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The catalytic role of social support in entrepreneurial intention: A systematic literature review

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Abstract

This systematic literature review assesses studies on social support and entrepreneurial intention. While both topics have been extensively researched, their intersection has only recently gained attention in entrepreneurship research. This review maps how social support influences entrepreneurial intentions to address this gap. The article utilizes Scopus and Web of Science for a comprehensive literature review. The initial search yielded 2,490 records, which were subsequently screened based on predefined inclusion criteria, resulting in a final sample of 63 journal articles. Notably, most of the selected studies were published after 2020, indicating a growing academic interest in this field in recent years.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial intention, Family support, Peer supports, Social support, Systematic literature review.

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has garnered attention from researchers, politicians, and governments. It can not only solve socioeconomic growth problems but also serves as a key solution to the development challenges faced by the country [1]. Entrepreneurial intention, as a key driver to predict entrepreneurial behavior, can significantly influence the decision to establish a new enterprise [2]. Therefore, it has received considerable attention. The Theory of Planned Behavior [3] and the Entrepreneurial Event Model [4] are widely used to study entrepreneurial intentions among different populations. Entrepreneurial intention denotes an individual's eagerness to pursue self-employment, establish a business, or engage in and complete an entrepreneurial endeavor [5]. Research indicates that intention is typically seen as a predictor of behavior connected to individuals [6-10].

Recently, studies have thoroughly examined the fundamental mechanisms that influence the development of entrepreneurial intention. Multiple significant research avenues have emerged, encompassing the influence of personal values [11-14], personality traits [15, 16] and the impact of entrepreneurship education [17, 18]. Social support includes

emotional, financial, informational, and instrumental aid (i.e., tangible resources) offered by family members, friends, and other important social connections [1, 5, 19].

In this expanding literature, it has been acknowledged that students' entrepreneurial intentions are significantly influenced by social support, particularly from family members [5]. In addition to providing inspiration during stressful times, social support can mitigate the negative psychological impacts of entrepreneurial uncertainty. Its significance in the entrepreneurial domain arises from its proven ability to enhance individuals' entrepreneurial inclinations [1]. Furthermore, an individual's proactive engagement in seeking entrepreneurship-related assistance is frequently regarded as an indication of entrepreneurial readiness. The entrepreneurial decision-making process is significantly influenced by social support, which increases an individual's intention to engage in entrepreneurial activities [1]. Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates a substantial and positive correlation between perceived social support and the propensity to engage in entrepreneurial endeavors [20]. This research asserts that individuals who have a high level of social support are more inclined to pursue entrepreneurial objectives and establish their own enterprises.

Certain scholars propose that social support is integral to entrepreneurial conduct [21-23]. However, when the study analyzed the different dimensions of social support, it was found that family support was closely related to entrepreneurial intention. In contrast, social support from peers was related to entrepreneurial intention but not significantly [5]. Despite this, there are relatively few studies analyzing social support and entrepreneurial intention. Moreover, most current research is one-sided and lacks a comprehensive perspective on this relationship. This study seeks to locate and analyze social support literature on entrepreneurial intention. This research investigated all academic journal articles up to 2024.

This extensive evaluation examines social support and entrepreneurial intention. Social support affects behaviour and decision-making [5]. In particular, as a socialized activity, entrepreneurial behavior intention will be influenced by the support of important others around the individual. The current research has identified some of these mechanisms, but it is incomplete, and further research is needed. The research presents a thorough conceptual framework that delineates the potential links between social support and other components of the entrepreneurial process. This framework delineates certain knowledge deficiencies and suggests a prospective study agenda in this scholarly domain. Consequently, this work may serve as the most pertinent reference for scholars in this domain.

The subsequent section examines the pertinent theoretical frameworks. The study methodology section will delineate the criteria employed to select the literature for inclusion in this review. Section 4 delineates the findings of this paper. Section 5 examines these findings and evaluates their ramifications, concluding with a brief summary.

2. The Theoretical Framework

House et al. [24] are regarded as making a seminal contribution to the topic of social supports. The study of entrepreneurial intentions relies on Ajzen's [3] Theory of Planned Behavior. However, entrepreneurial research rarely combines these two concepts.

2.1. Social Support

Social support is the attention and concern that an individual perceives from their environment when engaging in a specific behavior. It can enhance personal confidence and security [1]. This support can come from close relationships such as family and peers [1, 5, 25]. It can also be tangible or perceived [26]. The four types of social support are instrumental support, emotional support, economic support, and companionship [21]. Different sources of social support can provide these four types of support [27]. Among them, family support and peer support are the most important sociocultural factors [1, 9].

