

Uncovering the Drivers of Entrepreneurial Intention: A Hybrid Systematic Literature Review and Bibliometric Analysis

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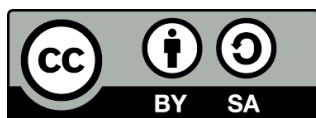
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entrepreneurial intention;
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planned behavior;
entrepreneurship education;
bibliometric analysis.

Abstract

This study examined the intellectual structure, publication trends, and key determinants of entrepreneurial intention through a hybrid systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis. The study analyzed 120 journal articles indexed in the Scopus database, retrieved using the exact phrase “Entrepreneur Intention” and screened in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The dataset covered publications available through August 2026. Bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer to examine publication trends, country and institutional contributions, authorship patterns, and keyword co-occurrence networks. The results showed that research on entrepreneurial intention had increased steadily since 2003, with a substantial rise in publication output from 2022 onward and a peak of 21 publications in 2025. Malaysia emerged as the leading contributing country and was also associated with the most prominent institutional contributions, while international research collaboration became increasingly interconnected. Keyword co-occurrence analysis identified entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneur intention, and entrepreneur as the most prominent research themes. The Theory of Planned Behavior remained a central theoretical framework and was closely associated with entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and innovation. The findings indicated that entrepreneurial intention was a multidimensional construct shaped by behavioral, psychological, educational, social, innovation-related, and institutional factors, with entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurship education emerging as prominent complementary drivers.



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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) refers to an individual’s willingness and commitment to engage in entrepreneurial activity and is widely recognized as an important precursor to entrepreneurial behavior. Understanding EI has become increasingly important because entrepreneurship contributes to innovation, employment creation, and economic development. Recent research has shown that entrepreneurial intention remains an active and expanding field of study across entrepreneurship, management, education, and behavioral research (Li et al., 2022; Antončič & Auer Antončič, 2023). Bibliometric evidence has also indicated continued growth and diversification in entrepreneurial intention research, suggesting that the topic

remains relevant for further investigation (Alfaro-García et al., 2022; Gao et al., 2022).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) remains one of the dominant theoretical frameworks for explaining entrepreneurial intention through attitudes toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. However, recent studies have indicated that EI cannot be fully explained by TPB alone. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurship education, social support, prior experience, the entrepreneurial environment, and institutional support have increasingly been incorporated into entrepreneurial intention models (Amofah & Saladrighes, 2022; Nasri & Morched, 2023; Wu et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2023). In particular, entrepreneurial self-efficacy shapes individuals' perceptions of their ability to perform entrepreneurial activities, whereas entrepreneurship education can develop entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, mindsets, and confidence (Martínez-Gregorio et al., 2021). Social and institutional environments can further provide resources, support, and opportunities that shape entrepreneurial aspirations (Huang et al., 2021; Si et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of literature, research on entrepreneurial intention remains fragmented across theoretical perspectives, determinants, populations, and geographical contexts (Mukhtar et al., 2021). Previous studies have often examined individual drivers separately, while the relationships among behavioral, psychological, educational, social, innovation-related, and contextual factors remain insufficiently integrated. Furthermore, entrepreneurial intention does not necessarily translate into actual entrepreneurial behavior, creating an important intention–behavior gap that requires further investigation (Dlamini & Botha, 2023). Recent bibliometric studies have also highlighted the fragmentation and diversification of entrepreneurial intention research, indicating the need for a more integrated understanding of the field (Loi et al., 2024).

The novelty of this research lies in its use of a hybrid methodology that combines a systematic literature review with bibliometric analysis to examine the field of entrepreneurial intention. Unlike previous bibliometric studies that have focused primarily on citation patterns or keyword co-occurrence, this study integrates systematic review and bibliometric approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the intellectual development and conceptual structure of entrepreneurial intention research. Furthermore, this study extends prior bibliometric analyses by examining not only publication trends and research distribution but also by proposing a conceptual model of the drivers of entrepreneurial intention based on the integrated findings. This model synthesizes the diverse antecedents identified in the literature and provides a framework for future research to examine how these factors collectively contribute to the formation of entrepreneurial intention (Bergner et al., 2022; Loi et al., 2024; Tetteh et al., 2025).

Therefore, a systematic examination is needed to identify how entrepreneurial intention research has developed and which drivers have received the greatest scholarly attention. A systematic literature review can synthesize findings across fragmented studies, while bibliometric analysis can identify publication trends, influential countries, institutions, authors, journals, and conceptual relationships. Combining these approaches can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the intellectual structure and emerging directions of entrepreneurial intention research (Donthu et al., 2021; Alfaro-García et al., 2022; Ramadhaniyati et al., 2024). Accordingly, this study aims to examine the development, intellectual structure, and principal drivers of entrepreneurial intention through a hybrid

systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis. Specifically, this study examines publication trends and research distribution, identifies dominant theoretical and conceptual themes, and explores emerging research directions and knowledge gaps. By integrating systematic synthesis with bibliometric mapping, this study contributes to a broader understanding of the behavioral, psychological, educational, social, innovation-related, and contextual factors that shape entrepreneurial intention.

