



## The Factors Affecting the Entrepreneurial Intention of Sports Science Students Based on the Planned Behavior Theory

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The most challenging face of sports entrepreneurship is the need to progress at the same pace as the industry (Hay Dock, 2020). In this regard, sports entrepreneurship in Iran has not yet been able to identify the motivations and needs of entrepreneurs. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the factors affecting the entrepreneurial intention of sports science students based on the theory of planned behavior.

**Methodology:** This research is applied in purpose and survey type in the data collection method. The statistical population of the present study was sports science students of universities in Yazd province. One hundred twenty students were selected as available in State university, Islamic Azad, Payame Noor, and non-profit universities. The measuring instruments of this study were four standard questionnaires of attitude towards behavior (26 questions), mental norms (6 questions), perceived behavioral control (entrepreneurial self-confidence) (23 questions), and entrepreneurial intention (3 questions), whose validity was confirmed by various researchers.

**Findings:** Findings showed that the dimensions of the theory of planned behavior had a significant relationship with the entrepreneurial intention of sports science students. Also, the regression test results showed that the three dimensions of the theory of planned behavior, including attitudes toward behavior, perceived behavioral control, and mental norms had a significant effect on the entrepreneurial intention of sports students. Also, the results of ranking the dimensions of the theory of planned behavior showed that attitudes toward behavior, perceived behavioral control, and mental norms had the highest priority, respectively. Therefore, it is suggested to pay attention to the dimensions of the planned behavior theory to develop entrepreneurship among sports science students.

**Originality:** The originality of this article is to use the theory of planned behavior in sports entrepreneurship.

### Keywords

Behavioral Attitude  
Behavioral Control  
Entrepreneurial Intention  
Entrepreneurial Self-Confidence  
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## 1. Introduction

Given the size of the sports industry relative to the global economy, this requires constant attention from entrepreneurs and sports management researchers, and it is essential that sports entrepreneurship researchers continue to look to the future (Ratten, 2012). So, sports are a unique and dynamic industry inherently entrepreneurial in many sectors (Ciletti & Chadwick, 2012). The uniqueness of sports, given the spread of entrepreneurship in industries and organizations, has provided dynamic opportunities for entrepreneurs (Ciletti & Chadwick, 2012; Santomier, 2002). On the other hand, the growth and development of entrepreneurship as the main driving force in the emergence of new businesses and jobs and the subsequent acceleration of economic growth requires understanding the factors and decision-making processes that lead to entrepreneurship (Díaz-García & Jiménez-Moreno, 2010).

Entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon that encompasses a wide variety of factors and contexts, so much of the entrepreneurial literature is devoted to identifying the factors that affect a person's desire to become an entrepreneur (Gerry et al., 2017) and the research of the entrepreneurial literature leads us to this direction. The factors involved in the growth and promotion of entrepreneurship have been analyzed at two levels. At the individual level, entrepreneurs' psychological and demographic characteristics are examined. At the environmental level, the factors that promote or inhibit the environment of entrepreneurial activity are identified (Mueller et al., 2002).

According to studies such as Gholami Torksaluye et al. (2019), which showed that today sports are one of the most important factors of economic and social development in the world, this industry has become one of the largest and most tangible industries in the world. Kearney (2021) also showed that the sports industry generated about \$ 700 billion in revenue in 2014, accounting for about one percent of total global GDP. Other studies have also shown that from 2009 to 2014, the world sports industry has grown by an average of seven percent each year, which is higher than the average economic growth rate in many countries (Ghorbani & Vahdani, 2016). In addition, the high volume of financial exchanges in the sports industry and the change in people's lifestyles provide countless opportunities for entrepreneurs in this field. Both sports and entrepreneurship seek to boost economic and regional development and have similar innovation, risk-taking, leadership, and opportunity-seeking (Ratten, 2018). Hence, investors have shown great interest in entrepreneurship in the sports sector as a sports business. This result has led organizations and companies to recognize new opportunities in sports and take advantage of them to be profitable in the long run (Kessler & Hermann, 2009). Thus, despite all these efforts, the process of identifying entrepreneurial opportunities still has as many unknown dimensions as a black box (Corbett, 2007; Venkataraman & Shane, 2000), and the question remains as to why some people take advantage of opportunities. And others are unable to do so? Therefore, behavioral factors and the entrepreneur himself are important in creating a business and developing entrepreneurship.

