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Career Decisions and Opportunity Recognition as The Predictors of Entrepreneurial Intention

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The process of entrepreneurship has a significant reputation for the career-related choice gained by innovation and risk-taking. The present study proposes to investigate the career decisions, opportunity recognition (ORN) and entrepreneurial intention (EIN) levels among university students studying sports sciences in Pakistan. The present study explores the EIN of young adults greatly associated to their career decisions and recognizes opportunism. The study employed cross-sectional data collected throughout Pakistan using a survey questionnaire. In total, 282 valid samples are utilized for concluding the investigation. By applying the path analysis through AMOS, the findings suggest a positive and significant effect of career decisions [(conscious career decisions (CCD) and blind career decisions BCD] on EIN among sports science students. Irrespective of this, environmental factors (ENFs) have an insignificant impact on EIN. The outcomes of a research study may provide guidelines for policymakers and universities' authorities to accomplish and support the career development of students and accomplish the potential career catastrophes relating to the significant facts of unemployment issues and unemployed young adults. Moreover, the study would also assist the students in recognizing their career opportunities to tackle the unemployment trends. Further, the effect of ORN on EIN is also found to be positive and significant.

Introduction

In developing welfare for human society, entrepreneurship has emerged as a vital pillar for the production of resources. It signifies the landmark evolution from post-industrial society to a modern age. The notion of entrepreneurship conceptualizes proactive and innovative creativities and risk-oriented in developing the sector and the different regions. Further, entrepreneurship; entrepreneurial intention (*EIN*), entrepreneurial propensity, and the features of the entrepreneur significantly gained great domains. According to Soomro *et al.* (2020), entrepreneurship brings out economic growth, advanced technology, the initiative of new designs; propagation of the labour markets, and income equality to root out societal poverty. Thus, *EIN* can assist in developing environmental factors and achievement orientation, including labour market situations.

Meanwhile, the growth of entrepreneurs related to the career opportunities, age, self-esteem, knowledge level and dearth of jobs, social capital and institutional environment (Soomro et al., 2020; Abdelwahed et al., 2022; Kirtley and O'Mahony, 2023). University students and young adults develop the labour force in an advanced manner. This is essential to examine an *EIN* and preliminary circumstance through entrepreneurial tendency that requires converting the attitudes into actual behaviour. However, a career is theoretically termed as the personification of personal knowledge and skills; the type of specialty in a particular region; convenient experience (Shah & Soomro, 2023). According to Gerber et al. (2009), a career is the sequence of attitudes, deeds, or conduct that people exhibit concerning their lifelong employment. The earlier career plans of university students expressively render employability and development for a career in the future (Akoğlan & Dalkıranoğlu, 2013). This requires investigating the factors of career decisions and influencing university students to develop EIN (Bandura et al., 2001; Abdelwahed & Soomro, 2023). Moreover, the present study explores the effect of career decisions through EIN strategies among university students studying at the faculty of sports science in Pakistan. In a sequel, the outcomes of this research task would assist university students in developing their future careers and choice in terms of ORN and EIN.

Literature review and conceptualization

As in today's globally competitive environment and innovation-oriented arena, entrepreneurship transfers a new mode of knowledge focusing on human resources. In the range, this perspective; political and media exposure; academic investigations and the number of books; measures and actions and the integer of so-called entrepreneurs have been speedily growing. The scholars Soomro and Shah (2015), Memon et al. (2019), Shah and Soomro (2017) and Soomro and Shah (2023) suggest diverse factors. These, i.e. environmental, psychological and socio-economic factors, positively and significantly enhance the EIN among the students. Likewise, a quantitative study conducted by Canuzakov et al. (2017) among senior university students pursuing their degree in physical education and sports fields in Bishkek province of Kyrgyzstan found the factors such as innovation, self-confidence and risk-taking as the robust predictors of entrepreneurship. According to Bazzy et al. (2019), EIN can be developed by high levels leading to self-efficacy. The perceived desirability of

entrepreneurship plays a mediatory role in strengthening the relationship between the concept and EIN.

