

Beyond Networks and Status: The Role of Social Positioning in Shaping Entrepreneurship Behaviour

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Abstract

The paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of entrepreneurship literature and investigates the intricate relationship between social positioning and entrepreneurship behaviour, analysing how an individual's social context including social status, cultural identity, and networks, collectively shape an individual's entrepreneurial motivations, decisions, and outcomes. Drawing from a wide array of interdisciplinary studies spanning sociology, psychology, economics, and management, the paper explores how social positioning acts as a lens through which individuals perceive opportunities, assess risks, and navigate the entrepreneurial landscape. This paper posits that an individual's social positioning, encompassing elements such as social status, networks, and cultural affiliations, acts as a lens through which their motivations, risk perceptions, and strategic decisions in entrepreneurship are shaped. It is argued that an individual's social positioning serves as a foundation for their self-concept, influencing their aspirations, values, and goals. The intricate interplay of these external factors with an entrepreneur's social positioning underscores the complexity of entrepreneurial behaviour, highlighting how societal and contextual forces shape the opportunities pursued, risks undertaken, and outcomes achieved. Despite significant progress, the paper highlights research gaps, including the need to explore the two-way relationship between social positioning and entrepreneurship, the intersectionality, the temporal evolution of social positioning, and the influence of cultural and institutional factors. Finally, the paper concludes by underscoring the relevance of this research area for informing policy making, fostering diversity, and contributing to the dynamic landscape of entrepreneurship in a rapidly changing world.

Keywords: Cultural Capital, Opportunity Perception, Risk Perception, Social Network, Social Status

Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of global economies, entrepreneurship has emerged as a pivotal force driving innovation, economic growth, and job creation. The entrepreneurial journey is often romanticised as a path to self-reliance, financial independence, creative fulfilment, and disruptive change (Dana et al., 2022; Mmbaga et al., 2020). Beneath this surface lies a complex interplay of personal, cultural, and societal factors that shape the decision to embark on this journey (Blanchflower & Oswald, 1998). However, the decision to venture into entrepreneurship is far from arbitrary; it is shaped by a myriad of interrelated factors. For instance, where personal traits such as risk-taking propensity (Agustina & Fauzia, 2021) and self-efficacy are frequently associated with entrepreneurial intentions and actions (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), cultural norms and societal attitudes also shape an individual's perception towards the career path and influence their likelihood to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Dheer & Lenartowicz, 2019). Furthermore, access to financial resources (Hanaysha et al., 2022; Omri, Frikha & Bouraoui, 2015), entrepreneurial ecosystems (Spigel, 2017), and supportive social networks significantly encourage and enable entrepreneurship (Folta, Delmar & Wennberg, 2010; Shane, 2009). Among these factors, the concept of social positioning has emerged as a significant determinant that melds the attitudes, motivations, and actions of entrepreneurs. At the core of social structure, social positioning lies in the recognition that individuals do not exist in isolation; rather, they are enmeshed within a complex web of social relationships, hierarchies, and networks. Social positioning encompasses

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an individual's placement within this intricate matrix, comprising dimensions such as socioeconomic status, educational background, cultural identity, and social connections. These dimensions collectively contribute to an individual's sense of self, identity, and perceived role within society (Lawson, 2022).

Social positioning offers a more comprehensive perspective on understanding entrepreneurship than merely focusing on social status or social networks. Unlike social status, which is typically defined by one's rank or prestige in society, social positioning encompasses an individual's relative standing in social, economic, and symbolic terms within a particular field or domain (Bourdieu, 1984). This positioning can influence entrepreneurial opportunities and access to resources (Welter, 2011). Additionally, while social networks are crucial for accessing information, resources, and partnerships, they only provide a snapshot of an individual's immediate connections. Social positioning, on the other hand, accounts for broader relational dynamics and power structures, highlighting how they shape entrepreneurial behaviour and opportunities (Granovetter, 1985). Therefore, by emphasising social positioning, we can gain a deeper insight into the nuanced interactions and contexts that drive entrepreneurial actions.

