

Beyond University Support: A Multidimensional Conceptual Framework for Entrepreneurial Intention among Undergraduate Students

Anjali, Prof Satyawan Baroda
Institute of Management Studies and Research (IMSAR)
Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak.
(anjali.rs.imsar@mdurohtak.ac.in)

Abstract

Specifically for college students who are still establishing their entrepreneurial skills and job preferences, entrepreneurial intention is a significant prelude to entrepreneurial activity. University support is often viewed as a wide and uniform entity, despite prior studies showing that universities might impact students' entrepreneurial inclinations. This conceptual paper makes the case that such an approach might ignore the various ways in which academic institutions support the growth of entrepreneurship. The study divides university assistance into three conceptual dimensions: instructional support, developmental and experiential support, and institutional and resource support. It does this by drawing on the Theory of Planned Behaviour and a synthesis of contemporary open-access literature. The framework also suggests that entrepreneurial attitude and perceived behavioural control are two student-level processes thru which these types of assistance may impact entrepreneurial intention. Eight conceptual claims are developed in the research that connect the aspects of psychological mechanisms, entrepreneurial intention, and academic support. The suggested approach adds to the body of knowledge on entrepreneurship by going beyond the straightforward question of whether or not universities encourage entrepreneurship and instead taking into account the kind of support offered and the potential psychological channels thru which it might function. Future empirical validation across various university contexts and student groups can be based on the framework.

Keywords : entrepreneurial intention, university support , developmental support , institutional support

1.Introduction

The development of entrepreneurial intents among university students is an essential study concern since entrepreneurship has emerged as a key avenue for economic development, innovation, and job creation. An individual's conscious desire to start a business in the future is reflected in their entrepreneurial intention, which is widely recognised as a significant precursor to entrepreneurial action. Because students are exposed to knowledge, skills, networks, entrepreneurial role models, and institutional resources during their higher education experience, universities are especially important in this process. According to recent study, contextual, educational, and individual factors—rather than just personal traits—have an impact on university students' ambition to start their own business(Li *et al.*, 2022; Raghavendra and Shivaprasad, 2024a).

As a result, the university setting is becoming recognised as a crucial setting for fostering students' entrepreneurial potential. Entrepreneurship classes, mentoring, incubation, networking, resource access, company development support, and other entrepreneurial activities are all ways that universities can foster entrepreneurship. The research, however, does not necessarily address different types of assistance independently. Rather, university sponsorship is often portrayed as a broad concept that incorporates a number of institutional initiatives. While some research suggest that university entrepreneurship assistance can influence students' psychological traits and entrepreneurial motivations, recent empirical evidence suggests that perceived university support can influence entrepreneurial intention(Liao *et al.*, 2022a; Lu *et al.*, 2021).

This raises a significant conceptual problem. Support from universities could not be a single source of impact. Institutional or resource support may offer the setting and resources needed for entrepreneurial activity, educational support may offer entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, and developmental assistance may assist students in turning concepts into viable businesses. This notion is supported by recent research, which demonstrates that entrepreneurial intention and its psychological antecedents might be related differently to various aspects of university assistance. For instance, entrepreneurial intention has been found to be influenced by perceived educational support and concept-development assistance, whereas other studies have indicated that university support has different effects on attitudes, self-efficacy, and perceived behavioural control (Makai and Döry, 2023; Vu *et al.*, 2024).

There is still a conceptual vacuum about how various types of university support could influence entrepreneurial intention through various student-level channels, despite an increase in research on this topic. The direct correlations and mediating roles of attitude, self-efficacy, subjective norms, entrepreneurial atmosphere, and perceived behavioural control have all been studied in the past; however, these results are frequently presented within distinct empirical models. Therefore, this paper offers a multifaceted approach to understanding university support through educational, developmental, and institutional/resource dimensions. This approach may enhance students' entrepreneurial attitudes and perceived behavioural control, which in turn may contribute to entrepreneurial intention (Galvão *et al.*, 2024; Sim *et al.*, 2023).

