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A Non-parametric Analysis of The Relationship Between Business Experience and Entrepreneurial Intention of Final-Semester MBA Students in Nepal

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between prior business experience and entrepreneurial intention among final-semester MBA students in Nepal. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 257 final-semester MBA students from five major Nepalese universities, using a structured questionnaire to measure business experience and entrepreneurial intention. Non-parametric statistical methods, including Pearson's chi-square test, Cramér's V, and Goodman-Kruskal's lambda, were employed for analysis. Family business exposure showed a statistically significant association with entrepreneurial intention ($\chi^2 = 12.847$, $p = 0.012$, Cramér's V = 0.158), with 68.5% of exposed students expressing intent to start a business within three years compared to 52.1% of those without exposure. Personal business experience demonstrated a stronger relationship ($\chi^2 = 10.394$, $p = 0.006$, Cramér's V = 0.201), with 68.0% of experienced students exhibiting entrepreneurial intention compared to 50.8% of those without experience. The combined business experience index showed a positive trend but did not reach statistical significance ($\chi^2 = 8.421$, $p = 0.077$). Personal business experience exhibited the strongest predictive value ($\lambda = 0.156$), followed by family business exposure ($\lambda = 0.127$). Gender moderation effects were observed, with business experience showing stronger associations among male students. The convenience sampling approach and cross-sectional design limit the generalizability of the findings. This research represents one of the few systematic investigations of the relationships between business experience and entrepreneurial intention in the Nepalese MBA context, contributing to the entrepreneurship education literature in developing economies. MBA programs should integrate experiential learning opportunities, family business case studies, and structured business exposure to enhance the development of entrepreneurial intentions.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial intention; Business experience; MBA students; Nepal; Non-parametric analysis; Entrepreneurship education

1. Introduction

The burgeoning landscape of entrepreneurial endeavors in developing nations, particularly in South Asia, necessitates a thorough understanding of the factors influencing entrepreneurial intention among highly educated demographics. Master of Business Administration (MBA) students represent a strategic population for entrepreneurship development given their advanced business education, professional networks, and career flexibility [1]. In Nepal, youth unemployment remains a persistent challenge, making the development of entrepreneurial orientations among educated graduates a national priority. The country's transition to a federal republic, evolving digital ecosystem, and youthful demographic profile create opportunities for the development of new ventures. However, constraints on access to capital, regulatory complexities, and market limitations present formidable obstacles for aspiring entrepreneurs.

The relationship between prior business experience and entrepreneurship has garnered significant attention in entrepreneurship studies globally. Business experience, acquired through family businesses, personal ventures, or professional involvement, provides individuals with practical knowledge, industry contacts, and confidence

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that may influence their propensity to start a new business [2]. However, this relationship remains understudied in Nepal's unique cultural, economic and institutional context.

Nepal's entrepreneurial environment is characterized by necessity-driven entrepreneurship, limited access to formal financial resources, and an increasing emphasis on education-driven opportunity identification [2]. The nation's political transformation from monarchy to federal republic has created a new institutional framework that is potentially conducive to entrepreneurial behavior, while traditional cultural values emphasizing security and stability may constrain the formation of entrepreneurial intentions.

Earlier studies, including [3], have demonstrated that exposure to business activities through family involvement and direct experience has a positive impact on students' entrepreneurial intentions. Their investigation of Romanian business students revealed meaningful associations between business experience categories and intention levels, providing an analytical framework adaptable to the Nepalese context.

The primary objective of this study is to determine whether a statistically significant association exists between the business experience of MBA students and their entrepreneurial intentions in Nepal. Specifically, this research tests the hypothesis that MBA students with business experience demonstrate higher entrepreneurial intention than those without such knowledge.

Secondary objectives include: (1) identifying the most predictive forms of business experience for entrepreneurial intention, (2) examining the strength of association between different types of business experience and entrepreneurial intention, and (3) providing evidence-based recommendations for entrepreneurship education enhancement in Nepalese MBA programs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Entrepreneurial intention, which refers to a person's deliberate plan or pledge to create a new venture, is the best predictor of actual entrepreneurial action [4]. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), formulated by Ajzen (1991), serves as the primary theoretical basis for explaining the development of entrepreneurial intentions. Based on TPB, entrepreneurial intention is a function of three major antecedents, namely attitudes toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Shapero's Entrepreneurial Event Model provides a complementary theoretical approach, highlighting precipitating events, perceived desirability, and perceived feasibility as they influence intention formation [4]. Both theoretical models emphasize the significance of experience in shaping entrepreneurial cognitions and intentions.

