

# Daily hassles, uplifts and quality of life of middle-aged entrepreneurs in India – An empirical study



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**Abstract** Entrepreneurship as a career provides unique opportunities for personal and professional growth. To maintain the balance between work and life, entrepreneurs juggle various challenges of running a business, such as finance management, operation management, innovation and competitive markets, which may affect the Quality of life of adults undergoing midlife transitions. Along with professional challenges, middle-aged individuals also deal with personal commitments and responsibilities related to family. Amidst all these, the daily hassles in these domains of life go unnoticed. Daily hassles are small, irritating, and distressing negative experiences, often regarded as a source of stress and can impact the quality of life. Alongside hassles, individuals also experience daily uplifts such as achieving a business milestone, positive feedback from clients or any other positive experience in their personal life, which positively contributes to their overall well-being. Both daily hassles and uplifts play a crucial role in determining the quality of life of middle-aged entrepreneurs. Thus, the present study examined the impact of daily hassles and uplifts on the Quality of life of middle-aged entrepreneurs. A cross-sectional design was used and through purposive sampling, a sample of 85 middle-aged entrepreneurs was recruited across India. The findings suggest entrepreneurs experience moderate levels of daily hassles and uplifts. Both Daily hassles and uplifts observed an inverse relationship with the four domains of the QOL. The result also suggest partial mediation of daily uplifts. Entrepreneurs can become aware of their daily uplifts and can use them as a coping strategy to counterbalance daily hassles. They can use them to promote a positive environment and overall productivity.

**Keywords:** daily hassles, daily uplifts, quality of life, entrepreneurs, middle-aged

## 1. Introduction

The average day of an middle aged entrepreneur is filled with numerous microevents. These micro events range from mundane to significant tasks and are often positive and negative. For example, reaching out to people for branding and conflicts with suppliers, workers, or customers are such hassles experienced by successful entrepreneurs such as Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, other small-scale business owners and managerial-level employees working in their firms (Wach et al., 2021). However, its magnitude and severity might differ for small-scale business owners and established entrepreneurs. Therefore, daily hassles are minor events that interfere with and cause hindrances in everyday life. They are irritating, distressing and frequent everyday minor challenges that are often regarded as a source of stress that stems from an individual's environment. In addition to these hassles, they also experience positive experiences, such as accomplishing a target and receiving positive feedback from consumers (Junça et al., 2023). Daily uplifts are positively toned micro events or experiences that work as a breather or a coping mechanism against the backdrop of stressors. These microevents have a significant effect on mental health, impacting overall happiness and quality of life (Bidzan-Bluma et al., 2020; Wayte, 2020).

Substantial shifts have been observed in people's preferences towards the nature of work. With increasing time, people have started opting for self-employment and entrepreneurship as alternatives to traditional employment roles (Struckell et al., 2022). An unparalleled surge in entrepreneurship has been observed in India, as it has become a hub for many start-ups (Singh, 2023). Given these competitive market trends, the feeling of pressure and stress associated with the demanding nature of the entrepreneurial world is ubiquitous in self-employed individuals. In particular, middle-aged groups juggle meeting business demands and commitment to personal responsibilities (Infurna et al., 2020; White & Gupta, 2020). While self-employment eliminates the constant fear of becoming unemployed and providing financial security to a certain extent, there are also nonfinancial aspects of self-employment, such as long working hours and being unable to disengage from work. However, it also offers flexibility and a sense of autonomy, which can lead to greater job satisfaction and well-being. In contrast, employees working for a firm have constant job security concerns. They may experience different stressors, such as meeting deadlines, a lack of control over the task and other workplace dynamics, which can affect their quality of life (Litsardopoulos et al., 2023). While both groups have pros and cons, maintaining a balance between work and life becomes important in shaping the overall quality of life (Brieger et al., 2021)



Middle-aged entrepreneurship has recently gained significant recognition for its constantly expanding demographic trends and economic impact. This phenomenon is commonly known as ‘senior entrepreneurship’. A study demonstrated that there is an increase in the tendency toward entrepreneurial activities among individuals aged 50 years and above (Murmam et al., 2023). The reports of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) also suggest similar observations of an increase in entrepreneurial activities between the age group of 55-64 years in many countries. Furthermore, it was also observed that starting a late career as an entrepreneur is associated with increased quality of life (Kautonen et al., 2017). Through their industry experiences, the resources and networks of middle-aged individuals contribute significantly to the country's economic growth. Azoulay et al. (2018) noted that, on the basis of the growth of the first five years of the company, the average age of a successful entrepreneur was 45 years. Furthermore, they also observed that older entrepreneurs have relatively higher success rates than young entrepreneurs do.

