

Assessment of Entrepreneurship Traits of English Translation Students: The Case of Islamic Azad Universities in Mazandaran Province

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Abstract

In recent decades, numerous studies in Iran have examined entrepreneurial traits among university students. However, the entrepreneurial potential of undergraduate English translation students remains unexplored. This study investigates the entrepreneurial characteristics of English translation students at Islamic Azad University branches in Mazandaran Province and identifies key obstacles hindering their development. A sample of 106 English translation students from four branches was selected through convenience sampling. Participants completed a validated questionnaire assessing traits such as risk-taking, internal locus of control, success orientation, pragmatism, challenge-seeking, intellectual vitality, and tolerance of ambiguity. Additionally, they engaged in semi-structured interviews after being informed about the study's objectives. Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA analysis indicated that entrepreneurial traits were generally average, with no significant differences across the four branches. Qualitative analysis of interview data highlighted personal, financial, legal, and educational barriers as primary entrepreneurial obstacles.

Keywords: English Translation, Entrepreneurship, Obstacles, Undergraduate Students

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Introduction

In recent decades, entrepreneurship as a desirable social behavior has been continuously promoted and expanded, prompting many developed and developing countries to approach it as a means of social transformation (Spinelli et al., 2014). In this regard, universities today have become central to training entrepreneurial students, supporting them in reaching their career goals by offering both entrepreneurship courses and research opportunities in the field (Kuratko, 2004; Nouri et al., 2022).

Although research in the field of entrepreneurship is broad, a significant area of study has consistently focused on the entrepreneurial tendencies of university students, who are widely considered a crucial potential source of entrepreneurship. This line of research operates on the basic premise that entrepreneurship consists of specific personality traits that can be cultivated (Soofi & Daylami, 2022). Among experts in the field, there is a well-established belief that entrepreneurial characteristics, such as locus of control and success-seeking behavior, can be enhanced through targeted training, even within a relatively short period (Nouri et al., 2022).

To delve deeper, these studies typically adopt a behavioral approach to examine personality traits that underpin entrepreneurial behavior. Within this theoretical framework, entrepreneurship is viewed as a set of behaviors that can be learned and nurtured. In other words, “no entrepreneur was born” (Drucker & Maciariello, 2014). This approach has also gained traction in Iran, where numerous studies on entrepreneurial tendencies have been conducted at various universities over the past decade (e.g., Hosseininia et al., 2017; Khalili Khezrabadi et al., 2023). Researchers believe that understanding students’ entrepreneurial orientation across disciplines can foster a more informed approach to entrepreneurship education.

Gaining insight into students’ entrepreneurial inclinations and capabilities post-graduation offers higher education institutions a clearer path to implementing sustainable education strategies that promote entrepreneurship. Accepting the premise that many students enter English translation programs with the goal of finding employment after graduation suggests that translation students should acquire essential entrepreneurial knowledge and behavioral skills for business creation and development – especially in undergraduate programs. Otherwise, an unfavorable employment outlook for graduates may arise, potentially discouraging prospective students and raising doubts about whether the field of English translation can reliably lead to stable employment. Translation program developers and administrators must therefore reassess the motivations for studying translation. Simply put, fostering entrepreneurship among translation students is crucial for the field’s vitality in Iranian universities and its inclusion in field-selection booklets distributed after the national entrance exam.

Since little research has been conducted on the entrepreneurial traits of translation students, this study fills an important gap by using a mixed methods design to assess the entrepreneurial characteristics of English translation students at Islamic Azad Universities in Mazandaran Province. This research also investigates factors that either foster or hinder entrepreneurial behavior among undergraduate English translation students. Specifically, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do English translation students at Islamic Azad Universities in Mazandaran Province exhibit entrepreneurial traits, namely risk-taking, internal locus of control, success-seeking, pragmatism, challenge-seeking, intellectual health, and tolerance of ambiguity?
2. Is there any significant difference among Islamic Azad University branches in Mazandaran Province regarding students’ entrepreneurial traits?

