

Obstacles to the public authorities' endeavor to promote youth entrepreneurship in Algeria

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Abstract :

Public authorities in Algeria face several obstacles in their efforts to promote youth entrepreneurship. Key challenges include complex bureaucratic barriers and lengthy administrative processes, making it difficult to start and manage businesses. Additionally, limited access to funding, difficulties in securing loans, and a lack of venture capital hinder the growth of startups. The insufficient availability of entrepreneurship education programs prevents young people from acquiring the necessary skills, while cultural and social norms that favor stable public sector employment discourage innovation. Furthermore, rigid and inconsistent regulations, along with a lack of support networks and mentorship opportunities, limit young people's ability to connect with experienced entrepreneurs and investors. These challenges hinder the Algerian government's efforts to foster a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem among youth.

Keywords : entrepreneurship, University, Promoting, Public Authorities.

Jel classification codes : M21, M39.

1. Introduction

The Algerian public authorities place significant emphasis on entrepreneurship, as evidenced by the measures taken to adopt policies and mechanisms that support and guide entrepreneurial initiatives, particularly among youth. Despite these efforts, youth entrepreneurship in Algeria faces numerous challenges that hinder its success, growth, and ability to compete effectively. This study seeks to address the central question : **What are the**

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obstacles confronting the public authorities' efforts to promote youth entrepreneurship in Algeria ?

The answer to this question will be explored through a structured three-part discussion.

The first part will examine the current state of youth entrepreneurship in Algeria, focusing on its theoretical foundations and the policies and mechanisms in place to encourage its development. The second part will analyze the barriers impeding the public authorities' initiatives, including political and sociological challenges, issues tied to education and training, obstacles within the business environment, and the shortcomings of contracting support systems. The third part will propose strategies to address these challenges, offering solutions related to public policy, education and training, improvements in the business climate, and the enhancement of contracting support agencies.

2. The Reality of Youth Entrepreneurship in Algeria

2.1 A theoretical framework on youth entrepreneurship

In 1934, one of the leading figures in the field, Joseph A. Schumpeter (1833–1950), described entrepreneurship as a powerful force for creative transformation, referring to it as "creative chaos." According to him, the entrepreneur introduces new products and innovative business methods that replace outdated ones. Similarly, Dr. Ishaq Kharchi, in his 2020 book *Entrepreneurship*, defined it as a process involving various stages of identifying business opportunities and transforming them into successful projects through innovations or changes in the offered products, thereby generating economic and social wealth (Kharchi, 2020, p.12).

In the context of Algerian legislation, the concept of entrepreneurship is evident in Article 43 of Law 16-01, which amends the Constitution in 2016. This provision highlights the constitutional legislator's commitment to fostering the private sector by ensuring equality among economic institutions and promoting economic growth. It emphasizes the liberalization of economic activities for entrepreneurs aiming to establish small and medium-sized enterprises (Dawas, 2020, p.285). The Article 43 of the 2016 Constitution states : "Freedom of investment and trade is recognized and exercised within the framework of the law. The State shall strive to enhance the business environment and support the growth of institutions without discrimination to promote national economic development. It ensures market regulation and consumer protection, as stipulated by law, while prohibiting monopolies and unfair competition."

It is clear from the above article that the Algerian legislator stresses the need to improve the business climate through the liberalization of economic activity and the application of the principles of the market economy, such as the freedom of investment and trade within the framework of the law. When we talk about entrepreneurship, we must address the freedom of initiative, as the adoption of the market economy system gradually leads to economic openness for the benefit of the private sector as a partner alongside the state in building the national economy (Dawas Maryam, op. Cit., P. 283).

