

# EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON THE WILLINGNESS TO CREATE STARTUPS AMONG ALGERIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: EVIDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTATION SCIENCE AT ALGIERS II UNIVERSITY

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## Abstract

The current paper examines the impact of demographic factors (gender, age ranges, and the academic degree) on the university students' entrepreneurial intention by the creation of startups in Algeria. Sample of 105 university students from department of library and documentation science at Algiers II University took part in the study through online questionnaire which was conducted during May 7<sup>th</sup> and July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The data were analyzed using the Chi square test which was performed with SPSS V26. The results obtained reveal that there are no significant differences between men and women, generation Y and generation Z, graduates/undergraduates and postgraduates regarding the willingness to create startups.

**Keywords:** Startups; Entrepreneurial Intentions; Entrepreneurship; Incubators; University Students; Algeria; Gender, Chi Square Test; SPSS.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, universities are considered pivotal in social and economic perspectives by enhancing entrepreneurial activities via incubators. Startups come in all shapes and sizes (Mahalakshmi, 2023). From the universities students' view, the creation of small enterprises called "startups" is an accurate way to contribute on the economic development and empower their entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Typically, incubators run programs within one to two years to assist early-stage startups (Tripathi & Oivo, 2020).

In the other word, the university provides students with practical entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, entrepreneurship education has often been seen as a strategic mechanism through which universities can promote entrepreneurship as a career choice among their students (Ratten & Jones, 2020). Entrepreneurship is considered as a phenomenon which has been talked about most in recent times (Anwar & Saleem 2019). Moreover, entrepreneurship is an important research topic given its significant role in triggering economic growth, reducing poverty, and increasing incomes by creating new employment opportunities (Castellanza et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2021).

The concept of entrepreneurial intention was first introduced in the 1980s (Jin et al, 2024). Bird (1988) regards entrepreneurship as intentional and planned behavior. In general, entrepreneurs can be divided into three categories: individuals who are engaging in entrepreneurial activity, individuals who have not begun to engage in entrepreneurial activity but have an intention to do so and individuals who have not started a business and have no intention to do so (Jin et al, 2024). Although numerous studies have shown that entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in producing entrepreneurial individuals, studies examining how entrepreneurial intention leads to startup preparations among business students remain scarce (Mahajar, 2012). The association between entrepreneurial intentions and startup preparations is well explained by the TPB (Souitaris et al, 2007; Gelderen et al, 2008).

Typically, innovation and entrepreneurship policy (IEPs) refers to a series of action guidelines formulated by the state in order to vigorously develop innovation and entrepreneurship (Jin et al, 2024). Additionally, Dvouletý (2018) believes that the entrepreneurial intention is a psychological state that leads to attention to and behavior related to self-employment, rather than employment at an organization. Henry and Lewis (2018) state that entrepreneurial intention means an individual intention to start a business. Hence, Murnieks et al (2020) regard entrepreneurial intention as the commitment to establish a start-up. In turn, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and individual motivations constitute the fundamental elements of the intention to start a business (Saeed et al, 2018). In startups, entrepreneurship is the starting point of a business and the driving force to pass the difficult period in the early years (from three to five years) of the startup, which is called the "death valley" (Hmieleski & Lerner, 2016). From the economic perspective, the influence of entrepreneurial policies on finance and taxes significantly and closely affects entrepreneurial intention (Block et al, 2018; Cumming & Groh, 2018; Cumming et al., 2018; Rocheteau et al, 2018; Bonini & Capizzi, 2019; Brown & Rocha, 2020; Brown et al, 2020; Galindo-Martín et al, 2021).

Further, in Algeria, there is a national agenda based on public policies, development plans and support initiatives that promote the creation of startups and the diversification of the national economy to reduce the dependence on fossil fuel exports. Therefore, the entrepreneurial environment in Algeria is also supported by the establishment of incubators to support startups.

