

## Analysis of the Social Determinants of Entrepreneurial Intention among Sub-Saharan Students in Morocco

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Received : November 28, 2024

Revised : November 17, 2025

Accepted : November 22, 2025

Online : December 31, 2025

### Abstract

This article is based on research on the socio-professional integration of sub-Saharan students in Morocco. It assesses the entrepreneurial intentions of these students at the end of their training cycle. To achieve this objective, we used two approaches and two tools to conduct this study. First, a sample survey using a questionnaire sent online. Second, the snowball technique, which allowed us to conduct individual interviews using an interview guide to obtain qualitative data, targeted at approximately thirty people selected based on recommendations. The sample survey achieved a sample of 200 people through saturation. The study indicates that personal and psychological factors determine the entrepreneurial intentions of sub-Saharan students in Morocco. Specifically, the results first reveal the influence of the Moroccan context in terms of training and investment opportunities. Next, the students' sociocultural environment and the mobilization of social (family) capital available in their region of origin are considered determinants of their desire to become entrepreneurs.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurial Intention, Entrepreneurial Motivation, Entrepreneurial Identity, Sociocultural determinants, Migration and Economic Integration, Sub-Saharan African Students*

### INTRODUCTION

The entrepreneurial approach goes beyond business creation ([Vestraete & Saputra, 2006](#)), as entrepreneurship generally concerns the management of any business, new or existing, large or small. In the entrepreneurship literature, the organizational emergence phase appears to require further research. This phase is characterized by an individual's intention to create an organization. When entrepreneurship is viewed as a process, intentionality is central. [Crant \(1996\)](#) defines entrepreneurial intention as "the individual's judgments about the likelihood of owning their own business." [Boissin et al. \(2009\)](#) consider that: "The intention to create a business is assumed to depend on three elements: the perceived attractiveness of business creation; the degree of entrepreneurial incentives perceived in the social environment; and the individual's confidence in his or her ability to carry out the entrepreneurial process" ([Halaissi et al., 2024](#)).

Many theoretical studies have analyzed the reasons that lead certain individuals to become entrepreneurs. Several researchers have tried to highlight the behaviors (behavioral approach), psychological characteristics, and personality traits (descriptive approach) that characterize entrepreneurs and distinguish them from other individuals (non-entrepreneurs). However, despite the abundant literature on the psychological characteristics of entrepreneurs, it is still possible to identify new personality traits of these entrepreneurs, but it is impossible to define a typical profile of the entrepreneur. This is why there is no typical entrepreneur. [Stevenson and Jarillo \(1990\)](#) assert that the psychological approach is reductive to explain a complex behavior (entrepreneurship) by referring to a few psychological traits. Therefore, it is necessary to see new

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research perspectives that take into consideration the dynamic and processual aspects of entrepreneurship (Gartner, 1990). In other words, entrepreneurship research is no longer centered on the entrepreneur and his personality traits, but rather on the entrepreneurial process. In this perspective, the concept of intention has been used by many researchers given its predictive nature of entrepreneurial behavior (Krueger and Carsrud, 1993). Studying the upstream stages of business creation allows us to understand and explain why and how an individual develops entrepreneurial behavior, well before reaching the stage of actual business creation.

Studying the determinants of students' entrepreneurial intention has attracted the interest of several researchers in many countries (Adekiya & Ibrahim, 2016; Bachiri, 2016; Shah et al., 2020). In the Maghreb context, some research examining the factors influencing entrepreneurial intention highlights the important role of entrepreneurship training (Bachiri, 2016).

Due to its advantageous geostrategic position (opening onto the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Greater Sahara) and the socio-economic transformations it has undergone in recent years (evolution of the productive structure and human development), Morocco has become a hub for international migration, first as a country of departure, then as a country of transit and, increasingly, it is destined to become a country of immigration.

According to the High Commission for Planning (HCP), 41.6% (34,966) of foreigners in Morocco are African, 64.5% (22,545) of whom are from sub-Saharan countries (RGPH 2014). In recent years, following a report by the National Council for Human Rights on the situation of refugees and immigrants in Morocco addressed to His Majesty King Mohammed VI on September 9, 2013, Morocco has adopted a policy of regularizing foreigners. Thus, an initial regularization operation enabled 18,000 irregular migrants to obtain residence permits to legally reside in Moroccan territory. By the end of 2017, the Moroccan government had regularized nearly 50,000 migrants in two phases.

At the same time, the EU-funded "Promotion of the Integration of Migrants in Morocco" program is supporting two pilot projects. The first, entitled "Integration Pathway", aims to support at least 1,500 migrants towards vocational training and employment or the creation of income-generating activities, while strengthening the capacities of the public institutions and civil society concerned. All of these measures in favor of migrants constitute a potential resource for them to take part in the development of their host country by engaging in economic activities, including entrepreneurship, which was more difficult before. Indeed, the emergence of this category of migrant entrepreneurs, directing their savings towards productive investments, reflects the changes in Moroccan migration dynamics.