2. Literature review

2.1 Entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduates' students

The cognitive stage that precedes entrepreneurial activity is commonly explained by entrepreneurial intention, which is commonly viewed as a person's conscious desire to start a new business. Because higher education is a time when career inclinations, professional identities, and views of the viability of entrepreneurship are emerging, intention can be especially significant for undergraduate students. Entrepreneurial education, personal skills, and psychological traits are all linked to entrepreneurial intention, according to research conducted among undergraduates. This implies that rather than being viewed as merely a matter of personal preference, entrepreneurial aim should be considered as a dynamic process (Almeida, 2023; Nursyirwan *et al.*, 2022). Entrepreneurial intention, which is typically regarded as a crucial stage prior to entrepreneurial action, is a person's deliberate desire to start a new business. Because university education takes place during a time when students build professional identities, career preferences, and perceptions about their future chances, entrepreneurial intention is especially pertinent to undergraduate students. Research indicates that rather than being impacted by a single trait, students' entrepreneurial inclinations are influenced by a variety of contextual, educational, and personal factors. Research on college students has also shown that entrepreneurial attitudes, self-efficacy, educational experiences, and environmental factors are related to entrepreneurial intention. These results suggest that comprehending student entrepreneurship necessitates paying attention to both the individual traits of students and the academic setting in which their entrepreneurial perspectives are formed (Al-Qadasi *et al.*, 2023; Li *et al.*, 2022; Raghavendra and Shivaprasad, 2024b).

2.2 Theoretical foundation: Theory of planned behavior

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) created by Ajzen (1991) serves as the main foundation for the suggested framework. According to TPB, attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control all have an impact on behavioural intention. An individual's opinion of how easy or difficult an activity is to do is also reflected in perceived behavioural control. In the context of entrepreneurship, students are predicted to exhibit better entrepreneurial intents if they have a positive opinion of entrepreneurship and feel that they have enough

control and capability. By presenting university support as a significant contextual antecedent of entrepreneurial mindset and perceived behavioural control, the current paradigm expands the use of TPB. The claim is not that the original TPB components are replaced by university support. Instead, university support is an external institutional and pedagogical factor that could influence students' views and sense of control ("ajzen1991 tbh.pdf", n.d.) (Ajzen, 1985).

Intention through attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) offers a helpful basis for comprehending entrepreneurial intention. Students' propensity to pursue an entrepreneurial career in a university setting might be influenced by their opinions of how attractive, socially acceptable, and personally attainable entrepreneurship is. Recent research indicates that contextual factors can supplement the conventional TPB components while also demonstrating the value of TPB in understanding entrepreneurial intention among college students (Barba-Sánchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018; "Understanding Entrepreneurial Intentions among Undergraduate Students", 2021).

2.3 Universities as entrepreneurial environment

Universities can serve as both instructional and entrepreneurial spaces where students can create ideas, engage with business owners, get support, and take part in entrepreneurial activities. The idea of the university entrepreneurial ecosystem highlights how interactions between students and their institutional surroundings might influence entrepreneurial intention. While recent research on university entrepreneurship ecosystems further emphasises the role of institutional, educational, and economic conditions in forming entrepreneurial motivations, research has shown that university environments and support services can affect students' entrepreneurial perceptions and capabilities (Makai and Döry, 2023). Universities are increasingly serving as venues for the development of entrepreneurial skills and ambitions in addition to being sources of academic knowledge. Students may be exposed to institutional resources, practical opportunities, networks, role models, and entrepreneurial knowledge through university support. Research shows that students' entrepreneurial attitudes, subjective norms, self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial goals are correlated with perceived university support. In a similar vein, studies on entrepreneurial university settings indicate that students' perceptions of behavioural control and their capacity to get past external and cognitive obstacles to entrepreneurship may be influenced by institutional support. Therefore, rather than just being a place where entrepreneurship courses are taught, the institution can be seen as a significant component of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

2.4 Educational support and entrepreneurial intentions

One of the most obvious types of university support is educational support, which includes opportunities to gain entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, training, workshops, and courses on entrepreneurship. It is important because students may want to start their own business but lack the skills necessary to recognise possibilities, create business concepts, or comprehend the venture formation process. While more recent research suggests that student participation with entrepreneurship education can further affect entrepreneurial outcomes, recent data shows that entrepreneurship education is favourably connected with entrepreneurial intention (Deng and Wang, 2023a; Malathi and Venugopal, 2025). Among the most basic ways that universities may promote entrepreneurship is through educational support. It offers business information, training, workshops, courses, and chances to hone entrepreneurial abilities. Although the degree of this association varies among individuals and educational environments, data from various student demographics usually shows a positive correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. Crucially, rather than merely imparting business information, new study indicates that education may affect intention through psychological shifts. While some research suggests that individual entrepreneurial orientation can buffer the association between entrepreneurship education

and entrepreneurial intention, other studies have demonstrated that entrepreneurship education strengthens entrepreneurial attitudes and self-efficacy (Deng and Wang, 2023b; Khalil *et al.*, 2024).

