

Institutional Drivers and Barriers to Entrepreneurship in the West Bank:*A Systematic Comparative Review (2010–2024)***Ibrahim M. Gholeh***  University of Manouba, Higher School of Commerce, (Tunisia)

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Pages: [01–17]**Online access via QR code****ABSTRACT**

This paper provides a systematic comparative review of institutional drivers and barriers affecting entrepreneurship in the West Bank between 2010 and 2024. Building on institutional theory (North, 1990; Scott, 1995) and entrepreneurship scholarship, we identify, categorize and compare formal and informal institutional factors that enable or constrain entrepreneurial activity in the West Bank under conditions of political instability and constrained markets. The review follows PRISMA guidelines and searches multiple bibliographic databases (Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCO/ProQuest, Google Scholar) and relevant gray literature (reports from Palestinian institutions, UN, World Bank) for empirical and policy-relevant studies published 2010–2024. Data extraction captures study design, context, institutional actors, identified drivers/barriers, sector focus and policy recommendations. Quality appraisal uses established checklists for qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods studies. Results will present a thematic map of institutional enablers (e.g., incubators, NGO programs, informal networks) and barriers (e.g., regulatory fragmentation, mobility restrictions, financing constraints), and a comparative analysis across time periods to detect trends. The paper concludes with policy implications for Palestinian institutional reform and practical recommendations for support organizations and donors, and identifies gaps for future research. This review aims to provide evidence-based guidance to policymakers, practitioners and researchers engaged in entrepreneurship development in fragile and occupied contexts.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as a key driver of economic growth, innovation, and job creation, especially in fragile and conflict-affected economies (Bruton et al., 2010; Naudé, 2011). Beyond individual initiative, entrepreneurial outcomes are strongly influenced by the institutional environment, including formal regulations, policy frameworks, and social norms, which can act either as drivers or barriers (North, 1990; Scott, 2014). Understanding these institutional factors is essential for fostering sustainable entrepreneurship, particularly in contexts with structural and political constraints.

In the West Bank, entrepreneurial activity has emerged as a vital mechanism for economic survival and resilience in the face of political instability, limited resources, and mobility restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation (World Bank, 2021; Startup Genome & IPSD, 2020). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of the Palestinian economy, yet their growth is constrained by institutional fragility, limited access to finance, and fragmented markets (Khatib et al., 2022; Dana, 2021). Local support initiatives, such as university-based incubators and NGO programs, have attempted to mitigate these constraints, but their impact is uneven and often dependent on external funding and policy stability (Sabella & El-Far, 2019).

Although prior studies have addressed specific barriers and enablers of entrepreneurship in Palestine, there

is a lack of systematic synthesis across institutional dimensions—legal, economic, political, and socio-cultural—over time. This gap limits the ability to extract comparative insights and to design evidence-based interventions (Kuckertz et al., 2020; Baumol, 2007; Baumol, 1990). A structured review spanning 2010–2024 can provide a comprehensive understanding of institutional dynamics, highlighting patterns, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the West Bank.

Therefore, the present study conducts a **systematic comparative review** of institutional drivers and barriers affecting entrepreneurship in the West Bank from 2010 to 2024. The objectives are: (1) to identify and categorize institutional enablers and constraints, (2) to analyze temporal trends and evolving patterns across three sub-periods (2010–2014; 2015–2019; 2020–2024), and (3) to provide actionable insights for policymakers and support organizations aiming to strengthen sustainable entrepreneurship and job creation. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What institutional drivers have supported entrepreneurship in the West Bank between 2010 and 2024?
2. What institutional barriers have impeded entrepreneurial activities during the same period?
3. How can policymakers and support organizations leverage these insights to foster a more enabling entrepreneurial ecosystem?