In the context of this study, this perspective translates into the process of building entrepreneurial intention among sub-Saharan students in Morocco, at the end of their training cycle or having completed their training a year ago. Whether this project is conducted in Morocco or in their country of origin. Indeed, a survey was conducted among sub-Saharan students (from Côte d'Ivoire, Congo Brazzaville, Congo Kinshasa, Senegal, Benin, Cameroon, Comoros, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Madagascar, and Togo) in Morocco, from various public and private universities in the Kingdom. These students or graduates are characterized by the diversity of their origins and are selected based on their intention to start their own business. While for some, Morocco is still their country of residence at the time of the survey, for the vast majority, it is their country of origin that hosts them, or a third country.

This research aims to identify the social determinants of the entrepreneurial intention of sub-Saharan students enrolled in universities and colleges in Morocco at the end of their cycle or graduates who have obtained their diplomas. This involves, among other things, analyzing the effect of the Moroccan context on the emergence of a category of entrepreneurs from sub-Saharan Africa on the one hand and understanding the sociocultural and family factors of these students in a

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process whose purpose is to undertake.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

From a process perspective, entrepreneurial intention is a decisive step in the business creation process. It predicts the entrepreneurial act that is likely to materialize. For [Bird \(1992\)](#), entrepreneurial intention is perceived as "(...) a state of thought that directs attention (and consequently experience and action) toward a specific goal, the new organization, and a means of achieving it." Other researchers, such as [Bruyat \(1993\)](#), conceive it as an individual will and freedom. They also specify that it is a state of mind that directs attention, and consequently experience and action, toward a specific goal, to accomplish something (creating a business, making it grow or evolve).

Studies on the student population use the theory of planned behavior to explain students' entrepreneurial intentions in different contexts. Some studies show that the intention to become an entrepreneur is significantly correlated with attitude, social norm, and perceived behavioral control ([Kolvereid, 1996](#)). On the other hand, as several other studies conducted in different geographical contexts have shown, social norm has no significant effect and only perceived desirability and feasibility significantly predict the intention to start one's own business ([Audet & Pegna, 2001](#); [Kennedy et al., 2003](#); [Krueger et al., 2000](#)). Therefore, the three traditional explanatory variables proposed by the theory have very different weights depending on the context ([Boissin et al., 2009](#)). Some studies highlight the importance of personal variables such as gender, age, professional experience, and family environment in entrepreneurial conviction ([Audet & Pegna, 2001](#)), as well as the level of education ([Boissin et al., 2009](#)).

Migrants are structurally excluded from the primary labor market, namely the segment of the labor market that includes stable, well-paid jobs with good working conditions. This exclusion is rooted in systemic discrimination and translates into discrimination in hiring. The consequences of this exclusion are economic, but not exclusively. Good pay and job stability are, in fact, essential for asserting fundamental rights such as access to decent housing, for example. In the case of migrants, employment situations can also condition the possibility of living with a family. Although there is a consensus on the greater propensity of immigrants to undertake entrepreneurial projects in their host country than natives, the economic impact of this greater propensity of immigrant entrepreneurs on the benefits derived by the host country is still poorly understood. Despite the considerable interest in immigrant, migrant, or ethnic entrepreneurship in a large multidisciplinary literature, the literature still shows a relative lack of measurement of the influence of immigrants on entrepreneurial aspirations.

Much research has been devoted to exploring the role of the firm as an entity influencing or determining the entrepreneurial behavior of immigrants. These factors have been grouped into three distinct categories: organizational characteristics, strategies, and resources. Among the specificities of organizational characteristics, particular emphasis has been placed on the impact of co-leadership in the creation and development of social capital, a crucial aspect in the management of ethnic businesses ([Paré et al., 2008](#)). It has been observed that wage disparity within firms favors the emergence of new businesses. Furthermore, it has been found that an effective business model, imbued with cultural inspiration, encourages engagement in entrepreneurship. The entrepreneur's need for autonomy and independence, combined with the fact that immigration itself represents a risk, predisposes immigrants to take higher risks than members of the host society.

Two types of entrepreneurship have been identified in the literature: opportunity entrepreneurship, motivated by pull factors such as autonomy, independence, freedom, money, challenge, social status, and recognition ([Kolvereid, 1996](#)). Necessity entrepreneurship, on the other hand, is linked to push factors such as unemployment, redundancy, or the threat of job loss.

