

Relationship between the Components of Social Intelligence and Entrepreneurial Intention among Bangladeshi University Students

Mohammad Tamzid Hossain*

Sadia Sultana**

Mst. Humaira Hena***

Musa Ahmed****

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the relationship between different components of social intelligence, including situational awareness, situational response, cognitive empathy, and social skills and their influence on the entrepreneurial intentions of university students in Bangladesh. Exploring how the components of social intelligence affect students' entrepreneurial intentions can provide important insights for various stakeholders, especially since entrepreneurship is often considered a vital means to tackle the pressing challenges of unemployment and economic growth in developing nations like Bangladesh.

Research Methods: This study employed a quantitative research design and implemented a structured questionnaire to gather data from 253 university students in Bangladesh. The data were analyzed with SPSS 29 to assess the impact of each component of social intelligence on the entrepreneurial intentions of university students in Bangladesh.



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* Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, University of Chittagong. E-mail: tamzid@cu.ac.bd

**Graduate Student, Department of Management, University of Chittagong. E-mail: sadiasultana1074@gmail.com

***Undergraduate Student, Department of Management, University of Chittagong. E-mail: humairahena112@gmail.com

****Undergraduate Student, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka. E-mail: ma.akib001@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: Mohammad Tamzid Hossain, Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, University of Chittagong, Chattogram, Bangladesh-4331. E-mail: tamzid@cu.ac.bd, Mobile: +88 017 2615 4144

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Findings: *The research revealed that all components of social intelligence significantly and positively influence entrepreneurial inclinations among university students in Bangladesh. Situational awareness enhances students' capacity to identify opportunities and adjust to evolving conditions, whereas situational responsiveness denotes their proficiency in managing obstacles and setbacks. Cognitive empathy facilitates a deeper understanding and connection with others, whereas social skills are crucial for networking and relationship development. Moreover, the entrepreneurial endeavors of university students are highly motivated by all of the components of social intelligence.*

Implications: *The results of this study have significant implications for policymakers and educational institutions in Bangladesh. Recognizing the importance of social intelligence, introducing courses and training modules into university curricula may strengthen students' entrepreneurial skills and equip them for future ventures in entrepreneurship. This study provides important insights and implications, although it focuses exclusively on social intelligence. Further research could incorporate additional influential variables, such as entrepreneurial efficacy, cultural values, emotional and cultural intelligence, and so forth.*

Keywords: Situational Awareness, Situational Response, Cognitive Empathy, Social Skills, and Entrepreneurial Intention.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, entrepreneurship is discussed as a strong driving force of economic growth and the key solution to the problem of youth unemployment, in particular, in the context of developing states such as Bangladesh (Ferdousi et al., 2022). At a time when the world is experiencing radical changes in its workforce due to the innovation of technology and unrest in the job market, instilling the correct entrepreneurial culture in the young people has become a national concern. Although psychological antecedents of entrepreneurial intention, in particular, self-efficacy (Sanchez, 2013), locus of control, and personality traits (Vega-Gomez et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2010), have been extensively researched, but little focus has been paid to the impact of social intelligence. Studies conducted in Bangladesh have shown that social intelligence, which consists of the capacity to read interpersonal cues, act properly, and empathize with others in addition to nurturing good interpersonal relations (Hossain et al., 2023; Goleman, 2006), is especially pertinent when applied to collectivist cultures such as the one in which entrepreneurship in Bangladesh is centered on social and relationship structures. However, the literature available is either pegged on emotional intelligence or social skills as a marginal construct, and thus they do not provide a wide level of operating such constructs together to have an overall concept of their influence on entrepreneurial intention (Nwibe & Ogbuanya, 2024; Vega-Gomez et al., 2020; Miao et al., 2018; Kanonuhwa et al., 2018; Linan, 2008).

Most empirical studies and current interest in entrepreneurship education have been observed in the Western world. Moreover, most of the past studies are limited methodologically, e.g., using small or non-representative samples, lacking theory-driven frameworks, or paying no attention at all to the existence of interpersonal capabilities as a force behind entrepreneurial intention. The existence of these gaps means that there is a need to conduct more context-specific and theoretically grounded studies in this area. In that regard, this research study will be able to make a contribution to the literature because it will examine the influence of varying elements of the concept of social intelligence on the entrepreneurial intention of university students in Bangladesh.

