

Measuring Entrepreneurship Competence Progression: Evidence from Muslim Youth in Australia

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Abstract: Entrepreneurship competence is increasingly recognised as a critical driver of entrepreneurial behaviour and venture creation among young people. The European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp) has become one of the most widely adopted frameworks for conceptualising and assessing entrepreneurship competence; however, most empirical applications rely on self-assessment instruments that capture perceptions of capability rather than behaviourally anchored evidence of progression, and therefore offer limited insight into competence progression. This study addresses that gap by examining entrepreneurship competence progression among Muslim youth in Australia through the Entrepreneurship Competence Progression Index (ECPI), a progression-based measurement approach aligned with the eight-level EntreComp progression model. Drawing on survey data from 109 Muslim youth aged 18 to 25 across Australia, the study evaluates competence across the three EntreComp areas of Ideas and Opportunities, Resources, and Into Action. The ECPI operationalises progression by classifying each respondent at a behaviourally anchored stage of entrepreneurial capability for ten non-cognitive competences, rather than recording a self-rated score. Descriptive, classification, and inferential analyses were used to identify progression patterns and to compare progression-based measurement with parallel self-assessment of the same competences. Respondents were generally positioned at an intermediate level of progression (mean 3.58 on the eight-point scale), with most classified at the Intermediate stage and a substantial minority at the Advanced stage. Progression varied meaningfully across competence areas, with Ideas and Opportunities highest and Resources lowest. Self-assessment scores significantly and systematically exceeded behaviourally anchored progression (mean difference 0.99, large effect), while remaining only moderately correlated with it, indicating that the two approaches capture related but distinct information. Prior entrepreneurial experience, rather than gender or schooling pathway, was the strongest correlate of progression, and religiosity was associated with self-assessed competence but not with behaviourally anchored progression, underscoring the distinction between the two. The findings provide evidence that progression-based assessment offers a more conservative and more diagnostic account of capability development than conventional self-assessment, and they extend EntreComp into an underrepresented, predominantly diaspora population. As a large and young population, Muslim youth in Australia are a significant yet under-examined community for entrepreneurship and innovation. The study has implications for entrepreneurship educators, policymakers, and youth-development organisations seeking to design targeted competence-development interventions and to evaluate entrepreneurial learning outcomes more rigorously.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Competence Progression Index, EntreComp, Entrepreneurship Education, Youth Entrepreneurship, Competence Development, Progression-Based Assessment

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is now widely understood as a competence that can be learned, developed and assessed rather than being an innate trait that one is born with (Bacigalupo et al. 2016). This reframing has shifted the agenda from teaching about business and business management, towards developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable young people to create value. For young people in particular, it is linked to employability and initiative taking, and has become a focus of entrepreneurship education across schools, universities and community programmes (Nabi et al. 2017).

The European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework, known as EntreComp, has become the most influential reference model for this agenda. It defines entrepreneurship as a transversal competence organised into three competence areas, fifteen competences and an eight-level progression model spanning 442 learning outcomes (Bacigalupo et al. 2016; Bernadó and Bratzke 2024). Despite the prominence of its progression model, most empirical applications of EntreComp operationalise competence through self-assessment questionnaires, in which respondents rate their perceived capability on a numerical scale (López-Núñez et al. 2022). Self-assessment is efficient and scalable, but it measures perceptions of competence rather than behaviourally anchored progression, and a substantial body of evidence indicates that self-assessments of knowledge and skill correlate only modestly with objective indicators and are coloured by motivational and affective factors (Sitzmann et al. 2010). When the construct of interest is *progression*, movement along a developmental trajectory, a self-rated score on an undefined scale offers little diagnostic information about the stage a learner has actually reached.

This study responds by applying the Entrepreneurship Competence Progression Index (ECPI), which positions respondents at an EntreComp progression stage for each competence using behaviourally anchored descriptors, rather than a self-rated magnitude. This paper focuses on examining an underrepresented population: Muslim youth in Australia, a predominantly migrant-heritage, diaspora community. Muslim minorities in Western diaspora settings remain substantially under-represented in the entrepreneurship competence literature, which is dominated by Western university samples. When the literature does engage diaspora communities, it concentrates on established adult immigrant founders rather than the developing capability of diaspora youth (Fallahi et al. 2024). Applying a progression-based operationalisation of EntreComp to diaspora youth is therefore novel on two counts: it extends the framework to an untested population, and it shifts attention from immigrant entrepreneurial outcomes to the next generation's competence development, a population central to entrepreneurship and innovation yet largely outside the measurement literature.

