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EXAMINING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP READINESS AMONG OMANI STUDENTS USING THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to investigate the entrepreneurship intentions among the Omani students. For this purpose, we utilized the theory of planned behavior and its three components including attitude, social norms, and perceived behavioral control and checking their effects on entrepreneurship intentions among the students. Data is collected from UTAS-Nizwa final year students (n=85). Key findings of the study are that attitude towards entrepreneurship (β=.705, P<05) and social norms (β=.873, P<05) have positive and significant effects on entrepreneurship intentions among the students. Additionally, we compared the results based on four demographic factors namely gender, age, the field of study, and father's profession. Our result shows that the influence of attitude, social norms, and perceived behavioral control on entrepreneurship intentions among the student is significantly different based on the field of study and the father's profession. We concluded that the theory of planned behavior is a suitable tool for understanding entrepreneurship among the youngsters and attitude, social norms, and demographic factors are important predictors of entrepreneurship intentions among students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Oman Vision 2040 replaced Vision 2020 and set the government priorities for the future in Oman. Some of the key themes of the Oman Vision 2040 are decrease dependence on natural resources including Oil and Gas, diversification of the Omani economy, youth development, and entrepreneurship growth in the country. By looking closely at these themes, it is clear that entrepreneurship plays an important role in achieving these different but interconnected objectives. In other words, for Oman Vision 2040, the development of entrepreneurship among individuals can be one such silver bullet that can enable the achievement of these diverse objectives. This is because if youngsters are involved in entrepreneurship and start businesses other than oil and gas related field so it will reduce unemployment, create jobs, and diversify the economy. It will also lead to the greater development of human resources and increased competitiveness and robustness of the Omani economy. Therefore, we must understand how entrepreneurship can be developed among the members of society especially the youngsters. There are plenty of studies on understanding factors that lead to the development of entrepreneurship intentions among individuals in Western and other countries context, however, the literature on this topic in Oman is scant. Therefore, the present study investigates the entrepreneurship intentions among students in the Omani context.

The focus of the study is measuring the entrepreneurial readiness among the final year students of B.Tech courses from UTAS (previous Nizwa College of Technology, Oman). For this purpose, the study utilizes the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The theory is based on three components predicting entrepreneurial intentions including entrepreneurial attitude, social nroms supporting entrepreneurship, and an individual's perceived behavioral control towards entrepreneurship. The attitude in this context is about the student's liking or disliking of involvement in entrepreneurial activity. Social norms are about student's perception of entrepreneurship from social groups or society

in general. The perceived behavioral control is the extent to which individual students feel that they can control the circumstances and involve in entrepreneurial activity. Thus, according to Ajzen's theory, the three components influence entrepreneurship intentions among students. The study is focusing on intentions since it is easier to measure and have good preditvie power (Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000; Nabi, Holden, & Walmsley, 2006).

The main problem this study is investigating is how to promote entrepreneurship among individuals especially students. Entrepreneurship is important since every year about 50,000 youngsters complete their education and join the job market in Oman. There is a high prevalence of unemployment among youngsters in the country. The government sector alone cannot create so many jobs each year. Also, due to the Coronavirus pandemic and resulting economic crisis, the private sector is shrunk resulting in downsizing of staff. In this situation, there is a need to promote entrepreneurship among youngsters which can solve unemployment problems and will also create meaningful jobs in the Sultanate. The main question remains the same as how to encourage youngsters to engage in entrepreneurial activity? And what are the factors which can promote entrepreneurial activity among the individual? Keeping in view this background, the current study attempts to answer these questions by utilizing the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1991).

The study is based on the following two research questions
Q1: What are the effects of three components of Ajzen's theory of planned behavior on student's entrepreneurship intentions?
Q2: Are there any differences among student's entrepreneurship intentions based on gender, age group, degree specialization, and father profession?
The study is based on the following objectives;

- To measure the effects of attitude on student's entrepreneurship intentions
- To measure the effects of social norms on student's entrepreneurship intentions
- To measure the effects of perceived behavioral control on student's entrepreneurship intentions
- To compare the effects of theory of planned behavior components on entrepreneurship intentions of students on the basis of gender, age, field of study, and father profession.

