

ARTICLE

An Analysis of Push and Pull Motivation Factors Among Women Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT ENGLISH:

Entrepreneurship has been recognized as a driving activity for innovation and economic growth. There is great potential to improve global economic conditions through a better understanding of the increased empowerment of women in entrepreneurial activity. In order to increase women's entrepreneurial activity, it is important to increase knowledge about what motivates women to start a business, which will raise awareness and provide information on how best to support women entrepreneurs. We identified women's motivations for entrepreneurship using push-pull theory. The analytical approach used in this study through a systematic literature review. Based on previous studies, we listed the push-pull factors that motivate women entrepreneurs to pursue entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, we found that pull factors such as family, business, and independence play a more important role in motivating women while running their businesses than push factors (e.g., job, family, and dissatisfaction).

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurs, Push-Pull Factors, Motivation.

ABSTRACT INDONESIAN:

Kewirausahaan telah diakui sebagai aktivitas pendorong bagi inovasi dan pertumbuhan ekonomi suatu negara. Terdapat potensi besar untuk memperbaiki kondisi ekonomi global melalui pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang peningkatan pemberdayaan perempuan dalam aktivitas kewirausahaan. Untuk dapat meningkatkan aktivitas perempuan dalam berwirausaha, penting untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan tentang motivasi apa saja yang memicu perempuan untuk membangun usaha, sehingga akan meningkatkan kesadaran dan memberikan informasi mengenai cara terbaik untuk mendukung wirausaha perempuan. Kami mengidentifikasi motivasi perempuan dalam berwirausaha dengan menggunakan teori dorongan-tarikan motivasi. Pendekatan analisis yang digunakan pada penelitian ini melalui *systematic literature review*. Berdasarkan pada penelitian-penelitian terdahulu, kami membuat daftar faktor dorongan-tarikan yang memotivasi perempuan wirausaha dalam menjalankan aktivitas kewirausahaan. Selanjutnya kami menemukan bahwa, faktor tarikan seperti keluarga, bisnis, dan kemandirian memainkan peranan lebih penting dalam memotivasi perempuan pada saat menjalankan usahanya daripada faktor dorongan (pekerjaan, keluarga, dan ketidakpuasan).

Kata Kunci: Wirausaha Perempuan, Faktor Dorongan-Tarikan, Motivasi.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in driving economic development in emerging economies through several mechanisms. These include transforming innovative ideas into viable start-up opportunities, catalyzing the formation of social networks, generating employment, increasing productivity, and enhancing national income. For developing countries, it is crucial to adopt a balanced approach that aligns the national institutional framework with the entrepreneurial ecosystem, tailored to the desired economic development trajectory (Acs, 2006). Such economies present both significant opportunities and structural challenges. Enhancing entrepreneurial activity is increasingly viewed as a pathway to expand economic access, particularly for women in developing nations. There exists substantial potential to improve global economic conditions through a deeper understanding of how empowering women in entrepreneurship contributes to economic progress.

In many emerging markets, a notable trend is the growing number of women entering entrepreneurship, especially as small business owners—one of the most significant features of these economies (Huynh et al., 2017). According to Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2021, women account for approximately 64.5% of the management of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia, out of a total of about 65 million MSMEs. This trend represents a promising signal for Indonesia's future economy. Empowering women to progress from merely engaging in business to becoming entrepreneurial leaders has the potential to accelerate economic growth.

Understanding the motivations that drive women to pursue entrepreneurship is critical in interpreting the increase in their entrepreneurial engagement. Entrepreneurial motivation is widely recognized as a determinant of human agency that influences business success, growth, innovation, and strategic development (Laguir & Den Besten, 2016). A broader understanding of how women entrepreneurs perceive themselves and their business environments can stimulate greater support for their personal and professional development, thereby contributing to broader economic growth.

Entrepreneurial motivation is often categorized into two major constructs: push and pull factors (Kirkwood, 2009). This dichotomy is well-established in entrepreneurship literature and serves as a conceptual foundation for explaining why individuals choose to become entrepreneurs (Cho et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020; Parveen et al., 2020; Vardhan et al., 2020). Push motivations are typically associated with necessity-driven entrepreneurship—emerging from unemployment, job dissatisfaction, or economic hardship (Lingappa & Rodrigues, 2023). In contrast, pull motivations relate to the intrinsic allure of entrepreneurship, including autonomy, personal achievement, and the pursuit of market opportunities (Zhu et al., 2019).

