

**The Shift from the Corporate Office to Business Ownership:
A Study of Malaysian Women Entrepreneurs**

By

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**Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Business Administration
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DECLARATION

The author hereby declares that this project paper is her original study unless stated otherwise. The due acknowledgement has been given to references quoted in the bibliography. The views and analyses in this study are that of the author based on the references made.



Signature :

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Abstract of the project paper submitted to the Senate of Universiti Tun Abdul Razak in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Business Administration

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This research examines the experiences of women who transitioned from working in corporate offices to owning their own businesses. The study sought to understand their motivations, personal and entrepreneurial qualities, challenges they faced during the transition, and how experiences differed among different ethnic groups. The study involved a questionnaire and convenience sampling of 102 women entrepreneurs in the Klang Valley. Women switched for economic incentives, business opportunities, autonomy, personal growth, and job satisfaction. They exhibited communication, listening, perseverance, and self-discipline skills, as well as problem-solving, leadership, relationship-building, and adaptability skills. Challenges included staffing shortages, lack of financial and team support, and lack of expertise. No significant differences in entrepreneurial characteristics were found among different ethnic groups, except for personal networking and computer skills, which could be remedied through education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
WIM	Women Institute of Management
FEM	The Federation of Women Entrepreneur Associations Malaysia
USAHANITA	Persatuan Usahawan Wanita Bumiputera Malaysia
OECD	Organizations for Economic Corporation and Development
ILO	International Labour Office
CCM	Companies Commission of Malaysia
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

The general trend appears to be an increase in women entrepreneurs worldwide. Women have more opportunities and certainly more options. Globally the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), 2022 indicates that more than one-third of all entrepreneurs are women.

This trend is also seen in Malaysia, where the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM, 2022) shows that 73,556 businesses were registered in 2020, and it has increased to 87,661 in 2022 despite the impact of Covid-19.

Through various initiatives, the Malaysian government through various initiatives have put forward many incentives and promoted women entrepreneurship, realising their important role in the economy. For example, the government had allocated RM230 million in financing funds to assist women entrepreneurs affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as to increase their business capacity. Among the funds are MARA's Special Business Financing Scheme for Women (DanaNITA) and Tekunita under Tekun Nasional (Ministry of Finance, 2022).

1.1 Statement of Problem

The key aspect of this study is to study why exactly women today leave their steady-paying jobs and venture into setting up their own business ventures within the Klang valley. Women face a myriad of challenges when working in corporate offices. Gender discrimination, gender bias and glass-ceiling prejudices are some of them, Rotimi, Brauner, Burfoot, Naismith, Silva, and Mohaghegh, (2023), Adikaram, and, Razik. (2022) and Tahir (2023).

At the same time women entrepreneurs also face problems when venturing into their own businesses. This applies to both rural and city environments too, (Rahman, Dana, Moral, Anjum, and Rahaman (2022). Capital financing, , family influence, social networking and even religion are impediments to women entrepreneurs when it comes to entrepreneurship. Extant literature has shown this to be true i.e. Al Boinin, (2023); Ummiroh, Schwab. and Dhewanto (2022).

Helm (1997) rightly suggests that men and women have different reasons for entering the business and that women have ‘internal-stable reasons’ (“I want to be my own boss”), while men have ‘external-stable reasons’ (“I saw a terrific market opportunity”).

Women’s entrepreneurship has good potential for empowering women and directly transforming society given that they make up half the population in almost all countries, (Reyes, and Neergaard, 2023). As such this study will examine from a Malaysian perspective what are the particular reasons women entrepreneurs in Malaysia would leave their corporate office jobs for business ownership? Hopefully this enlightenment will provide benchmarks

for more evidenced policy decisions to improve the opportunities for women entrepreneurs to be successful and to contribute to the nation.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research study is explore and examine why Malaysian women within the Klang Valley would leave their steady-paying jobs to venture into their own businesses.

Overall the objectives are to: -

- (i) Identify the factors that cause corporate women to take that step in business ownership.
- (ii) Identify the “entrepreneurial characteristics” as defined by Gartner (1989).
- (iii) Identify the uphill tasks faced by these women entrepreneurs in the Klang Valley.
- (iv) Examine the entrepreneurial characteristics of those ethnic groups.

1.3 Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- (i) What factors cause women to leave corporate offices for their own businesses?
- (ii) What entrepreneurial and personal characteristics make up those women?
- (iii) What challenges and difficulties do they face when taking that big step forward towards business ownership?
- (iv) What entrepreneurial differences are there among the different ethnic groups studied?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in it being able to unveil those specific characteristics of women who would consider leaving their corporate office jobs and the reasons they would do that. This becomes useful for policy decision-making by state and national governments that want to afford greater opportunities and spur employment creation (Hussain, Alshibani, and Daneshvar, 2023). Employment creation is the sine qua non goal of almost all governments and governing bodies as it contributes to economic growth and wealth creation significantly (De Clercq, Kaciak, and Thongpapanl, 2022). This study will contribute to a make-up or profile of women entrepreneurs in the Klang Valley and indirectly to the whole of Malaysia too.

1.5 Definition of Terms

An **entrepreneur** is someone who takes an invention or untested technological possibility and uses it to create a new product or produce an existing one in a new way. This can involve finding new sources of materials, creating new outlets for products, or reorganising an industry. (Schumpeter, 1942, p. 132).

Women entrepreneurs are women who have started their own businesses, are actively involved in managing them, own at least 50% of the company, and have been operating for at least one year. (Moore & Butter, 1997, p. 13).

Corporate career refers to a chosen profession or occupation within an organization or corporation. (Oxford University Press, 2022).

Business ownership refers to the exclusive right to possess, enjoy, and dispose of a commercial, industrial, or professional entity. (Oxford University Press, 2022).

1.6 Limitation of Study

The limitations of this study include;

1. The sampling was convenient and that may have contribute to biases and can impact the generalizability of findings. Additionally the Klang Valley respondents are mostly from the city and very few from the outskirts or suburban areas.
2. The survey overall was conducted and responded to by women entrepreneurs operating in the Klang Valley. Thus they would necessariy have obvious entrepreneurial characteristics.

1.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the overall rationale for conducting this study was outlined via the background, problem statement, limitations and most importantly the research questions. The next chapter will consider the literature and other studies with regard to women entrepreneurs to allow for a proper appraisal of the current background in this area.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will review the studies related to women entrepreneurs and those involved in corporate jobs. It considers the reasons why women would change and the ways they would do so. The key areas covered will include the factors that have spurred such women for those decisions, the particular characteristics revealed by previous seminal studies and the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the past and also presently, given the recent pandemic and other social and political changes.

