
Social and Economic Impacts of Adding an Entrepreneurship Courses in the Curriculum of High School in Afghanistan: A Conceptual Study Using the Social Fabric Metrics

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Abstract

After 17 years of international support, it is evident that the economic empowerment agenda of government and the international community has not been successful in Afghanistan. This is because along with other factors, in most cases focus groups did not have the basic knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurship. To turn this failure to success, as the first step an Entrepreneurship Course should be added in the curriculum of the high school in Afghanistan. Social Fabric Metrics (SFM) is used to conceptually examines how teaching this course in high school can play a constructive role in social and economic life of youth in Afghanistan. After visualizing the effects of this subject through SFM, one can understand that this course will be the foundation and beginning of a national agenda for entrepreneurship development which leads to a productive and innovative private sector, job creation, enhancing the role of law, wealth accumulation as well as a momentum for sustainable peace and development in Afghanistan.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, Afghanistan, Social Fabric Metrics, Economic Development, High school

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Introduction

Decades of destructive war destroyed the social, economic and political fabrics of the Afghan society. Currently, Afghanistan is suffering from a huge deficit in its trade balance which has been estimated more than 90 percent as of the third quarter of 2017 (CSO, 2018). As a result, the country unprecedentedly has been depending on the foreign aid to adjust its balance of payment. According to Tolonews (2016), more than 40 per cent of the labor force is unemployed. On the other hand, security and business environments are deteriorating. According to the Global Terrorism Database, more than 500 attacks have been recorded to non-military targets such as businesses, private citizens' property, airport, education institute, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Water supply and transportation infrastructure by the end of 2016. Fragile security negatively affects the business environment. As the Senior Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) has pointed out in one of its report in which Afghanistan is the second worse counties for minority enterprise. Further, Afghanistan had dropped from 47th to 107th country in the world ranking of doing business. At the same time, the country is among the corrupted with the lowest rate of literacy in the world. In short, lack of production and innovation capacity, unemployment, security, lack of social and human capital are among the serious challenges that currently Afghan society is facing.

On the other hand, there are opportunities such as; young labor force, mineral and natural resources, a strategic location; more importantly the financial, political and technical support of the international community. To note, more than 43 per cent of the population is under 14 years of age. 2002 onwards, the international community has been funding governance, economic empowerment, and social reform in Afghanistan. According to SIGAR, as the main partner since 2002, the US spent more than 33 billion USD for promoting governance and economic development (SIGAR, 2018). Similarly, the EU donates around one billion euro annually for the development project in different sectors. Other than that, organizations such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank, CIPE and many others have also funded many projects across the country. These projects have had short-run effects on the daily life of the people. However, the sustainability and long-run effects of the foreign aid and development projects have been subject to criticisms (Pain, 2012; Zhang, Yu & Zhang, 2018). Apart from other shortcomings, this failure is due to the fact that the entrepreneurial mindset and spirit has not been developed and spread within the Afghan society or it is very slow if there has been any effort. Less attention has been given to

entrepreneurship while strengthening the entrepreneurial mentality is an influential factor that can solve the current and future social, economic and political challenges in Afghanistan. The most important portion of the society which can embrace this change is the young generation and the best place to which this change can be started from is the education sector and specifically schools. Realistically speaking, it is too early and odd to talk about an education system which grows entrepreneurial spirit among the students regardless of their field of study from early primary school to the high level of tertiary studies in Afghanistan. However, adding a subject by the name of “Entrepreneurship” in the high school’s curriculum, with appropriate and relevant contents will be the first step for the long journey of developing of the entrepreneurial education system. The system which empowers Afghan youth to think, live and run the affairs of their country according to 21st century standards. Hence, this paper will conceptually investigate the social and economic impact of adding Entrepreneurship course in the curriculum of high schools in Afghanistan, using the SFM. Findings of the paper could help the policy makers and managers in the field of education to realize the enormous impact of this subject in the society and accelerate approving it as an official course in the curriculum of all high school in Afghanistan.

