

## The Grit of Entrepreneurs: Their Resilience Needs in Achieving Success

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**Abstract.** Failure is part of the risk that is acquired to form success of a business and entrepreneurship provides a promising future because of the profit it offers. Some of the management risks are also experienced by entrepreneurs such as financial, marketing, operational and HR risks as part of the operational process of having a business. To optimize economic improvement, Indonesia still needs at least 14% of young entrepreneurs as on a macro level, entrepreneurs have a role creating prosperity, equity of wealth, and good job opportunities serves as an engine of economic growth of a country. Success in entrepreneurship is what most entrepreneurs crave but it is not easy to be a success entrepreneur. However, Entrepreneurs are individuals with many needs that mobilize them to cultivate success and entrepreneurial success has some characteristics that specifically contribute to a success entrepreneur. The characteristics which shape success entrepreneurs are not only about the ability to maintain interest (the consistency of interest) related with the business that he deals with but also about the resilience in trying, not afraid to face challenges to achieve goals. That entrepreneur’s grit is dealing with the resilience and enthusiasm they have to achieve long-term goals of their business venture. Understanding that phenomena, researchers are interested in investigating the grit of entrepreneurs which support them in achieving success. The study conducts qualitative method by interviewing 5 entrepreneurs. Data Triangulation is implemented to support the validity of the research.

**Keywords:** human needs, grit, entrepreneur

### I. Introduction

Entrepreneurship provides a promising future because of the profit it offers. One of the conditions for Indonesia to become a developed country in the coming 2045 is the increasing ratio of entrepreneurs. The number of Indonesian entrepreneurs is still very limited or approximately 3.18% which is still far behind from Asia countries namely Singapore 8.76%, Thailand 4.26% and Malaysia 4.74%. To optimize economic improvement, Indonesia needs at least 14% of young entrepreneurs. The statistics below shows that number of people in entrepreneurship was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank under those who work in government sectors.

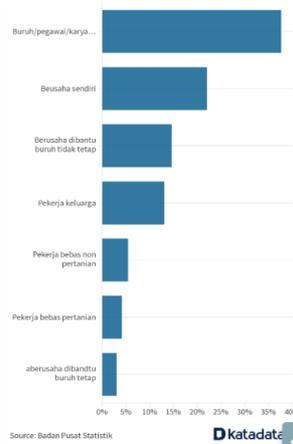


Figure 1. Number of jobs pursued in Indonesia

Source: katadata

On a macro level, entrepreneurs have a role creating prosperity, equity of wealth, and good job opportunities serves as an engine of economic growth of a country. Success in entrepreneurship is what most entrepreneurs crave but it is not easy to be a success entrepreneur.

Many people learn and then imitate the things that are done by a successful entrepreneur so that he can become successful. Individuals who have persistence will be able to achieve higher success than those who are less persistent. The first persistence is steadfastness. Fortitude is persistence of effort, diligent in trying. Consistent effort in achieving or realizing commitments, so that this individual will not be too distracted by short-term goals in order to achieve bigger long-term goals. Bullough and Renko (2013) state that entrepreneurs have confidence in their ability to effectively running business processes and have the ability to manage challenges as well as managing stress. Some of the management risks experienced by entrepreneurs such as financial, marketing, operational and HR risks are all part of the operational process of starting a business. To succeed, an entrepreneur will learn from business failures by using existing

information about business failures that occur to improve its ability to manage owned business with provide appropriate decisions and actions (Shepherd, 2003). Failure is part of the risk that is acquired to form success of the next business or business. Niode (2007) also argues that the risk of loss is something normal because for an entrepreneur, the risk of loss is something that will be experienced as well as the profit opportunities that can be achieved. The industrial environment in entrepreneurship has an influence directly on strategic competitiveness and profit-making ability above average. Succes Entrepreneurs are able to manage those obstacles.

