

Economics Entrepreneurship of the Female Business Operators in the East Coast Region: The Profiles Analyses

Norasibah Abdul Jalil*

Faculty of Management and Economics, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris Tanjung Malim, 35900, Perak D. R., Malaysia

Norimah Rambeli @ Ramli

Faculty of Management and Economics, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris Tanjung Malim, 35900, Perak D. R., Malaysia

Norsamsinar Samsudin

Faculty of Management and Economics, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris Tanjung Malim, 35900, Perak D. R., Malaysia

Nurhanani Romli

Faculty of Management and Economics, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris Tanjung Malim, 35900, Perak D. R., Malaysia

Emilda Hashim

Faculty of Management and Economics, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris Tanjung Malim, 35900, Perak D. R., Malaysia

Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to explore the profiles of the female business operators in the East Coast region, Malaysia. Specific attention is given to the Demographic and the Business profiles. 280 respondents from three selected districts namely; Besut, Kuala Terengganu and Pasir Mas had participated in this study. The instrument used for data collection is questionnaire set, and data are analyzed by using descriptive statistics method. The results summary of the Demographic analysis reported that; on average the respondents are within 31-50 years of age, are married, achieving at least a PMR level of education, and having an average of five or less number of children. The results from the Business Profile analysis reported that; by characteristics, majority (70.36 %) of the business are self-owned, fashion & textile and Restaurants & Food Stalls are most popular types of businesses; Parental business background and Inheritance factors appear to have positive association in Kuala Terengganu and Besut; and majority (90.71%) proclaimed to have experienced expansion and are operating at supernormal profit. As a conclusion, to self-own the business and the consistent good performance are considered as the two main contributing factors which keep these female business operators "IN" the market system.

Keywords: Economics; Female entrepreneurs; Demographics; Business profiles.



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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a part of economic activity, in which the foundation lies on the two basic economic units; the household and the firm [McConnel et al. \(2015\)](#). Those who involve in entrepreneurship play the function as the provider or the supplier of goods and services in the system. Like other types of business, entrepreneurship is a platform to generate revenue through economic activities. Statistic shows there is an aggressive female participation in entrepreneurship and this event is no longer new in the public eye. In Malaysia, the significant contribution of the female entrepreneurs to the economy is well recognized. The number of female entrepreneurs in Malaysia has consistently increasing over the past decade. Based on survey from total of 645,136 active SMEs in operation, 127,091 (19.7%) are owned by females ([Hamzah, 2012](#)) compared to 82,911 (16%) as figure in 2005 ([Farah, 2013](#)). Majority (91.7%) of the female-owned enterprises are focusing on services sector followed by manufacturing (6.9%) and the remaining in construction, agriculture or mining industries [Women Entrepreneurs Network Association ([Women Entrepreneurs Network Association WENA, 2012](#))].

1.1. Problem Statement

In Malaysia, when mentioning about females' involvement in entrepreneurship, the active participation of the east coast female entrepreneurs in business has long been recognized.

This is based on their domination (in the small and medium scale), and their ability to last long in the economic activity. These capabilities are considered as special and unusual. In relating to this, according [Heyzer \(1989\)](#) in [Askiah Jamaluddin \(2001\)](#), the female entrepreneurs who involved in this sector are necessarily driven by certain pushing factors. As the sequence of the above explanation, the current study aims to investigate further on the contributing factors, but specifically extracted from the demographic and business profiles analyses.

1.2. Objectives of Study

This study aims to fulfill the following objectives;

1.2.1. To Discover the Respondents' Demographic Profile; Namely By Age Category, Marital Status, Number of Children, Academic Qualification

1.2.2. To Explore the Respondents' Business Profile; Namely By Types of Business Operated, Ownership Status, Family and Inheritance Business Background and Finally Business Performance

2. Literature Review

In the case of Malaysia, the study by Alina (1997) in Amran (2004), has conducted a study on female entrepreneurs and compared the results with the male entrepreneurs in Poland. The findings reported that there is no significant psychological differences between male entrepreneurs and female entrepreneurs. She concludes, a successful entrepreneur is because he/she has the right characteristics, traits and temperament to be there as a successful entrepreneur.

