

Examining the Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy between Entrepreneurial Role Model and Entrepreneurial Intentions among Business Students

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship among variables Entrepreneurial Role Model and Entrepreneurial Intentions along with mediating role of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy. The study utilized quantitative approach with a cross sectional correlational research design. Research included 250 business students (133 males 117 females) from the universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Influence of Others on Academic and Career Decisions Scale (Nauta & Kokaly, 2001), Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy Scale (Chen, Greene, & Crick, 1998) and Entrepreneurial Intentions Scale (Linan, 2009) were administered to participants. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and Mediation analysis were employed for hypothesis testing. Study found that entrepreneurial role model, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions have positive significant relationship. Results of mediation analysis indicate a significant direct effect of the entrepreneurial role model on entrepreneurial intentions in business students. Furthermore, results also indicate the indirect effect of the entrepreneurial role model on entrepreneurial intentions through entrepreneurial self-efficacy. T test results revealed that there is significant difference between entrepreneurial family background and without entrepreneurial family background on entrepreneurial role model while no significant difference found on entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Role Model; Entrepreneurial Intentions; Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy; Mediation Analysis; Business Students; Entrepreneurship Education; Family Background; Career Decisions; Quantitative Research; Pakistan

Introduction

Given that the notion of an "entrepreneur" is not new, the meaning of it evolved over time to keep up with the times. The term itself has an appealing history; it initially appeared to describe men who were in charge of military expeditions in France in the 16th century. Economists didn't begin to employ it to describe those who supervised and planned agricultural production until the 18th century (Silk, 1968). Although the names have changed, the idea of the enterprising person is not new. In English, they used to be referred to as "undertakers" or "projectors," all of which referred to someone who makes choices and collects resources.

The modern understanding of entrepreneurship, however, is deeply tied to innovation. Joseph Schumpeter, in the 1930s, famously reframed entrepreneurs as the dynamic forces of "creative destruction," the innovators who disrupt markets with new products and ideas for progress and profit (Schumpeter, 1934). This view was furthered by later thinkers such as Burch (1986) and Hisrich (1990), who talked about an entrepreneur's role in the detection of opportunity, mobilization of resources, and the building-up process of ventures. At its core, entrepreneurship has always been about creativity, recognizing opportunity, and having the drive to act.

The Islamic tradition also has a solid foundation in this sense of enterprise. The scholar Ibn Khaldun outlined entrepreneurs as those who generate wealth through a variety of approaches centuries ago (Akbar, 1990). Numerous historical examples are offered, such as the Quraysh tribe's significant involvement in trade and finance and Hazrat Khadija (R.A.), a well-known and influential businessperson in Mecca. This illustrates how the Islamic worldview has long supported trade and innovation, viewing starting a business as a socially conscious effort that benefits the larger community as well as an approach to achieving personal success (Akbar, 1990).

Today, entrepreneurship has become recognized as an effective driver for expansion of the economy. Because they see entrepreneurship as an obvious path to job creation and problem solving, governments around the world are encouraging education and developing startup ecosystems (Koh, 1996; Verheul, 2012). Entrepreneurs tackle unmet needs, improve our quality of life, and strengthen societies by bringing about new ideas (Carland & Stewart, 1996; Chen & Lai, 2010; Smilor, 1997; Yildiz, 2012). The motivation to become an entrepreneur is the crucial starting point in every stage, so there has to be an initial spark before any of these things can occur. (Gartner, 1994).

Our study depends on two significant psychological theories the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) to deeply understand and present this specific idea. Altogether, they preentindicate how our business-starting tactics are influenced by both social and personal factors. The Social Cognitive Theory states that in addition to doing, we can also learn by watching others. When students are exposed to entrepreneurial role models, such as parents, teachers, or successful business owners, they not only acquire skills but also gain confidence. In the meantime, they believe that "if they can do it, so can I" when they see others they can relate to succeed.

An equally significant and supplementary viewpoint is presented by the Theory of Planned Behavior. According to this, three factors contribute to the intention to carry

out any behavior, such as starting a business: an encouraging mindset toward the behavior, perceived behavioral control, and perceived social pressure (subjective norms). The last aspect is very in line with self-efficacy. In essence, students with high ESE have stronger intentions to launch a business since they feel more in control of the process. Additionally, role models promote positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship and give the perception that it is a respected and socially acceptable career path in addition to increasing self-efficacy.

