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Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Intentions: A Conceptual Path from Classroom to Venture

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***Abstract* - This study aimed to synthesize existing research on how entrepreneurship education (EE) influences entrepreneurial intention (EI) among students, focusing on the mediating and moderating factors that shape this relationship. Design/methodology/approach: A conceptual framework was developed by integrating insights from 17 recent studies conducted in various countries. The framework explores the roles of self-efficacy, opportunity recognition, digital literacy, and learning environments in shaping EI, while also considering contextual factors such as family income and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings indicate that EE significantly enhances EI, but this effect is mediated by factors such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy and competence. Additionally, moderators such as digital literacy and prior exposure to entrepreneurial environments influence the strength of this relationship. This study highlights the importance of practical, hands-on learning experiences and the need for adaptive EE models that respond to changing economic contexts. For educators and policymakers, this study suggests that EE should incorporate experiential learning, digital tools, and support for students from diverse backgrounds. Practical recommendations include engaging local entrepreneurs as mentors, establishing entrepreneurship clubs in vernacular languages, and using digital platforms for content delivery. This study contributes to the literature by providing a comprehensive framework that connects the psychological, pedagogical, and technological dimensions of EE and offers a nuanced understanding of how various factors interact to shape students' entrepreneurial pathways.**
Keywords: **Entrepreneurship education, Entrepreneurial intention, Self-efficacy, Digital literacy, Experiential learning**

I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is now viewed as a strong tool for boosting the economy, creating jobs, and encouraging innovation. Entrepreneurship education (EE) is becoming more important in colleges and universities, as it helps build students' interest in and intention to become entrepreneurs (EI; Thomas, 2022; Sun *et al.,*2023). As more students take up EE, many researchers are trying to understand how this education actually helps in building their mindset to start a business. Research has shown that EE is not only about teaching theory. It plays a significant role in building skills such as confidence (self-efficacy), the ability to spot business opportunities, and the motivation to act (Dar *et al.,* 2023; Soomro & Shah, 2021). For example, studies have found that when students feel more confident in their entrepreneurial abilities, they are more likely to develop intentions to start their own businesses (Gao *et al.,*2023; Gao & Xiao, 2022). Similarly, learning through competitions and hands-on activities builds practical competence, which acts as a bridge between EE and EI (Lv *et al.,*2021).

Motivation plays an important role in this process. One study from China found that intrinsic motivation (interest from within) makes EE more effective, while extrinsic motivation (outside pressure or rewards) reduces the impact of EE on intention (Sun *et al.,*2023). EE also works well when it includes inspiration, peer learning, and knowledge building, which fully connect EE to intention (Thomas, 2022). Other studies have highlighted that entrepreneurial orientation and motivation help link EE to intention more clearly (Hassan *et al.,*2021).

The way EE is delivered also matters. Online tools and cyber courses are being used more frequently in today's digital world. Studies from South Korea have shown that when EE includes digital learning, communication, and technology use, it improves students' intentions.

However, simply using devices does not help unless the teaching is engaging and practical (Kim, 2022a, 2022b). External and background factors also affect the effectiveness of EE. For instance, government support was not found to make a significant difference in Jordan (Al-Omar *et al.,*2024), but family income did help improve the impact of EE in China (Gao & Xiao, 2022).

Additionally, creative methods such as storytelling with success stories and role models can increase entrepreneurial passion and intention (Liu *et al.,*2019). Looking at all these points, it is clear that EE works best when it combines knowledge, confidence, real-life practice, and emotional connection. This paper will review 17 recent studies from different countries and provide a clear idea of how EE leads to entrepreneurial intention, using various teaching methods and factors that support or block this path.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. This study examines how entrepreneurship education affects entrepreneurial intention through mediating and moderating mechanisms.
2. It explores the roles of self-efficacy, opportunity recognition, digital literacy, and learning environments in shaping entrepreneurial intentions.
3. It develops a conceptual framework based on a review of empirical studies.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To understand why students, choose to become entrepreneurs, we can examine several useful psychological theories. These include the theory of planned behavior (TPB), social cognitive theory (SCT), the concept of self-efficacy, and the roles of digital literacy and regulatory focus, especially in today's online and cyber-based business world.

A. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

This theory explains that a person's intention to do something, such as starting a business, depends on three factors:

1. Their attitude (how they feel about it),
2. The social pressure or norms (what others expect them to do), and
3. Perceived control (how confident they feel about doing it).

Self-efficacy (belief in one's own ability) is a major component of this. When students undergo entrepreneurship education, they often become more confident. This self-belief helps them feel ready to start something on their own. Studies have shown that such confidence strongly boosts entrepreneurial intentions (Efendi *et al.,*2023; Kusumawardani & Richard, 2020). Therefore, if students feel they can do it, they are more likely to try.

B. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Albert Bandura's theory states that people learn by watching others. If a student sees someone like them become successful in business, they feel that they can do it too. This builds self-efficacy, which boosts motivation. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to face challenges, take risks, and try something new (Boutaky & Eddine, 2022). A supportive environment-such as encouraging teachers, resources, and training-can also help students believe in themselves (Nguyen, 2020).

C. Self-Efficacy and Entrepreneurial Motivation

Self-efficacy is an inner belief that "Yes, I can do it." When this belief is strong, students feel more motivated to start something. Research has found that students who feel confident about their skills are more interested in business and ready to take action (Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2021). Thus, building self-efficacy is key to encouraging entrepreneurship.

D. Digital Literacy and ICT (Technology) Use

Today's entrepreneurs must be comfortable with digital tools such as social media, e-commerce platforms, and online marketing. This is where digital literacy is particularly important. When students learn how to use technology smartly, they feel more confident and ready to start a technology-based business. Entrepreneurship education, which includes digital skills, helps students develop self-efficacy and the intention to start a business (Wang *et al.,*2021).

E. Regulatory Focus Theory (RFT)

This theory describes two types of people:

1. Promotion-focused individuals, who like to take risks and aim for big successes, and
2. Prevention-focused individuals, who are more careful and try to avoid failure.

Both types of mindsets can be found in online and cyber businesses. Promotion-focused students might pursue innovation and startups, whereas prevention-focused students may choose a more secure path. Knowing which mindset, a student has can help us understand how they may behave in their entrepreneurial journey (Praswati *et al.,*2022).

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Researchers have studied many factors that encourage students and young people to become entrepreneurs. Below is a summary of important findings grouped into clear themes that help explain the different dimensions of entrepreneurial intention.

A. Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurship education (EE) plays a significant role in shaping students' desire to start businesses. Studies from countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia show that when students are taught about entrepreneurship-especially through practical, hands-on methods-they gain more confidence and interest in starting something on their own (Efendi *et al.,*2023). It is also important to note the differences between classroom theory and real-life learning (Doloi *et al.,*2024; Sain *et al.,*2024; Peter *et al.,*2024). Programs that include competitions, business simulations, or projects in which students try to build something seem to have a stronger effect than lectures alone (Leon *et al.,*2023). The structure of the curriculum and how interactive it is can also make a difference in how motivated students feel.

B. Role of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE)

Self-efficacy means believing in yourself-thinking, "Yes, I can do this." Many studies suggest that this belief is one of the most important factors that push students toward entrepreneurship (Leon *et al.,*2023). When students believe they are capable, they are more likely to take risks and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. Entrepreneurship education helps to build this self-belief, and when digital tools or online business training are part of the learning process, students feel even more confident (Ferreira-Neto *et al.,*2023). This suggests that self-efficacy often works as a bridge (or mediator) between learning and taking action. Digital literacy and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) also go hand in hand, especially in today's technology-driven business world (Wang *et al.,*2021).

