

DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL OF BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE AND
DECISION MAKING ON INTERNATIONALISATION OF GLOBAL MARKET
OF SUCCESSFUL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

FILZAH MD. ISA
CHENG WEI HIN
AZIZAH HAJI AHMAD
SITI NOREZAM OTHMAN
JAYAESWARI SANGARALINGAM

UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA

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Researchers:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Filzah Md. Isa (Leader)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Cheng Wei Hin

Dr. Azizah Haji Ahmad

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Siti Norezam Othman

Dr. Jayaeswari Sangaralingam

Signatures:

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.....

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.....

.....

ABSTRACT

Woman entrepreneur's contribution to the Malaysia economic is very significant and should never be overlooked by all parties. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate several issues related to Malaysian women entrepreneurs' success. Pertaining to this, the objectives of this study is to examine and gather detailed information on women entrepreneurs and how successful women entrepreneurs in Malaysia strategize their business in the global market. In addition, the study also tried to determine the roles of business intelligence on their business, and their decision making process in the internationalization of their business in foreign countries. Data collection method used in the study includes the primary data, secondary data sources and also direct observations that help to enhance the research objectives. A total of 10 women entrepreneurs (6 Malays and 4 Chinese) in the northern region Malaysia involved in this study. The research findings indicated that business intelligence is minimally used by the entrepreneurs since they are more comfortable with using conventional business systems that involves direct interaction with customers and stakeholders. In addition, their business decision making process leadership style and international market penetration strategies are almost similar for both ethnics. Their experience, issues and problems too are considered similar as well. Based on the research findings, the authors have developed a conceptual model that could be used as a basis for more entrepreneurship studies. The model is also useful a continuous learning process of how to become a successful entrepreneur in both local and international markets. Further discussions are provided in the study.

Keywords: Women entrepreneur, business intelligence, decision making process, leadership styles, business international strategies.

ABSTRAK

Sumbangan usahawan wanita terhadap ekonomi negara Malaysia adalah sangat signifikan dan perlu diberi perhatian oleh semua pihak. Oleh itu, kajian ini telah dijalankan untuk mengkaji isu-isu yang berkaitan dengan kejayaan usahawan wanita Malaysia. Sehubungan dengan itu, objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji dan mengumpulkan maklumat lengkap berkenaan usahawan-usahawan wanita dan bagaimana usahawan wanita yang berjaya di Malaysia menyusun strategi perniagaan mereka dalam pasaran global. Selain itu, kajian ini juga turut menentukan peranan risikan perniagaan (business intelligence) dalam perniagaan usahawan wanita, dan proses membuat keputusan untuk mengantarabangsakan perniagaan masing-masing di luar negara. Kaedah kutipan data yang digunakan dalam kajian ini merangkumi data primer, data sekunder dan pemerhatian secara langsung yang membantu meningkatkan pencapaian objektif kajian. Seramai 10 orang usahawan wanita (6 orang Melayu dan 4 orang Cina) daripada kawasan utara Malaysia yang terlibat dalam kajian ini. Penemuan kajian menunjukkan bahawa risikan perniagaan (business intelligence) digunakan secara minimum sahaja oleh usahawan-usahawan tersebut memandangkan mereka lebih selesa menggunakan sistem perniagaan konvensional yang melibatkan interaksi langsung dengan pelanggan dan pemegang taruh. Selain itu, proses membuat keputusan mengenai strategi perniagaan, gaya kepimpinan dan strategi penembusan pasaran antarabangsa yang mereka amalkan adalah hampir sama bagi kedua-dua etnik. Malah, pengalaman mereka, isu dan permasalahan yang dihadapi juga adalah serupa. Berdasarkan penemuan kajian, penyelidik telah membangunkan sebuah model konseptual yang boleh digunakan sebagai asas dalam kajian keusahawanan yang seterusnya. Model ini juga berguna dalam proses pembelajaran berterusan mengenai bagaimana menjadi seorang usahawan yang berjaya dalam pasaran tempatan dan antarabangsa. Perbincangan selanjutnya ada disertakan dalam kajian ini.

Kata kunci: *Usahawan-usahawan wanita, risikan perniagaan (business intelligence) proses membuat keputusan, gaya kepimpinan, strategi perniagaan antarabangsa.*

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GLOSSARY

RMK	Malaysia Transformation Plans
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
CCM	Companies Commission of Malaysia
WAO	Women's Aid Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
MECD	Ministry of Entrepreneurial and Cooperative Development
MWFCD	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
SMIDEC	Special Assistance Schemes through the Small and Medium Industries Development Corporation
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat
AIM	Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia
FEM	Federation OF Women Entrepreneurs Association Malaysia
NAWEM	National Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Malaysia
USAHANITA	Persatuan Usahawan Wanita Bumiputera
KEMAS	Department of Community Development
DOA	Department of Agriculture

IFC	International Finance Company
CAWTAR	Centre for Arab Women Training and Research
MENA	Middle East and North African
SEWA	India's Self-Employed Women Association
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
CCM	Companies Commission of Malaysia
EPF	Employment Provident Fund
ACE	Action Community for Entrepreneurship
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
OLAP	Online Analytical Processing
BIS	Business Intelligence System
IB	International Business
IE	International Entrepreneurship
POI	Production-Oriented Internationalization
RBT	Resource-based Theory
MNCs	Multinational Companies
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
KPI	Performance Measurement System
CSF	Critical Success Factors

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Day by day, more firms are owned by women entrepreneurs, and this is a growing phenomenon around the world today (Davidson & Burke, 2004). From the Malaysian context, it started with the Malaysia Transformation Plans (RMK) when the Malaysian government began encouraging women entrepreneurs as it symbolized innovation and is seen as a vital contributor to today's growing and challenging economy. According to Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, the wife of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, in her keynote address at the 4th Qatar International Business Women Forum in Doha, Qatar, said that entrepreneurship was a pivotal factor for advancing sustainable economic opportunities for women, and in Malaysia, women have been acting as the catalysts of growth for the small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Women-owned businesses now constitute 19 per cent of total business establishments in Malaysia.

Entrepreneurship also has been characterized as a major force for job creation and a vital determinant of economic growth in Malaysia, hence the outcome which saw a number of general plans of action by the Malaysian government that concerned on industrial, privatization, and entrepreneurship that could increase the number of women entrepreneurs in business successfully (Maimunah, 2001). According to the Malaysian's statistics department, there were more than 82,000 or 16 percent women owned companies with 89.5% of them involved in the services' sector, 7.5 percent in

manufacturing and 3.0 percent in the agricultural sector (The Department of Statistics of Malaysia, 2005). Recently, women entrepreneurs in Malaysia have started to move from SMEs to larger enterprises in areas such as stock broking, food and beverage, fashion apparel, trading, import and export, finance, plantation, fishery, construction, oil and gas, as well as information and communications technology. Thus, if given equal opportunity, as well as the necessary support and assistance, women entrepreneurs can prove their worth in the business world (Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, November 2013).

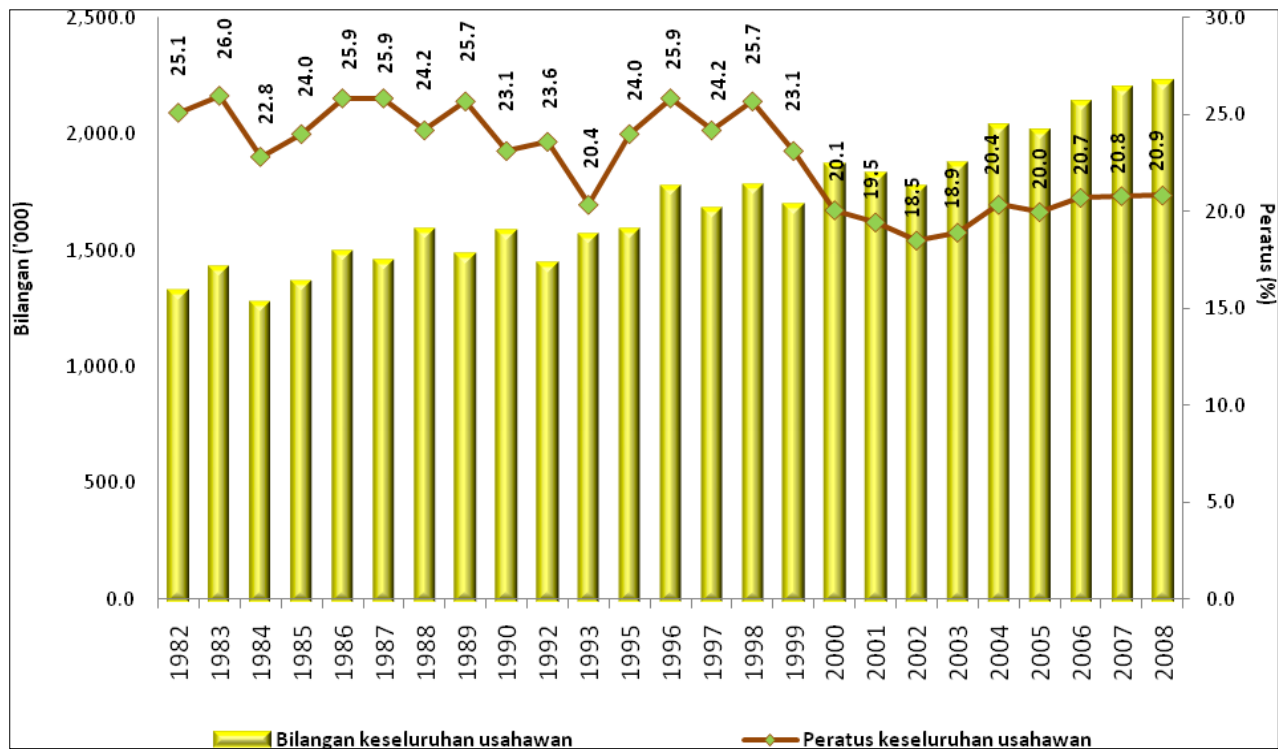
According to GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor), women represent more than one-third of all people involved in entrepreneurial activity. Valencia (2006) reported that 40.54 percent out of estimation of 73 million people who were active entrepreneurs in the 34 nations were women (GEM, 2005). This corroborates Sitterly's (2001) findings where 40 to 50 percent of all businesses were owned by women, with an admirable success rate of 75 percent. Besides, at the Southeast region of Asia, 18 to 30 percent of self-employed workers in Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand were women (Licuanan, 1992). In Malaysia, the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM, 2003), reported that 49,554 units of women-owned businesses were registered in 2000, and the number has increased to 54,626 units in 2001 and there were 28,185 units of women-owned businesses registered in the first half of 2002.

Meanwhile, based on the Ministry of Women and Family Development (2003) report, it stated that Malaysian women entrepreneurs were under-represented in the business world and this was evidenced with the undesirable development whereby micro-

enterprises which were scaled up to bigger enterprises were subsequently managed and taken over by the husbands or other family members (Jarrah & Laily, 1997). Besides that, the number of Malaysian women who make it to the international market is still small (Rafidah, 2005). Therefore, these entrepreneurs were urged to change their mindset in line with the changing of times in the business world and were advised to start producing quality products, which are capable of penetrating the global market (Azlan, 2005).

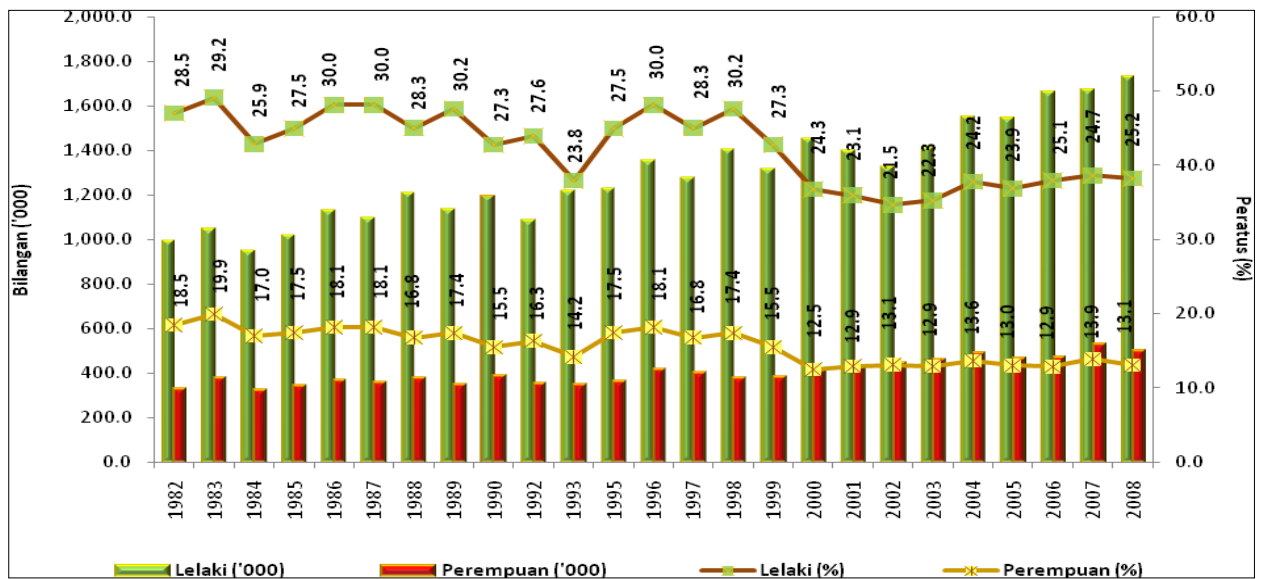
Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 show the number of entrepreneurs and the percentage of entrepreneurs by gender in Malaysia from the year 1982-2008 (Department of Statistic, Malaysia).

Table 1.1 Number of Entrepreneurs in Malaysia



Source: Department of Statistic, Malaysia (2009)

Table 1.2 Number of Entrepreneurs by Gender in Malaysia



Source: Department of Statistic, Malaysia (2009)

It is of critical importance to note that the problems, and the challenges faced particularly by women entrepreneurs today need to be taken into consideration. Besides, their successes need to be recognized for them to grow their businesses and effectively access their business opportunities. To fill the above gaps, this study therefore aims to provide a holistic view of factors influencing the success of women entrepreneurs in Malaysia that leads to their efforts expand across the country's border. This resulted in the development of a theoretical framework for the initiation of policies and programs in entrepreneurship development among women in Malaysia. From the practical point of view, it serves not only to provide a self-check to current women entrepreneurs' practices, but also to increase women's involvement in entrepreneurship through a better understanding of the determinants of business success of women entrepreneurs in local and international markets. Hence, such an understanding of the pre-requisites for Malaysian women entrepreneurs to succeed in

their businesses is of critical importance, especially in today's competitive environment since their route to success may be used as guidelines by other women entrepreneurs who have desires to venture abroad.

1.2 Background of the Study

In the early years of 80s, women accounted for only 7 percent of employers in the economically active population of Malaysia. In 1984, 0.6 percent of Malaysian women entrepreneurs were classified as employers, while 16 percent were classified as own-account workers. Hardly 10 percent of the total number of all employers was women (Jamilah, 1992). The percentage rose to only 8.5 percent in 1990, with men still comprising the vast majority in employer status (Women's Aid Organization (WAO), 2001).

However, women entrepreneurship has recently become an important pool of resources for Malaysia's economic growth and personal prosperity. Women account for about half of the entire population, and about 36.7 percent of Malaysia's total workforce of 10.9 million, with an increasing representation of the professional, managerial and technical levels (Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006). According to Normah (2006), the participation of women in Malaysia's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in 2003 was 1,122,000, or 36.8 percent of the total employment in SMEs. A proxy for women entrepreneurs obtained from Population Census in 2000 indicates that 30.3 percent were working proprietors and active business partners (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Malaysia, 2007).

Table 1.3 shows the number and percentage of entrepreneurs by gender in the Malaysian sector for the year 2000 - 2005 (Malaysia's Department of Statistic, 2006).

Table 1.3: Percentage of Entrepreneurs by Sectors and Gender

Sektor	Bilangan ('000)				%			
	2000		2005		2000		2005	
	Lelaki	Wanita	Lelaki	Wanita	Lelaki	Wanita	Lelaki	Wanita
Pertanian, Perhutanan, Ternakan dan Perikanan	1,030.3	392.7	1,046.9	358.8	17.3	11.9	15.2	9.0
Perlombongan dan Kuari	36.5	5.3	39.9	2.8	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.1
Pembuatan	1,460.0	1,105.8	1,865.8	1,266.3	24.5	33.5	27.0	31.7
Pembinaan	704.3	47.9	703.5	56.1	11.8	1.5	10.2	1.4
Elektrik, Gas dan Air	66.8	8.2	81.5	11.5	1.1	0.2	1.2	0.3
Pengangkutan, Penyimpanan dan Komunikasi	402.8	58.8	536.3	94.9	6.7	1.8	7.8	2.4
Perdagangan Borong dan Runcit, Hotel dan Restoran	954.7	628.2	1,176.6	750.6	16.0	19.0	17.0	18.7
Kewangan, Insurans, Hartanah dan Perkhidmatan Perniagaan	296.4	203.8	421.4	310.9	5.0	6.1	6.1	7.8
Perkhidmatan Lain	1,019.0	853.1	1,026.6	1,144.4	17.0	25.8	14.9	28.6
Jumlah	5,970.8	3,303.8	6,898.5	3,996.3	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Department of Statistic, Malaysia (2006)

It is not surprising that the number of women entrepreneurs in Malaysia increased in the past three decades due to the emphasis on industrialization, and growing interests in privatization, self-employment and business-oriented employment. All of these was facilitated by the growth in various sectors such as banking and financing, food manufacturing, general trading, personal and public services, education, training and consultancy, and others. It was found that Malaysian women had been increasingly involved in various enterprises, which were formerly male-dominated (Maimunah, 1996a; 1996b). According to The Department of Statistics of Malaysia (2005), there

were 518,000 companies involved in services, manufacturing and agricultural sectors, of which 99.1 percent were SMEs. More than 82,000 or 16 percent was women owned companies with 89.5 percent of them involved in the services' sector, 7.5 percent in manufacturing and 3.0 percent in the agricultural sector.

More importantly, the government support was considered as a huge cornerstone to the development of women's entrepreneurs. This can be seen from the establishment of the Ministry of Entrepreneurial and Cooperative Development (MECD) in 1995, and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) in 2001. These ministries, together with other government agencies provided support to women entrepreneurs in terms of funding, physical infrastructure and business advisory services. In terms of financial support, the government has encouraged the creation of special funds targeted for women entrepreneurs, such as Special Assistance Schemes through the Small and Medium Industries Development Corporation (SMIDEC). The SMIDEC allocated special assistance scheme worth RM9.2 million in 2006 for women entrepreneurs. It was reported that between August 1999 and June 2006, 541 women owned companies had been granted grants and soft loans by SMIDEC worth a total of RM52.33 million. A total of 196 approvals was grants worth RM2.44 million for the information and communications technology (ICT) sector, while 128 approvals worth RM850, 000 were for grants for market development projects (The Star Press, 2006).

Clearly, the Malaysian government has been actively involved and concerned about women entrepreneurship development in the last decade. This is to ensure that women

entrepreneurs are not left out of the process of national and economic development, particularly in important sectors such as information and communications technology (ICT) and bio-technology, in order for the country to successfully realize Vision 2020 and to internationalize the global market. More importantly, creating more women entrepreneurs, capacity building and training programs have become a high-priority agenda of the Malaysian government to ensure they were equipped with the best skills to manage their businesses (Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, November 2013).

However, based on GEM's study on Malaysia's entrepreneurial environment, the results reflected poorly on the government's performance, claiming that its policies disfavor new firms, and the government bureaucracy and regulation and licensing requirements impede new firms from expanding and to penetrate the global market. It raised doubts about the government's competence and effectiveness in supporting new and growing firms. The study singled out the lack of financial support, quality of education and training, and overall market openness as other main factors holding back Malaysian entrepreneurs (Gatsiounis, 2006).

To penetrate international market, internationalization decisions are guided by strict rational behaviors (Brouthers & Hennart, 2007), and successful strategy formation follows a systematic approach (Crick & Spence, 2005). Pertaining to this, the effectuation theory (Sarasvathy, 2001) focuses on the entrepreneurial decision making in conditions of high uncertainty when the future cannot be predicted through statistical inferences. In such conditions, based on the means available, entrepreneurs may develop opportunities based on the affordable loss principle rather than on the

maximization of expected returns. They create effective new ventures not based on a planned strategy but as an outcome of interaction with their social network. Therefore, successful entrepreneurs should be creative enough to spark fresh profound ideas and new methods of utilizing resources that can be viewed differently (Ronstadt, 1988; Shefsky, 1994).

From the above review in the area of successful women entrepreneurs, innovation of idea and products is indeed an important characteristic because it influences entrepreneurial success. For enterprises to emerge and expand, factors such as learned talent, sophisticated technology and sufficient capital can be regarded as important capabilities. Besides, other elements that are required include the “know-how” and the ability to improve business and/or scientific knowledge. It is the ability to find and apply know-how in various areas that marks the differences between success and meritocracy. Thus, this knowledge may be applicable to all business disciplines. Furthermore, the entrepreneurs should lead and drive innovation, and if society would like to generate innovation, a conducive environment is needed to allow entry and for facilitating the development of new enterprises.

In addition, women entrepreneurs should also be bold enough to become leaders in high-growth corporations, fueling innovation and driving economic growth as required in the new economy. Adding the programs to improve women’s access and use of technology would help expand their businesses, and also the need in providing practical assistance such as consulting support, technical expertise and best practices,

which would also go a long way in advancing their companies (Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, November 2013).

1.3 Problem Statement

Despite many studies that were done on women entrepreneurs, there are still rooms for improvement in the findings to support the development of women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. Moreover, there are few direct comparisons made regarding women entrepreneurs in Malaysia up to the global level; therefore, this study aims to identify the strength and weaknesses of women entrepreneurs in Malaysia so that their businesses are able to run successfully and thereon penetrate global markets. Henceforth, a comprehensive comparison which included various factors were carried out to identify the deviation and equality amongst both Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera women entrepreneurs in Malaysia and in the global context. From these findings, a model is developed to explain the critical factors, and the influence of other potential catalysts that can enhance or impede the success of women entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

1.4 Objective of the Research

The main objectives of the research are:

1. To examine the demographic background of the successful women entrepreneurs.

2. To investigate the relationship between women entrepreneurs' characteristics and their international business success.
3. To determine which characteristics that are more dominant in terms of influence toward women's entrepreneurial success in the international market.
4. To examine the critical success factors of women entrepreneurs in the international market.
5. To probe the women entrepreneurs skill of decision-making, leadership styles, business intelligence system, international marketing skills and entrepreneurial skills.
6. To examine the main issues, problems and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Malaysia and the barriers to penetrate the international market.
7. To develop a model for the women entrepreneurial success in the international market from Malaysians' perspectives.

1.5 Research Questions:

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics and profile of successful women entrepreneurs in Malaysia?
2. To what extent the women entrepreneurs' characteristics influence their international business success?
3. Which characteristics are more dominant in terms of influence toward women's entrepreneurial success in the international market?

4. What are the critical success factors of women entrepreneurs in the international market?
5. What are the women entrepreneurs' skills of decision-making, leadership styles, business intelligence skills, international marketing skills and entrepreneurial skills?
6. What are the main issues, problems and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Malaysia and the barriers to penetrate the international market?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study can be viewed from both theoretical as well as managerial perspectives.

From the theoretical perspective, this study will contribute a certain degree of new knowledge of women entrepreneurs' international business success by providing an in-depth discussion on the success determinant factors such as leadership styles, entrepreneurial traits, decision making strategy, business competencies, i.e. marketing, management, financial, operations, and ICT, internationalization strategy and business intelligence. The study also reveals several other factors surrounding the women entrepreneurs in Malaysia such as how the government support, spouse and family support, work values, economic situation of a country, business networking, legal procedures, cultural differences and others, play important roles in the success of the business internationalization process. Based on this study, several similarities and dissimilarities between different ethnics of the women entrepreneurs are discovered,

which implicate different ethnicity and cultural background do emanate a certain degree of importance in shaping the business acumen of each woman entrepreneur. These findings further enhance the importance of analyzing the entrepreneurs' success based on ethnicity differences, which later will expand the existing stream of literature related to women entrepreneurs' success in the world.

The findings of this research may also provide vital information and updated issues that might be encountered by the women entrepreneurs in Malaysia while venturing international market. Particularly, those factors that can be considered as potential problems or obstacles to their international success, i.e. cultural issues, business networking, trust, etc. By understanding these issues, the entrepreneurs can then undertake certain proactive or preemptive and corrective actions that are necessary for the betterment of their business success.

From the practical perspective, the outcome of the study will help the Ministry, government agencies and related institutes to find ways and better methods to set up a proper support center and the right assistance to assist Malaysian women entrepreneurs to venture into the international market. Finally, this study will inherently provide new understanding and better insights to the new comers in entrepreneurship field and to those students who intend to learn more about the entrepreneurship success in the world market.

1.7 Scope of Study

The respondents of this study are those successful women entrepreneurs in Malaysia, particularly in the northern region of Malaysia, i.e. Penang, Kedah and Perlis. The list of respondents was derived from the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI)'s successful entrepreneurs list, Penang Malay Chamber of Commerce (Dewan Perniagaan Pulau Pinang), Majlis Amanah Rakyat Pulau Pinang (MARA) (195 entrepreneurs), MCA chamber of Commerce, and Malaysian Associated Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MAICCI).

1.8 Assumptions

The primary assumption in this study is that the characteristics of successful women entrepreneurs in the northern region of Malaysia are similar or almost similar to other parts of the country. This study also assumes that the determinant factors used in the proposed research model which mainly based on various works from many parts of the world is applicable to all Malaysian women entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs in the study are also assumed to be women who are successful in running their own business up to the international level, with or without a business partner(s).

1.9 Key Important Terms

Women entrepreneur- Those women who use their knowledge and resources to expand or create innovative business opportunities, dynamically involved in

managing their business, own at least 50 per cent of business, and have been in operation for longer than one year (Anwar & Rashid, 2011; Moore & Buttner, 1997).

Success – In the business field, the notion of success frequently refers to business' financial performance (Md Isa, 2007).

Business Intelligence –the business intelligence is an extensive category of methods, technologies and software for collecting, storing, structuring, analyzing, and accessing the data with the object of making better business decisions (Estarad, 2010).

