

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**



**ENTREPRENEURS' MENTAL RESILIENCE AND NEW VENTURE
SUSTAINABILITY IN GHANA, THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SERVICE
DELIVERY QUALITY**



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**A thesis in the Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship,
School of Business, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Marketing and Entrepreneurship)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I, **Rabi Fuseini**, hereby declare that this thesis is the outcome of my own research conducted under supervision and has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for the award of a degree in this or any other university. All sources of information and references used have been fully acknowledged. I accept full responsibility for any shortcomings in this work.

Signature:

Date:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I have supervised the preparation of this thesis and, to the best of my knowledge; it meets the academic standards required for the Master of Philosophy degree.

Signature:

Date:

SUPERVISOR'S NAME: DR. YAW BREW

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my family, my loved ones and friends; Sammy, whose encouragement has been a constant source of strength, as well as to my own self-motivation, sacrifice, and discipline that sustained me throughout this journey. I also dedicate this work to Dr. Yaw Brew, in recognition of his invaluable support, sacrifice, and patience during the course of this study and to the entire Marketing and Entrepreneurship Department lecturers of the school of Business, UEW, for their support.



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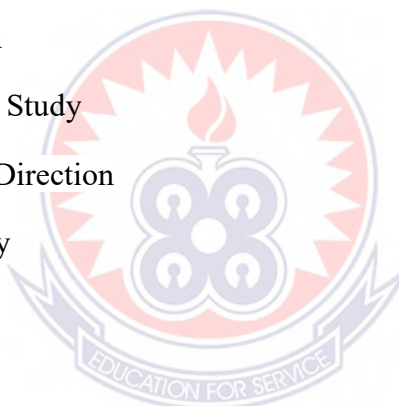
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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience, service delivery, and new venture sustainability among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating between 1-5 years in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. A total of 337 SME entrepreneurs participated in the study, and the data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results showed that service delivery has a strong positive and significant effect on new venture sustainability. SMEs that consistently provide reliable and customer-focused services are more likely to survive, grow, and compete effectively. High-quality service delivery builds customer satisfaction, loyalty, and reputation, which are essential for long-term sustainability. This supports the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988), which emphasizes service quality as a foundation for customer retention, and the Sustainable Development Theory, which positions effective service delivery as a strategic pathway for achieving long-term growth and socio-economic development. The mediation analysis revealed that service delivery significantly mediates the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and sustainability. While resilience enables entrepreneurs to withstand stress and adapt to challenges, its positive impact on sustainability is amplified when it is translated into effective and consistent service practices. This finding reflects the Conservation of Resources Theory, which posits that individuals with greater psychological resources such as resilience are better equipped to preserve and deploy resources in ways that enhance performance and survival. By combining these perspectives, the study provides both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it extends SERVQUAL model, Sustainable Development Theory, and COR into the SME context, showing how personal resilience and service delivery interact to drive sustainability. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of entrepreneurs not only cultivating resilience but also channeling it into high-quality, customer-centered service delivery to secure long-term success. In summary, the research demonstrates that service delivery is both a direct driver of sustainability and a bridge through which entrepreneurial resilience is transformed into long-term venture survival and growth.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Entrepreneurship has become a key driver of economic growth and development in today's globalized world (Onder & Nyadera, 2020). With the rise of technology and globalization, more individuals are turning towards entrepreneurship to create opportunities and contribute to the economy's growth in diverse ways, (Coulibaly, Erbao & Mekongcho, 2018). It is often romanticized as a path to freedom and creativity; nonetheless, it comes with significant mental resilience challenges, (Sahoo et al., 2025). Entrepreneurs face unique mental resilience challenges due to the high levels of stress, financial uncertainty, and workload associated with starting and running a business. Freeman et al., (2019) indicate that approximately 49% of entrepreneurs will experience at least one mental health condition during their lifetime, including anxiety, depression, and substance abuse disorders.

Unlike traditional employees, they bear the ultimate responsibility for their venture's success, which often makes them vulnerable to anxiety, depression, and burnout, (Ross, Strevel & Javadizadeh, 2021). Consequently, the mental resilience, coping strategies, and psychological well-being of entrepreneurs are crucial, as these factors significantly influence their well-being and the performance of their ventures. Additionally, the impact of poor mental resilience on business performance is profound, as entrepreneurs with mental health resilience issues may struggle with decision-making, creativity, and overall productivity, which can hinder their venture's sustainability (Wiklund et al., 2018; Arvidsson 2024)). Thus, addressing mental health resilience is not merely a

personal concern but a strategic necessity for business viability, (Ryde et al., 2020; Moşteanu 2024).

The pressures of starting and running a business, such as financial insecurity, long hours, and high expectations, can also exacerbate these issues. Overall, (2020) indicates that entrepreneurs are twice as likely to suffer from depression and six times more likely to experience Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) compared to the general population.

The relationship between mental resilience and firm performance has garnered attention in empirical research. Studies have shown that positive mental resilience correlates with improved decision-making, creativity, and overall business outcomes (Khalil et al., 2019; Pan et al., 2019; Wiklund et al., 2018).

For instance, Dijkhuizen et al. (2018) found a significant relationship between entrepreneurs' well-being and subjective measures of entrepreneurial success, suggesting that mental resilience is a crucial determinant of firm performance. This implies that the ability to bounce back from setbacks enhances personal well-being and promotes a culture of innovation and adaptability within the firm.

New venture sustainability is a particular concern, given that new businesses frequently experience high failure rates (Grover et al., 2018). In this context, sustainability hinges on a venture's ability to adapt, grow, and effectively navigate market and operational challenges. A venture's long-term success thus depends on resourcefulness, strategic planning, and critically the founder's mental capacity to lead under pressure (Michaelis et al., 2022). Therefore, entrepreneurs' mental resilience becomes a vital component in determining the sustainability of their businesses, as stress and burnout may impair effective leadership and decision-making.

The ability of a startup to survive and thrive over the long term, often in the face of numerous challenges such as resource constraints, market competition, and changing economic conditions, is crucial for any business to be considered sustainable, (Joel & Oguanobi, 2024). Studies by Knoppen and Knight (2022) have shown that sustainable ventures are not only financially successful but also able to provide what customers want, meet their demands, and adapt to environmental changes. A venture's long-term success depends on resourcefulness, strategic planning, and often the founder's capacity to lead effectively.

YuSheng and Ibrahim, (2019) indicates that, service delivery refers to the methods and processes through which entrepreneurs provide value to their customers. It encompasses customer service, product delivery, and overall client engagement, (Hammed, Shofoluwe & Pelumi, 2022). Effective service delivery can act as a buffer against the negative impacts of poor mental resilience on business sustainability. Arasli et al., (2020) imply that when entrepreneurs prioritize service quality, they may experience increased customer satisfaction, repeat buying and loyalty, leading to better financial outcomes and reduced stress levels.

Cavaliere et al., (2021) indicate that service delivery is crucial in establishing customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall business success, especially for startups that rely heavily on strong customer relationships and positive early impressions. More importantly, effective service delivery can bridge entrepreneurs' mental resilience and venture sustainability, (Shkabatur & Schwartz 2022). Entrepreneurs who maintain good mental resilience are better equipped to ensure consistent, high-quality service delivery, (Truong & McLachlan 2022). This, in turn, fosters customer retention and enhances the venture's sustainability as indicated by Hawkins & Hoon, (2019), which implies that

mental well-being indirectly impacts business viability through its influence on service quality.

The relationship between mental resilience of entrepreneurs and new venture sustainability may be mediated by service delivery in several ways; for instance, positive interactions can enhance an entrepreneur's mood and reinforce their commitment to the business (Elshaer et al., 2024). Streamlined service delivery can reduce workload stress, allowing entrepreneurs to focus on strategic growth rather than day-to-day operational challenges. (Santos et al., 2023). Moreover, building a robust service delivery framework may involve creating supportive networks that foster collaboration among entrepreneurs, thereby reducing feelings of isolation (Rashid & Ratten, 2021).

This mediation goes on to buttress the fact that entrepreneurs with strong mental resilience are more likely to establish effective service practices, leading to higher customer satisfaction and enhancing the venture's sustainability, (Ovharhe & Chukwuemeka 2023).

The relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience, new venture sustainability, and service delivery is complex yet vital for understanding contemporary entrepreneurship (Tang, 2020). By effectively addressing mental resilience and recognizing its influence on business operations, mainly through effective service delivery, entrepreneurs can enhance their well-being and their ventures' chances for success (Lanivich et al., 2021).

The intersection of entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability is a critical study area, particularly as the entrepreneurial landscape becomes increasingly complex and demanding. (Bass et al., 2024). This study explores how mental resilience

affects the sustainability of new ventures and examines the mediating role of service delivery in this relationship. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing strategies that support entrepreneurs in maintaining their mental well-being while ensuring the longevity and success of their businesses.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of entrepreneurs' mental resilience in shaping service delivery and new venture sustainability. It provides insights that could improve venture sustainability rates and contribute to a growing field of research linking entrepreneurs' mental resilience to economic and business outcomes. Understanding how entrepreneurs' mental resilience influences service practices and sustainability can offer practical ways to support entrepreneurs in maintaining business health and performance.

1.1 Problem Statement

Compelling empirical studies have demonstrated the critical role entrepreneurs play in driving innovation and economic growth, even though they are almost always faced with insurmountable challenges (Nasir, 2019; Sagar, 2024; Odeyemi et al., 2024). These challenges can sometimes be excruciatingly difficult and pose a threat to their mental well-being, especially with start-ups, (Khupe, 2022; Horst de Cuestas et al., 2023).

Studies indicate that entrepreneurs experience significantly higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression than the general population, particularly during the early stages of business establishment (Prib & Bobko, 2023; Lee et al., 2023). Many ventures collapse not only because of limited financial resources but also due to the inability of entrepreneurs to withstand stress, recover from setbacks, and adapt to turbulent environments (Sukhera 2018; Enwereji 2024).

In Ghana, the Ghana Enterprise Agency (2024) reports that approximately 75% of new businesses fail to sustain operations within their first five years, underscoring the fragility of entrepreneurial ventures in emerging economies. Similar global trends show that over 60% of new ventures fail within the same period, often due to poor resilience and the inability to adapt to business challenges (Hartmann et al., 2022; Osman et al., et al.,2024; Bapoo et al., 2022).

Although prior studies (Dijkhuizen et al., 2018; Stephen, 2018; Wiklund et al., 2019 and Drnovšek, Slavec, & Aleksić, 2024) have established that entrepreneurs' mental well-being positively influences business performance, customer attraction, and retention, the mechanisms through which mental resilience translates into sustainable venture outcomes remain insufficiently understood (Richter & Näswall, 2019; Wiklund et al., 2019). Specifically, existing research, (Haque, 2024; Schutte and Mberi 2020; Gupta, 2024) have often treated entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability as separate constructs and have often concentrated on the direct relationship between these construct overlooking the potential mediating factors that bridge psychological strength and business success (Audretsch and Kariv 2025; Audretsch and Kariv 2025).

Recent scholarship suggests that operational factors such as service delivery quality may play a mediating role between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and venture sustainability (Bapoo et al., 2022; Hawkins & Hoon, 2019), high-quality service delivery enhances customer satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term competitiveness; key determinants of new venture sustainability. However, consistent and effective service delivery requires entrepreneurs to be mentally resilient, adaptable, and emotionally stable as indicated by (Elshaer and Saad 2022; Goncalves, Haidar and Celik 2024). This underscores the need to investigate whether and how entrepreneurs' mental

resilience influences service delivery quality, and in turn, how service delivery mediates the relationship between mental resilience and venture sustainability.

Despite the significance of these dynamics, limited empirical research has examined this triadic relationship within the context of Ghanaian SMEs, where unique cultural, economic, and institutional factors may intensify the psychological and operational challenges entrepreneurs face (Ahmed et al., 2022; Adom and Ackom 2024). Consequently, the high failure rate of new ventures in Ghana may, in part, reflect a lack of understanding of how entrepreneurs' psychological capacities interact with service delivery processes to sustain business performance.

Therefore, this study seeks to address the pressing problem of new venture failure by investigating the mediating role of service delivery quality in the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability among SMEs in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

This research also seeks to elucidate the complex interplay between these factors and contribute to the existing literature on entrepreneurship and mental resilience of entrepreneurs.

1.2 Research Gaps

Despite the growing body of literature on entrepreneurship, several important gaps remain that this study seeks to address.

To begin with, numerous studies have examined factors influencing venture sustainability however, the majority of these have focused on financial capital, access to markets, innovation, and managerial competence, often overlooking the psychological dimensions of entrepreneurship. The construct of mental resilience, although increasingly acknowledged as a critical entrepreneurial resource, remains

underexplored in relation to venture survival and long-term sustainability, particularly within the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Secondly, although resilience has been studied in psychology and organizational behavior, its application in entrepreneurship research is fragmented. Many studies view resilience as an individual trait or coping mechanism without fully exploring how it translates into business outcomes (Ahmed et al., 2022; Linnenluecke 2017). Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence linking entrepreneurs' psychological resilience to measurable indicators of venture sustainability, especially in emerging economies such as Ghana.

Thirdly, the literature often treats service delivery as an independent determinant of business performance (Kinyanjui & Wambua 2020; Marcos et al, 2022), yet there is insufficient understanding of its role as a mediating mechanism. Little is known about how service delivery functions as the bridge between an entrepreneur's mental resilience and the sustainability of their venture. Addressing this gap provides a more holistic explanation of how internal psychological resources are transformed into external performance outcomes through customer-focused practices.

Fourthly, existing studies are often concentrated in developed economies, (Yang and Danes 2015; Sachdev 2023; Chadwick and Raver 2020) where institutional, cultural, and market dynamics differ significantly from those in developing countries. There is therefore a contextual gap in understanding how resilience and service delivery interact to influence venture sustainability in regions like Ghana, where entrepreneurs frequently operate under conditions of resource scarcity, high uncertainty, and institutional weaknesses (Apprey, 2025; Peprah et al., 2025).

Additionally, much of the prior research has relied on conceptual discussions and qualitative insights, (Schutte and Mberi 2020; Isensee et al., 2023) with limited empirical testing of the relationships among resilience, service delivery, and sustainability. This lack of quantitative evidence restricts the ability to generalize findings and to provide statistically robust conclusions. Thus, there is a methodological gap in employing rigorous analytical approaches to test these linkages in the entrepreneurial setting.

Finally, while theories such as the Resource-Based View (RBV), Innovation Theory of Schumpeter and Conservation of Resource theory have highlighted intangible resources as drivers of firm performance (Manyo et al., 2024 Guptar, 2024), few studies (Menezes et al., 2020; Ali et al., 2022) have integrated these perspectives with The SERVQUAL Model to capture the full picture of how psychological, operational, and service-related factors jointly sustain ventures. This theoretical gap calls for a more integrative framework that connects individual resilience, service delivery, and sustainability outcomes.

In summary, the research gaps include but not limited to,

1. Limited focus on psychological factors (mental resilience) in venture sustainability studies.
2. Fragmented understanding of resilience's application in entrepreneurship.
3. Lack of studies on service delivery as a mediator.
4. Contextual gap; most studies from developed economies, less from Ghana/SMEs in Africa.
5. Methodological gap; few empirical/quantitative tests of these relationships.

6. Theoretical gap, the lack of integrative frameworks linking resilience, service delivery, and sustainability.

1.3 Research Objectives

Aim of the study

The study aims to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability of SMEs and examine how service delivery quality can mediate this relationship in the Ghanaian context, specifically within the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

Objectives:

1. To determine the influence of entrepreneurs' mental resilience on a new venture sustainability of SMEs in Ghana.
2. To assess the effects of entrepreneurs' mental resilience on service delivery quality.
3. To examine the effects of the relationship between service delivery quality and new venture sustainability of SMEs in Ghana.
4. To analyze the mediating effect of service delivery quality on the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability of SMEs in Ghana.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions

1. Does entrepreneurs' mental resilience influence new venture sustainability of SMEs in Ghana?
2. Does entrepreneurs' mental resilience impact on service delivery quality?

3. What is the relationship between service delivery and new venture sustainability?
4. What is the extent to which service delivery quality play in the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability of SMEs in Ghana?

Hypotheses

H1: Entrepreneurs' mental resilience has a significant positive effect on new venture sustainability.

H2: Mental resilience of entrepreneurs has a significant positive effect on service delivery quality

H3: Service delivery quality has a significant positive effect on new venture sustainability.

H4: Service delivery quality mediates the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is significant both theoretically and practically, as it contributes to academic discourse, business practice, and policy development. Theoretically, it enriches entrepreneurship literature by emphasizing the psychological dimensions of business success (Ahmed et al, 2022). While prior studies have focused extensively on financial, structural, and strategic determinants of business survival, relatively little attention has been paid to the role of entrepreneurs' psychological strengths, particularly mental resilience (Hartmann et al., 2022). By examining resilience as a critical driver of sustainability, this research extends frameworks such as the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Psychological Capital Theory, which highlight intangible

resources as key contributors to organizational performance (Tefera & Hunsaker, 2021). In addition, the study draws on Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory to emphasize that entrepreneurs' mental resilience represents a fundamental psychological resource that helps them conserve, protect, and build additional resources necessary for coping with adversity and sustaining their ventures (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018).

The introduction of service delivery as a mediating variable provides fresh insights into the mechanism through which psychological traits are transformed into tangible business outcomes. Anchored in the SERVQUAL model, this study demonstrates that mentally resilient entrepreneurs are better able to deliver high-quality services characterized by reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility, which in turn enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and firm survival (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Amerta & Madhavi 2023). This positions service delivery as the bridge through which internal psychological strengths are externalized into measurable market value.

The study contributes to the broader discourse on entrepreneurship and sustainability by integrating Sustainable Development Theory. The findings suggest that when entrepreneurs leverage their mental resilience and deliver superior services, they not only ensure the continuity and competitiveness of their ventures but also contribute to economic resilience, social well-being, and long-term sustainable development (Brundtland Commission, 1987; Kato 2024; Korber & McNaughton 2018). Thus, the study advances theoretical understanding by linking individual-level psychological resources, firm-level service delivery practices, and societal-level sustainability outcomes. Practically, the study provides entrepreneurs with valuable lessons on how mental resilience can be cultivated and leveraged for business growth and continuity.

This research therefore emphasizes the importance of resilience-building, emotional stability, and adaptive capacity as essential skills for long-term survival. At the same time, it underscores the need for entrepreneurs to connect these psychological strengths with consistent and reliable service delivery, since customer satisfaction and loyalty remain vital to sustaining ventures in competitive markets.

Equally important, the study has strong implications for managers who play a central role in leading SMEs and service-driven organizations. Akpa et al (2021) attest to that fact, managers are responsible for shaping organizational culture, motivating employees, and ensuring that systems are in place to guarantee service excellence. By understanding the nexus between resilience and service delivery, managers can design supportive structures such as training, mentorship, and wellness initiatives that enhance both entrepreneurial and employee resilience. Moreover, Ahmad (2024) and Hsiao (2025) acknowledges that, managers can align service delivery strategies with sustainability objectives, thereby safeguarding ventures against market uncertainties while maintaining competitiveness.

Beyond entrepreneurs and managers, the findings of this study are highly relevant for SMEs. Since these SMEs are often vulnerable to market volatility and resource constraints (Hamilton et al., 2019), the study provides a roadmap for strengthening their sustainability strategies. By viewing service delivery not merely as an operational function but as a strategic enabler, SMEs can transform entrepreneurial resilience into long-term customer loyalty, trust, and repeat business.

In addition, the study has policy and institutional implications. It provides evidence to guide governments, business associations, and non-governmental organizations in designing interventions that go beyond financial and technical support to include

psychological well-being, stress management, and service improvement programs. For example, entrepreneurial training initiatives could integrate resilience-building modules, while policy measures could encourage customer-oriented practices and service quality standards that indirectly enhance venture sustainability.

Academically, this research contributes to closing gaps in existing knowledge. Although both resilience and service delivery have been studied individually in relation to entrepreneurship, few studies have examined their interconnectedness in driving venture sustainability. The mediating role of service delivery introduces a novel perspective, thereby offering fertile ground for future research across different contexts, industries, and regions.

Finally, the significance of this study extends to the broader socio-economic sphere. In regions where unemployment and economic instability are prevalent, entrepreneurial success serves as a powerful engine for job creation, poverty reduction, and innovation. Sustainable ventures not only provide livelihoods but also foster community development and social stability. By ensuring that entrepreneurs are mentally resilient and capable of delivering high-quality services, this study contributes to the establishment of stronger, more enduring businesses that enhance both local and national economic growth.

1.6 Delimitation

This study is focused on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) operating within the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The choice of this geographical area is informed by the region's high concentration of entrepreneurial activity, its strategic importance as Ghana's economic hub, and its diversity of small business sectors. The Greater Accra Region hosts a significant number of SMEs across different industries, making it an

ideal setting for studying issues of resilience, service delivery, and business sustainability. Focusing on this region also makes the research more feasible and contextually rich, as it reflects the challenges and opportunities faced by entrepreneurs within a dynamic urban environment characterized by intense competition, fluctuating customer expectations, and high operational costs.

The study further focuses its population to owner-managers of SMEs rather than including employees or customers. This decision is based on the understanding that entrepreneurs play a central role in shaping their firms' strategic direction, managing stress, and fostering resilience that directly influences organizational outcomes. Entrepreneurs are also primarily responsible for ensuring the quality-of-service delivery and maintaining the sustainability of their ventures. By focusing on owner-managers, the study captures the individual-level psychological factors (such as mental resilience) and behavioral dynamics that underpin service delivery performance and long-term business viability.

In addition, the study is delimited to new ventures that have been in operation for less than five years. This decision is justified by evidence from the Ghana Enterprise Agency (2024) and other empirical studies showing that new ventures are particularly vulnerable to failure within their first five years of establishment. By concentrating on this early stage of business development, the study provides insights into how entrepreneurs' mental resilience contributes to overcoming initial operational challenges, maintaining service quality, and achieving sustainability. Older, more established firms are excluded because they often have different resource structures, coping mechanisms, and business stability levels, which could distort the results.

Thematically, the study is delimited to three major constructs: entrepreneurs' mental resilience, service delivery quality, and new venture sustainability. It focuses on how mental resilience influences new venture sustainability both directly and indirectly through the mediating effect of service delivery quality. This focus is necessary because, although the direct link between resilience and business outcomes has been studied, limited attention has been given to understanding the role that service delivery plays as a mediating mechanism. By narrowing the scope to these constructs, the study aims to provide a clear and empirically testable model that addresses a specific research gap in entrepreneurship and organizational behavior literature. Other psychological or organizational factors; such as leadership style, innovation capability, or financial management are deliberately excluded to maintain conceptual clarity and analytical focus.

Methodologically, the study is delimited to a quantitative cross-sectional research design, using structured questionnaires administered to entrepreneurs. This approach enables the collection of data from a large number of respondents within a specific period, allowing for statistical testing of relationships among the study variables. A cross-sectional design is deemed appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to examine the current state of mental resilience, service delivery quality, and venture sustainability within the chosen sample.

Furthermore, the study is delimited to formal SMEs registered under Ghanaian business regulatory institutions, such as the Ghana Enterprise Agency. Informal businesses are excluded because of their lack of formal structures, inconsistent record-keeping, and different operational dynamics, which may not align with the measurement indicators of sustainability and service delivery quality. By focusing on formal SMEs, the research

ensures consistency in the data collected and enhances the validity of findings related to structured entrepreneurial practices.

Finally, the temporal scope of the study is limited to data collected within a specific time frame during the year 2025. This time-bound scope is necessary for feasibility and coherence of data collection and analysis. The findings will therefore reflect the prevailing economic, social, and business conditions within that period. Consequently, results may differ if replicated in other regions, sectors, or under different economic conditions.

In summary, this study is delimited by its geographical focus (Greater Accra Region), population scope (owner-managers of SMEs), venture age (less than five years in operation), conceptual framework (mental resilience, service delivery quality, and new venture sustainability), methodological approach (quantitative cross-sectional design), and institutional context (formal SMEs). These delimitations are necessary to ensure that the study remains focused, manageable, and contextually relevant, while providing meaningful insights into how entrepreneurs' psychological resilience and service delivery strategies contribute to the sustainability of new ventures in Ghana's SME sector.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1. Entrepreneurs' mental resilience

Entrepreneurs' mental resilience refers to the psychological well-being and emotional resilience of individuals who start and manage their businesses, (Stephan, 2018) It encompasses a number of factors, including anxiety, depression, and stress, which are often exacerbated by the unique challenges of entrepreneurship, such as financial pressures, long working hours, and the emotional toll of managing a business. Given

that approximately 49% of entrepreneurs experience at least one psychological disorder during their lifetime (Freeman et al., 2019; Cubbon et al., 2021), it is crucial to recognize how these issues can impact not only personal well-being but also business performance and decision-making capabilities. Thus, understanding mental resilience is essential for fostering a sustainable entrepreneurial environment.

2. New Venture Sustainability:

This concept denotes the ability of a newly established business to achieve long-term viability, resilience, and growth in the face of challenges. (Soto-Simeone, Sirén, & Antretter, 2020). For a venture to be sustainable, it must generate sufficient revenue, adapt to market changes, and maintain operational efficiency over time (Lahti, Wincent, & Parida, 2018). This sustainability is crucial for the venture's survival, enabling continued contributions to the economy, job creation, and community development. Hence, effective leadership, resource management, and customer retention directly influence new venture sustainability as indicated by (Di Vaio et al., 2022).

3. Service Delivery quality

This term refers to how a business provides goods or services to its customers, encompassing everything from customer interactions to service quality, speed, and consistency (Parasuraman & Zeithaml, 2002). Effective service delivery is essential for customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall business success, especially in competitive markets (Rane, Achari, & Choudhary, 2023). In this study, service delivery is viewed as a factor that can influence a venture's sustainability. When an entrepreneur can deliver high-quality service, it strengthens customer relationships, which may, in turn, enhance the business's success.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

Chapter one introduces the study by providing the background of the study and problem statement, discussing the mental resilience challenges faced by entrepreneurs, the critical importance of sustaining new ventures, and the role of effective service delivery in business success. The research questions, objectives, significance of the study, and scope of the studies follow this.

Chapter two reviews relevant literature by presenting a conceptual framework that discusses theories and concepts associated with mental resilience, entrepreneurship, venture sustainability, and service delivery. The theoretical framework and hypotheses development are presented, establishing the study's theoretical foundation and outlining hypotheses based on gaps identified in the literature.

Chapter three describes the research methodology, which includes the research design, sampling techniques, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques. Chapter four, on the one hand, presents the study's findings and analyses the results. Chapter Five summarizes the study's key findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of existing literature relevant to the study on entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability, with the mediating role of service delivery. The purpose of this review is to situate the study within the broader academic and practical discourse by synthesizing key theories, concepts, and empirical findings that provide a foundation for the research.

The review includes an exploration of the conceptual underpinnings of mental resilience in the entrepreneurial context, followed by discussions on the dimensions of venture sustainability, service delivery as well as the role of service delivery in entrepreneurial success. It further draws on theoretical perspectives such as the Conservation of Resource (COR), Sustainable Development Theory (SDT) and The SERVQUAL Model to frame the relationships among the key constructs.

2.1 The Concept of Mental Resilience

Mental resilience refers to the ability of individuals to withstand, recover, and adapt in the face of adversity, trauma, or significant stress. It encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects that enable individuals to navigate challenges and maintain their well-being (Palamarchuk & Vaillancourt 2021; Pahwa & Khan 2022). In other words, it embodies the ability to maintain or regain mental health and functionality after experiencing setbacks, disruptions, or prolonged exposure to challenging circumstances. Fuchs et al, (2023) believes that, mental resilience is not merely about surviving hardship but thriving through it by employing adaptive strategies, emotional regulation, and cognitive flexibility.

Hartmann et al., (2022) acknowledges that, mental resilience is both a trait and a developmental process. While some individuals may naturally possess higher levels of resilience, it can also be cultivated through experiences, social support, mindfulness, and coping strategies (Liu and Boyatzis 2021; Nikookar et al., 2024). Bardoel and Drago (2021) and Brown et al, (2020) alludes that, it is often conceptualized through frameworks such as the Protective Factor Model, which highlights internal attributes, for example, self-confidence, goal orientation and external factors which includes, supportive networks, access to resources among others that buffer individuals against stress.

