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Inclusive Innovation in Higher Education: Evidence on Entrepreneurship and Sexual Diversity

Innovación inclusiva en educación superior: evidencia sobre emprendimiento y diversidad sexual

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ABSTRACT

Context. Higher-education entrepreneurship in Mexico operates amid unequal resource access and bias against sexual minorities. Universities pursue **SDG**-aligned inclusion, evidence on **LGBTQ+** entrepreneurship remains scarce. This study examines whether such gaps affect students' entrepreneurial intention (**EI**).

Problem. Scholarship often assumes that discrimination and weak support networks reduce **EI** among sexual minorities, while resource access offsets these barriers. This study asks: Does sexual orientation predict **EI** among Mexican university students, and do perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources moderate that relationship?

Purpose. The research integrated entrepreneurship, gender and diversity studies, and education policy to inform Oslo-aligned social innovations in higher-education ecosystems and advance **SDGs 4, 5, 8, and 10**.

Methodology. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 477 undergraduates at the University of Guadalajara (Mexico) between January and March 2025. Instruments included an entrepreneurial intention scale and measures of perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources. All instruments showed adequate reliability and validity. Analyses in R included descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, Welch's t-test, and multiple regression models with interactions.

Theoretical and Practical Findings. Results showed no significant differences in **EI** by sexual orientation. Moderation effects were no significant, but access to resources had a positive direct effect. Theoretically, the study nuances identity-based assumptions by foregrounding resource availability. Practically, it supports social innovations in universities to widen access, and reduce bias.

Originality. The study bridges entrepreneurship, gender studies, and education design to promote social innovations that advance **SDGs 4/5/8/10**.

Conclusions and limitations. **EI** is equivalent across sexual orientations, while resource access emerges as a lever for action. Limits include a single institution and cross-sectional design; future research should be multi-site and longitudinal, include behavioral outcomes and intersectional analyses, and test inclusive program designs in the field.

RESUMEN

Contexto. El emprendimiento en la educación superior en México ocurre en un entorno marcado por desigualdades en el acceso a recursos y sesgos hacia las minorías sexuales. Aunque las universidades promueven la inclusión alineada con los **ODS**, la evidencia sobre emprendimiento **LGBTQ+** sigue siendo limitada. Este estudio analiza si dichas brechas afectan la intención emprendedora (**IE**) de los estudiantes.

Problema. La literatura suele asumir que la discriminación y la debilidad de las redes de apoyo reducen la **IE** de las minorías sexuales, mientras que el acceso a recursos mitiga estas barreras. La pregunta es: ¿la orientación sexual predice la **IE** en estudiantes universitarios de México, y la discriminación percibida, las redes de apoyo y el acceso a recursos moderan esa relación?

Objetivo. La investigación integra estudios de emprendimiento, género y diversidad, y política educativa, para proponer innovaciones sociales alineadas con Oslo y avanzar en los **ODS 4,5,8,10**.

Metodología. Se aplicó una encuesta transversal a 477 estudiantes de la Universidad de Guadalajara (México) entre enero y marzo de 2025. Los instrumentos midieron **IE**, discriminación percibida, redes de apoyo y acceso a recursos. Los análisis incluyeron estadísticos descriptivos, análisis factorial exploratorio, prueba t de Welch y regresiones múltiples.

Hallazgos Teóricos y Prácticos. No se observaron diferencias significativas en la **IE** por orientación sexual. Los efectos de moderación no fueron significativos, aunque el acceso a recursos tuvo un efecto directo positivo. Teóricamente, el estudio matiza los supuestos centrados en la identidad y destaca la disponibilidad de recursos. Prácticamente, respalda innovaciones sociales en universidades para ampliar el acceso y reducir sesgos.

Originalidad. El estudio vincula campos del emprendimiento, género y la educación con innovaciones alineadas a los **ODS 4, 5, 8 y 10**.

Conclusiones y limitaciones. La **IE** es equivalente entre orientaciones sexuales, mientras que el acceso a recursos emerge como un factor para la acción. El estudio se limita a una sola institución y al diseño transversal. Investigaciones futuras deberán ser multinivel y longitudinales, con resultados conductuales y análisis interseccionales, para evaluar programas inclusivos de emprendimiento.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship in higher education in Mexico operates within heterogeneous ecosystems that combine opportunities for innovation with persistent inequalities in access to resources and support. Universities position themselves as engines of regional development and as gateways to entrepreneurial careers, yet inclusion for sexual minorities remains uneven.

Following Stam (2015), the university entrepreneurial ecosystem (**UEE**) is understood as a network of actors, institutions, and resources that enable the creation and sustainability of new ventures, where participation depends on social capital, institutional support, and cultural legitimacy. Inclusive innovation, as defined by Heeks et al. (2014), refers to the active participation of marginalized groups in the processes of creating, designing, and implementing innovations that expand their capabilities and opportunities. From this perspective, inclusion in university entrepreneurship implies transforming practices and structures that condition access to resources and decision-making.

UEE increasingly align with the Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**), particularly 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and growth), and 10 (reduced inequalities). However, the translation of these commitments into everyday institutional practices that effectively broaden participation remains incomplete.

Research on entrepreneurial intention (**EI**) provides robust models that link personal attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and social norms with the predisposition to start a venture (Ajzen, 1991). Complementarily, scholarship on gender and diversity in entrepreneurship stresses that discrimination, network exclusion, and resource constraints shape who participates and how opportunities materialize. From the lens of Bourdieu (1986), access to economic, social, and cultural capital influences both the feasibility and desirability of entrepreneurial action. Accordingly, perceived discrimination, support networks, and resource access operate as moderators that can amplify or constrain perceived control and opportunity recognition—two key predictors of **EI**.

