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## Entrepreneurial Success among Single Mothers: The Role of Motivation and Passion

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### Abstract

Entrepreneurial motivation and passion are considered important elements in the recent development of entrepreneurial activities. Both motivation and passion are needed as a means to attain a greater height especially in an environment that requires a lot of concerted ideas and commitment. This study is intended to find out the dimensions that would help sustaining the interest of single mothers into entrepreneurship and later to prove the role of motivation and passions in explaining entrepreneurial success among single mothers. The findings is supported by a research survey, using cluster sampling technique that have been carried out in six (6) states in Malaysia (representing East, West, North and South of Peninsular Malaysia together with Sabah or Sarawak representing East Malaysia). The results of this study suggest that a motivational role does have significant influence on entrepreneurial passion which is later used to explain entrepreneurial success.

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## 1. Introduction

Based on Malaysia Home and Population Census in 2010 carried out by the Statistics Department, it was reported that a total of 831,860 women or 2.9% of the population were widowed, divorced with kids or permanently separated. Dasimah et al., (2009) discover that urban single mothers in Malaysia are largely from the lower income level. The data distribution of these single mothers consists of: 72% are widows 23% are divorcees, 4% husbands went missing and 1% abandoned by husbands. About 64% of them have 2-4 children with 92% of these women have monthly incomes of less than RM1, 000. Most of the single mothers in Malaysia facing different difficulties compared to normal parents especially in managing their family income. Hence, in order to generate the income for the family, these single mothers start operating their own small business although they lack of business skill. However, more often than not, some of these single mothers did not manage to continue their business due to loss of interest and motivation once they started the business.

In 2010 Women Development Department of Malaysia had collaborated with United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) and came up with National Action Plan to empower single mothers through three (3) main activities. The objectives of these three (3) activities include identify the socio economic profile of single mother; to review the effectiveness of the program and to provide continuous improvement in assisting and empowering single mothers in Malaysia. Consequently, under National Key Result Areas (NKRA) government aimed to train 4000 women as entrepreneurs from 2010 to 2012. The program also includes single mothers' entrepreneurial training.

This study was carried out because of the growing number of cases where by these single mother entrepreneurs had to discontinue their business venture. According to Ali et al., (2003), there are apparently various underlying reasons for this to happen including limited knowledge, lack of institutional support, competitions and etc. However, despite focusing on these failures, the study aims to unravel the motivation and passion theory behind these failures. Is it true that the single mother entrepreneurs loss their motivation and passion along their business journey? Judging from the current uncertain economic condition, entrepreneurial engagement requires more than just capital and ideas. It needs personal determination and most of all, Motivation and Passion. This study objective is to discover the significant relationship between Entrepreneurial Motivation Model and Entrepreneurial success. The Entrepreneurial Motivation Model focuses on risk taking and tolerance for ambiguity and passion that will lead to entrepreneurial success. The two (2) elements of risk taking and tolerance for ambiguity in Entrepreneurial Motivation Model develop by (Shanea, Locke & Christopher, 2003) and obsessive passion develop by Fisher and Langan-Fox (2009) are deployed to find the significant influence between these two (2) Motivation model and passion.

## 2. Literature Review

### *Entrepreneurial success*

Entrepreneurial success can be considered as one of the indicators to define the outcome after entrepreneur has gone through different obstacle in the business activities. The critical Entrepreneurial success factors include processes, benchmarks or components of a business that are essential for the business to be profitable and competitive in the market for the organization (Katz and Green, 2009). Paige and Littrell (2002) denote that success is defined by intrinsic criteria including freedom and independence, controlling a person's own future, and being one's own boss. On the other hand, extrinsic outcomes are, among others include, increased financial returns, personal income, and wealth. Common challenges such as financing, capacity, availability of market and so on have been added to the lists of obstacle faced by the entrepreneurs before they can celebrate the success of their business. The situations are more challenging especially for those who just venture into business world particularly the single mother. In fact, some of these single mothers entrepreneurs might not have business knowledge background or they lack of exposure. As a result, supports from various parties are required by these single mothers entrepreneurs who have to face the problems and challenges in their business dealings. In another research by Masuo et al., (2001) found that business success is commonly defined in terms of economic or financial measures which include return on assets, sales, profits, employees and survival rates. Other non-pecuniary measures include customer satisfaction,

