

# The Role of E-Learning in Entrepreneurship Development

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## Abstract

E-learning is one of the main principles of entrepreneurship development and by creating new opportunities and facilities, the selection of entrepreneurs and their capabilities was developed. The present study aimed to evaluate the effect of e-learning in development of entrepreneurship of human resources. The results showed that entrepreneurship stimulates economic development and e-learning supports the development space and the institutions by new methods of e-learning and elimination of most of the time and place limitations could help considerably via collecting human capital develop human resources entrepreneurship in Iran.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Human development, E-learning, Human resources

## Introduction

Now, due to scientific and technical progresses, the creative people with new thoughts as the most valuable capitals have special position. It is obvious that in global competition, all the institutions and people should permanently increase their competition and adaptabilities (Mashayekh, 2002) and instead of job seeking raise entrepreneurship. To achieve this aim, developing creative entrepreneurship ideas making students familiar with the new world causes that unemployment problem as it is considered is reduced considerably (Bazargan, 1994). Entrepreneurship is the driving force of the economy of developed and developing countries. The economic development cycles are moved by entrepreneurship development (Tiwari, 2007). Entrepreneurship is opportunity-based thinking method (Timmous, 2007). Entrepreneurship is the

factor putting various factors together to provide operation of resources and their activation in national benefit productivity and creative operating institutions are created leading to the full development (Hashemi, 2001:126). The consistency of human resources and dispersed units with the help of communication networks is linked and this issue requires new attitude to the human resources and authorities. The view of human resources to IT and communication caused that new model for collective interaction is created among work groups and employees who are far from each other in work environments. The communicative mechanisms link the groups and units and provide the effectiveness of collective attempts of dispersed groups (Baryy and Elmes, 1997). Any process improving the entrepreneurship of human resources is a capital increasing process and its result directly presents a model of collective relations among human beings, units and organizations. Thus, e-learning is the key entrepreneurship development. Thus, by considering the functions and positive effects of e-learning on employees, it seems that e-learning is a good tool to be faced with the challenges of human resources. Thus, e-learning is one of the solutions that can be applied for entrepreneurship development of human resources in organizations.

## Definitions of entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a process of presenting new thoughts, using existing opportunities with emphasis on knowledge and business and bearing risk (Rahimi, 2001). Entrepreneurship is the long-term educational process requiring planning in educational and research system and performing some programs of family basis and school to University and organization and it motivates the economic activities (Hashemi, 2001). An entrepreneur is a per-

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son that besides having knowledge in specialized fields is innovative and bears risk and by facilities, opportunities and empowerment can create productive and income generating employment (Heidari and Abdi, 2004). By the development of economic development concept "Schumpeter"(1934) emphasized on entrepreneur as fundamental and supportive force in all social activities. Generally, entrepreneurs are innovative and identify environmental opportunities and by a new combination of resources and opportunities by accepting the product risks, present the method and services that besides survival in instable and competitive environment benefit from this innovation (Moradi, 2004).

### Different types of entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship is starting a risk taking business, organizing required resources, accepting risks and the related benefits (Ahmad Pour Dariani, Moghimi, 2005). Successful entrepreneurs have different motivations and evaluate benefits by various methods. In an evaluation, the small business owners are classified into 5 different groups as shown below:

- Idealist
- Optimizer
- Hard Worker
- Juggler
- Sustainer

**Idealists:** Their reward is opportunity of new and creative works.

**Optimizer:** They find satisfaction of being business owner.

**Hard worker:** They are developed by challenging of bigger and more profitable business.

**Jugglers:** They are more capable people who enjoy doing all details of their business.

**Sustainers:** They enjoy the opportunity of balancing between work and personal life (Yankelovich, 2000).

### E-learning

One of the important achievements of new IT is the effect and application of internet in education, e-learning and cyber learning. Various definitions are about e-communication but it is evident that these educations provide educational opportunities for any person anywhere and anytime while ordinary educational systems cannot use them. In

e-learning by more participation of the learners, it is attempted that by using new technologies, media and mass and multi-media, suitable and easy educational services are presented to the employees (Ebrahimi, 2009). E-learning is an effective method for permanent educations and improving the human resources skills. As this method is used for re-teaching of the employees, e-learning is less costly than ordinary learning (World Bank, 1994).

#### *Benefits of e-learning*

The benefits of e-learning are including:

- Training a wide range of people
- Accessibility and using much information
- More application of new information and communication technologies
- New applications of information packages and communication and information technologies (Hill, 2002).

