



INFLUENCE OF HABITUATION AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ON THEIR OCCUPATIONAL ENGAGEMENT IN DELTA DISTRICTS

K. Krishnaveni¹, Dr. P. Chinnadurai²

¹Ph.D. Research Scholar, Dept. of Business Administration, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar-608002

²Associate Professor and Research Supervisor, Dept. of Business Administration, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar-608002

ABSTRACT

DOI No: 10.36713/epra28745

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra28745>

This study examined the influence of habituation on occupational engagement and business performance among women entrepreneurs in the delta districts. Habituation was conceptualized through three dimensions: habits, roles, and occupational routines. A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 387 women entrepreneurs using a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed using path analysis to examine the direct effects among the study variables. The findings revealed that habits and occupational routines had significant positive influences on occupational engagement, whereas roles did not exhibit a significant effect. Furthermore, business performance was significantly influenced by habits, occupational routines, and occupational engagement. The results indicate that women entrepreneurs who establish consistent work habits and structured occupational routines demonstrate higher occupational engagement, which subsequently enhances their business performance. The study concludes that strengthening habituation practices can improve entrepreneurial effectiveness and recommends that entrepreneurship development programmes focus on habit formation, routine management, and occupational engagement strategies to promote sustainable business growth among women entrepreneurs in the delta districts.

KEYWORDS: Habituation, Habits, Occupational Routines, Roles, Occupational Engagement, Business Performance, Women Entrepreneurs, Delta Districts, Entrepreneurship Development.

INTRODUCTION

Habituation, one of the four fundamental constructs of the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO), plays a vital role in shaping the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs by organizing their daily activities into stable patterns of habits, social roles, and occupational routines. Unlike motivation alone, habituation provides the structural framework through which entrepreneurial behaviours become consistent, efficient, and sustainable over time. Women entrepreneurs in the delta districts often balance multiple responsibilities as business owners, homemakers, caregivers, and community members, making the development of productive habits and clearly defined occupational roles essential for maintaining continuous engagement in entrepreneurial activities. Regular business routines, disciplined work practices, effective role management, and adaptive occupational patterns enable women entrepreneurs to respond successfully to changing market conditions while maintaining work-life balance. Within the MOHO framework, habituation complements volition by translating personal motivation into consistent occupational performance, thereby enhancing long-term entrepreneurial success and occupational engagement (Kielhofner, 2008;

Taylor, 2017; Ludwig, 1997; Hernández-Espeso & Goikoetxea Aramendia, 2026).

Habits represent learned patterns of behaviour that allow women entrepreneurs to perform business activities with greater efficiency and reduced cognitive effort. Entrepreneurial habits such as maintaining financial records, interacting with customers, managing inventory, monitoring production schedules, and planning daily operations contribute significantly to sustained occupational engagement. Positive work habits improve time management, increase productivity, reduce stress, and facilitate effective decision-making, particularly in small-scale enterprises where entrepreneurs perform multiple functions simultaneously. In rural delta districts, habitual business practices also help entrepreneurs cope with seasonal fluctuations, resource constraints, and family responsibilities. When productive habits become integrated into everyday occupational performance, women entrepreneurs experience greater confidence, continuity, and resilience, ultimately strengthening both business sustainability and occupational participation (Laguna, et al. 2017; Digan, et al. 2019; Denissen, et al. 2014; Ludwig, 1997).

Roles constitute another important dimension of habituation because they define the social expectations and responsibilities associated with an individual's occupational identity. Women entrepreneurs simultaneously perform multiple roles, including entrepreneur, employer, spouse, mother, caregiver, and community participant. The ability to integrate these diverse roles without significant conflict directly influences occupational engagement and entrepreneurial effectiveness. In the context of the delta districts, cultural expectations often require women to prioritize household responsibilities while simultaneously managing business activities. Effective role integration enables women entrepreneurs to maintain occupational balance, enhance role satisfaction, and sustain business involvement despite competing demands. Conversely, role conflict and ambiguity may reduce occupational participation, increase stress, and negatively affect entrepreneurial performance. Previous entrepreneurship literature emphasizes that successful role negotiation and occupational identity formation are central determinants of women's entrepreneurial persistence and long-term occupational engagement (Bowen & Hisrich, 1986; Bourne & Calas, 2013; Huq & Arenius, 2025; Nayar, et al. 2012).

Occupational routines provide temporal structure to everyday entrepreneurial activities by organizing work into predictable sequences that support consistent business performance. Daily planning, customer service schedules, procurement activities, production management, bookkeeping, networking, and family responsibilities become integrated into stable occupational routines that facilitate continuous engagement. Well-established occupational routines reduce uncertainty, improve efficiency, and strengthen entrepreneurs' ability to adapt to environmental challenges. According to MOHO, occupational routines emerge through repeated participation in meaningful occupations and become embedded within personal identity and social context. For women entrepreneurs operating in the delta districts, structured routines promote occupational stability, improve work-life integration, and foster sustainable business growth despite limited resources and external uncertainties. Consequently, habituation through habits, roles, and occupational routines serves as a critical determinant of occupational engagement and provides an important theoretical foundation for examining the entrepreneurial experiences of women in the delta districts (Kielhofner, 2008; Taylor, 2017; Laguna, et al. 2017; Hernández-Espeso & Goikoetxea Aramendia, 2026).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Influence of Habituation Among Women Entrepreneurs on Occupational Engagement

