

An Examination of The Role of Psychological Empowerment on Entrepreneurial Success: Evidence of Women Entrepreneurs in Semarang City

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Article Info

Keywords:

Psychological empowerment;
Women entrepreneur;
Entrepreneurial success

JEL Classification:

D91, L25, L26

DOI:

10.33830/jom.v20i2.6827.2024

Article History

Received : December 4, 2023

Accepted : June 24, 2024

Publish : December 20, 2024

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to review empirical data on the effect of empowerment on performance at the individual level. It investigates the aspects of empowerment and how they affect a female entrepreneur's ability to succeed.

Methodology – We collected 96 female entrepreneurs in Semarang City participated in this study. Data was gathered using a Google form link questionnaire. The data was analyzed using the WrapPLS 8.0 software and the structural equation modelling (SEM) technique.

Findings – The findings showed that women's success as entrepreneurs is influenced by all three aspects of psychological empowerment: self-determination, competence, and impact. However, the meaning dimension does not affect women's entrepreneurial success.

Originality – Based on the body of knowledge from previous research, there is a population gap. The originality of this research is to consider the object that has not been studied in previous studies, that is, women entrepreneurs.

1. Introduction

The creation of more women entrepreneurs is in line with the government's target to create new entrepreneurs. Economic empowerment in today's world is centered on women. Empowering women means empowering the economy. The concept of empowerment holds significant value as it can generate positive outcomes that are advantageous for both individuals and organizations. The psychological element, which consists of a set of circumstances required to encourage intrinsic motivation, is referred to as empowerment. The psychological condition consists of four dimensions, namely meaning, self-determination, competence, and impact (Al-Makhadmah et al., 2020; Mahama & Cheng, 2013; Sharma & Kohli, 2022). Psychological empowerment is an important indicator and key element for individuals to achieve business success (Ibrahim, 2020; B. Sun et al., 2022).

MSMEs play an important role in Indonesia's economy, especially in employment (Augustinah et al., 2022; Cuandra & Candy, 2024). According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) for 2021, women manage 64.5% of all MSMEs. In addition, 84.20% of MSMEs in 2023 experienced decreased revenue or profit, and 62% experienced financial problems and business capital financing (Linda & Rino, 2023). According to research by Dalberg and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, there are a significant number of female entrepreneurs in Indonesia—21 percent, to be exact. This demonstrates how powerful women are economically. Despite this high degree of involvement, MSMEs run by female entrepreneurs only contribute 9.1% of GDP and 5% of exports. One of the main reasons behind this is that access to women's empowerment is still limited. With such great potential, if accompanied by optimal empowerment, gender equality can be achieved and Indonesia can produce many successful women entrepreneurs who also contribute to economic progress.

The effect of empowerment, particularly psychological empowerment, on business performance or success has been the subject of several prior studies. However, based on a literature review of 154 previous studies from 1999-2023, shows a population gap, namely 96% of previous studies examined empowerment and its effect on the performance or success of employees in an organization and 4% only discussed the topic of entrepreneurs. In addition, this research is interesting to conduct considering that there is still a debate on the results of research (research gap) on the effect of psychological empowerment on performance. Some studies find the effect of psychological empowerment on performance (Fan et al., 2023; Hwang et al., 2023; Jawad et al., 2022; Lim et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). While previous studies state that psychological empowerment does not affect performance (Appuhami, 2019; Ardabili, 2020; Curran et al., 2021; Ochoa Pacheco et al., 2023; Sharma & Kohli, 2022). So, this research replicates previous studies by giving novelty to the object of research that has not been studied before. Female entrepreneurs as research subjects because there do not exist sufficient field studies on the effects of psychological empowerment on entrepreneurs, particularly women (Fan et al., 2023; Gu et al., 2022; Mathew & Nair, 2022; Pacheco et al., 2023). Reviewing empirical data on the effect of empowerment on performance at the individual level is the aim of this study. This study uses a quantitative method to investigate the aspects of empowerment and how they affect a female entrepreneur's ability to succeed.