2.2 Business Experience and Entrepreneurial Intention

Prior involvement in business encompasses a range of experiences with entrepreneurial activities, including participation in family businesses, creation of one's own companies, and work experiences in corporate organizations [5]. These experiences provide individuals with domain-specific knowledge, relevant skills, and social networks that help in enhancing their entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention.

Aldrich and Cliff (2003) highlight family embeddedness in entrepreneurship, arguing that individuals from entrepreneurial families possess tacit knowledge in business management, risk handling, and opportunity identification. The embedded knowledge diminishes the perceived barriers to entrepreneurship and raises intention levels.

Empirical research validates the positive correlation between entrepreneurial intention and business experience.[5] found that students from entrepreneurial families perceived new venture creation as more desirable and feasible. In the same vein, Carr and Sequeira (2007) showed that exposure to family business had a positive effect on entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention among undergraduate students.

More recent research has applied this work to varied settings. Hudea et al. (2021) applied non-parametric techniques to examine the link between business experience and entrepreneurial intention among Romanian

university students, reporting significant effects with moderate effect sizes. Their methodology, emphasizing as it does relationships between categories instead of linear relationships, offers a sound methodological approach to settings in which normality assumptions are likely to be breached.

2.3 Entrepreneurship in the Nepalese Context

Nepal's entrepreneurial environment is characterized by the prevalence of necessity-driven entrepreneurship, limited access to formal finance, and a growing emphasis on education-driven opportunity identification [5]. The nation's shift in political structure from monarchy to federal republic has led to the development of new institutional arrangements with the potential to facilitate entrepreneurial behavior; while prevailing cultural values that promote security and stability can stifle entrepreneurial intentions.

Universities in Nepal have increasingly recognized the contribution of entrepreneurship to economic growth. Entrepreneurship courses, incubation centers, and university-industry collaboration have been introduced in universities to develop entrepreneurial attitudes among students. Systematic studies on the success of such efforts have, however, been few.

The population of MBA students in Nepal is a uniquely valuable group for research on entrepreneurship. MBA students typically possess advanced business education, professional contacts, and career flexibility, which can facilitate the development of new ventures. The antecedents of entrepreneurial intentions among them can provide insights into educational policy and program development.

2.4 Entrepreneurship Research in the South Asian Context

Recent entrepreneurship studies in South Asia offer a valuable comparative perspective on business experiences that influence entrepreneurial intention. Researchers throughout the region have identified both general patterns and context-specific differences in the development of entrepreneurial intention among educated groups.

In India, Sharma and Gupta (2023) analyzed entrepreneurial intention in 412 MBA students in Delhi and Mumbai and found that exposure to family business raised the likelihood of intention by 23% ($p < 0.01$). Their paper highlighted the importance of joint family setups in offering entrepreneurial role models and risk-sharing opportunities. Patel et al. (2022) also studied business incubation impacts in Indian engineering colleges and found that practical business exposure through university incubators heightened entrepreneurial self-efficacy scores by 34% over control groups.

Bangladesh studies by Rahman and Hossain (2023) surveyed 298 business graduates from Dhaka and Chittagong universities, finding a significant relationship between microfinance family exposure and entrepreneurial intention (OR = 2.14, $p = 0.008$). Their research emphasized how entrepreneurial knowledge spillovers are generated through family engagement in microenterprise activities, which is highly applicable to Nepal's comparable economic framework and microfinance coverage.

Sri Lankan research offers further regional perspectives. Fernando and Silva (2021) examined post-war entrepreneurial intention among 356 graduate students in Northern and Eastern provinces, identifying that war-disrupted family businesses generated both obstacles and motivation to venture creation. Their mixed-methods study found that although conflict disrupted conventional business networks, it also gave rise to necessity-driven entrepreneurial attitudes among educated youth.

Pakistani data collected by Khan et al. (2024) surveyed 445 MBA students in Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. They reported that Sharia-compliant family business exposure had stronger associations with entrepreneurial intention (Cramér's V = 0.24) compared to conventional business exposure (Cramér's V = 0.16). The implication is that religious and cultural value systems moderate business experience impacts, which may have some applicability to the Hindu-majority context of Nepal.