Recent literature suggests that habituation comprising habits, roles, and occupational routines plays a pivotal role in shaping the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs by influencing how they organize daily activities, balance multiple responsibilities, and sustain business performance. Studies have consistently reported that structured work habits and effective occupational routines enhance productivity, resilience, and long-term entrepreneurial engagement, while conflicting family and business roles may reduce participation in meaningful occupational activities (Neneh, 2021; Lindstrom, 2022). Research on women entrepreneurs further indicates that

the ability to manage multiple roles and temporal routines improves resilience and adaptive entrepreneurial behaviour, particularly in environments where women simultaneously perform business, family, and community responsibilities (Ye, et al. 2025). Similarly, investigations into habitual women entrepreneurs reveal that accumulated routines and experience improve decision-making quality and occupational persistence compared with novice entrepreneurs (Soleimanof, et al. 2022). Studies on occupational engagement also demonstrate that meaningful occupational routines foster identity, self-efficacy, and sustained participation in work-related activities despite environmental challenges (Toh & Krizaj, 2025). Research examining self-employed women highlights that meaningful work routines strengthen occupational identity and professional commitment, thereby enhancing engagement in entrepreneurial occupations (Lindstrom, 2022). The importance of role salience has also been emphasized, showing that balancing work and family roles contributes significantly to entrepreneurial growth intentions and occupational engagement among women (Neneh, 2021). Furthermore, recent evidence indicates that work-life harmony and occupational autonomy positively influence engagement and well-being among self-employed individuals, suggesting that stable occupational routines contribute to sustainable entrepreneurial success (Jo & Ahn, 2026). Studies focusing on occupational participation further demonstrate that disruptions in occupational routines negatively affect occupational identity and engagement, emphasizing the importance of maintaining consistent habits and role performance (Daly & Hynes, 2025). Collectively, these studies suggest that habituation serves as a critical behavioural mechanism through which women entrepreneurs develop consistent occupational engagement; however, limited empirical evidence exists specifically for women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts, highlighting the need for context-specific investigation. Hence, the hypothesis is

H₀: There is no significant influence of habituation (habits, roles, and occupational routine) on the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs.

Influence of Habituation Among Women Entrepreneurs on Business Performance

Recent literature indicates that habituation, reflected through established habits, occupational roles, and occupational routines, plays a significant role in improving the business performance of women entrepreneurs by promoting consistency, effective time management, resilience, and productivity. Studies have shown that women entrepreneurs who develop structured work habits and maintain stable occupational routines are more capable of balancing business and family responsibilities, thereby achieving higher firm performance and sustainability (Oladipo, et al. 2023). Similarly, Ni, et al. (2024) reported that clearly defined entrepreneurial roles and effective role management positively influence subjective firm performance by enhancing leadership effectiveness. Uebbing, et al. (2025) observed that role conflicts and disrupted occupational routines reduce business continuity, whereas stable routines improve entrepreneurial persistence. Srivastava and Pandita (2025), through a systematic review, concluded that psychological, social, and behavioural factors including disciplined work habits and role adaptability are major determinants of women-owned business performance.

Huang, et al. (2025) further demonstrated that entrepreneurial learning embedded within daily occupational routines significantly enhances business performance through psychological capital and opportunity recognition. Mickiewicz and Nguyen (2025) found that productive behavioural patterns and organizational routines contribute to improved productivity among women entrepreneurs. Likewise, recent evidence from China revealed that disciplined entrepreneurial behaviours, consistent routines, and adaptive work practices positively influence venture performance (Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 2025). Women entrepreneurs who effectively integrate household and business roles through flexible occupational routines also experience better business outcomes than those with fragmented routines (Oladipo, et al. 2023). Furthermore, research on entrepreneurial resilience suggests that habitual time management and multiple-role balancing strengthen resilience and long-term business success (Management and Organization Review, 2026). Collectively, these studies suggest that habituation, through consistent habits, clearly defined occupational roles, and well-established occupational routines, forms a critical behavioural mechanism that enhances the business performance of women entrepreneurs, providing a strong theoretical basis for examining this relationship among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts. Hence, the hypothesis is

H₀: There is no significant influence of habituation (habits, roles, and occupational routine) on the business performance of women entrepreneurs.

Influence of Occupational Engagement Among Women Entrepreneurs on Business Performance

Recent literature consistently indicates that occupational engagement defined as the extent to which women entrepreneurs actively participate in meaningful business roles, decision-making, networking, innovation, and daily entrepreneurial activities is a critical determinant of business performance. Studies have demonstrated that highly engaged women entrepreneurs exhibit greater productivity, profitability, business sustainability, innovation, customer satisfaction, and competitive advantage because engagement strengthens motivation, resilience, opportunity recognition, and effective resource utilization. Huang, et al. (2025) reported that entrepreneurial learning significantly enhances entrepreneurial performance through psychological capital and opportunity recognition, highlighting that active engagement in entrepreneurial tasks promotes superior business outcomes. Sharma and Upadhyay (2025) found that work-life balance policies positively influence work engagement among women entrepreneurs, leading to improved entrepreneurial commitment and sustainable business success. Mickiewicz and Nguyen (2025) observed that women entrepreneurs operating in supportive institutional environments demonstrate higher productivity because greater occupational involvement enhances firm efficiency. Uebbing, et al. (2025) emphasized that continued engagement after venture creation enables women entrepreneurs to overcome role conflicts and sustain enterprise growth. Srivastava and Pandita (2025), through a systematic literature review, concluded that entrepreneurial performance is strongly influenced by behavioural engagement, entrepreneurial competencies, and organizational support mechanisms. Al-Kwafi, et al. (2021) identified motivation,

networking, business environment, training, and financial support as significant predictors of women entrepreneurs' performance, all of which enhance occupational engagement. De Clercq, et al. (2022) reported that emotional exhaustion arising from work-family conflict reduces entrepreneurs' engagement and consequently weakens firm performance. Similarly, research on entrepreneurial engagement suggests that engaged entrepreneurs demonstrate stronger innovation, adaptability, and long-term competitiveness, thereby improving business outcomes. Overall, these findings imply that in the Delta districts, women entrepreneurs who exhibit higher occupational engagement through consistent business participation, effective role performance, networking, and entrepreneurial commitment are more likely to achieve superior business performance, making occupational engagement an essential predictor of entrepreneurial success. Hence, the hypothesis is

H₀: There is no significant influence of occupational engagement on the business performance of women entrepreneurs.