Suaibah *et al.* (2005) and Tee Kee Pei (2000) have conducted studies on motives of female entrepreneurs' involvement in business. The former study found that the main driving factor is to take business as an economic activity that contribute main source of income. Other motives in the list are interest, a side job, and finally less satisfied with the previous job. The findings of the later study found that, there are five factors that encourage female involvement in entrepreneurship. The factors are; knowledge usage, the complementary of skills and talent to get more reward and to become financially independent, the wants to be independent, and also the want to have a career which guaranteed as an interest and a hobby.

(Amran, 2004) go into specific and pays special focus on female entrepreneurs in Kelantan have figured that; interest, the spirit to change the fate of the family, benefits and satisfaction factors are the few main motives for involving in entrepreneurship.

In conclusion, all studies highlighted in the literature are studies on female entrepreneurs. The current study which is an extension of the existing in the literatures; has diverted the scope of discussion into different areas. The current study, which also focuses on female entrepreneurs; pay specific focus on the respondents' demographic and business profiles.

3. Methodology

This research is an exploratory study. This approach is chosen because it has a high degree of reliability. The required study period is short and also saves costs (Uma, 2003). A total of 300 respondents are targeted as the sample size, but a number of 280 people had successfully response to the survey. Out of 280 respondents, 90 people are from Besut and the following 100 and 90 people are from Kuala Trg. and Pasir Mas.

The instrument used for data collection is the questionnaire set. The questionnaire set is that covers questions related to entrepreneur's demographic and business profiles is observable in Part A. The reaction of the respondents for all statements issued is prepared in the Likert Scale form; extending from the Strongly Disagree (1) to Disagree (2), followed by level 3 (Not Sure), and then stage 4 and 5 which represent the Agree and the Strongly Agree levels. To achieve the targeted objectives of the study, the results of the descriptive analysis and frequency average using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 17.0 is used.

Before the actual study is implemented, a pilot test is conducted and the results had documented the Cronbach Alpha values more than 0.70 for all items.

4. Results Reporting

The discussion in this section is divided into two parts; 4.1. The Demographic profile of the respondents and

4.2. The Business profile

4.1. The Demographic Profile

The overall summary of the respondents' profiles is displayed on Table 1.

Looking at the overall results; the respondents participating in this study are all Malay female entrepreneurs. The age distribution between 41-50 years forms the majority (41.43%), followed by age categories of 31-40 years (27.14), and those who are above 50 years of age (18.21%) and finally the least is the age category of below 30 years (12.50%).

Table-1. The Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Items	Besut	K. Trg.	Pasir Mas	OVERALL	
				Freq	%
Age					
< 30 years	17	6	12	35	12.50
31-40years	23	28	25	76	27.14
41-50years	32	36	48	116	41.43
> 51 years	18	28	5	51	18.21
Total	90	100	90	280	100.00
Race					
Malay	90	100	90	280	100.00
Total	90	100	100	280	100.00
Gender					
Male	0	0	0		
Female	90	100	90	280	100.00
Total	90	100	90	280	100.00
Academic Achievement					
Primary School	8	0	2	10	3.57
PMR/SRP	18	36	3	57	20.36
SPM/MCE	19	54	32	105	37.50
STPM	15	4	13	32	11.43
Diploma	8	6	19	33	11.79
Degree (Tertiary)	21	0	18	39	13.93
Others	0	0	3	3	1.07
No formal education	1	0	0	1	0.36
Total	90	100	90	280	100.00
No. of Children					
0 – 5	69	17	49	135	48.21
6 – 10	19	52	30	101	36.07
11 – 15	2	31	11	44	15.71
Total	90	100	90	280	100.00
Marital Status:					
Married	65	92	70	227	81.07
Divorced	17	4	15	36	12.86
Single	6	4	4	14	5.00
Others	2	0	1	3	1.07
Total	90	100	90	280	100

