

# Creativity, Motivation, and Social Impact: Exploring Social Innovation at Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan

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## Abstract.

This study investigates the interplay of university support, creativity, and intrinsic motivation in fostering social innovation among students at Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan. Utilizing a quantitative research design, a cross-sectional survey was conducted with 309 undergraduate and post-graduate students. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to examine the relationships between university support, creativity, motivation, and social innovation engagement. Findings reveal that university support and creativity significantly enhance students' intrinsic motivation, which in turn strongly predicts their engagement in social innovation. Motivation fully mediates the relationship between both university support and creativity and social innovation outcomes. These results underscore the critical role of institutional resources and creative environments in cultivating motivated students who actively contribute to societal change. The study offers insights into developing university policies that foster innovative and sustainable learning ecosystems.

**Keywords:** Social Innovation · University Support · Creativeness · Motivation · Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan

## 1 Introduction

The rapid changes that are taking place around the world due to social, political, and economic factors is creating new challenges in societies that radically need innovation, that goes beyond the conventional way of solving problems. In this case, social innovations have been the subject of considerable interest from both researchers and policy makers as they seek to have a lasting constructive impact on communities (Mulgan et al., 2007). There is no doubt that higher education and particularly universities sit at the epicenter in driving this type of innovation where intellectual and human resources are abundant. At universities, students are no longer empowered to just absorb academic content; they actively engage in solving issues with the concern of changing and improving the global community in which they reside through the exercise of leadership, creativity, and social action skill sets (Bazan et al., 2020). Focus on the theme of providing a stimulating university environment to actively engage students in addressing social challenges has also been emphasized in earlier works (Cazarez, 2022; Bacq & Janssen, 2011).

Therefore, the goal of the present research is to address the main aspects that will enhance the ability to create and initiate socially oriented projects among university students. The importance of this research derives from the need to better understand the psychological and institutional factors that underpin social innovation and detail how universities construct environments that are likely to motivate students to support, through their activities, the construction of an inclusive and sustainable world (Bryant-Scott, 2024).

Although there is increasing recognition of the role of universities in fostering social innovation, there is still a limited understanding of how systemic support impacts students' innovative actions through internal pathways like intrinsic motivation. It has been shown that institutional support has some level of importance; however, innovation outcomes may be comparatively greater when there is interaction with internal factors such as personal motivation and creativity (Chen, et al., 2024). Most prior studies have focused on the direct impact of university support on entrepreneurial or innovative activity, ignoring the mediation of psychological factors like passion, engagement, and self-determined motivation (Jiang et al., 2023). Furthermore, very few studies have examined the relationship between

university support and individual traits such as creativity and morality, which are crucial for socially innovative outcomes resulting from institutional actions (Setiamurti & Kurniawati, 2022).

As noted in systematic reviews, there is a scarcity of models which encompass both institutional and individual-level elements to explain the innovation outcomes, which stifles the usability of existing models in educational settings (Li et al., 2025). Hence, this research seeks to fill the identified gap by examining the influence of university support and moral identity of students on social innovation with intrinsic motivation as a mediating factor. The purpose of the study is to formulate an integrated model that could help shape policies in higher education directed toward fostering innovative, comprehensively motivated learning ecosystems (Svennevik, 2022). The remaining of this article will discuss relevant literature in section 2, afterward section 3 will discuss the theoretical framework of this study. The methodology (in section 4), will present research design, scales, and data collection. The results of this study will be demonstrated in section 5 and discussed in section 6. Finally, Section 7 will present research implications, limitations, and conclusions.