TABLE I SUMMARY OF KEY STUDIES ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION (EI)

Key Concepts/Variables	Key Insights (in Simple Terms)	Study
EE, inspiration, social networks, knowledge and skills, EI	Entrepreneurship education (EE) boosts entrepreneurial intention (EI) through inspiration, skill building, and networking.	Thomas (2022)
EE, entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE), opportunity recognition, EI	EE increases entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) and opportunity recognition, both of which raise EI.	Dar *et al.,* (2023)
EE, mindset, motivation (intrinsic/extrinsic), EI	EE helps develop a growth mindset; intrinsic motivation increases EI, whereas focusing solely on external rewards can lower it.	Sun *et al.,* (2023)
Education, entrepreneurial orientation, motivation, EI	Education builds the mindset and motivation needed for entrepreneurship.	Hassan *et al.,* (2021)
EE, competence, EI	Competence gained through EE-such as classes, practice, and competitions-raises students' entrepreneurial intentions.	Lv *et al.,* (2021)
EE, government support, EI	EE helps improve EI, but government support has not shown much additional influence.	Al-Omar *et al.,* (2024)
EE (opportunity recognition, knowledge), ESE, need for achievement, EI	EE raises ESE and ambition, both of which strongly influence EI.	Soomro & Shah (2021)
EE, competitions, ESE, family income, EI	Competitions and ESE connect EE to EI; wealthier students often benefit more.	Gao & Xiao (2022)
Story types, passion, ESE, EI	Stories of successful role models provide greater inspiration, while students with lower ESE may be less affected.	Liu *et al.,* (2019)
Cyber EE, ESE, EI	Theoretical (cyber) EE is less effective unless combined with real-world exposure.	Li (2024)
EE, COVID-19 impact, tourism EI	During COVID-19, students' EI in the tourism sector declined, and EE had limited impact under such uncertainty.	Laachach *et al.,* (2023)
EE, opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial learning, EI	Entrepreneurial learning helps students recognize and act on opportunities, thereby boosting EI.	Hou *et al.,* (2022)
IT acceptance, digital literacy, communication, ESE, EI	Students with stronger digital skills and greater comfort with technology show higher entrepreneurial intentions.	Kim (2022a)
Digital literacy, ESE, experiential EE, EI	Practical digital learning improves ESE and thus EI; merely providing digital tools is not enough.	Kim (2022b)

C. Opportunity Recognition and Entrepreneurial Motivation

Recognizing opportunities is like having an eye for business prospects. Some students develop this skill more quickly, especially when they are exposed to good role models or active learning environments. Seeing others succeed also boosts motivation (Perez-Luyo *et al.,*2023). Motivation itself is shaped by many factors, including family support, peers, success stories, and personal ambition. A study by Boutaky and Eddine (2022) showed how strong social networks and encouragement from others can help students feel more inspired. Together, motivation and entrepreneurial competence guide young people toward action.

D. Impact of Digital Literacy and ICT-Based Entrepreneurship Education

Today, knowing how to use digital tools is essential for entrepreneurs. From social media to online marketplaces, students need these skills for success. Studies confirm that digitally literate students are also more confident in starting technology-related businesses (Ferreira-Neto *et al.,*2023). In fact, when entrepreneurship education includes digital platforms and tools, it makes students feel more prepared and modern. However, not all students benefit equally; some studies show mixed results depending on course design and students' prior exposure (Nguyen, 2020).

E. Role of Contextual and Psychological Moderators

Sometimes, background factors such as family income, early business exposure, or the learning environment act as moderators, influencing the strength of the effect of education or confidence (Nguyen, 2020). In addition, some students are driven more by intrinsic motivation (doing something because they love it), while others are influenced by extrinsic motivation, such as rewards or job security. These intrinsic and extrinsic factors affect how students respond to entrepreneurship training (Nursyirwan *et*

*al.,*2022). Interestingly, the kinds of stories students hear also matter. For example, stories of successful entrepreneurs may build passion, whereas stories of failure can teach resilience and reduce fear (Praswati *et al.,*2022).

