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# From entrepreneurial intention to behavior: to what extend commitment and implementation intention could facilitate action ?

Anne-Flore Adam

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Anne-Flore Adam. From entrepreneurial intention to behavior: to what extend commitment and implementation intention could facilitate action ?. Business administration. Université Grenoble Alpes, 2016. English. NNT: 2016GREAG001 . tel-01412416

**HAL Id: tel-01412416**

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## THÈSE

Pour obtenir le grade de

**DOCTEUR DE L'UNIVERSITÉ GRENOBLE ALPES**

Spécialité : **Sciences de Gestion**

Arrêté ministériel : 7 août 2006

Présentée par

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préparée au sein du **Laboratoire CERAG, UMR CNRS 5820 de Grenoble**  
dans l'**École Doctorale Sciences de Gestion n°275**

## **De l'intention au comportement entrepreneurial**

**Dans quelles mesures les notions  
d'engagement et d'intention planifiée  
peuvent-elles faciliter le passage à l'acte ?**

Thèse soutenue publiquement le **15 février 2016**,  
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## Remerciements

Je tiens à remercier sincèrement toutes les personnes qui ont contribué de près ou de loin à la réalisation de cette thèse de doctorat.

En premier lieu, je présente mes meilleurs remerciements, ma gratitude et tout mon respect au Professeur Alain Fayolle, qui a su me faire évoluer et me motiver tout au long de ce parcours. Merci de m'avoir fait confiance en acceptant de me suivre dans ma démarche un peu "en marge" du tracé classique, de m'avoir introduit dès le début de mon parcours au sein de la communauté, et d'avoir fait preuve d'une grande disponibilité et accessibilité. Vos retours toujours rapides et constructifs sur mon travail, ainsi que tous vos conseils m'ont donné les clés et la confiance indispensables pour avancer. Un immense merci pour votre aide et votre soutien.

Merci également aux Professeurs Jean-Pierre Boissin, Didier Chabaud et Francisco Liñan pour avoir accepté d'être membres du jury de cette thèse et pour prendre le temps de lire, commenter et évaluer mon travail. Leur retour avisé est précieux et me permettra d'améliorer la qualité de mon travail.

Par ailleurs, ce travail de longue haleine n'aurait pas pu être mené à terme sans le soutien inconditionnel de toute ma famille. Un énorme merci particulièrement à mon mari, mes parents, et ma sœur pour m'avoir soutenue, comme ils l'ont toujours fait, dans ce projet. Merci pour l'intérêt que vous avez porté à mes avancées, pour les encouragements que vous m'avez fournis, la confiance communicative que vous m'avez démontrée, et vos félicitations motivantes qui ont jalonné les validations des différentes étapes du parcours. Une mention spéciale pour mes grands-parents et oncles et tantes qui m'ont chaleureusement accueillie à Grenoble à chacun de mes déplacements. Egalement à Arthur, qui a eu la gentillesse de me laisser finir la majorité de ce travail avant de pointer le bout de son nez, et qui m'a laissé y consacrer quelques heures hebdomadaires depuis sa naissance!

Merci aux Professeurs, au personnel, et aux doctorants du CERAG avec lesquels j'ai eu le plaisir d'échanger et qui m'auront permis de construire et d'améliorer mon travail, de m'orienter dans mes démarches, et parfois aussi de reprendre confiance.

Merci à toutes les personnes de la communauté de recherche que j'ai eu le plaisir de rencontrer, que ce soit lors de conférences, de journées de recherche ou de programmes doctoraux. Chaque échange a été bénéfique et m'a permis d'avancer.

Merci à l'Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne pour m'avoir dégagé du temps et des ressources afin de pouvoir réaliser ma thèse. Un grand merci à mes collègues de travail pour leur soutien, leur disponibilité et leurs conseils. Une mention spéciale à Karen Earl-Erpelding pour son travail minutieux de relecture ! Merci également au Professeur Christine Demen Meier pour avoir accepté de co-écrire un chapitre d'ouvrage sur l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil et pour ses conseils. Merci beaucoup aux étudiants de l'école qui m'ont volontairement consacré de leur temps pour participer à l'expérimentation sur l'intention planifiée.

De manière générale, merci beaucoup aux institutions qui ont accepté de financer tout ou partie de mes déplacements en conférences. Cela m'a permis de présenter et d'améliorer mon travail, ainsi que d'établir de précieux contacts.

Je remercie les sept personnes qui se sont portées volontaires et ont accepté d'être suivies tout au long de leur réflexion entrepreneuriale. Leur collaboration a été indispensable à la réalisation de mon travail sur l'engagement. Je vous souhaite pleine réussite dans vos aventures. Merci également aux Chambres de Commerce d'Annecy et de Thonon-les Bains, ainsi qu'à Chablais Léman Développement qui m'ont ouvert leurs portes pour que je puisse rencontrer ces porteurs de projets.

Enfin, je remercie toutes les autres personnes qui m'ont soutenue et qui ne se seraient pas encore reconnues. Toute aide, sous quelque forme que ce soit, a été grandement utile et appréciée.



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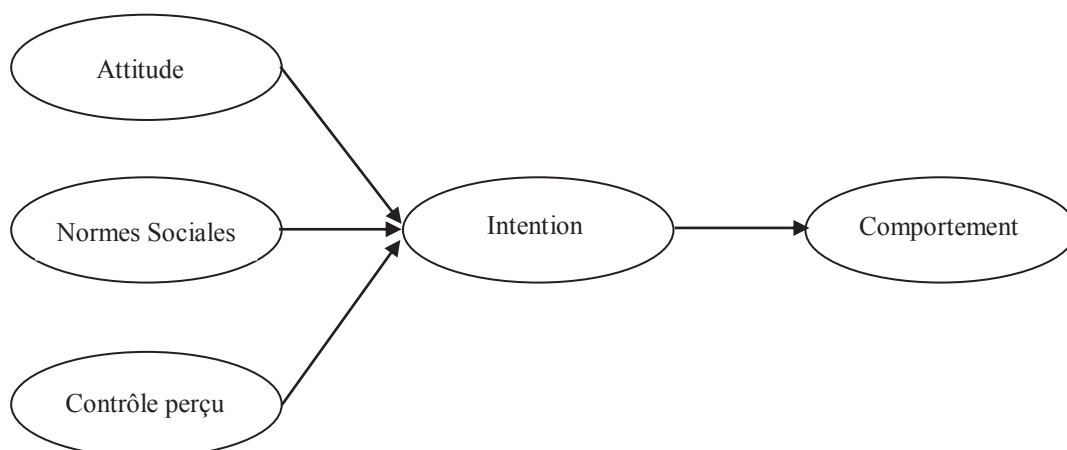


## Preamble : French summary

### 1. Revue de littérature

Depuis des décennies et les travaux de Gartner (1985), les chercheurs s'attèlent à mieux comprendre l'entrepreneuriat en tant que processus. Définir les déterminants qui poussent au comportement entrepreneurial, soit à la création d'une entreprise, est devenu un sujet incontournable dans ce champ de littérature. Pour ce faire, les modèles de l'intention développés en socio-psychologie sont largement utilisés, et notamment le plus célèbre: la Théorie du Comportement Planifié (TCP) d'Azjen (1991) représentée dans le schéma 1. Ces modèles partent du principe que l'intention est le meilleur prédicateur du comportement, et en définissent les déterminants (l'attitude envers le comportement, les normes sociales et le contrôle comportemental perçu dans la TCP). Cependant, des études ont montré que seulement 30% environ des variations du comportement étaient dues à l'intention (voir en socio-psychologie : Armitage et Conner, 2001; et en entrepreneuriat : Schaelgel et Koenig, 2014). Une question persiste donc aujourd'hui : si nous connaissons les antécédents de l'intention, quels sont les facteurs qui favorisent ensuite le passage à l'acte ? De plus, en s'intéressant uniquement aux antécédents de l'intention, seule la partie motivationnelle du processus (pourquoi on agit) est étudiée par les modèles de l'intention, la partie volitionnelle (comment agir) étant laissée de côté.

*Schéma 1* : La Théorie du Comportement Planifiée d'Azjen (1991)



Les modèles de l'intention sont donc perfectibles et notre thèse vise à combler en partie ces manquements dans la littérature.

## 2. Structure de la thèse et théories invoquées

Notre thèse se compose de quatre travaux et s'intéresse à la problématique suivante : quels sont les facilitateurs qui permettent de concrétiser les intentions entrepreneuriales et donc de passer à l'acte ? Nous relevons le défi d'entrouvrir la boîte noire qui se trouve entre intention et action.

Nous proposons dans un premier temps deux facteurs issus de la socio-psychologie et qui pourraient, également dans un contexte entrepreneurial, s'avérer de bons facilitateurs d'action : l'engagement et l'intention planifiée<sup>1</sup>. Notre travail est donc pluri-disciplinaire afin d'apporter un éclairage nouveau. Le choix d'une approche socio-psychologique du phénomène fait écho à un appel lancé il y a déjà plusieurs années par différents chercheurs sur la nécessité de cette perspective (Shaver et Scott, 1991; McCarthy et al., 1993; Frese, 2009). Nous testons ensuite chacun de ces deux facteurs dans un chapitre dédié.

Nous nous concentrons tout d'abord sur le concept d'engagement<sup>2</sup>. Nous choisissons de l'étudier à la lumière de la théorie des trois composants de Meyer et Allen (1987, 1991). Cette dernière a été développée dans un cadre organisationnel. Elle stipule que l'engagement se compose de trois aspects : l'affectif, la continuité et le normatif. L'engagement affectif fait référence au désir, la continuité à un besoin (lié soit au fait de ne pas avoir d'autres alternatives, soit au fait de s'être déjà trop engagé pour pouvoir faire marche arrière) et le normatif à une notion d'obligation morale (on se doit de faire quelque chose). Il a été démontré dans un contexte organisationnel que ces trois composants se combinent pour constituer le profil d'engagement d'une personne (Meyer et Herscovitch, 2001) et qu'ils ont ensuite un impact spécifique sur le comportement (Irving, Coleman et Cooper, 1997; Meyer et Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer et al., 2002). Afin d'étudier si ces mêmes conclusions sont applicables dans le champ de l'entrepreneuriat, nous appliquons cette théorie dans ce nouveau contexte. Nous avons choisi ce modèle en particulier pour différentes raisons : premièrement, il permet de synthétiser les diverses perspectives que revêt l'engagement organisationnel, en englobant les deux principales approches que l'on trouve dans la littérature: attitudinale et comportementale (Mowday et al., 1982). De plus, la théorie de Meyer et Allen (1987, 1991)

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<sup>1</sup> Adam, A., & Fayolle, A. (2015). Bridging the entrepreneurial intention-behaviour gap: the role of commitment and implementation intention. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 25(1), 36-54

<sup>2</sup> Adam, A. (2015). How to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior? The role of commitment. *Academy of Management*, Vancouver

se rapproche par certains aspects d'une théorie de l'engagement déjà développée en entrepreneuriat, celle de Bruyat (2001). En effet, la phase d'engagement décrite par ce dernier se rapproche de la composante de continuité de Meyer et Allen (1987, 1991), et la notion d'attractivité du composant affectif de l'engagement. Il est également intéressant de noter que la théorie des trois composants de l'engagement peut permettre d'établir, dans la même veine que Julien et Marchesnay (1988) et leurs typologies d'entrepreneurs, une typologie de porteurs de projets en fonction de leurs profils d'engagement. Cela dans le but d'étudier ensuite les impacts de ces profils sur le comportement entrepreneurial et d'adapter le suivi des porteurs de projets en fonction. Enfin, nous avons choisi la théorie de Meyer et Allen (1987, 1991) car il existe des échelles validées pour mesurer les différents composants de l'engagement. Après avoir été adaptées dans un contexte entrepreneurial, ces échelles permettront de quantifier l'engagement des porteurs de projets. Pour toutes ces raisons, nous avons choisi d'appliquer la théorie des trois composants de l'engagement au champ de l'entrepreneuriat. Dans le but de refléter l'aspect dynamique de la création d'entreprise, nous adoptons une approche longitudinale pour tester son rôle dans le lien intention-comportement.

Ensuite, nous consacrons une étude au concept d'intention planifiée<sup>3</sup>, qui a été défini principalement par Gollwitzer (1993, 1999). En effet, ce dernier a mis en évidence deux types d'intention, que l'on peut traduire littéralement par l'intention d'objectif et l'intention planifiée. L'intention d'objectif intervient en amont. Elle correspond plutôt à la phase motivationnelle du processus entrepreneurial, à la décision d'agir, alors que l'intention planifiée fait référence à la phase volitionnelle. C'est le fait de planifier l'occurrence des actions nécessaires à la réalisation de l'intention d'objectif. Cela correspond à « je prévois de faire l'action X quand je rencontre la situation Y ». Gollwitzer décrit l'intention planifiée comme des processus « si-alors » qui facilite la concrétisation de l'intention d'objectif. Le « si » permet de détecter une situation par anticipation et le « alors » de déclencher une réponse adaptée. Cela crée un lien fort en mémoire entre une situation particulière et un comportement, et favorise ainsi le passage à l'acte. En effet, quand la situation anticipée se présente, le comportement à adopter est engagé de manière immédiate, presque instinctivement. Il est initié plus rapidement que sans intention planifiée (Orbell and Sheeran, 2000; Webb and Sheeran, 2004). L'impact de l'intention planifiée sur les comportements a

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<sup>3</sup> Adam, A., & Fayolle, A. (2016). Can implementation intention help to bridge the intention-behaviour gap in the entrepreneurial process? An experimental approach. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 17(2), To be confirmed

déjà été démontré dans divers contextes : médical (Rutter et al., 2006), diététique (Verplanken and Faes, 1999), psychologique (Schweiger Gallo et Gollwitzer, 2007) par exemple. Nous appliquons maintenant ce concept au champ de l'entrepreneuriat. En effet, la création d'entreprise s'effectue en général dans une fenêtre d'opportunité étroite. Il est donc important dans ce contexte de faciliter et d'accélérer au maximum le passage à l'acte. C'est pourquoi l'intention planifiée pourrait être une aide précieuse dans ce domaine et mérite que l'on s'y intéresse. Nous la testons en utilisant la même méthodologie que dans les autres champs de recherche : l'expérimentation.

Enfin, le quatrième travail composant notre thèse dresse un panorama de l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil<sup>4</sup>. Il apparaît que ce secteur est un terrain fertile pour l'entrepreneuriat, et qu'il est de plus en plus étudié par les chercheurs de ce champ de recherche depuis les années 2000. Ce chapitre légitime ainsi la réalisation de notre expérimentation auprès d'étudiants d'Ecole Hôtelière, en montrant que ces derniers constituent une population intéressante à tester dans le cadre d'études sur l'entrepreneuriat.

### **3. Méthodologie**

Nous avons choisi d'adopter une approche qualitative pour nos études empiriques.

Concernant l'étude sur l'engagement, nous avons suivi entre mars et décembre 2014 sept personnes ayant manifesté une intention d'entreprendre (six d'entre elles ont participé à un atelier de présentation de l'entrepreneuriat dans une institution spécialisée, et une a répondu à un appel à témoin via un réseau professionnel). Nous réalisons avec chacune d'entre elles des entretiens individuels tous les deux à trois mois. Avant chaque rencontre (téléphonique ou en face à face), chaque individu remplit un questionnaire en ligne visant à évaluer leur intensité d'engagement en détaillant les trois composants sus-décrits. Ce questionnaire est une adaptation des échelles d'évaluation de l'engagement d'Allen et Meyer (1990). L'entretien a ensuite pour but de faire le point sur les avancées du projet et de comprendre les éventuels changements notés dans les questionnaires. Plusieurs chercheurs ont appelé à observer des individus de manière dynamique durant leurs processus de création (Krueger, 2009; Gartner et al., 2010; Kautonen et al., 2013). L'engagement pouvant être fluctuant, l'étude de ce facteur

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<sup>4</sup> Voir « L'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil ». Travail soumis comme chapitre d'un ouvrage

se prêtait parfaitement à ce type de méthodologie. Cela évite également le biais de réinterprétation en aval.

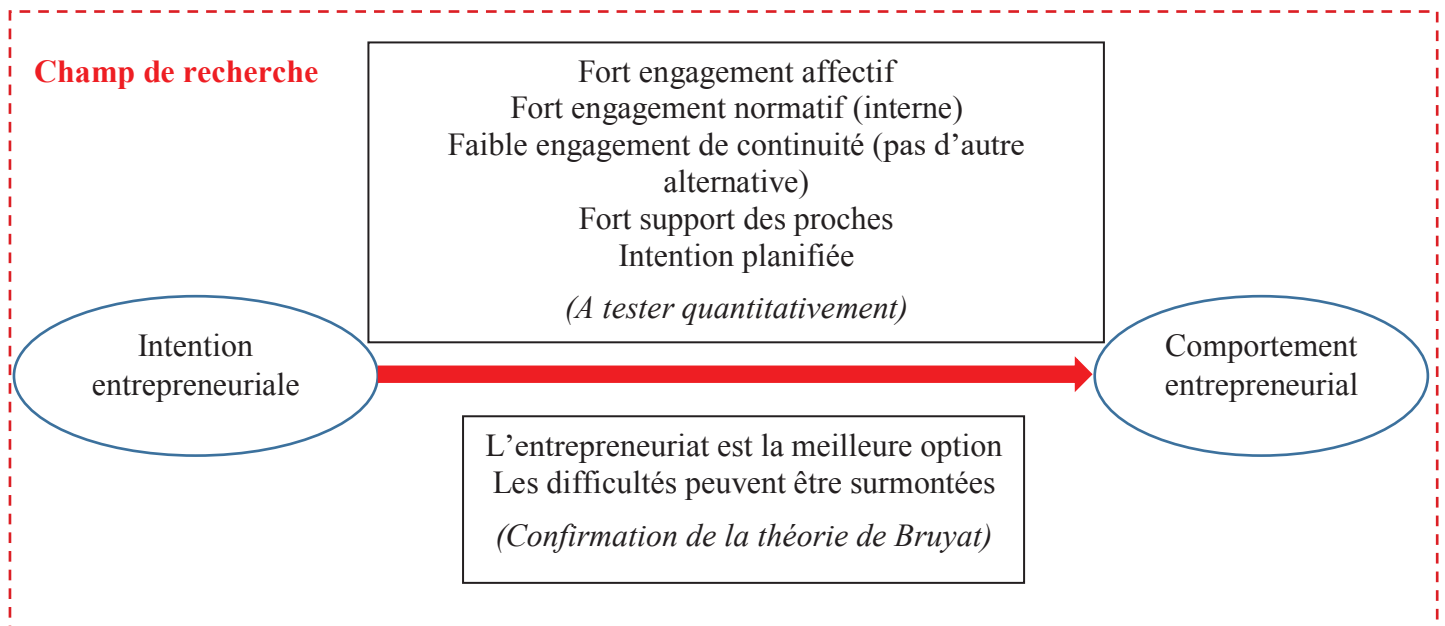
Quant à l'intention planifiée, nous avons choisi de mener une expérimentation auprès d'étudiants en Ecole Hôtelière. Dix-neuf volontaires se sont manifestés pour y participer. Elle a eu lieu en mars 2015 à l'Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne. L'entrepreneuriat étant un phénomène complexe durant lequel différentes actions sont réalisées, nous avons créé un fichier Excel ad-hoc pour refléter le déroulement d'un projet entrepreneurial. Ce fichier est une simulation de parcours selon une démarche causale. Nous avons divisé les volontaires en deux groupes aléatoires (un groupe contrôle et un groupe testé auquel nous avons demandé de planifier leur intention en amont) et nous leur avons administré le fichier de simulation. L'objectif était d'observer qui irait le plus loin dans la démarche entrepreneuriale et en combien de temps, afin d'établir éventuellement le rôle facilitateur de l'intention planifiée.

#### **4. Résultats obtenus et limites**

Notre étude sur l'engagement a révélé que des engagements affectif et normatif (interne) forts, et un engagement de continuité faible (au sens d'absence d'alternative) étaient autant de facteurs facilitant le passage à l'acte. En effet, nous avons observé que plus le porteur de projet ressent un désir fort de devenir entrepreneur et/ou de réaliser son projet, se sent investi d'une mission, et moins il se sent contraint de devenir entrepreneur par manque d'options, plus il met tout en œuvre pour concrétiser son projet. De plus, les discours des individus ont mis en évidence le rôle essentiel des proches et de leur soutien dans la réussite de la transformation de l'intention en comportement. Egalement, les entretiens ont confirmé la théorie de l'engagement de Bruyat, selon laquelle l'entrepreneuriat doit représenter la meilleure option pour l'individu et les difficultés à venir doivent être perçues comme surmontables.

L'expérimentation a quant à elle permis d'observer les impacts positifs de l'intention planifiée sur le passage à l'acte et la vitesse de réalisation dans un contexte entrepreneurial. Les étudiants du groupe testé sont allés plus loin dans la simulation de processus de création d'entreprise et ont réalisé les actions plus vite.

Les résultats de nos études empiriques sont résumés dans le schéma 2.

**Schéma 2: Résumé des résultats observés**

Cependant, la faible taille de nos échantillons ne nous permet que de décrire nos observations et non de généraliser ces résultats. Nos études restent donc exploratoires à ce stade et devront être confirmées quantitativement.

D'autre part, notre simulation de création d'entreprise emprunte une approche causale et n'englobe donc pas toutes les réalités de l'entrepreneuriat. Les résultats ne sont donc interprétables que dans ce schéma-là. Enfin, la population observée dans notre étude sur l'engagement n'englobait pas tous les profils possibles. Il reste donc encore à statuer sur certaines propositions concernant l'engagement de continuité et l'engagement normatif.

## 5. Contributions et implications

Notre thèse s'intéresse à la partie volitionnelle de la création d'entreprise, et vise à compléter les modèles de l'intention et à parfaire notre connaissance du processus entrepreneurial. En proposant de considérer le rôle facilitateur de l'engagement et de l'intention planifiée dans le passage à l'acte, elle contribue ainsi à la littérature traitant de l'intention entrepreneuriale. Elle ouvre avant tout la voie à des études complémentaires sur le sujet.

Méthodologiquement parlant, de par l'étude longitudinale de l'engagement, notre thèse contribue également à la littérature puisqu'elle fait partie des rares travaux qui intègrent l'aspect dynamique de la création d'entreprise. En outre, c'est la première fois que le concept



d'intention planifiée est testé dans le contexte de l'entrepreneuriat. Cela contribue à la fois aux champs de l'entrepreneuriat que de la socio-psychologie. En effet, il y a intégration d'un concept nouveau d'une part, et test des impacts de l'intention planifiée sur un phénomène complexe d'autre part, ce qui n'a à notre connaissance été réalisé qu'une fois par Sheeran et Orbell (2000).

Enfin, nous apportons un éclairage nouveau au concept d'engagement entrepreneurial en adaptant la théorie de Meyer et Allen issue de la littérature sur les organisations. Cette approche permet de faire émerger une notion intéressante de typologie d'engagement des porteurs de projets.

En ce qui concerne les implications pratiques, notre thèse vise à servir les politiques, les porteurs de projets eux-mêmes, les enseignants et les différents acteurs de suivi des entrepreneurs. En effet, tous sont intéressés par l'augmentation du taux de conversion de l'intention entrepreneuriale et pourraient utiliser dans ce but ce que nous avons mis en lumière. Notre objectif était de manière générale de proposer de la matière nouvelle pour aider les porteurs de projets à concrétiser leurs intentions. Afin que nos résultats soient concrètement mis en pratique, de futurs travaux doivent maintenant démontrer d'une part comment opérationnaliser la notion d'intention planifiée ; et d'autre part établir comment adapter le suivi des porteurs de projets à leurs profils d'engagement afin de maximiser leurs chances de mener à bien leurs intentions. Les résultats de ces futurs travaux devront ensuite être démocratisés auprès des acteurs suscités afin que notre thèse soit mise en pratique.



