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ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AND THEIR ANTECEDENTS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This research conducts a systematic literature review to integrate the existing literature on entrepreneurial intentions (EI) and their key antecedents. A structured literature search was conducted in the most prominent databases, including Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar, covering literature from 1980 to January 2026. Using predefined criteria, 115 peer-reviewed articles were chosen for analysis. Both citation analysis and thematic analysis were used to identify the most prominent research trends, key studies, and emerging themes. The findings reveal that there are five key thematic areas: foundational theories of entrepreneurial intention, demographic and personality variables, forms of capital (human, social, and psychological), entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurship education, with a focus on perceived university support. The literature review confirms that self-efficacy and entrepreneurship education are established strong predictors of EI, but the role of demographic variables is inconclusive. This research makes a contribution by providing a comprehensive and structured literature review of the existing literature on EI, identifying the gaps in the existing literature, and providing suggestions for future research, especially in the areas of entrepreneurship policy and cross-cultural studies.

Keywords:*Entrepreneurial intention, Entrepreneurship education, Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, Systematic literature review, Perceived university support*

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1.Introduction

An earlier theory argued that entrepreneurs are born, not made. This theory has since been discredited by studies showing that entrepreneurship skills can be acquired through learning and experience, rather than being inherited at birth (Gelard & Saleh, 2011; Singh & Singh, 2020). This means that people, especially those in higher education, can be trained to be entrepreneurs. Findings from empirical research in higher education institutions suggest that entrepreneurship education and the building of relevant competencies have a substantial impact on students' EI (Diepolder et al., 2025; Xu & Lee, 2025).

The literature on EI has grown significantly since the pioneering studies by Shapero and his associates more than four decades ago (Shapero & Sokol, 1982; Shapero, 1984). Bird (1988) made important contributions to this literature by identifying the reasons and circumstances underlying the decision to start new ventures. She argued that intentions are the driving forces for goal setting, commitment, organization, and entrepreneurial actions. Since then, a large number of studies have examined the factors influencing EI, and these studies have often concluded mixed results. The majority of the literature on EI is based on Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Shapero and Sokol's (1982) Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM), as well as other sociological and social psychological theories (Bandura, 1982; Shapero, 1984; Ajzen, 1991). The integration of these theoretical perspectives has improved the conceptual and methodological sophistication of the literature on EI. Recent applications of the TPB continue to validate its applicability and incorporate new variables, such as mindset, competence, and sustainability orientation, among students (Husnatarina & Rizaldi, 2026; Suwandi et al., 2026).

Entrepreneurship has gained significant interest from researchers and policymakers over the past few decades. The main reason for such interest is the growing need for entrepreneurs who can facilitate economic growth by turning innovative ideas into successful ventures (Turker & Selcuk, 2009). It helps in creating employment opportunities (Devi, 2023), thus increasing the nation's well-being (Saoula et al., 2023). A drop in the unemployment rate can boost per capita income and purchasing power, as well as the national economy's growth (Awalludin et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial marketing has also gained significance in the current scenario, as it helps businesses in adapting to the changing market conditions and surviving in the competitive market (Yadav & Bansal, 2021; Yadav et al., 2024).

Students at universities are viewed as the country's future entrepreneurs. Morris et al. (2017) argued that entrepreneurship is a promising career path because it allows students to turn their ideas into reality while achieving independence and self-reliance. Entrepreneurship provides individuals with flexibility and autonomy, making it an attractive option for youth and university pass-outs (Shiva & Jain, 2012). Evidence from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia suggests that students' entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by educational experiences and institutional support (Vasilescu et al., 2025; Perez-Bonaventura et al., 2026). Recent research in developing and emerging economies suggests that entrepreneurial intentions are increasingly linked to financial capability, institutional support, and sustainability goals (Chandra et al., 2024; Nayak & Nayak, 2025; Fallatah & Hoda, 2026). Comparative studies suggest that youth EI differ across nations in relation to education systems, cultural factors, and entrepreneurial role models (Bhaskar & Seth, 2025; Xuan & Yankai, 2025). Therefore, it is important to understand EI before the actual creation of the business, as EI indicates the clear direction of an individual's goals and the intended means to achieve them (Singh & Singh, 2020). Understanding the antecedents of EI is also vital. Recent empirical studies have identified entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, gender, and culture as important interactional determinants of entrepreneurial intention among university students (Krishna & Agrawal, 2026; Mhlongo et al., 2026). Therefore, a systematic literature review is required to form a holistic understanding of EI among university students. Literature reviews help in understanding the existing body of knowledge and provide insights into research trends and gaps (Batista-Canino et al., 2024). Despite the growing literature of empirical research, there is a lack of integrative reviews on the educational, psychological,

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and institutional antecedents of entrepreneurial intention, especially with post-2020 evidence (Yusriani et al., 2025). The current study seeks to contribute to the understanding of research on EI in two major ways. Firstly, the study will use citation analysis to determine the key studies and the major areas of research in the field. Secondly, the study will use thematic analysis to determine the major themes and sub-themes associated with EI.
While research in this field is expanding rapidly, the evidence is fragmented across individual, educational, and contextual aspects of findings that are rarely viewed through an integrated framework (Rasool et al., 2018; Donaldson et al., 2021; Loi et al., 2024). Previous research emphasizes the significance of factors like entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurship education, and institutional support, yet these variables are often assessed independently or within specific contexts (Bandura, 1997; Anjum et al., 2020; Galvão et al., 2025; Ye & Kang, 2025). Thus, a synthesized and thematically organized perspective is needed to consolidate these streams of work in order to elucidate how major variables interrelate and jointly shape entrepreneurial intention across studies.
Based on the above, this study has the following objectives:
1. To explain the core concepts of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intentions.
2. To determine the prominent themes in the study of entrepreneurial intention using thematic analysis.
3. To offer an integrated synthesis of the major drivers of entrepreneurial intention by collating and categorizing them into thematic clusters.
4. To recommend future research directions based on the identified gaps in the literature.
Based on a systematic review of existing research, this paper provides an integrated perspective on research on entrepreneurial intention, helping to achieve a better understanding, improved synthesis, and meaningful directions for future research.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Brief history behind the word “Entrepreneur”

The name "entrepreneur" comes from the thirteenth-century French word “entreprendre”, which means "to do something" or "to undertake." By the sixteenth century, the term entrepreneur was used to describe someone who established a business. The phrase was most likely coined in 1730 by an economist named Richard Cantillon, who identified the willingness to assume the personal risk of financial loss in a new venture as the distinguishing trait of an entrepreneur. During the early nineteenth century, economists and academics such as Jean-Baptiste Say and John Stuart Mill raised awareness of the academic use of the term "entrepreneur." Say stressed the role of the entrepreneur in producing value by reallocating resources from less lucrative fields to more lucrative areas. Mill popularized the concept of "entrepreneur" in his 1848 book “Principles of Political Economy” to refer to someone who takes on both the risk and management aspects of a business. In this approach, Mill contrasted an entrepreneur with other types of company owners (such as stockholders in a corporation) who carry monetary risk but are not actively involved in the organization's day-to-day operations or management.
Two notable twentieth-century economists, Joseph Schumpeter and Israel Kirzner, expanded the scholarly knowledge of entrepreneurship. Schumpeter (1934) stressed the entrepreneur's role as a creative person who brings about economic change by introducing new products or methods of production. In contrast to Schumpeter, Kirzner considered entrepreneurship as an approach to investigation. Kirzner's entrepreneur sees previously unexplored commercial opportunities. Current studies on entrepreneurship continue to develop these foundations by emphasizing innovation, opportunity recognition, and sustainability as core entrepreneurial outcomes (Schwegler & Petty, 2025).
Previous researchers asserted that entrepreneurs are the driving force behind enterprises and that entrepreneurs typically have a higher risk tolerance than non-entrepreneurs (Llados-Masllorens & Ruiz-Dotras, 2021). From an economist's viewpoint, an entrepreneur provides resources such as land, labor, capital, technology, materials, and other assets that collectively

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lead to value addition (Elfakhani & Ahmed, 2013). Entrepreneurs perform external as well as internal functions. Externally, they operate as job providers for job seekers. Internally, entrepreneurs reduce their reliance on others, boost their self-confidence, and have more purchasing power. Evidence from youth-centered studies also shows that these roles are increasingly linked to financial capability, competence, and mindset among would-be entrepreneurs (Fallatah & Hoda, 2026; Suwandi et al., 2026).

2.2 Entrepreneurship & Emergence of Entrepreneurship

2.2.1 Entrepreneurship

It is generally acknowledged as a valid and significant career choice. It has been described in many different ways, from very specific definitions that focus on the creation of one's own business to more general definitions that highlight autonomy, initiative, creativity, and risk-taking propensity (Van Gelderen et al., 2008). It is more than just starting a business; it also represents an attitude that promotes innovation and taking action. There is a growing literature that conceptualizes entrepreneurship as a competence- and mindset-based process, especially in educational contexts (Caputo et al., 2025; Neupane et al., 2025).

