

# The Impact of the Entrepreneurial Support Relationship on the Learning of Entrepreneurs: An Empirical Assessment with Tunisian Novice Entrepreneurs

**Mohamed Fitouri**

*University of Monastir, Faculty of Economics and Management of Mahdia,  
Research laboratory: LISEFE*

**Samia Karoui Zouaoui**

*University of Tunis El Manar, Faculty of Economics and Management of  
Tunis, Research laboratory: LISEFE*

*Original Research*

*Received 14 June 2021*

*Revised 26 June 2021*

*Accepted 26 June 2021*

*Additional information at the end  
of the article*

**Abstract:** This paper examines the impact of the entrepreneurial coaching relationship on entrepreneurs' learning. We use the structural equation method with the partial least squares technique to test our hypotheses on a set of Tunisian novice entrepreneurs. The results are generally in line with theoretical predictions and highlight the key role that the coaching relationship plays in the learning of the entrepreneur.

**Keywords:** learning; coaching relationship; entrepreneur

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji dampak hubungan pembinaan kewirausahaan terhadap pembelajaran wirausaha. Kami menggunakan metode *structural equation method* dengan teknik *partial least squares* untuk menguji hipotesis kami pada satu sampel pengusaha pemula di Tunisia. Hasilnya pada umumnya sejalan dengan prediksi teoretis dan menyoroti peran kunci yang dimainkan oleh hubungan pembinaan dalam pembelajaran wirausahawan.

**Kata Kunci:** pembelajaran; hubungan pembinaan; pengusaha

## INTRODUCTION

The literature on entrepreneurship emphasizes the crucial role of entrepreneurship and economic dynamism in many industrialized and developing countries. Indeed, the degree of entrepreneurial activity is becoming an increasingly used measure of a country's economic dynamism. However, the failure of newly created firms cannot be ignored. Studies indicate that the mortality of newly created firms is frequent and particular because of its specific characteristics: often limited financial resources, strong dependence on the environment (suppliers, customers), and the central role of the owner-manager (Cope & Watts, 2000).

Insofar as newly created businesses are an extension of the entrepreneur, the latter plays a very important role in their business's success, or failure. In addition, it is important to note that the creation of a new business is very challenging, especially for novice entrepreneurs. Consequently, it is not surprising that the latter encounters additional obstacles are often stemming from inexperience in business and a lack of management skills (Thornhill & Amit, 2003; Van Gelder et al., 2007).

Faced with these difficulties, the entrepreneur is often overwhelmed by events and sometimes abandons his project along the way (Valéau, 2006). Several governments and numerous institutions are multiplying initiatives to support them and to frame their development. However, some authors are critical of the link between support and business survival (Cooper et al., 1994; Papadaki et al., 2002). Considering these statements, a question arises: What is the impact of the coaching relationship on the entrepreneur's learning? To answer this question, this work will be divided into three parts. The first part is devoted to reviewing the literature and the definition of the study's concepts. The second part presents the methodology adopted in this research. The third part presents the results of this research,

and the main conclusions are discussed (Cope & Watts, 2000). This work aims to study the impact of the coaching relationship on the entrepreneur's learning.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Among the benefits of the coaching relationship are acquiring skills and developing the entrepreneur's learning capacity. Similarly, the relationship between the performance of newly created businesses and the learning of the entrepreneur is widely demonstrated in the literature. Indeed, considering coaching as a protean notion that covers a wide heterogeneity of practices, it also systematically evokes the interpersonal relationship between the coach and the coachee (Paul, 2002), which is concretized by the existence of individualized learning processes for the coachee (Sammur, 2003; Cuzin & Fayolle, 2004). Moreover, recent work has emphasized the co-constructed nature of this relationship (Mione, 2006; Chabaud et al., 2010) and the existence of individualized learning processes for the coach, particularly in the context of partnership relationships (Fabbri & Charue-Duboc, 2013).

