Promotion of Entrepreneurship Intention among Female Students in Pakistan by Utilizing the Perceived Support Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior

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Abstract
Understanding factors which promote entrepreneurship among female is need of the day. In current study, we proposed and tested three mediating model where three aspects of support including educational, relational, and structural predicted entrepreneurship intention among female students mediated by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. For this study, primary data is collected using the survey measure adapted from previous sources. Convenience sampling is used to collect data from female university students from selected universities in Pakistan (n=165). Our findings indicate that perceived educational support and perceived relational support have significant positive effects on the entrepreneurship intention among female university students. We did not find the support for the proposed mediating model. However, our findings indicate that perceived educational support have significant and positive influence on attitude and perceived behavioral control. Our findings thus highlight the role of educational support in promoting entrepreneurship intention among female students.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurship, Educational Support, Relational Support, Structural Support.

1. INTRODUCTION
Entrepreneurship is defined as the person who organizes and develops their own business and may involve in gaining different knowledge areas and hand on experiences, creates visions and insights, builds network of support, and takes risk (Lope-Pihie, 2008). Accordingly, entrepreneurship intention refers to an individual’s future plan for involving in entrepreneurship activity (Linan & Chen, 2009). In current study, the focus is on understanding entrepreneurship intention among female university students in Pakistan.

1.1 Background
Entrepreneurship intention is a topic of interest by researcher for last few decades and its one sub branch is entrepreneurship intention among female students (Kirby, Guerrero & Urbano, 2011;
Linan, Urbano & Guerrero, 2011). In current study, we use a process approach to understand entrepreneurship intention among female university level students by combining the entrepreneurship support model and the theory of planned behavior. The entrepreneurship support model proposes that entrepreneurship intention is influenced by three type of support including educational, relational, and structural support (Turker, Onvural, Kursunlugolu, & Pinar, 2005). Similarly, the theory of planned behavior propose that intentions are product of three factors namely attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control (Ajzen, 2002). Past studies shows that theory of planned behavior and its three components are good predictors of entrepreneurship intentions (Kautonen, Gelderen, & Tornikoski, 2013; Linan, et al., 2011; Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999; Veciana, Aponte, & Urbano, 2005). In current study, we use the perceived support model as antecedent of components of theory of planned behavior and entrepreneurship intentions.

1.2 Significance of the Study
The significance of the study is that it explores the topic of female entrepreneurship in Pakistan; a topic which is gaining increased attention by the researchers as well as policy makers at International level (Lerner & Malach-Pines, 2010; Pines, Lerner & Schwartz, 2010). One reason for greater interest in understanding female entrepreneurship is because it is considered as a solution to reduce gender disparities and improvement of socio-economic conditions of female (Diaz-Garcia & Jimenez-Moreno, 2010). In Pakistani context, the topic of female entrepreneurship is also important since generally women in Pakistan face gender disparities and several barriers while attempting to involve in entrepreneurship activity. The findings of the study can be helpful in understanding factors which can be used to promote entrepreneurship intention among female entrepreneurs and help them overcoming the resistance faced. A further significance of the study is that it is among initial studies which tested the theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Perceived Support Model in Pakistani higher educational context. The findings can be used by the management of universities, development agencies, government organizations, academics and so on.

1.3 Research Objective
The objectives of the study are as under.
• To measure the effects of perceived educational, relational, and structural support on entrepreneurship intentions among female students at university level.

• To measure the effects of perceived educational, relational, and structural support on the three components of theory of planned behavior including attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control among female students at university level.

• To test the role of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control as mediator between the relationship of perceived support and the entrepreneurship intentions among female students at university level.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior and Entrepreneur Intention

