



Research Article

Dark Entrepreneurship and Work Life Balance: The Moderated Mediation of Family Support and Resilience

¹Anum Moazzam | ¹Shanza Tabasum | ^{*1}Dr. Muhammad Imran

^{*1}Department of Management Sciences,
COMSATS University Islamabad, Pakistan
Email: m.imrankhan@comsats.edu.pk

Correspondence

Dr. Muhammad Imran
Email: m.imrankhan@comsats.edu.pk

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ABSTRACT

The dark aspects of entrepreneurship, portrayed as extreme desire, work centrality, risk neglect, and disdain for ethical boundaries, have gained increased scholarly interest, particularly for their consequences for entrepreneurs' well-being. Based on Spillover Theory, this study investigates dark entrepreneurship and its impact on work-life balance, using moderated mediation of family support and resilience. Data were gathered from owners and managers of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan. The findings show that dark entrepreneurship has a detrimental impact on work-life balance, and resilience mediates the relationship between dark entrepreneurship and work-life balance. Furthermore, family support moderates the mediated pathway, highlighting resilience's favorable function in improving work-life balance. These findings indicate that, while dark entrepreneurial tendencies may upset balance, internal psychological resources and external familial support might mitigate unfavorable outcomes. The study has practical implications for entrepreneur-focused interventions, such as resilience training and family-inclusive legislation that aim to support SME growth while protecting entrepreneurs' mental health in stressful business environments.

KEYWORDS

Entrepreneurship, Dark side, Resilience, Work-life balance, Family Support

1 | INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is acclaimed as an organ of economic growth, technological advancement, and individual prosperity; however, a significant amount of research has also revealed an opposing trend, the so-called dark entrepreneurship, which has been characterized by narcissism, as well as machiavellianism, obsessional passion, maverick addiction to risk, and a readiness to compromise his or her own health or well-being, or that of others, in the name of business success (Klotz & Neubaum, 2016). Although self-efficacy, growth orientation, and opportunity recognition are traditionally pre-eminent factors of the entrepreneurial inquiry, recent surveys show that the so-called dark qualities could have negative effects on the psychological well-being of the entrepreneurs, their family life, and work-life balance as well as professional ethics (Baluku et al., 2020).

This study is a critical revisit of the negative effects of entrepreneurship in a behavioral-psychological sense i.e., it evaluates the effects of dark entrepreneurship to work-life balance in Pakistani entrepreneurs who operate as SMEs. In Pakistan, SMEs form the backbone of Pakistan, and they generate more than 80% of jobs as well as around 40% of gross domestic product (SMEDA, 2023). However, the managers of such companies are accustomed to working under stressful circumstances, long hours, and unclear distinction between the realms of work and personal life, which leads to the predisposition of emotional sadness and improper lifestyle (Ratten, 2020). This paper uses a Spillover Theory (Staines, 1980), which holds that psychological conditions, behavior and emotions produced in a single field- whether professional or home- can be transferred to another and affect general environment around.

Even though, historically, the model has been used to explain positive outcomes of transfer effect like job satisfaction leads to family satisfaction, it also explains negative spill overs like work stress leads to family stress and a poor mental state. The specifics of these dynamics seem especially troubling when it comes to the environment of dark entrepreneurship, which is characterized by poor boundary control, impoverished social ties, and high emotional investment in the venture itself.

Resilience, which is defined as the bounce-back ability in response to adversity (Luthans et al., 2007), can protect the entrepreneur against the psychological consequences of dark aspects in that it helps people to remain composed about workplace demands (Hayward et al., 2010). The psychological effects of family support act as an outside socio-emotional resource in alleviating any negative effects of dark entrepreneurship by offering a helping hand through practical support, affirmation, and empathy (Greenhaus & Powell, 2008). Taken together, these constructs contribute to the existing demand of the system-based entrepreneurial research inclusive of the psychological factors (Uy et al., 2021). The geographical nature of Islamabad and Rawalpindi is prominent. The two cities are the largest urban centers in Pakistan, and due to the presence of a wide range of SMEs in the form of technology, retail, education, food services, and others. Businesspeople in the region tend to be deep-rooted in social communities where family input in decision-making and operational procedures is also intense (Alam et al., 2024). This context will allow the occurrence of the strong discussion of how the dark entrepreneurial trends spread to the sphere of personal life and how the mechanisms of both internal (resilience) and external (family support) alleviation or enhancement of these spillovers.

