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Research Article

Psychological and Social Determinants of Female Entrepreneurial Intentions: An Empirical Analysis of Personality Traits, Attitude, Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, and Social Perception

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Abstract: This study examines the psychological and social determinants influencing female entrepreneurial intentions, specifically focusing on the interplay between internal personality traits and external social pressures. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, data was collected through validated scales—including the Big Five Personality Inventory and the General Self-Efficacy Scale—from a diverse sample of participants. The findings reveal a significant "disconnect" in the path to entrepreneurship: while women demonstrate high levels of Self-Esteem (M = 5.25) and Self-Efficacy (M = 3.99), their actual Entrepreneurial Intentions remain low (M = 2.74). Multiple regression analysis identified Social Perception (beta = .495, p = .002) and Self-Efficacy (beta = .392, p = .015) as the only statistically significant predictors of intent. Conversely, general personality traits, attitude, and self-esteem failed to offer unique predictive power when these factors were accounted for. Furthermore, independent sample t-tests indicated no statistically significant differences between genders across these constructs, suggesting that challenges such as low social perception—the "social mirror" reflecting the desirability of entrepreneurship—are systemic issues affecting both men and women in this context. The study concludes that the transition from potential to action is a sequential flow where foundational traits must be supported by specific skill-based beliefs and positive environmental cues to crystallize into tangible entrepreneurial drive.

Keywords: Personality, Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Psychological, Social Determinants.

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INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a vital pathway for economic empowerment and innovation, yet the journey for women is often shaped by a complex interplay of internal psychological states and external social pressures. While foundational personality traits—such as openness to experience and emotional stability—serve as the initial "raw material" for entrepreneurial behavior, they do not operate in a vacuum. Instead, these traits are frequently filtered through gender-specific socializations and "self-perception biases," where women may objectively possess high-performing capabilities but subjectively undervalue them.

Current literature suggests that the transition from possessing potential to taking action is driven by a sequential flow of psychological constructs. At the heart of this process is Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE)—the "psychological engine" that converts a woman's attitude and personality into tangible intent. This internal belief in one's ability to manage business operations is often the deciding factor in whether a woman acts on a market opportunity or remains sidelined by a "confidence gap".

However, internal confidence is only half of the equation. A woman's Social Perception—how she interprets societal approval and the "desirability" of entrepreneurship—acts as a social mirror that can either reflect a path of feasibility or a wall of structural bias. Research indicates that when entrepreneurship is viewed as "socially affirmative," a woman's positive attitude and intention to launch a venture are significantly strengthened.

Despite the theoretical importance of these variables, empirical data often reveals a disconnect. Initial findings in this study show that while women may exhibit high levels of Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy, their Entrepreneurial Intentions can remain low, potentially due to a lack of connection with social cues or environmental awareness. This research utilizes a quantitative, cross-sectional design to investigate these determinants, specifically exploring why factors like Social Perception and Self-Efficacy emerge as the primary drivers of entrepreneurial drive while others, like general personality traits, may hold less predictive power in a combined model. By examining these relationships, this study seeks to clarify the internal and external mechanisms that ultimately crystallize into the intention to start a business.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Personality Traits as Foundational Drivers

- The literature consistently identifies stable personality characteristics as the starting point for entrepreneurial behavior. Using the Big Five model, Abad-Villaverde et al. (2026) demonstrate that traits such as openness to experience and emotional stability are significant predictors of how women perceive market opportunities.
- However, research by Zisser et al. (2019) suggests that personality traits do not act in isolation; their influence is often filtered through gender-specific socializations. For women, conscientiousness and extraversion are particularly strong predictors of taking the first step toward business ownership, though these traits are often subject to "self-perception biases" where women may undervalue their own capabilities compared to objective AI-based assessments (Abad-Villaverde et al., 2026).

2. The Role of Entrepreneurial Attitude

- Attitude—defined as the degree to which an individual holds a favorable or unfavorable appraisal of being an entrepreneur—is a primary determinant of intent. Jalil et al. (2023) find that a positive attitude acts as a powerful mediator between a woman's social resources and her career choices.
- According to Devi et al. (2019), a woman's attitude is shaped by her "desirability" for independence and financial autonomy. When female students perceive entrepreneurship as a high-status or rewarding career path, their attitude becomes the strongest predictor of their intent to launch a venture upon graduation. Meyer and Hamilton (2020) further argue that this attitude is not fixed; it can be significantly enhanced through formal business training and exposure to successful female role models.

