



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Personalities, Perceived Challenges, and Opportunities of Sri Lankan Rural Women Entrepreneurs: A Case Study

J.D.T.D. Jayakody, S.M.C.B. Karalliyadda*

Department of Agricultural
Systems, Faculty of Agriculture,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka,
Puliyankulama, Anuradhapura,
Sri Lanka.

Correspondence:

* chinthbk@agri.rjt.ac.lk

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5561-1544>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4038/sljae.v7i2.169>

Abstract

Amid Sri Lanka's economic downturn, worsened by the pandemic and political issues, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) remain central to resilience. Women entrepreneurs (WEs) contribute significantly to economic and social stability. However, WEs face distinct challenges and opportunities influenced by environmental, social, and personal factors, particularly in rural areas, necessitating customized support. This study investigates the unique conditions, challenges, and opportunities faced by WEs in Mahaweli System L, focusing on personality traits using the Big Five Inventory (BFI) method. Data were collected from a sample of 100 WEs through structured questionnaires via a phone survey, using snowball sampling and random field visits. Analysis was conducted in SPSS 20, applying descriptive statistics, principal component analysis (PCA), and Pearson correlation. Results indicated that WEs generally possess basic literacy and operate in low-skilled, primary cottage industries. WEs exhibit goal-oriented, adventurous, and emotionally stable traits. While friends and family facilitate their development, institutional (administrative and banking) and cultural support systems are limited in offering practical assistance. The study reveals significant relationships between personality traits and perceived challenges and opportunities, underscoring the need for targeted support. Tailored programs that account for personality traits can enhance organizational support and empower WEs by addressing their specific needs, creating an effective and efficient response to their unique circumstances.

Keywords: Enterprises, Gender, Personalities, Rural Communities, Women empowerment

1. Introduction

Sri Lanka's economic crisis worsened in 2022, leading to a major economic contraction, job losses, income reduction, rising living costs, and increasing poverty (World Bank, 2023). To solve this situation, with fiscal and debt sustainability, the Sri Lankan government identified small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that represent over 75% of businesses, contributing 52% to GDP, and employing 45% of the population, which span agriculture and non-agriculture sectors, was pivotal in mitigating rising unemployment and the economic crisis in future as well (Kulathunga, 2021; Ranasinghe, 2024; Sri Lanka Export Development Board, 2018).

Women Entrepreneurs (WEs), who create, lead, and manage a business (Atsan, 2022; Suganthi, 2009), significantly contribute to both economic and social development, offering numerous benefits to their countries. By empowering societies, transforming local economies, and supporting regional development, WEs help to raise the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) (Ge et al., 2022; Kuschel et al., 2017; Sinclair, 2020) and act as decision-makers, social leaders, and peacekeepers, contributing to household stability and communal harmony (Sinclair, 2020). Studies show WEs prioritize family welfare, directing more resources to food, healthcare, and education, which enhances their children's well-being (Ummah & Jamaldeen, 2015; Sri Lanka Export Development Board, 2022). Despite the lower number of WEs in the world, women-owned businesses have increased by about 114% over the past two decades (Halim, 2020; Santos et al., 2019). Contrary to the belief that WEs run lifestyle businesses, focused on sustaining the personal lifestyle with passion and minimal maintenance efforts, 62% of females run their businesses as a major income source (Kuadii, 2021). WEs engage in diverse sectors such as trade, handicrafts, essential goods production, hospitality, and food and beverage services, contributing to the economic development (Gupta & York, 2008; Chowdhury, 2007).

Despite that, WEs globally face significant challenges, particularly in developing countries. In Saudi Arabia, socio-cultural restrictions and inadequate government, legal, community, and departmental coordination limit women's entrepreneurial potential (Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2010). Similarly, in India, male dominance, limited financial, technical, and economic assistance, insufficient infrastructure, balancing family and business responsibilities, and mobility constraints hinder WEs (Gaur et al., 2018; Panda, 2017). Rural WEs encounter many challenges (Mamun et al., 2021; Shanthini, 2019). In India, they face social discrimination, production and marketing issues, labor management problems, limited awareness and support systems, dual roles in family and business, limited access to finance, information, assistance, and training, male dominance, mobility constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and widespread corruption (Jayakumar & Kannan, 2014; John & Mishra, 2013). In rural Egypt, financial and training issues, and limitations from customs and traditions cause challenging situations (Elkafrawi & Refai, 2022). Sri Lankan WEs struggle with finance, technology, dual roles, lack of entrepreneurial information, discrimination, mobility restrictions, limited market,

and fewer skills worsen these challenging situations (Medagama, 2016; Rajapaksha, 2018; Ummah & Jamaldeen, 2015). These challenges have an impact on rural WEs' courage, motivation, confidence, and performance, causing women to exit entrepreneurial activities at a higher rate than men, leading to lower business growth and overall economic progress (Aguiar, 2021; Fenn, 2020).

