

Determinants of Youth Entrepreneurship in Morocco: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract:

Our paper discusses a systematic literature review to examine the key determinants of youth entrepreneurship in Moroccan context. We based our research on a corpus of 45 scientific articles published between 2016 and 2026, sourced from Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. We apply a dual analytical approach: thematic co-occurrence analysis and frequency analysis. These two methods combined help identify the main factors that shape entrepreneurial engagement among Moroccan youth. Three categories of determinants come out as dominant: institutional factors appear in more than 75% of studies, next, the individual psychological factors at 67%, followed by financial barriers at a high level (64%), in the end, socio-cultural factors (40%) and regulatory conditions (20%). The co-occurrence analysis adds another evidence to these results: the interactions of these multiple factors modify youth entrepreneurship in Morocco more than independent variables do. These results highlight the limits of studies that focus on only one factor and suggest the need for a broader approach to better understand youth entrepreneurship in Moroccan context.

The study also gives useful recommendations for policymakers, universities and organizations that support entrepreneurship, it also helps them create programs that are more effective and meet local needs in a better way.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, youth, determinants, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurship education.

Classification JEL: M13

Paper type: Literature Review

1- Introduction:

Policymakers, academics, and international institutions have paid increasing attention to youth entrepreneurship in recent years, given its recognized role as one of the main engines of economic growth, employment, innovation, and social inclusion (Bouichou et al., 2021; Hessels et al., 2008; Lévesque & Minniti, 2011). In transitional economic contexts, persistent barriers to enter labor market face young entrepreneurs due to structural instability. Within this context, entrepreneurship is increasingly positioned as a strategic avenue, supporting self-employment, building new skills and contributing to development at both local and national level (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). On a social level, entrepreneurship is acknowledged as a driver of social cohesion, autonomy, empowerment, creativity, and social mobility.

The Moroccan context illustrates these challenges with particular acuity. With a large share of its population under 35, Morocco faces persistent youth unemployment, worsened by a mismatch between education and labor market needs (HCP, 2023). In response, the government has launched several initiatives to promote youth entrepreneurship as a lever for economic integration and social stability. These programs reflect a broader national strategy positioning entrepreneurship as a solution to structural labor market constraints. Yet entrepreneurial intention among Moroccan youth often fails to translate into actual business creation, revealing a persistent gap between aspiration and action. This gap suggests that institutional support alone is insufficient without a clearer understanding of the underlying behavioral and contextual determinants. Existing studies on the Moroccan case also remain scattered, often focusing on isolated dimensions such as access to finance or entrepreneurial intention, without integrating them into a coherent framework. Addressing this issue therefore requires a systematic examination of the factors shaping youth entrepreneurship within Morocco's specific socio-economic environment. Such an examination should account for the interplay between individual, institutional, and contextual determinants shaping the entrepreneurial trajectory of Moroccan youth.

Over the past few decades, numerous factors having an impact on entrepreneurial behavior have been identified, ranging from individual characteristics, such as motivation, self-efficacy, and personality traits, to institutional conditions like education systems, access to finance, public policies, and cultural context. The complexity and multidimensional nature of youth entrepreneurship are now well established, pointing to the necessity to adopt an integrated approach combining behavioral, institutional, and contextual dimensions.

Despite this growing body of research, significant gaps are identified: the tendency to focus on a limited number of determinants, which contribute to the fragmentation of findings, the predominance of the behavioral frameworks, while neglecting structural, institutional, and contextual dimensions, also cross-sectional designs dominate the empirical literature while paying limited attention to the transition toward actual entrepreneurial action.

To address these gaps, this study conducts a structured and systematic literature review setting out to identify, organize, and synthesize the main determinants of youth entrepreneurship. Therefore, this research tries to answer the following central question: *What are the key determinants influencing youth entrepreneurship in emerging and transition economies, with particular focus on Morocco?* From a set of 45 scientific articles, a frequency-based analysis is used to identify and categorize the main determinants of youth entrepreneurship into six dimensions, while also constructing an integrative analytical framework and mapping out the gaps for future investigation.

This study makes three main contributions. First, it brings together the main findings from previous studies on youth entrepreneurship by combining contextual dimensions, individual and institutional factors. Second, based on 45 scientific articles, it identifies, summarizes the key factors influencing youth entrepreneurship using a structured literature review. Finally, it

provides practical recommendations for universities, policymakers, and organizations that support entrepreneurship. It also suggests topics for future research.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the literature review of youth entrepreneurship and the Moroccan context. The 3rd section describes the research method. Section 4 presents the main results while section 5 discusses the findings. The 6th and final section concludes the paper and provides recommendations for future research.

2- Literature review:

Before examining entrepreneurship in the Moroccan context, it is necessary to define the concept itself, and to identify the main factors that influence its development. Entrepreneurship has attracted considerable attention across several disciplines, including sociology, management and economics.

As the field has evolved, researchers have moved beyond defining the concept and have focused more on the factors that encourage young people to become entrepreneurs. This literature review follows the main determinants of youth entrepreneurship in Morocco following this perspective.

2.1. Evolution of the Concept of Entrepreneurship:

2.1.1. Definition of entrepreneurship:

Entrepreneurship is increasingly conceptualized as a multidimensional and dynamic process in which individuals or groups identify and exploit opportunities, mobilize resources, and generate economic and social value under conditions of uncertainty. Initially, this concept was originally grounded in the idea of the innovative entrepreneur, largely inspired by the work of Joseph Schumpeter, who considered the entrepreneur as an innovative agent driving economic transformation through the introduction of new combinations of productive resources, a process that Schumpeter regarded as the driving force of economic development (Schumpeter, 1934). Subsequently, behavioral and cognitive approaches subsequently extended this perspective by highlighting the importance of individual characteristics, particularly individuals' propensity for risk-taking, and their capacity to recognize and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities (Krueger et al., 2000; McClelland, 1961). Recent theoretical contributions emphasize that entrepreneurial processes are multidimensional and deeply embedded in institutional, social, and economic ecosystems, characterized by the interaction between the individual, entrepreneurial opportunities and the surrounding context which play a decisive role in entrepreneurial process (Gartner, 1988; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Consequently, entrepreneurship is no longer viewed solely as the creation of new businesses but considered as a multidimensional process of economic and social value creation, influenced by the interaction of individual, organizational, and territorial determinants.

