Business Milieus and Core Self-Evaluation in Entrepreneurial Resilience: A Study of Small-Scale Entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo, Nigeria

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Abstract: The ability of small-scale businesses in Nigeria to bounce back from adversity is a crucial factor in their long-term viability and success. This study investigated the predictive roles of business milieus and core self-evaluation (CSE) in entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo, Nigeria. Employing an ex post facto research design, data were collected from 226 entrepreneurs operating within the University campuses. Data were collected using the Core Self-Evaluation Scale (CSES) and the Entrepreneurial Resilience Scale (ERS). Data were analysed with simple percentage, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple regression. The findings revealed that two of the business milieus investigated in the study (business type and the number of employees) significantly predicted entrepreneurial resilience, while business registration status and age did not predict entrepreneurial resilience. Additionally, regression analysis revealed the significance of three dimensions of CSE in entrepreneurial resilience, with self-esteem, locus of control, and self-efficacy emerging as significant predictors. Recommendations included incorporating modules on building self-esteem, locus of control, and self-efficacy in entrepreneurship training programmes and tailoring business support services and policies to enhance resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs. The study contributes to understanding the key factors that impact the ability of small-scale entrepreneurs to overcome obstacles, offering practical guidance for developing targeted interventions that can help them thrive and achieve their business goals.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Resilience, Business Milieus, Core Self-Evaluation, Small-Scale Entrepreneurs, University of Uyo.

I. Introduction

Small-scale businesses are critical to the Nigerian economy, playing a vital role in job creation, economic growth, and poverty reduction (Ogunsiji, Oyelana, & Olofinyehun, 2020). These businesses, often operated by individuals or families, can range from roadside kiosks to small manufacturing firms (Oyelana & Adeleke, 2018). They provide essential goods and services to local communities, and their importance cannot be overstated. Moreover, small-scale businesses are often the lifeblood of the informal economy, providing a means of livelihood for millions of Nigerians.

In the context of university campuses, small-scale businesses play a vital role in providing goods and services to students, staff, and faculty. These businesses, often operated by students or recent graduates, can range from food vendors to stationery shops. They provide essential services, such as printing and photocopying, and offer a convenient way for students to purchase necessities. Also, small-scale businesses on university campuses are often a key part of the student experience, providing a sense of community and convenience.

However, small-scale businesses in Nigeria often face significant challenges, including limited access to resources, infrastructure, and markets (Schutte & Mberi, 2020). These challenges can lead to the closure of numerous small enterprises, which can have a ripple effect on the entire economy. Despite these challenges, many entrepreneurs have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. They have found innovative ways to succeed in a rapidly changing environment, often by developing alternative marketing strategies. Some have shifted to platform-based marketing, establishing online selling channels to reach customers (Bryce et al., 2022). Others have merged with other small businesses to form strategic partnerships, enabling them to share resources and reduce costs. These effective responses have been associated with resilience and may enable small-scale businesses to thrive in the long term.

Resilience is characterised by the capacity to adapt to rapid and unexpected changes in the environment, as well as the ability to overcome difficulties and recover from traumatic experiences. Consequently, entrepreneurial resilience refers to the ability of entrepreneurs to adjust to changes in their business environment and recover from adverse business situations. This form of resilience involves a dynamic and evolving process through which entrepreneurs acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities that help them face an uncertain future with positivity, creativity, and optimism, relying on their available resources.

Lee and Wang (2017) define entrepreneurial resilience as the capacity to overcome traumatic business events and recover from despair, achieving success despite adverse circumstances. This implies that resilient entrepreneurs can rebound from failure and endure challenging times in business. These entrepreneurs are typically prepared to adapt to changes in business operations,

enhancing their chances of success. Research highlights the significance of entrepreneurial resilience, emphasising its correlation with business success and the ability to overcome business adversities (Miao & Ma, 2016; Ayala & Manzano, 2014).

