

Examining The Influence of Entrepreneurial Education on Entrepreneurial Intention: Evidence from Postgraduate and Undergraduate Students with an Entrepreneurial Mindset as a Mediator

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intention, with a focus on the mediating role of entrepreneurial Mindset among postgraduate students. The study aims to assess the reliability and validity of the key constructs—entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial Mindset, and entrepreneurial intention—while also examining the predictive relationships among them through regression analysis. Data were collected from a sample of 203 postgraduate and undergraduate students enrolled in autonomous colleges affiliated to Mangalore University and deemed universities in Mangalore that offer Entrepreneurship as a compulsory course. Standardised scales were employed, and the analysis was conducted using SPSS. Reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha, while construct validity was established using factor analysis. Regression results indicate a positive relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention, with entrepreneurial Mindset playing a significant mediating role. These findings provide preliminary support for the theoretical model and underscore the importance of fostering both educational and psychological components in nurturing entrepreneurial intent among students. The results also serve as a foundation for further large-scale empirical studies in this domain.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial Mindset, postgraduate students, entrepreneurial intent.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship activities have been given importance in many Western countries and are also gaining more attention in developing countries (Maheshwari et al., 2023). Entrepreneurship has a significant role in improving the economic standing of the rural sector, giving self-employment opportunities to individuals who have launched their businesses, and opening doors for rural populations to become more employable. Many entrepreneurs have become prosperous businesspeople and helped rural areas by producing revenue. Rural places have been urbanised because business owners there have turned their communities into commerce hubs.

The notion of entrepreneurship is becoming more and more significant in today's economies due to its role as the primary source of wealth and ability to hire a sizable workforce, both of which are essential in the battle against unemployment. Additionally, entrepreneurship holds great significance as an area of study from an economic, social, and even political perspective (Ladyga, 2015).

With the largest population in the world and plans to overtake the United States as the third-largest economy by 2030, India is actively fostering an entrepreneurial culture (Hassan et al., 2021).

The current unemployment rate based on qualification is as follows: Higher Secondary 6.3%, Diploma/Certificate course 13.0%, Graduate 14.9% (Thakur & Khan, n.d.). According to the data above, students do not want to pursue entrepreneurship as a job after completing their degree, even though they are unemployed. By encouraging students to engage in entrepreneurial activities, entrepreneurial education in higher education contributes significantly to the development of fundamental entrepreneurial knowledge as well as a variety of cognitive and non-cognitive abilities (Walter & Block, 2016).

Entrepreneurial education is becoming more widely acknowledged as a crucial strategy to provide students with the information, abilities, and mindsets needed to spot opportunities, take measured risks, and create original solutions (Raposo & Do Paço, 2011). As per the GEM report 2024/25 (GEM 2024/2025 Global Report: Entrepreneurship Reality Check, n.d.) India ranks 1st out of the 14 participating countries under the category of Group C with an adequate entrepreneurial framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review's main aim is to assist the researcher in creating a theoretical and conceptual framework. According to Noter and Cole (2010), a literature review needs to be pertinent, appropriate, and helpful to the study problem.

Entrepreneurial education

A significant amount of entrepreneurial literature relating to education has been created by academia since entrepreneurial Education (EE) has been a topic of discussion, analysis, and evaluation for more than 30 years. (Hahn et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship education is the ongoing use of incremental and traditional passive teaching methods. This method has an impact on students' capacity to put their education- and training-acquired information and abilities into practice. In order to foster a robust educational system that teaches and learns about entrepreneurship, it is important to support ongoing innovation. This would help produce employability skills and competent graduates. (Dzisi & Odoom, 2017). Teacher-guided instructional paradigms have given way to more constructivist viewpoints in the academic discussion of pedagogy in entrepreneurial education studies over time. There was also a change in the literature, with academic debates shifting from discussing the problem of teachability to focusing more on learnability (Hägg & Gabrielsson, 2019).

Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intention, defined as an individual's conscious state of mind that focuses attention and activity toward entrepreneurship as a career option (Bird, 1988), is often recognised as the best predictor of entrepreneurial behaviour. Entrepreneurial intention is influenced by attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioural control, all of which have been explained by Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Some studies (Fayolle et al., 2016; Hassan et al., 2021; Liñán, 2008; Maheshwari et al., 2023; Nabi et al., 2017) have opined that there is a positive impact of education on intention.

