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Exploring the Role of Emotional Intelligence, Confidence and Personal Resilience among Women Entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom (UK): Examining How Self-Awareness and Emotional Intelligence Shape Entrepreneurial Success

Riya Hemant Gote
Founder-Scriberlee
Author of The Hanuman's Diary: Mantras.Meanings.ManifestationsDr.

Prof. Smita Prashant Sonawane
Assistant Professor,
Progressive Education Society's Modern Institute of Business Studies,
Savitribai Phule Pune University

Supriya Balasaheb Malghe
Assistant Professor
Adhalrao Patil institute of management and Research
Savitribai Phule Pune University

Surekha Ningule
Assistant Professor
Siddhant Institute of Business Mangement, Pune
Savitribai Phule Pune University

Abstract
Women entrepreneurs make a considerable contribution to the UK economy, although this is not fully recognised. They still encounter gender obstacles in money, networks and self-perception that can hamper enterprise growth. The study investigates the influence of emotional intelligence (EI) and self-awareness on business success among women entrepreneurs in the UK and examines the mediating roles of entrepreneurial confidence and personal resilience. Drawing on emotional intelligence theory, social cognitive theory and resilience research, the paper develops a conceptual framework of how self-awareness (self-understanding, emotional awareness, recognition of strengths and weaknesses and self-reflection) and emotional intelligence (emotional regulation, empathy, social awareness and relationship management) impact entrepreneurial success. Success can be measured through business growth and profitability, entrepreneurial performance, business sustainability, innovation and opportunity exploitation, and professional and personal development. Entrepreneurial confidence and self resilience are suggested as intervening variables explaining the translation of inner potential into outputs. Five research questions and five objectives are informed by a methodical evaluation of Scopus-indexed literature and illustrative UK instances. The conclusion reveals that women who are self-aware and emotionally intelligent are better able to calibrate their confidence, regulate stress, recover from failures, create supportive connections and spot possibilities. This therefore allows for more sustainable and innovative ventures. The paper contributes to the gender and entrepreneurship scholarship by merging the psychological and contextual perspectives. It also has practical consequences for policy makers, enterprise support agencies, investors and educators who wish to build the talents of women founders. Next step: We recommend empirical testing by means of survey based structural equation modelling.
Keywords: *Emotional intelligence; Self-awareness; Entrepreneurial confidence; Personal resilience; Women entrepreneurs; Entrepreneurial success; United Kingdom*

I. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as a generator of economic growth, employment and social innovation. Women-led firms are an integral element of the small and medium-sized company (SME) environment in the United Kingdom. According to the Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship (2019), bridging the gender gap in business ownership has the potential to add billions of pounds to the economy. However, women still remain under-represented amongst founders and female-led enterprises expand more slowly or receive less external capital than equivalent male-led firms (Carter et al., 2015; Marlow & McAdam, 2013). The explanations have usually focused on structural variables such as access to capital, networks and sector segregation. However, psychological capabilities are increasingly argued to impact the ways in which entrepreneurs comprehend, respond to and learn from the challenges of venture development (Baron, 2008; Brush et al., 2009).

Two of them are self-awareness and emotional intelligence . Self-awareness is the ability to know what one feels, what one is good at and bad at, and how one affects other people. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to sense, comprehend, manage, and use emotion in oneself and in one's relationships (Mayer et al., 2016; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Entrepreneurship is an emotional roller coaster of uncertainty, financial pressure, rejection and the chance of failure. Founders who are aware of and can regulate their emotions tend to sustain realistic confidence, endure stress and develop trusted stakeholder relationships (Ahmetoglu et al., 2011; Zampetakis et al., 2009).

