



香港城市大學  
City University of Hong Kong

專業 創新 胸懷全球  
Professional · Creative  
For The World

## CityU Scholars

### Process Typologies of Identity Construction in Entrepreneurship

Kulshrestha, Reeti; Sengupta, Subhanjan; Sahay, Arunaditya; Chandra, Yanto

**Published in:**

Journal of Entrepreneurship

**Published:** 01/05/2024

**Document Version:**

Post-print, also known as Accepted Author Manuscript, Peer-reviewed or Author Final version

**Publication record in CityU Scholars:**

[Go to record](#)

**Published version (DOI):**

[10.1177/09713557241255404](https://doi.org/10.1177/09713557241255404)

**Publication details:**

Kulshrestha, R., Sengupta, S., Sahay, A., & Chandra, Y. (2024). Process Typologies of Identity Construction in Entrepreneurship. *Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 33(2), 293–329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09713557241255404>

**Citing this paper**

Please note that where the full-text provided on CityU Scholars is the Post-print version (also known as Accepted Author Manuscript, Peer-reviewed or Author Final version), it may differ from the Final Published version. When citing, ensure that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination and other details.

**General rights**

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the CityU Scholars portal is retained by the author(s) and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights. Users may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain.

**Publisher permission**

Permission for previously published items are in accordance with publisher's copyright policies sourced from the SHERPA RoMEO database. Links to full text versions (either Published or Post-print) are only available if corresponding publishers allow open access.

**Take down policy**

Contact [lbscholars@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:lbscholars@cityu.edu.hk) if you believe that this document breaches copyright and provide us with details. We will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

The article is protected by copyright and reuse is restricted to non-commercial and no derivative uses. Users may also download and save a local copy of an article accessed in an institutional repository for the user's personal reference. For permission to reuse an article, please follow our [Process for Requesting Permission](#).

Kulshrestha, R., Sengupta, S., Sahay, A., & Chandra, Y. (2024). Process Typologies of Identity Construction in Entrepreneurship. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 33(2), 293-329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09713557241255404>

***The work described in this paper was fully supported by a grant from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project No. CityU 15609620).***

## Process Typologies of Identity Construction in Entrepreneurship

Reeti Kulshrestha<sup>1</sup>  
Subhanjan Sengupta<sup>2</sup>  
Arunaditya Sahay<sup>3</sup>  
Yanto Chandra<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

Entrepreneurship researchers are becoming increasingly interested on identity in entrepreneurship; often reflecting on the construction of identity in entrepreneurship as an ongoing process. This literature review identifies four groups of process typologies on identity construction in entrepreneurship: *Cause and Effect*, *Active and Passive*, *Salience and Centrality*, and *Sameness and Otherness*. This grouping of past typologies makes two contributions for directing future research on identity construction in entrepreneurship. First, they outline key past findings on how entrepreneurs construct their identities. Then, they highlight the different ways in which this identity construction is processual in entrepreneurship. This has implications at the field-level for future research on identity construction in entrepreneurship as well as the understanding of entrepreneurship as a processual phenomenon.

### Keywords

Identity construction, process, entrepreneur, entrepreneurship

---

<sup>1</sup>Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH), Knowledge Park 2, NCR, Plot Number 5, BIMTECH Rd, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201306, India

<sup>2</sup>Innovation Management Research Group, Business School, University of Eastern Finland (UEF), Microkatu 1 F, Kuopio, FI-70211, Finland

<sup>3</sup>Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH), Knowledge Park 2, NCR, Plot Number 5, BIMTECH Rd, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201306, India

<sup>4</sup>Department of Public and International Affairs, City University of Hong Kong, Tat Chee Avenue Kowloon, Hong Kong SAR

---

### Corresponding author:

Reeti Kulshrestha, Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH), Knowledge Park 2, NCR, Plot Number 5, BIMTECH Rd, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201306, India.

Email: reeti.kulshrestha@bimtech.ac.in

According to Business Alligators (2017), Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, comes across as an introvert, intelligent, serious, and judgmental entrepreneur who revolutionised 'social networking'. Mark said "you have one identity" and repeated that three times in a single interview with David Kirkpatrick for the book *The Facebook Effect*. He added that "the days of you having a different image for your work friends or co-workers and for the other people you know are probably coming to an end pretty quickly." On a similar note Zimmer (2010) stated that "people constantly manage who they are and behave contextually switching between identities," to deal with various challenges and work on certain aspects of their identities depending on the situation (Yamamura and Lassalle,2024).

Identity explains actions and behaviour with a temporality dimension since identity is defined as it were, as it is, and as it is wanted to be in the future (Wagenschwanz, 2021). The comparative meanings are subjectively produced by self and by others (Tajfel, 1974; Brown, 2015, 2020). Identity research is embedded in the context and helps us understand how these meanings provide insights into personalities and behaviours of people at work and how individuals continuously construct their identities ((Alvesson et al. 2008;Foucault 1980). In entrepreneurship research, the processual characteristic of identity construction explains the becoming of an entrepreneur in the act of interpreting and navigating through identity tensions and the context (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). An analysis of past research on identity construction in entrepreneurship can reveal how research interprets contextually embodied practices, discursive resources, and storytelling about self, for an understanding of identity construction in entrepreneurship as an ongoing process (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003).

Entrepreneurial Identity can be a leader's superpower and a pain point too (Crosina et al.,2021). An entrepreneur's identity is shaped by their background, and defines their purpose, and their values as entrepreneurs. An entrepreneur's identity also informs on the type of resources they gather, their goals and their attitude in adversity which in turn affects the choice of opportunity that an entrepreneur pursues (e.g., Mr X who thinks of himself being more tech than social oriented would pursue 3-D technology as a for-profit venture than social venture; or Mr Y who holds Darwinian identity may take the start up into fast growth lane up to listing it in a stock market while Mr Z who holds other identity may just be settled doing entrepreneurship as a lifestyle or subsistence entrepreneurship). Such is the importance of identity and hence it becomes worth exploring in entrepreneurship.

For instance, a study of entrepreneurs in the IT industry suggested how entrepreneurs view of themselves shaped up how they went about acquiring resources, the kind of employees they hired, and the target market they decided to serve. A founder of a social enterprise explained that being a missionary entrepreneur was central to his entrepreneurial identity (Fauchart and Grober, 2011), saying, *“We downplayed ourselves to remain acceptable, approachable and more relevant. We wanted the common man to see himself in us. This, for us is an extension of our principles of Accessibility, Affordability and Availability and always technology agnostic. We do not want to take the centre stage, we are behind the scenes. When we bring in someone new, it’s not just their skills — it’s also their attitude towards work that matters. Do they have social orientation? Do they have compassion and empathy for others? These are the things that matter”*. Many of the entrepreneurs start their enterprises as a means of enacting their identities and values, such as the pursuit of prosocial goals.

There are times when entrepreneurs also face identity crisis (Geyer, 2021). They often dwindle between a sort of hard wiring to survive and the softness to belong, as entrepreneurs. They unwittingly survive in an environment that gives them labels and leaves them lost in terms of where or how to belong (Geyer, 2021).

This review of past literature identifies four 'processes' of identity construction which make them contextually embedded and relationally engaged and are constructed at the level of the individual entrepreneurs. . Acting as change agents in their (inter)actions with others, entrepreneurs construct and enact a context driven identity in response to their social experiences, one which keeps on evolving with time (Anderson et al., 2012; Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017). This process of constructing one's identity while establishing oneself as an entrepreneur has characteristics of its own (Watson, 2009; Wagenschwanz, 2021). With time, entrepreneurial behaviour also gets shaped by the interpretations of social structures in the transfer of identity from one form to another (Kurzweily, 2019; Mmbaga et al., 2020). This extends the idea of entrepreneurship as a socially accomplished and culturally constructed process with spatio-temporal characteristics (Essers & Benschop, 2007).

Previous research views identity in entrepreneurship mostly as a phenomenon where entrepreneurs define themselves through their interactions with the social context (Smith et al., 2018). The post-positivist realist theory of identity (Gilpin 2006) contends that identities "are both constructed and real, are mediated through cognitive and social processes, where knowledge is garnered in the context of oppression, and that the power of individual and collective agency forms a part of discussions of identity" (Moya & Hames-Garcia, 2000). With the notion of identity as constructed and formative, entrepreneurship researchers have frequently used the lenses of identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000), social identity theory (Tejfal, 1982) and role identity theory (Ashforth et al., 2008) to make sense of identity in entrepreneurship.

Research primarily talks about three types of identities: personal identity, role identity and social identity. Personal identity (Ibarra, 1999) is about how a person sees oneself and how others see the person. Social identity (Tejfal, 1982) is about group classification and the various groups the individual belongs to (Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Role identity (Mead, 1934) is the identity that an individual enacts in different roles, such as being a parent, partner, or professional. Two other concepts used popularly around these identities are entrepreneurial identity (Fauchart & Gruber 2011) and professional identity (Caza et al., 2018). Shaped by different life experiences and events, identity keeps changing with the changing context, time, and experiences (Lindgren & Wåhlin 2001). More studies are needed on how identities are enacted (Wagenschwanz, 2021) and how one identity presses demand on other identities to achieve coherence (Pratt et al., 2006). Research on identity in entrepreneurship has contributed much on identifying identity typologies (Cardon et al., 2009). However, there is a need of more research on how identities are continuously shaped and enacted in a process of revision (Grimes, 2018), particularly because it is now well known that entrepreneurship is a contextual and relational phenomenon (Sengupta & Lehtimäki, 2022).

