



Exploring entrepreneurial personality traits, motivation, and entrepreneurial success in the urban poor community

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Abstract

This paper studies the effect of entrepreneurial personality traits on the entrepreneurial success of entrepreneurs from underprivileged communities in Malaysia. The poor from the underprivileged community were encouraged to be self-employed as they are marginalized in terms of employability. In this study, a quantitative approach to the face-to-face survey was administered using a simple random sampling method among entrepreneurs from the urban poor community. A total of ninety-four usable questionnaires were then used for data analysis. A partial least square structural equation modeling technique was used to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial personality traits and entrepreneurial success. The findings revealed that entrepreneurial personality traits positively affected entrepreneurial success, where entrepreneurial motivation prevailed as a vital mediator in the relationship. Interestingly, opportunity motivation positively impacted entrepreneurial success compared to necessity motivation. Based on these findings, entrepreneurial personality traits are important to ensure the success of any business venture. On top of it, the urban poor entrepreneurs are embarking on business because of opportunity, which would help them to be more resilient, innovative, and creative to create sustainable business ventures. This study contributes to the literature by growing understanding of entrepreneurship in different groups of society. The study offers insights into how relevant government agencies can develop suitable entrepreneurial training and assistance that support and encourage urban poor entrepreneurship for these entrepreneurs to remain sustainable and successful.

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1. Introduction

The substantial rural-urban migration has created a new phenomenon in cities, especially in terms of economic disparities between rich and poor (Wan, Zhang, & Zhao, 2022). Urban poverty has become more visible in Malaysia in the last decade or so, especially in significant cities, as urbanization weighs on the less

able financially (Daros, 2019). On many occasions, rural people have migrated to the cities without proper qualifications, and their employment prospects have resulted in them earning low incomes (NST, 2019), which constitutes the urban poor. Urban poverty issues have become the primary concern. Malaysia had reduced poverty from 52.4% in 1970 to 5.7% in 2004, but visible pockets of urban poverty are often neglected (Ridzwan & Idris, 2018). During the COVID19 pandemic, the unemployment rate soared when many people, especially those in poor communities, left without sufficient financial support (UNICEF, 2021). Entrepreneurship is the way to help the poor in urban areas escape poverty (Si, Ahlstrom, Wei, & Cullen, 2020). But entrepreneurship is for everybody. Entrepreneurship has become an option to escape unemployment. Necessity has become the main reason for entrepreneurship, but opportunity-based entrepreneurship also plays a vital role in enticing new entrepreneurs (Mota, Braga, & Ratten, 2019). However, the sustainability and success of entrepreneurial activities among entrepreneurs in poor urban communities have yet to be discovered or documented. Their characteristics and personality traits should be researched to better understand their needs and requirements. In fact, entrepreneurial personality traits have been widely researched, but the impact on necessity for entrepreneurs in the poor urban community is unknown. In addition, entrepreneurial motivation is another element that influences entrepreneurial success (Shi & Wang, 2021) and should be explored in the community. Therefore, this study explores the impact of entrepreneurial personality traits and motivation on the entrepreneurial success of poor urban communities.

Furthermore, entrepreneurial personality traits only focus on proactiveness, risk-taking, and innovativeness (Linton, 2019). However, studies of entrepreneurial personality traits do not include opportunity motivation (Kerr, Kerr, & Xu, 2018) even though necessity entrepreneurs are also opportunists. In addition, entrepreneurial motivation and the need for achievement, social environment, and government support have been investigated separately, even though their existence should be regarded collectively (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2017). Therefore, in exploring the study, the impact of entrepreneurial motivation, necessity, and opportunity should be considered. In this study, the entrepreneurial motivation of opportunity and necessity is explored in the relationship between entrepreneurial personality traits and entrepreneurial success.