Despite the difficulties encountered during the process, these structures, such as the "Cyberparc" incubator and other university initiatives under Law 1275 play a crucial role

in supporting startups providing them with resources and an environment conducive to their growth (Djelti & Chouam, 2016; Nadji & Bourennane, 2023). Indeed, events such as the Algerian startup challenge (*Algeria Startup Challenge | Fifth Edition*) and annual events (*Algeria Disrupt - The Annual Startup Conference, 2023*) are dedicated to raising young people's awareness of the entrepreneurial initiative. Considering the statistics given by Statista (2024), the Algerian startup Yassir is the leader at the local market in 2022, followed by General Emballage, Temtem, Kick Sport and Azouaou, as it is shown in the table below:

**Table 1: Top five startups in Algeria in 2022**

Startups	Yassir	General Emballage	Temtem	Kick Sport	Azouaou
<b>Total funding</b> (in million U.S. dollars)	217.69	55	5.7	0.31	0.15

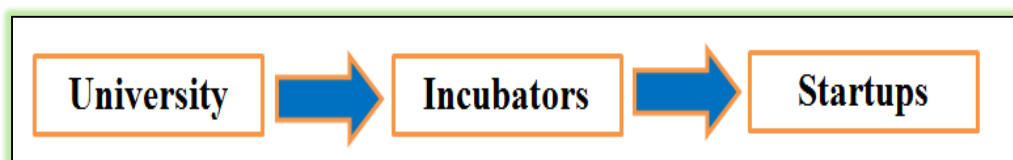
Source: Statista (2024)

Based on the articles 88 and 33 of Law “17-01”, the Algerian Ministry of Startups set tax exemptions (gross income tax / profit tax) for four years. Furthermore, a particular tax exemption for the value-added tax on new equipment is provided. Although this supportive environment is expanding rapidly, Algerian startups face several challenges including complex administrative procedures in setting up a business (Berrah & Bourif, 2015). However, a country's economic situation can lead to a significant reduction in available financial resources, which limits opportunities for business development and growth (Kouamé, 2012).

Overall, this paper aims to contribute to the literature by examining the attitude of university students toward entrepreneurial intention, as an extension to the planned behavior theory.

### 1.1 Theoretical background

Startups can be characterized as transformation catalysts as they create novel concepts or reimagine existing ones (Mahalakshmi et al 2023). Some recent work has noted that entrepreneurial ideas are created by an individual, while an opportunity is created by the environment, and entrepreneurial ideas will have benefits for increasing business opportunities (Kier, 2018; Kier, 2020). Moreover, Tomy & Pardede (2020) concluded that individuals with an intention should be able to establish a new enterprise in a conscious and organized way. In this sense, the following figure explains the role of the university on the creation of startups.



**Figure 1: Relationship between university and startups**

Numerous studies have reported that entrepreneurship education could stimulate students to be proactive, take risks, support the decision-making process to start a new business, and therefore lead to students' entrepreneurial intention (Dehghanpour, 2013; Wu & Wu, 2008; Zhang et al, 2014; Ratten & Jones, 2020; Boukhedimi, 2024).

Ratten & Jones (2020) highlighted the role of the universities in providing students with practical entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, entrepreneurship education has often been seen as a strategic mechanism through which universities can promote entrepreneurship as a career choice among their students. On the other hand, the emergence of the incubator concept dates back to an initiative that first took place at Batavia Manufacturing Center in 1959 in New York and it has not been utilized in the required and satisfactory manner for a considerable period. In the 1980s, the American Society was founded and has experienced great spread and success.

Overall, incubators offer activities aimed providing advice, counselling, financial assistance for entrepreneurs. Thus, it should be highlighted that the incubator could have two types, private incubators and university business incubators. Given that the current research is focused on the university students' intention toward the creation of start-ups, in turn, university business incubators are centers that provide support services and guidance on how to manage emerging projects and new businesses which keeps pace with the technological development, by integrating it with the higher education sector (universities), and therefore, those institutions play an important role in the creation of small business (start-ups).

According to Jain (2016), start-ups do not have an exact definition due to the subjectivity and complexity involved, and it may define as the following:

- A startup is a young company that is beginning to develop and grow, is in the first stages of operation, and is usually financed by an individual or small group of individuals;
- A startup is a young company that searches for an unknown business model to disrupt existing markets or create new ones;
- A startup is a young and dynamic company built on technology and innovation, where founders attempt to capitalize on developing products or services to create a new market.

