



AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL PASSION IN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURIAL CAREER CHOICE DECISION

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Abstract

The Social Cognitive Career Theory is used in this study as a framework to examine how students' entrepreneurial drive influences their career choices. The purpose of this study was to determine whether entrepreneurial self-efficacy and outcome expectancies may be used to explain the relationship between students' love for entrepreneurship and their career choice. A survey was given to a group of 300 university students in the Sultanate of Oman to find out if the predicted relationships were true. The research shows that entrepreneurial enthusiasm significantly affects self-efficacy and entrepreneurial outcomes. The mediation study's results additionally showed that there is full mediation, which implies that entrepreneurial self-efficacy and expectation of success entirely and sequentially explain the connection between entrepreneurial passion and career choice. The findings of the study wrap up with policy implications for academicians and policy makers in Oman.

Keywords: EP, Social Cognitive Career Theory, Career Choice

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has a larger part in any country's economic progress. Entrepreneurship is encouraged by governments around the world since it fosters economic growth and job creation. Governments began emphasizing entrepreneurship education as a strategy to boost entrepreneurship in order to foster entrepreneurial activity inside the country. Most universities across the world teach entrepreneurship. Arab nations are likewise on the path to safeguarding locals' livelihoods through developing entrepreneurial culture among their populations. The Sultanate of Oman is no different, and the government of Oman has prioritized entrepreneurship as a primary source of job development. Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Education are receiving growing attention in Oman, with research funding, curriculum creation, teacher training, and collaborations with non-governmental organizations. To develop the entrepreneurship culture among young people, the government mandated a semester-long course on Entrepreneurship for all students enrolling in Higher Education Institutions in 2015.

Educators of entrepreneurship equip their students with the necessary subject knowledge, abilities, experience, and self-assurance, working as facilitators of career success. Despite the fact that the decision of choosing entrepreneurship as a career rests solely with the individual, research reveals that a variety of factors influence people's employment decisions. Various studies have shown that EP significantly affects the launch of new businesses (Saeid Karimi (2020). "Consciously accessible, intense good sentiments experienced through participation in entrepreneurial activities connected with roles that are relevant and salient to a entrepreneur's self-identity" is how Cardon, M.S., et al. (2009) defined EP (Cardon, M.S., et al., 2009, p. 517). There is data to support the claim that EP encourages risk-taking and innovation (Robert, B. J., et al (2001); Murnieks, C. Y., et al (2014). the mechanism through which EP drives entrepreneurial intention has been elucidated by recent research on this topic (Biraglia, A., et al (2017); Huyghe, A., et al. (2016); Saeid Karimi (2020). However, the research provides scant support for the role of EP in entrepreneurial intent within a valid and



adequate theoretical model (Huyghe, A., et al. (2016), Saeid Karimi (2020). However, investigations on the role of EP in the establishment of entrepreneurial intention have used the social cognitive career concept framework (Biraglia, A., et al. (2017). However, it was centered on a distinct industry—home brewers. Knowing the significance of EP in the decision to pursue a career will aid entrepreneurship educators in boosting entrepreneurial job motivation. Thus, this study utilizes the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) framework to inquire into how EP influences the professional paths of Omani business owners. Despite the fact that the factors influencing entrepreneurial job choice have been extensively examined, very few studies have been conducted in the Omani setting (Al-Awbathani, R., et al. (2019).

There are several significant ways in which this research adds to the body of work on entrepreneurship that already exists. Using a logical and theoretical framework, we extend the research on EP by investigating how EP effects students' ECCs. That EP has an indirect impact on ECC via SEE (the serial mediation effect) and entrepreneurial outcome expectation in series, was one of the first empirical investigations into which our study is one. Third, this study advances our knowledge of how EP influences Omani students' decisions regarding their entrepreneurial careers. This assists policymakers in developing the entrepreneurship curriculum.

Here is how the rest of an essay is structured: Following a brief literature assessment (Section 2), the hypothesis is introduced. Section 3 then details the study's methodology and presents the findings. The results & their effects on subsequent study are discussed in Sections 5 and 6. Limitations and potential areas for future research are discussed in the paper's conclusion.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS

SCCT and ECC

It is up to the individual to choose entrepreneurship as a profession. Researchers have attempted to comprehend the process through which individuals pick entrepreneurship as a career path, as well as the elements that influence self-employment decisions (Cooper, A.C., et al. (1988); Kolvereid, L. 1996). Numerous theories that help to understand the process of choosing a vocation are explored in the career literature. One of the most popular theoretical frameworks for examining factors that influence one's career path is really the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent, R. W., et al. (2002); Swanson, J. L., et al. (2000). The SCCT, developed further from Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986, 2001), provides an explanation for the underlying factors that influence one's choice of career and subsequent actions (Lent, R. W., et al. (1994); E. Liguori, et al (2020). Numerous academics have utilized the SCCT framework to comprehend the individual motivational process underlying profession selection in a variety of contexts and domains (Zikic, J., et al (2009). Additionally, the SCCT paradigm has been extended to the study of the determinants of entrepreneurial intent (Biraglia, A., et al (2017); Witold Nowinski, et al (2019).

