

## Influence of Behavioral Factors on Entrepreneurial Intention in Green Startups in Algeria

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**Abstract:** This study explores the emerging field of environmental entrepreneurship in Algeria by focusing on young entrepreneurs developing green startups, with the aim of understanding the motivational drivers, value orientations, and innovative approaches that shape their entrepreneurial engagement in a largely underexplored context. Using a qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the owners of five Algerian green startups, and the data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns in motivations, values, and practices. The findings indicate that these young environmental entrepreneurs are motivated by a combination of intrinsic factors, such as personal commitment to sustainability and social responsibility, and extrinsic factors, including perceived market opportunities and community impact, while their value orientations strongly emphasize ecological stewardship, innovation, and societal contribution. At the same time, the study reveals limitations in the adoption of advanced environmental innovations, pointing to the need for updated strategies, knowledge transfer, and stronger support mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness and scalability of green ventures. By contributing empirical evidence from a developing economy, this research advances theoretical understanding of environmental entrepreneurship and offers practical implications for policymakers and practitioners, highlighting the importance of targeted training, access to sustainable technologies, and supportive policy incentives to foster a more robust ecosystem for ecological innovation in Algeria.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Behavior, Environmental entrepreneurship, Green startups, Youth entrepreneurship, Sustainability motivation

**JEL Classification Codes :** XNN ; XNN

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of the seminal report *Our Common Future* by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), sustainable development has emerged as a critical global paradigm, compelling nations to harmonize economic growth with the needs of future generations (Brundtland, 1987). This shift represents more than a mere policy adjustment; it is a fundamental re-evaluation of the relationship between industrial progress and planetary boundaries. Within the framework of the UN 2030 Agenda, this transition requires ambitious pathways that integrate climate action with human well-being (Soergel et al., 2021). As the international community grapples with the escalating impacts of the Anthropocene, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a blueprint for addressing systemic issues such as biodiversity loss, resource depletion, and social inequality.

Consequently, environmental entrepreneurship often referred to as "ecopreneurship" has gained prominence as a vital mechanism for implementation. As noted in recent bibliometric analyses, this field has evolved from a niche interest to a central pillar of the green economy, where entrepreneurs act as catalysts for ecological change (Piwoswar-Sulej et al., 2021). Unlike traditional business models that treat environmental externalities as secondary concerns, environmental entrepreneurship seeks to internalize these factors, positioning ecological preservation as a core value proposition. This transformative approach acknowledges that the private sector is not merely a contributor to environmental degradation but a necessary engine for its solution through innovation, resource efficiency, and the development of circular value chains.

For Algeria, this transition is strategically important given its historic reliance on hydrocarbon exports, which has produced a rentier economic model vulnerable to global price fluctuations. As in neighboring economies such as Tunisia, where green entrepreneurship supports both implementation and economic incentives (Youssef and Dziri, 2012), Algeria faces the dual challenge of economic diversification and environmental protection, a pressure intensified by the global energy transition. This shift was formalized in the 2020 Constitution, which emphasizes sustainable development and intergenerational responsibility. Awareness of these vulnerabilities aligns with findings by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which identifies the Mediterranean basin as a climate change "hotspot" (IPCC, 2022), where Algeria already experiences desertification, water scarcity, and extreme heat, prompting initiatives such as the National Climate Plan and renewable energy programs.

However, despite growing institutional support and a burgeoning ecosystem of incubators and "Start-up" labels, the underlying motivations of entrepreneurs entering this sector remain complex and multifaceted. Theoretical literature suggests that environmental entrepreneurs are not a monolith; they represent a diverse spectrum of actors with varying degrees of commitment to social and ecological outcomes. Their identity often evolves over time, shifting between the roles of the activist, the innovator, and the pragmatist (De Bernardi and Sydow, 2022). These individuals operate by creating "social-benefit markets" that differ significantly from traditional commercial structures (Corbett and Montgomery, 2017). In these markets, the "bottom line" is often a triple one, accounting for social equity and environmental health alongside financial profit. Yet, in an emerging economy like Algeria, the tension between these goals can be acute. The lack of mature venture capital and a regulatory environment still in transition may force entrepreneurs to prioritize survival over impact, or conversely, may attract "opportunists" seeking to capitalize on government subsidies or international grants without a

genuine commitment to sustainability.

A central question in the Algerian context is whether green entrepreneurs are primarily motivated by ethical convictions or by market opportunities, a distinction that is critical to the sector's long-term sustainability. Purely pull-based motivations risk fading if more profitable sectors emerge, while purely push-based motivations may undermine financial viability. In Algeria, the youth bulge and high graduate unemployment further complicate this dynamic, as environmental entrepreneurship often represents a necessity-driven path to self-employment rather than a solely moral choice. Understanding the interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations is therefore essential for policymakers seeking to design support mechanisms that foster a resilient green economy.

Rather than adopting predictive models of entrepreneurial intention that rely primarily on quantitative metrics and the Theory of Planned Behavior, this study adopts an exploratory qualitative approach centered on the lived experience of entrepreneurs, including their value orientations, interactions with the Algerian institutional environment, and personal visions for the future. The objective is not to isolate determinants of intention, but to understand how entrepreneurial intention in green startups emerges from specific configurations of behavioral factors. Using a multiple-case study design, the analysis of five Algerian green startups identifies recurring combinations of motivations, values, and perceptions that give rise to distinct entrepreneurial profiles. These profiles are therefore understood as analytically grounded expressions of the behavioral factors shaping entrepreneurial engagement, capturing how environmental values are translated into business strategies and how environmental challenges are perceived as entrepreneurial opportunities in a developing economy.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows. Section 2 establishes the theoretical framework, synthesizing the history of environmental entrepreneurship in Algeria and the behavioral factors such as biospheric values, environmental awareness, and self-efficacy that influence entrepreneurial intention. Section 3 details the qualitative methodology and the multiple-case study approach used to examine five specific green startups. This interpretivist approach prioritizes the "lived experience" of entrepreneurs over predictive models to understand why they engage in this sector. Section 4 presents the practical implications and results, offering a typology of Algerian environmental entrepreneurs ranging from "Visionary Champions" to "Innovative Opportunists" based on their distinct internal and external motivations. Section 5 discusses these findings, analyzing the dominance of specific entrepreneurial profiles and the impact of the Algerian "rentier" economy and institutional voids on green innovation. Finally, the conclusion summarizes key insights, addressing the "intention-action gap" and outlining policy implications for accelerating the adoption of sustainable entrepreneurship in the region. This study ultimately enriches the literature by providing rare empirical insights into the nascent Algerian green ecosystem.

