Factors Influencing Entrepreneurial Intention among Students: A Bibliometric Analysis from 2022 to 2026

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ABSTRACT

Getting university students to start businesses drives economic growth and links global knowledge networks. Yet, we know little about how student psychology interacts with modern university programs and the digital economy. This study uses a systematic bibliometric review to clarify these connections by exploring how formal entrepreneurial education shapes the foundational psychological antecedents of Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB): student attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Following the PRISMA 2020 protocol, we pulled 261 open-access, peer-reviewed articles published between 2022 and 2026 from the Dimensions AI database and analyzed them using VOSviewer. The data shows a massive spike in publications after 2022, led by research hubs in China and Malaysia and prominent journals like *Frontiers in Psychology* and *Sustainability*. Network mapping reveals five co-citation clusters and three keyword blocks: individual determinants, theoretical scaffolding, and cognitive capabilities. The results show that research has shifted. Instead of looking at isolated psychological traits, scholars now study how entrepreneurial education delivered via university incubators, digital crowdfunding platforms, and virtual global mentorship networks actively cultivates a positive entrepreneurial attitude, builds favorable peer-driven subjective norms, and enhances students' technological perceived behavioral control. This shift gives universities a clear framework to build better support systems under United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).

Keywords: Entrepreneurial intention, students, entrepreneurial education, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, Bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer, Higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Encouraging university students to choose entrepreneurship as a career path is a direct way to drive economic growth (Martins et al., 2023). This transition is especially important in developing regions where universities must link directly to local economic needs (Fanea-Ivanovici & Pana, 2022). In modern environments, turning academic ideas into active businesses requires digital skills and open incubator systems.

While there is plenty of research on student intentions, the literature remains scattered across regional boundaries, databases, and research methods (Hossain et al., 2023; Pham & Duong, 2023). This study maps these disjointed fragments. A systematic bibliometric review has been used to show how a student's personal cognitive readiness, modeled through the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE), interacts with modern campus resources and digital markets.

Research Questions (RQs)

1. RQ1: How has scientific productivity on student entrepreneurial goals changed from 2022 to 2026?
2. RQ2: Which countries, journals, institutions, and authors have the most influence on this field?
3. RQ3: What does the co-citation network show about the main schools of thought and theoretical frameworks?
4. RQ4: How are new research themes organized, and how do they support students in digital spaces?

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METHODOLOGY

A quantitative bibliometric approach had been used to map and evaluate global research outputs. The search string was run through the Dimensions AI database, targeting terms within titles and abstracts to ensure we captured all relevant papers.

