

The contribution of academic advising to fostering entrepreneurial intentions in higher education

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Abstract: Academic counseling plays a crucial role in student support within higher education institutions, contributing not only to academic achievement but also to career development and entrepreneurial initiatives. This study investigates the impact of academic advising on fostering entrepreneurial intentions among students at the Durban Institute of Technology (DUT) in South Africa. Utilizing planned behavioral theory as a conceptual framework, this research explores how academic guidance affects students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, ultimately influencing their intention to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Data analysis conducted using SPSS 30.0 revealed a significant positive correlation between academic counseling and entrepreneurial intentions ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.001$). Key findings indicate that academic advising enhances entrepreneurial awareness and provides essential information while also highlighting a gap in connecting students with practical resources, such as business planning and funding support. Additionally, this study reveals that Generation Z students prefer digital advisory tools, although they still value traditional learning methods for guidance. Recommendations include expanding mentoring programs, enhancing collaboration between universities and industries, and leveraging technology to improve advisory services. Moreover, addressing gender-influenced and culturally integrated advisory practices can support underrepresented student groups in entrepreneurship. Future research should focus on the longitudinal effects of academic advising on entrepreneurial success and explore best practices for integrating entrepreneurship into academic counseling models.

Keywords: Academic advising, Entrepreneurial intentions, Higher education, Mentorship, South Africa, Student support, Theory of Planned Behavior.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the significance of higher education in fostering entrepreneurial intentions among students has garnered considerable attention from academic researchers, policymakers, and educational institutions. Aboobaker [1]

As global economies grapple with swift technological advancements, globalization, and changing labor markets, Ghafar [2] indicated that universities are increasingly called upon to prepare students not only for traditional career paths but also for entrepreneurial ventures that stimulate innovation and contribute to economic growth. Stoica, et al. [3] divulged that entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as a vital driver of job creation, new product and service development, and overall economic progress. In this regard, Cui, et al. [4] argued that higher education institutions must equip students with the knowledge, skills, and mindset essential for succeeding in entrepreneurial pursuits.

Academic advising, a fundamental component of student support services in universities, has traditionally been viewed as a mechanism to guide students through their academic programs and career

trajectories [5]. However, in recent years, academic advising has evolved to encompass a broader role. Towers, et al. [6] argues that contemporary academic advising is increasingly recognized as an essential tool for promoting personal and professional growth, including the cultivation of entrepreneurial intentions. This approach empowers students by not only aiding in academic matters but also by fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, assisting in the identification of entrepreneurial opportunities, and providing mentorship for launching and managing new ventures [7].

According to Otache, et al. [8] entrepreneurial intentions refer to a student's aspiration to engage in entrepreneurial activities, such as starting a business or pursuing self-employment in the future. Research by Gieure, et al. [9] suggests that entrepreneurial intentions are strong predictors of actual entrepreneurial behavior and success. Consequently, Ye and Yee [10] argued that fostering these intentions among students can significantly influence their decisions to embark on entrepreneurial ventures. While a considerable amount of research on entrepreneurial intentions has concentrated on individual personality traits Bazkiaei, et al. [11] motivations [12] and external factors such as access to finance or resources [13] less emphasis has been placed on the impact of academic advising in shaping these intentions.

This article examines the role of academic advising in fostering entrepreneurial intentions within higher education. It aims to understand the relationship between academic advising practices and students' entrepreneurial aspirations, focusing on how academic advisors can influence students' perceptions of entrepreneurship, provide essential guidance, and offer critical resources that facilitate entrepreneurial endeavors. The paper leverages on the theory of planned behaviour, empirical studies, and practical examples to argue that academic advising is not merely an ancillary service but a crucial component in the development of entrepreneurial intentions among students.

2. Problem Statement

The entrepreneurial intentions of students in higher education are crucial in shaping the future workforce, with entrepreneurship recognized as a significant driver of economic development and innovation Tomy and Pardede [14]. However, Pasewark [15] argues that many students often lack the necessary support and guidance to fully realize their entrepreneurial aspirations. Although academic advising has typically concentrated on academic performance [16] and career planning [17] it has not always been effectively utilized to foster entrepreneurial mindsets and intentions—particularly in fields like Management Accounting, where students may not view entrepreneurship as a viable career path.