Despite growing literature on entrepreneurial stress, burnout, and psychological capital, the dark side of entrepreneurship particularly its impact on work-life balance remains underexplored in emerging economies like Pakistan. Most existing studies focus on Western contexts and positive entrepreneurial traits, thereby overlooking the culturally embedded and psychologically complex experiences of entrepreneurs in high-stress, high-responsibility environments. Furthermore, little is known about how resilience and family support interact with dark traits to shape outcomes such as work-life balance. The primary aim of this study is to examine the impact of dark entrepreneurship on work-life balance among SME entrepreneurs in Pakistan, while analyzing the mediating role of resilience and the moderating effect of family support. By doing so, the study intends to offer both theoretical insights and practical strategies for managing the psychological well-being of entrepreneurs.

2 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

This study is anchored in Spillover Theory, which suggests that cognitive, emotional, and behavioral experiences in one life domain (e.g., work) can influence outcomes in another (e.g., family or personal well-being) (Staines, 1980; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). Negative spillovers are the process of transferring stress, exhaustion, or unhealthy work-related habits into a domestic life, which undermines relational happiness and general personal well-being. Within the framework of dark entrepreneurship, work obsession, emotional detachment, and poor boundary setting are some of the characteristics that may trigger a domino effect of negative emotional and relationship consequences. In opposition to these processes stands the resilience of the person and family support, which can break the vicious circle, and this approach is aligned with the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and positive psychology theories (Harter, 2009).

2.1 | Hypotheses Development

The ability to recover after a disaster and maintain functional capacity during pressure is referred to as resilience (Luthans et al., 2007). As an essential entrepreneurship characteristic, resilience helps entrepreneurs cope with uncertainty, overcome failure and endurance through volatile market situations (Hayward et al., 2010). However, the resilience can be consumed through dark entrepreneurship, given that it brings with it excessive labor, the management of emotions, and lack of restraint. Chronic overworking, inhibition of affect-regulatory mechanisms and neglect of social feedback worsen coping resource availability with time (Uy et al., 2021). On the other hand, some dark traits, e.g., boldness or obsessive passion, can lead to short-term effects, i.e., increase in mental endurance, but this is not a sustainable boost (Baluku et al., 2020).

Empirical evidence suggests that there exists an interaction between maladaptive characteristics and personal psychological resources. Entrepreneurs who demonstrate high levels of resilience seem to avert the detrimental

effects of dark entrepreneurial behaviors, and the inability to demonstrate resilience predisposes entrepreneurs to burnout and emotional exhaustion (Fisher et al., 2009). A cross-national study found that certain dark-triad components particularly narcissism are positively associated with motivational dynamics that underpin entrepreneurial resilience (Kryeziu et al., 2024). In a recent study from Pakistan, higher psychological capital, which includes resilience, significantly helped entrepreneurs manage adversity and avoid burnout even in the presence of stress-inducing behaviors (Sarfraz Ali & Qassim, 2025). Together, these findings indicate that dark entrepreneurship can support resilience, helping individuals persist and maintain psychological well-being under pressure.

H1: Dark Entrepreneurship (DE) has a positive effect on Resilience (R)

It is no secret that resilience is the psychological resource that lies in the basis of successful emotional control, stress coping as well as adaptive functioning in the context of increased pressure at work (Smith et al., 2008). Investigation cites greater ability to balance competing pressures between work and home lives, recover upon exposure to everyday stressors, and create a stable relationship as having greater resiliency than the inability to do so. In the entrepreneurial environment, resilience enables maintenance of perspective in the case of failure, response to organizational crises, and the minimization of cognitive distortion and stress or isolation (Hayward et al., 2010). As a result, a resilient entrepreneur is most likely to establish boundaries, and positive reframing, and adaptive work strategies, thus contributing to work-life balance (Patel et al., 2019). In an entrepreneurial culture where entrepreneurial business owners are faced with inconsistent economies and social pressures, which are a major source of stress, resilience is the psychological cushion against a state of being out-of-control and well-being.