The study makes at least three important contributions. The first contribution is that it empirically tests the entrepreneurship intentions and three key predictors thus enriching the literature in this particular context of Omani students. Additionally, we focus on the demographic factors and their influence on entrepreneurship intentions. Previous literature indicates the existence of significant effects of demographic factors on an individual's entrepreneurship intentions; however, the demographic factors have received relatively lesser scholarly attention. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this literature gap. The second contribution the study makes is that it strengthens the theory of planned behavior and its application as it tests in the entrepreneurship among the student's context. The third contribution is that study can provide useful insight into the factors which can influence the promotion of entrepreneurship in the higher education sector in Oman and thus can provide useful guidelines for policymaking. The management of the higher educational institutes can also utilize the findings of present study in terms of improving the entrepreneurship courses and related support available to students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to Entrepreneurship

Mostly, entrepreneurship is associated with an individual who take intiaitive, use creativity, fulfill some unmet need, and come up with some new product/service, or a new business model. The focus of entrepreneurship is increased several times during the last few decades as it is understood as an engine of economic growth and solution to many socio-economic problems of a country (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2007). This is because increased entrepreneurship in a country reduces the unemployment problem by creating jobs and reducing the burden on society. Furthermore, entrepreneurship is also found to be enhancing quality of life of citizens of a country since it leads to increased availability of products and services (Mohar, Singh & Kamal, 2007). Overall, the policymakers around the world have

recognized the importance of the development of entrepreneurship in their respective countries and set it as a key priority area.

2.2 Theory of Planned Behavior and Entrepreneurship Intentions

The theory of planned behavior is one of the most cited theories to explain the prevalence of entrepreneurship. The theory is based on the three factors leading to the entrepreneurship intention among an individual. Initially, researchers used a variety of personality factors such as demographic factors and the social situation of an individual to explain an individual preference towards entrepreneurship activity (Rauch & Frese, 2000). However, later studies utilized more diverse factors to explain an individual entrepreneurship capacity and intentions. Examples include maximization of the expected utility model (Douglas & Shepherd, 2002); entrepreneurial idea model (Bird, 1988); and entrepreneurial event model (Shapero & Sokol, 1982). All these models had their limitations leading to the search for a better model for understanding entrepreneurship. As a result, Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior emerged as a sound theoretical lens to understand entrepreneurship among individuals. The theoretical strength of the model is that it is found valid in a variety of context including cross-culture comparison (e.g. Krueger, et al., 2000).

The theory of planned behavior is a general model of planned behavior and is used in a variety of settings including customers, investors, voters, religious worshippers, and so on. The theory explains that three factors influence an individual's intention to involve in a particular behavior. The attitude towards behavior is the first factor and refers to how one feel about a particular action. In this case, it is about feeling of liking or disliking towards entrepreneurship (Ajzen, 1991). In other words, we can say that if a student possesses a favorable attitude towards entrepreneurship so he/she is more likely to be involved in entrepreneurship in the future. On the other hand, if an individual possesses an unfavorable attitude towards entrepreneurship, so his/her likelihood of involvement in entrepreneurship activity is low. The second factor in the model is subjective norms refers to an individual perception of the social pressure to engage (or not to engage) in a particular behavior. The subjective norms can also be considered as pressure from people around such as family or friends for engaging in a particular behavior. For example, if a student's close relatives such as family members and friends are a successful entrepreneur so it will put pressure on him/her to engage in entrepreneurial activity. On the other hand, if perceived subjective norms are low so such students will feel less pressure for involving in entrepreneurial activity The third factor in the model is the perceived behavioral control (PBC) which is about an individual's confidence on his/her abilities to perform some behavior. Thus, if PBC is high so an individual is more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activity. However, if an individual's PBC is low so involvement in entrepreneurial activity will also be less among such individuals. Overall, the theory of planned behavior uses these three factors to explain the intentions of an individual towards some action which is entrepreneurial activity in this case.

