

Push and Pull motivation factors for Women Entrepreneurship: A Study on Women Headed Families in Ampara District

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Abstract

Introduction:

Entrepreneurial motivations are often defined as “push” or “pull” categories. To date, research has focused on the factors motivating men and women separately. What is missing from this research is an analysis of the particular group that is women headed families and an exploration of what this means in terms of push-pull factors. This paper aims to contribute by applying the existing theory on push and pull factors to explore the nature of entrepreneurial motivations among women headed families in Ampara District. Ampara and Batticala districts in Sri Lanka are situated in the Eastern part of the island which were affected by thirty years domestic war and tsunami hit in 2004. Due to this, most of the women in this district have become bread winners of their families and engaged in entrepreneurial activities to save their families. Accordingly 14.1 % of the families in Ampara district have become women headed families such as loss of husband, divorced/ abandoned by the husband, disappearance of elderly male member of the family, differentially able elderly male member, heading the family due to other reason (Source: Statistical Information Women Headed Households- 2010, Care International Sri Lanka, 2010).

Purpose: Entrepreneurial motivations are the most important factors in order to assure their survival in the industry. Hence, the research question is “To what extent the push and pull motivation factors influence to women entrepreneurship?” Accordingly, the research aims to study the push and pull motivation factors for women entrepreneurship in micro businesses among women headed families in Sri Lanka.

Design/methodology/approach– This exploratory study uses a semi-structured and face-to-face interview with 110 women entrepreneurs using simple random sampling method and the research duration was around six months.

Findings: The significance of the study especially to women entrepreneurs in micro business sector which are contributing a lot for the development of national economies. Many women entrepreneurs in developing countries such as Sri Lanka face many problems and challenges while they are operating their businesses. Findings suggest that women appeared similarly motivated by a combination of push and pull factors. However it was found the women entrepreneur in women headed families are motivated more by push factors rather than pull factors. Death of the bread winner, disabled male member in the family, sudden fall in family income and permanent inadequacy in income of the family are some of the main reasons for their entrepreneurial activity rather than their desire to evaluate their talents, need for achievement and to get recognition Accordingly, the findings might be immense value to enhance women entrepreneurship in developing countries, such as Sri Lanka, as much research has not been conducted in this regard.

Conclusion: Most of the women entrepreneurs in women headed families are motivated by push factors for entrepreneurship in micro businesses. Steps are being taken to promote women entrepreneurship. They should be moulded properly with entrepreneurial qualities to meet the challenges in national and global markets and be competent enough to survive in the industry by means of showing the pull factors and positive sides of the entrepreneurship.

Key Words: Push and pull factors, Entrepreneurial motivation, women entrepreneurs, women headed families, micro businesses

Introduction:

Entrepreneurs & Entrepreneurship is the talk of town, everybody is discussing and thinking about this. Government is seeing entrepreneurship the only solution of its increasing employment demand and that's true. An entrepreneur is a true wealth creator, a magician who creates wonders out of nothing and that's how countries are growing. Sri Lankan entrepreneurs also have done great things in past and seems committed to follow in the future. Resurgence of entrepreneurship is the need of an hour. Women entrepreneurs especially in micro businesses play a crucial role in rural economic development. Entrepreneurship is an attitude that reflects an individual's motivation and capacity to identify an opportunity and to pursue it in order to produce new value or economic success. This attitude is crucial for competitiveness, because new entrepreneurial initiatives raise the territory's productivity, increasing competitive pressure and encourage innovation. Entrepreneurship plays an important role in the economy of a country (Stokes.D, 1998) & (Zhao, F. (2005).

The role of women entrepreneurship is inevitable in any country. Nowadays women enter in almost all professions such as trade, industry, engineering, technology. They are willing to take up business and contribute to the nations development. Thus, their role is being recognized and steps are being taken to empower and promote female entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurship must be moulded properly with entrepreneurial qualities and traits, and skills to meet the global changes in trends and be competent enough to survive for excellence in entrepreneurial arena.

Women entrepreneurs envisage many problems while operating their businesses. Dual role to play at workplace and at home, non awareness of facilities provided by the institutions, competition with large scale units, and problems related to marketing are some of them.

Women entrepreneurs especially in micro businesses play a crucial role in rural economic development. Starting a new business is a vital decision of one's life which has impact upon various aspects of life on different stages. That makes it interesting to study those factors which motivates someone to take such important steps as it deals with lot of courage and timely emergence of opportunity. Gilad and Levine (1986) as in Hughes (2003) proposed two closely related explanations of entrepreneurial motivation, 'Push' theory and 'Pull' theory. The Push theory argues that individuals are pushed into entrepreneurship by negative external factors like job dissatisfaction, fire from job etc. While the Pull theory suggests that individuals are attracted to entrepreneurial activities in order to seek independence, to use their skills and experience in optimal way etc. The present study makes an attempt to find out main push and pull reasons behind the starting of the venture by women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka.

