

Article

Motivational Facets of Sustainable Entrepreneurship: A Systematic Review and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract: Entrepreneurial activity and especially sustainable entrepreneurship (SE) significantly impact the achievement of the sustainability transition. While we have a decent understanding of the drivers of entrepreneurial activity, there is limited knowledge and no systematic consolidation of existing work examining what motivates entrepreneurs to engage in SE. To address this issue, we conducted a systematic literature review analyzing 50 papers derived from the Scopus database since 2017. We found that the specific construct discussed in this literature is the *Motivation for Sustainable Entrepreneurship (MSE)* and argue that it is a combined construct comprising the motivation to have an impact on sustainability and the motivation to become an entrepreneur. We conclude by suggesting three areas for future research: First, a clear definition of MSE is needed, distinguishing what constitutes motivation for impacting sustainable development and motivation for engaging in entrepreneurship. Second, despite having a good understanding of the factors influencing MSE, these are often based on specific case-studies and could benefit from larger and more diverse samples as well as research methods. Third, we have a very limited understanding of the effect of MSE on new venture creation, entrepreneurial practices, performance, and success.

Keywords: entrepreneurial; motivation; intention; sustainability; sustainable development goals (SDG); UN17; literature review



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1. Introduction

The visible consequences of climate change and environmental deterioration contribute to increased calls for a transition toward greater sustainability in all areas of life. Research on sustainable entrepreneurship (SE) explores how entrepreneurial projects can contribute to this transition by creating innovative market solutions with ecological, social, and economic value [1,2]. It can be defined as a new business practice [3] in which sustainable development is linked to entrepreneurial activities [4]. Over the last decade, the subject has become one of the most important environmental discourses in the entrepreneurship research community [5–9]. Within the research area, drivers of engaging in SE [10–12] and drivers of conducting business in a sustainable way [4,13,14], such as environmental and social values, entrepreneurial passion, and market-based incentives, have consistently been of particular interest [15]. Understanding the facets of motivation for SE can help to adapt policies for successful entrepreneurship support as well as to set the right incentives to further advance the globally demanded sustainable development [16]. Studies in neighboring fields have furthermore found that motivation can be an antecedent for performance [17,18]. In this context, entrepreneurial motivation can be understood as the purpose or cause to engage in entrepreneurial action [18–21].

However, despite several researchers highlighting the relevance of this topic [22–25] and proposals for refining our current understanding of SE regarding its motivational

facets [22], there is no systematic consolidation of existing work or identification of future research opportunities examining entrepreneurial motivation in the context of SE. Some studies separately reflect the current state of literature on either SE [15,26] or entrepreneurial motivation [27] from different perspectives. On this basis and given the topicality, importance, and urgency of the sustainability issue today [28–30], we argue that a better understanding of what drives entrepreneurs to initiate SE projects and how SE opportunities affect entrepreneurs' motivation is urgently needed. Thus, we aimed to structure the academic debate on the motivational facets of SE to summarize the current state of knowledge and derive future research opportunities based on the following research questions: How are the motivational facets of SE currently understood? What influences on and of motivation in the SE context are currently being discussed in the academic literature?

We conducted a systematic literature analysis of 50 papers derived from the Scopus database since 2017 to summarize, synthesize, and discuss previous findings in the research field. After the explanation of the methodical approach based on Tranfield et al. [31], we structure the body of literature in three focus themes (influences *on* motivation, *understanding* motivation, and influences *of* motivation) and eight assigned topics. Based on our synthesis, we conclude that the focus of the discussion under these themes lies either on the general motivation to start a new venture or on the motivation to have an impact on sustainability. We argue that these two elements jointly form the construct of *Motivation for Sustainable Entrepreneurship (MSE)*. Our review indicates that:

- (1) We need a clear definition of *MSE* distinguishing what constitutes general motivation for impacting sustainable development and motivation for engaging in entrepreneurship.
- (2) We have a good understanding of what factors influence *MSE*; yet, these are often based on specific case studies and could benefit from larger and more diverse samples as well as different research methods. These factors include access to positive values, resources, education, role models and best practices, and absence of limitation and fear of failure.
- (3) We have a very limited understanding of the effect of *MSE* on new venture creation, entrepreneurial practices, performance, and success.

The reminder of this paper first introduces our review approach followed by an outline of our results. We then discuss and synthesize the content of the included papers to finally derive our conclusions and draw an agenda for future research.

2. Review Approach

Our paper follows the advice of Tranfield et al. [31] for conducting a systematic literature review. Like the PRISMA statement used in medical research [32], they proposed a clear protocol for transparency and replicability of systematic reviews in the business and management field comprising five phases: 1) the identification of research, 2) the selection of studies, 3) quality assessment, 4) data extraction and monitoring, and 5) data synthesis. In this section, we focus on the initial three phases to summarize and report our search strategy. In the following Section 3, we summarize our results from the data extraction phase, while Section 4 presents the synthesis of the literature. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

2.1. Identification of Research

During the first step, we identified relevant research to be included in our review. We carried out an initial keyword screening by reading several articles discussing both SE and entrepreneurs' motivation or drivers to start sustainability-oriented ventures. This led to the identification of our main keywords *motiv**, *sustainab**, and *entrepreneur**. We chose the Scopus database as it comprises the most comprehensive collection of academic literature for the field of this review [33] as well as for data availability reasons at our research institutes.

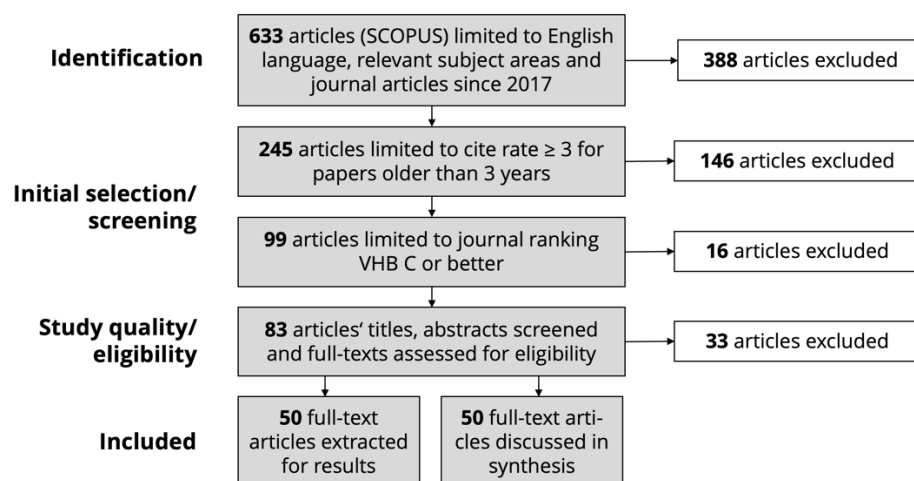


Figure 1. Overview of the review protocol.

2.2. Initial Selection of Studies

We then carried out the database search to select the studies to be included in our review. In June 2022, our initial search led to 633 results using the following search string:

(TITLE-ABS-KEY (motiv*) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (sustainab*) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (entrepreneur*))

We decided to focus on peer-reviewed journal articles published in the English language since 2017. This time horizon was selected due to a visible increase in research interest and publication numbers on the subject during the last five years. Moreover, relevant journals had either been founded (e.g., International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research) or started publishing on the subject (e.g., Technological Forecasting and Social Change) in 2017 or later. We additionally confined the search to the subject areas business, management and accounting, social sciences, economics, econometrics and finance, as well as decision sciences. This resulted in 245 papers considered relevant for the purpose of our review.