## 2 Literature Review

University support is increasingly viewed as a primary factor in motivating students to participate in social innovation. Comprehensive support from a university, such as structured mentorships, incubators, funding, and curricula focused on real-world problem solving, creates an environment that enables students' internal and external motivations to flourish (Suresh, 2015). Institutional support does not only enhance students' confidence and willingness to pursue innovation, but it also promotes the engagement in projects with societal impact (Al-Jubari et al., 2019). As an example, Hoang et al. (2020) shows that access to university-sponsored resources for entrepreneurial and social activities motivated students to pursue and actualize social innovations. Also, (Bazan et al., 2020) showed that a perceived supportive culture within higher education institutions significantly increases students' intentions and participation in social entrepreneurial activities. This demonstrates that university support is not limited to academic teaching; it also comprises provision of critical mental and physical resource building support that enable students to actively and positively impact the world. Here, motivation is both an outcome of support and a driving factor for continued participation in sustaining innovative social projects. Therefore, to guarantee that motivation is sustained and innovation is relentless, universities have to make changes to their support systems in relation to the ever-shifting student requirements and societal demands (Ruan et al., 2023).

The importance of creativeness, a student's ability to generate original and valuable ideas, has emerged as a significant factor of student motivation in social innovation contexts. Students who possess high levels of creative self-efficacy appear to be more motivated to pursue novel social solutions and overcome complex societal challenges. As highlighted by (Cunha et al., 2022), creativity influences motivation to engage in social innovation, acting primarily through the mediating pathway of self-beliefs. Universities that foster interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork promote higher levels of motivation and creativity, which then helps in addressing real-world challenges as described by (Aranha et al., 2017). The relationship (da Silva Santos, 2024) identified between creative learning environments and the sustained motivational capacity to launch social initiatives was underscored by (Cunha et al., 2022) when demonstrating that motivation to socialize peaks with ideation and perseverance in civic engagement when enhanced by creativity-boosting interventions. Motivational resilience grounded in creative capacity as described by (Jeong & Alhanaee, 2020) allows students to withstand repeated failures while remaining committed to social change. Together, this body of research underscores the importance of creativeness as a critical factor in nurturing sustainable motivation for social innovation within the university student population.

Motivation is increasingly considered the psychological factor that interlinks university support, creativity, and social innovations that stem from them. University supports such as mentorship access, funding, and innovation spaces have been noted to work best with students who are already motivated to implement ideas (Anjum et al., 2020). (Aggarwal & Manchanda, 2023) illustrated that it's the motivational states, and not resources alone, which dictate the persistence of students to pursue social innovation. (Cunha et al., 2022) evidenced that motivation fully mediates the relationship between cognitive inputs (support and creativity) and social innovation behavior, thus making it a crucial pivot in successful innovation models. (Yang, 2021) found that students possessing high motivation coupled with institutional support were more resilient and more committed to long-term social innovation. Furthermore, (Puente et al., 2021) demonstrated that motivational recognition, workshops, or feedback could enhance the conversion of university support and creativity into tangible social change. The right

blend of motivational factors and institutional support enables students not just to start, but also to sustain solutions for social issues within their communities.

### **3 Theoretical Framework**

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is one of the most accepted theories of motivation in the social sciences and rests on the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs, which are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The satisfaction of these needs increases the likelihood of intrinsically motivated behaviors, greater well-being, and increased engagement in activities. The importance of SDT theory continues to be supported in diverse fields. For example, (Palacio et al. 2024) showed that autonomy-supportive climates within higher education significantly improve student engagement and academic performance. In the same way, (Howard et al. 2024) showed a strong association of perceived competence with sustained health behaviors and self-directed learning correlates. In the workplace context, (Autin et al. 2022) pointed out that relatedness, in the form of being valued and connected to coworkers, enhances employee retention, job satisfaction, and innovative work behavior. All these examples reinforce the relevance of SDT to aid in the design and implementation of educational, health, and organizational strategies that seek to foster intrinsic motivation and sustainable favorable results.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is one of the many theories developed by Albert Bandura. SCT particularly focuses on an individual's learning process. It aims to understand the learning and maintenance of behavior through a person's individual characteristics, specific actions, and their surroundings. SCT's relevance continues to be validated across several fields. For example, (Warner & Schwarzer, 2024) demonstrate that self-efficacy was a stronger predictor of healthy behavior and long-term commitment to holistic wellness. In the classroom, (Feraco et al., 2023) urged educators to harness academic self-efficacy to promote deeper engagement and self-regulated learning among students. In addition, modeling, social support, and feedback, which fall under environmental influence, have been shown to sculpt innovative behaviors in organizational contexts. These findings further sustain the theory's relevance toward developing strategies aimed at improvement, which not only focus on individuals but also emphasize the design of their environments to enhance growth and innovation (Bandura, 2023).

