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Fostering entrepreneurship in Poland: how psychological safety and social adaptation empower Ukrainian women war refugees¹

ABSTRACT

The article aims to identify the importance of psychological safety of Ukrainian refugee women in the process of social adaptation, in order to develop entrepreneurship in this group. The manuscript presents the results of exploratory research in the form of focus group interviews. The analysis of the collected research material reveals the complexity and multidimensionality of the category of psychological safety and its importance for the adaptation of Ukrainian refugee women and the support of their entrepreneurial activities. In addition, it contributes to the understanding of these interrelationships, with actions such as building trust, minimizing risks, strengthening self-confidence and providing appropriate support. The results gathered also carry practical implications, in particular regarding initiatives to build psychological safety of Ukrainian refugee women, fostering social adaptation and entrepreneurial development.

Keywords: social adaptation, psychological safety, entrepreneurship, Ukrainian women war refugees

JEL Classification: M10, J61, O15

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Introduction

The issue of migrant entrepreneurship has become very important in recent years and is the subject of much research and analysis [Barth, Zalkat, 2021; Dabić et al., 2020; Duan et al., 2023]. The entrepreneurship of people experiencing migration is important for both the host country and the migrants themselves and has a strong impact on their adaptation process in the new place of settlement. Both individual predispositions and opportunities offered by the host society, as well as the context of the migration experience, are important in this respect. In the light of numerical data, Poland can be classified as a country of immigration [Kamińska-Berezowska, Cekiera, 2022]. The most numerous group of foreigners settling in Poland are Ukrainians [Office for Foreigners, 2023]. Increased migration flows at the Polish-Ukrainian border have been observed for a decade. However, during this period, clear changes in the dynamics of the inflow of Ukrainians and the nature of migration are visible, which has important implications for the course of the adaptation process of this group of migrants [Andrejuk, 2018; Pędziwiatr, Magdziarz, 2023]. Before Russia's aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the numerical stock of migrants from Ukraine was estimated at around 1.35 million, with a masculinized and 95% economically active immigration [Duszczyk, Kaczmarczyk, 2022]. After the outbreak of war (as of 15 December 2023), 17,293,665 people arrived in Poland and 14,741,500 left for Ukraine [UNHCR, 2023]. Pursuant to the Directive of the Council of the European Union of 4 March 2022 recognizing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine, resulting in the granting of temporary protection, a number of legal regulations on the legality of residence and employment were introduced [Council of the European Union, 2022]. In Poland, the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Armed Conflict on the Territory of Ukraine [Journal of Laws, 2022] was enacted, liberalizing, inter alia, access to certain financial benefits and the labor market. According to the Act, a Ukrainian citizen legally residing in Poland and having the status of a war refugee (UKR) with temporary protection may take up employment without permission from the competent authorities, as well as freely establish and operate a business. A report by the Polish Economic Institute [2023] shows that the employment rate of Ukrainian war refugees of working age in Poland is 65%, the highest among OECD countries. The percentage of business openings is also increasing. From 2022 to the end of June 2023, Ukrainians registered 29.4 thousand sole proprietorships, with about 16 thousand in 2022 and already 14 thousand in the first half of 2023 alone. This means that almost every tenth company established in Poland was founded by Ukrainians [Zyzik et al., 2023]. Ukrainian women accounted for 41% of the owners of businesses registered in CEIDG from March 2022 to January 2023, although this does not reflect the gender structure of war refugees [Businessinsider, 2023]. According to the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, as many as 2/3 of citizens of Ukrainian nationality in Poland are women (67%), with the largest percentage being female migrants who arrived after the outbreak of the war – 92% of all refugees [Polish Agency for