2.1 Factors that spur corporate women into business ownership

There are historical as well as contemporary reasons why women would be interested to go into business ownership despite having an existing paying corporate job, (Dana, Chhabra, and Agarwal, 2023).

Amongst the most prominent factors as seen recently, has been gender roles, family influence, social networking and religion (Al Boinin, 2023). Covid-19 actually helped women entrepreneurs by increasing social networking and helped them acquire resources, too (Muzaffar, 2023).

Women entrepreneurs are incentivised by a 'pull' motivation in that they have a positive inner desire to start a business venture. This is because they prefer to take control and become independent and to not remain an employee. Common 'pull' factors based on studies are

independence or autonomy, being one's own boss, wealth creation, lifestyle change and the desire to use or apply personal experiences and knowledge (Burke et al., 2002; Singh & DeNoble 2003; Dewitt, Jafari-Sadeghi, Sukumar, Aruvanahalli Nagaraju, Sadraei, and Li, 2022; Semkunde, Elly, Charles, Gaddefors, and Chiwona-Karltun, 2022; Hamdani, Ramadani, Anggadwita, Maulida, Zuferi, and Maalaoui, 2023).

Alternatively, there are also disincentives or 'push' motivations which represent external negative factors. These include aspects such as job frustration, perceived lack of advancement opportunities, avoidance of low-paid occupations, escape from supervision and constraint of subservient roles, unemployment and retrenchment (Moore & Buttner, 1997; Curran & Blackburn 2001; Rashid and Ratten, 2022). Typically, business ownership is formed as a result of both 'pull' and 'push' factors and is seen as combinational between push and pull to varying degrees and variations depending on each women entrepreneur's scenario (Hughes 2003; Granger et al. 1995; Mukherjee, and Pathak, 2023).

Women entrepreneurs generally are aware that they are taking on greater financial risk. This is as compared to earning a steady income within corporate offices. However, they find that the opportunity for financial gain, independence and flexibility for work-life balances can also be much better (Baral et al., 2023).

In that regard the positives that flow from greater independence and wealth generation will allow women entrepreneurs to contribute positively to both their organisations as well as society. The experienced gained will allow them to cultivate and mentor other women

entrepreneurs and even provide support through networking and also monetary resources and recommendations for support from the right ministries or relevant departments (Orser, 2022). This will require many studies as the benefits are enormous and impactful, as seen in studies by Corrêa, Lima, Brito, Machado, and Nassif, (2022), who looked at female entrepreneurship in emerging and developing countries and considered the practical and policy implications.

Eleanor Brantley Schwartz's (1976) "Entrepreneurship, A New Female Frontier" was based on interviews with 20 female entrepreneurs. She applied exploratory and descriptive research and concluded that the primary motivators for the women were the "need to achieve", 'job satisfaction, economic payoffs and independence, the same motivators found for male entrepreneurs (Collins & Moore, 1964; Baral et al. 2023).

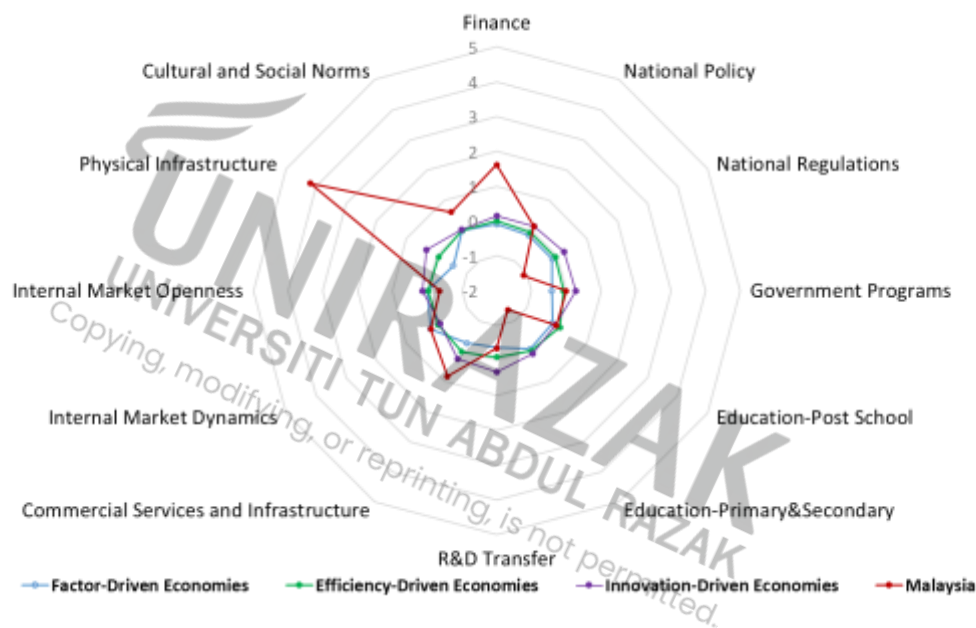
Scott (1986) and Kimuli, Sendawula, and Nagujja, (2022), in looking at the reason women started business ventures conducted two separate surveys to explore "glass ceiling" issues and the desire for increased flexibility to handle family responsibilities as possible motivators for women. They reported gender differences in reasons for starting a business; men stressed the desire to be their own bosses, and women reported being concerned with personal challenge and satisfaction. Another study found that motivation differed depending upon age of the woman business owner and the circumstances of founding, specifically whether the creation of the business represented a job transition or a re-entry into the workforce (Kaplan, 1988; Baral et. Al, 2023).

It was acknowledged that many of the reasons women gave for making the leap to entrepreneurship were also evident in studies of men; however, "other reasons appear special to women", Moore and Buttner (1997). Women have been fighting for equality in the face of a domineering patriarchal society buttressed by ancient outdated, idolised religious beliefs. Those conventions were weaponized and delivered severe inequalities. Women continue to fight within and outside of organisations. They seek equality in the workplace, equality in pay and notably in respect for their male counterparts (Tillmar et al., 2022). Good higher education by women contributes positively to parents' and husbands' positive perception of women. This, in turn positively impacted women's involvement and desire to set up their business ventures (Aminah, 1998). As cited in Maysami, 1996, the five major factors that motivate Singaporean women entrepreneurs to start their businesses were: (i) the perceived presence of a business opportunity; (ii) the desire to put their knowledge and skills into use; (iii) the need for freedom and flexibility; (iv) the desire to achieve personal growth and recognition; and (v) the need to make more money for financial independence. In that case, it was the women's own personal decisions that influenced them. The study also states that loyal customers, good product knowledge, competent staff and quality products and services as factors that contributed to women entrepreneurs' success (Gaies, Feola, Vesci, and Maalaoui, 2023),

Nordin's study (2005) in Malaysia suggested that self satisfaction, independence and finance did affect the growth of women entrepreneurs in Terengganu. This was also the case in Gaies et al., 2023.