Today, using IT and communication is one of the most important interaction elements with world communication, participation in others knowledge, exchanging the experiences, awareness of environment, pioneer in technology and development of public welfare.

#### *E-learning and increasing entrepreneurship capability of employees*

Human resources in organizations merely shouldn't be considered as agents, as they not only are unique in their work but also in their thinking method. In other words, they performance is mostly based on their thinking. At extensive level, it can be said the organizations don't act separated from their constituent elements and it means that their performance is the product of the thinking method of people participating in these organizations. In this view, the organization is based on the fact that the organizations are creatures active by its constituent thinking. On the other hand, the distinction between the organization unit and its constituent human resources is difficult and challenging most of the time. In this view, people are like organization and the organization shows a set of people (Ghoreishi, 2001).

#### *E-learning as an instrument in entrepreneurship development*

Development is the set of changes that cause a social system moves from unsuitable conditions of life to better conditions. In other words, develop-

ment is comprehensive as starting by human being and its goal is improving the life conditions of all people in the society. Thus, development includes all effective factors in improving the living conditions, cultural, economic, social and political factors in the society. Today, culture is based on information and developing the abilities (Iranmanesh et al., 2004). Development of entrepreneurship is the process of increasing the people selection. In this principle, these selections can be infinite and change over time. But in all development levels, two of them, knowledge attaining and having access to required resources to achieve good life standards lead to healthy and long life (Alkire, 2010).

In this approach, development is done for human being and by human being. Thus, the sections associated directly to empowerment and potential capabilities of human being and lead to human resources quality are of great importance. The study of e-learning goals showed that all e-learning goals are to increase and improve human development as they cause that self-learning and self-research is improved among the employees and providers of e-learning with IT and communication for improving communication level between the employees and easy access with low costs apply the information resources (World Bank, 1994). E-learning is the most efficient and strong existing process for knowledge and skill transfer to human resources and its promotion for doing the duties. Based on the society changes and the need of organization and avoiding the wastage of human resources, training the employees are of great importance; generally e-learning goals are as following:

1- Updating knowledge and competence of human resources: In the third millennium, technology revolution caused that we enter the era, its thinking structure is deepening the information and communication and considering the human resources teaching relations instead of performance human resources. In knowledge era, wisdom is the important aspect of human development, sustainable development and knowledge-based community (Irannejad, 2002).

2- Electronic working: There are various definitions of electronic working. This term is synonym with many words. For example: "E-working", "Cyber communication", "Place flexibility", "Electronic houses" and etc. "Electronic working" has wide range and the common element of all definitions is using communication and electronic communication for geographical change in doing the work

that is accepted. "E-working means by IT, we try to guide the work to the employees, instead of moving the employees to work (Dash, 1999).

3- The lack of consistency of the employees with environment: Consistency with environment leads to getting information of the condition inside the organization and even outside the organization. The employees create a network in which different types of information is received from inside and outside the organization. The information can be the knowledge of employees, comments and their criticism (Zargar, 2003).

IT and communication and internet not only affected IT experts and the employees using IT in their work place regularly, but also affected the organization environment, the organization itself and social world (Druker, 1999). The labor market needs are changing continually and the need to education and re-learning of employees are increased considerably. Thus, e-learning is one of the most suitable and attractive methods to be faced with these changes (Ebrahimi, 2009).

4- Interaction model: Creating a model for collective interactions among the work groups and employees being dispersed in an environment far from each other and by communication mechanisms link the employees, groups and units and provide the effectiveness of collective attempts of dispersed groups (Baryy and Elmes, 1997).

5- Work commitment: When people have direct communications, trust is formed, as the personnel of these organizations are not physically present in the organization and work far from each other and do not have direct contact with each other, loyalty and work commitment and mutual trust among employees is very important and are the main duties of the management of these organizations (Zahedi, Shamsolsadat, 2002).

6- Changing the job satisfaction and morale of employees: One of the potential effects of new technologies is increasing the isolation of one by one of the employees. The more the employees are separated of their work, the less their satisfaction of work and motivation. Virtual environment is considered as artificial and it is felt artificial and cannot provide the existing social relation feeling in traditional approach. By the reduction of human interaction, the employees get indifferent and are separated (Berger, 1996).

7- Increasing flexibility: New technology causes that work is more flexible and the employees can work outside of the office. In the past, when

the office was closed, business was finished but now PCs at home cause that the employees continue more than the traditional working hours and can develop their professional activities to any place or time (Hall, 1993).

