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An Integrative Psychodynamic—CognitiveBehavioral Approach to Entrepreneurial Development

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Abstract: This article presents a multifaceted methodology designed to address the psychological and challenges faced bv contemporary entrepreneurs operating in volatile markets. Grounded cognitive-behavioral principles, psychodynamic insights, and strategic coaching frameworks, the proposed method seeks to dismantle limiting beliefs, reduce anxiety, and foster both resilience and systemic thinking. A mixed-methods study involving 200 revealed entrepreneurs statistically significant improvements in revenue growth, anxiety reduction, and self-esteem, when compared to a control group engaging solely in conventional business training. Case analyses further illustrate how the integration of cognitive reframing, deep psychodynamic exploration, and leadership coaching can produce enduring benefits. The findings underscore the necessity of an integrative approach that simultaneously targets internal barriers and operational bottlenecks, offering a practical, evidence-based solution for sustainable business development.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Psychology, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Psychodynamic Analysis, Strategic Coaching, Anxiety Reduction, Leadership Development, Business Resilience.

Introduction: In the contemporary entrepreneurial environment, high levels of uncertainty, fierce competition, and rapid market shifts have become the norm [1]. These factors impose not only financial risks but also significant psychological pressures on business owners and leaders. Indeed, research indicates that entrepreneurs frequently encounter emotional burnout, stress, and anxiety at rates that surpass those of individuals in more stable organizational contexts [2,

3]. As a result, the psychological underpinnings of entrepreneurial behavior have attracted growing attention from scholars and practitioners alike, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive and evidence-based approach to intervention.

One particularly critical dimension of this problem involves the interplay between cognitive and emotional processes in decision-making [2, 4]. Common entrepreneurial barriers—such as fear of failure, procrastination, perfectionism, or the impostor syndrome—are rooted in cognitive distortions that can severely undermine business performance. For instance, entrepreneurs who harbor irrational beliefs about their own incompetence or who overestimate risks may delay strategic actions or overcompensate by micromanaging, thereby stalling organizational growth [5]. Moreover, the emotional toll that arises from sustained stress and uncertainty often leads to detrimental outcomes ranging from decreased motivation to chronic burnout [1].

Given these high stakes, merely focusing on external factors—such as market trends, financial strategies, or operational best practices—has proven insufficient to ensure long-term resilience [3]. Instead, an integrative framework that combines the strengths of cognitivebehavioral approaches, psychodynamic insights, and strategic coaching methodologies offers a more holistic path forward [6]. By targeting unconscious patterns of thought, reshaping maladaptive beliefs, and embedding strategic business planning within a psychologically informed practice, such a multifaceted system can bolster both the mental well-being of the entrepreneur and the overall sustainability of the venture [2, 4]. It is within this context that the present study situates its investigation—namely, to propose and validate a method that addresses the internal, psychological constraints alongside the external, strategic imperatives of business development.

The primary aim of this paper is to introduce an integrated methodology founded on established psychological theories (cognitive, psychodynamic) and strategic coaching principles, and to demonstrate its effectiveness in facilitating entrepreneurship under conditions of volatility and complexity. More specifically, the study seeks to illustrate how targeting internal barriers (such as anxiety, self-doubt, and perfectionism) can yield significant improvements in strategic decision-making and overall business performance.

To achieve this aim, the paper sets out the following objectives:

1. Analyze existing scientific concepts and empirical

research in the field of entrepreneurial psychology, with particular attention to cognitive-behavioral theories [2], social learning principles [4], and psychodynamic interpretations [6].

- **2.**Describe the key elements of the proposed integrative methodology, including diagnostic tools, intervention techniques for cognitive restructuring, and strategies for psychodynamic exploration of unconscious patterns influencing entrepreneurial behavior.
- **3.**Present empirical data that emerge from an initial implementation of this integrated approach, focusing on measurable outcomes such as reduced anxiety, improved leadership capacities, and enhanced strategic orientation.