A motivational construct that refers to psychological empowerment is represented in a series of cognitions involving impact, competence, meaning, and self-determination (Spreitzer et al., 2005; Spreitzer et al., 1997; Zhang et al., 2023). Meaning indicates alignment between work roles and individual ideals or value standards (Dewettinck & Buyens, 2014). Competence is the capacity to accomplish goals. The ability to decide how to initiate and organize programs of action is referred to as self-determination. Impact is the power to bring about a desired influence or effect. Such psychological cognitions contribute to improved individual performance outcomes. According to empowerment theory, a person with greater empowerment can complete tasks with greater efficiency than a person with less empowerment (Al-Bsheish et al., 2019).

A single meaning of "success" is an undertaking that is profitable or prosperous. Indicators for achieving prosperity will vary across different domains, metrics, and viewpoints. Because of this, achieving any kind of success can be assessed both subjectively and objectively (Fisher et al., 2014). The phrase "enterprise success" describes the accomplishment of a business work or job. A common measure of success is achieving wealth (Mullens, 2013); Nevertheless, other arguments imply that a lot of business owners may not view accumulating wealth as a sign of success (Alstete, 2008). Gender differences also affect how success is perceived. Men define success in terms of external factors like prestige or recognition for achievements. On the other hand, Women define

success internally by things like whether they accomplished their goals (Fisher et al., 2014, 2018). Goal accomplishment, financial success, lifestyle success, and business expansion are some of the metrics used to gauge an entrepreneur's success. Finding opportunities, developing business ideas, acquiring resources, and surviving and growing are other elements that contribute to entrepreneurial success (Zapata & Peiró, 2018).

Meaning involves the degree of congruence between tasks and a person's values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Sharma & Kohli, 2022). A person may lose interest in and be less engaged at work if there is not a personal connection or value to their work. On the other hand, meaning can create energy and purpose in individuals towards their work (Johnston, 2000). Meaning ultimately consists of an individual's level of commitment to a task, which can contribute to the endeavor's success. People are more likely to be motivated to work hard and succeed when they believe that their work has meaning (Liden et al., 2000). Tangible meaning is associated with instrumental or economic rewards, such as salary. Whereas intrinsic rewards such as autonomy, creativity, authenticity, and external recognition are latent forms of meaning (Nemkova et al., 2019). Meaning refers to work that is considered very important and has greater positive value to the individual (Sun et al., 2019). Meaningful work refers to the personal significance and positive value that an individual attaches to their work, which is connected to their own personal development and growth (Symon & Whiting, 2019).

An entrepreneur's work orientation reflects their core personal characteristics and traits. It embodies the underlying needs, drives, and motivations that shape an entrepreneur's approach to their work. An entrepreneur's work orientation can be categorized into three key dimensions - job, career, and calling. These dimensions reflect how individual position and perceive the value and meaning of their work (Zhang, 2020). So, the first research hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Meaning has a positive effect on entrepreneurial success

Competence has the same meaning as self-efficacy (Fock et al., 2011). Over time, competency is developed by mastering a range of social, cognitive, and physical abilities (Bandura et al., 1999) and describes a person's confidence in their capacity to complete a certain task (Sharma & Kohli, 2022). High competence leads to greater effort and tenacity in the face of difficulties. People who feel empowered think they are capable of carrying out their jobs well and possess the abilities and other resources required to do so (Lee & Nie, 2014; Loke et al., 2018; Sharma & Kohli, 2022; Spreitzer et al., 2005; Spreitzer, 1995; Spreitzer et al., 1997). Competence has a strong relationship with business performance or success. So, the second hypothesis is:

H2: Competence has a positive effect on entrepreneurial success

Self-determination theory has identified several distinct types of motivation, each of which has identifiable implications for an individual's well-being, personal capabilities, and the quality of their behaviors. Specifically, self-determination theory seeks to identify the factors that nurture and support the innate human capacities involved in personal growth and overall well-being. It also explores the processes that facilitate effective opportunity recognition and actualization for individuals (Chen et al., 2020). Self-determination theory posits that human beings are motivated by a combination of inherent, internal drives as well as external factors and incentives. Entrepreneurs are a diverse group of individuals who possess a range of both internal and external motivations, as well as the capacity to conceive and implement novel ideas or enhance existing ones. Researchers have investigated the underlying motivations and self-directed drive that compel individuals to engage in entrepreneurial endeavors (Ademilua et al., 2022).

