



PERFORMANCE CAPACITY AS A PREDICTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN DELTA DISTRICTS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of performance capacity on occupational engagement and business performance among women entrepreneurs. Performance capacity was conceptualized through four dimensions: physical capacity, cognitive capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills. A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from women entrepreneurs using a structured questionnaire. Path analysis was employed to examine the relationships among the study variables. The findings reveal that physical capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills have significant positive effects on occupational engagement, while cognitive capacity also exerts a significant but comparatively weaker influence. The results further indicate that cognitive capacity has the strongest positive influence on business performance, followed by physical capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills. In addition, occupational engagement significantly contributes to business performance, demonstrating its mediating role in translating entrepreneurial capabilities into improved business outcomes. The study concludes that strengthening women entrepreneurs' physical endurance, cognitive abilities, emotional resilience, and communication competence enhances occupational engagement, which subsequently improves business performance. These findings provide valuable implications for policymakers, entrepreneurship development institutions, and training organizations in designing capacity-building programs that foster sustainable entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs.

KEYWORDS: Performance Capacity, Physical Capacity, Cognitive Capacity, Emotional Capacity, Communication Skills, Occupational Engagement, Business Performance, Women Entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

Performance capacity refers to the combination of physical, cognitive, emotional, and communication abilities that enable individuals to perform occupational roles effectively and achieve desired work outcomes. Within the context of entrepreneurship, performance capacity determines how entrepreneurs mobilize their personal resources to meet business demands, adapt to changing market conditions, and sustain long-term occupational engagement. Women entrepreneurs, particularly in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu, encounter unique challenges such as balancing family responsibilities, limited access to financial resources, social expectations, and competitive business environments. These challenges require not only technical knowledge but also strong physical endurance, sound cognitive functioning, emotional resilience, and effective communication skills. Occupational engagement, defined as the extent to which individuals actively participate in meaningful work activities with commitment and persistence, is therefore influenced by an entrepreneur's overall performance capacity. Studies have consistently demonstrated that entrepreneurs possessing higher levels of personal competencies exhibit greater business involvement, innovation, and organizational effectiveness (Mahajan & Chowdhary, 2022; Saleem, et al. 2023; Singh & Kovid, 2023; Huang, et al. 2025).

Among the dimensions of performance capacity, physical capacity reflects the health, stamina, energy, and endurance required to perform occupational tasks consistently. Women entrepreneurs frequently engage in prolonged working hours, business travel, customer interactions, inventory management, and household responsibilities simultaneously. Consequently, adequate physical capacity enables them to maintain productivity, reduce fatigue, and respond effectively to occupational demands. Cognitive capacity encompasses attention, memory, decision-making, planning, creativity, and problem-solving abilities that are essential for recognizing business opportunities, managing financial resources, and making strategic decisions. Entrepreneurs with stronger cognitive abilities are more capable of adapting to technological changes, managing uncertainty, and identifying innovative solutions to business challenges. Likewise, emotional capacity, often associated with emotional intelligence, enables entrepreneurs to regulate emotions, cope with stress, maintain motivation, and build resilient businesses despite setbacks. Emotional competence strengthens perseverance, entrepreneurial passion, and confidence, which ultimately enhance occupational engagement and business sustainability (Saleem, et al. 2023; Singh & Kovid, 2023; Tahir, et al. 2025; Huang, et al. 2025).

Another critical dimension of performance capacity is communication skills, which facilitate effective interactions with customers, suppliers, financial institutions, employees, and government agencies. Successful entrepreneurs rely on communication competence to negotiate contracts, market products, resolve conflicts, develop business networks, and establish long-term stakeholder relationships. For women entrepreneurs, communication skills also enhance self-confidence and entrepreneurial identity while improving access to information, mentoring, and collaborative opportunities. Recent research emphasizes that communication



competence significantly contributes to entrepreneurial effectiveness, networking capability, and business performance among women entrepreneurs. When combined with strong physical, cognitive, and emotional capacities, communication skills create a comprehensive performance capacity that promotes sustained occupational engagement and business growth. Therefore, examining performance capacity as a multidimensional predictor of occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts provides valuable insights for policymakers, entrepreneurship development agencies, and educational institutions seeking to strengthen women-led enterprises through targeted capacity-building interventions (Terkan, 2026; Mahajan & Chowdhary, 2022; Singh & Kovid, 2023; Tahir, et al. 2025).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Influence of Performance Capacity (Physical Capacity, Cognitive Capacity, Emotional Capacity, and Communication Skills) on Occupational Engagement among Women Entrepreneurs