However, WEs experience several opportunities. In Bangladesh, WEs benefit from the availability of raw materials for agro-processing businesses, ample free time, low-cost labour, government assistance, training programs, financial support, and the availability of organizations (Mamun et al., 2021; Jayakumar & Kannan, 2014). Additionally, personal (kinship) links and low business costs offer advantages in regions like Egypt (Elkafrawi & Refai, 2022).

Personality theorists argue that a person's personality can be used to predict their behaviour (Awwad & Al-Aseer, 2020), with different personalities leading to varied perceptions of situations among individuals (Jonason & Sherman, 2022; McRae & Costa, 2008; Stangor et al., 2018). Entrepreneurs possess distinguishable personalities (Asia Development Bank, 2020; Kar & Ahmed, 2019) and risk-taking behaviours, where entrepreneurs report significantly higher risk tolerance, which influences their intentions and business strategy (Awwad & Al-Aseer, 2020; Costa et al., 2001; Feingold, 1994; Kar & Ahmed, 2019; Zhao and Liuying, 2010).

In an era of rapid technological, industrial, educational, and rural development, understanding the factors affecting women's entrepreneurial success is essential for driving effective rural development (Khan, et al., 2021). Identifying opportunities will enhance innovation, reduce gender gaps, and strengthen women's empowerment (Berbee & Schmid, 2018; Pahwa, 2022). Empowering rural women entrepreneurs contributes to reducing poverty and enhancing food security in rural areas (World Food Programme, 2021). Understanding WEs challenges and opportunities will foster gender equality, entrepreneurship growth, and strengthen WEs' economic contributions. Understanding the relationship of personality and the challenges and opportunities will allow for the creation of tailored support mechanisms enhancing business resilience, innovation, economic growth, poverty reduction, food security, and gender equity, benefiting the community as well. This paper mainly aims to identify the personalities of WEs and their perceived challenges and opportunities to develop. Secondly, it attempts to analyze whether WEs perceive challenges and opportunities are associated with their personalities.

2. Materials and Methods

This study focuses on WEs in the Mahaweli System L area of Sri Lanka (Figure 1). This area spans approximately 199,210 hectares across the Anuradhapura, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu, and Trincomalee districts, including older Padaviya and Welioya schemes and underdeveloped areas around village irrigation reservoirs (Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, 2021; Mudugamuwa, 2009). Mahaweli L is a

war-affected, resettled area (Wanninayake, 2017), where residents have different socioeconomic challenges, such as income generation as well as maintaining relationships, while water scarcity is a common problem, leading farming and daily tasks more challenging (Wickramasinghe, 2020). This area is home to 21,356 residents, with 6,121 settled families and a female population of about 11,702, with about 63 women's small group organizations having about 285 members (Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, 2021).

A sample of 100 participants was selected via snowball sampling, with initial respondents recommending others (Islam & Khan, 2022; Mundfrom, et al., 2005; Foisal, et al., 2015). Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire that encompassed four sections: background details, personality profile, business profile, and challenges and opportunities.

The personality profile section of the questionnaire included the 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI) five-point Likert scale (John & Srivastava, 1999). According to the BFI method, extraversion reflects sociability, assertiveness, and positive emotionality. Agreeableness denotes trust, compassion, and cooperativeness. Conscientiousness represents self-discipline, organization, and goal-directed behaviour. Neuroticism measures emotional instability, whereas low neuroticism indicates emotional stability. Openness to experience captures curiosity, creativity, and receptiveness to new ideas (Costa & McCrae, 1992; John & Srivastava, 1999).

From previous literature, 25 challenges and 12 opportunities were selected and assessed using a three-point Likert scale. A phone survey was conducted to collect data, while random field visits and key informant discussions were conducted to triangulate collected information.

Statistical analyses included frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation for background and business profiles. The BFI scores were analyzed by calculating a total score for each respondent, including the reverse scoring where applicable, from which each trait's mean value, and standard deviation were calculated using SPSS 22. Principal Component Analysis (PCA), a dimensional reduction method, was used to identify key challenges and opportunities, validated by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test. Factor loadings below 0.4 or/and with fewer than three factors were excluded (Islam & Khan, 2022; Basset, et al., 2022).

To identify the correlation between personality traits and perceived challenges and opportunities, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted (Jonason & Sherman, 2022). This analysis examined the relationship between the regression factor scores derived from PCA of challenges and opportunities and the mean scores of personalities.

