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The Impact of Fear of Failure, Entrepreneurial Resilience, and Ambiguity Tolerance on Entrepreneurial Intention among Generation Z

Alireza Yazdi ^{1*}, Maral Fallai², Sama Oudbashi ³

1. Master's degree, Department of Technology and Entrepreneurship, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

2. Master's degree, Department of Executive Management, C.T.C., Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

3. Master's degree, Department of Industries-Socio-Economic Systems, Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran

*Correspondence: Alireza_yazdy@atu.ac.ir

Abstract

Entrepreneurship, as one of the primary drivers of economic growth and employment generation, has become increasingly dependent on the psychological and behavioral characteristics of emerging generations in recent years. Due to its digitalized lifestyle, exposure to economic fluctuations, and continuous encounters with uncertainty, Generation Z is more influenced than previous generations by constructs such as fear of failure, entrepreneurial resilience, and ambiguity tolerance in career and entrepreneurial decision-making. The present study aimed to examine the effects of fear of failure, entrepreneurial resilience, and ambiguity tolerance on entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z, as well as to investigate the moderating roles of resilience and ambiguity tolerance in this relationship. This research was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-survey in terms of methodology. The statistical population consisted of university students and young graduates (Generation Z) affiliated with universities, science and technology parks, and business accelerators in Tehran in 2026, from whom 280 participants were selected as the study sample. Research data were collected using standardized questionnaires whose content validity and reliability were confirmed, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Spearman correlation analysis, multiple linear regression, and hierarchical regression through SPSS version 26. The findings indicated that entrepreneurial resilience and ambiguity tolerance were positively and significantly associated with entrepreneurial intention, whereas fear of failure had a significant negative effect on entrepreneurial intention among this generation. Furthermore, the results confirmed the moderating roles of resilience and ambiguity tolerance, demonstrating that these constructs function as psychological buffers that reduce the negative impact of fear of failure on entrepreneurial intention. Overall, the proposed research model was able to explain 62% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention within the studied population. The findings emphasize that promoting entrepreneurship among Generation Z requires a strategic shift from purely technical training toward psychological empowerment and the institutionalization of skills for coping with ambiguity and failure.

Keywords: Fear of Failure, Entrepreneurial Resilience, Ambiguity Tolerance, Entrepreneurial Intention, Generation Z.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as one of the most important mechanisms for economic growth, innovation, employment generation, and social development. In contemporary economies characterized by rapid technological



transformation, digitalization, and increasing uncertainty, entrepreneurial activity has become a critical strategy for addressing labor market challenges and enhancing national competitiveness. However, the emergence of entrepreneurship is not solely determined by economic resources or institutional support; rather, it is significantly influenced by psychological, cognitive, and behavioral factors that shape individuals' willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Among these factors, entrepreneurial intention has attracted substantial scholarly attention because it is considered the most immediate antecedent of entrepreneurial behavior. Entrepreneurial intention reflects an individual's conscious commitment and readiness to establish a new venture and serves as a reliable predictor of future entrepreneurial action. Consequently, understanding the psychological determinants that influence entrepreneurial intention has become a major concern for researchers, policymakers, and educators seeking to cultivate entrepreneurial ecosystems among younger generations (Nazari et al., 2024; Shirokova et al., 2024; Thompson et al., 2023). Recent studies have emphasized that entrepreneurial intention is shaped not only by economic opportunities but also by individual psychological characteristics that influence how people perceive risks, opportunities, challenges, and uncertainties associated with entrepreneurship. As a result, entrepreneurship research has increasingly focused on examining personal attributes and psychological mechanisms that either encourage or inhibit entrepreneurial engagement (Ahmadi et al., 2024; Bagheri et al., 2024; Martinez-Rodriguez et al., 2024).