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The aspiring immigrant entrepreneur has been the subject of extensive analysis in previous research, highlighting various entrepreneurial characteristics. Some authors have placed significant importance on professional experience ([Peroni, Riillo, & Sarracino, 2016](#)) and previous entrepreneurial experience ([Domboka, 2013](#)), as well as social networks ([Quan, 2012](#)). This is particularly relevant for immigrant entrepreneurs who choose the host country as the location for a new business, motivated by often emotional objectives such as combating discrimination, non-recognition of diplomas and professional experience, etc.

Previous studies have extensively examined the impact of social networks, but have not sufficiently explored motivation related to perceived risks and cultural intelligence. We will therefore focus on formulating propositions related to these two concepts, enriched by experience, to fill current gaps in the scientific literature. In the field of entrepreneurship, cultural distance indicates the extent to which immigrants perceive the entrepreneurial culture of the host country as similar to or different from that of the country of origin. This perceived gap can generate a fear of failure. [Berry \(2005\)](#) posits, in his two-dimensional model, that for migrants, the acculturation process boils down to a choice between, on the one hand, preserving their cultural heritage and identity, and, on the other, seeking and maintaining exchanges with the host group. According to him, any perceived mismatch between the two entrepreneurial cultures can cause an experience of incongruity, but this has motivational properties.

According to [Berry's \(2005\)](#) two-dimensional model, acculturation is one of the most significant global phenomena of our time. It falls within the field of intercultural psychology. Acculturation is the set of phenomena that result from continuous and direct contact between groups of individuals from different cultures and that lead to changes in the initial cultural models (patterns) of one or both groups.

Thus, from this perspective, the process of acculturation of migrants boils down to a choice between, on the one hand, maintaining their cultural heritage and identity, and, on the other hand, seeking and maintaining interactions with the host group. From this perspective, any perceived mismatch between the two entrepreneurial cultures can induce an experience of mismatch (incongruity), but one that has motivational characteristics. The environments in which entrepreneurs operate are so distinct and unique that immigrants require certain changes in their thinking and other cognitive aspects. Some environments strengthen their entrepreneurial capital, while others deteriorate it. The decision to engage in entrepreneurial activities will be influenced by perceptions of the environment.

In particular, risk perception is part of immigrants' assessments of the host country environment. For example, significant links have been established between a recessive environment and risk perception ([Nabi & Liñán, 2013](#)). The creation of successful integration programs in the host country promotes the emergence of entrepreneurial activities, particularly through the availability of entrepreneurial support structures. Business support services, such as entrepreneurial counseling, play an important role in facilitating the entrepreneurial process for immigrants.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study focuses on sub-Saharan African students at the end of their Master 2 (M2) program, from various public and private universities across the Kingdom of Morocco. This target group was chosen due to its dispersion and because these students are potential graduates with intentions to create their own businesses. While some were residing in Morocco at the time of the survey, for most, it was either their country of origin or a third country. Students at the end of their M2 program were selected because their attitudes, expectations, and the high probability of not immediately securing a job may foster or reinforce entrepreneurial intentions, giving them

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a clearer understanding of their future professional career paths.

This study uses two data collection methods; it relies on two information collection strategies: the online survey and the semi-structured interview. The online survey is a method of collecting and processing data through a questionnaire directly accessible on the Internet (Bigot, 2010). The questionnaire was inspired by Boileau's maxim: "What is well conceived is clearly stated / And the words to say it come easily." It was designed to translate the survey objectives into clear, relevant questions understandable to the target audience and structured around four key points.

Over 30 students from the researchers' network were selected through a reasoned choice pre-test. The responses were satisfactory in terms of clarity, precision, and relevance. Minor adjustments were made to some questions and sections to improve overall consistency and understandability.

Using snowball sampling, the aim was to reach participants meeting the selection criteria who were available for individual interviews. This allowed exploration of topics such as motivation for business creation, family and social influence, the role of training, financial and social conditions, and other factors affecting entrepreneurial intention. The final sample consisted of 200 participants, including: Comorian, Cameroonian, Malagasy, Guinean, Beninese, Nigerian, Ivorian, Congolese (Brazzaville), Senegalese, Togolese, Gabonese, Moroccan, Malian, and Congolese (Kinshasa).

The questionnaire included closed and semi-open items. Most statements measuring entrepreneurial intention and related factors were rated on a five-point Likert scale, from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," allowing respondents to indicate the intensity of their attitudes and perceptions. Closed items collected demographic data (e.g., geographic location, education level, origin), while semi-open items allowed participants to provide additional comments, providing qualitative nuance.

SPSS was used not only for descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) but also for inferential analyses, including reliability tests (Cronbach's alpha) and exploratory factor analysis to confirm the theoretical structure of the constructs.

For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants to complement the quantitative findings. These interviews explored in greater depth themes that emerged from the questionnaire, particularly the influence of contextual, socio-cultural, and personal factors on entrepreneurial intention.