Developing mental resilience requires a combination of strategies, including self-awareness, positive self-talk, social support, problem-solving skills, and emotional regulation, Whitfield and Wilby (2021). Dunlop (2023) attest to the fact that, developing self-awareness is critical to building mental resilience while practicing positive self-talk which can help to build confidence and resilience. Additionally, Chowdhary et al., (2025) consent to building a strong support network of friends, family, and mentors can provide a safety net during times of adversity. Moreover, developing effective problem-solving skills can help to build resilience (Carmeli et al., 2021). Practicing emotional regulation techniques, such as mindfulness and meditation, can help to manage stress and adversity (Polizzi and Lynn 2021).

Mental resilience is typically measured through scales assessing elements like, emotional stability under pressure, ability to recover from disappointment, perceived control over life events and coping strategies during crises (Silveira et al., 2022; Bondarchuk et al., 2024)

Chaigneau et al, (2022) and Gautam et al, (2024) indicates that, Mental resilience has several benefits, including improved well-being, increased productivity, better relationships, and increased adaptability. For instance, (Cherng et al., 2022) believes that, mental resilience is associated with improved mental and physical well-being. It enables individuals to maintain their focus and productivity, even in the face of adversity. Mental resilience enables individuals to build and maintain strong relationships with others as well as enabling individuals to adapt to changing circumstances and challenges (Ungar and Theron 2020; Hashimy et al., 2023)

Mental resilience is a critical aspect of overall well-being (Mayordomo et al., 2021; Afita and Nuranasmita 2023). In view of the above, it is important for individuals to prioritize mental resilience to enhance their well-being, productivity, and relationships (Marques & Berry 2021), ultimately achieving their goals and improving their overall quality of life.

2.1.1 Defining Mental Resilience in Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been defined as the process of creating or developing a new business venture by identifying, recognizing and exploiting opportunities (Alvarez et al., 2020). Both mental resilience and entrepreneurship have gained significant attention in literature, but their intersection has only recently been explored (Hartmann et al, 2022). In as much as entrepreneurship is also a potential source of personal development, growth, well-being (Chatterjee, Shepherd & Wincent 2022.) and innovation and success, it is often associated with high risk-taking and a high-stress career path, which can take a toll on entrepreneurs' psychological abilities (Abdelwahed 2024). It is therefore essential to acknowledge and appreciate the unique challenges that comes with being an entrepreneur (Vetrivel et al, 2025).

Entrepreneurs' mental resilience looks at the psychological strength and adaptive capacity of business founders to effectively cope with, recover from, and thrive despite the persistent uncertainties, stressors, failures, and pressures (Hartmann et al, 2022) inherent in the entrepreneurial journey. It encompasses an entrepreneur's ability to remain mentally and emotionally stable while managing high-risk decisions, financial instability, intense workloads, and fluctuating market conditions (Teleki et al, 2024). Entrepreneurs' mental resilience is both an intrinsic trait and a learned competence, influenced by personality, life experiences, coping mechanisms, social support, and prior exposure to adversity (Hartmann et al, 2022). In other words, it's a multifaceted trait that encompasses adaptability, learning from failure, emotional intelligence, and resourcefulness (Shandilya & Bansal 2025). This dynamic interplay between personal qualities and learned strategies enables entrepreneurs to navigate challenges with confidence and poise. It enables entrepreneurs to bounce back from failure, learn from mistakes, maintain psychological well-being, and continue pursuing innovation and business growth (Sahoo et al., 2025).

Resilient entrepreneurs are not immune to stress or failure (Yul et al., 2022), rather, they use adaptive strategies such as reframing negative events, seeking support, and maintaining a strong sense of purpose to maintain focus (Munroe et al., 2022), make rational decisions, and preserve their mental health during turbulent times. In doing so, they enhance not only their personal well-being but also the sustainability and long-term success of their ventures. This form of resilience is characterized by emotional regulation under pressure, cognitive flexibility in response to changing business environments, sustained motivation in the face of setbacks, and optimism and confidence in pursuing goals despite obstacles (Biggane and Steinbauer 2025; Singha 2024).

Extensive research has focused on the psychological aspects of entrepreneurship, highlighting the need to address mental health concern among entrepreneurs. A study by Freeman et al., (2019) found that entrepreneurs are 50% more likely to report having a mental health condition than the general population. It is estimated that 44% of small business owners experience stress, 25% experience anxiety, and 15% experience depression (Freeman et al., 2019). Studies have also shown that entrepreneurs are more likely to experience stress, burnout, and other mental health issues due to the high levels of uncertainty, financial pressure, and workload associated with entrepreneurship (Palmer et al 2021).

2.1.2 Challenges of Entrepreneurs' Mental Resilience

Entrepreneurs often operate in dynamic, uncertain, and high-risk environments, where success depends not only on innovative ideas and strategic decision-making but also on psychological endurance (Baroncelli et al., 2024; Wang, 2020). While mental resilience is a crucial psychological resource for navigating these challenges, cultivating and sustaining it is far from straightforward (Banerjee 2021). Entrepreneurs face numerous obstacles that can undermine their mental resilience, threatening both their well-being and the sustainability of their ventures (Vetrivel et al., 2025)

One of the most pervasive threats is chronic stress and burnout which is typically marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (cynicism), and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Mäkiniemi et al., 2021). In entrepreneurial settings, these conditions are compounded by uncertainty, high responsibility, and limited boundaries between work and personal life. Entrepreneurs often work long hours under intense pressure, grappling with financial uncertainty, tight deadlines, and the constant responsibility for business outcomes (Fisher et al., 2020). Unlike employees in more structured organizations, they typically lack access to institutional support systems such

as human resource departments, employee assistance programs, or mental health services (Bradley et al., 2021). Chronic stress and burnout among entrepreneurs have far-reaching consequences. Psychologically, these conditions lead to decreased motivation, irritability, and cognitive impairment. Physiologically, they increase the risk of insomnia, cardiovascular disease, and other stress-related illnesses (Merrill 2022). Professionally, burnout impairs decision-making, weakens leadership effectiveness and reduces innovation (Gabriel & Aguinis 2022). This persistent exposure to stress can gradually erode psychological stamina (Sutton 2022) making it increasingly difficult to maintain a resilient and focused mindset and increases the likelihood of venture failure.

Compounding this is the issue of isolation and lack of social support. Especially for solo founders or first-time entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurial journey can be emotionally isolating (Sahoo et al 2025). Without colleagues, mentors, or peer networks to lean on, entrepreneurs may struggle to process failure, share burdens, or seek constructive feedback (Becker & Eendenich (2023; Lenz et al, 2025). This emotional disconnection not only increases vulnerability to stress but also weakens the protective social factors that are known to foster resilience. It is estimated that 44% of small business owners experience stress, 25% experience anxiety, and 15% experience depression (Freeman et al., 2024).

A closely related psychological barrier is the fear of failure, often accompanied by perfectionism. Hwang and Choi (2021) believe many entrepreneurs internalize failure as a reflection of personal inadequacy, which cultivates self-doubt, anxiety, and risk aversion. (Flett and Hewitt 2020). The pressure to achieve flawless outcomes can result in emotional exhaustion (Ocampo et al., 2020), reducing the entrepreneur's capacity to bounce back from setbacks or remain adaptable in the face of challenges.

Another significant strain comes from financial and resource constraints. Entrepreneurs frequently operate with limited capital, restricted access to funding, and scarce operational resources, particularly in emerging markets (Singh 2024) where there is scarcity of venture capital and angel investors among other sources of funding. These financial limitations create a persistent sense of vulnerability and urgency, impairing strategic thinking and increasing emotional strain (Osiyevskyy et al., 2023). Under such conditions, it becomes increasingly difficult for entrepreneurs to maintain the calm, focus, and optimism that are fundamental components of mental resilience.

In addition, Wang et al., (2023) believes that, entrepreneurs face multiple role demands which contributes to psychological overload. As visionaries, managers, marketers, and operations leads, they must juggle a wide range of responsibilities simultaneously (Galkina et al., 2022). This role overload often leads to time pressure, decision fatigue, and an erosion of work-life balance. The blurring of personal and professional boundaries limits opportunities for rest and emotional recovery (Holavins 2023), gradually diminishing the entrepreneur's ability to remain resilient in the face of ongoing stressors.

Moreover, Horst de Cuestas and Le (2023) cites that, many entrepreneurs operate in ecosystems where mental health awareness is minimal or stigmatized. Cultural and societal norms may equate emotional vulnerability with weakness, discouraging open dialogue around mental health challenges (Singh et al, 2025). As a result, many entrepreneurs gallop in distress, deny their struggles and avoid seeking help. This lack of self-awareness and support delays intervention and hinders the development of long-term resilience strategies (Arcemont, 2024) such as counseling, mindfulness, or peer support.

Finally, the entrepreneurial landscape is characterized by continuous uncertainty and rapid change (Daraojimba et al 2023). From evolving customer preferences and technological disruptions to global crises like pandemics or economic downturns, entrepreneurs must constantly adapt to shifting conditions (Zaslavska & Zaslavska 2024). While psychological flexibility is vital in such contexts, repeated exposure to volatility without adequate coping mechanisms can result in mental fatigue, paralysis in decision-making, and eventual psychological breakdown (Pandur 2023).

While entrepreneurs' mental resilience is essential for sustaining innovation, effective leadership, and business continuity, (Aldianto et al,2021), it is continually challenged by stress, isolation, perfectionism, financial strain, and a lack of mental health infrastructure (Campion et al,2022). These factors not only compromise personal well-being but also threaten the long-term sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures. Addressing these issues requires a dual approach: entrepreneurs must adopt personal coping strategies such as seeking social support, practicing self-care, and cultivating emotional awareness, while ecosystem stakeholders must work toward systemic changes (Maguire 2024). These include increasing mental health education, normalizing help-seeking behavior, and integrating psychological support into entrepreneurial development programs. By proactively acknowledging and mitigating these challenges, entrepreneurs can strengthen their mental resilience and create more stable, adaptable, and sustainable businesses (Vetrivel et al., 2025).

2.1.3 4 Importance of Entrepreneurs' Mental Resistance

Entrepreneurs operate in environments marked by uncertainty, intense pressure, and frequent setbacks. In such contexts, (Ungar and Theron 2020) believes that, mental resilience emerges not only as a coping mechanism but also as a powerful driver of

success. This psychological strength enables entrepreneurs to navigate challenges effectively, maintain momentum, and sustain their ventures over time.

It is widely celebrated as a driver of innovation, economic growth, and job creation (Stoica et al., 2020). However, it is also a complex and emotionally demanding journey that requires individuals to navigate uncertainty, setbacks, and high levels of personal and professional risk (Nghiem et al., 2025). In this regard, it serves as a foundational resource that supports decision-making, innovation, leadership, and overall firm performance (Martínez-Peláez et al., 2023).

One significant success of mental resilience is enhanced adaptability to change (Omoseebi et al., 2024). In rapidly evolving markets, resilient entrepreneurs are more likely to adjust to shifting customer preferences, economic shocks, and technological disruptions (Omowole 2024). Rather than being overwhelmed by uncertainty, they see it as an opportunity for innovation and strategic pivoting. This capacity for adjustment is essential for maintaining a competitive edge.

Moreover, resilient entrepreneurs exhibit improved stress and crisis management skills (Elshaer, 2024). Given the constant demands and pressures of running a business, the ability to remain calm under pressure and make rational decisions during crises is crucial (Al-Dabbagh 2020). Mental resilience enables entrepreneurs to manage their emotions, maintain focus, and continue leading effectively, even in the most trying times (Vetrivel et al, 2025). Consequently, their ventures are less likely to suffer from impulsive decisions or burnout-driven collapses.

In addition, Fehintola (2023) argues, that, mentally resilient entrepreneurs demonstrate sustained motivation and commitment to goal attainment. They are driven by a strong sense of purpose and remain persistent despite facing obstacles and setbacks (Sahoo et

al., 2025). This unwavering drive increases their chances of reaching business milestones and sustaining progress, even when results are delayed or uncertain. Resilience fosters positive leadership and influence, which is vital for team performance and morale (Carvajal et al., 2023). Entrepreneurs with strong mental resilience often serve as role models, exuding confidence and optimism that inspire employees and stakeholders (Kayyali 2025). Through their leadership, they cultivate a resilient organizational culture, which contributes to long-term business success.

Another notable success linked to mental resilience is the ability to learn and grow from failure. While many may view failure as a deterrent, resilient entrepreneurs treat it as a valuable learning experience (Koh 2020). They reflect on what went wrong, extract lessons, and refine their strategies accordingly (Espinoza-Benavides and Guerrero 2025). This mindset promotes continuous improvement and long-term innovation (Singha 2024), both of which are essential in competitive business landscapes. Resilient entrepreneurs display persistence in resource acquisition (Kayyali 2025). Whether seeking funding, partnerships, or customer support, they are more likely to persevere despite rejections or initial challenges (Norman 2024). Their ability to remain focused and confident increases their likelihood of eventually securing the resources necessary for business growth.

Alongside these external outcomes, mental resilience also contributes to better health and overall well-being (Kim et al., 2021). Entrepreneurs with resilience are less susceptible to mental health issues like burnout, anxiety, and depression (Fernández-Bedoya et al., 2023). This, in turn, allows them to maintain the physical and emotional energy required to run their businesses effectively over the long term.

Notably, resilient entrepreneurs also tend to develop stronger stakeholder relationships (Santoro et al., 2020). Their emotional intelligence and empathy foster trust and open communication with employees, customers, investors, and community members (Vetrivel et al., 2025). These relationships, built on mutual respect and understanding, are key to ensuring business continuity and support during difficult times.

Ultimately, all these outcomes converge to promote long-term business sustainability. Entrepreneurs who exhibit mental resilience are more capable of withstanding adversity, seizing new opportunities, and leading their ventures through various life cycles (Abdelwahed et al., 2024). According to Hillmann (2021) their psychological strength becomes a cornerstone for resilience not only at the individual level but across the entire organization. Entrepreneurs' mental resilience significantly enhances their ability to adapt, persist, lead, and succeed in complex business environments (Hartmann et al., 2022). By improving their stress management, fostering innovation, and promoting healthy stakeholder relationships, mental resilience serves as a powerful tool for personal fulfillment and sustainable business growth (da Silver 2025). Therefore, fostering resilience among entrepreneurs should be prioritized by educators, policymakers, and support institutions seeking to nurture thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems (Suguna et al., 2024; Alzamel 2024).

A defining characteristic of entrepreneurial activity is the presence of unpredictability (Barker et al., 2020). Entrepreneurs must routinely respond to shifting market dynamics, customer behavior changes, financial instability, regulatory uncertainties, and operational disruptions (Terchila 2025). Mental resistance equips entrepreneurs with the ability to cope with such ambiguity and to persist despite failure or adversity (Sahoo et al 2025). Resilient individuals are more likely to perceive challenges as growth opportunities rather than threats (Schwarzer and Reuter 2023). This adaptive

cognitive framing supports proactive responses, enabling entrepreneurs to revise strategies, explore alternative solutions, and continue working toward long-term goals thereby enhancing venture continuity and survival (Hartmann et al., 2022).

Beyond navigating external challenges, Murnieks et al., (2020) believes that mental resistance plays a vital role in sustaining intrinsic motivation and entrepreneurial drive. The entrepreneurial process often involves extended periods of effort with limited immediate returns, (Yang et al., 2024) making internal sources of motivation essential. Entrepreneurs with strong mental resistance are characterized by higher levels of self-efficacy, persistence, optimism, and goal commitment (Meria et al., 2023). These psychological traits enable them to remain focused and engaged even when faced with setbacks, criticism, or resource constraints. Thus, mental resistance serves as an internal anchor, preserving entrepreneurial energy and determination across the venture lifecycle (Williams et al., 2024).

In addition, Biswas et al., (2024) believes that mental resistance facilitates effective decision-making under pressure. Entrepreneurs are frequently required to make high-stakes decisions under stressful conditions, with incomplete information and constrained timelines (Sinyard et al., 2020). In such situations, mental resistance supports emotional regulation and cognitive clarity, helping entrepreneurs remain calm and rational rather than reactive (Vetrivel et al., 2025). This enhances their ability to weigh risks, evaluate alternatives, and make informed choices that support both short-term operations and long-term planning. The capacity to make sound decisions under pressure is a key competency that directly impacts business success (Somwethee et al., 2023)

Equally important is the role of mental resistance in entrepreneurial leadership and organizational culture (Shiferaw et al., 2023). Entrepreneurs are not only business owners but also leaders who influence the behavior, attitudes, and resilience of their teams (Hartmann et al., 2022), especially those with strong mental resistance model composure, persistence, and solution-oriented thinking, especially during periods of adversity (Isabirye et al., 2025). These qualities inspire confidence, trust, and morale among employees, thereby fostering a resilient organizational culture. This culture becomes a strategic asset, equipping the venture to better withstand both internal and external shocks (Hokmabadi et al., 2024).

Mental resistance also contributes significantly to innovation and adaptive capacity, two pillars of entrepreneurial competitiveness (Chinyere and Ifeoma 2024). Innovation involves risk-taking and experimentation, which inherently carry the possibility of failure (Giaccone and Magnusson 2022). Entrepreneurs with high mental resistance are more likely to embrace failure as a learning experience and to continue innovating despite previous setbacks (Borbolla-Albores et al., 2022). Their openness to feedback and willingness to adjust enhance the adaptability of the business, allowing it to remain responsive to customer needs, market shifts, and technological changes. This ongoing capacity to adapt and evolve is critical to long-term business viability.

Moreover, mental resistance plays a protective role in safeguarding mental health and preventing burnout (Giostra et al., 2024) Entrepreneurs are particularly susceptible to stress-related challenges due to the intense and often isolating nature of their work (Kiefl, et al., 2024). Chronic stress, if unmanaged, can lead to burnout, depression, and reduced cognitive function all of which impair decision-making and business operations (Khammissa, et al., 2022). Mental resistance buffers against these risks by promoting effective coping strategies such as goal setting, time management, and help-

seeking behavior (Elder, 2023). Maintaining mental well-being not only supports personal health but also ensures sustained performance and productivity.

Entrepreneurs who demonstrate resilience are often perceived by investors, customers, and partners as capable, trustworthy, and competent. These perceptions enhance their ability to attract funding, secure partnerships, and build customer loyalty (Santoro et al., 2020). Additionally, resilient entrepreneurs are more adept at cultivating networks and leveraging relationships (Khan, 2023), thereby increasing access to critical resources such as information, capital, and market opportunities.

In summary, mental resistance is a foundational psychological resource that significantly contributes to entrepreneurial effectiveness, leadership quality, innovation, and venture sustainability (Pauceanu et al., 2021). It enables entrepreneurs to cope with uncertainty, maintain motivation, make sound decisions, and foster supportive organizational cultures. It also promotes mental well-being, strengthens stakeholder relationships, and enhances adaptability in volatile environments. As entrepreneurship continues to evolve in complexity and competitiveness, the cultivation of mental resistance must be recognized as essential (Nyamrunda and Freeman 2021). Therefore, entrepreneurship education, training programs, and policy initiatives should place greater emphasis on developing this capacity through psychological skill-building, mentorship, and accessible mental health support (Soni et al., 2025). Doing so will not only enhance individual entrepreneur success but also contribute to the resilience and sustainability of the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem.

2.1.4 Measurements of Entrepreneurs Mental Resistance

Entrepreneurs' mental resistance also referred to in the literature as psychological resilience, mental toughness, or emotional fortitude is a central construct in

entrepreneurial psychology and organizational behavior (Hartmann et al., 2022). Given the centrality of this capacity in shaping entrepreneurial behavior, decision-making, and venture sustainability, scholars have sought to develop robust instruments and models that accurately assess its various dimensions (Shao et al 2024; Daradkeh 2023). These tools help capture the complex, dynamic nature of mental resistance and its influence on business outcomes.

2.1.5 Conceptual Foundations of Mental Resistance Measurement

The measurement of entrepreneurs' mental resistance is grounded in theories of resilience, positive organizational behavior, and psychological capital (PsyCap) (Hartmann et al., 2022). Within these frameworks, resilience is not seen as a fixed personality trait but rather as a developable capacity one that is shaped by both individual characteristics and contextual experiences (Franken et al., 2022). Measurement efforts therefore focus on identifying cognitive, emotional, and behavioral indicators that reflect an entrepreneur's ability to bounce back from adversity, sustain long-term motivation, and adapt effectively to changing environments (Hartmann et al., 2022).

2.1.6 Commonly Used Measurement Scales and Instruments

1. Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)

One of the most widely utilized tools for measuring resilience, the CD-RISC consists of 25 items that assess tenacity, emotional tolerance, self-efficacy, and the ability to cope with change and hardship (Minnett and Stephenson 2024). Participants respond using a Likert scale, rating statements such as:

I am able to adapt when changes occur, I tend to bounce back after illness or hardship (Mohlin et al., 2020).

(Connor and Davidson, 2003)

2. Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

Developed by Smith et al., (2008), the BRS emphasizes recovery rather than resistance, focusing specifically on how quickly individuals bounce back from stress. It includes six items such as:

“I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times, It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.”

3. Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA)

The RSA (Friborg et al., 2003) offers a broader socio-contextual perspective on resilience by measuring five dimensions: personal competence, social competence, structured style, family cohesion, and social resources. This makes it particularly useful for assessing entrepreneurs who operate within complex social and organizational networks.

4. Mental Toughness Questionnaire (MTQ48)

The MTQ48 assesses mental toughness across four domains—control, commitment, challenge, and confidence (Clough et al., 2002). Though not designed exclusively for entrepreneurs, it is frequently applied in entrepreneurial contexts to evaluate psychological endurance under pressure and decision-making capacity in high-stakes environments.

2.1.7 Entrepreneurial Dimensions of Mental Resistance

While general resilience scales provide a solid foundation, researchers have increasingly emphasized the importance of context-specific adaptations that reflect the

unique psychological and operational demands of entrepreneurship (Hartmann et al., 2022). Common dimensions emphasized in entrepreneurial contexts include:

Emotional Stability: The capacity to stay calm and composed under stress, which is essential for navigating high-risk decisions and uncertain outcomes. (Eryilmaz 2024)

Goal Commitment and Perseverance: Often associated with “grit,” this dimension captures the entrepreneur’s ability to remain dedicated to long-term objectives despite obstacles (Bittencourt et al., 2024).

Cognitive Flexibility and Adaptability: This reflects the ability to revise strategies in response to feedback, market volatility, or failure, and is crucial for innovation and iterative learning (Goronga 2025).

Optimism and Positive Outlook: Entrepreneurs with an optimistic mindset tend to perceive failures as temporary and challenges as opportunities, fostering continued engagement and creative problem-solving (Le Count 2024; Sahoo 2025).

Stress Tolerance and Recovery Capacity: This dimension evaluates how well an entrepreneur manages stress physiologically and psychologically, as well as the speed and effectiveness of recovery from adverse events (Ahmed et al., 2022).

2.1.8 Contextual Adaptations and Entrepreneurial-Specific Measures

Recognizing the limitations of generic resilience tools, some scholars have tailored existing instruments or developed new ones to reflect the entrepreneurial environment, characterized by uncertainty, limited resources, and frequent failure (Ahmed et al., 2022; Cantelmi 2021) For example:

Ayala and Manzano (2014) created a Resilience Scale for Entrepreneurs (RSE), adapting the CD-RISC to measure entrepreneurial-specific behaviors such as risk-taking, opportunity recognition post-failure, and persistence in uncertain markets.

Hua et al., (2022), believes that accurately measuring entrepreneurs' mental resistance carries important implications for both academic inquiry and entrepreneurship development programs. From a research perspective, validated resilience instruments can be used to explore correlations between mental resistance and outcomes such as innovation, venture growth, leadership effectiveness, and sustainability (Hartmann et al 2022). In practice, these tools can guide entrepreneurship educators, incubators, and mental health professionals in assessing the psychological needs of entrepreneurs, designing resilience training modules, and offering targeted support interventions (Nafari 2025; Van 2024). This is especially relevant in high-stress contexts such as economic downturns, post-failure recovery, or rapid business scaling.

Entrepreneurs' mental resistance is a multidimensional and measurable construct that plays a vital role in business sustainability, innovation, and leadership under pressure (Soutoet et al., 2022; Luu et al., 2025). A range of validated psychological instruments including the CD-RISC, BRS, RSA, MTQ48, and entrepreneur-specific tools like the RSE, have been developed or adapted to assess this capacity. These instruments provide valuable insight into how entrepreneurs manage stress, maintain motivation, and adapt to adversity. As research into entrepreneurial well-being and performance continues to expand, the use of context-sensitive, psychometrically sound measurement tools will be essential for advancing both theory and practice in entrepreneurship.

2.1.9 Indicators of Entrepreneurs Mental Resistance

Understanding the indicators of mental resistance is essential for researchers, educators, and policymakers seeking to foster sustainable entrepreneurial behavior and well-being (Shir and Ryff 2022). Entrepreneurs operate in volatile, high-pressure environments where resilience is not merely advantageous but often crucial for survival and success (Shir and Ryff 2022). These indicators can be broadly classified into emotional, psychological, cognitive, and behavioral domains, each contributing to the overall resilience and sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures. (Stephan 2018; Shir and Ryff 2022)

1. Emotional Stability and Stress Tolerance

One of the foundational indicators of mental resistance is the ability to remain emotionally stable under pressure (Stephan 2018; Shir and Ryff 2022). Entrepreneurs frequently face emotionally taxing situations such as financial setbacks, customer rejection, or venture failure (Espinoza-Benavides and Guerrero 2025). Mentally resistant entrepreneurs are distinguished by their ability to regulate emotional responses managing anger, anxiety, or fear while avoiding emotional exhaustion or burnout (Shir and Ryff 2022). They maintain composure, demonstrate patience, and recover quickly after distressing events. This emotional equilibrium enables consistent decision-making and nurtures positive interpersonal relationships, (Idris 2023) both of which are essential for effective leadership and operational continuity.

2. Perseverance and Grit

Perseverance, conceptualized in psychological literature as "grit," reflects the sustained effort and commitment entrepreneurs demonstrate toward long-term goals, even in the face of repeated obstacles (Stephen, 2018). Entrepreneurs with strong mental resistance

exhibit determination and tenacity, continuing to pursue their objectives despite failures, rejections, or prolonged periods without tangible success. (Sahoo, 2025) This quality is particularly critical in early-stage ventures and resource-constrained environments, where persistence often distinguishes success from failure.

3. Optimism and Positive Outlook

Optimism plays a central role in mental resistance by shaping how entrepreneurs cognitively appraise setbacks. Those with a positive outlook tend to view challenges as surmountable and failures as opportunities for learning and growth (Sahoo, 2025). This hopeful disposition fuels psychological momentum, sustains motivation, and enhances the entrepreneur's capacity to lead during uncertain times. Optimistic entrepreneurs inspire confidence among team members and stakeholders, often increasing organizational cohesion and trust, which are vital for navigating entrepreneurial turbulence (Sahoo, 2025).

4. Self-Efficacy and Confidence

Self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to accomplish specific goals is a cornerstone of entrepreneurial resilience (Santoro et al., 2020). Entrepreneurs with high self-efficacy are confident in their competence to lead, make critical decisions, and adapt to adversity (Santoro et al 2020). They exhibit initiative in crisis situations, take responsibility for outcomes, and navigate ambiguity with a problem-solving mindset (Noaman and Nair 2025). High self-efficacy also correlates with greater willingness to take strategic risks and innovate, both of which are indispensable in competitive and uncertain markets (Kyaw 2024).

5. Adaptability and Flexibility

Given the dynamic nature of business environments, adaptability is a crucial indicator of mental resistance (Karman, 2020). Entrepreneurs must continuously respond to changing customer preferences, technological advancements, and market regulations. Resilient entrepreneurs demonstrate cognitive flexibility; the capacity to reframe problems, adjust strategies, and pivot business models when necessary. Rather than resisting change, they embrace it as a growth opportunity and maintain performance amidst external disruptions (Nafari, 2025). Adaptability enhances organizational agility and ensures long-term business relevance (Musa and Enggarsyah 2025).