2.2 Motivations of young people towards entrepreneurship

Schumpeter was among the pioneers in identifying the motives behind entrepreneurial endeavors. The first motive he highlighted is the desire for creativity and self-realization, where the drive to start a business stems from the need for self-fulfillment, self-esteem, and the pursuit of personal ideas. The second motive involves the aspiration to enhance one's status and income, driven by the need for prestige and financial growth. The third motive is the will to succeed, characterized by a competitive spirit and determination, which often motivates young individuals to pursue self-employment. The fourth motive pertains to maintaining structures and traditions, such as preserving family businesses across generations (Hamli A. & Houhou M., 2018, p.27).

One influential model explaining the factors that encourage youth to engage in entrepreneurship is the "Entrepreneurial Event Formation" model developed by A. Shapero and L. Sokol. This model posits that significant life events, which disrupt an individual's routine, often precede the decision to establish a business. The model identifies three categories of factors influencing entrepreneurial orientation:

- **Negative transitions:** Events like layoffs, divorce, immigration, or dissatisfaction with current employment.
- **Positive transitions:** Factors such as family influence, the availability of markets, or the presence of potential investors.
- **Intermediate situations:** Circumstances like leaving the military, finishing school, or being released from prison.

These transitions play a critical role in shaping an individual's decision to undertake entrepreneurial initiatives.

3.2. Public policies and mechanisms for the promotion of entrepreneurship in Algeria

To promote entrepreneurship in Algeria, the state has implemented various mechanisms designed to support entrepreneurs, particularly unemployed youth, in developing their own activities. The primary mechanisms include the following (Rahil, A., 2020, p.98):

Mechanisms to Support the Establishment of Enterprises (Small and Medium Enterprises):

1. **National Unemployment Insurance Fund (CNAC):** Established in 1994, CNAC provides compensation to workers dismissed for economic reasons and aids their reintegration into professional life. It targets individuals aged 30 to 50 and offers project funding up to ten million Algerian dinars.
2. **National Agency for the Support of Youth Employment (ANSEJ):** Renamed the *National Agency for the Support and Promotion of Entrepreneurship (Anade)*, it was created in 1996 to encourage youth employment through the creation of micro-enterprises. It supports individuals aged 19 to 35, with funding for projects up to ten thousand dinars.
3. **National Agency for Investment Development (ANDI):** Established in 2001, ANDI facilitates investment project implementation for both national and foreign investors. It serves as a promotional tool for investment opportunities and aims to attract domestic and foreign capital.
4. **National Agency for the Management of Microcredit (ANGEM):** Launched in 2004, ANGEM provides financial support to micro-entrepreneurs, with a maximum funding limit of one million Algerian dinars.
5. **Institutional Nurseries:** Since 2003, these nurseries have functioned as incubators to support project holders in various sectors. They include service-sector incubators, workshops for small industries and crafts, and institutional hostels to assist research-focused projects.
6. **Facilitation Centers:** Also established in 2003, these centers act as reception, guidance, and support bodies for contractors and project holders, providing essential resources and mentoring.

These mechanisms collectively aim to create a supportive ecosystem for entrepreneurship in Algeria, addressing diverse needs from funding and guidance to capacity-building and investment facilitation.

3.3 Mechanisms to support access to finance

In Algeria, several key mechanisms have been established to support the financing of entrepreneurial projects, including the Small and Medium Enterprises Loan Guarantee Fund, the Small and Medium Enterprises Investment Loan Guarantee Fund, the Common Loan Guarantee Fund, and the Zakat Fund.

- **Loan Guarantee Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises (FGAR):** Established in 2002, FGAR addresses the financing challenges faced by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) due to banks' reluctance to provide loans, often stemming from low capital and insufficient collateral.

- **Small and Medium Enterprises Loan Guarantee Fund (CGCI-PME):** Created in 2004, this fund guarantees repayment of bank loans obtained by entrepreneurs, with a maximum guarantee of up to fifty million Algerian dinars.
- **Common Loan Guarantee Fund:** Also established in 2004, this fund guarantees microcredits issued under the National Microcredit Agency's framework. It also covers the remaining outstanding debts, including principal and interest, as declared by the bank.
- **Zakat Fund:** Administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments, a portion of Zakat funds is allocated for investments benefiting the underprivileged. It provides interest-free loans up to a maximum of one million dinars.

