

DOES FAMILY REALLY MATTER FOR GENERATION Z STUDENT'S DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION? EVIDENCE FROM VIETNAM

GIA ĐÌNH CÓ THẬT SỰ QUAN TRỌNG VỚI DỰ ĐỊNH KHỞI NGHIỆP CÔNG NGHỆ SỐ CỦA SINH VIÊN THẾ HỆ Z? MỘT NGHIÊN CỨU THỰC NGHIỆM TẠI VIỆT NAM

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Abstract - This study examines the role of family in the digital entrepreneurial intentions of Generation Z (Gen Z) in developing countries. Drawing on survey data from 377 Gen Z students in Vietnam, this study clarifies how family background and family support influence young people's digital entrepreneurial intention. The results show that family background significantly impacts perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.294$), while family support positively influences entrepreneurial attitude ($\beta = 0.360$) and subjective norms ($\beta = 0.373$). The model explains 41.7% of the variance in digital entrepreneurial intention, with family support and family background serving as key upstream antecedents. Notably, the path from subjective norms to intention was not statistically significant and is not supported. This research fills a gap regarding family's role in digital entrepreneurship in developing countries and extends the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by integrating family-related variables as key antecedents of Gen Z students' digital entrepreneurial intention.

Key words - Digital entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurial intention; Generation Z; Family background; Family support

1. Introduction

The digital era has unlocked new entrepreneurial pathways, particularly for Generation Z (Gen Z) who are digital natives actively exploring startup opportunities online [1], [2]. In both advanced and emerging economies, digital entrepreneurship is seen as a catalyst for innovation and inclusive growth. Yet, understanding what drives Gen Z individuals to pursue digital startups remains a developing field [3]. While prior research on entrepreneurial intentions has examined individual traits, education, and peer influence, the role of the family environment in shaping digital entrepreneurial intentions is less understood. This gap is especially pronounced in developing country contexts, where family ties and expectations strongly influence young people's career choices [4], [5]. There is a pressing need to investigate how familial factors are associated with digital entrepreneurial intentions among university students, thereby contextualizing classic models for a digitally framed environment.

Entrepreneurship research has long acknowledged that families can profoundly affect a young person's entrepreneurial trajectory [6]. Families serve as an

Tóm tắt - Nghiên cứu phân tích vai trò gia đình đối với dự định khởi nghiệp công nghệ số của Gen Z tại các nước đang phát triển. Với dữ liệu nghiên cứu từ 377 sinh viên Gen Z, kết quả khảo sát cho thấy bối cảnh gia đình tác động đến sự kiểm soát hành vi cảm nhận ($\beta = 0,294$), trong khi sự hỗ trợ từ gia đình ảnh hưởng tích cực đến thái độ khởi nghiệp ($\beta = 0,360$), quy chuẩn chủ quan ($\beta = 0,373$). Mô hình giải thích được 41,7% phương sai trong dự định khởi nghiệp công nghệ số, với sự hỗ trợ và bối cảnh gia đình đóng vai trò là các yếu tố tác động đầu tiên. Mối quan hệ giữa quy chuẩn chủ quan và dự định khởi nghiệp không có ý nghĩa thống kê. Nghiên cứu góp phần lấp đầy khoảng trống về vai trò gia đình trong khởi nghiệp công nghệ số tại các nước đang phát triển và mở rộng TPB bằng cách tích hợp các biến liên quan đến gia đình như các yếu tố tiền đề chính của dự định khởi nghiệp công nghệ số của Gen Z.

Từ khóa - Khởi nghiệp công nghệ số; Dự định khởi nghiệp; Thế hệ Z; Gia đình

immediate social context that can instill values, confidence, and aspirations related to business venturing. However, most existing studies have focused on conventional entrepreneurship, leaving distinct family influences in the digital startup context underexplored. For example, the transfer of digital skills and innovative mindsets within entrepreneurial families, and how these shape a youth's intention to start an online venture, has not been adequately examined [7]. Recent work in emerging economies suggests that family support can be pivotal for young entrepreneurs, but findings have been mixed and context-dependent. This underscores the need for more nuanced research into family dynamics - especially in cultures where familial approval is often crucial in career decision-making of Gen Z students [8].

