

Understanding the Entrepreneurship Motivations of ESL Students in Emerging Markets: A Case of Higher Institutions' Students in Pakistan

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Abstract

This research delves in understanding the entrepreneurship motivations of ESL students in emerging markets, focusing on higher education students in Pakistan. Through a qualitative approach, data was collected from twenty final-year students who were engaged in entrepreneurship practices and expressed a keen interest in starting their own ventures after completing their degrees. The study identified six prominent themes that drive these young individuals towards entrepreneurship: limited employment opportunities and economic insecurity, the desire for autonomy and independence, the importance of flexibility and work-life balance, and the pursuit of dreams and personal fulfillment. These insights have implications for policymakers, educators, and aspiring entrepreneurs alike. Policymakers can leverage these findings to design targeted initiatives that foster entrepreneurship, encourage economic growth, and create a supportive ecosystem for young entrepreneurs. Integrating entrepreneurship education into the curriculum can equip students with the skills and mindset necessary to embark on their entrepreneurial journeys confidently. Ultimately, this research contributes to our understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset among young individuals in emerging markets. By recognizing and nurturing the diverse motivations that drive these aspiring entrepreneurs, we can collectively empower them to make a meaningful and lasting impact on the world of business. As the world evolves, the entrepreneurial spirit of these young individuals will play a vital role in driving innovation, economic progress, and positive societal change.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurial Motivations; Higher Education; Qualitative Approach; ESL Students.*

1. Introduction

In recent years, emerging markets have witnessed a remarkable surge in entrepreneurial endeavors, propelled by a generation of young, ambitious, and innovative individuals who are undeterred by traditional norms (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). This newfound dynamism in these regions has

created an environment that fosters rapid growth, resilience, and profound economic transformation. The rise of these young entrepreneurs is a testament to the evolving global economy, where their contributions extend far beyond their own countries (Autio et al., 2013). They are becoming key players on the international business stage, exerting a significant influence on various sectors and industries. In this dynamic context, the motivations that underpin individuals' decisions to embark on entrepreneurial journeys become an area of critical significance (Deci & Ryan, 2013). In the realm of psychological exploration, the motivations that drive individuals to embark on entrepreneurial journeys have long captivated researchers and scholars alike (Ryan & Deci, 2020). This inquiry into the intricate interplay between human psychology and the entrepreneurial realm unveils a fascinating landscape of motivations, aspirations, and socio-economic contexts. This research endeavors to delve into a particularly intriguing subset of aspiring entrepreneurs, namely those who are English as a Second Language (ESL) students within the higher education institutions of Pakistan. Situating this study within the backdrop of an emerging market like Pakistan provides a unique and fertile ground to examine the intricate web of factors that drive entrepreneurial aspirations among ESL students (Park, 2019).

One of the primary drivers behind this entrepreneurial boom is the advancement of technology and increased connectivity (Akram et al., 2021). The widespread availability of the internet and smartphones has enabled aspiring entrepreneurs from even the most remote areas to access knowledge, resources, and global markets. Moreover, the ease of communication and collaboration across borders has facilitated cross-cultural exchanges and partnerships, leading to an accelerated pace of innovation and development (Troise et al., 2022).

Another essential factor contributing to the success of emerging market entrepreneurs is the changing attitudes towards risk-taking and failure. In the past, failure was often stigmatized, leading many potential entrepreneurs to avoid taking risks. However, in today's dynamic landscape, there is a growing recognition that failure is an inevitable part of the learning process (Li et al., 2020). This shift in mindset has emboldened young entrepreneurs to take calculated risks, learn from their experiences, and bounce back stronger, fostering a culture of resilience and continuous improvement.

