



EXAMINING ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENT OF KABUL UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL STUDENTS USING THE “TPB MODEL” AND THE ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION QUESTIONNAIRE

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the entrepreneurial intention of business school students, where Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is the primary conceptual model combined with data collection using the Liñán and Chen EIQ (Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire). Using convenience sampling, a total of 154 students from Kabul University, Afghanistan, were studied. We found that the EIQ psychometric properties were confirmed. Personal attitude, self-efficacy, and subjective norms were all predictors of entrepreneurship intent and thus verified in the study's regression analysis results. Because of the research design limitation, the findings cannot be generalized and may reveal different results over time or by the time students graduate. As one practical implication of the study, it is suggested that universities focus more on independent variables, such as personal attitude and self-efficacy, to build confidence in entrepreneurship among students. Future research can include moderator variables such as family influence, networking and communication, and Islamic values in supporting entrepreneurship intention. The psychometric properties of EIQ were confirmed.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is identified as the process individuals undergo when partaking in opportunities without considering the resources they currently have to generate future products and services (Watson et al., 2016). Countries around the world use Entrepreneurship as an effective instrument for raising economic growth and decreasing extreme unemployment rates, especially in developing countries suffering higher unemployment and lower economic growth.

In recent years, unemployment has become a universal economic problem, especially in developing countries (Taha, Ramlan, and Noor 2017). Countries differ in how they overcome unemployment. An effective policy solution is by enhancing entrepreneurial activities (Nazrl, Aroosha, and Omar, 2016). Consequently, an increasing level of entrepreneurial activities does not only focus on profit generation but also societal well-being (Adham et al., 2013).

Afghanistan, as a developing country, has experienced a rising unemployment rate in recent years; thus, severe economic, political, and cultural hardships afflict it (NSIA 2020). Data published by the Afghanistan National Statistics and Information Authority show that this country experienced an extreme unemployment rate. The 2020 National Statistics yearbook reported unemployment at about 35% in Afghanistan. Limited job opportunities have forced many Afghan youths to leave the country, join terrorist groups, migrate, or suffer serious mental problems. After a change in the political regime of the country and the presidency of Hamid Karzai, the unemployment rate declined. The international and national organizations started job creation, formation of new governmental positions, and growth in entrepreneurship activities as investors launched new enterprises in different sectors in Afghanistan, slowly re-igniting Afghanistan's economic recovery.

In recent years, we witnessed significant improvement in some industries. Still, insecurity and lack of political stability generally discourage foreign investors from supporting entrepreneurship in all sectors of Afghanistan, also resulting in some newly launched businesses dying young. The critical hardships these entrepreneurs face are insecurity, lack of a sound banking system, electricity outage, market instability, and the government's weak support system. A significant step in tackling diminishing employment is to ensure stability for Afghan entrepreneurs. Given all

the abovementioned issues, entrepreneurship is still an excellent option for dealing with unemployment in the country.

Developing entrepreneurship intention or shifting the citizen's mindset toward entrepreneurship is a difficult task for almost all countries. Policymakers have used various methods to increase entrepreneurship, where one formidable strategy is to equip the young generation with proper and practical entrepreneurship education (European Commission 2006). This can provide the exact skills and knowledge necessary to launch a venture (SM, Chang, and Lim 2005). Entrepreneurship education trains students to acquire skills, management abilities, and the capacity to work for themselves and not others (Owosenl, and Akambl, 2010); another objective is to develop affirmative orientations toward entrepreneurship (Fayolle and Gailly, 2008).

Several variables influencing entrepreneurship include the environment, overall economy, and politics. In other words, a large set of external and internal factors support the triumph of a startup, and a dominant characteristic contributing to startup success is entrepreneurship intention. It is generally agreed that, to succeed in a particular endeavor, one must possess a profound interest and passion for it. Thus, assessing an individual's level of intention and interest toward entrepreneurship can provide insight into their potential impact on establishing startups or entrepreneurial activities. Scholars have explored the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents. As Krueger, Reilly, and Carsrud (2000) noted, no one enters the entrepreneurial arena on a whim. Rather, it takes a systematic and intentional process of ideation and refinement to transform an idea into a viable business concept. Therefore, investigating intention is imperative as it provides valuable insights and helps determine the level of entrepreneurial activities.