Enterprise Development, 2023]. Thus, the picture of migrants of Ukrainian origin settling in Poland is as follows – women of working age, refugees, enjoying the status of war refugees with temporary protection, struggling with social adaptation in the country of settlement. They are accompanied by longing for their relatives, fear for their life and health, anxiety about the uncertain future in the new place, often lack of means of subsistence, inadequacy of e.g. language skills, feeling of loneliness, lack of support, etc. [Dlugosz, Kryvachuk, Izdebska-Dlugosz, 2022; Kovalenko, 2023]. This can affect entrepreneurial intentions and behavior. The social adaptation of Ukrainian female war refugees thus appears to be a significant challenge. A sense of safety is crucial for everything to run smoothly. In the case of war refugees, it takes on a particular significance. It requires a multidimensional approach, taking economic, social or emotional aspects into account. It can not only improve the quality of life of refugees, but also lay the foundation for their successful adaptation and entrepreneurial development in Poland. Hence, the article fills the research gap on the importance of psychological safety of Ukrainian refugee women in the process of social adaptation to serve the entrepreneurial development of this group of migrants. It focuses on understanding the nature and complexity of the phenomenon of psychological safety, identifying different dimensions of safety, as well as exploring its implications for refugee women. The theoretical analysis presented in the article is illustrated by an empirical study based on an exploratory approach, presenting the results of two focus group interviews. The results of the research indicate the complexity and multidimensionality of the issue of psychological safety of Ukrainian female war refugees, accentuate its importance in the process of social adaptation and allow to identify measures for the development of entrepreneurship of this group of women. Thanks to the results collected, it is possible both to expand the existing knowledge in this area and to enrich the practice of enhancing psychological safety, thus accelerating the process of adaptation and entrepreneurship development of Ukrainian refugee women. The structure of the article includes the presentation of the theoretical foundations of social adaptation and the role of psychological safety in this process and their relationship with the entrepreneurship of Ukrainian refugee women, followed by a research project carried out using qualitative methods and its results, which form the basis for conclusions and theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical background

The social adaptation of people experiencing migration involves a kind of adjustment to the new place of settlement, the norms prevailing there, the values held, the intangible and material cultural products. It is one of the stages of the migrant's 'entry' into the environment of the host society [Adamski, 2020]. It involves a sense of safety, access to information, the assimilation of knowledge or the satisfaction of a number of diverse needs. It implies a minimal adaptation to the new environment that enables relative social functioning. This process is followed by integration and assimilation, enabling the formation of positive social

relationships [Budyta-Budzyńska, 2011]. According to Hofstede [2001, after Boski, 2009], this process comprises four phases: euphoria, culture shock, acculturation and stable adaptation. These can occur with varying intensity and duration, depending on the individual's predisposition to social adaptation, the context of the migration experience and the psychological condition. However, it is only in the phase of stable adaptation that the individual feels relatively calm and builds a new reality in the way he or she chooses, based on subjective choices of accepted norms, rules of behavior, relationship formation and ways of coping in the broader social context. This draws attention to its social dimension as a behavioral effect of adaptation related to the acquisition (learning) of certain specific skills [Ward, after Boski, 2009]. In addition to behavioral effects, no less important are affective effects related to the psychological adaptation of individuals, ways and skills to cope with stress and cultural change. However, the extremely important individual predispositions of migrants do not exist in a social vacuum. In a migratory context, adaptation is interactive. The receiving society can regulate/influence the course of the adaptation process in a specific way and to a certain extent, creating appropriate conditions that facilitate or hinder adaptation to the new social reality. In the process of a migrant's 'entry' into the host society, attention should also be paid to its cultural, identity or economic dimensions [Adamski, 2020; Budyta-Budzyńska, 2020]. In the identity and cultural dimension, adaptation is related to community building, loyalty, cohesion and national identification; in the economic dimension, it is related to professional activity and entrepreneurial behavior. However, it requires time and support at different levels. For people fleeing the war, professional activity and the guarantee of a livelihood in the new place of settlement are crucial for social adaptation and building a sense of relative well-being. Entrepreneurship is an important part of the adaptation process, influencing both migrants' livelihoods and their propensity for social integration. Research shows that it is more difficult for refugees to start a business than for economic migrants [Lazarczyk-Bilal, Glinka, 2021]. The authors point to a lack of resources, limited mobility between countries, and compromised psychological well-being as obstacles to refugee entrepreneurship [Wauters, Lambrecht, 2006, 2008, after Harima, 2022]. Furthermore, refugees are much more likely than economic migrants to lack confidence and self-efficacy beliefs [McGee et al., 2009; Zhao et al., 2005], and to lack strong social networks [Hargrave et al., 2023]. In addition, they are accompanied by a high degree of uncertainty about the future in the host country, which may affect the propensity to become self-employed [Fuller-Love et al., 2006; Portes et al., 2002]. According to Kovalenko [2023], many Ukrainians who have come to Poland are not well acquainted with the conditions in which they have come to live, the framework within which Polish society operates. Consequently, they may experience psychological disorientation and discomfort. A sense of rejection, loss of social ties and status or powerlessness due to an inability to interact effectively in the new cultural environment may also contribute. This dissimilarity from the migrants' experience and 'cultural equipment' may even lead to culture shock [Simpson, 2014]. Hence, it is worth noting that the adaptation of persons in a migratory situation is not only a process, but also an emotional, psychological state in which these persons find

