Explaining entrepreneurial intentions in the Caribbean

Dwayne Devonish, Philmore Alleyne, Wayne Charles-Soverall, Ayanna Young Marshall and Paul Pounder

Department of Management Studies, University of the West Indies, Bridgetown, Barbados, West Indies

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of the paper is to highlight the need for Caribbean scholarship to advance and test social psychological models that speak to current entrepreneurial realities on the ground which have implications for theory, education, practice and public policy. It tests a revised entrepreneurial intentions-based model by examining the impact of several socio-cognitive predictors.

Design/methodology/approach – Using a structural equation modelling approach, a revised model of entrepreneurial intentions is tested based on a survey of 376 university students from a Caribbean university.

Findings – The chi square difference results reveal that when compared with the proposed (revised) model, a previous model advanced by Krueger is found to be the most suitable model in explaining entrepreneurial intentions.

Research limitations/implications – The cross-sectional design of the study does not permit causal statements to be made regarding the variables examined. There is a call for longitudinal research to further examine the causal links between relevant variables in entrepreneurial models.

Practical implications – This paper has strong practical value in that the results can assist students, educators, and present entrepreneurs in understanding the dynamics and processes involved in entrepreneurial decision-making. This understanding can promote the development and maintenance of further entrepreneurial ventures in the Caribbean.

Originality/value – The paper also has a strong theoretical value as it relies on several socio-cognitive explanations of human behaviour, and seeks to advance the theoretical field by using more rigorous analyses.

Keywords Barbados, Caribbean, Entrepreneurialism, Social psychology

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The perceived lack of entrepreneurial culture and the absence of a vibrant small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector in the Caribbean have inspired a search for explanations. Therefore seeking to understand entrepreneurial intentions, especially why and how entrepreneurs create new ventures, is a good point of departure. Entrepreneurial intention (Katz and Gartner, 1988) is defined as the search for information that can be used to help fulfill the goal of venture creation. Choo and Wong (2006, p. 49) argued that “the personal commitment of the would-be entrepreneur to found a business is a critical dimension of this search which has a significant impact on...”

The authors would like to thank Professor Eudine Barriteau for her insightful ideas and comments which provided the impetus for this project. The authors would also like to thank Mr Dion Greenidge for his expert advice concerning several aspects of this paper.
shaping entrepreneurial intentions”. Intentions are the single best predictor of
behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and individuals with intentions to start a business can be
identified and studied as they progress through the entrepreneurial process much more
readily than people without an initial intention. Thus, entrepreneurial intentions are
essential to understanding the dynamics of entrepreneurship because intentions
establish key initial characteristics for new organisations (Bird, 1988; Katz and

There has been a marked interest in the study of entrepreneurship and
entrepreneurial intentions in the Caribbean (e.g. Boxill, 1995; Boxill, 2003; Nurse and
Punnett, 2002; Small and McClean, 2002). Boxill (2003) contended that there is a
growing black entrepreneurial class in the Caribbean that merits further research and
this study seeks to add to the extant store of local knowledge to inform policy and
practice. Indeed, it is incumbent on policy makers to understand the key factors that
courage or impede the creation of start-ups. Using the lenses of entrepreneurial
intentionality as a basis for studying would-be entrepreneurs appears to be a sensible
approach and an appropriate point of departure.

The next section provides a general review of the literature on entrepreneurial
cognitions and intentions in order to identify recent strides in the field. Careful
attention is paid to the role of cognitive variables in current entrepreneurial
intentions-based models, and the importance of national culture as a factor that shapes
cognitions and intentions.

**Entrepreneurial cognitions and intentions**

There has been much progress in the study of entrepreneurial intentions in recent
years. Majority of these studies have been based on principles of cognitive psychology,
and (hence) have highlighted the important role of cognitions in the development of
intentions. Recently, Gaglio (2004) examined mental simulations and counterfactual
thinking as important cognitive processes that can aid students, as prospective
entrepreneurs, in identifying and developing feasible and innovative opportunities.
Thus, Gaglio (2004) demonstrated the importance of cognitive variables in the
entrepreneurial process in which prospective entrepreneurs can emerge and develop.
The work of Mitchell and others (Mitchell and Chesteen, 1995; Mitchell *et al.*, 2002;
Mitchell *et al.*, 2007) has also indicated that researchers need to pay attention to the
cognitive processes involved in the development of entrepreneurial intentions-based
models. In a recent paper, Mitchell *et al.* (2007) highlighted that three emerging
research questions central to the study of entrepreneurial cognitions are:

1. Why do some persons but not others choose to become entrepreneurs?
2. Why do some persons but not others recognise opportunities for new products
   or services that can be profitably exploited?
3. Why are some entrepreneurs so much more successful than others?

The first question is central to the current paper as it deals with those factors that are
responsible for persons developing entrepreneurial intentions, within a particular
cultural setting.

Most cognitive models of entrepreneurship have been empirically tested using
student samples. For example, Peterman and Kennedy (2003) found that
entrepreneurial education was an important factor in influencing students’ cognitive
processes of perceived feasibility and desirability associated with becoming entrepreneurs. Feasibility and desirability perceptions have been argued to be instrumental in fostering positive entrepreneurial intentions, especially within student populations (Krueger, 1993; Shapero and Sokol, 1982). Students samples have been deemed useful in entrepreneurship research as these samples “provide subjects who have yet to face important career decisions” (Krueger, 1993, p.11), and recommendations and strategies can be tailored for educational settings as a means of igniting entrepreneurial cognitions (in this pre-employment stage) among those who are about to pursue important career goals.

Regarding the impact of culture, Mitchell et al. (2002, p. 14) argued that the factors that influence venture creation will vary across cultures and “new venture subscripts, which are subsets of the major cognitive categories – arrangements, willingness, and ability cognitions – are expected to be culturally specific at the national level”. In the same study, they confirmed their proposition that entrepreneurial cognitions do vary by national culture, but they claimed that researchers in the field are still unclear about the overall significance of culture in the study of entrepreneurship. Hence, the present study addresses this concern by testing an existing entrepreneurial intentions-based model in a different cultural context.