## 2. STATE OF THE ART

The global transition toward a "Circular Economy" has redefined the role of the entrepreneur. No longer seen merely as an engine of economic growth, the modern entrepreneur is increasingly viewed as a catalyst for environmental preservation. In Algeria, a country historically dependent on hydrocarbons, the shift toward green entrepreneurship is not just a

trend but a strategic necessity for economic diversification (Boudjelida et al., 2018).

However, the creation of a "green" startup is fundamentally different from a traditional one. It requires "dual-value creation" the simultaneous pursuit of financial viability and ecological benefit. This complexity makes the study of behavioral factors essential. Understanding the "Entrepreneurial Intention" (EI) of Algerians the conscious state of mind that precedes the action of launching a venture allows researchers to identify why some individuals embrace this challenge while others recoil.

### **2.1.Theoretical Framework: The Evolution of Intention Models**

#### **2.1.1. The Primacy of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)**

For three decades, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen (1991), has remained the foundational pillar for studying entrepreneurial intent. The model posits that intention is the single best predictor of planned behavior.

In the context of green startups in Algeria, the three pillars of TPB are interpreted as follows:

**Attitude toward the Behavior:** This refers to the degree to which an individual perceives green entrepreneurship as advantageous or rewarding. Mokhefi and Benhabib (2017) found that in Algeria, students often possess a highly positive attitude toward "greenness" but a hesitant attitude toward "entrepreneurship" due to perceived economic instability.

**Subjective Norms:** This represents the perceived social pressure. In Algerian culture, which leans toward collectivism, the opinion of family and the "social circle" is paramount (Yahiaoui & Zouiri, 2024).

**Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC):** This is the individual's belief in their capability to execute the startup. For green ventures, this involves not just business acumen, but "Eco-literacy" understanding environmental regulations and sustainable technologies (Alalei & Jan, 2023).

#### **2.1.2. The Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM)**

While TPB is dominant, researchers often supplement it with Shapero and Sokol's Entrepreneurial Event Model. This model emphasizes Perceived Desirability and Perceived Feasibility. In Algeria, the "feasibility" aspect is often hindered by "institutional voids" the lack of specialized green incubators or clear environmental legislation (Boukari & Khelil, 2022).

### **2.2.Core Behavioral Factors in Green Entrepreneurship**

#### **2.2.1. Environmental Awareness and "Biospheric Values"**

One cannot discuss green entrepreneurship without addressing the "Green" component. Behavioral literature identifies a specific set of values known as Biospheric Values, where individuals prioritize the ecosystem's health over personal or social gains.

In Algeria, research indicates that while environmental awareness is high among university graduates, it does not always translate into business intention. Alalei and Jan (2023) argue that for awareness to become intention, it must be bridged by Environmental Self-Efficacy the specific confidence that one's business can actually solve an environmental problem, such as waste management in Algiers or water scarcity in the highlands.

#### **2.2.2. Pro-Environmental Behavior (PEB) as a Predictor**

A significant "State of the Art" trend is the link between personal lifestyle and professional intention. Individuals who engage in Pro-Environmental Behaviors (recycling, energy conservation) in their private lives are statistically more likely to exhibit green entrepreneurial

intentions (Safitri et al., 2024). This suggests that green entrepreneurship in Algeria is often an extension of an individual's identity rather than a mere career choice.

### **2.2.3. Risk Aversion and the "Green" Paradox**

Green startups are perceived as riskier than traditional businesses. They often involve unproven technologies or "niche" markets with long ROI (Return on Investment) periods. Behavioral economics shows that Risk Aversion is a major deterrent in Algeria. Potential entrepreneurs fear that the Algerian market is not yet ready to pay a "green premium" for sustainable products, leading to a "Wait-and-See" behavioral pattern (Boudjelida et al., 2018).

## **3. The Algerian Contextual Influencers**

### **3.1. The Role of Higher Education**

Algerian universities have begun integrating entrepreneurship into their curricula. However, the "State of the Art" suggests a gap. While general entrepreneurship is taught, "Sustainable Entrepreneurship" is often absent. Boukari and Khelil (2022) note that when students are exposed to specific green business models, their Perceived Behavioral Control increases significantly.

### **3.2. Cultural and Subjective Norms**

Algeria's socio-cultural fabric places high value on stable employment (often in the public sector or the oil industry). Yahiaoui and Zouiri (2024) highlight that "Subjective Norms" in Algeria can act as a "Brake" on innovation. If a parent views a green startup (e.g., a plastic recycling plant) as "dirty" or "low-status" compared to a corporate job, the student's intention drops, regardless of their personal passion.

### **3.3. Government Support and the "Locus of Control"**

Psychologically, entrepreneurs need an "Internal Locus of Control" the belief that they control their own destiny. However, in Algeria, the heavy reliance on state-led initiatives (like the National Climate Plan or ANADE) can shift this to an "External Locus of Control." Entrepreneurs may wait for government grants rather than taking proactive steps, a behavioral phenomenon known as "Grant-seeking behavior" (Chatter, 2025).

## **4. Identifying the Research Gaps: The "Intention-Action Gap"**

The most modern research in 2025 and 2026 focuses on the Intention-Action Gap. In Algeria, there is a high "Green Intention" among the youth, but the actual rate of "Green Startup Creation" is low. This suggests that behavioral factors are being suppressed by structural barriers.

