

## IDENTIFYING MOTIVATION FACTOR INVOLVEMENT OF SARAWAK MALAY WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR

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### Abstract

Sarawak multilayered cake among Sarawak product signature famous among the local as well as international tourist visiting Sarawak. In fact, Sarawak Malay women entrepreneurs have become very necessary players in the entrepreneurial field specifically in this cottage industries from the early introduction of this business, they have facing various problem in this businesses. Thus, this research aims to build an understanding of motivational factor that encourage Sarawak Malay women entrepreneurial experiences especially in multilayered cake businesses. Using qualitative methods, this research aims to identify the entrepreneurial motivations factors; with regards to start-up motivation by Sarawak Malay women. The finding shows that the motivations that influence Malay women within Kuching, Sarawak areas to start and grow their business are involve self-driven and context driven that motivate them involve in multilayered cakes businesses.

**Keywords:** Sarawak women, entrepreneur, cottage industries, motivation, challenges.

### Introduction

Sarawak Malay women entrepreneurs have become very necessary players in the entrepreneurial field. Even though the number is still small, it shows that they no longer to stick previous stereotype where women only stay home, cook and take care of their families. In fact, those women also can be income earners in the family. Female entrepreneurs have contributed significantly to the economic development of the economy, both in jobs created and in the generation of revenue. They can find success through their own business besides a lot of duties assigned to normal Malay women including reproductive chores, such as childcare and doing house work. Although there have been challenges faced by them in the past, society have begun accept that Sarawak Malay women entrepreneurs do contribute greatly to a country's economy. Furthermore, it is no longer strange to have business dealings with them.

There are rising in Sarawak Malay women entrepreneur specifically in cottage industries such as multilayered cakes. A total of 90 Sarawak layered cake entrepreneurs are recorded under the Bumiputera Entrepreneur Development Unit, Department of Sarawak Chief Minister in 2009. Sarawak multilayered cake is a signature product as a souvenir to visitors who come to Sarawak. The demand of layered cake is high, especially during the festive Raya season. The layered cake industry in Sarawak is centered almost entirely in Kuching in response to the One District

one Industry Program as stated by Department of Agriculture, Sarawak (Johari, 2014). Thus, it is essential to research Sarawak Malay women entrepreneur with consideration of their diverse background and diversity of experience. This research will not only enable an exploration of Sarawak Malay women entrepreneurship, but also provides an opportunity using these Sarawak Malay women's experience as a lens through.

### Research Problem

Research done by Jalbert (2000) found that in the twenty-first century women are perceived as a great source of innovation and job creation as a result of their increasing entrepreneurial activities. Women that being entrepreneurs would be creating jobs for themselves and others, and by being different also provides society with different solutions to management, organization and business problems as well as to the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. However, women entrepreneur cannot free themselves from such obstacles. Hence, they become socially and financially independent by working or opening their own businesses for their benefit and wellbeing without real prospects for financial independence. For those who do managed to establish independent businesses in Malaysia, they remain at the micro level because of the inability to expand due to the lack of properly coordinated support, financial support and insufficient access to new technologies.

In Malaysia, Malay women entrepreneur represent an incredible amount of untapped potential that may contribute to the economic growth. In fact, multilayered cake in Sarawak faced a various challenges such as stiff competition among the entrepreneurs, credit or capital access, difficulties in getting recognition by the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point or HACCP and HALAL standardizing authorities, and rising in raw materials price. In examining the challenges, the researcher would like to adopt a qualitative approach using personal interview survey in order to understand what actually motivate Sarawak Malay women entrepreneur involve in this business.

### ***Women and Entrepreneurship***

Participation of women in entrepreneurial activities in Malaysia is promoted as a way to supplement the family income following by the appearance of women as entrepreneurs that is in line with the Malaysian economic situation encouraging women to take their work seriously in business and industry. According to Lavoie (1985), while at the same time women entrepreneurs carry out their daily tasks managing their business ventures, they also are leaders who seize the initiative to launch a new business activity and take calculated risks in terms of financial, administrative or social responsibilities. Buttner and Moore (1997) identified those who have started a business, or have a substantial interest in the business and its management as women entrepreneur which is clearly defined that initiatives and risks are part of an entrepreneurs' undertaking.

