

Influence of Volition 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

This study examines the influence of volition comprising personal causation, values, and interests on the occupational engagement and business performance of women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts. The research adopted a descriptive research design and collected primary data from 387 women entrepreneurs using a structured questionnaire and snowball sampling technique. Path analysis was employed to analyse the relationships among the study variables. The findings revealed that all three dimensions of volition significantly and positively influenced occupational engagement. Among them, values emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by interests and personal causation. Occupational engagement also had a significant positive effect on business performance. Furthermore, personal causation and interests exerted direct positive influences on business performance, indicating that volitional characteristics not only enhance entrepreneurial engagement but also contribute directly to business success. The study concludes that strengthening women entrepreneurs' confidence in their abilities, aligning entrepreneurial activities with personal values, and fostering sustained business interests can significantly improve occupational engagement and business performance. The findings provide valuable implications for policymakers, entrepreneurship development institutions, and training organizations seeking to promote sustainable women entrepreneurship in the Delta districts.

Keywords: Volition, Personal Causation, Values, Interests, Occupational Engagement, Business Performance, Women Entrepreneurs, and Delta Districts.

Introduction

Women entrepreneurs play a crucial role in promoting economic development, employment generation, poverty reduction, and social transformation, particularly in the Delta districts where agriculture, fisheries, food processing, handicrafts, textiles, and micro-enterprises form the backbone of local livelihoods. Despite increasing governmental support, financial inclusion, and entrepreneurial development programs, many women entrepreneurs continue to experience challenges related to balancing family responsibilities, limited access to resources, social expectations, and business uncertainties. While external factors such as finance, infrastructure, and institutional support significantly influence entrepreneurial success, contemporary occupational science emphasizes that internal motivational factors are equally important in

determining sustained occupational engagement. The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO), developed by Kielhofner (2008), identifies volition as the central motivational subsystem that directs occupational participation and engagement. Volition consists of three interrelated components: personal causation, values, and interests, which collectively shape individuals' willingness to initiate, maintain, and derive meaning from occupational roles. Entrepreneurs with stronger beliefs in their capabilities, clear personal values, and genuine interest in their occupations are more likely to remain engaged, resilient, and productive despite environmental challenges (Kielhofner, 2008; Smith, et al. 1986; Park, et al. 2019; Laguna, et al. 2017).

Within the MOHO framework, personal causation refers to an individual's perception of competence, effectiveness, and confidence in performing occupational tasks successfully. It reflects entrepreneurial self-belief regarding the ability to solve problems, make decisions, overcome obstacles, and achieve desired business outcomes. Women entrepreneurs possessing stronger personal causation are more willing to explore business opportunities, adopt innovative practices, and persist through market uncertainties because they perceive themselves as capable occupational performers. Conversely, low personal causation often leads to occupational withdrawal, reduced confidence, and limited business engagement. In the context of the Delta districts, where women frequently encounter gender stereotypes, financial constraints, and multiple family obligations, enhancing personal causation may significantly strengthen occupational engagement and entrepreneurial sustainability. Previous occupational therapy and entrepreneurship studies consistently demonstrate that self-efficacy and perceived competence positively influence occupational participation, work engagement, entrepreneurial persistence, and business performance (Smith, et al. 1986; Laguna, et al. 2017; Kielhofner, 2008; Manolova, et al. 2008).

The second component of volition, values, represents deeply held beliefs regarding what individuals consider meaningful, worthwhile, and socially important. Values guide occupational choices, influence long-term commitment, and provide purpose to entrepreneurial activities. Women entrepreneurs frequently establish enterprises not only for financial independence but also to improve family welfare, educate children, contribute to community development, preserve traditional occupations, and achieve personal fulfilment. These value-driven motivations sustain occupational engagement even when businesses experience temporary setbacks. MOHO suggests that occupations become meaningful when they are congruent with personal values, resulting in stronger occupational identity and greater persistence. Entrepreneurial research similarly indicates that value orientation shapes entrepreneurial intentions, business growth aspirations, occupational commitment, and satisfaction among women entrepreneurs. Therefore, understanding the role of values provides important insights into why some women maintain high levels of occupational engagement despite facing considerable environmental and economic barriers (Kielhofner, 2008; Smith, et al. 1986; Manolov,a et al. 2008; Lyons, et al. 1993).

