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The Effect of Perceived Threat of Terrorism on Entrepreneurial Behavior: Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Intention

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is the future of any nation's growth and well-being which helps the people to earn their living and raise their living standards. There are multiple barriers that revoke the youngsters and those who aim to achieve high to step into entrepreneurial pathway. These barriers have the power to change the intention of people towards entrepreneurship. Entering the entrepreneurship pathways is greatly influenced by entrepreneurial intention. This study is conducted to examine the impact of entrepreneurial intention on entrepreneurial behavior. It will also evaluate the relationship of perceived barriers on the pathway to entrepreneurship. This research is based on a quantitative research approach. The target population comes from active entrepreneurs in the hotel industry and travel agencies. The URL of the Self-administrated online questionnaire was sent to target participants on which purpose of conducting a survey was written. Out of 377 questionnaires, 249 questionnaires were filled by participants. The findings of the study explains that perceived threat of terrorism has negative relation with entrepreneurial intention and behavior whereas, entrepreneurial intention mediates the relationship between perceived threat of terrorism and entrepreneurial behavior by showing significant value among them. This research has unveiled some interesting facts about the barriers in the pathway to entrepreneurship. It has explored some important present-day barriers like occurrence of COVID 19 pandemic and terrorism in the entrepreneurship pathway because very little research has been conducted in this context till now.

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Keywords: Threat of terrorism, entrepreneurial intention, and Entrepreneurial behaviour.

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has been considered as one of the driving forces towards the professional development and job creation for those who are unemployed. With the passage of time entrepreneurship has got significant importance not only in the developing but also the developed countries because it has been found the only solution to takes a country out of unemployment crises. It has the tendency to improvise the financial and social stability of the countries and boosts the innovative power among the youth. According to research by Rezaei and Peykan (2017) the unemployment rate is almost 16% across the globe which is one of the basic causes of the economic gravity of any nation. Unfortunately, most of the developing countries lack the participation of youth in the mainstream economy of the developing countries and the reason is very clear that youth of these countries fail to inculcate entrepreneurial behavior in their people (Ephrem et al., 2021). Bullough and Renko (2017), has researched that people are not much inclined towards entrepreneurship because they have developed multiple mis-concepts regarding entrepreneurship.

Research by Ahorsu et al. (2020b) has depicted that people are reluctant to step into entrepreneurship because of certain threats like failure to achieve their targets, lack of finances. Moreover, internal and external environmental circumstances of the country and perceived threats and some prevailing natural disasters like terrorism declines entrepreneurial intention (Ahorsu et al., 2020b). Baron et al., (2016a), on entrepreneurial intention and barriers towards entrepreneurship pathways have unveiled lot of factors but not much has been researched about the impact of recent pandemic over entrepreneurial intentions. The significance of this research lies in the fact that it has highlighted the impact of some adverse environmental conditions on entrepreneurial intention and behavior. Baluku et al. (2019a), argued that very less has been researched about the entrepreneurial intentions among the people of countries that are a victim of terrorism and uncertainty caused by the COVID 19 pandemic.

Baron et al., (2016a) have proposed that perceived threats instill substantial fear in people's life and has impacted the entrepreneurial behavior of those also who are not a direct target of terrorism. Perceived threat and fear impact individual activities and strangle entrepreneurial activity that is so badly needed for economic growth and survival. Business analysts have admitted that people who are capable of overcoming all kind of threats, are resilient enough to cope up with the unseen challenges but again it requires conviction and a strong entrepreneurial intention (Bullough & Renko, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Development of entrepreneurial intentions among people is closely related to the available resources in the hands of people. These resources can be monetary or individual's life security. According to Baluku et al., (2019b), uncertainty in the environment, economic and political conditions of the country have a direct impact on individual's life and his mindset. If a person is facing continuous threat to his life and belongings, he can never develop any kind of positive intentions within himself. More precisely, Li et al., (2021), have proposed that if the available resources of human being are under threat, due to that perception of threat they never develop intention or make-up their mind to entrepreneurial intentions.