Despite the advantages of the online survey, such as automated response collection, wide distribution, and immediate results, it has limitations: some respondents may not have Internet access, and certain responses cannot be explored in depth. Data from interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis, identifying patterns and recurring ideas aligned with the study objectives.

Regarding validity and reliability, exploratory factor analysis confirmed the expected theoretical structure of constructs, with a satisfactory KMO value (0.812) and a total variance explained of 68.4%, indicating strong construct validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.73 to 0.86, demonstrating acceptable to excellent internal consistency and supporting the reliability of the measurement instruments.

**Table 1.** Summary of Construct Validity and Reliability Analysis

Analysis	Statistic Reported	Finding	Purpose
Construct Validity	KMO Value	0.812 (Satisfactory)	Confirms that the factor analysis is appropriate and the constructs

			are well-defined.
<b>Construct Validity</b>	Total Variance Explained	68.4\%	Confirms that the identified factors account for a strong portion of the data's variance.
<b>Reliability</b>	Cronbach's Alpha	0.73 to 0.86	Confirms that the measurement scales have acceptable to excellent internal consistency.

The descriptive analysis indicates that the surveyed students demonstrate a high level of entrepreneurial intention ( $M = 4.21$ ;  $SD = 0.68$ ) and strong motivation to start a business ( $M = 4.03$ ;  $SD = 0.75$ ). However, they report moderate perceived barriers ( $M = 3.15$ ;  $SD = 0.88$ ) and relatively low perceived institutional support ( $M = 2.95$ ;  $SD = 0.90$ ). These findings suggest that while students are eager to pursue entrepreneurial ventures, the support mechanisms they perceive in their environment may not be sufficiently enabling.

**Table 2.** Collinearity Diagnostics Based on Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Variable	VIF
Managerial skills and knowledge	2.84
Entrepreneurial skills and knowledge	3.12
Technical skills or mastery of the trade	2.90
Commitment and determination	2.50
Funding and subsidies	2.35
Administrative procedures for business creation	2.00
Family involvement and support	1.90
Support from business creation assistance systems (incubator, chamber of commerce)	1.85
Family business tradition	1.60

Multicollinearity among the independent variables was assessed using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. Tolerance represents the proportion of variance in an independent variable that is not explained by the other predictors, while the VIF, which is the reciprocal of Tolerance, reflects the degree of multicollinearity. In this study, all variables exhibit VIF values well below the critical threshold of 5. This indicates that multicollinearity is not a concern in our model, as the independent variables are sufficiently distinct from one another.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this article are structured around three axes of presentation. The first describes the profile of sub-Saharan students in Morocco, the second the influence of the context and sociocultural environment of the actors, and the third the personal character (individualistic dimension) of the entrepreneur.

The study tested the following hypotheses:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between motivation and entrepreneurial intention.
- H2: Perceived institutional support positively affects entrepreneurial intention.
- H3: Perceived barriers are negatively correlated with entrepreneurial intention.

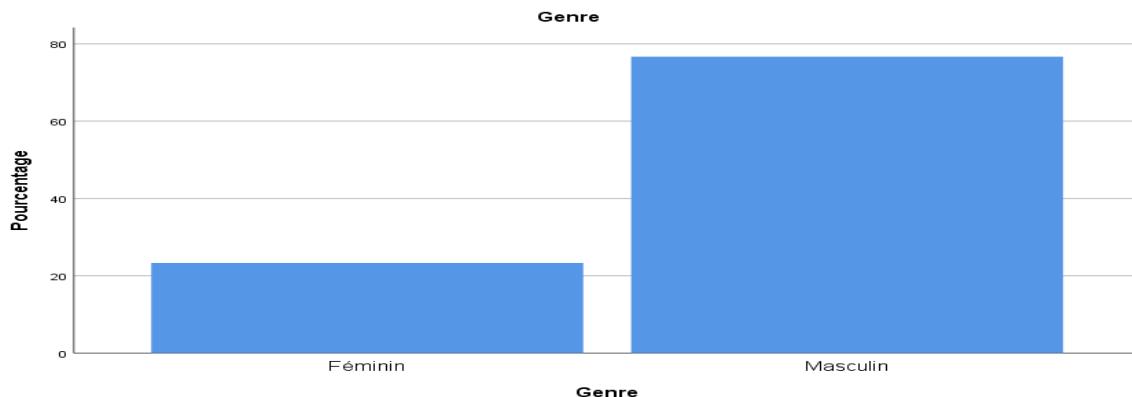
### Profile of Entrepreneurial Stakeholders in Morocco

#### *Demographic Breakdown and Social Context*

The snowball sampling method was used to solicit students who expressed entrepreneurial

intentions after their training. This required us to first rely on resource persons who then recommended others in their networks. This method allowed us to establish a sociodemographic profile of the sub-Saharan students in Morocco who responded to our questionnaire.

