

## **Pure Values among Entrepreneurs: A Study on Successful Entrepreneurs of Perlis MARA**

**Shuhairimi Abdullah, PhD**

Center for Communication Technology and Human Development  
University Malaysia Perlis  
Malaysia

### **Abstract**

*Pure values are expected to be applied in all areas of human lives including the scope of entrepreneurship. Specifically, pure values are a part of the important component in the activity of entrepreneurship. This article attempts to explain the practice of pure values among successful entrepreneurs of MARA, Perlis ([Malay](#) for Indigenous People's Trust Council; commonly abbreviated as **MARA**) is a [Malaysian](#) government agency. The research method for this paper is mainly based on the application of literature review. In addition to that, a broad research in Perlis was also conducted by means of purpose sampling which includes an interview among important individuals like entrepreneurs and MARA employees who are in the position to provide related information and data. The collected data are analyzed qualitatively. The results of the research discovered that success enjoyed by the entrepreneurs of MARA Perlis is closely related with the understanding of pure values practiced along the framework of the entrepreneurs.*

### **Introduction**

The appreciation of moral values in the practice of entrepreneurship is part of the complete component for a person who wishes to be labeled as a successful entrepreneur. These values include the pristine characteristics that need to be assimilated in the actions taken by entrepreneurs in order to get a positive outcome. Entrepreneurs who possess pure values like innovation, creativity, oriented towards success and so on are able to trigger a momentum to react consistently in any kind of situation. According to Nawawi Mohd. Jan (1992), these positive values will shape a series of prevailing propensity that influence their effort and attitude in fulfilling the entrepreneurship claims.

Besides that, the ingredients of pure values in the practice of entrepreneurship can stir a high spirit within the individual. It is obvious that pure values are capable to stimulate the potentials of an individual's self-improvement and act accordingly towards a certain stimulus that he faces in order to achieve success (Zaidatul Akmaliah Lope Pihie dan Habibah Elias, 1997). In fact western scholars like Milton (1973), Inkeles and Smith (1974), Meredith (1982), Zimmerer (1996) and Bygrave (1994) have indicated that positive values within the individual entrepreneur are important elements and act as catalysts to the factors that contribute to success in the field of entrepreneurship. Specifically, the practice of pure values in the field of entrepreneurship stresses upon performance and optimal qualities to succeed in their respective fields. These individuals always balance the values of profit oriented which are pure values and not merely profits in business. According to Suryana M. Si (2006) in her research that she conducted; it has been found that among the fundamental value that exists within the entrepreneurs is profit orientation and not profit per se. For example, an act that refers to materials based achievement like willingness to take risks, adapting to current situation and demands and focused upon generating wealth. Another example refers to the fulfillment not oriented on profit making like the values of responsibility, creativity, respect and so on (Suryana M. Si, 2006).

### **The Practice of Pure Values among Successful MARA Perlis Entrepreneurs**

In the meantime, the practice of pure values among the successful MARA Perlis entrepreneurs has shown that the majority of this group is applying these values in their business dealings.

According to the statement made by Noraini Othman (Interview with Noraini Haji Othman (Vice Director of MARA, Dept. of Service and Management, Kedah. Before assuming the deposition, she was the director of MARA; Perlis) on 13.8.2009 at 3.00pm at her office. Based upon the experiences on the part of MARA, when assisting with the process of entrepreneurial development among the entrepreneurs, especially those of Bumiputras, successful entrepreneurs usually practice good values in their activities. On the other hand, unsuccessful entrepreneurs are caused by many factors; among them are their failures to abide to good values in the practice of their business dealings.

It is understood, indirectly, that these values that are internalized and cultivated by entrepreneurs profess themselves as agents or contributors to the success of the entrepreneurs. The absence of discipline when incorporating these values results in the entrepreneurs being easily exposed to negative matters which compel the entrepreneurs to be exposed to failures in pursuing their activities. Nevertheless, entrepreneurs realized that pure values are relevant in their practices but from the pragmatic point of view, there is still room for improvement to enhance and cultivate these values in their activities.

