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ASSESSING ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENT AMONGST MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

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Abstract

In recent years, global employment rates have experienced stagnation and decline, particularly among management graduates. Consequently, there has been an increased emphasis on fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and intent among students as an alternative pathway to traditional employment. Entrepreneurial start-ups have been widely promoted as a panacea to address unemployment challenges. Existing literature suggests that targeted entrepreneurial education can significantly enhance students' entrepreneurial intentions. In response, many higher education institutions have expanded entrepreneurship curricula across various academic levels. However, most research on entrepreneurial intent remains cross-sectional, with limited longitudinal studies examining how entrepreneurial intent evolves across different stages of management qualifications within faculties of Management Sciences. This gap restricts understanding of how academic experiences and personal development influence entrepreneurial intentions over time. The present cross-sectional study, therefore, seeks to assess the entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students at different levels of their diploma studies within a Management Science Faculty. Entrepreneurial intent is employed as a proxy for entrepreneurial behavior. Utilizing a quantitative methodology, the study sampled 412 undergraduate students through stratified sampling across diverse Management programs. Findings indicate that students' entrepreneurial intent is significantly influenced by their progression through the undergraduate program, highlighting the role of educational and experiential factors in shaping entrepreneurial aspirations.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial intent, entrepreneurship education, Management Sciences, Entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a global stagnation and decline in employment rates, especially amongst management graduates. Globally, governments have responded to this concern by applying several policies and initiatives, including funding startup incubators and entrepreneurial training programs, that were intended to develop entrepreneurship and minimize unemployment (OECD 2022; World Bank 2023). Notwithstanding these advances, the problem persists, calling for more targeted and nuanced interventions. Subsequently, the alternative to employment has encouraged students to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset and intent. Entrepreneurial start-ups have been encouraged as the panacea to the unemployment challenge (Chimucheka 2014; Agwu 2019). More recent studies suggest that efforts could be channeled towards entrepreneurial education to enhance students' entrepreneurial intentions (Thetsane 2023; Keim et al 2024). To this end, many universities are expanding the offerings of entrepreneurship modules at various levels within their programs.

The need to produce graduates who can start a business or find formal employment has become necessary as the formal economy fails to provide sufficient employment opportunities for graduates. The graduates, especially from the Management Sciences, enter a highly competitive and saturated job market, which means limited employment opportunities. However, there may be entrepreneurial opportunities to be explored beyond the

formal job market, for which students need to be prepared. The result has led to the expansion of entrepreneurship education, with several entrepreneurship-related courses being added to traditional programmes at universities (Abebe 2015). Entrepreneurial intention is posited as the antecedent to entrepreneurial behavior (Schlaegel and Koenig 2014; Abebe 2015; Shirokova et al 2016).

Hence, this study aims to assess how students' entrepreneurial intent evolves as they progress through an undergraduate qualification. This cross-sectional study aimed to measure the entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students during their different levels of study for the diploma from start to graduation, in the Faculty of Management Sciences at a University of Technology.

Entrepreneurial intent serves as a proxy for entrepreneurial behavior. Hence; a growth in intent heightens the potential that the student may become an entrepreneur.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship in Higher Education

In recent decades, the phenomenon of Entrepreneurship has been viewed as a welcome as well as a key driver for flourishing economic and social development. As a result, Higher education institutes have increased their efforts to ensure that Entrepreneurship education is strengthened in their program offerings to promote entrepreneurial skills and development, including increasing opportunities for students through entrepreneurship (Jardim et al., 2021; Hammoda, 2024; Parker et al, 2025). However, a bibliometric analysis by Tiberius & Weyland (2023) contended that there is a weak understanding of how the pedagogy of entrepreneurship is delivered. Importantly, the concept of entrepreneurship has long been established in education and is not a novel phenomenon. Several students arrive at higher education previously rooted in communities where informal entrepreneurship is tacitly prevalent (Brodsky et al., 2024). Entrepreneurship education can therefore nurture this existing entrepreneurial background, elevating students' new venture abilities by reinforcing on their earlier lived experiences as well as community practices. Equally, acknowledging and including these informal entrepreneurial foundations can augment entrepreneurship education offerings as well as prepare and improve students for formal entrepreneurial ventures.

