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THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED SUPPORT ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERSONAL ATTITUDE*

ALGILANAN DESTEĞİN ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN GİRİŞİMCİLİK NİYETLERİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: KİŞİSEL TUTUMUN ARACI ROLÜ

Asel ATAOĞLU[(1)] Hüseyin EKİZLER[(2)]

Abstract: The purpose of this research is to examine the effect of perceived support on university students' entrepreneurial intentions and the mediating role of personal attitude. The research model proposes that educational, structural, and relational support influence entrepreneurial intention directly and indirectly through personal attitude. Perceived support was measured through educational, structural, and relational support; entrepreneurial intention and personal attitude were assessed using established scales. Data were collected from 402 students at Marmara University and Istanbul Kent University through convenience sampling. Exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, and mediation analysis were used to test the hypotheses. The findings show that all three support dimensions positively affect entrepreneurial intention. Structural and relational support significantly predict personal attitude, whereas educational support does not have a significant unique effect in the joint regression model. Personal attitude has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention and partially mediates the relationships between the support dimensions and entrepreneurial intention.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Intentions, Perceived Support, Relational Support, Educational Support, Structural Support, Personal Attitude.*

JEL: *M5, M21, M140*

ÖZ: *Bu araştırmanın amacı, algılanan desteğin üniversite öğrencilerinin girişimcilik niyetleri üzerindeki etkisini ve kişisel tutumun bu ilişkideki aracı rolünü incelemektir. Araştırma modeli; eğitimsel, yapısal ve ilişkisel desteğin girişimcilik niyetini doğrudan, kişisel tutum aracılığıyla ise dolaylı olarak etkilediğini öngörmektedir. Algılanan destek; eğitimsel, yapısal ve ilişkisel destek boyutlarıyla ölçülmüştür. Girişimcilik niyeti ve kişisel tutum, ilgili alanyazında kullanılan ölçeklerle değerlendirilmiştir. Veriler Marmara Üniversitesi ve İstanbul Kent Üniversitesi öğrencilerinden kolayda örnekleme yoluyla toplanmış ve 402 katılımcıya ulaşılmıştır. Hipotezlerin sınanmasında keşfedici faktör analizi, güvenilirlik analizi, korelasyon analizi, çoklu regresyon analizi ve aracılık analizi kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, üç destek boyutunun da girişimcilik niyetini olumlu yönde etkilediğini göstermektedir. Yapısal ve ilişkisel destek kişisel tutumu anlamlı biçimde yordarken, eğitimsel desteğin ortak regresyon modelindeki benzersiz etkisi anlamlı değildir. Kişisel tutum girişimcilik niyetini olumlu yönde etkilemekte ve destek boyutları ile girişimcilik niyeti arasındaki ilişkilerde kısmi aracılık rolü üstlenmektedir.*

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Anahtar Kelimeler: *Girişimcilik Niyeti, Algılanan Destek, İlişkisel Destek, Eğitimsel Destek, Yapısal Destek, Yapısal Destek, Kişisel Tutum.*

1. Introduction

The expectations of university students and recent graduates regarding their future professional lives are shaped by a wide variety of psychological, social, and emotional factors that influence the choices they make during their academic journey. Among these influences, the inclination toward entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role, as it not only affects the initial steps young individuals take toward joining the workforce but also determines their ability to sustain long-term professional success. Entrepreneurial orientation provides students with an alternative career path beyond traditional employment, enabling them to create value, generate innovation, and contribute to economic growth in uncertain labor markets.

Career adaptability, which refers to an individual's ability to adjust to rapidly changing work environments and labor market demands, is closely linked to their tolerance for uncertainty. Students who can manage future-related anxieties are often better equipped to make confident decisions about their careers. Conversely, those who struggle with ambiguity may experience indecision and hesitation in taking entrepreneurial steps. This process is strongly associated with personal attitudes mental frameworks that guide preferences and intentions toward specific behaviors. Favorable personal attitudes toward entrepreneurship increase the likelihood of students envisioning themselves as future entrepreneurs and taking the necessary actions to achieve this goal.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides the core logic for this study. TPB proposes that attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control jointly predict behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991, 2020). In the present model, personal attitude is the TPB construct that immediately precedes entrepreneurial intention. Perceived support is not treated as another TPB component or as a proxy for subjective norm. Instead, educational, structural, and relational support are positioned as distal contextual conditions that may shape students' personal attitudes and may also relate directly to entrepreneurial intention. The study is therefore TPB-informed rather than a complete test of TPB because subjective norm and perceived behavioral control are not included.

Recent evidence suggests why this distinction matters. Perceived university support has been linked to TPB-related cognitions and entrepreneurial intention, although effects may differ across students and support practices (Liu et al., 2022; Su et al., 2021). Similarly, a recent meta-analysis found a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' entrepreneurial intention, while also highlighting the role of context in that relationship (Zhang et al., 2022). These findings suggest that support should be examined not only as an available resource but also as a context that students interpret.

