

Entrepreneurial resilience and the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs in the hospitality and tourism industry of Uganda

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of the study is to establish the impact of entrepreneurial resilience on the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. The study also examines how individual dimensions of entrepreneurial resilience (hardiness, optimism and resourcefulness) impact the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs in the hospitality and tourism industry of Uganda.

Design/methodology/approach – This study is cross-sectional and used a self-administered questionnaire to gather data from women entrepreneurs. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences to run the descriptive, correlational and multiple regression analyses.

Findings – The results indicate that entrepreneurial resilience as a global variable significantly impacts wellbeing of women entrepreneurs and at the dimensional level, only hardiness significantly impacts the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs unlike optimism and resourcefulness.

Originality/value – This study is one of the limited investigations that have interrogated resilience and the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs using evidence from a developing nation where government and non-government organizations are still grappling with uplifting the position of women, including those engaged in entrepreneurial activities. The major contribution of this study lies in its focus on how the dimensions of

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entrepreneurial resilience explain the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs operating in Uganda's hospitality and tourism industry which is mostly dominated by women compared to their male counterparts.

Keywords Entrepreneurial resilience, Hardiness, Optimism, Resourcefulness, Entrepreneurial wellbeing, Women entrepreneurs, Developing country

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

In this paper, we present the contribution of entrepreneurial resilience and its dimensions (hardiness, optimism, resourcefulness) in fostering the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. This investigation was motivated by the low levels of wellbeing of women entrepreneurs in Uganda. In particular, [Culbreth et al. \(2024\)](#) indicate that over 32.2% of Ugandan women who are involved in business activities experienced stress and depression most of the time or all of the time during the previous 30 days. In addition, 49.2% of the women reported cases of someone in their home going to sleep without food. Furthermore, 95% of women entrepreneurs' struggle to create a work-life balance, leaving less time to use business as a means of caring for their children ([Oseremen, 2015](#)). This is intensified by the fact that 65% of women entrepreneurs experience restricted financial autonomy, notwithstanding their extensive work hours ([Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2021](#)). As a result, women entrepreneurs have become stressed, anxious, depressed, worried and restless, which eventually constrains their overall wellbeing.

Currently, policymakers and scholars are trying to devise strategies to enhance the entrepreneurial wellbeing of women. For policymakers in Uganda, the government through the Ministry of Labour, Gender and Social Development launched the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) in 2019 as a platform to provide training, startup capital and market for women-owned businesses. However, studies to evaluate the impact of such interventions in improving the wellbeing of women seem to be lacking. For entrepreneurship scholars who have interrogated entrepreneurial wellbeing, the focus is on self-employment and problem-and emotion-focused coping ([Nikolaev et al., 2023](#)); financial capability ([Guo and Huang, 2023](#)); gender inequality and gender roles ([Love et al., 2024](#)). As such, less is documented on the impact of entrepreneurial resilience and its dimensions (hardiness, optimism and resourcefulness) in enhancing the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs.

Specifically, scholars have interrogated resilience as a global variable (see; [Corner et al., 2017](#); [Shatté et al., 2017](#); [Ayala and Manzano, 2014](#); [Yuniati and Mukhlis, 2022](#); [Purnomo et al. \(2021\)](#)). Yet understanding the contribution of hardiness, optimism and resourcefulness in catalyzing entrepreneurial wellbeing strengthens the entrepreneurship scholarship. Moreover, [Abonil et al. \(2024\)](#) who unpacked resilience, focused on expatriate entrepreneurs whose lifestyle and standards of living are totally different from those of women entrepreneurs operating in developing nations like Uganda as a unique study context. Uganda is known to be one of the most entrepreneurial countries in the world (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, GEM). In particular GEM (2014) reported Uganda as a country with the highest level of total entrepreneurial activities across the globe, with 28% of Ugandan adults owning or co-owning a new business. High involvement in entrepreneurial activities implies impacts on the wellbeing of the entrepreneurs that is worth investigating.

Further engagement with extant literature demonstrated that the study of entrepreneurship in the context of hospitality and tourism is at its inception stage ([Alrawadieh et al., 2021](#)). Accordingly, the focus has been on home-based economic activities in Pakistan ([Muhammad et al., 2021](#)), farming in Kenya ([Kimmitt et al., 2020](#)) and entrepreneurship in general ([Marshall et al., 2020](#)). However, it is important to note the hospitality and tourism industry

