

ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

## The Role of the Partner of an Entrepreneur



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### ABSTRACT

*This research examines the role of one's partner in the motivation of the entrepreneur in the small and medium enterprise. This impact has been analyzed in terms of the hierarchy of needs as explained in the Theory of Human Motivation by Abraham Maslow (1991). The study uses a qualitative analysis of twenty-two cases of entrepreneurs who have had partners in the initial or growth stage of the company, and who have up to fifteen years in the market and that sell less than fifteen million dollars annually. The results of the study show that the motivation of the partner seems to be a factor that is valued and recognized by the entrepreneurs, and the entrepreneurs of both genders acknowledge the moral support of their partners as one of the major factor in the development and growth of their businesses.*

*Among its practical implications, the research provides a theoretical framework for understanding the motivational role of the partners and the entrepreneurs and establishes that entrepreneurs who have managed to stay in the activity of the new business with the support of the partner seem to be perceived as successful people. The originality and value of this study is that it provides primary information on the relationship between the businessperson and his/her partner and contributes to the understanding of the role of partners in the development of the business activities of an entrepreneur.*

**KEY WORDS:** *entrepreneur, relationship between the businessperson and his/her partner motivation, moral support*

## **Introduction**

In recent years, entrepreneurship has become an object of study throughout the world, because it is considered one of the main engines of economic activity. However, the entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon that can be found in a variety of settings and circumstances.

When the motivations are studied of entrepreneurs who are successful in business, the factors that motivate them stand out, as well as the types of behavior associated with business growth and the generation of wealth. These factors of motivation and behavior are evident in displays of power, money, image, and a transition of the family's socioeconomic status. Motivational factors are among the main influences on the entrepreneur and, among these, one of the most important is the family, especially the partner, who supports the person who decides to take the risks of undertaking a new business (Kirkwood, 2009).

The entrepreneur is an important source of income generation, employment and growth of the Gross Domestic Product. Studies conducted in several countries show that the entrepreneur is successful in his business when he is supported by the partner. In that sense, the entrepreneur and spouse constitute a cornerstone in the development of a nation's economy. Studying the influences of the partner on the entrepreneur who starts a business is also important, basically because we need to know if the support of the partner has a positive or negative effect on the development of the entrepreneur and why it is necessary to investigate if what the partner transmits to the entrepreneur in everyday interaction is transferred to the professional life of the entrepreneur.

## **Prior Research**

The Family FIRO (Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation) is a model based on a family business. It includes three dimensions of family interaction: inclusion, control and integration (Danes, Rueter, Kwon, & Doherty, 2002). A study of husband and wife on family farms supports this model and suggests that both the sense of inclusion and the ways in which control is managed are important for achieving integration in family business. In a similar configuration, some couples who own farms have been studied to investigate the relationship between tension and business, conflict and marital satisfaction (Amarapurkar & Danes,

2005). The role of farm women has been observed very specifically by Danes and McTavish (1997). Others propose a model for subsistence family business as a research tool to help understand the family and business, and the intersection of the two (Stafford, Duncan, Danes, & Winter, 1999).

Research on family business has proposed other theoretical models to help expand the understanding of family businesses. A perspective on the matter is the motivation to improve the family environment (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). This concept is based on the idea that people are part of social connections, hence, "do not decide to start a business in the air" (p. 577). These authors suggest that the perspective of the model to improve the family part shows that the family system includes features with three interrelated components: (a) transitions (marriage, divorce, birth of a child), (b) resources (financial, human, social) and (c) norms, attitudes and values. In this latter category, there are rules regarding the interaction between family members, attitudes toward work and the family, and terminal instruments and values.

This family system impacts on the process of starting business and its results (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). While this review highlights only two extremes in the field of family business, there are many other approaches to a more comprehensive review of family businesses (Heck, Hoy, Poutziouris, & Steier, 2008). In fact, recent research has highlighted the need to offer several perspectives simultaneously in order to conduct the research in this area (Heck, Hoy, Poutziouris, & Steier, 2008).

On the other hand, the study of the literature on gender offers another perspective. It shows that women think rationally when they make decisions about their careers. The major premise behind this approach is that women perceive their business as connections of cooperative relations rather than economic units. This means that, for women, one cannot separate the family business relationships, the society and personal relationships: "the business is integrated into the life of the businesswoman" (Brush, 1992, p. 16).