However, existing evidence often treats support as a single, broad construct or focuses on one source of support. This makes it difficult to determine whether educational, structural, and relational support have comparable relationships with personal attitude and entrepreneurial intention. The mediation mechanism is also underdeveloped: it remains unclear whether support is related to intention partly because it changes how attractive entrepreneurship appears to students. This study addresses that gap in a Turkish university context.

This study has three contributions. First, it distinguishes educational, structural, and relational support instead of treating perceived support as undifferentiated. Second, it explains personal attitude as a proximal psychological pathway between these contextual conditions and entrepreneurial intention. Third, it clarifies the scope of the theoretical claim: the study uses TPB to organize the attitude–intention pathway but does not claim to test all TPB constructs. The analysis is conducted on a pooled sample of public- and foundation-university students in Istanbul; institutional setting is described as a sampling context rather than modeled as a causal variable.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Personal Attitude

Attitude refers to a person's favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a specific subject or behavior. As a psychological factor, it develops before behavior and significantly influences action. In entrepreneurship, personal attitude toward entrepreneurial activity helps shape behavior before action is taken. It comprises emotional responses, cognitive judgments, and behavioral predispositions, and its direction and intensity can be inferred from entrepreneurial intentions (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán & Chen, 2009).

Within this framework, personal attitude reflects an individual's favorable or unfavorable evaluation formed before engaging in entrepreneurial activities and involves both emotional and rational judgments (Liñán & Chen, 2009). According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control jointly shape behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991).

Attitudinal orientation significantly influences individuals' success or failure when confronting life's uncertainties (Darren Lee-Ross, 2017; Sullivan & Meek, 2012). Optimistic entrepreneurs are more likely to achieve positive outcomes. Studies indicate that the perception of entrepreneurial opportunities depends on how worthwhile individuals consider starting a new business (Aragon-Sanchez et al., 2017). Moreover, Lee (2017) emphasizes that attitudes toward entrepreneurial are closely tied to how appealing entrepreneurial activities appear to individuals. Consequently, students with positive entrepreneurial attitudes are more inclined to pursue business ventures than those with pessimistic views. Furthermore, a significant relationship exists between willingness to take risks and entrepreneurial intention (Kebaili et al., 2017). Individuals with constructive and confident attitudes are better prepared to handle the potential risks and uncertainties associated with launching new ventures. Ultimately, personal attitudes represent internal evaluations that guide decision-making under complex and uncertain conditions.

While personal attitude is widely acknowledged in the entrepreneurship literature as a critical psychological factor, most existing studies conceptualize it as a relatively stable, internal trait with limited attention to how it may be shaped by external contextual factors. For instance, Al-Jubari et al. (2019) and Ferreira et al. (2012) argue that personal attitude is influenced by cultural norms and social values, yet they do not explore how this attitude may evolve in response to perceived external support. However, the Theory of Planned Behavior provides a clear rationale for viewing attitude as responsive rather than fixed: attitudes arise from behavioral beliefs and evaluations of expected outcomes, which are shaped by salient information and experiences in one's environment (Ajzen, 1991). This proposition is also supported empirically in entrepreneurship research. Fayolle and Gailly (2015), using a longitudinal design, found that exposure to entrepreneurship education produced

changes in students' entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions, particularly among those with limited prior entrepreneurial exposure. In addition, Bae et al.'s (2014) meta-analysis of 73 studies involving 37,285 participants showed that entrepreneurship education was significantly associated with entrepreneurial intention, underlining the relevance of contextual learning opportunities for intention formation. In this study, personal attitude is not only treated as a dependent variable but also as a mediating construct that helps explain how individuals interpret and internalize perceived support from their environment. This approach allows us to move beyond simply identifying the presence of support and instead understand how different forms of support translate into psychological readiness. Hence, this study addresses a gap in the literature by modeling personal attitude as an active psychological mechanism linking perceived support to entrepreneurial intention

2.2 Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intentions embody the courage and eagerness to establish one's own business (Fayolle & Liñán, 2015). Entrepreneurial education is essential in shaping students' positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship, fostering their intentions, and providing them with the necessary abilities and understanding required to achieve success (Aladejebi, 2018). In addition to education, elements such as mentorship, family background, demographic factors, characteristics such as personality, past entrepreneurial experiences, the aspiration for independence, fulfillment needs, self-confidence, and perceived social expectations also considerably affect entrepreneurial intentions (Saeed, 2013).

According to Bird (1998), intentions precede actions; they represent a mindset directing behaviors toward business creation. Entrepreneurial behavior results from prior intentions that translate into planned action. Thus, intention guides the course of behavior toward goal achievement. Numerous studies demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of entrepreneurial intention in successful new venture creation (Aladejebi, 2018). Variables including achievement motivation and exposure to family-run enterprises, and supportive subjective norms have been shown to significantly determine entrepreneurial intention. Individuals are more likely to pursue entrepreneurial when motivated by achievement needs, supported by family business experience, and encouraged by familial support (Tong, 2011).

