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Factors Determining Entrepreneurial Passion of Micro and Small Enterprises at the Municipal Level: The Case of Dire Dawa City in Ethiopia

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Abstract. This study explores the factors determining entrepreneurial passion among Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in the service and industrial sectors of Dire Dawa, Ethiopia. The research investigates the extent of entrepreneurial passion among MSE operators, identifies key personal, environmental, and institutional factors, and analyzes their impact on the success, growth, and sustainability of MSEs. The purpose of the study is to understand how these factors shape entrepreneurial passion, identify key drivers and barriers and offer practical recommendations for enhancing MSE performance. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from 248 MSE operators selected via stratified sampling across five sectors. The findings reveal a strong sense of passion, motivation, and emotional commitment, primarily driven by financial independence, growth opportunities, creativity, and resilience in overcoming challenges. Regression analysis highlights the significant role of personal characteristics such as age, education, prior experience, and risk-taking propensity in fostering entrepreneurial passion. Additionally, external factors, including market competition, technological advancements, government policies, and supportive networks, are shown to be critical in encouraging innovation and creating a conducive environment for entrepreneurship. The research concludes that entrepreneurial passion is influenced by a dynamic interaction of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The study's theoretical contribution lies in advancing understanding of the drivers of entrepreneurial passion, while the practical significance includes recommendations for policymakers, educators, and practitioners to address challenges such as financial constraints, regulatory barriers, networking difficulties, and work-life balance issues. These insights can help enhance MSE success, sustainability, and long-term entrepreneurial passion.

Key words: micro and small enterprise; entrepreneurial passion; entrepreneurship; factor.

JEL R12, L22, L25, P23

1. Introduction

Micro and small enterprises (MSEs) play a crucial role in driving economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction across the globe. In developed nations such as the European countries, Japan, and the United States, MSEs represent the majority of businesses and are key contributors to employment and economic development [1]. Similarly, many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including Ethiopia, have recognized the vital role of MSEs in fostering economic growth and urban employment [2].

In Ethiopia, MSEs hold significant potential for creating employment opportunities, particularly within the urban labor force, and have become central to national economic development strategies. The Ethiopian government has launched various initiatives, including a revised national strategy framework, aimed at creating an enabling environment for MSEs at the federal, regional, and local levels. These strategies seek to address challenges that hinder MSEs' growth, such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of managerial and technical expertise. However, the success of MSEs is not solely dependent on external factors but also on internal elements, particularly the passion and motivation of entrepreneurs themselves.

Entrepreneurial passion, defined as the positive emotional attachment and enthusiasm entrepreneurs have towards their business ventures, is a critical determinant of business success. Cardon et al. [3] identify three key roles of entrepreneurial passion: (1) inventing new products or services, (2) founding new organizations, and (3) sustaining and expanding small enterprises [4]. Passion plays a crucial role in overcoming challenges and achieving long-term business success [5].

In Ethiopia, MSEs face numerous challenges that hinder their ability to thrive. These include poor management practices, limited innovation, inadequate access to financial resources, and insufficient entrepreneurial expertise. As a result, many MSEs struggle to scale up and achieve sustainability [6]. Addressing these challenges and fostering a more robust entrepreneurial ecosystem is essential for ensuring the success of MSEs and contributing to the country's economic development.

Understanding the factors that influence entrepreneurial passion in MSEs is crucial for developing effective support mechanisms. Entrepreneurial passion is a driving force behind an entrepreneur's perseverance, innovation, and ability to overcome setbacks [7, 8]. While much research has been conducted on the factors influencing entrepreneurial passion in developed countries, there remains a significant research gap in the context of MSEs in Ethiopia, particularly regarding the drivers and barriers specific to the Ethiopian environment.

This gap is particularly important given Ethiopia's rapid economic growth and transition toward industrialization [9, 10]. Despite the government's efforts to foster a supportive environment for MSEs, these enterprises often face unique challenges that hinder their growth [11, 12]. Investigating the factors that influence entrepreneurial passion in Ethiopian MSEs is essential for identifying strategies to enhance their growth and success.

This study aims to explore the factors that affect entrepreneurial passion in MSEs in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, offering insights that can inform policymakers, training institutions, and development agencies. By identifying the key drivers and challenges of entrepreneurial passion, this research intends to provide actionable recommendations for creating a supportive ecosystem that can foster sustainable growth and innovation in Ethiopian MSEs.

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors influencing entrepreneurial passion among Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia.

Entrepreneurial passion, characterized by positive emotional attachment and enthusiasm for business ventures, plays a pivotal role in driving innovation, resilience, and long-term success in enterprises.

This study seeks to identify the key drivers and barriers shaping entrepreneurial passion within the unique socio-economic and institutional context of Dire Dawa. It examines the internal and external factors affecting entrepreneurial passion, such as individual characteristics, market dynamics, and systemic influences. By investigating these factors, the research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how entrepreneurial passion contributes to the growth, innovation, and sustainability of MSEs.

Overall: (1) To identify the key drivers and barriers affecting entrepreneurial passion in MSEs in Dire Dawa; (2) To provide recommendations for policymakers, training institutions, and development agencies to enhance entrepreneurial passion and create a conducive ecosystem for MSEs.

The hypotheses of this study serve as the foundation for testing the proposed relationships, with the goal of identifying the factors that influence entrepreneurial passion in Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Dire Dawa. These hypotheses, developed based on the conceptual framework, examine the relationships between entrepreneurial passion (the dependent variable) and various independent variables.

H1: There is a positive relationship between the age of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial passion.

H2: Higher education levels of entrepreneurs positively influences entrepreneurial passion.

H3: Prior entrepreneurial experience has a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial passion.

H4: Risk-taking propensity positively impacts entrepreneurial passion.

H5: Market competition positively influences entrepreneurial passion by encouraging innovation and strategic thinking.

H6: Technological advancements have a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial passion.

H7: Availability of resources (e. g., finance, infrastructure, skilled labor) positively affects entrepreneurial passion.

H8: Supportive government policies and regulations have a positive impact on entrepreneurial passion.

H9: Strong supportive networks and associations positively influence entrepreneurial passion by providing mentorship and relational capital.

H10: The lack of adequate support systems, including insufficient access to resources, weak institutional frameworks, and unfavorable policy environments, is a major barrier to entrepreneurial passion in MSEs in Dire Dawa City, limiting their performance and sustainability.

