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Income adequacy among creative professionals—An interplay of identities and skills

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The financially challenging work of creative professionals is a widely recognized concern, and uncovering the root causes of such challenges requires more explorations into the impact of personal factors on income generation. Accordingly, we investigated the significance of 400 creative professionals' entrepreneurial or artistic identities and business skills in their income adequacy on the basis of role identity theory. Our findings show that business skills support the likelihood of income adequacy but that artistic identity reduces it. The combination of entrepreneurial identity with business skills increases income adequacy, whereas entrepreneurial identity alone has no influence. These results point to the complexity of individuals' income formation and the need to study the outcomes of different work identities and their interplay with various skills. They imply that assuming an artistic identity can be an economic liability. Hence, our study implies that enabling creative and innovative work to prosper necessitates that creative professionals develop an adaptive, artistic–entrepreneurial meta-identity, in addition to enhancing their business skills, so that they can adjust between possible selves in different situations and work environments.

KEYWORDS
artistic identity, business skills, cultural and creative industries, entrepreneurial identity, income adequacy, role identity

1 | INTRODUCTION

Job insecurity, low and unstable income, temporary employment, and even unpaid labour shape the work of creative professionals (Bridgstock et al., 2015; Cunningham et al., 2010; Hennekam & Bennett, 2016; Siebert & Wilson, 2013), who often grapple with irregular or part-time employment, hybrid occupations, and multiple jobs (Campbell, 2020; Carey, 2015; Comunian et al., 2011; Kohn & Wewel, 2018; Throsby & Zednik, 2011) as well as short contracts or short-term projects (Eikhof & Warhurst, 2013). Creative professionals frequently engage in portfolio work, combining various sources of income, including entrepreneurship and self-employment, and often blurring the boundaries between paid work and self-employment (Bartleet et al., 2019). They are confronted with the precarity of income generation, regardless of their objective employment status. This situation calls for an examination of income generation among creative professionals as employees or self-employed individuals on the basis of their subjective perceptions regarding work at any career stage.

The realities depicted above shape how individuals see themselves and their identities as well as how they use their acquired skills in their work (Berkman, 2014; Dutton et al., 2010). Identities and skills are linked (Lord & Hall, 2005; Round & Styhre, 2017), with the former shaping individuals' behaviours and development and, subsequently, their income generation (Carter & Carter, 2020). However, as individuals may have multiple simultaneous role identities (Hogg et al., 1995), different identities may pose different implications for income generation. These realities compel creative professionals to

deploy competencies, such as business skills, that exceed the skills that they have acquired in their respective fields (Bridgstock & Cunningham, 2016; Hennekam & Bennett, 2017). An important consideration, however, is that these skills can support efforts to secure the continuity of creative work and income generation (Bartleet et al., 2019; Hennekam & Bennett, 2017; Küttim et al., 2011; Presenza & Petruzzelli, 2019; Scott, 2012). Therefore, a necessary task is to take a closer look at the ways in which different simultaneous role identities and skills affect income adequacy (McKelvey & Lassen, 2018).

In response to this call, we investigated the significance of creative professionals' role identities and business skills as well as the interaction between these variables in income adequacy on the basis of role identity theory. This theory defines identity as the expectations of an individual with regard to a particular social role or position (Farmer et al., 2003; Hogg et al., 1995; Stryker & Burke, 2000). We define creative professionals as practitioners with creative or cultural occupations, working in or outside of creative and cultural sectors, and maintaining any employment status (employee, self-employed, or both). To comprehensively analyse the relationship between role identity and income adequacy, we covered two types of role identities: entrepreneurial and artistic.

Our study contributes to the literature in a number of ways. The relationship between role identity and income has been explored to some extent (e.g., Chang, 2013), but we focused on different role identities (Hennekam, 2015) and their interaction with business skills in relation to income generation. Accordingly, our research adds to the debate on role identity and how it influences income generation among creative professionals. The findings suggest that role identity, which emphasizes either entrepreneurial or artistic identity, affects income adequacy in various ways. Artistic identity seems to be a liability that compromises income generation. By contrast, business skills are a direct antecedent of income adequacy, and, together with entrepreneurial identity, positively affect such adequacy. Illuminating the interaction between role identities and business skills expands our current understanding of creative professionals' income generation; it clarifies how identity affects financial outcomes and, thus, the continuity of creative and innovative work (Albinsson, 2018; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; McKelvey & Lassen, 2018). Correspondingly, public policymakers and educators should provide current and future creative professionals with learning opportunities that enhance their business skills while enabling them to actively build an adaptive, artistic–entrepreneurial meta-level role identity that advances adaptation to varying environments and guarantees continuity in creative and innovative work.

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The present study draws on role identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000), entrepreneurial identity (Mathias & Williams, 2017; Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021) and artistic identity (Bass et al., 2015), the dynamics between these concepts (e.g., Beech et al., 2016; Coulson, 2012), and studies on the role of business skills in income generation (e.g., Bartleet et al., 2019; Küttim et al., 2011).

2.1 | Role identity theory

The concept of identity answers the question "who am I?" now (current self) or "who do I aspire to become?" (possible self) (Kreiner et al., 2006; Markus & Nurius, 1986) by motivating a discussion of personal self-meanings, social structures, social behaviours, and the connections among these (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Different theoretical approaches to explaining identity reflect individuals' perceptions of themselves and the meanings that they attach to such self-awareness from various viewpoints. For example, social identity theory deals with how individuals see themselves in relation to other people and their membership in different social groups (Farmer et al., 2003; Stets & Burke, 2000). Role identity theory, which guided our study, defines identity as the expectations associated with people's sense of self in relation to certain social roles or positions (Burke & Tully, 1977; Charng et al., 1988; Farmer et al., 2003).