The mechanisms via which these talents lead to success are still under-explored, especially in relation to women entrepreneurs in the UK. There are likely intervening mechanisms between entrepreneurial confidence and its antecedents and outcomes, such as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Chen et al., 1998) and personal resilience (Bullough & Renko, 2013; Korber & McNaughton, 2018). Thus, this study explores the impact of self-awareness and emotional intelligence on the business success of women entrepreneurs in the UK directly and indirectly through confidence and resilience. It takes a multi-dimensional perspective of success that includes growth, performance, sustainability, innovation and personal development (Wach et al., 2016)

II. Problem Statement

Despite ongoing legislative focus, women entrepreneurs in the UK are still starting and scaling businesses at lower rates than men, and report poorer confidence, more fear of failure and more limited access to capital and networks. Existing research has focused mostly on structural and institutional hurdles, while less systematic attention has been paid to the psychological characteristics that enable women to transform opportunity into sustained venture performance. Emotional intelligence and self-awareness are often explored in leadership research although their combined impact on entrepreneurial success is seldom modelled in the UK women-entrepreneur scenario. Little is known if and how entrepreneurial confidence and personal resilience explain how these characteristics lead to growth, sustainability and innovation. In the absence of such proof, enterprise support programs may focus on technical skills and finance, while disregarding the inner characteristics that sustain founders through uncertainty. This study fills this gap by investigating the influence of self-awareness and emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial success through confidence and resilience among women entrepreneurs in the UK.

III. Variables of the Study

Type	Variable	Dimensions
Independent (IV1)	Self-Awareness	Self-understanding, emotional awareness, strengths and weaknesses, self-reflection
Independent (IV2)	Emotional Intelligence	Emotional regulation, empathy, social awareness, relationship management
Intervening / Mediating (MV1)	Entrepreneurial Confidence	Self-belief, decision-making confidence, opportunity recognition, leadership confidence
Intervening / Mediating (MV2)	Personal Resilience	Adaptability, perseverance, stress management, overcoming entrepreneurial setbacks
Dependent (DV)	Entrepreneurial Success	Business growth and profitability; entrepreneurial performance; business sustainability; innovation and opportunity exploitation; professional and personal development

3.1 Conceptual Framework (Figure 1)

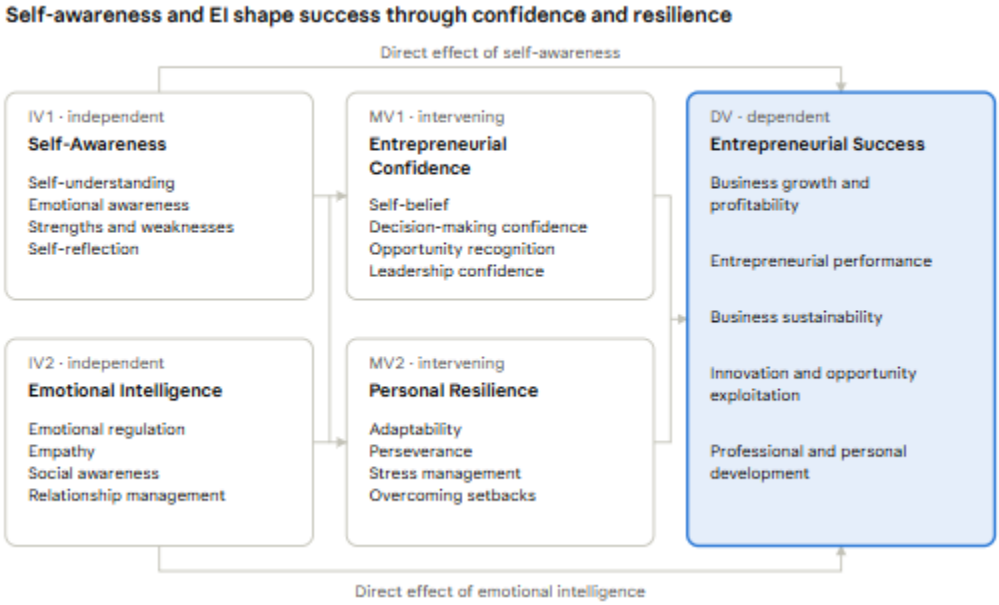

Figure 1. Conceptual framework. Self-awareness and emotional intelligence (independent variables) influence entrepreneurial success (dependent variable) directly and indirectly through entrepreneurial confidence and personal resilience (intervening variables), within the UK women-entrepreneur context.

