

## **Finding the linkage between Entrepreneurial Competencies and Entrepreneurial Intention of Students': An Attestation from Kashmir, North India**

Priyanka Chadha, Nisha Devi, Gitanjali Upadhaya

### **Abstract**

The focus of every developing nation is to make their people self-reliant by adopting entrepreneurship. In developed economies, much research has already been done to study the interplay between entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention of students. According to a report published in 2021 by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, the total population of India is 1.3 billion which is second-most in the world. But the positive sign is that the average age of the Indian population is 29 years which shows that India has the youngest population globally. This population will create a “demographic dividend” in the long run. Hence, this is the right time to infuse the spirit of entrepreneurship into the young blood. Therefore, the current study is an attempt to empirically scrutinize the role played by entrepreneurial competencies in the infusion of entrepreneurial intention among students. In the present study, a cross-sectional research design has been used. The sample for the study was management students. Data has been collected through web questionnaires. 193 filled questionnaires were found suitable for the information collection and to analyze the data structural equation modeling has been used. Findings of the study have depicted that opportunity competency, relationship competency, risk-taking competency, and strategic competency have significantly contributed to the students' entrepreneurial intention. Whereas other competencies like conceptual competency, learning competency, and organizing competency did not show any significant contribution to the entrepreneurial intention of students.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial competencies, Entrepreneurial intention

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## Introduction

Across the world, entrepreneurship contributed significantly to the economic development and growth of various countries (Rudhumbu et al., 2016). There are countries in the world that are facing the problem of unemployment amongst the youth and the elucidation to their problem is entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship helps in reducing the unemployment rate and poverty and also helps in establishing equality among the masses by actively engaging them in some productive work (Fayolle, Gailly, & Lassas-Clerc, 2006). As a result, it has been widely acknowledged that the future of developing countries is on the shoulders of entrepreneurs. India is a developing nation with a population of nearly 130 crores and it becomes nearly impossible for the government to provide government jobs for everyone and this leads to the situation of unemployment. Government acknowledges this problem and focused to identify the ways to make people of the country self-reliant and for this introduced “Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan” under which policies and programs have been designed which promote entrepreneurship among the youth of the country and also provide with required assistance in terms of monetary and non-monetary. Schumpeter (1965) defined “entrepreneurs as individuals who exploit market opportunity through technical and/or organizational innovation”. It has been noticed that educational background and institution is the major factor that has an impact on the decision of the students related to their career (Thuriket al., 2008). Therefore, the role of universities or institutions becomes more pivot in shaping the future entrepreneurs by exposing them to the world of entrepreneurship, providing them with the basic knowledge about the strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the profession of entrepreneurship. It has been also observed that not all students showcase entrepreneurial behavior because they lack the intent which comes from the competencies. With time, higher learning institutions acknowledge the importance of entrepreneurship and therefore, adopt more entrepreneurship-related programs, to encourage the entrepreneurial culture among students. Frank H. Knight (1921) stated that “entrepreneurship is about taking a risk” and in this, the assistance has been given by competencies and intentions. Man et al., (2002) emphasize the essentiality of competencies by considering them as the wholesome capability of an individual to perform a task effectively whereas intentions are personal commitment and the starting point of entrepreneurial activities which further leads to entrepreneurial behavior (Schwarz et al., 2009; Krueger, 2017).

In the context of developed economies, a lot more research has been already done to study the interplay between the entrepreneurial competencies and intention of students. Whereas, if we talk about developing economies, research is in its nascent stage. Ahmed, (2010) has described in his study, that for developing economies, entrepreneurship acts like an instrument for creating jobs and maintaining economic viability. Lopez and Alvarez (2019) emphasized the fact that entrepreneurial activities do not happen in isolation; they take place in association with other entrepreneurial domains like competencies and intentions. In the literature there exist studies that identified a set of competencies required to run an enterprise successfully and also research work emphasized the importance of intentions to showcase entrepreneurial behavior. But only a few types of research work exist that collectively considered entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intentions. To report this gap, current study is an endeavor to know the extent to which competencies contribute to the emergence of entrepreneurial intentions among the management students of Kashmir, India.