The remainder of the study consists of five sections. The literature review is illustrated in Section 2, where the relationship between variables is discussed in detail. Section 3 describes the research design and methodology. Then, in Section 4, the analysis and the results are presented and discussed, respectively. Section 5 reports the study's main implications and limitations, representing future research directions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Entrepreneurship and Urban Poverty

Urban poverty is typically characterized in two ways: as an absolute standard based on the least amount of income necessary to maintain a healthy and minimally pleasant life and as a relative standard based on the average of a country's standard of living (McDonald & McMillen, 2010). Low agency (or the ability to make choices for oneself), low standards of living, and limited mobility can also be seen as vulnerability, which can transcend a monetary and temporal definition. In Malaysia, the urban poor can be categorized as having a relative standard due to the high cost of living. Poverty is mainly associated with a lack of income, and individuals whose income level falls below the minimum basic human needs are considered poor (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020). Massive rural-urban migration necessitated by industrialization and rapid urbanization caused the emergence of a new social class: the "new poor" or "urban poor" (Khoo, Samsurijan, Gopal, Malek, & Hamat, 2018). The traditional approach to measuring poverty has focused solely on income, with poor and non-poor households distinguished by a poverty line income (PLI). According to the Household Income Survey (HIS) 2016 (Economic Planning Unit, 2018), the PLI for urban poverty was determined to be RM960 for Peninsular Malaysia, RM1,180 for Sabah and Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan, and RM1,020 for Sarawak.

2.2. Entrepreneurial Personality Traits and Entrepreneurial Success

Numerous factors influence the choice to start a business (Otache, 2019). On the one hand, people's entrepreneurial attitudes and traits influence the choice. Research has indicated that personality attributes such as innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness influence individuals' decisions to become entrepreneurs (Smith, Sardeshmukh, & Combs, 2016; Solesvik, Westhead, & Matlay, 2014). The study of business owners' personality traits has been linked to both the rise of entrepreneurship and achieving entrepreneurial goals (Rauch & Frese, 2000). Numerous researchers (Salmony & Kanbach, 2022) have studied entrepreneurial personality traits in relation to the emergence of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial success (Rauch & Frese, 2000). Previous studies have shown mixed findings on the impact of entrepreneurial personality on entrepreneurial success (Kerr et al., 2018).

The three most often researched personality traits were the internal locus of control, risk-taking, and the drive for achievement (Cao, Asad, Wang, Naz, & Almusharraf, 2022). Desire for success The idea of accomplishment motivation was connected to economic growth and development by McClelland (1961). Frey (1984) endorsed the conclusion that economic progress follows a nation's thirst for achievement. According to

Cooper and Gimeno-Gascon (1992) review, the success of small-scale firms was positively correlated with the demand for achievement in three of the four investigations. According to one study, personality traits can evolve. Training programs can boost employee enthusiasm and improve company performance (Li, Huang, & Gao, 2022).

H₁: Entrepreneurial Personality Traits have a positive relationship with entrepreneurial success.

2.3. Entrepreneurial Personality Traits and Entrepreneurial Motivation

Personality characteristics strongly influence entrepreneurial motivation (Awwad & Al-Aseer, 2021). Different entrepreneurs have different characteristics (Zhang, Wang, & Zhao, 2022). It is observed that personality strongly influences motivation and persistence significantly (Caliendo, Goethner, & Weißenberger, 2020). It was shown that those who failed in business had a low psychological commitment to their endeavours (Pan, Tsai, Popan, & Chang, 2022). However, Chu (2000) found that entrepreneurs' personalities did not influence their motivation, regardless of gender.

H_{2a}: Entrepreneurial Personality Traits have a positive relationship with Entrepreneurial Motivation (Necessity).

H_{2b}: Entrepreneurial Personality Traits have a positive relationship with Entrepreneurial Motivation (Opportunity).