EP

"Consciously accessible intense happy sentiments experienced by engagement in entrepreneurial activities connected with roles that are meaningful again for self-identity of a entrepreneur." is how Cardon, M.S., et al. (2009), 515 characterised EP. EP is a major motivator for business startup (Cardon, M.S., et al. (2009); Huyghe, A., et al. (2016); Saeid Karimi (2020).



Hypothesis and Model

The study model represented in Figure 1 is proposed to describe the interrelationships among the various constructs. The paradigm hypothesises both an unmediated and direct connection between EP and ECC that accounts for the indirect connection between entrepreneur self-efficacy and EOE.

EP and Entrepreneurial Job Choice

EP acts as a stimulant for business startup planning, and entrepreneurial zeal leads to a decision to pursue an entrepreneurial career Saeid Karimi (2020). Prior studies have shown a link among entrepreneurial zeal and entrepreneurial job choice (Murnieks, C. Y., et al. (2014); Nasiru, A., et al. (2014).

EP, SEE, and EOE

One's level of self-efficacy in entrepreneurship (SEE) can be seen of as an indicator of one's willingness to try new ventures (Chen, C.C., et al (1998); Saeid Karimi (2020), Segal, G., et al (2005). EP and self-efficacy are positively correlated, according to earlier studies (Murnieks, C. Y., et al (2014); Biraglia, A., et al (2017); Cardon, M. S., et al 2013; Huyghe, A., M. et al. (2016). The subsequent hypothesis is therefore postulated.

H1: EP has a positive relationship with SEE.

EOE are the expected results of a particular action and comprise perceptions of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations (Lent et al., 2001). A person who is enthusiastic about their work may anticipate receiving both extrinsic and intrinsic benefits. Al-Awbathani, R., et al (2019) observed that an entrepreneur's enthusiasm for invention positively affects the expectations he or she has for the success of their business. The following hypothesis is based on this research:

H2: EP is positively connected to EOE

SEE, EOE, and ECC

Under SCCT, it is argued that individuals will acquire intention toward a behavior if they believe they are capable of performing it and if the behavior produces a positive outcome (Lent, R. W., et al (2002).

Numerous empirical studies have examined the favorable correlation between SEE and entrepreneurial job choice. (Al-Awbathani, R., et al (2019); Lanero, A., et al (2016) have showed that EOE positively influence entrepreneurial attitude and intent.

According to the findings of this study, H3: SEE is positively connected to ECC.

H4: EOE is positively connected to ECC

According to SCCT, the mediator between a person's personal characteristics and professional goals is SEE and EOE (Lent, R. W., et al (1994); Lent, R. W., et al (2002). Students are more inclined to pursue entrepreneurship as a career if they believe they have the ability to be entrepreneurs and recognize the rewards of doing so. The entrepreneurial enthusiasm of students influences their SEE and outcome expectations, making them more inclined to pursue entrepreneurship as a career. Students with a strong EP will have high SEE and positive outcome expectations. Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H5: SEE acts as a moderator of the positive correlation between EP and vocational interest.

H6: EOE act as a moderator of the positive correlation between EP and career path.

H7: SEE and EOE serially mediate connection between extraversion (EP) and a preference for entrepreneurial work.

