# **Entrepreneurial Intention among** (potential) Franchisees

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## **Executive summary**

This report provides an analysis of possible factors that contribute to entrepreneurial intention among (potential) franchisees. In order to fuel network growth, franchisors need to attract new franchisees. The management of Bagels & Beans for whom this study was conducted, questioned how they could optimize the recruitment and selection process of franchisees. Recruiting franchisees with the right potential is of high importance. On the one hand, by attracting, recruiting and selecting people with the right potential to become a franchisee, there is probably a better chance of job success. On the other hand, it prevents people from making the wrong career choice, going into debt because of the investments one has to make, or getting burned out. Despite its importance, little attention has hitherto been devoted to franchisee recruitment in academic literature. In order to give advice on this practical purpose, it is first of all important to study a more theoretical framework regarding the antecedents of individuals' intentions to become a franchisee. More specifically, this project investigated how personality traits (internal locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance and entrepreneurial alertness) as well as cognitive factors (personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control) are explaining entrepreneurial intention among (potential) franchisees. Definitions of these traits and factors can be found on pp. 4-6 of this paper. Also, differences in entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents between franchisees and potential franchisees were studied.

An online survey was used to study this topic, which was completed by a total of 110 franchisees and potential franchisees. The latter were individuals who actively showed interest in becoming a franchisee at Bagels & Beans, but did not pursue the recruitment and selection phase to the end. They either decided to withdraw their application or contact was lost after they showed interest in becoming a franchisee. They are called 'potential franchisee' since they were not rejected by the franchisor itself, and therefore they could possibly still become a franchisee.

The results revealed that individuals that hold an overall positive personal evaluation towards being a franchisee and running a franchise, have a higher intention to start franchising. Also individuals with higher levels of confidence in their capability to perform as a franchisee and realizing control and success in their franchising activities, have a higher intention to start franchising as well. No differences were found in entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents between current franchisees and potential franchisees.

These findings can help to create valuable insights in factors that could be focussed on during the recruitment and selection phase of potential franchisees. It might be useful to obtain a clear and objective picture of the entrepreneurial potential of a candidate in an early phase, by using an assessment center. This will guide in the selection phase in search for more suitable franchisees.

The findings thus contribute to franchise literature as a theoretical framework. In addition, as a more practical goal, this project has provided valuable information with regard to important factors concerning recruitment and selection of potential franchisees.

#### Abstract

Until today a large number of studies have been conducted in the field of regular entrepreneurship, e.g. entrepreneurial intention. However, *franchising* has hitherto not been explored as extensively within the research domain of entrepreneurship. The present study mainly enriches our understanding of franchising - in particular the intention to start franchising - from a psychological perspective. We examine the Theory of Planned Behaviour (i.e. personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control) and personality traits (i.e. internal locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance and entrepreneurial alertness) in relation to entrepreneurial intention among (potential) franchisees. Our survey of 110 individuals demonstrates that personal attitude and perceived behavioral control are positively associated with entrepreneurial intention among current franchisees and potential franchisees.

*Keywords:* Franchise, franchisee, entrepreneurial intention, personality traits, Theory of Planned Behaviour

## Introduction

Entrepreneurship comes in all shapes and sizes. Until today a large number of studies have been conducted in the field of regular entrepreneurship, e.g. entrepreneurial intention. However, *franchising* has hitherto not been explored as extensively within the research domain of entrepreneurship. Sometimes franchisors want to optimize the recruitment and selection process of franchisees, in order to fuel network growth. However, little attention has been devoted to franchisee recruitment in academic literature (Watson, Dada, Grünhagen, & Wollan, 2016). In order to understand how an organisation can improve the recruitment and selection process, it is first of all important to study a theoretical framework regarding the antecedents of individuals' intentions to become a franchisee. Therefore, the present study mainly enriches our understanding of franchising - in particular the intention to start franchising - from a psychological perspective.

Researchers have attempted to universally define regular entrepreneurship (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). They tend to agree on elements such as organizing, creating, opportunity, innovation and risk taking. A more comprehensive definition of entrepreneurship is "the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic, and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence" (Hisrich & Peters, 2002, p. 10). Ozaralli and Rivenburgh (2016) state that this definition suggests a range of possible factors that could either encourage or discourage entrepreneurial intention in an individual, by articulating the risks of entrepreneurship (e.g. financial, psychic and social).

Entrepreneurial intention can be defined as "the intention to start a new business" (De Pillis & Reardon, 2007, p. 383). According to Wilson, Kickul, and Marlino (2007) the decision to become an entrepreneur and create a new venture is a deliberate and conscious decision that requires time, considerable planning and a high degree of cognitive processing. Therefore, an entrepreneurial career choice could be considered as planned behaviour, which in turn can be explained by intention models, e.g. the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour suggests that the intention to perform a given behaviour is the direct antecedent of behaviour (Ajzen, 2002). Building on this theoretical framework, intentions are claimed to be the single best predictor of most planned behaviour, including entrepreneurial behaviour (Kolvereid & Isaksen, 2006; Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000). Moreover, the stronger the intention for behaviour, the bigger the success of behaviour prediction or actual behaviour (Ajzen, 2002). According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, intentions are determined by personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. Prior research has also concluded that these factors are positively associated with entrepreneurial intention (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016; Sabah, 2016).

Personal attitude refers to which extent an individual has an overall positive or negative personal evaluation about being an entrepreneur (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). Ajzen (2005) claims that attitudes are developed, based on the beliefs one holds on the consequences of performing the behaviour. Such consequences include both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, e.g. financial rewards, independence/autonomy, personal rewards and family security, which all do favourably influence the intention to start a business (Choo &

Wong, 2006; Vanevenhoven & Liguori, 2013). Negative or costly outcome expectancies, e.g. perceiving risks associated with entrepreneurial activities, unfavourably impact the intent to start one's own venture.