However, middle-aged individuals face a myriad of everyday challenges and responsibilities. They are often called the “sandwich generation” in the literature, as they struggle to maintain equilibrium between their ageing parents and growing children and their own health-related issues (Infurna et al., 2020). Furthermore, these challenges are not limited to personal life; they are also observed in the business world. Since middle-aged entrepreneurs belong to a pretechnological advancement era, they face age-related biases in Gen Z-driven technology start-ups and face difficulties in adapting to rapidly changing technology (Eginli & Isik, 2020; Fernández-López et al., 2022). Furthermore, the responsibilities of making crucial decisions related to businesses and employees can be stressful. Entrepreneurs often wear many hats, causing role confusion and ambiguity in managing the stress of multiple responsibilities (Wincent & Örtqvist, 2009). Furthermore, it is presumed that self-employed people have a definite boundary between work and nonwork life. However, establishing a clear boundary between business and personal life is a common challenge for entrepreneurs. (Adisa et al., 2019) reported that, owing to their long working hours, self-employed individuals have poor work–life balance. The flexible nature of the job might serve as a significant advantage and increase job satisfaction in the self-employed (Hundley, 2001), but it also results in dealing with problems such as irregular work hours, being connected with work on weekends, holidays or during festival seasons to capitalize on business opportunities, which can interfere with personal and family time and can also affect quality of life.

Studies have shown that entrepreneurship and self-employment can enhance quality of life. (Carree & Verheul, 2012) reported that entrepreneurs who successfully overcome challenges and witness growth in their businesses feel accomplished. Additionally, entrepreneurship contributes to eudemonic well-being, promoting life satisfaction and a sense of purpose (Ryff, 2019) through small uplifting experiences such as receiving positive feedback from clients and solving major problems at work. Such daily uplifting events also reinforce their feelings of competence (Alkire et al., 2013) and positive emotional state. Successful entrepreneurs who have been in business for a long period often develop coping mechanisms and resilience (Simarasl et al., 2024). Nevertheless, many middle-aged entrepreneurs feel stressed and struggle to balance their business pursuits and daily life. Forty-seven percent of Indian entrepreneurs with less than 15 years of experience and 35 percent with more than 15 years of experience reported feeling stressed (Bhattacharyya, 2019). While most of the research has focused on major stressors and stress in working professionals, the accumulation of daily hassles, which serve as a potential source of stress, particularly in the entrepreneurial group, remains understudied. Furthermore, daily uplifting experiences, which serve as a buffer against stressors, are also less explored. Despite several initiatives and research articles on work–life balance and stress management, the intended results have not been achieved. Thus, this gap highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of microlevel experiences and their role in shaping quality of life (QOL). Furthermore, the scholarly work mentioned so far has consistently highlighted the middle age as a complex period. Therefore, there is a need for an empirical investigation of the daily hassles and uplifts and their impact on the quality of life (QOL) of middle-aged entrepreneurs.

### 1.1. Objectives

The primary objective is to explore the daily hassles, uplifts and quality of life of middle-aged Indian entrepreneurs. The secondary objectives include the following:

- To assess the frequency and intensity of the daily Hassles of middle-aged entrepreneurs.
- To examine the frequency and intensity of daily uplifts of middle-aged entrepreneurs.
- To study the associations between daily hassles, uplifts and the quality of life of middle- aged entrepreneurs.