Similarly, effective education and training are necessary for students to obtain entrepreneurial skills. This enhances human knowledge and training, making people highly skilled. These skills count as the responsibility for raising people's propensity to start a business (Gieure et al., 2019). A research study by Mawson and Kasem (2019) underlined the personal development of independent refugee arrivals as connected to their migration experiences that may help form the intention and involvement in entrepreneurship. The EIN, professional attraction and perceived behavioural control factors were higher among sport science students in Lithuania than in Spain (González-Serrano et al., 2018). Pérez-Macías et al. (2019) claimed the significant impact of social capital on EIN. There remains a weak effect of demographic profile, social background and participation in entrepreneurship education (Franco et al., 2010). Factors including skills, competencies, and capabilities are stated as the most important elements influencing Indian management students for career choices (Agarwala, 2008).

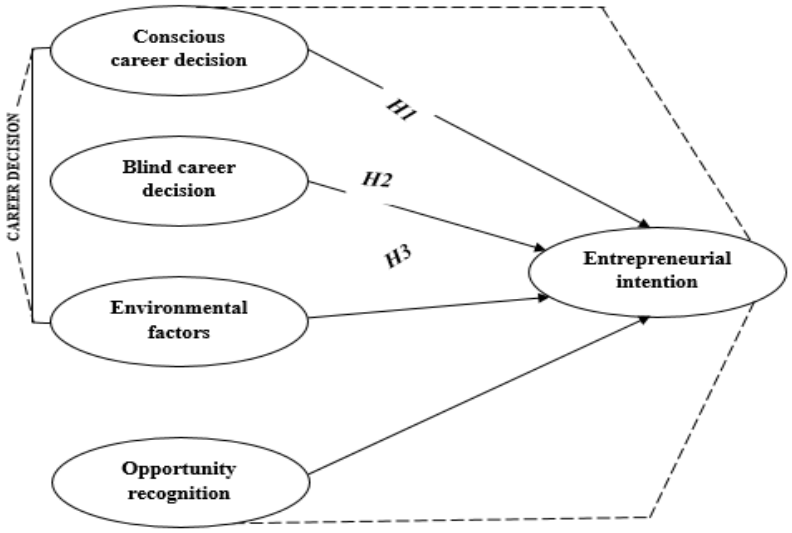
In Ghana, intrinsic value and employability/financial vision in their career choice decisions are predicted by the desired working conditions (Owusu et al., 2018). Meanwhile, the career choice of engineering students is more profoundly affected by implicit motives than clear or interpersonal motives. As stated by Gokuladas (2010), implicit motives significantly affect male students. Further, female students have been greatly influenced by explicit goals. More specifically, individual factors help promptly with the career choice of real estate students. These factors include the magnitude of initial salary, job security, personal career interest and future financial predictions (Ayodele, 2019). The study of Dalci and Özyapici (2018) revealed that collectivism and strong uncertainty avoidance is apply to the insignificant relationship between belief constructs and students' career ambitions in the accounting profession.

With regard to ORN, the ORN has remained an emerging area that best predicts EIN and entrepreneurship, specifically in the students' context (Jarvis, 2016; Oftedal et al., 2018; Hassan et al., 2020; Lim et al., 2023). In the early decision stage, it is crucial to investigate a suitable job and weigh the benefits and drawbacks of possible career paths. As a result, the domain of entrepreneurship recognized as the fundamental contribution of university students' career development to be perceptively assessed and including the basics of efficiently bearing in mind the circumstances and predictions (Akoğlan and Dalkıranoğlu, 2013; Abdelwahed and Soomro, 2023; Kirtley & O'Mahony, 2023) to undertake innovative-creative actions (Soomro et al., 2021). These initiatives may boost the national economy and produce societal norms. Extensively, entrepreneurship is mandatory creativity in sports, and entrepreneurship would be highly comfortable in inspiring the sports sector with innovative thoughts and revolution (Geri, 2013).

Consequently, the career decision method focuses on a well-constructive passage along with the agenda of an inclusive strategy and covers the moderately random sequence of the deed, for that there rises blind choice (Akoğlan & Dalkıranoğlu, 2013; Dalci & Özyapici, 2018; Kirtley & O'Mahony, 2023). Parting with this, the faculty students of sports science

prepare for the prevalent skills and strategies for adolescent people and develop the entrepreneurial risks. Entrepreneurship is conventionally associated with effective procedures and brick-and-mortar buildings. In addition to discussing the conceptual revolution, this infers innovative risks by including the various regional sports domains. Thus, the research task covers figure 1 to examine the influence of career decisions and ORN of sport faculty students for EIN.

