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The influence of emotions on decision-making: The case of women entrepreneurs in oriental Morocco

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Abstract

The need to study emotions, which are now omnipresent at the heart of our professional and private lives, is widely recognised. Research into emotions has led to the emergence of an operational concept, "emotional intelligence (EI)". Research into EI has focused mainly on management, negotiation and human resources, but little on entrepreneurship. Yet, emotions are at the heart of the field of entrepreneurship as a crucial element in encouraging entrepreneurs to manage (to regulate) their emotions and make the right decisions in all kinds of situations in order to promote professional success.

Based on the relationship established in the literature between EI and performance, our research aims at determining the influence of emotions on the decision-making of women entrepreneurs in Morocco. Based on a qualitative exploratory analysis, this work purposes more specifically to establish the relationship between the notions of self-awareness, emotion management, motivation, empathy, social skills and decision-making within this category of entrepreneurs. Through semi-directive interviews with women entrepreneurs identified in the Oriental region, and on the basis of a thematic content analysis of the interviewees' discourse, the obtained results will enable us to specify the intensity of the link between emotional management and entrepreneurial success.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence; Emotion; Decision-making; Entrepreneurship; Professional success.

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1. Introduction

The evolution of the business environment, marked by a strong demand for competitiveness and value creation in the market, requires entrepreneurs to be proactive and ready to make appropriate decisions in any kind of situation and at any time. Nowadays, entrepreneurship is at the heart of socio-economic and political debates in Morocco, not only because of its weight in the Moroccan economy, but also because of its social role in the development of the Moroccan population. Moroccan entrepreneurs are increasingly called upon to make decisions that have an impact on the country's economy, and they need to be well trained to be able to make effective and lasting decisions.

Many entrepreneurs find it difficult to make decisions, especially when they are unable to manage their emotions. This difficulty can affect their motivation and their ability to act effectively (Valéau, 2007). Entrepreneurs' success depends largely on their ability to manage and regulate their emotions (Sogbossi and Sabin, 2018). According to Ansiau (2007; 2011) and Ellouze and Rim (2017), emotional intelligence is a key factor in individual success, improved behaviour and organisational performance. Lopes et al (2006) revealed that people with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to make reasoned and considered decisions rather than letting themselves be influenced by their emotions.

By reviewing the literature of this issue, which encompasses the humanities and social sciences with a renewed interest in emotions (Hsee et al., 2001; Goleman et al., 2013), as well as a synthesis of previous studies in management that focus on emotions and their management (Ansiau, et al., 2007; Lionel, 2010; Ellouze and Rim, 2017; Sogbossi and Sabin, 2018), we found that there are previous studies on emotional intelligence and its link to leadership, human resource management, communication and business negotiation. With regard to decision-making, there are also studies that have focused on the influence of emotional intelligence on financial decision-making (Lopes et al., 2004), academic success (Sy and Côté, 2004) and economic decision-making through somatic marker theory (Bechara and Damasio, 2005). However, to our knowledge, few studies have specifically addressed the relationship between the emotional intelligence of women entrepreneurs and decision-making in a Moroccan context, more specifically in the East of Morocco, where women entrepreneurs represent a minority even though they own their own business. This is the source of our research question: What is the impact of controlling emotional intelligence on the decision-making of women entrepreneurs in the Oriental Eastern region?

The objective of this work can be divided into two specific questions: what is the influence of the determinants of emotional intelligence on the decision-making of women entrepreneurs? Does the presence of emotional intelligence have a negative effect on the professional success of women entrepreneurs with regard to their decision-making?

The aim of this article is to determine the influence of emotional intelligence on the decision-making of women entrepreneurs in Morocco. The originality of this article lies in its initial treatment of the influence of the emotional intelligence of women entrepreneurs on decision-making. Secondly, the field study remains unexploited in the East of Morocco until now. This article is structured around four main points as follows: a review of the literature relating to the concepts and theoretical research model, the research methodology, and the presentation and discussion of the results.

2. Review of the literature

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a new, proportional concept that has become very fashionable. It has provoked an impressive debate about its definition and factor structure (Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005 cited by Ellouze and Rim, 2017). Emotional intelligence plays an important role in companies, as it facilitates teamwork and stimulates innovation and creativity (Goleman, 1997). Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined by the pioneers Solvey and Mayer (1990) as a subset of social intelligences, which includes the ability to perceive, evaluate and express emotions correctly in order to obtain accurate perceptions of one's own emotions and those of others, in order to promote the emotional and intellectual development of the individual. In other words, emotional intelligence is a type of intelligence that generates a series of skills that, in addition to the ability to understand one's own emotions and those of others, enable one to use this sensitivity to motivate, plan and accomplish one's own life and that of others.

