ABSTRACTS

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EMERGING MINDS IN AN AI AGE: HOW UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ENVISION THE FUTURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP LEARNING AND ACTION

Aim of the Study

This study explores how university students from diverse cultural backgrounds perceive the future of entrepreneurship education in the context of rapid artificial intelligence (AI) integration. It investigates three core aspects: (i) students' interest in entrepreneurship learning and their future entrepreneurial intentions, (ii) their attitudes and anxieties regarding AI in entrepreneurial education, (iii) cross-cultural differences in these perceptions. As entrepreneurship education evolves to incorporate digital tools, this research aims to understand how learners envision their role in an AI-influenced entrepreneurial landscape and what they expect from educational environments going forward.

Theoretical Framework

The study integrates three conceptual frameworks to structure the research: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB): to assess students' attitudes, perceived social norms, and behavioral intentions related to entrepreneurship.
Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): selectively applied to evaluate students' perceptions of the usefulness and ease of use of AI tools in entrepreneurship learning.
Cross-Cultural Comparison: used to examine how perceptions vary among students from different nationalities, recognizing that cultural context may influence expectations and ethics toward AI in education.
Together, these frameworks provide a multidimensional lens to evaluate how technological and cultural variables intersect in entrepreneurship education.

Methods

A mixed qualitative, quantitative, cross-cultural survey was conducted with undergraduate students from a university in Japan, Nepal, and Bangladesh. Japanese university students are from different nationalities across the world (including Japanese) but currently residing and studying in Japan. The survey instruments included demographic questions (e.g., nationality, academic year, gender etc.), likert scale questions, and open ended questions.

Questions were formed based on the theoretical frameworks TPB, TAM, and cross-cultural comparison.

Results

The survey gathered responses from students currently residing in Japan (n=16), Bangladesh (n=20), and Nepal (n=4). This diverse sample allowed for a comparative analysis of how students from different socio-economic and educational contexts perceived entrepreneurship education and AI integration. Below are the results structured by three research goals.

i) Students' interest in entrepreneurship learning and their future entrepreneurial intentions

Students across all three countries reportes strong interest in entrepreneurship learning, but differences emerged in their intentions to take entrepreneurial action. Students residing in Bangladesh demonstrated the highest overall motivation toward entrepreneurship. Their mean score for interest in entrepreneurship learning was 4.8 out of 5, and their perceived usefulness of entrepreneurship education for career goals was also 4.8, with a matching in their intention to start or join a venture. This suggests not only a strong appreciation for entrepreneurship education but a clear drive to apply it in practice. In contrast, Japanese students reported high interest (4.13) and belief in the career value of entrepreneurship (4.19), but their intention to act was notably lower at 3.88, indicating a possible gap between learning and implementation. This may reflect structural or cultural hesitation in Japan toward entrepreneurial risk. Meanwhile, Nepalese students rated the usefulness of entrepreneurship education the highest of all (5.0), yet their entrepreneurial intention was moderate (3.75), which could imply optimism about education but uncertainty about real-world entrepreneurial feasibility due to limited resources or support system.

ii) Attitudes and Anxieties Regarding AI in Entrepreneurship Education

All three groups displayed positive attitudes toward AI as a learning tool. Japanese students reported the highest comfort level using AI (4.56), closely followed by those in Bangladesh (4.35) and Nepal (4.5). When asked whether AI would become a normal part of entrepreneurship, Bangladesh led slightly (4.65), with Japan (4.31) and Nepal (4.25) also agreeing. This indicates a generally high level of acceptance of AI's role in future education across regions. However, concerns about AI's impact varied significantly. Japanese students express the highest worry about AI misuse, particularly around plagiarism and shortcuts (4.56), likely due to stricter academic integrity norms. They also reported the lowest concern about AI responsibly. In contrast, students in Nepal and Bangladesh were moderately concerned about AI affecting their creativity (4.00 and 3.90), revealing a cautious view of AI's potential to dilute original thinking. Fairness and ethical concerns also showed variation. Students in Bangladesh were the most concerned that AI could create unfair academic advantages (4.00), compared to Japan (3.19) and Nepal (3.00). This reflects apprehension about unequal access to AI tools and academic disparities in resource-constrained environments. Japanese students, while less worried about fairness, were more focused on individual misuse and maintaining academic standards.

iii) Cross-Cultural Differences in Ethical Perceptions

When asked whether entrepreneurship education should include discussions on the ethical use of AI, students across all three countries strongly agreed. Bangladeshi students led again with a mean score of 4.60 followed by Nepalese students (4.25) and Japanese students (4.19). The strong demand in Bangladesh may stem from both optimism and concern, students are eager to engage with AI but want guardrails to ensure fairness, accountability, and access. Nepalese students also showed support, but the small size (n=4) limits broader generalization. Japanese students' moderate support suggests an expectation that ethics may already be embedded in institutional practices, though perhaps not explicitly emphasized in entrepreneurship courses.

Correlational Insights: Beyond mean comparisons, a correlation analysis was conducted among the likert-scale responses to uncover deeper relationships between students' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Several statistically meaningful correlations emerged, offering additional insights into how students cognitively and emotionally connect entrepreneurship education with Ai-enabled learning.

The strongest observed correlation was between students' interest in learning entrepreneurship and their belief that entrepreneurship education is useful for their careers (r=0.86). This robust relationship supports the Theory of Planned Behavior, where attitude toward the value of a behavior is closely tied to the intention to engage in it. It suggests that when students perceive clear personal or professional benefits, their motivation to participate in entrepreneurial learning increases significantly.

A similarly strong correlation (r=0.79) was found between students who feel comfortable using AI tools and those who believe AI supports their learning in entrepreneurship. This aligns with key principles from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), specifically, that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness often go hand in hand in chapring user acceptance. Students who trust AI to enhance their educational experience are also more likely to be enthusiastic about adopting it.

Furthermore, a high correlation (r=0.79) was observed between the belief that AI tools support learning and the expectation that AI will become a normal part of entrepreneurship education. Students who already experience AI positively tend to view its presence in education as inevitable and welcome. A related finding (r=0.75) showed that students who believe AI can foster innovative ideas and solutions also strongly support the idea of AI's growing role in the classroom.

Finally, the perception that entrepreneurship education is valuable also positively correlates with the belief that AI enhances entrepreneurship learning (r=0.72). This suggests that students who are already engaged and appreciative of entrepreneurship curricula are more likely to see Ai as a complementary and enriching tool, rather than a threat.

Taken together, these correlations suggest a synergistics relationship between openness to AI and engagement in entrepreneurship education. Students who value entrepreneurship and feel confident in their learning are also those most willing to adopt and trust AI, reinforcing the notion that technological adoption and entrepreneurial mindset development can be mutually reinforcing processes. These insights support the design of integrated curricula that combine entrepreneurial pedagogy with ethical, hands on Ai literacy.

Conclusion and Implications

This research confirms that students value the integration of AI in entrepreneurship education but also demand ethical guardrails and human-centered learning environments. While AI is seen as a powerful tool for idea generation and efficiency, students still expect mentoring, interactive learning, and ethical reflection to be central in entrepreneurship curricula. From a pedagogical perspective, these findings urge educators to:

- Leverage AI tools as part of blended learning environments
- Explicitly include ethics and critical reflection on AI in course content
- Adapt teaching methods to address cultural differences in learner expectations and technological readiness
- Design entrepreneurship education that balances innovation with human connection

The study contributes to ongoing debates on how to shape future-ready, ethically grounded, and culturally responsive entrepreneurship education especially in the age of accelerating AI adoption.