This connection of entrepreneurial intentions with threat of terrorism can be elaborated through discussing the conservation of resource theory as mentioned below;

Using Conservation of Resource Theory in Context to Uncertainty

Poh Yen Ng, (2021) explained conservation of resource theory states that, people endeavor to retain, protect and build their own resources if they feel themselves under certain unseen threats or potential loss to these resources. This theory states that the behavior of acquiring, developing and retaining resources is a coping mechanism of overcoming unseen potential loss. These losses can be a result of natural and man-made crises like terrorism respectively. It has been studied that people develop stress and anxiety if they get any signs of upcoming resources loss. As a reaction they attempt to conserve the resources available with them.

ALESSA Adlah A. et al., (2021), has shown that 90% of big businesses and companies have resumed their normal operations after the first two years of pandemic whereas, the percentage of small businesses who recovered is found to be 81%. While the entrepreneurs suffered from the double impact of pandemic. They faced issues with their health, 50% of them lost their jobs and majority faced a decrease in income as

their start-up firms closed due to loss of resources and opportunities (Lopes et al., 2018). As per the Enterprise Survey for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in China, entrepreneurs experienced a high level of anxiety and stress. The COR theory (Hobfoll, 2011), has become the center of focus while investigating about the effect of perceived threat of terrorism on entrepreneurial intentions and behavior.

Perceived Threat of Terrorism as a Barrier to Entrepreneurship Pathway

Bullough et al., (2014), the perceived threat of terrorism has a negative impact on the economic growth of a country and is proved as repelling private investments. Many of the under-developed countries like Afghanistan who have faced terror of war and insurgencies within their country for years are more exposed to loss of resources. ALESSA Adlah A. et al., (2021), have added that common reactions of terrorism threat include isolation, increased mental and psychological deficiencies, absence from educational institutions and work place, anxiety, stress and rage.

These negative impacts of terrorism grow deeper due to poverty and failure to access desired resources. Country economies are hit hard by the terrorism factor which leave diverse impacts on the business operations. ALESSA Adlah A. et al., (2021), claimed that all these negative impacts directly influence entrepreneur behavior and divert the intentions of future entrepreneurs towards declining phase. Bullough et al., (2014) (Belitski et al., 2022) proposed that once a country is hit by terrorism, it declines buyer demand, raises transaction costs and leads to inflation which altogether discourage individuals from pursuing an entrepreneur career. Moreover, countries hit by terrorism might experience high interest rates and insurance costs which revoke an individual from entering into new businesses (Bullough et al., 2014).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

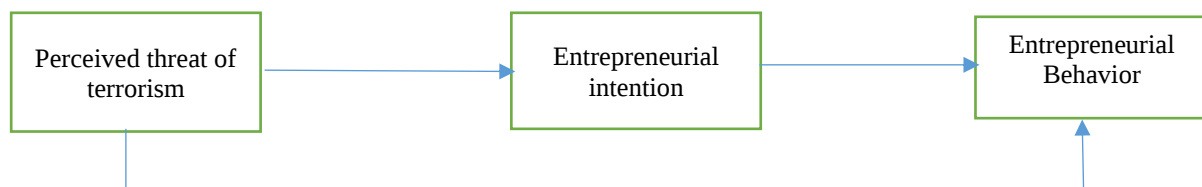


Figure 1.
Conceptual Framework

The above figure shows major barriers to the entrepreneurial behavior i.e., perceived threat of terrorism. This barrier can be overcome through high-level of entrepreneurial intention. All the factors are interlinked with each other and all these ultimately influence the entrepreneurial behavior. Chaudhary, (2017) proposed, external environmental conditions often intend to act as a barrier to entrepreneurial pathway. People living in countries prone to terrorism already reflect low intentions to switch to any personal investment business (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Abbas et al., (2019), act of terrorism has inculcated a feeling of insecurity and threat to resources loss for the people living there. These people are usually unwilling to take risks and feel reluctant in adapting entrepreneurship pathway.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Prior studies have explained that the effect of self-efficacy and resilience on entrepreneurial intention under threatening conditions and elucidates that high resilience and self-efficacy in entrepreneurs help in pursuing entrepreneurial initiatives under threatening conditions. As per Hair et al., (2012), the conservation of resource theory, people should attempt to safeguard their resources, their confidence and courage to do something better for their future. This kind of intention helps in coping up with the unseen environmental and man-made disasters. This fact has led the ground for our first hypothesis mentioned as below;