The third component, interests, reflects the enjoyment, satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation individuals experience while performing particular occupations. Interests encourage exploration, creativity, learning, and continued participation in occupational activities. Women entrepreneurs who derive personal satisfaction from designing products, interacting with customers, managing enterprises, or contributing to society are more likely to invest sustained effort and maintain long-term occupational engagement. Intrinsic interest promotes resilience, adaptability, innovation, and psychological well-being, enabling entrepreneurs to respond positively to changing market demands. MOHO proposes that occupational engagement is strengthened when activities are personally enjoyable and emotionally rewarding, thereby fostering occupational identity and competence. Entrepreneurship research also supports the relationship

between intrinsic motivation, enthusiasm, entrepreneurial engagement, and business persistence, emphasizing that passion and personal interest significantly contribute to sustained entrepreneurial success (Laguna, et al. 2017; Kielhofner, 2008; Park, et al. 2019; Smith, et al. 1986).

Occupational engagement extends beyond simple task performance and encompasses active participation, commitment, persistence, satisfaction, and meaningful involvement in everyday occupations. For women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts, occupational engagement includes planning business activities, interacting with customers and suppliers, managing financial resources, making strategic decisions, balancing occupational and family roles, and continuously adapting to changing economic environments. According to MOHO, occupational engagement emerges through the dynamic interaction of volition, habituation, performance capacity, and environmental factors. Among these determinants, volition serves as the primary motivational force initiating occupational participation. Women possessing stronger personal causation, clearly defined values, and enduring occupational interests are more likely to demonstrate higher occupational engagement, improved occupational competence, and stronger entrepreneurial identity. Consequently, investigating volition provides valuable theoretical and practical insights into enhancing women's entrepreneurial development within the socio-cultural context of the Delta districts (Kielhofner, 2008; Popova & Scott, 2024; Smith, et al. 1986; Laguna, et al. 2017).

The present study therefore seeks to examine the influence of volition comprising personal causation, values, and interests on occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts. By integrating occupational therapy theory with entrepreneurship research, the study contributes to understanding how intrinsic motivational factors influence entrepreneurial participation and occupational outcomes. The findings are expected to support policymakers, entrepreneurship development agencies, occupational therapists, self-help group coordinators, and women development organizations in designing interventions that strengthen motivational resources, occupational identity, and sustained entrepreneurial engagement. Ultimately, enhancing women's volition may improve not only occupational engagement but also business sustainability, family well-being, community development, and regional economic growth in the Delta districts.

Review of literature

Influence of Volition Among Women Entrepreneurs and their Occupational Engagement

Recent literature highlights that volition, comprising personal causation, values, and interests as conceptualized in the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO), plays a significant role in shaping women entrepreneurs' occupational engagement. Studies indicate that women entrepreneurs who possess strong self-efficacy, positive entrepreneurial attitudes, and intrinsic motivation demonstrate higher levels of business participation, persistence, and occupational commitment. Haylemariam, et al. (2024) emphasized that women's entrepreneurial orientation is strongly influenced by individual values, self-belief, and motivational factors, which facilitate active engagement in entrepreneurial occupations. Similarly, Lingappa and Rodrigues (2023) identified opportunity motivation, personal aspirations, and autonomy as critical volitional factors encouraging women to initiate and sustain entrepreneurial ventures. Jalil, et al. (2023) found that psychological capital and social capital significantly enhance entrepreneurial intentions among women, thereby strengthening occupational involvement. Liñeiro, et al. (2024) reported that perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial motivation positively influence entrepreneurial engagement and venture creation. Al-Mamari et al. (2024) observed that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations significantly affect entrepreneurial behaviour among rural women entrepreneurs. Le Loarne-Lemaire, et

al. (2024) demonstrated that women entrepreneurs' occupational participation is shaped by personal identity, interests, and contextual interactions within entrepreneurial ecosystems. Stephan et al. (2024) further revealed that work-life balance satisfaction and flow experiences contribute to sustained entrepreneurial engagement and well-being. Bernhard-Oettel, et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of personal resources and self-regulation in maintaining long-term occupational participation among self-employed women. Kleine, et al. (2024) found that affective commitment mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial stress and continued engagement in business activities. Finally, Schmitt and Prasastyoga (2024) emphasized that self-care practices and vitality enhance occupational performance and persistence among self-employed workers. Collectively, these studies suggest that volitional factors are fundamental determinants of women entrepreneurs' occupational engagement, influencing their motivation, persistence, performance, and overall entrepreneurial success. Hence, the hypothesis is **H₀**: There is no significant influence of volition (personal causation, values, and interests) on the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs.