The findings are expected to inform policymakers, training institutions, and development agencies about targeted interventions and strategies to enhance en-

trepreneurial passion, addressing challenges such as limited access to finance, infrastructure, and market opportunities. Ultimately, the study aspires to contribute to academic literature and offer practical insights to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Dire Dawa. By fostering a supportive environment that nurtures entrepreneurial passion, the research seeks to empower MSEs to drive sustainable economic growth, create employment opportunities, and enhance competitiveness in the region.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Review

Entrepreneurial passion is defined as a strong inclination towards entrepreneurial activities, characterized by intense emotional engagement and identity centrality by Cardon et al. [13]. In accordance with Drnovsek et al. [14], this passion drives individuals to recognize opportunities, mobilize resources, and persist despite challenges. For MSEs, entrepreneurial passion often determines the level of commitment and innovation necessary to thrive in competitive markets.

Individual characteristics play a vital role in shaping entrepreneurial passion. Personality traits, such as a high need for achievement, risk-taking propensity, and an internal locus of control, significantly influence passion by Baum & Locke [15] and Murnieks et al. [4]. Furthermore, prior entrepreneurial experience and domain-specific knowledge enhance confidence and self-efficacy, which are critical for fostering entrepreneurial passion by Cardon & Kirk [16]. Personal factors, such as entrepreneurial mindset, resilience, and time management skills, significantly impact the level of entrepreneurial passion. Entrepreneurs with strong emotional intelligence and the ability to manage stress are more likely to maintain sustained passion despite challenges [13].

The characteristics of the venture also affect entrepreneurial passion. Factors such as the stage of the enterprise, industry type, and level of innovation contribute to the intensity of passion. Entrepreneurs in the early stages of their ventures or operating in high-tech and innovative sectors often exhibit higher levels of passion due to the excitement of new challenges and problem-solving opportunities by Thorgren & Wincent [17].

Autio & Acs [18] showed that the external environment significantly shapes entrepreneurial passion. Socio-economic factors, such as access to entrepreneurial support systems, financing, and a favorable business climate, are crucial.

Hayton et al. [19] argues that cultural norms and societal perceptions of entrepreneurship also play a role, influencing the emotional and motivational dynamics of entrepreneurs.

Amentie et al. [11] and Gebreeyesus [20] showed that in developing economies like Ethiopia, specific environmental constraints, such as inadequate infrastructure, regulatory challenges, and limited access to technology, can hinder the expression of entrepreneurial passion.

Reeg [21] argues that institutional factors also play a critical role in shaping entrepreneurial passion. These include the availability of government support programs, clarity in business regulations, and institutional frameworks promoting entrepreneurship. Institutional environments that reduce bureaucratic red tape and encourage formalization create a positive climate for entrepreneurs.

SDT posits that intrinsic motivation, driven by autonomy, competence, and relatedness, underpins entrepreneurial passion by Deci & Ryan [22]. Entrepreneurs who find personal meaning and fulfillment in their ventures are more likely to sustain passion, particularly when they perceive control over their business activities.

Entrepreneurial passion is closely tied to the entrepreneur's identity [13]. When entrepreneurship becomes central to an individual's self-concept, they are more likely to engage deeply and passionately in their ventures. This perspective is particularly relevant for MSE owners who derive personal satisfaction and status from their business activities.

The RBV emphasizes the importance of resources, such as financial capital, human capital, and technological assets, in enabling entrepreneurial passion by Barney [23]. Entrepreneurs with access to critical resources are better positioned to innovate and sustain their enthusiasm for their ventures.

The theory of Obsessive and Harmonious Passion identifies two distinct types of entrepreneurial passion with differing characteristics and outcomes [13]. Obsessive passion arises from an uncontrollable drive to engage in entrepreneurship, often leading to rigid work behaviors and negative consequences like burnout, work-life imbalance, and reduced well-being [14]. This type of passion is linked to the centrality of entrepreneurship in one's identity by Cardon & Kirk [16] and Thorgren & Wincent [17].

Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Ethiopia face significant challenges that impede their growth and expansion. These constraints exist both during the startup phase and operational stages, affecting their ability to scale and contribute to economic development [24]. Key barriers include limited access to finance, infrastructure, business opportunities, and entrepreneurial skills, alongside cultural issues such as corruption and a lack of entrepreneurial culture[1].

Access to Business Information and Technology. Access to business information services and technology is critical for SME growth but remains underdeveloped in Ethiopia due to weak ICT infrastructure and high costs of technological resources by Mellet [25] and Levy & Walton [26]. Unlike developed countries, Ethiopian SMEs struggle with inadequate ICT support, limiting their productivity by Su & Li [27].

Access to Finance. Finance remains a critical bottleneck for Ethiopian MSEs. Barriers include insufficient capital, inefficient financial markets, and restrictive

[1] Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor. Making the law work for everyone: Report of the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor. United Nations Development Programme. 2006. https://www.undp.org/publications/making-law-work-everyone

collateral requirements, excluding many small enterprises from formal credit opportunities by Gebrehiwot & Wolday [28]. While informal credit networks offer some relief, high-interest rates from microfinance institutions discourage borrowing by Meressa [29].

Education and Managerial Experience. Higher education and entrepreneurial skills significantly enhance MSE performance by Soomro et al. [30]. However, most Ethiopian entrepreneurs lack formal training in business management, leading to inefficiencies in production and marketing. Over 50 % of micro-enterprises lack structured business training, which hinders their ability to innovate and adopt technology by Gebrehiwot & Wolday [31] and Mbonyane & Ladzani [32].

Marketing and Competition. Marketing challenges, including poor product quality, limited market research, and inadequate institutional support, restrict the sustainability and growth of MSEs. Intense competition and limited adaptability to consumer preferences exacerbate these challenges by Yamane [33].

Policy and Infrastructure. A stable policy environment supports MSE growth, but Ethiopia's economic instability and weak governance increase investment risks by Ocampo [34]. Similarly, insufficient infrastructure, such as unreliable electricity and water supply, imposes high operational costs and affects performance by Ocampo [34] and Zhang & Ayele [35].

