

**DETERMINANTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL
SUCCESS AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS
IN KOTA KINABALU, SABAH**



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UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

**FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND
ACCOUNTANCY
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
2016**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED AS FULFILMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS**

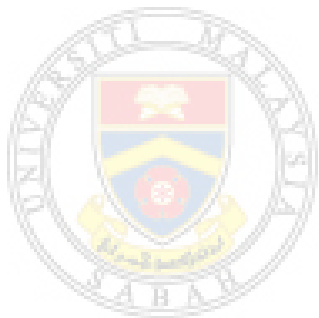
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UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
2016**

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material in this thesis is my own expect for questions, excerpts, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

27 April 2016

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Mook Yee Hui
27 April 2016

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the key success factors in determining the entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The key success factors for this study include family business background, motivation and; two of Hofstede's cultural dimension which include femininity/masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. The moderating variable of this study was demographic factors which consist of age, marital status, level of education, and working experience. The respondents for this study were women entrepreneurs operating businesses for a period of three years, located around Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The total population for this study was 454. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 330 and the total number of usable questionnaires was 216. Based on the results and findings of this study, it was found that only family business background contributed significantly towards women entrepreneurial success. Motivation, femininity/masculinity and uncertainty avoidance were not among the predictors in determining women entrepreneurial success in this study. Demographic factors were also found to have no moderating effect towards women entrepreneurial success in this study. This study through its research and findings has contributed significantly to both theoretical and practical implications. This study can help to provide information related to women entrepreneurial success and can benefit the government in an effort to encourage and support the success of women in their entrepreneurial ventures. The study suggested that further research should include a comparative study among the various states in Malaysia as well as between genders in determining entrepreneurial success.

Key words: Women entrepreneurial success, Family business background, Motivation, Hofstede Cultural Dimensions, Femininity/masculinity, Uncertainty avoidance, Demographic factors

ABSTRAK

FAKTOR PENENTU KEJAYAAN KEUSAHAWANAN DI KALANGAN USAHAWAN WANITA DI KOTA KINABALU, SABAH

Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk menyelidik faktor kunci kejayaan dalam menentukan kejayaan keusahawanan di kalangan usahawan wanita di Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Faktor kunci kejayaan kajian ini termasuklah latar belakang perniagaan keluarga, motivasi dan; dua dimensi budaya Hofstede termasuk budaya femininiti/maskuliniti dan pengelakkan ketidakpastian. Pembolehubah penyederhana kajian ini adalah faktor demografik yang terdiri daripada umur, status perkahwinan, tahap pendidikan dan pengalaman bekerja. Responden kajian ini adalah usahawan wanita yang mengoperasikan perniagaan untuk tempoh tiga tahun, terletak di sekitar di sekitar Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Jumlah populasi untuk kajian ini adalah 454. Jumlah bilangan soal-selidik yang diedarkan adalah sebanyak 330 dan soal-selidik yang boleh digunakan adalah sebanyak 216 soal-selidik. Berdasarkan keputusan dan dapatan kajian ini, didapati bahawa hanya latar belakang perniagaan keluarga menyumbang secara signifikan terhadap kejayaan keusahawanan wanita. Motivasi, femininiti/maskuliniti dan pengelakkan ketidakpastian bukanlah penentu kepada kejayaan keusahawanan wanita dalam kajian ini. Faktor demografi juga didapati tidak mempunyai kesan penyederhanaan terhadap kejayaan keusahawanan wanita dalam kajian ini. Kajian ini melalui penyelidikan dan dapatannya telah menyumbang secara signifikan terhadap kedua-dua implikasi teori dan praktikal. Kajian ini boleh membantu dalam menyediakan maklumat berkaitan dengan kejayaan keusahawanan wanita dan boleh memberi faedah kepada kerajaan dalam usaha untuk menggalakkan dan menyokong kejayaan wanita dalam usahaniaga keusahawanan mereka. Kajian ini mencadangkan agar penyelidikan lanjutan perlu merangkumi kajian perbandingan antara negeri di Malaysia dan juga di antara jantina dalam menentukan kejayaan keusahawanan.

Kata Kunci: *Kejayaan keusahawanan wanita, Latar belakang perniagaan keluarga, motivasi, Dimensi budaya Hofstede, Femininiti/maskuliniti, Pengelakkan ketidakpastian, Faktor demografi*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In the recent years, our country has witnessed a massive increase in the contribution of entrepreneurship. The number of entrepreneurs in Malaysia grew marginally from 1.2 million in 1992 to 3.2 million in 2011 (Nordin, Norizatun Azmin Mohd, Abdul Halim Abdul Hamid, and Chong, 2011). In 2011, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor reported that there are more than 400 million entrepreneurs around the world. This number has shown a significant increase in terms of entrepreneurial activities over the past few years. Developed nations such as the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Portugal and New Zealand are among those countries recording the highest rate of participation in entrepreneurial activity. An increase of 30% was recorded in 2011 compared to 10.9% in 2010 and 8.3% in 2008 (GEM, 2011).

