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Factors Affecting Entrepreneurial Intention of College Students: An Empirical Study from Vietnam

Thi Thuy An NGO¹, Phuong Thao TRUONG², Yen Linh TRAN³, Thao Vy TRAN⁴,
Ngoc Tram TRAN⁵, Ai My HUYNH⁶, Thanh Truc HUYNH⁷

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Abstract

The study aims to identify factors that influence university and college students' entrepreneurial intentions in Vietnam's Mekong Delta region. The study examines entrepreneurship mindset, subjective norm, capital sources, concept development assistance, personality qualities, and perceived behavioral control of university support for a student's entrepreneurial aim. The research was conducted according to the quantitative method. The data was collected through an online survey with a sample size of 611 students from 19 universities and colleges in the Mekong Delta region. The methods that test the scale, including Cronbach Alpha Test, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), are used to consider the correlation between the influence factors. The results of SEM analysis show that there are five main factors affecting students' entrepreneurial intention with decreasing level of influence, including the source of capital, perceived behavioral control, business development support, entrepreneurial attitude, and educational support. Besides, the results indicate that the subjective norm, personality traits, and concept development support have no impact on the intention of students toward entrepreneurship. The research also reveals that the entrepreneurial intention of students at universities and colleges has a positive relationship and is significantly affected by capital source and perceived behavioral control.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Intention, Students, Mekong Delta Region, Vietnam

JEL Classification Code: A13, A20, L26, L31

1. Introduction

In recent years, the Vietnamese Government has issued many policies to support entrepreneurship and create a favorable environment for entrepreneurs to develop. Moreover, the schemes of entrepreneurs have

always received special attention, typically the scheme "Supporting students and entrepreneurs to 2025" (referred to as Project 1665) signed by the Prime Minister on October 30, 2017.

It can be said that starting a business is one of the motivations to promote the economic development of a country. This is an effective solution to solve the problem of increasing unemployment (Vo & Le, 2021). According to the Vietnamese General Statistics Office, the most recent reporting data on the unemployment rate of the country in the third quarter of 2021 is 8.89%, an increase of 1.2%

¹First Author and Corresponding Author. Lecturer, Faculty of Business Administration, FPT University, Can Tho Campus, Vietnam. ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7510-972X. [Postal Address: 600 Nguyen Van Cu Street, An Binh Ward, Ninh Kieu District, Can Tho City, 94100, Vietnam] Email: AnNTT24@fe.edu.vn

²Faculty of Business Administration, FPT Can Tho University, Can Tho City, Vietnam. ORCID ID 0000-0002-6606-8783. Email: ThaoTPCS140043@fpt.edu.vn

³Faculty of Business Administration, FPT Can Tho University, Can Tho City, Vietnam. ORCID ID 0000-0002-6037-5555. Email: LinhTYCS140642@fpt.edu.vn

⁴Faculty of Business Administration, FPT Can Tho University, Can Tho City, Vietnam. ORCID ID 0000-0001-7520-273X. Email: VyTTCS140041@fpt.edu.vn

⁵Faculty of Business Administration, FPT Can Tho University, Can Tho City, Vietnam. ORCID ID 0000-0001-8618-731X. Email: TramTNCS140382@fpt.edu.vn

⁶Faculty of Business Administration, FPT Can Tho University, Can Tho City, Vietnam. ORCID ID 0000-0003-1298-5081. Email: MyHACS140017@fpt.edu.vn

⁷Faculty of Business Administration, FPT Can Tho University, Can Tho City, Vietnam. ORCID ID 0000-0002-4404-4748. Email: TrucHTCS140576@fpt.edu.vn

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compared to the previous quarter and an increase of 0.75% compared to 0.75% with the same period last year (General Statistic Office of Vietnam, 2021).

