarial services, and professional advice in administration, planning, training, and marketing.

For the Entrepreneurship Centre to successfully perform its two main functions, awareness-raising and support, it must possess sufficient financial capital (to fund activities in cooperation with support agencies), intellectual or scientific capital (to strengthen awareness and training in entrepreneurship), and social capital (to enhance its cooperative function, for instance, through partnerships with sports clubs) (Tawfiq, 2009, p. 35).

#### **4. Importance and Necessity of the Entrepreneurship Centre**

The idea of establishing entrepreneurship centres within universities emerged as a result of several key considerations:

- The promotion of employment and the fight against unemployment are among the strategic objectives of national employment policy.
- The significance of a qualified human resource base in ensuring the success of the employment strategy.
- The Ministry of Higher Education's policy aims to strengthen communication and coordination between the university and its economic and social environment, harnessing science and knowledge to serve the national economy's needs.



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- The contribution of small enterprises to the country's economic and social development is increasing.
- The necessity of reinforcing the relationship between the university and the economic environment.
- There is a need to enhance consultation and partnership between the labour, employment, social security, and higher education sectors and scientific research to promote and develop entrepreneurial thought within the university setting.
- The implementation of the framework partnership agreement concluded between the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research on 9 March 2007 (Amina, 2015, p. 102).

## **5. Administrative Organisation of the Entrepreneurship Centre**

Following the signing of the framework agreement between the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, local agreements were established at the wilaya (provincial) level between the National Agency for Youth Employment Support and universities. To implement these agreements, entrepreneurship centres were created within each university.

To enable these centres to fulfil their assigned roles and achieve their stated objectives, both parties established and installed joint local committees responsible for defining the Centres' work plan and programme, as well as for monitoring their implementation. The joint local committee comprises the following members:

- One (1) representative from the Directorate of Employment of the wilaya.
- Two (2) representatives from the National Agency for Youth Employment Support.
- Two (2) representatives from the university concerned.

## **6. The Role of the Entrepreneurship Centre in the Support Process**

The support and assistance structures provide a range of services. These support mechanisms have evolved since the 1980s, particularly in developed countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. Support and accompaniment for small enterprises are based on three fundamental pillars:

- Financial support addresses the problem of insufficient funds at the launch stage of projects.
- Development of advisory and training networks: for the creation and management of small enterprises and other related areas
- Logistical support: provision of premises for the activities of small enterprises in available locations for limited periods, as well as various administrative services under incentivised and reduced-cost conditions. This also includes offering basic or advanced advice depending on the nature of the small project and is managed through engagement with all business networks and relevant government agencies to strengthen these support mechanisms.

In general, scientific studies have highlighted that a range of services that support structures can be offered to small



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enterprises both before and after their creation. These services are provided at each stage as follows:

### ***Reception (Accueille):***

A comparative analysis reveals several key observations: When an entrepreneur visits a support structure for the first time, initial meetings are held, referred to as the reception stage. The nature of this reception varies across different structures; some limit it to the first meeting, during which only basic information and guidance are provided to the entrepreneur (project holder), whereas others begin from the first encounter to analyse and assess the project's potential (project format, product, market).

Thus, the reception stage is fundamentally based on establishing familiarity between the project holder and the support body. It seeks to identify the project's progress and needs and to reconcile the requirements of the support body with those of the project holder.

The length and format of the reception process vary from one organisation to another. It may take the form of interviews and/or regular phone calls, be scheduled as ongoing appointments, and be conducted individually or in groups. Furthermore, the duration of reception can range from a single session to several sessions and from a few minutes to several hours, depending on the significance and type of project.

This process represents the first point of contact between the project holder and the support body and is primarily informative. During this stage, the aim is to understand the project's purpose and importance, as well as the entrepreneur's position, ambitions, and expectations.

Conversely, the support body seeks to highlight the services it can offer to the project holder and demonstrate the importance of support in ensuring the project's success and sustainability. Accordingly, these organisations require professional competencies and industry experience to receive and guide project holders, as well as respond to the diverse questions posed by entrepreneurs, who differ in their objectives, ambitions, and types of projects they propose.

***During establishment support:***

This stage is characterised by a set of services provided by support bodies as follows.

- Preparing and compiling the project creation file: This consists of a business plan that includes the following: presentation of the project holder; project description; description of the product or service; market; turnover; commercial means; means of production; and the financial file: a projected income statement table, working capital requirement, financing plan, cash flow plan, and breakeven point.
- Seeking financial resources: loans, grants, and assistance.
- Making tax, social, and legal choices.
- Support may extend to assisting in planning and executing the steps of project creation.

These services are available in most support and accompaniment structures; however, the organisation of these processes varies from one organisation to another. Some services may be provided to project holders individually or collectively, depending on the number of project holders. In cases of heavy inflows, a minimum



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degree of individualisation is ensured through individual appointments with project holders.