is one of the fastest growing sectors in Uganda, and is the second largest in the country after product trade (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Accordingly, the industry has so many employment opportunities for both the skilled and unskilled labour (Fu *et al.*, 2019), comprising of over 65% of women business owners (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2020). These women are engaged in various sectors of the industry that include; accommodation, tour and travel, foods and beverages, events, recreation and ancillaries like crafts (Sisson and Adams, 2013; Katongole *et al.*, 2013; Alrawadieh, 2021; Limna, 2022). The industry is also known to be labor intensive and time consuming (Memili and Koç, 2023; Sharma *et al.*, 2016), which is likely to affect the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs (Bichler *et al.*, 2020; Peters *et al.*, 2019). Further still, the nature of work in the hospitality and tourism businesses is associated with irregular schedules (Mugambwa *et al.*, 2024) affecting their time for family responsibilities resulting in to conflicts. Additionally, safety and harassment especially for the bars and travel related services (Ram, 2018; Cheung *et al.*, 2018) crisis like economic instabilities and pandemics like COVID-19 (Wut *et al.*, 2021; Duan *et al.*, 2022; Aydogan *et al.*, 2024; Maliszewska *et al.*, 2020) are other issues related to the nature of hospitality and tourism industry. All these call for resilience in form of hardiness, optimism and resourcefulness to curb stress, anxiety, depression and promote psychological functioning for enhanced wellbeing.

Against that background, this study interrogates the impact of entrepreneurial resilience and its dimensions (hardiness, optimism and resourcefulness) in promoting the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs using evidence from the hospitality and tourism industry in Uganda. Undertaking this study is vital in strengthening the existing literature at the intersection of Hospitality entrepreneurship and wellbeing. In addition, it is vital in contributing to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) that prioritizes gender equality and women's empowerment in both developed and developing nations, and SDG 3 emphasizes healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages, particularly maternal mortality (3.1) and mortality rate (3.1). Similarly, fostering the realization of Uganda Vision's 2040, which focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment as prerequisites for social-economic transformation (National Planning Authority, 2020). The rest of the paper contains a review of existing literature, a presentation of the methods and materials, results, discussion, summary and conclusion.

2. Literature review

2.1 Entrepreneurial wellbeing

The concept of entrepreneurial wellbeing has attracted the attention of scholars in the recent past (Diener *et al.*, 2018; Wiklund *et al.*, 2019). From the psychological point of view, well-being is conceptualized as subjective well-being that indicates the overall internal state of mental wellness, which may include not only pleasure attainment and pain avoidance that is hedonic and desire-based but also vitality, meaning and self-realization which is eudaimonic (Shir and Ryff, 2022). However, Wiklund *et al.* (2019) viewed wellbeing in the context of entrepreneurship as "the experience of satisfaction, positive affect, infrequent negative affect, and psychological functioning in relation to developing, starting, growing, and running an entrepreneurial venture." In this case, psychological functioning refers to self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy and positive relations with others. On the other hand, Shir *et al.* (2019) define entrepreneurial wellbeing as the "positive and distinctive mental state that reflects entrepreneurs' affective and cognitive experiences of engagement in entrepreneurship as the process of venture creation, and these experiences are characterized by positive judgments of the entrepreneurial life and good feelings about it." This links well with the current scholars who present well-being as hedonic

and eudaimonic (Pritchard *et al.*, 2020). As such, this study conceptualized wellbeing in terms of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing that captures life satisfaction, affect and psychological functioning. This is intended to bridge gaps in extant literature that have mostly focused on subjective wellbeing only (see GEM 2013; Shir *et al.*, 2019).

2.2 Entrepreneurial resilience and wellbeing

As of now, there is no universally recognized definition of entrepreneurial resilience among scholars. The concept is rooted from the Latin term *resilire* that means to *jump back* (Fatoki, 2018). Resilience can also be traced from physics where it refers to the ability of the materials to not to break on exposure to stroke (Ešoniš, 2015). The psychologists on the other hand refer to resilience as a person's ability to confidently deal with any disasters and pressures in their environment (Fletcher and Sarkar, 2013). Fatoki (2018) further defines resilience as an individual's capacity to recover from adversity and effectively handle obstacles to achieve positive outcomes. Entrepreneurial resilience is also described as the ability of an entrepreneur to effectively use their personal strengths and skills to adapt and maintain their functioning in the face of adversity which could be before, during and after experiencing challenges or setbacks (Williams *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, this study views entrepreneurial resilience as an entrepreneur's capacity to effectively handle challenging personal and market circumstances, as well as disruptive occurrences, while maintaining a focus on the future.

A review of existing literature shows that entrepreneurial resilience is a vital predictor of wellbeing. Specifically, in their study of why entrepreneurs often experience low, not high, levels of stress, Baron *et al.* (2016), found that entrepreneurs' psychological capital, of which resilience is part, promoted greater subjective well-being by decreasing the levels of stress encountered by the entrepreneurs through their entrepreneurial journey. Leon-Perez *et al.* (2016) also reported that resilience improves wellbeing through reducing burn out and lowering psychological distress. On the same note, Chatterjee *et al.* (2022) investigated women entrepreneurs at the base of the pyramid and revealed that resilience enabled the entrepreneurs to flourish and have a high wellbeing, they remained cheerful and determined in hard times. As such, it is hypothesized that:

H1. Entrepreneurial resilience significantly impacts the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs.