## **Need for the Study**

As we see, the unemployment is increasing day by day (Shailesh et al., 2013) and this hinders the economic development of countries, especially the developing ones. Unemployment act as a threat to policymakers, academicians, and society as a whole. Unemployment rates are becoming high among university graduates. This shows there is a demanding need for skills and competencies among students. In the last decades, it has been seen that entrepreneurship has benefitted developed countries and it has it's a positive impact on developing countries as well.

This study has been carried out in Kashmir (J&K), North India where unemployment is a major problem that obstacle the growth of the region. According to the report of Central for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), Jammu and Kashmir have the highest rate of unemployment among all States and union territories of India i.e. 22.2 % (October, 2021). The notion of entrepreneurship or self-employment among the youngsters of Kashmir is naïve (Irfana Rashid, 2017). Hence, there is aneed to conduct this study in Kashmir. However, entrepreneurial competencies can be developed or seen among the youth of Kashmir. They can be further shaped if their entrepreneurial competencies are analyzed because these competencies will further lead to the entrepreneurial intention.

## **Literature Review and Research**

### **Hypotheses Entrepreneurial**

#### **Competencies**

The concept of entrepreneurial competencies have been deep-rooted in the entrepreneurship literature. Several research works have been done to understand the nature of competencies and their importance in the success of an entrepreneurial venture. According to Spencer and Spencer (1993), entrepreneurial competencies are “motives, traits, self-concepts, attitudes or values, content knowledge, cognitive or behavioral skills which can be shown to differentiate between superior and average performers”. Bird (1995) explained entrepreneurial competencies as “underlying characteristics such as generic and specific knowledge, motives, traits, self-images, social roles and skills which result in venture birth, survival and/or growth”. After years of research on this particular entrepreneurial domain the definition of competencies is still elusive (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010), but researchers agreed on the point that competencies of entrepreneurs are very much important because they support and help entrepreneurs in running an enterprise successfully and smoothly (Madichie, 2009; Man, Lau, & Chan, 2002). Competencies can be divided into two categories one is innate, these are the competencies with which individuals are born, and the others are acquired competencies, these are which can be embodied in the person through learning and teaching (Bird, 2019). As, competencies are learnable, therefore it becomes the responsibility of the educators and academicians that they should identify the competencies which are required in becoming a successful entrepreneur and should also assess that in which competencies today's youngsters lack so that appropriate measures should be taken to inculcate such competencies among the youth (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). Researchers (Chandler & Hanks, 1994; Colombo & Grilli, 2005; Man et al., 2002; Johnson Winterton, 1999; Chandler & Jansen, 1992) found a close association between entrepreneurial competencies and performance. Therefore, Bird (1995) considered entrepreneurial competencies as “baseline competencies” because they played a vital role in the lifecycle of an enterprise mainly in the planning or launching process. In the previous few decades, researchers identified a different set of entrepreneurial competencies in different contexts of entrepreneurship (Bird, 1995; Chandler & Jansen, 1992; Man et al., 2002; Baum, 1994;

Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1997; Al Mamun et al., 2016). Bartlett and Ghoshal (1997) emphasized “attitudes/traits, knowledge/experience, and skills/abilities”. Whereas, Baum, Locke, and Smith (2001) comes up with a list of nine entrepreneurial competencies which were “knowledge, cognitive ability, self-management, administration, human resource, decision skill, leadership, opportunity recognition, opportunity development, and organization skill”. Man (2001) did extensive research work and did both qualitative and quantitative research and prepared a list of entrepreneurial competencies which were “opportunity, relationship, analytical, innovative, operational, human, strategic, commitment, learning, and personal strength competencies”. Shepherd (1999) and Mitchell et al. (2002) considered the behavioral approach, according to which if a person only possessed competencies then it doesn’t mean that he is competent, competencies are observable in the behavior and actions of an entrepreneur.

