

RESEARCH ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION: AN ACADEMIC LITERATURE REVIEW AND CLASSIFICATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to review the academic literature available in the field of Entrepreneurial Intention (EI), and conduct a content analysis of the same for the purpose of classification and provide a comprehensive bibliography. Emerald full text, online database was searched to review the available literature on EI. The search resulted in only 118 publications where EI was mentioned as the primary research topic. The sample was further refined to only include papers with empirical research in qualitative and quantitative realms. The resultant of the refined sample was 69 research publications, which were classified in to mutually exclusive categories. The content analysis led to classification of literature on the basis of six categories viz. Publication Year, Journal, Research Area, Research Type, Base Theory and Population. The study identifies the history of research on EI and hints towards future research prospects in research in terms of industry, area of study, methodology, type of study, etc. The paper provides a list of field projects accompanied by a comprehensive bibliography that will be useful to both academicians and practitioners for studying existing research as well as for contemplating future research. This may be considered as the basic compilation and classification of available literature in the field of EI.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Intentions, Literature Review, Classification

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INTRODUCTION

Published literature in a discipline such as journal articles, trade publication, monographs, conference proceedings, dissertations etc. present the available knowledge base of that discipline and reflects upon the history, trend, research norms, and past and future key interest areas within that discipline. An analysis of published record of the discipline can demonstrate substantially about the discipline itself (Mittermeyer & Houser, 1979).

Windsor and Windsor (1973) stated that, “the knowledge bank of any field is its published literature”. Feehan (1985) substantiated, “the subject concerns of a discipline are nowhere better reflected than in its research literature”. Like many other fields, most research in Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) is published as journal literature. Journals provide a platform for communication and presentation of ideas which are then taken upon, further researched, validated or contradicted by researchers globally; further adding to the body of knowledge.

Cognitive approach directs that intentions occupy a central position in the study of human behavior (Tubbs & Ekeberg, 1991). As Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), argued in their important contribution towards the field of EI: most behaviors of social relevance, such as new venture creation and entrepreneurship are under volitional control. Several scholars sharing this view and aiming for further research in the field – theoretically or empirically – have proved that intentions are the best predictor of such behaviors (Bagozzi, Baumgartner & Yi, 1989; Ajzen, 1991; Sutton, 1998).

In an attempt to define EI, Bird (1988) stated that EI is “entrepreneur’s state of mind that direct attention, experience, and actions toward a business concept”. Intentions are considered to be a very important step in entrepreneurship process for people who wish to start a new business. In social psychology intention is noticed to be the most immediate and significant antecedent of behavior (Sheeran & Abraham, 2003). Following Low and MacMillan’s definition of entrepreneurship as “creation of new enterprise” (Low and MacMillan, 1988), we are able to define EI as the intention to start a new business.

Though plenty of research has been conducted on EI, it is still considered to be in its earlier phases; as much is still to be researched. This paper aims to gather available scholarly information and provide an overview of the field of EI. This effort represents an attempt to assist the understanding of EI research. The study also provides a distribution of literature as well as comprehensive bibliography that may assist future researchers.

METHODOLOGY

This paper presents a review of EI research published in academic research journals. The collected literature was subjected to content analysis for classification purpose.

Content analysis has been defined as an organized, replicable technique for condensing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Weber, 1990). Another researcher, Holsti (1969), provides a broad definition of content analysis as, “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages”. Content analysis can be a useful technique to assist researchers to discover and describe the focus of individuals, groups, institutions and society (Weber, 1990).

This research process requires a content analysis, which can evaluate and classify the available literature into a meaningful construct. We propose that evaluation and classification of literature regarding EI can thoroughly be conducted based on the following criteria:

- Publication Year
- Research Type / Methodology
- Journal
- Research Area
- Research Region
- Base Theory / Model

In this paper, the communications population is specified as EI literature restricted to “Emerald Full text” online database. This restriction was put in place due to the ease of access, wide availability and comprehensive literature availability of the database. It may be noted that there are many articles, tools and reports available on EI, but these were not included in this study due to its specific focus on journal papers. Additionally, conference proceedings, theses and dissertations, monographs, text books and unfinished papers are also excluded from the study as Ngai (2005) wrote that journals are the core source of information for all of the aforementioned scholarly texts.