Since the number of graduates now in the Mekong Delta is increasing, the need for employment becomes very large. In the context of jobs that are very scarce, one of the solutions to contributing to solving job problems for a non-small department student is to arouse entrepreneurship. According to research, participants of business spirit courses have increased entrepreneurship compared to those who do not attend courses related to entrepreneurship (Galloway & Brown, 2002). Business spirit is one of the motivations to promote the economy, and this has led to increasing interest in developing educational programs encouraging business spirit (Gorman et al., 1997). A study shows that education on the business spirit is very important. It helps equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills in the business. Accordingly, students participating in the business course will have a higher business attitude, with many knowledge and creative ideas in business (Kolvereid & Moen, 1997).

According to a wider concept, entrepreneurship education is understood as “all educational and training activities - in the education system or not - try to grow in the intended participants to perform business behaviors, or some factors affecting the intention, such as business knowledge, the desire of business activities, or its feasibility” (Liñán, 2004). Therefore, the study “Factors affecting entrepreneurial intention of university, college students in the Mekong Delta region in Vietnam” creates a scientific basis to provide a comprehensive orientation and view of the elements of student’s influence and desire to start their career as an entrepreneur. Since then, we can suggest and provide support methods to help students get the necessary knowledge, skills, and thinking in accordance with future entrepreneurship plans.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is one of the driving forces behind the development of innovative and technological products that meet human needs. Entrepreneurship is an important key to economic growth, solving employment problems, and promoting entrepreneurship (Shapero & Sokol, 1982). On the other hand, there are many definitions of entrepreneurship, and it is always different. MacMillan (1993) defines entrepreneurship as people who take all risks to create a new business or open a business store for the purpose of making a profit and getting rich. As stated by Hisrich and Drovensek (2002), entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new, innovative, and valuable. According to Nga and Shamuganathan (2010), entrepreneurship is the desire to

have more economic opportunities through each individual’s new inventions or ideas. In this study, entrepreneurship is understood as the creation of a new business or the establishment of a new business through innovative and novel business ideas, identifying and taking advantage of business opportunities to attract people’s interest in their own business (Koe et al., 2012).

2.2. Entrepreneurial Intention

Business intent can be understood as an individual’s preparation to start creating a new business (Bird, 1988; Souitaris et al., 2007). According to Kuckertz and Wagne (2010), entrepreneurship intentions originate from recognizing opportunities, taking advantage of available resources, and supporting the environment to create a business. Schwarz et al. (2009) stated that students’ entrepreneurial intentions come from students’ ideas and are properly oriented with the support of educational and training programs. Research by Dohse and Walter (2012) has given a broader and closer concept than previous studies on entrepreneurial intention, in which entrepreneurial intention is a state of willingness to do or create a new business. Moreover, entrepreneurial intention (EI) points out the inclination or likelihood of a person to initiate and begin a new business venture (Bui et al., 2020), and EI is considered a crucial tendency for the development and formation of new enterprises (Luc, 2020). EI has been studied for a purpose of assessing authentic entrepreneurial behavior (Luc, 2018). In this study, the students’ intention to start a business is a stepping stone, contributing to the realization of the student’s business intentions with unique ideas to create high-value products and services that suit societal needs.

2.3. Entrepreneurial Attitude

Some studies have suggested that the factor affecting business intention can be seen through an individual’s attitude towards the spirit or desire into entrepreneurship (Al-Jubari et al., 2018; Farooq et al., 2018; Kautonen et al., 2015; Wach & Wojciechowski, 2016). They realize that entrepreneurship is attractive, beneficial, and has opportunities for future development. Higher education institutions perceive changes based on perceptions or educational experiences, which can help improve the effectiveness and viability of individuals’ entrepreneurship (Liñán et al., 2016). Therefore, the people who have the spirit and choose the business path as a beneficial way for their careers are the people who may have ideas and are ready to entrepreneur their own business.