It is generally considered one of the main drivers of economic development. In other words, by establishing new businesses, entrepreneurs can contribute to job creation, innovation, and competitiveness, which in turn can support economic development at the national level (Markova & Akaiso, 2023). As a result, entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a basic strategy for economic and social development. This developmental approach is also embodied in sustainability and digital entrepreneurship initiatives as identified in recent studies on entrepreneurial intention (Ademi et al., 2025; Nayak & Nayak, 2025).

2.2.2 Emergence of Entrepreneurship

In recent years, many countries have faced the challenge of rising unemployment due to economic instability and financial crises. The rising unemployment has led to various social and economic problems such as poverty, crime, and low living standards. As a result, entrepreneurship has emerged as a viable solution to this problem (Ahmed et al., 2010; Rasool et al., 2018).

Economists have also defined entrepreneurship or self-employment as a successful means to overcome the problem of job scarcity. When people start their own businesses, they not only provide jobs for themselves but also for others. This makes entrepreneurship an important tool for economic and social stability.

Cross-national evidence indicates that youth entrepreneurial intention is influenced by educational systems, labor market structures, and institutional support (Bhaskar & Seth, 2025; Vasilescu et al., 2025). As a result, governments and institutions across the world have started promoting entrepreneurship as a means of educating and financing entrepreneurs. Through the promotion of entrepreneurship, countries hope to address issues such as unemployment, productivity, and economic resilience. The fact that unemployment is a universal problem means that it is being increasingly promoted as a long-term solution to economic problems. The policy-led focus on entrepreneurship education and support has been found to enhance EI, especially among university students (Mhlongo et al., 2026; Perez-Bonaventura et al., 2026).

The phenomenon of entrepreneurship has also been explained by the categorization of entrepreneurship into necessity entrepreneurship and opportunity-driven entrepreneurship. While necessity entrepreneurship is driven mainly by a lack of job opportunities, opportunity-driven entrepreneurship is driven by the recognition of market opportunities and innovation and growth (Reynolds et al., 2005). Empirical studies show that opportunity-driven entrepreneurship is more closely linked to entrepreneurial intention among university-educated people (Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023). This categorization emphasizes that entrepreneurship can be driven both by economic necessity and by innovation and growth,

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providing a more comprehensive explanation for why people engage in entrepreneurial activities.

2.3 Entrepreneurial Intentions

Entrepreneurial intentions have been recognized as an increasingly significant area of study in the field of entrepreneurship. This is evident in the amount of literature and citations that have been published in top academic journals. There is a collective interest among scholars, practitioners, and policymakers regarding the formation of EI and the factors that shape it (Paiz, 2014). These are defined as the individual's deliberate mental state that guides attention, experiences, and behavior towards planned entrepreneurial activities. It includes intentions, desires, and determination to start and run a business. More recent evidence suggests that intention formation is a function of the complex interplay between psychological, educational, and contextual variables rather than individual predictors (Mia et al., 2025; Saoula et al., 2025).

Entrepreneurship not only creates employment opportunities but also leads to innovation, productivity, and competitiveness, hence contributing to economic development (Awwad & Al-Aseer, 2021; Porfírio et al., 2023). Over the past years, there have been significant changes in the youth's EI (Shukla et al., 2021). As a result, the cultivation of entrepreneurial skills and intentions among the youth has become a key part of the development agenda across the globe (Aboobaker & Renjini D., 2020). EI is considered a strong predictor of entrepreneurial action (Gaddi et al., 2024).

When studying the literature on EI, two main research strands emerge. Two important developments from the field of studies that are highly pertinent for EI research are Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) TRA (Theory of Reasoned Action) and Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen in 1991 is one of the most widely used models to explain human behavior and has been widely used in the context of entrepreneurial intentions (Ajzen, 2012). Another approach focuses specifically on entrepreneurship and is based on the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) developed by Shapero and Sokol in 1982.

Krueger and Carsrud (1993) applied the TPB to the field of EI, improving the model's relevance to entrepreneurship studies. Since then, EI studies have expanded to cover a variety of psychological, social, and contextual factors. Empirical evidence continues to support TPB-based models of entrepreneurial intention among university students in different cultural contexts (Baba et al., 2025; Husnatarina & Rizaldi, 2026).

While the concept of entrepreneurial intention is not new, there has been an expansion of literature in this field, especially after 2010 (Rasool et al., 2018). This trend shows that understanding the processes involved in the formation of entrepreneurial intentions is a key concern in entrepreneurship research.

Conclusively, entrepreneurial intention is the core antecedent of entrepreneurial behavior. By understanding the factors that influence EI, it is possible to develop more effective educational programs and policies to encourage entrepreneurship among students and young professionals.

3. Research Methodology

A systematic literature review (SLR) is a methodical procedure used to search, assess, and integrate the existing literature on a specific subject (Pati & Lorusso, 2018). SLRs help in the summarization of academic disciplines, theme identification, construction of conceptual frameworks, and formulation of hypotheses for future studies (Abid et al., 2023). Recently, SLRs have received increasing attention not only in the natural sciences but also in the social sciences and humanities (Mangas-Vega et al., 2018). Recent entrepreneurship-themed literature reviews further emphasize the appropriateness of SLRs in synthesizing disparate empirical and theoretical streams of intention research (Yusriani et al., 2025).

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This paper offers a systematic review of the literature on EI that has been published in high-impact factor journals. The criteria for journal selection included three main categories: entrepreneurial intentions, students' perceptions concerning entrepreneurial intentions, and antecedents of entrepreneurial intentions. The literature search included the main databases: Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. The grey literature, including theses, dissertations, working papers, government publications, and conference proceedings, was not included. Similar criteria for database selection and the absence of grey literature have been used in recent EI reviews to ensure consistency, quality control, and replicability (Liu & Peng, 2025).

The literature search was conducted in a structured and replicable manner using relevant academic databases to search for studies on factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions. Boolean operators, truncation, and phrase searching were used in the following core search string:

(“entrep*” AND “intent*”) OR (“entrepreneurial intention”) AND (“student” OR “education”)

The search was restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles published in English. An initial search yielded 215 research articles. After removing 28 duplicates and limiting the search to English-language articles, 187 articles were left. Screening based on abstracts resulted in the removal of 62 articles that did not focus on entrepreneurial intentions. Only articles that were open-access and full-text articles were considered, resulting in 125 articles. Through a careful review of the full texts, articles that did not focus on entrepreneurial intentions were removed. Finally, 115 articles, published between 1980 and January 2026, were selected for in-depth analysis. Although the time period was extended, more emphasis was placed on the research articles from the past five to ten years to align with current academic trends.

Citation analysis was used first to identify the most influential studies within the time period. “THEME” extraction followed, based on patterns of citations, and themes were developed through interpretation of the reviewed articles. Consistent with Ryan and Bernard (2003), themes capture the central concepts of a study, such as arguments, key ideas, research questions, constructs, and measures. The combined use of citation and thematic analysis has been suggested in recent EI research to provide a balance between influence mapping and conceptual analysis (Donaldson et al., 2021; Batista-Canino et al., 2024; Galvão et al., 2025).

The important sources of literature reviewed are journals like Education + Training, Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Journal of Business Research, Frontiers in Psychology, and Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, among many others. The process of identification and screening is represented through the PRISMA framework, which explains the selection of studies and the body of literature used in this review.