Subjective norms refer to the belief and perceptions of what a person's "reference group" such as family, friends, colleagues or significant others would think about performing entrepreneurial behaviour (Ham, Jeger, & Frajman Ivković, 2015; Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). In addition, it also plays a role whether they approve and support or disapprove of the entrepreneurial decision. The article by Armitage and Conner (2001) states that in general, depending on personality characteristics and an individual's propensity to conform, subjective norms contribute more weakly to intention.

Perceived behavioral control refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen, 2020). In context of entrepreneurship, it is about the belief and confidence an individual has in their capability to perform as an entrepreneur next to realizing control and success in entrepreneurial activity (Ajzen, 2002). It can also be called entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Krueger et al. (2000) argued that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is strongly related to entrepreneurial behavior.

Research indicates that – alongside the cognitive factors of the Theory of Planned Behaviour - personality has also been associated with entrepreneurial intention and behaviour (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). In particular: internal locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance and entrepreneurial alertness are personality traits which affect entrepreneurial intention in regular entrepreneurship (Karabulut, 2016).

Locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals believe that they are able to influence events, situations and experiences encountered in their lives (Lee & Tsang, 2001; Shane, Locke, & Collins, 2003). Individuals with higher internal locus of control, believe that their own behaviours (e.g. effort) or traits (e.g. skills or ability) determine outcomes in life (Rotter, 1966). On the contrary, individuals with higher external locus of control, believe that outcomes are determined by external factors (e.g. fate, luck or chance) (Poon, Ainuddin, & Junit, 2006; Rotter, 1966). Rotter (1975) cautioned that internal locus of control and external locus of control represent two ends of a continuum, it is not an either/or typology. Mazzarol, Volery, Doss, and Thein (1999) state that when one's internal locus of control is stronger, entrepreneurial intention is higher (Kristiansen & Indarti, 2004).

*Need for achievement* can be defined as the drive, desire and ambition of a person to be successful (Karabulut, 2016). People who have entrepreneurial intentions have high need for achievement. This is characterized by being eager for success and wanting to show themselves as entrepreneurs who are able to establish successful businesses in competitive markets. There are several studies showing the significant associations of need for achievement on entrepreneurial intentions (Gürol & Atsan, 2006; Hansemark, 1998; Johnson, 1990). In addition it is claimed that people who have higher desires and ambitions to be successful, have higher potential to become entrepreneurs (Hansemark, 1998; Johnson, 1990; McClelland, 1961).

*Risk tolerance;* entrepreneurs have a higher propensity to take risks (Ahmed, 1985; Broehl, 1978; Meyer, Walker, & Litwin, 1961). Entrepreneurs take financial, career, family and reputation risks and deal with uncertainty when they decide to establish their own ventures (Karabulut, 2016; Matthews & Scott, 1995). Risk taking can both lead to success and

failure. Before taking risks, entrepreneurs should calculate risks of their actions and should evaluate advantages and disadvantages of risk taking in all stages of entrepreneurship (Karabulut, 2016). Building on this, the article by Karabulut (2016) also states that entrepreneurs tolerate risks more than other people. Matthews and Scott (1995) believe that risk tolerance is a required trait for entrepreneurial thinking and being an entrepreneur. Thus, tolerating risks is a major trait for entrepreneurs to succeed (Karabulut, 2016).

Entrepreneurial alertness is also an important entrepreneurial trait (Karabulut, 2016). It refers to the unique ability to notice a chance that had been ignored by other people and to pioneer opportunities (Kirzner 1973, 1979, 1985). Entrepreneurial alertness causes entrepreneurs to explore their environment and get the advantage of new opportunities (Karabulut, 2016). However, it is not necessary to seek for opportunities all the time: it is important to have knowledge and information about the environment and to take advantage of the opportunities when noticing them. Subsequently entrepreneurs can develop new ideas, products, and services.

Entrepreneurship research has dealt extensively with entrepreneurial intention among regular (potential) entrepreneurs. There are various views on the question whether *franchising* is a form of entrepreneurship (Ketchen, Short, & Combs, 2011). Franchising is "a strategy for cloning a business through the replication of proven business and management systems" (Hoy, Perrigot, & Terry, 2017, p. 1). In return for fee payments and/or royalty contributions, franchisees are granted the right to operate the business in a prescribed manner, within a specified geographic area (Weaven, Grace, & Manning, 2009).

Although franchisees are independent owners - and not employees - with their own entrepreneurial ambitions (Davies, Lassar, Manolis, Prince, & Winsor, 2011), they are bound to respect the business template provided by the franchisor, which leads Watson and Dada (2017) to suggest franchisees' ability to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour is debatable. Therefore franchisees might be a unique group of entrepreneurs, since the business model in which they operate is different compared to regular entrepreneurs. Another reason why franchisees might be a unique group of entrepreneurs, is that they differ in (entrepreneurial) personality traits compared to regular entrepreneurs (Anderson, Condon, & Dunkelberg, 1992, as cited in Watson & Dada, 2017). However, there are still mixed literature findings whether franchisees possess entrepreneurial personality traits. Anderson et al. (1992, as cited in Watson & Dada, 2017) compared entrepreneurial traits of regular entrepreneurs and franchisees. They found that franchisees to a lower extent exhibited initiative, achievement motivation, self-actualization, and supervisory ability, whilst having greater need for security. Therefore they have concluded that franchisees are not 'real' entrepreneurs. However, a survey by Dada, Watson, and Kirby (2015) indicates that franchisors seek to recruit franchisees who have entrepreneurial inclinations. These franchisees should be creative, ambitious, risk takers and should like to be in control. Watson and Dada (2017) also note there is some evidence to suggest that franchisees do possess entrepreneurial personality traits. Moreover the recently new published article by Croonen, Van der Bij, Perrigot, El Akremi, and Herrbach (2021) also seems to suggest that there is some overlap in personality traits in regular entrepreneurs and franchisees. In the remaining of the present study, this will be further discussed.

