

Women's Entrepreneurial Intentions in MSMEs: A Cross-Cultural Review of Key Determinants

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study synthesizes the development of research on Women's Entrepreneurial Intentions (WEI) during 2015–2025 by examining dominant theoretical frameworks, research contexts, and methodological approaches.

Design/methodology/approach – A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted on 72 articles published in international journals between 2015 and 2025. Studies were selected through identification, screening, and eligibility processes based on topic relevance, publication year, and full-text availability. The studies were classified according to theoretical frameworks, research methodologies, and geographical contexts.

Findings/Results – The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was the dominant theoretical framework, followed by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Quantitative survey-based approaches predominated, whereas qualitative and mixed-methods studies remained limited. Most studies were conducted in Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. The findings indicate that WEI is shaped by the interaction of psychological, socio-cultural, institutional, and technological factors across diverse cultural contexts.

Originality/Value – This study integrates these determinants within micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and cross-cultural contexts while mapping dominant theories, methodologies, and geographical distributions. It provides an integrated understanding of the development of WEI research during 2015–2025. The review is limited to English-language articles indexed in Scopus.

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1. Introduction

Women's entrepreneurship has increasingly been recognized as an important driver of economic development through its contribution to inclusive growth, employment generation, poverty reduction, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly gender equality and decent work (Ratten and Jones, 2021). In developing economies, women-led MSMEs contribute to household welfare, social inclusion, and local economic resilience. Digital transformation has further expanded entrepreneurial opportunities through e-commerce, digital marketing, social media, and technology-enabled business models (Putro & Takahashi, 2024; Yusoff et al., 2021). However, women entrepreneurs continue to face barriers related to financial access, social norms, entrepreneurial confidence, networks, and digital literacy (Jalil et al., 2023; Neneh, 2021). These conditions indicate that Women's Entrepreneurial Intentions (WEI) are shaped by interactions between individual capabilities and broader contextual factors.

Entrepreneurial intention has traditionally been explained through the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which emphasizes attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control as key determinants of intention (Ajzen, 1991). TPB remains the dominant framework in WEI research (Vasileiou et al., 2023; Rahayu, 2024). Nevertheless, recent studies have incorporated complementary perspectives, including Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Institutional Theory, and Resource-Based View (RBV), to explain the psychological, technological, institutional, and capability dimensions of entrepreneurial intention (Putro & Takahashi, 2024; Jalil et al., 2023). Although previous studies have examined various determinants of WEI, including psychological, socio-cultural, institutional, and technological factors, these dimensions are often investigated separately. Consequently, limited understanding remains regarding how multiple determinants interact across different cultural and institutional contexts.

Previous reviews have explored related areas. Paul et al. (2023) examined digital entrepreneurship research, while Alhajri and Aloud (2024) focused on female digital entrepreneurship and the relationship between gender and technology. However, these reviews did not specifically synthesize WEI within MSME contexts by integrating determinant dimensions, theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, geographical patterns, and cross-cultural evidence. Existing empirical studies also remain fragmented across individual national contexts, limiting broader understanding of WEI development across regions.

To address these gaps, this study conducts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of WEI research published between 2015 and 2025. This study aims to: (1) identify determinants influencing WEI; (2) analyse dominant theories and methodological approaches; (3) map geographical and cross-cultural patterns; and (4) propose future research directions. By integrating fragmented evidence, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of WEI and provides insights for developing inclusive, context-sensitive, and digitally responsive entrepreneurship policies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 WEI in the MSMEs Context

WEI refer to women's cognitive readiness and commitment to engage in entrepreneurial activities within the MSMEs sector. Entrepreneurial intention is a strong predictor of

entrepreneurial behavior because it reflects an individual's willingness and planned effort to establish a venture (Krueger et al., 2000). For women entrepreneurs, intention formation is influenced not only by economic motives but also by personal aspirations, flexibility, and self-actualization (Kirkwood, 2009).

WEI is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by individual and contextual factors. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy strengthens entrepreneurial confidence, whereas gender barriers may constrain intention formation (Wilson et al., 2007). Social support, institutional conditions, and digital opportunities through e-commerce and digital platforms further influence women's entrepreneurial engagement (Putro and Takahashi, 2024; Yusoff et al., 2021; Alshebami, 2024). However, existing research remains fragmented across determinants and national contexts. Therefore, this review examines WEI as a context-dependent phenomenon by synthesizing determinants, theories, methodologies, and cross-contextual patterns within MSMEs research.

2.2 Cross-Cultural Perspectives on WEI

A cross-cultural perspective is essential for understanding variations in WEI, as entrepreneurial intentions are embedded within social norms, gender expectations, cultural values, and institutional conditions. Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions, including individualism–collectivism, power distance, and masculinity–femininity, provide a framework for explaining how cultural values influence women's perceptions of autonomy, entrepreneurial opportunities, and social legitimacy.

Beyond cultural values, social and institutional environments also shape WEI. Family support, education, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and institutional policies may strengthen women's entrepreneurial confidence, whereas patriarchal norms and unequal resource access can constrain participation (Amine and Staub, 2009). Digital transformation further expands entrepreneurial opportunities through access to information, online markets, and professional networks. However, differences in digital competence, infrastructure, and socio-cultural acceptance create variations across contexts (Putro and Takahashi, 2024). Despite increasing attention, WEI research remains fragmented across regional contexts. Therefore, this review adopts a cross-cultural and multidimensional perspective by synthesizing determinants, theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, and geographical contexts to identify patterns and research gaps across different environments.

3. Methodology

This study employed SLR approach to examine the development of research on WEI within the MSMEs context. The SLR approach was selected because it provides a structured, transparent, and replicable framework while minimizing researcher subjectivity compared with conventional narrative reviews (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003). To ensure methodological rigor, this study adopted the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, which provide systematic procedures for article identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. The review process was supported by the Watase SLR with PRISMA system to facilitate article selection, classification, and documentation.