2.3 Hardiness and entrepreneurial wellbeing

Hardiness is conceptualized as a personality trait that is typically linked to an individual's capacity to effectively handle and react to stressful life events by using coping mechanisms that transform potentially unfavorable situations into chances for growth and learning (Buheji, 2023). Bartone *et al.* (2022) documented that hardiness serves as a safeguard against stress-related issues in many professions, encompassing executives, bus drivers, nurses, police officers, students and military personnel. In this study, we adopted Stein and Bartone (2020) conceptualization of hardiness as the trait that enhances the women entrepreneurs' ability to withstand and recover from stress.

Engagement with extant literature shows that several studies have been conducted on hardiness and wellbeing. For instance, Kowalski and Schermer (2019) demonstrated a correlation between hardiness and decreased anxiety levels. In addition, Bartone and Homish (2020) show that hardiness is associated with reduced levels of depression in various stressful situations. Similarly, in a study by Buheji (2023) about the people of Gaza, it was reported that hardiness enhanced mental health and psychological functioning among the

people of Gaza. This is because individuals with high levels of hardiness exhibit a robust sense of dedication and direction in life; they possess the belief that they have the ability to control or exert influence on the events they encounter. Furthermore, [Reknes et al. \(2018\)](#) found that hardiness enabled the employees to overcome the depression and anxiety that they face in their working environment, hence maintaining good mental health, using evidence from Norwegian oil and gas companies. It is also important to note that hardiness reduces cases of burnout among workers in the USA by lowering fatigue and demoralization due to excess work and the feeling of being unsuccessful in life, which affects their mental health ([Bartone et al., 2022](#)). On the contrary, a non-significant relationship was also found between hardiness and the employees' general health and wellbeing among employees in an Italian company by [Mazzetti et al. \(2019\)](#). Despite the several studies on hardiness, it is evident that less is done in investigating how it explicates the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be hypothesized that:

H1a. Hardiness significantly impacts the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs.

2.4 Optimism and entrepreneurial wellbeing

In this study, we conceptualized optimism as an anticipation that the future will bring a greater number of positive events than negative ones ([Parveen et al., 2016](#)). Scholars have presented optimism as a significant antecedent to different phenomena. Accordingly, [Bazargan-Hejazi et al. \(2023\)](#) found a positive association between optimism and wellbeing among medical college students. Optimism was also found to be positively related to the psychological wellbeing of adolescents in a study by [Parveen et al. \(2016\)](#). This is possible because with optimism, individuals are able to make more favorable evaluations, focus more on positive information about the future, show less worry about stressful future occurrences, possess a stronger drive to achieve their goals, and, as a result, experience improved wellbeing. In another study by [Ficher et al. \(2018\)](#), it was reported that optimism is associated with low levels of anxiety. Similarly, [Mohindru and Sharma \(2019\)](#) found a positive association between optimism and wellbeing among adults, as such individuals always avoid negative thoughts and just keep positive in all situations which improves their wellbeing. Despite the growing number of researchers on optimism and wellbeing among different people, we note that less focus has been paid to women entrepreneurs, yet they are vital in contributing to the social and economic transformation of developing economies the world over and yet through their entrepreneurial journeys, there are many ups and downs which affect their wellbeing. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H1b. Optimism significantly impacts the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs.

2.5 Resourcefulness and entrepreneurial wellbeing

Resourcefulness is generally perceived as personal and social ([Michaelis et al., 2022](#); [Zauszniewski, 2016](#)). In particular, personal resourcefulness refers to an individual's capacity to autonomously carry out their daily activities in challenging situations and their ability to use self-reliant techniques to manage hardships or obstacles. On the other hand, social resourcefulness is the ability to seek assistance from others when one is unable to handle a situation independently. This includes obtaining aid from professionals, as well as from family and friends ([Guo et al., 2019](#)). [Yang et al. \(2019\)](#) viewed resourcefulness as an individual's ability to effectively deal with distress by using cognitive and behavioral skills and drawing from both internal and external resources. In this study, resourcefulness is

viewed as the ability to perform one's everyday tasks independently and to seek help from others when unable to complete these tasks on one's own.

Researchers such as [Zauszniewski \(2016\)](#) reported that individuals who possess superior resourcefulness abilities are at a reduced risk of experiencing depression or exhibiting fewer symptoms of depression, and that resourcefulness is widely recognized as a beneficial psychosocial and behavioral asset for combating depression. Similarly, [Guo et al. \(2019\)](#), in their study about resourcefulness, stress and depression among elderly stroke patients in China revealed that resourcefulness helps reduce the harm of stress and depression among these individuals. [Yang et al. \(2017\)](#) studied depression, resourcefulness and self-harm behavior among adolescent students and reported that students who are more resourceful have fewer depression symptoms and are less likely to be involved in self-harm actions. This is possible because these students are able to consult with professionals around them, like teachers, counselors and family members, to overcome the challenges they face. From the above-mentioned investigation, less attention has been given to the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs, thus presenting a need for the current study that hypothesizes that:

H1c. Resourcefulness significantly impacts the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs.