Until today, relatively few studies have explained individuals' intentions to become franchisees. Exceptions being the studies done by Bastié, Cussy, & Le Nadant (2016), Bennett, Frazer, & Weaven (2010), Kaufmann (1999), Peterson and Dant (1990), Watson and Stanworth (2006), and Williams (1999). However, these studies covered economic or strategic perspectives to study a range of antecedents of entrepreneurial intention regarding franchising. Before conducting the present study, to the best of our knowledge franchising research had hitherto not included psychological factors (e.g. personality traits) and theories in explaining entrepreneurial intention regarding franchising. However, while conducting our study, the previously cited authors Croonen et al. (2021) published a new article in which Achievement Motivation Theory (AMT) - which included the personality traits need for achievement and risk taking propensity - was combined with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), in attempt to explain entrepreneurial intention among potential franchisees. They considered individuals' intentions to become franchisees as a specific type of entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, in the remaining of our paper, 'entrepreneurial intention' and its antecedents are also considered as a specific type, namely in the context of the intention to start franchising.

With respect to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Croonen et al. (2021) found a positive association between attitude towards franchising/personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control in relation to entrepreneurial intention among potential franchisees. They also found that the personality traits need for achievement and risk taking propensity belonging to the Achievement Motivation Theory, are positively associated with entrepreneurial intention among potential franchisees.

To sum up: research already showed that in regular entrepreneurship, the cognitive factors belonging to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (i.e. personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control) and personality traits (i.e. internal locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance and entrepreneurial alertness) are associated with entrepreneurial intention (Karabalut, 2016; Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016; Sabah, 2016). With the recently published article by Croonen et al. (2021) we now know that personal attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral, need for achievement and risk taking propensity are associated with entrepreneurial intention among potential franchisees. It thus seems reasonable to conclude that these traits and factors partly seem to form overlap among regular entrepreneurs and potential franchisees. However, note that risk taking propensity and risk tolerance are not conceptually the same. It is still unknown whether risk tolerance is associated with entrepreneurial intention among franchisees. Thus, this gives reason for further investigation, and therefore the trait risk tolerance will be included in the present study.

Croonen et al. (2021) only studied two personality traits, but more personality traits already associated with entrepreneurial intention among regular entrepreneurs could be applicable to franchisees as well, e.g. internal locus of control and entrepreneurial alertness. However, the trait entrepreneurial alertness among franchisees is debatable. Entrepreneurial alertness is mostly about seeing possibilities and finding new market opportunities to create a new venture or products, by searching for, associating, and evaluating environmental information (Tang, Kacmar, & Busenitz, 2012). These processes can contribute to the recognition of customers' unfulfilled needs, new activities in new markets, and constraints of the environment (Zott & Amit, 2007). As mentioned before, franchisees are bound to an

already existing business template with prescribed manners provided by the franchisor, and therefore, their ability to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour is debatable (Watson & Dada, 2017; Weaven et al., 2009). Therefore we conclude there is not much room for innovation. However, sometimes franchisees are expected to see possibilities/opportunities within the area they operate: e.g. see whether they can join or sponsor events, create collaborations between them and other local entrepreneurs/businesses in order to attract more new customers and other similar activities. So searching for, associating and evaluating environmental information, which characterizes entrepreneurial alertness, might also be applicable to franchisees. Therefore entrepreneurial alertness, alongside internal locus of control will also be included in the present study.

Evidence shows that gender differences exist in terms of some personality traits, factors associated with the Theory of Planned Behavior and entrepreneurial intention (Machado, Faia, & Da Silva, 2016; Onyeukwu & Padmavathi, 2019; Shirokova, Osiyevskyy, & Bogatyreva, 2016; Watson & Robinson, 2003). Given the fact that men and women sometimes differ on these variables, gender will be a control variable in the present study.

By studying additional personality traits (i.e. internal locus of control, risk tolerance and entrepreneurial alertness), and by examining not only potential franchisees, but also current franchisees, the present study is of added value with regard to existing literature by Croonen et al. (2021). Therefore, by examining how entrepreneurial personality traits, alongside the Theory of Planned Behaviour relate to entrepreneurial intention among (potential) franchisees, the present study primarily addresses a gap in the psychology of entrepreneurship and franchise literature. As a secondary purpose, the present study could lead to valuable insights that may contribute to improve franchisee recruitment and selection, since it provides more knowledge about the person-job fit. On the one hand, by attracting and recruiting people with the right potential to become a franchisee, there is probably a better chance of job success. On the other hand, it prevents people from making the wrong career choice, going into debt because of the investments one has to make, or getting burned out. This is especially of high relevance during the COVID-19 period in which a lot of employees will lose their jobs and are looking for other career opportunities.

## This will lead to the following research question:

What is the association between personal attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, internal locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance and entrepreneurial alertness in relation to entrepreneurial intention among (potential) franchisees?

Table 1 shows the hypotheses for the main effects. Since examining differences between franchisees and potential franchisees was a topic of interest as well, interaction hypotheses were included, which can be found in Table 2.

Table 1

# Main effects

Main Effects Hypotheses

- H1: Personal attitude is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention;
- H2: Subjective norms are positively associated with entrepreneurial intention;
- H3: Perceived behavioral control is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention;
- *H4:* Internal locus of control is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention;
- H5: Need for achievement is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention;
- H6: Risk tolerance is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention;
- H7: Entrepreneurial alertness is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Table 2

Interaction Effects Hypotheses

## **Interaction Effects**

- H8: Entrepreneurial intention differs between franchisees and potential franchisees, and tends to be stronger for franchisees;
- H9: The positive relationship between personal attitude and entrepreneurial intention is moderated by group, with the relationship being stronger for franchisees than for potential franchisees;
- H10: The positive relationship between subjective norms and entrepreneurial intention is moderated by group, with the relationship being stronger for franchisees than for potential franchisees;
- H11: The positive relationship between perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurial intention is moderated by group, with the relationship being stronger for franchisees than for potential franchisees;
- H12: The positive relationship between internal locus of control and entrepreneurial intention is moderated by group, with the relationship being stronger for franchisees than for potential franchisees
- H13: The positive relationship between need for achievement and entrepreneurial intention is moderated by group, with the relationship being stronger for franchisees than for potential franchisees;
- H14: The positive relationship between risk tolerance and entrepreneurial intention is moderated by group, with the relationship being stronger for franchisees than for potential franchisees;
- H15: The positive relationship between entrepreneurial alertness and entrepreneurial intention is moderated by group, with the relationship being stronger for franchisees than for potential franchisees.