Social support is a fundamental component of social network support, which can be described as an individual's perception of their capacity to receive assistance or integrate into a social network [23]. Current research emphasizes that social support not only enables individuals to mobilize resources, identify opportunities, and access essential knowledge for launching new ventures but also enhances their abilities and confidence [21, 28, 29] but also shapes their perceptions, decision-making processes, and entrepreneurial behaviors [30, 31]. However, the influence of social support is not uniformly positive. When social resources are limited or poorly utilized, they may have neutral or even adverse effects on entrepreneurial outcomes [32, 33].

Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), much research agrees that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are significant predictors of individual intention. However, when it comes to entrepreneurial intent, the predictive capacity of subjective norms is frequently observed to be poor or statistically negligible. Recent research indicates that perceived social support may have a compensating function by alleviating misunderstandings or misconceptions regarding social norms [23]. Consequently, social support can serve as a strategic intervention to alter individual beliefs and enhance entrepreneurial ambition. Positive reinforcement from one's social and environmental setting is seen as essential for business success, especially during the initial phases of entrepreneurship [23]. In this context, socially embedded resources empower entrepreneurs to cultivate significant relationships with stakeholders and to more effectively identify environmental resources and opportunities that promote entrepreneurial endeavors [25].

The sources of social support have been divided into two dimensions: family support and peer support [34]. Support from family is something an individual may receive when they are interested in doing something that is very different from a standard work-oriented career. Family-supported autonomy increases entrepreneurial activity [35]. Financial support from the family helps young people develop entrepreneurial abilities, minimize conservative thinking, and develop a strong desire to start a firm. Most potential entrepreneurs receive finance and assistance from their parents and immediate family, especially in collectivist nations [36]. And women pay more attention to family support when making career choices [37].

Peer groups are a primary source of social communication. Peer support can provide potential entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial experience and skills, address labor issues, and supply talents to enhance their entrepreneurial confidence. Young people also depend on peer encouragement when facing career challenges [36]. Therefore, peer support represents a significant socio-cultural factor influencing the entrepreneurial process of potential entrepreneurs, as supported by various studies.

2.2. Entrepreneurial Intention Model

Currently, literature argues that intention models are essential in determining an individual's behavior and development. The most extensively utilized theories of intention and behavior are TPB and EEM [38]. They both assume that exogenous events cannot directly affect "intention" or behavior, but these events can change an individual's perception [3]. It is extremely predictive and crucial for future entrepreneurship researchers [38].

The Theory of Planned Behaviour [3] asserts that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control influence intention, while action is predominantly affected by an individual's intention. These elements impact behavior indirectly through intention, which reflects the individual's motivation, effort, and readiness to execute a specific plan [3]. In the entrepreneurial context, entrepreneurial intention stems from attitudes and behavioral inclinations [39]. Perceived behavioral control is crucial, as it reflects personal confidence in one's capacity to start entrepreneurial activities [40]. Although subjective norms, influenced by the social environment, can impact behavior, their effect on intention is still a matter of contention. Subsequent research has consistently offered robust empirical evidence supporting the validity of this theory in elucidating entrepreneurial motivations and activities.

The volume of research papers on entrepreneurial intention is considerable and continues to increase [41]. This research identifies numerous variables that affect the development of intention, encompassing both personal and environmental factors. Specifically, social support is seen as a factor influencing entrepreneurial inclination [38].

2.3. Social Supports and Intention of Entrepreneurship

The process of entrepreneurial activity is complex. It includes the entire process from identifying entrepreneurial opportunities to exploiting them, and there is usually a considerable time delay. Entrepreneurial activities require more resources and more frequent social interactions than any other behavior [38], especially for young entrepreneurs [1]. If the environment is unsuitable for business, individuals will exhibit less entrepreneurial behavior despite their high entrepreneurial intentions [42]. Establishing an effective social support network can increase the likelihood of success for entrepreneurial enterprises and address the issue of a lack of social capital among potential entrepreneurs [43]. Therefore, social support is essential to decision-making.

Nonetheless, scant research has investigated social support as a pivotal factor influencing entrepreneurial inclination. Previous research shows that social support strongly influences entrepreneurial intention, despite the limited study of its availability and usefulness for prospective entrepreneurs. Recent studies have further substantiated this connection, emphasizing the increasing acknowledgment of social support as a crucial determinant of entrepreneurial motivation.

