

THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDE AND OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the mediating role of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition on the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention among university students in Ghana. A structured questionnaire was administered to 500 university students in Ghana, and the data collected was analyzed using Amos. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to assess the hypothesized paths. The result indicated that entrepreneurial attitude had a substantial positive impact on both entrepreneurial intention and opportunity recognition among university students in Ghana. The result further indicated that entrepreneurial opportunity recognition positively affected university students' entrepreneurial intention. The study further illuminated that entrepreneurial opportunity recognition mediated the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention. This implies that an entrepreneurial attitude increases the chances of opportunity recognition and self-employment propensity in Ghana. The study suggests that students should cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset and develop a healthy attitude toward entrepreneurship, enhancing the chances of identifying and pursuing business opportunities. The study contributes to the literature by focusing on and highlighting innate attributes that can possibly contribute to self-employment propensity.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial attitude, entrepreneurial intention, students.

JEL CLASSIFICATION: A22, C83, E24, I23, I25, M13

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INTRODUCTION

Every country's economic strategy emphasizes the importance of fostering a culture of entrepreneurship (Faloye and Olatunji, 2018; Adu et al., 2020; Mahmood et al., 2019; Sergi et al., 2019; Qin, 2021). Entrepreneurs are viewed as key contributors to economic growth because of their leadership, management, invention, research and development effectiveness, job creation, competitiveness, productivity, and the emergence of new industries (Asamani and Mensah, 2013; Akolgo et al., 2018; Mohammadali and Abdulkhalig, 2019; Makhwedzha, 2019). Thus entrepreneurship has taken the centre of both professional and academic research (Ruiz-Palomino and Martínez-Cañas, 2021; Qin, 2021; Shkodra, et al., 2021; Vu and Nwachukwu, 2021; Dvorský et al., 2021; Zovko et al.,

2020; Krisnaresanti et al., 2020; Swarupa and Goyal, 2020; Ryu and Kim, 2020; Adu et al., 2020; Usman, 2019; Munir et al., 2019; López-Delgado et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship is the act of actively seeking out new business ventures in which to invest one's time, energy, and resources. Thus, turning ideas into a small business takes talent, and it is typically a dynamic process of vision, development, and invention (Hassan et al., 2020; Kowang et al., 2021; Qin, 2021). However, this process does not often come easily or naturally to people, especially to students; therefore, the desire to engage in it may be insufficient to explore an idea or sustain an enterprise. This makes the willingness to engage in entrepreneurship has become paramount. Even more importantly, a person's motivation to start his or her own business stems from his or her desire to reap the benefits of entrepreneurship (Ambad and Damit, 2016; Ghani et al., 2014; Kozubíková et al., 2017; Zovko et al., 2020). Primarily, an individual's entrepreneurial intention is his or her desire to start a new business, it is a passion that drives them to begin a business activity to achieve a profitable outcome (Swarupa and Goyal, 2020; Ramchander, 2021). Accordingly, the entrepreneurial intention is the self-acknowledged conviction of an individual who aspires to launch a new business opportunity and has a long-term plan for doing so (Padilla-meléndez et al., 2014; Bae et al. 2014; Seun and Kalsom, 2015; Khin and Lim, 2018; Mahmood et al., 2019; Kowang et al., 2021). It is clear that the stronger the purpose for an activity or behaviour, the more likely it is that the predicted behavior or the actual behavior will succeed (Hikkerovaa et al., 2016; Zhang and Cain, 2017). Consequently, the theory of planned behavior emphasize that intention is determined by three factors: attitude towards behavior, perception of behavior control, and a subjective norm; these three factors work independently (Ajzen, 1991; Wach and Wojciechowski, 2016; Zhang and Cain, 2017; Munir et al., 2019). According to the theory, people's actions are determined by their intentions, and their outlook on the behavior and their own personal standards, influences—these intentions (Makhwedzha, 2019; Munir et al., 2019; Wach and Wojciechowski, 2016; Zhang and Cain, 2017). This points out that students' attitude plays a vital role in their opportunity recognition and, subsequently entrepreneurial propensity.