Influence of Volition Among Women Entrepreneurs and their Business Performance

Recent literature consistently indicates that volition comprising personal causation (self-efficacy and perceived competence), values, and interests as conceptualized in the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) is a significant psychological determinant of business performance among women entrepreneurs. Women with stronger entrepreneurial self-belief, intrinsic motivation, and value-driven commitment demonstrate greater innovation, resilience, opportunity recognition, and decision-making ability, which contribute to higher sales growth, profitability, business sustainability, and customer satisfaction. A systematic review by Srivastava and Pandita (2025) concluded that psychological capital, leadership capability, and innovativeness are among the strongest predictors of women entrepreneurs' business performance, while institutional and cultural barriers continue to moderate these relationships. Similarly, Mickiewicz and Nguyen (2025) found that productivity differences among women entrepreneurs are largely explained by institutional support and entrepreneurial motivation rather than gender alone. Kamran, et al. (2025) emphasized that internal motivational resources, including confidence, persistence, and entrepreneurial commitment, are essential for enterprise growth in developing countries. Prabha, et al. (2025) reported that recent research increasingly recognizes psychological and behavioural characteristics as central drivers of women's entrepreneurial success. Shukla, et al. (2025) demonstrated that entrepreneurial intentions mediated the effects of family support and risk-taking on business performance, highlighting the importance of volitional processes in business outcomes. Azize, et al. (2025) further identified self-motivation, resilience, and personal agency as key enablers of sustainable women entrepreneurship in emerging economies. Likewise, studies on women-led enterprise scaling reported that self-confidence, strategic orientation, and commitment significantly influence venture expansion and long-term performance. Collectively, these recent studies suggest that volition strengthens entrepreneurial engagement, improves adaptive business behaviour, and ultimately enhances business performance among women entrepreneurs, making it a critical construct for entrepreneurship development and occupational research. Hence, the hypothesis is

H₀: There is no significant influence of volition (personal causation, values, and interests) on the business performance of women entrepreneurs.

Influence of Occupational Engagement Among Women Entrepreneurs and their Business Performance

Recent literature indicates that occupational engagement plays a crucial role in enhancing the business performance of women entrepreneurs by strengthening commitment, persistence, innovation, productivity, and decision-making capabilities. Occupational engagement, reflected through active involvement, dedication, and meaningful participation in entrepreneurial activities, has been consistently associated with higher business growth, customer satisfaction, and venture sustainability. Sharma and Upadhyay (2025) found that work engagement among women entrepreneurs significantly improves entrepreneurial effectiveness, with supportive work–life balance policies acting as important facilitators. Huang, et al. (2025) demonstrated that entrepreneurial learning enhances business performance through increased psychological capital and opportunity recognition, both of which strengthen entrepreneurs' occupational engagement. Srivastava and Pandita (2025), in a systematic review, concluded that entrepreneurial engagement, self-efficacy, innovation, and institutional support are among the strongest predictors of women-owned firm performance. Mickiewicz and Nguyen (2025) reported that productive engagement, supported by favourable institutional environments, contributes to improved productivity and profitability among women-owned enterprises. Douglas and Venugopal (2025) emphasized that growth-oriented entrepreneurial engagement is influenced by gender-related contextual factors, which subsequently determine business expansion and performance. Uebbing, et al. (2025) observed that sustained engagement after venture creation enables women entrepreneurs to overcome role conflicts and maintain long-term business success despite social barriers. Li and Sanusi (2023) revealed that highly engaged opportunity-driven women entrepreneurs achieved superior non-financial business performance, while necessity-driven entrepreneurs showed stronger financial outcomes. De Clercq, et al. (2021) demonstrated that emotional exhaustion resulting from work–family conflict reduces occupational engagement and negatively affects firm performance among women entrepreneurs. Similarly, De Clercq, et al. (2021) reported that entrepreneurial strategic posture buffers the adverse effects of work interference on business performance by maintaining engagement and resilience. Collectively, these studies suggest that occupational engagement is a critical psychological and behavioural mechanism through which women entrepreneurs improve business performance, emphasizing the importance of supportive work environments, entrepreneurial learning, and institutional support in sustaining successful women-led enterprises. Hence, the hypothesis is

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

Research Gap

Although previous studies have examined women entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial motivation, business performance, and occupational participation independently, limited research has specifically investigated how the components of volition namely personal causation, values, and interests, as conceptualized in the MOHO influence the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, there is a notable lack of empirical evidence focusing on women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu, where socio-cultural norms, family responsibilities, and regional economic conditions may uniquely shape entrepreneurial engagement. Existing studies have largely emphasized financial, institutional, or psychological determinants while overlooking the role of volitional factors in sustaining meaningful occupational participation. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the influence of

personal causation, values, and interests on the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts, thereby contributing to both occupational science and entrepreneurship literature.

