

# Identity conflict and entrepreneurial intention in a marginalized community: evidence from Arab-Palestinian students in Israel

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study aims to explore how identity conflict (IC) influences entrepreneurial intention (EI) among Arab-Palestinian students in Israeli universities, a marginalized minority navigating complex national and cultural affiliations. Situating this inquiry within the framework of enterprising communities, it examines how entrepreneurship emerges as a response to social and structural inequalities.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A quantitative, cross-sectional design used an online questionnaire ( $n = 110$ ). Validated instruments measured IC, EI and moderators, including family background and income. Correlation, hierarchical regression and moderation analyses were conducted, with robustness checks based on bootstrapped confidence intervals.

**Findings** – Results reveal a significant positive relationship between the two focal constructs, which remains robust after controlling for attitudinal and social predictors, suggesting that such conflict can act as a motivational force driving agency, autonomy and self-determination. Overall, the results suggest that IC operates as a distinct motivational mechanism shaping EI in this context.

**Originality/value** – This study reframes IC from a psychological liability into a motivational asset within marginalized, place-based communities. It contributes to the enterprising communities' literature by integrating social identity, acculturation and institutional perspectives to explain entrepreneurship in culturally divided contexts.

**Keywords** Identity conflict, Entrepreneurial intention, Minority entrepreneurship, Arab-Palestinian students, Enterprising communities, Social identity, Acculturation, Family background

**Paper type** Research paper



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## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has emerged as a critical pathway for economic empowerment, social inclusion and collective resilience across diverse global contexts (Welter *et al.*, 2022; Audretsch *et al.*, 2006). Within enterprising communities, defined as localities that harness entrepreneurship to address structural disadvantages and foster collective advancement, entrepreneurial activity extends beyond individual economic pursuits to become embedded in place, identity and collective action (Elfving and Howard, 2018; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006). For marginalized populations navigating exclusion and inequality, self-employment represents not merely a livelihood strategy but a social and political practice through which individuals reclaim agency, reconstruct identities and resist subordination (Essers and Benschop, 2009; Dana and Anderson, 2007). Among Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, a minority population characterized by political marginalization, economic segmentation and identity conflict (IC) (Drori and Lerner, 2002; Hammack, 2010), entrepreneurship carries profound sociocultural and political significance. It represents a strategy of adaptation to structural inequality and a form of contestation against exclusion simultaneously. While policy initiatives increasingly aim to integrate this population into Israel's innovation economy, participation rates remain disproportionately low, underscoring the need to understand the sociopsychological forces shaping entrepreneurial intentions (EIs) within enterprising communities marked by identity complexity and institutional constraint (Drori and Lerner, 2002; Sabella *et al.*, 2014).

Traditional models of entrepreneurial intention (EI) have relied heavily on Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2020), emphasizing attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control as antecedents of entrepreneurial action. However, as Krueger (2009) argued in his seminal provocation, "Entrepreneurial Intentions Are Dead: Long Live Entrepreneurial Intentions," the field must move beyond static, linear frameworks toward an understanding of the cognitive, affective and identity-based processes underpinning entrepreneurial motivation. This call is particularly salient for minority and marginalized populations, where IC, acculturation pressures and belonging significantly influence entrepreneurial behavior (Essers and Benschop, 2009; Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013). In such contexts, individuals negotiate multiple and often contradictory social identities (ethnic, national, religious and professional) that produce psychological tension when perceived as incompatible (Amiot *et al.*, 2007). Whereas early research framed IC as a liability associated with stress and diminished self-efficacy (Liu *et al.*, 2025; Omran and Yousafzai, 2024), emerging evidence suggests that under specific sociocultural and institutional conditions, IC can serve as a motivational resource, propelling individuals toward entrepreneurship as a form of autonomy and self-definition (Adeeko and Treanor, 2021; Santos *et al.*, 2023).

The Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel provides a compelling empirical setting for examining how identity dynamics intersect with entrepreneurship in enterprising communities. Members of this population navigate dual and often competing affiliations: belonging to an Arab cultural and national collective while holding Israeli citizenship within a Jewish-majority state characterized by asymmetric power relations (Hammack, 2010; Drori and Lerner, 2002). This duality manifests as a persistent negotiation between heritage and participation, between communal belonging and institutional marginalization – a negotiation that is not merely psychological but also deeply spatial, rooted in the lived experiences of exclusion from mainstream labor markets, differential access to entrepreneurial capital and limited inclusion in innovation ecosystems (Sabella *et al.*, 2014). In this study, we conceptualize Arab-Palestinian students enrolled in Israeli universities as participants within an enterprising community, a collective that leverages education and entrepreneurship to reimagine its socioeconomic position within a constrained national

economy. For these individuals, entrepreneurship functions as a locally grounded act of identity reconstruction, transforming tension into agency and resistance into innovation – an interpretation consistent with the Journal of Enterprising Communities’ emphasis on how people and places co-produce entrepreneurial possibilities (Elfving and Howard, 2018).

Despite a substantial body of scholarship on minority entrepreneurship, quantitative evidence linking IC to EI remains scarce, particularly evidence treating IC as potentially positive rather than debilitating (James *et al.*, 2021; Van Merrienboer *et al.*, 2025). Most existing studies focus on Western immigrant populations and rarely account for how contextual markers, such as income, family background or linguistic integration, mediate this relationship (Ma *et al.*, 2013; Barrett and Vershinina, 2017). Similarly, entrepreneurship education research has largely overlooked the identity tensions faced by minority students in higher education settings, despite the centrality of universities as incubators of entrepreneurial aspirations (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017; Van Merrienboer *et al.*, 2025). Consequently, there is a critical need to test empirically whether and how IC can stimulate EI in contexts characterized by pronounced institutional and cultural dissonance and to explore the moderating role of place-based socioeconomic structures in shaping this relationship.

This study, therefore, seeks to examine how IC influences EI among Arab-Palestinian students enrolled in Israeli universities and to determine whether this relationship is moderated by key contextual factors, namely, family entrepreneurial background, participation in an entrepreneurship course, household income and linguistic integration or “Hebrew use.” Guided by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), Acculturation Theory (Berry, 1997) and Institutional Theory (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991), we conceptualize Arab-Palestinian students enrolled in Israeli universities as participants within an enterprising community, a collective that leverages education and entrepreneurship to reimagine its socioeconomic position within a constrained national economy (Elfving and Howard, 2018). For these individuals, entrepreneurship functions as a locally grounded act of identity reconstruction, transforming tension into agency and resistance into innovation (Adeeko and Treanor, 2021; James *et al.*, 2021). Through a quantitative, cross-sectional survey, we test whether IC is associated with EI, whether this association is stronger among students without family entrepreneurial role models and whether the association varies by household income and linguistic integration (Ajzen, 1991; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Berry, 1997). Through this multivariate design, the study not only tests psychological relationships but also interrogates how place-based socioeconomic structures condition entrepreneurial motivation within enterprising communities. By integrating IC into the intention-behavior nexus, we respond directly to Krueger (2009) call for cognitively and socially enriched models of EI. We also reframe IC from a liability into a context-enabled motivational asset, one that transforms marginalization into agency within minority and immigrant communities (James *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, we contribute to the enterprising communities’ literature by demonstrating empirically how place-specific identity tensions drive entrepreneurial aspiration (Elfving and Howard, 2018). On a practical level, these findings offer implications for policy and education by highlighting the interaction between identity processes and socioeconomic inequality, calling for culturally responsive entrepreneurship education that incorporates identity negotiation, belonging and bicultural stress management as explicit learning outcomes.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 *Entrepreneurial intention and the theory of planned behavior*