RESEARCH GAP

Despite the growing body of research on women entrepreneurship, a clear research gap remains regarding the influence of habituation specifically habits, roles, and occupational routines on occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu. Most previous studies have concentrated on entrepreneurial motivation, financial inclusion, business performance, innovation, and socio-economic empowerment, while limited attention has been given to habituation as a key construct of the MOHO. Furthermore, existing research has largely been conducted in urban or industrial settings, with little empirical evidence from the socio-cultural and economic context of the Delta districts, where women entrepreneurs encounter distinct family responsibilities, traditional role expectations, and occupational challenges. This gap highlights the need for a focused investigation to understand how habitual behaviours, occupational roles, and daily routines influence the level of occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs, thereby contributing to both occupational therapy and entrepreneurship literature.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women entrepreneurs in the delta districts contribute significantly to local economic development, employment generation, and household well-being. However, many of them encounter challenges in maintaining consistent occupational engagement due to ineffective work habits, multiple social and family roles, and irregular occupational routines. Habituation, comprising habits, roles, and occupational routine, is a key determinant of how individuals organize, sustain, and perform their daily occupational activities. Despite its theoretical importance, limited empirical research has examined how these dimensions of habituation influence the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs, particularly in the context of the delta districts where socio-cultural expectations, family responsibilities, and resource constraints may shape entrepreneurial behaviour. This lack of evidence creates a research gap in understanding whether positive habituation enhances occupational engagement among women

entrepreneurs. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the influence of habituation (habits, roles, and occupational routine) on the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs in the delta districts, thereby providing evidence to support interventions that strengthen entrepreneurial sustainability and productivity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the influence of Habituation (Habits, Roles, and Occupational Routine) on the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu. A descriptive design was considered appropriate because it enables the systematic collection of quantitative data and facilitates the examination of relationships among behavioural and occupational variables without manipulating the study environment. This approach is widely employed in entrepreneurship and occupational science research to understand the behavioural patterns, occupational participation, and work-related outcomes of entrepreneurs. The research focused on women entrepreneurs engaged in diverse business activities across the Delta districts, with the objective of identifying how habitual behaviours, occupational roles, and routine activities contribute to their occupational engagement. The study relied on a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument, ensuring consistency and objectivity in measuring the constructs. The methodological approach aligns with the recommendations of recent entrepreneurship and occupational behaviour studies, which emphasize descriptive survey methods for examining psychosocial and occupational variables in business settings (de Bruin, Brush, & Welter, 2022; Kielhofner, 2020; Townsend & Polatajko, 2021).

The questionnaire consisted of 37 items distributed across four sections. The first section contained 10 demographic profile questions covering age, education, marital status, business type, business experience, monthly income, and other socio-economic characteristics. The second section measured Habituation using 12 self-designed items with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.85, comprising three dimensions: Habits (4 items; $\alpha = 0.90$), Roles (4 items; $\alpha = 0.88$), and Occupational Routine (4 items; $\alpha = 0.78$). The third section assessed Occupational Engagement through 10 items with a reliability coefficient of 0.90, while the fourth section measured Business Performance using 5 items with a reliability coefficient of 0.82. The questionnaire was reviewed by academic experts to ensure content validity and subsequently subjected to a pilot study to establish reliability before the main survey. Reliability coefficients above the recommended threshold of 0.70 indicated satisfactory internal consistency, confirming the suitability of the instrument for empirical investigation (Hair, et al. 2022; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Boateng, et al. 2018).

The target population comprised women entrepreneurs operating in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu. Although the conceptual sampling plan proposed a larger sample, the final

empirical investigation was conducted using convenience sampling during field data collection because of accessibility and availability of respondents. Initially, 300 questionnaires were distributed, of which 264 were returned. After excluding 10 incomplete questionnaires, 254 valid responses were retained for statistical analysis, yielding an effective response rate of approximately 84.7%. Convenience sampling enabled the researcher to reach women entrepreneurs from various sectors, including retail trade, food processing, handicrafts, tailoring, agriculture-related enterprises, and service businesses. The collected data adequately represented the entrepreneurial activities within the selected study area and provided sufficient observations for multivariate statistical analysis (Saunders, et al. 2023; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Etikan & Bala, 2017).

The collected data were coded and analysed using appropriate statistical software. Initially, Factor Analysis was employed to examine the underlying factor structure of the habituation and occupational engagement constructs and to verify the dimensionality of the measurement scales. Subsequently, Path Analysis was conducted to evaluate the direct influence of Habits, Roles, and Occupational Routine on Occupational Engagement and to estimate the strength and significance of the proposed relationships. These multivariate techniques provide robust evidence regarding construct validity and causal relationships among latent variables and are widely recommended for behavioural and entrepreneurship research involving multiple interrelated constructs (Hair, et al. 2022; Kline, 2023; Byrne, 2022). The findings generated through these analytical procedures provide a sound empirical basis for understanding the influence of habituation on occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The table 1 shows the exploratory factor analysis confirmed that the Habituation construct among women entrepreneurs comprises three distinct dimensions Habits, Roles, and Occupational Routine. The KMO value of 0.711 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 1567.919$, $p = 0.001$) indicate that the sample was adequate, and the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis. The rotated component matrix revealed strong factor loadings ranging from 0.621 to 0.990, demonstrating satisfactory convergent validity of the measurement items. The three extracted factors accounted for a cumulative variance of 87.726%, with Habits explaining 40.100%, Roles contributing 25.524%, and Occupational Routine accounting for 22.102% of the total variance. These findings suggest that women entrepreneurs' habitual work patterns, clearly defined entrepreneurial roles, and consistent occupational routines collectively represent the multidimensional nature of habituation and provide a robust framework for examining its influence on occupational engagement (Kielhofner, 2008; Lee, et al. 2021; Fisher & Marterella, 2019).