2 The Importance of Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Education

Schumpeter is one of the pioneer economists who has written about innovation and entrepreneurship. He discussed the potential role of innovation in economic life in his book *The Theory of Economic Development* in 1912. He highlighted the role of the entrepreneur in this process. In his theory entrepreneurship has been considered as a driving force which interrupts the long-run equilibrium on the market, replaced method of production and organizations by the new one. He defined an entrepreneur as individuals who are capable of taking innovative actions (Croitoru, 2012). Later, in a book named *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, Schumpeter (1943) describes the dynamic and structure of capitalism based on his observations. He believes that capitalism is basically a form and method of economic change, but this evolutionary characteristic which most of the time affect the condition of industries is not because of social and the environment- wars, revolutions and so forth. Ruhter, he argues that the driving force of the Capitalism comes from the dynamic of industrial organization which creates by capitalism itself- unlocking the new markets, developing new production and transportation methods, and attracting new consumers which he called it the process of “creative

distraction". In short, Schumpeter gave a new prospect to the economy in the micro and macro-industrial organization.

To note, after he died his ideas were forgotten and had only revived when criticism against capitalism was on the rise in the second half of the twenty century. Those who have reviewed all early and later writings of Schumpeter about innovation and entrepreneurship can realize that there are differences between his views in the early 1900s and of those presented in 1930s and 1940s about both concepts. In his later works, he moved from a more individualistic role of an entrepreneur in innovation toward a broader concept of entrepreneurship and innovation executed by big corporations in the economy (Sledzik, 2013). Decades later, based on the spillover theory of entrepreneurship; the entrepreneurship considers an important factor of economic growth since it paves the way for commercialization of the ideas which would remain uncommercialized otherwise and enhance the availability of technological opportunity (Andretsch, 2005; Acs et al. 2009). The commercialization of the ideas not only pave the way for spillover of the knowledge but encourage economic development via resource allocation (Acs et al. 2013). Prior to that, two different studies by Hayward and Sundes (2000) and Kourilsky (1995) focusing on Europe and the USA indicates a strong relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth through the effects of entrepreneurship on startups, job creations and development of new products and services. In the same context, Zamberi Ahmad and Xavier (2012) argue that entrepreneurship is crucial for a country in terms of job creation, innovation and its effect on the wellbeing of the citizens. Focusing more on the macroeconomic level, Morris (2001), states that entrepreneurship is the driving force for sustainable economic development, wealth accumulation, increasing the gross domestic product and enhancing the quality of life of a nation. In the other hand, some scholars such as Gorman et al. (1997) and Henry et al. (2003) argue that not only entrepreneurship is important but essential factor for economic growth.

The effectiveness of the entrepreneurship education is as follow: getting a better understanding from the business world, bringing the school and work closer to each other, not only for the business student but for students in the other fields as well. In addition, it enhances the personal capacity of the students; collaboration, communication, and creativity to name a few. Meanwhile, the course improves some essential skills such as critical thinking, numeracy, problem-solving, self-management, time management and enhancing students' study skills when they involve in

many activities being instructed throughout the entrepreneurship course (Cheung, 2008). Moreover, Greaventiz et al. (2010) through an empirical study found that entrepreneurship education helps the students to “receive informative signals and learn about their entrepreneurial aptitude”. In response to those who believe that the entrepreneurship education could have some negative effects if the candidate does not have an entrepreneurial characteristic, Greaventiz et al. (2010) say that such a program enables the students to find the field that they are interested in and fit into it. This will be a good match between graduates and jobs in the market. In a study with a different context, Mohan-Neill (2001) conclude that students who took entrepreneurship education have a more positive view regarding the establishment of small business. As a result, they are most willing to start a business after graduation (Waldmann, 1997). Last but not least, taking the entrepreneurship course during the secondary school increases the likelihood of starting a business, it helps the student to be prepared for tertiary entrepreneurship studies in the university or the course help them to be more proactive in their personal life (Fredua, 2005).

Nowadays students and teachers understand that there is a gap between schools and work. The students and their lectures are confused about the applicability of what they learn and teach in the workplace (Brawer, 1997). This gap is behind the high drop rate of schools which directly and indirectly influences the society through unemployment and high crime rates (Saboe et al., 2002). Thus, as Cheung (2008) mentions the role of entrepreneurship is crucial in reducing the gap between school and workplace. As a result, many studies show teaching entrepreneurship is not impossible in schools (Donckels, 1991; Kolvereid & Moen, 1997; Fayolle, 2000). It was the time when schools and colleges in different countries add this subject in their curricula (Fayolle and Klandt, 2006). For instance, schools and vocational institutes include the entrepreneurship programs in their curricula in most of the states in the USA (Ohio State University, 1995). Similarly, enterprise education included in the materials of Ireland’s senior cycle program. Moreover, Scotland officially decided to promote entrepreneurship in both secondary and primary stages of education in the territory. Finally, similar programs initiated in Spain and Austria as well (The European Commission, 2006). Studies show that entrepreneurship education is an unavoidable part of the education curriculum in Malaysia since the mid-1990s (Zambir Ahmad, 2013; Rezai, et al., 2012) Hong Kong Cheung (2008), Austria, Finland, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Sweden (Hatak & Reiner, 2011).

