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Advancing Mindset in Entrepreneurial Intentions: A New Model?



Maria Patrocínia Correia, Carla Susana Marques, and Rui Silva

Abstract In the literature on entrepreneurship, the importance of entrepreneurial intentions (EIs) as a backdrop for behavioral planning has been highlighted. Although they are not real behaviors, EIs are among the best predictors of entrepreneurial activity, as this event is rare and difficult to measure. Several authors consider the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to be the “reference model” in EI research. The consideration and involvement of more factors in TPB have been explored with the main aim of building a more comprehensive and complete explanation of IEs. To realize this goal, this chapter uses the TPB proposed by Ajzen (*Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 50:179–211, 1991) as a framework for understanding the EIs of higher education students and then extends it by adding the entrepreneurial mindset. This study makes important contributions. First, this research is concerned with investigating the role of the psychological element of the entrepreneurial mindset. Second, a new EI model could be constructed, integrating different impact variables that can increase the EI of students, to advance a solid research agenda.

Keywords Entrepreneurial intentions · Theory of planned behavior · Entrepreneurial university · Mindset

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1 Introduction

What does it take for a student to innovate and act entrepreneurially? According to Audretsch et al. (2015), it seems that the paradigm of entrepreneurship has been elusive. Various intention-based models have been developed. However, Ajzen's *theory of planned behavior* (TPB) (1991) dominates the literature due to its predictive capacity and, in particular, its superiority has been recognized by many studies (Al-Jubari, 2019; Fayolle & Liñán, 2014; Liñán & Chen, 2009; Krueger et al., 2000). It not only considers personal factors but also includes social factors and the environmental contexts surrounding individuals. Based on the TPB theory, there are three factors that affect EI, namely, attitude (ATI), social norms (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC) (Ajzen, 1991).

The consideration and involvement of more factors in the TPB were explored with the main aim of building a more comprehensive and complete explanation of EIs. To realize this objective, this study uses the entrepreneurial mindset (MIND). Some researchers argue that an entrepreneurial mindset is increased either by entrepreneurship education in the family or in higher education.

2 Literature Review

2.1 *Entrepreneurial Intention and TPB*

The social-cognitive model of the TPB, introduced by Ajzen (1991) is considered to be the closest theory to predicting entrepreneurial intentions (EIs) (Bosnjak et al., 2020; Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023). Since its introduction, the TPB has been empirically tested and validated in numerous studies. These include those centered on the intention to start a business (Krueger et al., 2000; Liñán & Chen, 2006, 2009), growth intentions (Douglas, 2013), and the decision to grow (Wiklund et al., 2018). In this sense, the TPB was used as the reference framework to understand the IEs of higher education students, consisting of three key elements—attitude (ATI) toward entrepreneurship (personal belief in specific behaviors or actions), social norms (SN) (an individual's perceptions of what those around them or significant people think about a specific behavior), and perceived behavioral control (PBC) (individuals evaluate a behavior to be performed according to its ease of execution) (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán et al., 2011).

This study is in line with others that have used the explanatory power of the TPB in samples of university students who are potential entrepreneurs. However, some studies show differences in the influences of the three elements. In the study by Wu et al. (2020), ATI, NS, and CCP influenced EI. On the contrary, other studies showed that only two factors affected EI: the positive effect of ATI and NS on EI (Sharahiley, 2020) and the positive influence of ATI and PBC on EI (Galvão et al., 2018). Despite this, some studies show results in which only one of the

variables affects EI: ATI (Alghamdi, 2018; Otache et al., 2019) or PBC (Sharma, 2019).

2.2 *Entrepreneurial Mindset*

The true source of innovation and entrepreneurship is a capacity that resides within each person (Mariz-Pérez et al., 2012; Naumann, 2017; Kuratko, 2020). This capacity is called the entrepreneurial mindset (MIND).

Although there is no single definition of MIND, there are several that emphasize an individual's entrepreneurial skills or competences. These definitions can represent the concept of MIND because they are preconditions for behaviors that lead directly to action (Cui & Bell, 2022). MIND has also been described as a dynamic process of vision, change, and creation, requiring an application of energy and passion for the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. According to Kuratko (2020), it is a vision that allows us to recognize opportunities where others see disorder, contradiction, and confusion.

In order to understand the behavioral components of MIND, we have adopted the definition of Cui and Bell (2022) who state that MIND is a state of mind that guides human conduct toward carrying out activities with entrepreneurial results. According to Cui and Bell (2022), there are six components that conceptualize MIND: adaptation, creativity, execution, networking, team mobilization, and resource mobilization. Adaptation is defined as thinking beyond the immediate situation and planning for the future. It is related to goal orientation, decision-making, and monitoring (Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Cui & Bell, 2022). Creativity is the pleasure of generating ideas, challenging the status quo, and persisting in the face of adversity (Kwapisz et al., 2022). Execution is the ability to turn ideas into action plans, influencing business performance (Davis et al., 2015; Cui & Bell, 2022). Networking is based on social interaction skills and consists of creating and maintaining contact with external elements (Naumann, 2017; Cui & Bell, 2022). Finally, resources are essential in transforming an idea into action (Cui & Bell, 2022).

