The Role of Family and Social Environment in Guiding University Students Toward Entrepreneurship

دور الأسرة والبيئة الاجتماعية في توجيه الطالب الجامعي نحو المقاولة

Received: 20/09/2025 ***Accepted: 09/06/2026*** ***Published: 11/06/2026***

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Journal of research and human studies
Issue 20 N°01 year 2026 p p. 248-267
ISSN : 1112-8151 EISSN : 2588-2317

Abstract *:*

This study aims to analyse the impact of family and social environment on guiding university students towards adopting self-employment and founding private projects post-graduation. The research is based on a descriptive-analytical methodology using a questionnaire distributed among a sample of 77 male and female students from four faculties. The results reveal that the father's professional status and both material and moral family support significantly contribute to fostering entrepreneurial orientation among students. Additionally, the presence of family members who own private enterprises increases the likelihood of choosing independent projects as a career path. The findings indicate that social capital and family support play a pivotal role in shaping students' perceptions and practices towards entrepreneurship. The study recommends integrating family awareness programs within university entrepreneurship support strategies to strengthen the culture of self-employment among youth.

Keywords:*Family- Social environment- University student- Entrepreneurship- Self-employment.*

الملخص :

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل تأثير البيئة الأسرية والاجتماعية على توجيه طلاب الجامعات نحو العمل الحر وتأسيس مشاريع خاصة بعد التخرج. وتستند الدراسة إلى منهجية وصفية تحليلية باستخدام استبيان تم توزيعه على عينة مكونة من 77 طالبا وطالبة من أربع كليات. وتكشف النتائج أن الوضع المهني للأب والدعم المادي والمعنوي للأسرة يساهمان بشكل كبير في تعزيز التوجه الريادي لدى الطلاب. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن وجود أفراد من الأسرة يمتلكون مشاريع خاصة يزيد من احتمالية اختيار المشاريع المستقلة كمسار مهني. وتشير النتائج إلى أن رأس المال الاجتماعي ودعم الأسرة يلعبان دورا محوريا في تشكيل تصورات الطلاب وممارساتهم تجاه ريادة الأعمال. وتوصي الدراسة بدمج برامج التوعية الأسرية ضمن استراتيجيات دعم ريادة الأعمال الجامعية لتعزيز ثقافة العمل الحر بين الشباب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسرة، البيئة الاجتماعية، الطالب الجامعي، ريادة الأعمال، العمل الحر.

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1. *Introduction*

Entrepreneurship has become a central topic in global development discussions due to its role in enhancing economic growth, driving innovation, and providing sustainable employment opportunities, especially for the youth. In developing countries, including Algeria, entrepreneurship is seen as a strategic option to address the structural challenges faced by the labor market, where unemployment—particularly among university graduates—remains one of the most significant social and economic issues. Official statistics indicate high unemployment rates for holders of higher education degrees, prompting the state to develop various programs such as the National Agency for Youth Employment Support (ANSEJ), the Guarantee Fund for Loans to Small and Medium Enterprises (FGAR), and the National Agency for Micro-credit Management (ANGEM). However, despite their importance, these programs face limitations in their impact unless accompanied by social and cultural dynamics that enable youth to adopt an entrepreneurial culture as a strategic choice for their professional lives. (salami, 2012)

Entrepreneurship, therefore, is not merely a technical economic activity but also a social behavior and cultural value whose roots are grounded in early individual formation. In this context, the family constitutes the first social space where individuals acquire principles of self-reliance, confidence in their abilities, and encouragement of calculated risk-taking. Through socialization, young people learn how to perceive work: Is it merely a secure job in the public sector, or a space for initiative and innovation? The father, as a professional role model, exerts a noticeable influence on the orientations of his children, supported by what is known in sociological literature as Role Model Theory, which highlights how parental professional experience, particularly in the private sector, increases the likelihood of children adopting entrepreneurial ventures.