Figure No 1: Conceptual framework of the study



Entrepreneurship is essential for developing plans and strategies for university students' careers (Kirtley & O'Mahony, 2023). Further, to assume innovative-creative actions (Soomro et al., 2021). Similar to how a career is a series of attitudes, happenings, or behaviours linked with a person's lifetime employment influence (Gerber et al., 2009). The earlier career plans of university students are expressively connected to their employability and future career development (Akoğlan & Dalkıranoğlu, 2013). The career decision method is an excellent path to nurturing youth's ambition for the opportunity (Lent & Brown, 2020; Lehtonen et al., 2022; Xu & Flores, 2023). The programs on entrepreneurship were more likely to involve an entrepreneurial activity with potential impacts on career decisions on EIN (Duong et al., 2023). The findings of the research study of Yildiz (2018) demonstrate a positive and significant impact of conscious career decisions and blind career decisions choice on EIN. On the other hand, environmental factors are not significantly associated with EI. The members of the faculty of sports science prepare young adults with specific skills and capabilities relating to the domains, and they also make them for entrepreneurial ventures. Furthermore, the development of healthy EIN is possible through ORN, which is confirmed by well-known scholars (Jarvis, 2016; Hassan et al., 2020; Lim et al., 2023). As a result, these relationships were established in university students, i.e. students of management, business,

commerce and engineering etc. However, the estimation of EIN through career decisions and ORN integration is still avoided, particularly among sports students. Thus, we suggest:

H1- CCD significantly and positively predicts EIN.

H2- BCD significantly and positively predicts EIN.

H3- ENFs significantly and positively predicts EIN.

H4- ORN significantly and positively predicts EIN.

Research methods

Study Design and Data Collection

The proposed research study employs a correlational research design. The nature of the data is based on the cross-sectional strategy and is covered through a survey questionnaire. The items for the survey questionnaire as adapted from the prevalent literature. The target participation of a research study selected the students pursuing an education in sports science from various universities in Pakistan. Meanwhile, convenience sampling was used to locate the desirable participants for this research study. Besides this, the survey questionnaire included two sections. The participants requested to fill in the demographic section in the first part. In the second, the data were collected for dependent and independent variables. A five-point Likert scale running out from the options:-agree=1; agree=2; neither agree nor disagree=3; disagree=4; totally disagree=5. Before the fulfilment of the questionnaire, there was taken valid consent and willingness of participants to participate in this research study.

Measures

Entrepreneurial scale- This scale is consisting of 36 items. The items are borrowed from Yılmaz and Sümbül (2009). These items were already applied to a sample of university students. The sample item of the scale is "I do not have any reservations about taking risks" and "I can foresee the future and be prepared in advance." Career decisions scale- This factor is measured on 30 items adapted from the study of Yusupu (2015). This scale comprises three sub-subscales, including CCD, BCD and ENFs. The CCD mentions the knowledgeable form of career track of individuals. Similarly, BCD suggests a need for more conversant decision-making categorized by inadequate time, impulsiveness, and irresponsibility. The BCD contains indecisiveness and discontent. Last, ENFs mention the disparity between an individual's wishes and family desires. The sample items of the scale are "I can acquire new skills to be successful in my career", "I am not sure whether I like my current job or not", and "I chose this career because of my family; thus, I am not very much interested in my current studies". Opportunity recognition (ORN) - The researchers measured ORN on five items adapted from Ozgen and Baron (2007). The sample item of the scale is "I see many opportunities to start and grow a business"

Data Analysis and Results

Demography of the Respondents

The demography of participants highlights that most participants numbered male rather than female. A considerable number of the participants were between 21-30 (n=241; 85.81 %), and only 2.84 % (n=08) of participants stated as above 31 years of age. As per the father's job of the participants, 34.75 % (n=98) engaged as private employees in different organizations. Similarly, the majority of mothers of the participants were noted as housewives (n=93; 32.98 %). The majority of students in sports (78.72%; n=222) study during the daytime. On the other hand, some students (21.28%; n=60) study in the evening programs at different physical and health institutes. Meanwhile, 50.36 % (n=142) declared the family income of students as 31-40 thousand Pak Rupees (PKR) monthly income. Only 1.42 % (n=04) of students explained that their family's income is more than 51 thousand (Table 1).