Further research supports the critical role of resilience. Lee and Kim (2017) found that entrepreneurs with high resilience levels are better equipped to navigate crises and sustain their businesses. Similarly, Luthans et al. (2015) highlighted that resilient entrepreneurs are more likely to develop innovative solutions and capitalise on opportunities arising from challenging situations. According to Coutu (2002), resilient individuals possess three characteristics: they accept reality, possess a deep belief that life is meaningful, and possess an uncanny ability to improvise. In addition, studies by Jena and Sahoo (2019) indicate that entrepreneurial resilience is not just about surviving but thriving amid adversity. Entrepreneurs with a high degree of resilience can use their experiences to foster growth and innovation, thus driving their businesses forward even in the face of significant obstacles. This adaptability and forward-thinking approach are vital for small-scale entrepreneurs, who often operate with limited resources and face more significant market volatility.

There is a paucity of research on how business milieu factors, such as business registration status, number of employees, business type, and business age, relate to entrepreneurial resilience. Business milieu refers to the external environment in which a business operates, including factors such as the regulatory environment, market conditions, and social norms. Business registration status, for instance, may impact entrepreneurial resilience by influencing access to resources, such as financing and training. Formal registration may provide entrepreneurs with greater access to these resources, enabling them to better withstand challenges and adapt to changing circumstances. On the other hand, informal registration or lack of registration may limit access to these resources, making it more difficult for entrepreneurs to bounce back from setbacks. The number of employees may also influence entrepreneurial resilience by affecting the ability of the business to adapt to changing circumstances. Businesses with more employees may have a greater capacity to absorb shocks and respond to changes in the market, whereas businesses with fewer employees may be more vulnerable to disruptions. Business type may also play a role in entrepreneurial resilience, as certain types of businesses may be more resilient than others. For example, businesses in the service sector may be more resilient than those in the manufacturing sector, as they are less dependent on physical infrastructure and may be more able to adapt to changing market conditions. Finally, business age may influence entrepreneurial resilience by affecting the level of experience and knowledge that entrepreneurs have acquired over time. Older businesses may have developed more robust systems and processes, enabling them to better withstand challenges and adapt to changing circumstances.

Core self-evaluation (CSE), another potential factor in entrepreneurial resilience, is a personality trait that has been linked to various outcomes, including job performance, well-being, and job satisfaction. It refers to an individual's fundamental self-perception, encompassing their beliefs and evaluations of themselves, their abilities, and their overall worth (Judge & Bono, 2001). CSE consists of four primary dimensions: self-esteem, locus of control, emotional stability, and self-efficacy (Judge & Bono, 2001).

Self-esteem reflects how individuals perceive themselves, with high self-esteem individuals viewing themselves positively and low self-esteem individuals being self-critical. Locus of control refers to individuals' beliefs about their ability to influence life events, with internal locus of control individuals believing they can shape outcomes and external locus of control individuals seeing events as determined by chance. Emotional stability pertains to individuals' ability to manage stress and emotions, with high emotional stability individuals handling emotions effectively and low stability individuals struggling. Self-efficacy reflects individuals' confidence in their ability to accomplish tasks, with high self-efficacy individuals tackling challenges and persisting despite setbacks.

Research has consistently demonstrated an association between Core Self-Evaluation (CSE) and entrepreneurial resilience. For instance, Duan et al. (2020) found that entrepreneurs with higher levels of self-esteem, locus of control, and self-efficacy reported higher levels of resilience, which in turn was associated with better business performance. Similarly, Sánchez-García (2018) reported that self-esteem, emotional stability, and self-efficacy were positively associated with psychological well-being and resilience among entrepreneurs. Furthermore, Okon and Etuk (2020) found that entrepreneurs with high levels of self-esteem, locus of control, and self-efficacy had greater entrepreneurial resilience, enabling them to persevere in the face of challenges and setbacks. These findings suggest that the dimensions of CSE play a crucial role in fostering entrepreneurial resilience. By cultivating a strong sense of self-worth (self-esteem), believing in one's ability to control outcomes (locus of control), maintaining emotional stability, and possessing confidence in one's abilities (self-efficacy), entrepreneurs can develop the resilience needed to navigate the uncertainties and risks associated with entrepreneurial activities.

Despite the importance of small-scale entrepreneurs to the economy, many small-scale entrepreneurs struggle to adapt to changing circumstances and bounce back from setbacks. While entrepreneurial resilience is critical for overcoming these challenges, there is a lack of understanding of the factors that influence entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

Specifically, the role of business milieus (such as business registration status, number of employees, business type, and business age) and core self-evaluation (including self-esteem, locus of control, emotional stability, and self-efficacy) in entrepreneurial resilience remains underexplored, especially among on-campus entrepreneurs. This knowledge gap is problematic because it limits the development of effective strategies to support small-scale entrepreneurs and promote their resilience.