As it is generally understood, entrepreneurship is an engine of economic growth and has been promoted as one of the means to overcome chronic problems of

youth unemployment, especially in developing economies like that of Bangladesh (Ferdousi et al., 2022). The high rate of technological change and constant changes in labor markets have created the need to promote an entrepreneurial culture among the youths, and this has become a national agenda. Although earlier studies have focused on cognitive aspects, including self-efficacy (Rosique-Blasco et al., 2018; S 2013), locus of control, and personality (Zhao et al., 2010; Vega-G 2020), the importance of social intelligence as the skill of coping with difficult people and situations has not been studied previously in the research on entrepreneurial intention.

More recently, the government and other institutions in Bangladesh have made attempts to foster entrepreneurship among students, with the start-up Bangladesh Innovation Fund, university-based incubators, and student business plan competitions, among others. These programs offer financial aid, mentorship, and networking solutions to student-led ventures, and therefore social-emotional competencies, in addition to technical and managerial skills, matter. Nevertheless, there are limited empirical studies that incorporate social intelligence within existing theoretical models, especially when the same is applied in South Asian contexts. Previous research has tended to concentrate on emotional intelligence or individual social skills with a consequent lack of clarity as to how the various elements of social intelligence come together to form entrepreneurial intention.

The presented research is important, as it is based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991), which is the fact that intention is predetermined by the collections of the following triad: we could count attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Theoretically it extends the TPB by venturing into the new predictor of the entrepreneurial intention, which is social intelligence. Methodologically, it uses a solid work of quantitative design on a population that was not the focus of much empirical work, the Bangladeshi university students. In practice, the results of the study can be used in the design of the curriculum, skill-building training, and policies to promote entrepreneurship development with the help of socio-emotional learning. Identifying about which areas of social intelligence are the most vital, educators and policymakers will be able to effectively develop interventions

that can not only help students expect to see opportunities but also allow them to actively interact with others during their entrepreneurship endeavors. Altogether, this study is intended to help investigate how situational awareness, situational response, cognitive empathy, and social skills as the main elements of social intelligence influence the entrepreneurial intention of university students in Bangladesh, thereby addressing a gap in both theoretical and practical knowledge within the current literature.

1.1 General Objective

The overall aim of the study will be to analyze the connection between the main elements of social intelligence - situational awareness, situational response, cognitive empathy, and social skills, and the entrepreneurial intentions of students of the University of Bangladesh in light of the TPB.

1.2 Specific Objectives

To realize the overall goal, the study aims to:

1. Examine the effect of situational awareness on the entrepreneurial intention of Bangladeshi university students.
2. Examine the influence of situational response on the enterprising intention of an entrepreneurial student of Bangladeshi universities.
3. Identify the correlation between cognitive empathy and entrepreneurial intention of Bangladeshi university students.
4. Study how social skills influence entrepreneurial intention in Bangladeshi university students.
5. Offer theoretical and practical guidelines to implement the learning of social intelligence into the entrepreneurship training and instructions in Bangladesh.

2. Problem Statement

Entrepreneurship is a commonly advertised ideal to young people as a solution to mass unemployment in the country and to diversify the economy in Bangladesh. However, the level of graduate engagement in entrepreneurial activity is still low despite favorable policies and a variety of programs (Ferdousi et al., 2022). Although previous research has focused on cognitive and personality factors like self-efficacy, locus of control, and dimensions of personality, little attention has

been paid to social intelligence and its role as a multidimensional ability to negotiate the contexts of complex relationships with other people and environments. In a cultural sense, the collectivist culture of Bangladesh attaches a lot of importance to social relationships, trust, and networking, which is critical to entrepreneurial success, with such interpersonal skills as empathy, flexibility, and communication. Institutionally, university entrepreneurship education is more focused on technical and managerial skills and pays little attention to socio-emotional skills that play an important role in opportunity recognition and network development. In that context, there is a rapidly changing and volatile business environment that requires situational awareness and adaptability as well as relationship management. These gaps will prompt these researchers to conduct empirical studies on the effects of certain variables of social intelligence (situational awareness, situational response, cognitive empathy, and social skills) on entrepreneurial intention among university students in Bangladesh. The present study attempts to fill this gap, since it has both theoretical contributions in the entrepreneurship literature as well as practical suggestions for education and policymaking in emerging economies.

2.1 Research Questions

Based on the background and the problem statement, the research questions in the study are:

1. How does situational awareness affect the entrepreneurial intention of university students in Bangladesh?
2. What is the impact of situational response on entrepreneurial intention of university students in Bangladesh?
3. So how are cognitive empathy and entrepreneurial intention related among the university students in Bangladesh?
4. What is the contribution of social skills to the entrepreneurial intention of the university students in Bangladesh?

3. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The present study is based on the TPB theoretical framework elaborated by Ajzen (1991), a significantly tested psychological construct that has been applied to forecast intention-centered behaviors, such as entrepreneurship. TPB maintains

that three cognitive antecedents comprising attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control define the behavioral intention of an individual. This theory presupposes that when individuals possess positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship, allow that important people in their lives promote this activity, and believe they can regulate entrepreneurial behaviors, their chances to develop strong entrepreneurial intentions are increased (Kautonen et al., 2015). In the current research, the role of social intelligence is placed as a backup element that supports these three antecedents. Examples include situational awareness and situational response, being able to increase perceived behavioral control by enhancing individuals' ability to effectively manage uncertainties, and cognitive empathy and social skills enforcement of subjective norms and positive attitudes by allowing these people to interact better with others. Such an integration is consistent with existing literature since it indicates that socio-emotional skills complement the cognitive processes described in TPB (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015).

3.1 Rationale for Selecting the Four Components of Social Intelligence

In this study, four dimensions of social intelligence, including situational awareness, situational response, cognitive empathy, and social skills, were chosen theoretically and empirically. They theoretically match the three antecedents of the TPB: the situational awareness and situational response boost perceived behavioral control by letting people discover opportunities, calculate risks, and adapt to the change; the cognitive empathy promotes subjective norms through the comprehension of the interpersonal situations and responsiveness to social norms; and social skills contribute to attitudes towards behavior by enhancing effective communication, negotiation, and building relationships with others. Empirically, the individual components have all been correlated with entrepreneurial success in terms of situational awareness and adaptability to uncertainty in markets (Endsley, 1995; Baron & Tang, 2009; Hossain et al., 2023), cognitive empathy in building trust and cooperation (Bacq & Alt, 2018; Korte et al., 2018), and social skills in networking and resource mobilization (Riggio & Carney, 2003; Baron & Markman, 2003).

Social intelligence, as stipulated in the current studies, is a series of socio-cognitive skills that help humans to see, interpret, and act upon social and situational signals (Goleman, 2006; Rahim, 2014). The four components have been established as follows:

Situational Awareness: The ability to perceive an environment and the environment or perform interpretation of the environment, realize change, and recognize emerging opportunities or threats.

Situational Response: Altering our behavior and decisions in terms of changing conditions.

Cognitive Empathy: Recognizing the thoughts and feelings of others in order to develop trust and cooperation.

Social Skills: Ability to communicate persuasively, conflict resolution, and networking to collaborate.

Collectively, these dimensions reflect the perception, adaptability, interpersonal sense, and competence of relations that are critical in entrepreneurial success within the socially complex and uncertain environments.

3.2 Justification for Focusing on Social Intelligence

Cognitive constructs, like entrepreneurial self-efficacy and personality traits, have been the key subjects of studies of entrepreneurial intention (Zhao et al., 2010; Vega-Gomez et al., 2020). Comparatively, the characteristics of social intelligence provide a wider, context-specific, and better lens of concurrent nature that integrates the socio-emotional skills, which assist entrepreneurs in being exposed to difficult interpersonal and environmental scenarios. Emerging economies evidence suggests that these skills, like empathy, adaptability, and/or good communication, help opportunities to be identified, mobilize resources, and develop resilience (Naznen et al., 2023; Al-Qadasi et al., 2023).

Nonetheless, little has been done in regard to multidimensional social intelligence of influencing entrepreneurial intention, especially in collectivistic and relationship-oriented countries such as Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan (Karim et al., 2025; Shahriar et al., 2024). Another focus of the current study in Bangladesh is previous research that has been more concentrated on the structural and financial barriers but has not paid consistent attention to interpersonal abilities, which may assist graduates in overcoming hindrances (Ferdousi et al., 2022). This research closes an important literacy gap in two ways, both theoretically and practically: first, by incorporating the concept of social intelligence into a Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), and second, by bringing transformative research findings

elsewhere in the world in education entrepreneurship and policy development home to the developing nations.

3.3 Situational Awareness

Situational awareness is defined as the ability of an individual to sense and interpret the environmental stimuli and predict the upcoming difficulties (Endsley, 1995). The awareness of the environment, comprehension of meaning, and the interpretation of the future occurrence of the entities in the environment may be formulated as situational awareness (Munir et al., 2022). This competency in the entrepreneurial context is critical in the identification of opportunities, evaluation of risk, and taking proactive action in the fast-changing business environment. Experimental research shows that a person with high situational awareness is more prone to participate in strategic thinking, opportunity recognition, and performance enhancement of business processes that are central to entrepreneurial behavior (Zhao et al., 2021; Yukongdi & Lopa, 2017). There is, however, a limited body of empirical literature that has focused on the construct in making connections with entrepreneurial intention in an emerging economy like Bangladesh.