In terms of academic qualifications, more than 57% of the respondents are with PMR and SPM background. Entrepreneurs with tertiary education only covers 13.93% (39 people). In terms of marital status, majority of the respondents (81.07%) are married, while the next 12.86% are either divorced or widowed and the remaining percent is single. The distribution of number of children show a majority (48.21%) is in the range of 0-5 children followed by 36.07% in the category of 6-10 children and the last 15.71% is having between 11-15 children.s

4.2. The Business Profile

The business profile is explained in the following order; The Types of Business Analysis, the Ownership Analysis, The Business Background Analysis, The Motives and Motivation Analyses and finally The Performance Analysis.

4.2.1. The Types of Business Analysis

The following analysis is relating to the types of business operated by the female entrepreneurs participated in this study. The summary is displayed in Table 2.

From the statistics displayed in Table 2, we may infer, in Besut the Restaurants or Food Stalls type of business recorded the highest percent (17.78%) followed by the Food Production industry (15.56%), Fashion & Textiles and Beauty shop (each scores 14.44%) and the remaining percent is for the Other type of businesses. In Kuala Terengganu, the highest mean score (68%) is recorded in the Fashion & Textile type of business, followed by the Crafts Shop (16%) and the next 8% is in the Restaurants or Food Stall types of business. The rest of the business types score less than 10%.

As for Pasir Mas, the Restaurants or Food Stall type of business recorded the highest percent of 26.67%, followed by the convenience store (13.33%), the Fashion and Textile type of business (11.11%) (Note: The Other types of business also documented the same percent (11.11%) with the Fashion and Textile type of business), and the remaining types of business recorded score values of less than 10%.

Table-2. The Types of Business Analysis

Types of Business	Besut		K. Trg.		Pasir Mas		Overall	
	Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%
Restaurants or Food Stalls	16	17.78	8	8	24	26.67	48	17.14
Health Products	2	2.22	0	0	1	1.11	3	1.07
Fashion & Textile	13	14.44	68	68	10	11.11	91	32.5
Flowers & Decorations	5	5.56	0	0	4	4.44	9	3.21
Convenience Store	8	8.89	3	3	12	13.33	23	8.21
Tailor	5	5.56	0	0	7	7.78	12	4.29
Beauty Shop	13	14.44	0	0	5	5.56	18	6.43
Book Stores	5	5.56	0	0	4	4.44	9	3.21
Batik Industry	3	3.33	0	0	3	3.33	6	2.14
Crafts Shop	3	3.33	16	16	3	3.33	22	7.86
Food Industry	14	15.56	5	5	5	5.56	24	8.57
Agriculture & Breed	3	3.33	0	0	2	2.22	5	1.79
Others	0	0	0	0	10	11.11	10	3.57
Total	90	100	100	100	90	100	280	100

Glancing through the overall statistics; the Fashion and Textiles shop appear to be the most popular type of business (32.50%), followed by the Restaurants or Food Stall type of business (17.14%). The rest of the businesses are considered least popular as the score value is less than 10%.

4.2.2. The Ownership Analysis

The summary of the Ownership analysis is displayed in Table 3.

Table-3. The Ownership Analysis

Ownership Status	Besut	K. Trg.	Pasir Mas	OVERALL	
				Qty	%
Sole Ownership	59	86	52	197	70.36
Partnership	23	8	27	58	20.71
Operating the husband's business	8	6	11	25	8.93
Total	90	100	90	280	100.00

Focusing on the overall statistics at the last column, majority 70.36% respondents claimed to self-own the business, followed by a 20.71% under Partnership status, and finally; an 8.93% are operating the husbands' business. The highest score of Self-owning the business provides indication that the female entrepreneurs in East Coast region are independent, progressive, creative, and actively involved in the economic activity.

4.2.3. The Background Analysis

The Background analysis is divided into two sub analyses; Parental Involvement in Business Analysis and the Inheritance Analysis.

