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Entrepreneurship Education and Employability: The Mediating Effect of Entrepreneurial Intention Among University Students

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KEYWORDS
-Education; starting entrepreneurs; entrepreneurial skills; entrepreneurial intention; employability..

ABSTRACT
This study assesses how entrepreneurship education influences the entrepreneurial intentions and employability of students. It also investigates the mediation effect of entrepreneurial intentions on the relationship between entrepreneurial education and employability, as well as the direct effects on employability. In this research, a quantitative method was used to gather data from 397 university students through a survey questionnaire measured on a seven-point Likert scale using a convenience sampling method. We utilized structural equation modelling (SEM) to examine the data. ACMV model was used to evaluate the model's fitness, validity, reliability and of the data, and an SEM technique was used to test the hypotheses. The study found that entrepreneurship education could boost students' employability as well as their desire to start their own businesses. It shows how important entrepreneurship education is for learning the skills and knowledge needed to start a business. The study also suggests that having entrepreneurial intentions can enhance one's employability. This study reveals a heightened understanding of how entrepreneurship education impacts on entrepreneurial intention and employability. These insights can guide improvements in entrepreneurship programs to align with local employment needs. Moreover, the identified mediator, entrepreneurial intentions, presents a targeted opportunity for intervention, suggesting practical ways to cultivate entrepreneurial skills and mindset, ultimately enhancing employability prospects in the region..

1. INTRODUCTION

technological advancement, digital transformation, and globalization are rapidly reshaping lab or markets worldwide (Masud et al., 2021; Nhleko & Westhuizen, 2022; World Economic Forum [WEF], 2023). The acceleration of automation, artificial intelligence, and platform-based economies has significantly altered the nature of work and required skill sets (OECD, 2023; WEF, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified these structural shifts, producing widespread disruptions in global employment systems. It led to increased unemployment rates, labour market uncertainty, and heightened vulnerability among university graduates (Barba-Sánchez et al., 2023; Gazi et al., 2023; International Labour Organization [ILO], 2022; Zhu et al., 2022).

In developing economies such as India these disruptions have had profound consequences. The ILO (2022) reported a noticeable increase in unemployment during the post-pandemic period, particularly among youth populations. Despite the steady annual output of graduates, only a small proportion express intentions to establish entrepreneurial ventures, with the majority preferring salaried employment (Porfírio et al., 2023). However, reliance solely on traditional employment pathways is increasingly unsustainable in volatile labour markets (Tomlinson, 2021). In this context, strengthening entrepreneurship education (EE) and employability competencies has become a strategic necessity (Pardo-Garcia & Barac, 2020; Ramadani et al., 2022).

The Government of Bangladesh's Perspective Plan 2021–2041 (Vision 2041) emphasizes poverty eradication, sustainable economic development, and innovation-driven growth (Rahman, 2023; Zakaria et al., 2023). Entrepreneurship is positioned as a central mechanism for achieving these national objectives. Opting for self-employment is increasingly viewed as an effective alternative to traditional wage employment (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022; Gazi et al., 2022). Entrepreneurship not only supports individual income generation but also stimulates broader economic development through innovation, job

creation, and productivity enhancement (Amorós et al., 2021; Aparicio et al., 2022; Audretsch & Belitski, 2021).

Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as a catalyst for sustainable development and inclusive growth (Bouncken et al., 2022; Porfírio et al., 2023; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2022). It enhances economic dynamism by generating new firms and employment opportunities (Kostakis & Tsagarakis, 2022; Rahman et al., 2022). Moreover, exposure to entrepreneurship education enables students to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, opportunity-recognition skills, resilience, creativity, and risk-management capabilities (Vuorio et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2014). According to Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993), investment in education enhances individuals' productive capacities, thereby improving both entrepreneurial success and employability outcomes. Recent meta-analytical evidence further confirms that entrepreneurship education significantly influences entrepreneurial intentions and competencies (Bazan, 2022; Nabi et al., 2017; Nowiński et al., 2020).

In both developed and developing economies, graduate entrepreneurship contributes to national competitiveness and regional development (Paul & Shrivastava, 2015; Ramadani et al., 2022). Universities are increasingly recognized as entrepreneurial ecosystems that foster innovation and venture creation (Guerrero et al., 2021; Siegel & Wright, 2015). The integration of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) competencies into entrepreneurship curricula has become particularly important to prepare students for digitally driven markets (Killingberg et al., 2020; Nhleko & Westhuizen, 2022). Digital literacy, adaptability, and innovation capacity are now core employability requirements (OECD, 2023; WEF, 2023).

Although entrepreneurship education has been widely studied in relation to entrepreneurial intentions, fewer studies have directly examined its influence on graduate employability (Mittal & Raghuvaran, 2021; Succi & Canovi, 2020). Employability encompasses the skills, knowledge, adaptability, and competencies that enable individuals to obtain, maintain, and progress in employment (Mezhoudi et al., 2023; Tomlinson, 2021). In contemporary labour markets, employability is increasingly linked to proactive career behaviours, innovation capability, and opportunity recognition (Clarke, 2018; Donald et al., 2022).

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) is conceptually linked to employability, as individuals with strong entrepreneurial aspirations tend to develop competencies such as problem-solving, resilience, opportunity identification, and leadership (Hodzic et al., 2015; Hossain et al., 2021). Drawing upon the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), entrepreneurial intention reflects a planned cognitive state that precedes entrepreneurial behaviour. Empirical evidence suggests that students with higher entrepreneurial intentions are more adaptable and demonstrate stronger employability attributes (Cui et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). However, the mediating role of entrepreneurial intention in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and employability remains insufficiently explored, particularly in developing Asian contexts.

Despite growing scholarly interest, several research gaps persist. First, prior studies have largely examined entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, and employability independently rather than within an integrated structural framework (Adu et al., 2020; Mittal & Raghuvaran, 2021). Second, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the extent to which entrepreneurial intention enhances employability outcomes. Third, the mediating role of entrepreneurial intention between entrepreneurship education and employability has rarely been tested using structural equation modelling in the context of Bangladesh.