Empirical evidence on **LGBTQ+** students within university entrepreneurship remains scarce, and existing studies often conflate identity-based explanations with contextual factors. This ambiguity calls for an empirical examination that distinguishes whether sexual orientation per se predicts **EI**, or whether contextual variables carry greater explanatory weight.

This paper positions inclusive innovation in universities as both an analytical lens and a practical horizon. As Ríos (2024) argues, inclusion in university entrepreneurship implies transforming practices and structures that condition access to resources and decision-making. According to the OECD/Eurostat (2018) Oslo Manual, organizational innovation involves new institutional or relational methods, while social innovation develops solutions to unmet social needs that enhance people's capabilities. By situating this analysis within that dual framework, the study treats inclusion as an inherent dimension of innovation that strengthens the efficiency, fairness, and impact of university entrepreneurship ecosystems.

Empirically, the study examines undergraduate students in a large public university in Mexico and analyzes the relationship between sexual orientation and **EI**, while modeling the role of discrimination, networks, and resource access. The focus on the university stage is strategic: this is where attitudes crystallize, opportunities and constraints become visible, and early interventions can exert long-term effects on future entrepreneurial trajectories. By combining validated measures and institutionally relevant indicators, the study aims to inform evidence-based redesign that universities can implement in the near term.

The contribution is twofold: it clarifies whether identity or context primarily associates with **EI** and translates that insight into organizational and social innovation levers that strengthen inclusion. The originality lies in combining rigorous measurement with a design-for-implementation perspective anchored in the Oslo framework and the **SDGs**.

Accordingly, the paper addresses the following research question: Does sexual orientation predict entrepreneurial intention among university students in Mexico, and do perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources moderate that relationship?

2. CONTEXT DESCRIPTION

Universities increasingly frame entrepreneurship as a lever for innovation and societal impact, while global markets strengthen the case for inclusion. Recent estimates place **LGBTQ+** annual spending power at around US\$4.7 trillion (LGBT Capital, 2025), and evidence links **LGBTQ+** inclusion to stronger firm and macroeconomic performance (Miller & Parker, 2025). This positions inclusion not as a reputational add-on but as a competitiveness issue for ecosystems seeking to translate ideas into ventures.

In Mexico, official statistics provide a clearer picture of scale and lived conditions. The **ENDISEG** 2021 estimates that 5 million people—5.1% of the population aged 15 and older—self-identify as **LGBTI+** (INEGI, 2022). The **ENADIS** 2023 reports that 37.3% of adults who identify with sexual and gender diversity experience at least one act of discrimination annually (INEGI, 2023). Such data move the discussion from anecdote to structure, showing patterned bias with measurable effects on confidence, networks, and the perceived feasibility of launching a business during university years. These persistent structural inequalities highlight the need to examine whether sexual orientation influences entrepreneurial intention and how factors such as discrimination, networks, and resource access shape opportunities within university ecosystems.

Market signals and workplace practices reveal both opportunity and contradiction. **LGBTQ+** purchasing power in Mexico is estimated at US\$86 billion (LGBT Capital, 2023), yet only 4.6% of openly **LGBTQ+** people occupy leadership or director roles—a persistent “glass ceiling” that helps explain why self-employment and entrepreneurship often emerge as viable paths to autonomy and inclusive workspaces.

Corporate inclusion efforts expand but remain insufficient. The HRC Equidad MX (2024) program certifies 254 of 305 participating employers, covering about 1.5 million workers, yet only around 22,000 participate in internal **LGBTQ+** leadership or resource groups. These data show institutional progress alongside a limited leadership pipeline—a gap that universities can address upstream through mentorship, bias-aware selection processes, and capability building for diverse founders.

Aligning these levers with the **SDG** provides a strategic horizon that is already present in university mission statements: **SDG 4** (quality education), **SDG 5** (gender equality and inclusion), **SDG 8** (decent work and growth), and **SDG 10** (reduced inequalities). When entrepreneurship centers redesign selection and mentoring processes to be bias-aware, create safe networking spaces, and provide predictable micro-resources for prototyping and early tests, they enact Oslo-aligned innovation that advances these goals in measurable ways.

Against this backdrop, the present study focuses on undergraduate students at a large Mexican public university. It analysis whether sexual orientation predicts **EI**, and whether perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources moderate that relationship. This approach resolves a recurring ambiguity in the literature—identity versus context—by testing both

within the same model and translating results into actionable interventions for university ecosystems. Inclusion, therefore, is treated not as an end in itself but as a driver of innovation performance: when diverse students access mentors, networks, and early capital on equal footing, ecosystems convert more ideas into ventures with social and economic value.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the main theoretical and empirical related to **EI** and its determining factors, emphasizing the role of sexual orientation, perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources. The review integrates perspectives from entrepreneurship, gender studies, and social theory to construct a model consistent with inclusive innovation and organizational learning in universities.

3.1 Entrepreneurial Intention and Determining Factors

Entrepreneurial Intention (**EI**) represents a key construct in explaining entrepreneurial behavior, as it predicts the likelihood that an individual will create a new business. It has become one of the most studied variables in entrepreneurship research because entrepreneurial actions are typically preceded by a stage of planning and intention formation (Kautonen et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2019). **EI** therefore plays a fundamental role in understanding how individuals move from ideation to venture creation (Karimi et al., 2016).

Two main frameworks explain EI formation (Tomy & Pardede, 2020). Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (**TPB**), which establishes that the intention to engage in entrepreneurship depends on three core factors: attitudes toward entrepreneurial behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Barba-Sánchez et al., 2022). Shapero and Sokol's Entrepreneurial Event Model, which emphasizes perceived desirability and perceived feasibility as critical drivers of intention (Tomy & Pardede, 2020). Together, these models provide a foundation for understanding how cognitive and contextual elements shape entrepreneurial decisions.