#### Method

## **Participants**

Prior to collecting data, a power analysis was conducted to calculate the desired sample size. The estimated sample size was N = 109. For this study, 2370 participants were approached. Among these approached participants, 316 were franchisee and 2054 were potential franchisees. The franchisee group mainly consisted of people who are currently franchisee at Bagels & Beans and a few people were franchisee at another franchise formula in the Netherlands. The potential franchisees were people who actively showed interest in becoming a Bagels & Beans franchisee, but did not pursue the recruitment and selection phase to the end. They either decided to withdraw their application or the contact was lost after they showed interest in becoming a franchisee. They are called 'potential franchisee' since they were not rejected by the franchisor itself, and therefore they could possibly still become a franchisee. Due to some missing data, the actual sample size that fully filled in the questionnaires was N = 110. Franchisees had an average age of 43.46 SD = 9.61 and potential franchisees M = 41.97 SD = 10.37. 41.8% was male and 57.3% was female.

#### **Instruments**

*'Entrepreneurial intention'* was measured with a Dutch translated version of the scale used in the article by Do Paço, Ferreira, Raposo, Rodrigues and Dinis (2011), using a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (total disagreement) to 7 (total agreement). This scale had 6 items (e.g. I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur). Cronbach's alpha in the original study was .79. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was .92

*'Personal attitude'* was measured with a Dutch translated version of the scale used in the article by Do Paço et al. (2011), using a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (total disagreement) to 7 (total agreement). This scale had 5 items (e.g. Being an entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages to me). Cronbach's alpha in the original study was .70. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was .90

*'Subjective norms'* was measured with a Dutch translated version of the scale used in the article by Do Paço et al. (2011), using a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (total disapproval) to 7 (total approval). This scale had 3 items (e.g. If you decided to create a firm, would people in your close environment approve of that decision, e.g. your close family?). Using a routing in the questionnaire, the questions were asked slightly different for franchisees than for potential franchisees. Cronbach's alpha in the original study was .79. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was .76 for franchisees. Cronbach's alpha showed a value of .83 for potential franchisees.

*'Perceived behavioral control'* was measured with a Dutch translated version of the scale used in the article by Do Paço et al. (2011), using a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (total disagreement) to 7 (total agreement). This scale had 6 items (e.g. To start a firm and keep it working would be easy for me). Cronbach's alpha in the original study was .69. In the present study a Cronbach's alpha of .92 was calculated.

'Internal locus of control' was measured with a Dutch translated version of the scale used in the article by Karabulut (2016) using a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (total

disagreement) to 7 (total agreement). The original scale had 3 items (e.g. Diligence and hard work usually lead to success). Cronbach's alpha was .82 in the original study. Due to reliability issues in the present study, Cronbach's alpha initially showed a negative value. Analyses showed that only by removing item 1, alpha would turn positive. However, item 2 was not translated correctly and therefore did not define the construct internal locus of control correctly. Moreover item 3 correlated with item 2, which would imply that this item neither measures internal locus of control. Therefore it was decided to include only item 1 to measure internal locus of control, since this is conceptually the most correct explanation of internal locus of control (i.e. Diligence and hard work usually lead to success).

*'Need for achievement'* was measured with a Dutch translated version of the scale used in the article by Karabulut (2016) using a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (total disagreement) to 7 (total agreement). This scale had 10 items (e.g. I will do very well in fairly difficult tasks relating to my (study) and my work). Cronbach's alpha in the original study was .85. The calculated Cronbach's alpha in the present study was .76.

'Risk tolerance' was measured with a Dutch translated version of the scale used in the article by Karabulut (2016) using a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (total disagreement) to 7 (total agreement). This scale had 2 items (e.g. One should not start a business if there is a risk it might fail). Both items were reversed during the data analysis. Cronbach's alpha in the original study showed a value of .79. In the present study, alpha showed a value of .46.

*'Entrepreneurial alertness'* was measured with a Dutch translated version of the scale used in the article by Tang et al. (2012) using a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (total disagreement) to 7 (total agreement). This scale had 13 items (e.g. I have frequent interactions with others to acquire new information). Cronbach's alpha was between .71 and .94. In the present study Cronbach's alpha was .89.

Entrepreneurial intention, personal attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and risk tolerance were adjusted to a franchising context. The variables entrepreneurial intention, personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control were adjusted to the past tense, since they aimed to measure the intention of (potential) franchisees in the past. All original items were translated to Dutch using back-translation (see Appendix).

#### **Procedure**

Using an existing data base at Bagels & Beans, participants were approached by sending a link to the questionnaire by email. First, participants had to read the informed consent letter, which also had to be signed by clicking on 'I agree'. By doing this, participants gave permission for the usage of anonymous test data for this study. The order in which participants answered the questionnaire were: *entrepreneurial intention, personal attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, internal locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance* and *entrepreneurial alertness*. At the end of the questionnaire, demographic questions were asked such as age and gender. Also: to gain additional insights a few other questions have been asked regarding the attractiveness of Bagels & Beans, reasons why people stopped during the recruitment and selection process, how people ended up at

Bagels & Beans and how they experienced the communication with Bagels & Beans etc. These questions were beyond the scope of this thesis. Filling in the questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes.