This focus is not incidental. The paper forms part of a broader research programme examining how religiosity relates to entrepreneurship competence among Muslim youth in Australia. Religion has been linked to entrepreneurial values and intention (Giacomin et al. 2023), but its bearing on competence is theorised to operate less through the technical or cognitive aspects of enterprise than through the non-cognitive dispositions that underpin entrepreneurial action, namely, motivation and perseverance, self-efficacy, ethical orientation, and the readiness to act under uncertainty. For young people forming an entrepreneurial identity within a faith tradition, these dispositions are especially salient, so the study concentrates its progression measurement on the non-cognitive competences within EntreComp (Section 2.3).

The broader research programme examines entrepreneurship competence progression among Muslim youth in Australia, including the influence of religiosity and socio-demographic factors. The analysis reported here focuses on establishing the level and pattern of competence progression and evaluating the extent to which a progression-based measure captures development more effectively than conventional self-assessment approaches. While the relationship between religiosity and entrepreneurship competence is briefly considered, a more detailed examination of this pathway, situated within the Muslimpreneurship Competence Development Framework (MCDF) (Azhar 2024), is beyond the scope of the present paper. The remainder of the paper situates these questions within the EntreComp and competence-measurement literature, describes the ECPI and study design, reports the findings, and discusses their implications for entrepreneurship education and youth development.

2. Conceptual Background

2.1 EntreComp and the Three Competence Areas

EntreComp models entrepreneurship as a competence to act upon opportunities and ideas in order to create value for others (Bacigalupo et al. 2016). Its fifteen competences are grouped into three interconnected areas. *Ideas and Opportunities* concerns spotting opportunities, creativity, vision, valuing ideas, and ethical and sustainable thinking. *Resources* concerns self-awareness and self-efficacy, motivation and perseverance, mobilising resources, financial and economic literacy, and mobilising others. *Into Action* concerns taking the initiative, planning and management, coping with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk, working with others, and learning through experience. The three areas are intended to be read together: an entrepreneurial actor moves from recognising opportunity, through marshalling resources, to acting under uncertainty (Bernadó and Bratzke 2024).

A defining feature of EntreComp is its progression model, which describes development across eight levels in four phases; Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced and Expert. The progression moves from acting with support to driving transformation and creating value for others. Even though the progression model is conceptually central to EntreComp's claim to support lifelong development, it is nonetheless the element least often used in measurement, which tends to reduce competence to a single self-rated magnitude (López-Núñez et al. 2022; Bernadó and Bratzke 2024).

2.2 The Dominance and Limits of Self-Assessment

Self-assessment dominates competence measurement in entrepreneurship because it is inexpensive, scalable and well suited to large student samples. Validated instruments such as the EntreComp self-assessment questionnaire demonstrate good internal reliability and broadly sensible factor structures (López-Núñez et al. 2022). The limitation is not reliability but construct validity for the developmental question. A meta-analytic

review found that self-assessments of knowledge share only a limited proportion of variance with objective measures of the same knowledge, and behave partly as affective or motivational indicators rather than as cognitive ones (Sitzmann et al. 2010). In entrepreneurship education, a high self-rated score may reflect confidence, optimism or social desirability as much as actual capability.

Two consequences follow. First, self-assessment tends to overstate capability, especially among less experienced learners who lack the reference points to calibrate their judgements. Second, because a self-rated score is anchored to the respondent's own subjective scale, it cannot readily be mapped onto a shared developmental benchmark: two respondents who both rate themselves four out of seven may be at very different developmental stages. When the aim is to understand how competence develops and whether an intervention has facilitated progression within the EntreComp framework, measurement should be anchored to behaviourally defined stages rather than learners' perceptions of their competence. (Mitchelmore and Rowley 2010).

2.3 Religiosity, Values and the Selection of Non-Cognitive Competences

The choice of competences is theoretically motivated rather than arbitrary. Although religion has been associated with entrepreneurial intention and values (Giacomin et al. 2023), its influence on competence is understood to work principally through non-cognitive channels. That is, religion may shape the attitudes and self-regulatory dispositions that determine whether knowledge is translated into entrepreneurial action. Dispositions such as perseverance, ethical motivation, self-efficacy and the readiness to act under uncertainty are those most plausibly shaped by a young person's values and faith commitments.

