The Impact of Entrepreneurial Education on University Students' Entrepreneurial Intention

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Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award at the University, or other academic or professional organization, whilst undertaking my research degree.
2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
3. I certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.
4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy, and ethics approval has been granted for all research studies in the thesis.
5. The word count of the thesis is **50,804.**

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Abstract

The current study investigates the impact of entrepreneurship education (EE) on the entrepreneurial intentions (EI) of university students in an emerging developing country with a high rate of youth unemployment. Despite its inclusion in university courses to foster economic development and self-employment, EE's effectiveness within the country's unique socioeconomic environment is little understood.

In an effort to fill this gap, the research employed a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design informed by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen1991). The research began with a qualitative component involving semi-structured interviews (n=10) between Addis Ababa University students, providing rich contextual data. This guided the development of a large-scale quantitative survey (n=332), which statistically tested the relationships between the main variables.

The findings indicate that entrepreneurial intention is a complex process driven by the inter combination of entrepreneurship educational (EE), entrepreneurial role model (ERMs), entrepreneurial passion (EP) and Socioeconomic factors. The study positively confirms that EE has considerable effects on EI by equipping students with required skills and enhancing their perceived behavioural control. Furthermore, entrepreneurial passion (EP) was the best predictor of intention, and socioeconomic factors, such as family background and resources, have a determining but frequently restrictive role. The influence of entrepreneurial role models (ERMs) constituted a significant paradox. Although qualitatively identified as a source of inspiration, quantitative results showed their direct impact on intention was statistically insignificant. This discrepancy is attributed to the non-systematic engagement of ERMs within the formal curriculum.

Synthesizing these findings, this study makes its core theoretical contribution through the development of the Investment-Uncertainty-Profit (IUP) Model. This new framework is intended to shift EE in developing economies away from abstract theory and towards resiliency in practice, with a central emphasis on managing uncertainty, attracting investment, and gaining profitability. The research ends on practical propositions to policymakers and educators, advocating experiential learning, systematic mentoring, and ecosystem facilitation to bridge the intention-act gap between entrepreneurial intention and actual business creation within the Ethiopian context.

Dedication

for

My beloved mother, **"Abaye"**

My Greatest Inspiration.

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List of Abbreviations

AAU- Addis Ababa University

CF - Conceptual Framework

CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility

CLT – Central Limit Theorem

EE- Entrepreneurship Education

EI – Entrepreneurial Intentions

EP - Entrepreneurial Passions

ERMs- Entrepreneurial Role Models

FBE- Faculty of Business and Economics

GEM- Global Entrepreneurial Monitor

GTP - Growth and Transformation Plan

IDI – In Depth Interview

ILO – International Labor organization

IT- Institutional Theory

IVS- Independent Variables

MoSHE- Ministry of Science and Higher Education

MSMEs- Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises

OECD- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

RQs - Research Questions

SEF – Socioeconomic Factors

TPB - Theory of Planned Behaviour

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Ethiopia's high rate of graduate unemployment contrasts with graduates' lack of business aspirations. Policymakers have incorporated Entrepreneurship Education (EE) into university curricula in recognition of the contribution that entrepreneurship makes to economic development. However, given Ethiopia's particular circumstances, it is still unclear, and little understood how well these programs shape students' entrepreneurial intentions (EI).

By examining the effect of EE on EI among Addis Ababa University students, this study fills this knowledge gap. It looks at the combined impact of entrepreneurial role models, passion, and socioeconomic conditions, going beyond a specific emphasis. Prior to performing a comprehensive quantitative survey, the research collects rich qualitative insights using a sequential exploratory mixed-methods approach. This method guarantees that the results are thoroughly contextualized. In order to support job creation and economic progress in Ethiopia and other developing nations, the study intends to produce practical suggestions for improving the applicability and efficacy of entrepreneurship education and policy. Next section highlighted background of the study.

1.2 Background of Study

In the past several years, universities have placed increased focus on entrepreneurship due to its ability to drive innovation, economic growth, and professional development. Accordingly, universities around the world have included EE in the curriculum to equip students with sufficient entrepreneurial competences and capabilities. Despite such global focus, empirical studies on EE's effect in driving EI of students, an empirically verified antecedent of future behaviour, are limited (Lv et al., 2021; Nabi et al., 2017) in developing nations.

This thesis investigates the determinants of university students' entrepreneurial intentions and in particular entrepreneurship education, role models, entrepreneurial passion, and socioeconomic factors. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study provides an integrative account of how these factors interact.

The research is situated in the context of Addis Ababa University, a setting of utmost importance to new economies. Ethiopia boasts a young population, one of the populus African countries , having high young population and this is the largest asset to be exploited for economic development. The objective of the research is to evaluate EE's specific contribution and impact to university students' entrepreneurial intentions (EI), considering the necessity of understanding how interventions in education might act fruitfully in the demographic asset.

The economic function of entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as among the key drivers in addressing social economic problems, including poverty reduction, unemployment, and stagnation of growth. Entrepreneurship has proven to be an extremely viable instrument for transforming social economic conditions, and EE takes a key role in achieving this (Acs et al., 2018; Maaitah, 2023). In Ethiopia, where unemployment among the youth is over 25.3% (ILO, 2023) and only 12% of graduates pursue entrepreneurship within five years after graduation (MoE, 2023), building an entrepreneurial culture has become a top policy priority. To address this, the government has integrated EE into university programs to promote self-employment (MoE, 2019).

However, despite these efforts, there is little information regarding how EE affects the entrepreneurial intentions of students in Ethiopia. While systematic EE has been proven to increase self-efficacy, intention, and opportunities awareness (Nabi et al.,

2017; Tarekegn & Rao, 2021), its efficacy in settings with limited resources like Ethiopia is generally limited by poor mentorship, poor access to seed capital, and absence of entrepreneurial support systems that are fully established (Mwasalwiba, 2010; Belay & Mengiste, 2022). Furthermore, the association of EE and EI also is arguably mediated by perceived ease and risk-taking inclinations in such an environment (Adem et al., 2020).

The severity of graduate unemployment in Ethiopia underscores the critical necessity of this research. Personal entrepreneurial experience, such as receiving over 3,000 applications for a single vacancy, illustrates the profound scale of the crisis. Given Ethiopia's status as the second-most populous nation in Africa and its severely high unemployment rates, investigating how to effectively nurture entrepreneurship through education is not a mere academic exercise, but a national imperative. This context affirms the study's importance, timeliness, and potential impact.

This study is also relevant due to methodological deficiencies in existing research. The majority of prior studies conducted in Ethiopia have only relied on qualitative or quantitative data, possibly overlooking the complex, multi-faceted nature of the entrepreneurial experience.

Given these compelling factors, this research is both critical and timely. It holds strong potential to enrich academic discourse and inform practical strategies for universities, government bodies, and other stakeholders. Ultimately, the study seeks to enhance the entrepreneurial capabilities of the next generation of innovators within the university system.

The following section presents the Statement of the Problem, detailing the specific issues that motivate this research.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Graduate unemployment remains one of the most pervasive socioeconomic challenges in emerging economies . Despite the rapid expansion of tertiary education, the growth of quality employment opportunities has failed to keep pace, resulting in a rising population of underemployed youth (ILO, 2021). In response, universities have increasingly promoted entrepreneurship as a development strategy, integrating Entrepreneurship Education (EE) into curricula to foster self-employment and mitigate unemployment (Ndou, 2021).

However, empirical evidence on the efficacy of these initiatives within developing contexts like Ethiopia remains limited and inconclusive. Existing domestic studies, while valuable, are characterized by significant limitations. For instance, research has highlighted the prevalence of traditional, theoretical teaching methods in EE in developing countries (Zegeye & Singh, 2019), besides studies also show that lack of institutional support for EE programs as highlighted by (Gelaneh, 2019), and sometimes you find also a puzzling findings, such as a negative relationship between financial resources and entrepreneurial intention, which contradict established literature (Tereda, 2020). Study by Engidaw (2021) furthermore emphasized acknowledged the limitations of the current entrepreneur education design in Ethiopia and recommend the need for more experiential and supportive learning environments to establish in higher learning institutions (Engidaw, 2021).

Besides, methodologically most of the studies undertaken in Ethiopia solely adopted homogeneous methodology , relying exclusively on quantitative approaches that fail to capture the rich, underlying factors that influence entrepreneurial intention.

Guided by an analysis of both internal and external contextual factors, this study identifies several unresolved issues in the literature. It seeks to close the resulting knowledge gaps by addressing the following

1. **The Contextual Gap:** A scarcity of research that adequately accounts for Ethiopia's unique institutional, cultural, and economic realities, which differ profoundly from the Western contexts in which dominant theories were developed.

2. **The Methodological Gap:** It is noted that existing research on Entrepreneurial Education (EE) in higher institutions in Ethiopia has largely been limited to either qualitative or quantitative studies to assess the impact on students' Entrepreneurial Intention (EI). The reliance on mono-method (purely qualitative or quantitative) designs limits the depth of understanding. This study employs a mixed-methods approach to provide a more nuanced, contextually grounded analysis.
3. **The Theoretical Gap:** The need to test, contextualize, and potentially extend intention-based models like the Theory of Planned Behaviour to identify which factors are salient within the Ethiopian ecosystem.
4. **The Empirical Gap:** A lack of robust, comprehensive studies evaluating the actual impact of EE programs on student outcomes in Ethiopia. This research aims to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on how EE influences entrepreneurial intention.

1.4 Research Aim, Research problem and Objectives

1. Research Purpose

The overall aim of this study is to assess the impact of entrepreneurial education on university students' entrepreneurial intentions, specifically focusing on Addis Ababa University.

2. Research Problem

Despite the fact that entrepreneurship education is encouraged in all fields, empirical evidence as to the mechanism and the magnitude by which it affects the entrepreneurial intention of university students in Ethiopia is limited. It is against this background that the current study seeks to determine the following key problem: How and to what extent does entrepreneurship education, as well as other significant factors, affect the entrepreneurial intentions of Addis Ababa University students?

3. Specific Objectives

To achieve the research aim and address the identified problem, the research adheres to the following specific objectives:

- To quantify the entrepreneurial education direct effect on entrepreneurial intentions of students.
- To evaluate the effect of the exposure of entrepreneurial role models on entrepreneurial intention development.
- To test the effect of entrepreneurial passion on entrepreneurial intention development.
- To test the effect of key socioeconomic factors on entrepreneurial intentions of students.

4. Research Hypotheses

To empirically test the relationships as postulated in the objectives, the following null hypotheses were established for quantitative testing:

- H1: Entrepreneurship education (EE) has statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention (EI).
- H2: Entrepreneurial role models (ERMs) have statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention (EI).
- H3: Entrepreneurial passion (EP) has statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention (EI).

- H4: Socioeconomic factors (SEF) have statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention (EI).

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research focuses on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduates at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. A clearly defined scope is critical to establishing the study's focus and ensuring the research remains feasible. Concurrently, a forthright discussion of the limitations is vital to contextualize the results, acknowledge the research's boundaries, and provide clarity for future scholarly work by outlining the conditions under which the findings should be interpreted as detailed below.

1.5.1 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study has been carefully defined to guarantee focus and viability as follows :

- **Conceptual Focus:** The study focuses on **entrepreneurial *intention*** as the primary dependent variable, rather than on subsequent behaviour or venture creation. **This is because the latter may occur long after graduation, falling outside the timeframe of the DBA program.**
- **Educational Context:** The research is confined to formal, credit-bearing entrepreneurship courses within the university curriculum. Extracurricular entrepreneurial activities, informal exposure, or training outside the university are excluded unless incidentally mentioned by participants.
- **Population and Sampling Frame:** The focus is on undergraduate students at Addis Ababa University (AAU), chosen due to their formative career stage wherein attitudes and intentions are particularly receptive to educational influence. Graduate students, alumni, and faculty are not included.
- **Theoretical Variables:** The study investigates four key independent variables: Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and Socioeconomic Factors (SEF).

These were selected based on their theoretical significance in intention models, with other factors excluded to preserve analytical rigor.

- **Geographical and Contextual Boundaries:** The research is situated within the specific environment of Addis Ababa University. While this provides valuable context-specific insights, generalizing findings to other universities—especially those in rural or different national contexts—should be approached with caution.

1.5.2. Limitations of the Study

The following limitations, which may affect the study but are beyond the researcher's full control, are acknowledged:

- **Cross-Sectional Design:** The study uses a cross-sectional approach, collecting data at a single point in time. As a result, it captures entrepreneurial intentions but cannot monitor their development over time or establish causal links between intention and actual entrepreneurial behaviour.
- **Self-Reported Data:** Data collection relies primarily on self-reported surveys and interviews, which are vulnerable to biases such as social desirability, recall errors, and inaccuracies in respondents' reporting of perceptions and intentions.
- **Generalizability:** Given the focus on a single institution and a specific demographic (undergraduate students), findings may not be fully generalizable to other populations, such as graduate students, alumni, or students at other universities with differing experiences.

Finally, the scope defined within this research and limitations embraced are not deficiencies but cornerstones of good and solid academic research. Rather than undermining the study, these intentional parameters perform essential roles: the scope assists in analytical acuteness and operational practicability by focusing the investigation on a specified population and range of variables, and the limitations actively deal with possible limits of interpretation, thus contributing to the integrity and validity of the investigation. In openly placing the findings in such specific parameters, the research not only clearly states the conditions under which its findings are most relevant but also provides a critical basis for follow-up scholarly investigation to build upon.

From this finely crafted basis, the following section presents a complete rationale for the research design, detailing how the chosen methodology inherently follows and is legitimized by these specified parameters.

1.6 Justification of Research Design

Given that entrepreneurial intention is context-bound and multifaceted, in this research a sequential exploratory mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) will be employed. The two-stage research design will involve the first stage that will be qualitative in nature through the use of semi-structured interviews aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the beliefs, drives, and experience of students in regard to entrepreneurship. Implications from this qualitative phase will be employed to create an individualized survey instrument for application within the quantitative phase. The quantitative phase will then enable statistical testing to test relationships as well as enhance the generalizability of the result.

This research design fits extremely well with research in developing country environments, where concepts elsewhere cannot be translated and institutional, cultural, and socio-economic factors powerfully shape behaviour (Bruton et al., 2015). The qualitative initial stage makes it possible to create context-adjusted constructs, enabling the study to be grounded strongly in local context. The following quantitative phase then challenges these constructs to enable wider generalizability. Through their complementarity, the two methodologies are used here, with the study gaining each other's strengths: qualitative findings from participant interviews like how cultural determinants influence entrepreneurial success inform the population of the quantitative survey instrument. This enables the survey to capture adequate local cultural specifics, thus adding to the validity and richness of the quantitative outcomes. A clear explanation and detailed justification of this approach will be provided in Section 4.3 (research design), where the sequential exploratory mixed method research explored

1.7 Significance of Study

This research is motivated by the acute socio-economic challenges facing developing nations and a pronounced gap in context-specific empirical studies. In contexts characterized by high youth unemployment and poverty, entrepreneurship is championed as a vital catalyst for sustainable development. Within this paradigm, Entrepreneurship Education (EE) serves as a strategic intervention to equip students with the competencies and mindset for venture creation. This study is positioned to make significant, multi-faceted contributions to theory, practice, and policy. However, the effective implementation of EE requires a nuanced understanding of what truly shapes entrepreneurial intentions within these unique contexts. This study is positioned to make substantive and multi-faceted contributions by addressing this need:

1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

The study offers several key theoretical advancements that bridge the gap between established models and the practical realities of a developing economy:

1. Theoretical Contribution: Extension of the Theory of Planned Behaviour

This research makes a theoretical contribution through the extension of the classic TPB (Ajzen 1991) model by introducing, integrating, and testing empirically two important new variables: the internal affective driver of entrepreneurial passion and the external social driver of exposure to entrepreneurial role models. The extended model offers substantially more explanatory power for entrepreneurial intentions, especially in the specific setting of a developing country. This offers a more detailed theoretical lens for future research in entrepreneurship.

2. Contextual Contribution: Lessons from an Under-Researched Context

By focusing on the Ethiopian higher education system, a developing nation, the study addresses a fundamental geographical and contextual gap in the literature. The study generates insightful, context-specific knowledge that highlights the distinctive determinants of entrepreneurial intentions in an environment where the entrepreneurial ecosystem is in its infancy, institutional shortcomings prevail, and

there are unique socio-cultural dynamics. These findings complement and extend the current research, which predominantly concerns developed, resource-rich economies.

3. Practical Model Contribution: The IUP Model

Besides theoretical contribution, this study also provides a practical model—the IUP Model (Investment, Uncertainty, Profit)—to enhance Entrepreneurship Education (EE) in resource-constrained settings. The model explicitly responds to fundamental problems of developing countries, such as scarce resources and under-developed entrepreneurial ecosystem. It offers teachers, policymakers, and university managers a strategic solution to identify talents, develop skills, and stimulate entrepreneurship, and to enhance the effect of EE initiatives despite environmental limitations.

1.7.2. Practical Contributions and Policy Implications

The findings are translated into actionable strategies and tools for key stakeholders, with the aim of building a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem:

- **A Practical Framework for Education: The IUP Model:** The study introduces the **IUP Model (Investment, Uncertainty, Profit)**, a practical framework designed to enhance EE in resource-constrained settings. This model provides educators and administrators with a strategic tool to identify talent, develop skills, and stimulate entrepreneurship despite environmental limitations like scarce resources and underdeveloped support systems.
- **For University Administrators and Educators:** The findings advocate for a pedagogical shift from theoretical instruction to experiential learning. Recommendations include integrating startup simulations, internships, and formal mentorship programs that connect students directly with successful entrepreneurs to transform knowledge into tangible intent and capability.
- **For Policymakers:** The study serves as a call to action to eliminate barriers to venture creation. Key recommendations include establishing seed funding and startup grants, launching public campaigns to elevate the cultural status

of entrepreneurship, and implementing policy reforms that formally recognize it as a viable and respectable career path.

- **For Businesses and NGOs:** The research underscores the need for cross-sectoral collaboration. It calls on firms and non-profits to actively partner with universities by providing expert mentorship, access to early-stage capital, and real-world experience through competitions and incubator programs.

In conclusion, this study's worth is ultimately determined by how well it can promote change in the actual world. It accomplishes this by providing a logical and useful framework that links theoretical knowledge to real-world implementation. It offers legislators evidence-based recommendations for creating supportive ecosystems, university administrators a verified model for curriculum redesign, and the private sector a clear path forward for fruitful cooperation. This research equips a wide coalition of stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and resources to develop a new generation of entrepreneurs through its expanded theoretical framework, its profound contextual insights from Ethiopia, and its foundational IUP model. By doing this, it directly addresses the pressing issue of unemployment and transforms it into a long-term driver of growth.

The following section discusses the theoretical frameworks used for this study.

1.8 Adopted Theoretical Frameworks for this Study

The present study uses different theoretical frameworks to study entrepreneurial intentions because the study phenomena is multidimensional and complex in nature. The two models in the early frameworks—Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (1991) and Shapero and Sokol's Entrepreneurial Event Model (1982)—were utilized to measure the psychological constructs of university students' entrepreneurial intentions. The latter two the institute theory (North 1990) and the social cognitive theory (Banduras 1986) in particular presents a dynamic approach to understanding how entrepreneurship education (EE) affects students' entrepreneurial intentions (EI) through institutions and other factors.

That means , Institutional Theory (IT) is used to explore the role of institutional support in entrepreneurial intention. Indicating that no single model captures the complete richness of entrepreneurial intentions since they are affected by cognitive, affective, social, and institutional factors.

Thus, to account for this diversity, the present study utilizes a pluralistic methodology based on four interdependent theories: the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the Entrepreneurial Event Model, Institutional Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory. These models integrated allow for detailed investigation of entrepreneurial determinants across micro, meso, and macro levels.

1. The Central Psychological Model: Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The research is grounded in Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), a generalised cognitive model of intention determinants. TPB argues that a person's intention to perform a behaviour, in this instance, to begin a new business, is the best and strongest predictor of action that will occur. Entrepreneurial intention is formed by three perceptual constructs according to the model

- Attitude Towards the Behaviour: Overall evaluation by the individual of entrepreneurship as good or bad.
- Subjective Norm: Social pressure from significant others (e.g., family, friends, culture) to participate in or not participate in entrepreneurship.

- Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC): Perceived ease or difficulty of enacting the behaviour, including self-efficacy and the presence of resources and opportunities.

TPB has been found to possess strong explanatory power in a range of contexts (Krueger et al., 2000; Liñán & Chen, 2009). But its limitation is that it addresses rational cognition and disregards affective factors (e.g., entrepreneurial passion) and contextual factors such as institutional and environmental conditions, which may be particularly relevant in developing economies. the details will be addressed in chapter 2, section 2.6 later.

2. Affective and Dynamic Integration: The Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM)

To bridge these weaknesses, the study applies Shapero and Sokol's (1982) Entrepreneurial Event Model, which offers a dynamic view of intention formation. The EEM suggests that entrepreneurship is initiated by a disruptive event (e.g., redundancy) and shaped by three perceptions:

- **Personal Desirability:** The individual attractiveness of being self-employed (an affective element linked to attitude).
- **Perceived Feasibility:** The individual's perception of ability to successfully initiate a venture (similarly PBC).
- **Propensity to Act:** Acting on intentions, with a focus on the quality of volition.

This theory is particularly relevant for understanding the way in which entrepreneurship education and exposure to successful role models are functioning as positive "triggering events" (Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011) , enhancing perceived desirability and feasibility and transforming latent ability into entrepreneurial intentions.

3. Accounting for the Macro-Environment: Institutional Theory

In recognizing that entrepreneurial intentions are formed within broader socio-institutional contexts, the study applies (North, 1990) Institutional Theory to investigate how formal and informal "rules of the game" influence entrepreneurial action. These include:

- **Formal Institutions:** Government policies, regulatory frameworks, property rights, and education requirements supporting EE.
- **Informal Institutions:** Cultural beliefs, societal values, and entrepreneurial, risk-taking, and failure mindsets.

By incorporating Institutional Theory, the study incorporates the explanation of how entrepreneurial intention variations are based on differences in institutional environments, that is, in Ethiopia's unique socio-economic and cultural context (Ogunsade et al., 2021).

4. Explaining the Mechanism of Learning: Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) underpins psychological learning processes by which EE operates to impact entrepreneurial intention. SCT centres on triadic reciprocity among personal agency, behaviour, and setting, with self-efficacy—self-perception of being able to execute actions—at its core. EE boosts entrepreneurial self-efficacy primarily through:

- **Mastery Experiences:** Direct experience (e.g., incubators, business simulation) that boosts confidence through achievement.
- **Vicarious Learning**: Acquisition through observation of role models making entrepreneurial paths appear attainable.

This theory is especially helpful in describing how education interventions are translated into entrepreneurial intentions (Wu et al., 2022).

Synthesis and Strengths of the Integrated Framework

Combining these four theories provides a multi-layered, full-scoped framework with three robust strengths:

- Widespread Motivational Range: Covers both rational thinking processes (TPB) and emotional drivers like passion and desire (EEM).
- Multi-Level Analysis: Merges individual psychology (TPB, EEM, SCT) with macro-level institutional considerations (Institutional Theory), acknowledging that intentions are situated within context.

- Practical Applicability: Offers a systematic theoretical model for developing, executing, and assessing EE programs that are sensitive to psychological, social, and institutional variables.

Overall, this study uses a variety of theoretical frameworks to capture the complexity of its variables. While the last two theories look at the institutional framework and highlight the enabling and limiting elements influencing entrepreneurship education (EE), the first two theories concentrate on evaluating students' entrepreneurial intentions. All in all, a strong, multi-level analytical framework is produced by combining the Theory of Planned Behaviours, the Entrepreneurial Event Model, Institutional Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory. The interactions between cognitive, affective, social, and institutional factors that jointly influence entrepreneurial goals must be captured using this pluralistic approach. It provides a thorough framework for examining the phenomenon in all of its complexities.

The following section presents the structure of the thesis, providing a clear roadmap of the study.

1.9 Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised in a tightly formatted eight chapters that aim to present a systematic overview of how entrepreneurship education (EE), entrepreneurial role models (ERMs), entrepreneurial passion (EP), and socioeconomic factors (SEF) influence entrepreneurial intentions (EI) of university students. The structure is logically framed beginning with theory development, proceeding with empirical analysis, and finishing up with key findings and practical implications. An overview of thesis organisation is shown below:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 establishes the context for research by emphasizing the pivotal position entrepreneurship plays in economic development and innovation. It draws attention to university students as being at the core of entrepreneurial ecosystems and asks the research question: how and to what extent does the entrepreneurship education in impact university students EI. The chapter adequately sets the study context,

research objectives with establishing the boundaries of the study, and academic and practical significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides a synthesis of available scholarships, beginning with definitional notions and theory foundations. The chapter critically examines four main areas: (1) EE's role in entrepreneurial competency building, (2) ERMs' function as motivational catalysts, (3) EP's function as a motivational catalyst, and (4) SEF's function as contextual facilitators or barriers. Reviewing is concluded with discourses of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and other relevant frameworks and followed with the development of conceptual framework and identify critical knowledge gaps.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Contextual Application

This chapter is a culmination of the chapter 2 literature review to obtain the synthesized conceptual model . The chapter reflects on how these are associated in diverse geographical and institutional contexts, of which the developing economy contexts are of particular interest.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

The chapter on methodology describes the sequential exploratory mixed-methods design in which it clarifies why revealing depth and breadth of knowledge is appropriate. It describes qualitative data collection through interviews of 10 participants following quantitative survey administration with a large sample size of 332 in order to cross-validate findings highlighted in the analysis. It delineates sampling procedures, procedure of analysis (thematic analysis for qualitative, descriptive, inferential and regression analysis for quantitative), and rigorous ethical procedures. The chapter provides research process blueprint.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Findings

Reporting rich qualitative results in context. Chapter 5 demonstrates more subtle nuances in how the four most important factors are conceptualized and dealt with by students. Thematic analysis based on participants' accounts demonstrates how these

factors interrelate to shape entrepreneurial aspirations, special attention being paid to contextual facilitators and challenges.

Chapter 6: Quantitative Findings

This chapter statistically tests hypothesized relations systematically. It investigates direct and interaction effects of variables (EE, ERMs, EP and SEF) on EI, with findings presented in terms of suitable visualizations and tables. Quantitative findings supplement and enrich qualitative findings and aid in testing the hypothesis proposed in the objective of the study outlined in section 1.3 of this study.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Implications

This chapter combines the effects of entrepreneurship education (EE), role models (ERMs), passion (EP), and socioeconomic factors (SEF) on entrepreneurial intentions (EI) of Ethiopian university students. On the basis of mixed-methods data (332 questionnaires, 10 interviews), it focuses on Ethiopia's uniqueness, limited resources, tight curricula, and need-driven motivations, and contrast and compare with existing literature works in the discipline (e.g., Theory of Planned Behaviour) here. Findings show theory-practice gaps, divergence of student experience, and context-sensitive interventions needed. The chapter recommends IUP Model-based reforms to help students overcome barriers and capitalize on opportunity and their implications for policymakers and teachers.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

The concluding chapter synthesizes findings to meet research objectives, specifying theoretical contributions as well as real-world implications. The chapter formulates clear recommendations to universities, policymakers, and institution leaders, making categorical claims with respect to research limitations. The chapter ends by proposing valuable directions for future research to expand on the existing findings.

The next chapter constitutes a detailed literature review to establish a sound theoretical basis for the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been generally recognized as one of the primary drivers of economic development, innovation, and job creation, especially in countries such as Ethiopia with high youth unemployment (Alshebami et al., 2020; Ayalew & Zeleke, 2018; Badri & Hachicha, 2019; Brobbey et al., 2023; Dvouletý et al., 2018; Ndofirepi, 2020). In response, Ethiopia has made entrepreneurship education (EE) compulsory in all institutions of higher learning to motivate students to be creators of jobs rather than seekers of jobs (Workie et al., 2019). Nonetheless, graduate entrepreneurship remains low, and the question then remains as to whether EE is effective and what leads to entrepreneurial intentions (EI).

This study is interested in generating an understanding of EI influence among university students with four primary factors: entrepreneurship education (EE), entrepreneurial role models (ERMs), entrepreneurial passion (EP), and socioeconomic factors (SEF). The factors aggregate to build an entrepreneurial mindset based on knowledge, inspiration, motivation, and contextual facilitation.

While extensive research has been done in developed countries, very little is known about how these factors play out in developing economies where resources are scarce. This study attempts to fill the knowledge gap by testing the role of EE, ERMs, EP, and SEF in shaping entrepreneurial intentions (EI) among students in Ethiopia. Understanding these dynamics is important for developing innovative entrepreneurs who can perpetuate economic growth and development.

This chapter consists of nine sections, which are discussed elaborately in the following.

2.2 Entrepreneurship : A journey through its Meanings & Impact

Entrepreneurship resists a precise or commonly accepted definition, as its meaning evolves continually through academy-led research, everyday practice, and context-specific situations. Different disciplines—economics, sociology, psychology, and management—have each spotlighted different facets of the entrepreneurial process, ranging from innovation and opportunity identification to risk-taking and value creation. Such diversity indicates the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the concept.

One of the most influential definitions is that of Stevenson (1983, quoted in Paust, 2024, p. 86), which states entrepreneurship as the "relentless pursuit of opportunity beyond the constraints of current resources." This one emphasizes not just the finding of opportunities but also the visionary, active, and tenacious search to utilize them, often within the background of lacking resources. Stevenson's view positions entrepreneurship as a process and behavior rather than as an innate fixed trait, reinforcing adaptability, resilience, and risk-willingness to create new value.

Accordingly, one can understand entrepreneurship more as a dynamic practice rather than a fixed concept, which is being continually built by individual purposes, institutional environment, and other socio-economic conditions.

Early foundational researchers advocated revolutionary theories of entrepreneurship. Schumpeter (1934, as quoted by Mehmood et al., 2019) very described it as a process of "creative destruction"—a revolutionary tide that destroys existing market frameworks to pave the way for innovation and new birth. One such contemporary example of this phenomenon is Ethiopia's mobile banking revolution that has overhauled the financial sector very dramatically. The introduction of mobile money services, spearheaded by the state-owned Ethio Telecom's Telebirr, reduced reliance on traditional banking infrastructure and extended financial reach to tens of millions of previously excluded citizens (Tadesse, 2022). This transformation indicates entrepreneurship's capacity to revolutionize industries whole-scale and fuel inclusive economic change.

Drucker (1985) located entrepreneurship in social change, locating entrepreneurs as problem-solvers and agents of change (Deka, 2020). This aligns with the focus of this research on driving beyond systemic education challenges. Ethiopian social

businesses, such as innovative garbage management schemes that combine green measures with job creation, illustrate this dual economic and social impact.

By combining these perspectives—Schumpeter's market disruption, Drucker's societal transformation, and Stevenson's resourcefulness—this study examines how entrepreneurship education (EE) can be utilized in Ethiopia to spur economic innovation as well as community development. Together, the three perspectives underscore the multi-faceted nature of entrepreneurship encompassing individual initiative, systemic transformation, and social value creation.

In effect, entrepreneurship is quite personal. Each venture reflects a journey of pursuing one's vision, risk-taking, and clinging to survive and create value worthy enough (Tereda, 2020). Be it high-tech innovations or grassroots-level green development, entrepreneurial activities constantly reshape societies (Lidow, 2022), prompting governments—such as Ethiopia's—to turn entrepreneurial ecosystems into the key to inclusive growth (Ndlovu et al., 2023).

Entrepreneurship begins with opportunity identification in the midst of uncertainty. Entrepreneurs identify gaps, coordinate resources, and develop plans to generate value—a process of intuition, analysis, planning, and adaptation (Langlois, 2007). From architects of business (Jana, 2020), change agents (Deka, 2020), or disruptors (Mehmood et al., 2019), entrepreneurs possess a unique ability to turn uncertainty into opportunity through bold action (Suryadi & Anggraeni, 2023).

As can be evidenced from Table 2.1, the absence of a unifying definition reflects the variation of the concept in contexts as well as in disciplines. For the purpose of this study Entrepreneurship is defined as

> *“the creation and management of ventures with a purpose of generating incremental wealth".*

The incremental wealth encompasses a broad area such as :

- Sensing the environment for threats and opportunities,
- Mobilizing and managing resources strategically,
- Providing value in sustainable and competitive means.
- Continuous learning, innovation and creativity among others.

Herein, "incremental wealth" refers to something more than financial return to encompass value creation that is sustainable in shifting markets. Thus,

entrepreneurship emerges as both a professional discipline and a creative endeavour.

Table 2.1 Various Definitions of Entrepreneurship

Scholar(s)	Year	Definition / Perspective	Key Emphasis / Contribution
Cantillon	1755	Entrepreneurs as risk-bearers who buy at certain prices and sell at uncertain prices.	Risk-taking & uncertainty management.
Schumpeter	1934	Entrepreneurship is 'creative destruction' introducing innovations that disrupt and replace existing markets.	Innovation, economic disruption, and transformation.
Kirzner	1973	Entrepreneurship involves alertness to opportunities and exploiting market inefficiencies.	Opportunity recognition; market arbitrage.
Drucker	1985	Entrepreneurship is a systematic process of innovation aimed at creating value through new products or methods.	Innovation as a discipline; value creation.
Gartner	1985	Entrepreneurship is the creation of new organizations.	Entrepreneurial process and venture formation.
Stevenson & Jarillo	1990	Entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled.	Resourcefulness, behaviour under uncertainty.
Shane & Venkataraman	2000	Entrepreneurship is the discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of future goods and services opportunities.	Opportunity process; individual-market interaction.
Hisrich et al.	2017	Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new with value, requiring time, effort, and risk-taking.	Value creation; personal investment and reward.
Audretsch & Belitski	2017	Entrepreneurship enables knowledge spillovers and is a key driver of innovation and economic growth.	Knowledge-based entrepreneurship; macroeconomic impact.

Sources : Schumpeter (1934), Kirzner (1973), (Gartner, 1985), (Hisrich et al., 2017), (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990), Shane & Venkataraman (2000),and (Audretsch & Belitski, 2017, p. 2),

Why is careful consideration of these varied definitions significant?

Careful consideration of various definitions is necessary for this research because it makes three crucial contributions:

1. Theoretical Grounding & Practical Relevance

Considering the very complex and multi-faceted nature of the phenomenon of entrepreneurship, how the term itself is defined actually determines the conceptualization and measurement of entrepreneurial intentions among students. For example, Schumpeter's theory base of entrepreneurship as innovation suggests that EE must thus emphasize creativity, experimentation, and risk-taking.

Similarly, Stevenson's theory base of entrepreneurship as the pursuit of opportunity through mobilizing resources that are not already at hand highlights opportunity recognition, resource mobilization, and persistence (Paust, 2024).

Connecting EE programs with these theory bases ensures interventions are consequential, concrete, and perhaps powerful at eliciting desired outcomes.

Moreover, different definitions emphasize distinct entrepreneurial behaviours and processes, which in turn guide EE program design and delivery. An illustration is that a Schumpeter-influenced curriculum would focus on building innovative thinking and disruptive behaviour, whereas a Stevenson-influenced curriculum would seek to build opportunity identification and leveraging limited resources. Teachers can design context-specific approaches to enhance students' entrepreneurial capabilities and readiness by valuing these variations.

Furthermore, given that entrepreneurial intentions and outcomes are multifaceted constructs, sensitive scrutiny of varied definitions ensures that research instruments—questionnaires, measures, and observation tools—are accurately aligned with the central theoretical constructs. Inaccurate alignment threatens to have partial, biased, or unreliable measures of students' entrepreneurial mindset, leading to incorrect conclusions or ineffective policy recommendations.

In summary, critically thinking about the multi-dimensional definitions of entrepreneurship enhances the theoretical underpinning, applied relevance, and measurement accuracy of research and learning interventions to encourage students' entrepreneurship more systematically and effectively.

2. Placing EE within its Socioeconomic Context

The contribution of entrepreneurship to creating jobs and industrial transformation is especially significant in developing nations such as Ethiopia, whose youth unemployment is a dire concern. In this context, EE moves beyond the classroom to become a strategic national economic resilience tool (Ndlovu et al., 2023).

If entrepreneurship is conceptualized as wealth creation—prescribed in this research—EE programs must integrate theoretical expertise (e.g., business planning, finance) with hands-on experience like mentoring, incubation, and market exposure. Develop case studies that focus on local context and develop the curriculum based on specific local setting to find a solution for the problem.

3. Enabling Unambiguous Measurement

An unambiguous definition prescribes measurable parameters:

- **Dependent Variable:** Students' entrepreneurial intention—the likelihood of venturing following EE exposure.
- **Independent Variables:** Entrepreneurship education (EE), entrepreneurial role models (ERMs), entrepreneurial passion (EP), and socioeconomic factors (SEF).

This systematic format facilitates a critical analysis of how EE influences entrepreneurial mindset development. The evolving definition of entrepreneurship across scholarship highlights its dynamic nature, which is addressed in the contexts of the following entrepreneurship perspectives.

In conclusion, entrepreneurship is a multifaceted dynamic phenomenon that cannot be simplified into a single definition. Its meaning has evolved differently over disciplines and time, with different emphases on innovation, opportunity recognition, resourcefulness, market challenge, and social value creation. For the aim of this

study, the definition of entrepreneurship is defined as “ the creation and management of businesses with the goal of developing incremental wealth” provides a working and comprehensive definition that encompasses opportunity identification, strategic resource allocation, value creation, and continuous learning.

Critical application of the range of theoretical lenses—from Schumpeter’s creative destruction to Stevenson's resourceful opportunity pursuit and Drucker's focus on societal impact—enhances the theoretical foundation, practical relevance, and precision of measurement of entrepreneurship education (EE) research. Additionally, situating EE within the socioeconomic context of Ethiopia highlights its potential as a strategic tool for youth empowerment, job creation, and inclusive economic growth. By providing a clear conceptual and operational definition, this study is poised to systematically investigate how EE influences students' entrepreneurial intentions and capabilities, providing results that are both locally applicable and theoretically grounded.

Having established a definitional framework, the following section now shifts to explain the challenges and dynamic forces that shape entrepreneurial activity.

2.3 The Challenges & Dynamics of Entrepreneurship

Ethiopia's business environment is a full compound of high potential and distressing constraints. It has a youthful population, increasing policy focus on entrepreneurship, and a widening market, but in an unusual matrix of socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional barriers. It is crucial to an in-depth analysis to develop effective support policies and targeted educational interventions (Ayalew & Zeleke, 2018; Ogunsade et al., 2021).

2.3.1 Entrepreneurship Dynamics

1. Policy-Driver Promotion:

The Ethiopian government has consciously articulated entrepreneurship as a primary reaction to increased youth unemployment and economic diversification. This led to the inclusion of compulsory entrepreneurship education (EE) in higher learning institutions and the establishment of a National Entrepreneurship Strategy for the

creation of an enabling environment for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (MoE, 2018; Workie et al., 2019).