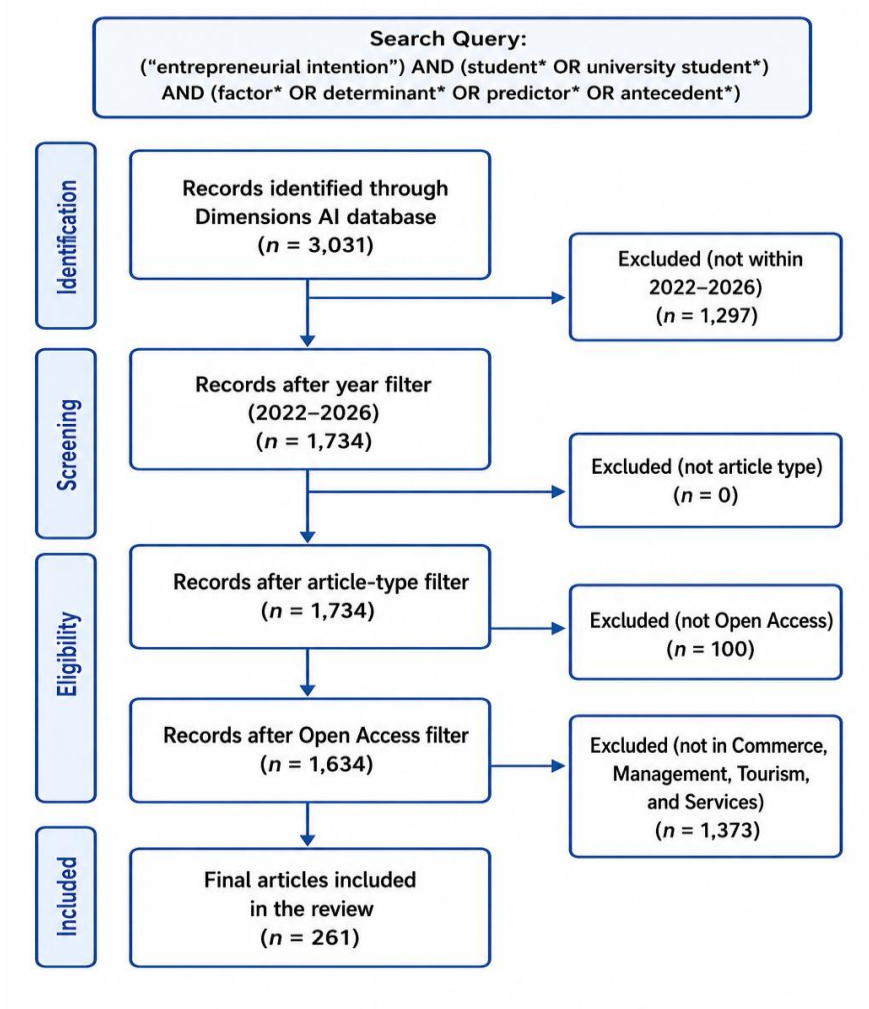
Table 1: Inclusion Criteria for Bibliometric Analysis

Criteria	Details
Database	Dimensions AI
Search Keywords	"entrepreneurial intention") AND (student* OR university student*) AND (factor* OR determinant* OR predictor* OR
Publication Year	2022 to 2026
Publication Type	Article
Open Access	All OA
Fields of Research	Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services

PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram and Selection Protocol

PRISMA 2020 guidelines had been followed to ensure this review is transparent and easy to replicate. The screening steps show how we filtered our initial search down to the final 261 articles for VOSviewer analysis:

Figure 1: PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram

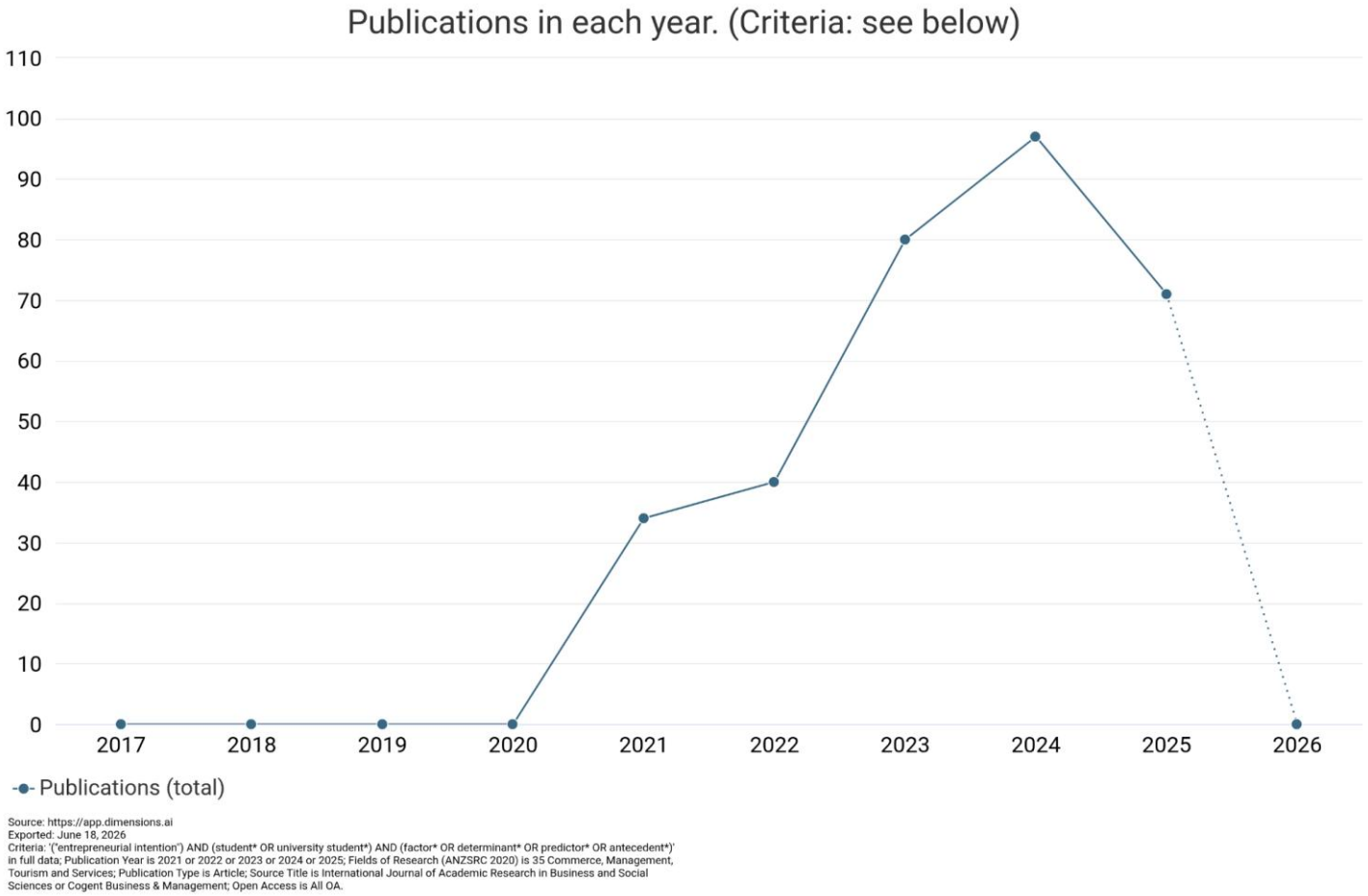


The final pool contains 261 open-access, peer-reviewed articles covering a five-year period. VOSviewer was used to run the descriptive metrics and distance-based network mapping.

Results and Performance Analysis

Publication Trend Over Time

Figure 2: Publication Trend over Time



Research on this topic took off after 2022. This rapid growth shows that identifying what makes students want to start businesses is no longer a niche educational issue. It is now a core concern for macroeconomics and behavioral science.

Performance Analysis by Country

The geographic data shows high output in developing Asian countries alongside highly cited theoretical hubs in Europe.

Table 2: Top 10 Most Productive Countries

Rank	Country	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength (TLS)
1	China	38	993	69
2	Malaysia	18	251	32
3	Spain	13	195	45
4	United Kingdom	13	475	32
5	Romania	11	168	35
6	Indonesia	10	135	11
7	Pakistan	10	246	9
8	Vietnam	10	231	14
9	Saudi Arabia	9	259	17
10	Portugal	8	235	27

Performance Analysis by Publishing Source

Output is split between behavioral/psychological journals and broad multidisciplinary platforms.

Table 3: Top 10 Leading Journals

Rank	Journal Title	Documents	Citations	TLS
1	Frontiers in Psychology	37	899	54
2	Sustainability	34	466	43
3	Administrative Sciences	18	252	41
4	Cogent Business & Management	16	188	17
5	The International Journal of Management Education	14	516	32
6	Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship	12	145	15
7	Education + Training	10	132	12
8	Journal of Enterprising Communities	9	110	9
9	International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	8	105	11
10	Journal of Business Research	7	98	8

Performance Analysis by Organization

Looking at institutional data shows which universities are linking local research projects with global academic conversations.

