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The Role of Personal Traits in Shaping Entrepreneurial Success

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is more than starting a business—it is about people who turn ideas into reality and projects and create history. Behind every successful entrepreneur are traits that guide them during their life. This paper analyses 5 personality traits: risk-taking, creativity, flexibility, resilience, that shape a successful career. These characteristics are analyzed in the context of how they help entrepreneurs navigate uncertainty, build creative solutions, and achieve economic growth. By highlighting these traits, the study emphasizes their importance not only for business success but also for broader social and economic development.

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Introduction

Entrepreneurship has always been about more than opening a business. It is about the people behind the idea—their drive, mindset, and ability to handle the unknown. Many studies show that while money and resources are important, the personal traits of entrepreneurs often make the biggest difference. These traits shape how they deal with stress, adapt to change, and find opportunities where others see problems.

Research highlights five especially important traits. Resilience helps entrepreneurs recover from setbacks and keep moving forward (Johnson, 2023). Creativity and innovativeness allow them to design

fresh solutions and stand out in crowded markets (Martinez, 2023). Proactiveness means acting early and not waiting for chances to appear (Kumar, 2024). In challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic, adaptability proved essential for survival and growth (Lee, 2021). Finally, self-confidence gives entrepreneurs the courage to take risks and make strong decisions (Peterson, 2025).

Several other researchers have emphasized the same ideas: resilience as a predictor of business longevity (Nguyen & Park, 2022), creativity as the foundation of innovation (Almeida, 2023), and adaptability as a skill for sustainable leadership (Singh, 2024).

This article focuses on these five traits—resilience, creativity,

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proactiveness, adaptability, and self-confidence—and shows how they help entrepreneurs succeed in unpredictable and constantly changing environments.

Literature Review

When it comes to entrepreneurship, many studies agree that personal qualities often matter just as much as money, resources, or market opportunities. The way an entrepreneur thinks and reacts can shape whether a business survives challenges or falls apart. In the literature, five traits appear most often: resilience, creativity, proactiveness, adaptability, and self-confidence.

Resilience is frequently described as the ability to keep moving after failure. Entrepreneurs who are resilient view setbacks as lessons instead of endings. Researchers point out that this trait is strongly linked to long-term survival and growth (Ayala & Manzano, 2014; Duchek, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, resilience became especially visible, since many entrepreneurs had to rethink their businesses from the ground up.

Creativity is another common theme. Entrepreneurs who think creatively are more likely to notice opportunities others ignore and to come up with original solutions. What is interesting is that studies also note creativity can be developed—it is not only a talent but something that grows through experience and exposure to new ideas (Gunawan, 2024; Frontiers, 2023).

Proactiveness, or acting early, is also highlighted. Instead of waiting for conditions to change, proactive entrepreneurs make the first move. This helps them gain an edge in competitive environments, and research often connects this trait with higher levels of business growth (Rauch & Frese, 2007; Kerr et al., 2017).

Adaptability has become even more relevant in recent years. Markets shift quickly, and unexpected events can completely change the game. Adaptable entrepreneurs—those who can adjust plans, reorganize resources, or pivot strategies—are the ones most likely to continue succeeding when conditions are uncertain (Haider et al., 2023).

Finally, self-confidence gives entrepreneurs the courage to act. Believing in their abilities makes them more willing to take risks, stay motivated, and push through obstacles (Newman et al., 2019).

Altogether, the literature makes it clear that entrepreneurial success is rarely about just one trait. Instead, it is the mix of resilience, creativity, proactiveness, adaptability, and self-confidence that allows entrepreneurs to survive challenges and grow even in unpredictable situations.

Research Methods

This study was based on a qualitative approach. Instead of running

an independent survey or experiment, the work relied on information that other researchers have already published. The focus was on secondary sources such as journal articles, case studies, and academic reports that explore entrepreneurship and the traits connected to it.

In total, over twenty articles were reviewed from scientific journals like *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, and *Frontiers in Psychology*. During the review, patterns were identified—especially those showing which personal traits were mentioned most often as helping entrepreneurs succeed, particularly when facing uncertainty.

