

A Study on Factors Influencing Business Administration Graduates to Start Their Businesses in Afghanistan

Sayed Habibullah Behzad¹, Fatima Frotan²

¹Lecturer, Bakhtar University, Afghanistan

²Lecturer, Razi University, Afghanistan

Corresponding Author Email Id: ha.behzad@gmail.com

Corresponding Author ORCID: 0009-0004-0274-3067

Abstract

Entrepreneurship is vital in fostering economic growth, job creation, and development, especially in countries like Afghanistan. For Business Administration (BA) graduates with knowledge and skills in leadership, management, finance, marketing, and strategy formulation, starting a business should be an accessible path. However, many still opt for employment over entrepreneurship due to various barriers. This Study aims to identify the key factors influencing the entrepreneurial intentions of BA graduates in Afghanistan. Using a survey method, data was collected from 200 BA graduates to explore internal and external factors affecting their motivation to start a business. The findings provide practical recommendations: educational institutions should emphasize applied knowledge and entrepreneurial training. At the same time, governments and policymakers must create supportive, accessible policies and financial incentives to promote self-employment among graduates.

Keywords: Business Administration Graduates, Entrepreneurship, Startups, Influencing Factors, Afghanistan.

Introduction

Afghanistan, a country with a rich history and diverse culture, faces significant economic growth and development challenges. In recent years, entrepreneurship has gained attention as a vital driver of progress, especially given the limited availability of traditional employment opportunities across many sectors. Among the groups best positioned to contribute to this shift are Business Administration (BA) graduates with foundational management, finance, marketing, and strategic planning knowledge. However, despite the increasing number of graduates, many face barriers that hinder their entry into entrepreneurship.

Multiple factors influence their decision to start a business or pursue conventional employment. These include access to financial resources, availability of startup capital, government regulations, educational support, cultural perceptions, and socio-political conditions. In a developing country like Afghanistan—where unemployment is high and economic uncertainty persists—understanding these influencing factors is essential for building a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Afghanistan's unique context, shaped by ongoing political instability, economic struggles, and a growing youth population, further complicates the entrepreneurial landscape. While BA graduates have the potential to lead small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) growth, they often encounter challenges such as limited access to finance, regulatory hurdles, and societal norms that discourage risk-taking.

This Study explores the factors influencing business administration graduates in Afghanistan to start their businesses. By identifying the key motivators and barriers, the research offers insights to help policymakers,

¹Corresponding Author: Sayed Habibullah Behzad, Lecturer, Bakhtar University, Afghanistan, Email Id: ha.behzad@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0004-0274-3067

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educational institutions, and business incubators develop targeted strategies that encourage entrepreneurship and contribute to the country's economic revitalization.

Problem Statement

In Afghanistan, entrepreneurship holds significant potential for driving economic growth, job creation, and innovation—particularly among Business Administration graduates with relevant knowledge and skills. However, despite the increasing number of these graduates, this group's entrepreneurship rate remains relatively low. This discrepancy suggests the presence of underlying factors influencing their career decisions, whether to pursue entrepreneurial ventures or opt for traditional employment.

Key influencing elements may include limited access to startup capital, insufficient government support, inadequate practical education, cultural perceptions of entrepreneurship, and the broader socio-economic challenges within the country. Understanding these factors is essential for designing effective strategies to promote entrepreneurship, reduce youth unemployment, and build a resilient economy.

This Study seeks to identify and analyze the main factors affecting the entrepreneurial intentions of Business Administration graduates in Afghanistan. The research will provide valuable insights for policymakers, academic institutions, and entrepreneurship development programs by exploring both the challenges and enabling conditions. Ultimately, the findings support creating a more conducive environment for graduates to start and sustain their businesses, thereby contributing meaningfully to Afghanistan's socio-economic development.

