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The truth about bricolage, dispositional optimism, and psychological wellbeing in entrepreneurship: evidence from a systematic review

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Abstract: While entrepreneurship offers personal fulfilment, autonomy and financial growth, it also poses significant psychological wellbeing challenges. Despite growing interest in this area, existing literature lacks an integrated analysis of how entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism jointly influence entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing. This study employed Paul and Criado's (2020) systematic literature review protocol, drawing on articles from *Journal Storage (JSTOR)* and *Scopus* to develop an integrated research model. A review of 11 relevant studies revealed that entrepreneurial bricolage enables entrepreneurs to optimise limited resources, fostering job satisfaction and positive affect. Dispositional optimism enhances coping abilities, contributing to positive affect, job satisfaction and life satisfaction. By bringing together these underexplored yet impactful constructs, this study proposes an exploratory integrated research model that represents an initial step toward linking the behavioural (bricolage) and cognitive-affective (optimism) dimensions of entrepreneurial practice within a holistic framework.

Keywords: entrepreneurial bricolage; dispositional optimism; life satisfaction; entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing; positive affect; job satisfaction; life satisfaction; fear of failure; entrepreneurial stress; exploratory integrated research models; uncertain environments; systematic review.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Entrepreneurship benefits

Entrepreneurship has morphed into a vital concept for driving economic growth, innovation and job creation in today's society (Bogdea et al., 2024; Huang and Liu, 2019; Reynolds, 2022). Entrepreneurs stimulate economic growth by creating a climate for innovation, generating employment opportunities and fostering community development, which collectively contribute to improved living standards and societal wellbeing (Audretsch et al., 2015; Huggins et al., 2018; Miles and Domke-Damonte, 2000; Vessal et al., 2021; Wall-Andrews, 2022). Besides these direct economic impacts, entrepreneurship enhances a country's competitiveness by attracting investment and facilitating the diffusion of new technologies and business models across industries, thus strengthening national and regional economies (Acs et al., 2017; Guerrero and Urbano, 2019). At the societal level, entrepreneurial activity addresses unmet needs, reduces inequality and supports the development of more inclusive and sustainable communities, thereby driving social change (Seelos and Mair, 2005; Zahra et al., 2009).

Youth entrepreneurship, in particular, is recognised for reducing unemployment and underemployment by cultivating a generation of innovative thinkers and problem-solvers (Adu-Appiah and Amankwah, 2024). It empowers young people by fostering self-reliance, improving leadership skills and inculcating risk-taking and resilience, which are essential attributes in starting and sustaining innovative ventures (Djordjevic et al., 2021; Manolova et al., 2019). Furthermore, youth-led entrepreneurial ventures often contribute to digital innovation, sustainability initiatives and the creative industries, acting as critical pathways for integrating young people into the labour market (Varotsis, 2022).

1.2 Entrepreneurship psychological wellbeing challenges

Besides providing immense personal fulfilment, autonomy and financial growth, entrepreneurial engagements are also associated with significant psychological wellbeing challenges (D'Andria et al., 2018; Foster et al., 2019; Lerman et al., 2021; Wang et al.,

2024). Entrepreneurs operate in environments characterised by elevated uncertainty levels and isolation, which can compromise their psychological wellbeing (Su et al., 2023; Wiklund et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship is sometimes accompanied by elevated levels of stress that adversely affect psychological wellbeing (Barbosa et al., 2024; Gish et al., 2022; Rauch et al., 2018). Besides stress, fear of failure is a pervasive and powerful emotion experienced by many entrepreneurs, often influencing their behaviours and their psychological wellbeing (Mehdi and Singh, 2023; Pradana et al., 2023). While a certain degree of fear can motivate individuals to prepare adequately and strive for success, high levels can become a significant psychological obstacle (Cacciotti et al., 2020; Wennberg et al., 2013). The emotional costs of business failure, including loss of confidence, anxiety and burnout, adversely affect entrepreneurs' psychological well-being in the long term (Wiklund et al., 2020). Emotional responses to important events such as bankruptcy can be overwhelming to entrepreneurs, sometimes leading to sustained trauma and impaired wellbeing (Kaiser and Kuckertz, 2023; Lechat and Torrès, 2016; Da Silva and Abreu, 2022).

1.3 Gaps in coping mechanisms

Researchers have increasingly examined mechanisms entrepreneurs use to manage the psychological consequences of their work (Reardon et al., 2021; Shepherd, 2020; Uy et al., 2013; Wach et al., 2021). Emerging evidence demonstrates that bricolage – a creative strategy in which entrepreneurs capitalise on the resources at hand, often pushing their limits to tackle obstacles and generate new value (Hou et al., 2022; Steffens et al., 2023) – promotes key psychological wellbeing antecedents, including resilience and sense of purpose (Cotterell et al., 2024; Gbadegeshin, 2018). By embracing bricolage, entrepreneurs develop a sense of control and self-efficacy through problem-solving, which improves their ability to cope with challenges (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Gbadegeshin, 2018). Additionally, bricolage promotes flexibility, allowing entrepreneurs to change hurdles to opportunities, leading to greater optimism and reduced psychological strain (Hou et al., 2022; Senyard et al., 2014).

