

A Study of Entrepreneurial Intention of Students of Jamia Millia Islamia During COVID - 19 Period

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is one of the prominent factors for the development of a nation. The government of India is rigorously promoting innovation, startups, and entrepreneurship and is allocating huge funds to foster the growth of the entrepreneurial environment. To encourage students to explore entrepreneurship as a career option, a variety of organizations, schemes, and projects are offering a support system and connecting industries, institutions, and skill development programs. Jamia Millia Islamia is the Central University in India that is promoting entrepreneurship and is providing students with relevant support for innovative startups. The entrepreneurial intention of students is one of the important factors to inculcate entrepreneurial behavior in students. This research paper was an attempt to measure the entrepreneurial intention of students of Jamia Millia Islamia during COVID-19. A sample of 203 students of Jamia Millia Islamia was taken. Multiple regression was conducted to know the impact of entrepreneurial behaviour, business opportunities during COVID-19, and entrepreneurial environment in India on the entrepreneurial intention of students. The findings may help educators, administrators, and policymakers to promote entrepreneurship among students.

Keywords : Business opportunities during COVID-19, entrepreneurial behavior, entrepreneurial environment, entrepreneurial intention

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Entrepreneurs are critical to a country's economic growth, employment creation, and overall development. Entrepreneurs support the nation in getting a market position on a worldwide scale through new and innovative ideas and activities. India has a dedicated and mindful young population which is more than 60%. Employing such a huge population is a difficult task. So, the Government of India is promoting entrepreneurship through various initiatives such as Startup India. Despite various initiatives, there is still a lack of program implementation to increase entrepreneurial activity at the college level in different disciplines.

So, to promote entrepreneurship in higher institutions, it is a prerequisite to creating an entrepreneurial mindset among college students through entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneur education is thought to be an innovative and significant force that decides the competitive economy's health. In today's era, entrepreneurship education is considered one of the necessary factors that could influence a student's career decision. Many universities and colleges are promoting entrepreneurial culture through entrepreneurship education in their program of study. These courses aim to make students aware of entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial opportunities existing in the environment and to create their mindset towards self-employment. However, understanding the impact of entrepreneurial education on students' entrepreneurial intentions is a vital subject that must be addressed. Entrepreneurial intention is a critical topic in entrepreneurship studies these days as intentions have proven to be the best predictors of planned behavior,

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particularly when that behavior is rare, hard to observe, or involves unpredictable time lags. Entrepreneur intention means the individual choice to put a business concept into new venture creation. Entrepreneurial intention is a widely used measure to know entrepreneurial behavior by researchers.

Recently, COVID-19 has been intimidating the worldwide economy. This pandemic has impacted different sectors in differently ways. In these circumstances, innovation, and entrepreneurship have a huge potential to lessen the negative effects of this pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has also impacted students to pursue and choose their career options in light of the current environment.

However, there is a paucity of research on COVID-19's impact on entrepreneurial activities, but this information is imperative and essential for both scholars and policymakers. The goal of this study is to test the entrepreneurial intention of Jamia Millia Islamia students during the COVID-19 period. More precisely, the study aims to

- (i) Determine the link between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneur behavior;
- (ii) Investigate the effect of business opportunity during COVID-19 on entrepreneurial intention
- (iii) Investigate the influence of entrepreneurial environment in India in shaping entrepreneurial intention.

The rationale of the current study is supported by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as this provides a strong theoretical base. Ajzen (1991) proposed, “planned behaviors (like introducing a new business) are intentional and can be projected by intention towards that behavior and future behaviors are intentional driven”. As seen in Figure 1, behaviour, opportunity, intention, and entrepreneurial environment were the considerable factors in the TPB model that has been developed.

Review of Literature and Hypothesis

University and college students symbolize potential contributions to the wealth of any country. While many pieces of research focused on established entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial intentions, COVID-19 impact on university students' entrepreneurial inclinations is severely lacking, notably in India. Different models have been used by researchers in the past to measure the entrepreneurial intention of students (Loan, Doanh, Thang, Viet Nga, Van, & Hoa, 2021; Maresch, Harms, Kailer, & Wimmer-Wurm, 2016; Turker & Selcuk, 2009; Zhang, Duysters, & Cloudt, 2013). Different scholars discovered various factors that affect entrepreneurial intention.