It is worth mentioning here that current models of entrepreneurial intentions (e.g. Krueger, 1993) have been applied in more developed territories such as North America and Europe, but few (or none) have been examined in an area with markedly different socio-cultural norms and economic conditions such as the Caribbean. Brannback et al. (2007) highlighted the need for replication in order to advance scientific knowledge in the area. They claimed that the majority of intentionality studies on entrepreneurship were conducted in developed countries like the USA, and few studies have been done outside of this territory. Furthermore, it was claimed that intentions-based models are likely to vary across cultures and there is a need to test (challenge) current models of entrepreneurial intentions as a means of observing the robustness of current theories and advancing the field of entrepreneurship. Culture is said to play an important role in influencing entrepreneurship (Morrison, 2000).

Linan and Chen (2006), too, highlighted the importance of testing an intention-based entrepreneurial model (derived from the theory of planned behaviour) in territories with different cultural and social norms, since this approach can enhance current understanding of the true validity (and robustness) of the model (being tested) in the face of marked cultural differences. In the field of entrepreneurial intention, the Caribbean presents an under-researched population, and hence an opportunity for researchers to examine the true value of entrepreneurial models developed. Boxill (2003) identified the Caribbean as fertile ground for entrepreneurial research and called for new theoretical developments to explain (and improve) the poor development of entrepreneurial potential and businesses within this region. Hence, the present study will demonstrate the usefulness of a previously tested model in an under-tested population such as the Caribbean, and at the same time, will provide some insight into some of the factors that may be responsible for the current condition as it exists in the Caribbean.

Entrepreneurship in the Caribbean: understanding culture and context
Entrepreneurship in the Caribbean has been deficient. Data from a recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2007 study (Bosma et al., 2008) revealed that although many
middle- and low-income countries such as those in the Caribbean have high rates of early-stage entrepreneurial activity, these countries exhibited lower prevalence of high entrepreneurial growth expectations (i.e. high expectations that newly established businesses will increase in size in the future) when compared to high-income countries such as those in North America and Europe (Bosma et al., 2008). In middle and low-income countries such as those in the Caribbean, individuals were more likely to enter entrepreneurship as the only option to survive or to maintain their income, compared to those in higher income countries whose intentions to become entrepreneurs were based predominantly on a desire to be independent or to increase their income (Bosma et al., 2008). Other important findings from the GEM study revealed that:

- males and younger individuals in low-and middle-income, and high income countries were more likely to start their own business;
- perceived capabilities and opportunities regarding entrepreneurship were related to early-stage entrepreneurial activity; and
- perceptions of national (cultural) attitudes of entrepreneurship were related to early-stage entrepreneurship (Bosma et al., 2008).

Many sources have indicated that understanding the relevant contextual and cultural factors in the Caribbean can provide greater insight into the nature and dimensions of entrepreneurial activity in this region, and shed light on the findings derived from the GEM study cited above. For example, it was reported that countries in the Caribbean, compared to those in higher-income countries, have fewer opportunities for entrepreneurship, and higher-income countries were more likely to have opportunity-driven entrepreneurship (Bosma et al., 2008). The perceived lack of opportunities for entrepreneurship in the Caribbean was also shown to exist in another GEM study done in Jamaica (Skeete et al., 2007) where most respondents pointed to several contextual factors in Jamaica which limit opportunities for entrepreneurship. These included:

- the difficulty of accessing capital to fund new business start-ups (this is largely due to high lending rates and/or strict requirements to qualify for loans in various sectors in the country);
- limited exposure to entrepreneurship training and education in schools and tertiary institutions;
- limited tax benefits for local entrepreneurs in the countries (also, new businesses are taxed at the same rate as established businesses); and
- highly bureaucratic procedures associated with starting a business such as the number of activities involved and the time it takes to register a business or obtain a license.

The first contextual factor, access to capital, was highlighted as the greatest barrier to entrepreneurship in Jamaica. Knight and Hossain (2008) also highlighted that there are many deficiencies in the microfinancing sector in Barbados (another small developing country in the Caribbean) which adversely affect its ability to cater for (i.e. finance) low-income persons who are seeking to start their own businesses, or existing micro and small enterprises.
Knight and Hossain (2008) also pointed to other contextual factors inherent in the Barbadian culture such as:

- the negative social psychological effects of colonialism, slavery, and plantation economic structures on the management culture of the small and micro business sector;
- the relatively individualistic culture of Barbados; and
- a history of distrust and suspicion among businesses in the country.

These have been argued to contribute to the low levels of entrepreneurial activity in Barbados. Boxill (2003) and other Caribbean authors also highlighted that entrepreneurship in the Caribbean, especially among the black and poorer sections of the region, has suffered because of governments offering greater support to the traditional white elite sections of society, hostility from white businesses targeted at black businesses (Ryan, 1995), weak support from the black community and the absence of a supportive family network (Dans, 1995; Ryan and Barclay, 1992), and the content of current educational curriculum which is largely responsible for developing educated people who are job seekers rather than job creators (Dans and Mentore, 1995).

From a policy and legal perspective, Caribbean governments currently are recognising the need to develop systems and mechanisms in place to promote entrepreneurship in the territory. For example, Knight and Hossain (2008) cited that collaborative efforts between the private sector and the government in Barbados led to the development of several institutions which sought to offer different forms of assistance to aspiring and existing microentrepreneurs. These institutions ranged from those providing technical assistance and training for local microentrepreneurs (e.g. Barbados Agency for Micro Enterprise Development) to those providing counselling and business development loans to young potential entrepreneurs (e.g. Barbados Youth Business Trust and Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme). These authors also noted that several programmes, and institutional and legal bodies have been developed to offer further support to Barbadian entrepreneurs including the Small Business Act of Barbados which aims to provide a regulatory framework to encourage a vibrant entrepreneurial sector in the country.