Scopus was selected as the primary database due to its broad coverage of peer-reviewed journals, rigorous indexing standards, and comprehensive filtering features. Although

reliance on a single database may limit coverage, potential bias was reduced through complementary manual searches of reference lists from selected studies.

3.1 Data Sources and Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted using the Scopus database through the Watase UAKE SLR platform between 16 July 2025 and 19 August 2025. The search strategy was developed based on three core concepts: women entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial intentions, and MSMEs. The Boolean search string was formulated as follows:

("women entrepreneur*" OR "female entrepreneur*" OR "women-owned business" OR "female-owned business") AND ("entrepreneurial intention" OR "entrepreneurship intention" OR "business intention") AND ("MSME" OR "SME" OR "small business" OR "micro, small and medium enterprise")

The search was conducted in the article title field (ABS = No in the Watase UAKE platform) and limited to empirical articles published between 2015 and 2025 in English-language journals indexed in Scopus Q1–Q4. The search identified 200 initial records. Although the use of a single database may limit coverage, backward reference searching was conducted from eligible studies to identify additional relevant publications and reduce potential database bias.

3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure consistency and transparency in study selection. Studies were included when they were empirical articles published between 2015 and 2025, written in English, indexed in Scopus Q1–Q4 journals, and related to WEI, women entrepreneurs, or entrepreneurship within MSME contexts. Full-text availability was required to assess methodological procedures, theoretical foundations, and empirical findings. Studies were excluded when they were duplicates, conference proceedings, editorials, book chapters, review articles, short notes, or insufficiently related to WEI and MSME contexts. Studies lacking adequate methodological or theoretical information were also excluded during full-text assessment.

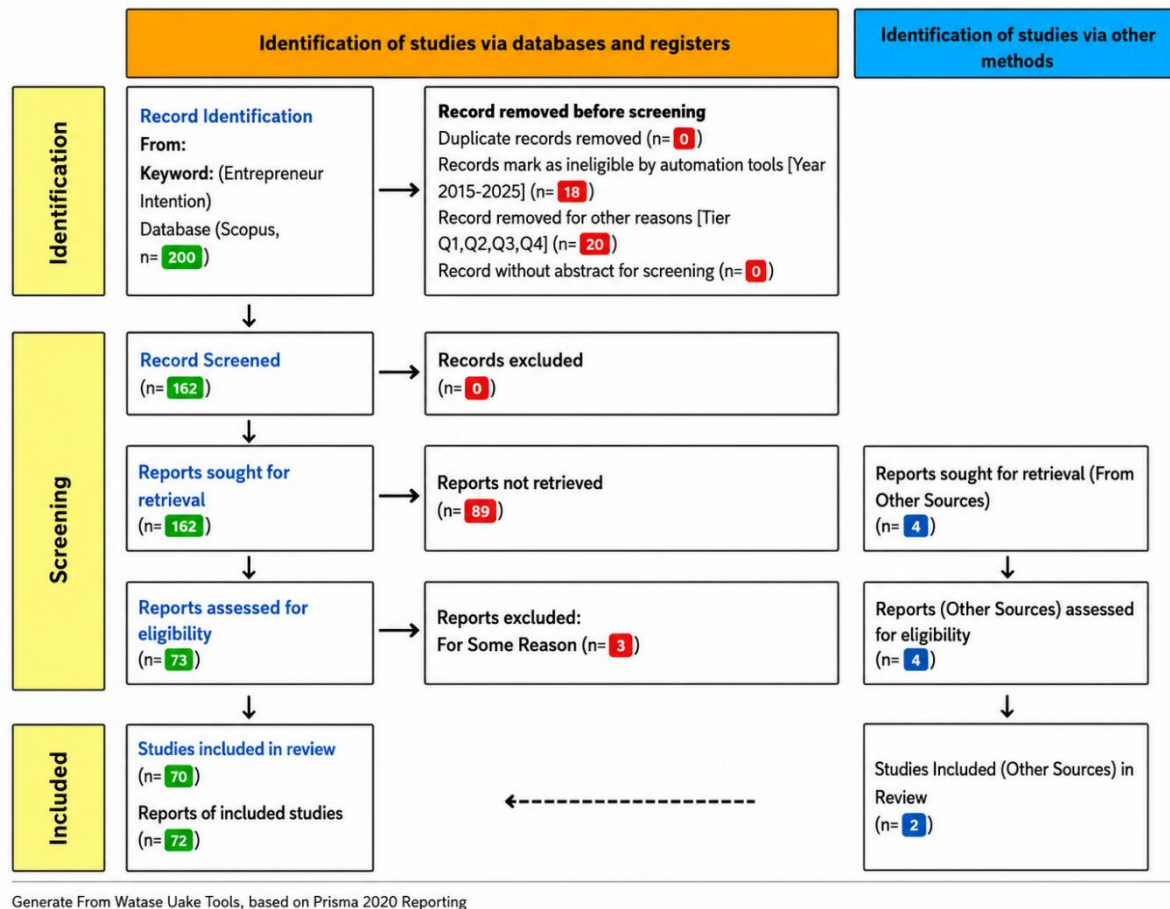
Full-text retrieval was conducted through institutional access, publisher websites, DOI searches, and open-access sources. Articles without accessible full texts were classified as reports not retrieved and were excluded from eligibility assessment, data extraction, and thematic synthesis.

3.3 Study Selection Process

The study selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 framework, consisting of identification, screening, full-text retrieval, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion stages. The workflow was supported by the Watase UAKE platform. During identification, the search strategy retrieved 200 records from Scopus. After removing records outside the publication period (2015–2025) (18 records) and those not meeting predefined journal quality and relevance criteria (20 records), 162 records proceeded to screening.

Titles, abstracts, and keywords were screened based on the predefined review scope. All records were considered potentially eligible for full-text retrieval, and the complete selection process is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram for the Selection of Studies on WEI in MSMEs
Prisma Reporting: Entrepreneur Woman Sme



Source: Adapted from the PRISMA 2020 Statement and generated using the Watase UAKE platform.