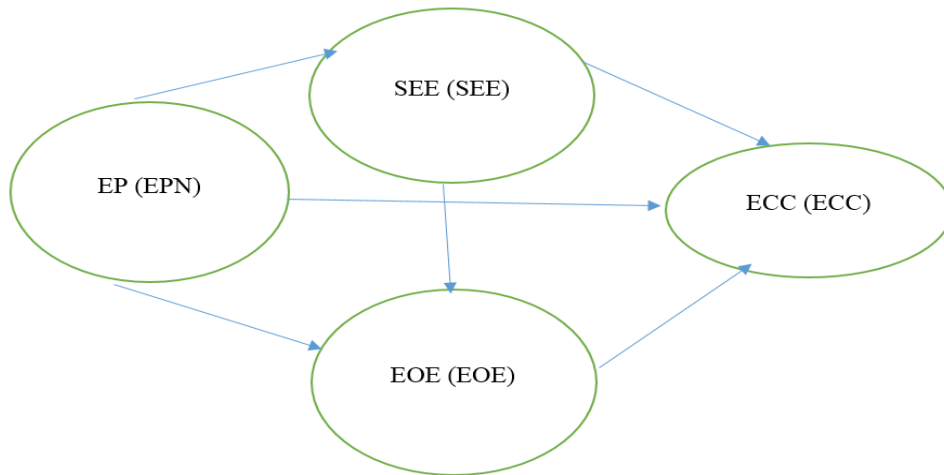


Figure1: The relationships linking EP, ESE, EOE and ECC

METHODOLOGY

Research method

In this study, we will use the cognitive social career theory as a framework to investigate the role that entrepreneurial zeal plays in the career decisions of college freshmen. The undergraduate students at the institution undergoing entrepreneurship instruction were the intended audience. A total of 250 questionnaires were sent to undergraduate students at one of the Sultanate of Oman's oldest private universities. Data collection involved translating the original English survey into Arabic. Out of the total of 250 surveys provided to students, 215 were completed and returned.

Measurements

Multi-item scales were used to assess the components, and measurements were drawn from past research. ECC (ECC) was assessed using six (6) items, two (2) items of entrepreneurial intentions, and four (4) items of nascent behavior on a seven-point (7) Likert-scale ranging from (7=strongly-agree- 1=strongly-disagree) (Lanero, A., et al (2016). As outlined by Cardon, M. S., et al., EP was evaluated on a 7-point Likert-type scale containing five verified markers (2013). The extent of EOE (EOEs) was evaluated with a four-item scale. The four (4) indicators were graded on a seven-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) through 7 (strongly agree) (strongly agree).

Analysis

Using a structural equation model (SEM) analysis with partial least squares, we analysed the expected connections between the variables (PLS). To identify the unique indirect effects of a mediators in the research model, a multiple mediation analysis was carried out using PROCESS MACRO.

RESULTS

Profile demographic of the respondents

Eighty-five percent of respondents are between the ages of 18 and 24. About 76% of respondents were enrolled in bachelor's degree programs, while the remainder were enrolled in diploma programs. 57.2% of respondents did not have a science background, while the remainder were from Science. All of the respondents were discovered to have taken a course in entrepreneurship.

Normality

Data normality was assessed using the skew-ness and kurtosis technique because it is what is required for structural equation modelling (Anderson, J. C., et al (1988). The kurtosis and skewness values for every item are well within the acceptable ranges of 3 and 8, respectively.

Measurement model examination

Throughout the process of analysing the measurement model, we looked at its construct dependability, convergent validity, or discriminant validity. Cronbach's alpha and composites reliability were utilised for this analysis of reliability. Convergent validity was calculated using the AVE and the standard loadings of each assessment item to its corresponding latent component. Discriminant validity can be tested by comparing the square root of AVE to a correlation between the latent variables in the studies.

Reliability Analysis

To ensure the proposed model was valid, we computed Cronbach's Alpha. The range of reliability values was between .91 and .98 (EP=.97; EO=.98; ESE=.95; ECC=.91). The composite reliability of the measured items, as expressed by their underlying construct, was within the acceptable upper limit of 0.70. The results are EP= 0.97, EO= 0.99, ESE= 0.96, and ECC= 0.93.

Convergent Validity

Using standardised loadings, the convergent validity of the model was developed, and By determining the AVE value, we may examine the measures' convergent validity. In table 1 are shown the AVE values and standardised loadings. These values above the 0.50 threshold set. The variables' convergent validity was evaluated based on the estimated values and the statistical significance of the results.

Table 1: Convergent validity and construct reliability

Latent Variables	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
EP	EPN1	0.744	0.979	0.784
	EPN2	0.841		
	EPN3	0.902		
	EPN4	0.873		
	EPN5	0.911		
	EPN6	0.878		
	EPN7	0.92		
	EPN8	0.905		
	EPN9	0.873		
	EPN10	0.939		
	EPN11	0.895		
	EPN12	0.93		
	EPN13	0.882		