4.2.3.1. The Parental Involvement Analysis

The findings of this analysis is displayed in Table 4.

Table-4. Parental Involvement in Business

Districts	Parental Involvement in Business				Total	Overall %
	Yes	%	No	%		
Besut	36	20.81	56	52.34	90	100
Kuala Terengganu	88	50.87	8	7.48	100	100
Pasir Mas	49	28.32	43	40.19	90	100
Overall Total	173	100	107	100	280	100
Overall %	61.79		38.21		100	

This analysis is to identify the statistics of female business entrepreneurs with family or parental involvement in business. By district, 91.49 % in Kuala Terengganu admitted with parental business background followed by Pasir Mas which moderately score 65.4% and Besut the lowest of 37.78%. The bigger score reported in the overall value

(61.79%) for the Yes proclamation provide indication, the business profession amongst the female entrepreneurs in the East Coast region is relatively a hereditary type of economic activity

4.2.3.2. Business Inheritance Analysis

The next analysis is to identify business operation under inheritance cases. The findings of this analysis is summarized in Table 5. Based on the statistics displayed in Table 5 we may infer, 68% in Kuala Terengganu admitted that the business currently owned is inherited from the earlier generation. Besut and Pasir Mas however recorded relatively lower scores of 18% and 10%. Here we may conclude, businesses in Pasir Mas has higher tendency to be inherited type of business while in Besut and Kuala Terengganu are non-inherited types of business.

Table-5. Business is inherited from the earlier generation

Districts	Business is inherited from earlier generation				Total	Overall %
	Yes	%	No	%		
Besut	18	20	72	80	90	100
K Trg	68	68	32	32	100	100
P. Mas	10	11.1	80	88.9	90	100
Overall Total	96	99.1	184	200.9	280	300

4.2.4. Performance Analyses

This section discusses the performance of the business operation. The Performance analysis is evaluated the Business Progress analysis and the Profit analysis.

4.2.4.1. The Business Progress Analysis

The findings of the Business Progress analysis is displayed in Table 6.

Table-6 The Business Progress Analysis

	Stats	Expansion	Decline	Status Quo (Break-even)	TOTAL
Besut	Freq	70	0	20	90
	%	77.8	0	22.2	100
K. Trg.	Freq	100	0	0	100
	%	100	0	0	100
Pasir Mas	Freq.	84	0	6	90
	%	93.33	0	6.67	100
Overall	Freq	170	0	20	190

Based on the statistics displayed in Table 6; all districts recorded highest percent score for the "Expansion" progress status. In specific, Kuala Terengganu score a perfect 100% score, followed by Pasir Mas of 93.33% and finally Besut with 77.7% score. Two districts; Besut and Pasir Mas recorded Break-even status which involve 20 people in Besut, and 6 people in Pasir Mas. No information is recorded for the "Decline" status. The findings of the aggregate (overall) analysis showed the higher percent of 89.5% documented an Expansion status, and the following 10.53% reported a Status-quo status.

Having a majority of near 90% experiencing Expansion status provide us an indication that the businesses are operating at supernormal profit; and the remaining are operating at normal profit level. In relating to this, the Progress analysis is extended to the Profit analysis to get a deeper insight on the overall performance of the businesses. Table 7 summarizes all the findings.

4.2.4.2. The Profit Analysis

The results summary of the Profit analysis is presented in Table 7. The Besut district reported a majority of near 63.33% claimed to have earn an estimated profit level by the amount of below RM10,000 monthly. The following 6.67% is earning at profit category between RM10,000-RM20,000 and also the same percent of respondents earned profit category between RM21000-RM30000. The least percent of 1.11% earned an estimated profit of more than RM30,000 monthly. For the Kuala Terengganu district, ranking from highest to lowest; the highest percent of 47% admitted to have earned an estimated profit between RM21,000-RM30,000 per month, while the other 34% confessed to have received profit level between RM10,000-RM20,000. The remaining 10 and 9 percent of the respondents claim to have received profit level above RM30,000 and below RM10,000.

