

Correlation Between Social Support and Entrepreneurial Intentions: Evidence from Private and Public Universities in Ghana

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Abstract

Based on the assertion that not all social ties promote entrepreneurship, this study investigated the correlation between social support and entrepreneurial intentions among 352 2019/2020 graduating university students sampled from private and public universities in Ghana. This study adopted a quantitative approach using questionnaires and a correlational analysis. The finding was that social support and entrepreneurial intentions have a moderate, significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention among Ghanaian tertiary students; there was no statistically significant difference between students' sex (male or female), birth order, and exposure to entrepreneurship on entrepreneurial intention. This study's conclusions suggest that families and friends/peers are capable or willing to provide support to become entrepreneurs or are willing to use social support for venture creation. The findings have implications for practicing entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship educators, and policymakers.

Keywords: Social support, entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurship, students, birth order, sex, Ghana

Introduction

The social system of entrepreneurs significantly influences their actions, requiring them to behave in a socially acceptable manner (Tajpour et al., 2019; Tien et al., 2022). Society plays a critical role in shaping values, views, and ambitions that influence individuals' perception of entrepreneurship as an attractive and desirable career option (Chhabra et al., 2020). Ozaralli and Rivenburgh (2016) argued that entrepreneurial intentions are higher in societies where entrepreneurs are appreciated and respected. Similarly, Tarling et al. (2016) highlighted the influence of family business values on individual motivation and direction toward entrepreneurship.

Utami (2017) suggests promoting an entrepreneurial spirit among the population, especially university students, to reduce unemployment. However, Haque et al. (2018) observed that many university graduates struggle to establish businesses and instead seek employment. This observation has led several studies (Nguyen et

al., 2019; Al-Mamary et al., 2020; Raza et al., 2018) to emphasize the importance of understanding the factors influencing new graduates' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship. Despite the recognized need, Herrington and Coduras (2019) noted that entrepreneurship research in the Sub-Saharan region has not received adequate attention.

Existing literature indicates that not all forms of trust or social ties promote entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship success depends on available facilities, resources, and human capacity (Harsch & Festing, 2019). Although social support plays a positive role in entrepreneurial development, some researchers identified both supporting and hindering factors within the social environment (Muller & Peres, 2019). The influence of social support can either encourage or deter individuals from pursuing entrepreneurship, particularly in contexts like Ghana, where societal expectations often favor traditional employment over entrepreneurial endeavors. This dynamic is evident

in the low Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI) scores for Sub-Saharan Africa, including Ghana, which highlights the need to explore the entrepreneurial aspirations of higher education students in relation to social support. Social support is viewed from emotional, tangible, and informational perspectives, each playing a crucial role in the venture creation process. The research aims to address the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between social support and entrepreneurial intentions?
2. Is there a significant difference in the entrepreneurial intentions of university students considering socio-demographic profiles such as:
 - (a) Sex?
 - (b) Birth order?
 - (c) Exposure to entrepreneurs?

Null Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between social support and entrepreneurial intentions.
2. There is no significant difference in the entrepreneurial intentions of university students considering socio-demographic profiles such as:
 - a) Sex?
 - b) Birth order?
 - c) Exposure to entrepreneurs?

Empirical Review

Shi et al. (2019) suggest that the perception of social support positively impacts the development of an entrepreneurial culture. Similarly, Mahfud et al. (2020) indicate that social support significantly boosts individuals' confidence levels, enhancing entrepreneurial intention. Gubbins et al. (2020) also support this view, highlighting the significant impact of social networks on entrepreneurial intentions. Molino et al. (2018) further note that social support indirectly affects entrepreneurial intentions by influencing perceived desirability towards entrepreneurship, subsequently affecting intentions.

Farooq (2018) finds that a socially supportive climate increases entrepreneurial intention and facilitates entrepreneurial behavior among budding entrepreneurs. Farooq emphasizes that entrepreneurial activities involve risk and stress, which healthy social support can mitigate. Hoogendoorn et al. (2019) argue that entrepreneurship is a social activity requiring frequent interaction with the social environment, making positive support from the social environment crucial for encouraging entrepreneurial intention (Farooq et al., 2018).