Objectives of the Study

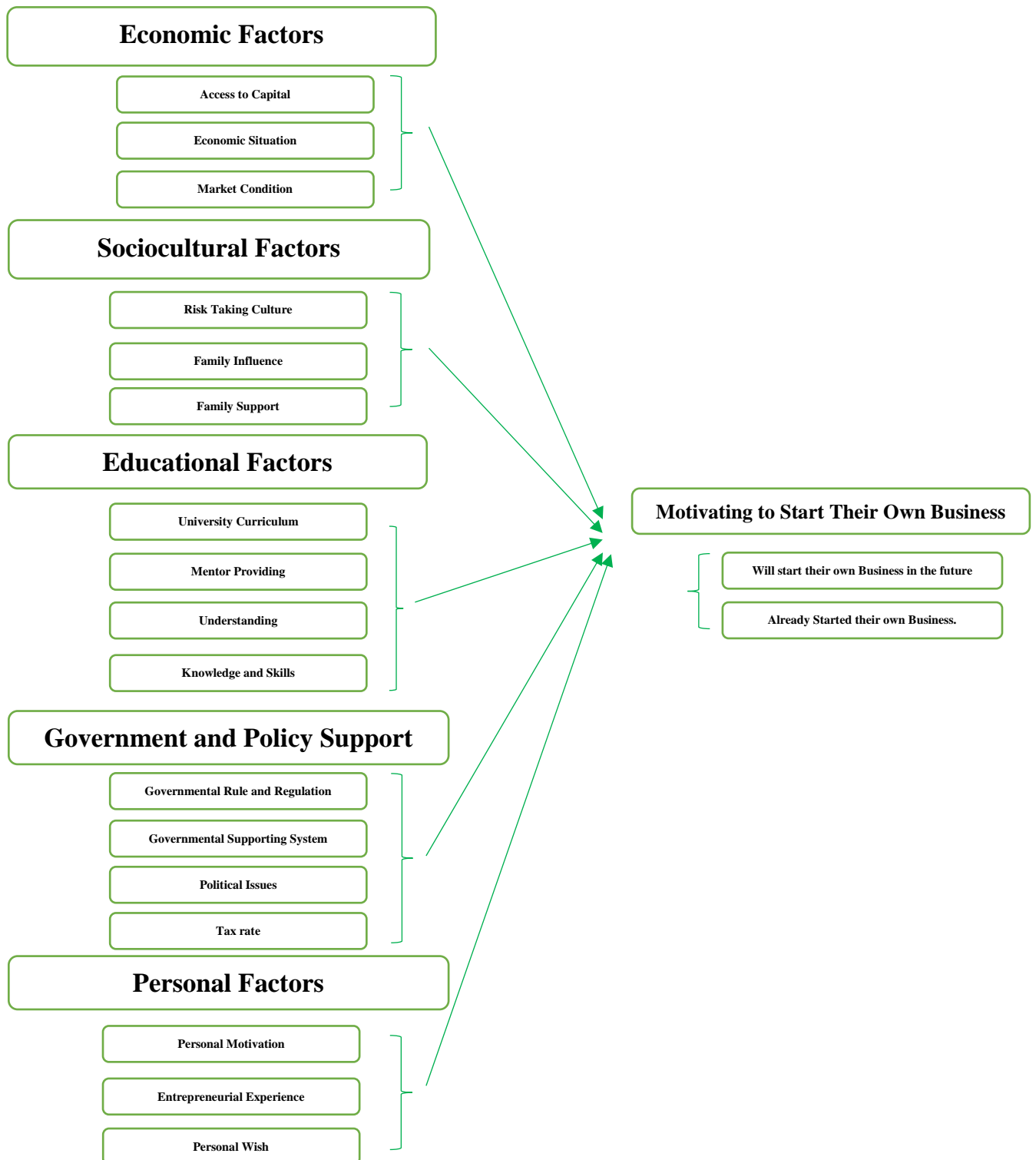
1. **To identify and analyze the key factors**—including economic, sociocultural, educational, governmental, and personal—that influence Business Administration graduates to start their businesses in Afghanistan.
2. **To provide practical recommendations** for the government, policymakers, and educational institutions to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem and promote a culture of entrepreneurship among graduates in Afghanistan.

The hypothesis of the Study

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between economic, sociocultural, educational, governmental, and personal factors and the likelihood of Business Administration graduates starting their own Business in Afghanistan.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between economic, sociocultural, educational, governmental, and personal factors and the likelihood of Business Administration graduates starting their own Business in Afghanistan.

Conceptual Framework of the Study:



Research Methodology

Data Collection

This Study utilized both primary and secondary data sources.

- Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 200 Business Administration graduates in Afghanistan. Of these, 120 respondents completed the questionnaire online via Google Forms, while 80 respondents filled out printed copies and were selected randomly. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS software.
- Secondary data was obtained from relevant books, academic journals, and previous research studies, as well as from official sources such as the websites of the Ministry of Commerce and Industries, the Ministry of Higher Education, and university curricula related to Business Administration.