Besides family, the broader social environment (relatives, friends, social networks) plays a complementary role through what is known as social capital. Possessing a successful network enables students to access resources, information, and the moral support necessary to venture into self-employment. Several studies confirm this, such as Mungai & Velamuri (Mungai, 2011), which demonstrated that an entrepreneurial family background directly increases the probability of children entering the field of entrepreneurship, and

Shinnar, which showed that social support is a key variable in the intention to establish projects among university youth. (Shinnar, 2014)

Nevertheless, university students in Algeria are confronted with a paradoxical situation: on one hand, they are products of an educational system that seeks to equip them with knowledge and skills, and on the other hand, they face a fragile reality in a labor market with limited absorption capacity that does not guarantee stable public sector employment. Under this contradiction, resorting to entrepreneurship becomes a risk-laden option that heavily depends on the extent of family readiness to provide material support (initial financial capital) and moral support (encouragement, guidance, social acceptance).

From this standpoint, the importance of this study emerges, seeking to explore how family and social environment influence Algerian university students' orientation towards adopting entrepreneurship and self-employment. The research problem is formulated as follows: To what extent does the family and social environment contribute to shaping university students' attitudes towards self-employment and entrepreneurship, and what are the main social determinants influencing these attitudes?

From this problem statement, several hypotheses arise, the most important of which are:

1. The professional status of parents has a direct impact on the readiness of children to embark on entrepreneurial ventures.
2. The presence of family members owning private projects enhances the student's intention to start a project after graduation.
3. Family support, whether material or moral, constitutes a fundamental element in guiding the student towards adopting a culture of self-employment.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1. Concept of Entrepreneur (Entrepreneur)

The concept of the entrepreneur in economic and social literature is linked to various roles the individual plays in creating economic initiatives. Schumpeter (1950) defined the entrepreneur as "a person who is capable of transforming a new idea or invention into a successful innovation," focusing on creativity and renewal. Other researchers describe the entrepreneur as someone "who possesses a blend of organizational, managerial, and innovative skills enabling

them to build and manage a private project capable of competition." (Majda, 2004)

Within the context of this study, the term entrepreneur refers to the university student who seeks to establish their own project after graduation, possessing the minimum necessary cognitive and skill qualifications allowing them to transition from the status of "student" to "entrepreneur."

2.2. Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is considered a multidimensional field; it is not merely the creation of an economic project but a culture associated with autonomy, initiative, and a desire for success. Today, it is seen as an alternative option for youth facing the blockage of the labor market.
In this study, entrepreneurship refers to the university student's willingness and readiness to engage in self-employment by establishing an independent economic or service project after graduation, driven by professional, personal, and social goals. (Borreziga, 2013)

2.3. Small Business

Small businesses are commonly defined as "economic units employing a limited number of workers and usually managed directly by the owners, targeting primarily local market needs". (Rabah, 1982)

Such businesses represent one of the main channels through which Algerian youth aspiring to entrepreneurship resort, due to their relatively lower complexity regarding organization and capital requirements.

2.4. Terms relevant to the study

A university student is "an individual receiving academic and systematic training within a higher education institution to acquire knowledge and skills qualifying them for a university degree". (Abdelaziz, 2005)

In this study, it refers to students enrolled in the final years (Bachelor's and Master's) at Skikda University, who stand at the threshold of transitioning from education to the labor market, making them the most relevant group for the entrepreneurship topic.

The definitions of a university vary between cognitive and social dimensions; it is on one hand "a social institution concerned with knowledge

production, transfer, and human competency preparation", and on the other hand, a space for value and cultural socialization.
For this study, the Algerian university is considered a strategic space preparing students for labor market integration and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit, though its impact remains limited without parallel family and social support. (Hussein, 2010)

2.5. Framing Theoretical Concepts

Over and above the definitions, the analysis relies on a number of core sociological concepts:

- **Socialization**: The process through which individuals acquire work values and a culture of self-reliance within the family.
- **Social Capital:** As formulated by Bourdieu and Coleman, it refers to the quantity and quality of resources obtained through family and social networks.
- **Role Model Theory**: Suggests that the presence of a successful role model within the family or close environment increases an individual's tendency to emulate and engage in a similar entrepreneurial experience.

3. Methodology

This study adopts the descriptive-analytical approach, as it is the most appropriate for studying social phenomena by describing them as they exist and analyzing the influencing factors. This approach allows for understanding the role of family and social environment in shaping university students' entrepreneurial orientation.

3.1. Study Population and Sample

The study population consists of graduating students at the University of Skikda (third-year Bachelor's and second-year Master's students), considered the group qualified for direct transition to the labor market. The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 120 students from four departments within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: Sociology, Psychology, Humanities, and Media and Communication.