***HI:** Entrepreneurial attitude positively affects the entrepreneur intentions of University, College students in the Mekong Delta region.*

2.4. Source of Capital

In any entrepreneurship field, capital is an important factor contributing to the realization of the business ideas of individuals. The source of capital is understood as money used for entrepreneurship. Research by Mazzarol et al. (1999) suggests that available capital (in the group of environmental economic factors) has a positive impact on the intention for entrepreneurship. Zain et al. (2010) have built a model of factors affecting students' entrepreneurial intention, including the factor of capital, and the results show the positive influence of capital on the intention for entrepreneurship.

H2: Source of Capital has a positive influence on the entrepreneurial intention of University, College students in the Mekong Delta region.

2.5. Subjective Norm

Studies have revealed subjective norms to be effective predictors of business intention (Al-Jubari et al., 2018; Krueger et al., 2000; Mustafa et al., 2016). Subjective norm is defined as social pressures coming from family, friends, relatives, or important people to the individual; this pressure can be expectations, support or not favor performing entrepreneurial behavior, which in turn leads to the individual deciding to do or not to perform the behavior later (Farooq et al., 2018). A study conducted by Bird (1988) shows that an individual will choose to perform a behavior in such a way that they perceive that others in society expect them to. Several studies have confirmed the positive impact of subjective norms on entrepreneurial intention (Autio et al., 2001; Gird & Bagraim, 2008).

H3: Subjective norm positively affects the entrepreneurial intention of University, College students in the Mekong Delta region.

2.6. Personality Traits

According to Nga and Shamuganathan (2010), an individual's personality trait is defined as a regular pattern of behavior, thoughts, or feelings. In the study by Kickul and Gundry (2002), personality traits were measured by observed variables related to facing and overcoming obstacles, being good at identifying opportunities, and adapting to difficulties. Personality traits influence the need to succeed, self-confidence, willingness to take risks, and positively influence the desire for entrepreneurial intention (Scott, 1991). The results of the study by Suan et al. (2011) confirmed that there was a strong positive association of traits and entrepreneurial intent considering the influence of

grit which they introduce as “a potential mechanism through which personality traits relate to entrepreneurial intent.”

H4: Personality traits have a positive influence on the entrepreneurial intention of students at Universities, Colleges in the Mekong Delta region.

2.7. Perceived Behavioral Control

Wach and Wojciechowski (2016) defined perceived behavioral control as an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a behavior related to past experiences or obstacles in the future. The study of Amos and Alex (2014) shows that perceived behavioral control is a significant factor and positively affects dependent variables.

H5: Perceived behavior control positively affects the entrepreneurial intention of University, College students in the Mekong Delta region.

2.8. Perceived University Support

Perceived University Support is perceived to include: educational support, concept development support, business development support (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2010). According to previous research, educational support improves students' awareness by helping students gain experience or put knowledge into practice, such as in business simulations, case studies, startup competitions. Educational support enhances students' entrepreneurial readiness after graduation while strengthening their entrepreneurial confidence (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2010). Concept development support is to provide ideas, motivation, and entrepreneurial mindset in the early stages of the startup process; opportunities are recognized and developed during concept development (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Business development support is to support policies and procedures that encourage students to engage in entrepreneurship (Liñán et al., 2010). Personal and environmental factors are concerned with the determinants of students' entrepreneurial intention (Krueger et al., 2000; Mustafa et al., 2016).

The conceptual framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

H6: Perceived university support affects students' entrepreneurial attitude in the Mekong Delta region.

H6.1: Business development support has a positive impact on entrepreneurial attitude.

H6.2: Concept development support has a positive impact on entrepreneurial attitude.

H6.3: Educational support has a positive impact on entrepreneurial attitude.