The online survey data revealed that 200 students participated in the study. They identified themselves as originating from Morocco, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Comoros, Madagascar, Benin, Togo, Senegal, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville and Congo Kinshasa, Niger, Gabon, and Mali. Of these students, 76% were men and 23% were women. Statistics show that the majority of respondents are aged 20–25 (54%), followed by 26–30 (25%).



**Figure 1.** Structure of respondents according to gender

**Table 3.** Structure of respondents according to country of origin.

Age Group	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Under 20 years	8	4
20–25 years	108	54
26–30 years	50	25
Over 30 years	34	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

#### *Structure by number of respondents by nationality*

In terms of nationality, the majority of respondents were Congolese (Kinshasa) with 21% of the sample, followed by Guineans (13%), Malians (10%), Togolese (10%), and Moroccans and Gabonese (9% each). The remaining respondents came from Côte d'Ivoire (5%), Senegal (7%), Benin (4%), Niger (3%), Cameroon (1%), Comoros (1%), and Madagascar (1%). These distributions are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Structure of respondents according to country of origin.

Country	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Benin	8	4
Cameroon	2	1
Comoros	2	1
Congo (Kinshasa)	42	21
Congo Brazzaville	12	6
Côte d'Ivoire	10	5
Gabon	18	9

Guinea	26	13
Madagascar	2	1
Mali	20	10
Morocco	18	9
Niger	6	3
Senegal	14	7
Togo	20	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

- Academic Background: Most participants hold or are pursuing Master's degrees (68%), with smaller shares in licenses (19%) and doctorates (4%).
- Family Entrepreneurship: A significant proportion (around 70%) report having an entrepreneur within their family, highlighting strong familial entrepreneurial influence.

In light of the presentation of the gender and age profiles and the number of respondents by nationality of sub-Saharan students with an entrepreneurial project after completing their studies in Morocco, the remainder of this section sheds light on the factors that determine their interest in starting a business. This second part then focuses on the influence of the context in terms of training and investment opportunities in the host area and the sociocultural environment of future economic entrepreneurs.

### **The influence of the Moroccan context and the sociocultural environment of the participants as a source of motivation for entrepreneurial intention**

The results showed that while for some, Morocco was still their country of residence at the time of the survey, for the vast majority, it was their country of origin or a third country that hosted them. With this in mind, the second part of the results is divided into two sections. The first section highlights the context of the host country, particularly Morocco, in terms of training and investment opportunities. The second section analyzes the entrepreneurial culture of the country of origin, the socialization process, and the mobilization of social capital: family, professional networks, and other networks of belonging, as factors influencing the entrepreneurial intention of sub-Saharan students living in Morocco.

#### *Training and investment opportunities in Morocco as a source of influence on entrepreneurial intention*

Analysis of survey data from sub-Saharan students in Morocco highlights training as a variable influencing entrepreneurial intention. Indeed, given these students' experiences in their host region and the social perceptions associated with this region, Morocco is perceived as fertile ground for creating the "best" training opportunities. Indeed, the table above shows that these future economic entrepreneurs are enrolled in private and public universities, as well as in training schools and institutes. Based on this, the statistical data reveal that 69% of respondents study in private institutions (universities and grandes écoles). This category exhibits a very remarkable entrepreneurial intention, compared to 21% of students in public institutions who expressed a desire to start their own business. The educational level of these learners varies between bachelor's (24%), undergraduate (25%), and master's (50%) degrees. These data show that cultural capital, the indicators of which are defined around training, the acquisition of knowledge and skills, presides over the construction of entrepreneurial intention among certain students carrying out a project at the end of their training in Morocco.

### *Morocco Perceived as an Investment Opportunity*

Some Sub-Saharan students view the Moroccan economic context as an investment opportunity. Indeed, these students expressed a desire to invest in Morocco after their studies. For them, the country offers a diversity of sectors suited to an economic operator. Data from qualitative interviews confirm that these sectors benefit from an above-average level of organization and infrastructure. These include agribusiness, the film and audiovisual sector, tourism and hospitality, networks and telecommunications, public health and renewable energy, civil engineering, electronics and infrastructure, and IT and computer graphics. Investment opportunities appear to be a variable that influences entrepreneurial intentions. Future investment in these sectors is linked to the choice of training programs. To this end, the online questionnaire survey shows that most of these students are training in economics and management, business and management, civil engineering, environment, tourism, mathematics, legal sciences, electricity and automation ([Mulyaningsih, 2021](#)).

### **The Influence of the Sociocultural Environment on Entrepreneurial Intention**

In this article, we analyze the sociocultural environment from two perspectives: the entrepreneurial culture of the country of origin and the mobilization of social capital.