Recent literature indicates that performance capacity, comprising physical capacity, cognitive capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills, plays a fundamental role in enhancing occupational engagement and entrepreneurial effectiveness among women entrepreneurs. A comprehensive systematic review by Srivastava and Pandita (2025) concluded that psychological capabilities, leadership competencies, and entrepreneurial skills are among the strongest determinants of women entrepreneurs' business performance and sustained occupational participation, emphasizing that cognitive and emotional capacities enable entrepreneurs to adapt successfully to dynamic business environments. Huang, et al. (2025) further demonstrated that entrepreneurial learning significantly improves women entrepreneurs' performance through enhanced psychological capital and opportunity recognition, highlighting the importance of cognitive capacity in maintaining active occupational engagement. Barbosa, et al. (2024), in a scoping review of entrepreneur well-being, identified physical vitality, emotional resilience, cognitive planning, and interpersonal competence as essential resources that support sustained entrepreneurial involvement despite occupational stress. Feng, et al. (2023) found that personality traits, motivation, commitment, and entrepreneurial competencies significantly predict entrepreneurial success among women-owned SMEs, suggesting that emotional capacity and cognitive decision-making strengthen occupational engagement. Somia (2025) reported that women entrepreneurs employ communication, persuasion, networking, negotiation, and reflective learning competencies to overcome business barriers, indicating that communication skills are critical for effective occupational participation. Ye, et al. (2025) observed that emotional intelligence enhances resilience among women entrepreneurs facing multiple occupational roles, thereby improving their ability to remain engaged in entrepreneurial activities. Hossain, et al. (2025), through a systematic review, identified entrepreneurial competencies, skill development, and supportive ecosystems as major enablers of sustainable women entrepreneurship in emerging economies. Nguyen, et al. (2025) further highlighted that digital literacy, entrepreneurial capability, and communication competence are emerging themes associated with business continuity and occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs. The study by Huang, et al. (2025) also confirmed that entrepreneurial learning strengthens cognitive flexibility and business performance through opportunity recognition, reinforcing the importance of cognitive capacity in occupational engagement. Finally, Terkan (2026) established that effective communication skills significantly influence entrepreneurial confidence, networking effectiveness, and business participation among women entrepreneurs, emphasizing communication competence as an indispensable component of occupational engagement. Collectively, these recent studies suggest that performance capacity is a multidimensional construct that substantially enhances occupational engagement and entrepreneurial sustainability, 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 performance capacity (physical capacity, cognitive capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills) on the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs.

Influence of Performance Capacity (Physical Capacity, Cognitive Capacity, Emotional Capacity, and Communication Skills) on Business Performance among Women Entrepreneurs

Performance capacity comprising physical capacity, cognitive capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills is a critical determinant of business performance among women entrepreneurs. Srivastava and Pandita (2025), in their systematic review of women-owned firms, concluded that psychological capabilities, leadership competence, and personal resources significantly improve venture performance by strengthening entrepreneurial effectiveness and adaptability. Huang, et al. (2025) reported that entrepreneurial learning enhances cognitive capacity, opportunity recognition, and psychological capital, which subsequently improve entrepreneurial performance among female entrepreneurs. Basheer and Rafiq (2025) demonstrated that entrepreneurial competencies developed through education significantly improve business performance by strengthening problem-solving ability, decision-making, and innovation capacity. Tahir, et al. (2025) found that entrepreneurial cognition and entrepreneurial capital positively influence sustainable business performance, emphasizing the importance of cognitive and strategic capabilities for women-led enterprises. Terkan (2026) highlighted that effective communication skills enhance entrepreneurial confidence, networking, negotiation, and business sustainability among women entrepreneurs, thereby contributing directly to organizational success. Esha, et al. (2026) observed that personality traits and interpersonal trust significantly improve business performance, indicating that emotional stability and relationship-building capacity are essential determinants of entrepreneurial success. Imtyaz and Yameen (2026) further revealed that AI proficiency and entrepreneurial agility strengthen business performance, suggesting that cognitive adaptability and technological competence have become indispensable capabilities for women-led ventures in the digital economy. Pekerti, et al. (2026) concluded that psychological resilience, emotional intelligence, and adaptive coping mechanisms substantially improve business resilience and performance among women entrepreneurs. Mickiewicz and Nguyen