Research Method

A survey method was employed for this Study to gather quantitative data regarding the factors influencing Business Administration graduates to start their Businesses. The survey approach was chosen to ensure broad participation and the collection of measurable data for statistical analysis.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurship has become crucial for economic growth, particularly in developing countries like Afghanistan. As the global economy shifts toward a knowledge-based and innovation-driven system, business administration graduates are increasingly seen as key players in fostering entrepreneurship. This literature review explores the factors influencing business administration graduates in Afghanistan to start their businesses, focusing on economic, sociocultural, educational, governmental, and personal factors.

1. Economic Factors

The economic environment is one of the most significant motivators for entrepreneurship in Afghanistan. According to a study by Mansoor and Saleh (2016), Afghanistan's unstable economy, characterized by high unemployment rates, limited job opportunities, and underdeveloped industries, drives many young graduates, particularly those with a background in business administration, to consider entrepreneurship a viable alternative. The authors argue that many graduates opt for self-employment for survival and economic mobility in the face of such economic challenges.

Moreover, the availability of microfinance and government-backed initiatives to support small businesses can play a pivotal role in motivating graduates to start their ventures. Programs offering financial literacy and entrepreneurial support have increased the likelihood of business formation (Khalid et al., 2020). This is particularly relevant in Afghanistan, where small and medium enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of the economy.

2. Sociocultural Factors

In Afghanistan, the sociocultural landscape plays a pivotal role in shaping the entrepreneurial intentions of graduates. Ahmad and Yousaf (2018) note that family support and societal perceptions of entrepreneurship are crucial in determining whether a graduate will risk starting a business. Families and communities may encourage or discourage entrepreneurship depending on the perceived risk and the individual's social status. In rural areas, where traditional industries dominate, there may be less encouragement for entrepreneurial ventures, particularly for women, due to cultural and societal norms.

Additionally, the influence of role models and mentors is essential. Graduates who have seen successful local entrepreneurs or have been mentored by experienced business leaders are more likely to consider starting their Businesses (Shafiq et al., 2019). In Afghanistan, where entrepreneurship is still developing, access to mentors and role models may significantly influence graduates' decisions.

3. Educational Factors

Education is a cornerstone in developing the entrepreneurial mindset. Zafar and Sadiq (2020) argue that business administration programs are crucial in equipping graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the entrepreneurial world. However, the education system faces challenges in Afghanistan, including outdated curricula, limited practical exposure, and a lack of emphasis on entrepreneurial skills. These gaps can influence graduates' confidence and preparedness to start their businesses.

Farhad and Zaki (2017) emphasize the importance of specialized entrepreneurship education, which fosters creativity, innovation, and risk management among students. A lack of practical training in entrepreneurship and exposure to real-world business challenges might deter graduates from pursuing their entrepreneurial aspirations. In contrast, graduates who have participated in internships or practical business projects are often more confident in their ability to launch a business.

4. Government and Policy Support

Government policies are another key determinant in the entrepreneurial success of business administration graduates. Jamal and Mahmud (2015) discuss how government policies in Afghanistan, particularly those related to ease of doing Business, regulatory frameworks, and access to funding, directly impact entrepreneurial activity. Initiatives that simplify business registration, reduce bureaucracy, and provide financial incentives for startups are essential in motivating graduates to start their own ventures.

Despite these efforts, the ongoing political instability in Afghanistan has resulted in inconsistent implementation of such policies. Sami and Akram (2018) argue that while there is potential for entrepreneurial growth, graduates often face bureaucratic hurdles and a lack of government support, particularly in conflict-prone regions.

5. Psychological and Personal Factors

Personal traits, such as risk tolerance, self-confidence, and the ability to manage uncertainty, significantly determine whether a business administration graduate will start a business. Shah and Rehman (2016) highlight that graduates with higher self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship. In Afghanistan, a country marked by political instability, graduates with the psychological resilience to face challenges are likelier to take the entrepreneurial leap.

Moreover, Saleem et al. (2019) identify the role of aspirations and personal values, particularly in a developing country context, where economic hardship often pushes graduates to consider entrepreneurship as a career and a means of creating change and contributing to society.