To address these gaps, the present study empirically investigates the interrelationships among entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, and employability using structural equation modelling (SEM). Data were collected from 397 university students in Bangladesh. By integrating Human Capital Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, this study proposes and tests a comprehensive conceptual model. The findings provide both theoretical advancement and practical implications for policymakers, educators, and higher education institutions in developing economies by demonstrating how entrepreneurship education enhances students' confidence, motivation, competencies, and employability prospects.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- **RQ1:** Does entrepreneurship education in promote entrepreneurial intentions?
- **RQ2:** Does entrepreneurship education enhance university students' employability?
- **RQ3:** Does entrepreneurial intention mediate the relationship between entrepreneurship education and employability?

This study contributes to the literature by advancing understanding of how entrepreneurship education shapes employability outcomes through entrepreneurial intention, offering a framework for future empirical investigations in emerging economies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical ground and research model-Entrepreneurship education encompasses a wide array of methodologies, including causal and linear planning, mindset cultivation, and process-oriented approaches. However, a definitive framework for associating specific outcomes with distinct types of entrepreneurship education remains elusive (Cui et al., 2021; Coetzee et al., 2016). An influential factor in the efficacy of entrepreneurship education is the individual's intention to become an entrepreneur (Bozward et al., 2022). Current research is mostly about how Entrepreneurship Education (EE) affects entrepreneurial intentions (EI). This research often uses the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) (Shapero & Sokol, 1982), which are both based on theories of motivation. TPB is widely employed in the social and behavioural sciences to explore how entrepreneurship education influences students' inclination to embark on entrepreneurial ventures. Known for elucidating intents and behaviours, TPB particularly shines in the realm of business initiation (Uddin et al., 2022; George & Bock, 2011).

As demonstrated by Krueger and Carsrud (1993), the application of TPB gauges the likelihood of engaging in a particular behaviour. This adaptable framework provides insights into the motivations underlying specific behaviours while accommodating personal and external factors (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022; Entrialgo & Iglesias, 2016). Notably, TPB stands as one of the foremost psychological theories for understanding human behaviour. According to TPB, behavioural display hinges on intent. It's worth noting that TPB evolved from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), a concept introduced by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) that highlighted how attitudes toward behaviours influence intentions to undertake them. In TPB, an entrepreneur's EI is shaped by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Hair et al., 2012). However, EI is a multifaceted phenomenon (Wang et al., 2023), necessitating the exploration of diverse dimensions that can enhance the TPB model. Our research introduces a specific modification to TPB, focusing on attitudes tailored to the entrepreneurial environment within a university. Our investigation aims to gauge individuals' perceptions of the university's entrepreneurial support, endorsement of entrepreneurial values, and the pros and cons associated with entrepreneurial engagement in an academic context. In traditional TPB, subjective norms encompass social pressure or expectations tied to a behaviour (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022). Our study innovatively substitutes conventional subjective norms with perceptions of entrepreneurial norms within the university milieu. We intend to evaluate how individuals perceive the backing, encouragement, and expectations related to entrepreneurship from peers, faculty, mentors, and influential stakeholders within the university. Furthermore, the conventional TPB's notion of perceived behavioural control pertains to an individual's self-assessed ability to execute a specific behaviour (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022; Karimi et al., 2016). In our work, we adapt perceived behavioural control to reflect confidence in entrepreneurial capabilities nurtured through university resources, courses, training, and experiences concerning entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. Hence, TPB offers a valuable framework for investigating the interplay between entrepreneurial intention (Wang et al., 2023), knowledge, skills, and other pertinent factors. This model aids researchers in comprehending the elements steering individuals toward entrepreneurship while informing the design of interventions to foster entrepreneurial pursuits (Barrios et al., 2021). Yet, by grounding this theory in the aspects of operation, this investigation makes a contribution to the field of TPB and entrepreneurial education research in the university setting.

2.2. Entrepreneurship education (EE) and entrepreneurial intention (EI)

Entrepreneurship education is a structured educational program that focuses on instructing students in the essential skills and attitudes required for entrepreneurship (Karimi et al., 2016). The key objective is to enhance students' comprehension of entrepreneurship, develop their entrepreneurial competencies, and promote an entrepreneurial culture and mentality at personal, societal, and community levels (Ramadani et al., 2022). Entrepreneurship is a deliberate and systematic process (Loi et al.,2016; Martínez-Cañas et al., 2023). Ajzen (1991) defines intention as the willingness of an individual to perform a specific behaviour and posits that it directly affects behaviour. He contends that the greater the level of intention to participate in deliberate actions, the higher the probability that the person will execute it. Research shows that teaching individuals about entrepreneurship has a positive effect on their attitudes and skills, making them more likely to try to succeed in entrepreneurial activities., as suggested by Zhao et al. (2005) and Mahmood et al. (2020). Participation in intensive entrepreneurship education programs is directly correlated with an increase in the likelihood that an individual will pursue entrepreneurship (Ruiz-Palomino & Martínez-Cañas, 2021; Heuer & Kolvereid, 2014). These relationships, on the other hand, are not so simple (Volery et al., 2013). Entrepreneurship programs aid students in developing skills related to entrepreneurial traits, such as modelling, mastering experience, social persuasion, and self-assessment (Westhead & Solesvik, 2016).

2.3. Entrepreneurship education (EE) and employability (EM) Employability is frequently defined as a person's potential in the national and/or international labour market. Three perspectives on this potential have been offered: (I) as personal qualities that boost employment potential; (II) as prospects for work recognized by the individual; and (III) as career adjustments as a means of realizing employment potential (Van Harten et al., 2021). Tertiary education can establish a reliable route to employment by establishing a suitable workplace with the necessary infrastructure, skills, and methods (Mittal & Raghuvaran, 2021). According to the 'Entrepreneurship Action Plan, 2020' launched by the European Commission, one of its primary initiatives was based on the premise that entrepreneurship is a teachable skill and that encouraging it in educational institutions has a positive impact. Research has shown that when young people participate in programs focused on entrepreneurship that assist individuals in developing their skills, knowledge, and attitudes, 15% to 20% of them start businesses three to five years after graduation. However, without such programs, the ratio drops to only