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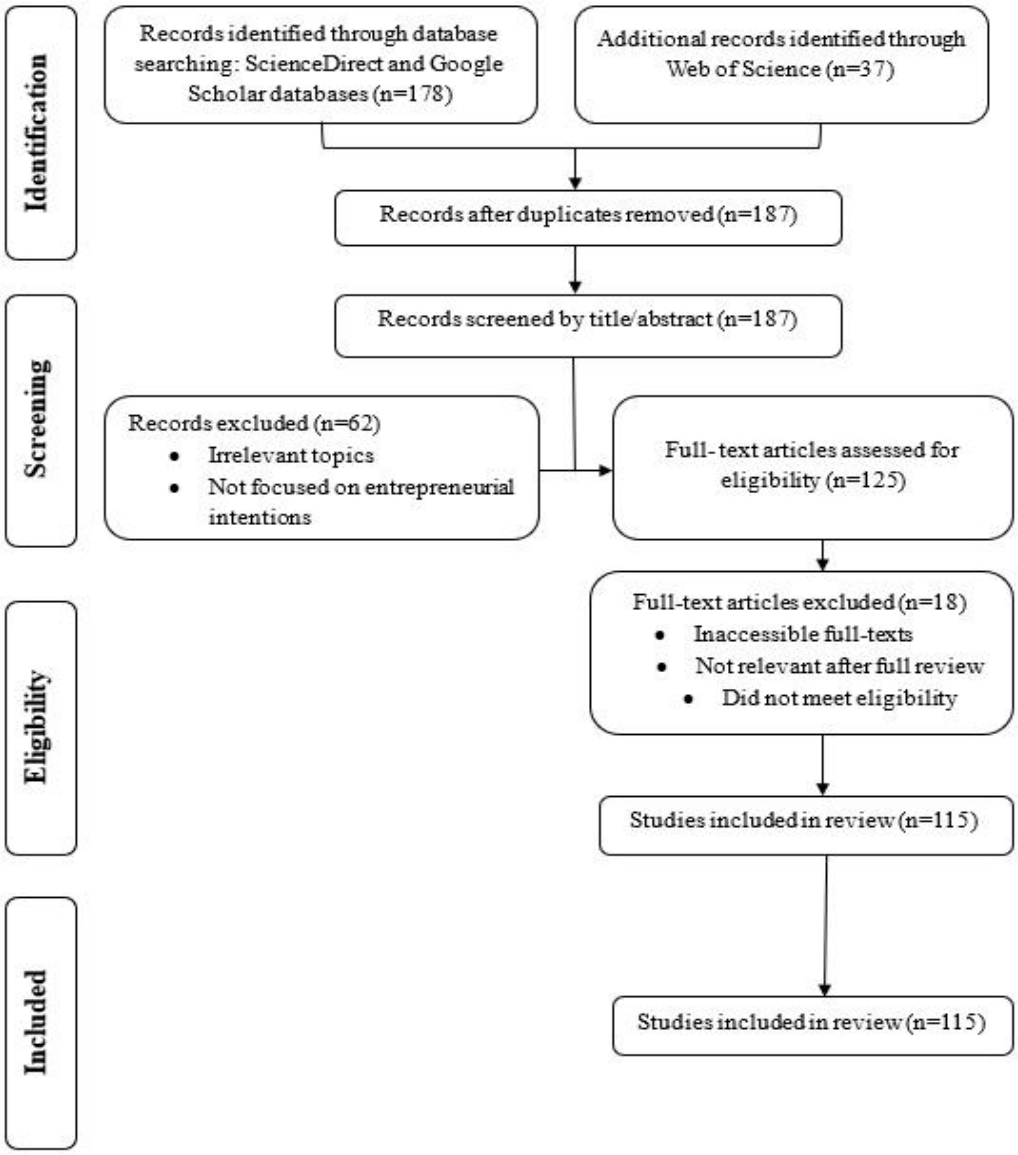

Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram Showing Article Selection for the Systematic Review

A systematic identification, screening, and inclusion process, similar to the PRISMA guidelines, was adopted. The records were searched in several databases. Following the removal of duplicates, the remaining records were screened based on their title and abstract. The full text of the potentially relevant studies was evaluated for inclusion based on predetermined criteria for inclusion and exclusion.

Systematic reviews emphasize rigor, transparency, and relevance over mere volume, aiming to integrate the most relevant and highest-quality evidence in line with specific research questions (Tranfield et al., 2003; Snyder, 2019). In the current review, many records were removed due to a broad treatment of entrepreneurship that did not specifically target entrepreneurial intention, a lack of theoretical or empirical alignment with the study aims, methodological issues, or failure to meet language and accessibility criteria. Similar rationales for exclusion have been explicitly documented in recent reviews focused on intention to avoid conceptual dilution (Yusriani et al., 2025). Furthermore, a concentrated dataset allows for a more comprehensive examination of themes, theories, and methodologies, thus improving the validity of analysis and interpretation (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Some review articles stringently selected samples of similar or even smaller sizes, have been well accepted in the

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field of entrepreneurship and management studies, especially when the focus is more conceptually specific (for example, entrepreneurial intentions as opposed to entrepreneurship in general). Recent reviews on EI suggest that the depth of analysis and integration of theory is valued over quantity when the scope of research is clearly defined (Galvão et al., 2025). Therefore, the use of 115 stringently selected studies is a good trade-off between scope and depth, allowing for sound pattern detection and identification.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Descriptive Analysis of Entrepreneurial Intention Research

This section presents the descriptive analysis of the studies that have been reviewed, summarizing the overall features of the studies in terms of year-wise trends in citations and publications, major themes of the studies, evolution of themes over time, theoretical underpinnings, country focus, methodological approaches, sampling methods, and population/sample focus. The analysis is done based on the studies chosen for this systematic review and is visualized by graphical representations of the networks, such as Year-wise Growth Trend of Publications Reviewed and Citations, Keyword Co-occurrence Network, Time-Theme Evolution Network, Theory Usage Network, Country Focus Network, Method Focus Network, Sampling Technique Network, and Population/Sample Focus Network.

4.1.1 Year-wise Growth Trend of Publications Reviewed and Citations

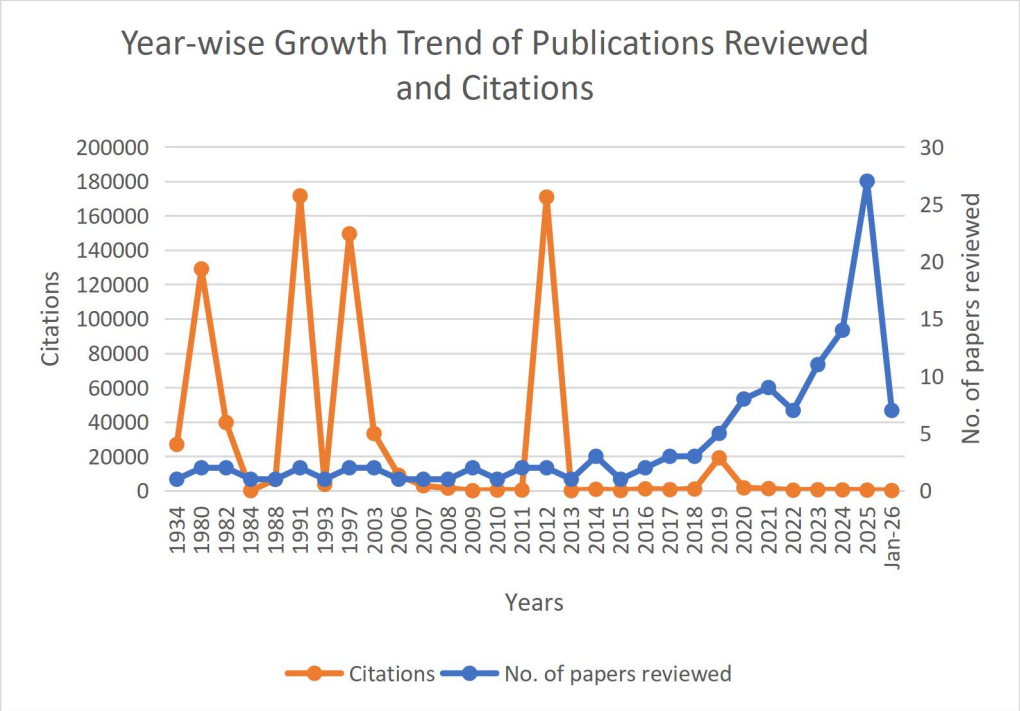

Figure 2: Year-wise Growth Trend of Publications and Citations

Figure 2 illustrates the year-wise evolution of both cited references and the number of reviewed publications in the field of EI. In the early years, the number of reviewed publications was small and scattered, reflecting that EI received sporadic attention from the academic community in its early days. Conversely, the citation pattern in the early years is characterized by a few influential foundational works, reflecting the strong impact of foundational theories such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Entrepreneurial Event Model (Bandura, 1982; Shapero & Sokol, 1982; Ajzen, 1991; Krueger & Carsrud, 1993). From the 2000s, there has been a steady increase in the number of reviewed publications,

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reflecting a steady growth in the field. There is a sharp increase in the number of reviewed publications after 2018, reflecting a strong growth phase in the field of EI. This reflects the increasing interest in entrepreneurship, education, and youth employment, particularly in the university and developing country contexts (Morris et al., 2017; Saoula et al., 2023). The steep increase in the number of publications for the period 2021-January 2026 reflects a recent surge in research activity, driven by the diversification into themes such as university support, psychological capital, sustainability, digital entrepreneurship, and gender (Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023; Galvão et al., 2025; Mhlongo et al., 2026). Overall, the pattern of results suggests a shift from a theory-driven phase to a rapidly growing and empirical field of study in recent years.

Citation analysis is conducted to understand the scholarly visibility of the studies included in this systematic review. It aims to show the distribution of influence in the studies reviewed and to determine the core and peripheral streams of research in EI. Although the review encompasses an extended historical period, the analytical emphasis was placed on the studies published in the past five to ten years in order to reflect current theoretical advancements, empirical settings, and shifting research agendas in the entrepreneurial intention literature.