Within this context, Generation Z has emerged as a particularly important population for entrepreneurship research. Generation Z generally refers to individuals born during the late 1990s and early 2010s who have grown up in an environment characterized by widespread digital technologies, global connectivity, social media influence, and unprecedented access to information. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z has experienced economic volatility, rapid technological disruptions, changing employment patterns, and heightened uncertainty regarding future career opportunities. These experiences have shaped distinctive attitudes toward work, career development, and entrepreneurship. Many members of this generation demonstrate strong preferences for independence, flexibility, creativity, and meaningful work, making entrepreneurship an attractive career option. At the same time, they face significant challenges associated with economic instability, competitive labor markets, and uncertainty about future outcomes. Consequently, entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z appears to be influenced by a unique combination of psychological factors that differ from those observed in previous generations. Scholars have argued that understanding the entrepreneurial behavior of Generation Z requires a deeper examination of the psychological mechanisms that determine how these individuals evaluate opportunities, cope with uncertainty, and respond to potential failure (Bagheri et al., 2024; Martinez-Rodriguez et al., 2024; Nazari et al., 2024; Shirokova et al., 2024). Furthermore, evidence suggests that entrepreneurial ecosystems designed for previous generations may not adequately address the psychological needs and expectations of Generation Z entrepreneurs, highlighting the importance of investigating generation-specific determinants of entrepreneurial intention (Garcia & Santos, 2024; Thompson et al., 2023).

Among the psychological factors that influence entrepreneurial intention, fear of failure has received considerable attention in entrepreneurship literature. Fear of failure refers to an individual's apprehension regarding the potential negative consequences of entrepreneurial failure, including financial losses, social embarrassment, reputational damage, and diminished self-esteem. Entrepreneurship inherently involves risk, uncertainty, and the possibility of failure; therefore, individuals' perceptions of failure can substantially affect their willingness to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. Fear of failure may discourage individuals from taking entrepreneurial action by increasing perceived risks and reducing confidence in their ability to succeed. For young individuals who often possess limited entrepreneurial experience and financial resources, concerns regarding failure may become particularly salient. Research has consistently demonstrated that fear of failure negatively influences entrepreneurial intention by creating psychological barriers that prevent individuals from translating entrepreneurial aspirations into actual intentions and behaviors. Studies conducted among university students and young adults have found that higher levels of fear of failure are associated with lower entrepreneurial intention and reduced willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Cacciotti et al., 2023; Jafari & Zarei, 2023; Kumar et al., 2024). Similarly, investigations in developing and emerging economies have shown that fear of failure can significantly weaken entrepreneurial motivation by increasing perceptions of uncertainty and personal vulnerability (Ahmadi et al., 2024; Mirzaei et al., 2023). Despite these findings, recent research suggests that the relationship between fear of failure and entrepreneurial intention may not be straightforward and may depend on the presence of other psychological resources that enable individuals to cope effectively with adversity and uncertainty (Cacciotti et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2024).



One of the most important psychological resources that may mitigate the negative effects of fear of failure is entrepreneurial resilience. Entrepreneurial resilience refers to an individual's capacity to recover from setbacks, adapt to challenging circumstances, maintain psychological well-being under pressure, and persist in pursuing entrepreneurial goals despite adversity. Entrepreneurship is rarely a linear process; entrepreneurs frequently encounter obstacles, failures, market fluctuations, and resource constraints. Therefore, resilience enables individuals to maintain motivation and continue pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities even when confronted with difficulties. Recent studies have identified entrepreneurial resilience as a key predictor of entrepreneurial intention, persistence, and venture success. Individuals with higher levels of resilience tend to interpret setbacks as learning opportunities rather than insurmountable barriers, thereby sustaining their entrepreneurial motivation over time. Empirical evidence indicates that resilient individuals are more likely to express stronger entrepreneurial intentions and demonstrate greater commitment to entrepreneurial careers (Ayala & Manzano, 2024; Chen & Zhang, 2025). Moreover, resilience has been shown to mediate and buffer the adverse effects of environmental uncertainty and economic instability on entrepreneurial outcomes (Lee & Wang, 2023; Zandi & Kazemi, 2022). Studies focusing on young entrepreneurs have further demonstrated that resilience facilitates adaptive coping strategies, enhances self-efficacy, and promotes entrepreneurial persistence under challenging conditions (Ayala & Manzano, 2024; Chen & Zhang, 2025). In contexts characterized by economic volatility and limited employment opportunities, entrepreneurial resilience may therefore play a particularly important role in encouraging entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z individuals (Lee & Wang, 2023; Zandi & Kazemi, 2022).