## **Chapter 1: General introduction**

### **1.1. Situating the thesis in the literature**

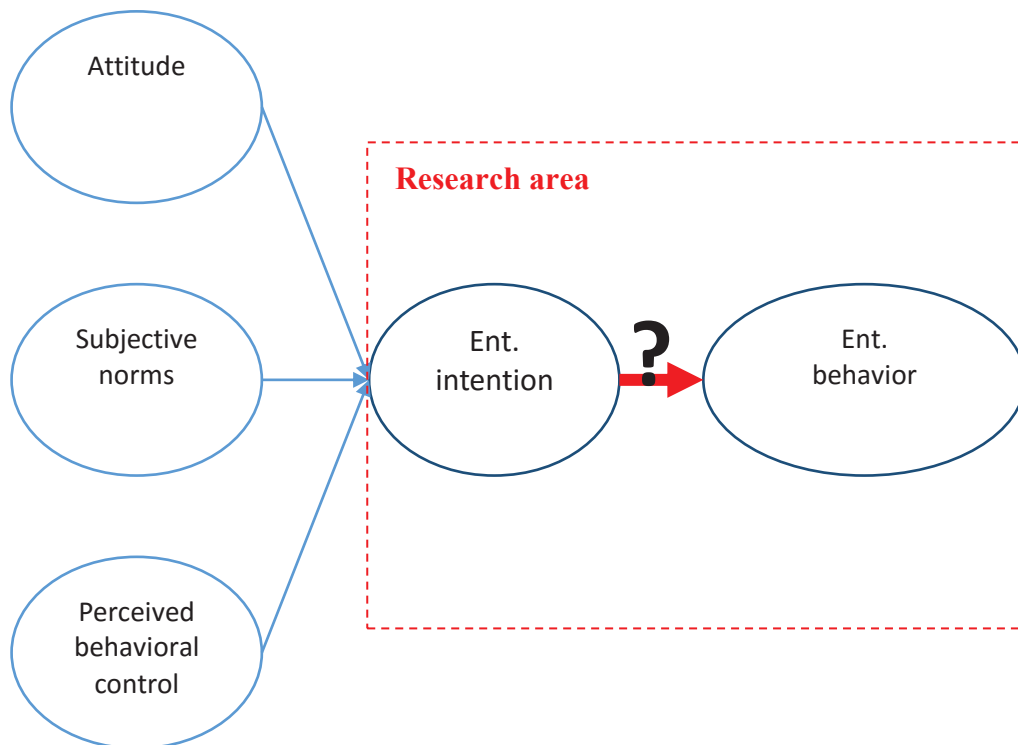
For about thirty years, entrepreneurship researchers have worked to develop an increasingly clear understanding of entrepreneurial behavior. In the same vein, this thesis aims at gaining a better understanding of entrepreneurial behavior, by adopting an explanatory rather than a predictive approach.

This dissertation studies entrepreneurial behavior as the end goal of a process. It is in line with the approach adopted from the 80's, when entrepreneurship was studied as a process (Gartner, 1988). From then on, entrepreneurship emerged as a sequence of activities that occur over time, where the end result is entrepreneurial behavior. Bird (1988) defines entrepreneurial behavior as a type of organizational behavior; but as reminded by Gartner and al. (2010), it designates the activities of individuals who create new organizations rather than the activities of individuals who manage operations of established organizations. This thesis tries to identify theories that could explain why some intended entrepreneurs complete the entrepreneurial process while others don't.

To better encompass the entrepreneurial behavior, we based this work on intention models. Intention models are rooted in the principle that intention is an immediate and significant predictor of a person's behavior (Sheeran, 2002; Kautonen and al., 2013). Thus, capturing the origin of intention would help to predict behavior. To this end, researchers work to determine the antecedents of intention, and intention models arise. The most famous is the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1987; 1991), whose efficacy has since been proved (Armitage and Conner, 2001). The applicability of intention models to the domain of entrepreneurship has been demonstrated (Krueger and Carsrud, 1993; Krueger and al., 2000; Kautonen and al., 2013), and many researchers work on entrepreneurial intention, its antecedents and influencing factors (see for example Frank and al., 2007; Boissin and al., 2008; Gupta and al., 2009; Boissin and al., 2011; De Clercq and al., 2013; Kibler, 2013). In our thesis, we adopt Krueger's (2009) definition of entrepreneurial intention: "the intent to start a business, to launch a new venture".

However, many intended entrepreneurs give up at various stages of the process and only few finally become entrepreneurs. This observation gives rise to the following problematic: what could be the facilitators between entrepreneurial intention and behavior? Our research area is represented in figure 3.

**Figure 3:** Definition of our research area based on Ajzen's (1991) intention model



In the next parts of the introduction, we will first show the interest of our thesis by establishing what we know and what we still have to discover: we will describe the existing approaches on intention models in the socio-psychological and entrepreneurship fields, which will lead us to expose the gap in the literature. We will then present our thesis structure and explain how the four articles which compose it allow us to bridge this gap. After that, we will explain more in detail the concepts of intention, commitment and implementation intention, and we will take the opportunity to clarify why we choose to particularly rely on Meyer and Allen's theory of commitment. We will then conclude the introduction by elaborating on what makes our thesis original.

## **1.2. What do we know about intention models and what do we still need to know?**

### ***1.2.1. Existing approach on intention models***

For forty years, authors have worked on models in order to better understand behaviors. The most famous are the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), then developed by Ajzen (1987, 1991) and known as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). In the TRA, intentions are determined by attitudes toward behavior and subjective norms. Ajzen (1987, 1991) completes this model by adding a third antecedent of intention: the perceived behavioral control. From there on, in order to predict behaviors, many researchers evaluate these three antecedents of intention (for example to predict health-related behavior: use of condoms, exercise, diet).

Since the early 1990s, different authors were inspired by the intention models and studied entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents as the starting point of the entrepreneurial process (Bird, 1992; Krueger and Carsrud, 1993; Lee and Wong, 2004; Thompson, 2009; Douglas and Fitzsimmons, 2013). Even if entrepreneurship researchers overwhelmingly used Ajzen's TPB in their studies, some of them developed their own intention models. For example, Shapero and Sokol (1982) developed the Entrepreneurial Event Model, Bird (1988) the Model of Implementing Entrepreneurial Ideas, and Douglas and Shepherd (2000) the Maximization of the Expected Utility Model (Fayolle and Liñán, 2014). A synthesis of these intention models developed in socio-psychology and in the entrepreneurship field is available in appendix 1. It appears that the most influential models in entrepreneurship are Shapero and Sokol's Entrepreneurial Event Model (1982) and Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991). In the end, both models provide a comparable interpretation of entrepreneurial intentions (Lee and al., 2011): their antecedents are similar. Although some researchers tried to uncover other determinants, they were found to only indirectly impact intentions (Liñán and al., 2011). So today, the models developed seem to encompass all direct determinants. However, there is still a call to improve the entrepreneurial intention models in order to better represent the complexity of the entrepreneurial process (Fayolle and al., 2014).

### ***1.2.2. The gap in the literature***

In the representation of intention models, the link between intention and behavior is always direct. However, not all intended people enact their intentions as some give up during the realization process. As reminded by Fayolle and al. (2011), intention must not be confused with the behaviour itself. Studies in socio-psychology show that only about 30% of the variance in behavior can be explained by intention (Ajzen, 1987; Armitage and Conner, 2001). Other variables must operate in the intention-behavior relationship. But although researchers know about the unsystematic link between intention and behavior, intention models fail to “address the processes by which intentions are translated into action” (Sheeran and Silverman, 2003). Some try to point them out to increase our understanding of behaviors. For example, Kim and Hunter (1993) reported “facilitating conditions”, “unexpected events”, “resources”, “temporal stability” or the control exerted by intended people over behavior as factors that can impact the intention-behavior link.

In the entrepreneurship field in particular, researchers make the same observation: entrepreneurial intention does not necessarily lead to entrepreneurial behavior. Creating a new venture is a complex phenomenon, and intention is not enough to ensure it will actually be set up. Shapero recognizes that complex goal-focused behaviors like entrepreneurship may require some precipitating factors. Indeed, exogenous variables can intervene to trigger, inhibit or accelerate entrepreneurial behavior (Krueger and Carsrud, 1993). Recently, Schlaegel and Koenig (2014) measure the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior and show that only 37% of entrepreneurial behavior can be explained by entrepreneurial intentions. This result is close to what was already found in the socio-psychological literature. Today, this gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior is probably one of the most important research challenges on entrepreneurial intention, and it deserves special consideration (Fayolle and Liñán, 2014; 2015). However, by referring to different works (Hessels and al., 2011; Kautonen and al., 2013; Laspita and al., 2012), Fayolle and Liñán (2015) remind that knowledge of the mechanisms affecting the entrepreneurial intention-behavior link is still poor. Some authors already tried to determine which factors could bridge this gap: motivation for Carsrud and Brännback (2011); self-control, doubt, fear, and aversion for Van Gelderen and al. (2015). Nevertheless, although some articles focusing on variables that affect the entrepreneurial process can be found in the literature (see Fayolle and Liñán, 2015), much remains to be known. Our thesis aims to address this gap by adopting a socio-psychological approach. Indeed, various papers already mention the need for this kind of

approach to complete models and better understand entrepreneurship (Shaver and Scott, 1991; McCarthy and al., 1993; Frese, 2009).

### **1.3. How does our thesis bridge this gap?**

#### ***1.3.1. General structure of the thesis and presentation of articles***

Our thesis intends to answer the following problematic: what could the facilitators between entrepreneurial intention and behavior be? It is composed of four pieces of work and its general epistemological approach is positivist. The propositions will derive from the theory and be tested empirically.

The first paper is theoretical and gives the general direction of the thesis: it sets the scene and explores two socio-psychological theories that could help to bridge the gap between intention and behavior: the commitment theory and the implementation intention theory. We discuss if they could be applied to the entrepreneurship field, and we call for empirical research on this subject<sup>5</sup>. We will then address this call in the next two papers composing our thesis. They empirically and qualitatively test the theories exposed in the first paper. Indeed, as the objective of the thesis is to explore and better understand part of a process, we find it appropriate to follow a qualitative approach.

In the second paper, we focus on the concept of commitment, adopting the approach of Meyer and Allen (1987, 1991). As commitment is an evolving state of mind, we conduct a longitudinal study involving intended entrepreneurs during their entrepreneurial process. Through interviews, we look more closely into the dynamics of commitment that lead intended entrepreneurs to actually set up their companies (or not). Here we followed the suggestion of Kupferberg (1998) who states that “the process of becoming an entrepreneur might best be studied by using qualitative methods and in particular biographical interviews. Self-narratives of entrepreneurs reveal better than statistical data the life-history context of emerging entrepreneurial commitment, how it comes about and why.” The objective is to

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<sup>5</sup> Adam, A., & Fayolle, A. (2015). Bridging the entrepreneurial intention–behaviour gap: the role of commitment and implementation intention. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 25(1), 36–54.

explore how commitment could play a role in understanding the link between entrepreneurial intention and behavior<sup>6</sup>.

Third, we concentrate on the concept of implementation intention (Gollwitzer; 1993, 1999). We explore what its role in bridging the entrepreneurial intention-behavior gap could be. Consistently with what is done in other fields, the implementation intention theory is tested through an experiment. We conduct it in a hospitality school (Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne)<sup>7</sup>.

The last piece of work is a preliminary work before the aforementioned experiment. It does not test propositions but provides a panorama of entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry. The objective here is to justify why it is relevant that the implementation intention concept was tested in a hospitality school. We show that the hospitality sector is more and more studied in the entrepreneurship field from the 2000's. It appears to be a fertile industry for entrepreneurship. As an example, in France in 2011, 5% of new companies were created in the hospitality sector. It is as much as companies created in dynamic sectors like communication, education or health. Hospitality students may thus show an interest in this area. This is why they constitute an interested population to be tested, which legitimates our choice to conduct the experiment about implementation intention in a hospitality school<sup>8</sup>.

So the three pieces of work entitled “Bridging the entrepreneurial intention-behavior gap: The role of commitment and implementation intention”, “How to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior? The role of commitment” and “Can implementation intention help to bridge the intention-behavior gap in the entrepreneurial process? An experimental approach” are the articles which directly allow us to provide answers to the problematic, and the paper entitled “L’entrepreneuriat dans l’industrie de l’accueil” is only indirectly related to the main problematic. More information about the four pieces of work is summarized in appendix 2. Moreover, the logic of succession of the pieces of work is represented in figure 4.

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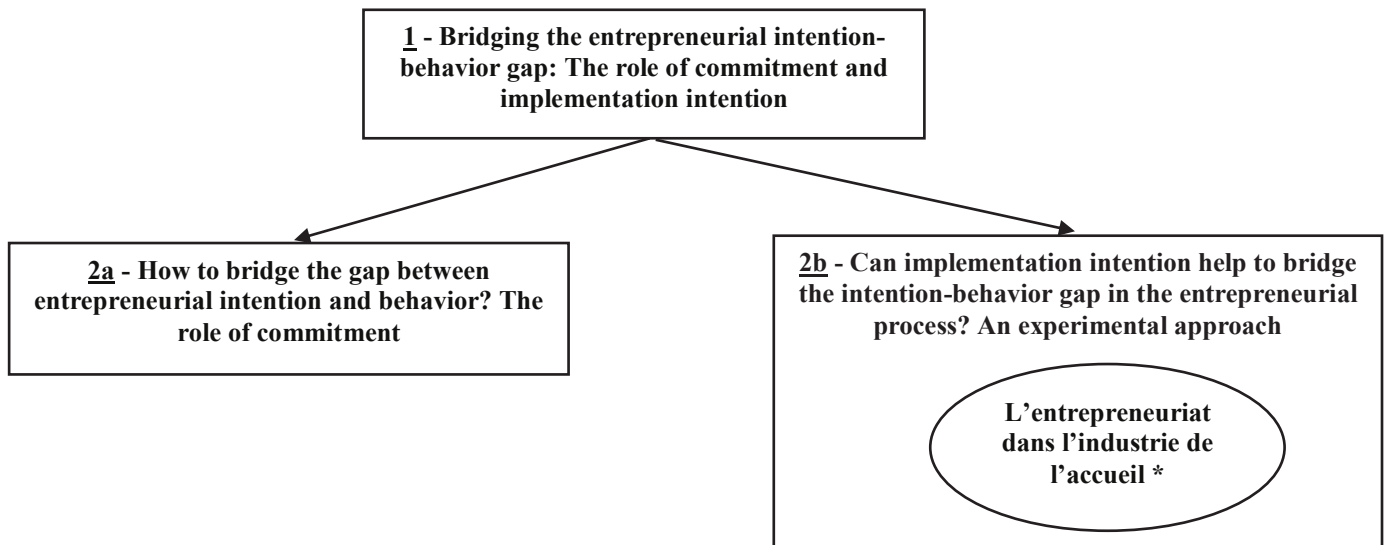
<sup>6</sup> Adam, A. (2015). How to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior? The role of commitment. *Academy of Management*, Vancouver.

<sup>7</sup> Adam, A., & Fayolle, A. (2016). Can implementation intention help to bridge the intention-behaviour gap in the entrepreneurial process? An experimental approach. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 17(2), To be confirmed.

<sup>8</sup> L’entrepreneuriat dans l’industrie de l’accueil. Paper submitted as a chapter in a French book – in process



**Figure 4:** How do the pieces of work interlock?



*\*Preliminary work before the experiment conducted in article 2b*

Appendix 3 sums up the main characteristics of the three main papers, and shows how they help to answer the problematic.

Let's now come back on the concept of intention to understand why we decide to focus on the concepts of commitment and implementation intention as potential facilitators between entrepreneurial intention and behavior in this thesis.

### ***1.3.2. The concept of intention***

In the 90's, Gollwitzer (1993, 1999) worked on the concept of intention and brought out two types of intention: goal intention and implementation intention. Goal intention refers to the statement "I intend to perform X", while implementation intention corresponds to "I intend to perform goal-directed behavior X when I encounter situation Y" (Gollwitzer, 1993). So people who form implementation intention define when, where and how they plan to enact their intentions (Gollwitzer and Brandstätter, 1997; Orbeil and al., 1997; Verplanken and Faes, 1999). The Model of Action Phase (MAP) of Heckhausen and Gollwitzer (1987) helps to understand the difference between these two types of intention. In this model, the intention realization is composed of four chronological phases: predecisional, preactional, actional, and postactional. Goal and implementation intentions correspond to transitions between phases:

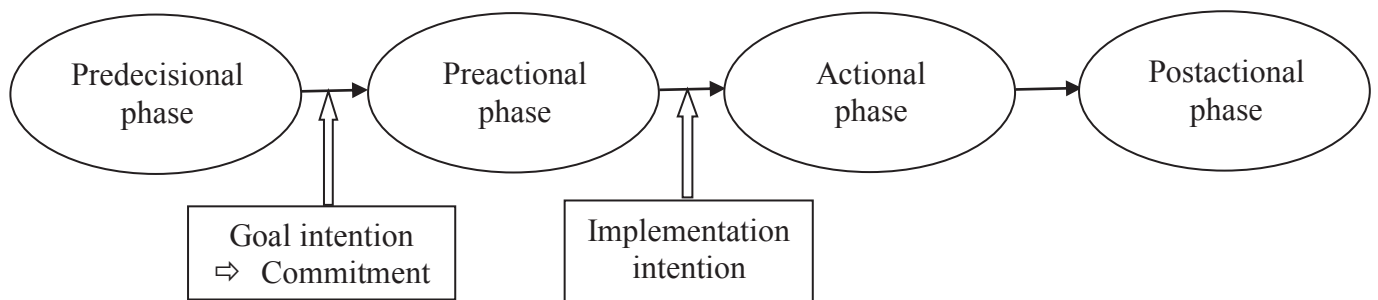
goal intention is formed between the predecisional and the preactional phases while implementation intention arises between the preactional and actional phases (see figure 5).

When goal intention is formed, people no longer consider competing alternatives. They feel committed to their goals. “The better formed the goal intention, the higher is the level of the person’s commitment to achieve it” (Dholakia and Bagozzi, 2003). Thus, the concepts of goal intention and commitment are closely related.

However, even if someone is committed to a goal, acting on it is not always easy. Different reasons can stop or delay the intention realization process (Gollwitzer and Brandstätter, 1997) and unforeseen barriers may arise (Martijn and al., 2008). So the actional phase is not always activated, and this is when forming an implementation intention can come into play.

Each phase is associated with a specific mindset. Therefore, while the predecisional and postactional phases refer to a “motivational mindset”, the preactional and actional phases are associated with a “volitional mindset”, which is realization-oriented (Gollwitzer, 1990). As in our thesis we try to define which factors facilitate action, we focus on the volitional part of the model.

**Figure 5:** The two types of intention represented in the Model of Action Phase of Heckhausen and Gollwitzer (1987)



In sum, goal intention, and thus commitment, is usually considered as a necessary initial step before implementation intention, and then behavior (Gollwitzer, 1993; Gollwitzer and Brandstätter; 1997; Wiedemann and al., 2009). However, it does not guarantee goal completion. Indeed, people “may fail to deal effectively with self-regulatory problems” during the goal realization process (Gollwitzer and Sheeran, 2006). High commitment and/or implementation intention could help to deal with this situation. This is why we first focus on the notion of commitment in this dissertation to study entrepreneurial behavior, before concentrating on implementation intention.

### *1.3.3. The commitment concept*

The role of commitment in the entrepreneurial process has been mentioned several times (Bruyat, 1993; Sharma and Irving, 2005; Fayolle and Liñán, 2014). Recently however, Fayolle and Liñán (2014) call for even more research in the entrepreneurship field that would use commitment theories to describe and explain entrepreneurial commitment. The second paper of this thesis answers this call and uses the Meyer and Allen's commitment theory (1987, 1991) to shed a new light on commitment in the entrepreneurship field. But what exactly is commitment?

Generally speaking, Becker (1960) describes committed individuals as people who engage in “consistent lines of activities”. In the same vein, commitment has been more recently defined as a “force” that binds people to their goals (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). The concept of commitment has been considered through different lenses. We will first describe Bruyat's approach in entrepreneurship and major approaches in the organizations field. Then, we will explain why we chose to use Meyer and Allen's approach in our thesis.

In entrepreneurship, the concept of commitment was particularly used by Bruyat (2001). He describes commitment as a process that is linked to actions: the more people act, the more committed they are. So commitment can be partial or total, depending on the level of actions initiated. But how does Bruyat consider commitment in entrepreneurship? According to him, entrepreneurial projects appear and evolve in a coherence zone which is composed of four elements: the individual, the project, the environment and the process. This system can adopt three successive states during which commitment evolves: the trigger phase, the commitment phase and the survival phase. In the trigger phase, the individual expresses his intention to become entrepreneur and initiates actions. At this stage, commitment is only partial: the study of an opportunity does not necessarily lead to complete commitment. The evolution of the “level of commitment” depends on the perception the individual has of his project: the project must be perceived by the individual as desirable (best option compared to other alternatives) and possible (resistances to change can be overcome). In the commitment phase, people devote most of their time and energy, as well as financial, intellectual, affective and relational resources to their projects. It then seems very difficult to go back or give up. In the last phase, success or failure marks the end of the process. In this approach, Bruyat considers commitment as an evolutionary component of a system. It is the overall situation considered

by the individual that constitutes (or not) a triggering factor to entrepreneurial commitment and thus behavior.

As mentioned above, and in line with the call of several researchers (Shaver and Scott, 1991; McCarthy and al., 1993; Frese, 2009), we decided in our thesis to follow a more individual-focused, socio-psychological approach. This is why we decided not to rely on Bruyat's approach, but to find another one, more centered on the individual. As the organizational literature is fertile concerning commitment theories, we will now explore this field and explain why we finally chose Meyer and Allen's commitment theory.

Reichers (1985) sums up the three approaches of organizational commitment we can find in the literature: the side-bets approach (for example Alutto, Hrebiniak, and Alonso, 1973; Becker, 1960; Farrell and Rusbult, 1981), the attributions approach (for example Kiesler and Sakumura, 1966; O'Reilly and Caldwell, 1980; Salancik, 1977), and the individual/organizational goal congruence approach (for example Angle and Perry, 1981; Morris and Sherman, 1981; Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982; Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian, 1974; Steers, 1977). In the side-bets approach, commitment depends on the rewards and costs associated with organizational membership. In the attributions approach, commitment "is a binding of the individual to behavioral acts that results when individuals attribute an attitude of commitment to themselves after engaging in behaviors that are volitional, explicit, and irrevocable", while in the individual/organizational goal congruence approach, commitment "occurs when individuals identify with and extend effort towards organizational goals and values" (Reichers, 1985). These last two approaches help to understand the general and well-known distinction made by Mowday and al. (1982) between attitudinal and behavioral commitment. Attitudinal commitment corresponds to the individual/organizational goal congruence approach whereas behavioral commitment corresponds to the attributional approach. It refers to the process by which people become bound to an organization (Mowday and al., 1982) and is also linked to the Becker's (1960) side-bet theory (McGee and Ford, 1987). All these organizational commitment theories in socio-psychological literature make it difficult to synthesize the results of commitment research and to choose the best approach to consider. The theory developed by Meyer and Allen (1987, 1991) presents a great advantage as it encompasses both the attitudinal and behavioral approaches. Moreover, as it considers organizational commitment as a mind-set or a psychological state, it perfectly fits our individual-centered approach of intention we chose

for our thesis. This theory is called the three-component model of commitment, the components being labelled affective, continuance and normative. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), the affective commitment component is an emotional bond that refers to the attachment to one organization and its values. Continuance commitment is based both on cost-avoidance and on the perception that there is no alternative course of action. And normative commitment refers to what is considered morally right. They respectively reflect a desire, a need and an obligation. All components combine with different intensity to constitute the commitment profile of people (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). It makes the model very interesting as it could allow the definition of a typology of individuals, depending on their commitment profiles. Some studies already establish how these commitment profiles correlates with behaviors in the organizational context (Irving, Coleman and Cooper, 1997; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer and al., 2002). The model rapidly become prominent in studies on commitment in the workplace (Jaros, 2007). Besides, others also apply it outside organizations, like Liou and Nyhan (1994) in the public sector or Sharma and Irving (2005) in entrepreneurship for family business.

So the reasons we chose Meyer and Allen's commitment theory (1987, 1991) as a framework for our thesis are several: first, as mentioned above, it suits the psychological approach we chose to adopt to better understand the entrepreneurial process, in line with the call of Shaver and Scott (1991), McCarthy and al. (1993) and Frese (2009). Furthermore, it allows us to synthesize the multifarious organizational commitment perspectives as it encompasses both the attitudinal and behavioral approaches. Moreover, it could also be linked to entrepreneurship through Bruyat's theory (2001) of entrepreneurial commitment. Indeed, the affective commitment is close to Bruyat's attractiveness and the continuance component is close to his commitment phase, when it is difficult for committed individuals to go back or give up. Then, following the same path as Julien and Marchesnay (1988) who establish entrepreneurs' personality typologies, Meyer and Allen's commitment theory (1987, 1991) could allow a definition of a typology of intended entrepreneurs depending on their commitment profiles. We can then study how these profiles would impact entrepreneurial behaviors and adapt the follow up of intended entrepreneurs accordingly. Indeed, as Meyer and al. (2002) demonstrate in the organizational context, commitment is a multidimensional concept and each of its dimensions has different consequences. As recommended by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), it is thus interesting for researchers to study the consequences of each component on behavior (which is the objective of the second paper of our thesis). Lastly, what leads us to consider

Meyer and Allen's commitment theory (1987, 1991) is the existence of validated scales to measure the different components of commitment. These scales, after being adapted to the entrepreneurial context, allow us to quantify commitment of the intended entrepreneurs we followed throughout their entrepreneurial paths.

#### ***1.3.4. The implementation intention concept***

However, as mentioned already, commitment to a goal does not necessarily lead to the intended behavior. As underlined by Sheeran and Silverman (2003), Gollwitzer differentiates between a “motivational phase during which the person decides to act, and a (...) volitional phase during which the person plans how s/he is going to make the decision become a reality”. The motivational phase is the one linked to commitment and is addressed in the intention models. The volitional phase refers to implementation intention and is not addressed in the intention models. It is nonetheless part of the process of performing a behavior. But how does implementation intention really impact behaviors?