The Management Accounting department at DUT confronts the challenge of bridging this gap in academic advising. According to Hoggett, et al. [18] students in this discipline tend to prefer traditional career routes in corporate accounting or finance over entrepreneurial ventures. This view is also supported by Ajose [19] who insinuates that this inclination may be attributed to limited exposure to entrepreneurship-related resources, inadequate guidance on starting and managing a business, and a deficiency of mentorship aimed at fostering entrepreneurial growth. Additionally, while students may encounter entrepreneurship concepts in the classroom, there remains a notable disconnect between entrepreneurial support and academic advising practices, which could play a vital role in promoting entrepreneurial intentions [20].

This study aims to investigate the role of academic advising in nurturing entrepreneurial intentions among Management Accounting students at DUT. It seeks to identify how academic advising can be structured to promote entrepreneurial thinking, boost confidence, and provide essential resources and mentorship to support students' entrepreneurial goals. Through highlighting the need for customized advising strategies that encourage entrepreneurship, this research will enhance the function of academic advising in developing a more entrepreneurial mindset among students, thereby facilitating their pursuit of entrepreneurial ventures after graduation.

2.1. Theoretical Perspective- Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

A study by Huang [21] established that the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a significant framework used to understand and predict human behavior, particularly in contexts where individuals are required to make intentional decisions, such as in entrepreneurial pursuits. According to TPB, three primary factors influence human behavior: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control [22]. These factors collectively shape an individual's intention to engage in a specific behavior, which serves as the most immediate predictor of actual behavior.

2.2. Components of the Theory of Planned Behavior

2.2.1. Attitudes Toward Entrepreneurship and Academic Advising

According to Worthington [23] attitudes pertain to an individual's positive or negative evaluations regarding a specific behavior. In the realm of entrepreneurship, a student's attitude towards becoming an entrepreneur, viewing entrepreneurship as a viable, rewarding, or risky career path—can significantly influence their entrepreneurial intentions [13]. In the study of Gieure, et al. [9] it emerged that a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship often correlates with a stronger intention to pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

According to Roche [24] academic advising plays a vital role in shaping students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Holland, et al. [16] added that advisors can influence students' perceptions of entrepreneurship by discussing its potential rewards, societal impacts, and personal fulfillment. Through targeted advising, students can cultivate a more positive outlook on entrepreneurship, viewing it as a viable and rewarding career option rather than a risky endeavor Iwu, et al. [25]. Aithal and Aithal [26] argued that advisors can enhance students' appreciation for entrepreneurship by providing real-world examples, case studies, and success stories. Additionally, they can help students connect their academic skills to entrepreneurial opportunities, demonstrating how their knowledge can be applied innovatively [27].

2.2.2. Subjective Norms and Academic Advising

Hur, et al. [28] are of the view that subjective norms encompass the perceived social pressures or influences from significant others (e.g., family, peers, mentors, and society) that impact whether an individual should engage in a particular behavior. Regarding entrepreneurial intentions, students may be swayed by the opinions of professors, peers, or family members concerning entrepreneurship as a career choice Lingappa, et al. [29]. Bazan, et al. [30] postulated that when entrepreneurship is positively regarded within their social circles, students are more likely to consider it a viable option.

According to Yitshaki [31] academic advisors can significantly impact students' subjective norms by offering support, mentorship, and validation of entrepreneurship as a legitimate career path. Serving as authority figures in students' academic journeys, advisors can exemplify entrepreneurial values and maintain connections to entrepreneurial networks [32]. A study by Smirnov, et al. [33] further demonstrated that by expressing confidence in students' abilities and reinforcing the idea that entrepreneurship is an achievable goal, advisors can shape the social influences that students encounter. Furthermore, Liu, et al. [34] indicated that advisors can facilitate peer networking, connecting students with like-minded peers, mentors, and alumni to create a supportive community. Crosina, et al. [35] concurred that this environment normalizes entrepreneurship and bolsters the social expectations for students considering entrepreneurial ventures, encouraging participation in relevant events and programs.

