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# The Determinants of Entrepreneurs' Business Performance in Rural South Jordan: Under the Mediating Role of Demographic Factors

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## ABSTRACT

Although managing a business may seem straightforward, effectively navigating and adapting to environmental changes presents considerable challenges. In Jordan, rural entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in fostering economic development, driving prosperity, and generating employment opportunities that contribute significant value to the economy. This study aims to analyze the factors influencing the business performance of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs (BPRJE). These factors are categorized into three main areas: personal traits, the external business environment, and supportive elements. Additionally, this study investigates the direct and indirect effects of perceived demographic factors within this framework. To achieve the research objectives, data were collected using purposive sampling and a cross-sectional survey. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed for data analysis. The results indicate that both the external business environment (EBE) and personal traits (PT) have a strong direct positive impact on BPRJE and an indirect influence through the mediating role of demographic factors (DF). However, supportive elements (SEL) were not significantly and positively correlated with BPRJE, either directly or through DF mediation. Furthermore, although perceived demographic factors influence BPRJE, they weaken the relationship between supportive elements and BPRJE. This study provides a comprehensive understanding of critical success factors and the role of demographic influences on the performance of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs. This underscores the importance of continued research on emerging entrepreneurial success factors and calls for comparative studies on rural entrepreneurship across different regional and global contexts to

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better address their unique challenges and opportunities.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurs Success; Business Performance; Personal Traits; Business Environment; Rural Jordan; PLS-SEM

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background and Significance

Entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in driving economic development globally regardless of a nation's developmental stage. In developed countries, individuals are encouraged to pursue new ventures and capitalize on growth opportunities. In addition, entrepreneurship is recognized as one of the most important factors that contribute to business success, innovation, and economic growth. It serves as the primary engine for innovation and sustainable business practices<sup>[1]</sup>. Supporting entrepreneurial ventures, particularly high-potential businesses, is essential for economic advancement in developing countries. Moreover, fostering rural economic entrepreneurs and businesses is crucial to enhancing their role and impact in society, which, in turn, contributes to overall economic growth. Support for rural entrepreneurs is also key to preventing migration from rural areas and the agricultural sector to urban centers. However, the success and growth of entrepreneurs and their businesses are often influenced by factors such as the business environment, the traits and personal characteristics of entrepreneurs, government and community support, and skills and capabilities. Over the past two decades, researchers have increasingly recognized the importance of individual business enterprises and their leadership in various sectors and in driving economic development. However, the success or failure of rural entrepreneurs worldwide has been shaped by numerous different visible and hidden factors. While researchers have found that entrepreneurs within a given nation often exhibit similar traits, in rural entrepreneurship, it is observed that many entrepreneurs come from the same ethnic background. Few studies have explored rural entrepreneurship at the national level in regions where multiple ethnic groups coexist, such as villages, small towns, and districts. Rural entrepreneurs face

distinct challenges in their efforts to succeed; however, research distinguishing rural entrepreneurs at the national level provides a comprehensive view of their experiences<sup>[2]</sup>.

Moreover, the high failure rate of new and small businesses in rural areas highlights the need to identify factors linked to entrepreneurial success. Recent studies have identified the characteristics of the entrepreneur, the business, and the surrounding environment as key determinants of business performance. However, many entrepreneurs, business consultants, and government agencies emphasize the role of demographic factors, personal traits, and the business environment and support in explaining global differences in business behavior, performance, and development across different stages of business growth, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises<sup>[3]</sup>.

Throughout history, numerous theorists have proposed several theories, but each theorist offers a unique perspective on the concept of entrepreneurship based on individual interpretations. These varying approaches contribute to a lack of clarity in understanding the concept because they reflect the different viewpoints of economists, socialists, and psychologists. Therefore, a unified and comprehensive theory that encompasses all aspects of entrepreneurship is needed. This study draws on economic and exposure theories of entrepreneurship and business performance and mediation models. The Economic theory of entrepreneurship asserts that entrepreneurship emerges when economic incentives exist within a country<sup>[4,5]</sup>. According to this theory, both entrepreneurship and economic growth are shaped by key economic factors such as (a) effective fiscal and monetary policies, (b) availability of funding from financial institutions and specialized financial entities at reasonable costs, (c) growing demand for consumer goods and services, (d) access to productive resources, (e) strong capital formation with substantial savings and investment flows, and (f) supportive communication and transporta-

tion infrastructure. Overall, this theory highlights the importance of economic incentives in developing an entrepreneurial class within society. The Exposure Theory of Entrepreneurship suggests that exposure to new ideas and opportunities stimulates innovation and creativity, leading to the formation of new businesses. Factors such as an individual's education, cultural values, motivation, economic conditions, need for achievement, religious beliefs, and risk tolerance play a role in shaping their exposure to these new ideas and opportunities, ultimately driving innovation. Innovation is a critical component of entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, business performance models evaluate a company's performance by examining its drivers, objectives, and key performance indicators. In the context of entrepreneurship and small business research, firm performance is often considered the primary measure of success or failure in both empirical and theoretical frameworks<sup>[6]</sup>. For entrepreneurial firms, developing high-performing business models is crucial for achieving sustainable profits and maintaining competitiveness. Numerous studies in recent years have explored the relationship between business drivers and performance outcomes<sup>[7, 8]</sup>. Lastly, mediation models, as highlighted by Douglas Gunzler and colleagues<sup>[9]</sup>, describe the mechanisms through which an intervention influences an outcome, considering both causal and temporal relationships.

## 1.2. Entrepreneurship in Rural Jordan

The Jordanian Department of Statistics reported that individuals aged 15 to 24 account for one-fifth of the country's population, totaling 2.3 million out of 11.6 million residents as of the end of 2023. In smaller rural areas, young people outnumber older workers. In recent years, the southern municipalities have undergone substantial changes due to the expansion of the camp, which has affected the local labor market. To meet the growing demand for labor in these rural regions, new policies are being developed to guide the workforce and capitalize on the advantages of self-employment programs. The Jordanian business sector has undergone significant development, influenced by a variety of internal and external factors. These factors include government incentives,

local and global economic conditions, regional political dynamics, conflicts, and the challenges entrepreneurs face. Entrepreneurship in Jordan is a competitive sector with abundant ideas to explore and numerous opportunities, along with support centers for entrepreneurial initiatives. It plays a pivotal role in cultivating innovative human capital. When effectively encouraged, implemented, and applied, it not only creates entrepreneurial opportunities but also equips the next generation to address the skill gap, thereby contributing to national economic growth and elevating Jordan's human capital on the global stage<sup>[10]</sup>.

## 1.3. Objectives and Structure of the Study

For decades, Jordanian governments have sought an ideal policy or model to address the challenges and needs of rural entrepreneurs. However, they were not able to develop a comprehensive solution package for these entrepreneurs' problems and obstacles. This is likely due to the rapidly changing business environment and numerous factors that influence business success. Consequently, there is a significant and ongoing need for research on entrepreneurial success and performance in rural Jordan, particularly in the southern region, where, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no such studies have been conducted. This gap highlights the need for research on rural entrepreneurship in Jordan, focusing on its practical impact on the rural economy, unemployment, and migration. The study also explores how social factors and personal traits influence the sustainability and growth of rural businesses. These findings will help shape research frameworks for rural enterprises in Jordan and the broader Middle East, where the business environment and key factors are often similar. On a theoretical level, this study contributes new insights to the literature, particularly regarding the influence of personal traits, the rural business environment, and supportive factors on the performance of rural enterprises in Jordan. These insights may be applicable to other Middle Eastern countries. Furthermore, this research will provide a foundation for future studies in this field, offering solutions and strategies to support rural entrepreneurs and enhance the existing body of knowledge.