Self-determination theory (SDT) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the factors that either support or hinder intrinsic motivation, autonomous forms of extrinsic motivation, and overall psychological well-being. Both intrinsic motivation and well-internalized (and thus autonomous) forms of extrinsic motivation are associated with a range of positive outcomes. This has been observed across diverse educational settings and cultural contexts (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Feelings of autonomy in the workplace are strongly correlated with self-determination (Lee & Nie, 2014). People who feel empowered regard themselves as autonomous, innovative, and creative. They become initiators rather than followers. When a person does not have autonomy, then the person will feel helpless and unable to take actions that they consider appropriate regarding work (Hwang et al., 2023). The third hypothesis in this study is:

H₃: Self-determination has a positive effect on entrepreneurial success

Impact refers to how much a person believes they can affect significant outcomes both inside and outside of their organization (Appuhami, 2019; Sharma & Kohli, 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Empowered people see themselves as key players and initiators of change in the organization. If they believe their performance in carrying out their duties affects people both inside and outside the company, then they will also be motivated to perform well (Pacheco et al., 2023; Pacheco & Montecel, 2023). So that it can lead to business success. The fourth hypothesis in this study is:

H₄: Impact has a positive effect on entrepreneurial success

Thus, the model of the research framework is:

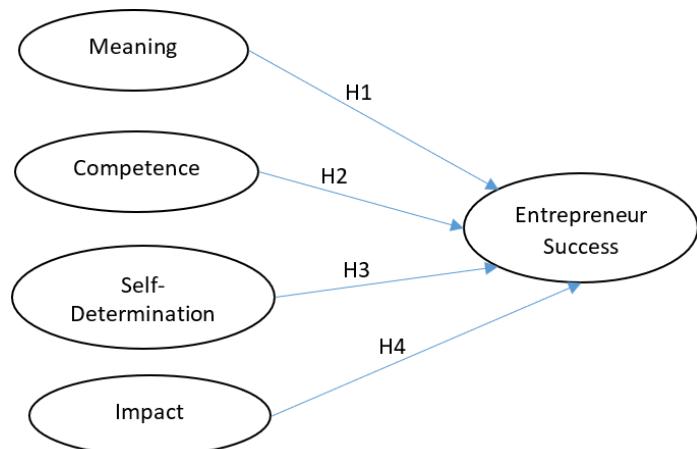


Figure 1. Research Model

The research model is based on four hypotheses that explore how the dimensions of psychological empowerment—meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact—affect the success of women entrepreneurs. These dimensions are considered essential factors that influence entrepreneurial outcomes, with meaning reflecting the personal significance of the business, competence representing the confidence in skills, self-determination highlighting the freedom to make decisions, and impact focusing on the ability to influence others and the environment. The hypotheses aim to understand the extent to which these psychological aspects contribute to the growth and sustainability of women-led enterprises. By examining these factors, the study seeks to provide insights into the empowerment of women entrepreneurs and their success in the business world.

2. Research Methods

This study was conducted to review the theoretical arguments regarding the impact of empowerment on individual performance, i.e., women's entrepreneurial success, by including empirical evidence. The empirical review has two main objectives: first, it provides insights into the influence of psychological empowerment on women's entrepreneurial success. Secondly, based on the multidimensional construct of psychological empowerment, this study provides clear evidence regarding the unique construct of empowerment dimensions on individual performance levels.