2.3 Entrepreneurial Intentions among Students

Intentions refer to a conscious plan or decision for engaging in particlar behavior (Armitage & Conner, 2001). Intentions are the final part of the Ajzen's theory. In this context, entrepreneurship intentions refer to an individual plan to engage in entrepreneurial activity in near future. In other words, it is a plan to start own business. In entrepreneurial-related literature, intentions are commonly utilized as an alterntative to due to its ease of measurement and higher predictive power of actual behavior (Krueger et al., 2000; Nabi et al., 2006).

2.4 The Relationship between Attitude, Social Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control and Entrepreneurship Intentions

Previous studies that utilized the Theory of Planned behavior mostly reported a positive influence of the dimensions of the theory of Planned Behavior on individual's entrepreneurial intentions. A notable example is study by Autio et al., (2001) reported that there is a positive effects of three dimensions of theory of planned behavior on entrepreneurial intentions among university graduates from USA and Sweden. VanGelderen et al., (2008) study showed that entrepreneurial intentions are effected by attitude, norms, and PBC. Linan and Chen (2009) made a similar investigation in the cross-culture context of Spain and Taiwan and reported similar results. Gird and Bagraim (2008) study from South Africa showed that MBA students entrepreneurial itnentions are predicted by the components of theory of planned behavior. In the Middle Eastern context, there are some similar relevant studies.

For example, a study by Aloulou (2016) utilized the theory of planned behavior among the final year business studies students of a Saudi university. The findings are that social norms are an important predictor of students' entrepreneurship intention whereas results for attitude and behavioral control were also significant. A study by Mehtap, Pellegrini, Caputo, and Welsh (2017) showed that the education system can provide useful support to females to overcome barriers related to engagement in entrepreneurial activity in the Arab world context. A notable study is Matlay, Belwal, Al Balushi, and Belwal (2015) which investigated the student's perception towards entrepreneurship in the Omani context. The findings were that students in Oman want to start their own business but lack related knowledge which creates a barrier. Additionally, the study acknowledged that some factors function as enablers such as an individual's attitude, confidence level, and effective connection. In addition to the contextual factors, demographic factors were also explored in some studies shows support for the idea that demographic factors such as gender, family status, father profession can be a good predictor of entrepreneurship intentions among the individuals (e.g. Vracheva, Abu-Rahma, & Jacques, 2019). Overall, the findings of previous studies show that the theory of planned behavior is a useful analytical tool to understand the three predictive factors and their influence on an individual entrepreneurship intention. Based on the above discussion, following hypotheses are proposed.

H1: There is a positive effect of a favorable attitude towards entrepreneurship on student's entrepreneurship intentions.
H2: There is a positive effect of favorable social norms towards entrepreneurship on student's entrepreneurship intentions.
H3: There is a positive effect of perceived behavioral control on student's entrepreneurship intentions.
H4: The effects of three components of the theory of planned behavior on student entrepreneurship intention are significantly different based on gender.
H5: The effects of three components of the theory of planned behavior on student entrepreneurship intention are significantly different based on the age group.
H6: The effects of three components of the theory of planned behavior on student entrepreneurship intention are significantly different based on study specialization.
H7: The effects of three components of the theory of planned behavior on student entrepreneurship intention are significantly different based on the father profession.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design of the current study is cross-sectional and explanatory. The cross-sectional means that the data is only collected once from the participants. The explanatory research design means that we attempted to explain the entrepreneurship intentions among students with the help of three independent variables. The main research method is quantitative since it matches with the nature and objectives of the study.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population is all higher educational institutes in Oman. The sampling frame is based on the students who are in the final years of the B.Tech. The sampling is based on non-random convenience sampling. The sampling is only limited to the UTAS Nizwa (previously known as Nizwa College of Technology, Nizwa). The total population of the study was estimated to be around 900 and the required sample size is 83. The required sample size is calculated by the table produced by Bartlett, Kotrlik, and Higgins (2001) and is based on a .03 margin of error, and a 95% confidence interval or .05 alpha level.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

'Google form' is utilized for data collection. The questionnaire is adapted from Linan and Chen (2009) and Linan, Urbano, and Guerrero (2011). In this scale, 5 items belongs to attitude; 3 items belongs to subjective norms; 6 items for PBC; and 6 items for entrepreneurial intentions. The tool used for analysis is SPSS and SmartPLS. The analysis consists of Confirmatory Factor Analysis for establishing validity and reliability and path analysis for hypotheses testing. Additionally, we used the Multigroup Analysis for comparing the results based on demographic factors.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data is analyzed using the SmartPLS software and is based on Partial Least Square which is a variance-based structural equation modeling approach (Roldán & Sánchez-Franco, 2012). This approach accompanied with SmartPLS is utilized since it offers a more incremental and robust analysis of the data (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015; Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Gudergan, 2017).

4. RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	49	57.6
	Female	36	42.4
Age Group	22 to 25 Year	37	43.5
	25 to 30 Years	44	51.8
	Above 30 Years	4	4.7
Field of Study	Engineering	28	32.9
	Information Technology	31	36.5
	Business Studies	26	30.6
Fathers' Profession	Self-Business	42	49.4
	Job Holder	38	44.7
	Others	5	5.9

There is a total of 85 students who participated in our survey. Out of the total respondents, 49 were male (57.6%) and 36 were female (42.4%). In terms of age group, 37 students were in the age category of 22 to 25 years (43.5%); 44 students were in the age category of 25 to 30 years (51.8%); and 4 students were in the age category of above 30 years (4.7%). 28 students were from the engineering field (32.9%); 31 students were from the Information Technology field (36.5%); and 26 students were from the Business Studies field (30.6%). In terms of the father's profession, 42 student's father had own business (49.4%); and 38 students' father was job holders (44.7%).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	Minimum	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Attitude towards Entrepreneurship	2.00	9.20	3.7859	1.34263
Subjective Norms	2.00	5.00	3.5922	1.11552
Perceived Behavioral Control	2.17	4.83	3.6098	1.06891
Entrepreneurship Intentions	2.17	4.83	3.5686	1.06169

The descriptive statistics indicate that among the survey participants, there is a favorable entrepreneurship attitude (M=3.78, SD=1.34); moderate subjective norms towards entrepreneurship (M=3.59, SD=1.11); and moderate perceived behavioral control towards entrepreneurship (M=3.60, SD=1.06). The entrepreneurship intention is also moderate among the survey participants (M=3.56, SD=1.06).

4.1 Assessment of Measurement Model

We performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for validating the dimensions and items of the measurement model. The initial specified model and the solution is presented in the following pictures.

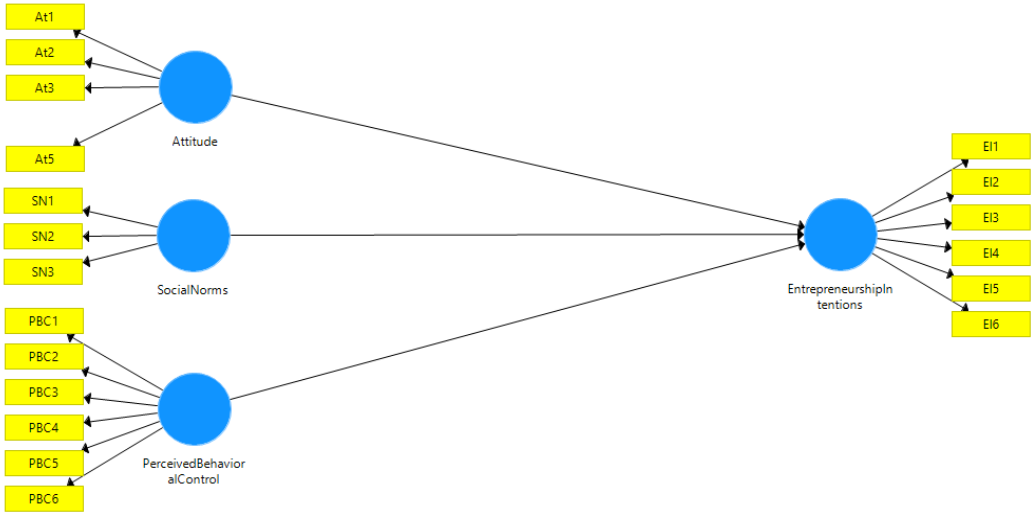

Figure 1: Measurement Model

Table 3. Convergent Validity and Reliability of Variables

Construct	Items	Standardized Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Attitude	At1	0.943	.956	.956	.846
	At2	0.934			
	At3	0.924			
	At4	Deleted			
	At5	0.876			
Social Norms	SN1	0.793	.906	.909	.771
	SN2	0.908			
	SN3	0.925			
Perceived	PBC1	0.734	.919	.922	.665
Behavioral Control	PBC2	0.939			
	PBC3	0.768			
	PBC4	0.817			
	PBC5	0.889			
	PBC6	0.722			
Entrepreneurship	EI1	0.597	.951	.953	.776
Intentions	EI2	0.993			
	EI3	0.894			
	EI4	0.927			
	EI5	0.908			
	EI6	0.911			