(2025) reported that women entrepreneurs demonstrate higher productivity when supported by favourable institutional environments and efficient workforce management, reflecting the influence of physical and managerial capacities on firm outcomes. Collectively, these studies suggest that stronger physical endurance, cognitive competence, emotional regulation, and communication skills significantly enhance entrepreneurial effectiveness and business performance. However, empirical evidence examining these dimensions simultaneously among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu remains scarce, highlighting the need for the present investigation. Hence, the hypothesis is

H₀: There is no significant influence of performance capacity (physical capacity, cognitive capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills) on the business performance of women entrepreneurs.

Influence of Occupational Engagement on business performance among Women Entrepreneurs

Recent literature consistently demonstrates that occupational engagement plays a vital role in enhancing business performance among women entrepreneurs by improving productivity, innovation, commitment, and business sustainability. Occupational engagement, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in entrepreneurial activities, enables women entrepreneurs to effectively manage business challenges and capitalize on market opportunities. Sharma and Upadhyay (2025) reported that work-life balance policies significantly enhance work engagement among women entrepreneurs, leading to greater business commitment and organizational effectiveness. Similarly, Huang, et al. (2025) found that entrepreneurial learning strengthens occupational engagement, which subsequently improves business performance among female entrepreneurs in China. Mickiewicz and Nguyen (2025) observed that highly engaged women entrepreneurs demonstrate superior productivity and business growth despite institutional constraints. Srivastava and Pandita (2025), in their systematic review, concluded that entrepreneurial engagement is one of the most influential determinants of firm performance in women-owned enterprises. Shukla et al. (2025) further established that entrepreneurial intentions and active occupational engagement significantly improve business performance among women entrepreneurs in India. De Clercq, et al. (2022) highlighted that work-related emotional exhaustion negatively affects occupational engagement, thereby reducing firm performance among women entrepreneurs. Kaur and Bains (2021) emphasized that motivation and continuous business involvement positively influence entrepreneurial performance through greater occupational commitment. Cardon and Patel (2021) reported that entrepreneurs exhibiting high work engagement are more resilient and capable of sustaining business growth under challenging conditions. Stephan (2021) demonstrated that psychological well-being enhances entrepreneurial engagement, resulting in improved venture success and long-term business outcomes. Collectively, these studies suggest that occupational engagement serves as a critical psychological and behavioural resource that directly contributes to superior business performance among women entrepreneurs. Although these findings are well established internationally, limited empirical evidence exists regarding women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu, thereby highlighting the need for the present investigation. Hence, the hypothesis is

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

Research Gap

Although previous studies have established that performance capacity—including physical capacity, cognitive capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills—plays an important role in improving entrepreneurial effectiveness and business outcomes, limited research has examined its influence on occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs, particularly in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu. Most existing studies have focused on business performance, entrepreneurial success, or psychological well-being without exploring how these multidimensional performance capacities predict occupational engagement in the local socio-economic and cultural context. Furthermore, empirical evidence integrating all four dimensions of performance capacity into a single predictive model for occupational engagement is scarce. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by investigating Performance Capacity as a Predictor of Occupational Engagement among Women Entrepreneurs in the Delta Districts, thereby providing context-specific evidence to support occupational therapy, entrepreneurship development, and policy interventions.

Need for the Study

Performance capacity, comprising physical capacity, cognitive capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills, plays a crucial role in determining the level of occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs. In the Delta districts, women entrepreneurs encounter various challenges such as limited resources, balancing family and business responsibilities, and market competition, all of which demand strong performance capacities for sustained entrepreneurial engagement. However, limited empirical research has examined how these dimensions of performance capacity influence occupational engagement in this regional context. Therefore, this study is needed to assess the predictive role of performance capacity in enhancing occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts. The findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers, entrepreneurship development agencies, and training institutions to design targeted interventions that strengthen entrepreneurs' capabilities, improve business sustainability, and contribute to regional economic development.