Policymakers and educational institutions must evaluate students' entrepreneurial interests as the intention to pursue entrepreneurship is a vital predictor of entrepreneurial activities or new venture creation (Krueger, Reilly, and Carsrud, 2000). Furthermore, policymakers focus on assessing entrepreneurship intention influence on university students (Iqtidar, Sohial, and Said, 2020). Hence this study has adopted the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model (Ajzen, 1991). This conceptual framework by Ajzen (1991) will be used to investigate the impact of the relationship between the dependent variable (intentions) and independent variables (personal attitude, subjective norms, and self-efficacy).

Key global indicators show that 25% of adolescents intend to initiate a business entity within three years of graduating from university (EI Entrepreneurial Intent). Fifty-four percent think they are equipped with the essential skills and knowledge to conduct a business (SE Self-Efficacy). In addition, 45% consider entrepreneurship opportunities a career choice (GEM, 2016).

Although extensive research has been conducted so far, more empirical studies are needed on entrepreneurial intentions globally. Besides that, fewer researchers have researched the entrepreneurial intention-entrepreneurship axis in developing countries. In Afghanistan, fewer papers have specifically addressed entrepreneurship intentions. This study tries to fill in the research gaps by studying the entrepreneurial intents of business school students at Kabul University and also serves as a basis for conducting further research in this area.

The main goal is to apply Azjen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model and test its applicability to university students who are studying business and entrepreneurship subjects. The primary focus of the research is to uncover the theoretical aspects of the TPB model and establish the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The survey questions utilized in this study are contextualized in the context of entrepreneurship. To facilitate this, we have chosen an Entrepreneurial Intention questionnaire developed by Liñán and Chen (2009), which is based on Azjen's TPB. We have formulated the hypotheses and conducted a psychometric evaluation of the EIQ following the investigation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies indicate that entrepreneurial intentions can be impacted by the variables of the TPB model of Ajzen (1991) because it is the primary model which supports the investigation and presents the primary cognitive approach to studying this connection.

The theory of planned behavior introduces three components (Attitude, subjective norms, and self-efficacy) that predict intention (Ajzen, 1991). Several empirical studies also confirmed that these three components are the main ones for explaining entrepreneurial purpose (Liñán and Chen, 2009). Attitude is the degree of personal valuation of entrepreneurship or simply the negative or positive judgments of individuals toward entrepreneurship (Ajzen 1991), Subjective norms indicate the social influence from family, friends, and close ones (Ajzen 1991), meaning how supportive individual

relatives are regarding one's entrepreneurial intentions or how their expectations affect individual behavior. Finally, Perceived Behavior Control (Self-efficacy) is the perception of realized ability to become self-employed (Ajzen, 1991). It is also called self-efficacy by Bandura (1997).

Liñán and Chen's (2009) study titled "Development and cross-cultural application of a specific instrument to measure entrepreneurial intentions" tested 519 individual samples from two diverse countries, namely Taiwan and Spain, to reveal how cultural values influence individuals' perceived entrepreneurship. Their findings confirm the cognitive process from perception to intention, which is the same in diverse societies. The effect of each factor may vary in different cultures, but three motivational factors (SN, PBC, PA) are always the main determinants of intention (Liñán and Chen, 2009).

Similar study by Lee-Ross (2017) was conducted to evaluate the entrepreneurial intentions of MBA students in Australia. Lee-Ross employed Liñán and Chen's (2009) Entrepreneurial Intentions Questionnaire (EIQ), which is partly based on Azjen's (1991) TPB. The sample involved 249 graduate students from an Australian university; the study identified attitude and perceived behavioral control as main predictors of entrepreneurship intentions among Australian university students.

Another recent study by Sharahiley (2020) studied entrepreneurial intentions of Saudi Arabia University students by combining the TPB model and entrepreneurship event model to evaluate how desirable and feasible factors are perceived, as predictors of entrepreneurial intentions. The study examined the suggested integrated model by incorporating other relevant variables, including innovativeness and the business environment. This study, however, is focused on the theory of TPB that is highly regarded to examine entrepreneurship intentions and proves that the TPB model is the main predictor of entrepreneurship intentions.