Table 1: Factor Analysis of Habituation Among Women Entrepreneurs

Rotated Component Matrix			
KMO	0.711		
Chi-Square	1567.919		
P Value	0.001		
Components	Habits	Roles	Occupational Routine
I automatically follow a structured daily schedule to manage my business operations.	0.988		
I find it easy to adapt to sudden changes in my daily business routine.	0.987		
I maintain a regular balance between my personal daily habits and my business tasks.	0.983		
I independently organize my workspace to ensure daily efficiency without supervision.	0.958		
I clearly understand my responsibilities as an entrepreneur, separating them from my family roles.		0.990	
I feel a strong sense of pride and identity in being a female business owner in my community.		0.980	
I confidently balance my domestic responsibilities with my entrepreneurial duties.		0.977	
I actively take on leadership roles within my local trade or business network.		0.962	
I consistently meet business deadlines and prioritize critical tasks effectively.			0.906
I dedicate enough regular time to marketing and expanding my enterprise.			0.880
I can handle the administrative burdens and financial record-keeping of my business smoothly.			0.845
I maintain a sustainable workflow that prevents physical or mental burnout.			0.621
Eigenvalues	4.812	3.063	2.652
% of Variance	40.100	25.524	22.102
Cumulative %	40.100	65.624	87.726

Source: Primary data

Path Analysis

The model fit indices presented in Table 2 indicate that the structural model examining the influence of habituation on the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs demonstrates an acceptable to excellent level of fit. The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 2.996$, $p = 0.056$) is statistically non-significant ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that there is no significant difference between the observed and estimated covariance matrices, thereby supporting the adequacy of the proposed model. Furthermore, the goodness-of-fit indices exceed the recommended threshold of 0.90, with GFI = 0.996, AGFI = 0.940, CFI = 0.999, and NFI = 0.998, indicating an excellent fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data. The badness-of-fit measures also support the model, as the RMR value of 0.041 is well below the recommended limit of 0.08, reflecting minimal residual errors. Although the RMSEA value of 0.087 is marginally above the preferred threshold of 0.08, it

remains within an acceptable range for complex behavioural science models and does not substantially impair the overall model fit. Hence, the findings confirm that the proposed structural equation model is appropriate for examining the influence of habituation dimensions habits, roles, and occupational routine on occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs in the delta districts. These findings are consistent with the recommendations of Hair, et al. (2022); Kline (2023); Schumacker and Lomax (2023); Velaudham & Baskar (2015a); Velaudham & Baskar (2016); Velaudham & Baskar (2017); Josephine Reena, et al. (2019); Velaudham & Baskar (2015b); Premapriya, et al. (2016); Deepak, et al. (2019); Hariprabhu Dhakal, et al. (2025), who emphasized that high incremental fit indices and low residual values indicate a well-fitting path model.

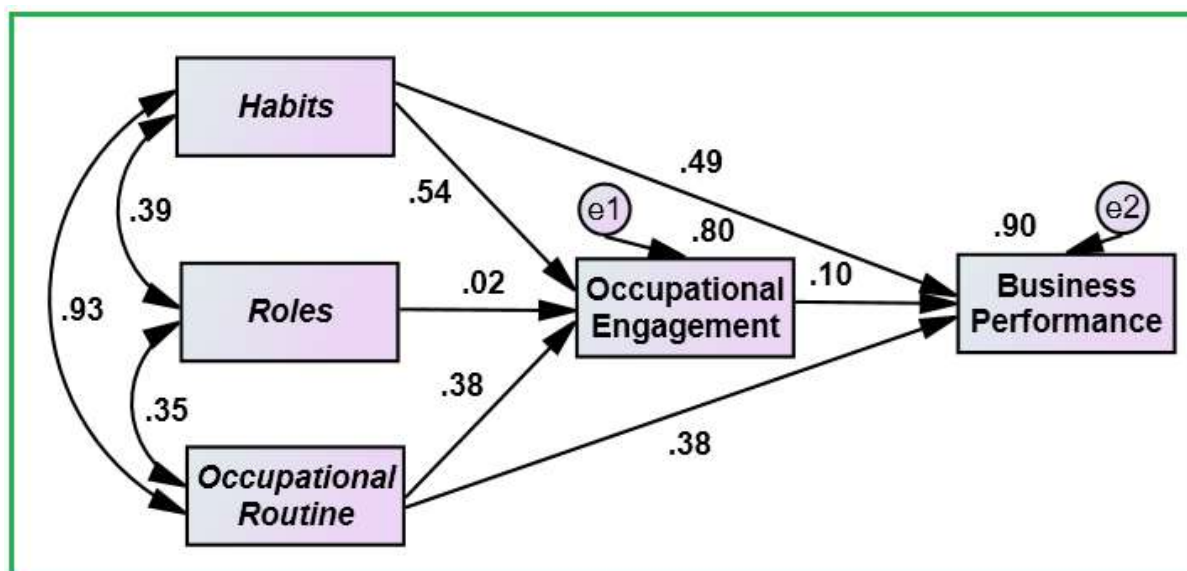


Figure 1: Influence of Habituation among women entrepreneurs on their occupational engagement

