

Female entrepreneurial motivation and growth intention: Moderating effects of marriage, motherhood and husband involvement for Taiwanese female entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises

Pei-Ju Ting¹ | Ching-I Chen² | Ting-Ling Lin³ | Mei-Chen Hsieh⁴

¹ Department of Business Administration, National Taipei University, New Taipei City, Taiwan.

² Department of International Business Studies, National Chi Nan University, Nantou County, Taiwan.

³ Corresponding author, Department of Business Administration, National Taipei University, New Taipei City, Taiwan, tingling@mail.ntpu.edu.tw

⁴ Department of Airline and Transport Service Management, Vanung University, Taoyuan City, Taiwan.

ABSTRACT

This paper intends to address the dynamic relationship between entrepreneurial motivation and growth intention, and the impact of marriage, childcare responsibilities and husband involvement in business based on responses from Taiwanese female entrepreneurs in a women entrepreneur program. A structured questionnaire was used to collect 78 valid responses. It is found that motivation gradually led these women to identify new opportunities and strive for self-sufficiency and self-actualization. Even though these female entrepreneurs sought to grow their businesses, they tended to engage with the community and care for their employees. Additionally, married women and mothers with dependents were mainly motivated to conduct business to ensure their family livelihood. However, their desire to enhance their sense of achievement makes them less likely to prioritize contributions to the community and society. Also, the more their husbands were involved in the business, the less these female entrepreneurs were motivated to care for their employees by the desire for independence.

Keywords:

Female entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial motivation, Growth intention, Marriages, Motherhood and childcare responsibilities.

1 | Introduction

Entrepreneurship has a vital role in a country's economic growth and stability (Benzing *et al.*, 2009). In 2018, an estimated 231 million women were starting or running new businesses in 59 economies around the globe (Elam *et al.*, 2019). This number remains lower than their male counterpart, despite a sharp rise from 163 million female entrepreneurs in 2016 (Elam *et al.*, 2019). To encourage more women to contribute to the growth and well-being of their societies, the gap between genders has attracted attention from both academics and policymakers (e.g., Reynolds *et al.*, 2004).

The number of women opting to become entrepreneurs in Taiwan has steadily increased in recent years, which accounts for over a third of the total entrepreneur population, according to the Taiwanese Ministry of Economic Affairs (Teng, 2019). Unlike the majority of countries in similar economic status and geographic regions, Taiwanese female entrepreneurs are only slightly more hopeful about the opportunity to start a business than their male counterparts (28.1% for women, 25.4% for men). However, they have far lower expectations to grow their business (38.8% for women, 59.1% for men), and a considerable portion of them are self-employed with no current job (52.8% for women, 25.4% for men) (Elam *et al.*, 2019). When grouping the entrepreneurs by age and gender, there are more Taiwanese women (19.9%) than men (14.2%) in the age range of 24 to 35, which is higher than the global average of 13.4% in the same age group. However, this rate falls sharply to 7.9% between 35 and 44, unlike that for men remaining at 14.2% and the global rate at 11.6%. These data suggest that the trajectories between male and female entrepreneurs in

Taiwan could differ. For the latter, the changes may stem from two major changes in a woman's adulthood: marriage and motherhood.

Past research indicates that male and female entrepreneurs often start their businesses for different reasons. Pillinger (2002) and Sullivan and Lewis (2001) find that women entrepreneurs tend to be motivated because they have more family responsibilities than men, a greater need for work-life balance, and a stronger desire to overcome long-standing gender stereotypes. The same can be found in Far Eastern cultures. Chu (2000) finds that, unlike the male entrepreneurs in Hong Kong, whose reasons for start-ups are usually for business purposes, female entrepreneurs view entrepreneurship as a life strategy. Their motivations are largely family-related, such as supporting their husbands and fulfilling filial piety responsibility. Pistrui *et al.* (2001) find that in China, alongside higher earnings and personal achievement, family security remains one of the primary motivations for women entrepreneurs to start their businesses. The significant influence of families on female entrepreneurs seems to persist even when they are second-generation immigrants raised under the influence of Western culture. For example, female entrepreneurs of Chinese origin still need to prioritize their family over their business at various stages of their family life cycle (Lever-Tracey *et al.*, 1991).

Given this line of thinking, it is unsurprising that family responsibilities could also impact how female entrepreneurs define the growth and success of their businesses. Dyke and Murphy (2006) conclude that men and women define success differently. Women highlight the importance of balancing personal growth with social connections, whereas men focus more on material success.

Even though relationships are important to many men, career sacrifice to sustain relationships is not a comfortable choice. A report by the World Bank describes how male entrepreneurs view success in terms of achieving goals and higher profits. In contrast, for females, it also means having control over their own identities, gaining more power and status in the household, market and community, and doing something fulfilling (Carranza *et al.*, 2018). Vietnamese female entrepreneurs are found to exhibit little intention to pursue growth at the initial stages of their business because they need to organize their business schedule around the care and needs of their nuclear and extended families (Gerrard *et al.*, 2003).