The vision that was just outlined differs from the work of Gilligan (1982), who said that women and men have different conceptions of themselves, and therefore have different ways of thinking about relationships. The interpretation of this author leads us to assume that there may be gender differences regarding how the spouse affects the motivation of the entrepreneur to start a business.

Business motivation generally revolves around four issues: desire for independence, monetary motivation, factors related to family and factors

related to work (DeMartino & Barbato, 2003). The results of comparative studies on gender show that independence and work-related factors appear to be strong motivators for men and women. Some gender differences have been found in money-related motivators. Most gender differences are related to the subject and family (Kirkwood, 2004), while the family is a strong factor in motivating a woman to become an entrepreneur (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Kim, 1996, Mallon & Cohen, 2001). There are gender differences that combine weight and housework (Buttner & Moore, 1997), family policy and family obligations (DeMartino & Barbato, 2003), and raising children (Cromie, 1987). The conclusion of these studies points to the flexibility required by the women in their roles as mothers and professionals. This is a factor to leave paid jobs and become entrepreneurs (Mallon & Cohen, 2001).

Conversations with a spouse on "dreams, time demands and financial risk" have been considered important for starting a business (Van Auken & Werbel, 2006, p. 59). In a study of ethnic family businesses, decisions were made to start a business and, in the immediate context, "the traditional gender roles" are defined within the family (Alcorso, 1993, p. 102). It was also found that many men who are business owners were not successful without the help of the wife (Alcorso, 1993, Baines & Wheelock, 1998). Support from the spouse has also been found to be particularly important during the initial stages of the business (Wheelock & Baines, 1998).

One of the key concerns in the question of whether the spouse plays a significant role in the motivation of businesspersons is: what happens to those who co-found or who are co-owners of a business with their spouse? Partners can be defined as many couples who share a job and personal relationships; this does not necessarily mean they have to be owners or partners in the business. Fitzgerald and Muske (2002) highlight what is defined in the term "partner" and suggest their definition: if the spouse works a few hours in the business, both can have great power over the operation and management of the business. However, there are very few studies of this type of partners (Cole & Johnson, 2007) and those that exist have been published in the popular press and not in academic journals (Smith, 2000).

Other studies have similarly observed that husbands view themselves as leaders when working in this type of business, while women are more involved in administrative tasks (Marshack, 1994). In these businesses, the perception is co-entrepreneurial dynamism, as the spouses may move in and

out of commitment to work and share the responsibilities of the business (Muske & Fitzgerald, 2006), even after divorce (Cole & Johnson, 2007) .

## **Theory of Human Motivation**

The impact on the needs and the behavior of entrepreneurs has been analyzed in terms of the hierarchy of needs, explained on the Theory of Human Motivation by Maslow (1991). He studied the motivation from the individual's needs. The Humanistic (or holistic) Theory proposed by Maslow emphasizes the individual as a whole and, therefore, the motivation also has an impact on the individual as a whole. The cornerstone of motivation in this theory is the satisfaction of needs grouped into hierarchical categories. Needs can be physiological (such as deficiencies in the organism) or psychic (something that the person requires for his well being.) In his theory, the desire to meet the needs motivates people and, when basic needs are met and reach a saturation point, new, higher needs appear that are never saturated and are a strong potential for motivation.

The holistic approach defined by Abraham Maslow proposes that the individual is an "integrated and organized" whole, which "means that an individual is motivated and not just part of him" (p. 3). In addition, when talking about meeting needs, this theory states that "satisfaction takes place in the whole individual, not a part of him" (Maslow, 1991, p. 3).

With his ideas, Maslow developed the known primary hierarchy of needs: (a) physiological, (b) security, (c) love and belonging, (d) esteem or value, and (e) self-realization.

Physiological needs are those "that are usually taken as a starting point for a theory of motivation (Maslow, 1991). The first need of the Maslow hierarchy contains the series of physiological needs necessary for human homeostasis, equilibrium and survival (Reeve, 1994). Clear examples of these needs are hunger, sex and thirst. These physiological needs are the most dominant of all needs, which means that if "a person lacks food, safety, love and esteem; he would probably feel the need for food more strongly than anything else" (Maslow, 1991, p. 23).