H2: Resilience (R) has a positive effect on Work Life Balance (WLB)

The dominant figure of entrepreneurship in early scholarship promoted salutary psychological qualities like innovation, proactiveness and self-efficacy (Rauch & Frese, 2007). However, contemporary scholarship raises questions about the darker side of entrepreneurship and admits to the existence of such variables as narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, obsessive passion, and overconfidence (Klotz & Neubaum, 2016; Shepherd, 2019). Such characteristics can boost business at the start of the journey but prove to deteriorate psychological health and social connection more. The dark entrepreneur literature reflects cognitive and behavioral indicators, including workaholism, affective detachment and moral disengagement, which are linked to high-stress, poor self-regulation and work-life imbalance (Baluku et al., 2020). In the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) where the condition of resources scarcity and role overload is inherent, they can contribute to the entrepreneurs prioritizing personal life, neglecting their health needs, and damaging interpersonal relationships, which further demonstrate the vital connection between work-related and organizational performance.

H3: Dark Entrepreneurship (DE) has a positive effect Work Life Balance (WLB)

In the model of Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) and through the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), people use their own resources to cope with extrinsic stress. In this model, resilience acts as a moderator that changes possibly maladaptive influences, like obsessive work behaviors, into more adaptive reactions. According to empirical studies, personal resources, subsequent resilience and psychological capital, moderate the correlation between stressors (e.g., workload, dark traits) with outcomes (e.g., burnout, well-being and work-life balance) (Luthans et al., 2007; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Resilience can moderate the negative impact of such dark behaviors in an entrepreneurial setting, as it helps manage and direct emotional responses, find support, and refocus on goals. In such situations, when the forces of entrepreneurial behavior may destroy the balance in an individual, resilience as a factor can turn the undesired behavior towards balance, thus achieve a mediating value.

H4: Resilience (R) mediates the relationship between Dark Entrepreneurship (DE) and Work Life Balance (WLB)

One of the contextual variables is the act of family support, which entails an object decisive antecedent of both psychological fairness as well as decision making among the entrepreneurs. It is a construct that comprises the emotional reassessment; instrumental assistance; moral nourishment and appreciable roles of close families (Greenhaus & Powell, 2008). Business lives in collectivist cultures, e.g. Pakistan, the family usually takes a significant place, and it thereby influences how an entrepreneur approaches stress and setbacks (Alam et al., 2024).

Empirical studies have shown that family support works as a moderator by minimizing the negative impact of the work stressors, cushioning emotional exhaustion, and leading to an increase of role satisfaction (Aryee et al., 2005). For entrepreneurs engaging in dark or obsessive work behavior, family support can provide a safe emotional space, validation, and even corrective feedback, helping prevent psychological depletion (Powell & Eddleston, 2013). In the relationship between dark entrepreneurship and resilience, family support may enhance coping mechanisms, motivate self-care, and encourage perspective-taking, thereby strengthening resilience. Without such support, the impact of dark traits may become more damaging and isolating.

H5: The indirect effect of dark entrepreneurship on work-life balance via resilience is contingent upon family support, being stronger under conditions of high support than low support.