While digital entrepreneurship shares some foundational elements with traditional entrepreneurship, it also introduces unique challenges and opportunities that warrant distinct theoretical attention. Digital ventures often operate in fast-paced, technology-driven environments that require not only entrepreneurial motivation but also digital literacy, adaptability, and access to online networks [1], [3]. In such contexts,

family influence may extend beyond emotional and financial support to include digital mentorship, encouragement in navigating online platforms, and fostering innovation-oriented mindsets [7]. Moreover, in emerging markets like Vietnam, where digital infrastructure and entrepreneurial ecosystems are still developing, the family may serve as a critical enabler or barrier to digital entrepreneurial pursuits [8], [9]. Therefore, it is essential to explore whether traditional models of entrepreneurial intention - such as the Theory of Planned Behavior [10] - adequately capture the nuances of digital entrepreneurship, or whether family-related factors play a differentiated role in this evolving landscape.

This study responds to the above gaps by examining two key aspects of the family's role - family support and family background - in shaping Gen Z's digital entrepreneurial intentions. Family support refers to the encouragement, approval, and tangible assistance that parents and close family provide to the aspiring entrepreneur [11]. Such support can positively influence a young person's attitude toward entrepreneurship and reinforce perceived social norms that entrepreneurship is a desirable career [12]. When parents actively endorse entrepreneurial pursuits, their children are more likely to view starting a business favorably and sense familial approval, fostering a pro-entrepreneurial mindset. On the other hand, family background captures whether the individual comes from an entrepreneurial family context. An entrepreneurial family background can provide early exposure to business activities, tacit knowledge, and networks, thereby strengthening the individual's perceived behavioral control - i.e., the confidence that they have the ability and know-how to start a venture [13], [14]. It can also shape subjective norms by normalizing entrepreneurial careers in the household [15], although the extent of this influence in the digital realm remains to be verified. Conceptually, family support captures the soft, socio-psychological resources such as emotional encouragement, while family background reflects structural exposure and explicit entrepreneurial role modeling, making them distinct upstream antecedents.

In summary, there is a compelling rationale to investigate "whether family really matters" for Gen Z's digital startup intentions. By focusing on both parental support and family entrepreneurial background, this research aims to clarify how family context feeds into the well-known antecedents of entrepreneurial intention - namely attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control [10] - in the specific case of digital entrepreneurship. The study is situated in Vietnam, a rapidly developing economy with a youthful population, where evidence of such family effects will enrich the global understanding of digital entrepreneurship drivers. In doing so, this study addresses an important theoretical gap and provides practical insights, shedding light on how supportive family environments and role models can nurture the next generation of digital entrepreneurs

2. Literature Review

Family support and family background are critical environmental factors associated with personal attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, thereby contributing to the explanation of entrepreneurial intentions. The influence of family on entrepreneurial intentions has been widely acknowledged in entrepreneurship literature, especially under the lens of the Theory of Planned Behavior [10]. This theory posits that an individual's entrepreneurial intention is immediately shaped by three psychological antecedents: attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. While these factors are often treated as personal perceptions, they do not develop in a vacuum - the family environment is a crucial external source shaping all three. Recent studies, especially in emerging economies, have pointed out that for Gen Z, family context can significantly "set the stage" for entrepreneurial aspiration by influencing how young people think and feel about entrepreneurship [8]. Two distinct but related dimensions of family influence are frequently examined: family support and family background. This section reviews relevant literature on how each of these dimensions impacts Gen Z's entrepreneurial attitudes, norms, and perceived control, leading to our hypotheses.

In the context of Vietnam, the role of family in shaping entrepreneurial intention may be even more pronounced due to cultural and socio-economic factors. As a collectivist society with strong intergenerational ties, Vietnamese youth often rely on their families not only for emotional and financial support but also for career guidance and social validation [16], [18]. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior, wherein subjective norms - perceptions of social approval - are significantly influenced by close referents such as parents [10]. Moreover, family support can serve as a psychological safety net, reducing the perceived risks associated with entrepreneurship and thereby enhancing perceived behavioral control [11], [12]. In emerging economies like Vietnam, where formal entrepreneurial ecosystems are still developing, the family often substitutes for institutional support, providing early exposure, mentorship, and even seed capital [14], [15]. These dynamics suggest that family influence may be a particularly salient antecedent of digital entrepreneurial intention among Vietnamese Gen Z, warranting further empirical investigation.