Another psychological construct that has gained increasing attention in entrepreneurship research is ambiguity tolerance. Ambiguity tolerance refers to an individual's capacity to accept, manage, and function effectively in situations characterized by uncertainty, complexity, incomplete information, and unpredictable outcomes. Since entrepreneurial activities often involve decision-making under uncertain conditions, ambiguity tolerance is considered a critical characteristic for entrepreneurial success. Individuals with high ambiguity tolerance are generally more comfortable navigating uncertain environments and are less likely to experience psychological distress when faced with incomplete information or unclear outcomes. Consequently, they may perceive entrepreneurial opportunities more positively and exhibit stronger intentions to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Recent empirical studies have demonstrated positive relationships between ambiguity tolerance and entrepreneurial intention, opportunity recognition, innovation, and risk-taking behavior (Garcia & Santos, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2023). Researchers have also argued that ambiguity tolerance enhances individuals' ability to adapt to rapidly changing business environments and fosters proactive responses to uncertainty (Garcia & Santos, 2024; Sadeghi et al., 2023). For Generation Z, whose professional lives are unfolding in an increasingly complex and uncertain global environment, ambiguity tolerance may represent an especially valuable psychological resource. Individuals who are more tolerant of ambiguity may be better equipped to navigate the uncertainties associated with entrepreneurial careers and may therefore exhibit stronger entrepreneurial intentions (Nguyen et al., 2023; Sadeghi et al., 2023). Nevertheless, despite growing evidence regarding the positive effects of ambiguity tolerance, limited research has examined its potential role in moderating the negative influence of fear of failure on entrepreneurial intention.

Although previous studies have investigated fear of failure, entrepreneurial resilience, ambiguity tolerance, and entrepreneurial intention separately, relatively few studies have examined these variables simultaneously within an integrated framework, particularly among Generation Z populations. Existing research suggests that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by a complex interplay of inhibiting and facilitating psychological factors rather than by isolated variables. Fear of failure may discourage entrepreneurial engagement, while resilience and ambiguity tolerance may function as psychological resources that enable individuals to cope with perceived risks and uncertainties. However, empirical evidence regarding the interactive relationships among these constructs remains limited, especially in developing economies where economic instability and uncertainty may amplify the psychological challenges associated with entrepreneurship. Furthermore, most prior studies have focused on direct relationships among variables and have paid comparatively less attention to the moderating mechanisms through which resilience and ambiguity tolerance may weaken the detrimental effects of fear of failure. Given the distinctive socio-economic context faced by Generation Z and the increasing importance of entrepreneurship as a career pathway, examining these relationships may provide valuable theoretical and practical insights for entrepreneurship development initiatives. Such knowledge can contribute to the design of educational programs, entrepreneurial support systems,



and psychological interventions that strengthen resilience, enhance ambiguity tolerance, and reduce the inhibitory influence of fear of failure among young potential entrepreneurs (Ayala & Manzano, 2024; Chen & Zhang, 2025; Garcia & Santos, 2024; Jafari & Zarei, 2023; Mirzaei et al., 2023).

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the effects of fear of failure, entrepreneurial resilience, and ambiguity tolerance on entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z and to investigate the moderating roles of entrepreneurial resilience and ambiguity tolerance in the relationship between fear of failure and entrepreneurial intention.

2. Methods and Materials

This study was applied in terms of purpose and employed a descriptive-survey research design. Given the study hypotheses, which sought to examine causal relationships and the moderating role of psychological constructs on entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z, the research required the collection of empirical evidence from individuals belonging to this generation. The statistical population comprised all university students and young graduates (born between 1996 and 2010) affiliated with universities, science and technology parks, and business accelerators in Tehran in 2026. Since the objective of the study was to assess the behavioral characteristics of this generation within the specific context of the Tehran metropolitan area, a survey approach was adopted to collect data based on participants' lived experiences.