2.2.3. Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) and Academic Advising

Al-Mamary and Alraja [36] were of the view that this component relates to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of executing a specific behavior, which is influenced by their available resources, skills, and opportunities. In entrepreneurship, PBC reflects a student's belief in their capacity to initiate and manage a business, factoring in elements such as financial resources, knowledge, and

support [37]. In addition, the study by Shi, et al. [38] expressed that higher perceived control is associated with a stronger intention to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Majeed, et al. [39] summarized that these three components—attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—work in concert to influence entrepreneurial intentions, which are critical predictors of actual entrepreneurial behavior. Stronger intentions typically correlate with increased likelihoods of taking steps towards starting a business or engaging in entrepreneurial activities [40].

According to Thanki, et al. [41] perceived behavioral control is where academic advising can exert a direct and significant influence. While students may aspire to be entrepreneurs, they often lack the confidence or sense of capability necessary for success [42]. However, St-Jean and Tremblay [43] argues that academic advisors can enhance students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy—the belief in their ability to succeed in entrepreneurial endeavors—by offering practical guidance, resources, and mentorship. Houssou, et al. [44] also added that advisors can provide access to entrepreneurial resources such as university-based startup incubators, competitions, funding opportunities, and networking events to reduce barriers to entry. Similarly, Bauman and Lucy [45] suggested that advisors can also recommend courses and workshops related to entrepreneurship to enhance students' skills, further increasing their competence and readiness to tackle entrepreneurial challenges. The study by Kinsella, et al. [46] divulged that by offering personalized advice tailored to each student's unique strengths, interests, and goals, advisors can reinforce a sense of control over their entrepreneurial journey.

2.2.4. Intention to Act on Entrepreneurial Opportunities

Entrepreneurial intention serves as the driving force behind decisions to pursue entrepreneurship Al-Mamary, et al. [47]. Ahmed, et al. [48] pointed out that the TPB model suggests that strong entrepreneurial intentions enhance the likelihood of students actively seeking opportunities to start businesses or engage in entrepreneurial projects. According to Yitshaki [31] through effective academic advising, students are more likely to cultivate strong entrepreneurial intentions, as advisors provide the knowledge, resources, and encouragement necessary to overcome both psychological and external barriers that may impede their aspirations.

3. Literature Review

Galindo-Martín, et al. [49] Entrepreneurship serves as a fundamental driver of innovation and economic development, positioning it as a vital area of focus for higher education institutions. Universities globally are integrating entrepreneurship into their curricula to equip students with the essential skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary for navigating increasingly dynamic labor markets Prokopenko, et al. [50]. Sansone, et al. [51] academic advising, as a structured support system, has emerged as a key element in fostering entrepreneurial intentions among students. This literature review explores the influence of academic advising on encouraging entrepreneurial aspirations within higher education, emphasizing its effects on skill development, resource provision, mentorship, and institutional support.

3.1. The Role of Academic Advising in Higher Education

In the study of McGill, et al. [52] it emerged that academic advising is traditionally defined as a structured framework through which students receive guidance on academic, career, and personal development objectives. According to Schreiner, et al. [5] effective advising is critical to student success, offering a platform for tailored support that aligns educational pathways with individual aspirations. Recent studies by Ayeni, et al. [53] and Singha, et al. [54] indicate an evolution in academic advising beyond traditional academic and career guidance, incorporating entrepreneurial mentoring, where advisors play a pivotal role in identifying and nurturing students' entrepreneurial potential. Research by Brausch-Böger and Förster [55] emphasizes the significance of personalized advising sessions in aiding students in clarifying their goals, exploring career options, and building

confidence in pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. Dalborg and von Friedrichs [56] echoed that this individualized approach allows advisors to identify students with entrepreneurial potential and direct them toward resources and opportunities that support their development. As universities enhance their entrepreneurial ecosystems, the role of advisors becomes increasingly central in connecting students with both institutional and external resources [57].

3.2. *Entrepreneurial Education and Advising*

According to Badawi [58] entrepreneurial education aims to nurture creativity, risk-taking, and problem-solving skills—attributes vital to entrepreneurial success. Williams Middleton, et al. [59] added that academic advising complements formal entrepreneurship education by offering individualized support that links theoretical knowledge to practical application. Research by Zhou, et al. [60] demonstrates that academic advising enhances the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education through tailored guidance that aligns with students' interests and capabilities. Advisors often facilitate connections to entrepreneurial networks, business incubators, and experiential learning opportunities [26]. Study conducted by Roche [24] underlines that entrepreneurial intentions are notably higher among students who engage with advisors knowledgeable in entrepreneurship. Such advisors provide insights into the entrepreneurial landscape, assist in goal setting, and encourage participation in entrepreneurial competitions and programs [61]. Furthermore, Xanthopoulou, et al. [62] highlighted that academic advising helps foster entrepreneurial intentions by addressing perceived barriers, such as lack of confidence or resources, that frequently discourage students from pursuing entrepreneurial paths.

