MOTIVATION AND ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR BEHIND THE SUCCESS OF TRADER WIDOWS IN INDONESIA

M. Rasyid Ridha\(^1\)
Ahmadin\(^2\)
Abdul Rahman\(^3\)
Khaeruddin\(^4\)

ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This article analyzes work motivation, forms of economic behavior, and success stories of widowed traders in Indonesia, especially in Sidrap, South Sulawesi.

**Methods:** The research was conducted with a qualitative approach using naturalistic inquiry methods. The data used consists of primary and secondary data, which were collected through observation, interviews and document study.

**Results and Conclusion:** The results of the study show that the motivation for widows in South Sulawesi to choose trading as their profession is the influence of the environment, where the majority of the population are traders, and the fast circulation of money. The economic behavior of trader widows includes distributing goods and utilizing profits for daily consumption needs, non-consumption needs, and saving for future needs, as well as for social activities and increasing capital.

**Research implications:** The results of this research provide an overview of widows who have long been considered weak women and are often underestimated, who actually have high work motivation and have proven to be successful in trading.

**Originality/value:** Widows should not be labeled as women who are weak and need mercy, but many of them are successful in developing businesses, including in the field of trade.

**Keywords:** Success, Trading, Widows.

MOTIVAÇÃO E COMPORTAMENTO ECONÔMICO POR TRÁS DO SUCESSO DAS VIÚVAS COMERCIAIS NA INDONÉSIA

RESUMO

**Objectivo:** Este artigo analisa a motivação no trabalho, formas de comportamento econômico e histórias de sucesso de comerciantes viúvos na Indonésia, especialmente em Sidrap, Sulawesi do Sul.

**Métodos:** A pesquisa foi realizada com abordagem qualitativa utilizando métodos de investigação naturalísticos. Os dados utilizados consistem em dados primários e secundários, que foram coletados por meio de observação, entrevistas e estudo documental.

**Resultados e Conclusão:** Os resultados do estudo mostram que a motivação para as viúvas em Celebes do Sul escolherem o comércio como profissão é a influência do ambiente, onde a maioria da população é composta por

---

\(^1\) Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. E-mail: m.rasyid.ridha@unm.ac.id
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9102-8487

\(^2\) Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. E-mail: ahmadin@unm.ac.id
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7123-5216

\(^3\) Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. E-mail: abdul.rahman8304@unm.ac.id
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6596-9504

\(^4\) Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. E-mail: khaeruddinfis@unm.ac.id
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4916-2206
Motivation and Economic Behavior Behind the Success of Trader Widows in Indonesia

comerciantes, e a rápida circulação de dinheiro. O comportamento económico das viúvas comerciantes inclui a distribuição de bens e a utilização de lucros para necessidades de consumo diário, necessidades de não consumo e poupança para necessidades futuras, bem como para actividades sociais e aumento de capital.

Implicações da investigação: Os resultados desta investigação fornecem uma visão geral das viúvas que há muito são consideradas mulheres fracas e são frequentemente subestimadas, que na verdade têm uma elevada motivação profissional e provaram ser bem sucedidas no comércio.

Originalidade/valor: As viúvas não devem ser rotuladas como mulheres fracas e que precisam de misericórdia, mas muitas delas têm sucesso no desenvolvimento de negócios, inclusive na área do comércio.

Palavras-chave: Sucesso, Negociação, Viúvas.

MOTIVACIÓN Y COMPORTAMIENTO ECONÓMICO DETRÁS DEL ÉXITO DE LAS VIUDAS COMERCIANTES EN INDONESIA

RESUMEN

Propósito: Este artículo analiza la motivación laboral, las formas de comportamiento económico y las historias de éxito de comerciantes viudos en Indonesia, especialmente en Sidrap, Sulawesi del Sur.

Métodos: La investigación se realizó con un enfoque cualitativo utilizando métodos de investigación naturalistas. Los datos utilizados constan de datos primarios y secundarios, los cuales fueron recolectados a través de observación, entrevistas y estudio de documentos.

Resultados y conclusión: Los resultados del estudio muestran que la motivación de las viudas en Sulawesi del Sur para elegir el comercio como profesión es la influencia del entorno, donde la mayoría de la población son comerciantes, y la rápida circulación del dinero. El comportamiento económico de las viudas comerciantes incluye la distribución de bienes y la utilización de ganancias para las necesidades de consumo diario, necesidades de no consumo y ahorro para necesidades futuras, así como para actividades sociales y aumento de capital.