Based upon the observation of MARA, pure values like honesty, trust, clean, fair, responsible and so on are fundamental holds to the entrepreneurs as part of their characteristics to be recognized as successful entrepreneurs. These values are easily pragmatized by entrepreneurs and are aligned with their high religious consciousness. At the same time, other pertinent values that are associated with these entrepreneurs are diligence and discipline, endurance, susceptibility to risks, acceptance to modern technology, competent in financial management, possess adequate knowledge in the field being undertaken as well as a substantial business network and an ability to manage time. As previously described, appreciating pure values can give a positive impact in the process of becoming an entrepreneur.

According to Hasan Adli Hashim (Interview with Hasan Adli Hashim, (Head of Deputy Director, Entrepreneurs Development Unit, MARA, Perlis on 14.08.2009 at 3.10 pm at his office). Successful entrepreneurs who adhere to these pure values protect themselves and the activities that they undertake to condone with religious requirements and do not go against human legislation. To deduce his comments on this matter:

*“...values that are routinized by those who are closely related to the demands that have been endorsed by Islam. Due to the fact that success as described in Islam is holistic in nature that encompasses success from the aspect of material, correct behaviors, clean-cut resources, moral values and aimed at the pleasure of Allah. This manifestation of success is not only enjoyed on earth but is sustained for the hereafter. Generally speaking, the majority of entrepreneurs are able to observe the values of honesty, innovative and creative, industrious, respectable moral, responsible, committed to social responsibility and religion.”*

Therefore, it can be understood that if these values failed to be adhered by entrepreneurs, the consequent would be the loss of genuine entrepreneurship elements within the wellbeing of the entrepreneurs. The impact would be that the entrepreneurs will fail in his engagement as entrepreneurs. In its generalization, the majority of entrepreneurs are able to observe the values of trust, innovative and creative, leadership, quality services, risks takers, industrious, morally admirable, responsible, knowledgeable and socially committed to society and religion as a whole.

It cannot be denied that values that are observed by entrepreneurs seem to to be the contributing factors towards their success (Interview with Hasan Adli Hashim, Head of Deputy Director, Entrepreneurs Development Unit, MARA, Perlis on 14.08.2009 at 3.10 pm at his office). The matter has also been agreed by Noraini Haji Othman Deputy Director MARA, Service and Management Department, Kedah. Before holding the position, she was the director of MARA, Perlis on the 13.08.2009 at 3.00pm at her office.) For example, appreciating pure values can motivate towards achieving success and to guard behaviors from getting involved in negative activities such as misappropriation, breach of trust, oppression, cheat and so on. Entrepreneurs who hold strong to these values are responsible in character and trustworthy whether towards his organization, the employees under them, the suppliers as well as towards the financial institutions. Therefore, when all interacted relationships go well, indirectly it is capable of influencing a positive surrounding and is able to help elevate their performance as a whole. Basically, pure values among successful entrepreneurs under the observation of MARA can be summarized in the following table:

**Table 1.1: (Pure Values of Successful Entrepreneurs, MARA, Perlis)**

<b>Pure Values</b>		
<b>Fundamental Values</b>	<b>Soft skill</b>	<b>Moral Values and Ethics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks takers</li> <li>• Profit oriented and hard-working</li> <li>• Quality services</li> <li>• Stresses upon technology</li> <li>• Endurance and competitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Innovative and creative</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Responsible</li> <li>• Visionary or insightful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adherence with the demands of religion</li> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Moral etiquette</li> <li>• Ethical</li> <li>• Social Responsibility</li> </ul>

Source: (Information through an interview with MARA officials)

At the same time, based upon an interview conducted on 13 MARA, Perlis businessmen who were voted successful for the sessions 2006/2007 (5 persons) and 2008/2009 (8 persons) related to pure values, it has been discovered that all respondents agreed that these traits are part of the important elements in the practice of entrepreneurship. In fulfilling the objectives as an entrepreneur, an individual not only has to equipped himself with the basics of business just for the sake of making profits but also need to strengthen positive values in business dealings (Buchari Alma, 2008). These values which are appreciated complement the successful entrepreneurs to their perfection. An entrepreneur who commits himself to these values is constantly cautious in his ways and attempts to avoid elements or activities that are against religious demands and local societal norms.