3. Materials and methods

3.1 Design, sample and sampling technique

The study adopted a cross-sectional and correlational design to establish relationships between study variables. Data were gathered at a single point in time that is from January 2024 to March 2024 with aid of a self-administered questionnaire. A questionnaire was used because it fits big samples, promotes confidentiality, it is easy to interpret and it also saves time (Ornstein, 2014; [Yaddanapudi and Yaddanapudi, 2019](#)). The usage of questionnaires is very common in existing literature (see; [Sendawula, et al., 2023](#); [Najjinda et al., 2023](#); [Turyakira et al., 2024](#); [Tibaingana et al., 2024](#)). Data were gathered from 117 hospitality and tourism business that were purposively selected based on being; registered, a woman owned business; operating in the hospitality and tourism industry and availability to participate in the data collection exercise. The above method was used since we lacked a reliable sampling frame and the databases from government Ministries, Departments and Agencies such as the Ministry of Tourism and Uganda Tourism Board is incomplete. This method is common in related studies conducted in Uganda (see; [Katongole, Ahebwa, and Kawere, 2013](#); [Manzanera-Ruiz et al., 2023](#); [Dawa, and Jeppesen, 2016](#)). As such, the sampled businesses include; accommodation (16), foods and beverages (32), tour and travel (20), events and conferences (12), entertainment and recreation (13) and Souvenirs (24). The women business owners constituted the unit of inquiry since they have adequate experience and knowledge about their businesses, resilience and wellbeing.

3.2 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

To ensure validity of the questionnaire, it was developed using measurement scales from previous researchers like [Wiklund, et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Ayala and Manzano \(2014\)](#). Further still, the questionnaire was given to two academicians, two practitioners and two policymakers to test for the relevance and applicability of the questionnaire items. Content validity index was also calculated and found to be above 0.7 for all the study variables. The instrument was then revised to capture the suggestions made before proceeding to data collection. For reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for entrepreneurial resilience and wellbeing were calculated and found to be above 0.7 implying that the questionnaire was reliable.

3.3 Measurement and operationalization of variables

This study has entrepreneurial resilience and entrepreneurial wellbeing as the main variables. Information from respondents on both variables was obtained through a closed-ended questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale. As such, entrepreneurial wellbeing was operationalized in terms of life satisfaction, affect and psychological functioning (Wiklund *et al.*, 2019; Diener *et al.*, 2018). Entrepreneurial resilience, on the other hand, was measured and operationalized in terms of hardiness, optimism and resourcefulness (Ayala and Manzano, 2014; Fatoki, 2018; Bernard and Barbosa, 2016). As such, the detailed presentation of the measurement, operationalization and some items of the study variables is illustrated in Table 1.

3.4 Common methods bias

In this study, Podsakoff *et al.* (2003)'s procedural guidelines were adopted to minimize bias during the data collection process. Specifically, by defining unfamiliar items; avoiding vague concepts; keeping items simple and specific; avoiding double-barreled questions; and keeping sentences short and simple. The items were adapted from previously developed scales and refined further during the pre-test phase through interaction with potential respondents. In addition, we safeguarded the respondents' anonymity.

3.5 Data analysis

Analysis of the quantitative data was done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS.25) to run descriptive statistics, correlation and hierarchical regression to predict the explanatory power of entrepreneurial resilience and its dimensions on the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs using evidence from Uganda's hospitality and tourism industry.

4. Study results

4.1 Respondent characteristics

The study considered age group, marital status, level of education and experience in business as key characteristics of the respondents that participated in the study as presented in Table 2. Results in Table 2 indicate that most of the respondents are in the age bracket of 20–39 (33%) and are mostly single (31%). This shows that youths are mostly supported by the government in its economic interventions. It is also important to note that the majority of the respondents have secondary education as their highest level of education (36%). This shows that less educated people who can not compete favorably in the job market are highly considered in these programs, and the majority have experience operating their businesses for about 1–3 years.

4.2 Firm characteristics

The study considered legal form of business, years in operation, number of employees and nature of businesses as the characteristics of the businesses studied. The findings are presented in Table 3. As such, study results in Table 3 indicate that most of the hospitality and tourism businesses that participated in the pre-test are operating under the food and beverage subsector (27%), followed by those in support services (21%) and the least are under events and conferences (10%). This suggests that most women entrepreneurs running food and beverage businesses mostly benefit from government interventions. Concerning the legal form of business, most of the pre-tested businesses are operating as partnerships (52%), meaning that the government prioritizes women entrepreneurs who are working together as interventions as compared to those who are operating other legal forms of businesses. In terms of the number of employees, most of the businesses employ between 1 and 10 workers