- *The Regulatory Hurdle:* Even with high intent, the lack of a "Green Label" for startups in Algerian law creates psychological uncertainty (Nouicer Tira et al., 2025).
- *The Gender Dimension:* Emerging studies are looking at how behavioral factors differ between male and female entrepreneurs in Algeria. Women often show higher biospheric values but lower PBC due to limited access to funding networks (Mokhefi & Benhabib, 2017).

## **5. History of Environmental Entrepreneurship in Algeria**

The history of environmental entrepreneurship in Algeria is deeply rooted in the broader imperative of sustainable development, a concept that frames environmental preservation as a

collective duty. The emergence of this field in Algeria can be traced through two distinct historical phases: an indirect phase and a direct phase.

During the indirect phase, the Algerian state engaged with sustainable development concepts without explicitly focusing on environmental entrepreneurship. In contrast, the direct phase marks a period where environmental entrepreneurship has emerged as a distinct subject of interest, recognized as a vital mechanism for achieving sustainable development goals.

### **5.1. The Indirect Phase of Environmental Entrepreneurship in Algeria**

Since gaining independence, Algeria has actively participated in major international forums, even prior to the formalization of sustainable development by the United Nations in 1983 (Tedjani, 2021).

In 1994, following the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Algeria began operationalizing sustainable development tools. This was marked by the establishment of the High National Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development. Subsequently, following the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, Algeria demonstrated increased consistency in its policy approach through the creation of a series of institutions, means, and legislative frameworks aimed at environmental protection.

### **5.2. The Direct Phase of Environmental Entrepreneurship in Algeria**

The direct emergence of environmental entrepreneurship in Algeria is characterized by a sectoral approach, where entrepreneurship is explicitly integrated into the environmental sector. This shift was facilitated by new legislation on sustainable development in 2003, which provided a preliminary framework for various plans and schemes, adding coherence to national projects (Tedjani, 2021).

The 2020 Constitution of Algeria further solidified this trajectory. It explicitly valorized sustainable development and emphasized the role of youth and entrepreneurship in preserving the interests of future generations. The Preamble to the 2020 Constitution states:

*"The Algerian people adhere to their choices in order to reduce social disparities and eliminate regional inequalities, and are working to build a productive and competitive economy within the framework of sustainable development.*

*The people also remain preoccupied with the deterioration of the environment and the negative consequences of climate change, and keen to ensure the protection of the natural environment and the rational use of natural resources, as well as their preservation for the benefit of future generations.*

*In recognition of the enormous energy of the Algerian youth... it has become necessary to actively involve them in the process of building and preserving the interests of future generations, by ensuring a qualitative formation for them to be undertaken by state and society institutions."*

*(Secretary-General, 1987)*

In recent years, particularly following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 and the 2020 constitutional amendments, environmental entrepreneurship has gained significant prominence. The pandemic period saw increased engagement from Algerian youth, who began translating ideas into on-the-ground realities. This momentum was supported by the Ministry Delegate for Startups, which facilitated the creation of emerging institutions. Consequently, sustainable development has become a central pillar linking the environment, society, and the economy.

## 6. Environmental Entrepreneurship

### 6.1. The Concept of Environmental Entrepreneurship

Environmental entrepreneurship is defined as the adoption of social entrepreneurship principles and sustainable behaviors to benefit society. It drives social change by creating sustainable green products and services that meet simultaneous social, economic, and environmental objectives. Fundamentally, it seeks to transform communities through innovative methods designed to protect the planet (S. and Surendran, 2022).

In the Algerian context, environmental entrepreneurship can be defined as the process of providing innovative solutions to specific local problems, transforming ideas into sustainable projects that ensure continuity and address the unique reality of the Algerian entrepreneurial ecosystem.

### 6.2. The Importance of Environmental Entrepreneurship

As the global population expands and resource consumption rises, environmental entrepreneurship becomes a crucial mechanism for raising awareness and managing natural resources. Its importance is highlighted through the following characteristics, which emphasize how innovative green ventures can effectively reconcile economic growth with ecological preservation, ultimately fostering a more sustainable and resilient future for developing economies like Algeria's, while simultaneously empowering local communities through job creation and the implementation of responsible, circular business models.

#### a) Environmental Characteristics

- *Leading the Nation towards Sustainable Development:* Environmental entrepreneurship is inherently designed to promote and protect the environment. It aligns with the core pillars of sustainable development prevention, solidarity, responsibility, and participation (Tedjani, 2021) making it a key driver in the national transition toward sustainability.
- *Environmental Flexibility (Resilience):* By fostering green startups, environmental entrepreneurship utilizes technological approaches to solve environmental problems. This fosters environmental resilience, a critical aspect of national stability and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (Sadma, 2021).
- *Sustainable Leadership:* As a nascent field, environmental entrepreneurship requires "sustainable leadership," defined as behavior that fosters continuous learning, ensures long-term success, addresses social justice, and develops human resources without exhaustion (Durst et al., 2021). In the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, this leadership style ensures that startups remain technologically relevant and financially viable while actively participating in biodiversity conservation.

#### b) Social Characteristics

- *Poverty Alleviation:* Climate change and industrial warming contribute to multidimensional poverty. Environmental entrepreneurship helps mitigate these effects by enhancing livelihood security for deprived populations, offering a pathway out of poverty through sustainable economic activities (on Climate Change (IPCC), 2022).
- *Providing Job Opportunities:* Environmental entrepreneurs exploit new market opportunities, both national and international. By creating new markets for green

products and services, this sector generates employment across various social classes, thereby contributing to the reduction of unemployment rates in Algeria (Corbett and Montgomery, 2017).