Perceived Threat of Terrorism, Entrepreneurial Intention and entrepreneurial behavior

Conservation of resource theory states that every individual wants to control the gain and loss of valued resources. To make this practical, an entrepreneur make different strategies to conserve their available resources. Ahmed et al., (2020), environmental threats like terrorism, pandemics may cause a barrier for the entrepreneurship pathway but with consistent intention, firm belief in one's capabilities can help the individual in limiting the losses or increasing the gain of resources (Bullough et al., 2014). According to the Global Terrorism Index 2018, Pakistan ranked 5th most affected country by terrorism and GTI score is 7.889.

Although this score is less than the previous year which is 8.18, the declining trend have shown the reduction in terrorist attacks but the businesses in KPK, FATA and Baluchistan are still vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Conversely, literature also claims that due to adversity, violence, discrimination, the threat of terrorism and infrastructural deficiencies; feelings of fear, powerlessness and low intention towards starting a business arises (Bullough & Renko, 2017). The difference in views regarding the effect of the threat of terrorism on entrepreneurial intention and behavior exists which gives birth to our first hypothesis.

H1. *"The Perceived threat of terrorism has a negative relation with entrepreneurial intention"*

H2. *The Perceived threat of terrorism has a negative relation with entrepreneurial behavior".*

H3. *The entrepreneurial intention has a positive relation with entrepreneurial behavior".*

Entrepreneurial Intention as mediator

Perceived threat of terrorism affect entrepreneurial activities; the threat of terrorism and war is known to be constrained for resources and economy. Sinclair & LoCicero, (2007b), have mentioned that Entrepreneurial intention contributes to create resistance against destructive behavior which stifles venturing behavior. Sieger et al., (2013), individuals with high level of resilience and confidence can reduce the fear of terrorism in making decisions for their future and adapting entrepreneurship. So, we concluded our third hypothesis as;

H4. *"Entrepreneurial intention mediates the effect of the perceived threat of terrorism on entrepreneurial behavior".*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design and Sampling procedure

The current research addresses the call of Bui, Nguyen, Tran, & Nguyen, (2020) for further applying to contextualize entrepreneurship by elucidating person-environment interaction in an adverse environment. For this purpose, the present study analyzed the effect of the perceived threat of terrorism on entrepreneurial behavior, whereas; mediation is analyzed between the aforementioned relationships. The present study follows quantitative research approach. The target population comes from active entrepreneurs in the hotel industry and travel agencies. The travel agencies and hotel businesses face adverse conditions and business risks due to the threat of terrorism (P. Raja & Raghu, 2021). For the current study, the sample size was calculated with the help of an online sample size calculator (Raosoft, 2022). With a 5% margin of error and confidence level of 95%, the sample size was 377 active entrepreneurs. The URL of the Self-administrated online questionnaire was sent to target participants on which purpose of conducting a survey was written. Out of 377 questionnaires, 249 questionnaires were filled by participants.

Measurement

There were two sections in the survey form; in the first section, basic demographic questions were included, i.e., age, gender, etc. In the second section, variables are measured with the help of close-ended questions. To measure "Perceived threat of terrorism" was captured by 13 items from the study conducted by Sinclair and LoCicero (2007a) and Raja et al. (2020). Sample items include "I have difficulty keeping the threat of terrorism out of my mind" and "There is little I can do to protect myself from terrorism." Entrepreneurial behavior was measured through a six-item scale taken from Sieger et al., (2013). A sample item is "I often generate new ideas by observing the world." Lastly, a two-item scale was taken from Edelman et al., (2010) and Pistrui et al., (2019) for entrepreneurial intentions. The sample item is "I want my business to be as large as possible." All the items were operationalized on a seven-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 stand for "strongly disagree" and 7 stands for "strongly agree").