Boxill (2003) claimed that there must be a strong appreciation of the structural and social psychological factors which form a context in which the status of entrepreneurship in the Caribbean resides. This consideration of context and culture in the Caribbean is essential for theory and model development in the study of entrepreneurship.

There are many dimensions that influence and shape entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial outcomes as evidenced earlier, and this study will explore some of these factors. In particular, these studies above highlighted the relevance of perceptions of existing opportunities for entrepreneurship (feasibility perceptions), entrepreneurial experience and education, and entrepreneurial intentions in the study of entrepreneurship in the Caribbean region. The contextual and cultural factors inherent in the Caribbean society have also reinforced the relevance of these factors in explaining why persons choose (or not choose) to start their own business.

It can be argued that the field of entrepreneurship is still seeking a unified definition and theory of entrepreneurial intentions and behaviour. Other scholars (e.g. Macmillan
and Katz, 1992) have contended that entrepreneurship research needs a conceptual framework that is grounded in well-established theory. Social psychology (in particular, the social cognitive perspective) offers a solid and useful framework from which we can begin to understand the processes involved in the formation of entrepreneurial intentions (Ajzen, 1987; Krueger, 2000), and it is envisaged that the intentions-based models examined in this study will add to such a framework. The next section presents a revised model, inspired by prior research (Krueger, 1993; Shapero and Sokol, 1982).

The proposed model and hypotheses
To date there is no social-cognitive model of entrepreneurial intentions that exists for the Caribbean. Moreover, there is no published study to date that has conceptually advanced or empirically tested the proposed model which includes the causal effects of prior exposure to entrepreneurial experiences, perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. The model represents an alternative explanation of entrepreneurial intentions using similar variables of previous models (Krueger, 1993; Shapero and Sokol, 1982). The model is based on a social-cognitive approach to the study of entrepreneurial intentions. It proposes that:

- prior exposure to entrepreneurial experiences (defined here as breadth of experience) will directly influence perceived feasibility;
- perceived feasibility will directly influence perceived desirability; and
- perceived desirability will directly influence entrepreneurial intentions.

Individuals with prior exposure to entrepreneurial activity are likely to demonstrate high feasibility perceptions due to that exposure. These perceptions will, in turn, positively influence the individual’s attitudes towards starting his or her own business (perceived desirability). Finally, these attitudes will influence his or her intentions to start a business.

The model is different from existing intention-based models of entrepreneurship because it examines a direct link from perceived feasibility to perceived desirability. Perceived feasibility has been defined as perceived self-efficacy in past studies, whereas perceived desirability has been defined as a personal attitude (e.g. Krueger, 2000). It is worth mentioning here that previous authors have argued that perceived self-efficacy is not the same as perceived feasibility, but others have claimed that perceived feasibility is conceptually associated with self-efficacy. For example, Krueger (2000), discussed the notion of perceived self-efficacy as a proxy for feasibility perceptions. This approach will be adopted in the current paper where perceived self-efficacy will be treated as a proxy for feasibility perceptions, as both constructs deal with perceptions of personal capability. Studies have shown that self-efficacy plays a relevant role in influencing career decisions among students in other literatures (e.g. Lent et al., 1994).

Previous and related social-cognitive models of entrepreneurial intentions assume that perceptions of feasibility and desirability emerge concurrently and independent of each other (e.g. Krueger, 1993; Krueger et al., 2000). However, the current model posits that perceptions of feasibility are likely to develop after prior exposure to entrepreneurial experiences (since these experiences can equip individuals with the necessary knowledge and efficacy beliefs to start a business) but before perceived
desirability. Hence, one can argue that perceived feasibility is an antecedent of perceptions of desirability. The discussion below will use prior empirical studies and conceptual arguments to justify these links in the overall proposed model.

**The link between entrepreneurial experience and perceived feasibility**

It has been argued that feasibility perceptions regarding entrepreneurship are influenced by prior exposure to entrepreneurial experiences. For example, Shapero and Sokol (1982) contended that prior exposure to entrepreneurial activity will have a positive effect on perceptions of feasibility (and perceived desirability). Krueger (1993) demonstrated in his study that breadth of entrepreneurial experiences significantly and directly influenced perceived feasibility, whereas the positiveness of these entrepreneurial experiences directly influenced perceived desirability.

Bandura (1994) posited that perceived self-efficacy can be a function of mastery and vicarious experiences. In particular, people who observe social models (e.g. parents or close friends) who succeed in certain tasks via sustained efforts are likely to develop strong beliefs about their capabilities to succeed in comparable tasks (Bandura, 1994). Hence, individuals who are exposed to entrepreneurial experiences (via role models) are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of self-efficacy (feasibility) than individuals with no such exposure. Zhao et al. (2005, p. 1266) claimed that “skills and performance strategies useful for the entrepreneurial role are likely to be acquired from previous experience”. In their study, Zhao et al. (2005) found that prior entrepreneurial experience had a positive and direct effect on entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Boyd and Vozikis (1994) argued that self-efficacy is a function of past experiences, some of which include a combination of direct and vicarious experiences.

Given the above arguments and empirical findings, it is logical to assert that prior entrepreneurial exposure will directly influence perceived feasibility:

**H1.** Prior entrepreneurial exposure will directly influence perceived feasibility

**The link between perceived feasibility and perceived desirability**

The unique contribution of the study lies in the proposed causal link between perceived feasibility and perceived desirability. There is no published study to date that examined the causal link between perceived feasibility and desirability. Studies have investigated these variables as independent mediators in entrepreneurial intentions-based models (Krueger, 1993; Krueger et al., 2000). However, there is conceptual and empirical rationale for establishing a direct link from perceived feasibility to perceived desirability, especially in the development of intentions-based models of entrepreneurial intentions. Under social learning theory, self-efficacy is believed to influence both affective (emotional) and cognitive (thinking) processes. Individuals with low self-efficacy doubt their capabilities and seek to avoid challenging and difficult tasks as they promote anxiety and other negative emotional reactions (Bandura, 1994). These individuals experience higher levels of distress when faced with difficult tasks and are thus more likely to avoid such tasks.