Farooq (2018) also notes an indirect effect of social support on entrepreneurial intention, observing a direct effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Venkataraman (2019) adds that positive social support complements personal knowledge, enhancing the ability to exploit business opportunities. Scholars like Brown et al. (2019) and Farooq et al. (2018) argue that assistance from social networks is vital during the early stages of job setup. In the UK, Brown et al. (2019) report that networks and social capital facilitate crowdfunding, enabling start-ups to navigate various stages of venture creation with less financial burden. This underscores the role of tangible support in promoting entrepreneurial intentions.

However, most previous studies on social networks focus on the size of the network, the strength of ties, and the number of contacts (Farooq, 2016; Gee et al., 2017). This study argues that network size or the number of relations does not determine the extent of support one's social network can provide. Someone with an extensive social network might receive less support than someone with a small but influential network. Despite several studies (Gee et al., 2017; Farooq, 2016; Mahfud et al., 2020) on social networks, the actual significance of support from social networks remains unclear.

Building on this argument, this study investigates perceived support instead of measuring the size, strength, or number of ties in one's social network for determining intention toward entrepreneurship. Existing literature on entrepre-

neural intentions suggests no previous studies have examined the combined influence of social support and entrepreneurial competencies on the entrepreneurial intention of university students in Ghana. Studies on the mediation and moderation roles of socio-demographic profiles and business opportunities in the Ghanaian context are also scarce. This study aims to fill this gap by assessing the integrated effect of support from social networks and entrepreneurial competencies on entrepreneurial intention in Ghana, providing valuable insights into how perceived support influences entrepreneurial behavior.

Farooq et al. (2018) state that new entrepreneurs seek assistance from close social circles, including family and in-laws. The concept of social support was popularized by Farooq (2016) based on House's (1981) study. Researchers assert that social associates are critical for budding entrepreneurs (Brown et al., 2019), contributing to mobilizing inputs, identifying customer needs, and sharing information on production techniques (Farooq, 2016). Society provides facilities and resources to stimulate entrepreneurial behaviors (Santos et al., 2016).

Gelaidan and Abdullateef (2017) observed the positive contribution of family members toward entrepreneurial decisions in a study of 227 students from the University of Utara, Malaysia. Edelman et al. (2016) found that access to economic, human, and social capital increases the likelihood of starting a new business. In rural Madagascar, Urban and Ratsimanetrimanana (2019) noted a significant moderating effect of access to finance on the link between attitudes towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intention. Gelaidan and Abdullateef (2017) confirmed that social networks are crucial in shaping people's business aspirations. This study tests whether social support influences university students' entrepreneurship intentions in Ghana, contributing to understanding social support and entrepreneurial intention in a developing country context.

Pierre Bourdieu's Social Capital Theory (Portes, 1998) supports the social support variable as an antecedent to entrepreneurial intention. This theory suggests that economic, cultural, and social capital interactions enhance economic activities. Social capital is measured through questionnaire items assessing the frequency and quality of interactions with family, friends, and professional networks.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a foundation for evaluating entrepreneurial intention. Ajzen (1991) posits that intention is determined by attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control, all measured through specific questionnaire items reflecting beliefs, social pressure, and confidence in entrepreneurial abilities.

Socio-Demographic Profile

From empirical literature on entrepreneurial intentions, research has identified clear associations between, on the one hand, the motivation to start a company and, on the other, socio-economic, demographic, and cultural characteristics (Wang et al., 2019; Moa-Liberty et al., 2016). Several studies have identified factors such as sex, income, education, age, birth order, ethnicity, marital status, and exposure to entrepreneurship as major demographic factors that influence individuals' entrepreneurial intention (Bloemen-Bekx et al., 2019; Abu Bakar et al., 2017; Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2016). This study focuses on sex, birth order, and exposure to entrepreneurs. Although age, marital status, and educational background are relevant in assessing entrepreneurial intentions, since the target respondents are undergraduate students, there are insignificant variations in age, marital status, and educational background. Similarly, ethnic status is beyond the scope of this study due to multiple ethnic groups. Most Ghanaians are highly sensitive to ethnic issues, which may affect the outcome of responses.