Implicaciones de la investigación: Los resultados de esta investigación proporcionan una visión general de las viudas que durante mucho tiempo han sido consideradas mujeres débiles y a menudo subestimadas, que en realidad tienen una alta motivación laboral y han demostrado tener éxito en el comercio.

Originalidad/valor: Las viudas no deben ser etiquetadas como mujeres débiles y necesitadas de misericordia, pero muchas de ellas tienen éxito en el desarrollo de negocios, incluso en el campo del comercio.

Palabras clave: Éxito, Comercio, Viudas.

RGSA adota a Licença de Atribuição CC BY do Creative Commons (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1 INTRODUCTION

Living as a widow for some people or some cultures is a burden, a psychological one. It is not uncommon for widows to be the object of pity of the society, especially if she had to raise her children all by herself. Substantially, a widow is a woman who has lost her husband and has not married again (Blom, 1991). The Encyclopedia noted that the reason for a woman being a widow varies, the demise of the husband or divorce. Being a widow is a status born from a problem in the family (George, Omoniyo, Uche, & Shaibu, 2016).
The fact that the government takes care of the widows is concrete evidence that the nation cares about them. However, not all countries implement this policy. Women are generally considered the fairer sex; implying that they are not as strong as men (R. Ridha & Ahmadin, 2021). Therefore, when a woman becomes a widow, her fairness (or helplessness) seems to be more prominent. This view is shared all around the world, in almost every country. Even, during the presidential campaign of George W Bush and Al Gore in the United States, both candidates raised the issue of divorced widows’ welfare. The candidates of both parties (George W Bush from the Republic and Al Gore from the Democrat) promised an improvement in widows’ life through the increase in pension fund and social security for them (Rose & Cartwright, 2009). This shows that the economic welfare of widows is an important thing for the candidates. All around the world, there are at least 245 million widows, and more than 115 million of them are poor (Marris, 2013). Unfortunately, they suffer discrimination and violence from their environment. In many cases, they are forced to be marginalized group, trapped in poverty and prone to be the victim of violence and exploitation. This condition becomes a kind justification for pitying the widows. According to Cherie Blair, the widows are isolated from their ex-husband’s assets and properties and even kicked out of the family house. Since they have no money and income, the poor widows cannot afford to take care of their children (Parker, 2016).

In Indonesia, the government and the public opinion about widows is not too different from that in other nations. In the general perspective of Indonesian, widows are weak, helpless, unfortunate, and pitiable women who cannot be expected to participate in the national development efforts. With such discriminative view, the role of widows in society is impaired. The discrimination reinforces the opinion that widows are weak, although in the eyes of the law, a widow is a citizen with identical rights and obligations as other citizens.

In the history of Indonesia’s struggle to be independent, there was Malahayati, a widow from Lampung who fought against the colonial government. The death of her husband motivated Malahayati to fight. Her ability to lead people and her fighting spirit, Malahayati were able to mobilize the widows in her surrounding to unite and fight the Dutch colonial. Malahayati is an example of the fact that a widow has the same rights and obligations with other citizens, including in participating in national development. The data from Indonesian Statistics Central Bureau (BPS) shows that 60% of the total 9.4 million widows in Indonesia is poor (Statistik, 2010). This condition is worsened by the fact that the widows do not have access to social security. The judges that legalize their divorce only give a reminder to the ex-husbands to provide for their children. It implies that there is no government-issued regulation to warrant the social security of widows, save for the distribution of pension funds to widows whose
deceased husbands were civil servants, military personnel, and state-owned business employees.

To avoid the widows from public’s negative stigma, there are several areas in Indonesia that formed an organization to empower the widows. One of the organizations is the Forum Ikatan Janda Garut (FIJG/Garut - Forum of Widows Association) in Garut Regency. Its primary mission is to improve the living and to facilitate legal services for widows. It also serves as a means to change the negative image of widows in Garut Regency.

Another organization that works for the widows is Persatuan Janda-Janda Indonesia (PJJJI/Indonesian Widows Association) in Yogyakarta. PJJI has 1000 members, presently. Under the management of Armalah Foundation, PJJI strives to realize its vision, which is to generate independent, respectable, and dignified widows.