Furthermore, governments and institutions have recognized the potential of these innovative minds and have been actively encouraging and supporting entrepreneurship through various initiatives, policies, and funding opportunities. As a result, the startup ecosystem in emerging markets has flourished, attracting investors and fostering a supportive network for young entrepreneurs to thrive (Martínez-González et al., 2019). The impact of these entrepreneurial endeavors is multifaceted. Economically, they have been instrumental in generating employment opportunities, driving economic growth, and fostering a competitive business environment. Socially, they have been agents of change, challenging societal norms and promoting inclusivity and diversity in the workforce. Additionally, many of these entrepreneurs are deeply committed to addressing social and environmental challenges through their ventures, contributing to sustainable development and positive change (Khoshmaram et al., 2020).

As the influence of emerging market entrepreneurs continues to grow, established businesses and multinational corporations are taking note. Collaborations and partnerships between startups and established companies have become more prevalent, enabling the exchange of knowledge, resources, and innovative ideas. In this way, the interplay between traditional business entities and the agility of startups is creating a synergetic ecosystem that benefits all parties involved (Pidduck et al., 2023).

While there are undoubtedly challenges that come with this rapid growth of entrepreneurship in emerging markets, such as regulatory hurdles, infrastructure limitations, and access to funding, the overall trajectory is undeniably positive. As more young visionaries take the plunge into the world of entrepreneurship, they are reshaping the future not only of their own nations but also of the global economy (Rudhumbu et al., 2020). Leaders may influence with their words (Ramzan et al., 2023). Their ability to adapt, innovate, and envision novel solutions is ushering in a new era of entrepreneurship that knows no borders and holds the potential to address some of the world's most pressing challenges. As a result, the impact of these entrepreneurs' endeavors is likely to reverberate for generations to come.

The rationale behind investigating the entrepreneurship motivations of ESL students in Pakistan's higher education institutions stems from the recognition of the multifaceted interplay between linguistic nuances, cultural contexts, educational environments, and prevailing economic opportunities. Bittered interaction disturb students and expressive writing may help them grow and eventually learn from opportunities by sharpening skills (Javaid & Mahmood, 2023). This research seeks to uncover the complex and often subtle influences that collectively shape the entrepreneurial ambitions of ESL students. By exploring the role of language proficiency, cultural backgrounds, institutional support systems, and the broader economic landscape, this study aims to construct a comprehensive framework that encapsulates the motivations of ESL students venturing into entrepreneurship.

While previous studies have explored various aspects of entrepreneurship in both developed and developing economies, there remains a relative dearth of research dedicated to comprehending the unique challenges and opportunities faced by young ESL students entrepreneurs in Pakistan. The country's emerging market status, coupled with its vast youth population, presents a compelling case for examining the aspirations, obstacles, and socio-cultural factors that shape the entrepreneurial mindset in this context. Social media and cultural factors affects motivation level of students (Ramzan et al., 2023).

The primary objective of this study is to shed light on the key drivers that inspire young individuals in Pakistani higher institutions to embark on entrepreneurial journeys. Additionally, the research aims to uncover the specific sectors and industries that capture their interest, the role of formal education in nurturing their entrepreneurial skills, and the support mechanisms they seek or lack throughout their entrepreneurial ventures.

The significance of focusing on the motivations of ESL students in Pakistan lies not only in its academic implications but also in its practical applications. By shedding light on the intricate interconnections of linguistic diversity, cultural perspectives, and economic imperatives, this research enriches the ongoing discourse on entrepreneurship within emerging markets. The insights garnered from this study can potentially contribute to a deeper understanding of the distinctive blend of factors that trigger entrepreneurial intentions among ESL students. Furthermore, these findings can provide valuable guidance to educational institutions, policymakers, and entrepreneurial support organizations, enabling them to tailor strategies that effectively nurture and harness the latent entrepreneurial potential within ESL students. This, in turn, holds the promise of fostering enhanced economic growth and innovation within the unique contours of Pakistan's emerging market landscape.

The findings of this research hold immense potential in informing policymakers, educators, and other

stakeholders about the ways in which they can foster a conducive environment for young entrepreneurs. Ultimately, by unraveling the factors that drive the entrepreneurial enthusiasm among students in Pakistan's higher institutions, we aspire to contribute to the broader discourse on nurturing innovation and economic growth in emerging markets.