Emotional intelligence is a complex and evolving concept, which includes aspects of personality, motivation and the ability to perceive, regulate and use affective information of an intrapersonal nature (management of one's own emotions) and an interpersonal nature (management of the emotions of others), and to reason validly while taking into consideration information linked to emotions (Moudoud, et al, (2023)). Bar-on (1997) defines EI as a set of non-cognitive abilities, skills and aptitudes that influence a person's ability to cope successfully with the demands and pressures of the environment. Goleman (2000), a few years later, defined EI as the actual

manifestation of certain skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social competence, these in a timely, appropriate and dimensioned manner in order to be effective in a given situation. This definition varies from the mental ability models of (Salovey and Mayers, 1990), to personality trait models (Petrides and Furnham, 2001) and finally mixed models (Goleman, 2000). Goleman's (2000) model of emotional intelligence is a set of five factors: self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social competence.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is the ability to identify and understand emotions and their effects on others. It also means recognising one's self realistically and with solid self-confidence. It consists of self-assurance and self-evaluation. These indicators are:

- Private self-awareness: represents the ability to be omnipresent in one's own thoughts and intuitions.
- Public self-consciousness: this is defined as an awareness of oneself as a social object, which has an impact on others and on social anxiety (discomfort in the presence of others).

The ability to self-regulate emotions

Managing emotions means having the ability to control impulses and disruptive moods and to think before acting. According to Aliyamutu (2011), emotion management therefore consists of controlling or directing one's emotions and impulses in order to adapt to changing situations. People who are aware of their own emotions have the power to act on them so as not to let themselves be overwhelmed (Ellouze and Rim, 2017). Emotional intelligence, as defined by Petrides and Furnham (2000), is the management of intra- and interpersonal affective information. From this definition, we can say that EI is delimited around the management of emotions, but few studies have been interested in analysing how to direct one's emotions (Sogbossi and Sabin, (2018)). Based on this question, these authors conducted a study to identify the determinants of emotion management. They found seven determinants of emotion management in the literature, but only six are proven according to their results. The indicators of emotion management are: experience of negative emotion management, learning, technical competence, degree of goal achievement, social expression of emotions and moral support.

Motivation

Motivation can be defined as the psychological process that drives an individual to act in a determined way in order to achieve a goal or satisfy a need (Maslow, (1943)). It is generally considered to be a key factor in commitment, perseverance and performance in human activities.

Motivation is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors, such as needs, interests, values, expectations, rewards, social pressures and environmental situations. Motivation can be intrinsic, i.e. originating from within the individual, or extrinsic, i.e. originating from a source outside the individual.

Motivation can also vary according to the goal or task to be achieved, and the context and circumstances in which it occurs. It can be stimulated and reinforced by motivational strategies such as goal setting, positive feedback, recognition and reward, as well as by optimising the working environment and conditions.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to discern, understand and value the emotional structure of others. It is "tuning in" to what people are experiencing, with the why and how of what they are feeling (Ellouze and Rim, (2017)). Empathic subjects take an interest in others and show that they care about what happens to them and allows people to be examined in terms of their emotional reactions (Aliyamutu, (2011)). Decety and Lamm (2006) state that empathy comprises three main processes which are: sharing emotional representation, understanding another's point of view and non-confusion between self and other.

Social skills

It is the ability to establish, build and maintain mutually satisfying relationships that demonstrate closeness to others. In other words, it is the ability to manage interpersonal relationships (Ellouze and Rim, 2017). Numerous authors (e.g., Mandon, 1990; Gillet, 1991 cited by Agathe (2016), summarise that social competence only exists in acts and is mobilised in situation in a given context functioning as an integrated network. This competence requires the mobilisation of several external resources, but above all internal resources, in order to accomplish a complicated task. Internal resources are organised into three types of knowledge (knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills). The indicators are of the order of two: intra-individual skills (curiosity, perseverance, initiative and interest) and inter-individual skills (sociability, communication, cooperation, participation and leadership).

Decision-making

According to Child (1972, cited by Berard, 2009), decision-making within organisations is carried out by the actors involved rather than by the organisation itself, and this decision-making depends on human perception and evaluation. The behavioural characteristics of entrepreneurs and managers, in relation to their work, influence the decisions they make (Emile-Michel, (2006)). Psychologists consider decision-making to be a type of behaviour (Zimmermann, 1986, cited by Berard, 2009), and emotions play an important role in this process, as recognised by Loewenstein et al. (2001). There are two types of logic in decision-making: algorithmic logic, based on reasoning, and emotional logic. By combining emotion and reasoning, we can better optimise decision-making, particularly for managers and entrepreneurs making financial decisions (Damasio, (1995)). In short, decision-making in organisations is influenced by the behavioural characteristics of the actors involved, as well as by the emotions involved in the decision-making process.

Faced with risks in an uncertain environment, decision-makers display several attitudes which can be categorised into different approaches, such as the rational attitude which uses an analytical approach based on objective data to select the best option. These include the rational attitude, which uses an analytical approach based on objective data to select the best option; the intuitive attitude, which is based on the entrepreneur's experience and instinct; the creative attitude, which encourages innovation and the search for original solutions; the conservative attitude, which minimises risks and chooses safe options; the emotional attitude, which can be influenced by personal considerations; and the collaborative attitude, which involves team members and other stakeholders in the decision-making process to reach a consensus.