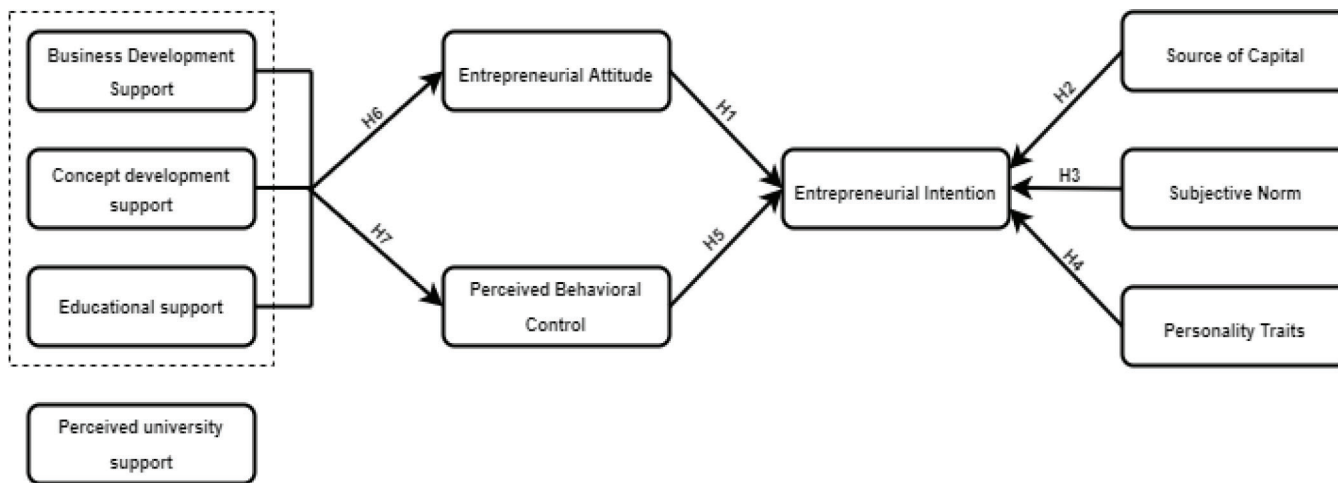


Figure 1: Research Framework

H7: Perceived university support affects students’ perceived behavioral control in the Mekong Delta region.

H7.1: Business development support has a positive impact on perceived behavioral control.

H7.2: Concept development support has a positive impact on perceived behavioral control.

H7.3: Educational support has a positive impact on perceived behavioral control.

3. Data and Methodology

In this study, a quantitative study approach was used, with the goal of determining factors affecting the entrepreneurship intentions of students at universities and colleges in the Mekong Delta. Faced with the complicated situation of the Covid 19 epidemic, the research team decided to conduct an online survey to collect data easily. The number of samples taken was based on the formula for determining sample size according to the unknown case overall scale.

$$n = Z^2 \times p \times (1 - p) / e^2$$

- *n*: Sample size to be determined.
- *Z*: The Z-distribution table lookup value is based on the reliability of the selection. Typically, the 95% confidence interval used corresponds to *Z* = 1.96.
- *p*: The success rate of *n* sample size estimation. Usually, we choose *p* = 0.5 so that the product *p*(1-*p*) is the largest; this ensures safety for the sample *n* estimates.
- *e*: Tolerance. Usually, three commonly used error rates are ± 01 (1%), ± 0.05 (5%), ± 0.1 (10%), of which the most common is ± 0.05.

Based on comments, the survey questionnaire was built. After testing to check adjustment of presentation, language, and questionnaires were formerly used for subsequent quantitative research.

To get different perspectives on the factors affecting the entrepreneurial intention of students of colleges and universities in the Mekong Delta region mentioned above. The study uses a non-probability sampling method with quota sampling technique because of the convenience of time and cost, in which quota sampling will perform population grouping by training level (college and university), and then perform convenience sampling based on convenience, accessibility, and ease of information retrieval (Ackoff, 1953; Davis, 2005).