3% or 5% (Pardo-Garcia and Barac, 2020). According to Costa et al. (2017), there is substantial evidence in the literature that establishes a direct and positive relationship between entrepreneurial education and the employability of graduates. Entrepreneurship programs assist students in acquiring abilities associated with entrepreneurial characteristics like creating models, gaining expertise, effective communication, and evaluating oneself (Costa et al., 2017; Karimi et al., 2016). Individuals who possess enterprising skills are typically viewed as more desirable job candidates than those who lack such skills. As many of these skills align with entrepreneurial behaviours, it can be inferred that individuals with a greater natural inclination toward entrepreneurship are likely to exhibit greater levels of enterprising behaviour (Malik et al., 2023; Rae, 2007). This, in turn, could enhance their employability and increase their chances of securing higher-level employment opportunities in the future. Employers value graduates with transferrable abilities such as teamwork, adaptability, strong communication, positive negotiation, etc (Scott et al., 2017

2.4. Hypotheses development

2.4.1. Entrepreneurial university climate (EUC)

The formation of individuals' beliefs, values, and attitudes is influenced by the social and cultural environment, thus impacting their behaviour (Barral et al., 2018). 'Entrepreneurial University Climate' can be described as the environment, culture, and circumstances of a university that encourage and support entrepreneurial efforts, innovation, and the development of a startup-oriented and entrepreneurial mindset among students, faculty, researchers, and staff In their study. EUC, grounded in the TPB, not only positively influences entrepreneurial intentions but also enhances employability. Sherkat and Chenari (2020) discovered a notable and positive correlation between an entrepreneurial university climate and the goal intention of university students. According to Oftedal et al. (2017), having specific values and standards in universities possesses the capacity to foster student involvement in entrepreneurial endeavours, resulting in positive outcomes. EUC encourages entrepreneurial intent by providing resources, guidance, and networking opportunities. Due to the encouragement and resources available at universities, it is observed that students have a higher propensity to contemplate initiating their own enterprises or embracing a more entrepreneurial mindset. (Bergmann et al., 2018; Salamzadeh et al., 2022). Therefore, universities must cultivate a supportive culture that fosters a passion for entrepreneurship and identifies potential business opportunities for all members (Sancho et al., 2021). Similarly, the EUC provides individuals with the necessary knowledge, abilities, and experiential insights that are crucial for entrepreneurship (Bazan, 2022; Salamzadeh et al., 2022), hence enhancing the employment opportunities for students. It equips them with valuable competencies and an entrepreneurial mindset, preparing them for various career paths, including entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship within organizations (Bergmann et al., 2018). This suggests that fostering entrepreneurship within academic institutions can lead to beneficial outcomes for students and graduates.

H1: EUC Positively Affects EI

H2: EUC Positively Affects EM

2.4.2. Entrepreneurial curricula (EC)

Fayolle et al. (2006) conducted a novel study to conceptually understand how entrepreneurship education affects students' willingness to start enterprises. Using Ajzen's (2005) TPB framework, the authors looked into the relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' intention to become entrepreneurs and discovered a substantial correlation between perceived behavioural control or self-efficacy and a three-day entrepreneurship program that concentrated on appraising new venture concepts. Several research (e.g. Ahmad et al., 2018; Iwu et al., 2021) have linked student entrepreneurship intentions more and more to how relevant and adequate they think course material is. Passaro et al. (2018) reported that EC promotes EI among students by exposing them to entrepreneurial principles and practices. Integration of EC in educational institutions equips students with innovative concepts and professional skills. Learning about business planning, opportunity identification, innovation, and risk management inspires students to pursue entrepreneurship, cultivating a stronger entrepreneurial intention(Foss & Klein, 2020; Salamzadeh et al., 2022). Charney and Libecap (2000), performed a comparison between students who chose courses that included entrepreneurship and those that did not. The authors came to the conclusion that students whose courses focused on entrepreneurship modules were more likely to get a full-time job with a company. Furthermore, EC enhances students' employability by cultivating a diverse range of transferable skills highly valued in the job market, including creativity, problem-solving, adaptability, leadership, and opportunity recognition (Foss & Klein, 2020). By this student improves their employability prospects, positioning themselves as desirable candidates for both entrepreneurial ventures and traditional employment opportunities (Costa et al., 2017).

H3: EC positively affect EI

H4: EC positively affect EM

2.4.3. Entrepreneurial knowledge (EKN)-By entrepreneurial knowledge, we mean an awareness of and familiarity with entrepreneurship and the crucial role that entrepreneurs play in advancing economic development and social progress (Christian et al., 2020). Karyaningsih et al. (2020) made the argument that the entrepreneurial knowledge impacted by entrepreneurship education. Having knowledge in entrepreneurship can provide individuals with the essential qualities and skills needed to create and run their own businesses. This includes fostering an innovative and creative mindset, promoting risk-taking, improving communication skills, providing knowledge of science and technology, and instilling a strong sense of ethical business practices (Ibrahim & Soufani, 2002). According to Christian et al. (2020), by enhancing students' knowledge and self-confidence, entrepreneurship education should enhance the possibility of more entrepreneurs.

Moreover, entrepreneurial knowledge fosters a proactive and entrepreneurial mindset, which is increasingly sought after by employers (Lim et al., 2021). This mindset encourages individuals to take initiative, think creatively, and they are ready to take well-considered chances in order to accomplish their objectives employers are often attracted to candidates who possess such qualities, as they are generally more self-motivated, resilient, and adaptable to change. Therefore, it is crucial to provide individuals with the essential entrepreneurial knowledge to foster economic progress and societal advancement while instilling the skills and mindset required creating and managing successfully businesses as well as acquiring employability.

H5: EKNpositively affects EI.

H6: EKNpositively affects EM.

2.4.4. Entrepreneurial skills (ES)-The abilities required for transforming ideas into tangible results are referred to as entrepreneurial skills (Christian et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship has become a popular topic in higher education, with many colleges and universities offering courses on the subject. As a result, there has been an increase in the amount of entrepreneurship-related research and new thoughts incorporated into the field (Mittal & Raghuvaran, 2021). The courses offered have extended in terms of both contents and specialized skills, with new ideas being incorporated both vertically and horizontally (Malik et al., 2023, Nordin et al., 2023)). Entrepreneurship skills turn ideas into action. They are taught in higher education to develop a mindset and attitude towards entrepreneurship. This goes beyond personality traits (Christian et al., 2020). Entrepreneurial education has been linked to better graduate employability. In light of changes in the job market, entrepreneurship programs now emphasize teaching skills that enhance students' employability, such as self-awareness, analytical thinking and problem-solving, adaptability, communication, collaboration, and resource management. This strategy aims to cultivate students who are creative, versatile, and able to make effective use of available resources (Costa et al., 2017). According to Scott et al. (2017), employers have a tendency to Favor job applicants who possess entrepreneurship skills such as effective communication, adaptability, teamwork, and positive negotiation abilities. In a comparative study by Charney and Libecap (2000), students who had taken courses with entrepreneurship components were found to have a higher likelihood of being employed in full-time positions and demonstrated greater levels of self-esteem, team spirit, morale, and job satisfaction in individuals with entrepreneurship education compared to those without (Foss & Klein, 2020).