It is necessary to note, however, that these foundational definitions, despite their conceptual relevance, were not originally developed to explain youth entrepreneurship's dynamics. Therefore, a high degree of critical adaptation is necessary in order to apply them to young people's entrepreneurial experiences, because of the difference in the conditions under which young people operate, whether individual, institutional, or financial, and those encountered by more seasoned entrepreneurs. This distinction, largely overlooked in the literature, has only recently begun to attract more prominent focus of scholarly research (Hessels et al., 2008; Lévesque & Minniti, 2011).

2.1.2. Evolution of the concept:

Entrepreneurship is a concept that has continuously evolved in step with the economic, social, and institutional changes that have marked contemporary societies. Classical economic

thought defined the entrepreneur as an agent who bears risk, organizes productive resources and takes on uncertainty in pursuit of economic value creation, this is well illustrated by Cantillon's work in the 18th century, in which the entrepreneur is conceptualized as an economic agent whose central role is to assume and manage market uncertainty (Cantillon, 1755).

Schumpeter later redefined this idea in the early 20th century, presenting the entrepreneur as an innovator who transforms the economy through “*creative destruction*” (Schumpeter, 1934). Beginning in the 1980s, entrepreneurship research has shifted from an exclusively individual-centered perspective to a broader framework centered on entrepreneurial processes and organizations. This shift placed particular attention to the emergence of entrepreneurial opportunities and the creation of new ventures (Gartner, 1988).

Contemporary research has further advanced this evolution by conceptualizing entrepreneurship as a systemic and context-dependent phenomenon shaped by institutions, social networks, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and broader contextual conditions. From this perspective, entrepreneurial processes and outcomes are driven by dynamic interactions among actors, resources, and environmental factors (Audretsch, 2015; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

While this conceptual evolution reflects a growing consensus that it is a multidimensional and integrative phenomenon shaped by the interaction of individual, organizational, and contextual factors, it also exposes a persistent gap: a large proportion of foundational theoretical frameworks were developed within relatively stable, high-income economic contexts, and their direct application to emerging or transition economies such as Morocco raises important concerns regarding contextual validity (GEM Morocco, 2021; Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016).

2.2. Theoretical foundations of entrepreneurship:

Pointing to the multidimensional character of entrepreneurship, multiple insights have contributed to building theoretical foundations of the field. This section adopts an integrative perspective to explain the determinants of youth entrepreneurship. It evaluates their explanatory power, their limits, and the tensions between theory and empirical evidence, instead of treating these foundations in isolation.

2.2.1. Economic Foundations of Entrepreneurship:

Early economic thought conceptualized the entrepreneur as a central economic actor whose primary role was to allocate resources efficiently and bear risk in uncertain environments (Cantillon, 1755; Say, 2013). Schumpeter extended these insights by placing innovation at the center of entrepreneurial activity and presenting the entrepreneur as a driver of transformation through the process of “*creative destruction*” (Schumpeter, 1934).

Despite their theoretical importance, these economic foundations fail to capture the specific dynamics of youth entrepreneurship. These perspectives primarily focus on the outcomes of entrepreneurial activity, such as innovation, growth, and economic transformation, while overlooking the factors that lead young individuals to engage in entrepreneurship. This gap has encouraged the development of behavioral and institutional approaches, better suited to explaining the motivations, constraints, and contextual conditions shaping young people's entrepreneurial engagement.

2.2.2. Behavioral approaches:

Behavioral approaches give particular attention to the entrepreneur's individual traits, with a specific focus on motivation and achievement motivation, as key factors shaping entrepreneurial action (McClelland, 1961). Among the main behavioral models, the Theory of

Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991) has established itself as the predominant theoretical framework in youth entrepreneurship literature. This model proposes that entrepreneurial intention is determined by three principal dimensions: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (equivalent to self-efficacy).

However, significant limitations are the outcome of the dominance of TPB. First, studies grounded in the TPB have largely employed cross-sectional designs and student samples, which limit the generalizability of their results to entrepreneurial behavior in practice (Maheshwari, 2022; Ojiaku et al., 2018). Second, TPB tends to privilege individual-level cognitive explanations, with less attention to the role of structural, financial, and socio-cultural conditions in shaping the transition from entrepreneurial intention to action, conditions that are especially relevant in emerging economies such as Morocco. Third, the model assumes the existence of a relatively stable institutional environment, which makes the sustainability in contexts marked by regulatory uncertainty and limited access to formal support mechanisms more difficult (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016).

Socio-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997) complements TPB by highlighting the role of self-efficacy on influencing individual's belief in carrying out entrepreneurial tasks as a key mediator between intention and action. Empirical findings demonstrate that self-efficacy represents a robust individual-level predictor of entrepreneurial intention across different cultural settings (Saoula et al., 2023). Yet, self-efficacy is shaped by prior educational experiences, role models, and institutional support pointing to the interaction between individual and institutional determinants, and not by behavioral mechanism alone.

2.2.3. Institutional and contextual approaches:

Institutional and contextual approaches regard entrepreneurship as a context-dependent phenomenon shaped jointly by the economic, social, and regulatory conditions (Gartner, 1988; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). These theoretical perspectives posit that an enabling institutional ecosystem is essential for the translation of entrepreneurial potential into entrepreneurial action, such as education systems, financing mechanisms, regulatory frameworks, and cultural norms, which create supportive conditions for entrepreneurship. This approach sheds light on the specific dynamics of youth entrepreneurship in Morocco, where entrepreneurial pathways are strongly shaped by institutional gaps and structural barriers. However, institutional approaches, although recognizing the importance of context, tend to overlook the capacity of young entrepreneurs to exercise agency, drawing on creativity, social capital, and informal networks to confront structural barriers (González & Kobylńska, 2019; Ojiaku et al., 2018). An integrative framework should therefore seek to connect, rather than choose between individual agency and structural conditions.

2.3. Key determinants of youth entrepreneurship: convergences, divergences, and gaps:

The empirical literature classifies determinants of youth entrepreneurship into six major categories. In this section, each category is examined critically with regard to recurring patterns, contradictory results, and research gaps that remain unresolved.

Individual factors, such as entrepreneurial motivation, self-efficacy, risk tolerance, and personality traits, are considered the most recurrent and stable determinants in the literature (Maheshwari, 2022; Saoula et al., 2023). The existing literature generally agrees that self-efficacy positively influences entrepreneurial intention. However, studies continue to diverge on the relative importance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. Some identify opportunity-driven motivation (pull factors) as an important driver of entrepreneurial intention, while others emphasize necessity-driven motivation (push factors). A particular meaning can be concluded from this distinction especially in countries with high unemployment such as Morocco (Hessels et al., 2008; Ojiaku et al., 2018).