3.4 Situational Response

Situational response refers to the capacity to adjust the behavior and make relevant decisions towards the social or environmental change. This aspect is especially important in entrepreneurial environments, where the resiliency to turn on the heels in the case of failure can spell the difference between success and failure (Discua Cruz et al., 2013). The situational response considers the know-how or skills and competencies of a person to effectively handle any social situation or adapt to it in order to get the required outcomes (Hossain et al., 2023; Rahim et al., 2018; Rahim et al., 2014).

3.5 Cognitive Empathy

Cognitive empathy is the ability to get inside the mind of others and perceive their opinions, intentions, and emotions (Davis, 1983). Cognitive empathy is likely to help individuals to understand customer needs better; this is applicable in environments where entrepreneurship and startups occur and also to improve teamwork and create an effective team out of it (Baron & Markman, 2003). Cognitive empathy is associated with placing oneself willfully in the mind of another person to identify what that individual thinks or feels about something

and where that individual can be within the organization or outside it (Hossain et al., 2023; Decety & Yoder, 2016; Decety, 2015; Batson, 2009).

3.6 Social Skills

Social skills are correlated with the ability of a person to speak convincingly because of their clear understanding of what, when, and how to say it (Rahim et al., 2018). The capability of an individual in social skills assists him or her to better explain his or her decisions and actions, why he or she takes them, and communicate them with others (Hossain et al., 2023). Communication, persuasion, and conflict resolution are also part of social skills that are necessary in entrepreneurship, and they are particularly useful in networking, team building, and mobilization of resources (Riggio & Carney, 2003). Entrepreneurs also have to deal with customers and investors, as well as partners, often, and therefore, entrepreneurs with high social skills are most likely to be treated as venerable people in the social network and able to establish trust (Baron & Tang, 2009).

3.7 Entrepreneurial Intention

The entrepreneurial intention is the deliberate scheme of a person to engage in a new business, and it is common knowledge that it is a good determinant of entrepreneurship behavior (Ajzen, 1991). TPB is the most practical model, and here attitude, the subjective norm, and the perceived behavioral control drive the intention (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). The entrepreneurial intention may be explained as the degree or amount of commitment of an individual to start a new venture (Miao et al. 2018). Entrepreneurial intention is defined as a determined state of mind that guides the individual's focus and skills to purposely engage in entrepreneurship (Wu et al. 2019).

3.8 Research Gap and Contribution

Despite the existing research that already examines a range of different influential factors on the entrepreneurial intention, and given the fact that any entrepreneurial act is largely driven by a range of psychological factors, the aspect of social intelligence is somewhat unclear both in practice and theory. Most research has been based on Western samples, adhered to a more restrictive definition of social or emotional competence, or otherwise not applied these variables in a concrete theoretical framework. The present study fills these gaps

through (1) integrating social intelligence in the TPB model, (2) referring to a developing country context, and (3) studying a population at the formative stage of their entrepreneurial identity, university students. In this respect, the study contributes to the literature in a new way because it empirically examines the combined effect of situational awareness, situational response, cognitive empathy, and social skills on entrepreneurial intention.

4. Hypotheses Development

4.1 Situational Awareness and Entrepreneurial Intention

Situational awareness is the capability to sense and comprehend appropriate information in the environment, knowing what might occur in the future, and being aware of the occurring opportunities (Endsley, 1995). High situational awareness enables entrepreneurs to be more suitable to recognize business opportunities and locate and explore new opportunities in dynamic and uncertain environments (Barba-Sanchez et al., 2022; Yukongdi & Lopa, 2017). This proficiency leads to improved perception of behavioral control and enables people to make a conscious decision. The previous studies indicate that the concept of situational awareness has a positive correlation with the intention to become an entrepreneur (Lim et al., 2023; Hossain et al., 2023; Barba-Sánchez et al., 2022; Joshi et al., 2020). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1: There is a positive influence of situational awareness on the entrepreneurial intention of university students in Bangladesh.

4.2 Situational Response and Entrepreneurial Intention

Situational response is the ability to adjust the behavior and decision-making according to the transformation of social and environmental factors (Shepherd et al., 2015). Perceived behavioral control is strengthened through high situational response because it can help an individual cope with setbacks through flexibility strategies (Mathias et al., 2015; Discua Cruz et al., 2013). A positive relationship between situational response and entrepreneurial intention was also found in previous studies (Al-Qadasi et al., 2023; Rahim et al., 2018). Thus:

H2: Situational response has positive effects on the entrepreneurial intention of the university students in Bangladesh.