Empirical studies on female entrepreneurs suggest that push and pull motivations are often interdependent. For example, a woman who initially engages in business out of economic necessity (push) may later experience fulfillment and success, thereby becoming motivated by pull factors (Cho et al., 2020). These motivations frequently overlap, and are

further shaped by external elements such as market dynamics and prevailing social norms (Dawson & Henley, 2012).

The field of women's entrepreneurship has seen increasing scholarly attention in recent decades, particularly in exploring the unique motivational factors influencing women. Numerous studies indicate that women may exhibit different motivational patterns compared to men due to societal expectations, family responsibilities, and restricted access to financial capital and business networks (Avcı & Gümüş, 2022; Lingappa & Rodrigues, 2023). Among women, push factors often involve the desire for flexible working conditions to balance familial and professional obligations (Dhar et al., 2022).

Conversely, pull factors in women's entrepreneurship often stem from aspirations for self-fulfillment, social recognition, and a desire to contribute meaningfully to their communities. Research by Zgheib (2018) emphasizes that female entrepreneurs frequently possess a stronger altruistic drive, with a focus on creating positive social impact through their ventures. Therefore, pull motivations may not be solely profit-oriented but also encompass emotional and social dimensions.

Understanding push-pull motivations among female entrepreneurs requires contextualizing them within the socio-economic environment in which they operate (Naicker & Nsengimana, 2020). In developing countries, women often face structural barriers such as gender discrimination, limited access to entrepreneurial education, and inadequate financial resources. These constraints tend to reinforce push motivations, as women may feel compelled to generate their own economic opportunities in the absence of access to formal employment.

However, in more supportive ecosystems—such as those with gender-inclusive policies and institutional support—pull motivations tend to predominate (Avcı & Gümüş, 2022; Parveen et al., 2020). Government programs, access to capital, and mentoring networks often serve as enabling factors encouraging women to pursue entrepreneurship. Additionally, shifting societal attitudes toward women's roles in the workforce and business environments further enhance pull motivations, as more women perceive entrepreneurship as a legitimate pathway for self-actualization and economic autonomy.

Women engage in entrepreneurial activities for various reasons. However, a systematic review by (Lingappa & Rodrigues, 2023) revealed that approximately 56% of studies on women's entrepreneurial motivation lack the application of structured theoretical models. Among the few theories utilized, the push and pull framework remains the most frequently applied (Kirkwood, 2009). Push factors—also referred to as negative or necessity-driven influences—motivate individuals to start a business due to pressing needs rather than personal desire. These include unemployment, financial insecurity post-divorce, workplace dissatisfaction, and the need for flexible schedules. Conversely, pull factors—positive or opportunity-driven influences—include recognizing lucrative business opportunities and the aspiration for independence (Kirkwood, 2009). Startups driven by pull motivations tend to be more prevalent and are generally associated with higher chances of success compared to those initiated primarily due to push factors (Kirkwood, 2009).

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to develop a comprehensive understanding of the push and pull motivational factors influencing female entrepreneurship and to assess the relative dominance of each type of motivation in shaping entrepreneurial behavior. A deeper understanding of these motivational dynamics will enhance stakeholder awareness and inform the development of more effective strategies to support and empower women entrepreneurs.

Method

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, guided by the framework proposed by Kraus et al. (2020), was employed as the methodological foundation for this study. The primary objective of a systematic review is to identify and synthesize all relevant empirical evidence that meets predefined inclusion criteria in order to answer specific research questions or test research hypotheses (Snyder, 2019). By employing a transparent and rigorous review process, the potential for bias is significantly minimized, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the analysis.

According to Kraus et al. (2020), the SLR process in entrepreneurship research consists of four sequential phases: (1) review planning, (2) identification and evaluation of studies, (3) data extraction and synthesis, and (4) dissemination of findings. The first stage, review planning, involves two key processes: identifying the need for the review and developing a review protocol. The need for this SLR stems from the research objective to identify the types of push and pull motivational factors influencing women entrepreneurs and to evaluate the relative impact of these factors on their entrepreneurial engagement. Accordingly, two research questions were formulated:

RQ1: What types of push and pull motivations drive women to engage in entrepreneurial activities?