Security needs arise when the physiological needs are met. According to Maslow, this category of need includes "security; stability; dependency; protection; freedom from fear, anxiety and chaos; need for structure, order, law and limits; strong protection, and so on." (Maslow, 1991, p. 25).

The need for love and belonging appear after physiological and security needs are well satisfied, "the needs of love involve giving and receiving affection. When they are not satisfied, a person will deeply feel the absence of friends, colleagues or children. Such a person will be hungry for relationships with people in general [...] and will strive valiantly to achieve that goal." The sense of belonging appeals to maintain "the importance of the neighborhood, one's own territory and clan" and is supported by "our profound animal tendencies to flock, herd, to regroup, to belong" (Maslow, 1991, p. 29.)

The need to be valued refers to the desire for a generally high valuation of themselves, with a firm and stable base; they are in need of self-respect or self-esteem, and the esteem of others. Maslow believes that this category of needs can be subdivided into two groups: (a) the desire for power, achievement, adequacy, expertise and competence, confidence in the world, independence and freedom, and (b) the desire for reputation or prestige (defined as respect by other people), status, fame and glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity or appreciation " (Maslow, 1991, p. 29.).

### **The Role of the Partner and the Family as a Source of Motivation for the Businessperson**

In many cases, businesses end up mixing with the family or vice versa. This can arise when one partner is engaged in a business that occupies a lot of time, causing less time to be shared with his partner and children, or when some family members work in a business, which generates conflicts and affects the coexistence of all. Most research on the partners and business activity has focused on the role of the family and the partner at advanced stages of the business. There is research focused on the number of women working in the husband's business (Danes & Olson, 2003), their leadership roles (Danes & Olson, 2003; Poza & Messer, 2001) and on interpersonal dynamics (Danes et. al., 2002). In many of these cases, the wife of the businessman works either formally or informally in the business, providing support to personnel or doing unpaid work. There are gender differences in the role that the spouses of businesspersons take in a business (Kirkwood, 2009). The work done by the wife of the businessman is more administrative (Baines & Wheelock, 1998) and often unpaid or unrecognized (Sinclair, 2000).

These situations mirror gender differences in the traditional roles of women and men. Women take the role of lesser authority, while men focus more on planning the future of the business, the finances, procurement and the employment of personnel (Alcorso, 1993) or technical support (Baines & Wheelock, 1998.) These results have led research to suggest that the wives of businessmen are invisible (Philbrick & Fitzgerald, 2007). While it may be invisible, the work of the spouse is almost always vital for financial development (Van Auken & Werbel, 2006) and, of course, for the survival of some businesses (Baines & Wheelock, 1998).

Statistics highlight gender differences. Only 35% of husbands of businesswomen assume any part in the business, while 60% of businesses owned by men have help from a spouse (Miettinen, 1986). The low incidence of the spouses of businesswomen working in the business is highlighted in a study showing that, of twenty-one cases analyzed, there is not one in which male partners participate (Baines & Wheelock, 1998).

Some more recent studies highlight a lack of understanding by the spouse who is not involved in managing the business (Philbrick & Fitzgerald, 2007). Even though the wives of businessmen do not always engage significantly in leadership of the business, they are vital to the functioning of the business (Marshack, 1994). There has also been a focus on the roles played by men and women in family businesses and their roles in families (Fitzgerald et al., 2001; Lee, Danes & Shelley, 2006, Lee, Rowe & Hong 2006).

Upon assessing the role of the partner as a source of motivation, one must first understand what needs are generated in the individual as part of the relationship in order to establish whether or not he meets that function. Depending on whether the partner is male or female, there are different interests that will be translated into demands or requirements of the partner, a situation that happens from the moment he is selected.

Various studies have shown that women place more emphasis on socioeconomic status, ambition, character and intelligence when they feel attracted by a member of the opposite sex (Feingold 1992). The man "exercises "sexual selection pressure on the woman" and in this case, "competition focuses on the reproductive value, which is associated with youth and health, issues that are usually manifest in the appearance and physical attractiveness" (Petri & Govern, 2006). These differences in the interests of men and women regarding their partners are maintained over time and are accentuated with the appearance of children.