The scope of this study focuses on the following independent variables:

1. **Personal traits of the entrepreneur**, which encompass factors such as business innovation, prior work experience, motivation, record-keeping, strategy development, managerial skills, and the presence of skilled employees;
2. **The external business environment** includes external sources, suitable markets, available opportunities, and technological advancements;
3. **Supportive factors**, such as family, financial support, and government support;
4. **Demographic factors** included age, gender, occupation, training, business experience, education, and marital status.

Furthermore, business performance, assessed by sales growth, market share, and net profit, is the dependent variable. This study also explores the mediating role of entrepreneurial demographic factors in the relationship between independent variables and business performance. The aim of this study is to analyze the correlation between the selected independent variables and business performance among a randomly selected sample of entrepreneurs from rural southern Jordan, with demographic factors acting as a mediating variable. This study explores the relationship between the business performance of a randomly selected sample of entrepreneurs from rural southern Jordan and various factors, such as personal traits, the external business environment, supportive elements, and demographic characteristics. Data were collected through a personally administered survey via in-person visits and emails with the support of research assistants. Additional efforts were made to include entrepreneurs with limited or no internet access to ensure a thorough understanding of the factors influencing business performance. Additionally, demographic characteristics are used as a moderator in the relationship between the entrepreneurs' business performance and other factors.

The structure of this study is organized as follows: The first section introduces the research problems and their background. The second section provides a theoretical foundation through an extensive literature review, emphasizing the importance of key concepts and

existing research. This review leads to the formulation of the study's hypotheses and the presentation of the research framework, which visually illustrates the model being studied. The methodology section details the data collection and variable measurement procedures. The results section reports the significant findings related to key success factors in the rural entrepreneurship sector in southern Jordan. The discussion and implications section then examines the theoretical and practical relevance of these findings. Finally, the conclusion addresses the study's limitations, offers suggestions for future research, and summarizes the main findings.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Entrepreneurs operate in a dynamic environment influenced by numerous variables and forces that shape business trends and success. While researchers have explored a broad range of factors, new and evolving elements continue to emerge that impact entrepreneurial performance. These factors constantly change over time. The literature presents various perspectives on the business performance of rural entrepreneurs, with differing opinions on the strengths or weaknesses of their businesses. Some argue that these businesses exhibit low performance, while others believe that rural businesses can thrive. Additionally, researchers and scholars have compared the performance of entrepreneurs in different rural regions within one country and in other countries, finding similarities in certain areas, given the disparities in opinions and findings.

A key group of variables known as entrepreneurial personal traits, differ from one individual to another. However, there are certain essential characteristics common among entrepreneurs that can greatly influence the success of their ventures. These traits include business innovation, experience, motivation, record-keeping practices, strategy development, managerial skills, and the presence of skilled employees.

This study contributes to the existing literature by examining the factors and incentives that drive the success of rural entrepreneurs in Southern Jordan. Specifically, it investigates the role of personal traits and human

capital, such as management skills, motivation, initiative, creativity, innovation, employee experience, record-keeping, strategic planning, and the presence of skilled employees. These personal traits are expected to significantly impact the success and stability of rural businesses. These traits reflect an entrepreneur's experience, motivation, managerial skills (including strategic planning), and capacity for innovation—factors expected to enhance business performance and market stability. Strengthening these areas will enable rural entrepreneurs to navigate the challenges of operating in unstructured markets, mitigate investment risks, and overcome barriers to business growth. Previous studies support this expectation. Atef TM and Al-Balushi M<sup>[11]</sup>, as well as Huarng K-H, Mas-Tur A, and Yu TH-K<sup>[12]</sup> emphasize the importance of personal traits in entrepreneurial success. They highlighted that factors such as management skills, innovation, employee experience, self-motivation, and meticulous documentation play crucial roles in enhancing business performance. Additionally, strategic planning and a skilled workforce contribute significantly to creating a positive business image, which is vital for entrepreneurial success<sup>[13]</sup>. Research further indicates a strong positive correlation between willingness, motivation, and likelihood of engaging in entrepreneurial activities<sup>[14]</sup>. Drawing upon the rationale, conclusions, and arguments presented, the researcher proposed the following hypotheses (H1) to be further explored:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1).** *There is a positive correlation between personal traits and the business performance of rural Jordan entrepreneurs.*

Evaluating the impact of the external environment on entrepreneurial success is a complex task because of its diverse and dynamic nature. To simplify this process, it is essential to link external factors with key aspects, such as the accessibility and quality of external knowledge sources, appropriate markets, available opportunities, and technological advantages. Consequently, rural entrepreneurs must remain vigilant about their external business environment to safeguard stability during constant changes and obstacles, thereby ensuring sustained growth.

The researcher anticipates that factors such as high-quality data, continuous pursuit of new opportunities, market research and monitoring, and strategic use of technology will have a significant positive impact on rural business performance. This expectation aligns with the findings of Phonthanukitithaworn, Ketkaew, and Naruetharadhol<sup>[15]</sup>, who, in their study *“Relevant Factors for Success as an Online Entrepreneur in Thailand,”* emphasized the critical role of technological progress in driving entrepreneurial success. By fostering an innovative work environment, technology can support the creation of novel products and services. Additionally, the importance of building strong partnerships with relevant markets and other business sectors is highlighted by Mahmood IPRC<sup>[16]</sup>. These collaborations enhance commercial activity and contribute significantly to the success of entrepreneurial ventures, further reinforcing the researcher's expectations. On the other hand, studies conducted by Al-Tit A, Omri A, and Euch J<sup>[17]</sup> have led to conflicting views, suggesting that external factors and business characteristics have only a limited effect on enterprise success. As a result, the contrasting findings have stirred an ongoing debate and contributed to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2 (H2).** *The external business environment positively affects the business performance of Rural Jordan entrepreneurs.*

This study anticipates that supportive factors, such as family support, financial availability, and government support, will positively impact the performance of rural businesses. It plays a significant role in the success of business activities, the development of strategic plans, and overall business growth. While these factors are essential for rural entrepreneurs, they also present considerable risks if not managed carefully. Access to external financial resources is often a necessity for entrepreneurs, but it must be approached with caution. Entrepreneurs must assess the appropriate timing for securing external funding and ensure that it aligns with suitable business activities. Proper financial planning can prevent overleveraging and promote sustainable growth.

Family support is another critical factor for en-

trepreneurs, contributing to business stability and reducing operational risks. This, in line with Family support, plays a vital role in the success of entrepreneurs, providing both moral support and assistance in various work-related situations that require family involvement<sup>[18]</sup>. Research by Cho J, Miller D, Lee J.<sup>[19]</sup> highlighted that family participation in entrepreneurial ventures, as with specialty businesswomen, leads to higher performance and success, underscoring the importance of encouragement and assistance from family in achieving business goals. In addition, family support significantly affects business management and decision-making among entrepreneurs<sup>[20]</sup>. A supportive family environment can alleviate the psychological and emotional stress associated with running a business. However, in Jordanian rural areas, family support is often accompanied by family intervention, which can negatively impact strategic planning, management decisions, and overall business control. This intervention is frequently driven by cultural values, particularly in cases involving young entrepreneurs and businesswomen. In such contexts, family members may exert influence over key business decisions, potentially leading to inefficiencies and conflicts. This perspective is supported by Noguera M, Alvarez C, and Merigó JM<sup>[21]</sup>, who emphasize that strong family relationships are critical to the success of entrepreneurial ventures, while family conflicts can hinder their development and achievements. Given the significant impact of family dynamics and cultural values on rural businesses in Jordan and similar Middle Eastern countries, further research is recommended. Studies should focus on how family support and cultural norms affect business success, with particular attention to the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs and women. Understanding these dynamics can help policymakers and stakeholders design more effective support systems tailored to the unique needs of rural entrepreneurs in the region.