Theory of planned behavior is frequently used to study entrepreneurship among individuals. It is based on three components including attitude towards entrepreneurship, social norms, and perceived behavior control. Attitude towards the entrepreneurship refers to the extent to which an individual consider a positive or negative valuation for becoming entrepreneur (Ajzen, 2002). Women’s attitude towards entrepreneurial behavior is different from male since female tends to adapt entrepreneurship with the motive to balance between work and family needs (Kirk & Belovics, 2006). Perceived social norm is about perception of social pressure for conducting or not conducting entrepreneurial behavior (Ajzen, 2002). For female, often the perceived norms are not favorable for entrepreneurship since the business culture is mostly masculine (Ventura & Quero, 2013). Furthermore, the traditional role of female in most culture including Pakistan is to take care of family rather than involved in business activity (Verheul, Thurik, Grilo, & Van Der Zwan, 2012). Perceived behavioral control is about perception regarding how difficult or easy it is to fulfill the behavior of interest which in this case is involvement in entrepreneurship activity (Ajzen, 2002). For female, the perceived behavioral control is also not very favorable as past studies shows that women have less favorable perception of their self-efficacy and thus involves less in entrepreneurial activity (Barnir, Watson, & Hutchins, 2011; Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; Maes, Leroy, & Sels, 2014). The final component of the theory is intention which is found to be a good predictor of individual future behavior (Ajzen, 2002). Entrepreneurship intention refers to the interest in starting own business (De Clercq, Honing, & Martin, 2011). The entrepreneurship
intention is now frequently used to understand entrepreneurship behavior since a new business cannot be started without having any intention and planning (Nabi, Holden, & Walmsley, 2006). According to Ajzen (1991), the theory of planned behavior model explains intention as an individual’s attitude towards particular behavior, along with the existing subjective norms and perception regarding behavior control serves to influence an individual’s intention to perform or not to perform a given behavior. Past studies found support for the validation of theory of planned behavior in different contexts (Kautonen, et al., 2013; Linan, et al., 2011; Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999; Veciana et al., 2005).

2.2 Role of Support in Promoting Entrepreneurship Intentions

The current study utilizes a process based approach of understanding entrepreneurship intention among students by utilizing the entrepreneurial support model developed by Turker, et al., (2005). The model is based on impact of contextual factors on entrepreneurial intentions. The contextual factors in this model are three type of support including educational, relational, and structural support. The educational support refers to the support which a student receives from their respective educational institutes regarding obtaining business related knowledge (Wang & Wong, 2004). Accordingly, academic institutions plays crucial role in promoting entrepreneurship among students by providing support such as providing business related knowledge, advice about setting up entrepreneurship venture, financial support, counseling by experts, and development of business incubation centers. Furthermore, the entrepreneurial education also promotes entrepreneurship orientation among individuals by means of increasing student’s self-efficacy (Zhao, Seibert, Hills, 2005). Past studies acknowledge the role of educational support by the universities or similar higher educational institutes in promoting entrepreneurship attributes among individuals (e.g. Diaz-Casero, Hernandez-Mogollón, & Roldán, 2012; Galloway & Brown, 2002; Turker & Selcuk, 2008).

Relational support refers to the support receive by an individual from close relative such as family and friends (Turker & Selcuk, 2008). Past studies shows positive influence of relational support on individual’s entrepreneurial intention. For example, Henderson and Robertson (2000) found that family support is an important determinant of career choice followed by personal experience. Similarly, Carr and Sequeira (2007) mentioned that perceived support from family and friends plays role in shaping individual’s subjective norms and thus further to entrepreneurship intention.
Structural support is the third factor in the entrepreneurship support model. The structural support is the support which an individual receive from the environment and actors within it (Erich, Malgorzata, Daniela, & Robert, 2009; Turker & Selcuk, 2008). These actors belongs to the political, economic, social, and technological categories and examples can be government organizations such as SMEDA in Pakistan, financial sector such as banks, trade development authority of Pakistan and so on (Aziz, Friedman, & Sayfullin, 2012). In Pakistan, a study conducted by Fizza (2017) found that perceived educational, relational, and structural support predict student’s entrepreneurial intention mediated by student’s self-efficacy. Overall, from literature, we can establish that entrepreneurship intention is influenced by attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control as well as by the perceived support an individual receive.

Based on the literature review, the study put forward the following theoretical model.

![Figure 1: Theoretical Model of the Study](image)

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.1 Research Design

The design of the study is cross sectional and explanatory. Data collection is based on primary method using the quantitative approach.

#### 3.2 Instrument and Data Collection Procedure

The three components of theory of planned behavior and entrepreneurship intention is measured by entrepreneurship intentions questionnaire adapted from Linan and Chen (2009) and Linan, et al., (2011). In this measure, there are 5 items for attitude towards entrepreneurship, 6 items for perceived behavioral support, 3 items for subjective norms, and 6 items for entrepreneurial intentions. Further, for measuring educational, relational, and structural support, measure is adapted from Turker & Seluck (2008). In this measure, perceived educational support is measured...
by 3 items, perceived relational support is measured by 2 items, and perceived structural support is measured by 4 items.