It is vital to recognise the success of both men and women entrepreneurs in order to create a dynamic and vibrant economy of the nation (Wendy and Chong, 2007). In this 21st century, women's success in the field of entrepreneurship has significantly increased in both local and global markets. It is estimated that the number of successful women entrepreneurs around the world will exceed to more than 50% of the total business units by 2015 (New Straits Times, 2012). According to the annual report by the World Economically Active Population Survey (2009), successful women entrepreneurs are able to contribute to the global market as well as to play important roles in developing the nation economies. The USA recorded 56% of successful women entrepreneurs followed by the United Kingdom and Singapore, which recorded 53% and 51% respectively (Worldwide Economically Active Population Survey 2009). According to the annual report published by the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME, 2011), there is an increase in the number of

successful women entrepreneurs in Malaysia for over the five year period from 2005 to 2010, where 19.7% of the total 645,000 units of sole proprietorship businesses were owned by women entrepreneurs in 2010 compared to only 16% in the year 2005. However, the percentages of successful women entrepreneurs in Malaysia are still considered low.

Since 1975, the Malaysian government has taken several steps to integrate and assimilate both men and women entrepreneurs in developing the country's economy (Idris, 2009). The women entrepreneurs play very important roles in developing our nation's economy even during an economic downturn (Sarri and Trihopoulou, 2005). Thus, the government has continuously created and developed an enterprising culture among entrepreneurs, including women entrepreneurs in Malaysia (Tan, 1990). As an example, our government has carried out numerous policies and provides facilities to encourage women entrepreneurs, which include financial funding, physical infrastructures and professional advisory services to increase the success of women in the field of entrepreneurship. Based on the annual report by the Companies Commission of Malaysia (2010), women entrepreneurs engaged in different types of businesses ranging from agriculture, manufacturing, construction, services, retail and many others with about 58% or 9,805 of the successful Malaysian women entrepreneurs venturing into the services sectors such as finance, insurance, real estate, restaurant, transportation and communication. They have significantly contributed to the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Malaysia (Companies Commission of Malaysia, 2011). In Sabah, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2005) reported around 4.5% or 24,794 of women entrepreneurs in Sabah were successful in their businesses. This shows the important role played by women entrepreneurs in Sabah in contributing towards our country's economy. Therefore, for this study investigates the key success factors among women entrepreneurs which include factors such as demographics, family background, motivation, and culture in determining the entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

1.2 Problem Statement

The gender gap between men and women, particularly in terms of gender segregation among entrepreneurs has led to different impacts toward entrepreneurial success. The number of women entrepreneurs has increased gradually because there are more women entrepreneurs succeeding in their entrepreneurial endeavor and at the same time had contributed in developing our economy (Bruin, Brush and Welter, 2007). However, studies found that the number of successful women entrepreneurs is less compared to men entrepreneurs (Verheul and Thurik , 2001). According to the annual report by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2011), there are a total of 163 million women entrepreneurs and 237 million men entrepreneurs in the global market. The Department of Statistics Malaysia (2008) reported that there are about 1.87 million successful women entrepreneurs as compared to 2.66 million of successful men entrepreneurs in Malaysia. The statistics indicated that the numbers of successful women entrepreneurs are lower as compared to men entrepreneurs. One reason which led to the gender gap issue is most women entrepreneurs tend to favour small businesses such home based businesses and micro businesses that can help them to balance out their work life and family life, while men entrepreneurs are more focused in generating profits in order to pursue their entrepreneurial success. (Hashim Jasmani Mohd Yunus ; Haim Hilman Abdullah ; Filzah Md Isa, Hoe and Hin, 2012).

In a developing country such as Malaysia, the number of successful women entrepreneurs is very low and they tend to generate lower profits compared to men entrepreneurs (De Mel, McKenzie and Woodruff, 2008). This is due to the reason that women entrepreneurs have no specific skill compared to men who are well equipped with technical skills in managing their businesses. Furthermore, women entrepreneurs need to commit their responsibilities in pursuing their careers at the same time playing a role as a mother in the family who carry out family responsibilities (Aterido, Beck and Iacovone, 2011). However, both genders need to be successful in their entrepreneurship endeavours for them to increase the family income. On the other hand, due to the lack of business skills and the need to plan for a balanced working life has led most women to operate small businesses as

compared to men entrepreneurs who are more often involved in entrepreneurship activities that can generate higher profit. As a result, men entrepreneurs are more successful than women entrepreneurs (Duflo, 2003; Duflo and Udry, 2004). According to SME's annual report (2011), there were around 86.8% successful women entrepreneurs in Peninsular Malaysia while Sabah recorded only 6.4% of successful women entrepreneurs. This statistic showed a very low percentage of women's entrepreneurial success in Sabah.