First, parental and familial support often acts as a positive driver of young individuals' attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Family support can take various forms - emotional encouragement, discussion of business ideas, or even financial and logistical help - all of which tend to reinforce the perceived benefits and desirability of an entrepreneurial career [4]. When parents are supportive of entrepreneurial pursuits, they help youth focus on the potential advantages of starting a business rather than the drawbacks. Prior research suggests that students who feel strong support from family are more likely to develop favorable attitudes about entrepreneurship, viewing it as an attractive and viable career path [12]. Similarly, Saoula et

al. [13] find that family support, alongside self-efficacy and motivation, significantly enhances pro-entrepreneurial attitudes among university students. Even in cross-national analyses, family encouragement has emerged as a consistent predictor of positive entrepreneurial outlooks [4]. Family support also contributes to subjective well-being related to a behavior - by reducing fear of failure and providing a safety net, supportive families make the prospect of entrepreneurship seem less risky and more rewarding [11]. All these findings converge on the notion that when Gen Z individuals receive robust support from their family, they are predisposed to hold more positive attitudes toward starting a business. Thus, we hypothesize that family support positively influences the entrepreneurial attitude of Gen Z.

Second, the family can powerfully affect subjective norms - the sense of social approval or disapproval one perceives regarding entrepreneurship. Within many cultures, family approval is a dominant component of a young person's social milieu; if one's parents and close family members strongly endorse entrepreneurship, this creates a perception that "important others" expect or encourage one to become an entrepreneur [6]. In other words, a supportive family not only makes entrepreneurship personally appealing, but also socially acceptable or even desirable. Gubik [15] observed this among Hungarian students: those with entrepreneurial parents or supportive family environments felt greater social pressure to choose an entrepreneurial career, presumably because their families had signaled approval of such choices. Family support explicitly elevates subjective norms by conveying that family members would applaud the decision to start a business [13]. Even in emerging markets, where societal norms around career choice can be conservative, evidence suggests that having entrepreneur parents tends to increase the social acceptability of entrepreneurship for the next generation [8]. We thus propose that family support positively influences the subjective norms perceived by Gen Z with respect to digital entrepreneurship.

Third, an entrepreneurial family background can implicitly raise normative support. Growing up in a family that runs a business often normalizes entrepreneurship; it becomes part of the family's identity and values [5]. Children of business-owning parents may internalize the notion that entrepreneurship is a respected or expected career route within the family context [14], [19]. As a consequence, children grew up in entrepreneurial family early exposure to the realities of running a business, which can demystify the process of venture creation and increase a young person's confidence in managing it [13]. They may have absorbed tacit knowledge about entrepreneurship from dinner-table conversations or even direct involvement in a family business [5], [14]. Furthermore, Maleki et al. [4] note that family support frequently entails resource sharing and mentorship - parents might finance a startup or provide expert advice and strengthens the individual's belief that they can successfully launch a venture. In a study focused on African and European youth,

Amofah et al. [11] reported that family backing positively affected young entrepreneurs' perceived control over their venture. Additionally, supportive families create a buffer against potential setbacks, further increasing one's sense of control under uncertainty [12]. On the whole, the presence of entrepreneurial role models in one's family enhances self-confidence in entrepreneurship by providing both know-how and fallback support [6]. Accordingly, we hypothesize that an entrepreneurial family background positively influences Gen Z's perceived digital entrepreneurship.

In summary, our study formulates six hypotheses, including three family-related antecedent hypotheses and three baseline TPB hypotheses:

- H1: Family support has a positive impact on the entrepreneurial attitude of Gen Z.
- H2: Family support has a positive impact on the subjective norms perceived by Gen Z.
- H3: Family background has a positive impact on the perceived behavioral control of Gen Z.
- H4: Entrepreneurial attitude positively influences Gen Z's digital entrepreneurial intention.
- H5: Subjective norms positively influence Gen Z's digital entrepreneurial intention.
- H6: Perceived behavioral control positively influences Gen Z's digital entrepreneurial intention.

