

Entrepreneurship Education: An Application of Allied Health Students' Entrepreneurial Intentions and Theory of Planned Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Due to a lack of research, it is unclear where entrepreneurship education (EE) fits within allied health curricula. It may become crucial for the allied health and entrepreneurship fields to comprehend the elements that influence allied health students' entrepreneurial intention. According to the survey results, 48.9% of the behavioral intent of allied health students completing EE could be predicted by the dimensions of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Our study's findings also demonstrated that the most clear predictor of students' intention to pursue entrepreneurship and possibly start their own company was attitude. These findings have implications for curriculum creators in entrepreneurship and allied health. In order to create specialized curricula that promote allied health students' entrepreneurial experience, the study makes some recommendations for future research on student entrepreneurship by examining the elements that influence allied health students' entrepreneurial purpose. The results of this study add to the field of entrepreneurship education, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and the bachelor students studying allied health who intend to pursue entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education has seen an increase in demand in recent years for graduates with a varied skill set that can function in a variety of professional settings. Cross-disciplinary partnerships that go beyond the conventional boundaries of academic fields are being investigated as a result of this trend. Because it has the potential to generate graduates with both clinical proficiency and business acumen, the integration of business education and health science disciplines has attracted a lot of attention (Shealy & McCaslan, 2018). Business schools have long been committed to helping their students develop an awareness of financial concepts, organizational dynamics, and strategic decision-making. On the other hand, health science schools have diligently concentrated on teaching the clinical skills and medical knowledge required to provide high-quality patient care (Causby, Dars & Ho. 2023). There has usually been little material and goal overlap between these two educational pathways. The combination of these seemingly unrelated fields to produce a transdisciplinary curriculum that equips graduates for the changing needs of contemporary industries, however, is an emerging possibility.

Allied health students may choose self-employment and entrepreneurship over work with an employer after graduating and registering (Hynes, Kennedy, & Pettigrew, 2016). The allied health course does not provide the entrepreneurial skills and business administration needed to start their own practice. Although the number of entrepreneurial courses at Australian universities is growing, they usually fall under the purview of business schools. According to Ajike, Goodluck, Babatunde, Onyia, and Kwarbai (2015), entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in addressing economic,

social, and cultural issues through the development of new technology and innovative ideas as well as the creation of job possibilities through new start-up firms. This study examined the impact of EE on the entrepreneurial intent of allied health students enrolled in an Australian higher education course using the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The initial goal was to determine whether students were pursuing EE as part of their course or as a postgraduate credential and whether they intended to start their own firm after graduation. The secondary goal was to determine which TPB components—attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control—are important indicators of and have an impact on students' intentions to pursue entrepreneurial education as part of or in addition to their allied health course.

Techniques

We employed a sequential exploratory study design to investigate the methodological difficulties associated with eliciting intent and creating trustworthy intention measures. The university's research ethics committee gave its approval to the project.

Participants

Potential applicants received email invitations from their respective Heads of Courses. Bachelor of Oral Health, Science (Chiropractic), Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Podiatry, Speech Pathology, Psychology, Exercise, and Sports Science were among the subjects covered at all academic levels. Along with the email invitation, prospective participants received an information sheet. A link to an online survey was available to interested parties, and prior to being able to complete it, each participant gave their electronic consent & take part in this research. Every response was anonymous. A database housed on the university's computer server contained the data gathered by the electronic questionnaire. After being coded, survey data was moved from the database to a statistical package software application called SPSS 26.0 (SPSS, 2019).

METHODS

One belief item was employed as a methodological origin in the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a predictor for direct measures. A systematic online survey was completed by the participants in order to learn more about their opinions of EE and business start-ups. Fishbein and Ajzen's research design recommendations support the questionnaire's creation (Gold, 2011). We need to know the following in order to determine whether someone plans to accomplish something:

- The person's "attitude," or if they support doing it
- The degree to which the individual experiences social pressure to follow the "subjective norm" and
- Whether the individual believes they have control over the action in question (also known as "perceived behavioural control").

The questionnaire was created in three stages: participant demographics, belief-based TPB construct measurement, and behavioral intention assessment questions.

The 22 questions used to measure attitude were divided into four categories: attitudes toward entrepreneurship education (three questions), entrepreneurship education integrated into the curriculum (eight questions), the university's role in fostering entrepreneurship (six questions), and attitudes toward owning a business (five questions). Seven items comprised the Subjective Norm construct, which was defined as the significance of others who would support or oppose studying entrepreneurship. The last Perceived Behavioural Control construct determined how specific circumstances affected entrepreneurship education and how much thought was paid to those effects. To get the pupils' answers, three questions were posed. Lastly, the pupils were asked five questions in order to ascertain their behavioral intent.