The Ministry of Women and Family Development (2022) saw that Malaysian women entrepreneurs were poorly represented in new ventures. In tandem,, those that were nt international with their businesses were even smaller (Rafidah, 2020).

A study of the Malaysian entrepreneurial ecosystem also indicates some shortcomings overall. This is evident from the chart below.



Malaysia’s Overall Composite Indicators on Entrepreneurship Institutions, By Stage of Development, GEM 2022

In a book entitled ‘How to make the Leap from Corporate Careers to the Right Small Enterprise’, Ginny Wilmerding (2006), suggests the following five themes as reasons for leaving the corporate organizations: ‘Challenge, Self-Determination, Family Concerns, Blocks to Advancement, and Organizational Dynamics’. Five clusters of items emerged

from a content analysis of the focus interview data revealing more complex reasons for leaving the organizations: ‘Self-Determination was the most important reason composed of dimensions of Autonomy and Job Freedom; Challenges and Attractions of Entrepreneurship clustered second and included the items identified in the survey data; Blocks to Corporate Advancement were composed of the Lack of Career Advancement, Discrimination, and a Feeling of Not Fitting in the Corporate Culture; Organizational Dynamics dealt with Power and Politics; and Balancing Career and Family’.

Other factors that women entrepreneurs face include their need to relocate when their husbands move and they are expected to care for their children or the elderly or sick relatives. As such they cannot devote time to their respective businesses. Balancing work life and family life becomes challenging and negatively impacts their opportunities despite their skills and abilities (Rashid, and Ratten, 2022).

2.2 Characteristics of Women Entrepreneurs

Masud, Jariah and Laily (1997, pg. 24) in researching micro-enterprise projects through 319 women in Malaysia found that women ‘gained knowledge through their projects in managing and controlling productive resources, skill and experience, and an increase in their ability to source relevant information and solve problems that equip them to become entrepreneurs and setting the business successfully’. Female ex-corporate managers on the other hand take advantage of personal knowledge, skills, relationships and social networks when starting their new businesses.

Handani et al., (2023) reported that a woman entrepreneur need confidence, courage and will power to succeed. This may be applicable also to women entrepreneurs in malaysia. This may be difficult as Henning and Jardin (1977) suggest that women are generally risk averse towards business as compared to men.

2.3 Entrepreneurial Challenges for Women Entrepreneurs

It is well accepted that women entrepreneurs experiences are different from that of men (Hisrich and O’Cinneide, 1985; Tabari, and Chen, 2022). A major challenge for women entrepreneurs is financial capital to start their business ventures. They have less finances to begin with generally and due to their backgrounds, they also lack management experience (Carter, 2000; Adikaram, and Razik, 2022).

Machado’s et. Al., (2016) study of 201 female entrepreneurs, suggested that the most common difficulties to set up or develop their business were as follows: Lack of finance (63%), Isolation of working and taking decisions alone (42%), Lack of confidence (38%), Lack of skills and training (21%), Lack of support from agencies (20%).

Correa et. Al., 2022, suggest the absence of guidance and management experience are key difficulties that women face at the start up stages. In fact Lerner, Brush, & Hisrich, (1997) state that the main barrier is the perception women-owned businesses are viewed or perceived as less creditworthy and innovative.

Maysami (1999) in her paper found that common challenges for women business owners in Singapore were a lack of start-up capital, confidence in their abilities from banks and clients and suppliers and they also faced issues with their families.

The Women Institute of Management (WIM), (1997), stated that in Malaysia women entrepreneurs lacked support networks as compared to men. This is despite the fact that there are many Malaysian associations like FEM, NAWEM and USAHANITA, that were formed to fill the networking gap and also to provide trainings. These were done through seminars, conferences and motivational workshops conducted and supported by established women entrepreneurs. However many women seldom find the time to attend due to their family obligations (ChoudhuryKaul, Supriyadi, and Fahlevi, 2023).

2.4 Entrepreneurial Characteristics across The Major Ethnic Groups

As the respondents were Malaysian in the Klang Valley it was easy to discern the three major ethnic groups and to consider their overall characteristics separately. We could consider their personalities, company backgrounds and also their family backgrounds.

Yinger (1985, pg. 27) states that an ethnic group is a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves or others, to have common origin and to share important segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients’.

However as is often said, “An entrepreneur is an entrepreneur is an entrepreneur,” and it should not matter what size, shape, color, or sex the entrepreneur might be. Theories generated ideally should apply to all entrepreneurs taking into consideration their context and where relevant their gender too (Anderson, and Ojediran, 2022),

2.5 Conclusion

The above chapter considered the backdrop against which women entrepreneurs in Malaysia have to operate and also discussed some global trends for women entrepreneurs. Their characteristics and challenges were also reviewed taking into consideration their gender roles for both family and communities. The next chapter will be used to describe the methodology and respondents for this research study.

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The following chapter will outline and explain the overall research design which will include population, sampling technique, data collection method and analysis of the same.

3.1 Research Design

Philosophically we will look at this research ontologically as we need to understand what actually is happening in reality for these actors. The interpretive philosophy suits this research as we want the opinion of the relevant respondents within their scenarios. Based on the relevant literature, a deductive approach will be taken. This will be applied using a survey questionnaire as we can gather the relevant data for the purposes of the research objectives stated above; a mono-method study. This cross-sectional study analysis will use primary data applying a quantitative technique (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2009).

3.2 Population and Sample

The sample was based on convenience and comprised women entrepreneurs who had previously worked in corporate offices. Location wise, they were all located within the Klang Valley and this included their businesses as well. The total actual respondents comprised 86 such women.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

The survey method was via questionnaires which could easily be self-administered. This method was flexible as we could reach the respondents via WhatsApp and emails. In all cases the respondents were assured of anonymity.

The women entrepreneurs were mainly Eduwis Preschool Centre, RealKids Preschool and Kumon franchise holders. In this regard it was identified via convenience sampling directly by the researcher. Random sampling would have been challenging given the time frame and the availability of listings.

The total questionnaires sent out were 95. The usable ones were 86 in total. A key limitation to this method was that the women chosen were already entrepreneurs and as such would have been largely entrepreneurial. However given the constraints of time and resources this method was applied but the limitation would be discussed further.

3.4 Operational Definitions

3.4.1 Entrepreneur

Refers to ‘one who reforms or revolutionizes the pattern or production by exploiting an invention, or, more generally, an untried technological possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way, by opening up a new source of supply of materials or new outlet for products, by reorganizing an industry and so on’ (Schumpeter, 1934, p. 132)

3.4.2 Women Entrepreneurs

Refers to 'women, who have initiated business, actively involved in managing it, own at least 50% of the firm, and have been in operation one year or longer'. (Moore & Butter, 1997, p.13).