Entrepreneurial intention refers to the deliberate willingness to engage in future venture creation. It is appropriate as the outcome in this study because students can form entrepreneurial plans before they undertake entrepreneurial action (Bird, 1988; Liñán & Chen, 2009). Empirical reviews and applications of TPB consistently identify attitude toward entrepreneurship as an important antecedent of entrepreneurial intention (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015; Su et al., 2021). Accordingly, the model follows the TPB sequence in which personal attitude precedes entrepreneurial intention. It does not reverse this order or infer that intention determines attitude. H3 therefore states the expected positive effect of personal attitude on entrepreneurial intention. Perceived support may influence entrepreneurial intention directly by increasing access to knowledge, opportunities, encouragement, and resources. It may also have an indirect relationship with intention when such support changes students' evaluations of entrepreneurship. The present study tests both routes, while treating the three support dimensions as distinct contextual conditions.

2.3 Perceived Support

Perceived support refers to students' appraisal of whether their educational environment, institutional context, and close network provide conditions that facilitate entrepreneurship. The emphasis is on students' subjective evaluation of support rather than on the objective existence of services or resources. In line with Yurtkoru et al. (2014), the construct is separated into educational, structural, and relational support.

Educational support concerns the knowledge, skills, and learning opportunities provided by the university. Structural support concerns the perceived availability of institutional, policy, regulatory, economic, and digital conditions that facilitate entrepreneurship. Relational support concerns expected encouragement and practical backing from family, friends, and other close network members. The label relational support is used consistently throughout this study. These dimensions should not be equated with TPB's subjective norm. A subjective norm concerns perceived social pressure or approval to perform a behavior; relational support concerns the expectation of help and encouragement if the student pursues entrepreneurship. Educational and structural support are similarly treated as contextual antecedents, rather than as TPB constructs. This distinction makes it possible to examine how different support sources relate to attitude and intention without claiming a full TPB test (Ajzen, 2020; Liu et al., 2022). Furthermore, the study proposes specific hypotheses to explore how each type of support may differentially shape psychological mechanisms. This approach moves the literature forward by asking not just "how much support exists," but "which type of support activates which psychological processes," providing a more refined and actionable model.

2.3.1 Educational Support

Educational institutions play a vital role in supporting students' entrepreneurial development through various approaches. Zhang et al. (2014) state that universities and colleges support entrepreneurship by providing knowledge and skills, aiding in identifying opportunities, preparing business plans, building capacities, and acquiring resources. Similarly, Saeed et al. (2015) highlight that academic institutions can strengthen this support by hosting workshops and conferences specifically designed for entrepreneurial development.

Educational support can make entrepreneurship more understandable and attainable by providing relevant knowledge, skill development, role models, and experiential opportunities. Recent evidence indicates a positive overall relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' entrepreneurial intention, although effects vary across educational and national contexts (Zhang et al., 2022). Educational support is therefore expected to relate to personal attitude and entrepreneurial intention.

2.3.2 Structural Support

Structural support refers to the handout and guidance perceived by students from authorities and institutions, including both governmental and non-governmental organizations (Türker & Selçuk, 2009). This support encompasses financial aid, simplification of regulatory procedures, expedited licensing, and the provision of business opportunities. However, empirical findings on the effectiveness of structural support in fostering entrepreneurial have been mixed. For example, Djankov et al. (2002) identified a strong connection between regulatory frameworks such as the simplicity of starting a business and entrepreneurial activity, whereas Van Stel et al.

(2007) reported opposing findings. Similarly, Türker and Selçuk (2009) suggested that structural support, such as access to bank loans and supportive institutions, positively affects entrepreneurial intentions, whereas Engle et al. (2011) observed that public policy perceptions have only a slight effect on such intentions.

2.3.3 Relational Support

Perceived relational support refers to an entrepreneur's expectations and perceptions of the help they receive from their social network. Baughn (2006) notes that primary reference groups influencing entrepreneurial choices include parents, siblings, and spouses. Similarly, Mustapha and Selvaraju (2015) stress that encouragement and backing from family, friends, and peers are crucial for entrepreneurial growth. Nanda and Sorenson (2006) also point out that family and friends strongly impact career decisions, often providing financial support and serving as role models. Furthermore, According to Mustapha and Selvaraju (2015), support from family members significantly enhances students' inclination to engage in entrepreneurial endeavors.

Role models notably impact students' decisions to pursue entrepreneurial (Baughn, 2006). Postigo (2006) asserts that role models provide essential information, advice, support, and examples, enhancing students' confidence and plausibility in starting their businesses. Consequently, such support is likely to influence career choices toward entrepreneurial.