After retrieving the questionnaires, 77 valid forms were accepted for analysis, representing a response rate of 64.2% of the total sample size, which is considered acceptable in field studies.

3.2. Data Collection Tools

Questionnaire : The primary tool for data collection, is designed to measure key variables including:

- Father's occupational status.
- Family support (material/moral).
- Presence of family members owning private enterprises.
- Student attitudes towards establishing a private project post-graduation.

Semi-structured Interviews: Used as a supplementary tool with a small sample of students to enrich quantitative findings with qualitative data reflecting their perceptions of entrepreneurial culture.

3.3. Data Analysis Method

The primary data is analyzed using descriptive statistical methods (frequencies and percentages) through statistical tables. This helped highlight the relationship between the father's occupational status, family support, and presence of family businesses on one hand, and students' entrepreneurial orientations on the other.

Qualitative results from interviews underwent simplified content analysis aims at exploring symbols and meanings related to students' perceptions of the family and social environment's role in shaping their professional decisions.

4. The Role of Family and Social Environment in Guiding Students to Adopt the Idea of a Private Project

University students are influenced by their immediate environment, especially the family, which is considered their primary support throughout life and in every step they endeavor to take, through consultation with relatives and receiving various kinds of support they need in their lives.

Table 1: Relationship Between Father's Occupational Status and Discussion of Project Idea

Father's Occupational Status	With Family	%	With Friends	%	With Successful Role Models	%	Total	%
Public Institution Employee	04	28.6	03	21.4	07	50.0	14	100
Private Institution Employee	04	80.0	00	00.0	01	20.0	05	100
Self-employed	04	100.0	00	00.0	00	00.0	04	100
Farmer	01	100.0	00	00.0	00	00.0	01	100
Trader	02	100.0	00	00.0	00	00.0	02	100
Business Owner	00	00.0	00	00.0	01	100.0	01	100
Unemployed	02	50.0	00	00.0	02	50.0	04	100
Retired	09	60.0	02	13.3	04	26.7	15	100
Deceased	04	80.0	01	20.0	00	00.0	05	100
Total	30	58.8	06	11.8	15	29.4	51*	100

(*) Respondents who have the idea of creating a private project after graduation.

The table reveals that the majority of students (58.8%) primarily discuss their private project idea with their families, while 29.4% turn to successful community role models, and only 11.8% consult friends. It is notable that children of fathers working in independent sectors (trade, agriculture, freelance) are more inclined to consult their families about the project compared to children of employees.

- This pattern is consistent with Socialization Theory, where the family is viewed as the primary environment in which professional awareness is embedded from childhood, enhancing the student's confidence to return to the family as a source of guidance. (Derkaoui, 2025)
- The father's occupational status serves as a Role Model, wherein the family experience has greater impact when the father is active in an independent business or trade, contrary to family's dependent on public sector jobs where stability and risk avoidance prevail.
- The significant reliance (29.4%) on successful role models from outside the family reflects the importance of social capital and community networks that widen the student's horizons beyond the immediate family setting.

Table 2: Relationship Between Father's Occupational Status and Acceptance of the Idea of Establishing a Private Project

Father's Occupational Status	Welcome	%	Reject (Do not Welcome)	%	Total	%
Public Institution Employee	11	84.6	02	15.4	13	100
Private Institution Employee	05	100.0	00	00.0	05	100
Self-employed	04	100.0	00	00.0	04	100
Farmer	01	100.0	00	00.0	01	100
Trader	02	100.0	00	00.0	02	100
Business Owner	01	100.0	00	00.0	01	100
Unemployed	04	100.0	00	00.0	04	100
Retired	15	93.8	01	06.2	16	100
Deceased	04	80.0	01	20.0	05	100
Total	47	92.2	04	07.8	51*	100

(*) Represents respondents who have the idea of creating a private project after graduation.

The table shows that the overwhelming majority of students (92.2%) received family acceptance of the idea of establishing a private project after graduation, while 7.8% did not get sufficient encouragement. It is noticeable that families whose fathers belong to free professions or the private sector shows an absolute acceptance rate of 100%, while the lowest acceptance rate is among children of employees in public institutions (84.6%) or those whose fathers are deceased (80%).