2. Young Population and Digital Advancing:

Since it has a youth-majority population, Ethiopia enjoys a huge reservoir of entrepreneurial potential. This dynamism is evident in the rapid adoption of digital technology. The revolutionary advancing with mobile money facilities like Telebirr is a classic manifestation of Schumpeter's 'creative destruction,' where new enterprises rapidly disrupt the old industries, with financial services providing a prime example (Tadesse, 2023; World Bank, 2021).

3. Emergence of Social and Necessity-Driven Entrepreneurship:

The majority of entrepreneurial activities are not only profit-driven but also drive an interest in addressing pressing issues challenging society, such as food security, renewable energy, and waste management (e.g., Kubik's plastic waste upcycling). Besides, by way of the absence of formal employment, entrepreneurship is an essential needs-driven venture for economic livelihood and the creation of employment opportunities (GEM Ethiopia, 2021; National Planning Commission, 2016).

4. Mobilization of Social and Cultural Capital:

Ethiopia's collectivist culture, which gives superior emphasis to kinship and community, provides a facilitating environment for collective activities. Non-formal traditional institutions like Iqub (rotating savings and credit associations) and Idir (mutual aid associations) are significant in non-formal finance and social protection and enable trust-based entrepreneurial networks (Belay et al., 2020; Brush et al., 2019).

2.3.2 Main Challenges Constraining Growth

1. Finance and Resource Constraints:

Access to Finance: It is the most common cited hurdle. Small and emerging entrepreneurs find it extremely challenging to secure startup and growth capital since

traditional finance institutions consider MSMEs risky. Venture capital and angel networks are in infancy (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2021; Daniel et al., 2020).

Infrastructure Shortfalls: Unreliable electricity, logistically related constraints, and limited internet connectivity in rural areas increase costs of doing business and limit market access (Boateng, 2020; Kassahun, 2020).

2. Administrative and Regulatory Barriers:

Despite supportive policies, many entrepreneurs are confronted with a challenging regulatory environment characterized by bureaucratic red tape, lagging licensing, and regulatory uncertainty. This "implementation gap" between policy intention and ground reality renders business challenging and discourages investment (Ebabu Engidaw, 2021; Ogunsade et al., 2021).

3. Risk Attitudes at the Cultural Level:

Risk-averse habits of thought on a broad scale, at times spurred by fear of failure and shame, can cause entrepreneurs to move away from growth-focused, conventional businesses toward high-potential, innovative ventures. Such thinking can have the perverse effect of stifling the ambition and scalability of start-ups (Kuckertz, 2021; Urban & Kujinga, 2016).

Conclusion

Ethiopian entrepreneurship is an important but challenging activity overall. The background is marked by a tension between bottom-up innovation and top-down support for policy on the one hand and, on the other, ongoing structural, financial, and cultural constraints. In order to enable entrepreneurship to fulfil its full potential in driving sustainable and inclusive growth, interventions must be multi-dimensional. They must not only stress the creation of skills through education but also call to critique the funding gaps, regulative inefficiencies, and infrastructural shortages that are presently inhibiting the entrepreneurial environment.

The following section presents key entrepreneurial perspectives that will inform the direction of this study.

2.4 Perspectives of Entrepreneurship

The varying perspectives of entrepreneurship have a critical bearing on education. In order to best develop students' entrepreneurial ability, education courses must continue to be sensitive to cultural, institutional, and contextual variations. One strategy is not sufficient enough to address the complexity of entrepreneurship. As such, entrepreneurship education must be adaptable and responsive in order to address the individual needs of diverse learners and environments. The following sections consider the main perspectives underpinning this research.

2.3.1 Economic Perspective

Economically, entrepreneurship is a major source of innovation, job creation, and economic development. Market conditions, access to capital, and economic development influence students' encouragement to pursue entrepreneurial pathways (Alshebami et al., 2020; Badri & Hachicha, 2019). Entrepreneurship thrives within thriving economies due to positive infrastructure and resources, while poor economic conditions may deter students' intentions (Dvouletý et al., 2018; Khan et al., 2022).

Therefore, EE programs must consider these economic realities in offering support that reflects local challenges and opportunities. Tailoring education material based on economic settings renders entrepreneurship training more appropriate and successful (Thurik & Dejardin, 2024).

2.3.2. Innovation Perspective

Innovation is the bedrock of contemporary entrepreneurship. EE courses with an entrepreneurial orientation, which focuses on problem-solving and creativity, are shown to greatly enhance students' entrepreneurial intentions (Wang et al., 2021; Wasim et al., 2023). By applying innovative thinking to students, such courses set them up to recognize market gaps and react with innovative solutions.

Moreover, innovation is aligned with global aspirations, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize the importance of innovative solutions in ensuring sustainable economic and social development (Shu et al., 2020).

However, overemphasis on innovation tends to ignore important practical skills like financial literacy and risk management (Lackéus, 2020; Nabi et al., 2017) . Therefore, a well-balanced curriculum that fosters creativity alongside essential business skills is vital.

2.3.3 Behavioural Perspective

The behavioural tradition focuses on psychological factors and traits, such as risk tolerance, autonomy, and self-efficacy, that exert a significant influence on entrepreneurial intentions (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Mujahid et al., 2020) . EE programs emanating from this tradition aim to raise these traits in an effort to increase student engagement and intention to act entrepreneurially.

Although its advantages, there are downsides to this perspective. Behavioural traits are hard to measure and don't automatically reflect the influence of external variables like economic or institutional ones (Shu et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). In addition, overreliance on personality traits detracts from teaching of important operating skills. There needs to be an integrated approach of blending behavioural insight with experiential training to fully prepare students.

2.3.4. Opportunity Perspective

The opportunity perspective emphasizes students' ability to recognize and act on business opportunities. EE can cultivate this ability by experiential learning and exposure to reality-based contexts that improve opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Zhang et al., 2022).

Opportunity recognition alone, however, is not sufficient to ensure success. Execution, handling of resources, and persistence are equally important (Nabi et al., 2017). Secondly, the subjectivity and heterogeneity of opportunity identification depending on individual background, experience, and context complicate the evaluation of EE outcomes (Lackéus, 2020).

Thus, EE not only needs to make students aware of opportunity recognition but also equip them with the tools to execute ideas efficiently in changing environments.

2.3.5. Sociological Perspective

Sociological theories emphasize the significance of entrepreneurial intentions through social context, networks, and cultural elements. Social capital built through peer support, mentorship, and working networks is most important for entrepreneurial success (Al Bati et al., 2022; Prastyaningtyas et al., 2023). EE programs that improve networking and mentoring relationships are most likely to stimulate entrepreneurial behaviour.

Cultural beliefs also impact students' risk-taking and professional careers (Kuckertz, 2021). EE must consider differences like these, especially in multicultural or diverse environments. Support facilities within institutions like incubators, entrepreneurship centres, and university policies also influence entrepreneurial intentions (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003).

Furthermore, EE curricula with social responsibility encourage students to be social entrepreneurs through the alignment of business goals with social needs (Gupta et al., 2020; Karen et al., 2019). More inclusive and effective curricula result from understanding how sociological factors affect students' entrepreneurial learning.

2.3.6. Contextual Perspective

Having a contextual perspective when studying the impact of entrepreneurship education (EE) on university students' entrepreneurial intentions has both benefits and challenges. One of the main benefits is that it includes social, economic, and cultural variables, which allows researchers to be able to identify more clearly how these components interact to form students' intentions (Kuckertz et al., 2020). This gives EE greater cultural appropriateness so programs can be designed to meet various student populations, making them more effective in general. It also acknowledges that several outside influences—i.e., industry characteristics, technological changes, regimes of regulation, and cultural demands—play a critical role in shaping entrepreneurial conduct (Al Bati et al., 2022). This perspective corroborates the argument that entrepreneurship is not a generalised phenomenon; instead, entrepreneurial conduct and performance can differ significantly in different industries, places, and countries. For instance, the entrepreneurial culture in a high-

tech sector might be completely different from that in an average manufacturing industry due to differences in technology demands and market scenarios (Al Bati et al., 2022). Therefore, it is critical to understand the specific context in which entrepreneurship operates to develop relevant and pragmatic EE programs.

It is not just acceptable but essential to raise the issue of the relevance of these theoretical perspectives to the research at hand. However, their inclusion is significant, as they constitute a comprehensive framework through which it is possible to see how EE may be able to effectively create entrepreneurial intentions in university students. Analysing economic, innovation-focussed, behavioural, opportunity-focussed, sociological, and contextual perspectives, this study aims to uncover the multifaceted determinants of students' entrepreneurial engagement. All offer a different angle, but together they provide an integrated image of entrepreneurship in Ethiopia's peculiar institutional and cultural environment.

From an economic and opportunity perspective, the acute youth unemployment of Ethiopia makes enterprise an urgent alternative to employment. Institutions like Addis Ababa University was pushing back by creating EE programs cantered on opportunity discovery, particularly in sectors like renewable energy and Agri-processing (MoE, 2021).

The innovation perspective provides a further key angle. Ethiopian startups are progressively personifying Schumpeterian innovation through disruptive solutions that address traditional markets with locally cantered solutions. Kubik, for example, is addressing environmental waste through upcycling plastic into building materials, while Zafree Papers produces sustainable paper products through the use of agricultural residue—two ventures that outline the way that EE can drive socially responsible innovation (Tadesse, 2023; Alemayehu, 2022).

However, innovation and opportunity alone do not necessarily translate into entrepreneurial action. Behavioural theories, in this case, Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour, highlight the focus on how entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by attitudes, perceived control, and social norms. In Ethiopia, this behavioural component is underpinned by data which shows that 62% of students at

Addis Ababa universities identify fear of failure as a very significant reason for not starting up (GEM Ethiopia, 2021).

Social and cultural problems are equally important. Social traditions in Ethiopia, such as iqub—rotating savings and credit associations—promote cooperative entrepreneurial forms, were trust and mutual responsibility guide business formation. The traditional financial practices at the grassroots level are now being formally recognized in Ethiopia's National Entrepreneurship Strategy (2021) as to be leveraged in EE training (Belay et al., 2020).

As this study goes on to explore entrepreneurial intention determinants among AAU students, it remains based on the reality that entrepreneurship is not a homogeneous phenomenon. The above-said variant views highlight the necessity to bear in mind or to include variant perspectives in a bid to present a better EE. It is along this axis that effective EE in Ethiopia will need to balance various visions of entrepreneurship meeting up with indigenous conditions, balancing individual intentionality with communal anchorage. The next section discusses entrepreneurial intentions more at length.

In conclusion, the diverse perspectives on entrepreneurship—economic, innovation-led, behaviourist, opportunity-led, sociological, and contextual—all confirm its dynamic and multifaceted character. Each in turn illustrates different determinants of entrepreneurial intention and action ranging from resource mobilization and market disturbance to personal traits, social network, and culture. In the case of Ethiopia, these perspectives emphasize the need for EE curricula that are adaptable, reactive to local economic and institutional contexts, and attuned to cultural dimensions. As these perspectives are integrated into EE, it is well placed to cultivate students' entrepreneurial skills, shifting the balance between personal enterprise and social and communal interests. Comprehending entrepreneurship as an interdisciplinary, context-dependent phenomenon provides the basis for extending the investigation of the impact of EE on students' entrepreneurial intentions, as addressed in the following section.

2.5 Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI)

Here, the multi-determinants of entrepreneurial intentions (EI) are discussed. The section begins by defining EI, founded on prevailing theory and empirical studies, and determines the interplay of cognitive, contextual, and behavioural factors in shaping EI, particularly among university students in developing nations. The determinants of EI are then described to serve as the foundation for the research study. Its aim is to provide actionable suggestions for building entrepreneurial ecosystems and helping prospective entrepreneurs translate their dreams into action.

Entrepreneurial intentions (EI) constitute a psychological state whereby there is conscious and deliberate commitment to establishing a new business venture (Krueger et al., 2000, p. 412). As a psychological construct, EI is the necessary antecedent of entrepreneurial behaviour, embodying what Thompson (2009, p. 676) describes as "a self-acknowledged conviction to start a business."

The theory borrows from Bird's (1988) initial research that established EI as a goal-oriented mental state that directs attention and action towards venture creation. More recent studies by Liñán and Fayolle (2015) emphasize EI's predictive ability, demonstrating it to be the strongest behavioural antecedent of actual business startup behaviour. In an academic context, this is where students in university translate entrepreneurial intentions into plans via formal learning and mentorship (Nabi et al., 2017).

Entrepreneurial intentions (EI) are the seed of ambition the conscious and intentional decision to start a business venture at some point in the future. As a precursor to entrepreneurial behaviour, EI has been a topic of interest among researchers, educators, and policymakers interested in understanding and developing the entrepreneurial spirit (Krueger et al., 2000; Liñán & Chen, 2009). This is especially relevant to university students, who represent a dynamic pool of potential innovators, job creators, and economic stimulators (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Nabi et al., 2017). Universities around the world have recognized this potential, embraced entrepreneurship and embedded it in curricula and extracurricular activities in an effort to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and mindset to translate ideas into action (Kuratko, 2005, p. 577). Researchers have tackled EI from different theoretical

and empirical perspectives, offering dense descriptions that stress its relevance to entrepreneurial behaviour prediction, as shown in Table 2.2.

The conceptualisations of EI have varied from focusing on individual traits (Bird, 1988) to encompassing cognitive processes (Kuratko, 2005, p. 577) and environmental cues (Shapero & Sokol, 1982). Later definitions also included contextual and systemic impacts (Fayolle & Liñán, 2014) along with the role of personal belief and commitment (Thompson, 2009) as shown below.

- **Early Definitions:** Focused on individual characteristics and goal orientation (Bird, 1988).
- **Cognitive Shift**: Introduced tidy, process-oriented models (Krueger et al., 2000; Shapero & Sokol, 1982).
- **Contextual Expansion:** Highlighted the role of education, culture, and external systems (Fayolle & Liñán, 2014).
- **Individual Agency:** Concerned with self-awareness and personal dedication (Thompson, 2009).

These developments reflect a broader perception of EI as a dynamic phenomenon influenced by a range of individual, cognitive, situational, and contextual factors.

Table 2.2 Some Definitions of Entrepreneurial Intentions

Author(s)	Definition of Entrepreneurial Intention	Key Focus	Theoretical Basis
Krueger et al. (2000)	EI is an individual's commitment to starting a business, shaped by personal attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.	Cognitive process, structured and deliberate nature, influenced by internal and external factors.	Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)
Bird (1988)	EI is the state of mind that directs attention and action toward creating a new venture, influenced by personal characteristics, environment, and entrepreneurial skills.	Goal orientation, dynamic interaction of personal traits, environment, and skills.	Focus on goal orientation and personal characteristics
Shapero and Sokol (1982)	EI arises from a perception of desirability, feasibility, and a significant life-changing event, such as economic shifts or personal milestones.	Desirability, feasibility, and significant life events act as catalysts for entrepreneurial action.	Entrepreneurial Event Model
Fayolle and Liñán (2014)	EI is shaped by contextual factors like education and culture, emphasizing the role of external systems, particularly entrepreneurship education.	Contextual influences, societal attitudes, and education systems shaping entrepreneurial aspirations.	Focus on contextual factors and entrepreneurship education
Thompson (2009)	EI is a self-acknowledged conviction to start a business in the future, focusing on personal decision-making and commitment.	Internal decision-making, self-recognition, and personal commitment to entrepreneurship.	Focus on self-acknowledgment and individual decision-making

As reflected in Table 2.2, scholars repeatedly stress its nature as a conscious and deliberate intention to start a new business. Krueger et al. (2000, p. 412) define it as one's commitment to entrepreneurial activity, while Alshebami et al. (2020, p. 3607) identify it as "the motivation that individuals possess toward certain behaviour." EI can be claimed to be not some will-o-the-wispy want, but a goal-oriented frame of mind that is the very foundation for business growth (Engle et al., 2010, p. 45).

The dominant theory to explain EI is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991, p. 182), that postulates intention as the primary behaviour predictor, which is moderated by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Here, EI is the modality through which situational and individual variables are performed. Empirical studies invariably validate this model, showing that more optimistic entrepreneurial mindsets, supportive settings, and higher self-efficacy significantly predict EI (Liñán & Chen, 2009, p. 595; Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014, p. 465) .

Recent studies have increasingly evolved from cognitive models to include affective and experiential variables. Nabi et al. (2017, p. 288) demonstrate that entrepreneurial learning and hands-on experiences play a crucial role in shaping EI. This resonates with a broader agreement that EI is a dynamic concept, influenced by a combination of cognitive, contextual, and emotional factors (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015, p. 34; Chen et al., 2022, p. 12). Thus, EI is an effective means of explaining entrepreneurial activity drivers (Sheeran, 2002, p. 143).

By bringing these perspectives together, it is evident that studying EI is essential to understanding why and how individuals desire to be entrepreneurs. This is crucial to inform effective education initiatives and evidence-informed policies to facilitate new entrepreneurs and build healthy entrepreneurial ecosystems.

In short, entrepreneurial intentions (EI) are an aware, goal-oriented psychological condition that serves as an antecedent to entrepreneurial conduct. As theoretical and empirical analysis implies, EI is driven by a complex interplay of cognitive, contextual, behavioural, and affective variables. From early trait and goal-focused models (Bird, 1988) to process models like the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and the Entrepreneurial Event Model (Shapero & Sokol, 1982), scholars alike emphasize that EI is both a matter of individual commitment and responsiveness to environmental cues. Recent studies also emphasize the role played by experiential learning, emotional arousal, and facilitative milieus in consolidating entrepreneurial intentions among students (Nabi et al., 2017; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). Understand EI is therefore vital not just to predict entrepreneurial behavior but also to inform good education programs and policies that promote entrepreneurship, particularly among university students in developing contexts. The foundation for examination of how

entrepreneurship education and other influences translate intentions into concrete entrepreneurial behaviour is this knowledge base.

Building on the discussion of entrepreneurial intentions, the following section outlines the theoretical frameworks used to evaluate how entrepreneurship education influences university students' entrepreneurial intentions.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study applies a multi-theoretical model in investigating how entrepreneurship education (EE) affects the entrepreneurial intentions (EI) of Ethiopian university students. The central theory is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), a robust framework for studying cognitive antecedents. It is supported by the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) (Shapero & Sokol, 1982) to incorporate affective and motivational drivers as well. Finally, Institutional Theory (IT) (North, 1990) is included to situate these micro-level processes in Ethiopia's particular socio-economic and institutional context. Together, these theories offer a general framework for assessing the effectiveness of EE in shaping students' entrepreneurial attitudes. A brief explanation of each theory is provided below.

2.6.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) is the prevailing theoretical framework for this study. TPB maintains that entrepreneurial intention (EI)—the conscious decision to start a new venture—is determined by three primary antecedents:

- Attitude Toward the Behaviour – The extent to which one evaluates entrepreneurship positively.
- Subjective Norms – Social pressure perceived from peers, family, and society to engage in entrepreneurial activity.
- Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) – The perceived ease or difficulty in undertaking entrepreneurial action, which is similar to self-efficacy.

These concepts are situated in the context of this research in the Ethiopian context:

Attitudes: Where government sector employment is more attractive, EE will have to work hard to foster positive entrepreneurial attitudes by promoting local success and reframing risk-taking as an available and merit-worthy path (Kuckertz, 2021).

Subjective Norms: Because of the wide-ranging influence of society and group values, EE programs can leverage mentorship, peer networks, and role models to

position entrepreneurship as a desirable and feasible career path, contrarian to that usually anticipated (Brush et al., 2019).

Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC): Experiential learning aspects, i.e., business plan competitions and incubation initiatives, are at the core of instilling students' confidence and perceived capability (Ratten & Jones, 2021). Practical constraints, however—i.e., limited access to seed financing—serve to illustrate the need for EE to address as well external barriers to entrepreneurial behavior (Daniel et al., 2020) .

While TPB has been well tested in numerous contexts, its application in Ethiopia must permit certain limitations. Its rational cognition focus could underemphasize affective incentives such as entrepreneurial passion, and its individual-level focus could fail to fully capture institutional shortcomings or system-level limitations. To offset these shortcomings, the present research combines TPB with supplementing theory to provide a more balanced portrayal of the factors underlying entrepreneurial intention.

2.6.2 The Entrepreneurial Event Model: Education as a Catalyst

While the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) provides a robust explanation for the cognitive precursors of intention, it fails to explain the cause of the decision to act. The Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM), proposed by (Shapero & Sokol, 1982), addresses this gap explicitly. It argues that entrepreneurial ventures tend to be started not by a gradual rational calculation in isolation, but by a powerful "triggering event" which intrudes upon an individual's current career track and renders entrepreneurship a vivid and attractive alternative.

Three interrelated perceptions are at the core of the EEM that decide if someone will capitalize upon such an intruding event. The first is Perceived Desirability, which means the cultural and emotional appeal of entrepreneurship—the extent to which one perceives the idea of venturing as personally appealing and aligned with their values. The second is Perceived Feasibility, a self-efficacy-like construct, referring to the belief that one possesses the skills, the knowledge, and the resources required to succeed. Finally, the model adds the critical element of Propensity to Act, one's natural tendency to act and translate intention into actual behavior, knowing not everyone who wishes and feels they are able to will so.

It is within this space of thinking that Entrepreneurship Education (EE) finds its critical place. An effectively created EE program is more than a knowledge transfer exercise; it is a deliberate and constructive "triggering event." By its method of study, EE overtly builds Perceived Feasibility through demystifying the process of entrepreneurial venture creation and equipping students with concrete competencies, hence believing that they can successfully overcome entrepreneurial obstacles (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011; Shapero & Sokol, 1982). Concurrently, through the use of Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), i.e., successful entrepreneurs who share their experiences, EE makes entrepreneurship a viable and plausible path, significantly enhancing its Perceived Desirability (Bosma et al., 2012; Krueger et al., 2000) .

This is particularly significant in the Ethiopian context. With limited access to formal job opportunities, many university students may view entrepreneurship with interest and apprehension. Here, EE has the potential to be that catalyzing intervention which redefines entrepreneurship from a risk-prone career of default to a functional and effective career of choice. By systematically elevating both feasibility and desirability of launching ventures, EE can set off a paradigm shift in the minds of students. Therefore, the EEM provides a critical approach to the current study, capturing the very affective and motivational processes by which education encourages entrepreneurial conduct—a process that complements and expands the cognitive foundations laid out by the TPB.

In conclusion, the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) complements the Theory of Planned Behaviour in highlighting the affective and motivational cues on which entrepreneurial behaviour is based. By its demarcation of perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and inclination to act, the model illustrates entrepreneurial intention's translation into actual behaviour. In such an organization, entrepreneurship education (EE) becomes not just a knowledge transfer tool but an intentional "triggering event" to enhance the appeal and perceived capability of entrepreneur ventures. In Ethiopian circumstances, where employment opportunities via formal means are limited, EE can be the core element in shifting students' mindset, gaining confidence, and inspiring entrepreneurial action. Therefore, the EEM emphasizes the pivotal function of EE in fostering intention-behavior bridging,

complementing cognitive-based theory like TPB in understanding and developing entrepreneurship.

2.6.3 Institutional Theory (IT)

Institutional Theory (IT) (North, 1990) provides a macro-perspective for analysing entrepreneurship, focusing on the fact that individual behavior is influenced by both formal structures, like laws, regulations, policies, and governance, and informal structures, like culture, social norms, and shared values. By casting light on the institutional environment, IT provides a key perspective toward understanding in what ways the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education (EE) is conditioned not only by the pedagogical context but also by the broader socio-economic and regulatory environment within which the students are being taught.

The study employs IT in an effort to probe three broad dimensions:

Formal Institutions: Policy at the national level, regulatory regimes, finance access, and infrastructure have significant impacts on the extent and effectiveness of EE initiatives. For example, well-aligned policies that enable business registration, startup funds access, and entrepreneurship corridors can enhance EE's objectives, while bureaucratic barriers, weak financial support, and poorly designed infrastructure can curtail the ability of students to translate learning into action (Kolade et al., 2022; Ogunsade et al., 2021). It is thus crucial to understand how EE is related to formal institutions so that education programs can be adjusted to avoid systemic weights.

Informal Institutions: Cultural and social norms play a great role in determining attitudes towards entrepreneurial careers. If failure is stigmatized or stable public sector jobs are appreciated, students may perceive entrepreneurial careers as risky or unappealing. Yet, if societies support entrepreneurial achievement, mentor students, and sanction entrepreneurial experimentation, they create positive informal environments that enhance EE outcomes (EFRATA et al., 2021; Kong et al., 2020).

Having the capacity to observe such fine points allows EE programs to integrate methods such as role-model engagement, peer networks, and social validation procedures to increase students' entrepreneurial self-confidence and intentions.

Socioeconomic Context: Institutional Theory emphasizes the way differences in resource access—capital, networks, education, and information—generate unequal entrepreneurial results. Students who come from low-resource or underprivileged backgrounds can be subject to systemic barriers to venture formation despite high entrepreneurial intentions. Incorporating equity considerations into EE design allows programs to make opportunities for learning, mentorship, and resource access more inclusive, thereby expanding the possibilities of entrepreneurial activity among diverse groups of students (Ogunsade et al., 2021).

By incorporating Institutional Theory, this study situates entrepreneurial intentions within the broader structural and cultural environment of Ethiopia's entrepreneurial system. IT prevents analysis from ever being disconnected from individual cognition or motivation and ensures that societal, economic, and cultural determinants of entrepreneurial behavior are never omitted.

Together with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM), IT completes a wide-ranging multi-theory paradigm. TPB provides the cognitive base for understanding how entrepreneurial intention is formed at an individual level based on attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control. EEM provides the motivational "catalyst" that converts intention into action based on perceived desirability, feasibility, and readiness to act. IT, then, locates these processes within the institutional context at the macro-level, highlighting how formal systems of rules, culture, and available resources facilitate or impede the conversion of intention to entrepreneurial action.

This broad framework allows for a thorough examination of entrepreneurship education in Ethiopia, so that cognitive and motivational processes on the individual level are explained together with systemic and contextual determinants. It thereby provides a theoretically rigorous and empirically grounded foundation for the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of EE programs that are both

academically sound and adaptive to the on-the-ground conditions of an emerging entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The following section explores key determinants of entrepreneurial intentions as they relate to the influence of entrepreneurship education.

2.7 Determinants of Entrepreneurial Intentions

This section briefly discusses the key determinants of entrepreneurial intentions (EI) with a particular emphasis on those under examination in this study: Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and Socioeconomic Factors (SEF). These were selected not only due to their strong theoretical and empirical basis but also due to their particular suitability in addressing existing gaps in EI knowledge within the Ethiopian context. They both capture the inner drivers of entrepreneurial conduct (cognition, attitudes, passion) and the external enablers or constraints (role models, institutional and socioeconomic contexts). Each of the determinants is defined in turn to account for its predictive role in defining entrepreneurial intentions among university students.

2.7.1 Entrepreneurship Education (EE)

Entrepreneurship Education (EE) refers to the process of equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitude required to identify opportunities, innovate, and create value (Bae et al., 2014). Besides fostering entrepreneurial skills, EE also fosters employability, adaptability, and problem-solving skills through learning by doing, creativity, and managing risk (Fayolle, 2013; Neck & Greene, 2011).

As a systematic and formalized intervention, EE is crucial in shaping the cognitive foundations (opportunity recognition, decision-making, problem-solving) and attitudinal orientations (self-efficacy, risk tolerance, proactiveness) that underpin entrepreneurial intent. Its impact transcends technical skill, creating a persistence mentality, resilience, and innovation spirit—attributes fundamental to venture creation.

A close contextual study of EE, namely its implementation and challenges in the Ethiopian higher education system, will be presented in Chapter 3.

2.7.2 Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs)

Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), including family members, peers, mentors, and successful entrepreneurs, play a significant influence on entrepreneurial intentions (EI) by presenting live examples of success and illustrating the competencies,

behaviours, and persistence required to excel in entrepreneurship (Kong et al., 2020; Nabi et al., 2017). Drawing on Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), ERMs enable students to acquire knowledge and confidence vicariously, thereby developing self-efficacy and reducing the perceived uncertainty of entrepreneurship (Boldureanu et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2022, EFRATA et al., 2021).

Despite their importance, the contribution of informal ERMs has been overlooked in the entrepreneurship education (EE) literature, which has predominantly addressed formal curricular interventions. Moreover, over-idealized portrayals of ERMs can sometimes create unrealistic expectations and understate the true demands of entrepreneurship (Boldureanu et al., 2020). The current research fills this significant gap by investigating how different forms of ERMs—formal and informal—affect EI in the particular socioeconomic context of Ethiopia, and, in this way, it addresses the research questions raised in Section 1.3 directly.

2.7.3 Entrepreneurial Passion (EP)

Entrepreneurial Passion (EP) is strong, positive emotions towards entrepreneurial behaviour that become a central part of the individual's identity (Cardon et al., 2009). EP is a key affective driver of EI as it fosters persistence, resilience, self-efficacy, and innovative problem-solving (Neneh, 2022). Experiential learning methods to EE, such as business simulations, case studies, and real-world projects, are particularly effective at building EP as they make the students internalize and act out an entrepreneurial identity (Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023).

More specifically, the interaction effect between EP and ERMs is significant: role models not only inspire students but also demonstrate to students that entrepreneurial passion is realistic and sustainable (Kong et al., 2020, p. 8). Despite this, there is limited research on the role of EP in stimulating EI in emerging economies. This study explicitly addresses this gap by investigating the effect of EP on the EI of Ethiopian university students, as described in the research questions.

2.7.4 Socioeconomic Factors (SEF)

Socioeconomic circumstances—cultural norms, financial resource access, and prevailing social values—act as both enablers and barriers to entrepreneurial intentions. Students from entrepreneurial families have an "embedded advantage", enjoying economic security, established networks, and tacit business awareness, which make EE more impactful and entrepreneurship a more accessible option (Brändle et al., 2023; Lingappa et al., 2020). Conversely, first-generation potential entrepreneurs may face an "institutional distance" where classroom training is insufficient without supporting mechanisms such as mentorship plans, incubators, and access to capital (Anderson et al., 2018, 2021; Anderson & Ronteau, 2017).

Financial resources are a particularly significant divider. Underprivileged students may experience the "motivation–resource paradox" where entrepreneurial passion does not lead to action due to limited resources (Brändle et al., 2023). These disparities emphasize the necessity of EE programs to not only improve financial literacy but also offer access to networks of resources, mentors, and institutional assistance. Additionally, cultural norms—such as collectivist values—act as robust moderators, indicating the need for pedagogy that is sensitive to local cultural capital (Vershinina et al., 2018).

The socioeconomic condition's moderating influence on interconnections among EE, ERMs, EP, and EI in Ethiopia is one of the main knowledge areas gaps this research seeks to address.

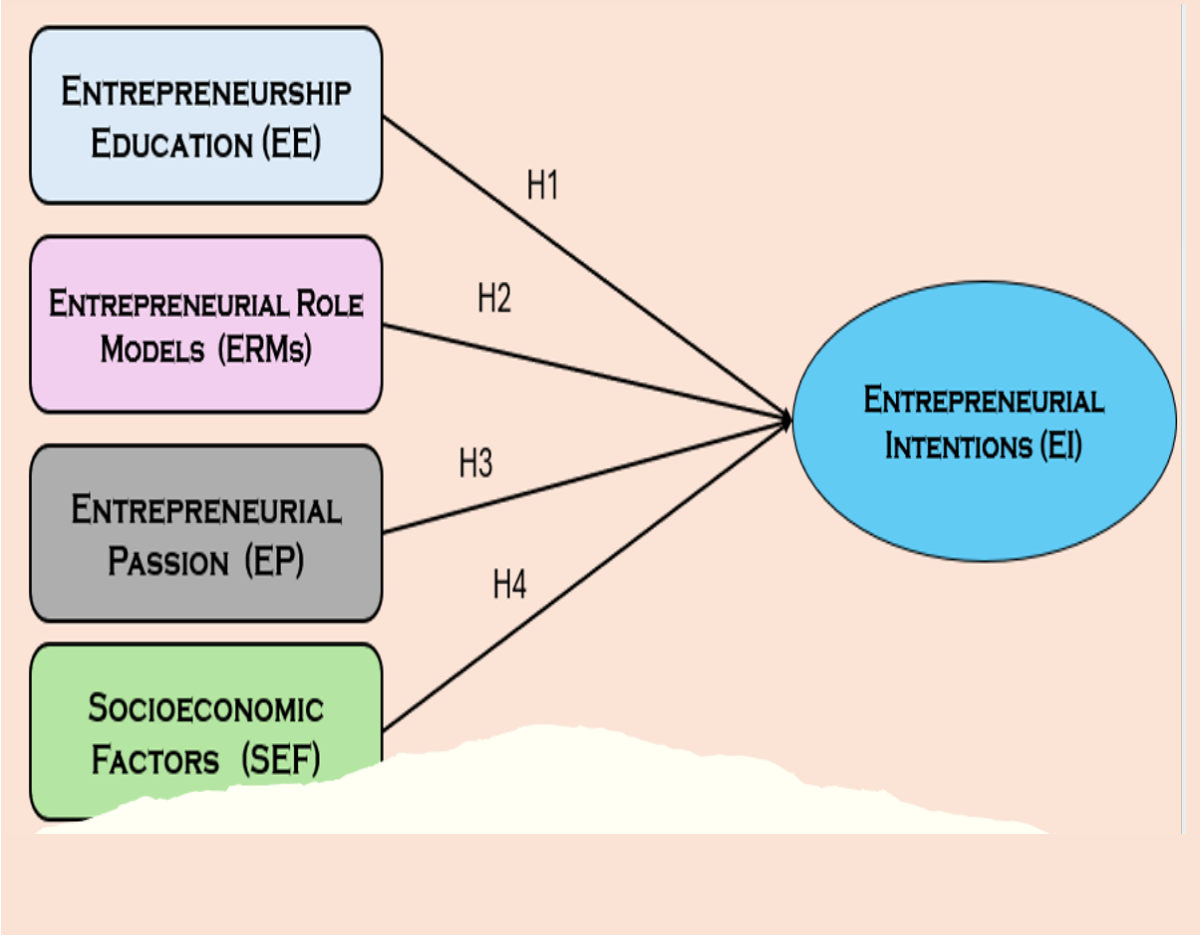
In summary, the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions (EE, ERMs, EP, and SEF) represent a complementary set of internal and external drivers that shape how university students perceive, approach, and ultimately pursue entrepreneurship. Together, they capture the interplay between cognitive foundations (knowledge and attitudes fostered through education), affective dimensions (passion and identity), social influences (role models and cultural norms), and structural conditions (resources and institutional environments). By situating these factors within Ethiopia’s distinctive socioeconomic and educational landscape, this study not only addresses significant gaps in the global EI literature but also generates insights with direct relevance to policy and practice.

Building on this multidimensional foundation, the following section introduces the conceptual framework of the study, which synthesizes these determinants into an integrated model for explaining the formation of entrepreneurial intentions among Ethiopian university students.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework for the research posits that Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) among university students is a product of dynamic interaction between socioeconomic, psychological, social, and education factors rather than the sole product of one determinant. The framework delineates that while Entrepreneurship Education (EE) is the most direct and formal inducer of entrepreneurial intention, its impact is rarely singular. Instead, it is moderated and mediated by exposure to Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), the emergence of Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and the opportunity and limitations present in Socioeconomic Factors (SEF).

Fig 2.1: Conceptual Framework (CF)



Essentially, the framework formulates three grand propositions:

1. The Amplifying Role of ERMs and EP

EE provides students with entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitudes, yet knowledge alone will not be sufficient to initiate actual entrepreneurial commitment. ERMs provide tangible examples of achievement and perseverance, demonstrating that entrepreneurship is not a theoretical concept but a viable profession. ERMs make entrepreneurship more seen as viable and attractive (Shapero & Sokol, 1982) by justifying it as an acceptable option within the social and cultural environment of the students. Similarly, EP is an affective and motivational factor that is transforming inspiration and ability into stickiness to effort, risk-taking, and innovative action (Cardon et al., 2009; Neneh, 2022). ERMs and EP together not only create added value but compound EE's efficiency so that cognitive acquisition of knowledge is translated into behavioural intent.

2. The influencing Power of Socioeconomic Factors (SEF)

Socioeconomic context is the macro-environmental context where educational and psychological motivator’s function. Students' capacity to access resources, acquire legitimacy, and pursue entrepreneurship with confidence is determined by family fortune, parents' occupation, cultural customs, and overall institutional circumstances. For example, students with entrepreneurial experiences possess an "embedded advantage" in terms of capital, contacts, and tacit knowledge (Brändle et al., 2023), while first-generation entrepreneurs face "institutional distance," in which the effect of EE or ERMs gets watered down due to structural limitations (Anderson et al., 2018). On this point, SEF acts as a control variable: it can accelerate or impede the pathways from EE, ERMs, and EP to EI. This makes SEF not only an explanatory variable of interest but also an important contextual moderator that makes the model sensitive to Ethiopia's unique socioeconomic environment.

3. Integration into Testable Relationships

By connecting micro-level (affective and cognitive) and macro-level (structural and contextual) perspectives, the framework goes beyond linear EI accounts. It argues that entrepreneurship learning operates optimally within an enabling social and economic environment, complemented with motivational role models and

entrepreneurial passion. These theoretical hypotheses are translated into four testable hypotheses literally mirroring the objectives of the study (Section 1.3):

H_1 (EE → EI): Entrepreneurship education has a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.

H_2 (ERMs → EI): Entrepreneurial role models have a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.

H_3 (EP → EI): Entrepreneurial passion has a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.

H_4 (SEF → EI): Socioeconomic factors have a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.

In conclusion, the conceptual framework provides an integrated and multi-level guide to account for entrepreneurial intention in the context of Ethiopian higher education. Contrasting with single-theory explanations, it integrates cognitive, affective, social, and institutional constructs within a single explanatory model. Through this, it acknowledges that entrepreneurial intention does not come into being in a vacuum but emerges at the intersection of education, individual identity, social environment, and structural opportunities or constraints. By combining EE, ERMs, EP, and SEF in one framework, the study addresses some significant gaps in the literature—namely the less-studied roles of passion, informal role models, and socioeconomic variations in developing economies. Empirical observation will be guided by hypotheses derived from this model, which will offer both theoretical insights and practical lessons to policymakers and teachers who seek to enhance entrepreneurship in Ethiopia and other similar contexts .

2.9 Chapter Summary: Literature Review

This chapter has built the theoretical and empirical foundation for this research in a systematic way, mapping the complex terrain of entrepreneurship to place the study in the specific context of Ethiopian universities. The review was structured to progress from broad conceptual understandings to the specific variables and relationships that form the core of this research.