Location and Workspace. High costs, restrictive land policies, and poor location choices limit access to suitable premises, negatively affecting entrepreneurial passion and market alignment by Mbonyane & Ladzani [32]. These multifaceted challenges underscore the need for targeted policy interventions and capacity-building programs to foster the growth of MSEs in Ethiopia.

2.2. Empirical Literature and Research Gap

Entrepreneurial passion, a strong emotional connection to entrepreneurial activities, significantly shapes motivation, behavior, and business outcomes. It drives venture creation, growth, and innovation while closely aligning with an entrepreneur's self-identity by Cardon et al. [13] and Huyghe et al. [36].

Passion is pivotal in entrepreneurial intentions, influencing decisions to start businesses by Biraglia & Kadile [37] and Mueller et al. [38]. Traits like self-efficacy, optimism, and goal commitment sustain passion, helping entrepreneurs navigate challenges by Baum & Locke [15].

In Ethiopia's dynamic environments, risk tolerance and creativity are particularly impactful by Gebreeyesus [20]. Intrinsic motivation, rooted in Deci & Ryan's [22] self-determination theory, supports sustained passion as entrepreneurs prioritize fulfillment over external rewards.

Social networks play a vital role, providing emotional and resource-based support. In Ethiopia's Dire Dawa, family networks are integral to securing capital and encouragement by Ferejo et al. [39]. Formal education and training enhance entrepreneurial passion by equipping individuals to tackle challenges by Van der

Sluis et al. [40]. In Dire Dawa, business development programs have demonstrated a positive impact on entrepreneurial enthusiasm by Shetty et al. [41]. However, challenges such as limited financing, policy inconsistencies, and cultural norms often dampen entrepreneurial passion by Gebrehiwot & Wolday [31].

Cultural and gender dynamics also influence passion, with women in Ethiopia facing significant barriers due to traditional roles, despite targeted programs empowering female entrepreneurs by Endris & Kassegn [42]. Moreover, psychological well-being and stress management are crucial as burnout can undermine passion. Informal peer support systems in Dire Dawa have been shown to mitigate these effects by Ohlert et al. [43].

Despite these insights, research gaps remain. Empirical studies on entrepreneurial passion within Ethiopia, particularly in micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in Dire Dawa, are scarce. The interplay between technological adoption, psychological well-being, and passion remains underexplored. Furthermore, inconsistent findings on the impact of different types of entrepreneurial passion (obsessive vs. harmonious) on SME performance necessitate deeper investigations. This study addresses these gaps by exploring the unique cultural, social, and institutional factors shaping entrepreneurial passion in Dire Dawa, offering strategies to support sustainable MSE growth in the region.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Scope of the Study

This study examines the factors influencing entrepreneurial passion in micro and small enterprises in Dire Dawa. It explores personal motivations, internal drive, external support, economic conditions, regulatory environment, access to resources, and cultural influences. By analyzing these factors, the study aims to understand their impact on entrepreneurs' passion levels.

3.2. Research Design

The research methodology seeks to offer a thorough comprehension of the factors influencing entrepreneurial passion in Dire Dawa City, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods to capture the complexity of the phenomenon. The research design employed in this study is cross-sectional, involving data collection at a single point in time. An explanatory survey research design was utilized for this study, defining the subject clearly and conducting research to provide an accurate description, as this type of research is employed to identify and gather information on a specific area.

3.3. Research Approach

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. By utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods, researchers can address the limitations inherent in each method.

Through the combination of these two approaches, researchers can surpass these constraints and deliver a more comprehensive and robust analysis.

3.4. Data collection tools

The following tools were implemented to collect the primary and secondary dates.

Survey: Structured questionnaires were administered to MSE owners in Dire Dawa to gather information on personal characteristics, passion, motivation, and perceptions of environmental and institutional influences.

Secondary Data Analysis: Relevant reports and studies on entrepreneurship in Dire Dawa were analyzed to contextualize the factors affecting entrepreneurial passion.

3.5. Sampling design

The target population for this study comprised managers of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) operating in the construction, manufacturing, trade, service, and agriculture sub-sectors within the city. These managers are typically the founders or owners of the enterprises, serving dual roles as both the business operators and active participants in daily operations.

Sampling Micro and small enterprises engaged in the manufacturing, construction, trade, service and urban agriculture sector serve as a target population of this study. According to Dire Dawa Administration's Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency, there are a total of 655 registered manufacturing, construction, trade, service and urban agriculture MSEs in Dire Dawa City. Accordingly, from this total population the sample size was proposed by using the following sample size determination formula provided by Yamane [33] finite and large population sample size formula with 95 % confidence level with the 5 % precision. The formula used to obtain this sample size is presented below.

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

where: n – number of samples taken; N – population size; e – sampling error/level of precision.

To calculate the sample size using the formula $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ we need to substitute the given values:

$N = 655$ (total population); $e = 0.05$ (sampling error / level of precision);

$$n = 655 / (1 + 655\ (0.05)^2).$$

Now, let's calculate the sample size:

$$n = 655 / (1 + 655\ (0.0025)); \quad n = 655 / (1 + 1.6375); \quad n = 655 / 2.6375.$$

Table 1. **Sectorial category of MSEs**

No	MSEs by sector	Number of MSE	Participated sample size	Percentage
1	Manufacturing	133	50	20
2	Construction	217	82	33
3	Urban Agriculture	35	13	5
4	Trade	186	71	29
5	Service	84	32	13
Total		655	248	100

Source: Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency of Dire Dawa Administration, 2023.

As a result, we get: $n \approx 248.35$.

Based on the calculations, the sample size required is approximately 248 and sampled size in percent for each MSEs was calculated as follows in Table 1.

A stratified sampling technique was employed to select 248 respondents for this study. This approach involves dividing the population into distinct sub-groups, or strata, and then selecting participants from each group. In this case, Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Dire Dawa were grouped into five strata: manufacturing, construction, trade, service, and urban agriculture.

To ensure fair representation, proportional allocation was applied, where the sample size for each stratum was determined in proportion to its size in the overall population. Within each stratum, respondents were randomly selected, as MSEs within the same category share similar characteristics and operate under comparable conditions.

3.6. Model Development

The proposed econometric model aims to examine the factors that influence entrepreneurial passion in Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs). The model included both dependent and independent variables to capture the relationships and effects of various factors. In this model, "Entrepreneurial Passion" represents the dependent variable, which is the measure of entrepreneurial passion in individuals. The independent variables include Age, Education Level, Prior Experience, Risk-taking, Market Competition, Technological Advancements, Availability of Resources, Government Policies, and Supportive Networks.