METHOD

This study employed a hybrid systematic literature review (SLR) and bibliometric analysis to examine the development, intellectual structure, and research trends of entrepreneurial intention. The combination of these approaches enabled both a structured synthesis of the literature and a quantitative mapping of publication patterns, citation relationships, authorship collaboration, and research themes (Donthu et al., 2021; Page et al., 2021). Bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer to visualize co-authorship networks, citation patterns, and keyword co-occurrence.

The study applied three inclusion criteria: (1) publications indexed in Scopus and published before August 10, 2026; (2) publications written in English; and (3) publications focusing on entrepreneurial intention. The selection and screening process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to ensure transparency and reproducibility in identifying eligible studies (Page et al., 2021). Bibliometric analysis was used to identify the development of the field, influential publications and authors, collaboration patterns, and dominant and emerging research themes (Donthu et al., 2021; Lim et al., 2022).

The search strategy used the terms “Entrepreneur” AND “Intention” in the title, abstract, and keyword fields of the Scopus database. The search was conducted on August 10, 2026, and initially identified 3,853 records across different subject areas. The results were subsequently refined using the exact phrase “Entrepreneur Intention,” which reduced the dataset to 146 documents.

The screening process followed the PRISMA framework, as presented in Figure 1. Refinement to the exact phrase “Entrepreneur Intention” excluded 3,707 records, leaving 146 documents. Document-type screening was then conducted to retain journal articles only. A total of 24 documents were excluded, comprising 16 conference papers, 7 book chapters, and 1 review article, resulting in 122 articles. A language filter subsequently excluded 2 non-English publications, consisting of one Polish-language article and one Spanish-language article. Following these screening procedures, the final dataset consisted of 120 journal articles included in the systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis.

The selected publications were analyzed using VOSviewer to examine relationships among authors, publications, citations, and keywords. The analysis focused on the temporal development of entrepreneurial intention research, the distribution of publications across relevant academic dimensions, and the conceptual relationships among dominant research themes. Accordingly, the study addressed three research questions: RQ1: How has research on entrepreneurial intention evolved over time? RQ2: How has research on entrepreneurial intention been distributed across the academic literature? RQ3: How can the findings conceptually and functionally inform future research on entrepreneurial intention?

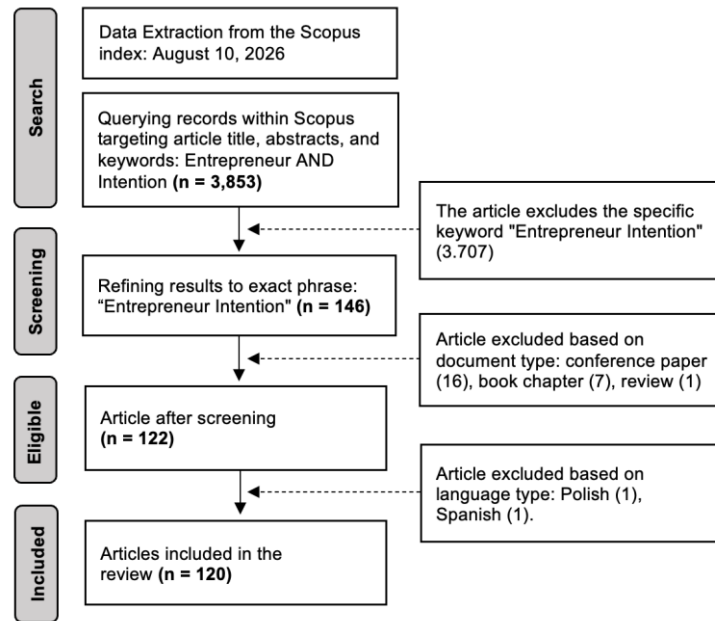


Figure 1. Systematic Literature Review information flow using PRISMA

Based on the reviewed literature, three main research gaps were identified. First, prior studies predominantly relied on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as the primary framework, while factors such as entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, social support, innovation, and institutional support were often examined separately rather than within an integrated framework. Second, most empirical studies were conducted within a single geographical context or focused on specific respondent groups, limiting the generalizability of findings regarding the combined drivers of entrepreneurial intention. Third, a persistent gap remained between entrepreneurial intention and actual entrepreneurial behavior, as strong intentions did not always translate into venture creation. Meta-analytic evidence also indicated that the intention–behavior relationship required further investigation. Therefore, this study employed a hybrid systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis to integrate fragmented findings, map relationships among key constructs, and identify directions for the further development of entrepreneurial intention theory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The outcomes of this research are drawn from 120 manuscripts indexed in the Scopus repository on the topic of Entrepreneurial Intention. This information was obtained by tracking the volume of published papers, annual publication trends, and their respective journal sources. The current assessment also highlights the dominant factors characterizing Entrepreneurial Intention research, including the constructs examined, methodological choices, and contextual settings across studies.