3.3 Population and Sampling
There are almost 180 universities in the Pakistan producing almost 45000 graduates each year. For sampling, we used the convenience sampling and collect data from 15 universities consisted of public as well as private. Total of 165 female students enrolled in various programs from the selected universities participated in the survey.

3.4 Data Analysis
Data was analyzed using the descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and the mediation analysis. Assumptions of regression were tested before conducting the regression analysis.

3.5 Ethical Consideration
Ethical issues including no deception to the subjects, freedom to participate, no use of force or threat, and maintaining the confidentiality of the participant is addressed adequately.

4. RESULTS
4.1 Demographic Details of the Survey Participants
The profile of the respondents is given in the table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Profile of the Respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 25 Years</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 30 Years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 35 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS/MPhil</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father Profession</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Business</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic profile given in table 1 above suggest that there were total of 165 participants. In terms of age, 150 (90.9%) belonged to the 18 to 25 years old age category; 14 (8.5%) belonged to 25 years to 30 years of age category; and 1 (.6%) belonged to the 30 to 35 years of age category. In terms of degree programs, 137(83%) were enrolled in bachelor program; 24 (14.5%) in master
program; and 4 (2.5%) were in MS/MPhil program. 89 (53.9%) participant’s father had own business and 71(43%) participant’s father were employed.

### 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics given in table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No of Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Educational Support</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.8101</td>
<td>.64835</td>
<td>.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Relational Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5909</td>
<td>.88220</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Structural Support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7015</td>
<td>.62585</td>
<td>.603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.7527</td>
<td>.52864</td>
<td>.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Norm</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.6808</td>
<td>.58243</td>
<td>.613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Behavioral Control</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5545</td>
<td>.51802</td>
<td>.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship Intentions</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.6293</td>
<td>.56888</td>
<td>.603</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive statistics given in table 2 above suggest that the level of perceived educational support (M=3.81, SD=.64); perceived relational support (M=3.59, SD=.88); and perceived structural support (M=3.70, SD=.62) is high among the surveyed participants. The attitude towards entrepreneurship (M=3.75, SD=.52); subjective norms (M=3.68, SD=.58); perceived behavioral control (M=3.55, SD=.51); and entrepreneurship intention is also favorable (M=3.62, SD=.56). Moreover, all variables have Cronbach alpha of above 0.60 indicating good internal consistency for the measures employed.
### 4.3 Regression and Mediation Analysis

For testing the proposed mediation, we run separate models and result are given in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression and Mediation Models</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to EI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rsquare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Rsquare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Control Variables**: Age (18 to 30 Years), Qualification (Bachelor), Father Profession (Self-Business)

**Independent Variable**: Perceived Educational Support, Perceived Relational Support, Perceived Structural Support

**Mediating Variable**: Attitude towards Entrepreneurship, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control

Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurship Intentions

n=165, *P< 0.05; **P< 0.01; ***P< 0.001
Model I test the relationship between three aspects of support and entrepreneurship intention. Results indicate that perceived educational support ($\beta=.344$, $P<.05$); perceived relational support ($\beta=.166$, $P<.05$); and perceived structural support ($\beta=-.215$, $P<.05$) is having significant effects on entrepreneurship intention explaining 21.7% change in the entrepreneurship intention. In model II, we tested the effects of three aspects of support on attitude towards entrepreneurship. Results indicate that perceived educational support ($\beta=.307$, $P<.05$); and perceived structural support ($\beta=-.230$, $P<.05$) is having significant effects, while, perceived relational support ($\beta=.070$, $P>.05$) is having insignificant effects on attitude towards entrepreneurship explaining 11.4% change in attitude towards entrepreneurship. Results for model III and IV shows that when attitude is controlled, perceived educational support ($\beta=.189$, $P<.05$) and perceived relational support ($\beta=.131$, $P<.05$) are having positive and significant effects, while perceived structural support ($\beta=-.098$, $P<.05$) is having negative and insignificant effects on entrepreneurship intention.