Table 1. Measurement and operationalization of the study variables

Variable	Operational definition	Source	Measurement	No. of items	Sample questions asked
Entrepreneurial wellbeing	Hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing that captures life satisfaction, affect and psychological functioning	Wiklund et al. (2019)	Life satisfaction Affect	7 6	This business has enabled to provide clothing for my children; this business has enabled me to feed my family; this business has enabled me to educate my children I feel happy when running my business; I feel relaxed when operating my business; I feel inspired by my business
Entrepreneurial resilience	The entrepreneur's capacity to effectively handle challenging personal and market circumstances, as well as disruptive occurrences, while maintaining a focus on the future	Saad et al. (2021)	Psychological functioning Hardiness	10 5	I have many close friends with whom to share my concerns; I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality; I have really improved much as a person over the years When things look hopeless in my business, I don't give up; when am under pressure, I can focus and think clearly for my business; I prefer to take the lead in problem-solving for my business
			Optimism	7	I can handle unpleasant feelings in my business; I see the good side of things in my business; In my business, I believe things happen for a reason
			Resourcefulness	6	I know where to turn for help in my business; I take pride in my business achievements; I can adapt to changes in my business

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 2. Respondent characteristics

No.	Item	Frequency	%
1	Age bracket		
	20–29	38	33
	30–39	31	26
	40–49	20	17
	50–59	19	16
2	60 and above	9	8
	Level of education		
	Primary	12	10
	Secondary	42	36
	Diploma	27	23
3	Bachelors	27	23
	Masters	9	8
	Experience in business		
	Less than 1 year	15	13
	1 – three years	39	33
	4 – six years	24	21
	7 – nine years	28	24
	10 years and above	11	9

Notes(s): $n = 117$

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 3. Firm characteristics

No.	Item	Frequency	%
1	Type of business		
	Accommodation	16	14
	Foods and beverages	32	27
	Tour and travel	20	17
	Entertainment and recreation	13	11
	Events and conferences	12	10
2	Support services (souvenirs)	24	21
	Legal form of business		
	Sole proprietorship	39	33
3	Partnership	60	52
	Limited liability	18	15
4	Number of employees		
	1–10	60	51
	11–50	42	36
5	51–100	15	13
	Firm age		
	Less than 5 years	39	33
	5–9 years	53	45
	10 years and above	25	21

Notes(s): $n = 117$

Source(s): Authors' own work

(51%), denoting that most of the supported businesses are mostly small, with the goal of supporting them to grow and become bigger companies to support the country's social and economic transformation agenda. Likewise, most supported businesses have been in existence for a period of 5–9 years, showing that businesses that have tried to sustain their operations are supported to minimize challenges of boosting new businesses that are still grappling with newness issues.

4.3 Descriptive statistics

The study results in [Table 4](#) present the descriptive statistics for the study variables. The means and standard deviations for entrepreneurial wellbeing and resilience are 2.4863; 3.1341 and 1.13312; 0.81706 respectively; for hardiness, the mean and standard deviation are 3.5853 and 0.73526 respectively; and for optimism, the mean and standard deviations are 3.4433 and 1.21984, respectively. The mean and standard deviation for resourcefulness are 3.1738 and 1.21437, respectively. As such, [Field \(2009\)](#) indicates that the estimated means accurately represent the data, while the standard deviations, on the other hand, show the degree to which the means accurately represent the data. Thus, the calculated means adequately represent the data in this study. In the same vein, skewness results are presented and they are close to zero, indicating that the data is normally distributed.

4.4 Correlational analysis results

We conducted correlation analysis in this study to assess discriminant validity and to present the initial findings about the relationship between the study variables (see [Table 5](#)). According to the study results, the association between the study variables is not high, confirming that they are distinctively different. Regarding the correlational results in [Table 4](#), there is a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial resilience and the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs ($r = 0.665^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that a positive change in the level of entrepreneurial resilience will result in a positive change in the level of wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, hardiness has a positive and significant relationship with women entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial wellbeing ($r = 0.699^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This shows that a unit change in hardiness results in a 69.9% change in the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. In the same vein, optimism is significantly and positively associated with the entrepreneurial wellbeing of women entrepreneurs ($r = 0.533^{*}$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that a unit change in optimism translates into 53.3% alternations in the entrepreneurial wellbeing of women. Finally, resourcefulness is positively and significantly related to the

Table 4. Descriptive statistics

Variables	N Stat	Min Stat	Max Stat	Mean Stat	SD Stat
Entrepreneurial wellbeing	117	2.85	5.00	2.4863	1.13312
Affect	117	1.10	4.00	3.6242	1.23549
Psychological functioning	117	1.85	5.00	3.4012	1.12366
Life satisfaction	117	1.00	5.00	4.2336	1.15333
Hardiness	117	1.63	4.00	3.5853	0.73526
Optimism	117	2.13	5.00	3.4433	1.21984
Resourcefulness	117	1.17	5.00	3.1738	1.21437
Entrepreneurial resilience	117	2.57	5.00	3.1341	0.81706
Valid N (listwise)	117				