With an interest on identity construction as a 'process' rather than identity itself (Watson, 2009), and with the notion of entrepreneurship as emerging from constant interpretation, relationality, and externalized enactment (Hjorth et al., 2015), this literature review sought answer to the following research question: How does past research on identity construction in entrepreneurship helps us in developing a processual understanding of identity construction in entrepreneurship?

The review exercise led to the identification of four process typologies that explain, somewhat also in a recursive sense, how identity construction happens in entrepreneurship: *Cause and Effect; Active and Passive; Salience and Centrality*, and *Sameness and Otherness*<sup>1</sup>.

Although past attempts at reviewing identity in entrepreneurship have been limited, three notable reviews were published in recent times (Mmbaga et al., 2020; Wagenschwanz, 2021; Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021). The current review distinguishes itself from these, yet adds to their findings, for the future of research on identity in entrepreneurship. According to Radu-Lefebvre et al. (2021) entrepreneurial identity can be either a property or a process. They take the stance that entrepreneurs negotiate and articulate "who they are" through self-related accounts that are motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The objective of the current analysis is to take forward the existing conversations on identity construction by emphasizing the processual construction of non-entrepreneurial identities (role, social, and personal) of entrepreneurs that draws upon a larger context, and not just enterprise creation. <sup>2</sup>Mmbaga et al. (2020) identified distinctive typologies on identity in entrepreneurship and proposed the concept of 'entrepreneurial pivoting' to explain that identities need to change from time to time, thereby asking future research to examine the construction of identity. Wagenschwanz (2021) categorizes identity of entrepreneurs in terms of structure and content, thereafter, calling for future research on how identity work is dynamic and changes over time. The current review answers these calls by synthesising and analysing findings from literature to present insights on how identity in entrepreneurship is constructed as a process.

The rest of the article is structured as follows. In the next section, a brief overview is given on the key concepts of identity in entrepreneurship, followed by methodology of carrying out the review. Then, the results are presented, and theoretical connections are discussed with a proposed conceptual framework. Finally, directions and implications are offered for future research.

## **Methodology**

---

<sup>1</sup> Cause and Effect; Active and Passive; Salience 81 and Centrality, and Sameness and Otherness

The study followed a systematic literature review approach (Wagenschwanz, 2021; Tranfield et al., 2003; Liberati et al., 2009). To ensure transparency and transferability with rigorous analysis (Hu et al., 2015), this article presents an evidence-based review with qualitative synthesis, which is appropriate for an emerging area of scholarship primarily led by qualitative and theory building research (Snyder, 2019). Synthesizing multiple studies qualitatively on the topic of our research, offered a valuable way to extend knowledge and theory (Drisko,2019). An interpretive approach was adopted to the qualitative synthesis, seeking to elaborate prior conceptualization and theory. Such an approach helped us in interpreting, critically analysing and deconstructing and synthesizing the “results” of prior qualitative work (Drisko,2019). It also gave us the freedom to allow multiple meanings, emphasizing the importance of context. Driven by the research question, the broad aim was to search systematically for empirical studies with a focus on identity construction in entrepreneurship. The preliminary browsing that drove our review of process-typologies became gradually more systematic to identify and include articles that would contribute to the key focus of enquiry, while excluding those that do not relate to the main enquiry (Greenhalgh, 2005). Subsequent sub-sections explain how the review was organised.

### *Identifying and screening*

With identity research in entrepreneurship as a broad and inclusive topic for searching literature within business and management field, a three-person review determined article fitment and consistency for inclusion, exclusion, and analysis (Matthews et al., 2018; Sutter et al., 2019). Drawing upon the most widely used format for systematic literature reviews (Liberati et al., 2009), a review protocol was designed and implemented (Figure 1), that involved a process of identifying and screening relevant literature.

--- Insert Figure 1 here ---

In the identification stage, Scopus was used as the database for article search because it has the largest coverage of scholarship in social sciences. A search was conducted with keyword combination (identity) AND (entrepreneur\*) in TITLE-ABS-KEY (mentioned at least once in article title, abstract and author keywords). Publication time frame covered from January 2000 to October 2022, when the search was carried out. Only two papers were found to have been published before this period on identity in entrepreneurship (MacNabb et al., 1993; Chan,1997). Moreover, the field also gained attraction during the same time with a pioneering paper on entrepreneurship



as a promising field of research (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). This led to 720 results. The screening of articles was done in four stages with inclusion and exclusion implemented at each stage. The first stage was the exclusion of books, research commentaries, conference papers and dissertations, and limiting search to only English language publications in business and management journals, leading to 506 results. Further, for quality check, in the second stage, only articles from journals ranked in ABDC and/or ABS list of journals were included, and other journals were excluded, leading to 181 results. This included empirical, theoretical and review articles. Further, articles with a passing mention of identity or entrepreneurship in the abstracts were excluded at the third stage. Some seminal articles which focused on organizational identity, helped the co-authors expand their overall understanding of 'identity' and what it means for an individual and organization, but were not included in the shortlist of 90 abstracts referring to identity and entrepreneurship/entrepreneur.

As per the direct relevance to the review question that guided this study, the abstracts were reviewed and classified (Table 1) into Relevant literature (RL) and Not Relevant Literature (NRL); where relevance meant suitability to the research question. After removing duplicates and the peripheral literature (38 articles), 52 articles remained for full text analysis. While some papers were deep read as the findings were very relevant to the review question, others were skimmed through as they were not contributing much in terms of identity construction, and hence they were classified as not relevant. The selected literature was subject to an interpretative analysis to identify the key process typologies, which will be further elaborated in Table 1.

---- Insert table 1 here ---

### *Synthesis and analysis*

This stage included carrying out a thematic analysis of the shortlisted articles. First, the information on publication year, authors, title, abstract, keywords, research question, key results, and doi were captured in a chronologically arranged spreadsheet, which is a common practice in systematic literature reviews (Malki et al. 2020; Cho et al. 2022; Abebe 2022). Subsequently, an inductive approach of theme identification was adopted by doing full text analysis and creating thematic tables. The analysis began with an inductive synthesis as opposed to a deductive application of a

pre-defined framework (Jones et al., 2011). This helped in identifying specific findings from past literature that fully or partly addressed the review question and reach to first and second order codes through thematic analysis (Jones et al., 2011). The first order themes were continuously compared with the abstract, introduction, and results of the papers in full-text analysis. The second order themes were aggregation of the essential meanings/patterns/constructs of the first order themes.

At this stage, a synthesis approach was adopted to compare and interpret the data (literature) and themes with potentially relevant theory (Noblit & Hare 1988). The Noblit and Hare's (1988) seven-step QRS approach was followed which provided guidelines to present our research more systematically as in Figure 2. The steps as given by (Noblit & Hare 1988) were in their own words, *“(a) defining the topic or area, (b) setting parameters for the search and for study quality, (c) comprehensively searching the literature, (d) reviewing study quality, (e) extracting interpretations, (f) synthesizing the extracting material, and (g) writing up the study methods and results.”*

--- Insert Figure 2 here ---

The thematic analysis was compared with relevant concepts and theories from process studies and identity research (Sandelowski et al., 2003) to identify suitable theoretical categories that constitute the themes and give directions for future research (Tranfield et al., 2003). This involved a lot of movement back and forth between literature and themes to generate and refine the higher-order categories (Kennedy, 2018). The result of this exercise were the four process typologies that construct identity dialogue in response to the research question in this study. Table 2 gives a sample overview of the analysis.

---- Insert Table 2 here ---

## **Findings**

## *Process typologies in identity construction*

### *Cause and Effect*

Previous studies have discovered variations in people's identities. People take actions and live with its consequences. In that sense, action becomes the cause and the result of the action taken becomes the effect (Doosje et al. 2002). An individual's social identity changes with group identification, develops with group interactions, and creates grounds for social identity to be dynamic with changes happening over time. Identities are causal in nature (Gubic and Varos, 2023; Brownfield and Thompson, 2005), as human behaviour tends to be consistent with how an individual identifies oneself and this is recursive (Doosje et al, 2002). In other words, identity becomes the cause for an effect and this is an ongoing process. Any action, thought, word or deed towards bringing about a change in who one is, becomes the cause for who one become as an effect. It is processual because the journey from who one is and who one becomes corresponds to planting a cause and reaping an effect. Those who come to think of themselves as entrepreneurs are more likely to be engaged in entrepreneurial behaviour that creates their identity as entrepreneurs. Rigorous theory-building on a cause-and-effect relationality is essential to establishing and legitimatizing the paradigm of entrepreneurship (Nicholls 2010, Newbert et al., 2014). Barbera et al (2019) analysed in their study how anti-plastic pollution social entrepreneurs used multimodal (visual and verbal) interactions for emotion-symbolic work as causes to influence their targets and form collective identity. Theorizing using visual texts help social entrepreneurs elaborate the chains of cause and effect (Greenwood et al. 2002). Social entrepreneurs influence social-symbolic structures to effect the desired outcomes which in turn connect and construct target actors' collective identity. Based on an identity approach to commitment (Burke and Reitzes, 1991), positive emotions connected to one's identity cause recurring activities that produce a coherent line of behaviour which in turn strengthens one's identity further (Schulte-Holthaus 2019). Thus becoming an entrepreneur starts with numerous conspicuous and inconspicuous activities that lead to first considerations, then commitment, and then finally founding a business (Brixy et al., 2012). Such a process often results from integrating founder role and personal identity (Hoang and Gimeno, 2010; Shepherd and Haynie, 2009). Similarly, demographic parameters such as education, training, and income cause women entrepreneurs create their own unique founder identities (Sodhi and Dwivedi,2024; Roy and Manna 2014).