Married female entrepreneurs are likely to face conflicts and challenges in combining work and home roles since they are deviating from the traditional homemaker-wife role. Gendered expectations regarding women's home responsibilities and roles can exacerbate tensions between work and family roles (Cha, 2010). Previous studies suggest that female managers feel stressed and guilty since they are frequently torn between these two roles (Ruderman *et al.*, 2002). Scholars have long noted that a husband's support of his wife's employment is critical to reducing her role conflict (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1984). Regardless of whether they like it or not, the lives of many female entrepreneurs' spouses are impacted, and they are involved in the business, in terms of planning, budgeting and technical support (Nikina *et al.*, 2015).

Cromie and Hayes (1988) argue that the mothering role is a major difference between married and single women in their motivation to start a business. Mothers tended to be self-employed or focus on entrepreneurial activities that were more in line with the needs of their families (McDermott, 1985). Two

aspects of motherhood should be distinguished: biological mothering and social mothering (Bolen, 1992). Biological mothering refers to a woman's role in carrying and giving birth to her children. On the other hand, social mothering involves various childcare activities, such as raising, feeding, protecting and caring for children. While biological mothering remains undeniably in the realm of women, in Western cultures, childcare is perceived to extend beyond individuals and can be shared with the support of the community and society. On the contrary, Taiwanese women maintain a traditional view of social mothering, considering it a personal responsibility (Pan, 2005). That is, chances are that they would overlook the collective responsibility of society, making their individual decisions even more closely knit with family responsibilities.

While much research investigates women's motivations and growth intentions for their businesses, little attention is given to how their relationships change based on the different roles they play in life. The first aim of this study is to explore the dynamics from the perspective of Taiwanese female entrepreneurs. Specifically, the goals of this study are twofold. Firstly, we intend to explore how Taiwanese female entrepreneurs in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are motivated to start their businesses, how they perceive business growth and the relationships between these factors. The second aim is to explore how elements of family structure and its responsibilities (marital status, childcare responsibilities and husband involvement) would mitigate or aggravate the relationship. The remainder of this study is organized as follows. First, relevant literature is presented, and hypotheses are proposed. Following from there, the research method design and data analysis are described before the results are

presented and examined. Finally, we summarize our conclusions and provide recommendations for future research.

Research on female entrepreneurs, including the present study, often encounters challenges due to participants' reluctance to take part (Manimala, 1992). Therefore, this study sources data from members of a female entrepreneur consultation program run by the Taiwanese government. One inherent limitation of this sampling design is that the study does not integrate the perspectives of female entrepreneurs falling outside of the program, thereby restricting the generalizability of the results.

2 | Theoretical background

2.1 Influence of entrepreneurial motivation on business growth intention

The growth of an organization is considered a natural phenomenon and reflects the intention and motivations of the lead entrepreneurs (Bird, 1988; Cooper, 1993; Davidsson, 1991; Herron & Robinson, 1993). Some large-scale studies support this notion empirically that entrepreneurial growth intentions have a strong connection with subsequent business growth. For instance, the results of Stam *et al.* (2011) and Levie and Autio (2013) suggest that ambitious entrepreneurship is a more significant predictor of macroeconomic growth than entrepreneurship in general.

The conventional assumption holds that perceived capability is the most important predictor of entrepreneurial intention, rather than gender differences. For instance, Armuña *et al.* (2020) conclude that, even though female entrepreneurs might feel less competent than their male counterparts, there

are still no gender differences in the positive influence self-perceived competence has on entrepreneurship intention. Rodríguez-Gulías *et al.* (2018) suggest that as long as female-owned university spin-offs acquire the initial resource endowment at a similar level to their male counterparts, firm growth for these spin-offs is not affected by gender differences.

Many studies, nevertheless, reach the opposite conclusion. That is, business performance and growth vary between enterprises founded by women and those by men (Marlow, 1997; Baines *et al.*, 2003). Women tend to exhibit lower entrepreneurial ambition than men. Thus, female entrepreneurs tend to have lower firm performance (Şen *et al.*, 2018). Many women entrepreneurs deliberately choose to keep their enterprises small in scale (Kaplan, 1988; Lee-Gosslin & Gris e, 1990) or have conservative expectations of their company growth (Belcourt *et al.*, 1991; Chaganti, 1986). These conscious choices are made by negotiating the expectations of their multiple roles (Esnard, 2012). They believe growth can harm a business because employees tend to trust bigger companies less, leaving the business goals inconsistent (Morris *et al.*, 2006). The result of Gupta *et al.* (2009) indicates that women's entrepreneurship intention is negatively impacted by gender stereotypes, even when both men and women have similar education levels and experiences. Women are affected by the traditional way of thinking of other family members, who have certain expectations concerning the role of a wife and a mother in the family (Levent *et al.*, 2003). Other studies also suggest that an entrepreneur's family members, especially parents, have a powerful effect on that individual's desire to be an entrepreneur (Shapero & Sokol 1982).