themselves. A sense of safety therefore appears to be an important condition for a smooth adaptation process. It means a state without worries; it is expressed by a feeling of calmness, of not being threatened; it indicates the possibility of satisfying needs of an existential nature, as well as the possibility of development [Rosicki, 2010]. In the literature we can also find the notions of social safety, which describes the state of individual and collective experience of order and stability in social reality, externalized in proper functioning and effective response to social threats [Pytel, 2023], as well as psychological safety, which describes the perception of the consequences of taking interpersonal risks in a specific context [Edmondson 1999]. Psychological safety is mainly associated with the work environment, where it helps people to overcome defenses or fears of learning [Schein, 1993]. According to Schein and Bennis [1965], psychological safety is essential for people to feel safe and be able to change their behavior in response to changing challenges. Psychological safety allows individuals to focus on collective goals and problem prevention rather than self-protection [Schein, 1993]. This influences their willingness to engage or express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally in roles, rather than withdrawing and adopting a defensive position [Kahn, 1990]. This thesis can be applied to the refugee situation. The sense of helplessness, anxiety and uncertainty about the future that accompanies them, can hinder the adaptation process and even lead to isolation [Kovalenko, 2023]. And while psychological safety is a manifestation of needs mainly in an emotional sense, it is accompanied by economic and social consequences related to leaving not only a home, but also a job and material possessions [Kovalenko, 2023]. The legal instruments adopted to assist Ukrainians should, among other things, support their active adaptation to social and economic roles [Firlit–Fesnak, 2023]. The offer of a job, the opportunity to learn the Polish language and psychological support are among the key factors mentioned by Ukrainian refugees to facilitate their adaptation process [Trębski, Młyński, 2023]. A sense of psychological safety determines refugee behavior, including that of an entrepreneurial nature. War refugees struggle emotionally while facing the challenges of a new reality [Polish Economic Institute, 2023]. The search for factors of psychological safety is in fact a search for answers to questions about the ways, motivators and barriers to social adaptation in the host society. Work activity and entrepreneurship are some of the key, but also the most challenging, elements of individuals' adaptation to the reality they face. Indeed, they involve overcoming significant work-related challenges, sustaining one's entrepreneurial ventures [Chadwick, Raver, 2020; Williams, Shepherd, 2016] and significant stress [Ahmed et al., 2022; Rauch et al., 2018]. In the situation of war refugees, the forced nature of migration can further hinder adaptation processes through feelings of loss, disorientation and other psychological factors, reinforced or offset by conditions prevailing in the host society. This requires a kind of resilience [Baran et al., 2023]. Adequate support can improve psychological safety and thus enhance the adaptation process, as well as stimulate entrepreneurial behavior. These issues seem worth exploring through research.