RQ1: How has research on entrepreneurial intention evolved over time?

Based on statistics extracted from the Scopus database, over the past two decades the academic literature specifically using the exact phrase "Entrepreneur Intention" comprises 120 publications, indicating that, despite Entrepreneurial Intention being an established construct in the broader entrepreneurship field, this narrowly defined body of work remains

comparatively modest in volume, as shown in Figure 2. Publications first began to appear sporadically between 2003 and 2009, with no more than a single paper recorded in most years during this period, reflecting the early and exploratory stage of the field (Kautonen, Van Gelderen, & Fink, 2015). A gradual upward trajectory started to emerge from 2010 onward, with the number of annual publications fluctuating between two and seven articles throughout the 2010s, coinciding with the growing influence of seminal works establishing self-efficacy and planned-behavior-based antecedents as central mechanisms explaining entrepreneurial intention formation (Zhao, Seibert, & Hills, 2005; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015).

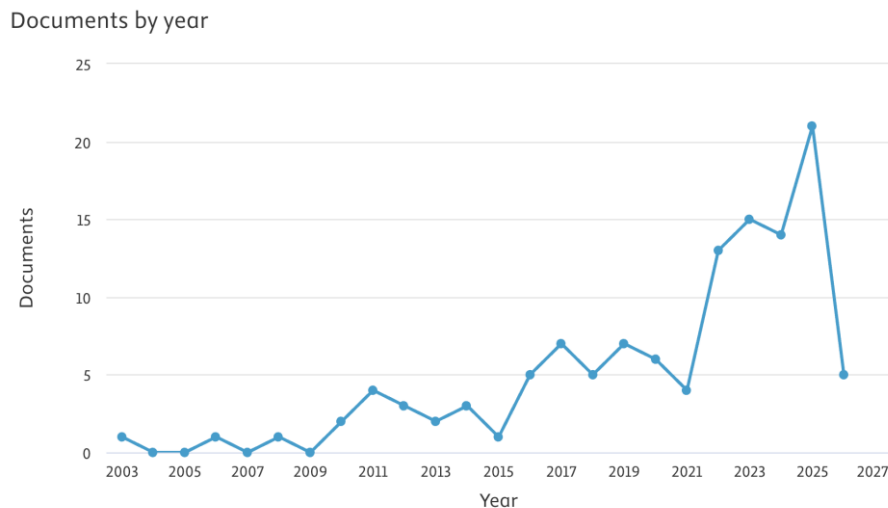


Figure 2. Number of Entrepreneurial Intention publications by year

A markedly steeper growth pattern is observable from 2022 onward, with annual publications rising sharply from 13 in 2022 to 15 in 2023, 14 in 2024, and peaking at 21 documents in 2025. The highest single-year output recorded in the dataset. This surge suggests that Entrepreneurial Intention has re-emerged as an increasingly attractive theme for contemporary scholars, plausibly driven by renewed interest in digital entrepreneurship, technology-enabled venture creation, and post-pandemic shifts in career and employment preferences among students and young professionals. The comparatively lower count of 5 documents recorded in 2026 should be interpreted with caution, as it reflects only a partial year of indexing at the time of data extraction rather than an actual decline in scholarly interest.

Taken together, the consistent upward trend, particularly the sharp escalation observed since 2022, indicates that Entrepreneurial Intention continues to be a relevant and expanding theme for future scientific examination, rather than a saturated or declining research area. This sustained growth trajectory underscores the continued value of the present investigation in advancing understanding of the antecedents, mechanisms, and contextual boundary conditions shaping entrepreneurial intention formation, and provides a timely foundation for identifying emerging constructs and underexplored contexts that merit further scholarly attention.

RQ2: How is research on entrepreneurial intention distributed across the academic literature?

Evaluating how research on Entrepreneurial Intention is distributed across the 120 selected articles was conducted by classifying the publications according to country or territory,

institutional affiliation, publication source, and author. This distribution provides a comprehensive overview of the geographical, institutional, publication, and authorship patterns characterizing the development of Entrepreneurial Intention research. Such an understanding is valuable for academics seeking to identify influential research centers, geographical concentrations, major publication outlets, and productive scholars, while also helping to clarify potential directions for future research. First, the distribution of scholarly investigations concerning Entrepreneurial Intention, when classified according to country or territory, is strongly dominated by Malaysia with 23 documents, followed by the United Kingdom with 12 documents, Spain with 11 documents, China with 10 documents, India with 10 documents, the United States with 9 documents, Indonesia with 7 documents, Italy with 5 documents, Vietnam with 5 documents, and Australia with 4 documents.