personal development and personal achievement. Nguyen (2005) highlights that most women start their own business with an objective to provide additional flexibility and life balance. They juggled between becoming the breadwinner for the family as well as the primary caretaker of the children. Consistent with Franck (2012) findings in Malaysia, women made the choice to enter entrepreneurship based on the expected outcome for themselves and their families including gains in income, independence, flexibility, time spent with their children and access to a healthy social life. Battling continuous struggles and challenges, many stories of successful women entrepreneurs who make it big in the business world have been documented. Evidently, in previous study demonstrate how environments can influences the Entrepreneurial success through the development of their inner characteristics. Casson (1982) highlight the typical characteristics of successful entrepreneurs are the ability to take risks, innovativeness, and knowledge of how the market functions. Additionally, manufacturing know-how, marketing skills, business management skills and the ability to co-operate are also equally important entrepreneurs' abilities. Entrepreneurial activity not just depending on known fact but risk taking of uncertainty transformation and ability to transform into opportunity (Alvarez et al., 2013). Consequently, there are other researches discussing about the factors contributing to success of entrepreneurs in small business. Study by Yusuf (1995) suggest that the most critical factors contributing to business success consist of good management skills, access to financing, personal qualities, and satisfactory government support. Thus, women entrepreneurs manage to create new jobs for themselves and others. From a social perspective, being different i.e. bearing the single mothers entrepreneurs status also provide society with different solutions to management, organisation and business problems as well as to the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. As a result, women's entrepreneurial activities are increasingly promoted as a means for creating growth and development of the countries.

#### *Entrepreneurial passion*

Passion is needed as a means to achieve high levels of performance and to overcome barriers to change. There are different inspiration factors influencing a woman to become an entrepreneur, and the circumstances are unique to the person (Woldie and Adersua, 2004). Vallerand et al., (2003) introduced the concept of The Dualistic Model of Passion (DMP) which suggested that individual may experience passion in two (2) ways: The obsessive or the harmonious passion. In this study harmonious passion is used to explain entrepreneurial passion which is hypothesized by Vallerand's "emerge from autonomous internalization" as compared to obsessive passion. These show that passion will somehow influence individual entrepreneurs and they will be passionate regardless of the situations and conditions of their business venture. These entrepreneurs are passionate about all aspects of their lives. Moreover, entrepreneurial thoughts and behaviors, and by extension emotions, are not a stable characteristics that differentiate some people from others across all situations (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Instead, both individual and venture must be considered, as it is their interaction that drives entrepreneurial success (Shook et al., 2003).

#### *Tolerance for ambiguity*

Tolerance of ambiguity is an emotional reaction toward ambiguous environment, complex and changing situation (Bushan and Amal, 1986). Entrepreneurs continually face more uncertainty in their everyday environment than do managers of established organizations; entrepreneurs who remain in their jobs are likely to score high on tests for this trait than would managers. According to Furnham and Ribchester (1995), the entrepreneurs who have low tolerance of ambiguity, will experience stress, reacts prematurely, avoids ambiguity and seek for certainty. For that reason, as entrepreneur they must have high tolerance of ambiguity since they will experience the ambiguous situation such as challenging, desirable and interesting. These situations requires individual to think creatively and construct an innovative perspective approach due to changes and problem (Kirton, 1981). Due to the current situation, entrepreneur must be able to cope with ambiguity since the ability to react quickly and able to adjust successfully will be a critical factor that need to be increase (Cristos and Kleanthis, 2011).