The number of graduates from Ghana's higher education institutions is steadily rising. There has been an imbalance in the number of graduates compared to the number of jobs in the market, which has resulted in a large number of university graduates being unemployed (Amanamah, 2017; Ismail, et al, 2013). As such, Ghana, a developing country, needs graduates who are original, energetic, smart, courageous, efficient, determined, modern, and employable, in other words, entrepreneurial, to deal with such a predicament (Adu, et al, 2020). Seeing the importance of entrepreneurship in the local economy, the government of Ghana has implemented measures to encourage the society, particularly young adults, to take up the task of being an entrepreneur (Asamani and Mensah, 2013). However, regardless of the interventions and platforms created to encourage entrepreneurship, individuals must still play a significant part in the entrepreneurial process. The study, therefore, seeks to examine the mediating role of opportunity recognition in the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention.

The rest of the paper is presented in this manner: theoretical review, which details the theory underpinning the study. This was followed by hypothesis development that detailed the interdependency of the constructs of the study. Next, the aims and methodology spelled out the methodological approach employed to carry out the study. This was followed by sections on results, discussion, and conclusion of the study, respectively.

1 THEORETICAL BASES

Underpinning the research was the theory of planned behavior. The TPB has become a go-to psychological theory to better understand and predict human behavior, including entrepreneurship (Carr & Sequeira, 2007). Entrepreneurial behavior is deliberate, and since intentions are effective

predictors of behavior, this theory is significant to researchers in entrepreneurship (Krueger et al., 2000). This theory gives a unified theoretical framework that can be applied to a wide range of situations, allowing one to better comprehend one's own and others' intentions (Krueger et al., 2000). Such intention theories, including the concept of planned behavior, have already been supported by research (Kruger et al., 2000; Shook and Bratianu, 2010; Jones & Iredale 2010; Walker et al., 2013; Ghani et al., 2014; Wach and Wojciechowski, 2016; Zhang and Cain, 2017; Munir et al., 2019).

Three major aspects influence entrepreneurial intentions: assertiveness toward results, apparent behavioral control, and a perceived subjective norm (Ajzen, 1991). To this end, intentions are influenced by three factors: one's attitude toward behavior, one's perception of control over one's behavior, and the subjective norm (Ajzen 2002). The theory holds that a person's actions are the outcome of his or her intents to do a behavior, and his or her outlook on the behavior as well as his or her personal criteria influences the resultant intent (Wach and Wojciechowski, 2016; Makhwedzha, 2019). Attitude is just as important as one's own personal convictions about how to carry out a particular action. A person's thoughts about a circumstance might lead to either negative or good reactions. In other words, it can be a person's assessment of the many repercussions that may result from doing a specific action in response to a scenario (Makhwedzha, 2019; Zhang and Cain, 2017; Munir et al., 2019). This means that a person's overall attitude can be defined as the total of their individual judgments about the implications and desirability of all their choices in conduct (Ajzen 2002). Perceived behavioural control (PBC) is a term that relates to an individual's impression of how easy or difficult it is to start and operate a business. (Walker et al., 2013; Ghani et al., 2014; Zhang and Cain, 2017). Basically, the theory of plan behavior explains the attitude and intention of an individual on the path of entrepreneurial journey.

2 HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Effect of Entrepreneurial attitude on Entrepreneurial intention

Entrepreneurial attitude is the extent to which an individual realizes that there are huge prospects for them to start a new firm, or how much they are attached to the high status of entrepreneurs (Kowang et al, 2021; Zhang and Cain, 2017). Thus, a person's approach toward entrepreneurship can be described as having an entrepreneurial attitude (Abun, 2018; Kusmintarti, et al., 2017; Ayalew and Zeleke, 2018). Thus, the behavior of someone's interest in becoming self-employed, which has a positive and high link with entrepreneurial aspirations, could also be considered as an entrepreneurial attitude (Kowang et al 2021; López-Delgado et al., 2019). Entrepreneurial intention is an individual's desire or wish to establish a new company. Thus, the development of a conscious state of mind in which a person aspires to establish a new business or to build new core values inside an existing organization (Kalitanyi and Bbenkele, 2018; Fini et al., 2012). In this case, entrepreneurial ambition is a student's desire to enter the world of entrepreneurship after graduation (Kowang et al 2021).