IV. Literature Review

4.1 Emotional intelligence and self-awareness

Salovey and Mayer (1990) initially formalised emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one's own feelings and those of others and then utilise this information to direct thought and action. Later the ability model structured EI into seeing, using, understanding and managing emotions (Mayer et al., 2016). An emotional-social model was suggested by Bar-On (2006) that focuses on intrapersonal abilities, interpersonal skills, stress management and adaptability. Trait EI was described by Petrides and Furnham (2001) as emotion-related self-perceptions. According to Ashkanasy and Daus (2005) EI offers actual value for organisations notwithstanding disputes about measurement. Each paradigm has a key aspect of self-awareness. Atwater and Yammarino (1992) shown that concordance between self and others' judgements predicts leadership success. The antithesis of self-awareness in entrepreneurship is overconfidence. Hayward et al. (2006) connect overconfidence to excessive risk-taking and venture failure.

4.2 Emotional intelligence and entrepreneurship

The trait EI is linked to entrepreneurial status and orientation. Ahmetoglu et al. (2011) revealed that emotionally intelligent people were more likely to be self-employed and to report entrepreneurial conduct. Zampetakis et al. (2009) found a favourable relation between EI and entrepreneurial attitudes and inclinations. In a study by Morton et al. (2014), EI was found to boost entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention, indicating a confidence pathway. These findings are consistent with the concept that affect impacts entrepreneurs' perceptions of opportunity and effort sustainment.

4.3 Entrepreneurial confidence and self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as a belief in one's ability to organise and carry out the actions required to attain goals (Bandura, 1997). Chen et al. (1998) observed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy differentiates founders from managers. Zhao et al., 2005). The effect of personality and experience on entrepreneurial ambitions was mediated by self-efficacy . Evidence on gender is consistent. Wilson et al. (2007) found women had lower entrepreneurial self-efficacy (which was related to weaker entrepreneurial goals). Women entrepreneurs' confidence is influenced by their perception of their ability and expectations surrounding them (Kirkwood, 2009).

4.4 Personal resilience

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from difficulty and to adapt in a constructive way. Bullough and Renko (2013) define entrepreneurial resilience as the mix of self-belief, flexibility and persistence that enables founders to succeed under duress. Ayala and Manzano (2014) discovered in a longitudinal study that resilience predicts economic success in Spanish entrepreneurs. Korber and McNaughton (2018) evaluated the literature

noting the varying definitions and rising evidence that resilience is developed through experience and support. Duchek (2018) described anticipation, coping and adaptation of resilient entrepreneurs. Learning from failure is a function of reflection (Cope, 2011). Reflection brings resilience back into self-awareness.

4.5 Women entrepreneurs in the UK context

Marlow and McAdam (2013) questioned the notion of the "under-performing female entrepreneur" and said that performance inequalities are a sign of gendered institutions and expectations instead of women's inadequacies. Brush et al. (2009) present a gender-aware paradigm that positions the venture in home, organisational and institutional settings. Carter et al (2015) evaluated evidence for the UK and highlighted continuing impediments and outstanding questions in policy formulation. Later The Rose Review (Rose, 2019) identified limitations in access to finance and confidence. This collection of studies makes psychological resources particularly crucial for UK women who have to negotiate uneven institutional contexts.

4.6 Measuring entrepreneurial success

There are several sides to entrepreneurial success Rauch and Frese (2007) found that personality qualities are related to business formation and success, with moderate impact sizes. An integrated measure is suggested by Wach et al. (2016), which goes beyond financial metrics and includes satisfaction, work-related well-being and personal growth. This validates the five dimensional perspective of success employed in this study.

4.7 Research gap

EI, self-efficacy and resilience have been studied individually in the literature and mostly with mixed gender or non-UK groups . Few research model self-awareness and EI together, assess confidence and resilience as parallel mediators and employ a comprehensive measure of success in the UK women-entrepreneur setting. The present work overcomes this gap.

V. Real-World Examples of UK Women Entrepreneurs

The cases below are illustrative and are based on publicly reported accounts. They are not primary data, and the interpretation in the final column is the author's analytical reading.