### **4 University Support**

Comprehensive support systems established by universities cultivate students' motivation in academic, personal, and career-related areas. (Ryan et al., 2021) noted motivation is enhanced through institutional support systems that provide adequate academic guidance, mentorship, research opportunities, counseling, and career guidance. (Zhang et al., 2021; Rashed et al., 2025) provided more recent findings stating motivation and performance levels are greatly influenced by an individual's self-efficacy, autonomy, and goal commitment, all of which are maximized when adequate institutional support is provided. Moreover, educational systems that emphasize a student-centered approach and a holistic view of learning construct systems that address and fulfill students' intrinsic psychological needs, as outlined in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2024). This is important in regard to the encouragement of student participation in innovation, leadership, and active community engagement programs that strengthen self-identity, hence, intrinsic motivation (Alonso et al., 2023). The collective findings bolster the theory that comprehensive university support systems greatly enhance students' motivation, serving as a core driver of development, both academically and socially (Okada, 2023). Building on this discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: University support has a positive effect on students' motivation.

### **5 Students and Creativity**

Using creativity effectively is critical when examining its effect on student motivation in both academic and non-academic spheres. When students exercise their creative skills through self-expression, ideation, and problem-solving, they are more likely to attain intrinsic rewards (Amabile & Mueller, 2024). The intrinsic rewards include autonomy and connection to their learning objectives. Research suggests that motivated, creative students are likely to engage in and pursue novel learning opportunities and learn strategies to tackle them due to the self-efficacy bolstered by the creativity (Zielińska et al., 2021). Self-Determination Theory has explained that motivation is maintained when learners feel they

have autonomy and competence the two of which are enhanced with strong motivational engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2024). Moreover, students who perceive themselves as creative learners tend to take responsibility for their learning, engage unconventional methods, and create meaningful goals. Collectively, these behaviors advance deeper motivation and academic persistence (Tirado et al., 2022). Thus, creativity also motivates and sustains something that drives motivation, supporting the hypothesis that creativity has a positive impact on students' motivation while they undertake classroom tasks and activities. Continuing from this discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Students' creativity has a positive effect on students' motivation.

## **6 Students and Motivation**

The motivation that students have greatly impacts their level of interaction with social innovations. Highly motivated individuals are more likely to encounter challenges, work through complex problems, and pursue meaningful socially driven objectives. Students who are motivated intensely, especially by intrinsic factors, are more likely to take the initiative to address societal problems and devise innovative solutions to meet them (Ryan et al., 2021). Recent empirical studies show that active social innovation, particularly in campus environments, is much more likely to be undertaken by students with a sense of competence, autonomy, and purpose, and is offered within a context that values civic engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration (Puente et al., 2021). Motivation not only facilitates participation but also helps sustain students' commitment through the often prolonged and ambiguous social innovation process (Wang & Horta, 2024). According to the Self-Determination Theory, motivation resulting from fulfilling students' basic psychological needs is converted to action when it is sustained is frequently with socially positive outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2024). Motivated students are capable of developing empathy, social awareness, and the requisite social leadership skills needed for effective social innovation (Monirs & Geberemeskel, 2024). Thus, it seems logical to assume that motivation has a positive influence on students' participation in social innovation activities both at the intention and behavioral levels. Given this discussion, we put forth the following hypothesis:

H3: Students' motivation positively influences their social innovation

## **7 The Mediating Role of Students' Motivation**

The motivational processes influencing a university student's engagement in social innovation have received increasing attention, particularly as a mediation factor between university support and participation outcomes. Although institutional support in the form of mentorships, funding, innovation labs, and community engagement programs has the potential to enhance student outcomes on the merits of psychology, specifically motivation, the outcomes remain limited of their intrinsic value (Ryan et al., 2021). Providing optimal environments that cultivate autonomy, competence, and relatedness strengthens intrinsic motivation, which willingly pushes students toward socially innovative practices (Ryan & Deci, 2024). There is empirical evidence confirming that motivational factors are essential regardless of the nature of university support, and without these processes, the support will not translate to proactive, creative, and socially responsible action (Solórzano et al., 2022). To illustrate, motivated students receive supportive scaffolds from the university, which empowers them to purposefully tackle societal challenges. Motivation thereby becomes the explanatory mediator that externalizes institutional support and internalizes the students' drive for social innovation (Wu et al., 2023). Such evidence supports the hypothesis that motivation mediates the impact of university support on social innovation outcomes. In light of the earlier conversation, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Students' motivation mediates the relationship between university support and social innovation

Furthermore, motivation is essential in conjunction with creativity for students to generate social innovation. Even though students who are creative can generate new ideas and alternative solutions for intricate social challenges, often, it is their motivation that decides whether such ideas are pursued and turned into impactful initiatives (Amabile & Mueller, 2024). In accordance with Self-Determination Theory, creativity can work in students' favor by enhancing their intrinsic motivation through meeting their need for competence and autonomy, thus increasing the probability of social meaningful engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2024). Recently, empirical research has affirmed that motivation acts as a mediator that channels students' creative potential towards social innovation outcomes (Wang, & Chang, 2022). A case in point is a student with an innovative idea for addressing a certain problem at the community level. In the absence of intrinsic motivation be it personal interest or a profound sense of purpose this idea is not likely to mature into real-world innovation (Villanueva-Paredes et al., 2024).

Thus, motivation sustains the work and investment needed to implement purposeful social change. This is consistent with the hypothesis that students' motivation acts as a mediator in the relationship between creativity and social innovation, thereby rendering it instrumental in the process of converting creative thought into social action. From the earlier discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Students' motivation mediates the relationship between creativity and social innovation.

Based on the previous arguments, this study developed the following conceptual framework to investigate the social innovation engagement (Fig. 1).

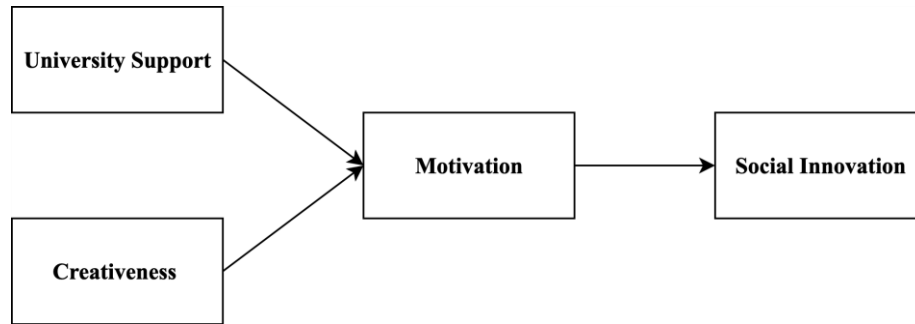


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study (developed by authors)

## 8 Methodology

In this research, a quantitative research design will be employed, as it aims to identify the factors influencing social innovation engagement among students at Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan. In order to examine the relationships between the variables of this study, a cross-sectional survey was carried out on the study variables: university support, students' creativity, motivation, and engagement in social innovation. Furthermore, the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is being used to determine the relationship between the study variables.

The target population of this study includes undergraduate and post-graduate students of Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan enrolled in the academic year of 2024/2025. The convenience sampling method was applied in selecting the study participants, given that it is practical and convenient in the university context. The aim was to collect a sample of about 300 students as the sample needed to be at least 10 times the number of structural paths in the model (Hair et al., 2017). They had to be active student participants, and they were made to read the purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of the study.