Comparative comparison illustrates many trends common in South Asian settings: (1) family business exposure consistently predicts higher entrepreneurial intentions, (2) cultural collectivism strengthens the family influence compared to Western settings, (3) economic necessity-driven conditions strengthen entrepreneurial motivation among educated groups, and (4) institutional framework deficiencies make family business networks increasingly important for entrepreneurial education.

Nepal's contribution to the regional knowledge pool is marked by its unique post-conflict transition, the reorganization of its federal structure, and the synthesis of Hindu and Buddhist entrepreneurial values. While it echoes South Asian patterns of family embeddedness and necessity-based entrepreneurship, Nepal's specific institutional environment and cultural conditions give rise to distinctive processes of entrepreneurial intention formation that warrant in-depth investigation.

Recent meta-analytic research by Bhattacharya et al. (2023) of 47 South Asian entrepreneurial intention studies found business experience to be the most robust consistent predictor (weighted effect size r = 0.31, 95% CI [0.24, 0.38]), in support of the theoretical applicability of experience-based intention models in regional contexts.

2.5 Theoretical Integration and Hypothesis Development

Extending prior entrepreneurial intention theories and regional empirical findings, the current study examines the following business experience effect hypotheses within the context of Nepal:

H1: MBA students with family business experience will demonstrate significantly higher entrepreneurial intention than those without such knowledge.

H2: MBA students who have personal business ownership experience will show significantly greater entrepreneurial intention compared to students without this experience.

H3: Personal business experience will have stronger predictive relationships with entrepreneurial intention than family business experience.

These hypotheses combine TPB and Shapero's model predictions with local empirical patterns, thereby situating the study within both theoretical and contextual literature streams.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Design

This research used a quantitative, cross-sectional, non-experimental research design to examine the relationship between business experience and entrepreneurial intention of MBA students in Nepal. The reason for choosing this design is the necessity to compare categorical data on entrepreneurial behaviors and background characteristics at a specific point in time. This is also in line with comparable research on entrepreneurship education and intention studies, for instance, [7].

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population was final-semester MBA students studying in accredited universities of Nepal, such as Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Pokhara University, Purbanchal University, and so on. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was applied based on practical considerations of accessibility and time limitations. This technique enabled the researchers to approach a sizeable number of students within a reasonable amount of time, especially those studying entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, and HRM specializations.

A total of 257 valid responses were collected and included in the final analysis. This sample is considered adequate for the application of contingency-based non-parametric tests, including Pearson's chi-square, that rely upon frequency distributions of categorical variables.

3.3 Instrumentation and Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on previous literature and adapted to the Nepalese context. The instrument was divided into four major sections as described in Table 1.

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Table 1: Instrumentation of Data

Sections	Particular
Demographic Information	Collected information on gender, age group, university affiliation, and specialization within the MBA program.
Business Experience	Assessed respondents' current or past involvement in family businesses, any experience owning or managing a personal company, type of business (if applicable), and a self-assessed rating of their business experience on a Likert-type scale from 1 (None) to 5 (Very High).
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	Measured students' intention to start a business within the next three years using both a categorical question (Yes/No/Unsure) and five Likert-scale items reflecting the strength of entrepreneurial intention. These items were adapted from previously validated entrepreneurial intention scales, including those aligned with Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour.
Informed Consent	Included a statement of consent and ensured participants understood the voluntary and anonymous nature of their participation. The questionnaire was distributed both online and in person, allowing broader access to students from urban and semi-urban campuses. Online distribution was managed through university platforms and student groups, utilizing tools such as Google Forms, while in-person distribution occurred in selected MBA classrooms with institutional permission.

Source: Author

Data collection was conducted during the final semester of the 2024-2025 academic year through a combination of in-person and online administration. Students were informed about the study's academic purpose, assured of confidentiality, and provided with voluntary participation options. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Quality control measures included: multiple validity checks during data entry, cross-verification of responses for internal consistency, and exclusion of incomplete questionnaires (7 removed from the initial 264).

3.4 Statistical Analysis Procedures

Given the categorical and ordinal nature of key variables, non-parametric statistical methods were employed. All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 28.0. Chi-square tests, Cramer's V, and Goodman's lambda were computed using built-in functions with exact p-value calculations.
The analysis proceeded in four stages:

Stage 1 - Descriptive Analysis: Frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, and descriptive statistics were computed to characterize the sample and key variables using SPSS Descriptive and Crosstabs procedures.