Finally, Entrepreneurship among business administration graduates in Afghanistan is influenced by a complex interaction of economic, sociocultural, educational, and personal factors. While there are considerable challenges, such as political instability and lack of practical education, the drive for self-employment among graduates is often fueled by the desire for economic stability and social mobility. In order to encourage more graduates to pursue entrepreneurship, the Afghan government must continue to improve the business environment, offer better educational resources, and provide support through financial services and mentorship.

Analysis of the Study

A. Demographic Factors

- Age of Respondents

Age Ranges	Number of Respondents	Percentages
20-30 Year	94	47%
31-40 Year	96	48%
41-50 Year	7	3.5%
Above 50 Year	3	1.5%
Total	200	100%

- Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Male	165	82.5%
Female	35	17.5%
Total	200	100%

- Education

Education	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Diploma in Business Administration	16	8%
Bachelor of Business Administration	102	51%
Master of Business Administration	80	40%
Doctor of Business Administration	2	1%
Total	200	100%

- Business Related Experience

Business Related Experience	Number of Respondents	Percentages
1-3 Years	82	41%
3-5 Years	45	22.5%
5-10 Years	38	19%

Above 10Years	35	17.5%
Total	200	100%

- **Occupation**

Occupation	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Business Owner	40	20.7%
Working for others	105	52.9%
Jobless	4	3%
Planning to start my own Business	30	14%
Busy with other activities	21	9.4%
Total	200	100%

Questionnaire Analysis

Economic Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Our country has a competitive market; anyone can start their Business.	21.5%	48.8%	16.5%	7%	7.2%	100%
The economic condition of the country is suitable	28.3%	43.3%	12.5%	10%	5.9%	100%
There is no limitation on access to capital	19.6%	29.8%	24%	20.7%	6.9%	100%
Total Economic Factors	23.13%	40.6%	17.7%	12.5%	6.07%	100%
Sociocultural Factors						
I would like to take risks and experience many Ideas	33.3%	49.2%	11.7%	5%	0.8%	100%
The family supports/supported me financially to start my own Business	19.6%	29.8%	24%	20.7%	6.9%	100%
My family had Business, I was working with them	12.4%	21.5%	11.6%	43.8%	10.7%	100%
Total Sociocultural Factors	21.7%	33.5%	15.8%	23.15%	5.85%	100%
Educational Factors						
The University Curriculum makes us eligible to start and run a business.	21.5%	57%	14%	8.5%	7%	100%
The University provides creative mentors or lecturers to encourage students to start their businesses.	24%	49.6%	16.5%	9.9%	0%	100%
I have Studied Entrepreneurship and Business Management Subjects at University	49.2%	28.3%	10%	10.8%	2.7%	100%
I have the management Skills to plan, organize, control, and lead Small Business activities.	46.3%	44.6%	8.3%	0.8%	0%	100%
I have complete knowledge of how to be an entrepreneur	22.3%	48.8%	24%	5.9%	4%	100%
Total Educational Factors	32.6%	45.66%	14.56%	4.44%	2.74%	100%
Government and Policy Support						
The governmental rules and regulations are clear and easy for small business activities	13.2%	43.8%	24.8%	16.5%	1.7%	100%
The government supports small Businesses in my country	7.4%	19.8%	24%	35.5%	13.2%	100%
The political and social issues cause/caused me not to start my own Business	28.3%	43.3%	12.5%	10%	5.9%	100%
The tax rate is a barrier to starting our own Business	24%	25%	20%	24%	7%	100%
Total Government and Policy Factors	18.22%	32.97%	20.32%	21.5%	6.99%	100%
Personal Factors						
Instead of working for others, I prefer to be my boss	61.7%	30.8%	5%	0.5%	2%	100%
I had an ambition to have my own Business while studying at University.	43.7%	42%	10.9%	2%	2.4%	100%
Before starting my own Business, I was working for others to get enough experiences	29.8%	46.3%	14%	8.3%	1.6%	100%
I can generate innovative ideas and solve the problems of the customers creatively	26.7%	58.3%	13.3%	1%	0.7%	100%
I understand how to analyze the market and arrange the Business according to the market needs.	28.9%	56.2%	14%	0.9%	0%	100%
I can attract and keep the customers efficiently	31.4%	56.2%	12.4%	0%	0%	100%
Total of Personal Factors	37.03%	48.3%	11.45%	2.11%	1.11%	100%
Motivating to start their own Business						
After completing my studies, I started my own Business	22%	10%	13%	30%	25%	100%
I would like to start my own Business shortly	40%	45%	10%	3%	2%	100%
Total of Motivating to start their own Business	31%	27.5%	11.5%	16.5%	13.5%	100%

Interpretation and Analysis

This table presents the perceptions of Business Administration graduates on five independent factors (economic, sociocultural, educational, government and policy support, personal) and their impact on the motivation to start their own Business.