3. Data and measurement

This study adopted a quantitative survey design. Data were gathered from 377 Gen Z students (born 1995-2010) enrolled in entrepreneurship classes in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It should be noted that this birth range is broader than the practical university sample allows; respondents were enrolled students in late 2024, suggesting the effective age range was approximately 18-29 years (born approximately 1995-2006). The survey was administered in late 2024 using convenience sampling at several universities.

It should be noted that the attitude toward entrepreneurship (ATT), subjective norms (SOC), and perceived behavioral control (PBC) items were adapted from Vamvaka et al. [20] and refer to entrepreneurship in general. While the survey instructions framed these questions within a digital entrepreneurship context, this study examines entrepreneurial intentions within a digitally framed environment rather than using a fully digital-specific measurement model. This is acknowledged as a measurement limitation; future research should develop and validate items that explicitly refer to digital venture creation. The final sample after eliminating invalid responses had a slight female majority (54%) and included students and recent graduates across various majors. Participation was voluntary. Respondents completed a self-reported questionnaire in Vietnamese, taking about 10 - 15 minutes. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree").

Table 1. Measurement

Construct	Item	Questionnaire	Reference
FAM	FAM1	My parents support my pursuit of a career in digital entrepreneurship	Nguyen & Nguyen [8]
	FAM2	My parents support my digital entrepreneurship business idea	
	FAM3	Other family members support my digital entrepreneurship business idea	
	FAM4	My parents approve of my career choice in digital entrepreneurship	
	FAM5	My parents encouraged me to pursue a career in digital entrepreneurship	
	FAM6	My parents are willing to provide start-up capital for my venture	
BAC	BAC1	At least one of my parents is or was an entrepreneur	Amofah et al. [11]
ATT	ATT1	Being an entrepreneur would bring more advantages than disadvantages	Vamvaka et al. [22]
	ATT2	Starting a business represents more positive aspects than failure	
	ATT3	A business career is completely appealing to me	
	ATT5	Being an entrepreneur would entail great satisfactions for me	
SOC	SOC1	My friends support my entrepreneurship	Vamvaka et al. [22]
	SOC3	My colleagues support my entrepreneurship	
PBC	PBC6	I am certain that I can start a firm and keeping it viable	
	PBC7	I can control the creation process of a new firm	
	PBC8	The number of events outside my control which could prevent me from being an entrepreneur are very few	
	PBC9	As entrepreneur, I would have complete control over the situation	
INT	INT1	My professional goal is to become a digital entrepreneur.	
	INT2	I will make every effort to start and run my own digital business	
	INT3	I am determined to create a digital business in the future	
	INT4	I have very seriously thought of starting a digital firm	
	INT5	I consider it to be very likely that I will be running my own digital business	

Source: Authors' work

The multi-item scales are adapted from prior research. First, family support (FAM) was measured with a six-item scale adapted from [8]. Then, family background (BAC) construct was measured following Amofah et al. [11] as a binary indicator of whether the respondent has an entrepreneurial family background. Specifically, respondents indicated if either parent is/was an entrepreneur (coded 1 for yes, 0 for no). It is consistent with prior studies in entrepreneurial intention research. For example, Amofah et al. [11], [20], [21], Santhanamery et al. [18] and Tong et al. [19] employed a similar operationalization to capture entrepreneurial family background. This method provides a parsimonious and practical way to assess early exposure to entrepreneurship. FAM was operationalized as a single observed binary variable (coded 1 if either parent is or was an entrepreneur,

0 otherwise) rather than a reflective multi-item latent construct. Accordingly, the reliability indices (Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, CR, AVE) reported in Table 2 are not applicable for this variable.

Lastly, the other latent variables representing the Theory of Planned Behavior - ATT, SOC, PBC - as well as the outcome digital entrepreneurial intention (INT) were measured with multi-item scales adapted from Vamvaka et al. [22]. Details of the measurement scale are presented in the Table 1 below.

