Entreprendre & Innover

Speaking of entrepreneurship and innovation

Call for Papers 2025/4 (67)
Cross Perspectives on the Resilience of Individual Entrepreneurs

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Topic covered

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have been unprecedented (Altig et al., 2020). On an international level, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and very small enterprises (VSEs) have been particularly affected by disruptions, crises, and black swan events. Due to their limited resources and capacities, these organizations are often more severely impacted than established multinational companies (Boubakary, 2022). They have faced challenges such as tightening credit conditions, credit rationing, and constraints on financial and material resources due to disruptions in supply chains.

The literature highlights the unfavorable changes brought about by the COVID-19 crisis at the macro level, particularly the increase in economic, social, spatial, and gender inequalities (Kobiané et al., 2020). At the micro level, this crisis has led to a deterioration in the psychological well-being of entrepreneurs (Torrès et al., 2022), shedding light on the diverse experiences within organizations and the challenges of remote work (Constantinidis et al., 2021). The disruption of economic and social activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic has notably created significant challenges for entrepreneurs engaged in individual entrepreneurial activities, often on a small scale.

In the face of this unforeseen and unpredictable crisis, they were forced to transform, adopt resilient strategies, and mobilize resources to confront these challenges, while also seizing opportunities for more sustainable development (Académie de l'Entrepreneuriat, 2020). Their ability to innovate, adapt, and learn was put to the test, and the challenge became how to rebound after the shock by managing and mastering these crises rather than merely enduring them.

Around the world, individual entrepreneurs, often lacking significant financial means, had to demonstrate exceptional creativity and a strong capacity for adaptation to survive this unprecedented crisis (Eboko & Schlimmer, 2020).

The complex nature of the phenomenon of individual entrepreneurship (Marchesnay, 2016) requires a deep understanding of these entrepreneurs' ability to adapt to changes, overcome obstacles, and thrive in often turbulent environments, particularly in contexts where entrepreneurship is becoming more widespread and individual entrepreneurs make up the majority. In France, for instance, the pandemic years saw record numbers of new businesses being created, with most of these being individual enterprises (Hofstetter, 2022). Liñán and Jaén (2022) establish a correlation between the economic difficulties brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of necessity-driven entrepreneurship, where businesses are created by entrepreneurs facing significant economic constraints, without necessarily having a well-developed business plan.

The challenges faced by individual entrepreneurs in such constantly evolving contexts call for a deep understanding of their resilience. The concept of resilience, originally from psychology, finds relevant application in the context of individual businesses. It refers to the ability to respond constructively to major changes, integrating both external and internal disruptions in order to regain a stable state. Resilience is the ability of a system to return to its original state after being disrupted. More specifically, the UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, UN campaign 2010/2011) defines resilience as 'the capacity of a system, community, or society exposed to risks to resist, absorb, accommodate, and recover from the effects of a hazard (...), including through the preservation and restoration of its essential structures and basic functions.

Organizational resilience becomes crucial for supporting transformations within the institutional environment of business creation. This approach involves implementing both individual and collective tools that enable entrepreneurs to navigate disruptions and bounce back while avoiding the damages caused by stress, demotivation, and the deterioration of quality of work life. The most resilient individual entrepreneurs do not respond to disruptions by creating new rules but rather by using these situations as opportunities to learn and develop new organizational skills. Organizational resilience, widely applied since the mid-2000s (UN, 2005), must evolve to address current crises, which are unprecedented and require organizations to become anti-fragile (Hillson, 2023). While the literature on SME resilience is constantly developing (Baroncelli et al., 2023), studies focused on individual businesses remain fragmented (Iyengar et al., 2021; Dagri and M'Zue, 2022).

Thus, in the proposed processual approach to entrepreneurial resilience, Gentile and Mothe (2022) focus on founders of SMEs with 10 to 50 employees. In this case, as with other studies on entrepreneurial resilience, it might be interesting to question the relevance of applying the results obtained to individual entrepreneurs. Building on the work of Bernard and Dubard Barbosa (2016), in-depth biographical studies could also help uncover new, more specific insights into the resilience of individual entrepreneurs.

Objectives of the Call

In this context, it seems appropriate to adopt a multidisciplinary perspective to better understand how individual entrepreneurs demonstrate creativity and adaptability to overcome the obstacles they face. We aim to highlight and bring into dialogue the practices and strategies used, or that could be used, to enhance the resilience of these economic actors, whether they come from entrepreneurs, professionals supporting individual entrepreneurs, or researchers. It would also be useful to identify perspectives, opportunities, or threats that these entrepreneurs should prepare for in terms of resilience.

Faced with the challenges and opportunities they encounter, this special issue will explore various aspects of their resilience through a multidisciplinary perspective. We therefore encourage contributions that draw from psychology, sociology, economics, law, governance, life sciences, or the contributions of information systems and new technologies in contexts of resilience (Frimousse & Peretti, 2021). We will specifically ask what contributions and challenges individual entrepreneurs face in terms of resilience, as well as the roles played by the environment or context. These contributions will provide insights into this category of entrepreneurs, which is the most widespread but not necessarily the most studied in research.