Similarly, Deakins et al. (1998) and Sullivan (2000) argue that coaching is a favored learning method for novice entrepreneurs. According to these authors, since entrepreneurial learning is largely experiential, the coach's support can be essential, particularly in allowing the entrepreneur to step back from their experiences and become aware of their learning needs. Fayolle (2004) notes that it is better to help the entrepreneur identify their problem than provide a ready-made solution. According to this author, coaching must be based on learning situations based on the entrepreneur's experience. Hence, developing the entrepreneur's learning capacity is more important than the training content.

Other researchers argue that coaching increases the survival rate of new businesses (Chrisman & McMullan, 2004; Couteret et al., 2006). In this perspective, studies carried out with entrepreneurs by (Chrisman & McMullan, 2004; Deakins et al., 1998) show that coaching contributes to the development of the entrepreneur's learning and that all of this learning has an impact on the performance of the company created. Several authors consider that the entrepreneur's learning capacity is an essential factor in the performance of the newly created enterprise (Bouchikhi, 1993; Bruyat, 1993; Livian & Marion, 1991). In this context, Smilor (1997) writes: "Successful entrepreneurs are exceptional learners. They learn in all circumstances. They learn from their customers, their suppliers, and especially their competitors. They learn from their associates and partners. They learn from other entrepreneurs. They learn from experience. They learn by doing. They learn from what works and, more importantly, from what doesn't." In fact, some studies identify the main learning processes achieved through a supportive relationship in two categories: cognitive learning and affective learning.

At the cognitive level, the coach allows the coached entrepreneur to increase their knowledge in various areas of management (Simard & Fortin, 2008; St-Jean, 2008) in finance and marketing (Gravells, 2006; Henry et al., 2004) to clarify their business vision (Kent et al., 2003; St-Jean, 2008). According to Ozgen and Baron (2007), the coach can help entrepreneurs be more attentive to the business opportunities they detect to ensure the proper functioning of their business. Politis (2005) insists that this capacity to identify business opportunities by the entrepreneur is vital for the survival and growth of their business in creation. According to the latter author, entrepreneurial learning is a continuous process that facilitates the development of knowledge and skills necessary for creating and successfully developing a business.

At an affective level, the coach allows the reinforcement of the self-image (St-Jean, 2008), of self-confidence (Gravells, 2006; Henry et al., 2004; St-Jean, 2008; St-Jean & Mitrano-Méda, 2016) and contributes to amplify the feeling of self-efficacy of the entrepreneurs being coached (Nandram et al., 2007; Nandram, 2016). Similarly, for St-Jean (2008), the coach can bring certain entrepreneurs a feeling of comfort and security. This last point seems important, especially since entrepreneurs generally experience periods of doubt when they are sometimes tempted to abandon their dreams (Valéau, 2017). Concerning the factors that maximize the entrepreneur's learning in the context of an entrepreneurial coaching relationship, the literature indicates that a high level of similarity in the coaching relationship as well as the entrepreneur's trust in their coach leads the latter to reinforce the deployment of these functions, which contribute to the development of the entrepreneur's learning (St-Jean & Audet, 2013). Hence, accompanying the novice entrepreneur is essential in terms of developing these learnings. However, according to (Cullière, 2003) they are often reluctant to be coached because of negative representations of entrepreneurs in coaching (Belet, 1993). In this context, the coach must have

legitimacy in the eyes of those being coached and provide real help. According to Bayad et al. (2010), this legitimacy will only be acquired when certain conditions are met: the level of expertise of the coach, the finalization of prescriptions, empathy, interactivity, commitment, the readability of information, and the reputation of the coach. According to Bateson (1972), coaching must be done according to a process of ‘decoding’ and ‘reframing’ to facilitate the adaptation to the new situation, hence the important role of the nature of the relationship. Based on the work of Wikholm et al. (2008), Deakins et al. (1998), St-Jean and Audet (2009) that the success of the relationship allows the learning of the entrepreneur. We deduce hypothesis 1 as follows: The success of the entrepreneur-coach relationship positively influences the entrepreneur’s learning.