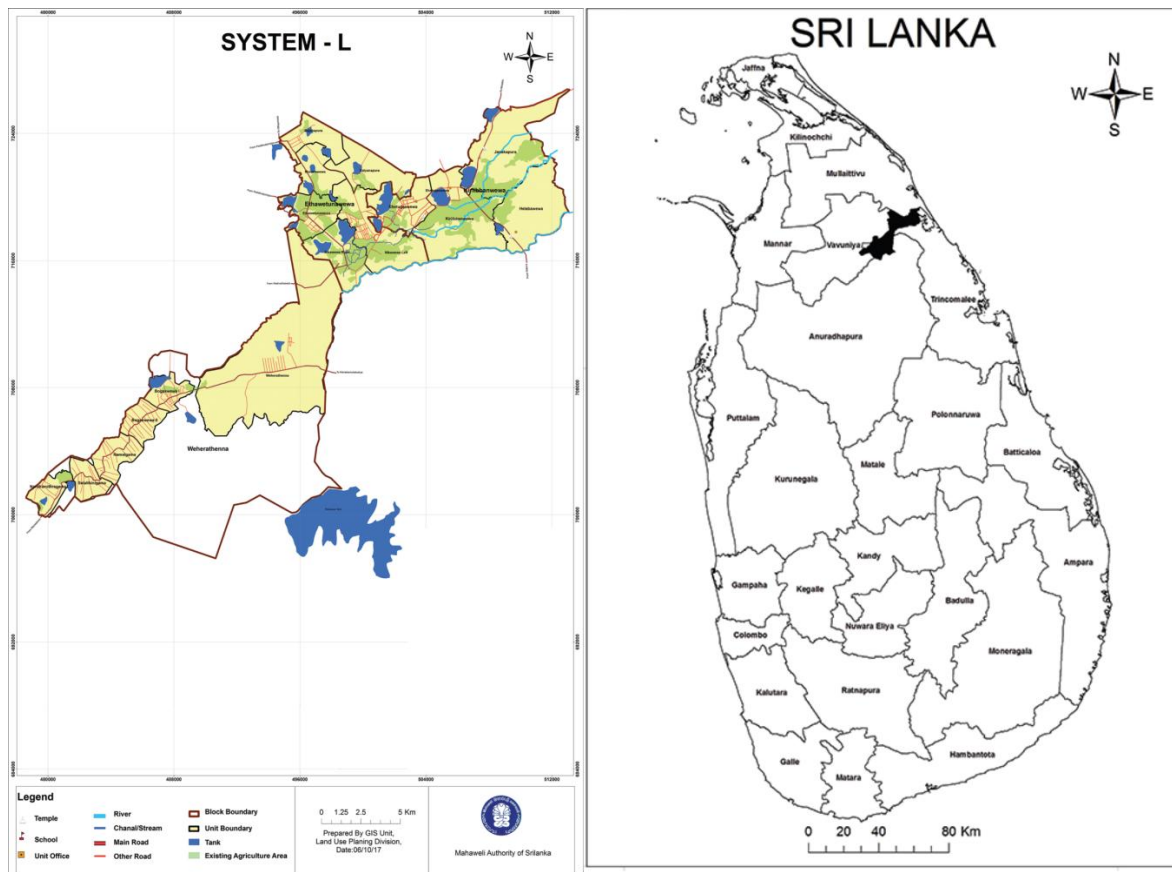


Figure 1: Map of Mahaweli system L
Source: Mahaweli Authority (2020)

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The socioeconomic profile of WEs

According to the results in Table 1, with an average age of 43.3 years, these WEs are predominantly middle-aged. Most respondents (55%) have completed the ordinary level education, suggesting they possess basic literacy and numeracy skills. The findings also show that Buddhism is the main religion, and WEs come from varied marital backgrounds, with the majority (75%) being married. Even though only 34% of WEs are members of a women's association, 16% of them have leadership roles in those associations, highlighting that there are potential areas for enhancing networking and leadership opportunities among these WEs. Only 32% have obtained training for their livelihood, mainly from the Mahaweli Authority (22%), pointing to limited access to skill development resources. Most WEs (87%) operate a single enterprise.

Table 1: Characteristics of WEs

Characteristics		Value
Age (years) (SD)		43.3 (10.93)
Education Level %	No education	3
	Primary education	27
	Ordinary level	55
	Advanced level	11
	Higher education	4
Religion %	Buddhist	98
	Catholic	2
Civil status %	Single	2
	Married	75
	Divorced	12
	Widowed	9
	Disabled husband	2
Driving license %	Don't have	74
	Have	26
Membership in women's association %	Don't have	66
	Have	34
Leadership in women's association %	Don't have	84
	Have	16
Obtained training for livelihood %	Not obtained	68
	Obtained	32
Training service provider %	Mahaweli authority	22
	Government	8
	Private sector	2
Number of businesses owned %	One business	87
	Two businesses	13

Table 2 presents the household characteristics of WEs. Households (HH) are medium-sized (3.52), with 1.68 and 1.85 female and male members, respectively. At least one HH member (0.7) has completed Ordinary Level (OL) education, and a smaller number have completed Advanced Level (AL) education (0.24). There is a modest educational background among HH members. Most HHs engage in agriculture and wage employment, with one primary income source, indicating financial

limitations. Only 3% have additional income through farming, and 36% lack any financial support, suggesting potential financial risks. The limited uncultivated land indicates that available land is largely used for agriculture, mainly in upland areas. Additionally, most HHs have stable housing facilities.