RQ2: How do push and pull motivations influence the entrepreneurial behavior of women?

The review protocol was developed through a systematic article search using Scopus, recognized as one of the largest and most reputable databases of peer-reviewed literature. To reduce selection bias and enhance comprehensiveness, supplementary searches were also conducted using other scholarly databases such as Google Scholar and ProQuest. The following search query was used to retrieve relevant studies:

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TITLE-ABS-KEY ("women entrepreneur" AND "motivation") AND PUBYEAR > 2017 AND PUBYEAR < 2024 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "cp")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Women Entrepreneurs") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Motivation") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Women") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Gender") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Women's Entrepreneurship") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Female Entrepreneurs") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Gender Issue") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "push And pull Motivation"))
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The inclusion criteria focused on English-language peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2018 and 2023, ensuring both recency and relevance to contemporary global discourse. This timeframe was chosen to capture the most up-to-date insights, allowing for broader generalizability and replicability across various international contexts.

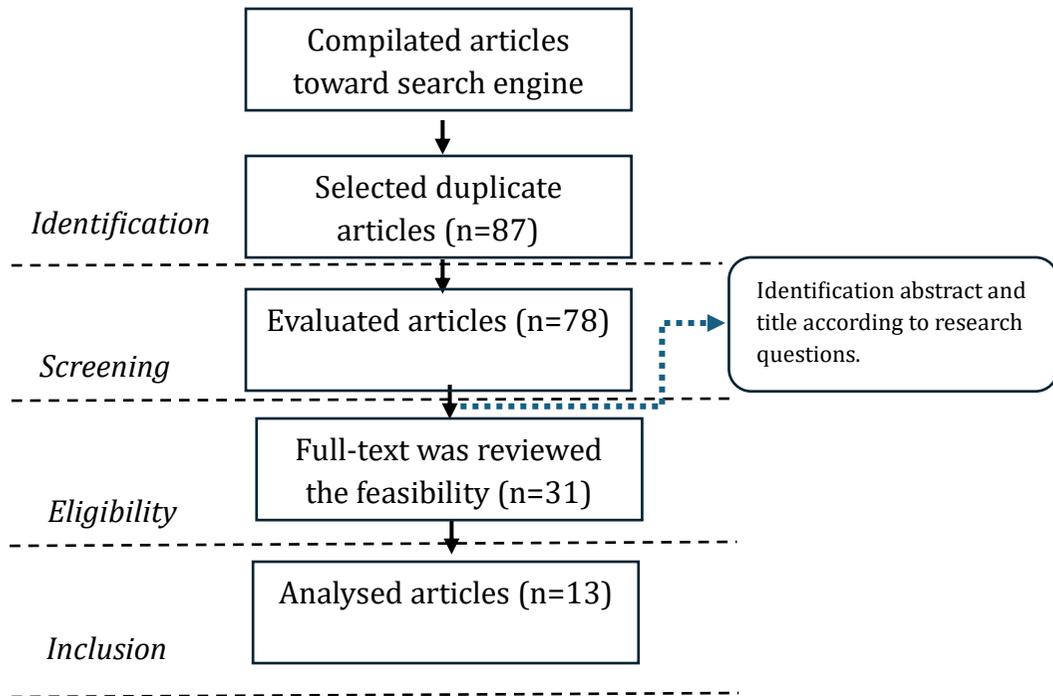


Figure 1. Workflow Diagram of the Systematic Literature Review

The second stage of this study involves the identification and evaluation of studies by applying predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria to the collected articles. The inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed journal articles published within the last five years and written in English. Any articles that did not meet these criteria were excluded from further analysis. The initial evaluation was conducted by screening the titles and abstracts of the retrieved articles. If both the title and abstract indicated relevance to the research questions, the full article was then reviewed for a more comprehensive assessment. The process of identifying and evaluating relevant literature is illustrated in Figure 1.

The third stage involves data extraction and synthesis. At this point, data were extracted not only on the main variables of interest—namely push and pull motivations and their respective influences—but also on the descriptive attributes of the articles. These attributes included author(s), journal title, publication year, and journal quality. Motivational data were then classified according to whether they reflected push or pull factors. Furthermore, the dominance of each type of motivation was noted, as well as the phase at which motivational stimuli were observed to emerge.