Company	Founder(s)	Sector	Capability illustrated	Link to the framework
Freelance Programmers (later Xansa)	Dame Stephanie Shirley (1962)	Technology services	Strategic self-presentation in a male-dominated field. She reportedly used the name "Steve" in early correspondence. She built a workforce of women working flexibly.	Self-awareness of context; empathy and relationship management; sustained growth
Jo Malone London / Jo Loves	Jo Malone	Fragrance and retail	Built a brand, sold it in 1999, then returned with a new brand after a non-compete period. She has spoken publicly about dyslexia and illness.	Resilience; confidence in creative judgement; innovation and renewal
Coffee Republic	Sahar Hashemi (with Bobby Hashemi)	Food and beverage	Pioneered a UK coffee bar concept and persisted through repeated financing rejections, as she has described in her own account.	Perseverance; self-belief; opportunity recognition
lastminute.com	Martha Lane Fox (co-founder)	Online travel	Navigated the dot-com boom and bust. She later turned to public service and digital inclusion work after a serious accident.	Stress management; adaptability; professional and personal development
The Cambridge Satchel Company	Julie Deane	Fashion accessories	Started with minimal capital to fund her children's schooling and grew an international brand.	Decision-making confidence; opportunity recognition; growth
Not On The High Street	Holly Tucker and Sophie Cornish	Online marketplace	Created a curated platform for small creative businesses.	Empathy and relationship management; innovation; sustainability
Anya Hindmarch	Anya Hindmarch	Luxury accessories	Founded the brand in 1987 and sustained it through trend cycles. Campaigns such as "I am a Plastic Bag" (2007) combined creativity with social awareness.	Self-awareness of brand strengths; innovation; long-term sustainability

VI. Research Questions

1. **RQ1:** How does self-awareness influence entrepreneurial confidence among women entrepreneurs in the UK?
2. **RQ2:** How does emotional intelligence contribute to personal resilience among women entrepreneurs in the UK?
3. **RQ3:** To what extent do entrepreneurial confidence and personal resilience mediate the relationship between inner capabilities (self-awareness and emotional intelligence) and entrepreneurial success?

4. **RQ4:** How do gendered contextual barriers in the UK shape the way women entrepreneurs apply emotional intelligence, confidence and resilience?
5. **RQ5:** What is the combined effect of self-awareness and emotional intelligence on the multiple dimensions of entrepreneurial success?

VII. Objectives of the Study

1. **Objective 1:** To examine the influence of self-awareness on entrepreneurial confidence among UK women entrepreneurs.
2. **Objective 2:** To analyse the contribution of emotional intelligence to personal resilience among UK women entrepreneurs.
3. **Objective 3:** To assess the mediating roles of entrepreneurial confidence and personal resilience in the relationship between inner capabilities and entrepreneurial success.
4. **Objective 4:** To investigate how gendered and contextual barriers in the UK shape the application of emotional intelligence, confidence and resilience.
5. **Objective 5:** To evaluate the combined effect of self-awareness and emotional intelligence on the five dimensions of entrepreneurial success.

VIII. Discussion of Objectives

8.1 Objective 1: To examine the influence of self-awareness on entrepreneurial confidence among UK women entrepreneurs

Confidence in entrepreneurship is based on self-efficacy, the idea that one can organise and execute the tasks needed to succeed (Bandura, 1997) and it differentiates founders from managers (Chen et al., 1998). Self-awareness makes that belief more true. Entrepreneurs who are aware of their skills and flaws are able to calibrate their confidence with their actual capabilities. This is important since self-other agreement predicts efficacy (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992), and unbridled overconfidence leads to arrogance and unsafe actions (Hayward et al., 2006; Hmieleski & Baron, 2009). Multidimensional measurements suggest that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is composed of seeking, planning, marshalling and implementation (Drnovsek et al., 2010). Self-efficacy affects the effect of other individual qualities on entrepreneurial intention (Zhao et al., 2005) and is related to start-up success (Hechavarría et al., 2012). The picture is more complex for women. Women tend to have poorer entrepreneurial self-efficacy than males (Wilson et al., 2007), and a lack of confidence may impede women's enterprises when bolstered by gendered expectations (Kirkwood, 2009). Evidence from the lending setting suggests that women's applications may be assessed against stereotypical criteria (Carter et al., 2007; Marlow & Patton, 2005) and this may undermine confidence. So women need self-reflection to correctly perceive feedback, to distinguish between institutional barriers and personal failures, and to protect self-belief. Affect influences judgement and the detection of opportunity hence emotional awareness is the basis of this (Baron, 2008). Highly confident entrepreneurs can bounce back and try again after failure (Hayward et al. 2010), suggesting that self-awareness translates failure into learning, rather than discouragement. Emotional capabilities also enhance self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention (Mortan et al., 2014). The expected association is therefore that the relationship is positive: that greater self-awareness is connected with greater and better calibrated entrepreneurial confidence among UK women entrepreneurs.