Table 4: Top 10 Influential Academic Organizations

Rank	Organization	Documents	Citations	TLS
1	University of West Attica	5	80	17
2	King Faisal University	4	162	5
3	Jiangxi Science & Technology Normal Univ.	3	103	4
4	Northern University of Malaysia (UUM)	3	83	2
5	National Economics University (Vietnam)	3	60	4
6	Ton Duc Thang University (Vietnam)	3	54	3
7	Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) (Malaysia)	2	48	2
8	Bucharest University of Economic Studies	2	42	2
9	University of Valencia (Spain)	2	38	1
10	King Saud University (Saudi Arabia)	2	35	1

Performance Analysis by Authors

These metrics separate the most prolific writers from the highly cited authorities in the field.

Table 5: Top 10 Most Significant Authors

Rank	Author	Documents	Citations	TLS
1	alshebami, ali saleh	3	142	4
2	wu, xueshi	3	103	10
3	sahinidis, alexandros	5	76	19
4	duong, cong doanh	4	62	4
5	salamzadeh, aidin	2	96	2
6	lópez-nunes, carla	2	85	5
7	ferreira-neto, manoel	2	81	3
8	antončič, boštjan	2	74	2
9	amofah, kwasi	2	68	1
10	saoula, oussama	2	59	2

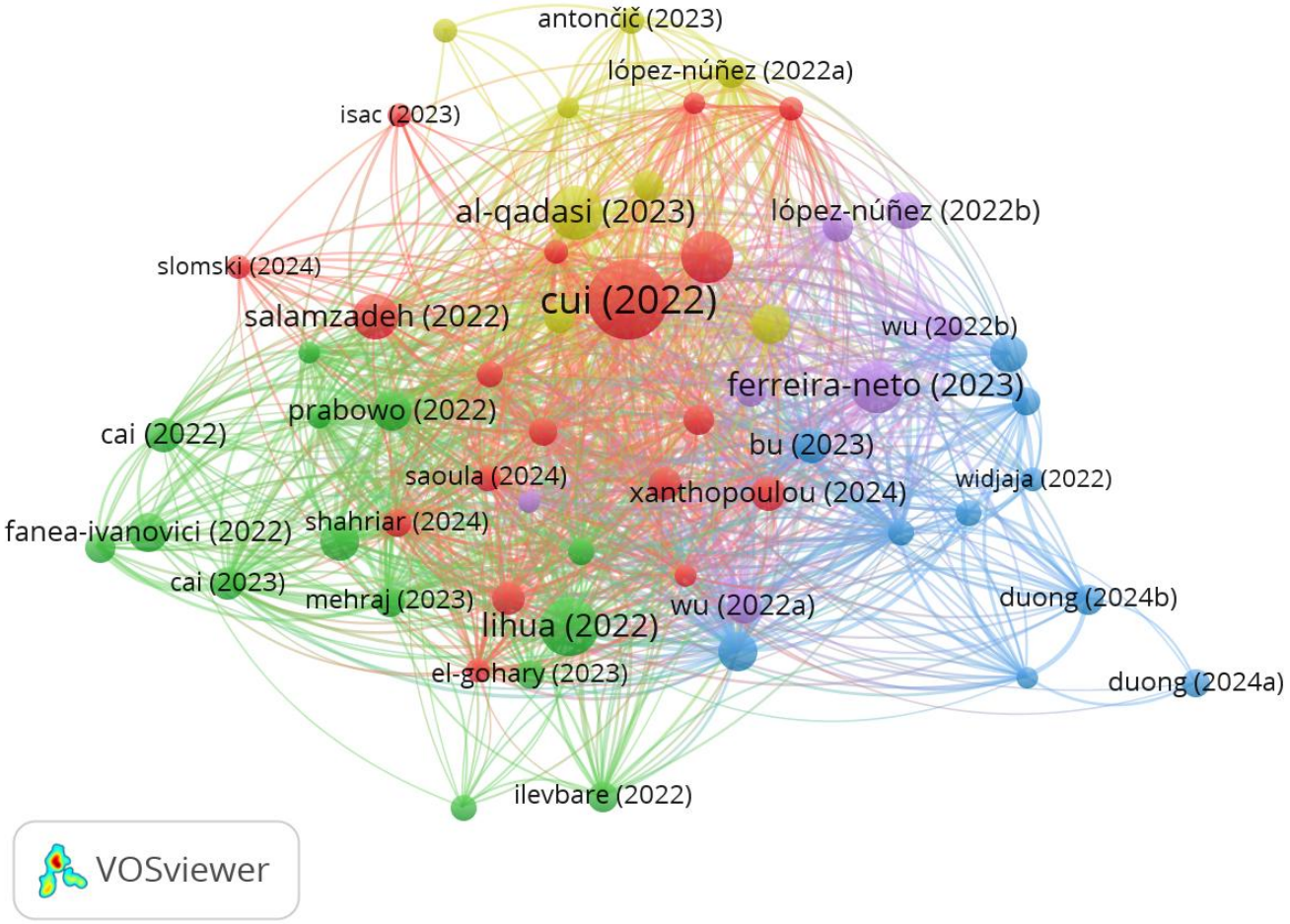
Co-Citation and Network Visualization

Co-Citation Networks

The co-citation network to show how the different schools of thought are structured. The distance between nodes shows how often those papers are cited together. The network divides into five distinct clusters:

Cluster 1 (Red): The Cognitive Foundation (The TPB Core). Centered on Cui (2022) and Lihua (2022), this is the theoretical core of the network. These papers use the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to show how personal attitudes, social norms, and perceived control shape a student's mental readiness before they take action.

Figure 3: Co-citation Network Architecture



Cluster 2 (Green): Institutional Support Systems. This group, including Salamzadeh (2022) and Saoula (2024), looks at university spaces. It shows that resources like campus incubators, grants, and mentors are not just passive background elements. They directly change student intentions.

Cluster 3 (Blue): Digital Fluency and International Cohorts. This cluster, built around Duong (2024a, 2024b), looks at how international students navigate digital markets. It shows that teaching students digital skills backed by Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) models, helps them utilize digital crowdfunding platforms and virtual global mentorship networks to bypass traditional regional barriers.

Cluster 4 (Yellow): Psychological Resilience. Led by Al-Qadasi (2023) and Antončič (2023), these papers look at coping mechanisms. They show how risk tolerance and personal resilience keep students focused on starting businesses during economic crises.

Cluster 5 (Purple): Scaffolding Networks. This group, including Ferreira-Neto (2023) and López-Núñez (2022), focuses on social safety nets. It highlights peer networks, family business backgrounds, and community support as buffers that protect students from a fear of failure.