Once the couple is constituted, the perceptions of either party impact not only behavior, but also the perception or image that boyfriends or husbands have of themselves, as a result of the mutual feedback that occurs over time (Cast & Cantwell, 2007, p. 172).

A study undertaken in New Zealand (Kirkwood, 2009) on the role of the partner in the motivation of entrepreneurs found that the role of the partner, whether men or women, is vital to starting and developing a business; even more, in many cases, partners found businesses together or have preponderant roles in the business started by the entrepreneurs.

In Peru, a study conducted with female entrepreneurs identified that, in most cases, there was a family that encourages and supports entrepreneurship when women want to become entrepreneurs. Moreover, it found that the family is actively involved in the company, which ends up being part of the family responsibilities of the entrepreneur: "The hiring of family members in their businesses is common among women entrepreneurs [...], which shows that, for women, the company is part of their role within the family" (Avolio, 2008, p. 132).

## **Methodology**

The research has a descriptive purpose and has used a qualitative approach to analyze the role of the partner in the motivation of the entrepreneur. The qualitative strategy used is the multiple case study under a holistic design, because the research analyzes the role of the partner in the motivation of the entrepreneur of the small and medium enterprise in Peru.

The population of small and medium-sized enterprises comprises all those formal companies that sell up to fifteen million dollars annually and whose founding member continues to manage the company. The analysis is performed on the period of introduction and early growth of the company. Since there is no single registry of small and medium companies in Peru, various sources have been used to identify the participants of this study, especially credit information in the financial system, in which there is a registry of legally constituted businesses, information on the number of years the company has been operating, information on the founders, information on whether they continue in the control and management of the company, and information on personnel contacts. For the sample, a combination of the following techniques is considered: *Snowball and Maximum variation* and it should meet the following criteria: the company



must be legally constituted at the time of the interview, the entrepreneur must be the primary manager of the company, i.e., the general manager, the company must have at least two employees, the business must have up to fifteen years in operation, and the partner must have shared with the entrepreneur (for at least two years) the beginning and early development of the business.

The following sources of evidence have considered in the collection of data: (a) direct observation, (b) in-depth interviews and (c) various documents. Data collection was performed through in-depth interviews in a session of 90 to 120 minutes, in quiet places where the respondent would pay due attention to the interview. If for some reason, the interview could not be carried out, this would take place in a second session. The interviews were prepared openly, conducted from a script, and were recorded and transcribed with the express permission of the interviewees. The information was codified, categorized and analyzed using analytic induction (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and the procedures suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) to analyze the qualitative information. To process the information, Atlas TI software was used, permitting the maintenance of clear evidence from the narratives, the codification of the information and the conclusions of the study.

The interview guide was structured considering demographic information and the needs from the Maslow's theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1991) which are: physiological; safety; belonging, in relation with the partner and with the family; recognition; and self-actualization.

The study was done in Perú. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor [GEM] found that: "Of the entrepreneurs who decide to put a company in Peru, 45% create it trying to exploit a business opportunity, and primary motivation of 72% of these is to gain a higher income that allows them to improve their main situation " (p. 13). According to several reports worldwide of GEM, Peru has always had entrepreneurial activity. This country is located in the first place both regionally and globally, with an average of 40% of the rate of entrepreneurs (from 2004 to 2006). It is worth noting that, in 2007, it ranked second after Thailand and, in 2008, second after Bolivia. Also in that year, the country achieved a rate of entrepreneurial activity of 25.98%, i.e., one in four Peruvian adults were undertaking some type of new business activity (2007, p. 13). Currently, the levels of entrepreneurship in Peru have been decreasing and it warns of a downward trend. In 2009, it was fourth in Latin America (with a rate of

20.9%) - behind Guatemala (26.8%), Jamaica (22.7%) and Colombia (22.4%) - and sixth worldwide – behind Uganda (33.6%), Guatemala (26.8%), Yemen (24%), Jamaica (22.7%) and Colombia (22.4%) (GEM, 2009).

Four conditions related to the validity and reliability were considered: (a) validity of the construct, (b) internal validity, (c) external validity and (d) reliability ']' (Yin, 2003, p. 34), and measures assigned to the concepts studied. In the research, the use of a protocol of the case was considered, in which the field procedures were established, including procedures similar for the interviews, techniques for creating an atmosphere of trust with the interviewee, formats for interview notes, time of the interview, etc. And, most importantly, the same interview guidelines were used for all cases. The use of a database on each case, with a standardized structure, enabled the transfer of the data and the formation of a solid, complete and detailed source of the information collected. The use of research participants for data collection was especially prepared for the study and with knowledge of qualitative research methods. The support of an external professional was received to verify the content and the logic of the survey and the analysis, while comparing the findings obtained.