Similarly, dispositional optimism has increasingly been recognised as a valuable psychological resource for coping with emotionally challenging business situations (Craig et al., 2021; Kivimäki et al., 2005; Yang et al., 2013). This construct is broadly defined as a stable trait among entrepreneurs marked by a general expectation of favourable outcomes (Crane and Crane, 2007; Scheier and Carver, 1987). In entrepreneurship, dispositional optimism serves as a critical psychological resource closely associated with adaptive coping mechanisms and reduced mortality risks during adversity (Burešová et al., 2020; Carver and Scheier, 2014; Craig et al., 2021; Kivimäki et al., 2005; Scheier et al., 2001; Yang et al., 2013). Hence, further inquiry is vital to understand how dispositional optimism influences psychological wellbeing within the entrepreneurial context.

Despite each construct's potential to enhance psychological wellbeing antecedents, minimal effort has been made to develop an integrated research approach to elucidate their joint impact on entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing. Literature offers limited insight into how these constructs interact to foster desirable outcomes within the entrepreneurial context (Oriol and Miranda, 2024; Uribe et al., 2021; Zhen et al., 2014). The present study systematically reviews bricolage and dispositional optimism literature

to propose an integrated research model to understand the effect of entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism on entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing.

1.4 The focus on bricolage and optimism as underexplored resources

Given their potential to foster business resilience, heightened sense of purpose, satisfaction and adaptive coping mechanisms, entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism emerge as a compelling area of inquiry to understand how it shapes entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing.

This study aims to fill the existing gap by contributing to a more nuanced understanding of how entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism interact to shape entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing. By illuminating the interplay between these two constructs, the study yields an insightful comprehension of the mechanisms that support entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing in resource-constrained, uncertain and high-pressure environments.

2 Literature review

2.1 Definition of entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing

Within entrepreneurship, psychological wellbeing is often defined from hedonic, eudemonic and hedonic-eudemonic perspectives. From a hedonic purview, entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing is defined as either life satisfaction, positive affect or job satisfaction (Benz and Frey, 2003, 2008). Employing a eudemonic perspective, Shir and Ryf (2021, p.6) defined entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing as a state comprising six dimensions: 'autonomy, self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, positive relations with others and personal growth'. A hedonic-eudemonic worldview conceptualises entrepreneurs' wellbeing as 'the feeling of satisfaction, positive affect, infrequent negative affect and psychological functioning in relation to developing, starting, growing and running an entrepreneurial venture' (Wiklund et al., 2019, p.579).

2.2 Entrepreneurial bricolage

Entrepreneurial scholars (Cotterell et al., 2024; Gbadegesin, 2018; Halme et al., 2012) recognise bricolage as a mechanism through which ventures overcome resource constraints and exploit opportunities in uncertain environments. Baker and Nelson (2005) demonstrated that entrepreneurs exploit this approach to creatively reconfigure available resources to generate novel solutions. Thus, bricolage drives firm survival during resource-constrained contexts. Building on this observation, Senyard et al. (2014) found that bricolage fosters innovativeness in new ventures through experimentation and non-conventional combinations of resources to achieve organisational goals. Bricolage is particularly effective in contexts characterised by uncertainty and limited resources (Fisher, 2012).

Desa and Basu (2013) emphasised bricolage's valuable contribution to social entrepreneurs operating in institutional voids by facilitating the development of workable solutions. More recent studies (Halme et al., 2012; Di Domenico et al., 2010; Salunke et

al., 2013) also linked bricolage to inclusive and sustainable innovation. Rahman et al. (2020) found that, in the entrepreneurial domain, bricolage enables individuals to overcome barriers by utilising readily available resources while strategically investing in new ones. This dual approach fosters innovative behaviour and augments entrepreneurs' ability to secure a competitive edge (Doern et al., 2017). Nevertheless, Park and Seo (2024) caution that an excessive reliance on bricolage may undermine strategic foresight and long-term sustainability, emphasising the importance of complementing bricolage with more structured, forward-looking strategies. Collectively, this body of work positions bricolage as a significant explanatory construct in entrepreneurship research, emphasising its role in fostering innovation and enabling ventures to thrive in volatile and resource-poor settings.

2.3 Dispositional optimism

Dispositional optimism has been increasingly examined in entrepreneurship research as a key trait that shapes entrepreneurs' approach to opportunity recognition, risk-taking and venture performance (Hmieleski and Baron, 2009; Li et al., 2021). Li et al. (2021) reported that entrepreneurial optimism positively affects new venture performance, with legal/institutional frameworks (such as labour law) mediating this relationship. However, Hmieleski and Baron (2009) found that excessive optimism can sometimes negatively affect new venture performance, particularly in dynamic environments, by luring entrepreneurs to underestimate risks or adopt poor strategies. These mixed outcomes suggest that while optimism is generally beneficial in entrepreneurship, its effectiveness depends on the prevailing context and the entrepreneur's ability to balance confidence with realistic judgment.

Recent scholarly works Amore et al. (2022); Fatma et al. (2024) and Mahn et al. (2024) associated dispositional optimism with enhanced innovation tendencies during crisis times. Amore et al. (2022) found that highly optimistic entrepreneurs were likely to innovate new products and make strategic organisational changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, such entrepreneurs experienced greater revenue growth during this period. Fatma et al. (2024) similarly illustrated that optimism positively affects entrepreneurial success, especially sales growth and employee numbers, with factors such as experience, age and gender moderating the relationships. Mahn et al. (2024) linked optimism to enhanced innovation activity and productivity growth. However, their findings showed that this impact does not necessarily translate into improved innovation quality or outputs. Therefore, while dispositional optimism can amplify innovation, adaptive behaviour and performance, especially under uncertain conditions, its benefits are not universal.