Accordingly, the ECPI concentrates on the ten EntreComp competences identified in the wider study as predominantly non-cognitive in character. From Ideas and Opportunities it includes Creativity, Vision, and Ethical and Sustainable Thinking; from Resources it includes Self-Awareness and Self-Efficacy, Motivation and Perseverance, Mobilising Resources, and Mobilising Others; and from Into Action it includes Taking the Initiative, Coping with Uncertainty, Ambiguity and Risk, and Working with Others. The five competences that are more cognitive or technical in nature are Spotting Opportunities, Valuing Ideas, Financial and Economic Literacy, Planning and Management, and Learning through Experience. These fall outside this non-cognitive focus and are not part of the index. Concentrating on the non-cognitive competences keeps the measure theoretically aligned with the wider study and sharpens its diagnostic value for the dispositional capabilities most relevant to youth entrepreneurial development. These choices are organised by the MCDF. Developed by applying an Islamisation-of-knowledge methodology to EntreComp, it reframes the framework's competence architecture in light of Islamic ethical and value commitments and identifies the non-cognitive, dispositional competences as those most directly informed by a Muslim entrepreneur's faith. This provides the rationale for the competence subset measured here. This emphasis aligns with evidence that non-cognitive, attitudinal capabilities are central antecedents of entrepreneurial action and learning (Newman et al. 2019). The ten competences and their EntreComp areas are listed in Table 3.

2.4 The Entrepreneurship Competence Progression Index

The Entrepreneurship Competence Progression Index (ECPI) is a progression-based measure developed for this research programme. Rather than asking respondents to provide an abstract rating of how competent they feel, the ECPI asks them to locate their capability against behaviourally anchored progression statements for each competence and records the EntreComp level that a respondent's reported pattern of activity corresponds to. The ECPI is therefore a behaviourally anchored self-assessment: it ties self-judgement to concrete descriptions of activity rather than an abstract magnitude, but remains self-reported. It is not an independently observed measure of capability. As described in Section 2.3, the ten competences are each operationalised through a set of underlying behavioural indicators, or threads. Each thread is coded to an EntreComp level, the competence score is the mean of its threads, and the ECPI is the aggregate across competences, expressed on the eight-point EntreComp scale.

To illustrate the scoring architecture, Table 1 shows how a single competence, Taking the Initiative, is anchored across the four progression stages. Each behavioural thread is matched to the stage whose anchor it best fits, and the competence score is the mean of its threads.

Table 1: Illustrative ECPI scoring anchors for one competence

Progression Stage	Level	Illustrative Behavioural Anchor — Taking the Initiative
Foundation	1	Acts on tasks mainly when prompted or directed by others
Intermediate	3	Initiates and carries out own tasks independently
Advanced	5	Initiates and drives activities that mobilise and direct others
Expert	7	Leads ventures that create lasting value for others

To support interpretation, ECPI scores are classified into four progression stages aligned with the EntreComp phases, representing the EntreComp eight-level model through four anchor levels: 1 (Foundation), 3 (Intermediate), 5 (Advanced) and 7 (Expert, or Transformative). The intermediate scores fall on the continuum between these anchors. The index is treated as a formative composite. This means that the competences are understood as conceptually distinct elements that each contribute to an overall progression profile. They are not treated as interchangeable indicators of a single underlying trait. For this reason, internal-consistency reliability is reported at the thread level for transparency only. It is not treated as a requirement for validity. Coefficient alpha therefore indicates how consistently the thread-level indicators have been coded rather than whether the composite itself is valid. The validity of the composite depends instead on whether its components adequately cover the competence domain (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). The ECPI is designed to be used alongside, not instead of, conventional self-rating, so that the relationship between progression-based and self-rated competence can itself be examined. Because the design is cross-sectional, the ECPI captures a respondent's current progression level, their position on the EntreComp continuum, rather than change over time; the term progression is used throughout in this positional sense.

3. Research Method

3.1 Design and Research Philosophy

The study is underpinned by a pragmatist research philosophy and a mixed methods design with a quantitative-dominant orientation (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Creswell and Creswell 2023). Pragmatism treats the research question, rather than a fixed epistemological commitment, as the arbiter of method, and licenses the integration of objective measurement with contextual interpretation. The quantitative component is a cross-sectional survey. It forms the core of the analysis, enabling systematic measurement and comparison of competence progression; the wider study also draws on limited qualitative material, but the present paper reports its quantitative strand. The design operationalised the ECPI as the primary developmental measure alongside a parallel self-assessment instrument, enabling both description and direct comparison of the two measurement approaches.