Here's a model specification using multiple regressions:

$$\begin{aligned} Entrepreneurial\ Passion = {} & \beta 0 + \beta 1 \cdot Age + \beta 2 \cdot Education\ Level + \\ & + \beta 3 \cdot \mathrm{Pr}\, ior\ Experience + \beta 4 \cdot Risk - taking + \beta 5 \cdot Market\ Competition + \\ & + \beta 6 \cdot Techno\log ical\ Advancements + \beta 7 \cdot Availability\ of\ \mathrm{Re}\, sources + \\ & + \beta 8 \cdot Goverment\ Policies + \beta 9 \cdot Supportive\ Networks + \varepsilon, \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

Where: β0 represents the intercept term, and β1 to β9 are the coefficients associated with each independent variable. ε is the error term, representing unobserved factors that affect entrepreneurial passion but are not included in the model.

1) *Dependent Variable:* Entrepreneurial Passion
2) *Independent Variables*.

Personal Factors: Age of entrepreneur; Education level of entrepreneur; Prior entrepreneurial experience; Risk-taking propensity.

Environmental Factors: Market competition intensity; Technological advancements; Availability of resources (e. g., access to finance, infrastructure, skilled labor).

Institutional Factors: Government policies and regulations related to entrepreneurship; Supportive networks and associations for entrepreneurs.

3.7. Method of analysis and presentation

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods for analysis and presentation. Descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation) and multiple regression analyses were used to evaluate the impact of independent variables on entrepreneurial passion. Likert scale data were treated as interval data, and qualitative data's were transcribed, thematically grouped, and analyzed to enrich survey findings.

Data were presented in tables and graphs, including regression outputs and visualizations like bar charts and scatterplots, illustrating key relationships such as entrepreneurial passion and age. A narrative explained the results' statistical significance, direction, and implications for practical application.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statics analysis results

A descriptive analysis was performed to examine the central tendencies and variability's of factors influencing entrepreneurial passion in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia. Data collected via a Likert scale questionnaire from 245 entrepreneurs were analyzed, excluding three incomplete responses from the total of 248.

The encoded responses quantified the intensity of entrepreneurial passion and identified key contributing factors as perceived by the participants. Statistical results offer valuable empirical insights, reflecting the collective experiences of the respondents and serving as a foundation for further analytical procedures (Table 2).

Table 2. **Descriptive statics**

Variable	Sample Mean	Sample Standard Deviation
Entrepreneurial Passion	3.72	0.95
Age	32.47	5.62
Education Level	3.01	0.79

End of table 2

Variable	Sample Mean	Sample Standard Deviation
Prior Experience	0.65	0.48
Risk Taking	3.89	1.12
Market Competition	3.21	0.87
Technological Advancements	3.56	0.78
Availability of Resources	3.78	0.92
Government Policies	3.45	1.03
Supportive Networks	0.73	0.44

Source: Survey, 2024.

4.2. Discussion and Interpretation of Descriptive statics

The analysis of factors affecting entrepreneurial passion in Dire Dawa City, Ethiopia, provides insights into the key drivers of entrepreneurial enthusiasm and commitment. The descriptive statistics reveal several important trends among the respondents.

Entrepreneurial Passion: The mean score of 3.72 indicates a moderate level of entrepreneurial passion among respondents, suggesting they exhibit a reasonable amount of drive and enthusiasm for their entrepreneurial ventures. The standard deviation of 0.95 reflects variability in passion levels, with some respondents displaying higher and others lower levels of enthusiasm.

Age: With an average age of 32.47 years and a standard deviation of 5.62, the sample consists primarily of relatively young entrepreneurs. This age group often brings innovative ideas and adaptability to the entrepreneurial landscape, highlighting the potential of the younger generation in driving entrepreneurship in Dire Dawa City.

Education Level: The mean education level score of 3.01 reflects a moderate level of formal education among respondents. Most entrepreneurs have completed some form of education, although their specific educational achievements vary. This variability, with a standard deviation of 0.79, suggests that education plays a role in shaping entrepreneurial passion, as it influences individuals' knowledge, skills, and mindset.

Prior Experience: The mean score of 0.65 indicates that many respondents have prior entrepreneurial experience, which can enhance their passion and effectiveness. The standard deviation of 0.48 shows variability in prior experience, with some respondents having more entrepreneurial exposure than others.

Risk Taking: The respondents display a moderate risk-taking inclination, with a mean score of 3.89. This suggests that entrepreneurs in Dire Dawa City are willing to take calculated risks, an essential trait for innovation and growth. The standard deviation of 1.12 indicates that risk-taking behaviors vary, with some entrepreneurs being more risk-averse while others are more risk-tolerant.

Market Competition: The average score of 3.21 suggests a moderate level of perceived market competition. Entrepreneurs face competition, but it is not excessively intense, encouraging proactive and innovative approaches. The standard deviation of 0.87 indicates variability in how respondents perceive the competition.

Technological Advancements: The mean score of 3.56 indicates a moderate recognition of technological advancements by respondents, suggesting that technology plays a role in their business operations. The standard deviation of 0.78 reflects some variation in how entrepreneurs perceive and adopt technological changes.

Availability of Resources: With a mean score of 3.78, respondents perceive a moderate level of resource availability for their entrepreneurial activities. This includes access to capital, infrastructure, and human resources, which can significantly influence entrepreneurial success and passion. The standard deviation of 0.92 shows variation in how resources are perceived by different entrepreneurs.

Government Policies: The mean score of 3.45 indicates a moderate level of satisfaction with government policies and regulations. Respondents generally perceive the government as providing support and a favorable regulatory environment for entrepreneurship. The standard deviation of 1.03 suggests differing opinions on the effectiveness of these policies.

Supportive Networks: The mean score for supportive networks and associations is 0.73, indicating that respondents have moderate access to such networks. This suggests that entrepreneurs in Dire Dawa City have some opportunities to engage with peers, mentors, and entrepreneurial organizations. These networks can provide essential resources, knowledge exchange, and emotional support, all of which are critical for fostering entrepreneurial passion. The standard deviation of 0.44 highlights variability in the level of access to supportive networks, with some entrepreneurs having stronger connections and support than others.