The chapter started with accepting the complexity of entrepreneurship, understanding the absence of a universal definition. It was preceded by the evolution of the concept through seminal eyes: Schumpeter's (1934) "creative destruction" with its emphasis on innovation and market destabilization; Drucker's (1985) systematic treatment of entrepreneurship as a tool of social change; and Stevenson's (1983) defining work on the "pursuit of opportunity beyond controlled resources." Synthesizing these, the research adhered to a general operational definition: entrepreneurship as "the creation and management of ventures with a purpose of generating incremental wealth," a definition that encompasses opportunity sensing, strategic resource mobilization, and sustainable value creation.

A probing analysis of the Ethiopian entrepreneurial ecosystem revealed a landscape of tensions and contrasts. There was vast potential for entrepreneurial growth in the country's massive youth population, speedy digital adoption (as embodied in the Telebirr mobile money revolution), and rich traditions of social capital like iqub and idir. However, this potential is strongly constrained by a well-reported set of bottlenecks: a severe lack of access to finance for MSMEs, bureaucratic and regulatory impediments that cause an "implementation gap," and deep-seated cultural risk-aversion that stigmatizes business failure. This study reaffirmed why entrepreneurship in Ethiopia has to be explored through context-specific research.

In order to adequately capture such complexity, the research adopted a pluralistic theoretical approach. This composite framework borrows from three complementary theories:

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB): Offers the basic psychological model for explaining how individual cognitive factors—Attitudes, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioural Control—shape entrepreneurial intention.

The Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM): Extends the TPB by adding the role of a "triggering event." It proposes that Entrepreneurship Education (EE) can act as such a catalyst by reinforcing the perceived desirability and feasibility of venturing and exploiting a person's predisposition to act.

Institutional Theory (IT): Provides the requisite macro-level view, contending that formal institutions (policies, regulations) and informal institutions (culture, norms) significantly shape and limit the entrepreneurial context, thereby influencing EE's efficacy and intention realization.

Extending this theoretical foundation, the chapter identified and deliberated on the four principal determinants of Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) under investigation:

Entrepreneurship Education (EE): The formal, curriculum-based program designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for venture creation.

Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs): The influence of formal and informal exemplars (e.g., successful entrepreneurs, family members) that motivate students and make entrepreneurship an attractive career choice through vicarious learning.

Entrepreneurial Passion (EP): The affective driver of EI, operationalised as intense positive feelings attached to entrepreneurial activity that drive identity, resilience, and persistence.

Socioeconomic Factors (SEF): The environmental context, including family, financial situation, and cultural norms, which can act either as an "embedded advantage" or a "motivation-resource paradox" for prospective students.

The summary of this review is the presentation of an integrated Conceptual Framework. This model implies that EI is not a linear outcome but the product of a dynamic interaction. It hypothesizes that although EE directly affects EI, its impact is strongly moderated by ERMs and EP. Above all, all these relations are moderated by

the overall Socioeconomic Factors (SEF), which can facilitate or hinder the translation of education, inspiration, and passion into firm entrepreneurial intention. This model is translated directly into the study's four testable hypotheses (H_1 to H_4), guiding the subsequent empirical investigation.

In conclusion, this literature review has successfully delineated the research conceptual boundaries, theoretical underpinnings, and key variables. Through synthesizing different perspectives and grounding the study firmly in the Ethiopian context, it has laid a sound foundation for examining how entrepreneurship education, in conjunction with role models, passion, and socioeconomic characteristics, affects the entrepreneurial intentions of university students—a question of paramount importance to developing a new generation of innovators and change-makers in Ethiopia.

The subsequent chapter (Chapter 3) offers a comprehensive examination of the relationship between entrepreneurship education and university students' entrepreneurial intentions, while also considering the role of additional influencing factors. Furthermore, it situates these dynamics within a comparative perspective, highlighting how entrepreneurial behaviours and outcomes vary across diverse geographical contexts and institutional settings.

Chapter 3

Entrepreneurship Education & Entrepreneurial Intentions

3.1 Introduction

The formation of Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) is not an automatic reaction but a complex psychological process, which is governed by a mix of internal dispositions and external environmental factors. While the conceptual framework in Section 2.8 created the baseline theory of this correspondence, the present section deals with the empirical reality of the key determinants that constructively foster and elevate the intention to form a venture among university students.

Drawing on the model, four drivers are identified within this level of discussion as having important roles: Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and the broader Socioeconomic Context. The sequence runs from the institutionalized pressure of education through to the personal inspiration of role models, the internal drive of passion, and finally, the enabling or disabling requirements of the external context.

The study recognizes that though education give the toolset, it is a student's emotional motivation, examples they observe around them, and tangible opportunities and barriers of their society and the engagement of entrepreneurial role models that makes effective the EE. By examining each of these factors in isolation and, later, considering their combined effect, this section provides a sound foundation for understanding the web of factors that steer a student towards an entrepreneurial career. Each of these shall be further elaborated on in the subsequent subsections, beginning with the cornerstone of the current research identifying factors influencing EI.

3.2 Entrepreneurial Intensions (EI)

According to the conceptual model constructed in Section 2.8, the current research examines the primary drivers of Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI) of university students with a specific focus being laid on Entrepreneurship Education (EE).

3.2.1 Impact of EE on EI

EE is known throughout the world as a foundation for entrepreneurial ambitions and not only as a mechanism for knowledge transfer but rather as a process of change allowing for skills, attitude, and mindset to be developed in order to identify and seize new business opportunities (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). Empirical evidence always substantiates that students who pass through well-structured EE programs also consider entrepreneurship a viable career choice (Martin, McNally, & Kay, 2013).

EE is multifaceted in its impact, with both affective and cognitive components of students' individual development being influenced. Besides imparting theoretical knowledge, effective EE promotes affective and motivational competence such as self-efficacy, risk-taking ability, and enthusiasm, which are all significant in the formation of solid entrepreneurial intentions (Nabi et al., 2017). At university, where people are at an early stage of career development, EE has a strategic role—both developing students' capability for entrepreneurial action and towards longer-term socioeconomic development, especially where there are high levels of youth unemployment.

EE operates through several interconnected mechanisms. First, it builds the ability by creating core competencies in business planning, finance, and marketing that are essential in translating innovative ideas into successful businesses (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008; Kuratko, 2005). Second, EE employs experiential pedagogical techniques such as case studies, business plan competitions, and incubator programs, which reflect actual-life problems. These strategies enhance resilience, enhance decision-making skills, and bridge the theory-practice divide (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Pittaway & Cope, 2007). Third, EE creates an entrepreneurial frame of mind, with considerable enhancement of students' attitudes towards the feasibility and desirability of an entrepreneurship career (Alshebami et al., 2020; Maresch et al., 2016).

The effect of EE is also maximized when the courses are contextually relevant. Aligning EE content to reflect the socio-economic challenges and prospects that students are most likely to face makes the educational-entrepreneurial intention link stronger (Boldureanu et al., 2020; Costin et al., 2022).

Development of EE definition from a business skills-only approach to an inclusive, holistic practice to develop entrepreneurial attitudes, competence, and intention to act is encapsulated in Table 3.1. Synthesizing these perceptions, EE in this study is defined to be "the formal and informal learning processes directed towards the creation of students' entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, attitudes, and mindset, hence preparing them to spot and utilize business opportunities."

Table 3.1: Evolution of Definitions in Entrepreneurship Education (EE)

Definition	Source	Key Insight
“The process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities, and the insight, self-esteem, knowledge, and skills to act on them.”	Jones & English (2004)	Focus on opportunity recognition and self-confidence.
“A structured educational process that nurtures an entrepreneurial mindset and the necessary competencies to launch and grow entrepreneurial ventures.”	Fayolle & Gailly (2008)	Emphasis on mindset and venture growth.
“Entrepreneurship education is about fostering entrepreneurial behaviours, preparing for entrepreneurial careers, and contributing to entrepreneurial thinking within organizations.”	Gibb (1993)	Broad scope including career preparation and intrapreneurship.

Definition	Source	Key Insight
“An educational system designed to promote creativity, innovation, and self-employment through the teaching of entrepreneurial skills and attributes.”	Kuratko (2005)	Linkage to creativity, innovation, and self-employment.
“Focused on developing students’ ability to identify and pursue opportunities, overcome risks, and turn ideas into viable businesses or initiatives.”	Pittaway & Cope (2007)	Prioritizes action, opportunity pursuit, and risk management.

However, there are several criticisms despite the established relevance of EE, particularly in developing contexts like Ethiopia. Scholars have questioned the long-term practical utility of EE, with minimal empirical proof of sustained venture creation and success (Nabi et al., 2017; Rideout & Gray, 2013). Most programs focus excessively on theoretical instruction, neglecting to harden students on the risks and uncertainty of real entrepreneurship (Pittaway & Cope, 2007). Moreover, development in soft skills, moral decision-making, and hardness is not given importance or focus, yet they are critical elements in understanding complex entrepreneurial situations. Finally, empirical research that examines EE's operation within sparse-resource contexts, as well as the relative effectiveness of disparate delivery mechanisms (curricular vs. extracurricular), is limited.

In conclusion, in its properly designed and properly delivered context, EE is the backbone of entrepreneurial intention formation (Boldureanu et al., 2020). It not only gives students the knowledge and skills to identify and capitalize on opportunities but also changes habits of thinking, increases levels of motivation, and introduces the confidence necessary for entrepreneurial action (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). Its influence

on EI, however, is most potent when applied in combination with other conditions such as entrepreneurial role models and passion, in experiential, context-dependent learning environments. The next part will cover the following determinant of choice: the Entrepreneurial Role Model.

3.2.2 Impact of Entrepreneurial Role Models on EI

Socio-economic status of students plays a significant role in the formation of EI via entrepreneurial role model mechanism(Boldureanu et al., 2020, p. 1) . Consistent with social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) , research indicates that ERMs affect EI in two broad channels: normalization of risk perception and reinforcement of efficacy beliefs. As Bosma et al. (2012) uncovered, "role models make entrepreneurship seem less scary by demonstrating its feasibility" (Bosma et al., 2012, p. 1) . This effect appears particularly potent in collectivist cultures, where being an entrepreneur is typically seen as deviant from typical jobs.

Alem (2021) Ethiopian study found that students whose family members belonged to entrepreneurial families were 2.1 times more likely to possess high EI, validating the role of family and community-level role models. Likewise, Van Auken et al. (2013) found that entrepreneurial mentor exposure had a positive influence on students' perceptions of being capable of starting a business (Van Auken, 2013). But Davidsson and Honig & Honig (2003) discover ERMs operate optimally in students with moderate initial self-efficacy, showing threshold effects in intention formation (Davidsson & Honig, 2003). Passion is the other core variable influencing entrepreneurial intentions, which is explained in the following section.

3.2.3 Entrepreneurial Passion as a Driver towards EI

Entrepreneurial passion (EP) is an emotional driver of entrepreneurial intention formation. Cardon et al. (2009, p. 517) define EP as "positive intense feelings toward entrepreneurial activities" and identify three dimensions of specific interest to students: inventing (passion for innovation), founding (excitement of venture creation), and developing (satisfaction of business growth). This passion influences students' attitudes toward difficulty—prompting them to view obstacles as "stimulating puzzles rather than roadblocks" (Alshebami et al., 2020, p. 45).

At the student level, it is essential to build the ability to generate innovative and creative ideas that have the potential to attract investors and mobilize resources, particularly financing. Accordingly, entrepreneurship education (EE) curricula should be designed to equip students with the competencies and knowledge to enable and enhance these activities.

Such enthusiasm can be developed through educational interventions. Alshebami (2023) conducted research in Saudi Arabia and established that, among students who participated in pitch competition, there was an increase in EP by 37%. Such interventions offer channels through which students acquire resilience, creativity, and perseverance skills needed in entrepreneurship. The next section discusses how socioeconomic characteristics shape the entrepreneurial intentions of university students.

3.2.4 Socioeconomic factors and Entrepreneurial Intentions

In nations like Ethiopia, where entrepreneurial endeavour can be discouraged by cultural values, high SEF enables students to "defy societal expectations" (Ratten & Usmanij, 2021) . Three times greater is the likelihood of high-SEF individuals pursuing entrepreneurial dreams despite family disapproval. Low economic support, institution unsupportiveness, and societal attitudes toward entrepreneurship decisively shape EI formation (Urban & Kujinga, 2016).

A study by Reyad et al. (2020) of Bahrain and Egyptian students in accounting found that wealthier students (private universities) were more entrepreneurial on the strength of better access to capital, networks, and risk-taking attitude (Reyad et al., 2020, p. 1101). Conversely, lower socioeconomic students are likely to encounter more barriers, such as parental expectations for secure employment and reduced access to startup capital (Obschonka et al., 2011).

This review indicates that while entrepreneurship education forms the basis for entrepreneurial intention formation, there is a need to include other determinants of entrepreneurship—like exposure to successful role models (ERMs), adopting an integrated experiential learning approach, and considering socioeconomic factors—

to promote and democratize entrepreneurship for students belonging to all socioeconomic group of society.

In conclusion, forming entrepreneurial intentions among university students is a multi-faceted process that is shaped by a constellation of cognitive, affective, social, and contextual factors. Entrepreneurship Education (EE) emerges as a foundation block, equipping students with the knowledge, competences, attitudes, and mindsets required to recognize and take advantage of business opportunities. However, the impact of EE is significantly enhanced by exposure to Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), who render success tangible and risk-taking routine, and by the formation of Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), which energizes motivation, resilience, and persistence in entrepreneurial endeavours. Socioeconomic circumstances also forcefully mediate these influences, enabling or constraining students' ability to translate knowledge, inspiration, and passion into genuine entrepreneurial behavior.

Cumulatively, these findings underscore that entrepreneurial intention is not reducible to a single factor. Rather, it is through the interaction of education, role models, passion, and socio-economic context that the intensity and likelihood of students' entrepreneurial intentions are explained. For policymakers, educators, and organizations, this implies the merit of holistic, context-sensitive entrepreneurship programs that integrate experiential learning, mentorship, and equitable access to resources. By addressing these numerous determinants simultaneously, universities can establish a more inclusive and successful entrepreneurial ecosystem that allows students from all backgrounds to consider entrepreneurship as a viable and attainable career path.

Next section will present a comparative discussion on entrepreneurship education in developed and developing nations contexts .

3.3 Entrepreneurship Education: Developed vs. Developing Nations

Entrepreneurship Education (EE) affects entrepreneurial intentions (EI) globally, but with differing effectiveness in developed and developing countries. The major variations occur in institutional support systems, available resources, policies, and socioeconomic levels. Developed nations have usually well-organized EE programs with experiential training, whereas developing countries mostly depend on theoretical curricula with limited hands-on learning. This segment compares these two environments, identifying their strengths and weaknesses as well as the possibility of each learning from the other.

3.3.1 Entrepreneurship Education in Developed Nations

In the developed world, EE is deeply rooted in formal education systems and supported by highly developed entrepreneurial ecosystems. These entrepreneurial ecosystems made up of university incubators, startup accelerators, government funding initiatives, and venture capital networks (Morris et al., 2020), have a well-established system for EE. Such a system facilitates an easy shift from theoretical studies to actual business setup with the help of precise experiential interfaces and policy interventions, the subject we explore in detail in the following section.

Experiential Learning and Practical Training

Experiential learning is an entrepreneurial education (EE) building block of the developed world. Universities directly involve students in the entrepreneurial process through tools such as prototyping facilities, incubators, and mentorship initiatives (Alakaleek et al., 2023) . In America, top universities facilitate this with organized programs that connect the student to angel investors and prototyping facilities (Kuratko & Morris, 2018) . Concurrent approaches in Western Europe, particularly in Germany and the Netherlands, blend work-study and industry partnerships to equip students with business capabilities upon graduation (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015).

Institutional and Policy Support

Government policy plays a significant role in advancing EE in developed countries. Finland is not left behind, where initiatives like Business Finland sponsorships and student-led entrepreneurial project mentorship (Chen et al., 2018). The business sector also supports the framework with venture capital, angel funds, and corporate innovation labs. Collaborations offer a robust entrepreneurial system under which students' ideas are transferred from development to implementation.

Disadvantages: Market Saturation and Vicious Competition

These drawbacks apart, developed economies have drawbacks too. Extremely mature markets are highly competitive, and it becomes difficult to distinguish their products (Acs et al., 2018). In addition, seed funding may be limited by rigid investment criteria and saturation within startup pipelines (Lange et al., 2024).

3.3.2 Entrepreneurship Education in Developing Countries

EE in developing countries is progressively considered an economic development and youth empowerment instrument. However, its impact is most commonly constrained by structural and institutional factors. EE programs in most cases continue to be too theoretical with inadequate practical components that are able to offer real entrepreneurial competence.

Most EE courses in developing nations depend heavily on lecturing due to infrastructural deficits and inadequate funding. In this instance, fewer than 20% of Nigerian universities possess viable business incubators (Adegbite, 2001, p. 1) , while Ethiopian courses focus more on business plan writing compared to venture implementation (Tessema Gerba, 2012). This overreliance on theory leads to a surplus of theoretical courses and a deficit in practical courses that cause mismatch between educational output and entrepreneurial ecosystem demands.

According to the International Labor Organization (2023), the deficit of practical training is responsible for the youth unemployment rate, where entrepreneurship has been promoted publicly but institutionally supported poorly. What is adding to it is:

- **Limited resources:** Weak laboratories, incubators, and connections with industry.
- **Policy failures:** Lack of government backing for EE adoption.
- **Cognitive Rigidity:** Emphasis on memorization instead of problem-solving and creativity (Ansong et al., 2024).

There are some developing nations that are now beginning to address such matters, e.g., countries like Rwanda and South Africa are testing reforms like internships with SMEs, university incubators, and public-private mentorship initiatives (Urban & Kujinga, 2022). Practice-based actions will more likely imply beneficial changes in entrepreneurial results as well as venture survival.

However, as an alternative, instead of large capital or institutional support, EE in developing countries is likely to promote frugal innovation, i.e., training students to build sustainable enterprises on scarce resources. Brobbey et al. (2023) call this an opportunity-oriented mindset, where constraints lead to solution-finding innovations.

It is particularly evident in social entrepreneurship:

- The Youth Enterprise Development Fund in Kenya integrates community needs assessments into business planning (Sikenyi, 2017).
- Social accelerators in South Africa target informal sector innovation, 42% of which are owned by women (Urban & Kujinga, 2016).

These initiatives align with George et al.'s (2012) "contextual intelligence" model of investing EE resources in addressing local socio-economic needs and building entrepreneurial capacity.

Though there have been some efforts in developing countries, venture capital and mentor availability remain in low supply. Without reform efforts toward enhanced microloan availability and advisory networks, entrepreneurial ecosystems (EE) will remain less impactful, Shahriar et al. (2024) suggested. Regulatory and bureaucratic issues, complex registrations and ambiguous legal environments, are further obstacles to entrepreneurship in these countries. Table 3.2 presents these comparisons.

Table 3.2: Comparison of Entrepreneurial Education in Developed and Developing Nations

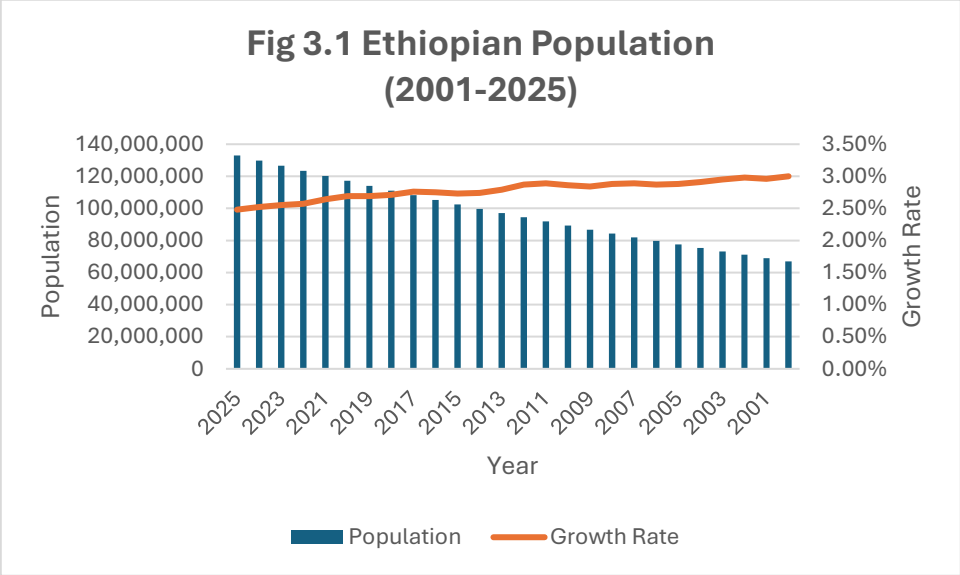
Factor	Developed Countries	Developing Countries
Pedagogy	Experiential, with incubators, simulations, and mentorship (Shirokova et al., 2021; Alakaleek et al., 2023)	Predominantly lecture-based; limited practical exposure (Ratten & Usmanij, 2021; Shahriar et al., 2024)
Ecosystem Support	Strong institutional and policy backing; access to capital and networks (Chen et al., 2018)	Weak support systems; minimal funding and mentorship (Costa et al., 2020; Brobbey et al., 2023)
Focus	Innovation-driven; high-growth industries (Chen et al., 2018)	Necessity-driven; solving local challenges (Suryadi & Anggraeni, 2023)
Key Barriers	Market saturation; high competition (Costa et al., 2020)	Lack of infrastructure, capital, and regulatory clarity (Shahriar et al., 2024)

In conclusion, entrepreneurial education (EE) in both developed and developing contexts has its strengths and weaknesses. The developed world provides organized ecosystems and emphasizes experiential models of learning but has to contend with market saturation. The developing nations, while they grapple with resource scarcity, exhibit innovative and adaptive strategies like frugal innovation and social entrepreneurship that are embedded in localized needs (Brush et al., 2023). To achieve EE's collective impact, a more cohesive strategy, among experiential learning, enabling policy frameworks, and cross-border collaboration, is necessary.

Having talked about EE, drawing on comparisons with developed and developing nations, the following section elaborates on how these global patterns of entrepreneurial education unfold in Ethiopia's particular socio-economic context, bringing out country-specific issues and practices.

3.4 Entrepreneurship Education & EI in Ethiopian

Entrepreneurship education (EE) has been on the agenda in Ethiopia as a strategic response to perennial problems such as youth unemployment and economic non-diversification. The Ethiopian government, under a broad national development program, has increasingly realized the potential of entrepreneurship to lead innovation, employment creation, and sustainable economic development. This is also seen in the main policy documents like the Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II), where entrepreneurship has been explicitly mentioned as a mechanism for realizing the country's vision of middle-income status by 2025 (National Planning Commission, 2016). As the population of Ethiopia is expected to continue increasing—to more than 132 million by 2025 (United Nations, 2022), the imperative to formulate employment-generating avenues, especially for young people, becomes even more critical.



Source : (United Nations, 2022)

In line with this, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) has officially integrated entrepreneurship education into universities. EE has been integrated into university curricula with the aim of equipping students with the capacity, competencies, and skills required to create and operate their own ventures (Workie et al., 2019). This shift is not just intended to be complementary to traditional career choices but also to promote the spirit of entrepreneurship among young people. Some

universities, such as Addis Ababa University, have even established entrepreneurship centres and incubation centres as a means of providing practical training and seed-stage support for student entrepreneurs (Williams et al., 2022). However, evidence shows that these centres' empirical contribution remains negligible; their existence in some studies was hardly or not known at all to students, which reflects outreach, functional, or integration gaps with student services.

Despite these institutional efforts, empirical practice of EE in Ethiopian universities is marred by daunting challenges that undermine its potential to develop entrepreneurial intention among students. Limited resources are some of the most critical issues. The majority of universities do not have sufficient qualified teachers, obsolete or insufficient pedagogic materials, or economic resources for entrepreneurial-type activities. Their absence depletes EE provision and reduces the potential for practice or on-the-job training. Zegeye and Singh (2019) affirm that the absence of entrepreneurship role models and institutional facilitation in the educational context significantly drains the success of entrepreneurship education.

Other than structural, socio-cultural attitudes play underlying functions in entrepreneurial intention formation. In Ethiopia, employment in the public sector continues to be more prestigious and safer than being self-employed, which is still stigmatized or taken as a last option (Ayalew & Zeleke, 2018; Tereda, 2020). Such norms discourage students from pursuing entrepreneurship careers regardless of the training or exposure they gain from formal EE programs.

The financing constraints also aggravate the problem. The youth, especially university graduates with few assets or collateral, have very limited access to start-up finance. Ethiopian banks require massive guarantees before they can provide a loan, thereby excluding potential entrepreneurs from the required finance (Tarekegne & Gelaneh, 2019). Without adequate finance, entrepreneurial students are confronted with overwhelming obstacles in transforming their visions into viable business entities.

Another problem in Ethiopia is that EE curricula are not contextually relevant locally. The majority of Ethiopian universities are adopting Western-inherited models of entrepreneurship education with little regard to the economic, regulatory, and market realities of the country. These one-size-fits-all curricula are not applicable to the

foremost concerns like informal economic frameworks, bureaucratic red tape, and limitations of access to infrastructure, parameters particularly distinctive to Ethiopian entrepreneurs. As Nabi et al. (2017) argue, EE in disregard of what happens on the ground in the local business ecosystem will not effectively equip students to become successful entrepreneurs.

Besides experiential learning, university-industry collaboration was also another priority area to strengthen EE and entrepreneurial ecosystem development. Universities in collaboration with private sector organizations can guarantee mentorship, access to finance, and innovation spaces to facilitate student entrepreneurship. Most notably, Addis Ababa Science and Technology University has partnered with the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce to engage in such activities (Williams et al., 2022). As noted by Aparicio et al. (2019), industry-university collaboration offers conducive conditions for the conversion of entrepreneurial intentions into actual business startups.

Policy programs are also becoming crucial in supporting young entrepreneurs, too. Programs such as the Ethiopian Youth Revolving Fund, where funding is provided to youth-owned businesses, reflect a growing acceptance that national development policy must be supported by EE programs at the university level (Ministry of Finance, 2021). Policy programs can address funding barriers as well as regulatory barriers typically deterring entrepreneurial endeavours among young graduates.

Tailoring entrepreneurship education to the unique socio-economic situation in Ethiopia, e.g., informal market activities, regulatory challenges, and localized success stories, can easily make it more relevant and effective. The inclusion of locally derived case studies and problem-solving activities can allow students to connect more pragmatically to the materials and formulate more realistic expectations of the entrepreneurial process (Tarekegne & Gelaneh, 2019).

In summary, while entrepreneurship education in Ethiopia is still in its promising stage, its contribution to influencing students' entrepreneurial intentions is looming. This will, however, be realized through an inclusive process that transcends structural hindrances, maps curricula to a specified context, supports experiential learning, and improves the cooperation between education, policy, and industry. As will be

discussed in this study, a grasp of how these determinants function within the university context in Ethiopia is crucial to determining the degree to which EE gets converted into entrepreneurial intention and, thereafter, venture creation among university students. The gaps identified will be discussed in the following section.

3.5 Gaps in Research

Though there has been significant progress in the field of entrepreneurship education (EE), particularly with respect to understanding its impact on entrepreneurial intentions (EI) among students, there remain significant gaps. These include contextual relevance in emerging economies, socioeconomic forces, passion for entrepreneurship, and role models' influence on entrepreneurial action. Bridging these gaps is crucial to enhancing EE program planning as well as the provision of appropriate real-world results, particularly in low-resource contexts.

The majority of curricula applied in developing nations are designed with models designed for high-income nations and therefore are less appropriate for nations like Ethiopia, whose entrepreneurial environments are extremely heterogeneous (Ratten & Usmanij, 2021). They are not capable of dealing with challenges like weak infrastructure, shadow economy, and access to finance (Ratten & Usmanij, 2021). As Welter (2011) argues, entrepreneurship relies on local drivers of socioeconomic and cultural factors.

Additionally, curricula have been centrally planned rather than well contextualized, and this will undermine EE's effectiveness. Furthermore, even with experiential learning, mentoring, and business simulation (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015), more research needs to confirm how much these methods can be utilized so that it will lead to greater student entrepreneurialism and engagement in nascent economies.

While the effect of ERMs on EI within the learner is omnipresent (Nabi et al., 2017), little empirical evidence exists concerning where and how ERMs can be incorporated appropriately into EE programs. Prior work made role models fixed variables that could be passive controlled, as opposed to dynamic variables that could be controlled systematically via mentorship, guest talks, and networking sessions.

In addition, socioeconomic determinants such as family background, economic capital, and social network access have been identified to play a crucial role in entrepreneurial intent (Lingappa et al., 2020; Dewi, 2024). Such determinants are not present in EE research. In relation to other determinants, significantly fewer studies have investigated the interaction between environmental factors and students' inner motivation to facilitate or hinder entrepreneurial behaviour. In such settings like in Ethiopia, social culture regarding risk-taking, failure in business, and job security would suppress entrepreneurship even further. Systematic studies should be conducted so that intersections of such determinants with EE can be explored and inclusive policies designed for supporting students from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

Furthermore, entrepreneurial passion (EP), a source of significant innovation and resilience (Cardon et al., 2009), remains to be investigated in EE studies in developing economies. Despite so much passion as is frequently reported, very little is known about how it can be developed through learning contexts. More research must look into the way experiential learning, experience, and mentorship can develop creativity, resilience, and entrepreneurial passion among students.

3.6 Integrative Approach to EI Formation

Entrepreneurship education (EE) offers entrepreneurial development the basic knowledge it needs, but its effectiveness is primarily determined by entrepreneurial role model exposure (ERMs), entrepreneurial passion development (EP), and socioeconomic factors awareness (SEFs). Scholarly literature states that universities that want to develop strong EI need to have an integrative approach with further application of the following important interventions:

- **Experiential EE Pedagogies** – Embedding practical, action-based learning processes enhances opportunity identification and self-confidence of the students (Pittaway & Cope, 2007).
- **Exposure to Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs)** – Entrepreneurship mentorship initiatives, entrepreneur-in-residence, and networking events fill the experience gap for future entrepreneurs (Reyad et al., 2020).
- **Passion-Driven Activities** – Pitch competitions and provides practical problem-solving skills through cutting-edge technology and real-world innovation, affirming students' entrepreneurial passion (Cardon et al., 2009).
- **Contextualized Socioeconomic Integration** – Interventions must consider the economic and cultural contexts of the location, particularly in African universities where limited resources pose unique challenges (Urban & Kujinga, 2016).

By bringing theoretical and empirical knowledge together, this review highlights the EI development multidimensionality and encourages holistic, context-sensitive methods in entrepreneurship education. The following section presents a brief summary of the chapter.

3.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 has conducted a detailed and critical analysis of the complex relationship between Entrepreneurship Education (EE) and the development of Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI) among university students. Taking a non-linear cause-and-effect perspective beyond a simplistic approach, the chapter affirms that EI is a multifaceted psychological construct, as it is affected by a dynamic interplay of educational, social, emotional, and economic factors. This review synthesizes global perspectives while maintaining specific focus on the unique challenges and opportunities in emerging economies, with Ethiopia as a central case study. The dominant thesis that is teased out is that while EE is a fundamental building block, its effect is strongly influenced by a student's exposure to role models, their individual passion, and the enabling—or disabling—nature of their socioeconomic environment.

The Pillars of Entrepreneurial Intention: A Multi-Dimensional Framework

The chapter divided the formation of EI into four key, interconnected pillars. The most significant and primary one is Entrepreneurship Education (EE). The discourse positions EE not merely as a knowledge-delivery system but as a strategic intervention aimed at reframing cognitive mindsets and building human capital. Effective EE programs do not simply teach business plans; they actively cultivate the entrepreneurial mindset to identify and exploit opportunity. They do this through a double-barrelled impact: they provide the necessary cognitive foundation in such fields as finance and marketing, while they build the essential affective attributes of self-efficacy, risk tolerance, and passion. The chapter emphasizes that pedagogical design is paramount. Experiential learning methods—such as business simulations, incubators, and pitch competitions—are described as being particularly valuable.

These methods bridge the theory-practice divide and allow students to develop resilience, make improved decisions, and develop a more realistic perception of the desirability and viability of an entrepreneurial career. Besides, the chapter emphasizes the criticality of contextual relevance in the sense that the effectiveness of EE is maximized when its contents are tailored to address the specific challenges and realities of the local business environment, a top priority in contexts like Ethiopia.

The second pillar is Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs). Drawing on Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), the chapter explains that ERMs operate through two basic psychological mechanisms: they normalize entrepreneurship's perceived risks by demonstrating its feasibility, and they enhance students' efficacy beliefs through vicarious learning. This impact is shown to be especially potent in collectivist cultures, in which entrepreneurship may be viewed as a deviation from the norm. Empirical evidence, including one specific Ethiopian study, is presented showing that students with entrepreneurial relatives are significantly more likely to develop high EI. One nuanced finding is, nonetheless, advanced: the role model influence is not uniform and is most effective for students with moderately high levels of existing self-efficacy, with a threshold effect being implied in the intention-formation process.

The third pillar, Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), is identified as the affective driver of intention. As "positive intense feelings toward entrepreneurial activities," EP is broken down into three dimensions of high salience to students: passion for inventing, founding, and developing. This passion is also not introduced as a fixed trait but as a developable state. The chapter illustrates how pedagogical interventions, such as experiential pitch competitions, lead to measurable passion. This kind of affective engagement matters because it converts cognitive appraisal, where students view challenges as "stimulating puzzles rather than roadblocks," and thereby fosters persistence and resilience.

Finally, the chapter places these individual-level variables within the larger context of Socioeconomic Factors (SEF). This pillar is the underlying reality that can either enable or stifle entrepreneurial ambition. The dialogue recognizes a clear dichotomy: students from more economically advantaged backgrounds naturally have greater access to capital, networks, and a family safety net that encourages risk tolerance. On the other hand, lower socioeconomic status students tend to face a compounded set of barriers, including family pressure to secure stable employment, less startup capital, and cultural stigma around business failure. In the Ethiopian context, where public sector employment is highly regarded, these socioeconomic barriers are

particularly concentrated, creating an immensely high barrier that EE, on its own, cannot overcome.

Comparing EE Ecosystems in Developed and Developing Countries

Most of the chapter is taken up with a comparative investigation of EE in different economic contexts, and a wide global divide is apparent. In developed nations, EE is characterized by highly embedded entrepreneurial ecosystems. These provide robust institutional and policy support, access to venture capital, and a pedagogy heavily oriented toward experiential learning through university incubators, accelerators, and industry partnerships. The principal challenges in these contexts are market saturation and hyper-competition.

As a point of contrast, the situation in the majority of developing nations, including Ethiopia, is one of scarcity. EE programs are theory-based and lecture-heavy, beset by an acute lack of resources, inadequate infrastructure, and few qualified instructors. The chapter notes that Western models are adopted but hardly, if ever, adapted to the local context, and the consequence of this is that there is a huge gap between the curriculum and the practical issues entrepreneurs face. However, the analysis also uncovers emerging strengths within these constraints, such as a focus on frugal innovation and social entrepreneurship, wherein students are taught to build sustainable enterprises with scarce resources and address pressing local needs.

In the case of Ethiopia, while the government has officially included EE within university curricula as a strategic response to youth unemployment, the empirical setting is marked by a many of challenges. These vary from a severe reliance on decontextualized, Western-based curricula, through a critical scarcity of practical resources and experienced mentors, to deep-seated cultural preferences for public sector work, and a debilitating absence of access to startup capital. The chapter concludes that for EE in Ethiopia to realize its potential, there must be a transformative shift—from a theoretical, add-on module to an integrated, experiential, and contextually relevant toolkit with immediate connections to industry and policy backing.

In conclusion, Chapter 3 can effectively argue that entrepreneurial intentions development requires a paradigm shift from a fragmented focus on education to an integrative and holistic model. The evidence in this data is that EE, while crucial, is no solution. It is only when it is synergistically combined with systematic exposure to relatable role models, pedagogical designs that actively foster entrepreneurial passion, and an active attempt to make sense of, and buffer, the socioeconomic challenges that students face. The chapter closes by pinpointing major research gaps, namely the need for longitudinal studies on the long-term impact of EE on actual venture creation and a closer look at how to effectively implement these integrative approaches in environments with limited resources. Lastly, this chapter sets the stage for the realization that building a generation of entrepreneurs needs to be an ecosystem-wide approach that addresses the whole student—their learning, their inspirations, their passions, and their realities.

The following chapter outlines the research methodology, presenting the comprehensive roadmap for the study.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the systematic method undertaken to examine the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions (EI) among Addis Ababa University (AAU) students. Attempting to capture the intricacy of EI—a notion that involves measurable aspects such as entrepreneurship education (EE), entrepreneurial role models (ERMs), and entrepreneurial passion (EP), along with socioeconomic factors—a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design was adopted (Saunders et al., 2019). This model combines qualitative and quantitative stages, reflecting a pragmatist research philosophy that favours practical outcomes and methodological flexibility in investigating complex phenomena like entrepreneurial behaviour (Morgan, 2007; Tashakkori et al., 2021).

The study took place in two sequential phases. The initial qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with 10 participant students in an effort to capture socio-cultural determinants and lived experience of EI. The findings from this phase informed the development of the quantitative phase, which involved a large-scale survey (n=400) aimed at assessing the prevalence and interrelations between key variables in a larger population of students. This approach ensures that research tools are contextually grounded, thereby enhancing the validity and applicability of the results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The chapter is organized into five main sections. The chapter begins with an explanation of pragmatist research philosophy, followed by an in-depth explanation of the sequential exploratory design. Data collection and data analysis procedures for both phases, sampling strategies, instruments, and analytic procedures are presented in the third section. The ethical concerns that informed the study are discussed in the fourth section. The chapter concludes with a summary of the overall methodological framework. Each section provides an elaborate description of its corresponding component.

4.2 Research Philosophy: A Pragmatic Approach

Entrepreneurial intentions (EI) are the product of determinants—that range from individual education exposure and motivations, socio-economic contexts and role models. Such determinants, as illustrated in Chapter 3, are non-one-way influences; instead, they coexist interactively in distinctive cultural and institutional contexts. To address such complexity effectively, the research rests on a pragmatic research philosophy that affords methodological convenience as well as commitment toward practical, contextual outcomes.

Pragmatism is best suited to exploring real-world phenomena with interconnected causes and consequences. It is highly concerned with choosing research methods based on their usefulness in responding to the research question, as opposed to allegiance to a paradigm (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). As Saunders et al. (2019, p. 818) state, "the most significant determinant of the epistemology, ontology and axiology you adopt is the research question itself." Pragmatism thus permits mixed methods to be employed, so quantification of the quantifiable (quantitative) and interpretative (qualitative) dimensions of entrepreneurial intention among Addis Ababa University (AAU) students is possible in this study.

Pragmatism, as such, is concerned with "what works"(Patton, 2001, p. 72), and it gives rise to selecting the most appropriate manner of solving problems in applied research. As it has been aptly explicated by Tashakkori et al.,(2021), "pragmatism rejects the either/or incompatibility stance and embraces a both/and stance," thereby fostering methodological pluralism (Tashakkori et al., 2021, p. 8). The merging of survey findings and interview-based outcomes in this study offers the potential for a rich, multilateral comprehension of how EE, ERMs, EP, and SEF affect students' EI.