The independency of widows is also fought for in South Sulawesi, particularly in Sidrap Regency. In the past three years (2007-2009), the data shows that there are 1424 divorced widows in Sidrap area (Jufri, 2019). 80% of that number is divorce cases in which the wife sues the husband. Further analysis of data shows that the widows are distributed in each sub-district and have various activities or professions. Most of them generally work in the fields of trading, agriculture, and service. While at other places widows are considered weak, helpless, pitiful, and marginalized; the widows in Sidrap Regency live different reality. In this area, the widows are considered superior (compared to widows in other areas) and empowered; they are not discriminated in every way. They have the power to fight for their survival and their welfare. They have awareness, good work ethics, diligence, and motivation; not only to survive but also to improve their economic welfare.

Most of the widows in Sidrap Regency are traders, as indicated by their primary source of income, which is trading. They are professional traders, in the sense that trading is their profession, whether it is small-scale trading, big-scale trading, or distributing goods for trading. Working at Pangkajene, Rappang, and Tanrutedong markets in Sidrap Regency are 66 profit-oriented small and medium trading widows.

Considering the different condition of widows in Pangkajene, the researcher is interested to analyze the factors affecting the success of trading business of these widows. To specify and limit the focus of the study, the researcher formulates the following research questions: (1) Why do the widows choose the profession of trading? (2) How is the economic behavior of the widows in trading? (3) How do the trading widows develop social networks necessary for their trading business?
With the problems formulated as mentioned, the research aims to: (1) describe the reason(s) why the widows choose trading business; (2) outline the economic behaviors of the widows in trading; and (3) describe how the trading widows build their social network necessary for their trading business.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

From religious point of view, particularly Islam, divorce is something that Allah despises (Ahmad, 2003). However, in the case that a marriage no longer provides sanctuary and tranquility for both parties, divorce is probably the best course to take. Marriage essentially serves to be an institution of union between a man and a woman to provide stability and tranquility to their lives (Blankenhorn, 2007). Should this purpose be no longer satisfying in a marriage; a divorce is a wise step to take.

Observers argue that a divorce should be regarded as the end of marriage instability in which the couple then lives separately and legally acknowledged by the existing law (Wulan, 2019). Marriage instability is the primary factor causing a divorce. If the relationship between the husband and the wife has been problematic and has no possibility of reconciliation, divorce will happen. It usually happens to modern couples who are highly aware of their rights (Engineer, 1992).

Marriage in modern age has huge differences with marriage in the past. Family in the past, before education is widespread all over the nation, could last a long time. Marriage usually does not disintegrate so easily. Even though it usually begins with some sort of matched marriage, both the husband and the wife know very well of their rights and responsibilities in a family. In modern time, when people are aware of their legal rights, divorce is an easy way out of family problem. Divorce is a phenomenon that seems to have become a tradition in modern society.

In the perspective of traditional (cultural) law, divorce is an extraordinary event which becomes an important social and judicial problem in many regions (M. R. Ridha, 2022). This statement is supported by the data of the number of widows in every region. The number of widows in an area indicates the number of divorces in that area. For every case of divorce, both parties, the husband and the wife, must have strong reason.

Cherie Blaire reported that the nation with the greatest number of widows in 2010 was China, with 43 million widows, followed by India (42.4 million widows), the United States of America (13.6 million widows), Indonesia (9.4 million widows), Japan (7.4 million widows),
Motivation and Economic Behavior Behind the Success of Trader Widows in Indonesia

Russia (7.1 million widows), Brazil (5.6 million widows), Germany (5.1 million widows), and Bangladesh and Vietnam (4.7 million widows). Based on the data, it can be concluded that divorce is a social problem in many countries in the world. Divorce happens due to various reasons.

Cherie Blaire noted that a woman become widow because of the demise of the husband, illness, divorce, the man does not take responsibility of the woman’s pregnancy, being left by the husband, and war or military conflict. Meanwhile, the traditional or cultural custom defines the causes of divorce as follow: (1) one of the spouses passes away, (2) the wife commit adultery (although in some cases the violation can be redeemed by paying certain fine, which will void the divorce), (3) one of the spouses commits severe wrong-doing, (4) both parties (the husband and wife) agree to get divorced, (5) the wife is infertile, and (6) for the greater good of society (Latif & Abdullah, 2013).