Of the 162 reports sought for retrieval, 73 full-text articles were successfully obtained and assessed for eligibility, while 89 reports could not be retrieved. These records were classified as reports not retrieved rather than eligibility exclusions. Specific retrieval failure reasons were not assigned because the original records did not document individual causes.

The 73 retrieved articles were assessed based on contextual relevance, methodological suitability, and alignment with the review objectives. Three studies were excluded due to insufficient relevance to WEI and MSME contexts, resulting in 70 eligible studies. A backward reference search identified four additional records, of which two met the inclusion criteria and were incorporated into the final dataset. Therefore, the final SLR consisted of 72 studies. The detailed selection process is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Article Selection and Screening Process Based on the PRISMA 2020 Framework

PRISMA Stage	Description	Records
Identification	Records identified through Scopus database searching	200
	Records removed by automatic publication-year filtering (2015–2025)	18
	Records removed based on predefined journal quality and relevance criteria	20

	Records proceeding to screening	162
Screening	Titles, abstracts, and keywords screened	162
	Reports sought for full-text retrieval	162
	Reports not retrieved after multiple full-text retrieval attempts; specific causes of retrieval failure were not individually	89
	Reports assessed for eligibility	73
Eligibility	Full-text articles excluded because their research context and scope were not sufficiently aligned with the review objectives	3
	Studies included in the primary review	70
Additional Identification	Studies identified through backward reference searching	4
	Additional studies meeting the inclusion criteria	2
Final Inclusion	Total studies included in the systematic literature review	72

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the PRISMA 2020 study selection process generated using the Watase UAKE platform.

The screening and eligibility assessment were conducted by a single researcher using predefined criteria. Reliability was strengthened through consistent application of the criteria and manual verification against the original publications. The Watase UAKE platform and AI-based tools were used only as preliminary aids for information organization and extraction, not as independent reviewers or decision-makers.

3.4 Quality Assessment

The methodological quality of the included studies was assessed using criteria adapted from the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) critical appraisal principles (Aromataris and Munn, 2020). Because the reviewed studies employed diverse empirical designs, the original JBI checklist was adapted into six criteria to ensure consistent assessment across heterogeneous studies. The assessment criteria included: (1) clearly stated research objectives, (2) appropriate research design, (3) adequate description of samples or participants, (4) clear reporting of data collection and analytical methods, (5) clearly presented findings, and (6) conclusions supported by reported findings. The detailed criteria are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Quality Assessment Criteria Adapted from JBI Appraisal Principles

No.	Quality Criterion	Score
1	Research objectives clearly stated	0–1
2	Appropriate research design	0–1
3	Study sample/participants adequately described	0–1
4	Data collection and analytical methods clearly reported	0–1
5	Research findings clearly presented	0–1
6	Conclusions supported by the reported findings	0–1
Total Score		0–6

Source: Criteria adapted from JBI critical appraisal principles ([Aromataris and Munn, 2020](#)) and applied through systematic data extraction and manual verification against the original full-text publications.

Each criterion was scored using a binary system (1 = fulfilled; 0 = not fulfilled), with the classification scheme presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Quality Classification Scheme

Score Range	Quality Category
5–6	High Quality
3–4	Moderate Quality
0–2	Low Quality

Source: Developed by the authors based on the predefined quality assessment criteria and manual verification of the included studies.

The quality assessment was conducted to evaluate methodological reporting and study characteristics rather than determine study eligibility, and no study was excluded solely based on quality scores. The extraction and assessment process was supported by the Watase UAKE platform and AI-based tools as preliminary aids for information organization. AI-generated outputs were not considered final decisions; all extracted information and quality classifications were manually verified against the original publications.

Because the review involved a single researcher, independent inter-rater assessment and Cohen’s kappa statistics were not performed. Reliability was strengthened through predefined criteria, consistent scoring procedures, and manual verification. The summary of quality assessment results is presented in Table 4, while article-level assessments are provided in Supplementary Table S1.

Table 4. Summary of Quality Assessment Results

Quality Category	Number of Studies	Percentage (%)
High Quality (HQ)	72	100.0
Moderate Quality (MQ)	0	0.0
Low Quality (LQ)	0	0.0
Total	72	100.0

Source: Quality assessment results based on the predefined criteria and manually verified against the original full-text publications.

3.5 Data Extraction and Coding Reliability

Data extraction was conducted using a predefined framework covering bibliographic characteristics, publication year, geographical context, theoretical foundations, research design, sample or participants, determinants of WEI, analytical methods, and principal findings.

The extraction and coding process was supported by the Watase UAKE platform and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based tools as preliminary aids for information organization. However, AI-generated outputs were not considered final evidence, coding decisions, or independent review judgments. All extracted information from the 72 included studies was manually verified against the original publications by the researcher.

Where AI-assisted extraction produced incomplete or inconsistent information, the original articles were treated as the authoritative sources and the coding was corrected accordingly. The final dataset was therefore based on verified information from the included studies.

Thematic synthesis was subsequently applied to categorize WEI determinants into psychological, socio-cultural, institutional, and technological dimensions. The synthesis aimed to identify recurring patterns, contextual variations, and theoretical perspectives across studies rather than statistically aggregating effect sizes.

