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Experiential Dimensions of Entrepreneurship Education: The Roles of Teachers' Entrepreneurial Experience and Students' Work Experience

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Abstract

The relationship between formal entrepreneurial education (FEE) and students' entrepreneurial intention (EI) remains an important area of inquiry, particularly in understanding the contextual conditions that may explain variations in entrepreneurial intention. Although previous research has examined entrepreneurial educators' experiences and students' work experiences, further theoretical integration is needed to understand their roles within entrepreneurship education. Building upon earlier conceptual work concerning entrepreneurial teachers' experience breadth, this paper proposes an extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework that incorporates the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences (ETE) and student employment (SE) as parallel contextual moderators. Drawing upon TPB, Role Model Theory, and Experiential Learning Theory, the framework conceptualises how educator-level and student-level experiences may condition the relationships between FEE, attitude towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and EI. The paper proposes eight moderating relationships and discusses their underlying theoretical mechanisms and potential boundary conditions. By integrating these distinct experiential perspectives, the study offers a conceptual basis for examining variations in entrepreneurial intention and provides directions for future empirical research and the development of context-sensitive entrepreneurship education practices.

Keywords Entrepreneurial Intention, Formal Entrepreneurial Education, Entrepreneurial Teachers' Experience, Student Employment, Theory of Planned Behaviour

Introduction

Formal entrepreneurial education (FEE) has received considerable scholarly attention for its potential to develop entrepreneurial knowledge, competencies, and intentions among higher education students (Fretschner & Lampe, 2019; Nabi et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention (EI) is not necessarily uniform across educational contexts and student populations. Previous research has demonstrated that the relationship may vary according to students' initial entrepreneurial aspirations and the nature of their educational experiences (Bae et al., 2014; Fretschner & Lampe, 2019). This variability highlights an important phenomenon within entrepreneurship education: students exposed to formal entrepreneurial learning opportunities may differ in how they interpret entrepreneurial knowledge, evaluate entrepreneurship as a potential career pathway, and develop intentions to pursue entrepreneurial activities. Understanding the contextual conditions associated with these differences is therefore important for explaining entrepreneurial intention formation and informing the development of entrepreneurship education practices.

From an experiential perspective, entrepreneurship education involves influences originating from both educators and students. On the educator side, entrepreneurial teachers may contribute practical knowledge, demonstrate entrepreneurial decision-making processes, and provide role-modelling opportunities that extend beyond conventional classroom instruction (Abbasianchavari & Moritz, 2021; San-Martín et al., 2021). However, educators differ in the breadth of their entrepreneurial experiences, including their exposure to different entrepreneurial activities, venture contexts, and business-related responsibilities. Such diversity may influence the practical relevance and credibility of the entrepreneurial learning experiences they provide. Nevertheless, possessing entrepreneurial experience does not necessarily indicate greater pedagogical effectiveness or stronger entrepreneurial intentions among students (Diegoli, 2018). On the student side, individuals undertaking paid employment alongside their formal studies may acquire workplace experiences that influence how they interpret and apply entrepreneurial knowledge. These experiences may provide opportunities to develop practical competencies and observe organisational activities, but they may also introduce competing career preferences or constraints. Consequently, educator-level entrepreneurial experience and student-level employment represent distinct experiential contexts that may influence the relationships associated with entrepreneurial intention.

The central research problem addressed in this study concerns the limited theoretical understanding of how educator-level and student-level experiential conditions may separately influence the strength or direction of the relationships between formal entrepreneurial education, cognitive antecedents, and entrepreneurial intention. While the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) provides an established explanation of entrepreneurial intention through attitude towards entrepreneurship (ATE), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC), the relative importance of these antecedents may vary across contexts (Ajzen, 1991). Similarly, previous research has investigated entrepreneurial educators, role models, and work-related experiences, but their proposed moderating roles have not been sufficiently integrated within a common conceptual explanation. In particular, greater theoretical clarity is needed regarding whether the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences (ETE) and student employment (SE) condition the translation of formal

entrepreneurial learning and cognitive evaluations into entrepreneurial intention. Addressing this problem is relevant to higher education institutions seeking to understand the potential roles of educators' practical backgrounds and students' employment experiences in entrepreneurial learning, without assuming that either experiential condition necessarily produces positive outcomes.

To address this research problem, the present conceptual study develops an extended TPB framework incorporating ETE and SE as two distinct contextual moderators. Building upon earlier conceptual work that proposed entrepreneurial teachers' experience breadth as a moderator within the TPB framework (Toh et al., 2026), the present study extends this perspective by introducing student employment as an additional student-level experiential moderator. Drawing upon TPB, Role Model Theory, and Experiential Learning Theory, the proposed framework examines the theoretical relationships between FEE, ATE, SN, PBC, and EI, together with the separate moderating roles of ETE and SE. Specifically, the model advances four direct relationships and eight moderating propositions to provide a theoretically grounded explanation of how entrepreneurial intention relationships may vary across experiential contexts. As a conceptual investigation, the study does not seek to establish empirical causal effects but instead provides a foundation for future empirical examination and further theoretical development in entrepreneurship education.

Literature Review

Role Models

Entrepreneurial role models are widely recognised as potential sources of social influence in the development of individuals' entrepreneurial intentions (Krueger et al., 2000; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). Such role models may include family members, former colleagues, educators, or experienced entrepreneurs whose behaviours and experiences provide examples of entrepreneurial career pathways (Krueger et al., 2000; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015; Urbano et al., 2011). Entrepreneurs frequently cite 'others' as a major motivator for starting their firm. These 'others' are frequently entrepreneurs of many types and traits, such as well-known persons, former colleagues, or family members. Such others could be understood as role models (Bosma & Schutjens, 2011) and play an inspiring role in enhancing entrepreneurial intention (Nowiński & Haddoud, 2019). For instance, Urbano et al. (2011) established that individuals with a similar ethnic background can inspire other community members to venture into new business creation. Pablo-Lerchundi et al. (2015), using a sample of Spanish technology students, showed that the professional experience of their parents influenced students' entrepreneurial intentions; they were more inclined to become entrepreneurs if their parents were entrepreneurs than if they were civil servants. Similarly, the results of the GUESS survey from a large, cross-country study showed that exposure to entrepreneurs in the family, such as parents and grandparents, increases students' entrepreneurial intentions (Laspita et al., 2012). In addition, there was research that shows that successful entrepreneurs increase perceived entrepreneurial potential (Krueger & Brazeal, 1994), and observing unsuccessful entrepreneurs can increase fear of failure (Jean-Pierre et al., 2011). Either unsuccessful or successful entrepreneurs have a positive relationship with entrepreneurial intention(Abbasianchavari & Moritz, 2021; Chen et al., 2016).

Entrepreneurial Teacher

Being an entrepreneurial teacher entails demonstrating entrepreneurial behaviour in one's ethos and practices (Gibb, 2011), as well as through educational activities, to sustain students' entrepreneurial learning processes and to enhance the development of students' entrepreneurial competencies (Joensuu-Salo et al., 2021; Peltonen, 2015). Besides that, they must have skills and knowledge that can meet the institutions' needs and contribute effectively to social transformation through practice (Hillmann et al., 2018), such as entrepreneurial spirit, entrepreneurial knowledge, professional ability, teaching ability, and research ability (Huang et al., 2024). Furthermore, according to Argon & Selvi Çiğdem (2013), teachers should be able to produce, use, present, and manage information; see, process, and evaluate school deficiencies; and have high levels of innovation and entrepreneurial value. As these descriptions show, being an entrepreneurial teacher necessitates cognitive, conative, and affective skills (Peltonen, 2015).

In the context of this study, the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences (ETE) refers to the diversity of entrepreneurial activities, venture contexts, and business-related roles in which educators have personally participated. Entrepreneurial experience primarily involves direct engagement in venture creation, business development, or the operation of entrepreneurial ventures(Delmar & Shane, 2006; Dimov, 2010). The breadth of such experience is conceptually distinct from its depth, as breadth concerns the diversity of entrepreneurial exposure, whereas depth reflects the duration or intensity of involvement in particular entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, prior industry employment and pedagogical competence should be distinguished from entrepreneurial experience, as professional knowledge and effective teaching practices do not necessarily indicate direct involvement in entrepreneurial ventures. Accordingly, this study conceptualises ETE as an experiential attribute of entrepreneurship educators that may condition the relationships between formal entrepreneurial education, cognitive antecedents, and students' entrepreneurial intention.

