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INSIGHT Journal focuses on social science and humanities research. The main aim of INSIGHT Journal is to provide an intellectual forum for the publication and dissemination of original work that contributes to the understanding of the main and related disciplines of the following areas: Accounting, Business Management, Law, Information Management, Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Language Studies, Islamic Studies and Education.

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FOREWORD BY DEPUTY RECTOR OF RESEARCH, INDUSTRIAL LINKAGES & ALUMNI



Since 2018, the INSIGHT JOURNAL (IJ) from Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor has come up with several biennial publications. Volume 1 and 2 debuted in 2018, followed by Volume 3 this year as well as Volume 4 with 19 published papers due to the great response from authors both in and out of UiTM. Through Insight Journal, lecturers have the ability to publish their research articles and opportunity to share their academic findings. Insight Journal is indexed in MyJurnal MCC and is now an international refereed journal with many international reviewers from prestigious universities appointed as its editorial review board members.

This volume 5 as well as volume 6 (which will be published in 2020) are special issues for the 6th International Accounting and Business Conference (IABC) 2019 held at Indonesia Banking School, Jakarta. The conference was jointly organized by the Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor and the Indonesia Banking School Jakarta. Hence, the volumes focus mainly on the accounting and business research papers compiled from this conference, which was considered a huge success as over 66 full papers were presented.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Rector of UiTM Johor, Associate Professor Dr. Ahmad Naqiyuddin Bakar for his distinctive support, IJ Managing Editor for this issue Dr. Noriah Ismail, IJ Assistant Managing Editor, Fazdillah Md Kassim well as all the reviewers and editors who have contributed in the publication of this special issue.

Thank you.

ASSOCIATE PROF. DR. SAUNAH ZAINON
Deputy Rector of Research, Industrial Linkages & Alumni
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An Overview of a Broadly-based Entrepreneurial Competencies Model for Business Success of Women Micro-entrepreneurs in Malaysia

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Abstract

Women comprise half of the Malaysian population or 15.3 million from a total of 31.7 million people. Approximately, 88 percent of women entrepreneurs in the country are involved in micro-entrepreneurs. Women micro-entrepreneurs contribute significantly through income generation and job creation. Despite the significant proportion and pivotal roles of women micro-entrepreneurs for economic development, their business success is still debatable. The number of successful women micro-entrepreneurs is still low, and they are underperforming despite the increase in their population. Thus, this paper seeks to develop a broadly-based entrepreneurial competencies model that is exclusively and mutually for women micro-entrepreneurs to succeed in their business by investigating each domain of entrepreneurial competencies. This was done based on the findings by reviewing a thorough review of literature from the local and global context about this issue. Previous studies revealed that women micro-entrepreneurs need to have necessary entrepreneurial competencies to act as a catalyst for their business success. The women micro-entrepreneurs need to have eight domains of entrepreneurial competencies which comprise of (a) strategic (b) commitment (c) conceptual (d) opportunity (e) organizing and leading (f) relationships (g) personal, and (h) technical competencies that are exclusively and mutually for women micro-entrepreneurs' business success. Finally, the conclusion from the literature helps to assess the critical issues of the low number of successful women micro-entrepreneurship, and they are underperforming in Malaysia. Furthermore, understanding on every domain of entrepreneurial competencies for women micro-entrepreneurs would also ascertain which of these competencies are to be included in the entrepreneurial competencies model for women micro-entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Women micro-entrepreneurs, business success, entrepreneurial competencies

1. Introduction

In the new global economy, business success has become a central issue for women micro-entrepreneurs in developing nations, including Malaysia. Woman micro-entrepreneur is a woman or women partners who establish, manage, and operate a micro-

enterprise. Business enterprises owned by women entrepreneurs accounted for 186,930 firms, or about 20.6 percent of total business establishments in Malaysia (Department of Statistics, 2016). About 88 percent of the entire women entrepreneurs in this country are women micro-entrepreneurs (Ming-Yen Teoh & Choy Chong, 2014; Al Mamun et al., 2016). These data showed that woman micro-entrepreneurs play a vital role in the national economy. The women micro-entrepreneurs are the key developers of micro-enterprises, and these businesses are critical drivers of economic development (Paoloni & Dumay, 2015). Women micro-entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in achieving Malaysia's vision of becoming a well-developed country with a fully competitive, dynamic, and robust economy (Hassan, Mahdee, Rahman, & Sade, 2017). Nonetheless, the number of successful women micro-entrepreneurs is still low, and they are underperforming despite the increase in their population (e.g Hoe, Isa, Hin, Hashim, Yunus, & Abdullah, 2012; Mutalib, Arshad, Ismail & Ahmad, 2015; Mustapha, 2016; Rani & Hashim, 2017).

A considerable amount of literature has acknowledged business success is heavily dependent on entrepreneurial competencies of the Malaysian entrepreneurs (Ahmad, Halim, & Zainal, 2010; Ng & Kee, 2013; Tehseen & Ramayah, 2015). Also, Ahmad, Ramayah, Wilson, and Kummerow (2010) posited that understanding business success from the perspective of entrepreneurial competencies is essential as it provides entrepreneurs with skills on how they should run their business and motivates them to be aware of the expected outcomes of their behavior.

Hence, this paper seeks to develop a broadly-based entrepreneurial competencies model that is exclusively and mutually for women micro-entrepreneurs to succeed in their business by investigating each domain of entrepreneurial competencies. Even though the effect of entrepreneurial competencies may have been explored to a certain extent, this paper intends to provide an integrated account of contributions relating to entrepreneurial competencies in the context of women micro-entrepreneurs.