Entrepreneurs' financial expertise, combined with access to funding, is essential for starting and managing their businesses. This financial support fosters growth, expansion, and investment in critical areas such as research, innovation, and modernization. With sufficient resources, entrepreneurs can enhance their market posi-

tion and achieve long-term success. This study predicts that access to finance positively influences Jordanian rural entrepreneurs' business performance. This expectation is supported by research from Satta G, Parola F, Penco L, and Esposito de Falco S.<sup>[22]</sup>, emphasizing the critical role of financial resources in ensuring entrepreneurial sustainability and growth. Furthermore, securing funding is especially crucial during the startup phase<sup>[23]</sup> because it offers the flexibility and capital needed for business management and expansion<sup>[24]</sup>.

Government support, in various forms, has been recognized as a critical factor in fostering entrepreneurial economic activities. The researcher anticipates that such support will enhance the business performance of rural entrepreneurs in Jordan by implementing favorable policies, regulatory frameworks, investment incentives, and tax exemptions. However, the absence of this support can weaken businesses, create numerous challenges, and, in some cases, lead to failure. This expectation aligns with the findings of Phonthanakitithaworn C, Ketkaew C, and Naruetharadhol.<sup>[15]</sup>, who concluded that government assistance significantly contributes to the success and sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures. Furthermore, the government can support rural entrepreneurs through monetary policy, which is essential for boosting agricultural competitiveness. However, higher interest rates adversely affect the performance of agricultural enterprises<sup>[25]</sup>. Considering the pivotal role of entrepreneurial projects in driving economic growth and development, assessing the impact of government support on the performance and longevity of these businesses is essential. Based on extensive literature, it is evident that government assistance positively affects the performance and sustainability of entrepreneurial enterprises. The contrasting perspectives and outcomes outlined above have initiated a new dialog, leading to the development of the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3 (H3).** *There is a positive relationship between the supportive elements and the business performance of rural Jordan entrepreneurs.*

The demographic factors of entrepreneurs influence their approach to entrepreneurship, the pursuit of business opportunities, and the long-term success and

sustainability of new ventures in their respective markets. This study expects that demographic factors of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs—age, gender, occupation, training, business experience, education, and marital status, have a significant influence on their business performance. These factors are often indicative of an entrepreneur's life experiences, business insights, and educational background. Among these, business experience, occupation, and training are particularly valuable for driving business growth and success. Additionally, marital status and gender are expected to play crucial roles in entrepreneurial performance because they often indicate a level of stability and maturity. Married entrepreneurs, especially women, tend to benefit from family support, which enhances business success and growth. In addition, various scholars have investigated the influence of demographic characteristics on overall business performance and entrepreneurship. While some findings support the expectations of this study, others present contradictory results. However, Age plays a crucial role in shaping the entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors of both men and women. Research by Lévesque and Minniti<sup>[26]</sup> found that entrepreneurs aged between 30 and 40 are typically the most successful. However, older entrepreneurs bring valuable knowledge, experience, and expertise to their businesses<sup>[27]</sup>. Moreover, they tend to have more developed skills for managing business operations, enabling them to address various challenges and situations more effectively<sup>[28]</sup>. This is consistent with Lee's findings<sup>[29]</sup>, who found that accumulated experience positively influences business success. A study by Alawamleh et al.<sup>[8]</sup> revealed several challenges faced by entrepreneurs in Jordan, with the most significant being a lack of operational experience and difficulties in launching new ventures. Young entrepreneurs often struggle to acquire the skills and experience the market demands.

Most studies conclude that demographic factors, such as gender, occupation, training, business experience, education, and marital status, have a significant impact on entrepreneurs' business performance, although some studies report contradictory findings. A study by Kolstad I, Wiig A.<sup>[30]</sup> found that an extra year of primary education significantly boosts entrepreneurial

profitability. Additionally, Hunady J, Orviska M, Pisar P.<sup>[31]</sup> observed that taking entrepreneurship-related courses is linked to greater business activity and long-term success. Demographic characteristics significantly impact an individual's entrepreneurial behavior. Numerous studies, including those by Harmon CHANIAGO<sup>[32]</sup>, have emphasized the influence of factors such as age, gender, experience, background, and education on entrepreneurial actions and business performance. In addition, multiple studies, such as those conducted by Abdelwahed NAA, Soomro BA, Shah N.<sup>[33]</sup>, demonstrated that age is a critical factor in business success. This phase of life often brings valuable experience, making it a key asset or qualification. Numerous studies have explored the impact of gender on entrepreneurship and business success, including work experience<sup>[34]</sup>. Owalla B, Nyanzu E, and Vorley T<sup>[35]</sup> also highlighted the presence of cultural gender imbalances. Furthermore, research by Botha M and Bignotti A.<sup>[36]</sup> and others have highlighted the differences between genders in abilities, potential, and various entrepreneurial traits. Additionally, marital status can significantly impact investment decisions. Married individuals may exhibit greater caution when considering risky ventures because they often prioritize their family's future, whereas unmarried individuals tend to have more freedom in choosing jobs based on personal preferences. In married individuals, the spouse may also influence decision-making to some extent<sup>[37]</sup>. According to a study by Katundu and Gabagambi<sup>[38]</sup>, male and married graduates show a greater inclination toward entrepreneurship than their female and single peers.

A study by Krishna Khanal and Bikram<sup>[39]</sup> found that male students exhibit a slightly higher tendency toward entrepreneurship, whereas factors such as age, marital status, and prior work experience show virtually no effect. Additionally, no correlation was found between entrepreneurial intention and prior exposure to entrepreneurial courses. These results contradict much of the existing literature that highlights the importance of these factors in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. Bouguerra Nesrine<sup>[40]</sup> found that women often face discouragement when considering starting their own projects because of various obstacles and barriers.

These barriers include a lack of experience, training, and funding; the absence of gender equality in business; and inadequate entrepreneurship support. Alvien Khardin, Muhammad Giatman, and Yuliana<sup>[41]</sup> explored the relationship between an entrepreneur's education and their ability to secure financing for projects from financial institutions. The study found that a lack of education contributes to poverty, whereas education enhances an entrepreneur's skills and capabilities. The study also highlighted that entrepreneurship education equips individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for entrepreneurship, serving as a tool to develop human resources that are capable of improving economic and welfare systems. In addition, this study concludes that education for entrepreneurs helps reduce poverty in developing countries.

This study expected that demographic factors would have a strong positive effect on the business performance of rural entrepreneurs, a hypothesis supported by several studies that found that these factors significantly influence entrepreneurial outcomes. However, some studies have presented conflicting results that deviate from the study's expectations. This disparity may stem from Jordanian rural entrepreneurs' unique personal characteristics, whose culture, values, and lifestyle differ from those in other regions. These differences may shape the influence of demographic factors on business performance, indicating the need for comparative studies in diverse environments. Such research could make valuable contributions to the existing literature.