2.3. Study Quality and Content Assessment

To ensure the inclusion of relevant and high-quality research, we then added two further exclusion criteria. For every paper older than three years, we checked for a minimum cite rate of three citations per year to ensure the relevance of the publication for the field. Furthermore, the quality of the journals was categorized using the VHB-JOURQUAL3 (JQ3) ranking [34], including articles that are at least published in renowned scientific journals in business research (C ranking or better). We manually added eight journals that were not part of this ranking but published relevant research in the entrepreneurship and/or sustainability context. A total of 83 papers fulfilled these criteria.

We then carefully screened the abstracts and full texts. We included all papers discussing the motivation of entrepreneurs in the context of SE, no matter if it was the focus topic of the study or solely part of a bigger research question. We explicitly excluded papers looking at how to sustain a new venture, except when the focus still remained on the social or environmental aspects of sustainability and motivation. We also excluded papers not discussing the motivational facets of sustainable entrepreneurs [35]. Furthermore, we excluded papers investigating motivations other than the motivation of entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial motivation, for example, entrepreneurial career intentions [36] or the motivation of business schools [37]. Finally, we eliminated papers that included the keywords but did not address the motivation in the context of the SE at all [38]. This led to a final literature pool of 50 papers. None of the most recent publications from 2022 stayed in the final literature pool, as they did not fulfill the criteria for content as set out above.

These 50 papers were downloaded and carefully read, identifying three themes and eight assigned topics. The complete selection process is illustrated in Figure 1. In the following sections, we extract and report the bibliometric data presenting our descriptive results and synthesize the literature structuring it by three themes that shape the academic debate on the subject.

3. Results

Our final literature pool on the motivational facets of SE comprised 50 papers the spread over 23 academic journals. The most prominent journal that published over one-third of the accepted papers is Sustainability Switzerland. The International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research, Business Strategy and the Environment, and Journal of Cleaner Production are the three other journals publishing more than one paper in the period between 2017 and 2021. An overview of the distribution of journals is set out in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of journals, alphabetical.

Journal	Paper					Total
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Asian Business and Management Journal		1				1
Baltic Journal of Management				1		1
Business Strategy and Development		1				1
Business Strategy and the Environment					3	3
Corporate Governance					1	1
Corporate Social Responsibility and Env. Management			1			1
Environment, Development and Sustainability				1		1
Int. Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research		5			1	6
Int. Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business	1					1
International Journal of Information and Management					1	1
Journal of Cleaner Production				1	1	2
Journal of Environmental Planning and Management					1	1
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management				1		1
Journal of International Entrepreneurship			1			1
Journal of Sustainable Tourism		1				1
Social Indicators Research					1	1
Social Responsibility Journal				1		1
Sustainability (Switzerland)		3	6	6	5	20
Technological Forecasting and Social Change					1	1
Technology Analysis and Strategic Management				1		1
Tourism Planning and Development				1		1
Traditiones				1		1
Transportation Research				1		1
						50

The literature pool comprised 1 conceptual paper [39], 1 systematic review [40], as well as 48 empirical papers. In the empirical field, we found that various approaches (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches) were well represented in each case, even though quantitative studies made up the bulk of the literature pool, at 58%. Considering that the ongoing academic debate neither offers a consensus on the construct of motivation in the entrepreneurial context nor a widely accepted and unified definition, future qualitative studies could contribute to a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms in the research field. For the entire literature pool, we also found that the vast majority of contributions (81%) were cross-sectional studies, and there were few longitudinal ones. The latter could be a key driver of future quantitative inquiries to better understand the development of entrepreneurial motivation in different contexts (e.g., technological, social, or sustainable entrepreneurship) over time.

Analyzing the empirical studies, we found typical sample sizes in all categories. Qualitative papers ranged from a single case studies to a sample size of 56, while quantitative

papers in the literature pool had a minimum sample size of 20 and a maximum size of 175,280 participants. We note, however, that in this case, both the highest and lowest values represent outliers up and down, respectively, while the vast majority conducted surveys of numbers from the high double digits to low triple digits. Across all samples, we found an uneven distribution between men (65%) and women (35%), although this corresponds to the current distribution of entrepreneurial activities for many countries and domains [41]. Still, we suggest that future research could investigate differences in drivers for SE between male and female entrepreneurs. Finally, we observed that the studies focused on European and Asian countries as well the U.S. and Canada, while the global south seemed under-represented. As these countries are particularly affected by climate change [42], future research could investigate the specificities of motivation for SE in this geographical context. All above discussed figures are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Structure and samples of the literature pool.

Variable	Expression	Share in Numbers			Share in Percent
Used methods (n = 48)	qualitative	28 studies			58%
	quantitative	13 studies			27%
	mixed methods	7 studies			15%
Time horizon (n = 48)	cross-sectional	39 studies			81%
	longitudinal	9 studies			19%
Sample size (n = 28) (n = 13) (n = 7)		<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	<i>median</i>	
	qualitative	1	56	11	-
	quantitative	20	175,280	234	-
	mixed methods	30	2106	141	-
Gender distribution (n = 16)	male	-			65%
	female	-			35%
Geographical distribution (n = 43)	Europe	24 studies			42.9%
	Asia	17 studies			30.5%
	North America	6 studies			10.7%
	South America	3 studies			5.3%
	Africa	3 studies			5.3%
	Australia	3 studies			5.3%

In the course of the review, we divided the literature into three themes: 1) influences *on* motivation, 2) *understanding* motivation, and 3) influences *of* motivation. The first theme included 12 papers focusing on the influences on sustainability motivations or on entrepreneurial motivations in a sustainability context. They could be allocated to two topics: a) external factors and b) personal factors. Studies where motivation was part of the research subject, but the influence on motivation as discussed, were also included in this theme. The second theme included 11 papers examining the sustainable motivation of the entrepreneur or the entrepreneurial motivation in a sustainable context with the goal of understanding motivation, without necessarily investigating the influence of motivation on certain factors, or vice versa. It also comprised two topics that discussed a) the motivation in the context of strategies and concepts for SE and b) the motivation in the context of SE activities. The third and largest theme consisted of 27 papers investigating the influence of sustainable motivation or entrepreneurial motivation in a sustainable context on certain contextual factors such as adopting sustainable business practices. Some articles discuss motivation as part or as a factor of a model or the research subject, and some examine motivation as the main influence. The papers in the theme could be allocated to four topics, namely how the entrepreneurs' motivation influences a) venture performance, b) sustainable business practices, c) sustainability orientation, and d) the creation and development of social and sustainable ventures.

The three identified themes, including the allocated topics and the associated papers, are presented in Figure 2. For papers that were assigned to one topic, but some of their findings were also addressed in another topic, the authors' names are highlighted in grey.

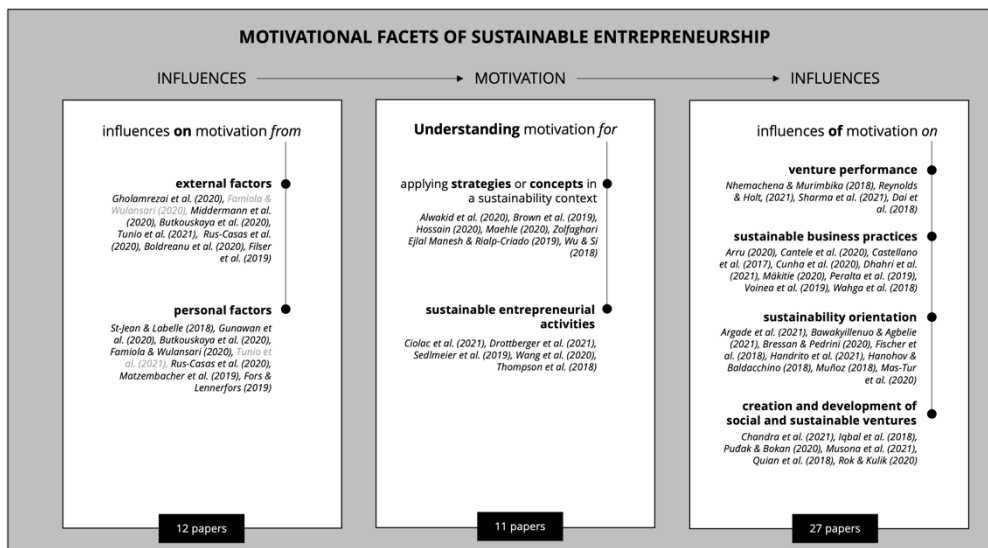


Figure 2. Overview of the categories and assigned papers.