3 Research methodology

Paul and Criado's (2020) reviewed protocol was adopted in this paper to recognise and evaluate critical insights and knowledge on bricolage, dispositional optimism, and entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing. This protocol is useful in business- and management-related research due to its structured and transparent methodology (Fisch and Block, 2018; Paul and Criado, 2020). Additionally, it was followed to ensure a nuanced synthesis of fragmented knowledge and establish conceptual clarity (Systematic

literature reviews provide a nuanced summary of extant studies on the topic under investigation (Fisch and Block, 2018; Paul and Criado, 2020). The review was structured around this protocol's three core phases critical for conducting high-quality systematic literature reviews: planning, executing and reporting.

3.1 Planning phase

The planning phase entails clearly defining the review's objective, outlining research questions, describing boundaries and developing a review protocol (Paul and Criado, 2020). The objective of this study is to integrate literature on entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism and appraise their influence on psychological wellbeing in entrepreneurial contexts. To meet this aim, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1 How does entrepreneurial bricolage foster entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing?
- 2 How does dispositional optimism promote entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing?

This review confines itself to scholarly research published between 2015 and 2025 to capture research evolution and trends in the past decade. Focusing on this timeframe allows the study to provide an up-to-date synthesis of contemporary developments, methodologies and theoretical advancements, reflecting the current state of knowledge and identifying recent gaps and directions for future research. The study is limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, which undergo rigorous evaluation by experts in the field, reducing biases, methodological flaws and inaccuracies and enhancing findings' reliability and credibility (Hames, 2007; Gasparyan et al, 2015; Kelly et al., 2014). By confining the review to these publications, the study underscores scholarly rigor and ensures that conclusions are drawn from evidence that meets established academic standards, contributing to a more trustworthy and authoritative literature synthesis. The study's disciplinary focus is confined to the entrepreneurship field, especially studies exploring the nexus between dispositional optimism, entrepreneurial bricolage and entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing.

The first phase also entails developing a review protocol outlining the procedures for searching, screening, selecting and analysing publications (Paul and Criado, 2020). Articles were sourced exclusively from Scopus and Journal Storage (JSTOR) databases. These databases were selected due to their rigorous indexing standards, which ensure access to high-quality, peer-reviewed publications from reputable academic journals. Scopus, in particular, is renowned for its comprehensive citation indexing, advanced bibliometric tools and coverage of interdisciplinary scholarship, enabling the identification of seminal and influential works (Ahmad and Bajwa, 2023). JSTOR complements this database by providing extensive archival access to foundational research, particularly in the social sciences and humanities and delivering valuable historical and theoretical perspectives (Sharma, 2019).

Unlike Google Scholar, which includes a wide array of non-peer-reviewed content and lacks strict quality filters, Scopus and JSTOR maintain stringent inclusion criteria that augments academic reliability (Ahmad and Bajwa, 2023; Sharma, 2019). Additionally, databases such as EBSCOhost, though useful, often require navigation across multiple sub-databases and may lack the unified analytical tools provided by Scopus (Younger and Boddy, 2009). Therefore, the deliberate selection of Scopus and JSTOR was guided by the need for quality, precision and depth in identifying literature

aligned with the study's focus on entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing, bricolage and dispositional optimism.

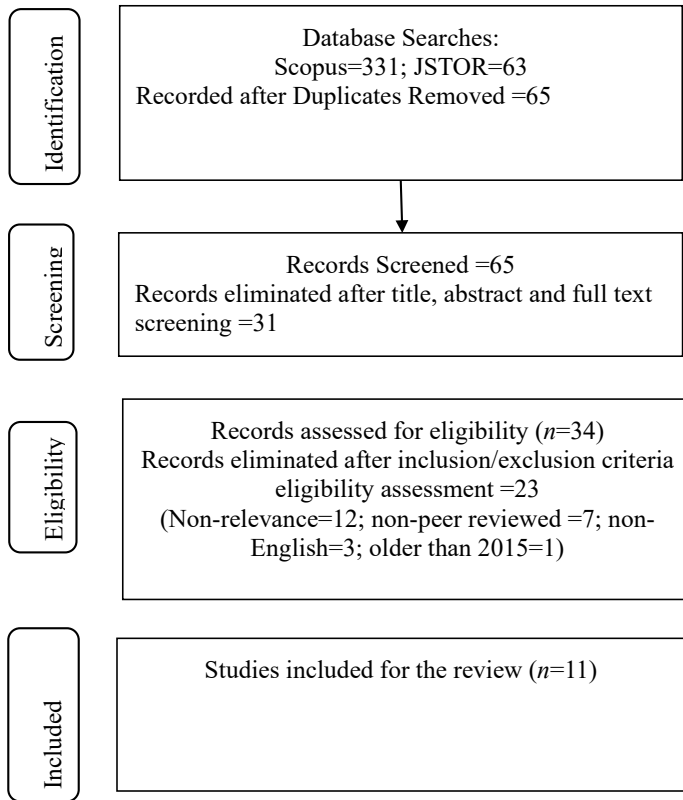
The following search terms were used to locate sources in Scopus: 1) "bricolage" AND "entrepreneurs" AND "psychological wellbeing" OR "satisfaction" OR "positive affect" AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Entrepreneurship") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Bricolage")) and "dispositional optimism" AND "entrepreneurs" AND "psychological wellbeing" OR "satisfaction" OR "positive affect" AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")). The conventional search bar and artificial intelligence (AI) search tool were used to improve the prospects of accessing more sources. Similarly, two sets of search terms were applied in JSTOR: ("bricolage" AND "entrepreneurs" AND "psychological wellbeing" OR "satisfaction" OR "positive affect") AND la:(eng OR en) and "dispositional optimism" AND "entrepreneurs" AND "psychological wellbeing" OR "satisfaction" OR "positive affect".

