

## Entrepreneur Traits and Business Activities of Rural Women\*

### 농촌여성 창업자 특성과 사업성과: 농촌여성일감맞기사업 참여자를 중심으로

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#### Abstract

이 연구의 목적은 농촌진흥청에서 시행하고 있는 농촌여성 일감 갖기 사업장을 운영하고 있는 농촌여성 소규모 창업자의 특성과 사업 성과와의 관계를 알아 보기 위한 것이다. 농촌진흥청이 실시하고 있는 농촌일감맞기 사업에 참여하고 있는 71명을 대상으로 자료를 수집한 이 연구의 주요 결과는 다음과 같다.

첫째, 39개의 창업자 특성 항목은 9개의 요인으로 구분되었는데, 각각 1) 새로운 것을 학습하고 불확실성을 감수하고자 하는 정도, 2) 혁신성과 자신감, 3) 네트워크와 유연성, 4) 관심, 5) 자아성취동기, 6) 도전정신, 7) 자발적인 관여, 8) 커뮤니케이션 능력, 9) 사업에 대한 지식 등으로 명명이 가능하였다. 이들 9개의 요인은 전체 변량의 76%를 설명하고 있다.

둘째, 사업성공 변수는 전반적인 사업장 운영상태와 상품의 판매 상태 두 가지로 측정하였는데, 전반적인 사업장 운영 상태는 본인들의 사업과 관련된 메모

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를 명확하게 작성하고 다른 사람들과 불안감 없이 커뮤니케이션할 수 있는 능력에 영향을 받는 것으로 나타났다. 상품의 판매 상태는 예상되는 사업에 대한 지식과 장시간 일을 할 수 있는 능력에 영향을 받는 것으로 나타났다. 두 변수를 합산함으로써 측정된 전반적인 사업성공 정도는 사업의 성장과 사업 자체에 대한 관심에 영향을 받는 것으로 나타났다.

이 연구는 71명의 사례에 바탕을 두어 연구를 하였기 때문에 그 결과의 일반화에는 다소의 한계가 있지만, 농촌여성 소규모 창업자들의 사업성과와 창업자 특성과의 관계를 분석하는 기초 자료로서의 활용은 가능하다고 판단된다.

주요어(Key words): 창업자 특성(Entrepreneurial Traits), 농촌여성(Rural Women), 소규모 사업(Small Business), 성과(Performance)

## 1. Introduction

Raising the rural households' income as one of the ways to stabilize those rural women's economic status has become one of the very important public policy issues throughout the world, especially in under-developed and developing countries. For example, since 1990 in Korea, the Rural Development Administration has been promoting the project, "Helping the rural women to get the small businesses," for the purpose of providing those rural women with the increased opportunity to earn extra income from beyond the traditional agriculture and, consequently, with stable cash inflow. This project was regarded highly as contributing to the raised economic status of rural women, the

heightened motivation to keep living in rural areas, and the development of the sources of extra-agricultural income, which altogether would enable those rural women to focus fully on stable, productive economic activities(이석영, 2003).

Those rural farmers who participated only in the agricultural production need opportunities to get professional consulting and lessons about after-production value-adding processes and marketing techniques. So far, however, because most teaching/consulting programs for business starters have been oriented heavily toward IT-based ventures, there have been few teaching/training programs and consulting infrastructure that are designed to fit precisely with rural residents. Furthermore, there has been little effort to understand the basic characteristics of small business for rural women, who are the target market of the government project, "Helping the rural women to get the small businesses". Thus, it is no wonder that few research has been conducted in exploring the basic traits of rural women small-business starters and/or relating such traits to their business performance.

The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between the entrepreneurial characteristics of rural women small-business starters and their business performances.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theory of Entrepreneurship

The concept of entrepreneurship has evolved as contemporary environments have been changed. Therefore, we believe, it would be useful to divide, based on historical time, the relevant literature on entrepreneurship into three categories: classical, neo-classical, and modern concept of entrepreneurship. In the following, those three concepts/theories of entrepreneurship are reviewed in details.