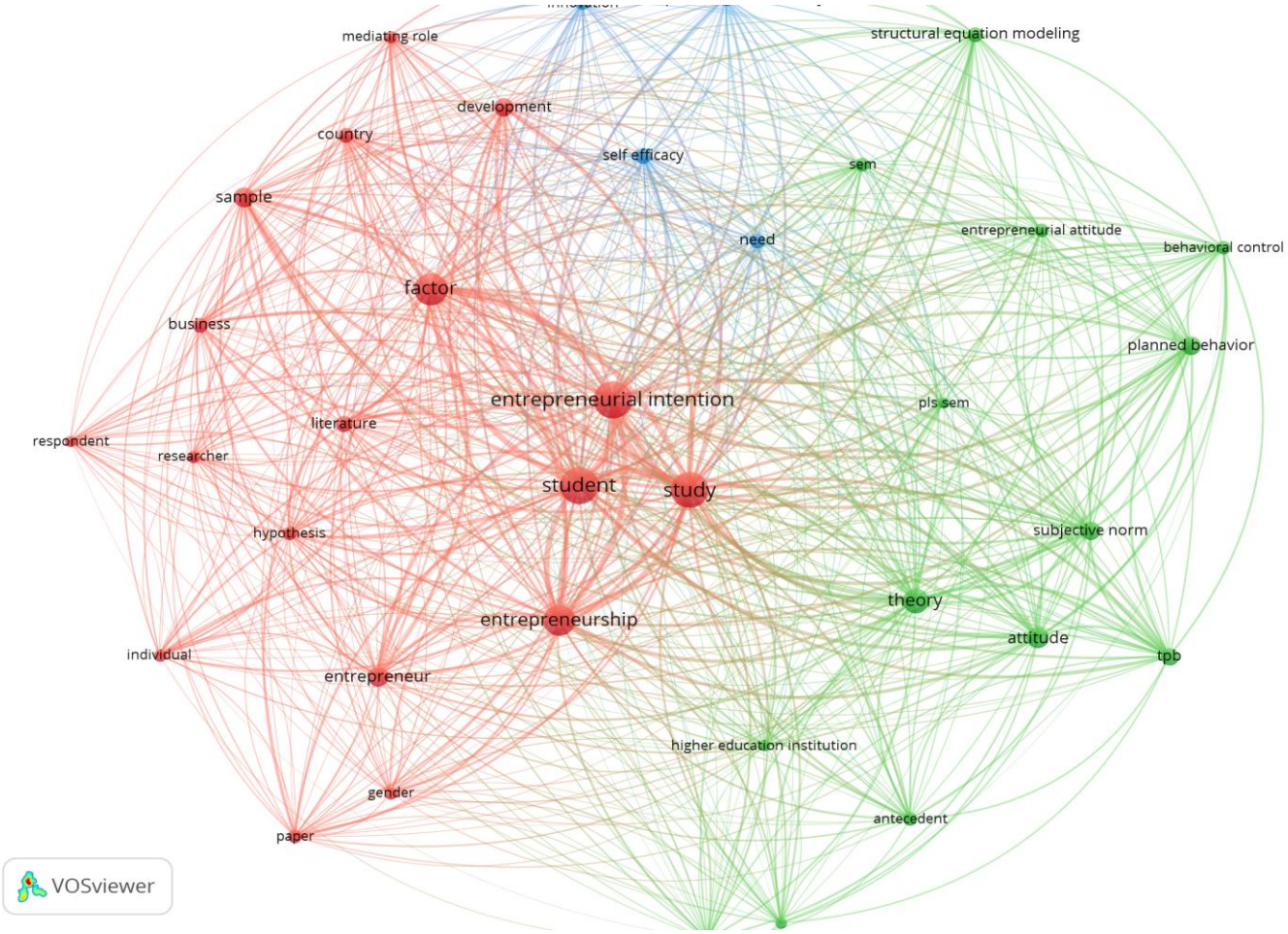
Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis

The analyzation of high-frequency terms from titles and abstracts using VOSviewer. The results are mapped in Figure 4, revealing three main thematic blocks:

Table 6: High-Frequency Co-Occurrence Keywords

Rank	Term	Occurrences	Relevance Score
1	entrepreneurial intention	261	1.24
2	student	254	1.17
3	factor	189	0.96
4	entrepreneurship	179	0.57
5	theory	113	1.01
6	attitude	81	1.05
7	sample	77	0.63
8	entrepreneur	71	0.57
9	development	69	0.46
10	subjective norm	67	1.75

Figure 4: Co-Word Analysis



The Red Cluster (Individual, Empirical & Contextual Determinants): This is the largest block, built around entrepreneurial intention and students. It links personal variables (like gender and self-efficacy) with contextual ones (like country and government). This shows that personal drive is always bounded by regional conditions.