Stage 2 - Association Testing: Pearson's chi-square test of independence was used to test the null hypothesis of no association between business experience and entrepreneurial intention. The test statistics follow the formula:

$$\chi^2 = \Sigma[(\text{Observed} - \text{Expected})^2/\text{Expected}]$$

Stage 3 - Effect Size Estimation: Cramér's V was calculated to measure association strength according to Cohen's (1988) conventions (small: 0.10, medium: 0.30, large: 0.50):

$$V = \sqrt{(\chi^2/(n \times \min(r-1, c-1)))}$$

Where n is the sample size, r is the number of rows, and c is the number of columns.

Stage 4 - Predictive Analysis: Goodman-Kruskal's lambda (λ) was computed using the SPSS Crosstabs procedure to assess predictive association:

$$\lambda = (E_1 - E_2)/E_1$$

Where E_1 represents error in predicting the dependent variable without knowledge of the independent variable, and E_2 represents error with knowledge of the independent variable.

3.5 Study Limitations

Several methodological limitations must be acknowledged. First, the convenience sampling techniques restrict generalizability to the broader population of Nepalese MBA students. The sample may overrepresent urban, accessible programs and potentially exclude students from remote regions or small institutions, potentially biasing results towards higher socioeconomic backgrounds and greater business exposure. Second, a cross-sectional design prevents causal inference regarding the relationship between business experience and entrepreneurial intention. While associations can be identified, directionality and temporal sequencing cannot be definitively established. Third, the measurement of business experience relies on a self-reported categorical variable, which may introduce recall bias and social desirability effects. The study doesn't assess the quality, duration, or success of business experiences, which may moderate their impact on entrepreneurial intention. Fourth, the research focuses exclusively on intention rather than actual entrepreneurial behavior. Although intention is a robust prediction of behavior, the intention-behavior gap remains a recognized limitation in entrepreneurship research.

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Sample Characteristics

The study achieved a final sample of 257 participants, with substantial diversity on primary demographic characteristics. As indicated in Table 2, the sample demonstrated a relatively equal gender distribution, with males comprising 55.3% (n = 142) of the sample, females comprising 42.4% (n = 109), and a small percentage (2.3%, n = 6) marking other or refusing to indicate their gender identity.

Table 2: Sample Demographics (N = 257)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	142	55.3
	Female	109	42.4
	Other/Prefer not to say	6	2.3
Age Group	Below 25	78	30.4
	25–29	134	52.1
	30–34	35	13.6
	35 or above	10	3.9
University	Tribhuvan University	112	43.6
	Kathmandu University	47	18.3
	Purbanchal University	42	16.3
	Pokhara University	37	14.4
	Other	19	7.4
Specialization	Finance	76	29.6
	Marketing	68	26.5
	HRM	59	23.0
	Entrepreneurship	29	11.3
	Other	25	9.7

Source: Author

The age profile showed a clustering in the 25–29 years group, representing 52.1% (n = 134) of the sample, which is consistent with general enrollment trends in final-semester MBA programs. The next highest representation was by participants younger than 25 years (30.4%, n = 78), followed by 30–34 years (13.6%, n = 35), and then a low representation by participants 35 years and older (3.9%, n = 10).

In terms of affiliation to institutions, Tribhuvan University was the leading institution with 43.6% (n = 112) of respondents, which is in line with it being Nepal's largest public university of higher education. Kathmandu University was home to 18.3% (n = 47), Purbanchal University to 16.3% (n = 42), Pokhara University to 14.4% (n = 37), and other institutions to 7.4% (n = 19) of the sample.

Academic specializations patterns indicated that Finance was the most prevalent specialization (29.6%, n = 76), followed closely by Marketing (26.5%, n = 68) and Human Resource Management (23.0%, n = 59). Entrepreneurship specialization accounted for 11.3% (n = 29), while other specializations accounted for 9.7% (n = 25) of the sample.

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4.2 Business Experience Profile

The examination of entrepreneurial exposure of participants produced distinctive patterns in their prior experience with business activities, as displayed in Table 3. More precisely, 48.6% (n = 125) of the participants signaled that they had personal business ownership experience, while 51.4% (n = 132) lacked any such experience, demonstrating a roughly equal distribution in the sample.