Role identity is both external and internal because a role is linked to external social positions, and an identity is constituted by internal personal meanings and role-related assumptions (Hogg et al., 1995; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Role identity is often perceived as a relatively stable set of attributes that individuals can acquire and strengthen but which they rarely abandon (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021). Importantly, it is used to predict behaviours, as it directs and motivates individuals to conduct themselves in accordance with their perceptions of what is suitable for their role identities (Burke & Reitzes, 1981; Callero, 1985; Callero et al., 1987; Farmer et al., 2003; Oyserman et al., 2006). Individuals have several simultaneous role identities (Hogg et al., 1995; Jain et al., 2009; Stryker & Burke, 2000), but their importance to a person varies depending on situation (Pratt & Foreman, 2000). These personalities can also be incompatible and difficult to balance (Pratt & Foreman, 2000). Different role identities may be close or distant to an individual's core self (Stryker & Serpe, 1994), and they may be deeply embedded in the individual's core self or related to more specific situations (Ashforth et al., 2008). In this regard, identity research distinguishes between identity centrality and identity salience (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Identity centrality refers to the relative importance of a certain role identity compared with other such personalities, whereas identity salience pertains to the probability that a certain role identity is active in different situations (Callero, 1985; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). On this basis, role identities with considerable importance in terms of centrality and salience have the strongest influence on an individual's behaviours (Stryker & Serpe, 1994).

Role identities guide the actions of individuals and commit them to certain behaviours (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Callero et al., 1987; Petkus, 1996; Stets & Burke, 2000). Multiple role identities can be perceived as conflicting (Albinsson, 2018; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Hennekam, 2015; Nielsen et al., 2018; Rivetti & Migliaccio, 2017) and cause contradictory behavioural expectations (Ibarra &

Barbulescu, 2010), as they involve varying and sometimes even opposing goals and motivations for professional action (Mathias & Williams, 2017). Research has highlighted that individuals use different strategies to manage and find balance between conflicting role identities (Kreiner et al., 2006). For instance, Pratt and Foreman (2000) suggested that individuals respond to the management of multiple role identities in four ways. First, they separate identities through compartmentalization, which can be achieved, for example, by activating a given identity in accordance with specific physical locations or professional occasions. Second, individuals eliminate one or more invaluable or contradictory role identities either slowly or quickly. Third, they integrate separate role identities into one completely new identity, and fourth, they aggregate different identities, which means maintaining all role identities but seeking synergy and finding connections among them.

In this study, we focus on the work-related role identities of creative professionals. Work gives rise to different roles and role identities through which individuals see themselves in certain professions or employment positions and define themselves in work-related situations and activities (Berkman, 2014; Dutton et al., 2010; Ibarra, 1999). According to Dutton et al. (2010), an individual's work-related identity is positive when it fits their expectations and those of people around them and when different role identities are perceived as compatible and interacting in a balanced way. However, in cases wherein simultaneous role identities differ in terms of logic and drive possible tradeoffs among various goals (Bergamini et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2018), a closer examination is warranted. Therefore, we investigate entrepreneurial and artistic role identities, both of which are underlain by different logics and goals. Hereafter, we refer to these role identities as entrepreneurial and artistic identities.

2.2 | Entrepreneurial and artistic identities and the dynamics between them

We define entrepreneurial identity as constituted by the ways in which individuals understand themselves as entrepreneurial individuals or aspire to be such (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial individuals engage in business-oriented behaviours by creating offerings for others to purchase or by searching for new solutions to different needs. A strong entrepreneurial identity reflects a considerable aspiration to engage in entrepreneurial behaviours (Farmer et al., 2011; Lundqvist et al., 2015; Mmbaga et al., 2020) that can take form in any organizational environment, regardless of a person's work status (see, e.g., Jong et al., 2015; Morris et al., 2007; Urbano et al., 2022). Such an identity is related to profit-seeking behaviours, financial rewards, innovation (Wach et al., 2016), and the need for autonomy (Yitshaki & Kropp, 2016), as well as a passion for inventing, establishing and expanding new ventures, and creating and exploiting opportunities (Cardon et al., 2009; Wry & York, 2017). Entrepreneurship research has shown that entrepreneurial identity strongly influences conduct and goal setting among individuals during entrepreneurial processes (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011). For instance, a strong entrepreneurial identity influences decision-making by affecting how individuals think and act when selecting opportunities; it may drive individuals to take greater risks than others (Mathias & Williams, 2017).

Artistic identity is related to an individual's understanding of their artistic activity, satisfaction, and art-centred self (Albinsson, 2018; Bass et al., 2015). Hence, we define this concept as pertaining to people's understanding of who they are and what they do in relation to artistic activity and satisfaction (see Bass et al., 2015). This identity may be rooted in different creative practices and craftsmanship (Nielsen et al., 2018) and characterized by an aspiration to identify with creativity and relevant new opportunities (Albinsson, 2018). Artistic identity is often perceived as contradictory to entrepreneurial identity (Albinsson, 2018; Bass et al., 2015; Nielsen et al., 2018), but studies have demonstrated similarities between them, including having creativity, innovation, and a strong desire for autonomy (Conor et al., 2015; Espiritu-Olmos & Sastre-Castillo, 2015; Kovesi & Kern, 2018; Werthes et al., 2018; Yitshaki & Kropp, 2016). Nonetheless, role identity theory stresses that behaviours vary in accordance with the meanings that individuals attach to different goals (Petkus, 1996). In this regard, the factors that drive satisfaction in entrepreneurial and artistic identities often differ (Bass et al., 2015). For example, entrepreneurs have a mix of motivations and goals that drive their behaviours, such as seeking extrinsic financial success (Wach et al., 2016), achieving independence, being innovative, pursuing a vision, and helping others (Murnieks et al., 2020). By contrast, artists mainly seek creative success and intrinsic rewards (Bass et al., 2015; Bourdieu, 1983). This difference implies that among creative professionals, being entrepreneurial is often associated with purely profit-seeking behaviours (Cnossen et al., 2019; Haynes & Marshall, 2018).