Entrepreneurial Motivation

Motivation is an important and interesting part of an individual's start up process. It is important to give youngsters as much neutral information as possible about entrepreneurship. In this way we give the opportunity to youngsters themselves to become interested and motivated towards entrepreneurship. Every individual must be empowered to make his/her own decision in this kind of vocational choice.

One important aspect of starting or running an own business is an entrepreneur's motivation. Women and men have numerous reasons why they choose to become an entrepreneur like personal achievement, power, wealth or creation of an business idea. One's motivation may be dependent on the success criteria an entrepreneur sets for the own business. Manolova et al. (2008) identified that little is known about women's motivation to act entrepreneurial, although the women owned businesses are increasing. However Orhan and Scott (2001) state that except for the "glass ceiling" barrier women and men do not differ in entrepreneurial motivation. Nevertheless, there are differences in aspects that influence the entrepreneur's motivation like, the level of self-efficacy, push and pull factors, and opportunity recognition. Whereas, Brush (1992) remarks that there are differences between male and female business owners. She points out that men are more motivated by economic motivation factors as wealth creation, and for women creating a flexible work-family balance is a high motivator. According to Winn (2005), funding and family support are two main obstacles for women when choosing for entrepreneurship. Greene et al. (2003) point out in

their literature review that research in several countries shows that motivation factors leading to entrepreneurship are the same for women and is not dependent on the country.

Push and Pull factors

Push and pull factors are regularly used in female entrepreneurship research to describe motivations for women to choose entrepreneurship as a career. Pushed factors are those circumstances or conditions that create the necessity for women to choose entrepreneurship. Whereas pull factors are more opportunity-driven, where women are challenged by an opportunity and want to explore their skills and work experiences. Women who are 'pulled' into entrepreneurship are more likely to be more growth-oriented than women who are 'pushed' into entrepreneurship by external circumstances (Morris et al., 2006). Thus, the choice for becoming an entrepreneur may be a combination of both pull and push factors. Push factors mean those influences, which push individuals toward entrepreneurship.

Besides the economic necessity, as unemployment, family support or a divorce, women also choose for entrepreneurship as a career because of dissatisfaction with wage employment (Orhan and Scott, 2001). Women usually are more client- and employee-focused than men and weigh social contribution higher than wealth creation, these differences create frustrations for women working in corporate positions (Orhan and Scott, 2001; Brush, 1992; Buttner and Moore, 1997). Also for women hitting the 'glass ceiling' and thus not being able to reach higher executive positions is a reason why women choose for entrepreneurship (Orhan and Scott, 2001; Buttner and Moore, 1997).

Many entrepreneurs are motivated as much or more by entrepreneurial rewards than by escapist mind set (push strategy) (Longnecker, et al., 1997 & Stokes, 1998). According to Longnecker et al. (1997), "individuals are pulled toward entrepreneurship by a number of powerful incentives or rewards. Those are Profit: freedom from the limits of standardized pay for standardized work; Independence: freedom from supervision and rules of bureaucratic organizations; Satisfying way of life: freedom from routine, boring and unchallenging jobs".

Entrepreneurs expect a return that will not only compensate them for the time and money they invest but also reward them well for the risks and initiative they take in operating their own business. Freedom to operate independently is another reward of entrepreneurship. Its importance as a motivational factor is evidenced by a survey of small business owners. "Thirty-eight percent of those who had left jobs at other companies said their main reason for leaving was that they wanted to be their own boss (Longnecker, et. al., 1997). The existing literature on autonomy as a start up motive is not only small, it is also weakly developed.

A number of pull motivation factors are identified in the literature including: personal freedom, independence gained from being one's own boss, personal satisfaction, a less rigid, more flexible lifestyle and greater job satisfaction. A study by Fielden et al. (2000) as in Walker and Brown (2004) indicated that, a large proportion of their sample (88%) listed making money as a motivation; however, 71% mentioned that job satisfaction, greater independence, creating opportunities, encountering new challenges and pursuing one's own interest were criteria which were of real importance to them.

The expression of being either 'pulled' or 'pushed' into starting a business has been used extensively in the literature. 'Pull' motivation is associated with business venture. The opposite motivation is 'push' which is associated with a possible equally strong desire, but based on external negative reason.

Logically, there is no reason to expect a direct relationship between these external forces and entrepreneurial activity. For example, job displacement may be a triggering event leading to entrepreneurship. However, displaced workers will not pursue this career unless there is a more direct, process-oriented linkage. Although external forces may provide a more conducive environment supporting entrepreneurship, it may be just as likely that other career option may be pursued (Segal et al., 2005). Even when those three characteristics are either pushing or pulling individuals toward entrepreneurship, such individuals are still unlikely to take action unless another element is present, they must perceive entrepreneurship as both desirable and feasible.