Bayero, Ibrahim, and Safiyan (2020); Maresch, Harms, Kailer, and Wimmer-Wurm (2016); Pandit, Joshi, and Tiwari (2018); Su, Zhu, Chen, Jin, Wang, Lin, and Xu (2021); Turker and Selcuk (2009); and Zhang, Duysters, and Cloudt (2013) stated that entrepreneurship education could have a favorable influence on college students and also on molding their intention towards entrepreneurship. According to Asghar, Gul, Hakkarainen, and Taşdemir (2019); Maresch, Harms, Kailer, and Wimmer-Wurm (2016); Pandit, Joshi, and Tiwari (2018); Zhang, Duysters, and Cloudt (2013), a well-designed entrepreneurship course in the curriculum could assure active entrepreneurial behavior in students. Various entrepreneurship programs and trainings provided in the university raise entrepreneurial behavior and inspire students to take part in entrepreneurial activities (Awan & Ahmad, 2017; Bayero et al., 2020; Gelard & Saleh, 2011; Mustafa, Hernandez, Mahon & Chee, 2016; Souitaris, Zerbinati, & Al-Laham, 2007; Su et al., 2021; Ugwu & Ezeani, 2012).

Gomes, Sousa, Santos, Oliveira, Oliveira, and Lopes (2021); Liñán, Rodríguez-Cohard, and Rueda-Cantuche (2011); Loan, Doanh, Thang, Viet Nga, Van, and Hoa (2021) found that the most significant factors influencing intention were personal attitude and perceived behavioral control. The family background of the student significantly influences the intention to pursue entrepreneurship as a career option (Loan et al., 2021; Su et al., 2021).

Jena (2020); Lopes, Gomes, Santos, Oliveira, and Oliveira (2021) discovered that there was a stronger capacity for entrepreneurial activity due to COVID-19 as people were more attracted towards being entrepreneurs than being employed by others.

Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)

The intention of a person is the vital variable to forecast the entrepreneurial behavior of an individual. Su et al. (2021) described intention as “a psychological orientation that can be thought of as a wish or a desire that influences their choice of becoming an entrepreneur”. Various studies found out that one's intention motivates one to choose entrepreneurship as a career option and students are particularly highly inspired and have positive intentions to become entrepreneurs (Awan & Ahmad, 2017).

College and university-level entrepreneurship education could be a great source of inspiration, and it can further encourage student entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurship education provided by the university gives students knowledge about entrepreneurship, startups, and also shapes decision-making capabilities. The intention of a person to engage in entrepreneurial activity drives establishment of a new organization. In today's circumstances resulting from COVID-19, there is a growing need for entrepreneurship and people are more inclined to become an entrepreneur than being employed by others (Lopes et al., 2021).

Furthermore, there are various theories to understand entrepreneurial intention (Jena, 2020; Maresch et al., 2016; Souitaris et al., 2007). Amongst all theories, mainly used theories are Institutional Economic Theory, Theory of Entrepreneurial Event, and Theory of Planned Behaviour (Liñán et al., 2011). Compared to other theories, the Theory of Planned Behaviour is the most used theory to justify the concept of entrepreneurial intention (Ajzen, 1991; Awan & Ahmad, 2017; Fayolle, Gailly, & Lassas-Clerc, 2006; Zhang, Duysters, & Cloudt, 2013).