One of the core assumptions of pragmatism is that knowledge is contextually constructed and its value resides in its use. "Only ideas enter into focus when they help to facilitate action," as emphasis by Saunders et al. (2019, p. 812), noting that this research philosophy culminates in the resolution of real-world problems. In the economic reality of today's Ethiopia, where youth unemployment is an immediate

issue such pragmatism is badly required to develop a solution for the problem. Through the emphasis on practical implications, research aims to be not only academically sound but also in a place to inform education policy and architecture that supports entrepreneurship.

Pragmatism allows for flexibility in the researcher to shift the mode of inquiry from one research stage to another (Morgan, 2007). By doing so, it provides an interactive method of EI research, a concept battered by turbulent cultural, psychological, and economic environments (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). Kelly and Cordeiro (2020) chronicle that pragmatism "freed the researcher from rigid traditions and allows them to put more emphasis on the problem at hand than on philosophical orthodoxy" (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). This flexibility provides room for the research to remain consistent with evolving knowledge and situational problems in the Ethiopian higher education environment. The following Sections dealt with the ontology and epistemologies of the research adopted respectively.

4.2.1. Ontology: Nature of Reality in Pragmatism

Ontology is concerned with researcher assumptions about reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Pragmatism is observed to be pluralist in character, dynamic, and comprises objective structures and subjective experiences (Saunders et al., 2019). Pragmatists do not believe in one and sole reality. Pragmatists have faith in several realities with different interpretations based on context and perspective Azzopardi & Nash, 2014, p. 152) .

This ontological disposition is particularly relevant to this current research, where students' conception of entrepreneurship is determined by a wide range of intersecting variables, including educational background, natural ability, socioeconomic status, and exposure to prototypes. Azzopardi and Nash (2014) posited that a pluralistic ontology justifies the utilization of mixed methods because it allows the researcher to investigate both common structures and unique lived experiences of participants. This ontological flexibility is an important factor in recognizing how internal motivations and external influences merge to form entrepreneurial intentions.

4.2.2. Epistemology: Pragmatism's Nature of Knowledge

Epistemology reflects the way knowledge is constructed and validated in the research process. From the practical viewpoint, knowledge is created through questioning and implemented for resolving real-world problems (Biesta, 2010). It is neither purely objective, as in positivism, nor purely subjective, as in interpretivism. Both of these are rather transactional in epistemology, where knowledge emerges from the respective co-action between the researcher, actors, and context of investigation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

For this research, the employment of qualitative and quantitative data collection is suitable to such an epistemological stance. Qualitative interviews elicit students lived experiences, their aspirations, challenges, and inspirations—and quantitative questionnaires supply data on larger trends and interconnections which can be statistically quantifiable and generalizable. This two-sensory approach enables one to have an in-depth analysis of how EE, ERMs, EP, and SEF impact EI.

Since Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 18) assert, "pragmatism is the best philosophical foundation for mixed methods research, because it allows researchers to 'choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes.'" This pragmatism of epistemology ensures that the derived knowledge is empirically significant and contextually appropriate.

4.2.3 Axiology: Value Role in Pragmatism

Axiology refers to the contribution of value to shaping research. Pragmatism does not shy away or conceal the reality that research is value-laden, i.e., the researcher's comprehension, interests, and societal issues constitute the entire process of inquiry (Azzopardi & Nash, 2014; Saunders et al., 2019). Unlike positivist tendencies trying to be objective, pragmatism embraces the reality that values can render research more practical and ethics driven.

The researcher has social and ethical responsibility to combat the problem of youth unemployment and promote entrepreneurship as a strategy for sustainable

development in Ethiopia in this study. These values informed study direction, formulating research questions, and the choice of feasible and attainable solutions. Because Azzopardi & Nash (2014) acknowledges that pragmatism leads researchers to make explicit the purposes and values in research as responsible research practice.

Along the way, axiology in this study is not merely a detour of philosophy but a central driver of the research endeavour. It is not merely entrepreneurial intentions in abstracts but devising reasonable interventions to lead teachers, students, and policymakers in creating a more robust entrepreneurial environment in higher education.

4.2.4 Rationale for Pragmatic Research Philosophy

It is not merely a methodological preference to employ pragmatism in this study; it is the general approach to solving problems, understanding context, and guiding effects in research. In establishing the study on pragmatism, the study embraces a flexible and resilient stance that harmonizes with the dynamism and the intensity of entrepreneurial intentions (EI) among university students in Ethiopia.

Pragmatism in the very nature of the term is about practical usability over theoretical necessity. What this means is that the research not only seeks to produce new scholarly knowledge, but to contribute to the illumination of practice, policy, and intervention in the world. Within the background of an Ethiopian setting of elevated youth unemployment levels, economic structural issues, and growing emphasis on entrepreneurship education, such concentration ensures that the conclusions of the research study will be of direct practical benefit to educators, learners, institutions, and policymakers.

The ontological pragmatism assumptions recognize reality to be not monolithic or fixed but plural, dynamic, and contextually constructed. Entrepreneurial intentions are neither fixed nor determined by linear models or attributes; they are shaped by individual backgrounds, socio-economic situations, learning experiences, and cultural settings of students. The pluralistic approach allows research to observe how different

students perceive, experience, and respond to entrepreneurial stimuli and offers a more inclusive and richer conceptualization of EI.

The epistemological implications of pragmatism vindicate the use of mixed methods in a way that the research takes advantage of the same paradigms of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Triangulating interview and survey responses, the research is able to note statistical trends and experienced realities. This approach facilitates more stringent and credible analysis through guaranteeing its observations to be embedded deeply and extended widely. Through this, the study meets what Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) refer to as the defining characteristic of mixed methods research: "to provide a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone."

Axiologically, pragmatism welcomes and can coexist with the presence of values in the research process. The value stance of the researcher in relation to resistance to social inequalities—specifically the need to nurture entrepreneurship spirit as a solution to unemployment among the youth—becomes the centrepiece of informing the research design, choice of variables, and interpretation of findings. Value-laden, this not only renders the study a good methodology, but also socially and ethically correct.

The practical significance of engaging pragmatism is manifold:

- **Relevance:** The outcomes of the research are those that can be applied directly in entrepreneurship education courses, help services, and interventions at the university level.
- **Inclusivity:** Capturing multiple realities makes the research encompass diverse backgrounds, requirements, and perceptions of AAU students.
- **Credibility:** The balance between quantitative exactness and qualitative depth enhances the validity and reliability of the product (Azzopardi & Nash (2014).
- **Utility:** The results are written in a manner that facilitates pragmatic remedies that can guide the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems in universities.

- **Responsiveness:** The adaptive philosophical school enables the research to be responsive in real-time to understanding in context and emergent findings.

Moreover, the context-specific location of the research setting, Addis Ababa University, in the broader Ethiopian socio-economic sphere makes pragmatism especially relevant. Neither a hard positivist nor an exclusively interpretivist strategy would serve the richness and frequently opposing dynamics of entrepreneurship in this regard. A hard positivist strategy can overlook significant cultural, emotional, or institutional factors, while an exclusively interpretivist strategy can be unable to generalize results beyond the target . Pragmatism, in contrast, permits research to balance context sensitivity against generalizability an asset of great worth in striving to generate theoretical and policy utility outputs.

Additionally, this pragmatic paradigm adoption renders this research both intellectual and pragmatic application. It acknowledges that entrepreneurship is more than economic theory or individual determination, but a practice founded on the social and informed by education, identity, opportunity, and systems support. To this end, this research bridges disciplines, contributing not merely to the extant academic literature on entrepreneurial intentions, but also to ongoing attempts at responsive, inclusive, and effective entrepreneurship education in Ethiopia.

Moreover, by situating the research in pragmatist philosophy, the research is best positioned to study the dynamic and situation-contingent nature of entrepreneurial intention among Addis Ababa University students. The pluralist ontology is able to account for multiple realities; the transactional epistemology can facilitate methodological pluralism; and the value-laden axiology can maintain the research socially embedded and goal-oriented.

Besides, such a philosophical foundation enables the study to go beyond theoretical abstraction and provide pragmatic, evidence-based recommendations for developing entrepreneurial attitude and reducing Ethiopian youth unemployment. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) and rightly so argue, the pragmatic paradigm functions best when "both the process and the outcome of the research are oriented toward change and improvement."

Accordingly, this section has established pragmatism as the philosophical foundation of the research and quoted how it addresses the broad, multilayered richness of entrepreneurial intentionality in Ethiopia. With the incorporation of ontological pluralism, epistemological flexibility, and axiological position-sensitive values, the pragmatic paradigm allows the research to be methodologically coherent and socially efficacious. Mixed methods use recounts pragmatic imperatives to "do what works" and makes integration of different points of view, empirical reality, and situated knowledge feasible and therefore render findings not only academically sound but also usable by education and entrepreneurial development actors.

The following section outlines the research design in which methodologies, sampling, data collection, and analysis methods are structured to achieve the study objective.

4.3 Research Design: A Sequential Exploratory Design

In order to adequately capture the varied influences that drive university students' entrepreneurial intentions (EI) such as entrepreneurship education (EE), entrepreneurial role models (ERMs), entrepreneurial passion (EP), and socioeconomic determinants, this study takes on a Sequential Exploratory Mixed-Methods Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Why this research design ? I employed a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, as it is the most appropriate to establish the impact of entrepreneurship education on EI, a phenomenon I believed could not be articulated in numbers and words. Therefore, the sequential exploratory design is not a preference issue but is necessary in this case, for many reasons including :

- It provided a methodological framework which is Context-Sensitive: It preferred to understand the proximate Ethiopian setting first and it built a quantitative instrument on a strong qualitative foundation which enhance its validity.
- It allowed the research to merely observe the statistical correlations but to understand and interpret the findings in the participants' language (complementary advantage).
- It is consistent to research philosophy undertaken (pragmatism) and thus It combines exploratory depth with statistical justifications
- It offers useful insights into entrepreneurial development

It is because of this study that design has been chosen in an effort to fulfil the aim and objectives of the research. The design has two interconnected phases (see Fig 4.1): first qualitative investigation to ascertain contextually located findings, and secondly quantitative phase to test and generalize findings on a larger population as set forth below.

The University Ethics Review Board granted complete ethical clearance for the study on April 29, 2023 (Reference ID: ER41721472). Following permission, the researcher

conducted in-person data collection from December 12, 2023, to March 30, 2024. A qualitative inquiry was conducted first, and then a quantitative validation phase was conducted as part of a two-phase study technique. Below is a thorough explanation of each stage.

4.3.1 Phase 1: Qualitative Exploration

The first research phase employs semi-structured in-depth interviews of 10 AAU students to examine their experience, motivation, and entrepreneurship perception. The qualitative phase addresses how students see the EE value, manage entrepreneurial risk, verbalize enthusiasm, and respond to socioeconomic environments.

It is the most critical step in uncovering culture-sensitive issues, i.e., business failure perceptions, family expectations, and access to networks of support for entrepreneurs most likely to be lost with traditional measures (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study employs this qualitative inquiry first because very little is known about the phenomenon for developing countries and it establishes research problems or agenda based on the participants' voice. Findings made at this stage actually inform the design of Phase 2 survey instrument to be conceptually clear, culturally sensitive, and contextually relevant as elaborated below.

The objective of this phase is to explore in-depth the perceptions, experiences, and contextual factors that shape the entrepreneurial intentions of Ethiopian university students, particularly in relation to their exposure to entrepreneurship education.

4.3.1.1 Population and Sampling

The target population for this phase is undergraduate students who have completed at least one core entrepreneurship course. A **purposive sampling** technique will be used to select information-rich participants. We will seek variation in terms of:

- Field of study (e.g., Business, accounting and management).

- Gender.
- In order to determine the point at which new data no longer produces new theme insights; the data saturation principle was used to guide the sample size for the qualitative phase. At first, it was thought that roughly six to seven in-depth interviews would be adequate. Seven students participated in the data collection process. Three more participants were enlisted after these preliminary interviews were analysed in order to see whether any new patterns emerged. It was concluded that theoretical saturation had been reached as these follow-up interviews produced no new ideas or information. In accordance with accepted qualitative research standards, this procedure verified that a final sample of ten participants was sufficient to fully address the study objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Mason, 2010).

Justification of the Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy was purposive sampling To gain deep, contextual insights into *how* and *why* students perceive Entrepreneurship Education (EE) as influential. We needed information-rich cases from a diverse range of perspectives. I deliberately selected participants from different fields and gender (e.g., Business, accounting and management students) within the university. This ensured I captured a wide spectrum of experiences and did not only hear from the most vocal or naturally entrepreneurial students. The sample size was determined by the principle of **data saturation**, where new interviews ceased to yield new thematic insights.

I completely acknowledge that researcher bias is a significant problem in qualitative research since it is an interpretivist paradigm. To minimize the potential effects of my preconceptions about entrepreneurship on data collection and analysis, several proactive steps were undertaken:

Proactive Reflexivity: Prior to data collection, I maintained a reflexivity journal on which I logged my assumptions and experiences. This provided required self-awareness, where I could deliberately bracket such preconceptions when working with participants.

Structured Data Collection: A semi-structured interview guide was employed. This ensured consistency by way of anchor questions with the freedom to follow emergent participant-driven issues. The application of open-ended, non-leading questions minimized the risk of leading respondents to assumed responses.

Analytical Rigor: During the analysis stage, credibility was maintained through peer debriefing and a procedure of triangulation, where emerging results were compared with other sections of the data.

Transparent Audit Trail: A systematic record of every research decision—from sampling to thematic development—was documented carefully to ensure the process was auditable and transparent.

Finally, while complete neutrality is an ideal, systematic application of reflexivity, a non-leading procedure, and triangulation seriously enhances the validity of the findings, so they strongly reflect student opinion rather than researcher opinion.

4.3.1.2 Qualitative Data Collection

A. Rationale and Purpose of the Qualitative Phase

This qualitative phase of the research is intended to conduct an in-depth investigation into the complex determinants of entrepreneurial intentions of university students in Ethiopia. While the literature, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, identifies main determinants such as formal entrepreneurship education (EE) , entrepreneurial role models (ERMs) , entrepreneurial passion (EP) , and socioeconomic factors (SEF), it also makes it clear that entrepreneurial intention (EI) is not formed in isolation. It is instead a result of a complex interplay of individual, educational, and socio-cultural factors. As Creswell and Poth (2018) point out, qualitative research is also uniquely suited to explore the intricate and context-dependent nature of such human phenomena. This phase is therefore necessary for uncovering how these broad constructs come to find expression and interact in the specific, under researched context of a developing nation.

Its basic purpose is to move beyond the naïve appreciation where entrepreneurship education is viewed as the sole predictor of intention. This study speculates that an integrated view must factor in the union of intrinsic motivators, through passion, and extrinsic ones, through public opinion, presence of role models, and the socioeconomic environment. By engaging with students and lecturers at Addis Ababa University (AAU), this phase seeks to unearth their lived experiences and subjective meanings, thereby illuminating the precise mechanisms through which these multiple factors converge to impact entrepreneurial intentions.

B. Research protocol and Target population

A semi-structured interview protocol was selected as the primary data gathering instrument for this phase. This approach is particularly suitable to exploring the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurship, since it provides to generate themes focusing on flexible enough to explore emergent and context-contingent knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The semi-structured format enables the researcher to explore categorical key themes—such as the impact of education, the influence of role models, the role of passion, and socioeconomic barriers—while enabling respondents to explain their personal experience and attitudes in their own words. Such flexibility is required to accommodate the complex and at times sensitive variables that govern entrepreneurial motivation.

The setting for this phase is Addis Ababa University (AAU). As Ethiopia's first and most prominent institution of higher education, AAU is a pioneer in entrepreneurial education and is often taken as an example by other Ethiopian universities. Examining this setting provides rich, in-depth data of high relevance to the national context of entrepreneurship development.

C. Participant Engagement and Analytical Potential

Data were gathered from two key stakeholder groups: faculty members and students. This two-perspective approach seeks to give a more comprehensive and balanced view of the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the university. It allows the study to explore:

Attitudes of students towards entrepreneurship education efficacy and its impact on their intentions.

Faculty perceptions of pedagogy, institutional support, and perceived student outcomes. Furthermore, by contrasting and comparing student and faculty perceptions, the analysis can identify potential incongruences in understanding, thereby developing a more nuanced, multifaceted appreciation of the educational and contextual factors that either enhance or hinder entrepreneurial intention development. This purposive participant engagement ensures the data obtained is robust and can withstand a rigorous thematic analysis, a topic of discussion on the following section.

4.3.1.3 Thematic Analysis

This study employed thematic analysis in order to examine the intricate factors affecting university students' entrepreneurial intentions (EI). Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019) define thematic analysis as a rigorous but flexible qualitative method of finding, analysing, and reporting on patterns (themes) in data. Its inductive nature makes thematic analysis particularly well-suited to producing rich, textured, and contextually embedded findings from participants' own words.

Thematic analysis was preferred for its power to allow themes to emerge naturally from the data without being constrained by prior categories. This inductive method ensures that the findings stem firmly from the students' actual experience, thereby mirroring the complex and frequently immeasurable issues affecting their entrepreneurial intentions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

One of the merits of thematic analysis is that it is flexible across various research contexts, including educational and cultural research (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Its iterative process, which involves constant repetition in reading the data, allows dynamic emergence refinement of emerging themes (Nowell et al., 2017). This was particularly helpful in unveiling the interrelating functions of entrepreneurship education (EE), role models, passion, and socioeconomic status in building EI within the Ethiopian context.

Moreover, thematic analysis is particularly designed to consider the effects of social, cultural, and economic contexts. This renders it highly appropriate for research in settings like Ethiopia, wherein socioeconomic disparities and cultural beliefs exert significant influences on careers (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The method provides analytical strength and transparency by a systematic process of interpreting data, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the results (Nowell et al., 2017).

Although both thematic analysis and content analysis are established qualitative methods, thematic analysis was deemed more appropriate for this study's aim. Content analysis is somewhat more deductive in approach, coding data to fit pre-established categories, and that can limit the identification of new or emergent

findings (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Krippendorff, 2018). Thematic analysis, given its contextual responsiveness and emergent meaning focus, was more appropriate for the exploratory nature of ascertaining the EI complex drivers. A comparative overview is found in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Thematic Analysis and Content Analysis Comparison

Criteria	**Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012, 2019)**	**Content Analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Krippendorff, 2004, 2018)**
Definition	A flexible, qualitative method for identifying and interpreting patterns within data.	A systematic method for quantifying and categorizing textual data using predefined codes.
Suitability	Ideal for exploring complex, context-sensitive topics like entrepreneurial intentions.	Best for structured analysis of large textual datasets.
Flexibility	Adaptable to diverse contexts and emergent themes.	Relatively rigid due to reliance on predefined categories.
Data-Driven Approach	Inductive coding promotes contextual relevance.	Deductive coding may overlook emerging insights.
Iterative Process	Continuous theme refinement throughout analysis.	Limited opportunity for iteration.
Context Sensitivity	Highly sensitive to social and cultural context.	Less sensitive to contextual variables.
Research Rigor	Offers a transparent, six-phase analytical framework.	Prioritizes reliability but may reduce depth of interpretation.
Application to This Study	Captures the nuanced and culturally specific influences on Ethiopian students' entrepreneurial intentions.	May underrepresent localized and emergent themes.

This comparative analysis reaffirms that thematic analysis offers a more adaptable and holistic methodological approach that is able to gather richness of context within participants' entrepreneurial motivation. This is especially important in the Ethiopian context, where pre-existent, verified coding schemes are limited.

The following analytical process , which are covered in detail in chapter 5 (the qualitative results chapter), will be used to analyse the qualitative data using thematic analysis in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) outline:

4.3.1.4 Analytical Process

The qualitative data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage thematic analysis framework. This method offers a flexible yet systematic approach for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within the data:

- Familiarization with the data
- Generating initial codes
- Searching for themes
- Reviewing themes
- Defining and naming themes
- Producing the final report

Each stage of this analytical process is described in detail below. NVivo software will be used to assist in data management . The emergent themes will directly inform the development of the quantitative survey, potentially leading to the addition of new items or the modification of existing scales to better fit the Ethiopian context. The following section presents the second phase of the study the quantitative validation section.

Data Familiarization

Data analysis started with a careful transcription of rich student interviews, an essential first step that I conducted myself to allow for accuracy and familiarization with the data (Saunders et al., 2019). As an additional aspect, I did careful notes in the course of the interviews to note down significant themes, nuances, and key insights that could potentially inform the research. Those notes proved highly informative in early stages of setting out emergent patterns.

To ensure the full contextual richness of data, interviews conducted in Amharic were translated into English when appropriate. This was as much a strategy to increase accessibility as it was to increase the depth of data. Familiarization was more than transcription—more the intensively immersed reading of participants' narratives to allow me to develop an intimate knowledge of their worldviews.

After transcription, I read each transcript thoroughly, reading them multiple times to comprehend participants' responses fully and pick up on finer points that might be of relevance to the study. These multiple steps reading process was essential to notice themes that might not always be apparent at first glance. Familiarization, as Byrne (2022) emphasizes, through data readings multiple times, is vital to establish key findings related to research questions. Besides, manually transcribing the interviews allowed me to work with the data at a more intense level, facilitating better identification of suitable information.

For example, reading through Participant 4's transcript, an Addis Ababa University (AAU) second-year management student described how her experience with entrepreneurial education (EE) impacted her career and study ambitions:

> *"I am a second-year management student at AAU.". I was initially studying natural sciences but, having been introduced to general courses such as Entrepreneurship Education (EE), I shifted and opted for social sciences to be within the management department. The primary cause that guided me in this direction was the course in entrepreneurship, particularly the idea of being a creator of my own job. I desire to own a business, be part of a team, and provide goods and services to society.*

But she also referred to the limitations of the EE curriculum:

> *[.] but I also see some disadvantages. I mention this because the course is primarily intended for focusing on theory and never incorporates any practical aspects [.]. No opportunity arises to speak with managers in order to understand how they have reached their level or observe how activities are managed and controlled. Even talking with employees could internalize and better realize real situations. Regrettably, all these dimensions are lacking.*

This realization led to a preliminary awareness that there might be a gap between theory learning and practice and observation that was later brought forth as a central theme in the analysis.

Similarly, Participant 1 highlighted inefficiencies in the EE curriculum by emphasizing that the courses were largely theory-based and did not acquaint students with entrepreneurial role models (ERM):

> *"It just focuses on the syllabus, and the modules were introduced to us in a time span, which also limits our perception."*

Participant 5, on the other hand, perceived family and community background as strong predictors of his entrepreneurial aspirations. He described how his cultural background instilled in him an excellent work ethic and business sense:

> *"First of all, I want to say that in our society, particularly in Gurage, there is a tradition of hard work, and most individuals are dedicated to business. For instance, my father was a carpenter and now has shifted to teaching in his area. He used to do numerous jobs in order to feed our family and make our lives better. Similarly, my mother initially studied Argo-economics and has been working at the customs office; at the same time, she has a restaurant in our city."*

This response caused me to question the role of cultural forces, something which I had not initially considered in the research. It also caused me to consider how socioeconomic factors would need to be addressed within the study, something which would subsequently emerge as a central theme within the analysis.

The translation and transcription process, which I managed myself, was not only a technical process but an essential learning experience that allowed me to closely engage with participants' accounts and better comprehend the data. Byrne (2022, p. 1398) describes familiarization as:

> *"A process of reading and re-reading the entire data set in order to become intimately familiar with the data,"*

highlighting its application in extracting information relevant to research inquiries. Byrne (2022) also observes that manual transcription is particularly effective for this function because it forces the researcher to work heavily on the data.

According to this principle, after transcribing the interviews, I went through each of them several times to refine my comprehension and unveil underlying themes that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. Such a recursive process played a crucial role in generating a deeper appreciation of participants' perspectives, which allowed for a sound basis for subsequent analysis.

The second stage of thematic analysis, generation of initial codes, is the topic of the following section. The Braun and Clarke (2006) procedure involves line-by-line transcript analysis, determining main ideas and assigning descriptive labels to them. The process keeps findings data-driven while accommodating both expected and unexpected patterns in entrepreneurial intentions.

Coding and Identification of Initial Themes

Following both the transcription and familiarization phases having been completed, the second analysis phase entailed coding the data in a systematic way. Line-by-line scrutiny of all of the interview transcripts witnessed the most salient portions of text of the interviewees being initially coded to determine key concepts. Utilizing a mixture of both deductive and inductive approaches to coding, the process was intended to yield a sound analysis.

The deductive process was guided by the central research questions of the research, i.e., entrepreneurship training, role models, entrepreneurial enthusiasm and economic and social circumstances. The predetermined codes assisted in constructing a specific framework for data identification against the study objectives. Nonetheless, the process was also guided by an inductive process to allow room for emergence of new and unanticipated themes from the respondents' narratives. This double-pronged approach permitted analysis to remain open and responsive to knowledge outside of the initially set categories.

To further improve the accuracy and efficiency of the coding process, qualitative data analysis computer software (i.e., NVivo) was employed. The software made it easy to ensure organized and systematic handling of interview data to enable pattern identification and thematic connections. Following coding, the information was combined into broad categories which aligned with the wide research themes for the

purpose of more in-depth thematic analysis. Four provisional thematic categories were established from the study research questions as organizing "containers" for associated codes (Table 4.2). The categories gave a systematic framework for establishing overall themes. These were constructed through this ordered process, thus main themes arose, summarizing general findings from responses made by participants as illustrated below.

From the pre-made containers developed in alignment with the research questions, initial codes were systematically generated and are presented in Table 4.2 as first-order concepts. First-order concepts are the most elementary units of meaning directly taken from the qualitative data, describing specific ideas, feelings, or perceptions that participants were conveying.

Following this initial coding, a more interpretive activity was performed to sort and group these codes into more general, higher-level clustering known as second-order themes. This entailed searching for patterns and connections among the first-order concepts in order to determine coherent thematic clusters that capture underlying concepts of relevance to the research purposes.

Within this thematic grouping, utmost care was exercised to refine the themes such that they best captured the data and provided significant insights.

Refining codes and assigned clear descriptive

Refining included returning to the coded data to ensure consistency, folding overlapping themes, and dissociating ideas that were very closely related but distinct. Finally, each theme was assigned a clear descriptive title that captured its essence and relevance to the research questions, thereby enhancing the interpretability and clarity of the analysis.

This recursive process of coding, categorization, refining and naming was critical to transmuting raw qualitative data into a structured and informative thematic framework upon which subsequent analysis and discussion can be founded.

Table 4.2: Generated codes and Themes using Thematic Analysis

	1st order concepts	2nd order Themes
RQ1	**EE impact on EI**	
	Benefit to the community Business Plan development Course content Knowledge acquisitions of entrepreneurship Limited knowledge Skill development Speculating environment Opportunity recognitions Understanding market needs	**Theme 1**: Entrepreneurial Skill Development
	Attitude Change Extra – Curriculum Activities Influence on career choice Motivations Need for practicality	**Theme 2**: Attitude change and motivation
	Absence of Networking Impact on confidence	**Theme 3:** Enhancing Confidence
	Extra - Curriculum Activities Recommended areas of Improvement. Exposure to practical aspects	**Theme 4:** Area required. Interventions
RQ2	**Role Models Influence on EI**	
	Family and friends Influence Impact on carrier influence	**Theme 1:** Influence on Carrer Decisions
	Access to successful entrepreneurs Practical Learning from Successful Entrepreneurs	**Theme 2:** Learning from Entrepreneurs
	Confidence Boost Mentorship Personal Aspiration	**Theme 3:** Confidence Building
RQ3	**Entrepreneurial Passion Influence on EI**	
	Confidence and determination Positive Feeling	**(Theme 1):** Confidence and Positivity
	Desire for Independence Learning from the Course Motivations or Aspiration	**(Theme 2)**: Aspiration and Independence
	Intrinsic Motivation Self-Reflection	**(Theme 3)**: Personal Insight
RQ 4	**Socioeconomic Factors on EI**	
	Economic status of Families Family Occupations	**(Theme 1):** Family Economic Dynamics
	Career Shift Culture Context Risk Perception Socioeconomic Factors and Economic Opportunities Unemployment Rate	**(Theme 2)**: Economic Opportunities and Risks
	Education Level of families Experiential Learning	**(Theme 3)**: Education and Learning Experiences

A detailed discussion of these aspects, aligned with the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1, Section 1.3, will be presented in Chapter 5 the qualitative analysis of the study.

4.3.1.5 Hallmark Qualities of the study

Qualitative research in the study also applied strict care, credibility, and ethical integrity procedures to offer firm and evocative insight into how entrepreneurial education (EE), entrepreneurial role models (ERMs), entrepreneurial passion (EP), and socioeconomic determinants (SEF) impact the entrepreneurial intentions of university students. The qualities are described in detail below.

Transferability

Transferability was realized through design and systematic sampling of participants. A university student representative sample with gender, educational strata, and socio-economic strata mixture was sampled for ease of inclusive range of experience and perspective. For instance, 40% males and 60% females were included in the sample to achieve gender representation in entrepreneurial intention studies. These are in alignment with Saunders et al., (2019) emphasis on diversity for purposes of providing qualitative results generalizability.

Placing the analysis into frameworks well-accepted by theory, i.e., Ajzen's Theory of Planned behaviour (1991), ensured transferability with consistency in comparison to the specified models. This makes it possible to ensure that the research findings are useful for populations other than the immediate sample and to transfer to comparable learning environments. In addition, the implemented implications, e.g., suggestions for implementing entrepreneurship education, signal wider practicability for policy and practice(Brobbey et al., 2023).

Credibility

Credibility was achieved through being diligent in method design and enactment. Data collection relied on in depth interviews, chosen based on their ability to give detailed, rich description by the participants. To adopt such methods agrees with

Patton's (2015) challenge of applying methods which permit depth in qualitative research.

Thematic analysis, in the words of Braun and Clarke (2006), was employed to systematically seek themes and patterns. "Confidence through entrepreneurial passion" and "economic adversity as a motivator" themes emerged naturally, evidencing high congruence between findings and conclusions.

Dependability

Dependability was achieved through systematic and clear research procedures. Research methodology was clearly explained in an effort to offer auditability and research procedure-objective congruence. Transparency is needed to help provide dependability as needed as highlighted by Nowell et al. (2017).

The participants were provided with brief information about the aim and purpose of the study in order to create an open forum for natural discussion. In this way, the participants were free to express themselves. This openness and transparency allowed the creation of genuine and authentic data set from the actual participants' experience.

Validity

Validity of findings was achieved with consistency and method triangulation. Data were collected from diverse sources like interviews and quantitative study sources that provide a clear description of entrepreneurial intention determinants (Denzin, 2009).

Further, ethicality was also a crucial component of this research work, and strict adherence to the university's research ethics guidelines was maintained during all stages of the research.

The following section presents the second phase of the study quantitative exploration phase.

4.3.2 Phase 2: Quantitative Validation

This quantitative phase of the study, which aimed at empirically testing the factors affecting entrepreneurial intentions. It explains how a structured survey was developed from preliminary qualitative results and reports the cluster random sampling technique employed in gathering data from 400 students. The section therefore describes the statistical procedures—i.e., target population, sampling design, data collection, descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression analysis—employed in ascertaining and quantifying notable predictors. Finally, it explains how these results, which are quantitative in nature, are integrated with the previous qualitative findings through methodological triangulation, providing a firm, empirical foundation to the study's conclusions and recommendations.

Phase two allows the research to address questions like:

- Is there a positive correlation between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intentions among university students?
- Does exposure to entrepreneurial role-models strengthen good entrepreneurial intentions among students?
- Is entrepreneurial passion a significant determinant of entrepreneurial intentions in students?
- Do socio-economic determinants (earnings, educational attainment) play significant influence on entrepreneurial intentions?

By statistically verifying the qualitative outcomes, this stage increases internal and external validity of the research and generalizability of the find to student populations (Tashakkori et al., 2021). Further, using the combination of qualitative and quantitative data increase’s reliability, with credibility and richness of final findings (Creswell, 2014). The following section will discuss the qualitative phase of this research.

4.3.2.1 Target Population and Sampling

The target population for the present research was explicitly defined as undergraduate students enrolled in classes at Addis Ababa University (AAU) who had successfully completed AAU's mandatory or core entrepreneurship education course. This specific criterion was utilized in order to ensure that all participants had a first and standard experience of formal entrepreneurial concepts, thereby creating an informed population from which to investigate the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. By focusing on this group, the study was then able to move beyond general attitudes among students and instead examine the effects of formal education and other factors in a framework befitting the context.

A single-stage cluster random sampling technique was applied for an effective and representative data collection process. The sampling frame of the university's 34 units included all its colleges, institutions, faculties, and schools. The units were utilized as naturally existing clusters.

One such cluster, the Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE), was randomly drawn from the larger sampling frame of 34 clusters. This random sampling was undertaken in an effort to minimize selection bias and also to enhance the generalizability of results in the specific context of the selected cluster. The FBE was identified as a highly suitable cluster for close scrutiny because its curriculum and student orientation are closely associated with the study's key constructs of entrepreneurial activity and business development.

Thus, the final sample for this quantitative phase was drawn only from the undergraduate student body in the Faculty of Business and Economics that met the initial criterion of having taken and passed the entrepreneurship course. This strategy presented a realistic but methodologically sound means of entering into a focused participant students while maintaining the probabilistic integrity of the sampling design.

4.3.2.2 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

With respect to the sampling technique, it has been explained in 4.3.1 above, but the sampling strategy utilized is so practical. Since, the sampling technique of this research was designed to balance methodological reliability with pragmatic constraints and maintain ethical requirements of research in check. The selection of cluster sampling was guided by both theoretical and practical challenges encountered during the period of applying research design.

Initially, the research was meant to be handled as stratified random sampling for proportionate representation of student groups. Sadly, due to data privacy issue in the university , a sampling frame of lists of all the students at the university was not available, making stratified sampling impossible. Cluster sampling was therefore employed that was more suitable to the institutional environment without compromising the validity of the research.

In any case, cluster sampling offered three main advantages:

1.Efficiency: It reduced logistical efficiency and cost by using natural sampling units, such as in-place academic departments, within the university.

2.Flexibility: The method adhered to data privacy regulations because it did not require individual student data.

3.Validity: The method ensured representational validity by taking into account disciplinary diversity across the university.

This sampling strategy is consonant with Creswell (2018) who is keen to suggest that cluster sampling is particularly useful in organizational studies where full sampling frames are not available. Random selection of departments with participants drawn from them ensured the study probability of sampling while taking into consideration practical realities. In addition, since entrepreneurship education is provided throughout the university, every cluster had pertinent participants.

The successful application of this sampling plan provided a robust dataset, demonstrating how methodological flexibility can maintain research validity when field realities arise.

The sample size for this study was determined using **Yamane's (1967)** simplified formula for sample size calculation:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the total population size (1813), and e is the margin of error (0.05), the calculated sample size was calculated as

$$n = \frac{1813}{1 + 1813(0.05)^2} \approx 317$$

We computed a required sample size from a standard formula above , however, to account for non-response, 400 questionnaires were distributed among full-time undergraduate students majoring in various academic departments to gain a diverse and cross-sectional sample. The sole inclusion criterion was successful registration for one or more entrepreneurship courses to guarantee all participants had baseline exposure to the core variable EE. Part-time students were excluded because their involvement in university life and career aspirations could be significantly different, which can be a source of bias as mentioned in literature (Mwasalwiba, 2012).

349 questionnaires were returned from the send out and after data cleaning, in which 17 responses were eliminated since there was substantial missing data or incomplete consent forms, a final analysis sample of 332 valid responses was achieved. This yielded a very high effective response rate of 83%, indicating high interest on the part of the target group and a good data collection process.

4.3.2.3 Instrument Development and Design

The quantitative stage of this sequential exploratory research used a structured survey questionnaire as its primary data collection instrument. The tool was constructed using a strict, two-stage methodology. First, an intensive review of existing literature was conducted to look for existing sound, theory-driven scales measuring the basic constructs of Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI). Second, and most crucially, preliminary findings from the Phase 1 qualitative discovery were integrated to contextualize the instrument and record nuances unique to the Ethiopian university context. This integrated process ensured the questionnaire was psychometrically robust and culture informed.

The final instrument employed a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), to measure respondents' attitudes, beliefs, and intentions in a structured manner. Using the standardized scale ensures an easy comparison directly across constructs and to previous studies. The questionnaire consisted of five separate sections, each of which was designed to cover a specific set of variables:

Section A: Socioeconomic and Demographic Factors (SEF): This section gathered baseline data on participants' gender, age, parents' job, and household income. These variables were included to define the sample and to serve as potential control or moderation variables in analysis, considering that background variables would exert considerable influence on entrepreneurial paths.

Section B: Entrepreneurship Education (EE): This section assessed experience in formal and informal entrepreneurial education, e.g., courses, workshops, and extracurricular programs. Moving beyond mere participation, questions were adapted from Martin et al. (2013) to assess the perceived usefulness of this education in the development of specific entrepreneurial skills, e.g., opportunity recognition, risk management, and resource acquisition.

Section C: Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs): Anchored in Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), this section measured the extent and influence of role models. It distinguished between close family networks (e.g., parents, relatives) and more distant exemplars (e.g., successful entrepreneurs in the community or media), using items based on the study of Bosma et al. (2012). This provided a subtlety of understanding of how vicarious learning operates in respondents' social context.

Section D: Entrepreneurial Passion (EP): Determine the affective drivers of entrepreneurship, this section tested the motivational and emotional facets of students' affinity towards entrepreneurship. Drawing on the research of Cardon et al. (2009), items were designed to determine business activity-related intrinsic motivation, enthusiasm, and entrepreneurial identity, situating passion as a critical antecedent to intention. Due to the qualitative phase's identification of the impact of culture on intention, this study has placed a significant emphasis on examining entrepreneurial passion.

Section E: Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI): As the primary dependent variable for the study, this section assessed the likelihood that students would start their own business in the future in accordance with their self-report. The items were directly adopted from the thoroughly validated scales of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), which measured the cognitive precursors to planned behaviour.

4.3.2.4 Pilot Testing and Instrument Refinement

The pilot test process yielded valuable, actionable feedback utilized to refine the end questionnaire instrument. The improvement areas are provided below.

1. Questionnaire Length and Respondent Fatigue

Pilot study results indicated the initial draft of the questionnaire was excessively long and induced respondent fatigue. A number of items were found to be too wordy or convoluted, leading to distraction and possible misinterpretation of the fundamental purpose of the questions. The response effort threatened to contaminate data quality via inattentive or satisficing responses. To address this, a strict item-reduction process was conducted. Duplicate or unnecessary questions were removed, and wording of other items was tightened for brevity. This enhancement was necessary to facilitate participant engagement when answering the survey and data reliability.

