

# Entrepreneurial Passion And Entrepreneurial Intention: The Mediating Role of Perceived Behavioral Control

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The objective of this article is to clarify the mechanism through which entrepreneurial passion affects entrepreneurial intention. This article empirically investigate whether perceived behavior control have a mediating effects on the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention. It is based on cognitive perspectives; the present study aimed to identify the impact of entrepreneurial passion on entrepreneurial intention.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The research method is quantitative. The sample of this study comprised 240 respondents from the public of Tunisian project leaders. Data were gathered using a self-report administered questionnaire, and hypotheses were tested with structural equation modelling.

**Findings:** The results demonstrate that the relationship between passion and intention is mediated by perceived behavioral control. We found that the mediating effect of perceived behavioral control is partial.

**Research limitations/implications:** Our study has some practical implications for the researcher and entrepreneurship education who are directly and indirectly involved in enhancing the growth of entrepreneurship.

**Practical implications:** This article gives rise to a new reflection on the analysis of entrepreneurial behavior based on a psychological and affective approach.

**Paper type:** Research paper

### Keyword:

Entrepreneurial passion, Entrepreneurial intention, Perceived behavioral control, Mediating effect

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In entrepreneurship, research on entrepreneurial intention continues to attract the interest of researchers. It is considered to be the most relevant concept to explain entrepreneurial behavior. Bird (1988), and Krueger, N.F., M.D. Reilly, (2000) argue that intention is the best predictor of entrepreneurial behavior. Similarly, several authors like (Schlaegel, 2014); Liñán, F., (2009); Krueger, N.F., M.D. Reilly (2000); Bird (1988); Lee, L. (2004) argue that entrepreneurial intention plays an important role in the decision to start a new venture.

Therefore, understanding how entrepreneurial intention is formed is critical to predicting entrepreneurial behavior (Bird, 1988). In the entrepreneurial literature, the formation of entrepreneurial intention is appreciated through a cognitive approach. The importance of cognitive variables in understanding this concept has been highlighted by Filion (2008) and Shaver (1991). For Mitchell, R. K, J.B. Smith, E.A. Morse, K.W. Seawright, A. M. Pedredo (2002), the cognitive approach is a relevant research paradigm to study entrepreneurship. This

approach helps to better understand the mental mechanisms to which entrepreneurs make recourse when they evaluate, judge or decide.

However, for Frank J., (2016) studying the cognitive mechanisms of entrepreneurs without considering the role of their emotions only gives a partial view of the whole picture. Forgas, J.P., (2001), and Delgado Garcia J. P., E. De Quevedo Puente, (2015) affirm in turn that emotion and cognition are two interactive mechanisms that affect behavior and decision-making.

The affective dimension is increasingly attracting the attention of entrepreneurship researchers. Research has shown the link between affect, creativity and innovation (Baron, R. A., 2011) the influence of affect on perceived judgment and decision making the role of affect in evaluating and explaining opportunities (Arora, P., J. M. Haynie, 2013) and the role of affect in the development of entrepreneurial intentions (Héctor P-F, J. B. Delgado-García, N. Martín-Cruz, 2020). Therefore, affective dimensions may play an important role in the cognitive processes involved in the formation of entrepreneurial intention.

Several studies from different disciplines have highlighted the key role that passion plays in motivation, cognition, and behavior (Perrewé, P.L., W.A. Hochwarter, 2014) Entrepreneurial passion has affective, cognitive, and behavioral components (& Y.-W. C. Liñán, F., 2009) and has particularly attracted the attention of researchers in recent years as it is perceived central to entrepreneurial action (Cardon, M. S., D.A. Gregoire, C.E. Stevens, 2013).

