



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38035/dijefa.v5i6>
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Barriers to Entrepreneurial Intention: A Comprehensive Literature Review

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Abstract: This literature review investigates the barriers affecting entrepreneurial intention, a foundational aspect of business creation influenced by psychological, social, and environmental factors. The study identifies major barriers, such as low self-efficacy, lack of social support, negative attitudes toward entrepreneurship, limited perceived behavioral control, environmental uncertainty, and fear of failure. These factors, documented across diverse contexts, highlight both individual and contextual challenges that deter entrepreneurial motivation. This review aims to clarify these barriers by synthesizing findings from prior research and presenting a framework to inform targeted interventions that can effectively foster entrepreneurial intentions. Emphasis is placed on the role of entrepreneurial education, supportive social structures, and simplified regulatory processes in overcoming these obstacles, thereby supporting potential entrepreneurs in diverse environments.

Keyword: Entrepreneurial Intention, Self-Efficacy, Social Support, Perceived Behavioral Control, Fear of Failure, Entrepreneurial Barriers, Literature Review.

INTRODUCTION

Human resource management (HRM) must remain agile and adaptable to support entrepreneurial aspirations effectively within dynamic environments, especially as individuals face numerous barriers to starting new ventures (Dessler, 2017; Furnham, 2020; Robbins and Judge, 2013). Understanding the factors that shape entrepreneurial intention has significant implications for promoting entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic and social advancement (Ahmed, Islam, & Usman, 2021). Entrepreneurial intention, defined as an individual's motivation to start a business, is influenced by psychological, social, and environmental components that either drive or deter the decision to pursue entrepreneurial activities (Bandura,

1986; Shinnar, Hsu, & Powell, 2014). Research has shown that self-efficacy—the belief in one’s capability to succeed in entrepreneurial tasks—is central to entrepreneurial intention, where low self-efficacy can create barriers to entry by fostering doubts about handling entrepreneurial risks and challenges (Bandura, 1977; Camargo, Çelik, & Storme, 2020; Otache et al., 2024).

Moreover, social support and the subjective norms within one’s community can critically impact entrepreneurial motivation. Individuals often rely on support from family, friends, or the broader community, and the absence of such support can significantly discourage entrepreneurial pursuits (Damari, Almadani, & Mirzaei, 2021; Christensen et al., 2023). Negative societal attitudes toward entrepreneurship, along with perceptions of high risks and low benefits, further limit entrepreneurial intention (Renko, Bullough, & Saeed, 2021). These societal factors are often compounded by practical challenges, such as limited access to capital, complex regulatory systems, and environmental uncertainty, which hinder an individual’s perceived control over launching a business (Maheshwari & Kha, 2022; Klinge Jacobsen, Birr-Pedersen, & Wier, 2003). For example, while Denmark ranks among the happiest countries globally (Hamilton, 2023), international employees interested in entrepreneurship must possess adaptable skills (Berry, 1997) to navigate the significant regulatory and financial challenges that can erode confidence and reduce self-efficacy.

Psychological barriers such as fear of failure also present significant deterrents to entrepreneurial intention. Fear of failure is associated with negative self-assessments and societal pressures that discourage individuals from pursuing business ventures (Yousaf et al., 2021; Furnham, 2020). Studies have shown that individuals who perceive entrepreneurship as excessively risky or likely to result in personal or financial loss are less likely to develop strong entrepreneurial intentions, which ultimately hampers their ability to take calculated risks necessary for success in business (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013).

External environmental factors, including economic uncertainty and regulatory complexity, further complicate the entrepreneurial landscape. When the economic environment is volatile or when policies fluctuate unpredictably, potential entrepreneurs may feel that the risks outweigh the benefits, leading to a reduction in entrepreneurial intention (Klinge Jacobsen et al., 2003; Klok et al., 2006; Vaux, 1988). Additionally, individuals in highly regulated industries may perceive the process of business creation as burdensome and unmanageable, ultimately deterring them from pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities (Maheshwari & Kha, 2022).

Despite the extensive body of research identifying various barriers to entrepreneurial intention, there is limited integrative analysis of how these factors collectively influence motivation across different contexts. Therefore, this literature review seeks to address the question: What are the obstacles faced by entrepreneurial intention in various contextual analyses in this literature review? By examining diverse factors including self-efficacy, social support, and perceived behavioral control this review offers a comprehensive understanding of the barriers to entrepreneurial intention, aiming to facilitate the development of targeted strategies for enhancing entrepreneurial motivation across varied environments. This synthesis contributes to existing literature by integrating findings across contexts and identifying areas where support structures, educational initiatives, and policy reforms can mitigate these obstacles to foster entrepreneurship (Nowiński et al., 2019; Cooper & Schindler, 2015).

