



Entrepreneurial women: The impacts of the pandemic on the emotional and cognitive aspects of their businesses

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SUMMARY

This research sought to explain the effect of affective and cognitive aspects on female entrepreneurship during the pandemic. This research is justified by its current and relevant theme, especially for the growth and recognition that women entrepreneurs have received from society, and for the academic and business point of view, due to the need for current research and that bring future perspectives. A qualitative approach was used and this research is characterized as exploratory, with field research procedures. The results of the interviews satisfactorily pointed out important issues, such as what stands out in the entrepreneurs' speech when reporting their faith and persistence in continuing and developing business strategies, even in the midst of a financial crisis.

Key words: entrepreneurship; feminine; social isolation.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the scenario currently experienced due to the advent of the pandemic caused by Sars-CoV-2 (CoVid-19), a virus that presents variables from asymptomatic infections to severe conditions, the WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION - WHO, highlights that about 80% of infected by COVID-19 can be asymptomatic or oligosymptomatic (few symptoms), and that only 20% are detected in a serious condition, requiring hospital care and that 5% may need ventilatory support (Ministry of Health, 2021). Due to the high rate of transmissibility, as well as mortality, social isolation began as a way to combat the spread of the virus.

A state of siege, characterized by quarantine, was recommended in order to avoid a health crisis. This isolation affected, directly or indirectly, all sectors of the economy, as well as all social interaction, which in turn, hampered the forms of work; many

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Entrepreneurial women: The impacts of the pandemic on the emotional and cognitive aspects of their businesses

companies had to close their doors and lay off people causing a huge increase in unemployment. With social isolation, the opening of many micro-enterprises, registered or autonomously

The Associação Paulista Dos Empreendedores Do Circuito De Compras - APECC (2020) highlights that in this period of social isolation, the number of open companies grew, an increase of 0.5% compared to the period of 2019. In the second quarter of 2020, the opening of 500 thousand Individual Microenterprises - MEI was observed, an increase of 2.9% compared to the first four months of 2019. This increase is justified by the fact that unemployment has increased during social isolation, with this, many citizens sought ways of survival.

It is understood that entrepreneurship is a method of implementing new businesses and or changes in already active companies, and it is also called something related to the creation of a new company or innovative product. According to Ruiz (2019, p. 24) there is no absolute definition of what an entrepreneur is, since each author is based on his experience, therefore, the author still says that "the entrepreneur brings something new to society and should be remunerated with the profit of your enterprise".

Since the Brazilian economy has currently grown around entrepreneurship, most small and medium-sized companies are opened and/or led by women, a movement confirmed by Sebrae (2021), which associates this growth with an objective of financial independence. and social equality on the part of the female public in the most diverse areas.

Knowing that entrepreneurship is one of the pillars of the Brazilian economy and that the growth of women in this area has been gradually observed, the following problem question emerges: What effect do affective and cognitive aspects have on female entrepreneurship during the pandemic?

Therefore, this research aims to explain the effect of affective and cognitive aspects on female entrepreneurship during the pandemic.

A research that has as its target audience women entrepreneurs in the municipality of Mossoró-RN and that seeks to identify the effects of their affective and cognitive aspects, is justified due to the importance of women in entrepreneurship and their relevance to the economy. It is even justified by the current and relevant theme, especially by the growth and recognition that women entrepreneurs have received from society, and from the academic and business point of view, due to the need for current research and that bring future perspectives.

two THEORETICAL REFERENCE

2.1 Female entrepreneurship in Rio Grande do Norte

The concepts regarding the existing entrepreneurship do not use the gender distinction, although there are definitions that reach the exclusivity of the male audience due to the roots of the time, it is understood that there is no space for women. However, it is observed that women are currently actively involved in entrepreneurship, that is, the thought that the field would be exclusive to the male public has been dissolved over the centuries (Colet & Mozzato, 2020).

For many years women have faced issues of prejudice, double shifts and low self-confidence when it comes to their dreams. The issue of social equality and space in the

Entrepreneurial women: The impacts of the pandemic on the emotional and cognitive aspects of their businesses

labor market is something that is still very present and that many seek ways out of such issues, one of these ways out is female entrepreneurship (Sebrae, 2021).

For Bernardo and Oliveira (2020) the female representation in entrepreneurship has resulted in a high increase and innovation in the forms of work, with this, it is observed that female entrepreneurs implement new challenges and business opportunities, with this it is demonstrated that female entrepreneurship has the competence to apply significant changes in society and economy. Sebrae (2021) reports that companies with single female management are divided into 47% of Northeastern businesswomen are concentrated in the entrepreneurial sector, and the most chosen segment to undertake, which brings together about 35% of women is commerce, in second place. comes industry with 10% and finally, civil construction with 1.4%.