Entrepreneurial identity also leads to causal or effectual behaviour in new venture creation (Alsos et al. 2016). Since entrepreneurial identity varies, it has consequences on entrepreneurial behaviours (Sarasvathy, 2008). Darwanian, Communitarian, and Missionary (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011) and Social Bricoleurs, Social Constructionists, and Social Engineers (Zahra et al., 2009) are among the most cited identity-based classifications that are based on diverse social identities. Identity variations have an effect on different choices innovation (Jones et al., 2019), bricolage (Renko and Stenholm, 2016) or social capital (Khazami et al., 2020). Identity formation, maintenance, and evolution are both personal and social processes (Vignoles, 2018). Entrepreneurs follow different logics in entrepreneurial processes by virtue of their different identities (Alsos, 2016). Identities are heterogeneous; they mix, overlap, complement and at times stand in conflict (Chasserio et al., 2014). Such heterogeneity causes an ongoing influence on entrepreneurial action, which is a process in itself with intended or unintended effects on the venture creation and growth process.

The general aspect of identity is to answer the 'who are you' (or 'who am I') question (Anderson and Warren, 2011). An identity is constructed as an effect of cultural backgrounds, contextualised experiences, rhetorics, and different motivations (Anderson and Warren, 2011). Because identity construction is context dependent, entrepreneurs constructed identity as a cause reflects different ways of thinking, acting, and responding as effects in entrepreneurship (Davidson, 2007). Using rhetoric and rationality of entrepreneurial discourse, an entrepreneur is able to construct an entrepreneurial identity (Anderson and Warren, 2011).

Socially expected norms as a cause differ from one context to another, bringing identity construction into effect in different forms (Nelson et al., 2016). For example, the identity construction of social enterprises organised as cooperatives with democratic participation, voluntary membership, limited returns, and positive dealing with institutional arrangements, is an effect of these very practices with a range of cooperation actors and their embeddedness in networks. In individual-level entrepreneurial identity, research shows that the entrepreneur may also want to use one stereotyped 'heroic' identity as a cause to demonstrate another type of identity, like that of a jester as an effect (Anderson & Warren, 2011). Identity construction and entrepreneurial actions both as processes feed into each other, becoming sometimes the cause and sometimes the effect of one another (Smith et al., 2023; Leitch and Harrison, 2016).

## *Active and Passive*

Research suggests that in order to strengthen their entrepreneurial identity, entrepreneurs actively engage in seeking strategic support and more so in the case of older, novice entrepreneurs to mitigate possible negative influences from social environment (Kibler et al. 2015). Identity is something that the person actively creates as a symbolic project (Elliot 1998), which is an active construction of who he/she is in accessing resources from the network (Thompson, 1995). The identities can be divided into two categories based on the dimensions of active and passive construction (Serafini et al. 2002). A passive identity construction process is that of identification and imitation from the external environment, to avoid making radical identity decisions and comply to external societal norms. An active identity construction process is an internal construction of self-regularized psychological process that guides individual's behaviour. Extending this work, the study contributes to taking the active and passive identities (Sefarini et al., 2002) forward and deliberate into the processes itself being active or passive in nature. Active identity construction process is where, *“individuals are active participants in shaping of themselves and others. They may—at various times—accept, deny, react, reshape, rethink, acquiesce, rebel, conform, define and redefine the demands and their responses”* (Barley et al., 1992). Aygoren and Nordqvist (2015) placed much emphasis on the active role that individuals play in constructing their identity through specific daily life identity work processes in relation to both the family and enterprise (Basly and Abdelwahed,2023). Whereas passive identity construction process is where one lets their external environment govern the shaping of their identity.

Another type of interaction explored in research has been between ‘dominants’ and ‘dominated’, where the dominated does not engage in a ‘passive’ but in an ‘active’ compliance (Goss et al., 2011). Barragan et al (2018) analysed the narratives of Emirati female entrepreneurs who engaged in strategic (dis) obedience in their early stages of becoming an entrepreneur, paying attention to the dynamic and ongoing process between dominators and dominated (Courpasson, Dany, & Clegg, 2012). In this case, the female entrepreneurs actively rather than passively obeyed organizational norms. The female entrepreneurs actively obeyed (Courpasson, 2000) their spouses with the purpose of micro-emancipating to ‘continue’ with their businesses. In this case, the spouses became an active constraint and also an enabler of her entrepreneurial career. Active construction of identities take place when women entrepreneurs form concurrent identities and

handle them simultaneously (Nash 2008; Carbin & Edenheim 2013) at the intersection of gender, entrepreneurship, and culture (Hidegh et al.,2023; Stirzaker & Sitko 2019). Identity construction in immigrant or refugee entrepreneurship happens while individual succumbed to external norms, and then transform their lives by turning into entrepreneurs (Kumru and Thompson 2003). Ulker and Baris (2004) found that immigrant entrepreneurs first passively construct their identities as per the norms of the state regimes, market and social networks, and then actively construct flexible identities to become mobile and competitive. Women entrepreneurs, despite societal and institutional constraints, practice an ongoing passive construction of identity to manage their gendered limitations prescribed by their ethnicity and actively construct identity to cross the lines and break the stereotype (Wang, 2019).

Gherardi (2015) examines the intertwined process of gendering and entrepreneuring, and finds that the female entrepreneur brings out an active and passive identity construction in identity as a venture-creator, a project co-author and as a wife in the process of negotiating and performing work–family life balance. Women entrepreneurs actively and passively construct their identities negotiating balance between family and work to gain independence and contribute to society. In cases where succession as a male phenomenon made female successors disappear because of the dominant gender structures, the daughters of such families actively construct their identities to take up opportunities other than their own family business (Martin, 2002). Another interesting example is that of Nuosu entrepreneurs who carry their passively constructed ethnic identity as a collective pattern, as well as actively constructed entrepreneurial identity depicting modernization (Heberer, 2008). Entrepreneurial identity has been found to be multidimensional also in elder British women entrepreneurs in the USA (Stirzaker & Sitko, 2019). They actively and passively construct their identities according to the external environment. The middle-aged women entrepreneurs face tension between age and entrepreneurial identities, and conflict in role identities as “mother” and “entrepreneur”. However, they are able to bring coherence in their identity by actively constructing entrepreneurial identity and passively constructing identity of a mother. This calls for more research on generating a contextual understanding of how identity construction is actively and passively performed in entrepreneurship (Marlow & Al-Dajani 2017).

Salience and Centrality

Identity centrality and identity salience are independent yet overlapping components of an identity (Stryker and Serpe 1994). In social identity theory, salience refers to the willingness to take on a certain social identity to have influence within a group (Haslam et al., 1987). The salience of one's identity may change considerably across situations (Bowman and Felix, 2017). Identity salience relates to the probability the identity will be invoked; identity salience influences how much effort will be devoted to each role and how well the role will be performed (Hogg et al., 1995). Centrality refers to the importance that an individual places on a focal identity in comparison to other identities. It describes the extent to which a dimension of one's identity is important to one's definition of oneself (Rosenberg, 1979). Identity centrality refers to the subjective importance or the strength of role identity to self-concept (Hoang and Gimeno 2010). It helps define and motivate an individual. The process of constructing an identity which is more central to the individual can help us understand what holds more importance for the individual and where lies more identification of self (Carter, 2015).

Newbury et al (2018) in their work explain how salient identities are created and strengthened by initial entrepreneurial experience, which could be positive or negative exerting similar effect on salience. And in that way, it becomes processual, getting strengthened or weakened by resulting outcomes. Identity salience and centrality also overlaps, complements and becomes equivalent too (Stryker and Serpe, 1994) and vice versa. In a study by Yitshaki and Kropp (2014), that compared entrepreneurial passion and its salience and centrality in hi-tech entrepreneurs (HTEs) and social entrepreneurs (SEs), the study found that the process of self-identity construction was unique for HTEs. For HTEs with strong partners or mentors and previous job experience, they constructed an entrepreneurial identity which was more central and less salient. It defined who they were. Passion helped in constructing an identity centrality. In case of SEs, the process of self-identity construction related to the closeness they had with their activities and communities, and how their identity was attached to the venture and to its meaningfulness. It was the activities that constructed a more salient entrepreneurial identity. In case of SEs, compassion and empathy led to constructing a strong sense of identity centrality or salience.

Central and salient entrepreneurial identity have been found to be among the main factors activating entrepreneurial behaviour (Wang et al. 2021). Academic scientists who have constructed

entrepreneurial identity as centrality are more inclined to use their acquired knowledge for commercializing their research (Etzkowitz et al. 2000). Constructing an identity based on centrality is more of an autonomous choice; whereas constructing an identity based on salience is driven by the necessity of one's current situation or by external considerations (Stryke and Serpe, 1994, Stryker, 1968). Entrepreneurs with higher interpersonal commitment and relationship with others may cause them to continuously construct their entrepreneurial identity to demonstrate its salience (Murnieks et al. 2018). Entrepreneurs who construct entrepreneurial identity as more central to who they are, demonstrate harmonious entrepreneurial passion that stems from an internal desire to engage in entrepreneurial activities. In an interesting study by Williamson et al (2022), entrepreneurial passion expressed for founding a venture at different points in time was captured by artificial intelligence (AI) methods in which the authors developed an AI algorithm to recognize identity-based passion (identity centrality) from the interview data of entrepreneurs and detected affective passion with sentiment analysis. Affective passion in this context meant the feelings of passion associated with one's constructed identity. Results indicated that when the entrepreneur distracted from constructing entrepreneurial identity as central to who he/she was, this affective passion declined.