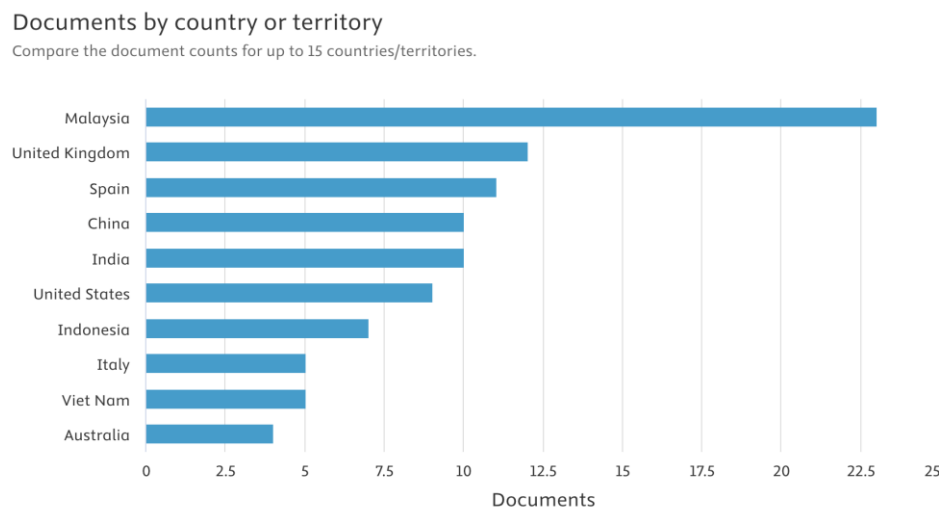


Figure 3. Number of publications sorted by country or territory (top 10 countries)

The geographical distribution of Entrepreneurial Intention research demonstrates that Malaysia represents the most prominent contributor, accounting for 23 documents, considerably exceeding the contribution of the United Kingdom, which produced 12 documents. Spain follows with 11 documents, while China and India each contributed 10 documents. The United States also demonstrates a substantial contribution with 9 documents, followed by Indonesia with 7 documents. Italy and Vietnam each account for 5 documents, while Australia contributes 4 documents. The international distribution of publications is further supported by the VOSviewer country co-authorship visualization, which illustrates extensive collaborative linkages among countries investigating Entrepreneurial Intention (see Figure 4). The network demonstrates connections among countries including Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Spain, India, China, Indonesia, the United States, Australia, Italy, Vietnam, and other countries.

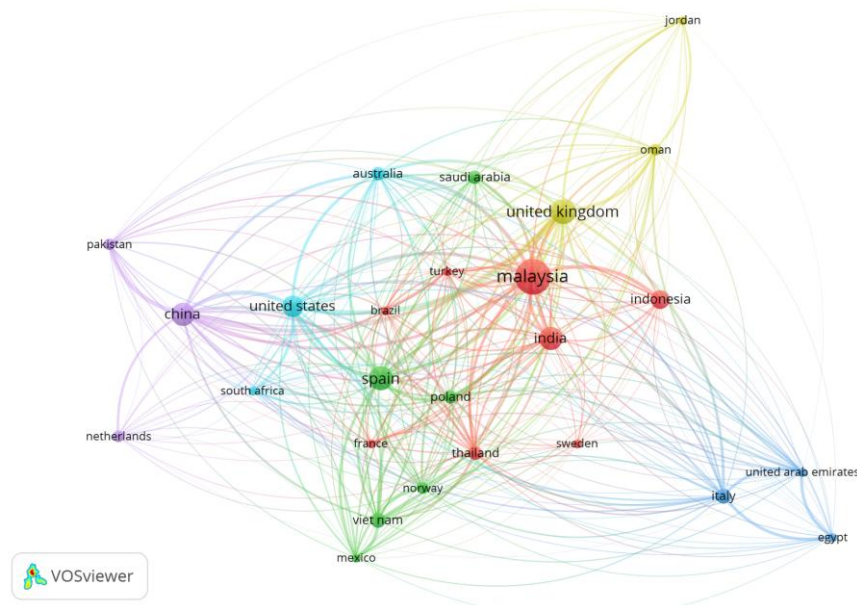


Figure 4. Network country visualization

The VOSviewer results additionally reinforce the international scope of Entrepreneurial Intention research. Malaysia occupies a particularly prominent position within the network, consistent with its highest publication count, while countries such as the United Kingdom, Spain, India, China, and the United States also demonstrate visible positions within the collaborative structure. The presence of numerous interconnecting links suggests that Entrepreneurial Intention research is not developing through isolated national research communities. Instead, researchers from different geographical regions are connected through collaborative publications, contributing to the development of a more internationally integrated research domain.