Sex

The socio-cultural background of entrepreneurs significantly influences venture creation success. The Kauffman Index of Start-up Activity Data reveals major variations in business establishments in the United States by gender, race, nativity, age, veteran status, and education level (Fairlie et al., 2016). Scholars emphasize the need for business education stakeholders to understand how women develop business interests (Chatterjee et al., 2018). Researchers have noted unique obstacles that women encounter in business operations (Gupta & Mirchandani, 2018). For instance, men and women are embedded in different social networks, leading to divergent economic outcomes (Moore & Carpiano, 2020). Women tend to include more kin in their business discussion networks, while men include more peers (Burt, 2019). Women also differ from men in their exit intentions when experiencing family interference (Hsu et al., 2016).

Women's ambitions to start and manage businesses may differ from men's (Sharafizad & Coetzer, 2016). Hence, influencing entrepreneurial intentions requires examining factors relevant to both genders. Varied expectations from social members result in different ways of developing projects and sustaining business survival (Sharafizad & Coetzer, 2016). Females in traditionally feminine industries receive greater societal help, while those in male-dominated sectors face lower social acceptance (Simoes et al., 2015).

Empirical evidence suggests male business owners depend less on societal members than female entrepreneurs (Hsu et al., 2016). Private networks, often family-oriented, play a significant role in this dynamic. Female entrepreneurs tend to excel in nurturing interpersonal and leadership skills (Athanasopoulou et al., 2017). In Saudi Arabia, men are more likely to create businesses due to inadequate skills and social structures hindering women (Abu Bakar et al., 2017). Historically, men have held more substantial public offices, establishing social ties

that contribute significantly to business start-ups and growth (Perez-Quintana et al., 2017).

Women face unique barriers that hinder their chances of succeeding in private venture creation (Mergemeier et al., 2018). In Egypt, women account for only one in four entrepreneurs (Reyad et al., 2019). Domestic roles, especially in Africa, deplete women's energy that could otherwise be directed to business management (Dutta & Mallick, 2018). Social and negative attitudes toward women's progress in Saudi Arabia present significant challenges (Al-Asfour et al., 2017). Common difficulties include gender discrimination, difficulty in career progression, and heavy workloads. The coefficient for sex was -0.189 ($p = 0.001$), indicating a lower scope of start-up activities for female entrepreneurs (Edelman et al., 2016).

Shinnar et al. (2017) found that men possess better business knowledge and skills than women in the United States, leading to higher entrepreneurial intentions. This discrepancy may be due to the traditional breadwinner roles of men in many African countries, where women often serve as housewives. Further research is needed to investigate what motivates women to become entrepreneurs.

Gender influences entrepreneurial orientation differently; women tend to be more proactive, while men exhibit greater risk-taking potential (Marques et al., 2018). Despite women's increasing roles in business (Gupta & Mirchandani, 2018; Urbano et al., 2017), it remains essential for stakeholders in socio-economic development to explore how women develop entrepreneurial intentions (Chatterjee et al., 2018).

This study adopts respondents' sex as a moderator to explore the link between social support, entrepreneurial competencies, business opportunities, and entrepreneurial intentions. It aims to highlight and empirically establish gender differences in these areas among university students in Ghana.

Exposure to Entrepreneurs

Considering role theory, people who directly observe other entrepreneurs gain insight into the key success factors required to manage businesses (Nowiński & Haddoud, 2019). Role models influence the probability of finding viable business ideas and stimulate individuals to establish firms (Austin & Nauta, 2015). From a network theory perspective, building relationships with social members allows one to access help, knowledge, and other tools, providing a robust forum for sustaining a firm and achieving better outcomes rather than relying solely on individual efforts (Nowiński & Rialp, 2015).

Several studies have investigated the impact of exposure to family businesses and peers' entrepreneurial activities on the desire to pursue self-employment (Cardella et al., 2020; Broome & Ohlsson, 2017; Abu Bakar et al., 2017). Farani et al. (2017) found that computer science students in Iranian universities who have access to people with rich business exposure develop higher entrepreneurship intentions. Scholars argue that entrepreneurial interactions reduce uncertainty and increase the drive to become business owners (Wyrwich et al., 2015). Many researchers confirm the impact of role models on business entry considerations (Feder & Nițu-Antonie, 2017; Ambad & Damit, 2016), helping entrepreneurs identify best practices and develop technical skills (Mauer et al., 2017). Role models can also trigger entrepreneurial skills or self-efficacy (Zozimo et al., 2017).