2. Relationship between emotional intelligence and the decision-making process

The influence of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial decision-making

According to Hess and Bacigalupo (2011), improved emotion management leads to successful decision-making. Mikolajczak et al (2009) support the idea that to improve their decision-making capacity, individuals who make financial decisions or assess risks need to become aware of their emotional states. In other words, by effectively managing their emotions, decision-makers can cope with complex situations and make informed investment decisions, whether at an individual or organisational level (Fazal, 2017). According to Ansiau et al (2007), emotion management or emotional intelligence is an important part of the decision-making process. With this in mind, Tanvir et al (2016) conducted a study of 225 investors to assess the impact of their emotional intelligence on their investment decisions, based on the approach of (Goleman (1996)). The results indicate that investors' emotional intelligence has a positive and significant impact on their investment decision-making. In a similar study conducted by Fazal (2017) in Pakistan, which examined the impact of investors' emotional intelligence on their investment decisions, taking into account the moderating role of financial literature. The results confirm that emotional intelligence is positively and significantly related to investment decision making and suggest that in order to make appropriate investment decisions, individuals need to learn to control their emotions. According to the financial literature, there is a significant increase in the relationship between emotional intelligence and investment decision-making. Najmeh and Aliahmadi (2015) conducted research among investors in the Esfahan Stock Exchange to determine the relationship between Emotional Quotient (EQ) and decision-making style. The results of a descriptive survey of 96 investors show that there is a positive and significant relationship between EQ and rational and intuitive decision making. In a similar vein, Sumathy et al (2015) conducted a study to explore the impact of emotional intelligence on leadership and decision-making skills. Using regression on a sample of 150 people selected at different levels in the Trichirapelli district, the results indicate that there is an association between the level of emotional intelligence and decision-making. Dejoux et al (2006) conducted an analysis of the link between emotional skills and the decision-making process. They put forward the hypothesis that the components of emotional intelligence support the decision-making process by contributing specifically to reducing suggestibility to decision-making bias. They identified and studied five types of bias, namely loss aversion, inflexibility, optimism, conjunction error and overconfidence. The results indicate that emotional intelligence has a moderating effect on cognitive biases, but this effect varies according to the dimension of emotional intelligence considered.

In a similar vein, Härtel et al (2002) found that workgroups with low emotional intelligence initially performed less well than those with high emotional intelligence. However, they also noted that this difference can be mitigated over time if group members learn to recognise, manage and control their own emotions and those of others. According to Lopes et al (2011), the ability to perceive, evaluate, integrate and manage emotions can provide individuals with a range of skills that enable them to perform better on complex tasks.

To investigate the role and place of emotional intelligence in innovative activities, researchers, including Hasan et al (2011), developed a study to determine whether managers' emotional intelligence, as strategic decision-makers, positively affects their innovative behaviour at work. They surveyed 57 managers and used a regression method to analyse the data. The results confirm that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on managers'

innovative work behaviour. Another research work guided by Rohana and Zarina (2015) in Malaysia examined the link between emotional intelligence, innovation and entrepreneurial success of entrepreneurs. Their study involved 51 young entrepreneurs and the analysis of the results show that positive emotional intelligence can enhance innovation capacity, which leads to entrepreneurial success. Hasan and Nazife (2012) conducted a sketch with 332 bank employees in various positions. The purpose of this sketch was to examine the link between emotional intelligence and innovative behaviour at work. The results indicate a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and innovative behaviour at work.

The influence of EI determinants on entrepreneurial decision-making

Entrepreneurs' decision-making is influenced by many factors, including their self-awareness, ability to self-regulate emotions, motivation, empathy and social skills.

Self-awareness enables them to understand their values, beliefs, strengths and weaknesses. This self-awareness enables entrepreneurs to make more informed decisions that are in line with their personal and professional goals. Similarly, the ability to regulate their emotions in stressful and uncertain situations enables them to make more rational decisions. Motivation is also a key factor for entrepreneurs, as it encourages them to take calculated risks and explore new areas. Empathy is important for understanding the needs of their target market and the concerns of their team, which can encourage them to make sound decisions and build stronger relationships with their staff and customers. Finally, social skills are essential for working with partners, investors, employees and customers, as they help entrepreneurs to communicate effectively, negotiate agreements and resolve conflicts, while taking into account the needs and viewpoints of all parties involved. Specifically, self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills are key factors that can influence entrepreneurs' decision-making. Thus, those who develop these skills are better equipped to make informed decisions and succeed in sustaining their business.

