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Success Factors Among Women Entrepreneur in Malaysia

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Abstract

The focus of the study involved exploring the success factors among women entrepreneur in the state of Kelantan, Malaysia. This paper further investigated to what extent several selective variables such as environmental dimensions, family dimensions and personal attributes are able to explain its contribution towards becoming successful women entrepreneur. About 300 respondents of women entrepreneur were selected to participate in the survey. For the purpose of capturing the required data a purposive sampling approach was adopted in the study. From the finding of the study, the results indicated that all the three selected variables are able to explain 30 percent of its significant influence of their contribution towards successful women entrepreneur. The finding of this studies provide some ideas on how to assists women entrepreneur to become more competitive and successful in their future.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurs play a key role in any economy. These are the people who have the skills and initiative necessary to take new ideas in marketing their product and make the right decisions to ensure the ideas are profitable. The outcome from risks taken has a great potential to increase economic profits for entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs are not necessarily motivated by profit but regard it as a standard for measuring achievement or success. As an entrepreneur he or she need to lead their business with creative and innovative thinking in producing new or improving existing products to ensure their business remain successful.

Based on the Census of Establishments & Enterprises 2005 by the Department of Statistics Malaysia, a total of 82,911 business establishments were owned by the women entrepreneurs. According to Sana'a Abdul Karim and Ilhaamie Abdul Ghani Azmi (2008), successful women entrepreneur are able to recognize opportunities, creative thinking, strong networking, adopt with changes, good communication skills, self confidence, learn from past experience and jump out from their comfort zones. The Malaysian Government has embarked on developing capacity building initiatives through various Ministries and agencies to create, promote and nurture more women entrepreneurs, in line with the Fourth Thrust of the National Key Result Area (NKRA), which is to develop 4,000 women entrepreneurs by the year 2012.

Even though various studies have been made to investigate women entrepreneurs in Malaysia, but the researcher do not specify their study and could provide explanation on how to sustain their business ventures and become successful. Hence, the focus of this study is to determine the factors that influence successful women entrepreneurs.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The number of women entrepreneur in Malaysia has increased in the past three decades due to emphasis on industrialization and growing interest in privatization, self-employment and business oriented employment. The popularity of business venturing steadily growing as the government of Malaysia seriously provide support and incentives so as the nation can reduce import but increase export thus creation a more favourable economic growth. Several studies on gender (Goffee & Scase, 1985; Bener, 2009) support the views that a confident, innovative and creative woman capable of achieving self-economic independence individually or in collaboration, generates employment opportunities for others through initiating, establishing and running the enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life.

Our formal observations and interviews among several women operating their businesses provide some interesting insight about the venturing. Some of them actively involved due to the reasons that a lot of opportunities remained unexploited since most of the product were been imported not only from neighbouring countries but a lot from other Asean countries. Some others prefer to be involved in business as it provide avenue for them to socialize rather then staying at home. On the extreme they have to be in business for improving their economic well-being. Similarly upon reviewing past literatures by Norudin Mansor (2005), Gnyawali & Fogel (1994), Vesper (1983), they concluded that among prominent reason for someone to venture is due to the propensity to enterprise.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the level of success factors of women entrepreneur, environmental dimension, family dimension and personal attributes.
2. To determine the relationship between environmental dimension with the success factor of women entrepreneur.
3. To determine the relationship between family dimension with the success factor of women entrepreneur.
4. To determine the relationship between personal attributes with the success factor of women entrepreneur.
5. To investigate the most dominant dimension influencing the success factor of women entrepreneur.

HYPOTHESES

- H1: There is a significance relationship between environmental dimension and success factor of women entrepreneur.
- H2: There is a significance relationship between family dimension and success factor of women entrepreneur.
- H3: There is a significance relationship between personal attributes and success factor of women entrepreneur.
- H4: All the selected variables are able to explain its influence on success factor of women entrepreneur.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This study focused on three areas which are Pengkalan Kubor, Rantau Panjang and Kota Bharu in the state of Kelantan. A total of 300 respondents are among women entrepreneur invoved in this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship

The increasing participation of women as owners and anchor persons in business has spurred the issue of gender in entrepreneurship studies. Prior to the phenomenon, efforts to differentiate a business as women-owned was least apparent since entrepreneurship has always been associated with men and masculinity. Hence, gender entrepreneurship has widely been used to refer to women or female involvement in business that generated by Adnan Alias (2004).

