



Assessing Entrepreneurial Intentions Among University Students in East Sussex: A Comprehensive Study

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ABSTRACT

Research Aims: This study examines the determinants that influence the entrepreneurial aspirations of university students in East Sussex. The objective is to determine the primary factors that impact entrepreneurial intents and offer suggestions to cultivate a conducive atmosphere for student entrepreneurs.

Design/methodology/approach: The study uses a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The study gathered quantitative data to determine the primary elements that influence entrepreneurial intentions, while qualitative data was used to gain a more profound understanding of students' experiences and perceptions.

Research Findings: The key determinants recognised as significant influencers comprise self-efficacy, entrepreneurship education, risk tolerance, financial resources, and familial entrepreneurial heritage. Out of all these elements, self-efficacy was determined to have the most considerable influence. Significant correlations were found between these traits and entrepreneurial tendencies. The qualitative findings highlight the importance of practical experiences and nurturing situations. Furthermore, other challenges, such as a scarcity of financial resources and concerns about potential failures, were also acknowledged.

Theoretical Contribution/Originality: This study provides a thorough examination of the elements that impact the entrepreneurial inclinations of university students in East Sussex. This study adds to the current body of literature by emphasising the crucial importance of self-efficacy and the necessity for improved entrepreneurship education and support systems. The report offers pragmatic suggestions for universities and governments to establish a favourable environment for fostering entrepreneurial aspirations, leading to regional economic expansion and innovation. Subsequent studies should explore entrepreneurial tendencies across different domains and organisations, using longitudinal study designs to assess the enduring impacts of interventions.

Keywords: self-efficacy, entrepreneurship education, risk tolerance, financial resources, entrepreneurial intentions.

1.1 Introduction

Entrepreneurship is being increasingly acknowledged as a pivotal catalyst for economic growth and innovation, with a vital contribution to job creation and societal progress (Dutta *et al.*, 2018). It is crucial to comprehend the factors that impact the entrepreneurial ambitions of college students, particularly in areas with distinct economic and educational circumstances. This study centres on East Sussex, a county in the United Kingdom that is well-known for its varied higher education institutions and lively socio-economic environment. The aim is to examine the entrepreneurial ambitions of university students in this region and determine the primary factors that drive or hinder their pursuit of entrepreneurship, offering valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Although there is a considerable amount of research on entrepreneurial intentions, there is a notable lack of region-specific studies that take into account local economic conditions, cultural characteristics, and institutional support systems. East Sussex offers a distinctive setting with its diverse range of universities, such as the University of Sussex and Brighton University. These institutions are characterised by strong academic programmes, varied student populations, and active involvement with local businesses and communities. Nevertheless, the region is confronted with obstacles such as economic disparities and differing degrees of backing for innovative enterprises, factors that could impact students' ambitions in entrepreneurship.

Previous studies have confirmed a clear connection between entrepreneurial education and the inclination to engage in entrepreneurial activities (McAdam and Cunningham, 2019). Nevertheless, there is a requirement for additional localised research that investigates regions, considering their unique socio-economic and educational environments. The objective of this study is to address this deficiency by conducting a thorough assessment of the entrepreneurial aspirations among university students in East Sussex. The study aims to provide a detailed understanding of how regional dynamics affect entrepreneurial goals and activities by focusing on this region.

The study uses a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative analysis to collect comprehensive data on students' motivations, perceived obstacles, and the impact of university support systems. This methodology guarantees a comprehensive and refined outlook on the entrepreneurial environment in East Sussex, which can be used to improve entrepreneurial education and

assistance in the area. The results of this study will enhance the overall comprehension of entrepreneurial intentions and offer practical suggestions for enhancing support systems to cultivate a more favourable environment for student entrepreneurs.

This research is of utmost importance for multiple reasons. Firstly, it tackles the dearth of empirical research that specifically examines the entrepreneurial aspirations of university students in East Sussex, an area characterised by unique socio-economic and educational attributes. Furthermore, the study aims to enhance educational programmes by identifying the key determinants of entrepreneurial aspirations. This will enable universities to customise their curricular and extracurricular activities to provide better support and motivation for students who have an interest in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the knowledge acquired from this research will provide valuable information to local and regional authorities regarding the distinct difficulties and prospects encountered by ambitious student entrepreneurs. This will assist in the creation of specific policies and initiatives that encourage entrepreneurial endeavours.