Implementation intention corresponds to an if-then process (Gollwitzer, 1999) that facilitates the translation of goal intention into behavior. Indeed, the if-component allows detecting an anticipated situational cue, and the then-component triggers the planned response to this cue (Parks-Stamm and al., 2007). Thus it creates a strong link between cues and behaviors in memory that helps to trigger action (Gollwitzer, 1993). When the anticipated situation occurs, “the intended behavior is initiated immediately and efficiently” (Brandstätter and al., 2001) as it does with habits, except that habits require repeated occurrences and not implementation intention (Gollwitzer and Brandstätter, 1997). So implementation intention facilitates action initiation, even when the plan is general and not specific (Ajzen and al., 2009). Moreover, it can also accelerate it as an immediate response has already been planned (Orbell and Sheeran, 2000; Webb and Sheeran, 2004).

The impacts of implementation intention on behaviors have been tested positively in various contexts. We can mention for example the studies of Gollwitzer and Brandstätter (1997), Aarts and al. (1999), Verplanken and Faes (1999), Orbell and Sheeran (2000) or Churchill and Jessop (2011), just to cite a few. Parks-Stamm and al. (2007) also discuss studies where implementation intention was tested, like in the health domain or in executive functions.

However, until today, implementation intention has mainly been studied when directed toward a single goal, like in the situation: “I intend to do X in situation Y”. But what about more complex goals that require the execution of several actions to be achieved, like entrepreneurship? As pointed out by Sheeran (2002) and Rutter and al. (2006), these complex goals will rather take the form of: “To achieve X, I intend to do W in situation Y”. Sheeran and Orbell (2000) consider this case and successfully test implementation intention for a complex behavior (to make an appointment to attend for cervical cancer screening). But there is a call today for more research to test the utility of forming implementation intention to achieve complex goals (Sheeran, 2002). The third paper of this thesis will answer this call as it will test in an exploratory way the impact of implementation intention in the entrepreneurship field. Indeed, becoming entrepreneur is a complex behavior. It does not correspond to a single behavior but to a series of actions (do a market research, define a product or service, find partners, get financed...). Implementation intention may be of interest in entrepreneurship as entrepreneurship occurs within a small window of opportunity. Thus facilitating and accelerating actions of intended entrepreneurs may be of great help to reduce the entrepreneurial intention-behavior gap and increase the creation rate.

The main papers constituting the theoretical background of our thesis are synthesized in table 1.

**Table 1:** Major works on which the thesis is based

	<b>What is used in the thesis</b>
Gartner (1988)	Entrepreneurship is a process
Ajzen (1987/1991)	Intention model
Schlaegel and Koenig (2014)	Entrepreneurial intention-behavior gap
Frese (2009)	Call for a socio-psychological approach
Meyer and Allen (1987, 1991)	Three-component model commitment theory
Gollwitzer (1993, 1999)	Implementation intention

### **1.3.5. Originality of the thesis**

What makes our thesis original and new?

First of all, contrary to a great number of studies about entrepreneurial intention, the focus of our thesis is not the antecedents of intention but what comes after it. We zoom in on the second part of intention models, with the objective of better understanding what could help to translate entrepreneurial intention into behavior.

Then, our thesis is interdisciplinary. Its main field of interest is entrepreneurship, but it also refers to socio-psychological and hospitality literature. This interdisciplinarity allows the shedding of a new light by importing validated theories to be tested in a new context. It helps to make the field of research evolve. Indeed, as far as we are aware of, it is the first time that the roles of commitment (in the sense of Meyer and Allen) and of implementation intention are tested empirically in the entrepreneurial context. Let's detail what is specifically original in the way these theories were tested.

Concerning commitment, our thesis proposes to use a scale to measure it in the entrepreneurial context for the first time. Indeed, in the paper "How to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior? The role of commitment", Allen and Meyer's (1990) scale to evaluate commitment was adapted and applied to entrepreneurship in order to measure the commitment components' intensity of intended entrepreneurs. This attempt to develop a specific scale derived from the organizational context could be taken further in future research to test Meyer and Allen commitment's theory quantitatively. Moreover, it is the first time that commitment is studied in entrepreneurship using a typology approach. Typologies were already used in entrepreneurship for personality traits but never for commitment. Here, the three components of Meyer and Allen's commitment theory allows us to establish a commitment profile of intended entrepreneurs. It could offer a new analytical tool to better know intended entrepreneurs and, for example, to determine if it is relevant to coach them. Indeed, as Chabaud and al. (2010) mentioned, the role of the intended entrepreneur is central in the coaching process and the quality of interactions between him/her and the coach depends on his/her commitment intensity. Finally, to avoid selection bias and to show the dynamic essence of entrepreneurship, commitment was studied using a longitudinal approach. As underlined by Fayolle and Liñan (2015) in their panorama of entrepreneurial intention studies, "interventions that track respondents over time are most useful in the understanding of the entrepreneurial process". Here, intended entrepreneurs were followed in their creation processes. Although there have been several calls to observe entrepreneurs dynamically throughout the creation process (see Krueger, 2009; Gartner and al., 2010;



Kautonen and al., 2013), only few authors adopt this approach: only 24 papers out of the 409 identified by Fayolle and Liñan (2015) were longitudinal studies.

Concerning implementation intention, as far as we know, it is the first time it was tested for such a complex behavior as entrepreneurship. From a methodological point of view, we had to create an experiment that includes several actions before completing a final behavior which was the creation of a company. An automatized Excel simulation was set up in this purpose. It could now be used on a larger sample to quantitatively validate the role of the implementation intention theory in the entrepreneurship field.

In the next parts of the document, we will expose the four pieces of work presented above, before drawing a general conclusion of the thesis.



## **Chapter 2: Bridging the entrepreneurial intention-behavior gap: The role of commitment and implementation intention**

*Anne-Flore Adam, Alain Fayolle*

### **Abstract**

Since the 1980s, many authors have studied the entrepreneurial process based on the intention models developed in the sociopsychological literature. Determinants of intention were defined, but as shown by Ajzen (1987), no direct link was established between intention and action: intentions were found to explain only about 30% of the variance in behavior. Some authors tried to bridge this gap, by focusing more specifically on environmental factors. Our paper is in line with works by Shane, Locke and Collins (2003), in studying factors at the micro level. Drawing on the sociopsychological literature, it focuses on two psychological factors that can explain why some people with entrepreneurial intentions act when others do not. As it addresses the missing link between entrepreneurial intention and behavior from a sociopsychological approach, the main contribution of this theoretical paper is to enhance our knowledge of the entrepreneurial process, in order to improve the training and support of nascent entrepreneurs.

**Keywords:** intention-behavior gap; commitment; implementation intention; entrepreneurial process; entrepreneurship

## 2.1. Introduction

As mentioned by Krueger in 2009, some researchers call for a better understanding of how to improve or modify the entrepreneurial intention models to better represent the complexity of the entrepreneurial process (Fayolle et al., 2014). This theoretical paper responds to this call and offers new insights into the entrepreneurial process by exploring the missing link between entrepreneurial intention and behavior, as suggested notably by Fayolle and Liñán (2014). The study of the entrepreneurial process is nothing new. For example, Carter et al. (1996) focus on what, how many and when activities are initiated or completed by nascent entrepreneurs, and Gartner et al. (2010) speak of a “gestalt of entrepreneurial activities” with regards to how the sequences of activities are combined to create an organization. In line with the works of Shapero and Sokol (1982), Ajzen (1991) and Bruyat (1993) on the entrepreneurial process, we adopt here a sociopsychological approach, supported by many authors. As early as 1991, Shaver and Scott called for a psychological approach “combining the person, his/her representation of the environment, and the cognitive process leading eventually to entrepreneurial behavior” (Fayolle et al., 2014). Subsequently, McCarthy et al. (1993) suggested that “models and theories will continue to be incomplete until the psychological factors are incorporated and explored”. In 2009, Frese endorsed a similar view and stated that as “psychology has traditionally defined itself to achieve an understanding of people’s perceptions, cognitions, emotions, motivation, and behavior, it makes sense to turn to psychology to study such important categories of entrepreneurship research as decisive actions (behaviors), perceptions, and implementation of opportunities (perception, cognition, emotions, motivation)”. The view developed in the sociopsychological literature is that intention is a good predictor of behavior. Intention models have been developed, based on the fact that intention is “the most immediate and important predictor of a person’s behavior” (Sheeran, 2002) and aim at defining the determinants of intention in order to predict behavior. These intention models have had a strong influence in entrepreneurship. Since the late 1980s, many authors studied entrepreneurial intentions as the starting point of the entrepreneurial process (Bird, 1992; Krueger and Carsrud, 1993; Lee and Wong, 2004; Thompson, 2009; Douglas and Fitzsimmons, 2013). Different models propose to explain the relationship between individuals and their entrepreneurial intentions. The most influential models are the Entrepreneurial Event Model, coupled with the displacement factor (Shapero and Sokol, 1982) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). In the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EE), intentions are derived from perceptions of desirability and feasibility. Self-efficacy acts as a moderator (Lee et al., 2011) and displacement may act as a triggering factor (Degeorge and Fayolle, 2011). Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) includes three factors predicting intentions: attitudes, subjective norms and

perceived behavioral control, which is close to Bandura's concept of self-efficacy (Sheeran and Orbell, 1999). Both models provide comparable interpretations of entrepreneurial intentions (Lee et al., 2011). Many researchers have studied other determinants, which were found to only operate indirectly on intentions (Liñán et al., 2011), so the models developed seem to encompass all determinants.

While the literature widely acknowledges the importance of intention as the first step toward behavior, there is no direct link established between intention and action. In 1987 already, Ajzen shows that intentions only explain about 30% of the variance in behavior. It was confirmed by a meta-analytic review of 185 studies by Armitage and Conner (2001) where they find that on average 27% of the variance in behavior was explained by behavioral intentions. In the entrepreneurial context, Schlaegel and Koenig (2014) reach comparable conclusions as they find that 37% of entrepreneurial behaviors can be explained by entrepreneurial intentions. For Sheeran (2002), individuals with positive intentions who fail to act are defined as the "inclined abstainers". This goes to show that the link between intention and behavior is not systematic, as highlighted by many authors (Kolvereid, 1996; Wiedemann et al., 2009). Recently, Fayolle and Liñán (2014) suggested that the intention-behavior relationship deserved special consideration. In line with Kautonen et al. (2013), who argue that intention and perceived behavioral control are significant predictors of subsequent behavior, this paper focuses on the relationship between intentions and behavior. Our goal is to theoretically determine what may explain the progression between these stages, using a sociopsychological approach. In the entrepreneurial field, some authors have tried to bridge the gap, such as Carsrud and Brännback (2011), who argue that motivation is a link between intention and behavior, especially for lifestyle entrepreneurs. However, no model has been proposed thus far.

In this paper, we propose to study implementation intention and commitment as moderators of the entrepreneurial intention-behavior relationship, in line with Fayolle and Liñán (2014).

In the first part, we will focus on implementation intention, its definition, consequences and role in the entrepreneurial process. We will then turn to the issue of commitment: its definition; what differentiates it from motivation and what role it plays in the entrepreneurial process. Our last part focuses on the contributions and implications of this paper.

## **2.2. Implementation intention: a facilitating factor**

### ***2.2.1. What is implementation intention***

In the sociopsychological literature, intention presents two different components: goal intention and implementation intention (Dholakia and Bagozzi, 2003). Gollwitzer (1993, 1999), in particular, has worked on the distinction between goal and implementation intention. Goal intention corresponds to “I intend to reach X” but does not guarantee goal completion, as individuals “may fail to deal effectively with self-regulatory problems during goal striving” (Gollwitzer and Sheeran, 2006). Goal intention is usually viewed as a compulsory initial step, after which an individual may or may not form an implementation intention (Dholakia and Bagozzi, 2003). But what exactly is implementation intention?

As underlined by Sheeran and Silverman (2003), Gollwitzer differentiates two phases in behavior achievement: a “motivational phase during which the person decides to act, and a (...) volitional phase during which the person plans how s/he is going to make the decision become a reality”. The theory of planned behavior concerns the motivational phase while implementation intention is part of the volitional phase. Implementation intention is a link between an intended goal-directed behavior and an anticipated situation (Gollwitzer, 1993; Gollwitzer, 1999; Brandstätter et al., 2001). If goal intention refers to the statement “I intend to perform X”, implementation intention corresponds to “I intend to perform goal-directed behavior X when I encounter situation Y” (Gollwitzer, 1993). People forming implementation intentions commit themselves to a plan as to when and where they intend to act (Gollwitzer and Brandstätter, 1997; Orbeil et al., 1997). Verplanken and Faes (1999) add the question of “how” they intend to act, when testing the impact of implementation intentions. The individual’s will is sufficient to trigger the goal-directed behavior as soon as the expected cue appears (Gollwitzer and Brandstätter, 1997). The response is automatic. Implementation intention “delegates the control of goal-directed responses to anticipated situational cues, which (when actually encountered) elicit these responses automatically” (Gollwitzer, 1999).

Control of the behavior goes from the individual to the situational context (Sheeran et al., 2005). As implementation intention implies an automatic behavior, it is unconscious and effortless, and thus it can be helpful for people having trouble translating their goals into behaviors (Gollwitzer, 1999; Ajzen et al., 2009).

So implementation intention anticipates how to respond to a specific situation and automatizes the initiation of a behavior in a certain context. As such, it should not be confused with an implemental

mindset, which refers to giving an orientation by planning the different steps to reach one's goal (Brandstätter et al., 2001). In the same way, implementation intentions should not be confused with habits. They are similar in the sense that they both control action and lead to a specific immediate and efficient behavior that does not require conscious awareness (Sheeran et al., 2005). However, they differ regarding how the action is initiated.

Implementation intention is a “conscious act of will”, a “strategic automaticity” according to Gollwitzer and Schaal (1998) (Sheeran et al., 2005). It stems from a mental act of deliberate planning, whereas habits become automatic only through “repeated rehearsal” (Verplanken and Faes, 1999; Brandstätter et al., 2001). Thus, implementation intention can be compared to an internal memory strategy, except that it does not require repeated occurrences (Gollwitzer and Brandstätter, 1997).

### ***2.2.2. Impact of implementation intention on behaviors***

The power of implementation intention in bridging the intention-behavior link was first examined by Gollwitzer (1993), and numerous studies followed in the sociopsychological field. It was used, for example, to test the intention-behavior link of mundane behaviors (Aarts et al., 1999), of drug addict patients writing a curriculum vitae (Brandstätter et al., 2001), of fruit and vegetable consumption (Churchill and Jessop, 2011), of students' work (Gollwitzer and Brandstatter, 1997), of physical exercise completion (Orbell and Sheeran, 2000; Prestwich et al., 2003; Sniehotta et al., 2005), and of medical behavior (Sheeran and Orbell, 2000; Rutter et al., 2006). Why are the individuals who form implementation intention more effective in goal pursuit?

“The formation of implementation intentions promotes goal achievement (...) because they eliminate classic problems associated with the control of goal-directed action” (Gollwitzer, 1993). Goal intentions are more successfully pursued when coupled with implementation intentions (Gollwitzer and Brandstatter, 1997). As it creates a strong link between cues and behaviors in memory, implementation intention gives rise to a mental accessibility that triggers action (Gollwitzer, 1993; Aarts et al., 1999). Cues can be detected even in difficult circumstances (Webb and Sheeran, 2004). Once the anticipated situation occurs, “the intended behavior is initiated immediately and efficiently” (Brandstätter et al., 2001). Thus implementation intentions facilitate the initiation of intended behaviors (Gollwitzer and Brandstatter, 1997; Orbeil et al., 1997; Sniehotta et al., 2005; Gollwitzer and Sheeran, 2006; Webb and Sheeran, 2007).

Not only do they facilitate action initiation, but they also accelerate it (Orbell and Sheeran, 2000; Webb and Sheeran, 2004). However, if the “where and when” of implementation intentions seems particularly effective in leading individuals to initiate action, “the how” of implementation intentions may be helpful in both initiating and maintaining behavior, specifically when “goals can be achieved through different courses of action, or by adapting a relatively complex pattern of acts” (Verplanken and Faes, 1999). This is mitigated by Martijn et al.’s (2008) results, whose findings suggest that the “where and when” of implementation intention helps individuals who encounter barriers in remaining constant in their behaviors and sticking to their goals: they will try again, every time as intensely as the first time. It would therefore seem that implementation intentions related to the “when and where” to act initiate and maintain goal-oriented behavior, whereas implementation intentions as regards “how” to act particularly help stick to one’s goal, especially when it is complex and when there are multiple ways to reach it. This contradicts Dholakia and Bagozzi (2003), whose conclusion is that implementation intentions have a significant impact on remembering behaviors, it is the goal intentions that “bolster persistence in difficult behavior situations”. Sheeran and Silverman (2003) confirm in their study that implementation intention increases the probability to act and that its effectiveness does not decline over time. Implementation intentions can also help to deal effectively with anxiety and negative feelings (Schweiger Gallo and Gollwitzer, 2007; Sheeran et al., 2007).

However, implementation intentions are effective only if the individual who formed them is motivated to reach his/her goals (Gollwitzer, 1993; Wiedemann et al., 2009). Thus, forming implementation intention without a strong motivation or goal intention will not increase the probability to act. This idea is corroborated by Sheeran et al. (2005) when they conclude that the probability of goal attainment engendered by implementation intentions considers the strength and activation of one’s goal intentions. Implementation intentions do not increase the rate of goal attainment when goal intentions are weak. As suggested by Prestwich et al. (2003) in their study about whether implementation intention promotes exercise behavior, “improving motivation to exercise just before the implementation intention was formed, also increased commitment to the implementation intention”. All motivations being equal, individuals who form implementation intentions are more likely to behave (Sheeran and Orbell, 2000).

It is interesting to note that the plan does not have to be specific to increase the probability to carry out the behavior. Even a general plan is effective in generating behavior (Ajzen et al., 2009).



To conclude, the impacts of implementation intention on behavior are the following: it accelerates the initiation of action, it initiates and maintains behaviors and it helps to deal with anxiety. To be effective, goal intention must be strong but no specific plan is required.

### ***2.2.3. Implementation intention and the entrepreneurial process***

Entrepreneurship can be considered as the result of a synergy between an individual and a project (Fayolle, 2004). In that regard, it can only occur within a small window of opportunity. Even individuals with a strong entrepreneurial intention will not set up a company if they fail to recognize the opportunity to act at the right time. As implementation intentions both increase the probability and the speed of action initiation, they can be of particular significance for the field of entrepreneurship. By speeding up the initiation of action, it could help reduce the entrepreneurial intention-behavior gap. Moreover, “entrepreneurship depends on decisions that people make about how to undertake that process” (Shane et al., 2003), confirming the role of implementation intentions in the entrepreneurial process.

In light of this, the next question that is raised in related to the nature of this influence: does implementation intention moderate the intention-behavior relationship or does it mediate it? A variable is said to be a mediator if the relationship between X and Y is at least partially indirect and depends on the variable in question. A moderator, however, is a variable that affects the existence, direction, or intensity of the relationship between X and Y (Gavard-Perret et al., 2012).

As it is impossible for an implementation intention to be developed without the formation of a goal intention (Gollwitzer and Brandstatter, 1997), individuals are considered to have formed at least a goal-driven intention, even if they are not aware of it (Ajzen et al., 2009). Therefore, intention should be replaced by “goal intention” in the intention-behavior process. It is not a moderator or a mediator of the relationship but a predictor. Schwarzer et al. (2010) state that planning acts as a mediator (“intentions serve as a predictor, planning as a mediator, self-efficacy as a moderator, and behaviors as outcomes”). As implementation intention is an act of planning, it means that the goal intention-behavior relationship is at least partially indirect and depends on implementation intention. However, this dependence between implementation intention and actions is not so clear. In a 2009 study, Ajzen et al. found that commitment to a goal was “sufficient to produce a high level of compliance”, even if there was no implementation intention. In order to be enacted, the intention does not have to be an implementation intention. If an individual has a well-formed goal intention, that is to say, if s/he is strongly committed to his/her goal, it is enough for the action to occur. While other studies argue that

implementation intention increases the probability and speed of action (Sheeran, 2002; Ajzen et al., 2009), they do not show that the behavior depends on it, suggesting that implementation intention may only affect the intensity of the intention-behavior relationship, without depending on it. As such, it should be considered as a moderator rather than as a mediator.

***Proposition 1: Implementation intention moderates the goal intention-behavior relationship.***

If an explicit commitment to a goal produces a compliance to that goal as strong as the one produced by implementation intentions (Ajzen and al, 2009), commitment deserves more attention.

## **2.3. Commitment**

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) define commitment as a “force” that binds an individual to his/her goal. According to Gollwitzer and Brandstätter (1997), an implementation intention will not be developed without a strong commitment to the goal, the notion of commitment could be correlated with the notion of goal intention. If we consider that different types of intention can play a role in the entrepreneurial process, the concept of commitment should be paid closer attention in entrepreneurship research. Edelman et al. (2010) claim that the intensity of the desired goals could explain the decision to take action, and Dholakia and Bagozzi (2003) argue that “the better formed the goal intention, the higher is the level of the person’s commitment to achieve it”. Therefore, in order to better understand the intention-action link, we should assess the intensity of goal intention. To assess one’s goal intention, the level of commitment should be measured. In this section, we will define commitment, determine how to measure it, and explain why it deserves more attention in entrepreneurship research.

### ***2.3.1. Commitment: a multi-dimensional concept***

Commitment is considered by researchers as a multi-dimensional concept. Two different approaches are considered in the organizational commitment literature: attitudinal and behavioral. In the attitudinal approach, commitment corresponds to the level of identification with an organization, whereas in the behavioral approach, commitment depends on extraneous factors and is linked to Becker’s (1960) side-bet theory (McGee and Ford, 1987). Depending on its nature, different scales have been developed to measure the level of commitment: Mowday et al.’s (1982) Organizational Commitment Scale for the attitudinal approach, and Ritzer and Trice’s (1969) scale, modified by Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) for the behavioral approach (Hackett et al., 1994).

Based on both the attitudinal and behavioral approaches, Meyer and Allen (1987) develop a three-component model of commitment, the components being called “affective”, “continuance” and “normative” commitment. Affective commitment refers to the attachment to one organization and its values (Meyer and Allen, 1991). It is an emotional bond, not calculative, unlike continuance commitment (Jaros et al., 1993). Continuance commitment is correlated with the costs associated with leaving an organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The bi-dimensionality of continuance commitment was rapidly addressed (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Dunham et al., 1994; Allen and Meyer, 1996; Meyer et al., 2002; Sharma and Irving, 2005), and it is today based both on cost-avoidance and on the perception that there is no alternative course of action. Zahra refers to this lack of alternatives in an interview with Randerson in 2012, in which he suggests that “entrepreneurs might persist not because they have a strong belief that it will work, but because they have no other alternatives”. Normative commitment is linked to what is considered morally right (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The three components reflect a desire, a need and an obligation respectively. Normative commitment could also be correlated to the notion of values, which supports its potential impact on the intention-action link. Indeed, referring to the works of Gollwitzer (1996), Schwartz (1992) and Bardi and Schwartz (2003), Fayolle et al. (2014) define values as “abstract beliefs about a desirable goal” that “guide individual decision-making” and encourage to “form action plans that can lead to its expression in behavior”.

As each form of commitment can be experienced to varying degrees and interact to influence behavior, they should be considered as components rather than types of commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991). Some researchers have questioned the distinguishability of each component, especially as regards the affective and normative components (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001; Bergman, 2006). However, in the end the three components were recognized distinct (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Dunham et al., 1994; Allen and Meyer, 1996; Meyer et al., 2002), and the model rapidly became prominent in studies on commitment in the workplace (Jaros, 2007).

Even though commitment is but one single concept, through its three components, it affects both goal intentions and actions. As mentioned before, Gollwitzer and Brandstatter (1997) suggest that implementation intention will not be developed without a strong commitment to the goal, implying that commitment first affects goal intention. However, the notion of cost-avoidance found in continuance commitment relates more to action than to goal intention. Individuals who are intent on a goal and have started acting towards it will not stop until they have performed the behavior, in order

not to lose what has been invested thus far. We can find this dual link “commitment-goal intention” and “commitment-action” in Fayolle et al.’s (2014) application of the theory of commitment to entrepreneurship. They define commitment as “devoting one’s time, energy, financial, intellectual relational and emotional resources in a project”. In this light, the concept of commitment is linked both to goal intention (intellectual, relational and emotional resources) and actions (time and energy). Continuance commitment would thus also concern individuals who have started acting on their intentions, but without having completed the behavior yet, like individuals in the gestation process of creating a company. Action binds them to their goals, in order to justify the costs incurred. This is reminiscent of Staw’s (1981) escalation of commitment theory, according to which individuals have a tendency to persist in their behavior even when feedback is negative (we will return to this concept later in the paper).