3 Entrepreneurship Education in Afghanistan

Entrepreneurship is a topic which ordinary people, academicians, and authorities rarely talk about its advantages and necessity for the economy of Afghanistan. This is because there is no compulsory entrepreneurship education in the primary, secondary and tertiary education of Afghanistan. Surprisingly, none of the public universities offer entrepreneurship programs in Afghanistan. Thanks to the international community, CIPE planned to introduce an entrepreneurship course to be taught in 10th grade of two high schools on the top of their core courses for the first time, in 2004. Liu(n.d.) states that this idea imitated from a program which was prepared by General Motors back in the 1970s, where it was designed to teach the Latin Americans how the market economy works. Later, CIPE translated the materials to the local language and called it “Tashabos” which means entrepreneurship. The author adds that by 2009, the program covers 44 high schools with the total number of 23000 students including both male and female. In the early stage, the program was implemented in two schools as a one-year course for the students of 10th grade. Gradually, the program expanded to much greater number of schools and materials applied in the 11th and 12th grades as well. By 2013, the total number of students increased to 44000 in 44 schools in four provinces of Afghanistan namely: Kabul, Parwan, Bamiyan, and Nangarhar.

As the contents are concerned, the course teaches students knowledge, skills, attitude, professionalism, management and leadership (TEO, 2017). CIPE (2012) states that “Tashabos may sound like just another class, but the students who participate in these courses take the lessons to heart and seek opportunities to start small businesses, thereby making their local communities better places. By helping Tashabos students understand the principles behind small business, CIPE is helping students to make a positive contribution to Afghanistan’s business environment. In addition, many Tashabos students contribute to the success of their family businesses. Youth are too often left out of political and economic policymaking, but with the right skills as business owners, these students are preparing for active roles as decision makers”.

In 2014, the program handed over to an organization called Tashabos Education Organization (TEO). The vision of TEO is to “Develop the young entrepreneurs’ innovation and creativity”. This organization is responsible to provide the textbook, teachers, organize exhibition, held business plane writing competition and training to increase the capacity of the Tashabos teachers through the support of numerous stakeholders such as: “Ministry of Women Affairs, the U.S. Embassy, the Embassy of Canada, USAID’s

Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA) project, Afghan Trade and Revenue (ATAR)” and Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce (AWCC), Tabish University, Wadan and other organizations. It goes in to note that in different occasions and meetings many officials have promised to include the course in the official curriculum of the education system to be taught across the country but this promise yet to become true till date.

4 Methodology

The Social Fabric Matrix (SFM) “is an integrated process matrix designed to express the attributes and relationships of the parts as well as the integrated process of the whole in order to define and appraise the real-world social, technological, and ecological system context that contains the problem of interest” (Hayden, 2006). Obviously, every society has different customs, beliefs, and norms that the people of that territory are stick to it in their daily life. Although these thoughts and their patterns are different, they are differentiable. The SFM is the method to recognize these characteristics by testing them in a different condition, structure, and challenges. This methodology is capable of identifying the fundamental elements of social behavior (Natrajan, et al., 2009).

The capability of SFM methodology in terms of using the theoretical and non-theoretical advancement from different areas, make SFM suitable tool for using a conceptual framework in social system analysis, ecology, policy analysis and so forth. This method is used to evaluate a mixture of scientific knowledge of different discipline through using a wide range of information to introduce a system which has many applications such as: finding a research gap in a specific area for further studies (Hayden, 2009). Shortly put, it is helping the researchers and policymakers to “produce a causal loop diagram by helping them structure their thinking from a particular point of view” (Radzicki, 2009). In policy making, there will be one Matrix called “what is” to characterize the problem and the other one named “What it ought to be”, to describe the policy of changing “what is” to “what it ought to be” (Hayden, 1999).