RESULTS

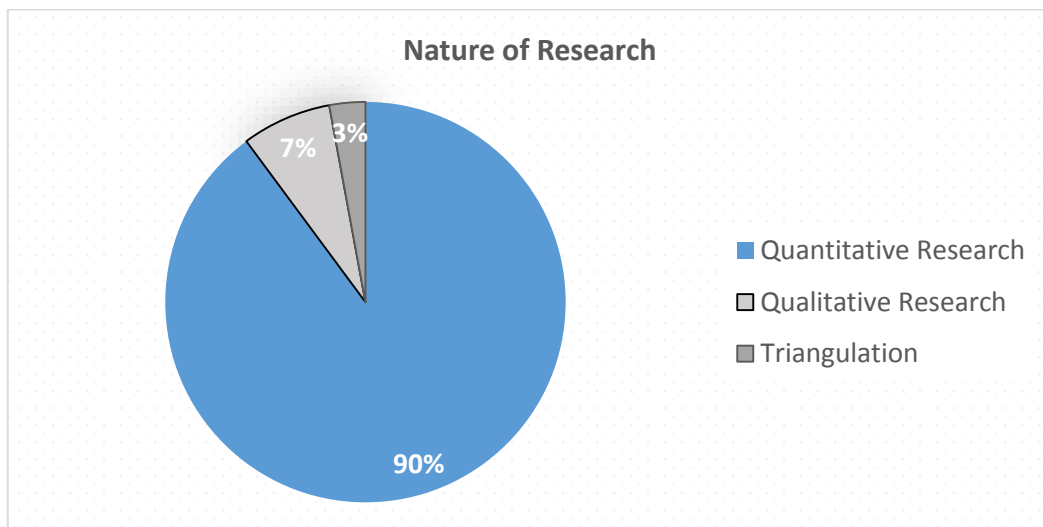
The literature search was based on the keyword descriptor “Entrepreneurial Intention” as a query run on the online database. The review yielded 118 publications related to EI. The result was further scrutinized to include only empirical researches. This resulted in a refined sample of 69 research publications.

Nature of Research

A base classification was conducted built on the nature of research being either qualitative, quantitative or mixed method. The research type of the revised sample was found to be inclined towards quantitative research. Figure 1 highlights 90% of the empirical studies conducted using quantitative techniques as compared to only 7 % with a focus on qualitative technique. 3% of the studies used Triangulation or Mixed-Method Approach.

FIGURE 1

Sample Academic Publications classified as per Nature of Research



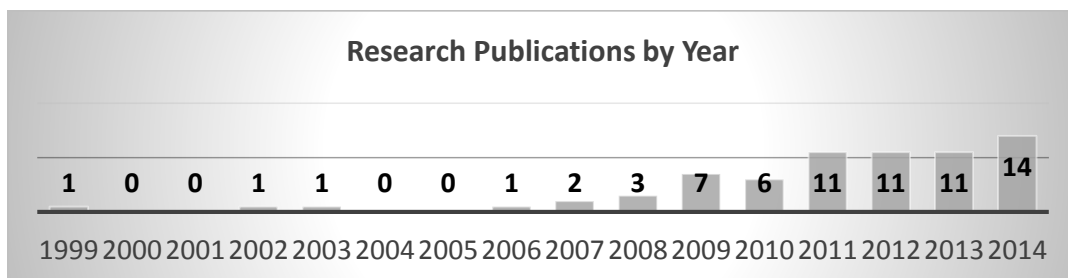
Source. Author’s Compilation from Sample of Academic Publications

Year wise distribution of Research Publications

A trend analysis of the publications in the field of Entrepreneurial Intention can be witnessed in the publication year. This highlights the birth of the field and the interest among researchers to pursue a better understanding. The first noted empirical research in the sample collected was conducted in 1999. Since then more and more researchers are keen to venture into this field of research. This trend is also evident from Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