#### *The Entrepreneurial Culture of the Country of Origin as a Trigger for Entrepreneurial Intention*

Research on the influence of national cultures on entrepreneurship by [Barbosa et al. \(2010\)](#) complements existing work. Specifically, their study explores how different cultural dimensions affect entrepreneurial intentions. In contrast to previous studies, they employ a measurement tool developed by Stephan (2007) to capture entrepreneurial culture in a region or country. This approach allows them to propose a theoretical model that links cultural dimensions more directly to entrepreneurial behavior than earlier research, and to provide an initial empirical test of this model by focusing on two countries with distinct levels of entrepreneurial intention: Brazil and France.

We observed notably high entrepreneurial intentions among sub-Saharan Moroccan students in our sample, consistent with findings reported in Monitor, with nearly all participants expressing a desire to start a business. Our findings suggest that cultural and immediate environmental factors interact directly with entrepreneurial intentions, pointing to several potential avenues for future research.

This mechanism reflects the presence of fundamental entrepreneurial prerequisites, a set of dispositions and codes acquired within the knowledge universe of these economic agents, even before they arrive in Morocco. These prerequisites act as catalysts, stimulating entrepreneurial intention. Notably, 64% of migrant students aspiring to become entrepreneurs reported having an entrepreneur in their family, whereas only 26% had no such familial connection.

### **Entrepreneurial social capital: characteristics and role of tie strengths for the performance of the newly created firm**

In entrepreneurship research, several studies have highlighted that entrepreneurs often exhibit a high degree of self-efficacy ([Hayek, 2012](#)). Entrepreneurs who are confident in their ability to succeed in a task are motivated to make the necessary efforts to ensure the success of their business ([Trevelyan, 2011](#)). Those with a strong perception of self-efficacy demonstrate greater resilience and success when facing challenges ([Zimmerman, 2000](#)).

Social capital, considered a strategic resource for both individuals and organizations, is defined by [Bourdieu \(1980, p. 2\)](#) as: "the set of current or potential resources that are linked to the possession of a lasting network of more or less institutionalized relationships of inter-knowledge and

*inter-recognition; or, in other words, to belonging to a group, as a set of agents not only endowed with common properties [...] but also united by permanent and useful links."*

Internal social capital, defined by strong ties, facilitates the exchange of reliable resources, the transfer of tacit knowledge and solidarity through various forms of support. Alexander [Nicholls' \(2013\)](#) work on the use of ethnic social capital in commerce by Chinese immigrants in Paris, Brussels, and Montreal aligns closely with our findings.

In our case study, social capital plays a critical role during the gestation and business creation phases among sub-Saharan students. Trust in close stakeholders, moral and financial support, and guidance enabling quick access to essential resources are essential for successful entrepreneurial initiatives (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Our cross-sectional analysis of online questionnaire data and in-depth field interviews indicates that entrepreneurial intention among sub-Saharan students in Morocco is shaped more by social capital than by self-esteem. This social capital manifests in two forms:

- Relational social capital: friends, professional networks, and associations.
- Affective social capital: kinship ties, including parents, siblings, cousins, uncles/aunts, grandparents, and other close family members.

Consequently, the entrepreneurial intentions of these students are largely based on their capacity to mobilize both strong and weak ties within their social networks. Survey results indicate that the strongest influence comes from the parental link (42.2%), followed by siblings (25.6%). The table below illustrates this distribution and the relative impact of different social ties on entrepreneurial intention.

### **The Personal Character (Individualistic Dimension) of the Entrepreneur**

This final part of the study results highlights two angles of analysis. The first analyzes the age of individuals as a variable of entrepreneurial intention, while the second analyzes the satisfaction of personal values and the purpose assigned to business creation by the future entrepreneur.

#### *The Influence of Age on Entrepreneurial Intention*

Analysis of the survey data reveals that age is a variable that influences entrepreneurial intention. Biological age is a component that characterizes the physical and personal dimensions of sub-Saharan students in Morocco. As such, it acts as a structuring factor on the intention to embark on an entrepreneurial project after training. Age reveals that most future entrepreneur candidates are relatively young. In this regard, the study results show that 71.5% of respondents have entrepreneurial intentions, including 57.8% between the ages of 20 and 25, followed by 24.4% between the ages of 26 and 30.

#### *Satisfaction with personal values and the purpose assigned to the business as factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions.*

The motivation to start a business among sub-Saharan students after their training in Morocco depends on the purpose assigned to the business, that is, the final objective that the future entrepreneur wishes to achieve. This purpose is reflected in all the rationalities developed by some of them, inspired on the one hand by their relationship to themselves and, on the other hand, by their relationship to others and the economic environment of their area of origin. For the purposes of this study, the relationship to oneself highlights a form of self-assessment of the ability to satisfy values relating to the psychological and personal satisfaction of the individual. The multiple regression analysis revealed that motivation to start a business is the strongest predictor of

entrepreneurial intention ( $\beta = 0.48$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Perceived institutional support also has a significant positive effect ( $\beta = 0.27$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ), while perceived barriers negatively impact entrepreneurial intention ( $\beta = -0.21$ ;  $p = 0.004$ ). The overall model explains 51% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention ( $R^2 = 0.51$ ), indicating a robust explanatory capacity of the selected variables. Indeed, the analysis of data from individual interviews shows that, for these young people, the intention to implement a project after training appears as an operator in the evaluation of all academic achievements in terms of daily learning. Entrepreneurial intentionality also responds to the need to create employment in the home country and thus, through work, to experience certain values such as independence and personal freedom. "I work alone, I try to manage my time between school and the restaurant," explains a sub-Saharan student.