Research has demonstrated the different ways in which cultural and creative entrepreneurs manage role identities. Artists and creative professionals may avoid acting or identifying themselves as entrepreneurs (Albinsson, 2018; Werthes et al., 2018) or even abandon an entrepreneurial identity if they perceive it as a threat to their broader self-image or as an obstacle to creativity (Slade Shantz et al., 2018). The desire to express the inner self justifies an artist's actions to achieve fame in this capacity or to reach aesthetic or social legitimacy (Albinsson, 2018; Nielsen et al., 2018; Peters & Roose, 2020). Some cultural and creative entrepreneurs actively and deliberately develop entrepreneurial identities but keep them apart from their artistic identities (Werthes et al., 2018). This compartmentalization makes it easier to act as an entrepreneur and focus on the business side of artistic work without needing to relinquish artistic and aesthetic values. Completely separated entrepreneurial and artistic identities can also be gradually integrated through reconciliation (Bass et al., 2015), which concludes with the two identities being unified and accepted as a single artistic–entrepreneurship identity. This reconciliation also culminates in creative work having equal financial and artistic value to an individual.

2.3 | Entrepreneurial and artistic identities and income adequacy

On the basis of the theoretical differences between entrepreneurial and artistic identities, we assume that these generate variations in individuals' income adequacy. Recent research has shown that creative professionals with a strong entrepreneurial orientation earn decent income without being prevented from experiencing artistic autonomy and creativity (Nemkova et al., 2019). Others, however, may still struggle with their entrepreneurial identities and may not define themselves as such (Albinsson, 2018; Coulson, 2012; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007; Haynes & Marshall, 2018; Nielsen et al., 2018)—an orientation that may endanger their income generation. Previous studies emphasized that envisioning oneself as an entrepreneur predicts one's commitment to entrepreneurial behaviour (Farmer et al., 2011) and the search for financial success (Bass et al., 2015; Wach et al., 2016). Entrepreneurial identity can therefore direct individuals to engage in profit-seeking conduct that supports income generation. This assertion finds support from Albinsson (2018), who found that certain musicians who identify as entrepreneurs earn their primary income from music. Accordingly, we posit that a strong entrepreneurial identity strengthens income generation:

> **H1.** Entrepreneurial identity increases the likelihood of income adequacy.

Unlike entrepreneurial identity and profit-seeking behaviour, artistic identity can be difficult to monetize. This identity and its development are often associated with individual struggles, such as coping with insecurity and constant self-questioning (Beech et al., 2016), which may stem from tensions between the need to commercialize creative work and the appreciation of its purely aesthetic value (Coulson, 2012). Furthermore, individuals are willing to accept and adapt to the precarity of work when they want to become artists and adopt artistic identity (Bridgstock et al., 2015). Among creative professionals, artistic identity seems to supersede everyday economic realities, and creative work itself gives meaning and defines role identity (Dutton et al., 2010; Ibarra, 1999). Thus, emphasizing artistic identity can trigger an escalation of commitment to purely aesthetic pursuits (Rouse, 2016), which may compromise income generation. An increased focus on artistic value creation may also reduce artists' efforts to complement their low income with work unrelated to art (Lindström, 2016). This can therefore become part of the socially shared source of an individual's identity (Cardador & Pratt, 2006). Valuing the freedom and autonomy of creative work appears to prevent endeavours to change work methods, even if these efforts support income generation (Kovesi & Kern, 2018). Accordingly, we put forward the idea that a strong artistic identity negatively influences income adequacy:

> **H2.** Artistic identity decreases the likelihood of income adequacy.

2.4 | Business skills and income adequacy

Business skills shape an individual's ability to adapt to different situations (Jackson & Chapman, 2012). These cover the transferable skills needed in the marketing, sales, production organization, and financing and pricing arrangement (Barringer & Ireland, 2011; Freel, 1999; Greene, 2020; Smilor, 1997) activities through which individuals manage their work (Round & Styhre, 2017). The need for business skills can also arise from individuals' efforts to secure creative freedom, reputation, and legitimacy for themselves and their creative work (Presenza & Petruzzelli, 2019) or efforts to achieve artistic and managerial independence, and the reconciliation of change, innovation, and exploration of new opportunities for an organization (Farjoun, 2010; Peltoniemi, 2015).

Previous research indicated that a lack of business skills challenges financial success (Thornhill & Amit, 2003), as these skills are essential in building financially sustainable careers in creative and cultural industries (Bartleet et al., 2019; Hennekam & Bennett, 2017; Küttim et al., 2011; Scott, 2012). The employment conditions of creative professionals and the realities of creative work demand the use of business skills to solve managerial issues and market creative offerings to generate income (Hennekam & Bennett, 2017). The absence of these skills may jeopardize the income generation and career continuity of creative professionals (Bartleet et al., 2019; Carter & Carter, 2020; Comunian et al., 2011; Hanage et al., 2021; Küttim et al., 2011; Scott, 2012). If creative professionals seek to secure their income, increase their independence from public funding or effectively manage their resources, build relationships with stakeholders, and raise public awareness among their stakeholders to secure legitimacy (Carlucci, 2018), they must acquire business skills that enable such developments. This requirement concerns creative professionals working in, for example, theatres, museums, newspapers, and other creative institutions that have employed business skills and business logic to create and innovate new sources of income (Coblence & Sabatier, 2014; Martins et al., 2015). Through these skills, creative professionals can better understand who their audience is, what they can offer, how and with which resources the offerings are created, and how they can generate income. On this basis, we maintain that business skills support income generation:

> **H3.** Perceived business skills increase the likelihood of income adequacy.