H7: ES positively affects EI.

H8: ES positively affects n EM.

2.4.5. Entrepreneurial intention (EI) and employability (EM)-As we just covered in the previous part, entrepreneurship education can strengthen individuals' intentions to create and run their own enterprises by arming them with the knowledge, abilities, and mentality needed to do so. Additionally, there is a close relationship between entrepreneurial intentions and employability (Hodzic et al., 2015). However, based on our knowledge, there is no single study that demonstrates the mediating effect of entrepreneurial intention in the relationship between EEand EM. But authors believe that individuals with a significant aspiration to initiate their own enterprises usually exhibit specific characteristics, including entrepreneurial principles, mindsets, expertise, and skills that enable them to adjust to changing requirements in the employment industry. Increasing the inclination towards entrepreneurship is seen as a viable solution to tackle the issue of poor job prospects (Martínez-Cañas et al., 2023; Tentama & Yusantri, 2020). These abilities can increase a person's attractiveness to employers, increase their capacity to adapt to shifting employment marketplaces, and enhance their possibilities for overall career advancement (Van Holm, 2021). Therefore, we conducted trials to examine the effect of entrepreneurial intention on employability directly as well as its role in fostering a beneficial mediating link between entrepreneurship education and employability.

H9: EI mediate the relationship between EE and EM.

Drawing from the discussion of theory and the development of hypotheses, the current study has come up with the following conceptual framework (Figure 1).

3. Methodology

3.1. Measurement instruments-This study is definitive in nature, with hypotheses developed to validate the relationship between variables. To evaluate the research hypotheses empirically, a structured questionnaire was formulated for gathering data from university students. Using a three-step process, we constructed our survey questionnaire based on the existing literature. First, an extensive literature review was employed to identify the

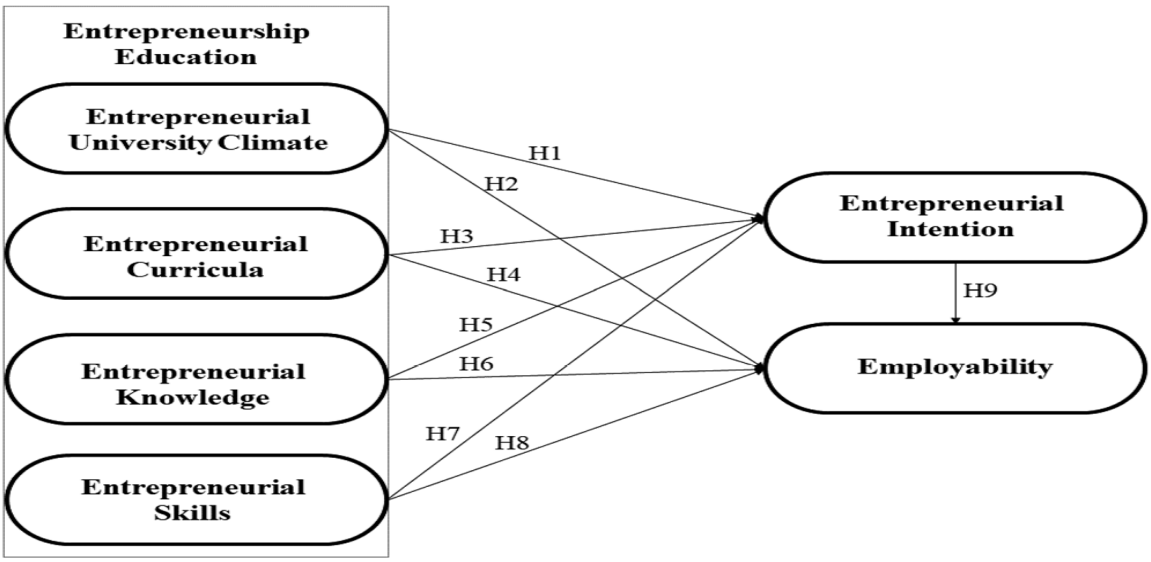


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Table-1

Comparative demographics between the population and sample.

Gender	Population (N)	Population (%)	Sample (N)	Sample (%)
Male	644,213	62.52%	196	49.4%
Female	386,273	37.48%	201	50.6%
Total	**1,030,486**	**100%**	**397**	**100%**

Table-2
Demographic Information

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	51.1%
	Male	49.4%
Age (years)	18–20	0.8%
	20–24	51.1%
	25–28	45.6%
	Above 28	2.5%
Type of University	Public University	75.3%
	Private University	24.7%
Educational Qualification	Graduate	55.9%
	Postgraduate	42.8%
	PhD	1.3%
Employment Status	Employed	3.5%
	Unemployed	83.5%
	Self-employed	13.1%

questionnaire items partially. Following that, the researchers who have made important contributions to the subject of education administrated the new questions. Minor alterations and revisions were made to enhance the readability and clarity of the selected questions prior to the finalization of the questionnaire. The questionnaire related to entrepreneurship education (EUC, EC, EKN, and ES) partially administrated by the authors of this study and were adapted from existing studies by Sherkat and Chenari (2020), Agarwal et al. (2020), Miralles et al. (2015), and Aznar et al. (2013). The measures for Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI) and Employability (EM) were selected and adapted from studies by Hossain et al. (2020), Ahmed et al. (2017), Miralles et al. (2015), and Saad et al. (2013). The questionnaire contained 20 items in total, eliminating those that were required to determine the demographic profile. In the context of the study, the measures appeared to be applicable. Data normality and multicollinearity were examined, and the results show that our data is ready for analysis. The reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha cutoff values of 0.70 ($\alpha > 0.70$) for each construct, yielding good findings. Finally, to examine the understandability of the measuring items, a pilot test with a convenient

sample of30 respondents was conducted. After conducting the pilot test, we collected data through an online survey questionnaire. We collect data within three weeks in the month of September 2022. Unless otherwise noted, participants rated each item on a 7-point Likert scale from '1' for 'strongly disagree' to '7' for 'strongly agree'. A higher score on the scale reflected a greater level of the construct being measured.