Sample Academic Publications categorized as Year-wise research



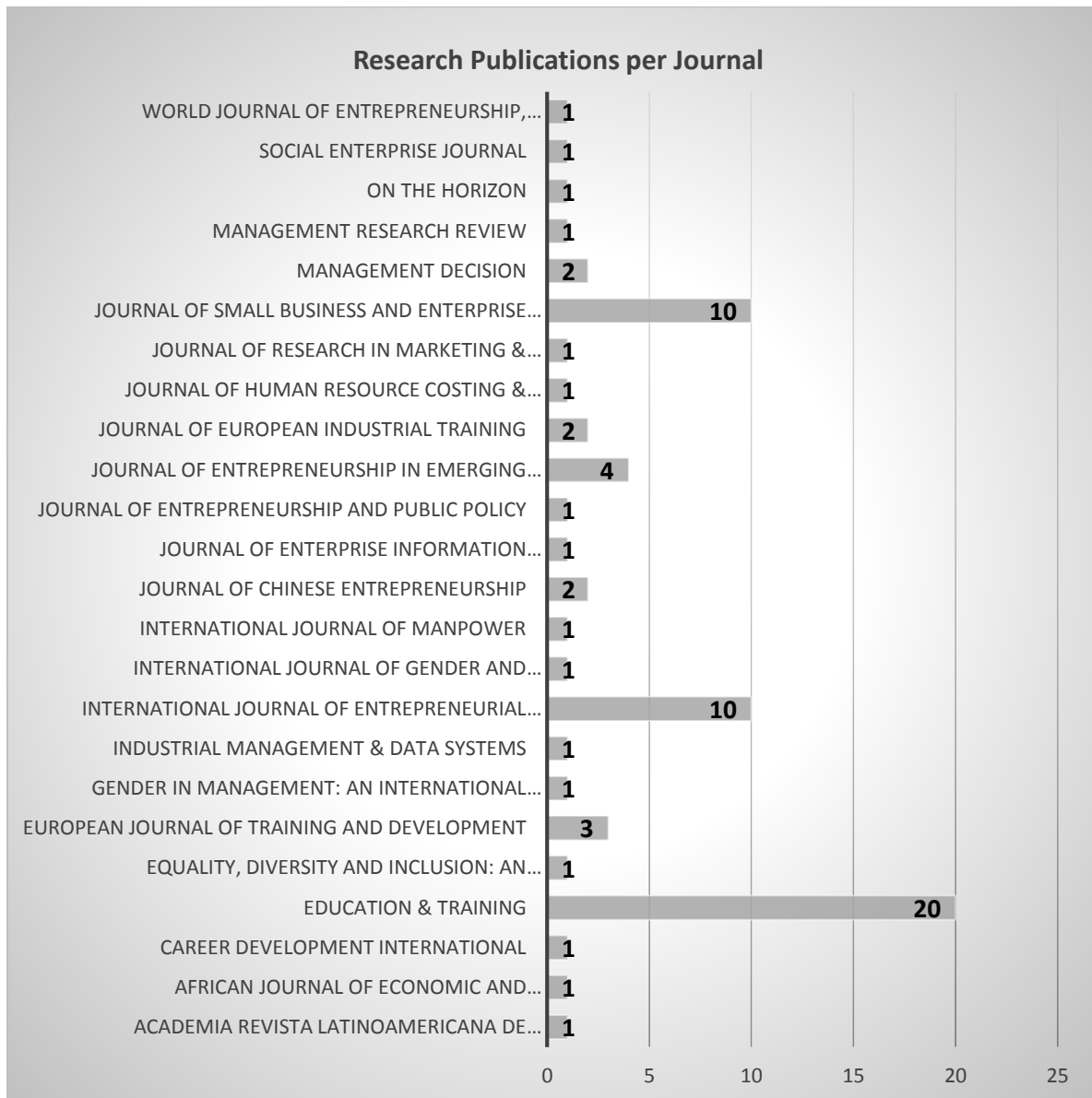
Source. Author’s Compilation from Sample of Academic Publications

Research Classification built on Research Journal

The refined sample was further analyzed on various bases. Most notably, the publication strength, which can be witnessed by considering the research journal where it was published. The resulting 69 research publications originate from 24 journals. The overview of the research journal differentiation is presented in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3

Sample Academic Publications Classified as per Research Journal



Source. Author's Compilation from Sample of Academic Publications

The details of publications in the specific journals and notable contributors are available in the following Table 1.