Social support can be categorized into several forms, such as instrumental, emotional, pecuniary, and intangible assistance [38]. Family and peer support improve entrepreneurial intention [1]. These support mechanisms help individuals access essential resources and opportunities, enhance their confidence and self-efficacy, and reduce risk-averse or conservative attitudes toward entrepreneurship [19, 44]. Despite increasing attention, a thorough understanding of how various forms and sources of social support influence entrepreneurial intention remains limited. To address this gap, this literature review consolidates current data to provide a clearer understanding of these dynamics.

3. Research Methodology

This paper conducts a systematic review of the literature on social support and entrepreneurial intention, aiming to identify, evaluate, and synthesize prior research in this domain. By organizing existing knowledge, literature reviews help define a field's state and guide future studies. This review adopts the methodological guidelines for systematic literature reviews as proposed by Pittaway et al. [45], ensuring a rigorous and transparent approach to the analysis.

Based on study objectives, relevant search phrases were found, including "social support," "peer support," "family support," and "entrepreneurial intention." The literature search was conducted using Scopus and Web of Science (WOS), which are major academic databases, to ensure the comprehensiveness and reliability of the results. No restrictions were placed on the publication date range, allowing for the inclusion of both early and recent studies. The final search was completed on December 20, 2024.

The original search yielded 2490 results, after which this study excluded items that were not of the specified article type and those not written in English. The limiting search criteria were subsequently incorporated into the paper title, abstract, and keywords boxes. Subsequent to the initial phase, this research identified 272 items that conformed to the established criteria. In the second phase, this analysis excluded publications irrelevant to the fields of management and business, resulting in 142 items that satisfied the criteria. In the concluding phase, redundant items within the scope were eliminated, resulting in the identification of 63 items that satisfied the criteria for this literature study.

Relevant search phrases were selected by checking in alignment with the objectives of this study. Consequently, these articles should be validated as the conclusive determination illustrated in Figure 1.

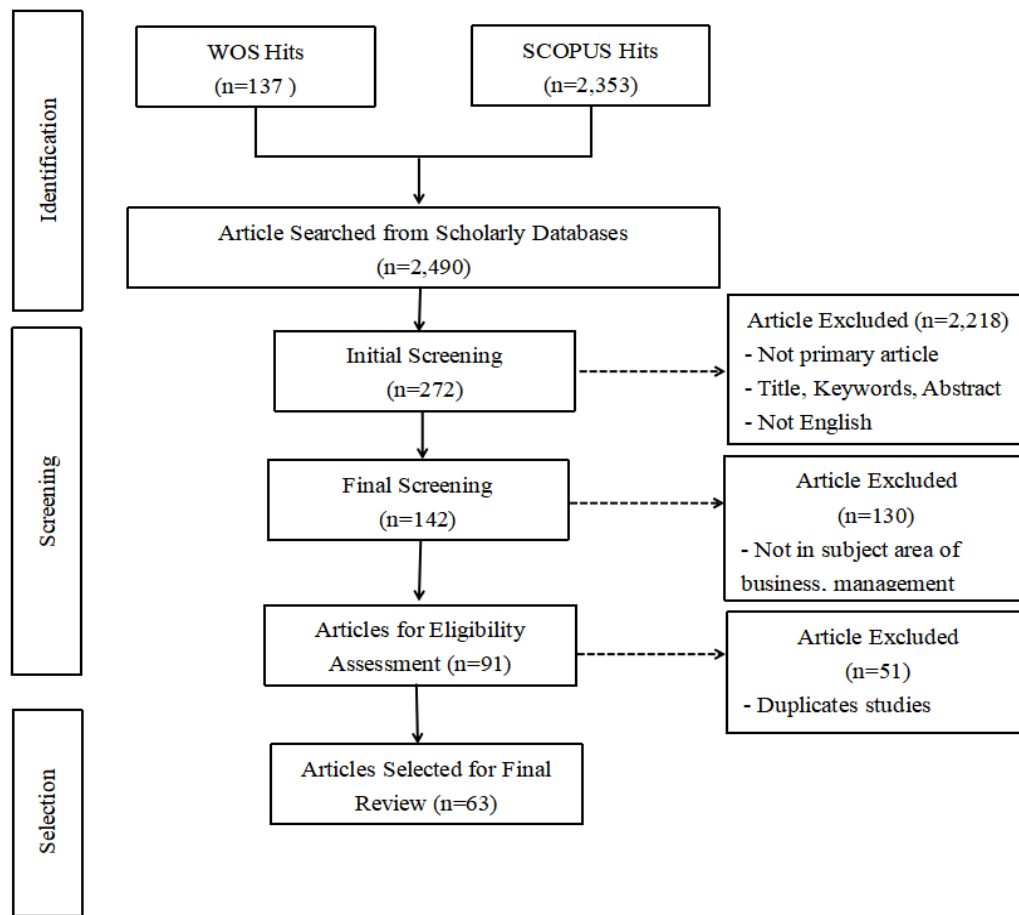


Figure 1.
Steps in SLR.