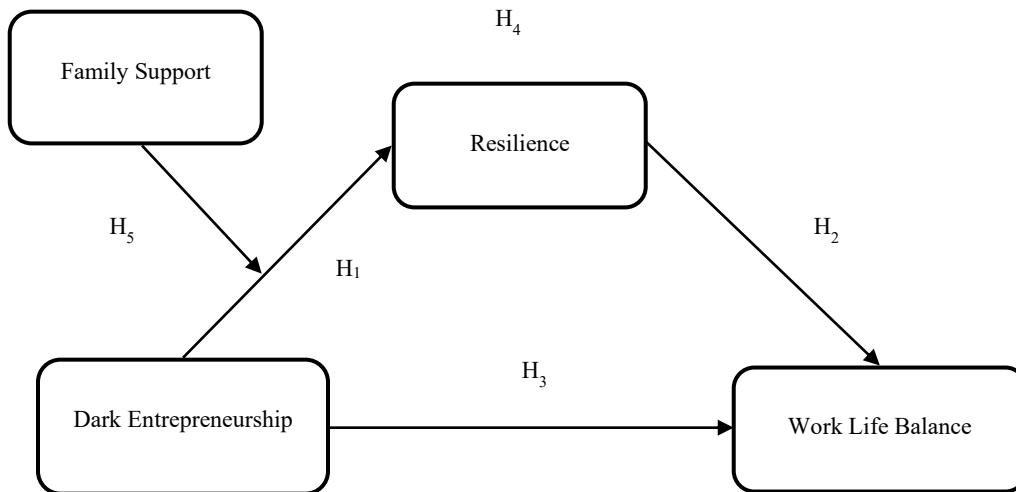


Fig 1: Research Framework

3 | METHODS

3.1 | Research Design

The current study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the impact of dark entrepreneurship on work-life balance, incorporating resilience as a mediator and family support as a moderator. Quantitative research allows for objective measurement of constructs and statistical testing of hypothesized relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The cross-sectional approach enables the collection of data at a single point in time, which is practical for studying behavioral and attitudinal variables across a wide sample of entrepreneurs. This study is grounded in Spillover Theory (Staines, 1980), which posits that emotional, behavioral, and attitudinal states in one domain (e.g., work) spill over into another (e.g., home). The theory justifies the use of entrepreneurs' work characteristics, particularly those associated with dark entrepreneurship as predictors of outcomes in their personal life, such as work-life balance.

3.2 | Target Population and Sampling

The target population for this study comprises entrepreneurs working in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Both male and female participants were included, with a majority aged between 30 and 45 years and holding graduate or postgraduate degrees. Most had 5 to 10 years of entrepreneurial experience across retail, services, and manufacturing sectors. SMEs play a crucial role in Pakistan's economy, contributing significantly to employment generation, innovation, and GDP (SMEDA, 2023). However, SME entrepreneurs often experience higher levels of stress and emotional labor due to resource constraints, multitasking, and lack of work-life boundaries (Ahmed et al., 2021).

A non-probability purposive sampling technique is employed to ensure participation from relevant respondents who are actively involved in entrepreneurial roles. Inclusion criteria require that participants (a) be owners or co-founders of an SME operating in the Islamabad/Rawalpindi region, (b) have been in business for at least one year, and (c) directly manage business operations. This sampling strategy ensures alignment between the respondent profile and the theoretical variables under study.

3.3 | Measurement

The study utilized established scales to measure the core constructs. Dark Entrepreneurship was assessed using 9 items adapted from Ziemianski and Golik (2020), capturing the psychological and emotional strain resulting from entrepreneurial engagement. Resilience was measured using 6 items Resilience Scale (Smith et al., 2008), which evaluates the ability to recover from stress and bounce back from adversity. Family Support was measured through 5 items developed by the Innovation and Technology Centre, Lahore School of Economics (Chaudhry & Chaudhry, n.d.), focusing on the emotional and intellectual support received from family members. Work-Life Balance was assessed using 15 items the scale by Dolai (2015), which emphasizes the equilibrium between personal and professional roles.

The desired sample size is estimated using guidelines by Hair et al. (2019), who suggest a minimum ratio of 10 respondents per indicator variable for structural equation modeling. Given that this study involves approximately 30–35 items across four constructs, a minimum of 340 participants is considered statistically adequate.

Data Collection Procedure: Data is collected using a self-administered structured questionnaire distributed both in hard copy and electronically (via Google Forms). SME owners are approached through personal networks, entrepreneurship forums, and business associations such as the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Women Chambers of Islamabad. Efforts are made to ensure gender diversity, sectoral variety (e.g., services, retail, IT, manufacturing), and coverage of both established and early-stage businesses.

3.4 | Data Analysis Techniques

The data is analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS to test the hypotheses. Descriptive statistics summarize demographic characteristics and scale responses. Structural equation modeling (SEM) tests the direct, mediating, and moderated mediation effects.

3.5 | Ethical Considerations

Participants are informed about the study's purpose, and informed consent is obtained before data collection. The questionnaire includes a brief section highlighting the voluntary nature of participation, the confidentiality of responses, and the academic intent of the research. Participants are also given the option to withdraw at any stage without any consequence. All data will be stored securely and used solely for research purposes, ensuring compliance with ethical research standards (APA, 2020).

4 | RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1

Demographic

Variable	Category	N	% of sample
Gender	Male	214	62.0%
	Female	131	38.0%
Age	20–29 years	52	15.1%
	30–35 years	96	27.8%
	36–40 years	83	24.1%
	41–45 years	69	20.0%
	46–55 years	45	13.0%

Entrepreneurial Experience	< 5 years	69	20.0%
	5–10 years	190	55.1%
	11–15 years	62	18.0%
	> 15 years	24	7.0%
Highest Qualification	Intermediate / Diploma	52	15.1%
	Graduate (Bachelor's)	172	49.9%
	Postgraduate (Master/MPhil/PhD)	121	35.1%

Table 2 below shows the values of factor loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha of the constructs in the table. The outer loadings of the items range from 0.6 to greater than 0.7; this range is acceptable if the AVE value is greater than 0.5, which is acceptable in the case of our constructs (Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2019). The composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values are also in acceptable ranges (Jöreskog, 1971; Cronbach and Meehl, 1955).