4.3 Cognitive Empathy and Entrepreneurial Intention

Empathy, or the capacity to know what others are thinking about and how they are feeling, allows entrepreneurs to know more about what the customers require and to create good team dynamics, and it can create trustful relations (Hockerts, 2015). Cognitive empathy will probably increase in subjective norms and positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship in such collectivistic cultures where social harmony and relational understanding are the principles, such as in Bangladesh (Naznen et al., 2023). Positive association between cognitive empathy and the entrepreneurial intention was also confirmed by previous research findings (Dickel & Johnson, 2024; Vu et al., 2024; Kim, 2022; Tiwari et al., 2020; Korte et al., 2018; Bacq & Alt, 2018). Therefore, it is possible to assume that,

H3: Cognitive empathy has a positive relationship with entrepreneurial intention of university students in Bangladesh.

4.4 Social Skills and Entrepreneurial Intention

A high level of social skills will enable an entrepreneur to develop social capital and attract support and thus increase the perceived behavioral control and subjective norms (Baron & Tang, 2009). A positive association between social skills and entrepreneurial outcomes has been established in several studies; however, the association between social skills and entrepreneurial outcomes in particular intention-stage entrepreneurs, specifically university students in developing nations, has not been adequately researched (Ghazali et al., 2013; Baron & Markman, 2003; Baron & Markman, 2000). Therefore, we can propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Social skills positively affect the entrepreneurial intention of university students in Bangladesh.

The proposed research model of the study can be formulated in accordance with the literature review and the hypotheses proposed as follows:

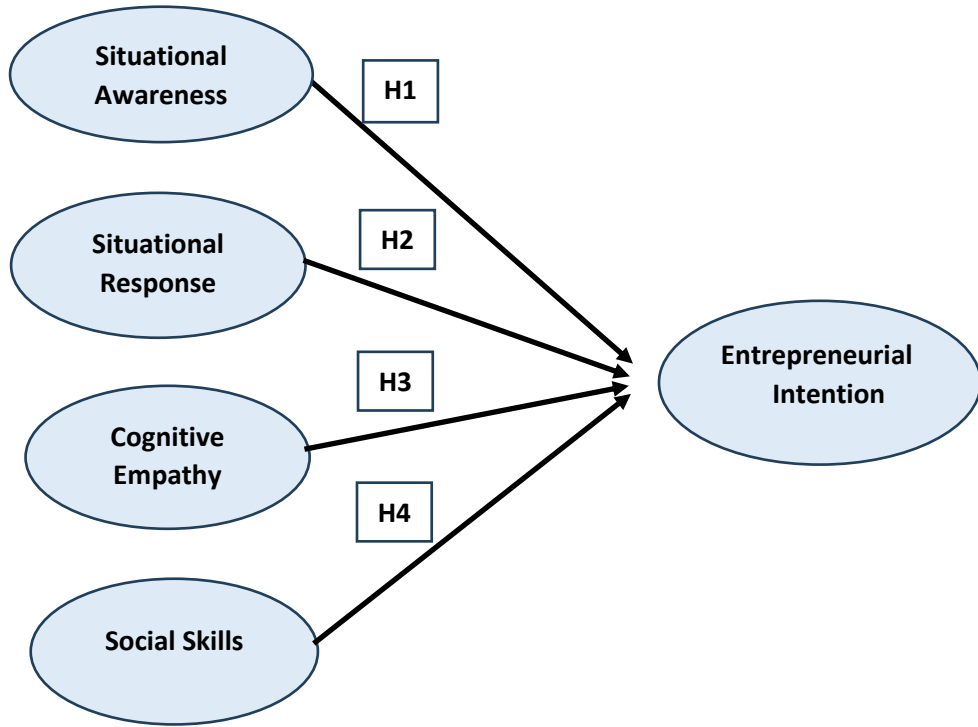


Figure -1: Proposed Research Model

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design and Population

In this study, the quantitative, cross-sectional research design was used to study the correlation between the elements of social intelligence and the entrepreneurial intention of the Bangladeshi University students. This sample included undergraduates and graduates of the public and the privately owned universities. As per the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (Statistics, 2023), there are 55 public universities and 114 private

universities in Bangladesh currently enrolled just more one million students in higher education. The university students were chosen because entrepreneurial intention is a pertinent and meaningful outcome variable since this group of individuals are in a formative stage of career decision-making.