The family is crucial in an individual's decision to become self-employed. Having a self-employed parent nearly doubles the likelihood of the child becoming self-employed (Broome & Ohlsson, 2017). Swedish data shows family and community background explain 16% to 45% of variations in entrepreneurial entry, persistence, and income (Vladasel et al., 2020). In Saudi Arabia, individuals with a relevant business background for more than two years are more likely to desire to establish a business (Abu Bakar et al., 2017). Similarly, Portuguese

students from entrepreneurial families have higher entrepreneurial intentions, although the effect is weak (Galvão et al., 2018).

Wealthy entrepreneurial family members raise entrepreneurial aspirations among business students in Croatia (Pfeifer et al., 2014). Family members provide business skills necessary for daily operations (Tarling et al., 2016) and support during the initial stages of business establishment (Edelman et al., 2016). They also promote a conducive environment that increases entrepreneurial intentions among young people (Hutagalung et al., 2017). In Kenya, India, and Nicaragua, culture and societal contributions significantly impact innovation and finding solutions to customer needs (Baskaran & Mehta, 2016). In Kerala, India, students with business-owner parents show higher opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial intentions (Johnson & Mathew, 2017).

Peers also shape entrepreneurial intentions. Close business friends significantly influence business interests and intentions (Tatarko & Schmidt, 2015). Students are motivated to become entrepreneurs by their peers (Henley et al., 2017). This study argues that individuals with prior exposure to family and entrepreneurial experience perceive higher entrepreneurial intentions through highly perceived social support and entrepreneurial competencies than those without such exposure.

Birth Order

Birth order is a significant socio-demographic variable that shapes individuals' working habits and career choices (Schenkel et al., 2016). In European culture, for example, first-born sons historically inherited management positions controlling family lands, while non-first-born sons pursued other occupations (Huebner, 2016). Although the tradition of primogeniture has waned with the rise of meritocracy (Lin, 2019), birth order continues to influence career choices and leadership capabilities (Black et al., 2018). In Ghana, inheritance often follows birth order among most ethnic groups.

Birth order is classified as first-born son, later son, or only son (Schenkel et al., 2016). This study defines birth order as first child, non-first child, or only child, consistent with previous definitions (Björkegren & Svaleryd, 2023). The concept of self is comparative in society, allowing individuals to compare themselves with others and identify their status (Zahavi, 2016).

Birth order studies follow social stratification at the family level, influencing how family firms acquire leadership positions. This logic aligns with the idea that birth position promotes personality uniqueness, resulting in varied aspirations and parental expectations among siblings (Campbell et al., 2019). However, this practice can also cause undue stress, particularly in cultures where first-born children bear the responsibility of succeeding their parents as family business managers (Schenkel et al., 2016). In Ghana, the extended family system often places the first-born child in charge of later-born siblings, especially if the father is deceased. This study aims to empirically establish the extent to which birth order influences entrepreneurial intentions in Ghana.

First-borns, closely protected by their parents, often become timid and less independent (Schenkel et al., 2016). In South Korea, Campbell et al. (2019) found that first-born leaders were more risk-averse than their non-firstborn counterparts. Later-born children benefit from broader cognitive frames and formative experiences (Schenkel et al., 2016). Non-first-born family company CEOs are more inclined to seek independence and develop unique leadership styles, enhancing their ability to assimilate new knowledge and ideas, which can increase firm value (Schenkel et al., 2016).

Birth order influences firm success through complex awareness of positional identification. First-born family business CEOs often lack creativity and over-identify with traditional business structures. In contrast, non-first-born CEOs are more socially accepted and willing to challenge the status quo, exposing them to external governance factors. A survey showed

that 75 percent of family businesses prefer first sons or daughters as successors, reflecting the significant influence of parents on the elder child's personality (Schenkel et al., 2016). Birth order affects personality and entrepreneurship (Viinikainen et al., 2017), suggesting differences in social support for first-child and non-first children. Given these mixed results, this study explores how birth order moderates students' entrepreneurial intentions in the Ghanaian context, contributing to the existing literature.