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS

The present study aims at investigating whether student intention to pursue entrepreneurship can be predicted by three independent variables, namely Personal Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control. The evaluation of an entrepreneurial opportunity's attractiveness relies on an individual's Attitude toward it, which is shaped by beliefs, experiences, and emotions. Additionally, Subjective Norms, which reflect the perceived social pressure to

engage in entrepreneurship, can influence one's entrepreneurial intent, although the extent of this effect is debatable. Notably, a study by Liñán and Chen (2009) has reported that Subjective Norms may not be a significant predictor of entrepreneurial intent. Finally, Perceived Behavioral Control, or Self Efficacy, which captures an individual's self-perceived ability and resources to undertake entrepreneurial activities, has been shown to be a crucial determinant of entrepreneurial intent. The following Hypotheses were constructed for this study:

- H1: Students' intentions toward entrepreneurship are significantly impacted by personal attitudes.
- H2: Students' intentions toward entrepreneurship are significantly impacted by perceived behavioral control.
- H3: Students' intentions toward entrepreneurship are significantly impacted by subjective norms.

3.1 ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENT QUESTIONNAIRE (EIQ)

Linan and Chen (2009) initially created the EIQ; they tested 519 students from two universities based on Ajzen's (1991) TPB model. Linan and Chen found the questionnaire's psychometric properties robust. We also witness this in other articles such as Malebana (2014). The EIQ, like other models, uses Likert scales (Autio et al., 2001; Krueger et al., 2000).

The section related to personal attitude has five questions, and respondents indicated their consent using a scale of 1 (for total disagreement) and 5 (for complete agreement).

- “An entrepreneur career is attractive to me.” (Liñán and Chen, 2009).
- “I would initiate a business if I had the chance and resources.” (Liñán and Chen, 2009).

The same scales were used for subjective norms. It poses six questions such as:

- “My closest family members believe that I have to follow a career as an entrepreneur.” (Liñán and Chen, 2009).
- “My closest friends believe that I should follow a career as an entrepreneur.” (Liñán and Chen, 2009).

For perceived behavioral control, again, we have used the same scales, and this section consists of six questions, for example:

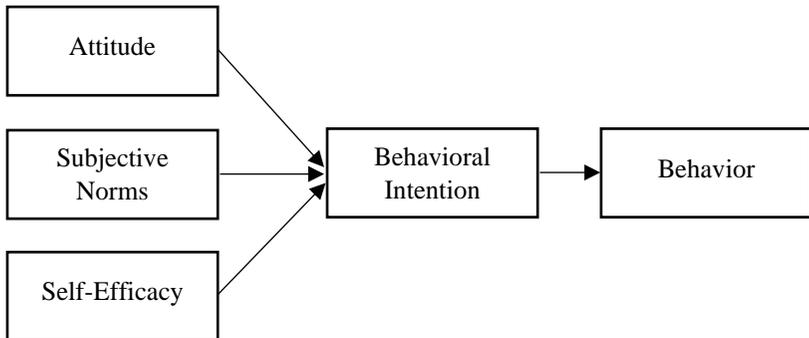
- “Launching a business and administering it would not be difficult for me.” (Liñán and Chen, 2009).
- “I am able to initiate a viable business.” (Liñán and Chen, 2009).

For entrepreneurship intentions, we have also used the same scales, and this section contains seven questions such as:

- “I am prepared to do everything to start my own firm.” (Liñán and Chen, 2009).
- “My professional goal is to start my own business entity.” (Liñán and Chen, 2009).

We have used a standpoint of pragmatism where subjective meaning and observable phenomena can jointly result in valuable knowledge (Sekaran, Borgia, and Schoenfeld, 2013). The questionnaires have been sent to Kabul University for data gathering. From a total of 170 convenience samples, only 154 were usable. To validate the data's robustness, a PCA or principal component analysis is conducted to find a number of predictors that explain the observed variables mathematically. This study has developed the following model to explain the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurship intention:

FIGURE 1
Conceptual Model of the study



4. METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

We believe that the social world can be understood objectively, known as positivist research philosophy. Therefore, this study assumes a positivist research philosophy and takes a quantitative approach.

Data were collected from public and private universities of Afghanistan where students are studying entrepreneurship courses as a mandatory subject at the undergraduate level in business schools, regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan. The unit of study for this article is a student of the public or private university of business schools or equivalent. We used the questionnaire created by Liñán and Chen (2009) for data collection. The questionnaire has questions related to attitudes toward entrepreneurship, self-efficacy, and subjective norms, the three independent variables of this study. The questionnaire's reliability and validity have been tested by Liñán and Chen (2009) and by the author during the factor analysis process to ensure that each question relates to the same subject while each subject corresponds to the measures required.

