

# The Factors Influencing the Performance of Female Entrepreneurs: Some New Discoveries

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**Abstract:** Entrepreneurship is very important to the survival of firms and especially in China with so many emerging firms. Female entrepreneurs play more and more important role in entrepreneurship practice. Past research about female entrepreneurship show that the relative lower position in the society leads to the disadvantage of female entrepreneurship. With the evolvement of society, the status of women in the society is promoted surprisingly. This paper analyzes the factors influencing the female entrepreneurship performance and draws an exciting conclusion: female entrepreneurship almost does not have relative disadvantage with male entrepreneurship nowadays in China.

**Keywords:** Female Entrepreneurs, Performance, Influencing Factors

## 1 Introduction

In past 20years, globalization and economic development provide very good opportunities for female entrepreneurs. Since 2000 the contribution of female entrepreneurs to the society has been recognized extensively and the factors influencing the performance of female entrepreneurs have attracted the attention from both of the popular and academic fields. Such kinds of discussions have been very popular in OECD countries and especially in England Canada and USA, but not in developing countries. This paper wants to explore the performance of female entrepreneurship in Certain Chinese configuration of relationship.

This paper first collects the recent literature about female entrepreneurs, then analysis the construct of the female entrepreneurship performance. On the ground of such analysis, we try to establish the relationship model between influencing factors and performance. Through model demonstration analysis, we propose some helpful suggestions for future female entrepreneurship practice and research.

## 2 Literature Review

The research on this field often trough sociology and management. Many researchers prefer sociological role attitude, role conflict and personal characteristic analysis. Others prefer the precise definition of female entrepreneurship, motivation, family network relationship and environmental. This literature review is the basis of further research and proposition.

### 2.1 Sex role research

Sex role is the male or female behavior patterns which is recognized or expected by society or culture. According to Li's (1984) definition, sex role is a set of conditional behavior models and sex characteristic is also used to classify the internal mental attributes. There are 3 main types of definition in different fields: Freud (1933) is the supporter of Psychoanalytic Theory, he believes biological structure determine the personality and earlier sex role development; Bandura (1977) holds Social learning theory which recognized sex role as the result of social learning process in specific regulation environment. Cognitive-Development Theory believes sex self-identified and the formation of sex role is the results of individual cognition mature.

The attitude towards sex role also plays important role in sex role research. Wang (1997) picked out 24440 married men as the research samples in Taiwan, he finds out that: In spite of the promoted female status, most women accepted the value of man domination. Yanico(1978) denotes in his research that non-traditional occupational female is apt to show double sex characters.

In Kahn's (1964) opinion, role conflict is that conflict happens when two sets or above expectations come forth at the same time. Because the family & work conflict often happened extremely in female groups, this field research show female suffer more pain and pressure in role conflict than male.

## 2.2 Female entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurs are often defined as a kind of innovative, sensitive and risky people. Female entrepreneurs have these characters as well, but in essence, they are doing innovative and risky entrepreneurship under certain social values and sex role regulations. They are the organizer of resource relocation, the decision-maker and the risk-taker. Female entrepreneurs are classified into self entrepreneurship, inheritance entrepreneurship and partner entrepreneurship (Starr and Yudkin, 1996). Original research believes big difference in male and female entrepreneurship, but recent research reveals that more similarities than differences (Hisrich, et al., 1997).

The motivation of female entrepreneurs lies in social environment mostly. This includes 3 factors: national culture, family relationship and education system. Dorothy P. Moore (1990) includes common theory, sex theory and motivation theory in his analysis of female entrepreneurship motivation (Figure 1).