Empirical studies identify multiple factors that influence **EI**. Yukongdo and Lopa (2017) argue that **EI** depends on cognitive processes that are themselves affected by personal motivations, social expectations, and external conditions. Similarly, Neneh (2022) highlights entrepreneurial passion

as a central element that fosters positive emotions, self-efficacy, and persistence in the pursuit of entrepreneurial goals.

The development of **EI** reflects an interaction between internal and external determinants (Wegner et al., 2020). Internal factors include personality traits, motivation, and attitudes, whereas external factors encompass historical, cultural, social, and political environments, as well as economic development and technological infrastructure (Looi & Khoo-Lattimore, 2015). Political and economic stability also influence **EI**, since environments with limited incentives or institutional support often display lower levels of productive entrepreneurship (Saeed et al., 2015).

Within this framework, academic training in entrepreneurship emerges as a crucial mechanism for shaping students' entrepreneurial attitudes and capabilities (Liu et al., 2019). Participation in courses, workshops, and incubation programs enhances their knowledge, self-confidence, and perceived feasibility of starting a business (Mei et al., 2020). These educational experiences contribute to developing the skills and competencies required to identify opportunities and manage risk effectively (Lv et al., 2021).

Accordingly, **EI** among students can be defined as the likelihood of initiating a new business venture in the future (Uddin & Bose, 2012). High levels of **EI** are associated with independence in decision-making, an inclination toward innovation, and a proactive attitude toward identifying and exploiting market opportunities. The construct thus serves as a bridge between individual intention and the broader entrepreneurial dynamics that universities seek to cultivate through education and innovation.

3.2 Sexual Diversity and Entrepreneurship: Exploring the influence of Sexual Orientation

Entrepreneurship was traditionally studied from a heteronormative perspective that largely overlooks the role of sexual diversity and gender identities in business creation. Recent research recognizes that sexual orientation influence the opportunities, barriers, and motivations in entrepreneurs (Byington et al. 2020). The **LGBTQ+** community continues to face structural marginalization in labor markets, which leads many of its members to consider self-employment as a strategy for autonomy and inclusion (Pulcher et al. 2019).

From a theoretical standpoint, minority entrepreneurship conceptualizes the entrepreneurial activity of marginalized groups as a response to institutional and cultural exclusion. These groups often rely on entrepreneurship to circumvent discrimination and to design business models that

align with their values of diversity and equity (Schindehutte et al., 2005). Sexual orientation therefore not only influences the decision to become an entrepreneur but also shapes how businesses are managed, networks are formed, and markets are approached (Cavalcanti & Ferreira, 2022).

Empirical studies show that **LGBTQ+** entrepreneurs encounter specific challenges, particularly in access to funding and support networks (Backman et al., 2024). Financial institutions and investors often operate within heteronormative frameworks that reproduce bias and limit access to capital (Byington et al., 2020; Conti et al., 2018). Nevertheless, LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs frequently identify alternative niches and loyal consumer bases that value diversity, allowing them to generate competitive advantages and innovative products (Schindehutte et al., 2005).

LGBTQ+ entrepreneurship also represents an emerging field of economic and social significance. Research indicates that ventures led by **LGBTQ+** individuals contribute to job creation, innovation, and corporate social responsibility (Byington et al., 2020; Conti et al., 2021). Understanding how sexual orientation interacts with entrepreneurial motivation and structural access thus becomes essential to developing inclusive policies and educational programs that promote equity and innovation in entrepreneurial ecosystems.

3.3 Perceived Discrimination and its Impact on Entrepreneurship

Perceived discrimination functions as a decisive contextual factor that shapes the entrepreneurial trajectories of **LGBTQ+** individuals. While workplace exclusion can motivate entrepreneurship as a route toward autonomy, discrimination simultaneously constrains access to resources, networks, and opportunities for growth (Pulcher et al., 2019; Germon et al., 2018).

Institutional Theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 2004) highlights how formal norms and inclusion policies influence entrepreneurial ecosystems. Environments with inclusive legislation exhibit lower levels of discrimination and higher diversity in business creation (Conti et al., 2021), whereas exclusionary settings compel minority individuals to engage in entrepreneurship out of necessity rather than opportunity. From a psychosocial lens, Minority Stress Theory (Doan Van et al., 2019) explains how chronic exposure to prejudice and stigma heightens stress and reduces well-being, which can hinder confidence and entrepreneurial performance (Frost et al., 2015).

This dual condition—discrimination as both catalyst and barrier—makes it a central variable in understanding LGBTQ+ entrepreneurship. On one hand, it fosters self-employment as a resilience mechanism; on the other, it limits access to financial capital, mentorship, and market stability, thereby constraining business consolidation (Germon et al., 2018). Recent studies further demonstrate that social belonging and community-based norms play a particularly strong role in entrepreneurial intention among **LGBTQ+** individuals, as peer networks help counterbalance perceived discrimination (Cavalcanti et al., 2024).

The Women @ Work 2024 report by Deloitte underscores the persistence of these patterns: over half of **LGBTQ+** women report workplace discrimination, which diminishes access to leadership and entrepreneurship opportunities. Such data highlight the systemic nature of bias and the importance of organizational interventions—both institutional and corporate—to foster inclusive and equitable entrepreneurial ecosystems (Deloitte, 2024).

In summary, perceived discrimination represents a paradoxical force within **LGBTQ+** entrepreneurship: it propels individuals toward self-employment as a form of agency, while simultaneously restricting their capacity for sustained growth. Understanding this dynamic is critical for designing university and policy interventions that mitigate exclusion and strengthen inclusive innovation.

3.4 Support Networks and Access to Resources as Moderators in Entrepreneurship.

Support networks and access to resources play a fundamental role in entrepreneurial success, particularly for minority groups such as the **LGBTQ+** community. The literature shows that participation in formal and informal networks significantly influence entrepreneurs' ability to obtain financing, mentorship, and business opportunities (Ghi et al. 2024). In this context, support networks facilitate the creation and consolidation of ventures and can mitigate the adverse effects of perceived discrimination (Ozkazanc-Pan & Muntean 2018).