Promoting Entrepreneurial Education for Entrepreneurial Behaviour

Despite earlier notions that entrepreneurs are born with the necessary innate skills, the literature abounds with evidence that entrepreneurship traits can be taught (Abebe 2015; Lebusa 2011; Skosana & Urban 2014; Panagiotis 2012). Entrepreneurship education is gaining global traction. For example, the European Commission started by promoting entrepreneurship in schools and universities reflected in the "Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2020" by revealing that entrepreneurship can be taught through education initiatives and promoting entrepreneurship in schools and universities has a positive impact. While it is argued that entrepreneurship education increases both entrepreneurial intentions and significantly encourages students to start their businesses (Collet 2013; Pardo-Garcia & Barac 2020), On the contrary, other studies across the continents, including the discipline of business studies, revealed otherwise. Contrarily, one study in Ethiopia representing 73 undergraduate students ranging from diverse disciplines of natural, social science, agriculture, science and technology found that the entrepreneurship courses they attended did not influence entrepreneurial intent (Abebe 2015). Most of these students preferred to find employment rather than start their own business, and entrepreneurship education had no significant influence on entrepreneurial intent (Abebe 2015). A further study in Malaysia found that both 234 undergraduate and postgraduate students from the fields of Information Technology, Business Management, Administration, Education, and Tourism established that students were only committed to completing their qualifications and displayed a lack of interest in pursuing good business opportunities that were offered during their course of study (Sandhu, Jain and Yusof 2010). More recent Chinese studies in a community of Madrid (Lin et al, 2023) confirm that in entrepreneurship education, there was no significant relationship between entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents, representing the poor academic outcomes and effectiveness of entrepreneurship programs offered in Madrid universities. In other instances, studies such as that by Cera et al. (2020) and Lu et al. (2021) suggest that although there is a weak relationship between courses taught in higher education, these studies show that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by the courses taught in tertiary education. Furthermore, the Latin American study by Montes et al (2023) further found a limited relationship between entrepreneurship education and intent.

In addition, entrepreneurial behaviour can be referred to as discovering opportunities and innovations and putting them into practice in order to be rewarded with n financial or social benef**it** (Wang et al 2022). Morris and Kuratko (2014) contend that a distinct set of competencies needs to be developed for entrepreneurial behaviour, and these are listed and described in Table 1. The framework depicted in Table 1 can serve as both a proactive

and or developmental exercise since it has the propensity to guide aspiring entrepreneurs during venture startups, as well as it can serve as a learning tool for novice and survivalist entrepreneurs who attain and augment these competencies as they work to grow and sustain their businesses. Using a quasi-experimental **Glackin & Phelan (2020)** confirmed that students' entrepreneurial traits identified by Morris and Kuratko were further enriched when integrating entrepreneurship within the curriculum

TABLE 1: Entrepreneurial Behaviour Competency Framewok

Competency	**Description**
Opportunity recognition and assessment	Perceiving possibilities of a business venture and evaluating its attractiveness
Risk mitigation	Reducing the probability and potential impact of risk
Vision	Articulating a compelling image inducing others to follow
Perseverance	Sustaining goal direct action amid obstacles
Creativity	Solving problems by relating variables for novel outcomes
Resource leveraging	Accessing resources owned and controlled by others
Value creation	Developing new products and services
Resilience	Coping and striving in the face of adversity
Self-efficacy	Maintaining a sense of self-confidence of one's own abilities
Network creation	Developing social interaction skills
Focus	Balancing strategic direction versus the need to pursue improvement

Source: Adapted from Morris and Kuratko 2014.

Henceforth, incorporating an entrepreneurship curriculum at different levels of students undergraduate study augments students' entrepreneurial mindset and intention (Reyes, Mariano, Herrera, Manipol, & Cubardo, 2018; Fang & Luo, 2020;).

Conceptualizing Entrepreneurial Intent

In recent years, there has been a burgeoning interest in entrepreneurship scholarship, more specifically within the ambit of higher education. For example, numerous studies have confirmed that entrepreneurship education positively drives students' entrepreneurial intention, more especially after they participate in entrepreneurship education and engage in business-related courses (Boldureanu et al., 2020; Jena 2020).

Entrepreneurial intention relates to an individual's willingness to pursue a course of action, considering the challenges of the task (Urban 2011) and, more specifically, it is the reflection of an individual's state of mind that directs attention and action towards a business concept (Bird 1998). More importantly, entrepreneurial intent is regarded as the immediate antecedent to entrepreneurial behaviour (Schlaegel & Koenig 2014; Abebe 2015). Kuratko (2005) asserts that entrepreneurial intention can be developed since it is related to individuals' characteristics of seeking opportunity, taking risks and pushing an idea through.

