

# Does Work-Family Conflict affect Women Entrepreneurial Success?

**Maliani Mohamad**

School of Business Management (COB), Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia.

**Muhammad Shukri Bakar**

School of Business Management, College of Business (COB), Universiti  
Utara Malaysia, Malaysia

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## **Abstract**

*The field of entrepreneurship in Malaysia is no longer dominated by men. Increasingly, women's entrepreneurship has been recognized as an important untapped source of economic growth. Although their participations are still small, factors such as strong government support in terms of promoting equal opportunities and the provision of better access to business skills and knowledge are pushing more and more women towards entrepreneurship. However, having to assume multiple roles both in relation to business and family affairs has given rise to several encumbered implications. Given a multitude of challenges faced, concerns are raising over the consequences of inter-role conflict exacting upon women entrepreneurs while they try to balance the incompatibility of demands between work role and family role. Hence this paper tries to examine effects of work-family conflict on women entrepreneurs as they attempt to steer their businesses to success.*

**Keywords:** Women Entrepreneurial Success, Work-Family Conflict

## **1.0 Introduction**

The field of entrepreneurship is currently no longer monopolized by the men as recorded participation by businesses led or owned by women entrepreneurs are quite noticeable in Malaysia in recent years. Several reasons were cited by various researchers in explaining the increasing trend in the involvement of women entrepreneurs in the past few decades, among them are; the existence of opportunities (Alam, Jani, & Omar, 2011), a source of family income, support from the government (Ahmad, 1998) and the advancement of technology (Liao & Welsch, 2003). From time management standpoint, entrepreneurship is perceived to offer more flexibility in which women entrepreneurs can have autonomy in how they set schedule and structure their time as compared to when they work as wage earners in both public and private sectors (Rao, 2014). This flexibility provides women entrepreneurs opportunity to balance their act, that is finding time to cope with their household affairs while at other suitable time attending to their business matters (Alam, Senik, & Jani, 2012).

Traditionally most of the Malaysian women were the home makers, confined to their homes while performing the daily household chores, taking care the requirements of their children and husbands (Mahmood, Mustapa & Jamaluddin, 2010). However, the past few decades have seen the expanding role of women at the country's workplaces. Increasingly women's workforce are making significant contributions to Malaysia's economy. As of 2014, World Bank Report shows that 45 percent of women participated in Malaysia's labour market (Department of Statistics, 2015). However, quite unfortunately, the supposed high women labour force participation does not translate to high women to men entrepreneurship rate. This untapped entrepreneurial potential.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1. Women Entrepreneurial Success**

Limited studies have been done in search of the success factors of women entrepreneurs (Alam et al., 2011; Franck, 2012; Raman, Anantharaman, & Ramanathan, 2013; Yen Teoh & Chong, 2014) and also on barriers to success of women entrepreneurs (Ilhaamie, Arni, Rosmawani, & Al-banna, 2014). Most studies on success of women entrepreneurs mostly done in qualitative method as the definition of success is very subjective. The measurement of success is based on different perspective and as to that reason, the qualitative method is more preferred. By implementing qualitative method, researchers conducted interviews to investigate the success factors of women entrepreneurs. Among the previous researchers who implemented qualitative method to investigate the success of women entrepreneurs were conducted in developed and western cultural spaces.

The success of entrepreneurial is often contribute by financial knowledge, prior experience in the specific business sector, and desire for independence (Buttner & Moore, 1997). The meaning of success is equivalent to continued business operations and the opposite, failure means going out of the business or stop from doing the business (Rashid, Ngah, Mohamed, & Mansor, 2015).

### **2.2. Work-Family Conflict**

Work-family conflict typically is defined as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. Work-family conflict or enrichment occurs when behaviors, moods, stresses, and emotions from work bring bad or good effects into family ((Hamid & Amin, 2014). Work-family conflict was first defined by Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek and Rosenthal in 1964 as whom examined the inter-role people experienced conflict between their work and other life roles.

According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) an examination of the literature on conflict between work and family roles suggests that work-family conflict exists in three circumstances which are when:-

(a) Time devoted to the requirements of one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another;

- (b) Strain from participation in one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another and;
- (c) Specific behaviors required by one role make it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another.