3.3. *Skill Development Through Advising*

A primary contribution of academic advising to entrepreneurship is skill development Eesley and Lee [63]. According to Jardim [64] successful entrepreneurs require a diverse skill set, including leadership, communication, financial management, and strategic planning. Furthermore, Kyncl, et al. [65] expressed that advising sessions often serve as a platform for developing these skills by guiding students through self-assessment, goal setting, and action planning. Research by Ayodele, et al. [66] highlights that skill development is a crucial factor influencing entrepreneurial intentions, and academic advising offers a means for honing these skills through structured, reflective discussions. In addition, advising assists students in identifying skill gaps and creating personalized development plans. For example, advisors may recommend specific courses, workshops, or extracurricular activities that align with the student's entrepreneurial ambitions. According to a study by Nabi, et al. [67] students receiving targeted advice on skill development are more likely to feel confident in their entrepreneurial capabilities, which positively influences their intention to initiate a business.

3.4. ***Resource Provision and Networking***

Access to resources is a critical factor in entrepreneurial success Sony and Naik [68]. According to Greer [69] academic advisors serve as facilitators, connecting students with resources such as funding opportunities, business development programs, and mentorship networks. Research by Roche [24] demonstrates that students who engage with advisors gain greater access to institutional resources, thereby enhancing their capacity to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Additionally, advisors play a vital role in fostering networks that support entrepreneurship Bergman and McMullen [20]. Longva [70] indicates that networking is an essential component of the entrepreneurial process, enabling students to establish relationships with peers, mentors, and industry professionals. Consequently, Roundy [71] academic advisors often act as connectors, introducing students to entrepreneurial ecosystems both within and beyond the university. Akhtar [72] further admonish that this role is especially critical for first-generation students and those from underrepresented backgrounds, who may lack access to informal networks conducive to entrepreneurship.

3.5. *Mentorship and Role Modeling*

According to Yitshaki [31] mentorship constitutes a key aspect of academic advising that significantly influences entrepreneurial intentions. Moreover, Hanson [73] added that advisors who serve as mentors provide guidance, encouragement, and practical advice, assisting students in navigating the challenges associated with entrepreneurship. Research by St-Jean and Tremblay [43] underscores the importance of mentorship in developing entrepreneurial self-efficacy, a crucial predictor of entrepreneurial behavior. In Deng and Turner [74] study, it emerged that effective mentoring relationships are characterized by trust, mutual respect, and ongoing communication. Advisors with entrepreneurial experience or expertise serve as particularly influential role models, inspiring students to follow similar paths [67]. Study by Lu, et al. [75] reveal that students who perceive their advisors as credible and supportive are more likely to cultivate entrepreneurial intentions and take proactive steps toward business creation.

3.6. *Institutional Support and Advising Infrastructure*

According to Wegner, et al. [76] the broader institutional environment significantly influences the effectiveness of academic advising in promoting entrepreneurial intentions. Universities that prioritize entrepreneurship often provide comprehensive support structures, including dedicated advising programs, entrepreneurship centers, and incubators [77]. Research by Boldureanu, et al. [78] highlights the importance of institutional commitment to entrepreneurship, indicating that students are more inclined to pursue entrepreneurial ventures when they feel supported by their institution. Troxel, et al. [79] also indicated that academic advisors play a crucial role in bridging institutional resources with student needs. For instance, Patricio and Ferreira [80] universities that incorporate entrepreneurial advising into their student support services foster a culture of entrepreneurship that permeates all aspects of campus life. A study by Browne [77] emphasizes that entrepreneurial universities enhance innovation and creativity by embedding entrepreneurship into their advising practices, curricula, and extracurricular activities.