As a result, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**Hypothesis 4 (H4).** *The business performance of rural Jordan entrepreneurs is positively affected by demographic factors.*

This research investigated the influence of demographic factors on entrepreneurial business performance. Mediation, as a theoretical framework, can justify the influence of demographics on entrepreneurship, especially if the effects of individual characteristics on entrepreneurial business performance are significant. The relationship between demographic characteristics and entrepreneurial success has received atten-

tion from various perspectives. Entrepreneurial skills and effectiveness often increase with age, indicating a positive relationship between age and business performance. Research on business outcomes has also emphasized the positive impact of higher education on success. Moreover, other studies have pointed to the advantages of strong network connections, such as enhanced innovation and increased customer referrals<sup>[42-44]</sup>. However, entrepreneurs in various demographic contexts face differences related to business competition, available resources, and access to capital. Therefore, demographic factors are considered important moderators of entrepreneurial performance<sup>[45, 46]</sup>. This research examines how demographic factors impact business performance. Mediation, as a theoretical framework, can help explain the role of demographics in entrepreneurship, particularly when the effects of individual characteristics on entrepreneurial performance are significant<sup>[45, 47]</sup>. The varying perspectives and arguments regarding the role of demographic factors as mediators between entrepreneurs' business performance and personal traits, external business environments, and supportive elements. Furthermore, the researcher also anticipates that the demographic factors of rural entrepreneurs affect the relationship between business performance (as the dependent variable) and personal traits, external environment, and supportive elements (as independent variables), which is supported by many studies and contradicted by some other studies. However, this study implies that demographic characteristics act as mediators between the dependent and independent variables, which are shaped by the unique business environment, values, and culture of rural Jordan. Such a distinctive structure calls for in-depth analysis to enhance the understanding of rural entrepreneurship, ultimately benefiting all relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, policymakers, financial institutions, clients, and researchers. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**Hypothesis 5 (H5).** *The relationship between (a) personal traits, (b) External business environment, (c) supportive elements, and the business performance of rural Jordan entrepreneurs is positively moderated by demographic factors.*

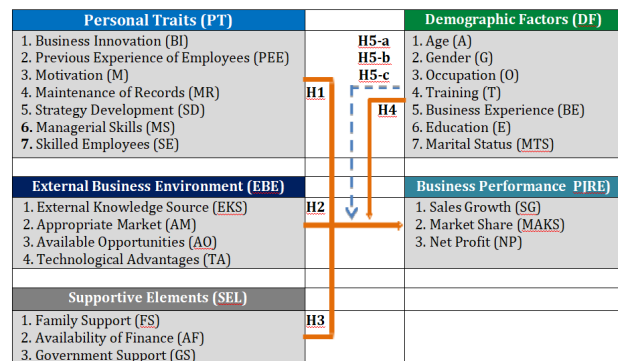


### 3. Conceptual Frameworks

The conceptual framework in this study functions as a predictive tool, mapping out the anticipated relationship between the independent and dependent variables to meet the research objectives. The proposed model serves as a blueprint for the theoretical model, illustrating how these variables are connected and interact. The framework presented in **Figure 1** was specifically designed to incorporate the success factor approach, previous research findings, and relevant literature. A wide range of variables have been identified as key factors influencing entrepreneurship, including personal characteristics, business environment, political factors, socioeconomic factors, business support, and personal traits. Additionally, research papers have varied in the factors they studied, approaching topics from different perspectives and yielding diverse outcomes. Nevertheless, this study conceptualizes a framework that builds upon the conclusions of previous studies, highlighting their significant contribution to this conceptualization.

The conceptual model (**Figure 1**) remains relevant, as supported by subsequent research findings. The entrepreneurship literature continues to explore a purely analytical context that clarifies the causes and effects of business success through performance. Personal traits such as management skills, innovation, employee experience, motivation, record-keeping<sup>[11, 12]</sup>, and strategic planning<sup>[13]</sup> significantly influence the business performance of entrepreneurs. The external business environment, including relevant market knowledge, available opportunities, and the use of technology, are also key factors that influence entrepreneurial success<sup>[15, 16]</sup>. Furthermore, Supportive factors like family support, financial access, and government assistance have a positive impact on the performance of rural businesses and play a vital role in their success. Family support is especially important for entrepreneurs because it strengthens business stability and reduces operational risks<sup>[18, 19]</sup>. Access to financial resources from banks and other financial institutions is also essential for entrepreneurial success. Numerous studies have supported the argument that financial support plays a crucial role in the success and growth of entrepreneurship<sup>[22-24]</sup>. Government support, in its various forms, is acknowledged as a key fac-

tor in promoting entrepreneurial economic activities<sup>[15]</sup>. Additionally, Researchers have explored the relationship between entrepreneurial business success from the perspective of various theories and demographic characteristics, including age, gender, occupation, training, experience, education, and marital status<sup>[42-44, 46]</sup>. This study focuses on three main constructs: personal traits, the external business environment, and supportive factors. This suggests that the demographic characteristics of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs play a significant role in influencing rural business performance, acting as a mediator between performance and these constructs and their related variables. Based on this concept, a conceptual framework (**Figure 1**) was established.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework of the study.

### 4. Materials and Methods

#### 4.1. Sampling and Methodology

The target population of this study is rural entrepreneurs in southern Jordan. These individuals or groups recognize opportunities within their local environment, engage in business activities in rural areas, and utilize local resources to create businesses that meet the needs and preferences of their communities. While they also generate employment opportunities for the people in rural areas of southern Jordan. To achieve the study’s objectives and test its hypotheses, the researcher employed purposive sampling to collect data through a cross-sectional survey. This survey targeted male and female entrepreneurs who owned and managed active businesses in southern Jordan. An “active business” is defined as one that engages in ongoing activities and em-

employs staff under the ownership and management of the entrepreneur. Rural entrepreneurs often need various forms of support, including logistical, technical, and financial assistance, as well as help from family and government. This support may provide access to investment opportunities, networking, and other critical resources essential for the growth and sustainability of enterprises. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, was used as a non-probability sampling technique in which participants were chosen based on the researcher's judgment and the study's specific objectives. This technique enhances the efficiency of data collection by focusing on individuals or groups, thereby saving time and resources. This method is particularly useful for studies in which random sampling is impractical because of limited resources or the rarity of the target population, such as rural entrepreneurs in southern Jordan. Furthermore, purposive sampling enables the study of unique or rare cases, such as rural entrepreneurship in southern Jordan, which may be difficult to identify in the general population. Entrepreneurs were identified through the Chamber of Commerce in the governorates of the southern region. The researcher personally reached out to each business via telephone or in-person visits as needed. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire used nominal scales to capture demographic information and a five-point Likert scale to assess personal traits, external environment, and supportive factors. The Likert scale ranged from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"), with two indicating "Disagree," 3 "Neutral," and 4 "Agree." These scales are valuable for measuring respondents' perceptions of specific objects, ideas, or phenomena. Their straightforward nature often leads to higher response rates, resulting in reliable data samples. Converting qualitative feedback into quantitative data allows researchers to analyze and compare concrete outcomes rather than relying on ambiguous or subjective interpretations. The questionnaire was pre-tested to identify inconsistencies and ensure that it provided the necessary information to meet the study objectives. This study explored how personal traits, the external business environment, and supportive factors affect the business per-

formance of rural entrepreneurs in Jordan, with demographic factors serving as mediating variables. The questionnaire was structured into two main sections, concentrating on four groups of independent factors that are expected to have significant relationships with entrepreneurial business performance. This study uses sales growth (SG), market share (MS), and net profit (NP) as key indicators of entrepreneurial business performance. To the researcher's knowledge, few studies have used these specific indicators<sup>[48, 49]</sup> despite their direct impact on return on investment (ROI), a commonly used performance metric. These factors were drawn from a comprehensive literature review that included qualitative and quantitative sources, such as published articles, reports, statistical data, and specialized professional websites. In a study conducted by Mohammad Alawamleh and colleagues on the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in Jordan, they highlighted that most emerging entrepreneurial companies in Jordan strive to boost their sales despite being surrounded by numerous unfavorable economic conditions<sup>[10]</sup>. A study by Alene, E.T. on the factors influencing the performance of women entrepreneurs in micro and small enterprises concluded that entrepreneurial performance is a key indicator of business success. This performance is measured using both financial metrics, such as revenue growth and profitability, and non-financial metrics, including market share expansion. Together, these indicators offer a holistic evaluation of how effectively a business or entrepreneur is achieving its goals, maintaining competitiveness, and contributing to economic development<sup>[50]</sup>.