## Data analysis

The dependent variable in this study was *entrepreneurial intention* (quantitative, mean score on the scale). The independent variables were *personal attitude, subjective norms*, *perceived behavioral control, internal locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance* and *entrepreneurial alertness* (quantitative, mean score on each scale). After data-collection, a data-matrix was made. Consequently: means of all variables were calculated if at least 80% of the items on each variable was filled in. Subsequently, using pairwise deletion, a hierarchical linear regression analysis with *group* (0 = franchisee, 1 = potential franchisee) as a moderator was executed in SPSS (version 27) to examine if there was an association and interaction between the variables. The control variable *gender* was dummy coded with 0 = male, 1 = female. In model 1 *gender* was tested, in model 2 the main effects were added. In model 3 the interactions and *group* were added. Six assumptions were tested: normality; linearity; homogeneity of variances; independence of data; interval data and multicollinearity. Analyses showed that all assumptions were met.

## **Results**

## **Descriptive Statistics**

An overview of the results can be found in Table 3. Important to note is that *N* differs per variable.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

		Total		F	Tranchise	es	Potent	Potential Franchisees		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	
Entrepreneurial intention	4.5	1.6	139	4.9	1.6	61	4.2	1.5	78	
Personal attitude	4.8	1.3	132	5.1	1.3	56	4.6	1.3	76	
Subjective norms	4.6	1.5	125	4.7	1.5	54	4.5	1.5	71	
Perceived behavioral control	5.4	1.2	116	5.9	0.8	48	5.1	1.4	68	
Internal locus of control	6.1	1.0	113	6.4	1.0	48	6.0	1.0	65	

Need for	5.6	0.7	112	5.8	0.7	48	5.5	0.8	64
achievement									
Risk tolerance	4.6	1.3	112	4.9	1.6	48	4.5	1.1	64
Entrepreneurial	5.1	0.9	110	5.1	0.8	48	5.1	1.0	62
alertness									

## **Correlations**

Table 4 displays the correlations between entrepreneurial intention and the predictors personal attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, internal locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance and entrepreneurial alertness. Table 5 shows the correlations split by group, in which the upper diagonal shows the correlations for franchisees, the lower diagonal shows the correlations for potential franchisees.

Table 4

Correlations between Entrepreneurial Intention and Personal Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Internal Locus of Control, Need for Achievement, Risk Tolerance and Entrepreneurial Alertness

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Entrepreneurial	-							
intention (1)								
Personal attitude (2)	.77**	-						
Subjective norms	.34**	.41**	-					
(3)	<b>-</b>	.52**	20**					
Perceived behavioral control (4)	.56**	.52	.29**	-				
Internal locus of control (5)	.31**	.33**	.21*	.46**	-			
Need for achievement (6)	.40**	.45**	.24**	.61**	.46**	-		
Risk tolerance (7)	.11	.14	02	.30**	.11	.28**	-	
Entrepreneurial alertness (8)	.37**	.29**	.18	.51**	.41**	.52**	.02	-

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> *p*<.001; \*\* *p*<.01; \* *p*<.05

Table 5

Correlations split by group between Entrepreneurial Intention and Personal Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Internal Locus of Control, Need for Achievement, Risk Tolerance and Entrepreneurial Alertness

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Entrepreneurial intention (1)	-	.70**	.17	.17	.05	.25	09	.18
Personal attitude (2)	.81**	-	.30*	.20	.14	.37**	03	.19
Subjective norms (3)	.45**	.49**	-	20	.17	01	19	.03
Perceived behavioral control (4)	.66**	.60**	.47**	-	.13	.52**	.25	.28
Internal locus of control (5)	.41**	.39**	.22	.55**	-	.31*	13	.22
Need for achievement (6)	.45**	.46**	.39**	.63**	.53**	-	.13	.33*
Risk tolerance (7) Entrepreneurial alertness (8)	.26* .49**	.25* .35**	.12 .28*	.34** .65**	.31* .52**	.40** .63**	.29*	28 -

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> p<.001; \*\* p<.01; \* p<.05

## **Hypotheses testing**

A hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted with group (franchisees vs. non-franchisees) as a moderator and gender (male vs. female) as a control variable for testing hypotheses 1-15. Entrepreneurial intention was regressed onto gender, personal attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance, entrepreneurial alertness and group.

The total model explained a significant proportion of variance p < .001,  $R^2 = .664$ . Using the enter method it was found that model 1 explained a significant proportion of variance F(1, 107) = 7.549, p = .007,  $R^2 = .066$ , Beta = -.257, which means males scored higher on entrepreneurial intention compared to females. Model comparisons revealed that model 2 ( $R^2 = .658$ ) explained significantly more variance than model 1 F(7, 100) = 24.722, p < .001,  $R^2$  change = .592. Table 6 shows that in model 2 personal attitude (p < .001) and perceived behavioral control (p = .038) are significant. Subjective norms, locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance, entrepreneurial alertness were all non-significant (all p's > .05). Model 3 ( $R^2 = .664$ ) did not explain more variance than model 2, F(8, 92) = .220, p = .987,  $R^2$  change = .006. Model 3 in Table 6 shows that none of the interactions were significant (all p's > .05), nor was group (p > .05).