Social capital was extensively studied in entrepreneurship as a mechanism for accessing key resources. According to Social Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986), an individual's ability to secure financial and non-financial support depends on the strength and quality of their social ties. Research indicates that **LGBTQ+** entrepreneurs tend to have more limited networks within conventional business environments, which constraints access to capital and mentorship (Essers et al. 2022).

Similarly, gender disparities in entrepreneurship largely stem from unequal access to financing and support networks, which restrict the growth and visibility of underrepresented entrepreneurs (Aguilar-Rosado & Campos-Sánchez, 2024,

Formal networks, such as UEE, help reduce structural gaps by connecting entrepreneurs to markets, investors, and learning opportunities. Inclusive networks, in particular, expand business growth prospects and strengthen diversity within entrepreneurial ecosystems (Díaz-González & Dentchev, 2021). Conversely, informal networks—family, friends, and community circles—offer emotional and informational support that fosters entrepreneurial resilience (Ghi et al., 2024).

played a crucial role in reducing resource access gaps. Recent studies indicated that participation in inclusive business networks could increase the growth and success opportunities of ventures led by **LGBTQ+** individuals (Díaz-González & Dentchev 2021).

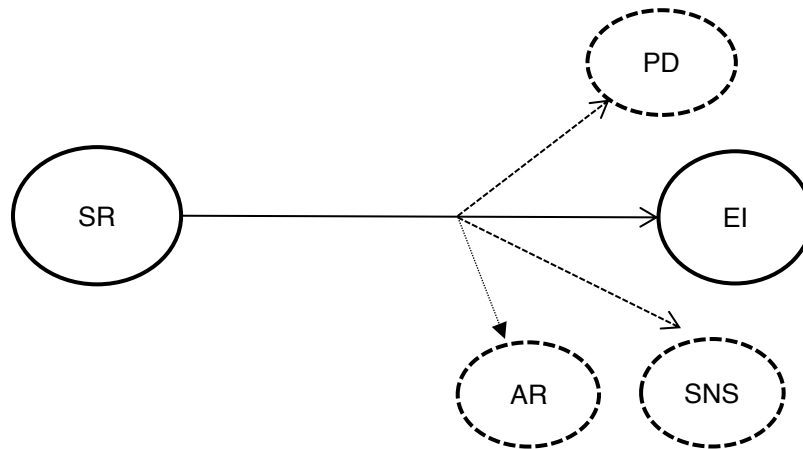
Access to financial and non-financial resources emerges as a critical determinant of business sustainability. Studies document that **LGBTQ+** entrepreneurs face persistent barriers in accessing credit due to bias in financial systems (Ozkazanc-Pan & Muntean 2018). However, active participation in inclusive networks facilitates capital acquisition through specialized investors and public programs (Essers et al., 2022). Entrepreneurs embedded in strong networks are also more likely to access strategic knowledge, clients, and collaboration opportunities (Ghi et al., 2024).

In summary, support networks and resource access constitute essential mechanisms for fostering inclusion and innovation in entrepreneurship. When universities and public institutions design programs that enhance social capital and provide equitable resource channels, they transform structural disadvantages into enablers of innovation and sustainable growth. Future research should further examine how different types of networks impact entrepreneurial resilience and what strategies can strengthen these mechanisms within inclusive ecosystems.

3.5 Theoretical Model and Hypothesis

Building on the reviewed literature, this study models entrepreneurial intention as a function of both identity and contextual factors. Sexual orientation is hypothesized to directly influence EI, while perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources may moderate this relationship (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1. Inclusive Capability Access Model (ICAM): Theoretical framework of relationships among sexual orientation, contextual moderators, and entrepreneurial intention.



Note. SR = Sexual Roles, PD = Perceived Discrimination, EI = Entrepreneurial Intention, AR = Access to Resources, SNS = Support Networks.

The model illustrates the hypothesized relationships among variables. **SR** are treated as an exogenous variable expected to influence **EI** both directly and indirectly through the moderating effects of **PD**, **SNS**, and **AR**. All constructs are modeled reflectively, as their observed indicators represent manifestations of underlying latent dimensions, while the moderating paths **PD**, **SNS**, **AR** operate formatively to condition the strength of the SR–EI relationship.

The Inclusive Capability Access Model (**ICAM**) is proposed as an integrative framework that connects existing validated constructs—entrepreneurial intention (Liñán & Chen, 2009), perceived discrimination, support networks (Bourdieu, 1986), and access to resources—with the conceptual principles of inclusive innovation (OECD/Eurostat, 2018). The originality of ICAM lies not in new measurement items but in its theoretical articulation: it positions inclusive access to capabilities as the proximal determinant of entrepreneurial intention in higher-education ecosystems. Thus, ICAM functions as an *ex ante* theoretical proposition, empirically tested and validated in this study.

The measure of entrepreneurial intention is based on the validated scale by Liñán and Chen (2009), whereas the remaining constructs—perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources—were operationalized by the authors according to their respective theoretical foundations

Hypotheses:

- **H1.** People with homosexual orientation present a higher level of entrepreneurial intention compared to heterosexual people.
- **H2.** Perceived discrimination moderates the relationship between sexual orientation and entrepreneurial intention so this relationship intensifies in the face of higher levels of discrimination.
- **H3.** Support networks positively moderate the relationship between sexual orientation and entrepreneurial intention, strengthening the relationship when support is high.
- **H4.** Access to resources positively moderates the relationship between sexual orientation and entrepreneurial intention, making it easier for this to translate into greater entrepreneurial intentions.

This integrated review positions entrepreneurial intention as a function of both identity and contextual factors, emphasizing that inclusive access to networks and resources within universities can transform structural disadvantages into opportunities for innovation and social equity.

4. METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

This study was conducted using a quantitative, cross-sectional design. It aimed to analyze the relationship between sexual orientation and **EI** and the moderating roles of support networks, perceived discrimination, and access to resources. The design prioritized measurement validity and a transparent, reproducible analysis plan grounded in established models of entrepreneurial intention and diversity research.

The sample consisted of 477 undergraduate students from the University of Guadalajara in Mexico between January and March 2025, selected through probabilistic sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire (see **Appendix A**). To measure **EI**, the scale developed by Liñán and Chen (2009) was used. It consists of six items that assess the predisposition to undertake entrepreneurial activity from an attitudinal perspective.

The study complied with institutional guidelines for research with human participants. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed that declining or discontinuing would not affect their grades or academic standing. The instrument avoided collecting unnecessary personal identifiers. Because sexual orientation was measured as part of the research aims, the survey

offered a “prefer not to disclose” option and stated that respondents could omit any item. Data were anonymized prior to analysis.

Likewise, scales for the moderating variables were designed based on the reviewed literature. In the case of Perceived Discrimination, the proposed items assess perceived unequal treatment in academic, work, and social settings. For the variables support networks and access to resources, the scales considered both formal and informal support and the availability of economic, training, and mentorship resources.

The variable sexual roles were measured using an adaptation of the Kinsey et al. (1948) scale, which classifies individuals on a continuum from 0 to 6 based on their sexual behavior. For analytical purposes, this scale was recoded into dummy variables to distinguish between heterosexual and homosexual orientations, as well as other intermediate categories.

All scales (except for Kinsey's) were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 7 "strongly agree."

Data analysis was carried out using RStudio (3.6.0) software. Descriptive analyses were performed, along with reliability tests using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to validate the structure of the constructs. Multiple regression models and moderation analyses were used to test the hypotheses derived from the theoretical model.

5. RESULTS

This section presents the empirical results obtained from the statistical analyses conducted to test the study's hypotheses. The findings are organized into five subsections. First, the demographic characteristics of the sample are described. Second, the descriptive statistics of the study constructs are analyzed. Third, the validity and reliability of the measurement model are confirmed through an exploratory factor analysis. Fourth, differences in entrepreneurial intention by sexual orientation are examined. Finally, moderation analyses are presented to test the effects of perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources on the relationship between sexual orientation and entrepreneurial intention.

5.1 Demographic Characteristics

The analyzed sample has a mean age of 21, with a standard deviation of ± 21.23 . Regarding academic level, the average semester completed by participants was the fifth ($M = 5$, $SD = 5.66$). In terms of sexual orientation, 80.42% of respondents identified as heterosexual, while 19.58% belonged to various sexual minority groups. This data is particularly relevant as it allows for the analysis of potential differences in entrepreneurial intention and other related factors based on sexual orientation.

5.2 Analysis of Study Constructs

To identify trends and variations within the analyzed population, means and standard deviations were calculated for the items comprising each of the study's constructs. These calculations provide an overview of the sample's characteristics and help identify relevant patterns related to entrepreneurial intention, perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources.

Table 1 presents the results obtained for each construct. In general terms, a moderately high predisposition toward entrepreneurship was observed, with an average of 5.10 ($SD = 0.86$) for **EI**, reflecting a significant interest among the sample in starting their own business in the future.

Support Networks (**SN**) also showed a high mean ($M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.37$), indicating that students perceive themselves as having a favorable environment that supports their entrepreneurial initiatives, whether through family, friends, institutions, or community-based ties.

On the other hand, Access to Resources (**AR**) had a mean of 4.22 ($SD = 1.27$), suggesting that while a certain level of financial, training, or mentorship resources is available, notable inequalities are still perceived regarding equitable access to entrepreneurship opportunities.

The mean of Perceived Discrimination (**PD**) was 1.61 ($SD = 0.32$) on a 7-point scale, indicating a generally low perception of unequal treatment in academic, professional, or social contexts.

However, even low levels of discrimination can negatively impact the entrepreneurial trajectory of individuals who identify with historically marginalized groups, such as the **LGBTQ+** community.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviation by Construct

Construct	Mean	Standar Deviation
Entrepreneurial Intention	5.10	0.86
Perceived Discrimination	1.61	0.32
Support Networks	5.11	1.37
Access to Resources	4.22	1.27

Source: Own elaboration

5.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

To evaluate the suitability of the data for a factor analysis, two key measures were calculated: the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (**KMO**) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity.

The **KMO** index was 0.85, indicating excellent data adequacy for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4897.584$, $df = 153$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, i.e., there are sufficient correlations among the variables to justify conducting an Exploratory Factor Analysis (**EFA**).

Based on these results, an **EFA** was conducted using the minimum residual method with varimax rotation. The objective was to identify the data's underlying structure and verify the items' theoretical grouping. **Table 2** presents the factor loadings of each item within its corresponding factor, as well as the percentage of explained variance and the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) for each dimension.

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Variable/Item	Factor Loading	% Variance	Cronbach's Alpha
Entrepreneurial Intention		22%	0.91
EI1	0.65		
EI2	0.80		
EI3	0.86		
EI4	0.72		
EI5	0.84		
EI6	0.88		
Perceived Discrimination		17%	0.91
PD1	0.82		
PD2	0.93		
PD3	0.86		
PD4	0.89		
Support Networks		9%	0.80
SNS1	0.69		
SNS2	0.77		
SNS3	0.53		

SNS4	0.39		
Access to Resources		13%	0.82
AR1	0.65		
AR2	0.80		
AR3	0.78		
AR4	0.55		

Source: Own elaboration.

The factor analysis confirmed the proposed theoretical structure, identifying four clearly differentiated factors, with factor loadings above 0.65 for most items. Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each construct indicate high internal consistency, validating the reliability of the scales.

