



Single Parent Households and Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Nearly a quarter of all U.S. children under the age of 18 live with one parent and no other adults (Census, 2022). The prevalence of this experience in American society tells us we should study what affects it might have on children when they become adults. The focus of this study is on better understanding the potential effects of living in a single parent household may have on the development of an entrepreneurial mindset.

Many factors play a role in if a child becomes an entrepreneur, but research suggests that there are several characteristics correlated to whether an individual chooses entrepreneurship as a career path. This project conducted interviews with entrepreneurs who grew up in a single-parent and those who grew up in multi-parent households to examine what role this might play in the development of an entrepreneurial mindset.

Interview Insights

- All respondents reported that their entrepreneurial experience was made more difficult as a result of being a minority.
- Most interviewees also identified what they thought are advantages for children not in a single parent household that could have affected them.
- All respondents report seeing gender bias in whether entrepreneurship is advocated for in households.
- Four of the five interviewees stated that taking the risk of relying economically only on their business was the hardest part of their entrepreneurship journey.
- Another overarching theme was that they accepted that failure is a learning opportunity and that it is inevitable for most. It's how you can turn that failure into a lessons learned.

Methods

In this study, I conducted five interviews with individuals of varying age, gender, occupations, race and ethnicity. The interviews were semi-structured with specific questions and topics to be covered but allow for exploration. Interviewees were recruited through my summer internship with Domi Station, a business incubator, and through the FSU Tech Fellows Station. Each interviewee was asked the same series of nine open ended questions for comparison. Follow-up questions were used to further explore each question's topic based on an interviewee's response.

The overall goal was to better understand their childhood and its potential influence on their career choices. In addition, what potential motivating factors in their life steered them toward entrepreneurship and whether their upbringing played a role.



All 5 interviews believed it's possible for a single parent to raise an entrepreneurial child

Interview Insights continued

- Every interviewee showed confidence that single parent household can cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset in children.
- Four out of five interviewees appreciated the independence of working for themselves and connected it to the independence of their childhood.
- Interviewees pointed to immediate family members having a significant influence on their mindset.
- Though interviewees reported family influence they did not received much guidance in their entrepreneurial career path.

Summary

Interviewees exhibited some of the same traits as other entrepreneurs; accepting failure as an opportunity to learn and understanding the risk involved in starting one's own business. They also exuded the ambition and passion of their peers. They reported family having great impact on their lives' mindset but lacked guidance as they explored entrepreneurship as a career path. This final point highlights the need for mentorship being at the core of entrepreneurial education and its power for vicarious learning for budding entrepreneurs.



References

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