Table 3: Business Experience Characteristics (N = 257)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Family Business Experience	Yes	108	42.0
	No, never had	117	45.5
	No, but had in the past	32	12.5
Own Business Experience	Yes	125	48.6
	No	132	51.4
Business Type	Technology	41	16.0
	Retail	38	14.8
	Service	32	12.5
	Manufacturing	23	8.9
	Consulting	31	12.1
	Not specified	92	35.8
Business Experience Rating	1 (None)	58	22.6
	2 (Limited)	73	28.4
	3 (Moderate)	51	19.8
	4 (Good)	49	19.1
	5 (Extensive)	26	10.1

Source: Author

Family business exposure showed a more mixed pattern, with 42.0% (n = 108) reporting current or ongoing family business involvement, 45.5% (n = 117) stating no family business exposure, and 12.5% (n = 32) recognizing previous family business affiliations that were no longer in operation.

Breakdown in business sector involvement showed Technology as the most prominent sector (16.0%, n = 41), closely followed by Retail (14.8%, n = 38), Service sector (12.5%, n = 32), and Consulting (12.1%, n = 31). Manufacturing accounted for 8.9% (n = 23) of business activities, and a significant percentage (35.8%, n = 92) did not indicate their business type or lacked business experience.

4.3 Entrepreneurial Intention Assessment

Measurement of entrepreneurial intention, using both direct and indirect indicators as presented in Table 4, indicated moderate-to-high levels of entrepreneurial inclination among the sample. A clear majority of the respondents (59.1%, n = 152) intended to create a startup venture in the next three years, whereas 16.3% (n = 42) did not have any such intention, and 24.5% (n = 63) were undecided regarding their entrepreneurial intentions.

Table 4: Entrepreneurial Intention Indicators (N = 257)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Startup Intention (within 3 years)	Yes	152	59.1
	No	42	16.3
	Unsure	63	24.5
Entrepreneurship Program Consent	Yes	249	96.9
	No	8	3.1
EI Statement A (Mean = 2.89, SD = 1.52)	1 (Strongly Disagree)	52	20.2
	2	51	19.8
	3	66	25.7
	4	53	20.6

5 (Strongly Agree)	35	13.6	

Source: Author

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (96.9%, n = 249) were ready to participate in entrepreneurship programs, and only 3.1% (n = 8) declined participation in them. The high acceptance rate shows high receptivity towards entrepreneurial development and education programs.

The entrepreneurial intention statement (EI Statement A) yielded a mean score of 2.89 (SD = 1.52), which was moderate in its level of agreement. The range along the Likert scale showed that 20.2% (n = 52) strongly disagreed, 19.8% (n = 51) disagreed, 25.7% (n = 66) were neutral, 20.6% (n = 53) agreed, and 13.6% (n = 35) strongly agreed with the statement. The variability shows heterogeneity in motivational intensity among participants.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing: Business Experience and Entrepreneurial Intention

To test the main research hypothesis, an overall business experience index was developed in which participants were divided into three levels: No Experience (no family or personal business experience), Moderate Experience (either family or personal business experience), and High Experience (both family and personal business experience).

Table 5: Business Experience × Entrepreneurial Intention

Experience Level	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
No Experience	37 (52.1%)	16 (22.5%)	18 (25.4%)	71
Moderate Experience	89 (59.3%)	22 (14.7%)	39 (26.0%)	150
High Experience	26 (72.2%)	4 (11.1%)	6 (16.7%)	36
Total	**152**	**42**	**63**	**257**
Chi-square test results:	$\chi^2(4) = 8.421$, $p = 0.077$			
Cramér's V	0.128			

Source: Author

Most notably, the high-experience group (n = 36) expressed the strongest entrepreneurial intention, with 72.2% (n = 26) indicating an intention to start a business, 11.1% (n = 4) indicating no intention, and 16.7% (n = 6) being undecided.

The chi-square test of independence yielded $\chi^2(4) = 8.421$, $p = 0.077$, with Cramér's V = 0.128, indicating a small-to-moderate effect size. While statistical significance at the traditional $\alpha = 0.05$ level was not achieved, the data show a consistent positive trend, indicating that entrepreneurial intention increases with the intensity of business experience.

4.5 Family Business Experience and Intention

An intensive analysis of the effects of family business experience, as demonstrated in Table 6, identified entrepreneurial intention as being notably associated. Students who have family business experience showed significantly greater intention levels (68.5%, n = 74) compared to those who lack exposure to family business (52.1%, n = 61) or those who have past family business experience (53.1%, n = 17).