3.4.3 Corporate Career

Refers to a chosen pursuit, a profession or an occupation in an organization or corporation.

3.4.4 Business Ownership

Refers to the exclusive right of possessing, enjoying, and disposing of an organization or enterprising entity engaged in commercial, industrial or professional activities.

3.5 Instrumentation

The survey consisted of two distinct sections, namely Section A and Section B. The first section required the respondents to provide their demographics, while the second section focused on their personal opinions, motivations, and the challenges they faced. To ensure that the respondents could answer truthfully, the survey guaranteed complete anonymity.

The survey utilized two different Likert Scale formats to measure the motivations for business ownership and the challenges/difficulties faced. The first scale featured five different options ranging from "very true" to "not true at all," while the second scale had five options ranging from "not at all" to "very strongly possess." Both of these scales are widely

used in academic journals to measure similar questions and were adapted to fit the local context.

Overall, the survey was designed to gather comprehensive data on the respondents' perspectives and experiences in a manner that was both fair and accurate.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

There was a cover letter for each letter that outlined the purpose of the study and that their confidentiality was assured. The survey took place between July and August 2023.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

When attempting to measure any given phenomenon accurately, it is critical to consider both reliability and validity. Reliability is typically assessed statistically, while validity provides a more comprehensive evaluation. In order to ensure the instrument's reliability, we employed the use of Cronbach Alpha on two separate occasions - once during the pilot testing phase and once again during the actual study. In regards to validity, we took steps to ensure that the items were evaluated by both the supervisor and other experts. It's worth noting that the pilot study involved a total of 16 participants, and the results of the Cronbach Alpha tests can be found in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Instrument Reliability for Pilot and Actual Study

		Cronbach's Alpha	
		Pilot Testing N=16	Actual Study N=86
1.	Factors that spur women into business	0.781	0.826
2.	Personal skills of women entrepreneurs	0.967	0.889
3.	Entrepreneur skills of women entrepreneurs	0.978	0.943
4.	Challenges and problems faced by women entrepreneurs	0.923	0.867

The figures between 0.826 to 0.943 indicates good reliability overall for this research study.

3.8 Data Analysis

Upon completion of the data collection Statistical package, SPSS version 25.0 was used for data analysis.

Percentages and medians were used to analyze the data of the study. Descriptive statistics, being significant for describing the data offers a powerful set of conceptual tools which one would be able to use in order to extend a better understanding of data in a number of important ways. Median was used in this analysis to obtain central tendency as the data was ordinal and the median can provide good, representative value for this research purpose. (Kaur, Stoltzfus, and Yellapu, 2018).

Table 3.2 Statistic Analysis Employed

Research Questions	Statistical Analysis employed
(1) What are the factors that spur women from leaving the corporate world into business ownership?	Percentage distribution of factors and their Median
(2) What are their personal and entrepreneurial characteristics?	Percentage distribution of characteristics and their Median
(3) What are the challenges and problems they are facing, and	Percentage distribution of challenges/problems and their Median
(4) Are there significant differences in the entrepreneurial characteristics among the major ethnic groups?	Kruskal Wallis Test

As shown in Table 3.2, the techniques chosen to answer the research questions were percentage distribution and the median for Questions 1, 2 and 3. Kruskal Wallis Test was performed to answer Question 4. From there the conclusions were discussed and recommendations and rationale were provided accordingly.

3.9 Conclusion

This above chapter looked at the philosophies and methodologies. It also describes the reliability and the validity of the instrument. Chapter 4 will consider the data analysis for the findings based on the research questions posed.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis. This discussion will follow the research questions provided earlier in Chapter 1.

4.1 Profile of the Respondents

The questionnaire available was 86 questionnaires. The profile of the respondents is summarised below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: The Racial Composition of the Respondents

Race	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Malay	21	25.0
Chinese	30	35.0
Indian	35	40.0
Total	86	100.0

Table 4.1 above shows the racial composition of the respondents. There were 21 Malay respondents (25%), 30 Chinese respondents (35%), and 40 Indian respondents (40%) in this study.

Table 4.2: Respondents Age Group

Age Group	No. of Respondent	Percentage
25 yrs and below	2	2.0
26 – 35 yrs	14	15.7
36 – 45 yrs	33	39.1
46 – 55 yrs	27	31.4
Above 55 yrs	10	11.8
Total	86	100.0

Table 4.2 above shows that a major group of the respondents (39.2%) falls under the 36 to 45 years age group (33 respondents, followed by another 31.4% of respondents falling under the 46 to 55 years age group (27 respondents). About 12% of the respondents are aged more than 55 years (10 respondents). On the other hand, only 15.7% of the respondents are aged between 25 and 35 years (14 respondents).

As seen in Table 4.3 below, many of the respondents (women entrepreneurs) (35.3%) have a first degree whilst 19.6% possess postgraduate degrees. About 25.5% of respondents are diploma holders while another 19.6% are SPM holders.

Table 4.3: Respondents' Highest Academic Qualification

Highest Academic Qualification	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Masters/PhD	17	19.6
First Degree	31	35.3
Diploma	22	25.5
SPM	17	19.6
Total	86	100.0

Table 4.4: Respondents' Working Experience

Working Experience	No. of Respondent	Percentage
More than 20 yrs	20	23.5
15-19 yrs	13	15.7
10-14 yrs	13	15.7
Less than 10 yrs	40	45.1
Total	86	100.0

Table 4.4 above outlines the working experiences of the respondents. 23.5% of respondents have acquired more than 20 years of working experience, with another 16% having working experience between 15 to 19 years. A similar percentage (16%) of respondents possess working experience between 10 to 14 years. However, a big group (40) of the respondents (45.1%) seem to possess working experience of less than 10 years.

Table 4.5 below indicates the last job category of the respondents. This refers to their job title while they were in the corporate sector prior to becoming women entrepreneurs. About 45% of the respondents held management posts, 41.2% of them held executive posts, and about 8% were at the corporate level. It can also be seen that only about 6% of the respondents were holding clerical positions.

Table 4.5: Respondents' Last Job Category

Last Job Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Clerical level	5	5.9
Executive level	35	41.2
Management level	39	45.1
Corporate level	7	7.8
Total	86	100.0

Table 4.6: Respondents Type of Former Organization

Type of Former Organization	No. of Respondents	Percentage
International	32	37.3
National	54	62.7
Total	86	100.0

As shown in Table 4.6 above, about 62.7% of respondents worked at national type organizations before moving on to business ownership, whilst 37.3% worked in international-type organizations before starting their own businesses.

