

# The Meaning of Business Success among Javanese Mompreneurs

Erita Y. Diahsari, Diana Harding, and Marina Sulastiana

**Abstract**—Business success is a crucial thing for all businessmen includes women entrepreneurs. The meaning of business success is varying among these entrepreneurs. This study aims to explore the meaning of success among Javanese women entrepreneurs which their business is categorized as Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs). There were 50 Javanese mompreneurs participated in this study. They work as an owner of micro and small businesses in Yogyakarta city, Indonesia. The data were analyzed through a coding process and grouped into several themes. The result shows that most of Javanese mompreneurs take relationship with others as the meaning of business success. Perceived business success came from satisfaction to maintain happiness of their families and workers, and also relationship with the Lord.

**Keywords**---Business success, Javanese mompreneurs, Yogyakarta

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE women entrepreneurs have become an important part of the historical development of the business world, especially in developing countries. It can be tremendous potencies to empower women and change society [1]. Indonesia as a part of developing countries is also having opportunity to promote women entrepreneurship because of its uniqueness. Most of regions in Indonesia have patriarchy tradition, which placed women entrepreneurs in a disadvantage position. For example, women earn important role in the family and society, but on the other hand, they do not get the opportunity and power that is comparable to men [12]. In the other side, Indonesia has determined to be a developed country and it will be reached if the number of entrepreneurs is around two percent of the population. Thus, this is a challenge to be reckoned with because the number of women entrepreneurs in Indonesia has not enough for this goal.

In a society with the patriarchy tradition, in general, married women spend their time working in the domestic sector, which called a homemaker. At present, the situation has changed

significantly, these homemakers then began to play their extra role and perform their ability outside the daily routine.

According to [2], personal needs and circumstances, such as having children, uncomfortable working atmosphere, fatigue, lead women began to think of doing something that does not make them face many problems but still produce something. Getting a personal income will be fun, have financial independence, and help the family finances or improving self confidence. For women with children, especially with the condition of quality time they owned, they want to be close to their children, so this is the reason why women want to do self-employment and become mompreneurs.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that the numbers of women entrepreneurs in Indonesia reach only 0.1 percent of the total population [3]. This amount is not yet ideal for the purpose of achieving welfare and independence of a nation. A nation can be independent if they are supported by at least two percent of entrepreneurs, and Indonesia predict this target can be achieved through National Entrepreneurship Movement program [4]. Indonesia still needs about four million entrepreneurs to support the nation's economy to be more resilient in the future [5].

Women entrepreneurs in Indonesia consist of various ethnic groups and working in various sectors of business. Most Indonesian business women currently engaged in the levels of micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It has to be recognized that they are resilient SMEs and able to survive in crisis era for last sixteen years. Most of the SME sectors are driven by women entrepreneurs, both in cottage industry, business groups, and other small businesses through advantage of personal ability as sewing, cooking, crafts, and other [3].

One of these ethnic groups is Javanese, which geographically resided in the area of Java Island in the past, and now they live in Central Java, Yogyakarta and East Java [6]. In general, they are united by their same culture, but sometime there are differences found in habits, customs, rituals, ways of thinking and behaviors.

Yogyakarta is one of the sultanate district in Indonesia, which was established in 1755 as a result of Giyanti agreement between the Dutch government and the ruler of Mataram [7]. Yogyakarta is also centre of Javanese culture beside Surakarta, and this culture affects the mindset and behavior patterns of the people who lived in Yogyakarta. The Javanese mompreneurs are part of citizen of Yogyakarta who lived within their culture which leads their everyday activities

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including in understanding the concepts related to the entrepreneurial activity. Unfortunately, there was no accurate information about the amount of mompreneurs in Yogyakarta.

Actually, Javanese women are a unique kind of women because they have special position in their culture. There were a lot of descriptions about the Javanese women and it can be found in the ancient documents as a great work of kings ruling in Java in the past.

One of the ancient manuscript called *Serat Wulang Putri* (teaching for girls or women) that created by King Pakubuwono IV from Surakarta, Central Java in 1904. This manuscript is based on Javanese cosmology that emphasizes the balance of outward and inward [8]. and applies to both men and women. This document explain etiquette of how a Javanese woman should present themselves, how to behave and act according to the current rule.

Implicitly written in this document, that women should possess patience, *legawa* (elate), and obedient. This relates to the context of the current status of Javanese women as *kanca wingking* (not equally as husband and wife) to men or husbands. So a Javanese woman must have these three properties in anticipation of their inner conflicts. In other manuscript, Javanese women are also placed in the same condition with no equality with men. Javanese women described as flowers, beautiful and sweet-scented. They are honorable queen and must possess inner and outer beauty, speak politely, well in arrange clothing, smiling, graceful. As wives they should be able to take care of the household, in charge of educating children, patient, and not stubborn [9].