#### 2.1.1. Classical Concept of Entrepreneurship

The classical concept, which prevailed before 20th Century, especially in the midst of industrial revolution, focused on entrepreneurship as understood in some European countries such as UK, France, and Germany. During that period, the concept was defined mostly by economists, where diverse terms were used. According to Schumpeter, the term, “entrepreneur,” was first used by one of the famous economists, Mill. (Schumpeter, 1934) Adam Smith viewed capitalist and producer as representing basically the same concept, and also used the terms, producer and capitalist, interchangeably (Smith, 1779). After all, classical economists tended to view entrepreneurs as the persons that pursue profits, the producers, the ones who try to exploit the fluctuation in price,

or the slaves of consumers' sovereign. Those classical economists' viewpoint can be characterized as being passive. On the other hand, the active viewpoint regards entrepreneurs as those playing central roles in making significant contributions to the economic development by, for example, adding values to land, creating jobs, or accumulating capital.

The classical concept of entrepreneurship has some unique characteristics. First, an entrepreneur was often regarded as a bizzar person. There is an episode that Mark Twain called entrepreneur as "crazy man"(Lambro, 1986, p.30). Second, an entrepreneur was often identified as the one who undertakes a giant project or the one that does his or her job well. The French word, entrepreneur, can be translated into English as "between taker" or "go between," which in turn can be understood as "warlike actor". Third, as the concept of risk-taking entrepreneur was widely accepted during the 17th century, economists regarded profit as reward for taking risk. Say argued earlier that the profit by an entrepreneur is different from that by an capitalist(Say, 1827). Fourth, in Germany, entrepreneur was called as "unternehmer," meaning the one who owns and manages a business, simultaneously. That parallels to the classical concept of entrepreneurship in the sense that entrepreneur and manager were not told from each other.

In summary, within the classical concept, entrepreneur was understood as being similar to owner-manager, but capitalist

and owner-manager were perceived as two distinct concepts.

### 2.1.2. Neo-classical Concept of Entrepreneurship

While classical concept of entrepreneurship was understood differently depending on countries and time periods, neo-classical concept began to evolve gradually, focusing more on the essential elements, that is, founding concept and “creating excellent companies”. That is, within the neo-classical concept, an entrepreneur was expected to be good at founding a new business and, to grow continuously, making a company excellent by cooperating well with professional managers. The industrial revolution, first begun in the UK, brought about revolutionary changes in America as well as many European countries. Resources development, refined machines, and advanced technologies were just some of such changes. Those changes, together or individually, led to increased productivity and innovation which was pioneered by craftsman entrepreneurs, resulting in product factors-driven economic development. The neo-classical concept suggested and, accordingly, showed that a company’s growth can’t be achieved without cooperation with professional administrators. Henry Ford was one of the exemplary entrepreneurs of this type.

The neo-classical concept of entrepreneurship can be described as follow(문원택 · 김원석, 2001).

First, entrepreneur, quite unlike an opportunity entrepreneur

or a venture capitalist, suggests the appearance of founder or start-up entrepreneur. Contemporary French technocrat and professional administrator, Henry Fayol emphasized the importance of management functions in growth-oriented organizations, in addition to founding a business.

Second, in encouraging willingness to take risk and passion for a given task, internal motive for achievement was perceived to be more important than external motive. And, subsequently, material reward plays a secondary, but not primary, role in making a task achieved.

Third, that time period saw the appearance of professional administrators and the emerging concept of cooperation. For example, General Motors could achieve a remarkable level of growth, owing to professional business administrators like Alfred Sloan. Fourth, entrepreneur typically has such characteristics as task orientation and autocratic leadership.

In summary, the neo-classical concept of entrepreneurship can be summarized as task-oriented leadership and, indeed, such spirit was deep-rooted in the mind of most contemporary entrepreneurs.