4. Findings

Results of this research indicate that the majority of articles were published in recent years. The publication period spans from 2012 to 2024, with 49 papers released post-2020. Consequently, it is initially determined that the examination of social support and entrepreneurial purpose constitutes a distinct research domain, as seen in Figure 2. Social support is regarded as a situational aspect that might augment an individual's confidence and capability [46-48]. It was not until 2012 that a study incorporating social support into entrepreneurial intention research was identified.

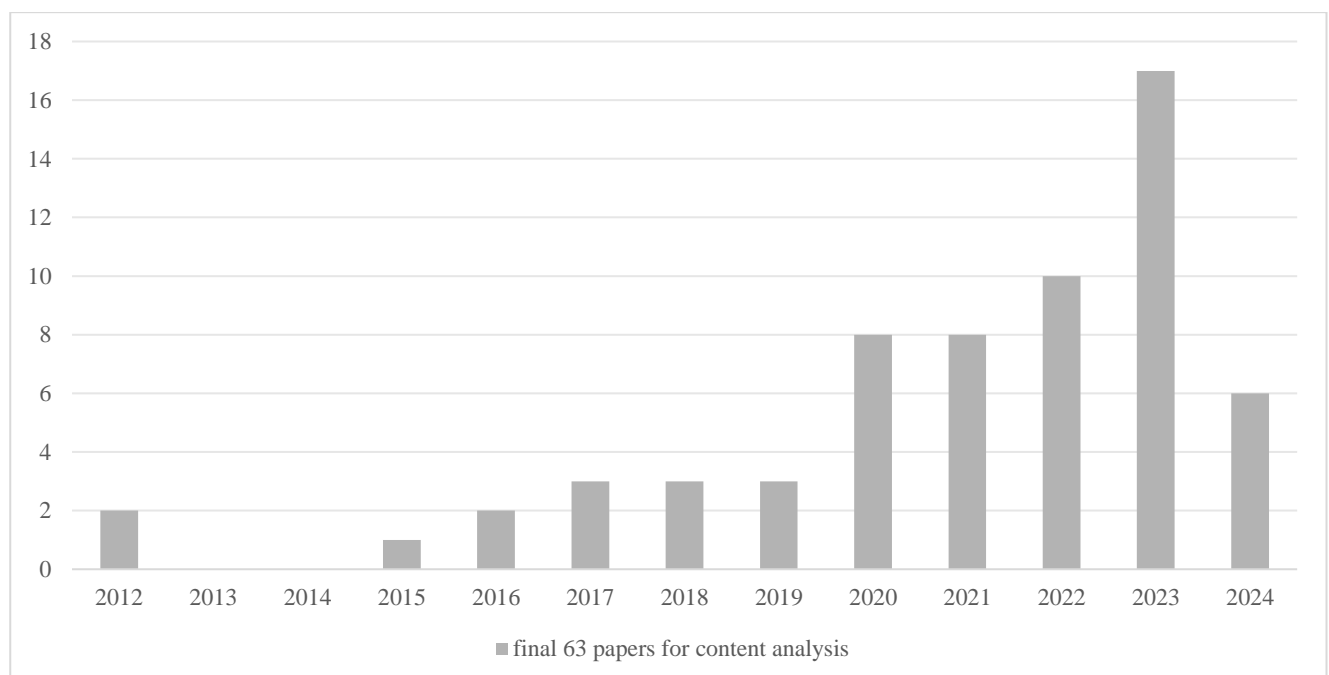


Figure 2.
The time frame for the SLR.

4.1. Synthesis of the Results

Table A1 presents a summary of the 63 papers that meet the inclusion criteria. Among the 63 articles that fulfilled the requirements, all but one qualitative research and two mixed-methods publications were empirical and employed quantitative methodologies. Furthermore, all articles viewed social support as a direct or indirect precursor to entrepreneurial intention. Inoubli and Gharbi [8] suggested that Social support may affect intention-behavior. Maleki et al. [49] postulated and tested that family support may act as a prerequisite for perceived feasibility and perceived desirability, specifically within the context of explaining entrepreneurial intention.

Table 1 indicates that the majority of the papers (37) concentrate on objectives related to initiating a commercial firm or pursuing entrepreneurship in general. Twenty-two papers focus on social entrepreneurial intentions. Three articles examine e-entrepreneurship goals, while one addresses sustainable entrepreneurial aspirations. The majority of these studies are recent, indicating a growing volume of research on social support.