6. Problem-Solving Orientation

Van de Velde (2024) believes that, a solution-focused mindset is another defining trait of mental resistance. Resilient entrepreneurs prioritize action over paralysis, directing their energy toward resolving challenges rather than dwelling on setbacks (Shepherd and Williams, 2020). This orientation is characterized by analytical thinking, resourcefulness, and a proactive approach to crisis management. Mentally resistant entrepreneurs avoid blame, focus on feasible solutions, and often exhibit creativity in overcoming constraints (Ladstaetter et al., 2020). This mindset supports operational effectiveness and strategic agility in high-pressure situations (Sahoo et al., 2025).

7. Social Connectedness and Support-Seeking Behavior

Contrary to the myth of the self-reliant entrepreneur, mental resistance often includes the ability to build and leverage social support systems (Udukeke and Usoro 2023). Entrepreneurs who demonstrate strong mental resistance are open to collaboration, engage in transparent communication about their challenges, and seek help from mentors, peers, employees, or family members (Mujtaba and Lawrence 2024). These

networks provide emotional reinforcement, diverse perspectives, and practical support, enhancing both the entrepreneur's psychological well-being and business problem-solving capacity. Social connectedness also expands access to information, partnerships, and new opportunities (Sanders and Scanlon 2021).

8. Learning Orientation and Feedback Responsiveness

Finally, a resilient entrepreneur is characterized by a strong learning orientation. Rather than viewing failure as defeat, mentally resistant entrepreneurs interpret setbacks as valuable feedback (Sahoo et al., 2025). They actively seek input from customers, employees, and other stakeholders, and are open to constructive criticism (Santoro et al 2020). They analyze mistakes, extract insights, and apply these lessons to improve strategies, processes, or offerings (Costa et al., 2024). This continuous learning cycle fosters innovation, adaptability, and sustainable growth, making it a vital indicator of mental resistance (Amit 2024).

The indicators of entrepreneurs' mental resistance encompass a rich spectrum of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral traits that together empower individuals to thrive in challenging business environments (Aseidu, 2024). Emotional stability, perseverance, optimism, self-efficacy, adaptability, problem-solving orientation, support-seeking behavior, and learning mindset collectively define the resilience capacity of entrepreneurs (Knuuttila, 2025). Recognizing and measuring these indicators is crucial for developing targeted interventions, resilience-building programs, and educational curricula that support entrepreneurial success and well-being. As entrepreneurship becomes increasingly global, complex, and high-stakes, these indicators will play an even more critical role in shaping entrepreneurial sustainability and effectiveness (Augoye et al., 2025).

2.2 Concept of New Venture Sustainability

Venture sustainability has become a critical focus in business research, reflecting the growing emphasis on long-term viability, environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic performance (Odeyemi et al., 2024). New venture sustainability refers to the ability of a startup or early-stage business to survive, grow, and remain competitive over time (Teterin, 2024). It encompasses financial stability, operational efficiency, market adaptability, and long-term value creation (Renaldo et al., 2024). Given the high failure rates of new businesses, sustainability is a crucial goal for entrepreneurs, particularly in developing economies such as Ghana (Onwe et al., 2024). In other literature, it refers to the ability of a newly established business to maintain its operations, grow, and thrive over time (Hokmabadi et al., 2024). It encompasses various aspects which includes; social, environmental, and economic sustainability (Metris et al., 2024). New venture sustainability is critical, as it determines the long-term viability and success of the venture (Kato, 2024). Others define new venture sustainability as the ability of a new business to maintain its operations, grow, and thrive over time, while minimizing its negative impact on the environment and society (Odeyemi et al., 2024).

New venture sustainability is multi-dimensional and can be assessed through various factors, including:

1. **Financial Sustainability:** The ability of the venture to generate revenue, manage costs, and maintain a stable financial position (Idris, 2024).
2. **Social and Environmental Responsibility:** Commitment to ethical business practices, social impact, and environmental sustainability, thus, the ability of the venture to create positive social impact, promote social justice, maintain good relationships with

stakeholders while at the same time, minimizing waste and using eco-friendly methods (Heucher et al., 2024).

3. Economic Sustainability: The ability of the venture to contribute to the local economy, create jobs, and stimulate economic growth (Omowole et al., 2024).

4. Operational Efficiency – The capacity to optimize processes, reduce waste, and maintain a competitive edge (Jean, 2024).

Factors Influencing New Venture Sustainability

1. Entrepreneurial Characteristics: The entrepreneur's skills, experience, and personality traits, such as resilience, adaptability, and leadership abilities (Branca, 2025).

2. Business Model: The venture's business model, including its revenue streams, cost structure, and value proposition (Antonio et al., 2024).

3. Market Conditions: The venture's market conditions, including competition, customer demand, and regulatory requirements (Usman et al., 2024).

4. Resource Availability: The venture's access to resources, including funding, talent, and technology (Gupta, 2024).

These ventures are often characterized by their dedication to creating a positive influence on society and the environment, all while achieving financial success. In other words, there should be a balance between economic performance, environmental stewardship as well as being socially responsible (Fiandrin o, Devalle, and Cantino 2024).

2.2.1 Importance of New Venture Sustainability

To fully appreciate the importance of new venture sustainability, it is important to explore its role in ensuring long-term business success, enhancing entrepreneurs' mental well-being, creating employment opportunities, driving economic growth, improving customer satisfaction, fostering innovation, and strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems (Tunio, 2024).

One of the primary reasons why new venture sustainability is important is that it allows businesses to transition from a startup phase to an established enterprise (Christodoulou et al., 2024). Many new businesses fail within the first few years due to financial instability, market uncertainty, and stress on entrepreneurs. However, sustainable ventures manage to overcome these challenges by maintaining financial stability, strategic growth, and entrepreneurial resilience (Al Halbusi et al., 2024).

More specifically, entrepreneurs with good mental health are better equipped to handle financial pressures, make rational business decisions, and lead effectively (Yadav et al., 2025). Sustainable ventures create jobs, stimulating economic growth and reducing unemployment. Additionally, sustainable ventures generate revenue, contributing to the local and national economy, thereby driving innovation, enhancing competitiveness and promoting economic growth (Mathibe et al., 2024).

Closely related to long-term success is the impact of sustainability on entrepreneurs' mental health (Kiefl et al., 2024). Running an unsustainable business can lead to stress, anxiety, and burnout, ultimately affecting decision-making and leadership effectiveness (Farrugia, 2024). On the other hand, sustainable businesses provide entrepreneurs with financial security, work-life balance, and emotional satisfaction (Drnovšek et al., 2024).

A steady income reduces financial anxiety, while work-life balance prevents burnout and allows entrepreneurs to maintain focus and motivation (Kayyali, 2025). Additionally, knowing that their venture is thriving gives entrepreneurs a sense of personal fulfillment and confidence. In this context, service delivery acts as a stabilizing factor, as a well-served customer base leads to higher business stability and, in turn, reduces the psychological stress experienced by entrepreneurs (Yu et al., 2022).

Beyond individual entrepreneurs, new venture sustainability benefits employees and communities by creating job opportunities, for instance, hiring front desks officers, sale persons among others and also supporting livelihoods (Cho et al., 2016). Sustainable businesses not only provide stable employment but also contribute to workforce development by offering training, mentorship, and career growth opportunities (Nijhawan et al., 2025). In particular, sustainable ventures contribute to community development, improving the quality of life for local residents (Roseland, 2000). Promoting ethical practices and minimizing negative social impacts. Consequently, sustainable ventures create value for stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, and the wider community, thereby having a multiplier effect on the economy, as they support suppliers, partners, and other businesses within their ecosystem (Kannan, 2025).

Another essential aspect of sustainability is its impact on customer satisfaction. A sustainable business consistently meets customer expectations, builds brand loyalty, and maintains a strong market presence. When customers receive high-quality products and services, they are more likely to return, recommend the business to others, and contribute to its long-term success (Lin et al., 2025). Beyond financial stability and customer retention, sustainable businesses are more likely to invest in innovation and adaptability. The ability to sense opportunities, seize market trends, and reconfigure

resources is crucial for long-term success, as market conditions are constantly changing (Singh et al., 2025).

In summary, new venture sustainability is a fundamental aspect of business success, entrepreneur well-being, and economic growth (Sahoo et al., 2025). It ensures financial stability, enhances mental health, creates jobs, fosters customer satisfaction, drives innovation, and strengthens entrepreneurial ecosystems among other benefits (Akahome et al., 2025).

2.2.2 Challenges of New Venture Sustainability

New venture sustainability is critical for the long-term survival and success of startups (Zapata et al., 2025). It encompasses various aspects that enable a newly established business to maintain its operations, grow, and thrive over time. While launching a new business is an exciting endeavor, sustaining it over time presents numerous challenges (Nguyen et al., 2025). Many startups fail within their first few years due to a combination of financial constraints, market competition, operational inefficiencies, and external environmental factors (Jingwen et al., 2025). It is important to understand the challenges that threaten new venture sustainability in order to develop effective strategies to overcome them (Mackay et al., 2025).

One of the most significant challenges new ventures face is securing adequate funding. Without sufficient capital, businesses struggle to cover startup costs, operational expenses, marketing efforts, and expansion plans (OK, 2025). Many startups rely on personal savings or small loans, which may not be enough to sustain long-term operations (Zaki et al., 2025). Furthermore, accessing external funding is often difficult, as banks and investors may hesitate to finance businesses with high risks and limited financial history (Pöschl et al., 2025). Even when startups manage to secure funding,

they frequently encounter cash flow problems, making it difficult to pay salaries, reinvest in growth, or respond to unexpected expenses (Atamaya, 2025).

The lack of financial stability affects entrepreneurs' ability to scale their ventures and improve operations (Mishra et al., 2025). At the same time, mental health is directly impacted, as financial stress can lead to anxiety, burnout, and poor decision-making (Campbell et al., 2025). Moreover, service delivery also suffers when businesses lack the resources to invest in quality products, customer service systems, and efficient logistics (Saha et al., 2025).

In addition to financial constraints, startups must also navigate the challenge of intense market competition (Madanchian et al., 2025). Established businesses often dominate industries, making it difficult for new ventures to gain a foothold. To illustrate, large companies with strong brand recognition and financial power can easily outcompete new entrants (Alam, 2025). Additionally, changing consumer preferences require startups to remain agile and innovative, yet limited resources can hinder their ability to adapt (Ukonne, 2024). Another challenge is pricing pressure, as new ventures often struggle to compete with the low prices offered by bigger firms, not forgetting brand awareness issues making it difficult for startups to build customer trust and loyalty (Nurse, 2024).

Failure to differentiate from competitors can lead to declining sales, loss of market relevance, and eventual closure (Pereira et al., 2024). Additionally, entrepreneurs experiencing high stress may struggle to pivot their businesses effectively. More importantly, poor service delivery further weakens competitiveness, as dissatisfied customers are likely to turn to more established brands (Simarasl et al., 2024). Equally important is the psychological well-being of entrepreneurs. Sustaining a business is

mentally and emotionally demanding, often leading to burnout and decision-making fatigue (Kayyali, 2025). For instance, many entrepreneurs experience work overload, handling multiple roles such as finance, marketing, and operations (Kayyali, 2025). Over time, these factors contribute to mental exhaustion and reduced decision-making capacity (Kayyali, 2025).

Poor mental health affects an entrepreneur's ability to strategize, innovate, and lead effectively. Furthermore, burnout may cause a decline in service delivery, as overwhelmed entrepreneurs may neglect customer engagement, employee management, and business growth efforts (Nghiem et al., 2025).

Another critical factor that affects sustainability is inefficient business operations and poor management structures. Many startups lack business experience, particularly in financial management, supply chain coordination, and marketing (Idris, 2024). An unstructured organizational framework can lead to inefficiencies in resource allocation and workflow processes (Ghanbari et al., 2024). Even when businesses achieve initial success, scaling challenges can arise, making it difficult to maintain consistency in service delivery (Qudus, 2025).

Operational inefficiencies lead to reduced productivity, increased costs, and frustrated customers. Entrepreneurs experiencing high levels of stress may struggle to implement structured management strategies (Nghiem et al., 2024).

Besides financial and operational issues, startups must also navigate complex regulatory and legal environments. For instance, cumbersome business registration processes can delay market entry, while high taxation and licensing fees place financial strain on startups (Kalaivani et al., 2024). Moreover, frequent changes in government

policies require businesses to constantly adapt, which can be overwhelming for entrepreneurs with limited resources (Nafari, 2025).

Failure to comply with regulations can lead to penalties, legal disputes, or even business closure. Additionally, entrepreneurs who are overwhelmed by administrative burdens may neglect critical aspects of business sustainability (Wulandari et al., 2025). For instance, service delivery is affected when businesses fail to meet legal requirements, such as safety standards or consumer protection laws, ultimately damaging their reputation (Alfian, 2024).

Beyond regulatory challenges, many startups struggle to hire and retain skilled employees, which significantly impacts business performance. For example, high employee turnover is a common issue, as startups often lack the financial capacity to offer competitive salaries and benefits (Mattsson, 2024). Additionally, skills gaps in areas such as digital marketing, financial management, and customer service hinder business growth (Mer et al., 2024).

A lack of skilled employees reduces operational efficiency, lowers customer satisfaction, and affects overall productivity. Entrepreneurs experiencing mental fatigue may struggle to manage human resources effectively, leading to poor leadership, reduced team morale, and declining service delivery standards (Udeh, 2024).

Finally, external factors beyond the entrepreneur's control pose serious threats to new venture sustainability. Economic downturns can reduce consumer spending, making it difficult for startups to maintain revenue streams (Filippelli et al., 2025). Additionally, natural disasters and pandemics, such as COVID-19, disrupt supply chains and market demand. Furthermore, political instability and trade restrictions create unpredictable

business environments, while rapid technological advancements force businesses to adapt or risk obsolescence (Zaslavska et al., 2024).

Economic and external uncertainties make it challenging for businesses to plan strategically, secure investments, and ensure steady growth. Entrepreneurs under stress may struggle to make sound financial decisions, while businesses that fail to maintain strong service delivery risk losing customers in volatile markets (Iriani et al., 2024).

In summary, new venture sustainability is threatened by multiple interrelated challenges, including financial limitations, intense competition, operational inefficiencies, regulatory barriers, workforce shortages, and external uncertainties. Additionally, entrepreneurs' mental health plays a critical role in business sustainability, as stress and burnout can impair decision-making and strategic planning (Lee et al., 2022).

2.3 The Concepts of Service Delivery

Service delivery refers to the process of providing goods or services to customers in an efficient, reliable, and customer-focused manner. It includes all the interactions between a service provider and its customers, ensuring that expectations are met or exceeded (Grönroos, 2025).

Service delivery is a fundamental aspect of business and public administration, encompassing the processes and interactions through which goods and services are provided to customers (Latupeirissa et al., 2024). It plays a crucial role in ensuring customer satisfaction, fostering business growth, and maintaining a strong competitive edge. Effective service delivery is essential for businesses to achieve customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention, ultimately driving revenue growth and sustainability (Hidayat et al., 2024). More importantly, in the entrepreneurial landscape, service

delivery acts as a mediating factor, influencing business sustainability, customer retention, and financial performance (Tolossa et al., 2024).

To achieve this, businesses must understand the key components of service delivery, including service design, service production, service support and service delivery (Trischler et al., 2022).

Service delivery is structured around several fundamental elements that contribute to its effectiveness. Service design ensures that the service is tailored to meet customer needs, while the service process/production establishes a step-by-step approach for delivering it efficiently. Additionally, service personnel play a critical role, as their expertise, attitude, and responsiveness directly impact customer experiences (Molloy et al., 2025).

Service support on one hand looks at the processes and activities that ensure the smooth and efficient delivery of services to customers. It plays a critical role in maintaining service quality, resolving issues, and enhancing customer satisfaction (Al Najjar et al., 2025). To achieve this, service support consists of several key components; incident management which focuses on quickly resolving service disruptions to restore normal operations, problem management identifies and addresses the root causes of recurring issues, preventing future disruptions, complementing these, is change management which ensures that any modifications to the service environment are implemented in a controlled manner, minimizing risks and service interruptions (Asaye et al., 2025).

Finally, service desk (or help desk) which acts as the central point of contact for users, allowing them to report issues and request assistance efficiently (Javed, et al., 2024). At the same time, configuration management keeps track of IT assets and their relationships, ensuring service continuity and to release management, responsible for

deploying updates, patches, and service improvements smoothly, ensuring minimal disruption to operations (Zeeman et al., 2024). Moreover, technology and infrastructure can be leveraged to enhance significantly service delivery such as artificial intelligence, introducing automation, digital interactions, and streamlined communication (Das, 2024). Equally important is customer experience which shapes the perception of a business, influencing customer loyalty and brand reputation (Krisprimandoyo et al., 2024). While service quality assurance guarantees consistency, reliability, and excellence, ensuring that customers receive the expected value (Chhetri, 2024).

Businesses must also consider the various types of service delivery, such as face-to-face service delivery, remote service delivery, and self-service delivery (Ingold, 2024). Additionally, they must also consider the different service delivery channels, including physical channels, digital channels, and hybrid channels (Shiri et al., 2024). In terms of strategies, businesses can adopt a customer-centric approach, focusing on delivering services that meet customer needs and expectations (Smith, 2024). Alternatively, they can adopt a process-oriented approach, focusing on optimizing service delivery processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness (Al-Assaf et al., 2042). By adopting effective service delivery strategies, businesses can reap numerous benefits, including customer satisfaction, revenue growth, competitive advantage, and cost reduction (Costa, 2024). However, businesses must also be aware of the challenges associated with service delivery, such as managing customer expectations, maintaining service quality, delivering consistent services, and integrating technology (Skaf et al., 2024)

2.3.1 Models of Service Delivery

To better understand how service delivery is structured, various models provide theoretical frameworks for optimization (Obiki-Osafiele et al., 2024). One of the most recognized models is the SERVQUAL Model, which evaluates service quality based

on five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Siyum, 2024). This model helps businesses identify service gaps and improve customer experiences.

Similarly, the Service-Profit Chain Model highlights the direct link between employee satisfaction, service quality, and business profitability (Zeglat et al., 2024). By fostering a positive work environment, businesses can enhance employee morale, which in turn translates into better customer service (Geetha, 2024). However, in public administration, the Public Service Delivery Model focuses on the efficient and accountable provision of essential services such as healthcare, education, and utilities (Swasthaisong et al., 2025). Additionally, with the rise of digital transformation, the Technology-Enabled Service Model incorporates automation, AI-driven support, and data-driven personalization to enhance service efficiency (Chaturvedi et al., 2023).

2.3.2 The Importance of Service Delivery

Considering the various models, it becomes evident that service delivery is pivotal for both businesses and society at large (Latupeirissa et al., 2024). First and foremost, it enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well-structured service delivery fosters trust and strengthens long-term relationships driving business growth and competitiveness, enabling organizations to differentiate themselves from competitors and increase market share (Ochieng, 2024). For instance, in industries where products and prices are similar across competitors, customer experience becomes a key differentiator. Thus, businesses that prioritize high-quality service stand out and gain an edge over their rivals (Mmango, 2024).

Effective service delivery directly contributes to increased revenue and profitability since satisfied customers are more likely to make repeat purchases, generating positive

word-of-mouth marketing, minimizing customer churn, and engage in long-term business relationships (Siddiqi et al., 2024). At the same time, efficient service delivery minimizes costs associated with errors, rework, and customer complaints, ultimately improving profitability. This enables businesses benefit from a stable revenue stream (Khedlekar et al., 2025).

Beyond reputation, a well-optimized service delivery also improves operational efficiency. By implementing streamlined processes, clear communication, and well-trained personnel, businesses can reduce delays, minimize errors, and optimize resource utilization. This, in turn, leads to smoother operations and cost savings (Bakare et al., 2024).

Additionally, good service delivery boosts a company's reputation. A strong reputation, in turn, enhances brand credibility, attracts more customers, and creates opportunities for expansion. Moreover, businesses known for exceptional service delivery gain the trust of their stakeholders, reinforcing their position in the market (Yatna et al., 2024). Likewise, a strong service culture enhances employee morale, as motivated employees are more likely to perform better and engage positively with customers (Geetha, 2024).

Moreover, service delivery ensures compliance with industry regulations and mitigates risks. By adhering to established standards, businesses can avoid legal penalties, maintain ethical practices, and protect their reputation. This not only reduces risks but also fosters trust with customers and regulatory bodies (Akinsola, 2025).

Lastly, effective service delivery supports business sustainability. As customer needs and market conditions evolve, businesses must adapt and maintain reliable service delivery to remain competitive. By doing so, they build resilience and ensure long-term success, even in challenging economic conditions (Holloway, 2024). Service delivery

is a fundamental driver of business success. By focusing on customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and service quality, businesses can build strong relationships, gain a competitive advantage, and achieve long-term growth. Ultimately, investing in effective service delivery is not just about meeting customer expectations it is a strategic necessity for sustained success (Fatma, 2024).

2.3.3 Challenges in Service Delivery

Despite its significance, service delivery is often hindered by several challenges. One major obstacle is inconsistent service quality, which results from human variability, lack of standardized processes, and external influences (Bogale et al., 2024). Additionally, businesses frequently struggle with a lack of skilled workforce, leading to inefficiencies and customer dissatisfaction (Bakare et al., 2024).

Another pressing challenge is technological barriers, where companies that fail to adopt digital service platforms risk falling behind customer expectations (Sharma et al., 2024). Furthermore, financial constraints limit investment in technology, employee training, and service infrastructure, thereby weakening overall service performance (Lin, 2024).

Beyond financial hurdles, poor communication and responsiveness contribute to negative customer experiences, eroding trust and brand reputation (Udeh, 2024). Additionally, with the rapid evolution of technology, customer expectations are constantly rising, making it increasingly difficult for businesses to meet demands for faster, more personalized, and high-quality service (Khan, 2024).

2.3.4 Strategies for Improving Service Delivery

Given these challenges, businesses must adopt proactive strategies to enhance service delivery. Investing in employee training and development ensures that staff are well-

equipped with the necessary skills to handle customer interactions effectively. Leveraging technology for efficiency, such as AI-powered chatbots, automation, and CRM systems, significantly improves service responsiveness and accuracy (Okuku, 2024).

Equally important is the need to standardize service processes, which helps maintain consistency and quality control (Ahire et al., 2024). Additionally, businesses should focus on enhancing customer engagement and feedback mechanisms, allowing them to adapt services based on real-time insights (Upadhyaya, 2024).

Moreover, personalized customer experiences foster deeper relationships, and companies can achieve this by utilizing data analytics and AI-driven recommendations (Vashishth et al., 2025). At the same time, improving communication and transparency ensures that customers remain well-informed and confident in their interactions with the business (Tanwar, 2024, June). Lastly, fostering a customer-centric culture at all levels of an organization reinforces the commitment to service excellence (Hidayat et al., 2024).

In conclusion, service delivery is a cornerstone of business success and societal development, influencing customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and overall performance (Akanbi et al., 2024). Its effectiveness relies on well-defined processes, skilled personnel, and the integration of technology to enhance efficiency and responsiveness (Hauashdh et al., 2024). However, challenges such as financial constraints, inconsistent quality, and evolving customer expectations require continuous adaptation and strategic improvements (Lawrence et al., 2024).

By prioritizing employee development, technology adoption, process standardization, and customer engagement, organizations can optimize service delivery, ensuring long-

term growth and sustainability. Ultimately, businesses that excel in seamless and high-quality service provision are more likely to maintain a competitive advantage, strengthen customer relationships, and achieve sustained success in their respective industries.

2.4 Theoretical Review

A strong theoretical foundation is essential for understanding the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental health, new venture sustainability, and the mediating role of service delivery (Ovharhe et al., 2023). Several theories from psychology, business management, and service delivery provide insights into how these variables interact. For the purposes of this study, The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), The Sustainable Development Theory (Brundtland Commission 1987) and SERVQUAL Model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) are employed to explain these relationships.

The Conservation of Resources Theory

Against the backdrop that, Entrepreneurship is a demanding endeavor that requires resilience, adaptability, and strong mental health to navigate uncertainties and challenges that, entrepreneurs frequently encounter high levels of stress, financial pressures, long working hours, and emotional exhaustion, all of which can impact their psychological well-being, the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) offers a valuable perspective by explaining how individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect valuable resources to cope with stress and maintain overall well-being. COR theory asserts that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect their resources (e.g., physical, emotional, and psychological resources), (Hobfoll, 1989: Hobfoll et al., 2018). Stress occurs when there is a loss, threat of loss, or insufficient gain of these resources.

In the context of entrepreneurs' mental resilience, this theory highlights the importance of psychological resilience, financial stability, social support, and coping mechanisms in mitigating stress and fostering long-term success (Ahmed et al., 2022). More importantly, COR Theory asserts that resource loss is more detrimental than resource gain, meaning that entrepreneurs facing prolonged stress and resource depletion may struggle to recover (Shahid et al., 2022). Conversely, those who proactively manage stress, invest in well-being, and build strong support networks can safeguard their mental resilience, which in turn improves their ability to sustain their ventures (Cangiano et al., 2015). Mental resilience is a critical psychological resource that influences the entrepreneur's ability to manage stress, make decisions, and sustain their venture as emphasized by (Wiklund et al., 2022). According to COR Theory, resources are categorized into primary, secondary, and tertiary resources, each playing a crucial role in an entrepreneur's mental health (Zhu et al., 2022).

Primary resources, such as financial capital, physical and mental resilience, and time, form the foundation of an entrepreneur's well-being. Secondary resources, including social networks, mentorship, and business partnerships, offer support systems that aid in stress management. Finally, tertiary resources, such as business stability and brand reputation, represent long-term benefits that contribute to sustained success (Kiefl et al., 2018). Given that entrepreneurs frequently operate in high-risk, uncertain environments, they are vulnerable to mental health challenges such as anxiety, burnout, and depression (Kiefl et al., 2024). As COR Theory explains, resource depletion arising from financial struggles, excessive workloads, or lack of social support can lead to emotional exhaustion and impaired decision-making (Ceschi et al., 2017). On the other hand, resource conservation and replenishment help build psychological resilience,

ultimately fostering sustainable business growth and overall well-being (Singha et al., 2024).

The impact of poor mental resilience on entrepreneurial performance is significant. As COR Theory posits, prolonged resource loss spirals can lead to cognitive fatigue, reduced creativity, and impaired problem-solving abilities, all of which negatively affect business operations (Zen et al., 2024). Entrepreneurs who experience continuous stress and depletion of financial, emotional, and social resources are more likely to suffer from burnout, decreased productivity, and business failure (Palmer et al., 2021).

However, resource gain cycles occur when entrepreneurs actively protect, replenish, and invest in their resources, leading to improved mental resilience and better decision-making (Reddy, 2023). For instance, entrepreneurs who prioritize mentorship and networking gain valuable social capital, which provides emotional support and strategic guidance. Similarly, those who focus on self-care and work-life balance enhance their psychological stability and overall efficiency, enabling them to navigate business challenges with a clearer mindset (Maguire, 2024). Additionally, financial management strategies, such as effective budgeting and risk mitigation, play a crucial role in reducing stress and ensuring long-term sustainability (Wang, 2024).

To mitigate the negative effects of stress and burnout, entrepreneurs should adopt resource conservation strategies that align with COR Theory (Yu et al., 2020). First and foremost, building a strong support system through mentors, business networks, and family connections is essential for preventing emotional exhaustion (Khan et al., 2025). Additionally, efficient workload management, including delegation, automation, and prioritization, helps reduce cognitive overload and enhances productivity (Obokhare, 2025).

Furthermore, investing in mental health and well-being through mindfulness practices, physical exercise, and professional counseling ensures that entrepreneurs maintain their emotional resilience (Vetrivel et al., 2025). Financial stability also plays a key role in stress reduction; therefore, implementing effective financial management techniques, such as proper budgeting, investment planning, and revenue diversification, can significantly alleviate entrepreneurial pressures (Al-Hashimy, 2025). Finally, adaptive coping mechanisms, including stress management training and resilience-building exercises, allow entrepreneurs to handle business uncertainties proactively (Sahoo et al., 2025).