Table 2. Reliability and Validity

Constructs	Items	Factor loading	VIF	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	Rho_c	AVE
FAM	FAM1	0.848	2.868	0.920	0.922	0.937	0.714
	FAM2	0.884	3.290				
	FAM3	0.864	2.818				
	FAM4	0.841	2.483				
	FAM5	0.848	2.434				
	FAM6	0.781	1.879				
ATT	ATT1	0.699	1.690	0.730	0.738	0.829	0.548
	ATT2	0.733	1.750				
	ATT3	0.770	1.407				
	ATT5	0.755	1.364				
BAC	BAC1	1.000	1.000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SOC	SOC1	0.909	1.829	0.768	0.772	0.896	0.811
	SOC3	0.831	1.781				
PBC	PBC6	0.767	1.515	0.830	0.829	0.887	0.663
	PBC7	0.820	1.829				
	PBC8	0.828	2.034				
	PBC9	0.839	2.079				
INT	INT1	0.748	1.553	0.799	0.801	0.861	0.554
	INT2	0.746	1.581				
	INT3	0.769	1.668				
	INT4	0.718	1.477				
	INT5	0.740	1.419				

Source: Authors' work

Note: BAC is treated as a single observed binary variable (0/1).

4. Analysis and results

The study applies Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the hypotheses. PLS-SEM analysis involves two stages: assessing the measurement model to evaluate reliability and validity of constructs; and examining the structural model to test hypothesized relationships among latent variables

4.1. Measurement Model

The measurement model demonstrates strong reliability and validity, consistent with recommended criteria from quantitative research experts [23]. All constructs exhibit high internal consistency: Cronbach's alpha values range from approximately 0.73 to 0.92, exceeding the 0.70 benchmark for acceptable reliability. Likewise, composite reliability scores (0.83-0.94) are well above the recommended 0.70 threshold, indicating excellent construct reliability. Convergent validity is confirmed by average variance extracted values for each latent construct above 0.50, meaning each construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators.

Discriminant validity is also well established. According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of each construct's AVE (ranging from 0.740 to 1.000) exceeds its inter-construct correlations, implying that each construct shares more variance with its own measures than with other constructs [24]. Additionally, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios for all construct pairs are below the conservative cutoff of 0.85, providing further evidence that the constructs are empirically distinct. In summary, these results indicate that the measurement model is consistent, accurate, and reliable, providing a solid foundation for testing the structural relationships.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

	ATT	BAC	FAM	INT	PBC	SOC
<i>Fornell-Larcker Criterion</i>						
ATT	0.740					
BAC	0.215	1.000				
FAM	0.360	0.418	0.892			
INT	0.594	0.170	0.340	0.744		
PBC	0.508	0.294	0.426	0.511	0.814	
SOC	0.412	0.160	0.437	0.339	0.312	0.901
<i>Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)</i>						
ATT						
BAC	0.250					
FAM	0.428	0.435				
INT	0.753	0.191	0.394			
PBC	0.659	0.324	0.486	0.623		
SOC	0.531	0.183	0.444	0.424	0.392	

Source: Authors' work

4.2. Structural Model

The structural model was evaluated following recommended procedures of Hair et al. [24]. Five of the six hypothesized paths are positive and statistically significant at the 5% level, supporting the structural model, with the exception of H5 (SOC → INT), which is not statistically significant at the 5% level ($p = 0.070$). In particular, FAM has a positive and statistically significant effect on ATT ($\beta = 0.360$, $p < 0.001$) and SOC ($\beta = 0.373$, $p < 0.001$), while BAC has a positive and statistically significant effect on PBC ($\beta = 0.294$, $p < 0.001$).

These path coefficients indicate moderate effect sizes in the context of behavioral research. The R^2 values for key endogenous constructs show acceptable explanatory power: the model accounts for about 41.7% of the variance in INT, which is moderate-to-substantial for social science models [23]. It also explains 13.0% of ATT, 13.9% of SOC, and 8.7% of PBC. Finally, global model fit indices indicate a good fit. The model's Standardized Root Mean Square Residual is 0.06, below the 0.08 threshold for a well-fitting model. To sum up, the structural model demonstrates consistency and reliability, with no signs of multicollinearity (inner VIFs < 3) and strong alignment between the theoretical framework and the empirical data. Details of the analysis results are presented in the Figure 1 and the Table 4 below.

