

# Entrepreneurial Orientation of Students: A Comparative Analysis of Management and Engineering Discipline

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** To study the entrepreneurial orientation of MBA and Engineering students of Dehradun region through measuring their entrepreneurial intention.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** For meeting the objective of the research, descriptive research method was used. A survey was administered to the students of 4 different MBA and Engineering colleges of Dehradun, yielding a total sample of 100 students.

**Findings:** The t-test indicates that there is difference between entrepreneurial intentions of MBA and engineering students wherein the MBA students are more oriented towards starting their own enterprise than engineering students.

**Research limitations and further scope:** This research is being done in order to find out the difference in entrepreneurial intentions of MBA and engineering students, however, this study remains silent on the factors influencing the differences. A further research can be undertaken so as to find out the factors explaining the differences and antecedents of formation of entrepreneurial orientation among higher education students.

**Practical Implications:** The outcome of this research may help the policy makers and educators who formulate, deliver and evaluate education policy.

**Originality:** This paper is a pioneer work on the study of entrepreneurial intention of higher education students of Dehradun region.

**Key Words:** Entrepreneurial intention, MBA, Engineering, students.

## INTRODUCTION

A long tradition of research is devoted to the question of why some people choose to be self employed and start their own businesses and others are rather inclined to seek wage or salary employment. Researchers have tried to answer this question from their own perspectives.

Earlier theories of entrepreneurship focused on personality traits and attitudes as determinants of entrepreneurial behavior. According to early researchers entrepreneurs are born and not made. They assumed that entrepreneurs are endowed with unique traits which

make them distinguishable from others. (Muellar and Thomas, 2000) The personality approach to explaining entrepreneurial tendencies has a long tradition in entrepreneurship research, a tradition which can be traced back to Mc Clelland's work in the 1950's. Since then a number of personality traits such as need for achievement (McClelland,1961), higher risk taking propensity (Hisrich and Peters,1995), higher internal locus of control(Bonnet and Fuharman,1991) tolerance for ambiguity (Teoh and Fro, 1997) have been discussed as factors affecting people's aspirations to start a company.

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Another stream of research dealt with personal circumstances and the social environment of the entrepreneur. Hisrich and Peters (2002) and Kruger (1993) provide an understanding of the impact of personal factors, such as gender, general education, prior experience and family background, on the development of entrepreneurial perceptions.

While this stream of research contributed to better understanding of successful entrepreneurs, it ignored the exploration of causal factors. When the focus of researchers shifted to causal factors they realized that starting a business is not an event, but a process which takes years to evolve and come to fruition.

(Mazzarol, Volery, Doss and Thein, 1999). Hence it is necessary to study individuals before the entrepreneurial event i.e individuals in the process of enterprise formation. (Reynolds, 2002;Gartner et al .2004; Delmar and Davidsson,2000). It is at this stage the importance of entrepreneurial intentions was realized.

There is a growing body of literature arguing that intentions play a very relevant role in the decision to start a new firm. The intention models use a cognitive focus to get additional insights in understanding the process of entrepreneurship .The importance of cognitive variables in understanding a personal decision has been highlighted by Baron (2004) and Shaver and Scott (1991).

Van Gelderen et al (2008) state that entrepreneurial intentions are central to understanding the entrepreneurship process because they form the underpinnings of new organizations. Because entrepreneurship occurs over time, entrepreneurial intentions might be viewed as the first step in an evolving, long term process. Intentionality, is defined by Bird (1989) as cited in Vasaleinen and Pihkala (2009) as a conscious state of mind that directs attention toward towards object. Individuals with the intention to start a business not only have a propensity to start but also adopt a rational approach to reach their goal. Intentionality is thus grounded on cognitive psychology that attempts to explain or predict human behaviour.

Hence according to this new stream of research which focuses on causal factors, Entrepreneurial Intention is a

previous and determinant element towards performing entrepreneurial behavior

(Fayolle & Gailly, 2004, Kolvereid 1996) Entrepreneurial Intention plays an important role in motivating an individual towards Entrepreneurial activity. It is a predecessor of a new venture creation. Entrepreneurial behavior is determined by the individual's intention to perform or not perform a given behaviour.