Table-7. The Profit Analysis

Profit level	Besut		K. Trg		Pasir Mas		Overall	
	Freq	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Break-even	20	22.2	0	0	4	4.44	24	8.57
Below 10K	57	63.33	9	9	9	10.00	75	26.79
10K- 20K	6	6.67	34	34	64	71.11	104	37.14
21K - 30K	6	6.67	47	47	8	8.89	61	21.79
Above 30K	1	1.11	10	10	5	5.56	16	5.71
Total	90	100	100	100	90	100	280	100

For the Pasir Mas district, majority 71.11% are earning between 10,000-20,000 per month while the second highest of 10% are earning below RM10,000. The following 8.89% and 5.56% are earning more than RM21,000 and more than RM30,000 per month. The rest of the scores are relatively low.

The overall findings lead us to conclude that the highest percent score of 37.14% had received an estimated monthly profit between RM21,000-RM30000. The second highest percent of 26.79% are receiving between RM21,000-RM30,000. The third highest percent of 21.79% received

between RM21,000-RM30,000. The lowest percent of 8.57% and 5.79% claimed to have received the extreme lowest (break-even) and the extreme highest estimated monthly profit by value of more than RM30K.

5. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to extensively explore the respondents and the business profiles of the female business operators in the East Coast region, Malaysia. 280 respondents from three selected districts namely; Besut, Kuala Terengganu and Pasir Mas had participated in this study. The results summary of the respondents profile analysis says that; on average the respondents are within 31-50 years of age, with married marital status, achieving at least a PMR or SPM academic qualification, and having an average of five or less number of children.

In the Business Profile analysis, more than 70% of the total respondents are the sole owner of the business while the following more than 20% are the owning the business under partnership title. the rest of the respondents are operating the spouse business. In terms of types of business, the overall findings provide indication that the Fashion and Textiles shop appear to be the most popular type of business (32.50%), followed by the Restaurants or Food Stall type of business (17.14%). The rest of the businesses are considered least popular as the score value is less than 10%.

The results of the Background analysis has recognize a majority of 61.79% of the total respondents admitted to the issue of parental participation in the business line. This finding provide indication, the business profession amongst the majority of the respondents, is relatively a hereditary type of economic activity. The Inheritance analysis provides a reconfirmation on the heredity characteristics of the business conducted by the respondents. the result of the inheritance analysis discover that the highest percent of 68% by the respondents in Kuala Terengganu had admitted that the business currently owned is inherited from the earlier generation. Besut and Pasir Mas however recorded relatively lower scores of 18% and 10%. Here we may conclude, businesses in Pasir Mas has higher tendency to be inherited type of business while in Besut and Kuala Terengganu are non-inherited types of business.

The results of the Performance analysis reported that; near 90% of the total respondents had proclaimed to experience "Expansion" pertaining the progress of the business, while the other 10.5% declare to have experience "Break-even". None had trapped in the "Decline" stage. In terms of profit earned, the overall findings had discover that highest percent score of 37.14% had received an estimated monthly profit between RM21,000-RM30000. The second highest percent of 26.79% are receiving between RM21,000-RM30,000. The third highest percent of 21.79% received between RM21,000-RM30,000. The lowest percent of 8.57% and 5.79% claimed to have received the extreme lowest (break-even) and the extreme highest estimated monthly profit by value of more than RM30K.

With more than 90% composition of self-owned and partnership title, and near 90% had proclaimed to have earned supernormal profit in terms of business performance, here we may conclude female entrepreneurs in East Coast are independent and proactive type of business operators. Their strong will and determination in improving family's economic status not only fulfil the private interest but also helps to enhance the performance of the overall economic activity. The State Government or the Ministry of Entrepreneurship or the Ministry of Women and Children either at state or national levels must take a serious look at the progress and welfare of the female entrepreneurs; and provide them with various types of assistance so that their activity can be further enriched and expand in the future.

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