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 5. Correlational analysis results

Study variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Legal form of business (1)	1										
Number of employees (2)	0.449**	1									
Firm age (3)	0.468**	0.477**	1								
Hardiness (4)	-0.019	0.064	0.071	1							
Optimistic (5)	0.023	-0.016	0.030	0.655**	1						
Resourcefulness (6)	-0.012	0.005	-0.097	0.652**	0.604**	1					
Entrepreneurial resilience (7)	-0.001	0.015	-0.006	0.856**	0.879**	0.873**	1				
Life satisfaction (8)	0.080	0.188*	0.131	0.553**	0.372**	0.368**	0.481**	1			
Affect (10)	-0.060	0.079	-0.006	0.595**	0.483**	0.491**	0.592**	0.623**	1		
Psychological functioning (11)	-0.063	0.052	-0.020	0.721**	0.571**	0.582**	0.706**	0.598**	0.832**	1	
Entrepreneurial wellbeing (12)	-0.016	0.120	0.040	0.699**	0.533**	0.579**	0.665**	0.734**	0.823**	0.709**	1

Note(s): **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source(s): Authors' own work

wellbeing of women entrepreneurs ($r = 0.579^{***}$, $p < 0.01$), denoting that a change in resourcefulness results in a 57.9% improvement in the entrepreneurial wellbeing of women. Regarding the control variables that include the legal form of business, firm size (number of employees) and firm age, none of them is significantly related to the entrepreneurial wellbeing of women, implying that the model is not affected by the confounding factors.

4.5 Regression analysis

In this study, Hierarchical regression analysis was run to validate our hypotheses. This is because, it effectively determines which predictor variable contributes the most to variations in the outcome variable and demonstrates the incremental contribution of an additional independent variable in explaining the dependent variable (Field, 2009). The usage of hierarchical regression analysis is common in extant literature (see; Sendawula *et al.*, 2021; Bananuka *et al.*, 2022; Kezaabu *et al.*, 2024). This is because correlation results only offer initial indications of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In Model 1 (see Table 6), we controlled for legal form of the business, firm age and firm size as suggested by Bartov *et al.* (2000) who asserted that failure to control for confounding factors may make some study hypotheses rejected when they would have been accepted. As such, study results indicate that all the control variables are insignificant in explicating the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. This confirms that the confounding factors have no impact on our model.

We incorporated entrepreneurial resilience into Model 2 and discovered that it was significant in predicting the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs in Uganda. At this point, the model explicates 43.9% of wellbeing (R^2 change = 0.439). Thus, *H1*, which states that entrepreneurial resilience significantly impacts the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs is confirmed and supported. In Model 3, we entered hardiness in the equation and it predicts 47.7% of wellbeing (R^2 change = 0.477). As a result, for a unit change in hardiness, the

Table 6. Hierarchical regression analysis results

Item	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Tolerance	VIF
<i>Constant</i>	4.564	1.328	1.129	1.046	0.970	Na	Na
<i>Independent variables</i>							
Entrepreneurial resilience		0.663**				1	1
Hardiness			0.695**	0.598**	0.547**	0.449	2.227
Optimism				0.146	0.112	0.509	1.966
Resourcefulness					0.111	0.495	2.019
<i>Control variables</i>							
Legal form	-0.089	-0.086	-0.030	-0.042	-0.048	Na	Na
Firm age	0.157	0.141	0.112	0.125	0.121	Na	Na
Firm size	0.007	0.017	-0.049	-0.047	-0.026	Na	Na
<i>Model summary</i>							
<i>R</i>	0.143	0.678	0.706	0.714	0.718		
<i>R square</i>	0.021	0.46	0.498	0.510	0.516		
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	-0.005	0.441	0.480	0.488	0.490		
<i>R square change</i>	0.021	0.439	0.477	0.012	0.006		
<i>Model F</i>	0.791	23.851	27.762	23.090	19.539		
<i>Durbin Watson</i>					1.926		

Note(s): **Significance at the 0.01 level; Dependent variable: Entrepreneurial Wellbeing

Source(s): Authors' own work

wellbeing of entrepreneurs' changes by 0.695 units. Therefore, H1a which states that hardiness significantly impacts the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs is validated and supported.

This above-captioned results are not surprising due the fact that in Uganda, women are very committed entrepreneurs who work hard to balance business and family responsibilities with the goal of retaining their autonomy. In addition, women entrepreneurs face multiple challenges revolving around business resources, handling family-based responsibilities and societal expectations. This strengthens their skillset in terms of decision-making, networking, work scheduling, employee relations and family management. In turn, women entrepreneurs become more competent, attain person growth that demonstrate improved psychological functioning.

Study results in Model 4 and 5, however indicate that optimism and resourcefulness insignificantly impact the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. This is because optimism and resourcefulness explain wellbeing by 1.2% and 0.6% respectively with insignificant beta values of 0.146 and 0.111 respectively and hence H1b and H1c were not confirmed and supported as initially conceptualized.