3.2 *Execution phase*

The execution phase involves conducting a systematic literature search, screening and selecting relevant studies, extracting and coding data and analysing and synthesising data (Paul and Criado, 2020). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow chart was adopted to guide the article selection process due to its standardised procedure, which involves identifying, screening, eligibility assessment and inclusion, thereby ensuring transparency, reproducibility and methodological rigour (Liberati et al., 2009; Tedja et al., 2024). During the identification process, relevant keywords were applied in the two databases, generating 394 publications (Scopus=331; JSTOR=63). Articles appearing in both databases were eliminated, resulting in 65 sources.

The remaining 65 articles were subjected to the screening process based on title, abstract and full text. Thirty-one irrelevant publications were eliminated, resulting in 34 articles assessed for eligibility in line with the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Per the inclusion criteria, only peer-reviewed journal articles were included due to their credibility to yield high-quality evidence (Hames, 2007; Gasparyan et al, 2015; Kelly et al., 2014). Articles examining entrepreneurial bricolage and entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing were included to align with the study's pre-determined scope. Articles published between 2015 and 2025 were included to ensure the study captures recent research evolution and trends. Owing to the extensive coverage of studies published in English and the need to alleviate loss of meaning during translation (Koshy and Chandra, 2020), only articles published in English were incorporated into the review process.

Excluded articles included those not relevant to the topic, non-peer-reviewed publications (grey literature, books, conference papers and reports), not published in English and published before 2015. After subjecting the 34 articles to the inclusion/exclusion criteria, 23 publications were removed (non-relevance=12; non-peer reviewed =7; non-English=3; older than 2015=1). The outstanding 11 articles were included in the systematic literature review and analysed using thematic analysis. Figure 1 summarises the article selection process through a PRISMA flow chart.

Figure 1 Flow diagram summarising different phases of the systematic review

4 Findings

In line with Paul and Criado's (2020) reviewed protocol, this chapter presents a report of the findings and analyses of the selected 11 articles. The section covers the descriptive analysis of the studies and the main findings.

4.1 Descriptive analysis

As summarised in Table 1, most studies were conducted in Europe (4), followed by Asia ($n=3$), Australia ($n=1$), Middle East ($n=1$), India ($n=1$) and Africa ($n=1$). Nine studies employed quantitative methods, while the remaining two used qualitative and mixed methods each. Six studies explored the link between dispositional optimism and entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing, with the remaining four examining how entrepreneurial bricolage affects entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing.

Table 1 A descriptive analysis summary

<i>Article</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Method and Design</i>
Kleine-Stegemann et al. (2024)	Europe	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey
Rahman et al. (2020)	Asia	Quantitative
Fatoki and Dzomonda (2019)	Africa	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey
Purnamawati et al. (2022)	Asia	Qualitative, causal research design utilising a cross-sectional survey
Lindblom et al. (2020a)	Europe	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey
Fatma et al. (2024)	Middle east	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey
Biegańska (2018)	Europe	Quantitative, cross-sectional comparative survey
Nikolaev et al. (2020)	Australia	Quantitative, longitudinal panel design
Srinivasan et al. (2024)	Asia	Mixed-method, survey and semi-structured interviews
Xu et al. (2022)	Asia	Quantitative, multilevel daily diary design
Lindblom et al. (2020b)	Europe	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey

4.2 Main findings

Eleven papers that entered the final stage of the review were thematically analysed by examining the full texts. Based on the analysis, the selected publications were clustered into three broad psychological wellbeing dimensions: affect, job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism uniquely influenced affect, job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Drawing on these correlations, the thematic analysis uncovered three major themes: entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and affect, entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and job satisfaction and entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and life satisfaction, as summarised in Table 2. Sub-section 4.3 presents and analyses of these six overarching themes and their underpinning sub-themes.

Table 2 Summary of themes

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Studies</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Method</i>
Entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and affect	Rahman et al. (2020)	Asia	Quantitative
	Fatoki and Dzomonda (2019)	Africa	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey
	Biegańska (2018)	Europe	Quantitative, cross-sectional comparative survey
	Xu et al. (2022)	Asia	Quantitative, multilevel daily diary design
	Srinivasan et al. (2024)	Asia	Mixed-method, survey and semi-structured interviews

Table 2 Summary of themes (continued)

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Studies</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Method</i>
Entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and life satisfaction	Purnamawati et al. (2022)	Asia	Qualitative, causal research design utilising a cross-sectional survey
	Fatoki and Dzomonda (2019)	Africa	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey
	Srinivasan et al. (2024)	Asia	Mixed-method, survey and semi-structured interviews
	Srinivasan et al. (2024)	Asia	Mixed-method, survey and semi-structured interviews
Entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and job satisfaction	Lindblom et al. (2020a)	Europe	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey
	Nikolaev et al. (2020)	Australia	Quantitative, longitudinal panel design
	Kleine-Stegemann et al. (2024)	Europe	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey

4.3 Themes

4.3.1 Entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and affect (4 studies)

This review reveals that entrepreneurial bricolage enhances two antecedents of positive affect (passion and feelings of good health) through the influence of work performance and business sustainability. Affect delineates an emotional state comprising immediate emotional responses (for instance, joy, fear) and more sustained moods states (contentment, anxiety) (Russell and Barrett, 1999). Thus, positive affect implies the degree to which a person feels excited or experiences pleasurable emotions such as happiness and joy (Kim et al., 2024). Rahman et al. (2020) established that entrepreneurial bricolage and entrepreneurial passion significantly predict positive affect among micro-entrepreneurs. Additionally, they found that bricolage mediates the relationship between passion for inventing, founding and developing and micro-entrepreneurs' positive affect. Fatoki and Dzomonda (2019) noted that besides optimising entrepreneurial success in terms of financial growth, bricolage improves non-economic components of business, notably entrepreneurs' emotions and feelings. The scholars demonstrated that managing an enterprise with limited resources enables entrepreneurs to develop positive feelings and happiness.