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how entrepreneurs' mental resilience influences business sustainability and performance (Ahmed et al., 2025). Entrepreneurs who face continuous resource depletion whether financial, emotional, or social are at greater risk of experiencing burnout, poor decision-making, and business failure (Yadav et al., 2025). However, those who actively conserve, protect, and invest in their resources can enhance both their mental well-being and long-term business success.

By applying COR Theory, entrepreneurs can develop effective stress management strategies, optimize resource allocation, and foster resilience, ultimately ensuring their personal well-being and business sustainability (Nghiem et al., 2025). Thus, prioritizing mental resilience is not only crucial for individual entrepreneurs but also serves as a foundation for long-term business growth and success (Yadav et al., 2025).

New venture sustainability is a critical aspect of entrepreneurship, as it determines whether a business can thrive in the long run while balancing economic, social, and environmental responsibilities. However, the sustainability of a new venture is closely

linked to the mental resilience of entrepreneurs, as their decision-making, resilience, and resource management capabilities are directly influenced by their psychological well-being (Krara et al., 2025).

Sustainable Development Theory

The Sustainable Development Theory, popularized by the Brundtland Commission (1987), defines sustainability as the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In a business context, this theory transcends environmental concerns and encompasses the long-term viability of enterprises by emphasizing economic, social, and human sustainability (Boluwaji et al., 2024; Al-Emran, 2023).

Within the entrepreneurial domain, sustainability hinges not only on financial performance but also on the psychological well-being of the entrepreneur and the quality of services delivered (Alkish et al., 2025). These elements interact in a complex, dynamic manner, with service delivery acting as a key mediating mechanism between the entrepreneur's mental resilience and the sustainability of new ventures (Ahmed et al 2022; Shepherd et al 2020). Entrepreneurs, especially those managing new or small businesses, often face volatile and demanding business environments marked by uncertainty, limited resources, and high personal responsibility. (Terchila 2025; Ehsani and Osiyevskyy 2022).

Mentally resilient entrepreneurs are better equipped to maintain emotional balance, exercise sound judgment, and sustain motivation despite continuous pressure (Vetrivel et al 2025; Kayalli et al 202). These attributes are vital not only for personal well-being but also for executing operational strategies that ensure business continuity.

Moreover, integrating sustainability from the start can help entrepreneurs avoid last-minute financial and ethical dilemmas (Castell-Gydesen and Lugo Hernandez 2020).

Sartzetaki and Dimitriou (2025) believes that when entrepreneurs embed social responsibility and ethical business practices into their business model early, they can create ventures that are resilient, adaptable, and ethically sound.

Likewise, Wu, (2024) argues that, Investing in employee well-being is also a key factor in business sustainability. Providing fair wages, healthy working conditions, and a supportive work culture not only boosts employee satisfaction but also reduces workplace stress for entrepreneurs by fostering a more motivated and productive workforce

Developing financial resilience through long-term financial planning, risk management, and securing sustainable funding sources helps reduce stress related to financial instability (Bayrakçeken, 2024). Entrepreneurs who have a well-structured financial plan are less likely to experience anxiety and burnout, allowing them to focus on innovation and sustainable growth (Maguire, 2024).

Service delivery serves as the operational conduit through which an entrepreneur's psychological resources are translated into tangible business outcomes (Iga et al., 2025). High-quality service delivery reflects consistent customer engagement, responsiveness to market needs, and effective management of business processes (Mosimanegape et al., 2020). Entrepreneurs with strong mental resilience are more likely to design and implement efficient service systems, interact empathetically with clients, and respond proactively to service challenges. (Vetrivel et al., 2025; Sahoo et al., 2025). This ability to maintain service excellence, even under psychological strain,

contributes significantly to customer satisfaction, brand reputation, and repeat business which serves as critical pillars of venture sustainability.

Furthermore, when service delivery systems are robust, they can buffer the negative effects of temporary psychological stress (Bekiros et al., 2022). For instance, standardized processes, supportive teams, and technology-driven service mechanisms can maintain operational continuity even when the entrepreneur experiences mental fatigue or emotional distress (Luu et al., 2025). In this way, service delivery acts as a stabilizing factor, ensuring that fluctuations in mental resilience do not necessarily translate into operational failure (Annarelli et al., 2020). This supports the Sustainable Development Theory's emphasis on building systems that ensure present functionality without eroding future capacity.

Conversely, entrepreneurs who lack mental resilience often struggle to deliver consistent and high-quality services (Ahmed et al., 2022; Protogerou et al., 2022). Stress, burnout, and anxiety can impair decision-making, reduce motivation, and diminish the entrepreneur's ability to manage customer relationships effectively. (Wijethilak, et al., 2025). Poor service delivery resulting from psychological challenges often leads to customer dissatisfaction, negative reviews, and reputational damage (Taylor et al 2020). These outcomes directly threaten business survival and hinder long-term sustainability. Therefore, mental resilience alone is insufficient; it must be channeled through effective service delivery mechanisms to produce sustainable business performance (Liu et al., 2023).

Moreover, sustainable entrepreneurship requires a strategic orientation that balances short-term efficiency with long-term adaptability (Rosario et al 2022). Entrepreneurs who are mentally resilient are typically more adaptive and innovative (Chadwick &

Raver 2020; Santoro et al 2020); qualities essential for evolving service delivery models in response to changing customer expectations and market dynamics. This adaptability ensures that the business remains relevant, competitive, and capable of sustaining itself over time.

In essence, the Sustainable Development Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how entrepreneurs' mental resilience, when coupled with strong service delivery, can enhance new venture sustainability (Tang 2020). It emphasizes the need for psychological well-being and operational efficiency to be jointly prioritized in entrepreneurial ecosystems. Service delivery not only operationalizes the entrepreneur's mental strengths but also safeguards the venture during periods of psychological vulnerability, thereby ensuring continuity and growth (Ahmed 2021).

In conclusion, service delivery mediates the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability by translating internal psychological strength into consistent external performance. This mediating role reinforces the broader sustainable development agenda, which advocates for building enduring, adaptable, and human-centered systems (Adel & Alani 2024; Li et al 2025). As such, enhancing mental resilience and embedding strong service delivery frameworks are both essential strategies for achieving sustainable entrepreneurial success.

SERVQUAL Model

The SERVQUAL Model provides a structured approach to evaluating service quality. This model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), identifies five key dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. Each of these elements contributes to customer experience and business reputation. However, without good mental health, entrepreneurs may struggle to maintain high service

standards, leading to customer dissatisfaction and, ultimately, business failure. Thus, service delivery acts as a bridge between entrepreneurs' psychological well-being and their venture's sustainability. If service quality remains consistent and customer-centric, businesses are more likely to thrive despite entrepreneurial stressors (Manishimwe et al., 2022). Conversely, when mental health challenges compromise service delivery, business sustainability is at risk. This model is a crucial framework for measuring service quality and its impact on customer satisfaction and business performance. Specifically, it consists of five dimensions, all of which play a critical role in shaping business success (Setó-Pamies, 2012).

Firstly, Tangibles, which include physical infrastructure, branding, and employee presentation, are vital in influencing customer perceptions. In addition, Reliability, which refers to the business's ability to consistently meet customer expectations, ensures that customers develop long-term trust (Ahmed et al., 2024). Similarly, responsiveness, or the business's capacity to promptly address customer concerns, significantly enhances service quality and customer satisfaction (Ifedi et al., 2024).

Moreover, assurance, which is linked to the trust and competence that customers associate with the business, is critical in service-oriented ventures (Laudien et al., 2017). Lastly, Empathy, or the ability to provide personalized service, fosters strong customer relationships and enhances brand loyalty (Singh et al., 2023). Taken together, these five dimensions highlight the interconnectedness of service delivery, mental health, and business sustainability. For instance, a mentally healthy entrepreneur is more likely to ensure reliable and responsive service delivery, whereas an entrepreneur struggling with stress or burnout may provide inconsistent service, leading to customer dissatisfaction and revenue loss (Maguire, 2024).

Since service delivery is largely dependent on entrepreneurs' ability to maintain consistency, focus, and interpersonal skills, mental health plays a direct role in shaping service outcomes. When entrepreneurs experience high levels of stress, anxiety, or burnout, their service quality is negatively affected (Odesanml et al., 2024).

Stress and burnout reduce reliability, as an overburdened entrepreneur may struggle to maintain consistent service delivery, leading to unfulfilled promises. Moreover, anxiety may set in leading to slow responsiveness, making it difficult for entrepreneurs to effectively manage customer inquiries and complaints. This, in turn, weakens customer relationships and satisfaction (Maguire, 2024).

Additionally, emotional exhaustion limits empathy, preventing entrepreneurs from forming meaningful connections with customers. Consequently, poor mental health leads to reduced customer engagement, hence sub-standard services delivery (Odesanml et al., 2024).

Given the strong link between mental health and service quality, service delivery acts as a mediator in determining whether an entrepreneur's mental health will positively or negatively impact venture sustainability. In this regard, several key relationships emerge (Stephan, 2018).

Firstly, high-quality service enhances customer retention, as mentally healthy entrepreneurs can maintain positive customer relationships, ensuring repeat business and brand loyalty. Conversely, when entrepreneurs experience poor mental health, service failures increase, leading to customer dissatisfaction and financial losses (Singh et al., 2023).

Furthermore, strong employee engagement boosts business growth, as entrepreneurs who maintain good mental health create a supportive workplace culture that encourages

employees to provide exceptional service (Attridge, 2009). Additionally, service innovation ensures competitiveness, since mentally healthy entrepreneurs are more likely to adapt to changing customer preferences, adopt new technologies, and sustain long-term growth (Sindakis, 2016). In essence, service delivery functions as a key determinant of whether mental health challenges will significantly hinder or enhance business success. If entrepreneurs prioritize both mental well-being and service efficiency, their businesses are more likely to remain sustainable despite external pressures. defects quality, and, ultimately, business instability (Ovharhe et al., 2023).

Although service delivery plays a crucial role in ensuring new venture sustainability, entrepreneurs often face numerous challenges that can hinder their ability to maintain consistent service standards. These challenges are interconnected and can create a cycle of stress, poor service delivery, and business instability (Dean et al., 2007).

One major challenge is resource constraints, as many new businesses operate with limited financial and human capital, making it difficult to meet customer demands. Additionally, the high workload and stress associated with running a new business can lead to mental fatigue, reducing service efficiency (Arokiasamy et al., 2009).

Moreover, customer expectations and competition continue to rise, forcing entrepreneurs to constantly innovate and improve service quality. However, financial instability may prevent entrepreneurs from investing in service enhancements, staff training, or technology upgrades, which could further affect business sustainability (Oly Ndubisi et al., 2014).

If these challenges are not effectively managed, they can negatively impact both mental health and service quality, ultimately affecting long-term business survival (Goetzl et

al., 2002). To mitigate these challenges, entrepreneurs should implement strategies that enhance both mental health and service delivery. A few key approaches include:

- i. **Prioritizing Mental Health and Well-Being:** Entrepreneurs should adopt self-care strategies, stress management techniques, and seek professional support to maintain mental resilience.
- ii. **Investing in Customer Service Training and Employee Development:** Well-trained employees help reduce the service burden on entrepreneurs, ensuring consistency in service delivery (Mwasiaji et al., 2022).
- iii. **Leveraging Technology for Service Efficiency:** Digital tools such as automated customer service systems, chatbots, and CRM software can streamline service operations, reducing stress and improving response times (Kang, 2024).
- iv. **Fostering a Sustainable Business Culture:** Entrepreneurs should focus on long-term business goals, customer-centric service policies, and ethical business practices to ensure sustained success (Zahrani, 2022).

By implementing these strategies, entrepreneurs can create a business environment that supports both mental well-being and high-quality service delivery, leading to long-term sustainability (Olughor, 2025).

In conclusion, the SERVQUAL Model serves as an effective framework for analyzing how entrepreneurs' mental health, service delivery, and new venture sustainability are interconnected. Each of the five SERVQUAL dimensions Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy plays a critical role in shaping business success (Tihic et al., 2022).

When entrepreneurs maintain good mental health, they are better equipped to provide consistent, high-quality services that enhance customer loyalty and business

sustainability (Alkire et al., 2022). On the other hand, poor mental health can result in inconsistent service quality, decreased customer trust, and financial instability, ultimately threatening venture survival (Yadav et al., 2025). Therefore, by prioritizing mental well-being, adopting customer-centric service strategies, and leveraging technological innovations, entrepreneurs can successfully navigate business challenges, improve service efficiency, and sustain long-term business growth (Hassan et al., 2023).

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review, a conceptual framework is proposed to examine the mediating effect of service delivery quality on the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability (Gopinath & Mitra 2017). Entrepreneurs' mental resilience serves as the independent variable while new venture sustainability serves as the dependent variable (Stephan, 2018). The framework suggests that entrepreneurs' mental resilience has a direct impact on new venture sustainability. In that a better psychological well-being of entrepreneurs goes a long way to impacts on the longevity of new ventures (Long et al., 2021). Again, depending on the services quality rendered to customers it can either help sustain or collapse a venture especially new ones that entrepreneurs are trying to find feet for it to stand against market competition (Cooper et al., 2013).

Lastly service delivery quality mediating the relationship implies that, for new ventures to be sustainable, entrepreneurs should have a strong mental resilience to be able to render quality services to their clients so as to encourage repeat buying and customer loyalty and also make good business decisions leading to a sustainable business.

Conceptual framework showing the relationship between EMH and VS while SDQ plays a mediating role.

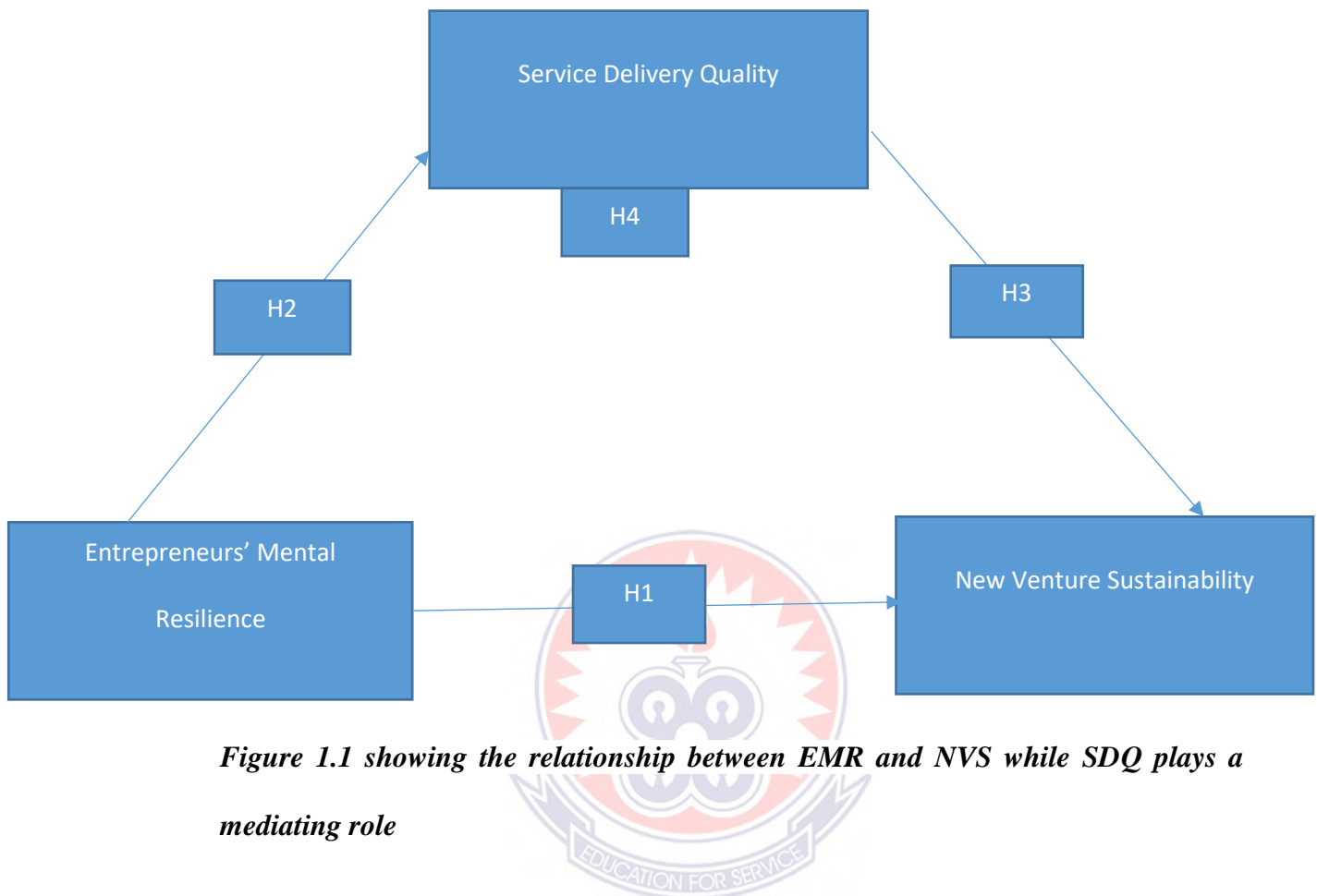


Figure 1.1 showing the relationship between EMR and NVS while SDQ plays a mediating role

Hypotheses

H1: Entrepreneurs' mental resilience has a significant effect on new venture sustainability.

H2: A strong mental resilience of entrepreneurs has a significant effect on service delivery quality.

H3: Service delivery quality has a significant effect on new venture sustainability.

H4: Service delivery quality mediates the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability.

Hypothesis development helps the researcher compare and cite previous studies on a particular study. A review of the empirical literature provides information on previous research undertaken on the topic that is the focus of the investigation by other researchers and the findings from those studies. This section provides an in-depth empirical review of entrepreneurs' mental resilience, new venture sustainability and service delivery. The review is structured according to the objectives of the research.

2.5.1 Mental resilience and new venture sustainability

Empirical studies increasingly demonstrate that entrepreneurs' mental resilience; defined as the capacity to adapt positively under stress and adversity plays a crucial role in venture sustainability. In their study Sangboon and Schjoedt (2025), found that psychological resilience significantly predicts the long-term performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Thailand. Similarly, Conz et al., (2023) findings show that resilient entrepreneurs tend to exhibit adaptive cognitive styles and maintain goal commitment during crises, which translates into better business continuity, especially in uncertain environments. This implies that resilience-building interventions may be essential for long-term entrepreneurial success, particularly in volatile economies.

In a cross-national study conducted by Hmieleski and Lerner (2020), entrepreneurial resilience was found to moderate the negative effects of environmental uncertainty on venture survival rates. Specifically, resilient founders were more likely to implement strategic pivots and maintain stakeholder confidence during economic downturns. The implications suggest that investor and incubator programs should not only focus on technical skills but also incorporate psychological preparedness training to enhance entrepreneurial endurance during external shocks such as pandemics or market crashes.

Research by Bullough, Renko, and Myatt (2021) examined resilience among female entrepreneurs and discovered that mental resilience had a stronger predictive value for venture persistence than access to financial capital. Women who reported higher resilience scores were more likely to continue operations despite social or institutional barriers. This highlights the importance of gender-sensitive resilience programs in entrepreneurship ecosystems, particularly in emerging markets where structural challenges persist.

A longitudinal study by Shepherd and Williams (2023) investigated how post-failure psychological recovery impacts future entrepreneurial behavior. The study found that resilient entrepreneurs who could cognitively reframe failure were more likely to re-enter the market with improved strategies. Their ventures exhibited greater sustainability due to learned adaptability. This underscores the value of post-failure support structures, such as peer mentoring and reflective coaching, in facilitating long-term entrepreneurial engagement.

Furthermore, a mixed-methods study by Corner, Singh, and Pavlovich (2019) revealed that entrepreneurs with high resilience levels are more effective in building socially sustainable business models. These individuals demonstrated stronger commitment to values such as community engagement and ethical leadership, which enhanced both social legitimacy and customer loyalty. The implication is that resilience not only ensures economic viability but also promotes socially responsible entrepreneurship, which can serve as a strategic asset in competitive markets. Newer studies by Saemaldaher and Emeagwali (2025); Awad and Martín-Rojas (2024). confirm similar trends, showing that resilience enhances innovation capabilities and strategic flexibility, both of which foster sustainable entrepreneurial outcomes.

Finally, recent work by Liu et al. (2024) using neurocognitive assessments found that resilient entrepreneurs showed higher levels of executive function and emotional regulation, which correlated with better decision-making under pressure. These neurobiological markers of resilience were linked to higher venture growth and lower rates of founder burnout. This points toward the potential for cognitive training interventions as a novel tool for enhancing both mental resilience and business outcomes.

Based on the above assertions it is posited that:

H1: Entrepreneurs' mental resilience has a significant effect on new venture sustainability.

2.5.2 Entrepreneurs' Mental Resilience and Service Delivery Quality

The relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and service delivery is a multifaceted area that has garnered increasing attention in recent literature. Central to understanding this relationship is the recognition that resilience is not solely an individual trait but is significantly influenced by the quality and accessibility of service systems. Ungar's work (2005) emphasizes that social service delivery systems play a crucial role in shaping pathways to resilience, highlighting the importance of understanding the services children need to foster resilience. This perspective can be extended to entrepreneurs, suggesting that effective service systems are vital in supporting their mental resilience, especially in high-stress environments.

Further, Ungar, (2005) explores how individuals exercise personal agency within service systems, negotiating for resources and support that enable resilience. This negotiation process underscores the importance of service delivery models that are adaptable and responsive to individual needs, which is particularly relevant for

entrepreneurs facing unique challenges. The principles identified for better service provision such as flexibility, accessibility, and responsiveness are applicable in designing support mechanisms that bolster entrepreneurs' mental resilience.

Research on vulnerable populations, such as homeless youth (Cleverley et. al., 2010) and women in northern Canada (Schmidt et. al., 2015), underscores the significance of culturally appropriate and tailored service delivery in fostering resilience. These studies suggest that services which acknowledge the specific contexts and needs of individuals can enhance resilience outcomes. For entrepreneurs, this implies that tailored support considering their specific industry, stressors, and cultural background may be more effective in promoting mental resilience.

The importance of community and ecological factors in mental health service delivery is highlighted by Wilson et. al., (2015), who propose a social ecology framework that leverages local social capital. Such an ecological approach can be instrumental in entrepreneurial contexts, where community networks and local resources can serve as vital support systems that enhance resilience. Similarly, Kahan et. al., (2016) demonstrate that understanding service preferences and needs through direct engagement can inform more effective intervention strategies, a principle that can be applied to entrepreneurial support services.

Qualitative insights into recovery and service system effectiveness, as presented by (Horsfall et. al., 2017), reveal that supportive environments and meaningful engagement are key to resilience. For entrepreneurs, creating supportive service environments that facilitate recovery from setbacks and promote ongoing resilience is essential. Moreover, Hodes et. al., (2018) highlight the importance of managing mental

health issues through tailored interventions, which can be adapted to entrepreneurial mental health support systems.

The broader context of mental health and resilience is further illustrated by (Jones-Bitton et. al., 2019), who identify significant stress and mental health challenges among populations such as farmers, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions. (Crane et. al., 2021) advocate for resilience training that integrates organizational strategies, suggesting that structured, organizationally embedded resilience programs can significantly enhance mental resilience in high-stress professions, including entrepreneurship. Recent entrepreneurship-focused literature confirms that resilient entrepreneurs tend to deliver higher service reliability, responsiveness, and empathy under pressure (Zighanet al., 2022; Siregar et al., 2023)

In summary, the literature underscores that effective service delivery characterized by responsiveness, cultural appropriateness, community engagement, and organizational support is fundamental in fostering mental resilience. For entrepreneurs, developing resilient capacities is closely linked to the availability and quality of tailored support systems that recognize their unique challenges and leverage local and organizational resources. These insights collectively point to the necessity of designing comprehensive, adaptable service models to enhance entrepreneurial mental resilience and service delivery outcomes.

Based on the foregoing, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Entrepreneurs' mental resilience has a significant effect on service delivery.

2.5.3 Service Delivery Quality and New Venture Sustainability

Recent empirical studies underscore the pivotal role of effective service delivery in enhancing venture sustainability across various sectors. A study by Fatoki (2021) examined service quality among SMEs in sub-Saharan Africa and found that businesses prioritizing responsiveness, reliability, and customer satisfaction demonstrated higher survival rates over a three-year period. These findings suggest that service delivery is not just an operational concern but a strategic determinant of long-term viability in competitive environments.

In another study, Mensah and Nketia (2022) evaluated the service innovation strategies of tech-based startups and their effect on business sustainability. The research showed that startups that adopted digital platforms to improve service efficiency and customer engagement achieved better customer retention and repeat patronage. This highlights the importance of integrating technology-driven service models as a pathway to venture growth and sustainability in digitally evolving markets.

A study by Al-Ababneh et al. (2023) focused on hospitality ventures in the Middle East and demonstrated that consistent service quality significantly reduces customer churn, increases positive word-of-mouth, and enhances financial stability. This implies that in customer-centric industries, sustaining high-quality service delivery builds brand trust, which in turn fortifies business resilience against market shocks.

In the healthcare sector, an empirical analysis by Ramya and Kumar (2020) found that service reliability, empathy, and assurance were statistically significant predictors of healthcare startups' long-term viability. These findings underscore the need for human-centered service design, particularly in ventures where trust and safety perceptions directly impact service uptake and loyalty.

Furthermore, a multi-country comparative study by Hoque and Awang (2019) examined micro and small enterprises and found that consistent service delivery led to enhanced customer satisfaction, which mediated the relationship between operational effectiveness and sustainability. This suggests that service delivery acts as a critical mechanism through which operational practices influence survival and growth, especially in resource-constrained ventures. Additional recent studies by (Skaf et al., 2024; Tedja et al., 2024) confirm that high-quality service systems drive customer loyalty, financial stability, and long-term survival.

Lastly, Kim and Choi (2024) conducted a large-scale survey of e-commerce ventures and revealed that personalized and responsive service models were key predictors of venture sustainability, particularly in saturated online markets. The study implies that differentiation through service quality can buffer smaller ventures from competitive pressure and facilitate sustainable scaling.

As the result of the above assertions, the researcher proposes that;

H3: Service delivery quality has a significant effect on new venture sustainability.

The effect of Service delivery quality on the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability.

Recent empirical literature reveals a growing interest in understanding the mechanisms through which entrepreneurial mental resilience contributes to venture sustainability, with service delivery emerging as a critical mediating factor. A study by Osei (2023) and Boateng tested a structural equation model among early-stage entrepreneurs in West Africa and found that while mental resilience had a direct positive effect on venture sustainability, its effect was significantly amplified when mediated by high-quality service delivery. Resilient entrepreneurs were more likely to maintain service

consistency under stress, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and increasing venture survival prospects.

Similarly, Liu et al. (2022) conducted a mixed-method study across 312 tech entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia and found that resilience alone did not guarantee sustainability unless translated into operational excellence particularly in service delivery. Their path analysis confirmed that emotionally resilient entrepreneurs managed frontline stress more effectively, ensuring smoother service experiences and maintaining client retention. This underscores that resilience manifests in sustainable ventures through its influence on relational and service-oriented performance.

A study by Eze and Okonkwo (2021) focused on female entrepreneurs in informal retail sectors and discovered that service delivery fully mediated the relationship between psychological hardiness and venture longevity. Their findings showed that emotionally strong entrepreneurs were better at de-escalating customer conflicts and maintaining service reliability in volatile environments, which had downstream effects on business survival. These results imply that the behavioral expression of resilience through consistent, empathetic service acts as the conduit linking psychological strength to sustainability outcomes.

In a longitudinal study, Martins and Dlamini (2024) examined 158 early-stage South African enterprises and found that entrepreneurs with high mental resilience invested more in service innovation and frontline training. These efforts resulted in better customer service metrics and improved brand loyalty, which in turn enhanced the sustainability of the ventures. Their findings support the notion that resilience contributes indirectly to venture sustainability via service excellence as an operational strategy. Recent research by (Zen et al., 2024; Suriyankietkaew 2022) supports these

findings, emphasizing that service delivery quality acts as the behavioral expression of resilience and is the pathway through which psychological strength enhances sustainability.