### *Sameness and Otherness*

Identity construction is also a process of both difference and similarity, whereby the construction of 'self' takes place as 'same' and 'other' (Jenson et al., 2010). Individuals construct identities through complementary and contradictory narratives over time (Somers, 1994). Identity construction is an ongoing process of building the new identity, while remaining nested in the old one. This keeps identity work in a flux, where entrepreneurs interpret their behaviour and social interactions and construct their identity in terms of how they relate to others (Fauchart & Gruber 2011). This construction of identity entails an ongoing process of 'becoming' and remains non-prescriptive, enacted in spontaneous and wilful engagement through narrative or discourse (Kasperova & Kitching 2014). In this process, same identity may be reinforced, or other identity may be introduced.

The social constructionist approach (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) is useful in exploring the sameness and otherness of identities at individual and collective level (Handley et al., 2006), and



examine how the lives of entrepreneurs are continuously produced (Steyaert & Hjorth, 2003). Ybema et al (2009) state that 'sameness' and 'otherness' emerge as pivotal guidelines in the elaboration of 'my' or 'our' identity when individuals define themselves and others in their self-narratives. Yitshaki and Kropp (2016) in their research on how high-tech entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs construct their identity in the becoming of an entrepreneur, found that the participants felt different (otherness) or similar (sameness) in their identity to other entrepreneurs. This sameness and otherness in entrepreneurs represented who they were and how homogenous or heterogeneous they were. Further in the research it was revealed that entrepreneurial identities were constructed differently across contexts based on the self-perceptions of otherness and sameness. While high-tech entrepreneurs' passion was linked to opportunity, social entrepreneurs focused on the creation of social value and emotional payback. In this way the identity construction process for all hi-tech entrepreneurs (HTes) demonstrated sameness. The source of self-identity for social entrepreneurs for sameness was based on life events and appeared to be constructed even before engaging in entrepreneurial activity. For HTEs, otherness in identity construction related to a strong sense of creativity, individuality, need for autonomy and decisiveness that made them different. SEs indicated that their otherness in identity construction was associated with high social sensitivity. SEs indicated that they were similar in constructing their identity like other people and developed an understanding that evolved over time regarding their ability to establish a social venture. They experienced sameness as a function of having experienced similar problems themselves. Similarly, Ybema et al (2009) opine that enactment of an 'identity' through discourse involves dialogic separation of 'self' from the 'other' by establishing 'sameness' and 'otherness', generally by creating stark contrasts – good versus bad, beautiful versus ugly etc. In another research, the concept of sameness and otherness is looked at from a liminality lens in identity study. The authors brought out the 'liminality' concept based on discursive practices of social actors with respect to their identity positions. The study explored two situations for describing individuals' identity issues with liminality in focus, one where actors are going through a transformational change from one 'identity position' to another, and second where the actors' experience being in-between two identity positions for a longer period of time. This 'transitional betweenness' and 'perpetual betweenness' refer to transitional liminars who during their discourse, abandon 'old' identities and talk about 'new' identities whereas perpetual liminars keep switching from identity to another while responding to the situation, sometimes 'same' sometimes 'other'.

## **Discussion**

The findings, in the form of process typologies of identity construction, contribute to identity literature by elaborating the processual characteristic of identity construction. Each conversation is inherently processual. Identity construction begins when there is a dissatisfaction with the status quo and the individual begins to revise and modify his/her identity in the process of becoming who he/she wants to be (Alvesson et al., 2008). Hence, the cause or effect process of identity construction embodies the spirit of making a change in the existing lives as is, whether identity becomes the trigger or becomes the effect of entrepreneurial action differs from one individual to another. The active or passive identity construction is sometimes spontaneous and subconscious and at times deliberate or strategic. Entrepreneurs choose to be passive in order to get the freedom to do what they want and at times have to actively raise their voice or navigate multiple identities to practice entrepreneurship. So while sometimes identity construction takes place dominantly, at other times representing an oppressive identity is also a choice and they may co-exist. Salient identity is the identity that gets invoked by default under situations and identity centrality is the identity that is at the core of the being, the one that entrepreneur identifies with the most. Sameness or otherness in identity construction refers to the aspect where each entrepreneur displays certain group characteristics and yet carries a unique identity as well. Multiple identities are relationally constructed with changing contextual influences and spatio-temporal interactions. The processes of identity construction keep evolving, reinforcing identities.

The process typologies of identity construction create insights not only on how founders craft their identities, but also how the constructing and maintaining of identity influences the venture types, entrepreneurial behaviour, and venture performance (Mmbaga et al., 2020). In constructing identities for making sense of sudden or ambiguous events in the entrepreneurial journey, previously constructed understandings of self, require reconstruction (Snow, 2001). This construction of identity has two parts to it, namely 'content' (meaning of an identity) and 'structure' (configurations of several identities) (Wagenschwanz, 2021). Future research can go deeper in exploring and explaining how the social construction and intersectionality of identity work is structural, and how the identity content is heterogeneous and contextualized.

With this understanding of identity construction as a process in entrepreneurship, the typologies explain the underlying assumptions related to how identity is constructed and enacted in entrepreneurship (Wagenschwanz, 2021).

O'Neil et al. (2020) suggested that if entrepreneurs are not finding coherence in what and who they are, they begin to reconstruct their identity to become who they want to be, otherwise it harms their wellbeing. The entrepreneur derives satisfaction in relation to not only who they are themselves but also the kind of entrepreneurial venture they develop and grow because of who they are. Studies also show that certain types of identities are more likely than others to be present before and during business growth (Ekinici et al., 2020). In a study, where the challenges faced by entrepreneurs were explored after start up and during business growth, it was found that business growth challenges entrepreneurs to reconstruct their identity as they aspire to achieve their personal goals and reach self-fulfilment. In an informal economy, entrepreneurs face peculiar challenges in running their businesses. When the identity of such constrained entrepreneurs was studied and how it shaped their response strategies to adverse situations, four entrepreneurial identities were revealed, guardians; survival entrepreneurs; canvassers; and growth-oriented entrepreneurs with response strategies being to succumb, improvise, and push new boundaries (Teyi et al.,2023). In that sense, entrepreneurs' identity influences them even during the entrepreneurial process (Stevenson et al.,2023). Lin et al (2023) suggests that it is important to study the dynamics nature of entrepreneurs' identity, interaction of entrepreneurs' different identities in the process.

### **Limitations of The Study**

The authors have carried out a detailed review of identity construction in entrepreneurship. However, the study is not without limitations. Firstly, the paper offers a review on how the identity construction process has been studied in entrepreneurship research, but does not get into explicating the findings with respect to specific entrepreneurship typologies, such as women entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, sustainable entrepreneurship, or immigrant entrepreneurship, to name a few. Since the study has focused on the process typologies of identity construction, this emphasis opens up grounds for empirical research on process based typologies of identity work in entrepreneurship like mentioned in the review in table 3. Another limitation of the review is that it focuses on identity construction at the level of the individual entrepreneur. While this generates information for future research that is focused on the individual entrepreneur, there is also a need of aggregated information on what evidence past research finds about identity construction taking place at the meso-level (organizational level) and the macro-level (community or stakeholder-network level), how does identity construction at one level catalyzes the other and how does identity work help the entrepreneur in this process. Finally, the study also invites future

research that adopts an interdisciplinary approach on identity construction in entrepreneurship, one that brings together managerial sciences, behavioral sciences, and cognitive sciences. The current literature review is limited to a specific disciplinary area, in order to enable a controlled and manageable review process. An integrative and interdisciplinary literature review is needed to take stock of all that is known, with a larger and interdisciplinary research team in place.

## **Future Research Avenues**

The research avenues that open for future are based on the four typologies (Table 3).

----- Insert Table 3 here -----

Identity dissonance, heterogeneity, homophily are some of the new theoretical developments that can be further researched to identify what triggers identity dissonance and associated responses, or how heterogeneity in venture creation outcomes emerge as a result of founders' different social identities, or how homophily and entrepreneurship are related in identity work (Gompers et al., 2017). Future research on identity work in women entrepreneurship can examine how locally embedded entrepreneurial ecosystems derive common practices to promote women in entrepreneurship and explore common entrepreneurial practices as an effect. Since immigrant studies are now gaining traction in entrepreneurship, it will be very relevant to conduct a longitudinal study to understand the dynamics of immigrants' career decisions and the extent to which the antecedents (socio-cultural identity and societal structure) as a cause influence immigrants' choosing different career types as an effect (Dheer et al., 2018). Theoretically, there is immense potential as identity research in entrepreneurship is gradually getting noticed. It will be interesting to explore how intersecting identity tensions may be magnified or mitigated with the construction of entrepreneurial identity. Identifying the normative aspects of identity construction and an in-depth interpretative analysis of what role existing organizational narratives play in identity work at an individual level, can be an avenue for research on identity work processes in different venture types (Philips et al., 2013). Founder identity and founder authenticity in identity work has been of research interest in recent times, whereas theoretical development on the construction of founder identity itself remains at a nascent stage (O'Neil et al., 2020). As identity research is gaining popularity with some recent reviews, there is need for future research to bring

in more construct level clarity. Constructs like socio-materiality and collective identity hold an increasingly visible place in identity research, due to which compassionate leadership, ethicality in practices, and emancipatory literature, are getting enriched (Rindova et al., 2009). Future research can also help in investigating how socially constructed and personally ascribed gender norms alter the relationship between identity centrality, affective interpersonal commitment and gender. In sustainable entrepreneurship research, it might be interesting to examine the differences between Green Entrepreneur (Discoverers and Revolutionaries) with regard to their identity work in relation to environmentally-focused social identities and how sustainable values and culture helps students develop sustainable entrepreneurial identity (Gimenez-Jimenez and Harc,2024; Lebron & Brannon, 2018). This review creates new opportunities for future research to use the process typologies to inform their research on identity in entrepreneurship. One of the limitations in this review is that it focuses on identity construction at the level of the individual entrepreneur. Future research can do a similar analysis of past literature on organizational identity in entrepreneurship research. Each process typology can be a topic of research in itself to identify what theoretical connections emerge with other process typologies. In addition, future research can also possibly include constructing a psychometric instrument to assess these typologies. This review brings together past research on individual-level identity construction and identity work for an analytical understanding. Future researchers can take this forward to generate deeper empirical insights for a micro-macro understanding. Future research can use qualitative research to examine the relational and negotiated nature of identities and their identity work in symbolic spaces. It will be interesting to study the paradox of entrepreneurial identity that highlights both heterogeneity and homogeneity (Navis & Glynn, 2011). Another potential future research opportunity is to conduct a comparative study on how differently successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs practice identity work (Muhr et al., 2019).