Similarly, this review also unearthed a positive nexus between dispositional optimism and affect. The three studies supporting this theme showed that dispositional optimism encourages positive affect by triggering positive feelings (pride) and reducing negative emotions (fear, stress, fear of failure). Biegańska (2018) found that dispositional optimism and the propensity to risk are predictors of positive affect (19%) and negative affect (nervousness, anger, guilt) (16%) among individuals making a career change from employment to entrepreneurship. However, these relatively modest percentages suggest that other factors like social support and financial stability may also influence individuals' affect during the employment-entrepreneurship transition. Xu et al. (2022) demonstrated that dispositional optimism minimises workload-related stressors, resulting

in reduced fear and amplified sense of pride (positive affect) among entrepreneurs working in business parks. Specifically, they found that dispositional optimism attenuates the financial stressor-fear association, controlling discrete emotions (fear and pride). Hence, dispositional optimism significantly affects the key attributes of job satisfaction. Srinivasan et al. (2024) stressed dispositional optimism's role in enhancing entrepreneurial wellbeing outcomes for both novice and experienced entrepreneurs by boosting the confidence to cope with stress and fear of failure.

4.3.2 Entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and life satisfaction (4 studies)

The findings of this review highlight a positive relationship between entrepreneurial bricolage and life satisfaction, emphasising the influence of subjective wellbeing and empowerment. In entrepreneurship, subjective wellbeing is defined as a measure of positive feelings and life satisfaction (Berglund et al., 2016) while empowerment broadly encapsulates economic stability (Bustamante-Gavino et al., 2011). In addition to linking bricolage to positive affect, Fatoki and Dzomonda (2019) illustrated that it enhances subjective wellbeing outcomes (happiness and work performance), resulting in life satisfaction. Purnamawati et al. (2022) investigated the effect of bricolage on female entrepreneurs in the weaving sector. They found that bricolage strengthens women's business by boosting their resilience to survive severe resource shortages. The study further revealed this entrepreneurial resilience significantly influences women entrepreneurs' empowerment, affecting subjective wellbeing through the manifestation of life satisfaction.

Two of the reviewed studies also indicated that dispositional optimism is related to entrepreneurial success, which is a significant marker of life satisfaction. Lindblom et al. (2020a) established that dispositional optimism directly and indirectly correlates with entrepreneurial outcomes through life satisfaction. They also revealed that dispositional optimism positively correlates with entrepreneurial success among SME entrepreneurs, with life satisfaction mediating the outcome. Similarly, Fatma et al. (2024) reported a statistically positive impact of dispositional optimism on entrepreneurial success among SME entrepreneurs, with satisfaction with past entrepreneurial successes acting as a mediator.

4.3.3 Entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and job satisfaction (3 studies)

Defined as a positive emotional state resulting from one's self-appraisal job experiences (Gessesse and Premanandam, 2024), job satisfaction emerged in this review as a core predictor of psychological wellbeing driven by entrepreneurial bricolage. Kleine-Stegemann et al.'s (2024) examination of entrepreneurial bricolage's impact on Work-Life Balance (WLB) and job satisfaction among German entrepreneurs reveals that bricolage behaviour enhances job satisfaction in novice and experienced entrepreneurs. However, they report differing mediating effects of WLB on the bricolage-satisfaction relationship across the two entrepreneur categories, with notable effects noted among experienced entrepreneurs. This divergent mediation outcomes points to unique underlying mechanisms influencing job satisfaction for novice entrepreneurs. Factors, such as uncertainty tolerance and the lack of business autonomy potentially play a more

dominant role in the nascent phases of entrepreneurship. Additionally, the effects of entrepreneurial bricolage require more time to translate into perceived WLB and job satisfaction, pointing to a potential entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing developmental trajectory that is currently underexplored. These concerns notwithstanding, Kleine-Stegemann et al.'s (2024) findings explicated how bricolage contributes to entrepreneurial activities, particularly in times of resource insufficiency, by empowering entrepreneurs to adapt and achieve sustained life satisfaction.

Consistently, two other studies unearthed a relationship between dispositional optimism and key job satisfaction indicators of reduced job stress, customer orientation and affect. Lindblom et al. (2020b) noted that dispositional optimism alleviates job-related stress and enhances customer orientation, positively affecting retail entrepreneurs' job satisfaction. Nikolaev et al. (2020) underscored the role of optimism in the work-to-entrepreneurship transition. They indicate that workers with a less optimistic outlook are likely leave a job and engage in entrepreneurship. Conversely, individuals exhibiting dispositional optimism have lower chances of engaging in entrepreneurship, suggesting a high job satisfaction in their current work portfolios.

5 Discussion: a research model

5.1 Discussion

This study examined the influence of entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism on entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing. The findings reveal a positive relationship between entrepreneurial bricolage and positive affect (Fatoki and Dzomonda, 2019; Rahman et al., 2020). Likewise, dispositional optimism emerged as a strong predictor of positive affect, reinforcing the role of cognitive traits in shaping emotional experiences among entrepreneurs (Biegańska, 2018; Srinivasan et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2022). These results underscore the value of cultivating resourcefulness and adaptive positive cognition as strategies for navigating entrepreneurial challenges and improving emotional resilience and psychological health.