The result in Table 3 shows that all variables have good internal consistency as Cronbach alpha and Composite Reliability are above 0.70 for all variables so it is an indication of good reliability. For validity, we analyzed individual factor loadings for all items and found that all values are above 0.60. The Average Variance Extracted is also above 0.50 so it is an indication of satisfactory convergent validity (values suggested by Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Attitude	**.919**				
Social Norms	.631	**.878**			
Perceived Behavioral Control	.343	.324	**.815**		
Entrepreneurship Intentions	.285	.289	.356	**.880**	

For establishing discriminant validity, we used the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criteria. In table 4, the values in the diagonal bold are the square root of AVE and other values are inter-variable correlation. The requirement is that the diagonal bold values needs to be greater than other values in its respective rows and column which is met as can be seen in the table. Thus, we can say that our variables have good discriminant validity. After assessing the measurement model and satisfactory results for the convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, we next assess the structural model for the hypotheses testing.

4.2 Assessment of Structural Model

After assessing the measurement model, the next step is the assessment of the structural model for hypotheses testing. The criteria used for assessing the structural model include multicollinearity assessment, t-statistics, path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), Effect size (f^2), and the predictive relevance of the model (Q^2). For assessing the multicollinearity, we used the VIF or variance inflation factor as provided in following table.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Assessment

Constructs	***VIF Values***
Attitude	1.243
Social Norms	2.343
Perceived Behavioral Control	1.875

Our assessment of the VIF in Table 5 indicates that all values are less than the threshold values of 5 so it shows that there is no problem of multicollinearity in our data. The threshold value of VIF is 5 which is based on the guidelines set by Hair et al., (2017) and Ringle et al., (2015). Next, we used the bootstrapping based on 5000 resamples and 95% Bias corrected and Accelerated bootstrap. The results are as follows;

Table 6. Hypotheses Testing (Structural Model)

H. No.	**Path**	**Original Sample (O)**	**Sample Mean (M)**	**Standard Deviation (STDEV)**	**T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)**	**R2**	**f2**	**Q2**	**P Values**
H1	Attitude >EI	.705	.703	.114	6.184	.425	.03	.213	.000
H2	SN>EI	.873	.854	.128	6.820		.04		.000
H3	PBC >EI	.327	.307	.223	1.466		.012		.0964

*EI= Entrepreneurship Intentions, SN=Social Norms, PBC=Perceived Behavioral Control

The result in table 6 shows that attitude towards entrepreneurship (β=.705, P<05) and social norms (β=.873, P<05) positively and significantly influence student's entrepreneurship intentions. The results for perceived behavioral control (β=.327, P>05) turned out to be positive but insignificant. Based on these results, we accepted H1 and H2 but rejected H3.

Hair et al., (2017) suggest that besides the beta coefficient, other criteria for assessing the relationship should be the coefficient of determination (R2), effect size (f2), and predictive relevance (Q2). R2 refers to the explained variation

in the dependent variable due to the independent variables. The R2 value in our study indicates that the independent variable explains 42.5% variation in the dependent variables of student's entrepreneurship intention which can be considered satisfactory. The value of f-square (effect size) indicates the independent variables' predictive power. The f-square value of 0.02 is considered a small effect, 0.15 as medium effects, and 0.35 is considered as large effect sizes (Cohen, 1988; Roldán & Sánchez-Franco, 2012). In our study, the f-square value is above 0.02 for attitude and social norms which can be considered as small to medium effects while the f-square value for the perceived behavioral control shows that its effects are weak. Q2 is also an important criterion and is an indication of the predictive relevance of the model based on the particular construct of that sample (Hair et al., 2017). Its value of above 0 shows satisfactory predictive relevance of the model. We obtained Q2 by using the Blindfolding procedure in SmartPLS. The Q2 value above 0 shows that our model has good predictive relevance.