In other disciplines, self-efficacy beliefs have been found to have a direct effect on attitudes. In the field of education and information technology (IT), Wu and Tsai (2006) found that students’ computer attitudes are influenced by their perceived self-efficacy in computer usage. Furthermore, Compeau and Higgins (1995), using social cognitive theory, found that self-efficacy positively influenced computer users’ attitudes towards
computers, actual computer use, and levels of anxiety towards computer use. Furthermore, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) posits that along with perceived usefulness of technology, perceived ease of use (i.e. perceived feasibility or behavioural control) should predict attitudes towards IT usage (Davis et al., 1989). Empirical evidence has supported the TAM’s assumptions that perceived ease of use (feasibility perceptions) influenced attitudes which, in turn, influenced intentions (Davis et al., 1989; Lin, 2007).

Transferring this logic to the study of entrepreneurial intentions, it can be argued that an individual’s perceptions of feasibility (perceived self-efficacy) regarding entrepreneurial ventures are likely to influence his or her perceptions of desirability (attitudes) regarding these same ventures. A careful review of the literature on entrepreneurial intentions reveals some form of empirical support, albeit indirectly, for the proposed link. For example, Krueger and Dickson (1994), found that self-efficacy influenced opportunity and threat perceptions, and claimed that persons with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to see more opportunities in a risky situation (i.e. have a positive or optimistic perception). Moreover, Krueger and Dickson (1994) explained that self-efficacy plays an important role in influencing individuals’ perceptions and attitudes (based on the principles of social-cognitive theory), which provides even greater support for the proposed link.

Although perceived desirability and perceived feasibility have been treated as attitudinal variables in the past, Krueger (1993) offered a distinction. Perceived desirability refers to the degree of attractiveness one finds in starting one’s own business. According to Krueger (1993, p. 8), this variable “reflects one’s affect toward entrepreneurship”. On the other hand, perceived feasibility is the degree of personal competence one perceives in starting one’s own business. As mentioned previously, perceptions of self-efficacy can influence an individual’s affective (as well as cognitive) processes. It is logical to argue that the extent to which a person displays high feasibility perceptions regarding a new venture creation, he or she will exhibit more positive attitudes towards that initiative. It is important to note that it is also logical to assume that the link between feasibility and desirability perceptions may be bidirectional, however, based on existing conceptual and empirical arguments rooted in social cognitive theory, perceived feasibility will be treated as the antecedent variable (see Krueger and Dickson, 1994).

H2. Perceived feasibility will directly influence perceived desirability.

The link between perceived desirability and entrepreneurial intentions
Perceptions of desirability regarding entrepreneurship are attitudes towards entrepreneurship (Krueger, 1993, 2000). Based on the theory of planned behaviour (TPB; Ajzen, 1991), attitudes have a significant and direct effect on intentions.

Prior research has established a positive relationship between desirability perceptions and intentions to start a business. For example, Krueger (1993) tested Shapero’s conceptual model of entrepreneurial intentions and found that perceived desirability directly and positively influenced entrepreneurial intentions. Krueger et al. (2000) claimed that attitudes are particularly relevant to our understanding of how various exogenous factors (such as role models and prior experience) influence entrepreneurial intentions. In fact, it has been argued that attitudes constitute the very mechanism by which these exogenous factors can affect intentions to become an entrepreneur (Krueger...
Desirability perceptions, in the current study, represent an affective/attitudinal component that is influenced by perceptions of feasibility (i.e. perceived self-efficacy) and which, in turn, influences entrepreneurial intentions.

H3. Perceived desirability will directly influence entrepreneurial intentions.

**Structural equation modelling and the proposed model**

The proposed model is depicted in Figure 1. This model will be tested using the method of structural equation modelling (SEM). This method involves the simultaneous analysis of relationships between indicators and their respective latent variables (using confirmatory factor analyses) and posited causal relationships between latent variables (using latent path analysis). Previous studies on entrepreneurial intentions have examined their intentions-based models using only path analysis techniques via multiple regression (e.g. Krueger, 1993; Krueger et al., 2000). The current study is particularly relevant as it seeks to assess overall model fit using “model-fitting” SEM procedures (e.g. LISREL), incorporating both measurement and structural considerations (an area that has been ignored in intentionality studies on entrepreneurship). Path analysis procedures do not take into account measurement error when testing structural models. However, full latent SEM procedures can account for measurement error by developing latent constructs from multiple observed variables or indicators (Kline, 2005).

Kelloway (1998, p. 33) claimed that “given the problems inherent in assessing model fit, it is commonly suggested that models of interest be tested against reasonable alternative models”. Given this argument, the proposed model will be tested against two alternative models of entrepreneurial intentions. In Figure 2, this alternative model of entrepreneurial intentions is based on propositions advanced by Shapero and Sokol (1982) and tested by Krueger (1993). This model posits that perceptions such as perceived feasibility and perceived desirability are determined by exogenous factors such as personal and situational factors (in the current study, exposure to entrepreneurial experiences will be examined as an exogenous factor). These perceptions, in turn, influence entrepreneurial intentions. This model does not consider any direct link between the two types of perceptions (perceived desirability and perceived feasibility). Figure 3 presents a partially mediated model of entrepreneurial intentions.
intentions which represents a slight extension of the model in Figure 2. This model includes a direct path from entrepreneurial experiences to entrepreneurial intentions, suggesting that perceived feasibility and desirability partially mediate the relationship between exposure to entrepreneurial experiences and entrepreneurial intentions. Using chi square difference tests, the fits of these models will be compared against each other to establish the most plausible model of entrepreneurial intentions for the Caribbean.