In model V, VI, and VII, mediation model is tested for relationship between three aspects of support and entrepreneurship intention mediated by subjective norms. Results for model V shows the effects of three aspects of support including perceived educational support ($\beta=.100$, $P>.05$); perceived relational support ($\beta=.021$, $P>.05$); and perceived structural support ($\beta=.038$, $P<.05$) on subjective norms explaining 2.5% change in subjective norms. Results for model VI and VII shows that when subjective norm is controlled, three aspects of support including perceived educational support ($\beta=.297$, $P<.05$) and perceived relational support ($\beta=.156$, $P<.05$) are having positive and significant effects; while perceived structural support ($\beta=-.233$, $P<.05$) is having negative and significant effects on entrepreneurship intention explaining 45.1% change.

In model VIII, IX, and X, mediation model is tested for relationship between three aspects of support and entrepreneurship intention mediated by perceived behavioral control (PBC). Results for model VIII shows the effects of three aspects of support including perceived educational support ($\beta=.220$, $P<.05$); perceived relational support ($\beta=-.066$, $P>.05$); and perceived structural support ($\beta=-.025$, $P>.05$) on perceived behavioral control explaining 6.7% change. Results for model IX and X shows that when PBC is controlled, three aspects of support including perceived educational support ($\beta=.265$, $P<.05$) and perceived relational support ($\beta=.190$, $P<.05$) are having positive and significant while perceived structural support ($\beta=-.206$, $P<.05$) is having negative and significant effects on entrepreneurship intention explaining 35.9% change. From these results,
in mediation model 1, 2, and 3, no change in significance occurred indicating that three aspects of theory of planned behavior including attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavior control do not function as a mediator between the three aspects of support and entrepreneurship intention. However, our findings indicate that perceived educational support and perceived relational support do influence the entrepreneurship intention. Further, educational support does influence the attitude towards entrepreneurship and perceived behavioral control. Thus, despite the lack of presence of mediating nature of theory of planned behavior components, we did find support for the role of perceived educational support and relational support for promoting entrepreneurship intention.

4.4 Discussion
The objectives of the study were to test a process model of entrepreneurship intention among female students enrolled in business studies related programs in Pakistan. Our finding indicates that perceived educational and relational support have significant positive influence on female student’s entrepreneurship intentions. These findings thus highlight that the support is important in shaping entrepreneurship intention among female students and consistent with the findings of previous studies (e.g. Diaz-Casero, Hernandez-Mogollon, & Roldan, 2012; Galloway & Brown, 2002; Turker, et al., 2005; Turker&Selcuk, 2008). Findings of the study also indicate that perceived educational support positively and significantly influence the components of theory of planned behavior including attitude and perceived behavioral control. The finding also highlight the role of educational support in promoting entrepreneurship intention among student and is consistent with the entrepreneurial support model (e.g. Car & Sequeira; 2007; Diaz-Casero, Hernandez-Mogollón, & Roldan, 2012; Fizza, 2017). The findings are highly important from local perspective since Pakistan is a developing country having almost 51% of its population as female. If proper support is provided to the female in terms of educational and relational support, then, it can motivate female to overcome the cultural resistance, and possibly involve in entrepreneurship activity. There are examples of successful female entrepreneurship in Pakistan which can be taken as role model.

5. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS
5.1 Conclusion
On the basis of our findings, it can be concluded that education and relational support play an important role in shaping entrepreneurship intention among female students. If government and its subsidiary organizations want to improve the entrepreneurship among female students, then, greater attention is needed to increase the support available to female students. The findings is not only limited to the female students and can be generalized to the male students.

5.2 Recommendations
The recommendations of the study are as under.

- Universities, colleges, and other higher educational institutes should focus on providing support to the female students for promoting entrepreneurship intention. The support can be in the form of providing business related knowledge through specialized courses, seminars, and similar. Further, entrepreneurship incubation centers and counseling is also an important type of support which should be provided to the female students.

- Higher educational authority (HEC) should also play its role in promoting entrepreneurship among female students by making it compulsory for the universities to allocate certain percentage of resources towards promoting entrepreneurship among students.

- Government organizations such as SMEDA and financial institutes such as banks can also play important role in promoting entrepreneurship among students by creating awareness, providing technical knowledge, and initiating easy loan schemes for starting entrepreneurship activity.

- Support from family and friends also plays an important role in promoting entrepreneurship intention among female students; therefore, families and friends are also advised to encourage female by providing emotional and psychological support.

5.3 Limitations
The limitations of the study include convenience sampling, small sample size, reliance on quantitative approach, and single method of data collection.

References