The concept of entrepreneur is very broad and a number of perspectives are applicable. Entrepreneur is an innovator or developer who recognizes and seizes opportunities. They converts these opportunities into workable or marketable ideas that bring values through time, effort, money and skills. They also assume the

risks of the competitive marketplace to implement the ideas, and realizes the rewards from these efforts (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2009). According to Madura (2007), entrepreneurs are the people whom organize, manage, and assume the risk of starting a business.

The Success Factors of Women Entrepreneur

The simplest definition of success is equivalent to continued business operations and the opposite, failure, means going out of business. According to Murphy et al., (1996) and Gatewood (2004) there are eight various success dimensions pertaining to economic performance that have been suggested which are; efficiency, growth, profit, size, liquidity, success or failure, market share and leverage. However, the concept of success is defined in terms of financial performance, such as growth, profit, turnover or return of investment, or number of employees (Walker & Brown, 2004).

The research has shown that successful entrepreneurs have large networks of casual acquaintances that provide ideas, access to potential investors and customers. There is a link between entrepreneurs' networking behavior and the growth of a firm (Ostgaard and Birley, 1996). Therefore, it is important to have large networks in order to be success in business. It is required to development of friendship and build social networking. Scholars such as Maidique and Zirger (1985) together with MacMillan (1994) had previously mentioned that success was defined as the achievement of something desired, planned or attempted.

Basically to be successful, women entrepreneur should learn from beginning phase when entrepreneur face the challenges and be a risk taker person (Adnan Alias, 2004). The reasons of successful women entrepreneurs are due to their personal qualities. The most important personal qualities required to become successful women entrepreneurs in Kelantan are self-reliance, exploit opportunities, innovative, creativity, willingness to take chances, personal drive, communication skills, people skills, web thinking, good negotiation skills and possess can do attitude in overcoming obstacles. Due to these qualities, they are able reach the targets and achieve their goals and be successful (Norudin Mansor, 2005).

Environmental Factors

Environmental factors can influence the successful of entrepreneur to remain competitive in the industry from the surrounding. Political factor especially influence when the system smooth, it can give a good impact to generate profit and at the same time it can contribute for economic growth. In term of regulation, there is the ways for the entrepreneur to get their license and permit to run their business legally (Norudin Mansor, 2014 et al.).

Furthermore, economic factor play the important roles to increase economic growth in country. Apart from that, government takes the initiatives in assisting the entrepreneurs by giving them the opportunity to enhance their business. For example, the government provides loan through its agencies such as Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA), Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM), and Small Medium Industries Development Corporation (SMIDEC). According to Kuratko & Hodgetts (2009), some other factor that significantly contributes to successful women entrepreneur is banking sector that provide loan facilities for the working capital as well as acquiring asset for the business operation.

Within the dimension of environment support, the financial community has established loan funds and training programs for enhancing women's entrepreneurial pursuit. In addition, other support service also includes public and private agencies that continuously established training and technical assistance programs for women business owners. With such structured program, it will provide knowledge, skills and abilities for entrepreneur to grow their businesses and make them more successful. All these efforts will eventually able to increase total number of women-owned firms (Davis, 2003).

Educational institutions also creating new opportunities for women who are interested to venture into entrepreneurship. The strategic collaboration between educational institutions and corporations have developed national and global marketing initiatives to better meet the needs of women business owners and to provide them with the products and services needed to expand their businesses (Jariah & Laily, 1995).

Normally, more of women from Kelantan are actively involved in small and medium enterprises and enjoy with great income. However, this is not reflected in the GDP calculation since in most cases the income is not reported or under-reported. In Malaysia, people in Kelantan are well-known because of their entrepreneurship capabilities and admired by many Malays counterparts throughout the country.

Family Factors

Another important dimension that act as the main motivational factors for promoting successful women entrepreneur could be due to the support of family members. The circle of family members that provide supports

and assistances varies accordingly to the the age groups of the entrepreneurs themselves. As mentioned by Hisrich (2008) the family support is extremely important and very much contribute to the moulding of entrepreneurship interest especially to start up any new business venturing.