Like any other methods, SFM is comprised of different components. These components are extracted from the literature of different disciplines which enable a researcher or policymaker to explore a problem and the solution to get out of the problem. Those components are “(1) cultural values, (2) societal beliefs, (3) personal attitudes, (4) social institutions, (5) technology, and (6) the natural environment” (Hayden, 2006). To articulate an SFM the components and its elements need to be defined. For instance,

it is important to know that exchanging and the movement of “good, service, information, fund and people” shapes and sustains a society’s relation. Moreover, existence of delivery based on rules and accepted principles guarantees the continuity of the SFM system. More importantly, the researcher adds all important issues to the SFM system in order to address the objectives for which the system is created (Parto & Regmi, 2009). Gray and Gill (2009) emphasize that the effectiveness of the SFM is mostly depended on how it eases the communication and share a mutual understanding among the stakeholders regarding the concerned topic rather than the complexity of the system.

5 Findings and Discussion

Table 1 shows a 19×19 SFM which contains components such as cultural values, social beliefs, institution authority, and personal attitude. At the same time, figure 1 indicates the digraph of the SFM. Both are based on delivery and process. To illustrate, in SFM, 1 confirms the existence of delivery and process among the components. However, blank cells show no delivery. On the same time, digraph has been created based on SFM; each vector that connects one component to another implies a delivery among them. The components from the left (rows) side deliver a product, service, legislation, an idea or skill to the receivers (columns) of the table 1. As Hayden (2006) describes, the cultural value “contains a group’s abstract ideas, ideals, and values from the super organic and supernatural world, and it is found in legends, mythology, supernatural visions, folklore, literature, elaborated superstitions, and saga”. In Hayden (2006) view, social beliefs are measures to judge the current condition with the ideals. He adds that the institutions are specific, they are connecting the community with the beliefs like a bridge. Finally, attitudes are representative of social beliefs in society.

In terms of components, it needs to be noted that learning knowledge is a cultural value which has deep root in religion and history of Afghan people. Furthermore, the situation of Afghanistan in the last half a century is the means behind placing of the market economy, economic development, wealth accumulation, rule of law and security under the social beliefs. For years Afghan citizens have suffered from poverty, insecurity, chaos in all levels. Mentioned social beliefs are described and illustrated in the constitution of Afghanistan, mentioned in the strategic social and economic plans, discussed regularly in the social and visual media, and is an urgent need and big dream for the People of Afghanistan. To achieve or to turn these social beliefs to reality, different institutes are listed which from the author’s point of view is considered significant. These institutes are the

parliament as the lawmaker, Ministry of Education (MOE) as the executor and the donors as fund and technical assistance provider. In the system, Tashabos Education Organization (TEO) which is currently an independent organization and has years of experience, considered as a division under the MOE. However, TEO should be supported exclusively by the concerned donor and government to keep its quality during the implementation of new policies. Financial institutions, Universities, corporations and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are also the important components which play their role in the system. Finally, the outcomes of the mentioned cultural value and social beliefs are; critical thinking, problem-solving, productivity, innovation, and other business management skills. Skills such as; time management, communication, self-management skills and so forth, which are not only crucial for business but for the daily life subtends as well.

Basically, all social beliefs would come to reality if the mentioned institutions act. That means, as a component of the system, institutions transform those beliefs and deliver them as knowledge, and policies. The parliament, MOE, donors, TEO, universities, and financial organization would certainly be amongst the most influential institutions throughout the way to turn the beliefs to reality or bring them closer to reality. To note, there are many cells each shows a delivery from one component to another, however, in the upcoming paragraph, the author will illustrate those cells that have a direct relationship to the entrepreneurship course which is the focus of this study.

The plan of Adding Entrepreneurship course starts with offering (delivery) the proposal of adding an entrepreneurship course to the donors to get their support by MOE as it can be seen in the cell (8,9). Later after getting the donors' support, cell (8,7) shows the delivery of a bill to the parliament to get their approval for implementation of the plan. It will be only taken to the executive stage when the parliament approves (delivery) it as a law, which is shown in cell (7,1). cells (9,1) and (10,1) show the delivery of fund which is practical work from donors and the TEO respectively to turn the plan into action.

In return, cell (1,8) and (1,9), show that the delivery of Entrepreneurship course to MOE and donors is that the course enables and paves the way for both to achieve their long-term goals. For instance, MOE meets its educational goals and the donors will be assured that their investment will pay off in the future in terms of income and social reform. Cell (1,10) shows the delivery of funds and resources to the TEO by government and donors. As a result, new motivated young talents who are equipped with the basic knowledge of entrepreneurship will be trained for the SMEs industry and

skillful fresh young talents to work in the corporation as are shown in cell (1, 11) and (1, 12) respectively. At the same time, cell (1,13) indicates that the universities could embrace students with the basic knowledge of entrepreneurship; each of whom could be potential entrepreneurs in their field.