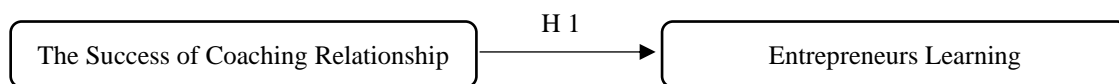


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We have opted to use a quantitative method. This method consists of elaborating a questionnaire on recognizing the opportunities of 80 Tunisian entrepreneurs, who were all recognized as having business opportunities and different characteristics, then collecting data and finally analyzing it.

We have adopted a hypothetical-deductive approach based on quantitative research. This involves testing the hypotheses deduced from the literature on a sample assumed to be representative. This will allow us subsequently to confirm or refute the hypotheses developed.

The variables are measured using 5-point Likert-type scales (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). A scale encouraging the entrepreneur to express his degree of approval or disapproval for certain proposals, in order to identify his characteristics as to the subjects dealt with. We opted for the positivist paradigm. A hypothetico-deductive methodological positioning accompanies this paradigm. We must test the hypotheses we have drawn from the literature on a sample of 80 Tunisian companies that have all recognized the opportunity and having different characteristics. The measurement scales of the professional and psychological aspects are extracted from the literature, while the measures relating to the cultural aspect we have elaborated by ourselves. However, for the variable to be explained, we selected items from the literature. We used SPSS software version 20 for statistical processing of all data collected. Linear regression is the explanatory method used. This is the most appropriate for explaining a quantitative variable through 9 quantitative explanatory variables presenting the entrepreneur’s profile characteristics.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Mode of Data Collection

To achieve our objectives, we chose to collect data using a questionnaire intended for a sample of 350 Tunisian novice entrepreneurs during the year 2020. First, we asked the entrepreneurs to indicate their degree of agreement with our study’s statements concerning the variables (entrepreneur’s learning; the success of the coaching relationship). Then, these two components are measured by items on a five-point Likert scale.

### Measurement of Entrepreneur’s Learning

According to the research methodology literature, a variable is considered dependent (explainer) if it is the variable that, in an experiment, is presumably influenced by the independent (explanatory) variable(s). It represents the result produced by manipulation. Indeed, as with the independent variables, the choice to be made regarding the measurement of the dependent variable influences the theoretical validity and the internal validity of the research. The researcher must choose a specific measure (a verbal response, a behaviour) that will best represent the conceptual dependent variable. If different measures are available to the researcher, the researcher must consider the advantages and disadvantages of each before making an informed choice. Indeed, several studies have addressed entrepreneurial

learning (Rae & Carswell, 2001; Aouni & Surlemont, 2008; Claret et al., 2006). Hence, the entrepreneur's learning can be defined as how he constructs new interpretations in recognizing and pursuing opportunities, as well as in the way he manages and organizes his business. In St-Jean Etienne's research on the entrepreneur-coaching relationship and its impact on the career development of the novice entrepreneur, he operationalized the level of learning of the entrepreneur from the coaching relationship. The reliability of the measurement scale used by the author, composed of five items, is considered very satisfactory. Therefore, we adopt this measurement scale: 1. I learned a lot from my guide; 2. My guide gave me new perspectives on several things; 3. My guide and I learned together, in collaboration; 4. There was mutual learning that happened with my guide; 5. My coach shared a lot of information with me that helped me in my professional development.

### **The Measurement of Entrepreneurial-Accompanying Relationship**

Our definition of the construct of the entrepreneurial-accompanying relationship is based on the research of those authors: Couteret et al. (2006), St-Jean (2011), and St-Jean and Audet (2009). The relationship between the attendant and the entrepreneur is an exchange relationship where the two parties benefit from each other's collaboration in terms of knowledge and experience.