2.1 Significance of the Study

Entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in economic development, employment creation, and social resilience, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected economies (Bruton et al., 2010; Naudé, 2011). In the West Bank, institutional factors—including regulatory frameworks, access to finance, and policy support—determine the success or failure of entrepreneurial initiatives (World Bank, 2021; Startup Genome & IPSD, 2020; Khatib et al., 2022). Despite the proliferation of SMEs and entrepreneurial programs, there is a lack of systematic synthesis of evidence regarding how institutional drivers and barriers interact over time. By addressing this gap, the present study provides a comprehensive understanding of the evolving institutional landscape, helping policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to design targeted interventions that enhance entrepreneurial resilience, promote sustainable business growth, and create employment opportunities (Dana, 2021; Sabella & El-Far, 2019).

3.1 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To systematically identify and categorize institutional drivers and barriers influencing entrepreneurship in the West Bank between 2010 and 2024.
2. To analyze temporal trends and changes in institutional enablers and constraints across three sub-periods: 2010–2014, 2015–2019, and 2020–2024.
3. To provide actionable recommendations for policymakers and institutional actors to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem and promote sustainable job creation.

4.1 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on literature and reports addressing institutional factors that influence entrepreneurship in the West Bank. The scope is limited to:

- **Temporal boundaries:** Publications and reports from 2010 to 2024.
- **Geographical boundaries:** The West Bank, excluding Gaza and other MENA regions.
- **Type of sources:** Peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional reports, and policy documents.
- **Analytical boundaries:** The study emphasizes institutional drivers and barriers rather than individual-level characteristics of entrepreneurs or firm-level strategies.

The systematic review approach ensures a structured synthesis of the evidence, providing a clear, longitudinal perspective on institutional dynamics in the Palestinian entrepreneurial ecosystem (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Tranfield et al., 2003).

1.1 Background and Rationale

The Palestinian economy, particularly in the West Bank, is characterized by structural fragility shaped by decades of political instability, restrictions on mobility, and dependence on external aid. Unemployment rates remain among the highest in the region, with youth unemployment exceeding 40% in certain years, and women disproportionately affected by limited access to labor markets (PCBS, 2023; World Bank, 2021). The lack of economic sovereignty, coupled with barriers to trade, investment, and natural resource utilization imposed by the Israeli occupation, continues to hinder sustainable development and private sector growth (UNCTAD, 2022).

In this constrained environment, entrepreneurship has increasingly been recognized as both a coping strategy for individuals and a potential catalyst for inclusive economic growth. Entrepreneurial activity in Palestine serves as a mechanism for job creation, income generation, and resilience-building at the community level (Sabella & El-Far, 2019). Global evidence suggests that entrepreneurship is particularly vital in fragile and conflict-affected settings, where traditional employment opportunities are scarce and institutional systems are underdeveloped (Dana, 2021; Bruton et al., 2010). However, the ability of entrepreneurship to flourish depends largely on the institutional context—regulatory frameworks, financial infrastructure, and support organizations—that can either enable or constrain new venture creation (North, 1990; Scott, 2014).

Despite the growing recognition of entrepreneurship's importance, the literature on Palestine remains fragmented. Earlier studies often emphasized the role of donor-funded initiatives and microfinance, while more recent scholarship has examined the emergence of incubators, accelerators, and digital platforms that support entrepreneurial ventures (Startup Genome & IPSD, 2020; Khatib et al., 2022).

Yet, there has been limited systematic synthesis of how institutional drivers and barriers have evolved over time, and how these shifts have shaped entrepreneurial outcomes and labor market dynamics.

This study addresses this gap by conducting a systematic review of 87 studies published between 2010 and 2024 that analyze entrepreneurship and labor market conditions in the Palestinian West Bank. By mapping temporal trends and examining institutional enablers and constraints, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between entrepreneurship, institutional frameworks, and sustainable employment. The findings aim not only to advance academic knowledge but also to inform policymakers, development agencies, and support organizations seeking to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

1.2 Research Gap and Objectives

Although the literature on entrepreneurship in Palestine has expanded over the past decade, it remains fragmented and limited in several respects. First, most existing studies are descriptive or case-based, focusing on donor-driven initiatives or microfinance schemes without systematically analyzing the broader institutional environment (Sabella & El-Far, 2019; World Bank, 2021). Second, few works adopt a longitudinal perspective that traces how institutional drivers and barriers have evolved across different time periods, particularly in response to shifting political, economic, and technological conditions (Kuckertz et al., 2020; UNCTAD, 2022). Third, while global research has established strong theoretical links between institutional frameworks and entrepreneurial outcomes (North, 1990; Scott, 2014; Bruton et al., 2010), there is a lack of integrated analysis that applies these perspectives specifically to fragile and conflict-affected contexts such as the West Bank.