Statement of the Problem

Women entrepreneurs play a vital role in the economic development of the Delta districts by creating employment opportunities and contributing to local economic growth. However, many women entrepreneurs experience difficulties in maintaining consistent occupational engagement due to variations in their performance capacity, including physical capacity, cognitive capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills. These capacities influence their ability to manage business operations, make effective decisions,



cope with occupational stress, and build productive relationships with customers and stakeholders. Although previous studies have examined entrepreneurial performance and business success, limited research has investigated how performance capacity predicts occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs, particularly in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu. This research seeks to address this gap by examining the predictive role of performance capacity on occupational engagement, thereby providing empirical evidence that may assist policymakers, entrepreneurship development agencies, and occupational therapists in designing interventions to strengthen women's entrepreneurial engagement and sustainability.

Research Methodology

The present study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the influence of Performance Capacity, comprising Physical Capacity, Cognitive Capacity, Emotional Capacity, and Communication Skills, on Occupational Engagement among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts. A descriptive research design is appropriate for identifying the characteristics, perceptions, and behavioural patterns of respondents and for examining the predictive relationship between variables in their natural settings without manipulating any research conditions. The design facilitates the collection of quantitative data from many respondents and enables statistical examination of the relationship between performance capacity and occupational engagement. The study also assessed the influence of occupational engagement on business performance using structured empirical analysis. Similar research designs have been widely employed in entrepreneurship and organizational behaviour studies to understand behavioural and occupational outcomes among entrepreneurs (Hair, et al. 2022; Sekaran & Bougie, 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

A structured questionnaire was developed to collect primary data from women entrepreneurs operating in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu. The instrument consisted of four sections. The first section included 10 demographic variables such as age, education, marital status, business experience, type of enterprise, and annual income. The second section measured Performance Capacity through 16 self-designed items covering four dimensions: Physical Capacity (4 items; $\alpha = 0.90$), Cognitive Capacity (4 items; $\alpha = 0.88$), Emotional Capacity (4 items; $\alpha = 0.78$), and Communication Skills (4 items; $\alpha = 0.92$). The third section measured Occupational Engagement using 10 items ($\alpha = 0.90$), while the fourth section assessed Business Performance using 5 items ($\alpha = 0.82$). The overall reliability coefficient for Performance Capacity was 0.87, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. All statements were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The reliability coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming that the instrument possessed acceptable reliability for further statistical analysis (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Hair, et al. 2022; DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021).

Primary data were collected from women entrepreneurs located across the Delta districts through direct field surveys. The study employed a convenience sampling technique to identify respondents who were actively engaged in entrepreneurial activities and willing to participate in the survey. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, of which 264 were returned. After eliminating 10 incomplete questionnaires, 254 valid responses were retained for final analysis, yielding an effective response rate of 84.67 percent. The collected data were coded, edited, and entered SPSS and AMOS software packages for statistical analysis. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to verify the dimensionality and construct validity of the measurement scales, while Path Analysis was used to examine the predictive influence of Performance Capacity on Occupational Engagement and Business Performance. These multivariate statistical techniques are widely recommended for validating latent constructs and testing causal relationships in behavioural and entrepreneurship research (Hair, et al. 2022; Kline, 2023; Byrne, 2022).

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the results of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) conducted to examine the underlying dimensions of Performance Capacity among women entrepreneurs. The adequacy of the data for factor analysis was confirmed by a Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value of 0.771, indicating good sampling adequacy, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2250.639$, $p = 0.001$), confirming that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor extraction. The rotated component matrix extracted four distinct factors, namely Physical Capacity (PC), Cognitive Capacity (CC), Emotional Capacity (EC), and Communication Skills (CS), with all factor loadings exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.60. The Physical Capacity construct recorded strong loadings ranging from 0.962 to 0.989, indicating that physical stamina, health, recovery from fatigue, and healthy lifestyle significantly represent entrepreneurs' physical performance capacity. Similarly, the Cognitive Capacity items exhibited very high loadings between 0.959 and 0.987, reflecting the importance of mental focus, strategic adaptability, decision-making ability, and continuous learning. Emotional Capacity demonstrated the highest factor loadings (0.977–0.993), emphasizing stress management, emotional resilience, self-regulation, and positive attitude as critical entrepreneurial competencies. Communication Skills also showed substantial loadings ranging from 0.860 to 0.907, confirming the significance of persuasive communication, negotiation, networking, and active listening in entrepreneurial success. The four extracted factors reported eigenvalues of 4.870, 3.886, 3.222, and 2.926, respectively, collectively explaining 93.154% of the total variance, which indicates excellent construct validity and confirms that the instrument effectively captures the multidimensional nature of performance capacity among women entrepreneurs. These findings are consistent with previous studies that identified physical endurance, cognitive competence, emotional intelligence, and communication ability as fundamental determinants of entrepreneurial effectiveness and occupational engagement (Baum, et al. 2001; Baron, 2008; Tehseen & Ramayah, 2015).