4. Synthesis and Discussion

This synthesis is structured following the three identified themes and eight assigned topics as set out in the previous section. We provide short summaries of the academic debates taking place within these themes and topics, synthesize key findings in the field, and derive unresolved issues and potential areas for future research.

4.1. Theme 1: Influences on Motivation

Theme 1 included 12 papers concerning influencing factors on sustainability motivations or on entrepreneurial motivations in a sustainability context. Studies where motivation was part of the research subject, but the influence on motivation was discussed, also belonged to this cluster. We identified the two individual, but still interrelated, topics: *external influences* [40,43–48] and *personal factors* [49–53].

4.1.1. Topic 1A: External Influences

The first topic involves the influences and motivations to become involved in social businesses and SE initiatives. Gholamrezai et al. [44] identified several extrinsic motivations for becoming involved in green businesses. By analyzing agricultural entrepreneurs, they found that different governmental strategies, such as increasing production capacity, matching national and global regulations, assessing environmental considerations, creating an entrepreneurial culture, and strengthening scientific research and international cooperation, can motivate entrepreneurs to become involved in green businesses. However, other findings indicated that entrepreneurs engage in social and environmental initiatives rather because of their intrinsic values than government policy or organizational need for competitive advantage [43].

Middermann et al. [45] and Butkouskaya et al. [46] explored different barriers nascent entrepreneurs can face when starting a sustainable business. Middermann et al. [45] investigated if the increasing awareness of environmental risk exposure also affects the intentions to create enterprises that address these social and environmental failures. They found that fear of failure and perceived social pressure have an impact on environmental risk exposure. At the same time, the positive effects of perceived self-efficacy and good opportunities are unaffected by environmental risk exposure. Butkouskaya et al. [46] aimed to identify the

major obstacles to new business creation; the evaluation differences of financial, nonfinancial, formal, and informal factors; in addition to the differences in the perception of obstacles between female and male tourism students. The results revealed that even students with high entrepreneurial intentions perceive different obstacles to new business creation. Financial factors affect entrepreneurial intentions the most, but educational, technological, governmental support, legal, and sociocultural factors are almost equally relevant. They also found that the lack of formal entrepreneurship education and informal factors such as support or incentives are hindering SE development. This is in line with the findings of Tunio et al. [47], who revealed that the participation in an entrepreneurship course acts as a motivating driver for SE, as graduates who are equipped with entrepreneurial skills in their educational institutions are more motivated to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities. Next to formal education, the exposure to successful entrepreneurial role models in entrepreneurship classes seems to impact students' entrepreneurial intentions [47,48]. In contrast to Butkouskaya et al. [46], who highlighted the importance of financial factors, Boldureanu et al. [48] found that students seem to be more motivated by the social benefits of entrepreneurship (creating new jobs) than the financial ones (high income).

The study of Rus-Casas et al. [53] can be seen as a link between topics 1A and 1B, as both personal and external factors were found to influence the motivation of the students. The paper describes how competencies in sustainability and entrepreneurship developed within the context of the entrepreneurship promotion programs for engineering students at the University of Jaén. The entrepreneurship programs were proven to have a positive impact on students' motivation, confirming the importance of training students in entrepreneurship and highlighting the role of social networks that allow students to improve their entrepreneurial skills. The identified factors that significantly influenced engineering students to become entrepreneurs were motivation, personal requirements, and the perception of the environment. Here, motivation is influenced by the students' perception of the environment and the personal requirement factor.

We identified one systematic literature study in our sample. Filser et al. [40] investigated how entrepreneurial activities influence sustainable development and vice versa, and under what circumstances entrepreneurship contributes to the economic, environmental, and social dimension of sustainable development. The paper describes how research on entrepreneurship has experienced considerable development during the last years and that there seems to be a preoccupation with the features of sustainable entrepreneurs and their potential to act as catalysts for sustainable development, while the actual outcomes of entrepreneurship for sustainable development are largely unknown.

Filser et al. [40] further argued that SE research should move away from its prescriptive and conceptual orientation toward an empirical approach to examine impacts, trade-offs, and synergies of the entrepreneurship–sustainable development relationship. They stated that a considerable number of researchers have examined the development of these relationships through three stages: (1) concept introduction and elaboration, (2) concept evaluation and augmentation, and (3) concept consolidation and augmentation, with most research being allocated to phases (1) and (2).

4.1.2. Topic 1B: Personal Influences

The second topic comprises findings on the values, culture, and gender of sustainable entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs wanting to become sustainable entrepreneurs, or entrepreneurs adopting SE. Several papers from topic 1A also contribute to topic 1B.

After discussing obstacles for SE in general, Butkouskaya et al. [46] compared the gender-related differences in the perception of such obstacles and concluded that women students evaluated all factors as more critical than men. The aspect of gender was also considered by Gunawan et al. [51], who explored value-based motivations for becoming an ecological entrepreneur (ecopreneur). Adding to the findings of Butkouskaya et al. [46], they pointed out that the degree of masculinity and femininity in terms of values play a more important role in the motivations for ecopreneurship than the category of gender

itself. Moreover, they found that self-enhancement, conservation, and self-transcendence values as well as the intersections of identities are motivators for ecopreneurship [51]. Tunio et al. [47] also highlighted the influence of culture and values on entrepreneurial motivation. For university graduates, entrepreneurship is a lifestyle decision that follows cultural, social, and family values. The culture of the graduates' family acts as a motivating factor for them to become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs who belong to a business family thus have an advantage in starting a business because of the experience and support from their families during the initial phases or any critical areas of the business.

Fors and Lennerfors [50] took a somewhat different approach to the influence of values on motivation. They did not regard motivation as a stable factor resulting from the entrepreneurs' values, skills, and knowledge. Instead, they understood entrepreneurs as engrossed in and motivationally displaced by other human and nonhuman stakeholders, causes, and ventures in different dynamic relationships. We found that this approach is similar to that of Tunio et al. [47], who mentioned the influence of the graduates' family. By introducing the individual–care nexus, Fors and Lennerfors [50] perceived sustainable entrepreneurs as dependent individuals whose emotions, motivations, and traits affect and are affected by engagement with caring practices and relationships. Thus, motivations manifested in the individual sustainable entrepreneur are determined by the relations upon which the entrepreneur is dependent and on the entrepreneurial practices. Fundamentally, most authors seemed to agree that gender and values (personal, cultural, and religious) are key drivers of the motivation for SE initiatives [43,46,47,50,51].