5.2 Sampling Frame and Sample Size

A structured questionnaire was utilized in the study, where 253 undergraduate and master's students were selected to be administered in five state and three private universities in Bangladesh. The sample selection was done on the participants of various fields of study, such as business, social sciences, and engineering, amongst others, with a gender division of about 57 percent male and 43 percent female. The convenience sampling design was employed, and stratification based on the type of institution (public and non-public) was used to be diverse. Sample size was calculated by G* Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009), which showed that at 80 percent statistical power, the minimum necessary participants are 85 to have a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$) and at an alpha level of 0.05 in multiple regression with four predictors. This requirement was met because the actual sample size of 253 was more than sufficient to ensure that the statistical power was adequate. Nevertheless, the sample is not quite representative of all students of Bangladeshi universities, and conclusions should be generalized with reservations.

5.3 Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling approach based on non-probability was implemented in terms of time, resource, and accessibility limitations, which was highly adopted in the research of entrepreneurial intentions, especially in developing countries (Yang et al., 2023; Hammami et al., 2022). To ensure a high level of diversity and minimize bias, stratification by the type of institution (public vs. private) was used, and consideration was given to include students across different faculties, including business, social sciences, and engineering. The completed sample included 57 percent of male and 43 percent of female respondents.

5.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data was obtained during the period of two months with the online and paper-based questionnaires. The online questionnaire was disseminated via

university mailing lists, academically related networks, and student social media groups, whereas paper-based surveys were distributed on a few campuses to make up the volume of response and also to broaden the demographic profile. The respondents volunteered to participate, and their anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed because they were expected to provide honest answers. The questionnaire was also piloted among a sample of 20 students to test clarity and relevancy; hence, some changes in terms of words were made prior to final implementation.

5.5 Measurement Scales

The elements of social intelligence, including situational awareness, situational response, cognitive empathy, and social skills, were measured with the help of the instrument developed by Rahim (2014) and constituting twenty-eight items. The entrepreneurial intention was statistically assessed by utilizing an established six-item set, which was adopted by Liñán and Chen (2009). Each of the items was measured using a five-point Likert scale that ranged between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). The study scales were relatively reliable because they surpassed the cut-off criteria (0.70) stipulated by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

Table 1: Measurement Scales and Example Items

Construct	No. of Items	Example Item	Source	Cronbach's α
Situational Awareness	7	"I am aware of what is happening around me."	Rahim (2014)	0.76
Situational Response	7	"I know what to say."	Rahim (2014)	0.80
Cognitive Empathy	7	"I am able to sense how others are feeling around me."	Rahim (2014)	0.76

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Social Skills	7	“I listen well to understand the views of others.”	Rahim (2014)	0.77
Entrepreneurial Intention	6	“I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur.”	Liñán & Chen (2009)	0.92

5.6 Analytical Tools and Choice of Method

The analysis of the data was completed with the help of SPSS version 29. The sample characteristics were summarized using descriptive statistics, and their relationship to the components of social intelligence and entrepreneurial intention was evaluated using Pearson correlation analysis in terms of strengths and directions. Multiple linear regression was chosen as the main form of analytical approach because it is well suited to evaluate directional hypotheses and determine whether individual components of social intelligence are predictive when the others are put into control. Though structural equation modeling (SEM) would allow the measurement of latent constructs and complex mediation or moderation effects, a bigger sample is usually needed to maintain the stability of the model. Based on the sample size ($n = 253$), multiple regression was considered the most powerful and statistically adequate approach to the research. However, we would also advise future studies to adopt bigger and more diverse samples to ensure possible mediation, moderation, and interrelationships between variables are included using SEM.

6. Findings

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Situational Awareness	253	3.815	.558
Situational Response	253	3.630	.604
Cognitive Empathy	253	3.873	.577

Social Skills	253	4.035	.540
Entrepreneurial Intention	253	3.378	.970

The descriptive statistics of the study variables are presented in Table 1, and the highest average points of the study variables were with social skills, which were measured as ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.54$), followed by cognitive empathy, which was measured as ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.58$), situational awareness, which was measured as ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.56$), and the situational response ($M = 3.63$; $SD = 0.60$). The mean of entrepreneurial intention was 3.38 ($SD = 0.97$), thus confirming generally positive responses across variables.

6.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Results of Correlations

	Situational Awareness	Situational Response	Social Skills	Cognitive Empathy	Entrepreneurial Intention
Situational Awareness	1				
Situational Response	.666**	1			
Social Skills	.621**	.615**	1		
Cognitive Empathy	.552**	.491**	.555**	1	
Entrepreneurial Intention	.325**	.335**	.293**	.112	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation analysis showed that there were significant positive correlations among all elements of social intelligence and entrepreneurial intention. To be more specific, all situational awareness was related to an entrepreneurial intention at $r = .33$, situational response at $r = .34$, social skills at $r = .29$, and cognitive empathy at $r = .11$. Such evidence shows that greater entrepreneurial

intentions among the university students are linked with increased levels of social intelligence.