Lastly, a recent experimental study by Nguyen and Tran (2023) used behavioral simulations to assess how entrepreneurs respond to customer complaints under pressure. Entrepreneurs with higher resilience scores were more likely to respond calmly and constructively, leading to higher post-interaction satisfaction. The mediation analysis confirmed that positive service responses mediated the relationship between psychological resilience and business continuity measures. This suggests that service delivery is not only a transactional process but also a behavioral expression of an entrepreneur's internal capacities.

Based on the above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Service delivery quality mediates the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability.

2.5.4 Lessons and Gaps Identified

There is enough literature that supports and have discussed the direct impact of entrepreneurs' mental resistance on venture sustainability, however, there's little or no literature on new ventures for which this study seeks to investigate.

Methodological Diversity; Most studies rely on qualitative assessments; there is a need for more quantitative and mixed-method research to better understand how service delivery mediates the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental health and venture sustainability (Khatib et al., 2021).

Context-Specific Studies Lacking; Research in this field is often based on developed economies, with limited insights into how these dynamics play out in developing regions like Ghana (Srinivasan et al., 2021).

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a comprehensive evaluation of the literature relevant to entrepreneurs' mental resilience, new venture sustainability, and the mediating role of service delivery. The chapter explores key theories that support the hypotheses established for the study, providing a conceptual foundation for understanding the relationship between mental resilience and business sustainability.

Emphasis is placed on the interconnected roles of entrepreneurial mental resilience, service delivery, and new venture success. The review examines prior studies on how entrepreneurs' psychological well-being influences decision-making, resilience, and business performance. Furthermore, customer retention and employee engagement are discussed as critical components of effective service delivery, which mediates the relationship between mental resilience and long-term business viability.

Finally, based on the conceptual review and study objectives, a conceptual framework is developed to illustrate the link between entrepreneurs' mental resilience, service delivery, and new venture sustainability.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter justifies the research methodology employed in the study, detailing the approach taken to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience, new venture sustainability, and the mediating role of service delivery. The chapter discusses the research philosophy and design, providing a rationale for the chosen methodological framework.

The chapter further examines the study population, sample size, and sampling techniques to ensure representativeness and reliability. It also elaborates on the data collection methods and instruments, explaining how data was gathered, measured, and analyzed to address the research objectives. The issues of reliability and ethical considerations are also highlighted to ensure the study's credibility and adherence to ethical standards. Finally, the chapter concludes by summarizing the key methodological approaches and addressing potential challenges encountered during the study.

3.1 Philosophical Assumptions

This study's assumptions are central to its research philosophy, which is shaped by four key dimensions: ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology. The ontological assumption underlying this research is the belief that reality exists and can be measured objectively. Within the context of entrepreneurs, this means that mental resilience, service delivery, and new venture sustainability are treated as observable phenomena that can be quantified through measurable indicators. Ontology therefore supports the

idea that a single reality can be captured using structured data collection and statistical analysis.

In relation to this, epistemology addresses how knowledge is acquired, validated, and communicated. Since the study is strictly quantitative, it adopts an epistemological stance, which assumes that all knowledge claims are tentative and open to revision based on new evidence. No theory or finding is ever considered final (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). Accordingly, statistical techniques such as Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) are employed to test hypotheses and establish relationships among the constructs of entrepreneurs' mental resilience, service delivery, and sustainability outcomes of new ventures.

Moreover, axiology concerns the role of values and ethics in research. In this study, the researcher's values particularly an interest in new venture sustainability guided the choice of topic but did not influence data analysis or interpretation. Objectivity was maintained throughout, with ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants upheld to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Finally, methodology refers to the systematic strategies used to generate valid knowledge. This study employs a quantitative research design underpinned by PLS-SEM to test the hypothesized model. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to give every entrepreneur in the target population an equal chance of selection, thereby reducing bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample. This methodological stance reflects the assumption that rigorous statistical procedures can uncover reliable patterns and generalizable results.

In summary, research philosophy provides a framework of beliefs and assumptions that guide the pursuit of knowledge (Abu-Alhaja, 2019). It encompasses how reality is understood (ontology), how knowledge is generated (epistemology), how values are managed (axiology), and how research is designed (methodology). As Saunders and Lewis (2017) and Held (2019) emphasize, recognizing these assumptions ensures coherence between the research problem, data collection, and interpretation. In line with this, the present study aligns its philosophical stance with a quantitative approach to objectively examine the influence of entrepreneurs' mental resilience and service delivery on new venture sustainability.

3.2 Research Paradigm

This study adopts the post-positivist research paradigm to explore the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience, new venture sustainability, and the mediating role of service delivery. Post-positivism is one of four major research paradigms, alongside constructivism, advocacy/participatory, and pragmatism (Mulatu & Negash, 2021). These paradigms reflect different worldviews and the underlying assumptions that researchers use to frame their studies. The choice of paradigm is influenced by factors such as academic background, the guidance of mentors and faculty, and previous research experiences (Hancock et al., 2021).

The post-positivist paradigm is particularly relevant to this study because it assumes that reality is subjective and varies across different contexts. For example, the impact of entrepreneurs' mental resilience on new venture sustainability may differ depending on external factors such as industry conditions, economic environments, and cultural settings.

From an epistemological perspective, post-positivism asserts that valid knowledge should be derived through empirical observation, rigorous testing, and causal explanations, while recognizing that findings are provisional and open to revision (Habib, 2020). This aligns with the study's goal of establishing structured relationships among mental resilience, service delivery, and sustainability.

To this end, the study employs quantitative research methods, specifically Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which are well-suited for statistical testing, hypothesis verification, and the generalization of findings (Maksimovic & Evtimov, 2023).

By adopting the post-positivist paradigm, this research ensures that data collection, analysis, and presentation of results are conducted in an unbiased and systematic manner. This approach helps in establishing a clear link between entrepreneurs' mental resilience, the effectiveness of service delivery, and the long-term sustainability of new ventures. Following the principles of post-positivist, the findings from this study can be generalized to a broader population, making them valuable for policymakers, business practitioners, and researchers (Fathalizadeh et al., 2022) and in particular the Ghana context.

Table 3.1: Summary of Research Paradigms and Their Philosophical**Foundations**

| Paradigm | Ontology (Nature of Reality) | Epistemology (Nature of Knowledge) | Axiology (role of values) | Methodology (Approach to Inquiry) |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Positivism | Reality is objective and exists independently of human perception. | Knowledge is objective, observable, and measurable; derived from facts. | Research should be value-free and objective | Deductive, quantitative methods; hypothesis testing; experiments, surveys. |
| Post-positivism | Reality exists but is imperfectly knowable (critical realism). | Knowledge is probabilistic and fallible, obtained through empirical testing and causal explanations. | Values acknowledged but minimized; researchers strive for objectivity with recognition of bias. | Quantitative (e.g., PLS-SEM, regression), sometimes mixed methods; emphasizes validity, reliability, and generalization |
| Interpretivism or social constructivism | Reality is multiple, socially constructed, and context-dependent. | Knowledge is subjective, co-created between researcher and participants. | Values play a central role in shaping inquiry | Qualitative, inductive methods (interviews, case studies, ethnography). |
| Pragmatism | Reality is pluralistic and practical, dependent on what works in context | Knowledge is judged by usefulness and practical consequences. | Values and researcher perspectives are integrated into the process.. | Mixed methods; focus on problem-solving and practical outcomes. |

Source: Creswell & Creswell, (2017); Guba & Lincoln (1994); Habib (2020); Kabak et al. (2024) Saunders et al. (2019).

3.3 Research Design

A research design serves as a structured and systematic framework that guides the procedures and methods used in conducting a study (Chun et al., 2019). It provides a detailed plan for collecting and analyzing data to address research questions and solve identified problems (Andrew et al., 2019).

Given the nature of this study and its deductive approach which focuses on examining relationships and testing hypotheses, the research adopts an explanatory research design to investigating the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience, new venture sustainability and service delivery.

An exploratory research design was not appropriate, as it aligns with an inductive approach, which involves identifying patterns to generate new hypotheses. In contrast, this study follows a deductive approach, which involves testing pre-existing hypotheses based on theoretical foundations (Haque 2022).

As outlined by Taherdoost (2022), research designs can be broadly classified into exploratory and conclusive research design. The choice of an explanatory research design in this study ensures that the relationships between key variables are systematically examined, leading to meaningful and generalizable conclusions.

3.4 Research Approach

The term "research approach" refers to the systematic processes and procedures involved in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Research approaches are generally classified into quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods (Taherdoost 2022).

This study employs a quantitative approach because it tests hypotheses and validates existing theories, specifically The Conservation of Resources Theory, Sustainability

Development Theory and The SERVQUAL Model. The quantitative method facilitates a deeper understanding of cause-and-effect relationships, particularly between entrepreneurs' mental resilience, new venture sustainability and service delivery. Additionally, data is collected through closed-ended questionnaires, which are analyzed using statistical techniques (Aithal & Aithal 2020).

A qualitative approach is not suitable for this study as it does not test hypotheses or theories in a structured, numerical manner (Selvi 2019). Since this research focuses on hypothesis testing based on established theories, a structured quantitative approach is more appropriate. Furthermore, qualitative research emphasizes subjective data interpretation, whereas this study aims for objective, numerical analysis of relationships between variables (Lim 2024).

Similarly, a mixed-methods approach is not adopted, as it may dilute the study's quantitative focus. Given that the study's primary objective is to test hypotheses and examine variable relationships through statistical analysis, incorporating qualitative elements would not significantly enhance the research outcomes (Frost & Bailey-Rodriguez 2020).

3.5 Research Strategy

Inquiry strategies encompass various qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches, providing structured guidelines for implementing research procedures within a given design (Taherdoost 2022). This study adopts a survey research strategy, which involves a systematic approach to obtaining a numerical representation of patterns, attitudes, or opinions within a specific population (Aithal & Aithal 2020).

A survey design enables researchers to study a subset of the broader population, allowing for meaningful data analysis. This approach includes both cross-sectional and

longitudinal study techniques, with questionnaires or structured interviews serving as the primary methods of data collection (Ghanad 2023). However, this study specifically employs a cross-sectional survey design, which involves collecting data at a single point in time for analysis (Creswell et al., 2019).

The cross-sectional approach allows for generalizing findings from a representative sample to a broader population. In this case, the study aims to draw conclusions applicable to a larger group of SMEs based on the collected data ((Ghanad 2023).

3.6 Study Area

The study was conducted on Small and Medium Enterprises that are between 1-5 years found in the Greater Accra Region. As the administrative and commercial hub of the country, the Region hosts a high concentration of SMEs across various industries, (Appiah et al., 2019) including retail, manufacturing, hospitality, technology, and professional services. These enterprises play a crucial role in job creation, innovation, and economic development, making them vital to Ghana's overall economic growth. However, despite the numerous opportunities available, newly established SMEs in the region face several challenges that threaten their sustainability (Boakye-Ansah & Adhikari 2023).

Moreover, the pressures associated with running an SME in the Greater Accra Region often take a toll on entrepreneurs' psychological resilience. Many SME owners juggle multiple roles, (Owusu-Ansah 2024) handling operations, customer relations, financial management, and strategic planning. This heavy workload, coupled with financial pressures and unpredictable market conditions, frequently leads to stress, anxiety, burnout, and even depression (Ovsiannikova et al.,2024), leaving them in a poor mental

state which negatively affect decision-making, productivity, and overall business performance, an essential factor in SME sustainability (Cardoni et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Greater Accra is characterized by high customer expectations, rapid business growth, and intense market competition (Appiah et al., 2020). These factors create an ideal setting for assessing how mental resilience affects entrepreneurs' ability to maintain service delivery quality and ensure long-term business success. The region's vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem provides a rich context for exploring the impact of service delivery dimensions such as responsiveness, reliability, and personalization on the sustainability of ventures driven by entrepreneurs facing mental health challenges.

3.7 Study Population

This study focuses on registered (SMEs) businesses between 1-5 years in the Greater Accra to examine the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability, with service delivery as a mediating factor. Greater Accra serves as the capital region of Ghana, is a hub of economic activity and urban diversity attracting all kinds of like-minded business people trying to make a difference and not to solely depend on the government for job opportunities. This makes it an ideal setting to explore how mental resilience influences entrepreneurial decision-making, in newly established businesses, and service quality.

According to the Ghana Statistical Service, (2024), the total number of registered SMEs between 1-5 years across Ghana is 85000, with 2157 in good standing located in Greater Accra as of 2024 (Ghana Enterprise Agency). This study considers new venture registered businesses because they are legally recognized and comply with regulations such as renewal of membership and payment of taxes. Focusing on such businesses ensures that the dataset is reliable and valid, allowing for a more accurate analysis of

how service delivery mediates the impact of entrepreneurs' mental resilience on venture sustainability. Registered businesses also adhere to sector best practices, providing a standardized basis for assessing service quality (Zietsman et al., 2019).

3.8 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sampling involves selecting a percentage or a representative subset of an entire population (Mweshi and Sakyi 2020). Casteel and Bridier (2021) define a sample as a subset of a population that shares common characteristics. Similarly, Lohr, (2021) asserts that a population sample comprises a proportion of units chosen for investigation. There are two primary types of sampling: probability and non-probability sampling.

According to Shamsudin et al., (2024; Mweshi and Sakyi 2020), probability sampling is a statistical technique in which every member of the population has a known, non-zero chance of being selected. This method ensures that each population element has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample, allowing researchers to make statistical inferences about the entire population based on the sample's characteristics. Common probability sampling techniques include simple random, stratified, systematic, and cluster sampling (Sharma 2023; Sharma, 2017).

In contrast, non-probability sampling does not rely on random selection, meaning that not all population members have an equal chance of being chosen (Shamsudin, 2024). Instead, selection is based on convenience, availability, or the researcher's discretion. Non-probability sampling methods include quota, purposive, snowball, and convenience sampling (Stratton 2023). Although non-probability sampling is less rigorous in terms of generalizability, it can be advantageous in situations where random selection is impractical (Shamsudin 2024)

For this study, a probability sampling technique was adopted, specifically simple random sampling, due to the availability of a sample frame provided by the Ghana Enterprise Agency database (2024). Simple random sampling ensures that every population element has an equal chance of being selected (Mweshi & Sakyi 2020). Lohr (2021) argue that simple random sampling is the most effective method for obtaining a representative sample, particularly for large populations. This approach was deemed appropriate given the availability of a sample frame, which included a comprehensive list of SMEs.

The simple random sampling technique was used to select the study's respondents based on Taherdoost's (2016) randomization method, which involved the following steps:

Defining the population: The population of interest was clearly defined as 2157 registered SMEs in Greater Accra Region.

Determining the sample size: The sample size was calculated using Taro Yamane's formula, resulting in a total of 337 respondents.

Determining the sample size

Assigning unique identifiers: Each SME business in the population was assigned a unique number or label.

Random selection: The sample was selected using number tables, number allocation, and computer-generated random numbers.

Contacting respondents: Selected SME businesses were contacted through E-mails, phone calls and in-person to ensure participation.

Additionally, the study adhered to Sanes's (1987) selection criteria, as cited by Kusi and Acheampong (2018), ensuring that all participating businesses met the following requirements:

Must be registered, have a renewed license, and be in good standing with the (Ghana Enterprise Agency)

Must have an owner-manager.

Participants were selected based on these criteria, and each stage of the process was carefully followed to ensure that every candidate had an equal chance of being included in the study.

3.9 Sample size determination

The determination of sample size is a crucial aspect of quantitative research, particularly when testing associations and hypotheses. Sample size refers to the number of elements drawn from a target population, from which data is collected (Casteel & Bridier 2021; Lakens, 2022). The accuracy of research findings and the selection of appropriate statistical analysis techniques can be significantly influenced by the chosen sample size (Malhotra, 2007; Hair et al., 2010). In this study, the Yamane sample size formula was employed to determine the appropriate sample size for data collection

Yamane Formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- n is the sample size.
- N is the population size.

- e is the desired level of precision (expressed as a decimal).

$$e = 5\% = 0.05$$

$$n = \frac{2157}{1 + 2157(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2157}{1 + 2157(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 337$$

3.9.1 Sample plan

Table 3.2 Sample plan

| Sampling Plan | |
|------------------------|---|
| Total Population | List of registered new SMEs in Ghana 85000 According to Ghana statistical service (2024) |
| Sampling Elements | Owner– managers |
| Sample Frame | Ghana Enterprise Agency Database (2024) |
| Target Population Size | Two thousand one hundred fifty-seven SMEs between 1-5 years in Greater Accra Region. (Ghana Enterprise Agency 2024) |
| Sampling size | Three hundred and thirty-seven (337) |

3.10 Data Collection Instrument

This study employed a primary data collection instrument, specifically a close-ended questionnaire, to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability, with service delivery as a mediating factor. The use of a questionnaire was appropriate given the research approach and explanatory study design, which require structured data collection methods (Taherdoost, 2021).

A questionnaire is a widely used tool for collecting data, consisting of structured questions designed to obtain objective responses from participants (Aithal and Aithal 2020). Palmieri (2020) further define a questionnaire as a standardized set of questions used to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire method was particularly suitable for this study as it allows for efficient data collection from a large sample, ensuring reliable and valid responses. Questionnaires are also cost-effective, easy to administer, and facilitate the collection of structured responses, Taherdoost (2021), making them ideal for examining how entrepreneurs' mental resilience influences service delivery and new venture sustainability.

The questionnaire used in this study was carefully developed based on validated literature. It was divided into four sections to ensure a comprehensive assessment of key variables. Section A focused on respondent demographics, while Section B examined entrepreneurs' mental resilience (Kipkosgei 2022;). Section C addressed service delivery (King et al., 2004) factors such as speed, reliability, and responsiveness, which mediate the relationship between mental resilience and venture sustainability. Finally, Section D assessed new venture sustainability by measuring long-term business viability, customer retention, and financial stability (Song et al., 2023).

To ensure precise measurement, the questionnaire utilized five-point Likert scale; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, 2= Disagree (D), 3=Indifferent/Not Sure, 4= Strongly Agree and 5= Agree. This scale is chosen because it effectively captures the central tendency of respondents' opinions while allowing for a nuanced understanding of attitudes and perceptions (Burgwal, 2020)). The midpoint of the scale represents a neutral stance, while the remaining points distinguish varying levels of agreement or disagreement, enhancing the accuracy of the data collected (McDonald et al.,2019).

A close-ended questionnaire was selected over other instruments due to its structured nature, ease of administration, and ability to generate uniform results while maintaining high confidentiality (Shiple and McAfee 2023). However, measures were put in place to ensure the validity and reliability of the data, strengthening the study's conclusions on the role of service delivery quality in mediating the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability.

3.10.1 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process for this study was conducted over a period of two months (May to June 2025). Given the focus on entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability, with service delivery quality as a mediating factor, a structured approach was adopted to ensure efficient and accurate data collection.

E-mails and phone calls were used to contact randomly selected registered SMEs businesses in Greater Accra region. This preliminary communication aimed to introduce the study's objectives and purpose to owner-managers. By clearly explaining the research intent, respondents were more willing to provide accurate and insightful information.

The researcher personally visited some of the selected businesses and also contacted the rest through e-mails and phone calls to administer the questionnaires. To ensure comprehensive data collection, responses were obtained within each establishment from owner-managers. Owner-managers provided responses related to entrepreneurial mental resilience and its impact on business sustainability, they again addressed aspects of service delivery. Questions related to employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention key elements influencing service quality and venture sustainability needed to be addressed by the owner-managers as well.

Each questionnaire required an estimated response time of 20–35 minutes, allowing participants enough time to thoroughly read and understand the questions before responding. To enhance response rates, contact details were exchanged with participants, and follow-up calls were made to remind them of the pending questionnaires. This proactive approach helped ensure timely data collection, despite respondents' busy schedules.

By engaging the key stakeholders within each business that was identified, this data collection process provided a holistic understanding of how entrepreneurs' mental resilience influences service delivery quality, which in turn affects the sustainability of new ventures.

3.11 Operationalization of variables

This section outlines how the study variables were measured to achieve the research objectives. The measurement items were drawn from a comprehensive literature review on entrepreneurs' mental resilience, new venture sustainability, and service delivery. Each variable indicator was carefully selected based on prior studies to ensure reliability and validity in the research context.

In this study, face validity was assessed during the pretest stage, where three registered SMEs reviewed the questionnaire to determine whether the items on resilience, service delivery quality, and new venture sustainability were easy to understand and logically represented the intended concepts. Respondents evaluated the clarity of each question, the appropriateness of the wording, and whether any items appeared confusing, unclear or unrelated to the constructs. The use of face validity ensured that the final instrument was user-friendly and aligned with the study's conceptual framework, enhancing the overall quality and credibility of the measurement scales.

The table below presents the sources of the measurement indicators, demonstrating the rigorous literature review that informed their selection. This approach enhances the study's credibility by aligning the measurement framework with established research while adapting it to the specific context of service delivery as a mediating factor in the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental health and venture sustainability.

Table 3.3 Operationalization of variables

| Variables | Operationalization | Measurements | sources |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Entrepreneurs' Mental Resilience | Entrepreneurs' mental resilience refers to the ability of individuals to withstand, recover, and adapt in the face of adversity, trauma, or significant stress, which impact business decision-making and performance. | Psychological well-being Stress management Resilience | Kipkosgei (2022) |
| Service Delivery quality (Mediator) | Service delivery represents the efficiency, reliability, and quality of services provided to customers, influencing business performance and customer satisfaction. | Service quality Responsiveness Personalization | King, King, and Rosenbaum (2004) |
| New Venture Sustainability | New venture sustainability refers to the long term viability, environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic performance. | Business survival Revenue growth Environmental and social responsibility | Odeyemi et al., (2024). |

3.11.1 Variable and Measurement

The constructs used to measure the study variables were adapted from established and validated scales in prior research to ensure both reliability and validity. All items were carefully modified to suit the context of entrepreneurs' mental resilience, service delivery, and new venture sustainability.

Entrepreneurs' mental resilience was measured using scales adapted from Kipkosgei (2022). The constructs focused on three key dimensions: perceived entrepreneurial stress, psychological well-being, and resilience. Perceived entrepreneurial stress was assessed through items capturing workload, competition, financial strain, and the need for continuous knowledge updating. Well-being was measured through indicators such as purpose in life, social support, optimism, and self-competence. Resilience was captured through items reflecting adaptive coping, creative problem-solving, and control over responses to adversity. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for these constructs ranged from 0.72 to 0.88, indicating acceptable reliability.

Service delivery was operationalized using items adapted from King, King, and Rosenbaum (2004), which capture multiple dimensions of service processes. These include enabling and partnership, providing general and specific information, coordinated and comprehensive care, as well as respectful and supportive care. These dimensions were selected and contextualized to reflect the role of entrepreneurs in delivering quality and reliable services to sustain their ventures. The Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.83 to 0.90, suggesting strong reliability.

New venture sustainability was measured using scales adapted from Song and Xiang (2023), covering entrepreneurial decision-making logic (causation and effectuation), resource bundling strategies (stability and pioneering), and environmental factors (market turbulence and competitive intensity). These measures capture both internal strategic practices and external market conditions that shape venture survival and growth. The Cronbach's alpha values for these constructs ranged from 0.72 to 0.90, demonstrating reliability. In addition, sustainability outcomes were measured through items on financial performance, operational efficiency, profitability, sales growth,

market share, and return on investment, reflecting both economic viability and long-term stability of new ventures.

Additionally, demographic characteristics, entrepreneurial experience, industry and sector classification, and firm size was collected to provide context and control variables for the study.

All constructs were carefully refined to fit the research context, ensuring their applicability to the study's objectives.

The variables and their respective measurement items are presented in Table 4.

3.4: Variables and their respective measurement items

| Scales | Cronbach Alpha | Sources |
|--|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <p>Entrepreneurs' mental resilience I often feel stressed due to the demands of my business or market competition I can effectively manage my emotions during challenging business situations I remain optimistic even in the face of challenges and risks.; I actively look for creative ways to alter difficult situations.</p> | 0.857 | Kipkosgei (2022) |
| <p>Service delivery quality We provide a caring environment so customers do not think we are only interested in their money. We provide opportunities for customers to make decisions about what they want. A conducive atmosphere is provided to make customers feel welcomed. Every customer is given a unique treat tailored to their needs.</p> | 0.870 – 0.900 | King, King, & Rosenbaum (2004) |
| <p>New venture sustainability Goals are clear and specific at the beginning of the entrepreneurial venture. My SME can generate consistent income to sustain its operations over time Our company's market share is increasing year by year. My SME respects cultural diversity and promotes inclusion in its operations.</p> | 0.894 – 0.905 | Song & Xiang (2023) |

The measurements items were carefully selected from existing literature to align with the study's focus on entrepreneurs' mental resilience, service delivery and new venture sustainability. These constructs ensure a comprehensive assessment of how mental resilience influences business longevity with service delivery playing a mediating role in sustaining the business.

3.12 Reliability and Validity of the research instrument

Ensuring the validity and reliability of the study was a critical aspect of this research to guarantee the consistency and accuracy of the measurement instrument. Validity and reliability are essential in establishing the credibility of research findings.

In terms of validity, Cook and Reichardt (1979) define validity as the best available estimation of the truthfulness of a given inference. This means that a research instrument is valid when it accurately measures what it is intended to measure. Almasreh (2019) also states that an instrument possesses content validity when the questionnaire's measurements fully represent the intended constructs. Content validity ensures that the instrument comprehensively captures all aspects of the variables under investigation. To establish content validity, the researcher pretested the instrument to identify and rectify any spelling mistakes, poor phrasing, or ambiguous questions. It is widely accepted that questionnaires do not appear independently; rather, they undergo a rigorous process of development, refinement, and modification to enhance their validity. To this end, the questionnaire was submitted to marketing and entrepreneurship and my supervisors for their review and approval before being administered to the respondents.

Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the ability of an instrument to provide accurate and consistent results over time, under the same conditions, and with the same group

of people (Sürücü & Maslakci 2020). Reliability ensures that the measurement instrument produces stable and consistent outcomes across different instances of data collection (Ahmed & Ishtiaq 2021).

Validity and Reliability Testing

To confirm the validity and reliability of the constructs, factor loadings were computed to ensure that all indicators met the required threshold of 0.7. Any factor loading indicator with a value lower than 0.7 was removed from the analysis. Furthermore, composite reliability and discriminant validity were assessed to ensure that all quality criteria met the preferred thresholds.

The following criteria were used to determine construct validity and reliability:

Composite reliability (CR) must be greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017).

Average variance extracted (AVE) must be greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017).

The square root of AVE must be higher than the correlation between the reflective construct and all other heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) constructs (Henseler et al., 2015; Voorhees et al., 2016).

The HTMT values must not exceed 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015).

A crucial factor in assessing reliability is the internal consistency of the instrument, which is evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is the most commonly used measure of internal consistency and is widely regarded as a reliable method for determining the stability of a questionnaire. According to Bujang et al. (2018), Cronbach's alpha must be greater than 0.7 to confirm the reliability of a research instrument.

In addition to Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR) was used to assess the reliability of the construct. Hair et al. (2017) emphasize that composite reliability must be at least 0.7 for a construct to be considered reliable. Furthermore, the outer loadings of an indicator must exceed 0.7 for the indicator to be deemed reliable (Hair et al., 2012). However, if an item's outer loading falls between 0.4 and 0.7, its retention is determined based on composite reliability and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017).

Convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE), which must be greater than 0.5 to confirm that the construct captures sufficient variance from its indicators (Hair et al., 2017). Moreover, to ensure discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) was used. The square root of the AVE must be higher than the correlation between the reflective construct and all other Fornell-Larcker constructs (Henseler et al., 2015; Voorhees et al., 2016). Additionally, for discriminant validity to be confirmed, HTMT values should not exceed 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015).

Overall, the study implemented rigorous procedures to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument.