Table 2: Household Characteristics of WEs

Characteristic		Value
Average household size (SD)		3.52 (1.28)
Average number of female members (SD)		1.68 (0.77)
Average number of male members (SD)		1.85 (1.12)
Average number of members who completed OL (SD)		0.7 (0.92)
Average number of members who completed AL (SD)		0.24 (0.55)
Average number of income earners (SD)		0.73 (0.57)
Income sources (%) household member 1	No other income source	33
	Service sector	11
	Farming	23
	Wage employees	27
	Self-employed	6
Income sources (%) household member 2	Farming	3
Financial support obtained by households (%)	No financial support	36
	Receiving Samurdhi	58
	Receiving pensions	6

3.2 Business profile of WEs in Mahaweli system L

Figure 2 indicates that WEs are involved in farming and selling, followed by activities in the textile industry, livestock industry, vending sector (such as fruits, vegetables, and groceries), and the crafting industry, with some engaged in various other sectors. The industries in which WEs are involved typically require minimal formal training, suggesting that these women are managing low-skilled, primary enterprises at the cottage industry level. As shown in Table 3, with the relatively young age of these businesses and the low rate of formal registration, many of them likely operate within the informal economy.

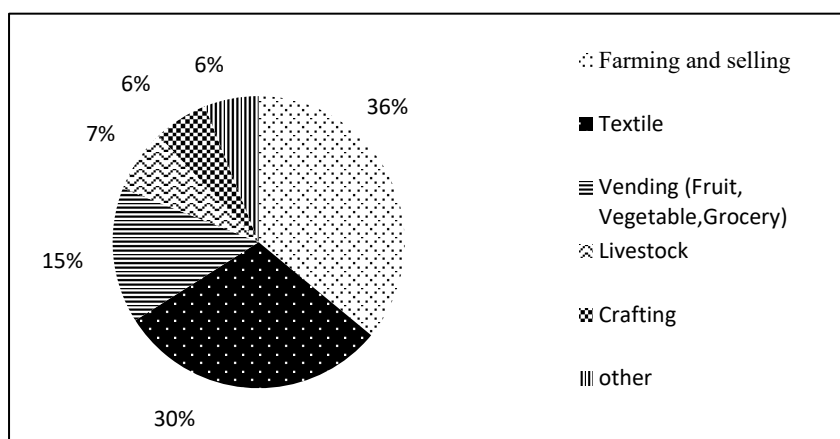


Figure 2: Types of businesses WEs involve

Table 3: Business profile

Characteristics		Value
Years of business existence (SD)		5.5 (4.52)
Business registration (%)	Registered	15
	Not registered	85

Figure 3 shows that the majority of WEs have used their personal savings as their initial capital, indicating their high reliance on personal savings. There is a very limited involvement with other financial institutions and the reliance on personal savings may limit the growth potential of these businesses.

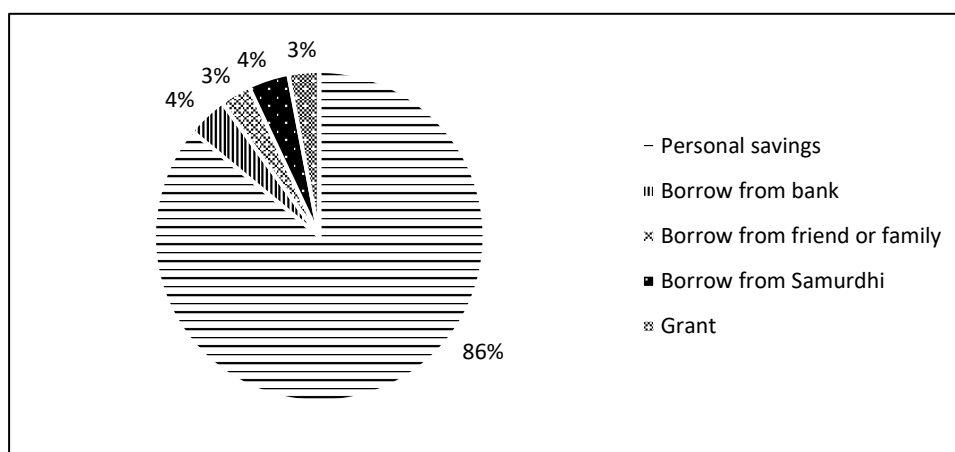


Figure 3: Source of initial capital

As shown in Table 4, the initial capital amount, monthly income, and monthly cost of different enterprises vary. The highest initial capital invested, monthly income, and monthly cost were for other sectors, which include carpentry and welding-like industries. This may be due to these sectors requiring higher costs for inputs and this sector is a long-run business. Other than that, the highest

initial capital invested is for the farming and selling industry mostly with expenditure on farming equipment, tools, and inputs.