Table 2: Model fit indication of influence of Habituation among women entrepreneurs on their occupational engagement

S.No.		Model Fit Indicators	Suggested standards (Premapriya, et al. 2016)	Calculated Values
1	Chi-Square Test	Chi-Square	---	2.996
		p	>0.050	0.056
2	Goodness Fit	GFI	> 0.90	0.996
		AGFI		0.940
		CFI		0.999
		NFI		0.998
3	Badness Fit	RMR	< 0.080	0.041
		RMSEA		0.087

Source: Primary data

Table 3 presents the structural regression weights that examine the influence of habituation dimensions namely habits, roles, and occupational routines—on occupational engagement and business performance among women entrepreneurs. The findings reveal that habits have a significant positive influence on occupational engagement (Estimate = 0.229, C.R. = 8.753, $p = 0.001$), indicating that women entrepreneurs who consistently follow disciplined work practices, effective time management, and structured business behaviours are more actively engaged in their occupational roles. Regular habits enable entrepreneurs to allocate resources efficiently, maintain work consistency, and improve commitment toward

entrepreneurial activities. The significant relationship suggests that repeated productive behaviours become automatic over time, thereby enhancing occupational engagement. This finding is consistent with occupational therapy and entrepreneurship literature, which argues that habitual behaviours reduce decision fatigue and improve work participation and productivity (Kielhofner, 2008; Krieger, et al. 2020; Lally & Gardner, 2013). These studies explain that stable habits provide cognitive efficiency, allowing entrepreneurs to devote greater attention to strategic decision-making and business growth rather than routine operational concerns.

Table 3: Regression Weights of influence of Habituation among women entrepreneurs on their occupational engagement

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Occupational Engagement	<---	Habits	0.229	0.026	8.753	0.536	0.001
Occupational Engagement	<---	Roles	0.021	0.022	0.974	0.023	0.330
Occupational Engagement	<---	Occupational Routines	0.181	0.028	6.372	0.385	0.001
Business Performance	<---	Habits	0.438	0.043	10.184	0.490	0.001
Business Performance	<---	Occupational Engagement	0.212	0.076	2.779	0.102	0.005
Business Performance	<---	Occupational Routines	0.374	0.046	8.192	0.379	0.001

Source: Primary data

The regression results further indicate that roles do not significantly influence occupational engagement (Estimate = 0.021, C.R. = 0.974, $p = 0.330$). Although women entrepreneurs

simultaneously perform multiple social and family roles, these responsibilities may not necessarily determine their level of occupational engagement. In many entrepreneurial settings,

women have developed adaptive strategies that allow them to separate family obligations from business responsibilities. Consequently, role expectations alone may not directly translate into greater engagement unless supported by organizational resources, family support, or motivational factors. The insignificant relationship may also reflect the increasing flexibility of women-owned enterprises, where entrepreneurs independently organize work schedules to balance competing responsibilities. Similar observations have been reported by researchers who found that role conflict does not always reduce work engagement when individuals possess strong coping mechanisms and supportive environments (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Xanthopoulou, et al. 2009).

The findings also demonstrate that occupational routines significantly influence occupational engagement (Estimate = 0.181, C.R. = 6.372, $p = 0.001$). Entrepreneurs who establish consistent daily business routines such as customer interactions, inventory management, financial monitoring, and planning activities are more likely to remain actively engaged in their occupations. Routine behaviours create predictability, reduce uncertainty, and improve operational efficiency, enabling entrepreneurs to concentrate on innovation and customer satisfaction. Regular occupational routines also facilitate better self-regulation and work continuity, particularly in small businesses where entrepreneurs independently manage multiple functions. These findings are supported by previous studies emphasizing that structured routines enhance occupational participation, work performance, and entrepreneurial resilience by creating stable behavioural patterns that improve long-term productivity (Kielhofner, 2008; Clark, et al. 1991; Dunn, et al. 1994).

The regression model further reveals that habits significantly improve business performance (Estimate = 0.438, C.R. = 10.184, $p = 0.001$), representing one of the strongest effects in the model. This finding suggests that entrepreneurs who consistently practice disciplined financial management, customer service, planning, and business monitoring achieve better organizational outcomes. Positive habits encourage efficiency, consistency, and effective decision-making, ultimately contributing to higher profitability, customer retention, and business sustainability. Habitual behaviours also strengthen entrepreneurial resilience by enabling business owners to respond systematically to challenges rather than react impulsively. Previous entrepreneurship research similarly concludes that disciplined behavioural patterns significantly contribute to venture success, innovation capability, and competitive advantage (Frese & Gielnik, 2014; Rauch & Frese, 2007; Uy, et al. 2013).

The results additionally show that occupational engagement has a significant positive effect on business performance (Estimate = 0.212, C.R. = 2.779, $p = 0.005$). Entrepreneurs who demonstrate higher levels of dedication, enthusiasm, persistence, and involvement in their work are more likely to achieve superior business outcomes. Occupational engagement motivates entrepreneurs to invest greater effort in problem-solving, customer relationship management, and continuous business improvement, thereby increasing organizational

performance. Engaged entrepreneurs are generally more proactive, innovative, and committed to achieving long-term business goals. These findings align with the work engagement literature, which consistently demonstrates that highly engaged individuals exhibit greater productivity, creativity, and organizational effectiveness (Schaufeli, et al. 2006; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Christian, et al. 2011).

