



UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
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FBM INSIGHTS

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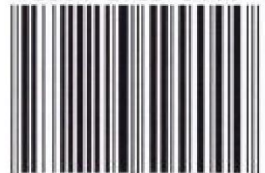
Volume 3

2021

e-ISSN 2716-599X

UiTM *di hatiku*

eISSN 2716-599X



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial Board	iii
Rector's Message	iv
From The Desk Of The Head Of Faculty	vi
1. JAWHAR AND WAQF DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA	1
<i>Dahlia Ibrahim, Zuraidah Mohamed Isa & Norhidayah Ali</i>	
2. INTRODUCTION TO MICROCREDIT INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA	3
<i>Zuraidah Mohamed Isa, Dahlia Ibrahim, & Norhidayah Ali</i>	
3. UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT	5
<i>Nurul Hayani Abd Rahman & Zuraidah Mohamed Isa</i>	
4. GRIT AND SUCCESS. A BRIEF OUTLOOK	7
<i>Azfahanee Zakaria & Syed Mohammed Alhady</i>	
5. AN OVERVIEW OF FOOD DELIVERY BUSINESS	10
<i>Azyyati Anuar, Zainuddin Mohd Piah & Siti Noor Syalwani Mustapa</i>	
6. FOOD DELIVERY BUSINESS: A NEW TREND IN 2020	13
<i>Siti Noor Syalwani Mustapa, Azyyati Anuar & Zainuddin Mohd Piah</i>	
7. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS	16
<i>Shazwani Mohd Salleh, Berlian Nur Morat & Sitti Aminah Baharuddin</i>	
8. USAGE OF ANIMATIONS AS ADVERTISING TOOLS	20
<i>Baderisang Mohamed & Malawanis Mohd Noor Kamal</i>	
9. THE INFLUENCE OF SERVICESCAPE UPON RETAILERS ON CUSTOMER VALUE IN MALAYSIA	23
<i>Baderisang Mohamed & Aliaa Adriana MohdDamanhuri</i>	
10. ONLINE CUSTOMER REVIEWS AS A POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL	27
<i>Baderisang Mohamed & Nor Fitrah Anaik Ali</i>	
11. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON AIRLINES INDUSTRY	31
<i>Baderisang Mohamed & Maryam Nabila Muhammad</i>	
12. DIGITAL MARKETING IN ONLINE SHOPPING	34
<i>Baderisang Mohamed & Aimy Zatul Akhmar Muhamad Nor Azeri</i>	
13. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT ON MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN MALAYSIA	37
<i>Baderisang Mohamed & Nurul Nisa Mat Jamail</i>	
14. DIVERSIFICATION AS AN EFFECTIVE BUSINESS STRATEGY	41
<i>Baderisang Mohamed & Siti Nurhidayu Sharin</i>	
15. PEST FORCES ON AGRICULTURE SECTOR	44
<i>Baderisang Mohamed & Nurul Najiha Azhar</i>	

16	MISSION AND VISION IN INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT <i>Baderisang Mohamed & Nurul Amira Ahmad Murad</i>	47
17	DO WE RECOGNISE THE HALAL LOGO? <i>Sitti Aminah Baharuddin, Shazwani Mohd Salleh & Berlian Nur Morat</i>	51
18	VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION: A PROPOSED STUDY AT A MATURED TOWNSHIP <i>Mahadzir Ismail, Junaida Ismail, ETTY Harniza Harun & Muna Abdul Jalil</i>	62
19	ECONOMIC WELL-BEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE ERA OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A PRELIMINARY REVIEW <i>Mahadzir Ismail, Jamilah Laidin & Siti Qurratuaini Mahadzir</i>	66
20	THE DIGITAL ERA: WILL YOU TRUST ME? <i>Norhidayah Ali, Zuraidah Mohamed Isa & Dahlia Ibrahim</i>	70
21	WORKPLACE HAPPINESS MATTERS <i>Rosliza Md Zani & Shuhaimi Samanol</i>	72
22	POWER DISTANCE AND EMPLOYEE SILENCE: A REVIEW IN THE SUPERIOR SUBORDINATES RELATIONSHIP <i>ETTY Harniza Harun, Hasni Abdul Rahim, Musdina Mohamad Salleh & Junaida Ismail</i>	75
23	COVID-19 AND JOB STRESS <i>Rosliza Md Zani & Shuhaimi Samanol</i>	79
24	PARADIGM SHIFT: ONLINE DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) <i>Norhidayah Ali & Azni Syafena Andin Salamat</i>	81
25	BUSINESS FAILURES AND PROBLEMS IN MALAYSIA <i>Law Kuan Kheng & Wan Irham Ishak</i>	83
26	WOMAN IN AVIATION, REALLY? <i>Yong Azrina Ali Akbar, Syahirah Atikah Mohd Sabri & Siti Liyana Yusrizan</i>	89
27	ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: A BRIEF INSIGHT <i>Azfahanee Zakaria & Syed Mohammed Alhady</i>	92
28	UNTOLD HEALTH ISSUE: COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME <i>Mohd Fazil Jamaludin, Mohd Shafiz Saharan & Khairul Azfar Adzahar</i>	94
29	COMPARATIVE STUDY ON FINANCING LIMIT, MARGIN OF FINANCING AND SAFEKEEPING FEES AMONG AR RAHNU OPERATORS <i>Mohd Shafiz Saharan, Mohd Fazil Jamaludin, Khairul Azfar Adzahar & Norwahida Wagiran</i>	96
30	A COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL VERSUS ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH AS MARKETING TOOLS <i>Ramli Saad & Rosliza Md Zani</i>	100
31	THE ROLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A PLATFORM FOR CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT <i>Ramli Saad & Wan Shahrul Aziah Wan Mahamad</i>	103