TABLE 1
Sample Academic Publications per Research Journal

Journal Title	Publications
Academia Revista Latinoamericana de Administracion	Sampedro, Fernandez-Laviada & Crespo (2013)
African Journal of Economic and Management Studies	Gerba (2012)
Career Development International Education & Training	Pillis & Reardon (2007)
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal	Robertson, Collins, Medeira & Slater (2003); Jones & Jones (2014); Katono (2011); Solesvik, Westhead & Matlay (2014); Joensuu, Viljamaa, Varamäki & Tornikoski (2013); Mohamed, Rezai, Shamsudin & Mahmud (2012); Solesvik, Westhead, Matlay. & Parsyak (2013); Iakovleva, Kolvereid & Stephan (2011); Marques, Ferreira, Gomes & Rodrigues (2012); Davey, Plewa & Struwig (2011); Bolton & Lane (2012); Sesen (2013); Vinogradov, Kolvereid & Timoshenko (2013); Dinis, Paço, Ferreira, Raposo & Rodrigues (2013); Jones, Jones, Packham & Miller (2008); Franco, Haase & Lautenschläger (2010); Kirby & Ibrahim (2011); Schwarz, Wdowiak, Almer-Jarz & Breiteneker (2009); Ertuna & Gurel (2011); Farashah (2013)
European Journal of Training and Development	Cañizares & García (2010)
Gender in Management: An International Journal	Heuer & Kolvereid (2014); Karimi, Biemans, Lans, Chizari & Mulder (2014); De Jorge-Moreno, Castillo & Triguero (2012)
Industrial Management & Data Systems	Petridou, Sarri & Kyrgidou (2009)
International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research	Fernández-Pérez, Alonso-Galicia, del Mar Fuentes-Fuentes, & Rodriguez-Ariza (2014)
	Nabi & Liñán (2013); Zeffane (2014); Engle, Dimitriadi, Gavidia, Schlaegel, Delanoe, Alvarado & Wolff (2010); Sandhu, Sidique & Riaz (2011); Devonish, Alleyne, Charles-Soverall, Marshall, & Pounder (2010); Pruett, Shinnar, Toney, Llopis, & Fox (2009); Mazzarol, Volery, Doss & Thein (1999); Taormina

Journal Title	Publications
International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship	& Lao (2007); Zampetakis, Kafetsios, Bouranta, Dewett & Moustakis (2009); Laviolette, Lefebvre & Brunel (2012) Dabic, Daim, Bayraktaroglu, Novak, & Basic (2012)
International Journal of Manpower	Jaén & Liñán (2013)
Journal of Chinese Entrepreneurship	Wu & Li (2011); Chen & He (2011)
Journal of Enterprise Information Management	Moghavvemi (2014)
Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy	Lewis, Wei, Hao, Yong & Vaccaro (2013)
Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies	Tang, Chen, Li & Lu (2014); Bhardwaj (2014); Molaei, Zali, Mobaraki & Farsi (2014); Bernhofer & Han (2014)
Journal of European Industrial Training	Cruz, Escudero, Barahona & Leitao (2009); Turker & Selcuk (2009)
Journal of Human Resource Costing & Accounting	Law & Hung (2009)
Journal of Research in Marketing & Entrepreneurship	Uslay, Teach, & Schwartz (2002)
Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development	Bagheri & Pihie (2014); Hamidi, Wennberg & Berglund (2008); Nabi, Holden & Walmsley (2010); Delanoë (2013); Wang & Verzat (2011); Zhang & Yang (2006); Mahmood, Hussain & Matlay (2014); Degeorge & Fayolle (2011); Wu & Wu (2008); Littunen & Niittykangas (2010)
Management Decision	Arribas, Hernández, Urbano & Vila (2012); Hormiga, Hancock & Valls-Pasola (2013)
Management Research Review	Quan (2012)
On the Horizon	Zainuddin, Rahim & Rejab (2012)
Social Enterprise Journal	Denny, Hazenberg, Irwin, & Seddon (2011)
World Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development	Hassi & Storti (2014)

