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**Determinants of Entrepreneurial Intention among  
Generation Y Students within the Johannesburg  
Metropolitan Area of South Africa**

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## **Abstract**

This study aimed at determining the impact of opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial passion on entrepreneurial intention among Generation Y students. Three hypotheses were posited and sample data of 261 were collected from Johannesburg, South Africa's biggest city, to empirically test these hypotheses. The results of this study showed that, in the context of students within the Generation Y Cohort, opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial passion positively and significantly influences entrepreneurial intentions. These findings contribute to broadening the scope of academic discourse in the entrepreneurship and business management domains, particularly from a South African perspective, and the identified relationships which bear important practical implications for Generation Y students, management of universities and government officials. This study contributes to the current body of Africa's entrepreneurship literature – a field that has received little research attention in developing countries like South Africa.

**Keywords:** *Opportunity Recognition, Entrepreneurial Role Models, Entrepreneurial Passion, Entrepreneurial Intentions*

## **Introduction**

Entrepreneurial intention research has grown rapidly over the past three decades since the introduction of the two dominant models of entrepreneurial intention namely, the Shapero and Sokol's model of the entrepreneurial event in 1982 and the theory of planned behaviour in 1985 (Ajzen 2012; Schlaegel & Koenig 2014). This has been driven by the fact that entrepreneurial intention influences the creation of a new venture and its subsequent success (Malebana, 2015a) and is strongly associated with entrepreneurial behaviour (Herrington & Kew 2014) or entry into self-employment (Kolvereid & Isaksen 2006). In addition, Oftedal, Iakovleva and Foss (2018) are of the view that since most countries consider entrepreneurship a labour option, there is the need to study entrepreneurial intention among university students. Furthermore, the analysis of entrepreneurial intention is the key to explain the process of creation of entrepreneurial ventures (Devonish, Alleyne, Charles-Soverall, Marshall & Pounder 2010; Liñán & Fayolle 2015). This is why

various studies have sought to identify the key factors affecting individuals regarding the decision to startup of entrepreneurial ventures (Liñan, Rodriguez & Rueda. 2005; Obschonka & Rodermund 2010; Valencia, Montoya & Montoya, 2016).

Despite this noted interest in entrepreneurial intention research, there are some gaps in the existing empirical literature relating to how opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial passion influence entrepreneurial intention among Generation Y students, hence the need for further scholarly introspection. Most international studies were carried out in nations such as Spain, Indonesia, Poland, Scandinavia, the United States of America and Brazil. For instance, Sánchez (2013) determined the impact of an entrepreneurship education programme on entrepreneurial competencies and intention of secondary students in Spain (Sánchez, 2013). In addition, Ridha and Wahyu (2017) determined entrepreneurship intention in the agricultural sector of young generation in Indonesia, while Alberto, González & Kobylńska (2019) determined the influence of personal variables on entrepreneurial intentions of students from Poland. Moreover, Moraes, Iizuka and Pedro (2018) examined the effects of entrepreneurial characteristics and university environment on entrepreneurial intention of undergraduate students in Brazil. Although entrepreneurial intention has been widely studied by international scholars, but the question of their applicability in the local setting still remains.

Some local scholars have attempted to study entrepreneurial intention in South Africa, several limitations can be found in their studies. For instance, Ndofirepi, Rambe, & Dzansi (2018) conducted a study centered on the relationship among technological creativity, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions of selected South African university of technology students. In addition, Botha and Taljaard (2019) focused on the bidirectional relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial competencies for nascent and existing entrepreneurs. In addition, Botha, Carruthers and Venter, (2019) determined the relationship between recurring entrepreneurial intention attitudes and action as well as entrepreneurial intention of 154 existing entrepreneurs in South Africa. Malebana (2015b) examined the nexus between perceived barriers, entrepreneurial intention and the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among 329 final-year commerce students in Limpopo.