Existing research has acknowledged that individuals' skills and expertise are linked to their role identities (Lord & Hall, 2005; Round & Styhre, 2017). The work of creative professionals requires the competence to balance different processes and activities and various role identities (Bridgstock & Cunningham, 2016; Round & Styhre, 2017). As discovered by Albinsson (2018), some artists successfully achieve professional statuses and corresponding income: Those who identify as entrepreneurial also acquire the business skills necessary to support their income generation. Business skills thus enable the simultaneous management of creative freedom and

business performance in organizations (Peltoniemi, 2015; Wilson & Stokes, 2005). This suggests that identifying as entrepreneurial and acquiring business skills enable individuals to overcome challenges related to income adequacy. These arguments indicate that business skills strengthen the role of entrepreneurial identity in income generation.

Nonetheless, artists see dealing with business-related issues as diminishing the artistic value of creative work and achievement (Rivetti & Migliaccio, 2017) and as endangering artistic identity (Bain, 2005). For this reason, they may lack knowledge about the financial management of their work and disregard business strategies (Küttim et al., 2011; Werthes et al., 2018) that support income generation. This lack of knowledge about management and business skills renders balancing art and business with the goals of creative work difficult (Küttim et al., 2011). Artists with strong artistic identities must consider, among other issues, obtaining funding for their creative work, business planning, sales, customers, and marketing (Arenius et al., 2021; Nielsen et al., 2018). Therefore, creative entrepreneurs must manage both creativity and creative independence as well as innovation and business performance to guarantee success (Wilson & Stokes, 2005). In line with these arguments, we expect business skills to support income generation, even among artistic individuals. With these explanations as grounding, we view business skills as interacting with different role identities, accordingly increasing the likelihood of income adequacy:

> **H4a.** Perceived business skills strengthen the effects of entrepreneurial identity on the likelihood of income adequacy.

> **H4b.** Perceived business skills mitigate the effects of artistic identity on the likelihood of income adequacy.

Our hypothesized conceptual model is summarized in Figure 1.

3 | METHODOLOGY

3.1 | Data and sample

To test the hypotheses, we use data collected from Finnish professionals working in creative sectors (e.g., audiovisuals, performing arts, design, and media). Cultural and creative sectors were defined using UNCTAD's (2008) categorization, which encompasses industries such as the arts (performing and visual arts), media (publishing and audiovisuals), heritage (cultural sites and traditional cultural expressions), and functional creations (design and creative services).

Given the lack of publicly available registers, we performed convenience sampling (Etikan et al., 2016) from a population of 2209 creative professionals whose contact information was available on various public cultural websites. This type of sampling means that our results are not generalizable to the entire population of creative professionals. Before data collection was initiated, the questionnaire was tested among four creative professionals and a group of researchers working in creative sectors. The pilot test called for minor changes to the wording of some items. For instance, we ended up using synonyms ("artistic"/"creative" and "entrepreneur"/"freelancer") in both the entrepreneurial and artistic identity scales because the respondents suggested such alternatives to clarify meanings and questions. We believe that these changes improved the face validity of the scales.

Data were collected using an Internet-aided survey administered from May to June 2021. An invitation was sent by personal email to prospective respondents, and after three rounds of reminders, we received responses from 456 creative professionals (21% response rate). To test for potential selection bias, we analysed the differences between the first and last waves of respondents via chi-square tests. The results showed no significant differences in age, gender, educational attainment, or employment status between the respondents, suggesting that nonresponse bias did not affect our results.

In this study, we focus on those who had been working in the creative and cultural sectors during the 12 months prior to the study. Creative professionals often have a range of income sources and varying employment statuses throughout their careers, blurring the lines between paid work and self-employment (Albinsson, 2018; Bartleet et al., 2019). Therefore, we restricted coverage to creative professionals engaged in any type of employment, yielding a final sample of 400. Among these respondents, 64% were women, and 65% completed tertiary education or higher (Table 1). The average age of the respondents was 48.4 years, and the minimum was 23 years, with the oldest being over 70 years old. Their work experience ranged from 1 to 54 years, with the average being 22. About 75% worked as full- or part-time self-employed individuals, approximately 30% as actors, 54% as fine or visual artists, and around 20% as musicians.

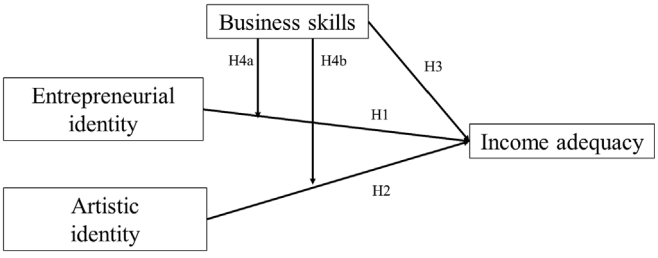

FIGURE 1 Conceptual model.

3.2 | Variables

We define our dependent variable, income adequacy, as the state of having enough income to cover normal living expenses, and we measured it by assessing a respondent's perceived financial status. Instead of asking about monthly income and expenses in euros and to avoid false responses or respondent loss because of excessively personal questions (Duncan & Petersen, 2001), we asked the participants whether their monthly income exceed, equal, or does not cover their

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics and correlations.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Income adequacy (1 = yes)	0.67	0.47								
2. Entrepreneurial identity	2.95	1.20	.02	*.69*						
3. Artistic identity	4.39	0.80	−.11*	.26**	*.63*					
4. Business skills	3.27	0.75	.13*	.28**	.04	*.40*				
5. Age	48.4	10.58	.01	−.12*	.02	−.15*				
6. Gender (1 = female)	0.64	0.48	−.17*	−.02	.04	.00	−.06			
7. Education (1 = tertiary/higher)	0.65	0.48	−.04	−.01	.06	.13**	−.17**	.07		
8. Self-employed (1 = yes)	0.75	0.44	−.09	.31**	−.19**	.06	−.01	.02	.03	
9. Work exp. in CCIs	22.1	10.80	.06	−.05	.01	−.08	.83**	−.13*	−.14**	.03

Note: AVE values of the main constructs in italics. $n = 400$.
*$p < .05$, and **$p < .01$.

monthly expenses. We coded this categorical item as a dummy variable assigned a value of 1 when *monthly income covers or exceeds living costs* and 0 when *monthly income fails to cover living expenses*. On the basis of this variable, 67% of the respondents perceived their income to sufficiently cover their living costs.