Bringing together these two theories provides us an understanding of how entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the significant relationship between entrepreneurial intention and the entrepreneurial role model. They work in tandem to provide the inspiration, the confidence, and the supportive social context that encourages individuals to seriously consider and plan for an entrepreneurial career.

And the evidence for this is growing all the time. Recent studies from Latin America found that parental role models and self-efficacy were strong predict of entrepreneurial plans (Gonzalez-Tamayo et al., 2024). A major analysis of existing research has also cemented self-efficacy's role as a key ingredient (Wardana, 2024).

Recently, a study was conducted by Abbasianchavari and Moritz in 2021 to explain the importance of a role model as a contextual factor that shapes career intentions of an individual. Particularly in developing countries where people have to confront obstacles and challenges to start any new business, the impact of role model on entrepreneurial intention is prominent (Karimi et al. 2014; Ukil 2022).

BarNir et al. (2011) states the mediating role of self-efficacy between the entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial career intention. They observed a direct, yet mediating effect of exposure to role models on entrepreneurial career intention.

It has been indicated by various empirical studies that attitudes, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and subjective norms mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intention (Austin & Nauta, 2016; Choukir et al., 2019; Karimi et al., 2014; Nowinski & Haddoud, 2019; Zapkau et al., 2015).

A study was conducted by Yuan and Qalati in 2019 that reported 58% of a literacy rate, an inflation rate of 5.9% and an unemployment rate of 8.0% in Pakistan. In a country like Pakistan, facing significant economic challenges, the spark of entrepreneurial intention is more important than ever. Despite dependence on the government to produce jobs, it is important to generate and involve the youth in entrepreneurial activities. To achieve this goal, it is essential to focus on the factors that influence the entrepreneurial intentions of the young generation.

Based on Previous studies and the theoretical framework, this study aims to determine the interwind relationship of entrepreneurial role model, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial intentions among business students. In particular, the focus of the study is to investigate the mediating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy between the entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intentions among business students. The result of this study will help to improve the entrepreneurial education and business policies to increase the entrepreneurial activity in Pakistan.

Hypothesis

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1. There will be a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intentions among business students.
2. There will be a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions.
3. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy will significantly mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intentions among business students.

Method

Research Design

This study used cross sectional research design and correlational research design.

Sample

To conduct this study, data of 250 business administration students both males and females were collected from various universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi by using convenient sampling. Business administration students include the current students of BBA and MBA of both genders. The target population included young adults with age limit of 18 to 25. Data was collected from participants with both entrepreneurial family background and no entrepreneurial family background to find any difference.

Measures

Influence of others on academic and career decision scale: It was developed by Nauta & Kokaly (2001). This scale contains 15 items and is divided into two subscales which includes support/guidance (item number 1 to 8) and inspiration/modeling (item number 9 to 15). This scale contains five reverse items (item numbers 4,7,10,12 and 15). This is 5-point Likert type scale consist of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5). Higher scores on the scale shows higher influence of role model in academic and career decision. .89 is the alpha reliability of this scale (Nauta & Kokaly, 2001).

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy scale: This scale was established by Chen, Greene & Crick (1998). Items contain by this scale are 22. It is 5-point Likert type scale consisting of completely unsure (1), unsure (2), neutral (3), sure (4), completely sure (5). Higher scores in the scale show high entrepreneurial self-efficacy. .89 is the overall alpha reliability of this scale (Chen, Greene & Crick,1998).

Entrepreneurial intentions scale: This scale was developed by Linan (2009). This scale contains 6 items, and 7-point Likert scale consists of strongly disagree (1), slightly disagree (2), disagree (3) neutral (4), agree (5), slightly agree (6), strongly agree (7). Higher scores in this scale means higher entrepreneurial intentions. .94 is the alpha reliability of this scale (Linan, 2009).