Entrepreneurial passion is defined as "*intense, consciously accessible positive feelings experienced through engagement in entrepreneurial activities associated with meaningful and salient roles in the entrepreneur's identity*" Cardon, M. S., R. Sudek, (2009). Drawing on the social, psychological and entrepreneurial literature, entrepreneurial passion is also defined as "*an intense, affective state of an entrepreneur, attended by cognitive and behavioral manifestations*", Chen, X.-P., X. Yao, (2009). Therefore, if passion is at all fundamental to entrepreneurial activities, then it makes sense that it is present or developed before the business creation process. Several researchers have called for a better understanding of passion for its fundamental role in entrepreneurial activity (Chen, X.-P., X. Yao, 2009). Most studies on passion focus on the effect of entrepreneurial passion on entrepreneurial behavior without focusing on the relationship between passion and entrepreneurial spirit. Indeed, the link between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention is not yet developed in the literature. Even the studies that consider this link do so indirectly by observing the moderating impact of passion on other factors (Fellnhofner, 2017) or as a determinant of other variables explaining its impact (Murnieks, C.Y., E. Mosakowski, 2014).

From a theoretical perspective, passion seems to be presented as a powerful factor. In particular, it is perceived to significantly condition actions that are central to self-identity (Cardon, M. S., R. Sudek, 2009). Then, passion seems to be of a greater importance to the process of developing entrepreneurial intention.

This paper examines the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention. Following Cardon, M. S., D.A. Gregoire, C.E. Stevens, (2013) who designed, developed and validated a three-dimension measurement scale for entrepreneurial passion (passion to found, passion to invent and passion to develop), this paper is the first to study the impact of entrepreneurial passion on entrepreneurial intention in the Tunisian context.

Furthermore, this paper also proposes to clarify the mechanism through which entrepreneurial passion affects entrepreneurial intention. At this level, Murnieks, C.Y., E. Mosakowski, (2014) argue that entrepreneurial passion may not directly relate to entrepreneurial behavior, but its effects may be mediated by proximal components. To this end, we propose the concept of perceived behavioral control as a mediating mechanism between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### A. Theoretical Background to Entrepreneurial Intention

Intention explains and proves why people are motivated to act. Not only does it determine the willingness to try (Ajzen, 1991), but also it does predict behavioral change (Kolvereid, 1996); Krueger, N.F., M.D. Reilly (2000). Defines intention as "*...a state of thought that directs attention (and therefore experience and action) toward a specific goal, the new organization, and a way to achieve it.*" Then, what makes intention unique is its ability to move an individual to take concrete steps and thus to consider taking actions.

In this regard, several entrepreneurial intention models have been developed in order to highlight the factors that contribute to the formation of entrepreneurial intention and consequently understand entrepreneurial behavior. The most commonly used entrepreneurial intention models are Shapero A (1982), taken up by Krueger, N.F. (1994), Bird (1988), taken up by Boyd, N. G (1994) and Ajzen (1991) theory of planned behavior

borrowed from social psychology. Most researchers are inspired by Ajzen (1991) theory of planned behaviour and Shapero & Sokol's model of the formation of entrepreneurial event.

According to these models, the formation of intention essentially bears on cognitive components. The intention to become an entrepreneur is the result of the individual's attitude, thoughts, beliefs and perceptions. The importance of cognitive variables in understanding the individual decision process has been highlighted by researchers such as Shaver (1991). Therefore, the cognitive perspective facilitates the understanding of the challenging process of entrepreneurship.

Our study refers to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) which is considered superior and more influential than other models (Fayolle A., 2013). According to this theory, an individual's intention is determined by three factors namely attitude towards the behavior, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control:

- Attitude towards the behavior refers to the degree of overall evaluation (positive or negative) or appreciation of the behavior in question,
- Perceived social norms refer to individuals' perceptions of how influential people in their lives approve or disapprove of them engaging in the behavior in question,
- Perceived behavioral control refers to individuals' perceptions of how easy or difficult the behavior in question is or how much voluntary control they have over it (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioral control is a particularly important determinant of intention.