Statement of the Problem

Women entrepreneurs in the delta districts play a significant role in promoting local economic development, employment generation, and family well-being. However, many women entrepreneurs continue to experience difficulties in maintaining consistent occupational engagement due to variations in their volition, particularly in terms of personal causation, values, and interests. Limited self-confidence in entrepreneurial abilities, conflicts between personal and business values, and declining interest arising from financial, social, and family pressures may reduce their motivation to engage effectively in business activities. Although previous studies have examined entrepreneurship and business performance, there is limited empirical evidence on how the components of volition influence the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs in the delta districts. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine the influence of volition (personal causation, values, and interests) on the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs, thereby addressing an important gap in occupational therapy and entrepreneurship research.

Research Methodology

The present study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the influence of volition (personal causation, values, and interests) on the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu. A descriptive design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to systematically describe the existing characteristics, perceptions, and behavioural patterns of the respondents without manipulating the study variables. The study aimed to investigate the relationships among volition, occupational engagement, and business performance through empirical analysis. The conceptual framework was developed based on the MOHO, which emphasizes that personal causation, values, and interests are the major dimensions of volition influencing occupational participation and engagement. Previous studies have recommended descriptive survey research for examining psychological and occupational constructs among entrepreneurs because it provides reliable estimates of relationships among variables in natural settings (Kielhofner, 2008; Lee & Kielhofner, 2017; Taylor, Lee, Kielhofner, & Ketkar, 2019).

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of five sections. The first section measured the demographic profile of the respondents using 5 items. The second section assessed volition through 12 self-designed statements comprising three dimensions: Personal Causation (4 items; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$), Values (4 items; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$), and Interests (4 items; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$). The third section measured Occupational Engagement using 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 overall reliability of the self-designed volition scale was 0.85, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. The questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Content validity was established through expert opinions from specialists in occupational therapy, entrepreneurship, and management research, while the reliability coefficients exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70 suggested in methodological literature (Cronbach, 1951; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2019).

The study was conducted among women entrepreneurs in the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu. Although the initial research plan considered a larger population, the final investigation employed a convenience sampling technique because of accessibility and the availability of respondents engaged in entrepreneurial activities. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, of which 264 were received. After excluding 10 incomplete questionnaires, 254 valid responses were retained for the final analysis, resulting in an effective response rate of 84.67%. The respondents represented women entrepreneurs operating in various sectors such as manufacturing, trading, agriculture-based enterprises, food processing, handicrafts, and service businesses across the Delta region. Convenience sampling enabled the researcher to collect responses from accessible participants within the study period while ensuring adequate representation of different entrepreneurial activities (Etikan, et al. 2016; Saunders, et al. 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The collected data were coded and analysed using SPSS and AMOS software packages. Initially, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to examine the construct validity of the measurement items and to confirm the dimensionality of volition and occupational engagement. Factor loadings, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistics, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used to determine sampling adequacy and construct validity. Subsequently, Path Analysis was performed to examine the direct influence of personal causation, values, and interests on occupational engagement and the subsequent effect of occupational engagement on business performance. The path coefficients, critical ratios, standardized regression weights, and model fit indices were used to evaluate the proposed conceptual model. These statistical techniques are widely recommended for validating latent constructs and testing causal relationships among multiple variables in behavioural and entrepreneurship research (Hair, et al. 2019; Kline, 2023; Byrne, 2016).

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Factor Analysis of Volition Among Women Entrepreneurs

Rotated Component Matrix				
KMO	0.832			
Chi-Square	1611.720			
P Value	0.001			
Comp.		1	2	3
I strongly believe in my capacity to handle unforeseen business challenges effectively.	0.981			
I am confident in my ability to make crucial business decisions without external direction.	0.980			
I feel that my daily efforts directly shape the success and growth of my enterprise.	0.980			
I see myself as capable of achieving my business goals, regardless of traditional societal expectations.	0.977			
It is important to me that my business benefits my local community and society.			0.980	
I actively integrate my core principles into how I operate and manage my enterprise.			0.976	
I find deep meaning in being recognized as an independent, contributing business leader.			0.964	

I ensure that ethical practices and fairness are prioritized in all my business dealings.		0.961	
I am genuinely passionate about the day-to-day operations of my business.			0.978
I enjoy learning about new market trends and opportunities that can improve my enterprise.			0.977
Running my business provides me with a sense of excitement and personal fulfilment.			0.959
I find it personally rewarding to spend my time creating new products or services for my customers.			0.956
Eigenvalues	4.782	3.833	2.868
% of Variance	39.848	31.939	23.896
Cumulative %	39.848	71.786	95.683