- This result reflects that family support is structural rather than circumstantial; entrepreneurial culture is part of the family values structure, especially when the family has prior experience in the business sector. (Chauhan, 2024)
- The father remains a pivotal actor, as his professional experience determines the family's acceptance of risk; children raised in entrepreneurial families acquire values of independence and risk-taking, while job stability values dominate families of employees.
- These results align with Coleman's (1988) concept of social capital, where "emotional support" (encouragement, confidence) constitutes a critical dimension in establishing entrepreneurial intent.
- They also align with global studies (Shinnar et al., 2014) that proved that psychological and social family support facilitates the transition from mere "entrepreneurial intention" to an actual decision to create a project.

Table 3: Relationship Between Father's Occupational Status and the Role of the Family in Case of Establishing a Private Project

Father's Occupational Status	Yes (Family Contribution)	%	No (No Contribution)	%	Total	%
Public Institution Employee	14	77.8	4	22.2	18	100
Private Institution Employee	6	100	0	0	6	100
Self-employed	6	100	0	0	6	100
Farmer	2	100	0	0	2	100
Trader	2	100	0	0	2	100
Business Owner	1	100	0	0	1	100
Unemployed	6	100	0	0	6	100
Retired	21	70	9	30	30	100
Deceased	6	100	0	0	6	100
Total	64	83.1	13	16.9	77	100

Table 3 shows that the majority of students (83.1%) confirms that their families have a direct role in helping them establish a private project, while only 16.9% do not expect any contribution. The percentage is nearly absolute among children of families with fathers active in independent sectors or owning private projects. Retired fathers' families reported the lowest contribution rate (70%), reflecting the decline in family resources after retirement.

- This data goes beyond symbolic support (encouragement) and reveals the practical dimension of the family as a source of material and cognitive capital through financing, management, or providing expertise.
- Based on Social Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988), families provide support not only from an emotional standpoint but also

as socio-economic actors offering resources that mitigate startup difficulties.

- Remarkably, unemployed families showed full willingness (100%) to contribute, possibly explained by their desire to push their children towards private projects to compensate for their limited current opportunities in the formal labor market.
- Results also suggest that students raised in families with "economic experience" in the private sector tend to consider the family a direct partner in their project, whereas those from families without entrepreneurial experience remain less dependent on family involvement.

Family contribution to the project does not only involve psychological encouragement but includes financial and cognitive support as an economic actor complementing official financing institutions. This reinforces the hypothesis that family in the Algerian context is not merely a social environment but also a deployable capital in the entrepreneurial process.

Table 4: Relationship Between Having a Family Business and Acceptance of the Idea of Establishing a Project

Having a Family Business	Welcome	%	Reject/Do Not Welcome	%	Total	%
Yes	18	94.7	1	5.3	19	100
No	29	90.6	3	9.4	32	100
Total	47	92.2	4	7.8	51*	100

(*) Respondents with the idea of creating a private project after graduation.

Table 4 shows that the majority of respondents who have a family member owning a private business (94.7%) affirmed that their families welcome the idea of establishing a project after graduation, compared to a slightly lower percentage (90.6%) among those without an entrepreneurial family member. This reflects that having a family business usually boosts the level of family acceptance for entrepreneurship, although general welcoming is prevalent among most families.

- This finding aligns with social capital literature, where successful professional kinship networks play a role in transmitting entrepreneurial values and strengthening trust within the family. Students who witness the success of a relative in the private sector gain a stronger sense of feasibility and realism toward the project idea.
- Having a family business is not merely a "realistic fact" but also a symbolic capital granting the student and their family confidence that entrepreneurship is a viable option, not merely a gamble.
- The slight difference (94.7% vs. 90.6%) can be explained by the broader cultural acceptance in Algerian families for private projects due to public employment stagnation, even in families without direct private sector experience.
- These results intersect with Mungai & Velamuri, who indicated that entrepreneurial family backgrounds affect not only "entrepreneurial intention" but also the extent of family support and aspirations for their children's future. (Mungai, 2011)

Having a family economic establishment makes families more receptive to their children's projects because it provides a tangible success pattern reproduced across generations, reinforcing a culture of learning by modeling and opening the way for students to benefit from a supportive kinship network in both symbolic and practical terms.

