

Proactive Personality and Emotional Intelligence as determinants of Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy among University Students: An Evidence from KP Public Sector Universities

Tufail Nawaz*¹, Shumaila Hashim², Aziz Javed³, Muhammad Kamran Khan⁴, Ahmad Ali⁵

^{1*3,5} Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan.

²Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan.

⁴Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan.

Corresponding author: tufail.nawaz@gmail.com

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Present study aims to examine the determining role of two personality attributes namely proactive personality and emotional intelligence towards shaping entrepreneurial self-efficacy among university students. A quantitative approach by floating questionnaire to the business students of final year enrolled in various public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan, is adopted by the researcher. Total 352 students selected through simple random sampling technique were surveyed. Gathered data was analyzed through applying various descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Empirical results obtained from the data analyses contended that both the personality attributes i.e., proactive personality and emotional intelligence play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial self-efficacy among university students in the present study context. Based on the findings it is contended that entrepreneurial self-efficacy can be strengthen with strengthening the proactive personality and emotional intelligence attributes of students.

1 Introduction

Due to its substantial influence on the socioeconomic growth of both established and developing countries, researchers and educators have become more and more interested in the decision to pursue entrepreneurship as a professional path (Kong et al., 2020). Numerous research have been done to determine the environmental and human elements that influence people's decision-making and readiness to engage in the difficult process of starting new firms, especially among university students (Mastura & Rashid, 2008; BarNir et al., 2011). In these researches, the idea of planned behavior, first forth by Ajzen (1991), has frequently been employed to explain people's career decisions and actions. The theory of planned behavior effectively predicts some specific behaviors and intentions like common exercise among adolescents (Lu et al., 2022) and behavioral factors (Wahidmurni et al., 2020). This theory is widely used in student's entrepreneurship related studies (Bagis, 2022). As a complicated and deliberate behavior involving cognitive processes and capable of being properly predicted by their intents, they have also looked into students' choice of an entrepreneurial career path. Scholars argue that students' entrepreneurial intentions can ultimately determine whether they choose a career as an entrepreneur.

According to the concept of planned behavior, choosing a particular behavior, like starting a business, is dependent on the interaction of three motivating and enabling elements. First, students' perceptions of their ability to control their behavior influence their perceptions of their capacity and aptitude for entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial abilities have a big impact on students' confidence in their capacity to carry out the tasks required for starting their own firms. The second aspect is how they view entrepreneurship, which reveals how much they value it and how they perceive the results and repercussions of creating their own businesses. This attitude is influenced by a variety of internal and external factors, including the individual's entrepreneurial abilities and the value and encouragement given to entrepreneurship in their immediate environment. Subjective and social norms, in addition to representing students' impressions of how their family and friends see and support the development of a new enterprise, also show their propensity to follow such norms. Their likelihood of intending to pursue entrepreneurship as a future career path increases with the level of support they receive from close friends and family. These aspects influence how students intend to engage in entrepreneurship and bolster their enthusiasm and ambition to start their own firms. The precise variables that affect students' entrepreneurial inclinations, however, are not well understood.

Prior studies have shown that both individual and contextual factors can influence and direct students' entrepreneurial inclinations. For university students who want to start their own business, it's essential to recognize and comprehend the distinct aspects and how they interact with one another in order to strengthen their decision. This comprehension can also aid them in making the move from idea to actualized business. Self-efficacy is the most important personal component influencing students' ambitions to start their own business, according to earlier empirical study. When referring to self-efficacy in the context of entrepreneurship, people are referring to their expectations for the consequences of starting a new firm as well as their beliefs in their capacity to carry out the tasks required for doing so successfully (McGee et al. 2009). Lot of literature is available focusing the entrepreneurial behavior of individuals however very less are known about the mechanisms by which entrepreneurial self-efficacy is shaped. The goal of current study is to

empirically investigate the elements namely proactive personality and emotional intelligence, influencing entrepreneurial self-efficacy of university graduates.

Entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial self-efficacy are both significantly influenced by personality, claims Wang (2016). Proactive personality is a distinct group of personality traits that support entrepreneurship. The ability to discover and grab possible possibilities is a trait of proactive people, which makes being proactive essential for properly recognizing opportunities (Nawaz, 2000). They take the initiative to aggressively search their environment for chances and seize those opportunities (Bateman & Crant, 1993). According to Mustafa et al. (2016), their proactive character gives them the ability to have an impact on their environment and heightens their level of entrepreneurial awareness.