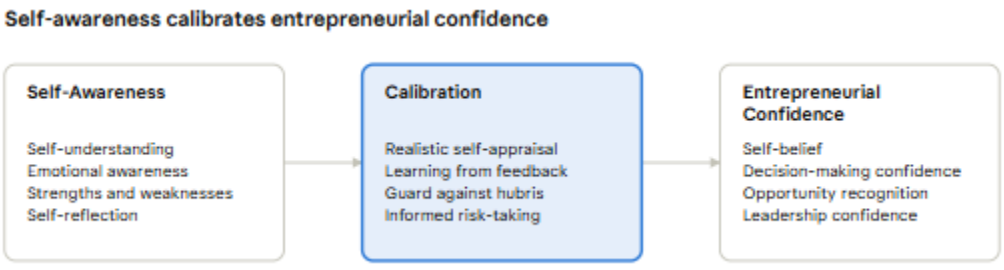

Figure 2. Self-awareness calibrates entrepreneurial confidence (conceptual illustration for Objective 1).

8.2 Objective 2: To analyse the contribution of emotional intelligence to personal resilience among UK women entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurial journeys are fraught with uncertainty, financial pressure and frequent losses. So the ability to handle emotion is key to staying power. Emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor one's own and others' feeling and employ emotions to guide thinking (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The ability model conceptualises it in terms of sensing, using, understanding and managing emotions (Mayer et al., 2016). In the emotional-social

paradigm, stress management and adaptation are explicitly named components (Bar-On, 2006), but in trait EI, emotional self-perceptions are conceptualised as dispositions (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Despite some controversy about the assessment of EI, it nevertheless has explanatory significance for organisational results (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). Trait EI has been connected with self-employment and entrepreneurial activity (Ahmetoglu et al., 2011) and with attitudes and intentions toward entrepreneurship (Mortan et al., 2014; Zampetakis et al., 2009). Emotion is also a driver of effort. Venture effort is influenced by the feelings of entrepreneurs (Foo et al., 2009) suggesting that managing emotion is a way to sustain consistent performance (Baron, 2008). Resilience has been defined as the combination of self-belief, flexibility and perseverance (Bullough & Renko, 2013) and a longitudinal study indicated that it predicted success in business (Ayala & Manzano, 2014). Resilience is a process formed out of resources and relationships (Korber & McNaughton, 2018) and resilient entrepreneurs anticipate, cope and adapt (Duchek, 2018). Emotional control can assist with stress management and empathy and relationship management can mobilise social support. These are the conditions that maintain entrepreneurial well-being (Stephan, 2018). So, for women founders in the UK who frequently have less financial and relational buffers, emotionally savvy coping should lead to better adaptation and endurance.

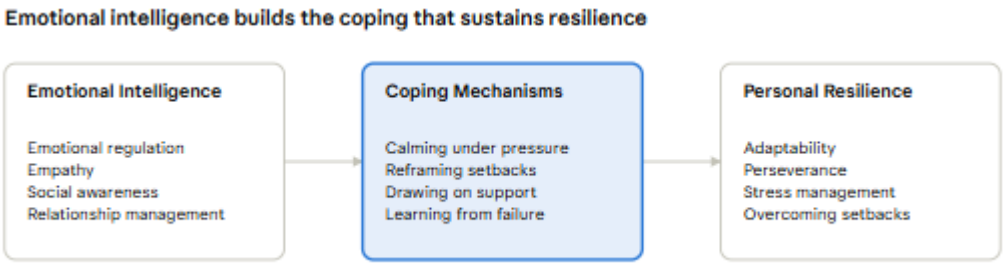

Figure 3. Emotional intelligence builds the coping that sustains personal resilience