### **Entrepreneurial Intention**

Katz (1992) elucidate intention as “the vocational decision process in terms of the individual’s decision to enter an occupation as a salaried individual or as self-employed.” Therefore, the intention is “a conscious state of mind that directs attention and therefore experience and action toward a specific objective or pathway to achieve it”. Choo and Wong (2009) also stated that entrepreneurial intention is the initial point of the entrepreneurial journey as intention generates personal commitment which has a crucial role in starting a new business or firm. In the literature related to entrepreneurial intention, Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior intention model is highly cited and recommended. TPB assumed that a “behavior is best predicted by the underlying intentions behind that particular behavior. And attitude toward that specific behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are the triggering factors behind intentions”. Bird (1988) also defined constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior as “an individual’s entrepreneurial intention is his or her willingness to engage in a specific entrepreneurial behavior, here, to create a new venture”. Thompson (2009), defined entrepreneurial intention as “self-acknowledged conviction by a person that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plan to do so at some point in the future”.

### **Entrepreneurial Competencies and Entrepreneurial Intention**

The past research studies have confirmed that the entrepreneurial intentions of the individual are the triggering factor behind their entrepreneurial behavior. And it is also confirmed by the previous studies that TPB is a well-established theory to study the formation of entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors. Along with this researchers (Al Mamun et al. 2016; Farrukh et al. 2017), made attempts to know more about the other predictors of entrepreneurial intentions and it has been disclosed that the other important predictors of individual’s intentions are their personality traits and competencies. In the initial years, researchers put more attention on the personality trait of the individual, but over time now their focus has been drifted towards competencies because they are observable behaviors and can be easily taught and learned. Also, it has been statistically proven that the theory of planned behavior and entrepreneurial competencies are related to each other and entrepreneurial competencies partly influence the entrepreneurial intention of the students. To know more about the impact of competencies on the emergence of the intentions among youth, a study has been conducted by Menke (2018) on the students of German university and the results disclosed that competency clusters “motive, traits, self-concept, skills and knowledge” have significantly influenced the entrepreneurial intentions of the youth. Reyes, G. (2018) also conducted a study on non-business students. The outcomes of their study concluded that out of ten, eight competencies

were set to possess a significant positive association with the entrepreneurial intention of the non-business students. Zdolsek et al., (2021) also researched students of a university in Slovenia. Results revealed that students who are involved in entrepreneurship education possess higher entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial competencies as compared to those, who are not exposed to entrepreneurial education. Botha & Taljaard (2019) undertook a study on the entrepreneurs of South Africa and the outcomes concluded that there exists a bidirectional association between entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention of the entrepreneurs which leads to the effective performance of an enterprise.

A significant number of studies (Man, Lau, & Chan, 2002; Mamun et al., 2018; Man, Lau, & Snape, 2008; Kanninen & Poutvaara, 2007; Zainol & Al-Mamun, 2018; Kanninen & Poutvaara, 2007) has been undertaken to find the areas of entrepreneurial competencies which have an impact on the entrepreneurial activities and the majorly identified competencies are strategic, conceptual, opportunity recognizing, relationship, commitment risk-taking and organizing competencies (Man et al., 2002; Man, Lau, & Snape, 2008; Mamun et al., 2018 & Ibidunni et al., 2021). Therefore, for the present study strategic, conceptual, opportunity recognition, relationship, commitment, organizing, and risk-taking competencies have been taken into consideration and their impact on entrepreneurial intentions has been studied. Based on the above discussion subsequent hypothesis has been asserted:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between various entrepreneurial competencies (strategic, conceptual, opportunity recognition, relationship, commitment, organizing, and risk-taking competencies) and entrepreneurial intention of management students.

## **Methodology**

### **Research design**

In this study deductive approach has been adopted to test the hypotheses and to confirm the association between entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention. Also, cross-sectional research design has been used, as the information form, the respondents have been taken at one point of time.

### **Sampling Method, Sample**

The aim of the research is to analyze the impact of various entrepreneurial competencies on entrepreneurial intention. To analyze this relationship students' samples have been considered as per the suggestions of Delmar and Davidsson (2000) and Krueger et al. (2000). Non-probability sampling, purposive sampling method has been used for the present study. Data was obtained from the students enrolled in the management program (MBA) of the university. Two major universities providing management education in Kashmir have been undertaken for this research work i.e. Kashmir University and the Central University of Kashmir. Both female and male students were encouraged to take part in this study. The data from the respondents have been taken through an online survey. A total of 193 responses was found suitable for this study, the rest of the other responses were not considered because of inappropriateness.