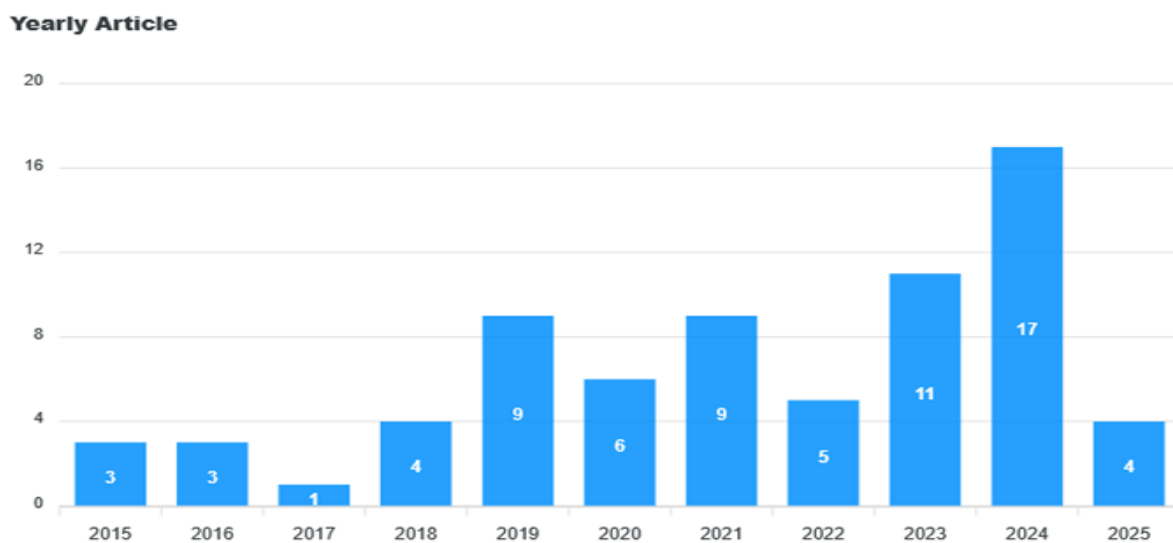
4. Analysis and Results

A systematic review of the 72 selected articles was conducted to identify publication trends, dominant themes, methodological approaches, and contextual patterns in WEI. The analysis aimed to map research development while synthesizing key determinants and emerging directions within the field.

4.1 Publication Trends

An analysis of publication distribution indicates that research on WEI developed continuously during 2015–2025. The increasing publication activity reflects growing academic attention toward women’s entrepreneurship, particularly regarding psychological, social, technological, and institutional determinants within MSMEs and cross-cultural contexts. The annual distribution of reviewed studies is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Annual Publication Trends of WEI Studies



Source: Generated from the reviewed studies using the Watase UAKE platform.

The development of WEI research can be classified into three phases: the early phase (2015–2017), growth phase (2018–2021), and expansion phase (2022–2025). The early phase primarily focused on foundational entrepreneurial intention theories, particularly TPB, entrepreneurial attitudes, and motivation. The growth phase demonstrated increasing thematic diversity, including entrepreneurial self-efficacy, proactive personality, work–life balance, social support, digital competence, and technology adoption. The expansion phase reflected a shift toward broader contextual issues, including institutional environments, green entrepreneurship, crowdfunding, digital creativity, and cross-cultural entrepreneurship,

indicating a transition from individual psychological perspectives toward multidimensional approaches.

The dominant themes identified from the reviewed studies are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Thematic Synthesis Matrix of WEI Studies

Main Theme	Frequency (n)	Representative Studies	Main Focus	Research Context
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy	n = 12	Christensen et al. (2023); Pham et al. (2021)	The influence of self-confidence and perceived capability on WEI	Entrepreneurship education and cross-cultural contexts
Entrepreneurial Attitude and Motivation	n = 10	Soomro et al. (2019); Neneh (2021)	Entrepreneurial attitudes and motivation as predictors of entrepreneurial intention	Psychological determinants
Social Support and Networking	n = 9	Bergner (2020); Jalil et al. (2023)	The role of family support, peer influence, and professional networks	Social and gender-related support
Work–Life Balance	n = 5	Alshebami (2024)	The impact of balancing work and family responsibilities on entrepreneurial intention	Women entrepreneurs
Technology Acceptance and Digital Adoption	n = 11	Yusoff et al. (2021); Putro and Takahashi (2024)	Technology acceptance, e-commerce adoption, and digital readiness	Digital MSMEs and e-commerce
Digital Competence and Creativity	n = 7	Putro and Takahashi (2024)	Digital skills and creativity in supporting entrepreneurial sustainability	Digital entrepreneurship
Institutional Environment	n = 6	Aránega et al. (2025)	The influence of institutional and policy environments on entrepreneurial growth intentions	Institutional and business environment
Green Entrepreneurship	n = 4	Rahayu (2024)	Sustainable and environmentally oriented	Sustainable entrepreneurship

			entrepreneurial intentions	
Crowdfunding and Alternative Financing	n = 3	Shneor et al. (2024)	Alternative financing mechanisms for women entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurial financing
Gender Roles and Social Stereotypes	n = 5	Kruse and Marquardt (2025)	The influence of gender stereotypes and social roles on entrepreneurial intention	Social role theory
Cross-Cultural Entrepreneurship	n = 8	González-Serrano et al. (2023); Barrero et al. (2024)	Cross-country differences in determinants of WEI	Comparative and cross-cultural studies

Source: Thematic coding and extraction results generated through the Wase UAKE platform and verified by the author.

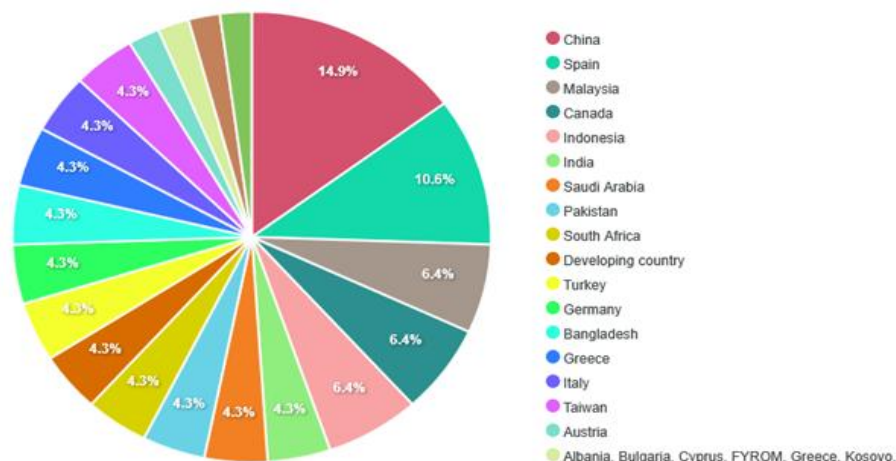
The thematic frequencies presented in Table 5 were derived from the coding of 72 studies. Since individual studies could address multiple determinants or themes, one article could be classified into more than one category, resulting in cumulative frequencies exceeding the total number of reviewed studies.

