

How Competent Are Our Students in Digital Entrepreneurship? †

Vladimir Simovic ^{1,2,*}, Mirna Safi ¹, Aleksandra Bradić-Martinović ², Hamsa Sarhan ¹, Rupalli Bhagat ¹ and Djina Ivanovic ²

¹ College of Business, Australian University, Mubarak Al-Abdullah P.O. Box 1411, Kuwait

² Digital Economics Department, Institute of Economic Sciences, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

* Correspondence: v.simovic@au.edu.kw

† Presented at the Digital Transformation in Business: Challenges and New Opportunities, West Mishref, Kuwait, 17 November 2022.

Abstract: This paper provides insights into the research design and preliminary results of the research targeting digital entrepreneurial competence levels of the university students acquired during the course of formal university education. The preliminary insights represent the part of the research grant funded by Kuwait Foundation for Advancements in Sciences aiming to develop the tool for assessing the levels of students digital entrepreneurial competences. The preliminary results indicate that there are differences in digital entrepreneurial competence levels which can be attributed to different characteristics of university students.

Keywords: digital entrepreneurial competences; EmDigital; competence frameworks; digital entrepreneurship

1. Objectives

Digital Entrepreneurial Competences (DEC) are vital prerequisites for digital entrepreneurship. Some studies [1] suggested that there is a gap between the level of competences that students are required to possess to join the contemporary labor market and the actual level of DEC they possess. To the best of our knowledge, the academic literature does not provide evidence of the research focused on measuring the levels of DEC that university students acquire during their university education. The main objective of this research is to develop relevant methodology and to measure DEC levels of university students.

2. Methodology

The methodology for assessing DEC levels of university students was developed using the EmDigital framework proposed by Prendes-Espinosa et al. [1]. This research focused on the first competence area of EmDigital, called the “identification of opportunities”. The instrument (questionnaire) was developed using the approach proposed by Kluzer and Priego [2]. The research was conducted simultaneously in Kuwait and Serbia. The descriptive statistics was used for assessing the DEC levels of university students.

3. Results

The preliminary data show that students in Serbia performed better compared to students in Kuwait. The level of acquired DEC for Bachelor students is higher compared to diploma and Master students. As per field of study, finance students showed better knowledge than IT and business economy students. Employed students performed better than unemployed students, and female students performed slightly better than male students.

4. Implications

The final results of the research outlined in this paper will provide higher education institutions (HEI) in Kuwait and Serbia with empirical evidence regarding the levels of



Citation: Simovic, V.; Safi, M.; Bradić-Martinović, A.; Sarhan, H.; Bhagat, R.; Ivanovic, D. How Competent Are Our Students in Digital Entrepreneurship?. *Proceedings* **2023**, *85*, 18. <https://doi.org/10.3390/proceedings2023085018>

Academic Editor: Marcelle de la Roche

Published: 14 March 2023



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DEC that their students acquire during their university education. This research is focused on the first competence area of EmDigital as a DEC framework and, in combination with the research which will be executed using the DEC online tool (for all the competence areas of EmDigital), it will provide a detailed insight into the DEC levels of university students. As a consequence, HEIs will be able to adjust their curriculums to better meet the needs of the contemporary labor market.

5. Originality Value

No similar research exists in the academic literature on DEC to date. This research reveals not only the DEC levels of university students in the participating countries but also points to its association with different variables (age, gender, level of study . . .).

6. Contribution

This research contributes to a better understanding of the effectiveness of the educational efforts of HEIs in Kuwait and Serbia in terms of the preparedness of their students for the labor market and digital entrepreneurship after their graduation.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, V.S. and A.B.-M.; methodology, V.S. and M.S.; resources, M.S., H.S. and R.B.; writing—original draft preparation, V.S.; writing—review and editing, M.S. and D.I. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This work is supported by the Australian University, Kuwait, under an internal seed grant No. IRC-2020/2021-SOB-MARKETING-PR11; by the Kuwait Foundation for Advancements in Sciences (KFAS), under grant No.CN21-18IQ-1382; and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and has received an ethical approval from the Scientific Research Center of the Australian University in Kuwait, prior to its administration.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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