Being self-assured and having a high level of self-efficacy are essential for those who are just stepping- into entrepreneurship field. Entrepreneurial effectiveness is significantly fueled by a person's strong faith in their talents to succeed in business. Salvador (2008) and Cárdenas et al. (2020) emphasized that one's view of one's own level of self-efficacy as an entrepreneur might be influenced by emotional intelligence. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy and a number of facets of emotional intelligence have a strong and favorable relationship. Therefore, those with high emotional intelligence are more likely to think an entrepreneurial career is realistic and to feel competent handling the uncertain conditions involved with entrepreneurship. When faced with unclear and stressful situations, they succeed at controlling their emotions, keeping a cheerful and collected demeanor, and avoiding worry and dissatisfaction (Nawaz, 2000; Nawaz Kalyar et al., 2019).

Lot of research on entrepreneurship is available, however it is important that there is scarcity of research specifically focused on developing countries like Pakistan, particularly the province of KP. One notable study conducted by Ullah, ahmad and Manzoor (2013) and Khan et al., (2022), explored the elements that shape entrepreneurial orientation in the context of KP province, but their research targeted entrepreneurs rather than students. Therefore, the present study is the first attempt to investigate the determinants of entrepreneurial self-efficacy among university students, specifically in the context of KP province, Pakistan. Their study specifically examines the influence of proactive personality and emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial self-efficacy among university students.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Proactive personality and entrepreneurial self-efficacy

The theory of planned behavior's (TPB's) perceived feasibility mechanism, the execution achievement mechanism of the social learning theory, and self-efficacy expectations (SEE) are all thought to have a favorable impact on self-efficacy. These two mechanisms are expected to be the main drivers of proactive personality's expected positive effects on self-efficacy. People with strong proactivity abilities are more likely to seize opportunities when they arise and use them to better their circumstances and the situations of those around them (Fuller & Marler, 2009).

In their model of proactive motivation and its antecedents from Parker and Collins (2010) hypothesized that self-efficacy is directly influenced by proactive personality. By presenting a similar justification for the connection between proactive personality and self-efficacy, Wu and Parker (2011) elaborated on this association. Furthermore, Crant's (2000) research showed that

proactive personality is a trait that is constant across a range of contexts and activities. However, empirical literature on the cross-contextual nature of proactive personality is scarce.

Having a proactive personality involves taking responsibility for potential psychological risks, as individuals with this trait are typically free from situational constraints (Bateman et al., 1993). Proactive individuals set ambitious goals and persist until those goals are achieved (Crant, 1996). Consequently, students with a proactive personality are likely to establish challenging goals and utilize all available resources, such as seeking new information, adopting new practices, and employing novel strategies, to enhance their position or achieve their goals. These proactive actions may face resistance and uncertainty from others. However, students with proactive personalities should possess the confidence to establish proactive goals and handle subsequent challenges before taking action to influence existing conditions. Persons having high level of self-efficacy believes in their abilities to be successful in any particular area and this belief strongly influences their proactive goal setting.

According to Morrison et al. (1999), self-efficacy is critical for people with proactive personalities since it significantly influences how in control they feel and how likely they are to succeed. According to Barling and Beattie (1983), individuals are more likely to put in the effort and perseverance necessary to complete difficult activities when they have higher task-related self-efficacy. This type of self-efficacy increases people's confidence in their capacity to overcome challenges and pursue more challenging goals (Locke & Latham, 1990), which leads to rekindled motivation (Lent et al., 1987) that is essential for enacting environmental improvements. Consequently, students who possess positive beliefs about their academic abilities, separate from their actual skills, often perform exceptionally well in their educational pursuits (Gafoor & Ashraf, 2012).

Therefore, proactive individuals are likely to have more personal mastery experiences compared to passive individuals who are responsive to their surroundings but fail to take action in recognizing opportunities. Personal mastery experiences contribute to the development of self-efficacy in proactive personality. Similarly, proactive individuals are also expected to exhibit a high perception of opportunity recognition in the field of entrepreneurship. As the entrepreneurial occupation requires individuals to identify, seize, and capitalize on opportunities for driving change, it aligns precisely with the characteristics of proactive individuals who enjoy taking action to identify opportunities and subsequently shape their environment. Proactive individuals are likely to perceive entrepreneurship as highly achievable because their abilities align with the requirements of this occupation. Based on the aforementioned explanations, the researcher derived the following hypotheses.

