

## Does Measurement of Entrepreneurial Intentions Make Any Difference in the Context of Afghan Business Students?

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### Abstract

*This empirical paper is grounded on theory of planned behaviour to measure entrepreneurial Intentions of Afghan Business Students. The problem addressed in this study is to cultivate careers through entrepreneurship for the betterment of individuals at micro and macro level. Quantitative methodology is acknowledged in this study while data is collected through five point Likert scale questionnaire adopted from previous research studies and Structure Equation Modelling (SEM) approach is used for analysis purpose by applying SMART PLS3 Algorithm in order to measure entrepreneurial intentions of Afghan business students. This Study developed five hypotheses based on literature and concluded the findings with three hypotheses substantiated while two are not. At a climax of the findings, this paper found that one of the well-established hypotheses is not substantiated in the context of Afghanistan. Moreover, this paper recommends qualitative study to explore the possible reasons of lack of support for the hypothesis in the context of the study.*

**JEL Classification:** K09, K12, K17

**Keyword:** Entrepreneurship, Intention, Business Students, Partial Least Square, Afghanistan

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### 1. Introduction

The environment conducive to economic and corporate activities enables people to easily consider and decide to start their own businesses, enjoy economic benefits, and support their families and economy. However, legal factors, economic factors and infrastructure are completely affected by the war, security, support network, lack of proper training and business institutions to increase entrepreneurship, and terrorism that directly affects the country's economic structure, make it difficult for individuals to consider starting their own businesses (Krueger, 1993; Steward & Knowles, 2003; Rae, 2007; and McMullan & Vesper, 2000). Afghanistan is one of those countries that face the same aforementioned. The security situation that affects economic and entrepreneurial activities is more serious than other factors.

The current government, with the assistance of international donors, has been working to improve basic necessities and improve the use of these basic necessities. Improving and obtaining basic necessities of life is not only a challenge for the government but also for the public. One of the most effective alternatives economists recommend is self-employment (Gielnik & Frese, 2013). Self-employment or entrepreneurship could pave the way for the bulk of output in Afghanistan. Therefore, the problem addressed in this study is to cultivate careers through entrepreneurship for the betterment of individuals in micro level and also in macro

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level. Taking into account the importance of entrepreneurship as one of the best solutions for the economy in Afghanistan, this study aims to investigate the perception of entrepreneurship among Afghan business students in order to create their own businesses and make a contribution to the Afghan economy.

## 2. Literature and Hypothesis of the Study

Individuals decide to start their own business depends on two major factors, external factors and internal factors. Social, legal, political and economic factors as well as internal factors and other external factors are all personal traits and personalities. Due to the launch of personal features and personality frameworks, they are now sharing their own business (Baron, 2004). Several researchers pointed out that the decision to become an entrepreneur is a complex decision that is the result of a complex psychological process (Shaver & Scott, 1991).

According to (Bird, 1988, Boyd & Vozikis, 1994), factors in the external environment interact with individual attitudes to influence intentions. These external and internal factors play a key role in the decision-making process of individual entrepreneurship. According to Shane and Venkataraman (2000), in order to understand and summarize different entrepreneurial methods, people must seek to explain why, how, when, or where individuals or entrepreneurs are aware of opportunities and take advantage of opportunities. Many researchers report various findings of internal and external factors. The current paper focuses on entrepreneurship, network support, self-reliance, and independence. Knowing and determining who wants to be an entrepreneur, how successful entrepreneurs behave and what factors influence the choices of companies have paved the way for researchers to conduct research on two important aspects of entrepreneurial research. First, researchers pay attention to linking personality traits or characteristics such as “self-efficacy”, autonomous independence and entrepreneurial intention (Ajzen, 2002; Wilson, Kickul, & Marlino, 2007). Second, researchers investigated demographic and contextual factors such as age, gender composition, work experience, and dissatisfaction or disappointment with incentives for entrepreneurial behavior (Linan et al., 2005; Wilson, Kickul & Marlino, 2007).

There is a long history of research on networks in entrepreneurship literature. In particular, all studies about entrepreneurial networks say that network ties of a start-up exist on the interpersonal level of social contacts directly developed by its entrepreneur (Gartner & Carter, 2003). At a general level, researchers sustain the idea that previous entrepreneurial experience tends to enlarge the set of social networks useful for the start-up's growth as well as to increase their heterogeneity (Mosey & Wright, 2007). Social capital can be a useful resource for the launch of a new venture since it allows them to bridge new external social networks to provide necessary entrepreneurial resource carr & Sequeira, 2007; Linan & Rodriguez, 2004; Putnam, 2000; Rabinovich, Y. I. et al., 2002. Therefore, this lead to first hypothesis of the study.