Table 1.
Combinations of social support and entrepreneurial intention utilized in the selected studies.

Variables	General entrepreneurial intention	Social entrepreneurial intention	Other entrepreneurial intention
Social support	Abebe [43]; Kar et al. [50]; Liguori et al. [51]; Sandhu et al. [52]; Yesmin et al. [53]; Pruett [54]; Arrighetti et al. [55]; Giacomini et al. [56]; Le and Loan [57]; Bellò et al. [58]; Martins et al. [10]; Tran et al. [25] and Truong et al. [48]	Ahmed and Islam [59]; Ghatak and Bhowmick [37]; Saoula, et al. [60]; Ukil [61]; Ukil et al. [62]; Bui Ngoc and Pham [63]; Moussa and Kerkeni [35]; Maleki et al. [49] and Maleki and Hajipour [64]	Ghatak and Bhowmick [37] and Hossain et al. [47]
Family support	Pruett [54]; Arrighetti et al. [55]; Moussa and Kerkeni [35]; Maleki and Hajipour [64]; Bilal et al. [65] and Truong et al. [48]		Li and Kang [36]
Peer support	Bellò et al. [58] and Martins et al. [10]		

Similarly, the theoretical approaches used to conceptualize social support varied considerably across the reviewed studies. Notably, 18 papers specifically focused on the family dimension. Some studies evaluated how family support affects entrepreneurial intention [57], while others explored how family support influences perceived feasibility and desirability within the framework of entrepreneurial intention [64]. Furthermore, research has shown that family support can influence sustainable entrepreneurial intention [48].

Next, 15 research investigates family support and entrepreneurial intent, utilizing diverse theoretical frameworks. Family support impacts entrepreneurial intention based on Social Cognitive Theory [54]. Some scholars view family support as an external stimulus in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework, emphasizing its influence on entrepreneurial intention [37, 66]. Several studies highlight the effect of environmental or situational factors on entrepreneurial intention and explicitly utilize the Theory of Planned Behavior, Ajzen [3], to elucidate the significance of family support [60, 65]. Conversely, the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) is used to study the impact of family support [27, 67]. Other researchers utilize different theoretical frameworks: Role Conflict Theory to assert that family support may exacerbate role conflict among female entrepreneurs, thereby affecting their entrepreneurial intentions [68]. A cultural viewpoint, highlighting the moderating effect of collectivism on the connection between familial support and entrepreneurial inclination [56]. Family dynamics affect entrepreneurial decision-making through work-family interaction and family embeddedness [59].

In addition, some studies have also used peer support as a social background to measure social support. Bellò et al. [58] confirmed that peer support plays a role in promoting youth entrepreneurship based on social cognitive theory. According to resource protection theory, family and peer support affect an entrepreneur's entrepreneurial behavior intention [10]. Finally, the remaining 43 articles focused on the effect of social support as a whole on entrepreneurial intention. Social support, as exogenous events (situational factors), cannot directly affect personal intentions or behaviors; however, these events can influence personal internal factors [8, 20, 63, 69-74]. Based on TPB and EEM, it is explained that social support can influence personal intentions.

Mair and Noboa [75] is often used to explain how social support affects entrepreneurial intention. This paradigm expands the concept of perceived behavioral control by dividing it into two components: internal and external control. The individual's belief in the availability of external resources and support necessary to perform the behavior is reflected in the perception of external control, which is considered a key determinant of entrepreneurial intention. This model posits that an individual's propensity to participate in a behavior is affected by the strength of their intentions, particularly in relation to external factors. Numerous studies have used social support as a surrogate for perceived external control to explain entrepreneurial intention [7, 48, 61, 76-79].

Many research studies have examined how social support affects entrepreneurial intention, each using a different theoretical framework. Tran et al. [25] and Yesmin et al. [53] conceptualize social support as assistance or encouragement

from family and peers, an essential motivational factor that fosters entrepreneurial intention, in reference to Social Learning Theory. Social Cognitive Theory [80] is adopted by other scholars [81]. These experts believe social support boosts confidence and entrepreneurial desire through conversation, learning, and observation. Personal intentions are influenced by the dynamic interplay between environmental, personal, and social factors, according to this perspective. In addition, Liguori et al. [51] and Ip [82] employ social cognitive career theory to interpret social support as an environmental influence that affects entrepreneurial career intentions, thereby emphasizing its significance in career-related decision-making processes.

According to the social resource exchange theory, Corey et al. [83] defined social support as resources entrenched in intimate connections like family and friends. Social support is a critical component of social capital theory, as it offers individuals emotional support and information to encourage their entrepreneurial aspirations Jasniak et al. [84]. Sandhu et al. [52] corroborate the influence of social support on entrepreneurial intention by referencing the conservation of resources theory.