The present paper dives deep into entrepreneurship literature and explicates the multifaceted relationship between social positioning and entrepreneurship behaviour, analysing how an individual's social context influences their entrepreneurial pursuits. While existing literature has made significant strides in exploring the influence of social networks, cultural capital, and perceptions of risk on entrepreneurial decisions, several uncharted territories remain unexplored. First, there is a dearth of research that delves into the intersectionality of social positioning, considering how the convergence of multiple dimensions such as gender, ethnicity, and age intricately shape an individual's motives and actions within the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Honig, 2019; Marlow, 2019; Pankov, Velamuri & Schneckenberg, 2021). For instance, studies have revealed how women entrepreneurs from different ethnic backgrounds navigate distinct socio-cultural norms and institutional barriers, leading to diverse motivations and strategic choices (Thornton & Klyver, 2021). Similarly, the interplay of age with other

identity dimensions influences an entrepreneur's risk-taking propensity, innovation strategies, and resource allocation decisions (Lechner, Volery & Zellweger, 2020). By overlooking the unique challenges and opportunities faced by individuals occupying specific positions (marginalised/privileged) within these intersections, previous research fails to provide a comprehensive picture of the mechanisms through which social positioning influences entrepreneurship. Second, previous studies have extensively investigated the role of social networks in the entrepreneurship journey but how social positioning mediates the relationship is still explored. As entrepreneurs navigate challenges and pivot their strategies, their acquired or changing social positioning influences their social networks which may then undergo transformations that profoundly impact their access to resources and information. A nuanced exploration of how changes in social positioning within these networks correspond to shifts in entrepreneurial behaviour and outcomes would shed light on the adaptive nature of entrepreneurship in response to changing circumstances. Another notable research gap lies in understanding the mediating and moderating factors that amplify or mitigate the influence of social positioning on entrepreneurial behaviour. Factors such as institutional environments, cultural norms, and geographic contexts can interact with an entrepreneur's social positioning, either reinforcing or attenuating its impact (Meoli et al., 2020; Vedula et al., 2022). Institutional environments, characterised by regulatory frameworks, government policies, and economic conditions, can either facilitate or impede an entrepreneur's access to resources and opportunities, thereby influencing the strategic decisions they make (North, 1990). Cultural norms, prevalent attitudes, and values within a society influence an entrepreneur's perceived legitimacy, shaping their ability to introduce innovative products or services (Shane, 1992). Moreover, the geographic context in which an entrepreneur operates dictates the availability of resources, market demand, and competitive dynamics, influencing their business strategies and expansion plans (Autio, Sapienza & Almeida, 2000). The intricate interplay of these external factors with an entrepreneur's social positioning underscores the complexity of entrepreneurial behaviour, highlighting how societal and contextual forces shape the opportunities pursued, risks undertaken, and outcomes achieved. Moreover, there exists a need to explore the

temporal dimension of the relationship between social positioning and entrepreneurship. Henceforth, this paper delves into the intricate relationship between social positioning and entrepreneurship, examining how social status, networks, cultural capital, and perceptions of opportunity and risk interweave to shape entrepreneurial motives, actions, and outcomes. Addressing these gaps not only enriches our theoretical understanding but also provides policymakers, educators, and practitioners with insights that can shape more effective strategies for nurturing inclusive and thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems. The objective of the present paper is thus to answer a set of pivotal research questions, such as (a) How does the intersectionality of social positioning dimensions influence entrepreneurial choices? (b) How does social positioning shape perceptions of risk and opportunity? (c) To what extent does social positioning impact the growth trajectory of entrepreneurial ventures? These proposed research questions provide a roadmap to unravel the mechanisms through which social positioning influences entrepreneurial choices and outcomes.

Social Positioning: A Multifaceted Lens

The framework of social positioning encapsulates the intricate web of relationships, social hierarchy, and network within which individuals exist. Comprising dimensions such as socioeconomic status, educational background, cultural identity, ethnicity, and social connections, social positioning engenders a sense of identity, purpose, and belonging (Mmbaga et al., 2020). This positioning plays a pivotal role in shaping an individual's perception of self and their role within society. Entrepreneurship, as an endeavour deeply rooted in personal experiences and social interactions (Germak & Robinson, 2014), is inevitably influenced by an individual's position within these socio-cultural landscapes. Social positioning serves as a lens through which individuals perceive opportunities, assess risks, and navigate challenges.

