

Digital Entrepreneurship Intentions of Qatar University Students

Motivational Factors Identification: Digital Entrepreneurship Intentions

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study examines the relationship between personality characteristics and contextual factors with their association to the attitudes, the perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms, which determine digital entrepreneurial intentions (DEI) of students at Qatar University. It also seeks to test the association between entrepreneurial knowledge and DEI for the studied group of students. The integrated research model was created by combining the three introduced TPB motivational drivers and the level of digital entrepreneurial knowledge as an additional motivational factor related to DEI for students at Qatar University. A total of 203 students completed the digital entrepreneurial intention questionnaire. The results show that students' attitudes towards digital entrepreneurship are not associated with their propensity towards risk-taking and locus of control. It also found that social and cultural views not related to the students' DEI. However, perceived support and perceived barriers were found to have a strong relationship with Qatar University students' perceived behavioral control. Therefore, this study contributes to identifying the critical motivational factors associated with digital entrepreneurship among university students and it provides information that could be useful for policy- and decision-makers.

KEYWORDS

Digital Entrepreneurial Intentions, Digital Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Knowledge Entrepreneurship, Theory of Planned Behavior

1. INTRODUCTION

In light of the rapid growth of digital activities in different industries, the use of digital technologies in business processes is likely to be most attractive for different types of entrepreneurship activities. Running businesses in this type of digital environment means utilizing the Internet and digital networks.

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This involvement provides entrepreneurs with exceptional opportunities to create their own ventures based on electronic commerce models.

1.1. Significance of Study

The intersection between the newly introduced technologies and entrepreneurship has created interesting questions for researchers who study this relationship as well as the creation of this new term (Digital Entrepreneurship) and its characteristics. There is a great interest in digital entrepreneurship (DE) research due to the growing number of entrepreneurs who have established their businesses using the Internet and technology. However, scholars in the entrepreneurship research field have not yet studied the concept of DE's practices in the Middle East, especially in the Gulf Countries (GCC). Thus, there is a great interest in studying the concept of DE in GCC, particularly in State of Qatar, and further research on this subject is definitely needed to enrich the body of work on this topic. This would contribute to providing a clear understanding of the processes associated with DE in Qatar. Indeed, since the number of information technology (IT) innovations and technology providers is increasing in Qatar, more entrepreneurs are paying attention to DE.

1.2. Objective of Study

Very few previous studies have addressed the motivational factors associated with digital entrepreneurship intentions (DEI) among university students in Qatar, in general, and Qatar University students, more specifically. In light of this gap, this study aims to identify and evaluate the motivational factors that drive the DEI of Qatar University students. It also seeks to evaluate the association between entrepreneurial knowledge (EK) and the students' intentions to engage in DE. Finally, this study also aims to determine differences in the demographic factors that affect the students' DEI.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Entrepreneurship and Digital Entrepreneurship

Researchers have considered that entrepreneurship can encompass the identification of business opportunities and how to develop these opportunities, so they can be transformed into profitable goods or services to add value to the market. Researchers have also investigated the risks and rewards associated with these types of opportunities.

In like manner, DE is an evolving concept that differs from traditional entrepreneurship. DE was studied for many years, and many conceptual studies have been conducted to determine its unique characteristics. In general, DE has been viewed as a subsection of traditional entrepreneurship in which some or all of what is physical in a traditional business is digitalized (Hull et al., 2007). DE arises from the process of a digital business startup in the market or a new innovative idea that responds to a change that is implemented using technology. Researchers have used different terms to describe DE, such as e-entrepreneurship, web entrepreneurship, Internet entrepreneurship, and DE (Guthrie, 2014). Carrier et al., (2004) referred to DE as cyber-entrepreneurship. In addition to addressing how information is sold, previous studies have considered the term to encompass the entire business process, including production, marketing, and distribution. Hence, DE deploys entrepreneurial activities that are associated with a certain level of digitalization (Guthrie, 2014). In other words, DE involves creating new values with digital products or services, in a digital marketplace, in a digital workplace, using digital distribution channels, or some combination of all of these.

The European Commission (2015) defined DE as converting an existing business project into a technological project by creating digital technology or using it to conduct business. This type of DE is viewed as a subcategory of traditional entrepreneurship because its characteristics are similar to the traditional form. However, it differs from traditional entrepreneurship in the way that entrepreneurs market their products using the power of technology. Several other definitions have been introduced

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