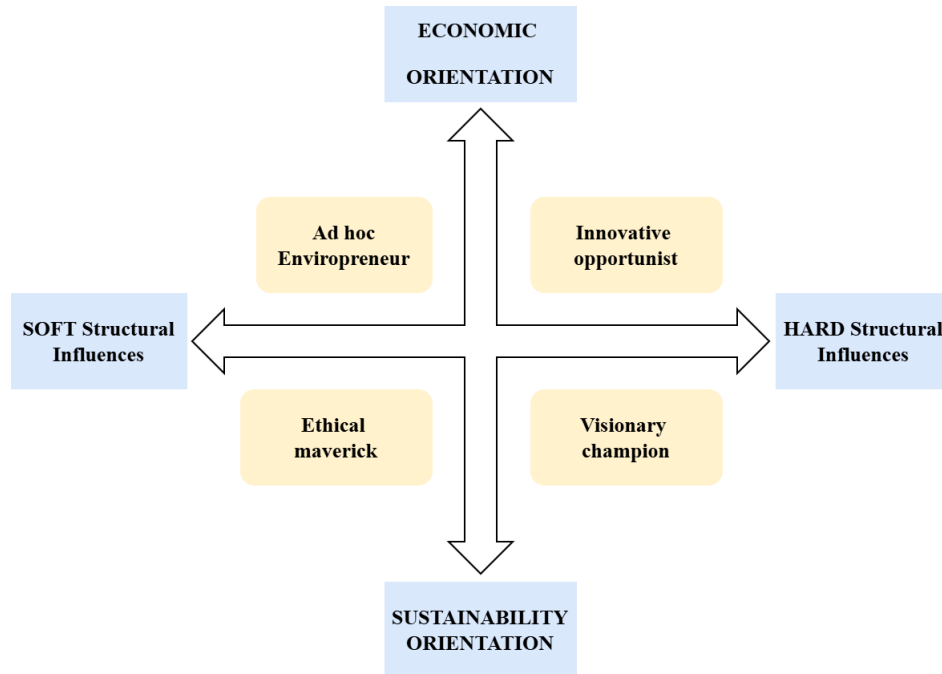


**Figure 1: Typology of Taylor & Walley's Eco-Entrepreneurs  
(Walley and Taylor, 2002)**

### 6.3.Environmental Entrepreneurs

Environmental entrepreneurs are defined as individuals who coordinate commercial activities with environmental stewardship. Their efforts are not solely profit-driven; they combine their entrepreneurial identity with environmental values to achieve profitability alongside ecological preservation (Brundtland, 1987).

## 6.4.Types of Environmental Entrepreneurs

Environmental entrepreneurs can be classified based on their goals (profit vs. preservation) and their motivations (internal vs. external). To categorize them, we utilize the Thompson model (Walley and Taylor, 2002) (Figure 1):

- a) *The Innovative Opportunist*: A financially oriented entrepreneur influenced by structural motives (regulation) and external pressures. They are adept at exploiting strategic opportunities to develop green businesses (Walley and Taylor, 2002).
- b) *The Visionary Champion*: Adopts a transformational approach with a vision for a sustainable future. They seek to change the world by bridging business culture with environmental culture (Youssef and Dziri, 2012).
- c) *The Ethical Maverick*: Often a scientist or expert driven by personal values. They typically operate in low-pressure environments with the primary goal of spreading their values through business creation (Youssef and Dziri, 2012).
- d) *The Accidental Environmental Entrepreneur*: Individuals whose entry into the green sector is incidental, often related to a specific job or non-environmental specialty, where

the primary goal remains financial profit (Youssef and Dziri, 2012). In addition to this classification, we propose a classification related to motives, as summarized in Figure 2.

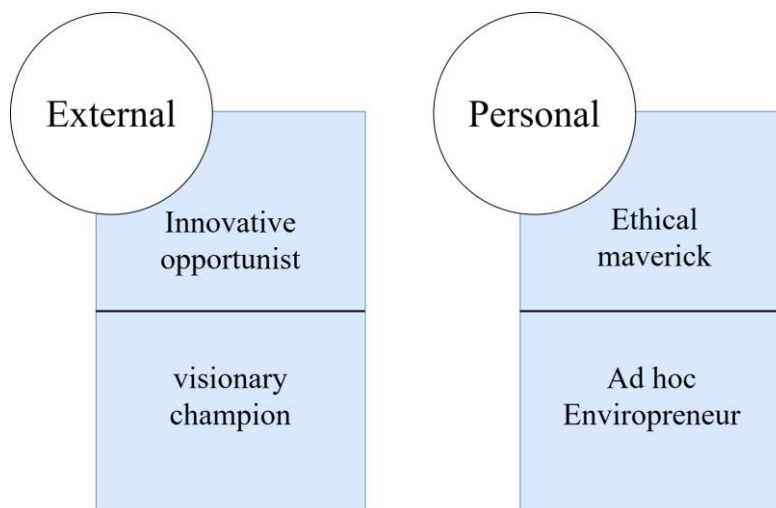


**Figure 2: Types of Entrepreneurs According to Influence**

### 6.5.Factors Affecting Environmental Entrepreneurs

Environmental entrepreneurs face diverse challenges economic, environmental, and social that vary by region. In Algeria, specific local factors may amplify challenges common to developed nations. Key factors include:

#### a) *Access to Finance from Traditional Sources*

Environmental projects are often less attractive to traditional investors because they prioritize a balance between economic and environmental objectives rather than pure profit maximization (Maehle et al., 2021). Traditional investors typically favor high-yield financial returns over long-term sustainability metrics.

#### b) *Disparities in Sustainable Development Interest*

While the shift toward sustainability is a global goal, the level of commitment varies. Countries pursuing an ambitious sustainability agenda can solve multiple crises simultaneously (Soergel et al., 2021). In Algeria, interest in sustainable development is expanding but remains in a nascent stage compared to developed nations that have successfully embedded a culture of sustainability within their societies.