**H1:** Networking Support is positively related to entrepreneurial intention

The importance of economic independence and the desire to reduce the liberation of the patriarchal framework have already marked the entry of young graduates into entrepreneurship, and they are more willing to create new businesses. Higher education pursues a variety of asset accumulation strategies for young graduates based

on specific socioeconomic conditions (Shapiro & Wolff, 2001). It points out that the well-known indicators of economic independence to investigate the economic guiding principles and the institutional structure affect the provision of entrepreneurs in modern civilization (Gwartney & Lawson, 2005). Audretsch and Thurik (2001) report that finance and self-independence are the main motivations to persuade young students to establish new businesses. Therefore, encouraging students to provide entrepreneurial environment is a lasting and long-term investment for future economic independence and economic growth, and also for the development of the general public. Based on the above literature, the second hypothesis of the study states:

**H2: Self Independence positively and significantly lead to entrepreneurial intentions**

The flexibility of the plan conveys the individual's ability to respond to various demands from a strong atmosphere. Sanchez (1995) defines strategic capabilities as the ability to act on various requirements from a dynamic and competitive environment. One study pointed out that environmental change is more rapid than that of firms, and it is invaluable that capacity expenditures give organizations flexibility to cope with ambiguous behavior (Kogut & Kulatilaka, 2001). Capabilities are described as "multifaceted capabilities and collected information that enables companies to organize actions and integrate all assets" (Day, 1990). Bingham & Eisenhardt (2008) pointed out that if an individual or company can obtain a source that is difficult to be legitimately acquired by a competitor, it will be significant. A study shows that competence is about obtaining, locating and influencing available sources to assist and discover business (Pavlou & El Sawy, 2009). Based on the literature, this study led to the third hypothesis of this study.

**H3: Entrepreneurial capability positively explains variance in entrepreneurial intention of Afghan business students**

Professional attraction is defined as the extent to which individuals hold a positive or negative assessment of personal about being an entrepreneur. Besides prior studies which support the general notion that professional attraction contributes to entrepreneurial intention (Gwartney & Lawson, 2005), also found significant relationship between professional attraction and entrepreneurial intention, hence, the following hypothesis is proposed

**H4: Professional Attraction positively leads to entrepreneurial Intentions**

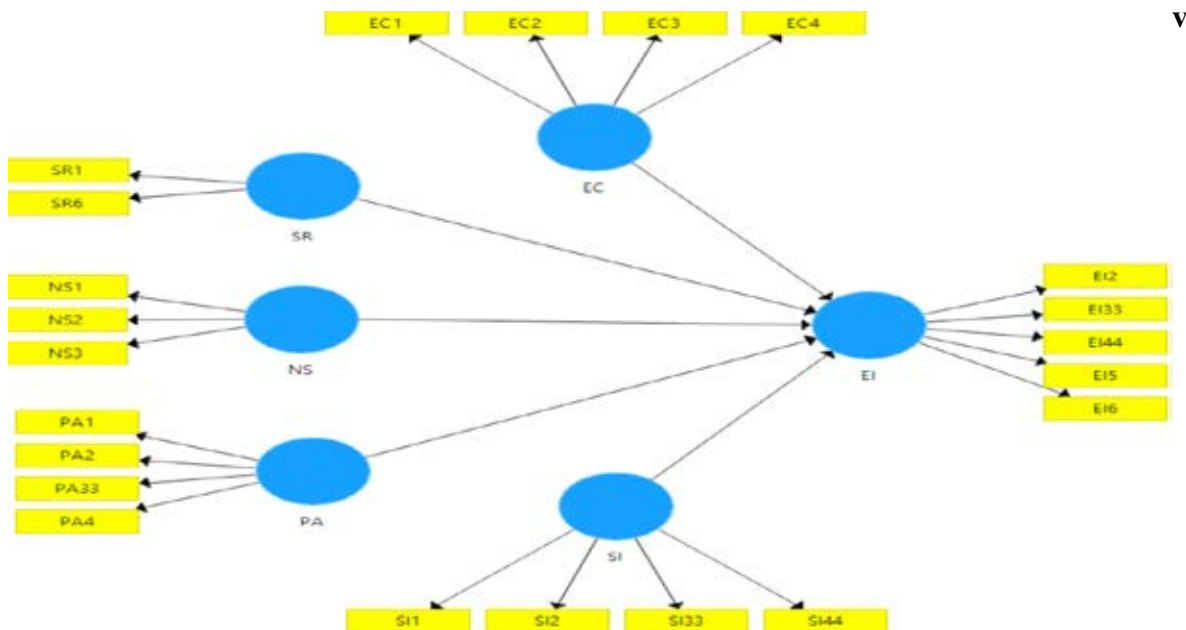
Self-reliance has something positive, but academics and intellectuals have an obligation to give it a special definition. In fact, this will be the only independent means of defining the term "self-reliance." Various scholars heard the requirements for local substitutes and self-reliance in vivid language (Mushtaq et al. 2011). The creativeness and modernization of young graduates selected the most up-to-date methods and knowledge applicable to local conditions (Achochi, 1998). Since the late 1980s, self-reliance has begun the economic restructuring environment (Fonchingong & Fonjong, 2002). Self-reliance is defined as a way of thinking of observing individual thoughts and material resources, as a basic reserve for the pursuit of personal goals, and not only to find emotional achievements in achieving goals, but also to include them through personal resources (Rahman, 1993). Therefore, based on the literature, this study stated that:

**H5: Self Reliance positively leads to entrepreneurial Intention**

### 3. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which considers that behavior is not random but conscious, planned, and designed. Linking it to the current research results, the new entrepreneurial creation is a planned and therefore intentional behavior (Shapero & Sokol, 1982; Bird, 1988; Autio et al., 1997; Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999). The concept of intent assumes that the new business structure is an intentional and designed behavior (Krueger & Carsrud, 1993). The theory of design behavior (Ajzen, 1991) has been developed in entrepreneurship since the 1990s, which promotes a new approach to the concept of intention. Several studies have demonstrated the importance and effectiveness of university education in predicting and clarifying individual behaviours related to the creation of companies (Kolvereid, 1996; Krueger, 1993). Entrepreneurship education and training have a direct impact on the behavior of students and their behavioural intentions (Kolvereid & Moen, 1997), which suggests that there should be a considerable gap between students who pursue entrepreneurial programs and those who do not. In today's environment, education plays an important role in promoting entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial intentions have led to the formation and development of new businesses. For new entrepreneurial entrepreneurs, they usually rely on network support, social norms, feasibility perceptions, and entrepreneurial experiences. Almost every university in Afghanistan offers management science and entrepreneurship courses, both undergraduate and master's degrees. It is time to bring the ideas of young graduates to entrepreneurship and lure them into entrepreneurship. Based on the theory of planned behavior, this study developed the following five potential exogenous and endogenous variables with their indicators as shown in following figure.

**Figure1: Cascading diagram of the Model**



Source: Author's Compilation

**Note:** PA=Professional attraction, EC=Entrepreneurial capability, NS=Network support, SI=Self Independence, SR = Self Reliance, EI = Entrepreneurial Intentions

## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1 Data collection method

The survey of this study was conducted based on a five point Likert scale questionnaire. Total of 160 questionnaires were distributed which was completed in two months' time period .Overall, all questionnaires were received, however, out of 160 questionnaires, 34 Questionnaires were found incomplete, therefore only 126 questionnaires are used for analysis which was counted as 79% response rate.

### 4.2 Sampling technique and Target respondents with Sample size

A judgmental sampling technique was used in this study. Judgmental Sampling comprises the selection of subjects who are most favourably placed or in the best position to provide the required Information (Sekaran, 2006). To use judgmental sampling, students studying in Master of Business Administration at Kardan University were targeted and Questionnaires were distributed in classes which is considered as non-contrive settings of the study. The reason lead to select Business students from Kardan University is the more number of students in MBA program at Kardan, secondly Kardan University is the first private and Pioneer University Offering Business degrees in Afghanistan and have more than 14,000 Alumni working in different sectors and many established their own businesses and generate employment opportunities for others. The shining example is Kapul Publishers where more than 300 jobs are generated for Afghan youth.