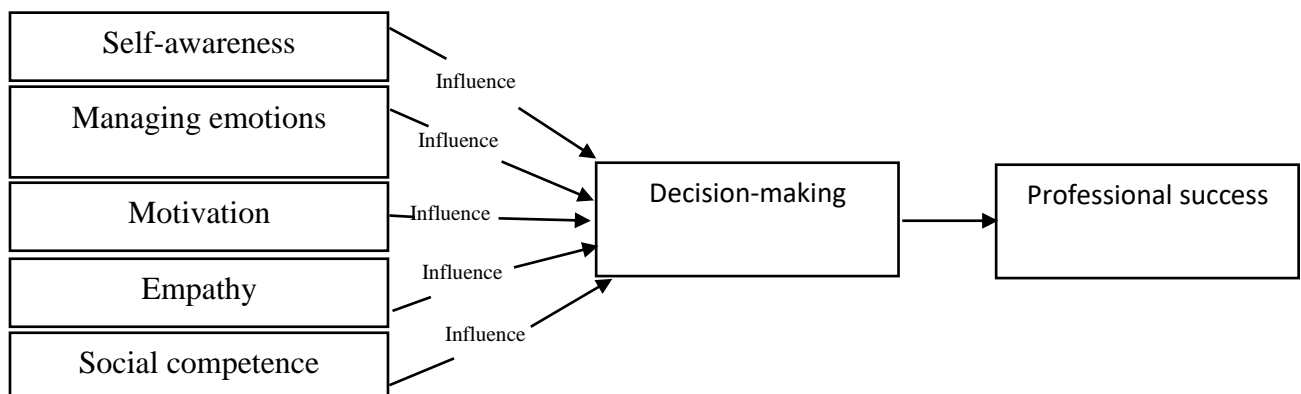


Figure 1: Conceptual research model

3. Research methodology

This article adopts a qualitative exploratory methodology based on in-depth individual interviews, with the aim of clarifying the influence of women entrepreneurs' EI on decision-making and, more specifically, establishing the link between the notions of self-awareness, emotion management, motivation, empathy, social skills and decision-making within this category of entrepreneurs. Two elements that have been more or less defined. Exploratory research therefore aims to fill a gap and uncover the various dimensions of the problem, providing the researcher with a rich source of information.

The qualitative approach aims to explore phenomena in all their diversity. The choice of qualitative methodology allows very fine-grained access to the representations of the players and a better understanding of the context and a more in-depth analysis, which does not offer a quantitative approach. From the outset, it should be noted that qualitative research involves all forms of field research, with the emphasis on discourse and life stories. Indeed, one of the characteristics of qualitative research is the study of social phenomena in the observed social environment, rather than in artificial or experimental situations. Consequently, data is collected by interacting with the individual in their own language and by observing them in their environment (Kirk and Miller, (1986)).

The aim of qualitative research is to develop concepts that help us to better understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) contexts, focusing on the meanings, experiences and perspectives of all participants (Mays and Pope, (1995)). Qualitative studies are particularly useful for investigating and developing hypotheses about an unfamiliar area (Miles and Huberman, 2003). Certainly, there is a wealth of research on EI and decision making, but contextualisation provides new insights.

Qualitative methods have always been seen as 'sound research strategies', provided they are used consistently. They have also been the subject of a number of criticisms, mainly because of the difficulty of collecting data (in terms of time and resources), the difficulty of analysing and interpreting the data, and the lack of reliability.

Approach to the study

We interviewed ten individuals using individual semi-directive interviews, also known as 'centred' interviews, to ensure flexibility and to allow the respondent relative freedom to better understand their logic (Gavard-Perret et al., 2008). The respondents were women entrepreneurs from the Eastern region who held senior positions within their companies. The choice of respondents was based on their availability, their ability to inform us and to shed more light on our research subject.

We chose the individual interview method because it allows us to capture, from the interaction between a researcher and a subject, the point of view of individuals, their understanding of a particular experience, with a view to making them explicit, understanding them in depth or learning more about a given object (Baribeau and Royer, 2012). This correspond perfectly to the objective of our article.

In terms of sample selection, we used the theoretical sampling method, which involves selecting participants who have relevant experiences or specific knowledge that meet the characteristics of the study. Data was collected face-to-face using a video recorder, and the average interview lasted 40 minutes.

The interview guide consisted of five parts. After introducing the subject of the study, we interviewed women entrepreneurs from the Oriental region, taking care to follow the following five themes:

- Theme 1: self-awareness
- Theme 2: Managing emotions
- Theme 3: Motivation
- Theme 4: Empathy
- Theme 5: Social competence

A preliminary presentation of the objective of our research was obviously given to the interviewees, while emphasising the confidentiality of the data collected. Each interview, which did not exceed an hour and a half, was framed by a precise order of questions in order to avoid deviating from our research objective. The interviews in the exploratory phase were conducted according to the following schedule (table 1):

Table 1. Interview schedule

Interlocuteur	Time	Date
Entrepreneur 1	1h	06/09/2022
Entrepreneur 2	31min	20/09/2022
Entrepreneur 3	45min	03/10/2022
Entrepreneur 4	30min	10/10/2022
Entrepreneur 5	30min	27/10/2022
Entrepreneur 6	40min	05/01/2023
Entrepreneur 7	33min	28/01/2023
Entrepreneur 8	35min	03/02/2023
Entrepreneur 9	45min	26/02/2023
Entrepreneur 10	1h	03/03/2023