The most popular entrepreneurial intention framework is the Theory of Planned Behavior Ajzen [3] with 50 papers explicitly adopting it regarding specific entrepreneurial intention models. In this collection of papers, 2 examine the intention to engage in e-entrepreneurship [23], while 1 examines sustainable entrepreneurship [48]. The remaining 22 studies focus on the intention toward social entrepreneurship, while 25 studies focus on the intention of general entrepreneurship. This section includes one qualitative paper [69] and two mixed-methods papers [32]. The remaining papers are quantitative empirical analyses. The Entrepreneurial Event Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior were used to measure entrepreneurial intentions in six quantitative studies [67]. Six papers incorporated the [75] model with the Theory of Planned Behavior to assess social entrepreneurial intentions [46].

There are 13 studies that propose hypotheses based on other theories. The following documents are: The SOR model was employed by Li et al. [9], Vu et al. [66] and Duong [7] to investigate the influence of social support on this variable. Ghatak et al. [85] employed the Push&Pull framework to forecast entrepreneurial intentions. The effect of external factors (social supports) on entrepreneurial intention was investigated by Pruett [54] using Social Learning Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and the Extended Social Cognitive Career Theory, respectively. Fox et al. [31] employed social exchange theory to forecast social entrepreneurial intention. Role conflict theory was employed by Ghatak et al. [85] to elucidate the entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurial intention was defined by Giacomini et al. [56] in accordance with optimism and chance theory [86]. The conservation of resources theory was employed by Martins et al. [10] and Sandhu et al. [52] to elucidate the theoretical model. Lastly, Ahmed and Islam [59] elucidated entrepreneurial decision-making from the perspectives of family embeddedness and the work-family interface.

4.2. The Conceptual Framework

Despite the intricacy and heterogeneity of these 63 studies' techniques, certain overall trends helped construct a comprehensive conceptual framework. Most research links social support to entrepreneurial intent [30]. There are two specific findings that regard entrepreneurial intention and social support as independent variables that jointly influence actual behavior [82]. Additionally, social support moderates entrepreneurial intention and behavior [8].

The Theory of Social Entrepreneurial Intention [75] and the Theory of Planned Behavior [3] are used to apply in this field. These two theories were identified in 15 studies (summarized in Table 2), indicating that it is appropriate to develop a comprehensive framework based on their combined application. The integrative conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 3. The solid lines represent empirically explored relationships in the 15 research studies, while dotted lines represent hypothesized associations that have yet to be tested. Notably, numerous studies have investigated the role of social support as a mediating factor that affects entrepreneurial intention. Ashraf [30] has investigated how it directly affects entrepreneurial intent. Inoubli and Gharbi [8] suggested that social support may impact entrepreneurial intention and action. Three papers [39] proposed and empirically tested partial or full mediation models.

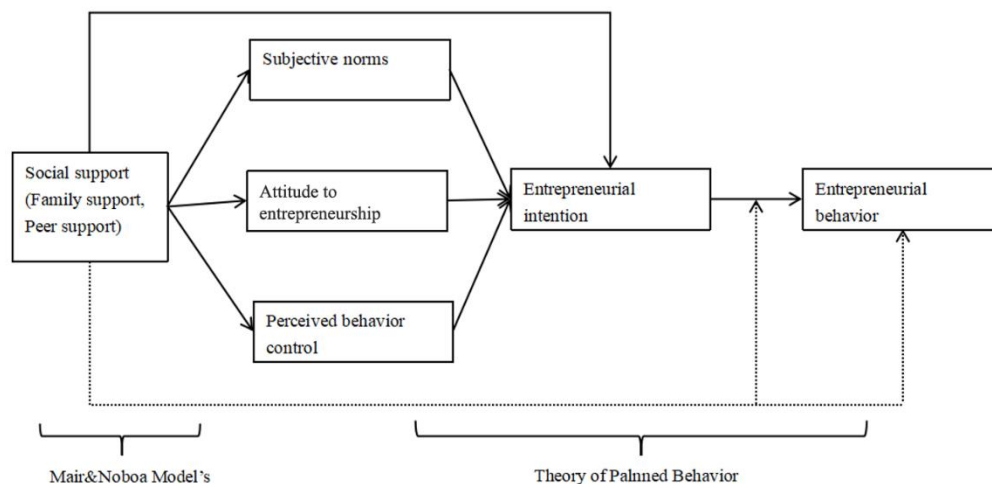


Figure 3.
The integrative conceptual framework.