Research design

Issues of psychological safety and social adaptation were the focus of research conducted in May 2023, as part of a project on the entrepreneurial behavior of Ukrainian female war refugees in Poland. As the research dealt with phenomena that are difficult to define, and the researchers were keen to capture the experiences of female interviewees, who are characterized by a high degree of vulnerability due to their refugee experience and experiences in their new place of settlement, qualitative research methods were used. These methods work well in such settings (Czernek, 2020). In addition, an important rationale for their use was the cross-cultural nature of the study, which requires the careful researcher to be vigilant about possible discrepancies in the understanding and formulation of certain concepts, and to pay attention to the context [Glinka, Czakon, 2021]. Taking the above circumstances into account, and in order to understand the psychological premises influencing the process of social adaptation and the entrepreneurial actions and intentions of Ukrainian refugee women, two focus group interviews were conducted. They provided an opportunity for interaction and discussion between the participants, which, according to Berrondo [2023], largely accounts for the success of this method. The focus group research allowed for the exploration of the subject of the study and the derivation of conclusions of a general nature relating to the female representatives of the national minority under study. In order to carry out the research, the authors took advantage of the assistance of the largest center for people in a migrant situation in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship. From the beginning of March 2022 (after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine) until the end of 2023, 13,830 people were registered at the center, the vast majority of whom were women of Ukrainian origin. The Centre operates in Szczecin with a population of 391.6 thousand and in Stargard with a population of 66.9 thousand. In order to saturate the data and provide as broad as possible picture of the phenomenon under investigation, focus interviews were conducted in both cities. Each group consisted of 8 people and was purposively selected from Ukrainian refugee women who had applied for language classes, adaptation workshops etc. All respondents had the status of a war refugee. Among the 16 respondents, the majority stated that they had been in Poland for about a year and a half (12 people), the others for about a year or less. The youngest participant was 30 years old and the oldest was 56 years old. Most of them had a university education (12 people). Each interviewee had work experience in Ukraine, while in Poland 9 women did not work, 5 declared employment below their qualifications and only 2 did work in line with their qualifications acquired in Ukraine. A detailed breakdown of the data is presented in Table 1.

The research was conducted using a semi-structured scenario, which on the one hand, guided the interview and on the other hand, provided the possibility for new, unforeseen threads of conversation to emerge that could be an important element for further, broader exploration of the phenomenon under study. Both interviews were facilitated by a cultural consultant with knowledge of Russian as a common language of all female respondents. Questions were

asked in a way that took into account relevant ethical issues, e.g., female interviewees were not asked about their war experiences or directly about their current situation in the place of settlement. In this way, an attempt was made to protect them from secondary traumatization and discomfort caused by a sense of loss. It was up to the interviewees to decide how much they wanted to say about themselves. At the same time, they were assured of the possibility of free psychological support. In addition, they were offered support in the form of employment and business advice. Both interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and then transcribed. The collected material was analyzed and subjected to a coding process. Deductive and thematic coding were used. The collected data was categorized according to key capturing factors related to psychological safety in the course of social adaptation and entrepreneurial behaviors and intentions displayed.

Table 1. Overview of interviewees' characteristics

Interviewees' characteristics		Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2
		Numbers of participants	
age	30–34	1	1
	35–39	2	2
	40–44	4	2
	45–49	-	1
	over 50	1	2
education	medium	1	3
	higher	7	5
length of stay in Poland	up to six months	-	2
	approx. one year	1	1
	approx. one and a half years	7	5
employment in Ukraine	trade	2	-
	education	2	-
	industry	2	3
	health care	-	2
	accounting/banking	2	1
	entrepreneur	-	2
employment in Poland	education	1	-
	health care	-	1
	cleaning services	1	2
	others	-	2
	not working	6	3
length of employment in current workplace	up to three months	-	1
	approx. six months	-	3
	approx. one year	1	-
	approx. one and a half years	1	1

Source: own elaboration.