4.1 PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF THE EIQ

The collected data were subjected to PCA (Principal Component Analysis) to verify the robustness of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen 1991) through the Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire. The goal is to derive the number of factors (latent variables) that can explain the information of total variables.

In Table 1, the result of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test with the value of 0.828 indicates there were adequate items for each factor. Moreover, Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at 0.05 which indicates the adequacy of items for each factor.

TABLE 1
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.828
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1579.647
	df	153
	Sig.	0.000

In addition, the initial communalities displayed in Table 2 for the extraction for all variables are above 0.3, whereas anything below

that is highly likely to control the results of principal component analysis.

TABLE 2
Communalities

Factors	Initial	Extraction
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 1	1.000	0.545
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 2	1.000	0.695
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 3	1.000	0.772
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 4	1.000	0.677
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 5	1.000	0.598
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 6	1.000	0.423
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 7	1.000	0.432
Self Efficacy 1	1.000	0.563
Self Efficacy 2	1.000	0.590
Self Efficacy 3	1.000	0.671
Self Efficacy 4	1.000	0.627
Self Efficacy 5	1.000	0.622
Subjective Norms 1	1.000	0.686
Subjective Norms 2	1.000	0.752
Subjective Norms 3	1.000	0.707
Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship 1	1.000	0.689
Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship 2	1.000	0.602
Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship 3	1.000	0.696

Table 3 indicates that four factors with Eigenvalues greater than one were extracted. The first factor explains 33.5% of the variance, which is higher than the rest. As researchers (e.g., Garson 2010) agree, the four factors extracted can explain 63% of the total variance within an acceptance range.

TABLE 3
Initial Eigenvalues

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	6.031	33.506	33.506
2	2.236	12.420	45.927
3	1.698	9.432	55.358
4	1.382	7.680	63.038
5	0.991	5.508	68.546
6	0.958	5.323	73.869
7	0.636	3.533	77.402

TABLE 3 (continued)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
8	0.592	3.287	80.689
9	0.546	3.032	83.721
10	0.501	2.781	86.502
11	0.411	2.285	88.787
12	0.399	2.216	91.003
13	0.372	2.069	93.072
14	0.332	1.847	94.918
15	0.296	1.643	96.561
16	0.242	1.343	97.904
17	0.218	1.212	99.116
18	0.159	.884	100.000

Table 4 represents the factors and how each item was loaded in each factor with the respective Cronbach's Alpha value.

TABLE 4
Rotated Component Matrix

	Component				Cronbach's Alpha
	1	2	3	4	
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 1	0.633				0.85
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 2	0.804				
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 3	0.804				
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 4	0.677				
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 5	0.838				
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 6	0.615				
Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship 7	0.481				

TABLE 4
Rotated Component Matrix

	Component				Cronbach's Alpha
	1	2	3	4	
Self Efficacy 1		0.747			0.82
Self Efficacy 2		0.713			
Self Efficacy 3		0.787			
Self Efficacy 4		0.747			
Self Efficacy 5		0.749			
Subjective Norms 1			0.782		0.83
Subjective Norms 2			0.830		
Subjective Norms 3			0.786		
Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship 1				0.768	0.71
Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship 2				0.636	
Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship 3				0.785	
Principal Component Analysis is used for extraction.					
Varimax with Kaiser Normalization is used for rotation.					
Rotation converged in 5 iterations.					

The Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs is above 0.70 in Table 4; thus, reliability is confirmed as in Nunnally (1967). The EIQ items were loaded perfectly on the TPB model that Ajzen (1991) determined. This study also requires excluding items less than 0.4 revealing that factor one has strong loadings on Entrepreneurship Intentions. Similarly, factor two has significant loadings on self-efficacy, where factor three describes the loadings for Subjective Norms, and factor four explains the loadings of Personal Attitude. Finally, we have used multiple regression to test the TPB theory. Similar studies were done before (e.g., Segal, Borgia, and Schoenfeld 2005; Engle, Andresson, and Wennberg 2014; Kim-Soon, Ahmad, and Ibrahim 2014).