Some recent scholarly findings confirm that Entrepreneurship education, representing diversified entrepreneurial outcomes and competencies, fosters competencies (Mei, Lee, & Xiang, 2020; Rodrigues, 2023). Literature further argues that having entrepreneurial knowledge, whether acquired through education or through default, significantly shapes entrepreneurial intentions (Caputo et al., 2025). Furthermore, Soomro et al. (2025) and Memon et al. (2019) concur that having entrepreneurial epistemologies enables aspiring entrepreneurs with the necessary self-confidence and ease to steer the entrepreneurial process. In addition, other studies by Liao et al. (2022a) and Han et al. (2025) further found that entrepreneurial knowledge elevates and improves the self-confidence of nascent entrepreneurs in navigating and overcoming challenges encountered in the entrepreneurship journey.

The literature review represents how students' entrepreneurial intentions are shaped by entrepreneurship education and knowledge (Mei et al., 2020; Caputo et al., 2025; Soomro et al., 2025; Liao et al., 2022a; Han et al., 2025). These studies on entrepreneurship education and related studies underscore that entrepreneurial intention is equally influenced by both having some experience or background in business-related types of activities as well as innovative and structured academic. More recently, Herplani & Patel (2025) relied on four different models to define entrepreneurial intent and found that both education and self-efficacy are positive indicators of entrepreneurial intent. These findings provide valuable insights to assess the entrepreneurial intent of management students. Examining the extent to which educational exposure, entrepreneurial knowledge, and

individual dispositions contribute to their entrepreneurial motivation during their different levels of study is a gap that is less understood in the literature.

To this end, many universities are expanding the offerings of entrepreneurship modules at various levels within their programs. Hence, this study aims to assess how students' entrepreneurial intent evolves as they progress through an undergraduate qualification in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the University of Technology. Whilst several studies in existing research on entrepreneurial intent are cross-sectional, there appears to be a dearth of longitudinal studies that measure and determine entrepreneurial intent across the different levels of different management qualifications in a Management Science Faculty. This gap limits the nuances of the student's academic experiences and personal development that influence entrepreneurial intentions over time. This cross-sectional study aims to measure the entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students during their different levels of study for the diploma, from start to graduation. Entrepreneurial intent serves as a proxy for entrepreneurial behavior. The methodology presented in the next section has been designed to systematically investigate these relationships through a quantitative research design

METHODOLOGY

Research Design - The primary research adopted a quantitative research design and was characterized as cross-sectional. The population for the study comprised 482 full-time students who were registered in the Faculty of Management Sciences. The students represented the eight Departments on the Durban Campus that offer undergraduate programs.

To ensure ethical practices, gatekeeper letters were sought from the Institutional Gatekeeper Committee, and thereafter, permission was obtained from the Dean of Management Sciences. We further communicated and liaised with the lecturers from the various Departments to administer and encourage student participation. Students from different levels of the undergraduate programs representing the eight departments in the faculty consented to participate in the face-to-face survey. The participants were inducted into the research process and explained the nature and reason for the study; simultaneously ensuring that each participant's responses would be confidential and anonymous. Furthermore, participants were at liberty to withdraw from the study at any point in the study.

Sample – The sample was stratified according to the population strata of student registrations in the 8 Departments (Table 2). The sample size was calculated using the population in each year of study for the Departments through a sample size calculator with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

Table 2: Population to sample stratification framework.

	Population per year					**Required Sample Size pe**			
Department	**1yr**	**2yr**	**3yr**			**1yr**	**2yr**	**3yr**	
Entrepreneurial Studies and Management	201	201	245			133	133	151	
Public Management and Economics	164	174	272			116	121	160	
Marketing and Retail	236	229	275			147	145	162	
Human Resources Management	190	151	255			128	110	155	
Applied Law	128	99	97			97	80	79	
Hospitality and Tourism	295	311	247			168	173	152	
Public relations	114	98	79			90	79	67	
Operations and Quality	155	134	94			112	101	77	

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria – Only students on the Durban Campus at DUT in the Faculty of Management Sciences and fall within the eight departments were included in the study.