To analyze the material, the findings of different authors were compared, and the qualities that appeared repeatedly across studies were noted. From this comparison, five traits stood out: resilience, creativity, proactiveness, adaptability, and self-confidence. These became the foundation for the discussion that follows in later sections of the paper.

This method was chosen because it brings together insights from many different perspectives. Instead of relying on a single study or example, using multiple sources made it possible to build a more balanced and reliable view of which traits really matter for entrepreneurs today.

Research Results

The findings from the reviewed literature show that entrepreneurship is not simply about having a business idea—it is strongly shaped by personal traits. After analyzing different studies, five traits appeared most consistently: resilience, creativity, proactiveness, adaptability, and self-confidence. Each plays a different but equally important role in helping entrepreneurs navigate challenges and uncertainty.

Resilience is one of the most frequently mentioned qualities. Entrepreneurs face setbacks such as financial losses, rejected proposals, or failed products. Research highlights that those who are resilient tend to view failure not as the end but as a learning opportunity. This mindset allows them to try again, improve their strategies, and eventually achieve success. For example, Ayala and Manzano (2014) found that resilience directly contributes to better coping mechanisms among entrepreneurs, while Korber and McNaughton (2018) also linked resilience to adaptability during crises, suggesting that emotional recovery and strategic flexibility often go hand in hand.

Creativity also emerged as a central trait. In a competitive and fast-changing world, entrepreneurs need to generate new ideas and find innovative ways of solving problems. Creativity enables them to identify opportunities in situations where others see only obstacles. Gunawan (2021) emphasized that creativity drives product innovation, while

Rauch and Frese (2009) noted that creativity alone is not enough without proactive behavior. Comparing these studies shows that creativity is most powerful when combined with action-oriented decision-making.

Proactiveness is another trait that makes a significant difference. Instead of waiting for opportunities to come, proactive entrepreneurs take the initiative to create them. They often anticipate market needs before they become obvious and position themselves ahead of competitors. Rauch et al. (2009) found a strong link between proactive behavior and business growth, and Kerr, Kerr, and Xu (2018) confirmed that proactive individuals tend to be more innovative and resilient. Together, these findings demonstrate that proactiveness supports both creativity and adaptability, reinforcing overall entrepreneurial success.

Adaptability is particularly important in today's uncertain environment. Markets, technologies, and consumer preferences change rapidly, and unexpected crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic have shown how fragile businesses can be. Adaptable entrepreneurs are better able to pivot their strategies, redesign their products, or change their business models to survive difficult times. Korber and McNaughton (2018) viewed adaptability as a key part of resilience, while Haider et al. (2022) argued that adaptability should be seen as a separate strategic capability essential for responding to external shocks. Comparing their views suggests that adaptability functions both as a psychological strength and a business strategy.

Finally, self-confidence ties all of these traits together. Entrepreneurs frequently have to make decisions under uncertainty, where outcomes are not guaranteed. A strong sense of self-belief allows them to take risks and act decisively. Newman et al. (2019) found that self-confidence, or entrepreneurial self-efficacy, increases persistence and goal achievement, while Shane (2003) linked it to opportunity recognition and leadership. These findings collectively indicate that self-confidence is both a motivator and a stabilizer for entrepreneurial action.

Taken together, the results suggest that these five traits do not work in isolation but rather reinforce each other. An entrepreneur may be resilient, but without creativity, they might struggle to innovate. Likewise, adaptability without self-confidence may result in hesitation when bold action is needed. The literature demonstrates that it is the combination of resilience, creativity, proactiveness, adaptability, and

self-confidence that provides entrepreneurs with the mindset and skills needed to manage uncertainty and build long-term success.

Conclusion

This paper reviewed personality traits that affect success in entrepreneurship. Analyses in the literature review show that, among other traits, these five are highlighted: creativity, adaptability, proactivity, and resilience. Every single one of these is helping entrepreneurs to stand up after losing, find new solutions, and opportunities.

Also, none of these traits is working alone. It is their combination that forms a special way of thinking and a set of skills in an entrepreneur, which enables entrepreneurs to overcome challenges and succeed.

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