Malay women entrepreneur who strongly want engaging in business must strike a balance between their private and public worlds (Fuad & Bohari, 2011; Mohd. Yunus & Mahajar, 2012). As a wife and mother, she must show respect and dedication; as an entrepreneur, she must be judicious and prudent; as a Muslim, she must not avoid from her faith. Most women are involved in the production of small business (cottage industries), micro-businesses and in the informal sector. Such as the Department of Community Development (KEMAS) and the Department of Agriculture (DOA) are some of government agencies that support most of these entrepreneurial activities which have nurtured the growth of women in business.

In case study by Teoh and Chong (2007) reported that 1,122 thousand women were participating in small and medium enterprises in 2003. After the Tenth Malaysia Plan, the situation of entrepreneurship among women and their participation in non-traditional sectors such as manufacturing, construction

and technology showed significant progress. In 2006, women entrepreneur constitute about half of the total population, and their share of employment had increase from 35.6 percent to 36.7 percent between 2000 and 2005, with representation in professional, managerial and technical levels according to Women Entrepreneur Association of Malaysia (FEM). The risen the number of women entrepreneur in Malaysia in percentage is not surprising as has increased in percentage in the past three decades due to affirmative actions by the government. All this has been facilitated by the growth in various sectors such as banking and finance, food production, general commercial, private and public services, education, training and consultancy and others.

To advancing women as entrepreneur the Federation Council's organizations Women's Entrepreneurship in Malaysia is establishing a proactive step with combining associations of the women entrepreneurs like *Peniagawati*, *Usahanita*, *Wawasanita*, Association of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Malaysia and Sarawak *Usahanita* have helped them to improve entrepreneurial activities to the global level. This situation shows that women are rapidly making a mark in business. Therefore, it is not surprising that image of women as entrepreneur becomes one of the fodders of creative imagination of Malaysian entrepreneurs. Further, Rhouse (n.d) said that Malay women entrepreneur build their enterprising values of being customer focused and quality driven and emphasizing trust in order to be competitive in business.

### ***Women Entrepreneur and Motivation***

Motivation is the driving force behind all people's actions. Behavioral psychologists have conducted research investigating why people behave the way they do (Sarri, & Trihopoulou, 2005). Ismail, Shamsudin, and Chowdhury (2012) and Alam, Jani, and Omar (2011) identified that push and pull factors motivate women to start their own business which are lack of employment opportunities, blocked opportunities, flexible work schedule requirements for family responsibilities are some motivations that encourage women to pursues entrepreneurship. Other factors pulling women towards setting up businesses such as fulfilling dreams, financial independence, commanding social respect, desire to achieve wealth in the future, and having trust in their own abilities. One study by Schwartz (1976) found that the need to achieve, the desire to be independent, the need for job satisfaction and economic necessity were women entrepreneurs major motivations starting a business.

Apart from that, the study revealed by Scott (1986) suggest that desire to control, need for achievement, to improve the financial situation, desire to be independent and the need for job satisfaction are also some notable motivating factors. Based on earlier research done by Lee and Rogoff (1997) found that among the motivation factors that lead women to start-up their own businesses are also desire for greater life flexibility, seeking challenges, fulfilling a long-felt desire or escaping from organizational glass ceiling. Hence, women were driven to entrepreneurship because of the independence and sense of achievement which entrepreneurship offers. Further, in studies conduct by Sexton (1980) women also rated better on dealing with people than men. In whatever way, Bender (2000) said that the premise of flexibility or just being able to do things their own way has become the ultimate motivation of women entrepreneurs.

In general, Robertson, Collins, Medeira, and Slater (2003) identified a business will neither start-up nor succeed without motivation. Nelson and Cengiz (2006) found that the Malaysian government has been very concerned to motivate in creating and developing quality, resilient and successful entrepreneurship which are competitive in all the potential growth sectors of the economy, and to cultivate and enterprising culture among Malaysian women. This again reflects the significance of women entrepreneurs in Malaysian economy. Meanwhile, Kavitha, Anatharaman, and Sharmila (2008) indicated that both motivation and environmental influences play a crucial role in entrepreneurship. An in-depth understanding on the influence of these variables will be useful to understand the complex phenomenon of entrepreneurship. Previous study by Selamat, Razak, and Gapor (2011) has shown that characteristic does not indicate the level of motivation and creativity in bringing Malay women entrepreneurs businesses into a higher level. However, despite the important role of women entrepreneurs in creating job opportunities for millions of people, there was only information available on the motivation of these Malaysian women becoming an entrepreneur.