Findings

The research showed the great complexity of the adaptation process of Ukrainian refugee women in Poland. It confirmed the importance of the sense of safety in its course. The analysis of the respondents' statements made it possible to identify several leading areas in which safety can be considered. In both groups, attention was drawn to the compulsion to migrate and the associated necessity to change one's life – leaving loved ones, possessions, work. At the same time, the loss was pointed out in the face of many real problems and an uncertain future. This draws attention to the emotional aspect and the need for psychological safety. It has an impact on the adaptation process, also in the economic dimension, which involves taking entrepreneurial initiatives. Indeed, issues concerning material safety were often raised. Starting a business was indicated as an important factor in the search for financial safety. This raises issues of competence and the need to verify the extent to which female refugees have knowledge, skills and knowledge of Polish realities. Therefore, in order to stimulate entrepreneurial activities of this group of women, it is necessary to identify what support they need. The results of the research indicated a number of challenges faced by Ukrainian refugee women. Many problems relate to economic and professional/competitive issues. These problems stem from insufficient language skills and financial insecurity related to difficulties in finding employment. Respondents strongly feel a structural mismatch with the labor market in Poland. This causes a gradual lowering of their expectations which in turn lowers their self-esteem and results in diminished well-being. During the interview in the group of women living in the smaller city, a lot of tension could be felt and some statements were accompanied by strong emotions and feelings. Disappointment with the lack of opportunities to work in their current profession, the lack of recognition of their diplomas by Polish employers and the lack of respect for their qualifications contribute to the negative feelings of the women interviewed and even lead to frustration. Although some of the female interviewees seemed reconciled to this situation and described repeated attempts to find a job (only a few had employment at the time of the survey), one could sense a disillusionment with the situation. A lack of confidence, fear of the unknown and anxiety about an 'uncertain tomorrow' were prevalent among the women. Emotions were heightened by a sense of loss, in particular the loss of their previous life, home, family, job, and at the same time the need to find themselves in new conditions, in a new place. The forced situation they found themselves in somehow forced them to cope with the new reality. This resulted in numerous (often unsuccessful) attempts to take care of the economic aspect of their migration. Refugee women, especially from a smaller town, attached great importance to various types of benefits received for children, including '500+', and other elements of funded support granted to war refugees from Ukraine. They also expressed concern about losing them. A particular aspect of the refugee experience seems to be the increased sense of responsibility for own fate, as well as that of the family. This strong sense of responsibility, combined with a lack of economic security, seems

to stimulate the entrepreneurial behavior of the women interviewed. Hope for change and a great desire, even determination, to improve their material situation in Poland resounded among the female respondents. They declared a desire to develop, acquire new competences and take entrepreneurial action, including starting their own business. They justified their hitherto inactivity in this respect by unfamiliarity with legal and market regulations, etc., fear of making mistakes, fear of the unknown, and the consequences they would face if the venture failed. They talked about the barriers that give rise to their fears and inhibit their entrepreneurial drive. They indicated a lack of self-confidence, lack of knowledge of the market, lack of knowledge of what is in demand in Poland, lack of adequate social capital, including lack of knowledge of persons/institutions that could support them in such a venture. Some participants in the research conducted in Szczecin pointed to the fear of war and the fear that it will also reach Poland, which does not motivate them to take any initiatives. However, the challenges faced by Ukrainian refugee women in the process of social adaptation require them to demonstrate entrepreneurial behavior that will help them to regain their sense of agency and adjust more easily to life in Poland. Identifying factors that have a significant impact on the sense of safety of the women surveyed is an important element in the search for support. The data collected made it possible to identify the key dimensions in which Ukrainian refugee women perceive security. They also provided knowledge about the actions that the study female participants take to address safety in the broadest sense, thereby accelerating the adaptation process. A summary of these is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of focus group findings

Safety dimension codes	Positive and negative manifestations	Examples of statements by interviewees	Examples of actions taken by interviewees
Economic dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + appreciation of the "500 plus" benefit as an important element of financial support for mothers + appreciation of the possibility to apply for financial support, e.g. credit – fear of losing the so-called "40 +" support (for housing) – fear of higher costs, rising inflation, reduction of salaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + "It is easier to take a fair business loan in Poland than in Ukraine". [Z3] – "If you have money it may not be scary" [Z2]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → finding and renting accommodation yourself → raising children on your own and providing for possible financial benefits → in case of limited financial resources, renting a flat with others, e.g. with a sister → continuation of part-time employment in Ukraine in remote form, e.g. as a tutor → informal "side jobs" e.g. cooking
Emotional dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + a sense of "coping" independently with your child/children in a foreign country + strong sense of responsibility for your own and your family's fate + perceptible determination to act – large gap between what is here and what was in Ukraine (work, housing, help with children: family, caretaker etc.) – none of the above; sense of loss – fear of war, of the unknown tomorrow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + "There is such a goal going forward and we feel we can". + "I have a sense of responsibility not only for myself but also for my family;". "here more than at home" [Z8], – "The war puzzles us in some percentage that it will start here and the fear is to take such a risk" [Z8]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → establishing and maintaining contact with other refugees, which can help to build community and provide mutual support → using the services of aid organizations that offer psychological and other types of support → developing interests, which can contribute to a sense of meaning and purpose