Women business owners tend to place greater emphasis on family matters, which affects the business directions they pursue and ultimately business performance (Shaw *et al.*, 2009). Benzing *et al.* (2009) show that one of the most important reasons why women start their businesses is the sense of security created by increasing revenue and having a job, especially when it involves their families. That is, working closely with and providing employment opportunities for their family members becomes a more important motivation than pursuing business growth and performance. In many developing countries, women face challenges in securing employment and are concerned about the financial well-being of their families, which motivates them to pursue entrepreneurship (Chaganti, 1986; Stevenson, 1986). By starting their own business, they could have a better chance to increase their income and improve the current quality of life for their families (Chaganti, 1986; Scott, 1986; Zapalska, 1997; Orhan, 2001; Levent *et al.*, 2003).

The pull/push model is a common way of explaining different motives for women to start businesses (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Brush, 1992). Push factors are related to the motivation driven by the need to change a situation due to its disadvantages, such as securing employment opportunities for family members. On the other hand, pull factors are related to the motivation that originates from actively pursuing good prospects, including independence and self-actualization (Hansemark, 1998; Glancey *et al.*, 1998). Female entrepreneurs could also be motivated by ambitions and/or other pull factors; for instance, they want to test their ideas in the marketplace (Scott, 1986), and find a market opportunity (Chaganti, 1986; Stevenson, 1986). Other pull motivations could include

debunking common stereotypes (Chaganti, 1986; Stevenson, 1986), proving their contribution to society (Shabbir & Di Gregorio, 1996), gaining social recognition (Lee-Gosselin & Grise, 1990), controlling their destiny (Zapalska, 1997) as well as wanting to be their own boss (Scott, 1986; Zapalska, 1997). Some other women start their businesses in response to drastic life changes, such as when their husband retires or dies (Stevenson, 1986; Shabbir & Di Gregorio, 1996). Therefore, this research proposes:

H₁: The business growth intention of women entrepreneurs is influenced by their entrepreneurial motivations.

2.2 Moderating roles of marriage and motherhood

The flexibility of being one's boss serves as a significant entrepreneurial incentive for women (Olson & Currie, 1992). This flexibility makes it possible for a woman to achieve work-life balance by being able to earn money and take care of their family (Chaganti, 1986; Orhan & Scott, 2001; Levent *et al.*, 2003). However, the most consistent characteristics predicting work-life imbalance for female entrepreneurs are their domestic roles (Rehman & Roomi, 2012) and being a parent (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). McGowan *et al.* (2012) look at the challenges for women entrepreneurs of managing a business with other life roles, finding that motivation to balance family responsibilities with other career ambitions is a major pull to entrepreneurship.

Bowen and Hisrich (1986) find that marriages and family needs may hinder the growth of women-owned businesses and affect the type of enterprise they choose and

their business style. This is because women entrepreneurs have more family-related commitments on top of growing their businesses with limited time and financial resources, compared to male entrepreneurs (Seedat & Rondon, 2021). Anggadwita *et al.* (2021) identify that for female entrepreneurs in SMEs, their social-cultural environment, including their family and other people close to them, could influence their entrepreneurial intention and their business style. Nevertheless, the effect of marriage on entrepreneurial intention is not universally negative. Stamm *et al.* (2024) find that female entrepreneurs are more likely to consider marriage as an important resource for long-term commitment to their entrepreneurial ventures than their male counterparts. Hence, it is important to recognize the marriage and family responsibilities of women and how these factors may affect their business (Mitra, 2002).

Mumpreneurship is a new emerging trend that takes on the concept of entrepreneurship in family businesses and demonstrates the impact of motherhood (Parlapiano & Cobe, 2002). It refers to “the creation of a new business venture by a woman who identifies as both a mother and a businesswoman, is motivated primarily by achieving work-life balance, and picks an opportunity linked to the experience of having children” (Richomme-Heut *et al.* 2013). Three elements would characterize mumpreneurs: the need to balance family and work/career demands, the desire to avoid the constraints of working in an organization unconcerned with the individual’s family needs and a desire to combine both of these elements with rewarding and challenging work experiences (Duberley & Carrigan, 2013; Jean & Forbes, 2012). For mother entrepreneurs, the independence afforded by entrepreneurship is

a functional necessity to balance the demands of their roles (Foley *et al.*, 2018).

Motherhood integrates biologically procreational and social processes, therefore past studies identify two aspects of motherhood: biological and social mothering (Bolen, 1992). Biological mothering refers to the act of producing an infant, whereas the practice of social mothering involves taking care of a child(ren). In many Western countries, childcare is, instead of an individual’s responsibility, perceived as a collective one. This can be seen in various policies and societal norms that recognize the importance of supporting families and children through communal efforts (UNICEF, 2021). Higher numbers and better performance of mumpreneurs could be the result of these policies. For example, Joon (2017) finds that Swedish women with young children are more likely to choose entrepreneurship. Joon (2018) finds that women who enter entrepreneurship after having children tend to have higher income and revenue in their businesses.

For women in other cultures, social mothering is usually a major factor hindering their participation in society and its economy (Simeonidou, 1996; World Bank, 2021). Culturally, Taiwanese women uphold a traditional perspective on social mothering, viewing it as a personal responsibility (Pan, 2005). When encountering a work-family conflict, they justify prioritizing choice for family over work as a voluntary decision that allows them to maintain the social image of being a good mother (Tang, 2011). These behaviors could reinforce the traditional gender role in Taiwanese society, promote minimal state intervention in childcare, and discourage women from pursuing entrepreneurship. Accordingly, we propose the following hypotheses:

H₂: The marital status of women entrepreneurs has a moderating effect on entrepreneurial motivation and growth intention.