Decision making – The process of decision making involves identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values and preferences of a decision maker (Hussain, 2006).

Leadership style – Leadership is described as "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members" (House et al.,2004, p.54).

Internationalization of business - is an evolutionary process, and the firms adapt to the international environment (Calof & Beamish, 1995).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a continuation of the discussion initiated in the background of study in Chapter One. The main objective of the literature review is to enhance understanding of research subjects through the facts and findings of previous studies on the issues related to the main factors of this study (Hair, et al.,2007). In brief, this chapter discusses the concepts and findings of previous study related to entrepreneurship, success, women entrepreneurs, business intelligence, leadership styles, decision making, the challenges of women entrepreneurs in the global economy and the issues on internationalization of business strategy.

2.2 Definitions of Entrepreneurship

According to Hutt (1994), the term of entrepreneurship came from the word “entrepreneur” which means the producers. Entrepreneurs also can be defined as self-employed, which referred to those who have their own business regardless if it is small, medium or large-scale business. Generally, the concept of entrepreneurship will be to run a business on a small scale because the owners also act as the managers who use their own money for business formation and are usually limited to the local market (Suaibah

et al., 2007). Besides, entrepreneurship also can be known as an art or process of exploring and managing own business (Hutt, 1994). Entrepreneurs do the business by their own efforts, have a good attitude and enthusiasm for self-employed, and have the entrepreneurial spirit that wants to pursue a career as an entrepreneur.

According to Hisrich (1986), the phrase of entrepreneurs is changing over time, and the interpretations differ from one to another. In the 18th century, Richard Cantillon, an Irish and French mixed economist defined entrepreneurs as individuals who take the risks to produce marketable products, and they differ from the individuals who contribute capital to carry out the enterprise or business. Next, Schumpeter (1934) as quoted in Hisrich's research (1986) interpreted entrepreneur as an individual who makes an innovation to develop new technologies that have never been applied before. Entrepreneurs are also known as the person who takes advantage of opportunities (Ducker, 1964); energetic and takes moderate risks (McClelland, 1961); individuals who are initiative, organize social and economic mechanisms, and accept the risk of failure (Shapiro, 1975). While Hisrich (1985) defines entrepreneurship as a process of developing and creating something new; and have a value by focusing efforts; sacrifice of time, and being confronted with financial risk, psychological impact, and indulge in social development to achieve personal satisfaction.

Rosli et al., (2007) stated entrepreneurs are individuals who are able to see, evaluate business opportunities and combine the resources to take advantage of opportunities, and act in appropriate action to ensure its goals. In reviewing of the interpretation by previous

researchers, it is concluded that entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship is related to the individuals who involved in business through the opportunity assessment process, taking risks, concentration of efforts and manageable for the realization of business ideas to offer value in the market.

Entrepreneurship is an unique activity that has been conducted independently or collectively as a career or have some other goals of its own. To accomplish this goal, entrepreneurs must combine tangible assets such as capital, physical facilities, information technology and intangible assets, for instance, the network with customers, suppliers, lenders, dealers, employees, marketers, competitors and other parties (Ab. Aziz, 2000). Thus, without these assets, entrepreneurs may not be able to create their business competitive advantage, which can capture the target market's attention.

Yep Putih (1985), on the other hand, stated that the entrepreneur is the energy or the human qualities that are responsible for developing and creating a business or working by using factors of production. Entrepreneurship can be interpreted as a humane quality which not only beneficial to themselves, but also beneficial for rapid economic development and able to contribute to others. He attributed entrepreneurship as a field of economical activity that has the beauty, grandeur, dignity and uniqueness that appeal to market. Thus, entrepreneurship should be considered as an area that has its own aesthetic values. These values are recognized and appreciated by people who called themselves an entrepreneur. These values led to the prosperity of society and the country, not only on the economic aspects but also for the country's development.

In general, entrepreneurship can be considered as the creation of new values by entrepreneurs through the devotion of their time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychological risks, social risks, and getting the resulting rewards in monetary, personal satisfaction and independence (Hisrich, 2002).

2.3 Success

Every person has their own definition towards success. In the business field, the notion of success frequently refers to business' financial performance. Thus, the two main dimensions of success can be classified as 1) financial vs. other success, and 2) short-term vs. long-term success. There are three types of measurement always relate to the concept of performance which are survival of the firm, firm profitability and firm growth. (Delmar & Davidson, 2000).

According to Cooper and Artz (1995), entrepreneurship success is not limited only economic performance, but also can be equal to business operation. (Simpson, Tuck, & Bellamy, 2004). The most common definition of entrepreneurial success according to Perren (1999, 2000) and Amit et al. (2000) is via objective elements such as revenue, a firm's growth, personal wealth creation, profitability, sustainability and turnover. Whilst in her study, Md Isa (2007) mentioned that, performance can be a good proxy to explain the success of a business.

According to Mahdavi (2010), women consider self-motivation and self-management as part of their success while men, however treat job environment and team-work as part of being successful. Therefore, women who are responsible for their household tasks (Hewlett,2002), and still attained top positions in their careers are categorized as successful women (Gersick & Kram,2002). In a different study, Omani women consider success by looking at personal growth and skills development (McElwee & Al-Riyami, 2003), whereas Duffy et al. (2006) and Lirio et al. (2007) argued women who have operated their business for at least two years can be identified as successful women entrepreneurs. Simultaneously, the number of employees they have can also be used to measure their success (Smith-Hunter et al.,2009).

The underlying reasons for women to venture into business are perceived to be more specific such as to have freedom and flexibility to balance family and work commitment but not merely for personal financial gain. Thus, the success in business of these women takes place once they achieved their desired goals (Kalleberg & Leicht, 1991). However, researchers found that women entrepreneurs seem to earn lower income (Hisrich & Brush, 1987), and slower progress as compared to male counterparts (Kalleberg & Leicht, 1991).

2.4 Women Entrepreneur in Malaysia

In 1980, women accounted for only 7 percent of employers in the economically active population of Malaysia. In 1984, 0.6 percent of Malaysian women entrepreneurs were

classified as employers, while 16 percent were classified as own-account workers. Hardly 10 percent of the total number of all employers were women (Jamilah, 1992). The percentage rose to only 8.5 percent in 1990, with men still comprising the vast majority in employer status. (Women's Aid Organisation [WAO], 2001). As reported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Malaysia (2007), about 30.3 percent of women entrepreneurs in 2000 are working proprietors and active business partners. As in 2003, Normah (2006) reported that about 1,122,000 or 36.8 percent of total employment in SMEs were women. In other fields too, women entrepreneurs in Malaysia keep on progressing well in numbers. According to The Department of Statistics of Malaysia (2005), there were about 518,000 companies involved in services, manufacturing and agricultural sectors, of which 99.1 percent were SMEs. More than 82,000 or 16 percent was women owned companies with 89.5 percent of them involved in the services' sector, 7.5 percent in manufacturing and 3.0 percent in the agriculture sector. Then in 2006, it is reported that women represented about 36.7 percent of total workforce of 10.9 million. They mostly involved in the professional, managerial and technical levels (Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006).

Apparently, entrepreneurship is a pivotal factor for advancing sustainable economic opportunities for women, and in Malaysia, women have been the catalysts of growth for the small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor (2013) further stated in her speech that the SME Corporation and the various ministries and government agencies have designed and implemented several policies, programmes and activities to facilitate the development of SMEs. Even though the schemes and support facilities

provided are not gender-specific, they are mainly taken up by women. For instance, the microcredit called Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) has financed more than 200,000 women entrepreneurs in the agriculture, manufacturing and services since its inception in 1987. Whereas, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, in its National Key Result Area, has targeted the creation of 4,000 women entrepreneurs as a priority by 2012, and a total of 4,300 women entrepreneurs were created, which exceeded the initial target by December 2012.

To activate more women participation in entrepreneurship, many women entrepreneur associations were established, such as the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association Malaysia (FEM), National Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Malaysia (NAWEM), Persatuan Usahawan Wanita Bumiputera (USAHANITA), and others to promote and encourage more Malaysian women to become entrepreneurs besides creating a platform for networking among them. Pertaining to this issue, Datin Seri Rosmah also mentioned about some specially-tailored programs that have been introduced to cater to the needs of women in rural areas, including building entrepreneurship skills, upgrading skills and providing financial support for business start-ups. To ascertain the strategy becomes fruitful, a financial commitment of approximately USD653 million has been allocated to focus on market access, human capital and financing. It seems that since the last decades, Malaysian government relentlessly encouraging women to be active in business, and this move was taken to ensure that women are not left out from the process of national and economic development, particularly in important sectors such as information and communications

technology (ICT) and bio-technology, in order for the country to successfully realize Vision 2020.

2.5 Development of Women Entrepreneur Activities in Malaysia

Earlier participation of Malaysian women in entrepreneurial activities was encouraged as a means to supplement family income. Most women were involved in cottage-level production, micro businesses and informal sectors (Jariah et al.,1994). Most activities were spearheaded by government agencies such as the Department of Community Development (KEMAS) and Department of Agriculture (DOA). Actually, supports from the government were slow prior to 1990s but the scenario has changed significantly during the Eighth Malaysian Plan in which women's participation in business has been integrated as an agenda in the plan. In general, women-owned businesses or enterprises in Malaysia were reported to be small, and most of them were concentrating on serving the local market. There is a noticeable progress though in interest and participation of women in non-traditional sectors such as manufacturing, construction and technology-based ventures. The Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Associations Malaysia (FEM) estimated that about 15 percent of women entrepreneurs are involved in the manufacturing sectors.

Although the number of women entrepreneurs and women owned businesses in this country continued to increase, systematic study of the subject is still lacking and previous studies were often regionalized. Many early studies were undertaken in Kelantan and

Terengganu where women in business activities were more visible. Notwithstanding the entrepreneurial efforts and economic contribution of women in these states, their involvement in business does not quite present the true picture of women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. They mostly involved in cottage production, micro and petty trading businesses. Whereas women in more developed areas such as the Klang Valley were involved in various sectors as well (Norsidah, 1999; Ismail et al. 2004; Nor Aini, 2005).

Entrepreneurship activity among Malaysian women took many faces. For example, women in business can be segmented into three major groups based on the status of their businesses: women in 'stable' business, women in newly formalized business and women in non-formalized business; formalization refers to the legal registration of the business (Shahrizat & Fauziah, 1995). For those in a formal and registered business, many are devoting their time and effort as a full-time business woman, while there are also as many who are doing it as a part time activity. There are other groups whose businesses are more informal: not registered, at micro level and cottage production. These differences reflect the different goal orientations that Malaysian women have in venturing into business.

Most women choose to participate in a particular business sector based on their experience, interest and perceived ability to handle the business whilst some women choose a sector which they feel as suitable for them as a woman (Norsidah, 1999; Md Isa et al., 2013). The possible effects of 'lifestyle venture' preferences or goal orientation of entrepreneurs in the growth of their businesses were highlighted out in the typology

analysis by Chaganti et al., (1995). Shadis also found that women entrepreneurs in Malaysia regardless their ethnic backgrounds can transform their business hobby initially to become a successful business entity that are able to capture the international market. (Md Isa et al., 2013)

2.6 International Women Entrepreneurs

Women entrepreneurs are the key to economic growth and development in a country and also in the international level. The increasing of their income is nonetheless related to family well-being. Hence, the role of women is important to achieve the main goals of national development in various fields such as nutrition and education of women (International Finance Company (IFC), 2007) and the Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR, 2007).

Previously, Hodgetts and Kuratko (1995) emphasized that women-owned businesses had increased at a tremendous rate. By 1990, nearly five million sole proprietorships in the United States were owned by women. Women owned partnership company accounting for 31 percent of all small businesses. At present, the percentage is approaching to 80.

Generally, women entrepreneurs in the 21st century were seen to combine entrepreneurial characteristics such as discipline, focus, independence, systematic thinking, empathy, and creativity. The study found that many women open their own businesses after they felt their previous employment was discriminatory to women. Therefore, by opening their

own businesses, it was a starting point for success in business areas where they could conduct their business in a positive way, such as i) the practice of noble values, ii) the welfare of workers and customers, iii) a fair leader, guide and not the direction or control of, iv) emphasize the concept of cooperation rather than competition, v) be receptive to change, vi) very responsive, vii) learn from mistakes and viii) spend time with family (Heffernan, 2006). The uniqueness of women entrepreneurs was that they were the source of strength they were able to attract and inspire new talent in entrepreneurship (Heffernan, 2007).

In relation to the performance of the entrepreneurs, Figure 2.1 shows the rates of contribution of the female and male entrepreneurs across the sample. The figure displays the increasing performance of both female and male entrepreneurs in the world. Among the efficiency-driven economies, Malaysian women entrepreneurs exhibited approximately 4 percent of participation rate. Comparing to the neighborhood countries like Thailand and Singapore, the participation rate of Malaysian women entrepreneurs were much lower.

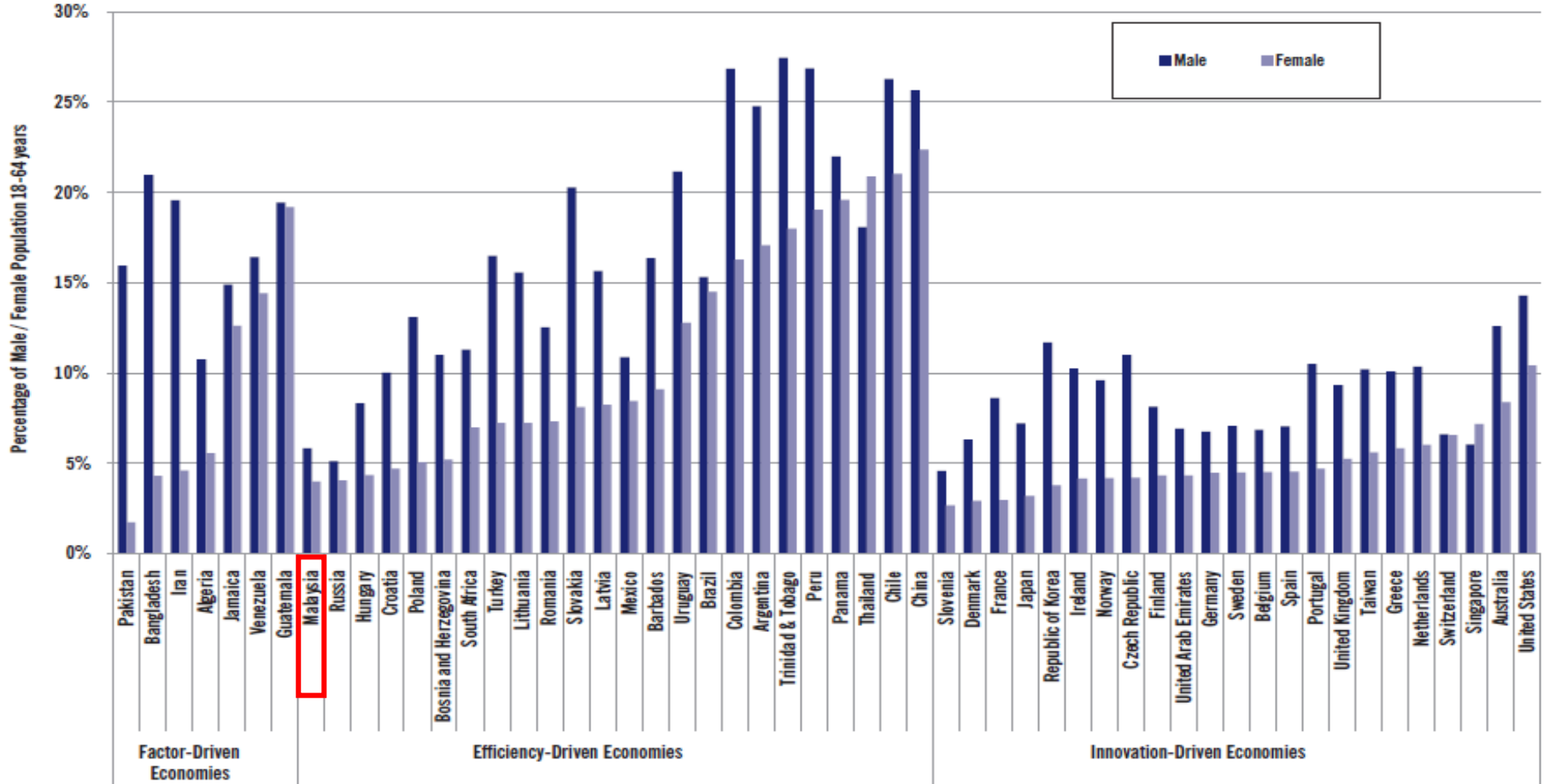


Figure 2.1 Comparison of Female and Male Early-stage Entrepreneurship (TEA) Rates in 54 Economies, Organized by Female TEA Rate with Economic Development Levels, 2011

(Source: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: 2011 Women's Report, Kelley, Singer & Herrington, 2012).

According to GEM report 2011, out of 54 countries, there were only 8 countries that showed an equivalent rate of female early-stage entrepreneurship to male. These eight countries are Panama, Venezuela, Jamaica, Guatemala, Brazil, Singapore, Switzerland, and Thailand (Kelley, Singer, & Herrington, 2012).

In most countries, women were more than often treated unfairly compared to men. These circumstances are still faced by women entrepreneurs nowadays. EI Namaki (1990) identified common barriers faced by women who go into business. These barriers are divided into two categories: barriers on the entry level and barriers on resistance levels. On the entry level, women had to deal with barriers related to culture, character, ability to meet the entrepreneurial function, the ability to seize opportunities, risk and ability to get the source of capital in particular. On the resistance level, women entrepreneurs tend to face barriers in terms of the ability to manage and promote networking, the vision and experience, competitive pressures, the problem of capital and the level of corporate-owned culture. The following sections are the discussion based on different regions around the world on women entrepreneurs.

2.6.1 United States of America

The involvement of the women entrepreneurs can be seen more subjectively in developed countries like the United States, as studies there showed that the number of women entrepreneurs who become entrepreneurial business has increased dramatically in these few decades. From the year 1980 to 1985, the number of women who become

entrepreneurs increased by 47.4 percent to a total of 3.7 million units (Longenecker, Moore & Petry, 1991).

Shane (2009) shared his view on facts related to the goals and aspirations of the entrepreneurs in the business environment said the main reason an entrepreneur starting a business is to avoid working under the direction of a boss or leader. In the U.S. there were only 9.4 percent of the business that has more than four workers. Only about 7 percent of women entrepreneurs and 15 percent of male entrepreneurs want to maximize their business growth. Only 32 percent of these entrepreneurs led and opened new businesses after six years they started the business.

Wolfe (2009) stated that the years between 1997 and 2006, globally, businesses owned by women or majority share owned by women increased, and the rate of growth had doubled in the United States. During the same period, the employment rate among women-owned companies rose up to 0.4 percent, while annual sales rose to 4.4 percent. In 2006, a report on women entrepreneurs owned business (or majority share owned by women) in the United States showed the following figures:

- i) There were approximately 10.4 million privately-owned firms;
- ii) A total of 10.4 million representing two-fifths of businesses, namely 40.2 percent of all businesses in the United States;
- iii) Firms owned by women entrepreneurs generated USD 1.9 trillion in annual sales;

- iv) The firms opened opportunities for employing around 12.8 million people throughout the country.

Adding on, Josef (2009) reported that there are resources and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in America are better than before, even though it is not encouraging. According to Josef, only 28 of the 1000 largest companies had female chief executive officers, and women earn 77 percent for every dollar received by a man. Based on Women's Business Research Center (Center for Women's Business Research) in the year 2008, around 6.8 percent of the venture capital companies founded by women, 3 percent of women-owned companies reached USD 1 million as compared to 6 percent owned by men.

2.6.2 Saudi Arabia

Lancaster (2006) referred to the speech by Princess Loulwa Al Faisal, daughter of King Faisal, the head of delegation of 21 businessmen in Saudi Arabia Women's Conference held in London in December 2005 whereby the princess stated that men and women always played the same role in the business in Saudi Arabia. According to financial analysts, business based on the Internet have led many Saudi women to invest in local stock markets. This reform allowed them to control the buying and selling shares from their own homes, and the presence of women in the market had given a great impact.

In addition, Lancaster (2006) also stated that business in Saudi Arabia in the present had changed over the past, especially when it relates to women. Saudi Arabia women are free to do what they want with their wealth, whether forming a company or whatever and

there was no limit to the amount they can use for investment. However, there was some red tape involved in obtaining land for business purposes, but the present law has changed. The Saudi Arabian government is in progress to make the process easier and reduce the bureaucracy.

2.6.3 South Africa

Women entrepreneurs in South Africa remain at the edge of the country's economy. They were involved in business activities in the field of crafts, hawking, personal services and retail sectors, however participation of women entrepreneurs in business opportunities in South Africa were minimum. Among the obstacles to promote women in business in that country included issues of culture and society, the psychological impact of cultural norms, employment laws and policies, lack of information, training, finance, technology, markets, business infrastructure, and lack of vehicles for capacity development and skills. Moreover, the approach is not unanimous in identifying the issues and develop strategies to influence policies that affect business and government intervention. Therefore, more and more women are taking advantage of entrepreneurship via the informal sector (Erwee, 1987).

2.6.4 Other Arab countries

Based on the report from the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR, 2007) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC, 2007), the

entrepreneurship career among the Middle East and North African (MENA) women has grown rapidly in the past decade. Businesses owned by women contributed significantly to economic growth and particularly helped to generate the wealth of the country, and at the same time, the business carried on by women were also able to create career opportunities for women in that country other than employment given to men. Al-Karaki (President of the University of Jordan), stated that women entrepreneurs were one of the most important sources of economic strength in MENA, and they are no longer considered as a minority that can only carry out small-scale businesses. For instance, women in Jordan were not only customers, but they were also producers as they were able to create opportunities, develop business, and encourage social and economic development (IFC & CAWTAR, 2007).

2.6.5 Europe

A survey by Eurochambers (2004) on women entrepreneurs in 25 EU member countries were conducted by the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry. According to the results of the survey, educated (tertiary level) women entrepreneurs carry out micro-enterprises, have a husband and children, and they do not assist in any activities related to house hold matters. These women normally created a company or business before the age of 35 years after gaining some work experience by working with others. The main reason they conducted these businesses were to fulfill the desire and freedom in making their own decisions, as well as supporting income to their families. They spend more than 48 hours (usually about 60 hours) a week in business to household

chores and have been working hard as well as to seek support from their families. The major problems faced by them while conducting their business were financial-related problems and problems of work balance between career and family, and these problems still occur at present day. Financial issues are the major concern to them, but it can be settled by borrowing from banks or alternative financial resources such as from family or from their own saving.

2.7 Women Entrepreneurs in Asia

2.7.1 India

India's Self-Employed Women Association (SEWA) is an organization that aims to help the poor women in India. It provides facilities for women such as loans and savings for purchasing vehicles. SEWA has been involved in the recruitment of participants at the national level and now had evolved in seven states in India. This organization considers them as an employee's union and financial bodies. The members must pay annual dues of five rupees, which is about 11 cents. SEWA provides various services, including general financial training, business management and job specification skills. These groups also provide credit services through a combination of local authority and operates in three financial bank. SEWA's bank in Gujarat had issued USD 21 million, of all members' savings and a loan of USD 4.7 million every year (Serrill, 2005).

2.7.2 China

The role of women in China has been underestimated like most Asian cultures. For thousands of years, women in China had endured gender discrimination in many sectors since they were regarded as a mere accessory to their male counterparts. It was not until 1900s that women started to gain equal access to education and after 1949, when the Peoples Republic of China was founded, Chinese women began to participate in the economic life and received protection in the workplace. As reported, Chinese female workers currently make up about 50 percent of the enrolment of the universities and 36 percent of the total labor force. They contribute about half of the household income, up from 20 percent in the 1950s. In addition, China has now become a real incubator for female billionaires. According to Forbes's listing, 7 out of 14 women billionaires in the world are from China, who earned 10-figure fortune in 2010.

Based on research on women entrepreneurs conducted in the Asian countries, there is not much significant difference with the Western countries. Hisrich and Zhang (1991) reported that 60 percent of women in China at the age 40 years old have at least secondary education, technical or higher education, and all of them were married and have children when starting a business. Sit and Wong (1988) stated that 67 percent of women entrepreneurs in Hong Kong were under the age of 40 years were educated and 12 percent of them have 12 years of schooling (Teo, 1996). According to Colleretta and Aubry (1990), women entrepreneurs in China devote more than 10 hours per week to

manage the household while Hisrich and Zhang (1991) reported that all women entrepreneurs in China manage all their housework (Teo, 1996).

2.7.3 Singapore

In Singapore, women are involved in service' sectors' such as retail, wholesale and production such as running a bakery, decorating services, bridal shops, barber shops, fashion stores, food stores, factories making clothes, beauty shops, travel agencies, restaurants, canteens and cafeterias (Teo, 1996). In the industry sector, women were active in agriculture and fisheries, manufacturing, construction, commercial, transport and communications, finance and trade services (Chew & Tan, 1991). One-third of women entrepreneurs have family members who carry on the business before. In addition to entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurs also played an important role for the happiness of family (Teo, 1996). The average age is 41 years for women entrepreneurs in this republic island. The majority (80 percent) of women entrepreneurs are married and have two children. These women were born in a medium-sized family with the average number of siblings is five.

2.7.4 Thailand

According to the source by Minniti, Bygrave and Autio (2005), Thai women entrepreneurs had the highest participation in entrepreneurial activities across 35 nations in 2005. The determinant factors that influence Thai business enterprise success are the

characteristics of SMEs, business technique, finance and resources, and external environment. Besides, the need for independence motivates the Thai women entrepreneurs to start up their own business because the majority of them prefer to gain self-achievement and do not want to be instructed (Johnson & Kongsinsuwan, 2008).

2.7.5 Indonesia

In Indonesia, SMEs are important. This is because almost 100 percent of the entire businesses are not agricultural based, SMEs are the biggest source of employment. SME in Indonesia employs 96.2 percent of the labour (Tambunan, 2011). Due to the lower level of education of the women, they hardly represent their business compared to their male partners. According to Tambunan (2004), the motivation that encourages them to become an entrepreneur is their financial status. They had to face a lot of obstacles in marketing, financial access (Tambunan, 2007), intense housework, and skills development chances.