3.2 Sample

The target population was Muslim youth aged 18 to 25 residing in Australia. Respondents were recruited through Muslim community organisations and networks and completed an online survey distributed across Australia. A total of 122 responses was obtained; after excluding thirteen age-ineligible cases, the final analytic sample comprised 109 valid respondents. The sample was balanced by gender (55 male, 54 female) with a mean age of 20.8 years (SD = 2.4). Respondents were distributed across schooling pathways, most having completed all schooling in Australia.

3.3 Measures

Competence progression (ECPI). Progression was captured using behaviourally anchored progression statements for the ten non-cognitive competences described in Section 2.3, coded at thread level to the EntreComp eight-level scale and aggregated to a weighted competence-progression index. While the ECPI is treated as a formative composite, thread-level coding demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.90$), supporting the consistency of the coding scheme. Coding was conducted by a single trained researcher; inter-rater reliability was therefore not assessed and is identified as a priority for future validation.

Self-assessed competence (SAT). In parallel, respondents rated their perceived competence on a validated multi-item seven-point instrument aligned to the same competences; the non-cognitive subscale (SAT-NC) used for comparison was highly reliable ($\alpha = 0.92$). This provides the benchmark against which progression-based measurement is compared.

Covariates. Prior entrepreneurial experience was a formative index summing binary indicators of prior activity, such as business ownership, entrepreneurship programmes, and family business background. Religiosity was measured with the ten-item IIUM Religiosity Scale (Mahudin et al. 2016) ($\alpha = 0.92$). Gender and schooling pathway were recorded as background variables. These covariates were used to examine correlates of progression rather than to test a causal model.

3.4 Analysis

Analysis proceeded in four steps. Descriptive statistics summarised overall ECPI and its distribution across progression stages. Competence-area scores described the profile across the three areas. Progression and self-assessment were compared using Pearson correlation and a paired comparison of mean scores, with Cohen's *d* for effect size. Finally, correlations and group comparisons examined whether progression varied by prior experience, gender and schooling pathway. Reliability, correlation and regression procedures, following established conventions for multivariate analysis (Hair et al. 2019), were conducted in the Jamovi statistical package.

4. Findings

4.1 Overall Progression and Stage Distribution

Across the full sample, the mean ECPI was 3.58 (SD = 0.84) on the eight-point EntreComp scale, with scores ranging from 1.44 to 5.49 and an approximately symmetric distribution. This places the typical respondent at the Intermediate phase. That is, the respondents were acting with growing independence and beginning to act on their own ideas. As Table 2 shows, two-thirds of respondents were classified at the Intermediate stage and a substantial minority at the Advanced stage, while only a small group remained at Foundation and none reached the Expert (Transformative) stage.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents across ECPI progression stages (N = 109)

Progression Stage	EntreComp Phase	Score Range	n	%
Foundation	Level 1	< 2.0	5	4.6
Intermediate	Level 3	2.0–3.99	73	67.0
Advanced	Level 5	4.0–5.99	31	28.4
Expert (Transformative)	Level 7	≥ 6.0	0	0.0

The concentration of respondents at the Intermediate stage, with a meaningful Advanced minority and an empty Expert stage, is consistent with a youth population that has acquired foundational entrepreneurial capability through education and early experience but has not yet undertaken the transformative, value-creating activity that characterises the highest EntreComp levels. The progression-based picture is thus more developmentally informative than a single mean self-rating would be.

4.2 Progression Across Competence Areas

Progression varied across the three EntreComp areas. As Table 3 shows, Ideas and Opportunities recorded the highest mean progression (3.96), followed by Into Action (3.70), with Resources lowest (3.34). At competence level, Vision (4.69) and Ethical and Sustainable Thinking (3.96) were the strongest, while Mobilising Resources (3.19), Creativity (3.23) and Self-Efficacy and Self-Awareness (3.29) were the weakest. The pattern indicates that respondents were comparatively stronger at recognising and valuing opportunities than at mobilising the resources required to pursue them. The prominence of Vision is consistent with aspirational, future-oriented thinking developing earlier in young people than the resources and skills required to enact it.