Table 4.7 below shows that most of the respondents (82.4%) worked in the private sector as compared to 17.6% of the respondents who worked in the public sector before starting their own businesses.

Table 4.7: Respondents' Type of Former Sector

Type of Sector	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Private	71	82.4
Public	15	17.6
Total	86	100.0

Table 4.8: Respondents Attempts at Own Business

Attempts	No. of Respondents	Percentage
First Attempt	71	82.4
Second Attempt	13	15.7
Third Attempt	2	2.0
Total	86	100.0

A majority of the respondents, i.e. 71 or 82.4% of them, indicated that this was their first attempt at starting their own business. Those for whom this was their second attempt made up 13 or 15.7% of the respondents. It was obvious that a majority of them had little prior experience as entrepreneurs, as only 2% or 2 of them had made three attempts before this study.

4.2 Data Analysis & Findings

The data collected was analysed using SPSS version 25.0, and the results are presented below following the sequence of the research questions.

RQ 1: What factors cause women to leave corporate offices for their own businesses?

By using percentage distribution across a median we observed that several factors could have been pivotal to these women taking on the entrepreneurship challenge. Those responses are shown using percentages in Table 4.9 below.



Table 4.9: Percentage Distribution of the Responses regarding the Drive towards Entrepreneurship

NO	ITEM	Not True at all (%)	Least True (%)	Somewhat True (%)	Quite True (%)	Very True (%)	Median
1.	My motivator or drive to make a leap into business has been:						
	(a) the need to achieve personal growth	-	2.0	13.7	44.1	43.2	4
	(b) recognition	5.9	25.5	23.5	29.4	15.7	4
	(c) job satisfaction (sense of self-worth)	1.0	1.0	18.6	39.2	40.3	4
	(d) economic payoff	-	11.9	26.4	37.3	24.6	4
	(e) independency	-	3.9	16.6	41.2	39.3	4
	(f) the need to freedom and flexibility	2.0	2.0	18.6	37.3	40.3	4
	(g) family business.	41.2	19.6	19.6	13.7	5.9	1
	(h) family commitments.	15.7	13.7	31.4	15.7	23.5	3
	(i) balancing career and family.	9.8	11.8	21.6	33.3	23.5	4
	(j) create supplement incomes for the family.	9.8	21.6	29.4	31.4	7.8	4
	(k) gender discrimination at work-place.	51.0	31.4	3.9	7.8	5.9	1
	(l) presence of business opportunity.	2.0	7.8	23.5	36.3	32.2	4
	(m) desire/passion to put knowledge and skills into use.	-	2.0	20.5	36.3	31.2	4
	(n) personal achievement (interest).	-	2.9	6.8	41.1	49.1	5
	(o) autonomy (freedom).	3.0	3.9	19.6	46.1	22.5	4
	(p) the demand of relocating of an executive position or husband position.	56.9	23.5	9.8	9.8	2.0	1
	(q) organizational dynamics dealt with power and politics.	41.2	31.4	27.5	-	-	1
	(r) social and political factor in the country	37.3	35.3	25.5	2.0	-	1
	(s) traumatic events- eg. divorcee, widower	66.7	15.7	17.6	-	-	1
2.	I started business out of frustration due to blocks to corporate advancement (Lack of career advancement and discrimination).	56.9	13.7	15.7	7.8	5.9	1
3.	I started business due to lack of mentors or role models in my earlier organization.	62.7	17.6	7.8	5.9	5.9	1
4.	I started business because I felt of not fitting into a corporate culture.	52.9	27.5	5.9	7.8	5.9	1
5.	I started business because I get family support and co-operation.	23.5	7.8	21.6	17.6	29.4	5
6.	I started business because I find it difficult to balance career and family.	31.4	17.6	19.6	13.7	17.6	1
7.	I started business because of sexual harassments at the workplace.	84.3	9.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	1

Among the factors identified sequentially are: (1) Need for personal achievement (90.2%), Personal growth (87.3%), (2) Job satisfaction (79.5%), (3) Independence (80.5%), (4) Flexibility (77.6%), (5) Autonomy (68.6%), (6) Presence of business opportunity (68.5%), (7)

Putting passion/knowledge in use (67.5%), and (8) Economic payoff (61.9%). The responses measured for those factors were at the true and very true end of the Likert scale applied.

However, the respondents indicated that Gender discrimination, Relocating from the workplace, Traumatic events in their life, Frustration due to blocks in career advancement, Not fitting into corporate culture, Lack of mentors, and Sexual harassment were not the factors in spurring women entrepreneurs into business.

Research Question 2 : What entrepreneurial and personal characteristics make up those women?

The aim of this particular study was to recognize and evaluate the personal and entrepreneurial abilities of women entrepreneurs, drawing on established research conducted by Abaddi (2023) and Pennetta, Anglani, and Mathews (2023). The study employed 16 variables to measure personal attributes and an additional 25 variables to assess entrepreneurial characteristics. The results were analyzed using percentage distribution and median. Table 4.10 showcases the order of personal skills possessed by the entrepreneurs, with the most prominent being a keen passion or interest in the business (82.4%). This was followed by listening skills (78.4%) and communication skills (78.4%), indicating that these women entrepreneurs prioritize effective communication and actively seek input from others. In fourth place, we have the attribute of hardworking (78.4%) which highlights the dedication and commitment of these entrepreneurs towards their business. Further down the list, we see the importance of perseverance in any situation (66.6%), self-management (62.8%), and self-discipline (62.7%). These skills are crucial for women entrepreneurs as they navigate through various challenges and strive towards success.

Table 4.10: Percentage distribution of Personal Skills possessed by respondents

No.	Item	Not At All (%)	Least Possess (%)	Some-what Possess (%)	Strongly Possess (%)	Very Strongly Possess (%)	Median
5.	Passionate about the business	-	-	17.6	41.2	41.2	4
3.	Listening skills	-	-	21.6	52.9	25.5	4
4.	Communication skills	-	2.0	19.6	52.9	25.5	4
16.	Hardworking	2.0	7.8	11.8	49.0	29.4	4
8.	Perseverance at any situation	2.0	2.0	29.4	49.0	17.6	4
10.	Self-management	2.0	2.0	33.3	51.0	11.8	4
13.	Self-discipline	-	3.9	33.3	45.1	17.6	4
1.	Proactive personality	-	7.8	29.4	39.2	23.5	4
2.	Set goals and action plan	-	2.0	35.3	45.1	17.6	4
6.	Persistent	2.0	3.9	31.4	43.1	19.6	4
9.	Good time management	5.9	3.9	33.3	49.0	7.8	4
11.	Good Instinct	2.0	3.9	39.2	43.1	11.8	4
14.	Able to manage stress	-	9.8	41.2	33.3	15.7	3
15	Community service by creating employment	5.9	7.8	31.2	37.3	9.8	3
12.	Acquainted with networking and collaboration skills	-	7.8	45.1	33.3	13.7	3
7.	Obsessed	15.7	15.7	41.2	17.6	9.8	3

Conversely, the skill that was least possessed by these women entrepreneurs were: (1) Being Obsessed, (2) Acquainted with networking and collaboration skills, (3) Community service by creating employment and (4) Ability to manage stress.