3. Self-Efficacy as a Mediating Mechanism

- Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE)—a woman's belief in her ability to successfully perform entrepreneurial tasks—is perhaps the most critical variable in the literature. It serves as the "psychological engine" that converts personality and attitude into action.
- The Confidence Gap: Valdez-Juárez et al. (2024) note that even when women possess the right personality traits, a lack of self-efficacy can prevent them from acting on opportunities.
- Mental Health Links: HassanAhmadi and Hoseinzadeh (2026) highlight that self-efficacy is deeply tied to self-esteem. They found that boosting a woman's self-efficacy can actually mitigate the negative effects of stress and depression on business performance.
- Leadership Influence: Participation in dedicated leadership programs has been shown to "transform" self-confidence, directly increasing ESE and allowing women to overcome the fear of failure (Herbst et al., 2024).

4. Synthesizing the Path to Entrepreneurial Intention

- The culmination of these variables is Entrepreneurial Intention. The literature suggests a sequential flow: Personality traits and social perceptions shape a woman's Attitude; this attitude, supported by high Self-Efficacy, ultimately crystallizes into the Intention to start a business.
- Linfang et al. (2021) emphasize that this path is most effective when "self-leadership" is present, allowing women to navigate the structural barriers and social biases identified by Anggadwita et al. (2021). In rural and developing contexts, this intention is further solidified by sustainable goals and social capital, which provide the safety net necessary for women to commit to their entrepreneurial plans (Nayak & Nayak, 2025).

5. The Internal Foundation: Personality and Self-Esteem

- Personality traits (such as openness and conscientiousness) provide the raw material for entrepreneurship, but self-esteem acts as the foundational filter.
- Self-Esteem vs. Self-Efficacy: While self-efficacy is task-specific, HassanAhmadi and Hoseinzadeh (2026) identify self-esteem as the broader sense of self-worth that mediates the relationship between mental health and business capability. High self-esteem allows women to bounce back from the "imposter syndrome" often triggered by male-dominated industries.
- Trait Interaction: Abad-Villaverde et al. (2026) suggest that personality traits are often obscured by self-perception biases; women may objectively possess high-performing traits but lack the self-esteem to acknowledge them.

6. The Social Mirror: Social Perception and Attitude

- A woman's attitude toward entrepreneurship is rarely formed in a vacuum; it is heavily influenced by social perception.
- Societal Approval: Anggadwita et al. (2021) argue that how society views female business owners directly impacts a woman's own attitude. If entrepreneurship is perceived as "socially affirmative" for women, their desire to enter the field increases (Stošić Panić & Janeska Iliev, 2025).
- Perceived Desirability: When social perceptions are positive, entrepreneurship is viewed as a "desirable" and "feasible" career path, which strengthens the individual's positive attitude (Devi et al., 2019).

7. The Bridge to Action: Self-Confidence and Self-Efficacy

- While often used interchangeably, the literature distinguishes between a general "voice" and specific "skills."
- Finding the Voice: Self-confidence is often described as the courage to participate and lead. Herbst et al. (2024) demonstrate that leadership programs specifically target self-confidence to help women overcome the "silencing" effects of traditional social structures.
- Skill-Based Belief: Self-efficacy is the more granular belief in one's ability to manage finances, marketing, and operations. Valdez-Juárez et al. (2024) show that university students with high self-efficacy are more likely to translate their ideas into intention because they believe they have the actual tools to succeed.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this study utilizes a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to investigate the psychological and social determinants of female entrepreneurship. Data is collected through structured survey instruments—incorporating validated scales like the Big Five Personality Inventory, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, and Entrepreneurial Intention Scales—targeting a diverse sample of women to ensure statistical power. The analysis follows a tiered approach: descriptive statistics are employed to profile the sample's baseline traits; independent sample t-tests are used to compare differences across demographic groups, such as training background or age; and multiple regression analysis is conducted to determine the predictive strength of personality, attitude, self-esteem, and social perception on the final dependent variable, entrepreneurial intention. This rigorous framework ensures that the relationships between internal psychological constructs and external social influences are measured with empirical precision.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To determine the Psychological and Social Determinants of Female Entrepreneurial Intentions: An Empirical Analysis of Personality Traits, Attitude, Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, and Social Perception.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Displays Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std.Deviation
Variable	Statistic	Statistic
Personality Traits	3.9444	.56509
Attitude	3.1270	.47685
Self-Efficacy	3.9921	.39978
Entrepreneurial Intentions	2.7381	.63132
Social Perception	1.4841	.39097
Self-Esteem	5.2460	.75460