### 2.1.3. Modern Concept of Entrepreneurship

Since the near end of 20th century, while professional administrators played largely the roles that are distinct from those which entrepreneurs were expected to play before, entrepreneurs played the essential function of innovation. Such an en-

trepreneur was called innovator by Schumpeter. Innovation represents more than introducing new products or services. And, as innovation is typically done within existing companies, creating a new business could be done also within an existing company. Such viewpoint, while being accommodated into the neo-classical concept of entrepreneur, has been evolving into the modern concept of entrepreneurship, where creating an excellent company and educating employees were major roles that an entrepreneur plays.

Under the modern concept of entrepreneurship, an entrepreneur has some unique characteristics(문원택 · 김원석, 2001).

First, a modern entrepreneur has innovation-oriented entrepreneurship. The concept of innovation, as Schumpeter first conceptualized, was understood gradually to encompass innovating production method and developing new markets, new resources, or new organizations, in addition to introducing new products. Recently, in many leading companies, business process reengineering(BPR) appeared as a dominating agenda of innovation. The major point is that most inefficient organizations need to be reorganized, using network or other new type, so that the fat part of an organization could be eliminated. But, it seems, the concept of Kaizen, which represents continuous improvement and gradual innovation, as proliferated in Japan since World War 2, should also be incorporated into the modern concept of entrepreneurship. Clearly, many Japanese companies that used such strategies



after World War 2 were very successful.

Second, modern entrepreneurs are challenging practitioners also with willingness to take a risk and possess intrapreneurship. A company needs entrepreneurship within the company itself, so that it can make its stiff bureaucratic organization, which very often results inescapably during the growing process, fresh or revitalized.

Third, it has the characteristic of educating human resources as well as creating excellent companies. That is, an entrepreneur needs to make continuous growth while avoiding a significant failure, and should be able to create new corporate culture where, based on innovation, human resources are regarded as being most important. "A company's fate depends upon human capitals" represents the long-standing oriental value. And, Western value also suggests that efficiency-oriented management can make a company excellent, only when combined with excellent employee training/education. Indeed, these two aspects represent the essence of, as Maslow termed, "eupsychian management" and, at the same time, the key component of modern entrepreneurship.

## 2.2. The Definition and Importance of Small Business Start-up by Rural Women

The business start-up for rural women has some unique characteristics largely in its scope. First, its scope is geo-

graphically limited to rural area, which in turn is the industrial background. Second, the object of business is limited to female, only one of two types of gender. And, third, it deals primarily with small size and small capital. Loker et al.(1990) defined home-based business as 'activity of selling agricultural products or value adding activity in wholesale market, or activity of working at least eight hours a week over the past one year'.

Small business represents self-employed business which is characterized by small amount of capital, smaller number of participants(e.g., husband and wife, or family), and non-segregation of ownership and management.

Self-employers, on the other hand, are different from entrepreneurs, that is, business founders, in some important characteristics. First of all, while small business owners also have the sense of responsibility, independence, and entrepreneurship with willingness to take risk, the important point is that they do not like to work under the control of another person(s) and careless about success or social status. On the contrary, they tend to prefer working autonomously. Thus, even those self-employers who started business due to the one's retirement or spouse's death, tended to be satisfied with the business or work itself and autonomous work conditions despite the reduced income. Second, another characteristic of small business is that it is possible for husband-and-wife to build a business and, further, to make it a bigger company

by offering the grown business in the stock market and, consequently, improving its financial structure. Third, in terms of underlying motives, small business is different than entrepreneurship-based founder spirit, because small size self-employment usually begins with founding business for a living and its ultimate goal is to be a owner-manager. According to a survey, the first motive for women to found a business was to earn extra household-income(25.9%), slightly bigger than the motive to exploit their business ability. Thus, we can infer that there are so many cases of business founding whose primary objective is to make monies for a living.

