Habitus that Leads Mama to Entrepreneurs: The Case Studies of Three Japanese Women Entrepreneurs

by Atsushi Kato and Eriko Miyake

What kinds of habituses lead Japanese mamas to entrepreneurs? We defined habitus as one's embodied disposition which influences the actions that an individual take and the habituses are acquired daily life not only in childhood(family habitus) but also in business and/or housewife life(non-family habitus). We confirmed that habituses have raised affirmative disposition for entrepreneurship and have positive effects to acquire critical skills. Average Japanese women have strong fear of failure and do not think entrepreneurship as a good career choice. But the three women raised at the self-employers' family have acquired the critical habituses for entrepreneurship naturally in her childhood. Our study implicates that the preference for entrepreneurs would be different individually among Japanese women. In other words, the intensive entrepreneurs training for selected high potential group would be effective.

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Introduction

What kinds of habituses lead Japanese mamas to entrepreneurs? Habitus is originally defined as “a durable, transposable system of definitions' acquired initially by the young child in the home as a result of the conscious and unconscious practices of her/his family” （Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992）. Bourdieu refers that habitus is among embodied cultural capital. In this article we think that habitus influences the actions to acquire human capital and that habituses are acquired not only in childhood (family habitus) but also in business and/or housewife life(non-family habitus).

As the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) reports, the entrepreneurial process starts with the involvement of potential entrepreneurs who believe they possess the capability to start a business, see new business opportunities and would not be dissuaded from doing so or fear of failing. In other words, they hold the entrepreneurial attitude (EA). In the GEM 2014 report, individual perception research, in comparison with the other innovation-driven economies, Japanese perceive less business opportunities (8 percent), capabilities(13 percent), and have stronger fear of failure (49 percent) when it comes to starting their own business. And only 31 percent of Japanese citizen think entrepreneurship as a good career choice.

In Japan, women constitute no more than 32 percent of total entrepreneurs, but the average income is smaller than man entrepreneurs and 90 percent of women owned startups have no employees(METI 2012). On the other hand, the field of everyday personal services, including eating, education support and living-related services, account for 40 percent of all female startups (METI 2012). As the personal services and products are often targeted at female customers, women could see opportunities in personal service market.

Research Question

As mentioned above, average Japanese have strong fear of failure and do not think entrepreneurship as a good career choice. We think that some habituses, which have been

acquired in childhood, in business career and in housewife life, could affect the entrepreneurial attitude (EA) and capabilities, as a result, it would contribute to create entrepreneurship(Figure1). Our research question is as follows. What kind of habituses could affect the EA of Japanese women? Here, EA consists of readiness confronting fear of failure, pride of self-employment and opportunities seeking.

Case Studies

We take the qualitative approach. We did the case studies of three Japanese women entrepreneurs accessing the female market (Table1). Note that all names that appear in this article are fictitious.

Akiko: Buying Agent of Costco and IKEA

Akiko is a divorced mother with 4 children. She is in her 40's and she starts business 8 years ago. Her business is the housewives' agent to buy specialty goods, especially from Costco and IKEA with web mail order. In Japan, rural housewives could not easily access famous specialty stores like Costco or IKEA, because these huge stores are usually located on the outskirts of big cities and they do not have mail ordering service in Japan. A is one of the pioneers who run buying agent for local housewives and now she hires Six staffs.

Her parents owned a catering business of Japanese dishes. After she graduated from a commercial high school, she had worked as a dental assistant for about five years. She married and quitted the job. She spent about five years as housewife.

Akiko had been seeking opportunities to start business in order to get her family living while caring four small children. As a buying agent, she had the risk of running short of operating funds, but the fear of failure is not too large because she had been raised in a self-employment family. Her parents had owned a catering business of Japanese dishes. She has affirmative disposition for self-employing and she is quick at figures. When she was a housewife, she sometimes gets small money through net auctions. She happened to know that

American housewives sometimes buy goods of famous retailers from agents and she thought there would be the same market in Japan.

The complement resources for her would be management skill and information technology skill. She accesses those through consigning specialists. As an ordering entry system from several web shops in different platforms is critical for the net business, she consulted with the municipal government as well as the ICT service firm.

Kaori: Tourist Service for Women

Kaori (in her 40's) is bereaved wife with 2 boys. She has been running Kyoto located local travel agency for women enjoying cultural, sentimental and memorial personal trips. She hires Four staffs.