The final decision to start a business reflects a process in which attitudes and intentions evolve based on the development of individual competence, experiences and relations to business context (Davidsson and Honing, (2003),Katz 1992).Career intentions are clearly planned (Kruger et al,2000)The opportunity identification process is intentional and accordingly entrepreneurial intention merits attention in Entrepreneurship research. (Indarti & Kristiansen, 2004).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial intention has emerged as a foremost construct within the entrepreneurship literature over the last few decades. (Drennan, Kennedy and Renfrow, 2005). There is an emerging body of entrepreneurship literature arguing that intentions are very pertinent and important for stimulating one's decision to start a new venture. Number of researchers have devoted their efforts to find out factors effecting entrepreneurial intentions.

Entrepreneurial Education and Entrepreneurial Intention: Entrepreneurial education is considered to be an important determinant of entrepreneurial intentions. According to Wilson, Kickul and Marlino (2007) purposeful education enhances entrepreneurial efficacy through providing attitudes, knowledge and skills to cope with the complexities embedded in entrepreneurial such as opportunity seeking, resource assembling and leading the business to success. Education enhances entrepreneurial efficacy of students through providing experience of mastery, role models, social persuasion and support by involving them in hands on learning activities, business plan development and running simulated or real small business (Fiet,2000;Segal,Borgia and Schoenfeld, 2005).

Borgia and Schoenfeld further stated that education plays a crucial role in developing entrepreneurial efficacy through involving individuals in entrepreneurial activities. This involvement increases their perceived desirability to step into venture creation. According to Fatoki, Olawale Olufunso (2010), one of the ways to reduce the obstacles to entrepreneurial intention is through entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurial education is needed to enhance skills and knowledge. Entrepreneurial skills include creativity, innovation, risk taking and ability to interpret successful entrepreneurial role models. Entrepreneurship education thus provides basics of such business practices.

Hessel Oosterbeek, Mirjam van Pragg, Auke Ijsselstein (The impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurship skills and motivation, European Economic review 54, 2010) emphasize that entrepreneurial education will influence students career choices towards entrepreneurship by positively swaying their perceptions of its desirability and feasibility and hence influencing their self efficacy to perform as entrepreneurs.

Brijlal P(2011) investigated entrepreneurial intentions of final year university students. The findings indicate that intention is a function of perceived self efficacy, personal attitudes and perceived subjective and social norms. Entrepreneurial knowledge affects entrepreneurial intentions by influencing self efficacy. Zaidatol (2009) conducted a study on entrepreneurial intentions of Malaysian University students and found that entrepreneurial intentions score is higher if students perceived that there is a need to learn entrepreneurship at the university. If students understand the necessity and need of having entrepreneurship education their intention to become an entrepreneur increases.

This finding is similar to the finding of Lussiers and Pfeifer, S (2001) findings where entrepreneurs with higher educational level have greater chance of succeeding in their business.

Zahariah Mohd., Zain, Amalina, Erlane (2010) conducted a study on entrepreneurial intentions among Malaysian business students and the findings implicate that the students decision to become entrepreneurs are influenced by their family members, academics and

adding courses on entrepreneurship. The results indicate that academics need to play a significant role in encouraging more students to become entrepreneurs and in turn contributing to the growth of the countries' economies and global competitiveness.

Soetanto, Pribadi and Widayadana (2010) conducted a study on Indonesian students entrepreneurial intentions. They concluded that there is growing need to create entrepreneurial education especially for universities in the developing countries. The current process of education is too mechanistic and does not promote and encourage entrepreneurial behavior. Universities should include entrepreneurship programs as part of their curriculum and endorse entrepreneurship.

#### **Previous work experience and Entrepreneurial Intention**

Another strong positive predictor of entrepreneurial intention is whether a person has some earlier exposure to entrepreneurship (Hamidi et al., 2008). Mazzarol et al (1999) found that individuals with previous government employment experience were less likely to be business starters as compared to employees from private businesses. According to Greve and Saleff (2003), family business background may lower perceptual barriers to entrepreneurial behaviors since the individual can capitalize on their networks and larger social capital. It is easier for an alumnus entrepreneur to assess the possibilities of starting a new firm (Delmar and Davidsson, 2000).