### **Research Method**

A semi-structured interview is undertaken in which it involved a set of three questions ensuring that the respondents are consistent throughout the research. Field research design methods are employed to analyze the motivation by Sarawak Malay Women entrepreneur in Kuching. For this research, a sample size of five is chosen mainly within the multilayered

cake businesses. These strictly involved Malay women in multilayered cake businesses and owners of the business only. The criterion for these Malay women to be part of the research is that, they owned and managed their own premises employing a minimum of two people mainly females working for them. Likewise, the premise was setup by an entrepreneur and operated in Kuching area. Informants were asked a broad range of questions and the corresponding probe for each of the question. With permission of the informants, all interviews were recorded in order to allow the flow of the interview to be faster and smoother as well as to capture the actual content of the informants' comments. The recorded interviews were subsequently transcribed by hand and the data converted into a printed form to facilitate further analysis. No information identifying the informants was included in the written copy of the interviews. The informants' names were replaced by an identification code on all written materials and electronic data file connected to research.

Procedure of qualitative analysis was done immediately after each of the interviews to have a fresh description of informants' explanation (Kasuma, 2012; Kasuma, Yacob, Bullok, & Hossen, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The researcher wrote the report of each of the individual interview, and sent it back to the informant in order to receive their comments on the accuracy of the expressed ideas and to ensure the transparency of the process.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### ***Respondent Background***

Through the interviews, the researcher found out that all the respondents of the study were not highly educated or trained in their profession. All of the multilayered cakes owners' educational level was at Secondary School - *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) and involved in this business more than 5 years. The age involved in this study range between 31 years until 60 years old. Two of the respondent operated their businesses in stall, two of them at home and one respondent at rented premises. For financial support matters, three of the respondent running their business using their own savings and two of the respondent funded by TEKUN Nasional.

### ***Entrepreneurs' Motivation involving in this Business***

Through the responses of the research interviews, the findings are as follows:

### ***Self-Driven: Self Satisfaction and Independency as a strong encouragement***

The multilayered cake owners informed that their interest and fully supports from their families are main motivations that encourage them to begin their own multilayered cake business. Moreover, most of them became entrepreneurs believing that as a professional cake baker, they are entitled to utilize their talents by satisfying the needs and wants of the Malay women population who prefer being cake expert with the assistance of professionals specifically Malay women bakers. This result implies that these women purposefully create innovative business ventures which are unique to them as well as to create opportunities for her employees. Some of the comments supporting this are stated as follows:

*'I started my own business because I do appreciate my interest in baking cakes. Additionally I really passionate about baking cakes and had the passion to open my business since teenagers. Also to create opportunities for me to create jobs.'* DSH, 50s

*'I choose multilayered cake as my business product because I really interested with it and having fully supports from my husband and child is very thankful for me.'* HANI, 40

Additionally, to control one's schedule and life for self-fulfillment function as a motivator for Malay women starting a business especially in those in Kuching because in the Sarawakian society, Malay women are given little respect for their accomplishments and abilities. These encourage Malay women creating their own self-respect by being innovative and creative influencing the economic growth of the economy as they create opportunities. Thus, entrepreneurship to most of the multilayered cake shop owners provides an opportunity to uncover new sense of accomplishment in assisting themselves rather than to depend solely on men.

Additionally, according to Woldie and Adersua (2004), personal reason such as self-satisfaction, desire for independence, desire for autonomy, control of one's destiny and being the boss were strong motivator for women entrepreneurs.

