

# Self-Efficacy, Alertness and Work-Family Conflict Toward Women Entrepreneurial Success

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*Abstract:* - Over the last few decades, the rise in women's entrepreneurship has been influenced by greater access to education, changing societal attitudes, advancements in technology, and initiatives aimed at empowering women in the business world. The increasing number of women entrepreneurs worldwide, is attributed to technological advancements and a decrease in job opportunities in both government and private sector. As a developing country, Malaysia also has a considerable number of women entrepreneurs taking advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities due to limited prospects and desire to have more quality time with their families. This research delves into the correlation between self-efficacy, alertness, and work-family conflict toward the success of women entrepreneurs. Recognizing that women play a crucial role in family management and business, this study investigates the moderating effect of work-family conflict on the relationship between self-efficacy, alertness, and the success of 300 women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. 300 successful women entrepreneurs participated through an online survey method and the data gathered were analyzed through the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 22 and SmartPLS 3.0.

*Key-Words:* - women, entrepreneurial success, women entrepreneur, women entrepreneurial success, work-family conflict, self-efficacy, alertness, moderating effect.

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## 1 Introduction

Women are not excluded from the natural roles as housekeepers, who manage families even with a high level of education background and living in an urban environment. Women are always committed when it comes to family matters. For women, family is a priority. The pure feeling the motherly love

towards their children and family always made women strong in facing challenges. Women tend to choose careers and dual roles as wives and mothers. Being an entrepreneur is a good choice among women nowadays because of the shrinkage of job opportunities in the market, besides the flexible hours in running own business compared to being

under-employed. However, running a business from the start-up to the established level is not simple. An entrepreneur needs energy, focus, sources of finances, and a lot more.

The chaotic life of a woman causes them to be often less concerned with the emotional and mental condition, commonly exposed to work-family conflict. Women will easily stressed in balancing their everyday lives. It disturbs their personal or family life and degrades the work's quality, so they cannot reach maximum performance levels or success. Researchers studying the conflict between family and entrepreneurship roles have suggested that an elevated level of demand in the family role contributes to work-family conflict, [1], resulting in heightened life stress. Nevertheless, family life and entrepreneurship intertwine with [1], [2], [3], [4], describing family as very important in life. Numerous women in developing nations, including Malaysia, engage in entrepreneurship as a means to supplement their income, while others transition from employment to entrepreneurial pursuits. In the new era of technology nowadays, women are driven to explore business ventures due to the market's limited job opportunities, [5].

The socio-demographic and political changes also being among the external factors towards opportunities in entrepreneurship. Socio-demographic factors can significantly influence the involvement of women entrepreneurs in various ways. These factors encompass characteristics related to social and economic demographics and can shape women to opportunities, challenges, and experiences in entrepreneurship.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Women Entrepreneurs in Malaysia

Entrepreneurship has become the main agenda in Malaysia. Over the recent decades, significant strides have been made in reducing the disparity in women's roles in a developing country such as Malaysia. This advancement is noticeable both in absolute and relative terms, encompassing increased rates of female workforce engagement, progress in women's productive endeavors, heightened participation in education, and enhancements in health status. The total population of women in Malaysia for the year 2021 was 15.6 million, with the majority being 15 to 64 years old, [6]. In Malaysia, there are three main ethnicities, namely the Malays, Chinese, and Indians. Women in Malaysia are among the traditional mothers who provide their time to comfort and take care of the

families while their men are working to feed the families.

According to the research statistics by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, Malaysia is categorized among three developing nations in Asia, alongside China and Thailand. It is noteworthy that, among these Asian developing countries, Malaysia exhibits the lowest Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) for female adults aged 18 to 64 years, as compared to Thailand and China, [7]. Most women avoid taking risks in business and are involved in micro and small enterprises rather than other more prominent industries. A limitation still diverts women entrepreneurs in Malaysia from endeavoring success in entrepreneurship wholly.

### 2.2 Women's Entrepreneurial Success

Women's entrepreneurial success is a dynamic and evolving process, influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Recognizing and addressing these factors can contribute to creating a supportive environment where women entrepreneurs can thrive and make significant contributions to the business world.