3.7. *Challenges in Academic Advising for Entrepreneurship*

Despite its potential, Umar, et al. [81] academic advising encounters several challenges in effectively fostering entrepreneurial intentions. Buffart, et al. [82] pointed that a significant challenge is the variability in advisors' expertise and experience with entrepreneurship. Research by Peschl, et al. [83] indicates that not all advisors possess the necessary knowledge or skills to adequately support entrepreneurial students. This gap underscores the necessity for professional development programs that equip advisors with the requisite tools and resources to guide entrepreneurial aspirations.

Another challenge involves the limited time and resources allocated for advising sessions [84]. According to Mann [85] High student-to-advisor ratios often restrict the depth and quality of advising interactions. Eesley and Lee [63] added that universities must invest adequate resources to ensure that academic advisors can offer meaningful support to students interested in entrepreneurship.

According to Kah, et al. [86] cultural and institutional barriers also present challenges; in some contexts, entrepreneurship may not be recognized as a legitimate career path, leading to insufficient institutional emphasis on advising entrepreneurial pursuits. Research by Lyken-Segosebe, et al. [87] highlights the importance of cultivating a supportive entrepreneurial culture within universities to address these barriers and enhance the effectiveness of academic advising.

3.8. *Impact of Academic Advising on Underrepresented Groups*

Academic advising plays a particularly significant role in nurturing entrepreneurial intentions among underrepresented groups, including women, minorities, and first-generation students [88]. Research by Fells [89] emphasizes that tailored advising strategies can help address the unique challenges faced by these populations, such as limited access to networks, resources, and role models. Asatorrian [90] indicated that advisors who adopt an inclusive approach and provide targeted support

can bridge these gaps, empowering underrepresented students to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors. For instance, universities that offer specialized advising programs for women entrepreneurs have observed notable increases in entrepreneurial intentions among female students [91]. Studies by Emon and Nipa [92] highlight the value of creating safe environments where underrepresented groups can explore entrepreneurship without fear of bias or discrimination. Spratley [93] added that academic advisors play a central role in fostering such settings, providing encouragement and advocacy for students from diverse backgrounds.

3.9. *The Evolving Role of Academic Advising in Entrepreneurship*

According to Rosienkiewicz, et al. [94] as the landscape of higher education continues to evolve, the role of academic advising in promoting entrepreneurial intentions is growing increasingly complex. Advisors are evolving from mere facilitators of course selection and academic planning to roles as mentors, connectors, and advocates for students' entrepreneurial goals Freshour [95]. Gallagher [96] underscores that the future of academic advising will hinge on its ability to adapt to the changing needs of students and the demands of the global economy. According to Asatorrian [90] emerging trends in academic advising include the integration of technology, data-driven decision-making, and collaborations with external stakeholders. For example, universities are utilizing artificial intelligence to provide personalized advising experiences that cater to students' unique entrepreneurial objectives. Additionally, partnerships with industry and community organizations are broadening the scope of advising, enabling students to access real-world insights and opportunities [97].

4. Research Methodology

This study adopted a positivist research paradigm with the objective of examining the influence of academic advising on students' workplace readiness and entrepreneurial intentions from a quantitative perspective. The positivist approach presumes that reality is objective and measurable, enabling researchers to draw conclusions based on numerical data [98]. To collect and analyze data, the research employed quantitative methods, a survey design, which is well-suited for obtaining information from a large sample and allows for the use of inferential statistics to explore relationships between variables [18]. The target population consisted of 33 students from the Department of Management Accounting at the Durban University of Technology, utilizing a census method due to the manageable size of this population. The research design included a survey to gather primary data through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained from textbooks, journals, and online articles. The focus of the study was on third-year students and postgraduate diploma candidates, excluding first- and second-year students because of their limited exposure to academic advising. A pilot study involving ten participants was conducted to test the reliability of the questionnaire, with adjustments made based on the feedback received. Reliability and validity were ensured through confirmatory factor analysis and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, confirming that the data collection instruments accurately measured the intended constructs [76]. Data collection was facilitated and distributed via Microsoft Teams, with a one-week window for responses. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 30.0, and ethical considerations, including confidentiality and anonymity, were rigorously maintained. Participants were not requested to provide personal identifiers, ensuring that their responses remained anonymous and secure [67]. The study adhered to ethical standards by protecting participants' privacy and ensuring the integrity of the data analysis and reporting process [45].