Status Withdrawal Theory, proposed by sociologist E. Hagen, provides the framework through which we can understand the intricate relationship between an individual's social positioning and their entrepreneurship behaviour. According to this theory, individuals who experience a decline in their social

status, often due to factors like unemployment or a change in life circumstances, may withdraw from conventional societal norms and seek alternative paths, including entrepreneurship, as a means to restore their position in the society (Hagen, 1962). Entrepreneurs from marginalised social positions might perceive entrepreneurship as a pathway to regain status, challenging systemic barriers, and proving their worth within their communities (Thornton & Klyver, 2021). Conversely, those with advantageous social position may leverage their networks and resources to pursue entrepreneurial ventures that align with their existing status, reinforcing their privileged positions (Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, Status Withdrawal Theory illuminates how an individual's social positioning can serve as a driving force behind their entrepreneurship behaviour, shaping both their motives and actions within the entrepreneurial landscape. Further, according to Tajfel and Turner (1979), an individual's self-concept and behaviour are strongly influenced by their membership or status quo in social groups. They suggest that individuals strive to maintain a positive sense of self by identifying with groups that they perceive as favourable and distinct from other groups. The concept of social positioning thus aligns closely with their social identity, as an individual's social status, networks, and cultural affiliations contribute to their sense of identity and belonging within society. When it comes to creativity, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) offers valuable insights into how social positioning influences the expression and exploration of innovative ideas. Individuals often draw on their social identity to navigate their environments and interactions, and this applies to creative endeavours as well. An individual's social positioning shapes their perceptions of what is considered creative and acceptable within their social circles. For instance, someone with a strong affiliation to a creative community may be more inclined to engage in unconventional thinking, as it aligns with the group's norms and values. On the other hand, an individual from a more conservative social environment might perceive conformity as a more favourable path. Thus, an individual's creativity can be influenced by their desire to align with the perceived expectations of their social group, either embracing or deviating from established creative norms based on their social positioning.

Social Positioning, Social Network, and Accessibility of Resources

The influence of the dynamics of social networks over the course of an entrepreneurial journey is a compelling and transformative aspect of entrepreneurship. Social networks, comprising relationships with mentors, peers, investors, and collaborators, evolve in parallel with an entrepreneur's progress (Uzzi, 1996). At the inception stage, social networks can serve as a wellspring of ideas, feedback, and initial support. As the entrepreneurial venture gains traction, networks become instrumental in sourcing funding, forging strategic partnerships, and accessing critical resources. The dynamic nature of these networks is evident as entrepreneurs continuously adapt and expand their connections to match the evolving needs of their ventures (Moghaddam et al., 2018). Relationships deepen as mutual trust and shared goals develop, fostering a collaborative environment that nurtures innovation and resilience. Social positioning can impact an individual's access to resources and networks that foster creativity. Those with higher social status or extensive networks may have more exposure to diverse perspectives, knowledge, and experiences, enabling them to draw inspiration from various sources.

Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) set the foundation with their groundbreaking work proposing that entrepreneurship is embedded within social structures and is significantly shaped by the network's individuals. They proposed that the relationships an individual forms within their networks greatly influence their access to critical resources such as funding, market information, and industry insights crucial for entrepreneurial success. The social positioning of an entrepreneur within these networks becomes a critical determinant of their capacity to mobilise support, forge partnerships, and seize emerging prospects. In their opinion individuals positioned at advantageous points within these networks are better positioned to mobilise support, collaborate with key stakeholders, and seize entrepreneurial opportunities. Conversely, those situated on the peripheries of influential networks may find themselves disadvantaged in terms of resource acquisition and access to knowledge (Sánchez-García et al., 2022). In this line of thought Burt (1992) introduces the concept of structural hole that adds depth to the understanding of the interlink between social structure

and entrepreneurship. The sociometric perspective of entrepreneurship emphasises the role of structural holes, characterised by gaps or disconnections between actors in a network creating valuable opportunities for individuals to bridge connections, access diverse information, and develop novel ideas. Entrepreneurs who strategically position themselves at these structural holes are poised to exploit untapped market niches and foster disruptive innovation (Tortoriello, 2015; Zaheer & Bell, 2005). These often serve as brokers of novel ideas and information, capitalising on their unique positioning to drive innovation and create distinct value propositions. Further in another research Aldrich and Martinez (2001) underscore the influence of social networks in facilitating access to resources such as funding, expertise, and market information. Those positioned at higher echelons of social networks often possess an advantage in garnering support critical to entrepreneurial success.

