

# Women's Participation Trends in Malaysia's Real Estate Sector

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**ABSTRACT** - This paper discusses on women's participation trends in Malaysia's Real Estate Sector (MRES). Malaysian women are highly important in contributing to the country's economic and social development. The purpose of this study is to document the current situation of women involvement in the MRES. Over the years women participation in Malaysia's labour force has gradually increased from year 2008 till year 2012. An important factor contributing to the growth in the real estate trends of women has been the equal access to the educational opportunities. The significant of the study is to help Malaysian women to see the potential growth in the MRES, at the same time, it will encourage many women in Malaysia to choose this sector as their career.

**Keywords** – Women's participation, trends, real estate

## I. Introduction

In Malaysia, there has been an increase in the proportion of women in the labour force, enabling women to use their potential in the labour market and achieve economic independence [1]. Women participation in the labour force has been increasing since Malaysia achieved its independence in 1957 [2].

In the workforce, the percentage of women is lower than that of men, but in terms of numbers women have increased considerably. Lately, women in Malaysia are slowly moving away from the agricultural towards the non-agricultural sector [3].

The objective of the paper is to analyse women's participation in the MRES in the light of a shift in Malaysian economic environment towards a knowledge and service-based economy.

## II. Women Labour Force Participation

The empowerment of women will be one of a key agenda in the Malaysia Tenth Plan Period (2011-2015), where the Government will increase its effort towards addressing issues confronting women to enable them to realise their full potential and participate more effectively in the economic and social development of the country. In addition, the government's goal is not only to encourage more women to participate in the labour force, but also to enhance the quality of their participation by increasing the number of women in decision-making positions. Therefore, it is essential that women are given the right opportunities, environment and mindset so that they can participate and contribute in the various fields of national development [4]. To achieve this, key programmes in this plan will focus on:

- (1) Increasing women's participation in the labour force;
- (2) Increasing the number of women in key decision making positions;
- (3) Improving provision of support for women in challenging circumstances such as widows, single mothers and those with lower incomes; and
- (4) Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.

In 2012, the labour force participation rate increased to 65.5 per cent as compared to 64.4 per cent in the previous year. The increase of 1.1 percentage point was attributed by the increase of

the population in the labour market from 12.68 million in 2011 to 13.12 million persons in 2012 [5].

Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) recorded an increase of 1.6 per cent for the period 2011 till 2012 from 47.9 to 49.5 per cent. This increase is contributed by all age groups, with the exception of 15 years old to 24 years old. Majority of the workers in the Professional category were women at 686.6 thousand persons (55 per cent) as compared to 559.8 thousand persons (45 per cent) of male workers.

In 2012, the Services sector was ahead of other sectors with 7.3 million (57.5 per cent) from the total of work force. There are 13 subsectors under Service sector as shown in **Table 1**, and we can see real estate activities are also one of the subsector under Service Sector [6].

**Table 1.** Subsectors under Service Sector

No.	Subsectors under Service Sector
1	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
2	Transportation and storage
3	Accommodation and food and beverage service activities
4	Information and communication
5	Financial and insurance/takaful activities
6	Real estate activities
7	Professional, scientific and technical activities
8	Administrative and support service activities
9	Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
10	Education
11	Human health and social work activities
12	Arts, entertainment and recreation
13	Other service activities

Source: Department of Statistic (2013) [6]

The age group of 25 years old to 34 years old showed the highest LFPR as compared to other age groups for the period of 2012 and 2011, whereas the lowest LFPR is shown in the age group of 15 years old to 24 years old.

**Table 2.** Number and Percentage Distribution of Female Employed Persons by Real Estate Activities and Age Group, Malaysia, 2012

Age group	Real estate activities ('000)	Real estate activities (%)
15-19	0.3	0.2
20-24	2.8	0.4
25-29	6.5	0.7
30-34	5.1	0.7
35-39	3.8	0.7
40-44	2.9	0.5
45-49	2.4	0.5
50-54	2.0	0.6
55-59	0.2	0.1
60-64	-	-
Total	26.1	0.6

Source: Department of Statistic (2013) [6]

### III. Women Employment Rate

**Table 3** and **Table 4** show the total employment by gender in real estate activities for the year 2011 and year 2012. Overall the data shows that increasing number from year 2011 to 2012, which is from 12,284.4 million to 12,723.2 million. Respectively, the number of male and female employment also increases by 203.7 million and 235 million. It's proved that more involvement in the workforce for women as the number of employment for female is higher than the male. From the statistical data, it shows that real estate sector had been male dominated, as the number of employed in the sector for man is double of the number of woman been employed.

**Table 3.** Total Employment by Gender in Real Estate Activities 2011

Number of Employed ('000)	2011		
	Total	Male	Female
Real estate activities	61.2	38.4	22.8
Total	12,284.4	7,889.8	4,394.7

Source: Department of Statistic (2012) [5]

**Table 4.** Total Employment by Gender in Real Estate Activities 2012

Number of Employed ('000)	2012		
	Total	Male	Female
Real estate activities	69.0	42.9	26.1
Total	12,723.2	8,093.5	4,629.7

Source: Department of Statistic (2013) [6]

The unemployment rate in 2012 decreased to 3.0 per cent as compared to 3.1 per cent in 2011. The decrease in unemployment rate was contributed by the higher increase in the number of the employed persons than the unemployed persons.