3. What are the barriers that diminish the entrepreneurial desires and intentions of English translation students?

Literature Review

Entrepreneurship is an excellent psychological process that means the ability to take risks and new actions, to deal with uncertainty and to consider inherent risks in business and innovative activities (Rodríguez-López & Souto, 2020). Entrepreneurs must have the ability to plan for the development of business plans to achieve goals in various areas, including finance, sales, production, marketing, and staff. They must have good communication, interpersonal, leadership, and marketing skills, and the ability to create and maintain positive relationships with customers and employees, financial lenders, investors, lawyers, and accountants. Moreover, they need to have basic management skills for hiring and dividing the work of others, creating their own vision for the company to inspire employees. They must also learn from other failures. Before starting a business, entrepreneurs should research the business and the mistakes of other entrepreneurs, and make sure that the company or business is what he wants (Gedik et al., 2015). López-Núñez et al. (2020) found in their research that entrepreneurs and students with entrepreneurial traits have the same characteristics in some psychological aspects. These characteristics include entrepreneurial spirit, extroversion, willingness to experience, conscientiousness, ability to face problems and solve them, emotional intelligence, self-confidence, and ambiguity tolerance.

The results of the study by Embi et al. (2019) showed that leadership skills, need for progress, tolerance of ambiguity, and tendency to risk have a significant positive relationship with students' intention to start entrepreneurial activities. In this context, the results of Rodríguez-López and Souto (2020) showed that companies owned by founders who had a university degree and studied in higher education have a higher probability of competition and more success in business, because entrepreneurs with a university degree often have higher problem-solving skills than company owners that do not have such educational records.

Research on Entrepreneurship

The study of the characteristics of entrepreneurs goes back to the early 1950s. It can be claimed that the studies conducted at that time started with the basic thesis that entrepreneurial people have distinct personality traits that make them different from others. Among those early studies conducted during that period, the classic study of McClelland done in 1961 showed decisively that the motivation to succeed or the desire to succeed is the determining factor. That is, with the increase in the number of people who have a strong desire for success, the economic development of society will also increase. From then on, success-seeking defined as improving performance and finding a shorter way and/or a faster way to do things and the desire to win by relying on individual effort have been emphasized in many research attempts, and it was consistently raised as one of the characteristics of entrepreneurs (e.g., Gartner, 1988; Hosseinpour et al., 2011; Hosseininia et al., 2017).

In later research, other characteristics such as willingness to do things that are likely to fail (risk-taking), attributing failures to one's own efforts rather than environmental factors (internal locus of control), optimism, and independence were also added to the list (Raadi Afsooran, 2010; Zali et al., 2008). In the meantime, it is noted that the features presented in different researches are not necessarily one hundred percent compatible.

In various researches, different characteristics have been listed for entrepreneurial people. For example, Timmons (1978) classified the characteristics of entrepreneurship into six categories: commitment, opportunism, risk tolerance, ambiguity, creativity, adaptability, and high motivation,

with the analysis that he did in 50 other studies, but this same classification is not the common feature of all studies and are not seen in different researches. Zali et al. (2008) believe that independence, risk-taking, and creativity are among the behavioral characteristics of entrepreneurs, which are accepted by most researchers.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

In this research, the model developed by Kurdnaji et al. (2006) for measuring the personality traits of Iranian entrepreneurs was utilized to evaluate the entrepreneurial traits of English translation students at Islamic Azad Universities in Mazandaran Province (see Figure 1). This model targets seven specific traits for measurement: risk-taking, internal locus of control, success-seeking, pragmatism, challenge-seeking, intellectual health, and tolerance of ambiguity.

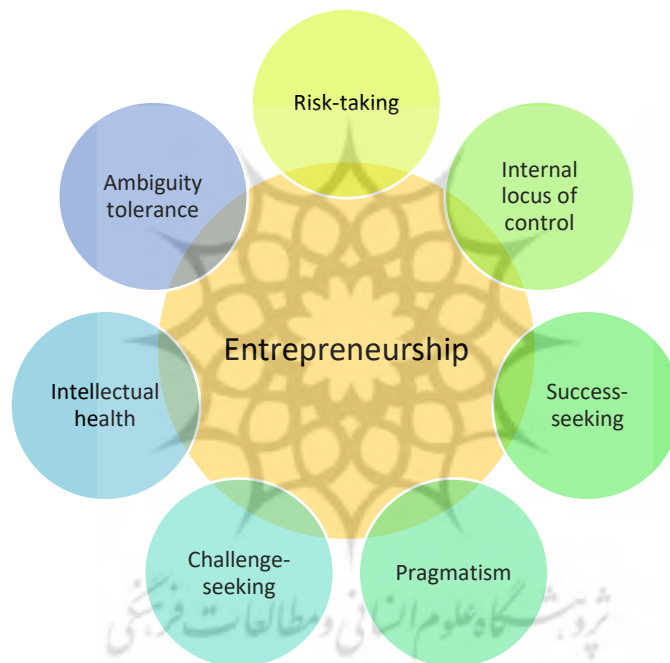


Figure 1. The theoretical framework of this study (Kurdnaji et al., 2006)