Beyond these mechanisms, other programs and institutions also contribute to supporting SMEs. These include the National Agency for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises (AND-PME), the National Advisory Council for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (CNC-PME), and the National Agency for the Promotion of Foreign Trade (ALGEX), among others. These entities collectively enhance the ecosystem for SMEs and entrepreneurial growth in Algeria.

4. Obstacles to achieving the public authorities' endeavor to promote youth entrepreneurship in Algeria

4.1 Sociological and political obstacles

The mechanisms established under government policies to promote entrepreneurship, integrate youth into the labor market, and ensure their economic empowerment often function as short-term solutions rather than comprehensive strategies. These policies, shaped by the circumstances in which they arose, lack a long-term vision. They were primarily reactive, addressing internal pressures like high unemployment and external pressures from organizations such as the International Monetary Fund to correct economic imbalances (Adan, N., 2019, p.104).

The state's inconsistency in its economic approach—oscillating between encouraging imports and supporting the productive private sector—has hindered progress. The influence of import barons within political circles has created a parallel economy that obstructs decisions aimed at boosting Algeria's productive sector. This has marginalized numerous productive initiatives, particularly in industries producing high-demand consumer goods (Rabih & Laroussi, 2028, p.104).

Algeria's adherence to a socialist system until the late 1980s, which heavily subsidized consumer goods, healthcare, education, housing, and other services, fostered a paternalistic state mentality. This created a dependency culture where individuals expect state support in

all areas. Such practices have discouraged youth from taking entrepreneurial initiatives or striving for the success of their enterprises. Some individuals even harbor negative attitudes, such as seeking state loans without intending to repay them (Boufaldja, G., 2021, p.164).

Civil society in Algeria has often played a minimal or absent role in preparing individuals for development and mobilizing them toward economic progress. While global trends emphasize governance principles, including empowering civil society to influence and disseminate public policies, Algeria has not effectively enabled this role despite civil society's proximity to citizens (Boudrioua, A. & Bourzama, D., 2019, p.289).

From a sociocultural perspective, a segment of the population resists the concept of wage and power disparities. The notion of differing living standards remains largely unaccepted by these individuals, influenced by the entrenched socialist mindset that rejects class distinctions. This group often views wealth accumulation through entrepreneurship with skepticism, associating it with corruption, money laundering, or unearned wealth (Gougeil, M. & Qureshi, Y., 2015, p.169).

4.2 Obstacles related to the young person, his education and training

Many unemployed youth in Algeria lack the ability and motivation to initiate and establish entrepreneurial projects. This is largely due to a deficiency in essential skills such as business acumen, an investment mindset, individual initiative, and basic competencies. These shortcomings hinder competitiveness and development. Human capital is essential for building an economic system capable of driving sustainable growth (Elias & Dafrour A., 2017, p.27).

In addition to challenges in starting entrepreneurial ventures, young people also face difficulties in sustaining their business activities. These include a weak entrepreneurial personality, lack of commitment to continue operations, inability to overcome challenges, poor management skills, and weak internal organization. Other issues include excessive ambition, such as acquiring luxury equipment, mixing business finances with personal matters, neglecting proper business planning, and failing to adopt effective accounting and financial practices (Bin Sheikh A. & Bin Alia L., 2019, p.164).

Algeria's university education system is poorly aligned with labor market requirements. It fails to equip students with the competencies and skills needed for seamless integration into the workforce, especially in light of rapid scientific and technological advancements. Universities do not provide the pedagogical support necessary for nurturing creative entrepreneurs capable of identifying and exploiting opportunities in competitive markets.

Instead, they train students for dependency, qualifying them for roles in public administration, state-owned enterprises, or private firms, rather than fostering entrepreneurial independence.