*'I chose this business because I want my children to have a comfort life in the future and getting respect from people surround and it is important for living nowadays and my husband already passed away. I don't have good qualification to get a job.'* AFF, 60s

Furthermore, most Sarawak Malay women entrepreneurs in the cake business within the studied population start business because of flexible hours; prefer working for themselves, favorable working conditions and high in demand of multilayered cakes. Working for one's self as noted by most of the multilayered cake shop owners gives them flexibility because it is upon them to decide the number of hours to work in a day or week and decide the hours to be at work. It gives them space as they call their own time. More so, flexibility to Sarawak Malay women entrepreneurs is major as an environment in which they have control of where to work, how to work and when to work is created; to give them the ability to respond to personal needs of the family enabling them to balance their family responsibilities with work. Apart from time and space flexibility, it provides these Sarawak Malay women the sense of self-attainment and satisfaction. This is because they are earning wages in respectable ways, create employment for other women and are able to work under favorable conditions. These motivations support by Ismail *et al.* (2012) and Alam *et al.* (2011) who identified that flexible work schedule requirements for family responsibilities are some motivations that encourage women to pursue entrepreneurship. As well as research by Bender (2000) said that the premise of flexibility or just being able to do things their own way has become the ultimate motivation of Sarawak Malay women entrepreneurs.

*'I like to do my own business rather than working with others because of the time flexibility for me come to work freely. It is more comfortable when my premise is at my own home.'* ASM, 40s

*'...sometimes, I do baking at home only and my daughter will take responsibility doing sales at the stall but if her selling are not really good, then I will do it my own.'* HANI, 40

Thus, rising in demand of multilayered cakes from peninsular residents that coming for holiday, visiting or working in Kuching, Sarawak also motivate the Sarawak Malay women entrepreneurs' to do this business.

*'...20 years ago, I saw a demand for this multilayered cake is keeping increasing. So, I feel more motivate to precede my plan to make this product as my main business, more so, my family really supportive.'* DSH, 50s

*'I see this product already commercialized and demand for Kek Lapis really high even though the competitions are very hard too.'* NONI, 31

Besides, multilayered cake business are owned and run by women believing that they are offering a unique service or product that other bakery owners are not offering such as different in terms of ingredients, design, taste, shape or services.

### Context Driven

Furthermore, the respondents insist to show the ability to control and manage their financial future by selecting the often risky and difficult choice of entrepreneurship. The respondents of the research acknowledge financial motivations for starting their businesses because the previous employment “insufficiently” paid them as well as the pay for entry-level positions in some workplace did not pay well to provide for the basic necessities of life. Hence, the reason to own and operate their own business as it financially assists the women which enable them to afford the basic necessities of life. Ismail *et al.* (2012) and Alam *et al.* (2011) identified factors that motivate women to start their own business which are blocked opportunities, financial independence and desire to achieve wealth in the future. Dzisi (2008) reported that nowadays, more women are the one who supports their family with money they earn due to divorce and separation in which they are the only parent that provides for the family.

*‘I chose this business money is really important in getting respect from people surround and it is important for living nowadays. I have to create my own venture to earn more money to support my children life and educate them better.’*

AFF, 60s

Then, become the primary provider of the household. Due to such issues and circumstances which are common within the Malaysian context, Sarawak Malay women start their businesses to enable them to provide comfortable life for themselves and their families. Moreover, the interview also revealed that most of the women were pushed into business to generate income to provide for themselves and their families, especially their children’s education.

### Conclusion

Malay women entrepreneurship is an increasing phenomenon in Kuching, Sarawak as they assist in the economic growth and development of the country. These women create employment for themselves and the other members of the society. Then, they are also able to provide for themselves and their family financially. Though, they encounter challenges in owning and operating their own businesses, these challenges such as access to credit is a minor challenge because

they prefer personal savings rather than acquiring credit from formal financial institutions in which the procedure is slow; the cost of rent acted as a challenge in their businesses. Additionally, their high level of education regarding their profession makes a country’s economy grow. This has a basic impact on the development and growth of the economy. The findings regarding Sarawak Malay women entrepreneurs within the multilayered cake businesses face were reported that Self driven and Context driven factors can be concluded as a motivational factors that Sarawak Malay women entrepreneurs’ involved in this business. This shows that they are some similarity with Dzisi (2008) findings where through the interviews, most of the women mentioned elements such as financial rewards and flexibility as motivational factors as among other factors they involved in business.

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