The importance of psychologists in the mid-twentieth century turned their attention to the analysis of the individual. It sought an answer to the question of what distinguishes the individual characteristics of the entrepreneur from the non-entrepreneur (Öner & Kunday, 2016). What characteristics young people and students should have to become entrepreneurs has been the subject of study by many researchers. Individual characteristics and entrepreneurial intention are classic and controversial approaches to entrepreneurship (Rauch & Frese, 2012). Measuring entrepreneurial intention and identifying the factors affecting it are determining factors in the phenomenon's occurrence. Entrepreneurship provides a more accurate prediction of the probability of its occurrence (Moradi et al., 2020). In this regard, several models have been presented. The most widely used in entrepreneurship research is the planned model of Ajzan (Autio & Acs, 2010; Engel & Teece, 2012). According to this theory, every behavior requires a certain amount of planning that intention can predict. Based on this theory and by studying the intention of a person to start a business, it can be predicted whether the person will eventually do it or not (Jones et al., 2010). On the other hand, studies such as Chan et al. (2012) showed that entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial efficiency affect each other; They also concluded that entrepreneurial efficiency and entrepreneurial motivation have a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intent.

In a study conducted by Zellweger et al. (2011), the entrepreneurial intentions of individuals were measured by their determination to start a private company and its success. Among these, students are the most potential for studying the characteristics of entrepreneurship (Holienska et al., 2018). Hosseini and Khosravilagh (2017) stated that entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial efficiency, and social networks positively and significantly affect entrepreneurial intentions. Rezaei et al. (2017) showed that perceived control variables and mental norms positively and significantly affect entrepreneurship development. On the other hand, Vamvaka et al. (2020), in their research entitled attitude toward entrepreneurship, perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurial intention, showed that emotional attitude and perceived self-efficacy are the strongest predictors of entrepreneurial intention. On the other hand, Holienska et al. (2018) stated that students' entrepreneurial characteristics in different disciplines are significantly different. Sport and entrepreneurship have several features in common. Therefore, when focusing on the entrepreneurship of university students, sports students deserve special attention. The results of the Student Entrepreneurship Survey showed that sports students are the second group after art students who are heavily involved in entrepreneurial activities (Holienska et al., 2018). Iran graduates and the labor market is not responsible for them; Therefore, students must have a serious intention for entrepreneurship with planned behavior. As Hayduk and Walker (2018) writes, sports entrepreneurs must be hopeful about the future of this industry by knowing themselves. But the important thing to note is that given the planned theoretical approach and the dimensions that arise from what factors can affect the entrepreneurial intent of sports students. Because of the behavioral and psychological aspects of these dimensions and their importance in the attitude and performance of students, these factors are important

in various aspects of innovation and entrepreneurship and have a great impact on their entrepreneurial intent. Therefore, in this study, the researcher examined the factors affecting the entrepreneurial intention of sports science students based on the theory of planned behavior.

## 2. Theoretical background

Logical action theory is used when there is considerable voluntary control over behavior (in other words, the success of reasoning action theory depends on the degree of voluntary control over behavior). In contrast, when the degree of voluntary control over a behavior decreases (the person, despite the behavioral intention, is not able to do it), the use of this model is not so much. Eisen et al. Established a new model called the "theory of planned behavior." In this theory, a third factor is proposed along with the two factors mentioned in the theory of reasoning action, called perceived control. In situations where the behavioral intention to do something is sufficient or the voluntary control over the behavior is high, the power of this third factor is reduced. Attitude Towards Behavior: Attitude toward a behavior is what Cheng describes as the product of a person's apparent belief that behavioral intentions will lead behavior toward actual results and the evaluation of outcomes that show the desired effect. Attitude towards behavior refers to a person's positive or negative assessment of behavior (Taheri Jandaghi & Husseinia, 2017).