Female entrepreneurship has its own characteristics that require a unique look to raise their findings regarding the evolution of research on the subject. The biases that need to be explored range from psychological to sociodemographic aspects so that the journey of female entrepreneurs can be outlined in order to know their possible behaviors (Silva, Tavares, Jesus, & Merlin, 2018).

Historically, women perform several functions and, among them, some women end up seeking to get involved in various professions, whether executive or entrepreneurial (Araújo, Miranda, Freire, Silva, & Ribeiro, 2018). To undertake, being a woman, especially in the current context, it is necessary that there are new ideas of strategies for insertion in the market, namely the existence of numerous risks and, despite the visible advances in this sense, there is still a social stigma regarding women. assuming leadership roles in organizations, which can lead them to give up on their initial goals.

2.1.1 Affective and cognitive aspects in entrepreneurial action

Entrepreneurial action is called the transformation of reality that exists in new markets, applying resources and innovation involving the entrepreneur and long-term innovation. Being able to be configured in four different ways, the entrepreneurial action can be divided in: a) the information and the abundant time; b) occasions when the entrepreneur needs to be familiar with the problem in question; c) abundant resources, the entrepreneur can opt for a different approach that will help the collection of information and, finally; d) the entrepreneur is faced with an issue or opportunity, but these have resource and time constraints (Maniçoba, 2019).

The entrepreneur has her particularities regarding the affective and cognitive aspects, these mainly refer to the decision-making process and the resilience to face major changes around her (Colet & Mozzato, 2020). From the perspective of Silva, El-Aouar, Da Silva, Castro, and Sousa (2019), 83% of women have resilience regarding performance motivation to face adversities in their participation in the enterprise. Many of these women still have perseverance in their daily lives at different times.

Barzotto, Nassif and Garçãson (2019) in their study report that affective and cognitive aspects are analyzed together, as they complement each other and have the same object, both seek implications for the actions of female entrepreneurs and their possible contributions to entrepreneurial performance. In addition, the authors Silva, El-Aouar, Da Silva, Castro and Sousa (2019) highlight the importance of resilience as a means of connecting to the cognitive aspect, through which the entrepreneur is able to develop autonomy to quickly recover from the difficulties faced in the activities enterprising.

2.2 Entrepreneurship in times of covid 19

Unusual situations test the entrepreneurial abilities of individuals, and while the challenges in entrepreneurship are routine, there are times when they are magnified beyond expectations. It is in this context that entrepreneurs are inserted in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, which highlighted the discrepancy between “winners” and “losers” in this environment, given that the status of each individual is given by their ability to respond to the rapid reconfiguration of new technologies, consumer demands, as well as the ability to make assertive decisions at certain times (Lungu & Bogoslov, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic was an environmental uncertainty, considered unforeseen since it cannot be considered in the strategic planning of the business, but which directly impacted their development (Castro, Pontelli, Nunes, Kneipp, & Costa, 2021). The need for countries to establish means of preventing contagion, such as social distancing and closing borders, led to bankruptcies and, consequently, to an increase in unemployment rates, particularly affecting small and medium-sized companies (Castro & Zermeno , 2020). This means that entrepreneurs may have to significantly change the direction of their business (Ratten, 2020).

Therefore, the search for new ways of doing things is imminent, because given the changes in consumption patterns, companies and entrepreneurs are driven to seek innovative ways, such as modifying and adapting business strategies, in order to meet to the new market demands and, consequently, to remain in the market (Nassif, Corrêa & Rossetto, 2020b). In this regard, a business orientation to deal with the problems and changes in this environment becomes necessary (Ratten, 2020).

Entrepreneurship is also seeing the opportunities that arise in adverse times, and this idea is not new, however, as Nassif, Armando and Falce (2020a) emphasize, to see the opportunities it is necessary to adapt and to have a minimum of preparation, as for example , the domain of technology, which is now essential. This becomes even more significant when e-commerce has become one of the main resources of refuge for enterprises, since their physical spaces had to close when complying with social isolation measures (Bernardes, Silva & Lima, 2020).

During this scenario, the ideal is to mitigate business risks, identifying new customers, and seeking new growth opportunities. The pandemic will pass and business owners who use their time to seek greater engagement with their customer base, develop new business models and improve their skills will emerge stronger than ever after the pandemic (Liguori & Pittz, 2020). Corroborating this idea, Castro, Pontelli, Nunes, Kneipp, and Costa (2021), found in their study that, among the opportunities that emerged during the pandemic, personal and professional growth and improvement, reinvention of services, new ways of working, changes in business models and the institution of e-commerce.

