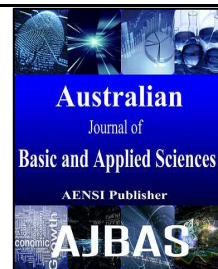




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Key Determinants of Women Entrepreneur Success Factor: Does Demographic Profile Differ

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempt to cross-sectionally investigate success factor relationship based on environmental dimensions and personal attributes. Further examination was conducted by observing the potential differences on the selected demographic profiles as related to the success factor. A total of 300 respondents among women entrepreneur in the state of Kelantan, Malaysia were purposively selected to participate in the survey. The required data were personally collected and administered for ensuring good respond from the respondents. From the finding of the study, the results indicated that the two selected variables are able to explain 29.8 percent of their contribution towards women entrepreneur success factor. The evidence generated from this investigation may provide a framework on enhancing women entrepreneur through focusing on personal attributes and environmental dimensions.

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INTRODUCTION

With the rapid advancement of technology, mobility of career interest, and communication methods, entrepreneurship has become a popular means for survival during the past decade. Nowadays, the interesting statistics related with the women entrepreneurs around the world show us the significant forces of the women to involve in businesses. Entrepreneurs play a key role in any form of economy. 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 and profitable. Entrepreneurs are not necessarily motivated by profit but regard it as a standard for measuring achievement or success.

Based on the Census of Establishments & Enterprises 2011 by the Department of Statistics Malaysia, a total of 662,939 business establishments were owned by the women entrepreneurs covering 5 sectors in manufacturing, services, agriculture, construction and mining & Quarrying.

As suggested by Sana'a Abdul Karim and Ilhaamie Abdul Ghani Azmi (2008), the capabilities of women entrepreneur are well recognize. This is due to the fact that they are able to recognize threat and opportunities, innovative thinking, have good

industrial linkages, capable of meeting the challenges, self confident, good persuasive communication skills, and willingness to work hard. Realizing the woman's potential, the Malaysian Government has embarked on developing initiatives through various Ministries and agencies to create, promote and nurture more women entrepreneurs, in taking extreme benefit that are capable to accelerate the Malaysian economy.

Problem Statement:

Women entrepreneurs form an important group in the economic development of any country and also in the world economy. The increase in the women's income is closely related to the existence of close family ties and household harmony. According to Clarlassare (2007), successful women entrepreneur think big, recognize opportunities, do network, adopt a positive outlook, communicate with confidence, learn from setbacks and jump out of their comfort zones. The Malaysian Government's objectives of strategizing to see a rapid growth in the number of women entrepreneurs is a high priority, the long term sustainability and survival aspects.

Prior to our qualitative investigation through observations and interviews among several women business operators, the motivational drive that spark and strengthen their involvement in business among

others were freedom of doing work, earning extra income for the family, and also ability to make own decision making. Some others decided to venture due to the observing of opportunities that remained unexploited within the nation. There were also others who prefer to promote local products rather than continuously importing product from neighbouring countries. Further evidence based on past literatures by Norudin Mansor (2005), Gnyawali & Fogel (1994), Vesper (1983, suggested that among prominent reason for someone to venture is due to the propensity to enterprise, improving economic well-being and exposure for socializing.

The mushrooming of business venturing among women strategically received support not only from the government but also from private institutions as more and more business establishment demonstrated their success and steadily growing. It was reviewed that a confident, innovative and creative woman portrayed their capability of achieving self-economic independence 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 (Goffee & Scase, 1985; Bener, 2009).

Research Objective:

1. To identify the level of success factors of women entrepreneur.
2. To investigate the relationship between environmental dimensions and personal attributes with success factor of women entrepreneur.
3. To investigate the differences on the success factor among women entrepreneur based on age group, educational level, marital status, and locality.

