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Measuring the Entrepreneurial Attitude and Intent of the Fishermen Community of Karachi

Dr. Sarwat Nauman

Associate Professor, Department of Education, Institute of Business Management

Dr. Zehra Habib

Senior Fellow, Department of Education, Institute of Business Management

Dr. Kamal Soomro

Associate Professor, Government College University Hyderabad

Munnaza Salman

PhD Scholar, Department of Education, Institute of Business Management

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the attitude for entrepreneurial ventures within the fishermen community of Karachi, with a focus on understanding their potential to diversify livelihoods and contribute to local economic development. While fishing has traditionally been the dominant source of income, challenges such as declining marine resources, rising operational costs, and market volatility have heightened the need for alternative income-generating opportunities. Using the quantitative approach, the research explores the fishermen community's entrepreneurial skills, risk-taking tendencies, access to financial and social capital, and their readiness to engage in small-scale business initiatives. Data was collected through a questionnaire for which the fishermen community members of Karachi were approached to participate. Findings reveal an overall positive attitude and intent towards entrepreneurial ventures, and it was found that a strong correlation exists between entrepreneurial intent and attitude. The study highlights the need for capacity building and policy interventions aimed at fostering entrepreneurship through entrepreneurship education as a viable supplement to traditional fishing livelihoods.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Attitude, Entrepreneurial Intent, Under-Privileged Community, Fishermen

Introduction

The fishermen communities in Karachi's coastal fishing villages are living in abject poverty because of a lack of basic amenities such as clean drinking water, acceptable health services, adequate education, and provision of Sui-gas (Khan et al., 2019; Khan & Khan, 2021). The population of Karachi's over a hundred fishermen's villages has risen from two million in 1960 to around 15 million today, but they have no options to seek an improved way of life for themselves (Khan, 2019; Shahzad, 2024). Pakistan's fisheries have not attained economic gains since the 1990s. Fish consumption in Pakistan varies by region, with people on the Makran coast consuming 10 Kg and people in Karachi consuming 5 Kg per year. Pakistan has a long history of fish production, but this is declining due to factors such as illegal fishing and pollution. (Baset, 2020) A combined



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assessment by the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization determined that marine fisheries are depleted and over-fished, even though the fishing fleet has increased. Less water has been flowing into rivers for over a century now, leading to saline intrusion and distortion of fertile land. Fishermen also feel threatened, and are being forced to take informal fishing tasks or migrate (Karrar, 2021). The current conditions are affecting livelihoods in vulnerable, small-scale fishing communities (Patil et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2023).

Keeping in mind the fourth industrial revolution and SDG goal 8 of decent work and economic growth, the purpose of this research is to understand the entrepreneurial attitude of the youth of marginalized communities of fishermen in Karachi in order to plan educational opportunities to build entrepreneurial capacity.

Research Objectives

To measure the entrepreneurial attitude and intent of the fishermen community of Karachi.

To understand the correlation between the entrepreneurial attitude and intent of the young adults of the fishermen community of Karachi.

To understand the gender related differences in entrepreneurial attitude and intent of the young adults of the fishermen community of Karachi.

Research Questions

Q1. To what extent do the young adults in the fishermen community of Karachi have an attitude for entrepreneurial ventures?

Q2. To what extent is there entrepreneurial intent in the young adults in the fishermen community of Karachi?

Q3. To what extent are there significant differences in entrepreneurial attitude and intent based on gender in the young adults in the fishermen community of Karachi?

The following null hypotheses were created:

H₀₁: Young adults in the fishermen community of Karachi do not have a significant attitude for entrepreneurial ventures.

H₀₂: Young adults in the fishermen community of Karachi do not demonstrate a significant entrepreneurial intent.

H₀₃: There are no significant gender-based differences in entrepreneurial attitude and intent among young adults in the fishermen community of Karachi.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship is an important lifelong learning skill and is regarded as an initiative for income generation, leading to economic development (Onstenk, 2003; Peprah & Adekoya, 2020). It also provides multiple opportunities for people's development, satisfaction, and citizenship. For the past few decades, the phenomenon of entrepreneurship has been encouraged by governments by including it in their policies to boost the economy through new business structures in order to achieve sustainable employment for their citizens. Many universities around the world offer courses in this domain and have opened business centers on campus to promote entrepreneurship among their students.

