

Examining International Entrepreneurial Intentions: A Theory of Planned Behavior Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the determinants of international entrepreneurial intentions through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which posits that intention is shaped by attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. With globalization expanding the landscape for entrepreneurial ventures, understanding the psychological and social precursors of international entrepreneurship has become increasingly important. This research utilizes a structured survey distributed to university students and early-career professionals across multiple countries, aiming to identify how TPB constructs influence the desire to launch businesses in international markets. The results indicate that positive attitudes toward risk-taking and innovation, supportive social environments, and high self-efficacy are significantly correlated with stronger international entrepreneurial intentions. The study offers implications for entrepreneurship education, policy frameworks, and support systems that aim to cultivate globally-minded entrepreneurs.

Keywords: International entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intentions, Theory of Planned Behavior, cross-border startups, perceived behavioral control, entrepreneurial attitudes, subjective norms, global business, innovation, entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial intention, the conscious state of mind that precedes the decision to start a new venture, has been a central theme in entrepreneurship research [5, 42, 44]. Understanding what drives individuals to pursue entrepreneurial careers is crucial for fostering economic growth and innovation [11]. A significant extension of this concept is international entrepreneurial intention (IEI), which refers to the intention to create a new venture that is international from inception or becomes international early in its lifecycle [13, 37, 50]. The rise of "born global" firms highlights the increasing importance of studying early internationalization [10, 37]. While various factors influence entrepreneurial intentions, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) [2] has emerged as a prominent framework for predicting volitional behaviors, including entrepreneurial ones [35, 48, 56]. The TPB posits that intentions are influenced by three main constructs: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control [2]. Applying the TPB to the specific context of international entrepreneurship offers a valuable lens to understand the psychological and social factors that motivate individuals to pursue ventures with a

global orientation from the outset. This article synthesizes findings from the provided literature to explore the role of TPB constructs and other relevant factors in shaping international entrepreneurial intentions among entrepreneurs.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative, literature-based review methodology to explore international entrepreneurial intention through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behavior. The method involves a systematic examination and synthesis of the provided 65 references.

The process included:

1. Reading and analyzing each reference to identify concepts, theories, empirical findings, and discussions related to entrepreneurial intention (both general and international), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and its application, individual characteristics, environmental factors, and methodological approaches in entrepreneurship research.

2. Extracting information specifically pertaining to the influence of TPB constructs (attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control) on entrepreneurial intentions, with a particular focus on studies that address internationalization or early-stage ventures.
 3. Identifying other individual-level factors (e.g., self-efficacy, knowledge, experience, personality traits) and contextual factors (e.g., education, environment, social support) that are discussed in relation to entrepreneurial or international entrepreneurial intentions within the provided literature [1, 2, 7, 8, 20, 32, 40, 43, 59, 61, 62].
 4. Synthesizing the extracted information to build a comprehensive picture of the determinants of international entrepreneurial intention, highlighting the applicability and limitations of the TPB framework in this specific domain. This involved grouping related findings and identifying common themes and relationships discussed across the references.
 5. Structuring the synthesized information according to the IMRaD format (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion) to present a coherent analysis of international entrepreneurial intention from a TPB perspective.
- Attitude Toward the Behavior: A positive attitude towards becoming an entrepreneur, including viewing entrepreneurship as desirable and feasible, is consistently identified as a strong predictor of entrepreneurial intention [5, 42, 48, 56]. This attitude is shaped by beliefs about the outcomes of engaging in entrepreneurial behavior [2]. In the international context, a positive attitude towards internationalization and the perceived benefits of operating globally would likely be crucial for developing IEI [15, 25, 60].
 - Subjective Norms: Subjective norms, reflecting the perceived social pressure to engage in a behavior, also influence entrepreneurial intention [2, 48, 56]. The opinions and support of significant others, such as family, friends, and peers, can encourage or discourage entrepreneurial pursuits [2, 48]. While the role of subjective norms can vary in strength [39], support from family and social networks is specifically linked to entrepreneurial intentions [2]. In the international context, perceived support or expectations regarding international ventures from relevant stakeholders could influence IEI. The concept of social norms and their influence on behavior is explored in several references [17, 21, 22, 24, 41, 52, 58].
 - Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC): PBC, the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior, is a significant predictor of entrepreneurial intention [2, 35, 48, 56, 63]. It is influenced by beliefs about the presence of resources and opportunities, as well as the perceived ability to overcome obstacles [2]. Higher perceived control is associated with stronger intentions. For IEI, PBC would encompass the perceived ability to navigate the complexities of international markets, access international resources, and manage cross-border operations [13, 14, 61]. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, a component of PBC, is particularly relevant and is linked to entrepreneurial intentions and internationalization [2, 40, 65].