EOE	EOE1	0.859	0.99	0.877
	EOE2	0.913		
	EOE3	0.933		
	EOE4	0.95		
	EOE5	0.951		
	EOE6	0.928		
	EOE7	0.957		
	EOE8	0.927		
	EOE9	0.947		
	EOE10	0.946		
	EOE11	0.936		
	EOE12	0.95		
	EOE13	0.951		
	EOE14	0.959		
SEE	SEE1	0.784	0.962	0.716
	SEE2	0.801		
	SEE3	0.859		
	SEE4	0.885		
	SEE5	0.854		
	SEE6	0.857		
	SEE7	0.865		
	SEE8	0.83		
	SEE9	0.868		
	ESE10	0.853		
ECC	ECC1	0.779	0.933	0.699
	ECC2	0.882		
	ECC3	0.723		
	ECC4	0.86		
	ECC5	0.869		
	ECC6	0.891		

Discriminant Validity

Fornell and Larcker's method is used to test the discriminant validity of the proposed model (1981). Fornell and Larcker (1981) state that the cross-tabular inter-construct correlation (shown as r^2) must be larger than the square root of the average variance estimator (AVE).

Table II. Discriminant validity

Variables	EPN	EOE	SEE	ECC
EP	0.885			
EO	0.52	0.937		
SEE	0.44	0.32	0.846	
ECC	0.21	0.57	0.36	0.836

Structural Model

Using structural equation modelling (SEM) with partial least squares (PLS), we tested the proposed theoretical framework (directly). Table III demonstrates that the primary endogenous variables (EOE, SEE, and ECC) have moderate R^2 values, indicating adequate explanatory power (Hair, J. F. et al (2014), Q^2 values (greater than 0.00) demonstrating predictive relevance and SRMR values (less than 0.08) demonstrating acceptable model fit. If a structural model meets all three criteria, it implies that all necessary relationships between variables have been taken into account (Hair, J. F. et al (2014).

Table III Model fit Criteria

Variables	R Square	Q Square	SRMR
SEE	0.644	0.644	0.07
EOE	0.447	0.444	
ECC	0.585	0.585	

Path analysis

Four direct hypotheses were investigated in the study utilizing structural equation modeling (SEM), and the findings gave empirical support for those four hypotheses (H1 to H4). The conceptual model's R2 values and significant beta coefficients for each hypothesized association were examined. Path importance and non-normalized path coefficients are displayed in Figure 2.

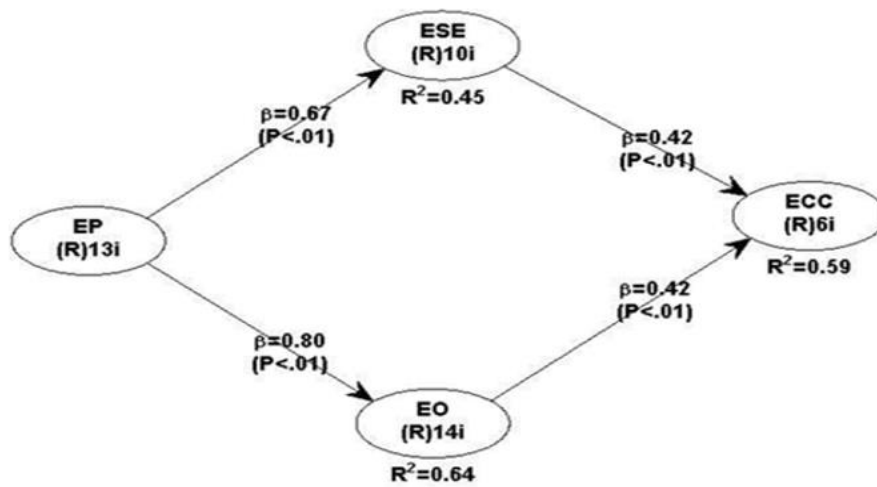


Figure 2: Path Analysis's result

Analyzing serial mediation

Multiple mediation analysis in SPSS Process Macro model 4 (Hayes, A. F.) was carried out to identify the unique indirect effects of both mediators (2013). If a 95% bootstrapped CI doesn't really contain zero, the effect is judged to be sizable. The findings, shown in Table 4, demonstrated that both ESE and EO fully mediate the association between EP and ECC since particular indirect effects were significant but the residual direct effect of EP on ECC was not (bootstrap CI included 0). (Non-zero confidence intervals). However, there was no discernible direct impact of EPN on ECC (zero confidence intervals), supporting complete mediation. Significant results were reported for the sequential mediating effect of ESE and EO on the influence of EP on ECC.