According to the fourth industrial revolution, the quality and sustainability of economic growth can also be achieved by providing education that provides entrepreneurial opportunities (Gwata, 2019). Studies show that entrepreneurship education provides



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individuals the knowledge, skills, mindset, and especially, the confidence that is needed to succeed as entrepreneurs (Raharjo et. al., 2023). Bell (2013 cited in Prasetyo & Kistanti, 2020) found that entrepreneurial education was more the engine of long-term socio-economic growth than any large foreign company that previously existed. It has been noted that there is a higher impact of informal institutions on entrepreneurial opportunities than formal institutions (Prasetyo, & Kistanti, 2020; Maggy & Khumalo, 2025). Thus to be in line with the fourth industrial revolution, it is imperative that like Singapore and Korea, developing countries must strengthen their domestic entrepreneurial base, through better vocational, entrepreneurship, and business school education (Nagler & Naudé, 2017; Wei & Duan, 2024). However, the problem occurs in developing countries when there is a lack of infrastructure for entrepreneurial education and ventures. Nevertheless, Ribeiro-Duthie (2020) is of the view that with innovative minds and training, entrepreneurs surpass these challenges by breaking the existing course of the economy and revolutionizing the existing structure.

Human Capital and Entrepreneurial Education

“Human capital refers to the ability and efficiency of people to transform raw materials and capital into goods and services, and the consensus is that these skills can be learned through the educational system,” (Son, 2010, p.2). “Human capital is the stock of skills that the labor force possesses,” (Goldin, 2024). Human capital is also regarded as a stock of knowledge, social, and personality attributes which includes creativity and the ability to perform labor to produce economic value (Oluwaleyimu, et. al., 2020). In fact, all fruitful economic activities require human capital to further reinforce socio-economic development (Prasetyo, & Kistanti, 2020). Thus, the development of human capital increases the abilities, potentials, skills, and productivity of human resources such that they add positively towards the economic development of a country. Understanding how poverty affects human capital is key to explaining how countries grow, produce goods and services, and share wealth (Attanasio et al., 2022).

Human Capital Theory shows that this development of abilities, potentials, skills and better productivity of human resources is achieved through education systems. When a country spends to improve its human capital, it seeks to develop individuals who can boost its socio-economic activities through their capacity building and quality of human resources (Prasetyo, & Kistanti, 2020). Human Capital Theory is the recognized belief that education, training, and ongoing learning are like investments that yield results in the future (David, 2022). Human capital development achieves the 8th SDG of Decent Work and Economic Growth through entrepreneurship. Figure 1 shows that entrepreneurial education, if contextualized and according to the needs of the participants, increases human capital sufficiently which uplifts the socio-economic conditions of a community.

Entrepreneurial Attitude of the Fishermen Communities

There have been researches conducted on the entrepreneurial attitude of fishermen communities which has provided insights related to their entrepreneurial attitude and developmental efforts that were made to enhance their entrepreneurial attitudes for the progress of their village (Shengqiang et al., 2025; Zamzami & Effendi, 2023). A few other studies have also focused on the role of women entrepreneurs of the fishermen communities (Musa et al., 2022). Furthermore, the significance of government and NGOs working for the education and development of fishermen communities have also been studied which are instrumental for gauging the attitude and providing support for fishermen communities in order to improve their livelihood and opportunities for



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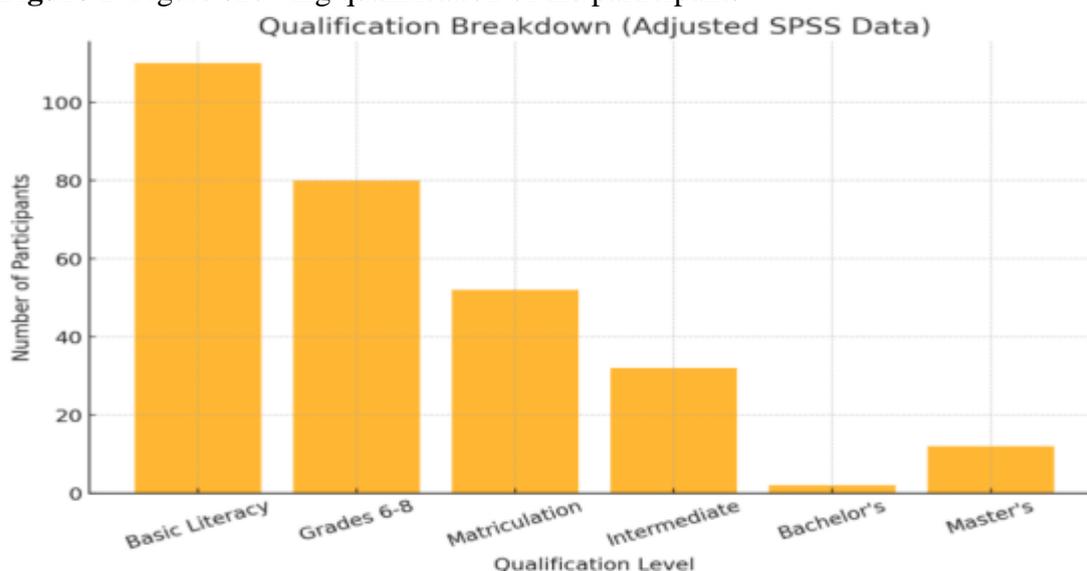
progress.