F. COVID-19 and Sectoral Impact on Intention

The pandemic has changed many things, including how students think about starting a business. In sectors such as tourism, students have become less confident due to uncertainty and risk, with some even changing their plans entirely (Perez-Luyo *et al.,*2023). However, COVID-19 has also demonstrated the power of digital transformation, pushing educators to adopt online platforms that opened new ways of learning and doing business. This highlights the need for future policies to support digital entrepreneurship education.

V. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To understand how university students develop an interest in entrepreneurship, a conceptual framework was developed by integrating key insights from recent research (Raghavendra & Diddimani, 2025). This framework illustrates how various forms of entrepreneurship education (EE)-including experiential (hands-on activities), theoretical (classroom learning), cyber (online platforms), and integrated ICT (digital tools and skills)-contribute to shaping students' entrepreneurial intention (EI). However, this relationship is often indirect and influenced by several mediating variables.

For instance, entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE), a student's belief in their ability to succeed, plays a crucial role in translating education into intention (Soomro & Shah, 2021). Similarly, entrepreneurial competence, which refers to knowledge and skills acquired through structured learning and practice, serves as a significant mediator between EE and EI (Lv *et al.,*2021). Another key mediator is opportunity recognition, or the ability to identify viable business ideas, which helps turn learning into intention (Hou *et al.,*2022). Entrepreneurial motivation, including intrinsic drivers such as passion and extrinsic factors such as rewards, further shapes a student's likelihood of pursuing entrepreneurship (Hassan *et al.,*2021).

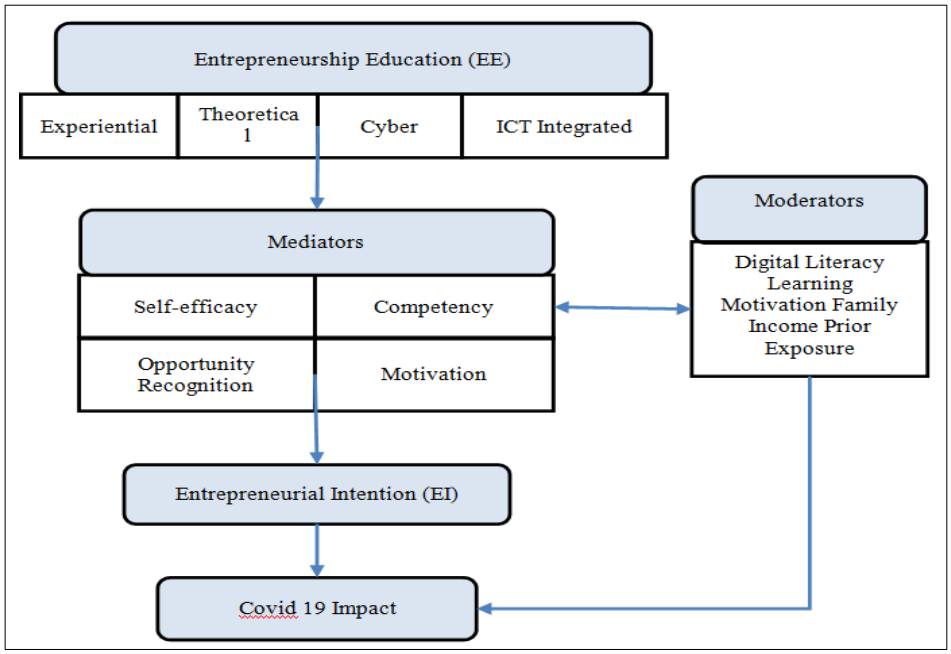

Fig. 1 Proposed Conceptual Framework

Beyond mediators, several moderators influence the strength and direction of these relationships. Digital literacy, or a student's ability to effectively use digital tools, strengthens the link between ICT-based EE and EI (Kim, 2022). Learning motivation-how driven students are to engage with and apply what they learn-also moderates the impact of EE on intention (Sun *et al.,*2023). Family income is another important factor, as it can affect access to the resources and support systems needed to take entrepreneurial steps (Gao & Xiao, 2022). Similarly, prior exposure to business or entrepreneurial activities influences how students perceive and respond to EE, making them more receptive to entrepreneurial thinking (Sun *et al.,*2023).