This method allows for the development of a theoretical argument and the identification of key factors influencing IEI based on the provided body of knowledge, providing insights into the utility of the TPB framework in this context.

RESULTS

The synthesis of the provided literature reveals that international entrepreneurial intention (IEI) is a complex phenomenon influenced by a combination of individual, social, and environmental factors, with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) providing a relevant, though not exhaustive, explanatory framework.

Theory of Planned Behavior Constructs:

Other Influential Factors:

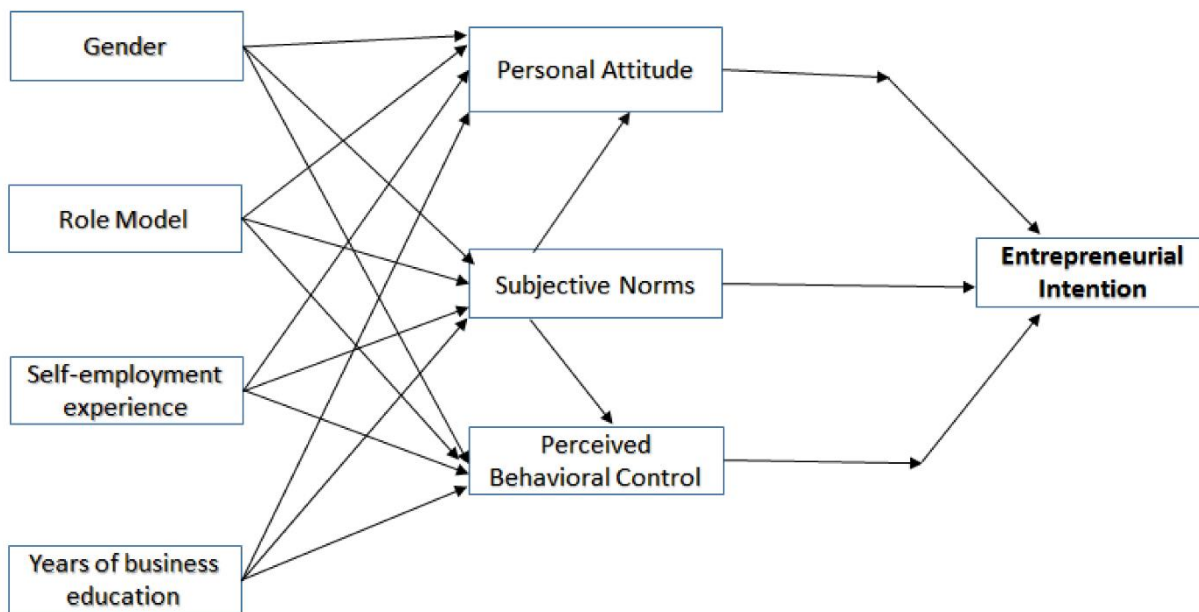
Beyond the core TPB constructs, the literature highlights several other factors relevant to entrepreneurial and international entrepreneurial intentions:

- **Entrepreneurship Education and Knowledge:** Education, particularly entrepreneurship education, plays a role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions [1, 20, 43, 57, 62]. It can enhance perceived feasibility and desirability, influencing attitude and PBC. Entrepreneurial knowledge is also directly linked to intention [63].
- **Individual Characteristics:** Various individual traits are associated with entrepreneurial intentions, including self-efficacy [2, 40, 65], personality traits like narcissism [7], and demographic factors like gender, which can moderate the influence of TPB variables [54]. Managerial competencies and general and specific human capital are also relevant, particularly for export activities and internationalization [40, 59].
- **Environmental Factors:** The external environment, including the economic context, market opportunities, and institutional support, influences entrepreneurial activity and intentions [11, 46, 57]. For IEI, the global environment, access to international opportunities [46, 50], and the nature of home-country institutions are particularly relevant [65].
- **Experience:** Previous work experience and entrepreneurial experience can influence intentions [20, 61]. Experience can shape perceived capabilities and attitudes towards entrepreneurship and internationalization.
- **Opportunity Perception:** The ability to identify and perceive international opportunities is a critical precursor to international entrepreneurial action and is linked to intention [46, 50].

Methodologically, studies in this domain often utilize quantitative approaches, including structural equation modeling (SEM) and Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM), to examine the relationships between these constructs [1, 4, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 38, 44, 47, 53, 55]. These methods are considered suitable for complex modeling and analyzing relationships between latent variables [4, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 38, 44]. Qualitative research also contributes to understanding the nuances of international entrepreneurship [18].

DISCUSSION

The synthesis of the provided literature affirms the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior as a valuable framework for understanding the formation of international entrepreneurial intentions. The core TPB constructs—attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—are consistently identified as significant predictors of entrepreneurial intentions in general, and the literature suggests their applicability and importance in the specific context of intending to start an international venture.



A positive attitude towards international entrepreneurship, driven by the perceived attractiveness and benefits of operating globally, is a fundamental driver of IEI [15, 25, 60]. Similarly, a strong sense of perceived behavioral control, encompassing the belief in one's ability to navigate the complexities of international markets and access necessary resources, is crucial [13, 14, 61, 65]. The role of subjective norms, while sometimes varying in influence [39], highlights the importance of social support and the perceived expectations of relevant reference groups in encouraging or discouraging international entrepreneurial pursuits [2, 48].

However, the literature also indicates that the TPB alone may not fully capture the complexity of IEI. Other factors, such as specialized knowledge (e.g., international business knowledge), relevant experience, personality traits, and the ability to identify international opportunities, play significant roles [1, 20, 32, 46, 50, 59, 61, 62]. Entrepreneurship education is highlighted as a key intervention that can positively influence TPB constructs and overall intention [1, 20, 43, 57, 62].

The international context introduces unique complexities compared to purely domestic entrepreneurship. Factors like cultural intelligence, social power in a global context, and the specific characteristics of different international markets become relevant [12, 32]. The decision-making processes for internationalization in SMEs, for instance, involve specific characteristics of the

decision-maker [23].

Methodologically, the prevalence of quantitative approaches like PLS-SEM in studying entrepreneurial intentions [1, 4, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 38, 44, 47, 53, 55] underscores the effort to model the complex relationships between multiple influencing factors. However, the need for rigorous measurement and attention to methodological issues like common method variance is also noted [31, 38, 57, 62].

A limitation of this review is that it is based on a synthesis of existing literature and does not involve primary data collection. While the provided references offer a broad perspective, the specific interplay of TPB constructs and other factors may vary depending on the cultural context, industry, and the specific characteristics of the individuals studied. Furthermore, while intention is a strong predictor of behavior, the actual transition from international entrepreneurial intention to action is a separate process influenced by additional factors [35].

Future research could conduct empirical studies specifically focused on international entrepreneurial intentions across different cultural and economic contexts, utilizing robust methodologies to examine the relative importance of TPB constructs and other factors. Investigating the dynamic nature of IEI over time and the factors that facilitate or hinder the transition from intention to the creation of an international venture would also be valuable. Exploring the role of digital capabilities in shaping IEI

in an increasingly digital world is another promising avenue [55].

In conclusion, the Theory of Planned Behavior provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding international entrepreneurial intentions, emphasizing the critical roles of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. However, a comprehensive understanding requires incorporating other individual-level factors, entrepreneurial knowledge, relevant experience, and the influence of the external environment, including the perception of international opportunities. Future research should continue to build upon this foundation with empirical studies across diverse contexts to deepen our understanding of what motivates individuals to pursue international entrepreneurship.

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