Consequently, affective, normative and continuance forms of commitment, in the sense that there are “no other alternatives”, bind people to their intentions and reflect the intensity of their goal intentions, whereas continuance commitment taken as cost-avoidance could reflect the escalation of commitment in which individuals can be engaged.

In order to measure the level of each commitment component, Allen and Meyer (1990) develop three 8-item scales: the affective commitment scale (ACS), the continuance commitment scale (CCS), and the normative commitment scale (NCS). These scales are widely used in research works “and mostly confirm[] differences in the antecedents and/or outcomes of the component constructs” (Jaros, 1997).

### ***2.3.2. Commitment: a different concept from motivation***

In a recent article, Carsrud and Brännback (2011) propose to “rediscover entrepreneurial motivation” and argue that it is the link between entrepreneurial intention and behavior. They refer to Ryan and Deci (2000) and state that “motivation involves the energy, direction and persistence of activation”. Renko et al. (2012) also assert that motivation could determine why some nascent entrepreneurs actually create their own companies while others quit the process. Thus, if motivation supports the “persistence of activation”, it is close to the concept of commitment that binds an individual to his/her goal, as defined by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001). Scholl already addressed this question in his 1981 article “Differentiating organizational commitment from expectancy as a motivating force”. The following paragraphs outline why we choose, in this paper, to focus on commitment rather than motivation to bridge the entrepreneurial intention and behavior gap, starting with the question of what exactly is motivation.

Entrepreneurial motivations have been categorized as pull or push (Gilad and Levine, 1986). The pull factors are the ones that attract individuals to become entrepreneurs, whereas the push factors refer to negative external forces. For example, when Shane et al. (2003) describe need for achievement, vision, desire for independence, and passion as general motivations for entrepreneurship, they refer to pull factors. Entrepreneurial motivations can also be intrinsic and/or extrinsic (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011). They are intrinsic when nascent entrepreneurs find personal interests in entrepreneurship (for example lifestyle entrepreneurs), and/or extrinsic when they find external rewards by engaging in entrepreneurship, whether economic or social (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011).

The motivational process is mainly based on two theories: Adams' (1963) equity theory and Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory (Scholl, 1981). The equity theory refers to the balance between one's contributions and outcomes compared to what it could be in other organizations (Scholl, 1981). The expectancy theory defines the motivation force as the result of synergy between expectancy, instrumentality and valence; expectancy being the belief that one can reach his/her goal by doing what it takes, instrumentality the belief that actions will be rewarded and valence the value that the reward represents to the individual (Renko et al., 2012). Individuals choose behaviors that lead to the most desirable outcome (Segal et al., 2005). For Renko et al. (2012), in the entrepreneurship context, expectancy has the strongest relationship with intended actions.

However, sometimes people persist in their behaviors even when the expectancy/equity conditions are not satisfied. In this case, commitment "is a stabilizing force that acts to maintain behavioral direction when expectancy/equity conditions are not met and do not function" (Scholl, 1981). Therefore, as defined by several authors, commitment binds people to a behavior even if there are conflicting motives (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Motivation could be considered as a triggering factor, while commitment could take over when the conditions for the individual's motivations vanish. The entrepreneurial process takes place over time, and commitment seems to be more stable over time, making it more likely to help individuals stick to their intentions. This is why we choose to focus on commitment rather than motivation to bridge the gap between intention and behavior.

### ***2.3.3. Commitment and its role in the entrepreneurial process***

Outside the organizational context, the three-component model has been used to assess commitment in the public sector (Liou and Nyhan, 1994), and in entrepreneurship research, Sharma and Irving

(2005) have applied the components of commitment to family business. We propose to apply the concept of commitment to general entrepreneurship, using the three-component model of Meyer and Allen (1987). As goal-commitment driven intention helps individuals stick to their goal for difficult behaviors (Dholakia and Bagozzi, 2003) like entrepreneurship, the intensity of goal intention could have an impact on the entrepreneurial intention-behavior link. An intense goal intention would increase the likelihood of entrepreneurial behavior. As the intensity of goal intention can be assessed through the intensity of affective, normative and continuance commitment, the three components of commitment should be tested to predict the probability of an entrepreneurial intention resulting in entrepreneurial behavior.

In the organizational context, Meyer et al. (2002) demonstrate that commitment is a multidimensional concept and that each of its dimensions has different antecedents and consequences. Concerning the consequences of commitment, which are at stake in our paper, they show for example that affective and normative commitment are positively correlated to on-the-job behavior (attendance and performance), whereas continuance commitment is negatively or not correlated to this behavior. Other researchers have come to the same conclusion before (Hackett et al., 1994; Allen and Meyer, 1996). As Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) recommend, researchers should study the consequences of each component on behavior. We propose to adopt this approach in the entrepreneurship field and to think about different commitment profiles implying different levels for each of the three components, as suggested by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001). Carsrud and Brännback (2011) describe four phases in the entrepreneurial process: a pre-decisional phase when the desire to become an entrepreneur emerges; a pre-actional phase when the behavior is initiated and the nascent entrepreneurs look for opportunities and learn what it takes to become an entrepreneur; an actional phase when they start a firm; and a post-actional phase when they evaluate the outcomes. As the binding force of commitment is not equal for all commitment components (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001), in order to better understand the entrepreneurial process, we should determine if the commitment profiles of nascent entrepreneurs vary across these different phases of the process, why, and what the consequences are on the behavior. Is there a best association of commitment components that would increase the probability to become an entrepreneur?

In the organizational context, commitment correlates more strongly with behavior if it is an affective commitment, followed by a normative commitment and then a continuance commitment (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer et al., 2002). Koestner et al. (2002) reach the same conclusion when they

show that self-concordance is positively associated with goal progress, self-concordance being defined as “the extent to which a goal reflects personal interests and values versus something one feels compelled to do by external or internal pressures”. It is interesting to note that the goal process is facilitated when self-concordance is combined to implementation intentions (Koestner et al., 2002).

As normative and continuance commitments depend on extrinsic factors (obligation, no other alternatives), they may be less stable than affective commitment. The entrepreneurial process is complex and occurs over time, so commitment needs to be stable to increase the probability to become an entrepreneur. Thus, in the entrepreneurial context, normative and continuance commitments are less likely to be translated into entrepreneurial behavior. However, continuance commitment could explain why necessity entrepreneurs enact their intentions, and normative commitment why team entrepreneurship occurs. It seems therefore difficult to determine which commitment component is the most likely to prompt action in the entrepreneurship field. The three components can also interact, so it is also important to check their additive and interactive effects (Meyer et al., 2002). When the three mindsets interact, the correlation between commitment and behavior is expected to be the highest when affective commitment is high and normative and continuance commitments low (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Could this also apply to an entrepreneurial context?

In the sociopsychological literature, researchers who work on commitment also show that commitment can “escalate”. Does it also apply to entrepreneurship? The escalation of commitment is a concept defined by Staw (1976) as a process that may “occur in many decision contexts in which additional time, effort, and resources are committed to an unsatisfactory policy alternative”. Even if it only offers a partial explanation (Brockner, 1992), self-justification can explain why individuals persist in a failing course of action. When people feel responsible for their decisions, they increase their commitment to be consistent (Staw, 1976; Staw, 1981; Brockner, 1992). When the feedback is negative, they hope to “recoup the losses” and to have “future gains” (Staw, 1981). When they set up their own companies, nascent entrepreneurs feel responsible for all decisions and overconfident, so they are inclined to escalate their commitment (McCarthy et al., 1993). Acting is therefore likely to increase the bond between nascent entrepreneurs and their goal. To what extent the components of commitment influence the escalation of commitment for nascent entrepreneurs?

As mentioned previously, escalation of commitment seems to be closely related to continuance commitment in the sense of cost-avoidance. Thus commitment not only appears as a predictor of

behavior as goal intention, but also as a moderator of the goal intention-behavior relationships. Future research should determine whether some profiles increase the probability of nascent entrepreneurs to drop out, to pursue the process or to escalate their commitment.

***Proposition 2: Nascent entrepreneurs' commitment profiles impact their entrepreneurial behaviors.***

*Proposition 2a: There is a best combination of commitment components that would increase the probability of becoming an entrepreneur.*

*Proposition 2b: The combination of commitment components evolves over time during the entrepreneurial process.*

To test this proposition, we need to measure the three components of commitment. We propose to adapt Allen and Meyer's (1990) scales to entrepreneurship (see appendix 4) for further studies.

## **2.4. Contributions and implications**

This paper responds to the call for a better understanding on how to improve or modify the entrepreneurial intention models (Fayolle et al., 2014). As such, it contributes to the entrepreneurship literature.

Using a sociopsychological approach, our paper provides new insights to the entrepreneurial process. Several researchers have addressed the need to improve entrepreneurial intention models, but using a macro approach (Liñán and Chen, 2009; Liñán et al., 2011; Siu and Lo, 2011). Our main contribution is to take a micro approach and to focus on personal, sociopsychological variables. Relying more specifically on two concepts that have been tested in other contexts – implementation intention and commitment – we explain how they could be the missing links between intention and behavior in an entrepreneurial context.

Moreover, the paper discusses what the role of these concepts could be in the entrepreneurial process. We refute the fact that implementation intention, as an act of planning, acts as a mediator of the intention-behavior link (Schwarzer et al., 2010), and show it could be more of a moderator. The intention-behavior relationship does not depend on implementation intention but is only affected by it. Depending on its components, commitment is linked both to intention and action and so is presented both as a predictor and a moderator. Affective, normative and continuance commitment in the sense of no other alternatives reflects goal intention and thus predicts behaviors, whereas



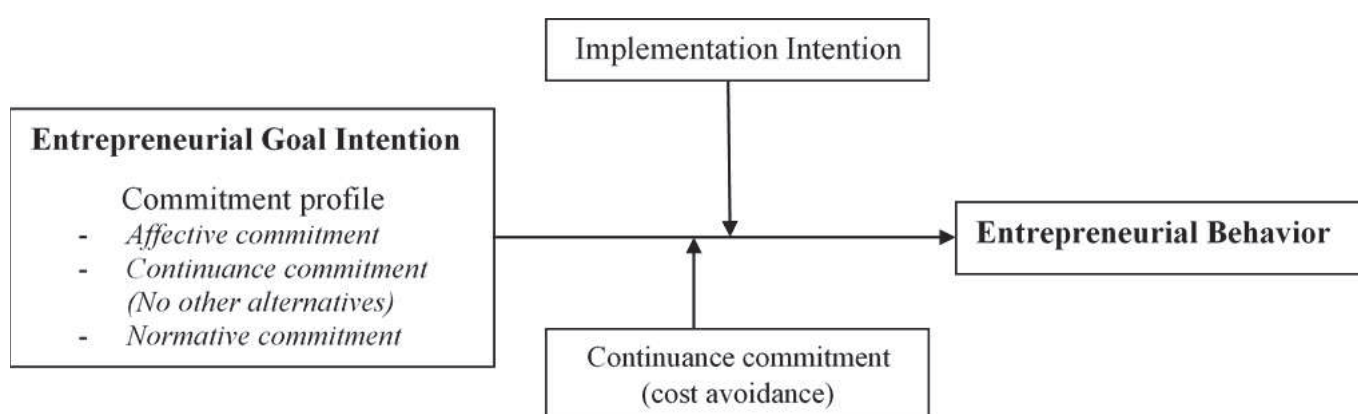
continuance commitment in the sense of cost avoidance relates to the escalation of commitment and moderates the intention-behavior link.

This paper also differentiates motivation and commitment, because even if they both bind individuals to their intended goals, they should be separated. Motivation force refers to expectancy, instrumentality and valence, encompassed by the affective component of commitment. When expectancy and valence are questioned, motivation is at stake, but it is commitment that helps stick to one's goals through its continuance and normative components. So this paper completes the work of Carsrud and Brännback (2011) who state that motivation is a link between entrepreneurial intention and behavior. It goes further using the concept of commitment.

Finally, the paper proposes to adapt Allen and Meyer's (1990) scales to the field of entrepreneurship. The original propositions, which were adapted to an organizational context, have been rewritten to be used with nascent entrepreneurs. We propose to use this adapted scale in further research to test the propositions concerning commitment.

The figure 6 summarizes the propositions presented in the paper concerning commitment and implementation intention.

**Figure 6:** A proposed model of the entrepreneurial process bridging the gap between intention and behavior.



This model should be tested in further research.

As it focuses on personal variables that could explain why entrepreneurs effectively act on their intentions while others do not, our paper also has practical and pedagogical implications. A better understanding of the psychological variables at stake could help implement better training and support programs for nascent entrepreneurs, and in the end increase creation rates. For example, incubators, mentors and educators can advise nascent entrepreneurs to use implementation intention. It could increase the likelihood of rapidly initiating behaviors and become entrepreneurs as it prompts automatic actions, helps to fight anxiety, and maintains behaviors throughout the process. Support provided to nascent entrepreneurs could also be tailored depending on their commitment profiles, based on the way components vary throughout the process and affect its progress.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

Since the 1980s, intention models have enhanced our understanding of the entrepreneurial process. However, they directly link entrepreneurial intention and behavior, whereas intentions only explain about 30% of the variance in behavior (Ajzen, 1987). These models do not explain why some would-be entrepreneurs quit the gestation process prematurely and never create their company. To bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intentions and behavior, this theoretical paper focuses on two factors of the sociopsychological literature that may explain why some entrepreneurs are more likely than others to act and create their own companies: commitment and implementation intention. The proposed model should be tested in future research.



## **Chapter 3: How to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior? The role of commitment**

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### **Abstract**

The objective of this paper is to bridge the often noticed gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior. It particularly focuses on the role of commitment in the entrepreneurial intention-behavior link, applying the commitment theory of Meyer and Allen (1987, 1991) found in the sociopsychological literature. Using a longitudinal qualitative approach, seven French volunteers with the intention to become entrepreneurs were followed during their entrepreneurial processes. The goal is to assess to what extent, and how commitment helps them to enact their intentions. In the end, it appears that commitment has a positive impact on entrepreneurial behavior when the approach is motivated by the inner self. On the other hand, when the project is motivated by external reasons, it seems to have no or even negative impacts on the entrepreneurial process. Moreover, it does not matter if the intended entrepreneur is emotionally attached to entrepreneurship as a career or to his project itself. Being committed to both entrepreneurship and the project does not increase the probability to create a company. Finally, having other alternatives, like being an employee, seems to increase the probability of success by releasing stress and financial pressure. Future research should test quantitatively these findings to check their generalizability.

**Keywords :** Entrepreneurial process; intention-behavior gap; commitment

### 3.1. Introduction

In order to predict entrepreneurial behaviors, researchers employ the intention models developed in the sociopsychological literature. The most implemented in the entrepreneurial context are the Entrepreneurial Event Model of Shapero and Sokol (1982) and the Theory of Planned Behavior of Ajzen (1991). In these models, intention is always directly linked to behavior. However, even if intention is considered to be “the most immediate and important predictor of a person’s behavior” (Sheeran, 2002), not all intended people finally act. Some drop out before achieving the entrepreneurial process. In a recent meta-analytic study, Schlaegel and Koenig (2014) show that the variance explained by entrepreneurial intention in actual behavior is only 37%. So even if the intention models highly contributed to understand the entrepreneurial process, there is still a missing link between the entrepreneurial intention and behavior. Today, “the most important research challenges on entrepreneurial intention are probably in this area” (Fayolle and Liñán, 2014). Increasing our understanding of the intention-behavior correlation could enhance the probability for intended people to enact their intentions. Thus it could expand the creation rate. Answers could be looked for in the sociopsychological literature, as “models and theories will continue to be incomplete until the psychological factors are incorporated and explored” (McCarthy, Schoorman & Cooper, 1993), and “a psychological approach is necessary to understand entrepreneurship” (Frese, 2009).

This empirical paper aims at bridging the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior, by answering to the following question: to what extent does commitment bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior? It focuses in particular on the role of commitment in the entrepreneurial intention-behavior relationship, following the works of Fayolle and Liñán (2014) and Adam and Fayolle (to be published). For Fayolle and Liñán (2014), “the individual commitment to a new venture creation process could be a determining variable in understanding the actual point in time when the setting in motion of the entrepreneurial process takes place”. They call for future research in the entrepreneurial field that would use commitment theories to describe and explain entrepreneurial commitment. In their theoretical paper, Adam and Fayolle (to be published) propose to use Meyer and Allen (1987, 1991)’s commitment dimensions and to evaluate how nascent entrepreneurs’ commitment profiles could impact their entrepreneurial behaviors. The current paper will effectively refer to Meyer and Allen (1987, 1991)’s commitment theory as a pattern for the

study. As entrepreneurship is not a one shot action but a sequence of activities, a dynamic and complex process that occurs over time (Gartner, 1988; Shane, Locke & Collins, 2003; Gartner, Carter & Reynolds, 2010), I adopted a qualitative longitudinal approach to better encompass and understand it. I studied seven individuals who intend to become entrepreneurs, throughout their creation processes. Following intended entrepreneurs who are not yet involved in the process appears to be the best option to understand to what extent commitment allows them to enact their intentions or not. Doing so, I bridge the gap noted by Kautonen, Van Gelderan & Tornikoski (2013), who state that “empirical research has not yet employed longitudinal data to examine whether the intention to start a business measured at one point of time translates into subsequent entrepreneurial behavior”. I am also in line with Gartner et al. (2010) who argue that “entrepreneurial behavior should be based, primarily, on studies that observe individuals in the process of organization creation” to avoid selection bias of successful entrepreneurs telling their stories.

### **3.2. Is entrepreneurial intention a good predictor of behavior?**

For decades, the sociopsychological literature has largely nourished the study of the entrepreneurial process with the intention models. In these models, intention is the most immediate step before behavior. Thus, in order to predict behavior, determinants of intention have been widely studied. Different authors developed their models. For example, in the Theory of Reasoned Action of Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975, behavioral intention is determined by attitudes toward behavior and by subjective norms. Later, the Theory of Planned Behavior of Ajzen (1985) adds as a third antecedent of intention the perceived behavioral control, which is closed to the concept of self-efficacy of Bandura (1977). Intention models were then applied to the entrepreneurship field. One of the most implemented theories is the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Also the Entrepreneurial Event Model of Shapero and Sokol (1982) describes perceptions of desirability and feasibility as the antecedents of entrepreneurial intention. In the end, both models provide comparable interpretations of entrepreneurial intention (Lee, Wong, Foo & Leung, 2011).

However, some intended people will fail to act. Sheeran (2002) calls them the “inclined abstainers”. They are mainly responsible for the lack of consistency between intention and action (Sheeran, 2002). This gap between intention and behavior has been underlined in the meta-analytic review of Armitage and Conner (2001), where they show that on average 27%

of the variance in behavior was explained by intentions. Kim and Hunter (1993) referred to previous studies and reported different factors that can explain why intention will not lead to behavior. They mention for example “facilitating conditions”, “unexpected events”, “resources” or “temporal stability”. They also argue that the intention-behavior correlation depends on the control exerted by intended people over behavior. In the entrepreneurial context, the “inclined abstainers” represent intended entrepreneurs who drop out during the creation process, before becoming entrepreneurs. Schlaegel and Koenig (2014) show in their meta-analytic study that 37% of the variance in entrepreneurial behavior is explained by entrepreneurial intention. So even if the intention models highly contributed to understand the entrepreneurial process, there is still a gap to bridge between the entrepreneurial intention and behavior.

Why do some people act on their intentions while others drop out? What is the missing link between entrepreneurial intention and behavior?

### **3.3. Can commitment bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior?**

Several researchers mentioned the role of commitment in the entrepreneurial process (Bruyat, 1993; Sharma and Irving, 2005; Fayolle and Liñán, 2014; Adam and Fayolle, to be published). In line with these works, I will study with a qualitative and longitudinal approach how commitment impacts this process and in particular the entrepreneurial intention and behavior link. But what is commitment? People are committed from the time they engage in “consistent lines of activities” (Becker, 1960). Generally speaking, commitment is “a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets” (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Bruyat (2001) mentions two conditions to trigger commitment in the entrepreneurial context: when the creation of organization is the best option compared to other alternatives, and when the resistances to change can be overcome. I will adopt in this paper another approach to shed a new light on the creation process and on the entrepreneurial intention-behavior link: the three-dimension model of commitment by Meyer and Allen (1987, 1991).

Meyer and Allen (1987, 1991)’s commitment theory was developed and then used in the organizational context. For them, organizational commitment is both a psychological state and

a behavioral persistence composed of three mind-sets or components: the affective commitment, which reflects a desire and an emotional attachment, the continuance commitment, which reflects a need, and the normative commitment which refers to an obligation (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The continuance commitment has rapidly been considered as bi-dimensional (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Dunham, Grube & Casteñada, 1994; Allen and Meyer, 1996; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002; Sharma and Irving, 2005). It is based both on cost-avoidance and on the perception that there is no alternative course of action. Even if the entrepreneurial intention-behavior link is not yet about an organization, but about a process of organization creation, the three components of commitment are relevant in the entrepreneurial context. People can be emotionally attached to their entrepreneurial project and so reflect an affective commitment to it. They can also be engaged in an entrepreneurial process because they need to, and then show a continuance commitment. These people represent what some call “necessity entrepreneurs”. Their needs to become entrepreneur can be explained either because they have no other choices (long-term unemployed, difficulty to find a job for example), or because they have already invested too much as a nascent entrepreneur to give up at this stage (escalation of commitment). Finally, the normative commitment is the feeling of an obligation to become an entrepreneur. In the entrepreneurial context, this feeling can be external with the pressure of relatives, for example in the case of some family businesses. It could also be internal when people feel they have a mission to pursue and that entrepreneurship would be their best option to achieve it. Thus, Meyer and Allen (1987, 1991)’s commitment theory is relevant in the entrepreneurial context and I will use it as a frame for this paper.

O’Reilly and Chatman (1986) call the three components (affective, continuance and normative) the bases of commitment, and defined them as “the motives engendering attachment” (Becker, 1992). The strength of each component constitutes the commitment profile of individuals (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). I will adopt this terminology in the rest of the paper to describe the strength of affective, continuance and normative commitment components of the interviewed nascent entrepreneurs. It was shown in non-entrepreneurial contexts that each component has different implications on behaviors (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002), and that they can exert their influences independently and/or interactively (Meyer and Allen, 1991). For example, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) argue that the probability for a behavior to occur is the highest when the affective commitment is high and the continuance and normative commitments are low. Other studies show that affective



commitment has the strongest positive effects on work behaviors, followed by normative commitment, but that continuance commitment has little or even negative impact on these behaviors (Irving, Coleman & Cooper, 1997).

How does the commitment profile of intended entrepreneurs influence their probability to become entrepreneur?

When the affective dimension of commitment is high, people are emotionally attached to their entrepreneurial projects. We could expect that it will increase the probability of enacting his intention.

***Proposition 1a: Having a high affective commitment impacts positively entrepreneurial behaviors.***

Nascent entrepreneurs could be rather attached to their projects themselves, for example because it indulges a passion. Or they can be attached to the wish of becoming entrepreneurs as a career, because it matches with their aspirations and values, or to both of them. One can expect that intended entrepreneurs have to be committed both to their projects and to the desire to become entrepreneurs to succeed.

***Proposition 1b: Intended entrepreneurs have to be committed both to their projects and to the desire to become entrepreneurs to succeed.***

When the continuance dimension of commitment is high, the individual needs to become entrepreneur. Either he has no other alternatives, or he has already invested too much in his project to give up. We could expect that this need will also increase the probability of becoming entrepreneur.

***Proposition 2a: Having a high continuance commitment because there is no other alternatives impacts positively entrepreneurial behavior.***

***Proposition 2b: Having a high continuance commitment because too much was already invested impacts positively entrepreneurial behavior.***

When the normative dimension of commitment is high, the individual feels obliged to become entrepreneur either because of external pressure, or to achieve a personal mission. So we

could expect that this feeling of obligation will increase the probability of acting on his intention.

***Proposition 3a: Having a high normative because of external pressure impacts positively entrepreneurial behavior.***

***Proposition 3b: Having a high normative because of internal pressure impacts positively entrepreneurial behavior.***

I will describe the general level of commitment of the seven individuals interviewed (highly committed or not), and detail their commitment profiles (the strength of each commitment component). The objective is to determine the impacts of these variables on behavior in an entrepreneurial context.

### **3.4. Method and data**

#### ***3.4.1. Method***

In order to minimize the retrospective biases, I opted for a longitudinal approach to study commitment throughout the entrepreneurial process. I followed seven French voluntary people wishing to engage in an entrepreneurial process. Only the opinions of the intended entrepreneurs were assessed, through surveys and semi-directed interviews. The survey aims at assessing the commitment profile of nascent entrepreneurs and their evolutions over the process. I used the revised version of commitment scales of Allen and Meyer (1990) proposed by Adam and Fayolle (2015) presented in appendix 4. Each commitment component was evaluated answering 5 questions of 7-point scales. It was an online survey, filled in by the nascent entrepreneurs before every interview. Every two to three months, right after the survey was completed, I conducted interviews with each nascent entrepreneur, face to face or by phone. Details about the individuals interviewed and about the interviews themselves (number, time, and duration) are presented in appendix 5. The objective of the interviews is to open the “black box”: to confirm their commitment profiles and eventually explain their evolutions, and to follow their courses. With the agreement of all individuals, the interviews were recorded and transcribed. They were semi-structured and each individual was free to describe what they were going through. However, I made sure to cover some topics, which

are presented in appendix 6. All interviews were accomplished between March 2014 and December 2014, and in total, 20 interviews were conducted.