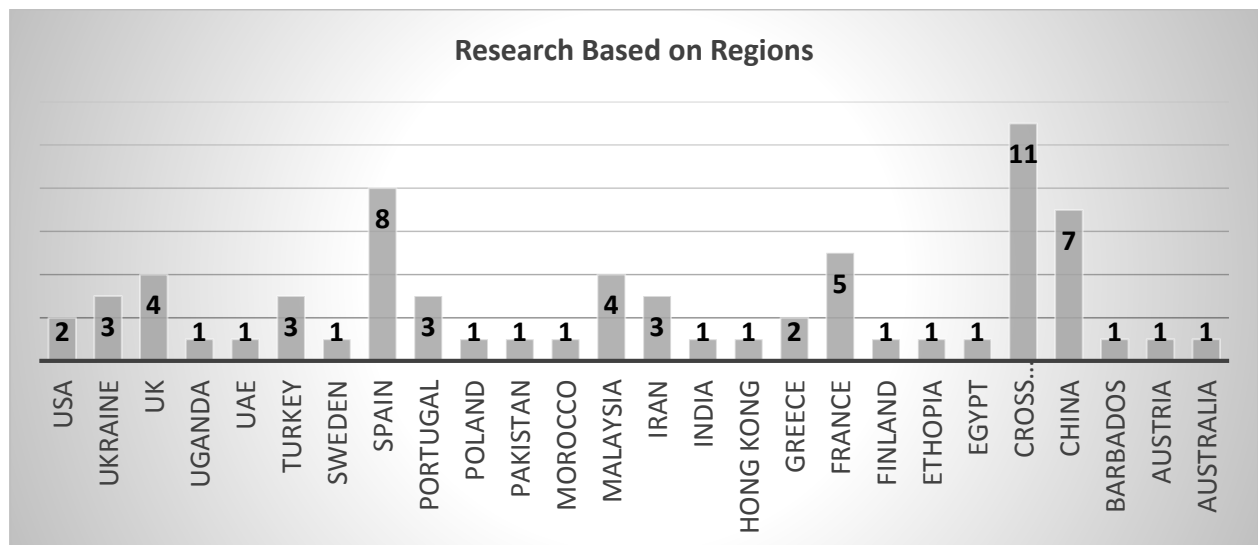
Source. Author's Compilation from Sample of Academic Publications

Region of Research

The region where the research was conducted to collect empirical evidence is another variable worth consideration. This highlights the impact of Entrepreneurial Intentions and the key regions where researchers have shown interest in pursuing an empirical research. As per the classification, the research was conducted in 26 countries / regions. The importance of the country and saturation of research in a region may be estimated based on this data.