2.4. Entrepreneurial Motivation and Entrepreneurial Success

Entrepreneurial motivation is vital to encourage and motivate entrepreneurs toward entrepreneurial success (Ephrem et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial motivation is about the goals that the entrepreneur seeks to achieve by setting up a business (Eijdenberg & Masurel, 2013). According to studies from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), the majority of entrepreneurs in developing nations are essential (Murnieks, Klotz, & Shepherd, 2020). Entrepreneurs who are driven by necessity undertake their business endeavours at random, without both vision and essential resources. Many studies have shown that entrepreneurial personality traits such as the need for achievement, proactiveness, risk-taking, and innovativeness positively impact firm performance (Salmony & Kanbach, 2022). Caliendo, Kritikos, and Stier (2023) emphasized that entrepreneurs who are driven by opportunity tend to be more innovative and creative and can stay ahead of their competitors. According to Hisrich and Peters (2007) successful businesspeople like taking chances, have an internal center of control, and have higher needs for achievement and independence. Nevertheless, a study conducted by Ephrem et al. (2021) failed to find any evidence linking entrepreneurial motivation to success. Moreover, without necessity entrepreneurs are less likely to succeed.

H_{3a}: Entrepreneurial Motivation (Necessity) has a positive relationship with Entrepreneurial Success.

H_{3b}: Entrepreneurial Motivation (Opportunity) has a positive relationship with Entrepreneurial Success.

2.5. Entrepreneurial Personality Traits, Entrepreneurial Motivation, and Entrepreneurial Success

Entrepreneurial Personality Traits would influence entrepreneurial success through mediators such as goals, strategy, and environment (Rauch & Frese, 2000). A study by Otache, Edopkolor, and Kadiri (2022) showed that entrepreneurial motivation significantly mediated individual personality traits and entrepreneurial intention. What determines an entrepreneurs' course of action under the influence of entrepreneurial motivation? However, necessity, entrepreneurs' desire to be successful in business, and their motivation are not fully understood (Crawford, 2018). According to a different study, motivation is a key mediator between company performance and human capital (Chyne & Syngkon, 2022).

H_{4a}: Entrepreneurial Motivation (Necessity) mediates the relationship between Entrepreneurial Personality Traits and Entrepreneurial Success.

H_{4b}: Entrepreneurial Motivation (Opportunity) mediates the relationship between Entrepreneurial Personality Traits and Entrepreneurial Success.

3. Research Methodology

A survey methodology was employed to examine the connections inside the research model. The survey was carried out on a face-to-face basis to ensure respondents understood the questionnaire. The survey was carried out in underprivileged community areas. All items for the study were adopted from various authors; thus, validity was not an issue. All items were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale with anchors from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The questionnaire included items worded with proper negation and a shuffle of the items to reduce the monotony of questions measuring the same construct. A quantitative research design was used in this study to determine the relationship between the independent variable (Entrepreneurial Personality Traits), mediating variable (entrepreneurial motivation), and dependent variable (entrepreneurial success) within a population (entrepreneurs from underprivileged communities) (Morgan, 2014).

4. Results and Discussion

This study involved 94 respondents in total. Although every respondent owns their own company, only 69% of them are formally registered. Details of the respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic profile.

Item		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	18	19
	Female	76	81
Age	Less than 24	9	9.6
	25 -34 years old	28	29.8
	35 -44 years old	36	38.3
	45 - 54 years old	19	20.2
	More than 54 years old	2	2.1
Education	High school certificate of education	60	63.8
	Professional certificate	8	8.5
	Diploma	8	8.5
	Degree	14	14.9
	Postgrad	1	1.1
Monthly income	Others	3	3.2
	Less than RM2000	42	44.7
	RM2001- RM3000	26	27.7
	RM3001 – RM5000	17	18.1
	More than RM5000	9	9.6
Occupation	Unemployed	2	2.1
	Public sector employee	4	4.3
	Private sector employee	14	14.9
	Self-employed	74	78.7
Ownership status	Sole proprietorship	72	76.6
	Partnership	11	11.7
	Private limited	11	11.7

Note: RM – Ringgit Malaysia (Malaysian Dollar).

4.1. Data Analysis

To validate the created measures and test the hypotheses, the Smart PLS 3.0 program (Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Gudergan, 2017) was utilized in conjunction with partial least-squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Because PLS-SEM simultaneously analyzes the associations between multi-item latent variables and places an emphasis on prediction in statistical model estimation—a situation where a smaller sample size is acceptable—it is considered appropriate (Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014). Measurement and structural model analysis were the two stages of the data analysis process. Internal consistency, discriminant validity, and item loadings were evaluated using the PLS measurement model. Standardized betas of the path coefficients were used to examine the structural model and hypotheses. The total predictive power of the dependent constructs was evaluated by calculating the explained variance.