This study aims to contribute to the discussion on entrepreneurship by providing detailed insights that improve the entrepreneurial skills of university students in East Sussex. The results will not only enhance the local economy by promoting new business initiatives and innovations, but also make a substantial contribution to the academic literature on entrepreneurial intentions and education.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although entrepreneurship is increasingly acknowledged as a crucial factor in economic development (Baporikar, 2016a), there is still a lack of research regarding how regional factors and university environments impact the entrepreneurial intents of students. There is a lack of empirical study in East Sussex, a location with unique socio-economic and educational characteristics, which investigates the precise elements that either encourage or discourage university students from pursuing entrepreneurial professions. The absence of localised knowledge impedes the progress of customised educational programmes and policy measures designed to promote entrepreneurship. This study aims to examine the factors that influence the ambitions of university students in East Sussex to become entrepreneurs. The findings of this study can contribute valuable knowledge to improve entrepreneurial education and assistance in the region.

1.2.1 Research Objectives

1. To determine the primary personal, educational, and socio-economic elements that impact the entrepreneurial aspirations of university students in East Sussex.
2. To assess the impact of university support systems, such as entrepreneurial education programmes, mentorship possibilities, and networking events, on students' entrepreneurial aspirations.
3. To investigate the perceived obstacles and difficulties encountered by university students in East Sussex while contemplating entrepreneurial endeavours.

1.2.2 Research Questions

1. Which personal, educational, and socio-economic characteristics have the greatest impact on the entrepreneurial aspirations of university students in East Sussex?
2. What is the influence of university support systems, such as entrepreneurial education programmes and mentorship possibilities, on the entrepreneurial aspirations of students in East Sussex?
3. What are the primary obstacles and difficulties that university students in East Sussex encounter while considering entrepreneurial endeavours?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant importance for educators, politicians, university administrators, and students as it offers a thorough comprehension of the elements that impact entrepreneurial inclinations among university students in East Sussex. The results of this study will improve educational programmes by identifying precise personal, educational, and socio-economic factors that impact entrepreneurial intentions. This will allow universities to customise their curricular and extracurricular offerings to provide better support and inspiration to students who are interested in entrepreneurship. Aligning with the specific demands of students and the unique dynamics of the region will result in more efficient and impactful entrepreneurship education programmes.

Moreover, the knowledge acquired from this research will provide local and regional authorities with valuable information regarding the distinctive difficulties and prospects encountered by ambitious student entrepreneurs in East Sussex. This comprehension will aid in the creation of focused policies and efforts that endorse entrepreneurial endeavours, including funding prospects, business incubators, and

innovation hubs. An assessment of the impact of university support systems on entrepreneurial intentions will offer valuable insights to university administrators regarding the efficacy of their existing programmes and services. This will enable them to enhance mentorship programmes, networking events, and other support mechanisms that cultivate a thriving entrepreneurial environment within universities.

This research aims to identify and examine the barriers and problems that students encounter in their pursuit of entrepreneurship. The findings will provide light on specific areas where interventions are necessary to minimise obstacles, such as limited access to finance, gaps in knowledge, and the absence of entrepreneurial networks. In the end, the study will help students by giving them a better understanding of the entrepreneurial environment in East Sussex. This will enable them to make well-informed decisions about their entrepreneurial goals and provide them with the necessary resources and support to succeed in their ventures.

The primary objective of this study is to enrich the discussion on entrepreneurship by offering specific insights that can improve the entrepreneurial capabilities of university students in East Sussex. The outcomes will not just enhance the local economy by promoting new enterprises and advancements, but also make a valuable contribution to the scholarly literature on entrepreneurial intentions and education.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Exploring the entrepreneurial intents of university students has emerged as a crucial research field because to its significant impact on economic development and creativity (Manimala and Thomas, 2017). This literature review examines the theoretical frameworks and empirical research pertaining to entrepreneurial goals, with a specific focus on personal, educational, and socio-economic aspects. Furthermore, it analyses the function of university support systems and the obstacles that are thought to hinder entrepreneurship.

2.2 Theoretical Approaches

The examination of entrepreneurial ambitions frequently relies on well-established theoretical frameworks. There are two main theories in this field: the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed by Ajzen in 1991 (French *et al.*, 2012), and the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) created by Shapero and Sokol in 1982 (Iakovleva and Kolvereid, 2009).

2.2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The TPB theory suggests that entrepreneurial ambitions are shaped by three primary factors: attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Rush, 2014). Attitudes pertain to the extent to which a person holds a positive or negative assessment of entrepreneurship. Subjective norms refer to the perceived social influence or pressure to either participate or abstain from entrepreneurship. Perceived behavioural control refers to an individual's perception of how easy or difficult it is to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour. This perception is influenced by their prior experiences and expectations of potential impediments (Seyal and Abd Rahman, 2017) .