3.2. Samples and sampling-The participants are mainly university students. The study initially began with a sample size of 413 participants (Table 1). Then, during the data screening process, it was discovered that 16 respondents had provided unengaged responses, which means that their answers had a standard deviation of zero.

Therefore, their observations were not included in the final analysis to prevent misleading results. Consequently, we were able to keep 397 valid samples for further examination to be enough for using SEM in social science research, per Hair et al. (2010) recommended procedures. This study has been used a convenience sampling method for selecting respondents. Among respondents, 222 are graduate students (55.9%) and 170 are postgraduates (42.8%), while the remaining 1.3% (5) earn their doctorate (Table 2). Most of the participants were between the ages of 20 to 24 (51.1%), and over half were female (50.6%).

Table 3.
Technical specifications of the study.

Technical Specification	Description
Sample Size	397
Sampling Method	Convenience Sampling
Data Collection Method	Online Survey
Data Analysis Techniques	Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)
Software Used	SPSS, AMOS

3.3. Common method variance (CMV)-This study tested CMVs using Harman's single-factor test. As stated by Podsakoff et al. (2003), if a single factor accounts for more than 50% of the variance or if all items load on the same factor, then it signifies the existence of CMV problems. However, the findings of this study revealed that the initial factor only explained 28% of the total variance, and multiple factors had eigenvalues greater than 1, indicating the absence of any CMV issues (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

3.4. Overview of analyses-The research adopted a three-fold methodology to analyse the data. Firstly, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were employed to evaluate the constructs' reliability, validity, multicollinearity, and common method variance (CMV). Secondly, well-established fit indices were utilized to assess the measurement and structural models' representativeness of the data. Finally, path analysis was conducted using the structural equation modelling (SEM) program, AMOS(version 24), to test the research hypotheses. SEM was preferred due to its ability to predict exogenous variables in the model, demonstrate the association among constructs and its strong predictive power (Table 3).

4. Analysis and results-

4.1. Measurement model Analyses-Figure 2 illustrates the measurement model, with its validity and reliability explained in Table 4. The findings indicate that both Cronbach's alpha (Table 5) and CR scores surpass the recommended cutoff value of 0.70, ranging from 0.935 to 0.963, demonstrating strong internal consistency. The AVE scores, which range from 0.787 to 0.839, also exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.50, and the factor loads range from 0.875 to 0.948 (Table 5), all surpassing the recommended cutoff of 0.70. Furthermore, there is both divergent and discriminant validity because the value of the inter-construct correlation is less than the square root of the AVEs, as suggested by Hair et al. (2010) and Fornell and Larcker (1981). The VIF values, ranging from 1.045 to 1.152, demonstrate that the model does not display multicollinearity problems, as stated by Hossain et al. (2023).

To evaluate the overall model fit, various commonly utilized fit indices, including chi-square of degrees of freedom (X2/d > 3), CFI(>0.90), GFI(>0.85), AGFI(>0.80) and RMSEA(<0.05), were evaluated, and the model demonstrated good fit according to these criteria (Hair et al., 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

4.2. Structural model analysis-This research utilizes structural model analysis to evaluate the satisfaction of measurement models and examine theoretical connections between entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, and employability (Figure 3).

According to the depicted in Table 6, the SEM model demonstrates a satisfactory model fit with respect to the data (X2/df. = 1.648, AGFI= 0.887, GFI=.905, CFI= .981, TLI= .979, IFI= .981, RMSEA= 0.040, P-close = .997). The data indicate that the model explained (e.g. R^2 value) 46% and 54% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention and employability, respectively. According to the study, hypotheses H1 and H2 suggest that creating an entrepreneurial environment in universities can have a positive impact on both

