

Entrepreneurial Intentions among University Students in the Digital Economy

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Abstract

The study examines the entrepreneurial intentions of university students in the context of the digital economy, focusing on digital technologies, motivational factors, and perceived challenges. The descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 102 university students in Bengaluru using a construction questionnaire. The findings indicate a strong inclination towards entrepreneurship, with digital platforms enhancing access to opportunities and reducing entry barriers. Financial independence and autonomy are identified as key motivational drivers. However, challenges such as limited access to funding, inadequate business knowledge and low awareness of institutional support persist. The study concludes that strengthening entrepreneurship education, digital skill development, and support systems is essential to transform entrepreneurial intentions into successful ventures.

Keywords: Digital entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial intention, University Students, Digital Economy, Digital Platforms

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a critical driver of economic growth, innovation and employment generation. In recent years, the emergence of the digital economy has significantly transformed the entrepreneurial landscape by reshaping traditional business models and creating new avenues for value creation. The rapid advancement of digital technologies, including online platforms, e-commerce and digital marketing, has reduced entry barriers, minimised startup costs, and enabled wider market access for aspiring entrepreneurs.

University students represent a vital segment of potential entrepreneurs, as they possess creativity, technological awareness and a greater willingness to explore innovative ideas. The integration of digital tools into business activities allows students to identify opportunities, develop business concepts and engage with customers more efficiently and at lower risk. As a result, the digital environment has enhanced the feasibility and attractiveness of entrepreneurship among young individuals.

Despite these opportunities, the development of entrepreneurial intention among students is influenced by a range of factors. These include educational background, level of digital skills, personal motivation and exposure to entrepreneurial knowledge. At the same time, students face several challenges such as financial constraints, lack of practical experience and fear of failure, which may hinder their ability to translate intentions into actual entrepreneurial behaviour.

In this context, understanding the entrepreneurial intentions of university students within the digital economy becomes essential. This study aims to examine the extent of entrepreneurial inclination among students and analyse the role of digital technologies, opportunities and challenges in shaping their intentions. It also considers the influence of demographic factors in determining students' readiness to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

Review of Literature

1. **Agus Wibowo (2023):** "Does Digital Entrepreneurship Education Matter for Students' Digital Entrepreneurial Intentions? The Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Alertness" in their study on digital entrepreneurship education, examined how digital knowledge influences students' entrepreneurial intentions. The study found that digital entrepreneurship education significantly enhances students' intentions, with entrepreneurial alertness acting as a mediating factor.
2. **Ioannis Sitaridis and Fotis Kitsios (2023):** "Digital entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education: a review of the literature" in the study on entrepreneurship in the digital transformation era, focused on the role of innovation and technology. The study concluded that digital technologies create new opportunities and significantly influence entrepreneurial behavior.

3. Md Mominur Raham, Md Jahid Hasan, Bishawjit Chandra Deb, Muhammad Shajib Rahman, Anower sadath Kabir (2023): “The effect of social media entrepreneurship on sustainable development: Evidence from online clothing shops in Bangladesh” examined psychological and contextual determinants of entrepreneurial intention among students. The results showed that motivation, attitude, and self-efficacy have a strong positive influence on entrepreneurial intentions.

4. Minh Pham (2023): “The impact of entrepreneurship knowledge on students’ e-entrepreneurial intention formation and the moderating role of technological innovativeness” in their study on entrepreneurship knowledge and technological innovativeness, analyzed the relationship between education and entrepreneurial intention. The study found that entrepreneurship knowledge and prior experience enhance motivation, while innovativeness strengthens entrepreneurial intention.

5. Kitsios, F. and Kamariotou, M. (2023): “Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship Transformation through Open Data Hackathons: Design Strategies for successful start-up settings” examined entrepreneurial orientation among students. The findings revealed that innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking behavior significantly influence entrepreneurial intention.

6. José Moleiro Martins, Muhammad Farrukh Shahzad and Shuo Xu (2023): “Factors influencing entrepreneurial intention to initiate new ventures: evidence from university students” investigated factors influencing entrepreneurial intention. The study concluded that entrepreneurship education, personal motivation, and institutional support are key determinants of entrepreneurial intention.

7. Adel Alferaih (2022): “Starting a New Business? Assessing University Students’ Intentions towards Digital Entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia” in their study on digital entrepreneurial intention, analyzed the key factors influencing students’ decision to pursue entrepreneurship. The findings revealed that self-efficacy, attitude, and digital knowledge play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions.

8. Duan Lihua (2021): “An Extended Model of the Theory of Planned Behavior: An Empirical Study of Entrepreneurial Intention and Entrepreneurial Behavior in College Students” in the study based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, examined

entrepreneurial intention among students. The findings showed that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly influence entrepreneurial intention and behavior.