2.8 Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneur in Malaysia on Local and Global Issues

The current trends of business have significant relation with competitive advantages because the latest trends in business will affect the entrepreneurs on how to decide and replicate the decision from one place to another place, to make the entrepreneurs closer to

the new environment. In relation to this, Abdul Manaf Bohari (2008) discussed that there are six current trends that the entrepreneurs must take care, such as the ones stated below:

- a) Increasing awareness toward environmental issues as well as air and water pollution, global warming, acid rains, and so on.
- b) Changing pace and location of people's real life as well as migration of rural people to urban areas, changing of physical, geographical, life styles, and many more.
- c) Changing household composition and family values, such as tendencies toward luxury products, increase in income, decrease of nuclear family, and so on.
- d) Growing health consciousness around the world and many people are aware of healthcare problems and solutions.
- e) Expanding worldwide market, in local-based demands surrounding the world.
- f) Increasing diversity of workforce, market and societal norms. These even will create new cultural norms accepted by various people.

In fact, the societal environment is very close to women entrepreneur's trends that occur and change from time to time. Here, women entrepreneurs must take care and consider environmental aspects as vital facts into the decision-making process.

Locally, Malaysia has a vibrant entrepreneurial base with a huge potential to become a global player. Indeed, past and current policies to create a class of entrepreneurs have succeeded in the sense that there are more women involved in business and entrepreneurship now as compared to before. These activities are spreading and reaching

overseas, proving that Malaysian companies can succeed in the global arena. Nevertheless, as evidenced by the drastic decline in women businesses and corporate equity following the economical crisis, the quality and level of competitiveness of the majority of women entrepreneurs could be improved so that they are more resilient to the ups and downs of economical cycles (Mohamed Ariff & Syarisa Yanti, 2004). Considering the effect of global issues, perhaps the time is right to begin to expand the new hope of Malaysian women entrepreneurship to become successfully, as achieved by other global women entrepreneurs. Hence, there is a need for utilizing the business intelligent sophistication as a solution for strengthening their position in the local and global marketplace.

Previously, many small businesses in Malaysia were traditionally owned and run by men entrepreneurs. However, more women are taking the initiative to run their own businesses, by increasing their participation in the creation of new enterprises. Recent evidence showed that there is an increasing number of women who became owners of small businesses in industries such as textiles and apparel, fashion, halal food processing, cosmetics, gifts, jewelry, information and communication technology (ICT), consulting, restaurants and health care.

In Malaysia, many women entrepreneurs are involved in hawking, retail and wholesale sales. This was because those fields do not require the labor skills and extra capital, no hassles and low risk (Fatimah, 1975). The research by Suaibah et al., (2005) found that the majority of women entrepreneurs ventured into food and beverages, clothing and

retail businesses. This study is further enhanced by findings in Md Isa et al., (2013) study in women entrepreneur in the Northern Region of Malaysia.

Evidence from several studies also showed that the number of women entrepreneurs in Malaysia is increasing over the past few years. For instance, census organizations and enterprises conducted in 2005 showed that women-led enterprises amounted to 82,911 firms. This figure represents 16 percent of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia. From the total enterprises owned by women, there were about 90 percent involvement in the services' sector while the remaining 10 percent was involved in the manufacturing sector and agriculture (New Straits Times, June 28, 2006).

Malaysian women entrepreneurs tend to be more focus on the type of business which does not have a high risk. However, business activities become one of the main activities in the government's efforts to eradicate poverty among women. From the perspective of history and tradition, Malaysian women have long been involved in the business world. Although their percentage in this sector is still small compared to males, but this scenario has opened another opportunity for women to find work or side income. So far there is no comprehensive data collected for connection with their participation. In fact, research on women are less. But of course, the number of women involved in the business increased. The year of 1990s was regarded as the decade that brought more women into this field (Nor Aini, 2003). From then onwards, there were more attentions by the Ministries and relevant government agencies to support entrepreneurship. Policies and programmes were designed and implemented to ensure a smooth economic development of

entrepreneurship in Malaysia. In the following sections, these procedures and policies that need to be adhered closely by all entrepreneurs were discussed.

2.9 Starting a Business in Malaysia

To start a business, an entrepreneur should follow certain procedures. Please refer to the table below.

Table 2.1: Business Procedure

No.	Procedure	Time to complete	Cost to complete
1	<p>Application to the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM) on the prescribed form (13A) to ensure the availability of the proposed company's name</p> <p>Name search can be conducted online and payment can be made online</p>	1 day	MYR 30 per name search application
2	<p>Company Secretary prepares company incorporation documents</p> <p>A company secretary is required to prepare the incorporation documents and provide a statutory declaration of compliance (Companies Act 1965).</p>	3 days	MYR 1000
3	<p>File necessary documents with the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM) one-stop shop and obtain company incorporation, tax registration, as well as registration with the Employment Provident Fund (EPF), Social Security Organization and the Inland Revenue Board</p> <p>Comment: Promoters must pay the registration fee and file the following incorporation documents with the Companies Commission within 3 months of name reservation: - The memorandum and articles of association and the statutory declaration of compliance</p>	1 day	MYR 3,000 (registration fee)+ MYR 220 (stamp)

	<p>(Form 48A) (prepared by a lawyer or the company secretary). - The particulars of (a) two subscribers holding a minimum of one share of MYR 1 each and (b) At least two directors who have their principal or sole place of residence in Malaysia. –</p> <p>The original Form 13A and a copy of the letter from the CCM approving the name of the company have to be attached as well. - The address or location of the registered office. - Form 6 (statutory declaration of compliance) upholding compliance with the requirements of the Companies Act 1965 and the Companies Regulations on matter precedent and incidental to the company’s registration. This form must be filed by the company secretary.</p> <p>After the submission of the incorporation papers, the CCM issues Form 9 (certificate of incorporation) in 1-2 working days upon lodgment of the relevant documents. The registration fee for the authorized share capital is charged the following scale and is payable to the Companies Commission: Capital up to MYR 100, 000: MYR 900; 100,001 to 500,000: MYR 2550; 500,001 to MYR 1 million: MYR 4250; 1,000,001 to 5 million: MYR 6800; 5,000,001 to 10, 000,000: MYR 8500; 10,000,001 to MYR 25 Million: MYR 17,000; 25,000,001 to 50 Million: MYR 34,000; 50,000,001 to 100 Million: MYR 42,500; over 100 Million: MYR 59,500 Since April 01, 2010 the authority for stamping of documents has been delegated to the CCM and entrepreneurs no longer have to go to the Inland Revenue Board (IRB). The stamp cost is RM100 for the Memorandum and RM100 for the Articles with a 2nd set stamped at RM10 each</p>		
4	<p>Purchase company seal, share certificates and statutory books from the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM)</p> <p>Usually, the seal can be ready in 3 days for RM100.</p>	1 day	MYR 100 (post-incorporation package)

Source: Malaysia on Doing Business database.

Startup companies can come in all forms, but the phrase "startup company" is often associated with high growth, technology-oriented companies. Investors are generally most attracted to those new companies distinguished by their risk/reward profile and scalability. That is, they have lower bootstrapping costs, higher risk, and higher potential return on investment. Successful startups are typically more scalable than an established business, in the sense that they can potentially grow rapidly with limited investment of capital, labor or land. Startups encounter several unique options for funding. Venture capital firms and investors may help startup companies begin operations, exchanging cash for an equity stake. In practice though, many startups are initially funded by the founders themselves.

The legal and regulatory framework can have a significant impact on the speed, efficiency, and cost of starting an enterprise and formally registering it. World Bank case studies of female entrepreneurs in the East Asia and Pacific region indicate that female entrepreneurs' success at negotiating this environment can be an important factor in determining their entrepreneurial success (World Bank, 2010). Research suggests that ease of business entry (as measured by the number of actions and time required to complete entry formalities) is correlated with the number of enterprises, particularly in the SME sector where many women operate. Conversely, the costs of entry-regulation procedures across countries correlate negatively to the percentage of new firms in an industry (Klapper, Laeven & Rajan 2006).

2.10 Entry Regulations

The term can refer to the procedures a firm faces in trying to enter a market or industry such as government regulation, or the established firm taking advantage of economies of scale such as licensing requirements. The entry regulations perform as a protector to the firms and restrict illegal entrance competition in a market, so then they can contribute to distortion prices. The existence of monopolies or market power is often aided by the entry regulations.

Numerous and lengthy procedures, as well as high monetary costs, often prevent potential entrepreneurs from even starting their businesses, or at least from registering them formally. In principle, one might expect the regulative environment from the male and female led enterprises in the same way. However, evidence suggests that the regulative environment assume a gendered dimension because women tend to have less access than men regarding to the social networks and also based on bureaucracies dealing, for instance, women entrepreneurs have access to less and poorer quality information and crucially, have less time to negotiate complex procedures. Research on the differential regulatory burden faced by female and male entrepreneurs would be useful in understanding which procedures impose particular costs on women entrepreneurs and the suitable solution to mitigate those costs.

In the ASEAN region, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam are particularly difficult for entry regulations under the indicator of “starting a business”

(World Bank 2009). Nine procedures are necessary to start a business, and the average time taken for the whole process is 85 days (World Bank, 2007). The monetary cost is also significant. Vietnam as one of the ASEAN members has made some headway in simplifying business entry regulations. With the introduction of simplified procedures, including some e-government processes under the Vietnam Enterprise Law 1999, the number of businesses established from 2000 to 2005 tripled compared to figures for the previous decade (Nguyen et al.,2006).

However, there are still an estimated 2 million informal household businesses in the country, and Vietnam still ranks relatively low on the Doing Business 2010 “starting a business” indicator (116 out of 183 economies) (World Bank 2009). The issues arose because due to the long period required to acquire a registration certificate (15 days), obtain a company seal (14 days), register for a tax code, and purchase preprinted invoices (15 days). While applicants can now track some processes online, they still must physically go to the government office to submit their documents (Nguyen et al.,2006).

In several countries in the region, the difficulties of starting a business are exacerbated through high minimum capital requirements. High minimum start-up capital requirements are highlighted as a significant constraint in case studies of female entrepreneurs in the Republic of Korea and Indonesia. The Korean businesswoman profiled in a World Bank case study obtained the required capital through access to her family’s business resources (World Bank, 2010). For Singapore, the government offers a good example to the rest of

the region, with no minimum capital requirements for starting a business (World Bank, 2008).

2.11 The Gender Dimensions of Regulatory Burden and Informality

Globalization encompasses the dynamic processes of international trade and finance that interconnect and increasingly integrate national economies. These global processes have an impact on local labor markets on employment structures and relationships, wages and working conditions, opportunities for women and men and their labor-force participation. Globalization has given countries access to a bigger workforce across the world.

Looking at the gender dimensions of globalization is essential for promoting a “fair globalization,” one that, according to the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, creates opportunities for all, does not exacerbate existing problems of inequality within and between nations, and enables men and women to meet their aspirations for democratic participation and material prosperity. The most obvious reason for addressing gender issues is that women workers make up the overwhelming majority of the workforces of labor-intensive, export industries in developing countries, dominate the international migration of care services workers, and tend to be concentrated in the most vulnerable jobs of global production systems. Any assessment of the benefits and costs of globalization would thus be insufficient if it does not differentiate the outcomes for female and male workers.

A second, perhaps less obvious, reason is that failure to take into account gender-based differences in economic behavior and labor market outcomes could lead to the formulation of ineffective and inefficient strategies. Women and men are differently, often unequally, positioned in the economy, perform different socially determined responsibilities, and face different constraints. Thus, they are unlikely to respond in the same way to policies and market signals.

Third, gender equality with respect to opportunity and treatment in the global economy is essential for achieving equity and social justice, which are integral to achieving decent work for all. “Decent work”, a term the ILO adopted in 2000, is a way of summing up people’s universal and basic aspirations in work, which include adequate and stable income, fair and equal treatment, safety at work, economic and social security in old age, through ill health and in time of hardship, more opportunities to develop one’s creativity and potentials, voice and representation, and dignity, respect and freedom at work. From the decent work perspective, globalization processes should help reduce, or at least not aggravate, inequalities between men and women.

The costs of starting a business are often higher for women rather than for men, even when the enterprises lead face the same regulatory environments. As a consequence, women are more likely to operate informally. Informality, in turn, reduces the probability of obtaining credit and the ability of a business to enforce contracts. An excessive regulative burden thus acts as a disincentive to growth and formalization, while small size and informality further increase the burden of regulative costs, creating a vicious cycle.

A World Bank study found that rapid rural-urban migration and the consequent surge in population in Asian cities has not been managed effectively, leading to a substantial increase in inequality and an increase in the size of the informal labor market (Gill et al.,2007). In China, the informal labor market has been estimated to represent 40 percent of its total labor market (Gill et al.,2007). In the Philippines, the figure is even higher, at 49 percent (ADB and World, Bank, 2008). In Laos PDR, the informal economy contributes around 30 percent of GDP (World Bank, 2007).

Finally, given the current economic climate, the importance of the informal sector is likely to increase further, as evidence has linked economic crisis with growth of the informal sector (Horn, 2009). After the 1997 financial crisis, for example, Indonesia saw an increase in informal sector workers from 65 percent in 1998 to 71 percent in 2003 (World Bank, 2006). Given the depth and severity of the current financial and economic crisis, it is possible that we may see further shifts toward informal work. This is likely to hit women entrepreneurs and workers hard due to their particular vulnerabilities.

2.12 Other Business Environment Issues

Both female and male entrepreneurs face other significant business constraints throughout the region, but these constraints may hit women-led enterprises especially hard. These circumstances include corruption and costly and cumbersome legal and regulatory frameworks for trade and exchange (especially for enforcement of contracts).

Women also face particular problems with gender-biased enforcement procedures and societal customs (which sometimes even take precedence over statutory laws). Increasing women's level of influence in public-private dialogue at both national and local levels is also necessary to foster inclusive private sector development, growth, and poverty reduction agendas.

a) Governance

Governance is the act of governing. It relates to decisions that define expectations, grant power, or verify performance. It consists of either a separate process or part of management or leadership processes. These processes and systems are typically administered by a government. When discussing governance, in particular institutions, the quality of governance within the institutions is often compared to a standard of good governance. In the case of a business or of a non-profit organization, governance relates to consistent management, cohesive policies, guidance, processes and decision-rights for a given area of responsibility. For example, managing at a corporate level might involve evolving policies on privacy, on internal investment, and on the use of data.

With some exceptions (for example, Hong Kong, China, and Singapore), entrepreneurs routinely identify corruption as a significant constraint to doing business in the East Asia and Pacific region (Gill et al.,2007). Corruption raises the costs of doing business and creates a more unpredictable business environment, making it harder to plan ahead. It may also create an incentive for firms to stay informal in order to escape the discretionary

power of local officials. Corruption which hits women-led enterprises officially with discretionary power can exploit the relatively poorer information that women have about regulations and their entitlement to service standards. This comes out starkly in several case studies of individual female entrepreneurs in the region (World Bank, 2010).

A contributing factor to corruption in the region is rapid or poorly managed decentralization programs, which give considerable discretion to individual officials to implement and oversee complex laws and procedures (IFC, 2006). Surveys of businesses in Indonesia and the Philippines suggest that major decentralization has led to worsening corruption (Gill et al., 2007). Vietnam, which has also implemented a program of decentralization, has also experienced problems with corruption and in one province, 70 percent of businesses reported that they had to pay bribes, while 12 percent claimed that more than 10 percent of annual revenue was spent on informal charges (Malesky et al., 2008).

Opportunities for corruption are also greater where business regulations are too numerous and overly complex. A case study of a female entrepreneur in Indonesia refers to the large number of procedures as the reason for widespread corruption and high costs, as middlemen and officials offer to “speed up” processes in exchange for under-the-table payments (World Bank, 2010). Corruption imposes costs for all businesses, but there is some evidence that women find themselves particularly affected because of public officials’ perception that they are “soft targets.”

This decision-making process is crucial to the women entrepreneurs' success in the international business arena because it may lead to wrong choice of failure to decide an important selection item.

b) Enforcement of Contracts

The ability to make and enforce contracts is fundamental if markets are to function properly. Good enforcement procedures enhance predictability in commercial relationships and reduce uncertainty by assuring investors that their contractual rights will be upheld promptly by local courts. When procedures for enforcing commercial transactions are bureaucratic and cumbersome or when contractual disputes cannot be resolved in a timely and cost-effective manner, economies rely on fewer efficient commercial practices.

Traders depend more heavily on personal and family contacts, banks reduce the amount of lending because they cannot be assured of the ability to collect on debts or obtain control of property pledged as collateral to secure loans, and transactions tend to be conducted on a cash-only basis. This limits the funding available for business expansion and slows down trade, investment, economic growth and development.

A well-designed, well-implemented legal framework for trade and exchange is, in many senses are the heart of the quality of the business environment. The costs and difficulties of enforcing contracts can be considerable, particularly for women who are poor, live far

from metropolitan legal centers, are unaware of their legal rights and available recourses, or lack the resources to afford legal expertise.

Country performance varies widely, for instance in Singapore, enforcing contract costs only 26 percent of the claim amount and takes an average of 150 days, but in Timor-Leste, the corresponding figures are 163 percent of the claim and a staggering 1,435 days. Timor-Leste is the most difficult place in the world to enforce contracts, ranking 183rd of 183 economies on this indicator in *Doing Business 2010*. Businesses must grapple with high costs, numerous procedures, and an average wait time of almost five years. A Timorese entrepreneur profiled in a series of case studies (World Bank, 2010) confirms that chasing unpaid bills was the major obstacle for her business. Verbal, rather than written, contracts have formed the mainstay of her business in a country where contacts and relationships are the main channels for securing customers.

Businesses have a little incentive to enter written contracts because the court system takes too long to process cases and costs a considerable amount in attorney and court fees. While alternative dispute resolution systems can be both cost-effective and efficient, in Timor-Leste, alternative dispute resolution relies on the intervention of community leaders, and a major gender barrier applies.

Women are not allowed to join the congregation unless invited by these leaders to discuss disputes. Problems with customary, gender-biased enforcement procedures exist in various forms in other countries. The costs and difficulties associated with enforcing

contracts are also cited as a strong constraint on effective business operations by an Indonesian businesswoman profiled in a World Bank (World Bank, 2010). Recovering a debt in Indonesia can often cost more in attorney fees and court costs than the amount claimed, as Doing Business 2010 revealed. Indonesia, unsurprisingly, ranks low (146th out of 183 countries) on the Doing Business “enforcing contracts” indicator.

c) Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) and Women’s Influence

The main potential benefits of PPD include:

- i) Facilitating investment climate reforms by supporting champions for reform, creating momentum, and accelerating the reform process.

Public-private dialogue has a range of potential impacts, but it does not achieve anything on its own. It works by facilitating, accelerating, or cementing other ongoing initiatives, ones which without the boost of stakeholder pressure would falter or fail. The most tangible benefits of PPD are the policy reforms it can precipitate. These can include new legislation, the amendment or scrapping of existing legislation, removal or simplification of regulations and controls, standardization of procedures across different jurisdictions, and establishment of new institutions. While the structured consultation of a public-private dialogue mechanism can have an immediate effect in improving the quality of particular reform efforts, its deeper benefit lies in building a sustainable constituency for investment climate reform.

- ii) Promoting better diagnosis of investment climate problems and design of policy reforms.

Governments that listen to the constraints of the private sector are more likely to devise sensible prioritization plans and workable reforms. This, in turn, can encourage investors to take a longer view and cooperate with laws and regulations. When governments and businesses are mutually mistrustful and uncommunicative, investors lack confidence and are disproportionately drawn to short-term returns and the informal sector.

- iii) Making policy reforms easier to implement. When entrepreneurs understand what a government is trying to achieve with a reform package, they are more likely to accept and work with the reforms in practice.

All too often, legislation may get onto the statute book but have little effect in reality because of lack of follow-through. PPD can help to ensure that reforms actually take effect on the ground, by helping disseminate awareness of the changes, feed information back, and keep up the pressure for action.

- iv) Promoting transparency, good governance, the taking of a broader view, broader view by setting an example of openness and rigorous cost-benefit analysis, and by creating pressure of public scrutiny.

Without the structure imposed by PPD, business advocacy tends to find a narrower outlet: one sector lobbies for a specific reform, which then has unwelcome effects in other

sectors, which lobbies for its reversal, and so on. The monitoring and evaluation systems put in place by a PPD initiative promotes a culture of compliance and entices governments to perform regulatory impact assessments. At its best, PPD can save time and effort by establishing checks and balances for private sector demands, allowing the ramifications of measures to be discussed before they are implemented, and ideally nurturing in the private sector a more rounded view of what's good for the economy as a whole. The example of openness and scrutiny set by a PPD can have ramifications for governance of both public sector agencies and corporations, by seeking to set a standard to which the media and public may hold the participants in their other affairs.

On the other hand, more local government power might also have the effect of strengthening discriminatory traditional norms, as identified, for example, in the analysis of Indonesia's decentralization program (World Bank, 2006). Moreover, as discussed above, rapid decentralization can sometimes increase corruption, thus harming businesses led by both women and men. To counter such trends, increased political empowerment and participation for women in all levels of government and in public-private dialogue are critical. The assumption behind this claim is that if women are not as much involved in public policy, then policy makers are less likely to consider their needs and concerns.

Singapore provides a good example of how public-private dialogue is improving the business environment and helping to ensure that government take the entrepreneurs' concerns into account when making policy. Singapore's Action Community for Entrepreneurship (ACE) is a public-private collaboration currently led by the minister

responsible of entrepreneurship. One of ACE's main objectives is to improve the regulatory environment for businesses by promoting discussion and encouraging feedback from entrepreneurs (World Bank, 2010).

2.13 Performance of Entrepreneurship

Women are one of the groups in supporting economic development in many developing countries. Global entrepreneurship monitor (GEM) 2011, reported that women entrepreneurs were creating the jobs, wealth and innovation across the 54 GEM countries under review. The growth rate of women entrepreneurs who create new business is greater than the growth rate of men in most countries.

According to Startiene (2009) entrepreneurship has a lot to do with the self employment of people who are skilled enough to make the bread and butter out of their own business ventures. Found by Luke and Munshi (2007), women entrepreneurship is a phenomenon which was not given an important role in the economy in the past, but now it has started gaining appreciation because it has been admitted that women in a society are the significant agents of positive economic change and without women's non passive participation in economic well being cannot be achieved. Singh (1993) stated, many socio-economic factors are responsible for this wrong perception in the business environment around the globe.

The development of women entrepreneurship has been growing rapidly in Malaysia. The significance importance of the women entrepreneurs to the growth on Malaysia's economy is proved by the variety of initiative, policies and organization. Similarly, Thurik and Wennekers (2004) said that in today's world small business, and particularly new one are seen more than ever as a vehicle for entrepreneurship, contributing not just the employment, social and political stability, but also to innovative and in competitive power. In Malaysia, there are many training programs and financial support systems that have been established to make women improve their skill and take advantage of the opportunities in the job market. However, all the program and financial support to the entrepreneur seems not really as effective as it should be.

In the research by Teoh and Chong (2007), they stated that from the previous literature seemed to suggest that there are five factors influencing the performance of entrepreneurs.

The factors are discussed below:

i) Individual Characteristics and Performance

Dolinski et al.,(1993) reckon that less-educated women may face financial or human capital constraints, which limit their business pursuits. The individual characteristics such as age, years of formal education, managerial skills, and particular strengths in generating ideas and dealing with people as well as prior experiences in the industry are positively correlated with firm performance. Moreover, 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 drove them to become entrepreneurs and run their business successfully.

ii) Management Practices and Performance

According to Butter (2001), a relational dimension is the best management style for women entrepreneurs as it defines mutual empowering, collaboration, sharing of information and nurturing, negotiating styles. These are significantly more beneficial to long-term business success. Women entrepreneurs also have the ability to communicate better with employees, suppliers and customers.

iii) Goals and Motivations and Performance

Brush (1990) reported that individual motivations and goals such as profitability, revenues and sales growth have been found to be related to performance in women-owned businesses. While the psychological motives for women entrepreneurs to be successful are self-satisfaction, search for independence and supportive environmental factors, however, industry sector and source of finance are affecting business performance.

iv) Networking and Performance

Hisrich and Brush (1987) suggested that support systems, mentors and advisors, business associates and friends, participation in trade associations and women's groups are the significant networks which are positively associated with business performance. Generally, networking serve as a platform for women entrepreneurs to establish networks

and exchange information and experiences as well as to conduct training programs, seminars and workshops on motivation, leadership and entrepreneur development and to provide other means of support.

v) Entrepreneurial Orientation and Performance

Entrepreneurial orientation such as innovativeness, and risk taking are the factors found to determine the success of a women entrepreneur in business. Innovation enables women entrepreneurs to venture into new things, such as technology, products and market whereas the risk is required if women are to venture into relatively large-scale businesses.

According to Tambunan (2009), the main constraints facing women to become entrepreneurs are SMEs because SMEs have overwhelming importance in Asian developing countries, as they accounted on average for more than 95% of all firms, thus the biggest source of employment, providing livelihood for over 90% of the country's workforce, especially women and the young. Women entrepreneurs are mainly found in SMEs that are traditional and low income-generating activities. They choose SMEs simply because this economy activity is characterized by an easy entry and exit, and low capital, skills, and simple technology requirements. Majority of women entrepreneurs were not drawn to entrepreneurship by 'pull' factors, such as the need for a challenge, the urge to try something on their own and to be independent, to show others that they are capable of doing well in business, to be recognized by the society (self-esteem), hobby or to use spare time, but by 'push' factors such as poverty, unemployment, they need to

have more cash income to support their family daily expenditures and precaution motives.

2.14 Business Intelligence (BI)

Estart (2010) stated the business intelligent is an extensive category of methods, technologies and software for collecting, storing, structuring, analyzing, and accessing the data with the object of making better business decisions. It also can be defined as business processes for accumulating and analyzing the business data from databases and data warehouses. The main business intelligence goal is to provide sufficient information for making business decisions. Depending on the aim of the business decision, business intelligence methods can provide information about company customers, market trends, effectiveness of marketing campaigns, companies' competitors, or even predict future activities.