The findings indicate that psychological factors, particularly entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial attitude, and motivation, remain dominant themes in WEI research. However, recent studies increasingly emphasize digital transformation, technology adoption, institutional environments, sustainability, and cross-cultural entrepreneurship. These developments demonstrate a shift from individual-oriented explanations toward broader contextual and multidimensional perspectives of WEI.

4.2 Regional Differences in WEI

A regional analysis was conducted to examine how geographical, institutional, and socio-cultural contexts influence the determinants of WEI (Liñán Fayolle, 2015). The geographical distribution of reviewed studies is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Geographic Distribution of Reviewed Studies



Source: Authors' compilation based on country classifications extracted through the Watase UAKE platform.

Figure 3 indicates that WEI research is concentrated mainly in Asia, followed by Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and cross-cultural comparative studies. The reviewed studies were classified according to regional context, dominant theories, and key determinants, as summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Cross-Regional Thematic Synthesis of WEI

Region	Number of Studies (n)	Dominant Themes	Dominant Theories	Main Determinants	Representative Studies
Asia	n = 29	Social support, gender norms, digital adoption, entrepreneurial education	TPB, TAM	Family support, social norms, self-efficacy, technology adoption	Putro and Takahashi (2024); Yusoff et al. (2021); Rahayu (2024)
Europe	n = 18	Innovation, growth orientation, opportunity recognition	TPB, SCT	Self-efficacy, innovation capability, entrepreneurial attitude	Aránega et al. (2025); Grande et al. (2025)
Middle East	n = 8	Religious values, institutional support, women empowerment	TPB, Institutional Perspective	Cultural values, policy support, perceived behavioral control	Rifas et al. (2023)
Africa	n = 6	Economic adaptation, survival entrepreneurship	TPB	Economic necessity, social support, resilience	Pérez-Macías et al. (2024)
Latin America	n = 4	Economic instability and household resilience	TPB, Social Role Theory	Income pressure, family responsibility, entrepreneurial motivation	Barrero et al. (2024)
Cross-Cultural / Comparative Studies	n = 7	Cross-country comparison, institutional differences	TPB, SCT	Cultural differences, institutional context, opportunity perception	González-Serrano et al. (2023); Pham et al. (2021)

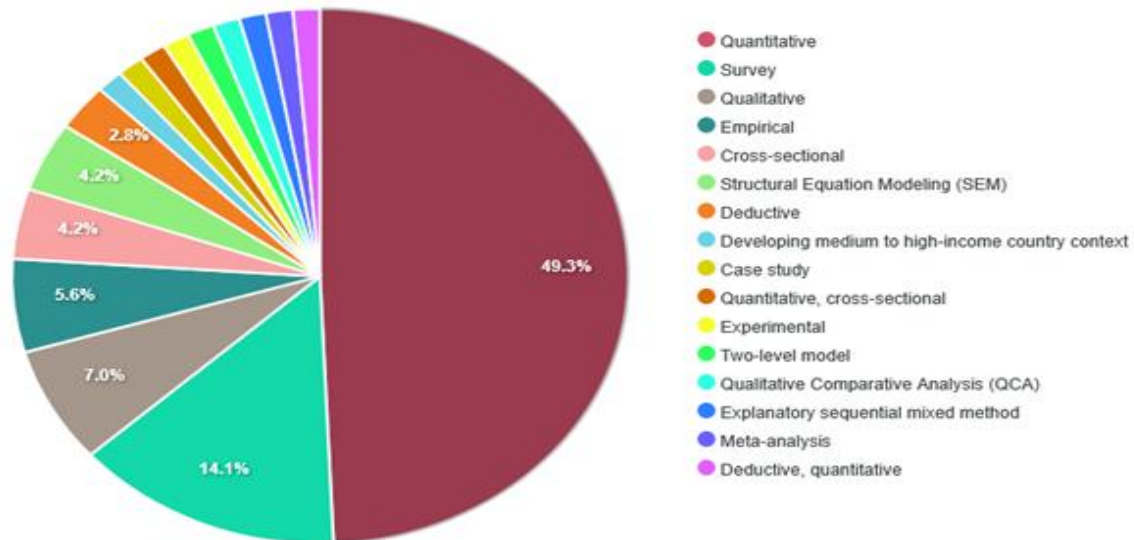
Source: Regional classification generated from the Watase UAKE coding database and verified through manual thematic synthesis.

Regional patterns indicate that WEI determinants vary across contexts. Asian studies emphasize social support, gender norms, entrepreneurial education, and digital adoption, whereas European studies highlight self-efficacy, innovation, and opportunity recognition. Other regions show stronger influences of institutional support, economic adaptation, cultural values, and social responsibilities. Across regions, TPB remains dominant, while contextual factors shape its application.

4.3 Research Methodologies and Analytical Techniques

Research methodology refers to study design, while analytical techniques refer to procedures used to analyze research findings. The methodological distribution of the reviewed studies is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Methodological Distribution of WEI Studies



Source: Authors' compilation based on methodological classifications extracted through the Watase UAKE platform.

Analysis of the 72 reviewed studies shows that quantitative methodology dominates WEI research. Most studies employed cross-sectional surveys to examine relationships among psychological, social, technological, and institutional determinants. This dominance reflects the influence of behavioral frameworks, particularly the TPB, TAM, and SCT (Pham et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022).