## **Results of the Case Analysis: Presentation and Discussion of Results**

Twenty-two in-depth interviews were performed with entrepreneurs selected to reflect the heterogeneity of entrepreneurs. For this study, it was taken into account that all informants had partners at the beginning of their business: whether they were unmarried, married or cohabiting. Similarly, with regard to the age of the partners, it is warned that there is no major age difference between the respondents and their partners. All the entrepreneurs have family beyond their partner. Moreover, the fact that all are married means there is some stability with respect to their personal life.

The entrepreneur respondents are mainly between 36 and 65 years old. The partner relationship of 82% of the respondents is over six years old, which helps to explain the possible influence of the partner in their decisions. 46% maintain a partner relationship of between six and fifteen years, representing half of the majority of the entrepreneur respondents that are between 36 and 45 years (eleven in total). In addition, 18% of the male and female entrepreneurs have a relationship of less than five years, and

another 18% have a relationship of between 16 and 25 years. With respect to the processes of maturing of the companies evaluated through the entrepreneurs, 41% have an average of seven years since the founding of his company, 32% of companies have been founded an average of three years ago, and 18% are companies more than fifteen years old. Many of the companies of the respondents (41%) are between six and ten years old.

## Need for Security and Health

To analyze the security and health needs the following themes were studied: perception of the spouse's support in the decision to initiate the business (Table 1) and the role of the spouse towards the fear of failure when starting an enterprise (Table 2).

In the study, it was found that the individuals who supported more both men and women entrepreneurs in the decision to start their business were the spouse, parents, siblings or children, business partners and others. When analyzing the perception of spousal support towards the decision to become an entrepreneur it was found that for both, men and women, the role of the spouse is fundamental in the decision to start the enterprise, and, in some cases, in the collaboration in necessary activities to initiate the business. From the results, it can be noticed that 12 men entrepreneurs (that is 67% of the total of men who participated in the study) perceived the support from their partners. On the other hand, for women entrepreneurs, 100% of them received support from their spouses. For example:

*“My wife help me, she work like a workwoman, she feed us and also she work in the production, she was there until the final stage of the distribution of the product” (Domingo, San Borja).*

*Table 1. Perception of support when starting the business*

Support	Men		Women	
	Frecuence	Percentage	Frecuence	Percentage
Spouse	10	55.50%	4	100%
Parents	5	28.00%	0	0%
Siblings or Children	1	5.50%	0	0%
Business Partners	1	5.50%	0	0%
Others	1	5.50%	0	0%
Total	18	100%	4	100%

In the case of the fear of failure and the support from the spouse, the results show that 45% of the participants do not showed high levels of fear of failure. This situation is different in the case of women in which one of four participants (25% of the sample) referred they had fear of failure. Consequently, 3 out of 4 women (75% of the participants) referred they had some presence of high feelings of fear to failure before starting their business. A common characteristic in the cases where the entrepreneurs referred little presence of fear to failure was that they do not had household burden or they had many years of experience.

*Table 2. Fear of failure at the start of the business*

Fear of failure	Men		Women	
	Frecuence	Percentage	Frecuence	Percentage
Si	7	39.00%	2	50%
No	11	61.00%	2	50%
Total	18	100%	4	100%

### **Need for Affiliation**

To analyze the need of affiliation between the entrepreneur and his or her partner (in the sense of belonging, love, emotional dependence, and esteem) the following themes were explored: activities that the entrepreneurs make with their partners or their family (Table 3); the partner's **influence** in the business creation (Table 4); the support of the partner or the family of the entrepreneur to resolve problems in the business (Table 5); and the values of the partner that the entrepreneur perceived during the first years of the business (Table 6).

It is shown in Table 3 that 67% of the male entrepreneurs interviewed had spare time outside the business to have some familiar activities or with their spouses. On the other hand, 100% of the female entrepreneurs interviewed had the time for such activities, maybe to not neglect their roles as mother or wife.