The highest monthly income and monthly cost are for the food and selling industry. This may be due to the frequent transactions, and dynamic market within this sector, and the demand for food products is high. The crafting industry had the lowest initial capital invested, the lowest monthly income, and the lowest monthly cost. This indicates that this sector is low capital-intensive and generates lower returns. According to Table 5, 78% of the entrepreneurs have claimed a decrease in their monthly income, while 96% of entrepreneurs reported that their monthly costs had increased, indicating that they face financial challenges while running their businesses.

Table 4: Monthly income, cost and Initial capital.

Business Types and Income/ Cost	Farmin g and selling	Fruit and Vegetab le Stall	Food selling	Livesto ck	Textile	Craftin g	Grocery	Other	Averag e
Monthly income (LKR)	59,971	24,143	62,375	49,000	27,417	13,500	43,400	10,9167	48,315
Monthly cost (LKR)	34,614	13,786	35,000	21,857	15,817	5,250	26,800	68,000	27,680
Initial capital amount (LKR)	69,086	11,071	13,563	39,571	20,133	4,500	21,300	15,9167	45,555

Table 5: Monthly income and cost change compared to the previous month.

Income / Cost	Range (%)	Value
Income	No	1
	Low	78
	High	21
Cost	No	4
	Low	0
	High	96

These enterprises have an average of 0.13 (0.69) permanent employees, 0.41 (0.93) temporary employees, and 0.59 (0.81) family members involved in the enterprises' activities (Table 6). This shows these WEs operate with minimum staffing for the long term. This may be due to a lack of

financial accessibility and seasonal changes in industries, especially those related to the agriculture sector.

Table 6: Number of employees and members involved in enterprise activities.

Engagement type	Value (SD)
Permanent employees (SD)	0.13 (0.69)
Temporary employees (SD)	0.41 (0.93)
Members involved in business (SD)	0.59 (0.81)

According to Table 7, except for the initial capital amount, entrepreneurs invested in their enterprises, 76% are claiming they do not have other capital investments in their enterprises, indicating they have limited financial support and access. The amount of loans still paid by these WEs is 39,625 (25,106.25), which indicates they have the burden of debts.

Table 7: Other capital sources.

Characteristics	Value
Non-capital investments (%)	
No	76
Loan	17
Grant	5
Donation	2
Pending loan amount (LKR) (SD)	39,625 (25,106.25)

3.3 Personality profile of WEs in Mahaweli system L

As shown in Table 8, WEs in the Mahaweli L area demonstrate high levels of conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion, along with lower levels of agreeableness and neuroticism. These traits suggest that the WEs in this region are goal-oriented, adventurous, and emotionally stable. This is consistent with prior research, entrepreneurs typically exhibit strong extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness, with low neuroticism and moderate agreeableness (Antoncic et al., 2015; Elliott, 2022). This implies that these WEs are strong-minded, hardworking, imaginative, and sympathetic, while also being sociable, emotionally stable, and free-spirited. This may be influenced by the region's unique socio-economic environment, which demands hard work with the presence of distinct challenges and opportunities, requiring entrepreneurs to effectively navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship.

Table 8: Personality profile of WEs

Personality types	Mean	SD
Openness	3.8	0.4
Extraversion	3.6	0.4
Agreeableness	3.1	0.4
Conscientiousness	3.9	0.3
Neuroticism	3	0.6

3.4 Perceived challenges of WEs

Table 9: KMO and Bartlett's test for perceived challenges.

Test Type	Statistics	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.666
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1097.244
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

KMO value is 0.666, which is greater than 0.5 and Bartlett's test of sphericity (1097.244, df = 276) with an associated p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$) (Bartlett, 1954) (Table 9). These indicate that the sample has adequate value to proceed with the analysis.

Table 10: Eigenvalue table for perceived challenges.

Component	Total value	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.738	19.741	19.741
2	2.605	10.854	30.595
3	2.370	9.877	40.472
4	2.052	8.550	49.022
5	1.592	6.632	55.654
6	1.322	5.508	61.162
7	1.151	4.798	65.960
8	1.084	4.515	70.475
9	1.033	4.304	74.779

According to the test results (Table 10), there are 9 components with a value of higher than 1.0. Also, the cumulative percentage of extractions sum of squared loadings implies that the components can explain 74.779% of the variables, perceived challenges for WEs.

Table 11: Perceived challenges of WEs and factor loadings.