Table 4.11: Percentage distribution of Entrepreneurial Skills possessed by respondents

Item No.	Entrepreneurial skills	Not at all (%)	Least Possess (%)	Some-what Possess (%)	Strongly Possess (%)	Very Strongly Possess (%)	Median
6.	Showing confidence, courage and strong willpower.	-	-	21.6	45.3	33.3	4

Table 4.11, continued

15.	Coordinating business development	2.0	3.9	39.2	39.2	15.7	4
13.	Decision-making skills.	-	-	27.5	41.2	31.4	4
16.	Leadership skills	-	-	33.3	41.2	25.5	4

22.	Creative thinking in problem-solving	2.0	2.0	31.4	47.1	17.6	4
7.	Efficient and effective in executing plans.	-	2.0	35.3	37.3	25.5	4
4.	Leveraging personal accumulation of knowledge, skills and relationship.	2.0	2.0	33.3	47.1	15.7	4
1.	Entrepreneurial/business knowledge (products/services)	2.0	3.9	31.4	39.2	23.5	4
5.	It is being analytical.	-	2.0	39.2	47.1	11.8	4
23.	Balancing skills between personal and business life	-	-	41.2	43.1	15.7	4
24.	Adaptability to changes	-	3.9	37.3	41.2	17.6	4
11.	Efficient in producing high-quality products/services.	2.0	5.9	37.3	43.1	11.8	4
12.	Delegation of job responsibilities to staff.	2.0	5.9	37.3	39.2	15.7	4
14.	HR Management	2.0	7.8	35.3	37.3	17.6	4
18.	Team building & conducting meetings ability	-	3.9	43.1	37.3	15.7	4
19.	Creativity (venturesome) and systematic	2.0	9.8	39.2	35.3	13.7	3
20.	Financial Management – to manage monthly cash-flow	2.0	11.8	37.3	29.4	19.6	3
21.	Innovative behaviors	2.0	5.9	43.1	41.2	7.8	3
17.	Policy development and execution skills	-	3.9	49.0	31.4	15.7	3
9.	Good marketing strategies.	3.9	7.8	43.1	29.4	15.7	3
2.	Controlling productive resources	5.9	5.9	43.1	37.3	7.8	3
8.	Good strategic management & planning practices.	2.0	9.8	45.1	25.5	17.6	3
3.	Risk-taking	5.9	7.8	45.1	27.5	13.7	3
25	Enhance competitiveness in the market	2.0	3.9	52.9	31.4	9.8	3
10.	Computer knowledge.	3.9	9.8	49.0	29.4	7.8	3

Entrepreneurial skills were assessed using twenty-five variables within the questionnaires provided to each woman entrepreneur. The entrepreneurial skills most possessed were;

- (1) Showing confidence, courage and strong willpower (78.6%),
- (2) Decision-making skills (72.6%),
- (3) Leadership skills (66.7%),
- (4) Creative thinking in problem-solving (64.7%),
- (5) Being efficient and effective in executing plans (62.8%),
- (6) Leveraging personal accumulation of knowledge, skills and relationship (62.8%),
- (7) Entrepreneurial/business knowledge (62.7%),
- (8) Being analytical (58.9%),
- (9) Balancing skills between personal and business life (58.8%),
- and (10) Flexibility- ability to change (58.8%).

Among the five most minor possessed entrepreneurial skills identified include (1) computer knowledge (37.2%), (2) Enhanced competitiveness in the market (41.2%), (3) Risk-taking (41.2%), (4) Good strategic management & planning practices (43.1%), and (5) Controlling productive resources and Good marketing strategies (promoting the products) (45.1%).

Research Question 3: What challenges and difficulties do they face when taking that big step towards business ownership?

All eighteen challenges and difficulties were outlined in the questionnaire and the resultant challenges were median ranked to assess the challenges for the women entrepreneurs.

The following challenges and issues are listed in Table 4.12: Lack of professional staff (35.3%); lack of staff (35.2%); development and growth concerns (29.5%); lack of dedicated/sincere staff (29.4%); low management practices/systems (23.6%); financial constraint due to high overheads (23.5%); lack of start-up capital (17.7%); isolation of making decisions alone (17.6%); carrying out heavy workloads (17.6%); and less advice and help from expert acquired (15.7%).

Table 4.12: Percentage distribution of Challenges/Problems faced by Respondents

No.	Item	Not at all (%)	Least Possess (%)	Some-what Possess (%)	Strongly Possess (%)	Very Strongly Possess (%)	Median
2.	Development and Growth Issues	13.7	21.6	35.5	25.6	3.9	3
3.	Poor management practices/systems	13.7	33.3	29.4	19.7	3.9	3
4.	Financial constraints	17.6	27.5	35.3	9.8	9.8	3
5.	Consultation from experts required	7.8	41.2	35.3	9.8	5.9	3
6.	Isolation of taking decisions alone	13.7	27.5	41.9	13.7	3.9	3
13.	Shortage of staff	15.7	27.5	21.6	17.6	17.6	3
14	Shortage of professional staff	11.8	23.5	29.4	21.6	13.7	3
15.	Shortage of committed/sincere staff	13.7	27.5	29.4	11.8	17.6	3
17.	Facing heavy workloads	21.6	27.5	33.3	9.8	7.8	3
1.	Lack of start-up capital	25.5	35.3	21.6	5.9	11.8	2
7.	Lack of confidence	27.5	47.1	11.8	5.9	7.8	2
8.	Lack of skills and training in business techniques	15.7	47.1	28.5	11.8	2.0	2
10.	Overloaded with family responsibilities and other problems	27.5	33.3	25.5	7.8	5.9	2
11.	Lack of family support	45.1	25.5	15.7	9.8	3.9	2
12.	Lack peer support due to family commitment	35.3	27.5	23.5	11.8	2.0	2
16.	Lack of support from business partners	49.0	31.4	9.8	7.8	2.0	2
18.	Unattractive remuneration package	21.6	49.0	21.6	5.9	2.0	2
9.	Engaged in too many businesses	54.9	29.4	11.8	2.0	2.0	1

Conversely, the least challenges/problems encountered by the respondents include; being engaged in too many businesses (4.0%); unattractive remuneration package (7.9%); lack of support from business partners (9.8%); lack of family support (13.7%); shortage of peer support due to family commitment (13.8%).