The classification of methodologies and analytical techniques is summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Methodological Approaches and Data Analysis Techniques in WEI Studies

Category	Classification	Main Characteristics	Representative Studies
Research Methodology	Quantitative	Cross-sectional survey design, hypothesis testing, measurement of relationships between variables	Pham et al. (2021); Wang et al. (2022)
Research Methodology	Qualitative	Exploration of lived experiences, cultural barriers, and contextual understanding	Pérez-Macías et al. (2024)
Research Methodology	Mixed Methods	Combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches for complementary insights	González-Serrano et al. (2023)

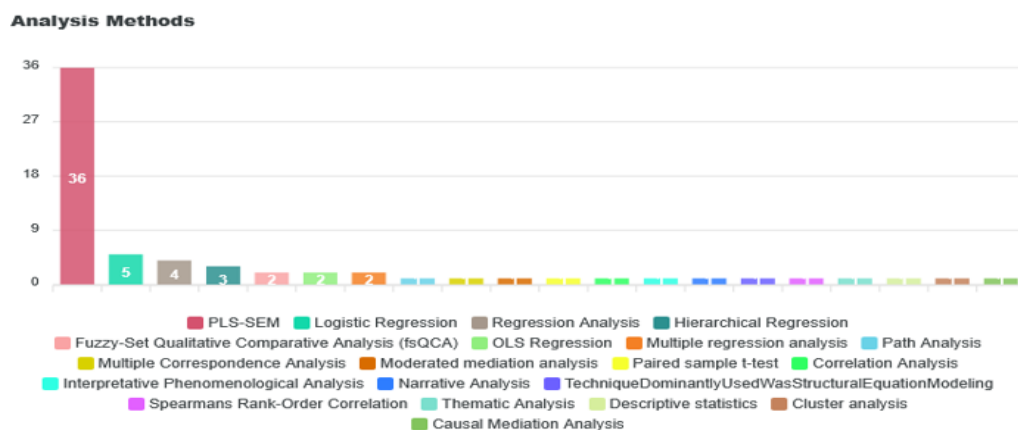
Data Analysis Technique	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), including Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)	Simultaneous testing of direct, indirect, and mediating relationships between constructs	Aránega et al. (2025)
Data Analysis Technique	Multiple Regression	Examination of predictive relationships between entrepreneurial variables	Soomro et al. (2019)
Data Analysis Technique	fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA)	Identification of configurational causal conditions influencing entrepreneurial intentions	Grande et al. (2025)
Data Analysis Technique	Thematic Analysis	Identification of recurring themes and contextual patterns	Pérez-Macías et al. (2024)
Data Analysis Technique	Narrative Analysis	Interpretation of entrepreneurial experiences and socio-cultural meanings	Barrero et al. (2024)

Source: Methodological coding generated through Watase UAKE extraction and manual verification.

The findings in Table 7 indicate that quantitative approaches are mainly used for hypothesis testing and relationship analysis, whereas qualitative and mixed-methods approaches provide deeper understanding of entrepreneurial experiences and contextual factors.

The distribution of analytical techniques is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Analytical Techniques Used in WEI Research



Source: Authors' compilation based on reviewed studies extracted through the Watase UAKE platform.

PLS-SEM was the most frequently applied analytical technique, appearing in 36 studies. Its dominance reflects the emphasis on testing conceptual models involving direct effects, mediation, and moderation among WEI constructs (Jalil et al., 2023; Rahayu, 2024). Other

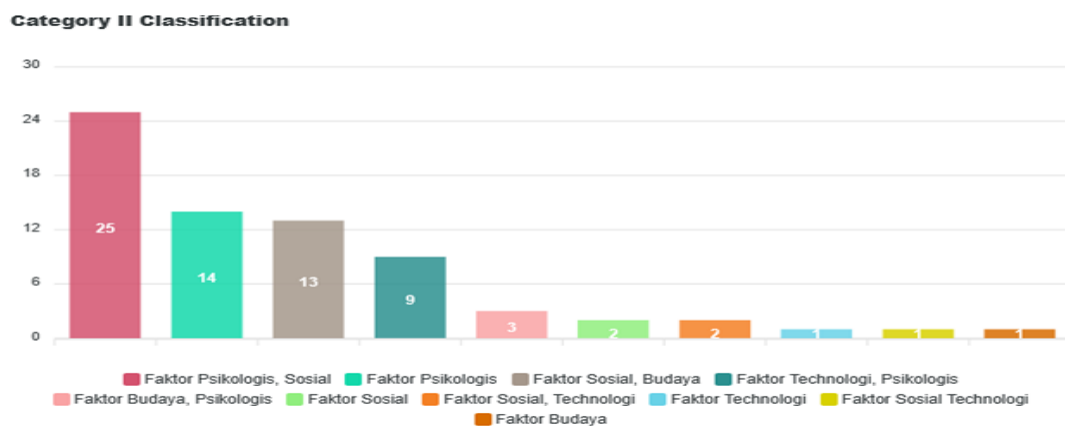
approaches included logistic regression (5 studies), regression analysis (4 studies), hierarchical regression, fsQCA, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS), thematic analysis, and narrative analysis, which provided complementary explanations of predictive relationships and contextual processes (Soomro et al., 2019; Grande et al., 2025; Pérez-Macías et al., 2024; Barrero et al., 2024).

Despite strong statistical validation capabilities, WEI research remains limited in qualitative, mixed-methods, and longitudinal approaches. Future studies should expand methodological diversity to better explain how psychological, socio-cultural, institutional, and technological factors interact in shaping WEI across different contexts.

4.4 Determinants and Theoretical Perspectives of WEI

The reviewed studies demonstrate that WEI are shaped by interacting psychological, social, cultural, technological, and institutional determinants, with their relative importance varying across regional, cultural, and institutional contexts. The classification of determinants is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Classification of Determinants Identified in the Reviewed Studies.