Furthermore, the University of Uyo, Nigeria, provides a unique context for studying entrepreneurial resilience, as it is a hub for entrepreneurial activity and innovation. However, there is a lack of research on the specific challenges and opportunities faced by small-scale entrepreneurs at the university, and how these factors influence their resilience.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the role of business milieus and the dimensions of core self-evaluation in entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested based on the research objectives

1. Business Milieus (business registration status, number of employees, business type, and business age) will independently and jointly predict entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo.
2. The four dimensions of CSE (self-esteem, locus of control, emotional stability, and self-efficacy) will independently and jointly predict entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo.

II. Method/Materials

The selection of an appropriate methodology is the cornerstone of any research. This part encompasses various sections detailing the techniques and procedures employed to conduct the study.

Research Design

This study employed an ex post facto design to gather data on core self-evaluation and entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs within the University of Uyo Campuses. The ex post facto design was chosen because it enables the collection of data on variables that have already transpired or been assessed in a natural setting. This design is well-suited for examining relationships between variables that are not under the researcher's control. Since the characteristics of small-scale entrepreneurs and their businesses are beyond the researcher's influence, the ex post facto design was deemed appropriate for this study.

Population of Study

The population of the study comprised small-scale entrepreneurs who had been operating their businesses for at least one year within the University of Uyo Campuses.

Participants

The study sampled a total of 226 participants, consisting of 178 (78.8%) males and 48 (21.2%) females from various small-scale enterprises situated within the University of Uyo Campuses. The sample size for this study was determined using the Taro Yamane formula, which considers the population size (516) and desired level of confidence to estimate the appropriate sample size. By applying this formula, the optimal sample size required to achieve reliable and statistically significant results was determined. Participants' age ranged from 20 to 48 years with a mean age of 30.65 years.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria/Sampling Technique

To ensure the study's validity and reliability, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Inclusion criteria required participants to be small-scale entrepreneurs actively operating within the University of Uyo Campuses, to have been in business for a minimum of one year, and to be at least 18 years old, ensuring they had the necessary maturity and legal capacity to participate in the research. The exclusion criteria ruled out individuals who did not meet these conditions. Selecting participants from small-scale enterprises within the University of Uyo Campuses provided a focused and contextually relevant sample for the study. The sampling technique employed in this study was a multi-stage purposive approach. Initially, three out of the four campuses were randomly selected for inclusion in the study: The Annex, Main, and Town campuses. Subsequently, within the selected campuses, the main participants for the study were chosen using purposive sampling. This approach facilitated the targeted selection of participants from within the selected campuses based on the established inclusion criteria.

Data Collection Procedure

The study was conducted in two phases – Pilot study and Main Study.

Pilot Study: Before the commencement of the main study, a pilot study was conducted to test the feasibility and refine the research procedures. The pilot study aimed to assess the clarity, comprehensibility, and appropriateness of the research instruments and protocols. A convenience sample of 30 participants drawn from the Ime Umana Campus of the University (one of the university's campuses), were purposively selected for the pilot study. Participants were administered the research instruments over a period of 3 days, and collected data were analysed. The two instruments displayed robust psychometric properties, and all items were retained for the main study.

Training of Research Assistants: Prior to the initiation of data collection, the research team undertook a rigorous training program to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives and methodological protocols. This training encompassed a detailed examination of the research design, emphasizing the importance of ethical considerations and the

implementation of protocols to guarantee the protection of participant confidentiality and privacy. The research assistants received instruction on the effective administration of research instruments, as well as strategies for navigating potential challenges that may arise during the data collection process. Particular attention was devoted to the principles of informed consent, ensuring that participants were fully aware of their rights and the implications of their involvement in the study. This training program served to equip the research assistants with the requisite skills and knowledge, thereby enhancing the overall quality and reliability of the study's findings.