The scientific novelty of this approach lies in its explicit combination of psychodynamically informed analysis of unconscious processes with a cognitive-behavioral intervention framework and strategic coaching techniques. While prior studies have separately investigated the impact of cognitive restructuring [2], psychoanalytic exploration of entrepreneurial motivations [6], and leadership coaching models [3], few have consolidated these modalities into a coherent system tailored to the entrepreneurial context. This synergy enables practitioners to address deep-seated mental schemas and biases while simultaneously equipping business owners with practical, futureoriented strategies.

1. Theoretical and methodological foundations of the methodology

A core element of the proposed integrative methodology draws on Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) principles, which emphasize the interrelation between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors [2]. Within entrepreneurship research, cognitive-behavioral models have been utilized to explore how distorted beliefs—such as catastrophizing, polarized thinking, or overgeneralization—can undermine strategic decisionmaking [5]. Entrepreneurs, for instance, overestimate the risk of failure due to their negative automatic thoughts or deeply rooted self-doubt, leading to delays in launching new products or revising flawed business strategies [2, 5]. By targeting these distortions through cognitive restructuring and behavioral experiments, the CBT framework helps entrepreneurs alter unproductive thinking patterns, thereby fostering a more resilient and adaptive mindset.

An essential part of the cognitive-behavioral framework is Social Learning Theory [4], which underscores the importance of role modeling, observational learning, and self-efficacy in shaping novel behavioral patterns. In the entrepreneurial arena, social learning manifests

when individuals adopt successful practices, attitudes, and coping strategies from mentors, peers, or other influential figures in their professional network. According to Bandura [4], enhancing self-efficacy involves both the vicarious experience of observing others' achievements and the guided mastery of new skills, thus creating a reinforcing cycle of confidence and proactive engagement.

By integrating these cognitive-behavioral constructs, the author's methodology confronts limiting beliefs (e.g., "I am not competent enough to succeed") and cognitive distortions (e.g., "Any mistake will ruin my business"), which frequently exacerbate entrepreneurial anxiety or indecision [1]. The systematic approach presented here seeks to reduce the intensity of negative thought patterns and increase self-awareness, thereby equipping individuals with the psychological flexibility needed to navigate complex market environments.

While cognitive-behavioral strategies address explicit thought patterns and observable behaviors, psychodynamic theoryprovides a deeper exploration of the underlying unconscious forces driving entrepreneurial motivations [6, 7]. In a business context, psychodynamic perspectives suggest that past relational experiences, internalized familial scripts, and archetypal patterns can manifest in the ways entrepreneurs perceive risk, handle success, and respond to interpersonal challenges [6]. For example, an individual who unconsciously associates financial success with guilt—possibly stemming from familial beliefs—may sabotage growth opportunities, exhibit chronic "fear of success," or struggle with impostor syndrome [1, 2].

From a Freudian standpoint, repressed anxieties and unresolved intrapsychic conflicts often surface in business decisions, affecting not only entrepreneur's emotional state but also the strategic trajectory of the enterprise [7]. In Jungian terms, archetypes such as the "hero" or the "caregiver" can unconsciously govern leadership styles, influencing both how entrepreneurs set goals and how they engage employees or collaborators [6]. A leader strongly identified with the "hero" archetype might, for instance, overextend themselves in crisis situations, neglecting the collaborative or delegation aspects crucial for sustainable business scaling.

Effective psychodynamic exploration involves analyzing these deep-rooted fears, familial imprints, and personal narratives to eliminate or diminish the constraining impact they have on entrepreneurial

activity. By working through inner conflicts—for instance, reconciling a need for personal acclaim with the responsibilities of leading a team—entrepreneurs can attain a healthier alignment between conscious objectives and unconscious drives [6, 7]. Consequently, in tandem with the cognitive-behavioral techniques, psychodynamic insights ensure the methodology addresses both surface-level impediments (e.g., negative self-talk) and deep-seated patterns that may sabotage long-term success.