Path Analysis

Table 2: Model fit indication of influence of performance capacity 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	---	2.062
		p	>0.050	0.084
2	Goodness Fit	GFI	> 0.90	0.998
		AGFI		0.961
		CFI		0.999
		NFI		0.998
3	Badness Fit	RMR	< 0.080	0.019
		RMSEA		0.065

Source: Primary data

The model fit indices presented in Table 2 indicate that the proposed structural model examining the influence of performance capacity on occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs demonstrates an excellent fit with the observed data. The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 2.062$, $p = 0.084$) is non-significant ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that there is no statistically significant difference between the hypothesized model and the observed covariance matrix. Furthermore, the goodness-of-fit indices exceed the recommended threshold, with GFI = 0.998, AGFI = 0.961, CFI = 0.999, and NFI = 0.998, indicating an exceptionally well-fitting model. Similarly, the badness-of-fit indices are within acceptable limits, with RMR = 0.019 and RMSEA = 0.065, confirming minimal residual error and satisfactory approximation of the model to the population data. Therefore, the structural model is considered statistically adequate for examining the influence of performance capacity (physical capacity, cognitive capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills) on occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts. These findings are consistent with the recommendations for evaluating structural equation models and support the validity of the proposed research framework (Hair, et al. 2022; Kline, 2023; Schumacker & Lomax, 2022; 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).