FIGURE 4

Sample Academic Publications Classified as per Region Research Conducted



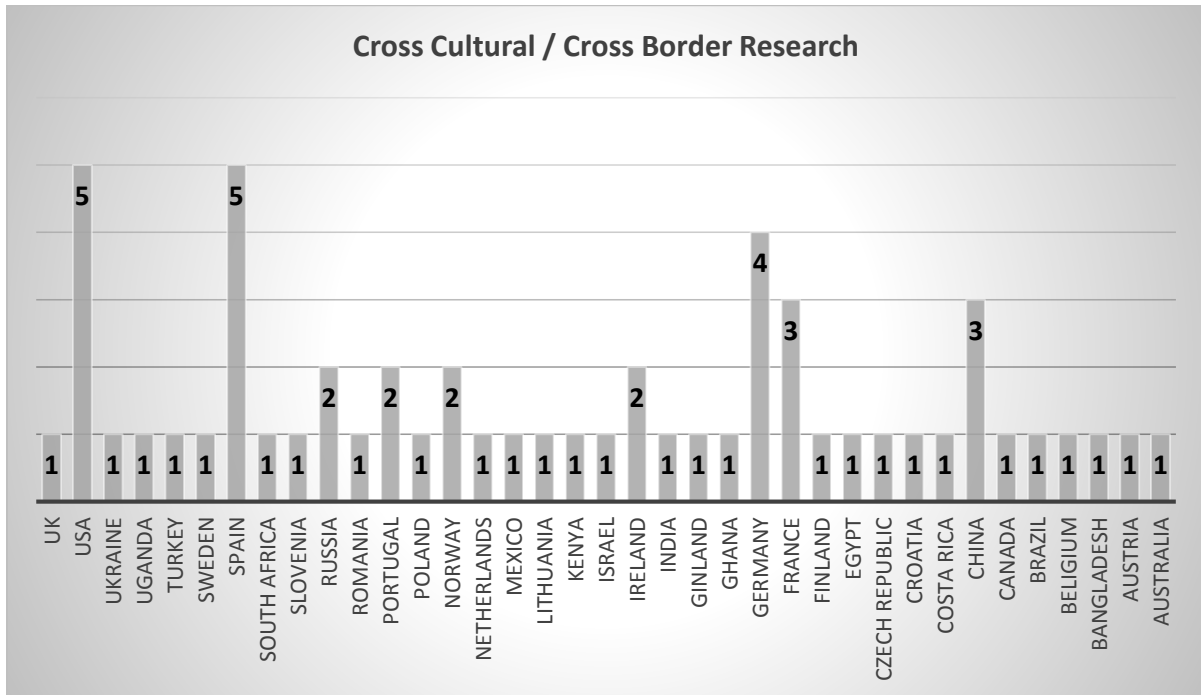
Source. Author's Compilation from Sample of Academic Publications

The results highlight that the main focus on Entrepreneurial Intention research has been in Europe and developed countries of Asia. This research indicates, based on the existing data that a gap is there to be filled on EI research in the developing and under-developed countries of the world.

Once the base data and empirical data have been gathered for a region, we focused on a wider horizon to improve validity and generalizability of instruments and models. In this effort it was found that, 11 publications have focused on a cross cultural / cross border research on EI. These researchers have tried to determine the differences between 37 defined areas in these 11 studies.

FIGURE 5

Sample Academic Publications on Cross Cultural / Cross Border Research Classified on region



Source. Author's Compilation from Sample of Academic Publications

A deeper analysis of these cross border researches can provide an insight on the way the research field of Entrepreneurial Intention is emerging.

TABLE 2

Research Publications Highlighting Cross Border / Cross Cultural Research and Regions of Comparison

Authors	Cross Border Research Regions
Nabi & Liñán (2013).	United Kingdom, Spain
Heuer & Kolvereid (2014).	Belgium, Norway
Engle, Dimitriadi, Gavidia, Schlaegel, Delanoë, Alvarado & Wolff (2010).	Germany, France, Spain, Ghana, Russia, Sweden, Finland, Egypt, China, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, United States
Iakovleva, Kolvereid & Stephan (2011).	Brazil, Mexico, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Norway, Spain, Netherlands
Davey, Plewa & Struwig (2011).	Finland, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa

Authors	Cross Border Research Regions
Pruett, Shinnar, Toney, Llopis, & Fox (2009).	United States, Spain, China
Dabic, Daim, Bayraktaroglu, Novak, & Basic (2012).	Croatia, Austria, Belgium, France, Israel, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, India
Lewis, Wei, Hao, Yong & Vaccaro (2013).	United States, China
Uslay, Teach, & Schwartz (2002).	United States, Turkey, Spain
Franco, Haase & Lautenschläger (2010).	Germany, Portugal
de Pillis & Reardon (2007).	United States, Ireland

Source. Author's Compilation from Sample of Academic Publications

Comparative studies have highlighted that individual Entrepreneurial Intentions have been empirically found to be higher in areas with lesser opportunities – essentially implying Entrepreneurial Intentions are lower in the developed world. This may contribute to the implication that the underdeveloped regions of the world may have higher entrepreneurial potential. This may also be considered as a gap to be filled by future researchers.