Ethical Considerations

Amid the Pandemic and due to restrictions on in-person contact, the questionnaire was generated on Google survey forms. The URL of this form was sent to official email addresses of travel agencies and hotel businesses. The introductory section of the online survey had a summary of the study and a statement requesting participants' consent. Those who consented to take part in the study clicked the "next" button and were directed to the online questionnaire. Two reminders were sent with one week's difference. The target participants who did not reply to the survey call were considered missing responses and removed from the analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Smart-PLS is a highly efficient technique utilised for depicting the interrelationships among many latent variables. Partial least squares (PLS) possess the capability to address latent hypotheses that have not been previously observed, as well as the ability to understand measurement mistakes (Chin, 1998). Moreover, the present study used the methods described by Cook and Campbell (1979) to assess the effectiveness of the model, as well as the discriminant validity of the research instruments, as

proposed by Campbell and Fiske (1959). Using the bootstrapping resampling method and the 1000 subsamples taken from this research (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2012), SEM in SmartPLS (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2014) has been used to investigate the collected output. Furthermore, the use of the partial least squares (PLS) method for demonstrating structural equations is deemed appropriate for examining the proposed model in this study, as suggested by Hair et al. (2011) and Henseler et al. (2014).

Descriptive of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the targeted population encompass responses provided by a diverse group of employees within the hotel industry. In Pakistan, the Hotel Management Industry exhibits a predominantly male workforce, with a comparatively lower representation of female staff members. The examination of the participants' demographic characteristics reveals the subsequent findings. In order to have a comprehensive grasp of the potential effects of the variables under consideration, educators from both married and unmarried statuses were included in the study. Among the 300 participants in the sample, 47% were married and 53% were unmarried. Among the 300 staff working at the hotel, it is seen that 22% own a bachelor's degree, 53% hold a master's degree, and 25% have obtained a doctoral degree. The ages of the participants in the planned sample were distributed across several categories. Among a sample of 300 individuals in the hotel industry workforce, it was found that 45% fell within the age range of 21 to 30 years. Additionally, 25% of respondents were between the ages of 31 and 40, while 28% belonged to the age group of 41 to 50. Only a small proportion, specifically 2%, were found to be 41 years or older. Among the 300 individuals employed in the hotel business, it is observed that 28% possess less than 2 years of experience. Furthermore, 35% of the hotel sector workforce has acquired experience spanning from 5 to 10 years. Hence, it can be observed that 16% of the workforce in the hotel industry has a tenure exceeding 10 years.

Table 1.

Demographic Items	Percentile %
Marital Status	
Married	47%
Unmarried	53%
Age	
21 to 30	28
31-40	25
41-50	45
More than 50 yrs	2
Education	
Phd	23
Bachelors	53
Masters	25
Experience	
Less than a year	14.97
1-3 yrs	48.98
4-6 yrs	15.38
7-9 yrs	7.69
10-12 yrs	12.14
More than 12 yrs	0.8

Scale Reliability and Validity

The model comprised of 53 items as the PLS algorithm was run and the factor loadings were calculated, PTS contain 13 items, EB has 6 items and BI has 2 items, Therefore, no

items reduction caused to the variables as all the variables factor loading is greater than 0.7 (Hulland, 1999; Hair, 2013). A partial least square algorithm is performed for the calculation of items of individual reliability as proposed by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). In this the range is > 0.7 furthermore; all the items in this study have the loaded values above 0.7 as displayed in the table of measurement-model outcomes.

Table 2.
Measurement-Model Results

Variables		Constructs	Factor Loading	Cronbach's	Composite-Reliability	AVE
Entrepreneurial (EB)	Behavior	EB-1	0.775	0.858	0.894	0.585
		EB-2	0.775			
		EB-3	0.722			
		EB-4	0.810			
		EB-5	0.738			
		EB-6	0.765			
Entrepreneurial (EI-MED)	intention	EI1.	0.871	0.752	0.852	0.742
		EI2.	0.851			
Perceived threat of terrorism (PTS-IV)	of	PTS1	0.735	0.945	0.952	0.604
		PTS10	0.777			
		PTS11	0.785			
		PTS12	0.758			
		PTS13	0.782			
		PTS2	0.795			
		PTS3	0.693			
		PTS4	0.799			
		PTS5	0.795			
		PTS6	0.756			
		PTS7	0.813			
		PTS8	0.812			
		PTS9	0.797			