Table 3: ECPI progression by competence area and competence (N = 109)

EntreComp Area / Competence	Mean	SD
Ideas and Opportunities (Area)	3.96	0.90
Creativity	3.23	1.13
Vision	4.69	1.26
Ethical and Sustainable Thinking	3.96	1.21
Resources (Area)	3.34	0.90
Self-Efficacy and Self-Awareness	3.29	1.13
Motivation and Perseverance	3.43	1.05
Mobilising Resources	3.19	1.31
Mobilising Others	3.46	1.40
Into Action (Area)	3.70	1.14
Taking the Initiative	3.58	1.63
Coping with Uncertainty, Ambiguity and Risk	3.88	1.24
Working with Others	3.65	1.44

This area-level asymmetry is diagnostically useful. It suggests that, for this population, the binding constraint on entrepreneurial progression lies less in ideation and more in the resource domain, which includes self-efficacy and the capability to mobilise financial, material and human resources. This is precisely where targeted competence-development support could be concentrated.

4.3 Progression Versus Self-Assessment

The comparison of the two approaches is the study's central methodological finding. Self-assessment and progression scores were moderately and significantly correlated ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that they capture related information, yet they shared less than a third of their variance ($r^2 = 0.30$). This is far from interchangeable. At the same time, the magnitude self-rating systematically exceeded the behaviour-anchored progression score: the mean self-assessed score stood 0.99 scale points above the mean ECPI score, a large and significant difference ($t(108) = 10.6$, $p < 0.001$; Cohen's $d = 1.01$).

In other words, respondents consistently rated their perceived competence above the progression stage indicated by their behaviourally anchored measure. The size of this gap was not trivial. This pattern is consistent with the broader evidence that self-assessment behaves partly as a confidence or affective measure rather than a direct index of behaviourally anchored capability (Sitzmann et al. 2010). For the developmental question at the heart of EntreComp, the implication is clear: relying on self-assessment alone would have substantially overstated how far this youth population has progressed and would have obscured the area-level pattern reported above. Progression-based measurement provides a more conservative and more diagnostic account.

4.4 Correlates of Progression

Examining covariates clarified what is, and is not, associated with progression. Prior entrepreneurial experience was the strongest correlate: respondents with entrepreneurial experience scored markedly higher on the ECPI than those without (3.93 versus 3.40), and experience correlated significantly with progression ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$). By contrast, there was no meaningful difference by gender (Cohen's $d = 0.01$, $p = 0.96$). Furthermore, schooling pathway was not associated with significant differences in progression. These results indicate that competence progression in this sample is driven by entrepreneurial exposure and practice rather than by demographic category or schooling context, reinforcing the case for experiential, practice-based competence development.

4.5 Religiosity and Progression

Religiosity was not associated with progression-based competence: its correlation with the ECPI was negligible ($r = 0.08$, $p = 0.38$), and it did not predict progression once gender, Islamic educational background and prior experience were controlled ($\beta = 0.03$, $p = 0.71$). Religiosity was, however, a robust predictor of self-assessed non-cognitive competence ($r = 0.37$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$) and was positively associated with the size of the self-assessment–progression gap ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$). In other words, more religious respondents rated their competence more highly than their behaviourally anchored progression indicated, though their progression-based score was no higher. The findings indicate that religiosity is more strongly associated with perceived entrepreneurial capability than with behaviourally anchored competence progression. This suggests caution in assuming a direct religiosity-to-competence effect and highlights the distinction between perceived and progression-based measures of competence.

5. Discussion

The findings make three contributions. The first is methodological. Applying a progression-based index alongside conventional self-assessment showed that the two approaches, while correlated, diverge sharply in level: the magnitude self-rating exceeded the behaviour-anchored progression score by a large and significant margin. This provides empirical support for a concern raised in principle but rarely shown within EntreComp research, that self-assessment overstates capability and is ill-suited to the developmental questions the framework addresses (Sitzmann et al. 2010; Bernadó and Bratzke 2024). By anchoring measurement to behaviourally defined EntreComp stages, the ECPI recovers the progression information that a single magnitude self-rating discards. Understood as a matter of calibration, the gap suggests that magnitude-based self-assessment may inflate estimates of competence progression (Sitzmann et al. 2010).