## **Conclusion**

Identity work is an act of creating, presenting and sustaining identities. In contrast to the static approach of considering identity as 'fixed', recent research focuses more on the processes and activities of 'becoming' rather than 'being'. Future research can make use of the key findings from this review of past research to examine how identity work is carried out when an individual entrepreneur engages in self-dialogue and in a dialogue with the context, for creating a range of identities. Sometimes, while interacting with the context or in acquiring positions, entrepreneurs

are negotiating between their role and social identities, exercising agency in defining the scope of their identity work which they navigate. This makes identity work of the entrepreneur a reflexive activity that is an on-going act of meaning making in relation to the dialogues with multiple stakeholders and the contextual conditions that influence the entrepreneur and the venture.

## **References**

Abebe, S. A. (2022). Refugee entrepreneurship: systematic and thematic analyses and a research agenda. *Small Business Economics*, 1-36.

- Alsos, G. A., Clausen, T. H., Hytti, U., & Solvoll, S. (2016). Entrepreneurs' social identity and the preference of causal and effectual behaviours in start-up processes. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 28(3-4), 234-258.
- Alvesson, M., Lee Ashcraft, K., & Thomas, R. (2008). Identity matters: Reflections on the construction of identity scholarship in organization studies. *Organization*, 15(1), 5-28.
- Anderson, A. R., & Warren, L. (2011). The entrepreneur as hero and jester: Enacting the entrepreneurial discourse. *International Small Business Journal*, 29(6), 589-609.
- Anderson, A. R., Dodd, S. D., & Jack, S. L. (2012). Entrepreneurship as connecting: some implications for theorising and practice. *Management Decision*.
- Ashforth, B. E., Harrison, S. H., & Corley, K. G. (2008). Identification in organizations: An examination of four fundamental questions. *Journal of management*, 34(3), 325-374.
- Auty, S., & Elliot, R. (1998). Social identity and the meaning of fashion brands. *ACR European Advances*.
- Aygören, H., & Nordqvist, M. (2015). Gender, ethnicity and identity work in the family business. *European Journal of International Management*, 9(2), 160-178.
- Barberá-Tomás, D., Castelló, I., De Bakker, F. G., & Zietsma, C. (2019). Energizing through visuals: How social entrepreneurs use emotion-symbolic work for social change. *Academy of Management Journal*, 62(6), 1789-1817.
- Barley, S. R., & Kunda, G. (1992). Design and devotion: Surges of rational and normative ideologies of control in managerial discourse. *Administrative science quarterly*, 363-399.
- Barragan, S., Erogul, M. S., & Essers, C. (2018). 'Strategic (dis) obedience': female entrepreneurs reflecting on and acting upon patriarchal practices. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 25(5), 575-592.
- Basly, S., & Abdelwahed, Y. (2023). Commitment to Learning and Open Innovation in Family Firms: Exploring the Moderating Effect of Family-to-firm Identity Fit. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 32(2), 420-448.
- Bowman, N. A., & Felix, V. (2017). It's who I am: Student identity centrality and college student success. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 54(3), 235-247.
- Brixy, U., Sternberg, R., & Stüber, H. (2012). The selectiveness of the entrepreneurial process. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 50(1), 105-131.
- Brown, A. D. (2015). Identities and identity work in organizations. *International journal of management reviews*, 17(1), 20-40.
- Brown, R. (2020). The social identity approach: Appraising the Tajfellian legacy. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 59(1), 5-25.
- Burke, P. J., & Reitzes, D. C. (1991). An identity theory approach to commitment. *Social psychology quarterly*, 239-251.
- Carbin, M., & Edenheim, S. (2013). The intersectional turn in feminist theory: A dream of a common language?. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 20(3), 233-248.
- Cardon, M. S., Wincent, J., Singh, J., & Drnovsek, M. (2009). The nature and experience of entrepreneurial passion. *Academy of management Review*, 34(3), 511-532.
- Carter, M., & Grover, V. (2015). Me, my self, and I (T). *MIS quarterly*, 39(4), 931-958.
- Caza, B. B., Vough, H., & Puranik, H. (2018). Identity work in organizations and occupations: Definitions, theories, and pathways forward. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 39(7), 889-910.
- Chan, S. (1997). Migration, cultural identity and assimilation effects on entrepreneurship for the overseas Chinese in Britain. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 3(4), 211-222.
- Chasserio, S., Pailot, P., & Poroli, C. (2014). When entrepreneurial identity meets multiple social identities: Interplays and identity work of women entrepreneurs. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*.

- Cho, D. S., Ryan, P., & Buciuni, G. (2022). Evolutionary entrepreneurial ecosystems: A research pathway. *Small Business Economics*, 58(4), 1865-1883.
- Courpasson, D. (2000). Managerial strategies of domination. Power in soft bureaucracies. *Organization studies*, 21(1), 141-161.
- Courpasson, D., Dany, F., & Clegg, S. (2012). Resisters at work: Generating productive resistance in the workplace. *Organization science*, 23(3), 801-819.
- Crosina, E., & Gartner, W. B. (2021). Managing legacy, achievement and identity in entrepreneurial families. *Family Entrepreneurship: Insights from Leading Experts on Successful Multi-Generational Entrepreneurial Families*, 35-47.
- Davidson, P. L., Carreon, D. C., Baumeister, S. E., Nakazono, T. T., Gutierrez, J. J., Afifi, A. A., & Andersen, R. M. (2007). Influence of contextual environment and community-based dental education on practice plans of graduating seniors. *Journal of dental education*, 71(3), 403-418.
- Dheer, R. J., & Lenartowicz, T. (2018). Career decisions of immigrants: Role of identity and social embeddedness. *Human Resource Management Review*, 28(2), 144-163.
- Doosje, B., Spears, R., & Ellemers, N. (2002). Social identity as both cause and effect: The development of group identification in response to anticipated and actual changes in the intergroup status hierarchy. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 41(1), 57-76.
- Drisko, J. W. (2020). Qualitative research synthesis: An appreciative and critical introduction. *Qualitative Social Work*, 19(4), 736-753.
- Ekinci, Y., Gordon-Wilson, S., & Slade, A. (2020). An exploration of entrepreneurs' identities and business growth. *Business Horizons*, 63(3), 391-401.
- Englund, H., & Leach, J. (2000). Ethnography and the meta-narratives of modernity. *Current anthropology*, 41(2), 225-248.
- Eriksson, P., & Kovalainen, A. (2008). Qualitative research materials. *Qualitative Methods in Business Research* (1st ed., pp. 77-94). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Essers, C., & Benschop, Y. (2007). Enterprising identities: Female entrepreneurs of Moroccan or Turkish origin in the Netherlands. *Organization Studies*, 28(1), 49-69.
- Fauchart, E., & Gruber, M. (2011). Darwinians, communitarians, and missionaries: The role of founder identity in entrepreneurship. *Academy of management journal*, 54(5), 935-957.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge* (New York. Pantheon, 11, 62-3.
- Gaddefors, J., & Anderson, A. R. (2017). Entrepreneurship and context: when entrepreneurship is greater than entrepreneurs. *International journal of entrepreneurial behavior & research*.
- Geyer, S. (2023). A practitioner inquiry and framework for seeding entrepreneurial leadership as part of identity formation in teenagers.
- Gherardi, S. (2015). Authoring the female entrepreneur while talking the discourse of work-family life balance. *International Small Business Journal*, 33(6), 649-666.
- Gilpin, L. S. (2006). Postpositivist realist theory: Identity and representation revisited. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 8(4), 10-16.
- Gimenez-Jimenez, D., & Harc, M. (2024). Students' Sustainable Entrepreneurship Intentions: The Role of Sustainable Values and Culture. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 09713557241232246.
- Gompers, P. A., Huang, K., & Wang, S. Q. (2017). Homophily in entrepreneurial team formation (No. w23459). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Goss, D., Jones, R., Betta, M., & Latham, J. (2011). Power as practice: A micro-sociological analysis of the dynamics of emancipatory entrepreneurship. *Organization Studies*, 32(2), 211-229.
- Greenhalgh, T., Robert, G., Macfarlane, F., Bate, P., Kyriakidou, O., & Peacock, R. (2005). Storylines of research in diffusion of innovation: a meta-narrative approach to systematic review. *Social science & medicine*, 61(2), 417-430.