The final stage of the SLR is the dissemination of findings. The synthesized results were presented in tabular matrix format and analysed thematically. In addition, a keyword analysis was conducted for each type of motivation using Voyant Tools, a web-based text mining platform.

Fundamentally, this section outlines the methodology adopted in conducting the research. The explanation is structured either in continuous narrative form or subdivided into distinct subsections, depending on the depth of detail required. The core elements covered in this methodological section include: (1) the population and sampling technique, (2) data collection procedures, (3) research design, and (4) data analysis techniques.

For qualitative research designs—such as action research, ethnography, phenomenology, or case studies—additional elements are necessary. These include the role of the researcher, the research subjects, informants who contributed data, the data collection techniques employed (e.g., interviews, observations, document analysis), the research setting and duration, and strategies used to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings.

Result and Discussion

Overview of Article Search Results

Research on the motivational factors of women entrepreneurs has demonstrated a generally upward trend over the past five years, despite a notable decline in 2021 (Figure 2). This suggests that the topic continues to gain scholarly interest, with the field of women's entrepreneurial motivation experiencing sustained development. Nearly 25 journal articles were published in 2022 alone—representing a more than 200% increase compared to 2018. By contrast, 2021 marked the lowest point in publication output, with only 7 relevant articles identified.

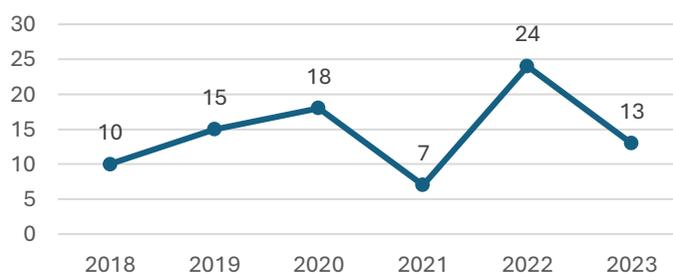


Figure 2. Number of Publications Per Year

Following the identification and screening phases, 13 peer-reviewed journal articles were selected and analysed in-depth to address the formulated research questions. Descriptive information related to these sources is presented in Figure 3. As shown in Figure 3a, the highest proportion of analysed articles (39%) was published in 2020. On average, the selected articles represented approximately 20% of the total population of publications per year. Notably, no articles from 2021 were included in the final analysis due to either thematic irrelevance or insufficient scholarly rigor.