Next to gender and values, Famiola and Wulansari [43] revealed that sustainability in Indonesian SMEs is particularly driven by the internalization of knowledge and insight from the education system of their owners. Generally, the experiences of SME owners during their schooling significantly affected their environmental interests. In addition to the importance of knowledge and education, Matzembacher et al. [52] highlighted the role of a clear mission combining sustainability-oriented goals with profit goals. They argue that for the generation of impactful business ideas and the motivation to engage in SE, entrepreneurs need to be mission-driven and willing to improve society's well-being. This is in line with St-Jean and Labelle [49], who found that sustainable orientation reduces the willingness to become an entrepreneur, but believing that entrepreneurship can change society mitigates this effect. Thus, they concluded that believing that entrepreneurship can change the world and having a sustainable orientation improve the motivation toward becoming an entrepreneur.

4.1.3. Future Research Opportunities

Most studies in the field are limited by either geographical or sectoral aspects. Thus, the inclusion of more regions [43,47,51,52] and sectors [51,52] is proposed to enable comparative studies and to identify cross-regional and cross-sectoral characteristics of SE motivation. For example, Tunio et al. [47] suggested expanding the investigation of universities' contribution to entrepreneurial motivation for SE to major hubs of commercial activity. Matzembacher et al. [52] argued for comparative research between industries and countries when exploring sustainable entrepreneurs' idea generation, opportunity recognition, development, and exploitation.

To overcome limitations due to small sample sizes and bias due to the over-representation of specific groups of persons, most authors suggested the use of larger [44,46,48,50–52] and more heterogeneous [46,48,50,52] samples. For example, they proposed the inclusion of gender comparisons of students with various specializations from different countries [46] or the comparison of various methods for teaching entrepreneurship to students from different study areas [48]. In addition, future longitudinal studies could capture changes over time, for example, with respect to entrepreneurial motivation [50] or entrepreneurial action.

4.2. Theme 2: Understanding Motivation

This theme included 11 papers focused on the motivation of entrepreneurs in the SE context. We identified two topics, the *motivation for applying concepts or strategies in a sustainability context* [39,54–58] and the *motivation for sustainable entrepreneurial activities* [59–63]. The included papers are distinctive, as entrepreneurial motivation was only a part of the many various research subjects. Thus, relationships or overlaps were not as well developed as in themes one and three.

4.2.1. Topic 2A: Motivation for Applying Concepts or Strategies in a Sustainability Context

In this topic, we identified four different strategies or concepts that were discussed in the context of SE and motivation: 1) circular innovation, 2) frugal innovation, 3) national strategy for SE, and 4) sustainable upscaling.

For the engagement in circular [55] and frugal [57] innovation, the literature suggests that the presence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is required. The results of Brown et al. [55] revealed that collaboration in circular-oriented innovation tends to happen earlier and more profoundly when built upon relational elements that incorporate normative and value-driven motives that originate from both the individual (intrinsic) and organizational (extrinsic) levels. Hossain [57] found that the antecedents of frugal innovation include intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as well. Intrinsic motivations can be the concern for nature or for the greater good of society; extrinsic motivations include customers' needs and the concern for the plight of manual workers.

Two papers discuss the antecedents and outcomes of SE on a national level. Alwakid et al. [56] found that for the development of green entrepreneurship across cities in Saudi Arabia, three cultural factors need to be present: environmental actions (which include motivation for action), environmental consciousness, and temporal orientation. Wu and Si [39] argued that in China, entrepreneurship is regarded as a strategy for poverty reduction. They developed a theoretical model that combines entrepreneurs' motivation with sustainability and the use of social networks. It showed that low levels of motivation are associated with exogenous drivers such as external help and subsidies, whereas endogenous drivers such as self-motivation represent a higher motivation level.

The influence of motivation in the context of scaling-up businesses in a sustainable manner was also addressed by two studies in this topic. Researchers [54] investigated the relationship between sustainable and international entrepreneurs to define the phenomenon of the "international ecopreneur". They explored what factors motivate ecopreneurs to enter the international market, finding that an important aspect is their different philosophical stance and original nonfinancial motivations compared with traditional entrepreneurs. Moreover, ecopreneurs' desire to make the world a better place to live was mentioned as an important reason. Maehle [58] discussed the distinctive features of sustainable crowdfunding in terms of motivation, platform choice, costs and relationships with supporters. The results revealed that sustainable entrepreneurs have both financial and nonfinancial motivations for crowdfunding. Unsurprisingly, the main reason for seeking crowdfunding is their need for financial resources and their difficulty in raising money from other sources. However, by participating in crowdfunding, companies may satisfy various other needs, e.g., visibility, support (moral, material, economic and financial), and better communication with stakeholders.

4.2.2. Topic 2B: Motivation for Sustainable Entrepreneurial Activities

This topic refers to entrepreneurs' motivation for sustainable entrepreneurial activities and includes five articles. Three articles specifically focus on the motivational factors for the decision to engage in entrepreneurial activities in certain sectors, namely agrotourism [59], market gardening [60], and the food industry [61].

Ciolac et al. [59] aimed to identify the aspects that make agritourism a possible business option for rural sustainability in Romania by focusing on several aspects. The first option is the identification of the main motivations for the orientation toward agritourism. En-

entrepreneurs in this field believe that agritourism ensures the economic viability or autonomy of the farm through additional income, capitalizes their own products, leads to jobs through their own efforts, and allows them to participate in the life of the local community. In addition, Drottberger et al. [60] examined the characteristics, motivations, as well as barriers and opportunities for new entrants of young market gardeners in Sweden. The results emphasized the multidimensional nature of motivation and its interconnectedness with both personal identity and the surrounding food system. That is because market gardening allowed the respondents to pursue a personal interest while creating economic, ecological, and social value in their business and for the community. Furthermore, this contributes to what they see as the future sustainable food system, creating a sense of purpose that motivates them to continue developing their business. Moreover, Sedlmeier et al. [61] investigated entrepreneurs' motivation to start businesses solving the food waste problem in Germany. Their results revealed that the entrepreneurs' motivations for starting a business that reduces food waste combine sustainability-oriented goals with a profit goal. Furthermore, the studied entrepreneurs differed regarding their perception of the importance of environmental and social goals, their understanding of sustainability, and their ways to reach them. Thus, social motivation and its contribution to solving society's problems take different forms.

While Drottberger et al. [60] and Sedlmeier et al. [61] outlined different motivational factors influencing new venture creation, ranging from the desire to create economic, ecological, as well as social value, Wang et al. [62] addressed motivations that do not specifically relate to the founding of companies. Their study dealt with the motives and levels of sustainability, especially of the SDGs, in the maritime industry. They proposed a framework, which, on one side, points to varied motives, beginning with legal and moving along to economic, social (environmental), and philanthropic ones. On the other side, the model presents levels of comprehensiveness of the sustainability efforts by the maritime industry. Finally, Thompson et al. [63] investigated the intersection of entrepreneurship, ecotourism, and governance in the three tiers of governing institutions, tour companies, and independent entrepreneurs at the Kilim Karst Geoforest Park in Langkawi, Malaysia. The study demonstrated that the normative dogma guiding how ecotourism should be practiced must be balanced against the diverse understandings, motivations, and capacities of ecotourism entrepreneurs on the ground and the effectiveness of governance systems. Furthermore, it appears that to many so-called ecotourism entrepreneurs, profitability is first, and the environment is second.

4.2.3. Future Research Opportunities

Even though the researchers have discussed different subjects, almost all suggested comparative studies and longitudinal analysis on their research topics as areas for future research [39,55,56,60]. Furthermore, most papers propose expanding future empirical studies not only by investigating wider contexts and by including more variables, but also by using a larger sample and investigating different countries [54,56–58,62].