Overall, these findings suggest that the variables included in the model exhibit a solid and coherent factorial structure, supporting their suitability for inclusion in subsequent regression and moderation analyses.

5.4 Comparison of Entrepreneurial Intention by Sexual Orientation

To test Hypothesis H1, which proposed that individuals with homosexual orientation exhibit a higher level of entrepreneurial intention compared to heterosexual individuals, an independent samples t-test (Welch Two Sample t-test) was conducted between the groups defined by their sexual orientation (0 = heterosexual, 1 = homosexual).

The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups in terms of their level of entrepreneurial intention, $t(17.01) = -0.03$, $p = 0.98$. The mean entrepreneurial intention score was $M = 30.65$ ($SD \approx 8.21$) for the heterosexual group and $M = 30.71$ ($SD \approx 8.95$) for the homosexual group. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference was $[-4.71, 4.60]$, which includes zero, confirming the absence of statistically significant differences.

These results lead to the rejection of Hypothesis **H1**, as no significant difference in entrepreneurial intention was found between heterosexual and homosexual individuals within the sample studied.

5. 5. Moderation Analysis

To test Hypotheses **H2**, **H3**, and **H4**, three multiple regression models were conducted, each incorporating interaction terms between sexual orientation and the proposed moderators: perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources. The results are presented in Table 4. Moderation Results.

Hypothesis 2 (**H2**) posited that perceived discrimination would strengthen the relationship between sexual orientation and entrepreneurial intention. The interaction coefficient was $\beta = 0.220$, with a p-value of 0.558, indicating that this moderation effect is not statistically significant. Although the direction of the effect is positive, it cannot be concluded that higher levels of perceived discrimination enhance entrepreneurial intention among homosexual individuals.

Hypothesis 3 (**H3**) proposed that support networks strengthen the relationship between sexual orientation and entrepreneurial intention. The interaction coefficient was $\beta = -0.047$, with a p-value of 0.771. These results do not support the hypothesis, suggesting that support networks do not significantly moderate this relationship.

On the other hand, the results for Hypothesis 4 (**H4**) show that access to resources has a positive and statistically significant direct effect on entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.318$, $p = 0.006$), highlighting its importance as a predictor. However, the interaction term was not significant ($\beta = -0.178$, $p = 0.298$), indicating that access to resources does not moderate the relationship between sexual orientation and entrepreneurial intention, although it does have a direct impact on the reported level of entrepreneurial intention.

These findings suggest that while access to resources emerges as a relevant variable due to its direct effect, the proposed moderators do not significantly alter the relationship between sexual orientation and entrepreneurial intention. This may be related to the phenomenon's contextual complexity or the need to explore other moderating factors not included in this model.

Table 4. Moderation Analysis Results

Model	Interaction (β)	p-value (Interaction)	Main Effect (Moderator β)	p-value (Moderator)	Adjusted R ²
Perceived Discrimination	0.220	0.558	-0.121	0.124	-0.001
Support Networks	-0.047	0.771	0.082	0.185	-0.001
Access to Resources	-0.178	0.298	0.318	0.006	0.007

Note: Dependent variable: Entrepreneurial Intention. *Source:* Own elaboration.

6. DISCUSSION

The results of the study present a consistent narrative that linking **EI** to resource access rather than to sexual orientation. The descriptive analysis shows that students maintains a moderately high level of **EI**, accompanied by strong perceptions of support networks, moderate access to resources, and low levels of perceived discrimination. The factor analysis confirms the structural validity and reliability of the constructs, strengthening the credibility of subsequent tests. The absence of differences in **EI** between heterosexual and homosexual students, combined with the non-significance of moderation effects, highlights that identity alone does not predict intention in this university ecosystem. However, the direct positive effect of access to resources indicates a clear mechanism: feasibility beliefs are activated when students perceive available means to act. These results reaffirm that inclusive innovation within universities operates when organizational and social mechanisms—such as access to resources and mentorship—reduce structural barriers, aligning with **SDGs 4, 5, 8, and 10**.

This discussion analyzes the theoretical and practical implications of these findings in dialogue with the contextual environment and the state of the art, emphasizing multidisciplinary and innovation for sustainable development. Theoretical contributions (*Scientia*) refine the understanding of entrepreneurial intention and propose a stage-sensitive model, while practical implications (*Praxis*) translate the evidence into organizational and social innovations consistent with the *Oslo Manual* (OECD/Eurostat, 2018) and the Sustainable Development Goals.

6.1. Theoretical implications (*Scientia*)

The study refines the theoretical understanding of **EI** by showing that access to resources, rather than sexual orientation, is the proximal driver of intention among university students. This pattern aligns with the **TPB** (Ajzen, 1991), in which resource access functions as a tangible proxy for feasibility and control: when students perceive that funds, mentorship, and training are available, they form stronger entrepreneurial intentions regardless of identity.

This finding challenges a recurrent assumption in diversity research—that identity categories explain variations in entrepreneurial behavior. Studies in Western contexts suggest that

discrimination pushes sexual minorities into entrepreneurship, producing higher or constrained entrepreneurial rates (Marlow et al., 2018; Germon et al., 2018). However, within the inclusive environment of a Mexican public university, identity does not predict entrepreneurial intention. This suggests a stage-sensitive model: during the university phase, feasibility beliefs—rather than identity constraints—anchor intention, whereas identity barriers may re-emerge later when individuals face markets or investors.

The study reconciles contrasting results in prior literature. Reports of higher self-employment among sexual minorities (Backman et al., 2024) and funding bias limiting growth (Byington et al., 2020) reflect different stages of the entrepreneurial process. The present findings confirm that capability access dominates intention at the formative stage. The implication for theory is clear: entrepreneurship must be modeled as a process with stage-contingent predictors, where capability access governs early intention while identity factors influence later performance.