Source: authors

We organised the exploratory phase as follows (Figure 2):

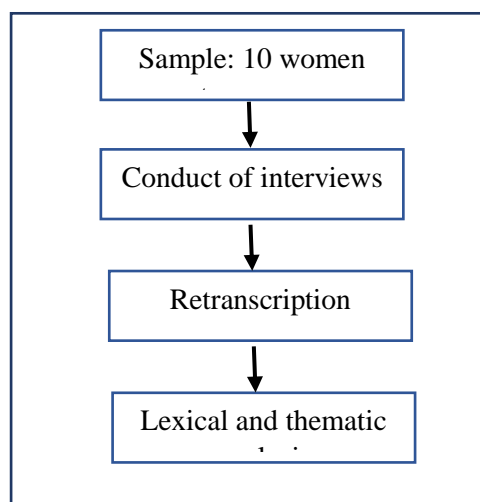


Figure 2: The main phases of the exploratory study

Source: authors

After developing our guide, we interviewed ten women entrepreneurs in the Eastern region. We obtained permission to record four interviews. For the others, we were obliged to take careful notes in order to gain a better understanding of our subject.

Respect for the following phases ensured that the interviews ran smoothly: first, an introduction to our subject took place after establishing a climate of trust that allowed the respondents to express themselves freely on the predetermined themes. Kvale (1996) warns that, although the interview can be considered as a conversation between two people, the relationship between these two people is not equal. It is therefore necessary to establish good rapport and trust from the outset. These two criteria are necessary to build the relationship between the respondent and the interviewer up to an immersion phase where there is a deep level of participation (Di Ciccio-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Then, with the help of a retranscription phase, which is a powerful act of representation and can affect the way in which the data is conceptualised, we were able to reproduce the words of the interviewee faithfully (not distorting his words) and in a way that was comprehensible to the reader, the analyst and also the interviewee (respecting his rights and the confidentiality of the names and organisations cited). Finally, a lexical and thematic analysis was carried out using Nvivo 10.0.641 software, analysing interview by interview and theme by theme. It has been suggested that this thematic approach, as a flexible and useful research tool, provides a rich and detailed, albeit complex, account of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The results of this analysis are as follows (Table 2):