Main Study: The study employed a purposive sampling strategy to select a cohort of small-scale entrepreneurs, comprising photocopy operators and online registration entrepreneurs, situated within the three campuses of the University of Uyo, namely Town Campus, Annex Campus, and Permanent Campuses located along Ikpa road and Nwainba Road, Uyo. Potential participants were identified from the pool of small-scale entrepreneurs operating within the specified campuses. Subsequently, the researcher, accompanied by four research assistants, engaged with the identified participants to elucidate the study's objectives, methodologies, and expectations. Participants were thoroughly informed about their rights, including the right to decline participation, the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and the right to confidentiality. Furthermore, participants were assured that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Upon obtaining informed consent, participants were provided with a self-administered questionnaire, which they completed and returned to the research team. The data collected from these small-scale entrepreneurs within the University of Uyo campuses constituted the primary dataset for the research study. The data collection process spanned a period of three weeks, with one week dedicated to each campus. A total of 240 questionnaires were administered, of which 233 were retrieved, and 226 were correctly completed. Seven questionnaires were deemed incomplete and were subsequently discarded. This yielded a response rate of 94.16%.

III. Instrumentation

To facilitate a thorough examination of the study's objectives, a well-structured questionnaire was utilized, comprising two distinct instruments. Specifically, the questionnaire incorporated the Core Self-Evaluation Scale (CSES) developed by Judge et al. (2003), which assesses an individual's fundamental self-evaluations, and the Entrepreneurial Resilience Scale (ERS) developed by Li et al. (2015), which measures an entrepreneur's capacity to withstand and recover from adversity.

The Core Self-Evaluation Scale (CSES) is a 12-item instrument designed to assess an individual's fundamental appraisal of their self-worth, effectiveness, and capability. The scale employs a five-point Likert format, ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"). The items are scored both directly and reversely. Specifically, items 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 are scored directly, whereas items 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 are scored reversely. The normative value of the instrument is 26.50, indicating that scores above 26.50 reflect high core self-evaluation, while scores below 26.50 suggest low core self-evaluation. The CSES has demonstrated high reliability, with a reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .84 (Judge et al., 2003). Furthermore, the instrument has been validated across various populations, including employees, university students, and clinical populations (Wanous et al., 2004; Jepsen et al., 2016; Harms et al., 2017). In the present study, the CSES yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .73 following a pilot study, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

The Entrepreneurial Resilience Scale (ERS) is a self-report instrument designed to assess an entrepreneur's capacity to cope with stress, adapt to change, and recover from setbacks. Developed by Li et al. (2015), the ERS comprises 22 items, which are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"). Higher scores on the ERS indicate greater entrepreneurial resilience, with possible total scores ranging from 22 to 110.

The ERS has demonstrated excellent psychometric properties, including good internal consistency (α =.35-.71) and test-retest reliability (r =.72) (Li et al., 2015). The scale has also exhibited high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .92 and an intraclass correlation coefficient of .86. Furthermore, the ERS has demonstrated convergent and discriminant validity in relation to other measures of psychological well-being and job satisfaction among entrepreneurs (Li et al., 2015; Li, Song, & Wang, 2015; Smith & Jones, 2018). A higher score on the ERS indicates greater entrepreneurial resilience. In the present study, the ERS yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .90 following a pilot study, indicating excellent internal consistency. This suggests that the instrument is reliable and suitable for use in the present research context.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the participants were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression were employed to examine the hypotheses formulated in the study.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to rigorous ethical standards, ensuring the protection of participants' rights and dignity. The following ethical principles were upheld:

Informed Consent: Participants provided informed consent prior to their involvement in the study. They received comprehensive information about the research, including its objectives, scope, and potential implications. This ensured that participants fully understood the study and its requirements before providing their consent.

Confidentiality: The confidentiality of participants' data was strictly maintained. Measures were implemented to safeguard the privacy of participants, including coding of identifiable data and restricted access to raw data. Only authorized personnel had access to the data, and no personal details were shared or disclosed to third parties.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants were under no obligation to take part. They were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any consequences. Participants were assured that their decision to participate or withdraw would not affect their businesses, the University, or any other entity.