Second, the distribution of scholarly literature concerning Entrepreneurial Intention according to institutional affiliation is primarily dominated by Universiti Malaya with 5 documents, followed by Universiti Teknologi MARA with 4 documents, International Islamic University Malaysia with 3 documents, Universidad de Extremadura with 3 documents, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia with 3 documents, Universiti Putra Malaysia with 3 documents, Universiti Sains Malaysia with 2 documents, Bialystok University of Technology with 2 documents, Multimedia University with 2 documents, and LUISS University with 2 documents.

Documents by affiliation

Compare the document counts for up to 15 affiliations.

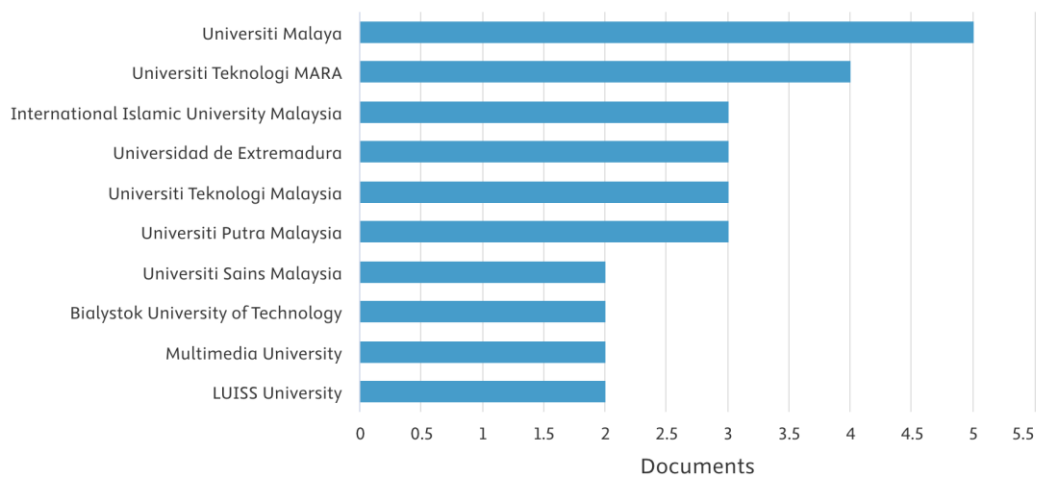


Figure 5. Top 10 institutional affiliations by number of publications

The distribution of Entrepreneurial Intention research according to institutional affiliation reveals a substantial contribution from Malaysian universities. Universiti Malaya occupies the leading position with 5 documents, followed by Universiti Teknologi MARA with 4 documents. Three institutions. International Islamic University Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and Universiti Putra Malaysia. Each contributes 3 documents. Meanwhile, Universidad de Extremadura also contributes 3 documents, demonstrating that the institutional distribution extends beyond Southeast Asia. Universiti Sains Malaysia, Bialystok University of Technology, Multimedia University, and LUISS University each contribute 2 documents.

The concentration of leading affiliations in Malaysia is consistent with the country's position as the largest contributor at the national level. However, the presence of universities from Spain, Poland, and Italy among the leading affiliations demonstrates that Entrepreneurial Intention research is also receiving attention from European academic institutions. This institutional distribution suggests that Malaysia has developed several important academic centers for research on entrepreneurial intention, while international institutions contribute to the diversification of the field.

Third, the distribution of research concerning Entrepreneurial Intention according to publication source demonstrates contributions from several journals. Based on the source distribution presented in the Scopus visualization, *Frontiers in Psychology* recorded 3 documents in 2022, while *International Journal of Innovation Creativity and Change* recorded 3 documents in 2019. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal* contributed 3 documents across the years represented in the visualization, including 1 document in 2018 and 2 documents in 2023. *Cogent Business & Management* contributed 2 documents in 2023, while *Advanced Science Letters* contributed 2 documents, appearing in 2015 and 2017.