As the independent variables, entrepreneurial and artistic identities were measured separately in terms of their strengths with adapted versions of Farmer et al.'s (2011) identity aspiration scale. This scale measures the aspiration for an identity, but it was modified in the current research to extend coverage to expected role identity. According to role identity theory, individuals have multiple simultaneous identities (Hogg et al., 1995; Jain et al., 2009; Stryker & Burke, 2000) that may not be equally important (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). The strengths of expected identities self-verify oneself as an occupant of a certain role identity, reflecting how individuals expect and regard themselves as entrepreneurial or artistic in their current work. This also applies to creative professionals, whether self-employed or paid employees, because varying expectations regarding role identity guide their actions and behaviours (Burke & Reitzes, 1981; Oyserman et al., 2006).

The respondents were asked to rate the questionnaire items on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Both the artistic and entrepreneurial identity scales consisted of six items. In the investigation of artistic identity, the respondents were asked to rate statements such as "I often think about being an artistic/creative person" and "Being an artistic/creative person is/would be an important part of who I am." In the analysis of entrepreneurial identity, they were instructed to respond to items such as "I often think about being an entrepreneur/freelancer" and "Being an entrepreneur/freelancer is/would be an important part of who I am." The reliability of the entrepreneurial ($\alpha = .93$) and artistic ($\alpha = .87$) identity scales exceeded the commonly used threshold of .70 (Hair et al., 2010). The scales and the associated items are presented in Table A1 in Appendix A.

We operationalized our moderating variable, business skills, with an original scale comprising nine items that cover functional business skills ranging from customer identification, sales, marketing, cost management, and networking to resource organization (Barringer & Ireland, 2011; Freel, 1999; Greene, 2020; Smilor, 1997). These skills are necessary in managing an individual's or an organization's creative work (Peltoniemi, 2015; Round & Styhre, 2017). The respondents were asked to indicate how well the statements describe their artistic or creative work (e.g., "I am good at identifying who my audience(s)/customers is/are.") using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). As a composite index, all nine items were converted into Likert scale variables, wherein a high value points to a strong perception of business skills. The reliability of the scale ($\alpha = .82$) exceeded the .70 threshold (Hair et al., 2010). To validate this scale, we tested it on another dataset covering 246 organizations operating in creative and cultural sectors, such as theatres, museums, and cultural event organizers. The results of the reliability analysis conducted in this work ($\alpha = .84$) indicated that the scale also exceeded the threshold of .70, suggesting that it is a sufficiently robust and valid tool for measuring business skills.

To investigate the differences between the main scales of entrepreneurial and artistic identities and business skills, we ran an exploratory factor analysis using Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization. The results suggested a three-factor solution ($KMO = .85$, $p < .001$, cutoff point .40), which explained 58% of the total variance (see Table A2 for details). This factor solution showed that each item loaded on its associated scales and that no cross-loadings occurred. Overall, the factor loadings of artistic identity, entrepreneurial identity, and business skills ranged from .86 to .71, from .90 to .73, and from .71 to .54, respectively. The average variance extracted (*AVE*) of entrepreneurial identity (.69) and artistic identity (.63) exceeded the threshold of .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), but that of business skills was below the threshold (.40). As Table 1 shows, the correlation of business skills is lower than its squared AVE, implying that the items associated with it explain the scale's variance rather than share common variances with the other scales. The same held true for the scales of entrepreneurial and artistic identities.

Although we used self-reported cross-sectional survey data on a single respondent, our results may be subject to common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To test for this type of bias, we

analysed common method variance using Harman's single-factor test, which focuses on the first factor and its effect in the factor model. In our model, the first factor accounted for 27.7% of the variance in the data, suggesting that common method variance had no substantial effect on the results.

Previous studies showed that a gender gap in income distribution exists between men and women, with the latter earning less than the former (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2007; Roszkowski & Grable, 2010). Therefore, we controlled for respondent gender in the analyses. Hennekam (2015) found that older creative professionals are likely to start their own businesses, but Kohn and Wewel (2018) called attention to the fact that entrepreneurs in creative industries are young. Thus, age may influence income generation, leading us to also control for respondent age in our analyses. Because education level is another determinant of income (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2007; Rodríguez-Pose & Tselios, 2009), we adjusted the analyses with respect to educational attainment, asking the respondents about the highest level of education that they completed (primary education to advanced tertiary education). This item was used as a dummy variable assigned a value of 1 to indicate *tertiary education or higher*.

Previous research also emphasized that the likelihood of earning low income is high among self-employed individuals (de Vries et al., 2020; Sevä & Larsson, 2015). Accordingly, we controlled for whether a respondent was self-employed or not as a dummy measure, in which 1 = *self-employed*. Low wages or unpaid periods of work at an early career are typical for creative workers (Bennett, 2018; Eikhof, 2013; Siebert & Wilson, 2013), and early-stage creative professionals appear to be more frequently self-employed than their older peers (Woronkowicz & Noonan, 2019). Nevertheless, the development of individuals' identities changes over time (Werthes et al., 2018). Therefore, we controlled for the respondents' work experiences in CCIs in our examinations. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics and correlations of the variables used in the analyses.

4 | RESULTS

We carried out hierarchical logistic regression to test our hypotheses. Table 2 presents the regression results separately for the main effects, interaction effects, and controlled models.

Our results indicated that entrepreneurial identity is not significantly associated with income adequacy, translating to a rejection of H1. A strong artistic identity decreases the likelihood of income adequacy ($OR = 0.75$, $p < .01$, Table 2), which means support for H2. Moreover, business skills increase income adequacy ($OR = 1.27$, $p < .05$), corroborating H3 and suggesting that business skills serve as a buffer for the challenges concerning creative professionals' income.