In Table 4 it is shown the influence of the spouses when creating the business. In the case of male entrepreneurs 68% recognize the support from their wives. In Table 5 it is shown that 77% of male entrepreneurs are supported by their partners or their family in difficult times; this situation is similar to female entrepreneurs (100%). One of the interviewers referred

that she perceive that her partner could not give her any support in his business; however she referred that his partner is the one in charge to raise their children, the one in charge of household maintenance, in charge of the health insurance and the cars, for which objectively, it is a support event if the informant does not recognize it expressively.

In Table 6 it is shown that 100% of the female entrepreneurs interviewed recognize a set of values in their partners (thus, the final count of values is higher than the interviewed). In is shown that a positive attitude is the main value entrepreneurs recognize in their partner, following by the order, and perseverance.

*Table 3: Activities entrepreneurs make with their partner or family*

Gender	Have activities		Do not have activities	
	Frecuence	Percentage	Frecuence	Percentage
Male	12	67.00%	6	33.00%
Female	4	100.00%	0	0.00%
Total	16		6	

*Table 4: Influence of the partner in the creation of the enterprise*

Gender	Positive Influence		Negative Influence	
	Frecuence	Percentage	Frecuence	Percentage
Male	15	68.00%	6	14.00%
Female	4	18.00%	0	0.00%
Total	19	86.00%	6	14.00%

*Table 5: Entrepreneurs perception on the support of their partners and family when facing problems*

Gender	Have Support		Don't have any support	
	Frecuence	Percentage	Frecuence	Percentage
Male	14	77.00%	4	23.00%
Female	4	100.00%	0	0.00%
Total	18	86.00%	4	

*Table 6: Values of the partner that the entrepreneur perceived during the first years of the business*

Gender	Partner's value	Frecuence	Percentage
Male	Positive attitude	6	26.00%
	Perseverance	4	17.00%
	Order	3	13.00%
	Openness	2	9.00%
	Analitical, reflexive, controlling	3	13.00%
Female	Optimistic	3	13.00%
	Order	1	4.50%
	Determination	1	4.50%
Total		23	100.00%

### **Need for Recognition**

The themes explored to analyze the need for recognition were: the contribution of the partner for the success of the entrepreneur (Table 7) and the recognition of the partner in the accomplishments of the entrepreneur (Table 8). It was found that the entrepreneurs appreciate the recognition from their partners in their business activities. For example:

*“Yes, she proud of me. She always thanks me for the things I gave to her and she is always telling me that she didn’t think that I will have so much success with the business, she has been with me since the beginning and has witnessed the growth of the business, she notice we are gaining more money and our kids have all their needs covered” (Carlos, Callao).*

*“I think so, and she shows me by giving me preferences to make international trips and giving me more comfort for my hobbies” (Hernán, Callao).*

The contribution the partner makes in the success of the entrepreneur is showed in Table 7. The information was organized around two key concepts: economical contribution and moral contribution. The first one refers to a direct financial contribution that the partners make to the business, and also to the financial support with the family expenses while the entrepreneur does not generate incomes; 23% of the interviewed affirm that they receive economical contribution from their partners. Moral

contribution refers to the company and support the entrepreneur receive from their partners especially in emotionally negative and positive moments, giving them a constant emotional support. In the case of female entrepreneurs, the 50% had an economical contribution and the other 50% moral contribution. In contrast, the 83% of male entrepreneurs referred that they received moral contribution from their partners while only 17% economical contribution.

In relation with the recognition from their partners about their achievements, the results showed that all of them appreciate and recognize their success (Table 8). The ways to express the recognition were diverse, mainly in the form of gratitude, in the possibility of their children education, improving their economic stability, material wealth, etc.

*Table 7: Contribution of the partner for the entrepreneurs success*

Values	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Economic	3	2	5	23.00%
Moral	15	2	17	77.00%
Total	18	4	22	100.00%

*Table 8: Recognition from the partner of the success of the entrepreneur*

Gender	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Male	18	81.00%	0	0.00%
Female	4	19.00%	0	0.00%
Total	22	100.00%	0	0.00%

## **Need for Self-realization**

The themes explored when analyzing the need for self-realization were the following: support of their partners in difficult time (Table 9), attitudes from their partners that have help in having success with their business (Table 10) and acceptance of the business advises from their partners.