EI represents the conscious state of mind that precedes action and directs attention toward entrepreneurial behaviors, serving as a critical predictor of actual entrepreneurial activity

(Liñán and Chen, 2009; Ajzen, 1991). The TPB, originally formulated by Ajzen (1991), has emerged as the dominant framework for understanding EI, positing that intentions are shaped by three key antecedents: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. Attitude toward entrepreneurship reflects the degree to which an individual holds a positive or negative evaluation of becoming an entrepreneur, encompassing both affective components, such as attractiveness and appeal and evaluative considerations, such as perceived advantages (Ajzen, 2001; Liñán and Chen, 2009). Subjective norms capture the perceived social pressure to perform or refrain from entrepreneurial behaviors, representing the extent to which important referent individuals or groups approve or disapprove of the entrepreneurial path (Ajzen, 2001; Liao et al., 2022). Perceived behavioral control, conceptually similar to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing entrepreneurial behavior and reflects an individual's confidence in their capacity to execute the necessary actions (Ajzen, 1991; Caputo et al., 2025).

Empirical applications of TPB to entrepreneurship have consistently demonstrated its predictive validity across diverse contexts and populations. Liñán and Chen (2009) validated an EI questionnaire across Spanish and Taiwanese samples, finding that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control collectively explained substantial variance in EIs. Liao et al. (2022), in a meta-analysis of 89 studies encompassing 51,919 individuals, confirmed that personal attitude and self-efficacy play vital roles in predicting EI, while also revealing significant moderating effects of demographic characteristics such as age, gender and educational background. These findings underscore TPB's robustness as a theoretical foundation for examining EI, although scholars have increasingly called for extensions that incorporate identity-based processes and contextual factors (Krueger, 2009).

## *2.2 Beyond traditional theory of planned behavior: the role of identity and cognitive processes*

While TPB has proven valuable for predicting EI, Krueger (2009) seminal critique argued that the field must move beyond static, linear models toward an understanding of the cognitive, affective and identity-based processes underpinning entrepreneurial motivation. This call is particularly salient for minority and marginalized populations, where IC, acculturation pressures and belonging significantly influence entrepreneurial behavior (Essers and Benschop, 2009; Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013). In contexts characterized by structural exclusion and institutional constraint, entrepreneurship often transcends economic calculation to become a vehicle for identity work, self-definition and resistance (Adeeko and Treanor, 2021; James et al., 2021).

For minority entrepreneurs, identity negotiation is not peripheral but central to entrepreneurial motivation. Individuals from marginalized communities frequently navigate multiple and often contradictory social identities (ethnic, national, religious and professional) that produce psychological tension when perceived as incompatible (Amiot et al., 2007). Whereas early research framed such IC as a liability associated with stress and diminished self-efficacy (Liu et al., 2025; Omran and Yousafzai, 2024), emerging evidence suggests that under specific sociocultural and institutional conditions, IC can serve as a motivational resource, propelling individuals toward entrepreneurship as a form of autonomy and self-definition (Adeeko and Treanor, 2021; James et al., 2021). James et al. (2021) demonstrated how female migrant entrepreneurs mobilize disadvantaged identities as entrepreneurial assets through social resourcing, finding that when entrepreneurial self becomes superimposed on intersectional identity, disadvantage can be transformed into agency. Similarly, Adeeko and Treanor (2021) documented how refugee women use

entrepreneurship to refute stigmatized labels and reconstruct positive self-concepts, revealing that claiming an entrepreneurial identity enables amelioration of marginalization and enhancement of socioeconomic standing.

### *2.3 Social identity theory and entrepreneurship in marginalized communities*

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) provides a complementary lens for understanding how group membership and social categorization influence entrepreneurial motivation. The theory posits that individuals derive self-concept from membership in social groups and engage in social comparison processes to maintain positive self-esteem. For minorities facing discrimination and exclusion, entrepreneurship can represent a strategy for redefining social identity boundaries and reclaiming agency (Santos *et al.*, 2023; Barrett and Vershinina, 2017). Santos *et al.* (2023) developed a racial identity approach to entrepreneurship through interviews with African American and Black entrepreneurs, uncovering that racial identity, often perceived as a liability before embarking on entrepreneurial endeavors, triggers entrepreneurial action to escape racial segregation and discrimination. Their findings reveal that entrepreneurs leverage racial identity as a source of resilience and differentiation, transforming marginalization into a competitive advantage.

The intersectionality of ethnic and entrepreneurial identities further complicates this dynamic. Barrett and Vershinina (2017) examined postwar Polish entrepreneurs in England, demonstrating how individuals negotiate multiple identity positions simultaneously, with ethnicity sometimes serving as a resource and sometimes as a constraint depending on context. Their study challenges essentialist views of ethnic entrepreneurship, showing that entrepreneurial identity is fluid, negotiated and context-dependent. Similarly, van Merrienboer *et al.* (2025) explored how racial minority entrepreneurs navigate othering and authenticity through identity work, revealing that entrepreneurs engage in complex strategies of identity presentation to manage perceptions and access resources within predominantly White entrepreneurial ecosystems.

### *2.4 Minority entrepreneurship in constrained institutional environments*

The institutional context, within which minority entrepreneurship unfolds, profoundly shapes EI and behavior. Drori and Lerner (2002) documented the dynamics of limited breaking out among Arab manufacturing businesses in Israel, revealing how Arab entrepreneurs face institutional discrimination, restricted access to development zones, poor infrastructure and exclusion from preferred markets that relegate them to the fringe of the Israeli economy. Their findings underscore how structural constraints create a ceiling effect that limits entrepreneurial growth despite individual motivation and capability. Similarly, research on Palestinian entrepreneurship in the West Bank has highlighted how political embeddedness and extreme contextual constraints shape entrepreneurial strategies and outcomes (Alvi *et al.*, 2017; Sabella *et al.*, 2014). Alvi *et al.* (2017) argued that entrepreneurship research in extreme contexts must conceptualize the idiosyncrasies of geopolitical dynamics and consider ethical implications, demonstrating how Palestinian entrepreneurs navigate checkpoints, resource restrictions and political instability as integral features of their entrepreneurial environment.

For Arab women entrepreneurs, these structural constraints intersect with patriarchal norms and gender expectations to produce additional barriers. Tlaiss and Kauser (2019) examined entrepreneurial leadership, patriarchy, gender and identity among Arab women in Lebanon, finding that women entrepreneurs must negotiate complex identity tensions between traditional gender roles and entrepreneurial agency. Their research reveals how patriarchal structures shape entrepreneurial opportunities and strategies, with women

leveraging family networks and adopting gender-specific leadership styles to navigate constraints. Similarly, [Mehtap et al. \(2017\)](#) investigated EIs among young women in Jordan, documenting how sociocultural barriers, gender stereotypes and educational systems interact to shape entrepreneurial aspirations. Their findings indicate that supportive educational environments can partially mitigate perceived barriers but cannot fully overcome deeply entrenched societal norms that position entrepreneurship as a masculine domain.