However, resilience is needed more than ever, which involves not only psychological readiness but also organizational support and system-level preparedness. That said, it is critically necessary for individuals, society and organizations to survive and thrive in the face of the fight against the virus, as well as the social and economic shocks associated with it (Liu, Lee & Lee, 2020).

3 METHODOLOGY

Based on the objectives proposed in this research, it can be classified with a qualitative approach and is characterized as exploratory, with field research procedures. Qualitative research uses statistical instruments to collect and analyze data, seeking theoretical explanations and considering intensive and detailed studies on the phenomena studied (Vieira & Zouain, 2005). It is also noteworthy that authors opting for qualitative research have within their scope a wide variety of practicalities to achieve a better understanding of the proposed objective.

Bardin (1977) defines that the most spontaneous qualitative research procedure, this type of approach should be used when making deductions about such an event, finally, it is understood that qualitative analysis is the inference defined in the presence of an index and not as to the frequency of its repetition in individual communication;

As for exploratory research, the authors Gray (2012) and Cervo, Bervian and Da Silva (2007) define it as an event that has not yet been studied, with the main objective of understanding the object in the study and or obtaining a new view of it, to achieving this vision requires flexible strategies that allow the observation of different aspects, among other elements. Finally, field research is characterized by being a procedure that aims to observe current facts, without allowing the exclusion or isolation of information and controlling possible variables, thus allowing the study of established relationships (Rodrigues, 2021).

Comprising a universe of women entrepreneurs, for this research, entrepreneurs from all sectors of the city of Mossoró, in Rio Grande do Norte, were selected, this choice is due to the fact that the increase in entrepreneurs has grown in the region during the pandemic, due to social representation and theoretical to achieve the objective of this research. Arruda (2020) points out that Brazil has 9.3 million women leading a company, of which 45% are heads of families, therefore, they have the main income for their homes. In Mossoró-RN there is more than 60% in the occupation of entrepreneurship, surpassing men.

Data collection took place through a structured interview in Forms in April, based on an adapted script to achieve the objective proposed in this research. Therefore, following the script with 12 objective and subjective questions, questions were formulated that seek to investigate the affective and cognitive aspects in the actions of entrepreneurs during the pandemic. Thirty-six responses were obtained from women entrepreneurs in the city of Mossoró/RN, aged between 18 and 54 years. The answers were manually transcribed for better visualization. For a better understanding of the collected data, tables made in Excel 2016 and word clouds were inserted in the WordClouds 2020 website.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

After analyzing the data, tables were generated, which were divided from the segments of activity of the respondents entrepreneurs.

4.1 Identification of affective and cognitive aspects

Entrepreneurial women: The impacts of the pandemic on the emotional and cognitive aspects of their businesses

After the descriptive analysis of the data and individual reading of the interviews, it was possible to perceive the following affective aspects in the entrepreneurs of the sweets business: perseverance, courage, willpower, initiative, willingness to take risks, personal motivation, facing challenges and independence. As for the cognitive aspects, the following stood out mainly: the definition of goals, knowing how to plan, knowing the limits and the ability to communicate, as can be seen in Table 1.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE CANDY BRANCH			
Affective Aspects		Cognitive Aspects	
Perseverance	X	Take calculated risks	
Courage	X	Ability to establish partnerships	
Willpower	X	set goals	X
Initiative	X	know how to plan	X
Willingness to take risks	X	Know your limits	X
personal motivation	X	Eloquence	
Face challenges	X	Communication capacity	X
passion for business			
do what you like			
Autonomy			
Self confidence			
Independence	X		

Table 1

Affective and cognitive aspects of female entrepreneurs in the sweets industry

Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

These data lead to the understanding that even during the pandemic and social isolation, entrepreneurs seek to remain persevering in the face of a new moment of global adaptation.

In Table 2 it is observed that some affective aspects were mentioned again, such as perseverance, courage, willpower and initiative, a new affective aspect observed in the entrepreneurs in the food industry was self-confidence. As for the cognitive aspects, the emergence of terms such as “taking calculated risks” and “eloquence” was observed, while the term “communication ability” is recurrent in both branches.