Table IV Mediation Analysis Results

	Path	Effects	LLCI	ULCI	Results
Total Effect	EPN→ECC	.6619	.5494	.7745	Significant
Direct Effect	EPN→ECC	.1087	-.0551	.2725	Insignificant
Specific Indirect Effect	EPN→SEE→ECC	.2717	.1652	.3722	Significant
	EPN→EOE→ECC	.2815	.1446	.4126	Significant
	EPN→SEE→EOE→ECC	0.0535	0.0202	0.1102	Significant

Contrast comparison

To compare the relative importance of each mediator's third-party effect, a comparative analysis was conducted. A contrast is considered statistically significant if the confidence interval (CI) doesn't really contain zero, and a comparison of the orders of magnitude of the various indirect effects reveals which mediator is more important (Hayes, A. F. (2013). There was no significant difference between EO and ESE when EP was the independent variable. The outcomes are displayed in Table V.

Table V Result of Contrast Comparison

Independent Variable	Contrast	Effect	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	Result
EPN	SEE→EOE	-.0098	-.0270	.1737	No significant difference

Serial mediation

The study also evaluated serial mediation using process macro 6 to assess if a relationship exists between EPN→SEE→EOE→ECC, which was not included in the conceptual model. As indicated in Table VI, the study demonstrated that, in accordance with the existing theory, there is complete mediation between EPN and ECC via SEE and EOE.

Table VI Result of Serial Mediation

Path	Effects	LLCI	ULCI	Results
EPN→SEE→EO→ECC	.0535	.0202	.1102	Significant

DISCUSSIONS

Four direct and three mediational hypotheses were evaluated in the study. All of the study's hypotheses found empirical confirmation from the PLS SEM and mediation analysis results. The findings complement H1 and H2 and show that EP has a strong impact on expectations for entrepreneurial outcomes and SEE. The findings imply that people with high levels of passion might try to learn new things about entrepreneurial pursuits, which would expose them to having higher levels of SEE. Similar to this, those who have a strong EP should anticipate positive business outcomes. The results are consistent with the research from (Cardon, M. S., et al (2013); Cardon, M.S., et al (2009); Thorgren, S., et al (2015), Al-Awbathani, R., et al (2019). The results supported H3 and H4 by demonstrating the significant positive effects of EOE and SEE on the decision to pursue an entrepreneurial career. In the context of the USA and Saudi Arabia, researchers like (Santos, G., et al (2020), Al-Awbathani, R., et al (2019) proved the significance of the relationship between EOE. The results show that those with a strong entrepreneurial attitude may choose to pursue entrepreneurship as a career. The earlier findings of () are consistent with the impact of SEE on ECC (Al-Awbathani, R., et al (2019); Lanero, A., et al (2016), E. Liguori, et al (2020). A strong indirect influence was identified through the mediators, SEE and EOE, while the direct impact of EP on choosing an entrepreneurial job was insignificant, according to the study. According to the findings of the mediation analysis, there is full mediation present, and in a sequential pattern, SEE and EOE fully mediate the relationship between EP and job choice. The results suggested that EP can lead to SEE, but that it is not sufficient on its own to choose of pursue entrepreneurial as a vocation, which fosters the development of favorable EOE and, in turn, influences career choice.



THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

SEE, EOE, and entrepreneurial job choice were all found to have a strong causal link in the study. The research examined how and to what extent students' EP affects their choice to pursue entrepreneurship as a career using the social cognitive career theory paradigm.

The study also supported the serial mediating model, which demonstrated that SEE and entrepreneurial orientation over time indirectly influence the choice of an entrepreneurial profession. The present literature on career choice in entrepreneurship does not examine this serial mediation effect.

Practice Implications

The study's findings supported the importance of EP in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and sense of self-efficacy. The decision-makers can come up with a number of strategies to inspire entrepreneurship in university students. Instead of orienting students with general scenarios of business launches, the focus of an entrepreneurship course could be on orienting them to industries they are enthusiastic about.

By integrating entrepreneurship in a hands-on manner into the course curriculum, one can increase their sense of self-efficacy as an entrepreneur. A focus on cognition in experiential entrepreneurship education may be especially beneficial (Santos, G., et al (2020). University start-up incubators can assist students in developing their domain self-efficacy. Exercises like company plan presentations and interviews with entrepreneurs should be facilitated by instructors to help students develop their SEE.

Research Limitations and Future Directions

The research was conducted in Oman, but the model must also be validated in other nations. The study found that just three factors could predict choosing an entrepreneurial career: entrepreneurial enthusiasm, SEE, and EOE. Other pertinent ideas are raised by Liguori et al. (2018)'s framework, particularly the need to investigate the role of general self-efficacy. By adding these constructs to the current study model, future investigations can be done.

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