Literature gives a prominent place to institutional factors, notably entrepreneurship education, training programs, and university support mechanisms. Their importance is viewed in the fact that they are the most frequently examined categories in research on youth entrepreneurship. Strong convergence is clearly observed in the literature regarding the positive effect of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention (Maheshwari, 2022; Wasilczuk & Licznarska, 2024). However, the literature shows a divergence concerning the respective roles of educational quality versus educational quantity, when the translation of entrepreneurship education into entrepreneurial intentions requires closely the combination of practical experience, experiential learning, and mentoring support (Saoula et al., 2023).

Financial factors play a dual role in literature, appearing as enabling conditions and persistent constraints at the same time. Across the literature, seed funding, microfinance, and venture capital are recognized as key mechanisms through which entrepreneurial intentions are translated into concrete action (Shabnaz & Islam, 2021). However, a notable divergence is clearly identified in the literature, concerning the direction of causality: many studies treat access to finance as a prerequisite for entrepreneurship, while others argue that entrepreneurial intention can itself facilitate access to funding through social ties and informal mechanisms.

Socio-cultural factors, including family support, gender norms, and social capital, have been insufficiently explored in the literature, despite their clear relevance in contexts like Morocco, where cultural perceptions and gender-based inequalities play a central role in shaping entrepreneurial experiences (GEM Morocco, 2017, 2021).

Contextual and environmental factors, particularly territorial conditions and regional disparities, have been comparatively neglected, despite their evident influence on entrepreneurial dynamics across Morocco's diverse regions (GEM Morocco, 2021; Lévesque & Minniti, 2011).

Administrative and regulatory factors, covering bureaucratic complexity, regulatory instability, and limited access to formal legal structures, largely left unexplored in previous research, even though empirical studies on emerging economies identify them as structural barriers. The fact that they remain underrepresented in the literature points to a broader tendency to prioritize individual and behavioral perspectives over structural and institutional ones (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016).

2.4. Integrative conceptual framework:

Youth entrepreneurship, as demonstrated by literature, is too complex to be fully captured by a single theoretical framework. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) addresses individual cognitive processes but leaves structural conditions, which are also influential, largely unaddressed. Economic theories are useful at macro-level dynamics but leave individual agencies out of the equation. Institutional approaches recognize the importance of context yet give insufficient weight to individual variation.

To address these theoretical limitations, the study proposes an integrative conceptual framework, structuring the six categories of determinants identified in the literature around two analytical dimensions: the level of analysis (individual vs. structural), and the nature of the effect (enabling vs. constraining). The framework positions entrepreneurial intention and behavior at the center of a multi-level system, in which individual factors (motivation, self-efficacy, personality), institutional factors (education, support programs), financial factors (access to capital), socio-cultural factors (family, norms, social capital), contextual factors (regional disparities, territorial conditions) and regulatory factors (administrative barriers, legal framework) interact dynamically in ways that can either support or stand young people's entrepreneurial engagement.

Two main contributions can be attributed to this framework. First, it supplies a theoretical foundation that facilitates the classification of the determinants identified across the literature through a frequency-based approach. Second, it opens the door to examining the Moroccan ecosystem in light of broader comparative debates, by drawing attention to structurally underrepresented dimensions in the existing literature, particularly socio-cultural and regulatory dimensions, which remain structurally underexplored in the literature and should be prioritized in future research.

2.5. Entrepreneurship in the Moroccan context:

To better understand the entrepreneurship concept, it is necessary to call for careful consideration of the context in which it develops. In Morocco, entrepreneurship has gradually become a strategic priority in social and economic policies. It is widely viewed as an effective way to reduce unemployment, boost private initiative, and promote self-employment (HCP, 2016). This growing importance of entrepreneurship in Morocco reflects the country's specific economic challenges. Persistent high youth unemployment, large informal sector, and significant regional disparities that collectively create a business environment that is very different from Western or high-income economies (GEM Morocco, 2021; HCP, 2016). As a result, Morocco has strengthened its institutional framework, while introducing public support programs and public-private partnerships aimed at fostering new venture creation and assisting project holders. Achieving the objectives of these initiatives requires the coordination of several stakeholders, including the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGEM) and the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) (CGEM, 2019; INDH, 2020). However, even if these institutional mechanisms have expanded, their effectiveness and accessibility for young entrepreneurs remain uneven, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas, where restricted access to structured support programs and financing mechanisms are less accessible for young entrepreneurs (GEM Morocco, 2021).

In addition to these contextual realities, entrepreneurship has evolved over time and become increasingly prominent in academic research, becoming an important research topic in Moroccan universities. Although entrepreneurship was previously examined indirectly through topics such as employment, local development, and small and medium-sized enterprises, it has gradually become a research field in its own right. This growing interest is reflected in the increasing number of master's theses and doctoral dissertations addressing entrepreneurial intention, as well as the assessment of the effectiveness of support and financing mechanisms. From an individual perspective, Moroccan studies often identify motivation and self-efficacy as key factors influencing entrepreneurship. This prominence reflects the significant influence of behavioral and socio-cognitive approaches in global entrepreneurship. However, the Moroccan context adds a distinctive dimension. Family pressure, social norms, and cultural attitudes influence directly individual entrepreneurial intention by presenting entrepreneurship as a necessity rather than as a deliberate career choice. This dimension remains less visible in Western-centric literature (GEM Morocco, 2017).

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, institutional conditions and socio-cultural factors play a key role in driving entrepreneurial activity in Morocco. These reports also emphasize the need to adapt international theoretical frameworks to the specific characteristics of the Moroccan context (GEM Morocco, 2017, 2021). Yet, the analysis highlights a critical paradox. Although socio-cultural and contextual dimensions have gained a theoretical importance in the Moroccan context, they remain insufficiently explored in academic research. This limited coverage reveals a major research gap. It suggests that the existing literature does not fully capture societal and territorial dimensions of youth

entrepreneurship in Morocco, notably the influence of gender norms, regional disparities, and informal social networks on entrepreneurial behavior.