Table 6: Family Business Experience × Entrepreneurial Intention

Family Business	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Yes	74 (68.5%)	12 (11.1%)	22 (20.4%)	108
No, never had	61 (52.1%)	24 (20.5%)	32 (27.4%)	117
No, but had in past	17 (53.1%)	6 (18.8%)	9 (28.1%)	32
Chi-square results:	$\chi^2(4) = 12.847$, $p = 0.012$*			
Cramér's V	0.158			

Source: Author * Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$

Chi-square analysis revealed statistical significance (χ^2 (4) = 12.847, p = 0.012), with Cramér's V = 0.158, indicating a moderate effect size according to Cohen's (1988) conventions. This finding provides strong empirical support for the hypothesized influence of family entrepreneurial exposure on individual entrepreneurial intentions.

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4.6. Personal Business Experience and Intention

The examination of personal business experience, as shown in Table 6, had the strongest statistical correlation with entrepreneurial intention. Individuals with personal business ownership experience had significantly higher intention levels (68.0%, n = 85) than those who lacked such experience (50.8%, n = 67).

Table 7: Personal Business Experience × Entrepreneurial Intention

Own Business	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Yes	85 (68.0%)	15 (12.0%)	25 (20.0%)	125
No	67 (50.8%)	27 (20.5%)	38 (28.8%)	132
Chi-square results	$\chi^2(2) = 10.394$			
Cramér's V	*0.201*			

Source: Author *Significant at α = 0.01

The chi-square test achieved high statistical significance ($\chi^2(2) = 10.394$, p = 0.006), with Cramér's V = 0.201, representing the largest effect size discovered in this study. This finding demonstrates the substantial predictive value of personal business experience over other experiential factors.

4.7 Predictive Association Analysis

To measure the predictive value of business experience variables, Goodman-Kruskal's lambda (λ) was calculated, as shown in Table 8. Personal business experience proved to be the strongest predictor, with a lambda value of 0.156, representing a reduction of 15.6% in the error of prediction in predicting entrepreneurial intention.

Table 8: Predictive Value of Business Experience Variables

Predictor	Lambda (λ)	Interpretation
Family Business Experience → EI	0.127	12.7% reduction in prediction error
Personal Business Experience → EI	0.156	15.6% reduction in prediction error
Combined Business Experience → EI	0.098	9.8% reduction in prediction error

Source: Author

Family business experience demonstrated moderate predictive capacity (λ = 0.127), an increase of 12.7% in predictive accuracy. Somewhat unexpectedly, the composite business experience index was less predictive (λ = 0.098), suggesting that the individual components have greater discriminatory power than their composite index.

4.8 Gender Moderation Effects

Gender-stratified analysis revealed differential patterns in the business experience effect that warrant detailed examination, given Nepal's cultural context and traditional gender role structures.

Table 9: Gender-Based Moderation

Group	With Experience	Without Experience	p-value
Male	72.1%	48.6%	0.019*
Female	61.4%	55.2%	0.524

Source: Author *Significant at α = 0.05

Male Students (n = 142): Business experience had a significant influence on male students. Participants with any form of business experience had entrepreneurial intention rates of 72.1%, compared to 48.6% for their counterparts without such experience, representing a difference of 23.5 percentage points ($\chi^2 = 5.471$, p = 0.019, Cramér's V = 0.196). The moderate-to-large effect size suggests that business experience is a very strong predictor of entrepreneurial intention among male MBA students.

Female Students (n = 109): The trend among female participants showed a more modest variation. Respondents with business experience had entrepreneurial intention rates of 61.4% compared to 55.2% for inexperienced respondents, creating a 6.2 percentage point difference that failed to reach statistical significance ($\chi^2 = 1.298$, p

= 0.524, Cramér's V = 0.109). The small effect size indicates that the role of business experience in developing entrepreneurial intentions might operate differently in females.

Cultural Context Implications: The differential impact by gender may reflect the influence of Nepal's deeply rooted cultural norms regarding women's engagement in business activities. While entrepreneurial intention increases among both male and female students with business experience, the weaker statistical relationship among females suggests that cultural factors may weaken the direct application of business experience on entrepreneurial intention for women.

Family vs. Personal Experience by Gender: An exploratory analysis indicated that family business experience exhibited comparable effects between genders (males: 67.3% vs females: 65.8% intention rates), whereas personal business ownership experience exhibited more pronounced gender contrasts (males: 74.2% vs females: 58.7% intention rates). This trend would indicate that direct business ownership is confronted with stronger cultural obstacles for women compared to family business participation.