Source: Authors' compilation based on determinant classifications extracted through the Wataase UAKE platform.

The cross-cultural synthesis of dominant determinants, regional contexts, consistency of findings, and representative studies is summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Cross-Cultural Determinants of WEI

Determinant Category	Dominant Factors	Regional Context	Consistency of Findings	Representative Studies
Psychological Factors	Self-efficacy, entrepreneurial attitude, motivation, perceived behavioral control	Europe, Asia, North America	Highly consistent across studies	Pham et al. (2021); Christensen et al. (2023)
Social Factors	Family support, mentoring,	Asia, Middle East	Context-dependent	Jalil et al. (2023); Bergner (2020)

	networking, peer influence			
Cultural Factors	Gender norms, stereotypes, collectivist values	Asia, Middle East, Africa	Mixed findings	Vasileiou et al. (2023)
Technological Factors	Digital literacy, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) adoption, e-commerce, social media	Asia, developing economies	Emerging but increasing	Putro and Takahashi (2024); Chakraborty and Biswal (2023)
Institutional Factors	Policy support, entrepreneurial ecosystem, access to finance	Europe, developed economies	Moderately consistent	Aránega et al. (2025)

Source: Determinant coding results extracted through Watase UAKE and synthesized from reviewed studies.

Psychological factors, particularly self-efficacy, entrepreneurial attitude, motivation, and perceived behavioral control, were the most consistent determinants of WEI across contexts. Social and cultural factors, including family support, networking, gender norms, stereotypes, and collectivist values, showed greater contextual variation, potentially facilitating or constraining women's entrepreneurial participation (Jalil et al., 2023; Bergner, 2020; Vasileiou et al., 2023). Technological determinants, including digital literacy, ICT adoption, e-commerce, and social media, are increasingly relevant through expanded entrepreneurial opportunities and market access (Putro & Takahashi, 2024; Chakraborty & Biswal, 2023). Institutional factors, including policy support, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and financial access, further shape the enabling environment for WEI (Aránega et al., 2025).

The theoretical perspectives underlying these determinants are presented in Figure 7 and Table 9.



Source: Authors' compilation based on theoretical framework classifications extracted through the Watase UAKE platform.

TPB was the dominant theoretical framework, appearing in 29.2% of reviewed studies, followed by TAM (4.6%) and SCT (3.1%). These frameworks reflect the prevalence of behavioral, technological, and psychological perspectives in WEI research. Social Role Theory and Personality-Based Approaches were identified in a limited number of studies examining gender norms, entrepreneurial identity, and individual characteristics. However, 38.5% of studies did not explicitly report a theoretical framework, particularly those focusing on digital entrepreneurship, crowdfunding, and cross-country comparisons.

Table 9. Dominant Theoretical Frameworks in WEI Research

Theory / Framework	Frequency (%)	Key Constructs	Typical Research Context
TPB	29.2%	Attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control	Entrepreneurial intention studies across regions
TAM	4.6%	Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use	Digital entrepreneurship, e-commerce adoption
SCT	3.1%	Self-efficacy, observational learning, psychological capital	Entrepreneurship education and behavioral studies
Social Role Theory	Limited	Gender norms, stereotypes, social expectations	Gender and work–life balance studies
Personality-Based Approaches	Limited	Proactivity, optimism, entrepreneurial identity	Psychological entrepreneurship studies
No Explicit Theory (NA)	38.5%	Empirical or descriptive variables	Cross-country and digital entrepreneurship studies

Source: Theory classification report generated through the Watase UAE platform.

5. Results and Discussion

This section interprets the findings of the SLR on WEI by examining how theoretical perspectives explain entrepreneurial intentions across socio-cultural and digital contexts. The discussion highlights dominant frameworks, their limitations, and the need for an integrative approach to strengthen future WEI research.

5.1 Theoretical Interpretation and Integration of WEI Determinants

The dominance of TPB indicates that WEI research continues to emphasize individual intention formation through attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Its strong predictive capability and conceptual clarity support its continued use across contexts (Ajzen, 1991). However, its focus on individual-level mechanisms limits its ability to capture broader influences, including gender norms, institutional barriers, resource constraints, and socio-cultural expectations. This limitation is particularly relevant in developing contexts, where family influence, cultural conditions, and economic pressures shape women's entrepreneurial decisions (Vasileiou et al., 2023).

Complementary perspectives extend the explanation of WEI beyond individual cognition. TAM highlights digital readiness, perceived usefulness, and technology adoption, while SCT

emphasizes self-efficacy, learning, resilience, and psychological capital. Evidence suggests that digital competence, technology acceptance, entrepreneurial learning, and empowerment can strengthen women's entrepreneurial capability and intention (Yusoff et al., 2021; Putro and Takahashi, 2024; Christensen et al., 2023).

WEI is also embedded in social, cultural, and institutional conditions. Social role and self-stereotyping perspectives show that gender norms, social expectations, and work-life balance pressures shape entrepreneurial decisions (Kruse & Marquardt, 2025; Neneh, 2021). The relative influence of these determinants varies across contexts: psychological mechanisms may be stronger in supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems, whereas social support, cultural expectations, and institutional barriers become more influential under structural constraints.

Thus, no single framework fully explains WEI. Integrating psychological, technological, social, cultural, and institutional dimensions provides a more comprehensive understanding of WEI as a multidimensional and context-dependent phenomenon.

5.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this review have several important implications for policymakers, educational institutions, and entrepreneurship-support organizations.

First, strengthening WEI requires interventions that extend beyond financial support. Policies should also focus on psychological empowerment, particularly by enhancing entrepreneurial self-efficacy, confidence, and resilience through training and mentorship programs. This is especially important in developing countries where social and cultural barriers remain significant.

Second, the increasing importance of digital entrepreneurship highlights the need for more inclusive digital ecosystems. MSMEs-support institutions should improve women entrepreneurs' access to digital infrastructure, technology training, and e-commerce platforms to strengthen technology adoption and entrepreneurial sustainability.