The design of the survey tool was based on validated scales used in earlier literature to ensure reliability and validity of collected data. All the items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). University support was measured based on a 3-item scale adapted from Salamzadeh et al. (2022), which determines how much the university can offer, train, or give encouraging support to engage in social innovation. The creativity of students was assessed through a 3-item scale featuring the ability of students to develop novel and beneficial ideas was adapted from (Cunha et al., 2022). A 3-item scale adapted and modified from Wang et al. (2022) based intrinsic motivation to the process of innovation was used in evaluating the degree of motivation. In the end, a 3 item scale on measuring students active engagement in social innovation was borrowed and modified from (based on Cunha et al., 2022). All the scales were translated and back-translated into the Arabic language guarantee linguistic accuracy. A pilot test was done at the scale of 30 students to evaluate the clarity and reliability of the instrument and Cronbach alpha values were more than 0.7 in all constructs showing the reliability of the instrument satisfactory (Hair et al., 2019).

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18–22 years	160	51.8%
	23–27 years	128	41.4%
	28–32 years	18	5.8%
	33 years and above	3	1.0%
Gender	Male	145	46.9%
	Female	164	53.1%
Level of Education	Bachelor's degree	232	75.1%

	Master's degree	77	24.9%
<b>Field of Study</b>	Business and Economic Sciences	146	47.3%
	Law and Legal Studies	42	13.6%
	Pharmaceutical Sciences	36	11.7%
	Engineering Technology	48	15.5%
		20	6.5%
	Literature and Arts	17	5.5%
<b>Previous Volunteer or Social Work Experience</b>	Yes	211	68.3%
	No	98	31.7%
<b>Total</b>		309	100.0%

The size of the study sample was 309 people and their demographic profile is summarized in the following way. As per age demographics, most respondents (51.8 percent) were aged between 18 and 22 years with 41.4 percent falling between 23 and 27 years. A smaller percent of the participants fell between the age of 28-32 (5.8%), with only 1.0 percent being age 33 years and above. In terms of gender, the sample was relatively even; although there were more females: 53.1 percent of the sample reported female gender and 46.9 percent reported male gender. Regarding the educational level, the majority of the participants performed or graduated with a bachelor degree (75.1), and 24.9 were at the master degree level. Regarding the field of study, Business and Economic Sciences had almost half (47.3%) of the respondents, thus being the best-represented area. The sample was dominated by 15.5 percent engineering, 13.6 percent Law and Legal Studies, 11.7 percent Pharmaceutical Sciences, 6.5 percent Technology, and 5.5 percent Literature and Arts. Finally, a strong majority of the respondents (68.3%) stated absolutely having prior volunteer or social work experience, whereas 31.7% of participants said that they had no such experience. These demographic patterns are valuable clues in the context of study population structure.

## 9 Research Analysis and Results

### The Measurement Model

To determine the structural relationships, it is important to make sure that the measurement model is sufficiently adequate in terms of reliability and validity of the constructs. According to Table 2, all outer loadings (OL) items on all constructs exceeded the recommended standard of 0.7, thus revealing that items sufficiently illustrate the corresponding constructs (Hair et al., 2017). The values of VIF, which varied between 1.468 and 2.950, were less than the standard of 5, thus signifying that there should be no notable multicollinearity among the items (Hair et al., 2019). All constructs Cronbach's alpha values were larger than 0.7 and values of composite reliability (rho\_c) were larger than 0.7, which satisfies the minimum criterion of 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The convergent validity was sufficient; it was indicated by Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of 0.687 to 0.789, which are more than sufficient for 0.5 related to the construct explaining variance of its items (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 2: Quality Criteria

Variable	Item	OL	VIF	a	rho_c	AVE
<b>Creativeness</b>	CR1	0.845	1.890	0.866	0.918	0.789
	CR2	0.901	2.558			
	CR3	0.918	2.950			
<b>Motivation</b>	MO1	0.869	2.104	0.840	0.904	0.758
	MO2	0.890	2.328			
	MO3	0.852	1.756			
<b>Social Innovation</b>	SI1	0.867	1.651	0.776	0.868	0.687
	SI2	0.876	1.889			
	SI3	0.736	1.468			
<b>University Support</b>	US2	0.880	2.056	0.838	0.902	0.755
	US3	0.868	1.937			
	US1	0.859	1.914			

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to determine the discriminant validity. The inter-construct correlations were lower than the square root of the AVE of the respective constructs, which shows that each of the constructs is unique (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This yet confirms that the constructs of Creativeness, Motivation, Social Innovation, and University Support are empirically distinct and assists in proving the strength of the measurement model (Table 3).