### 1.2. Research hypothesis

1.  $H_0$  There is no significant association between the frequency and intensity of daily hassles of middle-aged entrepreneurs.  
 $H_a$  There is a significant association between the frequency and intensity of daily hassles of middle-aged entrepreneurs.
2.  $H_0$  There is no significant association between the frequency and intensity of daily uplifts of middle-aged entrepreneurs.  
 $H_a$  There is a significant association between the frequency and intensity of daily uplifts of middle-aged entrepreneurs.
3.  $H_0$  There is no significant association between Daily hassles and the quality of life of middle-aged entrepreneurs.  
 $H_a$  There is a significant association between Daily hassles and the quality of life of middle-aged entrepreneurs.
4.  $H_0$  There is no significant association between Daily uplift and the quality of life of middle-aged entrepreneurs.

H<sub>a</sub> There is a significant association between Daily uplifts and the quality of life of middle-aged entrepreneurs.

## 2. Research Methods

### 2.1. Design and sample

A cross-sectional design was used in this study. This research design involves collecting data from the sample respondents at a single point in time. The study participants included entrepreneurs middle-aged adults through simple random sampling across India. A total of 120 participants were approached for the study, 100 of whom completed the questionnaire. However, after eliminating the missing data, 85 participants' responses were considered. The participants were between 40 and 60 years of age, and approximately 68.23% of the participants were between 40 and 50 years of age.

### 2.2. Inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria

*The inclusion criteria* were as follows: male and female entrepreneurs residing in India, aged between 40 and 60 years, who could read and write English and volunteer to participate in the study.

*The exclusion criteria* were as follows: less than 40 years of age and more than 60 years of age. All full-time employees working for an employer and nonresident Indians (NRIs) were excluded from this study.

### 2.3. Data collection instrument

Data were collected via a structured questionnaire comprising three sections, which included daily hassles, daily uplifts and a quality of life scale.

**WHOQOL-BREF:** The WHOQOL-BREF is a shorter version of the WHOQOL-100. It evaluates an individual's quality of life in four domains. The 26-item five-point rating scale ranges from 1= Disagree or Not at all to 5= Completely Agree or Extremely. The items of the WHOQOL-BREF are based on 4 different domains: psychological well-being, social relationships, and environmental and physical health. Additionally, two more descriptive questions ask the respondent about their quality of life and health. The range of the Cronbach's alpha values for the four domain scores was 0.84, indicating strong internal consistency. Physical health has a test-retest reliability of 0.66, psychological health has a reliability of 0.72, social relationships have a reliability of 0.76, and the environment has a reliability of 0.87 (Organization, 2004)

**Daily Hassles Scale:** The daily Hassles scale is used to evaluate the severity of the stressors from the interaction with the environment of an individual's life. It is a four-point rating scale ranging from none or did not occur, somewhat severe, moderately severe to extremely severe. The construct validity of the test is demonstrated by the scale's ability to explain or predict psychological symptoms, symptoms of physical illness, and emotional distress. The internal consistency reliability was 0.96, and the item-total correlation values varied from 0.27--0.63 (Kanner et al., 1981)

**Daily uplifts Scale:** The uplifts scale evaluates the frequency and intensity of daily positive events, also known as uplifts. Like the Hassles scale, it is a four-point rating scale ranging from none or did not occur, somewhat often, moderately often to extremely often. The respondents rate each item depending on how uplifting they find that item. The scoring of uplifts is divided into two parts. The frequency of daily uplifts is calculated by simply the sum of the number of items that occurred. The intensity is calculated by adding the ratings of all the items (Kanner et al., 1981).

### 2.4. Administration procedure

The questionnaire was circulated online in the form of a Google Form to all the potential participants across India. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study. Furthermore, they were assured that each item of the questionnaire was for research purposes only and that their responses would remain confidential. Following the debriefing, the participants filled out the participant's sheet, which included all the demographic details on which all the relevant samples were selected for the present study. Furthermore, the participants were instructed to give their honest responses to the items of the Quality of Life Scale (WHOQOL-BREF), Daily Hassles and Uplifts scale.

## 3. Results

Both Table 1 and Figure 1 show the scores of the descriptive statistics, mainly the frequencies and percentages of the major demographic variables. The table shows that 68.23% of the participants were between 40 and 50 years of age, whereas 30.58% of the participants were between 51 and 60 years of age. The table also shows that 52.94% of the participants belonged to a joint family and that 47.05% belonged to a nuclear family. Most participants were females (68.23%), and only 27.05% were males.