### **3.4.2. Data**

I followed seven French people throughout their entrepreneurial processes. Six of the seven volunteers were met during introductory information sessions about entrepreneurship in governmental institutions, and one answered to a call on an alumni website. The individuals have different characteristics (demographic, academic and professional backgrounds, motivations) described in appendix 7. Four are women and three are men, and they all are between 26 and 50 years old. Their projects were very different in nature: giving yoga courses, working in the wine industry, expanding one company by changing its juridical status, creating a restaurant, developing tourism with old cars, helping people with food allergies, democratizing science. Five out of seven were willing to create a company outside their professional fields, where they have no previous experience and no network.

The interviews were coded using N'vivo8 data analysis software. I organized the verbatim by topics to bring out some aspects of the entrepreneurial process. These topics were: affective commitment – the project itself / affective commitment – to become entrepreneur / continuance commitment – no other alternative / continuance commitment – too much investment / normative commitment – internal pressure / normative commitment – external pressure / motivations / difficulties / institutional support / support from relatives. I first analyzed each situation as a “stand-alone entity”, before trying to do cross-analyses in order to look for eventual pattern.

## **3.5. Findings**

### **3.5.1. Level of commitment, commitment profiles and their evolutions**

Let's first remind that I call level of commitment the general intensity of commitment of an individual. As for the commitment profile, it details the strength of each commitment components of the individual (affective, continuance and normative), according to the terminology used by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001).

The answers to the on-line questionnaires and the verbatim during the interviews helped to define the levels of commitment and commitment profiles of each individual. To give an overview of the different nascent entrepreneurs, their commitment profiles at the beginning of their entrepreneurial processes are described in appendix 8.

All interviewed nascent entrepreneurs had high levels of commitment at the beginning of the process but different commitment profiles. They did not present the same status in December 2014 either. One had given up, four were still in the process of creating their companies and two succeeded and created it. When they relate what they were going through, they cited luck, lack of help, lack of time, finding of a client, legislation, lack of network, or need for training as justification for their status (both justifying either success, delay or retirement).

The levels of commitment and commitment profiles evolved very little over time. Only three kinds of significant evolutions were observed.

One concerns the level of commitment of individual 4. The general intensity of her commitment suddenly decreased. At the same time, she decided to give up her entrepreneurial project.

The two others significant evolutions observed concerned the commitment profiles. The first one consists in a change in continuance commitment. It concerns two people, individuals 3 and 6: the continuance commitment of individual 3 suddenly increased while the one of individual 6 suddenly dropped during the process. The second evolution observed concerning the commitment profile is a change in the subject of the affective commitment. It concerns individuals 2 and 4. Even if they both showed a high affective commitment throughout the process, the subject of their commitment changed. Although they were committed both to entrepreneurship as a career and to their projects at the beginning of the process, they declared to be more committed to their projects only later in the process.

These evolutions will be discussed in the discussion part.

### ***3.5.2. Affective commitment***

All intended entrepreneurs interviewed presented a high affective commitment throughout the process. This is particularly visible through their verbatim which reflect passion and attachment, and confirmed in the surveys.

Individual 1: *“When I teach, I discover another aspect of yoga, different from when I practice, and that is what thrills me”.*

Individual 2: *“It is an industry I am passionate about for years”. “I really love wine and I want to work in this sector for personal reasons, for personal fulfillment”.*

Individual 3: *“It is the project that matters to me, not the financial aspect”.*

Individual 4: *“If I have the choice, I’d like to create a company”.*

Individual 5: *“I’d like to climb one step and to do more projects”.*

Individual 6: *“I thought about using my skills in a more personal project which would be entrepreneurship”.*

Individual 7: *“I really want to work on my own, to organize myself, and to have fun”.*

However, even if they are all emotionally attached to their entrepreneurial projects, it is not necessarily for the same reasons. Some are attached to their projects themselves, some to entrepreneurship as a career, and some to both.

At the beginning of the process, individuals 1 and 5 are mainly attached to their projects themselves.

Individual 1: *“It is really the project that makes me want to become an entrepreneur”. “The idea of becoming an entrepreneur is not what drives me”.*

They are not driven by the wish to become entrepreneur: individual 1 is even skeptical about entrepreneurship because of her mother’s experience, and individual 5 is already an entrepreneur. It is their projects that matter to them, more than entrepreneurship. Although entrepreneurship was not what drove her, individual 1 finally became an entrepreneur.

As for individual 2, she is mainly committed to entrepreneurship at the beginning of the process. Her project also corresponds to a passion (the wine industry) but above all, she wants to escape from the employee world. She thinks entrepreneurship would please her.

Individual 2: *“I realize that the business system no longer suited me”. “I wanted to set goals for myself and to obtain the benefits of my own work”.*

However, as mentioned above, she showed more affective commitment to her project as the process goes by. As soon as she began to struggle (lack of network, lack of time), she changed

her priority. Today, she is still working on her project and entrepreneurship is her goal. But her main objective now is to work in the wine industry, even as an employee at the beginning.

Individual 2: *“Employment could be a step toward success”*.

Other individuals (3, 4, 6 and 7) are all affectively committed to both their projects and entrepreneurship as a career. On the one hand, their projects represent either a passion (cooking, old cars or sciences), or something they hold near and dear (helping others). On the other hand, they all want to become entrepreneurs because it suited their situations, personalities and aspirations.

Individual 3: *“I really want to develop sciences”*. *“I really want to be my own boss”*.

Individual 4: *“I’d like to develop my own business”*. *“I love to cook”*.

Individual 6: *“I want to take control on my own development”*. *“It thrills me because I am personally involved. (...) There is a personal dimension that I am not sure to find in other projects”*.

Individual 7: *“I think about being my own boss for some times”*. *“I would be less enthusiastic with another project”*.

By December 2014, although they were all committed both to their projects and to entrepreneurship as a career, only individual 3 became an entrepreneur. Individuals 6 and 7 are in a good path but they need more time. As for individual 4, her affective commitment does not trigger action and she had given up her entrepreneurial project.

### **3.5.3. Continuance commitment**

Only two individuals present a high continuance commitment at the beginning of their entrepreneurial processes: individuals 4 and 6. They feel the need to change their professional situations.

Individual 4: *“For now, I am a nanny, but it does not work as before”*.

Individual 6: *“I have no job perspective on the short-term”*. *“I feel my professional and personal development perspectives are limited”*.

They think they have no other alternatives than to pursue their projects as entrepreneurs, for different reasons. Individual 4 does not want to be an employee, and individual 6 has no revenue and no job perspectives.

Individual 4: *“I am no longer used to work with others. (...) I am bored of colleagues”*.

Individual 6: *“I am unemployed with no subsidies”*.

Individual 4 has given up her project. As she faced difficulties to move on and found no support, she finally considered other alternatives. Working as an employee was finally her best option.

Individual 4: *“I did not do anything. (...) I have no help, no support, and myself alone, I cannot do it. (...) Today, it is better if I work for someone, if I have a salary”*.

Individual 6 was still working on his project in December 2014. As described above, his continuance commitment dropped suddenly when he found a job in parallel to his project. From then on, he has stable revenues and no more felt becoming entrepreneur as a need. He was then only driven by his affective and normative commitments.

Individual 6: *“For the moment, I can work besides my project. And instead of being stressed, I can develop my project more peacefully because I have financial revenues from my job”*.

As mentioned before, the continuance commitment of individual 3 increased when he effectively creates his company. From then on, he felt no choice but to fulfill his contracts.

Individual 3: *“I need to honour my contracts”*.

Through the process, individual 7 began to think he is too close to his goal to give up. Thus, as time goes by, his high continuance commitment slightly increased, but not significantly.

Individual 7: *“Until now everyone is convinced by the project so it would be a shame to give up now”*.

#### 3.5.4. Normative commitment

Only individual 2 presents a low normative commitment. She never mentions any feeling of obligation toward her project. In December 2014, she is still in the creation process but she needs more time.

The other individuals all refer to normative commitment, in the surveys and in their verbatim. This feeling of obligation can take two different forms: it can come from external people or from inside.

Individual 4 does not mention any feeling of personal pressure. She does not consider her project as a mission for example. However, she felt some pressure from external people.

Individual 4: *“It is people from the neighborhood that gets it into my head”. “It is people from the neighborhood that tell me to develop a business”.*

In December 2014, she had given up her project.

The other ones feel obliged to pursue their projects for more personal reasons. It seems they feel like a mission or a call to pursue. For individuals 1, 3 and 6, the mission is oriented towards the others. They feel they must share what they know.

Individual 1: *“It is really linked to the idea of sharing what I know”.*

Individual 3: *“The project is to develop sciences in France, to try to help young people to understand and do sciences”.*

Individual 6: *“I hope my experience can have a positive impact on people. The idea is to use my experience to help others”.*

In December 2014, individuals 1 and 3 are entrepreneurs while individual 6 need more time. He is still in the creation process.

For individual 5, the mission is more like a personal call. It is a challenge she issues herself and she cannot resist to.



Individual 5: *“It makes me more ambitious, I want more”. “It is because I will exceed the permitted revenues but also because I want to exceed it”.*

In December 2014, individual 5 is still in the entrepreneurial process.

The feeling of obligation and of internal pressure of individual 7 is more linked to his professional situation. He is no longer thrilled with his job and feels it is a matter of well-being to change.

Individual 7: *“If I continue my work, I am afraid of being bored and of becoming embittered”.*

In December 2014, he is close to create his company.

### **3.6. Discussion**

Even if it is impossible to draw general conclusions from seven cases, the study contributes to the entrepreneurial field. It addresses the entrepreneurial-behavior gap already mentioned in the literature. In particular, it sheds light on the role of commitment in the entrepreneurial-behavior link. It also allows to discuss previous results found in the literature.

All intended entrepreneurs have different commitment profiles and their entrepreneurial status differ in December 2014. Is there a “best commitment profiles”? How did commitment impact their entrepreneurial behavior?

#### **Evolutions of levels of commitment and of commitment profiles**

Three significant evolutions of the levels of commitment and commitment profiles of the nascent entrepreneurs were mentioned in the findings. What can we learn from them?

First of all, the general intensity of commitment of individual 4 suddenly decreased. Her intensity of commitment mainly dropped because of lack of support from her relatives. She felt alone and lost in front of a mountain to climb. Finally, even if she presented a high commitment at the beginning of her project, she gave up. So the support and help is crucial to

enact one's intention to create a company, no matter one's motivations and commitment at the beginning of the process.

What about the change in continuance commitment of individuals 3 and 6? The continuance commitment of individual 3 suddenly increased when he launched his company. Indeed, as soon as he signs contracts with clients, individual 3 felt he cannot back off and he must follow on. It is in line with the definition of continuance commitment in the sense of no other alternative. Individual 3 committed himself to honor contracts and then had no other choice. On the other hand, the continuance commitment of individual 6 suddenly dropped when he found a full-time job in parallel to his project. He no longer felt financial pressure. It decreases significantly his continuance commitment and from then on, his commitment was only based on affective and normative components. So when carrying out one's entrepreneurial project is no longer a need, one feels a lot more serene to follow on.

As for the change in the subject of the affective commitment, it concerned individuals 2 and 4. Their subjects of their commitment changed. They suddenly declared to be more committed to their projects as a project than to their desires to become entrepreneurs once they faced difficulties in their entrepreneurial processes. Their priorities then were to indulge their passions, even if they have to do it as an employee. However, it does not mean that the project will never succeed. Becoming an employee first can be a launching pad toward entrepreneurship. Indeed, although individual 4 completely gave up her project, individual 2 is still working on it. She considers being an employee first as a possible option to create a network before working as an independent. So employment can be a first step before entrepreneurship and they should not be considered as antithetical.

### **Proposition 1**

All intended entrepreneurs presented a high affective commitment throughout their processes. However, in December 2014, one of them dropped out. So even if it is more difficult for people who are highly emotionally attached to their projects to give up, it is not a guarantee that the intention will be translated into action. Nevertheless, a high affective commitment can help to persevere over time when difficulties arise and the process is spread over time. Individuals 2, 6 and 7 illustrate this point. Their projects correspond to professional reconversions, which is a long process (need to train, need to network). However, their

affective attachment to their objective helps them to persevere over time. Even if it is not a guarantee of success, having a high affective commitment helps to maintain motivation. So it impacts positively entrepreneurial behaviors and proposition 1a is validated.

Does the subject of the emotional attachment matter? Do intended entrepreneurs have to be committed both to their projects and to the desire to become entrepreneurs to succeed? Individuals 1 and 4 allow to reject this proposition (proposition 1b). First, individual 1 was only committed to her project, and entrepreneurship was not a goal in itself. She was even skeptical about it. However, compared to other status, being an entrepreneur was the best option to carry out her project. In the end, she managed to create her company fast. Moreover individual 4, who was committed both to entrepreneurship and to her project, gave up. As mentioned already, she faced difficulties to change and had no support to overcome them. So an intended entrepreneur does not have to be emotionally committed to both his project and to the desire to become an entrepreneur to succeed. On the other hand, being committed both to a project and to the desire to become entrepreneur is not a guarantee of success. Besides, these observations allow to confirm the conditions mentioned by Bruyat (2001) to trigger commitment to entrepreneurial behavior. The case of individual 1 confirms that entrepreneurship has to represent the best option. And individual 4 confirms that the resistances to change must be overcome. It was not the case here, and the project ends. We can note that all intended entrepreneurs can face difficulties and resistances to change. Support and help from others, especially from relatives, appear to be a precious help at this time. Individual 4 had clearly no support and it played a huge role in her decrease in level of commitment and decision to give up.

### **Proposition 2**

One could think that the feeling of having no other alternatives than to become an entrepreneur increases the creation rate. When we have no choice but to succeed, it could help to end the process. However, individuals 4 and 6 allow to reject this proposition (proposition 2a). Individual 4 felt she had no choice but to become an entrepreneur. Her professional situation no longer suited her, and employment was not an option for her. Nevertheless, she did not create a company. In the end, she reconsidered employment as an option. So the feeling of having no other alternatives did not impact positively entrepreneurial behavior. Individual 6 also allows to reject proposition 2a, in another way. As he had no subsidiaries

and no professional perspectives on the short run when he began his entrepreneurial process, he considered entrepreneurship as his only way to make money. So his continuance commitment was high. Finally, he found a full-time job some months later and his continuance commitment suddenly decreased. His entrepreneurial project was no longer his only way to make money, he had another alternative. Surprisingly, it did not question the project. On the contrary, it had a positive impact on the process. As he felt no more financial pressure, he felt more serene. Even if the project is more spread in time because he had less time to dedicate to it, he did not give up or even lost motivation to carry it out. On the long run, he still considers entrepreneurship as his best option. His affective and normative commitments are still high and make him pursue.

The cases studied here do not allow to clearly validate or reject proposition 2b. No one of the intended entrepreneurs interviewed presented a high continuance commitment based on cost-avoidance. No conclusion can be drawn.

### **Proposition 3**

Only individual 4 felt an external pressure, from her neighborhood, to develop an entrepreneurial project. However, it has no positive impact on entrepreneurial behavior, and does not trigger action. Thus, proposition 3a is rejected.

Yet, the impact of internal pressure on entrepreneurial behavior seems more significant. Among other motivations, individuals 1 and 3 felt they have to share their knowledge. It could be seen like a mission or a call, and gives rise to a feeling of obligation. They both created their companies fast. However, the role of normative commitment needs to be nuanced here because the creations were also highly due to opportunities they encountered (finding a client, finding a building). For individual 6, the positive impact of the internal pressure is clearer. He is mainly motivated by the idea he could help others, and it helps him to persevere in the time consuming and long process he is engaged in. Also, individual 7 feels he must succeed in his project for his well-being so strongly that it helps him to pursue his project. So even if the company creations of individuals 1 and 3 cannot be necessarily linked to normative commitment, the other cases allow to validate proposition 3b: having a high normative commitment because of internal pressure seems to impact positively entrepreneurial behavior, because it helps to persevere.

## **General discussion**

It appears there is no “best commitment profile” that would increase the probability for intended entrepreneurs to succeed. However, in the end, commitment has a more positive impact when the approach is really personal, and motivated by the inner self. It is the affective and the internalized normative components that help the most to persevere in the entrepreneurial process, to maintain motivation over time and to face difficulties. With no notion of hierarchy, it is consistent with the conclusions of Irving et al. (1997), which affirm that affective commitment has the strongest positive effects on work behaviors, followed by normative commitment. Irving et al. (1997) also state that continuance commitment has little or even negative impact on these behaviors. Even if this study does not allow to draw conclusions concerning continuance commitment in the sense of cost-avoidance, it appears that continuance commitment in the sense of having no other alternative has in fact little or even negative impact on entrepreneurial behavior. It is again consistent with the work of Irving et al. (1997). However, the study does not confirm Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) who argue that the probability for a behavior to occur is the highest when affective commitment is high and continuance and normative commitments are low. Normative commitment can also impact entrepreneurial behavior positively.

The two conditions enunciated by Bruyat (2001) are not questioned here. All intended entrepreneurs who persevere in the process consider entrepreneurship to be their best option in the long term. Sometimes employment serves a launching pad but becoming entrepreneur has to be the best final situation to maintain motivation and commitment over time, and to face difficulties. Moreover, the intended entrepreneur has to be convinced that the resistances to change can be overcome to pursue the process. If it not the case, he/she will start looking for other alternatives, even the one previously ruled out. The support and help from others can play a crucial role in reassuring the intended entrepreneur (i.e. individual 4).

## **Implications**

This study aims at bridging the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior. It has theoretical and empirical implications.

As far as I am aware of, it is the first study that tests the role of commitment on the intention-behavior gap in the context of entrepreneurship. In an attempt to bridge the often noticed gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior, the paper applies the theory and results found in the sociopsychological literature about commitment components in the entrepreneurship field, to better understand the entrepreneurial process. In the end, this study highlights that commitment has a more positive impact when the approach is motivated by the inner self, so when the affective and the normative components (in the sense of internal obligation) are high. On the other hand, when the project is motivated by external reasons (no other alternative, pressure from others), it seems to have no or even negative impacts on the entrepreneurial process. If generalizable, these results would encourage nascent entrepreneurs with high continuance commitment to work on other alternatives to reduce their feeling of need to create a company. This way, they feel more serene to pursue their entrepreneurial processes. However, the alternative can be time consuming and can delay the project.

Moreover, coaches of nascent entrepreneurs can learn from their verbatim in order to better answer their needs during the entrepreneurial process and to increase their probabilities of success. By knowing their main difficulties and what can make them give up, they can also help to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior. Mainly, the major difficulties encountered were the lack of help and support by the relatives, the information overload, the lack and/or uselessness of personal coaching on the project (too general, repetition of what is already known), the fear of failure, the fear of the unknown, the financial pressure, the difficulty of financing, the lack of time, the administrative work, the lack of a mentor, the lack of network, the loneliness, discouragement. Moreover, when the entrepreneurial project corresponds to a professional reconversion, the process will be even more time consuming and demanding (need to train and to network). In this case, the nascent entrepreneur could need even more help and support.

### **Limitations**

This study presents some limitations. As the goal was to understand what happens between entrepreneurial intention and behavior, I chose an exploratory approach. However, we cannot draw general conclusions from seven cases. So even if they allow to make some observations and to discuss previous findings, the results are not generalizable. Further research should test the results quantitatively with a bigger sample.

Moreover, the seven cases studied fail to encompass some situations. For example, no one of the intended entrepreneurs interviewed presented a high continuance commitment based on cost-avoidance. So no conclusion can be drawn for proposition 2b. Moreover, there is no case of team entrepreneurship. However, the commitment profile of nascent team entrepreneurs could be interesting to study. Maybe the interaction between them influences behaviors. Further research could test this particular case.

Finally, the questions about normative commitment in the survey were more about internal obligation than external pressure. The pressure felt from external people were not assessed through this way. It was only assessed through the verbatim. Some questions assessing the impact of others opinions should be added.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

The objective of this paper was to increase our understanding of the entrepreneurial process, and in particular to bridge the gap between of the entrepreneurial intention and behavior. It particularly focuses on the role of commitment in the entrepreneurial intention-behavior link, applying the commitment theory of Meyer and Allen (1987, 1991) found in the sociopsychological literature. By adopting a longitudinal approach, seven French volunteers with the intention to become entrepreneurs were followed during their entrepreneurial processes. The goal was to assess to what extent, and how commitment helps them to enact their intentions. First, it appears that it does not matter if the intended entrepreneur is emotionally attached to entrepreneurship as a career and/or to his project itself. Being committed to both entrepreneurship and the project does not increase the probability to create a company. However, commitment has a positive impact on entrepreneurial behavior when the approach is motivated by the inner self, meaning when the affective and the normative components (in the sense of internal obligation) are high. On the other hand, when the project is motivated by external reasons (no other alternative, pressure from others), it seems to have no or even negative impacts on the entrepreneurial process. Having other alternatives, as an employee for example, seems to increase the probability of success by releasing the stress and financial pressure associated with continuance commitment. However, it can delay the project. These observations should be tested quantitatively to check their generalizability. The impact of continuance commitment in terms of cost-avoidance, which is not observed in this

study, should also be studied. Future research could focus on the role of commitment in cases of team entrepreneurship. The interaction between commitment profiles during the entrepreneurial process could be interested to study.

### 3.8.Addendum

In order to precise our work and follow-on discussion, we would like to add this addendum to chapter 2.

As the paper about commitment was written in December 2014, the conclusions we draw about this concept were the one observable then. Yet, not all the intended entrepreneurs we followed had finished their processes at that time. Thus, from then on, we have kept contact with them and we have continued our interviews. We think it is interesting to review our findings today, after 8 months, and to confirm (or infirm) them. Table 2 presents an overview of the volunteers' situations in December 2014, in August 2015 and their commitment profile in August 2015.

**Table 2:** Follow-up of the seven volunteers' entrepreneurial process

Individuals	Status in December 2014	Status in August 2015	Commitment profile in August 2015
Individual 1	Launched a business (2014/07)	Growing business	
Individual 2	Still in process (need time)	Still in process / employed	High affective commitment ( <b>project and entrepreneurship*</b> ) / Low continuance commitment / Low normative commitment
Individual 3	Launched a business (2014/09)	Growing business	
Individual 4	Gave up		
Individual 5	Still in process (close to)	? (stop giving news)	
Individual 6	Still in process (need time)	Still in process / employed	High affective commitment ( <b>entrepreneurship</b> ) / High continuance commitment ( <b>too much to lose</b> ) / High normative commitment (internal)
Individual 7	Still in process (close to)	In business from April 2015	

*\*In red the changes observed*

The individuals who had launched their companies before December 2014 (individual 1 and 3) are still in business and are successful. Individual 5 stopped giving news. Individual 7



finally created his company in April 2015 and is still active. Only individuals 2 and 6 are still in the creation process. Their commitment profiles have only changed a little since December 2014.

Concerning affective commitment, whereas individual 2 was only committed to her project at the beginning of the process, she is now committed both to her project and to entrepreneurship. As for individual 6, he was committed both to his project and to entrepreneurship first, but he appears to be only committed to entrepreneurship recently. As individuals 2 and 6 are still in their creation process, these observations confirm our finding that it is not necessary to be committed both to a project and to entrepreneurship to persevere in the entrepreneurial path.

Concerning continuance commitment, individual 6 also changed his profile. He no longer presents a high continuance commitment because he has no other alternative but because he now has too much to lose. Indeed, he has a job in parallel to his project so he does not feel pressure anymore. However, he spent a great deal of time on his project, and already involved many people in it, so he feels he cannot go back. This situation was not tested in our paper about commitment because no intended entrepreneur presented this characteristic in his commitment profile. In this particular case, it seems that having the feeling to have a lot to lose encourages to persevere. It recalls the theory of escalation of commitment developed mainly by Staw (1976).



## **Chapter 4: Can implementation intention help to bridge the intention-behaviour gap in the entrepreneurial process? An experimental approach**

*Anne-Flore Adam, Alain Fayolle*

### ***Abstract***

In order to understand what triggers action, researchers have studied intention and its determinants for decades. Specifically, entrepreneurship has been widely studied using the intention models. However, only few intended entrepreneurs enact their intentions in the end. As a proof, the variance explained by entrepreneurial intention in actual behaviour is estimated at 37% (Schlaegel and Koenig, 2014). So the entrepreneurial intention-behaviour link still has a lot to reveal, leaving a gap in the literature. This paper first reminds the difference between goal intention and implementation intention and posits that intention models actually refer to goal intention only. As it has been proven in different contexts that by automatizing individuals' responses to anticipated cues, implementation intention increases the probability to act, we propose to observe what could be the role of implementation intention in the entrepreneurial intention-behavior link. The originality and main contribution of this experimental study is that it is the first attempt to operationalize implementation intention on such a complex behavior. Even if the experiment enables us to make observations more than statistically valid findings, it paves the way for more empirical research on the subject, and it still allows to suggest what could be the benefit of using implementation intention in that field. It should now be tested on a larger scale to be statistically reliable.