Relational support is widely acknowledged as an important factor influencing behavior. According to Al-Harassi et al. (2014), interpersonal relationships play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial tendencies. Being aware of accessible relational support can encourage individuals to pursue entrepreneurial careers. Bandura (2006) emphasizes that behavior results from the interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental elements. Accordingly, students may interpret support from family, friends, and close networks differently, but perceived relational support is expected to strengthen both their personal attitude and entrepreneurial intention.

Considering the literature review, the following hypotheses and research model are formulated in Figure 1.

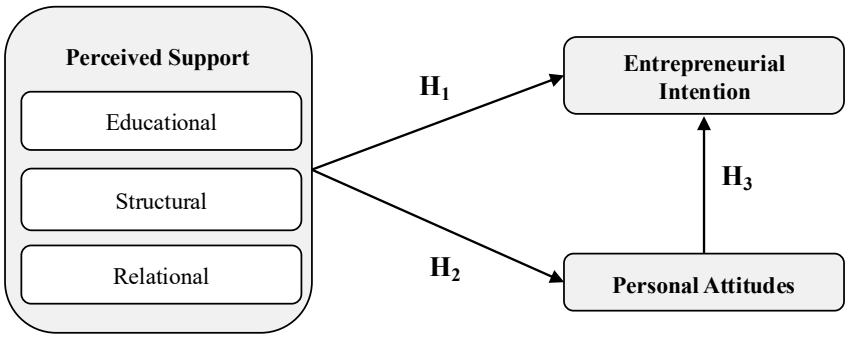


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model

H1a: Educational support has a direct positive influence on entrepreneurial intention.

H1b: Structural support has a direct positive influence on entrepreneurial intention.

H1c: Relational support has a direct positive influence on entrepreneurial intention.

H2a: Educational support has a direct positive influence on personal attitude.

H2b: Structural support has a direct positive influence on personal attitude.

H2c: Relational support has a direct positive influence on personal attitude.

H3: Personal attitude has a direct positive influence on entrepreneurial intention.

H4a: Personal attitude mediates the relationship between educational support and entrepreneurial intention.

H4b: Personal attitude mediates the relationship between structural support and entrepreneurial intention.

H4c: Personal attitude mediates the relationship between relational support and entrepreneurial intention.

3. Data and Methodology

3.1 Survey and Data Collection

Data were collected during the 2022–2023 academic year through a voluntary online questionnaire (Google Forms). A non-probability convenience sampling strategy was used because students who were readily reachable through university networks were invited to participate. The final sample consisted of 402 undergraduate students: 229 from Marmara University (public) and 173 from Istanbul Kent University (foundation). The two institutions were selected because they offered practical access to students in two higher-education settings within Istanbul. Participation was voluntary, respondents completed the survey independently, and no identifying information was collected. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant ethics committee before data collection. Because participants were not selected through probability sampling, the findings should be interpreted as associations in this accessible student sample rather than as population estimates.

EFA with principal component analysis and Varimax rotation was used as a sample-specific diagnostic of factor structure; KMO, Bartlett's Test, factor loadings, explained variance, and Cronbach's alpha values are reported. CFA was not performed in the original analysis, so formal model-fit indices are unavailable. Correlations summarize bivariate relationships. Joint multiple-regression models then estimate the unique associations of the correlated support dimensions with personal attitude and entrepreneurial intention

3.2 Survey Instruments

The survey included demographic questions and standardized items for the study variables. Perceived support was measured with 12 items adapted from Yurtkoru et al. (2014): educational support (4 items), structural support (4 items), and relational support (4 items). Entrepreneurial intention (6 items) and personal attitude (5 items) were measured with subscales from Liñán and Chen (2009). Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The instrument uses the term relational support consistently to denote students' expectation of support from family, friends, and close networks. The measures were selected because they have been used in university entrepreneurship research and correspond directly to the constructs in the TPB-informed model.

University type was recorded to describe the sample but was not entered as a control variable or used for group comparisons. The study did not have a theoretical hypothesis about differences between public and foundation institutions, and the design includes only one university in each category. Consequently, university type is perfectly confounded with the specific institution: any observed difference could reflect unmeasured characteristics of the university, programmes, or student composition rather than sector type itself. The findings are therefore reported for the pooled sample, and this design choice is treated as a limitation.

Furthermore to these scales, demographic information for instance gender, age, type of university (public or foundation), and faculty affiliation were collected. As the focus of the study was on undergraduate students, the questionnaire was distributed to students enrolled in both state and foundation universities, and data were collected online via Google Forms.

4. Findings

Descriptive statistics related to the demographic distinctive of the participants are presented in Table 1.A total of 402 undergraduate students participated in the study, all of whom were enrolled during the 2022–2023 academic year. Among them 206 were female (51.2%) and 196 were male (48.8%). In terms of academic year, 100 students (24.9%) were freshmen, 99 (24.6%) sophomores, 105 (26.1%) juniors, and 98 (24.4%) seniors. Regarding work experience, 144 participants (35.8%) reported having more than one year of experience, while 258 participants (64.2%) had less than one year.