Table 1. Dimensions and Indicators of Variables

Item	Statement	Source and Scale
Psychological Empowerment		
PE1	My work is really important to me	(G. M. Spreitzer, 1995)
PE2	The work that I do and my life values are extremely aligned	5-point scale
PE3	I place a lot of importance on the work I do	1 (SD) to 5 (SA)
Competence		
PE4	I have faith in my capacity to work	
PE5	I have complete faith in my ability to carry out work-related tasks	
PE6	I've acquired the abilities needed to work	
Self-Determination		
PE7	I'm free to choose how I want to go about my work	
PE8	It's up to me to decide how I want to complete my task	
PE9	I have a fantastic opportunity to be self-reliant and unrestricted in my choice of work	
Impact		
PE10	Things that take place in my organization are greatly influenced by me	
PE11	I have a great deal of control over the operations of my organization	
PE12	Within my organization, I have a great deal of control over events	
Entrepreneurial Success		
ES1	It is easier for consumers to buy products at my store	(Tu et al., 2014)
ES2	My store provides a wide range of products/services	5-point scale
ES3	My store provides high-quality products/services	1 (SD) to 5 (SA)
ES4	My store provides products/services that customers need	
ES5	I provide good prices	
ES6	Compared to the first year of entrepreneurship, in the third year, the average number of my employees is in line with expectations	
ES7	In my third year of business, I made more profit than my rival compared to my first years	
ES8	In the third year of entrepreneurship, I am very satisfied with the way the business has developed in comparison to the first year	
ES9	Current sales exceed my expectations at the beginning of entrepreneurship	
ES10	Compared to my earlier entrepreneurial expectations, current profits are higher	
ES11	My overall satisfaction with the business is currently higher than my expectations	
ES12	If I had another opportunity to develop a new venture, I would do the same business	

Source: processed data

The respondents in this study were 96 female entrepreneurs in Semarang city. The average age of respondents is 43 years old, and they have been running their business for more than 3 years. The majority of respondents are not the main breadwinner in the family. As many as 70% of respondents in running a business only helps in earning a living. Respondent's education varies, starting from Junior High School (4%), High School (40%), Diploma (10%), Bachelor (43) and

Master (3%). The type of business is fashion (4%), culinary (63%), craft (30%) and agriculture (3%).

Data was collected through a questionnaire of a Google form link and confidentiality was guaranteed. A total of 96 respondents responded to the dimensions of psychological empowerment and entrepreneurial success. Table 1 present the dimensions and indicators of the research variables used. Table 1 shows that competence, self-determination, meaning, and impact are the four dimensions of psychological empowerment, with twelve indicators in each (Spreitzer, 1995). Twelve indicators are used to measure entrepreneurial success (Tu et al., 2014). Items are rated using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The following are the dimensions and indicators of each variable.

The Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach with the WrapPLS 8.0 program was used to analyze the data. SEM testing consists of testing the outer model (testing indicators with constructs) and the inner model (hypothesis testing). As stated by (Hair et al., 2018), data characteristic of PLS-SEM includes no distributional assumptions and achieves high levels of statistical power with a small sample size. Larger sample sizes increase the precision of PLS-SEM estimations. In addition to handling data that does not meet the assumption of linearity in the context of women's entrepreneurship and subjective success, the Wrap PLS method is better able to capture the nuances and complexities of the psychological factors that influence such outcomes compared to linear regression.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Outer Model Testing

Outer model testing is carried out to determine the reliability, validity, and suitability of the research model. This test consists of a reliability test, validity test, and model fit test (*Goodness of Fit Model*). The following are the results of testing the outer model. The results of running the first model show that some indicators do not meet reliability. So that several indicators with values below 0.7 were removed from the model. After the indicators below the value of 0.7 were removed from the model, the second model was tested. Table 1. Shows the indicators that were excluded from the model.