### 2.5 *Acculturation, linguistic integration and entrepreneurial intention*

Acculturation processes profoundly influence EI among minority populations. [Berry's \(1997\)](#) acculturation framework distinguishes among integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization as strategies that immigrants and minorities use to negotiate relationships with host societies. The degree of linguistic integration, in particular, serves as both indicator and facilitator of acculturation, affecting access to resources, information and social networks ([Barrett and Vershinina, 2017](#)). For Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, linguistic integration (proficiency in Hebrew) represents a complex negotiation between maintaining cultural identity and accessing opportunities within the dominant Israeli society. While greater linguistic integration may facilitate market access and reduce transaction costs, it may also signal acculturation that dilutes the motivational force of IC.

The relationship between acculturation and EI is further complicated by family background and socioeconomic status. Research consistently shows that family entrepreneurial role models significantly predict EI ([Liñán and Chen, 2009](#); [Liao et al., 2022](#)), suggesting that exposure to entrepreneurship normalizes risk-taking and provides vicarious learning opportunities. However, for minorities facing structural exclusion, the absence of family entrepreneurial role models may paradoxically strengthen EI by intensifying the need for alternative pathways to economic mobility and social recognition. Similarly, household income shapes both entrepreneurial motivation and capability, with lower-income individuals potentially viewing entrepreneurship as necessity-driven rather than opportunity-driven ([Sabella et al., 2014](#)).

### 2.6 *Enterprising communities and place-based entrepreneurship*

The concept of enterprising communities offers a spatially grounded framework for understanding how collective entrepreneurial activity emerges from shared identity and place-based constraints ([Elfving and Howard, 2018](#)). Enterprising communities are defined as localities that harness entrepreneurship to address structural disadvantages and foster collective advancement, positioning entrepreneurial behavior as embedded in place, identity and collective action ([Peredo and Chrisman, 2006](#)). Within such communities, entrepreneurship functions not merely as an individual economic pursuit but as a social practice through which communities reimagine their relationship to dominant economic structures ([Hertel et al., 2019](#); [Roessingh and Verver, 2022](#)). Studies in enterprising communities emphasize how people and places co-produce entrepreneurial possibilities, highlighting the reciprocal relationship between community context and individual entrepreneurial agency ([Elfving and Howard, 2018](#)).

For Arab-Palestinian students in Israeli universities, conceptualization as members of an enterprising community recognizes that EI is shaped not only by individual cognitive antecedents but also by collective identity, shared experiences of marginalization and place-specific institutional constraints. Education serves as a critical mechanism through which enterprising communities cultivate entrepreneurial capacity and reimagine socioeconomic futures ([Gagica and Xhemali, 2023](#); [Huynh et al., 2025](#)). However, the role of entrepreneurship education in fostering intention among minority students remains

underexplored, particularly regarding how identity tensions mediate the relationship between educational interventions and entrepreneurial outcomes (Mehtap *et al.*, 2017).

Despite substantial scholarship on minority entrepreneurship, quantitative evidence linking IC to EI remains scarce, particularly evidence treating IC as potentially positive rather than debilitating (James *et al.*, 2021; Tlaiss and Kauser, 2019). Most existing studies focus on Western immigrant populations (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017; James *et al.*, 2021) and rarely account for how contextual markers, such as income, family background or linguistic integration, mediate this relationship (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017; Van Merriënboer *et al.*, 2025). Similarly, entrepreneurship education research has largely overlooked identity tensions faced by minority students in higher education settings, despite the centrality of universities as incubators of entrepreneurial aspirations (Gagica and Xhemaili, 2023). The present study addresses these gaps by examining how IC influences EI among Arab-Palestinian students in Israeli universities and by investigating whether this relationship is moderated by family entrepreneurial background, household income and linguistic integration.

### 3. Hypotheses development

#### 3.1 Identity conflict and entrepreneurial intention

The relationship between IC and EI among marginalized minorities remains underexplored in entrepreneurship scholarship, particularly in quantitative studies that treat IC as a motivational resource rather than a psychological barrier. For Arab-Palestinian students in Israeli universities, IC emerges from navigating dual and often incompatible affiliations: belonging to an Arab cultural and national collective while participating in Israeli civic and economic institutions within a Jewish-majority state. This tension generates psychological discomfort that requires resolution through active coping strategies.

Research on Palestinian entrepreneurship in conflict zones demonstrates that adversity and marginalization can catalyze entrepreneurial action as a survival and resistance strategy (Althalathini *et al.*, 2020; Omran and Yousafzai, 2024; Uzunogullari *et al.*, 2025). Althalathini *et al.* (2020) found that Palestinian women in Gaza pursued entrepreneurship as a response to conflict-induced economic instability and family necessity, transforming structural constraints into motivation for self-employment. The context of conflict itself became a prime motivator for entrepreneurial ventures, with necessity overriding fear of constraints. Similarly, Omran and Yousafzai (2024) documented how Palestinian women entrepreneurs in the West Bank experienced identity-based discrimination and epistemic injustice yet mobilized these experiences into entrepreneurial motivation, demonstrating resilience and agency in the face of marginalization.

Among refugee and migrant populations, IC has been shown to stimulate EI when individuals perceive entrepreneurship as a pathway to autonomy, self-definition and economic mobility (Adeeko and Treanor, 2021; James *et al.*, 2021). Adeeko and Treanor (2021) revealed that refugee women in the UK used entrepreneurship to refute stigmatized refugee labels and reconstruct positive identities, with entrepreneurial identity enabling amelioration of marginalization and enhancement of socioeconomic standing. The stigmatized identity, rather than inhibiting entrepreneurial aspiration, became a catalyst for entrepreneurial action aimed at reclaiming dignity and agency. Similarly, James *et al.* (2021) demonstrated how female migrant entrepreneurs mobilized disadvantaged identities as entrepreneurial assets, finding that when entrepreneurial self became superimposed on intersectional identity, disadvantage transformed into agency.

For Arab-Palestinian students, IC may function similarly as a motivational force that propels individuals toward entrepreneurship as a strategy for asserting autonomy, navigating

exclusion from mainstream labor markets and reconstructing identity on their own terms. Entrepreneurship offers a space where individuals can define success according to community values rather than dominant societal standards, thereby reducing the psychological dissonance produced by competing identity demands. Therefore, we hypothesize:

- H1.* Identity conflict is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention among Arab-Palestinian students in Israeli universities.

### *3.2 Attitudinal and social predictors of entrepreneurial intention*

Attitudinal and social factors are key elements influencing EI, emphasizing how individual evaluations and perceived social environments shape entrepreneurial motivation (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán and Chen, 2009). Appreciation for entrepreneurship reflects the extent to which entrepreneurship is viewed as a legitimate and desirable career path, while perceived social support captures the degree of encouragement and approval received from family, peers and the broader social environment.

Prior research consistently identifies positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship as among the strongest predictors of EI across contexts (Liñán and Chen, 2009). This attitudinal mechanism may be particularly relevant for marginalized populations, where entrepreneurship can represent both an economic opportunity and a socially meaningful alternative to constrained labor market options (Liao *et al.*, 2022). Perceived social support plays a complementary role by enhancing confidence and perceived feasibility, although its influence is often more modest and contingent on available resources and institutional conditions (Baba *et al.*, 2025).