**Table 5.** Unemployment Rate and Numbers of Unemployed by Sex, Malaysia, 2011 And 2012.

Sex/Stratum	2011		2012	
	Unemployment rate (%)	Number of unemployed ('000)	Unemployment rate (%)	Number of unemployed ('000)
Male	2.9	239.8	2.9	245.3
Female	3.3	151.6	3.2	151.0
Total	3.1	391.4	3.0	396.3

Source: Department of Statistic (2013) [6]

In 2012, almost seven million persons were outside the labour force. Most of them were females with 4.87 million persons (70.7 per cent) whilst males were at 2.02 million persons (29.3 per cent). Almost half of the total population outside the labour force who did not look for a job were homemaker. This number showed a slight decrease to 3.16 million in 2012 as compared to 3.28 million persons in 2011.

**Table 6.** Number of Persons Outside Labour Force by Reasons For Not Seeking Work, Malaysia, 2011 And 2012

Reasons	Number of person ('000)	
	2011	2012
No Interest	37.6	43.1
Will Further Study	135.5	133.6
Disability	148.1	163.7
Others	191.9	170.1
Retired	403.3	395.6
Still Studying	2,814.4	2,827.8
Housewife	3,278.0	3,163.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,008.8</b>	<b>6,897.4</b>

Source: Department of Statistic (2013) [6]

The connection between education and labour force participation as a means to women's socio-economic standing has been repeatedly emphasised by state policies. For instance, increased access to education has been shown to offer women a wider range of occupational opportunities, as well as to increase their life-chances in pursuit of a more rewarding career path in Malaysia [7]. According to [8], the increase in women labour force participant rate was largely resulted from the educational improvement, as better educated women are more likely than the lesser educated to be in the labour force.

#### IV. Women Involvement in Real Estate Sector

The Board of Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents Malaysia (BOVEA) was set up in 1981 under the purview of the Ministry of Finance, Malaysia. The setup and operation of this Board is governed by the provision of Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents Act 1981. Its primary function is to regulate the Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents practising in Malaysia.

There are 239 women were identified from the BOVEA registered from the year 2006 till year 2013. Among the 239 registered women there are only 197 registered women that in the workforce and which mean registered under a company [9].

Other than the profession that registered and covered by BOVEA, there are still many professions that related to the real estate sector that not counted such facility manager, housing loan mortgage, property consultant, corporate real estate manager, property investor, and sales executive in developer company.

Women involvement in the MRES is not significant compare to the western country. It can be seen that real estate practitioners in the West already opened the doors of these traditionally male-dominated companies to Women in Real Estate (WIRE) and continued to mentor the WIRE who followed in their footsteps. WIRE in the west

was given many rewards in order to acknowledge their contribution and commitment in real estate sector. Please refer **Table 7**.

**Table 7.** Top 15 Women in Commercial Real Estate.

Rank	Top 15 Women In Commercial Real Estate	Profession
1	Laurie Baker	Senior vice president of fund and asset management, Camden Property Trust
2	Jeri Ballard	Vice president, Strategy & Portfolio, Shell Oil Co.
3	Lynn Davis	Principal and CMO, Fidelis Realty Partners
4	Melanie Edmundson	Owner, Phase Engineering Inc
5	Tammy Hendrix	Vice president, operations, Houston region, Brookfield Office Properties
6	Susan Hill	Senior managing director, HFF LP
7	Brandi McDonald	Managing principal, Newmark Knight Frank
8	Edna Meyer-Nelson	President, Richland Investment Inc
9	Lynny Osenbaugh	President, Osenbaugh and Associates
10	Jennifer Raymond	President, JPR Commercial Real Estate Inc.
11	Rhonda Sand	Senior vice president, Western Gulf Territory manger, Regions Bank
12	Cassie Stinson	Attorney at law, Law Office of Cassie B. Stinson
13	Chrissy Wilson	Vice president, leasing, Hines
14	Debra Wilson	Senior vice president, CBRE
15	Michelle Wogan	Senior vice president, Transwestern

Source: Pulsinelli, (2012)[10]

In contrast, from the above table, it can be seen that WIREs in Malaysia are not being acknowledged as much as WIREs in the West as MRES is traditionally male-dominated and WIREs participation and contribution are not seen very significant to the national community at large.

#### V. Key Development Trends in the Real Estate Sector

The general increase in the WIRE participation rate is attributed to several factors. It has been pointed out that rapid expansion of education facilities and the ready and equal access of females to every level of education improved their skilled employability and earning capability [11].

Nowadays, women became more attracted to the labour force or more qualified for a variety of

previously male-dominated jobs as a result of the industrial training. In addition, it could be that society has become more receptive to women working in male-dominated jobs such as real estate sector or construction sector [11].

In year 2010 the number of women graduated is increasing to 965.1 million from the year 2008 which only have 794.9 million [12]. It shows that more and more women received higher education that can lead to the economic growth and also social advancement. Education is regarded as a powerful agent in changing the social and economic status of individuals [13].

**Table 8.** Number of Employed Graduates by Highest Certificate Obtained, 2008-2010.

Year	Number ('000)		
	Male	Female	Total
2008	868.4	794.9	1660.3
2009	1,006.7	905.8	1,912.5
2010	1,065.5	965.1	2,030.6

Source: Department of Statistic (2011) [12]

The main implication for government is that they need to improve the industry's image if they are to attract and encourage more women in the real estate sector.

## VI. Conclusion

Although participation of women in the workforce is not a new phenomenon, a study of trends in women involve in MRES does show that there are changes in the participation. In order to ensure that WIRE participation rates continue to increase and especially in the MRES, there is a need to put in place various policies and programmes that widen the scope of work for women and the most important is to facilitate their entry into the sector.

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