In any society, a divorce can be achieved formally and informally. Formal divorce is a divorce legally processed and acknowledged by the court of religious affairs. The decision of the court is legal in the views of both the nation and religion. On the contrary, informal divorce is performed under the rules of religion. In this case, the country is not involved; which means that the couple is still lawfully wedded to each other. In Indonesia, the laws about divorce are regulated in the Marriage Law of 1974. The law states that a divorce, or the discontinuation of a marriage union, is legally performed through (1) thalaq divorce; i.e. a divorce declared by the husband; processed through the religious affairs court, in which the husband makes a statement to divorce his wife with legitimate reasons and submits a request for the court to hold a divorce hearing; (2) sued divorce; i.e. a divorce in which the wife legally sues the husband to divorce her, processed through the religious affairs court by considering the provided reasons (Rinalti, Syahabuddin, & Ermawati, 2020).

One of the effects of a divorce is psychological feeling of losing or missing something. It is a condition in which an individual is separated from something which previously was there, and then gone, either in parts or in a whole (Lambert, 1985). A divorce caused by the death of the husband, being left by the husband, or war, can cause the feeling of lost and sorrow for the wife. Being left alone without a husband is certainly a shock for a wife; particularly if she depends her security and social life on the husband.

People response to sorrow of losing in various ways, depending on their psychological state. Kaslow (Kaslow, 1980) categorized these responses in five phases: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Depression phase is the peak of losing. In this phase,
an individual can barely control himself/herself. The negative effect is that the individual becomes anti-social and passive in social life. This is a serious problem for society.

Due to their psychological response towards losing a husband, widows are often regarded as weak, even to the point of being marginalized by the society. Loosing someone whom she depended upon will make a wife feeling weak and uncertain. Moreover, women are considered weaker than men and need protection. It is not uncommon for a widow to fall into poverty and other social problems, including being the subject of pity and negative stigma from the society (Parker, 2016).

In Sidrap Regency, South Sulawesi Province, however, the widows are not considered weak and helpless. In this region, widows are strong women, in the sense that they are able to fight for their survival, pride, and dignity, as well as for their economic welfare. Struggling alone to earn a living does not make them to be considered helpless by the society. The widows in Sidrap Regency generally work as traders, from small traders in traditional markets to successful professional traders.

Why are many trading widows in Sidrap successful in managing their businesses to compete with, and sometimes surpass, the other traders? To investigate the reason behind this condition, the researcher utilizes motivation theory as the tool of analysis.

There are several factors motivating someone to work like the trading widows in Sidrap. The factors include good understanding and interpretation of their status and supporting system, the support from various parties. The second factor is their own need for achievement (Hardy, 1957). These two factors are the tools utilized to investigate the existence of trading widows in Sidrap because this group of widows not only survive through their trading business but also achieve success and prominent existence among their society.

Motivation or need to achieve is a concept developed by Alexander Murray, under the heading of need for achievement (N’ach) (Losier, Bourque, & Vallerand, 1993). Hardy further investigates the matter by focusing on theoretical concept of motivation to achieve (Buck, 1988). According to McClelland and Atkinson (Buck, 1988), motivation to achieve is an effort to achieve success by competing with a certain measurement of superiority. The measurement of superiority may be oneself, other people, or excellence in work.

Weiner (Weiner, 1972) notes that motivation to achieve consists of four components. The first component is to prefer activities of achievement and to relate success with skills and hard work. An individual will feel satisfied and proud of his success so that he will work harder to increase his chance to achieve. When working, he is more motivated by the wish to success than by the threat of failure (Heckhausen, 2013). The wish to success makes someone hold on
Motivation and Economic Behavior Behind the Success of Trader Widows in Indonesia

stronger and longer than the motive of avoiding failure. It is because he understands that failure is a part of success. When he is motivated by his wish to success, he will be more ready to accept failure.

The second component of motivation to achieve is the view that failure is caused by lack of effort. Individual with high motivation to achieve will feel upset with himself if his achievement is not as good as what he expects. He will regret himself because he feels that he should have achieved more if he had worked harder (Selvanathan, Selladurai, Madina, Rahman, & Shaik Dawood, 2016). The third component is displaying eagerness to work harder than other individuals with low motivation to achieve. This eagerness will ensure the individual’s commitment and excellence in performing his works. He will maintain high quality of work every time he completes a task, in order to achieve the best achievement and be ahead of others (Heckhausen, 2013).