H₃: The motherhood of women entrepreneurs has a moderating effect on entrepreneurial motivation and growth intention.

2.3 Moderating effect of husband involvement

A significant number of studies in entrepreneur spouses have focused on wives and examined wives who work in their husbands' businesses, in contrast to only a few empirical research studies women play a more dominant role in the family businesses, with their husbands helping out with the business (Nikina *et al.*, 2015). These works in spousal support provide some insights into the role of husbands to their female entrepreneur wives. Hisrich and O'Brien (1981) find that successful women entrepreneurs have supportive parents and husbands. The role of an entrepreneurial wife is dissimilar to the traditional homemaker role, where work and home balance is a struggle for the former. Thus, support provided by husbands for their working wives becomes critical to the reduction of her role conflict (Kim & Ling, 2001; Marcinjus *et al.*, 2007). This is also the case for women who become entrepreneurs at the request of a family member(s), either starting a new business, joint venture or taking over a family company (Chu, 2000). Even when they become established entrepreneurs, support from husbands and family members retains its importance (Kirkwood, 2009). If their spouses have certain leading professional

or technical capabilities, their husbands could provide technical and financial assistance to the business (Nikina *et al.*, 2015). Some other studies further emphasized the importance of husbands, even more so than other family members, such as parents. For example, Nikina *et al.* (2015) concluded that the success and well-being of a female entrepreneur are closely tied to the support and involvement of her spouse. However, some evidence suggests that female entrepreneurs working with their husbands have lower business growth aspirations than those working with business partners other than their spouses (Baines & Wheelock, 1998). Lin *et al.* (2011) found that Chinese-origin women entrepreneurs were mainly influenced by their husbands. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H₄: The level of husband involvement has a moderating effect on entrepreneurial motivation and growth intention for women entrepreneurs.

3 | Methodology

This study aims to explore the relationships between the entrepreneurial motivations of Taiwanese female entrepreneurs and their growth intentions, as well as how family-related factors, including marriage, motherhood and husband involvement, could determine the effect. To gain a clearer understanding of female entrepreneurs in Taiwan, exploratory research methods were employed. Firstly, exploratory factor analysis was used to identify potential constructs of entrepreneurial motivations and growth intentions. A linear regression model was then adopted to verify the proposed hypotheses of this research.

Research on female entrepreneurs, including the present study, often encounters challenges due to participants' reluctance to take part (Manimala, 1992). Business studies in Taiwan are no exception. For example, business owners of Chinese ethnicity are generally reluctant to allow outsiders to study their businesses (Busenitz & Lau, 1996). Therefore, this study draws data from female entrepreneurs who have participated in a women's entrepreneurship program administered by the Taiwanese government. This program specialized in providing diversified resources to support female entrepreneurship when facing various challenges. Questionnaires were sent to two hundred and seventy-four SMEs (with at least one female (co)founder / less than 200 employees) identified out of the program directory. Initially, a total of 42 responses were returned and, after a follow-up invitation, 82 more replies were collected. Taking away four invalid responses, a total of 78 valid questionnaires were obtained, an effective response rate of 33.62%. One inherent limitation of this sampling design is that the study does not integrate the perspectives of female entrepreneurs falling outside of the program, thereby restricting the generalizability of the results.

The questionnaire was composed of four parts. Part 1 included 23 statements regarding entrepreneurial motivations, compiled from Carter and Cannon (1992); Ljunggren and Kolvereid (1996); Hisrich and Ozturk (1999); Levent *et al.* (2003); Browne *et al.* (2004); and Sinisalo and Komulainen (2008). Unlike much research on female entrepreneurship that focuses on mothers with young children (e.g. Esnard, 2016), childcare responsibilities, including care for adult children with disabilities, were used as a proxy for motherhood in this study. Lin *et al.* (2018)

show that mothers with disabled children often find it difficult to adhere to regular work hours, thus starting their own business, which offers flexibility. Therefore, part 2 consisted of three questions with regards to their marriage status (single/divorced/widowed/married), number of children in care (do you have any children still under care? These include non-adults and/or adults who are unable to take care of themselves) and perception of husband involvement in their businesses (how far was your husband involved in the entrepreneurial process?).

Part 3 incorporated 14 statements related to growth intention (Buttner & Rosen, 1988; Oliver & Anderson, 1995; Kim & Mauborgne, 1997; Gundry & Welsch, 2001; Barringer *et al.*, 2005). The questionnaire ended with 9 demographic questions about the female founders and their businesses. All items were answered on a five-point Likert agreement scale, from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), except demographic questions.

4 | Results

4.1 Sample information and demographic characteristics

Most enterprises included in our sample were SMEs established for less than 10 years, and only five (all in the manufacturing industry) for over 10 years. Approximately 70% were from the service industry and most were owned by sole proprietors. Table 1 summarizes the demographic information of the respondents. Nearly 70% of respondents were between 30 to 50 years old, over 80% started their business under the age of 40, and over 60% completed a university degree. In addition, over 70% were still in their marriage,

and more than 76% still had the mothering responsibility.