Each component in this model has a specific definition relevant to entrepreneurial traits. Risk tolerance is the capacity of an individual to accept or avoid risks when confronted with potentially dangerous situations (Anwar & Saleem, 2019). Internal locus of control, initially defined by Rotter (1982), refers to people's perceptions of their ability to control actions or specific events that impact their lives; it is commonly believed that entrepreneurs possess a heightened sense of control over the outcomes of their actions (Embi et al., 2019). Success-seeking reflects a strong drive to excel and succeed across various tasks (Greenberg & Baron, 2008; Kusmintarti et al., 2018). Intellectual health describes creativity in entrepreneurial individuals, particularly the capacity to act spontaneously and effectively solve problems (Kurdnaji et al., 2006).

Pragmatism, considered one of the core entrepreneurial traits, focuses on practical methods for achieving goals. Decision-making and experimentation are essential entrepreneurial strategies linked to pragmatism, as pragmatists are driven by practical outcomes and adapt to the belief that "change" is constant (Jena, 2020). Ambiguity tolerance is an individual's willingness to engage in tasks despite uncertainty and unpredictable outcomes. Entrepreneurs often face uncertain situations, making

tolerance for ambiguity a crucial trait, as new business ventures involve unpredictable challenges and potential successes (Kusmintarti et al., 2018). Finally, challenge-seeking measures an individual's readiness to tackle complex and ambiguous activities and to provide solutions suited to these challenging situations (Kurdnaji et al., 2006).

Research on Students' Entrepreneurship Skills

Over time, research on the characteristics of entrepreneurial individuals expanded from the professional sphere to university settings. This shift may stem from the growing cognitive perspective on entrepreneurship, where experts and researchers increasingly believe that entrepreneurial skills can be taught (Soofi & Daylami, 2022). Consequently, a view has emerged that by identifying the traits of entrepreneurial students, these skills can be taught and strengthened, helping students who may struggle to take the plunge in their career paths.

Similar to findings from studies on entrepreneurial professionals, research in this area indicates that the traits of entrepreneurial students can vary depending on the context. For instance, Burns (2022) showed that when starting a business, students prioritize traits like ambition, self-confidence, leadership, risk-taking, independence, and creativity. However, in the business development phase, the order shifts to ambition, risk-taking, leadership, creativity, self-confidence, and independence.

An additional insight is that there isn't always a direct relationship between students' entrepreneurial interests and their knowledge of entrepreneurship. For example, research by Wang and Wong (2004) found that although 71% of the students expressed a strong interest in entrepreneurship, more than two-thirds had minimal knowledge about it. This finding suggests that interest alone does not make an entrepreneur out of a student, nor does it drive them to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge. It underscores the necessity of formally teaching entrepreneurship skills, as most students lack sufficient understanding in this area.

In this context, Gürol and Atsan (2006) conducted research at Turkish universities, revealing that not all characteristics typically associated with entrepreneurial people distinguish interested students from their less interested peers. For instance, traits such as tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence were similar in both groups. However, key traits like risk-taking, internal locus of control, success-seeking, and innovation were what set the interested students apart from those who were not interested in entrepreneurship.

Research on Students' Entrepreneurship Skills in Iran

The history of research on student entrepreneurship in Iran spans less than two decades. Unfortunately, within this period, only very few studies have focused on entrepreneurship among translation students. This section reviews some Iranian studies that have examined the indicators and characteristics of entrepreneurial skills among students from various fields. Reviewing these traits, characteristics, as well as the instruments and methods used in past research, could enhance the quality and interpretation of the current research results.

One of the earliest studies in Iran, conducted by Hosseinpour and Rezaei (2011), found a significant positive relationship between various entrepreneurship variables, including students' internal and external motivations, subjective perceptions of the attractiveness of entrepreneurship, self-efficacy, expectation, creativity, and attitude. In the same study, Hosseinpour and Rezaei (2011) noted that a lack of personal financial resources and insufficient knowledge were the primary obstacles for students aiming to start a business. Zali et al. (2008) reported that about 21 percent of students in their study possessed entrepreneurial skills. They also observed that while these students showed strong

determination, their levels of independence, risk-taking, and creativity fell slightly below the minimum acceptable threshold. In further research, Raadi Afsooran (2010) found that neither gender nor faculty significantly impacted students' acquisition of entrepreneurial characteristics. However, their analysis showed that success-seeking and tolerance of ambiguity differed significantly among various groups.