#### **Exposure to Family Business and Entrepreneurial Intention**

More so, it has been found that persons who have a close relationship with someone with entrepreneurial experience are more likely to be self employed. For instance, large proportion of entrepreneurs have parents who themselves were entrepreneurs.

The two explanations for this pattern are that parents can act as role models (Delmar and Davidsson, 2000) and that there is a transfer of entrepreneurial skills from parents who expect their children to eventually take over the firm (Westhead, 2003).

Being raised in a family that is entrepreneurial significantly impacts individuals intentions to start their own businesses (Crant, 1996; Matthews and Moser, 1995). Having role models is a significant factor in wanting to start a business (Birley and Westhead,1994), and self employed parents tend to be especially relevant as mentors and guides for children starting their own businesses (Matthews and Moser, 1995)It has been posited by Drennan et al., (2005) that people who have a parent or close family member who is an entrepreneur are more likely to follow an entrepreneurial career path. Such individuals have the option to found their own company, take up organizational employment or become a successor in family business.

Drawing from the literature review, the main focus of this study is to find out the difference in entrepreneurial intentions of MBA and Engineering students and to find out the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention of students. While attention will also be paid to the experience of private business and occupation of parents as determinants of Entrepreneurial Intention.

**Objectives:** To study the entrepreneurial orientation of MBA and Engineering students of Dehradun region through measuring their entrepreneurial intention (EI).

**Hypotheses:** Based upon the referred theory and literature, we set forth the following hypotheses;

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in entrepreneurial intention (EI) of students across categories of education i.e. Engineering and MBA.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in entrepreneurial intention (EI) of students with respect to their work experience.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in entrepreneurial intention (EI) of students with respect to the occupation of their parents (self-employed or service class).

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in entrepreneurial intention (EI) of students with respect to their experience with family business.

## RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

An empirical research is conducted to identify the orientation of students of higher education towards

entrepreneurship. To identify the association between the entrepreneurial intention and other aspects like category of education pursuing, gender, previous entrepreneurial experience and parents' occupation, a descriptive research design is applied. The sample of respondents is drawn from four institutes of Dehradun city imparting education business administration and engineering courses. We used convenient and judgmental sampling method to ensure the appropriate mix of engineering and MBA students. The questionnaire in English language was distributed among students at various locations like, canteen, library and computer laboratories. A total sample of 165 students was taken wherein we found 100 students having filled up complete questionnaire with no anomalies.

The questionnaire has three components, Administrative, statements designed on seven point Likert Scale ('7' being 'Strongly Agreed' and '1' being 'Strongly Disagreed') and Demographic profile.

The profile of the respondents can be seen in table-1. Students are equally (approx.) divided among two courses. However, the representation of female students in the sample is very less.

		Education(Pursuing)		Total
		BE	MBA	
Gender of the respondents	Male	43	44	87
	Female	8	5	13
Total		51	49	100

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To check the reliability of the instrument i.e. the questionnaire which we used to measure the EI of the students, we relied on a parameter, Cronbach's Alpha. Value of Cronbach's Alpha was .860 which, as a general practice, is a very good statistical value for ensuring reliability of the instrument.

