Entrepreneurial Marketing Strategy: The Case of Ibn Rushd National Academy

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a practical implementation of entrepreneurial marketing strategy in the form of case study describing a Jordanian school which found a gap in the Jordanian market and decided to fill it by creating an entrepreneurial school that was the first authorized in the Arab world to offer International Baccalaureate (IB) program using Arabic as the main language of instruction. The case focuses on the regional development through using the local language of the country instead of using English as the main language for instruction.

This case also provides a brief introduction about the IB program to generate an understanding of the market surrounding the school and how it competes with other schools inside Jordan. Furthermore, the analysis expands to cover the surrounding environment including several aspects related to marketing strategy.

The case was concluded with a look on the performance indicators and matrices used by the school in the assessment and development process, and the organizational structure and management team which play a vital role in its success.

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INTRODUCTION

Ibn Rushd National Academy (IRNA) is a school like no other school! It is a private school that was opened in May 2012 and became the first school in Jordan that provides the IB primary year's program, not only this, it has also become the first and the only school in the Arab World that is authorized to offer the International Baccalaureate PYP program by using Arabic as the main language of instruction. The entrepreneurial idea of the school was based on a gap in the surrounding market as there were no schools providing the IB system with Arabic as an instruction language. The management team decided to create this school to both fill this market gap and fulfill the need for an Arabic based IB system (Barringer et al 2012). Young scholars can now pursue an international-minded education program, while reserving their Arabic language, and supporting their multilingual language development. IRNA prepares students for both the IB Middle Years Program (MYP) and IB Diploma Program (DP) by offering a rigorous academic program starting from Kindergarten (KG) following the IB primary program (PYP). In line with international best practice and research, Ibn Rushd Academy offers the PYP in Arabic, supported by a strong English language program and it offers placements for KG to Grade 5. Each year, the academy adds a new grade, thus growing with its own scholars all the way to the IB Diploma program. Although the innovative move of using Arabic as the instruction language in Ibn Rushd Academy is the main strength of the school, it faces a problem because the later phases of IB which are the MYP and the DP will be instructed in English which requires the school to maintain its innovation and continue to get the authorization for teaching all the IB levels in Arabic.

The International Baccalaureate (IB)

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a non-profit educational foundation that was founded in 1968 and applied in 3,699 schools in 147 countries to develop and offer four challenging

programs to more than 1,149,000 students; it's motivated by its mission that is focused on the student. IB programs are directed to students aged from 3 to 19 years old in order to help them develop intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn, and work in a rapidly globalizing and developing world (International Baccalaureate Organization 2014). It's a global curriculum and associated assessment processes, which is spreading rapidly throughout many countries of the world, the IB presenting itself as an alternative to local assessment and curriculum offerings. It's a clear example of the globalization of knowledge and the knowledge industry.

IB was established in 1970 in order to reduce the number of tertiary entrance examinations for which students had to prepare and sit. Only 13 schools from 11 countries participated at that time in the inaugural IB examination trial. Today, there are over 1000 schools from more than 100 countries participating in the IB curriculum, which has expanded to include (Paris 2003):

- International Primary Years Program (PYP) for learners from 3 to 12 years of age.
- Middle Years Program (MYP) for learners from 11 to 16 years of age.

The original IB program is now referred to as the Diploma Program (DP) for learners from 16 to 19 years of age. Bunnell (2008) reviewed the development of the IB program around the world over the previous 40 years.

IB Learner Profile

Several studies defined the attributes of the IB learner profile (Voorenet al 2012; Wells 2011; Cambridge 2010; Cambridge 2012). Learners aim to develop their natural curiosity, they acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning, they also actively enjoy and love learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives. At the same time they explore concepts, ideas and issues that have both

local and global importance, so they must acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

IB learners tend to exercise initiative in applying thinking skills in critical and creative ways to help them recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions. Of course the IB learners must understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others while they must act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities in addition to taking responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Another important thing for students is to understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and they have to be open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are familiar with seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to learn from experiences.

Empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others must be shown in their acts; they have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment. They are risk-takers who dare to face unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and patience, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and bold in defending their beliefs, at the same time they understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Last but not least they give a thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience and the ability to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development (Takapuna Grammar School 2014).