Models 2 and 3, which had uncontrolled interaction terms, showed that business skills moderate the relationship between entrepreneurial identity and income adequacy ($\beta = 1.26$, $p < .05$), thus supporting H4a. Model 4 reflected that the interaction holds even after adjustments to the control variables, but business skills do not interact with the relationship of artistic identity with income adequacy. Accordingly, H4b is unsupported. This finding implies that the role of business skills clashes with individuals' understanding of their artistic activities (Bass et al., 2015), and such a separation might impede the aforementioned interaction.

To examine the interaction between business skills and entrepreneurial identity in detail, we plotted this interplay in Figure 2. In combination with substantial business skills, a strong entrepreneurial identity increases the likelihood of income adequacy. On the contrary, with a strong entrepreneurial identity but nonexistent business skills, the probability of having sufficient income decreases. Business skills

TABLE 2 Logistic regression models testing the effect of identities and their interaction with business skills on income adequacy.

	Model 1 OR	Model 2 OR	Model 3 OR	Model 4 OR	Model 5 OR	Model 6 OR
Entrepreneurial identity	1.07	1.06	1.06	1.05	1.05	1.05
Artistic identity	0.75*	0.76*	0.74*	0.82	0.80†	0.82†
Business skills	1.27*	1.27*	1.32*	1.35*	1.38**	1.35**
Entrepreneurial identity * business skills		1.26*		1.26*		1.25†
Artistic identity * business skills			1.08		1.11	1.05
Age				0.99	0.99	0.99
Gender (1 = female)				0.48**	0.46**	0.46**
Education (1 = tertiary or higher)				0.85	0.87	0.86
Working as self-employed (1 = yes)				0.64	0.61†	0.62†
Work experience in CCIs (years)				1.02	1.02	1.02
n	410	410	410	400	400	400
Nagel R^2	.04	.05	.05	.11	.11	.11

Note: DV = Income adequacy (reference category 1 = yes).
†$p < .10$.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, and ***$p < .001$.

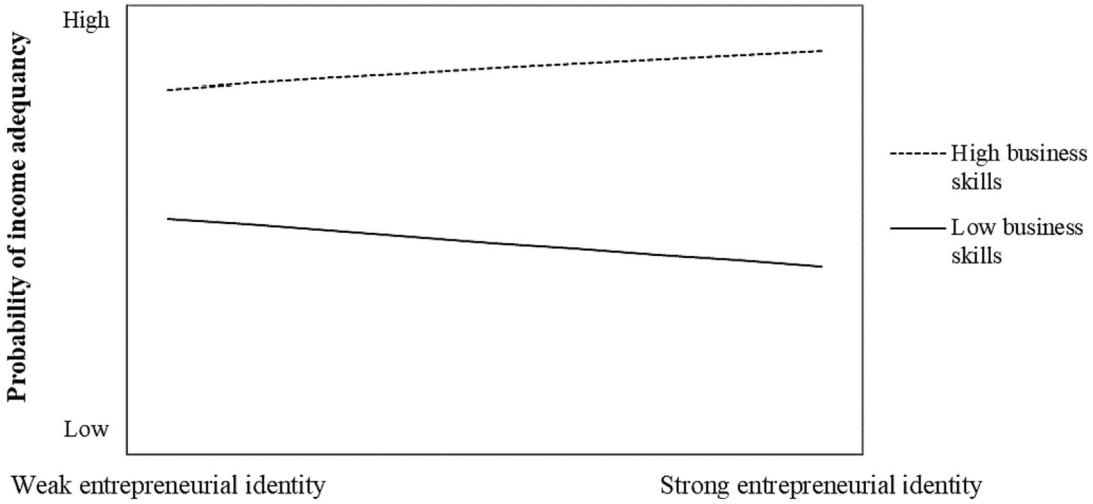

FIGURE 2 Effects of interaction between entrepreneurial identity and business skills on income adequacy.

possibly support income adequacy even under a weak entrepreneurial identity. The interaction between these variables implies that entrepreneurial identity needs to be complemented with business acumen to improve income adequacy.

In addition to illuminating the relationships among different role identities, business skills, and income adequacy, our results revealed that women are two times less likely to earn adequate income than men. This supports previously derived findings (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2007; Roszkowski & Grable, 2010). Full- or part-time self-employment reduces the probability of income adequacy, suggesting that such a work status and the realities of thin labour markets in CCIs pose challenges regarding financial sustainability to creative professionals.

To ascertain the robustness of our main results, we ran the main regression models separately for the self-employed respondents ($n = 305$; see Table A3 for details). The results support our hypothesized relationship between artistic identity and income adequacy ($OR = 0.71$, $p < .10$) and that between business skills and income adequacy ($OR = 1.54$, $p < .05$). The interaction effect of business skills and entrepreneurial identity on income adequacy is similar to the original interaction effect that we derived, but it remains only nearly significant ($OR = 1.26$, $p = .107$). These results suggest that the main effects of artistic identity and business skills on income generation remain regardless of work status, to which the interaction effect between business skills and entrepreneurial identity appears connected as well.

5 | DISCUSSION

Income generation among creative professionals requires closer scrutiny, as their work is financially challenging. For example, they work irregularly or on a part-time basis, or they maintain multiple jobs and sources of income (Campbell, 2020; Comunian et al., 2011). Disentangling the interplay between business skills and role identities is important given the tensions between the aims of art creation and the skills needed to mobilize and manage resources (Fine, 2017) in an economically viable manner. Accordingly, we directed our investigation to the significance of two role identities and business skills in the income adequacy of creative professionals, thereby providing new insights and responding to recent calls for further research on this matter (McKelvey & Lassen, 2018).