Moreover, the model fit indices also provide a reflection of overall quality of structural model. The SRMR value is below the recommended and accepted measure (0.08) of 0.686, which shows they are adequate (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The Normed Fit Index (NFI) figure (0.912) reach the desirable norm (at least 0.9), indicating the model fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). Explanatory capability of structural model was assessed by use of R square values. Motivation as a mediating variable had R-square 0.545 (adjusted R-square 0.542), so 54.5% of the variation of Motivation is described by Creativeness and University Support and this is a moderately strong effect (Cohen, 1988). The R-square of Social Innovation was 0.652 (adjusted R-square 0.651), which implies that 65.2% of the determination of the Social Innovation engagement is inspired by Motivation, Creativeness, and University Support, which depicts a robust explanatory power (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3: Fornell-Larcker criterion

Variables	CR	MO	SI	US
CR	0.889			
MO	0.615	0.870		
SI	0.614	0.807	0.829	
US	0.548	0.679	0.642	0.869

### The Structural Model

The findings of the hypothesis testing through PLS-SEM reveal the significance of the study variables. Table 4 demonstrates the analysis results, including path coefficients, T-values, and P-values, which show all direct and indirect relationships are supported with a level of significance of 0.05. Precisely, the interrelationship between University Support and Motivation was found to be significantly positive ( $\beta = 0.488$ ,  $T = 10.596$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). This finding means that the resources offered by universities, including financial resources, mentorship opportunities and facilities, greatly influence the desire of the students to take part in social innovation initiatives. This fact is supported by the recent findings related to the importance of the institutional support that provides the environment that encourages the innovation-related motivation by establishing the enabling environment (Alzoubi et al., 2022). Colleges that promote social innovation programs create a sense of purpose and motive in students, further increasing their determination.

Moreover, a significant positive coefficient of ( $\beta = 0.347$ ,  $T = 8.799$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ) was obtained which shows the relationship between Creativeness and Motivation. According to this finding, it can be stated that creative skills of students play an important role in their social innovation motivation. Creative people, who are capable of creating new ideas, are also more likely to be motivated to start improvements to the issues of society, because creativity shows a proactive approach to solving a problem (Shalley et al., 2023). This finding again reminds the need to foster creativity to increase motivational levels in institutions of learning. The coefficient of path from Motivation to Social Innovation engagement was very strong with the value of ( $\beta = 0.807$ ,  $T = 26.028$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). This close relationship brings attention to the fact that motivation acts as a key factor that influences students to undertake social innovation projects actively. Well-motivated students tend to become involved in the initiatives that solve social tasks, either by choosing a community project or a sustainable innovation, supporting the recent claim that the motivation type intrinsic is a vital antecedent of innovative actions (Chen et al., 2024). A high coefficient highlights the fact that motivation is a drive to take part in social innovation.

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	T value	P value
H1	US -> MO	0.488	10.596	0.000
H2	CR -> MO	0.347	8.799	0.000
H3	MO -> SI	0.807	26.028	0.000
H4	US -> MO -> SI	0.394	10.234	0.000

The indirect effect of University Support on Social Innovation through Motivation was significant with the coefficient estimate of ( $\beta = 0.394$ ,  $T = 10.234$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). The finding provides support for the confirmation of the mediation role of Motivation between the variables of University Support and Social Innovation engagement. The enthusiasm of the students during this process is boosted by the support they receive from the university, which further leads to the motivation of these young people to engage in social innovation. This mediation effect is congruent with the current studies that showed the significance of motivation as an agent by which the institutional resources are converted into innovative results (Hair et al., 2022). The indirect effect of Creativeness is proved to be significant, with a value of ( $\beta = 0.280$ ,  $T = 7.518$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ) that is the indirect effect via Motivation. The given finding possesses the following implication: Motivation mediates the connection between the level of creativeness and that of the engagement of students in social innovation. A higher level of interest to engage in social innovation results in the higher level of student engagement in this kind of activity because creative students are encouraged to become a part of the innovation. This finding is consistent with the modern research with the connection between creativity and innovation based on motivation processes (Shalley et al., 2023).