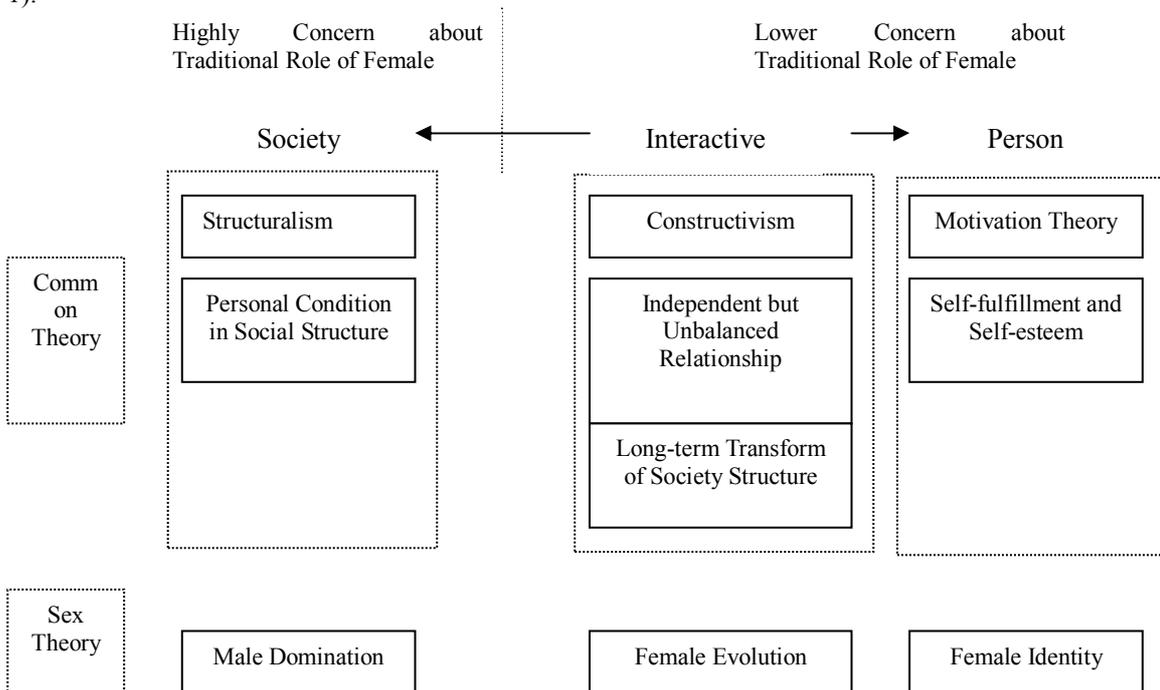


Figure 1. Female Entrepreneurship Motivation Model

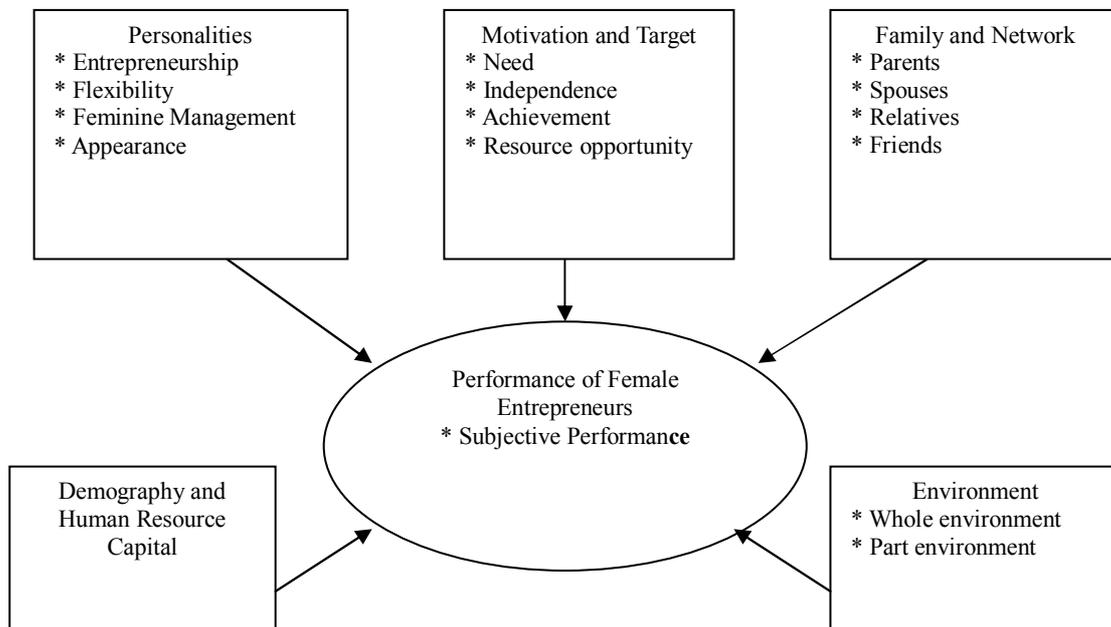
Female entrepreneurship performance is being valued by personal target achievement while male are valued by some quantity indexes (revenue, growth rate et. al) (Buttner and Moore, 1997).

## 3 Methodologies

### 3.1 Research Conceptual Model

According to Chinese current situation, this paper defines female entrepreneurs from 3 dimensions: involving in the entrepreneurship process, owning property and participating management.

The personal factors influence the performance research is very popular but not in developing countries. So on the basis of literature review, the process of this research is followed. First, we propose the conceptual model on the ground of literatures. Second, we revised the model after interviewing typical female entrepreneurs. Third, we proposed the factors influencing performance after Surveying by questionnaire. In the conceptual model, 5 aspects are included: motivation and target; family and network; personal characters of female entrepreneur; demography and human resource capital and environment.