No other variables were tested in these studies; thus, causing limited understanding of the influence of other factors towards entrepreneurial intention. By basing on the aforementioned studies, there is scant evidence of studies focusing on opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial passion influence entrepreneurial intention among Generation Y students in South Africa. Hence, applying international studies in a South African context would definitely raise a question of their appropriateness and applicability. As findings on determinants predicting entrepreneurial intention vary across countries and cultures (Boulton & Turner, 2005; Moriano, Gorgievski, Laguna, Stephan, & Zarafshani, 2012); some studies are needed at the local setting to increase the relevance and accuracy of the results. Very few (if any) researchers have used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to test the causal relationships of opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial role models, entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, this is a methodological gap, and part of the aim of this study is to fill up such a gap. In terms of the conceptual model proposed in this study, it can be noted that it is one of a kind. This research thus adds to the literature by taking results from a geographically distinct context by testing the suggested model in a developing country context.

## **Contextualisation of the Study**

### ***The rationale and significance of choosing Generation Y students***

The Generation Y is a generation that is argued to be born with all the gadgets and technologies in the fourth industrial revolution, thereby exposing them to a wider range of entrepreneurial avenues and pathways to innovation (Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010). According to Nabi, Holden and Walmsley (2010) a focus on student progression from higher education to graduate entrepreneur could be appropriately placed to ensure students develop a more knowledgeable entrepreneurial intention. In addition, Yusof, Sandhu and Jain (2007) also mentioned that in order for the new entrepreneurial ventures to be a success, this young generation should be researched and analyzed. The Generation Y is also arguably the biggest number of all the generations which has almost thrice the size of their immediate forerunners, in retrospect this also

translates to a bigger number of potential entrepreneurs (Huntley, 2006). Hence it becomes critical to understand the perspectives of this particular generation with regards to the impact of opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial role models on their entrepreneurial intention as the biggest number of all generations.

### **Problem Investigated**

The problem in this research is the twin challenges of a high unemployment and very low levels of entrepreneurial intention in South Africa (Mvula, 2018). This is bad news for an average university graduate struggling to get a job (Fatoki, 2010). Thus, an option for the youth would be to pursue entrepreneurship to create jobs and contribute to economic growth (Nieuwenhuizen & Swanepoel, 2015). Mothibi and Malebana (2019) point out that encouraging the youth to view entrepreneurship as an attractive career option and stimulating their intentions to start businesses does help. This is crucial given South Africa's low entrepreneurial intentions rate of 11.7% and the total early-stage entrepreneurial activity rate of 11% (Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, 2018; Mothibi & Malebana, 2019), coupled by high unemployment rates which are currently 53.7% for those aged between 15-24 years and 33.6% for those aged 25-34 years (Statistics South Africa, 2018). With this being said, researchers such as Lüthje and Franke (2003) as well as Malebana (2014) have concluded that entrepreneurial activity could play a key role in developing local entrepreneurship, as it has the potential to stimulate entrepreneurial intention and therefore the resulting entrepreneurial experiences.

### ***Discussion of the research constructs***

This section of the literature review discusses the different research variables undertaken as part of this study.

#### *Opportunity Recognition*

Opportunity recognition is the ability to filter and refine information effectively in order to be able to respond to favourable circumstances that could result in a profitable outcome (Wihler, Blickle, Ellen,

Hochwarter & Ferris, 2017). Opportunity recognition is described as being aware of potential business openings, effectively pursuing and assembling data about them, communicating on them, addressing client needs, and assessing the practicality of such potential entrepreneurial activity (Kuckertz, Kollmann, Krell & Stöckmann, 2017). In addition, opportunity recognition is a principal component of the entrepreneurship process as it establishes the developmental phase of the venture creation process (Singh & Gibbs 2013). It is obvious that opportunity recognition is the beginning stage from which all entrepreneurship develops (White & D'Souza 2014).

### *Entrepreneurial Role Models*

Many entrepreneurs claim that their business start-ups and business activities have been influenced by other people inter alia entrepreneurial role models (Arenius & De Clercq, 2005; Koellinger et al., 2007). Furthermore, the bearing of role models becomes apparent in the common business press that is amass with references to the alleged influence, names and speeches of entrepreneurial role models. It is against this backdrop of the influence of a role model that, Koellinger et al. (2007) acknowledges that the entrepreneurial role model can be in general considered as an individual whose behaviour is simulated by others.