4.3 Multigroup Analysis

Our last four hypotheses were related to the multigroup analysis as gender, age, educational field, and father profession is used as a moderator variable in these hypotheses (H4, H5, H6, H7). Based on the guideline by Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt, (2016), we performed the measurement invariance test using the MICOM process with permutations of 5000. The MICOM procedure consists of establishing measurement invariance at 3 stages and the results are as in the following table.

Table 7. MICOM Procedure Results

Step 2- Composite Measure Invariance					
	Original correlation	**Correlation permutation mean**	**5.00%**		**Permutation p-value**
Attitude	0.989	0.987	0.987		0.097
Social Norms	0.878	0.874	0.995		0.436
PBC	0.932	0.938	0.994		0.874
Step 3a: MICOM Results Report – Part 1					
	Mean original difference (males-females)	**Mean permutation mean difference (males-females)**	**2.50%**	**97.50%**	**Permutation p-value**
Attitude	0.091	-0.005	-0.268	0.243	0.446
Social Norms	0.232	-0.006	-0.267	0.275	0.401
PBC	-0.212	0.001	-0.254	0.268	0.088
Step 3b: MICOM Step 3 Results Report – Part 2					
	Variance original difference (males-females)	**Variance permutation mean difference (males-females)**	**2.50%**	**97.50%**	**Permutation p-values**
Attitude	-0.317	0.013	-0.378	0.257	0.2442
Social Norms	-0.674	0.015	-0.719	0.495	0.654
PBC	0.183	0.001	-0.554	0.531	0.871

*PBC= Perceived Behaviroal Control

Table 7 provides the results for the MICOM procedure. The software automatically calculate the configural invariance or step 1 (Garson, 2016). The second step was checking the composite invariance for which our results are insignificant for all correlation values as required. The third step was the assessment of equality of means and cross-groups variance. The step test works under the null hypothesis that the difference between measures and the variances of the composite are zero. The result as provided in the MICOM overall table shows that for step 3a, all values are within the range. Similarly, the result for step 3b shows that all values related to the variance of original differences are within 95% confidence interval or insignificant. Based on these results, we can say there is a presence of full measurement invariance for the adopted measure. Thus, the data satisfies the multigroup assumption and we can proceed to the next step.

Table 8. Multigroup Analysis, Gender-Based Comparison

H. No.	*Path*	*Path Coefficients-diff (Male - Female)*	*p-Value original 1-tailed (Male vs Female)*	*p-Value new (Male vs Female)*
H4a	Attitude > EI	-0.232	.989	.232
H4b	SN > EI	-.0345	.623	.754
H4c	PBC > EI	.043	.762	.761

*EI= Entrepreneurship Intentions, SN=Social Norms, PBC=Perceived Behavioral Control

The results of MGA based on gender in Table 8 shows that there are insignificant differences in path coefficients between male and female for attitude, social norms, and PBC on student entrepreneurship intentions. Based on these results, we reject H4a, H4b, and H4c.

Table 9. Multigroup Analysis, Age Group-Based Comparison

H. No.	*Path*	*Path Coefficients-diff (Male - Female)*	*p-Value original 1-tailed (Male vs Female)*	*p-Value new (Male vs Female)*
H5a	Attitude > EI	.231	.843	.212
H5b	SN > EI	-.041	.761	.554
H5c	PBC > EI	.048	.863	.583

*EI= Entrepreneurship Intentions, SN=Social Norms, PBC=Perceived Behavioral Control

The results of MGA based on age group in Table 9 shows that there are insignificant differences in path coefficients between different age groups for attitude, social norms, and PBC on student entrepreneurship intentions. Based on these results, we reject H5a, H5b, and H5c.