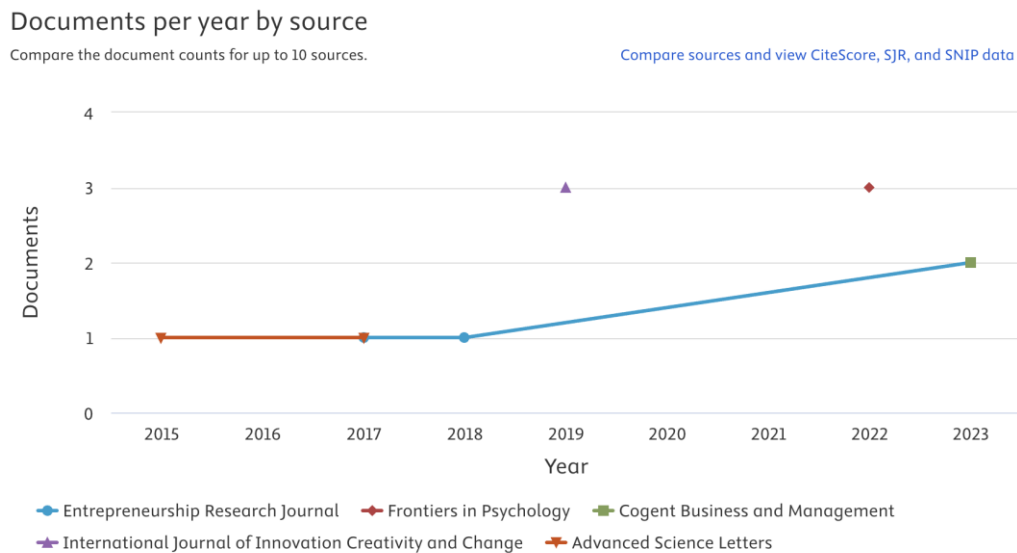


Figure 6. Distribution of publications by source

The distribution of publications across sources indicates that Entrepreneurial Intention research has been disseminated through journals representing different disciplinary and thematic orientations. The presence of Entrepreneurship Research Journal directly reflects the relevance of entrepreneurial intention within the entrepreneurship research domain, while the appearance of Frontiers in Psychology demonstrates the connection between entrepreneurial intention and behavioral or psychological perspectives. Similarly, publications in Cogent Business & Management, International Journal of Innovation Creativity and Change, and Advanced Science Letters indicate that Entrepreneurial Intention has been examined from broader business, management, and interdisciplinary perspectives.

The temporal distribution across these sources also indicates that Entrepreneurial Intention research has been published over an extended period, beginning with contributions in Advanced Science Letters in 2015, followed by publications in subsequent years and more recent contributions from journals such as Entrepreneurship Research Journal and Cogent Business & Management. This pattern suggests that the investigation of Entrepreneurial Intention has gradually expanded across different publication outlets and disciplinary perspectives. Fourth, the distribution of research on Entrepreneurial Intention according to authors shows that publication productivity is relatively concentrated among a small group of scholars. Miranda, F.J. and Rubio, S. are the most productive authors, with 3 documents each. Meanwhile, Chamorro-Mera, A.; Faisal, S.I.; Guido, G.; Jaya Prakash, S.K.; Jayawarna, D.; Kobylinska, U.; Lourenço, F.; and Marcati, A. each contributed 2 documents (see Figure 7).

Documents by author

Compare the document counts for up to 15 authors.

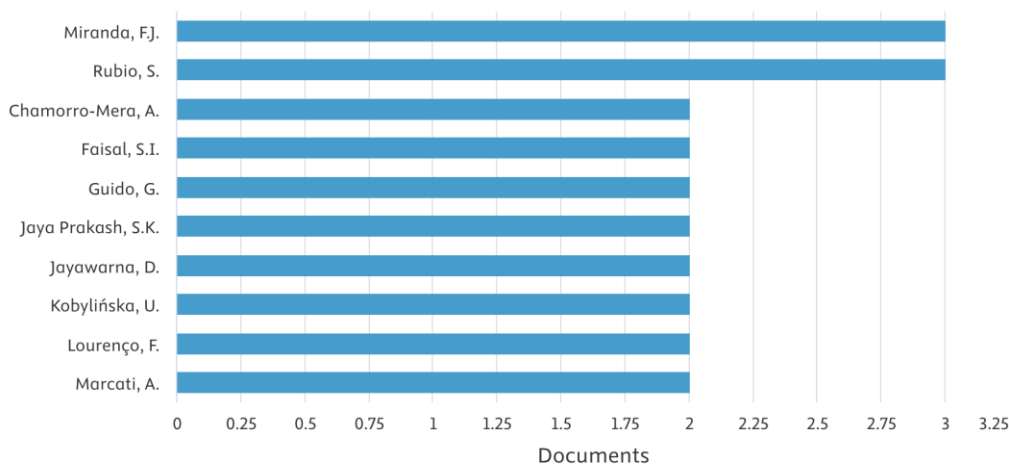


Figure 7. Top 10 authors by number of publications

The authorship distribution indicates that no single researcher overwhelmingly dominates the Entrepreneurial Intention literature. Although Miranda, F.J. and Rubio, S. occupy the highest position with 3 publications each, the remaining eight authors in the top 10 each contribute 2 documents. This relatively balanced distribution suggests that research on Entrepreneurial Intention has developed through contributions from multiple scholars rather than being controlled by a single dominant research group. The presence of researchers from different academic backgrounds and geographical contexts further reflects the international nature of Entrepreneurial Intention research.