According to Brindley (2005), the main factors which support the successful women entrepreneurs is come from family and friends. So, family and close friends play a very important part in ensuring the emotional stability of women entrepreneurs. These groups of associate members normally have the capacity to provide lessons and guidances in the business sectors that they had experienced earlier.

Positive attitudes of the surrounding community concerning entrepreneurship are likely to increase one's desire to engage in entrepreneurial activities and more specifically, individuals who experience a positive view on entrepreneurship among their immediate contacts are more likely to have greater intention to become entrepreneurs. For example, it is often recognized that among people that are highly motivated to be entrepreneurs are acquainted with the role models that encourage them to go into business. The propensity to venture will be much higher if the role models had been positively endorsed by close networks of family members and relatives. (Norudin Mansor and Azman Che Mat 2010).

Personal Atributes

Langan-Fox and Roth (1995) developed a framework of women entrepreneurs based on their personal attributes or psychological characteristics. Upon the observation, women entrepreneurs can be classified into three psychological types: the need achievers, the pragmatic and the managerial entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs differ on their level of motivations for achievement and power. Mitra (2002) classified women entrepreneurs based on several other key differentiators; motivator, acceptance of conventionally defined gender roles, importance of relational support and background of the female entrepreneurs.

In most cases personal attribute is often been shaped by the education of a person. Regardless of the profession, similarly within the context of entrepreneurship the success of any business operation is very much associate with the training and education experiences that someone had involved. In order for the entrepreneur to be successful, the related knowledge that had been accumulated is assumed to be always the key success that can affect their business performance, which will further support the business growth and certainly has positive impact on sustaining the survival of a business (Siti Haryati Shaikh Ali et al., 2004). Thus the importance of education in shaping, promoting, and ensuring success of business will remain intact (Lavoie, 1985). Nevertheless, most women choose to participate in a particular business sector based on their experience, interest and perceived ability to handle the business whilst some women choose a sector which they are more comfortable and believed to be suitable for them as a woman (Norsidah, 1999).

Business and risk are components of personal attributes that cannot be separated. As one component will be affecting the other, attitude toward risk-taking act as a pulling factor to motivate entrepreneur engagement in risk activity (Shane, 2003). Once a person involves in business it means she has to be involved with risk-taking as well. The favourable attitude towards risk-taking is relatively importance as it can give positive and negative impact towards the inspiring the success factor of entrepreneurs.

Another important component of personal attributes are very much associate with working experience. The journey of the experiences encountered will help the entrepreneur to face situations and challenges such as resolving conflict, how to attract the customer to buy products or services, or managing scarcity of resources. Besides that, it can also help the entrepreneur to improve the management system and control their organization by taking corrective action so as to implement several diversifications, strategically for promoting growth and profitability (Antoncic, 2006).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Framework

This research carried out to associate several dimensions that contribute the success factors of women entrepreneur in Kelantan. The framework in this study is based on the relationship between environmental dimensions, family dimensions and personal attributes as the independent variables while the success factors of women's entrepreneur in Kelantan to be the dependent variable. An overview of the research framework is depicted in the diagram below:

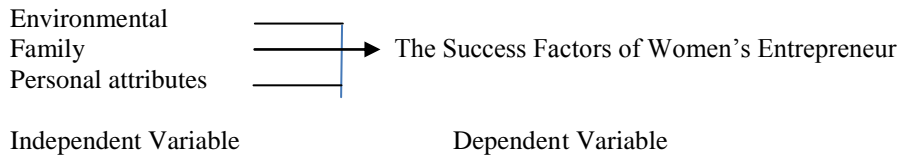


Figure 1: Research Framework

Sampling Design

The populations that the researchers have chosen were respondents among women entrepreneurs in the state of Kelantan covering three (3) areas which were Pengkalan Kubor, Rantau Panjang and Kota Bharu Kelantan with a total sample of 300 women entrepreneurs. The researcher used the purposive sampling technique in order to collect the data by distributing the questionnaire personally to the owner of the businesses. Purposive sampling which is basically non probability in nature though may not be able to get efficient representativeness of the elements in the population, found to be the best option for this study as it is very difficult and time consuming to get the desired respondents. Following the suggestion made by Sudman (1976), the minimum sample size within 200 to 500 is deemed to be appropriate for this investigation. Thus after several attempts we were able to collect 300 women entrepreneur as respondent.