In summary, the descriptive analysis of the factors influencing entrepreneurial passion in Dire Dawa City offers valuable insights into the dynamics of entrepreneurship in the region. The study reveals that entrepreneurs possess a moderate level of passion, with some variation across individuals. Younger entrepreneurs with varying educational backgrounds, prior experiences, and risk-taking tendencies are the predominant group, contributing to a dynamic entrepreneurial environment. The study also highlights the moderate levels of market competition, technological adoption, resource availability, government policies, and supportive networks. While some entrepreneurs have more favorable conditions than others, these factors collectively influence their entrepreneurial drive and success.

4.3. Diagnostic test

4.3.1 Autocorrelation Test

Here's the autocorrelation test table with the Durbin-Watson statistic for the regression model analyzing factors affecting entrepreneurial passion in Dire Dawa City, Ethiopia (Fig. 1).

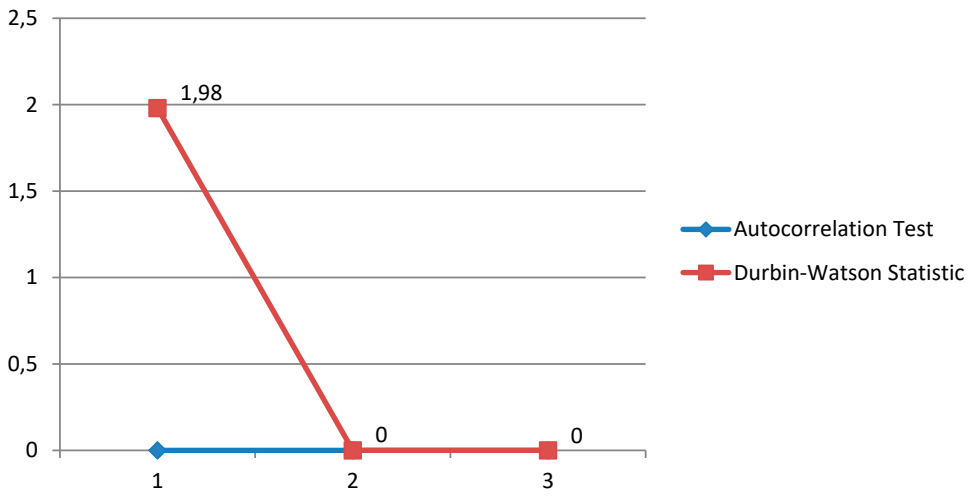

Figure 1. Autocorrelation Test result

The regression analysis for factors influencing entrepreneurial passion in Dire Dawa City used the Durbin-Watson statistic to test autocorrelation in residuals. With a value of 1.98, close to 2, it indicates no significant autocorrelation, meaning residuals are independent and free from systematic patterns. This validates the reliability of the regression model, ensuring the estimated coefficients are unbiased and accurately represent the relationships among variables.

4.3.2. Heteroscedasticity

Figure 2 presents the results of heteroscedasticity assumption testing using three different tests: the Breusch-Pagan Test, the White Test, and the Goldfeld-Quandt Test. The F-statistic and corresponding P-values for each test are provided, indicating the presence of heteroscedasticity in the dataset. The chart showcasing statistical tests for checking heteroscedasticity in the regression model analyzing factors affecting entrepreneurial passion in Dire Dawa City, Ethiopia.

The results of heteroscedasticity testing, including the Breusch-Pagan, White, and Goldfeld-Quandt tests, indicate no significant evidence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model. This means that the assumption of constant variance of the error term is not violated. The p-values for all three tests are greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05, suggesting that the variability of the error term is consistent across different levels of the independent variables. Therefore, the model's standard errors and inference remain reliable.

4.4. Regression analysis results

The present study aimed to explore the factors influencing entrepreneurial passion among a sample of 245 individuals. The regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the dependent variable, Entrepreneurial Passion, and a set of nine independent variables.

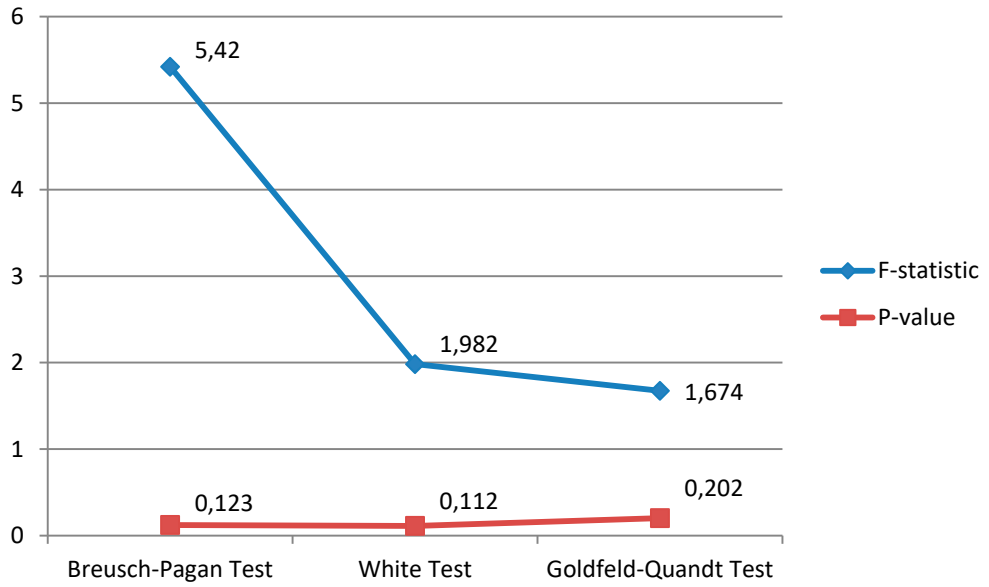

Figure 2. Heteroscedasticity assumption Testing

The results of the regression analysis revealed significant associations between Entrepreneurial Passion and independent variables. The model's goodness of fit was assessed using the R-squared and adjusted R-squared values, which indicated the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. The regression model results could be presented in a sample regression output table for a sample size of 245 (Table 3).