6.3 Regression Analysis

Table 4: Results of Regressions

Independent Variables	B	Std. Error	β	t	R Square	Adjusted R Square	p
Situational Awareness	.346	.151	.199	2.289	0.105	0.102	.023
Situational Response	.321	.135	.200	2.374	0.112	0.109	.018
Social Skills	.243	.139	.145	1.747	0.086	0.082	.012
Cognitive Empathy	-.316	.134	-.176	-2.358	0.013	0.009	.041

Multiple regression revealed that the four elements of social intelligence jointly determined 15.4 percent of the variance in entrepreneurial intention ($R^2 = .154$, $p < .000$). Individually, situational awareness ($\beta = .20$, $p < .023$), situational response ($\beta = .20$, $p = .018$), social skills ($\beta = .15$, $p = .012$), and cognitive empathy ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .041$) demonstrated a statistically significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intention. These findings support the argument that all the aspects of social intelligence explored can be considered significant predictors of entrepreneurial intention among the university students in Bangladesh.

7. Discussion

The results affirm that the components of social intelligence under the study possess a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention among university students in Bangladesh. It was found that social skills and situational awareness can be perceived as the most significant predictors, as interpersonal competencies and perceptions of the environment play a pivotal role in the development of entrepreneurial aspirations.

Such findings expand the TPB by incorporating social intelligence as a socio-cognitive determinant of entrepreneurial intention in keeping with previous evidence that high socio-emotional skills are critical in entrepreneurship (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015; Baron & Tang, 2009). The robust presence of social skills implies that being able to communicate, negotiate, and develop networks is quite important in the collectivist cultures, such as that of Bangladesh, where venture creation depends on the strength of relational ties. These results also resonate with earlier results in various studies (Ghazali et al., 2013; Baron & Markman, 2003; Baron & Markman, 2000).

The predictive ability of situational awareness supports the importance of entrepreneurs remaining vigilant to opportunities and threats to change environments when the context suggests an opposing stance, which is consistent with findings about opportunity recognition (Barba-Sánchez et al., 2022; Yukongdi & Lopa, 2017). Prior studies also confirmed these findings (Lim et al., 2023; Hossain et al., 2023; Barba-Sánchez et al., 2022; Joshi et al., 2020).

In the midst of this, the positive impact of situational response demonstrates how adaptability and resiliency are relevant when overcoming entrepreneurial challenges (Shepherd et al., 2015). Some studies provided evidence of these findings (Al-Qadasi et al., 2023; Rahim et al., 2018; Mathias et al., 2015; Discua Cruz et al., 2013).

The weakest predictor, however, is cognitive empathy, and this shows that cognitive empathy, or being able to view things from the perspectives of others, is also an important aspect that assists in entrepreneurial intention because, in the sense of improving social harmony and ethical consideration of business matters, concerns are significant in the Bangladesh situation. The relationship is also reinforced by prior results (Dickel & Johnson, 2024; Vu et al., 2024; Naznen et al., 2023; Kim, 2022; Tiwari et al., 2020; Korte et al., 2018; Bacq & Alt, 2018).

There was an interesting trend in the outcome of cognitive empathy. The correlation analysis depicted that there was a low yet influential relation with the entrepreneurial intention ($r = 0.112$, $p < 0.05$) that indicated that more cognitively empathetic students indicated more clear-cut entrepreneurial intentions. The standardized beta coefficient, however, became negative in the multiple regression model in which cognitive empathy was measured in the presence of situational

awareness, situational response, and social skills ($\beta = -0.176$, $p < 0.05$). This inconsistency may be attributed to the suppression effects as a result of multicollinearity in the four components of social intelligence. Since cognitive empathy overlaps in variance with the other predictors, it is possible that regulating them might expose some special variance that is negatively correlated with entrepreneurial intention. When predictors are conceptually related, then such patterns are not unusual in behavioral research (MacKinnon et al., 2000).

Notably, this observation does not mean that empathy is a detrimental factor to entrepreneurship. Rather, it points to a less direct role that is possibly mediated or mediated by other socio-cognitive skills. The interrelationships may be further unpacked in future studies based on structural equation modeling or hierarchical regression analysis attempts to explain the processes through which cognitive empathy has an influence on entrepreneurial intention. On the whole, the present study contributes to the TPB by introducing the element of social intelligence, enhancing the body of knowledge regarding the socio-cognitive factors that motivate entrepreneurial intention through the lens of the developing country context.