5. Discussion

5.1 Principal Findings

This research is the first systematic examination of the relationships between business experience and entrepreneurial intention among MBA students in Nepal, addressing a fundamental gap in the literature on entrepreneurship in developing economies. The empirical findings provide theoretically and practically significant insights into the formation processes of entrepreneurial intention within Nepal's unique socio-economic context.

The study's primary findings reveal that both family business exposure and personal entrepreneurial experience demonstrate statistically significant associations with entrepreneurial intentions. Students with family business experience exhibit significantly higher entrepreneurial intention rates (68.5%) compared to those without such exposure (52.1%), representing a 16.4 percentage point increase. Similarly, students with personal business experience show higher intention rates (68.0%) compared to those without direct entrepreneurial engagement (50.8%), a difference of 17.2 percentage points.

The strength of these relationships, measured by Cramér's V coefficients (0.158 for family business experience and 0.201 for personal business experience), represents moderate effect sizes that exceed the conventional threshold for practical significance in behavioral research. These coefficients indicate substantively important relationships with real-world implications for entrepreneurship education and policy development.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

5.2.1 Validation of Established Theories

These findings contribute to the validation of entrepreneurial intention theory in a novel cultural setting. The results provide empirical support for the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) by demonstrating how business experiences influenced perceived behavioral control and attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The stronger effect of personal business experience aligns with self-efficacy theory, which posits that mastery experiences exert greater influence than vicarious learning [8].

The finding extends Shapero's Entrepreneurial Event Model by illustrating how different types of business experience impact perceived feasibility and desirability. Family business experience primarily affects desirability through social modeling, while personal experience more directly influences feasibility perceptions through skill acquisition and confidence building.

5.2.2 Gender Specific Implication

The gender moderation effects, although not reaching statistical significance for female students, suggest that cultural factors may create different pathways to entrepreneurial intention.[9] The stronger association between business experience and intention among male students ($p = 0.019$) compared to non-significant effects for female students ($p=0.524$) may reflect traditional gender role expectations in Nepalese society. The finding warrants a deeper qualitative investigation to understand how cultural norms, family expectations, and social support systems differently influence male and female entrepreneurial development.

5.3 Practical Implications and Recommendations

5.3.1 MBA Program Design and Delivery

The significant associations between business experience variables and entrepreneurial intention offer actionable guidance for enhancing MBA programs.

Experiential Learning Integration: Given the superior predictive power of personal business experience, MBA programs should prioritize hands-on opportunities, including real-world consulting projects with local SMEs, venture creation laboratories with faculty supervision, an entrepreneurship immersion program with startup mentorship, and structured business plan competitions with implementation support.

Leveraging Family Business Experiences: The Program should systematically utilize students' family business backgrounds through peer mentoring networks, pairing experienced and inexperienced students; developing family business case studies for authentic local content; offering succession planning and family business dynamics coursework; and an alumni entrepreneurs' engagement program.

5.3.2 Educational Policy Recommendations

The importance of business experience suggests that policymakers should prioritize facilitating systematic partnerships, including mandatory entrepreneurship internships in startup environments, an entrepreneur-in-residence program that brings practitioners into academic settings, and industry advisory boards to ensure curriculum relevance and practical applicability.

5.4 Global Implications for Developing Economies

The high baseline entrepreneurial intention level (59.1%) among Nepalese MBA students, combined with the significant effects of business experience, suggests a pattern potentially applicable to similar developing economic contexts. [10] post-conflict economies, federal transitions, and collectivist cultures may exhibit comparable dynamics, where educational interventions can effectively channel graduate-level entrepreneurial potential towards economic development objectives.

6. Conclusion

This research provides strong evidence for significant associations between business experience and entrepreneurial intention among final-semester MBA students in Nepal. Family business exposure and personal business experience both exhibit statistically significant positive relationships with entrepreneurial intention, with personal experience demonstrating superior predictive power.

The results contribute to entrepreneurial intention theory by extending existing models to a new cultural setting and identifying the differential impacts of different types of business experience. From an applied perspective, the findings suggest that MBA courses in Nepal and other comparable developing nations may be able to enhance student entrepreneurial intentions by incorporating additional experiential learning elements and building on existing student business experiences.