Table 2
Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
Dark Entrepreneurship (DE)	DE1	0.772	0.581	0.923	0.919
	DE2	0.732			
	DE3	0.803			
	DE4	0.751			
	DE5	0.820			
	DE6	0.741			
	DE7	0.708			
	DE8	0.802			
	DE9	0.801			
	DE10	0.682			
Family Support (FS)	FS1	0.837	0.671	0.881	0.877
	FS2	0.857			
	FS3	0.845			
	FS4	0.796			
	FS5	0.757			
Resilience (RES)	RES1	0.755	0.610	0.873	0.872
	RES2	0.828			
	RES3	0.744			
	RES4	0.793			
	RES5	0.778			
	RES6	0.786			
	RES7	0.750			
Work Life Balance (WLB)	WLB1	0.750	0.553	0.945	0.941
	WLB2	0.610			
	WLB3	0.817			
	WLB4	0.688			
	WLB5	0.802			
	WLB6	0.724			
	WLB7	0.778			
	WLB8	0.662			
	WLB9	0.790			
	WLB10	0.765			
	WLB11	0.762			
	WLB12	0.808			
	WLB13	0.629			
	WLB14	0.812			
	WLB15	0.713			

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) is used to assess the discriminant validity. In our research study the values are less than 0.80 which is good discriminant validity (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015).

Table 3
Discriminant Validity

Variables	Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) – Matrix		
	DE	FS	RES
FS	0.058		
RES	0.256	0.549	
WLB	0.295	0.341	0.442

The direct paths of the from DE to RES ($\beta = 0.221$, $t = 4.95$, $p < 0.05$) and RES to WLB ($\beta = 0.492$, $t = 11.4$, $p < 0.05$) are positively significant, while DE to WLB ($\beta = -0.281$, $t = 5.75$, $p < 0.05$) is negatively significant, which indicates that H1, H2 and H3 are accepted. The mediation analysis is shown by the indirect path DE \rightarrow RES \rightarrow WLB ($\beta = 0.19$, $t = 4.24$, $p < 0.05$) shows the significance of the mediation path. Hence, hypothesis 4 is accepted. The conditional indirect effect of DE on WLB via RES is moderated by FS. So, hypothesis 5 is accepted.

Table 4
Direct Paths

Relationships	β	t	p	LL	UL
Direct Paths					
DE \rightarrow RES	0.221	4.95	0.00	0.13	0.31
RES \rightarrow WLB	0.492	11.4	0.00	-0.37	-0.18
DE \rightarrow WLB	-0.281	5.75	0.00	0.60	0.91
Indirect effect	B	t	p	LL	UL
DE \rightarrow RES \rightarrow WLB	0.19	4.24	0.00	0.06	0.16
Moderation effect	B	t	p	LL	UL
FS \times DE \rightarrow WLB	0.07	3.34	0.01	0.02	0.11
Conditional indirect effects at $M \pm 1$ SD	B	t	p	LL	UL
+1 SD	0.18	5.25	0.00	0.11	0.25
-1 SD	0.03	1.17	0.24	-0.02	0.10
M	0.10	4.24	0.00	0.063	0.16