The insignificance of the optimism could be attributed to the fact that despite the women entrepreneur's positive attitude and beliefs in running their businesses in challenging situations, the social, economic and political situation in Uganda undermine their hopefulness. In particular, the poor economic situation makes a number of customers buy items on credit and most of them usually do not pay, resulting into continuous losses that result into low levels of optimism among women entrepreneurs. Socially, the Ugandan culture is not supportive in terms of starting, operating and sustaining a business to the extent that even when women entrepreneurs need additional capital to boost their businesses, they are not always supported. As a result, they go for bank loans that put them on pressure as well as constraining business performance, which leads to stress, depression, sleeplessness and failure to meet business and family-based needs and responsibilities.

Concerning resourcefulness, its insignificance could be due to the fact that as women entrepreneurs work hard to boost their wellbeing using the little resources, it is common in Uganda for spouses to misuse women owned resources. In particular, some spouses use women owned businesses to get bank loans and at the end, the business is taken up by the bank. Others use capital for their wives to solve other personal challenges with less hope of paying it back. Moreover, resources in form of assets such as business land are sold by men to achieve their goals instead of supporting their wives to grow their business as strategic pathway for attaining improved wellbeing.

We also conducted tests for multicollinearity at two different levels. To start with, we assessed the presence of strong associations among the study variables and found that they are within an acceptable range, specifically not over 0.8 (Field, 2009). In addition, we performed the Durbin-Watson test, which was found to be 1.926. Field suggests that a Durbin-Watson value of 2 is optimal. Given that our study's Durbin-Watson value is near 2, it is highly probable that there are no serial correlations. Finally, we performed other variance inflation factors (VIF) and tolerance values as further multicollinearity tests. The study findings presented in Table 6 indicate that the VIF is less than 10, while the tolerance values are greater than 0.2, which is considered acceptable according to Field (2009).

5. Discussion

The study results indicate that entrepreneurial resilience significantly impacts the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. This means that resilience as a global variable is a significant antecedent to the entrepreneurial wellbeing of women in Uganda's hospitality and tourism

industry. As such, when women entrepreneurs demonstrate resilience by bouncing back in case of uncertainties and do not give up while running their business, they are likely overcome any stressful incidences and also attain their desires and goal hence registering high levels of wellbeing. The study findings are in agreement with [Newman et al. \(2018\)](#) who revealed a strong relationship between entrepreneurial resilience and the wellbeing of entrepreneurs. Similarly, [Baron et al. \(2016\)](#) in their study on business founders in the USA also reported that resilience promoted the wellbeing of entrepreneurs. This is true because once the entrepreneurs are able to face hard time, bounce back after challenges, they can overcome any stress, anxiety and depression. In another study on the resilience and wellbeing of nursing students in Hong Kong, [Chow et al. \(2018\)](#) reported resilience to be a significant predictor of wellbeing, a finding that is in line with the work of [Shatté et al. \(2017\)](#) who postulated that resilience is positively related to stress, depression and other business outcomes in challenging business environments.

Study results also show that hardiness significantly impacts the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. This means that when women entrepreneurs have the ability to focus and clearly think about their businesses, bounce back in case of uncertainty and comprehensively deal with all that happens, they will keep on trying to run their businesses despite the challenges and learn from their failure hence improving on their wellbeing. Additionally, women entrepreneurs with high levels of hardiness are able to develop confidence in making their decisions (autonomy), stay positive and focused on their goals (sense of purpose in life) and build their competencies through their networks which are indicators improved psychological functioning. Also with hardiness, the women entrepreneurs are able to overcome stressors which contributes to their happiness. Our results are in agreement with [Buheji \(2023\)](#), who reported that hardiness enhanced mental health and psychological functioning among the people of Gaza. This is because individuals with high levels of hardiness exhibit a robust sense of dedication and direction in life; they possess the belief that they have the ability to control or exert influence on the events they encounter. This finding also resonates well with [Bartone et al. \(2022\)](#), who reported that hardiness reduces cases of burnout among workers in the USA by lowering fatigue and demoralization due to excess work and the feeling of being unsuccessful in life, which affects their mental health.

Contrary to the initial hypothesis, our results demonstrate that resourcefulness does not significantly impact the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. This shows that even when women entrepreneurs try to be flexible with the ability to adjust to any situation, it may not positively translate into improved wellbeing. In addition, having other people like professionals, family members and friends to engage with in case of any business issue may not also enable women entrepreneurs to be fully supported to overcome stress and depression to improve their wellbeing. In the Ugandan context, these findings are not surprising because women entrepreneurs find it difficult to get support even from their spouses as a conduit for attaining improved wellbeing. Moreover, most resource personnels especially the professionals like business coaches, lawyers and financial advisors are very expensive to hire in supporting operations of women-owned businesses. Furthermore, it is a common practice in Uganda that people including relatives may not want to see others grow and develop, as such they do whatever it takes to demotivate and discourage them by misusing businesses resources especially finance into nonproductive activities to a point of stressing them and losing morale in operating businesses.