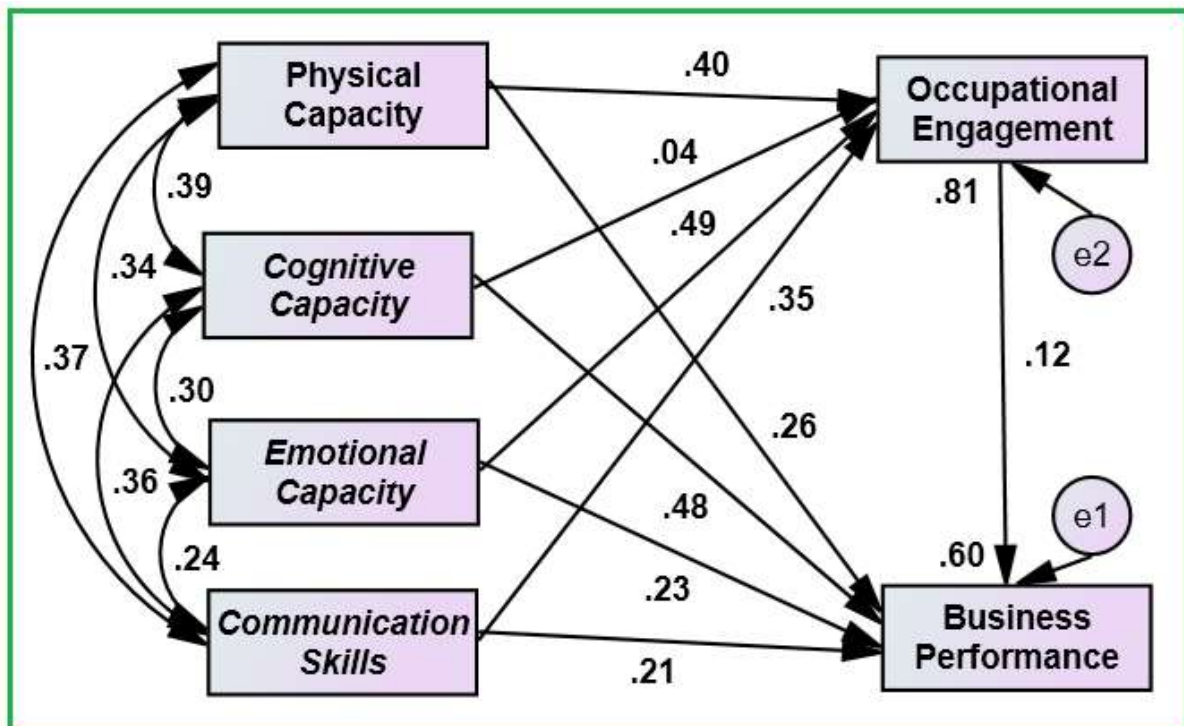


Figure 1: Performance Capacity as a Predictor of Occupational Engagement among Women Entrepreneurs



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

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Occupational Engagement	<---	Physical Capacity	0.057	0.003	21.592	0.400	0.001
Occupational Engagement	<---	Cognitive Capacity	0.007	0.003	2.018	0.037	0.044
Occupational Engagement	<---	Emotional Capacity	0.079	0.003	28.010	0.489	0.001
Occupational Engagement	<---	Communication Skills	0.064	0.003	19.696	0.352	0.001
Business Performance	<---	Physical Capacity	0.032	0.004	7.442	0.258	0.001
Business Performance	<---	Cognitive Capacity	0.079	0.004	18.060	0.483	0.001
Business Performance	<---	Emotional Capacity	0.032	0.005	6.235	0.230	0.001
Business Performance	<---	Communication Skills	0.034	0.005	6.538	0.212	0.001
Business Performance	<---	Occupational Engagement	0.102	0.047	2.164	0.117	0.030

Source: Primary data

Table 3 presents the regression weights examining the influence of performance capacity dimensions physical capacity, cognitive capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills on occupational engagement and business performance among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts. The findings indicate that all four dimensions of performance capacity significantly contribute to occupational engagement, while occupational engagement also significantly enhances business performance. These results demonstrate that performance capacity is a multidimensional construct that enables women entrepreneurs to manage their enterprises effectively by improving their work involvement, decision-making, interpersonal interactions, and overall business outcomes. Similar findings have been reported in entrepreneurship and organizational behaviour research, where individual capabilities were identified as major determinants of occupational engagement and entrepreneurial success (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Baron & Henry, 2011; Rauch & Frese, 2007).

The regression coefficient for physical capacity (Estimate = 0.057; CR = 21.592; β = 0.400; p = 0.001) indicates a positive and statistically significant influence on occupational engagement. This result suggests that women entrepreneurs possessing greater physical stamina, energy, and health are more capable of sustaining long working hours, managing multiple business activities, and coping with operational demands. In the context of women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts, who frequently balance household responsibilities with business operations, better physical capacity allows them to remain actively engaged in their occupations. Their businesses often require travelling to markets, supervising production, handling customers, and maintaining inventories, all of which demand considerable physical effort. Consequently, entrepreneurs with higher physical endurance are more likely to demonstrate stronger occupational engagement because they experience less fatigue and greater productivity. Previous studies similarly reported that physical well-being enhances work engagement, job involvement, and entrepreneurial persistence by increasing energy resources and reducing work-related exhaustion (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Schaufeli, 2018; Baron & Henry, 2011).

The results further reveal that cognitive capacity (Estimate = 0.007; CR = 2.018; β = 0.037; p = 0.044) has a positive and statistically significant, though comparatively smaller, influence on occupational engagement. The relatively lower standardized coefficient indicates that while cognitive abilities such as problem-solving, analytical thinking, planning, and decision-making are important, their direct contribution to occupational engagement is less pronounced than emotional and physical capacities in the present sample. Many women entrepreneurs in rural and semi-urban Delta districts operate small-scale enterprises where daily operational activities depend more heavily on persistence, emotional resilience, and interpersonal interactions than on sophisticated strategic decision-making. Nevertheless, cognitive skills remain essential for adapting to market changes, managing financial resources, identifying business opportunities, and solving operational problems, thereby contributing positively to occupational engagement. Similar conclusions have been reported by entrepreneurship researchers who emphasized that entrepreneurial cognition facilitates opportunity recognition and strategic business management, ultimately improving work engagement (Mitchell, et al. 2007; Baron & Henry, 2011; Frese & Gielnik, 2014).