8.3 Objective 3: To assess the mediating roles of entrepreneurial confidence and personal resilience in the relationship between inner capabilities and entrepreneurial success

Objective 3, seeks to test the process via which internal skills become success. According to the logic of mediation, the importance of self-awareness and emotional intelligence is that they are resources that entrepreneurs may utilise. One of such resource is entrepreneurial confidence. Self-efficacy differentiates founders from managers (Chen et al., 1998) and mediates the way from individual qualities to intentions (Zhao et al., 2005). However, its performance benefits are not consistently favourable, as excessive optimism can be detrimental to new venture performance (Hmieleski & Baron, 2009). Accordingly, calibrated confidence is important. Self-efficacy also enables persistence in part through entrepreneurial enthusiasm (Cardon & Kirk, 2015), and confident entrepreneurs also bounce back from failure (Hayward et al., 2010). The second resource is resilience. It is a mix of self-belief, flexibility and perseverance (Bullough & Renko, 2013). Together with self-efficacy it changes entrepreneurial goals even under tough conditions (Bullough et al., 2014) and predicted business performance in longitudinal data (Ayala & Manzano, 2014). Resilience is thought to grow through anticipation, coping and adaptation (Duchek, 2018; Korber & McNaughton, 2018), and reviews and qualitative studies suggest that learning from failure rely on reflective processing (Cope, 2011). Meta-analytic research suggests that entrepreneurial performance is related to individual differences (Rauch & Frese, 2007; Zhao et al., 2010). Effects vary by criterion, which underscores the need to measure success broadly (Wach et al., 2016). Social competence, a close relative of emotional intelligence, has also been found to correspond to financial success (Baron & Markman, 2003). Overall, the results are consistent with a parallel-mediation model where confidence and resilience mediate the impacts of self-awareness and emotional intelligence on venture success, and direct effects are also present.



Figure 4. Parallel mediation: entrepreneurial confidence and personal resilience transmit the effects of inner capabilities to success (conceptual illustration for Objective 3).

8.4 Objective 4: To investigate how gendered and contextual barriers in the UK shape the application of emotional intelligence, confidence and resilience

The environments in which women entrepreneurs operate determine what psychological resources they need and how they can use them. Research has argued for the need to understand women's entrepreneurship in gendered terms, going beyond comparative analyses that take male standards as the baseline (Ahl, 2006; Marlow & McAdam, 2013). A gender-aware framework locates enterprises in home, organisational and institutional frameworks (Brush et al., 2009). Subsequent work argues for new paths that take context and meaning seriously (Hughes et al., 2012; Jennings & Brush, 2013). Context also offers opportunities and constraints (Welter, 2011). Evidence studies in the UK highlight remaining hurdles and unanswered policy problems for women's enterprise (Carter et al., 2015). In particular, finance is a concern since women's access to capital may be hampered by stereotypical evaluations (Carter et al., 2007; Marlow & Patton, 2005). Work-family boundaries also differ by gender in ways that affect how entrepreneurs handle competing demands (Eddleston & Powell, 2012). These pressures can erode confidence (Kirkwood, 2009; Wilson et al., 2007) and increase stress levels. Mental health and well-being in entrepreneurs have increasingly been highlighted (Stephan, 2018; Wiklund et al., 2019). Useful here are emotional intelligence and self-awareness, which assist women to perceive biased feedback appropriately, manage emotional costs, and develop networks that offset structural disadvantage. Moreover, success should be assessed on the basis of characteristics such as satisfaction and personal development, not merely financial gain (Wach et al., 2016). The aim is thus to study how gendered contextual constraints condition the use of inner capacities. This is not to say that capability development is a substitute for structural transformation; rather, the two are complementary.