Source: Primary data

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the Volition construct among women entrepreneurs revealed a strong three-factor structure representing Personal Causation, Values, and Interests. The sampling adequacy was confirmed by a KMO value of 0.832, indicating that the data were highly suitable for factor analysis, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1611.720$, $p = 0.001$), confirming sufficient correlations among the variables. The rotated component matrix extracted three distinct components with excellent factor loadings ranging from 0.956 to 0.981, demonstrating strong convergent validity of the measurement items. Component 1 (Personal Causation) included four items reflecting self-confidence, decision-making ability, and perceived control over business success, with factor loadings between 0.977 and 0.981. Component 2 (Values) comprised four items associated with ethical orientation, social contribution, and value-driven business practices, with loadings ranging from 0.961 to 0.980. Component 3 (Interests) consisted of four items reflecting entrepreneurial passion, learning orientation, personal fulfilment, and innovation, with loadings between 0.956 and 0.978. The three factors reported eigenvalues of 4.782, 3.833, and 2.868, explaining 39.848%, 31.939%, and 23.896% of the total variance, respectively, with a cumulative explained variance of 95.683%, indicating an exceptionally robust measurement model for assessing volition among women entrepreneurs. These findings are consistent with previous research emphasizing that volition comprises personal causation, values, and interests as the core determinants of occupational behaviour and entrepreneurial engagement (Kielhofner, 2008; Lee, et al. 2017; de las Heras, et al. 2020).

Path analysis

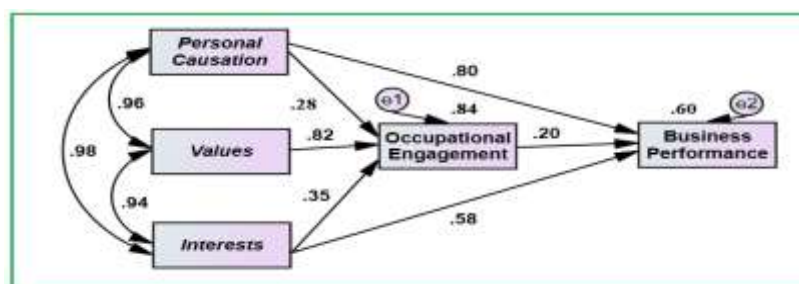


Figure 1: Influence of volition among women entrepreneurs on their occupational engagement

Table 2: Model fit indication of influence of volition 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	---	2.838
		p	>0.050	0.216
2	Goodness Fit	GFI	> 0.90	0.985
		AGFI		0.904
		CFI		0.976
		NFI		0.972
3	Badness Fit	RMR	< 0.080	0.021
		RMSEA		0.004

Source: Primary data

The model fit indices presented in Table 2 indicate that the proposed structural model examining the influence of volition on the occupational engagement of women entrepreneurs demonstrates an excellent fit with the observed data. The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 2.838$, $p = 0.216$) is statistically non-significant, indicating that there is no significant difference between the observed and estimated covariance matrices. Furthermore, the goodness-of-fit indices such as GFI (0.985), AGFI (0.904), CFI (0.976), and NFI (0.972) all exceed the recommended threshold of 0.90, confirming a strong overall model fit. Similarly, the badness-of-fit indices RMR (0.021) and RMSEA (0.004) are substantially below the acceptable limit of 0.08, indicating minimal residual error and excellent model parsimony. These findings suggest that the proposed model adequately explains the relationship between volition and occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs and is statistically suitable for further hypothesis testing and structural interpretation (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Hair, et al. 2019; Kline, 2016; 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).

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

DV		IV	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	Beta	Label
Occupational Engagement	<---	Personal Causation	0.243	0.232	4.187	0.284	0.001
Occupational Engagement	<---	Values	0.278	0.134	8.079	0.817	0.001
Occupational Engagement	<---	Interests	0.124	0.192	4.645	0.354	0.001
Business Performance	<---	Occupational Engagement	0.207	0.121	3.711	0.202	0.001
Business Performance	<---	Personal Causation	0.285	0.207	7.376	0.796	0.001

DV		IV	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	Beta	Label
Business Performance	<---	Interests	0.208	0.206	5.009	0.580	0.001