The data collection instrument was a questionnaire derived from standardized scales and consisted of four main sections corresponding to the study variables:

- Fear of Failure (based on the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory [PFAI])
- Entrepreneurial Resilience (based on the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale)
- Ambiguity Tolerance (based on McLain’s Ambiguity Tolerance Scale)
- Entrepreneurial Intention (based on the Liñán and Chen Entrepreneurial Intention Scale)

The questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The sample size was determined using Cochran’s formula for an infinite population and was estimated at 280 respondents. Participants were selected through simple random sampling and convenience sampling within innovation centers. Content validity was used to assess validity, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha. The overall Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.89, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Table 1. Operational Definitions of Variables and Questionnaire Items

Construct	Operational Definition	Questionnaire Items
Fear of Failure	An individual's anxiety and concern regarding the potential consequences of failure in the entrepreneurial process, including loss of capital, social reputation, or self-confidence.	1. Thinking about failure in a new business venture makes me highly anxious. 2. I worry that others will judge me negatively if I fail. 3. The possibility of financial failure prevents me from taking serious entrepreneurial action. 4. I am afraid of investing my time and energy in an idea that may not succeed. 5. Entrepreneurial failure means personal inadequacy to me.
Entrepreneurial Resilience	An individual's ability to recover psychologically, adapt to difficult circumstances, and continue entrepreneurial activities after encountering obstacles or temporary failures.	6. I can quickly overcome work-related problems and obstacles. 7. Difficult challenges in entrepreneurship increase my motivation. 8. Even when conditions deteriorate, I do not lose focus. 9. I have a strong ability to manage stress associated with starting a new venture. 10. After every failure, I return stronger and more experienced.
Ambiguity Tolerance	The degree to which an individual is willing and capable of dealing with uncertain, unpredictable, and ambiguous situations in the entrepreneurial process without experiencing excessive psychological pressure.	11. Working in situations where outcomes are not completely clear is attractive to me. 12. Market uncertainty does not discourage me from making efforts.



Entrepreneurial Intention	An individual's serious and conscious intention to establish a new business and choose entrepreneurship as a future career path.	<p>13. I prefer dealing with complex and multidimensional problems rather than repetitive tasks.</p> <p>14. Rapid and unforeseen changes in the business environment are stimulating challenges for me.</p> <p>15. I consider ambiguity in career paths a natural part of the success process.</p> <p>16. I have seriously planned to establish my own business.</p> <p>17. My primary future goal is to become an entrepreneur rather than an employee.</p> <p>18. I am willing to make every effort to start an independent economic activity.</p> <p>19. I am constantly seeking new opportunities to create value or provide services.</p> <p>20. I am confident that I will own my own business within the next five years.</p>
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In the data analysis stage, descriptive statistics were first employed to illustrate respondents’ demographic characteristics and the status of the study variables. Subsequently, advanced statistical analyses were conducted to test the research hypotheses. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the direct hypotheses (the effects of fear of failure, resilience, and ambiguity tolerance on entrepreneurial intention). To test the fourth hypothesis, which involved a moderating relationship, hierarchical regression analysis and the PROCESS macro (Model 1) were utilized to investigate the moderating effects of resilience and ambiguity tolerance on the relationship between fear of failure and entrepreneurial intention through interaction effects. All analyses were performed using SPSS version 26 to ensure the accuracy of the findings in explaining the behavioral model of Generation Z in Tehran.

3. Findings and Results

To evaluate the status of the study variables, namely fear of failure, entrepreneurial resilience, ambiguity tolerance, and entrepreneurial intention, descriptive analyses were first conducted to provide an overall picture of respondents’ characteristics and the distribution of data. These analyses present key indicators, including minimum values, maximum values, means, and standard deviations for each of the main research variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Fear of Failure	1.80	5.00	3.41	0.71
Entrepreneurial Resilience	2.10	5.00	3.76	0.64
Ambiguity Tolerance	1.90	5.00	3.58	0.67
Entrepreneurial Intention	2.00	5.00	3.84	0.60

The descriptive findings indicate that entrepreneurial intention, with a mean score of 3.84, was relatively favorable among the participants. This finding suggests that despite facing complex conditions and uncertain career prospects, Generation Z in Tehran exhibits a relatively positive attitude toward establishing independent businesses and perceives entrepreneurship as a viable pathway for personal and professional advancement. This situation may be attributed to changing occupational values among younger generations, a stronger preference for independence, greater career flexibility, and a desire to create personal and social value.