H1a: Proactive personality and entrepreneurial self-efficacy are significantly positively associated among university graduates

H2a: Proactive personality have a significant impact on entrepreneurial self-efficacy of university graduates

2.2 Emotional Intelligence relationship with Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a significant factor that has been shown to influence behavior in various ways. Individuals' beliefs in their own capabilities determine the initiation of actions, the level of effort exerted, and the persistence in the face of challenges and setbacks to achieve goals (Bandura,

1977). Bandura identified four primary sources of information that can impact self-efficacy: performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and judgments of one's own physiological and emotional states.

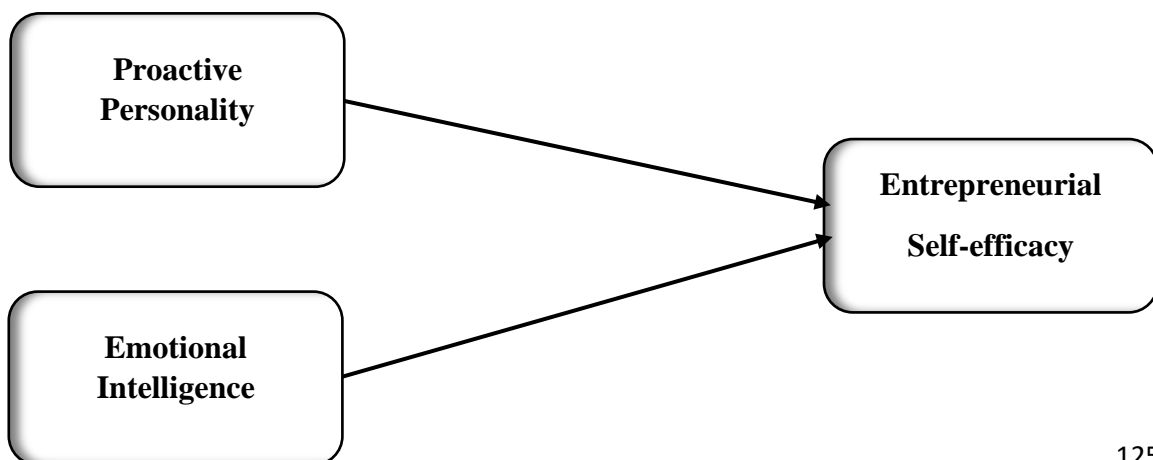
Individuals are more likely to have higher levels of self-efficacy when they believe that unpleasant feelings don't pose a serious threat to them, according to social learning theory. Negative emotions often affect emotionally sophisticated people less easily. Those who have lower levels of emotional intelligence frequently experience higher degrees of anger, depression, and frustration than those who have higher levels of emotional intelligence, who typically experience pleasant emotions more frequently (Carmeli, 2003). Because they are flexible and have the capacity to comprehend and control their own emotions, emotionally intelligent people are also adaptive. Additionally, according to Daus and Ashkanasy (2005), they are well-versed in the sources of stress and adept at using coping mechanisms.

An important element in fostering entrepreneurial success is self-belief. Slvador (2008) claims that because some aspects of emotional intelligence show a strong positive link with entrepreneurial self-efficacy, they help to shape how people perceive their own ability to succeed as entrepreneurs. Consequently, individuals with high emotional intelligence are more likely to perceive the entrepreneurial profession as viable and feel confident in navigating risky situations associated with entrepreneurship. Their adeptness in managing their emotions enables them to remain positive and composed, avoiding feelings of anxiety and disappointment when faced with uncertain and challenging circumstances. Humphrey (2013) proposed that emotionally intelligent individuals demonstrate resilience when encountering obstacles in starting their businesses, and they are more likely to persist even after experiencing setbacks and crisis situations. As a result, emotionally intelligent individuals are expected of having high entrepreneurial self-efficacy regarding their abilities. Therefore, based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are derived for the present study

H_{1b}: Emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial self-efficacy are significantly positively related among university graduates

H_{2b}: Emotional intelligence have a significant impact on entrepreneurial self-efficacy of university graduates

Figure No 1: Theoretical Framework



3 Methods and Procedures

Target population of current study includes all final year students of business administration program enrolled in different public sector higher educational institutions of KP, Pakistan. Data about the exact number of students enrolled was collected from public sector universities concern departments. Total 2038 students were enrolled in the final year of their academic journey. 335 sample size was drawn using Yamane (1969) formula however due the biggest issue of response rate facing by researchers in the field of social sciences, researcher floated 400 sets of close-ended questionnaire to the respondents for data collection in anticipation to overcome this issue. 352 of which complete in all aspects were used for data analyses. Respondents from the target population were chosen through applying simple random sampling technique as the target population was homogeneous.