However, these areas of competency are intertwined, and hence the role and effect of each of them on a teacher's thinking and behaviour are difficult to examine. According to Abbasianchavari & Moritz (2021), the documentary research view, through the systematic review of 86 published journal articles from 1989 to 2019, found that only 2 articles mentioned the educators' and mentors' positive entrepreneurial experiences as influencing students' entrepreneurial intention. The entrepreneurial teachers' experiences influence entrepreneurial intention, which is still very limited (Bosma & Schutjens, 2011; Bozward & Rogers-Draycott, 2024; Diegoli, 2018; Pertuz-Peralta et al., 2016; Ruskovaara & Pihkala, 2015). EE teachers are still limited (Li et al., 2016) and exhibit low competency, resulting in a dearth of expert teachers (Mei & Symaco, 2022). Within this evolving body of literature, growing attention is also paid to the role of educators, particularly to how teachers' identities, values, and underlying assumptions influence pedagogical choices and learning environments (Adiningrum et al., 2026; Fayolle et al., 2026). Due to this situation, colleges and universities face challenges, especially among experienced entrepreneurs as educators, which are disproportionate in entrepreneurship teachers, a high-quality curriculum system, personalised instruction, and a well-built entrepreneurship education ecosystem (Belitski & Heron, 2017; Cui, 2021; Krueger, 2007; Li et al., 2016). Although previous research has examined the influence of entrepreneurial educators and role models on students'

entrepreneurial intentions, questions remain regarding the contextual conditions under which educators' experiential backgrounds may influence the translation of entrepreneurial knowledge and cognitive evaluations into intention. Recent conceptual work has proposed the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences as a moderator of the relationships between FEE, TPB antecedents, and EI (Toh et al., 2026). Extending this perspective, the present study considers ETE alongside student employment to develop a more comprehensive conceptual explanation of experiential influences situated within both educators and students. Accordingly, ETE is retained as an educator-level contextual moderator, while the additional student-level perspective provides the principal extension developed in this paper.

Student Employment

Student employment (SE) refers to paid employment undertaken by students while they are concurrently enrolled in higher education. Such employment may involve part-time or full-time work across different organisational and industry contexts, providing opportunities for students to acquire practical knowledge, develop transferable skills, and gain exposure to workplace environments. Unlike prior employment undertaken before university enrolment, student employment involves the simultaneous engagement of individuals in academic learning and professional work. This distinction is particularly relevant to entrepreneurship education, as students may encounter opportunities to relate theoretical knowledge acquired through formal entrepreneurial education (FEE) to practical situations experienced in the workplace. Nevertheless, the learning opportunities associated with student employment may differ according to employment characteristics, including job responsibilities, working hours, organisational settings, and the relevance of employment activities to entrepreneurial learning. Accordingly, this study conceptualises SE as a student-level experiential factor that may condition the relationships between FEE, the cognitive antecedents of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and entrepreneurial intention (EI).

Previous studies have examined student employment in relation to skill acquisition, employability, and subsequent labour-market outcomes. Employment undertaken during university may provide opportunities for students to acquire practical knowledge, develop professional networks, and become familiar with organisational environments. However, findings concerning subsequent employment outcomes vary across studies and employment contexts (Jackson, 2024; Kroupova et al., 2024) . Beyond conventional labour-market outcomes, Merida & Justo (2019) examined the relationship between student employment and entrepreneurial entry following graduation, highlighting the potential relevance of workplace characteristics and employment experiences to subsequent entrepreneurial activity.

Previous studies have examined student employment primarily in relation to academic performance, skill acquisition, and subsequent labour-market outcomes (Häkkinen, 2006; Kroupova et al., 2024). Although emerging research has considered the relationship between employment experience and subsequent entrepreneurial activity, the potential moderating role of student employment within entrepreneurship education remains less clearly established (Merida & Justo, 2019; Zhang et al., 2025). In particular, further theoretical attention is required to understand whether employment undertaken concurrently with

formal studies conditions the relationships between FEE, attitude towards entrepreneurship (ATE), subjective norms (SN), perceived behavioural control (PBC), and EI. Drawing upon Experiential Learning Theory, this study proposes that workplace experiences may provide opportunities for students to interpret, apply, and critically evaluate entrepreneurial knowledge acquired through formal education. Nevertheless, such experiences may also influence students' perceptions of the attractiveness and feasibility of alternative employment pathways. Therefore, student employment is proposed as a contextual moderator rather than an inherently positive influence on entrepreneurial intention.

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) has become one of the most extensively utilized models in the entrepreneurship literature to analyse entrepreneurial intention to start up a business (Boubker et al., 2021; Daniel et al., 2022) since the theory provides a vital and appropriate framework for explaining individual planned behaviour, allowing researchers to forecast entrepreneurial intention while taking both individual and social factors into account (Liñán & Chen, 2009). In general, TPB allows the person to engage in a cognitive learning process before any decision is made in the context of entrepreneurial intention via the set of beliefs in terms of attitude towards entrepreneurship, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control that have been mobilized and expended by entrepreneurship literature towards the entrepreneurial intention (Boubker et al., 2021).

The three antecedents' relative importance in predicting intention will vary among activities, situations, and contexts (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB defines an attitude towards entrepreneurship (ATE) as a person's assessment of the influence of desired behaviour (good or bad, favourable, or unfavourable) on entrepreneurship. Subjective norm (SN) refers to what the person's key social group believes about completing the planned behaviour (as social pressure) (Ajzen, 1991). Finally, perceived behavioural control (PBC) refers to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of carrying out the intended behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

Formal entrepreneurial education

Formal entrepreneurial education (FEE) refers to structured entrepreneurship education that is formally integrated into higher education curricula, including entrepreneurship courses and curriculum-based learning activities designed to develop students' entrepreneurial knowledge, competencies, and intentions. Although universities may also provide extracurricular entrepreneurial activities, start-up support, and incubation programmes to strengthen the broader entrepreneurial education ecosystem (Nabi et al., 2017), these initiatives are conceptually distinguished from FEE unless they are formally incorporated into academic programmes with defined learning outcomes and assessment requirements. Within this context, FEE may influence students' entrepreneurial intention through different educational approaches and learning experiences (Fretschner & Lampe, 2019; Lyu et al., 2023).

In general, entrepreneurship pedagogy in formal entrepreneurial education could be categorized into theory-focused (TFP) and practice-focused pedagogy (PFP) (Kakouris & Liargovas, 2021; Piperopoulos & Dimov, 2015). Theoretically focused pedagogy principally intends to develop students' entrepreneurial competencies for starting and managing a business (Ahmad et al., 2018) with the concept of theoretical education practices (Alberti et

al., 2004; Fayolle & Gailly, 2008). In contrast, practical-focused pedagogy (PFP) offers a basic understanding and awareness of the entrepreneurship phenomenon, developing 'soft skills' such as idea generation, finding possibilities, teamwork, creativity, and invention (Karimi et al., 2016), dealing with failure and ambiguity, and managing resources (Cui et al., 2021; Fayolle & Gailly, 2015) with the professional and spiritual education practices for individuals to use during start-ups and the development of growth-oriented ventures (Alberti et al., 2004; Fayolle & Gailly, 2008). Researchers have focused on evaluating entrepreneurial education pedagogy due to its impact on educational objectives, instructional techniques, and learning results.

Formal entrepreneurial education may contribute to the development of students' entrepreneurial knowledge, competencies, practical skills, and career awareness through structured learning activities (Chaker & Jarraya, 2021; Lackéus, 2020; Onjewu et al., 2021). Such educational experiences may enhance students' understanding of entrepreneurial processes and their ability to evaluate entrepreneurship as a potential career pathway. Nevertheless, these learning outcomes should not be assumed to translate uniformly into stronger entrepreneurial intentions, as their relevance may depend on the design of educational activities and the experiential contexts of students.

Entrepreneurial intention

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) is an important cognitive antecedent of entrepreneurial behaviour because it reflects an individual's conscious willingness or commitment to pursue business creation. Nevertheless, entrepreneurial intention should be distinguished from actual entrepreneurial action, as the translation of intention into behaviour may depend on the availability of resources, opportunities, and contextual conditions. Accordingly, EI is adopted as the dependent variable in the proposed conceptual framework to examine the relationships associated with entrepreneurial aspirations rather than actual business formation or venture performance.

Methodology

This study adopts a theory-informed conceptual research design supported by a structured review and synthesis of existing literature to develop an extended framework explaining entrepreneurial intention. Rather than collecting primary empirical data, the study integrates established theoretical perspectives and previous research findings to identify relevant constructs, examine proposed relationships, and develop theoretically grounded propositions. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) serves as the primary theoretical foundation, while Role Model Theory and Experiential Learning Theory provide complementary perspectives for conceptualising the proposed moderating roles of the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences (ETE) and student employment (SE). The methodological approach comprises literature identification and selection, examination and synthesis of relevant research, and integration of theoretical arguments into the proposed conceptual model. The purpose is to establish a coherent basis for future empirical investigation rather than to demonstrate the statistical significance or causal effects of the proposed relationships (Jaakkola, 2020; Snyder, 2019).