On the other hand, women entrepreneurs with a family that operates and owns a business are more likely to be successful. A family business background seems able to influence and inspire women entrepreneurs in pursuing the entrepreneurial success. The Small and Medium Enterprise (SME Malaysia, 2011) reported that around 60.9% of women entrepreneurs with family business background are successful in their entrepreneurial activities. Women entrepreneurs tend to follow practices that they learn from their family businesses in producing marketable products to generate profits in order to achieve entrepreneurial success (Stein and Bailey, 1973). Apart from that, most women entrepreneurs tend to take their successful family businesses as a role model for women entrepreneurs, which drive them towards entrepreneurial success (Davis, 1995). Accordingly, family business background serves as an important role in helping women entrepreneurs to explore new business opportunities to achieve success in an entrepreneurial venture (Gary and Kimberly, 2012).

Motivation is also considered as one of the key factors that drive entrepreneurial success among women. Motivation plays the role as the psychological support in promoting the success of women entrepreneurs. Men and women entrepreneurs often have different motivations, which influence their entrepreneurial success (Demartino and Barbato, 2001). Male entrepreneurs, on the other hand, tend to be motivated by their desire to create wealth through a successful entrepreneurial venture (Ramraini and Syed, 2012). In this study, motivation includes job dissatisfaction and unemployment that determine the entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs. According to Brush (1992), most women entrepreneurs tend to be more successful in their entrepreneurial

ventures when they are involved in the entrepreneurial venture after they quit their jobs due to the dissatisfaction in their current jobs or employments. Some women desire to be more independent, which drives them into entrepreneurial success (Orhan and Scott, 2011).

Besides that, culture is also one of the key factors in determining the success of women entrepreneurs. Culture influences belief, values and perception of women to seek for entrepreneurial opportunities to determine entrepreneurial success (Mueller and Thomas, 2000). Culture can be defined as the mixture of norms, values and beliefs that are shared by a community or country (Spilling, 1991). It is the way women and men entrepreneurs are perceived in their countries which determine their recognition and determination to be successful in entrepreneurship (Starr and Yudkin, 1996). For example, cultural dimensions as highlighted by Hofstede such as femininity or masculinity and uncertainty avoidance play important roles in determining women entrepreneurial success. As explained by Hofstede (2010), the masculinity/femininity culture often described as competitive, assertive, materialistic, high ambition and concern with authority while femininity concern with the value in relationships and lifestyle. Femininity or masculinity place different responsibilities between women and men entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs are often assigned with heavier responsibilities, as they need to have a balanced family and work life. While, men entrepreneurs are fully committed in their entrepreneurship activities (Jamali, 2009). Meanwhile, gender inequality and labour discrimination in the job market have forced women to be self-employed and venture into entrepreneurship activities (Vossenbergh, 2013). These are the factors that encourage them to be successful in their entrepreneurial pursuits (Aidis, Welter, Smallbone and Isakova 2007). The second element of culture also considered as a key factor in determining entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs is uncertainty avoidance. According to Hofstede (2001), uncertainty avoidance is defined as the society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. It is described that women entrepreneurs with high uncertainty avoidance are those who tend to be more emotional and try to reduce the risk of an unknown situation. However, women entrepreneurs with low uncertainty avoidance culture are more tolerant to changes in the environment and tend to be

more pragmatic (Hostede, 2010). Women entrepreneurs who exhibit characteristics of low uncertainty avoidance are active, aggressive, emotional, compulsive, seek for security, and intolerant towards unfamiliar situations (Hofstede, 1987). The low uncertainty avoidance is able to influence women entrepreneur to develop higher tolerance for ambiguity leading them to succeed in entrepreneurship (Jones, 2007).

In conclusion, family business background, motivations, two Hofstede's cultural dimensions which consist of femininity or masculinity and uncertainty avoidance are those factors that determine the entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions addressed by this study are as follows:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between family business background and the entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between motivation factors and entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between culture and entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu?

RQ4: Does demography moderate the relationship between family business background, motivation, culture and entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu?

1.4 Research Objectives

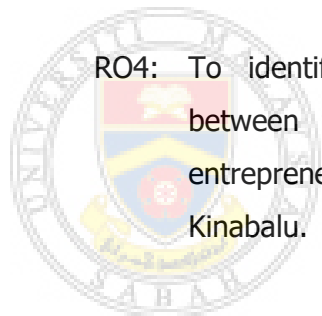
The research objectives are:

RO1: To examine whether there is a relationship between family business background and the entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu.