3 Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

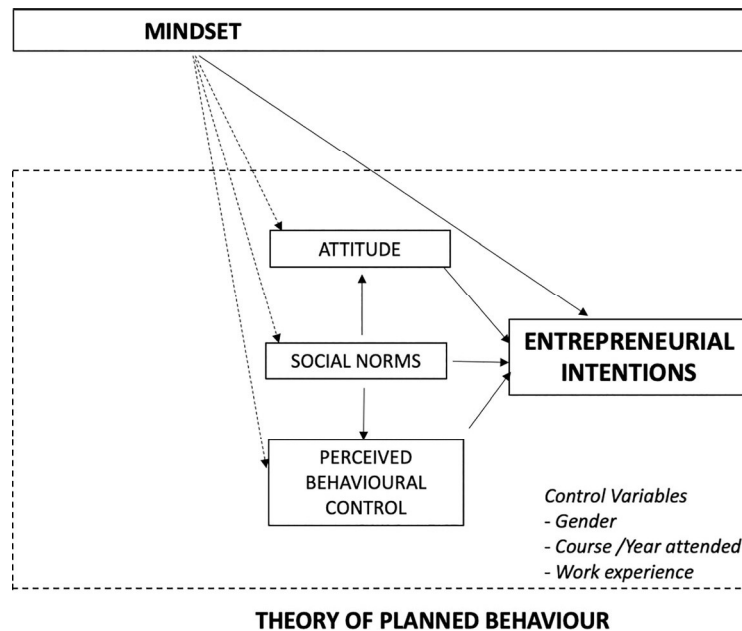
Table 1, as highlighted in the literature review, brings together all the hypotheses that could be tested in the conceptual model of the IE.

Considering the aim of the article and the gaps identified in the literature, we developed the theoretical model to relate the proposed effects (Fig. 1). The model considers EI as the dependent variable, with four categories as predictor constructs, namely, ATI, SN, PBC, and MIND.

Table 1 brings together the hypotheses that could be tested in the conceptual model of the IE.

Table 1 Hypotheses of the study

Hypotheses				
H1	ATI influences students' EI		ATI	EI
H2	PBC influences students' EI		PBC	EI
H3	SN influence students' EI		SN	EI
H3a	SN influence student' ATI		SN	ATI
H3b	SN influence students' PBC		SN	PBC
H4	MIND influences students' IE		MIND	IE
H5	MIND influences students' IE through A	MIND	A	IE
H6	MIND influences students' IE through SN	MIND	SN	IE
H7	MIND influences students' IE through PBC	MIND	PBC	IE

**Fig. 1** Study conceptual model

Hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 belong to the intention model based on the TPB.

Hypothesis H1 implies that the more positive the ATI to start a business, the stronger the intention to get involved and create that same business (Bazan, 2022; Pruett et al., 2009; Segal et al., 2005; van Gelderen et al., 2008).

With regard to PBC, researchers have found that it is the component that most influences the formation of EI (van Gelderen et al., 2008). Hypothesis H2 suggests that a high PBC will lead to a strong IE (Swann et al., 2007).

Hypothesis H3 suggests that if reference persons (family, friends) support students' entrepreneurial behavior, they will positively influence the intention to create

a business. The two hypotheses H3a and H3b derive from the empirical work of Trivedi (2016, 2017).

With regard to MIND, there are several relationships that can be drawn from analyzing the conceptual model. A student who possesses MIND characteristics will reflect the search for opportunities in their actions, having the autonomy to idealize projects and bring them to fruition (Rustiana et al., 2022).

MIND will help students to develop and improve their EIs, directly (H4) and indirectly, through the ATI (H5), SN (H6), and PBC (H7) factors of the TPB.

4 Methodology

The study will be carried out in a single country, institution, and context. We therefore adopted an exploratory research approach based on the students of a higher education institutions (HEI) located in a low-density territory.

4.1 Sample and Data Collection

The questionnaire will be based on Table 2, which describes the variables.

This study uses a quantitative research approach that will include two phases. The first phase will involve pilot-testing the research instruments adopted. In this phase, a pre-test will be carried out with a randomly selected class of students.

In the second phase, survey invitations will be sent to all HEI students by email, providing a link to fill in the questionnaire. All constructs will be measured on a 7-point Likert scale, in ascending order from 01 (strongly disagree) to 07 (strongly agree).

Table 2 Variables present in the questionnaire survey

Variable	Definition	Items
Attitude (ATI)	Personal belief in specific behaviors or actions	5 items
Social Norms (NS)	Study perceptions of what people around them (or more significant people) think about a certain behavior	3 items
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	How students evaluate a behavior to be performed according to its ease	5 items
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	Degree of motivation and desire of the student to become an entrepreneur	6 items
Mindset (MIND)	State of mind that directs the student's behavior towards entrepreneurial activities and results.	22 items

5 Conclusion and Implications

The literature review revealed that some studies have analyzed the influence of the entrepreneurial mindset and incorporated it into the IE model. For McLarty et al. (2023), the current understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset derives from numerous points of view. They point out that there is a dearth of cohesive frameworks for the “study of the concept, its definition, meaning, and subsequent measurement and examination” (p. 1).

In this sense, the study achieved its objective because it was possible to understand a new conceptual model of EI. To achieve this, it uses the TPB proposed by Ajzen (1991) as a reference framework for understanding the EI of higher education students. He then extends it with the addition of the entrepreneurial mindset, trying to refine the meaning of the mindset through Cui and Bell’s (2022) six components: adaptation, creativity, execution, networking, team mobilization, and resource mobilization.

However, to complete and verify its robustness, practical results are crucial. This is the main limitation of the study, as the surveys have not yet been finalized. However, this shortcoming will be overcome in the authors’ forthcoming work. A second limitation relates to the fact that this was a survey of students from a single institution.

Despite this, their contributions are clear. First, this research is concerned with investigating the role of the psychological element of the entrepreneurial mindset. Second, a new EI model could be constructed, integrating different impact variables that can increase the EI of students, to advance a solid research agenda.

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