IV. Results

This section presents information on the results of data analyzed in this research

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Business Profile of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Registration Status		
Registered	29	12.8%
Unregistered	197	87.2%
Number of Employees		
0-5 employees	189	83.6%
Above 6 employees	37	16.4%
Business Type		
Online Registration	84	37.2%
Groceries	32	14.2%
Stationaries	32	14.2%
Photography	22	9.7%
Computer Services	56	24.8%
Business Age		
Below 5 years	133	58.8%
5 years and above	93	41.2%
Total	**226**	**100**

The data presented in Table 1 above provide insights into the demographic and business characteristics of small-scale entrepreneurs within the University of Uyo campuses. In terms of the registration status of their businesses, a relatively small proportion of businesses, 29 (12.8%), were registered, while the majority, 197 (87.2%), were unregistered. The Table further revealed that 189 (83.6%) entrepreneurs had 5 or fewer employees, while 37 (16.4%) entrepreneurs had more than 6 employees. Analysis of business types indicates that the most prevalent category was online registration services, accounting for 37.2% of the sample. Groceries and stationery comprised 14.2% each, followed by photography services at 9.7%, and computer services at 24.8%. Regarding the duration of business operations, the majority of entrepreneurs (58.8%) reported having been in business for less than 5 years, while 41.2% reported 5 years or more of operation.

Table 2: Zero Order Correlation Matrix of Study's Variables Among Small-Scale Entrepreneurs within the University of Uyo Campuses

		RS	**BT**	**BA**	**NoE**	**SE**	**LoC**	**ES**	**SEF**
RS	r								
	Sig								
	N	226							
BT	r	.056							
	sig	.406							
	N	226	226						
BA	r	-.011	-.067						

	Sig	.874	.318					
	N	226	226	226				
NoE	r	-.076	-.102	-.076				
	Sig.	.253	.125	.253				
	N	226	226	226	226			
SE	r	-.035	.029	.052	-.133*			
	Sig.	.600	.664	.440	.046			
	N	226	226	226	226	226		
LoC	r	-.022	-.025	-.067	-.114	.056		
	Sig.	.740	.704	.318	.086	.403		
	N	226	226	226	226	226	226	
ES	r	-.023	-.032	.003	-.052	.017	.129	
	Sig.	.734	.635	.960	.436	.797	.053	
	N	226	226	226	226	226	226	226
SEF	r	.183**	-.055	.011	.030	-.013	-.042	-.025
	Sig.	.006	.411	.871	.652	.848	.530	.714
	N	226	226	226	226	226	226	226

N/B: **RS** = Registration Status, **BT** = Business Type, **NoE** = Number of Employees, **BA** = Business Age, **SE** = Self-Esteem, **LoC** = Locus of Control, **ES** = Emotional Stability, **SEF** = Self-Efficacy

Result presented in Table 2 above indicates that registration status exhibited no significant correlation with business type (r = 0.056, p = 0.406), years of business (r = -0.011, p = 0.874), business age (r = -0.076, p = 0.253), self-esteem (r = -0.035, p = 0.600), locus of control (r = -0.022, p = 0.740), or emotional stability (r = -0.023, p = 0.734). however, it showed a significant positive correlation with self-efficacy (r = 0.183**, p = 0.006). business type did not significantly correlate with years of business (r = -0.067, p = 0.318), business age (r = -0.102, p = 0.125), self-esteem (r = 0.029, p = 0.664), locus of control (r = -0.025, p = 0.704), emotional stability (r = -0.032, p = 0.635), or self-efficacy (r = -0.055, p = 0.411). Years of business showed no significant correlation with business age (r = -0.076, p = 0.253), self-esteem (r = 0.052, p = 0.440), locus of control (r = -0.067, p = 0.318), emotional stability (r = 0.003, p = 0.960), or self-efficacy (r = 0.011, p = 0.871). Business age showed no significant correlation with self-esteem (r = -0.133*, p = 0.046), locus of control (r = -0.114, p = 0.086), emotional stability (r = -0.052, p = 0.436), or self-efficacy (r = 0.030, p = 0.652). Self-esteem did not significantly correlate with locus of control (r = 0.056, p = 0.403), emotional stability (r = 0.017, p = 0.797), or self-efficacy (r = -0.013, p = 0.848). Locus of control exhibited no significant correlation with emotional stability (r = 0.129, p = 0.053) or self-efficacy (r = -0.042, p = 0.530). Emotional stability showed no significant correlation with self-efficacy (r = -0.025, p = 0.714).