**Significance of study**

This study on entrepreneurial intentions is significant in many ways. The two most important contributions of the study are:

**Notes:** It is important to note here that Krueger (1993) tested this model empirically as it was advanced by Shaper (1982). Propensity to act was included in the original model. This variable was not measured in the current study.
These contributions (and other areas of significance) are discussed in greater detail below.

First, there is no conceptual model of entrepreneurial intentions that exists for the developing countries which includes the causal effects of entrepreneurial experience, perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. One study among South African tertiary level students found significant relationships between student demographics and relevant entrepreneurial traits (Louw et al., 2003). Another study done in Barbados by Small and McClean (2002) was exploratory in nature and examined only differences in entrepreneurial intentions and attitudes based on gender, race and socialization, and exposure to entrepreneurial role models. The current study advances current knowledge and theory about entrepreneurial intentions, by going beyond demographic-based explanations to exploring the roles of several social-cognitive variables.

Second, the proposed model presents an alternative explanation of entrepreneurial intentions using similar variables of previous models (Krueger, 1993; Shapero and Sokol, 1982). The model proposes a causal link between perceived feasibility and perceived desirability which differs from previous intention-based models on entrepreneurial intentions. Since it has been shown that self-efficacy influences the behaviours that individuals choose to perform (Bandura, 1986), our study argues that this perceived self-efficacy will positively influence an individual’s attitudes towards starting his or her own business.

Third, the model will be tested using latent SEM procedures via LISREL. This area has been ignored in previous model-building attempts in the study of entrepreneurial intentions in most academic journals. Hence, the study endorses a strong methodological and analytical framework which offers a contribution to the existing body of knowledge regarding the measurement and analysis of entrepreneurial intentions-based models. SEM allows researchers to account for measurement errors in multi-indicator latent variables, while modeling relationships between these latent variables. Alternative or nested models will be compared to determine the best model of entrepreneurial intentions for the sample.

Finally, the results of this study have the potential to inform policy and practice about the underlying need for greater understanding of the issues associated with entrepreneurial activity and innovation and the factors that encourage or impede the creation of new ventures.

Method

Research setting: a brief profile of the current Caribbean business environment

In the Caribbean, Barbados is a small English-speaking island, situated northeast of Venezuela. It is densely populated with approximately 280,946 people over an area of 431 square kilometres (CIA, 2006). Formerly a colony of Britain, Barbados currently has a stable and democratic political society, with a private sector that includes a
vibrant financial services sector of both offshore and onshore businesses. Tourism is the main industry on which the country is highly dependent. More than two-thirds of the firms in the Barbados Industrial Census have less than 26 employees, which is a dominant finding in many countries. In fact, 75 to 85 per cent of all business activity in the Caribbean region is conducted by businesses with less than 26 employees. The sectors in which entrepreneurial activity is highly evident include food and agroprocessing, tourism and service related activities, marine and fishing, garments and handicraft, and emerging technologies. The overall business environment in the Caribbean region is characterised by a small and limited domestic market, non-availability or high cost of principal raw materials, high financial and labour costs, lack of coordination among organisations which were developed to support the entrepreneurial sector, and lack of information highlighting new opportunities for investment for the small- and medium-sized businesses (ILO, 2006).

Sample and data collection procedures
A total of 500 university students enrolled in a tertiary level education institution in Barbados were targeted as participants for the current study. Questionnaires were distributed to students to complete during periods before and after lecture and tutorial sessions. Students, who came from different academic faculties and departments across the campus, were informed about the nature and purpose of the study and confidentiality and anonymity were assured.

A total of 376 useable responses were obtained, indicating a relatively high response rate (75 per cent). Of these 376, 285 (76 per cent) were females and 92 (24 per cent) were males. Of the participants, 229 (61 per cent) were unemployed, 105 (28 per cent) were employed full-time, and 39 (11 per cent) were employed part-time. A total of 340 participants (91 per cent) were undergraduate students and 31 (9 per cent) were postgraduate students. Majority of the participants were Black (283; 77 per cent), 51 (14 per cent) participants were mixed race, 21 (6 per cent) were White, and 13 (3 per cent) were Indian. One-quarter of the sample (25 per cent) were in the “over $5,000” monthly income bracket, and the smallest proportion of the sample (11 per cent) fell in the “under $1,000” monthly income bracket. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 54 years, with an average age of 25.01 years (SD = 5.09).

Preliminary demographic analyses on entrepreneurial intentions revealed that there were no significant differences between males and females, between lower and higher income persons, and between younger and older persons. However, significant differences in intentions were found for race, where Blacks reported significantly higher entrepreneurial intentions than the other races.

Measures
A structured questionnaire was used as the main data collection tool in the current study. The first section on the questionnaire measured demographic characteristics of students such as gender, age, faculty, race, employment status and income. The second section of the questionnaire measured the main study variables that constructed the models tested here. These variables are discussed below.

Entrepreneurial intentions were based on a three-item index derived from a measure developed by Chen et al. (1998). A five-point Likert scale was used to measure responses to each item. A sample item included “How likely are you to become an
entrepreneur?”. The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.91, indicating acceptable internal consistency reliability.

Perceived feasibility and perceived desirability were derived from a list of pre-tested measures from Shapero and Sokol (1982). Consistent with the approach of Krueger (1993), five items were used to measure perceived feasibility, and three items were used to measure perceived desirability. A sample item on the perceived feasibility measure was “If you were to start your own business, how certain of success would you be?” (a semantic differential scale was used – “very certain of failing” to “very certain of success”). Items on the perceived desirability measure followed the question: “If you actually started your own business, how would you feel?” (a semantic differential scale was used – “I would hate doing it” to “I would love doing it”). The responses were anchored on a seven-point Likert scale. The Cronbach’s alphas for perceived desirability and perceived feasibility were 0.75 and 0.73, respectively. These alphas were deemed adequate.