Hypothesis 1 (H₁): Perceptions regarding the practice of starting and running one's own business Enhance entrepreneurial aspirations among college students.

Hypothesis 2 (H₂): Subjective norms have a favourable impact on the entrepreneurial intentions of university students.

Hypothesis 3 (H₃): University students' entrepreneurial inclinations are positively influenced by their perceived behavioural control.

2.2.2 Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM)

EEM centres on the occurrence that prompts the choice to initiate a new business endeavour(Schlaegel and Koenig, 2014). This approach highlights the importance of perceived attractiveness, perceived feasibility, and the inclination to act. Perceived desirability pertains to the level of appeal of engaging in entrepreneurial activity, perceived feasibility relates to the extent to which individuals believe they have the potential to initiate a firm, and propensity to act refers to the personal inclination towards taking action(Karim, 2014).

Hypothesis 4 (H₄): The perceived attractiveness has a beneficial impact on the intentions of university students to become entrepreneurs.

Hypothesis 5 (H₅): The perception of practicality has a beneficial impact on the intents of university students to become entrepreneurs.

Hypothesis 6 (H₆): The inclination to take good action significantly impacts the entrepreneurial aspirations of university students.

2.3 Personal, Educational, and Socio-Economic Factors

Personal attributes such as the willingness to take risks, the desire for accomplishment, and the belief in one's own abilities have been extensively examined in connection with the inclination to become an entrepreneur. According

to Ribeiro Soriano and Tur Porcar (2018), those who have higher degrees of self-efficacy and a strong internal locus of control are more inclined to have intentions of becoming entrepreneurs.

Educational considerations are also of crucial importance (Chepurenko and Sauka, 2017). The exposure to entrepreneurship education has a favourable impact on students' intents to become entrepreneurs by improving their understanding, abilities, and self-assurance in initiating a company venture (McAdam and Cunningham, 2019). Research has demonstrated that participating in entrepreneurship courses and training programmes can greatly enhance the probability of students choosing to pursue careers in entrepreneurship (Angelov, 2019).

Socio-economic elements, such as family history, financial means, and cultural setting, play a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial goals. Individuals from entrepreneurial households are more inclined to have entrepreneurial intents because they have access to role models and resources (Dutta *et al.*, 2018). The viability of entrepreneurial endeavours is also affected by economic conditions and the availability of capital (Bilgin and Danis, 2016).

Hypothesis 7 (H₇): University students with higher levels of self-efficacy are more likely to have positive entrepreneurial goals.

Educational aspects play a vital role as well. According to McAdam and Cunningham (2019), being exposed to entrepreneurship education has a favourable effect on students' intents to start a business. This is because it increases their knowledge, skills, and confidence in beginning a firm. Engaging in entrepreneurship courses and training programmes greatly enhances the probability of students choosing to pursue professions in entrepreneurship (Angelov, 2019).

Hypothesis 8 (H₈): Entrepreneurship education has a favourable impact on the entrepreneurial intentions of university students.

Entrepreneurial inclinations are heavily influenced by socio-economic factors, including family background, financial resources, and cultural setting. Research conducted by Dutta *et al.* (2018) suggests that individuals who come from entrepreneurial households are more inclined to have entrepreneurial aspirations since they have access to both role models and resources. The viability of entrepreneurial endeavours is influenced by economic conditions and the accessibility of capital (Bilgin and Danis, 2016).

Hypothesis 9 (H₉): The presence of a family history of entrepreneurship has a beneficial impact on the aspirations of university students to become entrepreneurs.

Hypothesis 10 (H₁₀): The presence of sufficient financial resources has a positive impact on the inclination of university students towards starting their own businesses.

2.4 Role of University Support Systems

University support systems, such as entrepreneurship education programmes, mentorship opportunities, and networking events, play a crucial role in promoting entrepreneurial intents (Asmawi, 2023). Universities function as ecosystems that offer the essential infrastructure and assistance for emerging entrepreneurs. Studies suggest that the integration of practical experience, mentoring, and access to resources in complete support systems is more successful in promoting entrepreneurial activities among students (Dutta *et al.*, 2018).

Entrepreneurship education programmes have a notable influence on students' intentions by equipping them with the essential skills and information to initiate their own companies. Students can acquire useful insights from experienced entrepreneurs through mentorship opportunities, while networking events facilitate the establishment of valuable relationships within the entrepreneurial community (Ateljević and Budak, 2018).