Conversely, network dynamics can also introduce challenges, such as the risk of stagnation or conflicts. The Structural Hole Theory, as introduced by Burt (1992), offers a theoretical lens through which the challenges introduced by the dynamics of social networks within the context of entrepreneurship can be understood. While social networks undoubtedly offer opportunities for resource acquisition, knowledge dissemination, and collaboration, they can also introduce challenges that impact an entrepreneur's journey. According to this theory, structural holes, i.e., the gaps between individuals or groups that are not directly connected, can lead to valuable information being trapped in the spaces between network connections. In an entrepreneurial context, social network dynamics can inadvertently create structural holes, limiting the flow of diverse perspectives and novel insights. Such limitations can result in the risk of stagnation, as entrepreneurs may be confined to echo chambers of information without exposure to fresh ideas or alternative viewpoints (Tortoriello, 2015; Zaheer & Bell, 2005). Furthermore, the evolution of social networks can give rise to conflicts, competition, and power imbalances as entrepreneurs vie for limited resources and influence within their networks. By elucidating how social network dynamics can introduce challenges like stagnation and conflicts, the Structural Hole Theory provides a crucial perspective for entrepreneurs and practitioners seeking to navigate the intricacies of networking for entrepreneurial

success. The evolving nature of social networks underscores their significance as more than mere conduits for resources—they shape the entrepreneurial trajectory and contribute to the dynamic tapestry of an entrepreneur's journey (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986).

Social Status and Perceived Opportunities

Social status, a component of social positioning and often intertwined with an individual's socioeconomic, educational, and occupational standing, profoundly shapes an individual's perception of opportunities and risks associated with their entrepreneurial choices (Blanchflower & Oswald, 1998). Individuals from marginalised backgrounds might view entrepreneurship as an avenue for upward mobility, a way to challenge systemic inequalities, striving to transcend socioeconomic constraints, and forge their paths to prosperity (Pidduck, & Clark, 2021). In contrast, individuals occupying higher social strata might perceive entrepreneurship as a means to further elevate their status or to preserve a legacy of success. They in general are motivated to sustain their social status or harness their resources for innovative ventures. Precisely, an individual's social status serves as a powerful lens through which they interpret and evaluate opportunities within the entrepreneurial landscape. These diverse perceptions are inextricably linked to an individual's social positioning, as it colours their outlook on the potential rewards and risks associated with entrepreneurial ventures.

The interplay between social status and opportunity perception is also mediated by cognitive biases that influence how entrepreneurs process and evaluate information. For instance, research in behavioural economics, such as a study by Agarwal, Driscoll, Gabaix and Laibson (2008), has shown that individuals from higher social status backgrounds exhibit an overconfidence bias, believing in their ability to navigate challenges and capitalise on opportunities due to their privileged position. This cognitive bias can lead them to perceive opportunities more optimistically and confidently, often emboldening them to pursue ambitious and innovative ventures. Conversely, individuals from lower social status backgrounds may exhibit a negativity bias, potentially leading them to perceive barriers as

insurmountable and opportunities as unattainable. Such biases can impact their willingness to take risks and explore entrepreneurial paths (Knobloch-Westerwick, Mothes & Polavin, 2020). Social status not only shapes an individual's internal cognition but also interacts with their external environment, particularly their social networks, to influence opportunity identification. Entrepreneurial opportunities often emerge from interactions within one's network, and individuals with higher social status are more likely to have access to influential and resource-rich networks. Such networks can provide them with a wider array of opportunities, ranging from funding sources to strategic partnerships. Additionally, social status can affect an individual's ability to penetrate exclusive networks where high-impact opportunities are more likely to arise, amplifying their competitive advantage in spotting and capitalising on promising ventures.