The first section of the questionnaire focused on the demographic characteristics of entrepreneurs, such as age, gender, occupation, training, business experience, education, and marital status. A summary of these variables and relevant statistics is presented in **Table 1**. The second section covered four groups of variables related to the study's core criteria. The first group examined personal traits, including business innovation, employees' previous experience, motivation, record-keeping, strategy development, and skilled employees. Respondents were asked to assess the impact of these traits. The second group focused on external business environmental factors, such as external knowledge

sources, market opportunities, available opportunities, and technological advantages, and respondents evaluated the importance of these factors. The third group explored supportive factors, such as family support, access to financial support, and government support for rural entrepreneurs, with respondents assessing the availabil-

ity of these resources. Lastly, the fourth group investigated how demographic factors directly impact the business performance of rural entrepreneurs and mediated the relationship between business performance and the other three groups of variables.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of sampling distribution.

Categorical Attribute	Frequency	%a
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 20	00	00.00
20 to 30	115	27.8
31 to 40	211	51.1
41 to 50	84	20.3
51 to 60	2	0.5
More than 60	1	0.2
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	250	60.5
Female	163	39.5
<b>Occupation</b>		
Ordinary employee	16	3.9
Team Leader	57	13.8
Head of the department	39	9.4
Manager	278	67.3
Top management	23	5.6
<b>Training Attended</b>		
No training	183	44.3
Once a year	107	25.9
Twice a year	89	21.5
More than two times a year	34	8.3
<b>Business Experience</b>		
Less than a year	81	19.6
1-3	64	15.5
4-6	230	55.7
More than 6 years	38	9.2
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Less than high school	63	15.3
High school	68	16.5
Bachelor's degree	208	50.4
Graduate studies	74	17.9
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	116	28.1
Married	253	61.3
Widow	16	3.9
Divorce	28	6.8

\* Number of respondents (n = 413).

The independent variables for this study were identified through a literature review (Table 2). A quantitative research method was employed to examine these factors and their impact on business performance using numerical data for collection and analysis. The sample size was adequate for quantitative analysis, and the response rate exceeded the minimum threshold of 30%. The data were analyzed using various quantitative meth-

ods, including descriptive, experimental, and causal relationship analyses. The primary goal of this study was to examine the cause-and-effect relationships between independent variables related to entrepreneurs and the business performance of rural entrepreneurs in southern Jordan. This approach identifies the key factors influencing entrepreneurial success in Jordan and clarifies their impact on business performance.

**Table 2.** Measurement Details.

Variables	Items	Literature Sources	Expected Relationship between Dependent and Independent Variables	Scale Type
<b>Personal Traits(PT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Innovation</li> <li>• Previous experience of employees</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Maintenance of records</li> <li>• Strategy development</li> <li>• Managerial Skills</li> <li>• Skilled employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atef &amp; Al-Baslushi M (2015)</li> <li>• Huarng K-H, Mas-tur, Yu TH-K (2012)</li> <li>• Gonzaez-Rodriguez et al. (2017)</li> <li>• Kallas E. (2019)</li> </ul>	Positive relationship (+)	1–5 Likert SD to SA
<b>External Business Environment (EBE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External Knowledge</li> <li>• Appropriate market</li> <li>• Available opportunities</li> <li>• Technological advantages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phonthanukitithowrn C, Ketkaew C, Naruetharadhol P (2019)</li> <li>• Mahmood (2005)</li> <li>• Al-Tit A, Omri A, Euch J (2019)</li> </ul>	Positive relationship (+)	1–5 Likert SD to SA
<b>Supportive Elements (SE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family support</li> <li>• Availability of finance</li> <li>• Government support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satta G, Parola F, Penco L, Esposito de Falco S.(2016)</li> <li>• Alon I, Shneor R. (2017)</li> <li>• Thaiss HA (2015)</li> <li>• Zaefarian R., Eng T-Y, Tasavori (2015)</li> <li>• Chao J, Miller D, Lee J (2018)</li> <li>• DHB, Kaciak E, Thongpa, I N. (2016)</li> <li>• Noguera M., Alvarez C, Merigo JM (2015)</li> <li>• Phonthanukitithowrn C, Ketkaew C, Naruetharadhol P (2019)</li> </ul>	Positive relationship (+)	1–5 Likert SD to SA
<b>Demographic Factors (DF)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Occupation</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Business experience</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Marital status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wach D, Stephan U, Gorgievski M. (2016)</li> <li>• Saurav Pathak SG and MWB (2013)</li> <li>• Lee J. (2006)</li> <li>• Kolstad I, Wiig A. (2015)</li> <li>• Hunady J, Orviska M, Pizar P. (2018)</li> <li>• Harmon CHANIAGO. (2012)</li> <li>• Abdelwahed NAA, Soomro BA, Shah N. (2022).</li> <li>• Arafat MY, Saleem I, Dwivedi AK, Khan A. (2020)</li> <li>• Botha M, Bignotti A.(2017)</li> <li>• Mangasini Atanasi Katundul, Damian Mulokozi Gabagambi (2014)</li> <li>• Khanal K, Prajapati B. (2023)</li> <li>• Bouguerra Nesrine (2015)</li> <li>• Alvien Khardin, Muhammad Giatman, Yuliana (2022)</li> </ul>	Positive relationship (+)	Nominal Scale
<b>Business Performance of Jordan rural Entrepreneurs (BPJRE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales growth</li> <li>• Market share gains</li> <li>• Net Profit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alene, E.T.(2023)</li> <li>• Mohammad Alawamleh (2020)</li> <li>• Naidu and Chand (2017)</li> <li>• Zhan &amp; Chen (2013)</li> </ul>		1–5 Likert SD to SA

## 4.2. Data Collection and Measurement

### 4.2.1. Data Collection

A pilot study was conducted with 60 entrepreneurs from the southern Jordan region to validate the proposed model. Based on the results of this pilot study, a final questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was then distributed to an initial sample of 582 poten-

tial respondents, all of whom were registered with the Chamber of Commerce and had confirmed addresses. To encourage participation, reminder notices were sent, follow-up phone calls were made, and additional surveys were distributed upon request.