Factor	Statements	Factor loading
Lack of support from banks	Complicated procedures to obtain bank loans	.930
	High interest rate for bank loans	.923
	Lack of short-term financial support from banks	.915
	Lack of collaterals to obtain bank loans	.889
Challenges in rules and regulations	Lack of laws and legislation to protect women	.836
	Lack of laws and legislation for WEs	.825
	Lengthy and complicated procedures to obtain licenses	.546
	Lack of coordination between various government departments	.507
Lack of capacity development opportunities	Lack of training programs by the government for women entrepreneurship	.828
	Lack of awareness about training programs	.810
	Lack of network	.750
Social beliefs	Mobility restriction	.754
	Lack of respect from the community	.639
	Society believes women are weak	.603

Four challenges were identified from the PCA analysis by selecting components that loaded equal to or more than three factors and factor loadings greater than 0.4 (+.4 or -.4) (Table 11). These factors express 45.98% of the variable. According to this, it was identified that WEs in the Mahaweli system L perceive a lack of support from banks, challenges in rules and regulations, a lack of capacity development opportunities, and challenges due to social beliefs.

Previous studies confirm these findings, highlighting that rural WEs are at a disadvantage due to socio-cultural, financial, and skill-related challenges that hinder them from growing in management (Rahman, et al., 2022; Gaur, et al., 2018; Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2010). Furthermore, this study also aligns with the findings of Rajapaksha (2018) that WEs in Sri Lanka are facing challenges due to cultural barriers, poor education and training, and a lack of favourable policies and laws.

3.5 Perceived opportunities of WEs

KMO value is 0.666, which is greater than 0.5 and Bartlett's test of sphericity (379.725, df = 66) with an associated p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$) (Bartlett, 1954) (Table 12). These indicate that the sample has adequate value to proceed with the analysis.

Table 12: KMO and Bartlett's test for perceived opportunities.

Test Type	Statistics	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.666
	Approx. Chi-Square	379.725
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	66
	Sig.	.000

Table 13: Eigenvalue table for perceived opportunities.

Component	Total Value	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.894	24.120	24.120
2	2.004	16.704	40.824
3	1.838	15.318	56.141
4	1.111	9.256	65.397
5	1.026	8.546	73.943

According to Table 13, there are 5 components with a value of more than 01. Also, the cumulative percentage of extractions sum of squared loadings implies that the components can explain 73.943% of the variables, perceived opportunities for WEs

41% of variables were explained by the selected opportunities according to the requirements. According to Table 14, it can be identified that WEs in Mahaweli L perceive family and social support as opportunities. This finding supports the claims of Elkafrawi and Refai (2022), who identified that strong personal support, like family and friends, is an opportunity for WEs.

Table 14: Opportunities of WEs

Factor	Statements	Factor loading
Family support	Dividing roles and responsibilities in the home with family	.912
	Strong personal links with family members	.882
	Support from spouse in household work and business	.862
Social Support	Introducing to suppliers and customers by family	.906
	Non-kin social contacts, such as various religious and social clubs	.859
	Introducing to suppliers and customers through friends	.716

3.6 Correlation between perceived challenges and opportunities and personality types

As shown in Tables 15 and 16, it can be said that the personalities and the challenges and opportunities have positive and negative relationships. Some personalities tend to perceive some challenges and opportunities higher than other personalities.

There is a significant correlation between challenges in rules and regulations and openness, suggesting a likelihood that WEs who are more adventurous and open to new experiences tend to advocate for system changes.

Following, there is a correlation between lack of capacity development opportunities and conscientiousness, claiming WEs who are ambitious and goal-oriented are more likely to recognize and claim the need for capacity development and facilitation. There is a significant negative correlation between family support and neuroticism ($p < 0.01$) and social support and openness ($p < 0.05$). This shows WEs who are emotionally stable tend to perceive higher levels of support from their family and friends, and WEs who are more adventurous show good social support.

Table 15: Correlation between perceived challenges and Personality types

Challenges	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Lack of support from banks	.165	-.086	.167	.036	.109
Challenges in rules and regulations	-.028	.070	-.024	-.159	.318**
Lack of capacity development opportunities	.038	-.104	.258**	.138	.150
Cultural issues	-.054	-.004	-.012	.068	.048

Table 16: Correlation between personality and perceived opportunities.

Opportunities	Extroversion	Agreeableness	Consciousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Family Support	.130	.136	-.031	-.265**	.170
Social Support	.141	-.089	.073	-.099	.235*

4. Conclusions

According to the findings of the study, WEs possess basic literacy and social skills but often lack formal training related to their enterprises, which are small-scale, low-skilled, and largely focused on primary, cottage-level businesses, relying heavily on family support and personal savings. WEs personality traits show they are goal-oriented, adventurous, and emotionally stable. Major barriers include limited bank support, challenges in rules and regulations, lack of capacity development opportunities, and social beliefs, while family support and social support are the major opportunities. The results indicate that there is a relationship between personalities and perceived challenges and opportunities of WEs, and some personalities tend to perceive some challenges and opportunities higher than others. This indicates personalities play a decisive role in shaping WEs behaviours as well as their interpretations and responses to challenges and opportunities in their business environment.