WOMAN IN AVIATION, REALLY?

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INTRODUCTION

There are plenty of women involved as flight attendants. However, how many women have handled behind the yoke? Most likely on the flight, ones can hear the captain's voice is male and most rarely it is female. How many women are there in the aviation office and air-traffic control where the area is dominated by men? Women in aviation industry seem as 'unable to fit in' for women's careers. This statement is supported by Miller and Budd (1999) which they found that the role of pilot was one of four occupations believed to be the most strongly sex-stereotyped roles as cited in Miller and Hayward (2006). Aviation industry is seen as a masculine business that has been generalized for men.

According to Lutte (2019), currently there is no sufficient data about the number of women are working in aviation industry, through Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) data for example, it remains a challenge to get a baseline of information in many segments in the industry. However, there is still an outstanding gap in the number of male and female works in that industry. Table 1 shows that women do not have adequate representation in maintenance technicians, airline executives and pilots.

Percentage Women in the Field	Occupation
< 5%	Maintenance Technicians Airline Executives (CEO, COO)
5% - 10%	Pilots
11% - 20%	Aerospace Engineers Flight Dispatchers Airport Managers Air Traffic Controllers Aviation Higher Education Leadership Cybersecurity
21% - 30%	FAA Employees Aviation Higher Education Faculty
31% - 40%	TSA Employees NTSB Employees NASA Employees
> 70%	Travel Agents Flight Attendants

Table 1: Women in the Aviation Workforce (Lutte, 2019)

DISCUSSION

Stereotype is still very common in the aviation industry. It is commonly expected that men do the most dreadful and risky jobs because of their masculine nature while female will avoid it. People tend to have a perception of the aviation is a male-dominated industry (Szakal, 2019). As a result, when children are asked regarding their role models at the age of four, boys can be seen choosing pilots, while girls choose flight attendants. Women have been active in aviation industry since the beginning of aviation but the opportunities for women did not come easily. They were based on decades of struggle, determination and perseverance. This was because gender stereotype was much more pronounced in the early years of the aviation industry, even if the first set of female pilots strived to break these boundaries set by the society based on expectations, of what and what not, they were not automatically accepted by male flight crew, rather, the proposed admission of female pilots provoked negative comments about women's flying abilities (Sule, 2019). Therefore, the aviation industry needs a strategy to prove to the public that airplane was safe and easy to operate and never let the public thinks participation of women caused by under assumption that women are weak, timid and ignorant of mechanics.

Stereotyping is the perceptual process in which we assign characteristics to an identifiable group and then automatically transfer those features to anyone we believe is a member of that group (Blossom, 2013). Via stereotyping, males have a whole set of attributes and skills that all members of that category think they have. These typically "masculine" attitudes, values still seem to dominate the aviation industry and the pilot profession even in the 21st century, on the account of which women will have to put their male colleague's input twice as hard than them to negate these beliefs and fulfil the demands of the communities. (Sule, 2019). However, due to women underrepresentation, women have to adjust to the male culture in order to survive and have much to lose by the challenging system.

Problem with stereotyping is stereotype threat, a phenomenon whereby members of a stereotyped group are connected that they might exhibit a negative feature of the stereotype. (McShane & Glinow, 2018). This concern and preoccupation adversely affect their behavior and performance, which often results in displaying the stereotype trait they are trying to avoid (Schmader & Hall, 2014). Akbar Al Baker, a newly appointed member of the board of Governors of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), who is also the CEO of Qatar Airways, was asked what should be done to tackle the lack of women in Middle Eastern aviation. He answered: *"Of course, Qatar Airways has to be led by a man, because it is a very challenging position."* (Bos, 2018). This situation does not only put emphasis on female stereotype, but it also makes women believe that they are not suitable for the aviation industry. As a result, women feel that the skills and talents they have are not suitable for handling 'typically' male positions, which profoundly affects their performance (Heilman, 2001).

CONCLUSION

The deep-seated bias for males exists not just in aviation, but in several other fields. While the other fields have enjoyed marked improvement in female representation, aviation industry is still struggling. Women have consistently been underrepresented throughout aviation industry for many years. The obstacles for female to get into aviation industry are huge (Szakal, 2019). There are needs to be improved in public perception for people to see female pilots as capable as male pilots. This will be easier if the collaborative effort of communities, corporative, training facilities and individuals to keep women presentable in aviation industry.

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