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1.

Age/generation.

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Age/Generation | | |
| Gen Z 1997 - 2012 (12 - 27) | 29 | 87.9 |
| Millennials 1981 - 1996 (28 - 43) | 4 | 12.1 |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 11 | 33.3 |
| Female | 20 | 60.6 |
| Prefer not to say | 2 | 6.1 |
| Academic level | | |
| Diploma 3rd year | 30 | 90.9 |
| Advanced diploma | 1 | 3.0 |
| Post Graduate diploma | 2 | 6.1 |
| Race | | |
| African | 28 | 84.8 |
| Indian | 4 | 12.1 |
| Other | 1 | 3.0 |

5.1. Age/Generation

A notable majority of respondents (87.9%) identify as part of Generation Z, encompassing individuals born between 1997 and 2012, and thus ranging in age from 12 to 27 years. Conversely, Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, represent only 12.1% of the sample, placing them in the 28 to 43 age range. This demographic distribution aligns with the typical age profile of university students, predominantly consisting of young adults in Generation Z who are largely at the initial stages of their academic and professional journeys. The unique characteristics of Generation Z, such as a preference for digital tools and experiential learning, should guide academic advising strategies to effectively meet their needs [99].

5.2. Gender

Most respondents are female, comprising 60.6% of the sample, while males account for 33.3%. Additionally, 6.1% of respondents chose not to disclose their gender. This distribution reflects a significant female representation in the Management Accounting program, consistent with broader trends in higher education, where female enrollment in business-related fields frequently exceeds that of males. The observed gender imbalance reinforces the need for gender-sensitive approaches in academic advising to address the unique challenges faced by female students, including balancing academic responsibilities with career aspirations.

5.3. Academic Level

A substantial majority of respondents (90.9%) are in the third year of a Diploma program, while only 3% and 6.1% are enrolled in Advanced and Postgraduate Diploma programs, respectively. This concentration indicates that the sample predominantly consists of students who are in the developmental phases of academic advising and career preparation. Academic advising strategies should be specifically tailored to third-year students, who are likely preparing for transition into professional roles or advanced academic pursuits, focusing on career readiness and alignment with industry demands.

5.4. Race

African students constitute most respondents at 84.8%, followed by Indian students at 12.1%, with other racial groups accounting for just 3%. This demographic breakdown reflects the broader racial

composition of the student body at South African universities, where African students represent the majority [100]. However, these racial disparities underscore the necessity of implementing culturally inclusive academic advising practices that cater to diverse student needs, addressing potential barriers to equitable access to career opportunities [101].

Table 2.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

| Section | No of items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|-------------|------------------|
| B. The effectiveness of academic advising in enhancing work preparedness amongst Management Accounting students at a University of Technology | 10 | 0.949 |
| C. The impact of academic advising on students' entrepreneurial intentions at a University of Technology | 10 | 0.740 |
| Overall | 20 | 0.923 |

The reliability analysis of the academic advising instrument, evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, demonstrated strong internal consistency. Section B, which measures the effectiveness of academic advising in enhancing work preparedness, achieved an impressive Cronbach's alpha of 0.949. This indicates that the items in this section are highly reliable and consistently measure the intended construct. Section C, which assesses the impact of academic advising on students' entrepreneurial intentions, recorded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.740. While this suggests acceptable reliability, it is slightly lower, indicating that the items may not be as closely aligned due to the complexities associated with entrepreneurial intentions. The overall Cronbach's alpha for the combined scale of 20 items was 0.923, reflecting excellent reliability. These findings highlight the robustness of the instrument and its value in providing actionable insights, particularly in relation to work preparedness. The higher reliability observed in Section B implies that students view academic advising as having a more consistent impact on their career preparation. In contrast, the slightly lower reliability in Section C suggests the need for more tailored advising strategies to better address the diverse entrepreneurial aspirations of students.

Table 3.

Correlation analysis.