According to the measurement model presented in Table 4.2, the values of Cronbach's alpha for all variables (EB, EI, and PTS) exceed 0.7 (Cronbach, 1951). This indicates that all the variables in our research are reliable and exhibit internal consistency. Additionally, it is worth noting that all of the predictors in our study satisfy the criterion for composite reliability, which necessitates a value greater than 0.7. Specifically, the composite reliability estimates for EB, EI, and PTS are 0.89, 0.85, and 0.95, respectively (Nunnally, 1978). Cronbach's alpha, as explained by Hair et al. (1998), evaluates the degree to which a group of indicators for an underlying concept collectively capture the measurement of a variable.

Additionally, the Average Variation Extracted (AVE) indicates the percentage of overall variation that can be ascribed to the latent variable at hand. The assessment of convergent validity, as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), involves the examination of the average variance extracted (AVE). It is recommended that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should above the threshold of 0.5, signifying that a

minimum of 50% of the observed variance may be attributed to the variable being examined. The table presents the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.5 for the constructs of Emotional Bonding (EB), Emotional Intelligence (EI), and Problem-solving and Task Skills (PTS), which are 0.58, 0.74, and 0.60, respectively.

Discriminant Validity

The evaluation of discriminant validity is conducted to ascertain if a given variable exhibits stronger associations with its own measures in comparison to any other variable inside the partial least squares path model (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3.
Correlation Matrix

	Mean	SD	EB	EI-MED	PTS
EB	3.980	0.291	0.765		
EI-MED	3.876	0.390	0.792	0.861	
PTS	4.021	0.329	0.693	0.645	0.777

Descriptive analysis is used to calculate the mean and standard deviation of the data, which has been gathered from a sample size of 250 respondents. The mean is a statistical measure obtained by summing all the values within a dataset, while the standard deviation quantifies the extent to which the data deviates from the mean (Saunders et al., 2009). The chart presented above indicates that the average value of all components falls within the range of 3.12 to 5.21. This indicates the respondents' reactions have predominantly been positive and neutral in nature. On the contrary, the standard deviation of the computed variables is less than 1, indicating minimal variation in the respondents' answers, as evidenced by the range of 0.079 to 0.412.

The discriminant validity is considered to be acceptable when the constructs of the given model have an Average loading value of greater than 0.5 i.e. the measurement variance captured by the construct was 50% (Chin, 1998). Moreover, for confirming discriminant validity the diagonal elements of the table need to be higher than the horizontal and vertical values i.e. corresponding rows and column values of the particular diagonal value need to be lower than the of diagonal value. If the values are lower than the conditions stated then multi-collinearity exists and there might be an overlapping in the variables. The diagonal elements represent the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) score for each construct. Consequently, the Fornell and Lacker criteria are commonly employed as the benchmark for evaluating discriminant validity. This technique involves comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) with the correlation of the variables under consideration. These constructions should provide a more comprehensive explanation of the variance observed in their specific indicator, as opposed to the variation accounted for by other structures under consideration. Table 3 provides confirmation of the discriminant validity, as seen by the observation that the diagonal values in each column are bigger (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity encompasses three key criteria. The primary criterion to consider is the Fornell-Lacker Criterion. Following that, cross loadings should be examined. Lastly, the HTMT measure should be assessed, with particular emphasis on its reliability as indicated by Ringle, Henseler, and Sarstedt (2015).

Table 3.
(HTMT) TABLE

	EB	EI-MED
EI-MED	0.895	
PTS	0.760	0.811

The HTMT tables provide an explanation of the Discriminant validity of the proposed model, revealing that all variable values are less than 0.9. This finding aligns with the guideline established by Henseler et al. (2015), which states that values should be below 0.9.