What is the Primary Years Program (PYP)

The PYP offers a solid program for the international education. Its main objective is to collect and gather the best research and practice from a range of national systems with the wealth of knowledge and experience in international schools to create a trans-disciplinary curriculum which is significant, relevant, and engaging for learners whose age is between 3 and 12 years. The PYP aims to provide a balanced program that focuses on acquiring significant knowledge, developing essential skills, understanding meaningful concepts, developing positive attitudes, leading to thoughtful action, and believes on an inquiry based teaching method. Structured in Units of Inquiry with cross curricular links to other subject areas, is an effective approach to teach the knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes that we value. Within the PYP, it is believed that student learning is best achieved when it is authentic and trans-disciplinary - relevant to the real world - where the learning is not confined within the boundaries of traditional subject areas but is supported and enriched by them, Students are also supposed to be provided with interactive methods of education in order to increase their role in the classes (Barlow 2008). The implementation of PYP requires specific dispositions, values, beliefs and knowledge to exist in teachers in order to achieve the goals of this program (Twigg 2010).

Ibn Rushd National Academy (IRNA)

IRNA was designed to regularly challenge and continuously extend the boundaries of its knowledge; it celebrates diversity by exploring multiple perspectives and experiences. While being a PYP candidate, its academic program and activities were designed from the outset to support the Academy’s intention to pursue authorization to offer the International Baccalaureate Organization Primary Years Program (PYP).

For the first time in the world, the Academy proposed offering the PYP in Arabic, using in-house developed differentiated and inquiry-based Arabic resources taking advantage of being

an Interactive Knowledge Center (INTKC) project. INTKC is an educational research center promoting an engaging, enjoyable and enriching approach to Arabic learning through working with schools and educational authorities and facilitating educational excellence through its programs which promote curriculum development, enhance instructional strategies, and provides teacher professional development programs (Ibn Rushd Academy 2010).

The academy's mission focuses on building fascinating personalities in children through developing the love of learning, nurturing a strong sense of self-worth cultural identity balanced by a global outlook, the ability to engage in critical thinking, and to demonstrate complete mastery of the academic building blocks, including the independent use of information and its related technologies, necessary for a successful future. IRNA seeks to develop both life and technical skills of its young scholars as a means of exploiting their success in making a positive contribution to their societies and to the world around them.

Ibn Rushd Academy applied for the authorization of the International Baccalaureate to offer its Primary Years Program (PYP) and it was accepted as a candidate in 2010. Further process of authorization followed in the following two years including an authorization visit by a team from the IB organization before final IB approval is considered. In 2012 the school was officially authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization. Only schools authorized by the IB, entitled IB World Schools, can offer any of its three programs (PYP, MYP, and DP) and the commonly shared philosophy of these programs stresses a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that the academy believes is important for its students.

The curriculum, learning resources, instructional strategies, and assessment tools which have been designed to accommodate the differentiated nature of the learning process have helped Ibn Rushd Academy to accomplish its main goal of pursuing authorization to offer an academic and activities program in line with the IB's Primary Years Program (PYP) through facilitating the unique nature of this program which is learner-centered; putting young scholars

at the center of the learning process. Following the IB PYP framework, Ibn Rushd Academy can provide authentic learning opportunities; where learning is engaging, relevant, challenging and significant which provides the students with an understanding of the world around them (Ibn Rushd Academy 2010). The school encourages advanced discussions between students and teachers about several issues related to the society, which builds a knowledgeable generation of kids who have critical thinking and negotiation skills.

Ibn Rushd Academy targets students starting from KG1 to Primary 5 who pursue PYP program, living with families that have a middle income and with a prestigious living.

Ibn Rushd Academy provides several services for its students including a light snack, e.g. biscuits, fruit, and raw vegetables, in addition to a hot meal to give the students the feeling of being home. Ibn Rushd Academy is a nut-free environment; children are not allowed to bring any food that contains nut with them to the Academy premises.

METHODOLOGY

This paper was completed using the case study method by directly observing the processes of Ibn Rushd Academy, which is based in Jordan, in addition to a thorough analysis of the environmental circumstances and competition surrounding the school. A comparison was conducted between IRNA and all IB authorized schools in Jordan in order to find the entrepreneurial position of the school under study.

FINDINGS / DISCUSSION

Through the analysis it has been found that IRNA has a unique entrepreneurial position among IB authorized schools in Jordan, the following discussion proves this fact by looking at the school from different perspectives concerning with the Jordanian market environment.