#### c) *National Economic Interests (The Rentier Economy)*

Algeria's economy is heavily reliant on hydrocarbon exports (oil and gas), creating a "rentier" economic structure. This presents a complex paradox for environmental entrepreneurs:

- **Systemic Challenges:** The dominance of the oil sector can overshadow green initiatives. Entrepreneurs may feel their impact is negligible compared to the massive environmental footprint of the hydrocarbon industry.
- **Institutional Gaps:** While the state encourages entrepreneurship, the ecosystem suffers from gaps in waste management infrastructure and environmental culture.

- **The Opportunity:** Despite these challenges, the vast Algerian territory offers unique opportunities such as investing in the desert regions for solar energy or sustainable agriculture where material and human resources can be leveraged to diversify the economy away from reliance on oil.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Philosophy and Approach

The choice of a **qualitative approach** is not merely a logistical decision but a philosophical one. To understand the "why" behind Algerian environmental entrepreneurship, we operate within an **interpretivist paradigm**. This perspective posits that reality is socially constructed; therefore, the motivations of project leaders cannot be measured through static variables alone but must be understood through their personal narratives and professional lived experiences.

By prioritizing qualitative data, we allow for "thick description" a process of capturing the context, emotions, and subtle social pressures unique to the Algerian socio-economic landscape. This is essential for environmental entrepreneurship, where motivations often oscillate between altruistic ecological preservation and pragmatic economic survival.

#### 3.2. Research Design: Multiple-Case Study

We adopted a **multiple-case study design** as defined by Yin (2018). Unlike a single-case study, a multiple-case design allows for **cross-case synthesis**, which strengthens the external validity of the findings. By examining five distinct entrepreneurs, we can identify "literal replications" (where cases produce similar results) or "theoretical replications" (where cases produce contrasting results for predictable reasons).

This design is particularly robust for the Algerian context, where the green economy is still nascent. It allows us to account for diverse environmental sectors such as waste management, renewable energy, or organic agriculture while maintaining a unified focus on the motivational drivers that remain constant across these niches.

#### 3.3. Case Selection and Sampling Strategy

In qualitative research, the goal is not statistical representativeness but **information richness**. Consequently, we employed **purposive sampling**.

##### Selection Criteria

To ensure the integrity of the unit of analysis (the entrepreneur), candidates were selected based on three specific criteria:

1. **Sustainability:** The entrepreneur must have been active for a period sufficient to demonstrate resilience against market volatility.
2. **Environmental Intentionality:** The core value proposition of the business must be the resolution of an environmental problem, rather than "greenwashing" or incidental ecological benefits.
3. **Geographic Relevance:** The projects must be headquartered and operational within Algeria, reflecting the local regulatory and cultural environment.

##### The Sample Profile

The final sample consists of **five (5) Algerian environmental entrepreneurs**. While a sample of five may seem small in quantitative terms, in qualitative case study research, this

size is ideal for achieving **data saturation** the point at which no new motivational themes emerge from additional interviews.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection was triangulation-based to ensure the internal validity of our findings. This involved the use of two primary qualitative tools:

#### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

Conducted between October and December 2020, these interviews served as the backbone of our data. The semi-structured format provided a "guided conversation" feel. We utilized an interview protocol focused on:

- **Life History:** Early influences and educational background.
- **The "Spark":** The specific moment or catalyst that led them to the environmental sector.
- **Challenges and Barriers:** Navigating the Algerian bureaucracy and market skepticism.
- **Values:** The hierarchy of priorities (Profit vs. Planet).

### **Field Observations**

To complement the self-reported data from interviews, we conducted field observations. By visiting the entrepreneurs' sites of operation, we were able to observe "practice in action." This allowed us to verify if the motivations expressed during the interviews aligned with the actual operational culture of the firm.

### **Data Analysis: Discourse Analysis**

The core analytical engine of this study is **Discourse Analysis (DA)**. We did not merely look at *what* the entrepreneurs said, but *how* they said it.

### **Classification and Coding**

Using discourse analysis, we classified the entrepreneurs into typologies based on their linguistic markers. For instance:

- **The Visionary:** Frequent use of "future," "legacy," and "responsibility."
- **The Pragmatist:** Emphasis on "efficiency," "market gap," and "viability."

The analysis followed a three-step process:

1. **Transcription:** Converting recorded interviews into verbatim text.
2. **Coding:** Identifying recurring keywords and themes related to motivation.
3. **Categorization:** Grouping codes into overarching motivational themes (e.g., Economic Necessity, Ethical Duty, or Social Recognition).

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

The qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews were analyzed using a systematic thematic analysis approach. The analysis followed three main stages:

- **Coding:** All interview transcripts were carefully examined to identify recurring concepts and themes. Open coding was first applied to label initial ideas, followed by thematic grouping to organize codes into coherent categories reflecting motivational patterns, behavioral drivers, and value orientations.
- **Categorization and Validation:** The grouped codes were further abstracted into higher-level categories representing key behavioral dimensions of Algerian environmental entrepreneurs. To ensure validity, coding and categorization were cross-checked among the research team, and interpretations were regularly compared against the original interview data to maintain consistency and accuracy.
- **Data Saturation:** Analysis continued until thematic redundancy was achieved. After five interviews, no new themes emerged, indicating that data saturation had been reached and the sample adequately captured the range of motivations and behavioral factors within the studied context.

Additionally, the average duration of the interviews was approximately 45 minutes, conducted over a three-month period. These procedures enhance the rigor, transparency, and trustworthiness of the study, ensuring that the findings are grounded in the participants' lived experiences while remaining methodologically robust.

### Contextual Considerations: The Algerian Landscape

It is crucial to note that the timing of the data collection (Late 2020) occurred during a period of global and local transition. The Algerian government had begun signaling a shift toward diversifying the economy away from hydrocarbons. Our methodology accounts for this by integrating the "environmental milieu" of Algeria into the analysis, recognizing that an entrepreneur's motivation is often a reaction to the institutional voids or opportunities within their specific national context.