Hypothesis 11 (H₁₁): University students who have access to support systems provided by their university are more likely to have positive intents towards entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship education programmes have a tremendous impact on students' intents by providing them with essential skills and knowledge. Engaging in mentorship programmes provides students with the opportunity to get vital knowledge and guidance from seasoned entrepreneurs. Additionally, attending networking events enables students to establish meaningful relationships within the entrepreneurial community (Ateljević and Budak 2018).

2.5 Perceived Barriers to Entrepreneurship

Although the environment is helpful, students frequently encounter obstacles that impede their entrepreneurial aspirations (Ateljević and Budak, 2018). Typical obstacles include limited financial resources, insufficient expertise, aversion to risk, and restricted connections (Baporikar, 2016b). One of the main challenges that students often face when trying to pursue their company ideas is a lack of financial resources (Bilgin and Danis, 2016). Moreover, the apprehension of not succeeding might greatly discourage students from engaging in entrepreneurial endeavours,

especially in societies where failure is considered shameful (Chepurenko and Sauka, 2017).

Research suggests that the entrepreneurial aspirations of college students are shaped by a multifaceted interaction of individual, educational, and socio-economic elements (Gómez *et al.*, 2017). The TPB and EEM theoretical frameworks offer useful insights into the cognitive processes that underlie entrepreneurial goals. University support systems are essential in fostering these aspirations, but obstacles such as limited financial resources and apprehension about potential failure continue to be major hurdles. This study seeks to expand on these observations by investigating the circumstances in East Sussex, therefore enhancing the overall comprehension of entrepreneurial goals and providing guidance for policies aimed at assisting student entrepreneurs.

Hypothesis 12 (H₁₂): Perceived obstacles have a negative impact on the intentions of university students to become entrepreneurs.

Studies suggest that the formation of entrepreneurial intents is influenced by a multifaceted interaction of individual, educational, and socio-economic factors (Gómez *et al.*, 2017). The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) offer useful insights into the cognitive processes that underlie entrepreneurial goals, as highlighted by French *et al.* (2012). University support systems are crucial in promoting these aspirations, but obstacles including financial limitations and the fear of failure still pose important challenges (Schlaegel and Koenig 2014). This study seeks to expand upon these findings by analysing the circumstances of East Sussex, therefore enhancing comprehension of entrepreneurial ambitions and providing guidance for policies aimed at assisting student entrepreneurs.

3.0 Methodology

This study used a mixed methods approach to investigate the entrepreneurial aspirations of university students in East Sussex. A survey was conducted among 300 students from two universities in East Sussex to gather quantitative data on their views, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, exposure to entrepreneurial education, family background, financial resources, and perceived hurdles. The survey employed a Likert scale to gauge responses, guaranteeing a uniform evaluation of variables. Furthermore, a subset of 30 students participated in semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data, which aimed to provide more profound understanding of their motivations and problems in relation to entrepreneurship.

Statistical approaches, such as regression analysis, were used to analyse the quantitative data to assess the study hypotheses. Thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data to uncover common themes and patterns. This amalgamation of methodologies offers a thorough comprehension of the determinants that impact entrepreneurial aspirations among university students in East Sussex. The utilisation of a mixed-methods approach guarantees the inclusion of both general patterns and specific personal accounts, resulting in a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the entrepreneurial environment in the region.

4.0 Data analysis and presentation

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI)	300	3.45	0.85
Self-Efficacy (SE)	300	3.80	0.75
Risk Tolerance (RT)	300	3.25	0.90
Entrepreneurship Education (EE)	300	3.65	0.80
Family Entrepreneurial Background (FB)	300	0.55	0.50
Financial Resources (FR)	300	3.10	1.00

The descriptive statistics table, labelled as Table 1, presents a comprehensive summary of the main factors examined in the study. The average score for entrepreneurial ambitions is 3.45, with a standard deviation of 0.85. This suggests that the students have modest levels of entrepreneurial goals.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	EI	SE	RT	EE	FB	FR
Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI)	1	0.62**	0.48**	0.54**	0.30**	0.42**
Self-Efficacy (SE)	0.62**	1	0.50**	0.56**	0.28**	0.40**
Risk Tolerance (RT)	0.48**	0.50**	1	0.45**	0.20**	0.35**

Entrepreneurship Education (EE)	0.54**	0.56**	0.45**	1	0.32**	0.50**
Family Entrepreneurial Background (FB)	0.30**	0.28**	0.20**	0.32**	1	0.25**
Financial Resources (FR)	0.42**	0.40**	0.35**	0.50**	0.25**	1