2. Visual Layout and Legibility

Pilot participant feedback indicated serious issues with the visual layout of the instrument. The crowded text and inconsistent response scale formatting made the questionnaire difficult to read, and an increased cognitive load was imposed on respondents. To enhance usability, the visual layout was completely revised. Alterations that were made involved expanding white space, using unequivocal section labels, making consistent and visually distinct use of the Likert scales, and choosing a rational, non-cluttered ordering from item to item. All of these alterations were designed to reduce visual overload and make it simpler, more precise to answer.

3. Cultural and Contextual Enrichment

The pilot functioned as an important test of the culturally sensitive character of the globally sourced scales. Even though these scales are psychometrically robust, participant comments indicated that they fell short of encompassing the entire set of

contextual factors pertaining to Ethiopian university students. For instance, social influence, family pressure, and perceived barriers required greater depth to reflect the local socio-cultural environment. As such, the questionnaire was augmented by adding learnings from the first qualitative stage. This involved the introduction of new elements and the reframing of existing ones to better capture elements such as entrepreneurial family history, supportive community structures, and culturally constructed definitions of success and risk.

4. Simplification of Technical Terms

One of the themes running throughout the pilot feedback was the need for more linguistic clarity. Participants emphasized that certain questions contained technical terms or academic jargon which were new or unclear. To ensure ease of comprehension for all questions, wording of the items was carefully examined. Technical vocabulary was replaced with simpler, clearer wording that retained the meaning of the original construct without reducing it to an inaccessibility. This enabled the survey to record the participants' true attitudes and experiences rather than their comprehension of technical terminology.

4.3.2.5 Data collection

Data collection was planned through an iterative process that was informed by theoretical best practice and a pragmatist response to contextual realities. A proposal to have a comprehensive digital survey was put on hold following discussions with key stakeholders at Addis Ababa University, i.e., faculty, program coordinators, and student representatives. These discussions revealed extensive practical constraints, such as untrustworthy internet access, varying levels of digital literacy, and poor potential rates of participation in a faceless online environment. In response to this, the strategy was adjusted to better align with the local environment.

The new strategy utilized a paper questionnaire, distributed via a network of class representatives. This solution effectively integrated the process of data collection into students' regular schedules, thereby minimizing disruption and maximizing accessibility. This transition proved to be highly effective, not only avoiding the

observed technological constraints but also fostering greater trust and engagement through involvement of peer leaders. The active cooperation of faculty, department chairs, and university administration also legitimized the study and helped significantly in accomplishing good student participation. This experience accords with the idea that proactive and timely action on the part of stakeholders is critical in improving the quality and quantity of survey responses (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

Moreover, participation in the study was framed as a higher purpose than collecting data; it was presented as an opportunity for students to join a community of entrepreneurial thinkers and be prompted to think about their own professional aspirations. The survey instrument was designed to be concise and comprehensive and thereby accessible without sacrificing scientific accuracy. Clear articulation of the research's academic and practical importance helped to allay any participant anxieties and promote a sense of common purpose.

In sum, the successful collection of 332 valid responses (Table 4.3) is attributed to a well-thought-out strategy that interwove sharply defined inclusion criteria, contextually informed delivery strategy, pre-emptive stakeholder collaboration, and student-led design. The resulting dataset is robust and solidly lays the foundation for intense statistical analysis into the factors affecting entrepreneurial intentions in the population of university students.

Table 4.3: Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	332	100.0
Excluded[a]	0	0.0
Total	332	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

The reliability of the assessment tool was carefully evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficients for all multi-item scales before to substantive analysis (Cronbach,

1951). A high level of internal consistency was shown by all of the major variables, including Entrepreneurial Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), Socioeconomic Factors (SEF), and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI), as shown in Table 4.4. The composite scale produced a standardized α of 0.737 and a Cronbach's alpha (α) of 0.748, both of which are higher than the generally recognized cutoff of 0.70 (Bernstein, 1994; Taber, 2018). The dependability of the instrument for the ensuing inferential analysis is confirmed by this high psychometric adequacy.

Table 4.4 Reliability Statistics

Measure	Value
Cronbach's Alpha	0.748
Standardized Cronbach's Alpha	0.737
Number of Items	5

4.3.2.6 Quantitative Data Analysis

It is here that quantitative data analysis process is outlined. The data were collected through cross-sectional questionnaire from Addis Ababa University (AAU) students. A cluster random sampling process was used to obtain a representative sample of the student population.

1. Data Screening and Preparation

The data set underwent rigorous screening and cleaning processes to determine quality prior to analysis. The questionnaires were distributed to 400 participants, of whom 349 returned them, providing a good response rate of 87.25%. Applying good practice recommendations in dealing with missing data, listwise deletion was applied in deleting the 17 invalid cases. The final analysis sample that resulted had 332 complete and valid cases, as shown in Table 4.3. This sample is significantly larger than the minimum size required for parametric analysis and provides scope for the application of the Central Limit Theorem, as detailed below.

2. Rationale for Parametric Statistical Procedures

Parametric statistical procedures, such as multiple regression, were applied in the current study to examine variable relationships. Their application is justified by the sufficiently large sample size (n=332) and the Central Limit Theorem (CLT). The CLT states that if the sample size is sufficiently large, then the sample mean distribution would be approximated to a normal distribution even if the population's distribution is not normal (Field, 2018; Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). This principle serves to cushion any problems of possible skewness or kurtosis in the initial data. Parametric methods were selected for their greater statistical power compared to non-parametric techniques, ensuring the utmost potential for identifying significant relationships among constructs under inquiry (Pallant, 2020).

3.Analytical Approach

Analysis was designed to rigorously test the proposed model examining complex relationships between Entrepreneurial Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), Socioeconomic Factors (SEF), and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI). The procedure adhered to quantitative research guidelines in social sciences to ensure statistical validity and dependability (Saunders et al., 2019). With data cleaning complete and the final validated dataset of 332 cases—confirmed to have no missing values for the key predictors—the stage was now set for reliable statistical modelling using SPSS that will be discussed later in chapter 6 the quantitative findings section. In chapter 6, correlation analysis , regression analysis and hypothesis testing (Highlighted in Chapter 2 , in the conceptual framework section used to be discussed to explore and test).

4.3.3 Qualitative and Quantitative Phase Integration

Integration is an integral part of the sequential exploratory design. It will occur at two places:

1. **Between Phases:** Qualitative findings (themes, stories, contextual factors) will be employed to build the quantitative survey. This renders the quantitative tool not only theoretically grounded but also contextually informed.

2. **During Interpretation:** In the final discussion chapter, results of both phases would be collated and interpreted together based on previous research studies in the field. The quantitative results would show what the associations are, and qualitative data would be used to determine why the associations exist, providing a richer and more complete picture.

4.3.4 Ethical Issues

The study will adhere to strict ethical principles:

- **Informed Consent:** Participants will be provided with an information sheet and a consent form before participation.
- **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Data will be handled confidentially. Identifiable data will be removed, and codes will be assigned to participants.
- **Voluntary Participation**: Participants will be informed that their participation is voluntary, and they may withdraw at any time without prior notice .
- **Minimization of Harm:** The research topic is not considered sensitive, although the environment will be kept non-judgmental and respectful.
- **Approval of Ethics :** The study was carried out after the University Ethics Review Board gave its complete ethics approval on April 29, 2023 (Reference ID: ER41721472). And data was collected by the researcher between December 12, 2023, to March 30, 2024.

4.3.5 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has detailed the methodological framework for the study. The adoption of a pragmatist philosophy and a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design was justified by the need to first explore the under-researched Ethiopian context before generalizing the findings. The qualitative phase employed thematic analysis of interviews, while the quantitative phase utilized a survey with statistical analysis. The integration of these two strands is designed to produce robust, valid, and deeply contextualized findings that accurately assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial intentions.

The research was undertaken in two interconnected, discrete stages:

Qualitative Phase: Pilot exploratory phase with semi-structured interviews of 10 purposively sampled students and staff. Data were analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis to probe key themes and contextual nuances that impact entrepreneurial intentions.

Quantitative Phase: Another phase that planned and carried out a structured questionnaire to 332 students belonging to the Faculty of Business and Economics, who had been selected by cluster random sampling. Pilot tests were implemented to finalize the survey instrument, whereas its reliability was calibrated (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.748$). Parametric statistical data analysis methods were employed, which was warranted by the large sample size and Central Limit Theorem.

The chapter laid out the population, sampling methods, data collection processes, and analysis techniques for both phases, emphasizing how qualitative results directly informed construction of the quantitative instrument. Also, the combination of the two datasets was explained as a key strength of the design, allowing findings to be deeply contextual and extremely generalizable.

Finally, the chapter substantiated the strict observance of the study to ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary enrolment, that were granted by the university ethics review board. Overall, this comprehensive and responsive methodology framework makes for an adequate basis for generating

credible, consistent, and impactful findings, which will be unveiled in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Based on the qualitative methodology outlined above, the following chapter (Chapter 5) presents the corresponding analysis and findings.

Chapter 5

Qualitative Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The current qualitative research attempts to examine the influence of Entrepreneurial Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Personality (EP), and Socioeconomic Factors (SEF) on Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI) of university students in Ethiopia. Whereas quantitative data determine statistical correlations, qualitative methods determine underlying drivers, social forces, and contextual barriers driving entrepreneurial aspirations of students.

Since Ethiopia possesses a developing economy and transforming entrepreneurial environment, qualitative results are relevant to the findings on the impact of cultural, structural, and institutional drivers on the students' entrepreneurship attitudes. This chapter discusses evidence from the semi-structured interviews dialogue among AAU faculty of business and economics students', which focuses on such prominent topics as motivation, perceived barriers, institutional support, and social pressure.

This study used a thematic analysis, which establishes iterative trends and individual narratives to gives a dynamic explanation of factors that influence or discourage entrepreneurial intention. Through the integration of lived experiences and situational problems, the technique offers a contextualized and culturally embedded explanation of EI among Ethiopian students.

The following sections give the qualitative findings, presented as per the research objectives (Chapter 1, Section 1.3). All the themes are presented to emphasize how EE, ERMs, EP, and SEF influence EI, for a holistic interpretation of the data and its implication towards entrepreneurship development in Ethiopia.

5.2 (RQ1): Impact of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) on EI

The thematic analysis, as presented in Table 4.2 (see page 101), showed three interrelated themes that are at the centre of findings of the study in relation to EE: learning entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and capacity; the adoption of entrepreneurial attitudes; and intervention points of importance, which include experiential learning, role model engagement, and the provision of a locally suitable curriculum. These themes are elaborately discussed in this section, supported by verbatim participant quotes as well as relevant scholarly literature.

Theme 1: Building entrepreneurial competence

The EE program effectively installs students with fundamental business competencies and builds their capacity to recognize latent opportunities, a key determinant of entrepreneurial actions (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). This aligns with previous research that formal EE programs do greatly augment students' entrepreneurial sensitivity (Frese & Gielnik, 2014, p. 414).

The findings confirm the focal place of structured EE courses in entrepreneurial capability development among tertiary students. The course design was demonstrated to be following international EE standards, particularly the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, 2018), in prioritizing the integration of theory-informed principles and practical applications.

The theoretical and practical excellence of the course was pinpointed by the respondents as Participant 1 (P1) stated:

> *“ We learned to write our first business plan from that course, and it helped us learn some very useful things about entrepreneurship."*

This supports Gibb's (2002) emphasis on experiential learning as an entrepreneurial skills acquisition basis.

Business plan exercises provided students with hands-on experience, which assisted in sharpening their market research, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities. Participant 2 (P2) declared:

> *"We learned to be entrepreneurs and made a business plan. We needed to get our hands dirty and actually make observations to do so."*

This assignment built technical skill (e.g., business planning) and adaptive capability (e.g., creative problem-solving). The experiential nature of the course increased students' confidence and preparedness for real-world entrepreneurship, consistent with best practices in EE that focus on learning-by-doing (Neck & Greene, 2011).

Participant 10 (P10) at the top highlights:

> *"[The course] gave me practical tools to manage different aspects of startup enterprise – from idea generation to marketing and financial planning. Above all, it taught me how to think creatively and identify opportunities where others would see barriers."*

This citation achieves the general competency development facilitated by the course, ranging from creativity, problem-solving, to opportunity recognition as emphasized by (Nabi, Linan, et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2022).

Other than that, participant 5 (P5) recounted learning critical entrepreneurial competencies:

> *"We gained some entrepreneurial abilities such as information-seeking, communication, etc. It would be a huge benefit for other people if they are aware of an entrepreneurship course."*

These comments reinforce Gibb's (2002) argument that EE is more than technical competence and offers a holistic set of entrepreneurial skills.

Participant 6 (P6) also demonstrated EE's potential to generate innovation:

> *"I think learning knowledge, skills, and methodology in the entrepreneurship education course can help build new products and services and enhance current processes better that adds value."*

This is in accordance with Lackéus' (2015) conclusion that action-oriented EE facilitates innovation and value creation.

Participant 8 (P8) referred to the impact of the course on learning risk:

> *"[…] EE is doing a great deal. If we study entrepreneurship, we see how important it is to risk. Entrepreneurship in and of itself is either earning profits or incurring losses."*

Her statement is in accordance with Sarasvathy's (2001) effectuation theory, which is concerned with dealing with uncertainty and making do with what you have.

Participant 9 (P9) explained the broader impact of the course:

> *"When we signed up for the EE course, it was truly a wonderful experience. The course was all about how to convert problems into opportunities and opens up the door to the reward for business ideas."*

This reflects Neck and Greene's (2011) model, which fostered thinking for opportunities through experiential methods.

In conclusion, the EE program was able to create a coalesced portfolio of competencies among students. In addition to technical skills, it encouraged entrepreneurial qualities like resilience, risk handling, and creativity. Such results support the incorporation of reflective practice and interaction with the outside world as determinants in EE, finally building an entrepreneurial human capital.

Second most important theme of discussion addresses the second most important theme uncovered through analysis demonstrating how EE affect entrepreneurial attitude & personal intentions among students.

Theme 2: Attitudinal Change Via Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship Education (EE) steps forward here as a change agent in students' career identity and aspirations. This thematic analysis reports the double-edged potential of EE to nurture entrepreneurial thinking and thus alter career paths. The evidence describes three interrelated but discrete dimensions of such transformation: reframing problems cognitively, adjusting career pathways, and elevating necessity entrepreneurship.

Research reports profound shifts in attitude among the participants, consistent with Sarasvathy's (2001) effectuation principles. While students had previously seen challenges as obstacles, EE training fostered a mindset of opportunity. As Participant 9 described:

> *"The course taught me to look at things differently - I now look at challenges as opportunities, which has been improved my behaviour for the better and really boosted my confidence."*

This change is similar to Krueger and Brazeal's (1994) entrepreneurial potential model, in which higher self-efficacy will cause intentionality. How fascinating that these cognitive changes had extended beyond theoretical knowledge to become actual behavioural changes, confirming EE's role in the development of what Neck and Greene (2011) term "entrepreneurial practice."

The analysis also showed interesting examples of intellectual diversion caused by EE exposure. The following example from Participant 4 is an illustration:

> *"After having completed EE, I changed from natural sciences to social sciences together with 38 classmates - we believed that the learning of management would lead to careers as entrepreneurs."*

This shared intellectual momentum demonstrates EE's role within Nabi et al.'s (2017) "career orientation" framework, where the school experiences the ability to re-structure human capital investment decision-making. Dropping mainstream STEM studies for entrepreneur courses by volunteers is a good example of re-framing human capital development hurdles by Ethiopian students.

Where there is narrowed employment prospect, EE has an important practical function. Participant 6's testimony demonstrates such a reality:

> *"With fewer chances for jobs, entrepreneurship has become not just an option, but a necessity - my family situation and means make it the only feasible option."*

This is consistent with Block et al.'s (2015) necessity entrepreneurship theory but taken from theory to life by describing the ways in which form EE can intentionally empower involuntary entrepreneurs. Indicators point to EE as both psychological buffer and utilitarian toolkit against economic insecurity.

Together, these findings validate Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned behaviour for the EE context, showing how:

- Attitude changes (risk acceptance increases)
- Peer influence, social pressure (subjective norms)
- Perceived control over one's behaviour (strengthened self-efficacy)

The transformational potential of EE then operates at a range of levels - cognitive, behavioural, and socio-economic - setting students not just to start businesses, but to survive and thrive in complex career systems. This places EE not as a value-added curriculum product, but rather a foundational human capital development platform for emerging markets.

Having established EE's attitude influences, we move on to explore areas where intervention is needed emerged as the third dominant theme in entrepreneurial intention formation below.

Theme 3: Areas for Intervention : Bridging Theory and Practice

While the entrepreneurship education (EE) programme at the theoretical and conceptual level was dense and rich, one of the most compelling arguments put forward by participants was the lack of opportunities for experiential learning. This result aligns with contemporary criticisms of entrepreneurship education in the classroom (Neck & Greene, 2011). Participants emphasized a desire for more practical exercises and suggested that dominant pedagogical practices are not sufficiently equipping them with applied skills for real-world entrepreneurial pursuits.

Thematic analysis revealed a resounding request for more practice-based curriculum. Participants demand the utilization of experiential tools such as business simulations, startup incubators, and venture operation programs—tools that proved useful in other contexts (Rideout & Gray, 2013). The results give clear instruction to curriculum designers: though the present EE course succeeds in teaching entrepreneurial knowledge and stimulate positive attitudes, the incorporation of practical learning modules can bridge the intention-action gap (Nabi et al., 2017).

Several students mentioned a lack of institutional support for extracurricular activities that could otherwise be vital channels for experiential learning. As an example, Participant 9 is recorded to have stated that

> *"there aren't any extracurricular activities at the university."*

With the same issue being mentioned by Participant 10, who stated:

> *"……..Oh, extracurricular activities? I haven't seen any. The course is purely based on the teaching curriculum.".*

These observations are a reference to an over-emphasis on formal classroom learning at the expense of informal, experiential learning. This is also a concern of Pittaway and Cope (2007), who argue that extracurricular activities—entrepreneurship clubs, networking events, workshops, and competitions—are at the canter of skill development, confidence-building, and peer learning. Deprived of these opportunities, students have few means of translating classroom knowledge to

practice, building entrepreneurial networks, and gaining the confidence to engage with real business contexts.

Gibb (2002) is on the same page with this criticism, arguing that successful entrepreneurship education has to go beyond the standard classroom approach. His argument is for experiential and immersive learning environments in which students learn by doing and navigating uncertainty and opportunity. The addition of extracurricular elements would thus offer a more integrated EE experience—one that would merge theory and practice and better position students for the complexities of entrepreneurial existence.

Another essential discovery was initiated by Participant 3, who proposed that entrepreneurial education be initiated at the earlier stages of the learning process.

> *"Yes, EE can help, but if we introduce this at the lower grades, like in high school, it will allow students to cultivate a creative mind in the direction of entrepreneurship."*

This perception is corroborated by Jones and Iredale (2010), who argue that entrepreneurship exposure at an early level inculcates innovative thinking in addition to problem-solving skill from an early age. In the same line of thought, the European Commission (2013) suggests introducing entrepreneurship education at every level of education—primary, secondary, and tertiary—to inculcate innovation and economic stamina from the grassroots. Extension of the EE base to the sub-university level may thus create a stronger platform for entrepreneurial development and national economic growth.

Together with the need for early and experiential learning, the second overall problem presented was the rigidity of the current curriculum structure. We were shown that the entrepreneurship curriculum was centrally planned with little room for tutors to include new activities or adapt content to meet local needs (see Annex 3). The student respondents pointed out that this one-size-fits-all policy fails to consider the specific economic, cultural, and social contexts of each university. The curriculum then continues to be disconnected from the real problems and opportunities that students face in their immediate environments.

Gibb (2002) again offers pointed insights in this respect, in arguing for context-sensitive entrepreneurship education. He demands curricula that are flexible and consider local entrepreneurial milieux and socio-economic circumstances. A rigid one-size-fits-all strategy can deliver consistency at the cost of minimizing impact by failing to engage students in a way that taps into their own experience. A more adaptive and responsive curriculum, on the other hand, might increase the impact of EE exponentially by making sure that students gain relevant skills and knowledge that they may apply to their own entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In summary, the commentaries of the participants indicate several areas where interventions are needed to expand the role of entrepreneurship education. These include the integration of experiential learning activities, providing extracurricular activities, introducing EE at the introductory level in school curricula, and having greater leeway in course design to enable local contextualization. Comprehensive addressing of these gaps will not only raise students' entrepreneurial intentions but also equip them with the necessary practical skills, mentality, and confidence to operate in dynamic and uncertain business environments. The following section elaborates on the functions of Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs) in students' entrepreneurial intentions, addressing the second key objective of this study.

5.3 (RQ2) Entrepreneurial Role Model (ERMs) Impact on EI

The second research question investigates the impact of entrepreneurial role models (ERMs) on students' entrepreneurial intentions. From thematic analysis Table 4.2 (see page 101), three major themes were identified :

- **Theme 1: Career Choice Impact** – ERMs had an impact on students' entrepreneurial intentions as a possible career choice.
- **Theme 2: Entrepreneurship Lessons Learned** – Students learned through actual experience by reviewing the plans and challenges encountered by successful ERs.
- **Theme 3: Improved Self-Confidence** – Self-belief and self-confidence of being able to be an entrepreneur were increased through learning from ERMs.

Together, these issues emphasize that entrepreneurial role models—family members, peers, and public figures alike—appear to play a significant role in the way students create intentions. By providing tangible proof of success and satisfaction, role models not only inspire students but also present entrepreneurship as an option for a more viable and satisfying career.

The interview results are an indication of the profound strength of role models. Successful entrepreneurs were the primary sources of inspiration of four out of the ten student participants (P1, P4, P5, and P7). Their experiences point to the actual strength of immediate exposure; through direct participation in activities like field trips and community service, these students not only got inspired, but they also received concrete, functional blueprints to success.

For instance, Participant 1 (P1) finds inspiration from successful entrepreneurs in her community who are only involved in entrepreneurial activities with good outcomes for the community. She stressed her observation:

> *"I am preparing myself by learning from other people's experiences who have successfully ventured into entrepreneurial activities for the good of our community. Their experiences are my motivator and compass as I prepare myself for a similar endeavour."*

Similarly, Participant 4's role model had been from a trip to see local entrepreneurial businesses in order to witness, where they had been able to offer volunteer assistance. According to her,

> *"The role model for me is the project known as Nu Cheka Enwuka. This firm began with low-level projects and have developed to a multi-million-dollar firm. The entrepreneur, who was a housewife by profession, came up with the brilliant idea of making children entertained by using mud.". It is a simple but effective concept because most city kids don't get to play with mud or clay, which is what most country kids would do. Parents want to introduce their kids to the culture of where they're from, and this company does so for a premium and brings kids happiness by giving them something new and exciting.*

Similarly, participant 7 shares the same experience with this project because she had made it so. Further, participant 4 identified the advantages of learning through seeing successful entrepreneurs, particularly those whose projects are culturally centred. She explained as follows:

> *"I was fortunate to interview an entrepreneur who is very passionate about preserving Ethiopian culture. They teach the young ones the entire process of preparing injera, from grinding teff to the final product, and urge them to prepare injera independently. Practical learning not only enables the students to understand the intricate process of preparing the Ethiopian traditional meal but also its challenges. I believe experiences like this have played a very big role in shaping my business and business strategy."*

Some of the interviewees such as P2, P4, P5, and P10 have said that their entrepreneurial role models are, derived within their kin, friends, and social network. These interviewees view entrepreneurship as something passed on through close relationships and know-how of individuals who they know and admire. For them, seeing their business-running family members or friends venture into entrepreneurial activities is a huge learning platform and an inspiration to tread the same line. Role models are not only sources of guidance and advice but also symbols of perseverance, creativity, and business success. Their tight-knit nature of their support

groups has been important in defining their own business culture and entrepreneurial vision.

Participant 4 (P4), for instance, detailed that:

> *“my parents are the ones whom they look up to and have left a profound impact on my entrepreneurial intentions ”. Their education, while not directly related to current operations of their business, they were successful on the entrepreneurial field".*

This was in line with demonstrating the idea that success in business is not so much the result of formal education or higher academic degrees but experiential learning, hard work, and adaptability in being able to cope, like her parents had demonstrated in taking up business ventures. Their case was a strong model for P4 in achieving her own business dreams in spite of the conventional study path.

Moreover, Participant 5 (P5) added that he gets his role models from both his community culture and his family. As he continued to emphasize, he had grown up in a working-oriented community. He had to tell us:

> *"The Gurage community is very famous by its working mindset where everyone is concentrating on or engaged in business. In addition, my business-focused parents are my role models."*

Similarly, participants 2 and 10 described how their entrepreneurial desires were highly influenced by their parents and families, who had a firm hold in influencing their ambition and attitude. For Participant 10, his father was the greatest inspiration, whom he believes is a great role model. As he described:

> *"My father is the biggest influence in becoming an entrepreneur."*

This is an impressive example of the impact of a role model parental figure who not only teaches entrepreneurial spirit but so by example by their own success and personal behaviour. Participant 2 (P2) also felt the impact extend beyond immediate family members to entrepreneurs who were close friends and cousins. She said:

"My family, who are all entrepreneurs, push me to also become an entrepreneur. Apart from my family, I also have some business-owning friends, and their achievements encourage me as well."

This indicates that P2's entrepreneurial intentions are fostered by a wider social network, where both relatives and friends who are entrepreneurs are sources of learning and inspiration. Positive social relationships within her network, especially those who have successfully ventured into business, have shaped her to think entrepreneurship is a good and rewarding option. These complex influences demonstrate how family and neighbourhood networks can Mold one to choose entrepreneurship.

Similarly, Participant 3 explained why he was an entrepreneur due to the success of a friend who had started a school in the neighbourhood. He said that :

"Yes, I have a friend who opened a private school, and that has been a major source of motivation for me."

Participant 8's experience with the Nu Chika Enwuka Project gives evidence of this impact. She reported that being in the business and participating in its operations more or less altered her perspective on entrepreneurship. Witnessing the entrepreneur beginning from a tiny business to a multimillion-dollar business provided her with tangible evidence that entrepreneurs can succeed. This first-hand experience provided valuable information on actual business, reaffirming her entrepreneurial temperament and establishing its possibility.

These examples confirm the overall reasoning that role models encourage and offer learning-by-doing exposure. Their own success makes students more accustomed to the reality of entrepreneurship being a worthwhile and successful career. Family members and friends, established entrepreneurs, all contribute to encouraging entrepreneurial intentions for students by bridging the gap between aspiration and action.

In summary, the above thoughts show that entrepreneurial role models play a wide-ranging impact on the entrepreneurial intentions of university students, specifically on their proximate social circle, including friends, relatives, and local businesspeople.

Observing the success of close friends or proximate acquaintances in business boosts the students' confidence and belief that they can be businesspeople.

The next section will discuss the impact entrepreneurial passion plays on students' decision-making and career.

5.4 (RQ3): Entrepreneurial Passion effect on students' EI

The findings are sure that entrepreneurial passion is a driving factor of entrepreneurial intention among university students much beyond interest. It is defined as a "strong, internal drive" that provides the thrust to do something and persist even in the face of challenges (Cardon et al., 2009).

The research observed three broad themes (table 4.2) from student interviews that capture how passion affects entrepreneurial orientation:

1. Confidence and positivity : Passion tends to enhance self-confidence and optimism.

2. Ambition and Autonomy: It gives rise to the need for independence and great achievement.

3. Personal Insights: Passion leads to a clearer sense of purpose and direction.

The central outcome is that passion has an empowering impact: students who are more passionate show greater commitment and a higher capacity to translate ideas into actual ventures. This supports passion as a foundation for building resilience and goal-oriented behaviour in future entrepreneurs. The facts are provided as follows.

Theme 1. Confidence and Positivity: Passion as a Source of Self-Belief

Self-confidence is a critical component of entrepreneurial spirit, which helps students deal with uncertainty and react to circumstances in a positive way. Such a feeling is captured in Participant 1's statement:

> *"I believe in myself. Even though, as a student, I don't really have much to do now, I am committed. I feel strongly that I will accomplish things which I set out to do in the future because I have aspirations that drive me."*

This citation determines passion's connection with entrepreneurial self-efficacy, corroborative evidence by Cardon et al. (2009), who consider passion a predictor of persistence and overcoming adversity. The intuition of the respondent about her long-term success despite the fact that she has no present entrepreneurial activity

resonates with Thierry's (2011) study that presents passion as a predictor of entrepreneurship intentions' continuity and motivating students to move forward in stepwise stages towards business establishment. Aside from that, Shapero and Sokol (1982) also speculate that belief in one's entrepreneurial capability is a dramatic determinant of the inclination to have an entrepreneurial career, where passion plays an important role as a factor in driving such plans.

Theme 2. Personal Insights: Passion Defining Entrepreneurial Identity

For some students, passion naturally forms part of their identity, extending beyond motivation. As Participant 2 expounded:

> *"EE certainly did have an impact on me quite a lot, if I am honest. I believe that I was predestined to do this (be entrepreneurial)."*

This definition emphasizes the role of passion for entrepreneurship and self-concept, in support of Cardon et al. (2009), who argue that passion increases one's investment in entrepreneurship as a career. The notion of being "born for entrepreneurship" reflects an inner sense of purpose, an inner strong drive that is at the foundation of entrepreneurial intention formation.

Second, this statement defines the function of entrepreneurship education (EE) in passion development. The respondent is aware of the manner in which his/her entrepreneurial learning has legitimized his/her entrepreneurial passion, proof that supports previous studies that have proven that education can ignite entrepreneurial passion by providing information, skills, and inspiration (Cardon et al., 2017). The relationship between passion and learning is that it is properly structured learning experiences which will intensify entrepreneurial passion and motivate students to take an active role in business creation.

Theme 3. Ambitions and Autonomy: Passion as an Inducer of Commitment

Entrepreneurial spirit is also heavily associated with aspirations of independence and self-governance. Several of the students had a strong desire to start up their own businesses rather than pursue traditional career paths. Participant 10 is possibly the most representative example of such an independent spirit, recounting:

"I feel that I am capable and actually interested in being an entrepreneur. If an opportunity arose, I would seize it with my heart and try my best."

This response aligns with the concept of personal insight, where the student-entrepreneur type will be more likely to survive challenges and pursue opportunities. Shane (2012) states that passion can be a key entrepreneurial motivator, where passion engages people to pursue opportunities with passion and determination. The willingness of Participant 10 to take advantage of opportunities is proof of the entrepreneurial passion's ability to stimulate active involvement, in favour of the argument that passion is a long-lasting motivational force and not an ephemeral interest.

In short, while knowledge, skills, and environmental opportunity are important, passion is the key driver that sustains commitment, inspires resilience, and energizes motivation to act. Furthermore, entrepreneurial passion is not an outcome; it is a strategic asset that inspires persistence, opportunity discovery, and business-creation commitment in the long run. The results of the study show the identification that passion entrepreneurial students tend to embrace entrepreneurship, withstand adversity, and pursue chances to materialize their ideas. Passion closes the distance between knowledge and action, and it is a critical determinant of the entrepreneurial fate of students. The next section presents the critical influencing factor for EI , the socioeconomic determinants.

5.5 (RQ 4): Socioeconomic Determinants on EI

The final theme highlights the critical role of socioeconomic factors—namely economic status, resource availability, and risk perception—in determining the entrepreneurial intention among students. As indicated in Table 4.2, a student's economic status, resource availability, and risk perception play a crucial role in informing entrepreneurial decision-making. The interviews revealed that the majority of students belong to families undertaking subsistence farming, replicating the wider economic challenges and increased unemployment levels in the country.

This setting adds to the sense of risk about entrepreneurship. As Participant 2 (P2) explained:

> *"The level of unemployment makes me even more to think of taking on an entrepreneurial role as an active solution."*

The other significant socioeconomic determinant of entrepreneurial intention is culture. Cultural norms and the mindset of society determine what entrepreneurship is and how it should be done, hence deterring or motivating entrepreneurial activities. Culture also serves the purpose of shedding light on the entrepreneurial role model, such that one will be inspired by entrepreneurs if society promotes entrepreneurship and compensates them for their endeavours.

The difference is seen in the lives of the study subjects. One of the subjects spoke about the entrepreneurial culture among the "Gurage people," where an entrepreneurial attitude is deeply embedded within the people's culture and strongly fostered. On the other hand, there are some locations, such as the capital city of Ethiopia, where there is no faith in entrepreneurship, finding it risky or uncommon. Thus, entrepreneurs in the area like to hide their entrepreneurial activities from public criticism.

Participant 5 provided a good illustration of how the origin of culture is implicated in entrepreneurial aspiration by saying:

> *"The Gurage community is known for its strong work ethic, with everyone dedicated to or involved in business."*

This proves the influence of cultural factors over other socioeconomic determinants on the entrepreneurial intentions among university students. This is also supported by research that indicates that entrepreneurial mindset can be shaped by cultural values and thus become an inspiration and model for meaning entrepreneurship achievement (Zhang et al., 2022).

The shared desire to work and start a business within the community offers a context through which entrepreneurial aspirations are developed and solidified, illustrating the way in which socioeconomic factors like culture intersect with individualistic aspirations.

From participant (P2) observation *"The high level of unemployment makes it more important to consider taking up an entrepreneurial role as an active option"* is a causal link between economic risk and entrepreneurial motivation. Individuals can be "pushed" into entrepreneurship by adverse economic circumstances, e.g., joblessness or economic deficit, and "pulled" by the prospect of independence and autonomy .

All these assumptions are in the context of socioeconomic determinants, where funds and material assistance is given priority in motivating students to pursue business activities.

Synthesis of Qualitative Findings and Link to Hypotheses

One of the main questions this analysis now attempts to answer is: what is the significant contribution of these findings? The qualitative findings create the groundwork for later quantitative validation by offering a comprehensive, contextualized understanding of the study's goals. Table 5.1 below provides specifics on how well these qualitative insights match the initial hypothesis of the investigation.

Hypothesis Statement	Result	Decision
H1:(EE → EI): Entrepreneurship education has a positive impact on entrepreneurial intention	The study supports the idea that entrepreneurial education (EE) and entrepreneurial intention (EI) are related because EE helps students to enhance their entrepreneurial skill, knowledge and capacity as well as to change their mindset from one of job-seeking to one of job-creation. But the results also point to a crucial area for intervention: hands-on experience must be added to theoretical learning.	**Supported**
H2:(ERMs → EI): Entrepreneurial role models have an impact on entrepreneurial intention.	According to the investigation, Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) is positively and directly impacted by Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs). The results of the study show that students' EI is greatly influenced by their family, friends, and culture—all important sources of ERMs.	**Supported**
H_3 (EP → EI): Entrepreneurial passion has an impact on entrepreneurial intention.	According to the participant data, the individuals consider themselves entrepreneurs, a mindset that was shaped by their community, friends, or family. A strong sense of confidence and a distinct entrepreneurial identity have been nurtured by this foundation.	**Supported**
H_4 (SEF → EI): Socioeconomic factors have an impact on entrepreneurial intention.	The qualitative data suggests that the socioeconomic level of parents influences students' entrepreneurial ambitions (EI) in both positive and negative ways. The results show a direct correlation with EI in spite of this dual role.	**Supported**

As can be seen from the above table , the qualitative study offers deep, contextual understanding of the factors that influence entrepreneurial intention (EI). It demonstrates how a mindset fostered within a person's community, friends, and family may lead to entrepreneurial passion (EP), which in turn fosters a self-assured entrepreneurial identity. Additionally, students' aspirations are directly influenced by

these social circles, which serve as important sources of entrepreneurial role models (ERMs). Additionally, the research reveals that socioeconomic factors (SEF) are complex and dual in nature, having the ability to both support and impede entrepreneurial desire.

Despite the fact that these thematic findings are solid within the qualitative data, they point to a crucial need for more study. Validating these linkages through a subsequent quantitative method is crucial to generalizing these discoveries and establishing their statistical occurrence and strength. The overall results will be strengthened by this mixed-methods approach, which will provide quantifiable, broadly applicable data to support in-depth comprehension.

The following section critically examines the limitations associated with the chosen qualitative methodology and details the measures adopted to enhance the study's rigor and validity.

5.6 Qualitative Methodology Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

While the qualitative component of this study produced rich context-rich data on entrepreneurial intention determinants, several methodological limitations were inherent in this methodology. All such limitations had been thoroughly deliberated upon, and certain mitigation strategies were employed to enhance the rigor, credibility, and value of findings in the sequential exploratory design.

Firstly, limited generalizability was a well-known limitation. The study used a small purposive sample and prevents statistical generalizability to the broader population of Ethiopian university students. To address this, detailed descriptions of the participants' characteristics, the university setting, courses, and cultural environment were provided so that readers may make judgment concerning the applicability of the results to comparable settings. In addition, the study firmly placed the qualitative phase as a means of developing rich contextual insight and hypotheses to inform the subsequent quantitative phase rather than seeking broad generalizability.

Second, researcher bias and subjectivity were potential challenges, since the researcher's perspectives could influence data gathering, analysis, and interpretation. This was mitigated by reflexivity, as the researcher maintained a thorough record of assumptions, biases, and responses during the study. An audit trail was kept of every analytical decision, demonstrating the logic and rigor of thematic development.

Third, contextual specificity and uncertainty of "influence" limited the research to not quantify relations or ascertain causality. This was done through triangulating data from a variety of participants, e.g., high and low entrepreneurial intention students , so that there could be consistency in the emerging themes. Member checking was also conducted with a subset of participants to validate that the interpretations were congruent with their experience. Furthermore, qualitative results were positively correlated with subsequent quantitative phase, whereby discovered patterns could be tested and quantified.

Fourth, social desirability and recall bias were difficult to counteract as participants might overstate positive experience with entrepreneurship education or misremember their intention formation. To prevent this, questions were asked in a neutral and open-

ended manner so that participants were requested to give concrete examples rather than abstract generalizations. Anonymity was emphasized to ensure truthfulness, and probing questions to elicit rich descriptions of real experience.

Finally, logistical and cultural constraints, such as access, language translation, and power dynamics, were dealt with through deliberate rapport building at the start of interviews. This was achieved through explaining the scholarly purpose of the research, demonstrating genuine concern in hearing the participants' opinions, and employing participatory translation strategies in order to accurately translate back responses from Amharic to English.

Through the application of these mitigation strategies, the research ensured that the qualitative phase generated robust, valid, and context-appropriate conclusions that formed a reliable foundation for the following quantitative validation phase.

5.7 Chapter 5: Qualitative Analysis Summary

This chapter describes findings from the qualitative phase of this mixed-methods research, whose purpose was to build a rich, grounded understanding of the influences on Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) in university students in Ethiopia. Through thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with Addis Ababa University students, this chapter details the underlying findings that inform the subsequent quantitative phase. The analysis was structured around the four central constructs of the study framework: Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and Socioeconomic Factors (SEF).