The last component is a tendency to choose tasks with medium level of difficulty, i.e. the tasks that are not too easy and not too hard. It is because the individual with motivation to achieve is success oriented. His achievement is measured by his success. An easy task will provide no challenge for him, while a too difficult task will increase the chance of failure.

An individual will succeed if he has in his heart a desire or a dream. This desire is related with motivation and behavior (N’ach), that is the urge to work well, not to get social acknowledgment but to satisfy himself. Those with high N’ach motivation will work harder and learn faster.

Motivation and urge to work hard and work well is one of the cultural traits of Bugis Makassar people. Errington (Errington, 1989) notes that for Bugis Makassar people there is no higher aim of life but maintaining their siri’. Siri’ is the internal motivation that allows them to gather strength to work hard and give their all for a work or effort (Mattulada, 1985). Siri’ is a pure feeling (Wahid, 2008). The value of siri’ is a reference for action, including any action related with achievement in economy. According to Rahim (in Salman, 2006), Bugis Makassar people consider unemployment and lack of effort to work, in economic life, is something humiliating. Therefore, according to Salman (Salman, 2006), the value of siri’ motivates people to work hard to achieve success in economy.

In line with the culture of siri’ of Bugis Makassar people, the humanism view proposed by Rogers (Orlov, 1992) shows that human action and behaviors are centered in his self-concept, i.e. human’s perception about his flexible and changing identity as a result of certain phenomenon. People act to maintain, improve, and actualize themselves. In other words, an
individual acts to a situation in accordance with his perception about himself and his surrounding environment (Misbawati Ahmadin, 2024).

Ancok (Ancok, 2006) states that human behavior is a result of interaction between human personality factor and external factors (environmental factors). Therefore, human behavior in social setting needs to be understood comprehensively; particularly concerning the elements that motivate them to act or interact with other people and their environment. Weber (Weber & Kalberg, 2013) stated that behavior aims to achieve certain goal and is urged by motivation. Weber further noted that a social study that investigates social structure and infrastructure from the outside, without considering any inside story and therefore ignore the self-direction of individuals, will not be able to reach into the primary element of the social life.

With high motivation that the widows of Sidrap Regency have, it is no wonder that their trading activities are successful, even to the extent that it overcomes the image of helplessness and negative stigma usually assigned to widows. In addition to motivation, economic behaviors are also an important factor in trading. Humanism view proposed by Rogers (Granovetter, 2018) indicates that human behavior is centered in self-concept; man’s perception of his flexible and changing identity based on certain phenomenon. Therefore, human acts or behaves to maintain, improve, and actualize himself. An individual acts or reacts to certain situation based on his perception of himself and his surrounding environment.

Concerning economic behavior, there is a concept proposed by Swedberg and Granovetter (Granovetter, 2018), refers to the three main propositions: (1) economic behavior is a form of social action; (2) economic behavior is socially situated; (3) economic institutions are socially constructed.

According to Weber, economic actions or behaviors can be seen as a social action, as long as they focus on other people’s behaviors. This focus is given socially in various ways such as paying attention to other people, talking to them, thinking about them, or smiling to them. Further, Weber explained that an actor always direct his actions towards other people’s behaviors through structured meanings. It means that the actor will interpret existing traditions, habits, and norms in an ongoing social relation or interaction.

The atomized actor approach is based on the neo-classical economic approach, that trust is a social institution resulted from the evolutions of political, social, historical, and legal forces, and is considered as an efficient solution for certain economic phenomena. Abuse or misuse of trust should be avoided because the social arrangement has made it a high stake and costly risk.

On the other hand, a more socialized actor approach views that trust is a general morality in economic behavior. Therefore, all actions of an actor should automatically refer to and obey
the morality. Morality is considered as something general and universal in economic behavior. Trust does not emerge out of the blue. It grows from the process of interaction between the individual actors who have been engaged together in economic behavior for a long time. Trust is not a standard (unchanged); on the contrary, it is continuously interpreted and assessed by the actors involved in the economic behavior interaction.