Business Dictionary (2010) defined business intelligence as computer-based techniques used in spotting, digging-out, analyzing business data, such as sales revenue by products or departments or associated costs and incomes. The objectives of a business intelligence exercise include:

- i) Understanding of firm's internal and external strengths and weaknesses
- ii) Understanding of the relationship between different data for better decision making

- iii) Detection on opportunities for innovation
- iv) Cost reduction and optimal deployment of resources

According to Laudon and Laudon (2007), Business Intelligence can help the entrepreneurs' firm in the decision-making process and strengthen the competitive advantages by integrating the external and internal information into a whole set of knowledge based on information. O'Brian (2007) defined Business Intelligence as human based organization that is made by extracting the information from both the external and internal of an organization.

Nurwahida and Abdul Manaf (2011) stated that Business Intelligence has capabilities that support strategic implementation and make their strategy more effective. Because of that, business intelligence must also be reliable and user friendly to every party and be updated from time to time. If business intelligence is not user friendly, then, employees as well as customers will not use it. This situation can create nonsensical situations that have potentials to create a negative image of an organization. From the business point of view, business intelligence will help the women entrepreneurs to perform better in environmental scanning, and makes the process be more systematic and precise. This is because Business Intelligence deals with strategic factors getting to corporate and business level planners and then, directly to decision makers in a timely manner. Therefore, a computerized Business Intelligence can be used to develop a series of likely data industry scenarios as well as a number of alternative strategies and implementation programs. So, the efficiencies are coming from integrated Business Intelligence that

allows the firm to share knowledge with customers and suppliers. By this way, the company 'fights' as well as has a competitive secret weapon in a dynamic marketplace. To the extent that a firm that has a complete design of an integrated Business Intelligence has strength that can provide a significant competitive advantage for a long time in business strategic planning.

Following that, Turban, McLean and Wetherbe (2007) mentioned that information is retained and stored in the systems, by establishing certain system designs, the business intelligence will react and function as well as a human. It means that the Business Intelligent system will have similar characteristics and thinking system such as how humans think and act in the real life. Clearly Business Intelligent systems are a special systems design, based on human specification intelligence and sometimes called as an expert system.

While, Kopackova and Skrobackova stated that business intelligence is a new term in information technology, the term was first used by Gartner and popularized by analyst Howard Dresner. It describes the process of turning data into information and into knowledge. The intelligence is claimed to be more useful to the user as it passes through each step. Business intelligence describes a set of concepts and methods to improve business decision making by using fact-based support systems. Gartner's definition of business intelligence includes all the ways an enterprise can explore access and analyze information in the data warehouse to develop insights that lead to improved, informed decisions. Business intelligence tools include ad hoc query, report writing, decision

support systems, executive information systems (Key Performance Indicators) and techniques such as statistical analysis and online analytical processing (OLAP).

Undoubtedly, the growth of technologies are the main elements in contributing business intelligence. Under the concept of Business Intelligence System (BIS) and with rapid advances in technology, enterprises today frequently search for new ways to establish value positions. Well- built BIS can provide the ability to analyze business information in order to support and improve management decision making across a broad range of business activities. Business intelligence utilizes a substantial amount of collected data during the daily operational processes, and transforms the data into information and knowledge to avoid the supposition and ignorance of the enterprises. The main characteristics of BIS are the capability of providing representative information for higher level management, to support strategic activities such as goal setting, planning and forecasting, and also tracking performance, to gather, analyze, and integrate internal and external data into dynamic profiles of key performance indicators. Business Intelligence Systems is structured on three distinct levels, which are data management, model management and data visualization tools.

2.15 Leadership Style

Leadership is described as "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members" (House et al.,2004, p.54). Michener et al., (1990) described leadership

"as a process that takes place in groups in which one member influences and controls the behavior of the other members towards some common goal." Leadership also is known as the act of providing direction, energizing others and obtaining their voluntary commitment of the leader's vision (Kotter, 1990). Thus, a leader is a person who creates a vision and goals, then energizes others to voluntarily commit to that vision (Kotter, 1990).

Women today have an increased leadership presence. Over the past three decades, each gender group has proclaimed the superiority of its own leadership styles (Chusmir et al.,1989). Leadership styles of women versus men gained a heightened awareness in the 1990s due to the attempt of researchers to clarify qualities of gender differences specific to contemporary conditions. Women's collaborative and contributory behaviors have increased significantly while men's scores declined despite emphasis on teamwork both in business schools and the workplace (Robinson, 2003). Emotional intelligence plays an increasingly important role where differences in technical skills are minimal in importance. Without emotional intelligence, the best education, brilliant ideas accompanied by an analytical mind will not constitute a stable and productive leader.

Successful leadership was considered to be reliant on the leader's judgment and consideration of situational factors in order for an appropriate leadership style to be chosen to cope with each situation. Situational theories suggested that leadership is a matter of situational demands. Therefore, situational factors will play a role in determining who will emerge to take up leadership role (Bass, 1990). Three styles of leadership were proposed, "autocratic leaders" were originally described as leaders who

used their power to force, or their ability to persuade in leading their followers. An autocratic leader was defined as a person who used power to be strict rather than lenient, to supervise closely and to ensure adherence to procedures (Blau & Scott, 1962). "Democratic leadership," which was explained as a style whereby the leader pursued an open, trusting and follower-oriented relationship. Leaders who adopted this style encouraged followers to establish their own policies, provided them with a perspective by explaining in advance the procedures for accomplishing the goals, and granted the followers independence to commence their own tasks and congratulating them in an objective manner. A third leadership style was described as "laissez-faire" leadership. The term laissez-faire means to let others act without interference, and according to the early studies of Stogdill (1974) laissez-faire refers to the extent that leadership is either avoided or attempted (Bass, 1990). Laissez-faire leaders were thought to have less confidence in their supervisory duties, or in their capability to manage, often avoiding meeting their subordinates (Bass, 1990).

Transformational leadership entails establishing oneself as a role model gaining followers' trust and confidence. By stating future goals, developing plans to achieve these goals and displaying an innovative edge, critically may benefit from utilizing transformational leadership, this model may be advantageous to women. The inconsistencies between the demands of leadership roles and the female roles, transformational leadership may very well allow women to excel as leaders. (Eagley, 2003).

Chen (2007) outlines entrepreneurial leadership as the creative response to new market opportunities through new business creation. Chen's (2007) empirical study of high-tech entrepreneurial teams within Taiwan aimed to develop entrepreneurial leadership by examining whether increased levels of this leadership generated higher levels of creativity among team members by measuring patent creation. Findings indicated that entrepreneurial leadership does stimulate entrepreneurial team members' creativity. However, Kuratko (2007) suggests this focus on business creation is limiting. He sees entrepreneurial leadership as unique concept combining the identification of opportunities, risk taking beyond security and being resolute enough to follow ideas through. Entrepreneurial leadership is the fusion of three concepts; entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial management with leadership enabling them to develop their own conceptualization of entrepreneurial leadership as a process rather than individual attributes. Gupta et al.,(2004) central premise of entrepreneurial leadership is that entrepreneur-leaders should be able to create visionary scenarios capable of mobilizing a supporting cast to enact the vision.

2.16 Decision Making

The process of decision making involves identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values and preferences of a decision maker (Hussain, 2006). It is essential to entrepreneurs because their decision-making process approach may differ from one another particularly in how they think, perceive and process the information associated with decision-making. Thus, the way they think (thinking style) will lead to how they

decide (decision style). Thinking style is defined as one's preferred manner of using mental abilities to govern daily activities, including understanding and solving problems and challenges. Thinking styles may vary depending on the conditions and demands of a given situation (Sternberg, 1997, 1994, 1988), and it can be either linear or nonlinear thinking (Vance et al.,2007). Linear thinking was based on rules, rationality, analysis, logic, reason, and cause–effect predictability (Siggelkow & Rivkin, 2005). On the other hand, non-linear thinking emphasizes on the intuition and gut feelings. It also focuses on creativity, flexibility, holistic insight, and emotion. Hence, effective thinking, planning, and problem solving in our complex, turbulent, unpredictable, and uncertain global business environment require entrepreneurs to reach beyond merely a linear thinking platform to enhance success.

Entrepreneurs have different goals when starting a business venture, and many of them are non monetary such as the desire to be independent and one's own boss. The entrepreneur must make a decision to invest resources and substantial time to plan, launch and manage a new venture. As accomplishing these tasks is difficult, the entrepreneur must have strong motivations for doing so. These motivations are different from one entrepreneur to another. (Dunkelberg et al.,2003). The decision to start a business occurs when an individual perceives that the founding of a company is desirable and possible (Antoncic et al.,2002).

In deciding to start a new business, the entrepreneur must recognize an opportunity, reviews available capabilities and resources, assesses the markets, and allocates resources

to meet expected challenges. The entry decisions force the entrepreneur to conceive a strategic framework and imagine steps or tactics for carrying out the strategy. By doing so, it will enable the entrepreneur to build the enterprise and begin to conduct business. The entry decision is the single most important strategic event in the life of the firm. The firm cannot perform any other strategy without it because the decision and the effects of startup strategy shape all the firm's later actions. Once made, the impact of the entry decision persists for life, and it is irreversible.

Despite a lack of information on the host market, limited international experience, lack of a business plan and, therefore, a lack of a clear idea about what to do abroad, the entrepreneurs performed high levels of commitment and effectively internationalized operations. According to the traditional international business (IB) literature, internationalization decisions are guided by strict rational behaviors (Brouthers & Hennart, 2007) and successful strategy formation follows a systematic approach (Crick & Spence, 2005). A limited number of IB and International Entrepreneurship (IE) scholars took into consideration the behavioral theory of the firm (Aharoni, Tihanyi & Connelly, 2011) that puts attention on bounded rationality (Cyert & March, 1963).

In complex environments characterized by high level of uncertainty, the entrepreneurs tend to make satisfying decisions (March & Simon, 1958) versus decisions based on the logic of cost-minimization e.g. transaction cost theory (Williamson, 1985) and risk-adjusted return on investment e.g. institutional theory (North, 1990). For example, Larimo (1995) analyzes the internationalization process of Finnish firms and finds that

often managers and entrepreneurs take into consideration a limited number of alternatives and adopt “*acceptable level of decision making contrary to maximization behavior*” (p. 53). Crick and Spence (2005) suggest that internationalization is a result of planned and unplanned strategies based on a combination of networking, resource-based analysis and serendipity. Nielsen and Nielsen (2011) argue that top management can make effective international strategic decisions based on personal background and experience.

All in all, it emerges that internationalization research covered a considerable number of topics; nevertheless, International Entrepreneurship research focused more on the content of new venture internationalization strategies but neglected somehow to analyze the development and implementation process of these strategies (Zahra & George, 2002; Zahra, Korri & Yu, 2005). Understanding the relationship between entrepreneurial behavior and development of competitive advantages in international environments necessitates a new and more holistic way of looking at the phenomenon (Jones & Coviello, 2005). In line with the developments, relatively recently scholars focused on opportunity recognition (see Jones, Coviello, & Tang, 2011) by considering that opportunity is not only present in the environment, waiting to be discovered (Kirzner, 1973) but it can also be created by the entrepreneur (Weick, 1979).

Sarasvathy (2001) describes two kinds of decision making modes in business settings, causation and effectuation. Causation is described as the use of techniques of analysis and estimation to explore and exploit existing and latent markets. Causal reasoning focuses on what ought to be done given pre-determined goals and possible means, implying a

process that rests on the logic of prediction. For example, it is extremely valuable, and thus also more likely to be seen, in situations where there is a market which is existent and measurable. Effectuation calls on the other hand for the use of synthesis and imagination to create new markets that do not already exist. Effectual reasoning emphasizes the question of what can be done given possible means and imagined ends, implying a process that rests on the logic of control. Moreover, effectuation does not assume pre-existent markets and is particularly useful and effective, and thus also more likely to be seen, in domains where new markets are created.

2.17 Internationalization Marketing

The internationalization is an evolutionary process, and the firms adapt to the international environment (Calof & Beamish, 1995). Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that the process of internationalization induces a number of changes inside the SME. Besides, from the preliminary research we received some inputs suggesting that the amount of the changes is considerable and have an important impact on the traditional SME. The research on the internationalization investigated mostly the peculiarities (at the firm, entrepreneur or management level) that moderate the internationalization of a firm. Christensen (2003) highlighted that up-stream studies and studies of reproductive entrepreneurs as well as studies of the entrepreneurial process embedded in the internationalization process itself have been somehow neglected by the research community.

The influence of the internationalization process on the firm's internal characteristics is an under-investigated issue (Schuh, 2001). Nummela, Loane and Bell (2006) report that it remains unclear how the key business operations change during internationalization, and what kind of resources and skills – on both the organizational, and the individual level are needed to manage the internationalization process successfully.

By understanding the type of change, it will be possible to identify what kind of situation will face the company and what kind of action the entrepreneur/management has to undertake in order to face Production-Oriented Internationalization (POI), for example, in case of radical change, probably, the firm will suffer a period characterized by a high level of instability, although concentrated in time; on the contrary, the presence of changes spread in time (continuous change) implies that the adaptation of the SME to the new situation is more gradual. Therefore, the entrepreneur and management have to keep adapting constantly the organization.

2.17.1 Motives of the Firm to Enter Other Markets

The process of globalization represents one of the most significant trends that accelerated rapid growth of global strategies. Firms that want to internationalize must decide on a fitting mode of entry into a foreign market in order to make the best use of their resources. However, it is important to analyze companies' motives for entering a foreign market. Therefore, companies are entering international markets for many reasons, for instance, the following motives:

- i. Foreign markets are growing faster than the domestic markets;
- ii. Protecting themselves by countering foreign firms to enter a domestic market;
- iii. Searching greater sales volume in order to achieve low cost.

Czinkota and Ronkainen (1995) suggest several motives for entering a new market.

Those motives are:

a. Profit and Growth Goals

Companies have a strong desire for short-term profit, especially companies that are at a stage of initial interest in exporting. The motivation for growth may also be of particular importance for the firm's export start. Some companies are profit seeking, so they seek international markets where they can increase their profits by selling to customers who are willing to pay more for the same product than their domestic customers would.

b. Managerial Motives

Managers are motivated toward marketing activities from their desire, drive and enthusiasm of management. This enthusiasm can exist simply because managers like to be part of a firm that operates internationally. So, managerial attitudes play a critical role in determining the exporting activities of the firm.

c. Foreign Market Opportunities

Market opportunities act as stimuli for the firm that has or is capable of securing the resources necessary to respond to the opportunities. Companies see opportunities in foreign markets as chances for operating and expanding their businesses.

d. Economies of Scale

Economies of scale can be reached by participating in global marketing activities, which may enable the firm to increase its output and therefore, climb more rapidly on the economies of scale. The Boston Consulting Group showed that a doubling of output can reduce production costs by up to 30 percent and this effect has been very much sought. As a result, increased production also helps in reducing the cost of production.

e. Tax Benefits

Tax benefits can also play a major motivating role. In some countries, taxes are lower that make companies to have more profits. This practice is in conformity with international agreements and provides firms with certain tax deferrals. So, tax benefits allow the firm either to offer its products at a lower cost in foreign markets or to accumulate a higher profit.

According to online resource centers, international marketing takes place when the marketer explores markets outside the national boundaries of the domestic market. This often begins with direct or indirect exporting to a neighboring country. The focus is to

find markets, which have needs similar to those in the domestic market and can be satisfied with similar products and services. While the marketing environment may be different, and some adjustment may have to be made to the marketing mix elements, exporting in economic terms is basically the movement of surplus production overseas. Planning, implementation, and control of the marketing mix are based in the exporting organization.

According to Julian (2003), there are six factors contributing significantly to the variation in the export marketing performance. There are:

- i) Managers of export firms must be aware of the firm-specific characteristics that can influence the firm's marketing performance. Competencies in international operations enable firms to select better export markets, to formulate suitable marketing strategy and effectively to implement the chosen strategy (Douglas & Craig, 1989). When managers are committed to an export venture, they carefully plan the entry and allocate sufficient managerial and financial resources to the venture. With formal planning and resource commitment, uncertainty is reduced and marketing strategy can be implemented effectively (Aaby & Slater, 1989; Christensen et al., 1987), leading to better performance (Aaker, 1988).
- ii) Managers of export firms must be aware of the dimensions of export marketing strategy that can influence marketing performance. This is due to the marketing strategy which confirm that supporting a distributor/subsidiary can lead to a

cooperative partnership between manufacturer and the distributor/subsidiary. Cooperation in the export channel will lead to effective implementation of marketing strategy and performance (Rosson & Ford, 1982).

- iii) Competition in an export market has a direct influence on a firm's marketing performance. The dimensions of competition will confirm the importance for the firm to be price competitive in the export market in which it is operating if it wishes to be successful in that export market. The firm needs to be aware of this so that the export venture is not undetermined by competitors.
- iv) Firms must make commitments to their product/services, by maintaining and servicing its products through the product's level of exposure in the export market, through the product's level of establishment within the firm. Therefore, the management of an export firm needs to be committed to its products/services for successful export marketing performance.
- v) Managers of export firms should be aware of the market characteristics of a foreign market. The level of sophistication in the markets' marketing infrastructure, the degree of adaption required with respect to the product's packaging, the extent of government intervention and the degree of adaption required for the product's positioning strategy are very important for successful export marketing performance.

- vi) Managers of export firms should make efforts to adapt their products/services to meet the needs of the local market to achieve success in the marketing performance of their export venture. Specifically, the culture-specificity of the firm's products/services and the extent of the patent enjoyed by the product/service all require management's attention.

Johanson and Vahlne (2007) concluded that firms' internationalization processes are related to surrounding processes such as market or network internationalization, industry internationalization, technical development, concentration as well as de-concentration processes. It is important to remember that firms' internationalization is embedded in an ever-changing world. The internationalization processes are the result of a mixture of critical thinking, strategic action, emergent developments, chances and necessity.

2.18 Underpinning Theories

Resource-based theory (RBT) is a method used to achieve competitive advantage. The concepts of resource, capability and competence have been widely discussed in management literature. As compared to the larger firms, smaller firms are less competitive because they may possess less of those three factors (Hamel & Prahalad, 1996). According to Grant (1991), the resource-based view (RBV) implies that differences in performance between businesses may be better clarified through differences in firm resources and their accumulation and usage.

Businesses have a propensity to grow because of wanting to reach for economies of scale (Penrose, 1995) and there may still balance to use internal and external resources (Rugman & Verbeke, 2002). The resource-based view focuses on the activities that can perform with business resources (Davidsson & Wiklund, 2006). Some researchers divide resources into four categories namely human, financial, physical and intangible (Stonehouse & Houston, 2012) or four factory outputs namely performance, flexibility, innovativeness, and delivery plus three network outputs namely accessibility, mobility, and learning (Miltenburg, 2005).

The resource-based theory is focused on performance relative to competitors (Peteraf & Barney, 2003). It is important for resource-based perspective to achieve and support the competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is beneficial to the business when the small number of firms implement a value-creating strategy. In the resource-based view, entrepreneurs in SMEs as a manager is a key person to control the performance of the firm by utilization of the resources that firm possesses (Grant, 1991). They have to choose suitable strategy to make the most effective use of the firm's resources and capabilities.

The resources of a firm “include all assets, capabilities, processes, firm attributes, knowledge, information that is controlled by a firm to consider and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness” (Barney, 1991), which leads to competitive advantage of the firm. Contrasting to Barney (1991) was Wernerfelt, who identified

resources to have consisted of anything that might be thought of as a strength or weakness of a given firm (Wernerfelt, 2006).

There are several categories of resources in a firm. For example, Hofer and Schendel (1978) stated six major categories of resources: financial, technological, physical, human, reputation, and organizational resources. Physical, human, and organizational capital resources are being classified as the three categories of resources by Barney (1991). In the same time, Granstrand (1998) also suggests that firm resources are decomposable into physical, financial and immaterial capital. However, according to Miller and Shamsie (1996), resources can be divided into property and knowledge-based resources. Property-based resources specifically define asset, and apply to a specific product or process.

Another common division of resources is categorizing resources into tangible and intangible. Generally, the survival of a firm depends on its ability to secure tangible resources, such as capital, credit, land, facilities, and labor with which to do business. However, the success of a firm will rather depend more on its ability to obtain or develop intangible assets, such as networks, favorable location, functional skills and know-how, patents, and reputation (Chrisman, Bauerschmidt & Hofer, 1998).

Resources can be turned into tautological and circular. Resources are considered to include anything and everything that contributes to a firm's sustainable performance (Priem & Butler, 2001). The resource-based perspective can still be considered as lacking maturity and even the exact definitions of key concepts, such as resources, competences,

core competences, capabilities, and dynamic capabilities, have not been agreed upon or remain ambiguous and controversial. The resource-based view has been instrumental in improving the legitimacy of the strategic management field as perceived by scholars in other, more conventional disciplines, including mainstream economics and organization science (Rugman & Verbeke, 2002).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Qualitative Research Design

Research design is like a plan for real study include with the purpose of the study, population, and how to select the sample, collect and analyze the data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). This study will utilize self-administered questionnaire (Bradburn, Sudman & Wansink, 2004) and open-ended questionnaire to collect data.

Several researchers suggested that an exploratory research is useful for defining a set of investigative questions that can be used as a guide for a detailed research design (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 1991). The researchers conducted an in-depth interview with 10 (six Malays, four Chinese) Malaysian women entrepreneurs with the purpose to understand the entrepreneurs activities and business performance in local and business arena.

In getting the detail information of each entrepreneur, the interpretative approach was used. This is done to understand the actual phenomena in its natural setting. This will facilitate a better and deeper understanding of entrepreneurs' cultural and contextual situations. According to Gibbons (1987), the interpretive approach attempts to understand the inter-subjective meanings embedded in social life and hence to explain why people act the way they do. Thus, the contribution of the interpretive research philosophy is the

revelation of the underlying connections among different parts of social reality, by examining the social rules and meanings that make the social practice possible. Translated into this study, the researcher attempts to investigate and make sense of the entrepreneurs' learning environment.

To make each entrepreneur's success story more distinctive, the research will treat each of them as a case study. According to Yin (1994), a case study is defined as an empirical inquiry, where it investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Also, Benbasat (1984) and Bonoma (1985) defined case study research as a study that examines a phenomenon in its natural setting to get information from people, groups or organizations.

Another strength in case study is that it can overcome the problem of doing research in developing countries such as Malaysia, where the small sample base means that there might not be sufficient respondents to justify using statistical generalizations (Chetty, 1996). Furthermore, the problem of respondents being over researched and developing resistance can be overcome. Case studies explain events and deal with them over a period of time and not as a frequency of events as with the case of surveys. By using the case study approach, research flow can be carried out in the less common direction, that is, from data to theory. The work of Chetty (1996), titled "The Case Study Method of Research in Small- and Medium- Sized Firms" concluded that the case study method is a rigorous technique that allows decision-making processes and causality to be studied. It

is also found to be suitable when the "how" and the "why" questions are asked about a set of events. Similarly, this is most likely the case in this study of entrepreneurial development via business format franchising. She further added that case study method permits a researcher to study a topic such as exporting and in the same context entrepreneurship in a developing country (such as Malaysia), as a dynamic process and not as something static. Apart from that, the case study method also is ideal for research topics where the existing theory is inadequate. The act of becoming an entrepreneur is a holistic process (Bygrave & Hofer, 1991) and as such warrants the use of case studies in order to make an in-depth and meaningful investigation.

3.2 Selection of Case Study

The decision to take up the case study approach was to further explore the relationship between business intelligence and decision making on internationalization of global market of successful women entrepreneurs in Malaysia, particularly in the northern region, i.e. Penang, Kedah and Perlis. To be more specific, the main objectives of the research are:

1. To examine the demographic background of the successful women entrepreneurs.
2. To investigate the relationship between women entrepreneurs' characteristics and their international business success.
3. To determine which characteristics that are more dominant in terms of influence toward women's entrepreneurial success in the international market.

4. To find out the critical success factors of woman entrepreneurs in the international market.
5. To probe women entrepreneur's skill of decision-makings, leadership styles, business intelligence skills, international marketing skills and entrepreneurial skills.
6. To examine the main issues, problems and challenges faced by woman entrepreneurs in Malaysia and the barriers to penetrate the international market.
7. To develop a model from the women entrepreneurial success in the international market from Malaysian's perspective.

3.3 Sampling Frame

The sample frames for the case study were derived from the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI's) successful entrepreneurs list, Penang Malay Chamber of Commerce (Dewan Perniagaan Pulau Pinang), Majlis Amanah Rakyat Pulau Pinang (MARA) (195 entrepreneurs), MCA chamber of Commerce, and Malaysian Associated Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MAICCI).

The sampling of cases for this research utilized the purposive sampling approach. In this study only those women entrepreneurs who were operating in the international markets were selected as the respondents of this study. According to Gay and Diehl (1992), purposive sampling which is also known as judgment sampling basically involves selecting a sample that is believed to be representative of a given population. Furthermore,

for the purpose of this research, the selection of cases were predetermined by the following criteria:

3.4 Data Collection Methods in Case Study

For collecting data, the researcher used personal face-to-face interview, confirmation via telephone and secondary information such as documents, company profiles, and other related material describing the company's achievements or milestones. The convergent interviews was done by the interviewer who asked probing questions to the interviewee and then, through reflective prompts and active listening, keeps them talking and then ask further specific questions. The convergent interviews were focused on questions such as:

- Identification and comparison of critical success factors of the women entrepreneurs
- Explanation on how the business intelligence (BI), leadership style and decision making affect their international business operation.
- Explanation on why resource-based factors, i.e. management, marketing, financial and operation and entrepreneurial traits play a significant role on their success.

3.5 Process before, during and after the interview session

a. Pre interview phase

Based upon the list provided by the agencies, the researchers had selected 25 companies (representing 15 Malay, six Chinese and four Indian entrepreneurs) who were most suitable for the interview. Initially, researchers made a phone call to the entrepreneurs'

PA and also faxed an official letter stating our intention to conduct an interview with some of them who requested the letter. We proposed several dates for them to choose, and after they agreed, an appointment for the interview was set up. In fact, many calls have been made to each of them and due to their active and busy schedule, many of them could not meet up despite previously agreed to do so. However, only 10 of them agreed to meet up, which represented by six Malay and four Chinese entrepreneurs agreed to be interviewed. However, no Indian women entrepreneur qualified to be the respondent for the study because their business activities were mainly managed by their male family members.

b. Interview phase

Before the interview took place, each participant was shown a consent letter and was briefed on how the interview will be conducted. The participant was informed regarding the confidential policy practiced by the researchers, whereby all the responses will only be used for research purpose. Participants are alert on the use of tape recorder to tape the conversation that takes place. A copy of interview question was emailed to them as a guide for the participants while the interview occurs. The sample of interview questions is attached in the appendix.

c. Post interview phase

After the interview ended, the researcher thanked the participants and in return a token of appreciation was given to them. Immediately after the session ended, the researchers gathered everything they acquired from the interviews, for instance, notes written during

interviews or company profiles and related documents related to the entrepreneurs. The responses, which was stored in a tape recorder, were transcribed manually and transferred into Word application.