Entrepreneurial resilience ranked second, with a mean score of 3.76, indicating that respondents possessed a relatively adequate level of psychological recovery, endurance, and persistence under challenging circumstances. This finding suggests that a considerable proportion of Generation Z individuals have the capacity to rebuild themselves and continue their efforts when confronted with obstacles and setbacks. Since entrepreneurship is inherently associated with risk, uncertainty, and temporary failures, such resilience may serve as a significant factor in strengthening entrepreneurial intention within this generation.



Similarly, ambiguity tolerance, with a mean score of 3.58, indicates that respondents were moderately capable of accepting uncertain, complex, and unpredictable situations, although this characteristic had not yet reached a highly developed level. Given that entrepreneurial environments, particularly within unstable economies, are characterized by ambiguity and decision-making under incomplete information, this moderate level of ambiguity tolerance suggests that Generation Z possesses the capacity to engage in entrepreneurial activities but still requires training, practical experience, and psychological empowerment to strengthen this capability.

In contrast, fear of failure, with a mean score of 3.41, indicates that this factor remains a significant psychological barrier among respondents. Although the mean score is not exceptionally high, it suggests that a substantial proportion of participants remain sensitive to the economic, social, and personal consequences of failure. Consequently, these concerns may influence their decisions regarding participation in entrepreneurial activities. In other words, although Generation Z demonstrates a relatively favorable inclination toward entrepreneurship, part of this intention may still be weakened by concerns about the consequences of failure.

Overall, the descriptive findings suggest that entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z in Tehran is relatively strong; however, this intention emerges within a network of interacting psychological factors. Entrepreneurial resilience and ambiguity tolerance appear to strengthen entrepreneurial intention, whereas fear of failure may function as an inhibiting factor. Therefore, subsequent inferential analyses were conducted to determine the strength and direction of these relationships and to assess whether positive psychological factors can mitigate the negative effects of fear of failure.

To test the research hypotheses and examine the relationships among the study variables, Spearman correlation analysis and hierarchical regression analysis were employed. Since the data were collected using a five-point Likert scale and normality tests (Kolmogorov–Smirnov) indicated non-normal distributions, Spearman's rank-order correlation was selected as a nonparametric statistical method suitable for ordinal data. Hierarchical regression analysis was subsequently used to assess direct and moderating effects. The significance level was set at 0.05, and all analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between fear of failure and entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial resilience and entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between ambiguity tolerance and entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z.

Table 3. Spearman Correlation Results for Research Hypotheses

Variables	Spearman Correlation Coefficient (ρ)	Sig.
Fear of Failure ↔ Entrepreneurial Intention	-0.42	0.000
Entrepreneurial Resilience ↔ Entrepreneurial Intention	0.55	0.000
Ambiguity Tolerance ↔ Entrepreneurial Intention	0.48	0.001

The correlation coefficient of -0.42 indicates a significant negative relationship between fear of failure and entrepreneurial intention. This finding suggests that as fear of failure increases among Generation Z individuals, their willingness to pursue entrepreneurship decreases significantly. The result highlights the importance of fear of failure as a cognitive-emotional barrier among young adults in Tehran.

The correlation coefficient of 0.55 indicates a strong positive relationship between entrepreneurial resilience and entrepreneurial intention. This result demonstrates that an individual's ability to recover psychologically from potential setbacks is one of the primary drivers of entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z.

The correlation coefficient of 0.48 reveals a significant positive relationship between ambiguity tolerance and entrepreneurial intention. This finding emphasizes that individuals with higher levels of ambiguity tolerance tend to have more positive attitudes toward uncertain and dynamic business environments, thereby strengthening their entrepreneurial intentions.

Hypothesis 4: Entrepreneurial resilience and ambiguity tolerance moderate the relationship between fear of failure and entrepreneurial intention.

To test this hypothesis, hierarchical regression analysis was employed to examine the interaction effects of the moderator variables (Fear × Resilience) and (Fear × Ambiguity Tolerance).