Research Area

The collected sample was carefully scrutinized to bifurcate depending upon the major research theme. Since the initial research criterion for the collection of data was Entrepreneurial Intention, all the research publications collected revolved around the area. However, further classification was made based upon Entrepreneurial Intentions as a research area in general or Entrepreneurial Intentions leading from another area of interest.

The classification of research areas resulted in 15 research themes including general Entrepreneurial Intentions. The bifurcation of the publications based on Research Areas is elaborated in Figure 6.

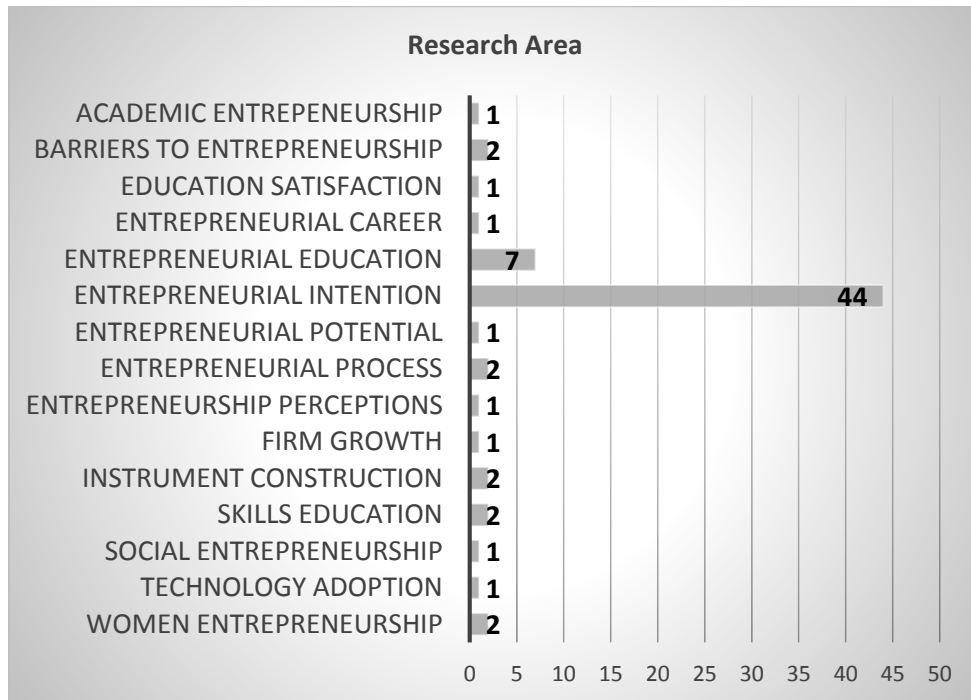
As anticipated, the research themes were inclined towards general Entrepreneurial Intention. However, one interesting finding is the interest of researchers towards Entrepreneurial Education leading to Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Base Research Model / Theory

Researchers generally venture into proposing a model specific to their own requirements. However, many researchers utilize the existing body of knowledge, which proposes models and theories already tried and tested. With reference to EI, the most predominant underpinning theory is the theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Figure 7 demonstrates other theories popular among researchers due to specified reasons.