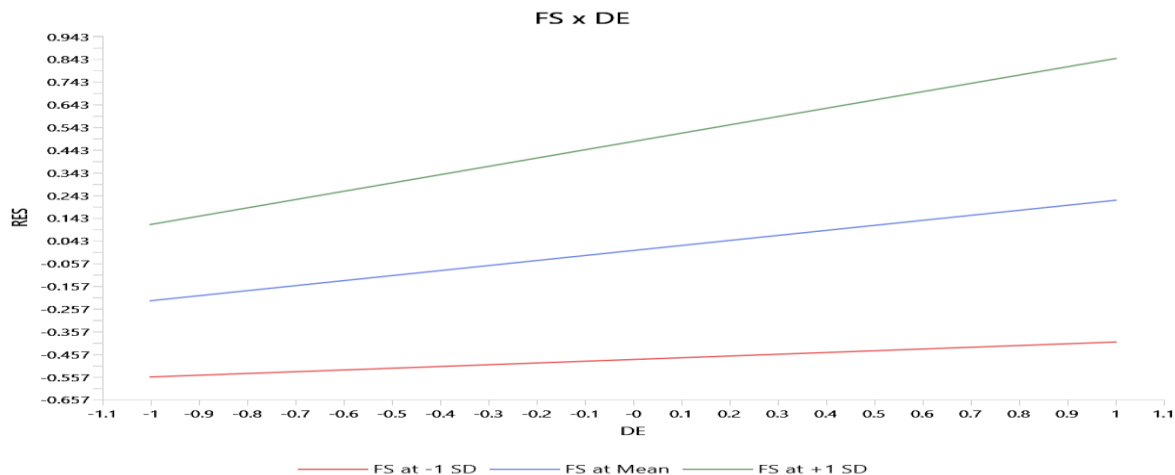


Figure 1: The Interaction Graph of DE and FS on WLB

Figure 1: The graph shows the moderated mediation of family support and resilience. It indicates that family support strengthens the positive relationship between DE and R.

This research was dedicated to investigating the consequences of Dark Entrepreneurship (DE) on the Work-Life Balance (WLB), with the mediator effect of Resilience (R) and a moderating factor Family Support (FS), according to answers given by the entrepreneurs working in the SME sector in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The findings were meaningful to create a good understanding of the relationship between personality factors, psychological assets, and support networks, particularly concerning an entrepreneurial setting in the context of a developing economy.

Hypothesis 1 was confirmed as the results demonstrated a positive relationship between dark entrepreneurship and resilience. The results of this study reveal a significant positive relationship between dark entrepreneurship and resilience. Entrepreneurs exhibiting dark traits such as obsessive drive, risk-taking, and emotional detachment tend to demonstrate higher levels of psychological resilience. These traits, while often seen as maladaptive, may provide the mental toughness and persistence needed to navigate the uncertainties and pressures of entrepreneurial life. Rather than undermining well-being, certain dark characteristics can enable entrepreneurs to recover from setbacks, maintain focus, and continue striving toward their goals. This finding highlights the complex role of personality in fostering resilience within challenging business environments.

Hypothesis 2 has also been accepted indicating that there is a positive direct relationship between resilience and work-life balance. This corresponds to the current literature sources, including the study by Kuntz et al. (2017) that states that resilient persons are more able to deal with stresses and learn to separate work and personal life demands. Entrepreneurs have distorted work-life boundaries most of the time; hence, resilience and flexibility to situations that require changes positively impact on healthier and sustainable work-life balance. Resilience seems to be a kind of cushion and cushion against emotional drain and role overload by an entrepreneur.

To support Hypothesis 3, there was a significant negative relationship between dark entrepreneurship and work-life balance. This result is a rather unexpected observation, as the dark personality traits are normally related to interpersonal issues and mental discomfort. Yet, the recent studies (e.g., Smith et al., 2008) indicate that these traits can prove to be beneficial in some cases. Thus, a narcissistic individual might perceive the importance of self-image and personal success and therefore, take active efforts to ensure that his or her time and roles are managed to seem at equilibrium. On the same note, Machiavellian entrepreneurs can employ tactical approaches in order to ensure that the work-life balance is positive. This result undermines the premise that dark traits invariably contribute to adverse consequences and emphasizes the complicated position of the character in health and well-being among entrepreneurs.

As can be seen in Table 4 and as it was proposed in Hypothesis 4, the underlying effect of resilience became evident in the data. The mediating effect of resilience was much stronger than that of work-life balance, and thus resilience could be considered as the psychological pathway, or channel, through which dark traits affected personal well-being. This result provides support to the applicability of Spillover Theory, supposing that characteristics that are cultivated or exercised at the work level (like strategic manipulation or emotional detachment) can transfer over into the personal area through resilience, and single out how people become adaptable to issues in both areas. It is also consistent with the conclusions made by Chen et al. (2020) who claim that resilience plays a critical role in transforming negative qualities or experiences into positive realities in life. This speaks too of how resilience should at least be developed in even darker personality-disposed entrepreneurs.