The success of women entrepreneurs is a multifaceted concept. The key elements that contribute to women's entrepreneurial success include leadership skills, innovation and adaptability, financial management, networking and relationship building, access to resources, education and skill development, resilience and persistence, strategic planning, work-life integration, social impact, and also community involvement.

According to [8], conflict can lead to success under certain circumstances. While conflict is often associated with challenges and tension, it can also catalyze positive change and improvement. Successful women entrepreneurs may contribute to the empowerment of others, particularly by creating opportunities for women in the workforce, mentoring emerging entrepreneurs, or advocating for gender equality in business. Success may be assessed through various metrics, including the entrepreneur's financial profits, the employment opportunities generated by the entrepreneur, and the sustained duration of the firm's existence, [8].

### 2.3 Alertness

[9], introduced and delved into the concept of alertness or opportunity recognition. The identification of entrepreneurial opportunities has been recognized as a fundamental behavior in entrepreneurship. In line with [10], entrepreneurial alertness is defined as a unique set of skills that involve the perceived processing of information.

recognized as an intellectual engine propelling the identification of opportunities. This study views alertness as a multidimensional variable, including scanning and search (S&S), association and connection (A&C), and lastly, evaluation and judgment (E & J). Alertness is a notion that typically denotes the condition of being watchful, focused, and mentally responsive to stimuli in one's surroundings. alertness involves diverse cognitive and physiological processes that impact an individual's wakefulness and awareness.

The [10], supports Kirzner's theory by asserting that alertness hinges on the capability to perceive signals of change accurately. The ability of a person's alertness leads to the quality of the decision-making. Decision-making is an essential element in the entrepreneurship field.

The effectiveness of entrepreneurial alertness in discerning opportunities within environmental complexity has the potential to unlock previously untapped profits, consequently contributing to the success of women entrepreneurs.

## 2.4 Self-Efficacy

According to [11], self-efficacy is referring to an individual's subjective assessment, and it reflects their ability to organize and execute actions required to accomplish specific tasks. Notably, studies indicate that, on average, females express lower confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities than males, [11]. There are a few numbers of research on entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE). In the context of entrepreneurship, high entrepreneurial self-efficacy is associated with a greater likelihood of taking entrepreneurial actions, persisting in the face of obstacles, and being resilient in the dynamic business environment. Individuals with solid entrepreneurial self-efficacy are more inclined to identify and pursue opportunities, manage uncertainties, and adapt to the challenges inherent in the entrepreneurial journey. Interestingly, evidence suggests this gender disparity in self-efficacy emerges early among young adults and adolescents, [12], [13]. Self-efficacy is a reflection of an individual's confidence in their ability to succeed in specific situations. Understanding one's beliefs regarding their capacity to exert influence in various circumstances plays a crucial role in shaping their ability to face challenges and helps make effective decisions. Individuals tend to be highly motivated to take on challenging tasks and seek new experiences when their self-efficacy is slightly above their current skill levels, [14]. Individuals with high self-efficacy exhibit a more significant commitment to task completion and demonstrate more resilience

than those people with low levels of self-efficacy, [15]. Self-efficacy beliefs represent a pivotal aspect of human motivation and behavior, shaping actions that have the potential to profoundly influence one's life and contribute to success in entrepreneurial endeavors.

## 2.5 Work-Family Conflict as Moderator

Work-family conflict is typically characterized as a clash between the demands of work and family roles, where pressures from these domains are mutually incompatible in certain aspects. On the flip side, work-family conflict arises when behaviors, moods, stresses, and emotions stemming from the work domain exert either negative or positive impacts on the family sphere, as outlined in [16]. [17], were among the researchers that first defined work-family conflict, [18], who explored how individuals navigating inter-role responsibilities experience conflict in their work. In another study, [18], examined the moderating impact of work-family conflict. Additionally, [19], delved into exploring the moderating influence of work-family conflict on the effects of childbearing on subjective well-being. Work-family conflict (WFC), as studied by [20], was considered a unidimensional construct and has significantly influenced women entrepreneurs' success. Numerous researchers, including, [21], [22], have examined the relationship of work-family conflict and entrepreneurial success. Studying conflict holds importance due to its function as a driver for change. Every resolution of a conflict leads to enduring transformations within the social system in which it took place. The evolution of changes and adaptations within the social system follows the resolution of conflicts. Factors contributing to work-family conflict for women may include long working hours, inflexible work schedules, limited access to supportive workplace policies (such as flexible hours or parental leave), and societal expectations regarding traditional gender roles. Striking a balance between career aspirations and family obligations can be a constant challenge. Consequently, conflict may serve as a moderator, either boosting and fortifying the determination of women entrepreneurs for greater success or demotivating them. When considering work-family conflict as a moderator, it pertains to its role in influencing the strength or direction of the relationship between two variables. In the realm of women entrepreneurs, numerous philosophers and psychological theorists agreed that having a sense of control over behavior, environment, thoughts, and feelings is paramount for achieving happiness and overall well-being. In a