Beyond psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioral approaches, an essential dimension of the methodology involves strategic coaching to ensure that insights gleaned from introspection lead to concrete, actionable business outcomes (Dilts, 2007). Several coaching models have proven valuable for structuring this process:

- **1.**GROW Model [8]. Focusing on Goals, Reality, Options, and Will, GROW enables entrepreneurs to articulate clear objectives, assess the current business landscape, brainstorm viable strategies, and commit to specific action steps.
- **2.**OSCAR Model [9]. Emphasizing Outcome, Situation, Choices, Actions, and Review, OSCAR supports iterative refinement of business strategies, thus promoting continuous improvement. By incorporating psychodynamic and cognitive insights, this model helps leaders stay mindful of unconscious bias and cognitive distortions during strategy formulation.
- **3.**Situational Leadership [10]. This framework highlights the importance of adaptability in leadership, particularly under volatile or complex market conditions. By tailoring leadership style (directive vs. supportive) to the maturity and competence level of team members, entrepreneurs can optimize team performance and morale.

In parallel, the Theory of Constraints [11] provides a systemic lens for diagnosing and resolving bottlenecks within business processes, ensuring entrepreneurial actions target the most critical impediments to growth. Meanwhile, Agile coaching methodologies and the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) framework equip entrepreneurs with adaptive mindsets and rapid-response capacities, vital for thriving in fluctuating markets [1, 3]. These models collectively underscore the necessity of flexible formulation, frequent iteration, strategy collaborative problem-solving-core elements that resonate with the cognitive-behavioral emphasis on continuous learning and the psychodynamic emphasis on deeper self-awareness.

Table 1. Comparative overview of key theoretical components underlying entrepreneurial development

Approach	Core Concepts	Relevance to Entrepreneurship	Key Proponents
Cognitive- Behavioral	Cognitive distortions, reframing, self-efficacy enhancement	Addresses limiting beliefs and unproductive thought patterns, thereby improving decision-making	, , , ,
Psychodynamic	Unconscious drives, archetypes, internal conflicts	Explores deep-seated fears and motivations; aids in resolving intrapsychic issues that impede growth	Freud (2014), Jung (2018)
Social Learning	Observational learning, modeling, self-efficacy	Encourages adoption of successful behaviors through role models, accelerating skill acquisition	Bandura (2000)
Strategic Coaching	GROW, OSCAR, situational leadership	Provides structured processes for goal-setting, action planning, and ongoing performance feedback	Whitmore (2009), Gilbert & Whittleworth (2002)
Theory of Constraints	Identification and resolution of bottlenecks in processes		Goldratt (1984)

As illustrated in Table 1, each theoretical component focuses on distinct, yet complementary facets of entrepreneurial growth. Where cognitive-behavioral perspectives target restructuring irrational thoughts, psychodynamic insights delve into the deeper emotional and unconscious drivers of behavior, and strategic coaching frameworks ensure that these psychological advancements translate into tangible organizational strategies [1, 10].

2. Description of the method's structure and content

At the heart of the methodology lies the principle of complexity, which blends psychological (cognitive-behavioral and psychodynamic) techniques with concrete business-strategic tools [2, 6]. Scholars have argued that focusing solely on either psychological barriers or external business tactics yields limited outcomes, underscoring the need for a unified system that targets both internal (e.g., anxiety, limiting beliefs) and external (e.g., market adaptation, revenue optimization) dimensions [1, 4].

Drawing upon Lazarus's [5] insights into stress and coping, this methodology emphasizes gradual, ecologically sound changes rather than abrupt restructuring of habitual patterns. By reducing the

likelihood of overwhelm and resistance, entrepreneurs are more likely to integrate new strategies into their existing routines without experiencing profound psychological disruption [7].

The overarching objective is to foster systemic thinking, resilience to stress, and adaptability among entrepreneurs operating in volatile markets. Through structured interventions—encompassing cognitive reframing, psychodynamic exploration, and strategic coaching—the method aims to elevate an entrepreneur's capacity for agile decision-making, sustained motivation, and effective leadership [3, 8].

The methodology is articulated in four key stages, each incorporating diagnostic assessments, targeted interventions, and subsequent evaluations to ensure alignment with both psychological well-being and business-performance goals. These stages build upon established assessment instruments (e.g., [2, 6]) and integrate best practices in strategic planning [1, 8].

