



## How does happiness affects women entrepreneurs' success?

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### Abstract

This study intends to see the meaning of happiness of women entrepreneurs in the business. This research was conducted in the city of Surakarta using qualitative methods with a phenomenological approach and social constructivist perspective. The results showed that happiness that is in line with a successful business is accompanied by a calm heart and mental condition and away from worry and sadness. In achieving happiness, there are supports influenced by both material and non-material aspects. Women entrepreneurs in Surakarta interpret success not only from the material side but also from the peace of mind, such as the absence of worry and fear, which shows that happiness goes in the same direction with success.

Keywords: happiness, entrepreneur, success.

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of life is to achieve happiness. Supports of achieving happiness are influenced by many aspects that are material and non-material. According to research conducted by Proyer et al. (2012) it shows that positive psychological function variables are supporters of happiness. Happiness comes from the heart, a satisfaction of happiness and a sense of contentment in the human heart give feelings of happiness. Indonesia's 2017 happiness index score is based on the results of the Happiness Level Measurement Survey (SPTK) of 70.69 on a scale of 0-100. The 2017 Indonesian happiness index is a composite index composed of three dimensions, namely life satisfaction, feeling (affection), and the meaning of life (eudaimonia). The contribution of each dimension to the Indonesian happiness index is life satisfaction at 34.80 percent, feelings (affect) at 31.18 percent, and meaning of life (eudaimonia) at 34.02 percent. The index values of each dimension of the happiness index are as follows: (1) life satisfaction dimension index is 71.07; (2) feeling dimension index (effect) was 68.59; and (3) meaning of life (eudaimonia) dimension index of 72.23. All dimensional indices are measured on a scale of 0–100 According to Veenhoven & Hagerty (2006) that happiness has a kind of positive attitude towards life, which is entirely a form of ownership of the cognitive and affective components. The cognitive aspect of happiness consists of a positive evaluation of life, which is measured either by standards or expectations. On the other hand, from an affective perspective, happiness consists of what we generally call a sense of well-being, finding wealth in life or being. On the other hand, from an affective perspective, happiness consists of what we generally call a sense of well-being, finding wealth in life or being profitable, or feeling satisfied or fulfilled by these things. In line with this, Diener, Horwitz, & Emmons (1985) added that happiness has the same meaning as subjective well-being, where subjective well-being is divided into two components, namely the affective component and the cognitive component.

Basically, happiness is a natural human nature or innate meaning that is something inherent in humans. Every human being should have happiness because, according to his nature, humans are created with various advantages and perfection. Humans are the best and most perfect creatures compared to other creatures. One of the keys to achieving business success is individual happiness in

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carrying out the business process until finally achieving success. Happiness is considered to be one of the keys to one's success in running a business. Success should be in line with the meaning of life, therefore individuals use each method to find true life happiness with meaningful things. According to Proyer et al. (2012) meaningful life is the gate to happiness, happiness that is achieved is outer happiness, meaning as a form of life experience. Inner and outer happiness can be defined as physical and mental happiness, where the mental happiness is related to spirituality, while outer happiness has the meaning of physical happiness, related to material attainments.

Happiness is something everyone is looking for. Each individual has different standards or measurements and definitions of happiness. Happiness can be seen from various scientific perspectives, both psychological, economic, social, and religious. All individuals are expected to feel completely happy because happiness is a broad concept such as positive emotions or pleasant experiences, low negative moods, and high life satisfaction. Individuals have high happiness if they feel satisfied with their living conditions, often feel positive emotions, and rarely feel negative emotions. Besides, happiness can also arise because of the individual's success in achieving what they desire, cultivating the strengths and virtues they have in daily life, and feeling a pleasant state Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener (2005).