cont. Table 2

Safety dimension codes	Positive and negative manifestations	Examples of statements by interviewees	Examples of actions taken by interviewees
Professional/competence dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + desire to raise their status in Poland – hope for development and change – frustration at the lack of recognition of education – frustration at the lack of employment for people 50+; – lack of a sense of empowerment when it comes to working in Poland – frustration due to the prolonged pause from work in the profession – lack of security in starting a business; lack of knowledge of laws, rules in force – fear of children's illnesses as an obstacle to taking up work (there was a grandmother in Ukraine, you could take sick leave) – permanent fear of not knowing the language, the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + "I want to change jobs and get to the next level" [S4]. – "I am exerting all my efforts to find a job, I have bookmarked online jobs that I browse, I send my cv, but for this job (according to the profession), I have no response" [S2]. – "I feel marginalized". – "I live in a block of flats and I would like to put up a banner outside saying I sell my products, but I don't know if I can?" [S8] – "Fear that you don't know the language, you don't know the law" [S7]. – "No knowledge of the law, you are the one who is afraid of the consequences" [S8]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → participation in language courses → job search directly and with the help of internet applications → use of the Employment Office for help with CV preparation → desire to develop oneself, participate in professional courses etc. → declared intention to start up a business in Poland → watching videos on doing business in Poland
Socio-cultural dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + openness of Poles, motivates entrepreneurial action – cultural and political differences 	<p>„In our country there are still these stereotypes: the woman sits at home with the child. There is no such partnership" [S3].</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → participation in cultural adaptation workshops → willingness to meet people who will share their knowledge and experience of doing business in Poland

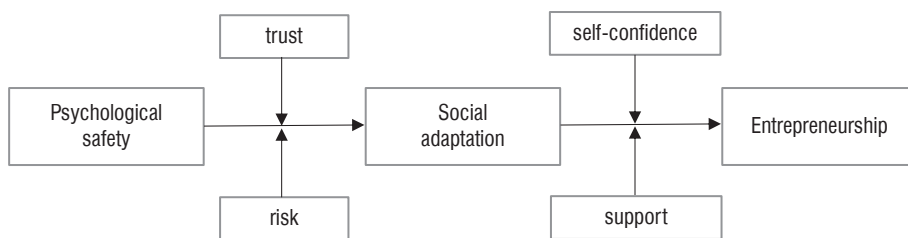
Source: own elaboration.

Discussion

On the basis of the material collected, a picture emerged of a Ukrainian refugee woman who, experiencing forced emigration and settling in Poland, on the one hand, has a strong sense of responsibility for her own fate, which prompts her to take measures to facilitate adaptation, and on the other hand, experiences many fears associated with the new situation. She is accompanied by a fear of war, weakened self-esteem and lack of self-confidence. She experiences difficulties in finding a job, even though she often looks for a one below her qualifications. This is confirmed by data presented by the Polish Economic Institute, which shows that war refugees are more likely to work in unskilled occupations, perceived as less attractive and with low barriers to entry [2023]. The difficulty of finding a job in the profession and the lack of recognition of diplomas exacerbate the already low self-esteem of refugee women. On the positive side, female participants in the study showed motivation for learning and self-development, as well as a desire to integrate. This is in line with the findings of Sliwak et al. [2015] that well-adjusted individuals confront the demands of their environment with their own capabilities and bring the initiative to join other people's activities. The women surveyed declared their desire to run their own business in Poland, stressing, however, the limitations,