Study results disagree with [Yang et al. \(2017\)](#) who indicated that students who are more resourceful have less depression symptoms and are less likely to be involved in self-harm actions. The contradiction with our findings could be attributed to the fact that [Yang et al.](#)'s findings were based on students whose needs, wellbeing enhancers and stressors are

significantly different from those of women entrepreneurs. In addition, students are not engaged in entrepreneurial activities and as a result, they mostly need support from their teachers and not other professionals that have to be paid and facilitated separately to provide support mechanisms needed to attain improved wellbeing.

Relatedly, optimism was found to insignificantly impact the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. This finding is not surprising due to the fact that even when women entrepreneurs have positive feelings about whatever is happening in their businesses, when such events are persistent, women entrepreneurs get overwhelmed, stressed, depressed and eventually lose their sense of purpose in life an indicator of low wellbeing. Based on our implicit knowledge of the study context, the stereotype among Ugandans that women cannot manage businesses while fulfilling their family-based responsibilities of giving birth and taking care of the children affects the hopefulness in operating successful businesses as a strategic pathway for improving their wellbeing. This finding contradicts with the findings of [Mohindru and Sharma \(2019\)](#), [Bazargan-Hejazi et al. \(2023\)](#). The disagreement could be attributed to the fact that the above-mentioned studies were conducted among adults and medical college students, whose characteristics and experiences are significantly different from those of female entrepreneurs since entrepreneurial journey is a roller coaster ([De Cock et al., 2020](#)) with many different challenges as compared to other professions and endeavors.

6. Summary and conclusion

This study aimed at establishing the impact of entrepreneurial resilience on the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs, and how individual dimensions of entrepreneurial resilience (hardiness, optimism and resourcefulness) explicitly affect the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs in the hospitality and tourism industry of Uganda. This was realized through a questionnaire survey in which quantitative data was gathered from 117 women entrepreneurs from Uganda's hospitality and tourism industry. According to this study, entrepreneurial resilience as a global variable significantly impacts the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. In addition, hardiness significantly impacts the entrepreneurial wellbeing of women, unlike optimism and resourcefulness that are insignificant in impacting wellbeing of women entrepreneurs at the dimension level.

7. Practical implication

Based on the research findings and discussion, this paper provides valuable contributions to academia, policy and the business community. Hence, this study adds a unique perspective to the current understanding of entrepreneurial wellbeing, as entrepreneurship scholars have not fully explored resilience and its dimensions. In addition, the study presents hardiness as a vital dimension in impacting the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs, unlike optimism and resourcefulness. Thus, women entrepreneurs should engage in peer support networks to access relevance resources such as finance, information, emotional support and assets that are vital in fostering their hardiness, optimism and resourcefulness. In addition, women entrepreneurs should receive training on stress management that is crucial in enabling them to manage challenging situations and events. This will enable women entrepreneurs not to give up while operating their businesses amidst the challenges, deal with whatever comes their way and take unpopular decisions if they are registered for improved wellbeing.

For policymakers, they should offer resilience training to women entrepreneurs. This training will unlock the entrepreneurs' ability to take bold decisions and become strong risk takers so that even if they are not certain of what is likely to come out of their businesses, they persistently operate them to attain greater success, which is vital in fostering their wellbeing. In addition, the above-captioned training should integrate resilience-building with

subsidized access to professional advisory services such as legal, accounting, banking, insurance, business consultancy, marketing, ICT and human resource training services to enhance resourcefulness in women owned businesses.

Similarly, policymakers, especially the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, should encourage women entrepreneurs to become more confident and join social and business groups with the goal of establishing relationships with different stakeholders. This will enable them to get access to multiple financial, material and physical resources that are vital in their business operations reducing cases of stress, depression. It will further make their businesses successful hence improving their personal growth, self-acceptance as well as sense of purpose in life.

8. Limitations and areas for future research

Nonetheless, there are some limitations to this study that merit investigation in subsequent studies. The study's design was cross-sectional, which constrained its scope to a specific moment during the measurement period. The need for a longitudinal study arises from the inevitable evolution of perceptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, the exclusive quantitative nature of the study necessitates the use of mixed methods or qualitative approaches in future studies to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial wellbeing of women in Uganda. Moreover, the current study focused on the hospitality and tourism industry, yet women entrepreneurs operate in other sectors of the Ugandan economy that are worth investigating. These include; the agricultural, trade, industry and manufacturing with the goal of validating the study's findings. In addition, future studies can explore gender-specific societal pressures that might uniquely affect women entrepreneurs' optimism and resourcefulness in Uganda since this study found them to be insignificant in explaining the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. Finally, the study predicts 49% of the variance in the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs, indicating the need for future research to explore additional antecedents of the entrepreneurial wellbeing of women entrepreneurs in Uganda and other contexts.

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