Research by (Fuad, 2017) stated that individual happiness could be assessed subjectively and objectively. Objectively, individual happiness is measured using standards that refer to certain evidence. According to research conducted by Salavera, Usán, Pérez, Chato, & Vera (2017) Happiness decreases with age. Strategy is needed to influence happiness, where an unproductive strategy affects happiness, while a productive strategy does not. Happiness does not always start with success. Many successful individuals are not happy. Therefore, individuals need happiness to gain success in line with Chittithaworn et al., (2011) is also reflected in individuals achieving a successful business. Chittithaworn et al., (2011) provide an understanding of how people should start their business by looking at all the factors that influence business success so as to help reduce the risk of failure and increase the chances of success. Business success is, of course, measured by viability, profit, return on investment, sales growth, the number of employees, happiness, reputation, and so on.

The study of the economic theory of happiness was first put forward by Easterlin (1974) in his research entitled "Does Economic Growth Improve the Human Lot". This study concludes that in countries with high per capita income, people have reasons to be happy. A happy and prosperous country is one that contains GDP, productivity, social support and inclusion, health, low corruption, and environmental sustainability (Kaklauskas et al., 2020). However, the happiness expressed by the community is not much different from other countries, even with countries with per capita income that can only meet basic needs. During its development, there has been debate about the relationship between income growth and the level of happiness over time. Proponents of the Easterlin paradox assert that there is no relationship between average per capita income and happiness in a country (Stevenson and Wolfers, 2008). As well as arguing that income growth results in higher average happiness. In contrast to followers of Easterlin (1974) Clark, Frijters, and Shields (2008) found that absolute income contributed to the level of happiness. There is robust evidence that within countries, those with more income are happier.

The meaning of happiness by women entrepreneurs cannot be separated from the factors of freedom and conformity with the desire to live. Whereas in general, entrepreneurs aim to succeed in entrepreneurship and be able to carry out the main role as a mother for their children and a wife for their husbands. Being an entrepreneur is the right choice because you can have free time and can achieve independence. This is as Berglund (2014) explains that an entrepreneur has more satisfaction than a worker (employee) because of the high flexibility in life. Not bound by special rules or on the task created, but has the autonomy of the task. Employers tend to have higher levels of subjective welfare compared to regular employees. Extraversion, friendliness, awareness, and emotional stability are positively related to job satisfaction.

As an entrepreneur, success is a joy because you have gone through a meaningful process to get the desired result. However, every individual who acts as a woman entrepreneur has different happiness in achieving success. Because happiness is each individual's measurement, this is in line with the findings of (Patnani, 2012) that happiness is a person's assessment of the quality of his life, which is marked by pleasant emotions and a sense of satisfaction with their own life. The most important

source of happiness for women is family. The components of happiness consistently in supporting happiness are positive cognition and control.

Specifically, this study aims to look at the meaning of happiness of women who work in companies. This meaning is based on the understanding and practice of religious values, life experiences, and culture from generation to generation. They know happiness subjectively from informants who then will be analyzed by researchers about the meaning of happiness from various backgrounds of scientific studies.

## 2. Literatur Review

Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener (2005) argue that happy individuals succeed in many aspects of life, including marriage, friendship, income, work performance, and health. On the other hand, happiness can also have costs or losses in some situations as well as trade-offs or sacrifices that need to be made to achieve the desired thing (Neumann, 1975). Happiness is the royal road to a perfect life. There are several ways that positive emotions can have a detrimental effect. For one thing, in some situations, positive influence is not the most functional response. On the other hand, happy people can use their creativity, confidence, negotiation skills, and social skills to achieve goals that are of no use to society (Lyubomirsky *et al.*, 2005). Family plays an essential role in the entrepreneurial process because of robust associations between family embeddedness in business and entrepreneurial actions or outcomes (Xu *et al.*, 2020).

Entrepreneurial work can bring financial benefits and non-money benefits, such as welfare. Entrepreneurial innovation is expected to be beneficial for individual job satisfaction, work-family balance, and life satisfaction (Jensen *et al.*, 2017). The theory of life satisfaction argues that differences in the importance of values and goals across societies may cause differences in the strength by which autonomy, relatedness, and competence needs affect individuals' life satisfaction.