### Reliability and Validity (Trustworthiness)

To ensure the "trustworthiness" of this qualitative research, we employed several strategies:

- **Credibility:** Through member-checking, where preliminary findings were shared with the participants to ensure their perspectives were accurately captured.
- **Transferability:** By providing a detailed description of the Algerian context, allowing other researchers to determine if the findings apply to similar emerging economies.
- **Confirmability:** Maintaining an audit trail of raw notes, recordings, and coding sheets to ensure the findings are grounded in the data and not researcher bias.

### Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed of the research objectives and provided informed consent. Anonymity was offered to protect the entrepreneurs' competitive interests, and data was handled in strict accordance with ethical research standards, ensuring that the discourse analysis remained objective and respectful of the participants' professional reputations.

## 4. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 4.1. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The classification of "green" entrepreneurs requires a dual-axis understanding of their worldviews. Walley and Taylor's typology (2002) is particularly effective because it moves

beyond a binary "green or not" view, instead situating entrepreneurs within a matrix defined by **Structural Influences** (External vs. Personal) and **Orientation** (Economic vs. Sustainability).

In the Algerian context, where the "Green Economy" is an emerging frontier, these motivations are often entangled with national economic pressures, environmental degradation in the Mediterranean basin, and the desire for social innovation. Our discourse analysis focused on identifying **lexical markers** specific words and phrases used by the interviewees that signal whether their primary loyalty lies with the planet, the pocketbook, or a personal calling.

#### 4.2. Analysis of Motivations: Data Structure

Before diving into the specific classifications, it is essential to look at the raw qualitative data that informed our findings. Table 1 (summarized below) represents the thematic coding of the interviews.

#### 4.3. Classification and Detailed Discourse Analysis

##### A. Fertitech: The Accidental Environmentalist

###### Classification: Ad-hoc / Accidental Environmental Entrepreneur

Fertitech represents the "Green-Business" quadrant where environmental benefits are secondary. The entrepreneur's discourse is centered on **utility**. In the interviews, the entrepreneur rarely used emotive language regarding nature; instead, the focus was on the "difficulties encountered in the agricultural sector."

For Fertitech, the environment is a constraint to be managed rather than a cause to be championed. The "accidental" nature of this venture is a result of a technical solution (e.g., reducing chemical usage to save soil quality for better yields) that happens to align with green objectives. This entrepreneur is driven by **external influences** specifically, the technical requirements of the market.

**Discourse Insight:** The use of the word "coincidental" in their self-description highlights a lack of initial "green" intentionality. This suggests that if a non-green solution were more efficient, the entrepreneur might have chosen it.

##### B. Woodit: The Visionary Champion

###### Classification: Visionary Champion

In stark contrast to Fertitech, Woodit operates from a position of **intense personal influence**. This entrepreneur is a "Champion" because they lead with a vision that predates the business itself. Their background in biology and activism provides a "holistic" framework where the business is merely a tool for ecological preservation.

The discourse analysis of Woodit revealed a high frequency of "systemic" terminology. They do not talk about "selling wood products"; they talk about "redefining our relationship with forestry." This is a classic "Green-Green" profile. Their commitment is deep-seated, meaning they are likely to resist market pressures that might compromise their ecological standards.

- **Influence:** Personal/Internal.
- **Strategic Orientation:** High Sustainability/High Economic (though the latter is a means to sustain the former).

## C. Jet Play: The Ethical Maverick

### Classification: Ethical Maverick

The Ethical Maverick is driven by a desire to challenge the status quo. Jet Play's discourse is centered on **witnessing**. The entrepreneur spoke at length about "ecological issues they personally witnessed," which suggests an emotional and moral catalyst for the business.

Mavericks are often less concerned with mainstream market success and more concerned with **value diffusion**. In the case of Jet Play, the primary goal is the "global protection of the environment." Their business model serves as a protest or an alternative to traditional, destructive industry practices. The discourse analysis identified a strong "social desire," indicating that the entrepreneur views their venture as a contributor to a larger global movement rather than just a local business.

## D. Rando Green: The Innovative Opportunist

### Classification: Innovative Opportunist

Rando Green sits at the intersection of **External Influence** and **Economic Orientation**. This entrepreneur is a pragmatist. While Woodit sees a forest as an ecosystem to be saved, Rando Green sees it as an "asset" for eco-tourism.

The discourse analysis here was unambiguous. The entrepreneur explicitly stated that their motive was "the creation of money and wealth." There is no pretense of activism. Instead, there is a savvy recognition of a **market opportunity**. Rando Green is "green" because the market is trending that way. This is a vital category for the Algerian economy, as it demonstrates that sustainability can be a lucrative competitive advantage. However, because they are driven by wealth creation, their "greenness" is contingent on market demand.

**Table 1: Citations of Common Motivations of Entrepreneurs**

| Eco-Entrepreneur   | Motivation                                                                                   | Objective                                                                        |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Fertitech</b>   | Given the difficulties encountered in the agricultural sector                                | Provide solutions for agricultural pollution and establish vermiculture business |
| <b>Woodit</b>      | As I am an ecology activist and my training in biology allows me to undertake in this sector | Sustainable commitment.                                                          |
| <b>Jet Play</b>    | Global protection of the environment begins with the creation of organic products            | Environmental protection and activism for the ecological cause                   |
| <b>Rando Green</b> | Green entrepreneurship allows us to create money and wealth                                  | Motivation and future perspectives in eco-tourism                                |
| <b>Ecomegots</b>   | The one and only waste that poses a problem in my everyday life                              | Reduce urban pollution and create raw material for construction companies        |

## E. Ecomegots: The Accidental Monetizer

### Classification: Accidental Environmental Entrepreneur

Ecomegots shares the "Accidental" tag with Fertitech but arrives there from a different angle: **Urban Nuisance**. The project was born from an observation of "cigarette butt waste" as a daily annoyance.