Regarding the support of their partners in difficult moments of the business, the results show that most of the partners or family of the interviewed entrepreneurs supports them being this support essential to face

those difficult moments. Regarding the attitudes of the partners the entrepreneurs considered have help with the success of their business; most of the entrepreneurs pointed out that persistence and conviction were the ones that stand out. Female entrepreneurs mentioned that the values that stand out were: optimism, creativity, persistence, and passion.

Regarding advises given by their partners, 78% of the entrepreneurs take into account these suggestions. In the case of 64% of the interviewed entrepreneurs listens and accept advises from their partners, while 18% does not. For women entrepreneurs 75% of them listens and accept the advises from their partners.

*Table 9. Support of the partner in difficult times of the enterprise*

Gender	Received support		Received support	
	Frequence	Percentage	Frequence	Percentage
Male	14	64%	4	18%
Female	4	18%	0	0%
Total	18	82%	4	18%

*Table 10. Attitudes from their partners that have help in having success with their business*

Gender	Attitudes	Frequence	Percentage
Male	14	4	18%
Female	4	0	0%
Total	18	4	18%

*Table 11. Acceptance of the advises from their partners*

Gender	Acceptance		Reject	
	Frequence	Percentage	Frequence	Percentage
Male	14	64%	4	18%
Female	3	14%	1	4%
Total	17	78%	5	22%



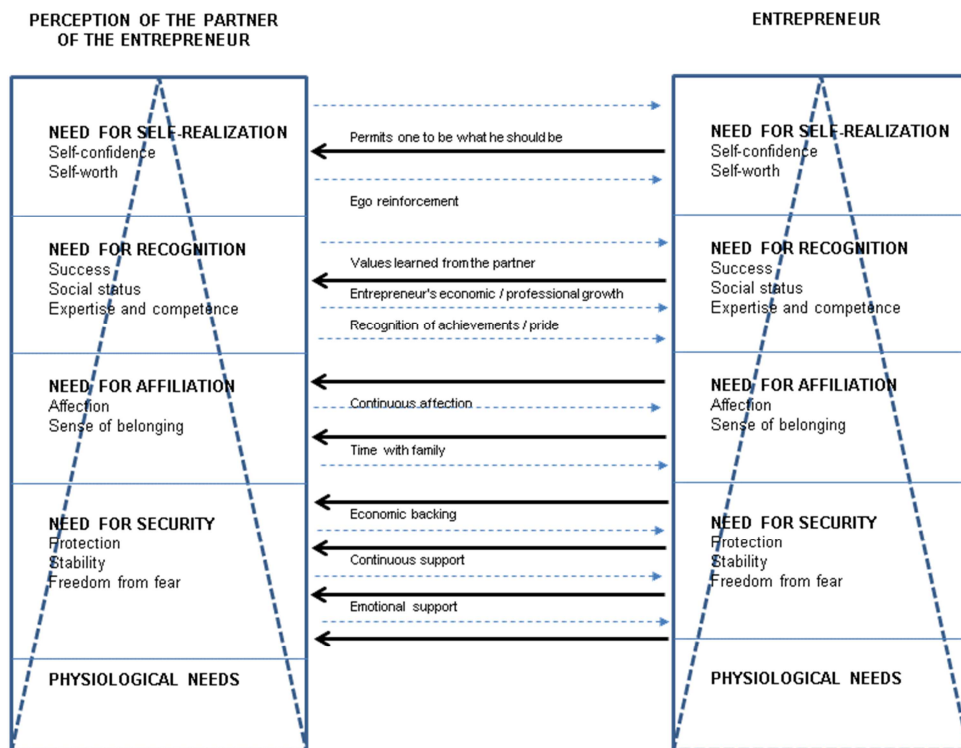
## Model Proposed: The Role of the Partner of an Entrepreneur

The proposed model presents the different roles of the partner of an entrepreneur, obtained based on the results of the study (Figure 1). The red lines illustrate the influence of the entrepreneur on his partner; the black lines show the influence of the partner on the entrepreneur.

Among the main security needs voiced by the respondents are the absence of fear, protection and stability. It seems that the entrepreneur satisfies, through emotional support, the partner's need for lack of fear and vice versa. Protection is given through the continual support and that stability is given through economic support.