Among all predictors, emotional capacity demonstrates the strongest influence on occupational engagement (Estimate = 0.079; CR = 28.010; β = 0.489; p = 0.001). This finding indicates that emotional resilience, self-confidence, stress management, optimism, and emotional regulation play a dominant role in determining how actively women entrepreneurs engage in their occupational activities. Women entrepreneurs often encounter financial uncertainties, family pressures, customer complaints, market competition, and business risks. Those with stronger emotional capacity are better equipped to manage these challenges without becoming discouraged, thereby maintaining higher levels of occupational commitment and enthusiasm. Emotional intelligence enables entrepreneurs to remain motivated, build positive workplace relationships, resolve conflicts effectively, and sustain long-term business involvement. Therefore, emotional capacity emerges as the most influential determinant of occupational engagement because it strengthens psychological resilience and enhances the ability to cope with entrepreneurial stress. These findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating that emotional intelligence significantly predicts work engagement, entrepreneurial success, and organizational effectiveness (Goleman, 1998; Miao, et al. 2017; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).



The analysis also indicates that communication skills (Estimate = 0.064; CR = 19.696; $\beta = 0.352$; $p = 0.001$) significantly influence occupational engagement. Effective communication enables women entrepreneurs to establish productive relationships with customers, suppliers, employees, financial institutions, and government agencies. Strong communication skills facilitate negotiation, conflict resolution, customer satisfaction, networking, and information sharing, thereby increasing entrepreneurs' involvement in business activities. In competitive business environments, entrepreneurs who communicate confidently are more successful in attracting customers, maintaining business relationships, and expanding market opportunities. Consequently, communication skills contribute substantially to occupational engagement by promoting collaboration, trust, and business networking. Earlier studies likewise concluded that interpersonal communication competencies enhance entrepreneurial performance, organizational commitment, and work engagement (Riggio & Reichard, 2008; Baron & Henry, 2011; Frese & Gielnik, 2014).

The regression results further demonstrate that all four dimensions of performance capacity significantly influence business performance. Physical capacity (Estimate = 0.032; $\beta = 0.258$; $p = 0.001$) positively contributes to business performance because entrepreneurs with greater physical endurance can efficiently manage production, marketing, customer service, and operational activities. Cognitive capacity exhibits the strongest direct influence on business performance (Estimate = 0.079; $\beta = 0.483$; $p = 0.001$), indicating that effective planning, innovation, financial decision-making, and opportunity recognition substantially improve business outcomes. Emotional capacity (Estimate = 0.032; $\beta = 0.230$; $p = 0.001$) also positively affects business performance by helping entrepreneurs maintain motivation, manage stress, and respond effectively to market uncertainties. Similarly, communication skills (Estimate = 0.034; $\beta = 0.212$; $p = 0.001$) enhance business performance through improved customer relations, networking, negotiation, and stakeholder management. These findings collectively suggest that business success among women entrepreneurs depends on the integrated development of physical, cognitive, emotional, and communication competencies rather than any single capability alone. Previous entrepreneurship studies consistently emphasize that entrepreneurial competencies represent critical determinants of business growth, profitability, innovation, and sustainability (Man, et al. 2002; Rauch & Frese, 2007; Frese & Gielnik, 2014).

Finally, occupational engagement significantly influences business performance (Estimate = 0.102; CR = 2.164; $\beta = 0.117$; $p = 0.030$). Although the standardized coefficient is comparatively modest, the significant relationship indicates that women entrepreneurs who actively engage in their work achieve superior business outcomes. Highly engaged entrepreneurs devote greater attention to customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, innovation, and continuous improvement, which collectively enhance business performance. Occupational engagement therefore serves as an important mechanism through which individual performance capacities translate into tangible business success. Entrepreneurs who exhibit dedication, enthusiasm, persistence, and commitment are more likely to identify growth opportunities, overcome business challenges, and sustain long-term enterprise performance. This finding supports the theoretical perspective that engaged individuals invest greater personal resources in work, resulting in improved organizational and entrepreneurial performance (Schaufeli, et al. 2002; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Christian, et al. 2011).