In addressing these barriers, this review highlights the importance of establishing supportive frameworks that encourage entrepreneurship. Interventions such as improved access to entrepreneurial education, skill-building programs (Schmutzler et al., 2019; Yousaf et al., 2021), and simplified regulatory processes can empower individuals to overcome psychological and social obstacles. Additionally, fostering a more favorable social and

economic environment can significantly enhance perceived control and reduce fear, motivating potential entrepreneurs to pursue their business aspirations (Nowiński et al., 2019).

This literature review thus aims to provide a foundational understanding for policymakers, educators, and community leaders seeking to promote entrepreneurial growth and reduce the barriers currently impeding entrepreneurial intention. The problem formulation includes key questions that must be examined in the discussion and addressed in the conclusion.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Yusriani et al., 2024) using a systematic literature review to analyze key factors that act as obstacles to entrepreneurial intention across various sectors. Conducted through a targeted examination of fifteen scholarly articles published between 2018 and 2024, all cited in the references section, the primary objective of this literature-based approach is to identify and categorize variables that hinder entrepreneurial intention across diverse industries and environments.

The sectors examined in this study include health services, education (spanning both school and higher education), hospitality, banking, consumer services, and courier services. Each sector provides a unique context wherein entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by structural and cultural factors specific to that field. By focusing on these sectors, the study aims to provide insights into both industry-specific and cross-sectoral barriers impacting entrepreneurial intention.

Relevant literature was sourced from academic databases to ensure a comprehensive selection of studies addressing these targeted variables. Articles were screened for relevance based on keywords such as “entrepreneurial intention,” “barriers to entrepreneurship,” “self-efficacy,” and “social support.” The analysis coded variables related to entrepreneurial barriers, categorizing these factors into psychological, social, and environmental domains, proving useful for subsequent research in sustainability (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009; Yusriani et al., 2024).

The systematic literature review method enabled a structured synthesis of findings across various contexts, highlighting patterns and variations in barriers to entrepreneurial intention. These outcomes offer valuable variables that can be integrated into future research for a more holistic understanding of factors affecting entrepreneurial intentions across sectors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This The systematic literature review identified multiple factors that negatively impact entrepreneurial intention across various contexts. These include self-efficacy, social support, subjective norms, attitudes toward entrepreneurship, perceived behavioral control, environmental uncertainty, fear of failure, managerial skill gaps, financial barriers, negative past experiences, and regulatory complexity. Each of these factors represents an obstacle that discourages individuals from pursuing entrepreneurial activities.

Low Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, or belief in one’s abilities (Bandura, 1986), increases confidence in an individual’s ability to succeed and is a significant predictor of entrepreneurial intention. Individuals with low self-efficacy often struggle to initiate entrepreneurial endeavors, as they lack confidence in their ability to manage the challenges of business creation (Bandura, 1977; Abdullah & Wider, 2022; Udayanan, 2019). Self-efficacy has also been shown to improve creativity (Ma, 2022; Yusriani et al., 2023; Puozzo & Audrin, 2021; Torrance, 1966; Lee et al., 2019). For instance, individuals with low scores in self-efficacy indicators—such as doubts about their capacity to overcome initial business challenges—are more likely to refrain from

entrepreneurship, positioning self-efficacy as a primary barrier to entrepreneurial intention (Camargo, Çelik, & Storme, 2020; Otache et al., 2024).

Insufficient Social Support and Subjective Norms

Social support and subjective norms refer to the perceived encouragement from family, friends, or the broader community (Shi et al., 2020; Pelegriani & Moraes, 2022). When social environments prioritize stable careers over entrepreneurship, they discourage potential entrepreneurs. Studies indicate that individuals lacking adequate social support often feel inhibited from pursuing business ventures, especially when family or community expectations emphasize traditional employment paths over entrepreneurial risk-taking (Chung, 2019; Hamdani et al., 2023; Valdez-Juárez & Pérez-de-Lema, 2023).

Negative Attitudes Toward Entrepreneurship

An individual's attitude toward entrepreneurship, shaped by perceptions of risk and reward, is crucial in entrepreneurial intention (Renko, Bullough, & Saeed, 2021; McIntyre et al., 2023). Negative attitudes often stem from the perception of entrepreneurship as a high-risk activity with uncertain benefits. Those who view entrepreneurship primarily as risk-laden, with few rewards, are less likely to pursue business opportunities, further reinforcing low entrepreneurial intention in environments where risk-aversion is culturally ingrained (Schmutzler, Andonova, & Diaz-Serrano, 2019).