The researchers were mindful of students' ages and permitted only students above the age of 18 years to participate. Hence students under the age of 18 years old will be renounced from participation in the study.

Research Instrument – To ensure the study's validity and reliability, a face-to-face questionnaire was employed with items that were adapted from previous studies. Consequently, this was intended to maintain the validity of the questionnaire items. The reliability and validity of the survey questionnaire have already been recognized and established in a plethora of studies (Morris and Kuratko 2014; Ramchander 2019; Nwankwo and Chendo, 2023)

The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A represents the demographic information and Section B characterizes the participants' responses related to entrepreneurship traits such as entrepreneurial opportunism, proactiveness, risk-taking propensity, desirability, and self-efficacy.

A five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, will be used to capture respondents' perceptions. The items used to measure entrepreneurial traits are taken from the Measure

of Entrepreneurial Tendencies and Abilities (META L61) questionnaire, which was validated by Susanj, Jakopec, and Krecar (2015).

Data Collection - The hand-delivered questionnaire was administered by a research assistant, during the second semester of 2023 within the Faculty of Management Sciences. Each participant was expected to complete the questionnaire within an estimated duration of 20 minutes after permission was sought from the relevant lecturer; during the lesson. Subsequently, the results were captured on version 21 of SPSS and were further analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

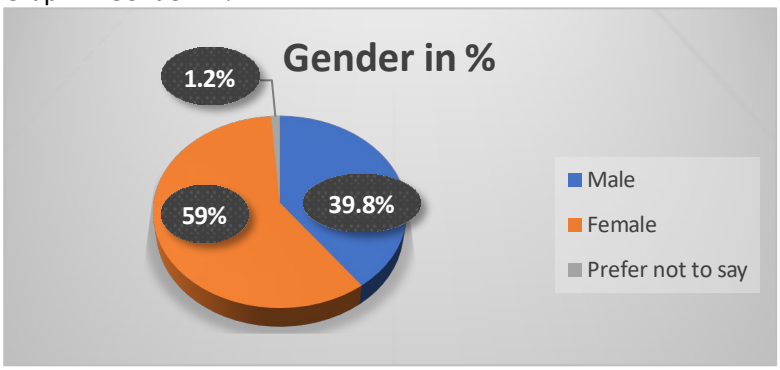
Descriptive statistics were employed in this study since this analytical tool can measure the mean, frequencies, and percentages, which are useful for highlighting trends, patterns, and differences across various study levels. Furthermore, using descriptive statistics presents a straightforward data analysis, allowing for easy comparison between groups (e.g., first-year students vs. final-year students) and identifying any shifts in entrepreneurial intent as students' progress through their academic journey.

This approach is essential in understanding the general tendencies and attitudes without making inferences or predictions, which aligns with the study's aim to describe and assess entrepreneurial intent at different academic levels. The following section provides an overview of the respondents' profiles. Frequency tables are utilized to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The demographics covered in this study encompass gender, department of study, year of study, location, and area of residence. The sample comprised 412 valid respondents. Detailed demographic results are presented below:

Table 3. Gender

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Male	164	**39.8**
Female	243	**59**
Prefer not to say	5	**1.2**
Total	**412**	**100**