After being collected, the data is filtered and analyzed with SPSS and AMOS software. Methods of data analysis include that Cronbach’s alpha reliability describes the reliability of the sum of measurements where the measurements may be representative of raters, occasions, alternative forms, or questionnaires/test items (Cronbach, 1951). Accordingly, only variables with the appropriate total correlation coefficient greater than 0.3 and Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient greater than 0.6, are accepted and suitable for inclusion in the analysis of the following variables (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). SEM was used to test hypotheses about the relationship between variables; then the authors used SEM (Hoyle, 1995). Furthermore, according to Kline (2011), the reason for using SEM is to understand the patterns of correlation/covariance among a set of variables, and SEM clarifies as much of their variance as possible with the model specified. In this study, the SEM is used to analyze the correlation of the factors to the entrepreneurial intention of students. The results of the relationship test will provide the basis for conclusions about the proposed research hypotheses.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of Respondents

The total number of 611 samples was collected via an online survey. Table 1 provides an overview of the survey respondents' demographics. The survey results show that the percentage of female respondents is higher than that of males; specifically, 329 respondents are females (accounting for 53.8%), and 282 respondents are males (46.2%). In terms of age, there are 384 people from 18 to 21 years old (accounting for 62.8%); 215 people aged 22–25 accounted for 35.2%, and 12 people over 25 years old (2%). Regarding the level of education, the freshman has 78 respondents (12.8%), 135 people from sophomore (22.1%), 151 people from junior (24.7%), 242 people from senior (accounting for 39.6%), and have 5 fifth-year students and university transfer students (accounting for 0.8%). The data provided above shows that students of colleges and universities in the Mekong Delta region are very interested in entrepreneurship, and the reliability of the survey is completely reliable.

4.2. Evaluation of the scale Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient

The study used the Cronbach alpha analysis method to test the reliability of the scale of the components in the theoretical model and the correlation between the observed variables and the total variable displayed according to the results in Table 2. The total variables in the model include Entrepreneurial Attitude (EA); Source of Capital (SC); Subjective Norm (SN); (4) Personality

Traits (PT); (5) Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC); (6) Business Development Support (BDS); (7) Concept Development Support (CDS); (8) Educational Support (ES); (9) Entrepreneurial Intention (EI).

The results of the Cronbach alpha test in Table 2 record the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scales ranging from 0.78 to 0.92, all higher than 0.6, proving that the relationship between the observed variables and the total variable is highly reliable. Besides, the correlation coefficients of each observed variable compared with the total variable all reached values greater than 0.3 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), which shows that the correlation of the component variable and the total variable is high, the scale measure with high reliability.

4.3. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The study analyzes the correlation between the components in the model by SEM method: Entrepreneurial Attitude (EA); Source of Capital (SC); Subjective Norm (SN); (4) Personality Traits (PT); (5) Perceived Behavior Control (PBC); (6) Business Development Support (BDS); (7) Concept Development Support (CDS); (8) Educational Support (ES); (9) Entrepreneurial Intention (EI). The results of SEM were:

Chi-square/df = 3.107 < 5.0 ($N \geq 200$) (Kettinger et al., 1995); TLI = 0.922 and CFI = 0.929 are both greater than 0.90 (Segars & Grover, 1993; Chin & Todd, 1995); RMSEA = 0.059 ≤ 0.07 (Taylor et al., 1993) the structural equation modeling analysis of the correlation between (1) EA; (2) SC; (3) PBC; (4) BDS; (5) ES; (6) EI showed a good fit. The research results of SEM analysis in Table 3 shows the positive and significant correlations between variables in the theoretical model.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

Statistical Indicators		Frequency	Ratio (%)
Gender	Female	329	53.8
	Male	282	46.2
Age	18–21 years old	384	62.8
	22–25 years old	215	35.2
	>25 years old	12	2.0
Education Level	Freshman	78	12.8
	Sophomore	135	22.1
	Junior	151	24.7
	Senior	242	39.6
	Fifth-year Student	3	0.5
	Student in Transition	2	0.3

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Analysis Results

Constructions	Code	Items	α
Entrepreneurial Attitude	EA	5	0.87
Source of Capital	SC	4	0.78
Subjective Norm	SN	4	0.81
Personality Traits	PT	6	0.86
Perceived Behavioral Control	PBC	4	0.88
Business Development Support	BDS	4	0.84
Concept Development Support	CDS	4	0.88
Educational Support	ES	4	0.82
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI	7	0.91