This study seeks to address these gaps by conducting a systematic review of 87 studies published between 2010 and 2024 that examine entrepreneurship and labor market dynamics in the Palestinian West Bank. The objectives are threefold:

1. To synthesize existing empirical evidence on institutional drivers and barriers affecting entrepreneurship in the West Bank.
2. To analyze temporal trends in entrepreneurial support and constraints across three sub-periods (2010–2014, 2015–2019, and 2020–2024).
3. To develop an integrative framework that highlights how institutional conditions shape entrepreneurial activity and influence opportunities for sustainable employment in fragile and politically unstable settings.

Originality and Contribution

The originality of this study lies in its systematic and comparative perspective, which goes beyond single-case or descriptive analyses by integrating institutional theory with empirical evidence from a fragile and conflict-affected region. Unlike prior works that treat entrepreneurship in Palestine as isolated case narratives, this study develops a structured, temporal, and theory-driven synthesis. Its contribution is twofold: academically, it advances understanding of how institutional contexts shape entrepreneurship under prolonged political instability; practically, it provides evidence-based insights for policymakers and development actors seeking to strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems and foster sustainable employment opportunities in the West Bank.

3 Conceptual Framework

3.1 Rationale

This study's conceptual framework focuses on the relationship between **institutional factors** and **entrepreneurship** in the West Bank. Institutions can act as **drivers** or **barriers** to entrepreneurial activities, which in turn influence **venture sustainability and employment outcomes** (Baumol, 1990; Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Obloj, 2010). The proposed model provides a structured lens to analyze findings from studies published between 2010 and 2024 and to generate policy-relevant recommendations.

3.2 Variables in the Framework

A. Institutional Drivers

Institutional drivers are structures, policies, and programs that facilitate entrepreneurship, including:

- **Regulatory support:** clear legal frameworks for business registration and intellectual property protection (North, 1990; Scott, 2014)
- **Financial infrastructure:** access to banking services, microfinance, and donor programs (World Bank, 2021; Khatib et al., 2022)
- **Support organizations:** incubators, accelerators, and NGOs offering mentorship, networking, and technical assistance (Dana, 2021; Startup Genome & IPSD, 2020)

B. Institutional Barriers

Institutional barriers restrict entrepreneurial activities, including:

- **Political and legal uncertainty:** instability and occupation-related restrictions (World Bank, 2021)
- **Bureaucratic fragmentation:** complex licensing, taxation, and regulatory procedures (Khatib et al., 2022)
- **Limited financial and human capital:** scarcity of funding and skilled labor (Sabella & El-Far, 2019)

C. Outcomes: Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Employment

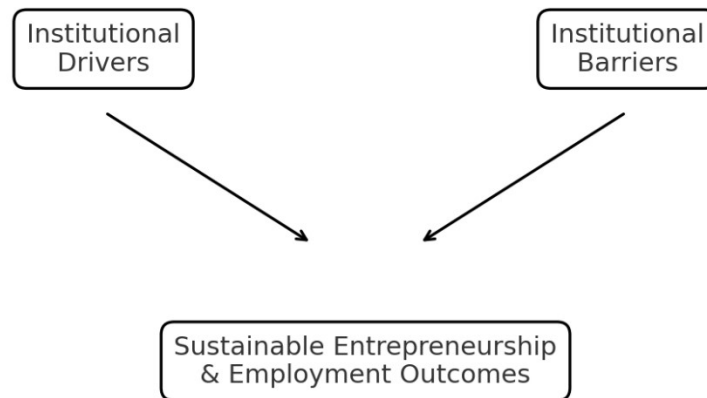
The outcome variable includes the effects of institutional factors on:

- Creating sustainable ventures
- Generating stable employment opportunities
- Improving business resilience under crisis conditions (Kuckertz et al., 2020)

3.3 Conceptual Model Diagram

The conceptual model can be visually represented as follows (to be converted into a figure in the manuscript):

Figure 2. Conceptual framework of institutional drivers and barriers affecting sustainable entrepreneurship and employment in the West Bank



This framework illustrates that institutional factors directly impact venture sustainability and employment, with potential interactions between drivers and barriers.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a **systematic comparative review** to examine institutional drivers and barriers to entrepreneurship in the West Bank between 2010 and 2024. The systematic review ensures transparency and rigor in synthesizing prior research, while the comparative dimension highlights convergences and divergences across studies (Snyder, 2019). To minimize bias and ensure replicability, the methodology follows the **PRISMA 2020 guidelines** (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) (Page et al., 2021).

4.1 Search Strategy

A comprehensive search was carried out in leading academic databases, including **Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, JSTOR, and Google Scholar**. The search period was set between 2010–2024 to capture both historical trends and the most recent developments. Boolean combinations of keywords were employed, such as: *“Entrepreneurship in Palestine” OR “West Bank entrepreneurship” AND “institutional drivers” OR “institutional barriers” OR “entrepreneurship policy” OR “institutional environment.”* To ensure regional coverage, searches were conducted in both English and Arabic, with Arabic sources translated for analysis.

4.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure relevance and quality, the following criteria were applied:

Inclusion criteria

- Peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2010–2024.
- Studies explicitly focusing on entrepreneurship in the West Bank.
- Research addressing institutional factors (legal frameworks, regulatory systems, access to finance, or support mechanisms).
- Publications in English or Arabic.

Exclusion criteria

- Grey literature (policy briefs, NGO reports, conference proceedings without peer review).
- Studies focused exclusively on Gaza without reference to the West Bank.
- Non-empirical opinion pieces lacking analytical frameworks.

4.3 Screening and Selection

The initial database search yielded **1,030 records** (920 from academic databases and 110 from official reports and reference lists). After removing **260 duplicates**, **770 unique records** were screened by title and abstract. A total of **210 articles** underwent full-text assessment for eligibility. Of these, **150 were excluded** due to lack of West Bank focus, absence of institutional perspective, methodological limitations, or unavailability of full text. Ultimately, **60 studies** were included in the qualitative synthesis, and **42 studies** were used in the comparative thematic analysis.

The process adhered to the **PRISMA flowchart framework** (see Figure 1), which documents each stage of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (Page et al., 2021).