Overall, the regression analysis confirms that performance capacity significantly enhances occupational engagement and business performance among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts. Emotional capacity emerged as the strongest predictor of occupational engagement, while cognitive capacity showed the greatest direct influence on business performance. These findings suggest that entrepreneurship development programmes should not focus solely on technical or financial skills but should also strengthen emotional resilience, communication competence, physical well-being, and cognitive decision-making abilities. Such integrated capacity-building initiatives would improve occupational engagement, increase business productivity, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of women-owned enterprises.

Managerial Implications

The findings provide several important managerial implications for organizations, entrepreneurship development agencies, financial institutions, and government bodies supporting women entrepreneurs. Since emotional capacity and communication skills exhibit relatively stronger positive effects on occupational engagement, managers and policymakers should prioritize interventions that strengthen emotional resilience, stress management, interpersonal communication, negotiation, and networking competencies. Regular capacity-building programmes, mentoring initiatives, leadership workshops, and peer-learning platforms can help women entrepreneurs develop confidence in handling business challenges, maintaining customer relationships, and sustaining motivation during periods of uncertainty. Although physical capacity shows a positive contribution, its comparatively lower estimate suggests that improving entrepreneurs' well-being through health awareness, work-life balance initiatives, and ergonomic work practices should complement, rather than replace, efforts to enhance behavioural and interpersonal competencies. The statistically significant influence of cognitive capacity further indicates that decision-making, problem-solving, business planning, and financial literacy training should remain integral components of entrepreneurship development programmes.

The results also indicate that occupational engagement positively influences business performance, highlighting the importance of creating work environments that foster dedication, enthusiasm, and active involvement in business activities. Managers of entrepreneurship support institutions, incubators, self-help group federations, and microfinance organizations should implement continuous mentoring, digital skill development, market intelligence support, and performance monitoring systems that encourage greater engagement among women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the direct positive effects of physical, cognitive, emotional, and communication capacities on business performance suggest that entrepreneurial success depends on a balanced development of both technical and personal competencies. Therefore, entrepreneurship promotion policies should adopt a holistic capacity-building framework that integrates business management skills with psychological empowerment, communication excellence, and health



support. Such comprehensive interventions are likely to improve occupational engagement, strengthen business performance, enhance enterprise sustainability, and contribute to the long-term socio-economic development of women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts.

Conclusion

The study concludes that performance capacity is a significant determinant of occupational engagement and business performance among women entrepreneurs. Among the four dimensions of performance capacity, emotional capacity emerged as the strongest predictor of occupational engagement, followed by physical capacity, communication skills, and cognitive capacity, indicating that women entrepreneurs who effectively manage their emotions, maintain physical stamina, communicate efficiently, and apply sound cognitive abilities are more actively engaged in their occupational roles. Similarly, business performance was positively influenced by all dimensions of performance capacity, with cognitive capacity exerting the greatest effect, followed by physical capacity, emotional capacity, and communication skills. Furthermore, occupational engagement had a positive and statistically significant influence on business performance, demonstrating that higher levels of engagement contribute to improved entrepreneurial outcomes. Overall, the findings suggest that strengthening the physical, cognitive, emotional, and communication competencies of women entrepreneurs can enhance their occupational engagement, which in turn improves business performance, emphasizing the importance of capacity-building initiatives, entrepreneurial training, and continuous skill development for sustainable business success.

Limitations and Future Research Direction

The present study has certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting its findings. First, the study was confined to women entrepreneurs in the Delta Districts, which limits the generalizability of the results to other geographical regions, sectors, or categories of entrepreneurs. Second, the use of a cross-sectional research design and self-reported questionnaire data restricts the ability to establish causal relationships and may be influenced by common method bias and respondents' subjective perceptions. Third, although the study demonstrated that physical capacity, emotional capacity, communication skills, and cognitive capacity significantly influence occupational engagement, and that occupational engagement contributes to business performance, other contextual factors such as entrepreneurial experience, access to finance, technological adoption, family support, market competition, and government policy were not incorporated into the proposed model. Future research may adopt longitudinal or mixed-method research designs to better examine the dynamic relationship between performance capacity, occupational engagement, and business performance over time. Comparative studies across different states, industries, rural–urban settings, and male and women entrepreneurs would enhance the external validity of the findings. Further studies may also examine mediating and moderating variables such as entrepreneurial resilience, innovation capability, digital competency, psychological well-being, leadership effectiveness, and organizational support to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that enhance occupational engagement and sustainable business performance among entrepreneurs.

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