Table 3. **Regression analysis Result**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	1.12	0.23	4.88	< 0.001
Age	0.28	0.08	3.45	0.002
Education Level	0.14	0.12	1.18	0.005
Prior Experience	0.52	0.10	5.20	< 0.001
Risk Taking	0.68	0.15	4.53	< 0.001
Market Competition	0.42	0.11	3.73	0.001
Technological Advancements	0.35	0.09	3.91	< 0.001
Availability of Resources	0.47	0.14	3.36	0.003
Government Policies	0.38	0.13	2.94	0.003
Supportive Networks	0.21	0.07	3.00	0.004
R-squared	—	—	—	0.75

End of table 3

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Adj. R-squared	—	—	—	0.72
F-statistic	—	—	—	36.54
Prob (F-statistic)	—	—	—	< 0.001

Source: Survey result, 2024.

5. Discussion

5.1. Model fitness

The R-squared value of 0.75 indicates that 75 % of the variance in entrepreneurial passion is explained by the model's independent variables, such as age, education, experience, and risk-taking. The high R-squared suggests a strong model fit. The Adjusted R-squared of 0.72, close to the R-squared, confirms the appropriate selection of predictors, minimizing the inclusion of irrelevant variables. Adjusted R-squared accounts for the number of predictors, offering a more accurate measure of model fit, particularly when using multiple predictors. This highlights the model's robustness in explaining entrepreneurial passion.

In summary, the model demonstrates strong explanatory power for entrepreneurial passion, offering reliable insights for researchers, educators, and policymakers. However, causation cannot be inferred solely from statistical relationships; external validation or experimental designs are necessary. The findings highlight critical factors to nurture and enhance entrepreneurial passion effectively. The regression analysis highlights the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurial passion, revealing a dynamic interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that shape this essential attribute.

The findings confirm the hypotheses proposed for each factor, emphasizing the significance of age, education, prior experience, risk-taking, and external elements such as market competition, technological advancements, resource availability, government policies, and supportive networks. A notable addition is the recognition of barriers to entrepreneurial passion, underscoring the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in resource-constrained environments.

5.2. Hypothesis confirmation analysis

The intercept value of 1.12 suggests that entrepreneurial passion has a baseline level even in the absence of the studied predictors. This aligns with the idea that intrinsic motivations and emotional factors contribute inherently to entrepreneurial passion.

Age (H1: Confirmed). The study finds a significant positive relationship between age and entrepreneurial passion (coefficient = 0.28, p = 0.002), validating the hypothesis. This result aligns with the idea that entrepreneurial pas-

sion grows with age as individuals accumulate experiences and develop greater resilience. Older entrepreneurs often possess a wealth of knowledge gained through personal and professional challenges, allowing them to approach entrepreneurial ventures with confidence and clarity. Research by Baron & Ensley [44] supports this finding, suggesting that life experiences enhance entrepreneurial goal-setting and problem-solving abilities. As individuals age, their capacity to navigate complex situations and recover from setbacks improves, fostering a deeper emotional connection to their ventures. This connection is a driving force behind sustained entrepreneurial motivation. For policymakers and educators, this finding highlights the importance of fostering entrepreneurial opportunities for individuals across all age groups, particularly for older professionals transitioning into entrepreneurship.

Education Level (H2: Confirmed). The positive association between education and entrepreneurial passion (coefficient = 0.14, $p = 0.005$) confirms the hypothesis. Higher education equips entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills, and innovative thinking required to succeed in dynamic markets. Formal education enhances creativity, strategic thinking, and problem-solving abilities, which are integral to entrepreneurial success. Shane [45] underscores the role of education in fostering opportunity recognition and risk assessment, critical elements of entrepreneurial activity. Educational institutions often serve as incubators for entrepreneurial ideas, providing access to mentorship, networks, and resources. For practitioners, this finding reinforces the value of integrating entrepreneurship-focused curricula in educational programs to nurture future entrepreneurial talent.

Prior Experience (H3: Confirmed). The study identifies a strong positive relationship between prior experience and entrepreneurial passion (coefficient = 0.52, $p < 0.001$), further validating the hypothesis. Experienced entrepreneurs bring a wealth of knowledge and refined strategies to their ventures, drawing on past successes and learning from failures. Rae [46] notes that accumulated experience enhances decision-making, goal clarity, and resilience, all of which intensify entrepreneurial passion. The ability to anticipate challenges and adapt effectively contributes to sustained enthusiasm and commitment. This finding highlights the importance of experiential learning and practical exposure in developing entrepreneurial capabilities. Initiatives that encourage internships, apprenticeships, and mentorship can significantly impact the entrepreneurial journey.

Risk-Taking (H4: Confirmed). Risk-taking emerges as the strongest predictor of entrepreneurial passion (coefficient = 0.68, $p < 0.001$), confirming the hypothesis. Entrepreneurs who embrace uncertainty and take calculated risks demonstrate heightened levels of determination and enthusiasm. Kuratko [47] describes risk-taking as a hallmark of passionate entrepreneurship, where individuals pursue opportunities despite potential setbacks. This finding underscores the impor-

tance of fostering a risk-tolerant mindset among entrepreneurs. Policymakers and educators can play a vital role by creating supportive environments that mitigate the fear of failure, such as access to seed funding, insurance schemes, and business advisory services.

Market Competition (H5: Confirmed). The study confirms a positive relationship between market competition and entrepreneurial passion (coefficient = 0.42, $p < 0.001$). Competitive environments drive entrepreneurs to innovate, adapt, and excel, as highlighted by Porter [48]. The challenge of differentiating oneself in a crowded market fosters creativity and motivation, essential elements of entrepreneurial passion. For practitioners, this finding emphasizes the need to embrace competition as a catalyst for growth. Policies that encourage fair competition and market transparency can further stimulate entrepreneurial activity.

Technological Advancements (H6: Confirmed). Technological advancements positively influence entrepreneurial passion (coefficient = 0.35, $p < 0.001$), confirming the hypothesis. Entrepreneurs leveraging emerging technologies often explore innovative business models and solutions, fueling their enthusiasm. Acs & Audretsch [49] emphasize that technological progress opens new avenues for creativity and growth. This finding highlights the importance of access to technology and digital literacy for entrepreneurs. Investments in technology infrastructure and training programs can significantly enhance entrepreneurial outcomes, particularly in developing regions.