Similarly, financial determinants play a dual and context-specific role in Morocco. Although access to finance is recognized in the international literature as both an enabling factor and a constraint, its constraining role is particularly pronounced in the Moroccan setting, where young entrepreneurs face a major structural barrier due to limited collateral, restricted access to formal credit markets, and the limited availability of risk capital and youth-oriented microfinance mechanisms (GEM Morocco, 2021; HCP, 2016). Administrative and regulatory barriers, despite their low presence in the literature, further increase these financial constraints, leading to a discouragement of entrepreneurial initiative which is structurally more pronounced in institutionally unstable economies.

Overall, this evolution illustrates the increasing structuring of entrepreneurship research in Morocco, in accordance with the country's economic and social development objectives.

By contrast, the way Moroccan contextual specificities interact with the identified determinants highlights a persistent imbalance: regarding the literature, institutional and individual factors are sufficiently examined to the detriment of socio-cultural, territorial, and financial dimensions that have a particular influence in emerging and transition economies such as Morocco. Future research should count this imbalance by developing more context-sensitive and policy-oriented frameworks for analyzing youth entrepreneurship.

3. Research methodology:

This study draws on a systematic literature review conducted in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses), widely regarded as the international benchmark for this type of scholarly work (Liberati et al., 2009; Tranfield et al., 2003). This methodological choice was guided by a concern for transparency, reproducibility, and rigor throughout the article selection and screening process.

3.1. Search Strategy:

The literature search covered three databases, complementary ones: Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science, via Publish or Perish. Google Scholar was picked for a specific reason, its broad coverage of francophone scholarship and research coming from emerging economies. Scopus and Web of Science, on the other hand, served to complement this base. They gave access to internationally peer-reviewed publications, and helped offset some of the editorial limitations that Google Scholar tends to have (Haddaway et al., 2015).

Search terms were entered in both languages, English and French. Keywords like youth entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intention, determinants of entrepreneurship, Morocco, entrepreneuriat des jeunes, intention entrepreneuriale, combined in different ways. This first search phase brought back around 100 records across the three databases.

3.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria:

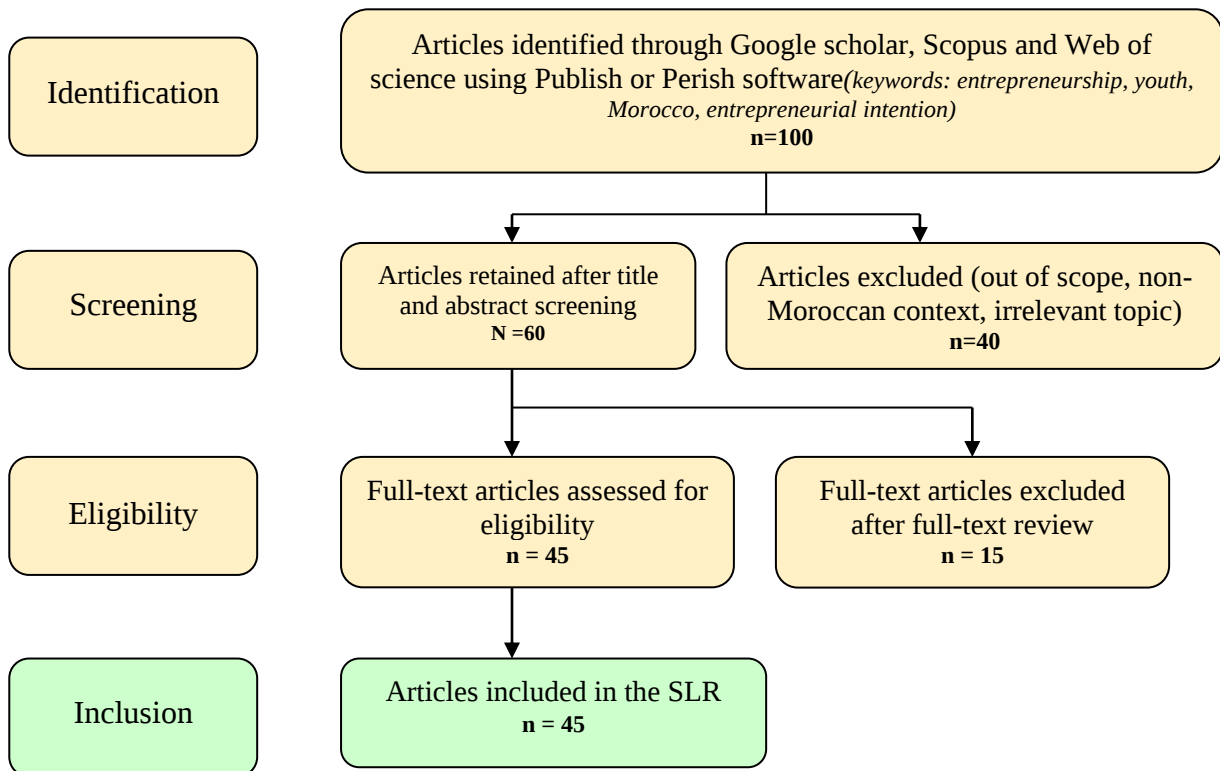
Before the screening phase, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were defined in order to ensure reproducibility and transparency, in accordance with PRISMA standards. The study selects only articles published between 2016 and 2026, with the aim of focusing in recent developments only and avoid studies published before youth entrepreneurship became a distinct research field. Regarding language criteria, only articles written in French and English were selected, because of the bilingual character of Moroccan academic production, while studies written in other languages were not taken into consideration with the purpose of maintaining consistency and comparability within the review. Concerning document type, only peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers that had been

reviewed through an editorial process were considered eligible. Theses, institutional reports, grey literature, preprints, or editorials were not included because the objective is to preserve academic quality of the selected literature. In terms of thematic relevance, only studies that explicitly focused on youth entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intention, or the determinants of entrepreneurial behavior among young people were retained. With regard to geographic scope, the study concern only articles treating Moroccan context. Finally, eligibility was restricted to articles with full-text access, whereas abstract-only records were considered ineligible for the analysis.

3.3. Screening, eligibility, and final corpus:

During the screening stage, titles and abstracts were studied in order to remove duplicates and exclude those not aligned with the research topic. This screening stage excluded 40 records and left 60 articles to be assessed in the next phase. After reviewing the full-text articles, they did not meet the eligibility criteria, yielding a final corpus of 45 articles published between 2016 and 2026.