2.5 Developmental and extra curricular support

Educational information might not be enough to inspire pupils to think about starting their own business. Students can progress from studying about entrepreneurship to creating and testing their own concepts with the aid of developmental guidance. Mentoring, incubation, company plan development, entrepreneurial competitions, hands-on projects, and engagement with entrepreneurs are some examples of this kind of help. Research on interactive start-up simulations shows the potential utility of experiential approaches for undergraduate students, while evidence from university interventions suggests that actual entrepreneurial activities can contribute to entrepreneurial intention (Bozward *et al.*, 2023; Sofiullah *et al.*, 2023). Support for entrepreneurship in higher education goes beyond traditional classroom instruction. Thru mentoring, incubation, contests, start-up programs, networking, and interactions with entrepreneurs, developmental and extracurricular support can give students the chance to put their expertise to use. Students might progress from merely studying about entrepreneurship to gaining confidence in their capacity to engage in entrepreneurial activities with the aid of such experiences. Extracurricular entrepreneurship support within a university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem was linked to entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial goals in engineering students, providing particularly pertinent evidence. According to other studies, entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions can be strengthened by perceived concept-development and business-development support. These results imply that, in addition to formal entrepreneurship education, colleges may have an impact on entrepreneurial intention thru experiential and developmental possibilities (Liao *et al.*, 2022b; Subhadrammal *et al.*, 2023).

2.6 Institutional and research support

Support from institutions and resources is another factor. To convert entrepreneurial curiosity into recognised viability, students might need access to university infrastructure, networks, incubation facilities, financial data, technology resources, and outside entrepreneurial connections. While research on multidisciplinary universities shows that universities and other ecosystem actors can offer significant support for students' entrepreneurial development, recent research suggests that university entrepreneurship support can influence entrepreneurial intention thru cognitive and affective mechanisms (Narmaditya *et al.*, 2024; Song and Lu, 2024).

2.7 University support and student level mechanism

The idea that academic support might not necessarily have a direct impact on entrepreneurial intention is a significant conceptual development. Instead, how students view entrepreneurship and their personal capacity to engage in entrepreneurial activities can be influenced by institutional support. According to research, subjective norms and entrepreneurial self-efficacy are influenced by perceived university support, and these factors are then linked to entrepreneurial ambition. Similar recent research indicates that psychological traits, an entrepreneurial environment, and other student-level factors may be the means by which university assistance functions (Liu *et al.*, 2022; Ratkovic *et al.*, 2025).

2.8 Educational support and psychological development

According to recent study on entrepreneurship education, the success of university support is contingent upon the development of psychological skills as well as the existence of instructional activities. Thru elements like entrepreneurial mindset and self-efficacy, entrepreneurship education has been shown to impact entrepreneurial intention. Technology-supported entrepreneurship education can boost entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention, according to more recent research, suggesting that university support may increasingly

incorporate both conventional teaching methods and novel types of learning assistance (Fan *et al.*, 2024; Liu *et al.*, 2025).

2.9 Conceptual gap

The literature's presentation of university assistance is still fragmented, despite the fact that current research offers strong evidence linking it to entrepreneurial intention. While some studies concentrate on concept development, the entrepreneurial environment, ecosystem support, or institutional support, others concentrate on educational support. As a result, university support is frequently viewed as a general concept without adequately elucidating how its many manifestations may contribute to various psychological mechanisms at the student level. In order to close this gap, this paper proposes a multidimensional conceptualisation of university support that includes educational, developmental, and institutional/resource support. It then links these dimensions to perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial attitude as pathways toward entrepreneurial intention (Ferdousi *et al.*, 2025; Zhao *et al.*, 2025).