Table-2

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.860	10

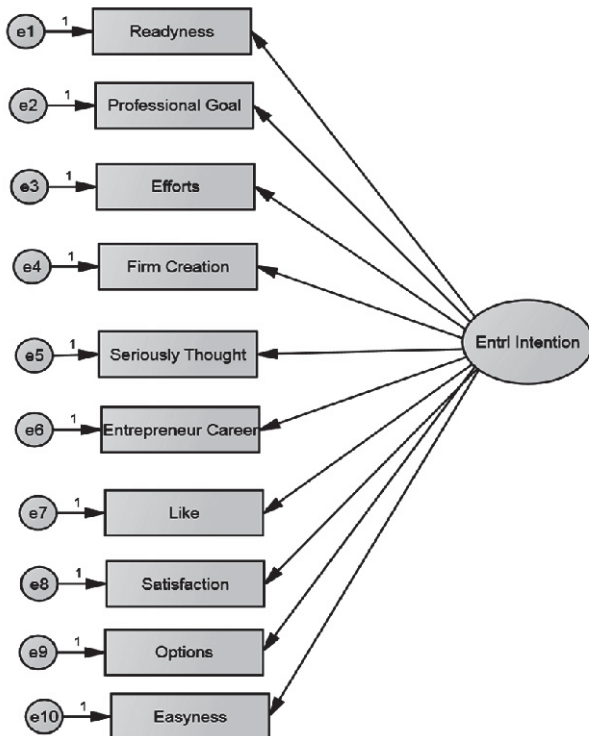
To test the hypotheses, we first calculated the EI score of all the respondents. For calculating the EI score, we used IBM-AMOS and calculated the EI score loading for each of the variables (Figure-1).

To check the normality of the distribution of EI score obtained, we applied P-P plot and one sample K-S test. Value of p at 95% level of confidence comes out to be .089 (>.05) which endorses the normality of the data obtained (Table-3), (fig-2).

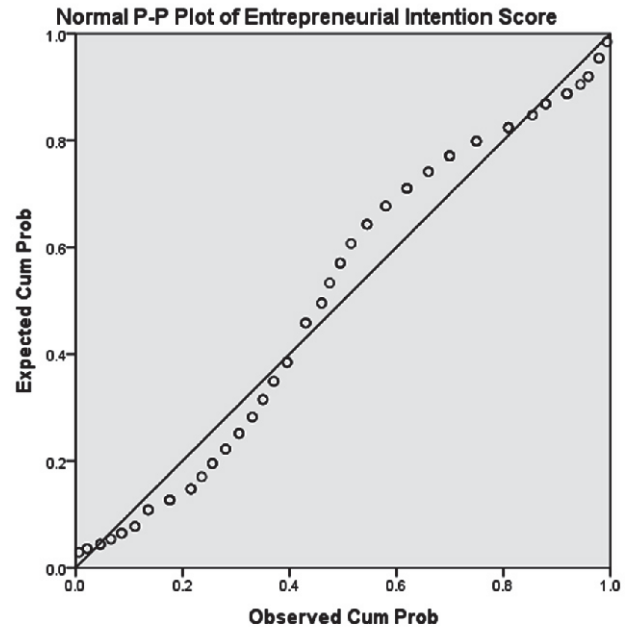
**Table-3**  
**One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test**

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		F1
N		100
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	2.8796
	Std. Deviation	.71184
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.125
	Positive	.098
	Negative	-.125
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.247
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.089
a. Test distribution is Normal.		

**Figure -1: EI Score loadings for each of the variables.**



**Figure-2: (P-P plot of EI Score)**



To test the first hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ), we applied t-test for two independent samples. From the Levene's test of equality of variance, the assumption of equal variance was violated as the value of p is .000, so we selected that value of 't' where equal variance is not assumed. t-Statistics of -7.649 (Sig. value 0.000) indicate that null hypothesis could be accepted (Table-4). Therefore, we can say that there is a significant difference of entrepreneurial intention between MBA and engineering students. As per the mean value of response (3.31 for MBA students and 2.45 for Engineering students), MBA students gave more agreement with the statements and hence have more score of EI than Engineering students (Table-5). Alternatively, we can say that MBA students have more entrepreneurial intention than Engineering students. The reason for more entrepreneurial inclination may be attributed to the course curriculum of MBA program or knowledge of business administration or inclusion of one subject of Entrepreneurship in their courses. Education enhances entrepreneurial efficacy of students through providing experience of mastery, role models, social persuasion and support by involving them in hands on learning activities, business plan development and running simulated or real small business (Fiet,2000;Segal,Borgiaand Schoenfed, 2005).