4.2. Measurement Model

In order to investigate the loadings, validity, and reliability of the measures used to represent each construct (Chin, 2010) and the methodology of PLS threshold values as recommended by Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2011) the measurement model, also known as the outer model, presents the outer model results. Each variable's outer loadings revealed good loadings between 0.820 and 0.952. Convergence validity was evaluated using factor loadings, composite reliability, and extracted average variance.

Table 2. Reliability and discriminant analysis.

Variable	Loadings	CR	AVE
Entrepreneurial success	0.731 – 0.919	0.963	0.612
Innovative	0.770-0.889	0.959	0.646
Locus control	0.480-0.942	0.708	0.485
Need achievement	0.631 – 0.900	0.950	0.783
Proactive	0.788 -0.893	0.922	0.778
Risk tolerance	0.830-0.898	0.792	0.706
Necessity motivation	0.686 – 0.916	0.914	0.690
Opportunity motivation	0.924 – 0.984	0.985	0.924

The composite reliability values in Table 2 indicate that the construct indicators reveal the latent to a greater extent than the suggested value of 0.7 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). While the average variance recovered (a measure of the total variation in the indicators that the latent construct accounts for) was higher than the suggested threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2011). As a result, all the variables' and

constructions' measures exhibit strong degrees of convergent validity. The heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), which has been shown to be reliable in assessing discriminant analysis (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015) was selected to assess discriminant validity.

A low correlation between the measure of interest and the measurements of other constructs indicates discriminant validity, which is the degree to which a measure does not reflect another variable (Cheung & Lee, 2010). It was suggested by Henseler et al. (2015) to use the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) to look at discriminant validity because it works better for finding discriminant validity (Ab Hamid, Sami, & Sidek, 2017). Discriminant validity between two reflective constructs has been demonstrated if the HTMT value is less than 0.90. Table 3 demonstrates that all variable values are less than 0.9, establishing discriminant validity.

Table 3. Discriminant analysis – Fornell & Lacker.

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Entrepreneurial success	0.782							
Innovative		0.804						
Locus control			0.696					
Necessity motivation				0.831				
Need achievement					0.885			
Opportunity motivation						0.961		
Proactive							0.882	
Risk tolerance								0.84

Therefore, the findings show that the measures' convergent and discriminant validity were appropriate.

4.3. Structural Model

Examining the postulated connections between the elements in the research model is the purpose of the structural model, also known as the inner model (Hair Jr et al., 2017). Figure 1 illustrates how antecedents of entrepreneurial personality traits of entrepreneurs from disadvantaged communities accounted for a total of 63.6% of the variance (R²) in entrepreneurial success, indicating a strong predictive explanatory power of variance. When mediating variables were included, the variance explained (R²) was increased to 0.917 as shown in Figure 2. Both Necessity and Opportunity Motivation mediate the relationship between Entrepreneurial Personality Traits and Entrepreneurial Success.

Entrepreneurial Personality Traits have a significant effect on Entrepreneurial Success ($\beta = 0.797$, with a t-value of 15.639); therefore, H1 is supported. Entrepreneurial Personality Traits have a significant effect on both the entrepreneurial motivation of necessity ($\beta = 0.689$ with a t-value of 11.305) and opportunity with a path (β) coefficient of 0.648 and t-value of 7.708. Entrepreneurial motivation of necessity ($\beta = 0.212$ with t-value of 1.650) has no effect on Entrepreneurial Success while Entrepreneurial motivation of opportunity ($\beta = 0.271$ with t-value of 2.293) has a significant effect on Entrepreneurial Success. Finally, only Entrepreneurial motivation for opportunity ($\beta = 0.176$ with a t-value of 2.102) mediates the relationship between Entrepreneurial Personality Traits and Entrepreneurial Success. Table 4 presents the findings of the total effect and results of the hypotheses.