Scope And Limitation Of Study:

This study focused only on women entrepreneur in the state of Kelantan, Malaysia. The result of this study will only address issues within the state therefore it will not be used to generalize for other states in Malaysia. A representation of 300 respondents was selected to participate in this study.

Literature Review:

Entrepreneur:

An entrepreneur is an economic agent that acts in the allocation of resources, raw materials, intermediate goods, physical, human, and social capital. The entrepreneur is an innovator or developers who recognizes and seizes opportunities to market their product or services that bring values through time, effort, money and skills. The exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities includes design actions to develop a business plan, acquire the human, financial and other required resources, and to be responsible for its success or failure.

It was mentioned by Madura (2007) that entrepreneurs are the people who organize, manage, and assume the risks in starting a business. Risk

management important for entrepreneurs to avoid miscalculated an opportunity, managing uncertainty and to create a new venture in business. Shane & Venkataraman (2000), claimed that entrepreneur involves phenomena and processes related to discovering, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities to create future goods and services.

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).

According to Brindley (2005), the main factors which support the successful women entrepreneurs is coming from family and friends. So, family and close friends play a very significant 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. Thus the family support is extremely important and very much contribute to the moulding of entrepreneurship interest especially to start up any new business venturing (Hisrich, 2008).

Women Entrepreneur Success factors:

Women entrepreneurs are key players in any developing country particularly in terms of their contribution to economic development. Women entrepreneurship has been recognized as an important source of economic growth. Women's reasons for starting a business are not always often driven by positive factors, but also due to negative circumstances, such as low family income, lack of employment opportunities, and dissatisfaction with a current job or the need for flexible work (Robinson, 2001).

The common theme among successful entrepreneurs is they have the right mentality to embark and meeting the challenges on the entrepreneurial journey, they see a real-world problem and have the drive and desire to solve that problem. In a much broader perspective, success can be defined as a persistent in the subject matter of individual life. In the simplest definition successful in entrepreneurship is equivalent to continued business operations, while failure means going out of business. Belassi & Tukul, (1996) mentioned that several common success dimensions pertaining to economic performance are very much related to efficiency, growth, profit, size, liquidity, success or failure, market share and leverage.

According to Fisher (1999), successful women entrepreneur tend to be good negotiators which is they achieve "win – win" situations, good

interpersonal relationship, effective communication skill, effective networking, good source of information, good decision maker and able to monitor changes from the environment and to create something different in their business. In supporting the above elements, the importance of communication skills are very much relevant in enhancing the success of women to venture in the business.

Based on the past literatures women entrepreneur seems to display better performance in their business due to the nature of their persuasive power. However the limitation of their success can be observed when women involves in sciences and technology, technical, and mechanical. As this field are not matches with this feminity of the women (O'Brien, 1983).

Other than that, most important personal qualities that are attached to successful women entrepreneur could be elements like self reliant, personal drive, good negotiation skill and positive attitude in overcoming obstacles. With this qualities women are able to achieve their business target with effectiveness (Norudin Mansor, 2005).

Environmental Factors:

Study of socio-political and economic environment has a great social and economic significance to the growth of entrepreneurship. Modern business is treated as a social and economic institution and is affected by the political, social and economic forces. Environmental can be defined as an identifiable element in the physical, cultural, demographic, economic, political, regulatory or technological environment that affects the survival operation and growth of an organization. Environmental factors can influence the success of entrepreneur to remain competitive in the industry from the surrounding (Norudin Mansor & Azman Che Mat, 2010).

Social political development provides certain degree of favourable atmosphere in operating a business. The stability of social political factors not only provides a good impact for running day to day business activities, but at the same time, it's able to generate profit which eventually contribute for the nation economic growth. These favourable climates provide opportunity for entrepreneur to acquired license for operating their business in a more favourable challenges market setting (Norudin Mansor *et al.*, 2014).