Entrepreneurial Mindset as a Mediator

As a major psychological factor influencing entrepreneurial behaviour, the entrepreneurial Mindset, which includes qualities like inventiveness, resilience, proactiveness, and opportunity recognition, is becoming more widely acknowledged. The development of a mentality is what turns passive learning into entrepreneurial intention and proactive action, according to recent studies, even while entrepreneurial education imparts fundamental knowledge and skills (Zampetakis et al., 2019; Nowiński et al., 2020). Students can identify and seize entrepreneurial possibilities by using the Mindset as a cognitive lens to understand and integrate educational experiences. The entrepreneurial Mindset is positioned in emerging literature as a crucial mediator in the connection between intention and education. The impact of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial intention, for instance, was found to be significantly mediated by Mindset-related characteristics, including entrepreneurial self-efficacy and opportunity alertness (Kariimi et al. 211). In a similar vein, Farashah (2022) concluded that a change in students' cognitive orientation and problem-solving

style—two important aspects of an entrepreneurial mindset—is the main way that education raises intention. The idea that attitude is not just a product of schooling but also an essential factor in shaping entrepreneurial intention is supported by these findings.

Theoretical Framework

The study's theoretical approach is based on the idea that students' entrepreneurial intentions can be greatly influenced by entrepreneurial education and that the development of an entrepreneurial mindset mediates this relationship. The framework explains how educational experiences influence entrepreneurial career choices by integrating ideas from entrepreneurial cognition and mindset literature with Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which draws on psychology and educational theories.

Core Constructs and Definitions

Entrepreneurial education (independent variable)

Formal and non-formal educational activities aimed at giving pupils entrepreneurial knowledge, abilities, and attitudes (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008). This comprises seminars, workshops, mentoring, simulations, and practical projects that promote entrepreneurial behaviour and thought.

Entrepreneurial Mindset (Mediating Variable)

Represents a cognitive and behavioural orientation characterised by opportunity recognition, risk-taking (Ireland et al., 2003), ambiguity tolerance (Karimi et al., 2021) and dispositional optimism (Scheier et al., 1994). It is shaped over time and through experience, particularly through action-based learning.

Entrepreneurial Intention (dependent variable)

Entrepreneurial intention is fluid and developmental, not fixed, and education, mindset, and environment are active agents of change (Walter & Block, 2016; Karimi et al., 2021; Nowiński & Haddoud, 2019). (Karimi et al. 2021) Validated the mediating role of mindset and **the** moderating role of perceived environment in the relationship between education and intention.

Conceptual Foundations

Planned Behaviour Theory (Ajzen, 1991)

According to TPB, three elements influence behavioural intention: perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and attitude toward the conduct. While the entrepreneurial mentality has a more direct impact on the attitude and control aspects, entrepreneurial education improves these components by improving knowledge and the perceived viability of entrepreneurship.

Theory of Entrepreneurial Cognition

This theory focuses on the decision-making and thought processes of entrepreneurs. Mitchell et al. (2002) claim that seasoned businesspeople have special cognitive scripts that help them spot and seize chances. Students can acquire some of these thought patterns through education, which can help them build an entrepreneurial attitude.

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this pilot study is to explore the influence of entrepreneurial education on students' entrepreneurial intention, with specific emphasis on the mediating role of entrepreneurial Mindset. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the effect of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intention among postgraduate and undergraduate students.
2. To assess the mediating role of entrepreneurial mindset in the relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention.

3. To evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement constructs used in the study.
4. To conduct a regression analysis to determine the strength and direction of relationships among the key variables.