Participants were enrolled in various faculties: 124 (30.8%) were from the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, 67 (16.7%) from the Faculty of Health Sciences, 59 (14.7%) from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 62 (15.4%) from the Faculty of Art and Design, and 90 (22.4%) selected “Other.” In terms of the type of university, 229 students (57.0%) were attending state universities, and 173 (43.0%) were enrolled in foundation universities.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	Frequency	**%**
Gender		
Female	206	51.2
Male	196	48.8
Grade		
Freshman	100	24.9
Sophomore	99	24.6
Junior	105	26.1
Senior	98	24.4
Work Experience		
More than one year	144	35.8
Less than one year	258	64.2
Faculty Member		
Faculty of Econ. and Admn. Sciences	124	30.8
Faculty of Health Sciences	67	16.7
Faculty of Arts and Sciences	59	14.7
Faculty of Art and Design	62	15.4
Other	90	22.4
University Type		
Public (Marmara University)	229	57.0
Foundation (Istanbul Kent University)	173	43.0

4.1 Explanatory Factor Analysis

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to assess whether the Entrepreneurial Intention scale accurately reflected the construct it was designed to measure. The procedure utilized Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation to identify the factor structure. Sampling adequacy was confirmed through a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of .902, which indicates an excellent level of suitability for factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974). Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity produced statistically significant results (χ^2=2183.245, df=15, p<.001), verifying that the correlation matrix was appropriate for further analysis. All six items demonstrated strong loadings on a single factor, ranging from .817 to .926. This factor explained 77.101% of the total variance, exceeding the commonly accepted 60% benchmark for social science research (Hair et al., 2010).

The internal consistency of the scale was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, and the result was α=.940, indicating high reliability. These findings demonstrate that the scale is both valid and reliable for measuring entrepreneurial intention among university students.

Table 2. EFA Results of Entrepreneurial Intention

Factor Name	Item	Factor Loading	Variance Explained	Alpha
Entrepreneurial Intention	I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur	.837	77.101	.940
	My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur	.886		
	I will make every effort to start and run my own firm	.922		
	I am determined to create a firm in the future	.926		
	I have very seriously thought of starting a firm	.876		
	I have the firm intention to start a firm some day	.817		
KMO		.902		
Bartlett's Test Chi Square (df)		2183.245 (15)		
p-value		<.001		

Table 3 summarises the analysis carried out on the Perceived Support Scale. The items converged on three coherent dimensions that align with the conceptual model: Educational Support, Relational Support and Structural Support. Together, these dimensions account for 70.05 % of the total variance, indicating that the scale captures the construct effectively. Sampling adequacy was confirmed (KMO = .822) and the correlation matrix showed sufficient inter-item correlations (Bartlett's χ^2=2736.167, df=66, p<.001). Internal consistency for each dimension proved satisfactory, with Cronbach's alpha values of .892 for Educational Support, .848 for Relational Support and .780 for Structural Support.

Table 3. EFA Results of Perceived Support

Factor Name	Item	Factor Loading	Variance Explained	Alpha
Educational Support	The education in university encourages me to develop creative ideas for being an entrepreneur	.893	25.516	.892
	My university develops my entrepreneurial skills and abilities	.909		
	My university provides the necessary knowledge about entrepreneurial	.884		
	The knowledge acquired from Internet helps me to become an entrepreneur	.635		
Relational Support	If I decide to be an entrepreneur, my close network will support me	.827	23.409	.848
	If I decide to be an entrepreneur, my friends will support me	.867		
	If I decided to be an entrepreneur, my family members will support me	.720		
	If I decide to be an entrepreneur, my friends on the Social Networks will support me	.754		
Structural Support	The Turkish economy offers many opportunities for entrepreneurs.	.799	21.127	.780
	Entrepreneurs in Turkey are encouraged by a structural system that includes private, public and non-governmental organizations.	.820		
	The digitalization of the Turkish economy encourages me to be an entrepreneur	.787		
	Digital world provides many opportunities for entrepreneurs	.634		
KMO		.822		
Bartlett's Test Chi Square (df)		2736.167 (66)		
p-value		<.001		

Table 4 presents the results regarding the Personal Attitude scale. The items loaded cleanly onto a single dimension, confirming the unidimensional structure of the construct. The five items together explained 80.24% of the total variance, suggesting that the scale provides a strong representation of students' attitudes toward entrepreneurial. Sampling adequacy was verified with a KMO value of .875, and the significance of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 1838.565$, $df = 10$, $p < .001$) indicated sufficient inter-item correlations. In addition, the internal consistency of the scale was found to be very high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .937$), demonstrating that the

personal attitude items function cohesively as a reliable measurement tool within this study.