Perceived Behavior Control: In the theory of planned behavior, perceived behavioral control is defined as an individual's assessment of whether a behavior is complex or straightforward. Perceived behavioral control determines behavior when perceived behavioral control reflects the actual behaviour of individuals on the desired behavior. It is assumed that behavioral control in K demonstrates the individual's previous experience and the predicted barriers to performing a behavior (Taheri Jandaghi & Husseinia, 2017). Mental norms: Mental norms are related to social factors and are connected to a person's perception of social pressures these people put on a person to do or not do or do something. It is also mental (abstract) norms that are the product of a person's normative belief, which relates to a person's confidence in their previous thoughts about "should or should not behave" and motivates them to perform or accept a behavior. A person in his social network will be influenced by several people, which indicates that the people around a person, including some factors like the father, mother of religious leaders, political leaders. All impact his ideas and behaviors (Ghavam & Kiamehr, 2020). Entrepreneurial intention: One of the presuppositions of entrepreneurial activities is entrepreneurial intention. Krueger (2009) sees entrepreneurial intent as a degree of commitment to future behaviors to create a new organization. (Davidsson, 1995) described entrepreneurial intent as a decision to start a company planned to do something groundbreaking for some time. Shapero and Sokol (1982) refer to entrepreneurial intent as the entrepreneurial event model and consider it to create a hypothetical event business that is influenced by the interactions of initiative, ability, management, and proportions of independence and risk. The three factors of

understanding desirability are pragmatism and understanding feasibility (Bani Shaykh al-Islami & Hamednejad, 2015, June 20). [Hosseini et al. \(2021\)](#) showed that structural ( $p=0.99$ ), environmental ( $p=0.88$ ) and behavioral ( $p=0.80$ ) factors exert a direct effect on sports entrepreneurship ([Hosseini et al., 2021](#)).

### 3. Methodology

The present research is applied in terms of purpose and survey method in terms of data collection. The statistical population of the present study consisted of all undergraduate and graduate students in the field of physical education and sports sciences of Yazd universities (National, Free, and Payame Noor) (185 people). The statistical sample was selected according to the Morgan table of 120 people, and also, the sampling method was available. The research instruments included two standard questionnaires of [Ajzen and Sexton \(1999\)](#) (attitude towards behavior (26 questions), mental norms (6 questions), perceived behavioral control (entrepreneurial self-confidence) (23 questions)), and entrepreneurial intention (3 questions). Seven professors and experts confirmed the validity of these questionnaires. Cronbach's alpha method was used to measure reliability. The reliability coefficient for Attitude Towards Behavior (0.78), Mental Norms (0.89), Perceived Behavior Control (Entrepreneurial Self-Confidence) (0.88), and Entrepreneurial Intention (0.91) were obtained. Multiple regression analysis was used to confirm or reject the relationship between the variables after calculating the correlation coefficient and determining the intensity of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Due to the differences between the variables, the Friedman test and SPSS (Ver 20.) were used to prioritize the variables.

### 4. Results

#### *Demographic characteristics description*

Descriptive findings showed that 83.3% of the respondents were under 30 years old, 16.7% were between 30 and 40 years old and older. Also, 60.6% of the respondents were male, and 39.4% were female. The highest level of education of the respondents was in the bachelor's degree, which is 76.6%. 23.3% of the respondents also had a master's degree.

To determine the normality of the research variables, we used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. It is shown in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1.** Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results.