Table 2. extract from the thematic analysis matrix

	1- Conscience en soi	2- Autorégulation des émotions	3- Motivation	4- Empathie	5- Compétence sociale
Entrepreneuse 1	La conscience de soi joue un rôle crucial dans la prise de décision. Être conscient de ses propres valeurs, motivations, peurs et limites peut aider à prendre des décisions plus éclairées et plus alignées avec ses objectifs à long terme. Par exemple, si je suis conscient de mes limites en termes de temps et de ressources, je serai en mesure de prendre des décisions plus réalistes et faisables pour mon entreprise. De même, si je suis conscient de mes valeurs et de mon éthique, je serai plus enclin à prendre des décisions qui sont en ligne avec celles-ci, même si cela peut être plus difficile ou moins rentable à court terme.	L'autorégulation des émotions est essentielle pour prendre des décisions éclairées et efficaces. Les émotions peuvent souvent influencer négativement la prise de décision en créant des biais et en limitant la capacité à considérer toutes les options disponibles de manière rationnelle. En apprenant à réguler mes émotions, je suis mieux en mesure de garder mon calme dans des situations stressantes, ce qui me permet de prendre des décisions plus réfléchies et moins impulsives. Cela me permet également d'éviter de prendre des décisions basées sur des préjugés ou des émotions négatives telles que la peur, la colère ou la frustration.	La motivation est un élément clé qui peut influencer la prise de décision. Une motivation forte peut aider à fournir l'énergie nécessaire pour prendre des risques calculés et explorer de nouvelles opportunités. En revanche, une motivation faible peut entraîner une prise de décision hésitante ou une réticence à sortir de sa zone de confort. Cependant, il est important de souligner que la motivation ne doit pas être la seule force motrice dans la prise de décision des entrepreneurs. Les décisions doivent être basées sur une analyse approfondie des données, des prévisions et des implications à long terme. La motivation doit servir de catalyseur pour aider à initier et à soutenir des actions qui sont en ligne avec une vision et des objectifs à long terme pour l'entreprise.	L'empathie peut avoir un impact significatif sur la prise de décision. L'empathie permet aux entrepreneurs de mieux comprendre les besoins, les désirs et les perspectives des autres parties prenantes, tels que les clients, les employés et les partenaires commerciaux. Cela peut aider à créer des relations plus fortes et plus durables, ainsi qu'à informer les décisions qui sont prises pour l'entreprise. Par exemple, en étant empathique envers les clients, les entrepreneurs peuvent comprendre leurs besoins, leurs préférences et leurs préoccupations, ce qui peut les aider à concevoir des produits et des services plus adaptés et efficaces. De même, en étant empathique envers les employés, les entrepreneurs peuvent comprendre leurs motivations et leurs défis, ce qui peut les aider à créer un environnement de travail plus positif et à encourager l'engagement et la loyauté des employés.	La compétence sociale peut avoir un impact significatif sur la prise de décision. La compétence sociale se réfère à la capacité d'une personne à interagir efficacement avec les autres, à comprendre leurs émotions et leurs besoins, et à construire des relations positives et durables. La prise de décision en entreprise implique souvent de travailler avec un large éventail de parties prenantes, tels que les clients, les employés, les partenaires commerciaux, les investisseurs et les régulateurs. En ayant une compétence sociale élevée, les entrepreneurs peuvent mieux comprendre les besoins et les perspectives de ces parties prenantes, ce qui peut les aider à prendre des décisions plus éclairées et plus efficaces pour l'entreprise. La compétence sociale peut aider les entrepreneurs à naviguer dans des situations difficiles, telles que les conflits avec les parties prenantes ou les crises inattendues. En comprenant les émotions et les perspectives des autres, les entrepreneurs peuvent mieux gérer ces situations et trouver des solutions qui sont mutuellement bénéfiques.
Entrepreneuse 2	La conscience de soi peut aider les entrepreneurs à être plus authentiques, plus conscients des enjeux éthiques et à mieux comprendre les impacts de leurs décisions sur les parties prenantes de leur entreprise, allant au-delà du seul aspect financier. Cela peut se traduire par une prise de décision plus responsable et durable pour l'entreprise et la société dans son ensemble.	En outre, l'autorégulation des émotions peut aider à renforcer les relations d'affaires en aidant à éviter les conflits et en favorisant une communication plus efficace. Cela peut également contribuer à la construction d'une culture d'entreprise plus positive et à un environnement de travail plus productif. L'autorégulation des émotions est un élément clé de la prise de décision efficace pour les entrepreneurs, car elle leur permet de rester calmes, de penser de manière rationnelle et de prendre des décisions réfléchies et bien informées pour leur entreprise.	Il est important que l'entrepreneur reste conscient de sa motivation et de ses biais personnels, car cela peut influencer la façon dont les décisions sont prises et les choix qui sont faits. Une motivation excessive peut conduire à des décisions impulsives et à une négligence des risques potentiels, tandis qu'une motivation insuffisante peut entraîner une prise de décision trop conservatrice et une perte d'opportunités. La motivation peut être un élément important pour aider les entrepreneurs à prendre des décisions audacieuses et novatrices. Cependant, il est important de maintenir une perspective équilibrée et une analyse approfondie pour prendre des décisions éclairées et efficaces pour l'entreprise.	L'empathie peut aider les entrepreneurs à éviter les décisions qui pourraient avoir un impact négatif sur les parties prenantes, tels que les communautés locales ou l'environnement. En étant conscients des impacts potentiels de leurs décisions, les entrepreneurs peuvent travailler à minimiser les effets négatifs et à maximiser les résultats positifs pour toutes les parties prenantes impliquées. L'empathie peut jouer un rôle important dans la prise de décision des entrepreneurs en aidant à comprendre les besoins et les perspectives des parties prenantes, à éviter les impacts négatifs et à favoriser des relations positives et durables. Les entrepreneurs qui intègrent l'empathie dans leur prise de décision peuvent créer des entreprises plus durables et plus humaines qui bénéficient à tous ceux qui y sont impliqués.	La compétence sociale peut aider les entrepreneurs à construire des relations positives et durables avec les parties prenantes clés, ce qui peut contribuer à la réussite à long terme de l'entreprise. Des relations solides peuvent aider à établir la confiance, à faciliter la collaboration et à améliorer la réputation de l'entreprise. En outre, la compétence sociale peut jouer un rôle important dans la prise de décision des entrepreneurs en aidant à comprendre les besoins et les perspectives des parties prenantes, à naviguer dans des situations difficiles et à construire des relations positives et durables. Les entrepreneurs qui développent leur compétence sociale peuvent être mieux équipés pour prendre des décisions éclairées et pour bâtir des entreprises durables et prospères.

Source: Sortie Nvivo

Thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative research in economics and management because it advocates a rigorous and methodical approach based on the clarification of the rules of reading, interpretation and coding (Belerson, 1954). The main strength of the approach advocated in this study is the inclusion of the researchers' creativity and subjectivity in the various stages of developing the theme. It is possible to maintain creativity while respecting the principles of data analysis (Vaismoradi et al. 2016).

Having presented the results of the thematic analysis we now focus on the discussion of each theme studied.