Including attitudinal and social predictors serves an important analytical function by situating IC relative to established explanations of EI and isolating its unique contribution beyond normative evaluations and social encouragement. Accordingly, we hypothesize:

- H2a.* Appreciation for entrepreneurship is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention among Arab-Palestinian students in Israeli universities.
- H2b.* Perceived social support for entrepreneurship is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention among Arab-Palestinian students in Israeli universities.

### *3.3 The moderating role of family entrepreneurial background*

The presence or absence of family entrepreneurial role models profoundly shapes how individuals perceive and respond to entrepreneurial opportunities, particularly within minority communities where economic pathways are constrained (Liao *et al.*, 2022; Elmuti *et al.*, 2011). Family entrepreneurial background provides vicarious learning, normalization of entrepreneurial risk and practical knowledge transfer that facilitates EI (Liñán and Chen, 2009). However, for minorities facing structural exclusion, the absence of family entrepreneurial role models may paradoxically intensify the need for alternative pathways to economic mobility and social recognition, thereby strengthening the motivational force of IC.

Research on Palestinian entrepreneurship indicates that in economically disadvantaged and politically unstable environments, personality variables and internal motivations become more salient determinants of entrepreneurial success than external factors such as family business experience (Elmuti *et al.*, 2011). Their study of Palestinian entrepreneurs in the West Bank revealed that individuals without family entrepreneurial backgrounds reported stronger necessity-driven motivations, viewing entrepreneurship as a critical survival

strategy and pathway to self-reliance. Similarly, [Althalathini et al. \(2020\)](#) documented that Palestinian women entrepreneurs in Gaza, many of whom lacked family business backgrounds, exhibited heightened entrepreneurial motivation driven by family economic necessity and the absence of alternative employment opportunities.

For Arab-Palestinian students without family entrepreneurial role models, IC may become an even stronger driver of EI because entrepreneurship represents a novel and autonomous pathway for resolving identity tensions and achieving economic independence. In contrast, students from entrepreneurial families may already possess normative scripts and established pathways for economic participation that reduce the urgency of entrepreneurship as an identity resolution strategy. Consequently, according to both general models of EI ([Liñán and Chen, 2009](#)) or prior research focusing on minority populations ([Liao et al., 2022](#); [Elmuti et al., 2011](#)), including studies on Palestinian communities in particular ([Elmuti et al., 2011](#)), the positive association between IC and EI is expected to be moderated among Arab-Palestinian students. Therefore, we hypothesize:

*H3a.* Family entrepreneurial background moderates the relationship between identity conflict and entrepreneurial intention among Arab-Palestinian students.

### *3.4 Entrepreneurship education as a moderator*

Entrepreneurship education is commonly viewed as a key institutional mechanism for fostering EI by enhancing individuals' knowledge, skills and perceived feasibility of entrepreneurial action ([Liñán and Chen, 2009](#); [Mehtap et al., 2017](#)). Participation in entrepreneurship courses is expected to strengthen entrepreneurial motivation by increasing self-efficacy, opportunity recognition and familiarity with entrepreneurial processes, therefore assumed to reinforce conventional drivers of EI.

Consequently, entrepreneurship education may also shape how identity-related motivations translate into EI ([Caputo, Nguyen and Delladio, 2025](#); [Liao, Nguyen and Caputo, 2022](#)). Specifically, structured exposure to entrepreneurial knowledge and practices may reduce reliance on IC as a compensatory motivational driver by providing alternative, skill-based pathways into entrepreneurship ([Elmuti, Khoury and Abdul-Rahim, 2011](#); [Liao, Nguyen and Caputo, 2022](#)). In this sense, participation in an entrepreneurship course is expected to weaken the association between IC and EI, as entrepreneurial aspirations become less dependent on identity-related tensions and more grounded in acquired competencies and institutionalized support ([Caputo, Nguyen and Delladio, 2025](#); [Harima et al., 2021](#)). Accordingly, we hypothesize:

*H3b.* The positive association between identity conflict and entrepreneurial intention is weaker among Arab-Palestinian students who have participated in an entrepreneurship course.

### *3.5 The moderating roles of household income and linguistic integration*

Place-based socioeconomic structures, including household income and linguistic integration, condition the motivational dynamics of entrepreneurship among marginalized populations by shaping both necessity-driven and opportunity-driven entrepreneurial motivations ([Drori and Lerner, 2002](#); [Barrett and Vershinina, 2017](#)). Household income reflects material resource availability and economic security, while linguistic integration (Hebrew proficiency) signals acculturation into the dominant Israeli society and access to mainstream economic opportunities.

Research on minority entrepreneurship consistently demonstrates that lower socioeconomic status intensifies necessity-driven entrepreneurship as individuals seek alternative income sources and economic survival strategies (Althalathini *et al.*, 2020; Sabella *et al.*, 2014). Althalathini *et al.* (2020) found that Palestinian women from lower-income households exhibited stronger entrepreneurial motivation driven by family survival needs, unemployment and economic crisis conditions. Similarly, Sabella *et al.* (2014) documented that economic disadvantage and political instability in the West Bank pushed Palestinian individuals toward entrepreneurship as a necessity-driven response to limited employment alternatives. For Arab-Palestinian students from lower-income households, IC may amplify EI because entrepreneurship represents both an identity resolution strategy and an economic necessity, creating dual motivational pathways.

Conversely, linguistic integration into the dominant culture presents a complex dynamic. On one hand, greater Hebrew proficiency facilitates access to mainstream labor markets, reduces transaction costs and expands market opportunities, potentially diminishing the necessity of entrepreneurship as an alternative pathway (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017). On the other hand, linguistic integration signals acculturation that may dilute the intensity of IC by reducing perceived incompatibility between Arab and Israeli identities. Research on Polish entrepreneurs in the UK revealed that linguistic integration and cultural adaptation moderated the salience of ethnic identity in entrepreneurial motivation, with more integrated individuals exhibiting weaker ethnic identity-driven entrepreneurship (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017).

For Arab-Palestinian students, higher linguistic integration (Hebrew proficiency) may weaken the positive association between IC and EI by reducing both the intensity of IC and the perceived necessity of entrepreneurship as an alternative to mainstream employment. Students with stronger Hebrew proficiency may perceive greater opportunities for upward mobility within established labor markets, thereby reducing the motivational urgency of entrepreneurship as an identity resolution strategy. Therefore, we hypothesize:

- H4a.* The positive association between identity conflict and entrepreneurial intention is stronger among Arab-Palestinian students from lower-income households.
- H4b.* The positive association between identity conflict and entrepreneurial intention is weaker among Arab-Palestinian students with higher linguistic integration (Hebrew proficiency).

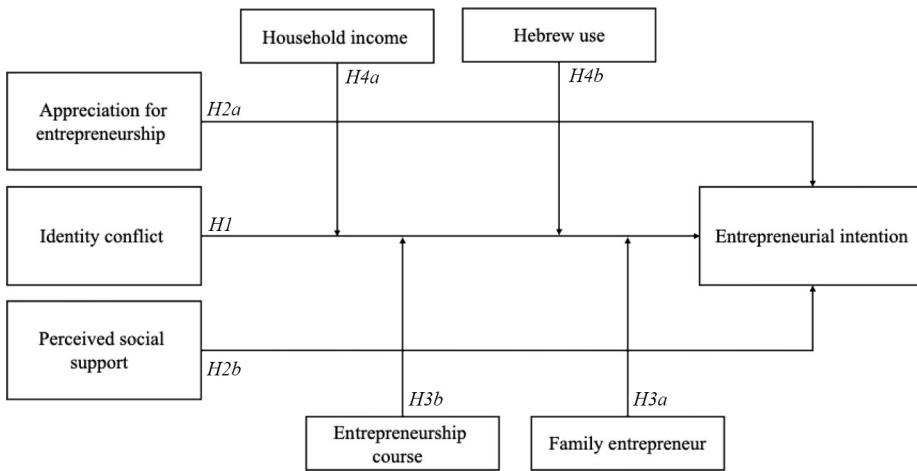
Figure 1 presents the study's conceptual framework, visually synthesizing the theoretical relationships developed in this section.