Prior exposure to entrepreneurial experiences (referred here as entrepreneurial experience) was also derived from Shapero and Sokol’s (1982) list of pre-tested measures. Consistent with the approach of Krueger (1993), four items were used to measure entrepreneurial experience. These four items were used in Krueger’s (1993) study to measure breadth of entrepreneurial experience. A sample item included “Did you parents/guardians ever start a business?”. The items were scored on a dichotomous scale (0 = no, 1 = yes).

**Analytic method**

LISREL VIII, using the maximum likelihood method, was used to examine the theoretical models in the current study. Full latent modelling was employed to test the overall measurement model, the hypothesised model and the other alternative structural models. Entrepreneurial intentions (three indicators), perceived feasibility (five indicators) and perceived desirability (three indicators) were specified as latent endogenous variables. Entrepreneurial experience, the main exogenous variable, was measured using dichotomous indicators (0, 1). Parcelling was used to combine these dichotomous indicators into two parcels to serve as indicators for entrepreneurial experience. Coffman and MacCallum (2005, p. 239) argued that parcelling is appropriate for dichotomous variables because parcels, moreso than individual items, are likely to approximate a normal distribution:

If items are not normally distributed and they are combined to form parcels, the parcels may be more normally distributed than the original items […] Parcelling could also be used with dichotomous items, which obviously cannot be normally distributed. Parcels created from such items may approximate a normal distribution […] If it is assumed that the dichotomous items measure a continuous underlying construct, then combining the items into parcels creates parcels with a more differentiated scale and the parcels would tend to have higher communalities than the items.

Consistent with the two-step approach (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988), the overall measurement model was examined before estimating the structural portions of the overall model. The overall measurement model was tested using a confirmatory factor analysis of relationships among the latent variables and their respective indicators. Convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity, and overall reliability of the measurement model were examined. The unidimensionality of the measurement model was assessed by an examination of appropriate fit indices.
Since the chi square goodness-of-fit statistic is overly sensitive to sample size, other fit statistics were used to examine the fits of the models such as the comparative fit index (CFI), the non-normed fit index (NNFI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the Akaike information criterion (AIC), parsimony normed fit index (PNFI), and the parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI). The PNFI and PGFI statistics were used to compare the fits of competing models, taking into account the complexity of these models. CFI and NNFI statistics larger than 0.90 highlight evidence of adequate model fit (Kelloway, 1998). A RMSEA value less than 0.05 indicates a very good fit, and a value between 0.05 and 0.08 represents reasonable fit (Kelloway, 1998; Meyers et al., 2006). According to a number of SEM authors and theorists, RMSEA values below .08 indicate adequate fit, whereas values above 0.10 indicate unacceptable fit (Loehlin, 2004). Other fit indices such as the Root Mean Squares Residual (RMSR) and the Standardised Root Mean Residual (SRMR) were reported as these are useful relative fit indices for comparing competing models. The Akaike information criterion (AIC) was also reported to compare models on the basis of parsimony. The model with the smallest AIC is considered to be most suitable model when comparing different models (Kline, 2005).

SEM is considered to be a large-sample technique (Kline, 2005). Stevens (2002) recommended that there should be at least 15 cases per indicator in SEM research. A minimum sample size of 195 is required given that there are 13 indicators measured in the current study. The sample size for the current study was 376. Hence the ratio between the number of participants and the number of indicators was acceptable.

**Results**

*Testing the overall measurement model*

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among observed and latent variables were presented in Tables I and II, respectively. All variables were significantly and positively correlated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O. Var.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. EI1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. EI2</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. EI3</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. PF1</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. PF2</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. PF3</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. PF4</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. PF5</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. PD1</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. PD2</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. PD3</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. EE1</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. EE2</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** All correlation coefficients were statistically significant at 0.001. O. Var. = Observed variables; EI1, EI2 and EI2 = three indicators of entrepreneurial intentions; PF1, PF2, PF3, PF4 and PF5 = five indicators of perceived feasibility; PD1, PD2 and PD3 = three indicators of perceived desirability; EE1 and EE2 = two indicators of entrepreneurial experience.
The overall measurement model was examined first using confirmatory factor analysis before estimating the structural models. The validity and reliability of the measurement model were examined in detail. Convergent validity was tested based on an examination of factor loadings, average variance extracted estimates, and composite reliabilities. All factor loadings for each construct were statistically significant \( (p < 0.001) \). With the exception of entrepreneurial experience, factor loadings were above the recommended level of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2006). Composite reliabilities were deemed acceptable for the latent variables – perceived feasibility (0.73), perceived desirability (0.78) and entrepreneurial intentions (0.91). However, entrepreneurial experience had a low composite reliability estimate (0.32). The average variance extracted estimates, which indicate the amount of variance in the indicators explained by each latent construct, exceeded the recommended level of 0.50 for perceived desirability and entrepreneurial intentions. However, these estimates were low for entrepreneurial experience (0.20) and perceived feasibility (0.37). Discriminant validity was examined by comparing the average variance extracted estimates for each construct with the squared correlations between constructs (Hair et al., 2006). For perceived desirability and entrepreneurial intentions, their average variance extracted estimates were higher than their squared correlations, indicating adequate discriminate validity. However, this was not the case for perceived feasibility and entrepreneurial experience, as their average variance estimates were somewhat lower than their squared correlations. Nomological validity was deemed acceptable given that the correlations between variables were significant and in the expected direction.

The results revealed that fit of the measurement model was acceptable \( [X^2 (59) = 256.60, \ p < 0.001; \ RMSEA = 0.08, \ CFI = 0.96, \ NNFI = 0.95] \). Given the reasonable model fit of the measurement model, the structural models were subsequently estimated.