Table 2.

The influence of social support on the theory of planned behavior variables.

Variables	Attitude to entrepreneurship	Subjective norms	Perceived behavior control	Entrepreneurial intention
Social support		+ (EI, SEI)	+(EI), – (SEI)	+(EI), ±(SEI)
Family support	+ (EI, SEI)	+ (EI, SEI)		

Note(s): Based on the results from: Lacap et al. [46]; Rambe and Ndofirepi [33]; Ashraf [30]; Nguyen et al. [39]; Akhter et al. [87]; Ghatak and Bhowmick [37]; Garaika [26]; Hossain et al. [47]; Chinaire et al. [77]; Truong et al. [48]; Ukil [61]; Aloulou and Algarni [78]; Iqbal et al. [34]; Cheah et al. [79] and Duong [7]. + = positive relationship; – = negative relationship; ± = conflicting results. EI = general entrepreneurial intention; SEI = social entrepreneurial intention.

Family support has an effect on entrepreneurial intention by influencing attitudes and subjective norms within the family support dimension [39]. In the same vein, Truong et al. [48] discovered that family support has a beneficial impact on both subjective norms and entrepreneurial attitudes during their examination of the antecedents of sustainable entrepreneurial intention. Upon a more comprehensive examination of social support, a favorable link was found between self-efficacy and perceived social support [34]. Despite the absence of the TPB–TSEI integrated framework, Farooq [21] found that social support improves entrepreneurial attitude. This finding was further corroborated by demonstrating positive correlations between social support and the motivational antecedents of entrepreneurial intention [38]. In contrast, Dabbous and Boustani [73] argued that social support can directly influence entrepreneurial intention but does not have an indirect effect through perceived behavioral control. Bui Ngoc and Pham [63] point out that perceived social support favorably affects attitude, self-efficacy, and social entrepreneurial intention.

5. Discussion

This systematic literature review (SLR) examines entrepreneurial intention and social support in 63 papers. Despite the fact that the discipline is relatively young, with all identified studies having been published since 2012, it has exhibited rapid growth in recent years. This review is relevant and vital because it synthesizes current knowledge and proposes an integrative conceptual framework for future research. An important finding of this review is that the majority of existing studies consider social support to be a critical antecedent of entrepreneurial intention.

In terms of social support, 18 articles subdivided social support into family support, and 2 articles subdivided it into peer support, but without a common basic framework. Pruett [54] found that the mild degree of family support had no significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. Moussa and Kerkeni [35] discovered that family financial support did not affect entrepreneurial intention. Giacomini et al. [56] believe that it may be because the individual's emphasis on family support is affected by national culture. Therefore, in collectivist and individualistic societies, family support will have different results in shaping individual behavior [34]. Some inconsistencies were also found in the results of the 43 articles that considered social support without dimensions. Rambe and Ndofirepi [33] found that social support had a negative impact on social entrepreneurship intention. The article believes that this may be due to the fact that providing too much social support makes potential entrepreneurs depressed and lack creativity. This makes them feel hesitant to go beyond their comfort zone and the general belief that such support cannot help them. The reason for this difference may be related to the income of the population. Saoula et al. [60] found that for low-income people (less than US\$200), support isn't necessary for social enterprise.

When there is a lack of resources around, individuals have lower expectations of receiving support. Hossain et al. [47] obtained the same result when verifying entrepreneurial intention. Previous studies have shown that, due to differences in cultural backgrounds, social support may have different positive incentive effects on entrepreneurial intentions [32], and personal factors may have a greater impact on entrepreneurship [50].

Analyzed intention is another key distinction. This article examined 63 publications that found different effects. Garaika [26] explained the formation of social entrepreneurial intention. They believe that social enterprises are those that actively reinvest most of their profits to better and more effectively achieve their social mission. Therefore, the contextual factors that measure social entrepreneurial intention are important for social entrepreneurs [31], and social support increases the likelihood of a social entrepreneur starting a business [46]. The impact of several social supports seems to be consistent.