Model Fitness (Blind Folding and Quality Criteria)

Table 4.
Blind Folding

	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Q ²
EB	0.799	0.798	0.321

The value of Q² can be determined by using the blindfolding procedure as by the standard set by (Stone, 1974; Geiser, 1975). The blindfolding procedure is just connected to latent variables with an intelligent estimation model detail. Chin (1998) advises that an efficient model proves relevant when Q² is greater than zero i.e. (Q² > 0). Hence, as all the Q² factors are significant greater than zero (1-SSE/SSO), which means that the model has good test of predictive relevance. The R² measures a construct's percent variation that is explained by the model (Wixom & Watson, 2001), in this model the value of R² shows that independent variables predict 80% variance in the EB.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

The basis of significance-level for accepting hypotheses ($p < 0.1$), sign and t-value > 1.96 (Wixom & Watson, 2001).

Table 5.
Boot Strapping Table

	Regression-Path	Path Coefficient	T-value	P-Value	Relation type	Remarks
H1	PTS ->EI	-0.388	2.721	0.003	Direct	Accepted
H2	PTS ->EB	-0.310	2.654	0.004	Direct	Accepted
H3	EI->EB	0.797	24.049	0.000	Direct	Accepted
H4	PTS->EI->EB	0.310	2.654	0.004	Mediation	Accepted

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$,

The above table 4.4 shows a complete summary of all the hypotheses with their effect types and remarks.

Initially **H1 & H2** explicit the direct effects that donates the negative relation of Perceived threat of terrorism to entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behavior with sample mean of -0.388, -0.310 (0.003 ,0.004 P-value).

Then, **H3** determines the support of positive relation of Entrepreneurial Intentions on entrepreneurial behavior with sample mean of 0.797 (p-value 0.000),

Furthermore, **H4** interprets the mediation, that is accepted as perceived threat of terrorism has an direct significant effect on entrepreneurial behavior ($p\text{-value} = 0.00$) so this indicates that EI mediate the effect of PTS on EB and every time EI will increase by 1 unit then EB will increase by 0.310 units respectively.

DISSCUSION

The current study aimed of explicating the role of perceived threat of terrorism as barrier of entrepreneurial pathway. This study has used Conservation of Resource theory in context to uncertainty and has proved the validity of hypothesis that revolve around hurdles in the entrepreneurial pathway keeping under consideration entrepreneurial intention. Some uncertain natural circumstances discussed in this study are perceived threat of terrorism, and ambiguity. Threats are considered as major barriers that revoke the risk- taking intention of the youth. O'Shea et al., (2017), also proposed that country economies are hit hard by the terrorism factor which leave diverse impacts on the business operations and all these negative impacts directly influence entrepreneur behavior and declines the intentions of future entrepreneurs. The major focus of this research is to validate the fact introduced by (Ahorsu et al., 2020a), that perceived threat of terrorism is a barrier that can be overcome high-level of entrepreneurial intention. Different tests run to check the validity of the hypothesis created in this research has shown that there is positive relation of Entrepreneurial Intentions on entrepreneurial behavior. Tests results have also identified that outbreak of Pandemic Fear (Covid-19) has a negative relation with entrepreneurial behavior and entrepreneurial intentions. This negative relation leads to create barriers in the entrepreneur pathway. This proves the first three hypothesis to be valid which stated that uncertain circumstances act negatively towards entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behavior and entrepreneurial intention has the capability to mediate the effect of these threats.

LIMITATIONS

Like all other researches, this study has also left few gaps for the future researchers. First of all, research should be conducted with a larger group of people which is lacking here. Another limitation of this research is that it only discusses the impact of terrorism fear on the entrepreneurial intention which has left many facts still unveiled.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The main purpose of this study is to research about the effect of perceived threat of terrorism among general public and its connection with entrepreneurial intention. All these unseen threats are supposed to impact the entrepreneurial intention negatively. These are taken as the major barrier in the pathways to entrepreneurship. Hypothesis created for this research covered the mediating role entrepreneurial intentions respectively and have proved that high intentions can decline the fear of threats to future entrepreneur's life and health. This research has proved that a fearful person is unable to develop entrepreneurial intentions because these fears and threats leave a negative impact on people's entrepreneur behavior and kill their confidence to take risks. Future research should encompass other threats and fears also like economic volatility, fear of war, political anarchy and others. Human equality and confidence irrespective of gender should also be considered as a moderator to entrepreneurial intentions and challenges to entrepreneurial pathway. There are some other strong

variables that can help people to develop entrepreneurial intention and future researchers should explore them.

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