Availability of Resources (H7: Confirmed). The availability of resources shows a strong positive effect on entrepreneurial passion (coefficient = 0.47, $p = 0.003$). Entrepreneurs with access to financial capital, skilled labor, and operational assets are better equipped to realize their vision. Brush et al. [50] stress that resource-rich environments reduce barriers and enhance entrepreneurial motivation. This finding underscores the need for targeted resource allocation to foster entrepreneurship, particularly for micro and small enterprises (MSEs). Governments and financial institutions should collaborate to improve access to funding, training, and infrastructure.

Government Policies (H8: Confirmed). The significant positive relationship between government policies and entrepreneurial passion (coefficient = 0.38, $p = 0.003$) highlights the role of supportive regulatory frameworks. Minniti [51] notes that favorable policies, such as tax incentives and business support programs, create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship. Policymakers should prioritize creating streamlined regulations, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and fostering public-private partnerships to support entrepreneurial ventures.

Supportive Networks (H9: Confirmed). Supportive networks positively influence entrepreneurial passion (coefficient = 0.21, $p = 0.002$). Networks provide access to mentorship, collaboration opportunities, and emotional support, all of which are crucial for sustaining passion. Nahapiet & Ghoshal [52] emphasize the importance of social capital in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to active-

ly build and maintain professional networks, leveraging them for knowledge sharing and resource access. Programs that facilitate networking opportunities, such as business incubators and accelerators, can significantly benefit entrepreneurs.

Barriers to Entrepreneurial Passion (H10: Confirmed). Challenges such as limited resources, weak institutional frameworks, and unfavorable policies were identified as significant barriers. This aligns with Woldetsadik et al. [6] who note that these constraints often hinder entrepreneurial growth in developing economies. Efforts to address these barriers should include capacity-building initiatives, institutional reforms, and improved access to resources, ensuring a conducive environment for entrepreneurial success.

In conclusion, the findings confirm that entrepreneurial passion is shaped by a complex interplay of personal and external factors. Risk-taking, prior experience, and resource availability are particularly influential. External factors, including competition, technology, and supportive ecosystems, further amplify passion. Addressing barriers to entrepreneurial growth can unleash the full potential of entrepreneurship, driving innovation and economic development.

5.3. Limitations and Practical Implications

This study presents several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The context-specific nature of the research, focused on Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, may limit the generalizability of results to regions with differing socio-economic and institutional conditions. Additionally, the cross-sectional survey design provides only a snapshot of the factors influencing entrepreneurial passion, making it unable to capture changes over time or establish causal relationships. The exclusion of certain variables, such as cultural influences, psychological traits, or family dynamics, limits the comprehensiveness of the model. Furthermore, while the sample of 248 MSEs is substantial, it may not fully represent the diversity of enterprises across all sectors in Dire Dawa, potentially affecting the breadth of the conclusions.

Despite these limitations, the findings offer valuable practical implications for policymakers, educators, and practitioners. Tailored interventions, such as improved access to resources, entrepreneurial training programs, and supportive government policies, can create an ecosystem that fosters entrepreneurial passion. Addressing barriers identified in the study will be critical in empowering MSEs to achieve sustainable growth, drive innovation, and contribute meaningfully to the local economy.

5.4. Contribution of Entrepreneurial Passion to MSE Success

Figure 3 presents the distribution of respondents based on the different contributions of entrepreneurial passion to MSE success. It includes the frequencies and percentages for each contribution.

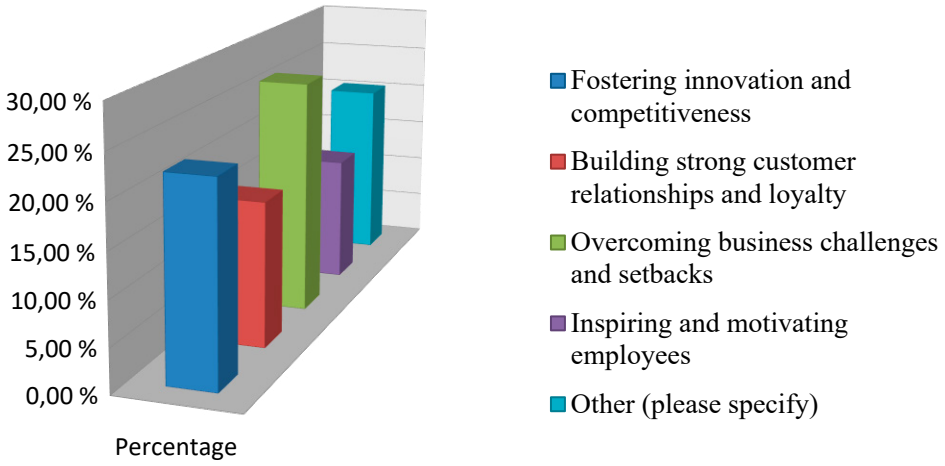

Figure 3. Contribution of entrepreneurial

Source: (survey, 2024)

5.5. Interpretation and discussion

The interpretation of the data reveals several key contributions of entrepreneurial passion to MSE success as perceived by the respondents. The analysis highlights the multifaceted role of entrepreneurial passion in driving MSE success. Key contributions identified by respondents include fostering innovation and competitiveness (22.4 %), emphasizing its role as a catalyst for generating ideas, adopting creative strategies, and achieving competitive advantage. Building strong customer relationships and loyalty (16.3 %) underscores passion's impact on fostering trust and exceptional experiences, enhancing sustainability.

Overcoming business challenges and setbacks (26.5 %) emerged as a significant factor, showcasing passion's role in resilience and creative problem-solving. Inspiring and motivating employees (14.3 %) reflects its positive influence on creating an engaging work environment and boosting performance. Additionally, 20.4 % of respondents noted other diverse impacts, highlighting passion's varied contributions based on individual contexts.

In summary, entrepreneurial passion drives innovation, strengthens customer ties, fosters resilience, and inspires teams, collectively contributing to MSE success. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to harness their passion to enhance performance and achieve sustained growth.

5.6. Specific Challenges Hindering Entrepreneurial Passion

Figure 4 presents the distribution of respondents based on the specific challenges they face, hindering their entrepreneurial passion. It includes frequencies and percentages for each challenge.