Extant literature supports the notion that positive affect contributes to greater resilience, improved mental and physical health, and higher overall life satisfaction (Moreta-Herrera et al., 2024; Tsujimoto et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024). In the entrepreneurial context where uncertainty, stress, and failure are prevalent, the ability to experience and sustain positive emotions becomes a crucial asset. Positive affect functions as a psychological buffer, promoting a more optimistic outlook and enhancing coping mechanisms when facing adversity (Wang et al., 2024). However, some scholars caution that excessive optimism may be counter-productive – it encourages unrealistic expectations, potentially resulting in risk under-estimation, poor decision-making and ultimately psychological strain (Hayward et al., 2010; Hmieleski and Baron, 2009). Therefore, balancing optimistic mindsets and realistic appraisal is pivotal to optimising wellbeing and business success outcomes.

The study also revealed a positive relationship between entrepreneurial bricolage and life satisfaction, aligning with prior findings that underscore the adaptive advantages of resourcefulness in uncertain environments (Fatoki and Dzomonda, 2019; Purnamawati et al., 2022). Similarly, dispositional optimism was found to enhance life satisfaction significantly (Fatma et al., 2024; Lindblom et al., 2020a), suggesting that individuals

with a positive outlook are better equipped to navigate challenges and maintain a sense of personal fulfilment. These findings are particularly noteworthy given the well-established connection between life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing, including higher levels of happiness and emotional stability (Akbarayam and Ketan, 2024; Jentsch and Hoferichter, 2024; Sufya and Abas, 2024). Furthermore, life satisfaction serves as a critical indicator of reduced psychological stress, highlighting its protective role in psychological wellbeing outcomes (Jentsch and Hoferichter, 2024). Taken together, these results depict entrepreneurial resourcefulness and optimistic dispositions as pivotal to improving life satisfaction and overall psychological wellbeing. This correlation has practical implications for entrepreneurial training and personal development programs, particularly in contexts characterised by uncertainty and limited resources.

Additionally, entrepreneurial bricolage positively impacts job satisfaction (Fatoki and Dzomonda, 2019; Purnamawati et al., 2022). In parallel, dispositional optimism was shown to enhance job satisfaction (Fatma et al., 2024; Lindblom et al., 2020a), reinforcing the idea that a positive cognitive outlook can buffer individuals against stress and improve the overall life quality. These findings are especially significant, considering the well-established association between job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing (Akbarayam and Ketan, 2024; Jentsch and Hoferichter, 2024; Sufya and Abas, 2024). Individuals who are resourceful in uncertain environments, reframe challenges as opportunities and maintain an optimistic outlook are likely to report higher levels of psychological wellbeing (Akbarayam and Ketan, 2024; Jentsch and Hoferichter, 2024). This conclusion aligns with prior research, which asserts that entrepreneurs often derive meaning and job satisfaction from the autonomy and creativity inherent in entrepreneurial activities (Uy et al., 2017; Wiklund et al., 2019).

5.2 *Research model*

The insights presented in this review offer a valuable empirical foundation for understanding the individual effects of entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism on psychological wellbeing. However, existing studies are inadequate in providing an integrated framework that elucidates the mechanisms through which these constructs jointly influence psychological wellbeing, particularly within the entrepreneurial context. To address this gap, the present study extends the theoretical discourse by proposing a unified research model that captures the dynamic interplay between entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and psychological wellbeing. The study adopted an abductive approach anchored on the interplay between published empirical data and theory (Conservation of Resources [COR] and broaden-and-build theory). Also known as abductive reasoning, the abduction approach is commonly applied in fields like the social sciences to make logical inferences. It emphasises beginning with a set of observations on a specific phenomenon and seeking the most plausible explanations to derive a theory (Saunders et al., 2023).

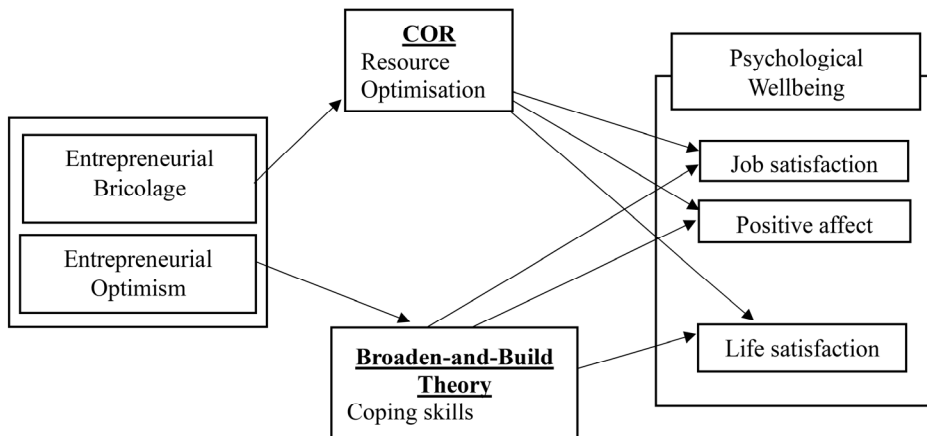
Guided by this philosophical underpinning, the study followed a two-step process to build an exploratory integrated research model to explore psychological wellbeing in the context of entrepreneurship. First, the two theories were used to interpret the effects of entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism on entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing. Second, insights from the first phase were used to interpret emerging linkages between various core variables in the model.