3.1 Measures

In the present study, the measurement scales utilized were adopted from existing literature. Proactive personality was evaluated using 17-items scale created by Bateman and Crant (1993). Emotional intelligence was assessed using a 16-items scale developed by Wong and Law (2002). The construct of entrepreneurial self-efficacy was measured using a 5-items scale originally developed by Schere et al. (1989) and also employed by Pihie and Bagheri (2013).

4 Data Analysis and Findings

For analyzing gathered data, scale reliability & validity, correlation and regression statistical tools were employed.

4.1 Scale Reliability and Validity

As stated by Haynes et al. (1995), an essential step in data analysis for social research is to check the scale validity and reliability used by the researcher.

Table No 1: Reliability and Validly statistics of Proactive personality

Reliability and Validity Statistics (PP)		N=352		
Reliability coefficient (α)		.831		
KMO measures of sampling adequacy		.752	Matrix	
Bartlett's test of Sphercity	Approx. Chi-Squa	1591.555	Items	Factor Loading
	Df	1.36	PPQ1	.735
	Sig.	.000	PPQ2	.681
			PPQ3	.795
	Required	Computed	PPQ4	.678
KMO test	=or>=.7	.752	PPQ5	.603
Bartlett's test	=0r<.05	.000	PPQ6	.580
Factor Loading	=0r>.4		PPQ7	.670
			PPQ8	.686

PPQ9	.684
PPQ10	.591
PPQ11	.754
PPQ12	.672
PPQ13	.720
PPQ14	.749
PPQ15	.736
PPQ16	.681
PPQ17	.757

Scale reliability may be checked through checking the Cronbach’s alpha value, while scale validity was assessed through exploratory factor analysis, including measures such as the Bartlett Test of Sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test to determine sample adequacy. The obtained results are presented below

Table No 2: Reliability and Validly statistics of Emotional Intelligence

Reliability and Validity Statistics (EmI)		N=352		
Reliability coefficient (α)		.811		
KMO measures of sampling adequacy		.749	Matrix	
Bartlett’s test of Sphercity	Approx. Chi-Squa	1788.102	Items	Factor Loading
	df	1.20	EmIQ1	.592
	Sig.	.000	EmIQ2	.605
			EmIQ3	.628
	Required	Computed	EmIQ4	.523
KMO test	=or= \geq .7	.749	EmIQ5	.446
Bartlett’s test	=0r= $<$.05	.000	EmIQ6	.595
Factor Loading	=0r= $>$.4		EmIQ7	.466
			EmIQ8	.639
			EmIQ9	.515
			EmIQ10	.430
			EmIQ11	.522
			EmIQ12	.602
			EmIQ13	.552
			EmIQ14	.578
			EmIQ15	.505
			EmIQ16	.486

Table No 3: Reliability and Validity Statistics of Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy

Reliability and Validity Statistics (ESE)		N=352		
Reliability coefficient (α)		.758		
KMO measures of sampling adequacy		.798	Matrix	
Bartlett’s test of Sphercity	Approx. Chi-Squa	410.453	Items	Factor Loading
	Df	10	ESEQ1	.725
	Sig.	.000	ESEQ2	.553
	Required	Computed	ESEQ3	.741
KMO test	=or= \geq .7	.798	ESEQ4	.797
Bartlett’s test	=0r= $<$.05	.000	ESEQ5	.754
Factor Loading	=0r= $>$.4			

4.2 Correlation Analysis

For testing Hypotheses H_{1a} & H_{1b}, correlation analysis was conducted. Empirical results obtained from the analysis are presented in table 4 as under Results in the table 4 presents the results about correlation analysis of current study variables. Results contended a significant positive relationship of both, proactive personality and emotional intelligence, with entrepreneurial self-efficacy having ($\beta=.381, p=.000$) and ($\beta=.283, p=.000$) respectively among university students in the present study context. Hence both the hypotheses H_{1a} and H_{1b} are accepted.

Table No 4: Correlation Analysis Coefficients

Construct		Proactive Personality	Emotional Intelligence	Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy
Proactive Personality (PP)	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-		
	N	352		
Emotional Intelligence (EmI)	Pearson Correlation	.435**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-	
	N	352	352	
Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy (ESE)	Pearson Correlation	.381**	.283**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	-
	N	352	352	352

** Correlation is significant at the level 0.01

Results in the table 4 presents the results about correlation analysis of current study variables. Results contended a significant positive relationship of both, proactive personality and emotional intelligence, with entrepreneurial self-efficacy having ($\beta=.381, p=.000$) and ($\beta=.283, p=.000$) respectively among university students in the present study context. Hence both the hypotheses H_{1a} and H_{1b} are accepted.