Literature Selection Process

This study employed a structured, theory-informed literature review to support the development of the proposed conceptual framework. Relevant academic publications were identified primarily through Scopus and ScienceDirect, supplemented by ResearchGate, Emerald Insight, and selected academic publishers' resources. The literature identification process focused on entrepreneurial intention, formal entrepreneurial education, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), entrepreneurial role models, entrepreneurial teachers' experiences, student employment, and experiential learning.

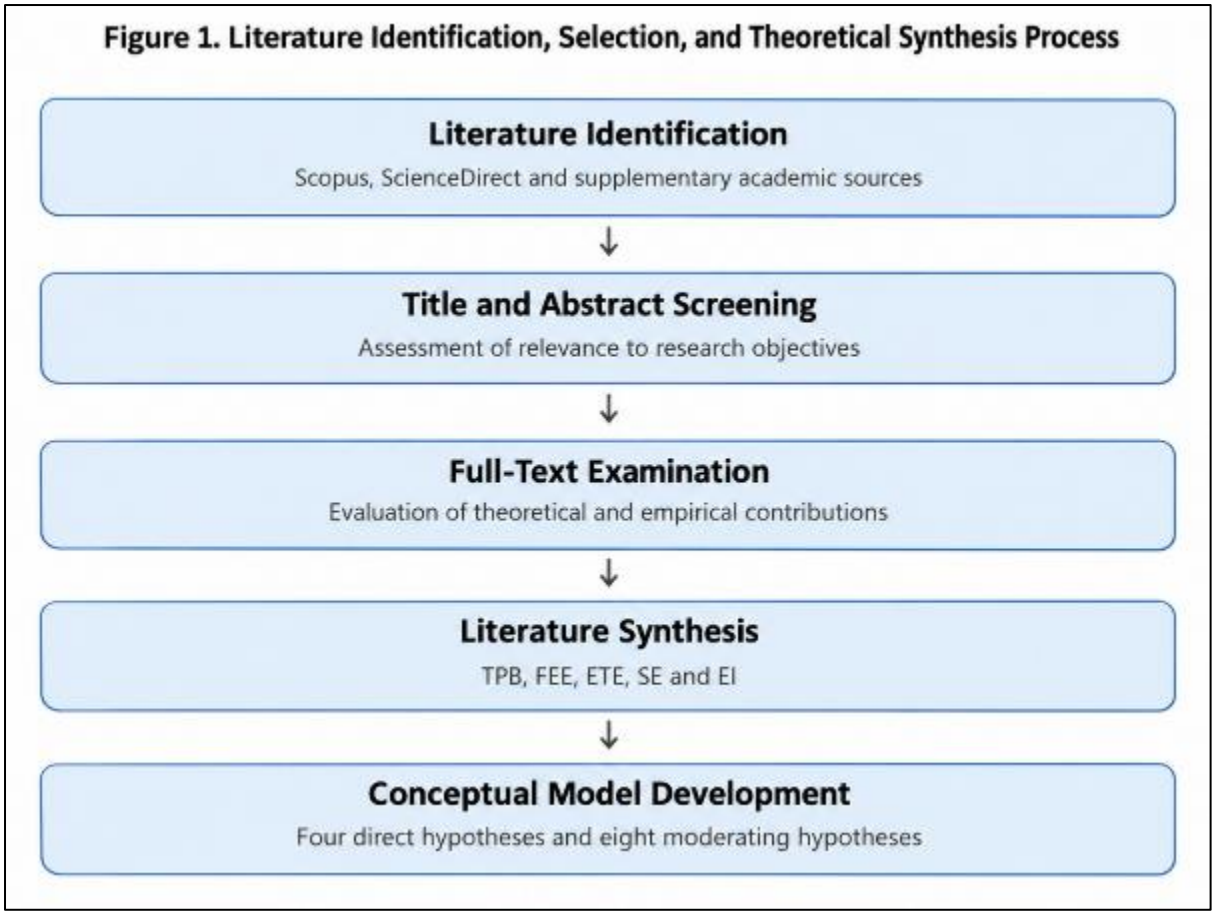
Search terms were organised around these central concepts to identify relevant theoretical and empirical contributions. Publications were examined for their conceptual relevance, theoretical foundations, and findings related to entrepreneurial intention. Particular attention was given to studies providing insights into the relationships between formal entrepreneurial education, TPB antecedents, and experiential influences originating from educators and students. The literature was used to support the theoretical development of the proposed framework rather than to conduct an exhaustive systematic review of all available publications.

Literature Screening and Selection

The literature selection process was organised into sequential stages to support the development of the proposed conceptual framework. Following literature identification, the titles, abstracts, and keywords of relevant publications were examined to assess their alignment with the study objectives. Publications addressing the theoretical foundations, empirical relationships, and experiential influences associated with entrepreneurial intention were prioritised for full-text examination.

The selected literature was subsequently examined to identify key constructs, theoretical perspectives, and relationships relevant to the conceptual framework. Particular attention was directed towards the Theory of Planned Behaviour, formal entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial teachers' experiences, and student employment. The literature was synthesised to identify theoretical explanations and contrasting empirical findings that could inform the proposed relationships. Figure 1 illustrates the literature identification, selection, and theoretical synthesis process.

This approach provided a structured and theory-informed basis for the development of the proposed conceptual framework.



Search terms were organised around the following conceptual categories:

- Entrepreneurial intention ("entrepreneurial intention" OR "start-up intention").
- Theory of planned behaviour ("TPB" OR "attitude towards entrepreneurship" OR "subjective norms" OR "perceived behavioural control").
- Entrepreneurial education ("formal entrepreneurial education" OR "entrepreneurship curriculum" OR learning pedagogy approach OR "extracurricular activities" OR "curricular activities" OR "non-formal entrepreneurship education" OR "Outcome/Assessment").
- Entrepreneurial Teacher's experiences ("role models" OR "mentor" OR "breadth of entrepreneurial teacher's experiences" OR "teaching way" OR "industry experiences" OR "working experiences" OR "start-up experience").
- Student employment ("experiential learning" OR "working experiences" OR "employment" OR "academic performances" OR "labour market performances").

Supplementary literature identification was undertaken through examination of relevant publications and their reference lists. The relevance of the identified literature was assessed in relation to the study objectives, theoretical perspectives, and proposed conceptual constructs.

Inclusion criteria

- Peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, or empirical conference papers published in English.
- Conceptual or empirical studies focusing on TPB, role model theory, experiential theory, entrepreneurial education, and entrepreneurial intention.
- Empirical, quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method research findings.

Exclusion criteria

- Non-academic publications, blogs, or opinion pieces.
- Studies unrelated to entrepreneurship or educational interventions.
- Studies that focus solely on policy without behavioural or cognitive elements.

Literature eligibility was assessed according to its relevance to the conceptual scope of the study. Particular attention was given to publications addressing the theoretical foundations of entrepreneurial intention, the influence of formal entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial role models, educators' entrepreneurial and industry experiences, and student employment or work-related learning. Both empirical and conceptual contributions were considered relevant where they provided theoretical explanations, research findings, or contextual insights applicable to the proposed relationships. Sources were assessed in relation to their conceptual relevance and contribution to the development of the framework, with particular consideration given to studies examining the cognitive antecedents of TPB and the experiential conditions associated with entrepreneurial learning. The eligibility assessment also distinguished studies concerning employment undertaken during formal education from those examining general prior work experience or subsequent entrepreneurial activity.

Literature Synthesis and Construct Identification

The literature synthesis was organised around seven principal constructs relevant to the proposed framework: attitude towards entrepreneurship (ATE), subjective norms (SN), perceived behavioural control (PBC), formal entrepreneurial education (FEE), the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences (ETE), student employment (SE), and entrepreneurial intention (EI). These constructs were examined in relation to their theoretical foundations, conceptual definitions, and relationships discussed in previous research.

The synthesis considered the established relationships between the TPB antecedents and EI, the role of FEE in entrepreneurial intention formation, and the potential experiential influences associated with educators' entrepreneurial backgrounds and students' employment experiences. Particular attention was directed towards contrasting theoretical explanations and findings, including circumstances in which educational and experiential influences may support, weaken, or have no clear relationship with entrepreneurial intention. This comparison provided a basis for examining the proposed contextual roles of ETE and SE without assuming uniformly positive relationships.

The synthesised arguments were subsequently organised to support the development of four direct-effect hypotheses and eight proposed moderating relationships. The purpose of this process was to establish theoretically coherent propositions for future empirical testing rather than to conclude the statistical significance of relationships that have not yet been examined within the proposed integrated model.