According to the 2020 Analysis Report on Female Entrepreneurship in Taiwan SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprise and Startup Administration, Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2020), over half of the businesses run by female entrepreneurs are SMEs (98%) and sole proprietorships (59.9%). Over half are in

the industry of Consumer Goods (13%), Agricultural Technology and Foods (10%), E-Commerce (10%), Biotechnology and Medicine (8%) and Educational Technology (8%). The differences between our sample and the overall female entrepreneurs suggest that the result of this study centers on this subpopulation and should be interpreted conservatively.

Table 1 Demographic information

Characteristic	Number	Percent	Characteristic	Number	Percent
Age	30 (or below)	8	Age for starting the business	30 (or below)	24
	31–40	26		31–40	38
	41–50	24		41–50	7
	51 (or above)	14		51 (or above)	5
Education	High school (or below)	27	Marital status	Single	15
	College	32		Married	54
	Graduate (or above)	14		Divorced (or widowed)	7
Family rank	Only child	1	Number of children in care	None	17
	Eldest sibling	30		One	10
	Middle sibling	28		Two	38
	Youngest sibling	15		More than three	8

4.2 Exploratory factor analysis of entrepreneurial motivation and growth intention

Out of the 23 items concerning entrepreneurial motivations, two were excluded due to low correlation and five factors were extracted by the exploratory factor analysis, the statistics of which are summarized in Table 2. Among them, “Self-sufficiency” and “Family livelihood” could be classified as so-called

subsistence motivations, which include motivations such as one’s desire to be independent and to enhance his/her quality of life. The other identified factors (“Need for recognition,” “Opportunity identification,” and “Self-actualization”) can be classified as incentive motivations, which are related to, for instance, personal interest, challenge, and a sense of accomplishment. These results echo the push and pull factors identified by past studies (Hansemark, 1998; Glancey *et al.*, 1998). More specifically, it is found that

entrepreneurial motivation driven by the desire to be self-sufficient was associated with the drive to be financially independent and secure and the desire to maintain individual freedom, more so than having a sense of self-worth. The factor analysis showed that

together these variables explained 73.81% of the cumulative variance (highly representative). The Cronbach's alpha value for each of the five factors was greater than 0.7, indicating high internal consistency.

Table 2 Results of factor analysis of female entrepreneurial motivation

Motivation factor	Questionnaire items	Average score	Factor loading	Eigenvalue / cumulative variance explained / reliability coefficient
Self sufficiency	I wanted to maintain individual freedom	4.12	0.798	3.479 16.57% 0.894
	I wanted to be self-supported	4.18	0.762	
	I wanted to demonstrate my competence	4.08	0.745	
	I wanted to feel more financially secure	3.81	0.688	
	I wanted to increase my self-worth	3.69	0.687	
Family livelihood	I wanted to generate extra income	4.06	0.839	3.214 31.87% 0.860
	I wanted to secure the family's financial situation	3.95	0.824	
	I wanted to improve my quality of life	4.13	0.791	
	I did not want others to control my work decisions	4.14	0.587	
	I wanted to be my own boss	3.55	0.559	
Need for recognition	I felt excited to start a new business	3.22	0.782	3.148 46.86% 0.842
	I was inspired by my role model(s)	3.09	0.774	
	I did not want to be belittled by others	3.03	0.767	
	I wanted to be acknowledged by others	3.51	0.539	
Opportunity identification	I was aware of market opportunities	3.97	0.798	3.040 61.34% 0.822
	I wanted to play a role in the holistic development of society	3.73	0.767	
	Starting a new business could help validate my business ideas	4.11	0.716	
	Starting a new business was challenging	4.10	0.616	
Self actualization	I wanted to increase my sense of accomplishment	4.32	0.828	2.618 73.81% 0.791
	I was interested in business	4.08	0.776	
	I wanted to achieve my goals	4.40	0.736	

Two items were excluded from the 14 items about growth intention due to low correlation. Three factors were extracted from the Exploratory Factor Analysis, which are

summarized in Table 3. In total these three factors explain 69.02% of the cumulative variance (highly representative) and the items in each factor are highly consistent

(Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7). Past research assumed no gender difference in growth intention and thus focused on financial performance. However, Morris *et al.* (2006) indicated that female entrepreneurs often regarded employees as a part of their family and paid special attention to their career planning. The three factors identified in this

research, business promotion, social engagement and employment and governance, also reiterate such findings that, even though women entrepreneurs also strive to develop their businesses, caring for the needs of society as well as their employees serve as important goals.