Table 2. Running Model 1

Psychological Empowerment		Entrepreneur Success	
Indicators	Loading Factors	Indicators	Loading Factors
PE1	0.785	ES1	0.377
PE2	0.644	ES2	0.490
PE3	0.825	ES3	0.186
PE4	0.721	ES4	0.380
PE5	0.837	ES5	0.604
PE6	0.909	ES6	0.702
PE7	0.522	ES7	0.875
PE8	0.952	ES8	0.815
PE9	0.976	ES9	0.816
PE10	0.745	ES10	0.742
PE11	0.930	ES11	0.576
PE12	0.901	ES12	0.652

Source: processed data

Certain indicators need to be eliminated from the model because, according to the first model's results, their loading values are less than 0.7. The indicators excluded from the model are ES1, ES2, ES3, ES4, ES5, ES 11, and ES 12 for indicators of entrepreneurial success. Meanwhile,

the indicators of psychological empowerment that were removed were PE2 and PE7. Furthermore, after reducing the indicators, the data is processed again for the second time. The results of testing the outer model of the 2nd running are as follows:

Table 3. Running Model 2

Psychological Empowerment		Entrepreneur Success	
Indicators	Loading Factors	Indicators	Loading Factors
PE1	0.862	ES6	0.764
PE3	0.862	ES7	0.868
PE4	0.721	ES8	0.867
PE5	0.837	ES9	0.854
PE6	0.909	ES10	0.781
PE8	0.991		
PE9	0.991		
PE10	0.745		
PE11	0.930		
PE12	0.901		

Source: processed data

After indicators that have a loading value below 0.7 are removed from the model, it can be seen that in the 2nd running data, all indicators meet the reliability with a loading value above 0.7. Reliability testing can also be done by looking at the composite reliability and Cronbach alpha values. The composite reliability value shows that all dimensions of psychological empowerment and variables have a value above 0.7 and the Cronbach alpha value shows a value above 0.6. This means that the latent variables meet the internal reliability criteria. In the model, there is also no correlation problem either vertical or lateral, because the VIF's full collinearity value of all variables and dimensions is below 3.3.

Table 4. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Entrepreneur Success	Psychological Empowerment			
		Meaning	Competence	Self-determination	Impact
R-squared	0.240				
Adj. R-squared	0.207				
Composite reliability	0.916	0.852	0.865	0.991	0.896
Cronbach's alpha	0.884	0.653	0.763	0.982	0.823
Avg.var.extrac.	0.685	0.742	0.682	0.982	0.744
Full collin.VIF	1.181	1.371	1.547	1.176	1.094
Q-squared	0.233				

Source: processed data

Validity testing is done by looking at the AVE value. The AVE value of all variables is above 0.5, so the variables meet the criteria for convergent validity. In addition, latent variables also have a high discriminant validity value. Discriminant validity is indicated by the value of the correlation among latent variables with Square Roots of AVEs, which is greater than the correlation with other variables or dimensions.

Table 5. Correlation Among Latent Variables with Square Roots of AVEs

	Entrepreneur Success	Meaning	Competence	Self-determination	Impact
Entrepreneur Success	0.828	0.049	0.288	0.289	0.202
Meaning	0.049	0.862	0.503	0.153	0.004
Competence	0.288	0.503	0.826	0.285	0.180
Self-determination	0.289	0.153	0.285	0.991	0.222
Impact	0.202	0.004	0.180	0.222	0.862

Source: processed data

Testing goodness of fit is done by comparing 10 measures of fit with model fit criteria. APC, ARS and AARS have values below 0.05, so these measures meet the fit criteria. Furthermore, AVIF and AFVIF have values of 1.217 and 1.274 respectively, these values also meet the model fit criteria. The model is concluded to have great predictive power. This is indicated by the Tenenhaus Goodness value of 0.429 (above 0.36). Other goodness of fit measures such as SPR, SSR and NLBCDR also showed fit values, with each of the values on these measures being more than 0.7. RSCR also showed ideal criteria with a value of 1.00. Testing 10 measures of model fit shows that the equation model has model fit criteria.