### *Entrepreneurial Passion*

Cardon, Wincent, Singh and Drnovsek (2009) assert that entrepreneurial passion involves “consciously accessible, positive feelings” that result from “engagement in activities that have identity, meaning and salience to the entrepreneur.” Passion has been shown to be particularly important in entrepreneurship (Shane, Locke, & Collins, 2012), and entrepreneurs who are passionate in pursuit of their goals have a greater chance of success (Timmons & Spinelli, 2009). Thus, it is critical that this study comprehends the drivers of entrepreneurial passion and their impact thereof on entrepreneurial intention of the Generation Y cohort in South Africa.

### *Entrepreneurial Intention*

Entrepreneurial intention can be alluded as the extent to which an individual is prone to taking up entrepreneurial activities (Okeke, Okonkwo & Oboreh, 2016). Entrepreneurial intention is an individual's expressed behaviour to become a business person (Ranwala & Dissanayake, 2016). In addition, Molvi, Rauf and Gulzar (2018) describe entrepreneurial intention as the tendency and expectation of mind molding the decision of profession as entrepreneur. Nieuwenhuizen and Swanepoel (2015) are of the view that, using university students to test entrepreneurial intention is appropriate as the findings can contribute to education policies and more specifically to entrepreneurship education policies and hold implications for public decision-makers who develop support programmes for entrepreneurship.

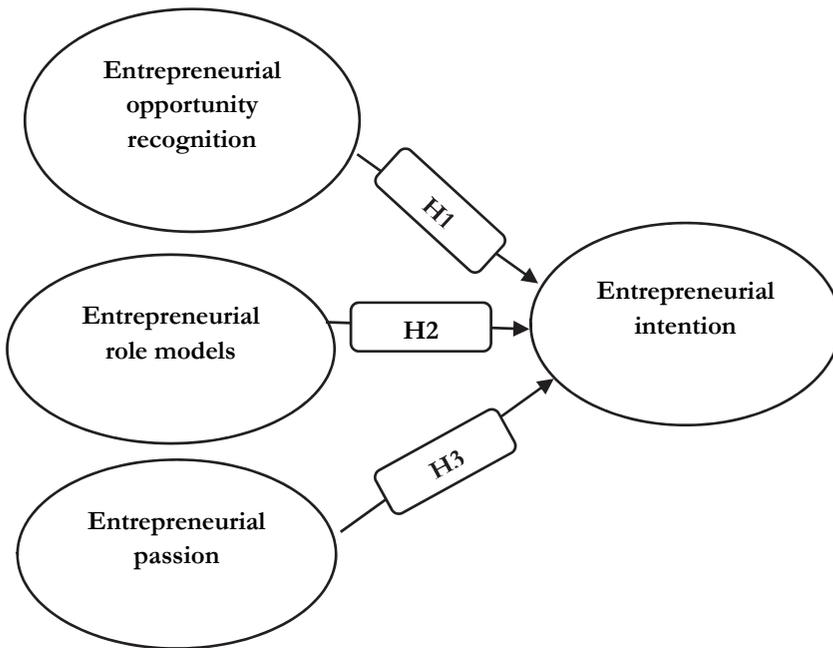
### *Conceptual Model of Research and Study Hypotheses*

From the literature review a model was elaborated to meet the research purpose (Figure 1), which aims to understand the effects of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial passion on entrepreneurial intention of Generation Y students. The conceptual model of this study proposes that, entrepreneurial opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial passion are the predictor variables on entrepreneurial intention, which is the outcome variable. Based on a synthesis of the converging literature related to the research variables, a conceptual model was proposed to guide the empirical study as shown in Figure 1. Visual representation facilitates an understanding of the conceptual model proposed.

Given the discussion above, the following hypotheses can be stated:

- H1: A positive relationship exists between entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial intention
- H2: A positive relationship exists between entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial intention.
- H3: A positive relationship exists between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention.

Figure 2: Conceptual model



### *Methodological Aspects*

This study submits to the positivist paradigm, since it intends to test several a priori hypotheses to determine relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The researchers selected a quantitative research approach, since it increases accuracy through statistical analysis. The design justified requesting the required data related to opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial role models, entrepreneurial passion, and entrepreneurial intention.