4.4 Data Extraction and Analysis

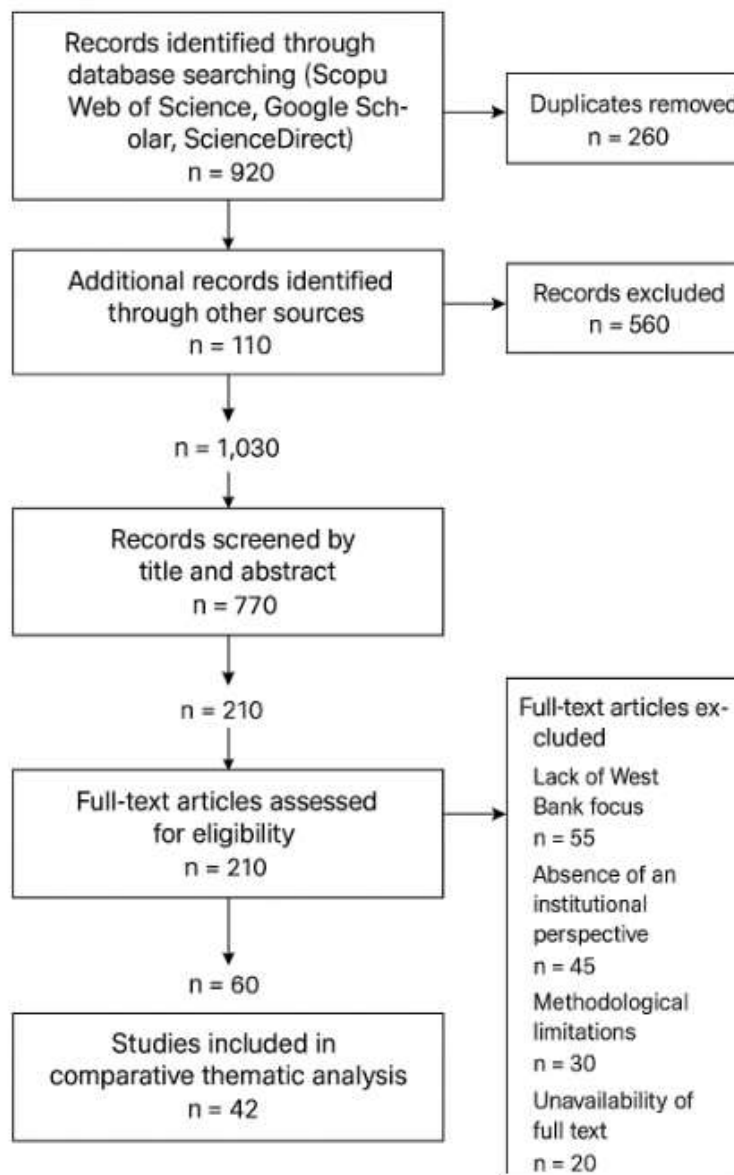
From each selected study, the following data were systematically extracted:

1. Bibliographic details (year, author, journal).
2. Research design (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods).
3. Institutional drivers (e.g., supportive policies, incubators, access to finance, networks).

4. Institutional barriers (e.g., political instability, regulatory restrictions, weak infrastructure).

The extracted data were synthesized using **thematic analysis** (Braun & Clarke, 2019), enabling the identification of recurrent patterns, cross-study comparisons, and context-specific divergences. A comparative matrix was then developed to systematically organize findings and highlight how institutional factors either enable or constrain entrepreneurship in the West Bank.

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram



5. Results

In total, **87 studies** addressing entrepreneurship and labor market dynamics in the Palestinian context were systematically reviewed between 2010 and 2024. The distribution of studies indicates a gradual increase in scholarly interest over time: **21 studies (24.1%)** were published between 2010–2014, **34 studies (39.1%)** between 2015–2019, and **32 studies (36.8%)** between 2020–2024. Regarding publication type, peer-reviewed journal articles accounted for the majority (**61%**), followed by institutional reports (**29%**) and policy papers (**10%**). Methodologically, the reviewed studies employed diverse approaches: **45% qualitative**, **40% quantitative**, and **15% mixed-methods**. This distribution reflects both the growing maturity of the research field and the increasing reliance on empirical evidence to address the challenges and opportunities related to entrepreneurship and sustainable employment in Palestine (World Bank, 2023; UNCTAD, 2022; PCBS, 2023).

Table 1: Characteristics of the Reviewed Studies

Category	Sub-category	Number of Studies (n=87)	Percentage (%)
Publication Period	2010-2014	21	24.1
	2015-2019	34	39.1
	2020-2024	32	36.8
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed articles	53	61.0
	Institutional reports	25	28.7
	Policy papers	9	10.3
Methodological Approach	Qualitative	39	44.8
	Quantitative	35	40.2
	Mixed-methods	13	14.9

5.1 Overview of Selected Studies

The systematic review identified 87 relevant studies published between 2010 and 2024. The distribution of studies across sub-periods is as follows: 2010–2014 (21 studies), 2015–2019 (34 studies), and 2020–2024 (32 studies). Sources included peer-reviewed journal articles (61%), institutional reports (29%), and policy papers (10%). Most studies employed qualitative methods (45%), while others used quantitative surveys (40%) or mixed methods (15%).

5.2 Institutional Drivers of Entrepreneurship

Analysis revealed several key institutional drivers that consistently support entrepreneurial activity in the West Bank:

A. Regulatory and Policy Support

Clear legal frameworks for business registration, taxation, and intellectual property were highlighted as major enablers of entrepreneurship (North, 1990; Scott, 2014). Studies in 2015–2019 reported increased legislative

efforts to streamline business registration and reduce bureaucratic hurdles (Khatib et al., 2022).