- Greenwood, R., Suddaby, R., & Hinings, C. R. (2002). Theorizing change: The role of professional associations in the transformation of institutionalized fields. *Academy of management journal*, 45(1), 58-80.
- Grimes, M. G. (2018). The pivot: How founders respond to feedback through idea and identity work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61(5), 1692-1717.
- Gubik, A. S., & Vörös, Z. (2023). Why narcissists may be successful entrepreneurs: The role of entrepreneurial social identity and overwork. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 19, e00364.
- Gupta, N., & Etzkowitz, H. (2021). Women founders in a high-tech incubator: negotiating entrepreneurial identity in the Indian socio-cultural context. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 13(4), 353-372.
- Handley, K., Sturdy, A., Fincham, R., & Clark, T. (2006). Within and beyond communities of practice: Making sense of learning through participation, identity and practice. *Journal of management studies*, 43(3), 641-653.
- Haslam, S. A., Oakes, P. J., Reynolds, K. J., & Turner, J. C. (1999). Social identity salience and the emergence of stereotype consensus. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*, 25(7), 809-818.
- Heberer, T. (2008). Ethnic entrepreneurs as carriers of ethnic identity: a case study among the Liangshan Yi (Nuosu) in China. *Asian Ethnicity*, 9(2), 97-119.
- Hidegh, A. L., Svastics, C., Csillag, S., & Györi, Z. (2023). The intersectional identity work of entrepreneurs with disabilities: Constructing difference through disability, gender, and entrepreneurship. *Culture and Organization*, 29(3), 226-241.
- Hjorth, D., Holt, R., & Steyaert, C. (2015). Entrepreneurship and process studies. *International Small Business Journal*, 33(6), 599-611.
- Hoang, H., & Gimeno, J. (2010). Becoming a founder: How founder role identity affects entrepreneurial transitions and persistence in founding. *Journal of business venturing*, 25(1), 41-53.
- Hogg, M. A., Terry, D. J., & White, K. M. (1995). A tale of two theories: A critical comparison of identity theory with social identity theory. *Social psychology quarterly*, 255-269.
- Hu, Q., Mason, R., Williams, S. J., & Found, P. (2015). Lean implementation within SMEs: a literature review. *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*.
- Ibarra, H. (1999). Provisional selves: Experimenting with image and identity in professional adaptation. *Administrative science quarterly*, 44(4), 764-791.
- Jenson, J., & Mérand, F. (2010). Sociology, institutionalism and the European Union. *Comparative European Politics*, 8, 74-92.
- Jones, M. V., Coviello, N., & Tang, Y. K. (2011). International entrepreneurship research (1989–2009): A domain ontology and thematic analysis. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 26(6), 632–659.
- Kašperová, E., & Kitching, J. (2014). Embodying entrepreneurial identity. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*.
- Kennedy, B. L., & Thornberg, R. (2018). Deduction, induction, and abduction. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data collection*, 49-64.
- Khazami, N., Nefzi, A., & Jaouadi, M. (2020). The effect of social capital on the development of the social identity of agritourist entrepreneur: A qualitative approach. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 6(1), 1787680.
- Kibler, E., Fink, M., Lang, R., & Muñoz, P. (2015). Place attachment and social legitimacy: Revisiting the sustainable entrepreneurship journey. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 3, 24-29.

- Kumru, A., & Thompson, R. A. (2003). Ego identity status and self-monitoring behavior in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 18(5), 481-495.
- Kurzweily, J. (2019). Being German, Paraguayan and Germanino: Exploring the Relation Between Social and Personal Identity. *Identity*, 19(2), 144-156.
- Lebron, M. J., & Brannon, D. (2018). When social identities integrate: schumpeterian entrepreneurs leading green entrepreneurship. *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 24(3), 1-25.
- Leitch, C. M., & Harrison, R. T. (2016). Identity, identity formation and identity work in entrepreneurship: conceptual developments and empirical applications. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 28(3-4), 177-190.
- Li, R., Lu, Y., Ma, J., & Wang, W. (2021). Examining gifting behavior on live streaming platforms: An identity-based motivation model. *Information & Management*, 58(6), 103406.
- Liberati, A., Altman, D. G., Tetzlaff, J., Mulrow, C., Gøtzsche, P. C., Ioannidis, J. P., ... & Moher, D. (2009). The PRISMA statement for reporting systematic reviews and meta-analyses of studies that evaluate health care interventions: explanation and elaboration. *Journal of clinical epidemiology*, 62(10), e1-e34.
- Lin, S., Liu, S., & Zhou, W. (2023). How entrepreneurs' identity influences their wellbeing in entrepreneurial process. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1121066.
- Lindgren, M., & Wåhlin, N. (2001). Identity construction among boundary-crossing individuals. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 17(3), 357-377.
- Luhtanen, R., & Crocker, J. (1992). A collective self-esteem scale: Self-evaluation of one's social identity. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*, 18(3), 302-318.
- MacNabb, A., McCoy, J., Weinreich, P., & Northover, M. (1993). Using identity structure analysis (ISA) to investigate female entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 5(4), 301-313.
- Malki, B., Uman, T., & Pittino, D. (2020). The entrepreneurial financing of the immigrant entrepreneurs: a literature review. *Small Business Economics*, 1-29.
- Marlow, S., & Al-Dajani, H. (2017). Critically evaluating contemporary entrepreneurship from a feminist perspective. In *Critical Perspectives on Entrepreneurship* (pp. 179-191). Routledge.
- Matthews, E. B., Stanhope, V., Choy-Brown, M., & Doherty, M. (2018). Do providers know what they do not know? A correlational study of knowledge acquisition and person-centered care. *Community mental health journal*, 54(5), 514-520.
- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago: Univ.
- Mmbaga, N. A., Mathias, B. D., Williams, D. W., & Cardon, M. S. (2020). A review of and future agenda for research on identity in entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 35(6), 106049.
- Moya, P. M., & Hames-García, M. R. (Eds.). (2000). *Reclaiming identity: Realist theory and the predicament of postmodernism*. Univ of California Press.
- Muhr, S. L., De Cock, C., Twardowska, M., & Volkmann, C. (2019). Constructing an entrepreneurial life: liminality and emotional reflexivity in identity work. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 31(7-8), 567-582.
- Murnieks, C. Y., Cardon, M. S., & Haynie, J. M. (2020). Fueling the fire: Examining identity centrality, affective interpersonal commitment and gender as drivers of entrepreneurial passion. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 35(1), 105909.
- Mushaben, J. M. (2009). Up the down staircase: Redefining gender identities through migration and ethnic employment in Germany. *Journal of Ethnic and migration Studies*, 35(8), 1249-1274.
- Nash, J. C. (2008). Re-thinking intersectionality. *Feminist review*, 89(1), 1-15.

- Navis, C., & Glynn, M. A. (2011). Legitimate distinctiveness and the entrepreneurial identity: Influence on investor judgments of new venture plausibility. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(3), 479-499.
- Nelson, T., Nelson, D., Huybrechts, B., Dufays, F., O'Shea, N., & Trasciani, G. (2016). Emergent identity formation and the co-operative: theory building in relation to alternative organizational forms. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 28(3-4), 286-309.
- Newbert, S. L. (2014). Building theory in social entrepreneurship. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 5(3), 239-242.
- Newbery, R., Lean, J., Moizer, J., & Haddoud, M. (2018). Entrepreneurial identity formation during the initial entrepreneurial experience: The influence of simulation feedback and existing identity. *Journal of Business Research*, 85, 51-59.
- Nicholls, A. (2010). The legitimacy of social entrepreneurship: Reflexive isomorphism in a pre-paradigmatic field. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 34(4), 611-633.
- Noblit, G. W., Hare, R. D., & Hare, R. D. (1988). *Meta-ethnography: Synthesizing qualitative studies* (Vol. 11). sage.
- O'Neil, I., Ucbasaran, D., & York, J. G. (2020). The evolution of founder identity as an authenticity work process. *Journal of business venturing*, 106031.
- Phillips, N., Tracey, P., & Karra, N. (2013). Building entrepreneurial tie portfolios through strategic homophily: The role of narrative identity work in venture creation and early growth. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 28(1), 134-150.
- Pratt, M. G., Rockmann, K. W., & Kaufmann, J. B. (2006). Constructing professional identity: The role of work and identity learning cycles in the customization of identity among medical residents. *Academy of management journal*, 49(2), 235-262.
- Radu-Lefebvre, M., Lefebvre, V., Crosina, E., & Hytti, U. (2021). Entrepreneurial Identity: A Review and Research Agenda. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 10422587211013795.
- Renko, M., & Stenholm, P. (2016). BRICOLAGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY (SUMMARY). *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, 36(4), 5.
- Rindova, V., Barry, D., & Ketchen Jr, D. J. (2009). Entrepreneurship as emancipation. *Academy of management review*, 34(3), 477-491.
- Rosenberg, M. (1979). *Conceiving the Self*, New York 1979. D. Martinot, *Connaissance de soi et estime de soi*.
- Roy, S., & Manna, S. (2014). Women in entrepreneurship: Issues of motivation and choice of business. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management*, 3(2).
- Sandelowski, M., & Barroso, J. (2003). Toward a metasynthesis of qualitative findings on motherhood in HIV-positive women. *Research in nursing & health*, 26(2), 153-170.
- Sarasvathy, S. D. (2008). *Effectuation: Elements of Entrepreneurial Expertise*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK.
- Schulte-Holthaus, S. (2019). Passion and performance in entrepreneurial contexts: an interest-based approach. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 28(2), 201-222.
- Sengupta, S., & Lehtimäki, H. (2022). Contextual understanding of care ethics in social entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 1-32.
- Serafini, T. E., & Adams, G. R. (2002). Functions of identity: Scale construction and validation. *Identity: an international journal of theory and research*, 2(4), 361-389.
- Shane, S., & Venkataraman, S. (2000). The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research. *Academy of management review*, 25(1), 217-226.
- Shepherd, D., & Haynie, J. M. (2009). Family business, identity conflict, and an expedited entrepreneurial process: A process of resolving identity conflict. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 33(6), 1245-1264.