## **B. Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial Intention**

The important role of passion in the pursuit and achievement of the desired goal has attracted the attention of psychologists and recently entrepreneurship scholars. Passion or "love" for something (Baum, J. R., 2004) that denotes affective feelings, especially intense positive feelings (Cardon, M. S., R. Sudek, 2009), has been defined in different ways. In psychology, Vallerand, R. J., C. Blanchard, G. A. Mageau, R. Koestner, C. F. Ratelle, (2003) define passion as a strong predisposition towards an activity that people love, that they find important and in which they relentlessly invest time and energy. In management, Cardon, M. S., R. Sudek, (2009) define entrepreneurial passion as "*consciously accessible intense positive feelings about entrepreneurial activities that are significant and salient to the entrepreneur's self-identity.*" The first dimension in this definition, namely intense positive feelings, reinforces engagement in entrepreneurial activities that are important to individuals and invoke such feelings. The second dimension, self-identity, denotes how the activity is central to one's identity (Cardon, M. S., D.A. Gregoire, C.E. Stevens, 2013). Centrality to identity differs between different individuals which leads entrepreneurs to engage in activities they identify with and disengage from others. Murnieks, C.Y., E. Mosakowski (2014) and Cardon, M. S., R. Sudek, (2009) note that centrality to identity plays an important role in entrepreneurial action and behavior. In the same line of thought, advocate that the entrepreneur's aspiration for identity is a powerful determinant of action, especially in the start-up stage.

On the other hand, the relationship between passion and individual entrepreneurial behavior has been considered by several authors (Cardon, M. S., R. Sudek, 2009).

In light of the above proposals, we can argue that entrepreneurial passion, through its two dimensions, plays an important role in entrepreneurial action, in this case the development of entrepreneurial intention. This leads us to develop our first hypothesis.

*H1 Entrepreneurial passion positively relates to entrepreneurial intention*

## **C. Entrepreneurial Passion and Perceived Behavioral Control**

Starting a business can face several risks and difficulties. Individuals may perceive obstacles as challenges and be even more determined to overcome them, inventing creative and alternative solutions (Zhao H., S. E. Seibert, 2005). Therefore, when starting a business, people should heavily rely on the belief in their own skills, and consequently they will be able to succeed and achieve their goals. This belief in their own competencies represents what is known by Bandura, (1997) as "self-efficacy". Self-efficacy is a central concept in Bandura, (1997) social-cognitive theory, which highlighted the ability of individuals to accomplish their tasks and achieve their goals. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is defined as the self-confidence to implement the skills necessary to achieve a goal and is highly task-oriented (Zhao H., S. E. Seibert, 2005). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy seems to be a very important prerequisite for the development of entrepreneurial intentions, as it forms a complex network of interrelated perceptions of the ability to complete a task or achieve a goal (Boyd, N. G, 1994; Lee, L., P. K. Wong, M. D. Foo, 2011; Zhao H., S. E. Seibert, 2005). This concept is similar to the concept of perceived behavioral control proposed by the theory of planned behavior.

On the other hand, several authors found a positive relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Murnieks, C.Y., E. Mosakowski, 2014);(Cardon, M. S., R. Sudek, 2009). Indeed, passion promotes confidence and competence in undertaking individual activities and in forming intentions (Cardon, M. S., D.A. Gregoire, C.E. Stevens, 2013). The positive effect of passion reinforces beliefs of success in activities that affirm and validate the identity associated with that passion. When entrepreneurs engage in activities they are passionate about, they are more confident and positive than when they evaluate the possibilities of success in those activities (Cardon, M. S., R. Sudek, 2009). We can thus formulate the following hypothesis:

*H2 Entrepreneurial passion positively affects perceived behavioral control.*

**D. Perceived Behavioral Control and Entrepreneurial Intention**

Perceived behavioral control involves taking into account the degree of knowledge and control that an individual has over his or her own abilities, as well as the resources and opportunities necessary to achieve the desired behavior (Tounès, 2003). Perceived behavioral control is the degree of ease or difficulty that an individual perceives in performing the behavior in question. This concept refers to Bandura (1997) self-efficacy and Shapero A (1982) perceived feasibility. McGee E. J., M. Peterson (2009) identify self-efficacy as a particularly important determinant of intention. Similarly, Ajzen (1991) claims an important role for perceived behavioral control; it will help to accurately predict future behavior. According to this author, it has been empirically shown that when behavior does not depend on any variable that the individual cannot control, intentions can predict them with great accuracy. Consistent with the theory of planned behavior, we formulate the third hypothesis as follows:

*H3 Perceived behavioral control positively affects the intention to start a business.*