2. Methodology

The present study employed a qualitative research approach to garner a comprehensive and insightful understanding of the motivations and aspirations that drive young ESL students entrepreneurs in emerging markets. To achieve this, focus group discussions were chosen as the primary method for data collection, in alignment with the recommendations of prominent researchers like Creswell and Poth (2016). The decision to employ focus groups in this exploratory research was well-founded, as it is regarded as the most suitable data collection technique for delving into the complexities of the entrepreneurial mindset among respondents.

Focus group interviews offer a dynamic and interactive platform that encourages participants to openly share their thoughts and experiences. By engaging in group discussions, respondents benefit from the diverse perspectives and ideas shared by their peers, fostering a rich exchange of insights that might not be elicited through individual-specific interviews (Hennink, 2013). This participatory nature of focus group discussions creates a stimulating environment that allows for a deeper exploration of the participants' entrepreneurial motivations and aspirations.

3. Sample and data collection

The selection of participants for this research aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial motivation among ESL students in various higher educational institutions within Lahore. Employing a purposive sampling technique, a total of eighteen (18) final year students, aged between 20 and 35, who expressed a keen interest in initiating their own ventures after completing their degrees, were purposefully chosen to form two distinct groups. Each group comprised nine (9) participants, resulting in a total of twenty respondents for the study.

To facilitate an in-depth exploration of the participants' motivations, two separate focus group discussions were conducted, with each discussion spanning a duration of sixty (60) to ninety (90) minutes. During these sessions, respondents were encouraged to share detailed information about the factors that influenced their decision to embark on entrepreneurial endeavors. In order to maintain accuracy and comprehensiveness, the discussions within both groups were audio recorded with the explicit consent of the participants. This ensured that no valuable insights or perspectives were missed during the data collection process.

In addition to exploring entrepreneurial motivations, the researcher also collected pertinent demographic information from each participant, including age, gender, and level of education (see table 1). This demographic data was essential in creating a comprehensive profile of the participants, thereby enhancing the richness and depth of the research findings.

Table 1. Demographic information

Participants	Age	Gender	Academic Field	Level of Education
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1	22	Female	Business	Bachelor's Degree
2	24	Male	Engineering	Bachelor's Degree
3	21	Female	Computer Science	Bachelor's Degree
4	28	Male	Economics	Master's Degree
5	23	Male	Marketing	Bachelor's Degree
6	25	Female	Finance	Master's Degree
7	30	Male	Business	Master's Degree
8	26	Female	Psychology	Bachelor's Degree
9	31	Male	Engineering	Master's Degree
10	29	Female	Computer Science	Master's Degree
11	27	Male	Marketing	Bachelor's Degree
12	32	Female	Finance	Master's Degree
13	30	Male	Economics	Bachelor's Degree
14	33	Female	Business	Master's Degree
15	31	Male	Computer Science	Master's Degree
16	34	Female	Engineering	Bachelor's Degree
17	32	Male	Psychology	Bachelor's Degree
18	35	Female	Finance	Master's Degree

4. Data analysis

The data obtained from the recorded interviews underwent a rigorous and meticulous process to ensure its accuracy and comprehensiveness. Initially, a professional transcription service provider transcribed the recorded data, and to enhance reliability, two researchers independently reviewed and cross-checked the transcriptions. Subsequently, the transcribed data underwent a systematic coding and interpretation process, drawing upon the guidelines outlined by Clarke et al. (2015). Moreover, to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the data, each transcription was thoroughly examined and analyzed. The two researchers responsible for coding meticulously organized the data, taking into account the specific questions posed during the interviews. Employing a line-by-line approach, the

data was methodically coded, whereby similar responses were grouped together, facilitating the identification of recurring patterns and themes.

Additionally, the researchers computed the frequencies of commonalities within the coded data, affording them a quantitative perspective to complement the qualitative analysis. In the pursuit of accuracy and consistency, the researchers diligently ensured that the content coded under each thematic category appropriately represented the essence of the participants' responses.