Research Question No. 4: What entrepreneurial differences are there among the different ethnic groups studied?

A thorough analysis was conducted utilising the Kruskal-Wallis Test to investigate whether there were any discernable discrepancies among various ethnic groups in terms of their

personal and entrepreneurial skills. This testing method is particularly useful when working with ordinal or non-normally distributed data or when dealing with relatively small sample sizes, as it can provide valuable insights into the nuances of the data.

Upon conducting the test, the results revealed that there were no significant differences among the groups, except in the areas of networking, self-discipline, and computer skills. Specifically, the networking and collaboration skills demonstrated noteworthy differences with a χ^2 value of 6.752 (2, N=86) and a p-value of 0.034. The Indian respondents exhibited a higher mean ranking (31.73) in this area compared to the Chinese respondents (20.06). Similarly, self-discipline also indicated a significant difference with a χ^2 value of 5.986 (2, N=86) and a p-value of 0.05. The Indian respondents scored much higher in this area, with a mean ranking of 31.53 compared to the Malay respondents' 19.92. Lastly, computer knowledge showed a significant difference with a χ^2 value of 10.378 (2, N=86) and a p-value of 0.006. The Indian respondents again displayed a higher mean ranking (31.98) in this area compared to their Chinese counterparts (17.86).

These findings provide significant insight into the personal and entrepreneurial skills of different ethnic groups, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each group in specific areas. The Kruskal-Wallis Test served as a reliable and effective tool for the analysis, allowing for the identification of significant differences that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. Overall, this analysis provides valuable information that can be used to support and improve entrepreneurial efforts among different ethnic groups.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the philosophical underpinnings and the methodology used to analyse the data collected from eighty-six women entrepreneurs. The findings were tabled to research questions were addressed using a sequential approach to the findings from the research questionnaires. The next chapter will discuss the findings, consider the limitations and make recommendations.



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will discuss and evaluate the findings based on the data collected. The discussion will follow the sequence of the research questions that were posed to discover the following i.e. the factors that cause women to leave corporate offices for their own businesses, the entrepreneurial and personal characteristics of those women, the challenges and difficulties women entrepreneurs face when shifting from corporate offices to owning their own businesses and the entrepreneurial differences amongst the different ethnic groups.

5.1 Findings and Discussion

Without using the phrase "convenience sampling," we received a total of 86 responses from participants in this study. Of those, 21 were Malay, 30 were Chinese, and 35 were Indian. Most of the respondents were over 36 years old, but 18% were between 25 and 35 years old. The majority of participants had at least a degree or postgraduate degree, while 30% had a diploma or SPM certificate. Over a quarter of respondents had 20 or more years of work experience, and 32% had between 10 and 19 years of experience. Many participants held senior management or executive positions before becoming entrepreneurs. Overall, the women entrepreneurs in this study had good work experience.

Most of the participants came from the private sector, with three quarters of them having worked there before starting their own businesses. However, most of them were starting their own business for the first time, which suggests they may have faced challenges in dealing with the uncertainty of business ownership.

5.1.1 Research Question 1 : What factors cause women to leave corporate offices for their own businesses?

The main factors identified were the Need to achieve personal growth, Job satisfaction, Independence, Flexibility, Autonomy, Presence of business opportunity, Putting passion/knowledge to use, and Economic payoff. Similar to this finding, Eleanor Brantley Schwartz's (1976) found that key motivators for the women entrepreneurs in her study were the "need to achieve", 'job satisfaction, economic payoffs and independence. Those were similar motivators for male entrepreneurs too (Collins & Moore, 1964; Kariv, Cisneros, Kashy-Rosenbaum, and Krueger, 2022; Bell, Thach, and Fang, 2023).

Generally, the readings from the literature use pull and push factors to explain motivations as discussed by Bell et al., (2023) in their paper entitled, "Examining motivations and challenges of black wine entrepreneurs using the push-pull theory of entrepreneurship", in the International Journal of Business Research. Other studies include Gilad, (1986); Olofsson and Petersson, (1986); Buttner and Moore, (1997); Solymossy, (1997); Samuelsson, and Witell, (2022) and Winand, Bell, and Zeimers, (2023).

In this regard the findings are for the most part similar where women entrepreneurs are concerned. The pull factors highlighted often in the earlier journals are the desire to be independent (Huq and Richardson, 1997; Orhan and Scott, 2001), self-achievement or self-fulfilment (Hisrich & Ozturk, 1999; Izyumov & Razumnova, 2000; Ufuk and Ozgen, 2001a), innovativeness and desire for wealth, and social interest (Orhan and Scott, 2001).

Other factors are less impactful, and they include Family support and cooperation, Recognition, Family commitment, supplementing incomes for the family, Change in positive trends of parents and husbands, and Balancing career and family. Some of these factors are referred to as push factors in the literature (Ufuk and Ozgen, 2001a; Huq and Richardson, 1997). In Malaysia Aminah (1998), in her study posits that attitudes are changing and that parents and husbands take a more positive approach that encourages women's participation in the business sector. This was supported further by Singh Sandhu, Fahmi Sidique, and Riaz, (2011) in their study of entrepreneurship barriers and entrepreneurial inclination among Malaysian postgraduate students

The lowest motivating factors were family business and political and social factors. However, the respondents responses indicated that Gender discrimination, Relocating from the workplace, Traumatic events in their life, Frustration due to blocks in career advancement, Not fitting into corporate culture, Lack of mentors, and Sexual harassment were not the motivating factors that spur them into business ownership.

It would seem that these women entrepreneurs shifted from corporate careers for their self-development, independence, flexibility, autonomy, and passion as the main reasons. The Woman-Led Businesses in Massachusetts research study conducted by The Center for Women's Leadership at Babson College and The Commonwealth Institute shattered the perception that the glass ceiling is a major reason women leave the corporate world. As such the study shows that the two key factors that compel women to become entrepreneurs are personal achievement and autonomy.

This however is not congruent with Abdul Rashid's (1995) study which found that women entrepreneurs are much less motivated by financial reasons e.g. money and economic necessity. To add on, Schienhutte et al's (2003) study suggest that women value the ability to pursue

career goals in tandem with family obligations which could lead them to implement less aggressive and fewer growth strategies. This was further supported recently in Adikaram, and Razik, (2022) and Nguyen, Lin, and Vu, (2023).