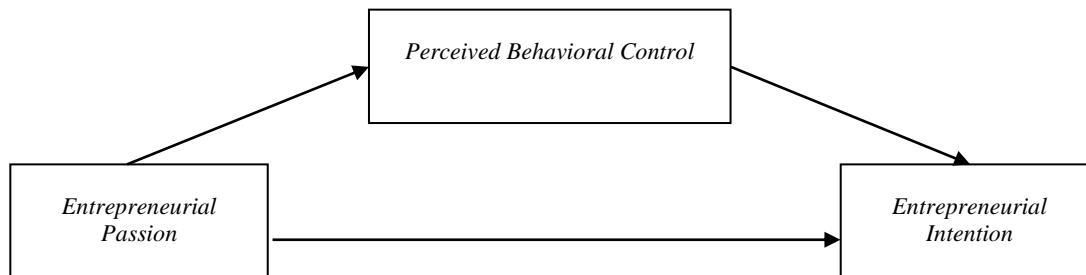
**E. The Mediating Role of Perceived Behavioral Control**

The relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention can then be understood through the concept of perceived behavioral control. Indeed, Murnieks, C.Y., E. Mosakowski (2014) argue that entrepreneurial passion may not directly relate to entrepreneurial behavior, but its effects may be mediated by proximal dimensions. We then formulate the following hypothesis:

*H4 The relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention is mediated by perceived behavioral control*

**F. The research Model**

The model presented below represents the different variables of our study. It integrates the mediating variable that we have chosen and is summarized schematically as follow:



*Figure 1. Conceptual formwork*

**III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**A. Sample**

The study examines a sample consisting of project managers. These managers have a validated idea of creating a business and, at the time we met them, were looking for funding from the BFPME of Tunis (Small and medium-sized enterprise financing bank -Tunisia), Others were looking for a business incubator in the governorate of Tunis to house their projects (note that we limited our survey to the governorate of Tunis). Others housed their projects in the innovation center of the technological pole of El Ghazela while others were met at an entrepreneurship fair. Accordingly, to our knowledge, because there is no database of project managers available to be consulted, we therefore opted for a convenience sampling method. At the end of the

survey, we obtained a sample of 240 project managers. The questionnaire was administered face to face. The table 1 shows the general characteristics of respondent's demography in terms of age, gender, experience, and the status of project.

*Table 1. The characteristics of respondents*

Characteristics	Percentage %
<u>Age</u>	
< 25 years old	68,8
26 to 35 years old	21.7
> 36 years old	9.6
<u>Gender</u>	
Male	65,4
Female	34,6
<u>Work experience</u>	
Yes	64.6
No	35.4
<u>Status of the project</u>	
Project preparation	67.1
Close de start-up the project	22.5
Very close de start-up the project	10.4

**B. Measurement Scales**

Because entrepreneurial intention is a new concept, several scales have been developed for its measurement. Of these scales, there is the Krueger, N.F., M.D. Reilly (2000), which uses a single item to measure intention. Similarly, Kolvereid, L. (2006) scale used a single measure for intention. Other studies have used an unconditional intention measure (Krueger, N.F., M.D. Reilly, 2000); Zhao H., S. E. Seibert (2005), while others have measured intention by preferences and estimated probabilities of pursuing an independent career as opposed to an office job (Kolvereid, 1996).

The measurement scale chosen for this study is the one developed by Liñán, F., (2009). To overcome the limitations of the different scales, these authors developed a standard measurement instrument for entrepreneurial intention. They developed the "Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ)" to measure entrepreneurial intention in different cultural contexts, referring to the principles of the theory of planned behavior.

Unlike other scales, the merit of this scale is that it is valid for different countries and that it apprehends intention through a cognitive approach, which seems to meet our research objectives. Entrepreneurial intention was measured using a five-item scale. A similar scale has already been used by Chen, C.C., Greene, P.G., & Crick, (1998) and Zhao H., S. E. Seibert, (2005). However, Armitage, C.J. & Conner, (2001) identified three distinct types of intention measures: desire ("I want to..."), self-prediction ("what is the probability..."), and behavioral intention ("I intend to..."). The latter type seems to provide slightly better results in predicting behavior (Armitage, C.J. & Conner, 2001). Zhao H., S. E. Seibert, (2005) used "interest" measures ("How interested are you in ...?").