Procedure

The data was collected according to Ethical guidelines to ensure the wellbeing and safety of participants. Data was collected from 250 business students from Islamabad

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and Rawalpindi universities based on convenience. They were requested to fill in the questionnaire which includes the questions regarding entrepreneurial role model, self-efficacy, entrepreneurial intentions and personal information. Every confusion regarding the research and questionnaires was made clear. All the queries of participants regarding the questionnaire was answered properly. Participants were further informed about confidentiality of their data and their right to withdraw from research any time. At last Informed consent were obtained from the participants before the administration of the questionnaires. Moreover, participants were requested to cooperate and provide honest answers to the questions in questionnaire. At the end, they were appreciated and thanked for their cooperation and honesty.

Results

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of sample (N=250)

Demographic Variables	n	%	M	SD
1.Age	-	-	21.12	1.70
2.Gender				
Male	133	53.2		
Female	117	46.8		
3. Education				
BBA	204	81.6		
MBA	46	18.4		
4. Entrepreneurial Family Background				
Yes	115	46		
No	135	54		
5. Work Experience				
Yes	120	48		
No	130	52		

Note. N = 250 (n= participant for each condition), % = Percentage, M= Mean, SD = Standard deviation

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Estimate of Participants for study variables (N= 250)

Scales	Item	M	SD	α	Range		Skew	Kurtosis
					Potential	Actual		
IOACDS	15	52.64	7.88	.77	15-75	26-72	-.22	0.29
Support	8	29.03	4.91	.73	8-40	10-40	-.14	0.61
Modeling	7	23.61	4.08	.69	7-35	8-35	-.40	1.11
ESE	22	83.90	10.13	.85	22-110	46-107	-.67	1.60
EI	6	30.47	6.39	.88	6-42	9-40	-1.43	2.08

Note. IOACDS = Influence of others on Academic and Career decisions scale, ESE = Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, EI = Entrepreneurial intention, M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation

Table 1 indicates the mean age and standard deviations of participants, 21.12 and 1.70, respectively. Predominantly, participants were young adults with less variation in age. With respect to gender, 53.2% (133) of participants were male and 46.8 (117) were female. This indicates that almost both males and females have significantly participated in the study. For education 81.6% participants were from BBA and 18.4% participants were from MBA. When examining family background, 46% (115) of participants were from entrepreneurial family background and 54% (135) of participants were not from entrepreneurial family background. Regarding previous work experience 48% (120) of participants have work experience and 52% (130) of participants have no work experience. This indicates the almost equal representation of entrepreneurial family background and work experience in sample.

According to Table 2, average score of participants is shown by the value of mean on each scale. The scatteredness of responses from mean is represented by standard deviation. The reliability of IOACDS and its subscales (support and modeling) was found to be .77, .73 and .56, respectively. The reliability of ESE Scale was found to be .85. The reliability of EI scale was found to be 0.88. Reliability of all the scales except modeling shows good internal consistency. The modeling subscale indicates low internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.56$), indicating that the items on the scale may not be highly correlated with each other. Table also shows the values of skewness and kurtosis of all variables. The values indicate the normal distribution.

Table 3 Correlation analysis on all study variables (N= 250)

		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Age	-	-.05	-.05	.01	-.11	-.00
2	ERM		-	.90**	.85**	.19**	.15*
3	Support			-	.54**	.12	.18**
4	Modeling				-	.23**	.26*
5	ESE					-	.29**
6	EI						-

Note. ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, ERM= Entrepreneurial role model, ESE= Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, EI = Entrepreneurial intention

Table 3 shows a significant positive relationship between the entrepreneurial role model and Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, indicating that students having a role model in their lives will increase their beliefs about their capabilities to carry out entrepreneurial activity. Further, it shows a significant positive relationship between the Entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intentions. It means that the presence of a role model will increase the student's intentions to start a business. Lastly, the table shows a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions. This finding indicates increase in a person's belief in their ability will increase the entrepreneurial intentions as well.