Hypothesis 5 was accepted, and the indirect effects show that the indirect effect of dark entrepreneurship and work-life balance via resilience and family support is significant. This finding is aligned to previous findings (e.g., Powell and Greenhaus, 2010) that showed a positive impact of family support on personal coping and well-being. This could be since entrepreneurs, especially those classified with dark traits, do not value or even utilize social and emotional support given by other people as much. These people often depend on self-directed systems like strategy thinking or self-confidence, to deal with stress. Furthermore, family help in the Pakistani social neighborhood fully accord with the business issues that are undertaken, especially by those who have huge ambitions of being independent and in charge of things.

All in all, the findings of this paper make an added contribution to the body of literature in the sense that they provide a new light of viewing the role of dark traits in entrepreneurship. Such traits are usually considered to be negative, yet this study has demonstrated that they can be adaptive in certain situations or particularly in the circumstance where they are accompanied by high levels of resiliency. According to the findings, resilience is an important system that enables entrepreneurs who possess dark traits to have balanced work-life and makes the dark

traits adoptive psychological instruments. It broadens the use of Spillover Theory in that having negative personality traits in the field of work can have positive consequences in the life sphere with the mediation of psychological variables.

In practice, the study implies that the entrepreneurial development programs not only emphasize beneficial aspects of personalities, as well as focus on the positive side of personalities, but they also take into consideration the mighty aspect of resilience training to every individual regardless of whether they involve having dark personality profiles or not. The treatment of mental illnesses and entrepreneurship coaching as well as courses in starting businesses ought to include lessons in resiliency and self-introspection. Moreover, the minimal importance of family support shows that institutional/policy support can be more effective than the family support which is carried out based on interpersonal and family relations, particularly, among individuals with which entrepreneurial personality has a unique structure.

Overall, accepting five hypotheses reveals an important trend, i.e., dark traits, although generally viewed as maladaptive, can lead to desirable psychosocial outcomes, such as work-life balance when lenses of resilience are placed. The paradigm of moderating impact of family support rejection points towards the fact that internal psychological strengths can play a greater role compared to the external support system in some people. These results can provide further theoretical insights and practical guidelines on future research of entrepreneurial psychology and well-being.

5 | CONCLUSION

The current piece of research examines the negative effects of dark entrepreneurship, that is, entrepreneurial practices as driven by wicked ambition, manipulation, or egoistic attitudes, on work-life balance. Based on the Spillover Theory, the statistics indicate that the negative aspects of entrepreneurial expression in most cases spill over to personal areas thus interfering with equilibrium and well-being. The factor of resilience was proved to be a highly influential mediator: the more psychologically resilient entrepreneurs are, the more they can overcome the negative impact of dark entrepreneurship on work-life balance. Moreover, there is a moderating effect because family support provides protection against adverse effects and enhances adaptive coping.

5.1 | Research Implications

The study will be a resource for entrepreneurship scholars, psychologists and policymakers. One, it adds to the large body of research on the dark side of entrepreneurship, a relatively unexplored but very prominent area of study in developing economies. Through the empirical validation of the mediating role of resilience, it underlines the need to consider the development of psychological resources that can be used to sustain challenges and toxicity linked to the process of entrepreneurship. The modifying role of family support amplifies the importance of an effective social ecosystem on the call of business support programs to include families in the venture of entrepreneurship. In practice, the paper suggests collaboration of start-up incubators, training organizations and mental health practitioners to facilitate balanced, ethical and psychologically safe entrepreneurship.

5.2 | Limitations

As in any additional empirical study, there are limitations to this study. To begin with, the sampling was restricted to the SME entrepreneurs of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, and this could become a challenge to the applicability of the results in other cities or other industries. Second, the data is cross-sectional, and the analyses cannot be related to causality. Thirdly, the study involved self-reports; thus, it is possible to raise issues about social desirability bias or the underreporting of darker traits. In addition, the relatively new concept of dark entrepreneurship is yet to achieve universally agreed definitions of how it is operated, and this may impact the conceptual clarity.

5.3 | Future Recommendations

The limitation of the study can be overcome in subsequent research by implementing a longitudinal design, enabling researchers to follow it through time and measure how the behaviors of the entrepreneurs are changing over time and how they might affect the work-life balance in the long term. This use of the study could be enhanced by extending the study to other locations or other industry sectors in Pakistan, or by carrying out a cross-cultural

comparison. Other moderator variables which researchers can investigate include organizational culture, peer support, or spirituality. Moreover, the construction of context-based scales to measure dark entrepreneurship with better precision in the South Asian cultures is highly encouraged.

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