Data collection occurred in two phases. In the first phase, research assistants, supervised directly by the researcher, gathered data. During this phase, 93 busi-

nesses were found to have closed or had incorrect addresses, reducing the sample size from 582 to 489 potential respondents. This phase resulted in 354 valid responses, while 135 were invalid and discarded due to incomplete or inaccurate answers, yielding a valid response rate of 72.4%. Due to budget constraints, the researcher could not verify incorrect addresses or conduct further follow-up calls to increase the response rate. To expand the sample size, a second round of mailings and follow-up calls was conducted, distributing an additional 104 questionnaires, resulting in 59 valid responses and 45 rejections. This resulted in 413 valid responses to 413. In total, 413 valid responses were collected from an adjusted sample of 563, resulting in a final valid response rate of 73.36%. This response rate is considered sufficient because structural equation modeling (SEM) typically requires a minimum ratio of 1:8 for parameters to observations<sup>[51]</sup>. The adequacy of the sample size was further confirmed by a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test performed in SPSS, yielding a KMO value of 0.951. The characteristics of the sampling distribution are summarized in **Table 1**.

#### 4.2.2. Statistical Techniques and Structure Model

In this study, SPSS and AMOS software were used to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement model and to examine the significance of the hypothesized relationships. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was performed using these tools to estimate the structural equations for both the measurement and structural models. This method was selected for its effectiveness in exploration theory development, its capability to manage non-normally distributed data, and its high statistical power in parameter estimation, thereby maximizing the explained variance<sup>[52]</sup>. The outer weights were examined to assess the contribution of each construct to the latent variables. The evaluation of the structural model was based on the  $R^2$  coefficient of the original latent variable (LV), which represents the proportion of variance in the LVs

explained by the independent LV. According to Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt<sup>[53]</sup>,  $R^2$  values range from 0.75 to 0.25, with 0.75 indicating substantial explanatory power, 0.50 moderate, and 0.25 weak. While covariance-based SEM could have been used, the researchers opted for PLS-SEM due to challenges in obtaining a sufficiently large sample size for covariance-based SEM. PLS-SEM is a widely used and valuable method in social science research<sup>[54]</sup>, advancing theory and enriching existing literature.

#### 4.3. Reliability and Validity

This study employed various measures to ensure data quality and data integrity, including assessments of reliability, validity, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The reliability of the scales and relationships between variables were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. As shown in **Table 3**, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all variables exceeded the threshold of 0.7, which is considered an acceptable level of reliability, indicating that the scales demonstrated strong internal consistency. Additionally, the study assessed the internal consistency, item, convergent, and discriminant validity. The internal consistency and composite reliability were evaluated at a threshold of 0.7, which is considered acceptable. Following the criteria outlined by Fuentes-Fuentes, Bojica, Ruizarro, & Welter<sup>[55]</sup>, convergent validity was determined by an average variance extracted (AVE) greater than 0.5. Furthermore, the square root of each construct's AVE must be higher than its correlation with other constructs (**Table 4**). The study concluded that the data used for hypothesis testing met the validity and reliability standards for each measure. The diagonal elements in the analysis were more significant than the off-diagonal elements, confirming adequate discriminant validity. In summary, the reliability and validity assessments affirm that the data collected in this study are both reliable and valid, ensuring sound hypothesis testing and meaningful conclusions.

**Table 3.** Reliability and Validity of Constructs.

Variables	Observed Variables.	Factor Loading	Cronbach's $\alpha$	AVE	CR
<b>Personal Treats (PT)</b>	• Business Innovation	0.975	<b>0.982</b>	<b>0.959</b>	<b>0.979</b>
	• Previous experience of employees	0.975			
	• Motivation				
	• Maintenance of records	0.982			
	• Strategy development	0.989			
	• Managerial	0.976			
<b>External Business Environment (EBE)</b>	• Skilled employees	0.977	<b>0.973</b>	<b>0.931</b>	<b>0.965</b>
	• External Knowledge	0.955			
	• Appropriate market	0.956			
	• Available opportunities	0.967			
<b>Supportive Elements (SE)</b>	• Technological advantages	0.981	<b>0.829</b>	<b>0.593</b>	<b>0.770</b>
	• Family support	0.838			
	• Availability of finance	0.755			
<b>Demographic Factors (DF)</b>	• Government support & policies	0.712	<b>0.830</b>	<b>0.65</b>	<b>0.806</b>
	• Age	0.802			
	• Agender	0.827			
	• Occupation	0.824			
	• Training	0.831			
	• Business experience	0.774			
<b>Business Performance of Jordan Rural Entrepreneurs (BPJRE)</b>	• Education	0.783	<b>0.958</b>	<b>0.883</b>	<b>0.940</b>
	• Marital status	0.800			
	• Sales growth	0.958			
	• Market share gains	0.942			
	• Net Profit	0.919			

Note: AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability.

**Table 4.** Discriminant validity -Furnell-Larker criterion.

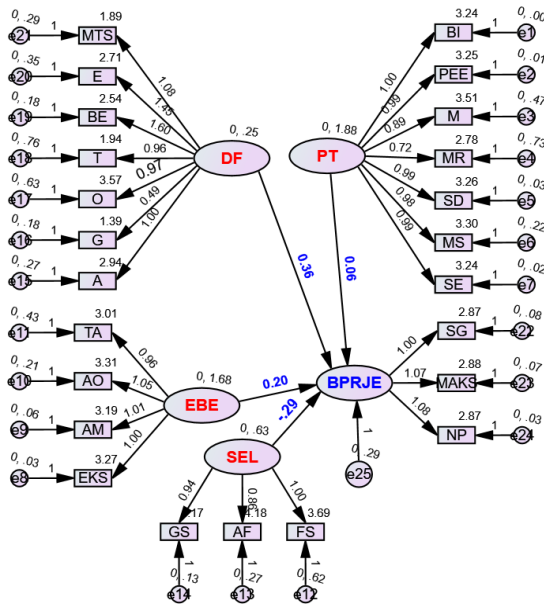
	PT	EBE	SE	DF	(BPJRE)
Personal Treats (PT)	<b>0.979</b>				
External Business Environment (EBE)	0.794	<b>0.965</b>			
Supportive Elements (SE)	0.831	0.745	<b>0.770</b>		
Demographic Factors (DF)	0.863	0.816	0.724	<b>0.806</b>	
Business Performance of Jordan Rural Entrepreneurs (BPJRE)	0.782	0.724	0.713	0.702	<b>0.940</b>

**Diagonal elements** (bold) = (AVE)<sup>2</sup> 0.5; **The off-diagonal elements** = the correlations among the constructs. Discriminate validity, the diagonal elements should be larger than the off-diagonal elements.

## 5. Results and Discussions

This study identified independent factors influencing the business performance of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs (BPRJE), guided by the theory of success factors<sup>[56]</sup>. These independent factors were grouped into categories: individual characteristics, external environments, supportive factors, and demographic factors. By analyzing their impact on BPRJE, this study enhances theoretical understanding and contributes to the literature on rural entrepreneurship. The results also provide a foundation for further statistical exploration of additional success factors and their relationships with

BPRJE. This study employed the partial least squares regression approach and structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The significance of the path coefficients for independent and dependent factors was assessed using bootstrapping to calculate the p-value. The path coefficients and their corresponding p-values are illustrated in **Figure 2**. The p-value, a key statistical measure in testing the hypothesis, indicates the probability of observing the results (or more extreme outcomes) under the assumption that the null hypothesis is true. A smaller p-value provides stronger evidence against the null hypothesis.



