



**An examination of the perceptions of entrepreneurs
in Hong Kong: An insight into personal success
through business activities.**

**HO, Po Kee Perry MBA
C3027227**

**UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
SEPTEMBER 2011**

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Business and Law in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Business Administration
(DBA)

DECLARATION

I have read and understood the University of Newcastle's Policy for the Prevention and Detection of Plagiarism Main Policy Document, which is located at: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/academic/general/plagiarism.htm>

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this dissertation is my own work, all sources have been properly acknowledged, and the dissertation contains no plagiarism.

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this dissertation project is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

Perry Ho

Perry Po Kee Ho

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the support of my professors, research participants, my family and friends. Without the generous contribution of their valuable time, effort and encouragement, this dissertation will not be completed.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to both of my supervisors. Dr. Gary Mankelow provided guidance and support for the first half of the project. After the data collection phase of the project, this dissertation project was halted for a few years due to an unusual circumstance that happened in my life. Dr. Lisa Barnes led the second half and guided me to the completion of this dissertation. I am very grateful for their valuable comments, suggestions and recommendation.

I am also grateful for the entrepreneurs who took precious time out of their busy schedule to participate in this research. Their answers to my interview questions provided insightful data to my research. I have been greatly inspired by their experience, advice and recommendations. I am most thankful for their contribution and effort to make this world a better place.

Finally, I want to thank my wife, my children, my parents and my friends for their patience, support and understanding. They have provided great help and encouragement during the last few years.

Last but not least, I thank God who gives me the strength, courage and faith to accomplish something that is simply not possible to do on my own.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF TABLES.....	viii
TABLE OF FIGURES.....	x
ABSTRACT.....	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 The Entrepreneurial Environment in Hong Kong	1
1.3 Personal Success	3
1.4 The Research Problem.....	6
1.5 Research Objective and Questions	6
1.6 Justification.....	11
1.7 Research Methodology	11
1.8 Thesis Outline.....	13
1.9 Limitations	14
1.10 Conclusion	14
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	16
2.1 Introduction.....	16
2.2 Entrepreneurs	16
2.3 The role of the Entrepreneur.....	17
2.4 An Entrepreneurial Economy	18
2.5 Factors Contributing to the Entrepreneurial Environment	21
2.5.1 Political Factors	23
2.5.2 Government Policy	24
2.5.3 Cultural Factors	24
2.6 Perception of Success: A Western View	25
2.7 Motivation.....	29
2.8 Factors for Success	30
2.8.1 Characteristics of Successful Entrepreneurs.....	30
2.8.1.1 Traits Theory (Digman 1990).....	32
2.8.2 Business Practices and Strategies	32
2.8.3 Start Ups	33
2.9 Overview of Leadership Theories	33

2.9.1	Great Man Theories	34
2.9.2	Trait Theories.....	34
2.9.3	Behaviorist Theories	34
2.9.4	Situational Leadership	34
2.9.5	Contingency Theory	35
2.9.6	Transactional Theory	35
2.9.7	Transformational Theory	35
2.10	Hong Kong's Style of Entrepreneurship and Business Strategy	36
2.10.1	Guerrilla Entrepreneurship	36
2.10.2	Creative Imitation	37
2.10.3	Regional Arbitrageurship and Coordination.....	38
2.11	Purpose of the study.....	39
2.12	Research questions.....	41
2.13	Limitation and Key Assumptions	42
2.14	Conclusion	43
	CHAPTER THREE: THE RESEARCH METHOD	44
3.1	Introduction.....	44
3.2	Research Philosophy and Paradigm.....	44
3.3	Possibility for Bias.....	45
3.4	Research Design	45
3.4.1	Validity and Reliability.....	46
3.4.2	Case Selection.....	46
3.4.3	Number of Cases.....	47
3.4.4	In-depth Interviewing	48
3.4.4.1	Research Question 1	48
3.4.4.2	Research Question 2	49
3.4.4.3	Research Question 3	50
3.5	Data collection Plan and Development.....	51
3.5.1	Stage One Research	52
3.5.2	Pilot Case Study.....	52
3.5.3	Stage Two Research	53
3.6	Analysis	54
3.7	Limitations and Key Assumptions of Research Methodology and Design..	55
3.8	Conclusion	56

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	57
4.1 Introduction to Findings	57
4.2 Entrepreneur A.....	58
4.3 Entrepreneur B.....	62
4.4 Entrepreneur C.....	66
4.5 Entrepreneur D.....	70
4.6 Entrepreneur E.....	74
4.7 Entrepreneur F	78
4.8 Entrepreneur G.....	81
4.9 Analysis	85
4.9.1 Sociability	85
4.9.2 Agreeableness	86
4.9.3 Conscientiousness.....	87
4.9.4 Emotional stability.....	88
4.9.5 Openness to experience	89
4.10 Concluding Remarks	89
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS	91
5.1 Introduction of Findings	91
5.2 Research Questions.....	91
5.2.1 Research Question 1	91
5.2.1.1 High acceptance of service or product.....	92
5.2.1.2 Personal Gratification	93
5.2.1.3 Sense of Pride and Leadership.....	93
5.2.2 Research Question 2	95
5.2.2.1 Knowledge.....	95
5.2.2.2 Spiritualism.....	96
5.2.2.3 Family Support	97
5.2.3 Research Question 3	98
5.2.3.1 Knowledge.....	98
5.2.3.2 Technologies.....	99
5.2.3.3 Mentoring and Teamwork	100
5.3 Conceptual Framework from Research	101
5.4 Discussion of Results from Digman Analysis	102
5.4.1 Sociability	103