1.Stage One: Diagnosis and Analysis of the Client's Challenges

Assessment Tools. This phase employs standardized psychological measures, such as the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem

Scale, and cognitive-behavioral diagnostic questionnaires [2]. The aim is to detect unhelpful thought patterns, self-limiting beliefs, and potential sources of burnout or procrastination [5].

Qualitative Methods. In-depth interviews and structured observations enable the practitioner to identify key personal and business-related problems, from leadership shortcomings to financial mismanagement. Particular attention is paid to unconscious scripts that may influence risk-taking and strategic planning [6, 7].

2. Stage Two: Formulating Development Strategies

Cognitive Reframing of Limiting Beliefs. Techniques such as thought records and restructuring exercises are applied to challenge irrational assumptions [2].

Goal Setting and Risk Analysis. Using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) or OKR (Objectives and Key Results) frameworks helps entrepreneurs clarify long-term objectives and break them into actionable targets [12]. Concurrently, SWOT analysis and scenario planning offer structured mechanisms for evaluating multiple business trajectories [13].

Leadership Skills and Communication Development. Building on situational leadership principles [10], the methodology fosters critical soft skills (e.g., assertive communication, conflict resolution), improving collaboration and delegation within teams [1].

3.Stage Three: Consolidating Change and Integrating into Business Processes

Self-Regulation Techniques. Drawing on cognitive-

behavioral and mindfulness research, clients are trained in breathing exercises, guided imagery, and emotional regulation strategies [5]. These reduce stress and enhance mental clarity, critical for coping with rapid shifts in market conditions.

Addressing Procrastination and Perfectionism. Through task segmentation and graded-exposureapproaches, entrepreneurs learn to methodically tackle major projects without succumbing to perfectionistic paralysis [2].

Team Engagement and Coaching Integration. Command-coaching sessions—adapted from GROW or OSCAR models [8, 9] —empower employees to contribute to strategic planning. By distributing problem-solving and leadership responsibilities, businesses foster an environment of shared ownership and resilience [3].

4.Stage Four: Progress Evaluation and Method Adaptation

Reassessment of Key Metrics. A follow-up battery of diagnostics (e.g., anxiety, self-esteem, revenue tracking) evaluates the efficacy of the interventions. For instance, a marked decrease in Spielberger scores may correlate with heightened readiness for strategic pivots [1].

Flexible Adjustment. Based on evolving objectives, the plan undergoes periodic recalibration. If new market barriers arise or personal circumstances shift (e.g., leadership transitions, economic downturn), the methodology adapts by refining the applied interventions [10].

Table 2. Four-stage process overview: diagnostic, intervention, consolidation, and evaluation

Stage	Activities	Intended Outcomes	Key Tools & References
1. Diagnosis	(anxiety, self-esteem) -		Spielberger, Rosenberg, Beck (2006), Lazarus (2010)
2. Strategies	- Cognitive reframing - SMART/OKR goal setting - SWOT, scenario planning	personal & business	` ' '
3. Consolidation	- Mindfulness & self- regulation - Addressing procrastination - Team coaching	habits, improved	

The American Journal of Management and Economics Innovations

Stage	Activities	Intended Outcomes	Key Tools & References
4. Evaluation	- Repeat diagnostics - Adjust method to outcomes - Ongoing coaching	improvement &	Spielberger et al. metrics, Performance Tracking, Guseltseva (2020)

The iterative nature of this four-stage process ensures that psychological gains—such as reduced anxiety or enhanced self-esteem—translate directly into measurable business performance improvements, including revenue growth and team productivity. Each phase leverages empirical tools, grounding the interventions in well-established theoretical frameworks while remaining flexible to the shifting needs of each entrepreneur [1, 3].

To operationalize the stages, the methodology integrates a cohesive set of psychological and managerial tools:

1.Cognitive Reframing and Anxiety Management. Building on Beck's [2] work, entrepreneurs learn to identify and dispute negative automatic thoughts. Breathing exercises and mental rehearsal reduce physiological arousal and cognitive overload [5].

2. Strategic Coaching Frameworks.

GROW [8] and OSCAR [9] provide structured platforms for clarifying objectives, brainstorming solutions, and implementing action steps.

