

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL RESILIENCE IN NIGERIA**Aramide A. KUFORIJ, PhD**

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Abstract

Entrepreneurial activity in Nigeria takes place within a business environment characterised by economic volatility, resource constraints, infrastructural deficiencies, intense competition, institutional uncertainty and changing consumer preferences. These conditions make entrepreneurial resilience increasingly important for business survival, adaptation and continuity. Although existing research has established the importance of strategic, relational and organisational capabilities in building resilience, comparatively less attention has been devoted to the emotional capabilities of the entrepreneur as a potential antecedent of resilience. This study examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial resilience in Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigates whether self-awareness, self-regulation and interpersonal/emotional competence influence entrepreneurs' ability to withstand, adapt to and recover from business adversity. A quantitative cross-sectional research design was employed, using a structured questionnaire administered to owners/ managers of 397 small and medium-sized enterprises in Nigeria. Multiple regression analysis was employed in testing the hypothesised relationships. The findings reinforce the broader argument that entrepreneurial resilience is not determined exclusively by financial resources, managerial skills or market conditions. The entrepreneur's capacity to understand, regulate and appropriately express emotions can also influence how setbacks are interpreted and how effectively entrepreneurs adapt to changing circumstances. Emotional intelligence should therefore be regarded as a potentially important component of entrepreneurial capability in Nigeria. The study therefore contributes to the emerging literature by bringing these two streams together within the Nigerian entrepreneurial context. The paper provides implications for entrepreneurship education, SME development programmes, incubators, financial institutions and policymakers.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial resilience, self-awareness, self-regulation, interpersonal competence, entrepreneurship, SMEs, Nigeria