In instances where differences in coding emerged, the researchers engaged in extensive discussions to resolve any discrepancies and arrive at a consensus. These deliberations served to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, reinforcing the credibility of the interpretations drawn from the data. Through this comprehensive and rigorous data analysis process, the study sought to derive meaningful insights into the motivations and aspirations of the young entrepreneurs in the sample. By meticulously transcribing, coding, and interpreting the data, the research aimed to present a nuanced and well-supported exploration of the factors influencing entrepreneurial endeavors among higher education students in Pakistan's emerging market context.

5. Results

After analyzing the data, a rich tapestry of themes emerged, encompassing a diverse array of insights and perspectives.

1. Self-Employment as an Alternative Path

A prevailing sentiment among the majority of the students in this study revolved around the limited employment opportunities prevailing in Pakistan. This scarcity of viable career options acted as a major impetus for many participants to consider entrepreneurship as a viable and attractive alternative to traditional employment paths. Despite boasting commendable academic records, the students expressed genuine concerns regarding the prospects of securing stable and fulfilling professional careers. A sense of uncertainty loomed over the minds of these young individuals, particularly as they observed their seniors grappling with unemployment. Witnessing the struggles of their predecessors provided a stark glimpse into the realities of the job market and led them to contemplate their own future prospects. Consequently, the prospect of self-employment emerged as an appealing avenue, offering a chance to take control of their destinies and forge their own paths in the business landscape. As one of the students, KL, articulated:

The inspiration to embark on an entrepreneurial journey was deeply rooted in the observation of senior peers facing unemployment challenges. This observation served as a powerful catalyst, motivating me to venture into self-employment with the hope of evading similar uncertainties and carving out a distinctive career trajectory.

This prevailing sentiment underscores the significance of entrepreneurial pursuits as a proactive response to the prevailing job market dynamics in Pakistan. It exemplifies how the allure of self-employment serves not only as a means of livelihood but also as a means of empowerment and agency for these ambitious young individuals. As they set forth on this entrepreneurial voyage, they seek to chart a course of their own, navigating the waters of uncertainty with the determination to create a promising and fulfilling professional future.

A significant number of respondents expressed their concerns about the limited access to skillful degrees, which they believe hinders their prospects of securing suitable and fulfilling employment opportunities. This perspective, highlighted by one of the students, sheds light on the impact of this perceived deficiency in specialized qualifications on their employability and career prospects. The sentiments shared by these participants underscore the critical role that skillful degrees play in today's competitive job market. They perceive a lack of such qualifications as a substantial barrier that impedes their ability to access promising and rewarding job positions. This realization has engendered a sense of uncertainty and apprehension among these young individuals, as they navigate the complexities of building a successful professional trajectory. As elucidated by one of the students:

I lack skillful degrees, which significantly hinders my ability to secure reasonable job opportunities. This perceived deficiency in specialized qualifications has become a major obstacle, generating a sense of uncertainty and concern regarding my future career prospects. As I reflect on the competitive job market, it becomes increasingly apparent that possessing skillful degrees is paramount in accessing promising and fulfilling employment positions.

2. Financial benefits

Several participants in the study drew a connection between entrepreneurship and pursuing it as a part-time venture to address their financial needs while alleviating the burden on their parents. The sentiments expressed by these respondents reflect a thoughtful approach to balancing financial independence and personal responsibility. One student, in particular, shared their perspective on this matter.

I take entrepreneurship as a part-time endeavor. I believe it serves as a pragmatic solution to address my financial requirements without solely relying on parental support. By engaging myself in self-employment I try to provide relieving my family of additional financial pressures.

Entrepreneurship emerged as a prominent avenue for some respondents to fulfill their family's living costs, as revealed in the insights gathered during the study. This crucial link between entrepreneurship and providing for their family's financial needs highlights the multifaceted motivations that drive these young individuals to venture into the world of business. The student's report shed light on the profound impact of entrepreneurship in alleviating the financial burdens faced by their family. A student, TR mentioned:

I perceive entrepreneurship as a pragmatic solution to fulfill my family's living costs. Through my entrepreneurial pursuits, I aim to not only secure my own livelihood but also to alleviate the financial pressures faced by my family. By embracing the challenges and opportunities that come with entrepreneurship, I seek to create a positive impact on the lives of my family members and contribute to their overall well-being.