Table 4. Hierarchical Regression Results for Moderating Effects

Model	Variables Entered	β (Interaction Effect)	ΔR^2	Sig.
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1	Fear of Failure, Entrepreneurial Resilience, Ambiguity Tolerance	—	—	0.000
2	Fear × Entrepreneurial Resilience	0.22	0.04	0.008
3	Fear × Ambiguity Tolerance	0.19	0.03	0.015

The regression results indicate that the interaction effects of entrepreneurial resilience ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < .01$) and ambiguity tolerance ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < .05$) are both statistically significant. The significant increase in the coefficient of determination (ΔR^2) confirms that these variables function as psychological buffers. In other words, among individuals with high levels of resilience and ambiguity tolerance, the detrimental effect of fear of failure on entrepreneurial intention is substantially reduced. Therefore, the fourth research hypothesis is supported.

Table 5. Model Fit Indices and Regression Coefficients

Predictor Variable	Standardized β	t	Sig.
Fear of Failure	-0.32	-5.12	0.000
Entrepreneurial Resilience	0.35	6.04	0.000
Ambiguity Tolerance	0.27	4.21	0.000

Model Statistics: $F = 102.50$; $p = 0.000$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.62$

The final regression model demonstrates that fear of failure, entrepreneurial resilience, and ambiguity tolerance collectively explain 62% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z. Within this model, entrepreneurial resilience exhibits the strongest predictive effect ($\beta = 0.35$), followed by fear of failure (negative effect) and ambiguity tolerance. These findings provide a comprehensive explanation of the entrepreneurial behavioral pattern of Generation Z in Tehran.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study provide important insights into the psychological determinants of entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z in Tehran. The results demonstrated that entrepreneurial intention among the respondents was at a relatively favorable level, suggesting that many members of Generation Z perceive entrepreneurship as a viable and attractive career path. At the same time, the findings confirmed that entrepreneurial intention is shaped by a complex interplay of psychological factors, including fear of failure, entrepreneurial resilience, and ambiguity tolerance. Collectively, these variables explained 62% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention, indicating that psychological characteristics constitute a substantial component of entrepreneurial decision-making among young individuals. This finding supports contemporary perspectives in entrepreneurship research, which emphasize that entrepreneurial behavior is not solely a function of economic opportunities or environmental conditions but is significantly influenced by individuals' psychological readiness to engage with uncertainty, risk, and potential failure (Martinez-Rodriguez et al., 2024; Shirokova et al., 2024; Thompson et al., 2023).

The first hypothesis proposed that fear of failure would be significantly associated with entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z. The results confirmed this hypothesis, revealing a significant negative relationship between fear of failure and entrepreneurial intention ($\rho = -0.42$). Furthermore, regression analysis demonstrated that fear of failure exerted a significant negative predictive effect on entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = -0.32$). These findings indicate that individuals who experience greater anxiety regarding the consequences of entrepreneurial failure are less likely to demonstrate a strong intention to establish a business venture. This outcome is consistent with the theoretical argument that entrepreneurship inherently involves uncertainty, and individuals who perceive failure as a threat to their financial security, social status, or self-worth may avoid entrepreneurial activities as a means of reducing psychological discomfort. For Generation Z, which has grown up in a highly competitive and uncertain socio-economic environment, concerns regarding failure may be intensified by social comparison, digital visibility, and increasing pressure to achieve success. Consequently, fear of failure may function as a significant cognitive-emotional barrier that discourages entrepreneurial action. The present finding is consistent with the results reported by Kumar et al., who found that fear of failure significantly reduced entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z participants across multiple countries (Kumar et al., 2024). Similarly, Cacciotti et al. emphasized that fear of failure can inhibit entrepreneurial behavior by increasing risk aversion and reducing opportunity exploitation (Cacciotti et al., 2023). The findings also align with studies conducted by Jafari and Zarei and by Mirzaei et al., both of which reported that fear of failure negatively influences entrepreneurial intention among university students and young adults (Jafari & Zarei, 2023; Mirzaei et



al., 2023). Therefore, the present study reinforces the notion that fear of failure remains one of the most significant psychological obstacles to entrepreneurship among young individuals.