Among the few research on the accompanying relationship, (St-Jean, 2011) was the first to operationalize the accompanying entrepreneurial relationship. The reliability of the resulting measurement scale is composed of nine items: it is considered very satisfactory. Therefore, we are adopting this measurement scale: It allows me to make a precise picture of myself and my company; It secures me; He believes I can succeed as an entrepreneur; I consider him a friend; He puts me in touch with people he knows; It provides me with information and intelligence related to the business world; Confrontation he would not hesitate to contradict me if he did not agree; He offers me other points of view; He shows me his successes and failures.

### **Data Analysis**

After collecting data from 350 Tunisian entrepreneurs, we analysed their responses regarding the impact of the success of the entrepreneurial support relationship and the entrepreneur's learning. The processing of the data is carried out through the modeling by the structural equations, via the PLS regression, using the software Smart-PLS.02.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Estimation of the Model by Structural Equations**

According to Chin (2000) and Sosik et al. (2009), PLS allows for the simultaneous estimation of reliability and validity by assessing the relationships and links between observable and constructed variables.

Generally, the procedure of validation and estimation of the model is as follows: first, the examination of the general characteristics of the variables of the model and the assurance of the validity of the measurement model, then, the test of the structural model to verify the formulated hypotheses (Sosik et al., 2009).

### **Reliability of the Constructs**

Reliability of the constructs involves verifying the reliability of each of the variables in our research model. Specifically, to measure the internal consistency of our research constructs. This is ensured by verifying the Cronbach's alpha of the constructs (the minimum alpha threshold is 0.7), and this is considered superior to the traditional measure of consistency (Cronbach's alpha) since it does not depend on the number of indicators (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

From Table 1 analysis, it is apparent that our composite reliability (CR) indicators are all above the acceptance threshold (0.7). They vary between 0.957 and 0.973: sufficient reliability to justify a very high level of internal consistency. Similarly, the Cronbach's alpha values of our constructs are very satisfactory and are above 0.9 (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Reliability of Constructions**

| Constructs   | Composite Reliability (CR) | Cronbach's Alpha |
|--|----------------------------|------------------|
| Novice entrepreneur Learning                         | 0.957954                   | 0.945354         |
| Success of the Entrepreneurial Coaching Relationship | 0.973685                   | 0.969400         |

### Convergent Validity of Constructions

To better appreciate the study of the internal coherence of the constructs of our model, we also evaluate the convergent validity of the constructs. Taking into account the criticisms addressed to the Alpha coefficient, particularly its sensitivity to the number of items, it is advisable under the PLS approach to complete the verification of the convergent validity of the constructed by using two other indicators. The first is that we will purify the variables by retaining only indicators with a correlation threshold  $> 0.7$  (Fernandes, 2012). The second is that we will examine the average shared variance (AVE) that should be  $> 0.5$ . To achieve this, simply calculate the PLS algorithm that our generate the results in Table 2.

**Table 2. The Converging Validity of the Constructs**

| Construct  | Items  | Loadings | AVE      | Composite Reliability |
|--|--------|----------|----------|-----------------------|
| Novice Entrepreneur Learning                         | APP1   | 0.897665 | 0.820925 | 0.958136              |
|  | APP2   | 0.948405 |          |                       |
|  | APP3   | 0.939386 |          |                       |
|  | APP4   | 0.852678 |          |                       |
|  | APP5   | 0.888733 |          |                       |
| Success of the Entrepreneurial Coaching Relationship | REACC1 | 0.802931 | 0.804659 | 0.973686              |
|  | REACC2 | 0.909251 |          |                       |
|  | REACC3 | 0.913278 |          |                       |
|  | REACC4 | 0.915418 |          |                       |
|  | REACC5 | 0.907314 |          |                       |
|  | REACC6 | 0.933339 |          |                       |
|  | REACC7 | 0.927569 |          |                       |
|  | REACC8 | 0.903458 |          |                       |
|  | REACC9 | 0.852916 |          |                       |