## 4. Methods

### 4.1 Research design and rationale

This study used a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational design to examine the relationship between IC and EI among Arab-Palestinian students in Israeli universities. A quantitative approach was selected for its capacity to systematically measure psychological and social constructs across a diverse population and to test theoretically derived hypotheses through statistical analysis (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Similar to recent studies in entrepreneurship (Baba *et al.*, 2025; Caputo *et al.*, 2025), the cross-sectional design was particularly appropriate for identifying patterns in how identity-related tension correlates with entrepreneurial aspirations at a single point in time. Within the framework of enterprising communities (Baba *et al.*, 2025), this design captures measurable expressions of agency and intention among a marginalized minority navigating intersecting



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework  
**Source:** Authors' own elaboration

cultural, institutional and economic constraints. By combining positivist rigor with community-sensitive inquiry, the study generates evidence that is both statistically robust and socially meaningful.

#### 4.2 Sampling and data collection

The study targeted Arab-Palestinian university students enrolled in Israeli higher education institutions. This population occupies a distinctive socio-cultural position as a national minority within a predominantly Jewish state, embodying the duality of pursuing socio-economic advancement while preserving cultural identity (Alvi et al., 2017). University students represent an especially relevant cohort, as they constitute the emerging generation of potential entrepreneurs positioned at the intersection of education, labor market entry and identity negotiation (Caputo et al., 2025).

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling from academic fields where entrepreneurial orientation is salient, including business administration, technology and social sciences. The survey yielded 127 responses; after data cleaning and validation, 110 responses were retained for analysis. This sample size exceeds the minimum threshold for detecting medium effect sizes ( $r \approx 0.30$ ) with 80% power at  $\alpha = 0.05$  (Cohen, 1992) and satisfies the guideline of at least 10 participants per predictor variable in multivariate analysis (Hair et al., 2018; Nunnally, 1978).

The sample included students from geographically diverse regions, Galilee (North), the Mothllath (Central) and the Naqab (South) (see Table 1), ensuring variation in socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds. Although the sampling was non-probabilistic, the composition provides a reasonable representation of the heterogeneity within the Arab-Palestinian student community. Participants were evenly distributed by gender (54% female, 46% male) and varied across income levels, academic years and family entrepreneurial backgrounds, enhancing the ecological validity of the findings.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via university mailing lists, faculty networks and social media channels serving Arab-Palestinian student

**Table 1.** Sample characteristics and descriptive statistics ( $n = 110$ )

Variable	Categories / scale	Frequency (%)	Mean	SD
Gender	Male / female	46/54	–	–
Region	Galilee / Mothalath / Naqab	43/32/25	–	–
Household income	1 = Low, 2 = Medium, 3 = High	–	1.94	0.66
Family entrepreneur	Yes/No	41/59	–	–
Entrepreneurship course participation	Yes/No	38/62	–	–
Linguistic integration (Hebrew use)	Scale: 1–5 (ordinal)	–	3.24	0.87
Identity conflict	Scale: 1–5	–	2.90	0.62
Appreciation for entrepreneurship	Scale: 1–5	–	4.35	0.55
Social support for entrepreneurship	Scale: 1–5	–	3.81	0.74
Entrepreneurial intention	Scale: 1–5	–	4.15	0.58

**Note(s):** Means and standard deviations are reported for continuous and ordinal variables; frequencies and percentages are reported for categorical variables. Household income and linguistic integration are treated as ordinal variables. Values are rounded to two decimals

**Source(s):** Authors' own elaboration

communities. Prior to the main survey, a pilot study involving 15 participants was conducted to assess conceptual clarity, cultural appropriateness and linguistic accuracy. Feedback from the pilot informed minor revisions to item wording, particularly for constructs addressing identity tension and entrepreneurial goals, to enhance sensitivity for bilingual respondents navigating both Arabic and Hebrew academic discourse (Schaffer and Riordan, 2003). In line with calls for community-aware scholarship, the questionnaire's language and tone were designed to respect participants' cultural duality and identity complexity, avoiding politically charged or emotionally sensitive phrasing (Welter, 2011).

#### 4.3 Instruments and measures

All constructs were measured using established scales, adapted to the study context through linguistic and cultural calibration.

EI – the dependent variable was assessed using four items adapted from Liñán and Chen's (2009) EI Questionnaire, grounded in Ajzen's (1991) TPB. Items captured commitment, planning and desire to pursue entrepreneurship (e.g. "I am determined to start my own business in the future"). Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha was 0.85, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

IC – the independent variable was measured using three items from the short-form Ethno-Cultural IC Scale (Szabó & Ward, 2021), assessing perceived tension between Palestinian and Israeli identities (e.g. "I sometimes feel that I have to hide parts of my identity depending on where I am"). Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater IC ( $\alpha = 0.59$ ). Given the short length of the scale, additional reliability assessments were conducted to further evaluate its measurement quality. Specifically, McDonald's omega ( $\omega = 0.63$ ) and composite reliability (CR = 0.65) were calculated, providing complementary indicators of reliability that are less sensitive to scale length.

Moderator variables included: family entrepreneurial background (0 = no, 1 = yes); household income (1 = below average, 2 = average, 3 = above average); Linguistic integration, operationalized as Hebrew language use (1 = never, 5 = always); Entrepreneurship course participation (0 = no, 1 = yes); household income and linguistic integration were measured on ordinal scales.

Control variables included appreciation for entrepreneurship, social support for entrepreneurship and gender (0 = female, 1 = male). Appreciation for entrepreneurship and social support were included to account for individual attitudes toward entrepreneurship and perceived social context.

All measures were pretested to ensure cross-cultural validity and face validity (Reynolds *et al.*, 1993; Dillman *et al.*, 2014). Construct validity was examined through exploratory factor analysis, with all factor loadings exceeding 0.60. Reliability was assessed using multiple indicators. While Cronbach's alpha values were satisfactory for most scales, additional reliability indices, including McDonald's omega and composite reliability, were calculated to provide a more comprehensive assessment, particularly for shorter scales. Prior methodological research notes that brief and context-adapted measures may exhibit moderate alpha values and recommends the use of complementary reliability indicators in such cases (Hair *et al.*, 2018).