Methodology

The study utilized a correlational research design and focused on 2019/2020 graduating university students from both private and public universities who were studying entrepreneurship and business courses. The target population comprised the top ten universities, according to the 4 International Colleges & Universities (4ICU) ranking in 2020. It was estimated that 3,120 students were enrolled in entrepreneurship courses or programs. Using Yaro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 535 students was drawn for the study.

The number of samples collected from the ten universities was influenced by two main factors. First, we noticed that some universities offered entrepreneurship as a program while others offered it as a course. Due to this, more samples were taken from universities that offer entrepreneurship programs. Additionally, most universities were not in session due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, we contacted available lecturers who could share the Google forms with their students. 352 research questionnaires were retrieved, accounting for 66% of the total out of 535 questionnaires distributed, as shown in Table 1. Of the 352 respondents, 232 (65.9%) were students enrolled in Entrepreneurship programs. The details of the data collection are presented in Table 1. The researchers attributed the 66% retrieval rate to limited internet access.

The study utilized convenience sampling due to its cost-effectiveness and speed. However, it acknowledged the limitations of this method, such as the lack of clear generalizability.

Table 1

Sample Drawn from the Universities in Ghana

University	Status	Estimated 2019/20 Graduating Business Students	Number of Expected Samples	Questionnaire Distributed	Retrieved Sample	Valid Percent (%)
A*	Private	115	51	60	51	85%
B	Public	520	40	60	45	75%
C*	Private	370	50	60	54	90%
D	Public	365	11	40	11	28%
E	Private	100	8	15	5	33%
F	Public	270	6	15	3	20%
G	Private	90	15	20	14	70%
H	Private	80	5	10	2	20%
I	Private	110	20	40	18	45%
J	Public	370	24	45	23	51%
K*	Public	371	85	120	86	72%
L*	Public	289	40	50	40	80%
TOTAL		3,050	355	535	352	66%

*Universities offering entrepreneurship as a program

The researchers adopted 10 out of 16 items for social support from Wei and Wang (2009). The authors sought to measure the most effective social support based on the House's existing definitions (1981). The researchers measured entrepreneurial goal intention with eight (8) items, out of which four (4) were from Linan and Chen (2009), and the remaining item was adapted from the work of Alammari et al. 2019 and Shah and Soomro (2017). The data were analyzed with bivariate correlation. The Cronbach's alpha of entrepreneurial intention is 0.954, with 16 items verbally interpreted as excellent.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

The respondents' socio-demographic profiles considered relevant in this study were sex, birth order, and entrepreneurship exposure. Of the 352 valid responses, 130 (37%) were females, while the male respondents accounted for 222 (63%). Thus, the male respondents were more than the female respondents.

The birth order variable sought to identify respondents' positions according to the order in which they were born among their siblings. This variable measured three options- first-child, non-first child, and only child. The birth order results indicate that a non-first-child respondents comprised 99, representing 28.1%, while the non-first child was 224 (66.5%).

Respondents had to tick "Yes" to represent prior exposure to the entrepreneurial activities of a friend/peer, parents, or other family members. The "No" response alternative indicates otherwise. Out of the 352 responses received, 268 (76%) and 84 (24%) said Yes and No, respectively. These results suggest that most of the respondents have exposure to entrepreneurial activities.

Relationship between social support and entrepreneurial Intentions

The study found a moderate, significant positive relationship ($r=0.315$; $p=0.000$) between social support and entrepreneurial intentions at a 95% confidence level. The details of the results

are provided in Table 2. As a result, the study rejects the null hypothesis, which suggests no relationship between social support and entrepreneurial intentions. This study's outcome is consistent with Tatarko and Schmidt's (2015) work, which found that social support significantly affects individuals' confidence levels and perceived behavioral control. It positively affects entrepreneurial intention.

Similarly, Santos et al. (2016) suggest that having a social support perception could positively impact the development of an entrepreneurial culture. These findings imply that the more social support respondents receive, the higher their entrepreneurial intentions. It throws more light on Ozaralli and Rivenburgh's (2016) observations, who argued that there would be a high entrepreneurial intention rate in societies where those already involved in entrepreneurship are appreciated, respected, and endorsed. Thus, if members of a given society encourage the youth to choose entrepreneurship as a career path, more students would develop a high intention of becoming entrepreneurs, resulting in high entrepreneurial activities.