### *Sample and Data Collection*

The target populations of this study were tertiary students within the Generation Y cohort and who were exposed to entrepreneurial education who can be considered as potential entrepreneurs. Students from various faculties at University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg constituted

the sampling frame. The students had completed a preliminary subject in entrepreneurship and therefore were considered to have a range of career options. These were individuals on the brink of making critical career choices on whether to pursue formal employment or entrepreneurship. The choice of having a student sample was due to the fact that the research was conducted in a resource constrained reality that might perhaps provide different results from previous studies in developed countries. In addition, the researchers chose university students as the target population because the goal of the study was not to establish the actual entrepreneurial behaviour of respondents but rather entrepreneurial intentions. Since the study was based on self-reports of students, the researchers cannot guarantee the durability of the entrepreneurial intentions of these respondents. With regards to the sampling frame, a list of registered students was used as a sampling frame within the university database. Thus, this study used a simple random sampling technique because each element of the population had an equal and known chance of being selected as part of the sample (Weideman 2014), for example, where every name on the list of students registered in the university database had an equal chance of being selected. The questionnaires made it clear that the respondents' anonymity would be assured and that the research was for educational purposes only. The sample size Raosoft calculator was used to calculate the sample size (Raosoft Inc. 2004). The calculation regarded the complete student population enrolment of approximately 33 346, a 5 percent margin of error, 90 percent interval of confidence, and the suggested 50 percent allocation, and returned a minimum sample size of 377 participants. Of the 377 questionnaires distributed, 261 questionnaires returned were usable, resulting in a response rate of 69.2 percent in terms of usability of the measures.

### ***Research Instrumentation and Questionnaire Design***

The measurement variables of opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial role models, entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial passion were developed based on established existing variables from past studies. Two trained fieldworkers administered a self-administered questionnaire. Section A requested the respondents to provide their demographic profile. Section B assessed entrepreneurial opportunity recognition which

was measured using scales adapted from Abuzguri and Hashim (2017). Section C measured entrepreneurial role models using a 5-item scale adapted from Fellnholer (2017). In Section D, entrepreneurial passion was measured by a 13-item scale adapted from the studies of Fellnholer (2017). Moreover, in section E, the variable of entrepreneurial intention was measured with 5 items adapted from Lim, Lee and Ramasamy (2015). All the measurement items for Sections B, C and D were anchored on a five-point, Likert-type format with responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree to express the degree of agreement.

### ***Respondent profile***

Table 1 displays the depiction of the participants. The respondents were requested to report their demographic data, including age, gender and year of study. Most of the respondents were between the ages of 18-24 years presented by 73.9%. This was followed by those who were between the ages 25-29 years presenting by 26.1% of the total sample. Table 1 also shows the gender of respondents. Majority of the respondents were male representing 48.3% of the total number of the study. Followed by female respondents at representing 44.1% and the minority of the respondents who preferred not to state their gender represented 7.7% of the total number of the study. Table 1 as well illustrates the year of study of respondents. Most of the respondents were 1st-year students representing 33.7% of the total number of the study. Followed by 2-year students, representing 29.9%, then followed by 3-year students, representing 22.2% and lastly, followed by postgraduate students representing 14.2%, of number the total number of the study.

**TABLE 1: Sample demographic characteristics**

Characteristics	Frequency	%
<b>Age</b>		
18-24 years	193	73.9
25-29 years	68	26.1
Total	261	100
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	126	48.3
Female	115	44.1

Prefer not to say	20	7.7
Total	261	100.0
<b>Year of study</b>		
1st year	88	33.7
2nd year	78	29.9
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	58	22.2
Postgraduate student	37	14.2
Total	261	100.0

## Research Results

The results section focuses on the results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), hypothesis tests performed through structural equation modeling (SEM) and discussions. A CFA is a unique type of factor analysis used to assess whether a construct's measurements are compatible with that construct's nature (Mafini, & Loury-Okoumba, 2018). The SEM method is used to evaluate interactions between variables that are latent (unobservable) such as dependent and independent constructs (Mafini, & Loury-Okoumba, 2018).

### *Psychometric properties of measurement scales*

The assessment of the measurement scales' psychometric characteristics were performed through a CFA to determine the construct's reliability, validity, and model fit. Table 2 presents the outcomes of the CFA assessment.