Entrepreneurial attitude highlights a person's decision to work for themselves rather than for an employer (Hassan et al., 2020; Makhwedzha, 2019; Zhang and Cain, 2017). As a result, entrepreneurial attitude is viewed as a prerequisite to reaching entrepreneurial intention (Wach and Wajciechowski, 2016; Munir et al., 2019), and a more positive attitude increases an individual's ability to exhibit or express their potential for future entrepreneurial activity or behaviour (López-Delgado et al., 2019). It is thus the behavior of someone's desire to be self-employed that has a substantial and positive association with entrepreneurial goals or intentions (Kowang et al 2021; Ayalew and Zeleke, 2018). Furthermore, students with a strong entrepreneurial mindset are more likely to have a high level of entrepreneurial intent (Abun, et al., 2018; Akolgo et al., 2018; Amanamah, 2017). Thus, to improve students' entrepreneurial initiative, you must first increase their positive attitudes toward

entrepreneurship (Pulka et al., 2015; Bako et al., 2017; Ayalew and Zeleke, 2018; Dahalan et al., 2015). Thus, students' attitude towards entrepreneurship is strongly influenced by their own beliefs. As a result, students who have a positive outlook on entrepreneurship are far more likely to engage in entrepreneurial endeavors in the future (Walker et al., 2013; Wach and Wojciechowski, 2016; Zhang and Cain, 2017). It is undeniable fact that entrepreneurs must have a positive attitude since, without it, they will not be able to fulfill their entrepreneurial goals, especially when they confront problems and barriers (Karimi et al., 2017; Kusmintarti, et al., 2017; Munir et al., 2019). More so, entrepreneurial desirability has been shown to predict entrepreneurial intention, with a positive link between perceived desirability and entrepreneurial intent (Iakovleva et al., 2011; Weerakoon and Gunatissa, 2014). As a result of this, a number of studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention (Ferreira et al., 2012; Feder & Nițu-Antonie, 2017; Karimi et al., 2017; Munir et al., 2019; Shook & Bratianu, 2010; Kusmintarti, et al., 2017; Ayalew and Zeleke, 2018; Zovko, et al., 2020) and found a positive relationship between the two variables. Moreover, a stronger attitude results in a greater possibility of the individual identifying and exploiting business opportunities (Hassan et al, 2020; Khin and Lim, 2018; Hunter, 2013; Seun and Kalsom, 2015; Ruiz-Palomino and Martínez-Cañas, 2021; Ryu and Kim, 2020). The study suggest that:

H₁ Entrepreneurial attitude has a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.

H₂ Entrepreneurial attitude has a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.

Effect of Entrepreneurial Opportunity Recognition on Entrepreneurial intention

Entrepreneurial intention is a preference for working for oneself or starting a new business over a job in an organization (Ramchander, 2021; Swarupa and Goyal, 2020). Entrepreneurship typically hinges on the capacity to recognize and seize on new opportunities. A good example of this type of opportunity is the chance to provide higher value by meeting a market need, interest, or desire through a creative combination of resources (Seun and Kalsom, 2015; Khin and Lim, 2018; Ruiz-Palomino and Martínez-Cañas, 2021). In the context of entrepreneurship, opportunity recognition is the ability to detect situations in which new products and services might be introduced through the construction of new means, ends, or interactions between means and ends (Alaydi, 2021; Hassan et al, 2020). An opportunity is discovered when a realization is made by the individual about the difference between current and future resource value (Saemundsson and Holmen, 2011; Miranda et al., 2017; Mahmood et al., 2019). To be successful, an individual needs to recognize or create patterns and concepts that can be turned into new ideas (Kessler, and Frank, 2009; Hunter, 2013; Khin and Lim, 2018). Hunter (2013) postulates that, vision, intuition, insight, discovery or creation can result to an opportunity. People's differing views of time and space may explain why the ability or talent to spot an opportunity is not evenly distributed among students (Mahmood et al., 2019). In addition, Grégoire et al. (2010) claim that the ability to recognize opportunities is dependent on one's ability to subjectively perceive and comprehend factual reality. Therefore, it is expedient that entrepreneurial efforts and activities, should focus on recognizing and utilizing opportunities, since entrepreneurship is impossible without them (Short et al., 2010; Mahmood et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the recognition of opportunities is thought to have a substantial impact on entrepreneurial intention or activities (Akolgo et al., 2018; Makhwedzha, 2019). Opportunity recognition is regarded as the first step in a sequential process that includes strengthening entrepreneurial intention, activating the investment of time and resources to develop a venture, and stimulating entrepreneurial activity (Kessler and Frank, 2009; Ruiz-Palomino and Martínez-Cañas, 2021). As a result, the ability to spot new business opportunities has a large and favorable impact on entrepreneurial preparedness towards the creation of a venture (Seun and Kalsom, 2015). To this end some studies have shown that recognition of opportunity and entrepreneurial intention are positively

and significantly related (Akolgo et al., 2013; Ryu and Kim 2020; Hassan, et al. 2020). The study suggests that:

H₃. Entrepreneurial opportunity recognition has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.