Validation results add theoretical robustness. The strong **KMO** and Bartlett tests confirm data adequacy, and the four-factor solution with high alphas supports construct validity. These results strengthen confidence in the measurement of entrepreneurial intention, perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources. Theoretical refinement may involve distinguishing between structural access (availability of mentors or funding) and navigational access (clarity of procedures). Models incorporating these subdimensions would enhance predictive precision.

The rejection of Hypotheses **H1**, **H2**, and **H3** (differences by orientation and moderation by discrimination or networks) defines boundary conditions for theory. Null results delimit what does not explain intention and encourage parsimony: broad measures of discrimination or networks do not moderate the orientation–intention relationship in this context. Conversely, the confirmation of **H4**—access to resources as a positive predictor—advances both entrepreneurship and gender-diversity theory by revealing feasibility as a key mechanism. This insight encourages a shift toward operational variables such as award cadence, mentor fit, and transparency in resource allocation.

Multidisciplinary integration reinforces these theoretical contributions. Entrepreneurship studies provide validated measures; gender studies reveal structural inequities; organizational design adds process mechanisms; and education policy identifies universities as capability nodes. Together, they position entrepreneurial intention as a phenomenon shaped less by who individuals are and more by how institutions allocate opportunities.

For sustainable development, the implications are equally relevant. If access to resources drives intention, improving it within universities directly strengthens **SDG 4** (quality education), **SDG 5** (gender equality), **SDG 8** (decent work and growth), and **SDG 10** (reduced inequalities). The study demonstrates how evidence-based educational innovation contributes to measurable progress toward global sustainability goals.

In sum, the theoretical contributions are threefold:

- Entrepreneurial intention at the university stage is anchored in capability access, not identity.
- A stage-sensitive model reconciles previous contradictions in the literature.
- Null results provide boundary conditions that refine theoretical parsimony.

If future studies replicate these findings, a new body of multidisciplinary knowledge will consolidate around capability access as the proximal determinant of intention in inclusive educational ecosystems.

6.2. Practical Implications (Praxis)

The practical implications of this study demonstrate how universities can operationalize inclusive innovation by redesigning organizational and social mechanisms that equalize access to capabilities. The results indicate that improving students' access to financial, informational, and mentorship resources enhances entrepreneurial intention across identity groups. Therefore, inclusive entrepreneurship in higher education depends less on identity-targeted programs and more on structural redesign that embeds equity into the processes of selection, support, and evaluation. These institutional levers correspond directly to organizational innovation and social innovation categories defined in the Oslo Manual (OECD/Eurostat, 2018).

First, micro-funding schemes should be transparent, predictable, and frequent rather than sporadic or discretionary. Universities can generate small but regular funding rounds with clear criteria and feedback mechanisms. Predictability fosters feasibility beliefs and strengthens entrepreneurial motivation regardless of background.

Second, mentor matching must move from informal assignment to structured process. Defined mentor profiles, clear learning goals, and short feedback cycles ensure fit and accountability.

Structured mentorship increases self-efficacy and helps students translate intention into early action.

Third, selection and evaluation systems require bias-aware redesign. Admission and funding rubrics should prioritize learning progress, validated evidence, and collaboration, not prior entrepreneurial pedigree. Transparent, written feedback transforms evaluation into a pedagogical resource, improving perceptions of fairness and inclusion.

Fourth, peer networks and belonging remain essential. Even if identity does not predict intention statistically, social inclusion remains a practical necessity. Initiatives such as ally circles, diverse role models, and peer mentoring reduce social isolation and normalize help-seeking behaviors. These low-cost social innovations reinforce engagement and persistence within entrepreneurship programs.

Fifth, governance and measurement must institutionalize inclusion. Universities should monitor participation and performance indicators—entry, funding, mentorship, retention, and early success—disaggregated by gender and sexual diversity while ensuring privacy. Transparent dashboards allow continuous improvement and accountability, turning inclusion into a measurable and manageable dimension of innovation.

These practices demonstrate how organizational and social innovations in higher education can directly advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Transparent resource distribution strengthens quality education (SDG 4); bias-aware governance and inclusion mechanisms promote gender equality (SDG 5); entrepreneurship pathways enhance decent work and economic growth (SDG 8); and equitable access to mentorship and funding reduces inequalities (SDG 10).

The transferability of these measures is high because they depend on process design rather than budget scale. Institutions with limited resources can adapt cadence, scope, or frequency without losing the behavioral effect of predictability. By institutionalizing fairness, transparency, and accessibility, universities transform their entrepreneurship ecosystems into engines of inclusive innovation.

Finally, it is essential to recognize the scope of these implications. The study focuses on intention rather than behavior, and on one university context rather than the broader system. Identity barriers may reappear in later stages when entrepreneurs interact with investors, markets, or policymakers. Consequently, future collaborations among universities, inclusive investors, and

government agencies are necessary to extend these effects beyond campus and to test whether inclusive organizational innovations translate into higher venture creation and more equitable outcomes.

In this sense, the study advances evidence-based pathways for universities to promote equality through organizational and social innovations anchored in measurable outcomes.

7. CONCLUSION

This conclusion summarizes the main contributions of the study in three parts. First, it explains how the research question is answered and how the hypotheses are confirmed or rejected. Second, it highlights the main findings, distinguishing the theoretical contribution (*Scientia*) and the practical contribution (*Praxis*). Third, it reflects on the scope and limitations of the study and proposes directions for future research.

7.1. How answer the question and explain the research hypothesis or hypotheses.

The study asks whether sexual orientation predicts **EI** among university students in Mexico and whether perceived discrimination, support networks, and access to resources moderate that relationship. The evidence shows that sexual orientation does not predict **EI** in this context; the tested moderators do not condition that link; access to resources shows a positive direct association with **EI**. Therefore, hypotheses that posit identity-based differences in intention are not supported, whereas hypotheses that prioritize capability access find support. The new knowledge is that, in a university ecosystem that offers at least baseline inclusion, resource access emerges as the proximal lever for intention formation, while identity per se does not drive differences in **EI**.