#### 4.4 Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS (Version 27). The analytical approach was designed to test both the direct relationship between IC and EI and the moderating effects of contextual variables. First, descriptive statistics summarized demographic characteristics and study variables (means, standard deviations and frequency distributions). Second, bivariate correlations (Pearson's  $r$ ) assessed initial relationships among constructs. All continuous and ordinal predictors were mean-centered prior to the construction of interaction terms. Moderation was tested using hierarchical regression models, with main effects entered in the first step and interaction terms entered in the second step. Changes in explained variance ( $\Delta R^2$ ) were examined to assess the incremental contribution of interaction effects. Third, hierarchical multiple regression examined whether IC predicted EI beyond attitudinal and social predictors. Fourth, the moderation analysis tested interaction terms involving family entrepreneurial background, household income and linguistic integration. And to further assess the stability of the results, sensitivity analyses were conducted for the ordinal moderators (household income and Hebrew language use). Regression and moderation models were re-estimated using dummy-coded categorical specifications with theoretically meaningful reference categories. The resulting estimates were then compared with those obtained from the ordinal coding to examine whether the substantive conclusions remained consistent across alternative model specifications. Fifth, bootstrapping (2000 samples) with bias-corrected confidence intervals (Preacher and Hayes, 2008) was applied to confirm robustness and minimize sampling bias. All regression models were assessed for multicollinearity variance inflation factor ( $VIF < 2.0$ ), normality of residuals and homoscedasticity. Model fit was evaluated using  $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$ , ensuring that findings represent stable and interpretable relationships.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Descriptive statistics and correlations

Among the descriptive statistics reported in Table 1 for all the variables of the study, the sample ( $n = 110$ ) included 54% female and 46% male respondents, drawn from the Galilee (43%), Mothalath (32%) and Naqab (25%) regions (see Table 1). Approximately 41% reported having a family member who owns a business and 38% had participated in an entrepreneurship course.

As shown in Table 1, the results indicate, in particular, that the rates of EI among Arab-Palestinian students in Israeli universities were relatively high, reflecting generally favorable entrepreneurial aspirations within the sample. Appreciation for entrepreneurship also

exhibited high mean values, whereas IC was reported at a moderate rate. Linguistic integration, operationalized as Hebrew language use, showed moderate variation across respondents.

As shown in Table 2, intercorrelations among the independent variables were low-to-moderate (ranging from 0.23 to 0.35), suggesting that multicollinearity is unlikely to bias the multivariate results. Furthermore, identity-related, attitudinal and social factors all displayed significant positive correlations with EI (ranging from 0.31 to 0.62), justifying their inclusion in the subsequent regression analyses.

Reliability indicators were satisfactory overall (Table 2), with McDonald’s omega and composite reliability values indicating acceptable internal consistency, particularly given the short and context-adapted nature of the IC scale. Convergent and discriminant validity were assessed separately. Composite reliability values exceeded recommended thresholds and discriminant validity was supported using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and HTMT ratios.

5.2 Direct effects: Hierarchical regression analysis

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine whether IC predicts EI beyond attitudinal and social controls. To test H1, H2a and H2b, we run two models (Table 3). In the baseline model (Table 3, Model 1), appreciation for entrepreneurship and perceived social support were entered as control variables. Both variables were positively associated with EI, with appreciation for entrepreneurship emerging as the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.607, p < 0.001$ ).

In the subsequent model (Table 3, Model 2), IC was added to the regression equation. IC showed a positive and statistically significant association with EI ( $\beta = 0.218, p < 0.01$ ),

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix (n = 110)

Variable	Items	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	$\omega$	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4
1. Identity conflict	3	2.90	0.62	0.59	0.63	0.65	0.45	–			
2. Appreciation for entrepreneurship	4	4.35	0.55	0.81	0.82	0.84	0.64	0.35***	–		
3. Social support for entrepreneurship	4	3.81	0.74	0.78	0.79	0.82	0.54	0.31**	0.23*	–	
4. Entrepreneurial intention	4	4.15	0.58	0.85	0.86	0.86	0.61	0.45***	0.62***	0.31**	–

**Note(s):** \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

**Source(s):** Authors’ own elaboration

**Table 3.** Hierarchical regression predicting entrepreneurial intention (n = 110)

Predictors	Model 1 $\beta$	Model 1 $t$	Model 2 $\beta$	Model 2 $t$
Appreciation for entrepreneurship	0.607***	7.552	0.492***	5.827
Social support for entrepreneurship	0.141*	2.329	0.104	1.773
Identity conflict (IC_new)	–	–	0.218**	3.290

**Note(s):** Model 1  $R^2 = 0.411$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.400$ ; Model 2  $R^2 = 0.465$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.451$ . Standardized beta coefficients are reported. \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . Table 3 reports parametric OLS estimates with two-tailed  $t$ -tests

**Source(s):** Authors’ own elaboration

providing support for *H1*. The inclusion of IC resulted in a modest but meaningful increase in explained variance ( $\Delta R^2 \approx 0.05$ ), indicating that identity-related factors contribute uniquely to EI beyond attitudinal and social predictors. This result was further supported by bootstrapped confidence intervals, which remained statistically significant, indicating that the observed association is stable under a conservative resampling approach.

*H2a* proposed that appreciation for entrepreneurship is positively associated with EI and *H2b* proposed a positive association between perceived social support and EI. Appreciation for entrepreneurship remained a robust and statistically significant predictor of EI ( $\beta = 0.492$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Bootstrapped estimates confirmed the stability of this effect (95% CI [0.2912, 0.6810]). Accordingly, *H2a* is supported. Perceived social support displayed a positive but weaker association in the parametric model ( $\beta = 0.104$ ). Bootstrapped estimates indicated a small but statistically significant direct effect (95% CI [0.0026, 0.2082]). Taken together, these results provide cautious support for *H2b*, suggesting that social encouragement plays a secondary yet meaningful role in shaping EI.

### 5.3 Moderation analyses

Moderation analyses were conducted to examine whether the relationship between IC and EI varied as a function of family entrepreneurial background (*H3a*), entrepreneurship course participation (*H3b*), household income (*H4a*) and linguistic integration (Hebrew language use) (*H4b*). Interaction terms were estimated using mean-centered predictors to reduce multicollinearity while controlling for appreciation for entrepreneurship and perceived social support (Table 4).

Parametric OLS estimates indicated a negative interaction term between IC and family entrepreneurial background ( $\beta = -0.238$ ). However, bootstrapped confidence intervals for the interaction included zero (95% CI [-0.716, 0.077]), indicating that the moderation effect is not statistically robust. Consistent with this pattern, the interaction step did not produce a significant increase in explained variance. Therefore, *H3a* is not supported.

**Table 4.** Moderation analysis: Identity conflict and entrepreneurial intention (n = 110)

Predictors	Model 1 (Family) $\beta$	Model 2 (Income) $\beta$	Model 3 (Hebrew) $\beta$	Model 4 (Course) $\beta$
<i>Control variables</i>				
Appreciation for entrepreneurship	0.471***	0.468***	0.463***	0.469***
Social support	0.098	0.095	0.093	0.097
Gender (Male = 1)	0.064	0.061	0.059	0.062
<i>Main effects</i>				
Identity conflict (IC)	0.199**	0.208**	0.205***	0.212**
Moderator	0.117	-0.096	-0.126**	0.083
<i>Interaction term</i>				
IC $\times$ moderator	-0.238	-0.168**	-0.169**	0.079
<i>Model fit</i>				
$R^2$	0.487	0.491	0.507	0.489
$\Delta R^2$ (Interaction)	0.009	0.011	0.010	0.002
$\Delta R^2$ Significance	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

**Note(s):** Standardized beta coefficients are reported. Continuous predictors were mean-centered. \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

**Source(s):** Authors' own elaboration

The interaction between IC and entrepreneurship course participation was not statistically significant in either parametric or bootstrapped models ( $\beta = 0.079$ ; 95% CI [-0.247, 0.409]) and the incremental variance explained by the interaction term was negligible. Accordingly, *H3b* is not supported.