Table 3 Results of factor analysis of female entrepreneurial growth intention

Growth intention factor	Questionnaire items	Average score	Factor loading	Eigenvalue/cumulative variance explained/reliability coefficient
Business growth	I wanted to find new markets and increase sales	4.27	0.874	3.344 27.87% 0.871
	I wanted to expand the distribution network	4.04	0.790	
	I wanted to increase the range of new products and services	4.22	0.773	
	I intended to enhance the effectiveness of advertising and promotions	4.20	0.718	
	I wanted to increase my company's profitability	4.38	0.554	
Social engagement	I wanted to be able to hire more disadvantaged people	4.12	0.901	2.562 49.22% 0.811
	I wanted to be able to provide more social services	4.29	0.881	
	I wanted to achieve the visions and missions of my company	4.22	0.525	
	I wanted to recruit top-quality employees	4.21	0.522	
Employment and governance	I planned to create jobs for my family members / the community	3.51	0.787	2.376 69.02% 0.758
	I wanted to improve employee retention	4.14	0.768	
	I intended to advance employees' professional skills and raise their pay	4.14	0.618	

4.3 Influence of entrepreneurial motivation on growth intention

The findings of Manolova *et al.* (2012) indicate that while male entrepreneurs want to

grow their new venture to achieve financial success, for women, financial success is only one of many reasons to achieve growth; others include self-recognition and intention to innovate. The results of this study align with this school of thought and show that entrepreneurial motivations significantly and

positively relate to different aspects of business growth. As shown in Table 4, our findings indicate that the regression models for “business promotion” ($F=4.280$, $p<0.05$) and “employment and governance” ($F=4.550$, $p<0.05$) are supported. The entrepreneurial motivation of “family livelihood” ($\text{Beta}=0.196$, $p<0.10$) and “self-actualization” ($\text{Beta}=0.383$, $p<0.05$) are significant predictors of business promotion, whereas

“family livelihood” ($\text{Beta}=0.333$, $p<0.05$) and “need for recognition” ($\text{Beta}=0.298$, $p<0.05$) for “employment and governance”. These results support hypothesis H₁, indicating that some women entrepreneurs grow their businesses not only to achieve profitability and enhance performance but also to benefit the community and society, as well as to improve the working environment for the employees.

Table 4 Growth intention model with no moderating effects

Growth intention / entrepreneurial motivation	Business promotion		Social engagement		Employment and governance	
	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> -value	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> -value	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> -value
Self-sufficiency	-0.030	0.775	-0.086	0.469	0.167	0.120
Family livelihood	0.196*	0.071	-0.037	0.761	0.333***	0.003
Need for recognition	-0.176	0.101	0.063	0.598	0.298***	0.007
Opportunity identification	0.141	0.186	0.205*	0.089	0.111	0.301
Self-actualization	0.383***	0.001	0.154	0.199	-0.138	0.200
Intercept	0.013	0.899	-0.008	0.948	-0.015	0.889
F value	4.280***	0.002	1.11	0.3659	4.550***	0.0013

* $p<0.10$; ** $p<0.05$; *** $p<0.01$

4.4 Moderating effects of marital status and motherhood

The moderating effect is also tested: whether the influence of entrepreneurial motivation on growth intention may vary depending on their marital status and childcare responsibilities. The empirical results are shown in Tables 5 and 6. Similar to the regression models without considering the effect of marital status, “business promotion” ($F=3.000$, $p<0.05$) and “employment and government” ($F=2.47$, $p<0.05$) are statistically valid. Marital status shows a significant moderation effect on the influence of self-sufficiency on business promotion ($\text{Beta}=0.483$, $p<0.10$). In other

words, compared to single/widowed/divorced women, the business growth intention of married female entrepreneurs is enhanced by their entrepreneurial motivation. These results support hypothesis H₂.

The growth intention model considering the number of children in care had similar results, where the F value was significant for the growth intention model of “business promotion” ($F=3.310$, $p<0.01$) and “employment and governance” ($F=3.353$, $p<0.01$). For the former growth intention model, there was a significant moderating effect between motherhood and Opportunity identification ($\text{Beta}=0.459$, $p<0.10$). This indicates that women with childcare responsibilities, compared to those who do not have children, are more likely to be

opportunistic due to their parenting experiences identifying market gaps, family responsibilities encouraging careful opportunity evaluation, and parenting networks providing market feedback. Cromie and Hayes (1988) state that married and single

women may start their ventures for varied reasons, especially for a motherly role. Women entrepreneurs who are mothers often choose to be self-employed or start a business to balance family and their professional goals (McDermott, 1985).

Table 5 Growth intention model with marital status as a moderating factor

Growth Intention / entrepreneurial motivation	Business promotion		Social engagement		Employment and governance	
	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> value	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> value	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> value
Self-sufficiency	-0.321*	0.063	-0.018	0.931	-0.002	0.991
Family livelihood	0.313*	0.056	0.042	0.826	0.250	0.141
Need for recognition	-0.053	0.808	0.061	0.815	0.428*	0.064
Opportunity identification	0.082	0.613	0.232	0.227	0.076	0.654
Self-actualization	0.198	0.369	0.307	0.241	-0.200	0.385
Self-sufficiency x marital status	0.483**	0.031	-0.118	0.650	0.279	0.226
Family livelihood x marital status	-0.242	0.276	-0.127	0.628	0.142	0.538
Need for recognition x marital status	-0.197	0.432	0.016	0.957	-0.177	0.498
Opportunity identification x marital Status	0.084	0.706	-0.034	0.897	0.103	0.655
Self-actualization x marital status	0.297	0.275	-0.207	0.519	0.084	0.768
Intercept	0.153	0.225	-0.047	0.752	0.019	0.887
F value	3.00***	0.004	0.61	0.796	2.47**	0.015

* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

For employment and governance intention, a positive interaction effect was found between the “number of children in care” and “family livelihood” (Beta=0.182; $p < 0.1$), suggesting that women with family responsibilities are more motivated to improve their family’s quality of life and economic status, and increases employment opportunities, especially for family members, by practicing business. These results support hypothesis H₃. Goffee and Scase (1985) note that many women entrepreneurs believe growth can harm trust between employees and big companies, leading to conflicting goals. This may explain why some women prioritize

training employees and creating a stable working environment.