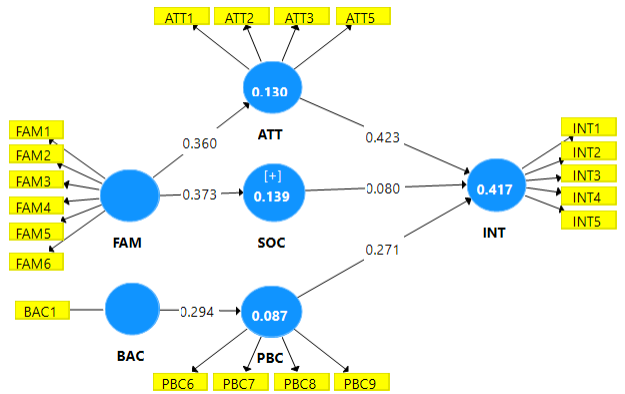


Figure 1. Path coefficient diagram

Note: Values on arrows = path coefficients; values in circles = R^2 .

Source: Authors' work

Table 4. Structural model results with effect sizes (f^2)

Relationship	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	Effect sizes (f^2)
ATT → INT	0.423	0.423	0.050	8.376	0.000	0.198
BAC → PBC	0.294	0.294	0.053	5.585	0.000	0.095
FAM → ATT	0.360	0.363	0.051	7.082	0.000	0.149
FAM → SOC	0.373	0.440	0.052	7.012	0.000	0.160
PBC → INT	0.271	0.262	0.052	5.212	0.000	0.091
SOC → INT	0.080	0.080	0.046	1.815	0.070	0.008

Source: Authors' work

Regarding effect sizes, family support exhibits a moderate effect on SOC ($f^2 = 0.160$) and entrepreneurial attitude ($f^2 = 0.149$), indicating its substantive role in shaping the cognitive antecedents of digital entrepreneurial intention. ATT shows a moderate effect on intention ($f^2 = 0.198$), while PBC exerts a small but statistically significant effect ($f^2 = 0.091$). Notably, the path from SOC to intention was not statistically significant ($p = 0.070$), suggesting that Vietnamese Gen Z students may rely more on personal attitude and PBC than on social norms when forming digital entrepreneurial intentions - consistent with prior TPB studies in collectivist emerging markets [9], [11], [23], [24]. Regarding indirect effects, Table 6 presents the specific indirect effects with bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals. The strongest indirect pathway is FAM → ATT → INT ($\beta = 0.152$, 95% CI [0.101, 0.212]), followed by BAC → PBC → INT ($\beta = 0.080$, 95% CI [0.042, 0.124]). The indirect path FAM → SOC → INT ($\beta = 0.030$, 95% CI [-0.001, 0.067]) was not statistically significant, consistent with the non-significant direct effect of SOC on INT. These findings confirm that attitude is the primary mechanism through which family support translates into digital entrepreneurial intention among Gen Z, consistent with prior TPB-based studies [23].

Furthermore, predictive relevance was assessed using the blindfolding procedure. As shown in Table 5, all endogenous constructs exhibit positive Q^2 values,

indicating adequate predictive relevance of the model. In particular, digital entrepreneurial intention shows a moderate level of predictive accuracy ($Q^2 = 0.225$), while attitude, SOC, and PBC demonstrate small but meaningful predictive relevance, which is acceptable for behavioral research models [23]. In addition, common method bias was assessed using the full collinearity variance inflation factor (VIF) approach as recommended by [25]. All inner VIF values were below the conservative threshold of 3.3 suggested by Kock [25] and Hair et al. [23], indicating that common method bias is unlikely to pose a serious concern in this study. To clearly distinguish between structural multicollinearity and common method bias diagnostics, full collinearity VIFs were computed following Kock [25] by inverting the latent variable correlation matrix. The resulting full collinearity VIF values were: ATT = 1.811, BAC = 1.238, FAM = 1.506, INT = 1.725, PBC = 1.626, SOC = 1.307. All values are well below the conservative threshold of 3.3, confirming that common method bias is unlikely to pose a serious concern in this study.

Table 5. Predictive relevance test results

Variable	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
INT	1885.000	1460.956	0.225
SOC	1131.000	986.971	0.127
ATT	1508.000	1407.192	0.067
PBC	1508.000	1425.812	0.055

Source: Authors' work

Table 6. Specific indirect effects (bootstrapping, 5,000 subsamples)

Path	B	Mean	SE	t-stat	P-value	2.5%	97.5%	Decision
FAM → ATT → INT	0.152	0.154	0.028	5.430	0.000	0.101	0.212	Supported
BAC → PBC → INT	0.080	0.080	0.021	3.775	0.000	0.042	0.124	Supported
FAM → SOC → INT	0.030	0.031	0.017	1.737	0.083	-0.001	0.067	Unsupported

Note: SE = Standard Error; CI = Confidence Interval; CIs are calculated based on 5,000 BCa bootstrap subsamples. An indirect effect is supported if the 95% BCa confidence interval excludes zero.