8. Implications and Contributions

This research has theoretical and practical contributions that add to the existing knowledge about entrepreneurial intentions, especially in emerging economies such as Bangladesh.

8.1 Innovativeness of This Study

It is the initial empirical analysis of Bangladesh that combines four fundamental elements of social intelligence, including situational awareness, situational response, cognitive empathy, and social skills, into the TPB scheme to interpret entrepreneurial intention. In contrast with the previous studies in the field which tended to narrowly focus on emotional intelligence or social skills on the one hand or a specific measure of social skills on the other, the study is multi-dimensional in nature, providing a picture in its entirety of how socio-cognitive competencies impact entrepreneurial performance. It also presents contextually specific insights, as it is dedicated to the Bangladeshi university students, who have considerable though overlooked entrepreneurship potential and answers to recent academic requests to incorporate interpersonal and adaptive skills into predictive modelling of entrepreneurship.

8.2 Economic and GDP Relevance

In developing countries, like Bangladesh, entrepreneurship can be identified as a leading factor in the diversification of the economy and economic growth in terms of GDP. The SME industry that is mainly driven by entrepreneurship in Bangladesh generates approximately 25 percent of GDP in addition to making up nearly 40 percent of the workforce (Sultana, 2024; Hossin et al., 2023). This research has provided practical lessons on determining socio-emotional competencies that influence entrepreneurial intention, which can be deployed to hike the level of entrepreneurial activity, and it could lead to more job generation, innovation, and long-term economic development.

8.3 Social Implications

More social intelligence among university students might help create entrepreneurial ecosystems that are more welcoming and open to helping others with their entrepreneurial endeavors. In most collectivist societies, like in Bangladesh, business success revolves around relationships and trust. A deeper focus on such skills as adaptivity, empathy, and communication may allow aspiring entrepreneurs access the resources to overcome cultural barriers and bring opportunities to the underrepresented populations, such as females and students living in rural areas.

8.4 Practical Implications

To the trainers and educators, the findings assert the importance of incorporating social intelligence building in the entrepreneurial curricula. Such activities may include simulations, scenario learning, negotiation training, role-playing games, and team simulation exercises to construct interpersonal and adaptive skills. These skills can be applied and practised with industry partners and mentors, getting students in touch with experienced entrepreneurs in learning authentic contexts of application and learning these skills.

8.5 Policy Implications

Policy-wise, social-emotional skill development should be included in the entrepreneurship development programs in addition to the technical and financial resources available to the persons. Such efforts as government agencies, non-government organizations, and other industry stakeholders were able to provide integrated training with incubators, innovation hubs, and university entrepreneurship centers. The support of a student-based startup may also have criteria regarding financial funding and the basis for evaluating the interpersonal

and adaptive functions so that a startup is not only feasible technically but also socially robust.

9. Limitations and Future Directions

The results indicate that cultivating social intelligence is a priority of educators and policymakers in Bangladesh that ought to be developed. Enhanced socio-emotional competencies enable students to identify opportunities, act on challenges, develop effective networks, and maintain positive relations, and these, together with traditional cognitive and technical learning in entrepreneurship, can be institutionalized into strengthening the structure of entrepreneurship training countrywide.

Indeed, there are a number of limitations to this study. It has a cross-sectional design that constrains causal inference, and only a convenience sample was used, which affects the generalizability of the findings to the rest of the university students. Research in the future may utilize longitudinal designs to follow up on the way social intelligence not only influences the intention of entrepreneurship but also the entrepreneurial behavior in the long run. Incorporating new variables in the model, like entrepreneurial self-efficacy, cultural values, emotional intelligence, and environmental conditions, would also give a clearer picture of how intentions are formed. Furthermore, expanding the analysis to vocational students, young businesspeople, and various cultural backgrounds would produce useful explanations regarding the role of social intelligence at various points of the entrepreneurship venture.

Conclusion

The study revealed the relationship among four dimensions of social intelligence, including situational awareness, situational response, cognitive empathy and social skills, that impacted the entrepreneurial intentions of university students in Bangladesh within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The findings reveal that social intelligence, alongside mental and technical skills, is critical for promoting entrepreneurial intentions in an emerging country context. The study provides a theoretical framework by extending the Theory of Planned Behavior to encompass social and emotional capabilities, while also offering practical insights into entrepreneurial education and policymaking in Bangladesh. However, further investigation is essential to validate this result across a larger and more diverse population; these findings indicate that social intelligence encompasses not merely personal competence enhancement but additionally a strategic approach to fostering future entrepreneurs.

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