To conclude, the findings support the idea that both the University Support and Creativeness have a significant influence on Motivation, which has a strong impact in predicting engagement on Social Innovation. The measurement and structural model are illustrated in Fig. 2.

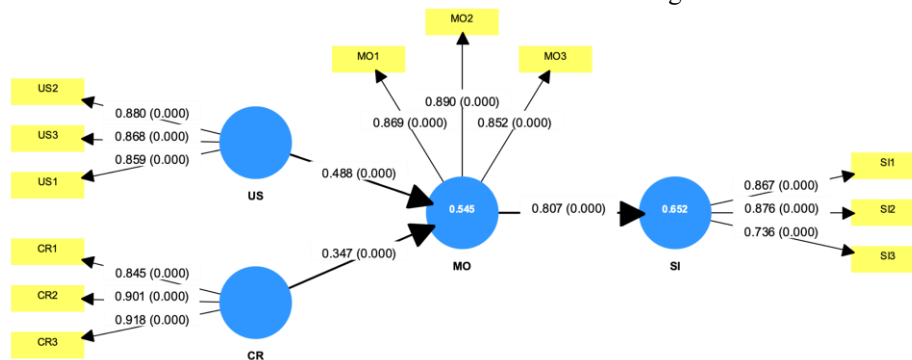


Fig. 2. Hypothesis Testing Results (source: SmartPLS 4.1)

## 10 Discussion

The current research strongly extends our knowledge about how university support and creativity of students can enhance participation in social innovation, and motivation is an important intervening variable. University support which is characterized as the mentioning, financing, and incubators, as well as the curricula allied to viable real-life problem-solving, in turn, appears to be an effective antecedent of student motivation. Its analysis illustrates that the overall effect is significant and positive, which means that resourceful institutional environments and conducive academic culture play a crucial role in instilling confidence and motivation among the students in undertaking socially innovative projects. This finding aligns with SDT, according to which environments in which the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met have a greater likelihood of fostering intrinsic motivation, as well as prolonged engagement on the part of students (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The present study builds on this frame-work by showing that the support provided in universities does not only increase motivation but with this increase in motivation, also provides greater participation of students in social innovation to an actual effect. Such results are supported by prior evidence, in which the researchers also emphasized the role of institutional scaffolding in the teacher (Al-Jubari et al., 2019; Suresh, 2015).

In the same manner, the research establishes that student creativity has a major positive influence on motivation. Creative self-efficacy supports students to enable them to develop innovative responses to difficult problems in society and this boosts their intrinsic motivation to create and sustain social innovation projects (Cunha et al., 2022). This underling connection is further explained by SCT which pays attention to the interactions of the self-efficacy, support of the environment and motivated behavior (Bandura, 1986). Universities that facilitate with interdisciplinary cooperation and creative learning

circumstances do not only help to advance the creative capabilities in students but also improve their motivational resilience earlier than hardship (Jeong & Alhanaee, 2020). In this way, it is critical to instill creativity into the academic environment to provide students with the required attitude and skills to solve or attempt to resolve acute societal problems.

The most interesting conclusion of the paper is a very high direct impact of motivation on social innovation engagement. This strong relationship emphasizes motivation as the pivot between institutional and self-driven elements and tangible social products. When students are highly motivated, they are more likely to start, engage and continue the lifespan of a social innovation project, which is a show of a sense of purpose, competence and civic belonging (Puente et al., 2021; Ryan et al., 2021). Also, mediation analyses indicate that motivation mediate completely the effects of university support and creativity on social innovation. These findings support the inference that although access to resources and creating potential are requisites, they are not sufficient alone to promote social innovation; rather it is motivation internalized that would convert potential into action (Amabile & Mueller, 2024; Wang & Chang, 2022).