### **Measures**

The current study is empirical and consisted of majorly two variables i.e. entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention. Several studies have already discussed their relationship (Al Mamun et al. 2016; Rashid Irfana, 2017). Hence, for this study standardized scale

has been undertaken. The web survey administered the measurement scales of entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial competencies. Scale for measuring the entrepreneurial competencies has been adopted from the Man et al. (2008) with little modifications and for entrepreneurial intention, Linan and Chen (2009) scale has been adopted. Total 35 items are there in the questionnaire consisted of 35 items and were derived from the review of the literature. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

## Data Analysis

This study is empirical using a quantitative approach. Partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) has been used for data analysis in this research work. Also, PLS-SEM does not require normal distribution of data and has an exploratory and predictive perspective by using reflective key items (Hair et al., 2019). A partial least square has been used in analyzing the measurement model and structural model.

## Results

### Descriptive Data

The demographic profile of respondents has shown that the maximum number of respondents fall in the 20-24 age group category (66.3%). Very few respondents fall in the category of 27 & above age group and 32.6 % of respondents fall in the age category of 24-28. Male respondents accounted for 58% while female respondents were 42% of the total sample of 193 respondents. Talking about previous educational background, 41.5% of students were from science educational background, 35.2% commerce and 23.3% humanities (Table 1).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	20-24	128	66.3	66.3	66.3
	24-28	63	32.6	32.6	99.0
	28 & above	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	193	100.0	100.0	
Sex	Male	112	58.0	58.0	58.0
	Female	81	42.0	42.0	100.0
	Total	193	100.0	100.0	
Previous Educational Background	Science	80	41.5	41.5	41.5
	Commerce	68	35.2	35.2	76.7
	Humanities	45	23.3	23.3	100.0
	Total	193	100.0	100.0	

*Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents*

## Measurement Model

As earlier mentioned this study has used Partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). To test the asserted hypotheses or to investigate the relationship between the entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention, latent factors have to be confirmed first. The measurement model evaluates the construct reliability and validity; and discriminant validity of the latent variables. In PLS-SEM, outer loadings of the observed variable should be greater than 0.7, indicating that observed variables were part of that latent construct (). Construct reliability and validity were checked by evaluating the values of Cronbach's alpha ( $>0.7$ ), average variance extracted (AVE  $>0.5$ ), composite reliability ( $>0.7$ ) and rho A and average variance extracted (AVE  $>0.5$ ). The average variance extracted indicates that the observed variable can explain the latent construct.

Further, discriminant validity has been evaluated by using Fornell- Larcker criteria. The criteria expressed a thumb rule that AVE's square root should be higher than the correlation among the constructs. It infers that every latent construct should be different from the rest of the constructs used in the study.

From Table 2, it can be illustrated that all the outer loadings of various entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention are greater than 0.8. For reliability, Cronbach's alpha of all the constructs is above 0.7, average variance extracted (AVE) was greater than 0.5 and also composite reliability was greater than 0.7. This indicated that the measurement model was consistent and convergent validity has been assessed.

Variables	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Conceptual Competency		0.893	0.899	0.918	0.652
ConC 1	0.832				
ConC 2	0.769				
ConC 3	0.855				
ConC 4	0.809				
ConC 5	0.829				
ConC 6	0.745				
Entrepreneurial Intention		0.889	0.892	0.916	0.645
EI1	0.743				
EI2	0.799				
EI3	0.822				
EI4	0.851				
EI5	0.835				
EI6	0.762				

Learning Competency		0.792	0.792	0.865	0.616
LC 1	0.735				
LC 2	0.817				
LC 3	0.793				
LC 4	0.793				
Opportunity Competency		0.876	0.877	0.915	0.73
OPC1	0.851				
OPC2	0.868				
OPC3	0.879				
OPC4	0.817				
Organizing Competency		0.867	0.872	0.904	0.654
ORC 1	0.824				
ORC 2	0.822				
ORC 3	0.796				
ORC 4	0.853				
ORC 5	0.743				

Relationship Competency		0.831	0.838	0.888	0.664
RC1	0.788				
RC2	0.790				
RC3	0.804				
RC4	0.875				
Risk-taking Competency		0.851	0.852	0.9	0.693
RTC 1	0.831				
RTC 2	0.774				
RTC 3	0.844				
RTC 4	0.876				
Strategic Competency		0.784	0.786	0.903	0.822
SC1	0.901				
SC2	0.913				