As previously described, Javanese women seem have no opportunity doing something free in the past. Otherwise, where the gender equality has become a global issue that places women are equal to men, the contents of the text become irrelevant.

At the present, Javanese women's ideal self-image is likely has different orientation, because the issues of gender equality are no longer a discourse. The Javanese women including mompreneurs today have freedom, they free to choose kind of work, free to follow their personal dream without having to leave their Javanese characters. When they choose the entrepreneurial activity, the mindset and attitudes that have been ingrained affect their concept of business achievement. This is regardless of the reason to be entrepreneurs, whether due to economic motives like raising money for family, to help husbands doing the work, wanted to make money by them, or just try to express their self actualization. This study attempts to explore the meaning of business success among Javanese mompreneurs.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Business Activities in Javanese Culture

Javanese culture has familiar with business term since ancient times, which termed as *dol-tinuku* (sell-buy). The Javanese business world consciously or not is always connected with Javanese concept of behavior called "*madhep*

*ngalor sugih madhep ngidul sugih*", means that the Javanese crave to be rich in entire life [10]. Furthermore, it is said that it was not just a rich of money, because the money was not always make their life happy. They have to be rich socially, which termed as *tuna satak bathi sanak*. This term means that the Javanese prioritize social relationships, gain a lot of friends or relatives than just making a profit when they do their business.

During the trading activity, the Javanese are also bound by ethical trade. They believe when keeping the rules, their business activity will run smoothly. This rule is mostly adopted from the teachings of the past. One of the teachings of the values used for trade called *Astagina* which is part of King Mangkunegara IV's work in Surakarta, Central Java. The *Astagina* contain the following, namely should pay attention to the selection of business sectors, smart in founding solution, prudent, spending money carefully, understand the cost calculations, always learn from the experts, hold the passions of various useless desires, avoid wastage and unwavering [11].

The business world for Javanese women is not a new thing, although their culture never put them on the position as business women. In the Javanese culture, the female role is in the domestic sphere as a housewife, so the activities in other sectors such as production is considered as a secondary task [12].

In rural areas in Java, the activities of women in the economic sector are very easy to find, they do a variety of jobs, working side by side with men. In this area, most of them work as laborers or merchant (*bakul*) in traditional market, and earn their own income. So, the community classify their income into two term, namely *duwit-lanang* (male's money) and *duwit-wedok* (female's money). *Duwit-lanang* derived from field and gardening activities, selling cattle and so on, whereas *duwit-wedok* derived from the side job in some sectors [13]. This *duwit-wedok* shows that women have their own power in the financial management at home, therefore, women are considered to have an important role in the economic sector.

In urban areas, Javanese women have more opportunities to choose type of work. They leave their traditional status as a homemaker and taking a job that she liked without disrupting household activities. Nevertheless, they cannot leave the house entirely because of their dual role, so women try to involve themselves in home industry. Unfortunately, this work was not supported by healthy working environment such as work situations, and inadequate wages [14].

### B. Business Success

The concept of entrepreneurial or business success has not been agreed upon, both by definition and measurement method on new ventures [15]. The meaning of success is individual, subjective, so it is often found that the meaning of success can be a definition, but it can also be an indicator.

According to [16], the definition of success is close to the performance or business growth and these terms are often used interchangeably. Nevertheless, there are differences in terms of

measure. Financial measures for performance are efficiency, growth, and profits, while the non-financial measures are time, flexibility and quality. Financial measures for growth are turnover change, number of employees, and market breadth. Financial measures for success are growth, profit, efficiency, an increase in the number of employees, while non-financial measure is autonomy, job satisfaction, and work-family balance.

According to [17], success can be defined into two criteria, namely the traditional criteria such as profit, growth and intrinsic factors criteria such as personal satisfaction and sense of achievement. This opinion shows that the definition of success can be seen from the indicator. Reference [18] summarize opinions from several entrepreneurs and found that the success can be defined as the ability of an object to produce, sustainable business operations, and achieving one's goals.

Reference [19] explicitly said that sales, profits, investment, personnel and revenue since the company was founded could be used to explain the success. The other indicators are customer satisfaction and satisfaction of workers [20], the annual turnover and profit [21], intrinsic indicator such as freedom and independence, the ability to control his future itself, be a leader for himself and external indicator such as personal income and welfare [22].

### C. Business Success among Javanese Women

In general, women entrepreneurs define business success based on venture economical perspective. If they are able to create and contribute to the family income, then they feel have achieved a measure of success [23]. Reference [24] found that women are more concerned with success in perceiving the intrinsic aspects, such as personal relationships and social acceptance.

Javanese women define success on the basis of cultural perspective, where they were raised and educated by their family. This cultural perspective namely *dadi wong*, means to be human [10]. Reference [8] says that the concept *dadi wong* for Javanese women is broader and deeper, and represents the notion of success in life and the concept is flexible and adaptive. It means that success in life can be analogous with success in business or work. Furthermore it is said that the indicators of *dadi wong* are *pangkat* (grade or position in a society), *semat* (position in a society that does not make them greedy) and *derajat* (nobility and honor).