What places Ecomegots in the "Accidental" category is the **monetization of the waste stream**. The discourse analysis shows a shift from "cleaning up the streets" (the initial spark) to "selling raw materials to construction companies" (the primary goal). The environment benefits from the removal of toxins, but the entrepreneur's logic is that of a **commodity trader**. The environmental impact is the "what," but financial profit is the "why."

#### 4.4. Synthesis: Personal vs. External Influence

When we aggregate these findings, a clear divide emerges in the Algerian entrepreneurial landscape.

##### a) The Personal Influence Cluster (Woodit & Jet Play)

These entrepreneurs are motivated by **internalized values**. Their discourse is "Identity-Based."

- **Resilience:** High. They are likely to stay in the green sector even during economic downturns.
- **Challenge:** Scalability. Their rigid adherence to values can sometimes make it difficult to attract traditional venture capital.

##### b) The External Influence Cluster (Fertitech, Rando Green, Ecomegots)

These entrepreneurs are motivated by **market signals and technical problems**. Their discourse is "Outcome-Based."

- **Resilience:** Moderate. They may pivot out of the green sector if profit margins shrink elsewhere.
- **Challenge:** Mission Drift. There is a risk that the environmental benefits will be sidelined in favor of "efficiency" or "wealth creation."

To make clearer the analytical connection between the identified entrepreneurial profiles and the behavioral factors, Table 2 brings together the profiles by directly linking them to their dominant behavioral drivers and the related implications for entrepreneurial intention.

**Table 2: Behavioral factors underlying entrepreneurial profiles and implications for entrepreneurial intention**

| Entrepreneurial Profile | Dominant Behavioral Factors | Implications for Entrepreneurial Intention |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|

|                                              |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Visionary Champion</b>                    | Strong intrinsic motivation, biospheric values, high environmental self-efficacy                         | Entrepreneurial intention is strong and persistent, driven by ethical commitment and long-term sustainability goals.                 |
| <b>Ethical Maverick</b>                      | Moral obligation, personal environmental experiences, identity-based motivation                          | Entrepreneurial intention is value-driven and resistant to market pressures, but may face scalability constraints.                   |
| <b>Innovative Opportunist</b>                | Opportunity perception, extrinsic motivation, market-oriented reasoning                                  | Entrepreneurial intention is conditional and opportunity-dependent, shaped by perceived economic viability.                          |
| <b>Accidental Environmental Entrepreneur</b> | Problem-solving orientation, low initial environmental intentionality, external institutional incentives | Entrepreneurial intention is initially fragile but may strengthen over time through experiential learning and value internalization. |

## DISCUSSION

The empirical findings from this study suggest a complex motivational landscape that deviates from the traditional Western narrative of "green activism." While the global literature often portrays the environmental entrepreneur as a crusader for the planet, the Algerian reality is more nuanced, characterized by pragmatism and a reactive approach to systemic inefficiencies.

### 1. The Prevalence of the "Accidental" Entrepreneur

Based on the empirical results obtained from the Algerian project holders, we observe that the Algerian context accommodates all four categories of the Walley typology (Walley and Taylor, 2002): the Visionary, the Ethical Maverick, the Opportunist, and the Accidental Environmental Entrepreneur. However, the category of the **"Accidental Environmental Entrepreneur" (Ad-hoc)** appears to be the most prevalent within the national landscape. This predominance can be attributed to several structural and educational factors. Firstly, a significant portion of environmental project holders do not possess an academic background in environmental sciences. Instead, they often hail from technical fields such as engineering, computer science, or management. The lack of specialized training suggests that these entrepreneurs are not primarily driven by an internal, value-based expertise in ecology or a lifelong commitment to conservation. Instead, there is a high probability that **external motives** such as encountering a specific logistical bottleneck in waste collection or identifying a market gap in recycled materials triggered their decision to establish an environmental

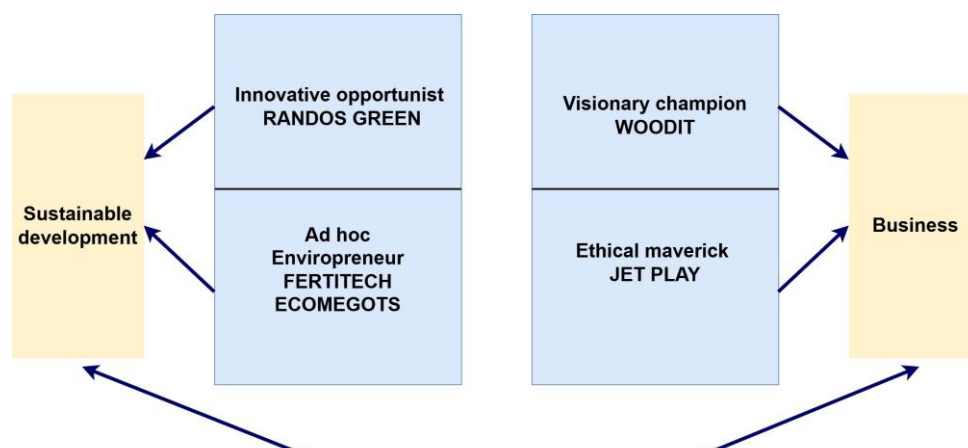


**Figure 3 Typology of Interviewed Eco-Entrepreneurs (2023)**

project. This "accidental" entry implies that the green nature of the business is a byproduct of solving a functional problem rather than the primary reason for the business's existence.

## 2. The Role of the Incubator Ecosystem

Secondly, the current entrepreneurial ecosystem in Algeria heavily promotes a **problem-solving approach**. In recent years, the Algerian government has shifted its focus toward a "Knowledge Economy," fostering a network of incubators, accelerators, and the "Start-up" label framework. These programs encourage entrepreneurs to identify specific societal pain points and develop innovative solutions to create competitive emerging enterprises. Given that the Algerian environment faces numerous challenges ranging from inefficient waste management to industrial pollution and water scarcity it presents a fertile ground for "problem identification." Consequently, entrepreneurs are naturally drawn to environmental projects not necessarily out of ideological activism, but because these issues represent **tangible market opportunities**. In a landscape where traditional sectors are saturated or state-dominated, the "green gap" offers a path of least resistance for innovation. Various organizations and consumers need these issues solved, and the entrepreneur steps in as a service provider rather than a social reformer.