If happy people were unable to experience negative emotions when things go wrong, their responses would likely be dysfunctional because they might not react appropriately to threats, losses, and other significant negative events. If, on the other hand, happy people can occasionally experience negative emotions, as we suggest they do, they might be particularly successful because they can be approach-focused most of the time, but not when conditions become adverse. Thus, happy people can remain in a positive mood as long as things are positive or neutral but experience a negative mood when things are very bad, thus motivating them to withdraw, conserve resources, or otherwise avoid harm. Furthermore, there may be a resetting point around a person's current circumstances so that people are most likely to react with negative effect when conditions worsen from their current state (Diener *et al.*, 1985).

Thoilliez (2011) in his research, explains that there are basically two events to approach the study of happiness, first is to think about what is meant by happiness, and the second is to ask people what makes them happy. Veenhoven (1988) divides the theory of happiness into three parts: *set-point theory*, *cognitive theory*, and *effective theory*. In the *set-point theory*, happiness becomes something that has been programmed by someone by nature or character and is not related to someone's life, and happiness is influenced by traits or characters (personal trait), genetics, and cultures. People will try to maintain a level of happiness that is comfortable for them. In *cognitive theory*, happiness is a product of human thought and reflection on the difference between actual and supposed perceptions of life. Happiness cannot be counted, but it can be known. In the *effective theory*, happiness is a human reflection of how good their life is in general. If a person feels good most of their life, then they should be happy.

Happiness for everyone is subjective, but in our country, there is a standard to measure the happiness of one nation. This measurement is based on the quantification of specified values or indicators. An index measures happiness from Central Statistics Agency (BPS) called the Happiness Index, which consists of 3 (three) dimensions, namely life satisfaction, feelings (affect), and the meaning of life (eudaimonia). Thus, dividing the dimensions of indicators of happiness by BPS referred to expert theories.

Pan & Zhou (2013) conducted a study to explore the relationship between career success and happiness using certain moderators and found that satisfaction scores coincided with the relationship between salary happiness and career commitment along with the relationship between happiness satisfaction. In their Research, Boehm & Lyubomirsky (2008) show that happiness is not only correlated

with success at work, but happiness often precedes the measure of success. Positive influences also have an impact on improving workplace outcomes.

### 3. Method

This research uses a social constructivist perspective to understand the meaning of happiness of female entrepreneurs in their success. A social constructivist perspective is an approach to qualitative research. The social constructivist perspective believes that individuals are always trying to understand the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings based on experiences, historical and social norms that are applied in their daily lives (Schwandt, 1994). In other studies, the measurement of happiness uses three types of studies, namely cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental studies, that link happiness with various work results (Boehm and Lyubomirsky, 2008).

This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The subject of this research is women entrepreneurs, understood by phenomenological research. This strategy is used not only to describe the experiences of informants but also to find out what is on their thoughts and feelings (Smith and Osborn, 2004). In other words, human behavior patterns can be understood by revealing what is hidden in the human consciousness. Thus the *verstehen* process (appreciation and eating) is needed to understand various social phenomena (Bungin, 2001).

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The data collection method used in-depth interviews. Unstructured and repetitive interviews. Then, determining samples or informants aims to obtain and explore as much information as possible to detail specific phenomena that can be used as a basis for theoretical design. The criteria for informants in this study are living in Surakarta, owning a stable business for more than three years, having a family (husband and children), having a concern in developing their business. Determination of these criteria aims to understand women's self-actualization in business, family, and community activities.

### 4. Results and Discussion

Women entrepreneurs think that business success is accompanied by a calm heart and mental condition that is far from worry and sadness. Women entrepreneurs not only act as entrepreneurs but also act as mothers, so the harmonic family is also one of the things that makes happiness in success. Women entrepreneurs interpret their business achievement from the experience and cultural internalization from generation to generation and religious values.