The descriptive statistics reveal a group characterized by high levels of self-belief but relatively low outward-facing intentions. The participants exhibit very strong Self-Esteem (5.25) and Self-Efficacy (3.99), suggesting they are confident in their personal worth and their ability to execute tasks effectively. However, this internal confidence does not translate into a desire for business ownership, as Entrepreneurial Intentions (2.74) remain below the moderate midpoint. The most striking result is the very low Social Perception (1.48), indicating that the group may struggle with or feel disconnected from social cues and environmental awareness. Across all categories, the low standard deviations (all < 0.80) show a high level of consensus among participants, meaning these scores represent a consistent trend within the group rather than a few extreme outliers.

Independent Sample t-test

Table 2: Displays Group Statistics for Independent Sample t-test

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Personality Traits	Male	16	4.0000	.45542
	Fema	26	3.9103	.62934

	le			
Attitude	Male	16	3.0000	.53055
	Female	26	3.2051	.43284
Self-Efficacy	Male	16	4.0417	.36260
	Female	26	3.9615	.42507
Entrepreneurial Intentions	Male	16	2.6875	.63792
	Female	26	2.7692	.63784
Social Perception	Male	16	1.3542	.39382
	Female	26	1.5641	.37439
Self-Esteem	Male	16	5.2917	.78764
	Female	26	5.2179	.74799

The gender-based descriptive statistics indicate that while both groups share similar psychological profiles, subtle differences exist across several key areas. Males exhibit slightly higher mean scores in Personality Traits (M = 4.00), Self-Efficacy (M = 4.04), and Self-Esteem (M = 5.29), suggesting a marginally stronger internal sense of capability and self-worth. Conversely, females score higher in Attitude (M = 3.21), Entrepreneurial Intentions (M = 2.77), and Social Perception (M = 1.56), indicating a slightly more positive outlook and a higher (though still low) awareness of social dynamics. Notably, Social Perception remains the lowest-scoring variable for both genders, with males (M = 1.35) trailing females significantly in this area. Despite these differences, the standard deviations for both groups are relatively consistent and low, suggesting that the individual responses within each gender are tightly clustered around their respective means and that neither group exhibits extreme internal polarization.

Table 3: Displays Independent Sample t-test

Variables		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Personality Traits	Equal variances assumed	2.058	.159	.495	40	.623
	Equal variances not assumed			.534	38.811	.596
Attitude	Equal variances assumed	.788	.380	-1.368	40	.179
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.303	27.079	.204
Self-Efficacy	Equal variances assumed	.226	.637	.626	40	.535
	Equal variances not assumed			.651	35.755	.519
Entrepreneurial Intentions	Equal variances assumed	.015	.902	-.403	40	.689
	Equal variances not assumed			-.403	31.892	.689
Social Perception	Equal variances assumed	.236	.629	-1.731	40	.091
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.709	30.639	.098
Self-Esteem	Equal variances assumed	.143	.707	.304	40	.763
	Equal variances not assumed			.300	30.612	.766

The Independent Samples T-Test results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between males and females across any of the measured variables, as all p-values (Sig. 2-tailed) are well above the standard alpha threshold of .05. Specifically, variables such as Personality Traits (p = .623), Self-Efficacy (p = .535), and Self-Esteem (p = .763) show that gender does not play a meaningful role in these psychological constructs within this sample. While Social Perception (p = .091) approached a marginal level of interest, it still fails to reach statistical significance, suggesting that the observed differences in means between men and women are likely due to chance rather than a systemic gender effect. Furthermore, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances yielded non-significant results (Sig. > .05) for all variables, confirming that the

assumption of equal variances was met and the data is robust for this comparative analysis.