- There is also variation in the time allocated to the project holder and in the duration of project assembly. Some bodies allocate from several hours to a limited period for simple projects, with an average duration of approximately 10 hours. In contrast, for more complex projects, the duration can range from 30--100 hours, and the assembly of the project may be as short as 15 days at a minimum, extending up to a full year.
- **Autonomy:** Support and accompaniment bodies endeavour to encourage the entrepreneur's autonomy in making decisions concerning their project for two reasons.

First, self-reliance enables the entrepreneur to learn autonomously the methods of leading and managing the project by relying on partners and economic operators, such that the entrepreneur benefits from this knowledge even in the event of project failure, as it constitutes an epistemic gain when undertaking a new venture.

Second, it enables the support body to economise on the services provided, saving time and focusing on new projects. In this context, most support bodies draw upon other institutions to serve entrepreneurs, such as chambers of commerce and design offices.

Postestablishment support (follow-up): Few support bodies undertake follow-up for small enterprises after their creation; however, bodies specialising in financial support attach great importance to this process, undoubtedly because of their establishment objective and their attempt to

ensure the recoverability of the funds disbursed. In general, postestablishment follow-up consists of monthly appointments with the project owner throughout the first two years, during which the following elements are examined:

- Treasury management, financial position, and the formation of a financial dashboard.
- The commercial dimension: client acquisition and outreach.
- Strategic vision.
- Contracts, tenders, and related matters.

In the event of potential problems in specific projects, periodic appointments are organised with the enterprise owner to resolve these issues.

Some bodies also organise informational meetings every two or three months, facilitated by specialists, focusing on the management of small enterprises, methods of recruitment, property and person insurance, exemptions, and similar topics.

There are substantial differences between the two stages in terms of the duration of support, the procedures followed, and the tools and means employed; these differences are attributable to several reasons:

- The scarcity of funding allocated to postestablishment follow-up partly explains the resemblance to the legal-creation process and the emphasis on encouraging project autonomy.
- The competencies that must be mobilised to ensure follow-up after the creation of new projects are more in demand at this stage than in earlier stages, which involve simpler administrative procedures and less complex services. At this stage, the small project



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requires monitoring and follow-up by specialists in the fields of organisation, financial management, management control, commercial management, strategic decision analysis, human resources management, tax management, and social law (Zitouni, 2014–2015, p. 16).

## **7. The role of the Entrepreneurship Centre in supporting and accompanying projects:**

After the principal services offered by the various support and accompaniment bodies for enterprise creation are presented, the outstanding problem in this study concerns how to evaluate the performance of these bodies. Specialists in the field concur on a set of elements that characterise high-quality accompaniment, namely:

- Accompaniment requires a person–project fit, which entails aligning the entrepreneur's capacities and competencies with the nature of the project being carried out, producing a continuous congruence between the individual and the project, not only during the initial management phase. This element "secures" both the entrepreneur and the project against foreseeable problems.
- Accompaniment is person-centred, whereas experts' work tends to focus on the technical services delivered to the project. Material and financial support to the entrepreneur is insufficient because accompaniment occurs over a limited period during which the entrepreneur must acquire the ability to manage the project in the long term.

- Accompaniment should encourage personal autonomy: even when a faster substitute exists to execute project-monitoring tasks instead of the entrepreneur (such as a business plan), some bodies supply the entrepreneur with a working methodology to economise on time (and hence costs), which often generates multiple problems later. High-quality accompaniment, therefore, requires the support body to ensure that the project holder understands why investment should be conducted prudently, how to control cash flow, the optimal timeframe for debt repayment, asset depreciation, and related issues.
- Accompaniment should include failure management: from the reception stage, the accompanier must be able to level with the new entrepreneur if the project is not feasible under the prevailing conditions. There exists a vulnerable category of entrepreneurs who propose projects that are not approved; thus, support bodies must have specialised technicians who can help this group correct their project errors. With respect to financial difficulties, the accompanier must work with the project holder to conduct an objective diagnosis and identify solutions without creating conflicts between support bodies representing the solidarity economy and venture finance organisations (Lafqir, 2009, p. 9).



## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that entrepreneurship centres represent a pivotal and essential mechanism for instilling the entrepreneurial spirit among university students, particularly those in disciplines like Physical and Sports Activities Sciences and Techniques. These centres' role extends beyond simple awareness and motivation, encompassing the provision of necessary support to transform creative ideas into viable and sustainable projects. Full activation of these centres, through securing competent human resources, financial, and social backing, is fundamental to injecting new life into the national economy. Expanding the establishment and development of these structures across Algerian universities is therefore the optimal route to enable graduates to enter the world of entrepreneurship and contribute effectively to comprehensive economic and social development.

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