Table 2 shows that convergent validity is ensured since all the items have a correlation threshold  $> 0.7$  (loadings vary between 0.8 and 0.9) and a shared mean variance value (AVE) greater than 0.5 (they vary from 0.820 to 0.804). This latter indicator allows us to ensure both convergent validity of constructs (Chin, 1998) and discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)

### The Quality Evaluation of the Model

To ensure the quality of the model under the PLS approach, you have to go through three validation stages:

#### The Quality of the Measurement Model

We note that we do not have mediating variables in our structural model. To examine the measurement quality of the model, we look at the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of each of the dependent variables. This coefficient also allows us to estimate the predictive power of the research model.

The results found generated by the PLS technology algorithm, show that all the variables introduced in our model explain on the whole ( $R = 48.2\%$ ) the learning of the entrepreneur following

the success of the entrepreneurial support relationship. According to the size of our sample which can be considered as a high size, we can note that  $R^2$  respect the minimum boundary of 0.13 suggested by (Wetzels et al., 2009). Thus, the value constitutes an admissible result and indicates that our model is significant.

### Assessing the Quality of each Block of Variables

As we have previously stated, the Stone-Geisser  $Q^2$  coefficient (CV-redundancy) of the endogenous variables allows us to examine the quality of each structural equation. Thus, to assess this indication we used the Blindfolding technology under the SmartPLS software, the results found show us that the  $Q^2$  indications are positive and different from zero. These results underline that our model has a predictive validity.

### The Evaluation of the Quality of the Structural Model

To assess the quality of the structural model we will examine the value of indication GOF. This Indication is reckoned through average of communalité and average of  $R^2$  of endogenous variables. Therefore, indication GOF is reckoned by:

$$GOF = \sqrt{\text{communalité} \times R^2}$$

$$GoF = \sqrt{(0.7590865) * (0.4402675)} = 0.5036$$

This meeting result allows us to pass to the following stage of the analysis of data.

### Validation and evaluation of the structural model

The objective of this paragraph is to evaluate the structural model, so the emphasis is on testing the assumptions made. To achieve this, two non-parametric techniques are used in the PLS approach: the jackknife technique or the bootstrap technique. In this study we used bootstrap replication analysis ( $n = 350, 500$  iterations). Chin (1998) indicates that jackknife is less efficient than bootstrap in the sense that it is only an approximation, bootstrap being a more recent method of re-sampling. Hence, to test the significance of structural relationships, we use the bootstrap procedure (sample = 500;  $n = 350$ ) by saturating the model. The results obtained are presented where the first column presents the relationships relating to our assumptions which have been significant. The second and third columns show respectively the values of the regression coefficients and of the Student t. The latter must be  $> 2.58$  for a significance level  $\alpha = 1\%$ ,  $> 1.96$  for an  $\alpha = 5\%$  or  $> 1.65$  for an  $\alpha = 10\%$  (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Significance of Structural Relations**

| Hypothesis   | Coefficients of Correlation ( $\beta$ standard) | Value (t) | Decision  |
|--|---|-----------|-----------|
| Success of the Accompanying Relationship<br>↓<br>Entrepreneur's Learning | 0.376892  | 7.818269  | Confirmed |

The tests conducted reveal that there is a positive significant relationship between the success of the entrepreneur-mentor relationship and the entrepreneur's learning. Therefore, the hypothesis is validated ( $t = 7.818 > 1.96$ ;  $\beta = 0.376$ ). This indicates that the more positive the coaching relationship is, the more it enables the entrepreneur's learning. Analysis of these found results allows us to confirm our research hypothesis.

### Discussion

The results of the theoretical and empirical analyses show that the coaching of entrepreneurs influences their learning. On this point, our results agree with those of previous studies coaching influences the learning of the entrepreneur (Fabbri & Charue-Duboc, 2013; Couteret & Audet, 2006). More precisely, our results agree with the results found by Couteret and Audet (2006), Deakins et al. (1998), St-Jean and Audet (2009), and Wikholm et al. (2008) that the success of the entrepreneur-coach relationship allows the learning of the entrepreneur. In fact, the coach must transform the problems encountered by the entrepreneur into lessons and experiences that improve his or her learning capacity during the coaching relationship.