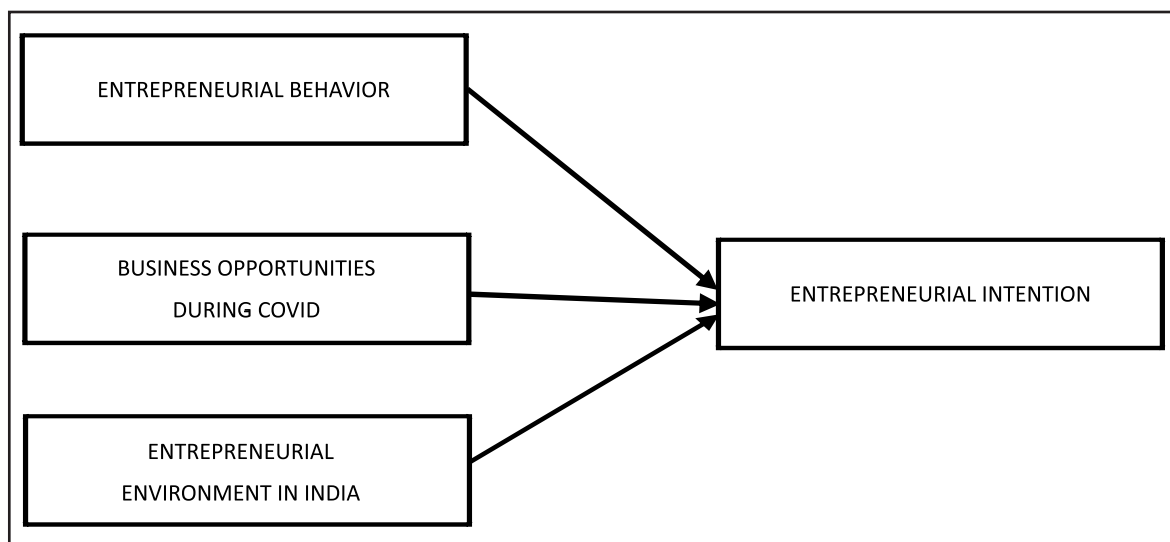


Fig. 1. The Hypothesized Research Model

Entrepreneurial Behaviour (EB)

It is observed from existing literature that common definitions and explanations were absent for entrepreneurial behavior. In this study, the skills, capacity, and knowledge of individuals towards entrepreneurship is referred to as entrepreneurial behavior. Briefly, entrepreneurial behaviors are linked with the formation of a business firm against being hired by others.

The behavioral factor indicates the aspiration of students' behavioral intentions in the form of objectives, ambitions, and expected responses to entrepreneurship. Gomes, Sousa, Santos, Oliveira, Oliveira, & Lopes (2021) concluded in their study that during this pandemic, perceived behavioral control has a positive effect on individuals' entrepreneurial

intentions. Many scholars have found a significant linkage between behavior and intention. Thus, it is seen that entrepreneurial behavior can drive students to create a business plan and run their own business.

🔗 **H1:** There is a positive correlation between entrepreneurial behavior and entrepreneurial intentions of students.

Business Opportunities During COVID - 19 (BOC)

Business opportunity comprises of one's ability to recognize, identify, and capture new business concepts and trends. It is also considered one of the important states of making entrepreneurial decisions by people. It is also considered that those with a lot of potential for recognizing business opportunities favorably run their own business and engage in entrepreneurial activities.

Jena (2020) analyzed the current pandemic and found out that the fear of COVID-19 and business opportunity was positively correlated with entrepreneurial intentions. Some SMEs are taking advantage of opportunities available due to COVID-19 to survive in this difficult time. However, some government intervention is needed to solve the negative effects of COVID-19 on the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Previous researches proved that business opportunity recognition has a strong association with entrepreneurial intention. Business opportunity recognition was found to be strongly and positively linked with students' entrepreneurial intention in previous studies. Ratten and Jones (2021) stated that entrepreneurial activities could play an influential role to help our society overcome the crisis.

🔗 **H2:** There is a positive correlation between business opportunities and the entrepreneurial intentions of students.