The Differences Between Students' Socio-Demographic Profile on their Entrepreneurial Intentions

Research question two sought to investigate the differences between respondents when considering their socio-demographic profiles. The study measured key socio-demographic profiles such as sex, birth order, and entrepreneurship exposure. The researcher discussed the magnitude of differences based on Cohen's

(2013) guidelines where small effect =.01, moderate effect =.06, and large effect =.14.

The sex distribution was 222 males (63%) and 130 females (37%), as shown in Table 3. In assessing the differences in respondents' entrepreneurial intentions due to sex, the initial analysis used an independent sample t-test to compare the respondents' entrepreneurial intentions with sex. As depicted in Table 3, the findings suggest *no significant* difference in the overall entrepreneurial intentions with sex (229.054) = -1.127, *p*=0.261, two-tailed. Furthermore, the result shows no significant difference between males and females when considering the entrepreneurial implementation and goal intentions, as shown in Table 3. The findings suggest that there is no significant difference in respondents' entrepreneurial intentions when considering sex. Based on this, the study *failed to reject* the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in students' entrepreneurial intentions when considering sex. The non-significance of the result points to the fact that in recent years, societal norms around gender roles have been shifting towards greater equality, which may have leveled the playing field for entrepreneurial activities. This means that both men and women now have similar access to entrepreneurial resources and opportunities, diminishing traditional gender disparities in this field.

These results imply that both males and females do not differ in their entrepreneurial intentions. This study's outcome contradicts findings from a study of students from Romanian universities, where Vodă and Florea (2019) observed that although females have adequate education levels, they are still less inclined towards a career in entrepreneurship.

Table 2

Results of the Relationship Between Social Support and Entrepreneurial Intention

		Entrepreneurial Intention
Social Support		
	Pearson Correlation	0.315
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	352

Differences Between Students' Sex on Their Entrepreneurial Intentions

Meanwhile, this study confirms that of Iwu et al. (2016) at the South African University of Technology, who found no statistically significant relationships between male and female students' entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, Chandhary (2017) observed that respondents' sex has no significant effect on undergraduate university students' entrepreneurial inclination in India. This study's outcome may be due to Ghana's affirmative action, which seeks to empower women to take up challenging leadership roles rather than seeing themselves as housewives.

Table 3

Differences Between Students' Sex on their Entrepreneurial Intention

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Dev	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Entrepreneurial Intention	Male	222	3.1275	0.53154	-1.127	229.054	0.261
	Female	130	3.2034	0.65084			

Eta squared = 0.0036

The study categorized the birth order of respondents into two- first child and non-first child. The first child accounted for 99, representing 28.1%, while the non-first child was 224 (66.5%), as depicted in Table 4. There is no normal distribution of responses for males and females, so the study adopted the Mann-Whitney U-test to analyze the differences. The effect size (r) of -0.026 indicates a minimal effect size according to Cohen's guidelines (Cohen, 2013), where the small effect size is 0.1, the medium effect size is 0.3, and the Large effect size is 0.5. The negative sign indicates the direction of the effect, but in terms of magnitude, -0.026 suggests that birth order has a negligible impact on entrepreneurial intention among the sample studied. Results showed no statistically significant difference ($p=0.63$) two-tailed in university students' entre-

preneurial intentions in Ghana considering birth order. Details of the results are in Table 4.

These findings mean that students' entrepreneurial intentions are similar in the Ghanaian context, irrespective of birth order. The non-statistical significance implies that in many cultures, parents may have similar expectations for all their children regarding career choices, leading to similar entrepreneurial intention levels regardless of birth order. Families may strive to provide equal support and resources to all their children, which can neutralize potential differences in entrepreneurial tendencies based on birth order.

Thus, the study *failed to reject* the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in university students' entrepreneurial intentions in Ghana due to their birth order. This study contradicts findings based on a study of South Korean Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) where birth order was positively associated with strategic risk-taking; thus, earlier-born CEOs will take less risk than later-born (Campbell et al., 2019). In Ghana, the high graduate unemployment rate may be an unfavorable factor pushing university students to develop high entrepreneurial intentions.