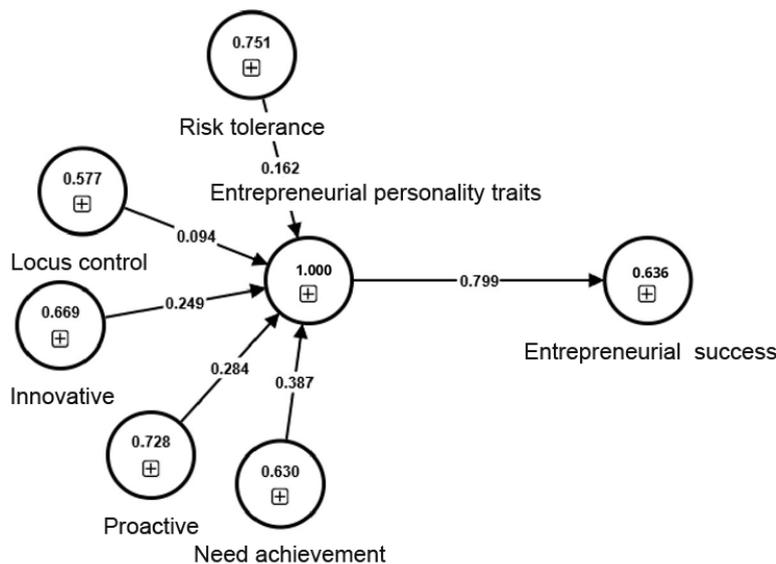


Figure 1. Structural model of direct relationship.

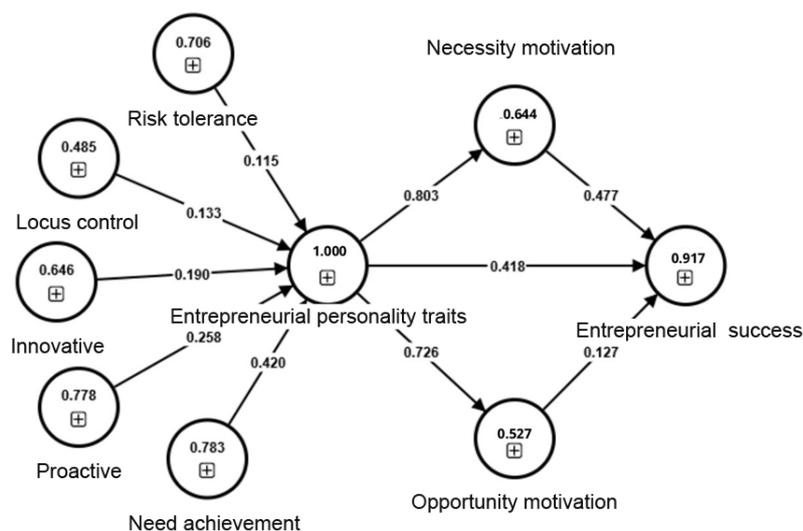


Figure 2. Structural model with mediating variables.

4.4. Mediation Effect

According to Hair Jr et al. (2014) mediation is the process by which the influence of the independent variable is transferred to the dependent variable. Later, the VAF (variance account for) calculation demonstrates that mediation exists through the motivation of necessity and opportunity between the antecedents and entrepreneurial success.

The model's predictive validity is supported by the high value of 0.743 for the coefficient of determination R^2 in the case of entrepreneurial success (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013). The Q^2 value of the predictive relevance (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974) lends further credence to this conclusion. The predictive relevance of the PLS path model is indicated by the Q^2 value of Company Performance (0.779), which is significantly higher than zero, following the blindfolding technique (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009) with an omission distance of D 9. The mediation analysis that satisfies the Hair Jr et al. (2014) criteria for evaluating the mediation effect is tested using the total effect through bootstrapping, and the VAF calculation (99%) demonstrates the existence of the mediation impact through Necessity and Opportunity Motivation and Entrepreneurial Success.