For Chen, C.C., Greene, P.G., & Crick, (1998), the similarity between interest and intention may not be quite clear. For this reason, they chose a pure intention measure. Accordingly, & Y.-W. C. Liñán, F. (2009) used a combination of self-predictive and pure intention measures to measure intention.

Entrepreneurial passion was measured using the scale of Cardon, M. S., D.A. Gregoire, C.E. Stevens, (2013). This scale is the only instrument in the literature that measures passion in the specific context of entrepreneurship and includes three distinct measures of passion: a dimension of passion to invent, a second of passion to found, and a third a passion to expand businesses. For each dimension, two subscales were included, representing the intense positive feelings the entrepreneur had towards a particular activity and the identity centrality of each entrepreneurial role (inventing, founding, and developing) (Cardon, M. S., D.A. Gregoire, C.E. Stevens, 2013).

The operationalization of perceived behavioral control is not consistent in the literature. Ajzen, (1991) considers perceived behavioral control to be a somewhat broader concept than self-efficacy. Such a proposal would also include a measure of controllability (the extent to which the success of the behavior depends ON the individual). Nevertheless, used the very "self-efficacy" scale because Armitage, C.J. & Conner, (2001) concluded that self-efficacy is more clearly defined and more strongly correlates with intention and behavior. To address these shortcomings, we chose the scale of Liñán, F., (2009) who developed a measure of perceived behavioral control that includes 6 items; five of these items measure self-efficacy, and one item measures controllability.

**C. Method of Analysis**

First, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis to purify the measurement scales and then a confirmatory factor analysis to confirm the structure of our scales and to check for their convergent and discriminant validities.

**D. Exploratory Factor Analysis**

In this study, we adopted the procedure of as revised by MacKenzie, D.I., J.D. Nichols, J.A. Royle, K.H. Pollock, L.L. Bailey (2005). We applied an exploratory analysis on the measurement scales. A series of PCA analyses were conducted to purify them. Items with factor loadings lower than 0,5 were eliminated. The table 1 presents that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the passion to found, passion to develop, passion to invent, entrepreneurial intention and perceived behavioral control are 0.728, 0.722, 0.500, 0.734 and 0.819, respectively. These results confirm the reliability of the scales as shown in their Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

Table 2. Results of Exploratory Analyses

Latent Variable		Items	Communality	Cronbach's alpha	Explained Variance
Entrepreneurial Passion	Passion to found	PassEntr10	0.589	0.728	60.868%
		PassEntr12	0.550		
		PassEntr13	0.692		
	Passion to develop	PassEntr4	0.605	0.722	
		PassEntr6	0.590		
		PassEntr7	0.614		
	Passion to invent	PassEntr9	0.579	0.500	
		PassEntr2	0.638		
	Entrepreneurial Intention		PassEntr5	0.622	
Entrepreneurial Intention		Int4	0.608	0.734	65.975%
		Int5	0.696		
		Int6	0.682		
Perceived Behavioral Control		ContPer1	0.550	0.819	65.211%
		ContPer2	0.784		
		ContPer3	0.647		
		ContPer4	0.628		
		ContPer5	0.628		

**E. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

The CFA was performed using AMOS (23) software. Reliability of our measurement scales is confirmed by Jöreskog's Rhô. Moreover, convergent and discriminant validities were determined in order to ensure the internal consistency of our measures.

At the end of the factor analysis, we eliminated items whose factor loadings are lower than 0.5 in order to improve our model fit. Then, the main change is the elimination of the dimension passion to invent from the passion scale and the shift to a second order construct since both statistical conditions are checked, namely, correlation between the two dimensions is higher than 0,5 (equal to 0.532) and TCI is higher than 0.9 (equals 1). The results are presents in table 3.

Table 3. Results of the measurement model: Jöreskog's Rhô, convergent and discriminant validity

	Jöreskog's Rhô	Intention	Passion to Develop	Passion to Found	Perceived Behavioral control
Intention	0.735	0.685			
Passion to Develop	0.625	0.044	0.655		

Passion to Found	<b>0.738</b>	0.372	0.273	0.717	
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.822	0.304	0.131	0.194	<b>0.643</b>

Note: The diagonal elements (in bold) are the values of the convergent validity.

All squared correlation coefficients are lower than the average variance extracted. Then, discriminant validity is verified.