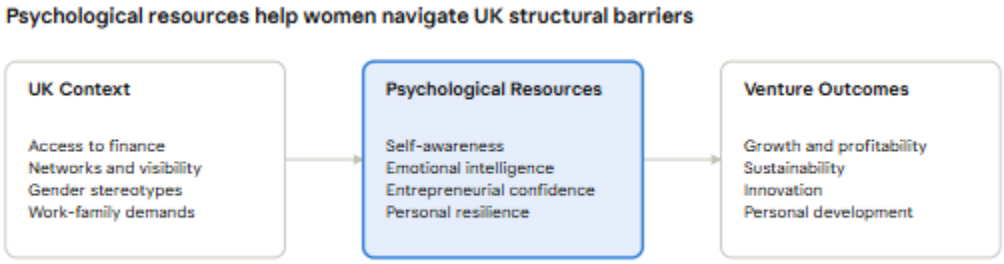

Figure 5. Psychological resources help women entrepreneurs navigate UK structural barriers on the way to venture outcomes (conceptual illustration for Objective 4).

8.5 Objective 5: To evaluate the combined effect of self-awareness and emotional intelligence on the five dimensions of entrepreneurial success

Objective 5 explores the relationship between self-awareness and emotional intelligence and the five characteristics of success. Entrepreneurship is defined as the process of locating, analysing and exploiting opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) and opportunity exploitation and innovation are natural elements of success. Positive affect and creativity impact business level innovation (Baron & Tang, 2011) and entrepreneurial enthusiasm drives persistent effort (Cardon et al., 2009). Nascent ventures' performance is influenced by human and social capital (Davidsson & Honig, 2003). Social competency relates to financial success (Baron & Markman, 2003). Meta-analytic evidence exists for the relationship between personality and individual differences and performance (Rauch & Frese, 2007; Zhao et al., 2010). But profit cannot be the measure of success. Founders define success by different criteria based on personal beliefs (Gorgievski et al., 2011), and integrative metrics include happiness, well-being and personal growth along with financial indicators (Wach et al., 2016). Well-being and mental health are part of the sustainability of the entrepreneur and the venture (Stephan, 2018; Wiklund et al., 2019). Sustainability also depends on managing failure. Balancing costs (financial and emotional) helps entrepreneurs move on (Shepherd et al., 2009); grief recovery supports renewed engagement (Shepherd, 2003); and negative emotions can become learning when processed constructively (Cope, 2011; Shepherd et al., 2011). Emotional intelligence enables regulation, relationships; self-awareness supports appropriate reflection, goal planning. Consequently, their joint influence is projected to be favourable on growth, performance, sustainability, innovation and personal development, with probable different effect sizes per dimension.

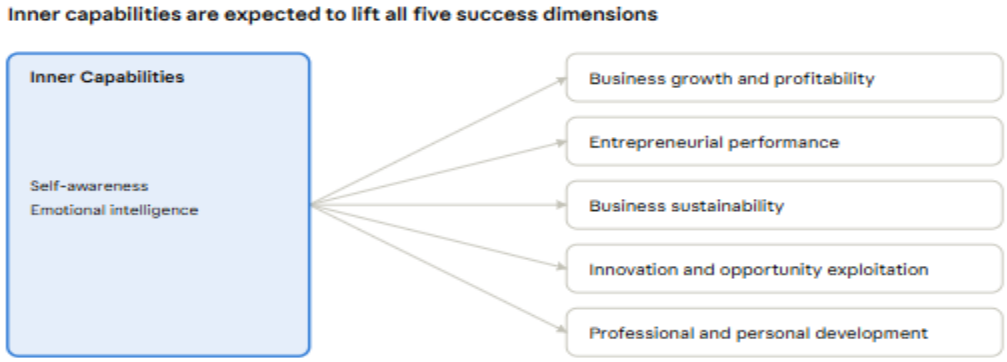

Figure 6. Combined effect of self-awareness and emotional intelligence on the five dimensions of entrepreneurial success (conceptual illustration for Objective 5).

IX. Findings

The integration of literature and illustrative instances highlights five key points. First, self-awareness seems to increase entrepreneurial confidence through improved calibration, eliminating not only overconfidence but also under-confidence. Second, emotional intelligence is related with resilience through emotional regulation, empathy and supportive relations. Third, confidence and resilience may serve as parallel mediators that translate inner strengths into venture outcomes. Fourth, the significance of these competencies in the UK is enhanced by gendered obstacles in finance, networks and expectation, and without addressing these may undermine confidence. Fifth, success is multi-dimensional, thus capabilities are expected to impact on growth, performance, sustainability, innovation and personal development in multiple ways. These are conceptual results from secondary sources and need empirical validation.