### 4.3 Instrumentation and operationalization

The questionnaire for five factors of entrepreneurship was adopted from Linan et al., 2008 to measure professional attraction (four items), networking support (three items), and entrepreneurial capability (four items). Self-independence was measured by scale (Kolvereid, 1996), and self-reliance was measured (Triandis et al., 1985). The main emphasis was to measure “Planned Behaviour Entrepreneurship and Intention to Create New Venture among Young Graduates in Afghanistan. The survey of this study was conducted based on a five point lickert scale questionnaire ranging from 1 to 5, showing strongly Agree to strongly disagree respectively.

### 4.4 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistic in form of mean values are calculated to provide an overview of the respondents' rating of five factors. The average scores for NS, PA, SI, SR, EC and EI, are 3.7831, 3.5575, 3.6171, 3.6448, 3.8780, 3.4656 respectively as shown in following **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Entrepreneurial capability	126	2.00	5.00	3.8780	.60958
Self independence	126	2.25	5.00	3.6171	.53915
Professional attraction	126	1.50	5.00	3.5575	.52073

Network support	126	2.00	5.00	3.7831	.67372
Self reliance	126	2.00	5.00	3.6448	.56156
Entrepreneurial Intention	126	2.00	5.00	3.4656	.75139
Valid N (listwise)	126				

Source: Data Output from SPSS.

## 5. Data Analysis

To test the hypothesis, the study uses a partial least squares (PLS) method. PLS is the second generation multivariate technique (Hair et al., 2012). It can simultaneously evaluate the measurement model (the relationship between the structure and its corresponding indicator) and the structural model in order to minimize the error variance (Hair et al., 2013). Data was analysed using Smart PLS version 3.0 (Ringle et al., 2005). Follow the advice of Hair et al. (2013) This study uses bootstrapping methods (500 resamples) to determine the significance level of loadings, weight, and path coefficient.

### 5.1 Measurement model

Convergence effectiveness is the degree to which multiple items that measure the same concept agree. As suggested by Hair et al. (2013, 2010), this study used factor loading, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extraction (AVE) to assess the convergence validity. The recommended loading value is set to 0.5, AVE should be greater than 0.5, and CR should be greater than 0.7. Table 2 shows that the result of the measurement model exceeds the recommended value, thus indicating that there is sufficient convergence validity

**Table 2: Results of Measurement Model (Convergent Validity)**

Construct	Measurement item	Loading	CR	AVE
Entrepreneurial Capability	EC1	0.854	.908	0.711
	EC2	0.835		
	EC3	0.850		
	EC4	0.834		
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI2	0.924	0.960	0.828
	EI3	0.915		
	EI4	0.896		
	EI5	0.905		
	EI6	0.909		
	NS 1	0.904		
NS2	0.903			
NS3	0.902			
Self Reliance	SR1	0.904	.707	0.715
	SR2	0.551		
Professional Attraction	PA1	0.944	0.947	0.816
	PA2	0.905		
	PA3	0.922		
	PA4	0.839		
Self Independence	SI1	0.685	0.851	0.742
	SI2	0.874		
	SI3	0.848		
	SI4	0.644		

Note: Where CR= Composite reliability and AVE= Average Variance Extracted

Source: Author's Compilation

After confirming the convergence validity, this study used the method of Fornell and Larcker (1981) to evaluate the discriminant validity. Discriminant validity is the degree to which a measures different concepts between structures. The criteria used to assess this are by comparing AVE with square correlation or the square root of AVE and the correlation. The criterion is that if the square root of the AVE shown in the diagonal is greater than the value in the row and column of that particular construction, one can conclude that these metrics are discriminative. As can be seen from Table 3, the values of the diagonals are larger than the values of their respective rows and columns, thus indicating that the metrics used in this study are different, indicating appropriate discriminant validity.

**Table 3: Results of Measurements Model (Discriminant validity, Farnell-Larcker criterion)**

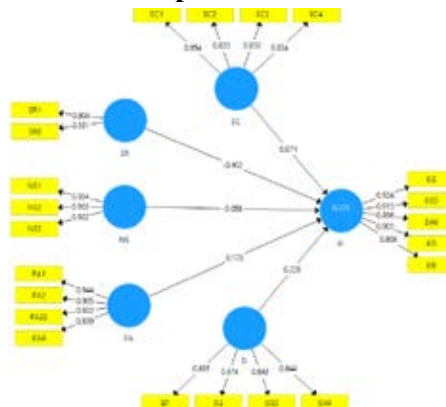
Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6
Entrepreneurial Capability	0.843					
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.154	0.910				
Network Support	0.160	0.096	0.903			
Professional Attraction	0.311	0.279	0.142	0.904		
Self Independence	0.216	0.297	0.145	0.515	0.769	
Self Reliance	0.070	0.352	0.076	0.096	0.106	0.749