**Table 2: Psychometric properties of measurement scales**

Research Construct		Cronbach's Test		Factor Loading	CR	AVE
		Item-Total	$\alpha$ Value			
Entrepreneurial opportunity recognition	EOR1	0.667	0.807	0.850	0.86	0.55
	EOR2	0.597		0.828		
	EOR3	0.565		0.585		
	EOR4	0.657		0.688		
	EOR5	0.924		0.731		
Entrepreneurial role models	ERM1	0.601	0.712	0.572	0.80	0.45
	ERM2	0.548		0.676		

	ERM3	0.722		0.770		
	ERM4	0.773		0.614		
	ERM5	0.679		0.696		
Entrepreneurial passion	EP1	0.708	0.898	0.727	0.91	0.47
	EP2	0.675		0.739		
	EP3	0.695		0.588		
	EP4	0.681		0.698		
	EP5	0.719		0.616		
	EP6	0.745		0.651		
	EP7	0.726		0.634		
	EP8	0.742		0.720		
	EP9	0.768		0.776		
	EP10	0.775		0.719		
	EP11	0.697		0.748		
	EP12	0.712		0.603		
	EP13	0.692		0.763		
Entrepreneurial intention	EI1	0.745	0.904	0.711	0.90	0.63
	EI2	0.759		0.886		
	EI3	0.729		0.781		
	EI4	0.748		0.793		
	EI5	0.736		0.801		

Note: EOR= entrepreneurial opportunity recognition; ERM= entrepreneurial role models; EP=entrepreneurial passion; EI= entrepreneurial intention. C.R= Composite Reliability A.V. E= Average Variance Extracted

### ***Reliability and Validity***

According to Nunnally (1978) the reliability of a measure is supported if Cronbach's alpha is 0.7 or higher. The results provided in table 2 ranges from the lowest Cronbach alpha which is 0.712 to the highest which is 0.904. Cronbach's alpha scores indicated that each construct exhibited strong internal reliability, Lee (2009). Therefore, Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs exceeded the recommended 0.70 thus meeting the required threshold and demonstrating that the constructs used to measure variables are very reliable for all the variables.

Table 2 above shows the loading of each item on their construct. The least value for each respective item loadings for the research constructs is 0,572. Therefore, all the individual item loadings exceeded the recommended value of 0,5 (Anderson & Gerbing 1988). This indicates that all the measurement instruments are acceptable and reliable since all the individual items converged well and with more than 50% of each item's variance shared with its respective construct (Fraering & Minor 2006).

As shown from the results shown in Table 2, the least composite reliability (CR) value of 0,80 is well above the recommended 0.6 (Hulland, 1999), while the lowest obtained average variance extracted (AVE) value of 0,45 is also above the recommended 0.4 (Anderson & Gerbing 1988). This indicates that convergent validity was achieved, and this further confirms an excellent internal consistency and reliability of the measurement instruments used. "As such, all pairs of constructs revealed an adequate level of discriminant validity (see Table 2). By and large, these results provided evidence for acceptable levels of research scale reliability" (Chinomona & Chinomona, 2013:20; Chinomona & Mofokeng, 2016).

### ***Discriminant Validity***

The inter-construct correlation matrix is used to assess the validity of measurement instruments, specifically discriminant validity. Correlations among constructs were evaluated to see if they were lower than 1. That is, the higher the correlation between variables, the lower the validity of those variables. The inter-construct values are required to be below 0.6 and in some cases below 0.85 to indicate discriminant validity. According to Table 3, the highest correlation value was 0.669 and the lowest correlation value was 0.437. These correlation values are below 0.85 and, therefore, it can be concluded that there is discriminant validity between all the constructs (Morar *et al.* 2015).