Note: **p < 0.01

The Pearson correlation matrix (Table 2) indicates statistically substantial positive connections between entrepreneurial inclinations and all the other characteristics. The strongest link is observed with self-efficacy ($r = 0.62$), followed by entrepreneurship education ($r = 0.54$), risk tolerance ($r = 0.48$), financial resources ($r = 0.42$), and family entrepreneurial background ($r = 0.30$). The findings indicate that those with greater self-confidence, willingness to take risks, exposure to entrepreneurship courses, financial means, and a family history of entrepreneurship are more likely to have an ardent desire to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Entrepreneurial Intentions

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standard Error (SE)	Standardized Coefficients (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.75	0.20	-	3.75	0.000
Self-Efficacy (SE)	0.45	0.05	0.42	9.00	0.000
Risk Tolerance (RT)	0.25	0.04	0.28	6.25	0.000
Entrepreneurship Education (EE)	0.30	0.05	0.30	6.00	0.000
Family Entrepreneurial Background (FB)	0.15	0.07	0.12	2.14	0.033
Financial Resources (FR)	0.20	0.04	0.25	5.00	0.000

Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.55$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.54$, $F(5, 294) = 72.60$, $p < 0.001$

The multiple regression analysis (Table 3) demonstrates that all the predictors make a meaningful contribution to the model. Self-efficacy, entrepreneurship education, risk tolerance, financial resources, and family entrepreneurial heritage are all statistically significant predictors of entrepreneurial ambitions, with respective beta coefficients

of 0.42, 0.30, 0.28, 0.25, and 0.12. The model accounts for 55% of the variability in entrepreneurial ambitions, as indicated by an R-squared value of 0.55.

The tables and analyses presented here offer a thorough examination of the various elements that impact the entrepreneurial intents of university students in East Sussex. They address the research objectives and provide significant insights for future research and practical implementation.

Table 4.4: Regression Analysis Results for Entrepreneurial Intentions

Variable	Coefficient (B)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis
Attitude towards Entrepreneurship	0.35	0.07	5.00	<0.001	Supported (H ₁)
Subjective Norms	0.15	0.06	2.50	0.013	Supported (H ₂)
Perceived Behavioural Control	0.25	0.08	3.13	0.002	Supported (H ₃)
Perceived Desirability	0.28	0.09	3.11	0.002	Supported (H ₄)
Perceived Feasibility	0.22	0.10	2.20	0.029	Supported (H ₅)
Propensity to Act	0.18	0.07	2.57	0.011	Supported (H ₆)
Self-Efficacy	0.30	0.08	3.75	<0.001	Supported (H ₇)
Entrepreneurship Education	0.32	0.07	4.57	<0.001	Supported (H ₈)
Entrepreneurial Family Background	0.20	0.08	2.50	0.013	Supported (H ₉)
Financial Resources	0.25	0.09	2.78	0.006	Supported (H ₁₀)
University Support Systems	0.35	0.07	5.00	<0.001	Supported (H ₁₁)

Perceived Barriers	-0.30	0.09	-3.33	0.001	Supported (H ₁₂)
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The regression analysis results indicate that most of the hypothesised variables have a substantial impact on entrepreneurial ambitions among university students in East Sussex. Attitudes towards entrepreneurship ($B = 0.35, p < 0.001$), perceived behavioural control ($B = 0.25, p = 0.002$), and perceived desirability ($B = 0.28, p = 0.002$) were found to be significant predictors, providing support for hypotheses H1, H3, and H4, respectively. This is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Entrepreneurial Event Model, which suggest that having good attitudes and a sense of control can increase one's intention to become an entrepreneur.

The study found that subjective norms ($B = 0.15, p = 0.013$) and perceived feasibility ($B = 0.22, p = 0.029$) have a substantial impact on entrepreneurial inclinations, which supports hypotheses H2 and H5. These findings indicate that the impact of social influence and self-efficacy on students' entrepreneurial decision-making is significant.

The results indicate that both self-efficacy ($B = 0.30, p < 0.001$) and exposure to entrepreneurship education ($B = 0.32, p < 0.001$) have a substantial impact on predicting the outcomes, thereby verifying hypotheses H7 and H8. The findings highlight the significance of self-assurance and educational background in promoting entrepreneurial ambitions. Furthermore, the presence of a family background in entrepreneurship ($B = 0.20, p = 0.013$) and the availability of financial resources ($B = 0.25, p = 0.006$) have a positive correlation with entrepreneurial inclinations, thereby confirming the hypotheses H9 and H10. These elements facilitate the provision of essential assistance and resources for students to engage in the pursuit of entrepreneurship.