Table 4. Hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Path coefficient	T-statistics	P-value	Remark
H1: EPT->ES	0.797	15.639	0.000	Supported
H2a: EPT ->NM	0.689	11.305	0.000	Supported
H2b: EPT ->OM	0.648	7.708	0.000	Supported
H3a: NM ->ES	0.212	1.650	0.099	Not supported
H3b: OM ->ES	0.271	2.293	0.022	Supported
H4a: EPT ->NM-> ES	0.146	1.560	0.119	Not supported
H4b: EPT ->OM-> ES	0.176	2.102	0.036	Supported

Note: EPT – Entrepreneurial personality traits; NM – Necessity motivation; OM – Opportunity motivation; ES- Entrepreneurial success.

4.5. Discussion

The findings of our analysis reveal nuanced relationships that contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics within entrepreneurial endeavours. One notable outcome of our study is the identified relationship between Entrepreneurial Personality Traits and Entrepreneurial Success. This result aligns with previous research emphasizing the role of individual characteristics in predicting entrepreneurial outcomes (Li et al., 2022). The connection suggests that certain personality traits may serve as catalysts or impediments to entrepreneurial success, thereby underscoring the significance of individual differences in the entrepreneurial context. Our exploration further unveils the mediating role of Entrepreneurial Motivation in the relationship between Entrepreneurial Personality Traits and Entrepreneurial Success. This mediation effect suggests that individuals with specific entrepreneurial traits may be more likely to seize opportunities, consequently enhancing their chances of success. This finding resonates with the idea that motivational factors, particularly those aligned with recognizing and pursuing opportunities, play a pivotal role in entrepreneurial achievement (Willmott, Pang, & Rundle-Thiele, 2021). Interestingly, we observed a lack of a direct relationship between Necessity Motivation and Entrepreneurial Success. This finding contrasts with some prior studies suggesting a positive correlation between necessity-driven entrepreneurship and success (Mota et al., 2019). Our results

imply that, while necessity motivation may drive individuals to embark on entrepreneurial ventures, its direct impact on success is not evident.

Identifying Opportunity Motivation as a mediator in the relationship between Entrepreneurial Personality Traits and Success highlights the critical role of recognizing and pursuing opportunities in achieving entrepreneurial goals. This finding aligns with the dynamic nature of entrepreneurial environments, where the ability to identify and capitalize on opportunities often distinguishes successful ventures from others. Conversely, the absence of a direct relationship between Necessity Motivation and Entrepreneurial Success challenges conventional wisdom regarding the impact of necessity-driven entrepreneurship on success. This calls for a re-evaluation of the role of necessity motivation in the entrepreneurial process and prompts further inquiry into the conditions under which necessity-driven ventures can thrive.

5. Conclusion

The established link between Entrepreneurial Personality Traits and Entrepreneurial Success highlights the enduring importance of individual differences in shaping entrepreneurial journeys. As entrepreneurial ecosystems evolve, acknowledging and harnessing the diverse traits entrepreneurs bring to the table becomes imperative for fostering innovation and sustainable business growth. In conclusion, our study contributes to the evolving field of entrepreneurship research by unravelling the complexities of the relationships between personality traits, motivations, and success. As we explore these dynamics, a richer understanding of the entrepreneurial process emerges, enabling scholars and practitioners to make more informed decisions and interventions in the dynamic and challenging realm of entrepreneurship.

5.1. Limitations

The study has a few limitations. Firstly, the survey was conducted on a site where many disturbances might influence respondents' perceptions of the survey's items. Secondly, the survey provides only generalizations without in-depth descriptions of the related activities of entrepreneurs. Lastly, the study only focused on metropolitan cities where poor urban entrepreneurs compete with well-funded entrepreneurs.

5.2. Future Research

Future research should explore the specific conditions under which different motivational factors may amplify or attenuate the influence of entrepreneurial traits on success. More research should also investigate the influence of personality traits on success, which operates, in part, through the motivational pathway of opportunity recognition and pursuit. This insight provides a more comprehensive understanding of how individual traits contribute to entrepreneurial success.

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