The initial analyses were performed to examine the daily hassles and uplifts among the participants, after which their levels were determined through mean scores of  $2.05 \pm 0.46$  and  $26.73 \pm 50.46$ , respectively. Thus, a range of somewhat severe hassles (below 1.59) to extremely severe hassles (above 2.50) was established. Likewise, for daily uplifts, a score ranging from somewhat often (below 211.27) to extremely often (above 312.19) was generated. A majority of the participants (80.00%)

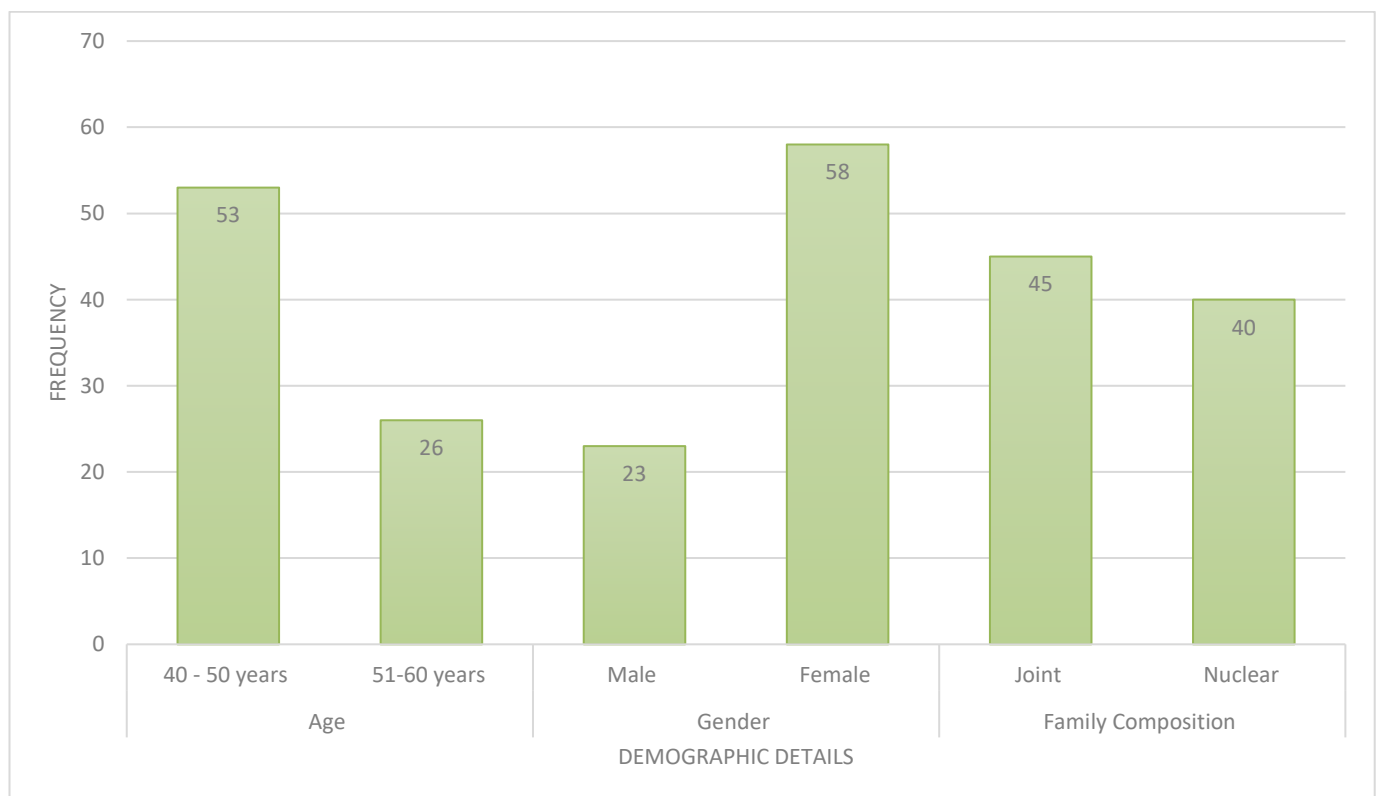
reported moderately severe experiences of daily hassles, while 14.12% reported experiencing somewhat severe daily hassles, and only 5.88% reported experiencing extremely severe daily hassles. On the basis of the results of daily uplifts, 84.71% of the participants experienced daily uplifts moderately often, whereas 10.59% experienced daily uplifts somewhat often, and only 4.71% of the participants experienced daily uplifts extremely often (Table 2).