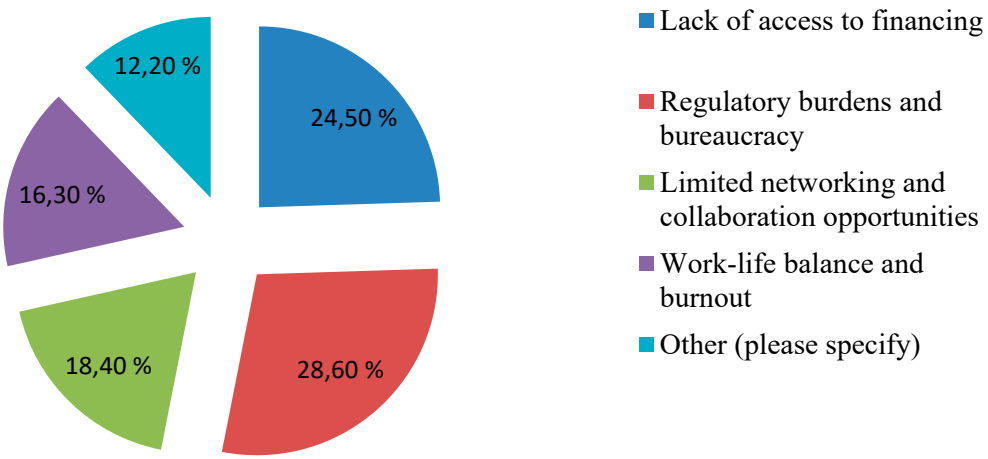

Figure 4. Challenges entrepreneurial passion

Source: Survey, 2024.

Figure 4 highlights several challenges that hinder entrepreneurial passion. Lack of access to financing (24.5 %) and regulatory burdens and bureaucracy (28.6 %) were reported as the most significant challenges. These findings indicate that financial constraints and bureaucratic hurdles pose substantial barriers to entrepreneurial endeavors.

Limited networking and collaboration opportunities (18.4 %) emerged as another significant challenge. This suggests that entrepreneurs face difficulties in establishing meaningful connections and accessing networks that could facilitate their growth and success.

Work-life balance and burnout (16.3 %) were also reported as challenges. This finding indicates that entrepreneurs struggle to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life, leading to potential burnout and a negative impact on their passion for entrepreneurship.

The "Other" category (12.2 %) encompasses challenges not specified in the table. Without further details, it is difficult to determine the specific nature of these challenges. Additional research or qualitative data would be necessary to gain a deeper understanding of these unlisted obstacles.

6. Conclusion

This study reveals that entrepreneurs in Dire Dawa exhibit a moderate level of passion, with individual variations shaped by intrinsic factors such as age, education, prior experience, and risk-taking tendencies. The predominance of younger entrepreneurs fosters a dynamic and innovative entrepreneurial landscape, underscoring the potential for growth in the region.

The research highlights the critical role of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors in shaping entrepreneurial success. Market competition, technological adoption,

resource availability, government policies, and supportive networks are pivotal in nurturing entrepreneurial passion, which emerges as a key driver of micro and small enterprise (MSE) success. This passion promotes innovation, competitiveness, and resilience, while also strengthening customer relationships, enhancing loyalty, and boosting employee motivation, contributing significantly to both internal operations and external market positioning.

The regression analysis demonstrates that personal traits, including age, education, prior experience, and risk-taking, significantly influence entrepreneurial passion by enhancing skills and resilience. Additionally, external factors – such as market conditions, technological advancements, resource availability, regulatory frameworks, and networking opportunities – play vital roles in catalyzing innovation and establishing a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem. These findings contribute to theoretical understanding by illustrating the complex interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive entrepreneurial behavior and motivation.

Practically, the insights gained from this study provide valuable guidance for policymakers, educators, and practitioners. By recognizing the significance of entrepreneurial passion and its determinants, stakeholders can develop targeted interventions to create a conducive environment for MSEs. The identification of key challenges, particularly financial constraints and regulatory burdens – highlights the need for supportive policies and improved access to resources. Additionally, addressing networking limitations and promoting work-life balance can further enhance entrepreneurial potential and sustainability.

In conclusion, this research not only emphasizes the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurial passion but also its critical role in fostering sustainable growth and innovation among MSEs. By bridging theoretical insights with practical implications, the study serves as a valuable resource for stakeholders committed to empowering entrepreneurs and enhancing their contributions to local and regional economic development.

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Аннотация. В этом исследовании рассматриваются факторы, определяющие предпринимательский энтузиазм среди микро- и малых предприятий (ММП) в сфере услуг и промышленном секторе Дыре-Дауа, Эфиопия. Исследуется степень предпринимательского энтузиазма среди операторов ММП, автор выявляет ключевые личные, экологические и институциональные факторы, а также анализирует их влияние на успех, рост и устойчивость ММП. Цель исследования состоит в том, чтобы понять, как эти факторы формируют предпринимательский энтузиазм, определить ключевые движущие силы и барьеры, а также предложить практические рекомендации по повышению эффективности ММП. Используя смешанный подход, были собраны как количественные, так и качественные данные от 248 операторов ММП, отобранных путем стратифицированной выборки в пяти секторах. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о сильном чувстве энтузиазма, мотивации и эмоциональной приверженности, в первую очередь обусловленных финансовой независимостью, возможностями роста, креативностью и устойчивостью в преодолении трудностей. Регрессионный анализ подчеркивает важную роль личностных характеристик, таких как возраст, образование, предыдущий опыт и склонность к риску в воспитании предпринимательского энтузиазма. Кроме того, показано, что внешние факторы, включая рыночную конкуренцию, технологический прогресс, государственную политику, поддерживающие предпринимательство, играют решающую роль в поощрении инноваций и создании благоприятной среды для предпринимательства. В исследовании сделан вывод о том, что предпринимательский энтузиазм находится под влиянием динамического взаимодействия внутренних и внешних факторов. Теоретический вклад исследования заключается в углублении понимания движущих сил предпринимательского энтузиазма. Практический вклад включает рекомендации для политиков, преподавателей и практиков по решению таких проблем, как финансовые ограничения, нормативные барьеры, трудности с налаживанием связей и нахождением баланса между работой и личной жизнью. Эти знания могут помочь повысить успех, устойчивость и обеспечить долгосрочный предпринимательский энтузиазм среди микро- и малых предприятий.

Ключевые слова: микро и малые предприятия; предпринимательский энтузиазм; предпринимательство; фактор.

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ДЛЯ ЦИТИРОВАНИЯ

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