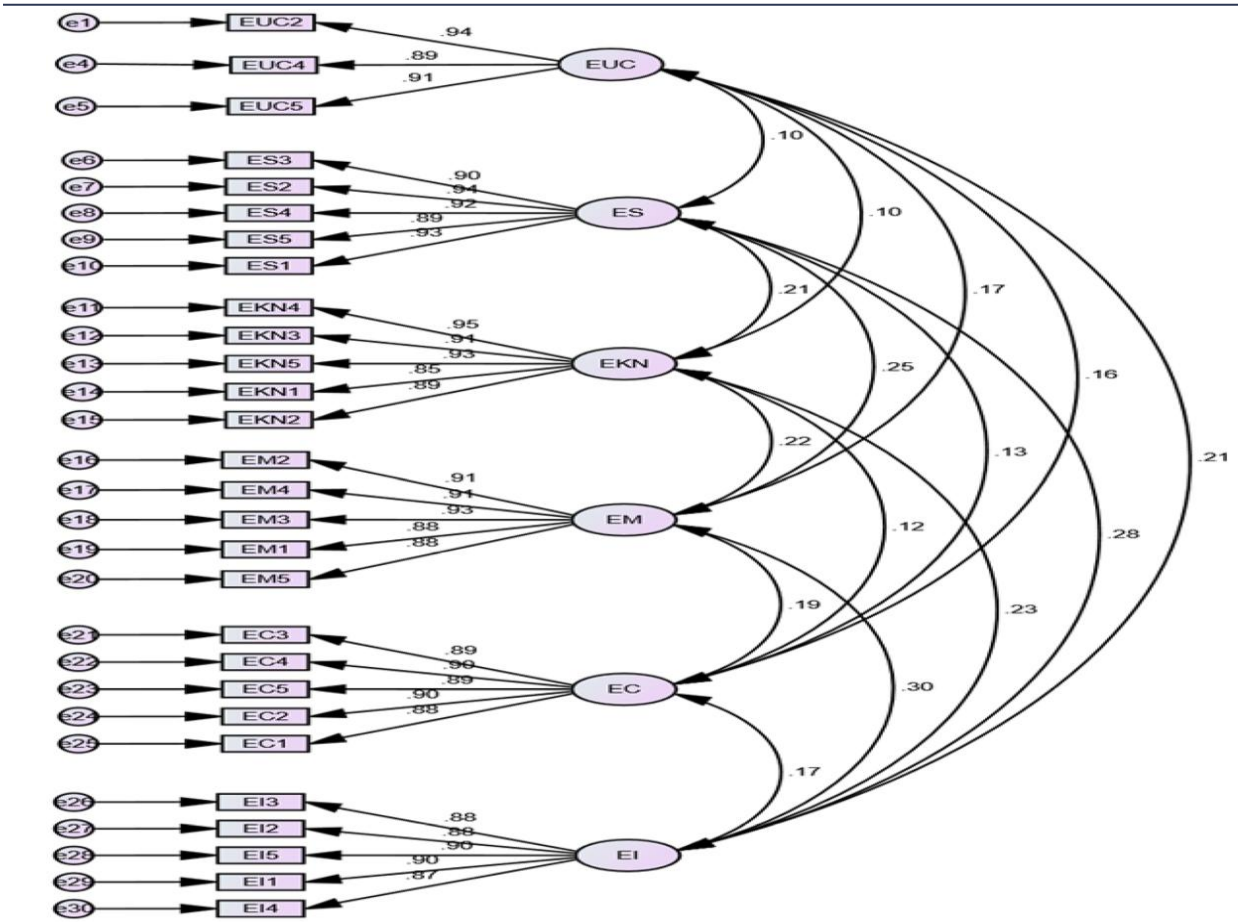


Table-4
Validity and reliability.

Construct	CR	AVE	MSV	Max-R(H)	EUC	ES	EKN	EMP	EC	EI	VIF
EUC	0.935	0.827	0.046	0.938	**0.909**						1.057
ES	0.963	0.839	0.074	0.965	0.108*	**0.916**					1.105
EKN	0.958	0.821	0.051	0.964	0.100*	0.210***	**0.906**				1.079
EMP	0.956	0.814	0.081	0.958	0.179***	0.237***	0.224***	**0.902**			—
EC	0.953	0.801	0.035	0.953	0.147**	0.126*	0.098*	0.188***	**0.895**		1.045
EI	0.949	0.787	0.088	0.949	0.206***	0.280***	0.225***	0.296***	0.172**	**0.887**	1.152

EI and EM prospects. This study found that a favourable entrepreneurial climate was significantly associated with higher EI($p < 0.001$) and increased EM prospects ($p = 0.046$), supporting H1 and H2. Additionally, this study assessed the impact of EC on both EI and EM (H3 and H4). The data demonstrated that being exposed to EC and a constructive and noticeable influence on EI($p = 0.036$) and EM ($p = 0.020$), supporting the validity of H3 and H4. Furthermore, hypotheses H5 and H6 investigated the effect of EKN on EI and EM. This study found that EKN had a favourable and noteworthy impact on both EI($p < 0.001$) and EM prospects ($p = 0.005$), supporting H5 and H6. Finally, in hypotheses H7 and H8, the influence of ESon EI and employability was investigated. The findings indicated a notable positive effect of ESon both EI($p < 0.001$) and prospects for employability ($p = 0.006$), thus providing confirmation for H7 and H8.

Table-5
Standardized regression weights.

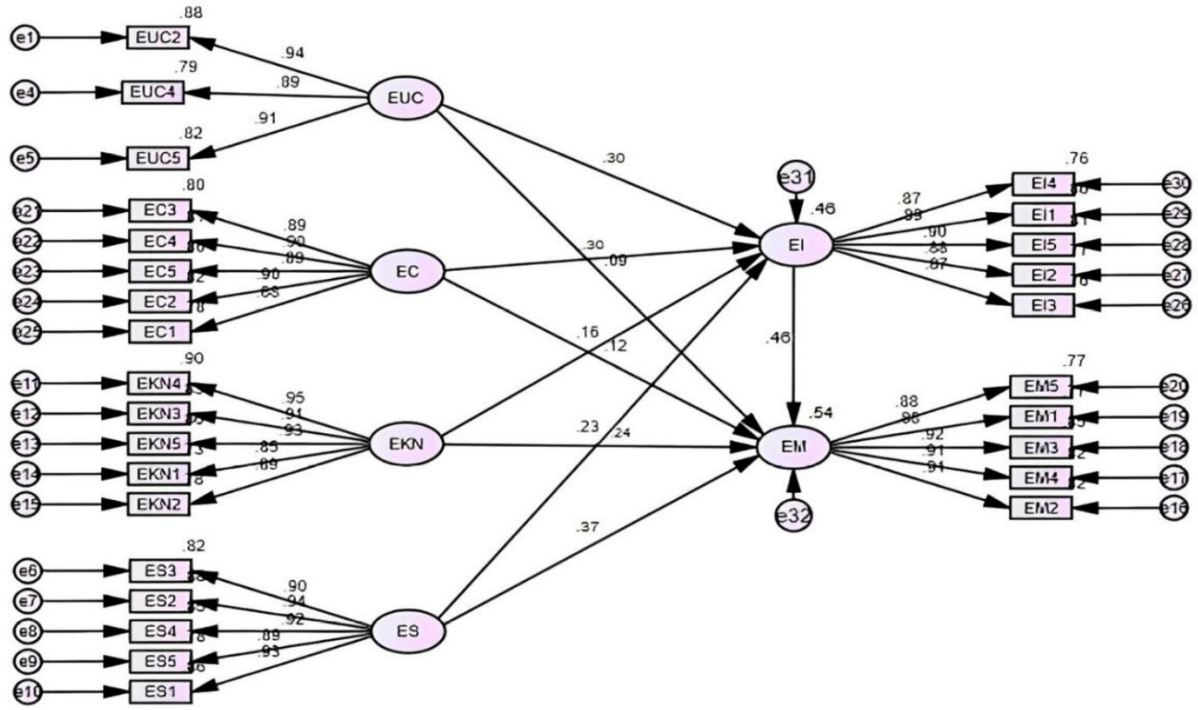
Construct	Item	Standardized Estimate (λ)	S.E.	t-value	Cronbach's α
EUC	EUC2	0.934	—	—	0.935
	EUC4	0.885	0.031	27.797	
	EUC5	0.909	0.030	29.524	
EC	EC1	0.884	0.035	26.405	0.953
	EC2	0.906	0.035	28.028	
	EC3	0.896	—	—	
	EC4	0.900	0.035	27.602	
	EC5	0.889	0.034	26.816	
EKN	EKN1	0.854	0.028	27.701	0.957
	EKN2	0.884	0.028	30.675	
	EKN3	0.910	0.024	33.792	
	EKN4	0.948	—	—	
	EKN5	0.925	0.027	35.961	
ES	ES1	0.932	0.033	31.652	0.963
	ES2	0.937	0.035	32.177	
	ES3	0.904	—	—	
	ES4	0.919	0.035	30.360	
	ES5	0.887	0.035	27.645	
EI	EI1	0.898	0.040	26.219	0.949
	EI2	0.886	0.039	25.477	
	EI3	0.881	—	—	
	EI4	0.875	0.039	24.798	
	EI5	0.901	0.040	26.460	
EMP	EM1	0.883	0.032	27.429	0.956
	EM2	0.909	—	—	
	EM3	0.927	0.032	31.308	
	EM4	0.908	0.033	29.539	
	EM5	0.883	0.032	27.472	