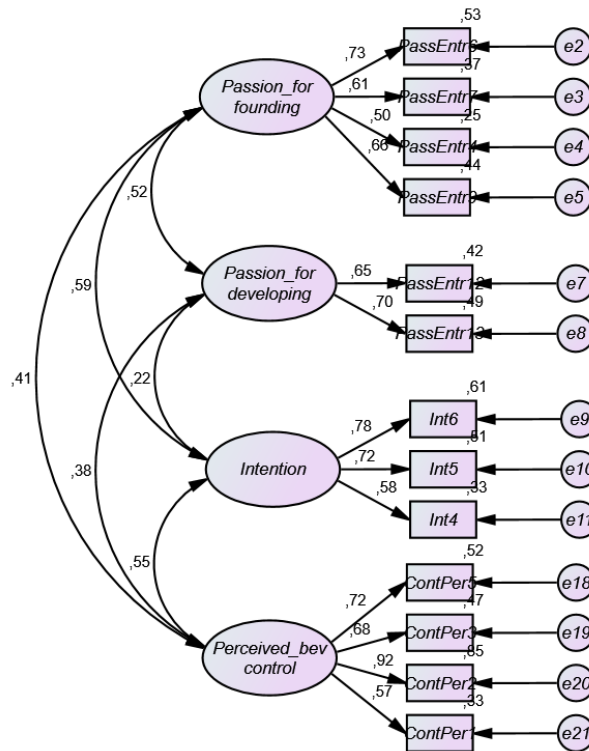


Figure 2. Measurement Model

**F. Structural Equation Analyse**

To test our research hypotheses, we used the structural equation method (using AMOS software). We submitted our structural model to a confirmatory factor analysis. The results of this procedure are globally satisfactory. Goodness of fit indices of the model are satisfactory too.

Table 4. Structural model fit indices

GFI	AGFI	RMR	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	X <sup>2</sup> /ddl	BIC	CAIC
0.852	0.800	0.047	0.095	0.761	0.804	3.171	718.013 Ms 1041.321	768.013 Ms 1231.321

The model presents satisfactory results. The standardized chi-square is below the norm and the absolute fit indices are very satisfactory (RMSEA<0,08). All the results of our model are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of the direct effects of the structural model

Hypothesis	Structural links	CR	P
H1	Entrepreneurial Intention ← Entrepreneurial Passion	0.416	3.754 0.000
H2	Behavioral Control ← Entrepreneurial Passion	0.461	4.913 0.000

H3	Entrepreneurial Intention	←	Behavioral Control	0.368	3.742	0.000
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The first hypothesis proposes to test the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and intention. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis yielded a significant and a positive structural relationship between the two variables with a standardized regression coefficient that is equal to 0.416, with  $t= 3.754$  and  $P=0.000$ . Therefore, hypothesis H1 is accepted.

The second hypothesis assumes that passion has a direct and a positive effect on perceived behavioral control. The structural relationship (standardized regression coefficient) between these two variables is also significant at 0.461 with  $t=4.913$  and  $P= 0.000$ . These results therefore support the presence of a significant and a positive relationship between passion and behavioral control. Then, hypothesis H2 is accepted.

The third hypothesis proposes to test a significant and a positive relationship between perceived behavioral control and intention. The structural relationship between these two variables is 0.368; it is also highly significant with  $t= 3.742$  and  $P= 0.000$ . Hypothesis H3 is therefore accepted.