These findings demonstrate that promoting equitable access to entrepreneurial resources constitutes a form of inclusive innovation in higher education, reinforcing universities' capacity to advance social equity and sustainable development.

This conclusion aligns with a multidisciplinary logic. Entrepreneurship studies emphasize feasibility beliefs; gender studies foreground the distribution of opportunities; organizational design explains how processes allocate capabilities; and education policy identifies institutional levers. The integration of these perspectives clarifies why organizational and social innovation—as defined by the **OECD** Oslo Manual—represent the most actionable route to widen

entrepreneurial participation. The study is valuable and original because it translates a null orientation effect into positive design guidance and because it advances innovation for sustainable development (SDGs 4, 5, 8, 10) with evaluable levers.

7.2. Research findings.

Theoretical (*Scientia*). The findings support a context-centered interpretation reading of **EI** at the university stage and motivate the Inclusive Capability Access Model (**ICAM**). **ICAM** explains intention through access-driven feasibility beliefs and positions capability channels—not identity markers—as the most immediate determinants. This reframing refines theory by prioritizing process variables (access reliability, mentor fit, micro-capital predictability) over static demographic predictors

Practical (*Praxis*). The findings indicate that entrepreneurship centers should prioritize transparent micro-funding, structured mentor matching, and bias-aware selection and feedback. These organizational and social innovations are low-cost, replicable, and measurable. In **SDG** terms, they enhance educational quality, reduce inequality in access to capabilities, and support decent work outcomes through entrepreneurial pathways.

7.3. Research final scope.

The study recognizes its scope and limitations. It analyzes a single institution, applies a cross-sectional design, and uses self-reported measures, which may restrict generalization. Subgroup sizes for sexual minorities are limited, and the broad scales of discrimination and support networks may not capture contextual nuances such as investor interactions or market visibility. Despite these constraints, the evidence remains robust for the examined population and provides a clear framework for institutional redesign.

Future research should extend to multi-site comparisons across diverse regions, employ longitudinal approaches to trace the transition from intention to entrepreneurial behavior, and adopt experimental designs to evaluate inclusive interventions in mentorship, resource access, and evaluation practices. Future research should also assess whether these inclusive organizational practices effectively translate into higher rates of venture creation and measurable social impact.

In conclusion, entrepreneurial intention in this study is anchored in access to resources rather than sexual orientation. This insight reorients both theory and practice: scholars are encouraged to model intention as a stage-contingent process where feasibility dominates, and practitioners are guided to design inclusive mechanisms that equalize opportunity. By centering capability access, higher-education institutions strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems, reduce inequalities, and advance sustainable development goals.

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APPENDIX A. MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

All variables, except for sexual orientation, were measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The variable *sexual orientation* was adapted from Kinsey et al. (1948) using a 7-point continuum ranging from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual. Table A1 presents all constructs, their indicators, and theoretical sources.

Table A1. Constructs, Items, and Sources

Construct / Dimension	Item / Indicator (English translation)	Source
Sexual Orientation (SR)	Please indicate your sexual orientation (1 = 100% heterosexual; 7 = 100% homosexual).	Adapted from Kinsey et al. (1948)
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	I am willing to do anything to become an entrepreneur. My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur. I will make every effort to start and run my own business. I am determined to create a firm in the future. I have seriously thought about starting a business. I firmly intend to start a business someday.	Liñán & Chen (2009)
Creativity	I often have original ideas and put them into practice. I can find multiple solutions to the same problem. I see creative possibilities in almost everything I do. When I face a problem, I always find a new way to overcome it. I enjoy exploring new ways of doing things rather than following traditional methods. I prefer using proven methods instead of experimenting with new solutions. I always look for new ways to improve my life or environment.	Developed by authors.
Proactivity	If I see a problem, I try to solve it instead of waiting for someone else. When I believe in an idea, I do everything possible to make it happen. I strive to find opportunities even when circumstances are difficult. If I see an opportunity before others, I act quickly to seize it.	
Risk Aversion	I am cautious when making important decisions. I prefer to avoid uncertain situations and stay on the safe side. When I have an idea, I evaluate it carefully before acting. I prefer taking small risks rather than big uncertain bets. I am willing to take risks if the reward is high.	
Locus of Control (Internal)	When I set a goal, I usually achieve it because I work hard for it. I believe my actions determine my success more than luck or destiny. If I work hard enough, I can reach any goal I set. I control the decisions that affect my future. My success depends mainly on my effort and dedication, not on external factors. I believe success is mostly a matter of luck rather than effort. (reverse-coded)	
Perceived Discrimination (PD)	I have felt that my sexual orientation affected how others value my professional abilities. I have faced barriers in academic or work opportunities because of my sexual orientation. I believe I have fewer development opportunities compared to others because of my identity. I have been treated unfairly in academic or professional spaces due to my sexual orientation.	
Support Networks (SNS)	I have people in my close circle who support my academic and professional path. I can rely on a network of contacts for help with academic or professional	

	challenges. I feel part of a community that values diversity and supports me. I have mentors or advisors who guide my professional decisions.	
Entrepreneurial Experience (EX)	I have participated in an entrepreneurial project, either individually or as part of a team. I have experience managing initiatives or projects that required strategic decisions. I have been involved in entrepreneurship-related activities such as incubators or contests. I am interested in participating in entrepreneurial projects in the near future.	
Access to Resources (AR)	I have access to funding or financial support to develop a project. I know where to find resources or information to strengthen my entrepreneurial skills. I have physical or digital spaces to develop my ideas or projects. I have access to entrepreneurship training and education.	



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