The figure shows the highly uneven citation distribution in the literature on EI. The most cited contributions are the foundational theoretical studies from the 1980s and 1990s, particularly those associated with the Theory of Planned Behavior and Self-Efficacy, which receive the most citations (Bandura, 1982, 1997; Shapero & Sokol, 1982; Ajzen, 1991). The empirical development of the literature in the 2000s and early 2010s can be observed through the successive validation and application of intention-related models (Van Gelderen et al., 2008; Turker & Selcuk, 2009; Yurtkoru et al., 2014). The studies published in the 2020s, including those in 2021- January 2026, have relatively lower citation numbers, mainly because of the shorter time span elapsed since publication, although still relevant, these contributions mainly focus on thematic expansions related to entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, and institutional support (Hassan et al., 2020; Galvão et al., 2025; Mhlongo et al., 2026). The presence of an inverse correlation between the number of publications and the citation rate reveals the “foundations versus expansion” dynamic in the study of entrepreneurial intentions. The first few decades are marked by a small number of highly influential theoretical publications, while the latter decades are marked by a large number of applied and contextually specific studies with a more scattered citation impact. This is consistent with previous reviews, suggesting the field is rooted in a core set of theories, despite the empirical expansion into various contexts and populations (Rasool et al., 2018; Donaldson et al., 2021; Loi et al., 2024). Overall, the pattern indicates a distinct core–periphery structure, with enduring foundational theories anchoring the field, and recent research has expanded upon these frameworks.

4.1.2 Keyword Co-occurrence Network

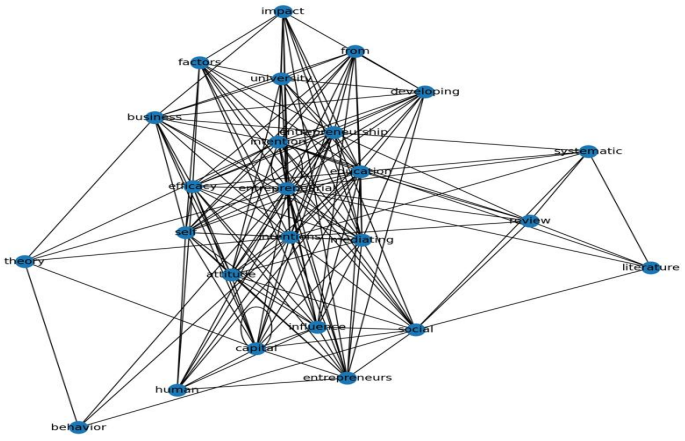

Figure 3: Keyword Co-occurrence Network

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Figure 3 illustrates the co-occurrence graph of common keywords identified from the reviewed studies. Each node in the graph represents a keyword, and the connections between the nodes show that the two keywords appear together in the title of a study. The more central nodes in the graph show the common themes that appear in several studies.

The network has a dense core around the words "entrepreneurial," "intention," "education," "self," "efficacy," "attitude," and "students/university." This network indicates that the literature on EI is mainly rooted in psychological and educational perspectives. The interlink between intention, attitude, and self-efficacy is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which states that attitudes and perceived control are central predictors of intention (Ajzen, 1991), and with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory.

Keywords like "education", "university", and "students" are strongly associated with entrepreneurship and intention, suggesting that a major part of the literature is focused on students and educational contexts. This is in line with the existing literature, which has found that universities are a major context for the study of entrepreneurial intention (Turker & Selcuk, 2009; Hattab, 2014; Maharana & Chaudhury, 2022).

Terms like "social", "human", and "capital" seem to be connected to the central cluster, suggesting a growing focus on contextually and resource-related interpretations of EI, in line with studies that give importance to social and human capital (Mahfud et al., 2020; Ghouse et al., 2024). Emerging evidence also points to the importance of financial capacity, family capital, and social support as complementary resources that shape entrepreneurial intention in different educational and cultural contexts (Zhang et al., 2025; Fallatah & Hoda, 2026). Overall, the keyword co-occurrence network reveals that entrepreneurial intention studies are mainly based on psychological concepts and educational settings, whereas policy, industry, and non-student-based themes seem less prominent.

4.1.3 Time–Theme Evolution Network

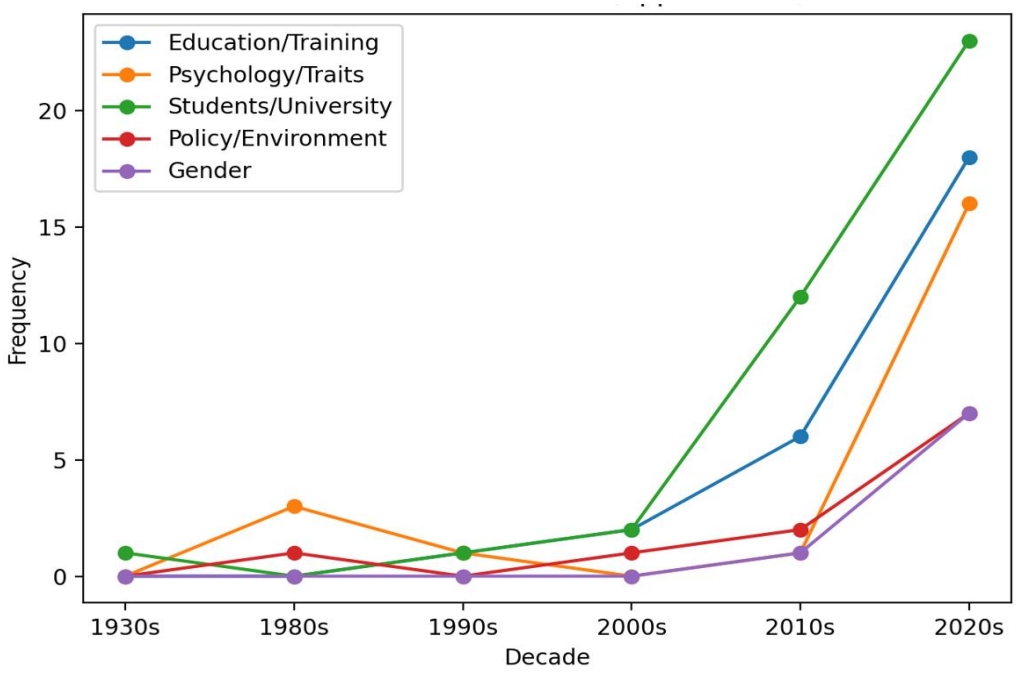

Figure 4: Time–Theme Evolution Network

Figure 4 illustrates the evolution of key themes in research on entrepreneurial intention over each successive decade. The themes illustrated in the figure are: Education/Training, Psychology/Traits, Students/University, Policy/Environment, and Gender.

The figure shows that the early phase (1930s-1990s) of research on entrepreneurship and intention-related concepts was characterized by a small number of studies with a scattered

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focus, occasionally addressing psychological factors and contextual variables. Basic theoretical contributions during the early phase, such as Schumpeter's (1934) research on economic development and Shapero's (1984) model of the entrepreneurial event, laid the foundation but were not yet followed by a large number of empirical intention studies.

However, from the 2000s onwards, there seems to be a steady increase in research interest related to students and educational settings. This can be seen to be more evident after the year 2010, with a significant increase in research interest related to the themes of Students/University and Education/Training, which is in line with the rise in entrepreneurship education globally and the engagement of universities in shaping entrepreneurial attitudes (Johannisson, 1991; Pittaway & Cope, 2007; Morris et al., 2017). Empirical evidence from different parts of the world confirms the growing impact of systematic entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention across different disciplines (Xu & Lee, 2025; Mhlongo et al., 2026).

Psychology- and trait-oriented research also shows significant expansion during the 2010s and, more importantly, during the 2020s, reflecting continued interest in psychological constructs such as attitude, self-efficacy, creativity, and motivation (Bandura, 1997; Karabulut, 2016; Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023). Themes related to policy and environment show moderate but steady growth, reflecting a growing interest in the role of institutional and contextual factors in shaping entrepreneurial intention (Huang et al., 2021; Bağış et al., 2024). Gender-focused research appears to be limited until the 2010s, following which there is a noticeable increase in the 2020s. This tendency is consistent with growing scholarly interest in women's entrepreneurship and gender disparities in entrepreneurial intentions (Chhabra et al., 2020; Manjaly et al., 2022; Omotajo et al., 2024). Recent research further illustrates the interaction of gender with cultural setting, entrepreneurship education, and environmental awareness in influencing entrepreneurial intention (Atienza-Barba et al., 2025; Krishna & Agrawal, 2026).

Overall, the time-theme evolution shows a shift from conceptually focused early research to a more empirically focused and theme-diverse body of research in recent years, with a strong focus on student-centered, education-based, and psychological views.