4.5 Moderating effect of husband involvement

The growth intention model results, considering husband’s involvement as a moderator, are shown in Table 7. The F value was significant for both the business promotion intention model ($F=2.57$, $p < 0.05$) and employment and governance ($F=2.94$, $p < 0.05$). There was a significant interaction effect between husband involvement and

opportunity identification motivation (Beta=0.804; $p<0.05$), indicating that female entrepreneurs are more motivated to grow their businesses when their husbands are supportive. For the employment and governance intention model, the interaction between husband involvement and self-sufficiency is negative (Beta=-0.611, $p<0.10$), while the interaction with the need for recognition is positive (Beta=0.645, $p<0.05$). These results show that when husbands are

involved, female entrepreneurs are more likely to start a business for recognition and grow it for employment and governance. Conversely, females without husband involvement are more likely to start a business based on self-sufficiency motivation and grow it to increase employment. These findings support hypothesis H₄, demonstrating that husband participation moderates the relationship between female entrepreneurial motivation and growth intention.

Table 6 Growth intention model with the number of children in care as a moderating factor

Growth Intention / entrepreneurial motivation	Business promotion		Social engagement		Employment and governance	
	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> value	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> value	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> value
Self-sufficiency	-0.135	0.525	-0.117	0.372	0.160	0.143
Family livelihood	0.395	0.024	-0.116	0.437	0.426***	0.001
Need for recognition	-0.123	0.735	0.176	0.216	0.425***	0.001
Opportunity identification	-0.170	0.385	0.244	0.091	0.151	0.203
Self-actualization	-0.007	0.978	0.205	0.137	-0.113	0.315
Self-sufficiency x number of children in care	0.208	0.401	0.016	0.905	-0.03	0.79
Family livelihood x number of children in care	-0.381	0.100	-0.105	0.419	0.182*	0.091
Need for recognition x number of children in care	-0.105	0.783	0.101	0.566	0.037	0.797
Opportunity identification x number of children in care	0.459*	0.058	-0.087	0.475	0.159	0.115
Self-actualization x number of children in care	0.436	0.132	-0.254*	0.098	0.024	0.848
Intercept	0.101	0.382	-0.106	0.483	-0.069	0.58
F value	3.31***	0.002	.991	.462	3.353***	.002

* $p<0.10$; ** $p<0.05$; *** $p<0.01$

Table 7 Growth intention model with husband involvement as a moderating factor

Entrepreneurial motivation	Business promotion		Social engagement		Employment and governance	
	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> value	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> value	Coefficient estimates	<i>p</i> value
Self-sufficiency	-0.210	0.479	0.128	0.689	0.632**	0.020
Family livelihood	-0.301	0.257	0.359	0.212	-0.090	0.696
Need for recognition	-0.348*	0.085	0.170	0.427	-0.018	0.917
Opportunity identification	-0.362	0.290	0.489	0.189	0.196	0.513
Self-actualization	0.392**	0.048	-0.077	0.712	-0.126	0.459
Self-sufficiency x husband involvement	0.364	0.300	-0.511	0.182	-0.611*	0.053
Family livelihood x husband involvement	0.453	0.181	-0.301	0.408	0.371	0.211
Need for recognition x husband involvement	-0.038	0.907	0.097	0.787	0.645**	0.032
Opportunity identification x husband involvement	0.804**	0.048	-0.321	0.454	-0.110	0.750
Self-actualization x husband involvement	-0.027	0.927	0.112	0.723	0.160	0.534
Intercept	0.253*	0.078	-0.140	0.357	-0.074	0.544
F value	2.57**	0.022	0.99	0.474	2.94**	0.011

5 | Discussions and implications

This study responds to the call made by Poggesi *et al.* (2020) and contributes to extending the existing understanding of female entrepreneurs in several aspects. Firstly, five motivations for Taiwanese female entrepreneurs to start their businesses are identified: self-sufficiency, family livelihood, need for recognition, opportunity identification and self-actualization. Hisrich (1990) argues that generally men and women entrepreneurs are remarkably similar, yet in some respects, women entrepreneurs possess different motivations, business skill levels, and occupational backgrounds than their male counterparts. For instance, men are often motivated by the drive to control their destiny, and this drive often stems from disagreements

with their bosses or a feeling that they can run things better. In contrast, women tend to be more motivated by independence and achievement, which arise from frustration with a job in which they have not been allowed to perform at the level of which they are capable. Our findings align with his research, revealing that these Taiwanese female entrepreneurs are driven by aspirations for independence and the desire to demonstrate their competence and pursue their goals. This result also resonates with studies such as Benzing *et al.* (2009), which highlight that ensuring family security plays a crucial role in their decision-making processes. They were motivated to improve their quality of life and generate more resources for their family.