Although commonalities in the suggested future research approaches can be seen, a closer look reveals that they are quite distinctive in their specific suggestions. According to Alwakid et al. [56], longitudinal research should be carried out on the dynamic effects of institutional factor change in developing countries. Wu and Si ([39], p. 257) stated that these longitudinal analyses should be conducted in poor countries to “*explain the experiences of poverty-stricken people in getting out of poverty*”. Drottberger et al. [60], on the other hand, proposed to investigate market garden development over time, and Brown et al. [55] rather advised to test their identified motives, conditions, and stages.

Furthermore, comparative analysis should be conducted on the effectiveness and performance of different research subjects, such as frugal innovation, crowdfunded projects, different motivations of backers, or modes of poverty reduction [39,57,58]. Comparative studies are also suggested in order to investigate different contexts, such as in a cross-country comparison or the investigation of different sectors [54,56,57]. To include more contextual factors and variables, the authors suggested extending the sample to different

regions and countries, as well as to other sectors. For example, Wang et al. [62] proposed to extend future studies to wider contexts and to adopt the SDG scheme in industries other than the maritime industry. Zolfaghari Ejlal Manesh and Rialp-Criado [54] suggested to not only look at the renewal energy branch in Spain. However, as suggested by Wu and Si [39] and Alwakid et al. [56], wider contexts could also be local economic conditions or cultural dimensions of different regions.

4.3. Theme 3: Influences of Motivation

The third theme comprises 29 papers investigating how entrepreneurial motivation influences sustainable business practices. Some researchers treated motivation as the main influence of behavior, whereas others looked at motivation as one of many factors. We identified *venture performance* [64–68], *sustainable business practices* [69–77], *sustainability orientation* [3,78–84], and *creation and development of social or sustainable ventures* [67,85–91], as four individual yet inter-related topics.

4.3.1. Topic 3A: Venture Performance

We identified four articles dealing with different factors positively influencing the success of SE initiatives. Nhemachena and Murimbika [64] investigated the influence of the four defined dimensions of SE motivation on enterprise performance. These dimensions are extrinsic, intrinsic, income security/financial independence, and necessity motivations. In accordance with the findings set out in themes one and two, their results revealed that extrinsic or intrinsic motivations or both are important determinants of entrepreneurial behavior and performance. Dai et al. [68] added that both factors are also relevant for the successful formation of an SE team. However, they suggested testing the robustness of their findings on the formation of SE teams to other types of alliance relationships. Moreover, interventions aimed at developing or strengthening intrinsic and extrinsic motivations among entrepreneurs would significantly contribute to the performance of sustainable enterprises [64].

Two further articles examined how personal and altruistic motives influence the success of sustainable enterprises. Reynolds and Holt [66] investigated the sense-making process of the individual entrepreneurs behind hybrid organizations in order to explore their experiences, motives, and values. Their findings showed that ambition and altruism motivate individuals to become involved in sustainable firms, echoing the paradox of firms seeking both social change and value creation. Similarly, Sharma et al. [67] demonstrated that both self-oriented agency and communion motives act as drivers of entrepreneurial satisfaction and, thereby, success. By studying the determinants of satisfaction of village-level entrepreneurs in the field of e-governance and on the support systems enabling this type of entrepreneurship, they suggested that social entrepreneurs view themselves through agency and communion objectives, where the communion motive of serving others and gaining social respect builds the agency motive to reinforce overall social entrepreneur satisfaction.

4.3.2. Topic 3B: Sustainable Business Practices

Eight articles focus on the influence of motivation on different sustainable business practices. Arru [72] provided insights into the factors that affect sustainable entrepreneurs' behavioral intentions, looking at subconscious goals, subjective motivations, and personality traits of sustainable entrepreneurs. The results of this study suggested that SE intention is propelled by subconscious motivations that operate alongside one another.

Voinea et al. [75] and Peralta et al. [73] focused on the factors influencing the development of sustainable business models and the acceptance of such practices. Voinea et al. [75] investigated the internal and external drivers related to organizational processes, managerial characteristics, and stakeholder expectations in the context of corporate social responsibility. They found that all examined startups reported a deeply rooted drive to do good for society. At the same time, financial benefits are a continuous motivator for their

engagement in corporate social responsibility. Peralta et al. [73] examined entrepreneur's practices within sustainable business model innovation in Spain and developed a framework comprising eleven influencing factors. In addition to performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, habit, costs, speed, funding, and security, they identified hedonic motivation as a factor that might affect practices leading to sustainable business model innovation. Moreover, behavioral intention, whose influencing factors were the focus of the investigation by Arru [72], was found to have an impact on the acceptance of such practices.

Four papers [69,70,76,77] highlight the importance of motivation within the scope of the implementation and adoption of sustainability practices and the 17 SDGs. Castellano et al. [69] explored the cognitive bases that guide conventional entrepreneurs' behaviors. They aimed to identify and explain their motivations to adopt sustainable development practices and whether these motivations differ. Their results implied that the conventional entrepreneur is driven by similar motivations as the social or sustainable entrepreneur, including the 3 subsets of the 17 SDGs: social, economic, and environmental sustainability objectives. Social entrepreneurs are driven not solely by economic but also by social and environmental sustainability objectives, and the inter-relations between these three subsets can explain sustainable entrepreneurs' motivations. Wahga et al. [77] also referred to these three subsets by pointing out that intermediary organizations have performed a pivotal role to make Pakistani entrepreneurs realize that economic and competitive advantages are closely attached to environmental improvement. Analyses of the drivers of sustainable entrepreneurial practices in SMEs operating in Pakistan's leatherworking industry showed that sustainability values and support services of intermediary organizations are stronger motivation for environmental improvement than regulations. Dhahri et al. [70] examined the influence of opportunity- and necessity-driven entrepreneurs' motivation on the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development based on the 17 SDGs. This paper demonstrates how the relationship between entrepreneurial activity and the three subsets of the SDGs varies across behaviors and motivations of entrepreneurs. The findings revealed that 1) early stage entrepreneurship contributes only to economic and environmental sustainability, 2) opportunity entrepreneurship is a key factor for stimulating the three dimensions of sustainable development, and 3) necessity entrepreneurship negatively contributes to environmental sustainability.

Cantele et al. [76] aimed to identify the main drivers of or barriers to sustainability implementation and to verify any significant differences between small- and large-sized companies in their approach to implementing such practices. The results showed that 1) pressures from the external environment, 2) expected benefits of sustainability implementation, and 3) entrepreneur's characteristics in guiding strategy practices implementation, including entrepreneur's motivation, values, and vision, have a positive effect on the implementation of sustainability practices. While pressures from the environment seem to play a more important role for large companies, entrepreneurs' values and the expected benefits are crucial factors for sustainability implementation, regardless of company size.

Determining or hindering factors are pressures from the external environment, expected benefits of sustainability implementation, and entrepreneur's characteristics in guiding strategy practices implementation, with particular reference to the entrepreneur's motivation, values, and vision. The main determining factor of sustainability implementation for all different types of firms, regardless of their size, is the entrepreneurs' values, as the drivers of sustainable commitment can be identified in the internal and personal motivations of the entrepreneur. For instance, Mäkitie [71] focused on sustainable resource redeployment in radical clean technologies. By investigating why and how established floating wind power (FWP) firms engage in innovation in radical clean technologies, the two key motivators to engage in FWP ventures are the perceived transition in the energy sector and the opportunity to redeploy existing firm resources.

In contrast to the previous studies that specifically focus on sustainability practices [69,70,76,77], Cunha et al. [74] investigated the motivations and general management practices of rural

tourism entrepreneurs driven by lifestyle concerns and the outcomes achieved by these entrepreneurs. The results revealed that entrepreneurs who are more driven by lifestyle motivations show sustainability concerns, which is reflected in the strategies of, e.g., cross-selling or investments in biological agriculture. The outcomes were that *“these projects are rewarding to their owners, reveal long-term planning and tend to generate robust networks, which clearly contribute not only to a dynamic but also more sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem of tourism in rural areas”* [74] (p. 215).