Table 4

Differences in Students' Exposure to Entrepreneurship on their Entrepreneurial Intentions

Ranks									
	Birth Order	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect Size(r)
Entrepreneurial Intention	First Child	99	163.09	16146					
	Non-First Child	234	168.65	39465	11196	16146	0.48	0.63	
	Total	333							-0.026

This section sought to investigate whether respondents exposed to entrepreneurial activities before would differ in their entrepreneurial intentions. The researcher provided respondents with two response categories- “Yes” and “No,” denoting previous exposure to entrepreneurial activities and no exposure, respectively. The “Yes” was 268 (76.1%), whereas the “No” accounted for a paltry 84 (23.9%), as shown in Table 5 hence using the Whitney U-test for the analysis. The effect size (r) of -0.024 indicates a minimal effect size according to Cohen’s guidelines (Cohen, 2013), where the small effect size is 0.1, the medium effect size is 0.3, and the large effect size is 0.5. The negative sign indicates the direction of the effect. Still, in terms of magnitude, -0.024 suggests that exposure to entrepreneurial activities has a negligible impact on entrepreneurial intention among the sample studied.

Thus, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in university students’ entrepreneurial intentions in Ghana due to entrepreneurship exposure. This study aligns with studies in the Indonesian and Japanese contexts, where Indarti et al. (2016) found that entrepreneurial social networks did not significantly correlate with entrepreneurial intentions among university students drawn from selected Asian universities.

Table 5
Differences in Students’ Exposure to Entrepreneurship on their Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Ranks									
	Exposure to Entrepreneurial Activities	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig (2-tailed).	Effect Size (r)
Entrepreneurial Intention	Yes	268	177.87	47668					
	No	84	172.14	14460	10890	14460	-0.45	0.6353	-0.240
	Total	352							

The results suggested *no* statistical difference ($p= 0.653$) in university students’ entrepreneurial intentions in Ghana due to exposure to entrepreneurial activities. Detailed analysis is in Table 5. This outcome means that whether or not respondents have exposure to entrepreneurial activities is similar to becoming an entrepreneur. The lack of statistical significance indicates that simply being exposed to entrepreneurial activities may not be sufficient. The quality, context, and nature of these activities play a critical role. Practical, hands-on experiences are likely more influential than mere theoretical exposure. The stage of life at which individuals are exposed to entrepreneurial activities might also matter. Exposure during formative years or early education may have a more profound impact than exposure later in life when intentions and career paths are already established.

However, this study’s findings contradict the findings of a study in Saudi Arabia; Abu Bakar et al. (2017) observed that knowing someone who has started a business over the past two years is substantially and positively linked to the tendency to start a business. Similarly, Galvão et al. (2018), in a study based on students from Portugal, concluded that respondents from family backgrounds of entrepreneurship increased their entrepreneurial intentions, although the effect was weak. The outcome of this study may be due to limited employment opportunities in Ghana.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study found that social support has a moderately significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions among Ghanaian tertiary students. This aligns with the social capital theory, which posits that social networks and the

support they provide can significantly enhance economic activities and entrepreneurial pursuits. The study recommends integrating entrepreneurial club activities within universities to enhance social support levels. Such clubs would facilitate the formation of strong networks and the exchange of resources, thus enhancing students' social capital.

The study revealed that entrepreneurial intention among students did not differ significantly based on gender, sex, birth order, or exposure to entrepreneurial activities. This outcome can be understood through the theory of planned behavior framework, which evaluates intention based on attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control. The study suggests creating an entrepreneurial hub and encouraging frequent student meetings to enhance social support skills.

Although students perceive moderate social support levels, the highest support comes from family members rather than friends or peers. This suggests that families are more capable or willing to support entrepreneurship. Universities should integrate entrepreneurial club activities into their programs to improve social support levels, especially from friends and peers. Creating an Entrepreneurial Hub and encouraging student meetings can enhance social support skills. In the face of high graduate unemployment, family and peer support can motivate students to pursue entrepreneurship, thereby reducing unemployment. Families with entrepreneurial backgrounds should support their relatives in tertiary institutions to pursue entrepreneurship as a career. Policymakers should integrate social support systems into their programs to develop entrepreneurs and create an enabling environment for practicing entrepreneurs. Tertiary and training institutions should highlight the importance of social support in their programs.

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