9. Ibrahim Al-Jubari, Arif Hassan & Francisco Liñán (2018): “Entrepreneurial intention among university students in Malaysia: Integrating Self-determination theory and the theory of planned behavior” focused on entrepreneurial ecosystems and innovation. The study found that innovation culture and ecosystem support positively influence entrepreneurial activities.

10. Wei-Loon Koe (2016): “The relationship between Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO) and entrepreneurial intention” examined determinants of entrepreneurial intention in higher education. The findings highlighted that educational environment and institutional support play a crucial role in developing entrepreneurial intentions.

Research Gap

Entrepreneurial intentions and the role of digital technologies in fostering entrepreneurship have been the subject of numerous prior studies. Many researchers have examined how factors such as entrepreneurial education, motivation, digital skills and self-efficacy influence entrepreneurial intentions. However, limited studies have specially focused on **entrepreneurial intentions among university students in the context of the digital economy**. Furthermore, when analysing entrepreneurial intentions, prior research has paid comparatively less attention to demographic factors such as gender, age, and program of study. Therefore, this study aims to address the gap by examining the relationship between digital factors and entrepreneurial intentions among university students.

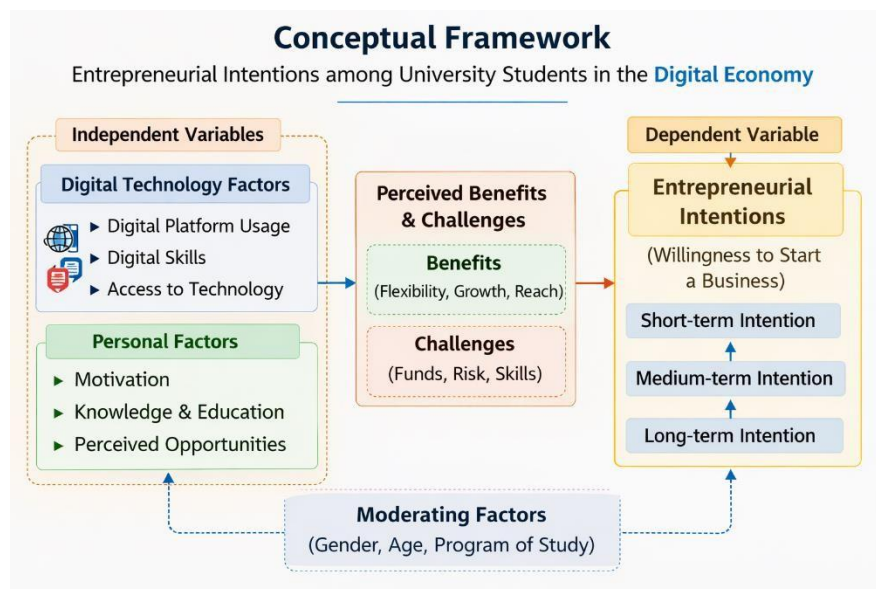
Objectives

1. To examine the entrepreneurial intentions among university students.
2. To analyse the influence of digital technologies on entrepreneurial intentions of university students.
3. To identify the factors that encourage university students to start digital businesses.
4. To examine the challenges faced by university students in starting entrepreneurial ventures.

Scope of the Study

The Study is only confined to University Students in Bengaluru. The opinion is obtained from various students through questionnaire to understand their readiness and inclination towards digital entrepreneurship.

Conceptual Framework



Source: Developed by the researcher based on literature review.

The conceptual framework of the study explains the relationship between digital technology factors and entrepreneurial intentions among universities students in the digital economy. Digital platform usage digital skills and access to technology are considered independent variables, while personal factors such as motivation, knowledge and perceived opportunity also influence entrepreneurial intentions. Perceived benefits and challenges further shape these intentions. The dependent variable is entrepreneurial intentions, while demographic factors such as gender, age and program of the study act as moderating variable that may affect the relationship between digital factors and entrepreneurial intentions.

Research Methodology

Research Methods

The Study is Descriptive in nature. Online survey method has been used for the study. Convenience Sampling Technique is used for the purpose of selection of Sample unit.

Sample Size

The Sample size is 102 University students in Bengaluru

Sources of Data Collected

Both Primary and Secondary data are used for the study. The Primary data is collected through questionnaire. Secondary data is collected from various reputed journals, books, internet sources.

Tools for Data Analysis

The collected data were processed and presented in the form of tables, graphs and figures. The analysis was made with the help of relevant statistical tools Percentage.

Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to a specific group of University Students.
- Time and resource constraints limited the depth of the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 01: Demographic Information

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	37	36.27%
Female	65	63.73%
Total	102	100%
Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
18-20 Years	56	54.90%
21-23 Years	37	36.27%
24-26 Years	9	8.82%
Above 26 Years	0	-
Total	102	100%
Course / Program of Study	No. of Respondents	Percentage
BBA	3	2.94%
BCOM	59	57.84%
MBA	1	0.98%

MCOM	39	38.24%
Other	0	-
Total	102	100%

From the above table, it is observed that the majority of respondents are female (63.73%), indicating higher participation compared to males. Most respondents belong to the 18–20 age group (54.90%), showing that the sample mainly consists of younger students. A large proportion of participants are from B.Com (57.84%) and M.Com (38.24%), reflecting a dominance of commerce students in the study.

Table 02: Interest of Respondents in Starting their own business

Parameters	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	70	70%
No	32	32%
Total	102	100%

The above-mentioned table shows that 70% of the respondents show interest in starting their own business in the future, whereas 32% are not interested. This reflects a high level of entrepreneurial inclination among the respondents.

Table 03: Reasons for Not interested in starting a Business (N=32)

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Lack of financial resources	14	43.8%
Lack of business knowledge	4	12.5%
Fear of failure	1	3.1%
Preference for job security	16	50%
Lack of experience	5	15.6%

The table shows that the main reasons for not starting a business is preference for job security 50%, followed by lack of financial resources 43.8%. Lack of experience 15.6% and lack of business knowledge 12.5% are comparatively lower, while fear of failure 3.1% is least reported reason.

Note: The data represents multiple responses, as respondents were allowed to select more than one option. Hence, the total percentage exceeds 100%.

Table 04: Preferred career options after graduation (N=32)

Career Option	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Work in a private company	6	18.8%
Government job	13	40.6%
Higher education (Master's / PhD)	6	18.8%
Professional career (CA, CS, etc.)	4	12.5%
Not decided Yet	3	9.3%
Total	32	100%

From the above table, it can be interpreted that the majority of respondents (40.6%) prefer government jobs after graduation. This is followed by private sector jobs and higher education, each accounting for 18.8% of respondents. A smaller proportion (12.5%) prefers professional careers, while only 9.3% of respondents are yet to decide their career path. It can be understood that there is a strong preference for secure and stable career options among the respondents.

Table 05: Type of business preferred by respondents who intend to start a business (N=70)

Type of Business	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Online business / E-Commerce	28	40%
Technology Startup	18	25.7%
Service-based business	25	35.7%
Family business	11	15.7%
Retail business	20	28.6%

Table 5 states that online business / e-commerce is more preferred type of business among respondents 40%, followed by service-based businesses 35.7% and retail businesses 28.6%. Technology startups 25.7% and family businesses 15.7% are comparatively less preferred, indicating a higher inclination towards digital and service-oriented ventures.

Note: The data represents multiple responses, as respondents were allowed to select more than one option. Hence, the total percentage exceeds 100%.

Table 06: Motivational factors for starting a business (N=70)

Motivational factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Financial Independence	39	55.7%
Being my own boss	38	54.3%
Opportunity to innovate	17	24.3%
Family business background	1	1.4%
Social impact	9	12.9%

From the above table, it can be interpreted that financial independence 55.7% is the most significant motivational factor, closely followed by the desire to be one's own business 54.3%. Opportunity to innovate 24.3% and social impact 12.9% are less influential, while family business background 1.4% is the least. The data indicated that economic independence and autonomy are key drivers for starting a business.

Note: The data represents multiple responses, as respondents were allowed to select more than one option. Hence, the total percentage exceeds 100%.

Table 07: Support required to start a business (N=70)

Support	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Startup funding	32	45.7%
Business training	42	60%
Mentorship programs	17	24.3%
Government support schemes	22	31.4%
University incubation support	9	12.9%

The table shows that business training 60% is the most required support, followed by startup funding 45.7%. Government support schemes 31.4% and mentorship program 24.3% are also important, while university incubation support 12.9% is the least required. This indicates that respondents prioritize business training and financial support to start a business.

Note: The data represents multiple responses, as respondents were allowed to select more than one option. Hence, the total percentage exceeds 100%.

Table 08: Perception on Digital Technologies making business easier (N=70)

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	64	91.4%
No	6	8.6%
Total	72	100%

The table shows that majority of respondents 91.4% believe that digital technology makes it easier to start a business, while only 8.6% do not agree. This indicates a strong positive perception towards the role of digital technologies in facilitating entrepreneurship.

Table 09: Preferred Digital Platform for Business Promotion (N=70)

Digital Platform	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Instagram	55	78.6%
Facebook	15	21.4%
YouTube	31	44.3%
WhatsApp	19	27.1%
LinkedIn	20	28.6%
E-commerce Platforms	34	48.6%
Personal website / blog	23	32.9%

The table shows that Instagram 78.6% is the most preferred platform for promoting business followed by YouTube 42.3% and e-commerce platform 48.6%. WhatsApp 27.1% and LinkedIn 28.6% are moderately preferred, while Facebook 21.4% is the least preferred. This indicates that respondents mainly prefer Instagram, a visually engaging and widely used to social media platforms for business promotion.