**Table 1** Demographic profile of the participants.

Demographic Details		Frequency (N= 85)	Percentage (%)
Age	40 to 50 years	58	68.23%
	51to 60 years	26	30.58%
Gender	Male	23	27.05%
	Female	58	68.23%
Family Composition	Joint	45	52.94%
	Nuclear	40	47.05%

**Table 2** Classification of levels of daily hassles and uplifts and percentage distribution.

Levels of Daily hassles	Range score	Number of participants (N)	Percentage of participants (%)	Levels of Daily uplifts	Range score	Number of participants (N)	Percentage of participants (%)
Somewhat Severe	Below 1.59	12	14.12%	Somewhat often	Below 211.27	9	10.59%
Moderately Severe	Between 1.59 to 2.50	68	80.00%	Moderately often	Between 21.27 to 312.19	72	84.71%
Extremely severe	Above 2.50	5	5.88%	Extremely often	Above 312.19	4	4.71%



**Figure 1** Demographic profile of the entrepreneurs.

The results of the Spearman correlation of the frequency and intensity of daily hassles showed a weak negative association and were not statistically significant ( $r = -.008$   $P > 0.01$ ), whereas a strong positive significant association was observed between the frequency and intensity of daily uplifts ( $r = .256$   $P < 0.01$ ). Similarly, a strong significant positive correlation was found between the daily hassles and uplift frequency ( $r = .631$   $P < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, similar results were also observed for the correlation between the daily hassles and uplift intensity ( $r = .716$   $P < 0.01$ ) (Table 3).



Table 4 presents the percentages and correlations of daily hassles, uplifts and quality of life (QOL) in the four domains of the entrepreneurs. The mean comparison of the four domains of the QOL revealed that the environment domain had the highest score, with a mean score of  $22.91 \pm 6.12$

The social relationship domain had the lowest mean score of  $8.83 \pm 2.26$ . Furthermore, 27.05% of the participants reported poor QOL in the social relationship domain, followed by 12.94% in the psychological health domain, 11.76% in the environment domain and 10.58% in the physical health domain. The results of Spearman’s correlation analysis suggested that all the domains of QOL are positively correlated with moderate to strong levels of association and are statistically significant ( $r = 0.548-0.726, p < 0.01$ ). However, the results of daily hassles and uplifts with the four domains of QOL revealed a significant negative correlation with low to moderate levels of association ( $r = -0.372 - -0.582, p < 0.01$ ).