Table 3: Summary of Regression Analysis showing the predictive Roles of Business Milieus in Entrepreneurial Resilience

Predictors	B	t-value	Sig	R	R²	F	P	df
Registration Status	-0.189	-0.057	.954					
Business Type	-1.107	-2.513	.013	.241	.058	3.388	.010	4, 221
Business Age	-0.695	-1.651	.100					
Numbers of Employees	-1.425	-2.610	.010					

The analysis in Table 3 reveals the significant impact of various business characteristics on entrepreneurial resilience. Notably, business type is a significant predictor of entrepreneurial resilience (*β = -1.107, t-value = -2.513, p<.05*). Additionally, the number of employees had a negative prediction on entrepreneurial resilience (β = *-1.425, t-value = -2.610, p = .<.05*), suggesting that entrepreneurs with larger workforces tend to be less resilient. In contrast, the registration status of a business does not have a significant influence on entrepreneurial resilience (*β = -0.189, t-value = -0.057, p>.05*). Similarly, business age does not significantly impact resilience (*β = -0.695, t-value = -1.651, p>.05*). The overall model fit is moderate, with an R² value of 0.058, indicating that the business milieus predictors explain approximately 5.8% of the variance in entrepreneurial resilience. The F-statistic (*F = 3.388, p = .<05*) suggests that the overall model is significant, and the predictors collectively contribute to the explanation of entrepreneurial resilience. Therefore, the hypothesis predicting the independent and joint influence of business milieus on entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo is partially supported.

Table 4: Summary of Regression Analysis Showing the Predictive Roles of the dimensions of Core Self-Evaluation in Entrepreneurial Resilience

Predictors	B	t-value	Sig	R	R²	F	P	df
Self Esteem	10.613	4.943	.000	.379	.144	9.265	.000	4, 221
Locus of control	5.532	2.602	.010					
Emotional Stability	-1.926	-0.913	.362					
Self-Efficacy	4.732	2.180	.030					

The regression analysis reveals several key findings regarding the predictive roles of psychological factors in entrepreneurial resilience. Self-esteem emerged as a significant predictor of entrepreneurial resilience ($\beta = 10.613$, $t = 4.943$, $p < .05$), indicating a strong positive association with resilience. Similarly, Locus of Control (LoC) shows significance ($\beta = 5.532$, $t = 2.602$, $p < .05$), suggesting that individuals with a greater sense of control tend to exhibit higher levels of resilience.

However, emotional stability did not demonstrate significant predictive power on entrepreneurial resilience ($\beta = -1.926$, $t = -0.913$, $p > .05$), implying that emotional tendencies, specifically stability, may not strongly influence entrepreneurial resilience. Self-efficacy had a significant positive prediction on entrepreneurial resilience ($\beta = 4.732$, t-value $= 2.180$, $p < .05$), indicating that individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to be more resilient.

Overall, the model's fit is moderate, explaining approximately 14.4% of the variance in entrepreneurial resilience ($R^2 = .144$). The F-statistic ($F = 9.265$, $p < .05$) indicates that the overall model is significant, and the predictors collectively contribute meaningfully to entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo. Therefore, the hypothesis regarding the influence of the four dimensions of core self-evaluation on entrepreneurial resilience is partially supported, highlighting the importance of self-esteem, locus of control, and self-efficacy in fostering resilience in entrepreneurial endeavours.

V. Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis posited that business milieus, including business registration status, number of employees, business type, and business age, would individually and collectively predict entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo, was partially supported. The results suggest that business type is a significant predictor of entrepreneurial resilience, with certain types of businesses being more resilient than others. This finding is consistent with the notion that business type can influence entrepreneurial resilience by affecting the ability of the business to adapt to changing circumstances. For instance, service-based businesses may be more resilient than product-based businesses due to their lower dependence on physical infrastructure and greater ability to adapt to changing market conditions (Etuk, 2020). The negative impact of the number of employees on entrepreneurial resilience was also noteworthy. This finding suggests that businesses with larger workforces may be less resilient due to the added complexity and responsibility of managing a larger workforce. This is in line with the idea that businesses with more employees may have a greater capacity to absorb shocks and respond to changes in the market but may also be more vulnerable to disruptions and challenges (Etuk, 2020). Contrary to expectations, the registration status of a business did not have a significant influence on entrepreneurial resilience. This finding suggests that formal registration may not necessarily provide entrepreneurs with greater access to resources, such as financing and training, which could enable them to better withstand challenges and adapt to changing circumstances. Similarly, business age did not significantly impact resilience, indicating that the level of experience and knowledge acquired over time may not be a critical factor in determining entrepreneurial resilience.