But, entrepreneurship-based founding is slightly different. That is, because the ultimate objective of entrepreneurship-based founding is usually to make a large excellent company, the business itself is sometimes sold to a larger capitalist. In that context, it is understandable that, in Silicon Valley, serial entrepreneurship became a new trend in which a business is sold to a large capitalist after a certain time period.

Therefore, small business by rural women can be defined as “self-employment that is operated by women living geographically in rural areas, with small capital and small number of participants like husband-and-wife or a few family members.” Throughout the remaining part of this paper, we use this definition.

### **3. Design of the Study**

#### 3.1. Method of Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaires were sent to 147 rural women business owner-managers who received a subsidy from Rural Development Administration of Korea fund during 1990 through 2002, as a part of the project supported by RDA. The number of returned questionnaires was 71, resulting in the response rate of 48.2%. During the data cleaning stage, 12 responses were dropped due to the flaws such as unidirectional answering pattern. In addition, five of those were dropped in the final analysis because they contained fatal errors in respondents' following the appropriate direction. Finally, SPSS Version 11.5 was used in data analyses, where primarily factor analysis and step-wise regression analysis were used.

#### 3.2. Measurement of Variables

The questionnaire included, among many others, 2 questions measuring dependent variable, the degree of success by rural women entrepreneurs. The first dependent measure asked respondents to rate the current condition their overall business operation. And, the second dependent measure asked them to rate the current condition of the sales of their products. Both measures used 5-point scale: very good to very bad.

The questionnaire also included 39 questions representing all of the thirteen entrepreneurial characteristics/traits of successful rural entrepreneurs, as suggested by Caneron et. al.(1999), Moon and Kim(문원택 · 김원석, 1999), and Welsh and White(1991) For each of the 13 trait variables, 3 questions were generated, after having carefully refined the wordings, that they portray the meaning of each trait. The primary objective of those 39 questions was to make a reasonably comprehensive set of items comprising the traits of rural women entrepreneurs, which subsequently were subjected to factor analysis.

In addition, measures of the degree of training/teaching experience, the extent of business experience, the degree of advice—from/consulting—with professionals, and the degree of support from family members. For reference, those actual 39 questions, the key elements of which were expressed in English, are contained in [Appendix]. They are arranged following the result of factor analysis.

## **4. Results of Data Analyses**

### **4.1. General Characteristics of Respondents**

The average age of respondents was 50.3 and the mode of education levels was middle school & under. The specific cat-

egories of age and education and the corresponding number of respondents are contained in [Table 1].

〈Table 1〉 Age and Education Level of Respondents

Age		Education	
Category	No. (%)	Category	No. (%)
Under 45	13 (18.6)	Middle school & under	32 (46.4)
45-50	20 (28.6)	High school	30 (43.5)
50-55	21 (30.0)	2-year College	4 ( 5.8)
Over 55	16 (22.8)	University & over	3 ( 4.3)
Total	70 (100)	Total	69 (100)

#### 4.2. Entrepreneurial Traits of the Rural Women

39 variables were subjected to factor analysis with principal component analysis and with varimax rotation. Initial eigenvalues, percentage of variance explained are indicated in bottom of [Table 2]. 9 components had eigenvalues greater than 1, which altogether explained approximately 76% of all variance.

The component loadings after varimax rotation are contained in [Table 2]. The individual loading greater than .6 were selected with one exception of 9th component in which .5 was used as the cutoff point for just convenience purpose. Two of nine rotated components were loaded with 4 or more variables. But, the remaining seven were loaded with two variables. In order to check the possibility of using those variables loaded on each component as a scale, each group of variables