***Keywords:*** entrepreneurial process; entrepreneurial intention; entrepreneurial behaviour; implementation intention; experiment

## 4.1. Introduction

Intention is considered in the socio-psychological models as ‘the most immediate and important predictor of a person’s behaviour’ (Sheeran, 2002, p.1). In order to understand what triggers action, researchers have thus studied intention and its determinants for decades. Some intention models aroused in the sociopsychological literature, like the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985). In the entrepreneurship area specifically, many researchers also worked on intention and on the factors influencing it (for instance Drennan et al, 2005; Liñán et al, 2011; Zampetakis, 2011; Urban, 2013), and entrepreneurship as a process has been widely studied using the intention models. The most used in this field are the Entrepreneurial Event (EE) model of Shapero and Sokol (1982), and the TPB of Ajzen (1991). However, even if intention models allow to predict behaviour quite well, not all intended people will finally act. As Dholakia and Bagozzi (2003, p.890) mention, ‘there is often a wide chasm between the formation of an intention and the performance of actions necessary for intention realization’. Entrepreneurship is no exception and researchers make the same observation than in other fields: not all intended entrepreneurs will enact their intentions. Different studies reached to the conclusion that generally speaking, intentions account for between 19% and 38% of the variance in behaviour (Sutton, 1998; Armitage and Conner, 2001; Sheeran, 2002). In entrepreneurship particularly, Schlaegel and Koenig (2014) conducted a meta-analysis composed of 98 studies and showed that the variance explained by entrepreneurial intention in actual behaviour is estimated at 37%. So the link between intention and behaviour is not systematic and the intention models do not ‘address the processes by which intentions are translated into action’ (Sheeran and Silverman, 2003, p.2154). The entrepreneurial intention-behaviour link still has a lot to reveal, leaving a gap in the literature. This paper aims at partly bridging this gap by proposing a factor that could impact the entrepreneurial intention-behaviour link. It thus contributes to the better understanding of the entrepreneurial process. The final objective would be to help to increase the probability of intended entrepreneurs to actually become ones.

Some authors like Dholakia and Bagozzi (2003, p.892) mention that ‘psychological processes pertaining to intention formation, maintenance, protection, and execution are all pertinent to whether it is eventually enacted’. In line with this statement, we choose to adopt a sociopsychological approach and to apply it to the entrepreneurship field. Verplanken and

Faes (1999) claim that other variables than intentions must relate to behavior, and this paper proposes that this variable is in fact a specific type of intention: implementation intention. The role of implementation intention has already been tested positively in different contexts like the health domain (see the studies mentioned by Parks-Stamm et al, 2007), but also for everyday activities (see the studies mentioned by Ajzen et al, 2009). This paper will propose a way to operationalize implementation intention in an entrepreneurial context, and to observe if this type of intention could increase the probability to act and the speed of action initiation. It answers the call of Fayolle and Liñán (2014, p.665), who state that ‘entrepreneurship researchers could apply implementation intention theory (Gollwitzer, 1999) in studying the link between intention and behavior’. It is also in line with the proposition of Adam and Fayolle (2015), who advance that implementation intention moderates the goal intention-behavior relationship. So our research question is: could implementation intention help to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behaviour? To our knowledge, it is the first time that this concept is empirically operationalized in the entrepreneurship field, which makes this paper original.

We will follow the same approach than previous researchers in the sociopsychological field to test the impact of implementation intention by conducting an experiment (see for examples the experiments of Aarts et al, 1999; Sheeran and Silverman, 2003; Webb and Sheeran, 2004; Achtziger et al, 2008). The experiment was adapted to the characteristics of entrepreneurship. As the sample we used is very small (18 individuals), we were only able to make observations more than to present statistically valid findings.

In the first part of the paper, we will explain what implementation intention is and how it can help to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behaviour. This theoretical part will lead to expose our propositions. We will then present our methodology and observations, before discussing them.

## **4.2. Theoretical background**

Gollwitzer particularly works on the differentiation between two kinds of intention: goal intention and implementation intention (Gollwitzer 1993, 1999; Gollwitzer and Brandstätter, 1997). Goal intention binds individuals to their goals and indexes a commitment to pursuing

them ('I intend to achieve X!'), while implementation intention refers to action ('I intend to initiate the goal-directed behaviour X when situation Y is encountered'). So in fact, acting on an intention has two phases. The intention models corresponds to a motivational phase, when people set a goal for themselves based on their attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. But performing a behaviour also involves a second phase called the volitional phase (Gollwitzer and Brandstätter, 1997) which refers to implementation intention, when people plan how they are going to enact their intentions. This second phase is not addressed in the intention models but is part of the process of performing a behaviour. So it appears that the term 'entrepreneurial intention' used in the intention models accounts specifically for 'goal intention'. Supplementing it with implementation intention could possibly increase our understanding of the entrepreneurial process.

#### ***4.2.1. What is implementation intention?***

Implementation intention links an anticipated situational context with a behavior, by specifying when, where and how the goal intention is to be achieved (Gollwitzer, 1993). As it determines a plan to execute a goal intention, it is subordinated to it and is formed conjointly or subsequently (Gollwitzer, 1993). Moreover, although it does not have to be specific to have an effect on behaviour (Ajzen et al, 2009), implementation intentions has to be based on strong goal intentions (Gollwitzer and Schaal, 1998). Goal intention specifies what one wants to achieve and implementation intention defines in advance when, where, and how to achieve it (Martijn et al, 2008). So, while goal intention is located at the level of strategy, implementation intention operates at the level of planning (Gollwitzer and Schaal, 1998). Doing so, it increases the probability for goal intention to be transformed into actions (Gollwitzer, 1993). The difference between the two types of intention is clearly understandable thanks to the Model of Action Phase (MAP) of Heckhausen and Gollwitzer (1987). In this model, the authors explain that the course of wish fulfillment consists of four action phases (in chronological order: predecisional, preactional, actional, and postactional), whereby each phase is associated with a typical task (i.e., setting preferences between concurring wishes and desires, promoting the initiation of goal-directed actions, bringing goal-directed actions to a successful ending, and evaluating what has been achieved as compared to what was desired, respectively). The transitions between the phases correspond to crucial points in the realization of an action process. The goal intention is formed between the predecisional and the preactional phases, and results in a feeling of commitment to the

goal. Goal intention commits one's individual to his objective and exclude other competing goals (Dholakia and Bagozzi, 2003). As explained by Gollwitzer and Brandstätter (1997), the next crucial point corresponds to the transition between the preactional and actional phases and implies the initiation of actions. Acting on one's intention is quite easy when the action to perform is a routine. However, it is not often the case and different reasons can stop or delay the intention realization process (Gollwitzer and Brandstätter, 1997). Indeed, 'forming a goal intention does not guarantee goal realization', especially when one or more of the four following elements are not defined: the action, target, time and context (Rutter et al, 2006, p.128). Unforeseen barriers may also arouse (Martijn et al, 2008). This is when forming an implementation intention comes into play. It can be a powerful self-regulatory strategy that helps to enact one's goal intention (Gollwitzer, 1993). But what is the underlying process that help intended people to enact their intentions?

#### ***4.2.2. How implementation intention can help intended entrepreneurs to actually become entrepreneurs?***

The effectiveness of forming implementation intentions on behaviour has been repeatedly proved. A meta-analysis of 94 studies shows that it actually affects goal-directed behaviour (Gollwitzer and Sheeran, 2006). Many studies tested it in various contexts: for example to eat healthy (Verplanken and Faes, 1999), to control anxiety (Schweiger Gallo and Gollwitzer, 2007), to perform physical activities (Prestwich et al, 2003), to do breast self-examination (Orbeil et al, 1997), or to interrupt mundane behaviours (Aarts et al, 1999).

But how does it work?

Two processes corresponding to the determination of where, when and how to act will facilitate the translation of goal intentions into actions: the if-then processes (Gollwitzer, 1999). The if-component increases the detection of an anticipated situational cue, while the then-component triggers the response to this cue (Parks-Stamm et al, 2007). So, an individual forming an implementation intention will state: " 'If' the situation X arises, 'then' I will do Y". He is then 'perceptually ready to encounter the cue and (...) can respond accordingly once the cue has been identified' (Webb and Sheeran, 2007, p.300). The cue accessibility thus increases and the cue-response link is strong: when the identified situational cue arises, it is easily recognized and will catch one's attention even if his attention is focused on something different than his goal. Thanks to the formation of implementation intention, a defined

situational context becomes a stimuli that triggers the intended behaviour. In sum, by forming an implementation intention, an individual will quickly and easily identify a specific cue and will respond to it immediately, efficiently and automatically (Webb and Sheeran, 2007). The automaticity comes from the fact that the control of action passes from the self to the environment (Gollwitzer, 1993). Thus, there is no more need for conscious and effortful control (Webb and Sheeran, 2004). The goal-behaviour is enacted with little cognitive resources (Parks-Stamm et al, 2007). This is why implementation intention has often been compared to habits (Gollwitzer, 1993; Gollwitzer and Brandstätter, 1997; Gollwitzer and Schaal, 1998; Verplanken and Faes, 1999; Brandstätter et al, 2001). They both pass the control of action to the environment and involve an automatic cue-behaviour link (Verplanken and Faes, 1999). The difference between them comes from the fact that ‘implementation intentions are formed by deliberate planning, whereas habits form through (satisfactory) repetition of behaviour’ (Verplanken and Faes, 1999, p.594). In the end, by creating a direct and automatic link between cue detection and behaviour, forming implementation intention increases the probability for an intended individual to act.

Moreover, as implementation intention helps to identify quickly and easily an anticipated cue and to respond to it automatically and immediately, it could increase the speed of action initiation. It is the automaticity, and the fact that there is no more need for conscious and effortful control on action that could justify it. Actually, Orbell and Sheeran (2000, p.794) already demonstrate that ‘implementation intentions also influence the speed with which action is initiated’.

But is forming implementation intention still relevant for more complex goals, like becoming entrepreneur? Would it be efficient in the entrepreneurial context?

Until now, implementation intention has mainly been studied when it is directed toward a single and simple goal (‘I intend to do X in situation Y’). However some goals are more complex and require to form implementation intention as ‘To achieve X, I intend to do W in situation Y’ (Sheeran, 2002; Rutter et al, 2006). Becoming entrepreneur is one example of this complex behaviour. It is crucial in these cases to specify the right behaviour W that will help to achieve the goal X (Sheeran, 2002; Rutter et al, 2006). Sheeran and Orbell (2000) successfully test implementation intention in the case of a complex behaviour (to make an appointment to attend for cervical cancer screening). There is a call for more research to test the utility of forming implementation intention to achieve complex goals (Sheeran, 2002). As entrepreneurship does not correspond to a single action but to a series of actions (do a market



research, find partners, get financed...), deciding to become entrepreneur is a complex goal. In line with this call, we will test the impact of forming implementation intention on entrepreneurial behaviour. Based on the previous results found in different contexts, we propose to test specifically the following assertions:

***Proposition 1: Forming implementation intention increases the probability for intended entrepreneurs to actually become entrepreneurs.***

***Proposition 2: Forming implementation intention increases the speed at which intended entrepreneurs actually become entrepreneurs.***

### **4.3. Methodology**

In line with previous works on implementation intention held in the sociopsychological field, we chose to conduct an experiment to test the effect of implementation intention in the entrepreneurship field. It consists of a role play around a restaurant opening. The great issue but also originality of this experiment is to operationalize implementation intention in entrepreneurship, a complex behaviour. Previous studies only focused on single behaviour (writing an essay, attending a breast exam, collecting coupons). Here the behaviour observed (the creation of a company) implies many tasks like conducting a market study, writing a business plan, getting financed, fulfilling administrative requirements. The entrepreneurial process is also ridden with pitfalls, and intended entrepreneurs face stress, difficulties and change in motivation throughout their projects. Thus, to be relevant, the experiment was adapted to the specificities of entrepreneurship and took them into account.

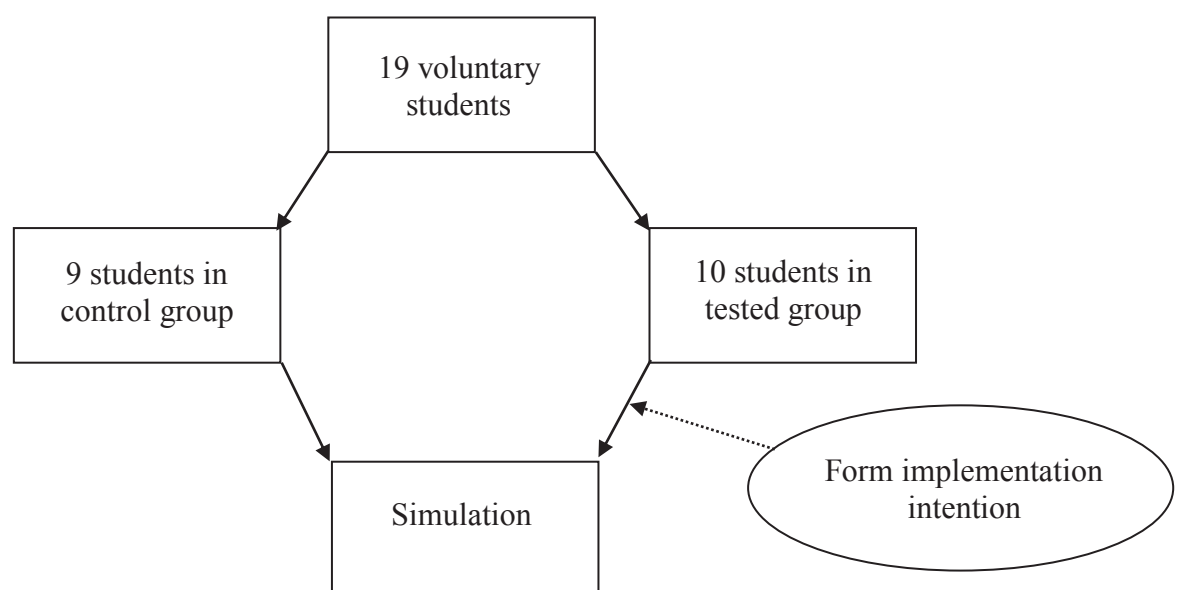
#### ***4.3.1. Participants and general design of the experiment***

383 undergraduate students of the French section of the Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) were solicited by email or in class in February 2015 to participate to an experiment. Hospitality students are legitimate to test the impact of implementation intention in the entrepreneurship field as hospitality has been proved to be a fertile industry for entrepreneurship (Li, 2008). The recruitment was based on a voluntary basis, and anonymity was ensured.

Students were told that they could participate to a simulation about company creation to achieve scientific goal. The real objective of the experiment was not disclosed. As goal intentions is a prerequisite to form implementation intention (Gollwitzer and Schaal, 1998), the simulation was presented as a role play where students will be in the skin of an entrepreneur who wants to create a restaurant. This way, only students who show interest for entrepreneurship answered the call. To double check, we then measured the volunteers' antecedents of goal intention to become entrepreneur. We assumed that if they have entrepreneurship goal intention's antecedents, it is probable that they could actually intend to become entrepreneurs. The details of this measurement are presented in appendix 9, and the results in appendix 10. In the end, only one volunteer (#14 in appendix 10) does not presented goal intention's antecedents to become entrepreneur. To be sure that the prerequisite of goal intention was validated, we will exclude him from the findings' analysis.

No kind of reward has been promised for the participants. This way, students' motivation and well-meaning participation to the study were guaranteed. However, it was harder to convince a great number of students. In the end, 19 students answered the call. Two groups of equivalent size were formed: a control group composed of 9 students versus a tested group composed of 10 students. Students were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions. The tested group will be ask to form implementation intention before completing the role play, while the control group will directly begin the entrepreneurial simulation. The general design is represented in figure 7.

**Figure 7:** Design of the experiment



Let's now go further into details about the experiment's procedure.

### ***4.3.2. Procedure and planning manipulation***

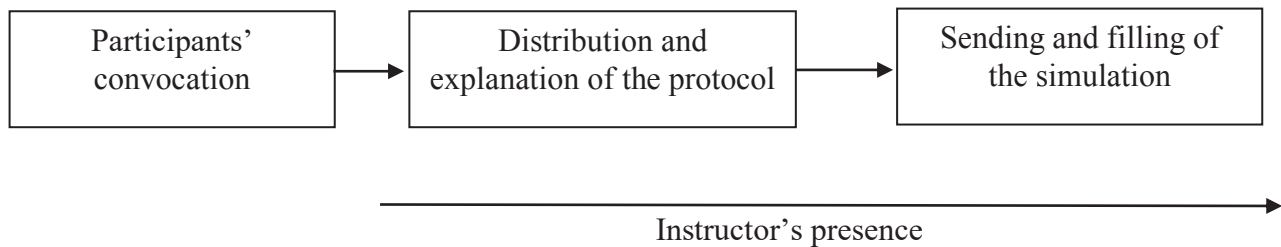
Participants have to get under the skin of an entrepreneur who wants to set up a restaurant. To do so, the experiment consisted in completing an Excel simulation. The simulation is fully automatized, that is to say that the instructions given to participants were immediately adapted to their own answers. The Excel file is based on a causal approach of entrepreneurship, and it is built to represent the entrepreneurial behavior as best as possible. First, as entrepreneurship is a stressful process, participants only have 45 minutes in total to become acquainted with the protocol and to complete the simulation. This time limit places them under pressure and thus makes the experiment more real. Then, as it is a complex behaviour implying the validation of multiple actions, participants have to choose in the right chronological order the different steps to achieve in order to complete the entrepreneurial process. They have 25 steps to order in total. Moreover, they have to take small tests throughout the process to validate their skills. They have the possibility to get help if needed. Furthermore, all students own a reserve of energy at the beginning of the simulation, materialized by an amount of vitamins (150). This reserve fluctuates to represent the change of motivation an intended entrepreneur may experience during the creation process: it decreases when students go back and forth in the process, or when they struggle (when they get help to answer the tests or when they make mistakes answering the tests). And it increases when they validate some actions. When participants lose all their vitamins, they are asked to give up. Besides, all participants also have the option to give up the simulation at any time. Finally, the starting and finishing times have to be specified in the simulation, so as we can then test the impact of implementation intention on the speed of action initiation. When finish, students are asked to save their files and to send it by email to the instructor.

A simplified matrix of the Excel simulation is presented in appendix 11 for more details.

Students were convoked to the experiment by email. Different sessions were organized in March 2015 according to participants' schedules. To ensure the same conditions of participation, an instructor was present during all the simulations, either physically or via Skype (when volunteers could not be present physically). All sessions followed the same plan. The experiment protocol was distributed and explained by the instructor. After making sure that all student understood the role play, the Excel simulation was e-mailed to them. The protocols and the Excel file provided all the instructions to achieve the simulation. Both documents were tested on four different external people before the simulation to solve any

potential problems. However, the instructor remained available until the end of the experiment to be sure no problem arose. The development of the simulation is represented in figure 8.

**Figure 8:** Simulation's development



The first part of the protocol and the simulation were common to both groups. The tested group's protocol contained an additional part where participants were asked to implement their intentions. To do so, they were first encouraged to plan the different steps that they will have to validate before achieving the entrepreneurial behaviour. They were also asked to anticipate potential lack of skills by pointed out the steps where they would need help. So in our experiment, implementation intention was induced by external people. This approach was valid as it has been proven that implementation intention does not have to be necessarily self-set to be effective (Gollwitzer and Brandstätter, 1997).

#### 4.4. Findings

As mentioned already, the limited size of our sample only allows us to present observations more than statistically valid findings. Moreover, as one volunteer of the tested group (#14 in appendix 10) did not present goal intention's antecedents to become entrepreneur, we excluded him from our calculations in order to be sure that the prerequisite of goal intention was validated.

Let's first remind that people in the tested group were asked to think about the chronology of actions before beginning the simulation. They planned the order in which they will complete the proposed actions. They were also asked to anticipate when they could face difficulties and thus ask for help.

All the observations are summed up in appendix 12.

Generally speaking, we can observe that people in the tested group tended to perform better than people in the control group: they go further in the entrepreneurial process. They completed more actions (table 3).

**Table 3:** Performance of participants by groups during the simulation

	<b># of actions completed on average (out of 25)</b>	<b># of individuals who completed up to 12 actions</b>	<b># of individuals who completed more than 13 actions</b>
Tested group	15,22	4	5
Control group	10	6	3

Moreover, more individuals from the tested group completed the whole process and finally virtually created their restaurants. Whereas only 1 individual out of 9 from the control group finished the process, 3 people out of 9 in the tested group did.

No one voluntarily gave up during the process. The only reason people did was because they lost all their vitamins' reserves. All participants did not lose their vitamins for the same reasons (table 4).

**Table 4:** Why participants lost their vitamins? Explanation by group

		<b>Proportion of vitamin loss in the control group due to :</b>	<b>Proportion of vitamin loss in the tested group due to :</b>
<b>Up to 12 actions completed</b>	Mistakes in the process order	57%	45%
	Training: difficulties' anticipation	14%	16%
	Lack of skills: mistakes in tests	32%	42%
	Vitamin's gain	-3%	-3%
<b>More than 13 actions completed</b>	Mistakes in the process order	19%	30%*
	Training: difficulties' anticipation	11%	22%*
	Lack of skills: mistakes in tests	84%	62%*
	Vitamin's gain	-14%	-14%
<b>All participants</b>	Mistakes in the process order	46%	36%**
	Training: difficulties' anticipation	13%	20%**
	Lack of skills: mistakes in tests	48%	54%**
	Vitamin's gain	-7%	-10%

\* Without volunteer #14:

*Mistakes in the process order: 20%, Training: difficulties' anticipation: 24% and Lack of skills: mistakes in tests: 51%*

\*\*Without volunteer #14:

*Mistakes in the process order: 33%, Training: difficulties' anticipation: 18% and Lack of skills: mistakes in tests: 47%*

We observe that generally speaking, people in the tested group made less mistakes in the process order (33% of vitamin loss versus 46% in the control group). They also invested more in training to anticipate difficulties (18% of vitamin loss versus 13% in the control group). It seems they were less in a rush. However, it cannot be said that they succeeded more during the tests (47% of vitamin loss versus 48% in the control group). But if we look further, the latter observation is not true for people who completed more than half of the process (more than 13 actions). Participants in the tested group who went further in the process invested twice as much in training than people in the control group. As a result, they did less mistakes

in the tests, even if it still represent the main cause of failure. They anticipated more the difficulties than the control group. So it seems than forming implementation intention helped the participants in the tested group not to rush in the process and so to perform better.

We can note that in both groups, participants made less mistakes in the process order as long as they progressed in the process. In the control group, these mistakes represent 57% of vitamin loss for people who completed up to 12 choices versus 19% of vitamin loss for people who completed more than 13 choices (and respectively 45% of vitamin loss versus 20% in the tested group). This can be explain because the choice between actions decreased progressively.

It is also worth noting that people who finished the process in the tested group did it more rapidly than the one in the control group (between 15 and 21 minutes in the tested group versus 24 minutes in the control group).

## **4.5. Discussion and conclusion**

### ***4.5.1. Contribution***

This study contributes to apply the concept of implementation intention in a little known context: to test the execution of complex behaviours. Doing so, it answers Sheeran's call (2002) for more research to test the utility of forming implementation intention to achieve complex goals. Indeed, although Sheeran and Orbell (2000) successfully test implementation intention in the case of a complex behaviour, the great majority of research about implementation intention concerns simple behaviour (see for example Verplanken and Faes, 1999, Prestwich et al, 2003, Aarts et al, 1999). The automatized Excel file created for the study allows different paths simulation. Thus it represents a new way to test implementation intention when different actions must be perform before achieving a final goal.

In sum, the main contribution of this paper is that, to our knowledge, it is the first time that researchers attempt to operationalize implementation intention in the context of entrepreneurship. Even if the experiment enables us to make observations more than statistically valid findings, it paves the way for more empirical research on the subject. Moreover, it still allows to suggest what could be the benefit of using implementation intention in that field.

### **4.5.2. Discussion**

Our observations tend to support the idea that forming implementation could impact the entrepreneurial intention-behaviour link. Even if it cannot be firmly affirmed since they are based on a small set of participants, yet they reflect a trend worth considering.

Participants in the tested group were asked to form implementation intention. We observed that they went further in the entrepreneurial process than the ones who did not. So, as they performed better than the ones in the control group, implementation intention could be a factor that helps to enact entrepreneurial intention. Thus, our observations provide support for proposition 1.