4. Discussion of the results

Theme 1: self-awareness

Self-awareness is a key concept in psychology, referring to the ability to recognise and understand one's own emotions, thoughts and motivations. Entrepreneur 2 presents this definition as follows: "Self-awareness involves reflection on one's own emotions, thoughts and feelings, as well as an understanding of one's own limitations and strengths". It also includes the ability to see oneself realistically, without being influenced by cognitive or emotional biases. Individuals with high self-awareness are often able to manage their own stress and anxiety effectively, as well as communicating better with others. Entrepreneur 1 added that "they also have diverse cultural values and are able to make ethical decisions".

Self-awareness has a significant impact on entrepreneurs' decision-making, with Entrepreneur 8 stating that "entrepreneurs who are aware of their strengths and weaknesses are more likely to make well-considered decisions tailored to their personality and skills". In addition, self-awareness helps entrepreneurs better understand the perspectives of others. Entrepreneur 10 argues that "entrepreneurs who possess self-awareness are better able to understand the points of view of others and take their opinions into account when making decisions". This helps to create a positive and inclusive working environment, which can lead to better entrepreneurial performance.

Finally, self-awareness can help entrepreneurs manage stress and step back when things don't go as planned. Entrepreneurs with a high level of self-awareness are more likely to face challenges with resilience and perseverance, rather than being overwhelmed by stress and anxiety.

In short, self-awareness can be a major asset for women entrepreneurs, helping them to make more informed decisions, better understand others, manage stress and maintain a positive work environment.

Theme 2: Emotional self-regulation

Emotional self-regulation is the ability to effectively manage one's emotions to maintain a calm and reflective state of mind when faced with difficult situations. It involves "the ability to recognise, understand and manage one's own emotions so as to maintain a clear perspective and make informed decisions" entrepreneur 9.

Emotional self-regulation is an important skill for navigating stressful or uncertain situations, whether in personal or professional life. This skill is particularly important for female entrepreneurs, who are often faced with challenges and uncertainties in the business world. According to Entrepreneur 4, this skill "enables women entrepreneurs to make rational, considered decisions, rather than reacting impulsively or emotionally to stressful and uncertain situations, such as making important financial decisions, managing conflict within the team or responding to increased competition in the marketplace". In these situations, emotional self-regulation guides entrepreneurs "to maintain a clear perspective on the situation and evaluate options rationally" Entrepreneur 7. For Entrepreneur 2, self-regulation allows her to "avoid hasty and impulsive decisions that can have negative long-term consequences". All this leads us to stipulate that this skill leads us to better assess risks objectively, make more informed decisions and communicate more effectively with their teams, business partners and customers.

Ultimately, emotional self-regulation is essential for women entrepreneurs as it enables them to successfully navigate a difficult and uncertain business environment, making informed decisions and effectively managing risks and challenges. It can also contribute to their long-term success as entrepreneurs, enabling them to maintain a clear perspective and remain resilient in the face of challenges and obstacles.

Theme 3: Motivation

Motivation is often considered as a skill in the field of psychology and personal development. As a skill, motivation refers to a mental and emotional state that motivates individuals to act, persevere and achieve specific goals. Entrepreneur 5 adds that "motivation is a process that involves internal and external factors that interact to influence human behaviour towards desirable outcomes". These factors can include physiological needs such as hunger, thirst and sleep, as well as psychological needs such as self-esteem, achievement and social affiliation.

In the entrepreneurial context, motivation can take different forms, such as enthusiasm, passion, fear, anxiety, anger, frustration, etc. Entrepreneur 6 mentions that these "can be triggered by a variety of factors, such as financial challenges, technical challenges, environmental pressures, growth opportunities, etc". Indeed, emotions can influence the cognitive processes involved in decision-making by affecting the perception of available options, the way in which information is evaluated and the weight given to different factors. Entrepreneur 8 confirms that "emotionally motivated entrepreneurs may tend to make more impulsive decisions, based on feelings rather than a rational and thorough analysis of the options available". For example, an entrepreneur who

is passionate about an idea may be more willing to take risks and invest money in that idea, even if it involves high costs and significant risks.

On the other hand, strong emotional motivation can be beneficial for female entrepreneurs, "as it can help them persevere in the face of adversity, overcome obstacles and maintain their commitment to their goals" Entrepreneur 10. Enthusiasm and passion are a source of mobilising additional resources and inspiring teams.

In short, as emotions influence cognitive processes in decision-making, strong emotional motivation can also be beneficial for female entrepreneurs, provided it is channelled constructively and does not compromise a rational and thorough analysis of the options available.

Theme 4: Empathy

- Empathy is a human skill that refers to the ability to understand and feel the emotions of others. This involves "the ability to perceive and understand the feelings, thoughts and perspectives of others, and to feel empathy and compassion for them" Entrepreneur 4. Empathy can be divided into two main types (Pauline (2010)):

- Cognitive empathy refers to the ability to perceive and understand the emotions of others, to recognise non-verbal cues and contextual clues, and to put this information into context for the other person's emotions. This is important for effective communication and group decision-making.
- Emotional empathy refers to the ability to perceive and feel the emotions of others, share their feelings and respond appropriately. This form of empathy is important for creating meaningful and healthy relationships through compassion.