Entrepreneurial success is influenced by several variables. Zimmerer, et al (2008) explained that there are several influencing variables, namely choosing moderate risk, being forward-oriented and enthusiastic and hard working. Nowadays, it is not surprising that many people wants to become entrepreneurs. In addition to the relatively large profits, being an entrepreneur can also open up jobs for other people. But entrepreneurs need to have characteristics that can make them successful in doing business. Duckworth (2007) explains that grit is a character shown through behavior to maintain perseverance and enthusiasm in achieving the expected long-term goals. Based on some studies, grit is one of the characteristics to help someone change the perception that the determinant of success not only from intelligence. Grit (persistence) is not only about achieving long-term goals by overcoming obstacles and challenges but also about determining how a person can put their efforts to persevere experiencing life's challenges. Entrepreneurs who are persistent will be able to achieve their goals and fulfill their self-satisfaction so that they will try hard to face challenges and maintain their business. It can be concluded that the variable which shape success entrepreneurs is not only the ability to maintain interest (the consistency of interest) related with the business that the entrepreneurs manage but also the resilience in trying, not afraid to face challenges to achieve goals.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Grit is resilience and enthusiasm to achieve long-term goals. Understanding that phenomenon, researchers are interested in investigating the grit of entrepreneurs to support them in achieving success. This study seeks to find out the influence of the grit empirically, through data which is collected qualitatively through interviews with selected entrepreneurs.

## II. Literature Review

Duckworth (2007) identified Grit (persistence) as a character shown through behavior to maintain persistence and enthusiasm in achieving the expected long-term goals. The definition of Grit is related with how often an individual behave in maintain perseverance and enthusiasm in challenging circumstances to achieve the expected long-term goals (Vivekananda, 2017). Akin and Arslan (2014) argue that grit is a continuous volunteerism of goal-directed action despite obstacles, difficulty, or hopelessness According to Hochanadel and Finamore (2015), grit is about how one can achieve long-term goals by overcoming obstacles and challenges. Two things that become dimensions in grit are the consistency of interest and the persistence of effort, explained as follows:

1. Concistency Of Interest, this is related with the ability to aligning interest in one goal. Individual who is consistent in his interests is not easily switching his interest and the interest itself does not change easily in some period of time. These individuals maintain their interest in the long term.
2. Perseverance Of Effort, meaning that a person is not afraid to face challenges or obstacles that prevent him from achieving his goals, namely to keep working hard and earnestly to achieve long-term goals.

## III. Research Method

Researchers implement a qualitative method in analyzing the grit of entrepreneurs in achieving success. The subjects of this study are five entrepreneurs with different business venture. They are interviewed deeply to discover the grit they have possessed. Besides, entrepreneurs will share their meaningful experiences related on how they deal with obstacle, failure and efforts in dealing it. Subjects' experiences as successful entrepreneurs are the richness of data that is very useful to analyze. Besides entrepreneurs' meaningful experience, researchers also analyzed journals and textbooks. All the collected data is then organized, categorized and analyzed (Creswell, 2009). The next step in this qualitative research is coding the data by deciding the themes and description based on the grit that consist into concistency of interest and perseverance of effort.

**Table 1.** Data Coding

No	Dimension	Coding	Subjects
I.	Consistency of interest i. focus on business fields ii. Entrepreneur passion	FoBF EP	S2,S3,S4,S5 S1, S2, S4
II.	Perseverance of effort i. Learning the specific field of business he chooses ii. Handling the difficult times iii. Entrepreneurial effort intensity	LfoB  HDT EET	S1, S4, S5  S1, S2,S3 S1, S3, S5

#### IV. Result and Discussion

Grit refers to characteristic a person has in achieving long-term goals by overcoming obstacles and challenges. In addition, Grit is also related to a person's efforts in showing their strategy in surviving problems that are challenges in their business. The results showed that grit in entrepreneurs related in 2 dimensions, namely consistency of interest and perseverance of effort.

##### Consistency of interest

Individual with consistency of interest do not switch interest easily. His interest itself lasts in some period of time. These individuals maintain their interest in the long term. Entrepreneurs who have gained success are able to maintain his interest whether it relates in his position being an entrepreneur (do not switch into other occupation such as working in a company, being a teacher, or others). Related to consistency of interest there are several aspects related to business interest, namely:

##### Focus on business fields

Consistency with interest' can be persistently manifested with a pioneered business field. Starting a business takes time for the product to be known by the public and this cannot be pursued in short time. By showing persistence, the business that was pioneered will be known to many people so that the business can gain success. Related to this, research shows related data on 4 subjects. Duckworth, et al (2007), suggest that achieving difficult goals requires not only talent, but also the application of talent that is sustained and focused all the time.