Currently, a gap exists in entrepreneurial education for Pakistan’s marginalized communities (Tunio et al., 2021) because while entrepreneurship is part of curricula in universities, there is a scarcity of focus in this respect for marginalized communities. By developing a curriculum via needs analysis that includes their entrepreneurial attitude, entrepreneurial intent reflecting the entrepreneurial attitude of the fishermen community and by taking the crucial step of involving youth from fishermen communities in small-scale entrepreneurial ventures, this research will address the gap of entrepreneurship for a disadvantaged community in Pakistan. Additionally, it will provide a way forward to take this type of project to the next level in the community by providing vocational training and related education. The research can be a torchbearer for using the strategies employed in the project to assist other marginalized communities in Pakistan to be trained in entrepreneurial ventures. The research will add to existing knowledge for entrepreneurship education for marginalized communities which can be implemented among other disadvantaged communities of the country.

Research Design

In total 336 participants completed the Entrepreneurship Aptitude Test (EAT). Out of the 336 filled forms 48 forms were nullified as the participants were not in the qualification range and did not have basic literacy as shown in table 1. The total participants left were 288. The chart displays the qualification breakdown of participants based on adjusted SPSS data. It shows that the majority have basic literacy (110), followed by those who studied grades 6-8 (80), matriculation (52), and intermediate (32). A very small number hold a bachelor’s (2) or master’s degree (12). This adjustment ensures alignment with the report’s figures for accurate analysis.

Figure 1. Figure showing qualification of the participants

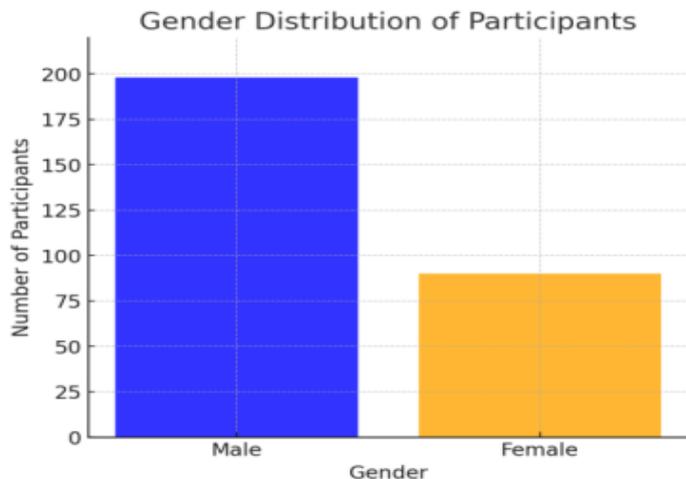


The participants represented both genders. Among the participants, 69% (n=198) represented males and 31% (n=90) represented females.

Figure 2. Figure showing the gender distribution of participants



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Their age groups ranged between 14 years to 25 years, where 14-17 years of participants were (n=60, 21%) whereas those belonging to the age range 18-20 years were (n=48, 17%) and 21-25 years of age range were (n=180, 63%). Our results indicated that 110 participants (38%) had basic literacy and had gone to school but dropped out in grade 5 or below. Of the total, 80 participants (28%) had studied between grades 6 and 8; on the other hand, 52 participants (18%) had their matriculation certification. Intermediate certification was obtained by 32 participants (10.3%); only 2 participants (0.7%) had obtained a bachelor's degree and 12 participants (4%) had obtained a master's degree. The data was analysed using SPSS23.