Source: Author’s Compilation

### 5.2 Structural equation modelling

This study used the partial least squares (PLS) and structural equation modeling (SEM) tool to examine five exogenous variables of entrepreneurial intention to calculate the predictive power of structure model, R<sup>2</sup>-value was evaluated. R<sup>2</sup> shows the amount of variance explained by the exogenous variables (Hair et al, 2014, Barclay et al., 1995). All five variables together explained 27.3 % per cent of the variance. For the hypothesized relationships, path estimates, t-statistic were calculated by using bootstrapping method of re-sampling of 500. Following figure 2 shows result on structure model.

**Figure 2: Structure model results of the variables with indicators and their relationships with planned entrepreneurial intention**



Source: Author’s Compilation

This study further progressed to path analysis to test the five hypotheses generated. Table 4 shows the results. The  $R^2$  value is 0.273, indicating that 27.3% of the difference in the degree of intention can be explained by the study latent exogenous variable. A closer look indicates that hypothesis number one and hypothesis number five that is network support ( $b = -0.542$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 2.066$ ) and Self-reliance ( $b = -0.402$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 12.093$ ) is negatively related to entrepreneurial intention. Hypothesis number 2,3 and 4 that is self-independence ( $b = .228$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 4.253$ ), entrepreneurial capability ( $b = .071$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 2.066$ ) and professional attraction ( $b = .170$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 3.325$ ) were positively related with entrepreneurial Intentions and therefore number 2, 3 and four of this study is substantiated, however, hypothesis number one and five are not supported which shows negative relationship.

**Table 4: Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing**

Hypotheses	Relationships	Coefficients	T Statistics	Supported
H1	Network Support -> Entrepreneurial Intention	-0.542	2.066	No
H2	Self Independence -> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.228	4.253	Yes
H3	Entrepreneurial Capability -> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.071	2.601	Yes
H4	Professional Attration-> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.170	3.523	Yes
H5	Self Reliance -> Entrepreneurial Intention	-0.402	12.930	No

Source: Author's Compilation

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to see the extent of predictive power of five latent exogenous variables of the study. The sample-based study found that entrepreneurial intentions are high among business students in Kabul. This study is consistent with previous research supporting the view that young business students are very willing to take up the risk of starting a business. The current study supports the theory of planned behavior in the context of Afghanistan and found that the findings of Hunjra et al. (2010) are the same. They believe that network support, professional appeal, self-reliance and self-reliance have a great influence on students' entrepreneurial intentions. This study found a significant relationship between three of independent variables and the study's dependent variable (entrepreneurial intention). The report of Binks et al. (2006) believes that accepting, encouraging and strengthening entrepreneurial activities requires continuous research, training and teaching. Shook et al. (2003) reported the same findings: Entrepreneurship is about how an individual perceives and associates his/her perception with a specific environment in order to identify, evaluate, and make best use of opportunities. The study found that entrepreneurship is significantly associated with the entrepreneurial intentions of Afghan business students. Therefore, the study supports the findings of Binks et al. (2006) and Shook et al. (2003). The current study concludes that the family business experience is one of the



other important influencing factors for the entrepreneurial intention of Afghan business students and supports the research of Aldrich & Cliff (2003). Therefore, based on the results of the study, the study concluded that the exogenous variables included in this study (professional appeal, self-independence, and entrepreneurial capability indicate the significant influence the entrepreneurial intention of Kabul Business School students in Afghanistan. Purpose of this study was to explore the perception of Kabul based business students, studying in business institutes specifically Kardan University Kabul Afghanistan, so the limitation of the study is sample size of 126 Kabul based business students, therefore findings of the study cannot be generalized and should be related to business students' views of entrepreneurship, the large sample size will help more to draw the real picture of the phenomena in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the possible reasons that hypothesis number one is not supported shows that Afghan students perceive that their network and social relations may not support them in creating their own business firms and further it indicates the independent approach of establishing their own ventures without expecting cooperation and help from others. Secondly hypothesis number five is also not supported which is a considered a climax of this study because the previous research shows positive relationship. However, this study put forward a research question for the future study to explore reasons of not supporting a well-established hypothesis in the context of Afghanistan.

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