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Spearman's rho | Section B ↔ Section C | Correlation Coefficient | 0.612 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | <0.001* |
| | | N | 33 |

Note: *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The analysis of the relationship between the effectiveness of academic advising in enhancing work preparedness and its impact on entrepreneurial intentions demonstrates a moderate to strong positive correlation ($\rho = 0.612$, $p < 0.001$) based on a sample size of 33. This suggests that students who view academic advising as beneficial for workforce preparation are more likely to regard it as influential in promoting their entrepreneurial aspirations. The results are consistent with established theories, including Social Cognitive Theory [45, 102] which emphasizes the importance of self-efficacy and mentorship, as well as Shi, et al. [38] and Elliott, et al. [91] which focuses on perceived desirability and feasibility in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. Academic advising plays a crucial role in boosting students' confidence, providing resources, and addressing obstacles to entrepreneurship, thereby serving as an effective mechanism for enhancing both work preparedness and entrepreneurial development [103]. Additionally, Career Construction Theory [93] further corroborates the notion that skills and mindsets fostered through advising are applicable across various career fields, enabling students to explore diverse pathways [104]. These findings highlight the dual function of academic advising in equipping students for both traditional employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Table 4.

Responses on questions based on the “The impact of academic advising on students' entrepreneurial intentions at a University of Technology”.

| Question | Responses, n (%) | | | | | Mean dev.) (Std | One-sample t-test p-value |
|---|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| | SD | D | N | A | SA | | |
| Academic advising has spurred my interest in exploring entrepreneurship as a potential career path. | 10 (30.3) | 5 (15.2) | 3 (9.1) | 10 (30.3) | 5 (15.2) | 2.85 (1.52) | <0.001 |
| My academic advisor has furnished me with pertinent information on entrepreneurship. | 3 (9.1) | 2 (6.1) | 3 (9.1) | 15 (45.5) | 10 (30.3) | 3.82 (1.21) | <0.001 |
| The counsel provided by my academic advisor has deepened my intrigue in entrepreneurial ventures. | - | 2 (6.1) | 6 (18.2) | 14 (42.4) | 11 (33.3) | 4.03 (0.88) | <0.001 |
| Academic advising sessions have aided me in identifying promising business opportunities. | 1 (3.0) | 2 (6.1) | 4 (12.1) | 18 (54.5) | 8 (24.2) | 3.91 (0.95) | <0.001 |
| My academic advisor has linked me to resources geared towards formulating a comprehensive business plan. | 9 (27.3) | 4 (12.1) | 7 (21.2) | 11 (33.3) | 2 (6.1) | 2.79 (1.34) | <0.001 |
| I feel more assured in my entrepreneurial abilities owing to the backing from my academic advisor. | 8 (24.2) | 3 (9.1) | 5 (15.2) | 15 (45.5) | 2 (6.1) | 3.00 (1.35) | <0.001 |
| Academic advising has equipped me with knowledge on securing funding for a business venture. | 1 (3.0) | 3 (9.1) | 6 (18.2) | 15 (45.5) | 8 (24.2) | 3.79 (1.02) | <0.001 |
| My academic advisor has encouraged me to partake in activities related to entrepreneurship. | 2 (6.1) | 2 (6.1) | 2 (6.1) | 16 (48.5) | 11 (33.3) | 3.97 (1.10) | <0.001 |
| I have received guidance on the risks and rewards associated with entrepreneurship through academic advising. | 2 (6.1) | 2 (6.1) | 5 (15.2) | 17 (51.5) | 7 (21.2) | 3.76 (1.06) | <0.001 |
| Academic advising has guided me through the fundamental steps involved in launching a business. | 2 (6.1) | 2 (6.1) | 6 (18.2) | 15 (45.5) | 8 (24.2) | 3.76 (1.09) | <0.001 |

Note: A = agree, SA = strongly agree, N = neutral, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree, Std dev. = standard deviation.

The results detailed in Table 4 underscore the influence of academic advising on students' entrepreneurial intentions within a University of Technology setting. The data, evaluated through descriptive statistics and a one-sample t-test, reveals important insights regarding students' perceptions of the role academic advising plays in cultivating entrepreneurial aspirations. A notable observation is the diverse impact of academic advising on entrepreneurial interests; specifically, 45.5% of students agreed or strongly agreed that advising enhanced their interest in entrepreneurship, while an equal percentage expressed disagreement. This variation indicates that the effect of academic advising may depend on factors such as the consistency of the advising practices or the students' willingness to engage. A significant majority of students (75.8%) indicated that their academic advisors supplied relevant information about entrepreneurship, yielding a mean response score of 3.82 (SD = 1.21). This suggests that advisors are generally successful in providing students with pertinent entrepreneurial knowledge. Additionally, the guidance offered by advisors increased interest in entrepreneurial ventures for 75.7% of respondents, reflected in a high mean score of 4.03 (SD = 0.88). Furthermore, 78.7% of students agreed or strongly agreed that academic advising sessions assisted them in identifying viable business opportunities, emphasizing the practical value of advising in fostering entrepreneurial intentions. However, there are areas that require attention. Only 39.4% of students felt their academic