These contributions can take the form of research articles, articles focused on dialogue with the field conducted with or without academic collaboration, presentations of innovative practices, as well as Inspirations, drawing from culture in a broad sense (literature, performing arts, visual arts, etc.) to shed light on the theme from innovative perspectives.

We identify several areas for reflection (non-exhaustive list):

- Resilience strategies of entrepreneurs in polycrisis contexts;
- The role of governments and their impact on entrepreneurs' resilience;
- The influence of emotions on individual entrepreneurs' strategies in crisis contexts;
- The legal aspects of individual entrepreneurs' resilience (regulatory frameworks, support mechanisms, commercial contracts, dispute management, data protection...);
- The influence of different forms of individual businesses (micro-enterprises, freelancing, umbrella companies, activity cooperatives, trial entrepreneurship...) on entrepreneurs' resilience;
- The cultural and social dimensions influencing the resilience of individual entrepreneurs; comparative studies between entrepreneurs from the Global North and South could be interesting, for example through the analysis of variables that foster resilience, such as frugal innovation, bricolage, or the use of social networks;
- The role of information technologies in entrepreneurs' resilience;
- The biological foundations of entrepreneurial resilience: for instance, how do living mechanisms affect entrepreneurs' ability to cope with stress and change?
- The psychological aspects of entrepreneurs' resilience: what role do psychological factors play in managing challenges and uncertainties?
- Training individual entrepreneurs in resilience;

- The limits of resilience discourse and its effects on entrepreneurs, as dominant narratives about entrepreneurship often emphasize success stories and entrepreneurs who have overcome obstacles to achieve success;
- How can advances in neuroscience shed light on how entrepreneurs make decisions in the face of adversity?
- The impact of technological innovations on entrepreneurs' mental well-being;
- Cyber-resilience among entrepreneurs and its contribution to business continuity to guard against attacks.

Relevance to Current Societal Issues

The polycrises we are currently experiencing—whether economic, financial, geopolitical, health-related, or environmental—highlight the urgent need for organizations to develop their capacity to cope with uncertainty, especially when confronted with out-of-the-box situations or black swan events (Lagadec, 2009; Taleb, 2007). Current crisis events offer a unique opportunity to study the actions taken by organizations to respond to such shocks (Dupin et al., 2022; Sein, 2020). In a context where entrepreneurship is seen as a lever for creating value, and where the majority of new businesses are individual enterprises, the question of their resilience is a key issue for economic development and social inclusion in various regions.

Managerial and Societal Implications

In the context of business activities, entrepreneurship aligns harmoniously with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), thus generating positive outcomes both for economic and financial value creation as well as societal well-being. We hope that this special issue will contribute to a more holistic and in-depth understanding of entrepreneurs' resilience, by researchers, entrepreneurs themselves, and public and private actors in entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Schedule

Submission of manuscripts (Version 1): 03/15/2025
Decision by guest editors - desk reject: from 03/16/2025 to 04/01/2025
First round of review: from 04/01/2025 to 05/15/2025
Manuscript revisions by authors (Version 2): from 05/15/2025 to 08/15/2025
Second round of review: from 08/15/2025 to 09/30/2025
Final adjustments (15 days): from 09/30/2025 to 10/05/2025
Edition and publication: 01/01/2026

Editorial Line of the Journal *Entreprendre & Innover*

The journal *Entreprendre & Innover* is a high-level popular science journal in the field of entrepreneurship and innovation, published by DeBoeck University. Its aim is to provide a readership of executives, entrepreneurs, professionals from business creation networks, and business leaders with original, scientifically sound, or innovative articles in terms of the ideas expressed.

The journal is open to ALL disciplines and ALL perspectives that are interested in entrepreneurship and innovation. Since the journal primarily targets practitioners, we ensure that contributions focus on practical applications, entrepreneurial implications, and/or policy recommendations.

In this spirit, contributions should:

- Include a section explicitly addressing these concerns: the reader should always be able to ask at the end of the article, 'So what? How does this article help me act or think more clearly for my future actions?'
- Use a more concrete and operational language than is typically found in academic journals: theory should not be absent but should be simplified, meaning it should be translated into simple terms. Abstract concepts must be explained and/or illustrated with practical examples.
- Avoid accumulating scientific references: the goal is to select a few key authors that help clarify the topic, rather than demonstrating the exhaustive nature of the academic literature on the subject. Scientific references should be cited exclusively using footnotes.

The detailed author guidelines are available on the journal's website (https://entreprendreetinnover.com/) under the 'Contribute' section. It is imperative to follow these guidelines when submitting your manuscript.
Please submit your manuscript via the journal's submission platform: https://eeti.manuscriptmanager.net.

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