As per the insights gathered from some respondents, traditional jobs do not offer sufficient financial returns, leading them to consider alternative options. Specifically, they perceive self-business or entrepreneurship as a pathway that holds the potential to provide the desired level of financial security and prosperity. The student, in particular, shared their perspective on this matter. The prevailing sentiment among these individuals revolves around the limitations they perceive in conventional job

opportunities, with concerns over inadequate compensation being a significant factor. The allure of entrepreneurship lies in the promise of greater financial rewards and the ability to control one's income based on the success and growth of their own venture.

This desire for financial independence and improved earning potential fuels their aspiration to start their own business. By embracing entrepreneurship, they envision a world of possibilities where their hard work and dedication directly translate into financial gains, unrestricted by the boundaries of fixed salaries or limited job positions. A student, PR mentioned:

I believe that traditional jobs do not provide sufficient financial returns. However, I see self-business as a viable option that can offer the level of financial security I desire. That's why I want to start my own business. With entrepreneurship, there's the potential for greater financial rewards, and I can control my income based on the success of my own venture. I see it as an opportunity to break free from fixed salaries and limited job positions.

3. Autonomy

Autonomy emerges as a highly significant and influential factor motivating the participants in this study. Its importance extends beyond its role in driving entrepreneurial aspirations; it also plays a pivotal role in fulfilling a range of other desires for these individuals. The sentiment expressed by some participants is that they feel themselves unsuitable for traditional jobs, where they would have to work under the pressures imposed by others. This realization has led them to the resolute decision of pursuing entrepreneurship and envisioning their future career within the realm of business ownership. The desire for autonomy looms large in the hearts of these aspiring entrepreneurs. They yearn for the freedom to chart their own course, make independent decisions, and shape their destiny according to their vision. For them, the prospect of being their own boss not only translates into greater control over their work but also holds the promise of a more fulfilling and personally meaningful career. As one of the students, KL, articulated:

I find autonomy to be an incredibly important factor that motivates me. It holds significant influence not only in driving my entrepreneurial aspirations but also in fulfilling other desires I have in life. Personally, I feel that traditional jobs are not suitable for me because I am not comfortable working under the pressures imposed by others. This realization has led me to the firm decision of wanting to run my own business and envisioning my career path within the realm of entrepreneurship.

Similarly, another student reported:

The desire for autonomy is deeply rooted in my heart. I yearn for the freedom to chart my own course, make independent decisions, and shape my destiny according to my vision. The prospect of being my own boss holds immense appeal as it means greater control over my work and the ability to create a more fulfilling and personally meaningful career.

In addition, as per the insights shared by some respondents, the limitations of a paid job become apparent when one cannot fully enjoy the authority to carry out tasks according to their own desires. This sentiment was vividly expressed by one of the students, shedding light on the significance of autonomy in their career considerations. The participant articulated their belief that traditional paid jobs often come with constraints, where decisions are bound by organizational hierarchies and policies.

In such settings, they find themselves restricted in pursuing tasks or projects that align with their unique vision and passions. This lack of autonomy can stifle creativity and hinder personal growth, prompting them to seek an alternative path. A student, PR mentioned:

In my view, the limitations of a paid job become evident when one cannot enjoy the full authority to carry out tasks as per their own desires. This is something I strongly believe in and has influenced my career considerations. In traditional paid jobs, decisions are often bound by organizational hierarchies and policies, which can restrict me from pursuing tasks or projects aligned with my unique vision and passions.