	Attitude towards behavior	Appreciated behavioral control	Mental norms	Entrepreneurial intent
Sample number	120	120	120	120
Mean	98.50	9.25	22.29	79.62

		Attitude towards behavior	Appreciated behavioral control	Mental norms	Entrepreneurial intent
Normal distribution parameters	Standard deviation	10.17	2.48	2.63	11.55
Kolmogorov-Smirnov test statistics		1.19	2.73	2.21	1.65
obtained Levels from the test		0.08	0.1	0.06	0.12

Table 1 shows that all variables' significant level values are greater than the test level, i.e.  $\alpha = 0.05$ , so all variables had a normal distribution.

Investigating the relationship between research variables:

**Table 2.** Results of Pearson correlation test of independent variables and entrepreneurial intention.

Variable	Entrepreneurial intent	
Attitude towards behavior	Pearson coefficient	0.554
	significance	0.001
	Sample size	120
Perceived behavioral control	Pearson coefficient	0.354
	meaningfulness	0.001
	Sample size	120
Mental norms	Pearson coefficient	0.446
	Meaningful	0.001
	Sample size	120

Table 2 shows the results of calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient. All coefficients are confirmed at a 95% confidence level, so the  $H_0$  hypothesis that there is no correlation is rejected, and the claim is retained. Behavioral controls, perceived behavioral controls, and mental norms are dependent variables. Stepwise regression was used to identify only the most predictive power variables (best model) to analyze the research hypothesis.

**Table 3.** Name variables in the regression model.

1	Attitude towards behavior	Independent variable
2	Perceived behavioral control	
3	Mental norms	
4	Entrepreneurial intent	Dependent variable

Table 3 shows how to name variables in the regression model.

The results obtained from the regression are shown in the table below.

**Table 4.** Summary of regression model for the dependent variable of entrepreneurial intention concerning independent variables.

Mod	Variables	Efficacy coefficient	Determination coefficient	Mediated efficacy coefficient	Standard estimation error	Watson-camera
1	Attitude towards behavior	0.69	0.476	0.474	1.80152	1.672
2	Perceived behavioral control	0.628	0.495	0.492	1.96583	1.84
3	Mental norms	0/40	0/160	0/156	2.28482	1.76

In the [Table 4](#) variables of attitude towards behavior with the variable of entrepreneurial intention, the value of the Watson camera test statistic is 1.67, and this value is in the specified allowable range of 1.5 to 2.5. There is no correlation regression among the components of the model error, and the fitted model is good. Also, the relationship between these two variables is 69%. Also, the perceived behavioral control variable with the entrepreneurial intention variable, considering that the value of Watson camera test statistic is equal to 1.84, and this value is in the specified allowable range of 1.5 to 2.5. There is no correlation among regression model error components, and the fitted model is good. The relationship between these two variables is 63%. Also, the variable of mental norms with the variable of entrepreneurial intention, considering that the value of Watson camera test statistic is equal to 1.76, and this value is in the specified allowable range of 1.5 to 2.5. There is no correlation between the error components of the regression model, and the fitted model is good. Also, the relationship between these two variables is 40%. According to the results, the attitude towards behavior has the most significant impact on entrepreneurial intention.

**Table 5.** Significance of hypothesis models.

Model	Source	Total squares	Average of squares	Freedom degrees	F	Meaningfulness
1	Regression	10364.085	10364.085	1	79.198	0.001
	Residue	15310.881	130.862	117		
	Total	25674.966		118		
2	Regression	11284.771	5642.385	2	45.484	0.001
	Residue	14390.195	124.053	116		
	Total	25674.966		118		
3	Regression	11887.820	3962.573	3	33.052	0.001
	Residue	13878.246	119.889	115		
	Total	25674.966		118		
4	Regression	12493.578	3123.395	4	27.013	0.001
	Residue	13181.388	115.626	114		
	Total	25674.966		118		

According to [Table 5](#), all variables were statistically significant. The Friedman test was used to prioritize independent variables and the value of their impact on entrepreneurship in this study. The test results are shown in [Table 6](#).