Cultural Capital and Entrepreneurial Aspirations

The interlink between social positioning, cultural capital, and entrepreneurial aspirations is a complex and dynamic relationship that significantly influences an individual's entrepreneurial journey. The concept of cultural capital, as theorised by Bourdieu (1986) refers to an individual's non-financial assets, such as education, knowledge, skills, and cultural resources that individuals acquire through their socialisation and upbringing. This contributes to their ability to navigate and succeed within various social contexts, which can be particularly relevant in entrepreneurship. An individual's social positioning, which encompasses their social status, networks, and education, can significantly shape their cultural capital. For example, those from privileged backgrounds often have access to higher-quality education, extensive networks, and exposure to diverse cultural experiences, which enhance their cultural capital (Ratten et al., 2017). This cultural capital can include knowledge about markets, consumer preferences, and innovative trends, which can be invaluable for aspiring entrepreneurs. Here, privileged cultural capital enables them to confidently engage with diverse stakeholders, effectively communicate their ideas, and access networks crucial for entrepreneurial advancement. This provides them with a distinct advantage in recognising

opportunities, mobilising resources, and ultimately attaining entrepreneurial success. Additionally, cultural capital can facilitate access to mentors, role models, and resources that further nurture entrepreneurial aspirations (Anderson, Warren & Bensemman, 2019).

Additionally, individuals positioned at the intersections of different cultural groups may engage in cultural bricolage. Cultural bricolage refers to the creative adaptation and blending of diverse cultural elements and practices to overcome resource constraints and navigate complex entrepreneurial environments (Baker & Nelson, 2005). An individual's social positioning significantly influences their ability to engage in cultural bricolage. Entrepreneurs from diverse social backgrounds often draw upon their unique experiences and cultural resources to craft innovative solutions (Bojica et al., 2020). For instance, immigrant entrepreneurs frequently leverage their cultural capital, such as language skills and cultural knowledge, to create niche markets and distinctive business models (Dabić et al., 2020). Recognising the interplay between social positioning, creative synthesis, and cross-fertilization of ideas is essential for understanding how societal contexts mould the creative process and how individuals navigate the delicate balance between conformity and novelty in their pursuit of creative endeavours (Rock & Grant, 2016).

Two prominent theories, Social Capital Theory, and Information Processing Theory, provide insightful perspectives on the intricate relationship between social positioning, information access, and entrepreneurship behaviour. Social Capital Theory, as proposed by Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1988), highlights how an individual's social networks and connections, influenced by their social positioning, can serve as valuable resources. These networks provide access to diverse information, knowledge, and perspectives, fostering creativity by exposing individuals to a wide range of ideas and influences (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Liao & Welsch, 2005). Additionally, Information Processing Theory, as explored by March and Simon (2005), emphasises the role of cognitive processes in creativity. An individual's social positioning can impact their cognitive structure, influencing how they process and synthesise information. Those with extensive networks and varied

social experiences may engage in associative thinking, connecting disparate ideas to generate novel solutions (Carmeli, Dutton & Hardin, 2015). Together, these theories illuminate how an individual's social positioning shapes their access to information, which in turn influences the creative process by facilitating the integration of diverse insights and ideas.

Social Positioning Influences Perception of Risk and Motivations

Social positioning, as elucidated by Social Positioning Theory (Lawson, 2022), significantly influences an individual's perception of risk and motivations for entrepreneurship. According to this theory, an individual's social context, encompassing their status, networks, and cultural affiliations, acts as a lens through which he/she evaluates risks and motivations in the entrepreneurial landscape. A study by Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2017) in emerging markets found that entrepreneurs from disadvantaged social positions often exhibit higher risk tolerance, driven by their motivation to improve their economic circumstances and social status. They view entrepreneurship as a mechanism for socio-economic upliftment, as it offers a means to escape systemic inequalities and create opportunities (Zhang, Duysters & Cloudt, 2014). Conversely, Hassan, Poon, and Alisa (2023) demonstrate that individuals from disadvantaged social positions may perceive higher financial risks associated with entrepreneurship due to limited access to resources, potentially impacting their motivation to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Further, entrepreneurs from more privileged backgrounds may perceive higher risks due to the fear of losing their advantageous position, which can influence their entrepreneurial motivations (Zott, Amit & Massa, 2011). For these people sustaining social status, achieving personal fulfilment, or exploring creative avenues are aligned with their cultural capital. Entrepreneurs from privileged backgrounds may experience reduced perception of financial risk due to the safety net provided by their social positioning, and their motivations might be driven by a desire to preserve family legacy or capitalise on existing connections (Acs & Audretsch, 1990).