Source: Authors' work

5. Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the critical influence of family environment on shaping Gen Z's digital entrepreneurial intentions. Five of the six hypothesized pathways were supported (H1, H2, H3, H4, H6), while H5 (SOC → INT) was not statistically significant at the 5% level and is therefore not supported. The supported pathways indicate that family-related antecedents are associated with stronger entrepreneurial attitudes, SOC, and perceived behavioral control, which in turn are associated with stronger digital entrepreneurial intentions. Our results suggest that even in the technology-driven context of digital entrepreneurship, a supportive family is associated with stronger entrepreneurial aspirations among Gen Z students in this sample.

Firstly, family support was found to significantly boost

Gen Z's ATT, confirming H1. This indicates that when parents and close family actively encourage and approve of entrepreneurial pursuits, young individuals tend to view entrepreneurship more favorably - as an attractive and worthwhile career path. This result dovetails with previous studies that highlight family encouragement as a cornerstone of youth entrepreneurial intention formation [4], [12]. Our study extends these insights into the digital domain, suggesting that parental support remains vital even for tech-centric startups. Family opinions carry substantial weight in career decisions; thus, supportive parents likely bolster confidence and enthusiasm, whereas a lack of support can dampen a young person's entrepreneurial spirit [26]. The strong influence of FAM on attitude aligns with Saoula et al. [13], who observed that family backing enhances students' favorable disposition toward entrepreneurship.

Secondly, our results demonstrate that family support elevates SOC regarding entrepreneurship (H2). This means that Gen Z individuals with better family support feel greater social pressure or support to also become entrepreneurs. This finding is consistent with prior research, for example Gubik [15] reported that Hungarian students with family support perceived higher social approval for entrepreneurship. Similarly, Shirokova et al. [6] noted that an entrepreneurial environment, including family support, can strengthen SOC among student entrepreneurs. Our contribution lies in confirming this dynamic in a digital entrepreneurship context.

Notably, while H2 (FAM → SOC) was supported, the subsequent path from SOC to digital entrepreneurial intention (H5: SOC → INT) was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.080$, $p = 0.070$). This suggests that although family support shapes Gen Z's perceived social norms around entrepreneurship, these norms do not directly translate into stronger intentions in this sample. Gen Z students may exhibit high digital independence, relying heavily on personal attitude and self-efficacy rather than social pressure when forming career goals. This finding is consistent with prior TPB research in Vietnamese and collectivist contexts, where the direct effect of SOC on entrepreneurial intention has been found to be weak or non-significant [25], [26]. A plausible explanation is that when family support is explicitly modeled as a distinct construct, it absorbs much of the normative social influence, leaving SOC with limited unique explanatory power over intention. Moreover, Gen Z - characterized by digital independence and self-directed decision-making - may be less responsive to perceived social pressure than older generations, relying more on personal attitude and self-efficacy when forming entrepreneurial intentions. This is an interesting boundary condition worthy of further investigation in future research.

Thirdly, we found that an entrepreneurial family background also boosts PBC(H3). This aligns with the notion that exposure to family businesses or entrepreneurial parents imparts tacit knowledge, skills, and networks that make entrepreneurship feel more attainable [5]. Prior studies have observed that individuals from

entrepreneurial families tend to have higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy [14]. Our results concur: Gen Z respondents with entrepreneur parents reported significantly stronger PBC, suggesting they feel more in control of the entrepreneurial process, likely because they have seen first-hand what running a business entails. This finding is consistent with Amofah et al. [11], who found that having entrepreneur parents amplifies youths' confidence in leveraging external support and skills for entrepreneurship. It also resonates with Lee et al. [19], who noted that students with family business backgrounds displayed higher practical entrepreneurial ability in university programs. Although the effect size of BAC on PBC ($\beta \approx 0.29$) was moderate, it is practically meaningful - even a modest boost in self-efficacy can markedly increase the odds of entrepreneurial action, according to social-cognitive theory.