**Table 6.** Friedman test results of research variables.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Friedman tests			
				Rank mean	The statistics are two	Freedom degree	Significance level
Attitude toward behaviour	120	4.6	0.983	4.53	38.198	2	0.001
Perceived behavioral control	120	4.16	0.947	4.38			
Mental norms	120	3.75	0.495	4.19			

Table 6 shows the results of the Friedman test that there is a significant difference between the priority of research variables in all three variables related to entrepreneurship. All factors were higher than average and based on this, the variable of attitude towards behavior had the highest priority, and the variable of mental norms had the lowest priority.

## 5. Managerial implications

Principals of sports schools should change sports students' behavior, attitudes, and mental norms by presenting attractive and practical programs. We use new and advanced sports facilities for students and establish sports workshops and seminars.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

Entrepreneurship is a good way to achieve economic development and create job opportunities. Entrepreneurial intention is also a prelude to entrepreneurial behavior, so it is imperative to know the entrepreneurial intention of sports science students and recognize the factors affecting it. Findings show a positive and significant relationship between the two variables of attitude toward entrepreneurial behavior and entrepreneurial intention. In other words, positive attitudes toward entrepreneurial behavior significantly affect the likelihood of starting a sports business and one's entrepreneurial intent. These results were consistent with the findings of Engle et al. (2010), Sadeghi and Malekinia (2011), Hosseini and Khosravilagh (2017), and Ziyae and Vaghar Mousavi (2016). Accordingly, the importance of attitudes toward entrepreneurship in explaining the ideals and goals of individuals to create a new business has been clearly and empirically confirmed in previous research. In this regard, Frank (2007) found in their study that the attitude towards entrepreneurship is the most important determinant of entrepreneurial intention. Swan and Heesacker (2012) also argued that attitudes have a special place in determining a person's desires. The main point in the occurrence of a behavior is the view of individuals towards that behavior. In their study, Schwarz et al. (2009) found that about 50% of the difference in intention is due to attitudes. Therefore, a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship by physical education students significantly increases the likelihood of starting a sports business.



Because a person's attitudes and motivations are a key factor in influencing his entrepreneurial tendencies. To the extent that a person has a positive attitude towards entrepreneurial behavior by considering the positive consequences of starting a business, they are more likely to reinforce the intention of the above behavior. In other words, a better understanding of the specific benefits associated with the sports business by physical education students will increase their recognition of their identity as an entrepreneur. Other research findings show a positive and significant relationship between perceived behavioral control variables and entrepreneurial intention. This result of the study was in line with (Vamvaka et al., 2020) and (Rezaei et al., 2017). Vamvaka et al. (2020), in their study entitled Attitudes toward entrepreneurship, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial intent showed that emotional attitude and perceived self-efficacy are the strongest predictors of entrepreneurial intent. Jenkins and Johnson (1997) also believe that perceived behavioral control influences career path choices. They cultivate themselves (Drnovsek et al., 2010; Naktiyok et al., 2009). Therefore, people with higher levels of perceived self-confidence will put more effort in a longer period and will have more continuity to receive the relevant results, as a result of which their entrepreneurial intention is more. The effect of mental norms on entrepreneurial intention shows a relatively strong positive relationship between the two variables. This result of the research was in line with the researches of (Rezaei et al., 2017) and (Hosseini & Khosravilagh, 2017). Previous research on the effect of this factor on entrepreneurial intention confirms the relationship between the two variables. When those around the person positively evaluate the role of entrepreneurship and related behaviors as a model, the person's tendency to develop entrepreneurial behaviors increases. But the analysis results show a weaker effect of this variable on intention than the other two variables. According to the study results, Ajzan considered mental norms the weakest factor in the model. Several studies conducted using the theory of planned behavior have found a weak relationship between this factor and entrepreneurial intention (Shook & Bratianu, 2010). A logical explanation for such a relationship is that this factor may not directly affect entrepreneurial intention and indirectly affect the entrepreneurial intention by influencing the other two factors of the model, namely attitude towards entrepreneurship and self-confidence. Individuals receive influences due to contact with family, friends, and other close and influential people in their lives, which can directly affect a person's attitude. According to Henley (2005), an individual's self-esteem may be influenced by a person's background, such as the degree of cultural acceptance of entrepreneurship as a career option or the strength of the family's influence on career choice. On the other hand, Ajzan emphasizes that the relative importance of the factors in the model varies during different situations and behaviors (Engle et al., 2010). Accordingly, the results of studies conducted on the effect of mental norms in different societies and examples have presented different results. Therefore, the mentioned reasons are the weaker effect of the mental norms variable on