The second hypothesis examined the relationship between entrepreneurial resilience and entrepreneurial intention. The results revealed a strong positive relationship between these variables ($\rho = 0.55$), while regression analysis indicated that entrepreneurial resilience was the strongest predictor of entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.35$). This finding suggests that individuals who possess greater psychological resilience are more likely to develop strong entrepreneurial aspirations and remain committed to pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities despite potential obstacles. Entrepreneurial resilience enables individuals to recover from setbacks, maintain motivation under pressure, and interpret challenges as opportunities for growth rather than as indicators of personal inadequacy. Such characteristics are particularly important in entrepreneurial environments where uncertainty, failure, and resource constraints are common experiences. The finding is highly consistent with contemporary entrepreneurship literature emphasizing resilience as a critical factor in entrepreneurial success and persistence. Ayala and Manzano demonstrated that entrepreneurial resilience significantly enhances entrepreneurial intention and persistence among Generation Z individuals operating in volatile environments (Ayala & Manzano, 2024). Likewise, Chen and Zhang reported that resilient young entrepreneurs are more likely to sustain their entrepreneurial intentions over time, even after experiencing setbacks and failures (Chen & Zhang, 2025). Similar conclusions were reached by Lee and Wang, who found that resilience mediates the relationship between economic uncertainty and entrepreneurial intention by helping individuals maintain confidence in uncertain environments (Lee & Wang, 2023). Furthermore, Zandi and Kazemi found that resilience strengthens startup intentions under economic crisis conditions by reducing the psychological impact of external threats (Zandi & Kazemi, 2022). The consistency of these findings suggests that entrepreneurial resilience constitutes a key psychological asset for Generation Z entrepreneurs and may be one of the most effective targets for entrepreneurship development programs.

The third hypothesis proposed a significant relationship between ambiguity tolerance and entrepreneurial intention. The results supported this hypothesis, revealing a positive and statistically significant relationship between ambiguity tolerance and entrepreneurial intention ($\rho = 0.48$), with ambiguity tolerance also exerting a positive predictive effect in the regression model ($\beta = 0.27$). This finding indicates that individuals who are more comfortable dealing with uncertainty, complexity, and incomplete information are more likely to express a strong desire to pursue entrepreneurial careers. Entrepreneurship frequently requires decision-making under conditions where outcomes cannot be accurately predicted, making ambiguity tolerance an essential psychological characteristic for entrepreneurial engagement. Individuals with high ambiguity tolerance tend to view uncertainty as a manageable challenge rather than as a source of threat, allowing them to recognize and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities more effectively. The present finding aligns with the results of Nguyen et al., who demonstrated that ambiguity tolerance positively influences entrepreneurial intention and risk-taking behavior among university students (Nguyen et al., 2023). Similarly, Garcia and Santos reported that ambiguity tolerance enhances innovation and entrepreneurial adaptability among Generation Z entrepreneurs by enabling them to navigate rapidly changing business environments (Garcia & Santos, 2024). The findings are also consistent with those reported by Sadeghi et al., who found that ambiguity tolerance facilitates entrepreneurial opportunity recognition among Generation Z students (Sadeghi et al., 2023). Collectively, these studies suggest that ambiguity tolerance serves as a valuable psychological resource that encourages entrepreneurial engagement by reducing discomfort associated with uncertainty and promoting adaptive responses to changing circumstances.

The most theoretically significant finding of the present study concerns the moderating roles of entrepreneurial resilience and ambiguity tolerance in the relationship between fear of failure and entrepreneurial intention. The results demonstrated that both interaction effects were statistically significant, indicating that entrepreneurial resilience and ambiguity tolerance reduce the negative impact of fear of failure on entrepreneurial intention. Specifically, individuals with high levels of resilience and ambiguity tolerance were less affected by fear of failure than those with lower levels of these psychological resources. This finding suggests that resilience and ambiguity tolerance function as psychological buffers that protect individuals from the adverse consequences of failure-related concerns. In practical terms, although fear of failure may discourage entrepreneurial engagement, resilient individuals are more likely to recover from negative thoughts and maintain confidence in their ability to succeed. Similarly, individuals with greater ambiguity tolerance may perceive uncertainty and potential failure as inherent