5.2.1 Step 1

COR theory was used to interpret the mechanisms through which entrepreneurial bricolage influences entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing. In proposing COR theory, Hobfoll (2002, p.307) defined resources as 'those entities that either are centrally valued in their own right (e.g., self-esteem, close attachments, health, inner peace) or act as a means to obtain centrally valued ends (e.g., money, social support)'. COR holds that humans are inspired to maintain and enlarge their resource base due to the integral intrinsic (derived from the activity itself) and extrinsic (derived from external factors like rewards) psychological value (Lee and Jo, 2023). Thus, missing or losing essential resources may trigger stress among affected individuals, negatively affecting their wellbeing. Hemanthakumara (2024), Moreta-Herrera et al. (2023), Ordóñez et al. (2011), Tsamarah et al. (2024) demonstrated a positive correlation between bricolage, life satisfaction, job satisfaction and positive affect.

From a COR lens, individuals may develop poor psychological wellbeing outcomes if they are unable to achieve the common goals that members of a culture aspire to, due to resource constraints (Jin et al., 2023). Building on this assertion and reviewing the findings, it is assumed in this study that entrepreneurial bricolage enables entrepreneurs to mitigate stress occasioned by resource constraints by maximising the use of existing limited resources, thereby mitigating negative emotions and resulting in job satisfaction, positive affect (including passion and good health). In the context of entrepreneurship, it is expected that job satisfaction, life satisfaction and positive affect (passion, good health) resulting from entrepreneurial bricolage boost entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Exploratory research model for promoting entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing



Similarly, the broaden-and-build theory offers a crucial theoretical lens for understanding the relationship between dispositional optimism and entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing. It suggests that positive emotions augment an individual's thought-action repertoire, allowing them to develop vital skills and resources for growth, resilience and survival. Specifically, these emotions, over time, enhance the ability to cope with

challenges (Lin et al., 2016). Conversely, negative emotions limit an individual's attention to specific, short-term and oftentimes automatic action tendencies (like escape, attack), which diminish coping behaviours (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004).

This study found a positive relationship between dispositional optimism and job satisfaction, life satisfaction and affect (positive) and entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing (Biegańska, 2018; Lindblom et al., 2020b; Nikolaev et al., 2020; Srinivasan et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2022). Building on the broaden-and-build theory, it is anticipated that dispositional optimism enables entrepreneurs to strengthen their adversity-coping capacities, leading to job satisfaction, life satisfaction and affect (positive), positively affecting psychological wellbeing. Collectively, this study integrates findings related to entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism literature to propose a model for examining entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing (see Figure 2).

5.2.2 Step 2

The conceptual model in Figure 2 weaves COR and broaden-and-build theory to blend key findings from the reviewed studies into an integrated framework for examining the effect of entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism on entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing. In line with COR theory, the model proposes that entrepreneurial bricolage enables entrepreneurs to optimise limited resources to navigate challenges and alleviate negative emotions, thereby enhancing psychological wellbeing through increased positive affect, life satisfaction and job satisfaction. Furthermore, drawing on broaden-and-build theory, the model illustrates how dispositional optimism strengthens entrepreneurs' capacity to cope with adversity, which in turn fosters greater job satisfaction, life satisfaction and positive affect. Within this framework, psychological wellbeing is conceptualised as a multidimensional construct, with job satisfaction, life satisfaction and positive affect serving as its primary indicators.

6 Research agenda

The exploratory integrated model proposed in this study shows a precise interplay between entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing. Building on this model, this study proposes several research avenues that are most likely to advance theory on psychological wellbeing in entrepreneurship.

6.1 *Clarifying the mediating influence of WLB on the link between entrepreneurial bricolage and entrepreneurs' job satisfaction*

While this review affirmed the beneficial role of entrepreneurial bricolage in boosting job satisfaction, the mediating influence of WLB on this relationship differed between novel and experienced entrepreneurs. WLB only mediated the influence of entrepreneurial bricolage on job satisfaction among experienced entrepreneurs, raising questions about the possible unique underlying mechanisms that influence job satisfaction among newer entrepreneurs. Future research should investigate the potential role of contextual factors, such as uncertainty tolerance and a lack of business autonomy, in mediating job satisfaction during the early stages of entrepreneurial activity.

6.2 Tracing the effects of bricolage on psychological wellbeing over time and cross-culturally

Future research can contribute to strengthening entrepreneurship-related psychological wellbeing theory by tracing the effects of bricolage over a prolonged period and across cultural contexts. A fundamental weakness noted in the reviewed studies is the over-reliance on cross-sectional research designs to conclude with far-reaching implications, leading the researchers to conclude that bricolage positively correlates with three indicators of entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing (job satisfaction, positive affect and life satisfaction). Hence, longitudinal studies could track the impact of bricolage on entrepreneurs' life satisfaction, job satisfaction and positive affect over time, offering more profound insights into how its benefits accumulate or shift from one phase of entrepreneurship to another. Examining the variables of interest over time can yield a solid methodological framework to understand the potential moderating influence of family support and other programmes, such as mentoring and incubators, on the link between entrepreneurial bricolage and life satisfaction. In addition to adopting cohort designs, future researchers should conduct cross-cultural comparative analyses to explore how institutional environments, and cultural beliefs mediate the influence of bricolage on life satisfaction, job satisfaction and positive affect.