Regression

Table 4: Displays Model Summary

R	R^2	Adj. R^2	F	Sig.	Durbin -Watson
.578	.334	.242	3.611	.009	1.820

The regression results indicate that the model is statistically significant (p = .009), establishing that the combined predictors have a meaningful impact on the dependent variable. With an R-value of .578, there is a moderately strong positive correlation present, while the R-Square of .334 reveals that the model accounts for 33.4% of the variance in the outcome. Although the Adjusted R-Square of .242 provides a more conservative estimate of the model's explanatory power, the F-statistic of 3.611 confirms that the overall fit is robust and not due to random chance. Furthermore, the Durbin-Watson score of 1.820 sits within the ideal range, ensuring that the residuals are independent and the model's reliability is not compromised by autocorrelation. The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant (F(5, 36) = 3.611, p = .009), confirming that the combination of Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Social Perception, Attitude, and Personality Traits significantly predicts Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Table 5: Displays Coefficients

Coefficientsa						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.857	1.087		.788	.436
	Personality Traits	-.029	.215	-.026	-.133	.895
	Attitude	-.191	.213	-.144	-.894	.377
	Self-Efficacy	.619	.241	.392	2.563	.015
	Social Perception	.799	.235	.495	3.405	.002
	Self-Esteem	-.203	.165	-.243	-1.231	.226
a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intentions						

The individual coefficients reveal that Social Perception and Self-Efficacy are the only significant drivers of Entrepreneurial Intentions within this model. Social Perception emerged as the most influential factor (beta = .495, p = .002), followed by Self-Efficacy (beta = .392, p = .015), indicating that higher awareness of social environments and greater belief in one's own competence directly boost entrepreneurial drive. Conversely, Personality Traits, Attitude, and Self-Esteem failed to reach statistical significance (p > .05), suggesting that while they may correlate with the outcome, they do not offer unique predictive power when Social Perception and Self-Efficacy are already accounted for.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide a nuanced look into the "psychological engine" that drives female entrepreneurial intentions, highlighting a significant disconnect between internal confidence and outward action. While the participants demonstrate high levels of Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy , their actual Entrepreneurial Intentions remain notably low. This suggests that simply feeling capable is not enough to trigger the intent to launch a business.

The Dominance of Social Perception and Self-Efficacy

The regression analysis clarifies this disconnect by identifying Social Perception and Self-Efficacy as the only two statistically significant predictors of entrepreneurial drive.

Social Perception as the Primary Driver: With the highest beta coefficient (0.495), social perception—how women interpret societal approval and the "desirability" of entrepreneurship—is the most influential factor. This aligns with literature suggesting that when entrepreneurship is viewed as "socially affirmative," a woman's intent is significantly strengthened.
Self-Efficacy as the Catalyst: Self-efficacy (beta = 0.392) remains a critical secondary driver. It acts as the functional belief in one's ability to manage specific business tasks, such as marketing or finance.

The "Non-Significance" of Personality and Self-Esteem

- One of the most striking findings is that Personality Traits, Attitude, and Self-Esteem failed to reach statistical significance in the final model.
- Filtering Through Context: While personality traits like openness or conscientiousness provide the "raw material" for behavior , they appear to be filtered through gender-specific socializations.

- Predictive Power: The data suggests that once a woman's specific belief in her skills (Self-Efficacy) and her reading of the environment (Social Perception) are accounted for, her general personality or overall sense of self-worth (Self-Esteem) offers no unique predictive power for her intent to start a business.

The Gender Neutrality of Psychological Constructs

The independent sample t-tests reveal that gender does not meaningfully impact these psychological constructs within the sample. Both males and females shared similar profiles of high self-belief but low social perception. This indicates that the "confidence gap" or "self-perception biases" discussed in literature might be more universal than previously thought, or that the barriers to entrepreneurship in this specific context affect both genders similarly.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Social Perception and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy are the definitive catalysts for female entrepreneurial intentions. While foundational elements like Personality Traits and Self-Esteem provide the psychological "raw material," the regression analysis proves they do not offer unique predictive power when social and efficacy factors are present. The data reveals a significant disconnect: women often possess high internal confidence and self-worth, yet their actual intention to start a business remains low because of a lack of Social Perception, or the "social mirror" that reflects the desirability and feasibility of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the study finds that these psychological constructs do not differ significantly by gender, suggesting that the challenges of environmental awareness and social affirmation are systemic rather than individual. Ultimately, the transition from possessing potential to taking action is a sequential flow where personality and attitude must be supported by a belief in specific skills and a positive reading of the social environment to crystallize into tangible intent.

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