4.3 Regression Analysis

For testing Hypotheses H_{2a} and H_{2b} developed for present study, linear regression analysis was conducted. Empirical results obtained from analysis are presented in table 4 below

Table No 4: Regression Analysis

Model Summary											
Model	R	R ²	Adjust. R ²	SEE	Change Statistics						
					R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	F	Sig.
1	.402	.161	.157	.58962	.161	33.579	2	349	.000	33.579	.000



		Coefficients				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.675	.261		6.410	.000
	Proactive Personality	.416	.071	.317	5.823	.000
	Emotional Intelligence	.134	.051	.144	2.648	.008
a. Predictors: Proactive Personality & Emotional Intelligence		b. Criterion: Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy				

The first portion of above table 4 illustrates the empirical results obtained from regression analysis about R, R², adjusted R², F statistics and overall model significance levels. R value represent the degree of association between study variables of current study i.e. .402 which means that almost 40% change will be caused by one unit variation in the value of predicting variable. In the above table, the value of R² shows the collective variation occurs in the value of criterion construct due to change occur in the value of independent variable i.e. .161 which means total 16% change in dependent variable caused due to change in independent variable. The value of adjusted R² should be near to the value of R² which in the present case is also recorded satisfactory i.e., .157.

The value of F shows the model fitness which crossed the minimum required value in present study analysis whereas the Sig. =.000 shows that the overall model calculating the impact of predictor on criterion variable is highly significant. Second portion of above table 5 presents the results about individual variation occurs in dependent variable due to independent variable. Here the variation in entrepreneurial self-efficacy caused by proactive personality is $\beta = .371$ whereas by emotional intelligence is $\beta = .144$ with p-value .000 recorded Hence both the hypotheses H_{2a} and H_{2b} developed for the current study are accepted.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

The primary aim of current study was to investigate that how proactive personality and emotional intelligence contribute to the development of entrepreneurial self-efficacy among university graduates. The participants included final-year business administration students from various public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The research employed a quantitative methodology to gather empirical data, which was subsequently analyzed using statistical tools such as descriptive analysis, correlation, and regression analysis.

The empirical results of the current study contended a significant positive correlation between proactive personality and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, indicating that proactive personality plays a substantial role in shaping the entrepreneurial self-efficacy of university students. The aforementioned results are in line with Wu and Parker's (2011) conclusions, adding credence to their earlier work. The study also discovered a substantial cause and effect association between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and emotional intelligence among students majoring in business management who were in their last year. According to a previous study by Salvador (2008), emotional intelligence appears to have a considerable impact on entrepreneurial self-



efficacy. According to Salvador, some elements of emotional intelligence have a direct impact on one's ability to succeed in the workplace.

The study's result highlights the significance of proactive personality and emotional intelligence in the growth of entrepreneurial self-efficacy among university graduates. According to the research, those who are more naturally proactive and emotionally intelligent are also more likely to have higher levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which boosts their confidence and optimism in pursuing entrepreneurial goals.

4.1 Managerial and Practical Implications

Present study yielded some significant association of proactive personality and emotional intelligence with entrepreneurial self-efficacy of university students. These findings have some important implications for various stakeholders.

Universities play a crucial role in shaping students' personalities. They can infuse the spirit of risk-taking, leadership and innovation in the minds of students. To foster awareness about the field of entrepreneurship, it is recommended on the basis of current study findings that universities should conduct different types of activities related to entrepreneurship and should involve students in these entrepreneurial activities. Universities should encourage students to engage in projects such as developing self-business proposals, managing small businesses on campus, or participating in flea markets can provide them with valuable business experiences. These experiences can enhance their personal attributes and ultimately lead them to consider venturing into new business opportunities. Understanding how entrepreneurial intention is shaped is a significant implication of this study, as it can help guide the process of encouraging entrepreneurial mindset among students.

Government and policymakers can derive a significant benefit from the findings of this study. By integrating young graduates who have aspirations of starting their own businesses into their future plans, they can effectively boost entrepreneurial activities within the economy. To foster an entrepreneurial culture in the country, the government should extend support to individuals with entrepreneurial self-efficacy through financial assistance and establishment of conducive infrastructure. Moreover, it is crucial to identify and address obstacles that deter individuals from pursuing entrepreneurship as a career, with the aim of eliminating them entirely.

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