Parametric estimates suggested a statistically significant negative interaction between IC and household income ( $\beta = -0.168$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, bootstrapped confidence intervals included zero (95% CI [-0.233, 0.075]) and the interaction step did not significantly increase explained variance. Thus, *H4a* is not supported.

Similarly, parametric estimates suggested a negative interaction between IC and linguistic integration ( $\beta = -0.169$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Yet, bootstrapped confidence intervals included zero (95% CI [-0.401, 0.071]) and  $\Delta R^2$  remained non-significant. Therefore, *H4b* is not supported.

Overall, although some parametric estimates suggested potential moderation patterns, the more conservative bootstrapped analyses and incremental variance tests do not provide robust evidence for systematic moderation effects. The relationship between IC and EI appears broadly consistent across examined subgroups.

#### 5.4 Robustness and sensitivity analyses

To further assess the stability of the findings, a series of robustness and sensitivity analyses was conducted. First, direct and moderation effects were re-estimated using bootstrapped confidence intervals with 2,000 resamples, providing conservative inference under modest sample size conditions. The bootstrapped estimates for the direct effects were consistent in direction and magnitude with the parametric results, while no robust moderation effects were observed.

Second, sensitivity analyses were performed for the ordinal moderators, namely household income and linguistic integration (Hebrew language use). Regression and moderation models were re-estimated using dummy-coded categorical specifications with theoretically meaningful reference categories. The results obtained from these alternative specifications were substantively similar to those reported in the main analyses, indicating that the conclusions are not driven by specific coding choices.

Finally, all regression models were assessed for high intercorrelations among predictors and basic diagnostic assumptions. VIF values remained below conventional thresholds, indicating no evidence of problematic overlap among predictors.

## 6. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a consistent and positive relationship between IC and EI among Arab-Palestinian students in Israel. This finding challenges conventional assumptions in entrepreneurship psychology, where identity tension is often conceptualized as a hindrance to self-efficacy and action (Liu *et al.*, 2025; Caputo *et al.*, 2025). Instead, the data indicate that IC may serve as a motivational resource, confirming earlier conceptual arguments by Krueger (2009); and Haq *et al.* (2024), who suggest that cognitive dissonance can activate adaptive responses that stimulate creativity, agency and goal pursuit. From the standpoint of social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), these results demonstrate that individuals strive to reestablish positive self-definition when their group identity is devalued or marginalized. Entrepreneurship thus functions as a channel through which Arab-Palestinian youth can reaffirm self-worth and social contribution, aligning with James *et al.* (2021) and van Merriënboer *et al.* (2025), who conceptualize entrepreneurship as a means of minority empowerment and a mechanism for navigating othering. Within the TPB (Ajzen, 1991; Baba *et al.*, 2025), IC indirectly shapes intention by influencing the three antecedents of behavior: attitudes (valuing autonomy and independence), subjective norms (challenging

community expectations) and perceived behavioral control (enhanced through self-reliance) (Liu *et al.*, 2025).

Acculturation theory (Berry, 1997) provides a complementary lens. For students who navigate both Arab cultural identity and Israeli institutional contexts, entrepreneurship serves as a hybrid adaptation strategy, integrating into dominant systems while maintaining cultural authenticity (Haq *et al.*, 2024). This duality produces ongoing negotiations of self-concept, which, while challenging, can fuel the desire for autonomy and agency. Entrepreneurship becomes a stage for this negotiation, allowing individuals to define success on their own terms and to engage with society from a position of self-determination rather than dependency. This finding echoes the work of Welter *et al.* (2017), who argue that everyday entrepreneurship under constraint is a mechanism through which marginalized actors transform adversity into opportunity. Similarly, van Merriënboer *et al.* (2025); and Yamamura and Lassalle (2025) show that managing multiple cultural identities cultivates adaptive skills such as resilience and creativity, qualities essential for entrepreneurship.

Krueger (2009) insights are particularly relevant here: EI reflects not just what to do but who to become. For these students, expressing an EI is an act of identity work, a symbolic step toward reconciling internal contradictions and asserting a coherent sense of self amid structural ambiguity. This aligns with Haq *et al.*'s (2024) culture-induced entrepreneurship model, which demonstrates how ethnic cultural capital shapes the development of human capital resources and contributes to business performance in communities often characterized as left behind. The moderating analyses highlight how contextual and structural factors shape the translation of IC into entrepreneurial motivation.

To provide a rigorous test of the central relationship between IC and EI, the analysis incorporated established attitudinal and social predictors, as well as gender as a control variable. This approach isolates the unique contribution of IC beyond normative evaluations and social encouragement while situating it within the broader cultural and social context of EI.

Within this framework, appreciation for entrepreneurship emerged as a strong predictor of EI, underscoring the role of cultural values and normative beliefs in legitimizing entrepreneurship (Liñán and Chen, 2009). Perceived social support was also positively related to EI, though with a more modest effect, suggesting that social encouragement may facilitate entrepreneurial aspirations but remain constrained by the availability of instrumental resources. When examining the gender variable, no significant changes were observed. These findings indicate that attitudinal and social factors provide an important contextual foundation, while IC retains a distinct motivational role in shaping EI.

Family entrepreneurial background was hypothesized to moderate the relationship between IC and EI, based on prior research emphasizing the role of familial role models in shaping entrepreneurial motivation and legitimacy (Baba *et al.*, 2025; James *et al.*, 2021). From this perspective, individuals without entrepreneurial family exposure may experience IC as a stronger push toward entrepreneurship, whereas those with such exposure may rely less on identity-driven motivations.

Initial parametric analyses offered tentative indications consistent with this expectation, suggesting directionally meaningful differences across family backgrounds. However, these interaction effects did not persist in the bootstrapped analyses. These findings suggest that IC functions as a motivational driver largely independent of family entrepreneurial background.

Household income was hypothesized to moderate the relationship between IC and EI, based on arguments that economic resources shape individuals' capacity to respond to identity-related tensions through entrepreneurial action (Williams and Williams, 2014). Initial parametric analyses provided tentative indications that higher income levels were

associated with a weaker positive association between IC and EI, suggesting that greater economic security may attenuate the motivational salience of IC. However, this moderation effect did not persist in the bootstrapped analyses. The absence of robust moderation indicates that household income does not systematically condition the relationship between IC and EI in this sample. This finding is consistent with recent perspectives suggesting that motivational and cognitive mechanisms may operate relatively independently of material resources and that entrepreneurship may function not only as an economic alternative but also as a symbolic response to perceived structural exclusion (van Merriënboer *et al.*, 2025).

Linguistic integration, operationalized as Hebrew language use, was hypothesized to moderate the relationship between IC and EI, drawing on arguments that greater inclusion may reduce the motivational salience of entrepreneurship as a compensatory response to identity-related tensions. Initial parametric analyses offered tentative indications in this direction, suggesting that higher levels of Hebrew use were associated with a weaker positive association between IC and EI. However, this moderation effect did not persist in the bootstrapped analyses. The absence of robust moderation suggests that linguistic integration does not systematically condition how IC translates into EI in this sample. This finding is consistent with recent perspectives emphasizing an equilibrium between belonging and tension, whereby increasing inclusion may attenuate the compensatory drive toward entrepreneurship without fully neutralizing identity-related motivational dynamics (Yamamura and Lassalle, 2025).