Table 4. EFA Results of Personal Attitude

Factor Name	Item	Factor Loading	Variance Explained	Alpha
Personal Attitude	Being an entrepreneur would entail great satisfactions for me	.927	80.240	.937
	A career as entrepreneur is attractive for me	.933		
	Among various options, I would rather be an entrepreneur	.868		
	Being an entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages to me	.915		
	If I had the opportunity and resources, I would like to establish my own firm	.831		
KMO		.875		
Bartlett's Test Chi Square (df)		1838.565 (10)		
p-value		<.001		

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The results of the correlation analysis shown in Table 5 reveal significant positive associations among the key variables of the study. Specifically, entrepreneurial intention was positively correlated with personal attitude ($r=.636$, $p<.01$), indicating that individuals who hold more favorable attitudes toward entrepreneurship are more likely to demonstrate stronger entrepreneurial intentions.

In addition, relational support ($r=.342$, $p<.01$), educational support ($r=.329$, $p<.01$), and structural support ($r=.291$, $p<.01$) were all positively and significantly associated with entrepreneurial intention, indicating that higher levels of perceived support from various domains are linked to greater entrepreneurial motivation. Among the sub-dimensions of support, relational support showed the strongest correlation with personal attitude ($r=.314$, $p<.01$), followed by structural support ($r=.269$, $p<.01$), while educational support had a relatively weaker relationship ($r=.147$, $p<.01$). These findings suggest that social and structural contexts are more influential in shaping students' attitudes than educational inputs alone.

Moreover, the sub-dimensions of perceived support showed significant positive correlations with one another. The strongest of these was between educational and relational support ($r=.457$, $p<.01$), followed by the correlation between educational and structural support ($r=.362$, $p<.01$), and between structural and relational support ($r=.302$, $p<.01$), indicating mediocare internal relationships within the perceived support construct.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis Results

	Entrepreneurial Intention	Educational Support	Structural Support	Relational Support	Personal Attitude
Entrepreneurial Intention	1	.329**	.291**	.342**	.636**
Educational Support		1	.362**	.457**	.147**
Structural Support			1	.302**	.269**
Relational Support				1	.314**
Personal Attitude					1

** Correlation is significant at the p < .01 level

*Correlation is significant at the p < .05 level

4.3 Regression Analyses

Table 6 reports joint multiple-regression models in which the three support dimensions were entered simultaneously. These models are not a duplicate of the mediation analyses. Their purpose is to estimate the unique association of each correlated support dimension with entrepreneurial intention and personal attitude while holding the other support dimensions constant. Multicollinearity was not a concern because all variance inflation factor (VIF) values were below 10.

For entrepreneurial intention, educational support (β=.172, p<.001), structural support (β=.164, p<.001), and relational support (β=.213, p<.001) each showed a positive unique association. The model explained 17.7% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention (R=.421, R^2=.177, F=28.572, p<.001). Thus, H1a, H1b, and H1c were supported.

For personal attitude, structural support (β=.204, p<.001) and relational support (β=.277, p<.001) showed positive unique associations. Educational support did not show a unique association after the other two support dimensions were included (β=−.054, p=.322). The model explained 13.4% of the variance in personal attitude (R=.366, R^2=.134, F=20.528, p<.001). Accordingly, H2a was not supported, whereas H2b and H2c were supported.

Personal attitude positively predicted entrepreneurial intention (β=.636, p<.001) and explained 40.5% of its variance (R=.636, R^2=.405, F=272.177, p<.001). H3 was therefore supported. This direction is consistent with TPB and with the conceptual model: personal attitude is specified as an antecedent of entrepreneurial intention.

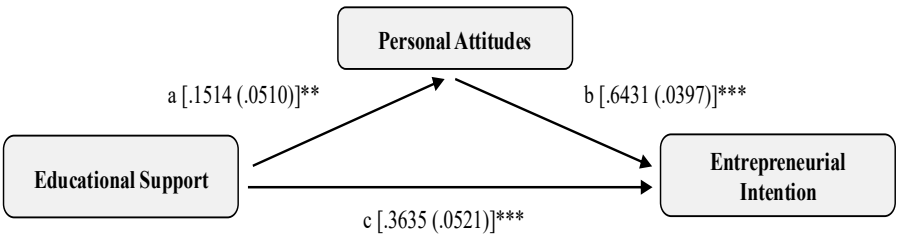
Table 6. Regression Analyses Results

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Std. Beta	t-value	p-value	VIF
Entrepreneurial Intention R^2=.177, F=28.572, p<.001	Educational Support	.172	3.251	<.001	1.359
	Structural Support	.164	3.313	<.001	1.183
	Relational Support	.213	4.116	<.001	1.3
Personal Attitude R^2=.134, F=20.528, p<.001	Educational Support	-.054	-.992	.322	1.359
	Structural Support	.204	4.03	<.001	1.183
	Relational Support	.277	5.21	<.001	1.3
Entrepreneurial Intention R^2=.405, F=272.177, p<.001	Personal Attitude	.636	16.498	<.001	-

4.4 Mediation Analysis

The primary mediation tests used Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4) with 5,000 bootstrap samples. A separate model was estimated for each support dimension, with personal attitude as the mediator and entrepreneurial intention as the outcome. An indirect effect was considered statistically significant when its 95% bootstrap confidence interval did not include zero. Because each PROCESS model includes only one support dimension, its a-path estimates a total rather than a unique association with personal attitude. It should therefore not be equated with the corresponding coefficient in the joint regression model.