Furthermore, a startup defines as "a human institution designed to create a new product or service under conditions of extreme uncertainty" (Ries, 2011). Thus, Blank (2013) mentioned that startups are temporary companies or organizations oriented and designed to search for repeatable and scalable business models; thereby, they are not parts or smaller versions of large companies. Additionally, startups are agents of change that provide innovative solutions for complex problems at various scales (Devadiga, 2017). In addition to that, startups come in all shapes and sizes. Subsistence entrepreneurs are individuals who initiate business ventures to generate sufficient money to meet their basic needs and sustain their livelihoods. (Mahalakshmi et al 2023).

According to Maciejewski & Wach (2019), there are three core assignments of startups that could give an appropriate definition:

- Startups provide customers with products from other sources unavailable in a given area;
- Startups provide customers with improved versions of known products;
- Startups supply customers with new products based on new technology.

Specifically, Durda & Ključniko (2019) mentioned that technology startups often built on an innovative business model. Hence, this type should ensure significant resources, skills, and internal and external partners in the early stages of growth. Although there is no unified definition of startups, this concept is presented by Bank & Kakabadse (2018) as a newly established business venture that is in its first stages of operation. In other words, it might be considered as a small business that grows quickly, and offers new ideas. On the other side, the incubator is an organization or place that aids in the development of new business ventures, mainly by providing low-cost commercial space, management assistance, or shared services (merriam-webster, 2024). The specific roles of incubators are summarized below:

- Facilitate for public policy supporting innovation by offering workspaces at reduced prices;
- Setting up shared training for incubated companies;
- Offering administrative and accounting management services;
- Establishing a relationship between project leaders and mentors or coaches;
- Providing access to financing for start-ups by organizing meetings with fund suppliers;
- Connecting with potential customers in the context of open innovation.

## **1.2. The importance of startups in the economy**

Entrepreneurs of micro, small, and medium enter-prises (MSMEs), play an important role in the progress and development of society by generating employment opportunities at a large scale (Rajeevan et al, 2015). Thus, startups that inspire young people are true economic models, demonstrating that entrepreneurship and innovation can lead to success, stimulating the local economy and securing jobs led by Yassir and Jumia (Hadj-Arab & Idir, 2018; Nadji & Bourennane, 2023). The ability of these young companies to innovate and adapt to the new technologies places them on the locomotive of technological development actors.

In this way, Boyer & Blazy (2013) argued that entrepreneur qualifications are a significant determinant of whether startups survive in a competitive market or not, e.g., entrepreneurs with weak professional experience influence startup activities negatively and vice versa. Thus, their impact on a country's economy was demonstrated in a study

of 50 U.S. states spanning from 1988 to 2014, which showed that 23 states progressed thanks to new business models (Nene et al, 2024).

Hence, the interest of individuals in the entrepreneurial career can be associated to what is theoretically known as the theory of entrepreneurial intentions (Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud, 2000). As a result, entrepreneurship is considered a vital force in industrialization and economic growth through capital formation, exploitation of local resources, and employment generation (Mahalakshmi et al 2023). However, startups typically fail due to the business development process when they disregard the design of a reliable and measurable business development phase and focus only on product and service improvement. Furthermore, startups will fail because of the lack of business development, owning an incorrect business model, running out of cash, ineffective management, competition, and wrong positioning in the market (Cantamessa et al, 2018). In all the economies, including less developed, developing and developed, there is a need for a proper entrepreneurial framework based on their level of economic development (Mahalakshmi et al 2023).

The best way to understand the importance of startups in the world economy world is to remember that a large part of the technology leaders in the world have started as startups, such as Alphabet, the parent company of Google, Meta (formerly Facebook). These innovators are today among the best-listed companies on the stock exchange, although they started with an idea that found the necessary support and financing to achieve success.

### **1.3. Literature review**

Various papers focused on the entrepreneurial intention of university students across countries, as it is highlighting below:

The study of Gürol & Atsan (2006) aimed to explore the entrepreneurship profile of two Turkish universities students ( $n = 400$ ), and to make an assessment for their entrepreneurship orientation in comparison with non-entrepreneurially inclined students. Overall, 40-item questionnaire is administered to students, with questions related to demographic variables, entrepreneurial inclination, and six entrepreneurial traits namely there are six traits involved, to define the entrepreneurial profile of students, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity, risk taking propensity, innovativeness and self-confidence (with Likert type items). The use of the  $t$ -tests allows the researchers to confirm that all entrepreneurial traits are found to be higher in entrepreneurially inclined students compared to entrepreneurially non-inclined students, except for tolerance for ambiguity and self-confidence. The percentage of students in the sample who desire to be entrepreneurs is relatively inferior (18 percent). Additionally, study can be conducted more broadly to lead to more general conclusions.