Results

In total 336 participants completed the Entrepreneurship Aptitude Test (EAT). Out of the 336 filled forms 48 forms were nullified as the participants were not in the qualification range and did not have basic literacy as shown in table 1. The total participants left were 288. The chart displays the qualification breakdown of participants based on adjusted SPSS data. It shows that the majority have basic literacy (110), followed by those who studied grades 6-8 (80), matriculation (52), and intermediate (32). A very small number hold a bachelor's (2) or master's degree (12). This adjustment ensures alignment with the report's figures for accurate analysis.

Entrepreneurial Attitude

The study assessed participants' attitude toward entrepreneurship using a 5-point Likert scale, where responses were categorized as Disagree (DIS), Neutral (N), or Agree (AG). The data was doubled to simulate 288 cases, ensuring robustness in the analysis.

Results indicate that a large majority of participants (M = 125.71, SD = 13.22, 43.65%) strongly agree or agree with entrepreneurial attitude statements, highlighting a positive inclination toward entrepreneurship. Among the attitude items, "Being an entrepreneur will empower my future life" had the highest agreement (46.87%), reinforcing the perception that entrepreneurship contributes to personal and professional growth.

Conversely, disagreement levels were consistently low (M = 12.86, SD = 14.41, 4.46%), with the highest disagreement observed for "Entrepreneurship will secure my future life" (15.97%), suggesting that some participants may have concerns about entrepreneurship as a stable career path. Neutral responses remained minimal (M = 5.43, SD = 3.08, 1.88%), indicating strong participant certainty in their views on entrepreneurship.

A total of 46 participants indicated that they have not attempted to be an entrepreneur, as they selected 'Disagree' for the statement "I have attempted to be an entrepreneur." This



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suggests that a portion of the respondents, despite having a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, have not yet taken practical steps toward starting a business.

Overall, the findings suggest a highly favorable entrepreneurial attitude, with most participants recognizing entrepreneurship as a viable and empowering opportunity. The minimal disagreement and neutral responses highlight a strong entrepreneurial mindset, with only slight variations in perceived security and personality fit.

Table 1. Results from the Entrepreneurship Attitude Test

Statement	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)
My ambition is to be an entrepreneur	8.33	2.08	89.58
Being an entrepreneur will secure my future life	3.47	6.25	90.28
Being an entrepreneur will give me an opportunity to be independent	2.78	4.86	92.36
Being an entrepreneur will empower my future life	3.47	2.78	93.75
Being an entrepreneur will show my real personality	4.17	6.94	88.89
I have always been interested in entrepreneurship	8.33	1.39	90.28
I have attempted to be an entrepreneur	31.94	2.08	65.97

Entrepreneurial Intention

The study measured entrepreneurial intent using a 5-point Likert scale, with responses categorized as Disagree (DIS), Neutral (N), or Agree (AG).

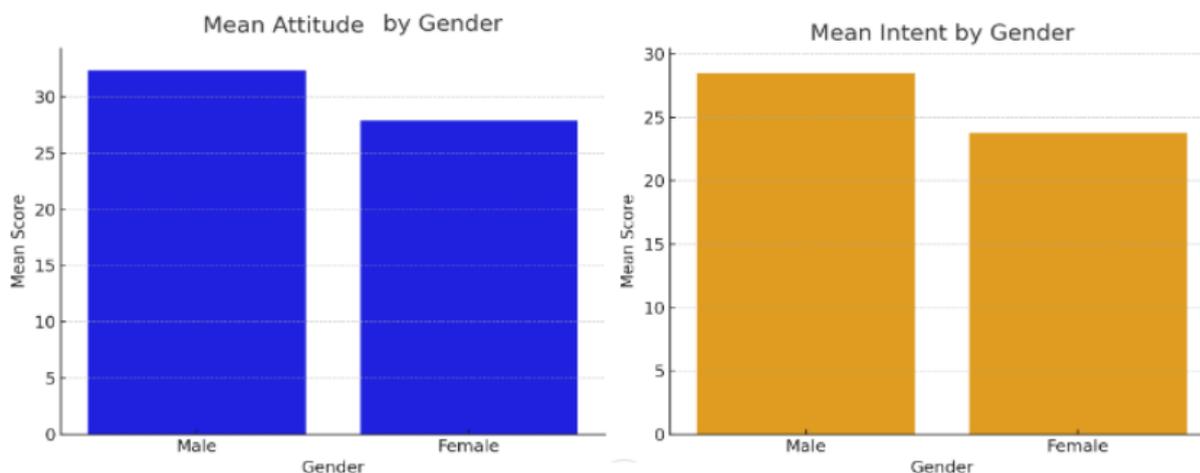
Findings indicate that a majority of participants ($M = 128.50$, $SD = 4.70$, 44.62%) strongly agree or agree with statements reflecting entrepreneurial intent. The highest agreement (46.53%) was observed for the statement “I am looking for an opportunity to be an entrepreneur,” suggesting strong intent to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.