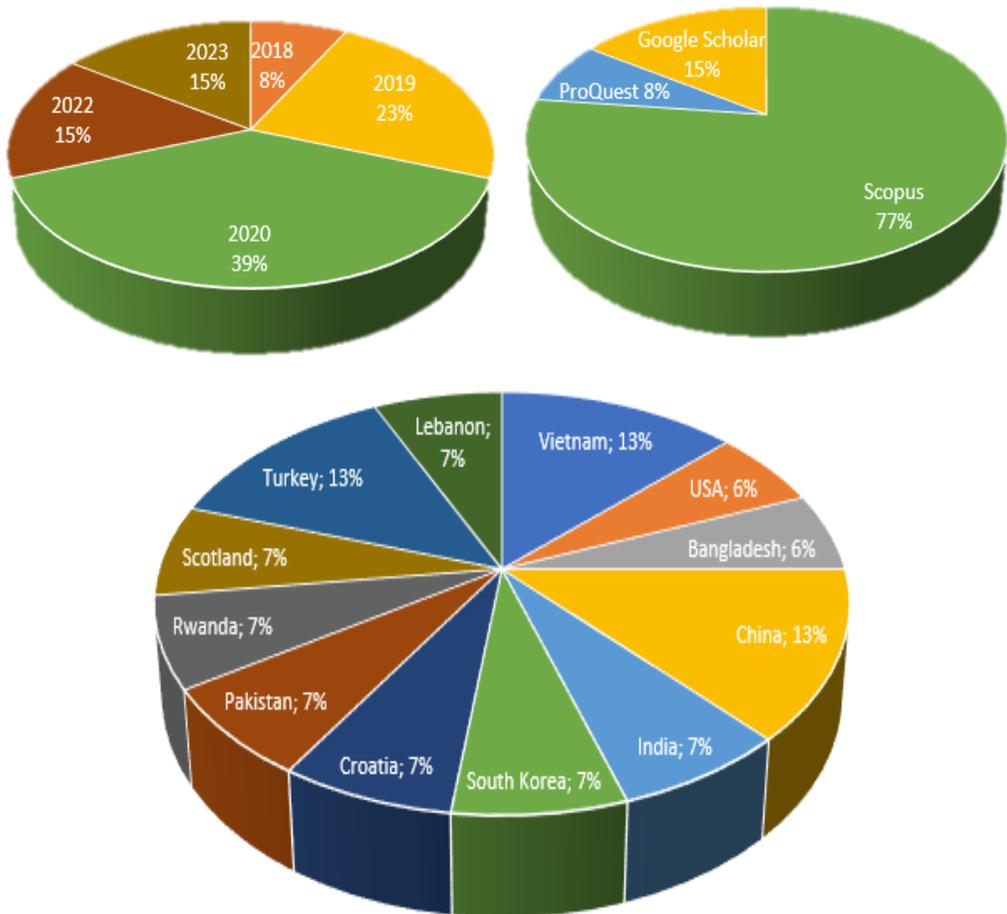


Figure 3. Distribution of Selected Journals by Year of Publication, Journal Source and Geographical Focus

In terms of source distribution, 77% of the articles were retrieved via the Scopus database, while less than 30% were identified through Google Scholar and ProQuest searches (Figure 3b). Regarding geographical focus, research on women's entrepreneurial motivation was heavily concentrated in Asia, accounting for 60% of the studies reviewed. These included case studies and empirical analyses from countries such as China, Bangladesh, South Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, India, and Pakistan (Figure 3c). The remaining studies were distributed across Africa (7%), the Americas (6%), and Europe (27%). This regional distribution suggests that women's entrepreneurship is particularly prominent as a research topic in Asian contexts.

To reinforce the credibility of the review, the quality of the analysed journals was also assessed. As shown in Figure 4a, nine journals were indexed in Scopus (Q), one journal was registered in Scopus but not yet indexed (na), and three journals were neither indexed nor registered in Scopus (nf). In terms of academic influence, citation analysis revealed that most of the selected articles had been cited between 0 and 10 times, while five articles had received up to 20 citations, and two articles had been cited more than 30 times (Figure 4b).

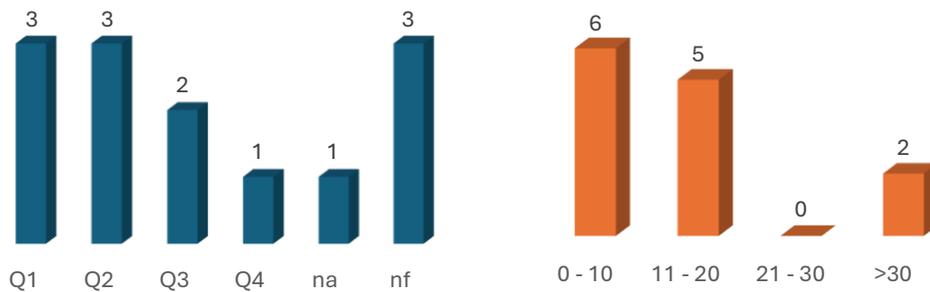


Figure 4. Quality of Analysed Journals Scopus; Indexing Status and Number of Citations

Identification of Push and Pull Motivations among Women

The text analysis of motivational factors—both push and pull—driving women to engage in entrepreneurial activity is presented in Table 1. This analysis was employed to evaluate readability, lexical density, complexity, and language structure of the texts. The lexical density difference between push and pull motivations was minimal, with a gap of only 0.033 points, indicating comparable content complexity. However, the average sentence length in texts related to push motivations was approximately 30 points higher than those describing pull motivations.

This finding suggests that pull factors are expressed with greater linguistic simplicity, characterized by shorter and more comprehensible sentences, reflecting a broader variety of motivational dimensions. Furthermore, readability indices indicated that pull-related motivations were generally easier to read and understand than push-related ones.

Table 1. Lexical Patterns and Keyword Analysis of Push and Pull Motivations

Indicators	Push Motivation	Pull Motivation
Lexical Density	0.609	0.576
Readability Index	2861	26.017
Average Words per Sentence	180	148.5
Frequent Keywords in corpus	Job (15); Family (6); Dissatisfaction (5); Pressure (4); Income (4)	Family (9); Business (8); Independence (6); Aspiration (6); Opportunity (4)

Among the frequently occurring words in the corpus, “family” was the only keyword common to both push and pull motivations, although it appeared more frequently within the context of pull motivation. Push motivations were more closely associated with job-related concerns, particularly dissatisfaction, economic pressure, and income instability. Conversely, pull motivations were more often linked to aspirations in business, desires for independence, personal goals, and perceived entrepreneurial opportunities.