3. Conceptual framework

According to the framework, university support is a broad concept made up of:

Educational support : structured learning, training, workshops, courses, and Formal learning formal entrepreneurship education.

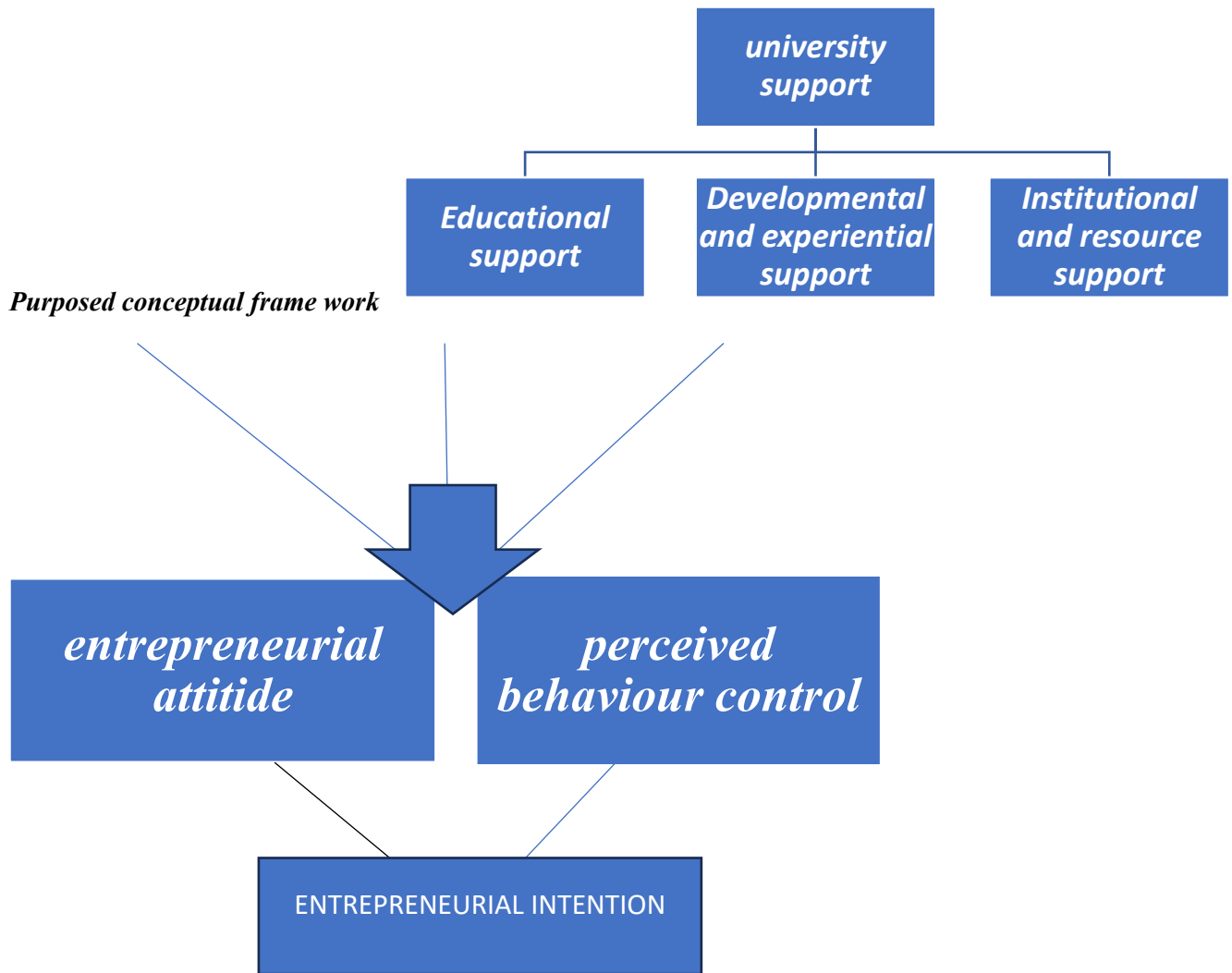
Developmental and experiential support: Competitions, mentoring, incubation, simulations, real-world projects, networking, and entrepreneurial activities .