Table 6

Coefficients of Entrepreneurial Intention, Gender, Personal Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Locus of Control, Need for Achievement, Risk Tolerance, Entrepreneurial Alertness, Group and its moderation

		Unstand Coeff	dardized icients	Standardized Coefficients			95% CI	
		В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Model	Gender	825	.300	257	-2.748	.007	-1.420	230
1								
Model	Gender	451	.194	140	-2.320	.022	837	065
2	Personal attitude	1.057	.118	.663	8.937	.000	.822	1.291
	Subjective norms	.013	.104	.008	.123	.902	194	.219
	Perceived behavioral	.290	.138	.182	2.103	.038	.016	.563
	control							
	Locus of control	003	.111	002	028	.978	224	.218
	Need for achievement	100	.131	062	763	.447	359	.160
	Risk tolerance	041	.102	026	399	.690	243	.162
	Entrepreneurial	.150	.119	.094	1.259	.211	087	.387
3.6 1.1	alertness	400	011	1.50	0.011	000	0.07	0.60
Model	Gender	488	.211	152	-2.311	.023	907	069
3	Personal attitude	1.116	.190	.700	5.882	.000	.739	1.493
	Subjective norms	.027	.165	.017	.162	.872	301	.354
	Perceived behavioral control	.506	.305	.317	1.656	.101	101	1.112
	Locus of control	062	.172	039	357	.722	404	.281
	Need for achievement	101	.210	063	480	.632	517	.316
	Risk tolerance	112	.142	070	791	.431	394	.170
	Entrepreneurial alertness	.063	.189	.040	.333	.740	313	.439
	Personal attitude x	138	.277	062	498	.619	688	.412
	Group	0.00		0.1-				
	Subjective norms x	.038	.244	.017	.156	.877	447	.523
	Group	210	400	4 7 2	<b>500</b>	420	4.440	400
	Perceived behavioral	319	.403	156	793	.430	-1.119	.480
	control x Group	107	262	0.60	501	602	205	<i>6</i> <b>5</b> 0
	Locus of control x	.137	.263	.060	.521	.603	385	.658
	Group Need for achievement	050	.311	022	160	.873	667	.567
	x Group							
	Risk tolerance x Group	.143	.249	.050	.575	.567	351	.637
	Entrepreneurial	.152	.286	.069	.534	.595	415	.720
	alertness x Group							
	Group	.051	.231	.016	.222	.825	407	.509

Dependent variable: Entrepreneurial intention

#### **Discussion**

This paper's aim was to examine entrepreneurial intention among (potential) franchisees and to understand its antecedents, in order to address a gap in the psychology of entrepreneurship and franchise literature. The present study examined the association between personal attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, internal locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance, entrepreneurial alertness in relation to entrepreneurial intention among (potential) franchisees. This study also sought to investigate differences in entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents between current franchisees and potential franchisees. The latter were the ones that either showed interest in becoming a franchisee at Bagels & Beans but with whom the contact was lost after they showed interest in becoming a franchisee, or they decided to withdraw their application.

Prior studies regarding entrepreneurial intention studied entrepreneurial intention among regular potential entrepreneurs, which was mostly a student sample (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016; Sabah, 2016). Only one study examined entrepreneurial intention among potential franchisees from a psychological approach, namely the study by Croonen et al. (2021). The present study has examined potential franchisees as well as current franchisees, which is of added value since it accounts for the behaviour-intention gap.

First of all the results show that gender differences play a role in entrepreneurial intention among franchisees: males scored higher on entrepreneurial intention compared to females. Since this was only a control variable, we will not go into depth on this part. The results also show that H1: *Personal attitude is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention* and H3: *Perceived behavioral control is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention* are confirmed. This means there is a positive association between personal attitude and perceived behavioral control in relation to entrepreneurial intention among franchisees and potential franchisees. This implies that individuals that hold an overall positive personal evaluation towards being a franchisee and running a franchise, have a higher intention to start franchising. Also individuals with higher levels of confidence in their capability to perform as a franchisee and realizing control and success in their franchising activities, have a higher intention to start franchising as well.

These research findings are in line with literature regarding entrepreneurial intention and the Theory of Planned Behaviour in potential franchisees by Croonen et al. (2021). They used potential franchisees in their sample. Note that the present study examined entrepreneurial intention in current franchisees, as well as potential franchisees. Our findings are also in line with literature findings in regular (potential) entrepreneurs (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016; Sabah, 2016). In these studies, university students of various departments participated. The measurements of entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents in the present study were context specific: they were adapted to a franchising context. With regard to existing literature, the present findings imply personal attitude and perceived behavioral control are important antecedents for each type of entrepreneurial intention - and therefore form overlap - in both regular (potential) entrepreneurs, as well as (potential) franchisees.

However, not all personality traits and antecedents of the Theory of Planned Behaviour are associated with entrepreneurial intention among (potential) franchisees: no relation was found between entrepreneurial intention and subjective norms, internal locus of control, need for achievement, risk tolerance and entrepreneurial alertness. This means that regardless of scoring high or low on these traits and factors, it is not related to the intention to start franchising. Based on the findings by Croonen et al. (2021) we suggested that (potential) franchisees and (potential) entrepreneurs are probably similar regarding the personality trait need for achievement. However, our findings violated the expected positive association regarding need for achievement and entrepreneurial intention in (potential) franchisees. An explanation could be that the study by Croonen et al. (2021) only studied potential franchisees, which were visitors to entrepreneurship and franchising exhibitions in France. Cross cultural differences might have played a role, since the present study was conducted among (potential) franchisees in The Netherlands and the study by Croonen et al. (2021) studied potential franchisees in France. According to Hofstede's (n.d.) Cultural Dimensions Theory, The Netherlands is a Feminine society which means standing out from the crowd is not admirable, instead quality of life is the sign of success. Next to quality of life, caring for others is a dominant value. However, compared to France, the French society is besides being partly Feminine, also Masculine. Masculine societies are driven by competition, achievement and success. With regard to this, success is being defined by the winner or being the best in the field. This is a value system starting in school, which continues throughout organisational life. Given the definition of need for achievement, which is characterized by the drive and desire for being successful, this seems to form overlap with the Masculine society in France. Given this information, this might be a plausible reason explaining why need for achievement plays a role in entrepreneurial intention in potential franchisees in France, but not in The Netherlands.