The disagreement rate was low ($M = 12.17$, $SD = 3.69$, 4.22%), with the highest disagreement (6.25%) for “Being an entrepreneur is my priority after I graduate,” indicating that some participants may not see entrepreneurship as their first career choice. Neutral responses were minimal ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 2.31$, 1.16%), suggesting that most participants had a clear stance on their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Overall, the results highlight strong entrepreneurial intent, with participants showing a clear interest in pursuing entrepreneurship. The slight variation in responses suggests that while most participants are confident in their intent, some may prioritize other career options.



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Gender Difference in Entrepreneurial Attitude and Intent**Figure 3.** Gender difference in entrepreneurial attitude and intent

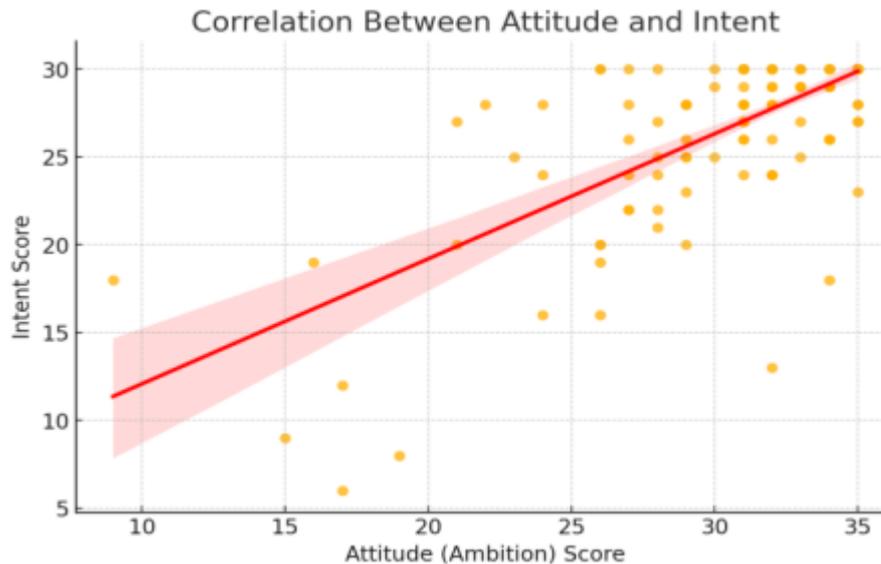
A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in entrepreneurial attitude and intent based on gender. The results revealed a statistically significant difference in **Attitude** scores between male and female participants, $U = 12,930$, $p < .001$. Similarly, a significant difference was observed in **Intent** scores between males and females, $U = 13,210$, $p < .001$. These findings suggest that gender plays a role in shaping both entrepreneurial mindset and aspirations, with differences in both attitudinal and intentional dimensions. Given the non-parametric nature of the test, these differences highlight potential disparities in entrepreneurial motivation between genders, warranting further exploration into the underlying factors influencing these variations (Mann & Whitney, 1947). This means that gender influences how participants view entrepreneurship and their willingness to pursue it. Since the data is skewed, this test confirms that the difference is not due to chance. These results suggest that males and females in the study have different levels of entrepreneurial motivation and aspirations.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between Ambition (Attitude) and Intent ($r = 0.71$). This suggests that individuals with a higher entrepreneurial attitude are more likely to exhibit greater intent to pursue entrepreneurship. The strength of this correlation indicates that as participants' ambition and perception of entrepreneurship improve, their intention to become entrepreneurs also increases. These findings highlight the important role of entrepreneurial mindset in shaping future entrepreneurial actions, reinforcing the idea that fostering a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship can significantly influence one's likelihood of pursuing it as a career.