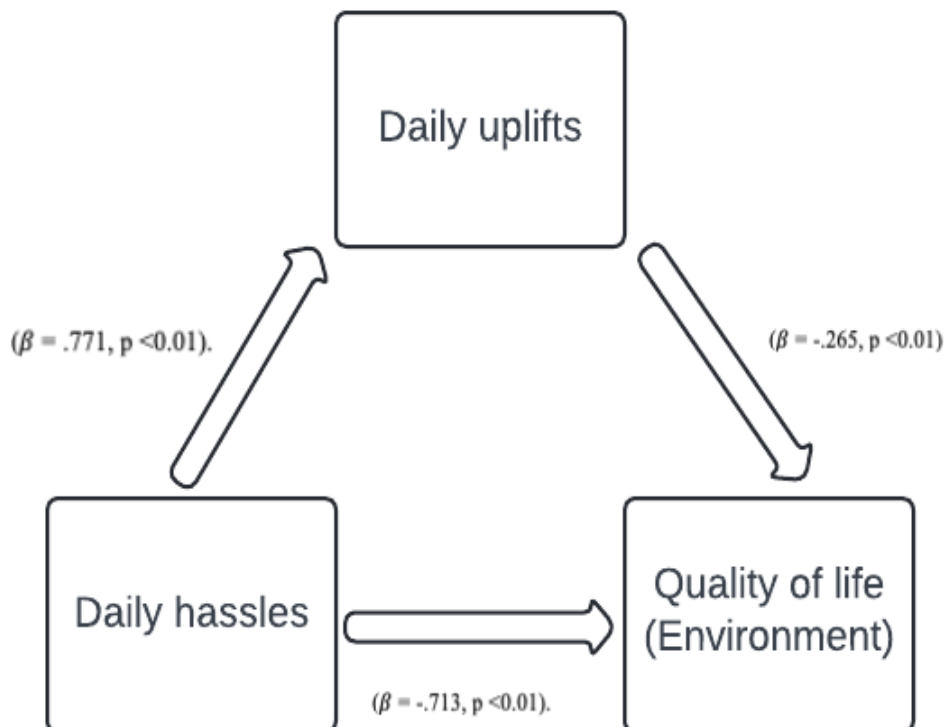
The mediation analysis shows that for Model 1,  $R^2 = .771$ , indicating that 7.71% of the variance in daily uplifts is explained by daily hassles. Daily hassles have a significant strong positive effect on daily uplifting ( $\beta = .771, p < 0.01$ ). Model 2 revealed that ( $R^2 = .732$ ) 7.32% of the variance in the environment domain of QOL was explained by daily hassles and daily uplifts. Furthermore, both daily hassles ( $\beta = -.509, p < 0.01$ ) and daily uplifts ( $\beta = -.265, p < 0.01$ ) have a significant negative effect on environmental QOL. Furthermore, the total effect of daily hassles on the environmental domain of QOL was significant ( $\beta = -.713, p < 0.01$ ). The indirect effect of Daily hassles on the environment domain of QOL through Daily uplifts is also statistically significant, indicating the mediating effects of daily uplifts. The findings of the analysis also suggest that daily hassles have a direct negative effect on QOL in the environmental domain. Thus, as daily hassles increase, the perceived QOL of middle-aged entrepreneurs decreases. This indicates that the daily hassles of middle-aged entrepreneurs make them feel less satisfied with their physical and social environment, including their home environment, safety, security, weather and other public access resources. However, daily uplifts partially mediate this relationship, implying that they partially counteract the negative effects of daily hassles on QOL’s environment, but the mediation is not strong enough to fully prevent the negative impact (Table 5 and Figure 2).

**Table 3** Correlation matrix of the daily hassles and uplifts of the participants.

	1	2	3	4
Daily hassles frequency	1.00	-.008	.631**	-
Daily hassles intensity	-.008	1.00	-	.716*
Daily uplifts frequency	.631**	-	1.00	.256*
Daily uplifts intensity	-	.716*	.256*	1.00

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). (Source: Authors, 2024)

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



**Figure 2** Mediation of daily uplifts between daily hassles and quality of life.

**Table 4** Results of the quality of life of entrepreneurs and spearman’s correlation (r).

Domains of Quality of life of life	Overall (N= 85)	Mean	SD	Number and of participants with low scores N(%)	Daily uplifts	Daily hassles	Environment	Social Relationships	Psychological health	Physical health
Physical health	85	22.17	4.17	9 (10.58%)	-.504**	-.486**	.679**	.613**	.659**	1.00
Psychological health	85	19.15	4.48	11 (12.94%)	-.582**	-.478**	.726**	.548**	1.00	.659**
Social Relationships	85	8.83	2.26	23 (27.05%)	-.372**	-.442**	.692**	1.00	.548**	.613**
Environment	85	22.91	6.12	10 (11.76%)	-.403**	-.429**	1.00	.692**	.726**	.679**
Daily uplifts	85	123.11	20.50	7 (8.23%)	1.00	.631**	-.403**	-.372**	-.582**	-.504**
Daily hassles	85	97.42	32.13	12 (14.11%)	.631**	1.00	-.429**	-.442**	-.478**	-.486**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 5** Mediation of daily uplift between daily hassles and QOL (Environment).