**Table-4**  
**Group Statistics**

**Group Statistics**

	Have your parents started their own business	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
F1	Yes	21	3.0834	.74182	.16188
	No	79	2.8255	.69849	.07859

**Table 5 Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
F1	Equal variances assumed	6.599	.012	-7.606	98	.000	-.86321	.11349	-1.08843	-.63799
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.649	92.489	.000	-.86321	.11285	-1.08731	-.63910

To test the second hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ), we again applied t-test for two independent samples, and the Levene's test of equality of variance is accepted for 'equal variance assumed, so we take t-value of equal variance assumed and t-statistics of 2.732 (sig. value 0.007) indicate that the null hypothesis could not accepted (table-6). Taking the mean value of response of two categories of students (with and without work experience), students with prior work experience gave more agreement to the statements and hence have are more inclined towards entrepreneurship (table-7).

**Table – 6**

<b>Independent Samples Test</b>										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
F1	Equal variances assumed	1.127	.291	2.732	98	.007	.38309	.14023	.10482	.66137
	Equal variances not assumed			2.770	90.216	.007	.38309	.13829	.10836	.65783

**Table- 7**

<b>Group Statistics</b>					
	Have you ever held a job where you were paid.	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
F1	Yes	41	3.1057	.65822	.10280
	No	59	2.7226	.71058	.09251

To test the third hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ), we applied t-test for two independent samples. Leven’s test for homogeneity of variance is violated hence we would see table value of ‘equal variance not assumed. t-statistics of 1.434 (sig value 0.162) indicate that null hypothesis is accepted i.e. there is no significant difference of EI among students with respect to occupation of their parents. (Table- 8)

Table-8

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
F1	Equal variances assumed	.002	.962	1.485	98	.141	.25798	.17371	-.08675	.60270
	Equal variances not assumed			1.434	30.109	.162	.25798	.17995	-.10947	.62542

To test the fourth hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ), we applied t-test for two independent samples. Leven’s test for homogeneity of variance is violated hence we would see table value of ‘equal variance not assumed. t-statistics of 0.709 (sig value 0.490) indicate that null hypothesis is accepted i.e. there is no significant difference of EI among students with respect to their experience with family business.

Table 9

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
F1	Equal variances assumed	3.738	.068	.420	19	.680	.15367	.36631	-.61302	.92036
	Equal variances not assumed			.709	14.164	.490	.15367	.21685	-.31093	.61827

## Conclusion and Discussion

The conclusions of the study are that entrepreneurship education has a significant impact on the entrepreneurial intentions of students and prior work experience of private business also influences their entrepreneurial intentions.

MBA students ranked high on entrepreneurial intentions as they are being exposed to entrepreneurship education. This education plays a crucial role in developing entrepreneurial efficacy through involving individuals in entrepreneurial activities. This involvement increases their perceived desirability to step into venture creation. There is no doubt about the fact that one of the ways to reduce the obstacle to entrepreneurial intention is through entrepreneurial education. Entrepreneurial education is needed to enhance skills and knowledge. Entrepreneurial skills include creativity, innovation, risk taking and ability to interpret successful entrepreneurial role models. Entrepreneurship education thus provides basics of such business practices (Fatoki et. Al., 2010). This study reinforces this fact that since MBA students have entrepreneurship as one of the compulsory papers, their entrepreneurial orientation is more than the engineering students who do not have entrepreneurship as one of their compulsory papers. Further, we cannot ignore the fact that their self efficacy and entrepreneurial feasibility is also enhanced through business administration education which in turn cast a positive influence on their entrepreneurial intention.

Entrepreneurship, in the current scenario, is considered to play a key role in the development of the economy. According to Gree and Thurnik (2003) entrepreneurship has been recognized as one of the tools that drives the economy of the country. Turker and Selcuk (2009) point out that entrepreneurial activities are not only the incubator of technological innovation, but they also provide employment opportunities and increase competitiveness.

It is thus the responsibility of education policy makers to incorporate entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of schools, colleges and universities. The conceptual foundation of entrepreneurship has to be supported by practical exposure through interaction

with successful entrepreneurs. The use of local case studies in the teaching of entrepreneurship can also make entrepreneurship a more feasible option for students. Media should also highlight stories of entrepreneurial success which will motivate the students.

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