5.1 | Theoretical implications

Theoretically, our study contributes to the discussion of role identity and its importance in guiding behaviour. Given that identity concerns self-image, which informs and shapes our thinking and decision-making (Oyserman et al., 2006), role identity directs our actions and commits them to certain behaviours (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Callero et al., 1987; Hogg et al., 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000).

We addressed situations in which individuals assume two role identities (entrepreneurial and artistic) that may engender different behavioural expectations (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010) and vary in their impact on income generation. We found that a strong artistic identity hinders income generation; that is, a strong self-conception as an artist causes professionals to act in ways that put their income at risk. It is at once fascinating and alarming that creative professionals value creativity, autonomy, and self-investment (Neff et al., 2005) while implicitly accepting the chance that they will not generate enough income. This may steer creative professionals towards portfolio work and careers (Ball et al., 2010) through which they can pursue their creative ambitions and simultaneously hold other jobs that earn them more or at least enough money (Bartleet et al., 2019; Tarassi, 2018). In this sense, role identity is both an economic liability and a personal asset (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021). This observation aligns with our findings, which showed that assuming an artistic identity jeopardizes income adequacy, even though it can generate legitimacy and recognition for oneself (Reid et al., 2016).

Following recent research, we explored entrepreneurial identity as contradictory to an artistic orientation (Albinsson, 2018; Bass et al., 2015; Nielsen et al., 2018) to unravel whether the examined role identities cause differences in income generation. Entrepreneurial identity supposedly navigates individuals towards profit-seeking (Wach et al., 2016), but we demonstrated that this does not necessarily lead to income adequacy. This finding implies, for example, that an entrepreneurial identity does not match the self-image of creative professionals. As noted by Nielsen et al. (2018), creative professionals may perceive entrepreneurship as an orientation that is forced upon them and conflicts with their desired role identities, highlighting the challenge of having and successfully reconciling multiple work identities. Individual artists would benefit from finding strategies for maintaining diverse orientations (Pratt & Foreman, 2000). For instance, they can cultivate an adaptive personality, which can help them adjust between possible selves when they interact with different situations and environments (Dutton et al., 2010). They can also integrate two identities into a new entity—an entrepreneurial meta-identity—whose process is similar to how employees of a family business assume an orientation that allows them to cope with the competing identities of a family member and businessperson (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). A meta-identity is developed to manage overlapping identities and represents a higher-level structure, as is the case with the formation of a scholar–entrepreneur identity to resolve the conflict between academic and business selves (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009; Zou et al., 2019). A meta-level identity's reconciliation of artistic and entrepreneurial role identities clears the way for the pursuit of both creative freedom and commercially oriented creativity and, eventually, adequate income generation. Overall, the different relationships between the two role identities and income adequacy underscore the understanding of how role identity affects creative and innovative work and income generation (see McKelvey & Lassen, 2018).

Intriguingly, our study illustrates that high perceived business skills support income generation but that this impact varies depending on role identity. For example, when combined with a strong entrepreneurial identity, high perceived business skills increase the likelihood of income adequacy, but in the case of a strong entrepreneurial identity and poor business skills, this likelihood declines. These results imply that a predisposition for profit-seeking behaviours requires business skills for income adequacy to improve. However, the fusion between artistic identity and business skills has no impact on income generation, suggesting that expanding skills beyond those that support an artistic craft (e.g., business skills) may conflict with creative professionals' understanding of artistic activity (Bass et al., 2015) and reflect their concerns about the neoliberalization of creative work (Mietzner & Kamprath, 2013). Accordingly, it may be difficult or impossible for creative professionals to acquire the business skills necessary to ensure financial stability, although possessing such skills does not necessarily translate into the adoption of an entrepreneurial identity (see Coulson, 2012).

5.2 | Practical implications

Our study particularly addressed the discussion of the interplay between role identity and skills and their influence on income generation by creative professionals—a seldom-studied phenomenon (McKelvey & Lassen, 2018). Acquiring business skills could serve as an avenue in which to reconcile an entrepreneurial identity with an artistic orientation, that is, without sacrificing the latter in earning an adequate living. Business skills seem beneficial to income generation, which should encourage creative professionals to seek experiences that transcend their core abilities and activities to improve their entrepreneurial proficiency in handling different forms and sectors of creative work. The development of such transferable skills could already be included in the education of creative fields, but also among professionals already working. For example, those who are passionate in creative niches could be guided to conduct experiments where their passion and expertise would be directed to solving others' needs. Such exposure can allow creative professionals to adapt their identities and skills to new contexts.

In addition to encouraging the development of business skills among creative professionals, our study provides implications for educators. Vocational training and higher education play a decisive role in supporting young artists in their endeavours to form multiple role identities and successfully balance them with necessary business skills before they enter the job market and during the early years of their careers. It is important to provide students with tailored opportunities to gradually build their professional role identities, which is also a process receptive to the cultivation of entrepreneurial identity and proficiency. This could be enhanced, for example, by offering courses with participants from different disciplines and where students should use their passion and skills to create value for others. Creating learning opportunities that enhance artistic–entrepreneurial meta-level identity allows for the adaptation of creativity to different situations and sectors without placing artistic orientation or income generation at stake. Approaching entrepreneurial behaviour through managerial logic, for example, clashes with the aspirations of creative individuals and distances them from income requirements (Nielsen et al., 2018). Correspondingly, creative entrepreneurship education should be designed to support the development of an adaptive role identity, which gives space to both the artistic and business sides of creative work (Bridgstock, 2013, 2022; Werthes et al., 2018). Put differently, pedagogical choices should link the development of creative practices and business skills on terms that are acceptable and nonthreatening to creative professionals.