Institutional and resource support: Infrastructure, institutional facilities, business development services, entrepreneurial networks, and access to pertinent resources .

(All the references of conceptual framework is completed in literature review)

These three aspects are suggested as complimentary but fundamentally different types of university support . While institutional and resource support offers the more expansive conditions within which entrepreneurial activities can be pursued, educational support primarily contributes to entrepreneurial knowledge and awareness. Developmental and experiential support offers opportunities for practical learning and capability development. Rather than asserting that earlier research has established this precise three-dimensional structure, the delineation of these dimensions reflects the conceptual contribution of the current article.

Additionally, the framework suggests two psychological channels by which academic support may impact entrepreneurial intention: perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial mindset. While perceived behavioural control reflects students' perceived capacity and control to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour, entrepreneurial attitude reflects students' positive or negative assessment of entrepreneurship. These constructs serve as the psychological mechanisms in the suggested framework since they are essential to the Theory of Planned Behaviour ("ajzen1991 tbh.pdf", n.d.).



Source : authors own work

4. Conceptual propositions

Proposition 1: Entrepreneurial Intention and Educational Support

Students' exposure to entrepreneurial opportunities, expertise, and perspectives can be increased by universities that offer structured entrepreneurship education. As a result, it is anticipated that educational support will enhance entrepreneurial intention.

P1: Students' inclination to start their own business is strongly correlated with educational support.

Proposition 2: Experiential and Developmental support

Students can use their entrepreneurial knowledge, identify opportunities, engage with entrepreneurs, and hone their entrepreneurial skills thru hands-on experiences. Therefore, it is anticipated that experiential and developmental support will enhance entrepreneurial intention.

P2: Students' inclination to start their own business is favourably correlated with developmental and experiential support.

Proposition 3: Support from Institutions and Resources

The presence of an enabling environment can have an impact on entrepreneurial intention. Students' impressions of the viability of entrepreneurship may be enhanced by institutional facilities, networks, support services, and other resources.

P3: Students' inclination to start their own business is favourably correlated with institutional and resource support.

Proposition 4: Entrepreneurial Attitude and University Support

Students' perceptions of entrepreneurship as a viable career option may be shaped by various sorts of academic support that expose them to good entrepreneurial experiences and information.

P4: Students' entrepreneurial mindset is positively impacted by university support.

Proposition 5: Perceived Behavioural Control and University Support

Students' judgements that entrepreneurial endeavours are feasible and under their control may be enhanced by access to education, real-world experience, institutional support, and entrepreneurial resources.

P5: Students' perceptions of behavioural control are positively impacted by university support.

Proposition 6: The Attitude and Intention of Entrepreneurs

According to TPB, students are likely to have greater inclinations to engage in entrepreneurial activities if they have a positive opinion of entrepreneurship.

P6: There is a favourable correlation between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial mindset.

Proposition 7: Entrepreneurial Intention and Perceived Behavioural Control

Students are more likely to have stronger entrepreneurial intents if they think they have the skills and self-control needed to engage in entrepreneurial activity.

P7: Entrepreneurial intention is positively correlated with perceived behavioural control.

Proposition 8: Psychological Mechanisms' Mediating Function

Support from the university might not have a direct impact. Students' attitudes and sense of behavioural control can be shaped by university support, which may then have an impact on their intention to start their own business.

P8: The association between academic support and entrepreneurial intention is mediated by entrepreneurial mentality and perceived behavioural control.

5. Methodological approach

The conceptual research technique used in this work is founded on an integrative review and theoretical synthesis of the body of current literature. The study summarises literature on entrepreneurial ambition, entrepreneurship education, university assistance, experiential entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial ecosystems, entrepreneurial attitude, and perceived behavioural control instead of gathering primary data. Recent peer-reviewed studies and publicly available full-text research involving college or university students were given precedence. In order to determine the psychological mechanisms linked to entrepreneurial intention as well as recurrent forms of academic assistance, the literature was compared. This synthesis serves as the foundation for the paper's multifaceted conceptualisation of university support and its arguments, which are mainly based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Thus, conceptual integration and theory development rather than statistical generalisation are the methodology's goals.