Graph 1. Gender in %

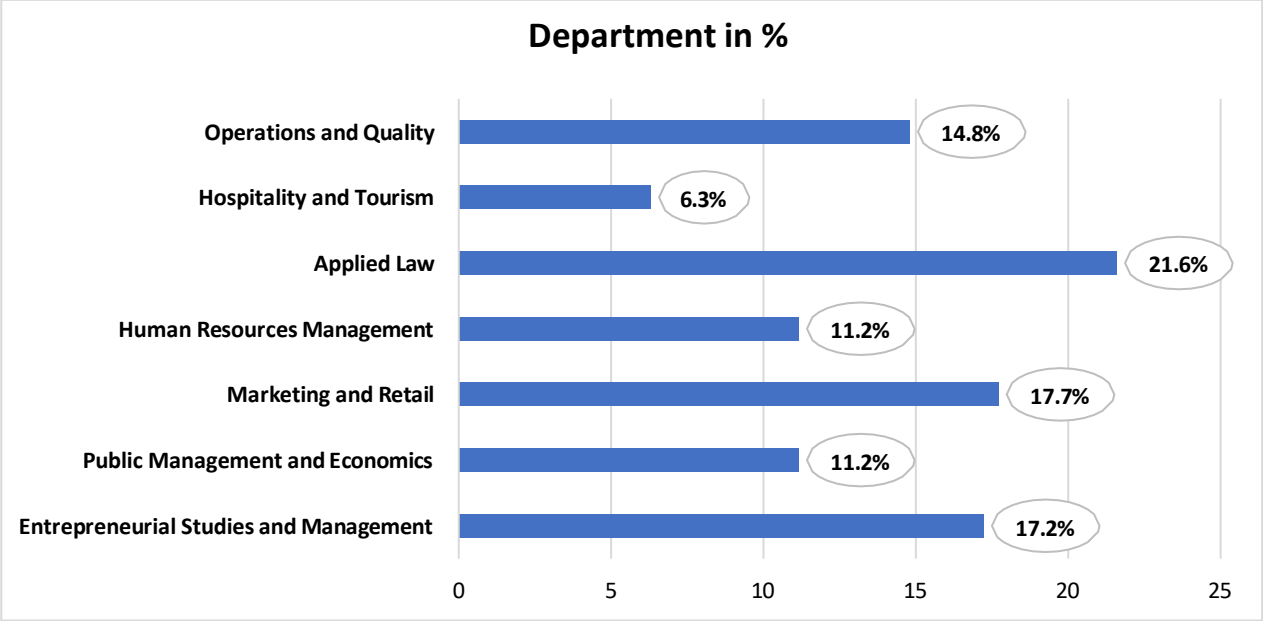


According to the results shown above (See Table 1 and Graph 1), 59% of respondents are female, 39.8% are male and 1.2% prefer not to say.

Table 4. State which Department you belong to.

	Frequency	Percentage
Entrepreneurial Studies and Management	71	**17.2**
Public Management and Economics	46	**11.2**
Marketing and Retail	73	**17.7**
Human Resources Management	46	**11.2**
Applied Law	89	**21.6**
Hospitality and Tourism	26	**6.3**
Operations and Quality	61	**14.8**
Total	**412**	**100**

Graph 2.



The results in Table 2 and Graph 2 indicate that most (21.6%) of the respondents' study in the Department of Applied Law.

Table 5. In what year of study are you in your current qualification?

	Frequency	Percentage
1st	264	**64.1**
2nd	77	**18.7**
3rd	71	**17.2**
Total	**412**	**100**

Graph 3. Year of Study in %

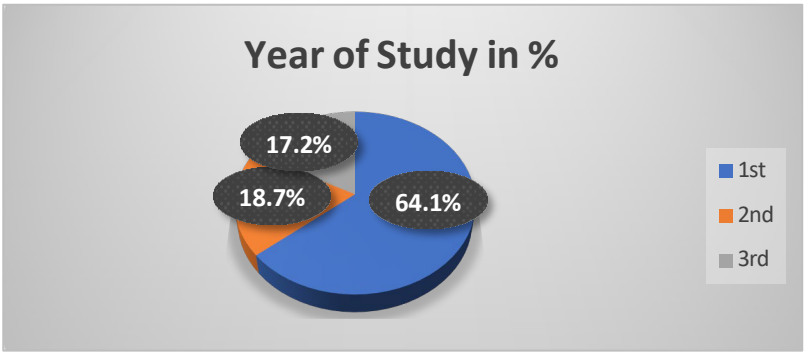


Table 3 and Graph 3 above show that the majority (64.1%) of the respondents are in their first year of study, and the rest are in their second year (18.7%) and third year (17.2%).