Predictor	B	SE	t	p	LL CI
<b>Model 1: Daily uplifts as outcome</b>					
Constant	75.186	4.573	16.440	.000	[66.090, 84.282]
Daily hassles	.492	.045	11.027	.000	[.403, .581]
<b>Model 2: Environment as outcome</b>					
Constant	42.069	3.029	13.890	.000	[36.044, 48.094]
Daily hassles	-.097	.022	-4.308	.000	[-.142, -.052]
Daily uplifts	-.079	.035	-2.243	.028	[-.149, -.009]
<b>Total Effect</b>					
Daily hassles	-.136	.015	-9.256	.000	[-.165, -.107]
Indirect effect	-.039	.032			[-.165, -.107]

#### 4. Discussion

The present study investigated the associations among daily hassles, uplifts and the QOL of middle-aged entrepreneurs. Furthermore, it also examined the mediating effects of daily uplifts between daily hassles and QOL. The results of this study revealed that the majority of the participants experienced moderate levels of daily hassles and uplifts. This suggests that the entrepreneurs experienced daily hassles enough to affect them. However, daily uplifts are not sufficient to buffer the negative impact of hassles. Since the results suggest the intensity of daily hassles and uplifts, it captures the severity of daily hassles and uplifts, which is significant, rather than the frequency, (Costa et al., 2021), as it plays an important role in determining well-being and QOL. The results are in accordance with those of previous studies, which reported that how individuals perceive daily hassles and uplifts in an organisational setting determines their well-being and quality of life rather than merely the occurrence or how often a particular event has happened (Junça & Caetano, 2013).

Additionally, a weak negative association between frequency and daily hassles suggests that when the frequency of daily hassles increases, the intensity of experiencing daily hassles decreases. This indicates an inverse relationship between the frequency and intensity of daily hassles. This can be attributed to the habituation or resilience phenomenon, as the repeated experience of a negative event leads to a decrease in its perceived intensity (Grissom & Bhatnagar, 2009; Maier et al., 2022). Therefore, the frequent experience of daily hassles results in habituation, leading to a decrease in subjective intensity over time. However, the results of the frequency and intensity of daily uplifts are the opposite of the results of daily hassles, as they suggest a strong positive correlation, indicating that an increase in the frequency of daily uplifts leads to an increase in the intensity with which they perceive it as an uplifting experience. This suggests that the cumulative effect of uplifting creates an upwards spiral of positive emotions. These findings are consistent with those of previous studies, particularly in the workplace setting, where positive experiences at work lead to increased work engagement and well-being, thus strongly perceiving uplift (S. A. Junça et al., 2023; Weigelt et al., 2021). However, very few studies have suggested a negative relationship between daily hassles and uplifts (Totenhagen et al., 2012). The present study revealed counterintuitive findings with a strong positive association between daily hassles and uplifts, suggesting the co-occurrence of both frequency and intensity.

Furthermore, daily hassles and uplifts are negatively correlated with QOL. The findings of daily uplifts contrast with those of previous studies, whereas the results of daily hassles are in line with those of previous studies, which reported that daily hassles lead to a decrease in subjective well-being (Graf et al., 2016). Notably, daily hassles have a direct effect on QOL,



particularly in the environment domain. Daily uplifts counteract daily hassles and mediate the association between daily hassles and the environmental domain of QOL. These findings align with those of previous research, which reported that (Larsson et al., 2017) daily uplifting and copying act as buffers against daily hassles.

## 5. Conclusion

The present study assessed the daily hassles, uplifts and quality of life of middle-aged entrepreneurs. The majority of the study participants experienced moderate levels of daily hassles and daily uplifts with poor quality of life in the social relationships domain. It was also discovered that both daily hassles and daily uplifts are negatively related to quality of life. However, daily hassles have a direct effect on the environment's quality of life. Daily uplifts partially mediate the relationship between hassles and quality of life. Thus, the findings will be beneficial to all entrepreneurs and self-employed people, as they can become more aware of their daily uplifts, which will counteract their daily hassles and not only promote higher quality of life but also increase work engagement and productivity.

## Acknowledgement

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## Ethical Consideration

The participants were informed about the purpose and objectives of the present study, and their consent was obtained voluntarily through the questionnaire. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Furthermore, their privacy was maintained by anonymising the data and adhering to the confidentiality protocols.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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