Figure 1: Article Selection Process According to the PRISMA Method



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review

3.4. Data extraction and analysis:

Data extraction was performed using a standardized form comprising eight data categories: author(s), year, title, journal, theoretical framework, methodology, data type, and main findings. The analysis was conducted using a standardized coding grid that classified determinants into six categories: individual, institutional, financial, socio-cultural, contextual and regulatory. The collected data were systematically organized into a structured database for comparative purposes.

In order to identify the relative recurrence of each determinants category across the selected literature, the analysis was primarily frequency-based. A complementary thematic content analysis was done later to examine co-occurrences and tensions between different categories

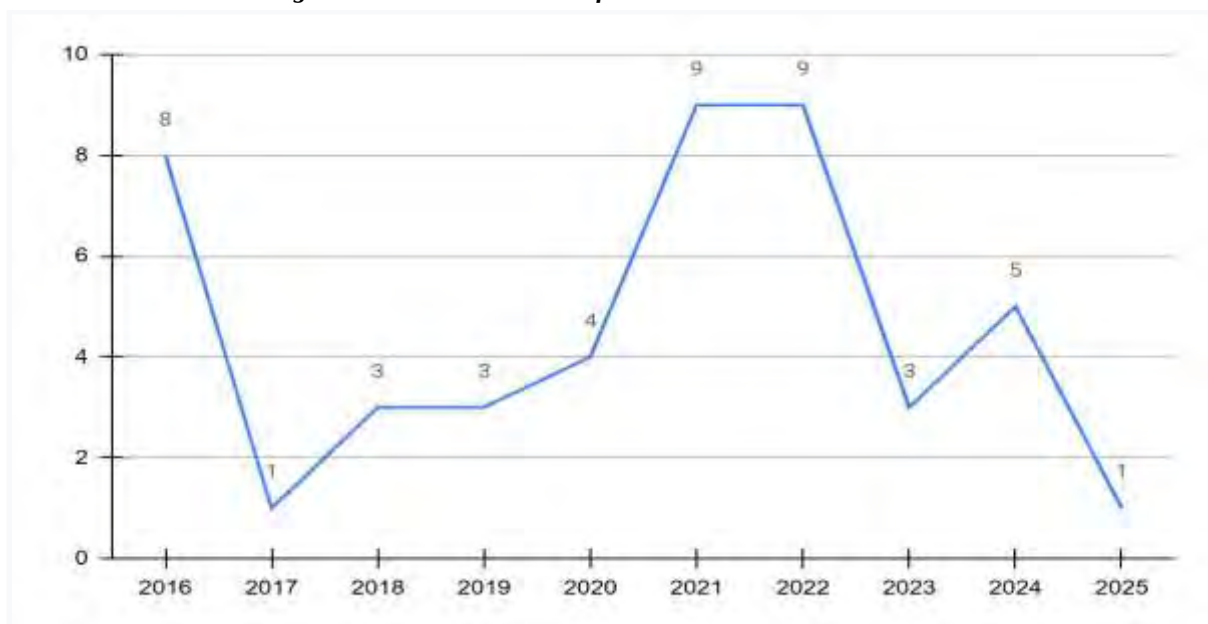
of determinants, in order to avoid the descriptive limits of frequency analysis, which remains limited in explaining causal relationships and contextual dynamics.

3.5. Methodological limitations:

Three methodological limitations should be noted. First, the corpus of 45 articles, although appropriate for an exploratory review, remains limited in its ability to cover the entire field. Second, the predominance of francophone and Moroccan studies limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other emerging contexts. Frequency analysis does not permit causal inference, which limits its ability to explain the effects of specific determinants; future meta-analytic or mixed-methods research could address this limitation.

4. Results:

Figure 2: Publication Dates of the Collected Research Articles



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review

When observing the temporal distribution of the collected research articles, a progressive and structured evolution of scientific production related to youth entrepreneurship in Morocco is clearly apparent. The first identified publications date back to 2016, a year marked by a relatively high number of studies, in contrast to the following year 2017, which recorded a slight decrease in the volume of publications. The period from 2018 to 2020 is marked by a progressive recovery in scientific production. This intermediate phase corresponds to a scientific stabilization phase, which reflects a period of strengthening theoretical frameworks, and the consolidating empirical findings.

From 2021, significant progress of scientific publications is evident, reaching particularly high levels in 2021 and 2022. These two years show a marked peak in publication activity, reflecting the maturity of the field and the progress of scientific attention allocated to this research area. This acceleration coincides with a broader international trend of renewed interest in youth entrepreneurship following the socio-economic disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, which intensified youth unemployment and reinforced the strategic relevance of entrepreneurship as a policy response (GEM Morocco, 2017; Maheshwari, 2022).

In contrast, more recent years show a relatively moderate level of scientific production. However, this observation should be interpreted with caution, as it may result from the partial indexing of recent studies in scientific databases.

Table 1 gives an idea about the distribution of articles by journal and lists the journals where entrepreneurship studies are concentrated. The Revue de l'Entrepreneuriat et de l'Innovation tops the list in terms of publication, with 6 articles confirming its strong standing as a leading platform for publishing entrepreneurship research. With 5 publications each, IJAFAME, the Revue Française d'Économie et de Gestion, and the Revue Internationale des Sciences de Gestion, follow closely, signaling their attention to entrepreneurship research.

Other journals contribute more modestly: MJEIM with 4 articles and the Revue marocaine de gestion et d'économie with 3 articles, while other journals record no more than 1 or 2 publications.

Table 1: Distribution of Research Articles by Scientific Journal

Journal / Review	Number of published articles
Revue de l'Entrepreneuriat et de l'Innovation	6
IJAFAME	5
Revue Française d'Economie et de Gestion	5
Revue Internationale des Sciences de Gestion	5
MJEIM	4
Revue marocaine de gestion et d'économie	3
Alternatives Managériales et Économiques	2
International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies	2
DROFE	1
African Journal of Business and Finance	1
Revue Africaine De Management	1
REMAC	1
Revue de Management et Cultures	1
RCCA	1
Management & Avenir	1
Revue marocaine de la Prospective en Sciences de Gestion	1
Revue du Contrôle de la Comptabilité et de l'Audit	1
African Scientific Journal	1
Revue internationale des études du développement	1

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review

This distribution reveals that some journals have carved out a clear focus on entrepreneurship research, while its presence across economics, management, finance, and development publications confirms the interdisciplinary character of the topic. This distribution goes beyond descriptive bibliometrics, it shows the structure and dissemination of research in this field. The dominance of a specialized francophone set of journals indicates that youth entrepreneurship research in Morocco remains confined in a narrow editorial ecosystem, with little presence in high-impact international English-language outlets. This situation represents both a dissemination constraint and a potential source of selection bias in the corpus, because the theoretical and methodological direction of the field is strongly shaped by a small number of dominant journals.