Overall, the findings of RQ2 demonstrate that scholarly investigations into Entrepreneurial Intention are internationally distributed, institutionally diverse, and supported by multiple publication outlets and research contributors. Malaysia represents the strongest geographical and institutional center within the dataset, while substantial contributions from Europe, Asia, North America, and Australia demonstrate the broader global relevance of the topic. The country collaboration network further indicates that research on Entrepreneurial Intention is increasingly interconnected across national boundaries. At the institutional and authorship levels, the distribution demonstrates several active research centers and productive scholars without an excessive concentration around a single author or institution. These findings provide an important foundation for examining the conceptual evolution and emerging research directions of Entrepreneurial Intention in RQ3.

RQ3: How can the findings, conceptually and functionally, guide future research on entrepreneurial intention?

This assessment used 120 Scopus-indexed articles, mapped using VOSviewer to identify dominant concepts, theoretical foundations, and under-investigated areas in Entrepreneurial Intention research. The findings offer scholars an evidence-based foundation for future inquiry, and offer educators, practitioners, and policymakers guidance for designing interventions that strengthen entrepreneurial intention through education, innovation, and capability development.

Table 1. Top 10 keywords by total link strength

Rank	Keyword	Occurrence	Total link strength
1	entrepreneurship	12	21
2	entrepreneurial intention	16	20
3	entrepreneur intention	11	16
4	entrepreneur	7	13
5	entrepreneurial education	4	11
6	academic entrepreneurship	4	10
7	theory of planned behaviour	5	10
8	entrepreneurship education	6	8
9	innovation	2	8
10	innovativeness	2	8

The co-occurrence analysis (Figure 8, Table 1) shows entrepreneurship (12 occurrences, link strength 21), entrepreneurial intention (16, 20), entrepreneur intention (11, 16), and entrepreneur (7, 13) as the dominant keywords. This confirms Entrepreneurial Intention remains firmly embedded within the broader entrepreneurship domain.

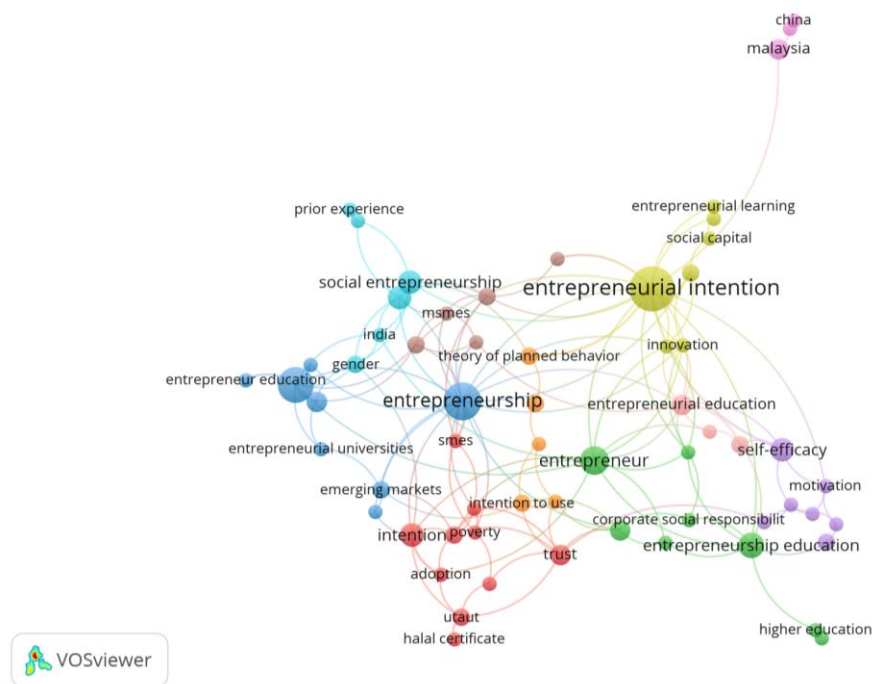


Figure 8. Co-occurrence network visualization of Entrepreneurial Intention keywords (VOSviewer).

Figure 8 shows five main clusters: (1) yellow, entrepreneurial intention, linked to entrepreneurial learning, social capital, innovation; (2) blue. Entrepreneurship and entrepreneur education, linked to entrepreneurial universities, emerging markets, gender; (3) green. Entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, motivation, higher education; (4) red. Intention and poverty, linked to adoption, trust, UTAUT, halal certificate; and (5) orange. Theory of planned behavior, bridging entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intention. A peripheral cluster (China,

Malaysia) shows weak integration into the core network. Overall, entrepreneurial intention is the network's central hub, connecting established theory (TPB) with emerging themes (innovation, self-efficacy). Entrepreneurial education (4, 11) and academic entrepreneurship (4, 10) point to universities as key contexts shaping entrepreneurial intention. Not just as knowledge providers but as environments building entrepreneurial attitudes and competencies. Future research should move beyond whether education raises intention, toward how and under what conditions it does. Testing mediators (self-efficacy, perceived behavioral control) and moderators (gender, family background, prior experience).