RO2: To identify whether there is a relationship between motivation and the entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu.

RO3: To examine whether there is a relationship between culture and the entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu.

RO4: To identify whether demography moderates the relationship between family business background, motivation, culture and entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu.



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1.5 Scope of Study

This study investigates the key determining factors towards the success among women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. These factors consist of family business background, motivation, femininity or masculinity and uncertainty avoidance culture. The respondents of this study were women entrepreneurs who are operating businesses in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The sample population of this study was obtained from Sabah Women Entrepreneurs and Professionals (SWEPA) and SME Corporation Sabah. There are a total of 454 women entrepreneurs in Kota Kinabalu. For this study, the data set both from Sabah Women Entrepreneurs and Professionals (SWEPA) and SME Corporation Sabah have been used. SWEPA is an association for women entrepreneurs to join networking and to be trained towards being forefront in the economic development of the state not only in of Sabah and but also Malaysia as well as in the eyes of the world. Additionally, the data set from

SME Corporation Sabah have also been used. SME Corporation Sabah is one of the government agencies that helps entrepreneurs in term of financial aid and advisory services in order to support the entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial ventures. However, this study only covers 330 respondents of women entrepreneurs who are operating various kinds businesses of in Kota Kinabalu.

1.6 Significance of Study

This study may benefit both the government and non-government sectors. It could help to provide new inputs concerning determinants of entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs in Sabah which include family business background, motivation and culture in determining the entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs. This study also highlights the impact of demographic factors as moderating variable in the relationship between predictors and entrepreneurial success. Demographic variables include age, marital status, level of education and working experience.

From the perception of the knowledge form, it delivers a new sight concerning the determinants of the key success factors among women entrepreneurship, which is relevant with the culture of Sabah and Malaysia. Likewise, it adds new knowledge and bridge the gap on the field addressed. For instance, subjected related to the family business background, motivation and cultures on entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, it laid a more solid, valid and reliable ground for the further researches in concern with the subject investigated in this study.

Besides, this study intends to fill up the gap demographics and how the moderator affects this factor predictor entrepreneurial success and extent it to the new findings. These new research included the moderating role of the demographics elements which are age, marital status, level of education and working experience in which may influenced the women entrepreneurs from different angles. After investigating these new variables, this study came up with an inclusive issues understanding in regard to the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable on the subject of entrepreneurial success

among women entrepreneurs. Thus, it will extend the existing literature on sustainable consumption and enhance the generalizability of results in a developing country like Malaysia.

The results of this study can provide an understanding on the factors that determine entrepreneurial success particularly among women entrepreneurs. Both government and non-government will benefit from this study since this study addresses the issue of unbalance in the percentage of entrepreneurial success between women and men entrepreneurs. This study can help the government to suggest or introduce some supports in terms of training or seminars that can help more women entrepreneurs to be successful in their entrepreneurial ventures at the same time help to balance the percentage of entrepreneurial success between men and women entrepreneurs.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The operational definitions for this study are as follows:

1.7.1 Women Entrepreneur

Women entrepreneurs as defined by Padmadeo, Sharma and Shejhar (2009) are women who create the business opportunities, manage all business activities independently and operate the business at the same time take the risk from daily entrepreneurial activity.

1.7.2 Entrepreneurial Success

Entrepreneurial success as described by Solymossy (1998) is when the venture is able to survive for at least of three years in the market.

1.7.3 Theory of Resource Based View (RBV)

The theory of Resource Based View (RBV) is the theory that explains the capabilities of entrepreneur to use their resources particularly in to determining entrepreneurial success (Akio, 2005)

1.7.4 Relational theory

Relational theory as described by Miller and Strive (1997) explains the values and leadership of women entrepreneurs in their pursuit towards entrepreneurial success.

1.7.5 Family Business Background

Family business background is the role played by the family in terms of the exposure given to women entrepreneurs in business that influence them to be successful in their entrepreneurial ventures (Mohd. Hassan Bin Mohd Osman, 2007).

1.7.6 Motivation

Motivation is the direction of action individual has in order to achieve the sets of goals (Bigley, Porter and Steers, 2003).

1.7.7 Culture

Culture as described by Hofstede (1980) is a set of measures to analyse values, behaviors and beliefs that have a positive impact on entrepreneurial success.

a. Femininity / Masculinity

Femininity/masculinity proposed by Hofstede (2010) is the distribution of roles between women and men.

b. Uncertainty Avoidance Culture

Uncertainty avoidance as described by Hofstede (1987) is the degree of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity into unknown situation.

1.7.8 Demography

Demographic factors refer to the size and composition of population based on diversified criteria such as age, marital status, level of education and working experience (Aida, 2008).