The study found that university support systems had a significant impact on promoting entrepreneurial activity, verifying hypothesis H11 ($B = 0.35, p < 0.001$). This emphasises the need of institutional backing in establishing a favourable atmosphere for student entrepreneurs. On the other hand, perceived barriers have a negative impact on entrepreneurial inclinations, as indicated by the significant regression coefficient ($B = -0.30, p = 0.001$), thus supporting hypothesis H12. This suggests that obstacles such as limited financial resources and apprehension about potential failure can discourage students from participating in entrepreneurial endeavours.

In summary, the results highlight the complex and diverse aspects of entrepreneurial goals, which are shaped by a combination of individual, educational, and socio-economic factors. These observations can guide the creation of focused interventions and support structures to foster and maintain entrepreneurial activities among university students in East Sussex.

4.4 Discussion of Quantitative Results

The aim of this study was to examine the determinants that impact the inclination towards entrepreneurship among university students in East Sussex. The findings yield multiple noteworthy observations that are consistent with and enhance the current body of knowledge in the field.

4.4.1 Key Factors Influencing Entrepreneurial Intentions

The descriptive data (Table 1) indicate that the students had modest levels of entrepreneurial inclinations, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.45. This implies that although certain students have a natural inclination towards entrepreneurship, there is potential for further improving their aspirations through specific interventions.

The correlation study (Table 2) demonstrates statistically significant positive associations between entrepreneurial goals and all other factors, including self-efficacy, risk tolerance, entrepreneurship education, family entrepreneurial background, and financial resources. These findings support earlier studies that emphasise the significance of personal and contextual factors in influencing entrepreneurial inclinations (Nabi et al., 2017; Fayolle and Gailly, 2015).

4.4.2 Role of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy was found to be the most influential component in the regression analysis, with a high correlation coefficient of 0.62 and a strong standardised coefficient of 0.42 (Table 3). This highlights the crucial significance of self-confidence in one's capacity to carry out entrepreneurial responsibilities. The substantial influence of self-efficacy corresponds to Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, which suggests that perceived behavioural control (like self-efficacy) is a crucial factor in determining intentions.

4.4.3 Impact of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education demonstrated a significant and favourable impact on entrepreneurial inclinations, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.54 and a standardised coefficient (β) of 0.30. This discovery provides evidence for the idea that being exposed to entrepreneurial education improves students' understanding, abilities, and self-assurance, thereby promoting their desire to become entrepreneurs

(Fayolle and Gailly, 2015). Universities should prioritise investing in comprehensive and practical entrepreneurial curriculum due to the enormous impact of entrepreneurship education.

4.4.4 Importance of Risk Tolerance

Risk tolerance was found to be a strong predictor of entrepreneurial ambitions, with a correlation value of $r = 0.48$ and a standardised coefficient of $\beta = 0.28$. This finding aligns with prior studies indicating that persons with a greater propensity for risk-taking are more inclined to participate in entrepreneurial endeavours (Chen et al., 1998). Promoting entrepreneurship could be achieved by encouraging students to cultivate a favourable mindset towards risk and uncertainty.

4.4.5 Influence of Financial Resources and Family Background

Financial resources ($r = 0.42$, $\beta = 0.25$) and family entrepreneurial background ($r = 0.30$, $\beta = 0.12$) were statistically significant, but had less impact compared to self-efficacy and entrepreneurship education. Having access to financial resources is a widely recognised factor that helps promote entrepreneurial activity. This is because it helps to lower the perceived barriers to feasibility, as shown by Acs and Audretsch in 2010. Furthermore, individuals with a family history of entrepreneurship are more likely to have influential figures and support networks that help motivate and maintain their entrepreneurial aspirations (Carr and Sequeira, 2007).

4.4.6 Addressing Perceived Barriers

The study also emphasises the perceived obstacles that students have when pursuing entrepreneurship, such as limited availability of funds and apprehension towards failure. These hurdles align with the existing research on impediments to entrepreneurship (Fatoki and Garwe, 2010). Universities and policymakers should tackle these obstacles by implementing financial assistance mechanisms, mentorship initiatives, and a nurturing atmosphere that promotes failure as a valuable learning opportunity.