These reveal that WEs play a vital role in rural economic development, and their success is affected not only by challenges and opportunities but also by their individual personalities. This provides a more comprehensive perspective, highlighting the need for tailored, individual approaches to entrepreneurial development.

5. Recommendations

The results of the study can be utilized as a reference for empirical research on the challenges, opportunities, and personalities of WEs. This study will help to discover the policy implications of empowering WEs as they play a prominent role in the economy and society.

Providing facilitation of organizations, such as the Mahaweli Authority and banks, to segregate WEs by their personality tailor support services to meet their specific needs, and work closely with policymakers to advocate for gender equality policies that empower women in entrepreneurship while helping to address perceived challenges more effectively and optimize the use of available opportunities. Furthermore, there is a need of design and implementation of targeted capacity building programmes, focusing on practical, skill-oriented training like, such as technical skills, basic financial management, relevant to their specific activities. Furthermore, facilitating access to microfinance and formal credit systems, and strengthening mentorship and networking opportunities to guide WEs to scale up their enterprises. The government should assign favourable

rules and regulations with suitable environments to start and manage enterprises of women, with empowerment programs.

Fostering collaboration among government entities, financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations to provide comprehensive support, providing programs in areas such as business management, technology adoption, and market access strategies, while providing better mentorship opportunities. These will help to handle the perceived challenges and opportunities of WEs effectively and efficiently, and will help to empower them.

Conflicts of interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest regarding this publication.

5. References

- Aguiar, J., 2021. LinkedIn. [Online] Available at: <http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/importance-women-entrepreneurs> [Accessed 12 06 2022].
- Antonicic, B., kregar, T. B., Singh, G. & Denoble, A. F., 2015. The Big Five Personality–Entrepreneurship Relationship: Evidence from Slovenia. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 53(3), pp. 819-841.
- Atsan, N., 2022. The Profile of Women Entrepreneurs: A Contextual Analysis From a Developing Country. In: *Eastern Perspectives on Women's Roles and Advancement in Business*. Turkey: IGI Global, pp. 155-175.
- Awwad, M. S. & Al-Aseer, R. M. N., 2020. Big Five personality traits impact on entrepreneurial intention: the mediating role of entrepreneurial alertness. *Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 15(1), pp. 87-100.
- Basset, F. A. E. & Kharusi, R. B. a. B. A., 2022. Reducing barriers to female entrepreneurship in Oman: does family matter?. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*.
- Berbee, P. & Schmid, C., 2018. Constraints and good practice in women's entrepreneurship in MENA, Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Chowdhury, M., 2007. Overcoming entrepreneurship development constraints: the case of Bangladesh. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 1(3).
- Costa, P. T. & McCrae, R. R., 1992. Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) and NEO Five-Factor (NEO-FFI) professional manual. Odessa, Florida: Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Elkafrawi, N. & Refai, D., 2022. Egyptian rural women entrepreneurs: Challenges, ambitions. *International Journal of*.
- Elliott, J., 2022. Personality Traits Successful Entrepreneurs Have in Common. [Online] Available at: <https://www.uschamber.com/co> [Accessed 12 10 2022].

- Fenn, B. S., 2020. Canada-India acceleration program. [Online] Available at: ciaccelerated.com/women-and-entrepreneurship/ [Accessed 12 06 2022].
- Foissal, M. T., Sagar, A. H. & Khanam, F. A., 2015. Factors affecting the women entrepreneurship development in small and medium enterprises (SME) in Bangladesh- An Evaluative Study. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 7(11), pp. 153-160.
- Gaur, S., Kulshreshtha, V. & Chaturvedi, R., 2018. Challenges And Opportunities For Women Entrepreneurs In India. *IJRAR- International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 5(3), pp. 395-403.
- Ge T, Abbas J, Ullah R, Abbas A, Sadiq I and Zhang R (2022) Women's Entrepreneurial Contribution to Family Income: Innovative Technologies Promote Females' Entrepreneurship Amid COVID-19 Crisis. *Front. Psychol.* 13:828040. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.828040
- Gupta, V. K. & York, A. S., 2008. The effects of geography and age on women's attitudes towards entrepreneurship: Evidence from the state of Nebraska.. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 9(4), pp. 251-262.
- Halim, D., 2020. World Bank Blogs. [Online] Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/women-entrepreneurs-needed-stat>
- Islam, N. & Khan, F., 2022. Push and Pull Factors of Women Entrepreneurship Development in Bangladesh: A Principal Component Analysis. [Online] Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/NasrinIslam/publication/357776932_Push_and_Pull_Factors_of_Women_Entrepreneurship_Development_in_Bangladesh_A_Principal_Component_Analysis/links/61dee96d5c0a257a6fe34156/Push-and-Pull-Factors-of-Women-Entrepreneurship [Accessed 16 2022].
- Jayakumar, P. & Kannan, J., 2014. Challenges and oppotunities for rural eomrn entrepreneurs. *EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business Review*, 2(1).
- John, J. & Mishra, P., 2013. study on challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs in Rajasthan. *OORJA*, 1(6).
- John, O. P. & Srivastava, S., 1999. The Big Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement and theoretical perspectives. In: *Handbook of personality: Theory and research*. New York:: John OP (Eds.), pp. 102-138.
- Jonason, P. K. & Sherman, R. A., 2022. Personality and the perception of situations: The Big Five and Dark Triad traits.. *Personality and Individual Differences*, Volume 163.
- Kar, B. & Ahmed, Y. A., 2019. Personality, Challenges and Performance: Evidence from Ethiopia's Young Entrepreneurs. *Small Enterprises Development, Management & Extension Journal*, 46(2).