3.13 Data Analysis

For this study, SmartPLS 4 and SPSS version 25 were used for data processing and analysis. The retrieved questionnaires were first coded in SPSS to organize the raw data for statistical analysis. The Excel data file containing the responses was then saved as a comma-separated values file (CSV – Comma delimited) and subsequently imported into SmartPLS 4 for further analysis. SmartPLS 4 was chosen because of its suitability for testing hypotheses and theories, as highlighted by Ramayah et al. (2017). In selecting data processing tools, factors such as flexibility, accessibility, relevance, and

statistical significance were taken into consideration to ensure the robustness of the analysis.

Both inferential and descriptive statistics were used for data analysis and interpretation. The data collected from respondents underwent a pre-coding process in Excel to ensure there were no errors before proceeding with further analysis. Each retrieved questionnaire was assigned a unique numerical code to facilitate the identification and sorting of non-response questionnaires

To analyze the demographic data, frequency, mean, and standard deviation were calculated using SPSS version 25. Additionally, a reflective model was developed to test the hypotheses and assess the relationships among the study variables.

3.14 Hypothesis Testing

To establish the relationships between the study variables, entrepreneurs' mental resilience, new venture sustainability, and the mediating role of service delivery, a consistent bootstrapping method was performed using 337 samples. This technique was employed to determine the statistical relationships between the constructs.

The t-statistics and p-values were used to assess the significance of these relationships. The study objectives were analyzed using an inferential analysis tool. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was selected as the primary inferential analysis method because of its effectiveness in establishing causal relationships between variables.

3.15 Descriptive Statistics

In addition to inferential analysis, the study also relied on descriptive statistics to summarize the dataset. Measures such as percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations were used to assess the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

By employing a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics, the study ensured a comprehensive and rigorous analysis of the data, ultimately providing meaningful insights into the relationships between entrepreneurs' mental health, new venture sustainability, and the mediating role of service delivery.

3.15.1 Common Method Bias

Jordan and Troth (2020), implies that common method bias (CMB) arises when data for all study variables; independent, dependent, moderating, and mediating are collected using the same method. In simple terms, CMB occurs when the relationships between two or more constructs are distorted due to the use of a consistent measurement approach. This study employs both procedural and statistical strategies to mitigate common method bias, following the principles outlined by Jordan and Troth (2020)

From a procedural standpoint, the first step involved providing an information cover sheet that clearly outlined the study's purpose. Additionally, comprehensive instructions were given to ensure that respondents fully understood how to appropriately answer each question in the questionnaire. To enhance the clarity of scale items, a 5-point Likert scale was incorporated. Furthermore, to minimize respondents' ability to identify relationships between their responses and the study's analysis, the survey questions were randomly ordered. This approach was chosen because respondents were required to assess all variables included in the study.

3.16 Ethical Considerations

Ethics play a fundamental role in scientific research, serving as the guiding principles that shape our conduct and interactions (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). Prior to distributing the questionnaires, the study's objectives were clearly communicated to the heads and managers of the participating organizations. Additionally, the introduction

section of the questionnaire included a clause ensuring respondents' confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose and methodology of the study.

To maintain ethical integrity, participants were assured that their responses would be treated with respect and kept strictly confidential. They were explicitly informed that their participation was voluntary and that the study was solely for academic purposes. To further safeguard their anonymity, respondents were instructed not to write their names on the questionnaire. Moreover, the potential benefits of the study were explained to the participants, and they were made aware that no monetary or material compensation would be provided for their participation.

In adherence to academic integrity, all sources referenced in the study, whether paraphrased, summarized, or directly quoted were properly cited to prevent plagiarism. Finally, before proceeding with data collection, my questionnaire underwent a thorough review by my supervisor and colleagues to check for grammatical errors. Upon receiving approval from my supervisors, I was granted permission to conduct the data collection process.

3.17 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a detailed explanation of the research methods and procedures employed in the study. It explored the research philosophy, emphasizing the use of a post-positivist approach due to the nature of the research and its objectives. The post-positivist philosophy acknowledges the objectivity of scientific inquiry while recognizing the potential for bias and the need for critical examination.

Additionally, the chapter outlined the research design, detailing the data collection procedures and statistical methods used. It examined the research population and

sample selection process, ensuring the study's representativeness. The research instruments were assessed for their validity and reliability to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurements.

Furthermore, the chapter highlighted the use of Smart PLS-SEM 4 as a robust analytical tool for achieving the study's primary objective.

To sum it up, ethical considerations were also addressed, ensuring adherence to research integrity and participant confidentiality.



CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter represents a section of this study in which the data collected are presented and discussed using structural equation modelling as the significant analytical technique. SPSS and Smart PLs was used for descriptive statistics and structural equation modelling. Finally, the results, along with those from previous studies, are discussed.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

A total of 353 respondents participated in the study out of which 337 respondents was drawn. In terms of age, most participants were between 25 and 34 years (35.6%) and 35 and 44 years (28.2%). A smaller proportion were under 25 (17.8%), while those aged 45 years and above constituted 18.4% of the sample. With respect to gender, 55.2% were male and 44.8% were female, indicating a fairly balanced gender distribution.

Regarding marital status, slightly majority of the respondents were single (53.4%), followed by married participants (38.6%), while 8.0% were divorced. Educational attainment varied among the participants: the largest group held a first degree (29.7%), followed by those with a diploma (19.3%) and SSSCE/WASSCE qualifications (16.3%). Smaller proportions held an HND (11.9%), a master's degree (14.8%), or a PhD (2.1%), while only 5.9% reported the lowest qualification category (MSLC/JSS).

Table 4.1: Background Information of Respondents

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage% |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Age (years) | Under 25 | 60 | 17.8 |
| | 25–34 | 120 | 35.6 |
| | 35–44 | 95 | 28.2 |
| | 45 and above | 62 | 18.4 |
| Sex | Male | 186 | 55.2 |
| | Female | 151 | 44.8 |
| Marital Status | Single | 180 | 53.4 |
| | Married | 130 | 38.6 |
| | Divorced | 27 | 8.0 |
| Education | MSLC / JSS | 20 | 5.9 |
| | SSSCE / WASSCE | 55 | 16.3 |
| | Diploma | 65 | 19.3 |
| | HND | 40 | 11.9 |
| | 1st Degree | 100 | 29.7 |
| | Master's Degree | 50 | 14.8 |
| | PhD | 7 | 2.1 |
| | Other | 0 | 0.0 |
| Employment History | Never been employed | 47 | 14.0 |
| | Currently employed | 200 | 59.3 |
| | Previously employed | 90 | 26.7 |
| Entrepreneurship | Started another business | 115 | 34.1 |
| | Not started another business | 222 | 65.9 |

In terms of employment history, the majority were currently employed (59.3%), while 26.7% reported being previously employed, and 14.0% indicated they had never been employed. Concerning entrepreneurial experience, about one-third of participants (34.1%) reported having started another business aside from their current one, whereas 65.9% had not.

4.2 Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling

Partial Least Squares (PLS) is a statistical method used in multivariate analysis. It is advantageous when dealing with datasets that include many samples (Memon et al., 2021). Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is a statistical methodology employed to establish and analyse the associations among latent variables that cannot be directly seen in a research investigation. PLS-SEM has been frequently utilized in various academic disciplines, including but not limited to the social sciences, marketing, and information systems (Sarstedt et al., 2019).

According to Hair et al. (2019), two main approaches constitute PLS-SEM: the measurement and structural models. The measurement model characterizes the relationship between observed variables (indicators) and latent variables (Hair et al., 2017). Once the measurement model has been established, PLS-SEM analyses the structural model, which examines the links between latent variables. In the context of a structural equation model, the relationships between latent variables are commonly depicted as paths (Hair et al., 2017).

4.3 Assessment of Measurement Model

In assessing the measurement model, factor loadings, reliability and validity (AVE, HTMT and Fornel-Larcker) of the construct should be determined (Hair et al., 2019).

4.3.1 Factor Loadings

The factor loading is a numerical value that assesses how much an observed variable correlates with a latent component. The numerical values play a crucial role in comprehending how each indicator effectively captures the fundamental construct and the degree to which the construct accounts for the variability observed in the indicator. A threshold value of 0.6 or higher is deemed suitable for the outer loading in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). However, a loading between 0.6 and 0.7 is considered appropriate when its deletion will not significantly increase the AVE (Hair et al., 2021). Table 4.2 shows that factor loadings are suitable for this model because most loading values are above the threshold of 0.6.

In practical terms, a factor loading represents how strongly an observed variable is linked to an underlying, unobserved concept, also known as a latent construct. Essentially, it tells us how well each question or measurement item reflects the idea it is intended to measure. Higher loading values indicate that the variable is a good representation of the construct, meaning the construct explains a large portion of the variation in that variable. In Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a factor loading of 0.6 or higher is generally considered strong and desirable. However, loadings between 0.6 and 0.7 can still be acceptable, especially if removing them would not meaningfully improve the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which is a measure of how much of the variance in the indicators is captured by the construct. Based on the information in Table 4.2, the factor loadings in this model are considered suitable, as the majority of them exceed the 0.6 benchmark, suggesting that the measurement items reliably reflect their intended constructs and support the validity of the measurement model.

4.3.2 Reliability of Construct

Reliability, also known as internal consistency, assesses how much the items or questions within a measurement instrument correlate. It is typically measured using statistical techniques like Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. High internal consistency reliability suggests that the items consistently measure the same underlying construct. Chronbach alpha and composite reliability values of 0.7 and above are good, consistent reliability dependability (Hair et al., 2019). Table 4.2 shows an acceptable reliability threshold since all constructs have composite reliability and Cronbach Alpha values above 0.70.

Table 4.2: Outer loadings, Cronbach Alpha, Composite reliability and AVE

| Constructs | Loading Value | Cronbach's alpha | Composite reliability (rho_a) | Average variance extracted (AVE) |
|--|---------------|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Entrepreneurs Mental Resilience | | 0.895 | 0.896 | 0.543 |
| EMR1 | 0.646 | | | |
| EMR2 | 0.712 | | | |
| EMR3 | 0.717 | | | |
| EMR4 | 0.771 | | | |
| EMR5 | 0.775 | | | |
| EMR6 | 0.733 | | | |
| EMR7 | 0.728 | | | |
| EMR8 | 0.759 | | | |
| EMR9 | 0.781 | | | |
| New Venture Sustainability | | 0.883 | 0.884 | 0.589 |
| NVS1 | 0.744 | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| NVS2 | 0.741 | | | |
| NVS3 | 0.746 | | | |
| NVS4 | 0.783 | | | |
| NVS5 | 0.788 | | | |
| NVS6 | 0.783 | | | |
| NVS7 | 0.784 | | | |
| Service Delivery Quality | | 0.868 | 0.871 | 0.524 |
| SDQ1 | 0.734 | | | |
| SDQ2 | 0.796 | | | |
| SDQ3 | 0.756 | | | |
| SDQ4 | 0.822 | | | |
| SDQ5 | 0.738 | | | |
| SDQ6 | 0.621 | | | |
| SDQ7 | 0.646 | | | |
| SDQ8 | 0.651 | | | |

Source: Smart PLS Output (2025)

4.3.3 Validity of Construct

The concept of construct validity holds significant importance within measurement modelling. Construct validity is the degree to which a measurement or assessment instrument effectively captures and represents the fundamental construct or notion it is designed to measure (Hair et al., 2017). Put another way, construct validity evaluates the extent to which a measurement accurately captures the intended construct it is designed to measure (Hair et al., 2019).

The Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) values and Fornell- Larcker scores were used to evaluate constructs' discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2015). To verify the model by using HTMT, the result should be less than 0.85 (Henseler et al.,

2015). Table 4.3 indicates that the values measuring HTMT are less than 0.85. Applying the Fornell-Larcker method can be demonstrated if the values in the rows and columns corresponding to the diagonal elements are significantly higher than those in the rows and columns not on the diagonal (Hair et al., 2017). This can be done by comparing the values in the diagonal elements to those in the rows and columns not on the diagonal (Memon et al., 2021). Table 4.4 indicates that all items on the diagonals have a value greater than those not on the diagonal in the rows and columns that correspond to them.

The Results from Tables 4.3 and 4.4 present the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio and the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which are used to assess the dissimilarity of measurement models in structural equation modelling. For HTMT, the values express the ratio of correlations among constructs (Heterotrait) to correlations within the same construct (Monotrait). A threshold often mentioned in literature is that HTMT values should be less than 0.85 to confirm that distinct constructs are being measured (Henseler et al., 2015).

The outcomes in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 provide a stringent discriminant validity assessment. They were obtained using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. These two tests are widely accepted in structural equation modeling and are applied in tandem when one aims to confirm the empirical distinctness of constructs.

Table 4 gives HTMT results that fall mostly below the conservative threshold of 0.85, a benchmark proposed by Henseler et al. (2015) for establishing discriminant validity. The HTMT is the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio. The HTMT values in Table 4 suggest that that all the constructs are conceptually distinct from one another.

Table 4.3: Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) ratio

| | EMR | NVS | SDQ |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|
| Entrepreneurs Mental Resilience | | | |
| New Venture Sustainability | 0.712 | | |
| Service Delivery Quality | 0.749 | 0.731 | |

Source: Smart PLS Output (2025)

Similarly, the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 4.4), while traditionally employed to verify discriminant validity, shows less sensitivity compared to HTMT. The square root of the AVE for each construct (diagonal elements) exceeds the inter-construct correlations (off-diagonal elements), seemingly supporting discriminant validity.

Table 4.4: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

| | EMR | NVS | SD |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Entrepreneurs Mental Resilience | 0.737 | | |
| New Venture Sustainability | 0.646 | 0.767 | |
| Service Delivery | 0.669 | 0.729 | 0.724 |

Source: Smart PLS Output (2025)

The Fornell-Larcker criterion assesses whether the constructs are discriminable valid, meaning they are sufficiently different. The results in Table 4.4 indicate that the pairs of constructs are, for the most part, distinct. They are not just separate ideas; within the contexts of this research, they describe phenomena that are not (strongly) correlated. The HTMT and Fornell-Larcker outcomes verify that the constructs have discriminant validity. This indicates that the constructs differ from one another and measure various aspects of the model, which is crucial for maintaining the overall validity of the structural equation model.

Figure 4-measurement model output with the indicators and path coefficient values.

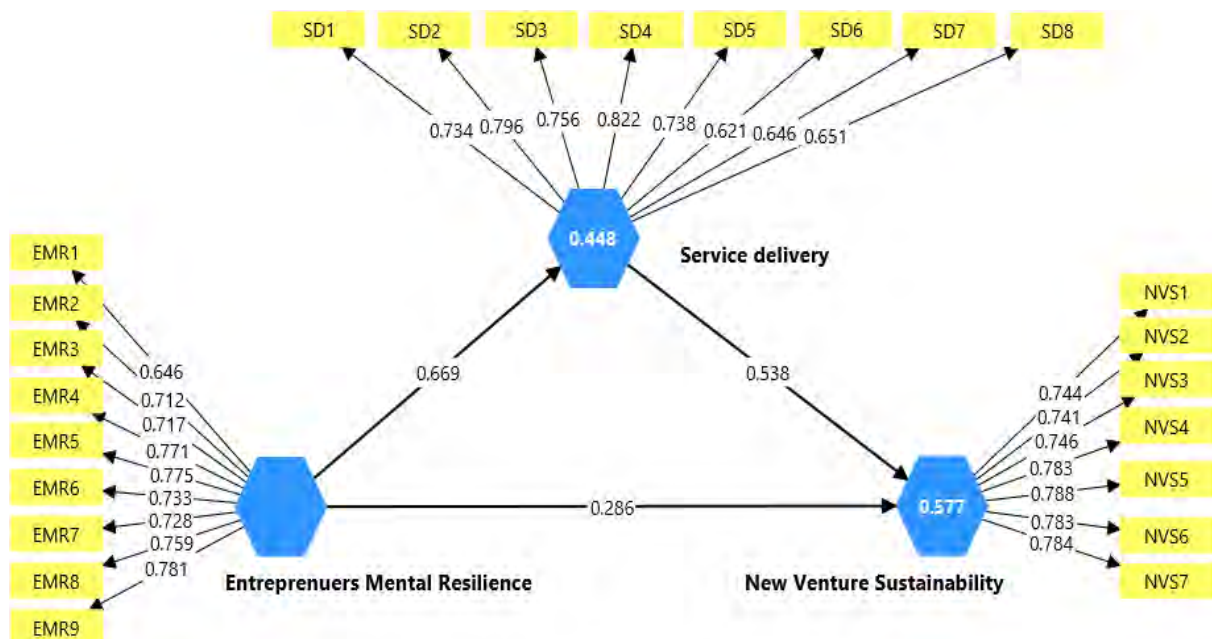


Figure 4.1: PLS-SEM Measurement Model Output

4.4 Assessment of Structural Model

After ensuring the constructs in the model are valid and reliable, the next step is to assess the structural model. According to Hair et al. (2017), to evaluate the structural model, you need to check multicollinearity, determine the significance of path coefficients, and calculate the coefficient of determination (explanatory power and predictive power).

4.4.1 Multicollinearity Test

The outcomes in Table 4.5 provide a severe test of multicollinearity, a critical assumption in structural equation modeling (SEM), that, if not upheld, could distort path coefficients and undermine the interpretability of the model. The assessment relies on the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), a widely accepted diagnostic tool for evaluating the extent to which predictor variables are linearly correlated. Hair et al. (2017) tell us

that a VIF value exceeding five (5) typically signals a potential multicollinearity problem.

The multicollinearity assessment presented through the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values across the items measuring entrepreneurs' mental resilience (EMR), new venture sustainability (NVS), and service delivery (SDQ) confirms that multicollinearity is not a concern in the model. All VIF values reported are well below the commonly accepted threshold of 5.0, with the highest VIF being 2.990 for item NVS7, and the lowest being 1.683 for item SD4. A VIF value under 5 indicates that an item is not excessively correlated with other items in the model, and therefore does not inflate standard errors or distort the estimation of regression coefficients (Hair et al., 2019; Kock & Lynn, 2012). These results demonstrate a statistically clean structure, ensuring the reliability of regression-based path estimates in the structural equation model.

Focusing on the entrepreneurs' mental resilience (EMR) items, VIF values range from 1.862 to 2.578, indicating that the constructs are distinct but interrelated, as expected in a theoretically coherent model. The relatively higher VIFs seen in EMR5 (2.578) and EMR9 (2.485) suggest moderate correlation with other EMR items, but they remain far below problematic levels. This pattern suggests internal coherence in the EMR construct without redundancy. This is critical for construct validity because while the items are meant to measure different aspects of entrepreneurial behavior, they must still collectively reflect the broader latent concept without exhibiting excessive overlap.

In the new venture sustainability (NVS) construct, the VIF values for the seven predictors of new venture sustainability were as follows: NVS1 = 2.200, NVS2 = 1.709, NVS3 = 1.853, NVS4 = 1.964, NVS5 = 2.412, NVS6 = 2.077, and NVS7 = 2.990. All values were well below the commonly accepted threshold of 5.0, indicating that no

problematic multicollinearity was present in the model. Among the predictors, NVS7 exhibited the highest VIF (2.990), while NVS2 had the lowest (1.709). This suggests that although some moderate correlation exists among the predictors, the degree of shared variance is not strong enough to threaten the stability or reliability of the regression estimates. Therefore, the predictors can be retained in the analysis without adjustment.

Similarly, service delivery quality (SDQ) items also demonstrate acceptable VIF ranges from 1.683 to 2.500, with SDQ2 having the highest VIF at 2.500. This still falls within acceptable limits, reflecting the item's possible correlation with other planning items, but not to a level that would raise concerns. Given the complex and layered nature of succession planning, which includes factors such as formal plans, communication, training, and criteria, some overlap is theoretically and practically expected, but the absence of VIF values above 3.0 across most items adds confidence to the structural soundness of the model.

The results align well with current literature in structural modeling that recommends using a VIF threshold of 5 as an early indicator of multicollinearity, while more conservative analyses suggest VIFs over 10 as definitively problematic (Hair et al., 2019). In this case, the findings confirm that no multicollinearity problem exists among the predictors, enabling the model to estimate path coefficients reliably and maintain robust interpretability. Moreover, the VIF profile supports the conclusion that the constructs were well-defined during the instrument development and validation process, avoiding common pitfalls of item redundancy or conceptual overlap that often plague SME studies, especially in emerging market settings like Ghana.

In conclusion, the VIF results reinforce the statistical integrity and construct validity of the measurement model by confirming that all items fall within the acceptable threshold. This ensures that the predictors in the structural model are free from harmful multicollinearity, allowing for accurate estimation of the relationships between entrepreneurs' mental resilience, service delivery, and new venture sustainability. This strengthens the reliability of the causal inferences drawn from the path analysis and supports the robustness of the study's findings within both theoretical and practical contexts.

Table 4.5: Multicollinearity Results

| Items | VIF Values |
|-------|------------|
| EMR1 | 2.142 |
| EMR2 | 2.123 |
| EMR3 | 2.023 |
| EMR4 | 1.976 |
| EMR5 | 2.578 |
| EMR6 | 1.903 |
| EMR7 | 1.862 |
| EMR8 | 2.363 |
| EMR9 | 2.485 |
| NVS1 | 2.200 |
| NVS2 | 1.709 |
| NVS3 | 1.853 |
| NVS4 | 1.964 |
| NVS5 | 2.412 |
| NVS6 | 2.077 |
| NVS7 | 2.990 |
| SDQ1 | 1.924 |

| | |
|------|-------|
| SDQ2 | 2.273 |
| SDQ3 | 2.500 |
| SDQ4 | 1.683 |
| SDQ5 | 2.465 |
| SDQ6 | 2.130 |
| SDQ7 | 1.542 |
| SDQ8 | 2.000 |

Source: Smart PLS Output (2025)

Moreover, the distribution of VIF values among different constructs shows an even spread that denotes no one item being responsible for inflating the variance of any other item. The items report low VIFs. To sum up, the VIF diagnostics decisively militate against any suggestion of multicollinearity-related bias in this study's estimation procedures

4.4.2 Predictive Relevance of Model

The adjusted R-squared, commonly represented as R^2_{adj} or R-squared adjusted, is a revised form of the R-squared (R^2) metric that incorporates the influence of the number of independent variables present in a regression model. The R-squared coefficient indicates the extent to which the independent variables account for the variability observed in the dependent variable. However, the adjusted R-squared coefficient considers the potential negative impact of including irrelevant or redundant independent variables in the model, adjusting the value accordingly (Henseler et al., 2015). Therefore, the modified R2 statistic is a reliable indicator of the extent to which the independent factors elucidate the variation in the dependent variable. According to the data presented in Table 4.6, the adjusted R2 values observed were 0.576 and 0.447

respectively. By implication, new venture sustainability and service delivery explain its indicators' variance by 57.6% and 44.7% respectively.

Q^2 is employed in partial least squares (PLS) regression to evaluate the prediction efficacy of the model. Partial Least Squares (PLS) is a statistical technique commonly used in multivariate regression analysis. It is beneficial when dealing with scenarios that involve numerous independent variables exhibiting correlation. The coefficient of determination, denoted as Q^2 , quantifies the predictive accuracy of a model about the dependent variable when it is employed for prediction purposes. The concept resembles the R-squared (R^2) metric used in ordinary least squares regression, while it is specifically adapted to the unique properties of Partial Least Squares (PLS). A Q^2 value > 0 for exogenous variables is preferred. Table 4.6 shows that the Q^2 values of new venture sustainability and service delivery are 0.416 and 0.446. This indicates that new venture sustainability and service delivery are predicted by other variables within the structural model with 41.6% and 44.6% accuracy, respectively. As a result, the closer Q^2 is to the adjusted R-squared, the better (Henseler et al., 2015). In this case, a better predictive performance of the PLS-SEM model can be inferred (See Table 4.6).

The term "F-Square" refers to the change in the coefficient of determination (R-Square) that occurs when an external variable is excluded from the model (Hair et al., 2021). Table 4.6 presents F^2 values ranging from medium to large effects (Hair et al., 2017). The variable EMR on NVS has a moderate effect t size 0.107. By implication, having good mental health as an entrepreneur within the Ghanaian context has a medium effect on new venture sustainability.

Table 4.6: Coefficient of Determination Diagnostic

| Construct | R ² | Adjusted R ² | F ² | Q ² |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Entrepreneurial Mental Resilience -> New Venture Sustainability | | | 0.155 | |
| Entrepreneurial Mental Health -> Service Delivery | 0.577(NVS) 0.448 (SDQ) | 0.576 0.447 | 1.034 | 0.416 (NVS) |
| Service Delivery Quality ->New venture sustainability | | | 0.311 | 0.446 (SDQ) |

Source: Smart PLS Output (2025)

The magnitude effect size (f^2) of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicates small, medium, and large effects (Kelley & Preacher, 2012).

4.4.3 Model Fitness

In Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Root Mean Square of Approximation (d_{ULS}), Goodness of fit (d_G), Chi-Square, and Normed Fit Index (NFI) are used to assess the model fitness Hair et al., (2017). According to Dash and Paul (2021), a model is deemed fit when $SRMR$ and $d_{ULS} < 0.08$. $d_G < 0.10$. Chi-square with a non-significant value (>0.05) satisfied model fitness. When considering NFI, the model is considered fit when the saturated and estimated model values are closer to 1. On this note, the values in Table 4.7 are deemed fit for the study.

Table 4.7: Summary of Model Fit

| | Saturated model | Estimated model |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| SRMR | 0.061 | 0.065 |
| d_{ULS} | 0.031 | 0.034 |
| d_G | 0.021 | 0.028 |
| Chi-square | 5270.841 | 5270.841 |
| NFI | 0.927 | 0.928 |

Source: SMART PLS 4 Output (2025)

4.4.4 Path Coefficient

The path coefficient is assessed by evaluating the significance of the path, the relevance, and the nature of the hypotheses. To assess the path coefficient bootstrapping, 5000 sub-samples were drawn from 337 distinct circumstances on the Smart PLS 4.00 software. Path coefficient is significant at the 5% level if zero does not fall into the 95% confidence interval (Hair et al., 2017).

The path coefficients' relevance is usually measured by values ranging from -1 to +1, indicating strong negative or positive relationships (Henseler et al., 2015). The path coefficients indicate that, holding all other exogenous factors constant, a change in endogenous construct values is associated with standard deviation unit changes in a specific exogenous construct. For example, a path coefficient value of 0.213 shows that when the exogenous construct increases by one standard deviation unit, the endogenous construct will increase by 0.213 standard deviation units.

The T-values are more significant in testing hypotheses than the recommended cut-off value of 1.96. Hypothesised paths with T-values over 1.96 are accepted (fail to reject), whereas paths with T-values less than 1.96 are rejected (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 4.8 gives details of path coefficient values. From Table 4.8, hypotheses were tested for direct, synergistic, and indirect effects among the hypothesized relationships.