Hypothesized Relationships

The framework proposes the following key relationships:

1. **H1: Entrepreneurial education has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.**
2. **H2: Entrepreneurial education has a positive effect on the development of an entrepreneurial Mindset.**
3. **H3: Entrepreneurial Mindset has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.**
4. **H4: Entrepreneurial Mindset mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention.**

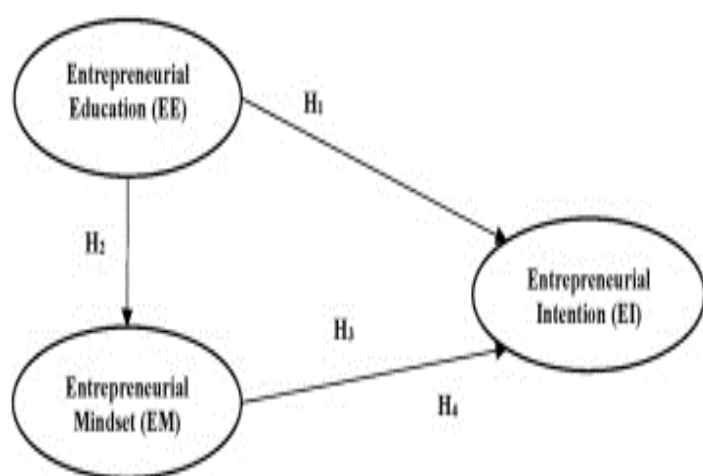


Figure 1: Conceptual framework (Conceptual Model adapted from Handayati et al., 2020)

Sample and sample size

The current study concentrated on postgraduate and undergraduate commerce students enrolled in Master of Commerce (M.Com) and Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) programs in autonomous colleges in Mangalore and Deemed Universities in Mangalore that offer entrepreneurship as a compulsory course. Students seeking an M.Com. and B.Com. degrees from autonomous colleges in Mangalore and Deemed Universities in Mangalore in the Dakshina Kannada district made up the population. To precisely target people who might have knowledge or experience related to entrepreneurial education and Mindset development, a purposive sampling technique was used. This strategy was selected to guarantee that, as part of their curriculum, participants were exposed to certain academic or real-world aspects of entrepreneurship. 203 responders from autonomous colleges connected to Mangalore University and Deemed Universities in Mangalore made up the final sample. Based on their present enrolment status in the M.Com and B.Com programs for the 2024–2025 academic year, respondents were chosen. The sample size was chosen in order to satisfy the minimal requirements for statistical analysis (e.g., regression, mediation) and to ensure sufficient representation across various institutions. A standardised questionnaire was distributed offline to gather responses.

Instrument development and data analysis

To compute respondents' reactions toward entrepreneurial intention, a seven-item scale was used, adapted from Linan & Chen (2009), while to acquire data on entrepreneurship education, this paper adapted from Soutaris (2007) which consists of five-item questions. Finally, seven items of instruments from Tang et al. (2012), Hung et al. (2012), and Scheier et al. (1994) were used to measure the entrepreneurial attitude. More specifically,

Table 2 contained the instruments needed to measure every variable. The five-point Likert scale, which ranges from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5), was used to calculate each variable construct.

Table 1: Validity and reliability of the construct to determine the goodness of measures.

Code	Variable	Loading	CR	A	AVE
1	Entrepreneurship Education		0.717	0.717	0.476
EB 1	I believe the Entrepreneurship Education Program increased my understanding of the attitudes, values, and motivation of entrepreneurs. (i.e., why do entrepreneurs act?)	0.719			
EB 2	I believe the Entrepreneurship Education Program increased my understanding of the actions I have to take to start a business (i.e., what needs to be done?)	0.788			
EB 3	I believe the Entrepreneurship Education Program has enhanced my practical management skills in order to start a business.	0.614			
EB 4	I believe the Entrepreneurship Education Program has enhanced my ability to develop networks. (i.e., who do I need to know?)	0.776			
EB 5	I believe the Entrepreneurship Education Program has enhanced my ability to identify an opportunity. (i.e., when do I need to act?)	0.513			
2	Entrepreneurial Mindset		0.730	0.789	0.461
MS 1	I have frequent interactions with others to acquire new information.	0.487			
MS 2	I can distinguish between profitable opportunities and non-profitable opportunities.	0.689			
MS 3	I like to take chances, although I may fail.	0.684			
MS 4	I can tolerate ambiguous conditions and unpredictable results.	0.756			
MS 5	I am always optimistic about my future.	0.747			
3	Entrepreneurial Intention		0.907	0.735	0.401
EI 1	I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur.				