Source: Primary data

Table 3 presents the regression weights explaining the influence of volition dimensions on occupational engagement and business performance among women entrepreneurs. The findings indicate that personal causation has a significant positive influence on occupational engagement ($\beta = 0.284$, C.R. = 4.187, $p = 0.001$). This result suggests that women entrepreneurs who possess greater confidence in their personal abilities, self-efficacy, and perceived control over business activities are more actively engaged in their occupations. Personal causation enables entrepreneurs to approach business challenges with confidence, make independent decisions, and persist during periods of uncertainty, thereby strengthening their occupational involvement. Similarly, values exhibit the strongest influence on occupational engagement ($\beta = 0.817$, C.R. = 8.079, $p = 0.001$), indicating that occupational engagement is largely driven by deeply held personal beliefs, commitment to family welfare, financial independence, ethical business practices, and long-term entrepreneurial aspirations. Women whose business activities align with their personal and social values are more likely to demonstrate dedication, responsibility, and continuous participation in entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, interests also significantly influence occupational engagement ($\beta = 0.354$, C.R. = 4.645, $p = 0.001$), implying that genuine enthusiasm, passion, and enjoyment in entrepreneurial work encourage sustained participation and greater commitment to business operations. These findings collectively demonstrate that occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs is strengthened when they possess confidence in their capabilities, align their business activities with personal values, and pursue enterprises that match their interests. This interpretation is consistent with the Model of Human Occupation, which emphasizes that volition, comprising personal causation, values, and interests, serves as the primary motivational force driving occupational participation (Kielhofner, 2008). Similar findings have been reported by Lee and Kielhofner (2017), who observed that self-efficacy and value-based motivation significantly enhance occupational participation, and by de las Heras, et al. (2013), who concluded that intrinsic motivation positively predicts occupational engagement.

The second part of the model demonstrates that occupational engagement significantly influences business performance ($\beta = 0.202$, C.R. = 3.711, $p = 0.001$). This result indicates that women entrepreneurs who actively engage in planning, customer relationship management, innovation, and business operations are more likely to achieve improved business outcomes, including higher profitability, customer satisfaction, and business growth. Active occupational engagement enables entrepreneurs to utilize available resources effectively, respond quickly to market changes, and maintain consistent business performance. Additionally, personal causation exerts a strong direct influence on business performance ($\beta = 0.796$, C.R. = 7.376, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that self-confidence and entrepreneurial competence directly improve business success beyond their indirect contribution through occupational engagement. Women entrepreneurs with strong beliefs in their capabilities are more willing to adopt innovative strategies, manage risks effectively, and overcome business obstacles, resulting in superior organizational outcomes. Likewise, interests significantly influence business performance ($\beta = 0.580$, C.R. = 5.009, $p = 0.001$), indicating that entrepreneurs who are genuinely interested in their business activities remain more committed to learning, innovation, customer service, and continuous improvement, thereby achieving

better financial and operational performance. Overall, the regression results confirm that volition is not only a significant predictor of occupational engagement but also directly contributes to enhanced business performance among women entrepreneurs. These findings support contemporary entrepreneurship research emphasizing that intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and personal values are critical psychological resources that sustain entrepreneurial persistence and business success. Consequently, entrepreneurial development programs should strengthen women entrepreneurs' confidence, reinforce value-driven entrepreneurship, and encourage business activities aligned with personal interests to improve both occupational engagement and business performance.

Managerial Implications

The findings provide important managerial implications for policymakers, entrepreneurship development institutions, financial organizations, and business support agencies working with women entrepreneurs in the delta districts. The significant positive influence of personal causation, values, and interests on occupational engagement indicates that managerial interventions should extend beyond financial assistance and focus on strengthening entrepreneurs' psychological and motivational capabilities. Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs), incubation centres, and government agencies should design training initiatives that enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy, decision-making ability, resilience, and confidence, thereby improving personal causation. Since values exert the strongest influence on occupational engagement, managers should promote ethical business practices, long-term goal orientation, social responsibility, and work commitment through mentoring, leadership development, and value-based entrepreneurship training. Furthermore, business advisors should encourage women entrepreneurs to pursue enterprises aligned with their personal interests and skills, as this alignment enhances enthusiasm, persistence, and overall occupational engagement.

The results further reveal that occupational engagement, personal causation, and interests significantly improve business performance. These findings imply that managers, entrepreneurship support organizations, and district-level industrial promotion agencies should prioritize strategies that sustain entrepreneurs' active involvement in business operations through continuous learning, networking opportunities, digital skill development, and peer mentoring. Business development services should incorporate personalized coaching that helps women entrepreneurs identify their strengths, set realistic business goals, and maintain motivation during market uncertainties. Additionally, local governments and financial institutions should integrate psychological empowerment and career engagement modules into entrepreneurship promotion schemes, ensuring that women entrepreneurs remain committed to their enterprises while improving productivity, innovation, profitability, and long-term business sustainability. Such integrated managerial initiatives can contribute to stronger entrepreneurial ecosystems and inclusive economic development across the delta districts.