### Risk taking

Risk is the critical element in entrepreneurial decision making but effect of risk, risk perception and risk propensities on entrepreneurial choice are not explicitly examine (Forlani and Mullins, 2000). McClelland (1961) claimed that individuals with high achievement needs would have moderate propensities to take risk. In addition, Lumpkin and Dess (1996) argued that in achieving entrepreneurial needs, the entrepreneurial orientation consist of the element of autonomy, innovative, risk taking, proactive and competitive aggressiveness. Entrepreneur must be able to face calculated risk in order to accomplish entrepreneurial goal. Understanding the potential of risk, it can be characterized based on degree of decision making will be made. More risk involve when the uncertainty of the potential outcome, high degree of variability in possible outcome and the potential of extreme outcome (Desislava and Matilda, 2011).

Therefore, base on the literature review, this study has identified the independent variables namely tolerance for ambiguity and risk taking. The intervening variable is entrepreneurial passion and dependent variable is the entrepreneurial success.

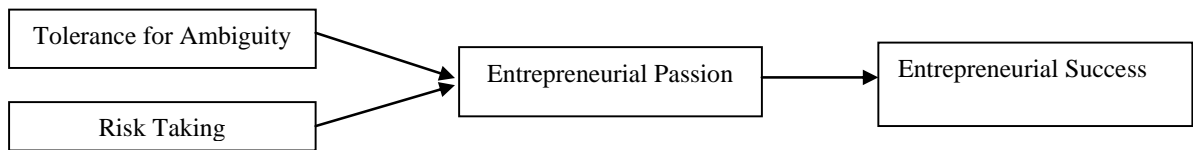


Fig. 1. Hypothesis structural framework

The framework is being proposed together with three (3) testable hypotheses to be analysed:

- H1: There is a significant influence between Tolerance for Ambiguity and Entrepreneurial Passion
- H2: There is a significant influence between Risk Taking and Entrepreneurial Passion.
- H3: There is a significant influence of Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial Success.

### 3. Method

In this study, a quantitative approach was used with strategies of inquiry that involve sequential quantitative data collection through questionnaire survey. The questionnaire is developed by using nominal scaling and Likert scale. All of the items were measured using a seven-point Likert Scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree to 7” “Strongly Agree”. Data for the research were collected by using personally administered questionnaire, conducted by a number of trained research assistants under the close supervisions of the researchers. The questionnaires were designed based on the variables indicated in the research framework shown in Figure 1.

For the purpose of this study, cluster sampling is used, as it represents the whole population of the study and it is conducted within the time frame effectively and economically. The respondents are chosen based on the information gathered from the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development under Department of Women Development and Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia in representing single mother. Data will be collected from respondents in five (5) different states namely Terengganu (represent East Coast, Peninsular Malaysia); Kuala Lumpur (represent West Coast, Peninsular Malaysia); Segamat (represent Southern region, Peninsular Malaysia); Alor Star (represent Northern region, Peninsular Malaysia) and Kota Kinabalu (represent East of Malaysia). Roscoe (1975) mentioned that the appropriate sample size must not be less than 30 and not more than 500. Therefore, 300 questionnaires were distributed but only 246 can be used for the purpose of the study. The remaining 54 questionnaires were void because of poor or incomplete data. The data were then analysed and tested through regression analysis.

## 4. Result and discussion

### 4.1. Reliability of measures

The inter-item consistency reliability or the Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients of the variables are obtained as shown in Table 1. The results show that all Cronbach’s alpha for the variables is above 0.5. Based on the result of Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient value, this questionnaire is allowed and applicable. The internal consistency reliability of the measures used in this study is acceptably good. (Sekaran, 2003).

Table 1. Reliability.

| Instruments             | No of Items | Result |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------|
| Risk Taking             | 7           | .725   |
| Tolerance for Ambiguity | 8           | .602   |
| Entrepreneurial Passion | 7           | .526   |

### 4.2. Correlations Among Variables

Pearson Correlation is used to test for association. From the table 2, it seems to indicate that all dimensions of independents variables that consist of Risk Taking and Tolerance for Ambiguity demonstrates a significant correlation with Entrepreneurial Passion (r = 0.400 and 0.466 respectively). The dimension of another variable (Entrepreneurial Passion; r = .285) proves a significant correlation with Entrepreneurial Success.