Finally, occupational routines significantly influence business performance (Estimate = 0.374, C.R. = 8.192, $p = 0.001$). The establishment of systematic operational procedures enables entrepreneurs to manage business activities efficiently while minimizing operational errors and uncertainty. Regular routines improve planning accuracy, customer service consistency, inventory control, and financial discipline, all of which contribute directly to organizational success. The relatively high regression coefficient indicates that standardized daily practices constitute an essential behavioural resource for sustainable entrepreneurial performance. Entrepreneurs who integrate effective routines into their business operations are better positioned to maintain quality, respond to market demands, and achieve long-term competitive advantages. Overall, the structural model confirms that habituation particularly through habits and occupational routines plays a vital role in strengthening occupational engagement and improving business performance among women entrepreneurs.

Managerial Implications

The findings offer important managerial implications for women entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship development agencies, self-help groups (SHGs), non-governmental organizations, and government institutions operating in the delta districts. The significant positive influence of habits and occupational routines on occupational engagement indicates that managers and entrepreneurship support organizations should focus on developing structured work behaviours rather than relying solely on technical or financial assistance. Regular business planning, disciplined time management, systematic customer follow-up, inventory control, and daily performance monitoring can strengthen entrepreneurs' engagement with their businesses. Training programmes conducted by agencies such as the District Industries Centre (DIC), Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women (TNCDW), and MSME Development Institutes should therefore include habit-building interventions, productivity routines, and work discipline modules. Since the influence of roles on occupational engagement was statistically insignificant, managers should recognize that merely assigning multiple family or business responsibilities may not enhance engagement unless entrepreneurs are supported with effective routines, workload management, and role clarity.

The results further reveal that habits, occupational routines, and occupational engagement significantly improve business performance, emphasizing that sustainable entrepreneurial success depends on consistent behavioural practices. Managers of women-owned enterprises should establish standard operating procedures, daily work schedules, customer relationship practices, quality monitoring systems, and continuous learning mechanisms to reinforce productive habits. Entrepreneurship development programmes should encourage

entrepreneurs to maintain business diaries, set measurable weekly goals, review financial records regularly, and adopt digital tools for scheduling and business management. Financial institutions and policy makers can also integrate behavioural coaching and mentoring into loan support programmes so that women entrepreneurs not only receive financial resources but also develop disciplined occupational practices that translate into higher engagement and improved business performance. Such managerial interventions are likely to enhance enterprise sustainability, income generation, and long-term competitiveness among women entrepreneurs in the delta districts.

CONCLUSION

The findings conclude that habituation plays a significant role in enhancing both occupational engagement and business performance among women entrepreneurs in the delta districts. Specifically, habits and occupational routines exerted significant positive influences on occupational engagement, indicating that entrepreneurs who maintain consistent work habits and structured daily routines are more actively involved, productive, and committed to their entrepreneurial activities. However, the influence of roles on occupational engagement was found to be statistically insignificant, suggesting that the multiple social and family roles performed by women entrepreneurs do not necessarily enhance their work engagement, possibly due to role conflict and competing responsibilities. Furthermore, business performance was significantly influenced by habits, occupational routines, and occupational engagement, demonstrating that disciplined behavioural patterns and active engagement contribute directly to superior business outcomes. Overall, the study confirms that developing positive habits and systematic occupational routines strengthens occupational engagement, which in turn enhances business performance. Therefore, women entrepreneurs should be encouraged through entrepreneurship development programmes, mentoring, and occupational skill training to cultivate effective work habits and structured routines that support sustainable entrepreneurial success in the delta districts.

Limitations and Future Research Direction

The present study has certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings. First, the study was confined to women entrepreneurs in the delta districts, limiting the generalizability of the results to other geographical regions, industries, or socio-economic contexts. Second, the use of a cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships among habituation, occupational engagement, and business performance. Third, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be subject to response bias and social desirability effects. Although the findings revealed that habits and occupational routines significantly enhanced occupational engagement and business performance, while roles did not exhibit a significant influence on occupational engagement, these relationships may vary across different entrepreneurial environments, business sizes, and stages of enterprise development. Future research should adopt longitudinal and mixed method approaches to examine how habituation develops over time and influences entrepreneurial success. Researchers may also extend the model by incorporating mediating and moderating variables such as

entrepreneurial self-efficacy, digital competency, resilience, work-life balance, environmental support, and access to financial resources. Comparative studies involving urban and rural entrepreneurs, different sectors, and male entrepreneurs would further strengthen the external validity of the findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of habituation in enhancing occupational engagement and business performance.

REFERENCE

1. Al-Kwafi, O. S., Tien Khoa, T., Ongsakul, V., & Ahmed, Z. U. (2022). Antecedents of women entrepreneurs' performance: An empirical perspective. *Management Decision*, 60(1), 86–122. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-07-2020-0849>
2. Azzahra, N., et al. (2025). Women entrepreneurs and sustainable development: Promoting business performance from the low-income groups. *Sustainable Futures*, 9, 100675. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sfr.2025.100675>
3. Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands-resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 273–285. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000056>
4. Boateng, G. O., Neilands, T. B., Frongillo, E. A., Melgar-Quinonez, H. R., & Young, S. L. (2018). Best practices for developing and validating scales for health, social, and behavioral research: A primer. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 6, 149. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2018.00149>
5. Bourne, K. A., & Calás, M. B. (2013). Becoming 'real' entrepreneurs: Women and the gendered normalization of work. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 20(4), 425–438. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2012.00591.x>
6. Bowen, D. D., & Hisrich, R. D. (1986). The female entrepreneur: A career development perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 11(2), 393–407. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1986.4283366>
7. Byrne, B. M. (2022). *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and programming (4th ed.)*. Routledge.
8. Christian, M. S., Garza, A. S., & Slaughter, J. E. (2011). Work engagement: A quantitative review and test of its relations with task and contextual performance. *Personnel Psychology*, 64(1), 89–136. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2010.01203.x>
9. Christiansen, C. H., & Townsend, E. A. (2010). *Introduction to occupation: The art and science of living (2nd ed.)*. Pearson Education.
10. Clark, F., Parham, D., Carlson, M. E., Frank, G., Jackson, J., Pierce, D., Wolfe, R. J., & Zemke, R. (1991). Occupational science: Academic innovation in the service of occupational therapy's future. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 45(4), 300–310. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.45.4.300>
11. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (6th ed.)*. Sage Publications.
12. Daly, R., & Hynes, S. M. (2025). An exploration of women's occupational participation and identity during menopause: Descriptive qualitative study. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 88(5), 272–280. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03080226241310032>
13. de Bruin, A., Brush, C. G., & Welter, F. (2022). *Advancing a framework for researching women entrepreneurs*.