4.3.3. Topic 3C: Sustainability Orientation

This topic focuses on the influence of motivation on contextual factors of sustainability orientation. The included papers offer insights into their different appearances, antecedents, and mechanisms. Handrito et al. [79] showed that the environmental sustainability orientation of SMEs is influenced not only by the external economic and social environment but also by the personal motives of the entrepreneur. A high level of environmental sustainability orientation is obtained when the entrepreneur is motivated by discrepant explicit and implicit power motives, whereas simultaneously high levels of explicit and implicit power are not associated with high environmental sustainability orientation. Argade et al. [81] came to the same conclusion and stated that external and intrinsic motivations shape the entrepreneurs' opportunity recognition and thus their sustainable orientation. Their findings demonstrated the interplay between the intrinsic motivational factors at the individual level and the extrinsic institutional settings that shape opportunity identification. Awareness about unsustainable practices embedded in the local context as well as the moral need to address social inequalities are the main motivators for individuals to undertake SE.

Bawakyillenuo and Agbelie [83] agreed with the statement that awareness of environmental concerns increases entrepreneurs' motivation. Their study aimed to determine entrepreneurs' consciousness regarding the environment in which they operate, how their motives are aligned with environmental sustainability, and what motivates them to be more sensitive to their environments based on the products and services they render. Their findings revealed that in addition to prior knowledge of and general concerns for the environment, the motivation of entrepreneurs in Ghana is influenced by the education level, the time period of having an established business, and the competitiveness of their products or services. In contrast to Handrito et al.'s [79] and Argade et al.'s [81] claim that any form of environmental or personal motives influence entrepreneurs' sustainability motivation, Hanohov and Baldacchino [84] found that only personal motives lead to SE activities. The authors built on the conceptual model of Shepherd and Patzelt [92] to explore how entrepreneurs recognize opportunities for sustainable businesses in practice. Perceptions of threats to the natural and communal environment were not found to motivate entrepreneurs to identify sustainable opportunities. However, the desire to be self-employed, aspects of their personalities, and personal circumstances were found to be personal motives for becoming an entrepreneur. This implied that factors that motivate individuals to engage in traditional entrepreneurship also motivate individuals who engage in SE. The results showed that not all motives to become a sustainable entrepreneur are necessarily strictly connected to sustainability motives: they could also be fulfilled by pursuing an opportunity for traditional entrepreneurship.

Musona et al. [91] did not mainly focus on sustainability orientation. The paper describes entrepreneurs' ability to harmoniously integrate the triple bottom line goals [93]. Mas-Tur et al.'s [3] study is an extension of Hanohov and Baldacchino's [84] entrepreneur-centered perspective, exploring entrepreneurs' perceived opportunities, perceived capabilities, motivation, and high job creation expectation, as well as the way those factors enhance sustainable development. The results revealed that the characteristics of entrepreneurs are crucial for the implementation of sustainability. Specifically, the motivation and the desire for high job creation enhance the sustainable development of companies. Both an entrepreneur's motivation and the ability to be a good motivator seem to be part of the recipe for sustainable development. Fischer et al. [80] agreed with Hanohov and Baldacchino [84]

and Mas-Tur et al. [3], mentioning that one driving force among sustainable entrepreneurs is the desire to be self-employed. In particular, the authors examined the role of regulatory focus in SE processes to broaden the understanding of how sustainable entrepreneurs pursue their goals and what motivates them. The findings indicated that the self-regulatory focus of sustainable entrepreneurs changes during the entrepreneurial process regarding the temporal dynamics of motivation. Entrepreneurs' motivation and self-regulation play a critical role in the early stages of venturing processes. The driving forces that were identified among the sustainable entrepreneurs were the desire to be independent and self-employed, to live by sustainable values, as well as to take meaningful action and to foster better living conditions for society in general. These findings were mirrored in Bressan and Pedrini's [78], who analyzed how the sustainable lifestyle motivation of entrepreneurs affects the sustainability-oriented innovation in micro and small firms. The findings revealed that entrepreneurs' sustainable lifestyle plays a key role in the business operation. Entrepreneurs having a lifestyle that positively impacts society may have more inclination for developing and implementing sustainably oriented innovation within their business operations. Fischer et al. [80] investigated the role of regulatory focus; Muñoz [82] examined the decision making of sustainable entrepreneurs, focusing on a substantive conception of entrepreneurial behavior to uncover the cognitive antecedents underlying entrepreneurial decisions. This included the explicit development and implementation of sustainable measures, targets, and strategies. The paper presents a cognitive map of sustainable decision making in entrepreneurship utilizing a typology comprising five combinations of cognitive factors: 1) purpose-driven, determined; 2) value-based, vacillating; 3) value-based, unintended; 4) single motive, single solution; and 5) purpose-driven, hesitant. The study showed that the implementation of sustainability-related actions can emerge from a wide range of individuals with different cognitive structures.

4.3.4. Topic 3D: Creation and Development of Social or Sustainable Ventures

This topic comprises papers discussing the motivational influences on the creation and the development of social or sustainable ventures. Chandra et al. [85] investigated green entrepreneurs, and Puđak and Bokan [87] focused on millennials; both studies concluded that there are two perspectives describing the influence of entrepreneurs' motivation on intention and the choice of the economic model for the development of sustainable ventures. The first perspective is primarily focused on profit, whereas the second focuses primarily on values (also known as the social perspective). Chandra et al. [85] showed that both public service motivation and money ethics affect millennials' intention to directly and indirectly engage in social entrepreneurship, whereby the former is a stronger determinant than the latter. Millennials who place greater value on contributing to public interest, social justice, compassion, and self-sacrifice have a stronger motivation for initiating and engaging in social entrepreneurship. However, individuals who attach a high level of importance to money are more likely to shun social entrepreneurship. Puđak and Bokan [87] suggested that green entrepreneurs differ in their motivations for the venture they undertake. It appears that farmers' values and motives are much closer to the degrowth idea, while engineers are more in line with the green economy outlook, where the latter is more focused on profit and the former is more focused on values. Next, of the economic and ecological facets of motivation, Iqbal et al. [88] found that human and social capital have a significant positive relationship with involvement in social entrepreneurship. The identified motivational factors impacting the attitude toward social entrepreneurship were the need for achievement, locus of control, vision, desire for independence, passion, drive self-efficacy, and goal setting.

Thompson et al. [63] and Rok and Kulik [90] also discussed entrepreneurs' motivation for achieving economic and environmental objectives. Thompson et al. [63] showed that ecotourism entrepreneurs prioritize profitability over environmental concern, whereas Rok and Kulik [90] pointed to the inner motivations of the sustainable entrepreneurs aiming at maximizing positive impact. Rok and Kulik [90] examined how circular start-

ups in Poland design and implement innovation into their business models to increase their positive impact. By proposing a circular startup-model, it was shown that three factors, which are strongly interconnected, can significantly influence the development of a circular start-up: the purpose-led motivation for circularity as a solution, the aim to increase the positive impact by addressing the most pressing social and environmental problems, and the understanding of the purpose of the innovation, concentrated on the business model innovation regarding circularity. The social dimension, which is integrated as a complementary goal, is driven by the inner desire of sustainable entrepreneurs to provide positive impact rather than external pressure or conditions. The development of circular start-ups is driven by their founders' motivation to achieve integrated economic and environmental objectives and to maximize their positive impact as well as by founders' internal passion that fuels sustainable innovation projects.