According to Myers and Twenge (2018), characteristics or characteristics of happy humans are self-respecting, optimistic, open, able to control themselves. Supporters of happiness are not only feelings of great joy, but pressure on someone can affect a person to be happy or not. Feelings of not being depressed would increase the assessment of a particular subject's happiness index. People who experience stress will tend to be very irritable or irritable (sensitive) and will have an impact on a person's happiness level. Then in the dimension of feeling, it includes feelings of not being worried or anxious.

In this study, researchers looked at the happiness of women entrepreneurs who became informants. This happiness is seen based on the understanding and experience of religious values, life experiences, and culture passed down from the family. To achieve success, an entrepreneur has business experience with various failures and successes. One of the problems faced by the informants was changing businesses and experiencing ups and downs in each business. The problems faced became self-learning by the informants. However, a strong fighting spirit and determination are some of the things that make her strong in entrepreneurship. These processes make informants have more happiness because each process increases the understanding of religious values. The informant gave the picture of happiness as a situation of the heart and the condition of the soul that is always calm and far from worry and sadness. This point can be seen from a quote from one of the informants. "*The point is actually that last statement, not sad nor worried.*" (Interview, Informant 1, 13/01/18)

Happiness, in general, can be seen with 2 (two) approaches, hedonic and eudaimonia approaches. Both of these approaches represent a different perspective and way of interpreting

happiness. According to Tumanggor (2016), the hedonic approach, well-being, and happiness are considered as pleasure, enjoyment, satisfaction, and the absence of pain. All of these aspects are centered on getting and consuming what you want. Meanwhile, the eudaimonic approach is understood more broadly. Well-being and happiness in a psychological perspective with a eudaimonic approach are understood as the meaning/value of personal growth, self-realization, maturity, quality, and autonomy. Happiness can be interpreted as a result of charity with full conviction that what is sought is nothing but a relationship with God. This also applies to work. What makes or brings happiness is giving to those who need it. This is believed by informant 1 (one). *“So the key is charity day and night, to do good day and night, for the sake of Allah’s blessings. So my work is charity”* (Interview, Informant 1 13/01/18)

According to informant 1, happiness is a way to achieve the blessings of Allah SWT by carrying out / giving wealth. At the same time, the meaning of informant one related to wealth is not just money but everything that is owned, either knowledge or time. This was Informant 1's statement. *“... God will give us his blessing if we do charity, I can see that wealth is not money, wealth can be knowledge or time, it can also be the most stingy thing that is money, the highest wealth is money ... yes money. Whatever that is, we are able to give it day and night as a form of charity ..”* (Informant Interview 1 13/01/2018)

The success that the informant believes is happiness by prioritizing her meeting with the Creator. This is closer to the eudaimonia approach as the meaning of happiness that is manifested in the holy spirit (divinity). Happiness is interpreted as a form of happy people is. Happiness for the successful business of a woman entrepreneur is one of the ways to make others happy, and this is in line with the thought of happiness according to Ki Ageng Suryamentaram in (Kurniawati *et al.*, 2013), which explains the meaning of happiness is by sharing happiness. Where happiness is by seeing other people happy, is doing good deeds as quoted from an interview with informant 1 *“Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good. So you don't have to wait, you don't have to dream after we passed away we will be together with Allah ”* (Interview Informant 1 13/01/18)

Kindness is meant to be shared with others. Willingness to share with others is one of the pious categories, and this is a form of happiness for the success of the business. This happiness can be useful to others and can give whatever one has to offer. The informant also told about how happiness accompanies each process towards success. One of the examples is by giving appreciation to employees who have high loyalty, and the informant provides the needs of her employees. Informant 1 (one) said that she gave appreciation in the form of motorbikes even houses. In addition, Informant 2 (two) gave appreciation by giving bonuses, on-time salaries and convenience experienced by employees.