1. Economic Factors

- A combined 63.73% agree or strongly agree that economic factors influence their decision.
- However, 18.57% disagree or strongly disagree, showing that while the economy matters, it is not the most dominant factor.
- **Interpretation:** Economic conditions are perceived as important but not universally decisive.

2. Sociocultural Factors

- 55.2% agree or strongly agree, while 29% disagree.
- This reflects mixed views, suggesting that culture and societal expectations affect some graduates more than others.
- **Interpretation:** Sociocultural norms moderately impact motivation depending on individual background.

3. Educational Factors

- A very high 78.26% agree or strongly agree.
- Only 7.18% disagree.
- **Interpretation:** Education is broadly seen as a strong foundation for entrepreneurship, though the hypothesis test may have shown that its actual impact on motivation is not statistically significant.

4. Government and Policy Support

- Only 51.19% agree or strongly agree, while 28.49% disagree.
- **Interpretation:** Government support is not widely trusted or seen as influential, consistent with the test result of no significant impact.

5. Personal Factors

- A clear 85.33% agree or strongly agree.
- Very few (3.22%) disagree.
- **Interpretation:** This is the strongest influencer; personal drive and confidence are key to starting a business.

6. Motivation to Start Business

- 58.5% agree or strongly agree that they are motivated.
- 30% disagree.
- **Interpretation:** Most Business Administration graduates are motivated, primarily influenced by personal and sociocultural factors. However, governmental and economic challenges limit some businesses from opening. Although educational factors provide key knowledge, if graduates do not take the step to start a business, it suggests that education alone may not be enough to motivate them.

Test of Hypothesis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.961 ^a	.923	.921	.41096

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personal Factors, Sociocultural Factors, Educational Factors, Economic Factors, Government and Policy Supporting Factors

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	389.616	5	77.923	461.401	.000 ^b
	Residual	32.595	193	.169		
	Total	422.211	198			

a. Dependent Variable: Motivating to start their Business

b. Predictors: (Constant), Personal Factors, Sociocultural Factors, Educational Factors, Economic Factors, Government and Policy Supporting Factors

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.478	.074		-6.488	.000
	Economic Factors	.241	.091	.192	2.662	.008
	Sociocultural Factors	.714	.099	.591	7.188	.000
	Educational Factors	-.012	.102	-.008	-.115	.908
	Government and Policy Supporting Factors	.070	.095	.057	.736	.463
	Personal Factors	.277	.092	.159	3.008	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Motivating to start their own Business

Interpretation

The table shows that sociocultural and personal factors significantly influence motivation, while educational factors, government rules, and policy support do not significantly impact. Finally, economic factors have little influence on Business Administration graduates in Afghanistan when starting their Businesses.

Recommendations

1. Business Administration Graduates

The data collected and analyzed from 200 Business Administration graduates showed that most respondents possess strong knowledge, skills, and experience, yet many still prefer to work for others. Therefore, if you want to be your own boss and work independently, taking risks and starting your own Business is important. Here are some recommendations for BA graduates:

- **Start small and grow gradually:** Begin with a risky, small-scale venture and gain experience. With no risks, no return will be possible.
- **Use your knowledge, skills, and experiences:** Apply your academic knowledge and finance, marketing, and management skills to effectively plan and run your Business.
- **Build a Network:** Connect with mentors, successful entrepreneurs, and business associations for guidance and support.
- **Document and Plan:** Always write a clear business plan, manage finances properly, and set realistic goals.

2. Business Administration Institutions

Although the majority of Business Administration graduates were satisfied with their University's curriculum, there are some recommendations that, if universities focus on them, could better motivate students to start and run their businesses:

- **Enhance Practical Curriculum:** Integrate real-world entrepreneurial training, business simulations, and case studies into the DBA/BBA/MBA curriculum.
- **Facilitate Access to Finance:** By signing MoUs with banks, microfinance institutions, and donors, they can offer small startup grants or facilitate access to seed funding.
- **Organize Entrepreneurship Competitions:** Run regular startup competitions or innovation challenges to motivate students to develop business plans.
- **Alum tracking and Support:** Maintain contact with graduates to monitor entrepreneurial outcomes and provide ongoing support or re-skilling.