Table 6.
Standardized regression weights.

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate (β)	S.E.	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	EUC → EI	0.133	0.040	3.305	0.001	Supported
H2	EUC → EMP	0.091	0.046	1.998	0.046	Supported
H3	EC → EI	0.095	0.045	2.106	0.035	Supported
H4	EC → EMP	0.120	0.051	2.342	0.019	Supported
H5	EKN → EI	0.121	0.038	3.230	0.001	Supported
H6	EKN → EMP	0.119	0.043	2.799	0.005	Supported
H7	ES → EI	0.185	0.043	4.257	0.001	Supported
H8	ES → EMP	0.136	0.050	2.746	0.006	Supported
H9	EI → EMP	0.201	0.060	3.323	0.001	Supported

Table-7
Summary of the SEM results.

Path	Indirect Effect (β)	Bootstrapped SE	Bias-Corrected 95% CI	p-value	Decision
EUC → EI → EMP	0.056	—	[0.023, 0.109]	0.000	Supported
EC → EI → EMP	0.047	—	[0.015, 0.098]	0.000	Supported
EKN → EI → EMP	0.058	—	[0.025, 0.114]	0.000	Supported
ES → EI → EMP	0.068	—	[0.032, 0.127]	0.000	Supported



4.3. Mediation analysis-This study explores the connection between EE, EI, and EM with a focus on the mediating role of entrepreneurial intentions(**Table-7)**

The study adopts the concept of partial mediation and employs bootstrapping with a sample size of 397 and a 95% confidence interval, repeated 5,000 times, to assess the mediating effects. The results indicate significant mediation effects of EI on the relationship betwixt EE(EUC, EC, EKN, and ES) and EM. All pathways were found to be significant at a probability level of less than 0.001 (Baron & Kenny, 1986), supporting Hypothesis H9 and indicating significant partial mediation effects.

5. Discussion-We have developed a structural framework to investigate three main aspects related to entrepreneurship education. Firstly, we aimed to determine whether providing entrepreneurship education to students has an influence on their entrepreneurial intention aligning with the TPB (Ajzen, 1991). To measure this, we tested hypotheses H1, H3, H5, and H7. The results supported our indicating hypotheses and were consistent with findings from other studies such as Ashari et al. (2021); Christian et al. (2020); Georgescu and Herman (2020); Ahmed et al. (2017); Singh and Singh (2017); Nowiński et al. (2017); and Jackson (2014). Secondly, our objective was to ascertain if the provision of entrepreneurial education impacts the employability of students. To measure this, we tested hypotheses H2, H4, H6, and H8. The results supported our indicating hypotheses and were consistent with findings from other studies such as Mittal and Raghuvaran (2021); Herrera et al. (2018); Singh and Singh (2017); Jones et al. (2017); Jackson (2014). Lastly, our goal was to determine if there was mediation between entrepreneurial intention and employability. We found that there were gaps in the direct/moderation/mediation effect of diverse contexts on entrepreneurial education, as highlighted in various research studies. Therefore, we wanted to fill this gap by examining the mediating effect of entrepreneurial intention and employability. The results supported our indicating hypothesis H9 that there is a mediating effect between entrepreneurship education and employability. That means entrepreneurial intention can enhance employability. Although there were gaps in previous research, several studies such as Bell (2016); Fulgence (2016); Komulainen et al. (2009) indicate that employability is influenced by entrepreneurial intention.
Additionally, our findings exhibit consistency with the TPB (Ajzen, 1991). In this case, creating an entrepreneurial environment, exposure to entrepreneurial curricula, entrepreneurial knowledge, and entrepreneurial skills can influence the intention towards starting one's own business, ultimately leading to higher entrepreneurial intentions and employability prospects.
Table 6. Summary of the SEM results.

5.1. Theoretical contribution-Firstly, the theoretical contribution of this research comes from the fact that it creates a unique framework that connects three important factors: entrepreneurial education, intentions, and employability. Secondly, previous research has looked at the effects of EE on EI and EM separately. We integrated these three variables and evaluated their effects. Thirdly, the research model of this study shows how entrepreneurship education can lead to

stronger entrepreneurial intentions, which in turn can lead to better employability outcomes. Additionally, the research demonstrates that entrepreneurial intentions mediate the connection between entrepreneurship education and employability. This is a new and unique concept in the literature of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, and employability because, before this study, there were no studies that had shown or analysed the mediation effect of intention between entrepreneurship education and employability. These findings indicate that entrepreneurship education can indirectly enhance employability outcomes by increasing entrepreneurial intentions. This means that people who want to be entrepreneurs are more likely to be employable and able to do their jobs well and efficiently. This could be because they like to try new things, take risks, and be proactive, all of which are valued in the job market right now. Employers may value these qualities and seek out candidates with high entrepreneurial intentions. Lastly, Variables such as entrepreneurial university climate, knowledge, skills, and curricula are integrated into TPB, enabling us to examine the interplay of these factors and their impact on entrepreneurial outcomes within the university setting. This approach makes a notable theoretical contribution to entrepreneurship research by providing a more comprehensive framework for studying entrepreneurial intentions and their determinants.