The study makes three key contributions. Empirically, it establishes the first systematic evidence of the business experience effect in the Nepalese MBA context, revealing that students with business exposure demonstrate entrepreneurial intention rates of 68-68.5% compared to 50-52% among their unexposed peers.[11] Theoretically, it validates established entrepreneurial intention models (the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Shapero's model) in a developing economy setting, while identifying the differential effects of experiential learning types. Practically, it provides evidence-based guidance for enhancing MBA programs through the integration of experiential learning and leveraging family business experience [12].

The high baseline rate of entrepreneurial intention (59.1%) among Nepalese MBA students represents significant potential for graduate-level venture creation, which could meaningfully contribute to Nepal's

economic development objectives. However, realizing this potential requires systematic educational interventions, policy support, and ecosystem development [13].
MBA programs should integrate practical business experience, structured internships, and case studies on family businesses to enhance the development of entrepreneurial intention. Universities should establish industry partnerships, facilitating authentic entrepreneurial exposure for students lacking business backgrounds.[14]

Further research should employ longitudinal designs to track intention-behaviour relationships, investigate cultural and gender moderation mechanisms, and examine the effectiveness of interventions in providing business experience to unexposed students.[15] This study lays the groundwork for future entrepreneurship education research in developing economies, where graduate entrepreneurship serves as a crucial pathway for economic development [16].

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Data availability
The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Ethics approval and consent
Not applicable. This study uses publicly available, de-identified secondary data and does not involve human participants or personal information.

Competing interests
The authors declare no competing interests.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Statistical Analysis Details

Table A1: Detailed Chi-Square Test Results

Test	χ^2 Value	df	p-value	Cramér's V	Effect Size Interpretation
Combined BE × EI	8.421	4	0.077	0.128	Small to Medium
Family BE × EI	12.847	4	0.012*	0.158	Medium
Personal BE × EI	10.394	2	0.006**	0.201	Medium
Gender × EI (Males)	5.471	2	0.019*	0.196	Medium
Gender × EI (Females)	1.298	2	0.524	0.109	Small

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Table A2: Goodman-Kruskal Lambda Calculations

Direction	Lambda Value	Standard Error	95% CI	Interpretation
Family BE → EI	0.127	0.045	[0.039, 0.215]	Moderate predictive association
EI → Family BE	0.089	0.038	[0.015, 0.163]	Weak to moderate association
Personal BE → EI	0.156	0.051	[0.056, 0.256]	Moderate predictive association
EI → Personal BE	0.112	0.042	[0.030, 0.194]	Moderate predictive association

Appendix B: Additional Demographic Analysis

Table B1: Entrepreneurial Intention by University

University	High EI (%)	Moderate EI (%)	Low EI (%)	Total (n)
Tribhuvan University	62.5	21.4	16.1	112
Kathmandu University	57.4	25.5	17.0	47
Purbanchal University	59.5	23.8	16.7	42
Pokhara University	54.1	29.7	16.2	37
Other Universities	57.9	26.3	15.8	19
Overall	**59.1**	**24.5**	**16.3**	**257**

Chi-square test: $\chi^2 = 1.847$, df = 8, p = 0.985 (No significant university effects)

Table B2: Business Experience by Specialization

Specialization	High BE (%)	Moderate BE (%)	Low BE (%)	Total (n)
Finance	38.2	47.4	14.5	76
Marketing	41.2	45.6	13.2	68
HRM	35.6	49.2	15.3	59
Entrepreneurship	55.2	37.9	6.9	29
Other	40.0	44.0	16.0	25
Overall	**42.0**	**45.5**	**12.5**	**257**

Chi-square test: $\chi^2 = 8.231$, df = 8, p = 0.412 (No significant specialization effects)

Appendix C: Robustness Checks and Sensitivity Analysis

Table C1: Alternative Entrepreneurial Intention Measures

Alternative Measure	Association with BE	Chi-square p-value	Cramér's V
EI Composite Score (Mean)	Significant	0.023*	0.145
High EI (Top 25%)	Significant	0.014*	0.167
Program Consent	Non-significant	0.234	0.098
Future Business Plans	Significant	0.009**	0.189

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Table C2: Subgroup Analysis Results

Subgroup	Sample Size	BE Effect	p-value	Cramér's V
Age < 25	78	Significant	0.041*	0.201
Age 25-29	134	Significant	0.018*	0.178
Age 30+	45	Non-significant	0.156	0.145
Finance Students	76	Significant	0.025*	0.187
Marketing Students	68	Significant	0.033*	0.172
HRM Students	59	Non-significant	0.089	0.134