Competition and Value to Market

According to 2011-2012 statistics, there were 6,172 schools in Jordan owned by different sectors; public schools that are owned by Ministry of Education, private schools, and schools that are owned by other governmental sectors or United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Private schools constitute 40% of the total number of schools in Jordan. Within the same year, total number of students was 1,690,172 students; 406,327 students were studying in private schools, meaning a present age of 24% (Ministry of Education 2013).

The students of IRNA are mainly those whose parents are looking to blend academic excellence with character and the diversity of the cultural experience, while reserving their children's ability to learn using their mother tongue language (Arabic). Customers will find this school in Jbeiha Area, Amman targeting students from pre-KG to Grade 5.

Identifying Competitors

IRNA is the first school in Jordan authorized to offer the IB Primary Years program which is considered a good strength for the school, however having poor facilities is the major weaknesses for the school. The International Baccalaureate Organization lists on their website the schools which have the IB authorization in each country. Table 1 summarizes the Jordanian schools, their locations, strengths, weaknesses, and the levels of IB provided by each:

Table 1: IB Authorized Schools in Jordan

School name	Location	PYP	MYP	DP	Major strengths	Major weaknesses
Amman Academy (AA)	Khalda		X	X		
Amman Baccalaureate School (ABS)	Dabouq		X	X	- 10 different nationalities in staff. - Proportion of teachers to students (1:7). - ABS is accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). It is also a global member of the	

					Round Square Conference of Schools (Amman Baccalaureate School, 2014).	
Amman National School (ANS)	Dabouq			X	- Trained, experienced and devoted staff. - The ratio of students to teachers is 1:8 (Amman National School, 2014).	
Cambridge High School (CHS)	Al Rabia			X	- Staff consists of 40% who have been educated abroad or who have lived outside of Jordan (Cambridge High School, 2014). - Facilities	
IRNA (IRNA)	Jbeiha	X			-The first IB PYP in Arabic authorized school in Jordan.	-Facilities
Mashrek International School (MIS)	Dabouq	X	X	X	Only IB world school in Jordan offering all three programs	
Modern Montessori School (MMS)	Khalda			X		
The Ahliyyah School for Girls (ASG)	Jabal Amman	X		X		-Girls only
The Bishop's School for Boys (BSB)	Jabal Amman			X		-Boys only
The International Academy Amman (IAA)	King Hussein Parks		X	X	- A member school of the International Schools Service (ISS), the Council for International Schools (CIS), the European Council for International Schools (ECIS), and the Middle East International Baccalaureate Association (MEIBA) (The International Academy Amman, 2014). - Facilities	
School name	Location	PYP	MYP	DP	Major strengths	Major weaknesses
Amman Academy	Khalda		X	X		

(AA)						
Amman Baccalaureate School (ABS)	Dabouq		X	X	- 10 different nationalities in staff. - Proportion of teachers to students (1:7). - ABS is accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). It is also a global member of the Round Square Conference of Schools (Amman Baccalaureate School, 2014).	
Amman National School (ANS)	Dabouq			X	- Trained, experienced and devoted staff. - The ratio of students to teachers is 1:8 (Amman National School, 2014).	
Cambridge High School (CHS)	Al Rabia			X	- Staff consists of 40% who have been educated abroad or who have lived outside of Jordan (Cambridge High School, 2014). - Facilities	- Up to 9th grade only
IRNA (IRNA)	Jbeiha	X			-The first IB PYP in Arabic authorized school in Jordan.	-Facilities
Mashrek International School (MIS)	Dabouq	X	X	X	Only IB world school in Jordan offering all three programs	
Modern Montessori School (MMS)	Khalda			X		
The Ahliyyah School for Girls (ASG)	Jabal Amman	X		X		-Girls only
The Bishop's School for Boys (BSB)	Jabal Amman			X		-Boys only
The International Academy Amman (IAA)	King Hussein Parks		X	X	- A member school of the International Schools Service (ISS), the Council for International Schools (CIS), the European Council for International Schools (ECIS), and	- High tuition fees

					the Middle East International Baccalaureate Association (MEIBA) (The International Academy Amman, 2014). - Facilities	

Some other schools which are candidates of the IB authorization in Jordan include the American Community School of Amman (ACS) which is located near the Royal Automobile Club in 7th circle area with a professional staff of over 70% Master Degree holders (American Community School 2014). The International School of Choueifat (ISC) which is a member of the global education management organization SABIS School Network (The International School of Choueifat 2014), and the International Community School (ICS) located in Marj Al-Hamam.