Musona et al. [91] and Qian et al. [89] concluded that motivations; the successful recognizing, developing, and scaling of opportunities; and entrepreneurial roles need to be considered in a sustainable context. Musona et al. [91] contributed to the SE and entrepreneurial behavior literature streams by applying a theoretical perspective of founder identity to the exploration of early phase sustainable entrepreneurs' self-perceived identities. The paper shows that these entrepreneurs possess multiple frames of reference, basic social motivations, and adopt either single or multiple role identities, which influence their behavior during the process of creating their enterprises. Entrepreneurs with different combinations of attributes of the pure social identity typologies have multiple frames of reference and basic social motivations. These types play an important role in their ability to harmoniously integrate the triple bottom line goals to successfully recognize, develop, and scale opportunities.

Finally, Qian et al. [89] described value creation as a result of sustainable innovative academic entrepreneurship. The sustainable innovative academic entrepreneurship process model in the study showed that the motivation of academic entrepreneurs leads them to play multiple roles such as academic researchers, enterprise founders, and enterprise managers. In creating, establishing, and developing their enterprises, academic entrepreneurs realize the commercial value of technology, while also increasing their personal value. The technology commercialization decisions made by academic entrepreneurs vary due to the differences in entrepreneurial motivations and intentions as well as technical characteristics.

4.3.5. Future Research Opportunities

In the third theme, we discussed the influences of motivation on venture performance, sustainable business practices, sustainability orientation, and creation and development of sustainable ventures. The most frequently suggested area for future research in the theme is conducting more comparative cross-country studies [3,64,67,69,71–73,76,78,79,84,87–90,94].

Wahga et al. [77] recommended also including other industry sectors to examine the relevance of factors impacting SE initiatives and to better understand how they can be promoted in other developing countries. However, the literature suggests that future studies should not focus solely on developing and emerging countries but include developed countries that are under-researched in this context today [64,70,81]. Furthermore, many authors have suggested using larger samples in order to generalize the findings of their studies [66,69,74,76,78,84]. However, qualitative and not only quantitative research is recommended to develop better measure instruments for the phenomena [85,90]. Rok and Kulik [90] proposed in-depth qualitative research, and Chandra et al. ([85], p. 9) suggested qualitative research for “*deeper and contextualized insights to develop new theories about social entrepreneurship intentions*”. Some papers propose longitudinal research to investigate the development of certain influences of motivation [79,80,88,91].

Furthermore, some authors suggested a focus on different types of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs [70,72,73]. For instance, Peralta et al. [73] suggested focusing on cultural and ecological aspects when including other contexts.

In addition to these overarching suggestions, several more specific propositions can be derived from the four topics within this theme. For instance, Nhemachena and Murimbika [64] encouraged researchers to explore the relative importance of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and how enhancing these two dimensions would affect SE activities. Reynolds and Holt [66] emphasized the need for further investigation of entrepreneurs' sense making of hybrid firms and the relation of profit and non-profit-related motives. Other aspects to consider include the effects of legal contexts [88] or regional development frameworks to explain differences between countries [87].

5. Conclusions, Limitations, and Future Research Agenda

With this systematic literature review, we aimed to structure the current academic discussion on the motivational facets of SE to summarize the current state of knowledge and derive future research opportunities. Concerning our first research question on how we are currently *understanding motivation* in the SE context, we provided an in-depth synthesis summarizing the academic debate in Section 4.2. Concerning our second research question, the synthesis provided an in-depth overview of the extant literature's main findings related to influences *on* motivation and influences *of* motivation in the SE context.

Moreover, in our synthesis, we found that the individual studies either focused on motivation for sustainability, motivation for general entrepreneurship, or a combination of those. Logically and semantically, this could be construed as the *motivation for sustainable entrepreneurship (MSE)*. We argue that this is a combined construct comprising two elements that need to be present: the motivation to have an impact on sustainability, and the motivation to become an entrepreneur. On this basis, using commonly accepted definitions, we could define the construct as simultaneously wanting to 1) positively impact sustainability and 2) find and explore opportunities to create goods and services [95]. This is illustrated in Figure 3. This conclusion builds on these findings by deriving and summarizing the key results satisfying both criteria of the MSE construct. On this basis, we then highlight relevant limitations of this review and suggest an agenda for future research.

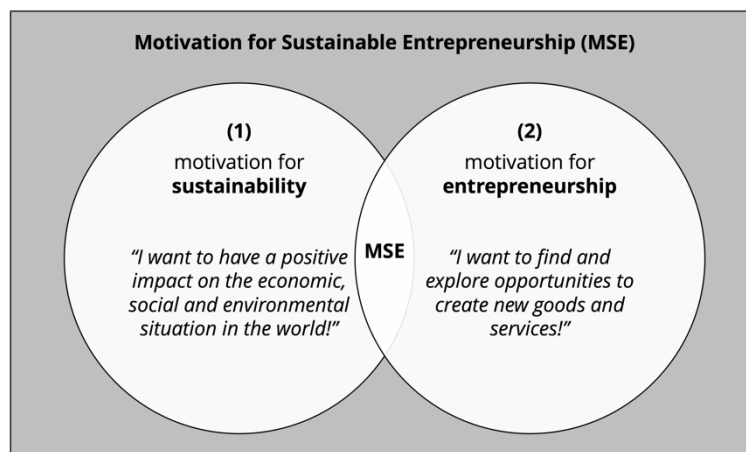


Figure 3. Motivation for sustainable entrepreneurship (MSE).

5.1. Motivation for Sustainable Entrepreneurship (MSE)

5.1.1. Understanding MSE

We started by investigating how the MSE construct is *understood* today. MSE can be intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivations include the concern for nature or for the greater good of society. Extrinsic motivations include customers' needs and the concern for the plight of manual workers. Current findings suggest that intrinsic motivation has a stronger effect on MSE than extrinsic motivation.

The extant literature indicates that entrepreneurs are not solely motivated by either idealism or commercialism. They combine sustainability-oriented goals with profit goals, differing with regard to the goal prioritization. Some sustainable entrepreneurs prioritize

profitability first and sustainability second. The factors that motivate individuals to engage in traditional entrepreneurship also increases the MSE. This implies that a higher entrepreneurial motivation leads to a higher MSE. Furthermore, the level of MSE can be impacted by culture.

For some subsets of entrepreneurs, for example, those engaged in ecotourism, profit motivation is stronger than sustainability motivation. Necessity entrepreneurs can also have MSE, because the desire to be self-employed can motivate sustainable entrepreneurs. MSE also fosters engagement in the circular economy, thus enhancing normative and value-driven motives to collaborate.

5.1.2. Influences Impacting MSE

Next, we looked at what *influencing factors impacting MSE* have been identified thus far. The sustainability element of MSE positively impacts the entrepreneurship element. In other words, believing that entrepreneurship can change the world and having a sustainable orientation improve the motivation to become an entrepreneur. Students are more motivated by the social benefits of entrepreneurship rather than the financial ones.

The prevailing external influence on MSE is argued to be access to necessary resources (such as financial, educational, technological, government support, legal, and sociocultural) for becoming a sustainable entrepreneur. The role of education can be observed at a very early stage, when the experiences of entrepreneurs during their schooling are argued to have a significant influence. At the same time, the absence of factors limiting the possibility for entrepreneurship have been discussed. Such limiting factors include fear of failure and social pressure. Authors [46] suggested that such obstacles have a stronger impact on women entrepreneurs than on men, highlighting that masculinity and femininity in terms of values influence MSE more than the category of gender.