Table 4 The mediating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy in the relationship between entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intentions (N=250)

Paths	B	SE	T	p	95%CI	
					LL	UL
Entrepreneurial role model → Entrepreneurial self-efficacy	.25	.07	3.19	.01	.09	.41
Entrepreneurial self-efficacy → Entrepreneurial intentions	.14	.03	4.29	.00	.07	.20
Entrepreneurial role model → Entrepreneurial intentions	.12	.04	2.90	.00	.04	.21
Direct effect	.08	.04	2.09	.03	.005	.17
Indirect effect	.05				.009	.11

Total effect	.12	.04	2.90	.00	.04	.21
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Note: β = Beta, ** $P < .01$, * $P < .005$

Table 4 showed the mediation analysis of entrepreneurial self-efficacy between entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intentions, the path from entrepreneurial role model to entrepreneurial self-efficacy showed a positive significant result ($\beta = .25$, $p = .01$). The path from entrepreneurial self-efficacy to entrepreneurial intentions showed a positive significant relationship ($\beta = .14$, $p < .01$). The path from entrepreneurial role model to entrepreneurial intentions showed a positive significant relationship ($\beta = .12$, $p < .01$).

Statistical model of mediation of Entrepreneurial self-efficacy in the relation between Entrepreneurial role mode and Entrepreneurial intentions

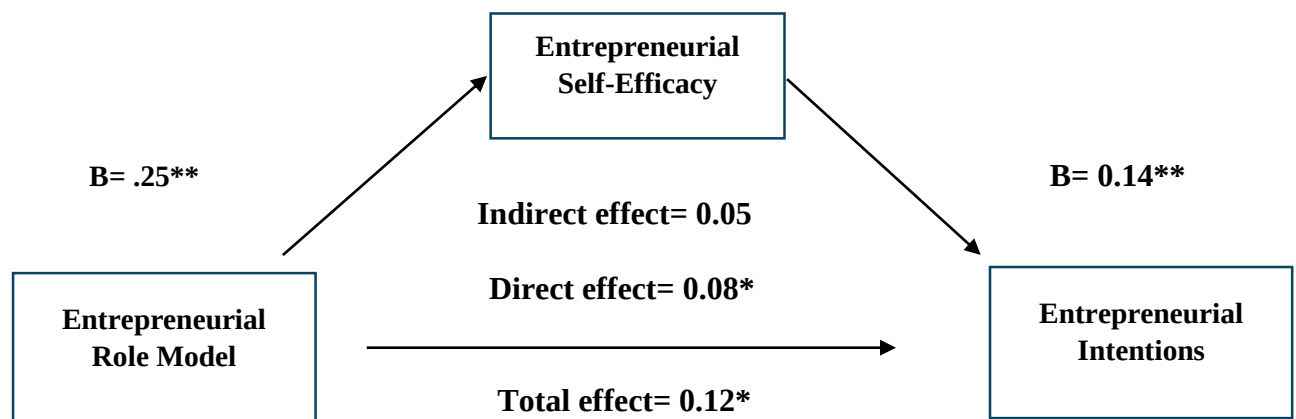


Figure 3 Statistical model of mediation of Entrepreneurial self-efficacy in the relation between Entrepreneurial role mode and Entrepreneurial intentions

Figure 3 showed a mediation analysis of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which indicated that entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly, mediated the relation between entrepreneurial role mode and entrepreneurial intentions. Direct and indirect effects were significant.

Table 5 Mean, Standard Deviation and t- values of students with and without entrepreneurial background on all Study Variables. (N=250).

Scales	With Entrepreneurial Background (n=115)		Without Entrepreneurial Background (n=135)		t	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	

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ERM	54.40	8.60	51.45	7.02	2.58	.01	.62	4.58	.30
ESE	30.73	6.65	30.24	6.16	.60	.54	-1.10	2.09	-
EI	82.58	11.21	85.02	8.99	-1.9	.05	-4.95	.078	-

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ ERM= Entrepreneurial role model, ESE = Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, EI = Entrepreneurial intentions.

Table 5 shows the result for t-test, which was computed to see differences of family background on the study variable. Analysis reveals significant difference between entrepreneurial family background and without entrepreneurial family background on entrepreneurial role model while shows no significant difference on entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions.