Table 5: Relationship Between Having a Family Business and Family's Role in Assisting with Establishing a Private Project

Having a Family Business	Assistance Provided	No Business	Total	%
Yes	18	4	22	100
No	46	9	55	100
Total	60	13	77	100

Table 5 shows that a significant percentage of students (83.1%) perceive their families as helpful if they move towards establishing a private project, regardless of whether a family member owns a business. The slight difference between the two groups (81.8% vs. 83.6%) indicates that family assistance is no longer conditional on a prior entrepreneurial background but has become a general phenomenon reflecting a growing social trend towards supporting youth initiatives.

- This reflects a shift in Algerian family culture from merely encouraging public employment to actively contributing to starting private projects, even among families not directly connected to entrepreneurship. (Bazan, 2022)
- According to the concept of social capital, the student benefits from family resources not only as inherited experience but also as "motivational capital" reflecting a new collective awareness of the necessity to enter the free economy as a practical choice amid public sector stagnation.
- Having a business within the kin remains an important additional factor but not a prerequisite for shaping the student towards entrepreneurship; the broader social environment (high unemployment, new government policies) has made families generally more prepared to assist even without direct background in the field.

These results indicate that family support for university entrepreneurship is no longer tied solely to relatives' experiential knowledge but has become an expression of wide social awareness about the role of self-employment in the student's future career. Even when families lack professional or institutional resources, they still consider themselves responsible for providing some form of assistance (financial or moral) to strengthen their children's chances of success.

Table 6: Types of Family Support According to Presence of a Family Business

Family Business Presence	Moral Support	%	Material Support	%	Material & Moral Support	%	No Answer	%	Total	%
Yes	1	4.5	5	22.7	10	45.5	6	27.3	22	100
No	4	7.3	14	25.5	23	41.8	14	25.5	55	100
Total	5	6.5	19	24.7	33	42.9	20	26	77	100

Table 6 shows that the largest percentage of students (42.9%) expect to receive both material and moral support from their families when embarking on establishing a private project. This is followed by material support alone at 24.7%, then moral support at 6.5%, while 26% of students left their answers open, possibly reflecting hesitation or uncertainty about family capabilities.

It is noted that students with family members owning a private business receive higher levels of combined support (material and moral together, 45.5%) compared to those without a family institutional background (41.8%), confirming that practical role models double family readiness to mobilize their resources in various forms.

- This distribution indicates that family support in the Algerian context is pluralistic; it is not only material (project funding) or moral (psychological encouragement) but often combines both dimensions to ensure project success. This aligns with Coleman's (1988) literature describing social capital as manifesting in intertwined material and symbolic forms.
- Material support reflects family awareness that official financial institutions alone are insufficient or unreliable from a social perspective (economic or even religious reasons), prompting families to provide a "safe start" for their children.
- Moral support reflects the symbolic dimension of family relationships, where family encouragement creates a psychological environment that

reduces anxiety related to risk and instills greater confidence in the student's project.

- Having a family member owning a business act as an "impact multiplier," making the family more engaged in supporting the project, either through transferring practical experience or reinforcing psychological acceptance of entrepreneurship.

This table illustrates that the family's role in supporting entrepreneurship is diverse and composite, usually combining financial and moral support. Also, the presence of a family business enhances the comprehensiveness and seriousness of that support. This confirms that the Algerian university student does not enter the entrepreneurial experience alone but relies on a complex family and social support structure providing financial, social, and psychological capital simultaneously.

5. Discussion

The results of this study show that the family and social environment are essential actors in shaping university students' entrepreneurial orientation, through psychological encouragement, practical contribution, and extended kinship networks. The field tables demonstrates that fathers' occupational status, especially those active in the private sector, plays a crucial role in motivating their children to consider private projects. This finding aligns with Mungai & Velamuri (2011), who highlighted the impact of family background on children's entrepreneurship choices.

The results also reveal that family support no longer is limited to symbolic encouragement but took a practical form involving financing and management participation. This agrees with Coleman (1988), who conceptualized social capital as more than just ties and relationships, but as the resources families provide to aid their children's success.

On the other hand, having entrepreneurial family members acts as a multiplier, enhancing students' propensity to engage in entrepreneurial ventures based on Role Model Theory and Bandura's (1977) observational learning. Kinship networks thus serve not just as supportive social contexts, but as conduits for transmitting expertise and successful practices, boosting students' confidence in their entrepreneurial decisions.