A collocation graph was generated to identify core keywords and their co-occurring terms. This network visualization maps high-frequency keywords (highlighted in blue) and adjacent terms (highlighted in orange). Based on this analysis, the principal push motivation keywords were work, family, and dissatisfaction, while pull motivation keywords included family, business, and independence (Figure 5).

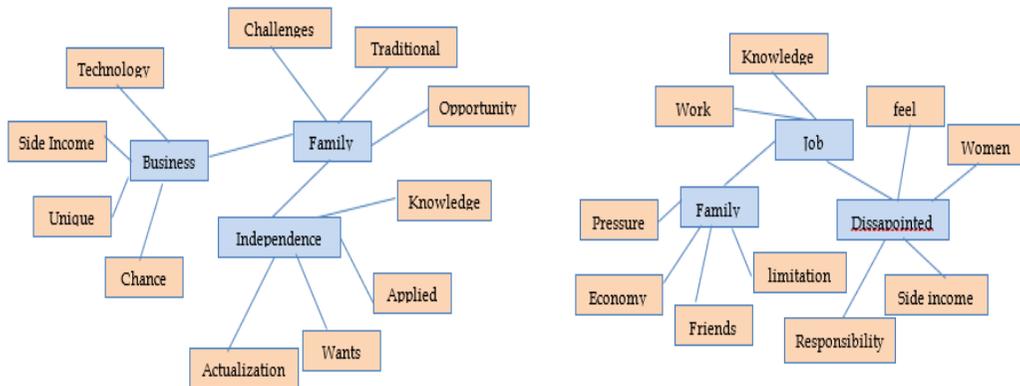


Figure 5. Collocation Graphs; Push Motivation and Pull Motivation

The collocation graph indicates that women entrepreneurs are often driven into entrepreneurship by dissatisfaction with their current work, family obligations, and external pressures. Work dissatisfaction emerged as the dominant push factor, often in connection with unmet expectations or conflicts between work and family responsibilities (Dhar et al., 2022; Özsungur, 2019; Naicker & Nsengimana, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020; Zgheib, 2018). While, Cho et al. (2020) emphasized work-family conflict as a key factor influencing women to pursue entrepreneurship.

Flexibility in work schedules is another critical push factor that motivates women to leave formal employment in favor of entrepreneurship (Bikorimana & Nziku, 2023; Zgheib, 2018). According to Tankovic et al. (2023) further noted that women's attitudes, commitment, and knowledge regarding their professional roles also influence their entrepreneurial decision-making.

Family influence and pressure also emerged as significant external motivators which elements act both separately and in combination to affect women's decisions (Li et al., 2020). While Özsungur (2019) framed family as a source of pressure, Parveen et al. (2020) identified family as a supportive influence. However, based on collocation analysis, pressure was more strongly associated with family than support.

In terms of pull motivations, key stimuli included family, business ambition, and a desire for independence. In some cases, entrepreneurship is seen as a family tradition (Bikorimana & Nziku, 2023; Zgheib, 2018), or as a way to remain close to and care for one's family (Zhu et al., 2019). This enables women to maintain family security while also contributing to household income (Özsungur, 2019).

Many women are also pulled into entrepreneurship by a strong business idea or the prestige of owning a business (Avcı & Gümüş, 2022; Cho et al., 2020). Therefore, this motivates women to become skilled entrepreneurs. This is due to the prestige associated with establishing their own businesses (Avcı & Gümüş, 2022). Others are influenced by family business legacy, motivating them to uphold the family name and continue operations (Özsungur, 2019; Parveen et al., 2020).