The structural model that was used in this research obtained 65.2 percent of the social innovation engagement variance; therefore, it was highly explanatory. This suggests that interaction of the factors of university support, creativity, and motivation creates an encompassing framework of explanations on the contribution of the students to social innovation. Nonetheless, the relevance of these results can be constrained by the institutional and cultural variation which makes it necessary to conduct additional studies in various settings. The conclusions provided indicate the scope of future research, which may include other mediating and moderating variables and focus on longitudinal research that can provide a deeper insight into how social innovation in higher education is possible with dynamic processes happening at the levels of individual institutions.

## 11 Implications

This study has major implications both in theory and practice of higher education. Theoretically, the research benefits the introduction of the Self-Determination Theory and the Social Cognitive Theory by explaining the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in the social innovation of the relationship between institutional and individual factors. Blending these theories gives the research a comprehensive model as it reconciles the psychological and the environmental determinants, which had not been achieved in previous bodies of literature where influences had been too direct (Li et al., 2025). As it applies to future research, the model can be used in testing further mediators including moral identity or prosocial motivation to improve our understanding of social innovation processes further.

The researchers practically demonstrate the relevance of the role of a university as a source of social innovation. Institutions, such as Al-Zaytoonah University, can complement their support systems by investing in mentorship activities, innovation labs and inter-disciplinary curricula activities, which can encourage creativity and motivation. As an example, students can be empowered to transform their creativity into solutions by creating rooms where collaborative ideation can take place and funds on the types of social projects that students want to implement. Educational policymakers need to focus more on SDT-consistent student-centered policies to make sure that the existing support mechanisms help cultivate autonomy, competence, and related. These efforts will be able to enhance the dedication of students towards social issues to achieve the aim of sustainable development. Additionally, the paper also emphasizes the importance of universities implementing creativity-enhancing interventions (e.g. workshops or learning challenges) in order to support the innovative abilities of students (Villanueva-Paredes et al., 2024). The faculty development programs must also be able to educate the educator on how to instill a creative and inspiring environment because this is what is important to keep student involved in social innovation.

## 12 Conclusions

This study underscores the vital roles of university support, creativity, and intrinsic motivation in promoting social innovation among students at Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan. By integrating SDT and SCT theories, the research demonstrates that institutional resources—such as mentorship, funding, and innovation-focused curricula—significantly enhance students' intrinsic motivation. Additionally, creativity fosters a proactive approach to problem-solving and strengthens the link between motivation

and social innovation engagement. The findings indicate that motivation mediates the relationship between university support and creativity in social innovation engagement. This integrated model provides a framework for how universities can effectively empower students to address societal challenges. While the research reflects broader calls for higher education institutions to serve as catalysts for sustainable development, its limitations—such as reliance on convenience sampling—suggest the need for further studies to validate these findings in diverse contexts. Future research could also explore additional mediators and employ longitudinal designs to better understand social innovation dynamics. This study contributes to advancing our understanding of how higher education can cultivate socially innovative leaders, thereby enhancing both academic discourse and practical approaches to sustainable development.

In spite of its contributions, this study is faced with a number of limitations. First, convenience sampling might reduce the extent of generalizability of results because the sample might not reflect actual diversity of student in Al-Zaytoonah University or other institutions. The research in the future is to use random or stratified sample to make it more representative. Second, the cross-sectional notion does not allow to interpret the causality or to trace changes over time. The use of longitudinal studies may allow gaining better understanding of the role of university support and creativity in relation to motivation and social innovation in long-term. Third, the paper only considered using intrinsic motivation as a mediator and may have missed other psychological variables, extrinsic motivation or moral identity being the ones also contributing to it. Lastly, the study was performed in terms of a particular cultural and institutional environment, which can restrict the possibility of its generalization to the other contexts. This can be eliminated by carrying out comparative research among various universities and nations.

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