The needs of affiliation that stand out the most are the need for affection and a sense of belonging. The sense of belonging is satisfied through time shared with the family, while the need for affection, through the constant tenderness in the relationship with the partner.

Figure 1: Model Proposed



The major needs shown in the study for recognition were achievement, status, expertise and competence. The need for social status of the partner is satisfied by the entrepreneur through his professional and economic growth. The need for achievement is satisfied by the partner through the recognition of the entrepreneur's achievements, as well as the manifestation of pride by the partner, while that for expertise and competence of the entrepreneur are attained through the values learned from the partner. Regarding the need of self-realization, the two most frequently named by respondents were self-worth and self-confidence.

## **Conclusions**

The research focused on the following: (a) what is the role of the partner in the motivation of the entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises? (b) Are there differences on the partner's motivation for male and female entrepreneurs? and, (c) What are the different types of support that the entrepreneurs receive from their partners?

On the role of the partner in the motivation of entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises, it seems that the motivation of the partners substantially influenced the development of the business or new enterprise activity. Regarding the influence of the partner as a driving force in the creation of the business, in cases where entrepreneurs had a partner in the beginning, it was noted that the partner has a positive influence in this endeavor. This is to note that, in most cases, the entrepreneurs sought the approval of the partner before starting the entrepreneurial activity. According to the information obtained, in most cases in the study, it can be seen that the partner actually plays a very important motivational role.

On the differences between the motivation of partners of male and female entrepreneurs, there seems to be no substantial differences between the motivation of the female and male partner. Most of the female informants stated that they did not put their business aside to pursue other opportunities that arose along the way. In the case of male respondents, it appears that they did rule out other employment opportunities during the course of their business. Of the cases interviewed, results show that male respondents tend to be more concerned about the generation of additional income, while in the case of female entrepreneurs, the main concern is the future stability of the family. Most of the male respondents say they currently spend less time on their business than at first, leading us to assume

the importance of the partner and family to the respondent. Nonetheless, male entrepreneurs spend less time on household chores and with the children. Otherwise, most of the female entrepreneurs report that they allow time for family activities outside work and do not neglect their partner or their family. They organize themselves in order to attend, in addition to their businesses, their family obligations. Most female respondents perceived support from their partners, especially to begin their entrepreneurial activities, while male respondents perceived support from their partners and from their parents.

On the different types of support that entrepreneurs receive from their partners, both male and female respondents recognize attitudes in their partners that have helped them succeed. Emotional support is one of the factors that is most valued by the respondents. At the time of beginning their business, most of the respondents had the direct support of their partner or relatives to face difficult situations. There were two very specific concepts of the contribution by the partner in the process of starting a new business: the economic contribution and moral support.

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## **Uloga partnera preduzetnika**

### **APSTRAKT**

*Ovo istraživanje ispitalo je ulogu partnera u motivaciji preduzetnika u malim i srednjim preduzećima. Obaj uticaj je analiziran na osnovu hijerarhije potreba kao što je objašnjeno u Teoriji ljudske motivacije Abrahama Masoua (1991). U istraživanju smo koristili kvalitativnu analizu dvadeset i dva slučaja preduzetnika koji su imali partnere u početnoj fazi razvoja preduzeća, koji su prisutni na tržištu već petnaest godina i koji imaju promet manji od 15 miliona dolara godišnje. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da motivacija partnera jeste faktor koji se ceni i priznaje od strane preduzetnika, i preduzetnici oba pola govore da je moralna podrška njihovih partnera jedan od najbitnijih faktora u rastu i razvoju njihovog preduzeća.*

*Pored praktičnih implikacija, istraživanje daje i teoretski okvir za lakše razumevanje motivacione uloge partnera i preduzetnika i pokazuje da su preduzetnici koji su uspeli da opstanu u poslovanju uz podršku partnera vidjeni kao uspešni ljudi. Originalnost i vrednost ove studije jeste to što ona daje primarne informacije o odnosu između poslovnih ljudi i njihovih partnera i doprinosi razumevanju uloge partnera u razvoju poslovnih aktivnosti preduzetnika.*

**KLJUČNE REČI:** *preduzetnik, odnos izmedju poslovnih ljudi i njihovih partnera, motivacija, moralna podrška*

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