Innovation and innovativeness (2 occurrences each, link strength 8) are comparatively underdeveloped in the network, suggesting a gap between "intention to become an entrepreneur" and "intention to build innovative ventures." Future studies could explore this distinction, especially in technology-driven entrepreneurial ecosystems. Overall, no single antecedent adequately explains entrepreneurial intention. The strong link to TPB offers a foundation to extend with self-efficacy, education, social capital, and institutional support — testing whether these operate independently or through mediating/moderating pathways. Given that intention formation likely differs across students, professionals, and cultural/institutional contexts, cross-country comparative studies are also recommended to test the stability of these relationships.

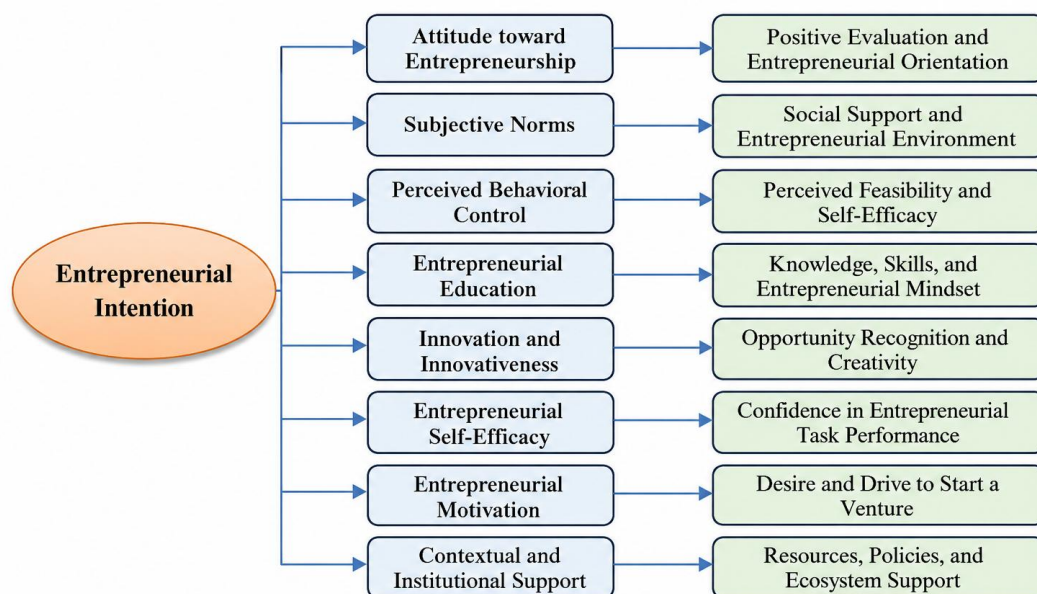


Figure 9. Conceptual model of the drivers of entrepreneurial intention

Source: The author's elaboration based on previous research

The conceptual model illustrates the main drivers of Entrepreneurial Intention identified from the literature and VOSviewer analysis. Entrepreneurial intention is influenced by several interconnected factors, including attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, entrepreneurial education, innovation and innovativeness, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial motivation, and contextual/institutional support.

These drivers influence entrepreneurial intention through mechanisms such as positive entrepreneurial attitudes, social support, perceived feasibility, entrepreneurial knowledge and

skills, opportunity recognition, confidence, motivation, and access to resources and ecosystem support. Overall, the model provides a conceptual foundation for future research to examine how these factors collectively contribute to the formation of entrepreneurial intention.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that entrepreneurial intention is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by behavioral, psychological, educational, social, innovation-related, and institutional factors. The findings indicated that the Theory of Planned Behavior remained a central theoretical foundation, while entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurship education emerged as important complementary drivers of entrepreneurial intention. By integrating these dimensions through a hybrid systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis, this study contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the intellectual and conceptual development of entrepreneurial intention research.

From a practical perspective, the findings highlighted the importance of strengthening entrepreneurship education, mentoring, innovation ecosystems, and institutional support to foster entrepreneurial intention and facilitate its translation into entrepreneurial action. For policymakers and educational institutions, support should extend beyond financial incentives to include broader educational and ecosystem-based interventions. Future research should examine diverse geographical and population contexts and adopt longitudinal or mixed-methods approaches to better understand the transition from entrepreneurial intention to actual entrepreneurial behavior.

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