5. RESULTS

A linear regression analysis has been performed to reveal the relationship between independent variables and Entrepreneurship Intentions as the dependent variable. Table 5 reveals the coefficients upon which the entrepreneurial intent estimation is based. As the significant p -values in Table 5 show, all three variables significantly influence entrepreneurship intentions.

TABLE 5
Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	1.104	0.402		2.746	0.007
Attitude Toward Entrepreneurship	0.339	0.089	0.248	3.820	0.000
Subjective Norms	0.229	0.047	0.320	4.829	0.000
Self Efficacy	0.195	0.057	0.219	3.460	0.001

Notes: Regression analysis for the dependent variable (Intentions Toward Entrepreneurship)

Table 6 shows the Pearson correlation matrix for all the variables studied. The coefficients in Table 6 show no strong correlation among variables; therefore, the regression results are unbiased.

TABLE 6
Pearson Correlation Matrix for All Variables

	Total Intentions Towards Entrepreneurship	Total Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship	Total Subjective Norms	Total Self Efficacy
Total Intentions Toward Entrepreneurship	1.000			
Total Attitude Toward Entrepreneurship	0.407	1.000		
Total Subjective Norms	0.471	0.356	1.000	
Total Self Efficacy	0.361	0.205	0.285	1.000

6. CONCLUSION

This study was concerned with two primary goals. The first was to confirm the appropriateness of the item's clean loading on the factors specified by the model. The second goal was to prove how well the three independent variables (attitude, self-efficacy, subjective norms) are able to predict entrepreneurship intentions.

Results for factor loading reveal that the whole model accounts for 63% of the variance in entrepreneurial intent, or the other 47% of the variance is not explained mainly because of factors not accounted for in the TPB. Thus, significant evidence exceeds the results of studies by other scholars (Segal, Borgia, and Schoenfeld, 2005). Therefore, the cognitive-based TPB is appealing as a reliable theory in the entrepreneurship context.

Family support is more substantial in non-western countries; however, in Western countries, family support is less apparent and influential in entrepreneurs (Hofstede 1980). We have found supporting results; while Afghanistan is a non-western country, SN is a significant predictor of entrepreneurship intent. The subjective norm is significant and reliable because the sample was drawn from business school students. Therefore, it is a predictor of entrepreneurship intent.

Based on the abovementioned results, the EIQ is a reliable instrument for investigating entrepreneurship intentions, given the appearance of neat factor loading.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the Afghanistan context, several avenues for further expansion of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) need exploration.

First, it is recommended that the influence of family members and elders on entrepreneurial intentions be studied as moderator variables. In Afghanistan, family members and elders hold considerable power over individuals' decisions and actions, including decisions related to entrepreneurial pursuits. Therefore, it would be interesting to understand the extent of their influence.

Second, how far networking and communication influence entrepreneurial intentions should be studied. Afghanistan is a collectivistic society, and personal relationships play a crucial role in business dealings. Therefore, it would be beneficial to investigate how networking and communication affect the TPB constructs and, in turn, influence entrepreneurial intentions.

Third, the moderating role of entrepreneurship education must be explored. Entrepreneurship education is still in its infant stages in Afghanistan, and its influence on entrepreneurial intentions has not been studied extensively. Investigating entrepreneurship education as a moderator variable would provide valuable insights into how it affects the relationship between the TPB constructs and entrepreneurial intentions. It would also help policymakers and educators understand the efficacy of current entrepreneurship education programs and guide future program development.

To further develop the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in the Afghan context it is recommended to investigate how Islamic beliefs influence the desire for entrepreneurship. A similar research has been done by Fozia, Rehman, and Farooq (2016) in Pakistan but not in Afghanistan which is a culturally diverse country with a rich heritage, and unique values and beliefs. The concept of Halal and Haram which has been studied thoroughly in the context of Pakistan (Khalique et al., 2020) may shape how people view entrepreneurship. By studying how cultural factors affect attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control over starting a business, researchers could gain valuable insights into the underlying drivers of entrepreneurship in Afghanistan.

Overall, expanding the TPB theory in the context of Afghanistan by studying the influence of family members and elders, networking and communication, entrepreneurship education and Islamic values as moderator variables would provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors driving entrepreneurial intentions in Afghanistan.

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