Theoretical Integration and Conceptual Model Development

The conceptual framework was developed by integrating the relationships identified in the literature with the explanatory perspectives provided by TPB, Role Model Theory, and Experiential Learning Theory. TPB provides the foundation for the proposed relationships between ATE, SN, PBC, and EI, while FEE is considered an additional educational antecedent

of EI. Role Model Theory informs the conceptualisation of ETE as an educator-level contextual moderator, whereas Experiential Learning Theory provides a complementary explanation for the proposed moderating role of SE.

Through this theoretical integration, the study specifies four direct relationships and eight moderating relationships, as illustrated in Figure 2. The proposed moderating relationships are conceptualised separately for ETE and SE, recognising their distinct educator-level and student-level characteristics. The framework also acknowledges that the strength and direction of these relationships may vary according to the nature and relevance of experiential exposure. Accordingly, the proposed model represents a set of theoretically derived relationships requiring subsequent empirical validation.

Methodological Limitations

Several methodological limitations should be acknowledged. First, the literature-based approach is influenced by the scope of the selected information sources, search terms, publication eligibility criteria, and language restrictions. These considerations may limit the coverage of relevant studies and potentially exclude alternative theoretical or empirical perspectives, particularly those originating from underrepresented educational and institutional contexts.

Second, the study is conceptual and does not involve the collection or analysis of primary empirical data. Consequently, the proposed direct and moderating relationships are theoretically derived and should not be interpreted as empirically established effects. In particular, the proposed moderating roles of the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences and student employment require empirical examination to establish their direction, magnitude, and contextual relevance.

Third, the proposed moderators operate at different levels of analysis. ETE represents an educator-level experiential characteristic, whereas SE represents a student-level experiential characteristic. Future empirical research should therefore consider the implications of these differences when developing appropriate measurement instruments and research designs. Studies involving students nested within classes or educators may benefit from multilevel analytical approaches.

Finally, future research could employ longitudinal, quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method designs to examine the proposed relationships and explore the mechanisms through which experiential influences may shape entrepreneurial intention. Such investigations would provide opportunities to evaluate and refine the proposed conceptual framework across different educational and institutional environments.

Proposed Conceptual Research Model

Drawing upon the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Role Model Theory, and Experiential Learning Theory, this paper proposes an extended conceptual framework to examine the relationships between formal entrepreneurial education, cognitive antecedents, experiential influences, and entrepreneurial intention. As illustrated in Figure 2, attitude towards entrepreneurship (ATE), subjective norms (SN), perceived behavioural control (PBC), and formal entrepreneurial education (FEE) are conceptualised as independent variables, while

entrepreneurial intention (EI) serves as the dependent variable. Furthermore, the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences (ETE) and student employment (SE) are proposed as moderating variables. Specifically, ETE represents an educator-level experiential influence that may condition how students interpret and translate entrepreneurial education and cognitive beliefs into intention. In contrast, SE represents a student-level experiential influence that may shape the practical relevance of entrepreneurial learning and its relationship with intention. The framework therefore proposes that the relationships between FEE, TPB antecedents, and EI may vary according to the experiential contexts of both educators and students.

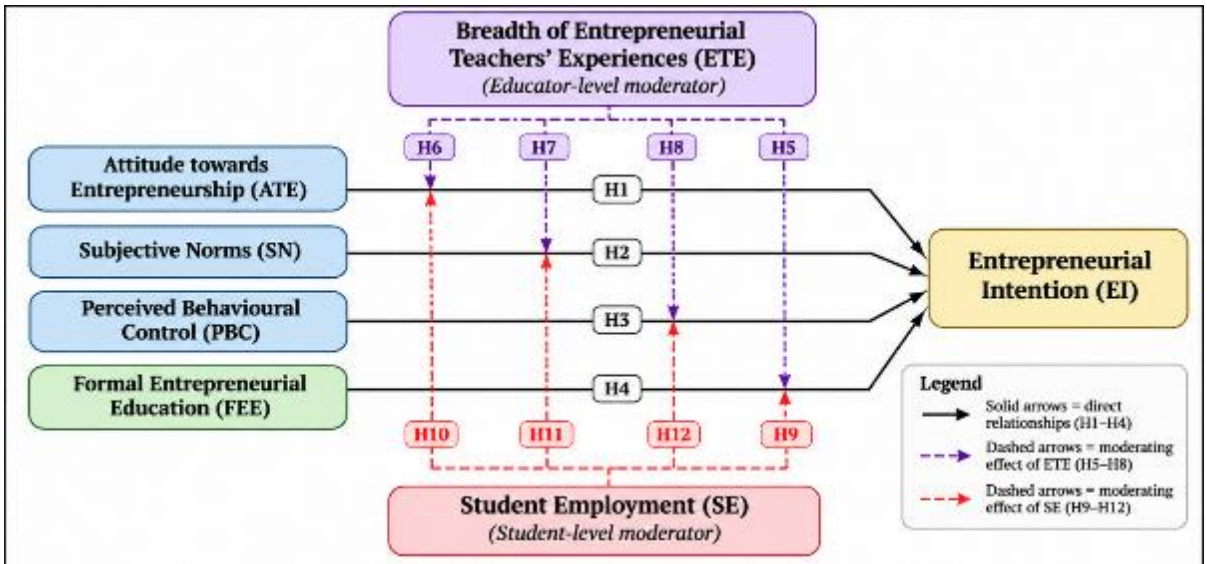


Figure 2. Proposed Extended Conceptual Framework of Entrepreneurial Intention

Hypothesis Development

Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Intention

Attitude towards entrepreneurship (ATE) refers to an individual's favourable or unfavourable evaluation of pursuing entrepreneurship as a career or behavioural choice. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), individuals who hold more favourable attitudes towards a particular behaviour are generally more likely to develop stronger intentions to perform that behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Within the entrepreneurial context, favourable attitudes may reflect positive evaluations of entrepreneurial autonomy, opportunity recognition, personal achievement, and potential career satisfaction. Conversely, unfavourable evaluations associated with uncertainty, perceived risks, or anticipated difficulties may discourage entrepreneurial aspirations. Previous studies have reported positive relationships between entrepreneurial attitudes and entrepreneurial intention (Ambad & Damit, 2016; Dinc & Budic, 2016; Vamvaka et al., 2020). These findings suggest that students who perceive entrepreneurship as an attractive and desirable career pathway may be more inclined to develop intentions to establish their own businesses. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Attitude towards entrepreneurship is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention

Subjective Norms and Entrepreneurial Intention

Subjective norms (SN) refer to individuals' perceptions of whether important social referents approve or disapprove of their engagement in a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Within entrepreneurship, these referents may include family members, friends, colleagues, educators, and other individuals whose opinions are considered relevant to entrepreneurial career decisions. Perceived approval from these social groups may encourage students to regard entrepreneurship as a socially acceptable and desirable career pathway. Conversely, perceived disapproval or pressure to pursue alternative employment may discourage entrepreneurial aspirations. Previous entrepreneurship research has examined the relevance of social expectations and interpersonal influences in entrepreneurial intention formation (Engle et al., 2010; Pruett et al., 2009; Santos et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the influence of subjective norms may vary according to the importance individuals attach to particular social referents and the broader social environment. Consistent with the TPB framework, students who perceive stronger social approval of entrepreneurship are expected to demonstrate stronger entrepreneurial intentions. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Subjective norms are positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Perceived Behavioural Control and Entrepreneurial Intention

Perceived behavioural control (PBC) refers to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a particular behaviour, taking into account perceived capabilities, resources, and potential constraints (Ajzen, 1991). In the entrepreneurial context, PBC reflects the extent to which individuals believe they possess the capabilities and sufficient control necessary to pursue business creation. Students who perceive themselves as capable of recognising opportunities, organising resources, and addressing entrepreneurial challenges may be more inclined to consider entrepreneurship as a feasible career pathway. Although entrepreneurial self-efficacy is closely associated with perceptions of capability, PBC also encompasses perceived control over external conditions that may facilitate or constrain entrepreneurial action. Previous research has supported the relevance of perceived control and entrepreneurial capability in explaining entrepreneurial intention (Autio et al., 2001; Engle et al., 2010; Karimi et al., 2016; Vamvaka et al., 2020). Consistent with TPB, stronger perceived behavioural control is therefore expected to be associated with stronger intentions to pursue entrepreneurship. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Perceived behavioural control is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Formal Entrepreneurial Education and Entrepreneurial Intention