4.1.4 Country Focus Network

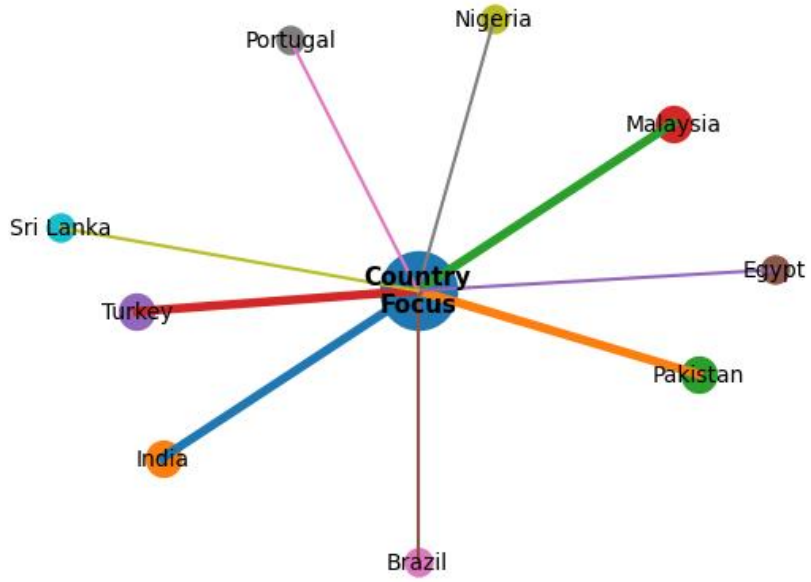

Figure 5: Country Focus Network

Figure 5 shows the distribution of country focus in the reviewed literature on EI, where the size and thickness of the nodes and lines represent the relative focus of research attention. Countries like India, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Turkey are represented by thicker lines

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connecting to the central node, indicating their relatively frequent appearance in the literature. While countries like Egypt, Brazil, Portugal, Nigeria, and Sri Lanka are represented by thinner lines, symbolizing their less frequent appearance in the literature. A strong focus is observed in the developing and emerging markets, especially in South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and parts of Latin America. This is largely in line with the existing literature that has emphasized a strong research focus on EI in developing countries, as entrepreneurship is often viewed as an important driver of economic development and employment (Ambad & Damit, 2016; Shah & Soomro, 2017; Hassan et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2021).

India and Pakistan appear regularly in the reviewed studies, indicating a significant emphasis on student entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in such contexts (Shiva & Jain, 2012; Singh & Singh, 2020; Maharana & Chaudhury, 2022). Research studies conducted in Turkey and Malaysia also appear regularly in the reviewed studies, often focusing on personality traits, educational variables, and support (Turker & Selcuk, 2009; Ambad & Damit, 2016; Karabulut, 2016). The fact that there are only a few cross-country linkages indicates that cross-country comparative studies are relatively rare. It seems that most studies are nationally confined, which might limit the generalizability of their results across different cultural contexts. Similar concerns have been raised in the previous reviews, which indicate that research on EI is context-dependent and regionally focused (Rasool et al., 2018; Loi et al., 2024).

Overall, the country focus network suggests a strong emphasis towards developing and emerging economies, with a relatively small number of studies from developed countries and very few comparative/multi-country studies, implying a potential for future research using more cross-national designs.

4.1.5 Theory Usage Network

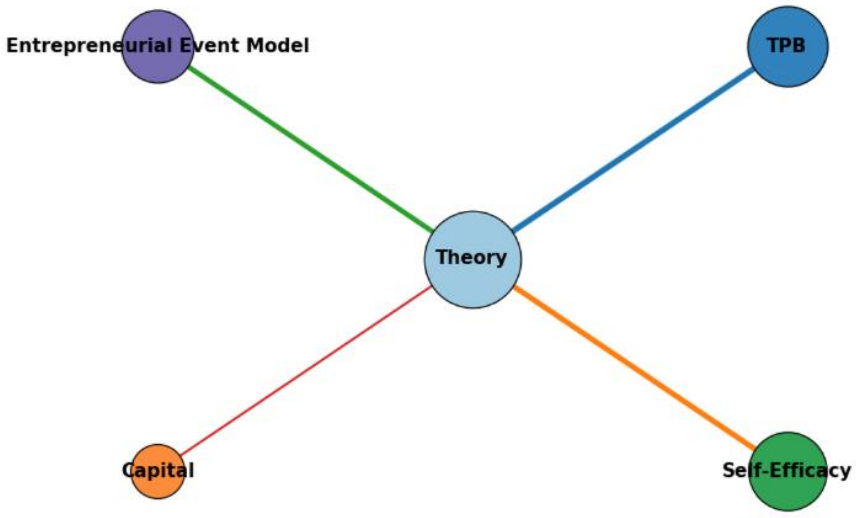

Figure 6: Theory Usage Network

Figure 6 shows the theoretical frameworks most commonly cited in the reviewed literature on EI, with thicker lines representing more prominent and regularly employed theories and thinner lines representing relatively less prominent views in the literature.

The network points to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), self-efficacy theory, and the EEM as the most prominent theoretical anchors in EI studies. The prominent position of TPB can be attributed to its pivotal role in explaining the relationship among attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in EI (Ajzen, 1991; Krueger & Carsrud, 1993; Van Gelderen et al., 2008). Recent empirical applications continue to confirm TPB while

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incorporating additional constructs such as competence, mindset, and sustainability orientation among students (Husnatarina & Rizaldi, 2026; Suwandi et al., 2026).

The prominent position of self-efficacy theory corresponds to Bandura's (1997) claim that people's beliefs about their capabilities play a pivotal role in determining motivation and action, which has been widely used in EI studies (Awwad & Al-Aseer, 2021; Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023; Saoula et al., 2023). Self-efficacy is increasingly posited as a mediating factor between entrepreneurship education, motivation, and environmental factors and entrepreneurial intention (Ridwan et al., 2025; Ye & Kang, 2025).

The prominent position of the EEM can be attributed to the continued use of Shapero's (1984) framework, which has been widely used to emphasize perceived desirability, feasibility, and propensity to act, as antecedents of entrepreneurial action (Shapero & Sokol, 1982; Soomro et al., 2020).

The development of capital-related approaches suggests that some research uses social and human capital theories to explain EI (Mahfud et al., 2020; Ghouse et al., 2024). Recent studies integrate financial capability and family capital as complementary resources in intention-based models, although these variables remain peripheral compared to dominant psychological paradigms (Zhang et al., 2025; Fallatah & Hoda, 2026).

Conclusively, the theory usage network suggests that entrepreneurial intention research is theoretically focused around a small number of dominant theories, with a particular focus on TPB and self-efficacy. This is consistent with previous reviews, which have suggested that intention-based entrepreneurship research is heavily focused on a small number of established theories (Donaldson et al., 2021; Loi et al., 2024).

4.1.6 Method Focus Network

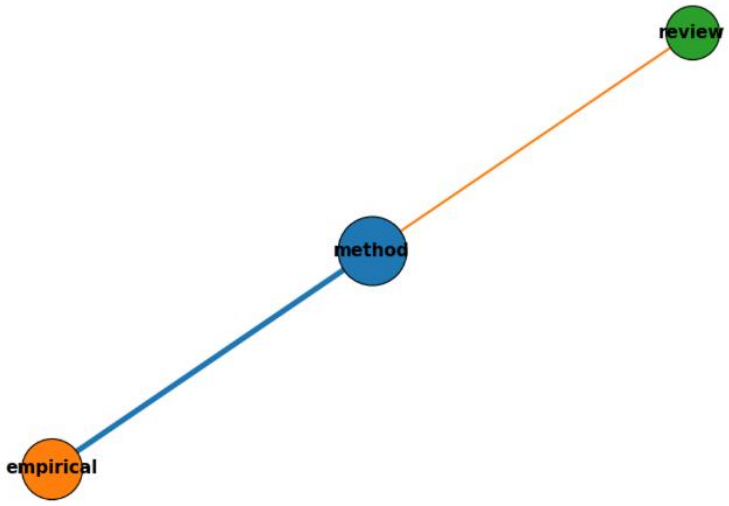

Figure 7: Method Focus Network

Figure 7 represents the methodological focus of the reviewed literature on entrepreneurial intention. The links represent different methodological foci, and the thickness of the links represents the relative emphasis of these foci in the literature.

The figure above shows a strong focus of the studies on empirical research, as suggested by the thick links, while a relatively thin link represents review-based research. This is consistent with the strong focus of EI studies on survey-based, quantitative research designs, where structured questionnaires and statistical analyses are commonly used to test theoretical models (Turker & Selcuk, 2009; Ahmed et al., 2010; Shah & Soomro, 2017). The focus of the studies on review-oriented research, although represented by relatively thin lines, indicates the increasing trend of systematic and narrative reviews that summarize the findings and identify research gaps, as seen in studies such as Rasool et al. (2018), Batista-Canino et al.