These findings align with local studies like Bouchamkh (2014), which emphasized the importance of an entrepreneurial culture fostered through the National Agency for Youth Employment Support (ANSEJ), which remains limited without familial backing. They also correspond with international studies such as Shinnar et al. (2014), affirming that family and social support are among the key determinants of entrepreneurial intention among university youth.

Therefore, this study suggests that societal transformation in Algeria involves not only government policies aims at youth support but also a shift in family culture—from emphasis on secure public employment to greater acceptance of risk and professional independence. This contributes new understanding of informal factors (family and kinship) in spreading university entrepreneurial culture.

6. Key Findings

Based on statistical analysis and theoretical connections, the study found that family and the social environment have a decisive influence on Algerian university students' orientation toward entrepreneurship and self-employment. There is a clear causal relationship between the family environment and the choice of private projects after graduation, aligned with students' personal aspirations.

The father's occupational status plays a central role in motivating students either to continue the same trade or to pursue new paths, facilitated through consultation and sharing of experiences within families especially active in freelance or private sector work. Fathers engaged in freelance work or lacking stable employment tend to invest more effort in assisting their children to establish private projects, reflecting a desire to compensate for job insecurity with investment in children's professional futures.

The study also observes that most students lacking employed fathers receive broad acceptance from their families when adopting entrepreneurship, indicating a shift in family values towards recognizing private enterprise as a strategic alternative to traditional jobs.

Moreover, having a family member with a business represents a key support factor, providing a network rich with practical experience and knowledge, enabling students to benefit from successful role models through consultation, observational learning, and direct material or moral support. This pivotal family role goes beyond preparation and inspiration, forming a powerful source in shaping students' project perceptions and practical orientations within society.

Different forms of family support are noted, ranging from financial to moral, or a combination of both, enabling students to overcome initial barriers in starting their own businesses. This diversity reflects growing familial awareness about the vital role families can play in supporting individual initiatives. The findings also indicate widespread acceptance of private enterprise ideas among Algerian families, driven by significant socioeconomic transformations, positioning the family as an active and essential agent in fostering and sustaining university entrepreneurship in the local context.

7. Recommendations

Based on the empirical results and theoretical analysis, the study offers practical recommendations to support university students' entrepreneurial orientation and self-employment:

7.1. Integrate Family Awareness into University Policies:

Establish awareness programs targeted at families in collaboration with universities to highlight the crucial role of family encouragement and practical support in students' project success, via organizing seminars and workshops that bring students and their guardians together around entrepreneurial culture.

7.2. Enhance University-Local Business Partnerships:

Foster connections between universities and local enterprises to provide final-year students with training, guidance, and access to role models within social and professional circles.

7.3. Create Support Units for Student Initiatives Within Universities:

Establish centers offering psychological and technical support for students aspiring to entrepreneurship, including consultations, financial advice, and

assistance in developing project ideas in coordination with family and social environments.

7.4. Encourage Entrepreneurial Curricula and Activities:

Review university curricula to integrate units on entrepreneurship, innovation, and market dynamics, enriching students' awareness and equipping them with effective leadership and self-management skills.

7.5. Support Seed Funding Programs for University Start-ups:

Advocate for authorities to allocate funds or small grants to students wishing to initiate projects, encouraging family participation in financing through loans or guarantees in collaboration with entrepreneurship support agencies.

8. Conclusion

This study confirms that the family and social environment constitute a primary pathway in guiding university students towards entrepreneurship and establishing private projects post-graduation. Families contribute not only to shaping entrepreneurial intent but also provide financial, moral, and practical support. The presence of private businesses within family members reinforces the culture of self-employment and opens wider horizons for students to succeed individually in a rapidly transforming economic landscape.

Given these findings, there is a recognized need to link university and social policies with effective family and social support mechanisms to ensure students a secure and promising entrepreneurship journey. Family awareness approaches and institutional partnerships represent key enablers of university entrepreneurship and its contribution to Algeria's economic and social development.

This research paves the way for future in-depth studies on the relationship between family environment, cultural transformations, and labor market dynamics, enriching academic discourse on youth entrepreneurship locally and globally.

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