- International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship, 14(2), 125–142. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJGE-10-2021-0156>
14. De Clercq, D., Kaciak, E., & Thongpapanl, N. (2022). Work-to-family conflict and firm performance of women entrepreneurs: Roles of work-related emotional exhaustion and competitive hostility. *International Small Business Journal*, 40(3), 335–359. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02662426211011405>
15. Denissen, J. J. A., Ulferts, H., Lüdtke, O., Muck, P. M., & Gerstorf, D. (2014). Longitudinal transactions between personality and occupational roles: A large and heterogeneous study of job beginners, stayers, and changers. *Developmental Psychology*, 50(7), 1931–1942. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0036994>
16. Digan, S. P., Sahi, G. K., Mantok, S., & Patel, P. C. (2019). Women's perceived empowerment in entrepreneurial efforts: The role of bricolage and psychological capital. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 57(1), 206–229. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12402>
17. Dunn, W., Brown, C., & McGuigan, A. (1994). The ecology of human performance: A framework for considering the effect of context. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 48(7), 595–607. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.48.7.595>
18. Etikan, I., & Bala, K. (2017). Sampling and sampling methods. *Biometrics & Biostatistics International Journal*, 5(6), 215–217. <https://doi.org/10.15406/bbij.2017.05.00149>
19. Fisher, G., & Marterella, A. (2019). Occupational patterns and routines: A review of the literature. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 26(3), 327–341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2019.1609965>
20. Frese, M., & Gielnik, M. M. (2014). The psychology of entrepreneurship. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1(1), 413–438. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091326>
21. Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of Management Review*, 31(1), 72–92. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2006.19379625>
22. Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) (3rd ed.)*. Sage Publications.
23. Hariprabhu Dhakal, B., Chinnadurai, P., and Velaudham, C. (2025). Significance of Digital Human Resource Management Practices for Organizational Performance. *EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business*, 13 (10), 86-92.
24. Hernández-Espeso, N., & Goikoetxea Aramendia, A. (2026). Exploring occupational participation of older adults in rural contexts: A qualitative study using MOHO. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03080226261421055>
25. Huang, Y., Wang, X., Yuan, Y., & Li, P. (2025). Entrepreneurial learning and performance of female entrepreneurs: Evidence from China. *BMC Psychology*, 13, Article 808. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-03067-3>
26. Huang, Y., Wang, X., Yuan, Y., Sun, W., & Li, P. (2025). Entrepreneurial learning and performance of female entrepreneurs: Evidence from China. *BMC Psychology*, 13(1), Article 808. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-03067-3>
27. Huq, A., & Arenius, P. (2025). Women entrepreneurs' negotiation of the work-family balance in patriarchal society. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 63(5), 2188–2219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472778.2024.2424813>
28. Jo, Y., & Ahn, J. (2026). Navigating the digital era: The impact of digitalization and work-life harmony on well-being among solo self-employed individuals. *PLOS ONE*, 21(6), e0350731. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0350731>
29. Josephine Reena, A., Kanthiah Alias Deepak, R., Velaudham, C & Manivannan, M. (2019). Influence Of Brand Image On Purchase Intention Towards Fmcg Products. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 6 (1), 742-745.
30. Kanthiah Alias Deepak, R., Velaudham, C & Manivannan, M. (2019). "Gypsy" Narikuravar Community: Problems in Accessing Health Care Services. *Indian Journal of Public Health Research & Development*, 10 (9), 48-54.
31. Kiehlhofner, G. (2008). *Model of Human Occupation: Theory and Application (4th ed.)*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
32. Kiehlhofner, G. (2020). *Model of Human Occupation: Theory and application (6th ed.)*. Wolters Kluwer.
33. Kline, R. B. (2023). *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling (5th ed.)*. Guilford Press. ISBN: 9781462551910.
34. Krieger, T., Feron, F., Kasten, E., & Meyer, T. (2020). Habit formation and occupational performance: A review. *Occupational Therapy International*, 2020, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2020/8893564>
35. Laguna, M., Razmus, W., & Żaliński, A. (2017). Dynamic relationships between personal resources and work engagement in entrepreneurs. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 90(2), 248–269. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12170>
36. Lally, P., & Gardner, B. (2013). Promoting habit formation. *Health Psychology Review*, 7(S1), S137–S158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17437199.2011.603640>
37. Lee, S., Park, J., & Kim, H. (2021). Occupational habits, role balance, and work engagement among self-employed women. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 28(4), 496–510. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2021.1882345>
38. Lindström, S. (2022). Meaningfulness and self-integrity at work amongst older, self-employed women entrepreneurs. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 14(3), 435–452. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJGE-11-2021-0182>
39. Ludwig, F. M. (1997). How routine facilitates wellbeing in older women. *Occupational Therapy International*, 4(3), 215–230. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oti.57>
40. Mickiewicz, T., & Nguyen, B. (2025). In the company of cheerful ladies: Whether female entrepreneurs are more productive? *Small Business Economics*, 64(3), 837–861. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-024-00929-9>
41. Murthy, R. N. (2025). Personal cognitive predictors influencing career resilience among Indian women information technology professionals. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 62(2). <https://doi.org/10.1002/joec.12245>
42. Nayar, S., Hocking, C., & Giddings, L. (2012). Using occupation to navigate cultural spaces: Indian immigrant women settling in New Zealand. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 19(1), 62–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2011.602628>
43. Neneh, B. N. (2021). Role salience and the growth intention of women entrepreneurs: Does work-life balance make a difference? *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 24, e4. <https://doi.org/10.1017/SJP.2021.9>
44. Ni, D., Li, N., & Zheng, X. (2024). Why do women entrepreneurs behave dominantly in the workplace, and what does it mean? A family embeddedness perspective. *Group & Organization Management*, 49(4), 860–901.