Table 7: Other Descriptives

Constructs	Items		Frequency	Percentage
About Yourself	I am currently self-employed (run my own business)	Yes	21	**5.1**
		No	391	**94.9**
		Total	412	**100**
	I currently hold a part-time job	Yes	21	**5.1**
		No	391	**94.9**
		Total	412	**100**
	I did Business studies / economics / accounting in grade 12	Yes	235	**57**
		No	177	**43**
		Total	412	**100**
	Upon completion of my studies, my intention is to be self-employed (run my own business)	Yes	334	**81.1**
		No	78	**18.9**
		Total	412	**100**
	Upon completion of my studies, my intention is to be in the employ of others (work for an organization that is owned by someone else)	Yes	176	**42.7**
		No	236	**57.3**
		Total	412	**100**
About your parents/guardians/family	At least one of my parents /guardians are self-employed (run their own business)	Yes	91	**22.1**
		No	321	**77.9**
		Total	412	**100**
	At least one of my Parents / guardians that was previously self-employed is now unemployed	Yes	115	**27.9**
		No	297	**72.1**
		Total	412	**100**
	At least one of my parents/guardians was previously self-employed but are now in the employ of others (working for an organization that is owned by someone else)	Yes	156	**37.9**
		No	256	**62.1**
		Total	412	**100**
About your close friends	At least one of my close friends is self-employed?	Yes	98	**23.8**
		No	314	**76.2**
		Total	412	**100**
	At least one of my close friends that has been previously self- employed is now unemployed	Yes	75	**18.2**
		No	337	**81.8**
		Total	412	**100**
	At least one of my close friends that has been previously self- employed is now in the employ of others (working for an organization that is owned by someone else)	Yes	86	**20.9**
		No	326	**79.1**
		Total	412	**100**
About your close family	At least one member of my close family (brother, sister, cousin) is self-employed (run their own business)	Yes	131	**31.8**
		No	281	**68.2**
		Total	412	**100**
	At least one member of my close family (brother, sister, cousin) that has been previously self- employed is now unemployed	Yes	101	**24.5**
		No	311	**75.5**
		Total	412	**100**
	At least one member of my close family (brother, sister, cousin) that has been previously self- employed is now in the employ of others	Yes	129	**31.3**
		No	283	**68.7**
		Total	**412**	**100**

Table 7 above, shows the results across the constructs used in the study revealing several significant insights into the factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions and career pathways. Firstly, within the construct "About Yourself," a high percentage (81.1%) of respondents expressed a desire to pursue self- employment, indicating a strong personal inclination towards entrepreneurship. This inclination is further supported by the finding that a majority of participants (57%) had studied Business, economics, or accounting in grade 12, suggesting a potential correlation between academic background and entrepreneurial aspirations. In the construct "About your parents/guardians/family," familial influences emerge as notable determinants of entrepreneurial intentions. A considerable proportion of respondents reported having at least one self-employed parent or guardian (22.1%), indicating the significance of familial role models in shaping entrepreneurial attitudes. Additionally, transitions within the family context from self-employment to alternative employment arrangements were observed, with a sizable percentage (37.9%) indicating such transitions among parents or guardians. Similarly, in the constructs "About your close friends" and "About your close family," social influences are evident in shaping entrepreneurial aspirations. While a moderate percentage of respondents reported having self-employed close friends (23.8%) and family members (31.8%), transitions from self-employment to alternative employment arrangements were also observed among both social circles.

Central Tendency Measures

Central tendency measures were conducted to assess the distribution of the constructs involved in the study. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5), was used to measure Opportunism, Proactive personality, Risk-taking propensity, Desirability/ Attitude/ Subjective norm, Self-efficacy/perceived behavioural control, and Resilience and persistence.

The median serves as an important measure of central tendency on the five-point Likert scale used to measure the subconstructs of Entrepreneurial Intent. The median represents the middle value of the dataset when arranged in numerical order. In this context, considering the median score for the subconstructs is 3, a median score below 3 suggests that a significant portion of respondents leaned towards disagreement or neutrality regarding the construct, whereas a median score of 3 or higher indicates a tendency towards neutrality or agreement with the statements related to the constructs.

The study sought to measure the entrepreneurial intent as the student progresses through the undergraduate diploma.

Table 3. Kruskal-Wallis H test

	Year of Study	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	p-value
Entrepreneurial Intent	1st	264	213.24	16.259	2	**0.000**
	2nd	77	159.44			
	3rd	71	232.47			
	Total	**412**				

The Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to measure the entrepreneurial intent of students as they progress through their undergraduate diplomas. The results, shown in Table 3, indicate a statistically significant difference in entrepreneurial intent across the different years of study ($\chi^2 = 16.259$, $p < .05$). The mean ranks for entrepreneurial intent were 213.24 for first-year students, 159.44 for second-year students, and 232.47 for third-year students. These findings suggest that entrepreneurial intent varies significantly over the course of the undergraduate diploma, with a notable decrease in the second year followed by a significant increase in the third year. The significant result implies that the progression through the undergraduate program influences students' entrepreneurial intent, potentially reflecting the impact of the curriculum, experiential learning opportunities, or increased confidence and skills gained over time. Therefore, the results indicate that there is indeed a significant difference in entrepreneurial intent across the different stages of the undergraduate diploma program. In simpler terms, it suggests that the entrepreneurial aspirations or intentions of students change significantly as they advance from one academic year to another within their undergraduate studies.