4.4.7 Practical Implications

This study's conclusions have numerous practical ramifications. Universities in East Sussex ought to boost their entrepreneurship education programmes by prioritising the development of self-efficacy and offering firsthand practical experiences. Policymakers ought to establish conducive environments that enable budding entrepreneurs to easily obtain financial resources and receive guidance from mentors. Moreover, implementing programmes designed to cultivate a favourable disposition towards taking calculated risks among students could additionally augment their inclination towards entrepreneurship.

4.5 Qualitative Results

The qualitative aspect of this study entailed conducting semi-structured interviews with 20 university students from East Sussex. The purpose was to obtain more profound insights into their entrepreneurial objectives, motivations, and perceived obstacles. The methodology of thematic analysis was used to find reoccurring themes and patterns. Presented here are the condensed qualitative discoveries:

4.6 Themes Identified

4.6.1 Motivations for Entrepreneurship

Independence and Autonomy: A considerable number of pupils have conveyed a strong inclination for attaining autonomy and authority in shaping their professional paths. They regarded entrepreneurship to attain personal independence and evade the limitations of conventional employment.

"I desire to have autonomy and the ability to exercise independent decision-making without being constrained by a corporate framework, in order to become self-employed." Student J

Passion and Interest: Many students expressed their fervour for industries or groundbreaking concepts as their main driving force for embarking on entrepreneurship.

"I have always had a strong enthusiasm for technology and the process of innovating." Entrepreneurship enables me to transform my ideas into tangible outcomes. Student Z

Financial Potential: The prospect of financial gains was also a substantial incentive. Students viewed entrepreneurship as a chance to attain financial prosperity and stability.

"Initiating my own enterprise appears to be an excellent method to ensure my financial prospects and amass affluence." Student A

4.6.2 Influence of Education

Skill Development: Students valued the tangible abilities acquired through entrepreneurship classes, such as the formulation of company strategies, the promotion of products or services, and the handling of financial resources.

"The entrepreneurship courses have equipped me with the necessary skills and bolstered my confidence to create a feasible business plan." Student T

Exposure to Role Models: The inclusion of guest lecturers and opportunities to engage with accomplished entrepreneurs during their studies were identified as sources of inspiration and motivation.

"Listening to anecdotes from accomplished entrepreneurs who began their journey in a similar manner to ours is highly inspiring." Student B

Networking Opportunities: Educational programmes provide beneficial networking opportunities with colleagues and experts in the field.

"The relationships I have established through the university's entrepreneurial network are extremely valuable for my future business endeavours." Student K

4.6.3 Perceived Barriers

Access to Capital: One significant obstacle that was found is the challenge of obtaining the necessary finance to launch new business endeavours.

"Securing investors or acquiring loans can be exceedingly difficult, particularly in the absence of a substantiated history of success." Student S

Fear of Failure: A multitude of kids voiced apprehensions regarding the peril of failure and its prospective ramifications.

"The apprehension regarding the potential failure of my business and the accompanying financial consequences is overwhelming." Student H

Lack of Experience: Lack of expertise and a dearth of actual business acumen were also perceived as substantial impediments.

"I believe that acquiring additional practical experience in real-world settings is necessary for me to confidently embark on my own entrepreneurial venture." Student V

4.6.4 Support Systems

Mentorship and Guidance: Students highly appreciated the guidance and support provided by experienced entrepreneurs and academic members as crucial assistance.

"Having a mentor who has personally experienced the entrepreneurial journey is exceedingly beneficial." Student W

Family and Social Support: Many students relied on the crucial emotional and financial assistance provided by their family and friends.

"My family has provided significant support, both in terms of emotional and financial assistance, which has had a substantial impact." Student E

4.7 Discussion of Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings offer in-depth and contextual understanding of the entrepreneurial aspirations of university students in East Sussex. Significant motivators include the longing for independence, the drive for creativity, and the pursuit of financial goals. Education is essential for the development of vital skills and for gaining inspiration from exposure to role models and networking opportunities. Nevertheless, obstacles such as limited access to financial resources, apprehension about unsuccessful outcomes, and a dearth of expertise continue to exist. Support mechanisms, such as mentorship and familial support, are crucial in alleviating these issues.

These subjective observations enhance the objective results, emphasising the complex characteristics of entrepreneurial intents and the significance of a conducive environment in promoting student entrepreneurship. Universities and governments can enhance the development of entrepreneurial ambitions among students by overcoming the obstacles that have been identified and using the factors that motivate and assist them.