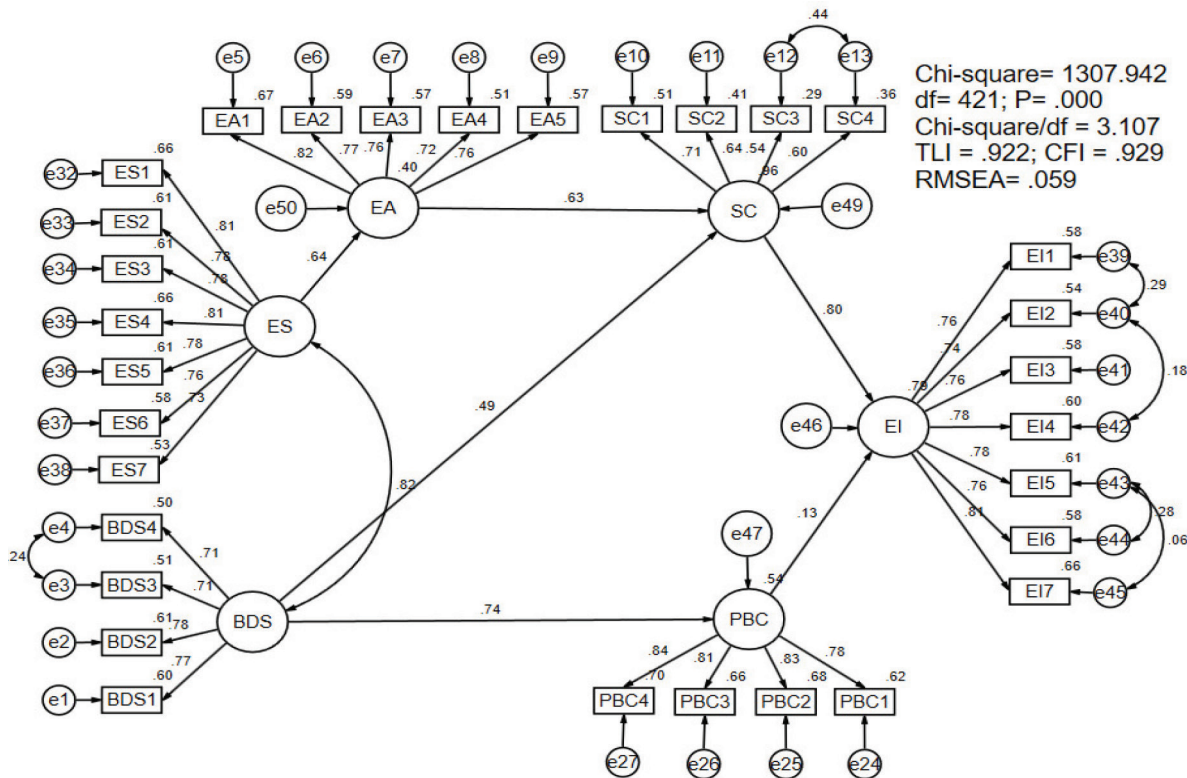


Figure 2: The Result of the Full Model

Table 3: The Results of Testing the Hypotheses in the Theoretical Model

Relationships	Estimate	P	Hypotheses Testing	Result
EA ← ES	0.69	***	H6.3	Accepted
SC ← EA	0.54	***		Accepted
PBC ← BDS	0.92	***	H7.2	Accepted
SC ← BDS	0.43	***		Accepted
EI ← SC	0.85	***	H2	Accepted
EI ← PBC	0.10	***	H5	Accepted

Notes: *** $P < 0.01$; ** $P < 0.05$; * $P < 0.1$.

After removing the relationships that were not statistically significant, the final SEM analysis model is shown in Figure 2, and Table 3 have explained:

Using the 95% confidence standard, the variables all have sig equal to 0.000 (AMOS sign *** is sig equal to 0.000), so these relationships are all meaningful. Thus, 2 variables directly affect EI, and perceived university support (PUS) factors, including ES and BDS, have an indirect influence on EI through EA, SC, and PBC. Among the hypotheses, we accept the hypotheses H6.3, H7.2, H2, and H5.