*Table 2: Assessment of Measurement Model*



	ConC	EIN	LC	OPC	ORC	RC	RTC	SC
ConC	0.808							
EIN	0.627	0.803						
LC	0.782	0.608	0.785					
OPC	0.805	0.757	0.767	0.854				
ORC	0.841	0.59	0.715	0.737	0.808			
RC	0.755	0.763	0.765	0.837	0.704	0.815		
RTC	0.764	0.758	0.753	0.812	0.71	0.801	0.832	
SC	0.73	0.743	0.721	0.822	0.648	0.816	0.784	0.907

*Table 3: Discriminant Validity: Criteria of Fornell - Larcker*

From Table 3, it can be seen that for discriminant validity, Fornell - Larcker has been satisfied. All the constructs used in the study have shown discriminant validity. Following Table 4 is showing values of R square and adjusted R square. Variance explained by various entrepreneurial competencies to entrepreneurial intention is 67.7% which is substantial (Chin, 1998).

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
EIN	0.677	0.665

*Table 4: Values of R square and adjusted R Square*

### **Structural Model**

For the structural model, the collinearity issue of the structural model has been checked using variance inflation factor (VIF) values. All the values of VIF for all the variables were less than 3.30(Marcoulides and Raykov, 2019). Further, structural equation modeling was used with bootstrapping (5000 sub-samples) to examine the significance of path coefficients. This current research work has studied the influence of various entrepreneurial competencies on the entrepreneurial intention of students.

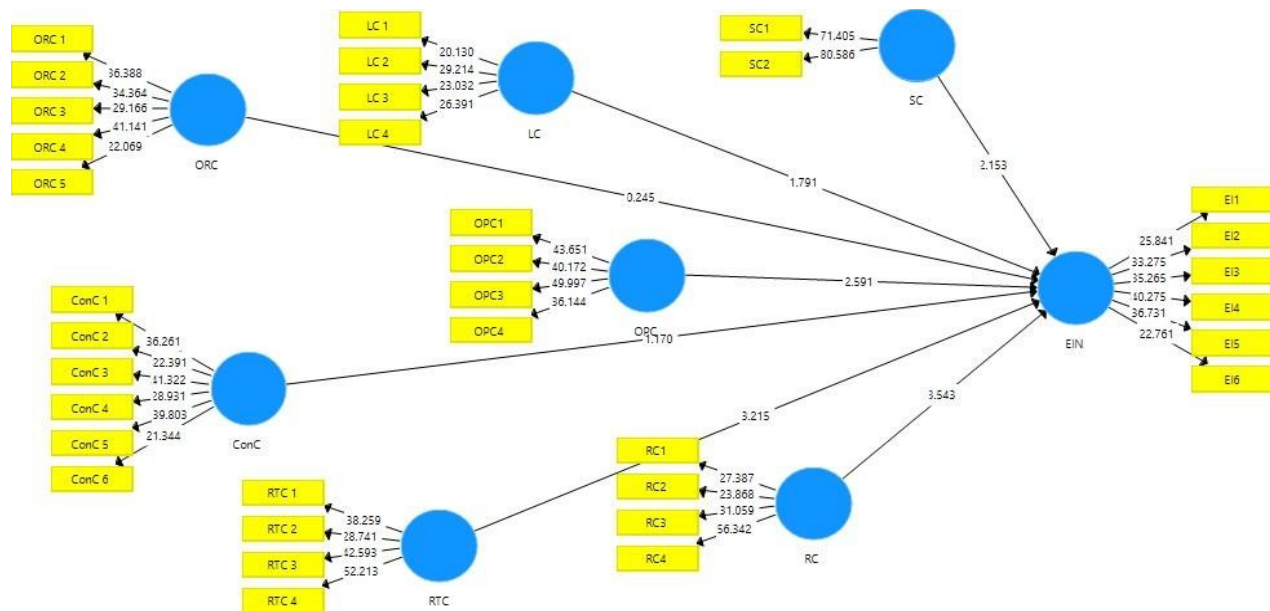


Fig.1: Structural Model

(ORC denotes organizing competencies, ConC denotes conceptual competencies, RTC denotes risk-taking competencies, LC denotes learning competencies, OPC denotes opportunity recognition competencies, RC denotes relationship competencies, SC denotes strategic competencies, EIN denotes entrepreneurial intention)