The habit of sharing with others that makes other people happy creates a special joy for the informants in achieving successful business because it has helped achieve success. According to informant 3 (three), happiness in life is running a business that doesn't suffer loss and runs sufficiently. In other words, business sustainability. Happiness will work for hand in hand with the successful business of a woman entrepreneur, one of which is having a harmonious family. As well as being able to maintain family harmony and on the other hand, children can learn well at school without having any major problems. This is conveyed by Informants 3 (three). *“It's happy, well because.... no segments got obstructed or problematic. In the sense of business, it does not suffer a loss. Not satisfied quickly... even though it's hard and we got to crawl, we must still go forward. That's enough for me. Family, of course ... what is the target? Children are good at school, even if there are one out of four children cannot be number one, it is not a problem”* (Interview Informant 3 (three) 10/08/17)

As experienced by Informant 3 (three), family happiness is done by maintaining family harmony, family harmony is one of the characteristics of family happiness that everyone aspires to. Even though Informant 3 (three)'s family have different characters and traits, this is precisely what unites the family. So there is good communication between family members, children, husband, and wife. *“Because each one has their own character... from the family side maybe that's what it is”* (Interview, Informant 3 10/08/17)

From the explanation of informant 3, the happy condition in the family can be proven by the results of good and harmonious relationships. Informant happiness in a harmonious family is the result of a good and harmonious relationship between the spouse (husband and wife) which results in outstanding children. Conversely, if the family is not harmonious, some family members are usually overwhelmed by conflicts, tensions, disappointments and never feel satisfied and happy with their

condition and existence. Informant 3 (three) said that family happiness is when both husband and wife are faithful towards each other, this can be seen from the statement of Informant 3 (three). “*If from the husband's side, as long as the husband is not cheating, it's true. If you have an affair, it means that as long as he can, what's it called, enjoying time at home with the children, then no problem*” (Interview Informant 3 10/08/17)

Harmonic family's happiness can also facilitate the way to achieve success, such as when determining a business decision together with a partner, as stated by Informant 2 “*Yes... we do it all together. That is our strength*” (Informant Interview 2, 05/09/17) From this information, family harmony in running a business is happiness that manifests in family harmony. According to informant 1 (one), the expected family condition is when there is the freedom to think and act in accordance with their own respective consciences.

Family harmony as happiness in the family or, in other words, family well-being, is a multidimensional conceptualization of happiness like individual happiness, but more broadly related to functions and needs that must be fulfilled, there are at least 4 (four): supportive family relationship, economic security, physical safety, and healthy relationships, economic resilience and outside social connections.

Schimmel (2009) states that happiness has several components, happiness on income, health, education, and happiness determined by each individual. The transitional happiness gap shrank during the recovery period after the Great Recession (Norton *et al.*, 2018). According to Schimmel (2009) external factors that support a person's happiness are social relationships, relationships at work, and socio-political conditions. The Happiness Study by Lyubomirsky, King and Diener (2005) shows that most individuals who claim to be happy have good social relationships. But social relations and happiness have a two-way relationship. Studies show that happier people are more sociable.

Happiness is also in line with balance activities when achieving happiness. The balance is carried out between business activities, family activities, social activities, and others. Balance here is measured from the workforce activity and according to achievement target. Besides that, there are outputs and outcomes. One of the informants felt happy carrying out her role as wife even though it was from simple tasks, such as making dinner, even if it was only eggs. Informants are trying to balance life and socialize by participating in socio-political activities as a form of happiness felt by informants. One of the informants is also active in various organizational activities. Some activities that the informant participated in were a balancing act and were supported by her husband.

From the results obtained from the informants, happiness goes hand in hand with the process of being a success. The subjective happiness of Informant 1 (one) and Informant 2 (two) is that they are always grateful no matter what the results of the business, either low or high or even when they encounter various problems. Informants 3 (three) emphasize more on happiness on religious elements such as educating their children to become devout children and husband's faithfulness when running a business to achieve success.

## 5. Conclusion

Women entrepreneurs in Surakarta interpret success not only from material or worldly matter but also from the state of peace of mind, such as the absence of worry and fear. They are balancing between work and family. Happiness is an achievement of business, family, and life goals. Balance in carrying out duties as a woman, wife, mother, and entrepreneur will create happiness. Being a decision-maker in developing and empowering women entrepreneurs to increase their contribution to the economy.

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