B. Financial Infrastructure

Access to finance through banks, microfinance institutions, and donor programs was a recurring enabler across all periods (World Bank, 2021; Startup Genome & IPSD, 2020). Notably, post-2020 studies emphasized digital financial solutions and crowdfunding as emerging facilitators of entrepreneurial activity.

C. Support Organizations and Networks

University incubators, NGOs, and accelerators provided mentorship, networking, and training programs that strengthened entrepreneurial capabilities (Dana, 2021; Sabella & El-Far, 2019). These programs were particularly important for youth and women entrepreneurs, who face additional social and economic barriers. These findings highlight the dual role of institutions in shaping entrepreneurial activity in the West Bank, where enabling mechanisms coexist with persistent structural challenges. A synthesized overview of these drivers and barriers is presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Institutional Drivers and Barriers to Entrepreneurship in the West Bank (2010–2024)

Category	Institutional Drivers	Institutional Barriers
Regulatory and Policy Environment	Introduction of clearer legal frameworks for business registration, taxation, and intellectual property; gradual reforms to reduce bureaucratic hurdles (North, 1990; Scott, 2014; Khatib et al., 2022).	Persistent bureaucratic complexity, fragmented administrative procedures, and inconsistent policy enforcement (Khatib et al., 2022)
Financial Infrastructure	Expansion of access to credit through banks, microfinance institutions, and donor-funded programs; emergence of digital financial solutions and crowdfunding post-2020 (World Bank, 2021; Startup Genome & IPSD, 2020).	Limited availability of sustainable financing for startups; over-reliance on donor programs; high risk aversion of local banks (Sabella & El-Far, 2019).
Support Organizations and Networks	Growth of university incubators, NGOs, and accelerators providing mentorship, training, and networking, particularly for youth and women (Dana, 2021; Sabella & El-Far, 2019)	Weak coordination among support institutions; limited scalability of programs; concentration of services in urban centers.
Political and Legal Context	Poliy initiatives promoting entrepreneurship as a driver for economic resilience (UNCTAD, 2022).	Ongoing Israeli occupation, mobility restrictions, and legal uncertainty undermining market access and business continuity (World Bank, 2021)
Human Capital	Rising participation in entrepreneurship education programs and innovation hubs since 2015.	Shortage of skilled labor in high-tech and knowledge-intensive sectors, leading to dependency on external expertise (PCBS, 2023).

5.3 Institutional Barriers to Entrepreneurship

The review also identified persistent institutional barriers limiting entrepreneurial activity:

A. Political and Legal Instability

The Israeli occupation and associated mobility restrictions remained a major barrier across all sub-periods, affecting access to markets, permits, and resources (World Bank, 2021).

B. Bureaucratic Complexity

Despite some regulatory improvements, complex licensing procedures and fragmented administrative processes continue to slow down business creation and expansion (Khatib et al., 2022).

C. Limited Human and Financial Capital

A shortage of skilled labor, coupled with restricted access to sustainable financing, constrained business growth, especially for high-tech and knowledge-intensive ventures (Sabella & El-Far, 2019).

5.4 Temporal Trends

The synthesis across the three sub-periods revealed:

- 2010–2014: Initial institutional efforts focused on establishing basic regulatory frameworks and donor-supported entrepreneurship programs.
- 2015–2019: Expansion of incubators and accelerators, alongside policy reforms to facilitate business registration and access to finance.
- 2020–2024: Emphasis on digital entrepreneurship, innovation hubs, and adaptation to crisis conditions such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Kuckertz et al., 2020).

5.6 Summary of Findings

Overall, the West Bank exhibits a mixed institutional landscape: supportive drivers exist but are counterbalanced by persistent barriers. The findings highlight the critical role of both formal institutions (laws, policies, financial systems) and informal support mechanisms (NGOs, incubators, networks) in sustaining entrepreneurial activity. They also underscore the importance of temporal analysis, as institutional effectiveness and constraints evolve over time.