Work-family conflict arises from work domain and family domain as married couples usually play more than one role in the family. Kim and Ling (2001) studied on three division of the work-family conflict which namely as job spouse conflict, job parent conflict and job-homemaker conflict. The antecedents of work-family conflict are divided into work characteristics (work hours, schedule inflexibility and work stressors) while family characteristics (number and age of the children and the family support). Kim and Ling (2001) analyze job satisfaction, marital satisfaction and life satisfaction as the outcomes of the work-family conflict.

### **2.3. Women Entrepreneurial Success and Work-Family Conflict.**

Women entrepreneurs experience unique difficulties and problems which limit their economic performance and jeopardize their personal feelings of achievement and satisfaction. One of the unique problems is balancing the conflicting role demands of work and family as women play a crucial role as supporters to their families (Ekpe, 2011).

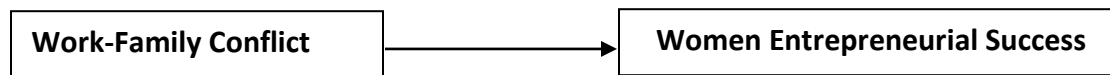
Women often driven to be an entrepreneur by the desire to do something good, something right or something that would help others. Likewise, there are many challenges in business such as limited capital, knowledge, lack of industry experience and work-life roles balance at the starting point as well as to grow and survive in the business. Pursuant to (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003), families play an important role in venture creation process and therefore their role deserves greater importance in the entrepreneurship. Since the family provide a huge impact on a person's of women entrepreneurs, the success or failure could occur when there are work-family conflict. There is still a lack in studies on the relationship between success of women entrepreneurs and work-family conflict although studies on entrepreneurship have acknowledged the potential constraints on business growth and success arising from conflicts between work and family demands.

While Parasuraman et al.(1996) reveal that gender influences the career success and well-being of entrepreneurs primarily through its effects on time commitment to work and time commitment to family, Nasurdin, Ahmad and Mohamed Zainal ( 2013) found out that male and female entrepreneurs tend to similar in work-family conflict which not conform to traditional gender role perspective. The inconsistencies in the findings is a gap in the research of relationship between work-family conflict and women entrepreneurial success. Therefore, it is a vital to examine whether work-family conflict affect women entrepreneurial success.

### **Hypotheses**

- H1 Work-family conflict negatively associated with women entrepreneurial success.
- H2 Work-family conflict positively associated with women entrepreneurial success

### Conceptual Framework



*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework*

### Implication, Future Research and Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between WFC and women entrepreneurial success and to see the significance on the relationship. This study has important impact on success of women entrepreneurship as well as able further enrich the empirical studies in the area of entrepreneurship. Generally this study could explain the current situation regarding the WFC in entrepreneurship among women entrepreneurs.

The implications of this study can be utilized to women entrepreneurs to examine, observe, investigate and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of entrepreneurship in order to survive and succeed in the business. In addition, information on the findings of this study may serve as a stimulus and a means for the national leaders in providing assistance and encouragement for the women in order not to despair and easily deterred as their respective fields. The parties concerned can also take a pro-active approach to improve time management skills between business and the family management in order to avoid conflict. This study is also expected to be utilized toward the positive to stimulate the development and the achievement of women entrepreneurs and the women in particular in order not to be left behind in the era of globalization.

This proposal is a concept proposal. Therefore there is no empirical evidence provided. The proposed future research will validate the model analysis with evidence of empirical findings regarding the relationship that are disclosed. The study of women entrepreneurs particularly important to ensure that women entrepreneurs could survive in the world of business and entrepreneurship. A study to find out the factors to success of women entrepreneurs as well as the barriers to success is essential to be identified in order to assist entrepreneurs continue be successful in the field of entrepreneurship.

### Corresponding Author

Dr. Muhammad Shukri Bakar  
Business Management and Entrepreneurship Department,  
School of Business Management (COB),  
Universiti Utara Malaysia,  
06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia.  
shukribakar@uum.edu.my

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