Research conducted in the following decade continued to highlight weaknesses in certain aspects of entrepreneurship among Iranian students. These studies indicated that entrepreneurial traits among students were unevenly distributed across behavioral components. For instance, Rezaee and Rahsepar (2010) found that students demonstrated high levels in all entrepreneurship components except risk-taking. Further analysis revealed that male and female students were similar in internal locus of control, creativity, and risk-taking, but differed in success-seeking and independence. Additionally, significant differences were found across departments in all components except creativity.

Some studies in Iran over the past decade have focused on identifying barriers to entrepreneurship among students. For example, Hosseini and Khosravilagh (2017) identified leadership self-efficacy, leadership motivation, and financial support as key factors influencing entrepreneurship aspirations among students at public universities in Tehran. Similarly, Keshavarz and Mehri Shandi (2021) identified seven primary obstacles for students: family, personal, educational, specialized-technical, financial, socio-cultural, and legal factors. Hosseininia et al. (2017) also identified additional barriers, such as a lack of planning, teamwork, and awareness of legal and regulatory issues. They found that progress motivation, success-seeking, marketing skills, and pragmatism were predictors of students' entrepreneurial intentions.

Recent studies have highlighted the impact of educational factors on the entrepreneurial ambitions of Iranian university students. For instance, Khalili Khezrabadi (2023) emphasized a strong correlation between the quality of undergraduate curricula and students' entrepreneurial intentions. Their findings suggested that strengthening university-business connections and developing entrepreneurial skills would help students better navigate environmental challenges and foster their entrepreneurial ambitions by enhancing emotional factors. Similarly, Darini et al. (2022), based on data from 482 students, concluded that entrepreneurship education can strengthen self-confidence, mindset, and attitude, thereby increasing students' entrepreneurial intentions. Their research showed that entrepreneurial desire is primarily influenced by behavioral and emotional factors, while cognitive factors have less impact. Consequently, they argued that universities can play a crucial role in developing entrepreneurial skills, which, in turn, fosters a positive attitude and mindset, ultimately enhancing students' entrepreneurial intentions.

Method

Participants

The participants in this research were selected from eighth-semester English translation students in the English Departments of Islamic Azad Universities in Mazandaran province. A total of 106 students, consisting of 31 males and 75 females with an average age of 23 years, participated. Given the population size, a convenience sampling method was used to select participants. Among them, 21 seniors (nine males and twelve females) voluntarily took part in an interview after completing the questionnaire.

Instruments

Personality Traits of Iranian Entrepreneurs Inventory

To collect quantitative data, a validated questionnaire designed to measure entrepreneurial characteristics within Iran's context was used. The reliability of this questionnaire, calculated using

Cronbach's alpha, was 0.82 for this study. This instrument includes 95 items assessing eight major entrepreneurial personality traits: risk-taking, internal locus of control, success-seeking, pragmatism, challenge seeking, intellectual health, and tolerance of ambiguity. Each item was rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree).

Semi-structured Interview

To identify factors influencing the entrepreneurial characteristics of English translation students, a semi-structured interview with five pre-determined questions was employed. These questions were approved by two Assistant Professors of English translation and two lecturers of entrepreneurship courses. Individual interviews were conducted in Persian, each lasting between 10 and 20 minutes. Prior to the interviews, the researchers explained the purpose of the study and clarified how the data would be utilized.

Procedure

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitatively, it is classified as a survey; qualitatively, it can be considered explanatory research. The study began with the sampling process. Data collection was conducted face-to-face in classrooms, where the researchers explained the research purpose to students and invited interested individuals to complete the questionnaire at their own pace. Students who preferred not to participate were free to leave the class. To encourage participation, researchers informed students that individual results would be shared through a message on a social network after data collection concluded. A total of 117 questionnaires were distributed, and 106 were returned without missing data. After announcing results, students interested in further participation were invited to an interview, leading to 21 volunteering students (nine males and twelve females) from the senior class. Recorded interviews were fully coded for analysis, and the results were interpreted in conjunction with questionnaire data.