The purpose of the study of Saeed et al (2018) was to test the impact of three university support dimensions that are perceived educational support, concept development support, and business development support on students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Focused on 805 Pakistani university students, it has



been found that perceived educational support exerted the highest influence on entrepreneurial self-efficacy, followed by concept development support, and business development support. Furthermore, individual motivations such as recognition, self-realization, and role had an impact on intention of entrepreneurship. However, intention was not related to innovation, financial success, and independence.

In another study, Anwar & Saleem (2019) researched the entrepreneurial characteristics among 719 university students in India. A comparison of the levels of entrepreneurial characteristics between entrepreneurially inclined and entrepreneurially not inclined students was drawn. Indeed, six entrepreneurial characteristics were included, namely, risk taking propensity, innovativeness, locus of control, need for achievement, general self-efficacy and tolerance for ambiguity to define the entrepreneurial profile of students. Data collected from three universities in different cities, namely, Aligarh Muslim University in Aligarh, CSJM University in Kanpur and KMCUAF University in Lucknow.

The researchers used t-test and they confirmed that levels of all the entrepreneurial characteristics examined are important in entrepreneurially inclined students when compared to entrepreneurially not inclined students except in terms of general self-efficacy. In addition to that, it should be mentioned that entrepreneurially inclined students carry higher risk taking propensity, locus of control, innovativeness, need for achievement and tolerance for ambiguity.

Soomro & Shah (2022) investigated on the entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, need for achievement and entrepreneurial intention among 184 students of different public sector universities commerce in Pakistan. Based on quantitative method (survey questionnaire), the findings revealed a significant effect of constructs of entrepreneurship education, opportunity recognition and entrepreneurship knowledge acquisition on entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial intention and need for achievement. Hence, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and need for achievement are found to be the robust predictors of entrepreneurial intention.

In a survey that was applied to 314 undergraduate students in Bucaramanga (Colombia), Romero-Colmenares and Reyes-Rodríguez (2022) explored a model to explain sustainable entrepreneurial intentions among university students which based on the main determinants of the TPB model (attitudes towards sustainable entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control). Additionally, some predictors such as altruism, education for entrepreneurship aspects, and self-efficacy were involved.

In this way, regression analysis based on the TPB model was performed, and the results showed that sustainable entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by the individuals' attitudes towards sustainable business creation, the level of perceived difficulty to carry out that action, and the subjective norms. Furthermore, these dimensions are positively influenced by the altruistic values that the individuals possess, the education for sustainable entrepreneurship as well as the belief they have of themselves to achieve goals.

Based on the main determinants of the TPB model, Romero-Colmenares & Reyes-Rodríguez (2022) explored explaining model of sustainable entrepreneurial intentions among 314 undergraduate students in Bucaramanga (Colombia). These determinants were attitudes towards sustainable entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, extending, three supplement factors, namely altruism, education for entrepreneurship aspects, and self-efficacy. As results, the individuals' attitudes towards sustainable business creation, the perceived difficulty involved in executing that action, and the subjective norms, impact on the sustainable entrepreneurial intentions. In addition, these dimensions are positively affected by the altruistic values that the individuals share, the education for sustainable entrepreneurship as well as their belief in themselves to achieve goals.

Focusing on data collected from 339 Malaysian and Ghanaian students, Mustafa et al (2023) found that university support for entrepreneurship increase the entrepreneurial intentions of students with a low to moderate proactive personality compared to those who have a strong proactive personality. Further, their study seeks how best universities can support the entrepreneurial intentions of their students. Students with low to moderate proactive personalities are more likely to perceive support for entrepreneurship from their institutions.

Jin et al (2024) aimed to clarify the composition of policies on entrepreneurship by college students and explore their influencing mechanism, on an entrepreneurial intention in China. The sample consisted of 4,600 participants from an online survey. The results showed that initial entrepreneurial impression has a weak positive correlation with entrepreneurial policies and ultimate entrepreneurial intentions, besides the most important factor that affects entrepreneurial intentions is entrepreneurial policies.