In addition, components have positively affected each other in the specific model; the effects of components are explained:

- SC and PBC components explain 79% of EI variation, and the level of influence on EI is 0.80 *** and 0.13 ***.
- BDS explains 54% of PBC variation, and the level of influence on PBC is 0.74 ***.
- EA explained 96% of SC variation, and the level of influence on SC is 0.63 ***.

- ES has explained 40% of the change of EA, and the level of influence on EA is 0.64 ***.

Research results have shown that the importance of capital sources has a positive impact on students in regard to supporting students with motivation and encouraging student business intentions.

5. Discussion and Managerial Implications

5.1. Discussion

First of all, there is a completely positive correlation between the variables, namely source of capital and perceived behavior control which both have a direct influence on entrepreneurial intention. In which, source of capital has a positive meaning to entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, the business development support variable is an important factor influencing the source of capital and perceived behavior control, with a higher level of influence on the latter. It can be seen that the variable educational support indirectly affects entrepreneurial intention through entrepreneurial attitude and source of capital. In addition, there is a link between the two factors: Entrepreneurial attitude and source of capital that significantly positively affect the entrepreneurial intention of students. Subjective norms, personality traits, concept development support, do not affect entrepreneurial intention. The study contributed to previous theories by identifying correlations between variables by answering the three research questions outlined at the beginning of the study.

Based on research, Educational Support (ES) has a direct influence on Entrepreneurial attitude (EA). This was also found in research on students' attitudes toward education and entrepreneurship (Irawanto & Novianti, 2021). Furthermore, most of the survey students have a positive attitude towards Entrepreneurial attitude (EA) since they were asked about readiness to start entrepreneurship as the industry and the school provides opportunities for students to start a business that creates satisfaction in the Entrepreneurial attitude (EA) of students. Therefore, Educational Support (ES) will indirectly affect the intention to be an entrepreneur (EI) through two variables: entrepreneurial attitude (EA) and capital source (SC). According to entrepreneurs, profit always comes with risk, and the higher the return, the greater the risk. The measure of success for current students lies in their ability to take advantage of opportunities and their ability to take risks. According to the research results, most of them accept risks, which can be compared with the findings of MacKo and Tyszka (2009), who found that entrepreneurs are generally more willing to take risks than the average person.

Based on the research results, Business Development Assistance (BDS) has a direct positive impact on Equity

(SC). Moreover, the research results show that the majority of surveyed students have a positive attitude towards business development support from universities/colleges, and those factors affect the Capital (SC). Capital plays an important role in shaping social entrepreneurship effectiveness, perceived desirability, and social entrepreneurship intentions. Therefore, to promote social entrepreneurship and innovation, policymakers and educators need to find solutions to enhance students' social capital (Ha et al., 2020). From the above results, we also see that the Capital Factor (SC) has a direct positive impact on the Intention to Start a Business (EI). Specifically, when asked about the factors affecting the intention to start a business, the majority of respondents said that it is capital.

Based on the research results, we can see that there is a relationship between business development support and perceived behavioral control. According to studies, some universities support policies and procedures that encourage students to engage in entrepreneurial activities. For example, providing financial support, using the school's brand to start a business, or even creating experience trips from which to stimulate each person's creativity. Previously, the study of Suan et al. (2011) also gave a similar result on the impact of cognitive-behavioral control on students' entrepreneurial intention.