5.1. Future Research Opportunities and Implications

This systematic literature review (SLR) may have important implications for academic research. As a relatively nascent research area, the intersection of social support and entrepreneurial intention still contains numerous knowledge gaps awaiting exploration. This SLR provides a framework for new research directions based on reviewed papers. A notable limitation in the current literature is the tendency to treat social support as a monolithic construct without distinguishing between its various dimensions. Critical questions remain unanswered: Do different types of social support influence the emergence of entrepreneurial intention in distinct ways? Does the source of social support, such as family, peers, or other significant individuals, lead to varying effects on entrepreneurial intention? These aspects must be studied to understand social support. Some studies have attempted such distinctions; for instance, family and peer support affect entrepreneurial intention [58]. Social support may also come from other important individuals, as noted by Ilevbare et al. [5]. However, among the 63 studies included in this systematic literature review, only two specifically addressed the role of peer support. This highlights a significant research gap that future studies should aim to address. Moreover, the indirect

effects of different dimensions of social support mediated by the antecedents of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) deserve greater attention. Family support positively influenced certain TPB antecedents [48]. However, understanding the complex interplay between various dimensions of social support and TPB components in shaping entrepreneurial intention remains underdeveloped. A comprehensive, multidimensional analysis is still lacking and should be prioritized in future research.

In addition, a growing body of literature explores specific forms of entrepreneurial intention, such as social entrepreneurial intention [25], E-entrepreneurial intention [36] and sustainable entrepreneurial intention [48]. Many of the found links are hard to compare or generalize due to the few studies in these subfields. Therefore, more empirical studies are needed to validate, refine, or challenge the existing findings and to enhance our understanding of how TPB applies across different entrepreneurial contexts. The utilization of alternative theoretical frameworks should be investigated in order to explore entrepreneurial intentions. For instance, the entrepreneurial event model intersects with TPB in certain respects [22]. Additional relevant theories may also be incorporated into future research. Mair and Noboa's theoretical model is the most frequently employed framework for the direct or indirect conceptualization of social support. Other theories and models cannot define how social support affects entrepreneurial intention.

The majority of studies included in this SLR relied on student samples, a practice that has raised ongoing concerns regarding the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. Demographic factors such as gender [72] have been shown to influence individuals' perceptions of social support. Therefore, future research should compare these results with studies that utilize more diverse and representative samples to assess the robustness of current conclusions. Additionally, social support affects entrepreneurial intention depending on background and culture [59]. Cultural dimensions, such as collectivism versus individualism, play a significant role in shaping how social support is perceived and utilized. Consequently, research findings may vary significantly between collectivist and individualist societies, highlighting the need for cross-cultural comparative studies.

As personal experience accumulates, the perceived social support by an individual will also change. Studies have found that cultivating personal experiences related to social entrepreneurship can help improve personal perceived social support [81]. Research on the impact of entrepreneurship education on social support will not only help identify the most effective combination of social support for entrepreneurial intentions but also assist in cultivating entrepreneurial responsibility and sustainable behavior [20]. Therefore, there is an obvious opportunity to enhance personal perceived social support through entrepreneurship education. To achieve this goal, longitudinal research is needed. Only one of the 63 articles analyzed in this study conducted a longitudinal study.

Perceived social support has been found to enhance individuals' sense of perceived feasibility, which in turn may help explain higher levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy [75]. Social support can originate from close family members and/or the broader social environment [26] and it may also take highly intangible forms, such as emotional encouragement or moral support [31]. As such, the emergence of entrepreneurial intention may be facilitated by specific combinations and sources of social support. Future research should validate proposed models using comparable samples, develop more precise operational definitions and measurement tools for different types of social support, and include additional variables or contextual factors that may influence the relationship between social support and entrepreneurial intention to fill gaps in the literature.

6. Conclusions

This comprehensive literature review examines entrepreneurial intention and social support for the first time. The rapid growth of research in this area is evident from the increasing number of recent publications. This review offers significant value to researchers in the field by providing a comprehensive synthesis of the theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, and empirical findings to date. This review maps the literature and presents a conceptual framework to integrate information, identify research gaps, and guide future study. Nevertheless, certain limitations must be acknowledged; for example, the selection of keywords may have inadvertently excluded some relevant studies, thereby affecting the comprehensiveness of the review.

Although this remains a relatively nascent field of research, it has already uncovered a range of promising avenues for further exploration. According to Mair and Noboa's model, social support is a fundamental antecedent of entrepreneurial intention. Nevertheless, alternative analytical perspectives have begun to emerge. In particular, scholars have increasingly focused on different forms of entrepreneurial intention, with social entrepreneurial intention being the most frequently studied variant. Existing evidence suggests that both intentions of general and social entrepreneurship are influenced by various dimensions and sources of social support, highlighting the need for more nuanced and differentiated analyses within this expanding research landscape.

As with any literature review, this study has limitations. Some important contributions may have been missed due to search keyword omission or screening exclusion. Despite this possibility, every effort was made to ensure a systematic and rigorous review process. Notwithstanding these limitations, this review provides a valuable and timely contribution to the field. It synthesizes existing research on social support and entrepreneurial intention and will be beneficial for academics exploring this growing field.

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