Empathy is a very useful skill in professional contexts, as it allows us to better understand the perspectives and needs of colleagues and to work better as a team. For Entrepreneur 6, this skill "is particularly important for women entrepreneurs, who are often obliged to understand the perspectives and needs of their customers, employees and business partners, in order to make more appropriate decisions in all situations". Entrepreneurs who are empathetic towards the stakeholders in their business can better understand the consequences of their decisions on others. Entrepreneur 3 confirms this by pointing out that "they can be more aware of the impact of their actions on employees, customers, suppliers and local communities, which leads them to make more ethical decisions".

Ultimately, all this helps to create a more profitable and sustainable business, as well as improving and strengthening relationships with the company's stakeholders.

Theme 5: Social competence

Social competence refers to a person's ability to understand the emotions and behaviour of others, communicate effectively with them, build and maintain positive relationships, resolve conflicts and negotiate complex social situations.

More specifically, in the entrepreneurial world, female entrepreneurs are often faced with difficult decisions that have significant consequences for themselves, their business and their environment. Entrepreneur 1 points out that "social skills enable them to navigate complex situations, understand the needs and motivations of other stakeholders and make decisions that take these into account".

For Entrepreneur 5, "building relationships with business partners, investors, customers, employees and other stakeholders is crucial to the success of their business". Social skills play an important role in creating these relationships. They enable female entrepreneurs to communicate effectively, build trusting relationships and work with people from different cultural backgrounds. According to Entrepreneur 10, social skills "also help entrepreneurs to listen to and understand the needs, motivations and concerns of different stakeholders", enabling them to make decisions that take everyone's interests into account. In addition, social skills help entrepreneurs to better manage conflicts, solve problems and find solutions that suit all parts of the business. According to Entrepreneur 8, social skills "enable entrepreneurs to make ethical decisions while considering the consequences of their actions on other stakeholders", such as managing employees, managing customer relations and managing the company's finances.

In short, social competence is essential for women entrepreneurs because it enables them to understand and manage stakeholder relationships, resolve conflicts and make ethical and effective decisions. Outside the professional context, social competence plays an important role in interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being. People with social competence are often able to work in teams, negotiate complex social situations and maintain positive and satisfying relationships with others.

5. Conclusion

The current economic climate in Morocco requires entrepreneurs to be proactive and to make decisions adapted to all kinds of situations, in order to meet the demand for competitiveness and value creation in the market, with the aim of promoting entrepreneurial success. However, some entrepreneurs may find it difficult to make decisions when their emotions get the better of them, which can affect their motivation and ability to act effectively. According to some authors such as Sogbossi and Sabin (2018), an entrepreneur's success largely lies in their ability to manage their emotions. It is therefore necessary to show the role and relevance of psychological and behavioural factors in the decision-making of female entrepreneurs in Morocco. In this context, the aim of this article is to study the influence of the determinants of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-regulation of emotions, empathy, motivation, social competence) in decision-making, more specifically among women entrepreneurs in the Oriental region. To address this issue, we conducted interviews with 10 women entrepreneurs in the Oriental region. The main results of the qualitative analysis that emerged from these interviews are as follows:

« Self-awareness guides entrepreneurs to make informed decisions, better understand others, channel stress and create a positive work environment. Emotional self-regulation is also essential for navigating a difficult business environment, making informed decisions and effectively managing risks and challenges. Emotions can have a complex impact on decision-making, but strong emotional motivation can be beneficial if channelled constructively. Empathy can help entrepreneurs to understand the needs and emotions of others, which in turn can help to create a more profitable and sustainable business. Finally, social competence is essential for understanding and managing stakeholder relationships, resolving conflicts and making ethical and effective decisions, which can also play an important role in interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being ».

This research contributes to the improvement of both theoretical and practical knowledge. On the theoretical level, this research provides knowledge on the fundamental role of the determinants of emotional intelligence in entrepreneurial decision-making. The results of this research will enable students, practitioners and researchers in entrepreneurship to improve their knowledge in this field of research in order to carry out future research. In managerial terms, the results of this research enable both innovative and traditional entrepreneurs to become aware of their emotional state when making entrepreneurial decisions. Secondly, the results confirm that the emotional capital of entrepreneurs promotes decision-making and remains a key factor in ensuring professional success despite the complexity of the business environment. On a practical level, this research also aims to encourage entrepreneurs to develop their emotional intelligence by being self-aware, empathetic, motivated, sociable and by managing their emotions intelligently, because emotional intelligence is a key factor in entrepreneurial success. Like all research, our study has two limitations. Our sample is composed solely of women entrepreneurs, which limits the variability in the interpretation and discussion of our results. The second limitation is that we did not focus on the different forms of decision-making. As a result of the above limitations, several avenues for future research have emerged. Another confirmatory quantitative analysis by questionnaire could be carried out on a sample of women entrepreneurs in order to enrich the results of the research. Finally, another study could be carried out on a more representative sample, taking account of decision-making bias.

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