*"Work gives me independence, so I work for myself,"* explains an African migrant in Morocco.

From another perspective, the implementation of the personal dimension of entrepreneur is analyzed through their relationships with others and their desire to transform the economic environment of their country of origin. From this perspective, entrepreneurial intent is reflected in the purpose assigned to the future venture. In this context, data from individual interviews confirm that some students consider starting a business to compensate for the weakness of the labor market and the lack of competitiveness of entrepreneurship in their country. For other respondents, it is the ability to assess their intrinsic abilities to generate financial resources and manage human resources. This responds to a quest for social power and status within the economic production structure of the country to which the entrepreneurs belong. This status is socially valued and allows for recognition by one's community, whatever it may be (family, professional, etc.).

*"The desire to manage a team and the desire to generate income that amply rewards our efforts,"* said an African migrant in Morocco.

A summary of the results shows that entrepreneurial intentionality is rooted both in the social capital available to sub-Saharan students in Morocco and in their personal or psychological characteristics. In this regard, entrepreneurial intentionality is aligned with the objective and subjective logic of entrepreneurs. From this perspective, the results are analyzed through the prism of Bourdieu's sociology of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and that of the construction of social identity (Dubar, 1998) in relation to the entrepreneurial field.

The objectivist logic of entrepreneurial intention among sub-Saharan students in Morocco: A first result shows that entrepreneurial intention is linked to the structure of social capital held by sub-Saharan students in Morocco. This social capital consists of all entrepreneurial experience (training and investment opportunities in Morocco) and the ability to mobilize strong (emotional social capital: uncle, father, mother, nieces, nephews, etc.) and weak (relational social capital: professional and associative network, friends and acquaintances, etc.) ties from the territory of origin. This contribution extends the work on entrepreneurship from the theoretical perspective of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). It is in this sense that Nicholls (2012) hypothesizes that social capital theories enrich the analysis of entrepreneurship as a multifactorial and interactive phenomenon. This article presents an analysis of the use of ethnic social capital in the creation and practice of businesses by Chinese immigrants from the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, living in Paris, Brussels, and Montreal.

The author's results confirm ours insofar as he shows that the mobilization of resources during business creation, the use of family or non-family labor and the economic networks woven between entrepreneurs of the same origin, at the local or transnational level, clearly demonstrate

the impact of ethnic social capital at different stages of entrepreneurial practice, from the mobilization of resources in the business creation process to its daily functioning in the choice of employment and economic networking.

Our results are consistent with the work of [Chollet \(2002\)](#). He analyzes how the characteristics of personal relationships influence the outcome of the business creation project. He states that two parameters of the entrepreneur's relational network retain an equivocal impact on the creation process: the proportion of weak ties (as opposed to the proportion of strong ties) and the number of structural holes (as opposed to the density of the personal network). The results obtained by [Surlemont \(2014\)](#) go beyond the analysis of social capital. Through a sociological and anthropological perspective on entrepreneurship, his work demonstrates that poverty and the low level of education of minority populations have influenced the emergence of entrepreneurial strategies oriented towards innovation and business creation in order to develop economic growth, guaranteeing autonomy and the conservation of cultural values and heritage ([Briones et al., 2023](#)).

**The Subjective Logic of Entrepreneurial Intention Among Sub-Saharan Students in Morocco**  
According to the results of this study, the entrepreneurial intentionality of Sub-Saharan students studying in Morocco is measured based on the entrepreneurs' individual characteristics, including their age, satisfaction with their personal values (freedom, independence), and the purpose assigned to the business created by the future entrepreneur.

This result extends the analysis of entrepreneurship in social identity theory ([Dubar, 1998](#)). From this perspective, according to [Dubar \(1991\)](#), it is the temporal "biographical transaction" during which individuals decide on their professional future. To understand this phenomenon, Dubar suggests "taking into account as much as possible the subjective processes by which individuals attempt to appropriate their history and anticipate possible futures" ([Dubar, 1998](#)). The preliminary angle of our analysis shows that the subjective logic of entrepreneurial intention takes into account the self-relationship of future entrepreneurs. This highlights a form of self-assessment of the capacity to anticipate the values linked to their psychological and personal satisfaction.