Table 6. Model Fit Values

Criteria	Value	Rule of Thumb	Conclusion
APC	0,185, P = 0.015	P-Value less than or equal to 0.05	Accepted
ARS	0,240, P = 0.003	P-Value less than or equal to 0.05	Accepted
AARS	0,207, P = 0.009	P-Value less than or equal to 0.05	Accepted
AVIF	1,217	If ≤ 5 , then acceptable; ideally, ≤ 3.3	Ideal
AFVIF	1,274	If ≤ 5 , then acceptable; ideally, ≤ 3.3	Ideal
Goodness	0,429	Large ≥ 0.36 , medium ≥ 0.25 , small ≥ 0.1	Large Predictive Power
Tenenhaus			
SPR	1,000	Ideally =1, Acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Ideal
RSCR	1,000	Acceptable if ≥ 0.9 , ideally =1	Ideal
SSR	1,000	Acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Accepted
NLBCDR	1,000	Acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Accepted

Source: processed data

The results in Table 6 indicate an overall strong model fit and predictive power. All key criteria meet or exceed the recommended thresholds. Specifically, the APC (0.185, P = 0.015), ARS (0.240, P = 0.003), and AARS (0.207, P = 0.009) demonstrate statistically significant results with P-values below 0.05, signifying that the model is robust. The AVIF (1.217) and AFVIF (1.274) fall within the ideal range (≤ 3.3), indicating low collinearity among constructs. The Goodness Tenenhaus value (0.429) exceeds 0.36, highlighting large predictive power. Furthermore, SPR, RSCR, SSR, and NLBCDR values all equal 1.000, satisfying their respective thresholds, which reflects an ideal and reliable structural model. These results collectively suggest that the model is well-specified and provides meaningful predictions.

3.2 Inner Model Testing

The hypothesis is tested through the application of the inner model or structural model. Based on the results of testing the inner model, it is known that the dimensions of psychological empowerment (competence, self-determination, and impact) affect the success of women entrepreneurs with a significant value below or equal to 0.05 (H_2 , H_3 , and H_4 accepted). Meanwhile, the meaning dimension does not affect women's entrepreneurial success with a significance value above 0.05 (H_1 is rejected). The model also shows the Adj R Square value of

0.207, which means that psychological empowerment can explain 20.7% of the variation in women's entrepreneurial success. The resulting Q-squared value is $0.233 > 0$, which indicates that the model is predictively relevant.