Her parents owned a dyeing shop, the building of which is now her office. She studied tourism in vocational college and she had over 15 years' carrier in the industry. She had skills of designing tours and booking suitable flight for clients. While working, she studied foreign language in the university. She quitted job after marriage. But she got the skilled job at a tourist company when her younger child became two years old. Soon she was promoted to the manager and earned enough money. So her motive for entrepreneur is not money but self-fulfillment.

Kaori acquired the habitual mode of behavior for self-employing in her family dyeing business. After the specialist career, she had enough skills to start a tourist business. But she sought new market so as to avoid excessive price competitions among her former employers. She decided to seek woman "niche" market. She made business plans assisted by Kyoto Women Entrepreneur Training Workshop, which is founded by the municipal government. At first, she served as a travel consultant and offered arranging trips for women. In 2012, the deregulation of travel agent law came into act, she began to deal in local package tour around Kyoto.

She is very talented women but not perfect. So she has been supported by municipal government in the field of management.

Sanae: Storage Bag for Baby Carrying Sling

Sanae (in her 30's) runs the online shop for the storage bag for baby carrying sling production and sales. She is two daughter's mother and married. She has 12 staffs, excluding some 20 contract sewing partners. As her parents both employed by firms, she usually spent her childhood in her grandmother's house. Granma worked for a in-house sewing consignee. Naturally she acquired sewing skill and got into the habit of select beautiful fabrics and sewing any useful items in ordinary life. She went to the vocational college for dental nurse and worked for the dental clinic for ten years. After marriage she quitted job and spent about five years as housewife.

In her housewife days, she had been actively trying for babies. At that time she had the personal blog for getting pregnant. After she got children, she created the new blog for baby raising. Her blogs was very popular among young mothers because she sent plenty of information through her blog. She thought that baby carrying slings are useful, but without a child, the sling hangs about the lower abdomen. It would be neither beautiful nor safe. She designed some storage bags for the sling and sewed them for herself. She showed the pictures and the method. A lot of mothers pressed the like button on her page. But most of them said it is useful but too laborious to handmade.

Like the other housewives Sanae wanted to earn small money for her hobby and children's educational expenses. And she started a micro business. In this case, her sewing skill, critical to her business, is related with the family habitus acquired in her childhood. Other than habitus related skills, the web communication skill contributes to potential market research. On the other hand, her compliment resource is management skill and supported by her husband and the municipal government.

Concluding Remarks

We defined habitus as one's embodied disposition which influences the actions that an individual take and the habituses are acquired daily life not only in childhood(family habitus) but also in business and/or housewife life(non-family habitus). We confirmed that habituses have raised affirmative disposition for entrepreneurship and have positive effects to acquire critical skills. Average Japanese women have strong fear of failure and do not think entrepreneurship as a good career choice. But the three women raised at the self-employers' family have acquired the critical habituses for entrepreneurship naturally in her childhood. Akiko and Kaori have the affirmative disposition for self-employing affecting fear and fame of entrepreneurs. Akiko is quick at figure. Sewing habit contribute to form the capability of Sanae in apparel business. As for non-family habitus, Akiko has the disposition to frequently exhibit in net auction, while Kaori usually gathers information of female tourist market and deregulation. For Sanae, blog is part of her life, which could show the word of mouth in the cyber communities. On the other hand they lack some capabilities, for example ICT skill and management skill for nascent entrepreneurs. The municipal government could offer the compliment resources for them. In short, habitus could play the role of catalyst for stronger EA.

Our study implicates that the preference for entrepreneurs would be different individually among Japanese women. In other words, the intensive entrepreneurs training for selected high potential group would be effective.