Conclusion

The findings conclude that volition is a significant psychological driver of occupational engagement and business performance among women entrepreneurs in the delta districts. All three dimensions of volition Personal Causation, Values, and Interests exert a positive and statistically significant influence on occupational engagement, indicating that women who possess stronger self-belief, clear personal values, and sustained entrepreneurial interests are more actively engaged in their occupations. Among these factors, Values emerged as the strongest predictor of occupational engagement, followed by Interests and

Personal Causation, highlighting the critical role of value-driven motivation in sustaining entrepreneurial commitment. Furthermore, occupational engagement significantly enhances business performance, confirming that engaged entrepreneurs achieve better business outcomes. In addition, Personal Causation and Interests also have strong direct positive effects on business performance, suggesting that confidence in one's entrepreneurial capabilities and genuine interest in business activities contribute to superior enterprise success beyond their indirect influence through occupational engagement. Overall, the study establishes that strengthening the volitional attributes of women entrepreneurs can foster greater occupational engagement and improve business performance, thereby supporting sustainable entrepreneurial growth and socio-economic development in the delta districts.

Limitations and Future Research Direction

A key limitation of this study is that it was based on cross-sectional primary data collected from women entrepreneurs in the delta districts using a non-probability snowball sampling technique, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to women entrepreneurs in other regions or sectors. The study examined only three dimensions of volition such as personal causation, values, and interests and focused on occupational engagement and business performance, without considering other influential factors such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy, resilience, social support, digital competencies, access to finance, innovation capability, institutional support, or market dynamics. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported responses may have introduced common method bias and social desirability bias. Although the results revealed that values had the strongest positive influence on occupational engagement, while personal causation and interests significantly enhanced both occupational engagement and business performance, causal relationships cannot be conclusively established due to the study design. Future research should employ longitudinal or mixed method approaches to examine changes in entrepreneurial volition over time, use probability sampling to improve external validity, and compare women entrepreneurs across rural and urban regions or different industries. Future studies may also investigate mediating and moderating variables such as entrepreneurial resilience, digital literacy, innovation orientation, family support, government assistance, and environmental uncertainty to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how volition shapes occupational engagement and long-term business performance.

REFERENCE

1. Al-Mamari, A., et al. (2024). Motivations and behaviours of rural women entrepreneurs in Oman. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 16(3), 402–421. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJGE-04-2023-0106>
2. Azize, A. L., et al. (2025). Women entrepreneurs for sustainable development: A systematic review of enablers and barriers in emerging economies. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 17(5), 976–1006. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26437015.2025.2538192>
3. Bernhard-Oettel, C., Bergman, L., Leineweber, C., & Toivanen, S. (2024). Flourish, fight or flight: Health in self-employment over time—Associations with individual and business resources. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, 97(2), 263–278. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00420-023-02041-z>
4. Byrne, B. M. (2016). *Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS: Basic Concepts, Applications, and Programming* (3rd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315757421>

5. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
6. Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16(3), 297–334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02310555>
7. De Clercq, D., Kaciak, E., & Thongpapanl, N. (2021). Mitigating work interference with family by leveraging an entrepreneurial strategic posture. *Strategic Organization*, 25(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14657503211035477>
8. de las Heras, C. G., Llerena, V., & Kielhofner, G. (2013). Volition and participation in occupation: An application of the Model of Human Occupation. *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*, 27(3), 197–213. <https://doi.org/10.3109/07380577.2013.785643>
9. de las Heras, M., Chinchilla, N., & Grau, M. (2020). The role of personal values in women's entrepreneurial career choices. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 463–472. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.06.020>
10. Douglas, E. J., & Venugopal, V. (2025). The complex causality of gender and entrepreneurship: To grow or not to grow? *Small Business Economics*, 65, 1209–1240. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-025-01047-w>
11. Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
12. Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.
13. 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.
14. Haylemariam, L. G., Oduro, S., Mainolfi, G., & De Nisco, A. (2024). Women entrepreneurial orientation: A systematic literature review. *Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review*, 12(2), 19–42. <https://doi.org/10.15678/EBER.2024.120202>
15. Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118>
16. Huang, Y., Wang, X., Yuan, Y., Sun, W., & 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>
17. Jalil, M. F., Ali, A., & Kamarulzaman, R. (2023). The influence of psychological capital and social capital on women entrepreneurs' intentions: The mediating role of attitude. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(393), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41599-023-01908-3>
18. 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.
19. Kamran, H., Alwie, A. B., & Yee, S. O. Y. (2025). A synthesis of systematic literature on women entrepreneurship in developing countries. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, 15(1), Article 9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40497-025-00426-7>