Figure 4.2 shows the structural model indicating the p- values and path coefficient

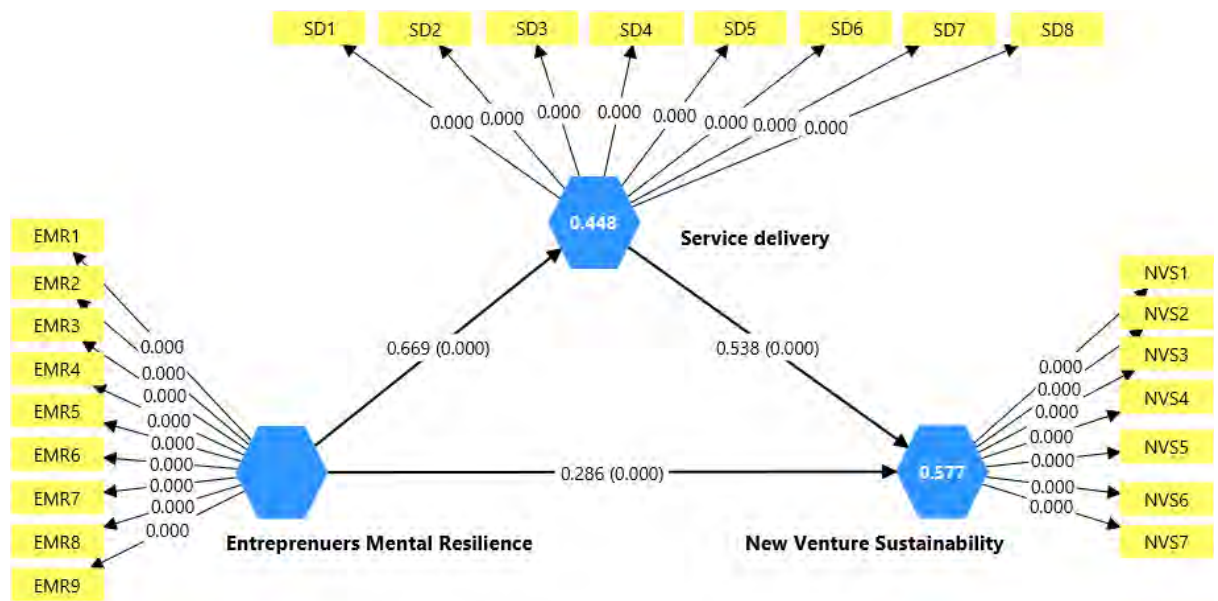


Table 4.8: Path Coefficient and Hypotheses Diagnostics

| s/n | Hypotheses | Path Coefficient (O) | Standard deviation (STDEV) | T statistics ((O/STDEV)) | P values | Remarks |
|---|--|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Direct Effect: | | | | | | |
| H1 | Entrepreneurial mental resilience -> new venture sustainability | 0.286 | 0.025 | 11.622 | 0.000 | Supported |
| Individual Effect with Mediator: | | | | | | |
| H2 | Entrepreneurial mental resilience -> Service delivery quality | 0.669 | 0.016 | 41.526 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H3 | Service delivery Quality-> New venture sustainability | 0.538 | 0.020 | 23.144 | 0.000 | Supported |
| Mediation Effect: | | | | | | |
| H4 | Entrepreneurial mental resilience -> Service delivery quality-> New venture sustainability | 0.360 | 0.018 | 20.506 | 0.000 | Supported |

Source: Smart PLS Output (2025)

4.5 Results

The direct effect analysis (H1) revealed that entrepreneurial mental resilience has a significant positive impact on new venture sustainability (path coefficient = 0.286, $t = 11.622$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting the hypothesis.

For the individual effects with a mediator, the results demonstrated that entrepreneurial mental resilience strongly predicts service delivery quality (H2), with a path coefficient of 0.669 ($t = 41.526$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the proposed relationship. Similarly, service delivery quality was found to significantly influence new venture sustainability (H3), with a path coefficient of 0.538 ($t = 23.144$, $p < 0.001$). Both hypotheses were supported.

Finally, the mediation analysis further indicated that service delivery quality fully mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial mental resilience and new venture sustainability (H4), with a mediation path coefficient of 0.360 ($t = 20.506$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, the direct effect path coefficient is lower than the path coefficient of the indirect effect. This finding confirms the mediating role of service delivery quality, reinforcing the indirect pathway between entrepreneurial mental resilience and new venture sustainability.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

Entrepreneurial Mental Resilience → New Venture Sustainability

The finding that entrepreneurial mental resilience has a significant and positive effect on new venture sustainability (path coefficient = 0.286, $t = 11.622$, $p < 0.001$) provides strong empirical support for the view that psychological resources are as critical as financial, social, or human capital in determining the survival and growth of entrepreneurial ventures. This result reinforces both theoretical and practical arguments

that resilience is not only a buffer against adversity but also a proactive resource that enhances adaptive capacity and long-term viability.

Entrepreneurial ventures, particularly in their early stages, operate under conditions of uncertainty, resource scarcity, and frequent market shocks. According to the Resource-Based View (RBV) (Barney, 1991), sustainable competitive advantage arises from unique, valuable, and inimitable resources. Psychological resources such as resilience meet these criteria, as they enable entrepreneurs to recover quickly from setbacks, reframe challenges as opportunities, and maintain persistence in pursuing long-term goals. The present finding suggests that resilient entrepreneurs are better equipped to marshal scarce resources efficiently, adapt to environmental turbulence, and sustain their ventures beyond the vulnerable early years.

Moreover, Psychological Capital Theory (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017) emphasizes four core components; hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (HERO). Resilience, in particular, allows entrepreneurs to “bounce back” from setbacks and adapt positively to adversity. The positive relationship with new venture sustainability aligns with this theoretical perspective: resilient entrepreneurs are more likely to view failure as temporary, adjust strategies, and reinvest in their ventures rather than abandoning them.

Recent empirical studies corroborate these findings. For instance, Hartmann et al. (2022) and Yang et al. (2015) demonstrated that resilient entrepreneurs show higher persistence in opportunity exploitation, which leads to longer survival rates of new businesses in uncertain markets. Similarly, a longitudinal study by Corner et al. (2017) found that resilience moderated the relationship between market shocks and business survival, highlighting its importance in navigating crises. More recently, research

during the COVID-19 pandemic emphasized that resilient entrepreneurs were more likely to sustain operations and pivot their business models to meet shifting consumer demands (Purnomo et al., 2021; Guckenbiehl et al., 2022). These studies converge with the current finding by suggesting that resilience is not merely reactive but also strategic, influencing how ventures sustain themselves over time.

The finding also resonates with the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2007), which posits that firms must integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments. Resilience functions as an individual-level dynamic capability: entrepreneurs with strong resilience are more adept at sensing opportunities, seizing them, and transforming organizational processes for sustainability.

Lastly, resilience can be interpreted through the lens of Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) (Hobfoll, 2001), which posits that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect resources. Entrepreneurs with high resilience are less likely to experience resource loss spirals and more likely to invest psychological energy into behaviors that promote venture sustainability.

Entrepreneurial Mental Resilience → Service Delivery Quality

The study found that entrepreneurial mental resilience exerts a strong and significant positive effect on service delivery (path coefficient = 0.669, $t = 41.526$, $p < 0.001$) underscores the pivotal role of psychological resilience in shaping how entrepreneurs design, implement, and maintain high-quality services. Service delivery is often the most visible indicator of a venture's competence and reliability, and the result suggests that resilient entrepreneurs are more capable of ensuring consistent, adaptive, and innovative service practices.

Entrepreneurship inherently involves exposure to adversity, ranging from financial constraints to unpredictable customer preferences and competitive pressures. Entrepreneurs who possess high resilience can withstand these pressures without compromising their service standards. According to Psychological Capital Theory (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017), resilience is one of the critical psychological resources that foster perseverance and adaptive functioning. By maintaining emotional balance and cognitive clarity during setbacks, resilient entrepreneurs can focus on meeting customer needs even when external conditions are unfavorable.

This result also aligns with the Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), which posits that value is co-created through service exchange rather than embedded in tangible goods. In this framework, resilient entrepreneurs are more likely to sustain relational quality with customers, handle complaints constructively, and tailor services under challenging circumstances. Thus, resilience becomes a crucial enabler of superior service delivery.

Several empirical studies validate this relationship. For example, Africano (2023; Hmieleski and Carr 2008) found that entrepreneurs with higher levels of resilience and optimism were better able to manage customer-facing tasks under conditions of uncertainty. Similarly, Elshaer and Saad (2022) showed that resilient entrepreneurs maintained high service quality despite operating in politically unstable environments. More recently, research in hospitality and retail sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that entrepreneur who exhibited resilience were more capable of adapting their service models, such as by transitioning to digital platforms or offering personalized delivery services (Liguori & Pittz, 2020; Rapaccini et al., 2020). These findings mirror the current study's result, reinforcing the notion that resilience directly enhances service-oriented practices.

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2007) provides a useful framework for interpreting how EMR leads to service delivery quality. Service delivery quality is often where firms must exhibit agility, adapting to new market demands and technologies. Resilience acts as an individual-level dynamic capability, allowing entrepreneurs to integrate new processes and reconfigure service systems under stress. This adaptability ensures continuity and improvement in service delivery.

Additionally, Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 2001) suggests that resilient entrepreneurs can prevent resource depletion by effectively managing stress and leveraging psychological resources. This conservation allows them to allocate cognitive and emotional energy to critical activities like service delivery, rather than being overwhelmed by adversity.

The strong effect size in this relationship highlights the practical importance of resilience training for entrepreneurs. Programs that develop cognitive reframing skills, mindfulness practices, and stress management techniques can directly improve entrepreneurs' ability to sustain high-quality service delivery. Business support organizations and incubators should integrate resilience-building as part of entrepreneurial development curricula.

Moreover, the finding implies that investors and partners should view resilience as an intangible asset that underpins service delivery quality. In industries where customer experience is central, such as hospitality, healthcare, and technology services, entrepreneurial resilience becomes a strategic advantage.

While resilience positively influences service delivery quality, it is worth considering contextual moderators. Industry norms, customer expectations, and cultural settings may shape how resilience manifests in service practices. For instance, in high-contact

service industries (e.g., healthcare), emotional resilience may be more critical than in technology-based services. Additionally, excessive resilience might result in entrepreneurs overcommitting to unsustainable service practices, leading to resource strain. Scholars such as Mahdiani and Ungar (2021) caution against the “dark side” of resilience, where persistence in maintaining service quality may come at the expense of financial sustainability.

The strong and significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial mental resilience and service delivery quality highlights resilience as a cornerstone of customer-centered entrepreneurial success. By fostering adaptability, perseverance, and relational competence, resilience enables entrepreneurs to deliver consistent and innovative services even under adverse conditions. The result aligns with established theories, including Psychological Capital, Service-Dominant Logic, and Dynamic Capabilities, while being supported by recent empirical studies across diverse sectors (Liguori & Pittz, 2020; Rapaccini et al., 2020; Elshaer and Saad 2022).

Overall, the evidence suggests that cultivating resilience is not merely about coping with challenges but also about strategically enhancing service delivery quality (Madi et al., 2023 and Celestin 2025) to achieve competitive advantage

Service Delivery Quality → New Venture Sustainability

The study found that service delivery regressed on new venture sustainability (path coefficient = 0.538, $t = 23.144$, $p < 0.001$), underscoring the centrality of customer-facing processes in determining whether new ventures survive and grow. For entrepreneurial firms, particularly in their formative years, service delivery is often the primary mechanism through which they establish legitimacy, build customer trust, and secure recurring revenue streams. This result highlights that ventures that prioritize

consistent, adaptive, and high-quality service delivery are more likely to sustain themselves in competitive markets.

From a theoretical perspective, the Resource-Based View (RBV) (Barney, 1991) emphasizes that firms achieve sustainability through resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. Service delivery, particularly when it is customer-centered, personalized, and responsive, embodies these characteristics. Unlike tangible assets, service delivery involves intangible capabilities such as relational competence, responsiveness, and trustworthiness that are difficult for competitors to replicate. The present finding supports this view, showing that ventures capable of delivering reliable services establish sustainable competitive positions.

The result also resonates with the Service-Dominant Logic (Jaakkola et al., 2024), which posits that value creation is co-produced with customers through service interactions. For new ventures, the ability to deliver services that continuously create customer value ensures stronger relationships, higher retention, and long-term sustainability. In this sense, service delivery is not merely an operational activity but a strategic process central to entrepreneurial survival.

Recent empirical studies reinforce the importance of service delivery for sustainability. For instance, Islam et al. (2021) found that service quality strongly predicts customer loyalty, which in turn supports firm longevity. In entrepreneurial contexts, Santos and Eisenhardt (2009) showed that ventures differentiating themselves through innovative service models achieved higher rates of survival compared to those competing solely on price. Similarly, in developing economies, where institutional voids often hinder trust, service delivery quality has been shown to directly influence venture sustainability by fostering credibility with customers (Kumar et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a natural experiment highlighting this relationship: small businesses that rapidly adapted their service delivery models such as shifting to online platforms or adopting contactless interactions demonstrated higher survival rates (Seetharaman, 2020). These findings converge with the current study, suggesting that ventures that adapt and maintain high service delivery standards are more likely to endure in turbulent contexts.

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2007) is also highly relevant here. Ventures that demonstrate agility in service delivery by sensing customer needs, seizing opportunities, and reconfiguring delivery processes are more likely to sustain themselves in dynamic markets. Service delivery quality thus becomes a dynamic capability that allows ventures to continuously adapt and remain relevant. Additionally, Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) provides further insights. New ventures operate in ecosystems where multiple stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, and regulators, influence survival. Superior service delivery enhances stakeholder satisfaction and trust, building a supportive network that underpins sustainability.

For practitioners, the strong relationship between service delivery and sustainability underscores the importance of embedding customer-centered strategies into the very foundation of entrepreneurial ventures. Training entrepreneurs to develop strong communication, empathy, and responsiveness can directly influence long-term viability. Moreover, digital technologies such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems and service analytics can enhance delivery consistency and responsiveness.

Incubators and accelerators could also prioritize mentoring entrepreneurs in customer service design, as these competencies directly link to sustainability. Policymakers

supporting entrepreneurship may consider programs that train small business owners in service management, recognizing its role in ensuring long-term survival and reducing venture failure rates.

The significant positive relationship between service delivery and new venture sustainability confirms that how entrepreneurs serve their customers is a central determinant of whether their ventures survive. This relationship is strongly supported by theoretical frameworks such as RBV, Service-Dominant Logic, and Dynamic Capabilities Theory, as well as empirical findings across industries and contexts. Service delivery functions not only as a mechanism of customer satisfaction but also as a strategic capability that generates loyalty, legitimacy, and adaptive learning. Taken together, the evidence suggests that ventures that embed superior service delivery into their core strategies are more likely to achieve long-term sustainability, even in volatile environments.

Entrepreneurial Mental Resilience → Service Delivery Quality → New Venture Sustainability

The mediation analysis revealed that service delivery significantly mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial mental resilience and new venture sustainability (path coefficient = 0.360, $t = 20.506$, $p < 0.001$). This result demonstrates that the influence of resilience on sustainability is not only direct but also channeled through the entrepreneur's ability to deliver consistent and adaptive services. In other words, resilience enhances service delivery capabilities, which in turn drive the long-term sustainability of new ventures. This mediated relationship provides a nuanced understanding of how psychological resources translate into organizational outcomes and aligns with several contemporary theoretical perspectives.

Entrepreneurial mental resilience equips individuals with the cognitive flexibility, emotional regulation, and adaptive strategies necessary for managing adverse situations. These attributes translate into tangible service practices, such as consistency, empathy, and innovation in serving customers. According to Psychological Capital Theory (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017), resilience fosters proactive coping and perseverance, which are reflected in the entrepreneur's ability to sustain high service standards under stress. This capability is especially important for new ventures, which often face resource scarcity and heightened performance pressures.

The mediated pathway suggests that resilience alone does not guarantee sustainability; rather, it exerts its effect by shaping how entrepreneurs design and deliver services that meet evolving customer needs. This perspective resonates with the Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), where value creation is co-produced in interactions with customers. Resilient entrepreneurs are better positioned to maintain positive engagements with customers, adapt to feedback, and ensure service continuity, which ultimately contributes to sustainability.

Empirical research increasingly supports the notion of mediated effects linking psychological resources with business outcomes. Ayala and Manzano-García (2014) found that resilient entrepreneurs translated their psychological strengths into improved service quality, which predicted long-term survival. Similarly, Bullough and Renko (2013) observed that resilience enabled entrepreneurs to maintain service delivery under crisis conditions, leading to business continuity. More recent studies in the wake of COVID-19 have shown that resilience facilitated digital transformations in service delivery, such as the adoption of e-commerce and remote customer service platforms, which in turn enhanced venture survival (Liguori & Pittz, 2020).

The mediated relationship can also be framed through Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2007). Resilience represents an individual-level dynamic capability, while service delivery represents an organizational-level manifestation of this capability. Together, they enable ventures to sense, seize, and reconfigure opportunities for sustainability. Additionally, Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 2002) suggests that service delivery is the primary touchpoint through which ventures engage with stakeholders. Resilience ensures that these interactions remain constructive under pressure, while effective service delivery reinforces stakeholder trust and loyalty, creating conditions for long-term sustainability.

The mediation analysis demonstrates that service delivery is the critical pathway through which entrepreneurial mental resilience translates into new venture sustainability. This finding bridges the gap between psychological resources and organizational outcomes, emphasizing that resilience must manifest in concrete service practices to foster sustainability. Supported by Psychological Capital, Service-Dominant Logic, and Dynamic Capabilities Theory, as well as empirical evidence across industries, the result underscores the importance of integrating psychological and operational dimensions in explaining entrepreneurial survival. Ultimately, resilient entrepreneurs sustain their ventures not merely because they can endure adversity, but because they channel that resilience into delivering services that continuously create value for customers and stakeholders.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENSATIONS

5.1 Key Findings

The primary aim of this study was to examine the effect of entrepreneurs' mental resilience on new venture sustainability, while also investigating the mediating role of service delivery quality among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) between 1-5 years in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Guided by the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), Sustainable Development Theory, and the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), the research adopted a quantitative approach within a post-positivist paradigm. Data from 337 SMEs were analyzed using (PLS-SEM).

The findings revealed several important insights. First, entrepreneurs' mental resilience has a positive and statistically significant effect on new venture sustainability. Specifically, entrepreneurs who recover quickly from setbacks, adapt to changing conditions, and maintain optimism are more likely to sustain and grow their ventures. This outcome is consistent with COR theory's proposition that psychological resources help individuals conserve and mobilize other critical resources (Hobfoll, 1989), and it aligns with prior empirical work showing resilience as a determinant of entrepreneurial success (Hartmann et al., 2022; Shepherd & Williams, 2020; Bullough, Renko, & Saeed, 2021).

Secondly, the results indicated that entrepreneurs' mental resilience has a significant positive effect on service delivery quality. In other words, resilient entrepreneurs are better positioned to sustain service standards, motivate staff, and respond to customer

needs under stressful conditions.(Gautam and Gautam 2024). This finding echoes studies that associate resilience with proactive responses to operational challenges and improved service interactions (Pathak & Joshi, 2021; Rahmi & Mursyidin, 2024).

The findings also revealed that service delivery quality has a significant positive effect on new venture sustainability. Businesses that consistently demonstrate reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangible quality are more likely to build customer loyalty, positive reputation, and long-term viability, an observation consistent with the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). This result also aligns with recent empirical findings linking service delivery quality to sustainable business outcomes (Adnan et al., 2023; Somasundaram et al., 2025).

Finally, the mediation analysis demonstrates that service delivery quality significantly mediates the relationship between entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability. That is, resilience affects sustainability both directly and indirectly, the latter effect being channeled through improvements in service delivery quality. This pattern supports the Dynamic Capabilities perspective (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997), which suggests that internal capabilities must be deployed through operational practices to yield firm-level outcomes, and is consistent with literature indicating that psychological resources have the greatest impact when manifested in concrete organizational practices (Shekarian et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2023).

Taken together, these findings highlight that entrepreneurs' mental resilience and service delivery quality operate synergistically, such that resilience enhances service delivery quality, which in turn bolsters venture sustainability.

5.2 Conclusions

On the basis of the empirical evidence, this study concludes that entrepreneurs' mental resilience is both a psychological resource and a strategic capability that supports new venture sustainability. Resilient entrepreneurs are able to withstand environmental pressures, make adaptive decisions under uncertainty, and pursue long-term goals despite setbacks a conclusion that corroborates COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and recent studies by (Hartmann et al., 2022; Shepherd and Williams, 2020).

However, the study further identifies that resilience alone is insufficient, its effectiveness depends on whether it is translated into service delivery quality. Thus, when mental resilience is operationalized via customer-centered practices such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and attention to tangibles the entrepreneur's psychological capital produces measurable business benefits including customer retention and sustained competitiveness (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Thus, in the resource-constrained and competitive context of Ghanaian SMEs (Bonny-Tay, 2023; Korah, 2021), combining resilience with superior service delivery quality is critical for achieving sustainable outcomes.

5.3 Theoretical Contributions

The findings of this study contribute significantly to theory by advancing the understanding of how entrepreneurs' psychological resources and operational practices interact to promote venture sustainability. First, the study expands the conversation around the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), by empirically demonstrating that mental resilience functions as a psychological resource that helps entrepreneurs conserve, protect, and mobilize other resources necessary for survival. In doing so, the study extends COR theory into the entrepreneurship domain.

The research integrates the Sustainable Development Theory to argue that sustainability must encompass not just environmental and economic considerations but also psychological and service-oriented capabilities. Thus, it broadens the sustainability discourse to include entrepreneur-level resources that have organizational consequences.

By drawing on the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988), the study shows that service delivery quality seen through reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles is the key channel through which entrepreneurs' resilience translates into sustainable firm performance. In other words, the study shows how a personal strength (resilience) can improve business outcomes when it is expressed through high-quality service delivery. This contribution connects insights from psychology and service management and makes the link from individual capability to firm success easier to understand. The study also contributes to Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece et al., 1997) by conceptualizing resilience and service delivery quality as dynamic capabilities that enable SMEs to reconfigure resources and adapt to turbulence.

Finally, by providing empirical evidence from an emerging-market context (Ghana), the study extends the generalizability of these theoretical frameworks beyond the predominantly Western samples featured in prior resilience literature (Hartmann et al., 2022; Bullough et al., 2021).

5.4 Practical and Managerial Implications

The study's findings have direct implications for entrepreneurs, managers, incubators, and policymakers. First, because mental resilience is foundational, entrepreneur development programs should explicitly incorporate resilience training such as stress

management, adaptive problem-solving, and emotional intelligence interventions to strengthen entrepreneurs' capacity to withstand setbacks (Shepherd & Williams, 2020; Pathak & Joshi, 2021).

Again, given that service delivery quality mediates the relationship between resilience and sustainability, entrepreneurs need to intentionally turn their psychological strength into actions that customers can see and feel. This means paying close attention to the SERVQUAL dimensions; reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles so that their resilience shows up in steady, timely, confident, caring, and well-presented service. When entrepreneurs do this, their inner resilience is transformed into consistent, high-quality customer experiences (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Thirdly, managers should invest in engaging and developing their employees because it is the staff who turn the entrepreneur's resilience into quality service. When employees receive proper training, feel empowered, and are supported by good leadership, they create the positive internal environment needed to deliver excellent service (Lin et al., 2021; Kang et al., 2022).

Moreso, technology adoption including Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, online feedback mechanisms, and other digital tools can amplify service delivery quality and help SMEs respond to customer needs more efficiently (Rahmi & Mursyidin, 2024).

Policy bodies such as the Ghana Enterprise Agency should include resilience and service quality modules in SME support programs and provide targeted financial and psychological support that reduces operational stressors (Bonny-Tay, 2023; Korah, 2021).

Finally, entrepreneurs should be encouraged to join peer networks and collaborative platforms to share best practices, access emotional support, and pool resources strategies that collectively enhance resilience and service quality (Bullough et al., 2021).

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to scholarship and practice in multiple ways. Empirically, it establishes that entrepreneurs' mental resilience positively influences new venture sustainability, both directly and indirectly via service delivery quality. Theoretically, the research fuses COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), Sustainable Development Theory, the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988), and Dynamic Capabilities perspectives (Teece et al., 1997), thereby offering an integrated framework for understanding how psychological and operational resources co-produce sustainability.

Conceptually, the study reframes resilience as both a psychological resource and a strategic capability that requires operational expression specifically, through service delivery quality to generate firm-level outcomes. Contextually, the research enriches the evidence base by focusing on Ghanaian SMEs, thereby addressing the empirical gap in emerging-market entrepreneurship studies (Bonny-Tay, 2023; Korah, 2021). Methodologically, the use of PLS-SEM to test mediation contributes to the quantitative toolset for entrepreneurship research and supports robust analysis of indirect effects (Shekarian et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2023).

In short, the study provides empirical validation of the resilience-sustainability link, identifies service delivery quality as a mediating mechanism, integrates multiple

theoretical perspectives contributes context-specific knowledge from Ghana, and demonstrates methodological rigor in mediation analysis.

5.6 Recommendation

Drawing upon the study's findings and theoretical underpinnings, several interrelated recommendations are proposed to strengthen the sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ghana. The results revealed that entrepreneurs' mental resilience significantly enhances new venture sustainability, both directly and indirectly through service delivery quality. Therefore, a comprehensive, multi-level strategy integrating training, operations, employee engagement, technology, policy support, and continuous learning is essential for achieving long-term business sustainability.

It is imperative that entrepreneurial training institutions, government agencies, and business development organizations such as the Ghana Enterprise Agency (GEA) and the association of Ghana industries institutionalize structured programs that develop both entrepreneurs' mental resilience and service delivery quality. These programs should emphasize stress management, adaptive leadership, emotional intelligence, and the integration of SERVQUAL dimensions; reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Such training ought to be introduced before business start-up for new entrepreneurs and reinforced annually for existing ones. By equipping entrepreneurs with psychological and operational competencies, they can better cope with business shocks, deliver consistent service, and maintain competitive advantage. This approach is consistent with the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, which posits that individuals who build and protect psychological resources are more capable of sustaining performance over time (Hobfoll, 1989).

Building upon this foundation, entrepreneurs should translate these psychological and theoretical insights into daily operational practices. Specifically, SME owners and managers are encouraged to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that institutionalize service delivery quality within their businesses. These procedures should cover customer feedback handling, complaint resolution, service reliability, and professional empathy in every customer interaction. Furthermore, these SOPs should be reviewed quarterly to align with evolving customer expectations and market dynamics. By embedding such operational routines, resilience becomes a lived practice rather than a theoretical concept, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. This recommendation reflects the Sustainable Development Theory, which underscores that sustainability results from the balanced integration of human, operational, and social capabilities (Brundtland, 1987).

In addition, employee engagement plays a crucial role in sustaining both resilience and service quality. Since employees serve as the operational bridge between the entrepreneur's mindset and customer experience, SME owners and managers should foster an engaging internal environment. They should adopt participatory management practices, open communication systems, and motivational programs that recognize and reward staff contributions. Regular team-building sessions and professional development workshops should be organized to align employees with the business's service vision. When employees feel supported and valued, they internalize the entrepreneur's resilience, leading to improved performance and superior customer interactions. This approach aligns with the Dynamic Capabilities Framework, which highlights those adaptive internal processes enhance a firm's ability to respond effectively to environmental challenges (Teece et al., 1997).

Moreover, to strengthen consistency and efficiency in service delivery, entrepreneurs should embrace technology as an enabler of resilience and quality. The adoption of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, digital feedback tools, and online service monitoring platforms can significantly improve responsiveness, reliability, and customer insight. These tools should be implemented within the first year of operation and updated every other year to ensure continued relevance. Technological integration not only streamlines operations but also supports evidence-based decision-making, allowing entrepreneurs to identify and address service gaps swiftly. This digital enhancement complements resilience by providing operational stability even during unpredictable market conditions.

Beyond firm-level efforts, policy and institutional interventions are equally vital. The Ministry of Trade and Industry, in collaboration with GEA and local government authorities, should develop comprehensive SME resilience and service quality development policies. These could include financial incentives, such as grants or tax rebates for SMEs that implement recognized service quality systems or undergo resilience training. Additionally, national policy frameworks should promote mental health awareness, leadership development, and sustainable business practices among entrepreneurs. Such interventions should be introduced in the shortest possible time as part of Ghana's SME growth and competitiveness agenda. Institutional support of this nature is would help in scaling resilience and service quality across the SME sector, contributing to broader economic sustainability and aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 8, which promotes decent work and economic growth (United Nations, 2015).

Furthermore, peer networking and mentorship should be encouraged as collective mechanisms for enhancing resilience and learning. Entrepreneur associations, chambers of commerce, and SME networks should establish peer mentorship and collaborative learning platforms where business owners can share experiences, coping strategies, and best practices in service management. These platforms should host quarterly discussion sessions and annual workshops that bring together entrepreneurs from diverse sectors. The purpose of such engagements is to create social capital and emotional support systems that reduce isolation and foster collective problem-solving. This recommendation resonates with the resource gain principle of COR theory, emphasizing that shared knowledge and social networks expand entrepreneurs' resource pools and enhance their ability to recover from setbacks (Hobfoll, 2011).