5.2. Managerial Implications

Through the study, the factors and extent of influence on students' intention to entrepreneurship have been identified. Therefore, to improve the entrepreneurial intention of college/university students in the Mekong Delta, the authors propose a number of managerial implications that are prioritized for implementation as follows:

For capital source: According to the survey results, capital source (SC) is the most important factor affecting the entrepreneurial intention of college/university students in the Mekong Delta. Because the capital source is one of the most important factors of entrepreneurship, to get financial resources when starting a business, students need to have a specific plan and actively seek financial sources from investors and mutual funds. To create conditions for students to have entrepreneurship capital, the management agency plays an important role in helping students' access capital in many ways, such as lending support with low-interest rates and shortening the approval period. Besides, Business development support (BDS) from the school also needs policies to support entrepreneurship activities for students, especially in terms of capital. For example, the schools, in collaboration with companies or business organizations, build a fund for supporting students' innovative entrepreneurship activities and ideas.

In terms of perceived behavioral control (PBC): For entrepreneurial awareness, passion, aspiration, discipline,

and determination are prerequisites for students when they intend to be an entrepreneur. In addition, students need to have independent and decisive thinking “dare to think, dare to do” and to see entrepreneurship as a challenge and the process of improving the practical experience for them. To be able to create those values for students, the school plays a very important role, helping students to raise awareness while they are still studying by giving students required practical courses rather than teaching only theory. From there, they were improving personal feelings, creating confidence for students to be ready to own businesses in the future.

Attitude towards entrepreneurship behavior (EA): is a factor affecting students’ capital and entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, the professional knowledge and skills learned combined with entrepreneurial attitudes and behavior could promote the intention of students to entrepreneurship. Indeed, involvement in entrepreneurship activities will be good preparation for startup projects in the future of students. The school needs to create entrepreneurship support centers to improve the attitude of students towards entrepreneurship ideas, create excitement in their professional career, and give students the view and mindset of being an owner instead of a hired worker. Therefore, to arouse the attitude to entrepreneurship behavior, the school needs to strengthen the introduction of previous successful entrepreneurship, the types of entrepreneurship in our country, and the world to arouse the desire to do business. Besides, motivating students actively and proactively participate in more practical experiences in the business, startup clubs activities, and seminars on entrepreneurship run by the school. Thereby students will learn from experienced people the ways to set up and run a business as well as to be aware of challenges when start-up and to be prepared for dealing with difficulties when doing business by themselves. This promotes the confidence and readiness of students to be entrepreneurs.

For educational support (ES): According to the analysis results, this is a factor that indirectly affects students’ entrepreneurial intentions and is considered as an important factor in forming a student’s entrepreneurial mindset while still in school. In this study, we have some recommendations for improving the entrepreneurship intention of students as follows. Firstly, about the design of entrepreneurship curriculum for students; the school should add courses related to entrepreneurship even more, in-depth training in practical courses to increase the experience and skills needed when starting entrepreneurship. Importantly, the training program needs to be tailored to the needs of students in different fields of study to provide the basics and advanced knowledge, skills, and attitude of entrepreneurship for both business and non-business major students. Secondly, the school should recruit a team of lecturers with essential practical experience in business to be able to mentor students in starting entrepreneurship, build beneficial activities for students such as internships or company tours, or help students establish

relationship networks with their startup partners or related organizations. Moreover, the school needs to encourage students to participate in entrepreneurship activities like training courses for business startups, entrepreneurship talk shows, innovative entrepreneurship competitions, and real-life projects. Those activities encourage creative business ideas that help motivate students’ attitudes toward entrepreneurship. From there, students can form ideas and entrepreneurial spirit while still in school.

6. Conclusion

The main goal of this study is to identify factors that affect the intention of entrepreneurship of university and college students in the Mekong Delta region in Vietnam. The research results showed that there are five factors affecting the status of students according to the degree of decrease: source of capital, perceived behavioral control, business development support, entrepreneurial attitude, and educational support. Of these five factors, source of capital and perceived behavioral control have a direct and meaningful influence on the entrepreneurial intention of students. Thereby, the school should consider the factors affecting the entrepreneurship intention of students, helping students access reality, organizing competitions related to entrepreneurship to support students who have more knowledge and experience. Since then, students have had an objective look and have a more positive attitude to the intention of entrepreneurship.

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