Mediating role of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in entrepreneurial attitude, and entrepreneurial intention nexus

Entrepreneurial intention is described as a mental picture of actions that individuals intend to take in order to either start a new business or create new value inside an existing organization (Fini, et al., 2012). There are many elements that can affect an entrepreneur's desire to start a business. Kusmintarti, et al. (2017) argued that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by entrepreneurial traits and the environment. Traits or characteristics and the environment in which a person operates determine an entrepreneur's entrepreneurial intention (Zovko et al., 2020; Kalitanyi, and Bbenkele, 2018; Karimi et al., 2017). The characteristics comprised of person's traits and upbringing or background where as the environment, on the other hand, comprises social, political, economic, and infrastructural development. In order to qualify as an entrepreneur, an individual must exhibit several characteristics that define entrepreneurialism (Zovko et al., 2020; Karimi et al., 2017; Kusmintarti, et al, 2014; Kozubíková et al., 2017). Therefore, attitude and opportunity recognition are therefore two key factors that plays a role in entrepreneurial intention.

Entrepreneurial intent is critical for any decision to establish a business to be made. Intention is a direct predictor of actual action; the more powerful the intention, the more successful behavior prediction or actual behavior is (Hikkerovaa et al., 2016). Students, particularly those who pursue business ideas, when deciding how to implement the business idea, are clearly tied to their level of entrepreneurial desire or intention (Usman, 2019). Students who have a higher tolerance for ambiguity are more likely to have a strong desire to start their own businesses (Nasip et al., 2017; Zhang and Cain, 2017; Vu and Nwachukwu, 2021). Nasip et al. (2017), further suggest that students should be supported and prepared with innovativeness, self-confidence, risk-taking ability, desire for accomplishment, and uncertainty in order to define effective entrepreneurial role models and recognize opportunities for their potential careers. The ability to recognize opportunities influences the association between entrepreneurial attitude and intention (Dahalan et al., 2015; Khin, and Lim, 2018). Students with more favorable attitude towards entrepreneurship, are more likely to engage in an active search for opportunities and hence have a greater intention to become entrepreneurs or start their own businesses. Similarly, the study conducted by Palomino and Caas (2021) examines whether entrepreneurial intention acts as a mediator between opportunity recognition and the start-up phase of a business. The data indicate that entrepreneurial intention plays a role in mediating the association between opportunity recognition and startup phase.

H₄. Entrepreneurial opportunity recognition mediates the effect of Entrepreneurial attitude on Entrepreneurial intention.

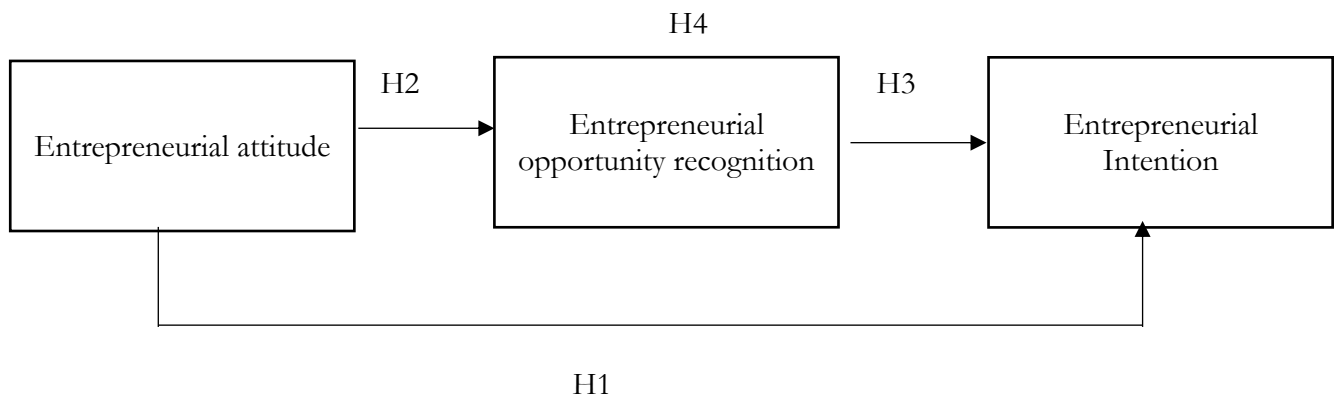
3 AIM AND METHODOLOGICAL BASES

The study aims to investigate the mediating role of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention among university students in Ghana. The survey method was used to collect data from respondents of the study who are university students. Questionnaires were administered on a sample size of five hundred (500) university students. The study used closed-ended questionnaires with a total of 33 questions, which were categorized under three sections: entrepreneurial attitude, entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and Entrepreneurial