The implementation intention formed was not specific as participants only chronologically ordered the actions to achieve. But it seems that identifying beforehand the sequence of actions to complete helped the volunteers to perform better than the one who directly engaged in the entrepreneurial process. So the if-then processes explained by Gollwitzer (1999) could apparently be applied to help intended entrepreneurs to implement their projects, and the plan does not have to be very specific to have an effect on behaviour (as already shown in another context by Ajzen et al, 2009). Moreover, participants in the tested group were asked to anticipate difficulties. They had to identify when they would need help because they lack skills. In the end, they trained more than the participants who were not ask to anticipate when they would lack skills. So when participants detect an anticipated situational cue ('I lack skills on this subject'), the cue-response link is stronger ('I receive help'). This supports what was already stated in the literature (Webb and Sheeran, 2007; Parks-Stamm et al, 2007).

Individuals who completed the whole process until the creation of their companies did it faster when they planned their actions and anticipated difficulties. This gives support for Orbell and Sheeran (2000, p.794) statement that 'implementation intentions also influence the speed with which action is initiated'. So, proposition 2 is also supported.

### **4.5.3. Limitation**

Again the study is exploratory and these findings only represent observations. They are not statistically valid. However, they have the merit of paving the way for empirical research



about implementation intention in the entrepreneurship field. It shows trends, and it would be worth to test them on a larger scale.

#### ***4.5.4. Research perspectives***

This exploratory study should be the starting point for further investigation.

First of all, the trends observed should be tested on a larger scale to test their generalizability.

The simulation has to be reproduced with more students. In order to increase the participation rate, rewards should maybe be proposed for the volunteers.

Moreover, this study did not question the need for implementation intention to be based on strong goal intentions to have impact, as stated by Gollwitzer and Schaal (1998). To test this aspect, it should be reproduce with enough participants to form 4 groups: a tested group with no goal intention, a tested group with goal intention, a control group with no goal intention and a control group with goal intention.

Last, the present experiment only tests imposed implementation intention. Participants in the tested group did not choose to plan their actions and to anticipate difficulties. They were asked to. However, there is a call in the literature for research on impacts of spontaneous implementation intention as ‘the effects of implementation intentions on behaviour should reach a maximal level when a person chooses when, where, and how to execute behaviour because there is the implicit requirement of choice’ (Brickell et al, 2006, p.252). So further research could reproduce this experiment following this objective. To do so, we could ask participants in the control group how they proceed in order to determine if some of them planned their actions before to complete the simulation. It would allow to compare ‘spontaneous implementation intention’ and ‘imposed implementation intention’.

#### ***4.5.5. Conclusion***

This study is original in the way that it operationalizes implementation intention in the context of entrepreneurship, a complex behaviour. The tool built allows to simulate different paths until the final goal (the company creation) is achieved.

Even if the population tested is too small to draw general and statistically valid conclusions, people who plan their actions and anticipate difficulties in our exploratory experiment perform better in the entrepreneurial process than others. Thus our observations allows us to carefully support the fact that implementation intention could impact the entrepreneurial intention-behavior link, and could help intended entrepreneurs to actually create their companies. Yet, further research are needed to confirm this observed trend.



## **Chapter 5 : L'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil**

*Anne-Flore Adam, Christine Demen Meier*

*L'industrie de l'accueil est définie comme un échange humain volontaire, contemporain et mutuellement bénéfique, et qui fournit un hébergement, de la nourriture et des boissons.*

*Brotherton, 1999*

## **Chapter 5, preamble: English summary**

The hospitality industry is defined by Brotherhood (1999) as the sum of hotels and restaurants. As the SMEs represent the great majority of this sector (Lee-Ross and Lashley, 2008), it is a fertile ground for entrepreneurship (as confirmed by Li, 2008). Considering the economic impacts at stake, entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry deserves attention.

The paper presents a cross-disciplinary review of literature established in 2012, focusing both on entrepreneurship and on the hospitality industry. The main objective is to analyze the chronological evolution of entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry as a research field, and to deduce its main and emerging domains of interest in terms of geographic zones, topics and sectors.

The first articles about entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry were published in the 1970s, but the great majority of publications have been released from 2000. They can mainly be found in tourism and hospitality journals, whereas the entrepreneurship journals seem to show an increasing interest about this topic from the 2000s.

From the 70's, the major fields of research are Europe, the United States, the Asia Pacific sector and international studies. However, trends are not linear and if researchers focused their studies on the USA before 2000, they diversified their fields of study over the years in favor of new geographic zones. Despite this, Africa and Latin America are being left out and constitute promising opportunities for future research.

The focus of articles evolved through time but the main topic of interests from the 70's remains the franchises. Entrepreneurs themselves also represent a stable topic of interest over years. The actual domains of interest seem to be performance (success and failure), family business, and destinations (impact studies, new destinations). But some topics, although strategic, are still understudied (education and research, network, and antecedents of entrepreneurship) and deserve specific attention in future.

From the 70s, there are less and less articles concerning the hospitality industry as a whole (restaurants and hotels), to the benefit of specialized papers about either restaurants, either hotels. Thus, it seems that sectors' specificities have been recognized. From the 1970s, the food and beverage sector (F&B) is the most explored, to the detriment of the hotels industry. In parallel, tourism in general has also appeared as a specific subject of study, with new problematics (ecotourism for example).

## 5.1.Introduction

De nos jours, il existe un manque de consensus sur la définition de l'industrie de l'accueil (Lee-Ross et Lashley, 2008). Commençons donc par en préciser les contours. Nous retiendrons la définition donnée par Brotherton (1999) pour qui l'industrie de l'accueil est la somme des secteurs de l'hôtellerie et de la restauration. L'entrepreneuriat dans cette industrie mérite attention. En effet, le secteur de l'accueil constitue un terrain fertile pour la création d'entreprises (Li, 2008). Malgré la présence de grands groupes dans l'hôtellerie-restauration, les petites et moyennes entreprises ont toujours constitués le cœur de cette industrie (Lee-Ross et Lashley, 2008). Les enjeux économiques sont donc de taille. Pourtant, selon une revue de littérature effectuée par Li en 2008 et portant sur les journaux du tourisme et de l'industrie de l'accueil entre 1996 et 2006, seulement 2% des publications concernaient l'entrepreneuriat. La recherche en entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil est donc existante mais reste peu développée. Où en est la recherche aujourd'hui ??? Que connaît-on et que nous reste-t-il à découvrir ? Pour notre étude, nous avons restreint l'entrepreneuriat à la définition suivante : la création d'une nouvelle organisation.

Ce chapitre est organisé autour de trois parties. Tout d'abord nous présenterons un historique de la recherche sur l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil. Puis nous établirons un état des lieux des connaissances à ce jour en termes de thématiques abordées, de zones géographiques et de secteurs d'activité. Nous terminerons en faisant un zoom sur une pratique entrepreneuriale dont l'ampleur est spécifique à l'industrie de l'accueil : la franchise. Ce chapitre se base sur une revue de littérature que nous avons établie en 2012. Les résultats présentés sont le fruit de cet état de l'art effectué à partir des articles publiés dans des journaux de référence de l'entrepreneuriat et de l'industrie de l'accueil, ainsi que du tourisme<sup>9</sup>. 88 articles ont formé la base de nos analyses.

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<sup>9</sup> Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, International Journal of Hospitality Management, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Annals of Tourism Research, Tourism Management et Journal of Travel Research pour les journaux sur l'industrie de l'accueil ; et Journal of Business Venturing, Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice, International Small Business Journal, Journal of Small Business Management, Small Business Economics, Strategic entrepreneurship journal et Family business review pour les journaux sur l'entrepreneuriat

## 5.2. Historique de la recherche en entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil

### 5.2.1 Depuis combien de temps la recherche s'intéresse-t-elle à l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil ?

Jusque dans les années 2000, la recherche dans ce secteur a connu une ascension progressive. Il semble que cette progression s'accélère depuis 2010.

**Tableau 5:** Nombre d'articles publiés sur l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil dans les journaux de référence du tourisme, de l'industrie de l'accueil et de l'entrepreneuriat à travers le temps.

	Années	Nombre d'articles par an
Les années 70	1971	2
	1972	1
	1977	1
<i>Nombre moyen d'articles publiés sur 10 ans</i>	<i>1970-79</i>	<i>0,4</i>
Les années 80	1981	1
	1983	1
	1988	1
	1989	3
<i>Nombre moyen d'articles publiés sur 10 ans</i>	<i>1980-89</i>	<i>0,6</i>
Les années 90	1994	2
	1995	2
	1996	3
	1997	2
	1998	3
	1999	8
<i>Nombre moyen d'articles publiés sur 10 ans</i>	<i>1990-99</i>	<i>2</i>
Les années 2000	2000	5
	2001	2
	2002	3
	2003	3
	2004	4
	2005	10
	2006	2
	2007	2
	2008	6
	2009	2
<i>Nombre moyen d'articles publiés sur 10 ans</i>	<i>2000-09</i>	<i>3,9</i>
2010-2012	2010	5
	2011	6
	2012	8
<i>Nombre moyen d'articles publiés sur 3 ans</i>	<i>2010-12</i>	<i>6,3</i>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88</b>

Durant les années 70 et 80, les publications ont été plutôt rares et sporadiques. En moyenne, moins de 1 article a été publié annuellement ces années-là. Puis les années 90 constituent le moment à partir duquel l'intérêt pour ce champ de recherche a progressé. Cette tendance s'est ensuite poursuivie et amplifiée à partir de 2000. Depuis le début du millénaire, nous assistons ainsi à une véritable explosion. Cela peut laisser présager que l'augmentation des publications sera toujours plus vivace dans les années 2010.

### 5.2.2. *Quels champs de recherche s'intéressent à l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil ?*

Depuis les années 70, la majorité des publications se fait dans les journaux spécialisés du tourisme et de l'accueil, et ce malgré le fait que l'importance de l'entrepreneuriat dans le secteur du tourisme et de l'accueil ait été affirmée dans la littérature depuis ces mêmes années (Hallak et al., 2012).

**Tableau 6:** Nombre d'articles publiés sur l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil par type de journal

	Total	Avant 2000	2000 et après
<b>Journaux du tourisme et de l'industrie de l'accueil</b>			
Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	13	8	5
International Journal of Hospitality Management	15	5	10
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	6	3	3
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	7	6	1
Annals of Tourism Research	6	0	6
Tourism Management	10	0	10
Journal of travel research	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Journaux d'entrepreneuriat</b>			
Journal of Business Venturing	12	7	5
Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	2	0	2
International Small Business Journal	6	0	6
Journal of Small Business Management	6	0	6
Small Business Economics	1	1	0
Family business review	1	0	1
Strategic entrepreneurship journal	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>58</b>

Néanmoins, comme le montre le tableau 6, cette tendance à la publication dans des journaux majoritairement spécialisés de l'industrie devient beaucoup moins marquée à partir des années



2000, et les journaux sur l'entrepreneuriat montrent un intérêt de plus en plus marqué pour ce secteur. A partir de cette date, la proportion des articles publiés par ces journaux a plus que doublé. Cette tendance confirme l'importance que représentent les activités entrepreneuriales dans l'industrie de l'accueil.

### **5.3. Etat des lieux de la recherche en entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil**

Dans cette deuxième partie, nous analysons les connaissances issues de la littérature selon trois axes : les thèmes abordés, les zones géographiques, et les secteurs d'activité étudiés. Nous tâcherons de mettre en évidence les principales tendances et les opportunités de recherche.

#### ***5.3.1. Analyse par thématiques abordées***

Comme le démontre le tableau 7, la franchise est le domaine de recherche le plus étudié sur toute la période, et ce de manière linéaire dans le temps. En quarante ans de recherche, près de 48% des articles étudiés ont concerné ce sujet. Etant donné le poids de ce thème de recherche, nous y consacrerons la troisième partie de ce chapitre. Les entrepreneurs représentent également, mais dans une bien moindre mesure, un sujet d'intérêt stable dans le temps. Depuis l'an 2000, trois nouveaux thèmes de recherche ont émergé. C'est notamment le cas des entreprises familiales. Il est étonnant que la recherche ne se soit pas penchée avant sur ce sujet étant donné que 95% des entreprises dans le tourisme et l'industrie de l'accueil sont des petites entreprises, généralement familiales (Lee-Ross et Lashley, 2008). Le thème de la performance, et plus précisément de l'échec et surtout du succès, ont également fait leur apparition dans les journaux académiques considérés depuis 2000. Cette tendance paraît justifiée dans une industrie où le taux de survie est très faible. En effet, la restauration particulièrement reste l'un des secteurs ayant un des taux d'échec les plus élevés (Camillo et Connolly, 2008). Le thème des destinations (études impacts, développement des destinations) constitue quant à lui le troisième sujet émergent. Par ailleurs, certains sujets, bien que stratégiquement importants, restent sous-étudiés. Il s'agit de l'enseignement (2% des articles considérés), des réseaux (3% des articles considérés) et de l'émergence entrepreneuriale (3% des articles considérés). Ils représentent certainement les opportunités de recherche pour les années à venir. En effet, concernant l'enseignement, les modules sur l'entrepreneuriat sont

répandus dans les écoles supérieures de l'industrie de l'accueil<sup>10</sup>. La recherche dans ce domaine pourrait permettre d'affiner et d'améliorer l'offre existante. De plus, les réseaux peuvent avoir des conséquences importantes : partage d'expérience, transfert des meilleures pratiques, apprentissage des erreurs des autres (Coop et Ivy, 2001), mais aussi accès à des ressources, des compétences, des opportunités et de l'aide (Greve et Salaff, 2003). De bonnes connaissances dans ce domaine permettraient aux structures en amont (incubateurs, écoles notamment) de mieux aider les entrepreneurs en devenir dans cette industrie au taux d'échec si élevé.

**Tableau 7:** Nombre d'articles publiés sur l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil dans les journaux de référence du tourisme et de l'industrie de l'accueil et de l'entrepreneuriat par thématiques

Thématiques	Sujets spécifiques	Avant 2000	2000 et après	Total
<b>Formes de propriété</b>	Capital	1	0	1
	Franchise	13	20	33
	Entreprises familiales	0	6	6
	Contrat de management	2	0	2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Enseignement</b>	Enseignement	1	1	2
<b>Performance</b>	Performance	1	4	5
	Succès	0	5	5
	Survie	1	0	1
	Echec	0	1	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Recherche</b>	Recherche	1	2	3
<b>Réseau</b>	Réseau	1	2	3
<b>Stratégie</b>	Stratégie	3	2	5
	TIC	0	1	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Entrepreneur</b>	Entrepreneur	4	4	8
<b>Emergence de l'entrepreneuriat</b>	Déterminants	1	2	3
<b>Destinations</b>	Développement des destinations	1	5	6
	Tourisme rural	0	2	2
	Pays en voie de développement	0	1	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>10</sup> Ball a identifié en 2005 treize universités anglaises qui dispensent des modules d'entrepreneuriat dans leur cursus industrie de l'accueil (Altinay et al., 2012)

### 5.3.2. Analyse par zones géographiques

Les zones géographiques qui ont été les plus étudiées depuis quarante ans sont, par ordre d'importance, l'Europe, l'Amérique du nord, et le secteur Asie-Pacifique (particulièrement les Etats-Unis, la Grande-Bretagne et l'Australie). Les études comparatives portant sur plusieurs pays représentent également une grande partie des publications.

**Tableau 8:** Nombre d'articles publiés sur l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil dans les journaux de référence du tourisme et de l'industrie de l'accueil et de l'entrepreneuriat par zones géographiques

Zones géographiques	Pays	Total	Avant 2000	2000 et après
Europe	Espagne	2	0	2
	Grande Bretagne	12	4	8
	Pologne	1	0	1
	Finlande	1	0	1
	Allemagne	1	0	1
	Norvège	1	0	1
	Non spécifié	2	1	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>
Amérique du nord	USA	17	10	7
Afrique	Ouganda	1	0	1
	Afrique du Sud	1	0	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
Secteur Asie-Pacifique	Chine	4	0	4
	Vietnam	1	0	1
	Malaisie	1	0	1
	Corée	1	0	1
	Australie	7	3	4
	Non spécifié	1	1	0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>
Jamaïque	Jamaïque	1	1	0
Turquie	Turquie	2	0	2
Israël	Israël	4	0	4
Etudes comparatives	International	14	1	13
Non applicable	Non applicable	7	3	4
Inconnu	Inconnu	6	6	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>88</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>58</b>

Les tendances ne sont cependant pas linéaires et les zones d'intérêt se sont diversifiées au cours des années (Tableau 8): si les Etats-Unis représentaient clairement le champ d'étude privilégié des études sur l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil avant le passage au nouveau millénaire, depuis lors, leur proportion a diminué au profit de nouvelles zones

d'intérêt. Ils restent cependant un terrain d'étude privilégié. Quant à l'Europe et à la zone Asie-Pacifique, elles n'étaient que timidement étudiées dans la littérature avant l'an 2000. Depuis, l'émergence de terrains d'études tels que l'Espagne, l'Europe du nord, la Chine et l'Asie du sud-est a contribué à leur essor en terme de recherche. L'Afrique et l'Amérique Latine sont les continents oubliés (ou presque) de la littérature. Ce constat est particulièrement étonnant concernant l'Amérique Latine étant donné son développement en tant que destination touristique (l'Organisation Mondiale du Tourisme déclare qu'en 2011 « L'Amérique du Sud, en progression de 10% pour la deuxième année consécutive, a continué d'être le principal foyer de croissance <sup>11</sup>»). L'Amérique Latine représente donc une réelle opportunité de recherche.

### 5.3.3. Par secteurs d'activité

La restauration est le secteur sur lequel s'est le plus concentrée la littérature depuis les années 70. Presque 40% des publications y sont consacrées, tandis que le secteur de l'hôtellerie a été l'objet de deux fois moins d'articles. Le nombre d'articles sur l'industrie de l'accueil dans son ensemble (incluant à la fois l'hôtellerie et la restauration) diminue au profit du nombre d'articles publiés soit uniquement sur l'hôtellerie, soit uniquement sur la restauration. Cette évolution traduit une prise de conscience dans la dernière décennie de la spécificité des métiers.

**Tableau 9:** Nombre d'articles publiés sur l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil dans les journaux de référence du tourisme et de l'industrie de l'accueil et de l'entrepreneuriat par secteurs d'activité

Secteurs d'activité	Total	Avant 2000	2000 et après
Tourisme & accueil	24	0	24
Accueil (Hôtels et Restauration)	10	7	3
Hôtels	16	6	10
Restauration	35	14	21
Inconnu	3	3	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>58</b>

D'autre part, nous remarquons l'apparition massive d'études sur le tourisme dans son ensemble (Tableau 9). Cette tendance peut sembler aller à l'inverse de celle décrite précédemment. Or il s'agit bien également d'une spécialisation, celle de l'industrie du

<sup>11</sup> <http://media.unwto.org/fr/press-release/2012-01-16/les-touristes-internationaux-devraient-atteindre-le-milliard-en-2012>

tourisme. Le tourisme semble être aujourd'hui une discipline à part entière, et non pas uniquement une somme de sous-secteurs<sup>12</sup>. Darbellay et Stock (2012) ont récemment donné une définition intéressante de l'objet de recherche touristique comme étant « susceptible d'articuler le double mouvement de la spécialisation et de l'interdisciplinarité, de la décomposition de l'objet touristique à sa recombinaison transversale ». Le tourisme semble donc avoir émergé comme une nouvelle spécialité, avec de nouveaux sujets de recherche (Tardif (2003) mentionne par exemple l'écotourisme).

#### **5.4. La franchise**

L'intérêt porté à la franchise dans l'industrie de l'accueil a réellement fait son apparition au milieu des années 90. En effet selon nos critères de recherche, les publications sur ce sujet ont débuté au début des années 70, puis ont cessé jusqu'en 1996. Cette observation est plutôt surprenante puisque les premières franchises de l'industrie ont crû aux Etats-Unis déjà dans les années 50 (Holiday Inn, KFC, McDonald...).

La franchise est un type de contrat entre un franchiseur et un franchisé. Le franchiseur autorise le franchisé à mettre sur le marché des biens et services en utilisant sa marque et ses pratiques commerciales (Combs et al., 2004). Les opérations sont décentralisées mais la standardisation imposée assure aux clients un niveau de services homogène (Wu, 1999). Franchiseur et franchisé entretiennent une relation profitable : le franchisé apporte le capital et transmet les informations sur le marché local au franchiseur. De son côté, le franchisé pénètre un marché à coût réduit avec une marque et un service qui ont déjà fait leurs preuves. Il dispose en sus d'une assistance du réseau pour la conception des installations, les achats, le marketing, les procédures... (Hoffman et Preble, 2003). Les entreprises franchisées croissent ainsi plus rapidement que les autres (Lafontaine, 1999). Les risques sont diminués et partagés, et des économies d'échelle peuvent être réalisées (Hoffman et Preble, 2003). Notamment pour les raisons précédentes, l'exploitation par la franchise est très utilisée dans l'industrie de l'accueil (Hing, 1996 a and b). Plus particulièrement, ce sont les fast-food américains qui font le plus appel à la franchise (Gillis et al., 2011). Si l'on se réfère au classement international des 100 meilleures franchises tout secteur confondu, c'est l'entreprise américaine de

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<sup>12</sup> Boyer affirme d'ailleurs en 2003 que le tourisme nécessite une approche spécifique et qu' « aucune discipline ne peut prétendre, seule, en faire une approche pertinente » (Demen Meier, 2005). Williams ira dans le même sens en 2004 en défendant que le tourisme est devenu une discipline en soi (Demen Meier, 2005).

restauration rapide Subway qui arrive en tête (entre autres selon les critères suivants : longévité, nombre d'unités franchisées, chiffre d'affaires, politique environnementale...). Par ailleurs, six des dix premières franchises de ce classement font également partie du secteur de la restauration rapide américaine<sup>13</sup>. De manière générale aux Etats-Unis, 65% des hôtels (Pine et al., 2000), plus de 56% des fast-food et 13% des restaurants sont des franchises (Hsu et Canter, 2010). Par exemple concernant l'hôtellerie, l'internationalisation des chaînes hôtelières, la mobilité des clients et leur souhait de trouver des produits similaires lors de leurs déplacements sont des facteurs favorisant le développement des franchises (Pine et al., 2000). Ainsi, un établissement Accor sur trois est une franchise<sup>14</sup>.

**Tableau 10:** Qui a dit quoi sur la franchise? Détails des articles publiés sur l'industrie de l'accueil dans les journaux de référence du tourisme et de l'accueil et de l'entrepreneuriat

Sous-thèmes	Secteurs	Auteurs
Stratégie	Restauration	Kaufmann, P. J., Eroglu, S. (1999)
	Restauration	Lashley, C., Rowson, B. (2002)
	Restauration	Hoover V. L., Ketchen, D. J., Combs, J. G. (2003)
	Restauration	Sul, H.-K., Khan, M. A. (2006)
	Restauration	Koh, Y., Lee, S., Boo, S. (2009)
	Hôtels	Grünhagen, M., Mittelstaedt, R. A. (2005)
	Restauration	Cho, M. (2004)
	Restauration	Hsu, L.-T., Canter, D. D. (2010)
	Restauration	Michael, S. C. (2003)
Performance	Restauration	Combs, J. G., Ketchen, D. J., Hoover, V. L. (2004)
Satisfaction des franchisés	Restauration	Hing, N. (1996)
	Restauration	Hing, N. (1996)
Organisation	Restauration	Michael, S. C. (2002)
Théorie	Restauration	Stanworth, J., Curran, J. (1999)
Relation franchiseur/franchisé		Emmons, R. J. (1971)
		Baucus, D A., Baucus, M. S., Human, S. E.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.franchisedirect.com/top100globalfranchises/rankings/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.accor.com/fr/marques/chiffres-cles.html>

	Restauration	(1996)
	Restauration	Dant, R. P., Gundlach, G. T. (1999)
	Restauration	Pizanti, I., Lerner, M. (2003)
	Restauration	Gillis, W. E., McEwan, E., Crook, T. R., Michael, S. C. (2011)
Internationalisation	Restauration	Paik, Y., Choi, D. Y. (2007)
	Hôtels	Xiao, Q., O'Neill, J. W., Wang, H. (2008)
	Hôtels	Alon, I., Ni, L., Wang, Y. (2012)
Client	Restauration	Grünhagen, M., Dant, R. P., Zhu, M. (2012)
Echec/Survie	Restauration	Michael, S. C., Combs, J. G. (2008)
	Restauration	Bates, T. (1998)
Prix	Hôtels	Wu, L. (1999)
	Restauration	Lafontaine, F. (1999)
Contrat	Accueil	Cochet, O., Garg, V. K. (2008)
Challenge	Hôtels	Pine, R., Zhang, H. Q., Qi, P. (2000)
Développement	Restauration	Klonowski, D., Power, J. L., Linton, D. (2008)

L'analyse des secteurs étudiés (Tableau 10) met en évidence la place prépondérante accordée à la restauration versus l'hôtellerie. Cette prépondérance d'études sur le secteur de la restauration peut s'expliquer par l'accès à l'information. En effet, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, la restauration est un secteur où les franchises ont proliféré. Ce qui se traduit également par un nombre d'unités franchisées des premières marques de la restauration plus important que dans le secteur de l'hôtellerie. L'accès à l'information est ainsi facilité. La proportion d'articles sur les franchises dans la restauration versus dans l'hôtellerie ne reflète ainsi pas spécialement un intérêt plus important pour la restauration. Elle est plutôt la conséquence d'une asymétrie de l'information.