The delivery in terms of personal attitude which is shown in cells (1,15) up to (1,19) is that this course can act as a platform for the high school student both male and female to learn and practice critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, being more productive and other beneficial skills that will be useful for their professional and personal life. Hence, it would be a win-win deal for the government, international community and private sector to support the proposal of adding the entrepreneurship course.

The efforts of institutions in different forms would be visible on social beliefs in the long run. Where, the knowledge and skills that the high school students get from the entrepreneurship course will be: critical thinking, problem-solving, productivity, innovation and other beneficial skill for setting up new businesses, managing businesses and a good personal life. For instance, cells (16,3) to (16,7) shows that the problem-solving component delivers special knowledge and capability to the students that help them to think of strategies to resolve the wealth accumulation problem in personal and national level, implement the rule of law, take initiatives to accelerate an inclusive economic development as well as solutions that could ensure long-lasting security in Afghanistan. Further, this skill is considered essential (delivery) for starting a business and enable an employee to identify and resolve obstacles in a corporation, as has been shown in cells (16,11) and (16,12). It goes in to note that these skills and knowledge do not only have important effects on the social beliefs through its economic means but other means as well. For instance, it helps students to be organized and to be a successful role model in every aspect of their personal and social lives.

As described above as a piece of knowledge, the Tashabos (entrepreneurship) course will touch the beliefs of the society and raise the issues which are a remedy for lots of the current challenges of Afghan community. In the long-run, as the first step toward developing an entrepreneurship education system, this subject not only can solve the problems but takes the society to a higher level of political, social and economic development if it supports with other development strategies in the education system. For instance, development of relevant context and hiring well- trained teachers, extending the entrepreneurship education to

primary, secondary and university level for all field especially agriculture, engineering, and economic fields.

The author chooses security out of other components of the social believes that presented in the table 1 (to look at the effects of beliefs please look at the diagraph). Cell (6,4) shows that peace and security pave the way (deliver support in form of preparing the young generation to respect social rules and regulations) for the rule of law. Moreover, cell (6,5) and (6,9) imply that security pave the way (delivers) for balance economic development for all the regions and attracts more attentions from the donors to invest more in development projects. At the same row, Cells (6, 11) and (6,12), show that security delivers certainty and safety to SMEs and corporations which are both crucial for innovation as it has been presented in the cell (6, 18). Where the certainty and safety are the delivery of security to innovation.

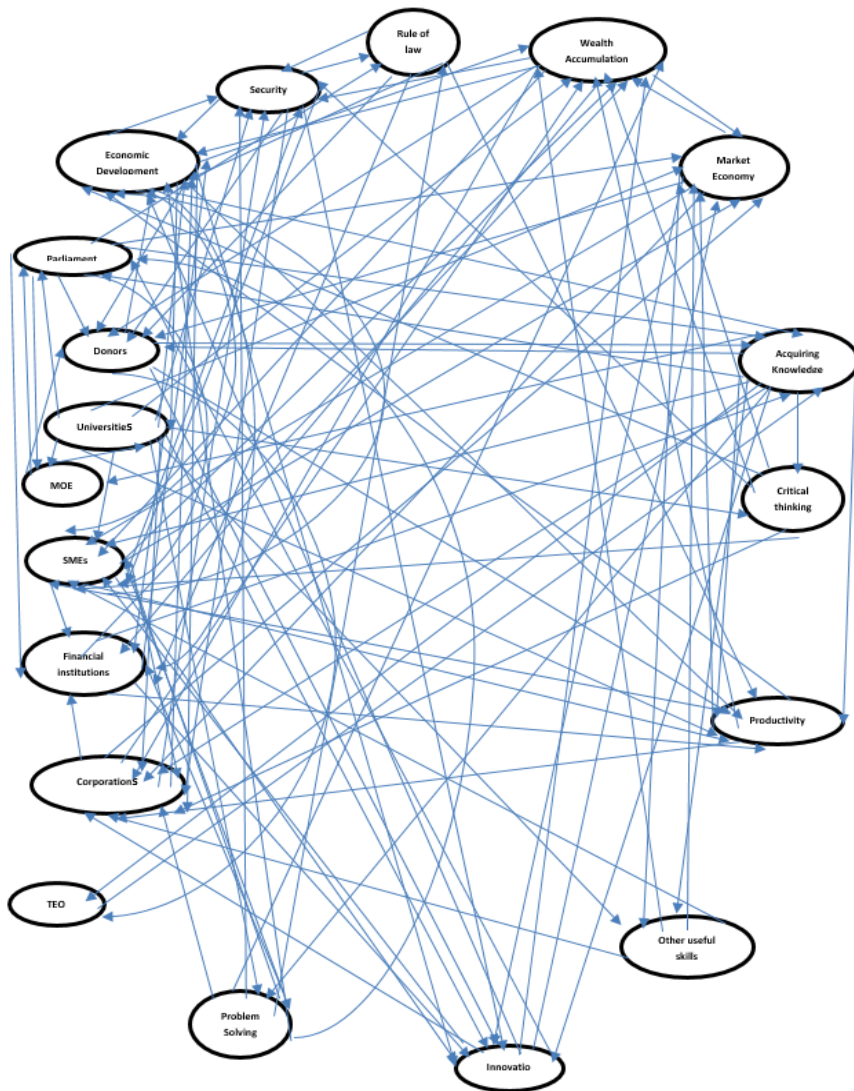
Table 1: SFM of social and economic impacts of adding an entrepreneurship course