X. Conclusion

The study explored the impact of self-awareness and emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial success using intervening variables of entrepreneurial confidence and personal resilience among women entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom. The information reviewed demonstrates that inner capabilities are practical resources, not soft extras. They allow women to make sense of feedback, to cope with stress, to maintain effort and to form connections in unpredictable and sometimes unequal settings. The suggested paradigm relates these qualities to a wide range of success outcomes such as innovation and personal growth. This paper proposes an integrated gender-aware paradigm, and a concrete research plan. It signals that assistance of women founders must mix structural measures, such as cash and networks, with purposeful development of psychological capabilities. The next step is empirical testing.

XI. Recommendations

1. **Embed self-awareness training within corporate support.** Structured self-assessment, 360-degree feedback and reflective practice should be included in start-up programs by accelerators, universities and business support providers. Founders then get a clearer picture of their strengths and weaknesses. That helps them calibrate confidence and know when to seek counsel or hire complementing skills.
2. **Peer learning and coaching to develop emotional intelligence.** Programs should teach emotional control, empathy and relationship management through facilitated coaching, role play and peer circles. “Practicing these skills in real-life scenarios such as investor pitches and tough conversations with suppliers make them transferable to day-to-day venture management.”
3. **Develop resilience as a learned skill.** Support providers should give stress-management routines, scenario planning and organised debriefs following failures or setbacks. Setbacks become learning opportunities, reducing stigma and helping founders bounce back faster. Resilience content should be embedded into long-term programs, not provided as a one-off.
4. **Increase mentoring and visible role models.** Matching women founders with successful UK entrepreneurs in related areas facilitates mastery learning and vicarious experience, two sources of self-efficacy . Mentors can normalise uncertainty, provide stories of recovery, and push against self-limiting attitudes. Programs should monitor relationship quality and participation.
5. **Build peer networks and communities of practice.** Regional and sector-based communities provide women with emotional and practical assistance and access to opportunities. Facilitators should structure these groups to build trust, mutual aid, and open discussion of failure. Online options can broaden access to founders with caring duties.

6. **Reduce the stereotypical assessment in the area of money.** Lenders and investors should teach assessors to spot gender prejudice and adopt systematic, transparent criteria. Frequent assessments mean that biased feedback is less likely to shake founders' confidence. Institutions need to track outcomes by gender and report on their progress openly.
7. **Make psychological competence objectives part of policy.** Policymakers should broaden the Rose Review agenda to incorporate metrics of confidence, resilience and well-being when evaluating women's entrepreneurial projects. Funding should be directed to programs that build inner capacities as well as finance and skills, with long-term follow-up of participants.
8. **Integrate emotional and entrepreneurial abilities into learning.** Curricula of schools, colleges and universities should contain emotional intelligence, reflection and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Simulations, live projects and incubators provide safe mastering experiences. Early exposure might lessen gendered inequalities in confidence before entering occupations.
9. **Support for work-family and well-being.** Founders can draw on mental health help, peer supervision and flexible care or caring arrangements. Chronic strain is reduced to safeguard the quality of decision and persistence. Support providers should be referring to these resources at the start of programs, not just in crisis.
10. **Empirically test and enhance the framework.** Future studies should explore the mediation pathways using longitudinal surveys and structural equation modelling. Samples should be selected from different areas, sectors, ethnic groups and phases of company. Mixed methods designs can then describe how the mechanisms work in practice.

XII. Limitations

This article is conceptual and based on secondary sources and so the hypothesised correlations are expectations not tested findings. The literature is not extensive and has been selected based on relevancy, hence some research may be lacking. Many of the studies listed involve mixed gender or non-UK samples, limiting direct extrapolation to UK women entrepreneurs. Self-report measurements of emotional intelligence and resilience may be subject to bias. Company examples are from public sources and tend to highlight high-profile founders, thus they might not be representative of the average small-business experience. Women entrepreneurs are a heterogeneous population and distinctions by ethnicity, geography, sector and venture stage need to be examined separately.

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