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(2024), and Loi et al. (2024). Conclusively, the network for method reveals a clear preference for empirical methods, with reviews playing a supplementary role in integrating knowledge. This is in line with previous findings that entrepreneurship studies are predominantly empirical in nature but are increasingly supplemented by systematic reviews to guide theory-building and future research (Pati & Lorusso, 2018; Donaldson et al., 2021).

4.1.7 Population/Sample Focus Network

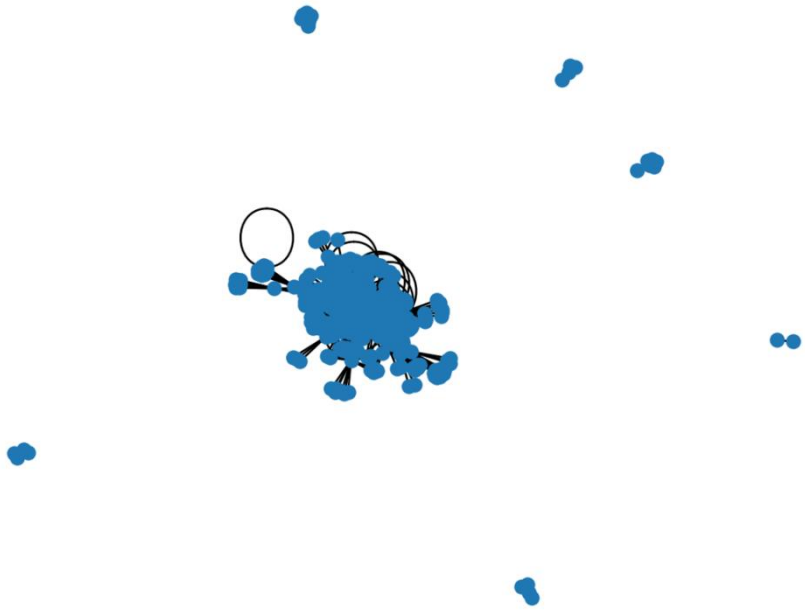

Figure 8: Population/Sample Focus Network

Figure 8 shows the distribution of population and sampling categories used in the studies reviewed. Nodes represent the different groups of respondents (students, university students, women, employees, and school students), and links show how they relate to the general concept of population/sample focus.

The presence of a dense cluster in the center of the graph suggests that a large proportion of research focuses on student and university-based samples. This is reflected in many empirical studies on EI among undergraduate, postgraduate, and business students (Turker & Selcuk, 2009; Ahmed et al., 2010; Shah & Soomro, 2017; Hassan et al., 2020). Studies carried out in India, Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, and other developing countries often target students, especially in higher education institutions, where entrepreneurship is increasingly being encouraged as a policy-driven career alternative for the youth (Hattab, 2014; Singh & Singh, 2020; Maharana & Chaudhury, 2022).

The smaller and more scattered nodes of the other cluster represent research studies conducted using different populations, such as women entrepreneurs (Chhabra et al., 2020; Manjaly et al., 2022; Omotajo et al., 2024), school or senior secondary students (Do Paco et al., 2011; Gaddi et al., 2024), rural students (Ghouse et al., 2024), and employees (Bhatta et al., 2024). The greater distance of these nodes from the central cluster indicates that these populations are less commonly studied than university students.

Overall, the network shows a strong focus on student and university samples, while other social groups, such as employees, women entrepreneurs, rural youth, and school students, are relatively underrepresented. This is not very different from previous reviews, which have noted that entrepreneurial intention studies are generally student-focused, mainly because students are easily accessible and suitable for testing intention-based theories like the Theory of Planned Behavior (Krueger & Carsrud, 1993; Van Gelderen et al., 2008; Donaldson et al., 2021). However, the presence of smaller peripheral clusters in the network suggests that there has been a gradual shift towards greater diversity in samples in recent years, with more

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studies being conducted on EI among various social and occupational groups (Bhatta et al., 2024; Ghouse et al., 2024; Omotajo et al., 2024).

4.1.8 Sampling Technique Network

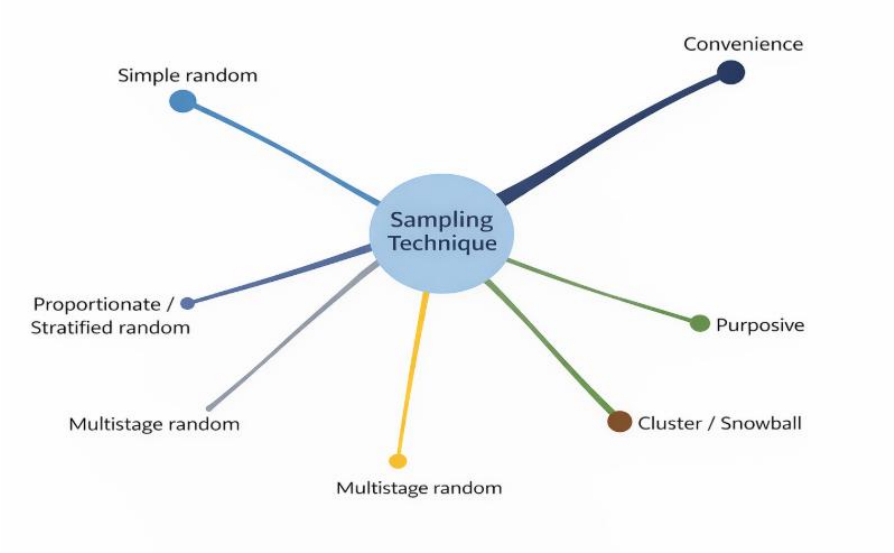

Figure 9: Sampling Technique Network

Figure 9 shows a graphical representation of the distribution of the sampling techniques used by the studies reviewed. The central node, "Sampling Technique," is connected to different sampling techniques, with the thickness of each line representing the frequency of use.

The strongest link is with convenience sampling, indicating that this method was the most commonly used in the literature surveyed. This suggests that research continues to be dominated by convenience sampling, especially in academic settings, thus perpetuating concerns about external validity and generalizability (Nowiński & Haddoud, 2019; Manjaly et al., 2022; Mujtaba et al., 2025). The strong dominance of convenience sampling over other methods is more a reflection of constraints than a preference.

The second strongest connection is with simple random sampling, which shows that a considerable number of studies used probability-based designs (e.g., Turker & Selcuk, 2009; Singh et al., 2017; Aboobaker & Renjini D., 2020). This indicates that the literature is making an attempt to improve representativeness and reduce sampling biases.

Less strong but still apparent connections are found for stratified/proportionate random sampling, purposive sampling, cluster/snowball sampling, and multistage sampling. The weaker connections indicate that these approaches were employed in a small number of studies. These approaches are mainly found in studies focusing on specific sub-groups (such as entrepreneurs, women, or policy-driven samples) or in situations where random sampling was not feasible.

4.2 Thematic Evaluation

To develop an integrated understanding of the factors influencing entrepreneurial intention, this section thematically integrates the contributions from the reviewed studies. The analysis structures the key variables examined in the literature into five major thematic clusters (as shown in Figure 10) to reflect dominant streams and explain the mechanisms emerging from the literature. Some studies had more than one objective and, therefore, could be placed in more than one category. In such cases, the study was placed in the category that reflected its central theme. The overall thematic structure follows a pattern similar to that found in the

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citation analysis, suggesting a correspondence between thematic importance and academic stature.

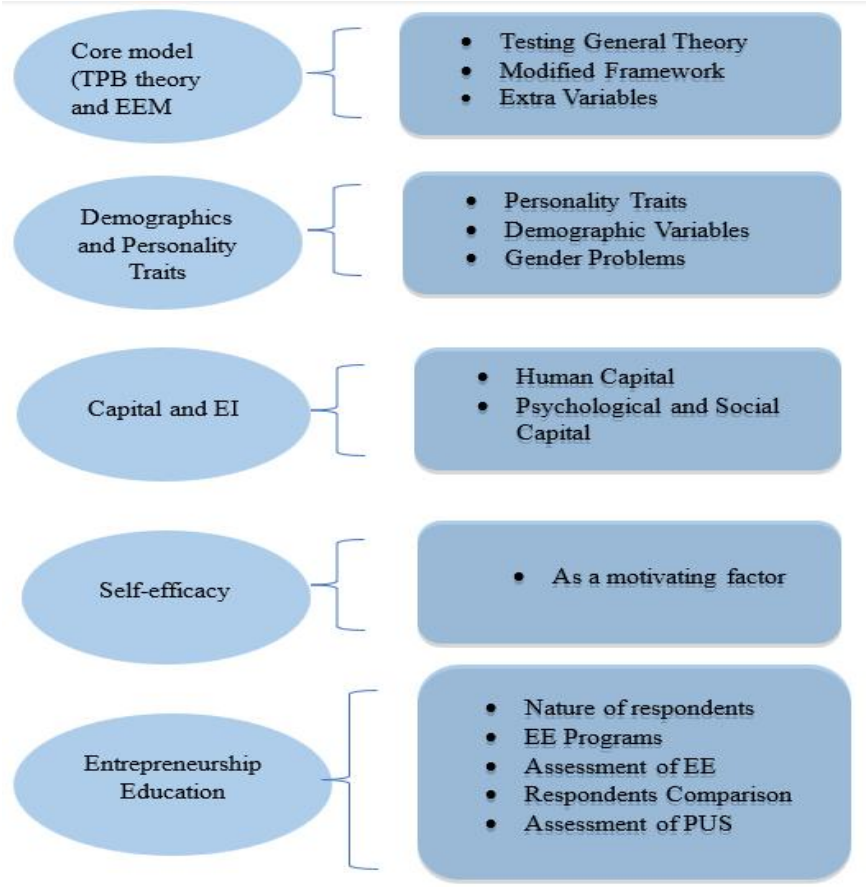

Figure 10: Themes and sub-themes in entrepreneurial intention research review

4.2.1 Core Model (TPB and EEM)

This theme includes research based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM). According to Ajzen (1991), behavior is structured by intention, which is, in turn, determined by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Shapero and Sokol (1982) argued that entrepreneurial intention is mainly affected by perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and the propensity to act.