**Figure 2.** SEM-Direct relationships between dependent and independent factors.

The findings of this research reveal a significant positive relationship between the personal traits (PT) of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs and the performance of their businesses ( $\beta = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), as illustrated in **Figure 1** and detailed in **Table 5**. This result supports the acceptance of hypothesis H1, which posits a positive correlation between entrepreneurial personal traits and business performance. These find-

ings are consistent with prior studies and existing literature, which frequently highlight the critical role of entrepreneurs' personal characteristics in the success of their ventures. Recent studies further support this conclusion, showing that entrepreneurial traits, education, managerial skills, and motivation play a crucial role in business success<sup>[11, 30, 31, 57]</sup>. Similarly, research by Mari M., Poggesi S., and De Vita L.<sup>[58]</sup> has shown that management skills—such as strategic direction, effective management, strong marketing capabilities, and financial proficiency—positively influence performance outcomes. However, not all studies align on this point. For instance, Kimosop, Korir, & White<sup>[59]</sup> found no significant relationship between personal traits and business performance. In contrast, Miralles F., Giones F., and Riverola C. observed that effective strategic planning can enhance business outcomes. Additionally, there remains insufficient evidence to establish a strong link between work experience and entrepreneurial success<sup>[60]</sup>. These mixed findings suggest that the impact of management skills and personal traits on business performance may depend on various contextual factors and individual circumstances. Nonetheless, as shown in **Table 3**, rural Jordanian entrepreneurs place considerable importance on personal traits, highlighting their pivotal role in driving business success in this context.

**Table 5.** Hypothesis Summary.

Path Relationship	PC	Hypothesis	Decision
“Success Factors” → “BPJRE”			
Personal Traits	0.12 *** (0.01)	H1	Supported
External Business Environment	0.39*** (0.01)	H2	Supported
Supportive Elements	-0.35*** (-0.01)	H3	Supported
Demographic Factors	0.27*** (0.01)	H4	Supported
Personal Treats × Demographic Factors Effect BPJRE	0.12***(0.01)	H5-a	Supported
External Business Environment × Demographic Factors Effect BPJRE	0.29*** (0.01)	H5-b	Supported
Supportive Elements × Demographic Factors Effect BPJRE	-0.31*** (-0.01)	H5-c	Supported

Note: BPRJE = business performance of rural Jordan entrepreneurs. Significance level: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$ ; ns insignificant.

The business environment is a key factor that influences entrepreneurial performance, as highlighted by numerous studies. It is well-established that external factors can significantly impact the success of entrepreneurs' businesses. Accordingly, Hypothesis H2 in this study proposed a strong positive relationship between the external business environment (EBE) and the business performance of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs

(BPRJE), considering various external components. The statistical analysis conducted using PLS-SEM ( $\beta = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) provides robust evidence supporting a significant relationship between EBE and BPRJE. These findings align with the study's expectations but contradict previous research, indicating that EBE is less significant for entrepreneurial success. However, they are consistent with the conclusions of numerous other stud-

ies<sup>[15, 61–63]</sup> and diverge from others, such as the study by Wida and Tri Septin<sup>[64]</sup>, which concluded that external factors did not influence business performance. The results suggest that rural Jordanian entrepreneurs effectively leverage external sources of knowledge, access appropriate markets, identify external opportunities, and capitalize on technological advancements to enhance their business performance. This reinforces the notion that EBE factors play a vital role in shaping the success of entrepreneurial ventures in this context.

The proposed model in this study hypothesized, as outlined in hypothesis H3 that supportive elements (SEL) positively influence the business performance of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs. However, statistical analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between SEL and (BPRJE) ( $\beta = -0.000$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This finding indicates that supportive elements, such as family support, availability of finance, and government support, have a direct negative impact on BPRJE. These factors appear to play a limited role in enhancing business performance and significantly affect rural entrepreneurs' motivation to achieve their business goals. The negative impact could stem from factors such as family members' interference in business activities, the scarcity of financial resources, and challenges in accessing funding from financial institutions in rural areas. Additionally, the limited role of government in promoting and protecting rural businesses—due to the lack of special laws and targeted support—further exacerbates the issue. This finding contradicts other studies<sup>[19, 20, 23, 65, 66]</sup>, which support the acceptance of H3, highlighting the need for deeper investigation. Scholars often emphasize the importance of financial support for entrepreneurial success, attributing this success to external backing<sup>[67]</sup>. However, research has shown that entrepreneurs in various societies face significant obstacles in securing consistent funding, often due to discrepancies in project data and limited access to financial resources. These challenges directly affect the performance and sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures<sup>[65, 68]</sup>. Some studies, such as those by Hahn, Mola, BosiBo, and Cassia<sup>[66]</sup>, report a positive impact of family support on startup business, particularly where access to capital markets is limited. However, in Middle Eastern societies, the masculine so-

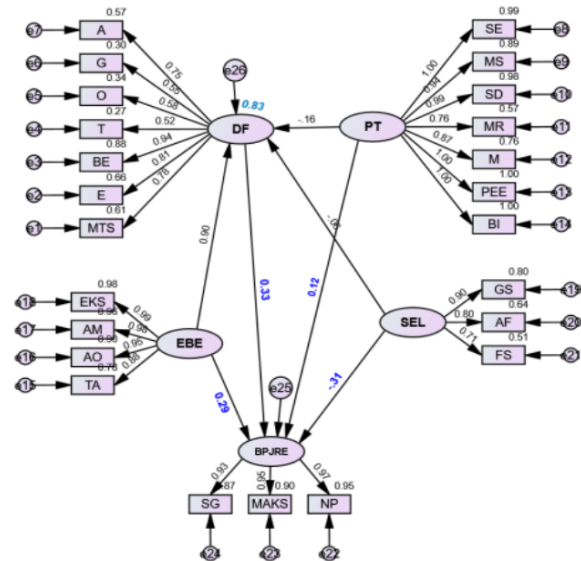
cial structure can make family involvement detrimental to women's business performance and success<sup>[24, 57]</sup>. Similarly, Gupta and Mirchandani<sup>[57]</sup> found that government support positively affects the success of women-led small enterprises. These varying findings underscore the complexity of supportive elements' impact on entrepreneurship, particularly in developing economies. This study's results highlight the need for policymakers and government decision-makers to review existing business laws and develop programs that provide targeted support to rural Jordanian entrepreneurs. Encouraging such reforms could address the identified challenges and foster a more conducive environment for entrepreneurial success.

Hypothesis H4 examines the relationship between entrepreneurs' demographic factors (DF) and the business performance of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs (BPRJE). The findings revealed a significant relationship between DF and BPRJE ( $\beta = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), providing strong evidence to support H4. This suggests that demographic factors play a crucial role in influencing the growth and performance of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs. The study highlights that pull factors, such as the owner's age, business experience, training, and education, have a more significant impact on business performance than push factors, like family considerations and social networks. Lee and Lim<sup>[69]</sup> note that traditional beliefs about family responsibilities may reduce entrepreneurial aspirations. However, other studies indicate no significant differences in entrepreneurial motivation among demographic groups, such as gender<sup>[70, 71]</sup>. Interestingly, some studies have found that women are less likely than men to pursue entrepreneurial ventures<sup>[72]</sup>. Among the demographic factors, business experience is a particularly influential element in entrepreneurial success. Fatoki<sup>[73]</sup> found a strong correlation between prior work experience and the desire to start a business. Similarly, Bayu Sumantri et al.<sup>[74]</sup> concluded that personal characteristics significantly influence women's entrepreneurial performance in the home food industry in Bogor. In conclusion, demographic factors play a vital role in the growth and sustainability of rural businesses. This highlights the importance of future research in tackling business challenges