Although Ibn Rush National Academy brings a great value to the Jordanian IB market which is summarized by merging the Arabic language with the international education experience, part of the competition between this kind of schools is based on tuition fees. In this area, IRNA is considered very competitive since it provides very affordable fees compared to others, as shown in Table 2, which is based on the latest updates of tuition fees of these schools according to the website of each of them.

Table 2: Tuition Fees Comparison

Domain	**IAA**	**AA**	**ABS**	**ANS**	**CHS**	**IRNA**	**MIS**	**MMS**	**BSB**	**ASG**	**ACS**	**ICS**	**ISC**
	Tuition Fees (JD):												
Pre-KG	N/A	3,110	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,000	2,550	N/A	N/A	3,885–4,662	4,080	3,300
KG1	4,355	3,110	4,595	1,900	2,655	2,800	3,200	2,550	N/A	N/A	6,570	5,142	3,500
KG2	4,355	3,240	4,595	1,900	2,790	3,200	3,300	2,550	N/A	N/A	6,570	7,173	3,550
Grade1	5,560	3,915	5,260	2,370	3,180	3,200	4,000	3,050	1,860	2,915	8,208	7,173	4,450
Grade2	5,560	4,435	5,260	2,370	3,500	3,400	4,200	3,050	1,950	2,915	8,208	7,905	4,450
Grade3	5,620	4,615	5,260	2,370	3,730	3,400	4,400	3,050	1,950	2,915	8,208	7,905	4,650
Grade4	6,017	4,775	5,260	2,520	3,810		4,600	3,650	2,270	3,135	8,208	7,905	4,850
Grade5	6,294	4,955	6,055	2,520	3,940		4,900	3,650	2,270	3,135	8,208	7,905	5,000

Grade6	6,551	5,245	6,055	2,520	4,060		5,100	3,650	2,270	3,135	9,931	9,618	5,100
Grade7	7,295	5,605	7,225	2,730	4,290		5,400	4,000	2,430	3,585	9,931	9,618	5,500
Grade8	7,365	5,940	7,795	2,480	4,490		5,600	4,000	2,430	3,585	9,931	9,618	5,700
Grade9	8,026	7,275	8,370	4,400	4,825		6,300	5,140	3,080	3,585	11,952	10,245	6,100
Grade10	8,677	7,275	8,945	4,400	5,125		6,400	5,140	3,250	3,585	11,952	11,358	6,400
Grade11	10,622	8,745	11,160	6,300	6,600		7,900	7,820	6,650	6,650	12,128	12,807	7,500
Grade12	10,622	8,745	11,160	6,300	6,600		7,900	7,820	6,650	6,650	12,128	12,807	7,500

Competitors can be classified into four categories: brand competitors, product competitors, generic competitors, and total budget competitors. Each of these categorize compete with Ibn Rushd International Academy in a different way; for example, the schools in the brand competitors category provide the PYP system with similar or very close tuition fees which are Mashrik International Schools (MIS) and the Ahliyyah School for Girls (ASG), where schools in the product competitors category provide the PYP system with different tuition fees, currently there are no other PYP authorized schools in Jordan , but there are candidate PYP schools such as Amman Academy. On the other hand, the schools included in the generic competition category include other private and public schools as they provide education in general either in the national system or with other international systems such as IG and SAT. Total budget competitors include any choices of parents that prevent them from choosing private IB schools. Examples include: future savings, vacations, real estate acquisition etc.

Social Media Marketing Channels' Utilization

Although the channels of marketing are becoming less costly and more effective, schools are not using the maximum potential of these tools. Table 3 shows the level of utilization of e-marketing tools among competitors:

Table 3: E-Marketing Channels' Utilization

School	Website	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	LinkedIn	Pinterest	Flicker
AA	X	X	X				X
ABS	X	X					
ANS	X	X	X		X		
CHS	X	X	X	X	X		

IRNA	X	X	X	X			
MIS	X	X		X			
MMS	X	X	X			X	
ASG	X	X	X		X		
BSB	X	X	X		X		
IAA	X	X					X
ACS	X	X				X	
ICS	X	X					X
ISC	X	X					

Economic Growth and Stability

The economic situation in Jordan is not very stable; prices are increasing rapidly which is leading to a higher level of inflation, the inflation reached 5.54% (Trading Economies 2014). On the same hand, income tax has increased to reach 14% in the year 2013. The unemployment rate is following the same trend as it has reached 14% indicating 1.4% increase from last year. However this rate of unemployment is does not make recruiting easier since the labor skills are getting lower. These ratios affect the spending patterns and parents' willingness to pay higher fees for their children education negatively, which constitutes a threat for future development in the education industry, especially if we compare the fees of private schools which are very high to the fees of public schools which are considered very low creating a very likely shift between the two types of schools in case of any economic problem in the country.