**Testing the structural models**

The hypothesised model (Model 1), the Shapero-Krueger model (Model 2), and the partially mediated model (Model 3; an extension of Model 2 with a direct path from entrepreneurial experience to entrepreneurial intentions) were estimated and compared against each other. Tables III and IV show the fit statistics for the measurement model and the three structural models. The model fit results revealed that both Model 2 \( [X^2_{\text{difference}}(1) = 51.09, \ p < 0.001 – Model \ 1] \) and Model 3 \( [X^2_{\text{difference}}(2) = 51.51, \ p < 0.001 – Model \ 1] \) showed a significant improvement in fit over Model 1 \( [X^2 (62) = 334.17, \ p < 0.001, \ RMSEA = 0.10, \ RMSR = 0.13, \ SRMR = 0.07, \ CFI = 0.95, \] \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L.Var.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. PD</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. EI</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. EE</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** All correlation coefficients were statistically significant at .001. L. Var. = Latent Variables; PF = Perceived Feasibility; PD = Perceived Desirability; EI = Entrepreneurial intentions; EE = Entrepreneurial experience

**Table II.** Intercorrelations among latent variables
NNFI = 0.94]. However, the fits for Model 2 and Model 3 did not differ significantly \(X^2_{\text{difference}}(1) = 0.42, \text{ns}\). Moreover, the AIC statistic was lower for Model 2 (343.08), compared with that found for Model 3 (344.66). Based on the principle of parsimony (Kelloway, 1998) and a comparison of PNFIs and PGFIs for each model, Model 2 (the Shapero-Krueger Model) was chosen as the more plausible model of the two. The overall fit statistics for Model 2 revealed adequate overall model fit \(X^2(61) = 283.08, p < 0.001; \text{RMSEA} = 0.08, \text{RMSR} = 0.12, \text{SRMR} = 0.06, \text{CFI} = 0.96, \text{NNFI} = 0.95\).

Structural coefficients for Model 2 were examined to determine the individual causal effects of latent factors in the model. Figure 4 shows a graphical representation of the model and its associated path estimates. Entrepreneurial experience had direct and positive effects on both perceived desirability (\(\beta = 0.74, p < 0.001\)) and perceived feasibility (\(\beta = 0.97, p < 0.001\)). In turn, perceived feasibility (\(\beta = 0.59, p < 0.001\)) and perceived desirability (\(\beta = 0.25, p < 0.001\)) had direct and positive effects on entrepreneurial intentions. Although the full model was not supported, \(H1\) (depicting a path from entrepreneurial experience to perceived feasibility), and \(H3\) (depicting a path from perceived desirability to intentions) were supported. However, \(H2\) which highlighted the proposed link between perceived desirability and feasibility was not empirically supported here.

It is interesting to note here that entrepreneurial experience had a stronger effect on perceived feasibility, and perceived feasibility had a stronger effect on entrepreneurial intentions, compared with perceived desirability. Sobel’s tests were used to examine the mediating roles of perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. The results of these tests revealed that both perceived feasibility and perceived desirability completely mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial experience and intentions. Hence, entrepreneurial experience indirectly (and not directly) influences entrepreneurial intentions via perceived feasibility and perceived desirability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table III.</th>
<th>Model fit statistics for measurement model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measurement model</td>
<td>(X^2) (df)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.M</td>
<td>256.60 (59)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural models</th>
<th>(X^2) (df)</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>RMSR</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>NNFI</th>
<th>PNFI</th>
<th>PGFI</th>
<th>AIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>334.17 (62)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>392.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>283.08 (61)</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>343.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td>282.66 (60)</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>344.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** M.M = Measurement Model; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; RMSR = Root mean square residual; SRMR = standardised root mean residual; CFI = comparative fit index; NNFI = non-normed fit index; PNFI = parsimony normed fit index; PGFI = parsimony goodness-of-fit index; AIC = Akaike information criterion
Discussion

The study sought to identify a plausible model of entrepreneurial intentions in the Caribbean. The SEM results revealed that the proposed model did not fit the data well compared with the other tested models. Ultimately, a model advanced by Shapero and Sokol (1982) and tested by Krueger (1993) was chosen as the most plausible model for the Caribbean. This model indicates that prior exposure to entrepreneurial experiences has a direct and positive effect on both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility and these perceptions, in turn, have a direct and positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions. Although the proposed model was deemed implausible, the alternative model (i.e. the Shapero-Krueger model) is an interesting and worthwhile contribution to existing entrepreneurship theory and practice, especially in a Caribbean context.

Overall, this research highlights the relevance and value of an existing model of entrepreneurial intentions. The relevance and value of this model are based on its robustness and applicability to the Caribbean region. The model also provides a parsimonious explanation for entrepreneurial intentions, simultaneously highlighting the significance of social psychological frameworks in this field. The model suggests that exposure to entrepreneurial experiences plays a major role in influencing intentions to become an entrepreneur, consistent with previous arguments and research (Krueger, 1993; Shapero, 1975; Shapero and Sokol, 1982). However, the effect of entrepreneurial experiences on intentions is not direct but mediated by personal perceptions of desirability and feasibility reinforcing the view that these personal beliefs represent the very mechanisms by which various exogenous factors such as entrepreneurial experience may influence entrepreneurial intentions (Krueger et al., 2000). Krueger (2000) argue these perceptions are learned, and exposing individuals to entrepreneurial role models and diverse entrepreneurial life experiences can lead to the development of these salient attitudes which are likely to translate into intentions and thus action.
The model is also consistent with findings highlighted in past research done on the Caribbean (Bosma \textit{et al.}, 2008; Skeete \textit{et al.}, 2007) which endorsed the importance of perceptions as key factors promoting entrepreneurial intentions and activity.