Vocational training centers and institutes aim to support educational dropouts by providing professional qualifications. While some trainees manage to join vocational workshops or launch projects with family or institutional support, the distribution of these centers is dictated by administrative boundaries rather than the natural and economic needs of regions. This approach neglects local professional specialties and labor market skill requirements. Moreover, the training system relies heavily on rote learning and does not encourage initiative or creativity.

A significant flaw in Algerian government policies is the persistent disconnect between the education system and labor market needs. Until recently, the education system did not incorporate entrepreneurship training or awareness programs, despite the critical role education and training institutions play in nurturing individuals with innovative ideas, knowledge, and technologies. Bridging this gap would enable the creation of business opportunities and support the launch of successful, innovative projects (Maziane A. & Bouksani R., 2018, p.385).

4.3 Obstacles related to the business climate

The business climate encompasses factors such as economic activity, establishment procedures, property rights, and access to finance. In Algeria, this environment faces numerous challenges that hinder young entrepreneurs from achieving their goals in establishing businesses. Bureaucratic dominance and administrative inefficiencies in institutional setups discourage entrepreneurial aspirations. Lengthy processes for administrative paperwork, securing premises, obtaining loans, navigating multiple approval committees, and unstable tax regulations contribute to a challenging business climate. These hurdles often lead young people to seek employment rather than start their own businesses (Boufaldja, opcit, p. 163).

Regarding the establishment of enterprises, the World Bank's *Doing Business Report 2015* notes that an entrepreneur in Algeria must complete 13 procedures over an average of 22 days. The cost of registering a business, as a percentage of gross national income per capita, stands at 11%, higher than neighboring countries like Morocco (9.2%) and Tunisia (4.2%).

In terms of economic activity, property registration in Algeria requires 55 days and involves 10 procedures. Comparatively, Algeria ranks poorly among neighboring countries based on

economic activity metrics (*Doing Business Report 2015*). Additionally, the country's high unemployment rate and a prevalent informal economy have weakened the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sector and entrepreneurial ventures overall (Meziane, A, opcit, p. 385).

Challenges also exist with industrial property and real estate access for SMEs. Regulatory instability, frequent legal amendments, and an atmosphere of mistrust hinder investment. Legal stability in this domain is crucial for fostering a conducive investment environment. The *Doing Business Report 2015* highlights deficiencies in investor protection, scoring Algeria 4.5 out of 10. Moreover, resolving commercial disputes takes approximately one year, forcing 70% of businesses to rely on amicable settlements, which are often ineffective.

The tax burden in Algeria is notably high, the highest in the Middle East and North Africa, affecting 74.2% of corporate profits, as reported by the World Bank. Financial difficulties further exacerbate the problem, with Algeria ranking 130th out of 189 countries in loan accessibility (*Doing Business Report 2014*). Approximately 80% of SMEs rely on shareholder funds for establishment, leading to a predominance of family-owned businesses (97%). Furthermore, alternative financing tools like financial markets, venture capital, and business angels remain largely unavailable (Meziane, A. & Amarouche, K. I., 2018, p. 110).

5. Deficiencies of entrepreneurial support mechanisms

Several shortcomings have been identified in the entrepreneurial support mechanisms in Algeria, particularly within bodies like CNAC, ANGEM, ANAD, and Andi (Quajail, M., op. cit., p. 165-166):

1. **Lack of Clarity in Objectives:** The primary goal of these mechanisms is to establish small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to tackle unemployment. However, there is a gap between the stated political objectives and the theoretical aspects of the policy. These mechanisms are more focused on employment creation rather than fostering entrepreneurship. This emphasis on employment highlights a social aspect of the process but overlooks the entrepreneurial dimensions essential for the long-term sustainability, adaptability, and growth of businesses.
2. **Insufficient Funding for Entrepreneurial Support:** The strategy behind these support mechanisms has been to provide funding and tax incentives to attract young people. However, there is criticism regarding the mismatch between the allocated funds and the types of businesses being established. Many of the businesses supported by these mechanisms are in service industries, which do not require significant financial investments. Additionally, while funding is important, it is not the sole factor

for successful entrepreneurship. The funding approach has led to an influx of applicants seeking financial support, often without sound business strategies, which resembles a rent-seeking behavior. This, in turn, creates challenges for banks, which face high risks of non-payment and fraud.