Formal entrepreneurial education (FEE) represents structured educational activities intended to develop entrepreneurial knowledge, competencies, and awareness of entrepreneurship as a potential career pathway. Through exposure to entrepreneurial concepts, practical learning activities, and opportunities for entrepreneurial reflection, FEE may influence how students evaluate entrepreneurship and formulate their entrepreneurial intentions. Nevertheless, the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention (EI) remains contested. Nabi et al. (2017) highlighted the diversity of entrepreneurial education outcomes and evaluation approaches; Bae et al. (2014), through a meta-analysis of 73 studies involving 37,285 individuals, identified a small but statistically significant overall association between

entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. However, this relationship was not statistically significant after controlling for pre-education entrepreneurial intention, suggesting that students' initial entrepreneurial aspirations should be considered when evaluating educational outcomes. Similarly, Fretschner & Lampe (2019) demonstrated that entrepreneurship education may generate sorting and alignment effects, suggesting that students may become more certain about pursuing or not pursuing entrepreneurship following educational exposure. These findings indicate that FEE may influence entrepreneurial intention differently according to students' initial aspirations, educational experiences, and contextual conditions. Accordingly, rather than assuming a uniformly positive influence, the present study proposes a non-directional relationship between FEE and EI, which may be conditioned by the experiential contexts of educators and students.
H4: Formal entrepreneurial education is associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Moderating Factors

Entrepreneurial Teachers' Experiences (ETE)

Entrepreneurial experience constitutes an important source of experiential knowledge that may contribute to opportunity recognition, strategic decision-making, and the management of entrepreneurial challenges (Cassar, 2014; Marvel et al., 2016). However, entrepreneurial educators may differ not only in whether they possess such experience but also in the diversity of entrepreneurial contexts to which they have been exposed. Educators with experience across multiple ventures, entrepreneurial activities, or business environments may possess broader practical perspectives that can enrich the interpretation and application of entrepreneurial knowledge. Within entrepreneurship education, these experiences may provide opportunities for educators to illustrate alternative entrepreneurial pathways, share practical challenges, and connect theoretical concepts with real-world situations. Drawing upon the role-modelling perspective, this study proposes that the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences may serve as a contextual factor influencing how students translate formal entrepreneurial education and the cognitive antecedents of the Theory of Planned Behaviour into entrepreneurial intention. Nevertheless, the proposed influence is not assumed to be uniformly positive, as its effectiveness may depend on the relevance of educators' experiences, their teaching practices, and students' perceptions.

Entrepreneurial Teacher with Entrepreneurial Experiences

Entrepreneurial experience, defined as previous involvement in new venture creation (Delmar & Shane, 2006), can build expertise in a broad range of activities and diverse knowledge of the entrepreneurial process (Delmar & Shane, 2006; Dimov, 2010). Prior entrepreneurial experience can help individuals identify new business opportunities (Dimov, 2010) because it enables them to “connect the dots” (Baron & Ensley, 2006) and recognize patterns representing opportunities. Experienced entrepreneurs have also learned that resources are fungible and can be used in different market domains (Gruber et al., 2008), and they typically know how to flexibly adjust business models to these domains (Dimov, 2010). Finally, entrepreneurial experience helps individuals better understand the value-creation potential of new products (Gruber et al., 2008).

According to Kirsch et al. (2025), the mentor’s entrepreneurial experience strengthens the relationship between value similarity and students’ choice of a teacher. On the one hand, students may feel that their perspective is more represented in advice coming from teachers

who used to be entrepreneurs themselves, reinforcing the quality of teacher and student relationships. For instance, when a teacher has entrepreneurial experience, they can give the facts concerning entrepreneurship (Seikkula-Leino et al., 2010) to positively impact the student entrepreneurial intention of a specific group of students (those with convergent learning styles) since it emphasizes active experimentation, which is based on the outside world and abstract conceptualization. i.e., conceptual interpretations and symbolic ruler of consciousness to regulate the thinkable and unthinkable (Holmgren, 2005; Miço & Cungu, 2023). In other words, the teacher with entrepreneurial experiences focuses on reflective practice (R. Bell, 2021; Ramsgaard, 2025), which reflects their experiences, values, beliefs, and aspirations to enhance their subsequent classroom instruction (Polikoff, 2013). This effect may go as far as students considering experienced teachers as role models and feeling particularly comfortable opening up to them(Kirsch et al., 2025). As a result, students with authentic entrepreneurial experiences and simulated environments can foster the mindset and skills needed for practice (Al Kharusi & Bell, 2025).

The other previous research places more emphasis on the characteristics of a practical teacher in terms of good communication, encouraging student participation, motivating, flexibility, and using different methodologies for effective development of the teaching process have been discussed (Joensuu-Salo et al., 2021; San-Martín et al., 2021). When such teachers also have substantial entrepreneurial experience, students will likely be convinced that they can really tap into these mentors' experience(Ragins, 2012) and profit from it in confidential matters, such as negotiations with investors (Douglas et al., 2014) or conflicts with founding team members (Preller et al., 2023). For instance, they committed to guiding students not just in theory but in practical, real-world applications that equip them for future challenges. They know that an approachable demeanour fosters a learning environment where students feel encouraged to explore, question, and innovate, which can extend beyond the classroom to bridge the gap between entrepreneurship and teaching. These indicate that a teacher's entrepreneurial experience creates role aspirants by delivering entrepreneurial knowledge and creating a positive perception of entrepreneurship (Raappana, 2025). In this case, the shared frame of reference between students and their teachers is extended to include not only the communication level but also a contextual level that may facilitate exchange and subsequent learning.

Entrepreneurial Teacher with Industry Experiences

In addition to direct entrepreneurial experience, industry experience represents a distinct form of professional exposure that may contribute to entrepreneurship education. Industry experience refers to prior involvement in professional or organisational activities within a particular sector, through which individuals may acquire knowledge of market structures, operational processes, customer requirements, and industry-specific challenges (Cassar, 2014; Marvel et al., 2016). Although such experience may enrich educators' practical understanding, it should not automatically be classified as entrepreneurial experience because employment within an established organisation does not necessarily involve venture creation or entrepreneurial decision-making. Nevertheless, educators who combine entrepreneurial and industry experience may be able to draw upon a wider range of practical examples when facilitating entrepreneurial learning. Industry experience is therefore considered a related but conceptually distinct attribute that may complement the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences. In other words, the entrepreneurial teacher with

industry experience allows students to acquire knowledge about the potential opportunities and threats in that sector, including the industry's competitive landscape, legal frameworks, rules, and norms (Delmar & Shane, 2006), as well as relevant products, processes, and technologies (Wahl & Münch, 2022). This prior experience can help entrepreneurs identify and evaluate new opportunities in a specific industry (Cassar, 2014; Dimov, 2010). For instance, according to Bashir et al. (2014) & Rahman et al.(2014), teachers with significant work experience in medicine (Yazigi et al., 2006), nursing (Baldwin et al., 2014), education (Lunenberg et al., 2007), or music (Hamann & Walker, 1993) can enhance students' knowledge, abilities, and aptitudes in the related field. Moreover, industry experience can provide individuals with knowledge of suppliers, customer needs, and trends in a specific sector (Cassar, 2014; Dencker & Gruber, 2015). Finally, industry experience helps individuals build sector-specific networks with key stakeholders (Cooper et al., 1994; Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1996). Based on such knowledge and networks, entrepreneurs can not only identify new high-quality business opportunities (Cassar, 2014; Dencker & Gruber, 2015; Gruber et al., 2013) but also make better strategic decisions. This is also supported by the study of Ruskovaara & Pihkala (2015) & Diegoli (2018), which results in the fact that the more the teacher has work experience, the more the student is inclined to start a business.

The potential teacher's high level of experience in the industry may further strengthen this trust because the student is more confident that the challenges they share with their mentor can be solved in the mentoring process. Building on their students' knowledge about relevant players and networks in the industry (Cassar, 2014), students may trust their advice more, for example, on how to establish strategic alliances or develop a go-to-market strategy in this specific industry(Kirsch et al., 2025). Furthermore, teachers who come from the industry have already started to establish a mutual understanding about the market, relevant players, processes, and trends in this industry. Communication is thus facilitated not only by the shared frame of reference based on value similarity but also by the shared understanding of the industry and, therefore, the context in which the focal students start up in the future(Kirsch et al., 2025). Accordingly, the level of relevant industry experience possessed by educators may further strengthen communication by providing a shared understanding of industry-specific practices, challenges, and opportunities.

Entrepreneurship Educators Without Direct Entrepreneurial Experience

Entrepreneurship educators without direct entrepreneurial experience may nevertheless contribute meaningfully to students' entrepreneurial learning through their pedagogical knowledge, academic expertise, and ability to facilitate reflective and experiential activities. Such educators may draw upon entrepreneurial case studies, simulations, multimedia resources, and the experiences of external role models to demonstrate entrepreneurial processes and challenges (Abbasianchavari & Moritz, 2021; Diegoli, 2018; Harmeling, 2011). Although these approaches do not constitute the educators' own entrepreneurial experience, they may provide alternative opportunities for students to develop entrepreneurial understanding and evaluate entrepreneurship as a potential career pathway. Consequently, the absence of direct entrepreneurial experience should not be interpreted as an absence of teaching competence or an inability to influence students' entrepreneurial intention. Rather, it represents an important distinction for examining whether different levels of entrepreneurial experiential breadth condition the relationships proposed in the conceptual framework.