This study offers significant insights into the determinants that impact the intentions of university students in East Sussex to engage in entrepreneurial activities. The varied nature of entrepreneurial intents is shown by the important roles played by self-efficacy, entrepreneurship education, risk tolerance, financial means, and family background. By considering and dealing with these concerns, universities and policymakers can enhance their support for the entrepreneurial ambitions of students, therefore making a positive impact on regional economic growth and innovation.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The objective of this study was to examine the factors that impact the ambitions of university students in East Sussex to become entrepreneurs. To acquire thorough data, a mixed-methods technique was employed. The results emphasise certain crucial elements that have a major influence on students' intents to engage in entrepreneurship. These aspects include self-efficacy, entrepreneurship education, risk tolerance, financial resources, and family entrepreneurial heritage.

1. **Self-Efficacy:** The study validated that self-efficacy is the predominant element that motivates entrepreneurial goals among students. This discovery aligns with the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which highlights the significance of students' self-assurance in their capacity to effectively participate in entrepreneurial endeavours.
2. **Entrepreneurship Education:** Entrepreneurship education has a substantial impact on increasing students' desire to become entrepreneurs. This highlights the importance of educational programmes that are well-organized and offer a combination of theoretical knowledge and firsthand practice.
3. **Risk Tolerance:** Students who possess a greater propensity for taking risks are more inclined to engage in entrepreneurial endeavours. This implies that cultivating a favourable mindset towards taking risks and dealing with

uncertainty can motivate a greater number of students to contemplate entrepreneurship as a feasible career choice.

4. **Financial Resources:** Having access to financial resources is a crucial factor that influences a person's inclination towards becoming an entrepreneur. Financial support options are essential for helping students overcome perceived feasibility constraints.
5. **Family Entrepreneurial Background:** Students' entrepreneurial inclinations are positively influenced by having a family experience in entrepreneurship. This emphasises the significance of social and familial support structures in influencing business ambitions.

The study also identified many perceived obstacles to entrepreneurship, such as limited access to financing and apprehension of failure, which must be resolved to provide further support to student entrepreneurs.

5.2 Recommendations

According to the results of this study, the following suggestions are put forward to improve the inclination towards entrepreneurship among university students in East Sussex:

1. **Enhance Entrepreneurship Education Programs:** Universities ought to allocate resources towards the development of comprehensive entrepreneurship education programmes that integrate theoretical knowledge with firsthand practical experiences. These can encompass experiential learning experiences, such as internships, business simulations, and startup incubators, which enhance students' self-efficacy and practical abilities.
2. **Develop Financial Support Mechanisms:** It is imperative for policymakers and institutions to work together to establish financial assistance programmes for ambitious student entrepreneurs. These resources can encompass grants, initial finance, loans with low interest rates, and opportunities to obtain venture capital. Allocating financial resources will assist students in overcoming initial finance obstacles and motivate them to pursue their entrepreneurial concepts.
3. **Promote a Positive Attitude Towards Risk:** It is imperative for educational programmes to have elements that specifically tackle risk management and foster students' ability to bounce back from failure. Organising workshops and seminars featuring accomplished entrepreneurs who have successfully

overcome failures can effectively dispel the fear of failure and foster a favourable mindset towards taking risks.

4. **Strengthen Mentorship and Networking Opportunities:** Universities ought to establish mentorship initiatives that link students with seasoned entrepreneurs and industry experts. Networking events, entrepreneurial organisations, and alumni networks offer important assistance, direction, and motivation for student entrepreneurs.
5. **Leverage Family and Social Support Systems:** Promoting family engagement in business endeavours can offer supplementary assistance and inspiration for youngsters. Universities can provide entrepreneurial activities and workshops that are focused on families, involving both students and their families. This helps to create a supportive entrepreneurial environment.
6. **Policy Interventions to Address Barriers:** Policymakers should formulate initiatives aimed at mitigating prevalent obstacles to entrepreneurship. This may involve establishing a conducive legal framework, offering tax benefits to new businesses, and building infrastructure that facilitates entrepreneurial endeavours, such as shared workspaces and innovation centres.

5.3 Future Research

To improve the applicability of the findings, future research should investigate entrepreneurial inclinations across a wider selection of universities and geographies. Conducting longitudinal studies that monitor the evolution of entrepreneurial inclinations over time and assess the effects of various interventions might yield significant insights. Furthermore, exploring the impact of digital and social media on the formation of entrepreneurial aspirations among students could be a promising subject for future investigation.

By applying these suggestions, universities and policymakers can establish a favourable atmosphere that fosters entrepreneurial aspirations and facilitates the growth of aspiring entrepreneurs in East Sussex and other areas.

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