Discussion

The role of Entrepreneurship is not only to uplift the national economy, but also to generate new jobs and elevate the social employment level (Parker, 2024). Policy makers and scholars of developed countries have understood this vital role of entrepreneurship (Mari & Poggesi, 2016). Entrepreneurship works as a catalyst for the growth of society (Song & Winkler, 2014). Furthermore, various researchers believe that entrepreneurship is a key factor that fights against unemployment and economic growth in developed countries (Cardella et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020).

In Pakistan, with an increase in students with higher education, it has become difficult for graduate students to find an appropriate job. Thus to release the pressure of employment, the government and universities have been encouraging students to create new business opportunities since the economic recession of 2008 (Majeed & Ghumman, 2021). To achieve this goal, scholars need to examine different factors associated with entrepreneurship.

The current study aims to investigate the association among entrepreneurial role model, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial intentions among business university students (N = 250). Previous studies have supported this relationship, but in Pakistani culture, this relationship is still unclear. For a better understanding of this association, this study also focuses on the mediating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy between the entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intentions.

To achieve these objectives, reliable instruments such as the Influence of Others on Academic and Career Decisions Scale, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy Scale, and Entrepreneurial Intentions Scale were used to collect data from 250 business students studying in different Rawalpindi and Islamabad universities.

After the data were collected, a preliminary analysis was done to report the descriptive and psychometric properties of the study variable of business students. Demographic variables in the sample provide the context for understanding the results. Table 1 shows indicate the mean age and standard deviations of participants. It also shows a percentage and number of participants with respect to gender, entrepreneurial background, and work experience. Table 2 shows psychometric

properties, including mean, standard deviation, actual and potential range, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, skewness, and kurtosis. The values of Cronbach's alpha showed good reliability except subscale of modeling. This could be due to low internal consistency. The skewness and kurtosis values of business students fall under the acceptable range of +2 to -2 and +3 to -3 (West & Finch, 1995), which means that the data were normally distributed.

This study found a significant positive relationship between the entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intentions. This outcome highlighted the findings of Doshe and Walter in 2012, who stated that role model plays an influential role in professional intention formation in college students. Various studies have supported this association by citing the positive relationship between role model and entrepreneurial intentions, as role model provide students with knowledge that increases their intentions (Pilart & Kintana, 2015).

Further, a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions was established. Research in East Asia confirms that a person's belief in their entrepreneurial abilities is one of the most reliable drivers of their intention to start a business (Ye & Kang, 2025; Rachmawan & Lizar, 2015).

The present study also aspired to assess the mediating relationship of entrepreneurial self-efficacy between the entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intentions. Results of mediation analysis indicate a significant direct effect of the entrepreneurial role model on entrepreneurial intentions in business students. This finding is in line with literature. Various past studies have provided evidence of the significant association between role model and entrepreneurial intention (Austin & Nauta, 2016; Fellnhofner & Mueller, 2018; Nowinski & Haddoud, 2019). Specifically, a study conducted by Entrialgo & Iglesias in 2018 stated that a role model has a positive influence on entrepreneurial intention through the process of imitation because individuals like to imitate the positive behaviours of their role model.

Findings of current study also indicate the indirect effect of the entrepreneurial role model on entrepreneurial intentions through entrepreneurial self-efficacy. This indirect effect is consistent with past literature. A study conducted by Ukill in 2022 states that observing a successful entrepreneurial role model enhances the perceived ability of a person to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Once a significant sense of self-efficacy of individuals developed, they are more likely to form intentions to start their own business ventures.

Additionally, group difference in family background was analyzed. Results indicate that there was a significant difference between students with a family background and those without a family background on the entrepreneurial role model. In an Entrepreneurial Family background, parents become role models for their children. Thus, influencing their attitudes towards self-employment through modeling (Chlosta & Patzelt, 2012).

As for the other two variables, a mean difference was present, but this difference was not significant. It could be due to a small sample size or an effect size that was difficult to detect, as explained by Cohen in 1988.

Conclusion

The present study found that there is significant positive relationship among

entrepreneurial role model, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial intentions among business students means students having role model will have higher self-efficacy and intentions to start a business. Moreover, self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intentions. These results indicate the importance of role model and self-efficacy in the establishment of entrepreneurial venture in developing countries like Pakistan.

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