### **Specific Values of MARA, Perlis Successful Entrepreneurs**

Basically, successful entrepreneurs hold tightly to certain specific values that are rooted to the system of religion or beliefs that are made of pure values. These religious value systems that are based upon religion consist of elevated responsible characters towards community institution. These values of community become fundamental agents towards the community's cooperation and consensus that are harmonious. Principally, entrepreneurship discloses value systems that stress upon responsibility towards community institution in offering its service and business. For that matter, specific values with the objective of doing good are very important to every individual entrepreneur to be appreciated and pragmatized in the practice of entrepreneurship. Based upon an interview with successful entrepreneurs for the session 2006 / 2007 and 2008 /2009, specific values have become their way of life as they summarized in the following table:

**Table 1.2: (Specific Values of MARA, Perlis Successful Entrepreneurs )**

No.	Entrepreneur(session2008/2009)	Specific values
1.	Entrepreneur 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Creative</li> <li>• Audacious</li> <li>• Patient</li> <li>• Diligent</li> </ul>
2.	Entrepreneur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed to task</li> <li>• Creative</li> <li>• Discipline</li> <li>• Keeping promises</li> <li>• Generous</li> <li>• Helpful</li> <li>• Is responsible towards the family</li> </ul>
3.	Entrepreneur 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving precedence to religious demands (a strong faith)</li> <li>• Thankful</li> <li>• Willing</li> <li>• Prayer and trusting in god</li> <li>• Risks takers</li> <li>• Humility</li> <li>• Keeping promises</li> <li>• Creative</li> </ul>
4.	Entrepreneur 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Is responsible</li> <li>• Lawful activities / transactions</li> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Attitude</li> <li>• Social responsibility</li> <li>• Employees' welfare</li> </ul>
5.	Entrepreneur 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Keeping promises</li> <li>• truthful</li> <li>• <i>Infaq</i> (charity)</li> <li>• Social Responsibility</li> <li>• Employees' welfare</li> <li>• Is responsible towards the family</li> <li>• Help and guide other people</li> <li>• Good management</li> </ul>
6.	Entrepreneur 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dare to take risks</li> <li>• Good management</li> <li>• Resilient and competitive</li> <li>• Diligent</li> <li>• Creative and innovated</li> <li>• A wide business network</li> <li>• Attitude and ethical</li> <li>• Honest</li> </ul>
7.	Entrepreneur 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Visionary</li> <li>• Creative and innovated</li> <li>• Capable as a manager</li> <li>• Generous</li> <li>• Attitude</li> <li>• Patient</li> <li>• Helpful to other people</li> <li>• Resilient</li> <li>• Social responsibility</li> </ul>

8.	Entrepreneur 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diligent</li> <li>• Motivated</li> <li>• Good communication skill</li> <li>• Keep promises</li> <li>• Patient</li> <li>• Negotiating ability</li> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Visionary</li> <li>• Helpful to others</li> <li>• Audacious</li> <li>• Ethical</li> </ul>
<b>No.</b>	<b>Entrepreneur (2006/2007)</b>	<b>Specific Values</b>
1.	Entrepreneur 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative and innovative</li> <li>• Diligent</li> <li>• Wide business network</li> <li>• Competitive and resilient</li> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Sincere</li> <li>• Helpful</li> <li>• Simplicity</li> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Ethical</li> </ul>
2.	Entrepreneur 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Good management</li> <li>• Diligent</li> <li>• Helping others</li> <li>• Highly self-assured</li> <li>• Resilient and competitive</li> <li>• Creative and innovative</li> <li>• Sincere</li> <li>• Discipline</li> </ul>
3.	Entrepreneur 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivated</li> <li>• Creative</li> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Prioritizing quality</li> <li>• Good management</li> <li>• Helping others</li> <li>• Diligent</li> <li>• Competitive</li> <li>• Ethical</li> </ul>
4.	Entrepreneur 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Sincere</li> <li>• Competitive</li> <li>• Patient</li> <li>• Helping others</li> <li>• Motivated</li> <li>• Visionary</li> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Ethical</li> </ul>
5.	Entrepreneur 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Infaq</i></li> <li>• Social responsibility</li> <li>• Religious responsibility</li> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Patient</li> <li>• Diligent</li> <li>• Keeping promises</li> <li>• Attitude</li> </ul>

Source: (Study of Successful Entrepreneur)