3. Government and Policy Makers

As it is clear, Afghanistan has a mixed economic system where people can start and run their businesses anytime and anywhere after obtaining a license. However, if the government wants to develop the economy, create more job opportunities, and reduce the unemployment rate, it should support the entrepreneurship process more strongly. Here are some key recommendations for the government to better support entrepreneurs:

- **Create Supportive Policies:** To encourage and motivate people to start their businesses, the government can develop and enforce policies that promote entrepreneurship, including tax incentives, simplified business registration, and legal support for startups.
- **Access to Finance:** The main problem that most of the newly graduated students who have the knowledge and Idea cannot start their own Business is a lack of financial resources; for this reason, the government can facilitate low-interest loans, microfinance schemes, and government-backed grants for young entrepreneurs, especially BA graduates.

- **Improve Infrastructure:** Provide reliable electricity, internet access, and transportation to facilitate business operations, as well as cold storage, especially in remote areas.
- **Ensure Security and Stability:** Strengthen security and reduce bureaucratic obstacles to build confidence among young entrepreneurs.
- **Market Access Support:** Help startups access local and international markets through trade fairs, online platforms, and export promotion programs.
- **Promote a Culture of Entrepreneurship:** Use media and public campaigns to highlight successful Afghan entrepreneurs and change public perceptions of self-employment.

Limitation of Study

There are some key limitations of this Study:

- There are no exact statistics on how many Business Administration graduates there are in Afghanistan, how many have left the country, and how many are still living here. This means accurate data on graduates, startups, and economic indicators may be difficult to obtain.
- Difficulty in reaching a diverse and representative sample from all provinces or sectors.
- Absence of centralized databases on entrepreneurship or graduate employment records.
- Respondent Bias or Graduates may provide socially desirable answers rather than honest opinions.

Conclusion

This Study aimed to explore the factors influencing Business Administration graduates to start their own Business in Afghanistan, focusing on five major areas: economic, sociocultural, educational, governmental and policy support, and personal factors. Based on the hypothesis testing and data analysis, the findings revealed that personal factors (such as ambition, self-confidence, and risk-taking attitude) and sociocultural factors (like family support and social encouragement) significantly impact graduates' motivation to become entrepreneurs.

On the other hand, economic conditions, government and policy support, and educational background were found to have no statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial motivation among the respondents. This indicates that despite external challenges like limited financial resources or lack of supportive policies, graduates' internal drive and social environment play a more critical role in their decision to start a business.

These findings suggest that to encourage entrepreneurship among Business Administration graduates effectively; greater emphasis should be placed on developing personal competencies and fostering an entrepreneurial culture through family, community, and mentorship-based support systems.

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I am also thankful to all Business Administration graduates who participated in the survey and provided honest and insightful responses, without which this research would not have been possible.

Lastly, I appreciate the support of educational institutions, faculty members, and those who provided relevant data, resources, and cooperation during this study.

This work is a small contribution toward understanding the entrepreneurial landscape in Afghanistan, and I hope it will be useful for students, policymakers, and institutions promoting entrepreneurship.

Conflict of Interest

The authors affirm that no conflicts of interest are linked with this publication. The research was conducted autonomously without financial or non-financial assistance from external entities.

Author Contribution Statement

For the research titled “A Study on Factors Influencing Business Administration Graduates to Start Their Own Business in Afghanistan”, the contributions were as follows:

Sayed Habibullah Behzad (First Author):

- Led the research design and development of the research questions and objectives.
- Collected and analyzed the data using SPSS.
- Drafted the main sections of the research including the introduction, methodology, results, and conclusion.
- Coordinated communication among team members and finalized the research paper.

Fatima Frotan (Co-Author):

- Assisted in designing the questionnaire and conducting the literature review.
- Contributed to data interpretation and supported statistical analysis.
- Reviewed and edited the manuscript for clarity, consistency, and academic quality.
- Helped in formulating recommendations and policy implications based on the findings.
- Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and take full responsibility for its content.

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