\textbf{Limitations, implications and future research}

Overall, the study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional nature of the study design does not permit causal generalisations to be made, and common method variance is likely to be a problem in this study. Second, the sample was based on university students in Barbados, and hence the generalisability of the findings is limited to this population in this Caribbean territory. Third, some aspects of validity and reliability of the measurement model were questionable based on the results of the confirmatory factor analysis. There was evidence of low discriminant validity and composite reliability for some of the latent variables tested in the models, which would present serious challenges. The AVE estimates for perceived feasibility and entrepreneurial experience were severely low (<0.40), and model re-specification did not point to better results. Readers are cautioned that low AVE estimates can bias structural relations among variables in SEM models. However, prior studies have relied on multiple regression analyses (without testing a measurement model) to test a similar entrepreneurial model and found results consistent with the ones found here (Krueger, 1993; Krueger \textit{et al.}, 2000). The failure to pre-test the instrument in this new culture may have contributed to these problems. Fourthly, the study failed to take into account other important variables that would allow this paper to make a substantial contribution above and beyond the existing literature. Perceived feasibility seems to be somewhat general in its measurement, and the unidimensional measure used here cannot capture the full construct domain of feasibility perceptions. Entrepreneurial experience, too, needs some measurement attention. It is advised that more specific (and multidimensional) measures of feasibility perceptions and entrepreneurial experience be developed in the future with better levels of reliability and validity. This is a task for future research.

There are several implications of the study’s findings regarding the chosen model. These implications touch various areas such as education and training, practitioners, governments, and research and theory. Given that the findings were derived from a developing country in the Caribbean, these implications were tailored to address the current situation in the Caribbean region.

First, it is important to highlight that the findings are in keeping with those from studies done on the Caribbean (e.g. Bosma \textit{et al.}, 2008; Skeete \textit{et al.}, 2007). These prior findings highlighted that many of the challenges affecting the status of entrepreneurship in the Caribbean and other developing countries relate to perceptions and attitudes of younger people. Hence, it is recommended that educators in the Caribbean should focus not only on developing skills and knowledge of young college students about the field of entrepreneurship but also concentrate on enhancing students’ perceptions of desirability and feasibility in this area. This can be achieved by:

- allowing successful entrepreneurs to share their experiences in classroom;
- providing internship opportunities for students to appreciate the “entrepreneurial experience” in well-established businesses; and
dispelling students’ fears about the “insurmountable” challenges associated with starting a business as well as any doubts they may have about their personal competencies in this area.

Caribbean educators play an important role in the region as they can provide the opportunities for students to appreciate the “entrepreneurial experience” (through repeated exposure to entrepreneurial role models), as well as assist students in developing positive beliefs and feelings of competency about starting a business. In relation to arguments made by Danss and Mentore (1995), educators should seek to review and modify the content nature of the educational curriculum in the Caribbean so as to encourage positive and supportive perceptions and attitudes of younger people towards entrepreneurship in the region.

Second, Boxill (2003) highlighted that there is a weak support network among black entrepreneurs in the Caribbean region. In line with the findings of the study, Caribbean entrepreneurs and other business professionals should seek ways to improve their current networking systems to support new ventures and maintain existing ones which would ultimately generate more positive perceptions about the entrepreneurial experience among potential and current entrepreneurs in the region. Furthermore, entrepreneurs in the region can apply this knowledge to influence their own children’s intentions to carry on the “family business” or to develop a new business in order to break the cycle of negativity towards entrepreneurship in the Caribbean.

Governments in the region can also play a major role in influencing present and future entrepreneurial ventures. This was noted by Knight and Hossain (2008) in their study. For example, the provision of financial assistance and training can enhance perceptions of feasibility and desirability among potential (and present) entrepreneurs. Caribbean governments should also provide adequate incentives (both monetary and non-monetary) to existing entrepreneurial ventures and their owners as a means of developing (and maintaining) positive entrepreneurial perceptions and enhancing the longevity of these businesses. Governmental initiatives should also be developed to inspire and assist new or potential ventures, as suggested by Knight and Hossain (2008).

Future researchers and theorists of entrepreneurship must appreciate the role of social psychological factors in the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. Future studies should also continue to test existing models of entrepreneurial intentions using better and robust methodological frameworks and analytical methods. As shown in the current study, SEM plays a major role in this area but this method relies on large samples (which are also important for generalisability). The field of entrepreneurship is still in need of a comprehensive model or theory integrating various factors derived from dispositional (e.g. the five factor model of personality), situational/contextual, and issue-contingent approaches. Longitudinal research is needed to determine whether variables in existing models may be causally related.

Future studies should investigate the role of entrepreneurial passion as a potential antecedent of intentions, especially in the face of cultures that do not foster entrepreneurial norms or motivations.

Studies have focused on academics’ (rather than students’) attitudes towards entrepreneurship (e.g. Bennett, 2006) and how these attitudes influenced their teaching styles regarding entrepreneurship courses in the classrooms. Future research should

Entrepreneurial intentions
continue on this path and also seek to understand how academia can enhance or impair students’ feasibility and desirability perceptions of entrepreneurship.

Future research should seek to further examine the roles of other cultural factors in the Caribbean. This can be approached in the form of qualitative research to explore the underlying mechanisms responsible for the development of entrepreneurial intentions within the region. Cross-cultural research is needed to examine whether culture is an important moderator in entrepreneurial intentions-based models.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance and robustness of an existing model advanced by Shapero and Sokol (1982) and tested by Krueger (1993). Although this model was found to be relevant to the Caribbean region, it is important that future Caribbean scholars seek to develop more indigenous and culturally relevant theories and models of entrepreneurial intentions.

References


Further reading


Corresponding author
Dwayne Devonish can be contacted at: devonishman13@hotmail.com

To purchase reprints of this article please e-mail: reprints@emeraldinsight.com
Or visit our web site for further details: www.emeraldinsight.com/reprints