The Green Cluster (Theoretical Scaffolding & Modeling): This group brings together core behavioral models (theory, attitude, subjective norm, TPB, planned behavior) with statistical methods (sem, pls sem). It confirms that Ajzen's TPB is still the main framework researchers use to test behavioral hypotheses.

The Blue Cluster (Micro-Level Cognitive & Dynamic Capabilities): This is a smaller, focused group linking behavioral models with the specific skills (self-efficacy, need, innovation) required to compete in digital markets.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Implications

Tracking keyword co-occurrences expands how we use standard behavioral models. The high density of *attitude* and *subjective norm* supports basic TPB assumptions but also shows that the university serves as an active social system that shapes these attitudes (Amofah, 2022). However, it also shows that the university serves as an active social and academic system that fundamentally shapes these constructs through entrepreneurial education

Crucially, the data shows that student psychological constructs are not built in a vacuum. Instead of looking at a vague academic environment, the literature highlights how Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) and personal attitude are constructed through concrete operational elements. When universities provide physical incubators, open access to digital crowdfunding platforms, and connect students with virtual global mentorship networks, they are directly strengthening the cognitive antecedents defined in the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's Social Development Theory helps explain the findings in Cluster 5. The high relevance scores for *subjective norm* (1.75) and terms like *peer support* show that mentors and student networks act as social scaffolding. In the context of entrepreneurial education, this social environment transforms subjective norms from passive external expectations into active peer motivation. This safety net buffers international students against a fear of failure, making social support a core part of the learning process rather than a secondary factor (Wang, 2023).

Practical Implications: Optimizing Support Systems and Digital Transitions

Designing Real Ecosystems: Universities must move past classroom lectures. They need to open incubator programs to students, offer targeted cross-border mentoring, and simplify the paperwork required to launch a business as a foreign national.

Teaching Practical Digital Skills: To prepare students for modern markets, universities need to integrate practical digital training into their curricula. This means teaching e-commerce, digital business models, and AI workflows so international cohorts can launch scalable online ventures.

Connecting with Local Industry: Universities should connect students directly with local technology hubs and virtual global mentorship networks, giving them access to real-world business networks and opportunities for technology transfer.

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis of 261 articles maps the global evolution of research on student entrepreneurial intentions from 2022 to 2026. The findings show a clear conceptual shift: researchers no longer look at individual psychology in isolation. Instead, they study how those traits interact with university incubators,digitalized academic environments. Individual variables like self-efficacy and resilience are not static characteristics. Rather, they are continuously shaped, buffered, and activated by institutional support spaces and localized peer networks (Amofah, 2022; Wibowo & Narmaditya, 2023).

Ultimately, this study highlights a dynamic interplay where entrepreneurial education functions as the structural catalyst that shapes, buffers, and activates the core tenets of the Theory of Planned Behavior, namely student attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Individual variables like self-efficacy and personal attitudes are not static characteristics; rather, they are continuously built and reinforced by hands-on educational support spaces and localized peer networks.

For international student cohorts, this environmental interaction is critical. Transitioning to unfamiliar cultures, regulatory codes, and professional circles demands that universities look beyond traditional lecture halls (Hossain et al., 2023). Host institutions must build proactive environments by integrating simplified administrative guidelines, cross-border incubator accessibility, and direct technology transfer paths (Salamzadeh et al., 2022). Additionally, preparing students for modern digital markets requires embedding advanced technical literacy directly into standard business curricula (Pham & Duong, 2023).

By restructuring support programs under United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), universities can establish equitable, inclusive, and practical entrepreneurial education frameworks (Fanea-Ivanovici & Pana, 2022). This holistic optimization of personal attitudes, communal subjective norms, and technological perceived behavioral control offers a cohesive strategic roadmap for academic administrators and global stakeholders to cultivate a resilient student-preneur architecture capable of driving a sustainable, knowledge-based economy.

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