From this point of view, it seems that entrepreneurial coaching can be seen as a learning process according to a prescriptive model of knowledge transmission, from the coach to the coachee. In this context, the coachee assumes a key role in the coaching process, which becomes a co-constructed process (Chabaud et al., 2010; Mione, 2006). Knowledge is then constructed for the different parties involved. It seems to us that the organizational context of support in which this learning process takes place, as well as the nature of the supervision, positively influences the learning process.

## CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study is to measure the contribution of the successful entrepreneurial support relationships to entrepreneur's learning. To conduct this analysis, to carry out this analysis, we opted for a hypothetico-deductive approach that allowed us to study the relationship between the entrepreneur learning and the success of the entrepreneurial support relationships through a hypothesis derived from managerial theory. To better understand this relationship, we selected a sample of 350 novice entrepreneurs. To test our hypothesis, we analyzed the data collected from entrepreneurs by the Smart-PLS software.

The results of this study showed that the entrepreneurial support relationships contribute to the entrepreneur's learning and our work contributes to a more precise and concrete knowledge of the entrepreneurial accompaniment relationship affecting entrepreneur's learning.

Despite the results obtained, our study is limited by the relatively small sample size, as well as the questionnaires used in the primary data retrieval process to ask respondents for their views on a problem that remains subjective and therefore it is sensitive to generalize our results. To overcome this limit, it would be interesting to conduct a study on a larger sample, and since our study was based only on the leading entrepreneurs, it would be appropriate to also take the advice of the coaches.

## REFERENCES

- Aouni, Z. & Surlemont, B. (2008). Entrepreneurial competencies within the process of opportunity recognition. *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, 28(17), 1-2.
- Bateson, G. (1972). The Logical Categories of Learning and Communication. In G. Bateson (Ed.), *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (pp.279-308), Ballantine Books.
- Bayad, M., Gallais, M., Marlin, X., & Schmitt, C. (2010). Entrepreneuriat et TPE: la problématique de l'accompagnement. *Management & Avenir*, 10, 116–140.
- Belet, D. (1993). Prestations de conseil auprès des PME/PMI et processus d'apprentissage de leurs dirigeants: pour une autre conception du métier de conseil en management. *Revue Internationale PME*, 6(2), 109-134.
- Bouchikhi, H. (1993). A Constructivist Framework for Understanding Entrepreneurship Performance. *Organization Studies*, 14(4), 549-570. doi:10.1177/017084069301400405
- Bruyat, C. (1993). *Création d'entreprise: contributions épistémologiques et modélisation* (PhD Thesis). Gestion et management. Université Pierre Mendès-France - Grenoble II.
- Chabaud, D., Messeghem, K., & Sammut, S. (2010). Vers de nouvelles formes d'accompagnement? *Revue de l'Entrepreneuriat*, 9(2), 1-5.
- Chin, W. (2000). *Partial least squares for IS researchers: An overview and presentation of recent advances using the PLS approach*. In proceedings of International Conference of Information Systems (ICIS), Brisbane, Australia (pp. 741-742).
- Chin, W.W. (1998). The partial least squares approach to structural equation modeling. In G. A. Marcoulides (Ed.), *Modern methods for business research* (pp.295-336). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Chrisman, J. J. & McMullan, W. E. (2004). Outsider assistance as a knowledge resource for new venture survival. *Journal of small business management*, 42(3), 229-244.
- Claret, N., Jouini, S. B. M., Charreire-Petit, S. (2006). Quand l'évaluation constitue un objet d'apprentissage significatif pour l'entreprise innovante en création. *La Revue des Sciences de Gestion*, 219(3), 45-55.