Results

This section is divided into two parts. The first part presents the results of the quantitative data analysis from the questionnaire, while the second part focuses on the qualitative content analysis of interview data. The first and second research questions were answered based on data collected from English translation students at four Islamic Azad Universities in Mazandaran province. The table below summarizes the findings from the descriptive and inferential statistical analyses conducted. Specifically, a one-way ANOVA was performed to compare entrepreneurial traits among students from the four university branches in Mazandaran province.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and results of one-way ANOVA for entrepreneurial traits

Traits	Descriptive Statistics			Level	One-way ANOVA		
	M	N	SD		F	df	p
Risk-taking	3.20	106	.71	Average	1.82	3	.16
Internal locus of control	3.06	106	.56	Average	.98	3	.68
Success-seeking	3.30	106	.80	Average	1.54	3	.19
Pragmatism	3.52	106	1.02	Average	1.53	3	.17
Challenge-seeking	3.11	106	.61	Average	1.34	3	.31
Intellectual health	3.25	106	.75	Average	2.0	3	.13
Ambiguity tolerance	2.73	106	.32	Average	.16	3	.87

As previously mentioned, each entrepreneurial trait was measured on a 1-to-5 scale, with a theoretical mean of 3. Table 1 shows that the averages for these traits – risk-taking ($M = 3.20$), internal locus of control ($M = 3.06$), success-seeking ($M = 3.30$), pragmatism ($M = 3.52$), challenge seeking ($M = 3.11$), intellectual health ($M = 3.25$), and tolerance of ambiguity ($M = 2.73$) – are close to this theoretical mean. Consequently, in response to the first research question, it can be stated that the overall level of entrepreneurial traits among English translation students in the Islamic Azad Universities of Mazandaran province is generally at an average level.

To address the second research question, a comparison of mean scores across four branches of Islamic Azad Universities in Mazandaran province was conducted using one-way ANOVA. The results, shown in Table 1, indicate no significant differences among students from these branches in terms of their entrepreneurial traits. Specifically, there was no significant difference in risk-taking ($F = 2.82, p = .16 > .05$), internal locus of control ($F = .98, p = .68 > .05$), success-seeking ($F = 3.54, p = .19 > .05$), pragmatism ($F = 3.53, p = .17 > .05$), challenge seeking ($F = 1.34, p = .31 > .05$), intellectual health ($F = 2.39, p = .13 > .05$), or tolerance of ambiguity ($F = .16, p = .87 > .05$). Therefore, in response to the second research question, it can be concluded that there are no significant differences in entrepreneurial traits among students from different branches in Mazandaran province.

To answer the third research question, open coding content analysis of the interview data revealed four primary themes related to obstacles: personal, legal, financial, and educational. These themes are illustrated in Figure 2 and elaborated on in the following sections.