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), on the other hand, posits that individuals' motivations and perceptions of risk are influenced by their desire to conform to the norms and expectations of their desired or belonging social groups. A study by Rattan and Dweck (2018) found that individuals' identity-related motivations and beliefs influenced their risk-taking behaviour. Furthermore, Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in behaviours that enhance their social identity and self-esteem. Entrepreneurs may be motivated to pursue ventures that align with the aspirations and expectations of their social groups, striving for recognition and validation (Stuart, Hoang & Hybels, 1999). This alignment between social positioning, identity, and motivations intricately shapes an individual's perception of risk, as entrepreneurs prioritise the risks that might threaten their social standing or reinforce their social identity (Lerner & Keltner, 2001).

Turner (1987) offers self-categorisation theory which extends the argument of social identity theory and claims group identification plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' motivations. Entrepreneurs align their motivations with the values, norms, and aspirations of their social groups to enhance their self-esteem and maintain a positive social identity. Individuals henceforth tend to categorise themselves into various social groups based on commonalities, and their behaviours are influenced by the group identities they adopt. These categories generally include socioeconomic status, cultural background, ethnicity, and affiliations, which significantly shape these group identities and, consequently, an individual's decision making. Individuals from privileged backgrounds identify with groups that emphasise stability and security, leading to a tendency to perceive risks more acutely due to the potential threats to their established social status and lifestyle (Lerner & Keltner, 2001). They are motivated to uphold family legacies and reinforce their social status through entrepreneurial ventures (Acs & Audretsch, 1990). On the other hand, individuals from marginalised backgrounds may identify with groups that encourage resilience and innovation, potentially leading them to view risks as stepping stones towards breaking societal barriers and achieving upward mobility. People from marginalised backgrounds are also driven by motivations that align with the collective goals of

their community, seeking to uplift their social group and challenge systemic inequalities (Grimm et al., 2013). By understanding how entrepreneurs' behaviours are shaped by their self-categorised social identities, this theory provides a comprehensive perspective to explore the dynamic relationship between societal context, identity, and entrepreneurial behaviour.