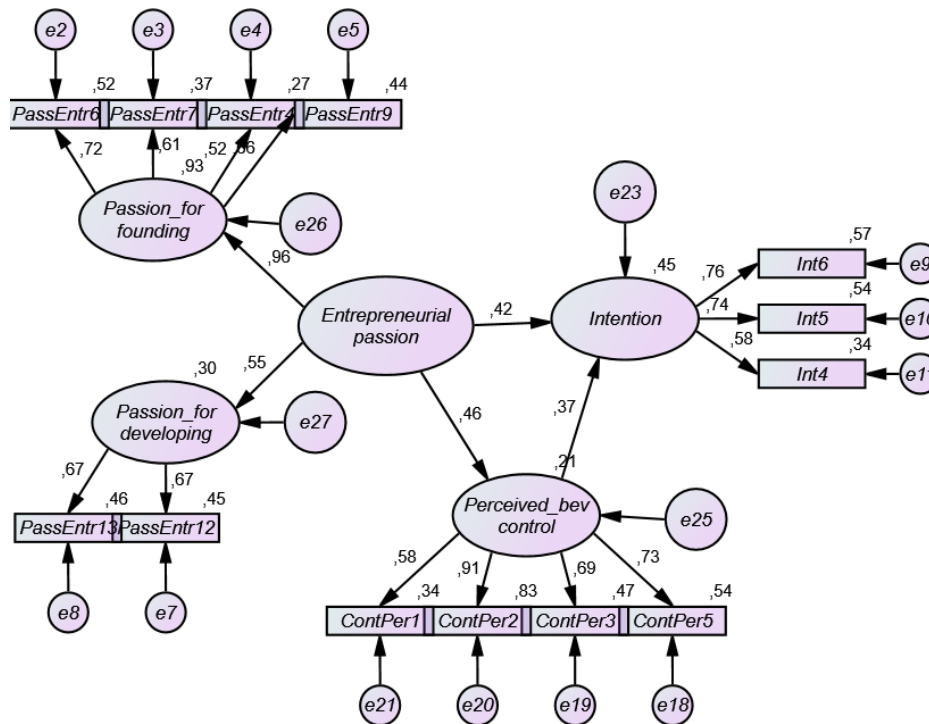


Figure 3. Structural Model

**G. Mediation Test**

In this section, we test the mediating effect of perceived behavioral control on the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention using.

Table 6. Results of the indirect effect of entrepreneurial passion on entrepreneurial intention

Relation	Structural links	P	LB (BC)	UB (BC)
Passion → Behavioral control → Intention	0.168	0.008	0.093	0.319

The results in Table 6 show that entrepreneurial passion indirectly affects entrepreneurial intention. The structural link between these two constructs is 0.168, which is significant at the 5% level.

Having checked the significance of the indirect links between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention, we now proceed to compare the direct and indirect relationships.

Table 7. Comparison of direct and indirect influence of entrepreneurial passion on entrepreneurial intention bootstrapping method



Relation	Direct links			Indirect links		
	Stand. Cof.	CR	P	Stand. Cof.	CR	P
Passion → Intention	0.416	3.754	0.000	0.168	3.231	0.008

The results of this table show that the values of the direct impact are higher than those of the indirect impact following the introduction of perceived behavioral control as a mediating variable. Therefore, we can conclude that mediation is partial, then hypothesis H4 is accepted.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that entrepreneurial passion has a significant impact on entrepreneurial intention in the presence of perceived behavioral control as a mediating variable. Entrepreneurial passion is considered a powerful construct that determines individuals' intentions to start a business. Our results are consistent with those of several studies. We cite Murnieks, C.Y., E. Mosakowski, (2014) who showed that entrepreneurial passion plays an important role in entrepreneurial persistence; Murnieks, C.Y., E. Mosakowski, (2014), Cardon, M. S., R. Sudek, (2009) who demonstrated that entrepreneurial passion affects individual entrepreneurial behavior; (Siddiqui, M. A., A. Asad, 2017) who highlighted the impact of harmonious and obsessive passion on entrepreneurial intention who proved the direct impact of entrepreneurial passion on intention to create; (Huyghe, A., M. Knockaert, 2016) who highlighted the impact of passion to invent on entrepreneurial intention of academic researchers; and (Çelik et al., 2018) who found that passion to invent and passion to found positively correlate with entrepreneurial intention of students participating in an entrepreneurship program.

These results support (& A. F. Liñán, F., 2015) claim that personal variables play an important role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurial passion as a personal variable is a powerful construct that develops entrepreneurial intentions. However, the results of our confirmatory analyses did not validate the initial structure of Cardon, M. S., D.A. Gregoire, C.E. Stevens, (2013) et al.'s entrepreneurial passion scale. The analysis revealed a two-dimensional scale, passion to found and passion to develop, while passion to invent was rejected. This could be explained by the fact that Tunisian project managers consider the identity of the founder and developer as more salient and central, and therefore determine more the behavior or action that represent these activities, i.e. the creation of a new business and the development of a business rather than inventing a business. This is in line with the theory of role identity Furthermore, the factor analysis confirmed that the two dimensions, passion to found and passion to develop, highly correlate with each other, which led us to group these two dimensions into a single second-order construct. This is consistent with (Costa S. F., S. C. Santos, D. Wach, 2018) and (Mensmann, M., M. Frese, F. Campos, M. Goldstein, L. Iacovone, H. Johnson, 2019) who combined entrepreneurial passion items into a comprehensive measure.