6. Discussion

6.1 Institutional Drivers of Entrepreneurship

The review highlights that supportive institutional frameworks in the West Bank—particularly regulatory reforms and financial infrastructure—play a pivotal role in enabling entrepreneurial activity. For example, streamlining business registration processes and improving access to credit have been identified as essential enablers (World Bank, 2021; Khatib et al., 2022). University-based incubators and NGO-led programs further strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems by offering training, mentorship, and networking opportunities, particularly for youth and women entrepreneurs (UNCTAD, 2022; PCBS, 2023). These findings align with comparative literature on entrepreneurship in other developing economies, where institutional support acts as a cornerstone for entrepreneurial resilience (Acs et al., 2018).

6.2 Institutional Barriers to Entrepreneurship

Despite these drivers, persistent institutional barriers continue to undermine entrepreneurial growth. Political and legal instability, largely shaped by the Israeli occupation and associated mobility restrictions, remains the most pressing structural constraint, affecting market access and business scalability (World Bank, 2023). Bureaucratic complexity, including fragmented licensing procedures, further impedes entrepreneurial initiatives, a challenge also documented in regional contexts such as Jordan and Lebanon (OECD, 2021). Limited human capital and restricted access to sustainable financing represent additional barriers, disproportionately affecting technology-intensive and knowledge-based ventures (Sabella et al., 2020). These barriers reinforce the argument that institutional fragility in conflict-affected economies systematically constrains entrepreneurship (Naudé, 2010).

6.3 Temporal Shifts and Emerging Trends

A temporal analysis reveals important institutional shifts over the three sub-periods (2010–2014, 2015–2019, 2020–2024). Initial efforts centered on foundational regulatory frameworks and donor-driven entrepreneurship initiatives. By 2015–2019, momentum shifted toward the expansion of incubators, accelerators, and incremental policy reforms, improving business registration and financial inclusion (Startup Genome & IPSD, 2020). The post-2020 period marked a pivot toward digital entrepreneurship, innovation hubs, and adaptive strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Kuckertz et al., 2020).

These developments underscore the dynamic interaction between external shocks and institutional adaptation, reflecting broader global trends in entrepreneurial ecosystems during crisis contexts.

6.4 Synthesis

Overall, the discussion illustrates a dual narrative: while institutional drivers have expanded the entrepreneurial landscape, structural barriers rooted in political instability and bureaucratic inefficiency continue to suppress long-term sustainability. This duality resonates with institutional theory, which posits that both enabling and constraining institutional forces shape entrepreneurial outcomes (North, 1990; Scott, 2014).

7. Conclusion and Policy Implications

7.1 Conclusion

This study systematically reviewed 87 studies published between 2010 and 2024 to investigate the institutional drivers and barriers shaping entrepreneurship in the West Bank. The analysis revealed that while regulatory reforms, financial infrastructure, and support organizations have provided critical enablers, persistent challenges such as political instability, bureaucratic complexity, and limited access to capital continue to hinder entrepreneurial activity. The temporal analysis highlighted that institutional support has gradually evolved—from foundational regulatory frameworks in the early 2010s, to expanded incubators and financing mechanisms in the mid-2010s, and more recently, to digital entrepreneurship and innovation-driven initiatives.

The findings underscore the dual role of institutions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts: they can either foster resilience and innovation or perpetuate structural constraints. For policymakers, the results emphasize the importance of reinforcing regulatory clarity, expanding sustainable financing mechanisms, and leveraging incubators and NGOs to support underrepresented groups such as youth and women entrepreneurs.

At the theoretical level, the paper advances the application of institutional theory in conflict-affected regions by integrating empirical evidence from Palestine. Practically, it provides a knowledge base for designing interventions that strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem and create more sustainable employment opportunities. By addressing both institutional drivers and barriers, this study contributes to ongoing debates on how entrepreneurship can be nurtured in fragile economies and highlights the need for policy coherence to balance constraints with enabling structures.