The vast majority of studies in this category focus on testing, validating, or developing these foundational models. Various scholars have used TPB and EEM with different groups of students, including university students and business students, in different contexts around the world, including Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Southeast Asia (Shah & Soomro, 2017; Gunawardane & Weerasinghe, 2022; Norol-janah & Marandacan, 2023). For instance, Soomro et al. (2020) used EEM and found that perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and self-efficacy were significant predictors of entrepreneurial intention among business students. Overall, the results obtained in this field of study have consistently confirmed the validity of the TPB and the EEM as basic frameworks for explaining the process of EI.

Modified and Extended Frameworks

Some studies have further extended the basic TPB and EEM models by adding contextual, psychological, or institutional variables. Chhabra et al. (2020) have combined TPB and EEM with variables like the entrepreneurial ecosystem, personality, motivation, and self-efficacy.

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Bağış et al. (2024) have added the need for achievement as a mediating factor, along with TPB variables. Yurtkoru et al. (2014) investigated the mediating effects of attitude and perceived behavioral control between support factors and entrepreneurial intentions. Ambad and Damit (2016) have added structural, relational, and educational support variables. Recent empirical applications have continued to support and extend TPB-based models with additional constructs such as competence, mindset, sustainability orientation, and digital context, particularly among university students (Xu & Lee, 2025; Husnatarina & Rizaldi, 2026; Suwandi et al., 2026).

Overall, these studies suggest that TPB and EEM have remained core frameworks, and their explanatory power can be improved by incorporating contextual and psychological variables.

4.2.2 Demographics and Personality Traits

This theme examines the influence of individual background variables and personality traits on entrepreneurial intention.

Personality Traits

Research has been conducted to explore the relationship between personality and entrepreneurial intention (Singh et al., 2017; Räty et al., 2019). Karabulut (2016) found that entrepreneurial intention was positively influenced by traits such as locus of control, need for achievement, alertness, and risk-taking propensity. Awwad and Al-Aseer (2021) investigated the relationship between the Big Five personality factors and entrepreneurial intention, which concluded that conscientiousness, openness, and alertness were positively related to EI. Extraversion and openness were related to alertness, although agreeableness and neuroticism were unrelated to either outcome. Moreover, alertness mediates the relationship between extraversion and openness with entrepreneurial intention. Research work supports the importance of personality by showing that openness, risk-taking propensity, and entrepreneurial orientation remain significant in shaping intentions across different cultural contexts (Neupane et al., 2025; Alyafei, 2026). The results suggest that personality traits have an important but selective influence on entrepreneurial intention.

Demographic Variables

This sub-theme includes studies that examine gender, age, family background, income, and previous business experience. Shiva & Jain (2012) found that gender and business experience had a positive influence on EI. Devi (2023) found that there was no difference in EI based on gender among students, but some entrepreneurial competencies were different for males and females. Dubey & Sahu (2022) found that gender, residence, and family income were significantly related to entrepreneurial intention, but age was not significant. Research also supports the idea that demographic factors are often context-dependent and shaped by factors such as education systems, culture, and institutional support (Vasilescu et al., 2025; Krishna & Agrawal, 2026).

Gender-Based Findings

Regarding gender, results are mixed. Fragoso et al. (2020), Akhtar et al. (2022), and Maharana and Chaudhury (2022) found that male students had higher entrepreneurial intentions. On the other hand, Mardisentosa and Khusaini (2019), Singh and Singh (2020), and Ferreira-Neto et al. (2023) found that there was no significant difference between genders. This indicates that gender has a context-dependent effect and is not universal. Gender-focused literature also supports the context-dependent nature of demographic factors by showing the interplay between gender, culture, awareness about the environment, and entrepreneurship education (Atienza-Barba et al., 2025; Xanthopoulou et al., 2025).

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4.2.4 Capital and Entrepreneurial Intention

This theme focuses on human, social, and psychological capital as predictors or mediators of EI. Aboobaker and Renjini D. (2020) found that human capital mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship education and EI. Mahfud et al. (2020) showed that psychological capital fully mediates the relationship between social capital and EI. Jalil et al. (2023) found that psychological and social capital jointly influence women's entrepreneurial intentions. The results clearly show that various types of capital have both direct and indirect effects on entrepreneurial intention.

4.2.5 Self-Efficacy

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy refers to an individual's perception of their ability to carry out entrepreneurial tasks (Bandura, 1997). It is generally considered a key motivational factor for EI (Donaldson et al., 2021; Sahid et al., 2024).

Self-efficacy has been studied as an independent variable (Nowiński & Haddoud, 2019; Hassan et al., 2020; Saoula et al., 2023) and as a mediating variable (Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023). Most of the literature suggests that self-efficacy positively and significantly predicts EI (Taneja et al., 2024; Wardana et al., 2024). Manjaly et al. (2022) found that EI is enhanced when self-efficacy is coupled with entrepreneurial passion. Recent research also positions self-efficacy as a mediating mechanism linking entrepreneurship education, motivation, and institutional support to entrepreneurial intention (Ridwan et al., 2025; Ye & Kang, 2025). This topic as a whole provides strong and consistent evidence that self-efficacy is one of the most reliable psychological antecedents of EI.

4.2.6 Entrepreneurship Education (EE)

This theme focuses on entrepreneurship education and its influence on EI. Entrepreneurship education provides the knowledge, skills, and confidence required for planning and executing ventures, making self-employment a feasible career choice (Purwanti et al., 2024). Literature has conceptualized entrepreneurship education as a process that aims to develop an entrepreneurial mindset, competence, and long-term career orientation among students (Nayak & Nayak, 2025; Mhlongo et al., 2026). Pittaway and Cope (2007) found that entrepreneurship education programs have a positive influence on EI. Many studies have supported this finding, but some have found mixed results. Empirical evidence from various national contexts has confirmed this positive relationship, while also showing variations that can be attributed to program design and delivery methods (Xu & Lee, 2025; Husnatarina & Rizaldi, 2026).

Entrepreneurship education has been studied as:

- An independent variable (Aboobaker & Renjini D., 2020; Anjum et al., 2022; Chaabane & Boujelben, 2023)
- A moderating variable (Hassan et al., 2020; Akhtar et al., 2022)
- A mediating variable (Saoula et al., 2023).

Nature of Respondents

Most studies concentrate on students, as they are the future entrepreneurs (Usman & Yennita, 2019). Morris et al. (2017) argued that entrepreneurship provides autonomy and self-realization opportunities for university students. Extending the boundaries of research, recent studies have included vocational trainees and discipline-specific student groups, indicating a growing institutional interest in entrepreneurship education (Dahal et al., 2025; Rudnák et al., 2025).

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Entrepreneurship Education Programs

Participation in entrepreneurship education programs is often linked to higher EI (Pihie & Bagheri, 2009; Hattab, 2014). Governments are increasingly embracing entrepreneurship education as part of their economic development initiatives (Shukla et al., 2022). Empirical evidence has highlighted a growing interest in sustainability and digital entrepreneurship education programs, demonstrating their ability to positively influence EI among higher education students (Diepolder et al., 2025; Wardoyo et al., 2025).

Assessing Entrepreneurship Education

Studies distinguish between general education and specialized entrepreneurship education. Gimeno et al. (1997) suggested that general education is essential for knowledge integration, while Johannisson (1991) highlighted learning when and how to start businesses. Entrepreneurship education has a positive impact on entrepreneurial attitude and perceived behavioral control (Chaabane & Boujelben, 2023), while experiential education programs improve EI (Rosli et al., 2023). However, some studies concluded that there was no significant impact of entrepreneurship education on EI (Mukhtar et al., 2021; Ghouse et al., 2024). Do Paco et al. (2011) emphasized the need to identify factors that affect EI to design effective programs. The evidence has suggested that the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education depends on the quality of instruction, depth of experiential learning, and institutional environment (Galvão et al., 2025; Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2025).