Financial support availability within the business boundary is another dimension of environmental factors. According to Kuratko & Hodgetts (2009), one of the elements that significantly contribute to successful women entrepreneur is the role of banking sector that provide loan facilities for the working capital, consultancy, and also the acquisition of asset for the business operation. The finding revealed by Neuberger & Rathke (2009) stated that the financial

community has established loan funds and training programs for business owners and entrepreneurial initiatives. These efforts have contributed to the growth in the number of women-owned firms. Public and private agencies have established training and technical assistance programs for women business owners. The training program with the tools for improving businesses and make them successful is significant (Zalinawati Abdullah & Norudin Mansor, 2012) as educational institutions are creating new opportunities for women who are interested in entrepreneurship. 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.

Personal Attributes:

The successful entrepreneur women have some personality attributes which make them successful business women. Personal attributes basically means traits that make up your personality, which define who you are as a person, which one person makes inferences about the underlying motives (Kelly and Michela, 1980), what make you who you are, what other people find in you that they may like or dislike. The involvement of women into entrepreneurship career normally can be observed based on several qualities such as acceptance of conventionality in defining gender roles, the importance relational support (Mitra, 2002) and the key motivational strength in term of need for power, need for affiliation and need for achievement (Miron & McClelland, 1979).

In most cases, personal attribute is often been shaped by the education of a person. Education is very important once an entrepreneur chooses to get involved in entrepreneurship as it is interrelated with knowledge. So to be successful, knowledge is one of the key components in operating a business. It is one of the most dominant characteristics of women entrepreneurs that can affect their business performance. Literally, education support system and managerial experience may attribute to business growth but certainly has positive impact on entrepreneurial performance (Gatewood *et al.*, 2004). In ensuring the agenda or remaining successful, the need to keeping pace with the related knowledge and further accumulation of new knowledge should remain intact. Through this process it will further support the business growth and certainly has a positive impact on sustaining the survival of a business (Siti Haryati Shaikh Ali *et al.*, 2004). Thus training and education are very much relevant in shaping, promoting, and ensuring the success of of a business (Lavoie, 1985, Norudin Mansor and Azman Che Mat, 2010).

Personality which is an important component of personal attributes are very much associate with the environment (Schermerhorn *et al.*, 2012) and working

experience. The exposure of the experiences sails through by the entrepreneur in meeting issues, situations and challenges in resolving conflict, handling customer, and managing scarcity of resources found to be highly valuable. With these experiences it provides a much strategic approach for the entrepreneur to improve the whole management activities for ensuring stability, growth and profitability (Antoncic, 2006).

Once a person steps into business venturing it means she has to inculcate another new personality characteristic known to be risk-taker. Both business and risk elements are personal attributes that cannot be separated. Attitude toward risk-taking act as a pulling factor that will motivate entrepreneur to engage in any business risk related activity (Shane, 2003). With the understanding of the need to have a favourable attitude towards risk-taking it can provide a framework for observing the positive and negative impact towards the inspiring the success factor of entrepreneurs.

Methodology:

Research Framework:

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

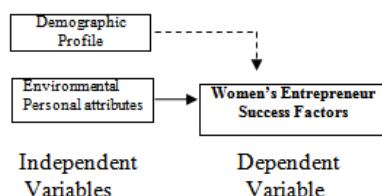


Fig. 1: Research Framework.

Hypothesis Formulation:

H1: There is a significant relationship between environmental dimensions and personality attributes with success factor of women entrepreneur.

H2: There is a significant difference between age group and success factor of women entrepreneur.

H3: There is a significant difference between educational level and success factor of women entrepreneur.

H4: There is a significant difference between marital status and success factor of women entrepreneur.

H5: There is a significant difference between locality and success factor of women entrepreneur.