intention. The items used to measure the study's constructs were largely drawn from previous research. 18 items from Ayalew and Zeleke (2018) were used to measure the variable entrepreneurial attitude. An evaluation scale of 1 to 5, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, was used to rate this construct. Six items adapted from Mahmood, Mamun, Ahmad, and Ibrahim (2019) were used to measure entrepreneurial opportunity recognition. Additionally, this was scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. Entrepreneurial intention was also adopted from Ayalew and Zeleke (2018) with the utilization of nine items. Additionally, this was scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in Amos was used to analyze the numerous paths hypothesized in the study in order to meet the study's goals. SEM was used because it is a technique for analysing multiple and interrelated relationships between constructs in order to build models. It enables comprehensive and concurrent testing of all relationships pertaining to the complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Hair et al., 2007; Hair et al., 2014; Hulland, 1999). Also taken into account were the numerous fit indices proposed by Hair et al (2007). Figure 1 shows the diagrammatic form of the study's structural model, and hypothesis table was also presented (Table 3).

The conceptual model of the study indication the relationship among the constructs of the study is presented in figure 1.

Figure 1. The conceptual model



(Source: own elaboration)

4 RESULT

4.1 Reliability and Validity

For the purposes of determining the model's fitness, the study used maximum likelihood in using Amos (version 23) to conduct a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). 50 or above is the level at which factor loadings for each construct's variables are required (Igbaria et al., 1995; Hulland, 1999). Items with a poor loading time (less than 0.6) were discarded from the final analysis based on this criterion. Originally, entrepreneurial attitude comprised 18 assessment pieces, opportunity recognition had 6 measurement items, and entrepreneurial intention had 9 measurement elements. 8 of the measurement items for entrepreneurial attitude, seven of the measurement items for entrepreneurial intention, and all 6 of the measurement items for opportunity recognition were kept after the CFA process.

Measurement items were further tested for reliability in the study. The alpha score is intended to be at least 0.7 in order to achieve internal consistency. Checking average variation extracted (AVE) for each construct was also used to determine convergence validity. At least a CR of 0.7 and an AVE score of at

least 0.5 are required to attain convergence validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 1 shows that the study had both internal and convergence validity. As recommended by Hair et al. (2010), the study also analyzed fit indices criteria and concluded the constructs fit the data appropriately ($CMIN = 561.397$; $DF = 206$; $CMIN/DF = 2.725$; $CFI = .934$; $TLI = .926$; $GLI = .901$; $RMR = .039$; $RMSEA = .059$; $PClose = .007$).

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model Fit Indices: $CMIN = 561.397$; $DF = 206$; $CMIN/DF = 2.725$; $CFI = .934$; $TLI = .926$; $GLI = .901$; $RMR = .039$; $RMSEA = .059$; $PClose = .007$		Std. Factor Loading
Entrepreneurial attitude (EA): CA=.874; CR=0.93; AVE=0.766		
EA 1		0.694
EA 2		0.662
EA 3		0.719
EA 4		0.646
EA 5		0.740
EA 6		0.684
EA 7		0.693
EA 8		0.619
Opportunity recognition (OR): CA=.859; CR=0.940; AVE=0.724		
OR 1		0.650
OR 2		0.704
OR 3		0.744
OR 4		0.733
OR 5		0.694
OR 6		0.735
Entrepreneurial intention (EI): CA=.892; CR=0.966; AVE=0.764		
EI 1		0.719
EI 2		0.770
EI 3		0.799
EI 4		0.739
EI 5		0.628
EI 6		0.601
EI 7		0.681
EI 8		0.758

Note: AVE: Average Variation Extracted; CA: Cronbach's Alpha; CR: Composite Reliability

(Source: own elaboration)