world perceived as predictable and manageable, it is important to know how to control behaviors, thoughts, and emotions so that a person can have a better perception to confront life's challenges, nurture positive relationships, and attain personal satisfaction and peace of mind. The stress resulting from work-family conflict may influence an individual's self-efficacy, affecting the capacity to achieve life satisfaction and succeed in the career. While work-family conflict poses unique challenges, it does not necessarily preclude success. Like their male counterparts, women entrepreneurs can employ strategies to effectively manage and navigate the demands of their professional and personal lives. Success in entrepreneurship often involves resilience, adaptability, and adequate time and stress management.

### 3 Proposed Framework

The proposed framework is supported by the Social Behavioral Theory and Role Theory. As clarified by [23], attribution theory pertains to how social perceivers utilize information to formulate causal explanations for events. It delves into the process of gathering information and how it is amalgamated to shape a causal judgment, [23]. In measuring the instrument, the five-point Likert scale is chosen.

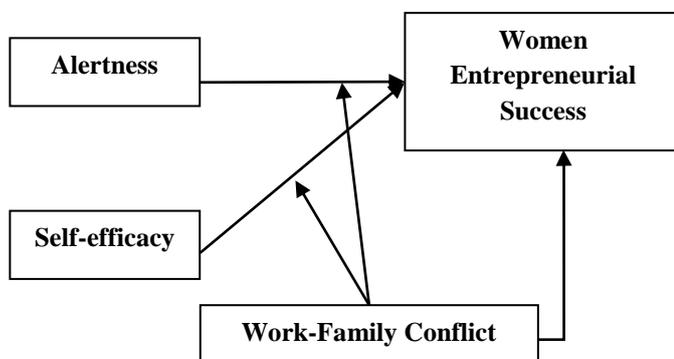


Fig. 1: Proposed Theoretical Framework

Based on Figure 1, the objectives of this research are:

- i. To determine the significant relationship between self-efficacy and women's entrepreneurial success.
- ii. To examine the significant relationship between alertness and women's entrepreneurial success.
- iii. To analyze the relationship between the work-family conflict and women's entrepreneurial success

- iv. To analyze the moderating effect of work-family conflict on the relationship between self-efficacy and women's entrepreneurial success
- v. To analyze the moderating effect of work-family conflict on the relationship between self-efficacy and women's entrepreneurial success.

### 4 Methodology

According to [24], it is imperative to define margins of error when determining the sample size. This is essential to ensure accuracy and appropriateness, ensuring that the selected sample effectively represents the characteristics of the entire population. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), the definition of a successful business is when the business was established for more than 36 months to 48 months. The registered businesses in the CCM until Dec 2022 were 8,481,655, with 7,347,074 being sole proprietorships and a total of 1,455,284 being partnership.

The unit of analysis in this research was individual. The target population was according to the criteria such as the women must currently play an active role in managing their businesses. The women entrepreneurs must operate the business for at least 36 months and the business must be a stand-alone business.

This study employed a stratified random sampling technique, which involves dividing or stratifying the population into distinct and mutually exclusive groups. As explained earlier, subjects were then randomly selected from each stratum, [25]. The stratified random sampling technique is typically chosen when a large population consists of several subpopulations. Simultaneously, it was anticipated that similarities would prevail in terms of women's responsibilities, networking environments, and adherence to similar national policies and business procedures. Table 1 provides a summary of the instrumental approach used in this study. The success variable (dependent) was adapted from Lau, Shaffer, and Au (2007), consisting of 19 items. The alertness variable was adapted from Kirzner (1973,1999) and consists of 13 items in 3 dimensions. The self-efficacy variable was adopted from Matthias Jerusalem and Ralf Schwarzer (1981) and consists of 10 items. While the work-family conflict variable (moderator) was adopted from Netemeyer and Boles (1996), consisting of 5 items.