3.6 Protocol of Interview

Figure 3.1 shows the six steps to conduct a convergent interview in the process of getting the information or data about the success factors in the women entrepreneurs' business. Each step is in sequence, but at step four and five, it must be repeated to each different respondent.

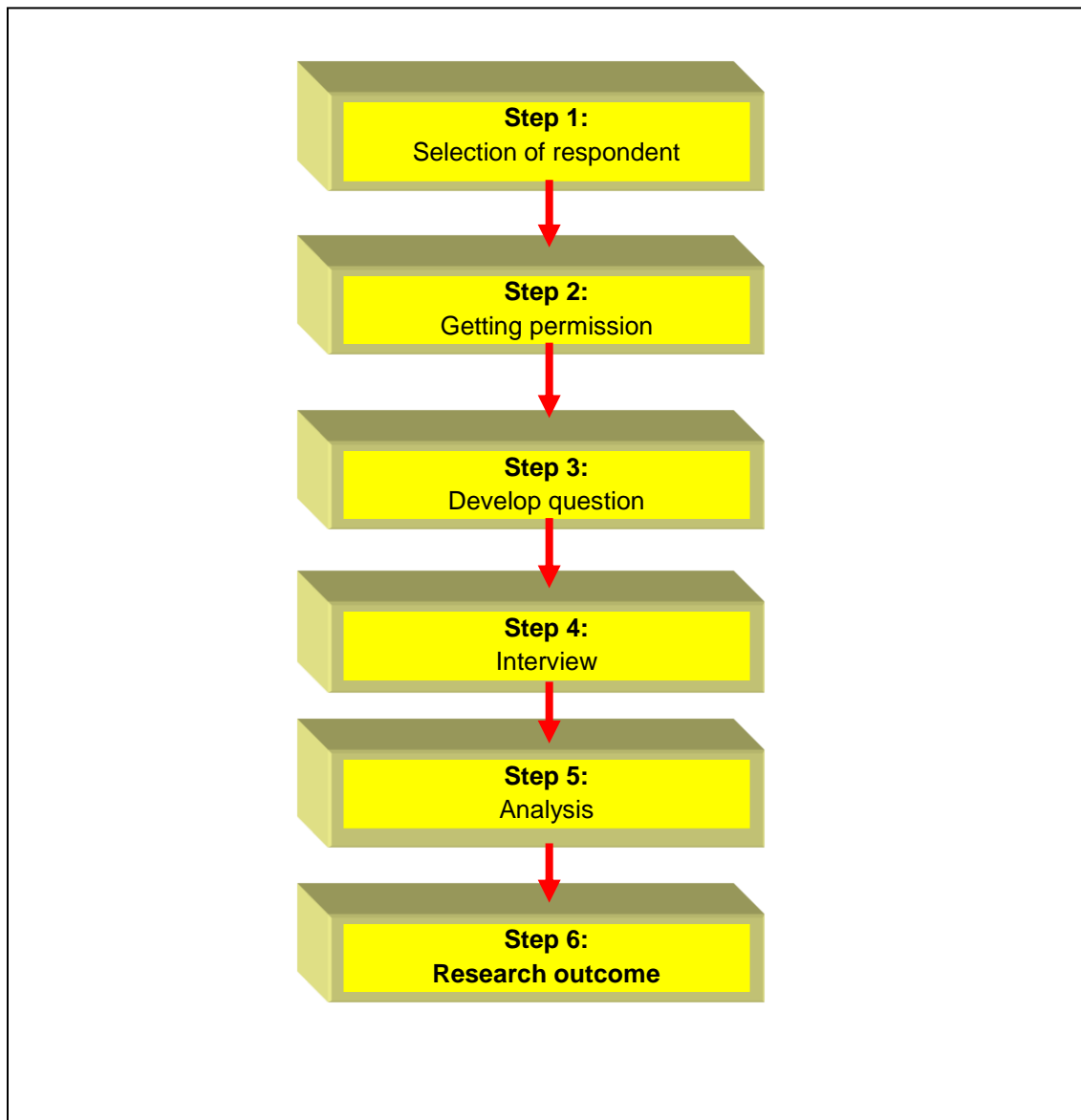


Figure 3.1: Steps in Conducting Interview
Source: Adapted from Mohd Amy Azhar (2001)

3.7 Documenting the Data from Interview

During the interview session, the researcher requested permission from the interviewees to tape-record the conversation that occurred. An outline of interviews question was provided to the respondents so that they have initial ideas on the topic of the interview. In addition, memory cards were used to write down the main points thrown out by the respondents. This memory card functioned as an Interview Log and a back up to the tape recording procedure that was done simultaneously. At the end of each interview session, the researcher re-checked the answer given by the respondents to make sure they have sufficiently answered all the required questions. After the interview was done, the researcher summarised immediately the responses from each respondent.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data was initially transferred into a tabulated diagram developed manually. The strategy of analyzing the data was by looking into the themes and issues. By using this approach, the researcher was able to understand in depth the issues relevant to the research problem.

3.9 Cross-Case Analysis

The cross-case analysis was used in interpreting the data for this study. This method was done by using an in-depth analysis with each respondent in order to identify the role of business intelligence, decision making, entrepreneurial traits and capabilities on their international market success. The findings in this study were gathered from the similarity

that exists in the analysis by analyzing the responses from each respondent. The cross-case analysis enabled the comparison of different cases against predefined categories (i.e. business intelligence and decision making). This method was chosen because the cross case analysis enables the comparison of multiple cases in many divergent ways, which would not be possible within a single case analysis. The case comparison can be made against predefined categories, in search of similarities and differences, or by classifying the data according to data sources. This method also will give more accurate result due to increase generalization (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Besides, this analysis can increase the understanding and explanation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) about the issues studied. This is because, when they have many different situations but in the same time the research will get a clear picture and in-depth view about the study, then the researcher will predict the probability of the event or findings.

3.10 Analyzing Qualitative Data

In analyzing qualitative data, word processors were used for taking, transcribing, writing up or editing field notes, memory, preparing files for coding and analysis, tabulating data into matrix and writing report. The data were displayed and analyzed by tabulating them into the conceptually clustered matrix. This conceptual clustered matrix has its rows and columns to bring together items that belong to the same concept. In other words, the principle is “conceptual coherence”. The outcome occurs in two ways; conceptual or empirical. Conceptual means the analysts may have prior ideas about items that derive or relate to the same theme or constructs while the empirical outcome is when informants, who answer questions give similar responses (Miles & Hubermann, 1994).

In the context of the study, most of the analysis was done with words meaning that the words can be assembled, and sub clustered. These words can be organized to permit the researcher to contrast, compare, analyze and bestow pattern upon them. The data were organized manually and using a word processor. The reason is the nature of this qualitative study is more on exploration and description. To put in a different way, the objectives of the study were more on exploring the critical success factors and describing the factors. Thus, putting the analysis into a table is sufficient.

3.11 Steps in Analyzing the Qualitative Data

The steps in analyzing qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews are as follows:

- 1) First, after the responses were gathered from interviews, the responses were transcribed and typed in a word processing application. The responses were stored in a file in the computer.
- 2) The transcribe text was read repeatedly to get the overview of the responses and feel of the data.
- 3) From the transcribe text, we affixed codes according to the conceptual framework. These concepts were marketing orientation, resource-based view, an agency based factors, and entrepreneur based factors.
- 4) Then, the interview transcripts were sorted and sifted through to identify similar phrases, themes, pattern and common dimensions.

- 5) Next, these phrases or patterns or themes and common dimensions were located under the concepts mentioned above, which were coded earlier. The analysis was based on variable orientation (Babbie, 2007).
- 6) These common dimensions discovered from the transcribe text elaborated the concept in such a way a clear picture was obtained.
- 7) A progressive interpretation report was written by comparing the summary notes of the first two interviews. This progressive report was then compared to each subsequent interview's summary notes and added to, and/or modified according to new issues that emerged after each interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four explains the findings of the 10 cases which represented 10 women business entrepreneurs. Each case was analyzed in terms of the personal and business background and also the business strategies conducted by these women entrepreneurs. Analysis of the cases were carried out by looking into frequencies and magnitude of the research findings. A cross-case analysis was also conducted to emphasize the uniqueness of each case. The synopsis of each case was also presented to provide insightful information regarding the women entrepreneurs business operations.

4.2 Case Synopsis

An overview of the 10 entrepreneurs' background and their business operations are provided as the following:

Case 1

Case 1 is a gift and souvenir's business run by Madam Shereen Al Mashoor. The business was first started by her parent in Penang, and since the year 2000, she took over the business after her father passed away and later expanded the business to Klang Valley Area to reach for wider market. Her company's named Prestasi Meriah Sdn Bhd was

started with embroidery based products, and now supplying customized merchandise products for Shell, Petron, USM and several other companies. Based on the market demand, she moved on to create business collaboration with a Chinese business man from Mainland China, to design and supply the merchandise products to her company, as required by the customers. With her almost fifteen (15) years of experience in business, she managed to expand into the international market successfully, growing together with her main customers, Petronas and Shell.

Case 2

Starting as a distributor to other cosmetic businesses in 1998, Datuk Hajah Kamaliah Abd Halim boldly ventured into the cosmetic industry in Malaysia by introducing Rzac Cosmetic brand of product lines in year 2000, with the business headquarter in Penang. She never looked back ever since and with her beautiful and confident personality, she took a big step in involving in cosmetic product innovation, and recently ventured into the Indonesian market starting with Medan, Sumatera and later followed by Bandung and others. Her success story in cosmetic industry has turned her into a business role model for many Malay women entrepreneurs in Malaysia, particularly in Penang.

Case 3

Case 3 is HR Marketing, which is popularly linked to natural product cares related to goat's milk. Having experiences of more than 20 years, Datin Atikah Ab Ghani, has been a loyal companion to her husband, Datuk Hashim Jahaya, a well-known and successful entrepreneur in Kedah. As a business person herself, Datin Atikah is actively involved in monitoring and supervising the business operations and also in managing distributor and

leader in this direct selling company. With good-quality products, capable distributors and reliable business systems, HR Marketing has now successfully penetrated Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei markets.

Case 4

Haliza Food Industry, a cracker manufacture in Penang, was the brain child of Madam Nor Haliza Hussain, and has been in the market for 2008. After obtaining the Halal certificate in the year 2010, Haliza Food Industry is actively promoting non-preservatives crackers known as Witties, in Malaysia, China, Indonesia and Maldives market place. The business is getting stronger since it is now being co-managed by her sons and daughter, who has been the backbone of her success.

Case 5

Madu Unggul is a company owned by Madam Rohaya Che Abu bakar and her husband. They have been busily promoting the product lines via established retailing business such as Giant and Tesco. Her passion for honey has made her become more confident to invest in a honey farm in Thailand. Her investment in Thailand is worth the effort since Thailand is more advance in honey production and innovation technology as compared to Malaysia. With a good business relationship with her foreign supplier and partner, she is able to venture into more local and international markets along with Tesco and Giant.

Case 6

JWR Technology was established in 1992, and founded by Puan Johara Bee Sheikh Naterssah. As a family business, JWR technology has been successfully managed by her

and her children. Although the company is a SME company, it has been able to secure business contracts on metal stamping and fabrication business with many multinational companies (MNCs) and local manufacturers such as Robert Bosch (Germany), Honda, JKN, Motorola, Alcatel, Sony, Texas Instrument, ACM and Modenas. With the global networking, JWR Technology is able to competitively position itself into international markets for having quality manufacturing products and tooling design capability that have seldom been involved by other Malay entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

Case 7

Madam Ooi Siew Ting started Furnizone Sdn Bhd in Seberang Perai in 2009, Penang, and involved in selling furnitures such as the clip board for the low end markets. With her fifteen (15) years of experiences in business, Madam Ooi Siew Ting and her husband have been able to penetrate the market in the Philippines, Chile, Colombia and other South American countries. Having a strong self-confidence, opportunities and reliable networking, she is eagerly looking for more business expansions in the global arena.

Case 8

Plentos Sdn Bhd, owned by Miss Christina Yew, is a trading company for cameras and the related accessories in Bukit mertajam. She has about ten (10) years of experience in the business and related areas, and now leading her business to venture Thailand, India, Singapore and China markets. Besides focusing on the international markets, as an aggressive woman entrepreneur, Miss Christina Yew is also looking forward to and working hard toward getting contracts from the Malaysian government, despite the

limited domestic market size, because she is also concerned about the brand positioning of Plentos branding in the local market.

Case 9

CG Solutions Sdn Bhd is a company that provides design for fabrication of jigs, by building from a concept and later developing the machine based on customer request. As a young entrepreneur with a working experience of 10 years, she has managed to venture into USA, Europe markets through her networking with several multinational companies (MNCs) in Malaysia and in foreign countries.

Case 10

Dr Lim Yu Lin is a caliber trainer and consultant of a company called Hao Tai Consultant Sdn Bhd. This company is a network of strategic alliance partners which provides established companies and start-ups with specialized professional corporate consultancy services and training in the whole spectrum of Human Resource, sales and general management. With her fifteen (15) years of experience in the service industry, she is now confidently expanding her business to Singapore to promote her business acumen and services to foreign customers.

4.3 Case Analysis and Results

In analyzing the ten cases, Table 4.1 provides the summary of the personal and business background of the women entrepreneurs.

TABLE 4.1: SUMMARY OF PERSONAL AND BUSINESS BACKGROUND

QUESTION			COMPANY NAME			
CATEGORIES	NO	TYPES	CASE 1: Prestasi Meriah -Shareen Al-Mashoor	CASE 2: Rzac Cosmetic- Datuk Hajjah Kamaliah Abdul Halim	CASE 3: HR Marketing- Datin Atikah Ab Ghani	CASE 4: Haliza Industries- Nor Haliza Hussain
A. 1) Individual Factors	1	Age Category	c) 30-39 years	d) 40-59 yrs	d) 40-59 yrs	d) 40-59 yrs
	2	Marital Status	a) Married	a) Married	a) Married	a) Married
	3	Do have a child/children	a) Yes, Two	a) Yes, Six	a) Yes, Three	a) Yes
A. 2) Education	4	Education level	c) Postgraduate	a) Secondary	b) Tertiary	c) Postgraduate
A. 3) Business Background	5	Are you the sole owner of this business entity?	b) No	a) Yes	b) No	a) Yes
	6	If No, name your position in the business.	M.D	-	d) Others	CEO
	7	This Business is a:	b) Corporation	c) Sole proprietor	b) Corporation	a) Partnership
	8	Your business experience in the current and (point to that):	c) 11-15 Years	c) 11-15 Years	e) more than 20 Years	b) 6- 10 Years
	9	How did you involve in this business?	f) Start on business	a) Based on personal innovation and initiatives		a) Based on personal innovation and initiatives
	10	What is the size of your company?	d) Medium (50-249 employees)	b) Small (10-49 employees)	c) Medium (50-249 employees)	b) Small (10-49 employees)
	11	Any family members working in the business?	a) Yes	b) No	a) Yes	a) Yes
	12	Please specify your relation with the persons	Sister		Spouse & children	Son & daughter

CASE 5: Madu unggul- Puan Rohaya Che Abu Bakar	CASE 6: JWR Technology- Puan Johara Bee Sheikh Naterssah	CASE 7: Furnizone Sdn Bhd- Ms Ooi Siew Ting , Seberang Prai	CASE 8: Plentous Sdn Bhd- Ms Christine Yew, Bukit Mertajam	CASE 9: CG Solutions Sdn Bhd. -Ms Ng Thean Gin, Bukit Tengah, BM	CASE 10: Hao Tai Consultant Sdn Bhd- Lim Yu Lin
d) 40-59 yrs	d) 40-59 years	d) 30 -39 years	d) 30-39 years	b) 20 -29 years	d) 40 - 59 years
a) Married	a) Married	a) Married	d) Single	a) Married	a) Married
a) Yes , Four	a) Yes, Three	a) Yes , Two	a) No	a) Yes, One	a) Yes , One
c) Postgraduate	b) Tertiary level	a) Secondary	b) Tertiary level	b) Tertiary level	c) Postgraduate (MBA) (DBA)
a) Yes	b) No	b) No	b) No	b) No	a) Yes
a) Partner	General Manager	Partner and manager	Partner and manager	Shareholder and manager	
a) Partnership	b) Corporation	a) Partnership	a) Partnership	c) Sole proprietor	b) Corporation
a) 1-5 years	e) More than 20 years	a) 11 – 15 years	b) 6 to 10 years	b) 6 to 10 years	c) 11 - 15 years
c) Started the business with partner/ partners	a) Based on personal innovation and initiatives	b) Started with partner	a) Based on personal innovation and initiatives	a) With the help of husband	a) Based on personal innovation and initiatives
c) Medium (50-249 employees)	c) Medium (50- 249)	a) Small	a) Micro (1- 9 staff)l	c) Medium (50- 249)	a) Micro (1 - 9 employees)
a) Yes	a) Yes	b) No	b) No	a) Yes	B) No
	Children			Husband	

TABLE 4.2: SUMMARY OF MALAY ENTREPRENEURS COMPANY

NO	QUESTION/ CASE	1. Can you tell me about your business background?	2. Nature of Business	3. What is the most challenging experience during your business startup?	4. Did you get any assistance and support from government agency or the ministry? Why and why not?
1	CASE 1: Prestasi Meriah -Shareen Al- Mashoor	2000	Souvenirs, Promotional Item, Embroidery	Natural disaster that affects production	No
2	CASE 2: Rzac Cosmetic- Datuk Hajjah Kamaliah Abdul Halim	2000	Own brand local cosmetics	Banned brand product and lack of knowledge in export and import.	No
3	CASE 3: HR Marketing- Datin Atikah Ab Ghani	1998	Goat milk based product	Lack of capital.	No
4	CASE 4: Haliza Industries- Nor Haliza Hussain	2008	Snacks and Crackers	Up and down of business and did not manage to get the bank loan.	Yes, SME Corp for machines.
5	CASE 5: Madu unggul- Puan Rohaya Che Abu Bakar	2008	Honey based product	Up and down of business.	Yes, KPNKK (MOA, MARA, PERDA, Jabatan Pertanian, MARDI, SIRIM)
6	CASE 6: JWR Technology- Puan Johara Bee Sheikh Naterssah	1992	Metal stamping and fabrication	Lack of confidence and economy downturn.	Yes, PERDA (building infrastructure), MITI, SME Corp, PUNB.

NO	QUESTION / CASE	5. How do you maintain your current business status in order to compete in the market place?	6. What are your business main competitive advantages?	7. What is the uniqueness of your business strategies that is hard for competitors to imitate?	8. When and what make you decide to venture international markets?
1	CASE 1: Prestasi Meriah -Shareen Al- Mashoor	Conquer your client	Make sure that the customers do not go to the competitors.	Manpower	It is costly to mass produce the product in Malaysia.
2	CASE 2: Rzac Cosmetic- Datuk Hajjah Kamaliah Abdul Halim	Do research on product	Offer affordable price products.	Producing products that customers need.	Easy to understand the language.
3	CASE 3: HR Marketing- Datin Atikah Ab Ghani	Improve business knowledge, business networking and improve the practice of MLM system.	Networking in MLM system.	Introduce MLM in Malay community.	Expand the market.
4	CASE 4: Haliza Industries- Nor Haliza Hussain	Venture the market by doing the differences, for example, produce the product without MSG and coloring and add in Vitamin C in the cracker.	Healthy snacks.	The products are halal.	Easy to get the payment
5	CASE 5: Madu unggul- Puan Rohaya Che Abu Bakar	Innovative in products, for example packing honey in sachets.	Be innovative.	The products quality are up to the standard of Australia and New Zealand.	Expand the market.
6	CASE 6: JWR Technology- Puan Johara Bee Sheikh Naterssah	Practice aggressive marketing, research and development, emphasizing on cost factor.	Focuses on flexibility and innovation. Their core competencies are progressive tooling.	Produce high quality products with lower cost.	Do not want to just depend on the local market.

NO	QUESTION/ CASE	9. Please name those countries	10. Who assisted your international business move?	11. What were the biggest problems you encountered in the international market? How did you overcome those problems?	12. To you what are the most important international marketing strategies that a women entrepreneur particularly should be good at?
1	CASE 1: Prestasi Meriah -Shareen Al- Mashoor	China	Herself	China market only accept big deal business.	Pricing strategy, service and product.
2	CASE 2: Rzac Cosmetic- Datuk Hajjah Kamaliah Abdul Halim	Indonesia	Herself	Culture of local market	Promotion strategy
3	CASE3: HR Marketing- Datin Atikah Ab Ghani	Indonesia, Thailand, Korea	Herself and husband	Different procedures and law restriction.	Promotion strategy
4	CASE 4: Haliza Industries- Nor Haliza Hussain	Mauritius, China	Herself	Different ways of dealing the business, either CIF or FOB.	Service strategy
5	CASE 5: Madu unggul- Puan Rohaya Che Abu Bakar	Brunei, China	Herself and husband	Different ways of dealing the business, either CIF or FOB, different regulations.	Promotion strategy and pricing strategy
6	CASE 6: JWR Technology- Puan Johara Bee Sheikh Naterssah	German	Herself and children	Fluctuation of exchange rates, have to bear the penalty if product is damaged and have to comply the green policy and requirement stated by customers.	International marketing strategy, product and quality strategy and pricing strategy.

NO	QUESTION/CASE	13. As a woman, do you believe you need a man's help to succeed in the global market?	14. Do you have an international business partner?	15. By any chance, does your business operation uses ICT?	16. In which area or function ICT is applied in your organization?
1	CASE 1: Prestasi Meriah -Shareen Al- Mashoor	No	Sister and husband	Yes	UBS system, warehousing system, purchasing system, software for HR and Account.
2	CASE 2: Rzac Cosmetic- Datuk Hajjah Kamaliah Abdul Halim	No	No	Yes	Account system.
3	CASE 3: HR Marketing- Datin Atikah Ab Ghani	No	Husband	Yes	Account system.
4	CASE 4: Haliza Industries- Nor Haliza Hussain	It depends	Children	Yes	Purchase system
5	CASE 5: Madu unggul- Puan Rohaya Che Abu Bakar	Yes	Husband	Yes	UBS system.
6	CASE 6: JWR Technology- Puan Johara Bee Sheikh Naterssah	Yes	Children	Yes	Production system, internal communication, Autocad.

	Question	17. Do you apply business intelligence (BI) tool? (Example: making decision, business network, production, designing etc)	18. If you do, which BI tools (OLAP, MIS, EIS, DSS, analytics, dashboard, data mining, forecasting, pattern and trending) did you use?	19. Do you think it is important to use any ICT related or BI in providing the right information or knowledge for your business decision?	20. If you have BI systems in your organization, do you use BI - based knowledge provided by the system provided to strategies your business?
1	CASE 1: Prestasi Meriah -Shareen Al- Mashoor	Yes but minimal.	Pattern and trending, forecasting, data mining.	No	Not really
2	CASE 2: Rzac Cosmetic- Datuk Hajjah Kamaliah Abdul Halim	Yes but minimal.	Analytic, pattern and trending.	No	No
3	CASE 3: HR Marketing- Datin Atikah AbGhani	Yes but minimal.	Analytic, forecasting, pattern and trending.	Yes	Yes
4	CASE 4: Haliza Industries- Nor Haliza Hussain	Yes but minimal.	Forecasting	Yes	Yes
5	CASE 5: Madu unggul – Puan Rohaya Che Abu Bakar	Yes but minimal.	Forecasting, pattern and trending.	Yes	Yes
6	CASE 6: JWRTechnology- Puan Johara Bee Sheikh Naterssah	No	No	No	No

NO	QUESTION/ CASE	21. Regarding business process, do you have any particular standard operating procedure (SOP) to base on, to be able to succeed in international market?	22. How do you measure your business operation effectiveness?	23. How do you control the problems from becoming more serious?	24. Do you make important decision by yourself or you get when venturing into international market or get help from others?
1	CASE 1: Prestasi Meriah -Shareen Al- Mashoor	Yes	Hire consultant to evaluate the performance of the company.	Have a backup plan	Make own decision by looking mentor as a role model but not seeking advice directly from the mentor.
2	CASE 2: Rzac Cosmetic- Datuk Hajjah Kamaliah Abdul Halim	Yes	Seek feedback from customers and random checking.	Update through meeting and not to be too strict with the employees.	Herself
3	CASE 3: HR Marketing- Datin Atikah Ab Ghani	Yes	Analysis data	Willing to take risks.	Herself
4	CASE 4: Haliza Industries- Nor Haliza Hussain	Yes	The sales of product.	NIL	Herself
5	CASE 5: Madu unggul- Puan Rohaya Che Abu Bakar	Yes	Develop SOP for every batch of honey produced	Strategy in rolling the capital	Herself and husband's opinion
6	CASE 6: JWR Technology- Puan Johara Bee Sheikh Naterssah	Yes	Set KPI	Monitoring the rejection rate using system.	Staff meeting

NO	QUESTION/CASE	25. In your opinion, what kind of leader are you?	26. What are your special traits on an entrepreneur?	27. How do you lead your organization? Can you share with me your vision and mission?	28. Did you ever fail in making good business decisions? Can you share with me your experience?
1	CASE 1: Prestasi Meriah -Shareen Al- Mashoor	Democratic.	Persistent, and a risk taker	Always discuss with the key persons in the office and accept the opinion.	NIL
2	CASE 2: Rzac Cosmetic- Datuk Hajjah Kamaliah Abdul Halim	Democratic.	Persistent, and a risk taker	Slowly penetrate into Indonesia market.	Yes, sometimes.
3	CASE 3: HR Marketing- Datin Atikah Ab Ghani	Democratic.	Persistent, and a risk taker	Help more Malay entrepreneurs.	Yes, but learn from mistakes.
4	CASE 4: Haliza Industries- Nor Haliza Hussain	Democratic.	Persistent	Penetrate all local market	Yes but rarely make mistake.
5	CASE 5: Madu unggul- Puan Rohaya Che Abu Bakar	Democratic.	Persistent	To introduce Malaysian product abroad.	Yes, mostly are decisions to set price.
6	CASE 6: JWR Technology- Puan Johara Bee Sheikh Naterssah	Democratic and Autocratic.	Persistent, and a risk taker	She inculcates Islamic value in organization, wish to fulfill fardu kifayah as a muslims business woman and produce their own product using their own brand.	Yes, the investment did not generate profit.