Most strikingly, participation in an entrepreneurship course did not produce a significant moderating effect, contrary to expectations. While prior research has shown that entrepreneurship education typically enhances intention (Liñán and Chen, 2009; Mehtap *et al.*, 2017), this study found no such effect. Instead, students' entrepreneurial motivation seemed to stem more from personal and sociocultural dynamics than from formal instruction (Harima *et al.*, 2021; Liu *et al.*, 2023). This divergence underscores a critical insight: entrepreneurship education that is culturally neutral may fail to resonate with minority learners. The result points to a need for pedagogical reform, one that aligns educational design with students' identity experiences and social realities (Harima *et al.*, 2021; Liu *et al.*, 2025). In entrepreneurship education, the lack of a moderating effect from course participation signals a disconnect between current curricula and students' lived experiences. Many university entrepreneurship programs adopt universal business models and emphasize opportunity recognition, financial planning and innovation processes, yet they rarely address issues of identity, belonging or community integration (Harima *et al.*, 2021; Liu *et al.*, 2023). This gap limits their effectiveness for minority students whose entrepreneurial motivation is deeply intertwined with questions of self-concept and collective empowerment.

To bridge this divide, entrepreneurship education must become culturally responsive. Programs should explicitly integrate identity work, bicultural stress management and community engagement into learning objectives (Mehtap *et al.*, 2017). Case studies and mentorship models should feature entrepreneurs from the same cultural background to enhance relatability and legitimacy (Haq *et al.*, 2024). In this sense, the curriculum becomes not only a tool for skill acquisition but also a space for reflection, empowerment and identity negotiation (Liu *et al.*, 2025). At the policy level, the results call for targeted interventions that acknowledge the sociocultural dimensions of entrepreneurship in minority populations. Government and university incubators could adopt identity-aware incubation models that provide mentorship sensitive to cultural narratives and social belonging (Baba *et al.*, 2025). Policymakers should also consider entrepreneurship promotion as part of broader social inclusion strategies rather than as a purely economic policy. Initiatives that integrate language support, networking across communities and recognition of cultural assets can

transform entrepreneurship from an individual act into a collective strategy for empowerment (AlMehri *et al.*, 2024; Haq *et al.*, 2024). Ultimately, these implications align with the Journal of Enterprising Communities' vision of enterprising communities, where entrepreneurship serves as a bridge between personal aspiration and collective transformation.

This study makes four key contributions to the growing body of literature on enterprising communities. First, it provides theoretical advancement by reframing IC as a potential driver of entrepreneurial agency. While prior research focused largely on its detrimental psychological effects, the present findings demonstrate that, within constrained contexts, identity tension can foster innovation, determination and social mobility (Haq *et al.*, 2024; James *et al.*, 2021). Second, it offers a methodological contribution by using quantitative analysis to examine identity dynamics in a localized community context. Much of the existing research on minority entrepreneurship has been qualitative; this study complements that work by offering statistically grounded evidence of how identity processes manifest within marginalized groups (Yamamura and Lassalle, 2025). Third, it provides an empirical contribution through its focus on Arab-Palestinian students in Israel, a population rarely examined in mainstream entrepreneurship literature. By documenting their unique experience, the study extends the geographic and cultural reach of the enterprising communities framework, demonstrating its applicability to the Global South and to politically divided societies (van Merriënboer *et al.*, 2025). Finally, it makes a philosophical contribution by reinforcing the notion that entrepreneurship is not solely an economic phenomenon but a form of community-based identity work. In this view, entrepreneurs are not isolated actors but participants in collective efforts to redefine belonging, purpose and social contribution (Haq *et al.*, 2024; Baba *et al.*, 2025).

Like all empirical studies, this research has limitations that should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference, capturing only a snapshot of how IC relates to intention. Future longitudinal studies could trace how this relationship evolves over time and whether intentions translate into actual entrepreneurial behavior (Liu *et al.*, 2025). The reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases such as social desirability or overestimation of entrepreneurial ambition. Triangulation with behavioral data, peer evaluations or longitudinal follow-up would enhance validity (Baba *et al.*, 2025). A further limitation is the modest internal consistency of the short IC measure; future research should use extended scales and larger samples to further strengthen measurement precision. The sample, while diverse regionally and demographically, is limited to university students, who may differ from practicing entrepreneurs in motivation and resource access. Expanding future research to include postgraduates and active entrepreneurs would strengthen generalizability. Furthermore, inquiry could also explore mediating mechanisms, such as identity integration, resilience or perceived discrimination, to clarify how IC transforms into agency. Qualitative approaches, such as narrative or phenomenological interviews, could uncover the emotional and symbolic dimensions of identity negotiation that quantitative data cannot capture (van Merriënboer *et al.*, 2025). Cross-community comparisons, involving Arab minorities in other Middle Eastern or Western contexts, would help assess whether the observed patterns hold across cultural and institutional settings (Yamamura and Lassalle, 2025).

## 7. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between IC and EI among Arab-Palestinian students in Israel. The findings demonstrate a consistent and positive association between IC and EI. Importantly, this effect remains significant even after controlling for attitudinal and social

predictors, underscoring the independent motivational role of IC when examining EI. These results indicate that identity tension, rather than functioning solely as a barrier, can operate as a stable catalyst for EI in marginalized contexts.

The study makes a clear theoretical contribution by reframing IC as a form of motivational capital. In communities where identity is contested or socially devalued, EI may represent a structured response to that tension. Rather than reflecting only psychological strain, IC can stimulate a desire for autonomy, agency and social recognition. By integrating Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), acculturation theory (Berry, 1997) and the TPB (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2020), this research demonstrates that EI is embedded in broader processes of identity and community positioning. In doing so, it extends the enterprising communities literature by showing how community-level marginalization can activate identity-driven entrepreneurial motivation.

The findings highlight that entrepreneurship education and support programs in minority contexts should not assume that entrepreneurial motivation stems solely from opportunity recognition or economic incentives, for many individuals, EI is intertwined with issues of belonging, dignity and self-definition (Haq *et al.*, 2024; Krueger, 2009; van Merriënboer *et al.*, 2025). Therefore, educational initiatives should incorporate culturally responsive approaches that acknowledge identity experiences and community realities. Mentorship structures, incubation models and funding schemes that reflect minority narratives may strengthen the translation of EI into sustained entrepreneurial action.

More broadly, the findings suggest that IC in marginalized communities should not be viewed only as a social risk or constraint. When accompanied by appropriate institutional support, it may generate entrepreneurial motivational capital that contributes to community development. Policymakers and universities can play a constructive role by channeling this motivational energy through targeted support mechanisms, identity-aware incubation models and inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystems. In this sense, entrepreneurship becomes not merely an economic activity but a structured pathway for community-based agency and renewal.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference and the reliance on self-reported intentions constrains conclusions about actual entrepreneurial behavior. The university-based sample may differ from practicing entrepreneurs in terms of motivation and resource access. Future research should examine whether identity-based motivational capital translates into venture creation and long-term sustainability and whether similar dynamics emerge across different minority contexts.

### **CRedit author statement**

Moataz Abo Moch: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review and Editing. Mariya Kargina: Conceptualization, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review and Editing, Supervision. Andrea Caputo: Conceptualization, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review and Editing, Supervision.

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