As mentioned by Subject (S2) who opened a pharmacy business, here are the interview verbatim:

*Currently, my goal is only to focus on my business, entrepreneurship by opening a pharmacy. I can be useful and help many people. I was once entrusted to run a franchise store next to my pharmacy, but I did not accept it because I felt that what I had achieved in my business was what I had to maintain.*

Subject (S3) who works as the owner of a skin care clinic also said the same thing about focusing on the business field he chose, namely skincare. The transcript of interview is shown below:

*The right thing for me is skincare business and until now it has been almost 13 years since my business was established which started from 2010 but we started to have our own brand name in 2012*

S4 also said that persistently in the same field would pay off, as he pursued the cake making business that was pioneered during the pandemic and is still running today. Here's the transcript of the interview:

*Well, it just happened at that time accidentally, it was before 2020 pandemic and it was still rare that people selling online before 2020 for bread and cakes. So, it's like starting first for this cake shop and it is still running until now. This cake shop has had its regular buyers who keep buying regularly.*

S5 is an entrepreneur in the culinary field and also said the same thing that selling requires perseverance if you want to succeed. The subjects put forward the following:

*13 years I have been running this business. From the beginning, I used to work alone, then now have many employees and even have branches. This business has already had demand with many orders every night.*

##### Entrepreneurial passion

Pioneering a business is not an easy way to do. It definitely takes time to run the business especially if it is a start up business. Individuals need to learn how to manage resources. Cardon et al, 2009 mentioned

that entrepreneurial passion is related with having positive feeling in entrepreneurial activities involvement that is connected with significative and prominent to the entrepreneurial self- identification. This construct is mentioned by 3 subjects namely S1, S2, S4.

S1 who has been an entrepreneur in automotive business mentioned that the workshop that he owns has make him bersemangat dalam berbisnis. Apalagi otomotif menjadi passionnya sejak lama yang berasal dari hobi semasa remaja. Subject menyatakan sebagai berikut,

*“having an automotive repair shop is my dream since I was a teenager. I feel proud to see that my workshop is like this because I used to love racing so I can channel my hobby by having a repair shop for cars. Many customers ask me for advice and I provide detailed and reasonable input, so that the customer does not incur too many costs.”*

The same thing was also stated by S2, this entrepreneur working in the pharmaceutical sector stated that the pharmacy business he owns makes him even more enthusiastic about working. Even though he has no background in pharmaceutical science, owning a pharmacy business has made him more involved in the world of medicines and medical devices. S2 put it as follows, “I have tried various businesses, but this pharmaceutical business has made me even more interested in exploring it. I can employ pharmacists and to manage a business I study management knowledge on how to manage finances, employee. Well..i’m proud of myself even tough not having education background in pharmacy I can still run a pharmacy business”.

S4 also identifies entrepreneurial passion as she pioneers this bakery shop incidentally. Having her own bakery was a success for her since she started this by accepting orders from the neighborhood. She is also happy knowing that the cake she produce can have repeat orders. She has become very enthusiast making other variance of bread, cake. This is mentioned in the interview, “I feel happy and proud to see my cakes ordered by people around my environment. At first, it was not intentional to receive orders, then now I often receive orders and even able to open a bakery.”

#### **Perseverance of effort**

Other dimension which is so related with grit of entrepreneur is Perseverance of effort. This dimension can be described as persistently giving effort to manage obstacles and problems related with business. Subjects have shown some indicators related with perseverance. the description is mentioned as follow:

#### **Learning the specific field of business venture**

Astamoen (2005) explained that the scope of Entrepreneurship relates with the knowledge, technical skills, attitude of self-motivated individuals leading a process in presiding with practice and experience. This aspect was put forward by 3 subjects, namely (S1, S4, S5). S1 stated, "I'm still determined to learn entrepreneurship, I've taken care of administration and so on. I also need to learn more intensely about automotive, how to do it by attending seminars and joining automotive entrepreneur associations.". learning specifically how to manage business venture , such as how to manage financial, human resource assets.