Table 1. Research Instruments

Variable Type	Items	Sources
Success	19	Lau, Shaffer and Au (2007)
Alertness	13	Kirzner (1973,1999)
Self-efficacy	10	Matthias Jerusalem & Ralf Schwarzer (1981)
Work-family Conflict	5	Netemeyer & Boles (1996)

Data were gathered using fully structured and closed-ended questionnaires. The study utilized the internet-based electronic survey method, employing a questionnaire administered through Google Survey (Google Docs.). An internet survey was chosen to enable the researcher to reach a broader geographical area and collect a substantial amount of data at a relatively low cost. A total of 300 completed questionnaires were collected and subsequently analyzed through the SPSS and Smart PLS.

## 5 Analysis and Findings

### 5.1 Demographic

Respondent's demographic profile describes the background of 300 profiles of successful women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. The descriptive statistics results postulate that 10.4%(24) of respondents are single, 65.6%(151) are married and the other 23.9%(55) are divorcees. 57%(131) of the respondents are doing online business while the other 43%(99) are not doing online business at all. The education of respondents illustrates that higher education (degree, master & phd holders) are at 39.1% while middle education (stpm, certificate & diploma holders) are 42.2% while the rest are from the high school level.

### 5.2 Assessment of Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity

The measurement model for this research is shown in Figure 2. Table 2 is the summarization of the result on the 1st and 2nd order measurement model (Figure 2). All the constructs in this study presented a composite reliability (CR) exceeding 0.80 and average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.5, which fulfill the condition of the measurement model to proceed to the next analysis in structural model. There are a few items deleted to achieve the AVE.

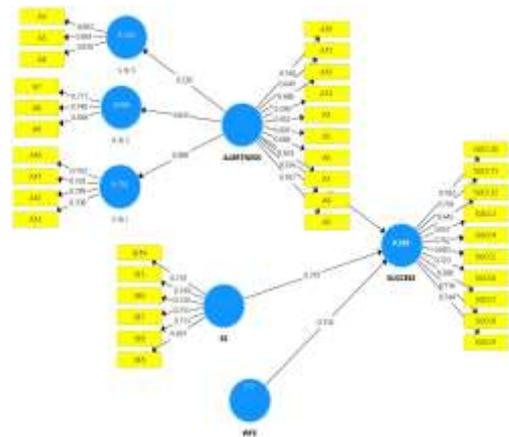


Fig. 2: Measurement Model

Table 2. Results of the Measurement Model

CONSTRUCTS													
1 <sup>st</sup> Order	2 <sup>nd</sup> Order	Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE	No. of Indicators						
Scanning & Search (S&S)		A3	0.683	0.738	0.851	0.658	3(6)						
		A5	0.861										
		A6	0.876										
Association and Connection (A&C)		A7	0.777	0.698	0.831	0.622	3(3)						
		A8	0.748										
		A9	0.838										
Evaluation and Judgement (E&J)	ALERTNESS (AL)	A10	0.793	0.682	0.836	0.671	4(4)						
		A11	0.703										
		A12	0.789										
		A13	0.708										
		(S&S)	0.726										
		(A&C)	0.833										
SELF-EFFICACY (SE)		(E&J)	0.890	0.821	0.869	0.525	6(10)						
		SE5	0.749										
		SE6	0.730										
		SE7	0.753										
		SE8	0.713										
		SE9	0.691										
		SE10	0.783										
		WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT (WFC)						WFC1	0.851	0.927	0.860	0.557	5(5)
								WFC2	0.595				
								WFC3	0.664				
WFC4	0.875												
WFC5	0.706												
SUCCESS (SUCC)		SUCC3	0.657	0.892	0.911	0.507	10(19)						
		SUCC4	0.762										
		SUCC5	0.683										
		SUCC6	0.723										
		SUCC7	0.690										
		SUCC8	0.716										
		SUCC9	0.744										
		SUCC10	0.783										
		SUCC11	0.701										
		SUCC12	0.645										

### 5.3 Structural Model

The structural model as attached in Figure 3, shows the moderation effect, and the model was analyzed through 1000 bootstrapping.