		0.707			
EI 2	My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur	0.665			
EI 3	I will make every effort to start and run my own firm	0.755			
EI 4	After receiving education, I am determined to create a firm in the future.	0.685			
EI 5	I have the firm intention to start a firm someday because of the education received	0.168			

(Source- primary data)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using Principal Axis Factoring was conducted on five items measuring the perceived benefits of entrepreneurial education. All five items loaded above 0.513, with loadings ranging from 0.513 to 0.788. The results suggest that the items form a one-dimensional scale, suitable for constructing a composite measure for further analysis.

The entrepreneurial mindset was measured using five items. The internal consistency of the scale was found to be acceptable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.789). Factor analysis showed a single-factor structure, with factor Score coefficients ranging from 0.487 to 0.756, indicating moderate to strong contributions of all items. The resulting factor score was used for subsequent statistical analysis.

The construct measuring Entrepreneurial Intention exhibited strong internal consistency, with a Composite Reliability (CR) of 0.907 and an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.684. Both values exceed the recommended thresholds of 0.70 and 0.50, respectively, indicating good reliability and convergent validity.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity

	EE	EI	EM
EE	0.690	0.294	0.455
EI	0.294	0.680	0.655
EM	0.455	0.655	0.634

(Source: primary data)

Discriminant validity was assessed using both the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Henseler et al., 2015). According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, EE: $\sqrt{AVE} = 0.690$, which is greater than its correlations with MS (0.294) and EI (0.455). Hence, discriminant validity is established. MS: $\sqrt{AVE} = 0.680$, which is greater than its correlation with EB (0.294) and slightly greater than its correlation with EI (0.655). Hence, discriminant validity is established, although the margin over EI is small. Whereas EI: $\sqrt{AVE} = 0.634$, which is less than its correlation with MS (0.655). Hence, discriminant validity is not established between the Mindset (MS) and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) constructs according to the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial mindset on entrepreneurial intention. The overall model was found to be statistically significant

($F = 101.494$, $p = 0.710$), suggesting that the independent variable(s) significantly predict the dependent variable. Therefore, the regression model provides a significantly better fit than a model with no predictors.

The multiple regression analysis showed that Entrepreneurial Education (EB) had a significant positive effect on Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) ($\beta = 0.287$, $t = 5.502$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, Mindset (MS) significantly and positively influenced Entrepreneurial Intention ($\beta = 0.570$, $t = 10.942$, $p < 0.001$). Among the two predictors, Mindset was the stronger predictor, as indicated by its higher standardised beta coefficient. H1. Entrepreneurial mindset also exerts a significant positive influence on entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.570$, $t = 10.942$, $p < 0.001$), providing support for H3. Furthermore, the standardized beta coefficient indicates that entrepreneurial mindset is a stronger predictor of entrepreneurial intention than entrepreneurial education.

However, the current regression results do not provide sufficient evidence to evaluate H2, as a separate regression analysis with entrepreneurial mindset as the dependent variable is required. Similarly, H4 cannot be accepted or rejected based solely on multiple regression results.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study aims to assess the impact of entrepreneurial Mindset and entrepreneurial education on the entrepreneurship intentions of postgraduate and undergraduate students in Dakshina Kannada. It is possible to conclude from this study that students' entrepreneurial intentions and their entrepreneurial Mindset are closely related. It is well established that fostering an entrepreneurial Mindset in students is one way that entrepreneurship education influences their entrepreneurial intention. However, the major limitation of this study is that the conclusion is drawn from 203 students' responses only. Further study must be made to include a larger sample. Teachers could improve their proficiency, especially in areas related to entrepreneurship, by participating in entrepreneurship webinars, internal training, and certification programs. According to the GEM report 2024–2025 (GEM 2024/2025 Global Report: Entrepreneurship Reality Check, n.d.), the school's Entrepreneurial Education score decreased from 6.3 to 4.9. Only school-based entrepreneurial education is inadequate out of 13 frameworks. Principals of schools might also encourage teachers to pursue further education to improve their performance. To develop entrepreneurial competencies and ignite students' passion for business, the entrepreneurship curriculum should also be improved. Additionally, students should be encouraged to develop innovative ideas to become entrepreneurs through entrepreneurship education in schools and colleges. Along with continuing to support and prepare students to become entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship education should impart the necessary knowledge about entrepreneurship. The study's drawback is that convenience sampling was used to choose participants exclusively from postgraduate institutions connected to Mangalore University in Dakshina Kannada.

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