	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T Statistics ( O/STDEV )</i>	<i>P Values</i>
ConC → EIN	-0.113	-0.108	0.099	1.133	0.257
LC → EIN	-0.13	-0.125	0.072	1.812	0.07
<b>OPC → EIN</b>	<b>0.257</b>	<b>0.252</b>	<b>0.094</b>	<b>2.745</b>	<b>0.006</b>
ORC → EIN	0.02	0.028	0.081	0.255	0.799
<b>RC → EIN</b>	<b>0.293</b>	<b>0.292</b>	<b>0.083</b>	<b>3.547</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>RTC → EIN</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>0.327</b>	<b>0.102</b>	<b>3.224</b>	<b>0.001</b>
<b>SC → EIN</b>	<b>0.196</b>	<b>0.192</b>	<b>0.088</b>	<b>2.214</b>	<b>0.027</b>

Table 5: Path Coefficients

Table 5 indicates which competencies have a significant influence on the entrepreneurial intention of students. Opportunity competency, relationship competency, risk-taking competency and strategic competency have a significant impact on students' entrepreneurial intention. Whereas, conceptual competency, learning competency and organizing competency did not show any impact on the entrepreneurial intention of students.

## **Discussion**

The current study had analyzed the influence of various entrepreneurial competencies on the entrepreneurial intention of Kashmiri students. Several competencies have been identified from the literature and their relationship with entrepreneurial intention has been evaluated. This study indicated that conceptual competency, learning competency and organizing competency did not possess any impact on the entrepreneurial intention of students. In contrast, opportunity competency, risk-taking competency, relationship competency and strategic competency have an impact on the entrepreneurial intention of students. Even though numerous studies have discussed entrepreneurial intention (Krueger 1993; Autio et al. 2001) but there are fewer studies that have focused on the relationship of entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention of Kashmiri students.

By ascertaining these competencies and examining their effect on entrepreneurial intention this study makes significant contributions. Firstly, this study has shown that opportunity competency has a significant influence on the entrepreneurial intention of students' (Al- Mamun et al., 2016). It clearly shows that students who identify the opportunities related to entrepreneurship will have more entrepreneurial intention. Secondly, the findings of the study have indicated that risk-taking competency has a significant influence on the entrepreneurial intention of students. This fact has been discussed in many earlier studies (Pascoe & Mortimer, 2014), and this study has also shown that students who are capable of taking risks have more entrepreneurial intention. Thirdly, relationship competency has significantly impacted the entrepreneurial intention of Kashmiri students. Students' who can make good relationships will be having more entrepreneurial intention. As, this fact cannot be denied that students' who have been good at relationship building, will have good communication skills and be more exposed to entrepreneurship. Lastly, strategic competency has been also found a significant factor that influences entrepreneurial intention. Whereas, learning competency, conceptual competency and organizing competency did not possess any influence on the entrepreneurial intention of students.

## **Conclusion**

Hence, this study is providing profound results that indicate that policy-makers, academicians should work on the learning competency of students'. So, the students will be able to recognize opportunities more and can encourage others as well. Another focus can be made on inculcating programs and curriculums to improve students' conceptual clarity and their organizing skills. Team building programs can be carried out in institutions to further enhance their intention towards becoming self-employed. Academics, policy-makers and educators can use these findings and can ensure that these competencies must be developed among students which will eventually progress the students' intention to become self-employed and nurture national growth through decreasing unemployment rates and poverty among graduates in Kashmir.

## **Limitations**

Talking about the limitations of the study, this study has only considered business students. Also, the study is carried out in Kashmir (Jammu & Kashmir). Further studies can be carried out on non-

business students as well. Longitudinal studies can be taken into consideration. Other States of India can be taken into consideration for further studies.

### Recommendations

This study recommends that future research should focus on other variables like demographic factors as well. The influence of these factors can also be used as moderators. The competencies which have shown a significant relationship with entrepreneurial intention of students can be explored in different States. Comparative studies among business and non-business students can be taken into consideration.

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