Based on the study by Croonen et al. (2021) it was also expected that subjective norms would be positively associated with entrepreneurial intention. However, the present study did not find this association. The recall bias could be an explanation for this. Recall bias is the result of recall error (Althubaiti, 2016). This is an often occurring bias in case—control or retrospective cohort study designs, in which participants have to evaluate variables retrospectively using a self-reporting method, e.g. self-administered questionnaires. Recall might have played a role here, since a questionnaire - in which the variables entrepreneurial intention, personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control were asked in a retrospective way - was used in order to gather data for this study. Some of the franchisees already started franchising 19 years ago, and some of the potential franchisees showed interest nearly 6 years ago, therefore recall bias could have played a role for answering the items to subjective norms, and thus lead to non-significant results.

Referring to literature about (potential) regular entrepreneurs, in which locus of control, risk tolerance and entrepreneurial alertness were positively associated with entrepreneurial intention (Karabalut, 2016), we expected the same to find for (potential) franchisees. However, we did not find these associations. Regarding the reliability of the scales, all Cronbach's alpha values were acceptable to excellent, except for items belonging to *risk tolerance*, which means an unacceptable value. Also Cronbach's alpha of *internal locus of control* initially showed a remarkable value, since it turned out to be a negative value. After deleting item 2 (due to incorrect translation of the construct) and item 3 (due to correlation with item 2), the scale was formed by one single item. Therefore the results regarding these variables have to be interpreted with caution, since they are not reliable. This could be an

explanation for the non-significant results for risk tolerance and internal locus of control. However, it could also be the case that franchisees simply do not possess these personality traits, which could also be the case for entrepreneurial alertness. Anderson et al. (1992, as cited in Watson & Dada, 2017) stated that franchisees are different compared to regular entrepreneurs, since they differ in (entrepreneurial) personality traits. Although, we did not examine all the traits studied by Anderson et al. (1992, as cited in Watson & Dada, 2017), the current results could possibly complement their findings. This would thus suggest that regarding these traits, franchisees are not 'real' entrepreneurs.

Lastly, no differences regarding entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents were found between franchisees and potential franchisees. This could suggest that these groups might be more similar than previously was expected. Namely, both groups were interested in becoming a franchisee once, and thus their level of intention and its antecedents might have been more or less the same, which could explain the non-significant moderation. Another explanation for why no differences were found, could be that one or both groups might not have represented the concept 'franchisee' or 'potential franchisee' enough. We took into consideration that they already were a franchisee at another franchise formula, but we did not check for (prior) regular entrepreneurial experience. So there might have been actual differences between the franchisee and potential franchisee group, but if there were regular entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial experience among the potential franchisees, it could have led to some misleading results.

## **Practical implications**

Based on the results of this study, we can conclude that personal attitude and perceived behavioral control are important antecedents of entrepreneurial intention in (potential) franchisees. The results could also imply that franchisees and potential franchisees are more similar than expected. Accordingly, an answer is partly found to the research question, and thus a contribution is made to franchise literature.

A secondary purpose of this study was to create valuable insights in order to optimize the recruitment and selection of potential franchisees. After conducting this study, a practical implication regarding recruitment and selection could be to focus on individuals with high levels of perceived behavioral control and individuals with overall positive attitudes towards franchising. In that case it could be useful to obtain a clear and objective picture of the entrepreneurial potential of the candidate in an early phase, by using an assessment center. By assessing the level of perceived behavioral control and by assessing to which extent an individual has a positive attitude towards franchising, a better prediction of future job performance as a franchisee can be given. This will guide in the selection phase in search for more suitable franchisees.

## **Recommendations for future research**

Future research should investigate what the past and current jobs of participants in the group of current franchisees and the group of potential franchisees are. By doing so, prior entrepreneurial experience can be controlled for, since mixing individuals with

entrepreneurial experience with individuals without entrepreneurial experience may cause confusing results. Another recommendation for future research would be to create a more heterogenous sample, and thereby a more representative sample, by approaching a pool of franchisees in more different sectors from more different franchise formulas, since most of the franchisees in the present study were operating in the food sector, especially at Bagels & Beans. This recommendation could also be applicable to potential franchisees, by approaching more potential franchisees that showed interest in becoming a franchisee at other franchise formulas. Lastly, entrepreneurial intention and its possible antecedents could also be studied using a cross-cultural approach, in which also gender plays a part. By doing so, comparisons between different cultures and genders can be further made, and variations in personality traits and factors belonging to the Theory of Planned Behaviour in relation to entrepreneurial intention can be understood.

## Conclusion

This article contributes to franchise literature by testing personality traits and cognitive factors belonging to the Theory of Planned Behaviour in (potential) franchisees. Overall, it was demonstrated that personal attitude and perceived behavioral control explain entrepreneurial intention among franchisees and potential franchisees. In addition, it has been confirmed that antecedents to entrepreneurial intention among regular (potential) entrepreneurs and (potential) franchisees to some extent are similar, but also show some differences. These insights provide an appropriate starting point for further research into the psychological approach of explaining individuals' intentions to become a franchisee.

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## **Appendix**

## Entrepreneurial intention

Ga terug naar de tijd waarin je je oriënteerde op het franchise ondernemerschap. <u>Het gaat erom wat je toen dacht/vond.</u> Geef de mate aan waarin je het eens bent met de volgende stellingen op een schaal van 1 (helemaal niet mee eens) tot 7 (helemaal mee eens)

- 1. Ik had er alles voor over om franchisenemer te worden
- 2. Mijn doel op professioneel gebied was om franchisenemer te worden
- 3. Ik spande mij volledig in om een eigen franchisevestiging te starten en te runnen
- 4. Ik was vastberaden om in de toekomst een eigen franchisevestiging op te zetten
- 5. Ik heb serieus overwogen om een eigen franchisevestiging te starten
- 6. Ik was stellig van plan om op een dag een eigen franchisevestiging te beginnen

## Personal attitude

Ga terug naar de tijd waarin je je oriënteerde op het franchise ondernemerschap. <u>Het gaat erom wat je toen dacht/vond.</u> Geef de mate aan waarin je het eens bent met de volgende stellingen op een schaal van 1 (helemaal niet mee eens) tot 7 (helemaal mee eens)