3. **Failure to Address National Economic Realities:** The mechanisms do not adequately consider the peculiarities of Algeria's national economy, which is heavily dependent on hydrocarbons and petroleum. These sectors present alternative investment opportunities that often overshadow the development of SMEs. Countries that have successfully adopted SMEs as a strategic growth direction did so under circumstances such as limited natural resources or market saturation, where entrepreneurship became a key development tool.
4. **Incompatibility of Funding with Religious Beliefs:** A significant number of young people in Algeria seek interest-free loans, which aligns with Islamic principles. However, the financing models provided by these mechanisms often do not cater to this preference, creating a barrier for many potential entrepreneurs.
5. **Neglect of Other Entrepreneurial Needs:** Support mechanisms tend to focus primarily on financing, neglecting other critical needs of entrepreneurs, such as skill development and acquiring necessary business attributes for success. These skills are essential for entrepreneurs to manage their businesses effectively and navigate challenges.
6. **Limited Role of Support Agents:** In many cases, the role of advisors in support mechanisms is limited to facilitating the administrative procedures for project submission. They do not engage in a comprehensive evaluation of business ideas, feasibility studies, or the creation of detailed business plans, which are essential for the success of entrepreneurial ventures.
7. **Incapacitating Conditions for Young Entrepreneurs:** Some support mechanisms impose conditions that require young entrepreneurs to contribute a financial percentage of the project value, which can be a significant barrier for unemployed youth and recent graduates. Additionally, these support mechanisms often lack market research to guide young entrepreneurs toward the most suitable business activities.

These shortcomings point to the need for a more holistic and tailored approach to supporting entrepreneurship in Algeria, one that not only provides financial assistance but also addresses skill development, business planning, and alignment with the country's unique economic and social contexts.

6. Proposals to reduce the effects of obstacles to the promotion of entrepreneurship in Algeria

6.1 *Proposals for Public Policy in Promoting Entrepreneurship*

- **Objective for Entrepreneurial Class Development** : The primary goal of public authorities should be to foster the emergence of a class of entrepreneurs who will drive the future economy. This can be achieved by nurturing individuals with entrepreneurial qualities such as innovation, strategic vision, and the ability to overcome existing social norms. The growth and expansion of micro-enterprises depend on the presence of such individuals.
- **Strategic Planning for Entrepreneurship Promotion** : A comprehensive strategy for promoting entrepreneurship should be developed, with clear, measurable goals and plans for achieving them. Effective methods and mechanisms for monitoring implementation and evaluating the performance of these programs must be established.
- **Support for Local Products** : Implement strong policies to reduce imports and encourage the production of local goods. This will help young entrepreneurs by providing markets for their products and incentivizing their continuation in business.
- **Activating Civil Society's Role** : It is important to activate civil society's role in raising awareness and changing societal perceptions about entrepreneurship. This includes promoting the benefits of self-employment and entrepreneurship, and addressing negative attitudes toward wealth creation.

6.2 *Proposals for Training and Education to Promote Entrepreneurship*

- **Integration of Entrepreneurship Education** : Entrepreneurship education should be integrated into all levels of education and across disciplines. Educational institutions are the ideal platforms to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and ideas necessary for creating new business opportunities and launching innovative projects.
- **Advanced Pedagogical Programs** : Develop and implement advanced teaching methods that equip students with the competencies, skills, and psychological traits needed to succeed as business owners and employers, helping to create job opportunities for others.
- **Linking Education to the Labor Market** : Educational programs and environments, especially in universities, should be more closely aligned with labor market needs.