Comparison Among Respondents

Maharana and Chaudhury (2022) found that the students in private universities were more exposed to entrepreneurship education and had stronger entrepreneurial intentions than students in public universities. Students from business and commerce streams showed a higher inclination towards entrepreneurship than students from professional streams. Comparative studies have indicated that the differences in entrepreneurial intention among various groups of students are influenced more by institutional factors, teaching methods, and cultural factors than discipline-specific differences (Bhaskar & Seth, 2025; Vasilescu et al., 2025).

Perceptions of University Support

University support is a strong moderating variable. Anjum et al. (2020) revealed that university support strengthens the relationship between creativity and entrepreneurial tendency. Anjum et al. (2022) also supported that university support positively moderates the relationship between attitude and EI. Further studies have confirmed that perceived university and institutional support can enhance the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education on EI by improving self-efficacy, resource access, and perceived feasibility (Galvão et al., 2025; Perez-Bonaventura et al., 2026). Overall, the above findings indicate that university support can improve the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions.

5. Conclusion

This study conducted a systematic review of entrepreneurship intention (EI) research to extract the leading theoretical sources and thematic streams, methodological trends, and future directions. The literature was synthesized around five thematic wings based on the analysis of the reviewed studies: core intention models and their extensions (TPB and EEM), demographics and personality traits, capital and entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurship education, and perceived university support. The reviewed studies conclude that EI research is tenaciously firmly associated with the intention-based framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Entrepreneurial Event Model, justifying the majority of empirical analysis. Simultaneously, the review identifies an evident

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tendency to expand these models to include psychological, educational, and institutional factors. In all the identified themes, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurship education consistently represent the most significant determinants of entrepreneurial intention, which often act as major explanatory mechanisms. Conversely, the effect of demographic variables is equivocal and context-specific enough to invalidate generalizability to entrepreneurial intention. The review further acknowledges a shift toward a more broad-based understanding of entrepreneurship within educational and institutional ecosystem perspectives, positioning universities as key enablers that can better create entrepreneurial intention through education, support mechanisms, and confidence-boosting ecosystems. This suggests that from a methodological viewpoint, quantitative, student-based, cross-sectional studies remain the most common approach in some of the work on this topic, and there is a call for greater variation in terms of samples and research designs.

Overall, these results indicate that the field of entrepreneurial intention research has evolved into a mature yet still expanding field. Future studies could further advance this domain by adopting ecosystem-oriented perspectives, exploring understudied populations, and identifying dynamic mechanisms that link education, self-efficacy, and institutional support to entrepreneurial intention in varying economic and social contexts.

6. Theoretical and Practical Implications

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This review contributes to the development of EI theory by reaffirming that traditional intention models—most notably, but not limited to, the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Model of Entrepreneurial Event—remain vital theoretical pillars in this realm (Shapero & Sokol, 1982; Ajzen, 1991, 2012; Krueger & Carsrud, 1993; Van Gelderen et al., 2008). The reviewed studies show that these models maintain high explanatory power across cultural contexts, student populations, and institutional settings (Ademi et al., 2025; Xu & Lee, 2025; Husnatarina & Rizaldi, 2026). The findings also indicate that their explanatory power is enhanced when added with psychological, context-related, and institutional variables such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy, personality traits, entrepreneurship education, or perceived support from the university (Anjum et al., 2020; Awwad & Al-Aseer, 2021; Bağış et al., 2024; Galvão et al., 2025). This means that EI theory should be understood as evolving through contextual enrichment, rather than replacing its foundational models (Donaldson et al., 2021; Loi et al., 2024).

These results further consider entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a pivotal construct linking multiple research streams. Its stable presence as both a direct and mediating variable indicates that future EI frameworks should specifically establish self-efficacy as a central mechanism to conceptualize the influence of education, personality, and environmental factors on entrepreneurial intention (Bandura, 1997; Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023; Wardana et al., 2024; Ridwan et al., 2025; Ye & Kang, 2025). On the other hand, the surprisingly mixed findings observed with respect to demographic variables—including gender—suggest that demographic effects are contingent upon context rather than being universal (Mardisentosa & Khusaini, 2019; Devi, 2023; Atienza-Barba et al., 2025; Xanthopoulou et al., 2025), underscoring the need for theoretical models that better integrate social, cultural, and institutional contexts. Another theoretical implication is the increasing significance of capital-based approaches. Human, social, and psychological capital offer further insights into how resources and capabilities shape entrepreneurial intention, often indirectly (Aboobaker, 2020; Mahfud et al., 2020; Jalil et al., 2023; Ghouse et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). Consequently, integrating these capital-based perspectives with intention models can illustrate the mechanisms behind individual differences in education and institutional support that translate into entrepreneurial intention.

6.2 Practical Implications

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The results have several important practical implications for universities, policymakers, and entrepreneurship educators. This emphasizes the importance of practice-oriented entrepreneurship education that goes beyond classroom-based instruction (Hattab, 2014; Hassan et al., 2020; Maharana & Chaudhury, 2022; Taneja et al., 2024; Diepolder et al., 2025). Mentoring, incubation centers, internships, and real venture exposure appear particularly effective in enhancing students' skills and confidence (Morris et al., 2017; Nowiński & Haddoud, 2019; Rosli et al., 2023).

Given the crucial importance of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, educational interventions must aim to enhance students' self-belief in their entrepreneurial potential (Bandura, 1997; Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023; Wardana et al., 2024; Ye & Kang, 2025). This can be addressed through hands-on activities, simulations, interaction with role models, and opportunities for low-risk experimentation (Porfírio et al., 2023; Taneja et al., 2024; Xuan & Yankai, 2025). The perceived university support underlines the importance of visible institutional mechanisms, including but not limited to entrepreneurship cells, startup labs, funding access, and advisory services (Morris et al., 2017; Anjum et al., 2022; Galvão et al., 2025), supported by enabling policy frameworks (Huang et al., 2021). Mixed results on gender and demographic factors imply that one-size-fits-all interventions are not likely to be enough (Mardisentosa & Khusaini, 2019; Devi, 2023; Atienza-Barba et al., 2025; Mhlongo et al., 2026). This calls for targeted, inclusive programs, particularly among women and students from less enabling backgrounds (Chhabra et al., 2020; Manjaly et al., 2022; Omotajo et al., 2024). The variation of human, social, and psychological capital shows the need for entrepreneurship development efforts that will focus not only on acquiring knowledge but also on building networks and mentoring, as well as strengthening psychological resilience (Aboobaker, 2020; Mahfud et al., 2020; Jalil et al., 2023; Ghouse et al., 2024). Overall, enhancing entrepreneurial intention requires an integrated approach that combines robust theoretical foundations with supportive educational practices and institutional ecosystems.

7. Drawbacks and Future Research Agenda

7.1 Drawbacks / Limitations of the Study

Although the review has been conducted in a systematic manner, it has some limitations. Firstly, the review is based on a sample of 115 articles, which may not be a comprehensive representation of the entire body of literature on entrepreneurial intention because of limitations in terms of database coverage, keywords, language, and availability. Secondly, by focusing on peer-reviewed journal articles, the review has not considered books, conference proceedings, dissertations, and policy documents, which may have some practice-related insights. Thirdly, the process of thematic categorization required subjective interpretation because many studies have addressed more than one theme. Fourthly, citation counts were used as an indicator of influence. This has some natural limitations. For instance, older publications are likely to have more citations, while newer studies that have made a greater impact may not yet be represented in the citation metrics because of the shorter time they have been available in the public domain. Finally, the major focus on student samples has limited the generalizability of findings to other groups.

7.2 Future Research Agenda

Future research should move beyond the commonly used databases to include regional journals, policy documents, and grey literature. There is a need for more focus on less explored populations such as school-going children, working professionals, rural communities, women entrepreneurs, and marginalized groups. Future research should look beyond cross-sectional studies and adopt longitudinal methodologies to explore the dynamic process of entrepreneurial intention formation. Although the Theory of Planned Behavior and Entrepreneurial Event Model are the most popular theories in the area of entrepreneurial intention, the integration of other theoretical approaches, such as institutional theory, social

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identity theory, cultural theory, and behavioral economics, may add more explanatory power to the theories. Future research should also focus on the contextual factors such as digital ecosystems, government support, family background, and cultural factors, particularly in developing and emerging economies. Moreover, future studies should examine program quality and design, and further investigate the mediating and moderating mechanisms of self-efficacy, motivation, psychological capital, and university support to better understand how entrepreneurial intentions are formed.

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