The food business currently during the pandemic has grown continuously due to social isolation, many restaurants seek to reinvent themselves for new modalities of deliveries and or forms of marketing to keep their customers and / or conquer new ones.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE FOOD BUSINESS			
Affective Aspects		Cognitive Aspects	
Perseverance	X	Take calculated risks	x
Courage	X	Ability to establish partnerships	
Willpower	X	set goals	
Initiative	X	know how to plan	
Willingness to take risks		Know your limits	
personal motivation		Eloquence	x
Face challenges	X	Communication capacity	x
passion for business			

Entrepreneurial women: The impacts of the pandemic on the emotional and cognitive aspects of their businesses

do what you like		
Autonomy		
Self confidence	X	
Independence		

Table 2

Affective and cognitive aspects of female entrepreneurs in the food industry

Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

It is then observed with the findings of Table 2 that the entrepreneurs took initiative, took calculated risks and had the willpower to develop a new system for their restaurant/delivery. The findings in this research are in line with what Silva, El-Aouar, Da Silva, Castro and Sousa (2019) say, which attest that even in the face of a national economic crisis, the vast majority of women sought to open their own business, seeking to ways of resilience to maintain good results in your venture.

As observed in the first two tables, in Table 3 the first four affective aspects are detected again in the entrepreneurs' speech during the interview. Other aspects emerged, such as: personal motivation, autonomy and independence. As for the cognitive aspects, there was repeated mention of only one, while new mentions emerged such as: skills to establish partnerships and knowing how to plan.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN BEAUTY AND AESTHETICS			
Affective Aspects		Cognitive Aspects	
Perseverance	X	Take calculated risks	x
Courage	X	Ability to establish partnerships	x
Willpower	X	set goals	
Initiative	X	know how to plan	x
Willingness to take risks		Know your limits	
personal motivation	X	Eloquence	
Face challenges	X	Communication capacity	
passion for business			
do what you like			
Autonomy	X		
Self confidence			
Independence	X		

Table 3

Affective and cognitive aspects of entrepreneurs in the beauty and aesthetics sector

Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

The beauty and aesthetics branch suffered from social isolation due to Covid-19, as it is a branch that does not enable a “delivery” to the customer, some beauty salons and beauty salons that work in neighborhoods had to close their doors. In this research, the entrepreneurs interviewed reported that the initial moment was quite difficult, some reinvented themselves in digital marketing seeking to offer their products and teaching their customers how to use them, others set up kits and “burned” inventories.

The strategy applied by entrepreneurs in this field related to their affective and cognitive aspects, corroborates the research by Castro, Pontelli, Nunes, Kneipp, and Costa (2021) which highlights that beauty salons seek to retain their customers and keep them gradually post-pandemic, even when some interviewees report the change in demand for the service.

Entrepreneurial women: The impacts of the pandemic on the emotional and cognitive aspects of their businesses

In Table 4 we will observe the inquiries about the intimate fashion trade branch.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE INDUSTRY FASHION COMMERCE			
Affective Aspects		Cognitive Aspects	
Perseverance		Take calculated risks	x
Courage	x	Ability to establish partnerships	x
Willpower		set goals	
Initiative	x	know how to plan	
Willingness to take risks		Know your limits	
personal motivation		Eloquence	
Face challenges		Communication capacity	
passion for business			
do what you like			
Autonomy			
Self confidence	x		
Independence			

Table 4

Affective and cognitive aspects of women entrepreneurs in the underwear trade

Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

In Table 4, it is observed that the interviewees in the underwear trade sector, regarding the affective aspects, did not detect so many of these during the reading of the interviews. Only the affective aspects were noted: courage and initiative. It is understood that this volume of appearance was due to the fact that there were only two women in the field.

As for the cognitive aspect, it was noted the assumption of calculated risks and skills to establish partnerships. As for the issue of establishing partnerships, the entrepreneurs reported that "keeping in touch with buyers and new suppliers has been a good way out.

Table 5 deals with the various trades, which are: bars and restaurants, children's clothing stores, perfumeries, handicrafts, clothing, automotive sound services, gift stores, accessories store and dairy and cold meat retail. . All these businesses are run by women who claim to possess the following aspects: perseverance, courage, willpower, initiative, willingness to take risks, personal motivation, facing challenges, passion for the business, doing what you like, self-confidence. As for the cognitive aspects, it was noted that female entrepreneurs take calculated risks, know how to plan, know their limits and have communication skills.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN MISCELLANEOUS TRADE			
Affective Aspects		Cognitive Aspects	
Perseverance	X	Take calculated risks	x
Courage	X	Ability to establish partnerships	
Willpower	X	set goals	
Initiative	X	know how to plan	x
Willingness to take risks	X	Know your limits	x
personal motivation	X	Eloquence	
Face challenges	X	Communication capacity	x
passion for business	X		

Entrepreneurial women: The impacts of the pandemic on the emotional and cognitive aspects of their businesses

do what you like	X		
Autonomy			
Self confidence	X		
Independence			

Table 5
Affective and cognitive aspects of women entrepreneurs in the varied trade branch
 Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

These attributes become important and indispensable, noting that these branches of commerce have their own characteristics for being more dynamic and of high communication with the public, the entrepreneur must have, in short, the flexibility to stand out from the problems and difficulties that may arise during the day by day. The interviewees reported that during the pandemic, many chose to adapt their business to delivery, this was necessary so as not to lose customers. The beginning was one of adaptation for everyone, some respondents also reported the difficulty in finding motoboys, because as all the shops looked for the same way out, the failure with the motoboys arose, but in the end everything worked out.