Lastly, the desire for self-reliance, particularly financial independence, is a central pull factor (Bikorimana & Nziku, 2023; Özsungur, 2019). Entrepreneurship is seen as a viable pathway to personal empowerment, control over work-life balance, and economic autonomy (Cho et al., 2020; Dhar et al., 2022; Li et al., 2020; Naicker & Nsengimana, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020; Shastri et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2019). A summary of the most prominent push and pull motivational factors identified through this systematic literature review is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Push and Pull Motivational Factors Among Women Entrepreneurs

Push Motivation	Pull Motivation
Flexibility in work	Family tradition
Attitude, commitment, and knowledge toward the job	Ease of managing household responsibilities
Work-family conflict	Contributing to household income
Family influence	Family business legacy
Family pressure	Business idea
	Desire to establish own business
Financial self-sufficiency	Desire for independence
	Financial self-sufficiency

Source: Processed data

Comparative Analysis of Push and Pull Motivations Among Women Entrepreneurs

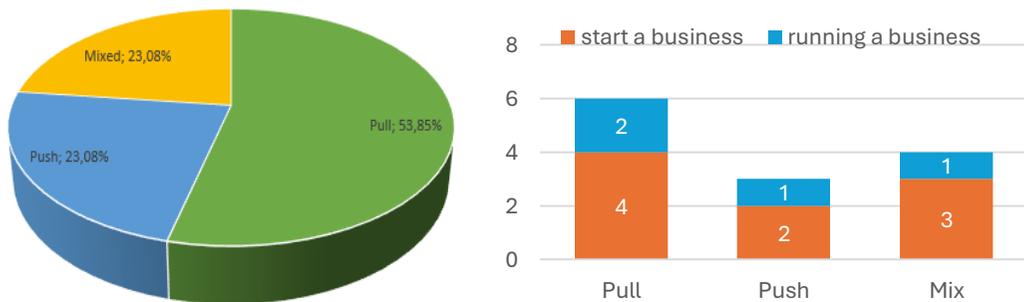


Figure 6. Comparison of Push and Pull Motivational Factors; Dominance of Motivational Influence, Contribution to Stages of Entrepreneurial Development

Motivational factors influencing women's entrepreneurship are multifaceted. To determine which motivational factor is more dominant, this study conducted a qualitative comparison of 13 international journal articles. As depicted in Figure 6, pull motivation plays a more significant role in encouraging women to become entrepreneurs (Nguyen et al. 2020; Li et al. 2018; Zhu et al. 2018; Avcı & Gümüş 2022; Zgheib 2018; Shastri et al. 2019; Tankovisc et al. 2023). This aligns with the theoretical framework of push and pull motivation, which asserts that intrinsic incentives (pull factors) are generally stronger than external pressures (push factors) in influencing substantial career shifts (Nguyen et al 2020). Avcı & Gümüş (2022) argue that psychosocial expectations are the primary motivators leading women into entrepreneurship. These include feelings of success, prestige, self-fulfilment, enjoyment, and personal happiness. According to Li et al. (2020), understanding these motivational drivers provides insights into developing effective human resource strategies that support women's entrepreneurial engagement.

Further, the analysis found that pull motivation is more prevalent during the operational and growth stages of business development (Figure 6), emphasizing women's strong internal drive for success (Nguyen et al. 2020; Li et al. 2018; Avcı & Gümüş 2022; Zgheib 2018; Tankovisc et al. 2023). This is consistent with findings by Li et al. (2020), who noted that women entrepreneurs in China did not emphasize economic pressures or external threats, but rather focused on self-actualization and the pursuit of personal goals, including the willingness to confront new and difficult challenges.

Conclusion

Women entrepreneurs are influenced by both push and pull motivational factors in their entrepreneurial endeavours. This study summarizes key motivational drivers as follows push factors include: job dissatisfaction, desire for flexible work, commitment and job-related knowledge, work-family conflict, and both supportive and pressuring influences from family. While, pull factors include: family traditions, ease of managing household obligations, contribution to household income, continuing a family business, desire to establish a new business, and pursuit of personal and financial independence.

Among these, pull motivation was found to play a more critical role in motivating women to actively pursue and grow their businesses. Strong internal drivers help women entrepreneurs navigate challenges, develop their ventures, and seek self-actualization within the broader social context. Understanding these core motivations can aid stakeholders in designing targeted interventions that stimulate women's entrepreneurial potential. Nevertheless, a limitation of this study lies in its inability to directly correlate these motivations with entrepreneurial performance or business outcomes. This gap presents an opportunity for future researchers to explore the link between motivation types and entrepreneurial success, thereby contributing to a more robust theoretical and practical understanding of women's entrepreneurship.

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