Entrepreneurs with strong values are essential for creating sustainable business practices, and we argue that particularly religious values, the relationships of the entrepreneur, and the culture of the entrepreneurs' family may influence MSE. Finally, we observed that best practice role models seem to positively impact MSE, especially for individuals less interested or not interested in entrepreneurship.

Next to these influences on the individual entrepreneur, strategic choices and decisions shaped by the governmental or societal policies influence MSE. Examples of such strategies can be the level of production capacity according to regulations or general environmental considerations, the level of investment in research, and the focus on cooperation and entrepreneurial culture. However, it is argued that entrepreneurs engage in social and environmental initiatives rather because of their intrinsic values than government policy or organizational need for competitive advantage. Such intrinsic values can be self-enhancement, conservation, self-transcendence, and the intersections of identities.

5.1.3. Effects of MSE

Finally, we explored the effect of different levels of MSE on the creation and performance of ventures and the sustainable orientation and practices within these ventures. Regarding the creation and development of social or sustainable ventures, high money ethics have a moderating effect on MSE. If both these factors are present, the creation of sustainable ventures is positively impacted. For MSE to impact new sustainable venture creation, the presence of other required resources is also highlighted: MSE only positively impacts new sustainable venture creation if the required human capital, social capital, and motivational factors are present. The identified motivational factors impacting the attitude toward social entrepreneurship are the need for achievement, locus of control, vision, desire for independence, passion, drive self-efficacy, and goal setting. MSE only positively impacts new sustainable venture creation when the entrepreneur possesses purpose, prioritization, and understanding. We moreover found that different industries may have different approaches to sustainable entrepreneurship. Researchers [87] found that farmers aspire a shrinking economy focusing on regional production in a smaller scale,

while engineers focus on innovation and new technologies for an economy that still grows but in a green manner. These different takes on MSE can lead to a higher or lower creation of new ventures.

For understanding the current knowledge on the performance of social or sustainable ventures and their entrepreneurial activities, we suggest expanding the traditional conception of entrepreneurial performance. In addition to economic profit, the achievement of environmental and social objectives needs to be included in the concept of the performance of the individual entrepreneurial venture. Authors [69] proposed that “*Social entrepreneurs are driven not only by economic but also by social and environmental sustainability objectives, and interrelations between these three subsets can explain motivation. The conventional entrepreneur is driven by similar motivations as the social or sustainable entrepreneur, including the three subsets of UN17, social, economic, and environmental sustainability objectives*”. It is also clear that different types of entrepreneurial ventures affect the three different types of performance differently: “*Early stage entrepreneurship contributes only to economic and environmental sustainability. Opportunity entrepreneurship is a key factor for stimulating the three dimensions of sustainable development, and necessity entrepreneurship contributes negatively to environmental sustainability*” [70]. Intrinsic and extrinsic MSE positively impact entrepreneurial activities and performance, thus taking measures to improve MSE leads to improving sustainable entrepreneurial performance. Furthermore, MSE and its profit and sustainability-related submotivations positively impact engagement in sustainable entrepreneurship and thus its success, as well as sustainable business model innovation. The literature suggests that the external environment of the venture and the expected benefits of SE have a moderating effect on MSE. When these elements are present, engagement in SE and thus its success are positively impacted. The intrinsic and extrinsic components of MSE positively impact sustainable orientation, whereas intrinsic MSE positively impacts SE activities as the personal characteristics of entrepreneurs are crucial for the implementation of sustainability. Simultaneously, problem awareness without MSE does not positively impact SE activities.

We summarize this current understanding of the MSE construct including the identified influences in Figure 4.

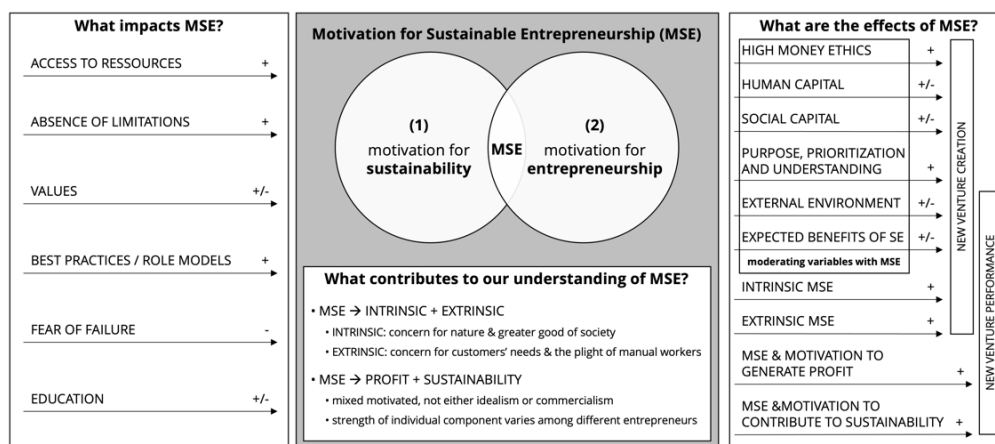


Figure 4. Current understanding of the MSE construct.

5.2. Limitations

We acknowledge that our study has several limitations. First, systematic reviews have been criticized for their lack of flexibility [96], thus limiting the conclusions that can be drawn. Secondly, the review is limited by relying on the Scopus database. However, we were using the resources available to achieve the best possible result and a comprehensive review. Thirdly, we could have included any article found by the keyword search without restrictions on journal quality or year. As outlined in Section 2, however, we argue that the selected time horizon covers the period of increasing research interest in the field and that the application of journal ranking criteria ensured a focus on high-quality research.

Finally, despite being transparent and reproducible, systematic reviews are limited by subjective choices made by the researchers. We addressed this by building a review panel of four authors, as suggested by Tranfield et al. [31], keeping the individual subjectivity to a minimum.

5.3. Future Research Agenda

Firstly, a clear definition of MSE is needed, as is a clear delineation between what constitutes general motivation for impacting sustainable development on one side, motivation for entrepreneurship on the other side, and what influences the union of these two motivations. The need for such clarification flows from the diversity in how these key terms are used in the 50 papers and the lack of referencing to a clear and single definition. Only few of the investigated studies seem to recognize or encourage this future line of research. Nhemachena and Murimbika [64] encouraged researchers to explore the relative importance of the extrinsic or intrinsic motivations and their effect on sustainable entrepreneurial activities. The other studies focused on the need for further comparative studies and longitudinal analysis; increasing the number of variables, sample size, and number of countries; and studying different contexts, such as in a cross-country comparison or the investigation of different sectors. We conclude that the academic debate in the field should rather strive for a deeper understanding of the variations in demographics than toward an overarching conceptual understanding of the theme.

Secondly, it seems that the factors that influence MSE are well understood. However, the inclusion of more regions and sectors in future studies is proposed, enabling comparative studies. Furthermore, the introduction of larger and more heterogeneous samples as well as quantitative and/or longitudinal research are suggested. For instance, Reynolds and Holt [66] suggested using larger sample sizes, and Bressan and Pedrini [78] proposed cross-cultural studies for future research and comparative research in the context of micro and small businesses. Thus, we conclude that adjusting sampling and methods may lead to a deeper understanding of the impact and interdependencies regarding the factors influencing MSE.

Finally, the effect of MSE on new venture creation, entrepreneurial practices, performance, and success seems to be rather under-researched. We found only a few papers suggesting investigating the generalizability of their findings in this context. Only Dai et al. [68] ventured into this direction by suggesting to test the robustness of their findings on the formation of SE teams to other types of alliance relationships. Therefore, we conclude that a deeper and more generalized understanding of motivations in the SE context is needed.

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