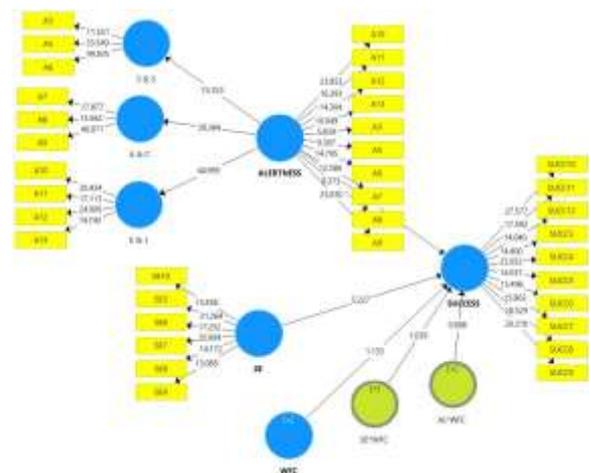


Fig. 3: Structural Model

### 5.4 Direct Relationship

Table 3 recounted the result of the direct relationship between self-efficacy (SE), alertness (AL), and women entrepreneurs' success (SUCC). The result shows that self-efficacy and alertness towards women's entrepreneurial success are significant while work-family conflict and women entrepreneurial success is not significant.

Table 3. Result of Direct Relationship

	Direct effect (β)	STDEV	T-statistic	P value	Result
AL→SUCC	0.252	0.069	3.628	0.000	Significant
SE→SUCC	0.326	0.062	5.227	0.000	Significant
WFC→SUCC	0.111	0.097	1.153	0.125	Not Significant

### 5.5 Indirect Relationship

Table 4 indicates the result of the moderating effect of work-family conflict on alertness and self-efficacy towards women entrepreneurs' success (SUCC). The result shows no significant moderation effect of work-family conflict towards both independent variables.

Table 4. Result of Indirect Relationship

	Indirect effect (β)	STDEV	T-statistic	Result
AL→WFC→SUCC	-0.087	0.088	0.988	Not Significant
SE→WFC→SUCC	-0.194	0.187	1.039	Not Significant

R square 1 denotes the coefficient value before introducing the moderating effect, while R square 2 reflects the coefficient value after incorporating the moderating effect. The disparity between the two R square values indicates a noticeable difference. The R2 values indicate a modest impact of the predictors (alertness, self-efficacy, and work-family conflict) on the dependent variable (success).

## 6 Conclusion and Recommendation

The field of entrepreneurship is crucial in the economic development of any country. Entrepreneurial activities can boost the economy and improve the standard of living for the population in a country. Entrepreneurship serves as a driver of innovation, opening up numerous job opportunities for the community. Through entrepreneurship, various developments take place, leading to the advancement of regions. Entrepreneurs contribute to the economy through the introduction of new ideas and technologies. Entrepreneurship plays a vital role as a job creator, absorbing the workforce, and fostering economic

growth. Successful entrepreneurs can inspire others by identifying key elements and aspects related to their success. The findings of this study offer implications that can be utilized for examining and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of women entrepreneurs, facilitating their endurance and success in the business realm. Additionally, the information from this study can serve as a stimulus and a means for national leaders to assist and encourage women to progress in their respective fields. To avoid conflict, stakeholders can proactively enhance time management skills between business and family management. The results of this study can catalyze fostering the development and accomplishments of women entrepreneurs, ensuring they keep pace with the rapid advancements in globalization and technology. Past research [26], [27], consistently indicates that women entrepreneurs have played a significant role in reducing poverty and expediting the achievement of broader socio-economic goals.

Consequently, women's entrepreneurship has become a key focus for policymakers in developing countries for several decades. However, their contribution depends on their performance, and the motivating factors or circumstances leading to their success are not identified. As a result, there is currently a lack of research aimed at examining the factors that could contribute to or moderate the success of women entrepreneurs, ultimately enhancing their achievements.

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- Maliani Mohamad - Writing - review & editing Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation)
- Rusnifaezah Musa -Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution.
- Azizi Abu Bakar- Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team.
- Siti Nur Zahirah Omar- Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication.
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