The reasons that women venture into business are varied overall. Huq and Richardson (1997), found some doing so to supplement family incomes and others as a hobby or just for more freedom from patriarchy. Personal freedom, security, and satisfaction were the primary goals for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan (Shabbir & D'Gregorio, 1996). A report commissioned by the OECD (Hall, 2003), found that women entrepreneurs were closer to being “growth-oriented women entrepreneurs”, rather than “lifestyle” entrepreneurs (Llados-Masllorens, and Ruiz-Dotras, (2022). As such there is clearly a gap between previous and present women entrepreneurs and their respective reasons for embarking on their own businesses.

It would appear that personal goals and intentions have changed or evolved over time based on the above research findings, literature and analysis. The women entrepreneurs of yesterday are not the same as those today and tomorrow they will likely be even more different and will forge greater goals and newer more exciting frontiers.

5.1.2 Research Question 2: What entrepreneurial and personal characteristics make up those women?

The entrepreneurial and personal characteristics of women entrepreneurs are essential to the development of initiatives, training, and policies that uplift them. As women constitute half of the population, these characteristics can have a significant impact on any nation. This study examines 16 personal and 25 entrepreneurial characteristics of women entrepreneurs.

The most crucial skill that supports entrepreneurial characteristics is being passionate and interested in the business, followed by listening and communication skills. The fourth-ranking

personal skill is being hardworking, followed by perseverance, self-management, self-discipline, and persistence. These results seem intuitive, but the combination of passion and business interest can bring about commitment and perseverance, which are positive qualities that follow passion naturally.

Other characteristics that moderately influence women entrepreneurs' success include proactive personality, setting goals and action plans, good time management, and good instincts. These characteristics attest to the drive and need for better training and exposure to businesses among women entrepreneurs.

However, the least possessed skills include being obsessed, networking and collaboration skills, community service by creating employment, and managing stress. Networking has always been crucial, but women entrepreneurs seem to lack this skill. There are many reasons for this, such as insufficient time or a lack of freedom within patriarchal societies where only men can have informal meetings outside.

When it comes to entrepreneurial skills, the most strongly possessed skills are courage and strong willpower, showing confidence, leadership skills, creative thinking in problem-solving, being efficient and effective in executing plans, leveraging personal accumulation of knowledge, skills, and relationships, decision-making skills, entrepreneurial/business knowledge, being analytical, balancing personal and business life, and flexibility.

Moderate skills possessed by women entrepreneurs include efficient production of high-quality products/services, delegation of job responsibilities to staff, HR management (recruiting, training and managing staff), team building and conducting meetings ability, creativity

(venturesome) and systematic, and financial management. These skills can increase the probability of success for women entrepreneurs, especially since many are first-time business owners.

On the other hand, the six least possessed entrepreneurial skills are risk-taking, computer knowledge, enhancing competitiveness in the market, controlling productive resources, good strategic management and planning practices, and good marketing strategies. However, Masud et al.'s study (1999) showed that women entrepreneurs could gain these skills by managing resources within businesses or as employees and applying them to their own businesses over time.

In conclusion, while the majority of respondents agreed that being an entrepreneur poses entrepreneurial risk-taking, women tend to avoid risky actions and decisions compared to men. However, when faced with a challenging and prejudicial business or work environment, women may exhibit a reverse trend.

5.1.3 Research Question 3: What challenges and difficulties do they face when taking that big step forward towards business ownership?

Many women entrepreneurs face a major challenge in finding professional and committed staff, which affects the growth of their businesses. This is particularly true in Malaysia, where the process of finding, hiring, training, and retaining new employees is challenging, thereby limiting the potential for growth of any organization (Fallah and Soori, 2023).

In addition, more than 15% of women entrepreneurs cited secondary challenges such as low management practices, financial constraints due to heavy overheads, lack of expert consultation, insufficient start-up capital, making decisions alone, and carrying heavy

workloads. Mukherjee, S. (pg. 5, 2023) supports this, stating that "lack of management experience, the absence of guidance, and relatively little experience in hiring outside help, lack of credit" are often overlooked difficulties that women entrepreneurs face in the early stages of their business.

These women entrepreneurs typically start their businesses through the franchise system, receiving guidance and support from franchisors to some extent. This allows them to use limited capital and require less technical skills, thereby overcoming challenges such as lack of confidence, skills, and training in business techniques, overloaded family responsibilities, lack of family support, and shortage of peer support networks.

5.1.4. Research Question 4: What entrepreneurial differences are there among the different ethnic groups studied?

In general, there were no significant differences between the groups except in the areas of networking, self-discipline, and computer skills. Significant differences were found in networking and collaboration skills, with Indian respondents ranking higher than Chinese respondents. Additionally, self-discipline showed a significant difference, with Indian respondents ranking higher than Malay respondents. In terms of computer knowledge, Indian respondents also ranked higher than Chinese respondents. These subtle differences have various implications, as researched by Saedikiya, Li, Ashourizadeh, and Temiz in 2022. However, further historical and sociological studies are needed to understand the reasons and implications of these behavioural differences.

5.2 Limitations and Recommendation for Future Researchers

The following recommendations and limitations are noted;

- (i) A more rigorous research using a larger sample is recommended with better sampling approaches should time permit.
- (ii) A qualitative study or a mixed mode might be necessary to find out more accurately and in-depth the exact challenges and problems these women entrepreneurs are facing.

5.3 Conclusion

This study's findings align with the push-pull theory, opportunity recognition theory, and effectuation theory (Karami, Chandra, Wooliscroft, and McNeill, 2022). It is apparent that these women became business owners due to their desire for independence, autonomy, and personal achievement. These women entrepreneurs were not significantly affected by glass ceilings, sexual harassment, or other conventional barriers. Instead, they were driven by passion, courage, confidence, and determination. They leveraged their work experience to pursue something new and uncertain, fully aware of the risks but ready to seize unlimited opportunities and unlock their full potential.

While this study has limitations due to resource and time constraints, it serves as a modest foundation for future researchers to conduct their own studies. Overall, this assessment and other similar studies provide an excellent opportunity for policymakers to make evidence-based decisions. By acting as gatekeepers and gate constructors, policymakers can support resilient Malaysian women entrepreneurs not only nationally but also regionally. Other women's aid

organizations can also benefit from this study by providing training in computer skills and organizing better networking opportunities, among other things.



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APPROVAL PAGE

TITLE OF PROJECT: THE SHIFT FROM THE CORPORATE OFFICE TO BUSINESS OWNERSHIP: A STUDY OF MALAYSIAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

NAME OF AUTHOR: SUEMAIYA MOHD RASOL

The undersigned is pleased to certify that the above candidate has fulfilled the condition of the project paper prepared in the partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of Master of Business Administration.

SUPERVISOR

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