Figure 1
Habitus and Entrepreneurship

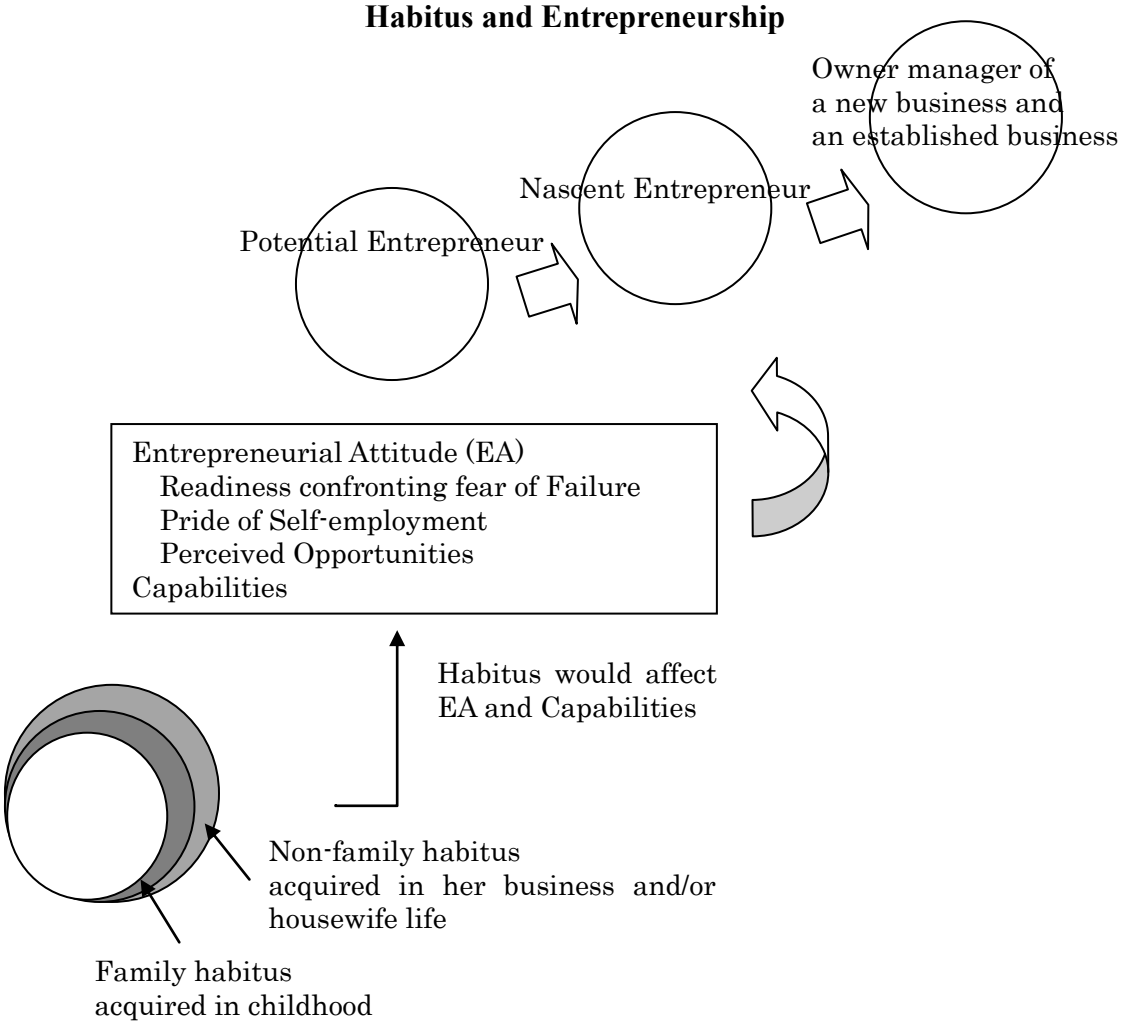

Table 1
Three Japanese Women Entrepreneurs for Female Market

	Akiko (in her 40's)	**Kaori (in her 40's)**	**Sanae (in her 30's)**
Stage	Established (8 years)	Established (10 years)	New Business (2 years)
Business	Housewives' agent to buy specialty goods (Costco, IKEA) with web mail order, 6 staffs	Local travel agent (Kyoto) for female market 4 staffs	Storage bag for baby carrying sling production and sales, web mail order, 12 staffs
Profile	4 children, divorced Parents owned a catering business of Japanese dishes	2 boys ,bereaved Parents owned a dyeing shop	2 daughters , married Granma had a in-house shop for a sewing consignee
Education	Commercial high school	Vocational college(tourism) University (foreign language)	Vocational college (dental nurse)
Job history	Dental assistant (5 years) Housewife (about 5 years)	Tourist bus. (about 10 years) Housewife (about 3years) Tourist bus. (about 6 years)	Dental nurse (about 10years) Housewife (about 5 year)
Motive	Get her family living with children	Self-fulfillment	To earn small money with little children
EI (1) Fear (2) Fame of entrepreneur (3)Opportunities	(1)(2)Affirmative disposition for self-employing [1] (3)Frequent exhibition in net auction [2]	(1)(2)Affirmative disposition for self-employing [1] (3)Usual gathering information of female tourist market and deregulation[2]	(3)Blog, word of mouth in the cyber communities [2]
Capabilities	Quick at figures [1]	Tourist business skill[2]	The act of sewing [1] Web design[2]
Complement resources	Web order system (Supported by the municipal government)	Management skill (Supported by the municipal government)	Management skill (Supported by her husband and the municipal government)

[1]Habitus and capabilities acquired in childhood. Family habitus.

[2] Habitus and capabilities acquired in business career and/or housewife life. Non-family habitus.

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