**TABLE 3: Correlation Matrix**

	<b>OR</b>	<b>ERM</b>	<b>EP</b>	<b>EI</b>
<b>EOR</b>	1	-	-	-
<b>ERM</b>	0.587**	1	-	-
<b>EP</b>	0.517**	0.669**	1	-
<b>EI</b>	0.437**	0.576**	0.668**	1

Note: Note: OR= opportunity recognition; ERM= entrepreneurial role models; EP=entrepreneurial passion; EI= entrepreneurial intention

### ***Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)***

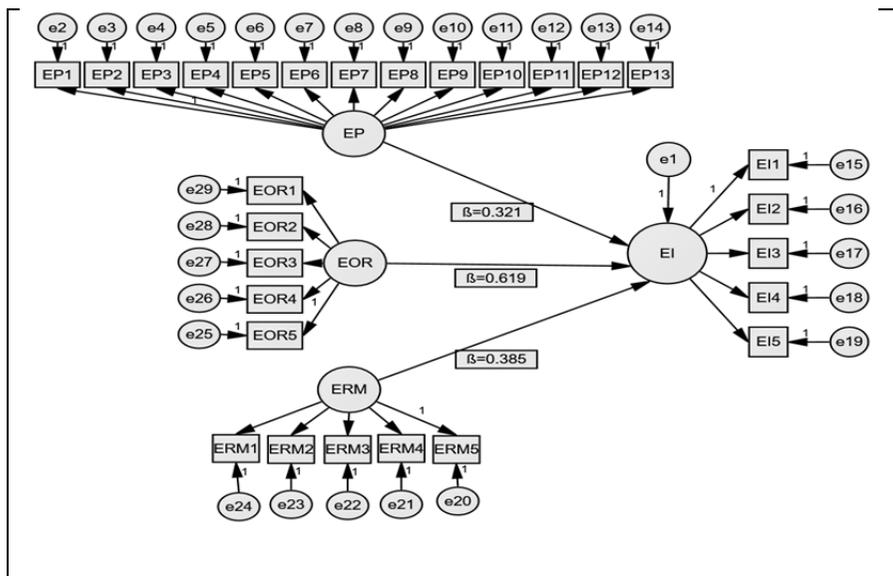
#### *Measurement Model Evaluation*

A confirmatory model development strategy was followed to confirm the dimensional structure of the constructs used in this research as well as the level of internal consistency among the respective indicators. Precisely, a measurement model was specified using maximum likelihood extrapolation (MLE) technique. Initial model estimation was extrapolated at CMIN/DF=2.464 (<3.0);  $p < 0.01$ . It is imperative to note that the significant chi-square value is disregarded by researchers due to sensitivity of the index to large sample sizes and many indicators (Malhotra, 2010). To overcome this limitation, Byrne (2010:77) proffers that a more “pragmatic approach is to report on multiple indices that are not based on the central distribution”. Therefore, the following indices demonstrated adequate model fit as follows: CMIN/DF 1.711, CFI 0.919, GFI 0.798, NFI 0.827, TLI 0.912 and RMSEA 0.052. Figure 2 below depicts the CFA model.

#### *Structural Model Assessment and Hypothesis Testing*

Results of the structural model analysis indicated that all the structural model fit statistics were within the tolerable ranges:  $\chi^2/df = 1.711$ ; CFI=0.919, IFI = 0.920; TLI = 0.912; RMSEA = 0.052. A good fit is normally deemed to exist when NFI, GFI and CFI were all greater than 0.9, Chang and Chen (2009). Moreover, figure 3 depicts a structure model. A structural model examination aims to evaluate strength and direction of relationships among constructs in a model (Lee 2009).

Figure 3: The final structural model of the study



Note: EOR=entrepreneurial opportunity recognition; ERM= entrepreneurial role models; EP=entrepreneurial passion; EI= entrepreneurial intention.

Table 4: The Summary of the Hypotheses Testing

Relationships	Hypothesis	Path Coefficient $\beta$	P Value	Remarks
EI ← EOR	H <sub>1</sub>	0.619	***	Supported
EI ← ERM	H <sub>2</sub>	0.385	***	Supported
EI ← EP	H <sub>3</sub>	0.321	***	Supported

Note: Note: EOR= entrepreneurial opportunity recognition; ERM= entrepreneurial role models; EP=entrepreneurial passion; EI= entrepreneurial intention

*Outcome of hypotheses testing*

In this study, testing of the hypotheses was determined by path coefficient values, as well as the *p*-values for the structural model. In the model, relationships of constructs proposed in this study generate the

coefficients of paths. Based on these coefficients, hypotheses are examined.