Women Headed Families Information

Ampara district in Sri Lanka is situated in the Eastern part of the island which was, affected by thirty years domestic war and tsunami hit in 2004. Due to this, most of the women in this district have become bread winners of their families and engaged in entrepreneurial activities to save their families. Accordingly 14.1 % of the families in Ampara district have become women headed families such as loss of husband, divorced/ abandoned by the husband, disappearance of elderly male member of the family, differentially able elderly male member, heading the family due to other reason (Source: Statistical Information Women Headed Households- 2010, Care International Sri Lanka, 2010).

District Summary Ampara District

Number of DS Division	: 20
Number of GS Division	: 506
Number of Families	: 204,128
Total Population	: 553,285
Total WH Families	: 28869

Type of WHF	No. of WHF
Loss of husband	21218
Divorced/ abandoned by the husband	4542
Disappearance of elderly male member of the family	305
Differentially able elderly male member	475
Heading the family due to other reason	2329
Total	28,869

(Source: Statistical Information Women Headed Households- Ampara District 2010, Care International Sri Lanka, 2010)

Design/methodology/approach–

This exploratory study uses a semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with 110 women entrepreneurs using simple random sampling method. and the research duration was around six months.

The operational definition for the pull factors refers influences, which pull people towards entrepreneurship. The same influence can become a push factor for one individual but may be a pull factor for another. Unemployment is one example of that. Push and Pull factors have an impact, for example, on an individual’s motivation.

Findings:

The significance of the study especially to women entrepreneurs in micro business sector which are contributing a lot for the development of national economies. Many women entrepreneurs in developing countries such as Sri Lanka face many problems and challenges while they are operating their businesses such as existence and survival, innovation, dual role play at business place and home, non awareness of facilities provided by business developing supporting institutions, competition with large scale units, problems related to marketing etc.

The table 1 shows the different opinions obtained from the respondents of their business start-ups.

Strategy	Influencer for Entrepreneurial Activity	Percentage
“Push”	Death of breadwinner	69%
	Disabled male member in the family	41%
	Sudden fall of family income	37%
	Permanent inadequacy of income	52%
	Job dissatisfaction	09%
	Fire from job	11%
“Pull”	Need for achievement	13%

	Got recognition/Social status	04%
	Use skills and talents	45%
	Independent	28%
	Wealth or creation	14%
	Power	02%
	Flexible life style	21%
	Personal satisfaction	05%

(Source: Survey data)

Women entrepreneurs in Ampara district women headed families started their businesses mostly by push factors. That is, death of bread winner 69%, permanent inadequacy of income 52%, Disabled male member in the family 41%, Sudden fall of family income 37%, Fire from job 11%, and Job dissatisfaction 09%. As the pull factors for their business start up showed that 45% of using their skills and talents, 28% of independent, 21% of flexible lifestyle, 14% of wealth or creation, 13% of need for achievement, and 5% of personal satisfaction. Accordingly, the findings might be immense value to enhance women entrepreneurship in developing countries, such as Sri Lanka, as much research has not been conducted in this regard.

Conclusion:

For some women having an own business means creating better conditions for oneself compared to salary employment. Also, independency, creativity, social status and flexibility are a major reflection of pull factors (Buagh et al., 2006; Orhan and Scott, 2001). The need to create a better work-life balance is another reason (Yetim, 2008) for women to start their own business. Stokes, D. (1998) and others proposed two closely-related explanations of entrepreneurial motivation, the “push” theory and the “pull” theory. The “push” theory argues that individuals are pushed into entrepreneurship by negative external forces, such as job dissatisfaction, difficulty of finding employment, insufficient salary, or inflexible work schedule. The “pull” theory contends that individuals are attracted into entrepreneurial activities seeking independence, self-fulfillment, wealth, and other desirable outcomes. Research (Keeble *et al.* 1992; Orhan and Scott, 2001) indicated that individuals become entrepreneurs primarily due to “pull” factors, rather than “push” factors. (Cited in Segal et al., 2005).

According to Jodyanne K. (2009) both women and men appeared similarly motivated by a combination of push and pull factors. Women were more influenced by a desire for independence; women considered their children as motivators more so than did men; men were influenced more by job dissatisfaction than were women. The discussion focuses on analyzing the nature of gender differences rather than merely their incidence.

Findings suggest that women appeared similarly motivated by a combination of push and pull factors. However it was found the women entrepreneur in women headed families are motivated

more by push factors rather than pull factors. Death of the bread winner, disabled male member in the family, sudden fall in family income and permanent inadequacy in income of the family are some of the main reasons for their entrepreneurial activity rather than independence, need for achievement, wealth or creation, power, flexibility life style, personal satisfaction and to get recognition. However, considerable women in the women headed families have been motivated towards entrepreneurship to evaluate their talents,

Most of the women entrepreneurs in women headed families are motivated by push factors for entrepreneurship in micro businesses. Steps are being taken to promote women entrepreneurship. They should be moulded properly with entrepreneurial qualities to meet the challenges in national and global markets and be competent enough to survive in the industry by means of showing the pull factors and positive sides of the entrepreneurship. Future researchers may find these push and pull variables do analytical research in future

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