In a recent research, Boukhedimi (2024) presented a study which aims to measure the impact of the gender on the perceived risks linked with the ration of startups in Algeria. The research among 100 university students during December 20th, 2023–May 22nd, 2024. Using the Chi square test, the findings revealed that there are no significant differences between men and women regarding perceived risks associated with startups creation. Further, 44.1 percent of men and 62.1 percent of women stated that there is no difficulty in obtaining loans from banks, because this financial process is supported by the Algerian government. In addition to that, an important number of students (i.e., 53% of men and 48.4 % of women) believe that a lack of financial resources isn't a risk. Finally, most men (67.6%) and women (81.8%) thought that inflation didn't pose a significant risk to establishing small businesses.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **2.1. Method of Sampling**

Using an online survey as a branch of the quantitative approach, 105 university students were randomly involved. Furthermore, this study was performed from May 7th to July 8th, 2024, among students of Algiers II University in the department of library and documentation science.



This paper has empirically assessed the effect of the demographic variables of selected university students on their entrepreneurial intentions, which tend to create business startups. As intention and behavior are the basic elements of this study, it was necessary to explore the theory of planned behavior (TPB), as it is considered one of the best primary theory-driven models for explaining entrepreneurial intention (Ajzen, 1991). Statistically, it is important to outline that the data were analyzed using SPSS software (Version 26), and the Chi square test was explored to ensure the examination of study hypotheses.

The final sample size (n) was 105, and the findings might be generalized across the population (N), because the central limit theory (CLT) demonstrates that the sample is representative once the number of the sample population (n) is equal or superior to 30 (Chang et al, 2006; Polya, 1920; Johnson, 2004; Tomothy, 2005; Berenson et al, 2012; Naval, 2013; El sherif, 2021; Boukhedimi et al, 2023; Sriram, 2023).

## 2.2. Study objectives

1. Assess the influence of gender, age ranges, and education level regarding the foundation of small businesses (startups) in Algeria;
2. Determine the entrepreneurial intentions of Algerian students' university.

## 2.3. Hypotheses

**H1:** There is a significant difference between men and women university students regarding the willingness to create startups in Algeria

**H2:** Significant difference could be found in age ranges of Algerian university students with the willingness to start small entrepreneurial business in Algeria

**H3:** There is a statistically significant difference including the academic degree of university students in terms of the willingness to launch startups in Algeria

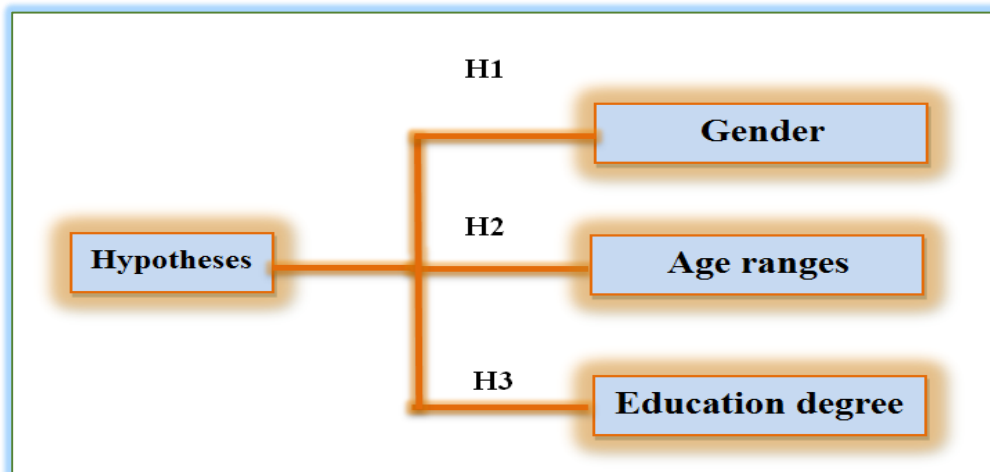


Figure 2: Study hypotheses

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Descriptive statistic

As shown in table 2 the study sample is consisted of 105 participants; and the sociodemographic features of the survey sample indicate that 67.6 % of them were from generation Z. While 32.4 % percent is the proportion of participants who are from generation Y. In addition, most of the respondents are women (67.6 %), compared to men, who are represented by 32.4 percent. However, 93.3 percent of our sample is undergraduate / graduate, versus 6.7 percent is post-graduate. On the other side, 14.3 percent of respondents are aspiring entrepreneurs and have already created small businesses.