This study also identifies three different growth intentions: business growth, social engagement and employment and governance. It indicates that Taiwanese female

entrepreneurs, in addition to their ambition to expand their business, are also committed to contributing to society and improving the well-being of their employees. Much longitudinal and cross-sectional research has shown that women are more empathetic than men (e.g., Toussaint & Webb, 2005; Mestre *et al.*, 2009). Women entrepreneurs prioritize their family's well-being and strive to maintain family cohesion. They prefer to hire their family members as employees and work with them (Morris *et al.*, 2006), unlike male entrepreneurs whose growth intention is usually linked to increasing profitability via ambitious initiatives such as offering new products or services and expanding into new markets (Gundry & Welsch, 2001).

Thirdly, the present study further demonstrates that growth intentions are not uniformly driven by the same motivations. Previous research on female entrepreneurship has predominantly focused on the economic performance of their business, such as sales and profitability (e.g. Du Rietz & Henrekson, 2000) and that women's tendency to place greater emphasis on family and lifestyle considerations explains why their companies tend to underperform (e.g. DeMartino *et al.*, 2006). This study shows that Taiwanese female entrepreneurs' desire to increase their families' life qualities drives their intention to grow their businesses and care for their employees. Their ability to identify market opportunities motivates them to strengthen their ability to serve society. By taking care of the employees, they seek recognition, and through managing their business, they intend to enhance their sense of achievement. This result echoes the other research suggesting that women tend to measure results by social values (Travis *et al.*, 1988; Unger & Crawford, 1992).

Fourthly, this study provides a dynamic view of women's motivation and how their goals can change depending on the stage in their life, career and family. Previous evidence shows that marriage and motherhood moderate the relationship between the entrepreneurial motivation and growth intention of women entrepreneurs. Scholars, including Hsu *et al.* (2016), find that family-related concerns impede the growth of women-owned businesses and affect the type of business they choose and their business style. This study shows that married women in Taiwan tend to be motivated to start and grow a business to achieve independence. Female entrepreneurs who are mothers with dependents are particularly motivated to conduct business to ensure their family livelihood. Also, their desire to enhance their sense of achievement makes them less likely to prioritize societal contributions. It is also found that marriage and childcare responsibilities do not affect their intention of social engagement.

Lastly, this study indicates that spouse involvement plays different roles in influencing Taiwanese female entrepreneurs' intention to grow their businesses and take care of their employees. Scholars have noted that a husband's support for his entrepreneurial wife is critical in mitigating her role conflicts between work and family responsibilities (e.g. Nikina *et al.*, 2015). This study advances the existing understanding and provides more detailed insights into how husbands' involvement impacts female entrepreneurs. The more their husbands are involved in the business, the more these female entrepreneurs are driven by opportunity identification to expand the businesses. Similarly, the same effect can be found for the influence of the need for recognition to increase employee well-being.

Interestingly, the opposite effect is observed regarding how self-sufficiency influences the intention of employment and governance. In other words, the more husbands are involved, the less female entrepreneurs are motivated by the desire for independence to care for their employees. The concept of gender ideology might offer explanations to a certain degree. Gender ideology is “how a person identifies herself or himself with regard to marital and family roles that are traditionally linked to gender” (Nikina et al., 2015). Husbands often assume leadership roles within the family, and this expectation probably extends to the business realm when they become involved in their wives’ enterprises.

The findings presented here can benefit policymakers. By explicitly stating what motivates women to pursue entrepreneurship and how their roles would impact the effect of their motivations, policymakers can, for example, offer increased childcare support to mothers with significant childcare responsibilities. This support would encourage these women to contribute more actively to society. It is worth noting that the results of the present study should be interpreted with caution and consideration since the data is limited to Taiwanese female entrepreneurs who enrolled in a government-run consultation program.

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女性創業動機與成長意圖：婚姻、母職與丈夫參與對臺灣中小企業女性創業家的干擾效果

丁媿如¹ | 陳靜怡² | 林婷鈴³ | 謝美珍⁴

¹ 國立臺北大學企業管理學系

² 國立暨南國際大學國際企業學系

³ 國立臺北大學企業管理學系(通訊作者)

⁴ 萬能科技大學航空暨運輸服務管理系

摘要

本研究旨在探討創業動機與成長意圖之間的動態關係，並透過分析來自台灣女性創業家計畫中受訪者的回應，探討婚姻、育兒責任及丈夫參與經營所帶來的影響。研究使用結構式問卷，收集了 78 份有效回覆。研究發現，動機逐漸引導這些女性尋找新的機會，並努力實現自給自足與自我實現。儘管這些女企業家尋求發展自己的事業，但她們亦傾向與社區互動並關心員工。另外，已婚女性和育有子女的母親特別會因想確保家庭生計，而有動機從事事業經營。然而，她們追求成就感的慾望，反而使她們不太重視對社區和社會的貢獻。同時，當丈夫參與企業經營越多，這些女性創業者就越不會因追求獨立而關心員工。

關鍵字:

女性創業家、創業動機、成長意圖、婚姻狀況、母職