Entrepreneurial Environment in India (EEI)

Ritu and Chawla (2021) said, "Past shreds of evidence depict India among the largest and fastest-growing economies". Entrepreneurship emerged as the most discussed topic in the past decade and prospects of entrepreneurship have shown great development as well. According to the ASSOCHAM report, India became the center of more than 5000 start-ups and ranked high in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. In India, rural entrepreneurs play a vital part in economic development as help in eradicating rural poverty from India. Entrepreneurship development and economic development are fairly interconnected (Tiwari & Mishra, 2020). Government policies and plans are helpful for the new and budding entrepreneurs who may also convert traditional family business into innovative firms. Various supporting organizations such as incubation centers, Atal Innovation units, etc. are set up by the government, universities, and private bodies for supporting entrepreneurs in India. The government of India is also promoting and supporting women's entrepreneurship.

🔗 **H3:** There is a positive correlation between the entrepreneurial environment in India and the entrepreneurial intentions of students.

Research Methodology

For the regression analysis, a total of 203 valid data were gathered and justified. For this purpose, convenience sampling has been used. The period of study was March 2021 to July 2021.

The data were collected from an online questionnaire by the students of Jamia Millia Islamia. The questionnaire consisted of structured questions. To reduce selection bias, data were collected university-wide from students of different disciplines as well as from different levels of courses. SPSS 22 was used to analyze data from participants. The statistical techniques used for analysis were Descriptive analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis.

In the study, we have four variables. We used a five-point Likert scale to assess variables with level 1 = "strongly disagree" to level 5 = "strongly agree". We measured Entrepreneurial Behaviour with five questions (Cronbach's alpha = 0.863), Business opportunity due to COVID with five questions (Cronbach's alpha = 0.862),

Entrepreneurial environment in India with five questions (Cronbach's alpha = 0.813), and Entrepreneurial Intention with five questions (Cronbach's alpha = 0.880).

Result and Analysis

The data were initially analyzed to see if they met the assumptions of homoscedasticity, collinearity, and others before being used to test the hypotheses. The results in Table 3 show that the hypotheses H1, H2, H3 are supported.

In the 206 effective responses, there were 57% males and 43% females. 48% of students were in the final year of their studies. 50% of the respondents belonged to 21-25 years of age. About 18% of students planned to become entrepreneurs during COVID-19 pandemic.

Multiple regression was conducted to examine whether Entrepreneurial Environment in India (EEI), Entrepreneurial Behaviour (EB), Business opportunity during COVID-19 (BOC) could predict the Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) of students. A scattered plot showed that the relationship between EB, BOC, and EEI influenced the EI in positive and linear ways, and no bivariate outliers were found. Standard residual analysis revealed no outliers in the data (Std. Residual Min. = -3.282, Std. Residual Max. = 2.885). The Durbin-Watson Test ($d = 2.085$) was used to confirm the independence of residual errors; residual plots revealed homoscedasticity and normality of residuals.

$R^2 = 0.459$; taken as a set, the predictors EB, BOC, EEI account for 46% of the variance in EI of the student. ANOVA table provides information about the overall models. The overall regression model was significant. The EEI, EB, BOC

Table 1. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.678 ^a	0.459	0.451	0.75165

a. Predictors: (Constant), EEI, EB, BOC

b. Dependent Variable : EI

Table 2. ANOVA (test using alpha = 0.05)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	96.844	3	32.281	57.137	0.000 ^b
	Residual	114.127	202	0.565		
	Total	210.971	205			

a. Dependent Variable: EI

b. Predictors: (Constant) EEI, EB, BOC

Table 3. Coefficients (test each predictor at alpha = 0.05)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.218	0.250		0.874	0.383
	EB	0.281	0.066	0.266	4.243	0.000
	BOC	0.195	0.078	0.171	2.511	0.013
	EEI	0.436	0.072	0.384	6.024	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: EI

statistically significantly predicted the EI of students, $F(3,202) = 57.137, p < 0.001$, accounting for 45.9% of the variability in EI of a student with adjusted $R^2 = 0.451$. The difference between R^2 and adjusted R^2 is 0.008 which shows that the sample size is adequate.