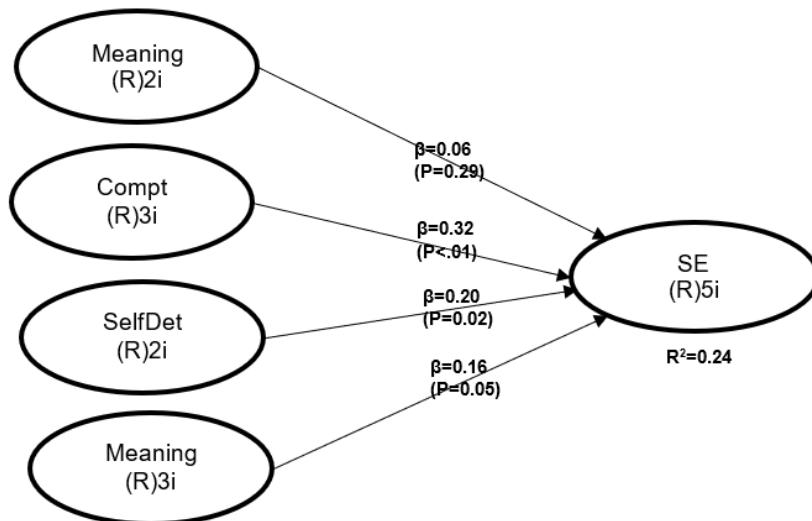


Figure 2. Inner Model Testing

The results show that meaning does not affect an entrepreneur's business success. By directly linking psychological empowerment to the performance outcome of entrepreneurial success, we ignore the potential mediating role of individual behavior. This concept is based on common sense, which holds that when someone feels empowered, they can perform in a certain way as long as they act appropriately (Dewettinck & Buyens, 2014). The majority of respondents in this study are entrepreneurs, but they are not the main breadwinners in the family. So that the meaningfulness of work can be lower than an entrepreneur as the main breadwinner in the family. For this reason, meaning in psychological empowerment does not affect the success of the entrepreneur. Other studies that report the same results are (Appuhami, 2019; Ardabili, 2020; Curran et al., 2021; Gregory et al., 2010; Mahama & Cheng, 2013; Pacheco et al., 2023). Although some previous studies support these results, most of these studies examined the organizational level (managers and employees), while the object of this study was conducted at the individual level, namely female entrepreneurs.

Competence has a significant influence on entrepreneurial success. Someone who has high competence, meaning that they have the skills and expertise needed at work, will have more chances of success (Fock et al., 2011). A person with a greater sense of competence tends to show greater enthusiasm and commitment at work and is more likely to focus on business success (Lee & Nie, 2014). Competence will lead to job satisfaction; this is where business success can be felt. Competencies play an important role in career success as they cover various aspects that directly affect job performance, professional recognition and career development opportunities. With high competencies, individuals are more likely to achieve higher positions, earn better income, and feel satisfied with their career journey. Therefore, investing in competency development is an effective strategy to achieve career success. This result is in line with the research (Lee & Nie, 2014; Loke et al., 2018; Mahama & Cheng, 2013). However, the results of this study contradict research conducted by (Fock et al., 2011; Gregory et al., 2010; Sharma & Kohli, 2022).

Self-determination indicates autonomy, initiation, and self-regulation (Lee & Nie, 2014), these feelings will lead to a commitment to success. The results show that the greater the self-determination that exists in a person, the greater the chances of that person to achieve success.

When a person has the autonomy to use various skills in doing a job, they will produce a greater impact on the job (Sherman, 2022). Self-determination plays an important role in career success by increasing intrinsic motivation, providing greater control over career choices, enhancing resilience, promoting continuous learning, creating work-life balance, and increasing the ability to take initiative. All these factors contribute to better job performance, higher career satisfaction and long-term career success. These results are similar to research (Gregory et al., 2010; Lee & Nie, 2014; Loke et al., 2018; Mahama & Cheng, 2013).

Impact refers to the belief that one can influence work outcomes and create differences in organizations (Loke et al., 2018). The impact has a positive effect on business success. The greater the impact that arises on the surrounding environment, the greater the sense of success that exists in an entrepreneur. A significant impact at work not only enhances an individual's reputation and influence in the organization, but also increases personal motivation and satisfaction, expands professional networks, and encourages skill development. All these factors together contribute to greater career success. As such, focusing on making a positive impact is an effective strategy for achieving and maintaining career success. This result is supported by research (Fock et al., 2011; Gregory et al., 2010; Mahama & Cheng, 2013; Sharma & Kohli, 2022). But, contrary to the research (Lee & Nie, 2014; Loke et al., 2018).

4. Conclusions

The results revealed that all three dimensions of psychological empowerment, namely self-determination, competence, and impact, affect women's entrepreneurial success. However, the meaning dimension does not affect women's entrepreneurial success. The findings of this study provide useful information for policymakers by highlighting the concept of empowerment needed to enhance the career success of women entrepreneurs based on the dimensions of psychological empowerment. Policies that support women entrepreneurs' autonomy in decision-making and management of their businesses, such as flexibility in working hours and access to capital, can strengthen their independence. Policies that provide access to training and education that improve the skills and knowledge of women entrepreneurs, such as business workshops or professional development programs. This study did not use mediating variables to test the effect of the dimensions of psychological empowerment on career success, especially in the meaning dimension, where no effect was found. Behavioral factors such as proactive behavior, innovation, etc., may be used in future studies as mediating variables between the effects of psychological empowerment and career success. In Addition, the limitation of this study is the limited generalization aspect. Another limitation is the cross-sectional research design. Future research can use case studies or longitudinal research.

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