- <https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011221116729>
45. Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
46. Oladipo, O., Platt, K., & Shim, H. S. (2023). Female entrepreneurs managing from home. *Small Business Economics*, 61(2), 447–464. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-022-00713-7>
47. Petrou, P. (2024). Unraveling the power of leisure crafting for unengaged employees: Implications for creativity and meaning at work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 45(6). <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2824>
48. Premapriya, M.S., Velaudham, C. & Baskar, P (2016). Nature of Family Influenced by Consumer Buying behaviour: Multiple Group Analysis Approach. *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6 (9), 908-915.
49. Rauch, A., & Frese, M. (2007). Let's put the person back into entrepreneurship research: A meta-analysis on the relationship between business owners' personality traits, business creation, and success. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 16(4), 353–385. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13594320701595438>
50. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2023). *Research methods for business students* (9th ed.). Pearson.
51. Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66(4), 701–716. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164405282471>
52. Schumacker, R. E., & Lomax, R. G. (2023). *A Beginner's Guide to Structural Equation Modeling* (5th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003447962>
53. Sharma, S., & Upadhyay, P. S. (2025). Impact of work-life balance policies and practices on work engagement of women entrepreneurs. *Journal of Information Systems Engineering and Management*, 10(14s), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.52783/jisem.v10i14s.2398>
54. Soleimanof, S., et al. (2022). Decision-making biases in women entrepreneurs: The novices vs the habitual. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 9(4), 675–691. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOEPP-12-2021-0338>
55. Srivastava, S., & Pandita, D. (2025). Unveiling the untapped potential: A comprehensive review of performance in women-owned firms. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 14(1), Article 31. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-025-00496-7>
56. Taylor, R. R. (2017). *Kielhofner's Model of Human Occupation: Theory and Application* (5th ed.). Wolters Kluwer.
57. Theunissen, P., Kensbock, J. M., Schüler, J., Baum, M., & Gerards, R. (2025). What makes mothers decide (not) to become entrepreneurs? Unpacking the role of time and money in parental leave policies. *Journal of Management Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.13215>
58. Toh, L. K. R., & Križaj, T. (2025). Experiences of occupational engagement in young and middle-aged women post-stroke: A qualitative systematic review. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 48(3), 581–597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2025.2515448>
59. Townsend, E., & Polatajko, H. J. (2021). *Enabling occupation II: Advancing an occupational therapy vision for health, well-being, & justice through occupation* (2nd ed.). CAOT Publications.
60. Uebbing, L., Wehner, M. C., Yela Aránega, A., & Guaita Martínez, J. M. (2025). Make it or leave it? An exploration of post-foundation dynamics among female entrepreneurs. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 21, Article 52. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-024-01065-2>
61. Uy, M. A., Foo, M. D., & Song, Z. (2013). Joint effects of prior start-up experience and coping strategies on entrepreneurs' psychological well-being. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 28(5), 583–597. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2012.04.003>
62. Velaudham, C & Baskar, P (2015a). Influence of Gender in Consumer Buying Behaviour Towards Air Conditioner In Chennai City. *Annamalai Journal of Management*, 3-9.
63. Velaudham, C & Baskar, P (2015b). Multiple Group Structural Equation Model Showing Influence of Age in Consumer Buying behaviour towards Air Conditioner in Chennai City. *Annamalai journal of management*, 89-96.
64. Velaudham, C & Baskar, P (2016). Number Of Earning Members Influence Over Air Conditioner Buying Behavior: Multiple Group Analysis Approach. *Annamalai Business Review*, 59-68.
65. Velaudham, C & Baskar, P (2017). Rural Women Empowerment through SHG in Dharmapuri District: Path Analysis Approach. *SUMEDHA Journal of Management*, Special Issue, 6 (3), 24-31.
66. Xanthopoulou, D., Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2009). Reciprocal relationships between job resources, personal resources, and work engagement. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 74(3), 235–244. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.job.2008.11.003>
67. Xu, Y., et al. (2026). Utilize time with ease: Women entrepreneurs' polychronicity and resilience. *Management and Organization Review*, 22(2), 272–303. <https://doi.org/10.1017/mor.2025.10088>
68. Ye, Z., Song, X., Li, J., & Qiao, C. (2025). Utilize time with ease: Women entrepreneurs' polychronicity and resilience. *Management and Organization Review*, 22(Special Issue 2), 272–303. <https://doi.org/10.1017/mor.2025.10088>
69. Zhang, X., et al. (2025). Unraveling key factors enhancing female entrepreneurial performance in China: A PLS-SEM and fsQCA analysis. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 12, Article 121. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-04192-x>