aspects of entrepreneurship rather than as reasons to avoid entrepreneurial activities. These results support psychological resilience theories, which emphasize that protective psychological resources can mitigate the influence of stressors and perceived threats on behavior. The findings are consistent with the conclusions of Ayala and Manzano, who argued that resilience enables aspiring entrepreneurs to maintain entrepreneurial commitment despite adverse conditions (Ayala & Manzano, 2024). They are also compatible with the findings of Chen and Zhang, who highlighted the role of resilience in sustaining entrepreneurial persistence despite repeated setbacks (Chen & Zhang, 2025). Moreover, the findings complement the work of Garcia and Santos and Nguyen et al., who suggested that ambiguity tolerance helps entrepreneurs cope effectively with uncertainty and unpredictable outcomes (Garcia & Santos, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2023). The results also extend previous findings reported by Mirzaei et al., who identified psychological resilience as a mediating mechanism through which the negative effects of fear of failure on entrepreneurial intention may be reduced (Mirzaei et al., 2023). By demonstrating moderating rather than merely direct effects, the present study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how positive psychological resources interact with negative psychological factors to shape entrepreneurial intention.

The overall pattern of findings supports emerging perspectives suggesting that entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z should be understood through a multidimensional psychological framework. Generation Z individuals are simultaneously exposed to unprecedented entrepreneurial opportunities and substantial uncertainty. While digital technologies, innovation ecosystems, and changing labor markets create new possibilities for entrepreneurial engagement, economic instability and social pressures also increase concerns regarding failure and uncertainty. Consequently, entrepreneurial intention among this generation appears to depend not only on reducing psychological barriers such as fear of failure but also on strengthening positive psychological resources such as resilience and ambiguity tolerance. These findings are consistent with the broader literature emphasizing the importance of psychological traits in entrepreneurial development among Generation Z (Nazari et al., 2024; Shirokova et al., 2024; Thompson et al., 2023). They also support the argument advanced by Ahmadi et al. and Bagheri et al. that entrepreneurial intention in Generation Z is strongly influenced by individual psychological characteristics and personality-related factors (Ahmadi et al., 2024; Bagheri et al., 2024). Furthermore, the results align with the observations of Martinez-Rodriguez et al., who highlighted the central role of psychological maturity and adaptive capacities in fostering entrepreneurial aspirations among young individuals (Martinez-Rodriguez et al., 2024). Taken together, the findings indicate that entrepreneurship promotion initiatives targeting Generation Z should move beyond traditional business skills training and incorporate psychological development strategies aimed at strengthening resilience, enhancing tolerance for ambiguity, and reducing the debilitating effects of fear of failure.

One limitation of the present study is that the data were collected exclusively from Generation Z students and graduates in Tehran, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other geographic regions, cultural contexts, or age groups. Additionally, the use of self-report questionnaires may have increased the possibility of social desirability bias and subjective response tendencies. The cross-sectional design of the study also prevents the establishment of definitive causal relationships among the variables. Furthermore, entrepreneurial intention rather than actual entrepreneurial behavior was examined, meaning that the findings reflect participants' intentions and attitudes rather than realized entrepreneurial outcomes.

Future research should investigate these relationships using longitudinal designs to determine how fear of failure, entrepreneurial resilience, and ambiguity tolerance influence entrepreneurial behavior over time. Researchers may also explore additional psychological variables such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy, optimism, growth mindset, emotional intelligence, and psychological capital as potential mediators or moderators. Comparative studies involving different generations, cultural contexts, and economic environments could further clarify the extent to which these psychological mechanisms vary across populations. Qualitative and mixed-methods approaches may also provide deeper insights into the lived experiences underlying entrepreneurial decision-making among young people.

From a practical perspective, universities, entrepreneurship centers, incubators, and policymakers should place greater emphasis on developing psychological competencies alongside technical entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship education programs should incorporate resilience-building interventions, failure-management training, and experiential learning activities that help young individuals become more comfortable with uncertainty and setbacks. Mentoring programs involving experienced entrepreneurs who can share real-world experiences of overcoming failure may also reduce fear-related barriers.



In addition, innovation ecosystems should foster supportive environments that normalize learning from failure and encourage experimentation. Such initiatives can strengthen entrepreneurial confidence among Generation Z and increase the likelihood that entrepreneurial intentions will translate into sustainable entrepreneurial action.

Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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