Third, higher education institutions should integrate entrepreneurship education with digital literacy, innovation capability, and soft-skill development. Existing research indicates that entrepreneurial intentions among students are significantly influenced by both psychological readiness and exposure to entrepreneurial learning environments.

These findings suggest that women's entrepreneurial development requires integrated and context-sensitive strategies that combine individual capabilities, digital readiness, social support, and institutional mechanisms.

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study systematically reviewed empirical research on WEI published between 2015 and 2025. The findings demonstrate that WEI represents a multidimensional construct shaped by the interaction of psychological, social, cultural, institutional, and technological factors. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, attitude, and perceived behavioral control emerged as consistent determinants, although their effects vary across contextual environments. The review highlights that WEI develop differently across regions. Psychological factors are more prominent in developed contexts, while social support, cultural norms, institutional conditions, and structural barriers play stronger roles in developing economies. Furthermore,

digital competence and technology adoption have become increasingly relevant within MSMEs ecosystems.

The contribution of this review lies in integrating fragmented evidence across multiple dimensions of WEI research and emphasizing the need for more comprehensive theoretical approaches. However, the findings should be interpreted considering methodological limitations related to database coverage and review procedures.

7. Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, this review relied exclusively on the Scopus database, which may have limited the coverage of relevant studies indexed in other databases. Although backward reference searching was conducted, potential database bias cannot be fully excluded.

Second, 89 of the 162 reports sought for retrieval were unavailable and therefore excluded from further assessment and synthesis. Since specific retrieval barriers were not documented in the original records, these reports may represent a potential source of selection bias.

Third, the review applied a single-researcher workflow for screening, extraction, coding, and quality assessment. Although predefined criteria and manual verification were applied, potential reviewer-related bias cannot be completely eliminated.

Finally, AI-assisted tools were used only for preliminary extraction and organization, while all final decisions were manually verified against original publications. Future reviews should incorporate multiple databases, independent reviewers, and standardized appraisal procedures to improve coverage, reduce bias, and strengthen the reliability of WEI evidence synthesis.

AI declaration and AI-assisted technology in the writing process

AI-assisted tools were used during the preparation of this SLR to support preliminary information extraction, literature organization, coding assistance, and language refinement. The Watase UAKE SLR platform and AI-based applications were used only as supporting tools and were not considered independent reviewers or sources of final evidence. All study selection decisions, eligibility assessments, quality evaluations, coding processes, extracted information, and thematic interpretations were manually verified by the researcher against the original full-text publications. The authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, interpretation, and integrity of the reported findings.

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Supplementary Table S1. Article-Level Quality Assessment Matrix of the Included Studies

No	Author	Research Objectives	Research Design	Sample/ Participants	Data Collection & Analysis	Findings	Conclusions	Total Score	Quality Category
1	Rienda et al. (2025)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
2	Luan, Y., and Zhang, Z (2025)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
3	Grande et al. (2025)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
4	Kruse, P., and Marquardt J (2025)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
5	Aránega et al. (2025)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
6	Alshebami et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
7	Freel et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
8	Kleine, et al.(2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
9	Kryeziu et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
10	Putro, A., and Takahashi, Y (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
11	Awal, M. R., and Chowdhury, M. S (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
12	Ghouse et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
13	Barrero et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
14	Bachmann et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
15	Rahayu, N. S (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
16	Maslakci et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
17	Batz et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
18	Cui, Y., and Zhang, Y (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
19	Fonrouge, C. (2024)	1	1	0	1	1	1	5	HQ
20	Alshebami, A. S (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
21	Pérez-Macías et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
22	Zhou, et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
23	Rifas, et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
24	Wasim et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
25	Shneor et al. (2024)								HQ

		1	1	1	1	1	1	6	
26	Christensen et al. (2023)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
27	María Huertas et al. (2023)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	HQ
28	Jalil et al. (2023)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
29	Rífas, et al. (2023)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
30	Vasileiou et al. (2023)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
31	Chakraborty, U., and Biswal, S. K (2023)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
32	Geng et al. (2023)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
33	Badghish et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
34	Mayuto et al. (2023)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
35	Ordinana et al. (2022)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
36	Cao et al. (2022)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
37	Dong et al. (2022)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
38	Romani et al. (2022)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
39	Wang, et al. (2022)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
40	Boubker et al. (2022)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
41	Hohen, S. and Schweizer, L (2021)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
42	Boubker et al. (2021)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
43	Neneh, B. N. (2021)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
44	Taufik and Ernawati. (2021)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
45	Botha, M., and Taljaard, A (2021)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
46	Ye, L., and Dong, X.-Y (2021)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
47	Yusoff et al. (2021)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
48	Polas, M. R. H., and Jahanshahi, A. A. (2020)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
49	Karadağ, H., and Şahin, F (2020)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
50	Liang, C (2020)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
51	López-Meri et al. (2020)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ

52	Wannamakok, W., and Chang, Y. Y (2020)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
53	Bergner, S (2020)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
54	Ceresia, F., and Mendola, C (2020)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
55	Arru, B (2020)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
56	Wąsowska, A (2019)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
57	Muhammad, N., Robinson, D., and Nisar, M (2019)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
58	Muñoz-Bullón et al. (2019)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
59	Tiwari et al. (2020)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
60	Al Mamun et al. (2019)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
61	Soomro et al. (2019)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
62	Chepurensko, A (2019)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
63	Yun, S., and Kim, T (2019)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
64	Amésquita Cubillas et al. (2018)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
65	Turan, M. and Kara, A (2018)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
66	Ali, R. S (2018)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
67	Choi et al. (2018)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
68	Chen et al. (2018)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
69	Chen et al. (2017)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
70	Emami, A., and Dimov, D (2017)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
71	Costa et al. (2016)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ
72	Zampetakis et al. (2016)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	HQ