Table No1: Demographic Detail of Respondents

	Category	***Frequency***	***%***
Gender	Male	146	51.77
	Female	136	48.23
	Total	282	100.0
Age	Less than 21	32	11.35
	21-30	242	85.81
	Above 31	08	2.84
	Total	282	100.0
Father’s job	Public	76	26.95
	Private	98	34.75
	Self-employed	20	7.10
	Retired	88	31.20
	Total	282	100.0
Mother’s job	Public	42	14.90
	Private	62	21.98
	Self-employed	48	17.02
	Retired	37	13.12
	House wives	93	32.98
	Total	282	100.0
Study time	Daytime	222	78.72
	Evening	060	21.28
	Total	282	100.0
Family income (per month)	1-20 thousand	12	4.25
	21-30 thousand	44	15.60
	31-40 thousand	142	50.36
	41-50 thousand	80	28.37
	51 and above	04	1.42
	Total	282	100.0

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Confirmation

The descriptive statistics illuminate the high level of the mean (3.789) for EIN and the lower level of the mean for environmental factors, as noticed in the data. Similarly, the maximum range of standard deviation (1.9992) was observed for environmental factors; further, the minimum score of standard deviation appeared as (1.0121) for EIN (Table 2). As a result, the overall factors (predictors and criterion) remained within the suitable scores (Table 2). Thus, Cronbach's alpha reliability has assessed internal consistency among the scale items.

Table No 2: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Assessment

	Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's alpha (α)
1	EIN	3.789	1.0121	0.823
2	CCD	3.778	1.2482	0.798
3	BCD	3.218	1.1782	0.862
4	ENFs	2.331	1.9992	0.741
5	ORN	3.132	1.342	0.841

Note(s): EIN=Entrepreneurial intention; CCD= Conscious career decision; BCD= Blind career decision; ENFs=Environmental factors; ORN= Opportunity recognition

Hypotheses Evaluation

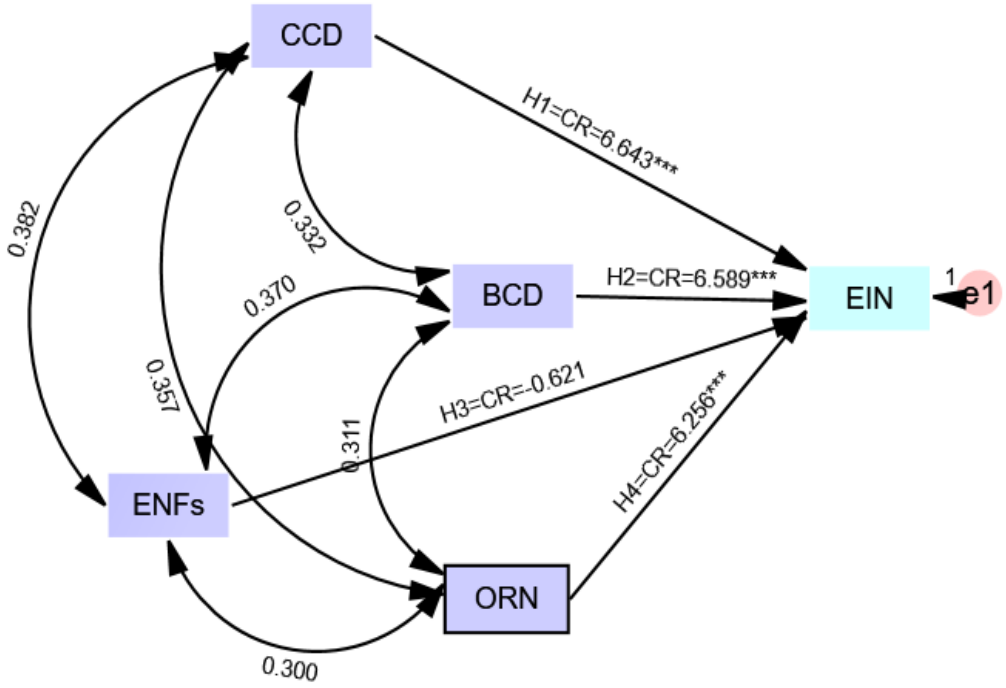
Current study applied path analysis through Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS). As presented in Figure 2 and Table 3, the effects highlighted the significant positive effect of CCD on EIN (SE=0.043; CR=6.643; P< 0.01). Hence, H1 is supported. Likewise, the BCD significantly positively affects EIN (SE=0.042; CR=6.589; P< 0.01). Thus, H2 is accepted. On the other hand, the study does not confirm a positive significant effect of ENFs on EIN (SE=0.021; CR=-0.621; P>0.01), which rejected H3. Finally, the investigation demonstrated a positive predictive impact of ORN on EIN ((SE=0.319; CR=6.256; P< 0.01). As a result, the data accepts the final hypothesis (H4).