Other Subject (S4) , owner of a bakery, also mentioned about learning specifically how to manage business by pursuing higher degree in management science and learning how to bake. This is mentioned as follow:

*After leaving to work in a company, I switched to opening a business by opening. Then I had the thought that if I only graduated from high school, of course I don't understand managing a business. Finally, I took the initiative to continue school again. Another thing is that I learned about baking in order to innovate to develop cake and cookie products that are more in demand by consumers.*

S5, an owner of culinary business, also mentioned that learning is important to succeed in culinary business. This is mentioned as follow:

*"My dream is that I want to be a successful person in my family so after graduating from high school, I learnt by taking a diploma in economics to learn how to manage a business. I started this culinary business within 5 years so that I learned quite a lot about people's taste buds related to food that is a favorite of the people of Surabaya.”*

#### **Handling difficult time**

In business, an entrepreneur will definitely face problems not only related to operations, but also related to HR, finance, and others. but with his Grit, he will try to deal with the problems he faces. Entrepreneurs can use existing information about business failures that occur to improve their ability to

manage their business, effectively in the form of knowledge to improve the consequences of events or risks that occur in the business, by providing appropriate decisions and actions (Shepherd, 2003). This construct is mentioned by 3 subject, namely S1, S2, S3

Subject (S1) who owns an automotive business shows efforts in dealing with financial problems he faced during the pandemic. He temporarily reduced the number of employees he had and provided services to come to the house. This is stated as follows:

*At that time the pandemic and business were a bit stagnant because not many people used car service services. Moreover, people also rarely go out of the house, the streets become deserted. The first 6 months of the pandemic were quite tough for me because the salary of employees was quite draining on finances.*

The same thing was also stated by S2 who opened a pharmacy. He once faced pharmacy operational problems where there were limited employees to maintain the pharmacy. Here's the information obtained:

*In the past, I still didn't have any employees, only my wife and I took turns guarding the pharmacy, then after a few months I recruited 2 people. At that time, I didn't expect to be able to hire and provide income to someone*

Related to difficult times, S3 also explained what he did so that her business could run. Here's the transcript of the interview:

*In the past, I have faced problems related to BPOM complaints. There was an investigation about the mercury content which had quite an impact on the number of skincare products I produced. The problem did not hamper operations too much, instead I became motivated to solve this so that it would not be prolonged.*

S5 is also having difficult time in managing the business. It is mentioned that he handled all the process started from buying fresh ingredients, cook then serve it. He stated, "When I first started selling, I did everything myself with my wife. Starting from buying raw materials, cooking, serving and even washing dishes. It is indeed difficult but we did it for almost 2 years.

### **Entrepreneurial effort intensity**

Being an entrepreneur relates a lot with creative and administrative jobs in the process of managing the business. Uy et al. (2015) mentioned that intensive effort in Entrepreneurship is about how often an entrepreneur conducts hard work not only on jobs related with creativity but also on administrative jobs. The result in this study also mentioned about creative and administrative jobs handled by an entrepreneur. these were mentioned by 3 subjects (S1, S3, S5).

S1 mentioned that as entrepreneur, he often makes creative jobs that have not been implemented in his business. this is mentioned as follow:

*My business is automotive so I have to update with automotive developments. I see those in other workshops, if they are not in my place, I apply them, for example now for booking can be via online, so we must be able to follow the existing trend.*

Other creative jobs are implemented as mentioned by S3 who is involved in skincare field. Nowadays many promotion is conducted online by making short video with only less than 3 minutes duration. As mentioned, "I asked my promotion team to make short video about our product, posted it in tiktok, Instagram, shopee video. These video needs creative idea and must be set regularly at least 10 short videos a week, well the video is only for 3 minutes maximum . It can be about customer testimonies, product unboxing ". Other task related with entrepreneurship is not only about creative task but also about administrative jobs. S5 also mentioned about administrative job that must be managed in running the business. S5 stated that, " I check the administrative duties of my subordinates, for example, when paying monthly salaries and overtime, then we must see the presence of employees ."

## **V. Conclusion**

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that persistence is the consistency of interest, the ability to maintain interest and resilience in trying and not being afraid to face challenges to achieve goals. In the research conducted related to the psychological aspects of an entrepreneur, it can be concluded that matters related to the persistence of an entrepreneur include the following:

1. Consistency of interest
  - a. focus on business fields. Subjects must focus on the type of business venture he/she has. Each type of business has its own characteristics
  - b. Entrepreneur passion. Running a business needs more than hard work. It needs passion to complete all tasks
2. Perseverance of effort. It is about persistently giving effort to manage obstacles and problems related with business
  - a. Learning the specific field of business venture. Entrepreneurs have to learn how to manage the business and specifically about the field of business he /she manage such as automotive, culinary, pharmacy.
  - b. Handling difficult time. Hard time is not an obstacle for entrepreneur to run the business. Obstacles must be handled since it is not lasting forever.
  - c. Entrepreneurial effort intensity. Entrepreneurs have to show more intense activities related with creativity and administrative jobs

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