- Khan, R. U., Salamzadeh, Y., Ali Shah, S. Z. & Hussain, M., 2021. Factors affecting women entrepreneurs' success: a study of small- and medium-sized enterprises in emerging market of Pakistan. *Journal of innovation and entrepreneurship*, 10(11).
- Kuadii, J., 2021. Women Entrepreneurs Statistics. [Online] Available at: <https://legaljobs.io/blog>
- Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, 2021. Mahaweli statical Hand book. s.l.:s.n.
- Mamun, A., Jabbar, A. & Sultana, R., 2021. Problems and Opportunities of Women Entrepreneurship in Char Areas of Bangladesh. *South Asian Journal of Social Studies and Economics*, 10(2), pp. 27-38.
- Mamun, A., Jabbar, A. & Sultana, R., 2021. Problems and Opportunities of Women Entrepreneurship in Char Areas of Bangladesh. *South Asian Journal of Social Studies and Economics*, 10(2), pp. 27-38.
- McCrae, R. R. & Jhon, O. P., 1992. An introduction to the Five-Factor Model and its applications. *J Pers.*, 60(2), pp. 175-215.
- Medagama, S., 2016. The Impact of Economic Development upon the Lives of Women in Developing Countries and Possible Alternatives with Special Reference to Sri Lanka. *Sri Lanka Journal of Development Administrations*, Volume 5, pp. 109-124.
- Mudugamuwa, I., 2009. Displaced to be resettled in Mahaweli System L. *Daily News*.
- Mundfrom, D. J., Shaw, D. G. & Lu Ke, T., 2005. Minimum sample size recommendations for conducting factor analyses. *International Journal of Testing*, 5(2), pp. 159-168.
- Pahwa, A., 2022. What Is Business Opportunity? – Importance, Types, & Identification. *Freedough*.
- Panda, S., 2017. Constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in developing countries: review and ranking. *Gender in Management: An International Journal* Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Rahman, M., Dana, L., Moral, I.H., Anjum, N., Rahman, S., 2022. Challenges of rural women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh to survive their family entrepreneurship: a narrative inquiry through storytelling, *Journal of Family Business Management*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 645-664. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFBM-04-2022-0054>
- Rajapaksha, R. P. E. K., 2018. Challenges for Female Entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, 8(7), pp. 1235-1239.
- Sadi, M. A. & Al-Ghazali, B. . M., 2010. Doing business with impudence: A focus on women entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(1), pp. 001-011.
- Santos, V. F. d., Morais, G. M., Ribeiro, F. F. d. A. & Pardini, D. J., 2019. Female Entrepreneurship: Evolution, Current Challenges, and Future Prospects. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 10(5), p. 24.

Shanthini, B., 2019. The opportunities and challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs in erode district, Tamilnadu. *Ijrar*, 6(3), pp. 104-109.

Sri Lanka Export Development Board, 2022.[Online]Available at:

<https://www.srilankabusiness.com/>

Stangor, C., Jhangiani, R. & Tarry, H., 2018. Principles of social psychology-1st International H5P Edition. s.l.:BCcampus Open Education.

Suganthi, J., 2009. Influence of motivational factors on women entrepreneurs in SMEs.. *Asia Pacific Business review*.

Ummah, M. A. C. S. & Jamaldeen, A., 2015. Entrepreneurial Development Issues and Challenges in Sri Lanka: A Case Study of Women-owned Businesses in Ampara District. s.l., s.n.

Wanninayake, S., 2017. Making a "Home"Internal Displacements and Resettlement Processes in Sri Lanka 2002-2006, s.l.: School of Global studies.

Wickramasinghe, K., 2020. Kidneys that whisper death Endless socioeconomic issues a burden on CKDu patients. *Daily Mirror*.

World Food Programme, 2021. World Food Programme. [Online] Available at: wfp.org/

Zhao, W., & Liuying, F. (2010). The impact of entrepreneurial thinking system on risk-taking propensity and entrepreneurial behavior. *Journal of Chinese Entrepreneurship*, 2(2), 165–174. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17561391011051144>