6. Conclusion-Entrepreneurship education, as supported by theoretical foundations such as the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), provides a unique avenue for individuals to explore and develop their genuine entrepreneurial identity (Byrne et al., 2022). This research emphasizes the meaning of teaching entrepreneurship in universities in shaping the entrepreneurial aspirations of students in Bangladesh. It demonstrates the many beneficial outcomes associated with entrepreneurial education, such as fostering a favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship, raising the probability of students opting for entrepreneurship as a career, and enhancing their employability prospects. All signs point to the necessity of entrepreneurship education in addressing Bangladesh's high unemployment rate. Based on these findings, universities and decision-makers in Bangladesh should prioritize adding entrepreneurship education to their academic programs to better equip students for the competitive job market.

6.1. Practical implications- The findings of this study offer important implications for policymakers, educators, and academic institutions in India particularly in relation to the design and implementation of entrepreneurship education (EE) initiatives. The empirical results demonstrate that entrepreneurship university context (EUC), entrepreneurial competencies (EC), entrepreneurial knowledge (EKN), and entrepreneurial skills (ES) exert significant positive effects on both entrepreneurial intention (EI) and employability (EM). Furthermore, the positive association between EI and EM indicates that fostering entrepreneurial intention not only encourages venture creation but also enhances students' broader employability prospects. These findings underscore the strategic role of entrepreneurship education in equipping university students with the knowledge, confidence, and motivation required for both self-employment and career advancement. From a policy perspective, higher education regulators and university administrators in Bangladesh should systematically integrate entrepreneurship education into undergraduate and postgraduate curricula across disciplines. Rather than limiting entrepreneurship to business schools, institutions should adopt an interdisciplinary approach that embeds entrepreneurial thinking within engineering, social sciences, arts, and science programs. Such curricular integration would cultivate opportunity recognition, problem-solving capabilities, innovation orientation, and risk management skills among a wider student population.

At the institutional level, universities should foster a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem by establishing incubation centres, innovation labs, startup support cells, and industry–academia collaboration platforms. Dedicated entrepreneurship courses, experiential learning modules, business plan competitions, and venture simulation exercises can provide students with practical exposure beyond theoretical instruction. These initiatives would strengthen entrepreneurial competencies while simultaneously enhancing employability through transferable skills such as leadership, teamwork, adaptability, and strategic thinking.

The positive linkage between entrepreneurial intention and employability further suggests that encouraging entrepreneurship as a viable career path can contribute to national employment generation and economic development. Universities in Bangladesh should therefore promote entrepreneurship not merely as an alternative to wage employment but as a strategic career choice. Structured mentorship programs, internships with startups and SMEs, networking events, and alumni entrepreneur engagement can provide students with role models and practical guidance in translating entrepreneurial aspirations into actionable ventures.

Moreover, collaboration between universities, government agencies, financial institutions, and private-sector stakeholders would facilitate access to funding opportunities, training workshops, and market exposure. Such coordinated efforts can strengthen the entrepreneurial pipeline and align higher education outcomes with national development objectives.

Collectively, these practical measures can contribute to cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset among university students in India thereby enhancing both venture creation and employability in an increasingly competitive and dynamic labour market.

6.2. Limitations- Despite making meaningful theoretical and empirical contributions to the entrepreneurship education literature, this study is subject to several limitations that provide opportunities for further scholarly inquiry.

First, the study relied on a self-administered survey design, which may introduce common method bias and social desirability effects. Although procedural remedies were applied to mitigate such bias, self-reported measures may not fully capture respondents' actual entrepreneurial competencies or employability outcomes. Future research could adopt multi-source data, behavioural measures, or mixed-method approaches to enhance measurement robustness and reduce mono-method bias.

Second, while the sample size was statistically adequate for structural model estimation, the respondents were drawn from a specific group of university students in Bangladesh. This sampling frame may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of students or to other demographic groups. Future studies should consider larger and more heterogeneous samples, including students from diverse academic disciplines, vocational institutions, private and public universities, and working professionals, to enhance external validity.

Third, the study is context-bound within the socio-economic and cultural environment of Bangladeshi higher education. Institutional structures, entrepreneurial ecosystems, labour market conditions, and cultural attitudes toward entrepreneurship vary considerably across countries. Accordingly, cross-national comparative studies are warranted to examine whether the observed relationships among entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, and employability remain stable across different cultural and economic settings. Such investigations would contribute to the cross-cultural validation of the proposed framework.

Fourth, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causal inferences and to observe how relationships evolve over time. Although structural equation modelling enables the examination of theoretically grounded associations, temporal precedence cannot be conclusively determined. Longitudinal designs, panel studies, or experimental interventions would provide stronger evidence regarding causality and developmental trajectories of entrepreneurial intention and employability outcomes.

Finally, future research may benefit from conceptualizing entrepreneurship education as a higher-order (second-order) construct to better capture its multidimensional nature, including curricular content, experiential learning, mentorship, and institutional support mechanisms. Incorporating additional control and moderating variables—such as gender, socio-economic background, prior business experience, and family entrepreneurial exposure—would further strengthen explanatory power and theoretical precision.

By addressing these limitations, future scholarship can advance a more nuanced, generalizable, and causally robust understanding of how entrepreneurship education shapes entrepreneurial intention and employability across diverse contexts.

6.3. Future research-Future research should extend the investigation of the interrelationships among entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intentions, and employability across different national contexts. Since cultural, institutional, and economic environments significantly influence entrepreneurial behaviour, comparative cross-country studies would provide richer insights into how these constructs operate under varying structural conditions.

Moreover, conducting longitudinal research designs would allow scholars to better establish causal inferences and examine how entrepreneurship education influences entrepreneurial intentions and employability outcomes over time. Such designs would contribute to a deeper understanding of developmental trajectories rather than relying solely on cross-sectional evidence.

Further studies should also incorporate additional control variables, including gender, socio-economic background, prior business experience, and family entrepreneurial background, to enhance model robustness and explanatory power. These variables may moderate or mediate the relationships among the key constructs.

Additionally, entrepreneurship education may be conceptualized and tested as a second-order construct to capture its multidimensional nature (e.g., curriculum content, experiential learning, mentoring, and institutional support). This approach would provide a more comprehensive structural representation of entrepreneurship education.

Finally, as the present study focused on a specific group of university students, future research should consider more diverse samples, including students from different academic disciplines, vocational institutions, working professionals, and nascent entrepreneurs. Broadening the participant base would enhance generalizability and provide a more holistic understanding of the dynamics between entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, and employability..

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