Sampling Design:

The determination of sampling frame for this investigation covers those business operations within the state of Kelantan. However, there was no definite numbers and consensus to the exact business establishment been gazetted by the authorities. With such inadequacy of establishment statistic, in order to get a minimum representation of the business population, following the suggestion by Malhotra (1999), total samples of 400 women entrepreneurs were proposed to be the selected sample size of the study. Knowing the limitation of the inability to generalize, but to some extent it will provide a magnitude of good respondent profile, the researcher undertake to use the purposive sampling technique for collecting the data. This technique was considered as the best option since researchers had the ability to approach each respondent based on the predetermine profiles. 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 taken to get the desired response, eventually, we were able to collect 300 women entrepreneur as respondent.

Data Collection Method And Instrument:

The data to be explored in this study is quantitative in nature. Using survey as an approach, respondents were personally administered in ensuring that data were efficiently collected cross-sectionally. The questionnaire was designed to investigate the profile, success factor, environmental dimensions, and personal attributes. Questionnaire was divided into 4 sections: in which section A was designed to explore the profiles of the respondents. Section B attempted to elicit information on success factors; while section C and D were formulated to capture information on environmental dimensions, and personal attributes. Except for section A, all items measuring independent and dependent variables were measured using five-point Likert scale.

Findings And Analysis:

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 1: Reliability Analysis.

Dimension	Cronbach Alpha Value
Success Factors	.759
Environmental	.682
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 (.759) after dropping one item. Environmental (.682) 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).

Frequency Analysis:

Followings are the result of demographic profile on the information of the respondents. Of the total samples majority of the respondents were malays which made up 92%, while another 8% were non-malays, which reflects the nature of population in the geographical areas of study.

Table 2: Frequencies Demographic Profile of Respondents.

Profile	N	%	Profile	N	%
Age 16-30	99	33.0	Edu Level		
31-45	88	29.3	Post Graduate	6	2.0
46-55	79	26.3	Under Graduate	27	9.0
56 and >	34	11.3	Diploma	32	10.7
Marital Status			Certificate	13	4.3
Single	74	24.6	SPM	155	51.7
Married	220	73.3	Others	67	22.3
Others	6	2.1	Location		
			rural	154	51.3
			urban	145	48.3

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.

In terms 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.

Table 3: Mean Analysis.

Dimension	Mean	Std Dev
Success	4.05	.464
Customers Always Come	3.99	.731
Have Large Number of Customers	3.89	.803
Product Fulfills Customers' Needs	4.03	.661
Able to Face Risk	4.00	.734
Improved Standard of Living	4.27	.615
Able to Face Capital Problem	4.04	.751
Not Affect Family Members	4.13	.767

The above analysis provides an overview about the success factor of the respondent in the study. As a whole the result indicated that majority of the respondent assumed to be quite successful in sustaining their businesses as displayed by the mean value of 4.05. Upon reviewing the 6 (six) measurement items, the result indicated that women involvement in business do support the improvement in the standard of living (mean= 4.27), does not badly affecting family members (mean=4.13), has the ability to face any capital proble (mean=4.04), still has the ability to face potential risk (mean=4.03), and still can maintain customers (mean=3.99 and 3.89).

In most circumstances, people has the tendency to generalize that the older you are the more favourable outcome will be produced. With this

assumption the testing of differences was conducted in observing whether the age group differs in terms of being successful. Throughout the investigation the finding revealed that those entrepreneurs with the age group more than 56 years old were more successful, followed those within the age group of 46-55 years old. While those classified to be much younger (16-30 years old) tend to be less successful. However, based on the mean value for the classified group, the result indicated that the differences were not statistically different at sig. value of .135

The group statistics table shows that the mean values for rural is 4.07 and urban are 4.03 respectively. The above observation clearly demonstrated those in the rural areas are slightly more successful than entrepreneurs in urban areas. With such a minor difference we therefore conclude

that there is no significant difference between these groups of women entrepreneur at the significance value of .503.

Table 4: Testing of Differences.