Referring to table 1.2 which reflects the opinions of 13 MARA, Perlis successful businessmen concerning specific values in the practice of entrepreneurship, literally, the values itemized by them cover the claims of pure values expected in the activities of entrepreneurship. Based upon these information, the frequencies of values that are favored by the businessmen are as follows: Trustworthy (10 times), creative and innovative (8 times), helping others (8 times), attitude and ethical (8 times), diligent (6 times), knowledgeable (6 times), resilient and competitive (6 times), patient (5 times), keeping promises (5 times), audacious (4 times), infaq ('charity' 4 times), fulfilling social responsibilities (4 times), good management (4 times), visionary (3 times), discipline (2 times), responsibility towards the family (2 times), prioritizing religious demands (2 times), care for employees' welfare (2 times), wide business network (2 times), motivated (2 times), commitment to tasks/work (1 time), thankful (1 time), willing (1 time), prayer and trust in God (1 time), humble (1 time), responsible (1 time), prioritizing lawful activities/transaction (1 time), capability as a manager (1 time), good communication (1 time), compromise (1 time), prioritizing quality (1 time), simple (1 time) and self-assured (1 time). These values that have been outlined seem to be the specific values according to the experience and observation of these businessmen from MARA, Perlis. The frequencies of these specific values gathered from the interview which were named 5 times and above were considered to have high frequency values, while values with frequencies of below 5 were considered to be low frequency value; according to the perspective of these businessmen. As a summary, the frequencies of these values according to the opinion of these entrepreneurs can be illustrated in the following table:

**Table 1.3: (Specific Values According to the Viewpoint of MARA, Perlis Successful Entrepreneurs based upon the Priority Hierarchy)**

<b>Specific Values</b>	
<b>High Frequency Values</b>	<b>Low Frequency Values</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustworthy (10 times)</li> <li>• Creative and innovative (8 times)</li> <li>• Helpful to others (8 times)</li> <li>• Attitude and ethical (8 times)</li> <li>• Diligent (6 times)</li> <li>• Knowledgeable (6 times)</li> <li>• Resilient and competitive (6 times)</li> <li>• Patience (5 times)</li> <li>• Keeping promises (5 times)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audacity (4 times)</li> <li>• <i>Infaq/Charity</i> (4 times)</li> <li>• Fulfilling social responsibility (4 times)</li> <li>• Good Management (4 times)</li> <li>• Visionary (3 times)</li> <li>• Sincerity (3 times)</li> <li>• Discipline (2 times)</li> <li>• Responsibility towards family (2 times)</li> <li>• Prioritizing religious demands (2 times)</li> <li>• Care for employees' welfare (2 times)</li> <li>• Wide range of business network (2 times)</li> <li>• Motivated (2 times)</li> <li>• Committed to tasks/work (1time)</li> <li>• thankful (1time)</li> <li>• Willing (1time)</li> <li>• Prayer and trusting in God (1time)</li> <li>• Humble (1time)</li> <li>• Responsible (1time)</li> <li>• Prioritizing activities that are lawful (1 time)</li> <li>• Capable as a manager (1 time)</li> <li>• Good communication (1 time)</li> <li>• Compromise (1 time)</li> <li>• Prioritizing quality (1 )</li> <li>• Simple (1 time)</li> <li>• Self-assurance (1 time).</li> </ul>

Source: (Study on Successful Entrepreneur)

Based on table 1.3, it can be summarized that the component of the highest frequency values that have been agreed by the entrepreneurs include the values trustworthy as well as keeping promises. Generally, these values seem to describe the characteristics of a successful entrepreneur or businessman. These values function as a main propulsion to entrepreneurs to act proactive and effective when expanding multiple efforts in the field of entrepreneurship. Besides that, referring to the other values that include audacity/bravery to self-assurance, the interviewed entrepreneurs seemed to consider these values as components of specific values.

### **Conclusion**

Generally stating, MARA, Perlis has succeeded in producing entrepreneurs/businessmen as well as to elevate the dominations and ownership of Bumiputeras (Malay and [indigenous peoples](#) natives in Sabah and Sarawak) in the field entrepreneurship especially in the state of Perlis. A wide variety of facilities and services has been provided to these entrepreneurs like education, guidance and training, research studies, advice services as well as financial assistance. All these aids that are contributed to the Perlis' entrepreneurs are meant to create a group of quality entrepreneurs who are able to endure and practice pure values that lead to the success of these entrepreneurs. On the whole, these successful entrepreneurs recognize that pure values are part of the important component that contributes to their success.

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