Political Trends

Jordan is considered a safe place compared to the surrounding countries such as Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon, which are facing wars and terrorism, this gives Jordan an advantage of attracting businesses more than others, in addition to the immigration of those countries' people to Jordan. However, being surrounded by these unstable countries generates the fear of being affected by these wars, which decreases the safety of investment in Jordan.

Technological Advancements and Socio-Cultural Trends

In order to stay competitive, having lower prices is not enough; the school must follow the technological and socio-cultural trends. Due the vast advancements in technology and to follow these advancements the school must use electronic sources and tools in the education process. The use of computers, laptops, iPads, smart phones, smart boards and other technological instruments has become a necessity for surviving in the harsh competition of these days. Furthermore, the lifestyle of the target market values prestigious living; parents of today are looking for high quality education which provides their children with the knowledge they require in addition to the cultural diversity that helps in building their personalities in the correct way. They are also willing to maintain the roots of Arabic language while improving the proficiency of foreign languages especially English language.

Performance Indicator and Matrices

IRNA aims to add a new grade every year to grow with its students until they reach the IB Diploma Program (DP); this is considered a main metric for the school for the measurement of performance. Additionally, the school aspires to attract a good number of students each year to sustain its current grades and to be able to add new grades. The number of required students depends on the grade being added. For the upcoming school year the school is opening two grades, and they are planning to attempt to add two grades each year from now on.

Organizational Structure and Management Team

The school was initially established by Mr. Fouad Majdalawi, founder and managing director of the Interactive Knowledge Center (INTKC). Mr. Majdalawi has an experience of 11 years in the education field. In addition to the founder, the management team includes Ms. Zabalawi, the head of primary school; she has an experience of 23 years, which include being the head of professional development in the Interactive Knowledge Center in addition to being a supervisor for the early elementary classes at Dhahran Ahliyya School. Furthermore, the team

includes Ms. Lina Jaser the head of kindergarten who has 28 years of experience. Ms. Lina was the head of early-years education at the Interactive Knowledge Center, besides being the director of Al Ahliyyah and Bishop's kindergarten. The management team also includes some supportive executives for the different grades and departments.

In addition to the management team, IRNA will be governed and controlled by an independent board of trustees which is responsible for holding the school in trust, and taking the necessary steps to ensure that the school's mission is fulfilled now and in the future in an effective way by providing strategic direction, defining desired outcomes, governing through policy and monitoring overall progress. The initiatory board of trustees consists of several professionals with different experiences ranging from entrepreneurial experience to essential managerial roles.

The schools is also partnering with the Interactive Knowledge Center (INTKC), which is an educational research center that works with schools and educational authorities to promote an engaging, enjoyable and enriching approach to Arabic learning. INTKC facilitates educational excellence through its programs which promote curriculum development, enhance instructional strategies, and provides teacher professional development programs (INTKC 2014).

CONCLUSION/IMPLICATIONS

This paper viewed the entrepreneurial strategy of the Jordanian IRNA, which is the first school in the Arab world authorized to offer IB PYP program using Arabic as the main language of instruction. A background about the IB and PYP programs was provided to give a clear view about the industry where the school is functioning. This paper can be very useful for educators who want to make their teaching material closer to reality by looking at national examples regarding non-technological innovation and entrepreneurial marketing strategies. The focus of this case study was given to several aspects of the Jordanian market environment in the field of

education, these aspects included: social media marketing channels' utilization, economic growth and stability in Jordan, political trends, technological advancements and socio-cultural trends. The analysis of these factors clarified the market situation in addition to the potential for IRNA. Furthermore, the paper covered some of the success factors of the school including the performance indicator and matrices used by IRNA in the assessment and development process, and the organizational structure and management team of the school.

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