20. 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.
21. Kielhofner, G. (2008). *Model of Human Occupation: Theory and Application* (4th ed.). Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
22. Kleine, A. K., Schmitt, A., & Wisse, B. M. (2024). Financial stress and quit intention: The mediating role of entrepreneurs’ affective commitment. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 20(4), 1487–1510. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-024-00972-8>
23. Kline, R. B. (2016). *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling* (4th ed.). Guilford Press.
24. Kline, R. B. (2023). *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling* (5th ed.). Guilford Press.
25. 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>.
26. Le Loarne-Lemaire, S., Bertrand, G., Maalaoui, A., Kraus, S., & Schiavone, F. (2024). Shaping entrepreneurial gender play: Intersubjectivity and performativity among female entrepreneurs. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 40(1), Article 101316. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2023.101316>
27. Lee, S. W., & Kielhofner, G. (2017). Volition, occupational engagement, and quality of participation among working adults. *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*, 31(2), 120–135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07380577.2017.1307484>
28. Lee, Y. G., Kielhofner, G., & Lim, Y. J. (2017). Construct validity and measurement of volition using the Model of Human Occupation. *Occupational Therapy International*, 24(4), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2017/3601749>
29. Li, S., & Sanusi, E. S. (2023). Entrepreneurial motivations and business performance: A study of female online microbusiness owners. *PLOS ONE*, 18(8), e0289946. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0289946>
30. Liñeiro, A. B., Romero Ochoa, J. A., & Montes de la Barrera, J. (2024). Exploring entrepreneurial intentions and motivations: A comparative analysis of opportunity-driven and necessity-driven entrepreneurs. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 13(11), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-024-00366-8>
31. Lingappa, A. K., & Rodrigues, L. L. R. (2023). Synthesis of necessity and opportunity motivation factors in women entrepreneurship: A systematic literature review. *SAGE Open*, 13(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231159294>
32. Lyons, T. F., Lumpkin, G. T., & Dess, G. G. (1993). Personal value systems of men and women entrepreneurs versus managers. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 8(5), 409–430. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0883-9026\(93\)90022-W](https://doi.org/10.1016/0883-9026(93)90022-W).
33. Manolova, T. S., Brush, C. G., Edelman, L. F., & Shaver, K. G. (2008). What do women entrepreneurs want? *Strategic Change*, 17(3–4), 69–82. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jsc.817>.
34. 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>

35. Mickiewicz, T., & Nguyen, B. (2025). In the company of cheerful ladies: Whether female entrepreneurs are more productive? *Small Business Economics*, 64, 837–861. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-024-00929-9>
36. Park, J., Best, K. L., & colleagues. (2019). Model of Human Occupation as a framework for implementation of Motivational Interviewing in occupational rehabilitation. *Work*, 62(4), 629–641. <https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-192895>.
37. Prabha, S. A., Palanichamy, N. V., Murugananthi, D., et al. (2025). Research trends and dynamics in women entrepreneurship: A comprehensive bibliometric review. *Future Business Journal*, 11(1), Article 46. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-025-00446-5>
38. 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.
39. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research Methods for Business Students* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.
40. Schmitt, A., & Prasastyoga, B. (2024). Self-care practices and relationships with vitality and health complaints in self-employed workers. *Current Psychology*, 43(24), 22492–22507. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-06014-4>
41. 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). <https://doi.org/10.52783/jisem.v10i14s.2398>
42. Shukla, M., Bhatt, A. S., Chandramouli, S., Mohan, S., & Rai, A. (2025). Entrepreneurial intentions and business performance: A study of women entrepreneurs in Telangana. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 15(6), 276–286. <https://doi.org/10.32479/irmm.20683>
43. Smith, N. R., Kielhofner, G., & Watts, J. H. (1986). The relationships between volition, activity pattern, and life satisfaction in the elderly. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 40(4), 278–283. <https://doi.org/10.5014/AJOT.40.4.278>.
44. 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), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-025-00496-7>
45. Stephan, U., et al. (2024). “I want it all”: Exploring the relationship between entrepreneurs’ satisfaction with work–life balance, well-being, flow and firm growth. *Review of Managerial Science*, 18(3), 799–826. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-023-00623-2>
46. Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2, 53–55. <https://doi.org/10.5116/ijme.4dfb.8dfd>
47. Taylor, R. R., Lee, S. W., Kielhofner, G., & Ketkar, M. (2019). Occupational engagement and participation among entrepreneurs: A MOHO perspective. *Occupational Therapy International*, 26(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2019/7359421>
48. 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>
49. Velaudham, C & Baskar, P (2015a). Influence of Gender in Consumer Buying Behaviour Towards Air Conditioner In Chennai City. *Annamalai Journal of Management*, 3-9.

50. 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.
51. Velaudham, C & Baskar, P (2016). Number Of Earning Members Influence Over Air Conditioner Buying Behavior: Multiple Group Analysis Approach. Annamalai Business Review, 59-68.
52. 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.