Table 2. Correlations.

|                                |                 | <b>Risk Taking</b> | <b>Tolerance for Ambiguity</b> | <b>Entrepreneurial Passion</b> | <b>Entrepreneurial Success</b> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Risk Taking</b>             | Pearson         | 1                  | .477**                         | .400**                         | .383**                         |
|                                | Correlation     |                    | .000                           | .000                           | .000                           |
|                                | Sig. (2-tailed) | 246                | 246                            | 246                            | 246                            |
|                                | N               |                    |                                |                                |                                |
| <b>Tolerance for Ambiguity</b> | Pearson         | .477**             | 1                              | .466**                         | .550**                         |
|                                | Correlation     | .000               |                                | .000                           | .000                           |
|                                | Sig. (2-tailed) | 246                | 246                            | 246                            | 246                            |
|                                | N               |                    |                                |                                |                                |
| <b>Entrepreneurial Passion</b> | Pearson         | .400**             | .466**                         | 1                              | .285**                         |
|                                | Correlation     | .000               | .000                           |                                | .000                           |
|                                | Sig. (2-tailed) | 246                | 246                            | 246                            | 246                            |
|                                | N               |                    |                                |                                |                                |
| <b>Entrepreneurial Success</b> | Pearson         | .383**             | .550**                         | .285**                         | 1                              |
|                                | Correlation     | .000               | .000                           | .000                           |                                |
|                                | Sig. (2-tailed) | .246               | 246                            | 246                            | 246                            |
|                                | N               |                    |                                |                                |                                |

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

### 4.3. Multiple Regression

Further investigation using multiple regression analysis is also being conducted. From the Table 3, the results were statistically significant  $F = 42.220$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and the total variance explained by the model as a whole as 25.2%. The results further show that there is a significant relationship between two dimensions which are; Risk Taking ( $\beta = 0.231$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) and Tolerance for Ambiguity ( $\beta = 0.355$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) with Entrepreneurial Passion at 5% at significant level.

The Multiple Correlation Coefficient (R), using all the predictors simultaneously, is 50.8% and Adjusted R-Squared is 25.2% of the variance in the Entrepreneurial Passion that can be predicted from the Risk Taking and Tolerance for Ambiguity. Furthermore, the results indicate the possibility of Multicollinearity in this study is low due to the tolerance value more than 0.1 and Variance Inflation Factor value less than 10.

In order to determine the best set of predictor variable in predicting Entrepreneurial Passion, a stepwise regression method was used. Based on the stepwise method used, all predictor variables were found to be of significance in explaining an Entrepreneurial Passion. The two predictor variables are Risk Taking and Tolerance for Ambiguity. As depicted in table 3, the largest beta coefficient is 0.355 which is for Tolerance for Ambiguity.

Table 3. Summary of Regression Analysis.

| Summary |       | ANOVA  |       | Dimensions              | $\beta$ | T     | p     | Collinearity Statistics |       |
|---------|-------|--------|-------|-------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| R       | $R^2$ | F      | Sig.  |                         |         |       |       | Tolerance               | VIF   |
| .508    | .252  | 42.220 | 0.000 | Risk Taking             | 0.231   | 3.670 | 0.000 | 0.772                   | 1.295 |
|         |       |        |       | Tolerance for Ambiguity | 0.355   | 5.653 | 0.000 | 0.772                   | 1.295 |

Table 4. Summary of Regression Analysis.

| Summary |       | ANOVA  |       | Dimensions              | $\beta$ | T     | p     | Collinearity Statistics |       |
|---------|-------|--------|-------|-------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| R       | $R^2$ | F      | Sig.  |                         |         |       |       | Tolerance               | VIF   |
| .285    | .077  | 21.572 | 0.000 | Entrepreneurial Passion | 0.285   | 4.645 | 0.000 | 1.000                   | 1.000 |