6.3 Evaluating contextual factors in mediating the relationship between entrepreneurial bricolage and positive affect

While several studies reviewed in this study affirm the beneficial role of entrepreneurial bricolage in boosting positive affect (Fatoki and Dzomonda, 2019; Purnamawati et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2020), they significantly overlook contextual limitations, notably cultural, institutional and economic constraints, which may influence the effectiveness of entrepreneurial bricolage across different entrepreneurial environments (Stephan, 2018). This lack of consideration may limit the generalisability of the findings reported in this paper, necessitating more nuanced research undertakings that account for diverse entrepreneurial ecosystems. Future research should account for the direct or indirect mediating role of contextual factors, such as cultural, institutional and economic constraints, in the relationship between entrepreneurial bricolage and entrepreneurs' positive affect.

6.4 Exploring the mediating role of external factors in the link between dispositional optimism and life satisfaction

Fatma et al. (2024) and Lindblom et al. (2020a) established that dispositional optimism relates to life satisfaction through the mediating influence of entrepreneurial success. However, by focusing solely on this positive business outcome, these studies may have potentially underestimated the role of external factors, such as market volatility, access to capital or structural barriers, which could moderate or weaken the relationship between dispositional optimism and life satisfaction (Baron et al., 2016; Uy et al., 2013). Future research should adopt a more integrative approach that considers both internal dispositions and external challenges satisfaction and, in extension, entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing.

Though dispositional optimism may serve as a vital psychological buffer that fosters positive outlooks and life satisfaction, its full influence cannot be understood without accounting for the broader environmental conditions under which entrepreneurship unfolds. Factors, such as socio-cultural norms and market uncertainty may significantly enhance or constrain the degree to which optimistic entrepreneurs can translate their outlook into tangible satisfaction and wellbeing outcomes. Thus, future studies should fill this gap by exploring how dispositional optimism interacts with these external forces, employing moderated mediation models or multilevel analyses to uncover complex interactions between individual personality attributes and contextual factors.

6.5 Diary-based method for understanding the influence of dispositional optimism better

While the findings reported in this study attribute dispositional optimism to positive impacts on entrepreneurs' life satisfaction, job satisfaction and affect, they extensively rely on cross-sectional research designs, resulting in a limited understanding of causal and effect interlinkages. A diary-based method can enable future researchers to examine how dispositional optimism influences entrepreneurs' responses to daily stressors over time or across prolonged periods. Analysing data over a long period could help account for pivotal psychological developments, especially the capability to withstand entrepreneurial uncertainty and the associated stressors as individuals transition from nascent to experienced entrepreneurs. This tracking could help refine knowledge on the influence of dispositional optimism on job satisfaction, life satisfaction and affect, in both stable and unstable entrepreneurial environments.

6.6 Inclusion of other key psychological wellbeing variables in the proposed model

The proposed model focuses solely on the hedonic aspects of psychological wellbeing, overlooking the eudemonic dimensions (e.g., autonomy, self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, positive relations with others and personal growth) that are equally important in the entrepreneurial context (Shir and Ryff, 2021; Wiklund et al., 2019). This limitation stems from the reliance on hypothesised claims drawn from reviewed secondary sources. To address this gap, future research should incorporate primary data collection methods – particularly mixed-method approaches – to gain deeper and more nuanced insights into how dispositional optimism and entrepreneurial bricolage influence both hedonic and eudemonic facets of entrepreneurial psychological wellbeing.

7 Conclusions

Entrepreneurs operate in intricate environments that predispose them to elevated uncertainty levels, often triggering fear of failure, negative emotions and stress, adversely affecting their psychological wellbeing. Emerging empirical evidence from recent studies reveal that entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism can address adverse emotional outcomes in entrepreneurial activity to boost entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing. The aim of this study was to contribute to available knowledge in

entrepreneurship by examining the effect of entrepreneurial entrepreneurship and dispositional optimism on entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing. The findings disclosed that entrepreneurial bricolage is positively correlated with two antecedents of psychological wellbeing: job satisfaction and positive affect. Additionally, dispositional optimism is positively correlated with three dimensions of psychological wellbeing (job satisfaction, positive affect and life satisfaction).

Based on these findings, the current study proposes an exploratory integrated model demonstrating that entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism influence psychological wellbeing. While the current evidence base is limited and does not permit definitive conclusions, this integration represents an essential first step toward linking the behavioural (bricolage) and cognitive–affective (optimism) dimensions of entrepreneurial practice within a holistic framework. By shifting the focus of entrepreneurship research beyond exclusively economic outcomes to integrate psychological sustainability, the study contributes to a more balanced understanding of entrepreneurial success. For future researchers, this exploratory model offers a preliminary standpoint to undertake robust longitudinal and cross-cultural inquiry into the causal pathways between bricolage, optimism and psychological wellbeing outcomes.

Despite its contributions, this study has a major limitation: only 11 studies with relevant insights into the influence of entrepreneurial bricolage and dispositional optimism on entrepreneurs' psychological wellbeing were retrieved and reviewed. This narrow evidence base limits the generalisability of the findings across diverse geographical, cultural and contextual settings. With such a small pool of studies, this study could not capture full range of perspectives, contexts and methodological approaches. This limitation, therefore, dilutes the capacity to advance strong and widely applicable theoretical claims. Accordingly, the integrated model proposed in this study should be viewed as exploratory rather than definitive. Future research can build on the recommendations of this review to generate larger-scale empirical evidence, strengthen theoretical refinement and rigorously examine the linkages between entrepreneurial bricolage, dispositional optimism and key antecedents of psychological wellbeing among entrepreneurs.

Declarations

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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