

Contextualizing Entrepreneurship Education: Finding the Balance Between Effectuation and Causation

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education is one of the most dynamic and highly evolving fields. This is especially true when educating “for” and “through” entrepreneurship as there are many personal and contextual dynamic variables that affect the outcomes of entrepreneurial educational programs. Therefore, the design of the entrepreneurship education programs that seek to yield the ultimate outcome of venture creation should reflect the nature of these variables. This paper uses the action research methodology to develop and test an entrepreneurship education program in the Egyptian context that is characterized by a highly dynamic environment and a risk averse culture.

A tailored approach merging the elements of causation and effectuation was developed along the different stages of the venture creation process, namely opportunity discovery, opportunity exploitation and opportunity scaling. The new approach emphasizes predicting possible future outcomes within the parameters of the present contextual constraints or what can be referred to as constrained predictions. The new approach proved to improve both the short term and the long-term outcomes of the program as it positively affected both the “distance travelled” or the behaviors and skills acquired throughout the venture creation process, and the venture creation rate by program graduates. The research has several implications for entrepreneurship education. It presents a new approach to entrepreneurship education that can be used in highly dynamic, risk averse contexts; and It presents entrepreneurship education as a constantly changing field that needs to adapt to the dynamic cultural, economic, political, and regulatory environment through continuous iterations of planning, measuring outcomes, reflection, and modification.