Table No 3: Path Coefficients

H.No.	Independent variables	Path	Dependent variable	Estimate	SE	CR	P	Decision
1	CCD	→	EIN	0.217	0.043	6.643	***	[√]
2	BCD	→	EIN	0.356	0.042	6.589	***	[√]
3	ENFs	→	EIN	-0.010	0.021	-0.621	0.439	[X]
4	ORN	→	EIN	0.378	0.319	6.256	***	[√]

Note: SE=Standard error; CR=Critical ratio; P=significance level ***p<0.05; [√] = accepted; [X] = Rejected; EIN=Entrepreneurial intention; CCD= Conscious career decision; BCD= Blind career decision; ENFs=Environmental factors; ORN= Opportunity recognition

Figure No 2: Path Model



Note(s): Significance level ***p<0.05
EIN=Entrepreneurial intention; CCD= Conscious career decision; BCD= Blind career decision; ENFs=Environmental factors; ORN= Opportunity recognition

Discussion and Conclusion

In the advanced world, entrepreneurship is recognized as a substantial stand-up for career-related choice and innovation. The study proposed to gauge the influence of career decisions on the students pursuing an education in sports science relating to *EIN* in Pakistan—the base of a study comprised of cross-sectional data gained by a survey questionnaire. The results illuminated a significant positive effect of *CCD* and *BCD* on *EIN*. On the other hand, there remains an insignificant effect of *EMFs* on *EIN*. These results as supported by Akoğlan and Dalkıranoğlu (2013); Yildiz (2018) and Lent and Brown (2020), who claimed the same results in earlier studies.

Further, the present study supports previous findings that indicate the relationship between entrepreneurial development and career decisions (Saffari et al., 2013; Lent & Brown, 2020; Duong et al., 2023; Xu & Flores, 2023). In this way, our results reflect that the sports science students are consistent with their career choice. The Sports science students perceived that entrepreneurs provide comfortable services from the initiative to the end level, like a formative stage to the delivery point and contributing to employment and development for national growth. However, these students of universities are highly conscious of any consequences at the global level. Thus, they developed the notion that entrepreneurship is a

valuable source and stated progressively significant career choices for university students. Career choice is associated standard with the modification that could contribute to adolescent students' entrepreneurial tendencies.

Besides, the EIN of sports students is viewed as a significant possibility for adults and the development of society. The faculty students of sports science relating to career consciousness and choice are concerned with entrepreneurial propensity. Adolescents are moderately fascinated by a new form of employability and entrepreneurship indicating the outflow mode concerning possible unemployment. The perception of a career covers the entire efforts, including adaptive, advancement and self-improvement (Akoğlan & Dalkıranoğlu, 2013). In the labour market and modern development, the career concept and appropriate decisions have been distorted to fulfil the idea of entrepreneurship. Morris et al. (2001) claimed that the implication of perceptions, i.e., acquiring resources, availing opportunities, optimism, risk-taking, hard work, and leadership stated entrepreneurs' significant features. In the same manner, universities are predictable to offer opportunities for career choice and support in handling an entrepreneurial career path. Moreover, the investigation exerted a significant positive effect of ORN on EIN, which is also reinforced by several scholars like Jarvis (2016), Hassan et al. (2020), Lehtonen et al. (2022) and Lim et al. (2023) who confirmed the ORN as the substantial predictor of EIN. These positive connections reflect that students developed their EIN through ORN to pursue their career opportunities in entrepreneurship.

In a sequel, the overall results suggested the significant positive effect of CCD and BCD on EIN, and there remains an insignificant effect of EMFs on EIN. Moreover, ORN is the most considerable analyst of EIN also. The outcomes of a research task focused on the requirement for student-centered and non-traditional performances that students are making ready for the future job as categorized by technology innovation. The findings of the research task availed the specific implications and recommendations. Sports science universities must deliver counselling services and career development to adolescents through their respective academic education. Adolescents should be aware of future employability choices and entrepreneurial possibilities. Adolescents should ponder the case and look outward at the public-private employment dichotomy. Universities are particularly obliged to accomplish and assist students' career potential and development and solve the issues of unemployment and unemployed youth.

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