Table 2 presents the discriminant validity on the variables studied. For the purposes of testing discriminant validity, the squared roots of the AVES (AVEs) were compared with the inter-correlation scores. When the square root of the AVE is greater than each correlation coefficient with other constructs, discriminant validity is obtained (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Due to the results of the analysis, the study was found to have discriminant validity, since the lowest AVE was .851, which was higher than the highest correlation, which was .693.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Analysis

Variables	EA	EOP	EI
Entre. Attitude	<u>.875</u>		
Entre. OP	.644**	<u>0.851</u>	
Entre. intention	.602**	.693**	<u>0.874</u>

** ~ P-value significant at 1% (0.01)
 \sqrt{AVE} are bold and underlined

(Source: own elaboration)

4.2 Hypothesis testing

The study found that entrepreneurial attitude had a substantial impact on university students' entrepreneurial intentions ($\beta = .257$; C.R. = 3.600). This implies that entrepreneurial attitude increases self-employment propensity. Thus, the initial hypothesis that entrepreneurial attitude has a direct effect on entrepreneurial intention is supported. The result further indicated that entrepreneurial attitude had a substantial positive effect on the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities among university students ($\beta = .724$; C.R. = 11.238). As a result, the research found evidence to support the second hypothesis, according to which an entrepreneurial attitude aids in the detection of entrepreneurial opportunities. The result again indicated that entrepreneurial opportunity recognition had a strong beneficial impact on university students' entrepreneurial intentions ($\beta = 0.755$; C.R. = 8.539). Recognizing business opportunities boosts one's likelihood of working for oneself. High levels of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition were found to have a 65.4 percent impact on the entrepreneurial intents of university students. Third hypothesis that recognizing entrepreneurial opportunities has a direct positive impact on entrepreneurial ambition is thus supported. The study also assessed the mediating effects of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention among university students. The coefficient of the direct effect between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention has decreased dramatically, but it has remained statistically significant. The study concluded that entrepreneurial opportunity recognition acted as a partial mediator in the link between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention. Thus, the hypothesis 4 that entrepreneurial opportunity recognition mediates the association between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention is supported.

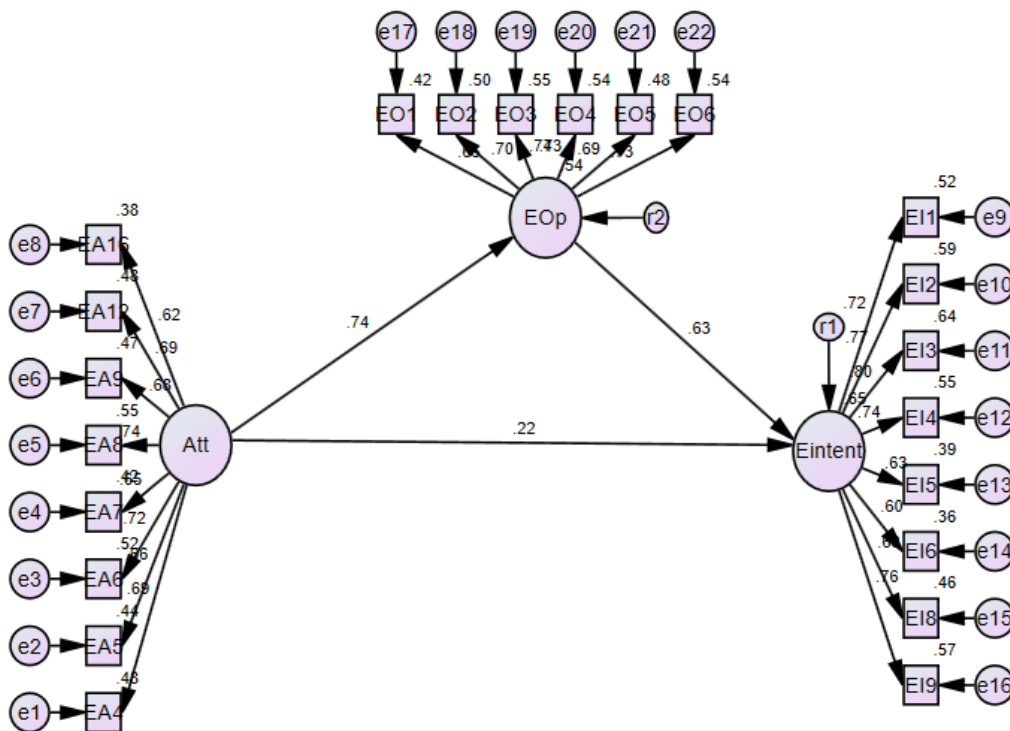
Table 3. Direct and Indirect Paths

Path	UnStd. Estimate	Std. Error	C.R.	Path
EA → EI	.257	.071	3.600**	Supported
EA → EOP	.724	.064	8.539**	Supported
EOP → EI	.755	.088	11.238**	Supported
Indirect Effect				
EA → EOP → EI	.220	0.095	2.316	Supported
Model Fit Indices: CMIN = 561.397; DF = 206; CMIN/DF = 2.725; CFI = .934; TLI = .926; GLI = .901; RMR = .039; RMSEA = .059; PClose = .007				