Comp# Var#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
v01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.841
v06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.500(*)
Eigenvalue	15.916	2.791	2.199	1.876	1.700	1.560	1.391	1.158	1.066
% of Variance Explained	40.811	7.157	5.640	4.809	4.358	3.999	3.566	2.969	2.733
Cumulative % of Var. Explained	40.811	47.967	53.607	58.416	62.774	66.773	70.339	73.308	76.041
Reliability (alpha)	.8393	.8604	.8079	.7021	.8234	.8194	.6340	.7573	.6563

(\*): less than .6

- comp. #1: Willingness to learn new things and to endure uncertainty
- comp. #2: Innovativeness and self-confidence
- comp. #3: Networking and flexibility comp. #4: Interest in business
- comp. #5: Self-motivation comp. #6: Challenge
- comp. #7: Willingness to involve comp. #8: Communication ability
- comp. #9: Knowledge of business.

### 4.3. Success / Performance level by the Entrepreneurial Traits

To examine the relationship between the extent of success / performance, as measured by two dependent variables, and those nine component scores as independent variables, a series of stepwise regression analyses were performed, where either one of three dependent variables, two dependent measures and the sum of those two scores, was entered in each analysis.

In the first stepwise regression analysis, the component #8 entered the regression model and all other components were excluded. The 8th component explained 14.3% of the variance



in the dependent variable. The overall model was significant at .005. ANOVA results are in [Table 3].

The result indicates that the current condition of rural women's overall business operation was influenced by their communication ability while no other independent variables had any statistically significant influence.

〈TABLE 3〉 Current condition of overall business operation by communication ability.

Model	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F-value	Significance
Regression	3.904	1	3.904	8.666	.005
Residual	23.429	52	.451		
Total	27.333	53			

R=.378 and R Square=.143

In the second analysis, where the dependent variable was substituted with the current condition of the sales of products, the component #9 entered the regression model and all others were excluded. The 9th component explained 7.4% of the variance in the dependent variable. The overall model was significant at .05. ANOVA results are in [Table 4].

The result indicates that the current condition of the sales of products was influenced by knowledge of their business while no other independent variables had any statistically significant influence.

(TABLE 4) Current condition of the sales of products by knowledge of business

Model	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F-value	Significance
Regression	2.345	1	2.345	4.048	.050
Residual	29.542	51	.579		
Total	31.887	52			

R=.271 and R Square=.074

Finally, the component #4 entered the regression model and all others were excluded. The 4th component explained 9.3% of the variance in the dependent variable. The overall model was significant at .026.

In the third analysis, where the dependent variable was substituted with the average of those two dependent measures, the component #4 entered the regression model and all others were excluded. The 4th component explained 9.3% of the variance in the dependent variable. The overall model was significant at .026. ANOVA results are in [Table 5].

The result indicates that the composite dependent measure of both overall business operation and product sales was influenced by interest in business. But, no other independent variables had any statistically significant influence.

〈TABLE 5〉 Both overall business operation and product sales by interest in business

Model	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F-value	Significance
Regression	10.252	1	10.252	5.238	.026
Residual	99.824	51	1.957		
Total	110.075	52			

R=.305 and R Square=.093

## 5. Conclusion and Limitation

This study focuses on the conceptual exploration of rural women entrepreneurship, the traits of rural women entrepreneurs, and the potential relationship between entrepreneurial traits and the degree of success or performance in small business start-up.

First of all, a pool of 39 trait items could be categorized into 9 unique factors, which altogether explained 76% of the total variance. While Caneron et al.(1999) suggested 12 traits of successful entrepreneurs, the factor analysis in this study showed 9 meaningful traits.

Second, the current condition of overall business operation, a variable of business performance, was influenced by the ability to write a memo clearly/precisely and to communicate/meet with other people without anxiety. And, the current condition of products sales, another variable of business performance, was influenced by knowledge in the expected business and ability to work

long. Another analysis where those two performance variables were combined into a single dependent measure showed that overall business operation and product sales were influenced by interest in business and interest in the growth of business.

There is some limitation in this study.