This ensures that the skills, training, and education young people receive match the demands of the job market, particularly in entrepreneurship.

- **Regional Adaptation of Training Programs** : Training programs should be tailored to the economic characteristics of different regions in Algeria. This will allow the use of local resources and support the promotion of region-specific traditional industries.

6.3 Proposals for Improving the Business Climate in Algeria

- **Simplifying Administrative Procedures**: Streamline the administrative processes involved in entrepreneurship and investment activities to make it easier for young people to enter the business field.
- **Stability in Legislative Framework** : Ensure stability in the legal framework governing investments, particularly with regard to industrial property, to foster investor confidence and long-term growth.
- **Reducing Tax Burden** : Reduce the tax burden on youth-led entrepreneurial ventures, especially those that are innovative and creative in nature, to encourage investment in such projects.
- **Easier Access to Financial Support** : Simplify and improve the process of obtaining financial support for starting or expanding entrepreneurial ventures, ensuring that young entrepreneurs can access necessary capital with less bureaucratic hassle.

6.4 Proposals for Activating the Role of Contracting Support Agencies

- **Clear Identification of Objectives** : Ensure that the objectives of each contracting support agency are clearly defined, and establish coordination among these agencies to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Financial and Economic Feasibility Studies** : Prior to providing financing, ensure that financial and economic feasibility studies are conducted on entrepreneurial projects. This helps to assess the viability of the project and ensures that funds are allocated to promising and sustainable initiatives.
- **Aligning Financing with Islamic Culture** : Develop financing mechanisms that align with Algerian society's cultural and religious values, particularly by offering interest-free loans in accordance with Islamic principles.
- **Focus on Training and Skill Development** : Shift the focus of support mechanisms beyond just financial assistance. Provide training and capacity-building programs that focus on equipping young contractors with the skills necessary for effective project management and long-term sustainability.

- **Training for Support Agency Staff:** Provide training for the staff of support agencies so that they can offer more effective guidance to young entrepreneurs and better support the entrepreneurial process.
- **Facilitate Access to Support:** Make the procedures for benefiting from the services of support agencies more accessible, helping young entrepreneurs take advantage of the resources available to them and encouraging more youth to pursue entrepreneurial initiatives.

These proposals aim to create a more conducive environment for entrepreneurship in Algeria, where young people can thrive and contribute to the country's economic development.

7. Conclusion

Since Algeria's shift to a free market economy, various policies, legislation, and support mechanisms have been implemented to balance the national economy and address the social challenges arising from privatization in the 1990s. With the current challenges, a political trend has emerged in government policies, focusing more on fostering the entrepreneurial sector and youth initiatives, especially those involving creativity, innovation, and information and communication technologies. However, it's important to analyze the shortcomings of previous policies and mechanisms to learn from them for future improvements. The key findings from this analysis are as follows :

- Youth entrepreneurship in Algeria faces several challenges, including political and social barriers, issues related to the mindset, education, and training of young entrepreneurs, as well as shortcomings in the business environment and support mechanisms for entrepreneurs.
- Algerian policies on entrepreneurship show a certain ambiguity, as they attempt to balance the goal of promoting entrepreneurship with addressing unemployment issues.
- There are misconceptions within Algerian society regarding entrepreneurship and wealth acquisition, leading to a lack of respect for entrepreneurs.
- The educational system in Algeria, both at the university level and in vocational training, does not adequately prepare young people to become entrepreneurs who can create jobs. Instead, it focuses on creating individuals who seek employment.
- The business environment in Algeria is not conducive to entrepreneurship, due to factors such as cumbersome administrative procedures for starting and expanding businesses, difficulties in obtaining loans and real estate, and other systemic issues.

- Although Algeria has created several mechanisms to support young entrepreneurs, these mechanisms mainly offer funding and procedural support, neglecting the essential training in business management, which is crucial for the success of entrepreneurial ventures.

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