4. Convenience

The participants in the study frequently cited convenience and flexibility of time as a compelling reason for their inclination towards entrepreneurship. The allure of being able to manage their own schedule and work at their own pace resonates strongly with these individuals, and they express a strong desire for the freedom that self-employment offers. A student's statement provides valuable insights into this aspect of their entrepreneurial aspirations. According to a student,

I am drawn to entrepreneurship because of the convenience and flexibility it provides. In my view, traditional jobs often come with rigid working hours and fixed schedules that may not align with my individual preferences or personal commitments. However, self-employment offers an alluring prospect of tailoring my work hours to suit my lifestyle, allowing me to strike a harmonious balance between my professional pursuits and personal life.

Similarly, another student reported:

Through entrepreneurship, I envision a future where I can have more control over my time and schedule, which fosters a sense of fulfillment and empowers me to design my career on my own terms. This level of autonomy in managing my time allows me to be more productive and maintain a healthy work-life balance, which is essential for my overall well-being.

Several respondents emphasized that the issue of obtaining leave in a traditional job poses a significant concern when needed. This sentiment was eloquently expressed by one of the students, shedding light on the importance of flexibility and autonomy in their career considerations. According to the student, the rigidity of leave policies in conventional jobs can become a major hurdle, especially when unforeseen personal or family commitments arise. The lack of flexibility in taking time off can create undue stress and challenges, impacting their ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. A participant, AS mentioned:

I believe that the inflexibility of obtaining leave in a traditional job is a significant concern. This issue was something I highlighted during the study. The rigidity of leave policies can be challenging, especially when unexpected personal or family commitments arise. It can create stress and difficulties in maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

5. Self-employment skills

As per the insights shared by some respondents, a prevailing belief in possessing good entrepreneurial skills serves as a compelling motivation for their desire to run their own business. This perspective

was eloquently expressed by one of the students, highlighting the significance of self-confidence and self-assurance in their entrepreneurial aspirations.

I firmly believe in my possession of good entrepreneurial skills, which is a major driving force behind my desire to run my own business. This perspective is something I shared during the study. Having strong entrepreneurial abilities instills in me a sense of empowerment and self-assurance, motivating me to take charge of my own work and pursue my entrepreneurial aspirations.

Similarly, another student reported:

My belief in my entrepreneurial potential not only boosts my self-esteem but also fuels my passion to create a business venture that aligns with my unique skills and strengths. It serves as a guiding light, urging me to embrace the challenges and uncertainties that come with entrepreneurship, knowing that I have the capacity to navigate the dynamic landscape of business.

6. Career motivation

Among the respondents, a significant group found their motivation to start their own business rooted in their dreams and aspirations. For them, the vision of establishing a business was not merely a short-term pursuit but a lifelong commitment. Their entrepreneurial journey was driven by an ardent desire to turn their dreams into reality, and the pursuit of fulfilling their own aspirations emerged as a crucial motivational factor behind their entrepreneurial endeavors. A participant, KS mentioned:

I was motivated by my dreams to start my own business, and my intention is to establish a business that lasts a lifetime. For me, it's not just about earning money; fulfilling my own dream is a crucial motivational factor in starting my own business. While I recognize the importance of money and other practical aspects of life, the fulfillment of my dreams holds immense significance.

Similarly, another student reported:

The vision of entrepreneurship goes beyond mere financial gain; it's about turning my dreams and aspirations into a tangible reality. By starting my own business, I aim to create something deeply meaningful and personally fulfilling, aligning my career with my passions and creative visions.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study align with previous research on entrepreneurial motivations, particularly in emerging markets. Limited employment opportunities and economic insecurity have been commonly cited as key drivers for individuals to explore entrepreneurship as a viable career path (Simón-Moya et al., 2014). In the context of Pakistan, where the job market may be constrained for recent graduates, the allure of self-employment becomes more apparent. The need for financial independence and the desire to create one's own opportunities resonate with the experiences of young entrepreneurs in other emerging economies as well (Todeschini et al., 2017). Teachers should be mindful enough to lead them (Javaid et al., 2023).