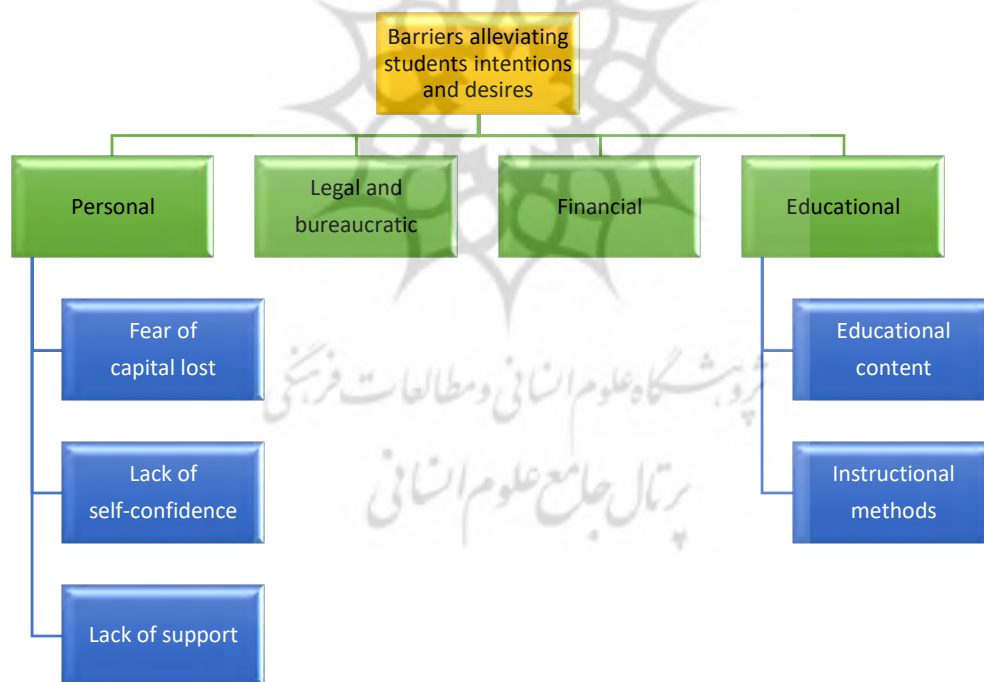


Figure 2. The emerged themes and subthemes from the interview data

Personal Obstacles

Personal obstacles, as identified in this study, are barriers arising from personal concerns or from relationships with people close to the students, such as family members or friends. These obstacles are internal to the students, meaning they are experienced individually, and eliminating other external obstacles does not directly address these personal challenges. Three main types of personal obstacles emerged from the data:

A significant personal obstacle is the fear of losing initial capital. Many students worry that investing in a business idea might result in the loss of their own savings or resources provided by family or other sources, leaving them without a second chance. For instance, student 7 expressed this concern:

How much capital do I have that I want to use? If it disappears, I will also be destroyed.

Some students, despite having financial support, feel a lack of self-confidence in their abilities to start and manage a small business. This self-doubt can inhibit their entrepreneurial pursuits. As student 12 noted:

The fact is that my father supports my financial independence regarding my future, but I don't see it in myself. I mean, even when we talk about collective work with friends, I still think I can't.

Another personal obstacle is the perceived lack of support from family members and friends. This refers to students' uncertainty about receiving emotional or financial backing during potential financial or business difficulties. For example, student 14 shared:

I know my wife and her family. Even if the financial support is from my own family, again, if there is a problem, they blame me and say they warned me. I don't know what to do after that.

Legal and Bureaucratic Obstacles

A significant barrier for translation students aspiring to entrepreneurship is navigating legal and bureaucratic requirements. These include a lack of familiarity with the legal protocols essential for establishing and running a business. Student 7 voiced this concern:

I have friends who, after starting work, faced 100 paperwork mazes in offices and even regretted it. I don't want to experience it.

Additionally, students often feel overwhelmed by the complexity of administrative systems. Many expressed anxiety over the unfamiliarity of formal processes, which makes initiating a business appear daunting. For instance, student 2 stated:

I feel I need a lawyer. In fact, I don't know what to do, or who to turn to; even though my parents are employees, I still don't have anything to do with this kind of work.

Financial Obstacles

Financial constraints were another common theme. Both students and their families, who are often their primary sources of financial support, typically lack sufficient capital to fund a startup. Moreover, obtaining external funding from banks and institutions poses additional challenges. As student 3 explained:

I have other siblings who have to be provided by my family, as well. I have to take a loan. In your opinion, will a bank give me a loan? I need a deposit; I need a guarantor; there are thousands of other excuses.

Educational Obstacles

The final theme identified from the interviews was educational obstacles. The students in this study generally felt that their formal education, both in school and at university, did not adequately support the development of their entrepreneurial skills. One aspect of this obstacle relates to the educational content itself, which, according to students, focuses heavily on theoretical knowledge without demonstrating how these theories could be applied practically. For instance, student 16 noted:

We only read books and pamphlets and memorized them. We took an exam and wrote answers to the questions. We translated and they corrected our papers. No one said anything about business.

Students reported that essential skills for establishing a business based on their translation expertise were not covered in their coursework. Student 20 voiced a similar frustration:

I have already mentioned all the obstacles and problems, financial issues, and other things. In the whole 4 years, we have not talked about these things in our classes as we did during this meeting.

Another significant obstacle highlighted was the gap between professors' teaching methods, the current curriculum, and the real needs of the job market. Many students felt their professors lacked awareness of what is required to succeed in the professional translation field. One student observed:

It seems that the professors are not aware of what a student needs in the job market in the field of translation. You can see how many of our professors have translation businesses.