Questioning on the impact of Entrepreneurial Teachers' entrepreneurial and industry experiences

Empirical Studies mentioned the potential of the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' entrepreneurial and industry experiences to influence the students' entrepreneurial intention. However, when the researcher considered the students' side, more interesting results emerged; there was no individual effect of the teacher's entrepreneurial experience among students in general (Diegoli, 2018) due to other factors influencing students' long-term intentions, such as changing circumstances or evolving entrepreneurial opportunities. Most importantly, rather than whether they can start up a business, they would be more concerned with academic performance at the end of the semester, especially since these are first-year students; completing their studies may be their primary long-term objective (Arasti et al., 2012). These previous research findings reflect that there was a lack of a significant association between current direct entrepreneurial experiences of teachers and students' long-term intentions, which deviated from previous research. As a result, the individual cognitive factors in terms of attitude towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control will reflect differently. Therefore, understanding a subject is not the same as teaching it effectively. Even though a teacher with entrepreneurial and work experiences could foster automated ways of seeing the world, where entrepreneurship is implicitly embedded in how entrepreneurs operate, what is taken for granted, and therefore consequently gears the students' decision-making structures (Black et al., 2003; Gibb, 2011; Pittaway & Cope, 2007), it is not necessary to ensure they will start a business after graduation (Arasti et al., 2012). Hence, a single meeting with one entrepreneur cannot meet the entrepreneurial learning needs of all students (see also Adesola et al., 2019; Lockwood et al., 2002). This underscores the need for a deeper understanding of the position of the entrepreneurial teacher in the role modelling process in entrepreneurship education. As a result, choosing a teacher based solely on entrepreneurial experience is akin to assuming that age, gender, nationality, or other aspects of a curriculum vitae impact teaching success (Diegoli, 2018). A more nuanced approach, considering various factors, including student learning styles, is more effective in understanding how entrepreneurial experience impacts teaching and student success.(Ramsgaard, 2025) It is also supported by Diegoli (2018) findings, which mentioned that teachers with entrepreneurial experience have a positive impact on students, depending on the different learning styles of their students.

Questioning the Impact of Entrepreneurial Teachers with No Experience

Empirical Studies mentioned that the potential of entrepreneurial teachers with no experience can influence the students' entrepreneurial intention. Despite this, lecture-based teaching remains a common approach in EE due to its efficiency and convenience (Pittaway et al., 2011). However, discussions and case studies are often criticized as inert methods with limited impact on entrepreneurial characteristics (Bennett, 2006). Overall, such approaches do not completely shape a teacher's identity-creation process, as unpleasant experiences might lead to resistance and rejection of suggested identities (Frederiksen & Berglund, 2020) since the teacher does not explicitly detail expertise and skills that students should develop. This decision is presently at the discretion of the educator in the classroom(H. Bell & Bell, 2025)

Besides that, it has been found that most entrepreneurship programmes emphasise generic entrepreneurial principles instead of equipping students with the digital and technological

skills necessary for entrepreneurship (Wahl & Münch, 2022). This blurring could make EE programmes vulnerable to funding cuts (Oliver, 2025). Due to this situation, the entrepreneurial teachers with no experiences, they will follow the programmes standard and may not know how to modify it further to meet the market needed especially decreases focus in key growing areas such as technology, artificial intelligence, and their relevance to start-up-focused EE (Wahl & Münch, 2022). Due to this situation, if a teacher does not have substantial experience, the students may be less likely to expect that a trusting relationship with such a teacher will help them tackle the problems they discuss with their teacher. Furthermore, students are unlikely to expect a smooth conversation with a teacher who has only limited or no entrepreneurial experience because they will likely need to substantially elaborate on the context they would like to start up. As a result, the student may be sceptical that this trusting relationship will give them an advantage in terms of the knowledge and advice they may receive from such teachers(Kirsch et al., 2025).

Furthermore, it could be seen that others assert that publications, books, and resources to supplement classroom instruction are still fighting for complete acceptance. The relationship between teaching and academic research is unclear (Maisano et al., 2023). Most importantly, there is a lack of connection between practice-oriented research and theories and concepts central to mainstream entrepreneurship research (Wiklund et al., 2025). For instance, Shepherd & Gruber (2021) point out that much of the mainstream entrepreneurship research could potentially inform the lean start-up framework. However, very few attempts have been made to focus on this, and the emphasis of entrepreneurial education is too far from new venture creation, which undermines the original goal of entrepreneurial education. Overall, such approaches remain task-oriented and procedural. While traditional teaching methods are effective for building foundational business knowledge, they are increasingly recognized as less effective in developing entrepreneurial skills or motivating students (R. Bell, 2020). As a result, entrepreneurship education has traditionally been posited as able to develop and improve macroeconomic outcomes, such as economic growth, employment, and innovation, and moving away from a focus on new venture creation could dilute this link(H. Bell & Bell, 2025).

Due to this situation, teachers with no experience who rely on publications, books, and resources to supplement classroom instruction have been questioning. In addition, sometimes, universities are unsure whether their academic program’s objective should focus on the development of entrepreneurial skills such as the ability to innovate, proactiveness, and risk-taking behaviour, or on the development of entrepreneurial intent in undergraduate students (Martins et al., 2018). There was a question about whether a teacher who does not have entrepreneurial experience but relies on secondary data and the course’s structure can influence the students' cognitive factors in terms of attitude towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Most importantly, does a teacher with no entrepreneurial experience increase students' entrepreneurial intention? Many universities entrepreneurship educators experience imposter syndrome, feeling they are not as capable as others think (Lane & Mountford-Brown, 2025). According to Misni et al. (2020), an unclear curriculum and a lack of experienced staff made the effort to increase entrepreneurs feel slow.

Proposed Moderating Role of the Breadth of Entrepreneurial Teachers' Experiences

The preceding literature suggests that entrepreneurship educators may contribute to entrepreneurial learning through their practical knowledge, entrepreneurial backgrounds, and role-modelling functions. Nevertheless, the influence of educators' entrepreneurial experiences may depend not only on whether they have participated in entrepreneurial activities but also on the diversity and relevance of their experiences. Drawing upon the role-modelling perspective, this study proposes that the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences (ETE) may serve as an educator-level contextual moderator of the relationships between formal entrepreneurial education (FEE), the cognitive antecedents of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and entrepreneurial intention (EI).

First, educators with diverse entrepreneurial experiences may draw upon practical examples involving venture creation, opportunity recognition, resource mobilisation, and entrepreneurial challenges to demonstrate the applicability of concepts introduced through FEE. Such exposure may enable students to interpret entrepreneurial knowledge within a broader range of practical contexts, potentially conditioning the relationship between formal entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention. However, this relationship may depend on the extent to which educators incorporate their experiences into teaching and whether students consider these experiences relevant to their entrepreneurial aspirations. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: The breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences moderates the relationship between formal entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention.

Second, entrepreneurial teachers with diverse venture-related experiences may provide credible examples of how favourable evaluations of entrepreneurship can be translated into entrepreneurial career aspirations. Through their practical accounts of entrepreneurial opportunities, challenges, and decision-making processes, these educators may reinforce the relevance of students' favourable attitudes when considering entrepreneurship as a possible career pathway. Nevertheless, the extent to which these experiences influence the translation of attitude into intention may depend on students' perceptions of educators' credibility, relevance, and role-model suitability. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: The breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences moderates the relationship between attitude towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intention.

Third, entrepreneurial educators may constitute influential social referents within students' educational environments. Educators who possess diverse entrepreneurial experiences may be perceived as credible representatives of entrepreneurial career pathways, potentially influencing how students interpret and respond to perceived social approval of entrepreneurship. However, such an influence is not automatic, as students may attach different levels of importance to educators' opinions compared with those of family members, peers, and other social referents. The proposed moderation therefore concerns whether educators' experiential backgrounds condition the extent to which existing subjective norms are translated into entrepreneurial intention, rather than merely changing students' perceptions of social expectations. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: The breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences moderates the relationship between subjective norms and entrepreneurial intention.

Fourth, educators with diverse entrepreneurial experiences may expose students to practical approaches for identifying opportunities, mobilising resources, managing uncertainty, and overcoming challenges associated with venture creation. Such experiences may help students evaluate how their perceived entrepreneurial capabilities and control could be translated into entrepreneurial career intentions. Nevertheless, their influence may vary according to the relevance of the educators' entrepreneurial backgrounds and students' perceptions of their own capabilities and constraints. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H8: The breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences moderates the relationship between perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial intention.