Based on this outline, it can be concluded that economic behavior is an action related to the act of planning, organizing, and selecting activities to be performed in order to satisfy one’s needs. Therefore, the traders’ economic behaviors can be described as their actions to (1) obtain capital to procure trading goods, (2) select goods to trade, (3) select the place to do business, (4) offer their goods to people, and (5) use their income.

3 RESEARCH METHOD

This study attempts to describe the factors that enable the trading widows in Sidrap Regency to have striving business as well as high motivation and good behaviors in conducting their businesses. The method used to achieve that purpose is the naturalistic inquiry method. As the name implies, this method works from the assumption that the scientific inquiry is natural (as it is) and avoids a ‘set up’ laboratory-oriented research (Muslih, 2004). This study is conducted not to find correlation between variables; it focuses on qualitative and subjective data with ontological assumption that reality is social or plural in nature.

Cresswell (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) outlined that qualitative approach has five traditions, one of which is the phenomenology tradition. Considering the subject being studied in this investigation, the researcher implemented phenomenology tradition. This is the most suitable approach because the study focuses to discover the motivation and economic behaviors of trading widows based on their experience and subjective thinking.

The researcher selects Sidereng Rapang Regency, particularly the Central Market of Pangkajene, Rappang Market, and Tanrutedong Market as the sites of the study. The research object is 66 female traders who are widows. Out of this number, the researcher selects 20 widows as the research sample.

The data consists of primary and secondary data. The primary data includes motivation and economic behaviors of the trading widows, while the secondary data covers the general description of Sidereng Rappang Regency and the research sites. The main source of data is the trading widows who have children and trade in Central Market of
Motivation and Economic Behavior Behind the Success of Trader Widows in Indonesia

Pangkajene, Rappang Market, and Central Market of Tanrutedong. Other sources of data include their customers, other traders, the administrative staff of the markets’ cooperatives, the heads of the markets, banking institutions, government institutions, and other parties related to the widows in terms of their trading business.

The primary instrument in this investigation is the researcher himself (Mr Ahmadin, 2022). It is because the nature of the study requires active observation and participation. As a research instrument, the researcher puts himself in the position of being responsive, being adaptive, focusing on comprehensiveness, and orienting himself on the knowledge, process, and utilization of opportunities to discover the theoretical phenomena on the field.

Data collection is performed directly by the researcher [30]. The researcher will go to the field to collect data or information through observation, interview, and documentation. Data analysis will be conducted in four stages: data reduction, data display, reading and interpreting, and conclusion drawing.

Data validation is the last step of the study. This is a necessary step to see the degree of validity of the result (Moleong, 2007). Data validation is performed through: (1) peer discussion with people from the same profession; (2) triangulation by cross-checking the data with the data source; (3) in-depth observation on related matters; (4) member check on findings; and (5) continuous discussion with the advisory commission concerning the concepts found in the field.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULTS

4.1.1 Motivation

The motivation of widows in Sidenreng Rappang to choose trading as their profession is inspired by the condition in Sidrap region. The widows are motivated by other women who have also chosen trading as their profession. The widows realize that their status is an opportunity that can support the profession as traders because the profession requires a lot of time, patience, diligence, and ability to build social network. Another reason for their choosing to trade is because trading is a profession that allows them to earn money quickly. As Hj. SS, Hj. TR, Hj. MT, and NL admit, “to satisfy the needs of the family in a quick way, one of the most recommended activities is trading.” The circulation...
of money in trading business is fast, which allows the traders to earn money quickly for their daily needs. In addition, trading does not require a large number of physical laborers. These two factors suit the need of the widows to achieve success. At the end of each market day, the traders have their money. Trading is a relatively easy work and is one of the recommended professions in Islam. Islam even implied that eight of the ten doors of fortune (blessing) from Allah can be obtained through trading. Although some society put certain limitation for women to trade, Bugis tradition does not forbid women to work as traders. It is a profession that requires diligence, patience, and interaction skills. Social network, with other traders and with customers, is one of the requirements in trading.

Although many of the subjects begin their trading business after they became widows, Isima only continues what she had been doing since she lived together with her husband. For her, trading is not a choice made because she is a widow. Isima understands her position and status as a woman who plays multiple roles, has freedom and a lot of free time. This is the kind of understanding that widows have as motivation to do business. In addition, they are also motivated by their desire to actualize themselves and to prove that they can play the role of husband or head of household for their family. They expect to show the society, and particularly their own family, that being a widow is not an obstacle to achieve success.