Table 2: Distribution of Research Articles by Authors' Institutional Affiliation (University)

University	Number of published articles
Ibn Zohr University	11
Ibn Tofail University	9
Hassan II University	7
Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University	5
Hassan I University	4
Mohamed V University	4
Cadi Ayyad University	2
Chouaib Doukkali University	2
Abdelmalek Essaâdi University	1

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review

The table above shows the distribution of published articles according to the institutional affiliation of the authors. Ibn Zohr University ranks first as the most productive institution, with 11 articles, followed by Ibn Tofail University with 9 publications and Hassan II University with 7 articles, which reflects the important place of those institutions in developing this research discipline. The other universities, such as Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University with 5 articles, as well as Hassan I University and Mohammed V University with 4 publications each, also offer a major contribution, but with a more limited extent. At the same time, many universities produce a relatively limited number of publications, showing a progressive but persistently unequal diffusion of entrepreneurship research at the national level.

A significant imbalance in the national distribution of research production is clear: three universities, Ibn Zohr (Agadir), Ibn Tofail (Kénitra), and Hassan II (Casablanca) present 60% of the corpus (27 of the 45 articles), which shows that these institutions host active research teams and academic programs focused on entrepreneurship. Universities in north, eastern, and rural regions are scarcely represented in the corpus, which shows a geographic concentration of academic research on youth entrepreneurship in Morocco. This imbalance provides only a partial view of the diversity of entrepreneurial conditions across the country's different socio-economic territories.

Table 3: Frequency of Keywords Used in the Analyzed Research Articles

Keywords used in the analyzed research articles	Number of published articles
Entrepreneurship	32
Entrepreneurial university	10
Entrepreneurial intention	6
Motivations	5
Business creation	3
Entrepreneurial process	2
Entrepreneurship education	2

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review

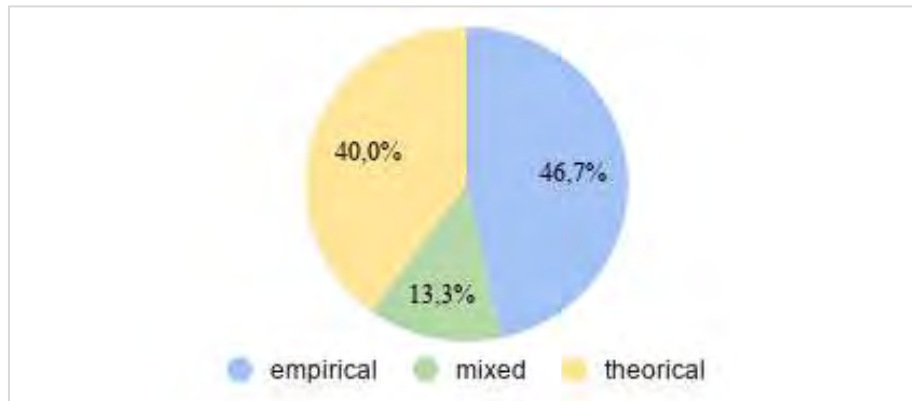
Table 3 offers an overview about the frequency of keywords employed by authors in the analyzed corpus and sheds light on the major lines of inquiry in entrepreneurship research. The term “entrepreneurship” is by far the most recurrent keyword, with 32 occurrences, underscoring its position as the central concept of the studies under review. The terms “entrepreneurial university” (10 occurrences) and “entrepreneurial intention” (6 occurrences) also constitute two significant concepts, drawing attention to the contribution of higher education institutions and cognitive-behavioral factors in driving entrepreneurial activity.

Other keywords, such as motivation, business creation, and youth, remain less apparent, while terms in relation with entrepreneurial process and entrepreneurship education, are present only to a limited degree. Overall, this distribution reflects that existing literature gives more attention to conceptual and institutional foundations of entrepreneurship and overlooks entrepreneurial intention and the university context (Hessels et al., 2008; Lévesque & Minniti, 2011).

Figure 3 presents the distribution of articles according to the research methods employed by authors in the 45 articles. Empirical studies are more used, with 21 articles, showing a strong priority given to primary data collected in the field in examining entrepreneurial phenomenon. Theoretical studies also occupy a notable share, with 18 articles, illustrating the pivotal role of conceptualization and the development of analytical frameworks in entrepreneurship. However, the number of studies combining both empirical and theoretical approaches continues to be limited, with only 6 articles, reflecting a major methodological gap in the literature: the field remains limited in its use of integrative designs that can jointly examine

individual entrepreneurial intentions and the structural factors influencing its conversion into action (Ojiaku et al., 2018).

Figure 3: Distribution of Articles by Research Method Employed



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review

Figure 4: Distribution of Articles by Type of Study



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review

Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of articles by type of research adopted in the analyzed corpus. 26 articles use qualitative research, which reflects the high weight of exploratory and interpretative approaches aiming to have an in-depth understanding of the entrepreneurial phenomenon. Quantitative studies concern 19 articles, signaling a marked reliance on statistical and econometric methods in the corpus of articles. Overall, this distribution highlights the complementarity of methodological approaches and indicates the central role of qualitative research in the literature examined.