The chapter started by explaining the strengths of qualitative research in uncovering the silent drivers, social determinants, and contextual barriers that statistical indicators cannot but fail to reveal. This is particularly crucial in an unprecedented context like Ethiopia's growing economy and transforming entrepreneurial setting. The thematic analysis approach was deemed to be the optimal practice for identifying recurring trends and vibrant individual narratives, hence giving a dynamic and culture-immersed account of EI.

5.8.1 EE's Impact on EI

Through the research, EE's multidimensional impact was revealed and distilled into three interdependent themes:

Entrepreneurial Competence Development: Students consistently declared that the EE course was instrumental in equipping them with fundamental business capabilities, especially through experiential learning like business plan writing. This cultivated crucial skills of opportunity identification, market research, and innovative problem-solving, well-suited to bolster their entrepreneurial self-efficacy and human capital.

Attitudinal Change and Career Realignment: Along with skill acquisition, EE triggered profound attitudinal and cognitive change. Students indicated an attitudinal shift in which they began to view challenges as opportunity rather than threat. In certain influential cases, this led to radical career realignment, e.g., students

switching from natural sciences to business-focused fields, thereby highlighting EE's capacity to redirect human capital investment decisions.

Closing the Theory-Practice Gap: One of the important learnings was a gap, which was identified between knowledge retained at the theoretical level and implementation in actual practice. Although the course was theory-oriented, students preferred greater experiential learning mechanisms—such as simulations, incubators, and venture-development programs to a very large extent. They also identified poor extracurricular supply (e.g., competitions, clubs) and centrally decreed, rigid curriculum as key constraints, and argued that a more context-sensitive, practice-oriented, and flexible approach is needed to close the intention-action gap.

5.8.2 Entrepreneurial Role Model Impact on EI

The findings highlighted the influential role of ERMs, whose influence was greatest when models were close and concrete. Three overriding themes emerged:

Inspiration and Legitimization of Career: Having successful entrepreneurs, most particularly through field trips and community projects, provided tangible evidence of concept. It rendered entrepreneurship as an accessible, believable, and desirable career option, de-mystifying it from an abstract idea to a real one.

Practical Learning and Blueprinting: Practical, useful lessons were imparted by ERMs, which were inspiring. Observing the models' experiences, strategies, and setbacks, students gained unofficial "how-to" learning as well as their official education.

The Primacy of Proximal Models: The most commonly cited and influential role models were not distant overseas icons but those in the closest social environment to the students—parents, kin, friends, and local entrepreneurial businesspeople. This highlights the core importance of intimate social networks in the development of entrepreneurial aspiration in the Ethiopian context, providing a trust platform, level of similarity, and face-to-face sponsoring.

5.8.3 The Effect of Entrepreneurial Passion (EP) on EI

Entrepreneurial Passion was the key internal motivator of EI, independent of and complementary to extrinsic factors. Its manifestation was framed through three themes:

Confidence and Positivity: Passion was accompanied by a natural sense of self-efficacy and confidence. This entrepreneurial confidence gave students the strength to greet uncertainty with resilience and to maintain a positive vision for their future ventures.

Ambition and Autonomy: A strong need for autonomy and self-expression was a clear sign of passion. Those who were passionate had a clear preference for being their own bosses in a business, rather than taking a traditional job, driven by a need for autonomy.

Personal Insight and Identity: For some, passion was not an emotion but a fundamental part of their identity. Expressions like being "born for this" indicated a sense of purpose and direction born within them, which served as a powerful and enduring motivator that keeps people committed in the long run.

5.8.4 The Role of Socioeconomic Factors (SEF) on EI

The research corroborated that entrepreneurial intentions are not built in a vacuum but are strongly grounded in a socio-economic context. Two broad sub-themes were identified:

Economic Necessity and Resource Constraints: The universal economic reality of unemployment and restricted family resources was a double-sworded phenomenon. For many, it was a "push" factor, thrusting them into entrepreneurship as a necessity-driven proactive response to economic insecurity and not an outright opportunity-driven choice.

Cultural Norms and Social Legitimacy: Cultural context was highly influential. Students in entrepreneurial-oriented ethnic groups (e.g., the Gurage) indicated a facilitating environment that legitimized and encouraged business ownership. Others,

conversely, intimated social environments in which entrepreneurship was not valued, indicating how cultural norms can legitimize or deter entrepreneurial endeavour.

Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

The chapter concluded with honest recognition of the qualitative methodology's built-in limitations, including low generalizability, potential researcher bias, and the inability to establish causality. Importantly, each limitation was accompanied by a rigorous mitigation strategy—e.g., researcher reflexivity, peer debriefing, member checking, and the explicit use of these findings to form hypotheses for the quantitative phase—thereby ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis and laying the groundwork for the next stage of the research.

Finally, the findings in relation to the study's ultimate objectives are summarized in Table 5.1. This table presents the results of the analysis and lays the foundation for validating these findings through the quantitative approach that will be presented in the next chapter (Chapter 6).

Chapter 6

Quantitative Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter marks the beginning of the quantitative phase of the research, aimed at identifying the main factors influencing university students' Entrepreneurial Intention (EI). It centres on four key variables: Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and Socioeconomic factors (SEF). The analysis carefully explores how each factor, both independently and in combination, impacts students' entrepreneurial aspirations.

The investigation is divided into two sections. The first section presents descriptive statistics, offering an initial summary of the dataset through means and frequencies to situate the data within the study’s theoretical context. This foundational overview paves the way for the more detailed inferential analysis that follows.

The second section utilizes advanced statistical methods—including correlation, regression analysis and hypothesis testing—to rigorously examine the relationships between the independent variables (EE, ERMs, EP, SEF) and entrepreneurial intention (the dependent variable). This part evaluates both the significance and predictive strength of each determinant.

By combining descriptive and inferential approaches, this chapter delivers a thorough and nuanced understanding of the factors driving entrepreneurial intention. The results are essential, serving as the groundwork for the subsequent discussion on theoretical contributions, practical implications, and future research avenues.

6.2 Descriptive Statistics

To locate our quantitative research within context, we started with descriptive statistics—the cartograph charting the landscape of unanalysed data. This analysis was two-valued in terms of significance: it allowed us to view what constituted our participant sample and offered a foundation for recording patterns that would inform subsequent inferential analyses. By using measures of central tendency and frequency distributions, we worked with demographic variables (age, sex, educational level) and principal entrepreneurial indicators (prior training, role model exposure, and business experience) in a systematic manner.

The resulting profile yielded both expected and unexpected information about our sample of potential student entrepreneurs. Like gaps in entrepreneurship preparation and demographic clusters to explain findings.

6.2.1 Participant Demographics: A Profile of Potential

We discovered three defining characteristics of the study population that are especially striking: Gender imbalance, entrepreneurship preparation gaps, and windows of opportunity for the distribution of age.

1. Gender Imbalance

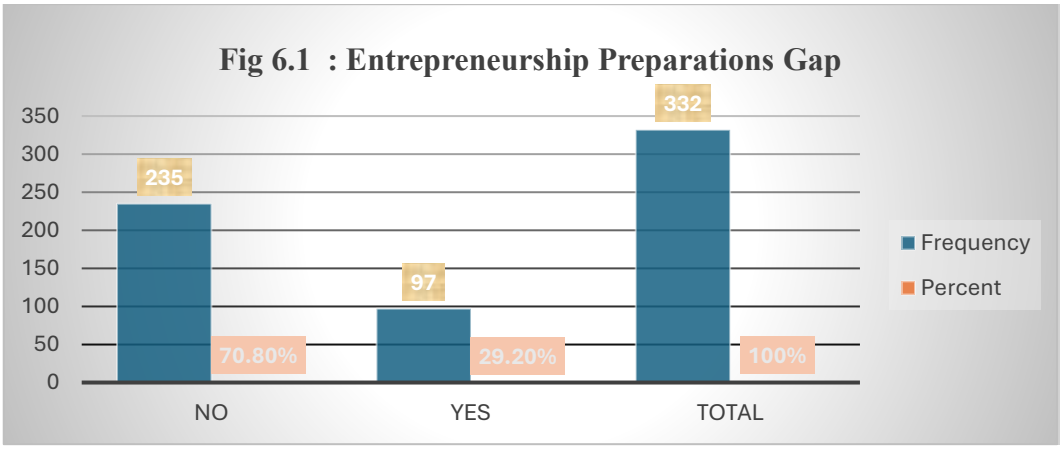
The sampling frame was predominantly male (62.7%) to female (37.3%), a skew mirrored in the graphical Table 6.1. The skew has important methodological consequences; though an accurate representation of true enrolment patterns for much business education, it calls for caution in making gender wide generalizations. The prevalence of male perspectives will itself have a specific influence on entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention findings, domains where gender divides are common in the literature.

Table 6.1: Participant Demographics: Age and Gender

Age Group	*Gender*			*Age Percentage (%)*
	Male	**Female**	**Total**	
<20 years	45	51	96	**28.9%**
21–30 years	163	73	236	**71.1%**
Total	208	124	332	**100.0%**
Gender %	**62.7%**	**37.3%**	**100.0%**	

2. The Preparation Gap

Figure 6.1 produced a dramatic deficiency in early entrepreneurial education: 70.8% of respondents came to university without formal training in entrepreneurship. This preparation gap indicates a large number of students meet entrepreneurial ideas for the first time in higher education and may already be at a developmental disadvantage relative to peers who have had exposure. The discovery highlights what we could refer to as the "catch-up challenge" as "the requirement for university programs to develop foundational knowledge at the same time as they develop advanced skills.



3. The Age Of Opportunity

The majority of these (71.10%) were in the 21-30 age group—the very period when professional aspirations crystallize and risk tolerance is highest (refer to Table 6.1 above). This sweet spot in age offers the universities a critical window of opportunity, considering that such students in their life stage are more sensitive to entrepreneurial training and mentoring.

These population features do more than provide a description of our sample—they place significant boundary conditions on the interpretation of subsequent findings concerning education effects. Prevalence of young male students with little prior training establishes a specific setting for valuing the impacts of entrepreneurship education on intention formation.

As we move from describing who our participants are to how they react to entrepreneurship education, these demographic indicators will come into play to explain differences in program effectiveness. The next section investigates this core relationship, exploring how the design of the curriculum, instructional pedagogy, and extra-curricular programming all influence the entrepreneurial aspirations of this unique student population.

The following section discusses responses of 332 university students in a survey to gauge the impact of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) courses on entrepreneurial intention, focusing on strengths, weaknesses, and curriculum results based on existing literature.

6.3 Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on EI

6.3.1 Reliability Analysis

Quantitative analysis begins with a reliability test of the data through Cronbach's alpha coefficient. From Table 6.2 (Case Processing Summary), data involved include responses of 332 participants. Cronbach's alpha coefficients obtained (0.708) fall within the cut-off required and therefore confirm the internal reliability of scale items. The data are thus deemed to be reliable for further statistical analysis.

Table 6.2 Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	332	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	332	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 6.3 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.708	5

With data reliability established, the research then proceeds to analyse the impact of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) programs on entrepreneurial intentions among university students based on survey data from 332 participants. The results classify both the merits and weaknesses of existing EE programs, while Table 6.4 summarizes constructive recommendations for curriculum design.

TABLE 6.4: Impact of EE on university Students EI

	Descriptions	SD (%)	D(%)	N(%)	A(%)	SA(%)	MEAN	S. D
EE1	EE equips students with knowledge, skill and competencies necessary to identify & pursue entrepreneurial opportunity	30 (9 %)	66 (19.9%)	130 (39.2%)	78 (23.5 %)	28 (8.4%)	3.02	1.066
EE2	The curriculum is designed to increase students' motivation and confidence to start their venture	33 (9.9%)	56 (16.9 %)	116 (34.9%)	76 (22.9 %)	51 (15.4%)	3.17	1.177
EE3	Throughout the class, I received frequent feedback on my thoughts and contributions to the discussion.	33 (9.9%)	72 (21.7 %)	109 (32.8%)	79 (23.8%)	39 (11.7%)	3.06	1.150
EE4	EE provides students with a solid foundation in an area such as business planning, marketing, finance, and innovation.	37 (11.1 %)	64 (19.3%)	118 (35.5%)	64 (19.3 %)	49 (14.8 %)	3.07	1.192
EE5	Knowledge gained from EE can enhance students' confidence in starting and managing their venture	26 (7.8%)	73 (22%)	146 (44 %)	51 (15.4%)	36 (10.8%)	2.99	1.060
EE6	Extra curriculum activities are in place to enhance the entrepreneurship intentions of students.	28 (8.4 %)	70 (21.1 %)	118 (35.5 %)	75 (22.6%)	41 (12.3%)	3.09	1.124
EE7	The EE course helps to develop company concepts and prepare a business plan.	37 (11.1%)	65 (19.6%)	122 (36.7%)	67 (20.2%)	41 (12.3%)	3.03	1.158
EE8	EE fosters networking among students, which can lead to valuable connections, partnerships, and access to resources in the future	43 (13%)	62 (18.7%)	118 (35.5%)	70 (21.1 %)	39 (11.7 %)	3.00	1.179
EE9	EE often provides opportunities for students to interact with successful entrepreneurs, industry experts, and mentors.	33 (9.9%)	65 (19.6%)	131 (39.5 %)	67 (20.2 %)	36 (10.8%)	3.02	1.110
EE10	EE encourages the development of an entrepreneurial mindset characterized by traits such as creativity, risk-taking, resilience, and opportunity recognition.	33 (10.5 %)	67 (20.2 %)	117 (35.2%)	71 (21.4 %)	42 (12.7 %)	3.05	1.160

Note:

- The analysis, based on a 5-point Likert scale (SA to SD) and a sample size of 332
- The grand mean ($\bar{x}$) was calculated as 3.05 (30.50/10), establishing the benchmark for influence. Based on this threshold:
- **Variables with a weak influence** on entrepreneurial intention (scores below 3.05) are: EE1, EE5, EE7, EE8, and EE9.
- **Variables with a positive influence** on entrepreneurial intention (scores above 3.05) are: EE2, EE3, EE4, EE6, and EE10.

Analysis of EE Program Strengths in Developing an Entrepreneurial Mindset

The overall weighted average score of 3.05 is acceptable for the overall outcome of the EE program. The strengths higher than the benchmark score are as follows:

- EE2: Developing entrepreneurial motivation and confidence (3.17).
- EE4: Providing fundaments of business knowledge (3.07).
- EE3: Discussion/feedback on program delivery (3.06).
- EE10: Developing entrepreneurial qualities such as creativity and resilience (3.05).

The most important question in this case is that what do the figures indicate for the study? The Interpretation of results are discussed in below.

- Motivation and Confidence (EE2: 3.17): The most highly rated area of the program indicates the quality of the program in developing students' self-efficacy, which is one of the greatest predictors of entrepreneurial intention (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015).
- Business Knowledge (EE4: 3.07): Theoretical robustness prepares students to deal with entrepreneurial issues.
- Opportunity recognition & Traits Development (EE10: 3.05): Creativity and opportunity recognition development, alongside resilience, aligns with research emphasizing these as key to venture success (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015).
- Delivery Feedback (EE3: 3.06): Implies student satisfaction with the way things are taught, supporting program applicability.

The findings reveals that the university's entrepreneurship educational program excels at building psychological and cognitive foundations essential for entrepreneurial activity. Enhancing students' motivation and self-efficacy (EE2), a central driver of intention, is the major strength of the program. This is well aided by building practical business expertise (EE4) and forging essential entrepreneurial traits such as creativity, opportunity identification, and resilience (EE10). Also, positive feedback regarding program delivery (EE3) confirms that pedagogies are successfully translating theory into practice-oriented learning. Together, these findings confirm that the program is well-structured to facilitate students not just in

developing grounding knowledge, but also in developing the necessary confidence and flexibility of mind for entrepreneurial activity.

Although the program excels in most areas, the analysis also uncovers areas that need improvement, reflected in ratings lower than the weighted average ($\bar{x}$ = 3.05):

- EE5: Confidence in venture-creation (2.99): Students still lack confidence to start ventures.
- EE8: Opportunities for networking (3.00): Extremely minimal encounters with peers and practitioners.
- EE9: Industry interaction (3.02): Lower interaction with practitioners.

These findings align with bigger criticisms of entrepreneurial education. While EE courses prove very effective at providing theoretical knowledge, the majority struggle to approach applied entrepreneurship (Dyer et al., 2009). The low opportunity recognition and venture creation scores—entrepreneurial competencies reiterate a disconnect between training in schools and real-world know-how.

Moreover, the lack of aggressive networking and industry exposure makes the program ineffective in real-life business contexts. As Rasmussen and Sørheim (2006) point out, "entrepreneurship is learned through practice, not just theory." The inclusion of mentorship programs, live case studies with indigenous entrepreneurs, and structured networking activities can bridge this gap and transform passive learners into active venture entrepreneurs.

Basing on the noted gaps in venture confidence, opportunity recognition, and industry engagement, three strategic interventions are poised to be instrumental in enabling the EE program's impact:

- Experiential learning modules should be the first to attempt bridging the theory-practice gap. Students can build muscle memory with experiences that are crafted using exercises such as simulations, lean startup challenges, or real-world opportunity scouting projects. This will address low confidence scores-2.99-directly and places Dyer et al.'s (2009) "practice-based entrepreneurship education" emphasis into action.

- Second, the program requires structured networking scaffolds—not just ad-hoc gatherings. An entrepreneur-in-residence program would provide long-term mentorship, and curated peer groups (assembled by industry interests) would mimic the social interactions of real entrepreneurial ecosystems. Such interventions would move the existing networking score (3.03) by causing relevant, curriculum-integrated connections.
- Robust industry partnerships can offer more than tokened guest lectures. Synergistic partnerships with local incubators, weekly "entrepreneur shadowing" days, and judged pitch events with real investors would bridge the gap of exposure to industry (3.05). As presented by Rasmussen and Sørheim (2006), immersion enables the transition from "student" to "founder" mindsets.

Together, these proposals make up a pedagogical shift from information transfer to capability building—where every program element explicitly builds entrepreneurial capacity, networks. The below-weighted-average gaps become attainable objectives when expressed as precise developmental outcomes rather than imprecise weaknesses. This shifting would locate the program not just as a curriculum, but as a starting point for entrepreneurial action. The following section investigates the influence of entrepreneurial role models on EI.

6.4 Influence of Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs) on EI

A huge 68.4% of the university students in this research reported having parental entrepreneurial role models whom they actively admire, a finding that speaks to entrenched social roots of entrepreneurial intention. As Table 6.5 shows, entrepreneurial influences permeate the student's life from different sources: from parents (68.4% have at least one self-employed parent) to extended networks (87% have entrepreneur relatives/friends) and personal contacts (74.4% know entrepreneurs outside their immediate network).

Table 6.5: Student Responses on Role Models

No	Descriptions	No (%)	Yes (%)	Total (%)
1	**Parental Entrepreneurship:** Are either your parents self-employed or business owners?	105 (31.6%)	227 (68.4%)	332 (100%)
2	**Entrepreneurial Social Network:** Do you have any relatives or close friends who are self-employed or run their own businesses?	43 (13.0%)	289 (87%)	325 (100%)
3	**Direct Exposure to Entrepreneurs:** Do you personally know any entrepreneurs (outside of family and close friends)?	85 (25.6%)	247 (74.4%)	332 (100%)
4	**Role Model Influence:** Is there a specific entrepreneur or business role model you look up to and aspire to follow?	105 (31.6%)	227 (68.4%)	332 (100%)

Such role models are living case studies that render entrepreneurial intangibles concrete. Parent entrepreneurs, for instance, inadvertently lecture their children on risk management and opportunity recognition through dinner conversations and family time—what scholars have termed "family entrepreneurial socialization"

(Abbasianchavari & Moritz, 2021). The data confirms such a transmission mechanism, with students from entrepreneurial families demonstrating greater self-efficacy in venture creation settings.

Along with connection ties, students' overall social networks serve as informal incubators. The 87% with entrepreneur friends or relatives are subject to what Bosma et al. (2012) call "entrepreneurial peer effects"—examples of problem-solving in the moment and success stories that normalize business ownership as a career option (Bosma et al., 2012). Interestingly, the 17% difference between students with entrepreneur acquaintances and those with deliberate role models (68%) suggests room for structured mentorship programs to convert passive identification into active emulation.

The pedagogical implications are clear. While traditional entrepreneurship education tends to focus on business models and plans, these findings highlighted the need in curriculum design—placing a priority on direct exposure to founders through:

- Family business expos that leverage parental entrepreneurs already available.
- Entrepreneur-in-residence programs to expose students to local founders.
- Alumni founder case studies with familiar career trajectories.

These sorts of initiatives might transform the 68% who desire role models into the 87% who, in turn, become role models themselves, in an apparently self-reinforcing cycle of entrepreneurial motivation.

In conclusion, entrepreneurial role models, whether close family, extended social networks or admired individuals, play an important role in shaping university students' entrepreneurial intentions. Their mentorship, inspiring the upcoming generation, and experiential knowledge are the basis for the development of SEF and EP that impacts the development of EI. The identification and operationalization of ERMs' position in education and policy levers would enhance entrepreneurial outcomes and build prospective entrepreneurs (Abbasianchavari & Moritz, 2020; Nabi et al., 2022). By providing settings where exposure to entrepreneurial role models is likely, policymakers and universities can play a leading role in shaping students' entrepreneurial intentions and provoking economic development via innovation and

new business creation. Entrepreneurial passion that affects entrepreneurial intention is explained in the following section.

6.5 The Influence of Entrepreneurial Passion (EP) on EI

This section explains how Entrepreneurial Passion (EP) influences university students' Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI) by analysing six key dimensions in Table 6.6. The information was collected through a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA), providing a greater insight into the students' perception of various entrepreneurial attributes when considering creativity, opportunity perception, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial self-concept.

Table 6.6 : Students' Responses of Entrepreneurial Passion on EI

	Descriptions	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	MEAN	S.D
EP1	Searching for new ideas for products/services to offer is enjoyable to me	10 (3.0%)	19 (5.7%)	50 (15.1%)	164 (49.4%)	89 (26.8%)	3.91	0.956
EP2	I am motivated to figure out how to make existing products/services better	10 (3.0%)	22 (6.6%)	72 (21.7%)	152 (45.8%)	76 (22.9%)	3.79	0.911
EP3	Scanning the environment for new opportunities really excites me.	5 (1.5%)	17 (5.1 %)	61 (18.4%)	148 (44.6%)	101 (30.4%)	3.97	0.911
EP4	Inventing new solutions to problems is an important part of who I am	8 (2.4%)	23 (6.9%)	69 (20.8%)	130 (39.2%)	102 (30.7 %)	3.89	1.000
EP5	I have engaged in entrepreneurial activity before	52 (15.7%)	69 (20.8%)	89 (26.8%)	71 (21.4%)	51 (15.4%)	3.00	1.291
EP6	Are you considering yourself as an entrepreneur?	23 (6.9 %)	47 (14.2%)	104 (31.3%)	80 (24.1%)	78 (23.5%)	3.43	1.191

Note : N =332 , SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree N= Undecided ; D = Disagree ; SD = Strongly Disagree. Decisions – weighted average (Grand Mean) = 21.99/6 = **3.665**

As table 6.6 above revealed , most of the participants possess strong passion in innovation (EP2), opportunity recognition (EP3), and problem-solving (EP4) —core entrepreneurial intent drivers. However, the outcomes also reflect weaker participation in hands-on entrepreneurial practices (EP5) and relatively weak self-definition as entrepreneurs (EP6), revealing a passion-practice mismatch as detailed in below.

Innovation and Idea Generation (EP1): A majority of students (76.2%) stated that they enjoy coming up with innovative product or service ideas, scoring an average of 3.91. This reinforces opportunity-driven entrepreneurship, where ideation creates passion due to the desire to innovatively disrupt existing markets (Schumpeter, 1942).

Opportunity Recognition (EP3): The highest rated item (mean = 3.97) shows enthusiasm in opportunity searching for business. With a near 75% agreement, students show a strong proactive orientation—a key dimension in forming entrepreneurial intentions.

Problem-Solving Identity (EP4): Nearly 70% of the students see problem-solving as something they are (mean = 3.89), showing a strong solution-finding orientation. This trait is crucial in coping with the uncertainties and complexities of entrepreneurship.

These findings indicate that the students are highly attracted to the discovery and imaginative stages of entrepreneurship. However, the analysis also came with some limitations as disclosed by the following findings.

Limited Entrepreneurial Experience (EP5): Less than half, that is, 36.8% of the students, hadn't engaged themselves with entrepreneurial experiences in the past, and at an average rating of 3.00, it was the lowest for the six items. This suggests that while the level of interest was high, there isn't actual experience.

Weak Entrepreneurial Self-Concept (EP6): Less than half (47.6%) describe themselves as entrepreneurs, and 31.3% remain unsure. The mean score of 3.43 is

reflective of the fact that the majority of students are at the initial entrepreneurial identity stages, possibly due to a lack of experience, guidance, or external feedback.

Interpretation and Implications

A grand mean of 3.665 suggests a moderate-to-high entrepreneurial passion in students. The highest passion is in areas related to creativity, innovation, and ideation—which augurs well for entrepreneurial development.

However, the difference between passion and actual hands-on experience indicates necessary areas of intervention. Without any practical opportunities to apply their passion, students will be struggling to translate intention into action.

6.6 Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) Findings

The study of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) among university students reveals a generally positive disposition towards relevant entrepreneurial skills. Students confirmed confidence in key areas such as opportunity recognition, risk-taking, and planning for business. Results also highlight critical deficits in experiential learning, sociocultural encouragement, and corporate entrepreneurship awareness, which suggest deficits to be completed up to empowering future entrepreneurs to their maximum capacity. Table 6.7 summarizes students' answers in nine dimensions of ESE.

Table 6.7 : Students' Responses on Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) and EI)

	Descriptions	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	MEAN	S.D
ESE1	I have learned about opportunity recognitions	16 (4.8 %)	39 (11.7%)	75 (22.6 %)	156 (47.%)	46 (13.9%)	3.53	1.026
ESE2	I know how to evaluate opportunities	9 (2.7 %)	42 (12.7 %)	95 (28.6 %)	135 (40.7%)	51 (15.4%)	3.53	.987
ESE3	I have gained basic knowledge to establish my own firm	17 (5.1%)	48 (14.5%)	102 (30.7 %)	115 (34.6%)	50 (15.1%)	3.40	1.068
ESE4	I am aware of corporate entrepreneurship	13 (3.9%)	59 (17.8 %)	97 (29.2 %)	114 (34.3 %)	49 (14.8%)	3.38	1.061
ESE5	I have gained much experience from successful entrepreneurs	32 (9.6%)	73 (22 %)	95 (28.6 %)	85 (25.6 %)	47 (14.2%)	3.13	1.190
ESE6	I am confident that to take calculative risks to start a business	17 (5.1%)	37 (11.1%)	91 (27.4%)	116 (34.9%)	71 (21.4%)	3.56	1.099
ESE7	Sociocultural aspect of my community supports entrepreneurship	24 (7.2%)	57 (17.2%)	92 (27.7%)	102 (30.7%)	57 (17.2%)	3.33	1.161
ESE8	My previous entrepreneurship experience helps me to start a business	43 (13.0%)	72 (21.7%)	95 (28.6%)	76 (22.9%)	46 (13.9%)	3.03	1.234
ESE9	I am aware of the importance of business planning activities, feedback mechanisms and networking for entrepreneurship success .	17 (5.1%)	30 (9 %)	74 (22.3%)	125 (37.7%)	86 (25.9%)	3.70	1.104

Note : N =332 , SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree N= Undecided ; D = Disagree ; SD = Strongly Disagree. Decisions – weighted average (Grand Mean) = 30.59 /9= 3.399

As may be seen below, the data demonstrates some favourable results that highlight important characteristics.

6.6.1 Key Strengths in Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy

Students showed strong conviction in their ability for the identification and assessment of entrepreneurial opportunities. Both ESE1 and ESE2 had a mean of 3.53, where the proportion of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed was over 60%. The disagreement was extremely low, and therefore fundamental opportunity-related abilities are firmly established among students. These findings support existing literature that delineates recognition of opportunities as a critical antecedent of entrepreneurial intention (Krueger & Carsrud, 1993).

Risk-taking: ESE6: has a high mean rating of 3.56 and 56.3% of students who feel comfortable taking calculated risks—the entrepreneurial behaviour trait that is crucial (Zhao et al., 2005).

The highest scale was ESE9, concerning business planning, feedback mechanisms, and networking, with a mean of 3.70. This indicates students are conscious and value formal procedures for entrepreneurial success.

Yet, the analysis also reveals some weak spots, such as Experience and Contextual Support deficits.

Corporate Entrepreneurship Awareness (ESE4 : Mean = 3.38) : Around 21.7% of the students disagreed with the statement, indicating unfamiliarity with how entrepreneurship is relevant in mature organizations. This indicates a possible curriculum deficit that can be addressed through special modules on intrapreneurship and innovation management.

ESE5 Exposure to Entrepreneurial Role Models (ESE5 : Mean = 3.13) : Over 31% of students indicated weak exposure to learning from successful entrepreneurs. This lacuna emphasizes the need for formal mentorship, guest speaker events, and case-based teaching to supplement experiential learning.

Sociocultural Support (ESE7: Mean = 3.33) : Nearly one-fourth (24.4%) of respondents felt their communities do not support entrepreneurship. These perceptions suggest that cultural or social norms may act as barriers for some students, depending on their backgrounds or regions.

Prior Entrepreneurial Experience (ESE8: Mean = 3.03) : This was the least-scored dimension, and 34.7% of the participants indicated that prior experience did not adequately prepare them as entrepreneurs. This confirms earlier findings (Section 6.3), which carry a recurring theme: while students possess core competencies, some do lack entrepreneurial experience through actual practice.

The results reflect a two-way gap: students exhibit sound conceptual knowledge and entrepreneurial thinking, but not enough practical experience and outside assistance. Such a gap is evidence of experiential learning's capacity to foster entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

Universities can fill the gaps through the following:

- Increase Experiential Learning Experience:
- Infuse startup incubators, business simulations, internships, and live case projects into the entrepreneurship curriculum.
- Increase Mentorship and Exposure to Role Models
- Implement mentorship programs and host regular guest speakers or case studies of local entrepreneurs or graduates.
- Create a Supportive Entrepreneurial Environment: Promote community and institution activities that celebrate and cultivate student businesses and promote cultural acceptance of entrepreneurial professions.

These strategies fit with Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which states that self-efficacy is generated by mastery experiences, social models, and environmental factors. In permitting students to have guided practice applying their knowledge and seeing competent models doing the same, schools can substantially increase intention and confidence.

Finally, assessment of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) indicates that students are confident as far as their cognitive and affective entrepreneurial capabilities, particularly opportunity recognition, planning, and risk-taking. Despite this, there are

evident gaps in experiential experience, knowledge on corporate entrepreneurship, and society levels of support. Intervening on these areas with intentional educational design and ecosystem building could strongly boost entrepreneurial intention and prepare students for successful venture creation.

Following section presents the inferential statistical analysis of the study which will help to formulate model and make a hypothesis test highlighted in chapter 1 section 1.3 .

6.7 Inferential Statistics

This study adopts a parametric analysis based by the Central Limit Theorem (Field, 2018), the larger the population, the more the sampling distribution of the mean will approximate to normality despite the original distribution not being normal. This applies particularly in applied research, where sample sizes greater than 30 are generally considered adequate for parametric analysis even with small deviances from normality (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012; Pallant, 2020).

Before statistical analysis, the data set itself had been carefully checked for integrity and completeness. As detailed in Table 6.8, all five main variables (EE), (RM), (EP), (ESE), and (EI)—were all fully filled in, no missing values on any of the 332 cases. The thorough coverage of the data gives yet more robustness to the findings, once again supported by the high internal consistency through Cronbach's alpha coefficients (Table 6.3).

Table 6.8: Summary of Cases Processed

Variable	Valid (N)	Percent	Missing (N)	Percent
EE	332	100.0%	0	0.0%
RM	332	100.0%	0	0.0%
EP	332	100.0%	0	0.0%
ESE	332	100.0%	0	0.0%
EI	332	100.0%	0	0.0%

6.7.1 Fitting the model

Table 6.9, our results, provides some intriguing information on what motivates college students to pursue entrepreneurship. The regression model, which is based on reliable behavioural theories, illustrates how psychological and educational elements interact to foster entrepreneurial ambitions.

Table 6.9 : Model Summary [b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.618[a]	.382	.374	.64215	1.881

a. Predictors: (Constant), ESE, RM, EE, EP

b. Dependent Variable: EI

A significant amount of the variance in entrepreneurial intention can be explained by the model, which has an R^2 of 0.382. or 38.2% of the variance can be explained, which is a noteworthy discovery in the complicated field of human behaviour, where many factors impact decision-making. Future research options are presented by the remaining unexplained variation, which points to the influence of additional relevant elements not included in this study, such as personality traits or familial history. These results thus support the idea that entrepreneurial intention is a complex phenomenon influenced by both internal and external variables.

Furthermore, these results were supported by the model's trouble-free diagnostics (Durbin-Watson = 1.881). We have made every effort to confirm that our statistical assumptions are correct by testing the foundation before constructing a home (Field, 2018). Here, we have only positive patterns to trust, not bothersome autocorrelation. An ANOVA test is used in the next section to assess the estimated model's statistical significance.

6.7.2 ANOVA's Goodness of Fit

To confirm whether the regression model fits observed data, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. As Table 6.9 shows, the results tell us that the model has substantive predictive capabilities for entrepreneurial intention (EI) for university students. The F-statistics are 50.523, and its corresponding p-value is .000, a number well below the standard 0.05 cut-off for determining significance. This strongly indicates that the model is statistically significantly superior to an empty baseline model with no predictors.

Table 6.10: ANOVA Summary

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	83.334	4	20.834	50.523	.000[b]
Residual	134.840	327	0.412		
Total	218.175	331			
Dependent Variable : EI *Predictors : (Constant), ESE,RM,EE, EP*					

The high F-value is a sign that the combined regression model will be able to predict entrepreneurial intention better than if there were no predictors. That is, it is a sign that the group of independent variables, entrepreneurship education (EE), role models (RM), entrepreneurial passion (EP), and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE), taken together, account for a large amount of variance for students' entrepreneurial intentions.

This satisfactory model fit confirms that these predictors are not only statistically significant but also practically significant in their ability to predict entrepreneurial intentions among students. The low residual mean square (0.412) also identifies that predictions by the model are highly close to the observed, and this helps in the overall reliability of the model.

The ANOVA test also lends supporting evidence that the model fits with the data. With a statistically significant F-statistic value of 50.523 and p-value of .000, the group of EE, RM, EP, and ESE is a well-suited base to understand what influences entrepreneurial intentions of students in universities. These results lend supporting evidence for the conclusion that these variables contribute significantly to explaining students' intention to pursue entrepreneurial career streams.

6.7.3 Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis result table 6.11 below, reveals some interesting correlations between the key variables of interest—Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurship-Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE), and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI).

Table 6.11 : Correlation Analysis

		EE	RM	EP	ESE	EI
EE	Pearson Correlation	1	.055	.448**	.334**	.361**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.321	.000	.000	.000
	N	332	332	332	332	332
RM	Pearson Correlation	.055	1	.281**	.253**	.213**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.321		.000	.000	.000
	N	332	332	332	332	332
EP	Pearson Correlation	.448**	.281**	1	.581**	.588**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	332	332	332	332	332
ESE	Pearson Correlation	.334**	.253**	.581**	1	.472**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	332	332	332	332	332
EI	Pearson Correlation	.361**	.213**	.588**	.472**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	332	332	332	332	332
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

The. correlation analysis results, which are presented in Table 6.11 are as follows:

Entrepreneurship Education (EE):

- EE is positively and significantly related to Entrepreneurial Intention at a moderate level ($r = .361$, $p < .01$). This indicates that students who have been educated entrepreneurially are likely to have entrepreneurial intentions.
- EE is also significantly correlated with Entrepreneurial Passion ($r = .448$, $p < .01$) and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy ($r = .334$, $p < .01$), which reflects that exposure to education leads to affective commitment and entrepreneurial self-efficacy.
- But EE is not strongly correlated with Role Models (RM) ($r = .055$, $p > .01$). This may be a sign of theory-practice mismatch for entrepreneurial exposure, as indicated by qualitative results of lack of practice exposure and limited exposure to successful entrepreneurs in the course.

Role Models (RM):

- RM has a weak but significant relationship with Entrepreneurial Intention ($r = .213$, $p < .01$), indicating that role model exposure affects entrepreneurial motivation but not as much as EE or personality.
- RM is also strongly correlated with EP ($r = .281$, $p < .01$) and ESE ($r = .253$, $p < .01$), which shows that perceiving others' success as an entrepreneur is capable of sparking passion and increasing self-confidence.

Entrepreneurial Passion (EP):

- EP is strongly correlated with Entrepreneurial Intention ($r = .588$, $p < .01$), which shows its significant status in inspiring students' entrepreneurial intention.
- Also strongly correlated with ESE ($r = .581$, $p < .01$), as those students who are high on entrepreneurial traits feel more confident and think that they can start and run a business.

Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE):

- ESE has strong positive correlation with Entrepreneurial Intention (r = .472, p < .01). This highlights confidence that one can start his/her own business as a strong motivator in determining whether one would do so as a student.

These findings also support the research theoretical framework through confirmation of entrepreneurial education, role models, personality, and self-efficacy as all positively linked with students' entrepreneurial intentions. Amongst these, entrepreneurial passion (EP) and self-efficacy (ESE) are particularly determined as being excellent predictors, while EE and RM are determined as playing more complementary roles in the development of the respective underlying psychological motivations.

6.7.4 Regression Coefficients – Interpretation of Findings

Regression analysis, as seen from Table 6.12, yields valuable information on how various factors influence university students' entrepreneurial intentions (EI). More particularly, the study was interested in the impact of Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Exposure to Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) on EI.

Table 6.12 : Coefficients [a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.082	.221		4.887	.000		
	EE	.120	.054	.110	2.234	.026	.784	1.275
	ERMs	.105	.113	.043	.931	.352	.900	1.111
	EP	.476	.065	.423	7.340	.000	.569	1.759
	ESE	.179	.054	.179	3.305	.001	.646	1.549

a. Dependent Variable: EI

The EE coefficient was 0.120 and statistically significant at p = .026, and this implies that a one-unit change in EE is linked to an increase of 0.120 units in entrepreneurial intentions. This result supports earlier research that reported the important role of

entrepreneurship education in teaching students to learn skills and knowledge to recognize opportunities and become entrepreneurial (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Nabi et al., 2017).

Coefficient for Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs) was 0.105, while not significant at the p = .352 level. This means that while entrepreneurial role models do impact students' intentions positively, in this sample the impact is too weak to be significant. This aligns with some of the literature research that has found role models to have a non-standard influence on people depending on context and individual-related issues (Bosma et al., 2012).

Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), however, was the strongest predictor in the model with a value of 0.476 and a very significant statistical level (p < .001). The finding indicates entrepreneurial passion as an intention determinant and supports the hypothesis that emotional commitment strongly influences entrepreneurial activity (Cardon et al., 2009; Murnieks et al., 2014).

The Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) coefficient was 0.179 and significant statistically (p = .001), which captures entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a positive predictor of entrepreneurial intentions. The findings are consistent with the Theory of Planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and much empirical literature emphasizing the significant role played by self-efficacy in entrepreneurial decision-making (Zhao et al., 2005; Wilson et al., 2007).

Applying the regression coefficients from Table 6.11, the regression equation estimating Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) based on the independent variables—Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurship-Related Modules (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE)—is given by:

$$EI=1.082+0.120(EE)+0.105(ERMs)+0.476(EP)+0.179(ESE)$$

Notes:

- Intercept (Constant): 1.082 is the estimate of EI when all the independent variables are zero.

- The coefficients (the B values) indicate the amount of EI that is anticipated to increase as each predictor variable increases by one unit while keeping other variables constant.
- The greatest influence on EI among the predictors is EP (Entrepreneurial Passion), then ESE (Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy) and EE (Entrepreneurship Education). ERMs were not found to be statistically significant (p = .352), or low predictive power for this model.

One of the widely applied metrics for multicollinearity testing is a tolerance of less than 0.10 or a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of more than 10 (Hair et al., 2010). As clearly shown in Table 6.12 of this study, the tolerance of all the predictors ranged from 0.569 to 0.900, while the VIF scores ranged from 1.111 to 1.759. All these are within acceptable ranges with no multicollinearity among the independent variables. This is proof that each predictor is contributing unique information to the regression model, and no condition of multicollinearity has been met. Practical gaps and reality contexts of entrepreneurship in developing countries are presented below.

I understand that the regression model presented was specified without the addition of control variables. This was done with the intent to add a parsimonious model to test the focal relationships between the main independent variables and entrepreneurial intention without any control variables. I acknowledge that this limits the ability of the model to rule out competing explanations or control for external factors such as prior family business experience, gender, or study discipline, which could be hypothesized to contaminate the results.

However, the primary solution to this constraint exists within the mixed-methods design of the research. The qualitative component of this research performed a critical complementary role with respect to it. Using in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, I could probe deeper than the statistical correlations. The qualitative data provided rich contextual information that helped to "flesh out" the regression results. For instance, when students attributed the program for their increased intention, they would then continue to describe their personal journeys, allowing me to hear firsthand how their attitudes shifted independently of their background. This method

triangulation enhances the overall validity of the conclusion that changes in intention actually observed are indeed significantly associated with the educational intervention itself, thus adding an element of confidence to counteract the statistical weakness of the regression model.

Hypothesis testing

One of the main objectives of the quantitative approach was to make a hypothesis test. A summary table has been included to provide a clear and concise overview of the study's hypothesis testing. This table synthesizes the key empirical findings, allowing for an efficient assessment of the research outcomes. Below is the summary table of the hypothesis Test with decisions from the analysis :

Table 6.13: Summary of the hypothesis Statements , method of testing & decisions

Hypothesis Statement	Coefficients	Method of Testing	Test Result	Decision
H1:(EE → EI): Entrepreneurship education has a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention	0.120 *	Simple Linear Regression	β = 0.026	**Accept**
H2:(ERMs → EI): Entrepreneurial role models have a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.	o.105 (ns)	Simple Linear Regression	β = 0.352	Reject
H_3 (EP → EI): Entrepreneurial passion has a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.	0.476***	Simple Linear Regression	β = 0.000	**Accept**
H_4 (SEF → EI): Socioeconomic factors have a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.	0.179**	Simple Linear Regression	β = 0.001	**Accept**
***p<0.001,**p<0.01, *p<0.05, ns= not significant The result of p- value of all variables under 0.05 are considered as significant				

6.7.5 Quantitative Analysis Chapter Summary

The chapter reported a thorough quantitative analysis of university students' determinants of Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) using data from 332 respondents. The research emphasized four major variables: Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and socioeconomic factors . The analysis progressed from descriptive description of the sample and variables to sophisticated inferential statistics to a robust predictive model.

Descriptive Findings: A Profile of Aspiring Entrepreneurs

The initial sample profiling provided a cohort with defining characteristics that put the findings into context. The gender imbalance (62.7% male) and large proportion of "preparation gap" (70.8% with no prior experience of entrepreneurship training) signalled a pressing need for inclusive and foundational programming across universities. The salient entrepreneurial role model, particularly parental (68.4%), suggested a rich social context for EI development, but also suggested possible benefits for students from entrepreneurial families.

Systematic assessment of each construct revealed the following in-depth insights:

- **Entrepreneurship Education (EE):** While the overall mood was optimistic (Mean=3.05), students were most convinced with regard to the theoretical foundations (e.g., business knowledge, motivation). Largely ambiguous feelings toward applied aspects like networking, industry participation, and confidence in venturing out revealed a fundamental theory-practice imbalance in today's curriculum.
- **Entrepreneurial Passion (EP):** Students showed high passion for intellectual aspects of entrepreneurship, such as generating new ideas (EP1, Mean=3.91) and opportunity scanning (EP3, Mean=3.97). However, this lively innovative passion did not fully translate into real entrepreneurial identity or experience, which indicates a "passion-action gap."

- **Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE):** Levels of confidence were the highest for basic competencies like opportunity recognition, risk-taking, and familiarity with business planning (Mean up to 3.70). Conversely, lower scores in areas like prior experience, learning from successful entrepreneurs, and sociocultural support perceived indicated weaknesses in experiential learning and environmental support.

Inferential Findings: A Model of Entrepreneurial Drive

The inferential test confirmed the combined power of the four predictors to account for EI. The regression equation was statistically significant (F=50.523, p=.000) and explained a large 38.2% of EI variance ($R^2 = .382$), a powerful effect in the context of human behaviour. The regression model obtained from regression analysis is

EI=1.082+0.120(EE)+0.105(ERMs)+0.476(EP)+0.179(ESE)

Above all, the analysis established a clear hierarchy of effect among the predictors:

1. Entrepreneurial Passion (EP) was the only highest significant motivator ($\beta = .476$, $p < .001$). This emphasizes that identity- and emotional attachment to entrepreneurship—the readiness to create—is a more predictive intention than knowledge or skills separately.
2. Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) was the second strongest significant predictor ($\beta = .179$, $p = .001$), as it was also expected that the perceived capacity to execute entrepreneurial activities is a fundamental need for intention creation.
3. EE had a smaller but statistically significant direct effect ($\beta = .120$, $p = .026$). This suggests that while EE is very important, its primary value may be found in its indirect role as an antecedent developing the enthusiasm and self-efficacy that more directly affect intention.
4. Role models for Entrepreneurs (ERMs) indicated a positive but nonsignificant relationship in the regression model ($\beta = .105$, $p = .352$). This indicates that even though exposure to role models is universal, its effect can be more indirect, maybe on EI by first enhancing EP and ESE, as presented in the significant correlations.

In short, this quantitative chapter indicates that entrepreneurial intent is not an automatic spin-off from education. Instead, it is a complex psychological state primarily determined by intrinsic passion and strong self-efficacy, and which can be readily nurtured through educational intervention. The research obliges education to move beyond knowledge transfer into creating learning opportunities that deliberately nurture passion and cultivate competence through experiential, mentor-dense environments.

The results open up to the subsequent discussion chapter where these results will be integrated with the qualitative data, contrasted with existing literature, and interpreted into practical recommendations and actionable theoretical contributions for enhancing entrepreneurial education and ecosystems in the subsequent discussion chapter.

Chapter 7

Discussion and Implications

7.1 Introduction

The chapter offers a synthesized discussion of the study's main findings on the determinants of Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) among Ethiopian university students. Synthesizing quantitative data (n=332) and qualitative insight (n=10), it offers an in-depth understanding of how Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and Socioeconomic factors (SEF) all affect students' entrepreneurial intention.

The study is based on the core research question—how entrepreneurship education impact university students' entrepreneurial intention in Ethiopia, characterized by high socioeconomic constraints and low entrepreneurial infrastructure developments.

The chapter concludes by presenting context-sensitive policy and curriculum recommendations for reform, with the Investment-Uncertainty-Profit (IUP) Model as a practical framework for building student resilience. The argument addresses the overarching research question and contributes to the general discourse on entrepreneurship education among developing nations.

The following sections will discuss the impact of EE, ERMs, EP, and SEF on university student entrepreneurial intentions linking with current literature .

7.2 Discussion of Findings : The Impact of EE on EI

This study offers substantial qualitative and quantitative proof of the fact that Entrepreneurship Education (EE) plays a crucial role in the entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and capabilities of Addis Ababa University (AAU) students. The results bear witness to the constructive impact of EE, consistent with prior research highlighting a robust connection between EE and entrepreneurial intentions (Alshebami et al., 2020; Boldureanu et al., 2020; Nabi et al., 2017). Yet, the study identifies severe shortcomings in the current EE arrangement at AAU, notably a huge gap between theoretical instruction and practical application, as well as insufficient harmonization with Ethiopia's unique socio-economic context. These findings are explored under three interrelated aspects: competency development, attitudinal change, and confidence enhancement among learners.

7.2.1 Enhancing Competencies and Highlighting a Practice Gap

Analysis indicates that Entrepreneurship Education (EE) in AAU has an effective role in developing students' key entrepreneurial competencies. Both qualitative and quantitative findings indicate that students understand EE as a necessary condition for learning key skills like business planning, market research, financial projections, and strategic decision-making. Qualitative findings also show that students appreciate EE for introducing them to the underlying elements of entrepreneurship. For example, Participant P1 emphasized how EE made it possible to bridge the gap between theory and practice through structured activities such as preparing business plans. Such an observation adds to the concept of transforming theoretical ideas to actual learning experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Along the same line, Participant P2 emphasized the importance of EE in building market analysis and financial forecasting capacities—capacities seen as being foundational to the success of sustainable entrepreneurship. These observations are consistent with research that believes that effective EE programs ought to cover broad ranges of competency areas to build able entrepreneurs (Reyad et al., 2020; Alakaleek et al., 2023).

Besides technical ability, the qualitative data refer to the overall role of EE in cultivating general entrepreneurial qualities such as leadership, innovativeness, and risk-taking. For example, participant P5 freely credited EE with the cultivation of leadership capability and a spirit of innovativeness. This corroborates the rationale that effective EE must cultivate a growth mindset, preparing the students to make decisions based on risk and lead during ambiguous circumstances (Lv et al., 2021).

Despite these positive findings, the research has also identified a significant flaw: the stark lack of experiential, work-based learning opportunities. This theory-practice gap is one of the conclusions of this research. A few of the participants (e.g., P5 and P9) lamented the insufficient amount of hands-on experience with too much theory teaching. Participant P5's statement, "It's hard to feel ready to launch a business when you've only studied cases, not lived them," succinctly captures this disconnect. This gap reflects broader critiques in the field that EE must offer real-world testing grounds to be transformative (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Kuratko, 2024).

The quantitative results reinforce this misfit. Though students showed a moderate level of agreement with items on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge (e.g., EE1: M = 3.04; EE4: M = 3.09), their scores for practical application and confidence items were lower than the weighted mean = 3.058 (e.g., EE5: M = 2.99; EE7: M = 3.03 with a mean of 3.058). This statistical trend only indicates a true deficit in applied competence and confidence—a paradox noted by Ratten and Usmanij (2021), who hypothesize that without experiential learning, students may know but lack the ability or confidence to apply it effectively.

7.2.2 Attitude Change: Managing Necessity and Opportunity

One of the robust findings of this research is the role of EE in shifting career intentions from traditional job seeking to entrepreneurial endeavours. The research, however, offers a contextual qualification to this largely noted effect. Within the Ethiopian context, this shift is likely to be characterized by a necessity-driven dimension rather than opportunity-driven entrepreneurship typical in Western literature. As Participant P6 put it, "entrepreneurship is the only available pathway for survival." This perception aligns with literature highlighting that entrepreneurship in developing economies is driven by the scarcity of employment opportunities (Block et al., 2015; Williams & Youssef, 2014). This would imply that EE in Ethiopia must address survivalist demands alongside encouraging innovative, opportunity-driven businesses.

The qualitative evidence also shows that EE fosters entrepreneurial orientations by enabling students to align business goals with disciplinary knowledge and personal values. Participant P1's inclination towards agricultural entrepreneurship following exposure to sustainability concerns is one way in which EE can encourage value-driven entrepreneurship in line with national development agendas, an outcome supported by Alakaleek et al. (2023). Similarly, P4's transition from natural sciences to social science stream of study confirms EE's potential to induce interdisciplinary identity transformation, especially enabling students to apply specialized knowledge in entrepreneurial settings (Holienka et al., 2016).

Quantitative results validate this trend of attitude shift. The high mean score on EE2 (motivation and self-efficacy, M = 3.17) affirms the place of EE as a core predictor of motivational antecedents to intention (Bandura, 1997; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). Somewhat lower scores for items covering practical readiness (EE1, EE5) suggest, however, that while EE can ignite entrepreneurial intention, this aspiration can be fragile without experiential validation.

7.2.3 Self-Efficacy Construction: The Disconnect Between abstract Motivation and task-Specific Self-Efficacy

The study also reveals a crucial distinction between task-specific self-efficacy and general motivational confidence. While participants like P8 reported enhanced general motivation ("I no longer have any fears about starting a business"), as predicted by Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, on closer examination, this confidence may be abstract.

The lower ratings on the confidence in performing specific venture tasks items (EE5) and the absence of interest in industry exposure (EE9), networking (EE8), and extracurricular activities (EE6, M = 2.96) indicate restricted access to mastery experiences—the most potent source of stable self-efficacy. As P9 put it, "we learn, but we didn't get to practice it." This highlights Pittaway and Cope's (2007) argument that entrepreneurship is best fostered in healthy ecosystems rich with experiential knowledge, and not in classrooms. Without them, EE may create theoretical readiness but leave learners ill-equipped to convert intentions into action.

7.2.4 Conclusion of EE impact on EI

In conclusion, this study authenticates the available literature by bearing witness to EE as a vital motivator of entrepreneurial skill acquisition, attitude change, and knowledge development at AAU. Its precise contribution is the identification of the pervasive theory-practice gap and the context of necessity-driven environment within the Ethiopian higher education system.

The findings point towards the need for a paradigm shift in the conceptual thinking of the current EE framework. To address the gaps found, experiential learning needs to be the pedagogical trend of the moment. It involves the addition of internships, live projects, mentorship programs, and stronger institutional links with industry. Besides, the curriculum has to be contextualized, moving away from Western, opportunity-based models to include survivalist realities and leverage the interdisciplinary skills of Ethiopian students.

Such developments would not only raise pedagogical effectiveness but also support graduates with the hands-on experience and local context knowledge necessary to

initiate entrepreneurial careers successfully, thereby transforming EE into a dynamic driver of local economic development.

The following section will summarize the discussions related to the second research objective, which examines the effect of entrepreneurial role models (ERMs) on entrepreneurial intentions (EI).

7.3 Discussion of Findings: The Impact of ERMs on EI

Findings from this study identify the significant influence of Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs) on Addis Ababa University students' entrepreneurial intentions (EI). Based on Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), the analysis indicates that exposure to ERMs—family, peer, or public—to be a determinant of enhancing entrepreneurial aspirations and perceived feasibility of an entrepreneurial career. This section discusses the intricate contribution of ERMs as motivational sources, the unique benefit of proximate influences, and their contribution to entrepreneurial self-efficacy development, culminating with practice implications for institutions.

7.3.1 ERMs as Motivators and Conveyors of Viability

A prevailing theme emerging from the qualitative data is the tremendous inspirational power of ERMs. Successful entrepreneurs were consistently cited by participants as people who demystify entrepreneurship and render it a viable and attractive career choice. For instance, Participant P1 stated:

"I am preparing myself by learning from others' success in entrepreneurial activities that contribute to the well-being of our society. They are my role models and motivation."

This view aligns with the work of Ahn et al. (2020), who argue that role models make entrepreneurial success seem more attainable by providing concrete, proximal exemplars. Further, as Boldureanu et al. (2020) argue, ERMs make entrepreneurship more appealing by exemplifying not just financial success but also societal value, an element clearly reflected in the participants' narratives.

The quantitative findings corroborate this universal effect. The statistics show that 74.4% of the participants know an entrepreneur personally, and 68.4% have at least one self-employed parent. These figures validate Abbasianchavari and Moritz's (2021) contention that entrepreneurial norms and success cases are typically transmitted through familial generations. This effect can be seen as a "normalization" of entrepreneurship (Malebana, 2022), whereby frequent exposure in one's immediate social environment reduces psychological barriers to entry and introduces self-employment as a normal choice of career.

7.3.2 The influence of Proximate Influence: Peers and Family

The position of entrepreneurial parents was particularly important, normally imparting entrepreneurial attitudes from a very young age. The fact that "My parents taught us that entrepreneurship is about being flexible rather than just learning" from participant P4 reflects the manner in which role models of the family model impart key attitudes such as flexibility and problem-solving. This finding corroborates Lingappa et al. (2020), who discovered that family exposure to entrepreneurial traits in early life was a primary predictor of entrepreneurial cognition.

Peer influence was also a significant factor, with 87.0% of the participants reporting having self-employed family members or friends. Examples such as Participant P3, who described "inspiration from a friend who had opened up a private school," illustrate what Bosma et al. (2021) term as "informal mentorship." Peer-sourced, culturally relevant success stories evoke aspirational congruence. In addition, such networks are entrepreneurial social capital (Nabi et al., 2022) that provides likely access to assistance, information, and resources combined that all lower perceived risk of entrepreneurship.

7.3.3 Encouraging Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy through Vicarious Learning

Exceeding inspiration, ERMs play a powerful role in students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy—a potent EI antecedent (Bandura, 1997). Social cognitive theory predicts that self-efficacy is cultivated through vicarious experience and social persuasion, both through observation of models. This was strikingly evidenced by Participant P8, who, on witnessing the progression of a local start-up, avowed: "Watching them grow from a small business to a multimillion-dollar company made me feel like I could do the same."

Quantitatively, this is evidenced by the fact that 68.4% of the students imitated an entrepreneurial role model consciously. This supports previous research undertaken by Zhao et al. (2005) and Kong et al. (2020), who emphasize that observational learning from successful ERMs is a robust source of the self-efficacy that drives firm entrepreneurial intentions. It seems the hypothesis that test the impact of ERMs with

EI has been rejected , because the curriculum in place did not include the engagement of ERMs and create access to have experience in the industry.

7.3.4 A Critical Interrogation of Non-Significant Quantitative Findings

The investigation of this study reveals a core paradox: although rich qualitative accounts strongly indicate that students derive significant motivation from Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), the quantitative regression analysis found no statistically significant direct impact of ERMs on entrepreneurial intention.

The apparent contradiction was of central concern to the analysis, and three reasonable explanations were hypothesized to account for this discrepancy:

Firstly, the distinction between **passive exposure and active engagement**. The quantitative measure largely captured pervasiveness or familiarity with role models (e.g., "do you know an entrepreneur?"). However, it failed to capture the quality or depth of these interactions. Qualitative data, by contrast, captured inspiration and vicarious learning processes that entail more than familiarization. This suggests that mere exposure is a necessary but insufficient component of influence. The prime catalyst seems to be engaged mentorship and involvement in full, relational terms, elements our quantitative measure was unable to capture.

Second, the **idea of mediated as opposed to direct effects**. ERMs' effects are likely not a straight path to intention but rather channelled through some important psychological concepts. Role models primarily work by creating the entrepreneurial self-efficacy and passion of a student, which in turn directly serve as intention drivers. When the mediator variables are held constant in a statistical model, they account for the variance of intention that otherwise would be accounted for by ERMs. Consequently, the special direct effect of ERMs is statistically insignificant, not because they are irrelevant, but because it is fully mediated by these more proximal determinants.

Finally, the **role of an institutional gap**. The absence of institutionalized university mechanisms—such as structured mentorship programs or curricula for teaching practitioner wisdom—meant that the potential impact of naturally occurring ERMs was left largely unrealized. Without the scaffolding of a pedagogical support system to help students process, analyse, and learn from such role models, informal exposure was precisely that—informal. It failed to grow into a robust and measurable shift in entrepreneurial intention because the journey from inspiration to action lacked scaffolding and structure.

Overall, therefore, the non-significant quantitative finding should not be interpreted to mean that role models are an irrelevance. Rather, it emphasizes that their influence is more indirect, conditional, and subtle than the simple assumption of "exposure" would have it. This could also be one of the future agenda for the future.

7.3.5 Conclusion of ERMs impact on EI

Considered collectively, therefore, this study provides a more nuanced picture of the Entrepreneurial Role Model's function. Qualitative evidence in no uncertain terms' shows that public figures, peers, and family members are powerful inspirations demystifying entrepreneurship and transferring self-efficacy through vicarious learning. The non-significant quantitative finding, however, serves as an essential warning that their impact is not certain.

ERMs' influence appears to be conditional. It is less the presence of a role model that matters, but interactive engagement with them, internalization of their experience to form self-efficacy, and institutional reaffirmation that seals exposure to intention. The reliance on informal social networks results in unequal and too often superficial access. Therefore, for entrepreneurial culture to be strong and equal, universities must move beyond reliance on unanticipated exposure. They will need to actively institutionalize the presence of role models through guided mentorship, designed curricula, and experiential learning environments that convert passive awareness into active, effective learning. By doing so, they can effectively unleash the dormant potential of ERMs to convert student aspirations into solid entrepreneurial intentions.

7.4 Discussion of Findings: The Role of EP in EI

This study reveals the powerful, multi-dimensional impact of Entrepreneurial Passion (EP) on entrepreneurial intentions among university students. Integrating qualitative and quantitative data provides a balanced view to highlight firm convergence between EP's role in stimulating creativity, self-efficacy, and opportunity identification, but revealing primary divergences with regard to entrepreneurial identity formation and experiential learning. These findings are placed within the dominant theoretical paradigms to elucidate their implications.

7.4.1 Convergent Evidence: Passion as Catalyst of Creativity, Opportunity, & Resilience

The findings reveal that passion for entrepreneurship is a powerful stimulus for developing innovative ideas and also for identifying opportunities. Thematic analysis of the interviews revealed that the students are highly excited about the activity of idea generation with new concepts and identifying probable businesses. This qualitative result is supported by the quantitative indices, which accounted for the highest mean value in the statement on "environmental scanning for opportunities" (EP3: M = 3.97) and then on "idea generation" (EP1: M = 3.52). This consistency confirms that passionate students have a better sense of assessing potential opportunities, a finding that aligns with Chen et al. (2009), who regard passion as one of the prime antecedents to entrepreneurial alertness.

Furthermore, the motivational potential of passion can also be observed in its relationship with resilience and self-efficacy. Qualitative responses tended to involve examples of determination and confidence in pursuing future entrepreneurial ventures, even in the face of uncertainty. This is consistent with Cardon et al. (2009), who contend that passion facilitates the persistence present in entrepreneurial activity. This constructive, self-efficacious mindset is also in line with entrepreneurial self-efficacy models where intrinsic motivation underpins the perception of self-competence (Bae et al., 2014; Kong et al., 2020).

Another recurring theme was autonomy and independence, since students wished to liberate themselves from conventional employment by becoming entrepreneurs. This

statement finds its roots in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which proposes autonomy as a fundamental psychological need driven by intrinsic motivation. From the data, passion drives the pursuit of this autonomous career, substantiating Shane et al. (2003) on the relationship between passion and autonomous career choices.

7.4.2 Converging Evidence: The Disconnect Between Aspiration and Identity/Experience

Despite overwhelming evidence supporting the motivational role of the passion, the research shows a notable disparity in the development of a mature entrepreneurial experience and identity.

While qualitative narratives occasionally captured a strong, internalized entrepreneurial identity with labels such as "I was born for that," the quantitative findings are less encouraging. Only 44.6% of participants agreed they think of themselves as entrepreneurs (EP6), with 31.3% not sure. This shortfall indicates enthusiasm has yet to solidify into a secure entrepreneurial identity for most students. This aligns with Obschonka et al. (2012), who contend that entrepreneurial identity accumulates over time via experiential learning and social legitimation.

A second extreme departure lies in the sphere of practical experience. With aspiration and inclination scores high, the average for "past entrepreneurial behaviour" (EP5: M = 3.00) was low. This indicates a significant gap between students' interested eagerness and actual entrepreneurial conduct. This intention-behaviour gap is confirmed; Nabi et al. (2017) note that entrepreneurial enthusiasm is not always followed by action, particularly in circumstances where resources and opportunities are scarce. The relatively low rating for "coming up with new products/services" (EP2: M = 2.87) also leads to the conclusion that entrepreneurial activities are perhaps more driven by necessity than opportunity, limiting entry into new product development.

7.4.3 Conclusion of EP impact on EI

Briefly put, this study confirms entrepreneurial passion as a core psychological predictor of entrepreneurial intention for Addis Ababa University students. It possesses the power to drive key antecedents to EI, such as creativity, self-efficacy, and seeking autonomy. The differences between high passion and downplayed identity/experience, however, do highlight a significant challenge.

The findings indicate that while passion may be a necessary condition for entrepreneurial intention, it is not enough in itself. In closing the gap between passion and action, university programs must address more than encouraging students to building systematic opportunities for identity formation and learning experience. As Fayolle and Liñán (2014) suggest, action and reflection components such as venture creation projects and mentoring should be incorporated within curricula so that students can experiment, learn from, and ultimately reinforce their entrepreneurial selves. Bridging this gap, schools can more effectively utilize students' passion to drive not only intention but entrepreneurial outcomes as well.

The following subsection will present the influence of socioeconomic factors, another important determinant of student entrepreneurial intention.

7.5 Discussion of Findings: The Effects of SEF on EI

The research uncovers the complex dynamics involved between socioeconomic factors and entrepreneurial intentions of university students, illustrating how economic deprivation, family background, and resource access interact to influence entrepreneurial intentions. The findings are significant to motivational drivers and structural barriers that influence the entrepreneurial path of students, with significant implications for educators and policymakers.

7.5.1 Economic Need as a Driver for Necessity Entrepreneurship

A recurring message of the qualitative results is the role of economic hardship as a strong entrepreneurial intention driver. Not only is entrepreneurship perceived as a self-chosen career path by most students but as an obligatory response to structural factors such as unemployment and economic insecurity. As Participant P2 phrased it:

> " *The high level of unemployment makes it more relevant to assume an entrepreneurial role as an active response."*

This is in line with the push-pull theory of entrepreneurship, where individuals are generally pushed by unfavourable conditions—a lack of work opportunities—into entrepreneurship rather than pulled by attractive opportunities for innovation and independence (Lingappa et al., 2020). In this study, economic distress provides a root push factor, compelling the students to view entrepreneurship as an imperative. This is in accordance with proof that necessity entrepreneurship is prevalent in emerging economies with fewer opportunities for legal employment (Baker & Welter, 2018; Williams et al., 2022). Consequently, entrepreneurial intention among these students will be framed as a means of survival for economic reasons and not opportunistic growth.

7.5.2 Familial and Cultural Capital Facilitating Role

Another insightful finding of this study was that ,besides economic push factors, family influence was also a key predictor of EI. Entrepreneur family origin was stated by students having higher intentions, with both material inputs (e.g., money, business

connections) and immaterial support (e.g., guidance, moral support). This is evidenced from the participant students as :

- Participant P10 credited her parents' entrepreneurial spirit for giving her the same outlook for business.
- Participants P4 and P8 directly associated their business ambitions with those of the activities of their parents' businesses, leveraging family experience to propel their own ventures.
- Participant P5 underscored the application of family and community norms, whereby "The Gurage are particularly known to have a strong work ethic with everyone committed to or involved in business," reflecting cultural endorsement of entrepreneurship values.

This study finds that family support operates on various levels—affective, instrumental, and cognitive—via encouragement, mentoring, and access to networks, thereby reducing perceived risk and an entrepreneurial orientation (Dewi, 2024). This concurs with research from other settings; Elias (2025), for example, found that Tanzanian university students with strong family support had better odds of acquiring resilient, opportunity-focused mindsets. Similarly, Lingappa et al. (2020) demonstrated that Indonesian students from entrepreneurially backgrounded families had significantly higher EI, attributing this to availability of resources and motivational encouragement. Quantitative findings here also lend support to this, with entrepreneurially backgrounded students rating higher on entrepreneurial self-efficacy scales, particularly in opportunity recognition and risk-taking abilities.

7.5.3 Intention-Action Gap Critical: Resource Constraint

Despite there being active entrepreneurial aspirations between the students, the most dominant impediment encountered was a critical lack of accessible resources. Participant P2's frustration encapsulates an epidemic sentiment: "I wish to establish a business, but where there is no money, it remains fantasy."

Quantitative evidence confirms this barrier, and questions on access to capital and external assistance networks receiving some of the lowest scores. This recognises a major intention-action gap, indicating the critical role of facilitating conditions. The

evidence suggests that even with high motivation, a lack of resources available to hand—e.g., startup capital, mentoring, and institutional support—poses a significant barrier to translating entrepreneurial intentions into action.

Briefly, this research depicts the way socioeconomic variables have a two-way influence on students' entrepreneurial intentions. Economic deprivation is a push factor that induces necessity EI. Family and cultural capital, on the contrary, is a strong supportive foundation that extends self-efficacy and intention. Although the strong synergy of support and motivation does not succeed as a result of the huge structural barrier of resource deficiency. This aspiration-entrepreneurship gap helps to identify the requirements for policy and educational interventions aimed not only at cultivating entrepreneurial aspiration but also at providing tangible resources—in the shape of seed capital, mentorship programs, and access to networks—to prepare students to bridge the gap between aspiration and venture creation.

The next section will respond to the so what questions bridging the gap as is.

7.6 Bridging the Gap: Practical Deficits and a Proposed Contextual Model

This research confirms the role of theoretical knowledge in entrepreneurship education (EE) while revealing a critical gap: the lack of practical, experiential learning bridging intention and action. Despite curricula including applied competencies such as business planning and strategic formulation—conceptually well-developed domains in mainstream business education (Wheelen & Hunger, 2015; Kotler & Keller, 2016)—a burning question remains: in what way does entrepreneurship education specifically prepare students to handle venture creation's unique uncertainties?

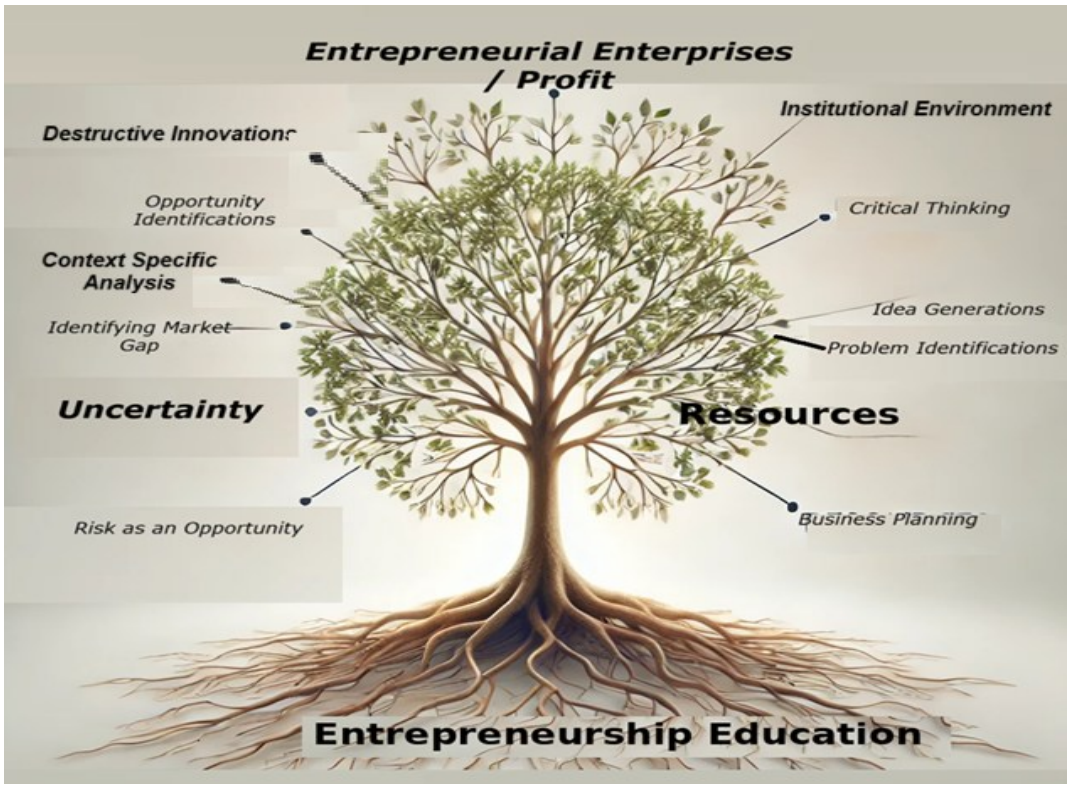
Student interviews reinforced this disconnect. Participants expressed strong entrepreneurial intentions but predominantly listed socioeconomic constraints as significant deterrents. Responses such as, "I'm interested, but I'm poor," or "Let's wait and see what happens after graduation," reveal two pervasive barriers: low access to seed capital and high perceived uncertainty. These findings reflect what Gibb (2002) refers to as "entrepreneurial reality," in which environmental and psychological barriers stifle action even among the willing.

Analysis of the existing curriculum at AAU further reveals a gap between academic content and students' realities. Courses remain based on traditional management theory with minimal focus on the distinctive, action-based needs of entrepreneurship. This calls for a reform in the curriculum that focuses on experiential and contextually relevant learning.

7.6.1 Toward a New Framework: The Investment–Uncertainty–Profit (IUP) Model

Given the resource-constrained environment and nascent entrepreneurial ecosystem typical of the emerging nations, the current study introduces a realigned strategy. Despite curricula covering applied competencies such as business planning and strategic formulation—concepts well-established in mainstream business education (Wheelen & Hunger, 2015; Kotler & Keller, 2016)— effective EE should also need to focus on three interlinked pillars that address the defining issues as perceived by students: managing uncertainty, accessing resources, and survivability. The IUP Model is thus proposed, with an intent to shift EE towards localized, practice-oriented learning.

The logic of the IUP model is illustrated below with EE as the tree trunk branching out to foster the emergence of sustainable ventures:



Note: A narrative description of the tree diagram is given for simplicity

- Foundation (The Trunk): Entrepreneurship Education (EE)
- Core Pillars (The Main Branches):
    - **Managing Uncertainty (U):** Teaching students to manage and embrace uncertainty using environmental scanning, gap analysis, and creative problem-solving at a local level.
    - **Raising Investment Capital (I):** Equipping students with the capacity to attract capital through problem-solving innovation on local issues, thereby generating value for potential investors or collaborators.
    - **Goal (The Foliage & Fruit): Establishing Profitable Business Ventures (P):** The ultimate goal is the development of sustainable business ventures that generate profit, engendering longevity and impact.

      Alternatively, this can be represented by the following diagram :

Fig 6.3: The Investment–Uncertainty–Profit (IUP) Model

This model aligns with practice-based approaches advocated by Neck and Greene (2011) and Rae's (2006) emphasis on application-centred learning. It draws on different perceptions of entrepreneurship:

- The economic perspective appreciates structural support and capital access as essential; they run out of steam when intention and performance are dampened (Dvouletý et al., 2018).
- The behavioural approach is interested in cultivating risk-conscious mindsets and decision-making skills (Krueger et al., 2000).
- Contextual approach emphasizes adaptive strategies specifically, often bounded contexts (Welter, 2011).

7.6.2 Implications and Implementation

The IUP model acts as a blueprint for higher education to design specific interventions. To operationalize it, universities need to integrate experiential learning practices like internships, business games, and mentorship initiatives that allow learners to navigate ambiguity in real-world settings and procurement of resources.

Concurrently, policymakers must address systemic barriers, particularly access to finance. A collaborative ecosystem involving academia, government, and industry is essential to create support systems like grants, seed capital, and incubators.

In conclusion, this research argues for a philosophical reconceptualization of entrepreneurship education. Assuming a model of learning that focuses on uncertainty management, resource mobilization, and venture creation, universities are able to transcend theoretical constructs. It will empower a generation of entrepreneurs with not only intent but with the pragmatic skill to drive economic growth and generate successful entrepreneurial communities in negative environments.

The following section will provide a detailed summary of arguments put forth in the chapter and summarize the overall findings of the study.

7.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter 7 provided a comprehensive discussion and interpretation of the study's findings, integrating quantitative data from 332 survey respondents and qualitative data from 10 in-depth interviews. The discussion was guided by the four main factors influencing entrepreneurial intention (EI) among Addis Ababa University students: Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), Entrepreneurial Passion (EP), and Socioeconomic Factors.

The main findings affirm the dominant, though complex, impact of these factors in the Ethiopian context. While Entrepreneurship Education (EE) was confirmed to be a significant driver of entrepreneurial knowledge, skill, and attitude change, a ubiquitous theory-practice gap was discovered to be present. This gap, which is characterized by minimal experiential learning opportunities, impedes task-specific self-efficacy and practical readiness development among students, despite the fact that the latter are strongly motivated.

The study also highlighted the powerful influence of Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs), in particular those close by, including family and peers. ERMs were found to motivate students, normalize entrepreneurship as a career choice, and build self-efficacy through vicarious learning. A structural shortfall was found, though, in that the majority of students lack contact with formal mentoring programs, indicating an untapped institutional opportunity.

Entrepreneurial Passion (EP) emerged as a potent psychological predictor with a strong influence on creativity, opportunity recognition, and autonomy pursuit. However, an alarming incongruence was uncovered: increased levels of passion fail to correspond with an entrepreneurial identity that has been established or with practical experience, suggesting a substantial intention-behaviour gap.

Finally, Socioeconomic Factors analysis revealed a dual impact. On the one hand, economic adversity acts as a push factor, nurturing a necessity-driven approach to entrepreneurship, with family and cultural capital playing a supportive role. On the other hand, tight resource constraints—most significantly restricted access to capital—are an almost prohibitive barrier, discouraging the majority of students from translating their intentions into action.

Synthesizing these results, the chapter ended by proposing the Investment-Uncertainty-Profit (IUP) Model. This context model addresses the gaps discovered by positing that effective entrepreneurship education must focus on three pillars: teaching students how to manage uncertainty, empowering them to access resources, and guiding them towards establishing profitable ventures. The model calls for a paradigm shift from theoretical, content-based teaching to experiential, application-oriented learning that is sensitive to the local socioeconomic environment.

In short, this chapter not only interpreted the findings within existing theoretical frameworks but also brought a fresh insight to entrepreneurship education for developing economies. The discussions and the proposed IUP model provide the basis for the corresponding recommendations of curriculum redesign, institutional policy, to foster future innovative entrepreneurs.

The subsequent chapter provides the findings of the study, inferred conclusions, as well as research recommendations.