By implementing an entrepreneurial project, they wish to experience the values of independence and freedom inherent in working in society. This result is confirmed by the work of R. Moreau (2004). The objective of his article is to provide new analytical elements to understand how individuals forge an entrepreneurial image, coherent for themselves and identifiable for others. Through the concept of "entrepreneurial identities," he shows that past experiences and future visions are linked and that, when they intersect, individuals define themselves according to their entrepreneurial identity. "For them," he writes, "acquiring autonomy and independence are key values for their professional future. Freedom of action, independence, working for oneself—in short, 'entrepreneurship' is synonymous with emancipation." The second aspect of the subjective dimension of entrepreneurial intention is explained by the relationship of entrepreneurs to others and their desire to transform the economic environment of their country of origin, which is not conducive to innovation. Entrepreneurs want to use the experience gained during their training in Morocco to assess their ability to lead people and generate economic resources.

This result confirms the work of [Moreau \(2004\)](#). He uses the concept of creators with a "stimulated" entrepreneurial identity to account for this subjective dimension. He notes that these people plan to remain owners of their businesses. They are privileged members of the educational system, eager to prove themselves. These people, he believes, have developed a critical view of organizations: heavy norms or habits, hierarchy, lack of communication, and uninteresting work content. [Reix \(2012\)](#) summarizes the motivations for entrepreneurial action. He observes that creating a business refers to a plurality of motives for action, the main ones being to acquire social status (integration logic), to maximize resources (strategic logic), and to fulfill oneself as a subject (subjective logic).

## CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this study was to examine the motivations underlying the entrepreneurial intentions of sub-Saharan students in Morocco.

### Practical Contributions:

1. Entrepreneurship Education and Training: The study highlights the importance of strengthening entrepreneurship training modules within university curricula to enable students to recognize and seize entrepreneurial opportunities. It recommends support measures such as monitoring and coaching to facilitate the development of entrepreneurial intentions among students.
2. Policy Implications for Socio-Professional Integration: By assessing how sociocultural environment and social capital influence entrepreneurial intentions, the research informs stakeholders and policymakers about the specific support mechanisms and investment opportunities that can be designed for sub-Saharan students in Morocco, contributing to their socio-professional integration and economic autonomy.
3. Utilization of Social Capital: The findings reveal the critical role of mobilizing both strong (family) and weak (professional, associative) social ties from students' regions of origin in nurturing entrepreneurial intention and practice. This points to practical avenues for leveraging ethnic social networks to foster entrepreneurship.

### Theoretical Contributions:

1. Extension of Social Capital Theory in Entrepreneurship: The study applies and extends Bourdieu's social capital theory by demonstrating how ethnic social capital among sub-Saharan students facilitates business creation and entrepreneurial practice in Morocco. It confirms that social capital is a multifactorial and interactive determinant of entrepreneurial intention, aligning with [Nicholls' \(2012\)](#) hypothesis on its enriching role in entrepreneurship analysis.
2. Sociological and Anthropological Perspective: Building on [Surlemont's \(2014\)](#) sociological and anthropological approach, the study shows how poverty, education levels, and cultural heritage impact entrepreneurial strategies. This enriches existing entrepreneurship literature by integrating socio-cultural dimensions and context-specific factors influencing entrepreneurial intentionality.
3. Integration of Personal and Contextual Factors: By linking psychological and personal characteristics with social and contextual determinants (such as training opportunities and social capital), the research supports a comprehensive model of entrepreneurial intention that considers both objective structures and subjective logics of entrepreneurs.
4. Illumination of Understudied Populations: The study contributes to filling knowledge gaps by focusing on sub-Saharan students in Morocco, a relatively understudied group in entrepreneurship research, highlighting how their sociocultural backgrounds and migration contexts influence their entrepreneurial intentions.

In summary, the study practically informs education and policy frameworks to support entrepreneurship among sub-Saharan students, while theoretically enriching entrepreneurship research by incorporating social capital, sociological, and psychological perspectives contextualized in the Moroccan-African migration setting.

## LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

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Students from sub-Saharan countries in Morocco have not been studied for their sociocultural background. However, this factor can have a significant impact on the development of entrepreneurial intentionality. Similarly, our sample has several limitations, including the fact that we did not distinguish between students from different social backgrounds, especially since family environment is also a factor that can either encourage or hinder entrepreneurial activity among students. Although this work is based on an objective scientific approach, it does not address all dimensions of entrepreneurial intention among students. The study helps to understand the contextual elements of the emergence of entrepreneurial intention among students. We recommend strengthening training modules in the university curriculum so that these students can understand the merits of entrepreneurship and seize the opportunities available to them. Support measures such as monitoring and coaching are also essential. Training is also a prerequisite for the development of entrepreneurship.

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