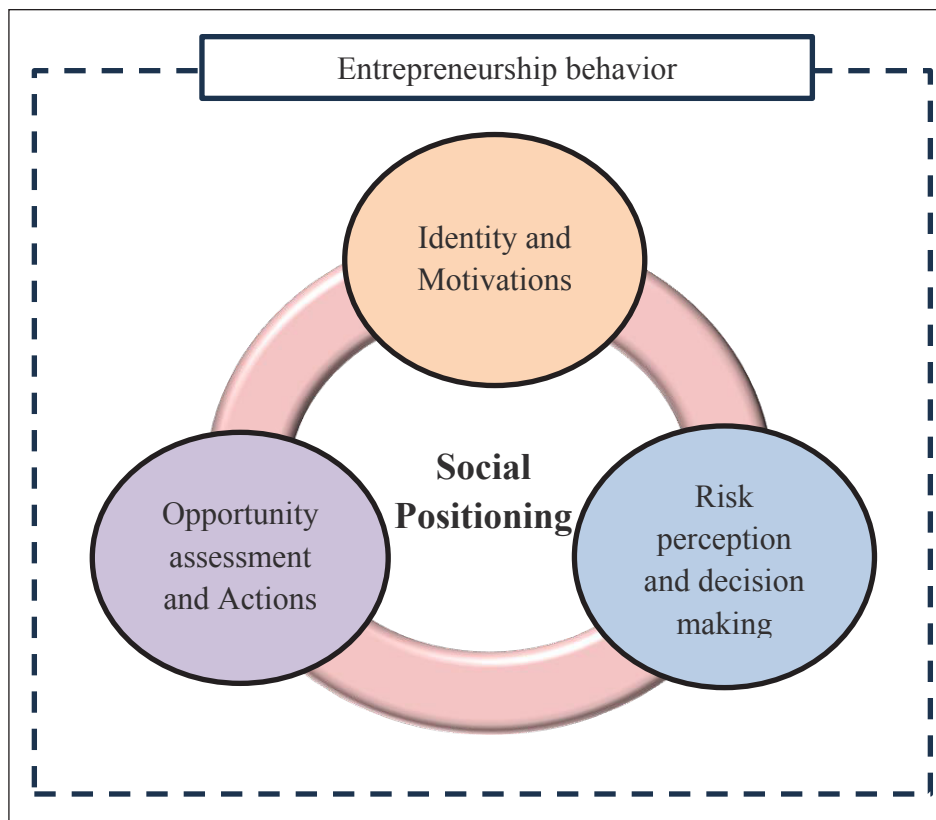
Summary

In a nutshell, the present review seeks to bridge the gap between an individual's social positioning and their entrepreneurship behaviour by emphasising the centrality of identity and societal context. Grounded in a synthesis of social psychology and entrepreneurship literature, this paper posits that an individual's social positioning, encompassing elements such as social status, networks, and cultural affiliations, acts as a lens through which their motivations, risk perceptions, and strategic decisions in entrepreneurship are shaped. It is argued that an individual's social positioning serves as a foundation for their self-concept, influencing their aspirations, values, and goals. Moreover, societal norms and expectations, associated with an individual's social positioning, act as cognitive frameworks that guide their assessment of opportunities, risks, and appropriate entrepreneurial actions. By recognising the intricate relationship between identity and entrepreneurship, Social Positioning can be theorised as a framework to explore how an individual's societal context fundamentally influences their entrepreneurial behaviour, offering insights into the mechanisms that drive decision-making, innovation, and success within the dynamic landscape of entrepreneurship. Considering an individual's social positioning as a multidimensional construct, this framework delves into the layers of identity, power dynamics, and cultural norms that shape their entrepreneurial aspirations, risk perceptions, and strategic decisions. It acknowledges the role of societal expectations in moulding an individual's self-concept and, consequently, their attitudes towards innovation, risk-taking, and resource mobilisation. Social Positioning posits that the collective values and norms associated with an individual's social position act as an invisible backdrop that guides their navigation of entrepreneurial challenges and opportunities. As a comprehensive framework, it unveils how societal

positioning fundamentally influences entrepreneurial behaviour, allowing for a deeper exploration of the mechanisms underlying individual actions, motivations, risk perception, and decision making within the dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem (See Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Conceptual diagram visually represents the

complex web of connections that underlie the relationship between social positioning and entrepreneurship behavior. The disk interconnects these three components to show the dynamic interplay between identity, risk perception, opportunity assessment, and actions, all of which are profoundly influenced by an individual's social positioning.



Source: Auditi Pramanik.

Fig. 1: Conceptual Diagram

Future Scope

While exploring the interlink between social positioning and entrepreneurship, it is essential to remember that none of these constructs are static, and so forth the relationship. The existing literature on social positioning and entrepreneurship has made significant strides in elucidating the influence of an individual's social context on their entrepreneurial behaviour. However, a noticeable gap persists in the form of limited attention to the temporal dynamics of this relationship. The majority of studies tend to offer cross-sectional snapshots, capturing the influence of social positioning at a specific point in time, typically

during the venture's initiation phase. This approach neglects the potential evolution of an individual's social positioning and its impact on entrepreneurial behaviour over time. Influential factors such as experience, network expansion, and evolving social dynamics shape not only the initiation but also the development, sustainability, and success of entrepreneurial endeavours (Davidsson & Gordon, 2016). To address this research gap, longitudinal studies that track entrepreneurs' journeys from inception to growth and sustainability are essential. Such studies can provide insights into how shifts in social positioning, such as changes in social networks, access to resources, and evolving motivations, interact with entrepreneurial

experiences and outcomes over an extended period. In doing so, researchers can uncover the nuanced and dynamic nature of the relationship between social positioning and entrepreneurship, shedding light on how this influence morphs as entrepreneurs progress through their entrepreneurial journeys. As entrepreneurs progress through different stages of venture development, their social networks, resources, and motivations may undergo transformations that also alter their social positioning (Halder, 2019; Kalantaridis & Fletcher, 2012). To gain a comprehensive view, it is crucial to explore both the end, i.e., how shifts in social positioning impact entrepreneurial behaviour and outcomes beyond mere initiation, encompassing the phases of growth, scaling, and sustainability and vis-a-vis.