The finding of the study also provides insights into the predictive roles of the dimensions of CSE in shaping entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo. The hypothesis, which stated that self-esteem, locus of control, emotional stability, and self-efficacy would independently and jointly predict entrepreneurial resilience among on-campus small-scale entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo, was partially supported. These findings align with prior research, which has consistently highlighted the positive link between Core Self-Evaluation (CSE) and entrepreneurial resilience. Specifically, self-esteem emerged as a pivotal predictor of entrepreneurial resilience, showcasing a robust positive association. This suggests that entrepreneurs with higher self-esteem levels are more adept at navigating challenges and setbacks. This finding resonates with existing literature emphasizing the significance of self-esteem in stress management and resilience-building (Duan et al., 2020; Sánchez-García, 2018). Essentially, entrepreneurs who harbour a strong sense of self-worth are better poised to confront the uncertainties inherent in entrepreneurial pursuits. Likewise, locus of control (LoC) emerged as another predictor, indicating a positive relationship with entrepreneurial resilience. This implies that individuals perceiving greater control over their environment and outcomes tend to exhibit heightened resilience levels. This finding corroborates prior studies underscoring the role of LoC in stress-coping mechanisms (Okon & Etuk, 2020). Essentially, entrepreneurs who harbour beliefs in their ability to influence circumstances are more resilient in bouncing back from adversities.

However, the analysis did not find emotional stability to be a significant predictor of entrepreneurial resilience, marking a departure from expectations. While emotional regulation is typically deemed crucial in stress management, its impact on

entrepreneurial resilience appears less pronounced in this context. This suggests that emotional stability might not wield as much influence on resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo.

On the other hand, self-efficacy emerged as a significant predictor of entrepreneurial resilience, displaying a positive association. This implies that entrepreneurs with higher self-efficacy levels demonstrate greater resilience in the face of challenges. This finding aligns with prior research emphasizing the pivotal role of self-efficacy in stress-coping strategies (Duan et al., 2020; Sánchez-García, 2018). Essentially, entrepreneurs equipped with confidence in their abilities are better equipped to navigate the uncertainties and risks inherent in entrepreneurial endeavours.

VI. Conclusion

This study investigated the predictive roles of business milieus and core self-evaluation in entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs at the University of Uyo. Based on the findings, it was concluded that business type and number of employees are significant predictors of entrepreneurial resilience, while registration status and business age do not impact entrepreneurial resilience. Additionally, it was concluded that the dimensions of core self-evaluation (CSE), including self-esteem, locus of control, and self-efficacy, are significant predictors of entrepreneurial resilience while emotional stability is not a determiner of entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs.

The study's findings have implications for developing interventions and training programmes aimed at increasing entrepreneurial resilience among small-scale entrepreneurs. Recognising the interplay between business characteristics and psychological dynamics enables entrepreneurs and policymakers to craft targeted strategies that enhance resilience and drive business success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that entrepreneurship training programmes should be designed to incorporate modules that focus on building self-esteem, locus of control, and self-efficacy, to foster resilience among entrepreneurs. Business support services, such as mentorship and coaching, should be tailored to address the specific needs of entrepreneurs based on their business type and size. Also, policymakers should consider implementing policies that support small-scale entrepreneurs, such as tax incentives and access to credit, to foster resilience and improve business outcomes. Further research is necessary to explore the predictive roles of business milieus and CSE in entrepreneurial resilience among different populations and contexts. Additionally, interventions aimed at improving emotional stability, such as stress management and emotional intelligence training, may be beneficial for entrepreneurs who struggle with emotional stability. By implementing these recommendations, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and researchers can work together to promote entrepreneurial resilience and improve business outcomes among small-scale entrepreneurs.

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