6. Discussion

This paper's main contribution is the idea that university support shouldn't be viewed as a single, homogenous entity. The relevance of colleges in fostering entrepreneurial purpose is amply demonstrated by existing studies, however the type of support provided differs greatly. When a student enrolls in an entrepreneurship course, they receive a different kind of support than when they participate in an incubation program or have access to entrepreneurial infrastructure. Therefore, treating these experiences as a single universal support construct may obscure significant variations in the ways that university support functions. As a result, the framework makes a distinction between institutional/resource, educational, and developmental/experiential assistance. It is not

appropriate to think of these dimensions as entirely separate activity. Instead, they are complimentary facets of the entrepreneurial ecosystem at universities. Knowledge can be obtained through educational assistance, opportunities to apply that knowledge can be obtained thru developmental help, and the conditions required to turn entrepreneurial ideas into viable opportunities can be provided by institutional and resource support. The second contribution focuses on the psychological processes that connect entrepreneurial intention and university assistance. According to the concept, two crucial paths are perceived behavioural control and an entrepreneurial mindset. This is in line with TPB's thinking since students' perceptions of entrepreneurship and their ability to carry it out successfully may be influenced by their university experiences. As a result, the framework suggests a more explanatory pathway: support → psychological perceptions → intention, going beyond a straightforward support → intention relationship.

Higher education institutions can benefit from the framework as well. The quantity of entrepreneurship courses offered should not be the primary metric used by universities to assess their support for entrepreneurship. Formal education, hands-on activities, networking, mentoring, institutional facilities, and resource-related support may all be necessary for successful entrepreneurial ecosystems. For students who are interested in entrepreneurship but lack confidence or real-world experience, this combination could be very crucial.

7. Key concept of the study

Five key insights are produced by the conceptual synthesis:

University support is multidimensional : It shouldn't be viewed as a single, homogenous construct by default.

Experiential support is distinct from educational support: Gaining opportunity to practice entrepreneurship is not the same as learning entrepreneurial concepts.

Institutional circumstances are important: Students' perceptions of the viability of entrepreneurship may be influenced by infrastructure, networks, resources, and support services.

Psychological processes are important : The relationship between academic assistance and business intention may be explained by entrepreneurial attitude and perceived behavioral control.

Both direct and indirect relationships could exist: Students' views and perceptions may be shaped by university support before those perceptions impact their ambition to start their own business.

8. Limitations

There are many restrictions on this paper. First, because the suggested framework is conceptual, the links between the suggested constructs are not empirically tested. Second, before being regarded as a formally established measuring structure, the three dimensions of university support—which constitute a conceptual synthesis of the body of current literature—need to be empirically validated. Third, rather than taking into account the entire spectrum of factors that influence entrepreneurial intention, the framework purposefully concentrates on university support and specific psychological mechanisms. Lastly, as a large portion of the information currently available comes from various institutional and national contexts, the type and intensity of the suggested relationships may fluctuate depending on university features, cultural settings, and educational systems.

9. Future directions

The suggested three-dimensional structure of university support should be empirically validated in future studies. Using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling, researchers can create educational, developmental/experiential, and institutional/resource support assessment scales and assess their discriminant validity. Future research should also look at whether the connections between the three types of support and entrepreneurial intention are significantly mediated by entrepreneurial mindset and perceived behavioural control. Differences between engineering and management students, public and private colleges, or various national educational systems could all be the subject of comparative research. Additionally, as entrepreneurial support and

ambition may evolve over time rather than concurrently, longitudinal studies may be beneficial. Lastly, future studies can investigate if students at different phases of their university education place varying degrees of priority on the three types of support.

10. Conclusion

This conceptual paper makes the case that an understanding of university assistance as a single variable may not fully explain university students' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship. Universities offer a variety of services, including institutional and resource-based support, practical entrepreneurial experiences, and formal entrepreneurship instruction. As a result, the suggested framework distinguishes between institutional/resource, instructional, and developmental/experiential aspects of university support.

The framework, which is based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour, further suggests that students' entrepreneurial mentality and perceived behavioural control may have an impact on their intention to start their own business. Therefore, the main contribution is a change in focus from questioning if colleges encourage entrepreneurship to looking at the kind of support offered and how it might affect students' aspirations to start their own business. The framework offers a targeted basis for upcoming empirical studies, which may then be evaluated in various student populations and higher education setting.

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