entrepreneurial intention than the previous two factors. In general, if sports science students manage their behaviors more optimally and change their attitude towards entrepreneurship and business development in the sports industry, they can take a more positive step in their entrepreneurial goals. As a result, it is necessary to pay attention to the theory of planned behavior due to the importance of developing entrepreneurial intention among sports science students. In this regard, to pay attention to the dimensions of the theory of planned behavior. According to the priorities obtained from this research, it can improve and strengthen the entrepreneurial intention among sports science students.

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## عوامل موثر بر قصد کارآفرینی دانشجویان علوم ورزشی مبتنی بر نظریه رفتار برنامه‌ریزی شده

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### کلیدواژه

خودباوری کارآفرینانه  
قصد کارآفرینی  
کنترل رفتاری  
نگرش رفتار  
هنجارهای ذهنی

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** بزرگ‌ترین چالش پیش روی کارآفرینی ورزشی، نیاز به پیشرفت با همان سرعت صنعت است (های داگ، ۲۰۲۰). در این راستا کارآفرینی ورزشی در ایران هنوز نتوانسته است انگیزه‌ها و نیازهای کارآفرینان خود را شناسایی کند. لذا مطالعه حاضر به دنبال بررسی عوامل موثر بر قصد کارآفرینی دانشجویان علوم ورزشی بر اساس نظریه رفتار برنامه‌ریزی شده است.

**روش:** این تحقیق از نظر هدف کاربردی و از نظر شیوه گردآوری اطلاعات از نوع پیمایشی است. جامعه آماری پژوهش حاضر دانشجویان علوم ورزشی دانشگاه‌های سطح استان یزد بود. که تعداد ۱۲۰ دانشجو به صورت در دسترس در دانشگاه‌های دولتی، آزاد، پیام نور و غیرانتفاعی انتخاب شدند. ابزار اندازه‌گیری این پژوهش ۴ پرسشنامه استاندارد نگرش نسبت به رفتار (۲۶ سؤال)، هنجارهای ذهنی (۶ سؤال)، کنترل رفتاری درک شده (خودباوری کارآفرینانه) (۲۳ سؤال) و قصد کارآفرینانه (۳ سؤال) بود که روایی آن توسط پژوهشگران مختلف مورد تأیید قرار گرفته است.

**یافته‌ها:** یافته‌ها نشان داد ابعاد تئوری رفتار برنامه‌ریزی شده با قصد کارآفرینی دانشجویان علوم ورزشی رابطه معناداری دارد. همچنین نتایج حاصل از آزمون رگرسیون نشان داد، سه بعد تئوری رفتار برنامه‌ریزی شده شامل نگرش نسبت به رفتار، کنترل رفتاری درک شده و هنجارهای ذهنی بر قصد کارآفرینی دانشجویان علوم ورزشی تأثیر معناداری داشت. همچنین نتایج حاصل از رتبه‌بندی ابعاد تئوری رفتار برنامه‌ریزی شده نشان داد به ترتیب نگرش نسبت به رفتار، کنترل رفتاری درک شده و هنجارهای ذهنی دارای بالاترین اولویت بودند. بنابراین، پیشنهاد می‌شود جهت توسعه کارآفرینی در میان دانشجویان علم ورزشی به ابعاد تئوری رفتار برنامه‌ریزی شده توجه گردد.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** نوآوری این مقاله به جهت استفاده از نظریه رفتار برنامه‌ریزی شده در کارآفرینی ورزشی است.

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