## 5.5. Conclusion

La recherche s'intéresse particulièrement à l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil depuis les années 90. Le nombre de publications dans ce domaine progresse toujours plus. Depuis quarante ans, la littérature s'est surtout penchée sur l'étude de la franchise et des

entrepreneurs en tant qu'individus. Les centres d'intérêt émergents sont les entreprises familiales, la performance et les destinations. Certains sujets, bien que stratégiquement importants, restent sous-étudiés et constituent des opportunités de recherche. Il s'agit de l'enseignement de l'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil, des réseaux et de l'émergence entrepreneuriale dans l'hôtellerie-restauration. Les Etats-Unis, la Grande-Bretagne et l'Australie ont été les terrains d'étude privilégiés. Néanmoins les chercheurs se sont récemment intéressés à de nouvelles zones d'étude, notamment la Chine et Israël. Les études comparatives internationales représentent également une nouvelle tendance de poids. L'Amérique Latine, qui demeure absente de la littérature malgré son développement et son potentiel touristique, représente une piste de recherche. Les articles sont majoritairement publiés dans les journaux spécialisés de l'industrie. Cependant les journaux sur l'entrepreneuriat montrent un intérêt de plus en plus marqué pour ce secteur particulier. En effet, l'entrepreneuriat représente un enjeu de taille dans l'industrie de l'accueil. Rappelons que 95% des entreprises dans le tourisme et l'industrie de l'accueil sont des petites entreprises (Lee-Ross et Lashley, 2008). Or c'est un secteur où le taux d'échec reste très élevé<sup>15</sup>. La connaissance plus approfondie de la création d'entreprise dans cette industrie est donc nécessaire pour tenter d'endiguer ce phénomène.

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<sup>15</sup> La restauration en particulier est l'un des secteurs ayant un des taux d'échec les plus élevés (Camillo et al., 2008)





## **Chapter 6: General conclusion**

In a recent study, Van Gelderen and al. (2015) observed that over two-thirds of the individuals in their sample who expressed an entrepreneurial intention within a year, did not take any (or few) steps toward creating a new venture in the following 12 months. Thus, as they mention, “apparently, there are factors other than intention involved in distinguishing those who take action from those who do not”, and entrepreneurship researchers must not focus exclusively on intention. But until today, the entrepreneurship literature mainly concentrates on the motivational part of the entrepreneurial process, at the expense of studies about the volitional part.

### **6.1. Contributions**

Our thesis contributes to entrepreneurship literature by concentrating on the volitional part of the entrepreneurial process. Contrary to the great majority of published studies, we do not focus on entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents, but on the second part of intention models: the intention-behavior relationship. We explore factors which could ease the transition between both, and thus which could help intended entrepreneurs to actually set up their own companies.

We propose two socio-psychological facilitators in particular: commitment and implementation intention. Some researchers already recently mentioned these two factors as possible links between entrepreneurial intention and behaviour (Fayolle and Liñan, 2014). We contribute to this line of research by showing why it would be worth using them in the entrepreneurial context.

Moreover, even if commitment and implementation intention were already cited in the literature, no one had tested them before. So, our contributions are also empirical. For the first time in the entrepreneurship literature, we examine commitment with the lenses of Meyer and Allen (1987, 1991). This approach allows us to establish commitment profiles of intended entrepreneurs, in the vein of the typology of entrepreneurs of Julien and Marchesnay (1988), and pave the way for more research using these profiles. Furthermore, our study contributed methodologically to the literature as it was longitudinal, which is scarce although relevant to test a dynamic process.

As for implementation intention, we conducted an experiment. On the one hand, no one empirically examined the role of implementation intention in entrepreneurship before. On the other hand, to our knowledge, it is the first time that implementation intention was tested with such a complex behavior. Thus, our study contributes both to entrepreneurship and to socio-psychology literature.

## **6.2. Implications**

### **6.2.1. *Theoretical and methodological implications***

Theoretically speaking, drawing on Meyer and Allen's (1987, 1991) three-component theory of commitment, we pave the way for the establishment of a detailed typology of intended entrepreneurs' commitment. This could have an impact on intended entrepreneurs' coaching. Indeed, we could imagine that, depending on their commitment profiles, intended entrepreneurs will not have the same needs and should not be helped in the same way. If we are able to match commitment profiles and coaching best practices, coaching could be more efficient and the conversion rate between entrepreneurial intention and behaviour could increase.

In terms of methodology, in order to test implementation intention, we created an Excel file to simulate the entrepreneurial path. This simulation reproduces a causal process and asks the respondent to act as if they were creating their own company. They have to order their actions and can choose to get training to help themselves. This file could be validated and used to set up the conditions of firm creation in research or in the field.

### **6.2.3. *Practical implications***

Our thesis has practical implications for different actors.

First, for the intended entrepreneurs themselves. Our objective was to give them keys to facilitate action. Indeed, they already have material to help them to think and to evaluate their projects, such as business models. However, they then lack support to convert their plans into real actions. Our work about implementation intention in particular is a prelude to something more operationalized that would guide them into action.

Moreover, our thesis could be valuable for politicians. Indeed, considering the economic issues at stake with entrepreneurship (job creation, increase in GDP, development of a country's economic fabric...), politicians are interested in enhancing the entrepreneurial rate and the number of company creations. By proposing facilitators between entrepreneurial intention and behaviour, we work in this direction as an objective of our work is to give material to increase the conversion rate between intended and actual entrepreneurs.

Last but not least, our thesis can have implications for incubators and educators. Indeed, the knowledge of the volitional part of the entrepreneurial process could help coaches to support intended entrepreneurs during their paths so as they can implement their projects. The final goal remains to help them to convert their intentions into behaviors. To do so, coaches have two levers: on the one hand, implementation intention to help intended entrepreneurs to take actions, and commitment on the other hand. If they advise and guide them depending on their commitment profiles, it could have a bigger impact on intended entrepreneurs' perseverance.

Our work could also help educators in their mission to promote and facilitate entrepreneurship. Particularly, they could teach the implementation intention concept.

### **6.3.Limitations**

Generally speaking, the main limitation of our thesis is that our empirical studies are only exploratory. The samples we use are too small to be representative and thus no generalizable conclusions can be drawn. However, our studies still allow us to present observations which have the virtue of constituting the foundations of future research on the subject. They pave the way for further investigations.

More specifically, our empirical studies about commitment and implementation intention do not encompass all the situations. Indeed, not all commitment profiles were represented in our sample and thus two of our propositions could not be infirmed or confirmed. Moreover, the simulation we used in our experiment only illustrates a causal

entrepreneurial process. Thus, the findings we present are only relevant in this context, and still need to be tested, for example, in an effectual context.

#### **6.4. Research perspectives**

The limitations of our thesis pave the way for future research. Our propositions should now be tested quantitatively, with representative samples in order to be generalizable. Moreover, the entrepreneurial process simulation file should be developed in order to represent more in detail the complexity of entrepreneurship. The notion of typology of commitment should also be expanded: different profiles should be clearly enounced, coupled with their characteristics and needs in terms of support in order to promote the conversion of entrepreneurial intention into behaviour.

Furthermore, we think it could be interesting to target particular samples in order to test the impact of a commitment typology. For example, we could learn from necessity entrepreneurs what the impact of having a high continuance commitment, in terms of having no other alternatives, is. Likewise, the new students-entrepreneurs status could give us another perspective. Indeed, we can expect them to have a high affective commitment, a low continuance commitment and a high normative one. They could represent another interesting profile and knowing more about them could help to give them support according to what they really need. .

Lastly, we should work on the operationalization of the implementation intention concept. We now know that it could positively impact the entrepreneurial process but we still need to determine how people in the field could use it.

We look forward to working on these opportunities to contribute to the entrepreneurship field.



## **Appendixes**

*Appendix 1:* Examples of intention models developed in the socio-psychological and entrepreneurship field

<b><u>Model</u></b>	<b><u>Authors</u></b>	<b><u>Antecedents of intention</u></b>
<b><i>In socio-psychology</i></b>		
Theory of Reasoned action (1975)	Fishbein and Ajzen	Attitude toward behavior / Social norms
Theory of Planned Behavior (1987, 1991)	Ajzen	Attitude toward behavior / Social norms / Perceived behavioral control
<b><i>In entrepreneurship</i></b>		
Entrepreneurial Event Model (1982)	Shapero and Sokol	Desirability / Feasibility
Model of Implementing Entrepreneurial Ideas (1988)	Bird	Context / Personal history / Personality / Abilities / Thinking
Maximization of the Expected Utility Model (2000)	Douglas and Shepherd	Attitudes toward risk / Attitudes toward independence

**Appendix 2:** The four pieces of work constituting the thesis, their status and link with the problematic

<b><u>Piece of work</u></b>	<b><u>Author(s)</u></b>	<b><u>Status</u></b>	<b><u>Link with the problematic</u></b>
Bridging the entrepreneurial intention-behavior gap: The role of commitment and implementation intention	Adam and Fayolle	Published Int. J. Entrepreneurship and Small Business, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp.36–54 - 2015	Identification of two socio-psychological factors that could facilitate the transition from entrepreneurial intention to behavior: commitment and implementation intention
How to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior? The role of commitment	Adam	Conference paper Academy of Management (Vancouver, 2015)	What could be the role of commitment in bridging the entrepreneurial intention-behavior gap?
Can implementation intention help to bridge the intention-behavior gap in the entrepreneurial process? An experimental approach	Adam and Fayolle	Submitted – In process	What could be the role of implementation intention in bridging the entrepreneurial intention-behavior gap?
L'entrepreneuriat dans l'industrie de l'accueil	Adam and Demen Meier	Chapter in a book – In process	The hospitality industry is a fertile field for entrepreneurship. It justifies why the experimental study concerning implementation intention was conducted in an hospitality school



*Appendix 3:* Synthetic view of the three papers directly linked to our problematic

<u>Piece of work</u>	<u>Type of paper</u>	<u>Methodology</u>	<u>Propositions</u>	<u>Findings</u>
Bridging the entrepreneurial intention-behavior gap: The role of commitment and implementation intention	Theoretical paper		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Implementation intention moderates the goal intention-behavior relationship</li> <li>2- Nascent entrepreneurs' commitment profiles impact their entrepreneurial behaviors</li> <li>- There is a best combination of commitment components that would increase the probability of becoming an entrepreneur.</li> <li>- The combination of commitment components evolves over time during the entrepreneurial process.</li> </ul>	
How to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial intention and behavior? The role of commitment	Empirical exploratory paper	Qualitative longitudinal study ⇒ Semi-directive interviews ⇒ On-line questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Having a high affective commitment impacts positively entrepreneurial behaviors.</li> <li>2- Intended entrepreneurs have to be committed both to their projects and to the desire to become entrepreneurs to succeed.</li> <li>3- Having a high continuance commitment impacts positively entrepreneurial behavior.</li> <li>4- Having a high normative impacts positively entrepreneurial behavior.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Validated</li> <li>2- Rejected</li> <li>3- Rejected in the sense of no other alternative, no findings in the case of cost-avoidance</li> <li>4- Validated in the sense of internal pressure, rejected in the case of external pressure</li> </ul>
Can implementation intention help to bridge the intention-behavior gap in the entrepreneurial process? An experimental exploratory approach	Empirical exploratory paper	Qualitative study ⇒ Experiment	Forming implementation intention increases the probability of success and the speed of action of intended entrepreneurs	Validated.

**Appendix 4:** Proposition of three-component scales to measure commitment in the entrepreneurial context

*Affective Commitment Scale (Adapted from Allen and Meyer, 1990)*

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career being an entrepreneur.
2. I enjoy discussing my entrepreneurial project with people outside it.
3. I think that I could easily become as attached to another entrepreneurial project as I am to mine.
4. I do not feel “emotionally attached” to my entrepreneurial project.
5. My entrepreneurial project means a great deal to me.

*Continuance Commitment Scale (Adapted from Allen and Meyer, 1990)*

1. I am not afraid of what might happen if I give up my entrepreneurial project without having another one lined up.
2. It would be very hard for me to give up my project right now, even if I wanted to.
3. It wouldn't be too costly for me to give up my entrepreneurial project now.
4. Right now, sticking to my entrepreneurial project is a matter of necessity as much as a desire.
5. I feel that I have very few options to consider if I give up my entrepreneurial project.

*Normative Commitment Scale (Adapted from Allen and Meyer, 1990 and from Jaros, 2007)*

1. The entrepreneurial project I work on has a mission that I believe in and am committed to.
2. I feel it is “morally correct” to dedicate myself to my entrepreneurial project.
3. I am loyal to my entrepreneurial project because my values are largely its values.
4. One of the major reasons I continue to work on my entrepreneurial project is that I believe loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to continue.
5. Even if I had another better alternative elsewhere, I would not feel it right to give up my entrepreneurial project.

**Appendix 5:** Details about the interviews conducted

<b>Individuals</b>	<b>Interview 1</b>	<b>Interview 2</b>	<b>Interview 3</b>	<b>Interview 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
Individual 1	07/07/2014 30 minutes Face to face	09/17/2014 15 minutes Face to face			2
Individual 2	03/06/2014 30 minutes By phone	05/22/2014 20 minutes By phone	08/18/2014 30 minutes By phone	10/27/2014 20 minutes By phone	4
Individual 3	05/02/2014 30 minutes Face to face	07/15/2014 15 minutes Face to face	10/02/2014 10 minutes Face to face		3
Individual 4	05/27/2014 40 minutes Face to face	08/20/2014 20 minutes Face to face			2
Individual 5	06/25/2014 15 minutes By phone	09/19/2014 10 minutes By phone			2
Individual 6	04/29/2014 45 minutes By phone	07/18/2014 45 minutes By phone	10/03/2014 45 minutes By phone		3
Individual 7	04/16/2014 30 minutes By phone	07/02/2014 20 minutes By phone	09/15/2014 15 minutes By phone	12/05/2014 15 minutes By phone	4
					20

**Appendix 6:** Main questions/topics developed in interviews*First interview:*

- Description of the individual: age, academic and professional backgrounds, marital status...
- The individual's actual situation
- The motivations to become entrepreneur
- Description of the project
- Brakes / fears of the individual
- Support from relatives or externals
- Next steps until the next interview

*Following interviews:*

- Evolution of personal situation
- Steps from the previous interviews
- Brakes / fears of the individual
- Sources of motivation
- Support from relatives or externals
- Next steps until the next interview

**Appendix 7:** Details about the individuals interviewed

<b>Individuals</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Initial situation</b>	<b>Actual situation</b>	<b>Main motivations</b>
Ind 1	Female	29	Full-time employed	Full-time employed / Entrepreneur	Independence, money
Ind 2	Female	45	Formation	Part-time employed / In process	Passion, rejection of the actual professional situation, personal fulfillment
Ind 3	Male	40	Unemployed	Part-time employed / Entrepreneur	Independence, passion, mission, opportunity
Ind 4	Female	50	Work at home	Work at home / Gave up process	Leave the house, passion, rejection of the actual professional situation
Ind 5	Female	26	Independent	Independent / In process	Money, more activity
Ind 6	Male	34	Unemployed	Full-time employed/ In process	Independence, mission
Ind 7	Male	37	Unemployed	Unemployed/ In process	Rejection of the actual professional situation, passion, independence

**Appendix 8:** Commitment profiles of intended entrepreneurs at the beginning of the entrepreneurial process and their status in December 2014

Individuals	Affective commitment		Continuance commitment		Normative commitment		Status in December 2014
	<i>Toward project itself</i>	<i>Toward entrepreneurship</i>	<i>No other alternatives</i>	<i>Too much to lose</i>	<i>Internal pressure</i>	<i>External pressure</i>	
Individual 1		High	Low		High		Launched a business
	X				X		
Individual 2		High	Low		Low		Still in process (need time)
		X					
Individual 3		High	Low		High		Launched a business
		X			X		
Individual 4		High	High		High		Gave up
		X	X			X	
Individual 5		High	Low		High		Still in process (close to)
	X				X		
Individual 6		High	High		High		Still in process (need time)
		X	X		X		
Individual 7		High	Low		High		Still in process (close to)
		X			X		

**Appendix 9:** Test to check if volunteer presented a goal intention to become entrepreneur

We asked the volunteers to answer to 5 assertions, using a 2 item-scale (rather disagree, rather agree). These assertions measured students' attitude toward entrepreneurship, their perceived control, the social norm and instrumentality. They were based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour of Ajzen and on the motivation force of Vroom. Based on their 5 answers, we attributed a score between 0 and 5 to the volunteers. Students scoring 3 or more out of 5 were considered to present the goal intention's antecedents to become entrepreneurs.

Test to check if volunteer presented a goal intention to become entrepreneur:

	<i>Rather agree</i>	<i>Rather disagree</i>	<i>Points attributed if agree</i>
Becoming entrepreneur is a desirable career option for me			1
I possess the necessary skills to become entrepreneur (or I can easily acquire them)			1
I think my relatives would support me if I decide to become entrepreneur			1
I am convinced that becoming entrepreneur would fulfill all my expectations in life			1
Being an employee would fulfill my expectations as much or much than being an entrepreneur			0

**Appendix 10:** Volunteers who present goal intention's antecedents to become entrepreneurs and attribution to groups

	<b>Points obtained at the 'goal-intention test'</b>	<b>Goal intention's antecedents to become entrepreneur?</b>	<b>Group</b>
Volunteer 1	4 out of 5	Yes	Control
Volunteer 2	5 out of 5	Yes	Tested
Volunteer 3	5 out of 5	Yes	Control
Volunteer 4	5 out of 5	Yes	Control
Volunteer 5	3 out of 5	Yes	Tested
Volunteer 6	4 out of 5	Yes	Tested
Volunteer 7	5 out of 5	Yes	Control
Volunteer 8	5 out of 5	Yes	Tested
Volunteer 9	3 out of 5	Yes	Tested
Volunteer 10	4 out of 5	Yes	Tested
Volunteer 11	3 out of 5	Yes	Control
Volunteer 12	5 out of 5	Yes	Tested
Volunteer 13	5 out of 5	Yes	Control
Volunteer 14	1 out of 5	No	Tested
Volunteer 15	4 out of 5	Yes	Tested
Volunteer 16	3 out of 5	Yes	Tested
Volunteer 17	4 out of 5	Yes	Control
Volunteer 18	4 out of 5	Yes	Control
Volunteer 19	5 out of 5	Yes	Control
Total control group			9
Total tested group			10

*Appendix 11: Simplified matrix of the simulation's Excel file*

<b>Chronology</b>	<b>Possible choices</b>	<b>Assignements</b>
<b>Action 1</b>	Do administrative creation tasks	Not the best first action Choose another action
	Do your business plan	Not the best first action Choose another action
	Do your market study	Best option. Follow the process
	Look for financing	Not the best first action Choose another action
Action 1 - Step 1 (with test*)	Detail your concept	Not the best first step Choose another step
	Analyze the questionnaire's answers	Not the best first step Choose another step
	Create a questionnaire	Best option. Do the test and follow the process
	Submit the questionnaires to potential clients	Not the best first step Choose another step
Action 1 - Step 2 (with test*)	Detail your concept	Not the best second step Choose another step
	Analyze the questionnaire's answers	Not the best second step Choose another step
	Submit the questionnaires to potential clients	Best option. Do the test and follow the process
Action 1 - Step 3	Detail your concept	Not the best third step Choose another step
	Analyze the questionnaire's answers	Best option. Follow the process
<b>Action 2</b>	Do administrative creation tasks	Not the best second action Choose another action
	Do your business plan	Best option. Follow the process
	Look for financing	Not the best second action Choose another action
Action 2 - Step 1 (with test*)	Learn how to present your project	Not the best first step Choose another step
	Define hypothesis	Best option. Do the test and follow the process
	Write your business plan	Not the best first step Choose another step
	Forecast financial data	Not the best first step Choose another step
Action 2 - Step 2 (with test*)	Learn how to present your project	Not the best second step Choose another step
	Write your business plan	Not the best second step



		Choose another step
	Forecast financial data	Best option. Do the test and follow the process
Action 2 - Step 3 (with test*)	Learn how to present your project	Not the best second step Choose another step
	Write your business plan	Best option. Do the test and follow the process
<b>Action 3</b>	Do administrative creation tasks	Best option. Follow the process
	Look for financing	Not the best third action Choose another action
<b>Action 4</b>	Do administrative creation tasks	Finish the process
Action 4 - Step 1 (with test*)	Choose a legal status	Best option. Do the test and follow the process
	Register your company administratively	Not the best first step Choose another step
	Write the status	Not the best first step Choose another step
Action 4 - Step 2	Register your company administratively	Not the best second step Choose another step
	Write the status	Congratulation You finish the process

\*If participants do not have the skills to answer, they can get help. It takes the form of a written sentence that gives them crucial information to answer the test.

Asking for help costs them vitamins.

*Appendix 12:* Observations of the experiment

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Groups</b>	<b># of actions completed</b>	<b>Time needed in minutes</b>
# 1	Control	3	6
# 2	Tested	14	11
# 3	Control	14	16
# 4	Control	10	5
# 5	Tested	5	11
# 6	Tested	3	9
# 7	Control	11	19
# 8	Tested	18	11
# 9	Tested	25	15
# 10	Tested	24	21
# 11	Control	25	24
# 12	Tested	25	15
# 13	Control	4	8
# 14	Tested	14	12
# 15	Tested	11	11
# 16	Tested	12	Unknown
# 17	Control	1	4
# 18	Control	8	6
# 19	Control	14	19



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In order to understand what leads individuals to create new ventures, entrepreneurship researchers use intention models in their studies for decades. The most famous are the Theory of Planned Behavior of Azjen and the Entrepreneurial Event of Shapero and Sokol. However, these models are still perfectible. In fact, they stem from the fact that intentions predict behaviors, but only less than half of variance of entrepreneurial behaviors is explained by intention. Moreover, intention models only focus on the antecedents of intention. So the motivational part (why one acts) is addressed, but the volitional part (how to pursue actions) remains set aside.

Our thesis, composed of four pieces of work, aims at addressing this gap in order to improve our understanding of the entrepreneurial process. Our objective is to shed light on facilitators that can lead from intentions to effective action. We thus took on the challenge of unveiling part of the missing links between entrepreneurial intention and behavior. We selected commitment and implementation intention in the socio-psychological literature as being the possible missing links, and we test them in entrepreneurial contexts.

Thus by focusing on the volitional part, our thesis completes the intention models in order to improve our knowledge of the entrepreneurial process. It has implications for intended entrepreneurs themselves, politicians, educators and incubators. Indeed, they could use what we have learnt about commitment and implementation intention to enhance the entrepreneurial intention conversion rate. Generally speaking, our goal is to propose new materials to help intended entrepreneurs to enact their intentions.

However, the size of our samples limits our empirical studies to exploratory papers. Further researches should now test our findings quantitatively.

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Dans le but de comprendre ce qui pousse les entrepreneurs à agir, les chercheurs en entrepreneuriat utilisent depuis des décennies les modèles de l'intention dans leurs études. Les plus célèbres sont la Théorie de l'Action Planifiée d'Azjen et l'Évènement Entrepreneurial de Shapero et Sokol. Cependant, ces modèles restent perfectibles. En effet, ils partent du principe que l'intention est un bon prédicateur du comportement, alors que seules moins de la moitié des variations des comportements entrepreneuriaux sont explicables par l'intention. De plus, les modèles de l'intention se concentrent uniquement sur les antécédents de l'intention. La partie motivationnelle (le « pourquoi ») est donc couverte, mais la partie volitionnelle (le « comment ») est oubliée.

Notre thèse, qui se compose de quatre travaux, a pour ambition de parer à ce manquement, dans le but de parfaire notre compréhension du processus entrepreneurial. Notre objectif est de mettre en lumière des facilitateurs qui permettraient de passer effectivement de l'intention à l'action. Nous relevons donc le défi de dévoiler en partie la boîte noire qui se trouve entre intention et comportement entrepreneurial. Nous avons sélectionné l'engagement et l'intention planifiée dans la littérature de socio-psychologie comme étant les chaînons manquants possibles, et nous les avons testés en contextes entrepreneuriaux.

Ainsi, en se concentrant sur la partie volitionnelle, notre thèse complète les modèles de l'intention dans le but d'améliorer nos connaissances du processus entrepreneurial. Elle vise à servir les porteurs de projets, les politiques, les enseignants et les différents acteurs de suivi des entrepreneurs. En effet, tous peuvent utiliser ce que nous avons mis en lumière pour augmenter le taux de conversion de l'intention entrepreneuriale. Notre objectif est de manière générale de proposer de la matière nouvelle pour aider les porteurs de projets à concrétiser leurs intentions.

Cependant, la taille de nos échantillons limite nos études empiriques à des études exploratoires. Nos résultats devront maintenant être confirmés de manière quantitative.