VUCA Lens (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) fosters adaptive thinking, encouraging rapid iteration and recalibration.

Theory of Constraints [11] helps identify systemic bottlenecks, ensuring that strategic efforts target the most critical impediments to business scalability [1].

3.Psychodynamic Exploration. Techniques such as free association, archetype analysis, and dream interpretation [6, 7] reveal unconscious scripts—like fear of success or negative financial narratives—that may sabotage entrepreneurial progress.

4. Adaptive Leadership Approaches.

Situational Leadership [10] offers an adaptable framework for guiding teams with varying skill levels.

Antifragility Principles [14] encourage embracing uncertainty as an opportunity for growth, aligning with the overarching goal of cultivating

resilience [1].

5.Self-Discipline and Productivity Methods. Emphasizing time management, habit formation, and micro-success tracking, entrepreneurs develop daily

routines that prevent overcommitment and burnout [3]. By balancing professional and personal domains, they can maintain sustainable energy levels, thus protecting both mental health and organizational outcomes.

Collectively, these tools align short-term corrective actions—like cognitive restructuring or scenario planning—with deeper transformations in personality structure, leadership style, and strategic agility [6, 7]. As such, the methodology exemplifies a comprehensive, evidence-based approach, designed to fortify entrepreneurs against the inherent uncertainties of modern business while simultaneously catalyzing growth-oriented behaviors.

3.Effectiveness and results of the method's implementation

To evaluate the effectiveness of the integrative approach described above, the present study employed a mixed-methods design involving both qualitative and quantitative data collection [1, 2]. The research was conducted over the course of 2023, drawing 200 volunteers from diverse industries and spanning multiple geographical contexts: Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russian-speaking entrepreneurs operating in the United States. All participants represented a range of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and had a minimum of one year of entrepreneurial experience.

Recruitment was open to business owners who were interested in enhancing their efficiency and overcoming internal barriers, agreed to a six-month period of study participation, and confirmed that they had not taken part in a similar coaching program during the previous 12 months. This selection ensured that participants were at least moderately familiar with entrepreneurial challenges while also maintaining an openness to psychological and strategic interventions.

Participants were then assigned to two groups of equal size (n = 100 each). The experimental group received the complete intervention—including cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, and strategic coaching modules—over a six-month period of individual sessions and group workshops. Meanwhile, the control group took part in standard business-training modules without any

specialized psychological or psychodynamic components. These standard modules encompassed:

- Financial Management (budgeting, accounting principles, taxation)
- Marketing and Sales (target audience analysis, promotional strategies, sales techniques)
- Management and Team-Building (personnel leadership, communication, delegation)
- Business Strategy (business-process modeling, competitive market analysis)

By distinguishing between a conventional business curriculum and the integrative method, the study could clearly assess the added value of addressing internal barriers alongside external skill sets.

Both groups completed standardized psychometric tests at two time points: baseline (T1) and six months post-intervention (T2). These included:

- Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), measuring changes in anxiety (Spielberger, 1983).
- Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE), assessing shifts in self-confidence (Rosenberg, 1965).
- A structured procrastination questionnaire, adapted from Lazarus [5], examining tendencies to delay key decisions.
- A Business Metrics Survey [1] that compiled data on revenue growth, strategic goal achievement, and subjective stress resilience.

In addition to quantitative data, qualitative interviews were conducted with members of both groups to gain insights into personal transformations, leadership challenges, and changes in day-to-day business operations. The experimental groupfocused on

cognitive restructuring, uncovering unconscious conflicts, and applying strategic leadership models. The control group—while receiving valuable instruction in finance, marketing, and management—did not engage in any targeted psychological or psychodynamic interventions beyond baseline education.

Effectiveness indicators were chosen to encompass both psychological variables (anxiety, self-esteem, procrastination, stress resilience) and business metrics (revenue growth). Taken together, these measures offered a multi-dimensional view of how internal cognitive—emotional shifts correlated with external entrepreneurial performance [1, 2].