For educational support, the indirect effect through personal attitude was statistically significant (ab=.0974, SE=.0363, 95% CI [.0259, .1684]). In the single-predictor mediation model, educational support positively predicted personal attitude (a=.1514, SE=.0510), which in turn predicted entrepreneurial intention (b=.6431, SE=.0397). The direct effect of educational support remained significant after attitude was included (c=.3635, SE=.0521, p<.001). H4a was therefore statistically supported in the single-predictor mediation model. Because educational support did not uniquely predict personal attitude in the joint regression, this indirect effect should be interpreted cautiously as a pathway that may share variance with structural and relational support.



Note: **p<.01, ***p<.001

Figure 2. Mediation Model – Educational Support

In the second model, the mediating effect of personal attitude in the relationship between structural support and entrepreneurial intention was examined. The results showed a significant indirect effect (ab=.1909, SE=.0410, 95% CI [.1125, .2716]). Structural support significantly increased personal attitude (a=.2966, SE=.0532), and personal attitude in turn had a significant impact on entrepreneurial intention (b=.6439, SE=.0423). The direct effect of structural support remained significant after accounting for the mediator (c=.3434, SE=.0565, p<.001), indicating partial mediation. Figure 3 presents the structural support mediation model. The predictors explained approximately 7.12% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention (R=.2685, R^2=.0721, F=31.0881, p<.001). Hence, H_{4b} is partially supported.

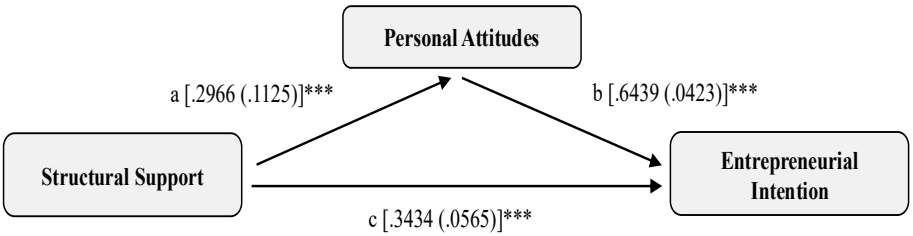


Figure 3. Mediation Model – Structural Support

In the third model, the mediating role of personal attitude in the relationship between relational support and entrepreneurial intention was tested. The indirect effect was significant (ab=.1982, SE=.0391, 95% CI [.1234, .2760]). Relational support significantly improved personal attitude (a=.3155, SE=.0477), and personal attitude had a strong and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention (b=.6281, SE=.0427). Even after considering the mediating role of personal attitude, relational support remained a significant predictor (c=.3672, SE=.0505, p<.001), again indicating partial mediation. Figure 4 displays the mediation model for relational support. The model explained approximately 9.87% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention (R=.3141, R^2=.0987, F=43.7796, p<.001). Therefore, H_{4c} is also partially supported.

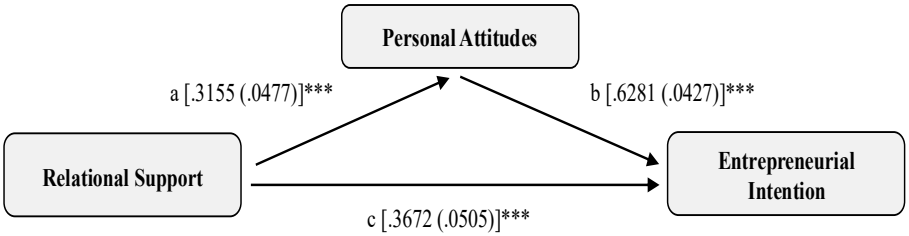


Figure 4. Mediation Model – Relational Support

The mediation analysis further strengthens the regression analysis findings. H4a–H4c were formulated in the hypothesis-development section before the analyses and test the indirect effects shown in Figure 1. In all three models, personal attitude partially mediated the relationship between perceived-support dimensions and entrepreneurial intention. The non-significant unique regression coefficient of educational support for personal attitude should be interpreted together with the separate mediation model, in which the indirect effect is significant; the two analyses use different specifications.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the impact of perceived support including educational, structural, and relational dimensions on university students' entrepreneurial intentions and investigated the mediating role of personal attitudes in this relationship. The findings align with some aspects of the existing literature while offering noteworthy distinctions that contribute to the scholarly field.