In this study, the size of sample was small, especially because the number of items subjected to the factor analysis were as large as 39. Due to the difficulty in getting the complete sample frame of rural women entrepreneurs, this study failed to get as many responses as two to three times the number of items, as the traditional rule of thumb may suggest. Therefore, one needs to be very careful when generalizing the empirical results of this study. It is hoped that another study with larger sample size would be conducted, contributing to our increased knowledge in the near future.

〈Appendix〉 Trait Components and Corresponding Items

Trait Components		Item No.	Wordings
1	Willingness to learn new things and to endure uncertainty	08	나는 불확실성과 스트레스에 대해 잘 견딘다/ endure uncertainty and stress very well
		12	나는 다른 사람이 말하는 것을 주의 깊게 듣는다/ listen carefully to what others are saying.
		14	새로운 기술, 아이디어 및 방법을 배우길 좋아한다/ like to learn new technology, ideas, and methods.
		27	다른 사람을 도와주는 것을 좋아한다/ like to help other people.
2	Innovativeness and self-confidence	23	나는 감정적인 혼란으로부터 회복을 잘 한다/ recover quickly from emotional disorder.
		24	나는 내 자신이 확고하다고 본다/ think myself as firm-rooted.
		37	내가 원하는 일이 있을 때 마음속으로 목적을 분명히 한다/ have in my mind a clear objective(s) of what I want to do.
		38	새로운 것을 배우기 위해서는 익숙하지 않은 것도 탐구한다/ explore even what I am not familiar with so that I learn something new.
		39	자신의 노력으로 어떤 성과를 올릴 수 있는 일을 좋아한다/ like a work in which I can show good performance with my own effort.
3	Networking and flexibility	31	나는 어떤 일을 성공하기 위해 시간과 노력을 투입할 의지가 있다 /willing to spend my time and effort in order to make it successful.
		35	문제를 해결하는데 필요한 전문성을 찾기 위해 다른 사람과의 네트워크를 잘 만든다/ build well a network with others in order to find special knowledge necessary to solve a problem.
		36	나는 일을 계획하고 실천할 때 적응력과 융통성이 있다/ am adaptive and flexible in planning and implementing my work.

Trait Components		Item No.	Wordings
4	Interest	02	흥미가 있거나, 하고자 하는 일에 관계된 때에는 시간이 아주 잘 간다 / am absorbed in what I am interested in or what I am going to do.
		03	사업의 성장에 매우 흥미가 있다/ very interested in the growth of my business.
5	Self-motivation	16	나는 내 스스로 결정하기를 좋아한다/ like to make decisions for myself.
		17	나는 자아 동기가 높다/ am highly self-motivated.
		18	나는 다른 사람의 상담이나 조언이 없이도 내 방식대로 일을 할 능력이 있다/ have ability to work in my way without others' advice or consulting them.
6	Challenge	29	나는 실행계획을 개발하고 조직하는 방식을 찾는다/ seek a way to develop and organize an action plan well.
		30	나는 문제를 도전으로 보고, 오히려 투지가 솟는다/ regard a problem as challenge and am willing to confront it.
7	Willingness to involve	05	나는 내 사업에 오랫동안 관여할 의지가 있다/ willing to be involved long with my business.
		21	나는 기회를 잘 잡는다/ exploit an opportunity well.
8	Communication ability	10	나는 편지나 메모를 간결하고 정확하게 쓸 수 있다/ can write a letter or memo, clearly and precisely.
		11	나는 새로운 사람들과의 모임과 대화를 하는데 불편함을 느끼지 않는다/ am comfortable with meeting with, or talking to, the person(s) I am not familiar with.
9	Knowledge of business	01	내가 시작하고자 하는 사업에 대해 정말 잘 알고 있다/ know very well about the business I am going to start
		06	장시간에 걸친 단순한 일을 싫증내지 않고 계속할 수 있다/ can keep working long without getting bored.
(Order Rearranged after Factor Analysis)			

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