Low Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) reflects an individual's sense of control over the actions required to start a business. Low PBC is associated with perceived obstacles, such as lack of resources, complex regulations, or limited access to funding, which can deter entrepreneurial intention (Ahmed, Islam, & Usman, 2021; Bandura, 1986). This is especially prevalent in sectors with high regulatory demands, where perceived challenges are exacerbated by real barriers, limiting entrepreneurial actions (Maheshwari & Kha, 2022).

Environmental Uncertainty

External environmental uncertainty, including economic instability and unpredictable regulations, further discourages entrepreneurial pursuits (Klinge Jacobsen, Birr-Pedersen, & Wier, 2003). Unstable market conditions or fluctuating governmental policies create a risk-laden environment that can inhibit entrepreneurial intent, particularly among those who feel unprepared to navigate these uncertainties (Klok et al., 2006; Furnham, 2020).

Fear of Failure

Fear of failure, often driven by internal and social pressures (McIntyre et al., 2023; Bandura, 1986; Vaux, 1988), is one of the most significant barriers to entrepreneurial intention. This fear can stem from personal insecurities, societal expectations, or previous experiences with business failure (Yousaf et al., 2021). Studies suggest that individuals with heightened fear of failure are less inclined to engage in entrepreneurship due to the anticipated risk of financial or personal loss (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013).

Managerial Skill Gaps and Lack of Business Knowledge

The absence of essential managerial skills and business knowledge, such as financial management and marketing, poses a substantial barrier to entrepreneurship. Those lacking these competencies often lack the confidence to start a business, highlighting the importance of entrepreneurial education and training (Hamdani et al., 2023). This gap underscores the need

for targeted skill development programs to empower aspiring entrepreneurs (Horng et al., 2020; Shi et al., 2020).

Financial Barriers

Access to capital is frequently cited as a primary obstacle to entrepreneurship. Limited funding can significantly deter entrepreneurial intention, particularly for individuals with restricted access to financial resources or those operating in capital-intensive industries (Elnadi & Gheith, 2023). Financial constraints inhibit entrepreneurial pursuits by limiting individuals' ability to launch and sustain business operations (Osadolor et al., 2021).

Negative Past Experiences

Prior negative experiences with business endeavors or witnessing failures within close circles can lower entrepreneurial intention. These experiences reinforce doubt about business success, often leading individuals to avoid entrepreneurship (Christensen et al., 2023; Pelegrini & Moraes, 2022). Those with adverse past experiences may be less inclined to risk similar failures, thus reducing their likelihood of entrepreneurial engagement (Renko, Bullough, & Saeed, 2021).

Complex Regulatory and Bureaucratic Processes

Regulatory complexity and bureaucratic challenges, including licensing costs and administrative burdens, present significant obstacles to starting a business. Individuals who perceive the regulatory process as overly complicated are likely to be discouraged from pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities (Maheshwari & Kha, 2022). Simplifying regulatory processes could thus be instrumental in enhancing entrepreneurial intention, particularly in sectors heavily impacted by bureaucracy (Klok et al., 2006).

Building on these findings, future research could delve deeper into the interplay between these barriers and their impact on specific demographic groups, such as young entrepreneurs, women, or individuals from underrepresented communities. Examining how these factors vary across different cultural and economic contexts could provide a more nuanced understanding of entrepreneurial intention, especially in emerging markets or regions with unique regulatory challenges (Kakeesh, 2024). Moreover, longitudinal studies could offer valuable insights into how these barriers evolve over time, particularly in response to changing economic conditions or policy reforms. For instance, tracking the impact of entrepreneurial education programs on self-efficacy and perceived behavioral control over extended periods could reveal the lasting effects of targeted interventions.

Research could also creatively explore the effectiveness of support structures, such as mentorship programs, networking opportunities, and financial assistance initiatives, in mitigating the identified barriers. Investigating the role of digital tools and platforms in overcoming obstacles like regulatory complexity and limited access to funding could further enhance support systems for entrepreneurs.

Finally, interdisciplinary approaches that incorporate insights from psychology, sociology, and economics could lead to the development of more comprehensive models for predicting and fostering entrepreneurial intention, ultimately guiding policies and programs that better support aspiring entrepreneurs. Collaborations with peers and others should emphasize sustainable business and research practices (Yusriani et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

This literature review identifies several factors that hinder entrepreneurial intention, including low self-efficacy, lack of social support, negative attitudes toward entrepreneurship, low perceived behavioral control, environmental uncertainty, fear of failure, managerial skill

gaps, financial constraints, negative past experiences, and complex regulatory frameworks. Recognizing these factors can guide the development of effective interventions to foster entrepreneurship, such as skill-building programs, social support systems, and policy reforms aimed at reducing bureaucratic obstacles. These findings offer valuable insights for international communities and policymakers seeking to bolster entrepreneurial engagement and support aspiring entrepreneurs.

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