Results at T2 indicated a significant positive effect of the integrated methodology on both psychological well-being and business success:

- Revenue Growth. The experimental group averaged a 32% increase, surpassing the 15% gains in the control group.
- Reduction in Anxiety (STAI). Experimental participants showed a 40% decrease in anxiety, as opposed to 10% in the control group.
- Rise in Self-Esteem (RSE). Scores in the experimental group improved by 25%, compared to 6% in the control group.
- Procrastination. Qualitative interviews revealed a marked decline in delaying vital tasks among the experimental cohort; the control group showed only moderate changes.
- Stress Resilience. Approximately 68% of those receiving integrative coaching reported feeling more capable of coping with market volatility and teamrelated challenges, whereas only around 21% of the control participants expressed a similar shift.

Table 3. The primary outcome measures, contrasting the experimental and control groups

Outcome Variable	Experimental Group(n=100)	Control Group (n=100)
Revenue Increase (over 6 months)	+32% (average)	+15% (average)
Reduction in Anxiety (STAI)	-40%	-10%
Gain in Self-Esteem (Rosenberg)	+25%	+6%

Outcome Variable	Experimental Group(n=100)	Control Group (n=100)
Procrastination Frequency	Substantial Decline	Moderate Decline
Stress Resilience (Qualitative)	Marked Improvement (≈68% reported)	Limited Change (≈21% reported)

(Values are aggregated T2 measurements; p < .05 for all major comparisons.)

In addition to these quantitative indicators, case studies highlighted the internal transformation processes. A technology consultant (Case A) initially exhibited high anxiety around pitching to potential corporate clients. Through cognitive reframing and psychodynamic sessions focused on early-life fears of rejection, the participant reported a 50% increase in client acquisition over six months. Similarly, a restaurant owner (Case B) struggled with operational bottlenecks and interpersonal conflict, which affected staff morale. Integrating situational leadership and exploring unconscious power dynamics helped to reduce employee turnover and elevate monthly revenues by 25%.

These real-world successes illustrate how precisely targeting both psychological and business dimensions can deliver transformative outcomes. Many in the control group, by contrast, enhanced their technical skills (finance, marketing) but continued to exhibit residual anxiety or procrastination due to unresolved internal issues.

brief examination of alternative methods underscores the distinct advantages of the integrative model. While conventional business courses effectively impart technical knowledge, they rarely delve into deep-seated emotional barriers, such as perfectionism or fear of failure. Conversely, purely psychological interventions may offer valuable insights but often lack the strategic frameworks necessary for immediate application in dynamic environments. By blending cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, and coaching principles, integrated methodology ensures that personal transformation is directly linked to operational improvement. Previous research suggests that such hybrid systems typically foster better resilience and lasting performance gains, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach in competitive and uncertain market conditions.

Taken together, these results confirm the effectiveness of the integrative approach in promoting both

psychological growth and tangible entrepreneurial success. The method's capacity to reduce anxiety, bolster self-esteem, and enhance strategic decisiveness sets it apart from narrower business training models. Notably, the study sample—comprising Russian-speaking entrepreneurs from various cultural contexts—indicates the method's adaptability and broad relevance. Future research can extend the approach to different linguistic and geographic environments, further refining best practices for merging internal development with external business requirements.

CONCLUSION

The research outcomes strongly suggest that a combined application of cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, and strategic coaching interventions constitutes a robust framework for enhancing both the psychological well-being of entrepreneurs and the performance of their ventures. Quantitative metrics spanning revenue growth, anxiety levels, and selfesteem—underscore the effectiveness of integrating tools such as cognitive reframing, archetype analysis, and structured goal-setting models (e.g., GROW, OSCAR). Qualitative insights gleaned from case analyses reinforce the notion that deeper transformation occurs when unconscious drivers are addressed alongside practical skill-building in leadership, communication, and strategic planning. By simultaneously eliminating barriers rooted in self-doubt or unconscious fear and equipping entrepreneurs with adaptive strategies for decision-making, the presented methodology supports long-term resilience in a rapidly evolving marketplace. Future research could extend this framework to various cultural contexts and larger-scale implementations, further refining the model's capacity to reconcile psychological operational dimensions and entrepreneurship.

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