- Cooper, A. C., Gimeno-Gascon, F. J., Woo, C. Y. (1994). Initial human and financial capital as predictors of new venture performance. *Journal of business venturing*, 9(5), 371-395.
- Cope, J., Watts, G. (2000). Learning by doing—an exploration of experience, critical incidents and reflection in entrepreneurial learning. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 6(3), 104-124.
- Couteret, P., Audet, J., 2006. Le coaching, comme mode d'accompagnement de l'entrepreneur. *Revue Internationale de Psychosociologie*, 12(27), 139-157.
- Couteret, P., St-Jean, E. & Audet, J. (2006). *Le mentorat: conditions de réussite de ce mode d'accompagnement de l'entrepreneur*. Communication publiée dans les actes du colloque de la 23e conférence du CCPME/CCSBE, Trois-Rivières, Québec.
- Culière, O. (2003). L'aide à la légitimation des entreprises nouvelles, in: Actes Du Colloque de l'Airepme «L'entrepreneur En Action», Agadir, Octobre.
- Cuzin, R. & Fayolle, A. (2004). Les dimensions structurantes de l'accompagnement en création d'entreprise. *La Revue des sciences de gestion: direction et gestion*, 39(210), 77-88.
- Deakins, D., Graham, L., Sullivan, R., & Whittam, G. (1998). New venture support: an analysis of mentoring support for new and early stage entrepreneurs. *Journal of small business and enterprise development*, 5(2), 151-161.
- Fabbri, J. & Charue-Duboc, F. (2013). Un modèle d'accompagnement entrepreneurial fondé sur des apprentissages au sein d'un collectif d'entrepreneurs: le cas de La Ruche. *Management international/International Management/Gestión Internacional*, 17(3), 86-99.
- Fayolle, A. (2004). A la recherche du cœur de l'entrepreneuriat: vers une nouvelle vision du domaine. *Revue internationale PME Économie et gestion de la petite et moyenne entreprise*, 17(1), 101-121.
- Fornell, C. & Larcker, D. F. (1981). *Structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error: Algebra and statistics*. Sage Publications.
- Gravells, J. (2006). Mentoring start-up entrepreneurs in the East Midlands—Troubleshooters and Trusted Friends. *The International Journal of mentoring and coaching*, 4(2), 3-23.
- Henry, C., Hill, F. M., & Leitch, C. M. (2004). The effectiveness of training for new business creation: a longitudinal study. *International Small Business Journal*, 22(3), 249-271.
- Kent, T., Dennis, C., & Tanton, S., (2003). An evaluation of mentoring for SME retailers. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 31(8), 440-448.
- Livian, Y.-F. & Marion, S. (1991). De l'évaluation des projets de création d'entreprises au pronostic de succès. *Revue internationale PME Économie et gestion de la petite et moyenne entreprise*, 4(1), 107-129.
- Mione, A. (2006). L'évaluation par l'accompagnant de la performance d'une structure d'aide à la création d'entreprise. *Management International (Montréal)*, 11(1), 31-43.
- Nandram, S. S. & Samsom, K. J. (2020). *Attributes of Entrepreneurial Success and failures. New Perspectives gained from the Critical Incident Technique*. In Proceedings of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Development, The University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK, 15–16 April 2020
- Nandram, S. S. (2016). How do spirituality, intuition and entrepreneurship go together? *Philosophy of Management*, 15(1), 65-82.
- Ozgen, E. & Baron, R. A. (2007). Social sources of information in opportunity recognition: Effects of mentors, industry networks, and professional forums. *Journal of business venturing*, 22(2), 174-192.
- Papadaki, E., Chami, B., & Branch, S. B. P. (2002). *Growth determinants of micro-businesses in Canada*. Citeseer.
- Paul, M. (2002). L'accompagnement: une nébuleuse. *Éducation permanente*, 153(4), 43-56.
- Politis, D. (2005). The process of entrepreneurial learning: A conceptual framework. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 29(4), 399-424.
- Rae, D. & Carswell, M. (2001). Towards a conceptual understanding of entrepreneurial learning. *Journal of small business and enterprise development*, 18(2), 150-158.
- Sammur, S. (2003). L'accompagnement de la jeune entreprise. *Revue française de gestion*, 144(3), 153-164.
- Simard, P. & Fortin, J. (2008). Mentorat des entrepreneurs. *Gestion*, 33(1), 10-17.