5.4.2	Agreeableness	104
5.4.3	Conscientiousness	104
5.4.4	Emotional Stability	107
5.4.5	Open to experiences.....	107
5.5	PAST Model	110
5.6	Overall Conclusions.....	111
5.7	Implications and Future Research	113
5.8	Limitations	114
5.9	Recommendations.....	115
5.10	Conclusions	118
	REFERENCES	119
	Appendix A - List of Potential Participants.....	139
	Appendix B - Interview Protocol, Research Questions and Interview Questions..	140
	Appendix C - Information Letter, Information Statement and Participant Consent Form.....	140

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1.2 Small Medium Enterprise (SME) verse Large Business	9
Table 2.1 SMEs v Large Business Characteristics	19
Table 3.1 Research Question One Interview Questions	49
Table 3.2 Research Question Two Interview Questions	50
Table 3.3 Research Question Three Interview Questions	51
Table 4.1 Summary of interviewees showing industries and gender	58
Table 4.2.1 Research Question One Interview Questions Entrepreneur A	60
Table 4.2.2 Research Question Two Interview Questions Entrepreneur A.....	60
Table 4.2.3 Research Question Three Interview Questions Entrepreneur A.....	61
Table 4.2.4 Analysis of Traits: Entrepreneur A.....	62
Table 4.3.1 Research Question One Interview Questions Entrepreneur B.....	64
Table 4.3.2 Research Question Two Interview Questions Entrepreneur B.....	64
Table 4.3.3 Research Question Three Interview Questions Entrepreneur B.....	65
Table 4.3.4 Analysis of Traits: Entrepreneur B.....	66
Table 4.4.1 Research Question One Interview Questions Entrepreneur C.....	68
Table 4.4.2 Research Question Two Interview Questions Entrepreneur C.....	68
Table 4.4.3 Research Question Three Interview Questions Entrepreneur C.....	69
Table 4.4.4 Analysis of Traits: Entrepreneur C.....	69
Table 4.5.1 Research Question One Interview Questions Entrepreneur D	72
Table 4.5.2 Research Question Two Interview Questions Entrepreneur D.....	72
Table 4.5.3 Research Question Three Interview Questions Entrepreneur D.....	73
Table 4.5.4 Analysis of Traits: Entrepreneur D.....	74
Table 4.6.1 Research Question One Interview Questions Entrepreneur E.....	76
Table 4.6.2 Research Question Two Interview Questions Entrepreneur E.....	76
Table 4.6.3 Research Question Three Interview Questions Entrepreneur E	77
Table 4.6.4 Analysis of Traits: Entrepreneur E	77
Table 4.7.1 Research Question One Interview Questions Entrepreneur F.....	79
Table 4.7.2 Research Question Two Interview Questions Entrepreneur F	80
Table 4.7.3 Research Question Three Interview Questions Entrepreneur F	80
Table 4.7.4 Analysis of Traits: Entrepreneur F	81
Table 4.8.1 Research Question One Interview Questions Entrepreneur G	83
Table 4.8.2 Research Question Two Interview Questions Entrepreneur G.....	84
Table 4.8.3 Research Question Three Interview Questions Entrepreneur G.....	84

Table 4.8.4 Analysis of Traits: Entrepreneur G.....	85
Table 4.9.1 Sociability	86
Table 4.9.2 Agreeableness	87
Table 4.9.3 Conscientiousness.....	88
Table 4.9.4 Emotional Stability	88
Table 4.9.5 Openness to experience	89
Table 5.4 Digman (1990) Trait Analysis.....	103

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Outline of chapters for dissertation	13
Figure 2.1 Large versus SME Organisational Structures	18
Figure 2.12 Conceptual Framework	42
Figure 5.3 Conceptual Framework	102
Figure 5.5 PAST Model.....	111

ABSTRACT

Hong Kong is seen as a world leader in building and developing its economy and entrepreneurs have a unique status in Hong Kong. These entrepreneurs constitute a majority of businesses and employ a significant part of the population and thus are vital for the economy of Hong Kong. This dissertation looks into and studies this phenomenon to evaluate the various components of the success of these entrepreneurs and to draw conclusions that will benefit the educators, the legislators as well as the new entrants wishing to become entrepreneurs.

Most of the available literature on this topic of entrepreneurship treats the subject without specifics so that not much is revealed about the psyche of the Hong Kong entrepreneurs. This research includes interviewing seven successful Hong Kong entrepreneurs and attempts to find their reasons for success.

In accordance with Digman's (1990) conceptualization of entrepreneurial traits the seven candidates also show their perceptions and achievements of success based on sociability, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience. It can be found that each may demonstrate some factors of success, but that each perceptions of success is different, as is their sense of achievement, showing that the personal perceptions of success of the Hong Kong Entrepreneur are wide and varied.

It has been found that the main source of entrepreneurial success in Hong Kong is of very complex origin. While the normal rules of sound business principles, as found in the Western business world, are a necessity, a large part of the success is attributed to exceptional leadership qualities. Leadership in the East has connotations of deep respect for all sections of the society and based on Confucian principles of kindness and contributions quite different from that of the West. The Hong Kong entrepreneur seems to succeed when they are able to blend the best qualities of the East and the West. Based on the research outcomes, the PAST model has been developed to assist Hong Kong Entrepreneurs of the future.