Profile	N	Mean	Sig.
Age 16-30	99	3.97	.135
31-45	88	4.06	
46-55	79	4.09	
56 and >	34	4.17	
Location Rural	154	4.07	.503
Urban	145	4.03	
Educational Level	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
Post Graduate	6	204.17	.079
Under Graduate	27	161.20	
Diploma	32	149.84	
Certificate	13	201.19	
SPM	155	149.85	
Others	67	133.37	
MARITAL STATUS Single			.546
Married	74	144.23	
Others	220	153.34	
	6	123.67	

The analysis of differences between educational level and success factor was executed in response to hypotheses 3. The result displayed mixed findings between each educational level. Those having postgraduate as well as those possessing certificate qualifications seems to be more successful (mean rank = 204.17 and 201.19) as compared to those entrepreneurs with undergraduate, SPM (high school), and others (161.20, 149.85, and 133.37 respectively). However the tabulated value in table 4, indicated that there is no significant difference on the educational level in observing the success factor of the business. Further analysis on each item suggested when observing Q2 (consumers having large number customers, Q3 (product fulfil customer needs), and Q5 (ability to improved standard of living), the result revealed that there were significant difference on these three items at .020, 0.27, and 0.49 respectively.

The decision to be entrepreneurs used to be associated with environmental dimensions and personality attributes. This is being reflected in our study. With such association, we undertake to investigate the possibility of differences in success factors based on marital status. Our findings suggested that regardless of each individual's marital status, there was no significant difference in terms of their success, although those who were married seems to be a little bit more successful (mean rank 153.34) as compare to those with single status (mean rank 153.34) or divorce separated (123.67). Further analysis of each item measuring success were also been observed. The result similarly indicated there were no significant difference between the marital status and success factor.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis.

Dimension	Standardized Coeff - Beta	t	Sig.
Environmental Factor	.277	5.081	.000
Personal Attributes	.362	6.648	.000

- Dependent Variable: success AWE
- Adjusted R Square : .298
- Sig F Change : .000

The above table displayed the multiple regression value between environmental factor and personal attributes with the success factor. Both variables were significant at 0.000 which therefore supported the hypothesis 1. Analyzing further on the relative importance of both variables, the tabulated value indicated that personal attributes contribute more towards the success factor based on the beta value of 0.362 as compared to environmental factor at 0.277. The above table further provide evidence that based on the Adjusted R Square, 29.8% of the two selected predictors (environmental factor and personal attributes) are able to explain its contribution in predicting the women entrepreneurial

success factor and both are significant at the sig F Change value of 0.000

Discussion And Conclusion:

It is our main interest in this paper to discuss the importance of establishing a relationship between environmental and personal attributes with women entrepreneur success factors. 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 continuously survive and compete in the business that they are currently enrolled.

Based on the findings generated by multiple regression analysis, the result indicates that both dimensions (environmental and personal attributes) were significant at 0.000. Personal attributes contribute more towards the success factor based on the beta value of 0.362 as compared to environmental factor at 0.277.

As an overall conclusion for observing the relationship, environmental and personal attributes are significantly 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 that needed further exploration for supporting business success.

One of the purpose that researcher attempt to discuss in this paper is investigating the possibility of differences by analyzing the profile of age, location, educational level, and marital status as related to women entrepreneur success factors. Our analysis revealed that there were no significant differences between all the above profile toward success in business. We therefore come into a conclusion that hypohotesis 2, 3, 4 and 5 were not supported in our discussion. However, entrepreneurs with the age group more than 56 years old were more successful, while those age group (16-30 years old) tend to be less successful. Similarly those in the rural areas are slightly more successful than entrepreneurs in urban areas. It is therefore useful to further explore these phenomenon as it can be used as a model for improving the success factor.

Based on the above observation, knowing the fact that there was an uptrend success of women entrepreneur in Malaysia, it is therefore appropriates that whatever strategic implementation that had been executed so far shoule move on as been planed without having changes related to the four (4) selected profile as been discuss in this study.

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