7.2 Policy Implications

The findings carry important implications for policymakers and development actors in Palestine. First, addressing bureaucratic complexity through streamlined licensing and regulatory harmonization is essential to reduce entry barriers for entrepreneurs. Second, sustained investment in financial infrastructure—including digital financing solutions and venture capital—can enhance access to funding for early-stage and growth-oriented firms. Third, strengthening human capital through entrepreneurship education, vocational training, and targeted support for women and youth is critical to leveraging untapped potential. Finally, while broader political challenges remain unresolved, local institutions, NGOs, and international partners can play a crucial role in mitigating risks by fostering resilience, supporting innovation hubs, and promoting inclusive entrepreneurial opportunities. Collectively, these measures could enhance the sustainability and scalability of entrepreneurship in the West Bank, contributing to long-term economic resilience and social stability.

7.3 Limitations and Future Research

While this review provides comprehensive insights into the institutional dynamics shaping entrepreneurship in the West Bank, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the analysis was restricted to peer-reviewed studies published between 2010 and 2024, which may exclude valuable insights from unpublished reports, policy briefs, and practitioner documents. Second, most of the reviewed studies relied on qualitative data, which limits the ability to generalize findings across the broader entrepreneurial landscape. Third, the unique socio-political context of Palestine constrains the direct comparability of findings with other regions, although this specificity also enriches contextual understanding.

Future research could benefit from three directions. One is the integration of longitudinal and mixed-methods approaches to capture the dynamic evolution of entrepreneurship under institutional and political constraints. Another is the inclusion of grey literature and practice-based evidence to provide a more holistic picture of ecosystem development. Finally, comparative regional studies with other conflict-affected or transitional economies could illuminate shared challenges and adaptive strategies, contributing to both institutional theory and practical policy design.

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A: Legislative Texts Related to Entrepreneurship in Palestine

This appendix provides a concise overview of the main Palestinian legislations that directly affect the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the West Bank, forming the legal framework that regulates start-ups and entrepreneurial initiatives:

1. Companies Law No. (12) of 1964

Governs the establishment procedures of companies in their various forms, including limited liability companies, which are the most common legal structure used by Palestinian entrepreneurs.

2. Investment Promotion Law No. (1) of 1998 and its Amendments

Provides investment incentives and tax exemptions for new projects, considered one of the key legislations from which entrepreneurs in both productive and service sectors can benefit.

3. Labor Law No. (7) of 2000

Contains provisions regulating the relationship between employers and employees, ensuring legal protection for workers in start-ups while defining their rights and obligations.

4. Intellectual Property Laws include:

- a. Trademarks Law No. (33) of 1952: Regulates the registration and protection of trademarks, which is vital for start-ups building their market identity.

- b. Copyright Law No. (46) of 1992: Protects literary, artistic, and software works, serving as a crucial legislation for start-ups in creative and technological sectors.

Appendix B: Summary Table of Selected Studies Extracted from Scopus Database

N	Authors	Title	Journal	Year	Link/ DOI
1.	Bruton, G. D., Ahlstrom, D., & Obloj, K.	Entrepreneurship in emerging economies: Where are we today and where should the research go in the future	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	2010	https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2010.00390.x
2.	Naudé, W.	Entrepreneurship and economic development	Journal of Development Studies	2011	https://doi.org/10.1080/00220381003656445
3.	Kuckertz, A., Brändle, L., Gaudig, A., Hinderer, S., Morales Reyes, C. A., Prochotta, A., Steinbrink, K., & Berger, E. S.C	Startups in times of crisis – A rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic	Journal of Business Venturing Insights	2020	https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbvi.2020.e00169
4.	Sabella, A. R., & El-Far, M. T	Entrepreneurship as an everyday form of resistance: An exploration of the experiences of Palestinian women street vendors	International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research	2019	https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-02-2018-0113
5.	Khatib, S. F. A., Shoubaki, Y., & Abuhjeeleh, M	Entrepreneurship in Palestine: Current trends and institutional challenges	Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies	2022	https://doi.org/10.1108/JEEE-07-2021-0274

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