At the center of this framework is the outcome of entrepreneurial intention (EI), which represents a student's plan or willingness to start a business. Adding another layer to this model is the contextual impact of COVID-19, which has significantly reshaped students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship. The pandemic, especially in sectors such as tourism, has reduced students' willingness to take risks and limited the effectiveness of conventional EE approaches (Laachach *et al.,*2023). This framework highlights how the interaction of education, personal and environmental factors, and broader contextual influences collectively shapes students' entrepreneurial pathways.

VI. METHODOLOGY

This study examines how learning about business (entrepreneurship education) helps students develop an interest in starting their own businesses (entrepreneurial intention). To do this, the study reviewed and synthesized findings from 17 studies conducted in different countries. A simple model was developed to show how different ways of teaching, such as hands-on practice, classroom theory, and digital tools, affect students' thinking. The study also examined what helps or hinders this process, such as self-confidence, digital skills, family background, and prior business exposure. It drew on widely used psychological theories, such as the theory of planned behavior and social cognitive theory, to explain how students' attitudes, social support, and self-belief play a role. After carefully reviewing all the study results, the study found that practical learning and digital support are especially important, particularly in the post-COVID context. In the end, it suggests that teachers and policymakers use local languages, digital platforms, and real-life business mentors to guide students more effectively.

VII. DISCUSSION

The findings of this conceptual framework are strongly supported by a range of studies examining how different dimensions of entrepreneurship education (EE) influence students' entrepreneurial intention (EI). A consistent theme across these studies is that EE-whether delivered experientially, theoretically, online, or digitally-plays a significant role in enhancing students' entrepreneurial outlook, but its influence is often indirect and shaped by key mediators and moderators. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) is a vital mediator through which EE boosts EI. Soomro and Shah (2021) found that students who developed greater confidence in their entrepreneurial skills through education were more likely to express the intention to start a business. Similarly, Li (2024) emphasized that cyber-entrepreneurship education had a limited impact unless it improved ESE through practical exposure. This finding highlights the importance of hands-on and experiential learning in EE programs.

Another critical pathway is the development of entrepreneurial competence. As reported by Lv *et al.,* (2021), EE activities such as classroom learning, business simulations, and entrepreneurial competitions help students build core entrepreneurial skills, which, in turn, raise their EI. Moreover, Hou *et al.,* (2022) showed that opportunity recognition acts as a key mediator: students who are better at spotting viable business ideas due to entrepreneurial learning are more likely to express entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurial motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is also an important factor. Hassan *et al.,* (2021) found that educational inputs foster entrepreneurial orientation and motivation, which together positively influence EI. On the other hand, Sun *et al.,* (2023) showed that while intrinsic motivation (such as passion or personal growth) strengthens the effect of EE on EI, extrinsic motivators (such as financial rewards) may reduce genuine entrepreneurial interest. Digital literacy has emerged as a key moderating variable. According to Kim (2022), students with higher levels of comfort and competence in using digital technologies showed greater EI, particularly when EE was ICT-based.

Gao and Xiao (2022) added another dimension by highlighting the influence of family income-students from wealthier backgrounds benefited more from EE interventions, likely due to better access to resources and support. Prior exposure to entrepreneurial environments also plays an important role. Sun *et al.,* (2023) found that students with experience or family business backgrounds responded more positively to EE and demonstrated higher EI. As shown by Sun *et al.,* learning motivation further influences how students absorb and apply entrepreneurial knowledge.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a unique contextual challenge. Laachach *et al.,* (2023) observed that students in sectors such as tourism showed a decline in EI during the pandemic, and EE interventions during that time were less effective. This underscores the need for adaptive and resilient EE models that can respond to shifting economic and social environments.

VIII. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This study provides useful insights for both researchers and practitioners in the fields of education and policy.