Data Collection Method and Instrumentation

The study is highly focused on quantitative data. As there were several numerous studies done on entrepreneurship, it is much efficient to get better observation by using new or primary data by means of questionnaire. Through this questionnaire, the researchers selectively distributed the instruments to 300 women entrepreneurs in Kelantan. A questionnaire is formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternative. There were 5 sections in a questionnaire in which section A was designed to get information on the profiles of the respondents. Section B was made up of several items which elicited information on success factors; while section C, D, E were formulated to capture information on environmental dimensions, family dimensions, and personal attributes. All items measuring independent and dependent variables were measured using five-point Likert scale.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Frequency Analysis

Followings are the result of demographic analysis on the information of the respondents.

Table 1: Frequencies of Respondents Profile.

	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent		
Age	16-30	99	33.0	Educational Level			
	31-45	88	29.3		Master/PHD/PRO	6	2.0
	46-55	79	26.3		Degree	27	9.0
	56 and >	34	11.3		Diploma	32	10.7
Location	rural	154	51.3	Certificate	13	4.3	
	urban	145	48.3	SPM	155	51.7	
				Others	67	22.3	
Religion	Muslim	277	92.3	Marital Status			
	Hindu	3	1.0		Single	74	24.6
	Buddha	16	5.3		Married	220	73.3
	Lain-lain	4	1.3		Others	6	2.1
Race	Malay	275	91.7	Monthly Income (RM)			
	Cina	18	6.0		0-1999		
	India	1	3		2000-2999	104	34.7
	Lain-lain	5	1.7		3000-4999	137	45.7
					5000-6999	48	16.0
			7000 and above	7	2.3		
				4	1.3		

Based on the table above, in terms of the age group it shows that those within the age of 16-30 years old made up the highest representation at 33%. The lowest age group involved entrepreneur at the age of 56 and above which was 11.3%. In terms of location, 51.3 % represents entrepreneurs from rural areas, while 48.3% were those among the urban areas. Our observation on religious affiliation, the analysis displayed that 92.3% of the

women entrepreneurs were muslim and the rest were those from other religion. Muslim shows the highest representation because majority of the population in Kelantan were Malays and obviously there are muslim affiliated. Symmetrically similar pattern followed when the distribution involved in term of race, whereby the Malays made up 91.7% of the samples under the investigation. This is followed by Chinese, Indian and others.

In term of marital status, the tabulated results revealed that the highest representation were those already married with 220 respondents (73.3%), followed by single status 140 respondents (24.6%) and others status which is 6 respondents (2.1%). Mostly, women who are married is the one who being successful, because they gain a support from their husband and family, while those with the single status showed the lowest because they are lack of experience and lack of capital.

Reliability Analysis

As part of interim analysis, the procedure of analyzing stability and consistency of data had been executed so that items that had been formulated for measuring each variable can be assumed to be reliable. The result of reliability test is shown below:

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

	Cronbach Alpha Value
Success Factors	.750
Environmental	.682
Family	.712
Personal Attributes	.745

In assessing the reliability of data, several strategies such as assessing the possibility of collinearity as well as dropping the items that field to fit in within the variables was taken. With the Cronbach alpha value generated from the above analysis, a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. Thus, the Cronbach alpha value for success factors (.750), Environmental (.682), Family (.712) and personal attributes (.745). We found that all the variables are reliable for the study and the result is good as the range is more than 0.6 which indicates good result (Hair et al. 2010).

Mean Analysis

This analysis will furnish the findings on observing the level of agreement on the usefulness for each variable investigated.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std.Deviation
Successful Women Entrepreneur	4.0500	.46400
Environmental	3.9008	.52960
Family	3.9629	.55189
Personal Attributes	3.9733	.41980

Table above shown four items were developed in assessing the success factors among women entrepreneur in Kelantan, the mean value for these items shows that it's ranging from 3.9008 to 4.0500 with standard deviation from 0.41980 to 0.55189. This indicates that most of the respondents in this study were responding within the scale of agreed and strongly agreed to most of the items measuring the success factors among women entrepreneur, environmental dimensions, family dimensions and personal attributes.