Table 3 reflects the significance of each independent variable in describing the dependent variable. The unstandardized coefficient (B) demonstrates both the magnitude and relationship between entrepreneurial intentions and independent variables EB, BOC, and EEI. The positive values of beta imply that the independent and dependent variables have a positive association. The *Sig.* value is 0.000 which means that all constructs of Ajzen theory except BOC are making a substantial contribution to the model. EB, BOC, and EEI explained a substantial amount of unique variance in EI of students as *p* values are less than 0.05 for all the variables. EB is significant with $p < 0.001$, BOC is significant with $p = 0.013$ and EEI is significant with $p < 0.001$.

Conclusion

The goal of this research was to determine the impact of entrepreneurial behavior, business opportunity recognition during COVID-19, and entrepreneurial environment in India on entrepreneurial intention among Jamia Millia Islamia students. From the analysis, it was found that students' entrepreneurial intentions were considerably and positively influenced by all factors, that is, entrepreneurial behavior, business opportunity recognition during COVID-19, and entrepreneurial environment in India. Overall, the model revealed that all variables had a positive impact on entrepreneurial intentions, indicating that the hypothesis is accepted. These results are imperative to strengthening the previous research on entrepreneurial intention, especially measuring the intention gap of students due to COVID-19 pandemic. This research adds to the theory of planned behavior by validating the positive attitude-intention link and examining the impact of entrepreneurial behavior, business opportunity recognition, and the entrepreneurial environment in India on entrepreneurial intention. According to findings, if the university provides suitable knowledge, needed programs, and encouragement for entrepreneurship, there are more chances that students would opt for a career in entrepreneurship (Turker & Selcuk, 2009).

Whether students choose to start their venture or not, entrepreneurship education allows students to look at the world differently (Bayero et al., 2020). The government, institutions, and legislators should take into account students' mental health difficulties as a result of COVID-19 to control the negative impact of COVID-19 on entrepreneurial activity and then consider designing entrepreneurship programs and courses that build strong theoretical concepts as well as enhance practical skills of students (Ruiz-Rosa, Gutiérrez-Taño, & García-Rodríguez, 2020). In general, students choose to work for organizations; however, this perception has shifted in light of the present epidemic, with students preferring to be entrepreneurs in this new environment. We have also seen that people have a strong desire to accomplish something remarkable. This would ideally ensure that youngsters can think deeply about their ideas and assess the extent to which the ideas can be operationalized at a young age.

Limitations, Recommendations and Scope for Future Research

Just like any other study, the present research has limitations. Data on student entrepreneurial intentions were acquired via students' perspectives, similar to earlier studies of entrepreneurial intents. One significant drawback of this strategy is that there may be discrepancies between a student's "perceptions" and "reality" (Liñán, Rodríguez-Cohard, & Rueda-Cantuche, 2011). Although the sample size was sufficient to yield meaningful results, a bigger sample size must be evaluated for the results to be more generalized. Data were collected using convenience sampling. Hence, it might not represent the entrepreneurial intentions of all students of Jamia Millia Islamia. Data were collected from Jamia Millia Islamia University only, it can further be collected from other universities as well. The study focused on factors such as entrepreneur behavior, business opportunity recognition during COVID-19, entrepreneur environment in India only. Future research should consider more factors. Researchers can gather intention and behaviors, thorough demographic information on students' family origins by distinguishing students from self-employed and non-self-employed families. We recommend that the university and the government's policies and programs should be more of

individual factors for successful entrepreneurial activities among university students. The university curriculum must be updated in line with the dynamic nature of today's business environment. Entrepreneurship awareness program should be created at the university level which will provide students with a basic understanding of entrepreneurship. Government should also provide support and services along with entrepreneurship education to encourage entrepreneurship among university students.

Authors' Contribution

Daniya Siddiqui and Prof. Naseeb Ahmad conceived the idea to study entrepreneurial intention of students of Jamia Millia Islamia during COVID-19 period. The impact of COVID-19 on intention of students was carried out jointly by Daniya Siddiqui and Prof. Naseeb Ahmad. Daniya Siddiqui wrote the manuscript in consultation with Prof. Naseeb Ahmad.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest, or non-financial interest in the subject matter, or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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