Moreover, the significance of autonomy and independence in motivating individuals to become entrepreneurs is consistent with existing literature. Autonomy has been recognized as a crucial factor for entrepreneurial ventures, empowering individuals to make independent decisions and shape their businesses according to their vision and values (Hmieleski & Corbett, 2008). This resonates with the findings from our study, where participants expressed a strong aversion to traditional jobs, highlighting their preference for self-determination and control over their work.

The theme of flexibility and work-life balance aligns with research that emphasizes the importance of work-life integration in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs often seek greater flexibility in managing their schedules to balance personal and professional commitments (Chowdhury et al., 2015). Psychological factors (Ikramullah et al., 2023) and emotions affect ESL student's experience (Javaid et al., 2023). Collaborative strategies and engagement help ESL students manage well (Ramzan et al., 2023). The recognition of the constraints posed by rigid leave policies in traditional jobs further emphasizes the value of entrepreneurship as a means to achieve greater control over one's time and achieve a more harmonious work-life balance (Brush et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the pursuit of dreams and personal fulfillment has been acknowledged as a significant factor driving entrepreneurial aspirations (Williamson et al., 2022). This intrinsic motivation to create something meaningful and personally fulfilling aligns with the concept of "passion-driven entrepreneurship," where individuals are driven by a deep desire to align their careers with their passions and creative visions (Omoredede, 2014). Quality of life gets improved through social support (Adeeb et al., 2017) and social adjustments (Maqbool et al., 2021). The findings from our study demonstrate that entrepreneurship can serve as a platform for young individuals to turn their aspirations into reality and find fulfillment beyond financial gains.

The implications of our study are in line with previous research on the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports and encourages aspiring entrepreneurs. Policymakers can draw insights from these motivations to design targeted initiatives that promote entrepreneurship, stimulate economic growth, and create job opportunities (Kuvshnikov & Kuvshnikov, 2023). Resilient people grow more and overcome challenges regarding health and others (Riaz et al., 2021). Integrating entrepreneurship education into the curriculum, as suggested by our findings, can equip students with the necessary skills and mindset to embark on entrepreneurial journeys (Troise et al., 2022).

In sum, our study contributes to the growing body of literature on entrepreneurial motivations in emerging markets, particularly among young individuals in Pakistan. The themes of limited employment opportunities, autonomy, flexibility, and the pursuit of dreams align with existing research, emphasizing the universal nature of these motivational factors. By linking our findings to previous literature, we strengthen the understanding of the multifaceted motivations that drive young entrepreneurs and underscore the importance of creating a conducive environment to support their aspirations and contributions to economic and societal development.

7. Conclusions

This research provides valuable insights into the motivations and aspirations of young ESL students entrepreneurs in emerging markets, with a specific focus on higher education students in Pakistan. The findings illuminate six key themes that drive these individuals towards entrepreneurship: limited

employment opportunities and economic insecurity, the desire for autonomy and independence, the importance of flexibility and work-life balance, and the pursuit of dreams and personal fulfillment. This research contributes to the understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset among young individuals in emerging markets, offering valuable insights into the transformative power of entrepreneurship in shaping careers and fulfilling personal aspirations. As the world continues to evolve, the entrepreneurial spirit of these young individuals will play a pivotal role in driving innovation, economic progress, and positive societal impact. Through recognizing and nurturing their motivations, we can collectively empower the next generation of enterprising individuals ready to make a meaningful and lasting mark on the world of business.

8. Implications

The implications of these findings extend to various stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, and aspiring entrepreneurs. Policymakers can leverage these insights to design targeted initiatives that nurture entrepreneurship, stimulate economic growth, and create a conducive environment for aspiring entrepreneurs to flourish. Integrating entrepreneurship education into the curriculum can equip students with the necessary skills and mindset to embark on entrepreneurial journeys confidently.

For aspiring entrepreneurs, this study serves as a source of inspiration and guidance, highlighting the diverse motivations that drive successful entrepreneurial ventures. By recognizing the significance of these themes, aspiring entrepreneurs can embrace their unique journey and navigate challenges with greater resilience and determination.

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