**Figure 2. The Conceptual Model**

### 3.2 Questionnaire Survey

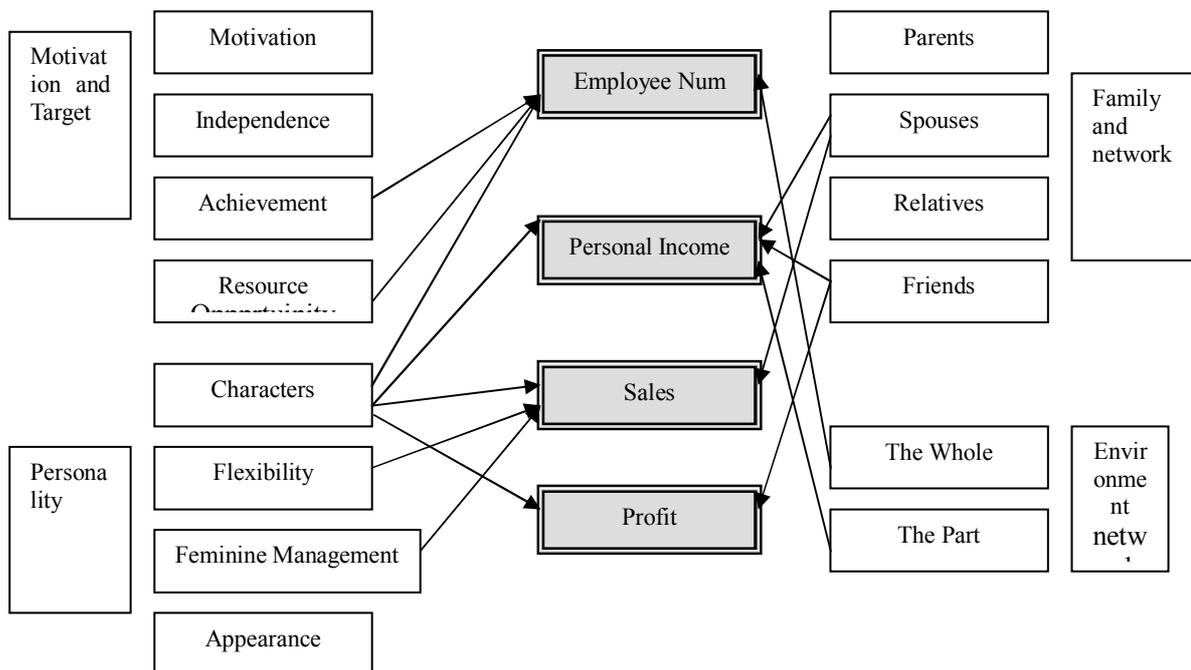
We interviewed 117 female entrepreneurs and then totally delivered 103 questionnaires, getting back 63 and 56 valid. We use SPSS 11.0 to analysis the data collected. We defined employer numbers, personal income, sales and profit as the objective performance indexes in the questionnaire.

### 3.3 Analysis

Through SPSS analysis, we found in the enterprises founded by female entrepreneurs, personality and flexibility are positive to the sales. Feminine management also has a lit bit positive to the sales. Surprisingly, the spouse is negative to the sales. The data shows that innovative and risky female entrepreneurs do well in enterprise profit. At the same time, friends, money and commercial network also support great to the profit. The female holding firm achievement motivation employs more people. Innovative and risky female entrepreneurs are willing to employ more people and expand the scale to achieve the goal. Obviously, the whole environment show positive relationship to the numbers of employees. The personal income of female entrepreneurs is strongly affected by the friends and local environment.

## 4 Conclusions

The purpose of the paper is to find out the factors influencing the female entrepreneurship performance. On the ground of many literatures, this research first defines the female entrepreneurship performance then classifies it. We further interview typical female entrepreneurs and revise it, then propose theory conceptual model. According to the model and correlative literatures, we design the questionnaire. In this part, we will draw some conclusions based on data analysis.



**Figure 3. The factors influencing female entrepreneurship performance**

From Figure 3, we can see that achievement, resource opportunity and personal characters are positive to the employee numbers; personal characters, spouses, friends and local environment are positive to personal income. Personal characters, personal flexibility, feminine management style, spouses and friends are positive to the enterprise sales. Personal Characters and friends are positive to the enterprise profit.

Personal characters seem to very important to all of four kinds of performance. Possible explanation is that personal characters are most important to the success of female entrepreneurship. We noticed this has nothing to do with the gender. We could further see that sex characters of female including flexibility, feminine management and appearance almost are irrelevant to the performance. So, we draw a final conclusion that though female entrepreneurship has relative disadvantage with male, but female entrepreneurs share the same success opportunities and fair environment provided by the society.

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