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Figure 4. Correlation between attitude and intent

Discussion

Based on the responses received, the majority of participants demonstrated a positive entrepreneurial attitude. They connect it with an empowered society, personal welfare, and independence. Recent developments reveal that the right attitude is crucial for developing mindset and intention to become entrepreneurs (Alshebami et al., 2020). This positive attitude suggests that participants perceive it as a way towards better life experiences and conditions. According to Hechavarria et al., (2019), entrepreneurship is not just a financial activity, it can accelerate economic and social prosperity.

The positive entrepreneurial attitude among the respondents is intertwined with the intrinsic motivation as well as affirming perception about their own abilities and capabilities. It encourages individuals to build their ventures with better readiness and mindfulness (Kusumojanto et al., 2021). As the data collection reveals that most participants consistently agreed with the various survey statements, it indicates a strong entrepreneurial mindset. As Keyhani and Kim (2020) noted, entrepreneurship is in a sustainable phase and people are developing entrepreneurial mindsets.

Studies consistently demonstrate that the right attitude is essential for being an entrepreneur. For instance, similar to responses received from the participants, Entrialgo and Iglesias (2020) discovered that across all cultures and education levels, the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and intention to start a business remains direct. Similarly, as the analysis specifically indicates the highest level of agreement for the statement “Being an entrepreneur will empower my future life” which supports Biney (2023) findings that personal empowerment has become the main motivational force for young adults regarding entrepreneurship.

In addition, another factor that influences the entrepreneurial attitude and intent is gender-based differences. Generally, males tend to express higher levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intent in comparison to female (Hossain et al., 2024). In Pakistan, despite a positive attitude and willingness toward entrepreneurship, cultural and societal disparities limit their efforts (Rehman & Qamar, 2024). This sheds light on the fact although positive approach toward entrepreneurship is common and was received, right motivation differs significantly across genders due to various reasons.

However, the existing literature identifies the gap between entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions. Entrepreneurial action goes beyond a positive attitude since it requires more than just a favorable entrepreneurial mindset (Kuratko et al., 2021). A positive



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entrepreneurial attitude requires available resources along with network accessibility and supportive social systems for successful implementation. Despite the positive outlook shown by research the existing practical obstacles might prevent participants from taking entrepreneurial action. A focus on empowerment and independence demonstrates the increasing importance of entrepreneurship because it functions as a suitable alternative to traditional employment. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2023) more young adults and people in mid-career stages choose entrepreneurship to take control of their careers after the COVID-19 pandemic caused economic instability.

Nonetheless, some participants shared certain reservations regarding stability of entrepreneurship. Although many participants supported the idea of entrepreneurship, several shared that they had never ventured into business. Even though the result indicates that implementing programs to maintain and building entrepreneurial self-efficacy would boost entrepreneurial behavior. There is a lack of activities that not only create positive attitude about entrepreneurship, but the right environment, tools, and platform to make a shift from intention to action.

Conclusion

The findings reveal that the first and the second null hypotheses were rejected and the participants hold a largely positive entrepreneurial attitude, associating it with empowerment, independence, and improved life opportunities. This aligns with prior studies showing that entrepreneurial mindset strongly influences intention and readiness to start ventures. The responses also indicate that personal empowerment is a key motivational driver, particularly among young adults. However, gender-based disparities remain evident, with cultural and societal barriers limiting female participation in entrepreneurship.

The third null hypothesis was also rejected and despite the optimistic outlook, a significant gap persists between entrepreneurial attitudes and actual entrepreneurial action. While participants recognize entrepreneurship as a viable alternative to traditional employment, structural challenges such as lack of resources, limited networks, and inadequate support systems hinder the transition from intention to implementation. Additionally, some participants expressed concerns about the uncertainty and instability of entrepreneurship, highlighting the need for practical interventions beyond fostering positive attitudes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that entrepreneurial ecosystems be strengthened through mentorship, funding opportunities, and incubation platforms, while education systems integrate experiential learning to bridge the gap between attitude and action. Gender-inclusive policies and targeted support for women should be prioritized to overcome societal barriers. To facilitate the transition from intention to practice, structured programs such as business idea competitions, pilot projects, and collaborations with local industries are essential. Moreover, reducing perceptions of instability through supportive policies, financial safety nets, and showcasing role models can encourage risk-taking. Sustaining the post-pandemic entrepreneurial momentum further requires aligning national strategies with global trends to ensure long-term entrepreneurial growth.



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