A. Theoretical Contributions

From a research perspective, this study brings together three important aspects: how students think (psychological), how they learn (pedagogical), and how they use digital tools (technological). By combining these dimensions, the study offers a clearer understanding of how entrepreneurship education (EE) can shape students' interest in starting a business. Instead of viewing EE as a one-size-fits-all approach, this model shows that different students respond differently depending on their confidence, skills, motivation, and family or digital background. This perspective can help future researchers develop more realistic and inclusive models.

B. Practical Implications

For teachers and educators, this study highlights that classroom lectures alone are insufficient. Students need real-life experiences, digital tools, and opportunities to build confidence and practical skills. This can include business competitions, hands-on projects, and exposure to success stories. It also serves as a reminder for government bodies and policymakers that not all students have equal support at home or equal access to digital resources. Therefore, EE policies should be designed to better support students from

disadvantaged backgrounds or with lower prior exposure. For curriculum planners, this framework encourages the creation of courses that blend theory with practice. Course content should not only cover business fundamentals but also help students build confidence, recognize viable business opportunities, and stay motivated.

IX. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

To make entrepreneurship education (EE) more effective and accessible for all students in India and similar developing countries, there are several practical and easy-to-adopt ideas:

A. Local Entrepreneurs as Guest Speakers

Invite small-scale or local business owners to colleges as guest speakers or mentors. Students often relate better to individuals from similar backgrounds, and such talks can be organized without large budgets.

B. Mini Start-up Corners in Colleges

Allow students to run small stalls or kiosks on campus during weekends or college festivals. This provides a risk-free opportunity to test business ideas and learn through real-world practice. No major funding is required-only space and basic permissions.

C. Entrepreneurship Clubs in Vernacular Languages

Establish entrepreneurship clubs that operate in regional or local languages, particularly in rural colleges. Language should not be a barrier to developing entrepreneurial thinking. These clubs could host idea-sharing sessions and small competitions in local dialects.

D. Peer Learning Circles

Form small peer groups in which students with knowledge of digital tools or basic business models can teach their classmates. This reduces the need for external trainers and builds teamwork. Teachers can help motivate students to participate.

E. Use of WhatsApp and YouTube for EE Content

Instead of relying on costly learning management systems, create short EE videos and voice notes in regional languages to share via WhatsApp or YouTube. This is low-cost and can reach low-income or remote learners effectively.

F. Local Problem-Solving Projects

Encourage students to work in teams on real, small-scale local challenges, such as helping a vendor go digital or improving packaging for women's self-help group (SHG) products. These projects are low-cost, high-impact, and teach business skills through hands-on experience.

G. Digital Literacy Camps for Rural Students

Organize one-day or weekend workshops to teach basic digital skills-such as using Google Forms, UPI payments, Canva, and Excel-especially targeting students from rural or low-income backgrounds. Senior students or volunteers can serve as trainers.

H. Affordable Start-up Kits

Colleges can prepare and distribute basic startup kits (including notebooks, logo templates, costing sheets, and marketing materials) in print or digital formats to help students quickly develop and organize their business ideas.

X. CONCLUSION

This conceptual study aimed to explore how different forms of entrepreneurship education-such as classroom-based (theoretical), hands-on (experiential), online (cyber), and digital skills-based (ICT-integrated)-can influence students' intentions to become entrepreneurs. Drawing from existing research, this study highlighted that this relationship is not direct but is shaped by important mediators, including entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial competence, opportunity recognition, and entrepreneurial motivation. The study also identified key contextual and personal factors-such as digital literacy, motivation to learn, family income, and prior business exposure-that can strengthen or weaken the impact of education on entrepreneurial intention. These moderators help explain why entrepreneurship education may work differently for different students. By integrating psychological, pedagogical, and technological elements, this study provides a useful framework for researchers and educators. It suggests that entrepreneurship education should be designed to be practical, motivational, and responsive to students' individual circumstances. This framework can guide future research in testing these relationships across diverse educational and cultural contexts.

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