NO	QUESTION/CASE	29. How did you overcome those problems?	30. Can you share with me your current business worth (income)? Is the figure satisfactory	31. Average marketing expenses for a year	32. What is your advice to other women entrepreneur in Malaysia who plan to venture a foreign market?
1	CASE 1: Prestasi Meriah -Shareen Al- Mashoor	NIL	NIL	NIL	Be confident, cater the business internally before go abroad.
2	CASE 2: Rzac Cosmetic- Datuk Hajjah Kamaliah Abdul Halim	For example, when one of the products did not have good sales, then just stop the production.	NIL	RM300,000	Financially stable, focus on own capability.
3	CASE 3: HR Marketing- Datin Atikah Ab Ghani	For example, met a unreliable distributor, so that distributor was terminated.	RM3-4 million a month	NIL	Sharing is giving and determine.
4	CASE 4: Haliza Industries- Nor Haliza Hussain	Using business networking with business figures and agencies.	RM400,000	RM45,000 - RM200,000	Learn the culture of the country and the people.
5	CASE 5: Madu unggul- Puan Rohaya CheAbu Bakar	She has the husband as the back up.	RM2 million	NIL	Ask yourself what do you want, be focus and do not give up easily, be passionate.
6	CASE 6: JWR Technology- Puan Johara Bee Sheikh Naterssah	The product was not revived and the company did not intend to market them at the moment.	NIL	RM 50,000 - RM 80,000	Dare to take risk, never against the Islamic principles and improve on communication skills.

TABLE 4.3: SUMMARY OF CHINESE ENTREPRENEURS COMPANY

NO	QUESTION/CASE	1. Can you tell me about your business background?	2. Nature of Business	3. What are the most challenging experience during your business startup?	4. Did you get any assistance and support from government agency or the ministry? Why and why not?
7	CASE 7: Furnizone Sdn Berhad	2009	Clipboard Furniture	Finding support from the market like customer, distributor, supplier and also finance.	Yes, MATRADE.
8	CASE 8: Plentous Sdn Berhad	2010	Trading camera and camera accessories	Cash flow, paying back of interest and reinvestment	Yes, SMIDEX
9	CASE 9: CG Solutions Sdn Berhad	2002	Design and sell fabrication, prototype and machines	One man show with a small office	Yes
10	CASE 10: Yulin	2002	Management Consultancy, Learning and Development	Lack of referrals.	No.

NO	QUESTION/ CASE	5. How you maintain your current business status in order to compete in the market place?	6. What are your business main competitive advantages?	7. What is the uniqueness of your business strategies that is hard for competitors to imitate?	8. When and what make you decide to venture international markets?
7	CASE 7: Furnizone Sdn Berhad	Online marketing, participate in international and national furniture exhibitions.	Low cost production and reasonable price	Provide low cost furniture so that everyone can afford it.	Malaysia market is small while international market offers more opportunities.
8	CASE 8: Plentous Sdn Berhad	Pricing, competitive analysis and promotion	Provide good products and after sales services	After sales services	Malaysian market is too small while ASEAN market is huge.
9	CASE 9: CG Solutions Sdn Berhad	Provide good services	Build up good impression to gain loyal customers by providing good products and services	Provide good services	Through Multinational Corporations
10	CASE 10: Yulin	Focus more on good human resource management skills with the existing clients.	Contemporary yet fundamental management content and personal delivery.	Passion, perseverance and sincerity.	Local market is saturated with competitors that offer similar services

NO	QUESTION/CASE	9. Please name those countries	10. Who assisted your international business move?	11. What were the biggest problems you encountered in the international market? How did you overcome those problems?	12. To you what are the most important international marketing strategies that a women entrepreneur particularly should be good at?
7	CASE 7 : Furnizone Sdn Berhad	Philippines, Chile, Columbia	Partner	Different countries have different requirements and logistics procedures.	Quality of the product and product services strategy.
8	CASE 8: Plentous Sdn Berhad	India, Singapore, Thailand, China	Sub distributors	High custom duty about 30% and the distributors may raise the end user price.	Provide good product quality, service, provide warranty for products and absorb the shipping cost.
9	CASE 9: CG Solutions Sdn Berhad	USA, Europe	Multinational Corporations	Getting approval from local authorities which will need 3-4 months.	Good products and services also competitive pricing.
10	CASE 10: Yulin	Singapore	Herself	Lack of contacts, the methods of trading.	Sincerity and integrity

NO	QUESTION/CASE	13. As a women, do you believe you need a man's help to succeed in the global market?	14. Do you have an international business partner?	15. By any chance, does your business operation uses ICT?	16. In which area or function ICT is applied in your organization?
7	CASE 7: Furnizone Sdn Berhad	Yes. They provide support for network and advices in technical aspect.	No	Yes	Company website, advertising, research.
8	CASE 8: Plentous Sdn Berhad	Yes. They can escort and protect when travelling to country with high crime rate like Pakistan.	Sub distributors	Yes	Account system.
9	CASE 9: CG Solutions Sdn Berhad	Yes. Some men have certain expertise or skills in engineering and machinery.	Yes	Yes	ERP system, CAD, CAM, UBS system.
10	CASE 10: Yulin	No	No	Yes	Training.

NO	QUESTION/CASE	17. Do you apply business intelligence (BI) tool? (Example: making decision, business network, production, designing etc)	18. If you do, which BI tools (OLAP, MIS, EIS, DSS, analytics, dashboard, data mining, forecasting, pattern and trending) did you use?	19. Do you think it is important to use any ICT related or BI in providing the right information or knowledge for your business decision?	20. If you have BI systems in your organization, do you use BI - based knowledge provided by the system provided to strategies your business?
7	CASE 7: Furnizone Sdn Berhad	Yes but minimal.	Data mining ,forecasting	Yes	Yes
8	CASE 8: Plentous Sdn Berhad	Yes but minimal.	Data mining.	Yes	Yes
9	CASE 9: CG Solutions Sdn Berhad	Yes but minimal.	Data mining, pattern and trending	Yes	Yes
10	CASE 10: Yulin	NIL	Analysis	Yes	Yes

NO	QUESTION/CASE	21. Regarding business process, do you have any particular standard operating procedure (SOP) to base on, to be able to succeed in international market?	22. How do you measure your business operation effectiveness?	23. How do you control the problems from becoming more serious?	24. Do you make important decision by yourself or you get when venturing into international market or get help from others?
7	CASE 7: Furnizone Sdn Berhad	Yes	Sales output, staffs' productivity and target achieved.	Through discussion and find out the root of the problem.	Discussion with partner.
8	CASE 8: Plentous Sdn Berhad	No	Sales	Take charge, increase promotion	Discussion with partner.
9	CASE 9: CG Solutions Sdn Berhad	Yes	Performance appraisals, sales results, customers' satisfaction	Through communication, boss monitor and take action	Discuss with Board of Directors
10	CASE 10: Yulin	Yes	Increase in market share according to market size and the achievement of company's goals.	Focus on my strengths, move away from low-end segment.	Herself.

NO	QUESTION/CASE	25. In your opinion, what kind of leader are you?	26. What are your special traits on an entrepreneur?	27. How do you lead your organization? Can you share with me your vision and mission?	28. Did you ever fail in making good business decisions? Can you share with me your experience?
7	CASE 7: Furnizone Sdn Berhad	Democratic	Persistent, risk taker	I give my staff certain freedom in decision making. My vision is to improve quality of services and products. I also improve goodwill among customers.	Yes. I made decision to produce the wrong model of furniture and it was not well responded by the market.
8	CASE 8: Plentous Sdn Berhad	Democratic	Risk taker, smell opportunities and act fast.	We have our directions well written. We want more on-going projects and conquer more markets. We want to increase our profit and be able to self-sustain.	So far no major mistakes.
9	CASE 9: CG Solutions Sdn Berhad	Democratic	Persistent, risk taker, seek for feedback.	I lead the organization by participative management, use philosophy of 'sincerity of the heart' to manage people.	Hire the wrong person.
10	CASE 10: Haotai Sdn Bhd	Participative	Sincerity, Integrity, Passion, Perseverance	My vision is to be the most trusted and most competent management consultant in Asia Pacific.	Hire the wrong personnel.

NO	QUESTION/CASE	29. How did you overcome those problems?	30. Can you share with me your current business worth (income)? Is the figure satisfactory	31. Average marketing expenses for a year	32. What is your advice to other women entrepreneur in Malaysia who plans to venture a foreign market?
7	CASE 7: Furnizone Sdn Berhad	We reduced the production until we were able to confirm that model has gained acceptance in the market.	RM3-4 million/ month	RM60,000	Must have prior knowledge about own products and services in the industry, learn from mistakes and do not repeat. Mentoring and having a good partner are essential for making decision. Support from family and friends are important.
8	CASE 8: Plentous Sdn Berhad	Minimize the problems for example we use financial analysis method.	RM70,000/ month	RM20,000	Should start in the area where we are good at, do not be too ambitious, be focus, find a niche and do not be greedy.
9	CASE 9: CG Solutions Sdn Berhad	Learn from the mistakes.	RM4 million/ month	Average marketing expenses a year less than RM100,000	Build up business in one's country first then only expand to overseas.
10	CASE 10: Haotai Sdn Bhd	Manage by performance measurement system (KPI).	About 1,000000/year	NIL	Know what you are good at. Focus on what you are good at. Do what others do not like to do, do not want to do and do not dare to do. Find the blue ocean.

4.4 Findings Analysis

Referring to Table 4.2 and 4.3, with regards to the summary of Malay entrepreneurs' company, there are various challenging experiences that the Malay entrepreneurs encountered during their business start-up. Among those barriers were: 1) Natural disaster, which affected the production, for example flood, draught, storms and etc; 2) Products were banned in other countries; 3) Lack of business knowledge in terms of export and import activities; 4) Lack of capital; 5) Fluctuating business performance; and 6) Lack of confidence and economy downturn. However, from Table 4.3 in regards to the summary of Chinese entrepreneurs' company, the Chinese entrepreneurs seem to have a different set of challenging experience during the business start-up. Among those barriers that they encountered were: 1) Difficulty in finding support from the stakeholder; 2) Difficulty in seeking financial support; 3) Issue regarding cash flow, paying back interest issue and reinvestment strategy; 4) Issue related to human capital and expertise; and 5) Lack of business referrals. Nonetheless both Chinese and Malay entrepreneurs faced various challenges that seem to directly relate to their business nature and product/service characteristics.

In terms of getting assistance and support from the government agencies and Ministry, three out of six Malay entrepreneurs stated that they did not get any assistance from both parties. However, the other three entrepreneurs (Case 4,5,6) mentioned that they received assistance from SME Corp (Case 4), KPNKK,MARA,PERDA, Jabatan Pertanian, MARDI and SIRIM (Case 5), and lastly, PERDA, MITI, SME Corp and PUNB (Case 6). From the interview with the Chinese entrepreneurs, three of them had said yes by mentioning MATRADE (Case 7), SMIDEX (Case 8) as the two

agencies that assisted them in business, Case 9 however, said she received assistance, but she did not mention which agency she received from. Only one entrepreneur (Case 10) stated that she did not receive any support and assistance from either agencies namely government and ministry.

Relating to question on “how do you maintain your current business status in order to compete in the market place?” Case 1 said that, she tried her best to conquer her clients by offering good products and services, and for Case 2, she involved a lot in R&D on product development to capture her customers. Case 3 stated that she continuously improve business knowledge, business networking and improve the practice of MLM system to ensure her distributors loyalty to the company. Case 4 ventured into the market by focusing on differentiation strategy, for example producing products without MSG and coloring but at the same time adding vitamin C in the product to create a healthier product line. Case 5 focused on product innovation, particularly on packaging strategy, i.e. using sachets to ease consumption of honey, and lastly for Case 6, the Malay entrepreneur utilized aggressive marketing and R&D and emphasized more on cost factor to minimize the production cost. From Table 4.3, based on the similar question to the Chinese entrepreneurs, Case 7 stated that she embarked on online marketing, participate in international and national exhibitions to maintain her current business in the market place. Whereas Case 8 preferred to utilize proper pricing promotion while continuously analyzing her competitive position in the market place. For Case 9, the entrepreneur believes in providing good services to her customers at all time. Finally, Case 10 focused more on good human resource management skills with her existing clients.

When the Malay entrepreneurs were asked about "what are your business main competitive advantages?" Case 1 answered that she focused on customers' satisfaction and loyalty. Case 2 mentioned that she emphasized pricing strategy while for Case 3, she focused on expanding her business networking in MLM system. Case 4 stated that she remained competitive by producing healthy snacks, and Case 5 remained to be innovative to adapt to the market's change. The last case of Malay entrepreneur, Case 6, stressed on the importance of her business advantage was the flexibility and innovation. Based on the similar question to the Chinese entrepreneurs, the main competitive advantage of Case 7 was the low-cost production and reasonable price. Case 8 mentioned that she competed by providing decent products, and after sales services and Case 9 emphasized on customers' loyalty and also providing decent products and services. Lastly, Case 10 remained competitive by focusing on contemporary yet fundamental management content and personal delivery.

Based on the question "what is the uniqueness of your business strategies that is hard for competitors to imitate?" the answer from Case 1 was the human capital that she had while Case 2 was unique in terms of producing products based on customers' need. Case 3 stated that her business uniqueness lies in the concept of MLM among Malay communities. Case 4 answered that her uniqueness was more to the concept of Halal and healthy products. Case 5 mentioned that the uniqueness of her business strategy was that she produced products with the quality that was up to the standard required by both the Australia and New Zealand governments. Lastly, Case 6 adopted the business strategy of producing high quality products with lower cost.

The entrepreneurs were also asked about the reason for venturing into the international market. Case 1 mentioned that it was because to mass produce the products in Malaysia was too costly and Case 2 thought that venturing into Indonesia is an advantage because she can understand the language. Case 3,5 and 6 ventured into the international market because they wanted to expand the business market while Case 4 stated that it was easier to get payment in the international market. For the Chinese Entrepreneurs, Case 7 and 8 brought the business to international market because they thought that international market offers more opportunities as Malaysia's market is too small. Case 9 ventured into the international market because of her partners who are the Multinational Corporations (MNCs). Local market seems to be saturated with many competitors that offer similar services, hence Case 10 decided to venture into the international market.

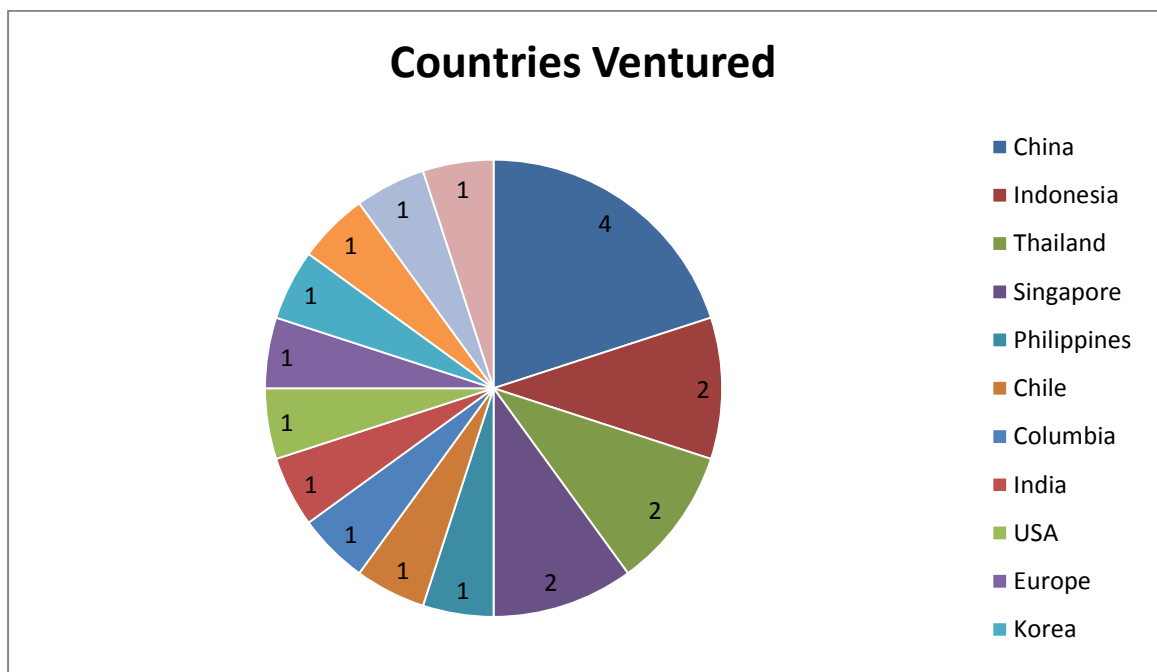


Figure 4.1: Countries ventured by Malaysian woman entrepreneurs

Based on Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 these are the few countries whereby the Malay entrepreneurs expanded their business into, namely China (Case 1); Indonesia (Case 2); Indonesia, Thailand, Korea (Case 3); Mauritius, China (Case 4); Brunei, China (Case 5); and German (Case 6). While for the Chinese entrepreneurs, they have ventured into the market of these countries, Philippines, Chile, Columbia (Case 7); India, Singapore, Thailand, China (Case 8); USA, Europe (Case 9) and Singapore (Case 10).

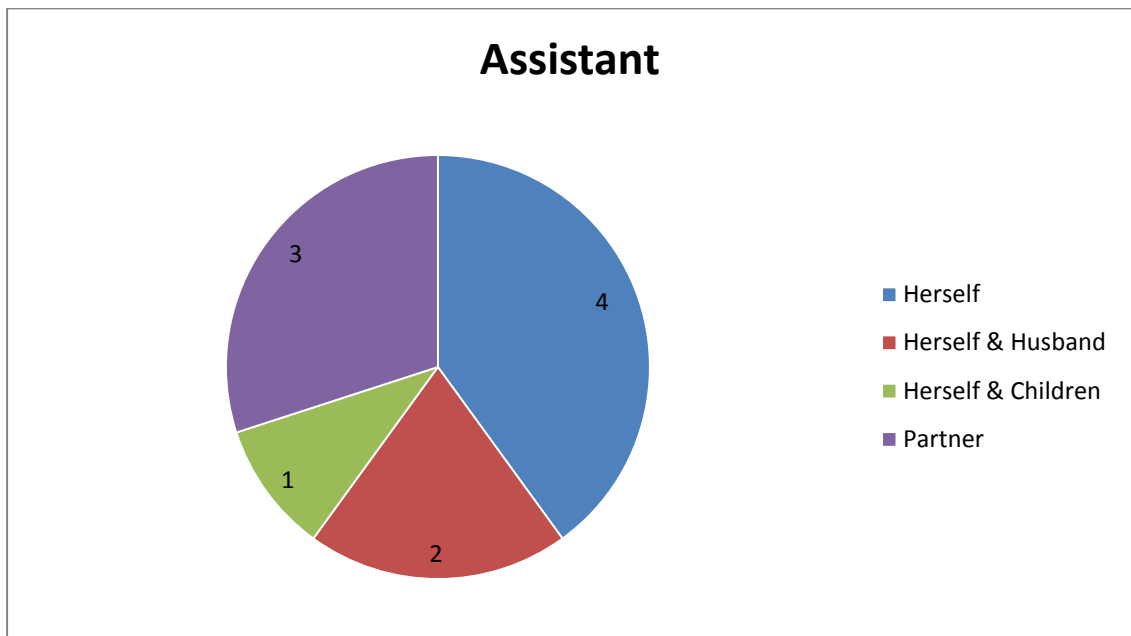


Figure 4.2: Assistance in international business move

Referring to the question of whom assisted these entrepreneurs in bringing their business to international market, four out of 10 were not assisted by anyone (Case 1,2,4,10) and two of them were assisted by their husband (Case 3, 5). The rest of the entrepreneurs got her children's assistance (Case 6), partner's assistance (Case 7), sub

distributors' support (Case 8) and collaboration with Multinational Corporations (Case 9). Please refer Figure 4.2.

Relating to question "what were the biggest problems you encountered in the international market? How did you overcome those problems?" Case 1 mentioned that she faced a problem whereby China market only accepts big deal business, and Case 2 felt that the culture of the host country market was her biggest problem. Case 3,4 and 5 stated that the biggest problems were the procedures and regulations of dealing business like CIF or FOB. Lastly, Case 6 encountered problems on the fluctuation of exchange rate and complying the policy and requirement stated by the customers. For the Chinese entrepreneurs, Case 7 said that the biggest problem was the difference on the requirements and procedures on logistics. Case 8 stated that the custom duty was too high, and the distributors may raise the end user price. Case 9 encountered problem on the duration of getting approval from local authorities and finally, Case 10 mentioned that being in the international market, the problem she faced was her lack of contacts and the different methods of trading.

In relation to the most important international marketing strategies that a women entrepreneur should be good at, Case 1 stated that pricing, service and product strategies are very important. Case 2 and 3 said that promotion strategy is the most important tool for international marketing. Case 4 believes that service strategy is the most important factor in the international marketing strategy whereas Case 5 said entrepreneurs should focus on promotion and pricing strategy, and finally, Case 6 mentioned about the importance of product quality and pricing to penetrate the international market. From the Chinese entrepreneurs' perspective, Case 7 has similar

ideas with Case 6, whereby she said that quality and products' service strategy should be focused by women entrepreneurs. Case 8 stated besides quality products and services, warranty and shipping cost also must be concerned. Case 9 also has similar thoughts about good products and services in addition to offering competitive pricing to the international market. Finally, Case 10 however said that to her, sincerity and integrity are more important than the rest of the marketing mix strategy namely product, pricing, place of distribution and promotion because she mainly offers service consultancy and training to her clients.

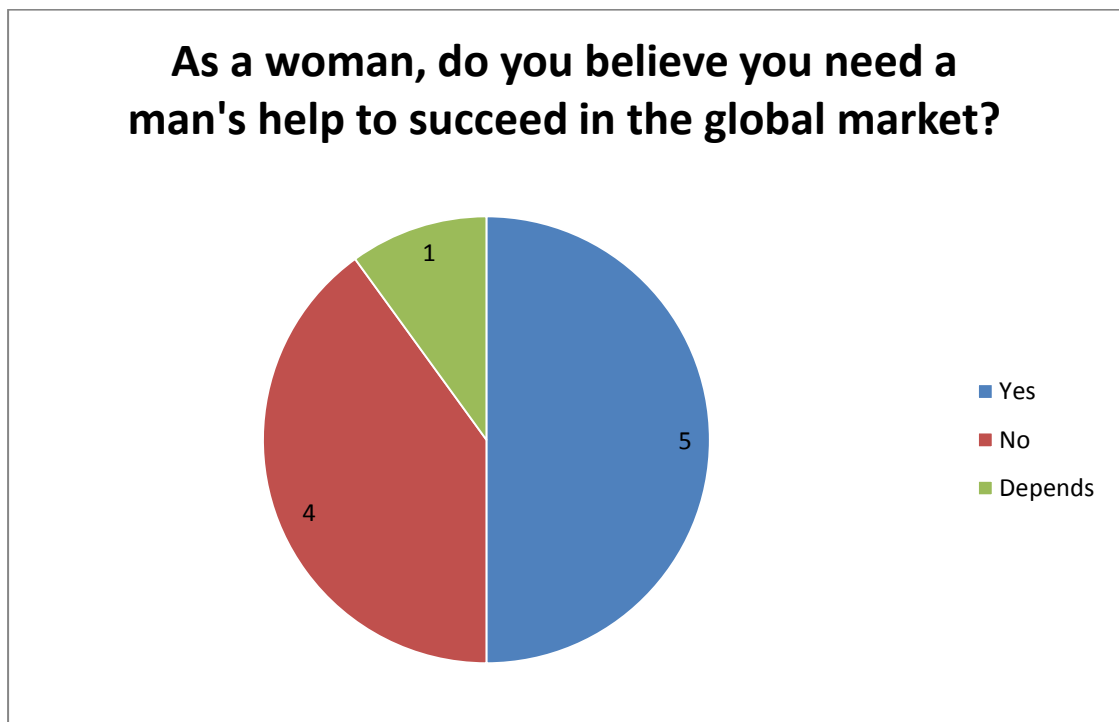


Figure 4.3 A man's role in a woman business success

To the Malay women entrepreneurs, three out of six believe that they do not need a man to be successful in the market (Case 1,2,3) however, only one of them (Case 4) said that it depends on certain circumstances that a man's help is needed to be

successful in the global market. On the other hand, two of them (Case 5,6) said that a man's help is needed to be successful in the global market. For the Chinese entrepreneurs, however, only one of them (Case 10) said that she does not need a man's help to make her successful in the global market, whereas the other three said that they need a man's help to succeed in the global arena.



Figure 4.4 International Partner

Referring to the question whether or not these women entrepreneurs have an international business partner, five of the Malay women entrepreneurs stated that their business partners are their husband, siblings and children, whereas only one of them (Case 2) implied that she does not require an international business partner. However, the Chinese women entrepreneurs provide a different answer regarding this issue. Two of them do not require an international business partner (Case 7, 10) whereas the other two (Case 8, 9) stated that they need an international partner in foreign countries who is not a family member.

In terms of ICT in business operation, all women entrepreneurs said that they use ICT in their business. According to Case 1, she uses ICT such as UBS system, warehousing system, purchasing system, HRM software and accounting system, whereas for Case 2 and 3 they are using ICT in the accounting system. Case 4 uses ICT in purchase order system, Case 5 uses UBS system and Case 6 utilized ICT in production system, internal communication and AutoCAD. For the Chinese entrepreneurs, Case 7 uses ICT to develop the company's website, advertising and research. Case 8 uses ICT in accounting system, Case 9 uses ICT in a more advance system, i.e. ERP system, CAD, CAM and UBS system while Case 10 uses ICT in the training program.