Table 4: Theoretical Foundations used in Entrepreneurship Research

Theoretical framework employed	Number
Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen)	16
Entrepreneurial Event Model (Shapero& Sokol)	6
Entrepreneurial University Theory (Etzkowitz)	5
Entrepreneurial Motivation Theory (Push / Pull)	4
Social Capital Theory	4
Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura)	3
Resource-Based View (RBV)	3
Experiential Learning Theory	1
Locus of Control Theory (Rotter)	1
Entrepreneurial Opportunity Theory (Gartner)	1

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review

Table 4 presents the different theories identified in the selected articles showing the importance of the behavioral approaches in the corpus of articles. Ajzen's Theory of Planned

Behavior occupies a dominant position and appears as the dominant model in studies on youth entrepreneurship, confirming the major place given to cognitive and behavioral determinants within entrepreneurship research. However, some theoretical limitations can be inferred from the prominence of TPB. The theory pays limited attention to structural, financial, and institutional factors that impact entrepreneurial engagement and venture creation. It also neglects the way of entrepreneurial intention is translated into entrepreneurial action, a transition that is particularly constrained in emerging economies such as Morocco (Krueger et al., 2000; Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). According to this theory, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are placed at the center of entrepreneurial decision making. The Entrepreneurial Event Model developed by Shapero and Sokol is also frequently mobilized, highlighting the place of perceived desirability and feasibility. In addition, some studies rely on the concept of entrepreneurial university to draw attention to the role of higher education institutions in encouraging entrepreneurial spirit. Other approaches, such as entrepreneurial motivations (push/pull) and social capital, remain present, albeit to a lesser extent. In contrast, the relatively low mobilization of Social Capital Theory (4 articles) and contextual frameworks such as the Resource-Based View (3 articles) further confirm the underrepresentation of structural and relational dimensions in the corpus, a gap that the present study seeks to address through its integrative analytical framework.

Table 5: Analytical Approaches Used in Entrepreneurship Research

Approaches	Number
Systemic approach	27
Institutional and environmental approach	23
Behavioral approach to entrepreneurial intention	17
Psychosocial approach	9
Motivational approach to entrepreneurial intention	8
Educational and societal approach	7
Socio-economic and territorial approach	5

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review

Table 5 presents a structure of approaches employed in the entrepreneurship literature. The systemic approach ranks first in the corpus of articles, due to its ability to describe in precise terms the entrepreneurial phenomenon by integrating individual, organizational, and environmental dimensions. It is followed by the institutional and environmental approach, which is used to demonstrate the influence of regulatory frameworks, public policies, and entrepreneurial ecosystems, particularly in emerging economies.

Although the behavioral approach to entrepreneurial intention was supported by established theoretical models, it still received limited attention due to its focus on individual-level factors. Other approaches, mainly motivational, pedagogical, or territorial in nature, are marginally mobilized and tend to be associated with more comprehensive analytical approaches.

The classification of determinants of youth entrepreneurship into six categories is not done arbitrarily in this study; it is based on well-established theoretical and empirical contributions in entrepreneurship research. It draws on the multi-level taxonomy proposed by Verheul et al. (2001), which provides a distinction between demand-side and supply-side determinants of entrepreneurship across individual, market, and institutional levels, and on the opportunity-individual-context framework developed by Shane and Venkataraman (2000), which places entrepreneurship within a framework linking individual agency, opportunity recognition, and contextual conditions. The distinction between socio-cultural factors and contextual factors further reflects the analytical distinction commonly made in the literature, between proximal social influences (family, peers, norms) and distal environmental conditions (economic stability, territorial infrastructure). This taxonomy was applied a priori as a coding framework

and subsequently supported by the inter-coder agreement procedure, confirming its internal consistency and reproducibility.

Table 6: Classification and Frequency of Determinants of Youth Entrepreneurship Identified in literature

Determinant	Associated Factors	Frequency
Individual Factors	Entrepreneurial motivation ; entrepreneurial self-efficacy; personality traits; risk-taking; entrepreneurial mindset	30
Institutional Factors	Training; entrepreneurship education; coaching; support mechanisms	35
Financial and Resource Factors	Access to finance; credit; financial resources	29
Social and Cultural Factors	Social norms; family and social environment; support networks; socialization; socio-cultural practices; national culture	18
Contextual and Environmental Factors	Economic conditions; economic instability; environmental opportunities; surrounding environment	11
Administrative and Regulatory Constraints	Bureaucratic burden; administrative procedures; legislative framework; access to credit; work–life balance	9

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review

Institutional factors appear in 35 out of 45 studies (78%), confirming their central role in the field. This strong presence is analytically meaningful and reflects the specificities of the context: in Morocco, where market mechanisms supporting entrepreneurship are still underdeveloped, institutional interventions, such as entrepreneurship education, training programs, and public support mechanisms, take on a compensatory role and increases their relative importance in comparison with high-income economies (GEM Morocco, 2021). This result is coherent with international studies, which reinforces the idea that entrepreneurship education contributes positively to entrepreneurial intention (Saoula et al., 2023; Wasilczuk & Licznarska, 2024), while also pointing to the risk of depending too heavily on institutional factors rather than addressing broader structural reforms.

Individual factors are identified in 30 studies (67%): The high presence of motivation, self-efficacy, and personality traits as factors influencing youth entrepreneurship confirm the strong influence of the Theory of Planned Behavior and socio-cognitive frameworks in the corpus. However, a critical interpretation of this result brings to light an important nuance: in the Moroccan context, individual entrepreneurial motivation is often driven by necessity rather than opportunity, a distinction that has a strong impact on the quality and sustainability of entrepreneurial projects (Hessels et al., 2008; Ojiaku et al., 2018).

Financial factors concern 29 studies (64%): Their twofold role as sources of support and persistent barriers, is highly noticeable in the Moroccan entrepreneurial context, characterized by structural barriers including limited collateral, difficult access to formal credit markets, and inadequate development of microfinance and risk capital mechanisms targeting youth that confront young entrepreneurs (Rusu & Roman, 2020; Shabnaz & Islam, 2021). The prominence of this category shows that financial constraints should not be marginal, but they must be taken as barriers in the entrepreneurial pathway of Moroccan youth.

Social and cultural factors are mentioned in 18 studies (40%): this result indicates that entrepreneurial intention is also influenced by family support, social norms, and cultural representations of entrepreneurship, but their mediating role let their effect mainly indirect (González & Kobylńska, 2019; Lévesque & Minniti, 2011). Despite their importance, these factors receive relatively limited attention in the literature which indicates that Moroccan research tend to treat societal and relational dimensions of youth entrepreneurship as secondary concerns rather than structural ones. As a result, an important gap has emerged. This issue deserves closer examination, especially because family expectations and gender

norms are widely recognized as key factors influencing entrepreneurial trajectories in collectivist societies.

Contextual and environmental factors concern only 11 studies (24%), administrative and regulatory constraints are viewed in 9 studies (20%): This limited attention given to these factors reveal an important challenge, manifested in the fact that structural barriers, administrative procedures, and regulatory complexity discourage entrepreneurial engagement among young people. Despite their potential influence, these factors remain insufficiently explored in the existing literature, particularly in the context of emerging economies.