Finally, the adaptation of different skills and identities must be supported from the outside. For example, the lack of appreciation for creative and cultural work in society (Guardans et al., 2022) can restrict the ways in which creative professionals identify themselves. Therefore, both cultural and economic public policies should enhance the interaction between actors and stakeholders to increase the appreciation of creative and cultural work. This requires better communication and open dialogue between cultural and economic policy

makers to improve understanding of which tangible and intangible resources, skills, and networks support the creative and innovate work of creative professionals and how it can be supported. Such approach may also encourage creative professionals to develop and use the different kinds of skills and identities needed for financially sustainable creative and innovative occupations. After all, a financially sustainable career path may require expanding one's interests to connect oneself with networks and markets (Crimmins et al., 2022; Fine, 2017; Hanage et al., 2021). The need to support the joint development of artistic identity and business practice has been acknowledged and explored (Benzenberg & Tuominiemi, 2021; Flew, 2019; Nielsen et al., 2018), and our study proposes that accompanying business skills with the adoption of entrepreneurial identity could serve as an asset for creative professionals in securing their income.

5.3 | Limitations and future research

Our study explained how income adequacy is influenced by artistic identity and business skills separately and by business skills in interaction with entrepreneurial identity. Despite our promising findings, our research choices have engendered certain limitations. First, we employed cross-sectional data, which prevented us from exploring the dynamics and development of different role identities. Given that identity is a process of construction (Chasserio et al., 2014), changes in this construct uncover deeper insights into creative professionals' work. A longitudinal research design can be used to inquire into possible changes in business skills and their effects on income generation.

Second, we disregarded theoretically relevant relationships between the two role identities. Among other things, for instance, the balance/imbalance between different role identities, the role of identity centrality, identity conflict, and how these aspects shape income generation remain open issues. Research on how the strategies employed to manage different role identities (Pratt & Foreman, 2000; Werthes et al., 2018) influence income generation can also provide novel perspectives. Individuals pursuing different creative professions naturally have various approaches to their role identities (Nielsen et al., 2018). Further studies can revolve around the varying role identities of different professionals and identify whether and how they affect the continuity of creative and innovative work.

In conclusion, our study highlights the varying effects of different role identities and business skills on the income adequacy of creative professionals and provided recommendations for coping with monetary insecurity. Our findings suggest that enhancing the continuity of creative work and innovation necessitates finding ways to handle potentially contradictory entrepreneurial and artistic role identities and capitalizing on business skills that are not at the core of artistry.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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APPENDIX A

TABLE A1 Scales used in the data collection and analyses.

Entrepreneurial identity $\alpha = .93$
Question: Please indicate how the following statements describe you.
I often think about being an entrepreneur/freelancer.
I like to see myself as an entrepreneur/freelancer.
Being an entrepreneur/freelancer is/would be an important part of who I am.
When I think about it, the term "entrepreneur/freelancer" would fit/fits me pretty well.
I am always thinking about being an entrepreneur/freelancer.
It is important for me to express my entrepreneurial/freelancer aspirations.
Artistic identity $\alpha = .87$
Question: Please indicate how the following statements describe you.
I often think about being an artist/creative person.
I like to see myself as an artist/creative person.
Being an artist/creative person is/would be an important part of who I am.
When I think about it, the term "artist/creative person" would fit/fits me pretty well.
I am always thinking about being an artist/creative person.
It is important for me to express my creative aspirations.
Business skills $\alpha = .82$
Q: Please indicate how well the following statements describe your artistic work.
I am good at identifying who my audience(s)/customers is/are.
I am good at connecting with my audience(s)/customers.
I am good at selling my offerings to my audience(s)/customers.
I am good at controlling the costs of my creative work.
I am good at managing the different processes necessary for my creative work.
I am good at creating networks necessary for my creative work.
I am good at organizing the resources (skills, equipment, materials, technologies) necessary for my creative work.
I am good at pricing my creative work.
I am good at describing the value I create for my audience(s)/customers.

Note: All items are rated on a 5-point scale: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *undecided*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*.

TABLE A2 Factor analysis of the main constructs.

	Entrepreneurial identity $\alpha = .93$	Artistic identity $\alpha = .87$	Business skills $\alpha = .82$
I like to see myself as an entrepreneur/freelancer.	.90		
Being an entrepreneur/freelancer is/would be an important part of who I am.	.89		
When I think about it, the term "entrepreneur/freelancer" would fit/fits me pretty well.	.87		
I often think about being an entrepreneur/freelancer.	.81		
I am always thinking about being an entrepreneur/freelancer.	.80		
It is important for me to express my entrepreneurial/freelancer aspirations.	.73		
Being an artist/creative person is/would be an important part of who I am.		.86	
I like to see myself as an artist/creative person.		.85	
When I think about it, the term "artist/creative person" would fit/fits me pretty well.		.81	
I often think about being an artist/creative person.		.78	
It is important for me to express my creative aspirations.		.71	
I am always thinking about being an artist/creative person.		.71	
I am good at creating networks necessary for my creative work.			.71
I am good at connecting with my audience(s)/customers.			.67
I am good at selling my offerings to my audience(s)/customers.			.66
I am good at pricing my creative work.			.64
I am good at controlling the costs of my creative work.			.64
I am good at organizing the resources (skills, equipment, materials, technologies) necessary for my creative work.			.62
I am good at describing the value I create for my audience(s)/customers.			.61
I am good at managing the different processes necessary for my creative work.			.60
I am good at identifying who my audience(s)/customers is/are.			.54
Variance explained	27.7%	17.9%	12.3%

Note: Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization (KMO = .85, $p < .001$, cut-off point .40, 58% of the total variance explained).

	Model 1 OR	Model 2 OR	Model 3 OR
Entrepreneurial identity	1.01	0.47	1.01
Artistic identity	0.71†	0.72†	1.01
Business skills	1.54*	0.79	2.58
Entrepreneurial identity * business skills		1.26	
Artistic identity * business skills			0.89
n	305	305	305
Nagel R^2	.05	.06	.05

Note: DV = income adequacy (reference category 1 = yes).
†$p < .10$.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, and ***$p < .001$.

TABLE A3 Logistic regression modelling on self-employed respondents—effects of the identities and their interaction with business skills on income adequacy.