Table 10. Multigroup Analysis, Field of Study-Based Comparison

H. No.	**Path**	**Path Coefficients-diff (Male - Female)**	**p-Value original 1-tailed (Male vs Female)**	**p-Value new (Male vs Female)**
H6a	Attitude > EI	.564	.043	.004
H6b	SN > EI	.776	.050	.001
H6c	PBC > EI	.745	.038	.000

*EI= Entrepreneurship Intentions, SN=Social Norms, PBC=Perceived Behavioral Control

The results of MGA based on the field of study in Table 10 shows that there are significant differences in path coefficients for attitude, social norms, and PBC on student entrepreneurship intentions. Based on these results, we accepted H6a, H6b, and H6c.

Table 11. Multigroup Analysis, Fathers Profession-Based Comparison

H. No.	*Path*	*Path Coefficients-diff (Male - Female)*	*p-Value original 1-tailed (Male vs Female)*	*p-Value new (Male vs Female)*
H7a	Attitude > EI	.454	.042	.002
H7b	SN > EI	.498	.047	.002
H7c	PBC > EI	.043	.734	.609

*EI= Entrepreneurship Intentions, SN=Social Norms, PBC=Perceived Behavioral Control

The results of MGA based on father profession in Table 11 shows that there are significant differences in path coefficients for father profession of business versus job holder for attitude and social norms. Based on these results, we accept H7a and H7b while rejecting H7c.

4.4 Discussion

The objective of the study was to test the theory of planned behavior in the context of entrepreneurship intentions among the students at UTAS-Nizwa. The key findings of the study are that attitude and social norms are an important predictors of student's entrepreneurship intentions. Additionally, we found that among the demographic factors field of study and father profession significantly explain the differences between student's entrepreneurship intention while predicted by attitude, social norms, and PBC. In other words, we can say that field of study and father profession as a businessman can increase the likelihood of a student's involvement in entrepreneurial activity. These results are comparable with the previous studies' findings. For example, a study by Linan and Chen (2009) also reported significant results of three dimensions of theory of planned behavior on students' entrepreneurial intentions with significant differences based on demographic factors. Another study by Gird and Bagraim (2008) also showed that attitude and social norms are important predictors of entrepreneurial intentions among MBA students. Other studies also found similar results including Autio et al., (2001) and VanGelderen et al., (2008). Thus, we can say that our results are supported by the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and previous studies' findings.

5. CONCLUSION

The central theme of the present study was entrepreneurship readiness among Omani students by utilizing the theory of planned behavior. Based on the findings of the study, we conclude that among the components of the theory of planned behavior, attitude and social norms are highly important factors predicting student's entrepreneurship intentions. This result shows that if the right attitude towards entrepreneurship is inculcated among the students so it can be beneficial for the promotion of entrepreneurship among the youngsters. Similarly, if the social norms are made more favorable, so it can lead to the greater promotion of entrepreneurship intentions among the individuals. Based on the demographic factors related results, we can say that father profession and field of education also plays important role in promoting entrepreneurship intentions among individuals. Our findings contribute to the existing literature on entrepreneurship intentions, the theory of planned behavior, and the role of demographic factors in the promotion of entrepreneurship-related literature.

5.1 Recommendations

- There should be greater emphasis on entrepreneurship-related education among the higher educational institutes in Oman to impart entrepreneurial related knowledge among the youngsters and development of a favorable attitude towards entrepreneurship.
- There should be greater support available to students to encourage entrepreneurship. Important sources of support are family, friends, financial institutions, educational institutes, and relevant government bodies. Such support will enable development of favorable social norms which will facilitate development of entrepreneurial activity among individuals.
- Greater support from educational institutes should be made available to students for the development of entrepreneurship favored attitude and knowledge. The suitable mechanism such as entrepreneurship-related counseling, business incubation centers, and entrepreneurship specific programs can be used to provide such support.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

The study limitations include cross-sectional research design and data collection from a small sample. The adapted measure from the Western context for data collection is also a limitation of the study. Finally, data is only analyzed using the quantitative methodology which also remains a limitation of the study.

5.3 Directions for Future Research

A future researcher can focus on other suitable demographic factors such as ethnicity, geographical location, urban-rural status, religion, and nationality to further explore the influence of these factors on student's entrepreneurship intentions. Additionally, the use of different mediators and moderators can also be investigated to get a better understanding of the different factors and their influence on students' entrepreneurship intentions.

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