Moreover, students pointed out the absence of practical training and internship opportunities in translation programs. They felt unprepared for the realities of the workplace, lacking knowledge of the limitations, challenges, opportunities, and risks they might encounter. One student explained:

I think even our professors don't have experience working as translators. During these 4 years, they did not talk about their memories as a translator even once. They told us all kinds of memories, but even once, they didn't say anything about it; that means they didn't tell us about the tricks, they didn't do it themselves, so they didn't have anything to tell us.

Overall, the students concluded that the current curriculum and teaching methods do not provide adequate guidance or role models, and the gap between university education and the job market remains wide.

Discussion

The results from the quantitative and qualitative analyses reveal that the entrepreneurial readiness of English translation students at Islamic Azad University in Mazandaran province is currently suboptimal. The findings indicate that students' entrepreneurial characteristics are generally at an average level, influenced by personal, legal, financial, and educational factors. However, it is essential to interpret this average level with caution, as previous studies suggest variability in entrepreneurial traits across disciplines. For instance, Narenji Thani et al. (2020) found that management and information technology students at the same university displayed higher entrepreneurial characteristics, while industrial engineering students exhibited only average levels. Therefore, generalizing the results of this study to other universities, provinces, or national institutions requires careful consideration.

Further insights arise when the findings of this research are compared to those of Raadi Afsooran (2010) and Khalili Khezrabadi (2023), underscoring that the specific environment within a department can be more impactful than the general university setting. The qualitative data here highlights the importance of curriculum content in fostering entrepreneurial traits. The qualitative analysis aligns with Burns' (2022) findings on pre-business students, as the participants in this study also showed deficiencies in personal traits, particularly in self-confidence and self-reliance. Additionally, the current findings reflect Wang and Wong's (2004) conclusion that a lack of knowledge, both specialized and legal, about the job market hinders students' entrepreneurial development.

In line with past research conducted in Iran, this study's findings – that translation students exhibit insufficient entrepreneurial characteristics – echo earlier studies by Zali et al. (2008), Hosseinpour and Rezaei (2011), and Hosseini and Khosravilaghhab (2017), all of whom identified financial constraints as significant barriers to entrepreneurship. The consistent appearance of these obstacles over time highlights the deeply rooted nature of these challenges in the Iranian educational context.

Previous studies have indicated that the factors influencing students' entrepreneurial traits are both internal and external to the university environment. Thus, addressing these factors requires collaborative, multi-faceted efforts rather than action from a single institution. This study corroborates the view of Keshavarz & Mehri Shandi (2021), who proposed a triangular framework involving personal, intra-university, and external factors to guide initiatives that enhance students' entrepreneurial skills.

Finally, while the standardized instrument by Kurdnaji et al. (2006) provided valuable insights into the entrepreneurial characteristics of English translation students, this study suggests the need for a more comprehensive tool. Such an instrument should encompass various dimensions – including educational factors, legal knowledge, financial preparation, and personal readiness – to better assess the entrepreneurial potential of students in translation programs.

Conclusion

University education plays a pivotal role in shaping students' career trajectories, and in today's competitive job market, the ability to launch and manage an independent business is increasingly essential. For English translation students, developing an entrepreneurial spirit is particularly important, as it directly impacts their success in a field where traditional career pathways are often limited. If graduates lack career success, disillusionment with the field could grow, underscoring the need to assess and nurture entrepreneurial traits among these students.

This study was motivated by a significant research gap on this topic in Iran and focused on final-year English translation students from Islamic Azad Universities in Mazandaran province, using a mixed-methods approach. Results showed that while students generally possessed only average entrepreneurial traits, this was due to personal, legal, financial, and educational obstacles.

The findings are a call to action for educators, administrators, and curriculum designers to enhance entrepreneurial skills within translator training programs. Collaboration with other departments and university offices, such as the Office of Industry Relations, is recommended to provide students with cross-disciplinary insights and real-world skills. Additionally, revising teaching methods and curricular content to better align with industry needs is essential. Holding events like translator talks, publishing seminars, and labor market exhibitions could further familiarize students with the practical, legal, financial, and business aspects of the profession.

Despite its limitations, this study is one of the first of its kind in Iran, providing valuable initial insights into entrepreneurial skills in translation education. Future research should involve larger sample sizes to better understand entrepreneurial traits among translation students across the country. Phenomenological studies are needed to delve into overlooked aspects of entrepreneurship within this field, and the development of entrepreneurship training programs for translation students could serve as a practical step forward. Testing these programs' effectiveness in different academic settings could help identify best practices for cultivating students' entrepreneurial potential.

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