### 4.1.2 Economic Behavior

In general, economic activities consist of production, distribution, and consumption (Griffiths et al., 2023). Economic behaviors of each individual depend highly on his or her profession. In this study, economic behaviors are described as various activities performed by trading widows in Sidenreng Rappang Regency, particularly the distribution pattern (mechanism) of goods and the profit utilization pattern. An interesting research result regarding the relationship between happiness and economic behavior concludes that happiness results from pro-social behavior. This research, which uses experimental and non-experimental methods, also explains that happiness encourages and is driven by certain behavioral tendencies. Apart from that, it was also explained that happiness is negatively correlated with selfishness and vice versa is positively correlated with trust. Based on this assumption, behavior is considered a strong determinant in constructing happiness (Lane, 2017).
4.1.3 Mechanism of Goods Distribution

Based on the goods being traded (Sanyal & Jones, 1982), the widows in the three Central Markets can be categorized into: (1) clothes traders, (2) mixed-goods traders, (3) imitation jewelry traders, (4) cosmetic traders, (5) fish traders, (6) rice traders, (7) fruit traders, and (8) traditional cookies traders.

4.1.4 Profit Utilization

Economically, the trading widows do their businesses with the purpose of gaining profit to satisfy their daily household needs (Berner, Gomez, & Knorringer, 2012). The widows perform their business activities everyday from five a.m. to five p.m. They use all resources they have, including energy, money, and time to ensure good performance and result of their work.

In an interview, Hj. Tr states that the daily profit she obtained from trading is used based on several considerations. The main use of her profits is for satisfying urgent needs, including daily household needs and education needs of her children. The rest of the profit is saved for future needs in several ways, including buying gold jewelry and saving the money in Bank BRI.

Hj. Nm admits that she often finds it difficult to allocate her income because she cannot know for sure how much he profits every day. Therefore, Nm is always careful in spending the money from her trading to avoid overspending or overconsumption which will affect the amount of her supply of trading goods.

It is different from the condition of traders whose goods are relatively sold out each day, such as TR. Traders who sell all their goods every day generally know the amount of their profit, i.e., between IDR 50,000 to IDR 100,000 in average, which allows them to regulate the profit quite easily. They can allocate the profit for consumption needs and for other needs. To save money, they utilize the income based on the scale of priority.

In general, the profit that trading widows earn is utilized for: (1) daily life (consumption) needs, (2) non-consumption needs, (3) saving for future needs, including for social activities, raising capital, and others.
4.2 DISCUSSION

The change of status of a women, from the status of wife to widow, has certain consequences for her. The primary consequence of being a widow, in general, is the need to play a new role as single parent; acting as a mother as well as the head of the family. As a single mother, a widow will be the one who earns for her family, the one who protect her children, and the one who participate actively in society.

Basically, working outside the house for women in Sidenreng Rappang society is not a taboo or forbidden thing. It is a common thing in the society for women to work. Many women play a role in society beside their housewife status; for instance, helping their husbands to earn a living or playing double role due to their being widow. For Sidenreng Rappang society, it is a part of culture that women work out of the house. This culture is the primary motivation for the trading widows to success in their businesses (Otieno & Muga, 2024). Although they have to earn a living by themselves, without any help from a husband or the society, they are patient and persevering in playing their new double role as mother and head of the family.

Manuel Pinto, a Portuguese, described Sidenreng as a lively country. He outlined the trading activities in the kingdom, visited by traders from all over the world, including Portuguese, through the sea route to Tappareng Karaja. Pinto wrote, “A big fusta (Portuguese long ship with rows of oars on both sides) may sail from the sea to Sidereng” (Pelras, 2006).

Usually, people are motivated by the desire to achieve success (Hardy, 1957). However, it is not so with widows. The initial motivation for widows emerges when they accept, understand, and interpret their new self-concept and status; other motivations come later. Hardy fails to see that people will be motivated earlier when they have accepted, understood, and interpreted themselves and their status.

In Granovetter’s perspective (Granovetter, 2018) of economic sociology, all economic activities performed by the trading widows are the realization of economic activities socially situated and embedded in the social network of the actors. However, Granovetter did not see that one’s social status may be an important determinant that affects social interaction in the effort to develop social relationship; which in turn will affect economic action.