*Outcome of testing hypothesis 1: A positive relationship exists between entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial intention*

Based on the results of the final model testing, the relationship between entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial intention shows a  $\beta = 0.619$  at p-value  $< 0.01$ . This implies that entrepreneurial opportunity is positively related to entrepreneurial intention in a significant way. Hence, hypothesis 1 is supported

*Outcome of testing hypothesis 2: A positive relationship exists between entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial intention*

The final structural model presents the relationship between entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial intention results in a coefficient  $\beta = 0.385$  at p-value  $< 0.01$ . This finding suggests that entrepreneurial role models have a direct strong positive effect on entrepreneurial intention. So the more Generation Y students feel inspired from their entrepreneurial role models the more they intend to engage in entrepreneurship. Thus hypothesis 2 is supported.

*Outcome of testing hypothesis 3: A positive relationship exists between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention*

Based on the results of the final model testing, the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention shows a  $\beta = 0.321$  at p-value  $< 0.01$ . This finding suggests that entrepreneurial passion has a direct strong positive effect on entrepreneurial intention. So, the more Generation Y students have passion in entrepreneurship, the more they intend to engage in entrepreneurship

### ***Discussion of findings***

Three of the hypotheses (H1, H2, H3) were supported. The statistical analysis exposed that a positive and a significant relationship exists between entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial

intention. This finding has ample support from previous empirical research studies, such as that conducted by Yan, Gu, Liang, Zhao, & Lu (2018) who examined the influence of personality traits on the sustainable entrepreneurial intention of college students and specific effects of personality traits on the sustainable entrepreneurial intention of college students. Their study revealed that opportunity recognition has a significantly positive effect on sustainable entrepreneurial intention.

The statistical analysis exposed that a positive and a significant relationship exists between entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial intention. These findings corroborate the results obtained in the works of Du Toit and Muofhe (2011) who discovered that there is a positive relationship between role models and entrepreneurial intentions. The finding obtained in this study is also in line with the findings of previous empirical research that role models influence potential entrepreneurs' desire to own businesses (Brennan et al., 2003; Fayolle et al., 2006; Van Auken, Fry & Stephens, 2006).

The statistical analysis exposed that a positive and a significant relationship exists between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention. These findings reinforce the results obtained in the study of Biraglia and Kadile (2017). Their results demonstrate entrepreneurial passion having a strong positive relationship with entrepreneurial intentions.

### ***Implications of the study***

The present study has implications to students as well as theoretical and practical implications for researchers and policy makers. Research findings show that entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention have a strong influence on each other, as indicated by a path coefficient value of 0.321. This finding therefore enhances an understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention for academics, as this is a useful contribution to existing literature. Furthermore, relevant ministries in charge of enabling, youth empowerment and socio-economic development inter alia can focus on supporting initiatives that have indications of entrepreneurial intentions. Similarly, these agencies can even proceed to engage in mentor/mentee adoption in actualizing the relationship and influence that exists between entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial intentions.

### ***Limitations and future research directions***

The discoveries from this examination cannot be generalisable to students at other South African institutions of higher learning given the comparatively small student sample utilized and the investigation's core interest on a solitary university. Hence, future examinations ought to coordinate students from other institutions to expand the representativeness of the sample. Furthermore, focusing on university students just confines the generalisability of the discoveries as they do not speak to the entire populace of potential entrepreneurs and subsequently, different students at different secondary schools and other training academies are ought to be incorporated into future investigations. In conclusion, the examination's quantitative character may have prompted the disregard of more illuminating and more extravagant information, which a qualitative methodology could have created had it been converged in the investigation.

### **Conclusions**

This study contributes to entrepreneurial intention literature by investigating complex relationships between entrepreneurial opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial role models, entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intentions among students within the Gen Y Cohort in South Africa. To test the three hypotheses, data were collected from the Generation Y Student cohort in South Africa. Drawing from the empirical results of this study, all the postulated research hypotheses were supported in a significant way. The findings of this research afford a major contribution to general practitioners in developing pertinent predictors to entice entrepreneurial intentions.

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