- 1. Franchisenemer zijn bood mij meer voordelen dan nadelen
- 2. Een carrière als franchisenemer vond ik aantrekkelijk
- 3. Als ik de kans en de middelen had, dan wilde ik graag een eigen franchisevestiging starten
- 4. Franchisenemer zijn zou voor mij tot grote tevredenheid leiden
- 5. Als ik kon kiezen, dan wilde ik het liefst franchisenemer zijn

## Subjective norms - Franchisees

Ga terug naar de tijd waarin je je oriënteerde op het franchise ondernemerschap. Toen je besloot om een franchisevestiging te openen, keurden mensen in je naaste omgeving deze beslissing goed? <u>Het gaat erom wat men er toen van dacht.</u> Geef aan in hoeverre men het ermee eens was op een schaal van 1 (helemaal niet mee eens) tot 7 (helemaal mee eens)

- 1. Directe familie
- 2. Je vrienden
- 3. Je collega's

## Subjective norms – Potential Franchisees

Ga terug naar de tijd waarin je je oriënteerde op het franchise ondernemerschap. Als je destijds zou hebben besloten om een franchisevestiging te willen openen, zouden mensen in je naaste omgeving deze beslissing goed hebben gekeurd? ? <u>Het gaat erom wat men er toen van dacht.</u> Geef aan in hoeverre men het ermee eens zou zijn geweest op een schaal van 1 (helemaal niet mee eens) tot 7 (helemaal mee eens)

- 1. Directe familie
- 2. Je vrienden
- 3. Je collega's

## Perceived behavioral control

De volgende vragen hebben betrekking op ondernemersvaardigheden. Ga terug naar de tijd waarin je je oriënteerde op het franchise ondernemerschap en beantwoord vanuit dat gezichtspunt de volgende vragen. <u>Het gaat er om wat je toen dacht/vond.</u> Geef de mate aan waarin je het eens bent met de volgende stellingen op een schaal van 1 (helemaal niet mee eens) tot 7 (helemaal mee eens)

- 1. Het starten en draaiende houden van een eigen franchisevestiging zou me goed afgaan
- 2. Ik was er klaar voor om een goedlopende eigen franchisevestiging te starten
- 3. Ik achtte mijzelf in staat om het creatieproces van een nieuwe eigen franchisevestiging te kunnen managen
- 4. Ik kende de noodzakelijke praktische details om een nieuwe eigen franchisevestiging te starten
- 5. Ik wist hoe ik een ondernemingsproject moest ontwikkelen
- 6. Als ik zou proberen om een eigen franchisevestiging te starten, dan zou ik een grote kans op succes hebben

## Locus of control

De volgende vragen moeten in het algemeen worden beantwoord. Geef de mate aan waarin je het eens bent met de volgende stellingen op een schaal van 1 (helemaal niet mee eens) tot 7 (helemaal mee eens)

- 1. Hard werken en doorzettingsvermogen leiden meestal tot succes
- 2. Als het me flink tegenzit, dan ben ik geneigd om op te geven → item deleted
- 3. Ik geloof niet echt in geluk  $\rightarrow$  item deleted

## Need for achievement

De volgende vragen moeten in het algemeen worden beantwoord, tenzij anders aangegeven. Geef de mate aan waarin je het eens bent met de volgende stellingen op een schaal van 1 (helemaal niet mee eens) tot 7 (helemaal mee eens)

- 1. Op het gebied van mijn studie en/of werk kan ik vrij lastige taken goed aan
- 2. Ik span me flink in om mijn eigen werkprestaties te verbeteren
- 3. Ik zoek naar extra verantwoordelijkheden als ik werk toegewezen krijg
- 4. Ik probeer om beter te presteren dan anderen
- 5. Ik streef naar succes
- 6. Ik ben niet bang om te falen
- 7. Ik wijs succes of falen toe aan mijzelf, in plaats van aan anderen en omstandigheden
- 8. Ik hou ervan om mijn taken af te ronden
- 9. Ik pak onafgemaakte taken op en maak deze af
- 10. Ik doe soms veel moeite om iets nieuws te leren

#### Risk Tolerance

Geef de mate aan waarin je het eens bent met de volgende stellingen op een schaal van 1 (helemaal niet mee eens) tot 7 (helemaal mee eens)

- 1. Men zou geen eigen franchisevestiging moeten starten als dit zou kunnen mislukken
- 2. Het risico op falen baart mij grote zorgen

## Entrepreneurial Alertness

De volgende vragen hebben betrekking op informatie verzamelen en kansen zien m.b.t. ondernemen. Geef de mate aan waarin je het eens bent met de volgende stellingen op een schaal van 1 (helemaal niet mee eens) tot 7 (helemaal mee eens)

- 1. Ik heb vaak contact met anderen om nieuwe informatie te verkrijgen
- 2. Ik let altijd scherp op het vinden van nieuwe bedrijfsideeën als ik informatie opzoek
- 3. Ik lees regelmatig de krant, tijdschriften of vakbladen om nieuwe informatie te vinden
- 4. Ik surf elke dag op het internet
- 5. Ik ben een informatievreter
- 6. Ik ben voortdurend op zoek naar nieuwe informatie
- 7. Ik zie logische verbanden tussen ogenschijnlijk losse stukken informatie
- 8. Ik ben goed in het leggen van logische verbanden
- 9. Ik zie vaak logische verbanden tussen informatiegebieden, waartussen eerst geen link was
- 10. Ik heb een extra zintuig voor het ontdekken van potentiële kansen
- 11. Ik weet onderscheid te maken tussen winstgevende en minder winstgevende kansen
- 12. Ik heb een gave voor het onderscheiden van hoogwaardige en laagwaardige kansen
- 13. Als er zich verschillende kansen voordoen, dan ben ik in staat de goede eruit te pikken

## Demografische gegevens

- 1. Wat is je geslacht?
  - a. Man
  - b. Vrouw
  - c. Anders
- 2. Wat is je leeftijd?