- Smith, B. A., Murib, Z., Motta, M., Callaghan, T. H., & Theys, M. (2018). "Gay" or "homosexual"? The implications of social category labels for the structure of mass attitudes. *American Politics Research*, 46(2), 336-372.
- Smith, B. R., Lawson, A., Barbosa, S. D., & Jones, J. (2023). Navigating the highs and lows of entrepreneurial identity threats to persist: The countervailing force of a relational identity with God. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 38(4), 106317.
- Snow, D. (2001). Collective identity and expressive forms.
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of business research*, 104, 333-339.
- Somers, M. R. (1994). The narrative constitution of identity: A relational and network approach. *Theory and society*, 605-649.
- Stevenson, R., Guarana, C. L., Lee, J., Conder, S. L., Arvate, P., & Bonani, C. (2024). Entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurial action: A within-person field study. *Personnel Psychology*, 77(1), 197-224.
- Steyaert, C., & Hjorth, D. (Eds.). (2003). *New movements in entrepreneurship*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Stryker, S. (1968). Identity salience and role performance: The relevance of symbolic interaction theory for family research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 558-564.
- Stryker, S., & Serpe, R. T. (1982). Commitment, identity salience, and role behavior: Theory and research example. In *Personality, roles, and social behavior* (pp. 199-218). Springer, New York, NY.
- Stryker, S., & Serpe, R. T. (1994). Identity salience and psychological centrality: Equivalent, overlapping, or complementary concepts?. *Social psychology quarterly*, 16-35.
- Sutter, C., Bruton, G. D., & Chen, J. (2019). Entrepreneurship as a solution to extreme poverty: A review and future research directions. *Journal of business venturing*, 34(1), 197-214.
- Sveningsson, S., & Alvesson, M. (2003). Managing managerial identities: Organizational fragmentation, discourse and identity struggle. *Human relations*, 56(10), 1163-1193.
- Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social science information*, 13(2), 65-93.
- Tajfel, H. (1982). Social psychology of intergroup relations. *Annual review of psychology*, 33(1), 1-39.
- TEYI, S. S., Larsen, M. M., & Namatovu, R. (2021). Entrepreneurial identity and strategic response in the informal economy. In *Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 2021, No. 1, p. 15107). Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510: Academy of Management.
- Thompson, R. K., & Oden, D. L. (1995). A profound disparity revisited: Perception and judgment of abstract identity relations by chimpanzees, human infants, and monkeys. *Behavioural processes*, 35(1-3), 149-161.
- Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., Smart, P., 2003. Towards a methodology for developing evidence informed management knowledge by means of systematic review. *British Journal of Management* 14 (3), 207–222
- Ülker, R. B. (2004). Entrepreneurial practices of Turkish immigrants in Berlin (Master's thesis, Middle East Technical University).
- Wang, T., Long, L., Zhang, Y., & He, W. (2019). A social exchange perspective of employee–organization relationships and employee unethical pro-organizational behavior: The moderating role of individual moral identity. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 159(2), 473-489.
- Vignoles, V. L. (2018). 12 Identity: Personal AND Social. *The Oxford handbook of personality and social psychology*, 289.

- Wagenschwanz, A. M. (2021). The identity of entrepreneurs: Providing conceptual clarity and future directions. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 23(1), 64-84.
- Watson, T. J. (2009). Narrative, life story and manager identity: A case study in autobiographical identity work. *Human relations*, 62(3), 425-452.
- Williamson, A. J., Battisti, M., & Pollack, J. M. (2022). Capturing passion expressed in text with artificial intelligence (AI): Affective passion waned, and identity centrality was sustained in social ventures. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 17, e00295.
- Yamamura, S., & Lassalle, P. (2024). Intersectional entrepreneurship: the burden of contextual embeddedness beyond the business. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*.
- Ybema, S., Keenoy, T., Oswick, C., Beverungen, A., Ellis, N., & Sabelis, I. (2009). Articulating identities. *Human relations*, 62(3), 299-322.
- Yitshaki, R., & Kropp, F. (2016). Entrepreneurial passions and identities in different contexts: a comparison between high-tech and social entrepreneurs. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 28(3-4), 206-233.
- Zahra, S. A., Gedajlovic, E., Neubaum, D. O., & Shulman, J. M. (2009). A typology of social entrepreneurs: Motives, search processes and ethical challenges. *Journal of business venturing*, 24(5), 519-532.
- Zimmer, M. (2020). "But the data is already public": on the ethics of research in Facebook. In *The Ethics of Information Technologies* (pp. 229-241). Routledge.

#### Web references

- <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/entrepreneurial-identity-a-leaders-superpower-and-their-achilles-heel/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/entrepreneurs-identity-crisis-sandy-geyer/>

**Table 1. Classification of papers according to relevance for the study**

S.N	Relevance	General focus areas	No. of papers
1	Relevant Literature (RL)	Identity, identity work, identity construction, embeddedness, entrepreneurial identities, social identity, role identity, multiple identities, self-identity, gender identity, culture, environment, ethnic identity, social capital, storytelling, organizational identity, social relationships, professional identity, entrepreneurial training, innovation activity, entrepreneurial passion, entrepreneurial behavior, entrepreneurial orientation, social value, identity conflict	52
2	Not Relevant Literature (NRL)	liberal art, life cycle of social enterprises, impact on learning, regional entrepreneurial contexts, crowdfunding, narratives and ethnography, entrepreneurial traditions, corporate entrepreneurship	38

RL\*- Relevant Literature (relevant paper to the nature of the study)

NRL\*- Not Relevant Literature (Not relevant to the current study)

**Table 2. Thematic Analysis**

How identity has been researched (First order)	Analytical themes of identity focus (2nd order)	Themes (3rd Order)	Key papers
The entrepreneur enacting the entrepreneurial discourse	entrepreneurial identities	<b>Cause or Effect</b>	Fauchart and Gruber,2011; Alsos et al.,2017; Murnieks et al, 2020; O'Neil et al, 2020; Wagenschwanz, 2020, Lefebvre et al.,2021; Mmbaga et al.2020; Moss et al.,2010
Identity shaping entrepreneurial intentions	social identity, entrepreneurial identity		
Identity and storytelling	narrative identities		
Social identity and signalling success factors in online crowdfunding	social identity		
Measuring the social identity of entrepreneurs	social identity		
Exploring entrepreneurial roles and identity in the United Kingdom and China	entrepreneurial identity, role identity		
identity centrality, affective interpersonal commitment and gender as drivers of entrepreneurial passion	multiple identities, gender		
A review of identity in entrepreneurship	multiple identities		
The evolution of founder identity	founder identity		
Review of Identity of Entrepreneurs	multiple identities		
Review of entrepreneurial Identity	entrepreneurial identity		
Entrepreneurial identity and multiple social identities	entrepreneurial identity, social identity		
Cultural influence on the relationship between the entrepreneur's social identity and decision-making	cultural influence, social identity		
Integration of social identities	social identity		
Entrepreneurs' multiple identities and crowdfunding performance	multiple identities		
Measuring the social identity of entrepreneurs	social identity		
Māori entrepreneurship	individual identity, cultural identity		
The construction and regulation of collective entrepreneurial identity	collective entrepreneurial identity		
Looking at stakeholder engagement by Identity, Governance and Legitimacy	Organizational identity, multiple identities, meta-identity		
Founder Identity in Entrepreneurship	Multiple identities		
Dual Identities in Social Ventures	Multiple identities		

The Emergence of Dual-Identity	Multiple identities	<b>Cause or Effect</b>	
Entrepreneurial Identity and Social-Business Tensions	Entrepreneurial Identity		
Narrative construction of the social entrepreneurial identity	entrepreneurial identity		
How nascent entrepreneurs' social identity affects their entrepreneurial self-efficacy	social identity		
Identity Coupling, Venture Goals, and Stakeholder Incentives	Identity Coupling		
Insights on the self-identity of the descendants of family business owners	self-identity		
Connecting gender identity, entrepreneurial training, role models and intentions	gender identity		
Exploring the identity work of social entrepreneurs	identity construction		
Entrepreneurs' social identity and the preference of causal and effectual behaviours in start-up processes	processual		
Identity in Entrepreneurship Effectuation	identity construction	<b>Active or Passive</b>	Zhang and Chun, 2018; Stirzaker and Sitko, 2018; Essers and Benchop,2007; Groote and Schell, 2017; Wang,2018;
Intersecting identities of older women entrepreneurs	intersecting identities		
Women entrepreneurs and gender, race/ethnicity, and entrepreneurship	Gender, race/ethnicity, and its interactions		
Identity, gender and professionalism in entrepreneurship	identity and its interactions with other factors		
interactions in entrepreneurial identity and multiple social identities by identity work of women entrepreneurs	intersecting identities		
How immigrants developed entrepreneurial identities	immigrant identity		
Managing the Consequences of Organizational Stigmatization	Identity construction	<b>Salience or Centrality</b>	McKeever et al.,2015; Yitshaki and Kropp,2016; Gallagher and Lawrence, 2012 Tracey and Philips,2015; Smith and Woods,2014; Powell and Baker,2017
Embedded entrepreneurship and place identity	renewing identity of place, embeddedness		
Cultural influence on the relationship between the entrepreneur's social identity and decision-making	cultural influence		
The impact of regional entrepreneurial contexts upon enterprise education	entrepreneurial context		
Effects of Place Identity, Self-Efficacy, and Gender on tourism Entrepreneurship performance	Place Identity, Gender		
Social value change, embeddedness and social entrepreneurship	embeddedness, rural context		
How does national culture enable or constrain entrepreneurship	cultural influence, context		
Comparing entrepreneurial passions and identities in different contexts	multiple context		
Becoming a (green) identity entrepreneur and negotiating situated identities	situated identities	<b>Sameness or Otherness</b>	Anderson and Wareen, 2011; Jones et al, 2007; Nelson et al.,2016 Watson, 2009; Chasserio et al., 2014; Leitch and Harrison,2016; Hytii and Heinonen,2013;
Organizational identity and social relationships	Organizational identity		
Identity formation and alternative organizational forms	identity formation		
Management education as an identity construction	identity construction		
Activist identity construction	identity construction		
Identity, identity formation and identity work in entrepreneurship	identity construction		
Identity work in entrepreneurship education			