Overall, these findings reinforce and extend existing literature on entrepreneurial intentions. They confirm that family-related factors, both the soft dimension of support and the structural dimension of background, significantly shape the well-known antecedents of entrepreneurial intention (ATT, SOC, PBC) among Gen Z. In doing so, our study bridges traditional entrepreneurship research and the emergent field of digital entrepreneurship. Our results suggest that in emerging markets like Vietnam - and likely in many collectivist or family-centric societies - the family's role remains paramount. Even for a generation often characterized as independent and digitally connected, family still considerably influences career intent. This indicates that the generational shift and the technological shift (digital startups) have not diminished the relevance of family; if anything, family backing continues to be a bedrock for nurturing young entrepreneurs.

These findings carry important policy implications. First, universities should consider integrating family engagement into entrepreneurship education programs. For instance, organizing family-inclusive entrepreneurship workshops or showcasing student-led digital ventures to parents may help foster familial understanding and support. Second, policymakers should recognize the family as a key stakeholder in youth entrepreneurship development. Initiatives such as awareness campaigns highlighting successful family-supported digital entrepreneurs may help normalize and encourage intergenerational collaboration in business creation. While more direct policy instruments such as co-investment incentives may also be worth exploring, such recommendations go beyond the scope of the present study, which measures intentions rather than actual entrepreneurial behavior. Finally, given the demonstrated impact of family background on perceived behavioral control, entrepreneurship support programs should provide additional scaffolding for students from non-entrepreneurial families - such as mentorship schemes, access to entrepreneurial role models, and targeted training - to level the playing field [20], [21]. By acknowledging the centrality of family in the Vietnamese context, these strategies can enhance the effectiveness of entrepreneurship promotion efforts among Gen Z.

6. Conclusion

This study confirms that the family environment plays a pivotal role in shaping Gen Z's digital entrepreneurial intentions. Using data from 377 Vietnamese students, we found that family support significantly enhances a young person's entrepreneurial attitude and SOC. Similarly, family background contributes to stronger perceived behavioral control. In other words, when Gen Z individuals receive encouragement from family and come from business-oriented households, they develop more favorable views of entrepreneurship and are more confident in their startup abilities. These findings extend the Theory of Planned Behavior by showing that external family-related factors are linked to the key precursors of entrepreneurial intention in a digitally framed context.

In addition to these contributions, it is important to acknowledge several limitations of the study that may inform future research. First, family background was measured using a single binary indicator, which, while consistent with prior studies (e.g., Amofah et al. [11]; Santhanamery et al. [20]; Tong et al. [21]), may not fully capture the multidimensional nature of entrepreneurial family influence. Future research could adopt more granular measures to assess the depth and quality of entrepreneurial exposure within families. Second, the sample was drawn from students enrolled in entrepreneurship classes at universities in Ho Chi Minh City using convenience sampling. This group may have greater entrepreneurial exposure than the broader Vietnamese Gen Z population, potentially over-representing students with heightened entrepreneurial awareness, which limits the generalizability of the findings to broader Vietnamese Gen Z. The findings should therefore be interpreted as evidence from Vietnamese Gen Z university students enrolled in entrepreneurship-related courses, rather than Vietnamese Gen Z broadly. Future studies should employ probability sampling across diverse regions and educational backgrounds. Additionally, the Gen Z birth range applied in this study (1995-2010) may be broader than the actual university sample; respondents were enrolled students in late 2024, suggesting the effective age range was approximately 18-29 years (born approximately 1995-2006). Third, the model did not include control variables such as gender, field of study, prior entrepreneurial experience, or exposure to entrepreneurship education. Including these variables in future studies may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing digital entrepreneurial intention.

Fourth, the ATT, SOC, and PBC measurement items were adapted from Vamvaka et al. [20] and refer to entrepreneurship in general rather than digital entrepreneurship specifically. Although the survey context framed all questions within a digital entrepreneurship setting, the item wording itself was not digitally adapted. Future research should develop and validate scales that explicitly capture attitudes, norms, and perceived control in relation to digital venture creation. Lastly, as a cross-sectional survey design, this study cannot establish

causality. The observed relationships between family environment, TPB antecedents, and digital entrepreneurial intention reflect associations at a single point in time. Longitudinal or experimental designs would be needed to confirm directional causal effects.

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