Pertaining to business intelligent (BI) tool, only one Malay entrepreneur (Case 6) said that she does not apply any business intelligent tool in her organization, similarly, for the Chinese entrepreneurs, only one of them did not state whether she utilized this tool into her business. The rest of the Chinese entrepreneurs used business intelligent tool minimally.

In relation to question which BI tool they use, Case 1 said that she uses BI in pattern and trending, forecasting and data mining. Case 2 and 3 use BI tools in analytic, pattern and trending. In addition to that, Case 3 also uses BI in forecasting similar to Case 4. Case 5 uses BI in forecasting, pattern and trending. However, Case 6 does not apply any BI tools in the business. Similarly, the Chinese entrepreneurs used BI tools for data mining except Case 10. However, besides data mining, Case 7 also used BI tools for forecasting. In addition to that, Case 9 also uses BI tools for pattern and

trending on top of using it for data mining purposes. Case 10 uses BI tools for business analysis.

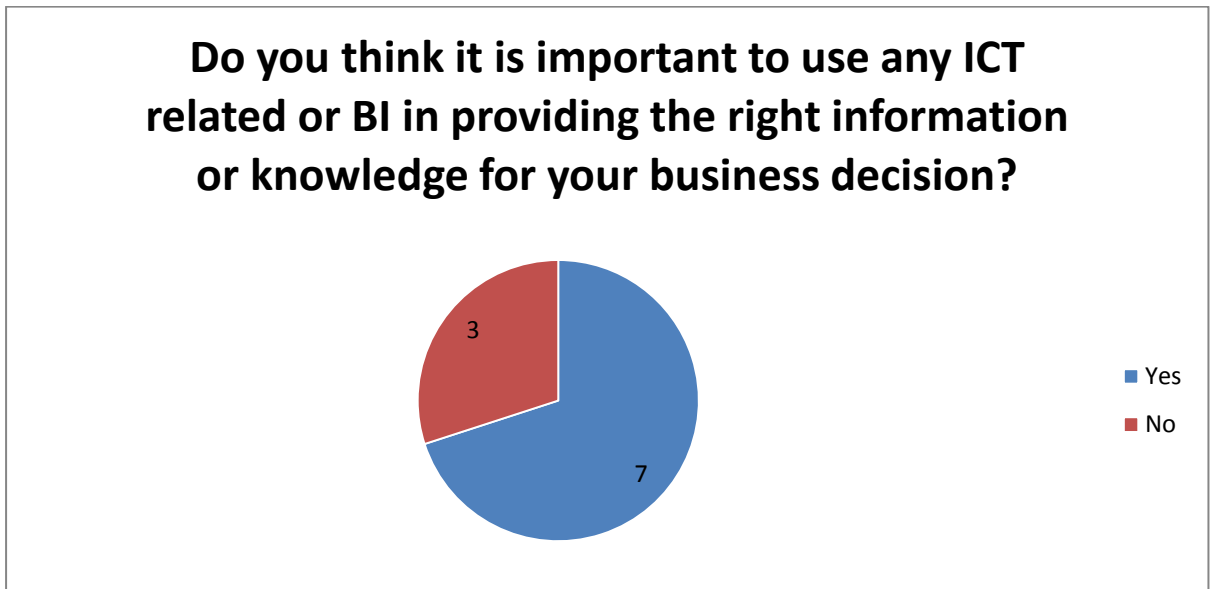


Figure 4.5 ICT usage in business

In relation to the question whether it is important to use ICT related or BI in providing the right information or knowledge for business decision, three Malay entrepreneurs (Case 1,2,6) said both ICT and BI are not important while the other three (Case 3,4,5) said both tools are important in the decision-making process. From the perspective of Chinese women entrepreneurs, all of them said that ICT and BI are important for their business decision making.

As for the question whether or not they use BI based knowledge to strategize their business, similarly three of the Malay entrepreneurs (Case 3, 4, 5) stated that BI based knowledge was used in the business strategy formulation and execution. On the other hand, the other three entrepreneurs (Case 1, 2, 6) said otherwise. In relation to the

same question, regarding BI based knowledge in the strategization of the business, all the four Chinese entrepreneurs agreed that BI based knowledge was used for that purpose.

In relation to standard operating procedure (SOP), all Malay entrepreneurs agreed that they use SOP to penetrate international market, and to them, SOP must be used to succeed in foreign countries. On the other hand, only one Chinese entrepreneur disagrees with the statement (Case 8), whereas the rest of the entrepreneurs believe that SOP enable them to succeed in the international market.

Pertaining to question regarding the measurement of business operation effectiveness, Case 1 stated that she hired consultant to evaluate the performance of her company, Case 2 used a different measure that was seeking feedback from her customers while at the same time also doing a random checking from time to time. Case 3 utilized another different method which was continuously analyzing her business data to determine the effectiveness of the business operation. According to Case 4, she measured her business operation effectiveness by calculating the sales of product through which she will note any improvement or decreasing in the number of sales volume. Case 5 developed SOP for every batch of her products being produced every month, and finally Case 6 set KPI to measure the effectiveness of her business operation. For the Chinese entrepreneur, Case 7 believed that sales output, staff productivity and target achieved were the three best measures for business operation effectiveness. Case 8 however, strongly believed that sales can determine her business operation effectiveness. Case 9 however placed high importance on performance appraisal, sales results and also customers' satisfaction for that matter. Finally, to Case

10, increase in market according to market size and the achievement of company's goals were the best measure of her business operation effectiveness.

In relation to question "how do you control the business problem from becoming more serious?" Case 1 stated that she believes that a back-up plan will solve the issues. Case 2 however, stated that updating the problems through meetings and being closer and not strict with the employees will help her control the business problems from becoming more serious. On the other hand, Case 3 mentioned that she is willing to take the risk whenever problems become serious. Case 5 focusing on strategies in rolling the capital while Case 6 controls the business problem by monitoring the rejection rate using a suitable system. Case 4 however, did not respond to this question. In relation to the similar question regarding controlling the business problem, the Chinese woman entrepreneurs provided different responses, Case 7 for example, will focus more on discussion with staff and try her best to find out the root of the problem with them. Case 8 stated that she would take charge of the problem and focus more on increasing promotion. Case 9 controls the problems via communication, monitoring and taking proper action to control it. Finally, according to Case 10, she will focus on her strength and tries to move away from the low-end segments.

Pertaining to obtaining success in the international market, Case 1 believes that making own decision by looking at mentors as the role model, but not seeking advice directly from the mentors are important in her decision-making task. Case 2, 3, 4 and 10 mentioned that they believe in themselves to make important decision that would lead them to the international success. While case 5 made her decision together with her husband whereas Case 6 will discuss with the staff for decision making. Case 7

and 8 will discuss with their partners to make important decision. Lastly, Case 9 will discuss with the Board of Directors for any important decision to be made.

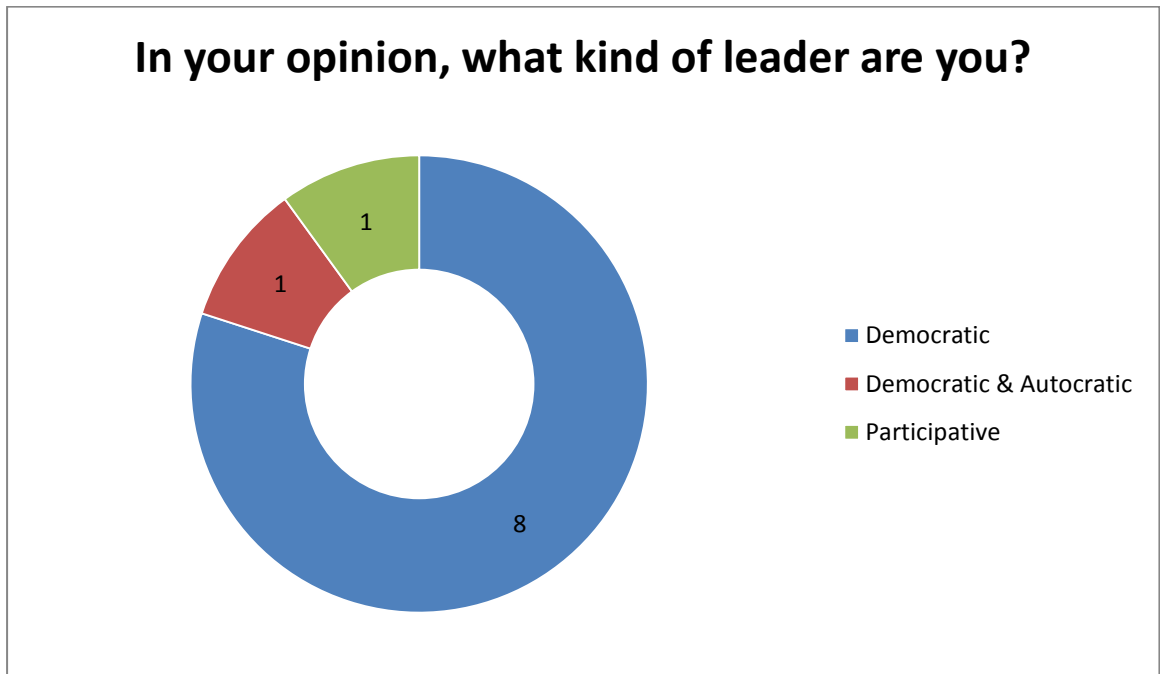


Figure 4. 6 Types of leader

In relation to the leadership issues, Case 1 to 5 stated that they are mainly a democratic leader while Case 6 is a democratic and in certain cases, she also acts as an autocratic leader. From the perspective of the Chinese entrepreneurs, Case 7, 8, 9 said that they are democratic leader whereas only Case 10 said that she is a more participative type of leader in the organization.

In terms of their entrepreneur traits, Case 1, 2, 3 and 4 believe that they are persistent and a risk taker. Case 4 and 5, however, only mentioned that they are persistent in nature. For the Chinese woman entrepreneurs, Case 7 thinks that she is a persistent and a risk taker, Case 8 stated that she is a risk taker, she can smell opportunities and

will act fast to achieve that. Case 9 also said that she is a persistent person, a risk taker and willing to seek for feedback. Finally, Case 10 said that sincerity, integrity, passion and perseverance are the four main special traits of hers.

In relation to question, "How do you lead your organization and can you share the vision and mission with us?" Case 1 said that she always discusses with the key person in the office, and in most of the time, she would accept the opinions. Case 2 mentioned that she slowly penetrates into a foreign market, particularly Indonesia. Case 3 highlights her intention to help more Malay entrepreneurs to succeed. Case 4 focuses on penetrating all local markets. Case 5, however is trying her best to introduce Malaysian products abroad. Finally, Case 6 implied that the importance to inculcate the Islamic values in her organization, wishes to fulfill Fardhu Kifayah as a Muslim business woman and produce own products using her own company brand. In relation to the same question, from the Chinese woman entrepreneurs' perspective, Case 7 said that she gives her staff certain freedom in decision making. Her vision is to improve the quality of services and products and also to improve goodwill among customers. To Case 8, she has her direction well written, her organization wants more on-going projects and conquer more markets. She wants to increase the profit of the business and be able to self-sustain. According to Case 9, she leads the organization by using participative management style with sincerity and a sincere heart to manage people. Finally, to Case 10, her vision is to be the most trusted and most competent management consultant in Asia Pacific.

In relation to this question about "have you ever failed in making good business decision, and can you share your experience?" Case 1 did not provide any feedback

on the question. Case 2 said yes, she had failed in making good business decision but only sometimes. Case 3 also said yes, and she advises other entrepreneurs to learn from the mistakes. Case 4 agreed that she failed to make a good business decision, however it is a rare issue for her to be overly concerned. Case 5 also experienced failure in making good decision regarding business but mostly the decisions were related to setting the right price. Case 6, however mentioned about her failure to make good decision in an investment that did not generate profit. Case 7, as the first representative of Chinese woman entrepreneur said that she had made a bad business decision whereby her company had produced the wrong model of furniture and yet failed to get a good response from the market. Case 8 on the other hand, mentioned that up to now she had never made any major mistakes. Case 9 and 10 made the mistake by hiring the wrong person and the wrong personnel respectively.

Subsequently, regarding the question on how the entrepreneurs overcome decision making problem, Case 2 said that whenever one of the products did not have good sales, she will just decide to stop the production. Case 3 mentioned that in case she met an unreliable distributor, she would just terminate the distributor. Case 4, on the other hand, used her business networking with related parties, for example, with any prominent business figures and representatives from the government agencies to lessen her problems. Case 5, however, stated that she will discuss with her husband about the problems and seek for his advice to solve it. Case 6 mentioned that whenever her product was not revived, therefore, the company would decide not to market them at the moment. Case 1, however, did not respond to this question. From the Chinese entrepreneurs' perspective, they took different strategies to overcome the business problem. For example, Case 7 said that she would reduce the production

until she can confirm that the model being developed has gained acceptance in the market. Case 8 focused on minimizing the problem, for example, by using financial analysis method. Case 9 simply stated that she would just learn from the mistakes, and finally, Case 10 will overcome the problem by managing the performance measurement system (KPI) utilized in her company.

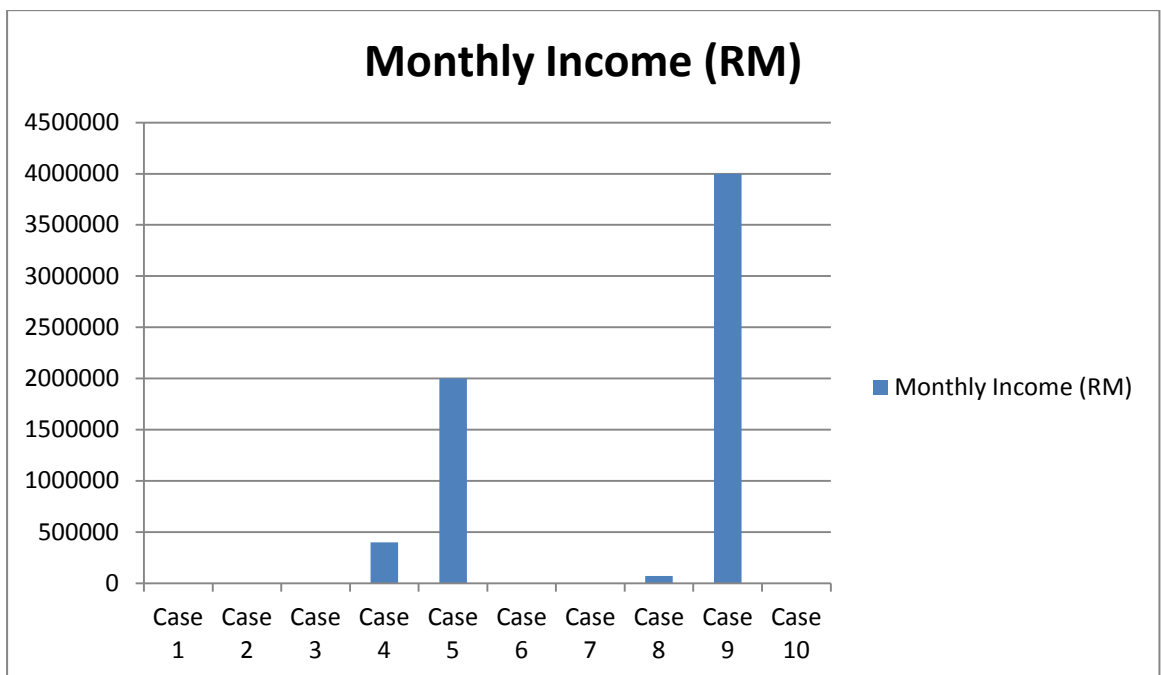


Figure 4. 7 Company's monthly income

In terms of current business worth of income, only three Malay entrepreneurs willingly provided the amount namely Case 3 (RM3-4 million a month), Case 4 (RM400,000 a month) and Case 5 (RM2 million a month). However, Case 1,2 and 6 refused to provide the figures. Chinese woman entrepreneurs provided the figure of their current business worth of income: Case 7 (RM3-4 million per month), Case 8 (RM70,000 per month), Case 9 (RM4 million per month) and Case 10 (about RM 1Million per year or about RM85000 per month).

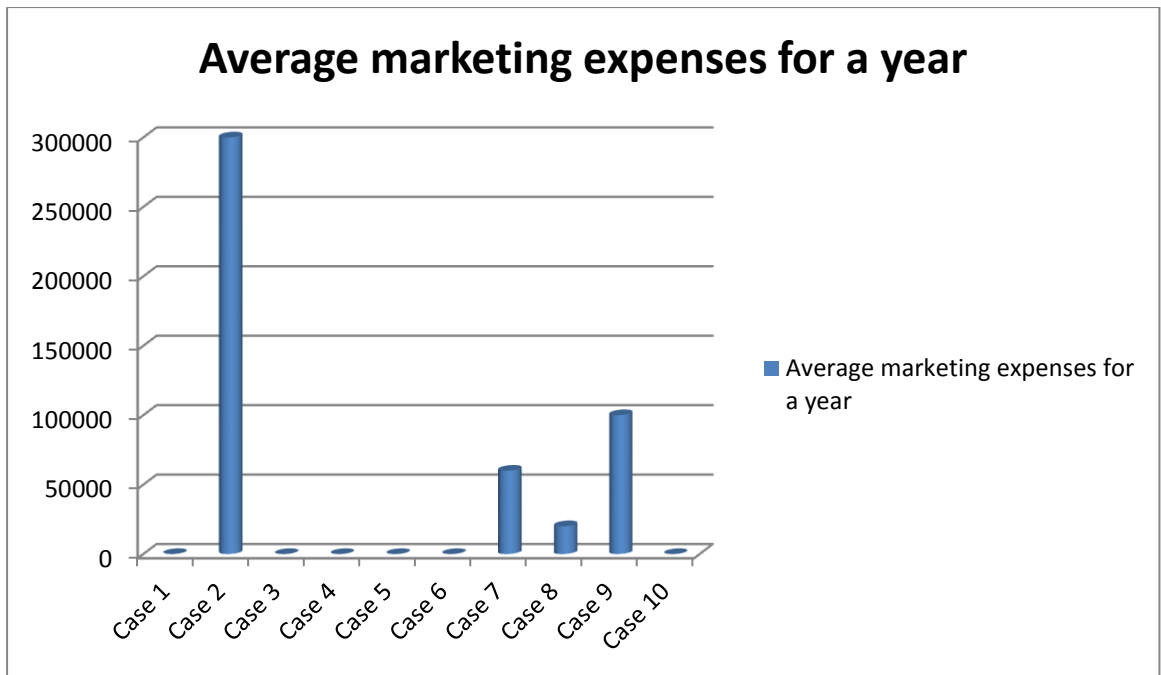


Figure 4. 8 Company's average marketing expenses

In relation to average marketing expenses, Case 1, 3 and 5 refused to reveal any figure, whereas Case 2 stated that the average marketing expenses for her company is RM300,000 per year. For Case 4 (RM45,000-200,000 per year), Case 6 (RM50,000-80,000 per year). For the Chinese women entrepreneurs, average marketing expenses, Case 7 spent about RM 60,000 per year, Case 8, RM20,000 per year, Case 9 less than RM100,000 per year, while Case 10 refused to reveal any figure.

Pertaining to the question, "What is your advice to other women entrepreneurs to venture a foreign market?" Case 1 said that woman entrepreneur should be confident and cater the business internally before going abroad. Case 2 mentioned about financial stability and focusing on own capability when venturing a foreign market. Case 3 said that sharing is giving and the woman entrepreneur should be determined when making the decision to venture a foreign market. Case 4 utterly said that the woman entrepreneur should first learn the culture of the host country and the people.

Case 5 is more concerned about what the entrepreneur should ask herself on what she really wants, be focused, do not give up easily and be passionate about the business. Finally, Case 6 believes that woman entrepreneur should dare to take the risk, never go against the Islamic principles and improve communication skills. On the other hand, according to the Chinese women entrepreneurs, Case 7 stated that woman entrepreneur must have prior knowledge about their own products and services in the industries, learn from their mistakes and never to repeat them. According to Case 7 also, mentoring and having a good partner are essential for making such decision, in addition to that, support from family and friends are essential too. Case 8 implied that, women entrepreneurs should start the business in the area where they are good at, do not be too ambitious but be more focused. At the same times, the woman entrepreneurs should also find a niche and do not be greedy about becoming successful. Case 9 believes in the concept of building up the business in one's home country first then only decide to expand the market overseas. Finally, according to Case 10, women entrepreneurs should know what they are good at, focus on it, do what others “do not like to do, do not want to do and also do not dare to do”. Most importantly, Case 10 also stressed on the importance of finding the blue ocean market to tap on.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

Based on the interviews with the respondents, several important findings were successfully collected and categorized according to the research objectives. Among those objectives are: 1) the characteristic of the successful women entrepreneurs, 2) the extend of how their characteristic influence their international business success, 3) the dominant characteristic that the entrepreneur possesses which influence their entrepreneurial success in the global market, 4) the critical success factors (CSF), entrepreneur performance in the global market, 5) the women entrepreneurs' skills of decision making and decision making style and leadership style. Finally, the main issues, problems and challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs to penetrate the international market. Discussions on these issues are provided in the following sections.

5.2 Entrepreneurial Traits

Based on the interviews, the majority of the woman entrepreneurs seemed to have two most important entrepreneurial traits that are considered very crucial to their business success. The two traits are persistent and risk taking. For example, respondent 7 (Furnizone Sdn. Bhd) said that:

"I am persistent and a risk taker and I drink tea to keep myself alert and active"

Besides, respondent 8 (Plentous Sdn Bhd) stated that:

"An entrepreneur must be able to be risk taker, endure, smell opportunities and act fast."

While respondent 9 (CG Solutions Sdn Bhd) mentioned that:

"My special traits are persistency, risk taking and feedback seeking."

5.3 The extend of how their characteristic influence their international business success

Regarding the issue on how their characteristic influences their international business success, women entrepreneurs have different reasons for starting and involving in their business. Their personal characteristics and traits would actually determine what type of business, products and services they are going to offer to the market.

Respondent 2 (Rzac Cosmetic) said that:

"I myself was not very knowledgeable about beauty however I have the passion and interest in the beauty care line, when I managed to sell my previous company product, I felt so proud of myself and from then onwards I plan to have my own business."

According to respondent 3 (HR Marketing):

"When we feel desperate about something, then we will remember about those products that we have seen earlier when, what and why the person did the business. With the knowledge and understanding of the business we have confidence to start ours."

Respondent 9 (CG Solutions Sdn Bhd) mentioned that:

"My husband being an experienced mechanical engineer started the firm with his friends and I got involved into it after her marriage."

5.4 The dominant characteristics that the entrepreneurs possess, which influence their entrepreneurial success in the global market

These entrepreneurs possess several unique characteristics that make them able to compete successfully in the market place. Among those characteristics are they do not easily give up, keep on learning new things, build networks and aggressively market the products to customers. In relation to this issue, respondent 1 (Prestasi M) mentioned that:

"I do my best to conquer my clients, I never bothered about my competitors and always make sure my clients never ever have a chance to look at my competitor's offerings."

Respondent 2 (Rzac Cosmetics) stated that:

"I do research on every product to understand my business better. This will make me learn about my products better."

Respondent 3 (HR Marketing) said that:

"The reason why Malay entrepreneurs fail in business is because they do not have good networking. Therefore, I work hard to get a good networking with every party which directly or indirectly influence my business, and to be successful I need to have knowledge. Lastly, most

importantly entrepreneurs must be honest and trustworthy to gain trust from clients"

5.5 The critical success factors (CSF), entrepreneur performance in the global market

5.5.1 Business intelligence

In relation to business intelligence usage, not many entrepreneurs are using business intelligence (BI) in their business. For half of the Malay entrepreneurs, business intelligence was used in the business strategy formulation and execution. Similarly, according to Chinese women entrepreneurs, they use business intelligence to strategize their business. However, they do not fully depend on BI. Pertaining to this discussion, respondent 7 (Furnizone Sdn. Bhd) said that:

"We use it for scouting information which help us to make decision and try to find out competitors' next move."

Respondent 8 (Plentous Sdn Bhd) mentioned that:

"Business intelligent is important because it helps us to provide information in the market in the website."

Respondent 9 (CG Solutions Sdn Bhd) quoted that:

"Business intelligent is very important in business. It is used to provide information, communication and linking staffs through emails, memorandums and meetings."

5.5.2 Combination of ICT and BI

Most of them use ICT to develop a company website for advertising and research, and only one of the entrepreneurs, Case 6 uses ERP, CAD, CAM and UBS system. This shows that business intelligence is not considered as an important tool in the business, and they only use it minimally for certain purposes.

Respondent 3 (HR Marketing) said that:

"We cannot run away from ICT, whoever wants to succeed in business must use ICT, because it has no boundaries, especially from the marketing side."

Respondent 6 (JWR Technology) stated that:

"We use ICT mainly for the purpose of developing production system, synchronizing between departments for the purpose of internal communication. The company also use Autocad for tooling design and development."

Respondent 9 (CG Solutions) said:

"We use ERP system in procurement, CAD or CAM in designing machines and UBS system in accounting."

5.5.3 Internationalization

To be successful in the international market, there are various strategies the entrepreneurs should adopt to ensure the success rate of the penetration strategy and the internationalization of their business. Among the marketing strategies that the entrepreneurs use are product and service, pricing, promotion and distribution strategy. Regarding product and service strategy, the women entrepreneurs both Malay and Chinese said that product and service strategy is their vital factor to focus on in order

to attract foreign buyers or distributors. In relation to this issue, respondent 4 (Haliza Industries) said that:

"First and foremost is service strategy. Whenever customer believes in you then only you can market your products."

Respondent 6 (JWR Technology) quoted that:

"As an entrepreneur, I should be good at quality strategy and product strategy, quality strategy is by complying to the high quality standard imposed by the customer. Beside that, to penetrate global market, the price need to be competitive because customers can outsource to any suppliers around the globe that could give them high quality products with low cost."

Respondent 8 (Plentous Sdn Bhd) mentioned that:

"The most important strategy is having good product quality, service, provide warranty for products and absorb shipping cost. These strategies are important because they are most important to the customer when buying our products."