FIGURE 6

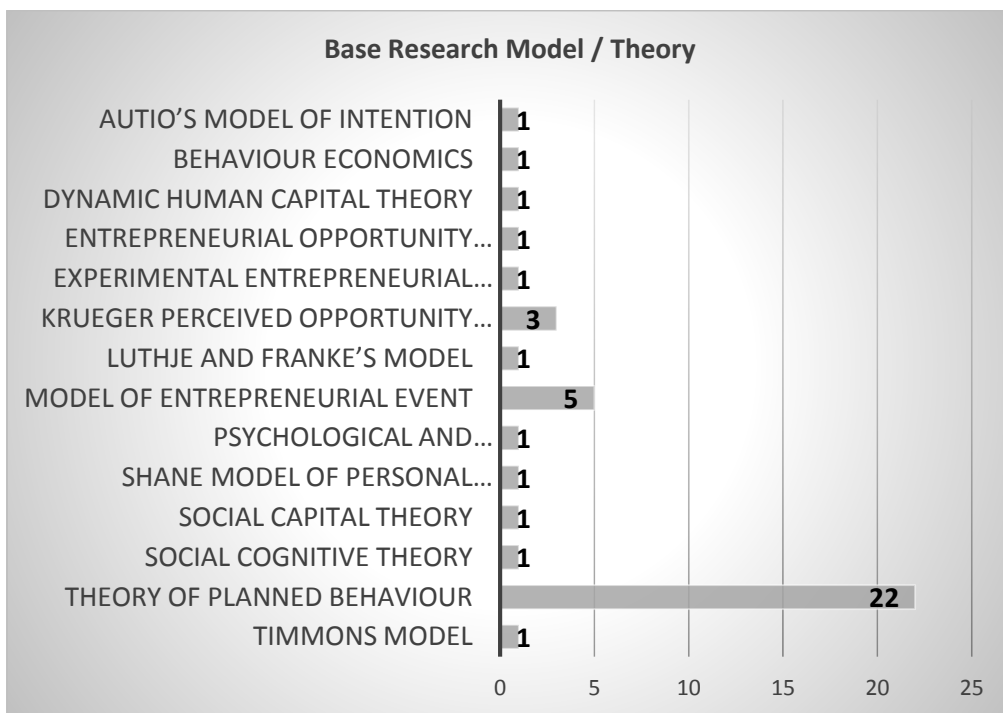
Sample Academic Publications Classified as per Subject Research Area



Source. Author's Compilation from Sample of Academic Publications

FIGURE 7

Sample Academic Publications Classified as per Base Research Model / Theory Used for Research



Source. Author's Compilation from Sample of Academic Publications

CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The current research can be considered as a census study, for reasons explained earlier, and therefore, the findings can be fully generalized to the population. However, the findings cannot be generalized to the larger universe of EI literature for obvious reasons.

The majority of the research papers are in the six closely related categories i.e. publication year, research type / methodology, journal, research area, research region and base theory / model. Following the publications annually, a trend may be witnessed leading to a surge in research on EI.

Additionally, the research areas highlight the current saturation of empirical research in general EI and hint towards the upcoming interest in the field of Entrepreneurial Education on EI. With many promising independent variables, and intervening variables yet to be introduced for an improved understanding. Furthermore, other areas like Academic Entrepreneurship, Skills Based Training and Entrepreneurial Skill Assessment, Women Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship are yet to be explored at greater length.

The contribution of research journals towards the field of Entrepreneurial Intention is another interesting review. The majority of the research publications originate from the “*Education & training*”, “*International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior*” and “*Research Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*”. These three journals account for 58% of the overall sample collected for this research. Future analysis of individual journals and their contribution towards the broad field Entrepreneurship and its sub-areas may highlight the historical analysis, initiations, rise and saturation of the research fields. This may additionally hint towards the new sub-areas of research, which will assist the novice researchers.

Furthermore, this research also highlights the major interest of EI research in Europe and other developed regions of the world. Though a few researchers have ventured into a comparative study of the different regions, a gap yet exists into evaluating EI in the developing and underdeveloped countries / regions of the world.

At the end, we can definitely state that EI has attracted significant research interest. Going by the past trend, it can be expected that research in this area will further increase in the future. There are many research areas within the field of EI which are yet to be explored to the fullest. A better understanding of all the variables in this field is essential to have a better understanding of the Entrepreneurial Potential of a country / region and essentially the economic growth and prosperity.

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