including those related to lack of psychological security, self-confidence and belief in success. They pointed to deficiencies in economic education, knowledge of the Polish market as well as rules and regulations of the law that are so important for successful self-employment. This confirms the findings of Shinnar and Young [2008, after Kubiciel-Lodzińska, Maj, Bębenek, 2020] that cultural mismatch, lack of experience and knowledge are limitations in the decision of migrants to start their own business. According to Bielska (2022), there are two main categories underlying refugee decisions – risk and confidence. Risk refers in particular to the failure of the social adaptation process in the new place, the deterioration of the economic situation and the social position. Confidence, on the other hand, refers to possible opportunities, the belief in one's own adaptability, the possibility of acquiring/developing competences to access basic resources and meet needs. This leads to the conclusion that building psychological safety, can simultaneously build confidence and minimize risks, which positively influences the process of social adaptation. In addition, strengthening self-confidence and belief in the success of actions taken, while providing external support, can stimulate entrepreneurship among Ukrainian female war refugees (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.



Source: own elaboration.

Understanding these aspects makes it possible to adapt support strategies that take into account the specific needs of the women surveyed in different areas of their lives. This indicates the need for psychological, financial, social, educational, etc. support, provided both by state or local government bodies, as well as NGOs, aid institutions or society at large. It is important that the measures taken are implemented in close cooperation with Ukrainian refugees, taking their needs and experiences into account. This will have a positive impact on their quality of life and will also contribute to the successful social adaptation and the development of entrepreneurship in Poland. The research shows that there is a need for: improvement of psychological well-being, encouragement to take up new challenges, access to legal and social assistance, development of soft skills, including confidence building or stress management, support in gaining professional qualifications (access to language courses, entrepreneurship training, information on the local labor market), exchange of experience among refugee women, especially those already running a business. These initiatives will help refugee women to acquire business skills which can facilitate social adaptation and running a business, while contributing to an inclusive and supportive environment.

Summary

The research focused on the entrepreneurship of Ukrainian refugee women who settled in Poland after the outbreak of the war in 2022. The researchers directed their attention to the factors of psychological safety that affect the course of women's social adaptation and their relation to entrepreneurial activities. The largest number of foreigners in Poland are Ukrainian citizens, and the majority of them are women. This is therefore an important resource that can foster economic development. It was therefore reasonable to identify factors in this group that either favor or hinder the development of entrepreneurship. Ukrainian women, who are in the majority in the migrant group, start their own businesses in a way inadequate to this representation. This situation called for research and a search for answers about factors stimulating or limiting entrepreneurial activities of Ukrainian refugee women. By analyzing the research material collected from the two focus group interviews, challenges in the process of social adaptation, including those related to psychological safety, were identified and their relationship to Ukrainian refugee women's entrepreneurial endeavors was demonstrated. It should be emphasized that there is a growing awareness of the challenges of adaptation, integration and the need to include women in the labor market, both in the research field and in terms of institutional support. At the same time, there is little research on the drivers of entrepreneurship for this group. The study conducted fills this gap and expands the knowledge in this area. In particular, it points to the complexity and multidimensionality of the category of psychological safety and its importance for the smooth adaptation of Ukrainian refugee women and supporting their entrepreneurial activities. In addition, it contributes to the understanding of these interrelationships through actions such as building trust, minimizing risks, enhancing self-confidence and providing appropriate support. The findings also point to practical implications of our study. These involve taking concrete initiatives to build the psychological safety of Ukrainian refugee women, fostering social adaptation and entrepreneurial development. Our study shows that there is still a lot of work to be done in this area, which requires the involvement of many actors as well as migrant women themselves. Despite providing what we consider important findings, we are also aware of some limitations. These mainly relate to the cultural context and the presentation of the viewpoint of one group of refugee women who do not run their own businesses in Poland. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to know the opinions of refugee women entrepreneurs as well. Nevertheless, the presented study is a voice in the discussion on the factors supporting entrepreneurial attitudes of refugee women, and the proposals formulated as a result may be useful in guiding a broader research process, including quantitative methods.

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