advisors connected them to resources for developing business plans, indicated by a lower mean score of 2.79 (SD = 1.34). While 51.6% of respondents reported increased confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities due to advising, nearly half remained neutral or disagreed, suggesting a moderate impact on confidence-building. Conversely, academic advising was viewed as moderately effective in providing knowledge about securing funding, with 69.7% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing (mean = 3.79, SD = 1.02). Additionally, 81.8% of students noted that their advisors encouraged them to engage in entrepreneurial activities, reflecting efforts made by advisors to promote entrepreneurial involvement.

These findings are consistent with existing literature that emphasizes the critical role of academic advising in nurturing entrepreneurial intentions. Li, et al. [105] highlight the transformative impact of academic advising on shaping students' aspirations, and the results of this study confirm that advising has a measurable effect on entrepreneurial interest, albeit inconsistently. The findings also resonate with Social Cognitive Theory [45] which underscores the importance of mentorship and self-efficacy in shaping entrepreneurial behavior [13]. Through encouragement and actionable guidance, advisors enhance students' confidence and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, both vital predictors of entrepreneurial success. Moreover, the results are in alignment with Shi, et al. [38] which emphasizes the significance of perceived feasibility and desirability in entrepreneurial intentions [106]. Furthermore, Wraae, et al. [107] argued that advisors play a vital role in shaping these perceptions by providing practical insights, connecting students to resources, and promoting entrepreneurial activities. Nevertheless, the lower scores related to resource provision for business planning highlight an opportunity for enhancement. The essential role of academic advising in identifying business opportunities and facilitating entrepreneurial steps is substantiated by Career Construction Theory [5] which posits that individuals construct their careers through developmental support and guidance, equipping them to navigate various career paths, including entrepreneurship Carvalho, et al. [108].

Bais, et al. [109] expressed that to optimize the effectiveness of academic advising, institutions should prioritize accessibility to resources by equipping advisors with tools and networks related to entrepreneurship, such as funding opportunities, incubators, and business plan templates. Similarly, Miller [98] argued that implementing standardized training for academic advisors is essential to ensure consistent support for all students and reduce variability in advising practices. Additionally, Al-Fattal [110] recommended that advisors should aim to bolster students' entrepreneurial confidence through mentorship programs and experiential learning opportunities. Finally, fostering stronger collaboration between academic advising departments and entrepreneurship centers can provide students with comprehensive support, ensuring they have access to a full range of guidance and resources for their entrepreneurial endeavors [24].

6. Conclusion

This study emphasizes the significant role of academic counseling in fostering entrepreneurial intentions among university students. The findings indicate that academic advising not only aids in students' academic and professional development but also enhances entrepreneurial mindsets by offering guidance, mentorship, and awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities. There is a strong positive correlation between effective academic advising and students' confidence in pursuing entrepreneurship, underscoring the importance of a structured consulting program within the university. While academic advisors are crucial in shaping students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship, this study advocates for integrated approaches that collaborate with experts in entrepreneurship, industry leaders, and economic resources to enhance regulatory effectiveness. Given the prominent presence of Generation Z students, universities should leverage digital tools and experiential learning methods to make counseling more accessible and engaging. Additionally, it is essential to adopt gender-sensitive and culturally inclusive counseling practices to address the unique challenges faced by underrepresented groups in entrepreneurship. Higher education institutions are encouraged to strengthen their advisory frameworks by incorporating mentorship initiatives for entrepreneurs, improving resource accessibility, and developing certification programs. Future research should explore the long-term impact of

academic advising on students' entrepreneurial success and identify best practices for integrating entrepreneurship into academic counseling models. Universities can significantly contribute to equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to thrive in the entrepreneurial landscape by enhancing the advisory approach.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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