5. Co-occurrence and interactions between determinant categories:

Treating each determinant category separately, as if it operates in isolation is the main limitation of a frequency-based analysis. According to the international literature, entrepreneurial intention is the result of interactions and complementarities between individual, institutional, and environmental factors (Krueger et al., 2000; Liñán & Chen, 2009). To address this limitation, the present section examines the co-occurrence patterns identified in the corpus.

Institutional and individual factors are the most frequent interaction, co-occurring in 28 of the 45 articles (62%). This finding is consistent with theoretical expectations, suggesting that the two dominant individual-level determinants, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial motivation, are strongly influenced by the quality of entrepreneurship education and the institutional support available to young people (Bandura, 1997; Saoula et al., 2023). This interaction indicates that individual and institutional determinants should not be analyzed in isolation but has to be considered as synergistic dimensions of a common developmental process.

The second most frequent co-occurrence is between individual factors and financial factors, appearing in 21 articles (47%). This finding aligns with the literature, which indicates that young people's confidence in their entrepreneurial capabilities declines when financial barriers are perceived as structural rather than temporary. This helps to create a self-reinforcing cycle of disengagement that is particularly pronounced among those lacking financial resources and social capital (Ojiaku et al., 2018; Rusu & Roman, 2020).

However, the co-occurrence between socio-cultural factors and individual and institutional factors appears in only 12 articles (27%), which confirm that socio-cultural dimensions are marginal. These findings suggest that models focusing on individual cognitive factors or institutional support, with an oversight of cultural and relational context, tend to treat young entrepreneurs as isolated individuals rather than as actors in influence with social and cultural contexts. As a result, these models may provide only a partial and potentially misleading explanation of entrepreneurial behavior (González & Kobylińska, 2019; Liñán & Chen, 2009).

Finally, regulatory dimensions and financial factors co-occur in only 8 articles (18%), reflecting that administrative barriers and financial constraints jointly influence negatively entrepreneurial behavior, especially in emerging economies (GEM Morocco, 2021; Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). This interaction suggests that regulatory simplification and financial access at the same time should be examined together, instead of treating each dimension separately.

Overall, the co-occurrence analysis reveals that the determinants of youth entrepreneurship in Morocco are interdependent, so they cannot be treated in isolation. This systemic perspective highlights the need to adopt multiple levels of analysis by future research, in order to better capture the dynamic interactions between individual agency, institutional support, financial conditions, and socio-cultural context.

6. Conclusion:

This systematic literature review was developed to identify and synthesize the main determinants of youth entrepreneurship in Morocco based on a corpus of 45 scientific articles. The study points to the pivotal role of institutional and individual factors in explaining entrepreneurial trajectories of young people. Entrepreneurship education, academic support mechanisms, coaching programs, and entrepreneurial ecosystems are recognized as major drivers of entrepreneurial intention and behavior. In parallel, psychological dimensions such as entrepreneurial motivation, self-efficacy, entrepreneurial mindset, and tolerance for risk are frequently represented in previous studies, revealing the strong focus of entrepreneurship research toward behavioral and cognitive models.

Financial determinants are also recognized as significant dimensions, both as mechanisms of support and as structural constraints limiting the conversion of entrepreneurial intention into concrete entrepreneurial activity. Social, cultural, territorial, and contextual determinants impact directly entrepreneurial trajectories even if they are still underrepresented in the literature. Similarly, administrative and regulatory constraints remain structural obstacles that hinder the sustainability and development of entrepreneurial initiatives.

Overall, the results show a significant imbalance in existing literature, which gives greater attention to behavioral and institutional perspectives while giving limited attention to integrative analyses able to capture the complexity and the multidimensional character of entrepreneurial ecosystems.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the entrepreneurship literature by proposing an integrative analytical framework that structures youth entrepreneurship determinants around six main categories: individual, institutional, financial, socio-cultural, contextual, and regulatory factors. In contrast to fragmented approaches that examine determinants separately, this study presents an integrative synthesis of the interplay between multiple dimensions influencing entrepreneurial dynamics in Morocco. In addition, the analysis conducted in this study provides valuable insights into the dominant research orientations and underexplored dimensions within the literature, thereby contributing to a deeper scientific understanding of youth entrepreneurship in emerging economies.

From a practical perspective, a set of recommendations can be proposed for key actors engaged in the promotion of youth entrepreneurship in Morocco:

- Universities and higher education institutions are well positioned to strengthen entrepreneurship education: integrate more practical and experience-based learning, develop institutional incubators and mentoring systems, and implement entrepreneurial coaching programs aimed at building entrepreneurial skills, self-efficacy, and innovation capabilities among students.
- Public policymakers and financial institutions should work to improve young entrepreneurs' access to appropriate funding, especially during the post-creation phase and throughout the development phase; financing barriers remain one of the most stubborn challenges in practice. This involves making simple credit mechanisms, easing financing procedures, and strengthening support initiatives tailored to vulnerable groups such as rural and female entrepreneurs.
- Government authorities and regulatory institutions must tackle the persistent challenge of bureaucratic complexity. Simplifying administrative procedures and upgrading regulatory framework should be a priority because of its impact on business creation promotion and entrepreneurial initiatives sustainability.
- Territorial and social development stakeholders should adapt entrepreneurship support mechanism to socio-cultural and regional specificities of Moroccan entrepreneurship ecosystem, with the aim of improving inclusive strategies and aligning them with rural territories, disadvantaged social groups, and local entrepreneurial ecosystems.

This review points to several opportunities for future research. First, it is necessary to adopt by future studies with the aim to present a better explication of the transition from entrepreneurial intention into concrete entrepreneurial behavior, especially because most existing studies rely on intention-based models. Second, the influence of territorial inequalities, family structures, social norms, and regional entrepreneurial ecosystems on the Moroccan entrepreneurial ecosystem should be explored more extensively by future research, as the frequency analysis reveals an underrepresentation of socio-cultural and contextual determinants. Third, underrepresented forms of youth entrepreneurship need to win more space in future studies, particularly entrepreneurship among young women, rural youth, and young entrepreneurs engaged in green and digital activities, because these areas continue to be insufficiently explored despite their increasing economic and social significance. Finally, it is clear that future studies have to integrate rigorous empirical evaluations of public entrepreneurship policies and support programs, in order to assess their real effectiveness and contribute to the development of evidence-based entrepreneurship policies adapted to the Moroccan context.

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