According to the Malay women entrepreneurs, the internationalization of business will be better if their spouse acts as their business partner. Pertaining to the husband as a business partner, respondent 1 (Prestasi M) said that:

"Production wise, local production with small quantities is handled by my younger sister, and my husband is helping me with the international business issue."

Case 2 (Rzac Cosmetics) said that:

"My husband gives support as an advisor for me to enter the international markets."

On the other hand, Chinese entrepreneurs prefer foreign partners to assist them in the internationalization of business. Respondent 8 (Plentous Sdn Bhd) stated that:

"Our international partners are the sub distributors that help us to handle the sales and promotion, channel the product nationwide and motivate other agents to achieve their targets."

5.5.4 Business Operation

Different entrepreneurs have different ways of operating their business. To be able to succeed in the international market, the majority of the entrepreneurs prepared a Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) to properly manage and align their business operation. Pertaining to this SOP matters, respondent 3 (HR Marketing) said that:

"We need to have SOP because if we do not have SOP we cannot apply for GMP, we also cannot obtain any certification for example Halal certificate, and because of that SOP is important to my company."

Responded 5 (Madu Unggul) mentioned that:

"It is important to have SOP because we can follow it for a long time to standardize our business operation."

Respondent 7(Furnizone Sdn Bhd) quoted that:

"We have SOP on job, we communicate and issue memorandums for staff to know the procedures, and most of the procedures are standardized."

Respondent 9 (Plentous Sdn Bhd) stated that:

"We have SOP on job and ISO. SOP is issued in hiring and firing employees, provision of salary and other human resource management issue."

In relation to effectiveness of business operation strategy, entrepreneurs used various ways to measure it. For example, respondent 4 (Haliza Industries) said:

"Business effectiveness depends on SOP, if you do not follow the SOP, you will never get things done properly."

Respondent 7 (Furnizone Sdn Bhd) said that:

"We measure by looking at sales output and productivity of staff and target achieved."

Respondent 10 (Hao Tai Consultant) quoted that:

"We measure it by looking at the increase in market share according to the market size and achievement of company goals."

5.6 The women entrepreneurs' skills of decision making and decision making style and leadership style

To be able to succeed in local and international market, every entrepreneur has to properly control their problems from becoming serious; there are many strategies to do so. For example, respondent 2 (Rzac Cosmetics) stated:

"I will conduct meeting my staffs, I cannot be too strict and I have to use proper strategy to make them listen to my decision."

Respondent 8 (Plentous Sdn Bhd) said that:

" I will take charge of the problem, increase efforts in promotion, advertise in the internet where the customers are found in Facebook."

Respondent 10 (Hao Tai Consultant) mentioned that:

"I will focus on my strength and move away from the low-end segments."

In relation to leadership style, the majority of the women were using democratic leadership style, only one Malay entrepreneur utilized both democratic and autocratic style to ensure a better management of her organization. Only one Chinese entrepreneur said that she prefers to use participative style of leadership. For example, according to respondent 1 (Prestasi M) said that:

"Sometimes we think that our idea is correct but actually our staff ideas are much better, then we should consider those ideas."

In addition, respondent 6 (JWR Technology) mentioned that:

"I lead my organization by providing good examples. I give advice to my children in managing the company. I inculcate Islamic values in the organization for instance I pray tahajud/istikharah to ask Allah's assistance in making right decision."

In making decision, every entrepreneur both Malay and Chinese have experienced failures in making a good decision. They however considered the failure as a learning process for future decision making purposes. For example, respondent 3 (HR Marketing) said that:

"Actually we need to remember that wrong decision making will provide us with new knowledge, for example, we can learn why our product is not saleable."

Respondent 4 (Haliza Industries) however said that:

"I made wrong decision regarding pricing strategy, whenever you talk too much you sometimes will make mistake, therefore it is better for you to listen and be a good listener to make you a better decision maker."

Respondent 7 (Furnizone Sdn Bhd) stated that:

"I made mistake by producing the wrong model of furniture, it was not responded by the market well."

5.7 Strategy to succeed in the international market

Finally, to succeed in the international market, entrepreneurs used various types of strategies depending on products and services they are offering. In relation to this issue, respondent 1 (Prestasi M) said that:

"You need to have a business mentor who is in the same line as you are, and then you can learn to make right decision, particularly for the international market."

Respondent 5 (Madu Unggul) said that:

"I use all the platform provided by the ministry in promoting my products. Normally when I first attend international exposition, I will introduce my product and prepare some promotional tools, get acquaintance with the distributor in the foreign country, create networking and build the trust. Business is actually as art and you are the one who design it, you must be committed and make people happy working with you."

Respondent 7 (Furnizone Sdn Bhd) mentioned that:

"To be successful in the international business, discussion with partners is the key factor that affects the success rate."

Respondent 9 (CG Solution) stated that:

"I discuss with the Board of Directors before making any important decision relating to international market to ensure higher success rate."

Respondent 10 (Hao Tai Consultant) said that:

"I strongly believe in own ability to be successful in the international market."

5.8 Similarities and Dissimilarities

5.8.1 Similarities

Based on our interviews and data analysis, there are several similarities of responses from both Malay and Chinese entrepreneurs. Among those similarities that can be derived from our analysis are:

	Items	Similarities
1	Entrepreneurial Traits	Both Malay and Chinese entrepreneurs have persistent and risk taking traits.
2	Types of Leadership	They are mostly democratic in nature.
3	Failure in making decision	The majority of the entrepreneurs experienced failure in making good decision.
4	Internationalization and Business strategy	They are using product, service, quality, pricing, promotion and distribution strategy in the international market.
5	Standard Operation Procedures	Both Malay and Chinese entrepreneurs believe in SOP to ensure the higher success rate in the international market.
6	Business Intelligence	Business Intelligence is not truly important for these entrepreneurs.
7	ICT	All entrepreneurs are using ICT in certain areas in their business. Therefore, ICT is an important tool that influences the business success.

5.8.2 Dissimilarities

1	Internationalization strategy
2	Controlling strategy
3	Business operation effectiveness
4	Decision making strategy

These four dissimilarities factors were found to affect Malaysian women entrepreneurs' business activities. Each woman entrepreneur has different strategy and method to penetrate international market and utilizing a proper strategy that they deem fit for their business. They also control their business operation differently according to their nature of business and services, i.e. production, service delivery. They measure business operation effectiveness differently according to their needs and expected outcomes, and finally they use various types of decision making strategies that are suitable for their business context.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, RECOMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The rational of this study is to further understand the entrepreneurship field from another level which is the success of the international business venture done by Malaysian women entrepreneurs, particularly in the Northern region of Malaysia. Even though entrepreneurship has been widely studied by many authors throughout the world, Malaysian women entrepreneurs are still considered as understudied, especially from the perspective of different ethnics. Nonetheless, their contribution to the Malaysian economic development is indisputable and will continue to foster healthy growth rate. Being a promising business venture that has an enormous potential in various industries, the Malaysian government is looking forward to promote women entrepreneurs in a local and international market. However, with the increasing competitiveness among the global players, especially from the ASEAN region, Malaysian women entrepreneurs have to prove that they are also a worthy global player who are able to offer quality products and services, which are of equally beneficial and demanded by international market.

6.2 Discussion

Regarding the main factors that contribute to the international success, the authors have come up with one conceptual model that comprises all the factors that may contribute to the women entrepreneurs' business success, which were derived from the

respondents' feedback. Please refer to Figure 6.1: Factors that contribute to the women entrepreneurs' international success.

Based on Figure 6.1, there are three main factors that act as the determinants to the international business success, and these factors are namely known as individual factors, organizational factors, i.e. business and international marketing factor, and environmental factors. Apart from these determinant factors, there are three mediating factors that are found important to the success of women entrepreneurs, specifically decision making strategy, leadership style and controlling strategy. These mediating factors are found to play a significant role in the women's success in all industries they were involved in. From the study two important supports were found to play a substantial role in the women entrepreneurs' business success. The government support and spouse/family support seem to act as the moderators who further enhance their business success in the international market. Overall, many factors seem to play vital roles in the success of each woman entrepreneur, but to a distinct degree of utilization. Apart from that, the business intelligence (BI) can add a certain degree of value to the business operation, albeit its minimal role in the success of the women entrepreneurs. The existence of these various factors may reflect diverse obstacles and issues that each of the entrepreneur has to go through before she can finally realize to what extent her success can uphold and sustain in the international market.

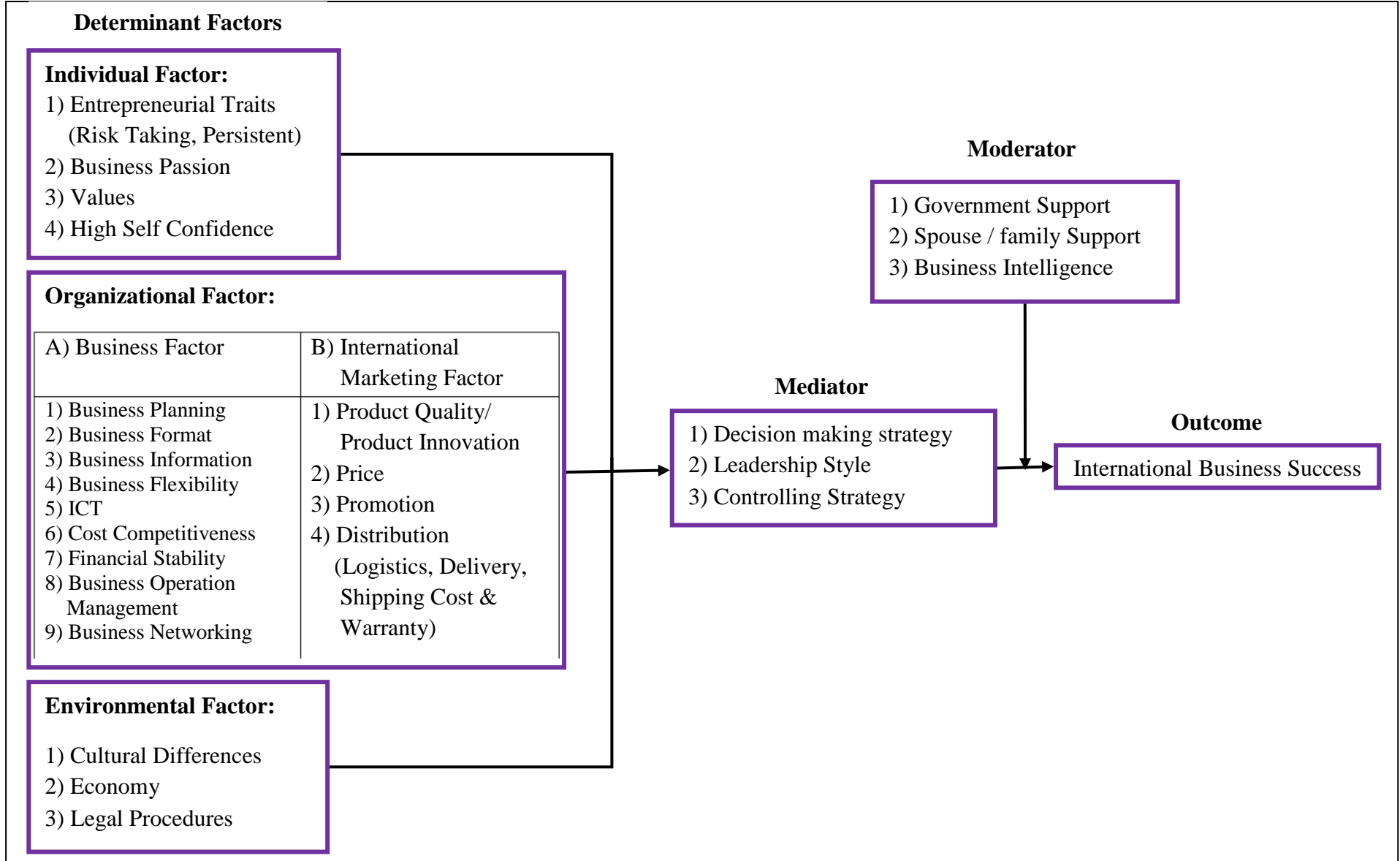


Figure 6.1: Factors that contribute to the women entrepreneurs' international

To be a successful business player, women entrepreneurs need to possess certain entrepreneurial traits like persistence, risk taking, passionate and confidence that strongly relate to good moral values. Inherently, every woman entrepreneur in Malaysia can possibly be a successful entrepreneur if she maintains and preserves the individual factors as revealed in the study.

In addition to having strong personality and other good qualities as an individual, the women entrepreneurs need to first establish their business in the local market before deciding to venture into the international market. Pertaining to this issue, as suggested by women entrepreneurs who participated in this study, women entrepreneurs in Malaysia should have a proper business plan, a distinct business format, sufficient business information, business flexibility that is able to fit in any situation, having good access to ICT, able to focus on cost competitiveness to compete with rivals, financial stability, a good business operation management and wide business networking with various parties that may directly or indirectly influence their business operation. In most situations, organizational factors form the main basis for business readiness to venture into the international market. Without those important factors as mentioned earlier, most probably, women entrepreneurs may fail to sustain and persevere while positioning themselves among business competition. Apparently once they are considered successful in the local market, then only many government agencies, financial institutions, investors and other interested parties are fond to collaborate, agree to join venture and provide assistance for the women entrepreneurs. Once the women entrepreneurs decide to expand their business to overseas, they should be more concerned on improving their marketing strategies to enable their business to fit in well in the global arena. Women entrepreneurs should focus on

product and service quality, and innovation of ideas, pricing strategies, their integrated communication strategies such as advertisement, promotion, and direct marketing and last but not least, their distribution strategy, particularly on the logistics, delivery system, shipping cost and warranty issues. These marketing mix strategies should be equally acceptable in the international arena as the demand from the international market may sometimes totally differ from the local demand. Therefore, women entrepreneurs must always be susceptible to comments and suggestions by others, particularly from the experts who may come from the ministry, international advisors, partners, networkers and distributors, who are more knowledgeable about the foreign markets. The learning process should continuously take place and along the way, women entrepreneurs might fail and has to start all over again with some better corrective measures. They may face various difficulties and problems before reaching success. Those who learnt from mistakes and failures will normally last longer and survive the turbulence that exist in the international market. Proper planning does help women entrepreneurs to oversee their shortcomings and potential problems surrounding their business. Most importantly, success in one country may thus lead to another success in another country and more countries after that. By having substantial organizational strengths, they may be able to overcome any difficulties there encounter.

Despite having a sufficient strength of organizational and individual factors, women entrepreneurs should also realize the importance of the environmental factors that they may not be able to control fully. Among the factors that exist in the environment that may affect a woman entrepreneur's business success are cultural differences between home and host countries, economic situation of both domestic and

international countries and the legal procedures that they have to go through before the products can be distributed or service to be rendered to the host countries. Even though these factors could influence their business to a certain extent, women entrepreneurs may reduce their impacts by implementing a proactive strategy and anticipating the outcomes of each factor while doing a preliminary study before venturing into the foreign markets. Besides understanding these issues, women entrepreneurs should also realize that there are many other environmental factors that may appear from time to time once they already embarked on any international business strategies. Precautionary steps should be prepared during the decision-making process of entering any new international market.

Regardless of how ready a woman entrepreneur with the three main factors namely individual, organizational and environmental factors, their international business success may face certain problems if they are not equipped with a good decision making strategy, controlling strategy and leadership styles that may affect how their foreign partners or buyers will perceive when they first meet. These three factors may act as the mediating factors in the success of the internationalization process. A good decision maker will use various strategies that suit with the current business context. Although there are times when decisions may be wrong or failed, a good decision maker can turn the problems into opportunities, which may bring about a fruitful result. Only a genuine risk taker can sense the best way out of a problem and able to realize and smell the new potential opportunities.

In relation to that, women entrepreneurs should know how to control their business operation as well as their own emotions. Ability to control one's business and oneself

is strongly related to how good a leader she is. A good leader will pave a more successful route to success by knowing how to command and delegate the power to her subordinates while at the same time provide them with a clear and achievable vision and mission as guidelines. Without these three vital factors, their venturing strategies may have hiccups somewhere along the line and it may hinder them from achieving their business targets. In most situations, entrepreneurs do require supports from their loved ones, particularly from spouse and family members. These supports will make entrepreneurs become stronger and more confident to take any important action towards achieving success. However, there are times when spouse and family supports may seem not to be able to play a positive role. There are also times when the woman entrepreneur feels that her spouse is not providing any support that she needs or deserves. This situation seemed to be faced by many women entrepreneurs in other parts of the world too.

According to most of the respondents, their spouse and family members do provide support during their business expansion, i.e. moral and advice. However, there are also women entrepreneurs who mentioned they do not receive any support from both parties. They only believe in themselves and never look for any specific support from others. This shows that women can be successful without men's assistance if she strongly believes in herself and in her passion of doing the business right. In other words, men can just moderate the success of a woman entrepreneur and not act as an important determinant to their success. In addition to that, business intelligence also seems to moderate their success rate. It is found that Malaysian women entrepreneurs do not always rely on business intelligence in their business operation. Even though

business intelligence enables them to achieve better results, the majority of them minimally use business intelligence for certain business purposes.

From another perspective, women entrepreneurs sometimes seek supports from the government agencies in order to succeed better, for example, from SME Corp, PERDA, FAMA, MITI, MARA and etc. However, there are also women entrepreneurs who never seek for government support because they are able to penetrate the international market via their own efforts. In other words, government support could either be or not be a strong influence to women entrepreneurs' success depending on the nature of the women entrepreneurs' business, products and services, besides other factors such as individual, organizational and environmental factors; and also on how the women make decision and control their business apart from how effective their leadership styles are. These factors can influence the degree of support and assistance that the women entrepreneurs will seek from the government. In other words, government support acts as a moderating factor to the women international business success.

6.3 Business Process Flow

Based on the study, the researchers developed a business process model that depicts the business process flow from the local market to the international business market. Referring to the discussion in earlier chapters, it is important to realize that any internationalization of business should be carefully studied by every woman entrepreneur to ensure a better success. Women entrepreneurs should utilize all their business resources, both tangible and intangible, and their business competencies, i.e. management, financial, marketing, operation, and ICT effectively, to stay competitive

in both local and international markets. As suggested by most of the entrepreneurs, all businesses must be stable and well established in the local market first before the entrepreneurs plan to go abroad. In the local context, the business needs to be strengthened by having a sufficient pool of loyal customers and distributors, financially strong, with good business operation management and effective marketing strategy. A stable business may prosper better in the international market since the entrepreneur can easily control their local business operation by having sufficient support from her partner, employees and other stakeholders, while taking any available advantage, leveraging on it and exploring how opportunities in the international business can be tapped.

During their initial decision to penetrate the international market, women entrepreneurs should first gather sufficient business information about the international market needs and wants, which will provide them with better precautionary bases on how to avoid any failures during the penetration process. During this initial decision process, they should have ample business networks with various parties both at local and international context to ease their plan to venture abroad. For example, networking with the government agencies, international partners, business contacts or distributors will definitely help them to succeed in the penetration process. In order to be able to have a smooth international market penetration strategy, a proper business plan must be developed to guide the entrepreneurs in the business operation.

A business plan is vital for any business operation, particularly when deciding to start up a business, to expand the market and to diversify the business. In this case, women

entrepreneurs should have a business plan to enable them to successfully expand into a new market in a foreign country that normally requires a detailed industry and market analyses. In doing so, women entrepreneurs also do require a strong support system from various parties that have more expertise in international market penetration. Along the line, these entrepreneurs should continue their learning process on how to ensure an on-going business success in foreign countries. Although they may fail several times before they really achieve success, failures do make them stronger and better businesspersons both internally and externally. The learning process that they have gone through will make them have a better insight about the international market and subsequently, from one country they may be able to venture into more countries. The internalization process of their business will keep on growing gradually from the lowest degree to the highest degree of effectiveness depending on how much they are willing and able to take up any challenges to grow and sustain in the global market. Please refer the detail of the explanation in Figure 6.2.

Hence, pertaining to Figure 6.2, we may suggest that to be successful in the international market, women entrepreneurs have to possess strong individual factors, established organizational factors and truly understand the environmental factors. They also must be able to make good decisions, control the business operation effectively, and at the same time have a proper leadership style that is respectable. They however may need ample support from others, for example, support from family and spouse or government to become more successful. Nonetheless, their business may be more successful if they adopt a suitable business intelligence tool to assist them in their daily business operation.

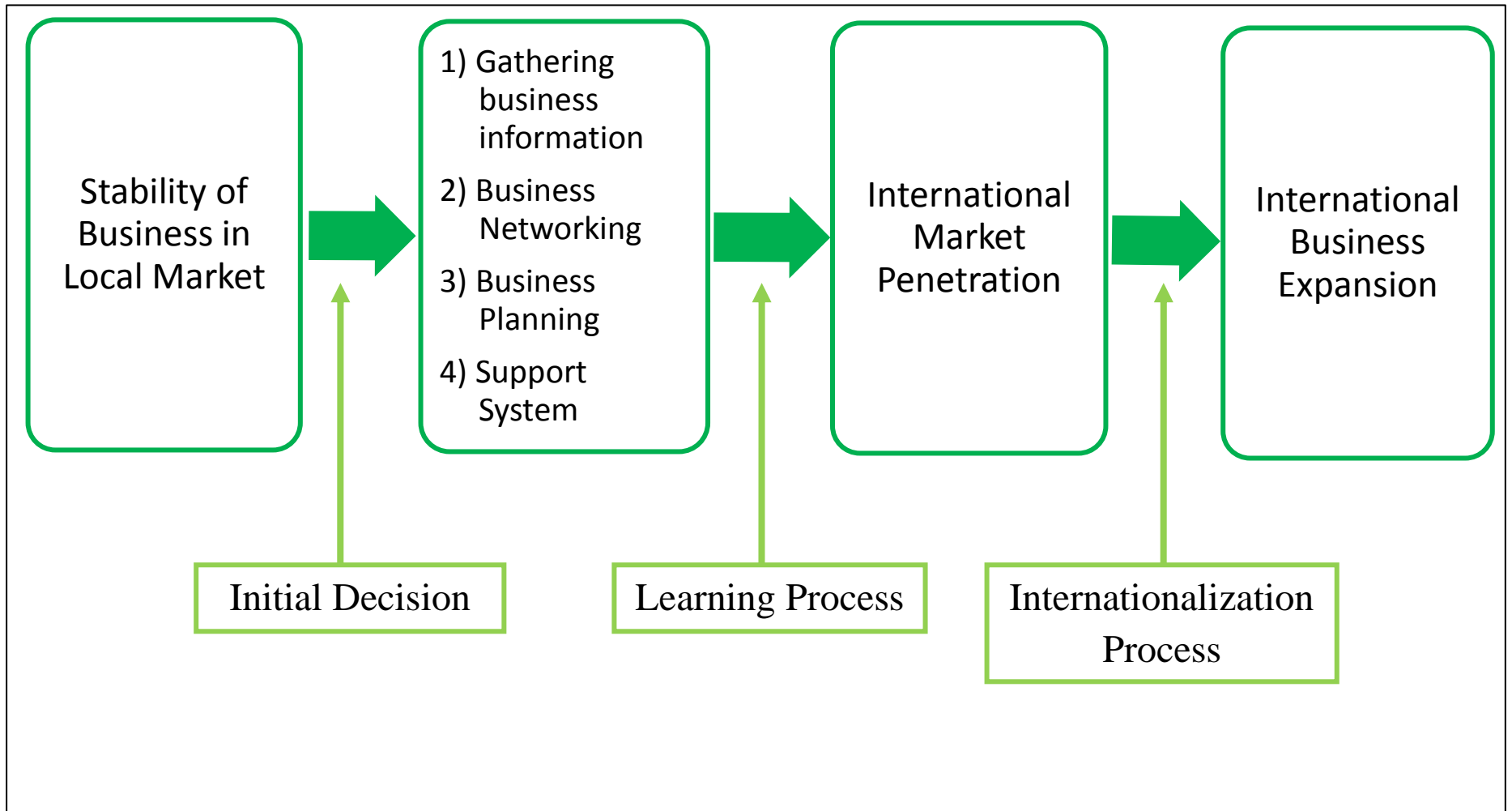


Figure 6.2: Business Process Flow from Local to International Markets

6.4 Conclusion

There is a debate over the last decade on what determines the success of women entrepreneurs. Prior literature has indicated that women possess different characteristics and strengths and weaknesses compared to men. As such, the collection of data on the profile, experience, management skill and competency, size and sector, individual characteristics, leadership and decision making style of Malaysian women entrepreneurs are needed in order to allow the policy makers, educators, women's associations and public to identify suitable planning of national policies and programs. This not only helps the government to identify the suitable target, but also leads the women entrepreneurs in developing appropriate skills and capabilities in doing businesses, starting from startup phase up to the international level.

Another important factor to be taken into consideration is the support received from the government of Malaysia. While the government has undertaken various efforts in promoting entrepreneurship, especially among the women, there are more to be accomplished. The policy makers should continue their efforts in nurturing more women entrepreneurs and also to facilitate their success. A policy that is friendly to new firms must be enacted. These include removing constraints such as red-tapes and to simplify the licensing requirements. More financial support is needed in various forms such as pre-seed and seed funding in order to draw more women into entrepreneurship.

It is also important to encourage big corporations to have business collaborations with SMEs and to facilitate SMEs' growth as they go international. Without these supports, the efforts in creating quality, resilient and successful women entrepreneurs in all sectors of the economy would be cumbersome. Given a conducive environment and adequate support, Malaysian women entrepreneurs can realize their full potential and maximize their contribution to the country's economic development.

In addition, the Malaysian women entrepreneurs need to have an acute understanding of the entrepreneurial orientation in order for them to succeed in their ventures. These orientations include confidence, persistence, strong will power, risk taking, creativity and innovativeness can be embedded within the women entrepreneurs through short courses, training programs, mentoring or even long-term courses leading to the award of a diploma or degree. This is where the government agencies and associations play an important role in nurturing these skills within the women entrepreneurs. Incentives in the form of income tax relief, discounted or free-of-charge association membership and training could help to mold more successful women entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

Malaysian women entrepreneurs can be successful in both local and international similar to their male counterparts if they put their heart fully on achieving the success. Most importantly, the internalization process of women entrepreneurs' business is no longer beyond reach as long as a proper international business strategy is used optimally and effectively.

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