** ~ P-value significant at 5% (0.05)

(Source: own elaboration)

Figure 2. Structural model



(Source: own elaboration)

5 DISCUSSION

Entrepreneurial opportunity recognition was examined as a mediator between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention in university students. The findings showed that university students' entrepreneurial intention was significantly influenced by their attitude toward entrepreneurship, and attitude toward entrepreneurship also influences entrepreneurial opportunity recognition among university students. This implies that an entrepreneurial attitude increases the chances of opportunity recognition and self-employment propensity. These findings were in line with some existing studies that found similar results (Ambad & Ag Damit, 2016; Feder & Nițu-Antonie, 2017; Karimi et al., 2017; Miranda et al., 2017; Kusmintarti, et al., 2017; Ayalew and Zeleke, 2018; Munir et al., 2019; Zovko et al., 2020; Abun, et al. 2018). The result further indicated that entrepreneurial opportunity recognition significantly positively affected entrepreneurial intention among university students. This implies that entrepreneurial opportunity recognition increases self-employment propensity. This finding also supports existing literature (Akolgo et al., 2013; Ryu and Kim, 2020; Hassan, et al., 2020; Ruiz-Palomino and Martínez-Cañas, 2021) who found that opportunity recognition or identification affects entrepreneurial intention. Finally, entrepreneurial opportunity recognition was found to mediate the connection between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention among university students. As previously reported, a positive attitude about starting a business is linked to an increased likelihood of starting a business (Dahalan et al., 2015; Khin and Lim, 2018; Ryu and Kim, 2020; Hassan, et al., 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

The study investigates the mediating role of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention among university students in Ghana. Like other emerging and developing economies, Ghana relies heavily on entrepreneurship to fuel its economic growth and innovation. Unemployment among Ghanaian graduates is a national problem. Entrepreneurship has been tried numerous times by stakeholders to combat unemployment. As an example, the Ghanaian government has implemented initiatives to boost the country's entrepreneurial culture, such as the youth in the entrepreneurship program. Similarly, universities in Ghana have increased the focus on entrepreneurship education by requiring students offering various programs to take entrepreneurship courses as part of their coursework. Despite the charming external contributions to whip entrepreneurial interest in students, graduates increasingly join the job market, with the vast majority adding up to the unemployment quota every year. Thus, there is a need to examine the innate impact characteristics, and business environment have on the intention to exhibit entrepreneurial behaviour. The results of this study showed that an entrepreneurial mindset substantially impacted entrepreneurial intention and opportunity recognition among university students in Ghana. Students who were aware of the entrepreneurial opportunities available were more likely to be interested in starting their own businesses. This indicates that when university students cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset and develop a healthy attitude towards entrepreneurship, not only will the students be capable of identifying business opportunities and be enthused to pursue such business ideas. Therefore, graduates must shift their mindsets from a salaried job mentality to self-employment a propensity orientation, as their contributions to entrepreneurship would stimulate the country's economic growth and ease unemployment issues. More so, students who intend to become entrepreneurs should intensify their search for entrepreneurial opportunities because it highly influences their self-employment intent.

This study focused primarily on the role entrepreneurial attitude plays in influencing opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial intention. However, entrepreneurial intention was found to be influenced by other notable factors, such as entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. It will be interesting to investigate how these variables can collectively influence entrepreneurial intention especially entrepreneurial education, since education in entrepreneurship has been identified as one of the crucial factors that could influence students' career decisions (Bako et al., 2017). Further research should be conducted to investigate the tendency toward entrepreneurship intentions across other tertiary institutions, such as vocational and technical institutions. The study did not consider gender, so further studies can be conducted on whether the factors will differ significantly between male and female university students. The study also suggests a study should be conducted using other intervening variables to be added to assess a mediation or moderating effect on the relationship between entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and self-employment intention.

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