To ensure these interventions are impactful, it is essential to establish continuous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms. SME owners, with the assistance of consultants or business development experts, should develop frameworks to track progress in resilience building, service quality performance, and sustainability outcomes. Monitoring should occur annually, with comprehensive evaluations conducted to assess the effectiveness of strategies and identify areas for improvement. This process ensures accountability, promotes learning, and fosters adaptability; elements central to sustainable development (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002).

Finally, continuous academic and research collaboration is necessary to support evidence-based decision-making and refine theoretical applications. Universities, research institutions, and postgraduate students should conduct longitudinal and sector-specific studies to explore how entrepreneurs' resilience and service delivery quality evolve over time and across industries. Such research should be initiated each academic

year through partnerships between academia, government, and private institutions. The insights generated will inform training curricula, policy design, and practical interventions, ensuring that theoretical models such as the COR Theory, Sustainable Development Theory, and the SERVQUAL framework remain contextually relevant to newly established Ghanaian SMEs.

In conclusion, these recommendations are deeply interconnected. Entrepreneurial training establishes the foundation for resilience; operationalizing service quality translates resilience into customer-centered action; employee engagement and technology ensure consistency and efficiency; while policy, networking, and monitoring provide the institutional and social support required to sustain progress. Academic research, in turn, ensures continuous learning and refinement of these processes. Collectively, these integrated efforts create a self-reinforcing ecosystem where psychological strength, service excellence, and sustainable performance work hand in hand, positioning Ghanaian SMEs for resilience, competitiveness, and long-term growth.

5.7 Originality of the Study

The originality of this study lies in its integrative conceptualization, contextual scope, and empirical contribution to understanding how entrepreneurs' mental resilience influences new venture sustainability through the mediating role of service delivery quality across diverse sectors within Ghana's small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) landscape. Although previous studies have explored the direct relationship between resilience, venture sustainability service delivery, (Haque, 2024; Schutte and Mberi, 2020; Guptar, 2024), this research advances scholarly discourse by developing

and empirically testing a multidimensional framework that interlinks psychological, operational, and sustainability perspectives.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes uniquely to entrepreneurship literature by integrating three distinct but complementary frameworks; the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), the Sustainable Development Theory (Brundtland, 1987), and the SERVQUAL Model (Parasuraman et al., 1988). This combination is original because previous studies have rarely examined how these frameworks intersect to explain entrepreneurial outcomes (Haque, 2024; Guptar, 2024; Schuttle and Mberi, 2020). The study extends the COR theory beyond its traditional psychological context to the realm of entrepreneurial management, demonstrating how resilient entrepreneurs mobilize and conserve psychological and social resources to achieve sustainable business outcomes (Hobfoll, 2011; Long, Liu, and Zhang 2025). Additionally, the incorporation of the SERVQUAL model provides an operational dimension to resilience by showing that mental strength can translate into enhanced service quality measured through reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles which in turn fosters customer satisfaction and firm longevity (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml et al., 1996). Meanwhile, the Sustainable Development Theory grounds these relationships in a broader developmental context, emphasizing the long-term balance between economic performance, human well-being, and social responsibility (Tekin and Ertuğrul, 2023; Fedotova et al., 2023). The integration of these frameworks therefore represents an innovative theoretical synthesis that bridges individual-level psychology and firm-level sustainability outcomes.

Contextually, this study makes a significant contribution by focusing on multiple sectors within Ghana's SME ecosystem, rather than restricting the analysis to a single industry. Data were collected from entrepreneurs operating across diverse sectors such as manufacturing, retail, services, and agro-processing. This captures the heterogeneity of the Ghanaian SME environment, where businesses face varying degrees of market competition, resource constraints, and institutional support (Amoah et al., 2022; Odei, 2024). Previous studies on entrepreneurial resilience and sustainability have largely focused on developed economies or isolated industries, limiting their generalizability (Kato, 2024; Isik et al., 2024). By contrast, this study provides a holistic understanding of how resilience and service quality jointly influence sustainability within the dynamic and often volatile context of a developing economy. The inclusion of multiple sectors enhances the external validity of the findings and contributes novel insights into how contextual factors such as cultural norms, resource availability, and customer expectations shape the manifestation of resilience and service delivery quality among entrepreneurs (Gupta, 2024; Conz et al., 2023).

The study also demonstrates methodological originality by adopting an empirical design that tests a mediational model linking entrepreneurs' mental resilience to new venture sustainability through service delivery quality. While prior research has examined these constructs separately (Fatoki, 2018; Flip and Faith 2020), this study employs an integrated analytical framework that captures both direct and indirect relationships. Using validated quantitative measurement instruments and advanced statistical modeling techniques, the research provides robust evidence of how psychological attributes are operationalized into measurable business outcomes. Moreover, the operationalization of service delivery quality using the SERVQUAL dimensions within the Ghanaian SME context represents an innovative methodological

contribution. By contextualizing these global measurement scales to reflect local business realities (Mensah & Benedict, 2010), the study enhances the precision and cultural relevance of resilience and sustainability assessment in emerging economies.

From a practical standpoint, the study moves beyond abstract conceptualization by proposing actionable pathways through which entrepreneurs, policymakers, and SME development agencies can foster both psychological resilience and service excellence. The study underscores that building mental resilience among entrepreneurs is not an isolated psychological process but one that must be complemented by structured service quality practices to achieve long-term business sustainability (Hartmann et al., 2022; Tang, 2020). This insight has significant implications for the design of entrepreneurship development programs, capacity-building initiatives, and policy interventions. By linking mental resilience training to service quality improvement, the study introduces a new paradigm for enhancing SME competitiveness and sustainability in resource-constrained environments such as Ghana.

Again, the study contributes to policy originality by providing an evidence-based framework for integrating psychological and operational dimensions into SME support policies. Traditionally, SME development policies in Ghana have focused on financial assistance and infrastructural support, with limited emphasis on the human and service-oriented aspects of entrepreneurship (Athur et al., 2025; Nkansah, 2020). This study fills that gap by demonstrating how resilience and service delivery quality collectively contribute to sustainable business performance. It thus provides policymakers and development agencies with empirical justification to include psychological resilience training, service quality benchmarking, and performance monitoring in national SME development strategies (United Nations, 2015; Wambua, 2024; Citraresmi et al., 2025).

Finally, the study's holistic approach to sustainability represents a conceptual innovation in itself. Rather than viewing sustainability purely through an economic or environmental lens, this research conceptualizes it as a dynamic interaction between mental resilience (a psychological resource), service delivery quality (an operational capability), and business longevity (a performance outcome). This multidimensional understanding advances existing theory by positioning sustainability as both a psychological and strategic process (Shah et al., 2021; Rachmad, 2021). It also establishes a foundation for future research to explore how resource based and human-centered capabilities intersect to drive firm survival and growth across different sectors (Teece et al., 1997; Lepeley, 2021; Chukwuka and Florence).

In summary, the study integrates psychological, operational, and sustainability perspectives in a novel framework. Contextually, it expands existing literature by examining multi-sectoral SMEs in a developing economy. Methodologically, it introduces a robust mediational model and contextual adaptation of the SERVQUAL dimensions. Finally, it provides actionable insights for entrepreneurs and policymakers seeking to enhance venture resilience and sustainability. Collectively, these contributions establish the study as a pioneering work that broadens academic and practical understanding of how entrepreneurs' mental resilience and service delivery quality jointly influence sustainable venture outcomes across diverse sectors in Ghana.

Limitation

Although this study makes valuable contributions to the understanding of entrepreneurs' mental resilience, new venture sustainability of SMEs in Ghana with service delivery quality as a mediator, it is not without limitations, particularly those linked to methodology, theory, and context as they may have influenced the results.

The study employed a cross-sectional research design, which captures data at a single point in time. While useful for identifying relationships among variables, this design limits the ability to establish causality. As such, the findings cannot fully explain whether mental resilience drives venture sustainability or whether sustained ventures foster greater resilience among entrepreneurs. A longitudinal approach would have been more effective in uncovering these dynamic relationships.

Again, the reliance on self-reported data raises the issue of response bias. Entrepreneurs may have overstated their resilience or the quality of their service delivery due to social desirability, pride, or fear of appearing weak. This might have led to inflated associations between variables, moreover, self-report measures exclude objective indicators such as audited financial records, customer feedback, or employee assessments (Aubouin-Bonnaventure et al, 2024) which might have provided a more balanced view of venture performance and sustainability.

Added to the above, the study was conducted within the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, which, while economically vibrant, may not fully represent the experiences of entrepreneurs in rural areas or in other regions with different socio-economic conditions. This geographic concentration limits the generalizability of the findings to wider contexts, both within Ghana and across different cultural or institutional environments.

Fourthly, although validated scales were adopted, the measurement of complex constructs such as resilience and sustainability remain inherently challenging. Reducing multi-dimensional concepts into survey items risks oversimplification, and may not fully capture entrepreneurs' lived experiences. In particular, sustainability was

measured through perceptual indicators rather than longitudinal financial, social, or environmental data, which could have strengthened the robustness of the results.

Sample composition presents another limitation. While the sample size of 337 respondents is adequate for statistical analysis, it may not have fully captured the diversity of entrepreneurs in terms of firm size, industry, and years of experience. For instance, certain sectors such as technology startups or informal businesses may have been underrepresented, reducing the ability to generalize findings across all industries.

Another limitation relates to theoretical scope. While the study drew on frameworks such as the Conservation of Resource Theory (COR), Sustainable Development Theory and The SERVQUAL Model, it did not account for other potentially relevant theories such as Institutional Theory or Contingency Theory, which might have offered alternative explanations for venture sustainability in specific environments.

Practical constraints such as time and resource limitations also shaped the study. Data collection was restricted to a set period, meaning entrepreneurs' responses might reflect short-term conditions rather than long-term realities

Lastly, the study did not consider external macroeconomic and environmental factors such as inflation, political instability, or global shocks (e.g., COVID-19) that could also impact venture sustainability independently of entrepreneurs' resilience. By focusing primarily on psychological and service-related variables, the model may have overlooked broader structural influences that shape business survival.

5.8 Future Research Direction

Although this study has provided significant insights into the effects of entrepreneurs' mental resilience on new venture sustainability, mediated by service delivery, there remain several areas that future research could explore to deepen understanding.

To begin with, the current study was limited to SMEs in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. While this context offered valuable insights, it restricts the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future research could extend the scope to other regions of Ghana or even across different countries in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Such comparative studies would help establish whether the relationships observed hold across diverse cultural, economic, and institutional contexts.

In addition, the study adopted a quantitative and cross-sectional design, which, although effective for testing causal relationships, did not allow for tracking changes over time. Consequently, future research could adopt a longitudinal approach to examine how entrepreneurs' resilience and service delivery evolve throughout the different stages of venture growth and sustainability. This would provide richer insights into the dynamic nature of resilience and its long-term implications.

Moreover, the present research examined service delivery as the sole mediator between mental resilience and new venture sustainability. However, future studies could explore other mediating or moderating variables such as innovation, leadership style, access to finance, or social capital, since these factors may also play a crucial role in explaining how resilience translates into sustainability. Including these variables would provide a more comprehensive model.

Equally important, this study concentrated primarily on entrepreneurs' mental resilience, leaving out other dimensions such as financial, social, and operational

resilience. Future research could adopt a multi-dimensional resilience framework to assess how these different forms of resilience interact to influence venture outcomes. This would broaden the understanding of resilience from a more holistic perspective.

Lastly, the study relied on self-reported data collected through questionnaires, which may introduce response bias. Future studies could therefore employ mixed-method approaches, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, case studies, or secondary performance data. This would help triangulate findings, minimize bias, and strengthen the robustness of the conclusions.

5.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter synthesized the study's principal findings, drew conclusions, discussed theoretical contributions, outlined practical implications among others. The evidence demonstrates that entrepreneurs' mental resilience materially enhances new venture sustainability, and that this relationship is substantially strengthened when resilience is operationalized through service delivery quality. The study therefore underscores the imperative of combining psychological capital with service excellence to achieve sustainable venture performance, particularly in the resource-constrained context of Ghanaian SMEs (Bonny-Tay, 2023; Korah, 2021).

Ultimately, the study concludes that mental resilience, when effectively expressed through high service delivery quality, transitions from a personal attribute into a strategic capability that secures survival, fosters competitiveness, and promotes long-term growth. Consequently, entrepreneurship development programs, business support agencies, and policymakers should adopt integrated interventions that develop both the psychological and operational capacities of entrepreneurs.

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APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF TAXONOMY FOR ARTICLES

| Authors & year | Title | Main findings | Methodology | Gaps |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Jun-Jun Tang, 2020 | Psychological Capital and Entrepreneurship Sustainability | Psychological capital (PsyCap) has a positive impact on entrepreneurship sustainability by enabling entrepreneurs to be more confident, hopeful, optimistic, and resilient. | The paper does not describe any specific methodology or empirical study) | Limited Focus on Psychological Capital Constructs. Insufficient Exploration of Contextual Factors |
| Orugba Harry Ovharhe 2023 | Sustainable Development Goals: Therapeutic Entrepreneurship and Mental Health Conditions | The study found that therapeutic entrepreneurship components (discipline, risk-culture, passion, competence, capital, spirit, and charisma) significantly improve mental health conditions among entrepreneurs. The results show a positive impact of therapeutic entrepreneurship on mental health rehabilitation, | The study used a quasi-experimental design and correlation analysis to explore the relationship between therapeutic entrepreneurship and mental health. It employed systematic and cluster random sampling to collect data from 231 participants. Regression analysis was conducted using SPSS. | The study's findings may not be generalizable beyond the specific cultural and economic context of Nigeria. The quasi-experimental design limits the ability to establish causality. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases, such as social desirability bias. |
| Isabella Hatak 2021 | Mental health in entrepreneurship | Research findings suggest that mental health can be considered as a resource in the | The chapter focuses on the individual entrepreneur as the unit of analysis, | The chapter highlights the need for further research to address unsolved issues related to mental health in entrepreneurship, |

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| | | entrepreneurial process | considering mental health in the entrepreneurial process. | |
| Jiaqi D. W. Kwok Yan 2023 | Research Note Mental Health and Well-being of Tourism Entrepreneurs During Times of Crisis | Entrepreneurship-specific training or qualifications have a significant impact on supporting the mental health of tourism entrepreneurs, as indicated by the study's findings. | The methods used in this paper involved conducting a survey of 138 homestay business operators in Wuyuan, China to gather data on tourism entrepreneurs' mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. | The research does not delve into the specific factors or mechanisms that contribute to the differences in mental health and well-being between male and female. The study focuses on homestay business operators in Wuyuan, China, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to tourism entrepreneurs in other regions or sectors |
| Hota et al., 2024 | Achieving Sustainability in Newly Founded Start-Up Businesses: Navigating Challenges and Gaining Insights | Start-up entrepreneurs face significant challenges in fostering sustainability, including the need to enhance customer ratings and ensure long-term performance. To achieve sustainability, entrepreneurs are advised to focus on implementing risk mgt. models, refining marketing strategies, and fostering virtual collaboration among geographically | Examining risk management models to identify and mitigate potential risks that could hinder sustainability in newly founded start-up businesses. Implementing eco-friendly technologies and refining marketing strategies to enhance customer ratings and long-term performance, aligning with the focus on sustainability | The paper does not explicitly address the specific challenges faced by different types of start-up businesses, such as tech-based startups versus traditional brick-and-mortar businesses. |

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| | | dispersed employee | in today's business landscape. | |
| Hartman, S. (2022) | Psychological resilience of entrepreneurs: A review and research agenda | Resilience is a multi-dimensional construct for entrepreneurs (personal resources, coping strategies, contextual buffers) that links to venture outcomes (persistence, performance, recovery); research is fragmented and needs integrative theory and longitudinal designs | Systematic / narrative literature review synthesising empirical and conceptual work on entrepreneur psychological resilience; identifies theoretical perspectives, antecedents, mechanisms, and outcomes. | Lack of longitudinal causal studies, inconsistent operationalisation of resilience, limited work connecting individual resilience to firm-level sustainability outcomes (environmental/social/economic), and few studies from low- and middle-income contexts. |
| Stephan, U. (2018) | Entrepreneurs' Mental Health and Well-Being: A Review and Research Agenda | Entrepreneur mental health affects decision-making, opportunity recognition, and firm survival; demands more entrepreneur-specific measurement approaches rather than employee-based proxies | Literature review mapping antecedents, processes, and consequences of entrepreneurs' mental health and well-being; proposes agenda items. | Calls for theory-driven empirical tests, more research on mediators (e.g., service delivery, organizational routines) and moderators (social support, institutional context), and more diverse samples |
| Fu, J., et al. (2023) | The Dark Side Effect of Entrepreneurial Resilience | While resilience generally benefits coping and adaptation, excessive or rigid resilience can lead to maladaptive persistence | Empirical analysis (mixed methods / quantitative dominant) exploring non-linear or adverse effects of high | needs replication in different sectors and with attention to boundary conditions (when does resilience switch from adaptive to maladaptive), and how mediators like service delivery moderate those effects. |

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| | | (e.g., escalation of commitment, ignoring market signals), producing negative effects on firm adaptation and sustainability | resilience on entrepreneurial decisions and outcomes | |
| Barrera-Verdugo, G., et al. (2024) | Analysing the effect of resilience and perceived social support on sustainable entrepreneurial intention | | Quantitative survey study testing relationships between resilience, perceived social support, subjective norms, and sustainable entrepreneurial intentions | Resilience and social support positively influence sustainable entrepreneurial intentions; psychological and social factors play a measurable role in shifting entrepreneurs toward sustainability-minded ventures |
| Aloulou, W. J. (2023) | Be Innovative and Resilient: Empirical Evidence from Saudi Firms on How to Translate Entrepreneurial Orientation into Firm Performance | EO dimensions significantly relate to IC; IC mediates EO → FRC; FRC partially mediates IC → FP; no direct EO → FRC or EO → FP link detected. The mediating role of resilience is nuanced | Quantitative survey of 225 randomly selected SMEs in Saudi Arabia; analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM); examines mediation of innovation capability (IC) and firm resilience capability (FRC) in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and firm performance (FP) | Context is specific (Saudi SMEs), cross-sectional data limits causal inference; does not directly address how resilience influences sustainability or service delivery mechanisms. |
| Galkina, O. (2023) | Business modelling | Organizational resilience can | Conceptual and empirical study | |

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| | under adversity: Resilience in international firms | be framed as both predisposition and process; key traits include resource redundancy, improvised collective behaviors, digitalization, strategic collaboration, and adaptive revenue models especially under ongoing adversity contexts | (likely qualitative or mixed methods) that examines organizational resilience through the lens of business model adjustments in international firms during COVID-19; builds on resilience theory and process stages | |
| Xiong, T., et al. (2024) | How does organizational resilience promote firm growth? The mediating role of strategic change and managerial myopia | Organizational resilience positively predicts firm growth. Strategic change and reduced managerial myopia mediate this relationship. Environmental uncertainty strengthens resilience strategic change, but weakens resilience reduction in managerial myopia. Effects more pronounced in SMEs, non-SOEs, and non-labor-intensive industries | Empirical study using data from Chinese A-share listed firms (2010–2020); statistical analysis of mediating roles (strategic change, managerial myopia) and moderation by environmental uncertainty. | While focused on growth, it doesn't directly examine sustainability (social or environmental dimensions) or mechanisms like service delivery; specific to manufacturing context in China. |

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| Olaleye et al., (2024) | Leveraging innovation capability and organizational resilience for business sustainability among SMEs: A PLS-SEM approach | Innovation capability improves business sustainability; sustainable competitive advantage and environmental dynamism mediate this relationship; organizational resilience plays a key intermediary role. | Quantitative survey (401 SME employees in Lagos, Nigeria), analyzed via PLS-SEM to test relationships among innovation capability, organizational resilience, environmental dynamism, competitive advantage, and business sustainability. | Focused on Nigeria may lack generalizability; doesn't unpack service delivery or psychological resilience at individual entrepreneur level. |
| Faeroevik, K. H. (2024) | SMEs' resilience and cross-industry innovation before and after a crisis | Cross-industry innovation strategies help SMEs transition from survival to adaptation, thereby enhancing resilience and diversification. CII capabilities are crucial, especially during crises, and help prepare for future transitions (e.g., green shifts). | Likely qualitative/longitudinal case-study of SMEs (in O&G industry) tracking cross-industry innovation (CII) as a resilience capability across crises; analysis over time (longitudinal trend) | Industry-specific (O&G), context may limit generalization; needs broader datasets and testing across other crisis types and sectors; does not directly tie to service delivery or sustainable venture outcomes. |
| Harrison, J., & Kipkorir, M. (2022) | The link between organizational resilience and the sustainability of community-based social enterprises: Evidence from | A strong positive relationship exists between crisis anticipation, adaptability, robustness (resilience dimensions), | Descriptive research using surveys from 104 managers and coordinators across 26 community-based social | Limited geographic and sector scope; descriptive design; lacks deeper mediation analysis (e.g., service delivery mechanisms). |

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| | the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya | and overall sustainability of social enterprises during COVID-19 | enterprises in Nairobi, Kenya | |
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APPENDIX B
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
M.PHIL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

Dear respondent,

The researcher is a student from the University of Education, Winneba, and is undertaking a Master of Philosophy in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management. This survey seeks your response on entrepreneurs' mental resilience and new venture sustainability. The study further examines the role of service delivery in this relationship. The purpose of this survey is to collect your opinions and experiences regarding, entrepreneurs' mental resilience, new venture sustainability and service delivery. Your responses will be kept confidential, and no personally identifying information will be collected.

The data collected in this survey will be used solely for research purposes, and the results will be reported in aggregate form.

Thank you for your time and participation. You are required to tick [✓] your response using the five-point Likert Scale, where Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, 2= Disagree (D), 3=Indifferent/Not Sure, 4= Strongly Agree and 5= Agree

Section A: Biographical Data

Age Group (in years):

- Under 25
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45 and above

Sex:

- Male
- Female

Marital Status:

- Single
- Married
- Divorced

Educational Level:

- MSLC / JSS
- SSSCE / WASSCE
- Diploma
- HND
- 1st Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD
- Other (please specify): _____

5. Have you ever been employed in any other organization?

- Never been employed Yes
- No
- Currently employed Yes
- No
- Previously employed Yes
- No

6. Have you ever started any business other than this one? Yes

No

7. Industry and Sector Classification

(Please tick the category that best describes your SME's main line of business)

Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing

- Crop and animal farming
- Aquaculture and fisheries
- Agro-processing

Manufacturing

- Food and beverages processing
- Textiles, apparel, and leather
- Wood and furniture
- Chemicals, plastics, and related products
- Metal and machinery fabrication

Construction and Real Estate

- Building and civil works
- Real estate and property services

Wholesale and Retail Trade

- General trading (shops, supermarkets)

- Automotive sales and repairs
- Other consumer goods trading

Hospitality and Tourism

- Hotels, guesthouses, restaurants
- Travel and tour services
- Event management

Transportation and Logistics

- Road transport (taxis, buses, haulage)
- Courier/delivery services
- Logistics and warehousing

Financial and Business Services

- Microfinance, savings and loans
- Consultancy and professional services (legal, accounting, HR)
- ICT and digital services

Health and Social Services

- Clinics, pharmacies, health centers
- Daycare and elderly care services

Education and Training

- Private schools and training centers
- Vocational and technical training

Creative Arts and Entertainment

- Media, film, music production
- Fashion and design
- Beauty and personal care services

Energy and Utilities

- Renewable energy enterprises
- Small-scale water supply and waste management

Other (please specify): _____

SECTION B: Entrepreneurs' Mental Resilience;

Indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement by checking the appropriate number from 1 to 5, using the following scale:

| 1 = Strongly Disagree 4 = Strongly Agree | 2 = Disagree 5 = Agree | 3 = Indifferent/Not sure | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Section 1: General mental Wellbeing; (Perceived Entrepreneurial stress measures) | | | | | | |
| 1. In managing my SME, I often feel stressed due to the demands of my business or market competition. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 2. I am able to maintain a healthy work-life balance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 3. I feel anxious about the financial stability of my business. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 4. I feel my knowledge about this entrepreneurship journey is lower than what I thought I knew | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 5. There is a rapid development of products in my line of business which means that I need to always update my knowledge to meet customer expectation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Section 2: Emotional Wellbeing | | | | | | |
| 6. I feel satisfied with my entrepreneurial journey. | | | | | | |
| 7. I experience mood swings related to the ups and downs of my business. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 8. I can effectively manage my emotions during challenging business situations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 9. I feel optimistic about the future of my business. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 10. I feel very happy and satisfied in the process of starting my own business and have a sense of accomplishment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 11. I am engaged in the daily activities of my business | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Section 3: Social Support and Relationships | | | | | | |
| 12. I have people/ someone that helps me make decisions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 13. I have a strong support network to help me through tough times. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 14. I feel comfortable sharing my business struggles with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 15. I have someone to talk to when I feel mentally overwhelmed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Section 4: Coping Mechanisms | | | | | | |
| 16. I actively engage in activities to reduce stress (e.g., exercise, hobbies). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 17. I can easily disconnect from work when needed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 18. I remain optimistic even in the face of challenges and risks. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |

| Section 5: Mental Resilience Awareness | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19. I am aware of the signs of mental resilience issues in myself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I believe that mental resilience is as important as business success. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. I look for creative ways to alter difficult situations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. I actively work to replace the losses I encounter in life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2.3 I am able to adapt when changes occur. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. I take proactive steps to maintain my mental health. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

SECTION C: New Venture Sustainability

Indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement by checking the appropriate number from 1 to 7, using the following scale:

| | <i>3 = Indifferent/Not sure</i> | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| <i>1 = Strongly disagree</i> | <i>2 = Disagree</i> | | <i>5 = Agree</i> | | |
| <i>4 = strongly agree</i> | | | | | |
| Section 6: Entrepreneurial decision-making | | | | | |
| 25. Goals are clear and specific at the beginning of the entrepreneurial venture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. We have a detailed entrepreneurial plan before the start of entrepreneurial activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. We choose our entrepreneurial projects mainly by analyzing the future returns | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. Expected returns are a decisive factor in our decisions related to entrepreneurial activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Section 7: Environmental Sustainability | | | | | |
| 29. Anticipated impacts on the environment are considered in our line of business. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. We try to identify the risks of our entrepreneurial activities to the environment through market research and competitive analysis. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Section 8: Effectuation | | | | | |
| 31. We organize specific entrepreneurial activities based on the resources at our disposal. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. Potential losses are a decisive factor in our decisions related to entrepreneurial activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. Our business is flexible and able to respond to new opportunities that arise during the new venture process. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. We focus on potential risks and losses when deciding on capital expenditures. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Section 9: Economic Sustainability | | | | | |
| 35. My SME can generate consistent income to sustain its operations over time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. My business is resilient to economic challenges or market fluctuations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. The financial situation of our business is good. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. The company's net profit is increasing year by year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. We feel very happy and satisfied in the process of starting our own business and have a sense of accomplishment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. I have a higher return on investment than our competitors. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. Our company's sales revenue is increasing year by year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. Our company's market share is increasing year by year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Section 10: Social Sustainability | | | | | |
| 43. My SME provide incentives to the local community especially during religious festivities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. My SME invest and maintain the existing structure of people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. Customers are always looking forward to our price cuts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. My SME respects cultural diversity and promotes inclusion in its operations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

SECTION D: Service Delivery

Indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement by checking the appropriate number from 1 to 5, using the following scale:

| | <i>1 = Strongly Disagree</i> | <i>2 = Disagree</i> | <i>3 = Indifferent/Not sure</i> | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| | <i>4 = Strongly Agree</i> | <i>5 = Agree</i> | | | |
| Section 11: Customer service | | | | | |
| 47. We provide a caring environment so customers do not think we are only interested in their money | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. We help customers feel relaxed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. We provide opportunities for customers to make decisions about what they want. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 50. We Fully explain to customers what the business does. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 51. Make our customers feel valued | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52. Provide consistent information to customers as and when they visit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Section 12: Business Environment | | | | | |
| 53. A conducive atmosphere is provided to make customers feel welcomed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 54. Every customer is given a unique treat tailored to their needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. We Provide enough time to talk to customers so they don't feel rushed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Personalized services are rendered to customers at their request | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Thank you for participating in the survey