Note: The data represents multiple responses, as respondents were allowed to select more than one option. Hence, the total percentage exceeds 100%.

Table 10: Purpose of using Digital Platforms for Business (N=70)

Purpose	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Marketing and Promotion	54	77.1%
Customer Communication	33	47.1%
Online Sales	28	40%
Brand Building	27	38.6%
Networking with Customers	34	48.6%

The findings from the above table indicate that marketing and promotion 77.1% is the primary purpose of using digital platforms, followed by networking with customers 48.6% and customer communication 47.1%. Online sales 40% and brand building 38.6% are also significant. This suggests that digital platforms are mainly used for promotional and customer engagement activities.

Note: The data represents multiple responses, as respondents were allowed to select more than one option. Hence, the total percentage exceeds 100%.

Table 11: Possession of Digital Skills to start an Online business (N=70)

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	24	34.3%
No	18	25.7%
Not Sure	28	40%
Total	70	100%

The table shows that most respondents are not sure about the digital skills 40%, followed by those who possess the skills 34.3% and those who do not 25.7%. This indicates that a significant number of respondent lack clarity or confidence in their digital readiness for starting an online business.

Table 12: Important Digital skills for Entrepreneurship (N=70)

Digital Skills	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Social media marketing	53	75.7%
Website development	30	42.9%

Digital payments management	16	22.9%
Online customer service	23	32.9%

The table reveals that social media marketing 75.7% is considered the most important digital skill for entrepreneurship, followed by website development 42.9%. Online customer service 32.9% and digital payments management 22.9% are less prioritized. This suggests that respondents view social media marketing skills as the key requirement for digital entrepreneurship.

Note: The data represents multiple responses, as respondents were allowed to select more than one option. Hence, the total percentage exceeds 100%.

Table 13: University Support for Entrepreneurship (N=70)

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	17	24.3%
No	25	35.7%
Not Sure	28	40%
Total	70	100%

The table shows that 40% of respondents are not sure about university support for entrepreneurship, followed by 35.7% who believes such support is not available, while only 24.3% feel that their university provides entrepreneurship support. This indicates low awareness and limited availability of entrepreneurship training among the respondents.

Table 14: Biggest Challenges in Starting a Business (N=70)

Challenges	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Lack of funding	36	51.4%
Lack of Knowledge	35	50%
Fear of Failure	27	38.6%
Lack of Experience	29	41.4%

The table indicates that lack of funding 51.4% and lack of knowledge 50% are the major challenges in starting a business. Fear of failure 38.6% and lack of experience 41.4%

are also significant factors. This suggests that financial and knowledge related barriers are the primary challenge faced by the respondents.

Note: The data represents multiple responses, as respondents were allowed to select more than one option. Hence, the total percentage exceeds 100%.

Findings

- The study identifies a strong entrepreneurial inclination among university students, with a majority expressing intent to establish business venture in the future.
- Digital technologies significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions by lowering entry barriers and facilitating access to market and resources.
- Financial independence and autonomy emerge as the most dominant motivational factors driving students towards entrepreneurship.
- A notable audible gap exists in digital skill readiness, with a considerable proportion of students lacking confidence in their ability to engage in digital entrepreneurship.
- Key barriers such as limited access to funding, inadequate business knowledge and low awareness of institutional support hinder the conversion of entrepreneurial intentions into actions.

Suggestions

- Higher education institutions should integrate structured entrepreneurship education with focus on experiential and practice-oriented learning.
- Targeted digital skilled development program should be implemented to enhance student's competency in areas such as e-commerce and digital marketing.
- Financial support mechanisms, including seed funding and access to credit facilities, should be strengthened to reduce entry barriers.
- Universities should establish incubation centers and mentorship programs to provide guidance and practical support to aspiring entrepreneurs.
- Awareness initiative should be undertaken to improve students understanding of available government schemes and institutional support systems.

Conclusion

The study concludes that university should show a strong inclination towards entrepreneurship in the digital economy. Digital technologies play a significant role in

shaping entrepreneurial intentions by providing easy access to platforms, tools and markets. However, despite high interest, students face challenges such as lack of funding, insufficient knowledge and limited awareness of available support systems. The study highlights the importance of improving entrepreneurship education, digital skill development and institutional support to encourage students to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. With proper guidance, training and support students can effectively leverage digital technologies to become successful entrepreneurs and contribute to economic growth.

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Ries (2011) emphasized the importance of innovation and adaptability in modern entrepreneurial ventures.

Drucker (1985) highlighted entrepreneurship as a key driver of innovation and economic development.

Kollmann (2022) discussed the evolving nature of digital entrepreneurship in the modern economy.