and identifying growth factors that empower rural entrepreneurs to succeed, expand their businesses, generate employment opportunities, and reduce youth migration to urban areas. The demographic factor acts as a mediating variable, influencing the relationship between the dependent factors and their associations. The  $R^2$  value of 0.738, which lies between substantial and moderate, suggests a strong correlation among the variables within the model. As shown in **Figure 1**, the model exhibits high predictability, drawing on insights from prior research and relevant literature. To validate the model, a blindfold test was conducted using a selected sample to assess its validity and predictive power. The results yielded a  $Q^2$  value of 0.615, which is greater than zero, indicating that the model possesses strong predictive relevance for the business performance of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs (BPRJE). The statistical analysis examined the moderating role of demographic factors (DF) on the relationship between success factors—personal traits (PT), external business environment (EBE), and supportive elements (SE)—and the dependent variable (BPRJE) as detailed in **Table 5** and **Figure 3**. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between personal traits (PT) and BPRJE ( $\beta = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), confirming the substantial impact of PT on entrepreneurial performance. Additionally, a significant interaction effect was observed between demographic factors (DF) and PT on BPRJE (DF  $\times$  PT  $\rightarrow$  BPRJE), supporting hypothesis H5-a ( $\beta = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The analysis further supported hypothesis H5-b, showing a significant interaction effect between demographic factors (DF) and external business environment (EBE) on BPRJE (DF  $\times$  EBE  $\rightarrow$  BPRJE) ( $\beta = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This emphasizes the moderating role of DF in the relationship between EBE and BPRJE. For hypothesis H5-c, the interaction between demographic factors (DF) and supportive elements (SE) was found to significantly impact BPRJE (DF  $\times$  SE  $\rightarrow$  BPRJE), albeit negatively ( $\beta = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Hypothesis H5-d was thus accepted, indicating a negative moderation role of DF. This suggests that demographic factors do not positively enhance the relationship between SE and BPRJE. The negative moderation is attributed to limited government support, insufficient financial resources, and challenges such as family in-

terference, which hinder rural entrepreneurs in Jordan. These findings highlight the critical influence of demographic factors on the relationships between independent variables and business performance. These findings underscore the need for a concerted effort by entrepreneurs, policymakers, lawmakers, and government entities to address the unique challenges faced by rural businesses. Promoting rural entrepreneurship requires targeted support to overcome these barriers and foster sustainable employment opportunities. Further research is recommended to explore the dynamics of rural business success and enhance the understanding of these relationships to enable effective policymaking and support mechanisms.



**Figure 3.** SEM-Relationships between variables with the mediation role of DF.

## 6. Conclusions

Entrepreneurs are widely acknowledged as vital to economic development and social well-being. Their roles in driving innovation, generating employment, and enhancing economic value have been pivotal in addressing poverty and unemployment. Over the past 25 years, entrepreneurial ventures have attracted significant global attention from researchers and innovators because of their success, challenges, and distinctive characteristics. Despite this interest, research on the factors influencing the success of rural entrepreneurs has largely focused on developed economies, leaving a

gap in understanding less economically active regions that urgently need innovation and development. These regions often grapple with weak motivational drivers and numerous obstacles to business growth, particularly for rural entrepreneurs. Challenges such as limited financial support, family interference, insufficient government support, unfavorable investment conditions, and market constraints are common. This study examines the factors that directly influence the performance and success of rural entrepreneurs in Jordan. The statistical findings support the research hypotheses, indicating a strong positive relationship between success factors and the business performance of rural Jordanian entrepreneurs (BPRJE)-except for hypotheses H3 and H5-c. These exceptions relate to supportive elements in terms of their direct and mediated impact via demographic factors. The results demonstrate that personal traits (PT) and the external business environment (EBE) significantly affect BPRJE through the mediating role of demographic factors (DF). This underscores the importance of demographic factors in explaining how PT and EBE influence entrepreneurial success. However, demographic factors do not similarly mediate the effect of supportive elements on BPRJE. Given the growing global focus on rural entrepreneurship and investment, this study validates success factor theories and broadens the framework for measuring the business performance of rural entrepreneurs in Jordan. As rural entrepreneurs navigate dynamic and evolving environments, this study highlights the critical need for the Jordanian government to develop new rural business policies and review and implement regulations that support rural entrepreneurship in Jordan. The study also highlights the importance of continuous media and formal television campaigns to positively influence rural families' involvement in their family businesses. Additionally, the study calls for ongoing research into emerging entrepreneurial success factors and advocates for comparative analyses of rural entrepreneurship across various regional and global contexts to better understand their unique challenges and opportunities.

## 6.1. Contributions

### 6.1.1. Theoretical Contributions

This study provides valuable insights and marks a significant advancement in understanding the factors contributing to the success of rural entrepreneurs' businesses. It also offers valuable theoretical contributions by broadening the scope of success factors beyond those traditionally explored in success factor theory<sup>[48]</sup>. According to this theory, certain critical factors play a vital role in achieving success and can guide decision-making, goal-setting, and performance improvement. Furthermore, a key contribution of this study is the development of the proposed model, which highlights the significance of entrepreneurial businesses in rural areas, particularly in Jordan. This model categorizes factors influencing entrepreneurial success into four main groups: personal traits, external factors, supportive elements, and demographic factors. These classifications offer fresh perspectives on success factors and women's entrepreneurship. In addition, this study examines the direct and indirect impacts of demographic factors on the business performance of rural entrepreneurs in Jordan.

### 6.1.2. Practical Implications

This study has significant implications for rural entrepreneurs in Jordan and globally, as it offers a clear and logical framework for understanding the factors contributing to the success of rural entrepreneurs' businesses. These factors are categorized into four groups: personal traits, external business environment, supportive elements, and demographic factors. This study equips rural entrepreneurs with valuable insights into the key factors impacting their success while fostering a deeper understanding of the entrepreneurs' demographic characteristics, business environment, and community and their role in rural business success. Moreover, the proposed model is a practical tool and guideline for measuring and evaluating these success factors. In addition to its academic contribution, this study provides actionable recommendations for decision-makers and delivers profound insights into rural entrepreneurship. It also serves as a robust foundation for researchers and institutions aiming to explore further studies on rural business success.

## 6.2. Limitations and Future Research

The important results of this study have crucial relevance to the theoretical literature of success factors associated with the performance and success of entrepreneurs' businesses in Jordan, but there is a set of constraints that must be conducted more future scientific studies about them in many societies until the results are circulated internationally and thus have created a clear base to improve the results of entrepreneurs' projects and their success, and we can summarize these restrictions and determinants as follows: First, expanding the scope and area of research on the success factors to include the direct and indirect impact of entrepreneurs' demographic factors, psychological factors, and social structure, and adding areas of innovation and development as new factors. Second, since this study dealt only with the success factors of rural entrepreneurs's projects, there is a great need to conduct specialized comparative studies on the success factors between men's and women's businesses in rural areas, especially at the level of small and medium businesses, to increase awareness and knowledge of entrepreneurs on the one hand and develop and improve the performance of projects for both women and men. Third, there is a need to increase the number of studies on the success factors of rural entrepreneurs' businesses in Jordan and expand the range of factors currently used by the theory of the decisive success factor to reach a level where the success factors of entrepreneurs in Jordan can be generalized to the rest of the countries of the region, especially considering the results of the current study. Fourth: There is a need for more joint research among many researchers in the world on the factors and determinants that affect the success of rural entrepreneurs and to come up with a unified model that adds its fingerprints to current theories and models to improve business performance and reduce the factors of failure, poverty, and unemployment.

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## Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

## Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

## Data Availability Statement

The researcher obtained primary data through a questionnaire survey and secondary data from the Chambers of Commerce in the southern region of Jordan, Department of Statistic (Directorate of Economic Statistics), Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship (Investment and Promotion Directorate), related literature, articles, and websites.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding research, authorship, and publication of this article.

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