The second contribution is substantive. The progression profile of Muslim youth in Australia was concentrated at the Intermediate stage, strongest in Ideas and Opportunities and weakest in Resources, with prior experience the dominant correlate. This profile is coherent: young people may develop entrepreneurial ideas and aspirations before acquiring the resources and practical experience needed to enact them. The absence of any respondent at the Expert stage is consistent with the developmental position of a youth cohort and underlines that the highest EntreComp levels describe sustained value-creating activity that few young people will yet have undertaken.

The third contribution is to the reach of the evidence base. Entrepreneurship competence research has been built largely on Western university samples; extending a progression-based application of EntreComp to Muslim youth in Australia both demonstrates the framework's portability and begins to redress the underrepresentation of culturally and religiously diverse youth in this literature (Giacomin et al. 2023). It also contributes to the diaspora-entrepreneurship literature. Much of this literature has focused on established immigrant founders (Fallahi et al. 2024). By contrast, a progression lens shows how competence develops among diaspora youth before venture creation. This is directly relevant to developing the next generation of entrepreneurs. The competences and progression stages translated meaningfully to this population, while the area-level profile points to context-specific development needs. By concentrating on the non-cognitive competences, the study also lays the groundwork for a broader research agenda examining how religiosity and values relate to entrepreneurial capability among Muslim youth, particularly within the dispositional domain where that relationship is theorised to be strongest.

The findings regarding religiosity further reinforce the study's methodological contribution. Religiosity was associated with self-assessed competence but not with progression-based competence. This suggests that religiosity may influence confidence, motivation, identity, or perceptions of capability more strongly than it influences behaviourally anchored competence progression itself. More broadly, the finding highlights that self-assessment and progression-based measures capture different dimensions of entrepreneurship competence and may therefore lead to different substantive conclusions.

These contributions also carry practical implications. For educators, the results argue for assessment that locates learners on a developmental trajectory rather than a self-rated snapshot, and for curricula that concentrate support where progression is weakest; self-efficacy and resource mobilisation. For policymakers and youth-development organisations, the dominance of prior experience over demographic factors supports investment in experiential, practice-based opportunities. More broadly, the observed gap between self-rated and

behaviour-anchored competence cautions against evaluating programmes on magnitude self-ratings alone, which may flatter outcomes and misdirect resources.

6. Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be noted. The study is cross-sectional, so progression is inferred at one point in time rather than tracked longitudinally. Future research should apply the ECPI over time to examine genuine developmental movement and evaluate the impact of entrepreneurship education interventions.

The sample is not a probability sample, so findings should be generalised with caution. Two targeted competences also lacked directly matching self-assessment items, limiting the comparison between ECPI and conventional self-rating for those areas. Finally, because the ECPI relies on coded accounts, future work should examine inter-rater reliability and external criterion validity more directly.

7. Conclusion

This study applied the ECPI as a progression-based measure of entrepreneurship competence among Muslim youth in Australia. The findings show that respondents were positioned at an intermediate level of progression overall, with variation across the three EntreComp areas. They also show that progression-based measurement produces a different picture from conventional self-rating, with self-assessment yielding systematically higher scores.

The study makes two main contributions. Methodologically, it extends the use of EntreComp by operationalising its progression model rather than reducing competence to a single self-rated score. Empirically, it provides evidence from Muslim youth in Australia, a population largely absent from entrepreneurship competence research.

Beyond its academic contribution, the study responds to a practical need. Muslim youth in Australia represent an important but under-supported source of entrepreneurial potential. More broadly, the findings suggest that entrepreneurship competence should be assessed as a developmental construct, not only as a self-perception. If entrepreneurship education aims to foster progression, then progression itself must become a central focus of assessment.

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Ethics Declaration

Ethical clearance was required for this research and was obtained from the Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Research Ethics Application RA03191, approved 20 February 2025). All procedures were conducted in accordance with institutional guidelines and national standards for the ethical conduct of research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and data were collected and stored to protect confidentiality.

AI Declaration

Generative AI tools were used in a limited, supporting capacity during the preparation of this paper. An AI assistant was used to help structure and copy-edit the manuscript, to assist with the verification and formatting of references, and to cross-check the consistency of reported statistics against the underlying analysis. All research design, data collection, statistical analysis, interpretation and substantive argument are the work of the authors; no generative AI tool was used for data collection or for the statistical analysis. The authors reviewed and verified all AI-assisted output and take full responsibility for the content of the paper.

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