Collectively, these propositions suggest that educators' entrepreneurial experience breadth may condition the strength or direction of the relationships between FEE, TPB antecedents, and EI. The proposed moderation effects remain theoretical and require empirical validation, particularly in distinguishing the influence of entrepreneurial experience breadth from the effects of pedagogical competence, general industry experience, and students' perceptions of educators as role models.

Students' Employment (SE)
While the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences represents an educator-level experiential influence, entrepreneurship education should also account for the experiences that students bring into the learning environment. The effectiveness of FEE may depend not only on educators' ability to communicate entrepreneurial knowledge but also on students' opportunities to interpret and apply such knowledge within their own experiential contexts. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of connecting entrepreneurship education with practical learning, reflective engagement, and real-world entrepreneurial situations (Al Kharusi & Bell, 2025; R. Bell & Cui, 2023; Wiklund et al., 2025). From this perspective, student employment represents a relevant experiential context because students who work while studying may encounter organisational practices, workplace challenges, and professional interactions that influence their understanding of entrepreneurship. Consequently, the present study extends the educator-centred perspective by considering whether student employment conditions the relationships between FEE, TPB antecedents, and EI.
Students who engage in employment alongside their academic studies may encounter experiential learning opportunities that differ from those available through classroom-based instruction. Such opportunities may include observing organisational decision-making, interacting with customers and colleagues, responding to operational challenges, and developing transferable competencies. Through these experiences, students may acquire practical insights that enable them to assess the relevance of entrepreneurial knowledge introduced through FEE. However, the nature and extent of these learning opportunities may vary considerably across employment settings. For instance, employment involving decision-making responsibilities, customer interactions, or exposure to small-business operations may provide different learning experiences from work characterised by limited task autonomy or repetitive activities. Accordingly, the present study recognises that student employment may provide a context for entrepreneurial learning without assuming that all employment experiences contribute equally to entrepreneurial intention.

Previous research has reported mixed relationships between work experience and entrepreneurial intention. These findings should be interpreted in relation to differences in the type, timing and context of employment experience. Accordingly, student employment should not be assumed to enhance entrepreneurial intention uniformly. For instance, Malebana & Swanepoel (2015) identified a negative relationship between prior work experience and entrepreneurial intention. Other studies have reported nonsignificant relationships (Abebe, 2012; Shinnar et al., 2009; Walter & Dohse, 2009). Although these findings concern different forms of work experience and research contexts, they suggest that employment exposure should not be assumed to enhance entrepreneurial intention uniformly. Such variations may reflect differences in employment characteristics, career expectations, perceived entrepreneurial opportunities, and the relative attractiveness of paid employment. Financial considerations may also influence students' decisions to work while studying (Häkkinen, 2006). Consequently, the potential influence of student employment on entrepreneurial intention requires a contextual interpretation that recognises both its possible benefits and limitations.

In contrast, when students were focusing only on their studies, they could engage in various entrepreneurial activities and different types of pedagogical approaches in the entrepreneurial programs to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills accordingly (Lazear, 2004, 2005; Zhang et al., 2025). However, formal entrepreneurial education was difficult to guarantee that students would build up the entrepreneurial intention at the end of study due to the resource endowments and entrepreneurial capabilities (Sun et al., 2023). Inconsistent findings in the relationship between formal entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention were observed. For instance, entrepreneurship lectures, field reports by entrepreneurs, case studies from new businesses, creativity and problem-solving training, social competence training, business plan courses, and startup simulations do not affect students' entrepreneurial intention(Franco et al., 2010). Although Bae et al. (2014) reported a small positive overall association between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention, this relationship was not statistically significant after controlling for pre-education entrepreneurial intention. From this viewpoint, the student may believe that working provides important skills and experience that classroom learning cannot (Kroupova et al., 2024).

The mixed findings concerning employment experience and entrepreneurial intention highlight the importance of examining how academic learning and workplace experiences may interact. FEE provides structured opportunities for students to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and develop relevant competencies, whereas student employment may expose individuals to practical situations in which such knowledge can be applied, evaluated, or reconsidered. From an experiential learning perspective, the integration of theoretical understanding with practical experience may support reflective learning and influence students' perceptions of entrepreneurship as a potential career pathway. Nevertheless, the relationship between academic learning and employment experience may not always be complementary. Employment responsibilities may constrain students' participation in entrepreneurial learning activities, while exposure to attractive employment opportunities may reduce their interest in business creation. Therefore, this paper proposes that student employment may condition the relationship between FEE and EI, with the strength and direction of this relationship potentially varying across experiential contexts.

Several theoretical arguments suggest that student employment may provide experiential exposure relevant to entrepreneurial career considerations. Previous research has highlighted the importance of professional environments, opportunity recognition, and organisational experiences in entrepreneurial development (Dobrev & Barnett, 2005; Singh et al., 1999; Sørensen, 2007; Ucbasaran et al., 2008). Within this context, students who undertake employment alongside their studies may gain practical insights into business operations, workplace responsibilities, and professional decision-making. Employment may also expose students to individuals with entrepreneurial experience, potentially influencing their awareness of entrepreneurship as a career pathway (Nanda & Sørensen, 2010). Furthermore, workplace experiences may shape students' evaluations of entrepreneurial autonomy and the relative attractiveness of self-employment compared with salaried employment. While some students may perceive entrepreneurship as offering greater independence and flexibility, others may develop stronger preferences for employment stability and structured career progression. Consequently, student employment should be understood as an experiential context that may condition entrepreneurial aspirations rather than as an inherently positive influence on entrepreneurial intention.

Experiential learning further highlights the importance of connecting theoretical knowledge with practical experiences in entrepreneurship education. Through workplace participation, students may encounter organisational processes, engage in problem-solving activities, and develop a better understanding of how entrepreneurial concepts relate to practical situations. When these experiences are integrated with formal entrepreneurial education, students may have opportunities to reflect upon their practical observations and evaluate the relevance of entrepreneurial knowledge within real-world contexts. Such integration is consistent with experiential and participatory learning approaches that emphasise active engagement, reflection, and the application of knowledge (Michel et al., 2009; Motta & Galina, 2023). Previous entrepreneurship education literature has also discussed the importance of strengthening connections between theoretical instruction and practical learning experiences (Carpenter & Wilson, 2022; Montes-Martínez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2023; Petrolo et al., 2023; Senali et al., 2022; Sitaridis & Kitsios, 2024). Nevertheless, student employment should not automatically be regarded as equivalent to entrepreneurial learning, as the relevance of workplace experiences may depend on job characteristics, responsibilities, and opportunities for reflection. Accordingly, the integration of employment experiences and formal entrepreneurial education provides a theoretical basis for proposing that student employment may condition the relationships between formal entrepreneurial education, TPB antecedents, and entrepreneurial intention.

The Proposed Moderating Role of Student Employment

Drawing upon Experiential Learning Theory, student employment (SE) is conceptualised as a student-level experiential context that may condition the relationships between formal entrepreneurial education (FEE), the cognitive antecedents of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and entrepreneurial intention (EI). Employment undertaken concurrently with formal studies may provide students with opportunities to observe organisational activities, acquire practical skills, and evaluate the applicability of academic knowledge in real-world settings. Nevertheless, the relevance of these experiences to entrepreneurial intention may vary according to employment characteristics, workplace responsibilities, and students' career aspirations.

First, student employment may condition the relationship between FEE and EI by providing opportunities for students to apply or critically reassess entrepreneurial knowledge acquired through formal education. Students whose employment involves practical problem-solving, customer interactions, or exposure to business operations may find greater relevance in entrepreneurial learning. Conversely, employment that offers limited entrepreneurial exposure or places substantial demands on students' time may provide fewer opportunities to reinforce formal entrepreneurial education. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H9: Student employment moderates the relationship between formal entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention.

Second, student employment may condition the relationship between attitude towards entrepreneurship (ATE) and EI. Students with favourable entrepreneurial attitudes may become more inclined to pursue entrepreneurship when their employment experiences expose them to entrepreneurial autonomy, innovation, and opportunities for business development. Conversely, attractive employment conditions, career stability, or negative workplace experiences associated with entrepreneurial activities may weaken the translation of favourable attitudes into entrepreneurial intention. These competing possibilities suggest that the relationship between ATE and EI may vary according to students' employment experiences. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H10: Student employment moderates the relationship between attitude towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intention.

Third, student employment may influence the relationship between subjective norms (SN) and EI through students' exposure to additional social and professional environments. Interactions with supervisors, colleagues, business owners, and other workplace contacts may affect the importance students attach to perceived approval or disapproval of entrepreneurial career choices. Students working in entrepreneurial environments may encounter social expectations that differ from those experienced by students in more conventional employment settings. Consequently, employment experiences may condition the extent to which existing subjective norms translate into entrepreneurial intention.

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H11: Student employment moderates the relationship between subjective norms and entrepreneurial intention.