In their trading activities, the trading widows socialize and deliver satisfying service for their customers. Socializing and delivering satisfying service is necessary for the
widows to build and maintain social network and trust that have been developed with all parties that can facilitate the success of their trading. These parties include retail traders, government, cooperative organizations, other traders in the market, and customers and general public. This is in line with Granovetter opinion that the social network developed by economic actors will affect the economic activities; or in other words, economic activities are embedded in social network (Damsar & Indrayani, 2019).

The mechanism for distributing goods in Sidenreng Rappang has been going on for a longtime. It is because the mechanism is considered valuable or beneficial for both the retail traders (suppliers) and the trading widows. In this mechanism, the trading widows do not need to work too hard to find capital or funding for their businesses and the retail traders (suppliers) can satisfy the demand of goods needed by the trading widows. The mechanism is in line with Homans’ proposition (Johnson, 2021) in exchanging theory that, “an exchange occurs if both parties obtain benefit from the action, and the exchange will be repeated; if the opposite happens, the exchange will be discontinued and both parties will find other exchange behavior (mechanism) which is beneficial for them” (Molm, 2015).

Profit utilization, that has formed certain pattern, indicates that the trading widows (Bakut, 2023) follow the principle of efficiency and utility (Zhang, Bai, Su, & Balezentis, 2024). They expect that their actions in utilizing business profit will benefit themselves and improve their social status. Considering Skinner’s view that behavior is lawful, it is clear that the trading widows in Central Markets of Sidenreng Rappang Regency develop their behaviors in patterns, values, and habits as a routine.

The short-term goal of the trading widows is, commonly, to gain benefit or profit from the services they provide to others. Meanwhile, the long-term goal is to initiate changes in their lives; including the improvement of their social status. Empirically, the social status of an individual in certain community depends greatly on his/her ability to satisfy his/her daily needs. The better the service they provided, the higher customers’ satisfaction will be; and the greater their chance to improve their social status. This is in line with Max Weber’s opinion (Weber & Kalberg, 2013) that a decision to do an action is made based on the consideration of meaning or values of the action, guided by norms, values, and ideas on one hand and by conditions on the other hand. It is aimed to achieve certain goal in a certain way based on subjective, effective, and efficient consideration.
5 CONCLUSION

Living as a widow often result in negative perception from society. It is because people generally feel pity towards a woman who has been left alone by her husband (for whatever reason). The negative stigma from society leads to another problem for the widows; that is the low level of socialization due to their economic condition. It is not uncommon for widows to end up in debts or in poverty.

However, the opposite situation occurs among the widows in Sidereng Rappang Regency. In this region, widows have the ability to earn a living for themselves and their children, and to save money in order to improve their welfare. The main profession that widows in Sidenreng Rappang Regency takes to earn a living is trading.

The findings show that the primary factors that allow the trading widows to succeed in economy are their strong motivation and efficient economic behaviors. The main motivation for Sidenreng Rappang widows to choose trading as their profession is the influence of their surrounding environment. Women in Sidenreng Rappang Regency in general are accustomed to trading. It is not uncommon for a wife to help her husband trading in the market. However, the status as widow provides certain leverage in trading business. Widows have a lot of time which they can focus on managing their trading business. Another motivation for widows in Sidenreng Rappang to work as traders is the fast circulation of money in the industry. In trading, although the profit cannot always be calculated precisely, the daily income (profit) of the widows is sufficient to satisfy their daily life needs.

The economic behaviors of trading widows include distribution of goods and profit utilization. The activities of distribution consist of selling goods to resellers and customers. Based on the type of goods they sell, the trading widows are categorized into: (1) clothes traders, (2) mixed- goods traders, (3) imitation jewelry traders, (4) cosmetic traders, (5) fish traders, (6) rice traders, fruit traders, and (8) traditional cookies traders. Profit utilization is performed by allocating their funds (income and profit) in certain posts. In general, the profit the trading widows earn is utilized for: (1) daily life (consumption) needs, (2) non-consumption needs, (3) saving for future needs, including for social activities, raising capital, and others.
REFERENCES


Motivation and Economic Behavior Behind the Success of Trader Widows in Indonesia


Motivation and Economic Behavior Behind the Success of Trader Widows in Indonesia