Receiving components		Delivering component																		
		Cultural Value	Social Beliefs					Institution Authority							Personal Attitude					
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Cultural Value	Acquiring Knowledge	1																		
societal beliefs	Market Economy	2		1					1									1	1	
	Wealth Accumulation	3		1		1	1			1					1					
	Rule of law	4				1	1			1					1			1		
	Economic Development	5	1		1			1			1	1	1	1				1	1	
	Security	6				1	1				1	1	1							1
Institution Authority	Parliament	7	1	1		1				1	1		1	1						
	MOE	8							1					1						
	Donors	9	1				1					1						1	1	
	TEO	10	1																	
	SMEs	11		1	1		1	1					1		1			1	1	1
	Corporations	12		1	1		1	1							1					

personal attitudes	Universities	13		1	1		1	1	1	1			1	1		1	1	1	1
	Financial institutions	14		1	1		1										1	1	
	Critical thinking	15		1	1		1		1				1	1					
	Problem Solving	16			1	1	1	1	1				1	1					
	Productivity	17		1	1		1						1	1					
	Innovation	18		1	1		1		1				1	1					
Other useful skills	19			1		1						1	1						

Source: Author compilation

Figure 1: The diagram of SFM of the social and economic effects of adding an entrepreneurship course



Source: Author compilation

5 Conclusion

It has been described that despite the support of the international community-flows of billions of USD and attempts of the government, the economic situation of the ordinary Afghans does not change remarkably. The reasons are that the people did not have the basic knowledge about entrepreneurship. As a result, since 2002 they lost many opportunities. However, by having a young labor force, a strategic location full of natural resources and minerals. Afghanistan can move to a higher level of economic development. This will come true if an entrepreneurial spirit and mindset grow up in the society, government and among the business communities. This change should start from the young ages and no place is better than high school. Hence, the author suggests, an entrepreneurship course to be added into the curriculum of high school of Afghanistan. As a role model, the author has demonstrated to the Tashabos (entrepreneurship) course which has teaching to 44000 students of 43 schools in four provinces of Afghanistan. The author insisted that TEO should be responsible for the implementation of this new policy as this organization is equipped with more than a decade of experience.

The author has analyzed the social and economic impacts of this policy through a SFM system. The SFM system consists of 4 components and 19 elements. The entrepreneurship course as knowledge is under the culture value, while social belief consists of the market economy, economic development, wealth accumulation, rule of law and security. Moreover, components such as MOE, donors, TEO, SMEs, corporations, university, financial institutions are the institution authorities which transform beliefs and cultural value to ideas, products, services, a benchmark, momentum for change and so forth. Finally, the outcomes of institutions' efforts can be seen in critical thinking, problem-solving, productivity, innovation, and other useful skill.

The conceptual analysis using SFM clearly shows that entrepreneurship course can develop critical thinking, problem-solving, productivity, innovation, and other useful skills among the students. These skills along with other knowledge about the market economy and wealth accumulation pave the way for economic development, secure and eventually prosper Afghanistan.

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