In Table 6, the offices are highlighted, this branch, due to social isolation, opted for the home office, the interviewed entrepreneurs who have accounting office and journalism office ventures in their speeches highlight, mainly the points that can detect that the existing affective aspects are: perseverance, courage, willpower, initiative, passion for the business and doing what you love.

These last two are highlighted by the entrepreneur of the journalism office who has been in the business for exactly ten years. As for the cognitive aspects, it was observed that they take calculated risks and know how to plan. It is known that the home office for women increases their work, because in addition to their work, women need to pay attention to family members and take care of the house (Ratten, 2020).

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE OFFICE BRANCH			
Affective Aspects		Cognitive Aspects	
Perseverance	X	Take calculated risks	x
Courage	X	Ability to establish partnerships	
Willpower	X	set goals	
Initiative	X	know how to plan	x
Willingness to take risks		Know your limits	
personal motivation		Eloquence	
Face challenges		Communication capacity	
passion for business	X		
do what you like	X		
Autonomy			
Self confidence			
Independence			

Table 6
Affective and cognitive aspects of female entrepreneurs in the office sector
 Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

Therefore, it is understandable when entrepreneurs emphasize the aspects of perseverance, willpower, courage and so on so many times during the interview in their

Entrepreneurial women: The impacts of the pandemic on the emotional and cognitive aspects of their businesses



Figure 2
Word cloud about motivation to undertake during the pandemic
Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

As for losses, raw material, business, sales, going bankrupt, etc., these are words that the entrepreneurs stressed a lot during the interview, because the economic crisis is one of the reasons that leads all the interviewees to report the drop in their sales.

Figure 3 shows the question about which characteristics the interviewees believe are important for an entrepreneur to have during this time of financial crisis. The interviewees answered, as in all the research, that first, the entrepreneur needs to have persistence, therefore, innovation, resilience, focus, trust, patience, intelligence, faith, and so on.



Figure 3
Word cloud about characteristics that the entrepreneur needs to have
Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

These were some of the characteristics of the affective and cognitive aspects that the interviews judged to be important for an entrepreneur, so it was observed in their answers all 36 interviewed entrepreneurs adequately possess these characteristics.

5 Final considerations

Entrepreneurial women: The impacts of the pandemic on the emotional and cognitive aspects of their businesses

In the context of the objective of this research regarding the effects of affective and cognitive aspects on female entrepreneurship during the pandemic, we sought to investigate the effects that this isolation would have on their emotions and, consequently, their enterprise. The thought about female affective aspects goes to its emotional side, however, during social isolation it was possible to notice that many women showed their resilience and persistence in their endeavors. As for the cognitive aspects, these appear as auxiliaries, so that the entrepreneurs seek within themselves their skills, planning and so on. Through an exploratory approach, it was found that the effects of social isolation increased the willpower of female entrepreneurs to remain firm in their business.

The results of the interviews satisfactorily pointed out important issues, such as what stands out in the entrepreneurs' speech when reporting their faith and persistence in continuing and developing business strategies, even in the midst of a financial crisis.

The positively reasonable results regarding the affective aspects were observed after divided into the branches of the enterprise, therefore, it was possible to notice that the entrepreneurs acquired the same affective aspects, highlighting faith. As for the cognitive aspects, the same was noted.

It is understood that the study regarding the affective and cognitive aspects of female entrepreneurs during social isolation, provides reflections on the search for the development of public policies for these post-pandemic female entrepreneurs, to ensure their continuity in the market. Therefore, the theme proves to be relevant for society in a business environment. The limitations observed in this research were the data collection that allowed a better view of the entrepreneur and her posture during the interview. It is suggested for future research, a more detailed interview in the field of affective and cognitive aspects and their effects on female entrepreneurship during social isolation.

Entrepreneurial women: The impacts of the pandemic on the emotional and cognitive aspects of their businesses

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Entrepreneurial women: The impacts of the pandemic on the emotional and cognitive aspects of their businesses

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