Fourth, student employment may condition the relationship between perceived behavioural control (PBC) and EI by providing opportunities for students to develop practical competencies and evaluate their ability to manage work-related responsibilities. Such experiences may influence whether students who perceive themselves as capable of entrepreneurial activity subsequently develop intentions to establish a business. However, workplace exposure may also reveal resource limitations, uncertainty, or difficulties associated with entrepreneurial activities, potentially weakening the translation of perceived control into intention. Furthermore, general employment-related competence should not automatically be equated with entrepreneurial capability. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H12: Student employment moderates the relationship between perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial intention.

Taken together, these propositions suggest that student employment may condition the relationships between FEE, TPB antecedents, and EI. The proposed moderation effects are not assumed to be uniformly positive because employment experiences may provide both supportive and competing influences on entrepreneurial career aspirations. Future empirical research should therefore investigate whether the proposed relationships are supported and whether their strength or direction varies across employment characteristics and educational contexts.

Contributions of the Study

Theoretical Contributions

This conceptual paper seeks to contribute to entrepreneurship education research by integrating educator-level and student-level experiential influences into an extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework. This builds upon earlier research that conceptualised the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences as a moderator of entrepreneurial intention relationships (Toh et al., 2026). The present study extends this perspective by incorporating student employment as an additional experiential moderator. The proposed framework therefore considers two distinct contextual conditions through which the relationships between formal entrepreneurial education (FEE), TPB antecedents, and entrepreneurial intention (EI) may vary.

First, this study brings together two experiential perspectives that are commonly examined through different areas of entrepreneurship education research. The educator-level perspective focuses on the diversity of entrepreneurial experiences that teachers contribute to formal learning environments, while the student-level perspective considers employment experiences undertaken concurrently with academic studies. By positioning ETE and SE as parallel moderators, the framework provides a basis for examining how different experiential contexts may condition the relationships between FEE, cognitive antecedents, and EI. This integration represents a conceptual extension of the teacher-experience perspective rather than the introduction of entrepreneurial experience as an entirely new research construct.

Second, the study develops a context-sensitive application of TPB by drawing upon Role Model Theory and Experiential Learning Theory to explain the proposed moderation mechanisms. Role-modelling processes provide a theoretical basis for considering how educators' entrepreneurial backgrounds may influence the relevance and credibility of entrepreneurial learning. In contrast, experiential learning provides a basis for understanding how students' workplace experiences may influence their interpretation and application of entrepreneurial knowledge. These perspectives offer complementary explanations for why the relationships between entrepreneurial education, cognitive antecedents, and intention may differ across experiential contexts. Importantly, the framework does not assume that either form of experience necessarily strengthens entrepreneurial intention, recognising the possibility of context-dependent and competing influences.

Third, the proposed framework establishes a research agenda for examining the conditional relationships among FEE, TPB antecedents, and EI. By distinguishing educator-level and

student-level experiential moderators, the study provides a foundation for future empirical investigations that consider the characteristics, relevance, and quality of entrepreneurial and employment experiences. Such research may clarify whether the proposed moderating relationships are supported and under which educational or institutional conditions they emerge. Accordingly, the contribution of this conceptual paper lies in the integration and theoretical specification of these experiential perspectives rather than in demonstrating empirically established moderating effects.

Practical Contributions

From a practical perspective, the proposed framework offers potential practical implications for higher education institutions, policymakers, and educators.

- **Higher Education Institutions:** Recruit educators with diverse entrepreneurial backgrounds and encourage them to integrate their practical experiences into teaching. Simultaneously, develop structured student employment or internship programs that align with entrepreneurial learning outcomes.
- **Policy Makers:** Support initiatives that link student employment opportunities with entrepreneurship curricula, ensuring that work experiences are not only income-generating but also skill-enhancing and innovation-oriented.
- **Educators & Trainers**: Blend theoretical knowledge with real-world entrepreneurial cases from both their own experiences and students' employment contexts, fostering deeper engagement and applied understanding.

By emphasizing the complementary roles of educators' entrepreneurial diversity and students' work experience, this study provides a roadmap for designing holistic entrepreneurship programs that may inform educational approaches intended to develop students' confidence, stronger entrepreneurial skills, and sustainable entrepreneurial intentions.

Empirical Roadmap for Future Research

Future empirical research should operationalise the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences (ETE) by distinguishing the diversity of entrepreneurial involvement from the duration, intensity, and outcomes of such experience. Potential indicators of experiential breadth include the number of entrepreneurial ventures in which educators have directly participated, the diversity of industries or business contexts represented by these ventures, and the range of entrepreneurial roles or activities undertaken, such as venture creation, business development, opportunity evaluation, and resource mobilisation. In contrast, experience duration, venture performance, and pedagogical competence may be considered distinct attributes requiring separate assessment. Researchers should also distinguish educators' actual entrepreneurial histories from students' awareness and perceptions of those experiences, as students may not be equally exposed to their teachers' professional backgrounds. Appropriate measurement instruments would require conceptual validation and empirical assessment before application. Given that educators' experiences operate at the teacher level while entrepreneurial intention is assessed at the student level, future studies should consider multilevel research designs where students are nested within educators or classes.

Future empirical research should examine the proposed moderating role of student employment by clearly distinguishing employment status from the characteristics of employment experiences. Student employment may initially be operationalised by identifying whether students undertake paid employment concurrently with their formal studies. Additional information concerning working hours, employment type, job responsibilities, organisational context, and exposure to entrepreneurial activities may be collected to examine heterogeneity in employment experiences. Quantitative studies may employ regression-based moderation analysis or structural equation modelling to test whether student employment conditions the relationships between FEE, ATE, SN, PBC, and EI. The proposed models should include the relevant main effects and interaction terms, while accounting for potential confounding factors such as prior work experience, socioeconomic circumstances, and previous entrepreneurial exposure. Longitudinal designs would be particularly valuable for investigating how employment experiences and entrepreneurial intentions develop over time. Furthermore, subsequent research may examine whether employment relevance and entrepreneurial exposure explain differences in the magnitude or direction of the proposed moderating relationships.

Qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations can reveal mechanisms like storytelling, experiential learning, and credibility transfer. Longitudinal research could track whether intentions translate into entrepreneurial action post-graduation, while cross-institutional or cross-country comparisons could uncover cultural and policy influences.

Further studies may explore mediators and moderators such as prior entrepreneurial exposure, self-efficacy, gender, and socioeconomic background. This roadmap encourages empirical validation and expansion of the model to inform evidence-based strategies that integrate entrepreneurial teaching experiences and student employment into effective entrepreneurship education.

Discussion and Conclusion

This conceptual paper develops an extended framework that integrates the breadth of entrepreneurial teachers' experiences (ETE) and student employment (SE) as distinct contextual moderators of the relationships between formal entrepreneurial education (FEE), the cognitive antecedents of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and entrepreneurial intention (EI). Building upon earlier conceptual work concerning educators' entrepreneurial experience breadth (Toh et al., 2026), the present study introduces a complementary student-level experiential perspective by examining employment undertaken concurrently with formal studies. Drawing upon TPB, Role Model Theory, and Experiential Learning Theory, the proposed framework considers how experiential influences situated within both educators and students may condition the relationships between entrepreneurial learning, cognitive evaluations, and intention. The framework therefore offers a basis for examining variations in entrepreneurial intention without assuming that educational exposure or practical experience necessarily produces uniformly positive outcomes.

However, it is important to recognize that entrepreneurial educators, regardless of whether they possess experience, may still face systemic challenges that weaken their influence (Dickson et al., 2008; Fayolle et al., 2015; Matlay, 2005, 2006; Ruskovaara & Pihkala, 2015;

Weinrauch, 1984). These include inconsistencies in curriculum assessment and the ambiguous nature of entrepreneurial learning environments, which often lack clarity in both content and outcomes. As Diegoli (2018) & Lane and Mountford-Brown (2025) caution, selecting educators solely based on their entrepreneurial background is as superficial as judging teaching quality based on age, gender, or nationality, as these factors do not necessarily predict pedagogical effectiveness. Similarly, not all student employment experiences equally contribute to entrepreneurial growth; the relevance, quality, and context of such employment are critical factors.

Overall, this study contributes to the conceptual development of entrepreneurship education research by positioning educator-level entrepreneurial experience breadth and student-level employment experience as distinct contextual conditions within an extended TPB framework. Rather than treating experiential exposure as an inherently beneficial influence, the proposed model recognises that its relevance to entrepreneurial intention may depend on the characteristics of educators' experiences, students' employment contexts, and the educational environment. As the proposed moderation relationships have not been empirically tested, future research is required to evaluate their direction, magnitude, and contextual applicability. Such investigations may provide further insights into how formal entrepreneurial education can be connected with experiential learning opportunities while accounting for differences in students' entrepreneurial aspirations and circumstances.

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