The dimension of another variable is being conducted using multiple regression analysis. As shown in Table 4, the R-squared of 0.077 implies that the predictor variable explain about 7.7% of the variance in the dependent variable. The ANOVA table revealed that the F-statistics (21.572) is large and the corresponding p-value is highly significant (0.000) or lower than alpha value of 0.05. The results further show that there is a significant relationship between Entrepreneurial Passion ( $\beta = 0.285$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) with Entrepreneurial Success at 5% at significant level. Additionally, the results indicate the possibility of Multicollinearity in this study is low due to the tolerance value more than 0.1 and Variance Inflation Factor value less than 10.

## 5. Limitation and future research

There are several limitations that need to be considered. First, this study involved an intrinsic motivation as compared to extrinsic motivations. Therefore, there is a driven needs to tackle the intrinsic parts of the respondents. Furthermore, geographical studies can be widen in the studies because of the gap between urban and rural single mother entrepreneurs. Finally, for future research, we encourage replications of this study in other settings and to include other variables of motivations and passions.

## 6. Conclusion

The result of the analysis suggests that the proposed objectives have been achieved. The first objective is to investigate influence between independence variables which are motivations: Tolerance for Ambiguity and Risk Taking with Entrepreneurial Passion. The second objective is to analyse the influence between Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial Success. With the support from the analysis, we hypothesised that Entrepreneurial

Motivations does have significant influence on Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial Success. These findings are similar with the study by Alam, Jani & Omar (2011) which also confirms the role of motivations in entrepreneurial success.

The two (2) independence variables namely Tolerance and Risk Taking have significant influence with Entrepreneurial Passion. It shows that Tolerance for Ambiguity and Risk Taking will influence single mother's passion in engaging themselves with entrepreneurial activity. Mitchell et Al., (2004) reveal that risk taking is a commitment to venturing and receptivity into the idea to start getting involved in the entrepreneurial behaviour. We proposed that, single mother's understanding of the risk will help them increase their entrepreneurial passion hence assist them in their entrepreneurial pursuit. Comprehensive understanding on entrepreneur risks increase entrepreneurial opportunity and prompt them to venture into wider business market. According to He et A.,l (2007) women are more risk sensitive in the context of business loss and risk challenges. The second objective is to identify the significant influence between Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial Success. The analysis found that there is a significant influence between these two (2) variables. From the findings, we purported that single mothers need to understand risk and entrepreneurial ambiguity so that they can manage and understand the current entrepreneurial challenges and situation. The right motivations and passion will help increase their passion to engage in successful entrepreneurial ventures.

## **7. Implication and recommendation**

Many programs have been developed and planned for single mothers' entrepreneurial development such as training programs organized by the department of women development and other relevant agencies. Numerous programs are being developed to train single mother to be skilled entrepreneurs. Therefore, this study will benefit the single mothers' entrepreneurial development program. Among the programs identified to be suitable for single mothers entrepreneurs include training and developing risk taking ability, entrepreneurial passion and tolerance for ambiguity. The implication of this study on the single mother entrepreneurial passion is the development of comprehensive understanding on the current needs of the single mothers entrepreneurs. Thus, this will help the ministry and agencies to develop relevant programs related to risk taking ability and tolerance for ambiguity. Further, it will assists to improve the survival of single mothers in entrepreneurial success. This study can be used as an input in assisting the National Action Plan to empower single mothers as entrepreneurs.

Some of the recommendation from this study identify that single mother entrepreneurs should be help and given support for the sake of their continuous business survival. Programs that help single mothers to enhance their ability in risk taking and tolerance for ambiguity should be develop. This will help them not just to survive in the business but also help single mothers to improve their income level by exploring new business dimension or for the purpose of business expansion. The single mothers entrepreneurs have been given assistance through a number of government supported programs. In conclusion, this study can be used by the ministry and related agencies in helping to empower single mothers in entrepreneurship continuous development.

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