Additionally, while research has acknowledged that social networks play a pivotal role in entrepreneurship, the mechanisms through which these networks interact with an individual's social positioning are not thoroughly explored. Studies often focus on the mere existence of networks rather than their composition, quality, and dynamics. An individual's position within their social networks, influenced by their social positioning, can significantly affect resource acquisition, opportunity identification, and overall entrepreneurial behaviour (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986). Investigating these nuanced processes can provide deeper insights into how an individual's social context mediates the relationship between social positioning and entrepreneurship. Moreover, substantial strides have been made in uncovering the relationship between multidimensionality of social status, the impact of cultural and institutional factors, the intricate interplay with social networks, and the complexities arising from cognitive styles and entrepreneurship in the existing literature (Shepherd, Williams & Patzelt, 2015). Evidently, a clear gap exists in explaining and exploring the direct relationship between social positioning and entrepreneurship behaviour. Individuals at the crossroads of various socio-cultural dimensions, such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, may face unique challenges and opportunities that differ from those experienced by individuals with singular identities (Greene, 2017). Henceforth, addressing these gaps are not only vital for enriching our theoretical understanding but also for informing policies and interventions that promote inclusive and diverse

entrepreneurial ecosystems, fostering entrepreneurship for individuals across various social spectrums.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the intricate linkage between social positioning and entrepreneurship behaviour unveils a captivating landscape where an individual's societal context intertwines with their aspirations, motivations, and decisions within the entrepreneurial realm. As revealed through extensive research, an individual's social positioning, encompassing elements such as social status, networks, and cultural affiliations, significantly shapes their entrepreneurial journey. Recognising the influence of social positioning on risk perception, motivations, opportunity identification, and resource access sheds light on the multifaceted interplay between personal identity and the pursuit of innovative ventures. Moreover, as the field of entrepreneurship continues to evolve in response to changing social dynamics, technological advancements, and economic shifts (Rubleske & Berente, 2017), the future scope of study holds the promise of delving even deeper into the dynamic relationships that characterise the intersection of social positioning and entrepreneurship behaviour. By unravelling unexplored dimensions such as the role of virtual networks, the impact of cultural diversity, and the intersectionality of social identities, researchers can enrich our understanding of the mechanisms that underlie entrepreneurial actions in diverse contexts. Ultimately, a comprehensive exploration of this nexus not only contributes to academic knowledge but also informs policy makers, educators, and practitioners, fostering a more inclusive, innovative, and impactful entrepreneurial ecosystem for the benefit of societies worldwide.

In the same line of thought, policy makers and employers play a pivotal role in nurturing social positioning and harnessing its potential for fostering creative endeavours within organisations. To effectively leverage social positioning, policy makers can implement diversity and inclusion initiatives that promote a diverse workforce, embracing individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds, cultures, and identities (Van Knippenberg, Nishii & Dwertmann, 2020). By creating an inclusive environment that values different perspectives, policy makers can provide opportunities for individuals to draw upon their unique social positioning to contribute

innovative ideas that reflect a broader range of experiences. Employers, on the other hand, can foster a supportive organisational culture that recognises and celebrates diverse social positioning, encouraging employees to bring their authentic selves to the workplace. Strategies such as mentorship programs, cross-functional teams, and resource allocation for skill development can facilitate the integration of diverse perspectives into creative projects (Manoharan, Madera & Singal, 2021). Additionally, employers can provide platforms for employees to share their personal experiences and expertise, facilitating a dynamic exchange of ideas that draws from their diverse social networks. By embracing and nurturing social positioning, policy makers and employers can harness the power of diverse backgrounds and perspectives to drive creative endeavours that benefit both individuals and the organisation as a whole.

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