- Smilor, R. W. (1997). Entrepreneurship: Reflections on a subversive activity. *Journal of Business venturing*, 12(5), 341-346.
- Sosik, J. J., Kahai, S. S., & Piovosio, M. J. (2009). Silver bullet or voodoo statistics? A primer for using the partial least squares data analytic technique in group and organization research. *Group & Organization Management*, 34(1), 5-36.
- St-Jean, É. (2011). *Recherche auprès des mentors du Réseau M et analyse en dyade avec leur mentoré: Résumé des principaux résultats*. Homme, 78, 5.
- St-Jean, E. (2011). Mentor functions for novice entrepreneurs. *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 17(1), 65-84.
- St-Jean, E. (2008). La formation destinée à l'entrepreneur novice: exploration des possibilités offertes par le mentorat. *Revue de l'Entrepreneuriat*, 7(1), 1-22.
- St-Jean, E. & Audet, J. (2013). The effect of mentor intervention style in novice entrepreneur mentoring relationships. *Mentoring & tutoring: partnership in learning*, 21(1), 96-119.
- St-Jean, E. & Audet, J. (2009). Factors Leading to Satisfaction in a Mentoring Scheme for Novice Entrepreneurs. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching & Mentoring*, 7(1), 148-161.
- St-Jean, É. & Mitrano-Méda, S. (2016). Should Mentors of Entrepreneurs be Trained or their Experience is Enough? *Entrepreneurship - Practice-Oriented Perspectives*, 39-61.
- Sullivan, R. (2000). Entrepreneurial learning and mentoring. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 6(3), 160-175.
- Thornhill, S. & Amit, R. (2003). Learning about failure: Bankruptcy, firm age, and the resource-based view. *Organization science*, 14(5), 497-509.
- Valéau, P. (2017). Les effets de l'engagement affectif, continu et normatif sur l'intention de rester dans le métier d'entrepreneur. *Revue de l'Entrepreneuriat*, 16(3), 83-106.
- Valéau, P. (2006). L'accompagnement des entrepreneurs durant les périodes de doute. *Revue de l'Entrepreneuriat*, 5(1), 31-57.
- Van Gelder, J.-L., De Vries, R. E., Frese, M., & Goutbeek, J.-P. (2007). Differences in psychological strategies of failed and operational business owners in the Fiji Islands. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 45(3), 388-400.
- Wetzels, M., Odekerken-Schröder, G., & van Oppen, C. (2009). Using PLS path modeling for assessing hierarchical construct models: Guidelines and empirical illustration. *MIS quarterly*, 33(1), 177-195.
- Wikholm, J., Henningson, T., Hultman, C.M., 2008. Mentor and Mentee Attitudes in Mentoring for New Entrepreneurs, in *ICSB World Conference Proceedings*. International Council for Small Business (ICSB), 1-27.
- 

**Article correspondence should be sent to:**

Mohamed Fitouri

University of Monastir, Faculty of Economics and Management of Mahdia, Research laboratory: LISEFE  
(fitourim@yahoo.fr)

**Recommended Citation:**

Fitouri, M. & Zouaoui, S. K. (2021). The Impact of the Entrepreneurial Support Relationship on the Learning of Entrepreneurs: An Empirical Assessment With Tunisian Novice Entrepreneurs. *Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship*, 9(2), 19-27.

**This article is available online at:**

<http://ojs.sampoernauniversity.ac.id> (ISSN: 2302-4119 Print, 2685-6255 Online)