Our results also show that the stronger entrepreneurial passion the greater the individual perception of behavioral control. This finding is consistent with those of Cardon, M. S., D.A. Gregoire, C.E. Stevens, (2013) who confirm the presence of a positive impact of passion on perceived entrepreneurial self-efficacy. It follows, therefore, that entrepreneurial passion fosters a sense of self-confidence and belief in one's own skills that are recognized as prerequisites and very important for the development of entrepreneurial intention.

The relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention was understood through the concept of perceived behavioral control. We found that there is a partial mediation of perceived behavioral control in the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention. This result suggests that, on the one hand, entrepreneurial passion is a powerful determinant of individuals' intentions when starting a new business, and on the other hand, there is a strong positive link between entrepreneurial passion and perceived behavioral control which only affirms the important role of this variable in predicting entrepreneurial behavior.

The mediating role of perceived behavioral control has been highlighted by several researchers: Baum, J. R., (2004) highlighted the mediating role of perceived self-efficacy (a concept similar to perceived behavioral control) in the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and firm performance; Murnieks, C.Y., E. Mosakowski, (2014) highlighted the mediating role of perceived self-efficacy in the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and individual entrepreneurial behavior; Biraglia, A., (2016) highlighted the mediating role of perceived self-efficacy in the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper examined the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention. The paper serves two main research gaps. The first is lack of importance given to the role of affective variables in the study of entrepreneurial intentions. The second is the need to consider the interaction between affective and cognitive variables when explaining and predicting entrepreneurial behavior. Such concerns led us to consider the concept of entrepreneurial passion as a factor affecting entrepreneurial intention.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the mechanism by which passion affects entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, our study tested a model that included the mediating effect of perceived behavioral control on the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention. We showed that the relationship between passion and intention is mediated by perceived behavioral control. We found that the mediating effect of perceived behavioral control is partial.

Moreover, our study has contributions at the theoretical and managerial levels. At the theoretical level, our study contributed to further understand the concept of entrepreneurship. It offers a number of important insights that could help us determine the factors that lead individuals to become entrepreneurs. Indeed, the powerful role of entrepreneurial passion in directly influencing entrepreneurial intentions is a contribution to the field of entrepreneurship, highlighting in turn the important role of affect in understanding individuals' intentions for future actions (Hmieleski, K. M., 2009). In doing so, we confirm many proposals assuming that entrepreneurial passion affects individual entrepreneurial behavior (Cardon, M. S., R. Sudek, 2009). This effect can be direct but also mediated by other variables.

The strong impact of entrepreneurial passion on the formation of entrepreneurial intentions could be used to explain an individual's career choice, which would open up further the debate on the concept of passion, which is controversially apprehended by several research disciplines including entrepreneurship. Furthermore, this study contributed to the understanding of new dimensions of the psychology of entrepreneurs and the process of business creation. Passion could be an important dimension to be taken into account by educators in entrepreneurship courses. Then, in order to develop the entrepreneurial spirit, it would be interesting to reinforce the objectives of awareness and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills detailed in the programs and modules of entrepreneurial culture along with content and methods that will promote the creation of an entrepreneurial identity in learners and the stimulation of intense and positive feelings towards entrepreneurship. Therefore, an affective approach to teaching entrepreneurship that favors the triggering of entrepreneurial passion in students could be a learning objective conducive to the development of the entrepreneurial spirit of students.

Moreover, the objective of an entrepreneurial training program would be to detect the field of activity that students are passionate about: to invent, develop and orientate training in these specific areas. Such a pedagogical pursuit could develop an entrepreneurial passion in students and reinforce their perception of success in these pursuits, which would contribute to strengthening their entrepreneurial intentions.

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