## 3. Internal vs. External Drivers: The Viability Gap

Furthermore, we can infer that external motives may currently have a stronger influence on project viability than internal motives in the Algerian context. This is because projects driven by external factors are designed to address **existing market demands**. In an economy still undergoing structural transition, the market's "willingness to pay" for pure environmental ethics is limited.

In contrast, projects driven purely by internal motives (personal values) without a clear link to immediate market needs may face significant hurdles. An entrepreneur motivated by deep ecological ethics might focus on niche sustainability goals that the average Algerian consumer, burdened by purchasing power concerns, is not yet ready to prioritize. This creates a "competitiveness gap." If the community does not yet share the entrepreneur's prioritization of a specific environmental value such as carbon footprint reduction or biodiversity preservation the value-driven startup may struggle to scale compared to a "problem-solver" startup that focuses on cost-saving waste recovery.

## 4. The Institutional Push and the "Start-up Label"

The institutional framework in Algeria has acted as a significant external "pull" factor. The creation of the Ministry of Knowledge Economy and Start-ups has provided a legal and financial incentive for youth to label their projects as "innovative" and "green." For many project holders, the decision to pivot toward an environmental focus is influenced by the **availability of grants, tax exemptions, and specialized funding** (such as the ASF - Algerian Startup Fund).

This creates a phenomenon we might call "Institutional Green-Orientation." When the state signals that green projects will receive priority in public procurement or incubator placement, the entrepreneurial class responds. This is not necessarily "greenwashing," but rather a rational response to institutional signals. However, it reinforces the "Accidental" or "Opportunistic" profile, as the primary motivation is the ease of doing business and accessing resources provided by the state's new strategic orientation.

## 5. Cultural Barriers and the "Rentier" Legacy

A significant factor complicating the motivational landscape is the legacy of the rentier economy. For decades, the Algerian mindset was oriented toward state employment or trade-

based activities with quick returns. Transitioning to a model of "productive" and "sustainable" entrepreneurship requires a cultural shift that is still in its infancy.

Environmental entrepreneurs in Algeria often report a "credibility gap" when dealing with traditional suppliers or customers. Because the green sector is seen as "new" or "experimental," entrepreneurs must work twice as hard to prove their economic worth. This environment favors the "Opportunist" and "Accidental" types because they are typically more focused on the **economic bottom line** and are better at communicating their value in traditional commercial terms. The "Ethical Maverick," who may be more focused on the circularity of the process than the immediate margin, often finds themselves marginalized in a market that still prioritizes low-cost solutions over sustainable ones.

### 6. The Demographic Factor: Youth and Necessity

Finally, the youth-led nature of the Algerian green sector cannot be ignored. With a high percentage of the population under 30, entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed as a necessity rather than a choice a "push" factor caused by the saturation of the public sector. For a young graduate in Algiers or Oran, starting a green business is a way to claim agency in a changing world.

While their entry might be "accidental" (triggered by a need for employment), their presence in the sector often leads to a **gradual internalisation of environmental values**. Our study suggests that even those who enter the sector for purely economic reasons often develop a "green identity" over time as they become more aware of the impact of their work. This suggests a "reversed motivation" pathway: in the West, values often lead to action; in Algeria, the action (starting a business) may eventually lead to the cultivation of environmental values.

### 7. Implications for Policy and Education

The dominance of the "Accidental" entrepreneur suggests that Algeria's strategy should not rely solely on promoting "environmental awareness." Instead, it should focus on **strengthening the business case for sustainability**.

- **Integration of Green Skills:** Higher education should integrate ecological modules into technical and business degrees to move entrepreneurs from "Accidental" to "Visionary" status.
- **Market Creation:** The state must move beyond just funding startups to creating a market for them for example, by enforcing stricter waste-sorting regulations that provide the "raw material" for recycling startups.
- **Typology-Specific Support:** Support mechanisms should recognize that a "Visionary" entrepreneur needs help with market viability, while an "Opportunist" needs help ensuring their environmental impact is genuine and measurable.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study examines the evolving field of environmental entrepreneurship in Algeria, highlighting its role at the crossroads of economic necessity and ecological urgency. Rather than portraying green entrepreneurs as a uniform group, the findings reveal a diverse ecosystem shaped by social transition, local environmental challenges, and emerging market opportunities.

The results show strong heterogeneity among entrepreneurs, ranging from value-driven actors motivated by ecological ideals to pragmatic and opportunistic profiles responding to market gaps in areas such as waste management, renewable energy, and water scarcity. This diversity reflects how environmental issues in Algeria are increasingly perceived not only as

crises, but also as viable business opportunities influenced by cultural, educational, and economic backgrounds.

Overall, the study points to a major shift in which environmental action is becoming a sustainable economic pillar rather than solely a social cause. The future growth of the sector depends on tailored support policies that recognize different entrepreneurial profiles and on the ability of these actors to balance environmental impact with financial viability, positioning innovation as a key driver of Algeria's transition to a circular economy.

Despite the contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged:

- The study is based on few interviews, limiting statistical generalizability.
- As an exploratory qualitative study, findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than definitive.
- The focus on Algerian green startups may limit the direct application of findings to other national contexts.

These limitations open avenues for future research. Future research directions include combining qualitative and quantitative methods to statistically validate the proposed typology and assess the relative weight of different behavioral factors on entrepreneurial outcomes, extending the analysis to specific green sectors in order to identify sector-specific behavioral factors and challenges, exploring the impact of public policies and entrepreneurial support programs on the behavioral drivers of green entrepreneurship, and examining the role of public authorities in the training and support of green project leaders.

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