8- Idea creation and creating creativity and innovation among employees: Another personal and personality features is “creativity” and most of the researchers (Harbnison and Fires, 1995) know the basis of organization entrepreneurs and creative people. In other words, the more creativity or entrepreneurship in organization, the more the empowerment of the organization (Gilson and Shalley, 2004). Druker (1985) believed that creativity and innovation are complementary with entrepreneurship as entrepreneurship without creativity and innovation is not possible. Entrepreneurship is one of the main issues of development and plays an important role in terms of economic planning and sustainable development.

Entrepreneurs with new view and as it was said by Schumpeter, creative destruction (Maia, 2002) to environment and resources provide a good ground for economic, social and environmental progress (Verhiul, 2001).

## Current entrepreneurship

By various reasons, entrepreneurship is dynamic section of current economy and human development. These reasons include economic changes, globalization and more competition, advancing technology and new locations of market and organization culture.

1- Economic changes: The current economy is like fertile soil for entrepreneurs. Economy is changed continually and provides new opportunities for new businesses. Considering the life of people in economy is a new issue and in modern economy, various efforts are made for direct consideration of “life level” and its constituents (UNDP, 1990). Entrepreneurship is considered as economic sustainable development driving force as it can lead to the sustainable economic development of the countries, increasing productivity, creating employment and social welfare (Ahmadpour et al., 2003). Entrepreneurs play important role in sustainable economic cycles and they are the origin of great changes in industrial, manufacturing and service fields in organizations (Duane, 2000).

2- New places of market: The wide current changes and competition dynamics caused that in-

telligent organizations create the situation in which innovative and entrepreneur people are absorbed, managed and kept to use organizational entrepreneurship benefits. Today, the organizations by a few innovative and entrepreneurs and by doing entrepreneurial plan cope with the innovative and flexible and opportunistic competitors. They should provide the situation that all employees have entrepreneurship morale and can do their entrepreneurial activities individually or group (Aghayi, 2008). The entrepreneurs consider change element as an ordinary phenomenon and always search for change and react to it and apply it as an opportunity (Ramirez and Vargas, 2010).

3- Developing technology: Rapid progresses and reduction of prices in computer technology create completely new methods for producing goods and presenting services rapidly (Jafarnejad Ghomi, Abasnejad, 1999). Gret and Kevin referred that competitive, world with rapid technology changes is the ability of companies in management the environmental changes and timely reaction to them as one of the important and effective factors in organizations success (Ramirez and Vargas, 2007).

4- Organizational culture: It is a philosophy guiding the organization policy and organization behaviors to the employees and customers or the special fundamental beliefs as common among the organization members by which the routine works and activities are done and finally organizational culture is the presence of a system of common meanings and concepts among the organization members (Soheili, 2000).

Thus, organizational culture is of great importance as it has many functions as it gives organizational identity to the employees, facilitate group commitment and encourage social system stability and by helping the members to find about their work environment form their behavior in work place and the examples are having creative, innovative and environment and creative behavior in this environment (Sharifzade, Kazemi, 1998).

5- Globalization and more competition: Even the biggest organizations can not dominate their industry in world markets with rapid change rate for a long time and entrepreneurship is required for globalization, it means that the organizations should find some ways for rapid, better and cheap performance (Mirabzade, 1995). Wagner & Sternberg divided effective factors on entrepreneurship and establishment of new organizations into three groups of macro, micro factors and personal features of

entrepreneurs and found that in regional, national and international level, each of them and sub variables had various effects on entrepreneurship process (Wagner & Sternberg, 2004).

## Conclusion

Entrepreneur is a person that besides having knowledge in a specialized field, is innovative, creative and bears risk and by facilities, opportunities and empowerment can create productive and income generating employment. The entrepreneurs as the authorities of development do not wait for environment changes and they try to change. Entrepreneurship is one of the main factors of development and is on priority as a sustainable measurement in creating of job as human resources are educated as they can act with flexibility and accepting unsafe and complex job situations in labor market and can create new jobs with innovation and appropriate risk bearing. Entrepreneurial development attitude to human being is as the development goal and factor. E-learning is one of the principles of human development that reduced many time and place limitations in teaching people. Thus, it is an effective method for permanent teaching and improving professional and job skills. The employees under any condition should do their responsibilities and invest on themselves. In addition, e-learning improves behavior and characteristics as self-learning and self-research and not relying on organization management among the employees.

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