Analysis of Statistics

Frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations were used in descriptive statistical studies to characterize the respondent population and find patterns or anomalies in the research variables' data. The TPB constructs of attitude (A), subjective norm (SN), perceived behavioral control (PBC), and behavioral intent were measured directly, and means and standard deviations were produced. To determine the predictor variables that influence allied health students' intentions to use EE within or as an add-on to their allied health course using TPB constructs. To ascertain if the TPB constructs were significant predictors of intention, a bivariate analysis was performed. After adjusting for behavioral intention, the effectiveness of the Theory of Planned Behavior's constructs—attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control—to predict students' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship was evaluated using hierarchical multiple regression. To make sure the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were not violated, preliminary analyses were carried out. SPSS V25 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA) was used to analyze the data, and $\alpha = 0.05$ was chosen as the level of statistical significance.

OUTCOMES

This study had 39 participants. Seventy-two percent of the participants were female, and most of the students were in their second year of study (41%) and were majoring in podiatry (26%) and physiotherapy (41%). Of the pupils, 85% were based locally, and 51% said they planned to continue working locally. Eighty-five percent of students said they were thinking about starting their own business after graduation and agreed that entrepreneurship education is important to their current studies. Eighty percent of students agreed that EE should be taught in an educational setting, and eighty-six percent agreed that their course had the potential to include EE units. According to 89% of students, the university did not prioritize or encourage entrepreneurship.

entrepreneurship (64%). 57% of respondents said they would make more money if they started their own business than if they were employed. Compared to the other attitude questions in the poll, the students' opinions about the university's encouragement of entrepreneurship were less favorable. Table 1 displays the results of the bivariate analysis performed to ascertain if the TPB components were significant predictors of intention. To ascertain if the direct measures of Attitude (A), Subjective Norm (SN), and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) were significant predictors of allied health students' behavioral intention to undertake EE, the behavioral intention variable was linked onto them. The Pearson product-movement correlation coefficient was used to examine the link between students' behavioral intent to pursue entrepreneurial education as indicated by their answers to five EE-related questions. To make sure the assumptions of homoscedasticity, linearity, and normalcy were not violated, preliminary analysis was carried out.

Table 1 BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS OF CONSTRUCTS OF THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR				
	Behavioral Intent	Attitude towards learning (A), r (p-value)	Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), r (p-value)	Subjective Norm (SN), r (p-value)
Behavioral Intent	1	0.687 (<.001)	0.607 (.003)	0.495 (.015)
M	14.32	9.63	7.93	30.64
SD	6.90	5.57	3.96	4.55

The ability of the Theory of Planned Behavior's constructs—attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control—to predict allied health students' behavioral intention to engage in EE was then evaluated using hierarchical multiple regression.

DISCUSSION

According to our study's findings, the majority of allied health students stated that they intended to launch their own company after graduation. This suggests that EE may be necessary in post-graduate programs. The primary predictor of their intention to launch their own company was their attitude regarding EE. This is the first study of its kind to comprehend the requirements of EE for students studying allied health. Providing equal amounts of clinical and business-related Work Integrate Learning (WIL) internships through an EE WIL framework (Winborg & Hägg, 2022) could be one method to help students understand business strategies in addition to developing skills relevant to their clinical scope of practice. Additionally, the study found that students believed they would succeed and make more money if they launched their own firm. This illustrates the gullibility of students who, despite their optimism, might not be entirely ready to begin guaranteeing their business's success (Grant, 2011). They might not have thought about the other facets of running a business, like the dangers involved, the initial capital required, corporate management, and social obligations. One of the most effective factors in predicting the students' intention to pursue entrepreneurship studies and possibly launch their own company after graduation was attitude. The results show a statistically significant correlation between the entrepreneurial intention, attitude toward entrepreneurship, and EE undertaken by allied health students. This is corroborated by research showing a relationship between entrepreneurial goals and university students' entrepreneurship education (Boubker, Arroud, & Ouajdouni, 2021). Additionally, prior research has shown that a student's entrepreneurial attitude influences their entrepreneurial desire (Zollo, Laudano, Ciappei, & Zampi, 2017). This study assessed students' views toward entrepreneurship, how the institution supports entrepreneurship, how EE is integrated into their present degree, and how they feel about running their own business. It affected the intention and behavior of engaging in EE and running a business in both direct and indirect ways. There are some drawbacks to this study. First, students from a regional institution who plan to remain in the area after graduation were included in this study. Future research with students in major cities may be necessary to see whether there are any mediation and/or moderation effects, since the majority of allied health professionals may live and work in these areas (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019).

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this survey, which included a cohort of undergraduate allied health students at a regional institution, most of them plan to launch their own company after graduation. This emphasizes the necessity of offering EE. Nonetheless, students favored EE's inclusion at the postgraduate level, giving academic institutions a preliminary sense of demand. According to our research, 48.9% of the intention variation of allied health students enrolled in EE could be predicted by the dimensions of attitude, subjective norms, and PBC. The TPB can be a good model to predict the intention and behavior of allied health students in performing EE, according to the study's findings. Given that the most important factor in determining students' intention to pursue entrepreneurship was attitude

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