The results will add to the increased effectiveness of women micro-entrepreneurs in developing nations, particularly in Malaysia. Besides, they can also provide more clarity on the priorities of determining predominant types of competencies among women micro-entrepreneurs for further development.

2. Literature Review

Based on literature and as a strategic exploration, this study intends to develop a clear understanding of the relationship between every domain of entrepreneurial competencies with business success among women micro-entrepreneurs in developing nations like Malaysia.

Women micro-entrepreneurs are setting up their business mainly to achieve success (Mwaniki, Nassiuma & Maket, 2018). Generally, business success is associated with the goal and objective achievement from any viewpoint it is considered (Pasanen, 2003). According to Rashid, Ngah, Mohamed & Mansor (2015), women micro-entrepreneurs mainly defined business success from economic outcomes alone since they sought entrepreneurship as a way to gain income, empower themselves, and relieve the burden of gender. Thus, business success is the ability of women micro-entrepreneurs to meet their business goals in terms of economic perspectives. Business success enhances

household incomes through profit generation, thereby increasing employment and bringing economic and social stability.

Lazer & Paul (2015) place entrepreneurial competencies as the underlying characteristics possessed by individuals, which assist them to execute the tasks in a most befitting manner. According to Zainol, Al Mamun, Ahmad & Simpong (2018), entrepreneurial competencies are a strong predictor for business success. Such competencies constitute the components of individual characteristics including knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviours, and attitudes that impact on the abilities of the women micro-entrepreneurs to perform the activities of the business most effectively towards success. Women micro-entrepreneurs need an essential mix of competencies that are suitable for the demand of tasks to boost their business success.

The domains of entrepreneurial competencies proposed have been adopted on the basis from previous studies which show that they may impact either directly or indirectly towards business success. The broadly-based entrepreneurial competencies which are mutually and exclusively applicable for women micro-entrepreneurs comprise of eight domains, namely strategic, commitment, conceptual, opportunity, organizing and leading, relationship, personal, and technical competencies.

Strategic competency is defined as setting, evaluating, and implementing strategies by the women micro-entrepreneurs and having abilities and skills from a broader and long-term perspective. The strategy explains how the organizations deploy resources among units; thus, the engagement of this competency will contribute mainly to business success (Hussin, Rabun & Yunus, 2012). With strategic competency in place, women micro-entrepreneurs will be able to make decisions tailored to the dynamics of a specific situation, broader and long-term perspective to succeed in their business.

Commitment competency is about diligent women micro-entrepreneurs with a restless attitude towards their business. This competency reflects the ability to strive in achieving long-term goals with intense devotion, taking initiatives, and possessing the entrepreneurial attitude (Zainol & Al Mamun, 2018). The competent women micro-entrepreneurs can find a niche to enter the market even the market is saturated, and they can still keep a positive attitude about the situation to find an alternative.

Conceptual competency reflected in the women micro-entrepreneurs' behaviours when analyzing the problems, making important decisions, and innovating in new processes, products, or new services. Zainol & Al Mamun (2018) referred to conceptual competency as the ability in making decisions automatically about business opportunities or absorbing and comprehending complex information for business success. Unlike strategic competency, this conceptual competency is a concern with a short-term perspective, resolving instant events, or requiring fast responses.

Opportunity competency related to recognizing market opportunities through various means and forms from the competitive scope of the business (Al Mamun, Muniady, Ibrahim & Nawi, 2018). This opportunity competency is essential for women micro-entrepreneurs as they will alert of the current situation in the market to seek business information actively, evaluate the risk involved, and transform it into a business opportunity.

Competency in organizing and leading refers to an ability to plan, organize, lead, motivate, delegate, and control (Suhaimi, Al Mamun, Zainol & Nawawi, 2018). The competency is essential among women micro-entrepreneurs in executing their daily duties that incorporate planning of daily operations, acquiring and allocating resources from both external and internal, leading and motivating employees, and delegating and establishing rules and regulations for the business.

Relationship competency refers to the ability to build and keep networks and relationships with both existing and potential stakeholders (Al Mamun, Muniady, Ibrahim & Nawawi, 2018). This competency is essential to the women micro-entrepreneurs as they interact with numerous categories of stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, employees, government authorities, competitors, and others while doing business. Women micro-entrepreneurs will be able to develop long term relationship and maintain the trust with other stakeholders to acquire and strengthen their resources and skills for business success.

Personal competency refers to characteristics that help in the building up of personal strength and to improve effectiveness in performing specific challenging tasks (Al Mamun, Nawawi, & Zainol, 2016). The women micro-entrepreneurs need to have the personal competency to enable them for self-management by identifying their strengths and weaknesses and match them with opportunities to ensure business success.

Technical competency involves processing knowledge of instruments and the functioning of tools, machines, and mastery of tasks or content of work. It covers the field of specialized knowledge and practical skills but does not include any personal qualities (Kozak & Mogan 2018). This technical competency is significant for women micro-entrepreneurs in handling relevant tools to ensure the smooth running of their business operations.

3. Conclusion and the way forward

This present paper endeavours to develop a broad-based model of entrepreneurial competencies which are exclusively and mutually for women micro-entrepreneurs in developing nations such as Malaysia, to succeed in their business. It is imperative to note that traditional roles are becoming less frequent in the array of entrepreneurial careers. As a result, additional competencies are required for women micro-entrepreneurs. It is possible that failure to recognize the broader entrepreneurial competencies that exclusively and mutually for women micro-entrepreneurs may have compromised the capacity to predict business success for women micro-entrepreneurs. Therefore, it is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of entrepreneurial competencies by encompassing the total range of competencies necessary for effective performance. Future research may conduct an empirical study to examine the relationship between every domain of entrepreneurial competencies and business success.

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