### III. METHODOLOGY

There were fifty Javanese mompreneurs participated in this study. They are living in Yogyakarta district, Indonesia and work as micro and small entrepreneurs. In this study, value of property and annual income became criteria to determine whether it is micro or small enterprises. The respondents asked about the meaning of business success for them as business women (mompreneurs). The data were collected and summarized through coding process. Table 1 describes the demographic characteristics of respondents. The data reflects

their age, educational level, and marital status, number of children, business scale, and types of business.

TABLE I  
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Range	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20 – 30	10	20
	31 – 40	10	20
	41 - 50	17	34
	51 - 60	13	26
Educational level	Elementary degree	3	6
	Secondary degree	8	16
	High School degree	20	40
	High Education	19	38
Marital Status	Married	47	94
	Widow	3	6
Number of children	0 - 1	23	46
	2 – 3	24	48
	4 - 5	3	6
Business scale	Micro	32	64
	Small	18	36
Type of business	Shop (fashion)	7	14
	Shop (food)	7	14
	Services	18	36
	General Trading	16	32
	Food Production	2	4

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the demographic characteristics, majority of the respondent are among 41 to 50 and 51 to 60 years old. Perhaps some of them are no longer productive because of their age, but it shows that they still have good spirit and strong motives in running business. In Javanese society, it is common for elderly to work or do something, even to make a living. They are generally still excited and did not like the silence and bother other people, including their family.

Based on education level, the majority of respondents had high school and high education level background. This means that Javanese mompreneurs have enough good education level and it will be a benefit for their business. The high level in education shows that Javanese women have broader opportunity to get better knowledge and cognitive skill to manage and maintain their business.

Majority of the respondents are married with two or three children, and it is possible to emerge trouble balancing their work-life time. Most of them work in micro businesses which depend on their own action in managing their works. This situation will be related with individual time management because they have to arrange the time properly.

General trading and services are the type of business that most mompreneurs do. They sell goods for daily purposes in a small shop near the house or as a part of home front.

The service business consists of miscellaneous services, such as catering, beauty salon or telecommunication shop. This shows that in general Javanese women feel their passion in services businesses. It is relevant with their characters as Javanese women. They have good skills in service work, and familiar with service activities since they are still in their family. Some respondents are also work as a food, pastry or

cookie maker and the other are selling clothes in a store or online shop.

The success of the business gives a lot of meaning for the Javanese mompreneurs. Table 2 classifies responses about the meaning of business success into several themes.

TABLE II  
GROUPING OF RESPONSES

The Meaning of business success	Quantity	Percentage
Making profit	7	11
Cover up the family's consumption	10	16
Cover up the children's consumption	6	9
Makes the family happy	2	3
Makes the worker happy	5	8
Charity	5	8
Share with others	9	14
Venture growth	10	16
Living in harmony	4	6
Saving money	1	2
Worship	1	2
Autonomy	2	3
Be a good wife	1	2

The opinions of all respondents grouped into 13 themes, in 63 answers related to the meaning of business success. When examined in the overall response, it seems that the respondents gave the explanation about indicators, not the definition. This justifies the opinion that the definitions and indicators of success are not always precisely described because of its ambiguous meaning.

The respondents' opinion can be separated into different meanings orientation. There are several themes oriented to individual needs or business needs, but there are also some opinions oriented to interpersonal relationships or transcendental. The meaning of success related to individual needs are living in harmony, autonomy, saving money, and be a good wife. Living in harmony means successful balancing family-work. It is interesting found that saving money, and be a good wife barely support the meaning of success. Overall, the result shows that the respondents are likely to interpret the success of their business rather than on the basis of their own needs.

The other group is the meaning of success related to the business itself, namely making profit and venture growth. The percentage is high enough, and this means that respondents assume that profit and growth are being rational, logical and easy to know and essential to interpret the business success.

The meaning of success that related to others was dominant in this study; it is physical, psychological and transcendental nature. Cover up the families and children's consumption; make family and the worker happy, worship, charity and sharing with others occupy the largest percentage. This indicates that respondents interpret the business success including other parties together. Interpersonal relationships with family, children, employees and also the relationship with the Lord become crucial in defining business success. This

indicates that the success of the business is more meaningful psychologically, socially, and religious rather than economic or material matter.

Thus, related to the Javanese cultural view-*dadi wong*-these mompreneurs will experience successful when they are able to welfare the life of the family, share with others, and have good relationship with the Lord.

## V. CONCLUSION

Business success have special meanings for Javanese mompreneurs, because as successful in business means successfully *dadi wong*. Their cultural background strongly influences their perspective on business success. This may not be generally applicable to all women entrepreneurs, but it will give contribution for cultural businesses.

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