First, the strong effect of relational support on entrepreneurial intention highlights the decisive role of social networks (family, friends, and close contacts) in decision-making processes, particularly in collectivist cultures. This result is consistent with previous studies such as Nanda and Sorenson (2006), Baughn (2006), and Mustapha and Selvaraju (2015). However, the current study also finds that relational support significantly influences not only entrepreneurial intention but also personal attitude. In this sense, the research adds depth to the existing literature by showing that supportive social networks shape not only behavioral outcomes but also cognitive and emotional processes.

Regarding structural support, the findings align with previous studies (e.g., Yurtkoru, Kabadayı-Kuşçu & Doğanay, 2014; Türker & Selçuk, 2009), which emphasize the importance of entrepreneurship infrastructure and public policies. Yet, this study reveals that structural support also significantly affects personal attitudes. This suggests that individuals' perception of environmental opportunities is shaped not only by objective conditions but also by subjective evaluations. From the standpoint of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), this suggests that behavioral intentions are shaped not only by external influences but also by individuals' internal psychological evaluations.

The absence of a significant unique relationship between educational support and personal attitude in the joint regression model is noteworthy. Although previous research, such as Zhang et al. (2014) and Fayolle and Liñán (2015), has demonstrated a positive influence of educational support on entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions, the current study does not replicate this result after structural and relational support are considered simultaneously. However, the separate mediation analysis shows a

significant indirect effect through personal attitude. One possible explanation is that educational support overlaps with other support sources and may be more effective when it is accompanied by practical, structural, and relational support.

One of the most distinctive aspects of this study is its modeling of personal attitude as a mediating variable. While numerous models have been proposed in the literature to explain entrepreneurial intentions, limited research has specifically explored personal attitude as both a dependent and mediating variable. In this regard, the present study makes a valuable contribution to the field by highlighting the importance of psychosocial factors, especially within the context of developing countries such as Türkiye.

Additionally, perceived support is modeled as a multidimensional construct in this study, with educational, structural, and relational support analyzed separately. In contrast, most previous research has either treated support as a singular construct (e.g., focusing solely on structural support: Türker & Selçuk, 2009) or adopted a general, undifferentiated approach (Saeed et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2014). This research addresses this gap by analyzing how different types of support affect distinct psychological mechanisms. Accordingly, the study seeks to answer not only "how much support is available" but also "which type of support triggers which psychological process," thus offering a more refined and theoretically sound framework.

Finally, conducting this research in Türkiye an emerging economy characterized by economic uncertainty and a large young population adds valuable contextual diversity to the literature. While most existing studies are based on Western samples, this study illustrates how entrepreneurial motivation is shaped by cultural, economic, and social factors specific to the Turkish context.

This cross-sectional study examined the relationships between perceived support and university students' entrepreneurial intentions, with personal attitude specified as a mediator. In the joint models, educational, structural, and relational support were each positively associated with entrepreneurial intention. Structural and relational support, but not educational support, were uniquely associated with personal attitude. Personal attitude positively predicted entrepreneurial intention.

The mediation analyses showed statistically significant indirect effects through personal attitude for all three support dimensions. The educational-support result requires a qualified interpretation: it was significant in the single-predictor mediation model but not uniquely related to personal attitude when structural and relational support were considered simultaneously. This pattern is consistent with shared variance among support dimensions and should not be interpreted as equally strong evidence for an independent educational-support pathway.

The study's theoretical contribution is to distinguish the three support dimensions and to explain personal attitude as a proximal psychological pathway. The model is informed by the attitude–intention sequence of TPB, but it does not test TPB in full because subjective norm and perceived behavioral control were not measured. Perceived support is therefore treated as a distal contextual condition rather than as a substitute for any TPB construct.

Practically, the findings suggest that entrepreneurship support should combine educational content with structural opportunities and relational encouragement. Courses may be more effective when students can also access visible institutional

opportunities, role models, networks, and encouragement from close contacts. Such a coordinated approach may help students develop more favorable evaluations of entrepreneurship.

The study has several limitations. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference, the non-probability sample was drawn from two universities in Istanbul, and university type is confounded with the specific institutions sampled. In addition, CFA was not conducted, so the study cannot report formal measurement-model fit indices. These limitations constrain generalizability and indicate that the findings should be interpreted as associations within the sampled students.

Future research should test the measurement model with CFA, examine measurement invariance and group differences with multiple institutions in each sector, and use longitudinal or experimental designs to assess causal ordering. It would also be useful to examine the full TPB by incorporating subjective norm and perceived behavioral control, while retaining differentiated measures of educational, structural, and relational support.

Despite these limitations, the study shows that students' perceptions of support are linked to entrepreneurial intention both directly and through their evaluations of entrepreneurship. Distinguishing the support dimensions provides a more precise account of how university and social environments may contribute to students' entrepreneurial motivation in Türkiye.

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