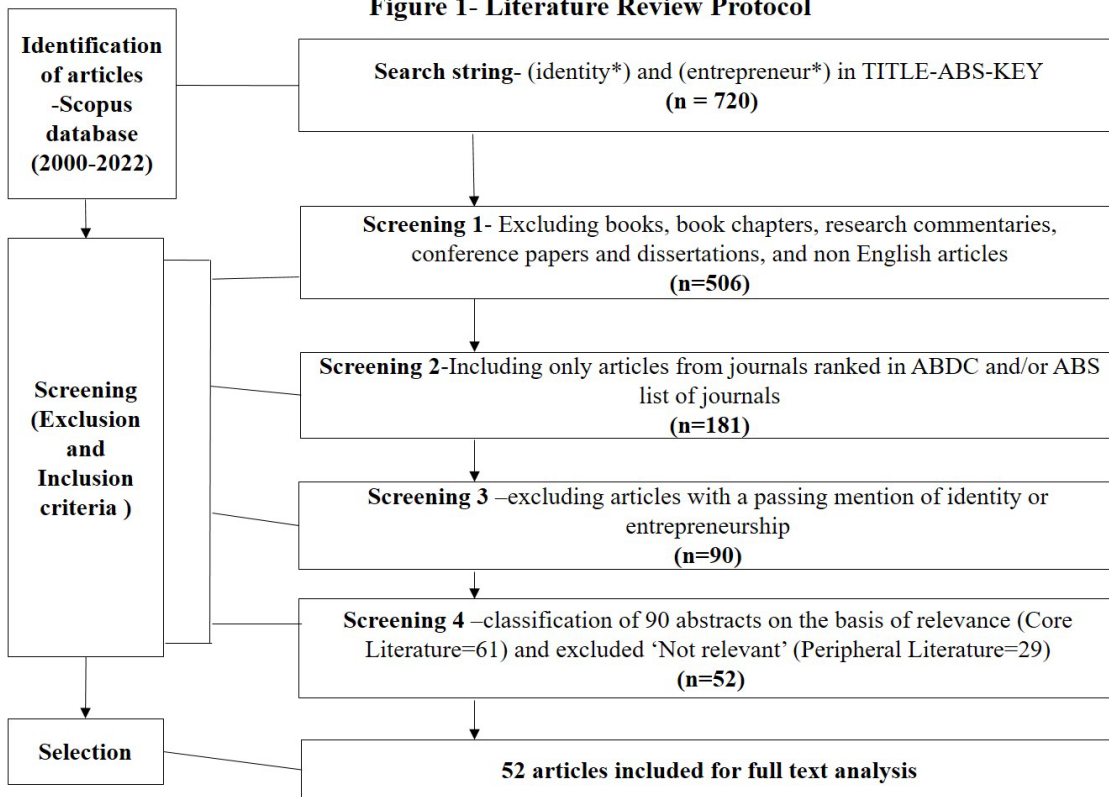
Identity processes and organizing in multi-founder nascent ventures	identity construction		Driver,2017;
---	-----------------------	--	--------------

**Table 3. Future research avenues on identity work in entrepreneurship**

<b>Cause and Effect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying what triggers identity dissonance and associated responses in promoting entrepreneurship</li> <li>Studies on locally embedded entrepreneurial ecosystems as a cause to explore common entrepreneurial practices as an effect</li> <li>To understand the dynamics of immigrants' career decisions and the extent to which the antecedents (socio-cultural identity and societal structure) as a cause influence immigrants' choosing different career types as an effect</li> <li>Identity as a cause and its impact as an effect on performance of immigrant-owned entrepreneurial firms</li> </ul>
<b>Active and Passive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becoming the “entrepreneurial tribe” by applying symbols or rituals in identity construction</li> <li>To explore normative passive identity processes across social ventures</li> <li>Exploring personal identity as a “moving baseline” from passive to active process of identity construction with authenticity as socially constructed process and effect</li> <li>Exploring the relationship between social psychological identity processes and entrepreneurial passion</li> </ul>
<b>Salience and Centrality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socio-materiality and construction of entrepreneurial identity</li> <li>To investigate how socially constructed and personally ascribed masculine/feminine genders relationship between identity centrality, affective interpersonal commitment and gender.</li> <li>Exploring identity negotiation in entrepreneurial teams.</li> </ul>
<b>Sameness and Otherness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explore the role of symbolic spaces in relational and negotiated nature of identity</li> <li>Heterogeneity in venture creation outcomes owing to founders with different social identities</li> <li>Embeddedness- Exploring social flexibility focusing on collectivism-individualism, and tightness-looseness</li> <li>Paradox of entrepreneurial identity implying heterogeneity and homogeneity</li> <li>Investigating how a founder's personal identity (“me”) becomes a social identity (“we”)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source articles:</b> Lefebvre et al.,2021; Murnieks et al.,2020; O'Neil et al.,2020; Wagenschwanz,2020; Zhang and Chun, 2018; Leitch et al.,2016; Ulla Hytti and Heinonen,2013; Watson, 2009; Alsos et al.,2017; McKeever et al.,2015;Nelson et al.,2016;Sieger et al.,2016;F Dunkley; Dheer and Lenartowicz,2017; Wang,2018; Muneirks et al.,2018; Brannon,2018; Hasan et al.,2020; Paivii Siivonen,2019; Philips; Feldner and Fyke,2016; Yitshaki and Kropp,2016; Smith and Woods,2014; Powell and Baker,2017; Moss et al.,2017; Bu Zur,2020; Gallagher and Lawrence,2012; Nielson and Lassen,2012; Aaltio,2008; Cruz et al.,2018; Hallak et al.,2013; Brandle et al.,2012</p>	



**Figure 1- Literature Review Protocol**



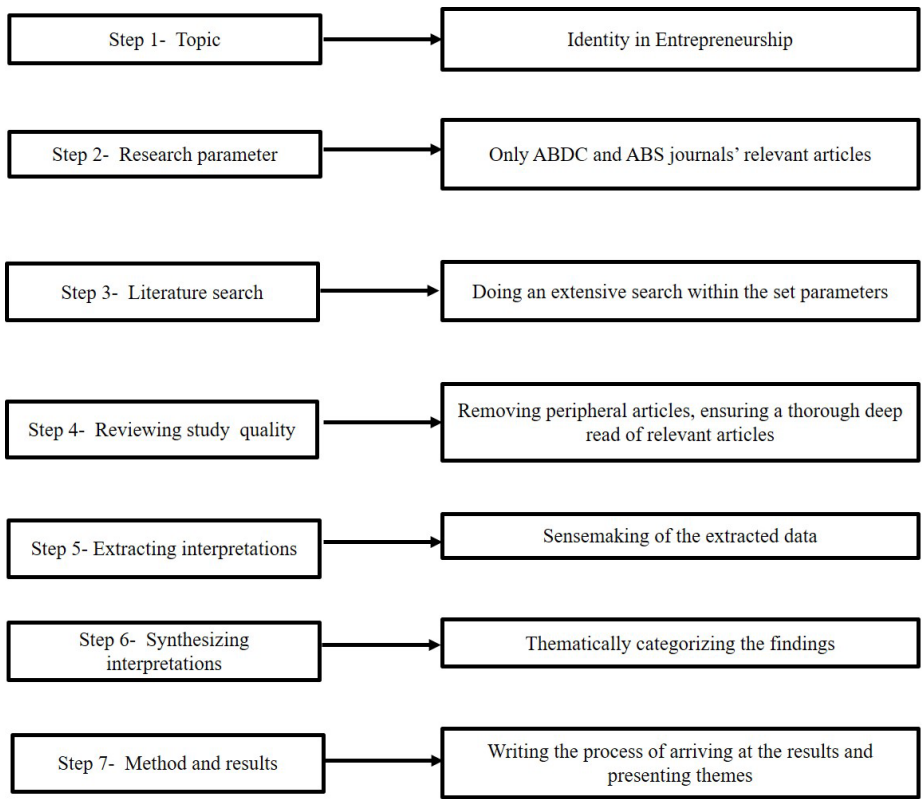


Figure 2- Qualitative Synthesis Process adopted from Nobit and Hare (1988)