Chapter 8

Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Overview of the Study

This study quantified the impact of entrepreneurship education (EE) on entrepreneurial intentions among university students in a developing nation, focused on Ethiopia. While EE's impact is proven in developed economies, much less is known about its impact within developing economies—specifically via vehicles like role models, passion, and socioeconomic factors . For bridging the gap, the study employed the Theory of Planned Behaviour theoretical framework and sequential exploratory mixed methods. This was preceded by qualitative interviews (n=10) to inform preliminary opinions, followed by additional investigation at greater scale using quantitative survey (n=400).

8.2 Key Findings

This research identifies entrepreneurial intention (EI) of Ethiopian university students as a complex process driven by the interaction of education, social, personal, and contextual factors. Both qualitative and quantitative findings indicate the following results:

1. **Entrepreneurship Education (EE)**: has a significant positive impact on enhancing the entrepreneurial intentions of university students in Ethiopia.EE effectively shapes student attitudes and enhances perceived behavioral control by equipping learners with vital entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and confidence.

2. **Entrepreneurial role models (ERMs):** the study confirms that ERMs significantly influence students EI. A notable example for this NU CHIKa Enwuka project (Bosma et al., 2012) however, curriculum did not include engagement of ERMs.

3. **Entrepreneurial Passion (EP)** : both qualitative and quantitative findings underscores the significance of Passion in influencing EI. (Cardon et al., (2009) confirming that EP serves as a critical delivery of EI.

4. **Socioeconomic Factors** : it includes family background , finical resources and educational opportunities play a pivotal role in shaping EI & behavior (Linan & Chen 2009, Autio et 2013)

5. Synthesizing these insights, the study proposes the Investment-Uncertainty-Profit (IUP) Model. This framework has three core pillars: managing uncertainty, securing investment, and achieving profitability that will help to make EE program with the unique socioeconomic landscape of developing nations like Ethiopia.

6. The sequential exploratory research design adopted played a pivotal role in developing deep, contextually grounded understanding on the research problem, and shows EI as a product of the complex synergy between EE, ERMs, EP & SEF , not a single variable dependent.

7. To be EE is valuable & effective, it must be tailored to local contexts and focus on entrepreneurial learning , enhance ERMs engagement and consider EE as strategic focus or activity.

8. The analysis helps to develop an integrated model

   EI=1.082+0.120(EE)+0.105(ERMs)+0.476(EP)+0.179(ESE)

   Where the model coefficients are positive indicating that the variables (EE,ERMs,EP and SEF) all have direct influence on entrepreneurial intention (EI). Interestingly, entrepreneurial passion (EP) (β = 0.476) and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) (β = 0.179) contribute the most significantly and therefore might be a more significant determinant of EI than other determinants.

As presented in Chapter 2 in the conceptual framework (pp. 48-49) and the table below demonstrate, hypothesis testing found a positive influence of all variables (EE,EP &SEF) on entrepreneurial intention (EI) except for Entrepreneurial Role

Models (ERMs). The answer for rejecting the ERMs hypothesis owes one answer from the qualitative analysis, which identified a lack of systematic engagement with successful entrepreneurs in the curriculum. Although others went about such encounters independently, the study discovers that there are no experiential learning elements in the form of official role models.

Hypothesis Statement	Coefficients	Method of Testing	Test Result	Decision
H1:(EE → EI): Entrepreneurship education has a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention	0.120 *	Simple Linear Regression	β = 0.026	**Accept**
H2:(ERMs → EI): Entrepreneurial role models have a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.	o.105 (ns)	Simple Linear Regression	β = 0.352	Reject
H_3 (EP → EI): Entrepreneurial passion has a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.	0.476***	Simple Linear Regression	β = 0.000	**Accept**
H_4 (SEF → EI): Socioeconomic factors have a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.	0.179**	Simple Linear Regression	β = 0.001	**Accept**
***p<0.001,**p<0.01, *p<0.05, ns= not significant The result of p- value of all variables under 0.05 are considered as significant				

Building on the findings, the following section articulates the significant theoretical and practical contributions of this work.

8.3 Contributions of the Study

The research makes solid theoretical and practical contributions in that it not only isolated individual key entrepreneurial intention drivers but also challenged a fundamental paradox in the data. It moves beyond establishing what works to investigate the contexts under which entrepreneurial influences are effective, particularly against the backdrop of an emerging economy.

8.3.1 Theoretical Contributions

A. Enrichment of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

This research significantly extends Ajzen's (1991) TPB by suggesting and delineating entrepreneurial passion's and role models' positions. It demonstrates entrepreneurial passion as a vital emotional driver that reinforces the central TPB antecedents. Above all, the research offers a milestone improvement in regard to Entrepreneurial Role Models (ERMs). The "paradox of their qualitative motivational strength and quantitative insignificance" ($p = 0.352$) contradicts the hypothesis of a simple, direct effect. Instead, the outcome predicts that ERMs' effect is most likely going to be completely mediated by variables like self-efficacy and passion and is dependent on depth of engagement as opposed to exposure. This provides more sophisticated, mechanism-based intention formation theory.

B. Focus on Context-Specific Knowledge

By focusing on Ethiopia, the study detects a context-specific phenomenon which we term as the "Passivity Paradox": high descriptive accessibility to entrepreneurial role models does not necessarily imply entrepreneurial intention. This contribution indicates a crucial shortcoming of directly applying theories from established ecosystems to emerging environments without accounting for institutional voids. The findings propose that in such environments, the absence of formal support systems creates a gap between inspiration and action, a dynamic poorly covered within Western bias literature.

C. Introducing the IUP Model :

In bridging the intention-action gap, this dissertation presents the new Investment-Uncertainty-Profit (IUP) Model. This is a theoretical contribution that rescues entrepreneurship education from inspirational abstractions by focusing on three viable, psychology-based pillars:

Investment: Framing resource deployment as a series of low-probability, information-gathering bets.

Uncertainty Management: The creation of cognitive and affective resilience as a critical entrepreneurial ability.

Profit Orientation: Incorporating a framework for generating sustainable value with scarce resources.

8.3.2 Practical Contributions

A. For Educators & Universities: From Exposure to Engineering Engagement

The findings mandate practice transformation from guest lectures toward structured, extended mentorship programs that facilitate entrepreneurial learning and active engagement of ERMs known to be necessary.

Apply the IUP Model as an applied pedagogical method to design experiential learning (e.g., incubators, simulations) that specifically cultivates uncertainty management and profit-seeking skills.

Tailor curricula to address the specific uncertainties of the informal economy, using the IUP model as a guide.

B. For Policymakers and Ecosystem Actors: Building Scaffolding

The lack of significance in ERMs shows that informal networks are insufficient. Practical contributions therefore seek to build formal scaffolding:

Establish a National Student Entrepreneurship Fund in order to make the "Investment" pillar of the IUP model operational, to allow small-scale venture experimentation.

Organize formal university-based mentorship networks ("Entrepreneurship Alumni Hubs") in order to institutionalize the high-quality interactions which, the evidence suggests are missing.

Engage corporations and banks in developing "pitch days" and seed funds, making a concrete pipeline from ideas on campus to investment in the real world.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

While this study offers valuable insights, its findings should be considered in light of the following methodological limitations:

1. **Cross-Sectional Design:** The use of a cross-sectional research design provides only a snapshot of entrepreneurial intention (EI) at a single point in time. This limits the ability to observe how intentions develop, fluctuate, or translate into action over the long term due to factors such as practical experience, further education, or changing economic conditions. Future longitudinal research tracking students after graduation would offer a more dynamic understanding of causality and entrepreneurial trajectory.

2. **Reliance on Self-Reported Data:** The data for key constructs—such as entrepreneurial intention, passion, and self-efficacy—were collected through self-reported measures. This method is susceptible to biases, including social desirability bias (where participants may provide answers they believe are favourable) and common method variance, which could potentially inflate the relationships between variables.

3. **Scope Limitations:** The study's sample was drawn exclusively from undergraduate students at Addis Ababa University. Consequently, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other important populations, such as students in vocational colleges, from other regional universities, or from different academic disciplines. Future studies incorporating a more diverse and representative sample would help establish the broader applicability of the results.

8.5 Recommendations

Following the outcomes of this study, the following practical suggestions are made to enhance entrepreneurial intention and action among university students in Ethiopia.

8.5.1 For Universities and Teachers

In order to allow for a bridging between theoretical education and practical venture start-ups, universities must lead a pedagogical change oriented towards experiential and contextual learning.

1. Redesign Pedagogical Strategies

- Transformation of theory-centric lectures to an experiential learning format consisting of business simulations, mandatory internships with local MSMEs, and university-operated startup incubators.
- Incorporate the IUP (Investment-Uncertainty-Profit) model into the curriculum to provide hands-on training in resource mobilization, risk management, and venture viability.

2. Tailor the Learning Experience:

- Design curricula using local Ethiopian case studies and involve successful local entrepreneurs in curriculum design as well as guest lecturers so that it is relevant.
- Create a structured mentorship program that places students with alumni and local entrepreneurs as ongoing mentors.

3. Create a System of Comprehensive Support:

- Develop key entrepreneurial characteristics such as risk-taking and resilience through specialized workshops and business plan competitions.
- Provide tangible financial and material support in the form of micro-grants to innovative start-ups and access to campus incubators with infrastructure like prototyping labs and legal services.

8.5.2 For Policymakers and Government Agencies

To create a supportive ecosystem for new business setup, the government must focus on reducing hurdles and building an integrated entrepreneurial network.

1. Minimize Administrative and Fiscal Hurdles:

- Streamline business registration processes for accelerating them quicker and more conveniently available.
- Introduce incentive plans, such as tax incentives for startups by young people, and use public funds for seed capital and early-stage funding.

2. Create a Cooperative Ecosystem:

- Pro-actively build networks connecting universities with private investors, industry partners, and support facilities for facilitating knowledge transfer and sharing of resources.
- Strengthen the base by introducing entrepreneurship education at suitable earlier stages of education to raise an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age.
- In general, the implication of the research is summarized in the figure 8.1 below :

8.6 Agenda for Future Research

In order to expand this research, the following are proposed research agendas:

Longitudinal study : Future research should adopt longitudinal designs in order to track students from university throughout their early careers. This would move beyond the "snapshot" provided by this study to show how entrepreneurial intention forms, what triggers or slows the transition into action, and the long-term impact of entrepreneurship education.

Widened Contextual Scope: In a bid to enhance generalizability, subsequent studies must encompass a more diverse sample including students from vocation colleges, local universities, and various fields of study in Ethiopia and other nations within Africa. This would facilitate informative comparative analysis.

Intervention Evaluation: Future studies should be action research that develops, implements, and evaluates specific interventions based on this research's suggestions—such as the IUP Model or systematic mentorship programs—to experimentally test their effectiveness for closing the intention-action gap.

8.7 Chapter Summary

The last chapter of this thesis, "Conclusion and Recommendations," is to summarize the whole research experience, summing its investigation into how entrepreneurship education impacts the entrepreneurial intentions of Ethiopian university students. Acknowledging that the impact of such education is well-documented in developed economies but not as much in developing economies, the study was designed to bridge this knowledge gap. It did this by basing itself on the Theory of Planned Behaviour as its theoretical underpinning and adopting a sequential exploratory mixed-methods approach. The methodology began with qualitative interviews to generate initial, in-depth results, which guided a larger quantitative survey to statistically validate these initial findings.

The research uncovered that entrepreneurial intention among Ethiopian students was not a simple cause-and-effect outcome, but a complex process driven by the interplay of educational, role models engagement , entrepreneurial personal, and socioeconomic factors. The key findings confirmed that entrepreneurship education played a positive impact on university students' entrepreneurial intention by affecting student attitudes and enhancing their skill , knowledge and capabilities. However, the study reveals a clear need for interventions that foster entrepreneurial learning, which emerges as the most critical component driving entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, entrepreneurial passion was discovered as the single most influential driver of intention. The discussion also highlighted the dominant role of socioeconomic determinants, i.e., family background and financial resources. Of highly interesting relevance was entrepreneurial role models; while qualitative data underscored their motivational role, quantitative findings surprisingly suggested no statistically significant direct influence. It explains this paradox by pointing to a glaring weakness in contemporary curriculum: a dearth of systematic and thorough engagement with these models, reducing the effect they can have to casual inspiration rather than as an intentional mechanism of education.

In order to record such insights given the resource constraint environmental settings , the study proposed a new model called the Investment-Uncertainty-Profit (IUP)

Model, with the intention of grounding entrepreneurship education on the harsh realities of managing risk, securing resources, and reaching profitability in an emerging economy.

Based on qualitative and quantitative findings, the study offers important practical and theoretical contributions. Theoretically, it extends the Theory of Planned Behaviour by including entrepreneurial passion as a necessary affective driver and explaining the role model paradox in an advanced manner. It also introduces context-specific theoretical construct of the "Passivity Paradox" where exposure to entrepreneurship is high but action does not follow due to institutional voids. The proposed IUP model is a further theoretical contribution, from inspirational abstractions to implementation. In reality, the research provides unambiguous guidance to academics and policymakers alike. It challenges universities beyond esoteric lectures to hands-on learning, mentorship-led training, and incorporating the IUP model into their curricula. For policymakers, the recommendations are to build formal support scaffolds such as a National Student Entrepreneurship Fund and formalized mentorship networks that will bridge the gap from entrepreneurial intention to actual action.

The chapter does justice in commenting on the limitations of the research, such that only a snapshot in time is provided by its cross-sectional design, its reliance on self-reported measures could be skewed, and its geographic and demographic sample may be restrictive for generalizability purposes. In response to these criticisms and limitations, the thesis then concludes with a clear set of recommendations and an agenda for future research. It calls on universities to rethink pedagogic strategies to experiential learning and government agencies to minimize bureaucratic obstacles and foster a cooperative atmosphere. Finally, it recommends that a future research agenda focused on longitudinal studies to track intention over time, expanding the scope of studies to other institutions and geographical areas, and conducting action research to test the effectiveness of the proposed interventions, such as the IUP model, to bridge the enduring intention-action gap.

8.8 Personal Reflection

My own experience as a necessity entrepreneur heavily influenced my preconceptions regarding teaching entrepreneurship. I went into this study with a strongly held, "Field of Dreams" presumption: if we constructed a curriculum that was full of local content and filled with role models to whom students could relate, good entrepreneurial intentions would flow logically and directly. I recognized the motivational appeal of a success story as an urgent intervention, just like my own early experiences of learning through immersion and survival.

This research has served as a corrective, both humbling and critical, which in essence transformed my thinking and professional practice. The turning point—establishing that exposure to role models has no direct significant impact on intention—shattered my lineal assumption and revealed the fundamental difference between passive inspiration and active psychological change. This knowledge was further strengthened by the profound transformation witnessed in students through the "Nu Chika Enwuka" program, where active engagement rather than shallow exposure built the self-efficacy that fuels intention. Consequently, my professional focus has shifted radically. I no longer merely teach entrepreneurship; I now try to craft the psychological and structural scaffolding on which it may be founded. This involves designing curricula in the language of my IUP Model's guiding principles—iterative learning, uncertainty reduction, and strategic resource utilization—and calling for joined-up ecosystems that connect education to mentorship and finance. My approach has changed from aspiring to create entrepreneurs to understanding we need to create the conditions under which they can develop and emerge, capable of translating local limitations into drivers of sustainable growth.

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10. Word Count:

50,804 (including all contents from introduction to conclusions and recommendations, excluding references and appendices)

11 Annexes

Annex1: Application for Confirmation of Doctorate Acceptance

Application for Confirmation of Doctorate

rdcadmin@shu.ac.uk <rdcadmin@shu.ac.uk>
Tue 1/31/2023 4:08 PM
To:Wesenseged.G.Lema@student.shu.ac.uk <Wesenseged.G.Lema@student.shu.ac.uk>
Cc:Breese, Richard <fomrb3@exchange.shu.ac.uk>
Student Number: [redacted]

Dear Wesenseged

I am pleased to inform you that the Chair of the University Research Degrees Committee has endorsed the decision of the Research Institute assessment panel to approve your application for Confirmation of Doctorate.

Current Title of Thesis: Assessment of Ethiopian University Entrepreneurship Education on Student Entrepreneurial Intention

The next stage for you will be the approval of your thesis title and examining team. These details should be proposed on an RF3 by your Director of Studies, and submitted to your research administrator at least 4 months in advance of submission of your thesis. In your case we would expect an RF3 to be submitted by no later than 20 May 2027, and your expected date of submission is no later than 20 September 2027. Please note that these dates are based on your maximum registration end date. However, please be aware that earlier dates may be suggested by your supervisors if you are a funded/ sponsored student.

First Submission of Thesis
Please ensure that your thesis conforms to the University's "Research Degree Thesis Guidelines". Further details can be found on the Research Degrees Blackboard site under the Examination Information tab. The guidelines now include a requirement for a detailed Candidate Declaration in the thesis after the title page, and an example is provided.

Your viva should take place 4-6 weeks after submission of the thesis, but this all depends on examiner availability and is a guideline only.

Please also see the document 'Examination Process and Viva for a Research Degree Candidate' on the same Blackboard tab. This document provides details on what you can expect from the examination process and your viva.

Final Electronic Thesis
Following the assessment process and successful completion of your research degree, the University requires all final theses to be made available via the Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA.) Electronic publication of your thesis raises copyright issues, and you may need to produce an edited version of your thesis to place on SHURA. In brief, if you are making substantial use of third-party material in your thesis, you will need to obtain permission to reproduce it in your electronic thesis. As this process can take time, it is good practice to start planning for this possibility as soon as possible. If you are working on an article-based PhD thesis, it is important to ensure that you have permission to reproduce the articles in your electronic thesis.

Full guidance on copyright, and the process for submitting your electronic thesis, can be found at https://library.shu.ac.uk/lms/freebooks/CopyrightAndYourElectronicThesiscurrentversion.pdf.

You can also contact the Library Research Support team: library-research-support@shu.ac.uk

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us at rdcadmin@shu.ac.uk.

Kind regards

Doctoral School on behalf of the Research Degrees Committee
Research and Innovation Services

Annex 2 : Interview Guide Questions

1. Interview Guide Questions for Students

The main goal of gathering data from the student are the following:

- To assess demographic variables
- Assess students' opinions on the existing curriculum of EE.
- To assess the impact of EE in changing students attitude social norms and perceived behaviors.
- To investigate students' level of entrepreneurial passion, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial intentions.
- To ascertain whether the environment is taken into account in the EE course curriculum.
- Assess how the EE course benefits from having successful role models and how it elevates students' expectations.
- To investigate the methods and style of instruction and evaluate the interactions between teaching staff and students at the university.

Interview Guide Questions

- Check completed and signed consent form.
- There will be 6 distinct areas of questions in the study.
- There will not be right or wrong answers, the purpose of these questions are considered to be a pivotal input for the research given your wide personal and professional experience and hence you are free to say whatever you want, nothing will exposed to a third party apart from using for the purpose of this research.
- you can ask clarifications as needed and you can withdraw from the study at any time if you want to do so.
- The interview will only take 20 – 30 minutes maximum.

Topic 1: Demographic variables

Can you tell me something about yourself?

Follow up / Prompt:

- ❑ Could you also tell me a little bit about your family's history, including their employment, education and income?
- ❑ What role do you think families will have in entrepreneurship development?

Topic 2 : Entrepreneurship and EE

Could you elaborate on how the university's EE program gives students the knowledge, skills, and abilities that foster the development of an entrepreneurial mindset? (e.g., creativity, risk-taking, business planning networking and opportunity recognitions)

Follow – up / Prompt.

- ❑ How do you explain the way the EE designed in AAU (like for example the Business planning process, feedback, networking, role models) ? ? Can you explain to me if you have any suggestions of improving?
- ❑ In what way does the EE course cover people management, new product and service development and sales?
- ❑ How does the institution organized its students to be able to learn from successful business owners?
- ❑ I would appreciate it if you could provide me with an explanation of the curriculum and extra curriculum activities used to teach the EE course at the university.
- ❑ In what way does the knowledge acquired from the EE course contribute to the confidence to pursue entrepreneurship as a career?

Topic 3: Attitude, Subjected Norms & Perceived Behavior

How does entrepreneurship education influence in changing students' attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviors ?

Follow up / Prompt.

- ❑ What is the difference between your position in taking advantage of market opportunities and the type of authority you require at work before and after the EE course?
- ❑ What impact does entrepreneurship education have on students' perceptions of enhancing entrepreneurial behavior?
- ❑ In keeping with the perception of being an entrepreneur held by friends, family, and peer groups, how would you describe the influence of EE (EE) ?

Topic 4: Entrepreneurial Passion (EP)

How do you explain your behaviors in terms of entrepreneurial passion [i.e., in terms of positive feelings, beliefs, and motivations that you have towards entrepreneurship] .

Follow up / Prompt.

- ❑ To what extent are you willing to dedicate yourself to exploring business opportunities?
- ❑ In terms of developing new products and services as well as fixing problems, how do you see yourself enhancing these circumstances?
- ❑ In your opinion, what role does speculating the contextual environment have for entrepreneurs?

Topic 5: Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy (ESE)

How do you perceive your ability as a person to engage in entrepreneurial tasks and activities?

Follow up / Prompt.

- ❑ How would you rate your level of confidence, your capacity to recognize and seize entrepreneurial opportunities, obtain the resources you need and control risks before and after the EE course?
- ❑ What role do you think business planning, role model, feedback and networking play in an entrepreneur's success?
- ❑ How effective is the EE course to make an informed decisions to establish a business?
- ❑ Can you explain to me, how helpful the EE course in helping people make informed business decisions?
- ❑ What do you learn from the EE course the most important advantage of opportunity recognitions?

Topic 6: Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI)

How do you explain your level of desire and commitment to become an entrepreneur?

Follow up / Prompt.

- ❑ If your answer is positive, where do you think this skill and capabilities have come from?
- ❑ What are your goals for a career in the future or starting your own business eventually?

Please let me know if there is anything else you would want to add or clarify before we wrap up this interview. Thanks

II. *Interview Guide Questions for Staffs*

The primary objectives of data collection among others are :

- Learn about their opinions of the current curriculum.
- To determine whether the program is supported by research and data.
- To determine whether the program makes an effort to take the big picture of the environment or the industry into account.
- I'm also interested to know about the teaching style /methods and understand the way how the lecturers interact with the students.

Interview Guide Questions

- Check completed and signed consent form.
- There will be 6 distinct areas of questions in the study.
- There will not be right or wrong answers, the purpose of these questions are considered to be a pivotal input for the research given your wide personal and professional experience and hence you are free to say whatever you want, nothing will exposed to a third party apart from using for the purpose of this research.
- you can ask clarifications as needed and you can withdraw from the study at any time if you want to do so.
- The interview will only take 20 minutes maximum.

Topic 1: Demographic variables

- ☐ Can you tell me something about yourself ?
- ❑ Follow up / Prompt:

Topic 2: Role

- ❑ Could you tell me what role you play at AAU?
- ❑ Follow up / Prompt
  - ❑ How did you get started at AAU with entrepreneurship?

- ❑ To what extent did you contribute your knowledge, skills, values, and beliefs to this role?
- ❑ Does the program you work for include environmental considerations in its overall design when offering the EE course? If your response is "yes," could you please elaborate for me?
- ❑ In your opinion, who gains advantages from EE?
- ❑ What are your thoughts on the nation's present entrepreneurship-promoting policies and strategies in general, and the university's support of EE courses specifically?
- ❑ Can you tell me how this has been influenced your teaching style?

Topic 3: Subject Area

- ❑ Could you please explain the process you use to develop a model or lesson plan for an entrepreneurial course?
- ❑ Follow up / Prompt.
  - ❑ What type of learning outcome do you anticipate? Do you think that students can be taught to be entrepreneurs?
  - ❑ How are these assessed? formally or informally?
  - ❑ How would you describe the course's design in terms of creativity, problem-solving, design thinking, the realities of starting a business, and the inclusion of extracurricular activities?
  - ❑ Does the EE course cover sales, people management, and developing new products and services?
  - ❑ Do you have any suggestions or recommendations in line the existing teaching style?
  - ❑ Do you know of any extracurricular activities that complement entrepreneurship education process?

Topic 4: Entrepreneurship

- ❑ How would you describe "entrepreneurship "to someone who has never heard the term before?
- ❑ Follow up / Prompt.
  - ❑ What are the good characteristics of Entrepreneurship you think?
  - ❑ Does the program in which you are taking part considers the broader context of the environment into account when providing the EE course?
  - ❑ What is included in the curriculum for the EE courses? Does the course cover people management, sales and developing new products and services?

Topic 5: Teaching Approach

- ❑ When you taught entrepreneurship course at the university what kind of instructional technique did you employ?
- ❑ Follow up / Prompt.
    - ❑ What are the good characteristics of entrepreneurship?
    - ❑ Do you think students can be taught to be entrepreneurs?
    - ❑ How would you sum up the basic teaching methodology in this field?
    - ❑ Do you have any suggestions or recommendations in line with the existing teaching style?
    - ❑ Do you have any questions for me before we wrap up?

Topic 6: student participation and Responses

- ❑ Can you tell me the way you communicate with your students?
- ❑ Follow up / Prompt:
    - ❑ Can you give me any examples of individual student's response that encourages you or negatively responded?
    - ❑ Do you have any sort of self-assessment mechanisms to measure entrepreneurial potentials of the students?
    - ❑ What do you think will the impact of entrepreneurship education (EE) on university student's entrepreneurial intentions (EI)?
- ❑ These are my questions, and before we wrap up, I would really appreciate it if you could let me know if you have any additional questions or suggestions.

Annex 3 : Converis - Ethics Review – Approval

Converis - Ethics Review - Approval

converis@shu.ac.uk <converis@shu.ac.uk>
Wed 4/26/2023 12:01 PM
To:Lema, Wesenseged <Wesenseged.G.Lema@student.shu.ac.uk>

Dear Wesenseged

Title of Ethics Review: Assessment of Ethiopia Universities Entrepreneurial Education on Student Entrepreneurial Intention
Ethic Review ID: ER41721472

The University has reviewed your ethics application named above and can confirm that the project has been approved.

You are expected to deliver the project in accordance with the University's research ethics and integrity policies and procedureshttps://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice.

As the Principal Investigator you are responsible for monitoring the project on an ongoing basis and ensuring that the approved documentation is used. The project may be audited by the University during or after its lifetime.

Should any changes to the delivery of the project be required, you are required to submit an amendment for review.

Wishing you success you with your study

Kind regards,
Ethics Research Support

*** This is an automatically generated email, please do not reply ***

Annex 4 : Measurement Instrument and Consent form

A Survey Instrument for Assessing the Impact of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) on Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) in the Ethiopian University Context.

1. Demographic Data (DD) : Please put your choice in the space provided

1. Demographic Data (DD) : Please put your choice in the space provided		
DD 1	**Age** : [1= if age ≤ 20 years ; 2= For age between 20 and 30 years ; and 3= for age ≥ 30 years]	
DD 2	**Gender**: [1= For Male ; 2= Female and 3= Rather not say]	
DD 3	**Father's Occupation**: [1= Self-employed ; 0 = other]	
DD 4	**Mother's Occupations**: [1= Self-employed ; 0= other]	
DD 5	**Father's education**: [0 = None ; 1= Primary ; 2= Secondary ; 3= University graduates]	
DD6	**Family Income Level**: [1 = if ≤ 5000 birr ; 2 = if income is between 5,000 and 10,000birr ; 3= if income is greater than 10,000 birr [≥ 10000]	
DD7	Have you ever taken an entrepreneurial course(s) before joining the university? [0 = No ; 1= Yes]	

2. Entrepreneurship Education (EE)

Mark only one using (√) in the box provided the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement 1='strongly disagree'; 2='disagree'; 3='Neutral ; 4='agree'; 5='strongly agree'.

Strongly Disagree ◄——► ***Strongly Agree***

2. Entrepreneurship Education (EE)		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
EE1	EE equips students with knowledge, skill and competencies necessary to identify & pursue entrepreneurial opportunity					
EE2	The curriculum designed to increase students' motivation and confidence to start their venture					
EE3	Throughout the class, I received frequent feedback on my thoughts, contributions to the discussion.					
EE4	The EE provides students with networking opportunities, access to resource					
EE5	EE provides students with a solid foundation in an areas such as business planning, marketing, finance, and innovation.					
EE6	Knowledge gained from EE can enhance students' confidence in starting and managing their venture					
EE7	Extra curriculum activities are in place to enhance the entrepreneurship intentions of students.					

EE8	The EE course helps to develop a company concept and prepare a business plan.					
EE9	EE fosters networking among students, which can lead to valuable connections, partnerships, and access to resources in the future					
EE10	EE often provides opportunities for students to interact with successful entrepreneurs, industry experts, and mentors.					
EE11	Successful entrepreneurs were invited as guest speakers in the program					
EE12	The EE plays a vital role in shaping the mindset and aspirations of students towards entrepreneurship.					
EE13	EE encourages the development of an entrepreneurial mindset characterized by traits such as creativity, risk-taking, resilience, and opportunity recognition.					
Role Models (RM) : Please indicate your choice in the space provide in front of each questions						
EE14	Parents self-employed status [0 = No 1= Yes]					
EE15	Self-employed relatives/ close friends [0= Nobody , 1 = Some, 2= Many]					
EE16	Do you personally know any entrepreneurs? [0 = No 1= Yes]					
EE17	Do you have a role model to follow [0= No 1= Yes]					

Source : (Obschonka et al., 2011)

Strongly Disagree ⟷ **Strongly Agree**

Attitude, subjective Norms & Perceived behavior		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3.1 Attitude (A)						
A 1	I want to use market opportunities to have economic success					
A 2	I want to have a challenging work (challenge)					
A 3	I want to have authority at work					
A 4	I want to be my own boss (autonomy)					
A 5	Self-actualization is important to me					
A 6	I would enjoy becoming an entrepreneur					
3.2 Subjective Norms (SN)		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
SN 1	My family thinks that I will become an entrepreneur					
SN 2	People who are important to me think that I should become an entrepreneur					
SN 3	Starting a firm and keeping it working would be easy for me					
SN 4	I am prepared to start a viable firm					
SN 5	I can control the creation process of a new firm					
SN 6	I know all the necessary practical details to start a firm					
SN 7	I know how to develop an entrepreneurial project					
3.3 Perceived behavior (PB)		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
PR 1	Starting a firm and keeping it working would be easy for me					
PR 2	I am prepared to start a viable firm					
PR 3	I can control the creation process of a new firm					
PR 4	I know all the necessary practical details to start a firm					
PR 5	I know how to develop an entrepreneurial project					
PR 6	If I become an entrepreneur, it would be very likely that my company would be successful.					

Strongly Disagree ⟷ Strongly Agree

3. Entrepreneurial Passions (EP)		1	2	3	4	5
EP 1	Searching for new ideas for products/services to offer is enjoyable to me					
EP 2	I am motivated to figure out how to make existing products/services better					
EP 3	Scanning the environment for new opportunities really excites me.					
EP 4	Inventing new solutions to problems is an important part of who I am					
EP 5	I have engaged in entrepreneurial activity before					
EP 6	Are you considering yourself as an entrepreneur?					

Source : Adopted from validated instrument for measuring EP (Cardon et al., 2013)

4. Entrepreneurial Self efficacy (ESE)		1	2	3	4	5
ESE 1	I have learned about opportunity recognitions					
ESE 2	I know how to evaluate opportunities					
ESE 3	I have gained basic knowledges to establish my own firm					
ESE 4	I am aware of corporate entrepreneurship					
ESE 5	I have gained much experience from successful entrepreneurs					
ESE 6	I am confident that to take calculative risks to start a business					
ESE 7	Sociocultural aspect of my community supports entrepreneurship					
ESE 8	My previous entrepreneurship experience helps me to start a business					
ESE 9	I am aware of the importance of business planning activities, feedback mechanisms and networking for entrepreneurship success .					

Source: ESE (1) up to ESE(5) (Chen et al. (1998) and DeNoble et al. (1999))

5. Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)		1	2	3	4	5
EI 1	I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur					
EI 2	My professional goal is becoming an entrepreneur					
EI 3	I will make every effort to start and run my own firm					
EI 4	I strongly believe that I will start my own business in the future					
EI 5	I have very seriously thought of starting a firm					
EI 6	I prefer to be an entrepreneur rather than to be an employee in a company/organization					

Source : EI 1- EI 5, (Linan & Chen, 2009)and EI 6- (Leong, 2008)

Annex 5 : Pilot Testing

Pilot Testing Report

The main goals of this pilot test were to assist in organizing and modifying the larger inquiry, identify new emerging variables that would be emphasized in the larger study procedure, and generally provide the information required to support the research study. To accomplish this, efforts were made to schedule a meeting with the department head of business and economics to decide on the best course of action. Precise guidelines were provided on how to support and set up the FBE's management program manager, Dr. Habtamu.

During our conversation with Dr. Habtamu, we went into great length about the study's design as well as its goal, which is to assess the influence of entrepreneurship education (EE) on students' entrepreneurial intents (EI) in the context of Ethiopian universities. Additionally, it was clarified that the project's aim apart being benefiting a community there will not be any harm which makes it ethical project. Participation is purely voluntary, and anybody is free to stop or withdraw if they need so. Data will also be anonymized and stored in a secured and safe university web site and serve for this research purpose.

During our conversation, the online data gathering plan using a Google Form was one topic that was explored and thought to be pre-pilot testing explorations. Dr. Habtamu's assessment of his experience was distinct, though. He said that this kind of data collection is not supported by the university's current culture and environment. Online surveys typically have a poor response rate, but in the case of the AAU specifically, it was nearly nonexistent. His experience reveals that when attempts were made to gather feedback on curriculum assessment online, academic staff members and even students themselves showed no interest in responding. He believes that using the questionnaire rather than the online one will be advantageous for data collection. As a result, attempts were made to take this information into consideration.

The pilot testing looks to examine the validity of each question. However when I was asking the questionnaire for two students , there were a sort of replicated type questions, I have noticed this on their response for my questions they start by saying as I have mentioned it before and continued to answer the same answer.

In order to make sure the questions reflected the intended purpose, some of the items in the survey questionnaires and interview guide questions were rephrased or even deleted. For instance, efforts were made to scrutinize and combine the topics of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education into a single subsection rather than treating them as separate sections.

The discussion has revealed that the necessity of providing a thorough explanation of the study's goals, its significance, and its ethical justifications has a big influence on how well the information-gathering process works because it raises participants' aspirations.

Lessons from the pilot testing

1. The demotivating environment at AAU has called into doubt the relevance of the study and the value of the online survey approach that was planned to collect data. Consequently, the necessary adjustments have been made to enable students to finish the survey. It will be given out by class representatives, and a random follow-up will be conducted.
2. The budgetary requirements of the survey were determined by the results of the pilot study. This pilot testing is a useful tool for estimating study costs, which have not been budgeted and were not previously taken into account because of the plan to carry the online data collection through google form.
3. The study highlights how crucial it is for society to accept any activity that business owners planned to undertake.
4. Pilot testing helps the survey and interview guide questions undertook rephrasing, scrutiny, and in some cases, removal based on their relevance to the topic matter.

Annex 6: Generated Codes and Themes

	1st order concepts	2nd order Themes
RQ1	**EE impact on EI**	
	Benefit to the community Business Plan development Course content Knowledge acquisitions of entrepreneurship Limited knowledge Skill development Speculating environment Opportunity recognitions Understanding market needs	**Theme 1** : Entrepreneurial Skill Development
	Attitude Change Extra – Curriculum Activities Influence on career choice Motivations Need for practicality	**Theme 2**: Attitude change and motivation
	Absence of Networking Impact on confidence	**Theme 3:** Enhancing Confidence
	Extra - Curriculum Activities Recommended areas of Improvement. Exposure to practical aspects	**Theme 4:** Area required. Interventions
RQ2	**Role Models Influence on EI**	
	Family and friends Influence Impact on carrier influence	**Theme 1:** Influence on Carrer Decisions
	Access to successful entrepreneurs Practical Learning from Successful Entrepreneurs	**Theme 2:** Learning from Entrepreneurs
	Confidence Boost Mentorship Personal Aspiration	**Theme 3:** Confidence Building
RQ3	**Entrepreneurial Passion Influence on EI**	
	Confidence and determination Positive Feeling	**(Theme 1):** Confidence and Positivity
	Desire for Independence Learning from the Course Motivations or Aspiration	**(Theme 2)**: Aspiration and Independence
	Intrinsic Motivation Self-Reflection	**(Theme 3)**: Personal Insight
RQ 4	**Socioeconomic Factors on EI**	
	Economic status of Families Family Occupations	**(Theme 1):** Family Economic Dynamics
	Career Shift Culture Context Risk Perception Socioeconomic Factors and Economic Opportunities Unemployment Rate	**(Theme 2)**: Economic Opportunities and Risks
	Education Level of families Experiential Learning	**(Theme 3)**: Education and Learning Experiences

Annex 7: Course Outline of EE

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE
COURSE SYLLABUS

Program	BA	
Course code	MGMT1012	
Course Title	Entrepreneurship	
Degree Program	**Freshman**	
Module Name		
Module Number		
Course Chair	Hailemariam Kebede (PhD)	
	Office Location	New building -317
	Mobile:	
	Email	[redacted]
	Consultation Hours:	Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 3:00pm-11:00pm
ECTS		
Credit hours	3	
Target Student	Freshman	
Year/Semester	Year I Semester I-2012ec	
Status of the Course		

Course description

The course, **Entrepreneurship**, has been offered to Ethiopian students of higher education in limited departments, such as management, Accounting, Agriculture and Engineering. However, as part of high education reform, it was decided the course, **Entrepreneurship**, to be one of the common courses for all freshman students. It aims to bring behavioral changes among students and support them develop self-employment mindset in their personal and professional lives. Among other things, it was also decided to prepare common teaching material for the course so that students may learn and instructors teach the course using the same material.

Course outcome

Upon successful completion of this paper, you should be able to:

- ✓ Understand the context, concepts, theories and process of entrepreneurship
- ✓ Develop entrepreneurial opportunities & recognize the entrepreneurial potential within yourself, whether you want to start your own business or act as an entrepreneur within an existing organization
- ✓ Identify entrepreneurial opportunities and assess these opportunities
- ✓ Research and determine the viability or feasibility of new business concepts
- ✓ Understand how to turn a new business concept into a sustainable business venture
- ✓ Appreciate that there are various types of entrepreneurs, such as social entrepreneurs, sustainable entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial families

Contents

- HirshRobertD. and D. and PetersMichaelP. "Entrepreneurship" Fifth Edition, Tata McGraw Hill Edition, 2002.
- Justin G. Longenecker and Carlos W. Moore, Small Business Management 12th edition, College Division South Western Publishing Co. Dallas, 2003
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Annex 8 : Coding Outcome

EE influence on EI

- Files (case count) → 10
- References → 198

ERMs influence on EI

- Files (case count) → 10
- References → 61

EP influence on EI

- Files (case count) → 10
- References → 49

SEF influence on EI

- Files (case count) → 9
- References → 36