Table 4. Kruskal-Wallis H test

Constructs	Year of Study	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	p-value

Opportunism	1st	264	205.98	18.625	2	**0.000**
	2nd	77	166.99			
	3rd	71	251.27			
	Total	412				
Proactive personality	1st	264	211.60	8.739	2	**0.013**
	2nd	77	172.03			
	3rd	71	224.92			
	Total	412				
Risk-taking propensity	1st	264	208.73	4.365	2	**0.113**
	2nd	77	183.53			
	3rd	**71**	**223.10**			
Total		**412**				
Desirability/ Attitude/ Subjective norm	1st	264	214.63	5.673	2	**0.059**
	2nd	77	177.99			
	3rd	71	207.18			
	Total	412				
Self-efficacy/perceived behavioural control	1st	264	210.49	8.158	2	**0.017**
	2nd	77	174.18			
	3rd	71	226.70			
	Total	412				
Resilience and persistence	1st	264	209.24	1.373	2	**0.503**
	2nd	77	192.40			
	3rd	71	211.61			
	Total	**412**				

The Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to measure the entrepreneurial intent of students as they progress through their undergraduate diplomas. The results, shown in Table 14, indicate statistically significant differences in Opportunism ($\chi^2 = 18.625$, $p < .05$), Proactive Personality ($\chi^2 = 8.739$, $p < .05$) and Self-efficacy/perceived behavioural control ($\chi^2 = 8.158$, $p < .05$) across the different years of study

The significant result implies that the progression through the undergraduate programme influences students' entrepreneurial intent, potentially reflecting the impact of their experiential learning opportunities, their tendency towards taking or avoiding risks or creativity and adaptability.

The findings of this study underscore the fluidity of entrepreneurial intentions as students' progress in their successive years of study. The empirical data and findings suggest that the high entrepreneurial intent of management students is mainly attributable to their enthusiasm and the novelty of a venture or business idea that requires further fortification by practical realities encountered in their second year of study. The ensuing increase in entrepreneurship intent in their third year of study suggests that nuanced curriculum interventions, incubator training workshops and mentorship, as well as immersion into real-world entrepreneurial activities, can elevate motivation, confidence towards entrepreneurship intention.

Furthermore, the influential role of family background and social support is considered a significant factor that shapes students' entrepreneurial intent, as evinced by the described presence of friends and family members who are self-employed relatives and friends. Yet, the movement of students from being self-employed to other forms of employment or unemployment within these family and social circles is likely to present mixed signals to students about entrepreneurial risks and rewards. Understanding such concerns warrants higher education institutions to not only equip students with entrepreneurial traits but also to respond to the challenges encountered in entrepreneurship, as well as provide support and mentorship towards sustaining entrepreneurial start-ups and ventures.

Understanding these revelations calls for a flexible curriculum that is designed to the growing entrepreneurial mindset of students at different levels. In addition, it becomes imperative to integrate real-world teaching and learning entrepreneurial activities during the first two years of management students' curricula. Indeed, the proposed initiative has the propensity to support and improve entrepreneurial intent. Concurrently exposing students to the realities of risk management would better prepare and foster resilience-building traits, significant for succeeding in entrepreneurship.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The literature presents a significant gap in terms of both theoretical and empirical studies that assess the entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduate students in their different levels of study and behaviour (Binks Mahon 2006; Sanchez, 2019; Jena,2020; Li et al, 2023). This paper responds to this lacuna by, adding to the existing body of the literature. Notably, the results indicate that there is indeed a significant difference in entrepreneurial intent and the various factors across the different stages of the undergraduate diploma programme. In simpler terms, it suggests that the different factors significantly influence students' entrepreneurial aspirations or intentions change as they advance from one academic year to another within their undergraduate studies. The study indicates varying levels of entrepreneurial intent among students across different stages of their academic journey. This study recommends a redesign of the curriculum that ought to be practical, hands-on entrepreneurial training, particularly in the early years of students' study. For example, introducing entrepreneurship-related projects, simulated case studies, and authentic forms of learning can help students for entrepreneurial careers. Ultimately, higher education institutes should consider leveraging familial and social networks to reinforce positive entrepreneurial role models and provide realistic insights into entrepreneurial careers.

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