Standard deviation used as a measure of uncertainty. A low standard deviation indicates that the data points tend to be very close to the same value. From the table, we found out that the data for all variables tend to be close to the nearest value. The value of standard deviation is 0.59260, 0.55189, and 0.41980. The standard deviation showed that respondent's answer not much vary or similar with another.

Analysis of Relationship and Predictive Explanatory Model

Pearson Correlation

Table 4: Correlation

	Environmental	Family	Personal Attributes
Successful Factor among Women's Entrepreneur in Kelantan	.441 .000	.394 .000	.487 .000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table 4 shows that all the constructs related to environmental, family and potential attributes are significantly correlated with Women's Entrepreneur at sig. value of .000. All three variables which are environmental, family, and personal attributes had moderate relationship with the success factors among women

entrepreneur as indicated by the pearson correlation value of 0.394 for family dimensions, 0.441 for environmental dimensions and 0.487 for personal attributes. With the above values hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2, and hypothesis 3 are supported.

Multiple Regressions

Multiple regression analysis has been used as a subsequent analysis after the Pearson Correlation coefficient measure. Therefore, we use more than one independent variable to explain variance in the dependent variable. As regression and correlation are closely related, it is predicatively linked to the independent. Regression analysis attempt's to predict the values of continuous, interval-scale dependent variable from the specific values of the independent variable .Moreover regression analysis is used in order to substantiate the fifth objective of the study as well as Hypothesis 4 as been stated earlier.

With the value of adjusted r-Square of 30% (percent), the success factor of women entrepreneur that can be predicted from the environmental, family and potential attributes. There is no multicollinearity in this study which is the tolerance value lee than 1 and VIF value less than 10. The research model that had been earlier formulated seems to be acceptable as indicated by the significant f-value of .000. thus hypothesis 4 of the study is supported.

Table 5: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.426	.232		6.147	.000
environmental	.182	.057	.208	3.195	.002
family	.102	.053	.122	1.914	.057
personal_attributes	.380	.061	.344	6.241	.000

a. Dependent Variable: success_AWE

b. Adjusted R Square: .300; Significance F Change: .000

The result generated from table 5 (observation based on the combination of three dimensions) was not congruent as compared to table 4 (observation on each single dimension linearly). Table 5 shows that two of the three dimensions significantly influenced success factors among women entrepreneurs in Kelantan were environmental dimensions (p-value of .002), and personal attributes (p-values of .000). Between the three variables above the most contributing factor toward success factor among women entrepreneur was personal attributes with the Beta value of 0.344. Based on the table above, the objective 5 of the study has been addressed.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The focus of this study is to establish whether there is a relationship between environmental, family and personal attributes with the success factors among women entrepreneurs. The result from the analysis suggested that if we were to observe the relationship of each single dimension, all the selected dimensions justifiable to play its role in ensuring the success of women to contionously survive and compete in the business that they are currently enrolled. The evidence displayed from the correlation analysis indicated that the strength of the relationship is only moderate. Thus it may be very useful to focus in-depth about several other components or items which may strengthened the relevancy of these dimensions so that entrepreneurship among women can be pushed to the next higher level. According to the correlation data, the most dominat factors that shape the success was personal attributes. This is because the fundamentals of becoming successful women entrepreneur had been acknowledge due to personal attributes. With the association of positive personal attributes, someone is more likely able to develop a good behaviour, self-dicipline, risk-taker and others (Zalinawati et al., 2014).

The relative importance of personal attribute had been further confirmed based on the findings generated through multiple regression analysis. The beta value of 0.344 strongly suggests its usefulness in shaping the success factors of the women entrepreneurs. No doubt other dimensions like the environmental climate do significantly played its usefulness. However, although previous literature do suggest the importance of family dimensions in supporting someone to venture into entrepreneurship, but its contribution in this study could be consider mix as reflected by the significant value of .057. The total observation based on the association of the three dimensions (personal attribute, environment dimensions, and family dimensions) nevertheless able to generate an acceptable model for making successful women entrepreneurs. As such revisiting back our research framework, hypothesis 4 is supported in this investigation.

As overall conclusion, environmental, family and personal attributes is important in order to promote successful business ventures among women entrepreneur. Obviously there could be more other dimensions such as the use of technology, human resource practices, and financial management need to be explored for supporting business success.

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