**Table 2: Demographic profile of the sample**

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD	
n = 105	Gender	Man	34	32,4	1.68	0.47
		Woman	71	67.6		
	Age ranges	Generation Y	34	32,4	1.68	0.47
		Generation Z	71	67.6		
	Education degree	Undergraduate/graduate	98	93.3	1.93	0.25
		Post graduate	07	06.7		

Source: Survey data

Comparing the standard deviation and the mean of gender, age ranges and the academic degree of the university students involved in this survey, it has been determined that the differences are significant. In this sense, it is important to highlight that the differences regarding the count of each sub variable are significant (i.e. 34 men/71 women; 34 generation Y/71 generation Z; 98 graduates/undergraduates /7 postgraduates). This data highlights a predominantly women, generation Z, undergraduates and graduates sample population.

#### 3.2. Data analysis

Referring to the table 3 below, the majority of men (f= 29/34/), and women (f= 57/71), showed their interest to setting up small business (startups).

**Table 3: Cross tabulation based on gender**

		Yes	No	Total
Gender	Man	29	5	34
	Women	57	14	71
Total		86	19	105

Source: Survey data

As indicated in the table 4, most of respondents are agreeing to create their own startup.

**Table 4: Cross tabulation based on age ranges**

		Yes	No	Total
Age ranges	Gen Y	28	6	34
	Gen Z	58	13	71
Total		86	19	105

Source: Survey data

In this study, the impact of academic degree on the willingness to create startups is significant, (i.e., 100 percent of undergraduate/graduate participants and 80.61 percent of post graduate sample population).

**Table 5: Cross tabulation based on educational degree**

		Yes	No	Total
Education degree	Undergraduate/graduate	7	-	7
	Post graduate	79	19	98
Total		86	19	105

Source: Survey data

According to the table 6 below, the findings highlighted that there are no significant differences between gender of university students in our sample regarding the perceived risks associated with foundation of startups in Algeria. The asymptotic signification shows that all  $p$ -value obtained is superior to the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  (5%), which confirm that the variables are independents and the null hypothesis is accepted, Therefore the alternative hypothesis is rejected. In short, there is no significant deference between men and women regarding the risks associated with the creation of their own startups. Accordingly, all the sub-hypotheses are rejected ( $p$ -value > 0.05).

**Table 6: Hypotheses results**

Hypotheses	Variables/Risks	$p$ -value	Relationship	Result
H1	Gender	0.661	Independency	Rejected
H2	Age ranges	0.297	Independency	Rejected
H3	Educational degree	0.530	Independency	Rejected

Source: Survey data

Entrepreneurship is the key to generating income, which in turn allows for the development of wealth for individuals. Moreover, startups contribute to the development of exports, through direct and indirect production, by feeding big organizations with the raw materials and making them part of their production, which reduces production costs for giant organizations. Focusing on the gender, the startups contribute to the employment of women, and support them in setting up entrepreneurial activities that they lead themselves, and contribute effectively to the national economy. The presence of freelancers and small businesses in the economy is one of the basic pillars of rural population stability, and avoiding migration to big towns. Consequently, it is a reasonable solution to fight poverty and unemployment and reduce the pressure on big cities' infrastructure.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It could be concluded that this paper sought to examine whether demographic factors such as gender, age cohorts, and academic degree significantly influence the willingness to create startups among university students in Algeria. As a result, it has been confirmed that the university students' entrepreneurial intention isn't impacted by these factors. On the other hand, both men and women, generation Y and Generation Z, graduates/undergraduates and postgraduates respondents share the same direction regarding the current issue.

In line with the study limit, the survey was performed online using Google Forms. Moreover, this research is focused on the students of the Department of Library and Documentation Science at Algiers II University. In addition to that, there is a concentration on some variables (i.e., Women, Generation Z, and Postgraduate students). Given these limitations, it is welcomed that future research needs to be expanded by taking students from different departments and universities and implementing face-to-face surveys to increase the rate of reliability. Thus, it is recommended to include the less frequent variables as well as men, generation Y, and undergraduate/graduate participants. However, the findings could be considered useful to scientific research by including the results obtained.

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