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Entrepreneurship among The Orang Asli Proto-Malays (A Malaysian

Aboriginal Tribe) In Rompin, Pahang: Are they progressing in entrepreneurship?

Abu Bakar Sedek Bin Abdul Jamak

Nuradli Ridzwan Shah Bin Mohd Dali

Dr. Abu Bakar Bin Mohd Yusof

Syed Zamberi Bin Ahmad

Kolej Pengurusan Bisnes, Universiti Tenaga Nasional,

26700 Bandar Muadzam Shah, Pahang.

Abstract

This is believed to be the first study of entrepreneurship among the aboriginal Orang Asli Proto-Malays tribe in Malaysia. The study aims to uncover: the characteristics of Proto-Malays (Jakun and Semelai tribes) who have diverged from their traditional paths to venture into entrepreneurship; the impact of cultural factors on their progress as entrepreneurs, and the effectiveness of government-organised development projects in improving the Proto-Malays' standard of living and in instilling entrepreneurship among the Jakun and Semelai people of Rompin, Pahang. The findings reveal strong relationships among these issues. The study is concluded with recommendations based on personal interviews with around 100 Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurs, 'Tok Batins' or Village Chiefs, and the government officers and workers (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli or JHEOA), with specific suggestions on how the Proto-Malays are advancing in entrepreneurship, especially in comparison to other Bumiputras (indigenous people) in the country.

Introduction

Orang Asli means “the original people” or “first people”. The *Orang Asli* aboriginal group in West Malaysia is a minority group in the multi-ethnic Malaysian society. *Orang Asli* comprises of three main tribal groups namely Negritos, Proto-Malays and Senoi, all three of which can be further separated into 18 dissimilar cultural-linguistic¹ groups. A case study of the impact of development on indigenous people revealed that the *Orang Asli* is not a homogeneous group. Each of the sub-ethnic group has its own language, culture, economy, religion, social organisation and physical characteristics (Dentan, Endicott, Gomes, & Hooker, 1997). As reported by Collin Nicholas, (1997) the Negrito and Senoi speak a language that suggest a historical link with the indigenous people of Burma, Thailand and Indo-China (Nicholas, 1996).

There are approximately 12 million indigenous people in the world that live in forests and depend on forest products. In Malaysia, the total aboriginal population comprises of 0.9 percent of the total population as reported by the APFT Pilot Report (Bahuchet, 1992). The statistic from Department of Orang Asli Affairs or JHEOA (2000) shows that the total number of aborigines in Malaysia is 116,119 people according to the 1999/2000 classification of village data (JHEOA, 2000). The Senoi aborigines make up the biggest number, at approximately 54 percent of the total aboriginal population. In contrast, the Negritos and Proto Malays consist of only 7 and 39 percent respectively of the aboriginal population. Of that number, approximately 21,895 people are from the Jakun tribe, which comprises of 18.86 percent from the total population of aborigines.

Traditionally, the *Orang Asli* are hunter-gatherers, fishermen and arboriculture cultivators. Of particular interest is that a majority of the *Orang Asli* still depend on the forests for livelihood in varying degrees. Forest dependence has affected many facets of their way of life.

A research done by Narifumi Maeda Tachimoto in 1965 found that the economic activities of the Jakuns were concentrated around locating and seeking resources from the forest. The trading of forest and agricultural products in the market has resulted in a wider use of money. Subsequently, income generation grew in importance over traditional subsistence farming. Collecting and growing subsistence material require considerable time and patience, whereas the forest harvests can yield immediate cash benefits, and these harvests are easily found and have not been exhausted as are the subsistence products (Tachimoto, 2001).

Compared to the Jakun, the Semelai economic activities are mostly derived from the lake "Tasek Bera". While there are outsiders utilizing the lake for their own benefit, economic activities in the lake are still centred around the tradition ways of the Semelai. The lake provides them with animals such as mouse deer, wild boar, porcupine, monitor lizards, wild fowl and turtles. Some of the Semelai collect rattan, bamboo, tree resin and some of them clear the land for vegetables and rubber estate (Khong Tuck Khoon, 2000).

Government efforts² in developing the Orang Asli, through the provision of basic facilities, regroupment and resettlement, have also gradually transformed the Orang Asli population. In recent years, these aborigines have improved their way of life, and gained exposure to modern living through the rapid development of Malaysia.

The Proto Malays is one of the three main groups of Orang Asli and is the second largest large ethnic group of Orang Asli. The Proto Malays consists of 39.5 percent from the total population of Orang Asli in 2001 (JHEOA,2001). The Proto Malays was the latest aboriginal tribe that migrated to Malaysia after the Negrito and Senoi. The Proto Malays concentrated in Negeri Sembilan, Selangor, Johor and Pahang. Their cultures have some common with the

¹ Most of them speak Mon –Kmer Language- showing an ancient connection with Mainland Southeast Asia to the north.

² Department of Aborigine Affairs (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli or JHEOA)– Under the Ministry of Rural Development. This Department was created in 1954 under British mandate. Its power and functions were defined by the Aboriginal People Ordinance of 1954, published in 1961.

Malay cultures. The 6 sub-ethnic groups in Proto Malays are Temuan, Semelai, Jakun, Orang Kanaq, Orang Kuala and Orang Seletar. In this study, our respondent are collected from two sub-ethnic groups which are the Semelai and Jakun since they reside in Rompin, Pahang while the other sub-ethnic groups reside scattered in Johor, Melaka and Negeri Sembilan.

The Jakun

The Jakuns are the largest of the Proto Malays tribes of Peninsular Malaysia, residing in the states of Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johore and Pahang with a large concentration in Pahang. According to Iskandar Carey, even though Jakun is a tribe, the people do not consider themselves as a tribe as the various sub-groups show great differences in their way of life. The Jakuns themselves lack that sense of belonging to the tribe, and prefer instead to identify themselves with groups of villages that cluster around their areas (Carey, 1976). Jakun really consists of two words, “Jah Kun”. Jah means people and Kun means wild or backward. Other names for Jakun are Orang Hulu or the people who live upstream, Orang Darat, Orang Dusun, and finally, Orang Dalam. Jakuns also have their own language, which is different from the Malays. But today, Jakuns can speak Malay very fluently, although they tend to use the Jakun language when speaking among themselves.

The Semelai

The Semelai is the smallest group of the Proto Malays tribes of Peninsular Malaysia, mostly residing at Tasek Bera, Sungai Bera, Sungai Teriang, Paya Besar and Paya Badak in the centre of Pahang and some of them reside at Sungai Lui, Sungai Serting and Ulu Muar near the border of Pahang and Negeri Sembilan (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 2002). Total approximate number of Semelai people is 5,026 according to Orang Asli Ethnic Groups in Malaysia³ for the year 2000 by the Department of Aborigines. According to a study, "The Semelai speak Semelai"⁴,

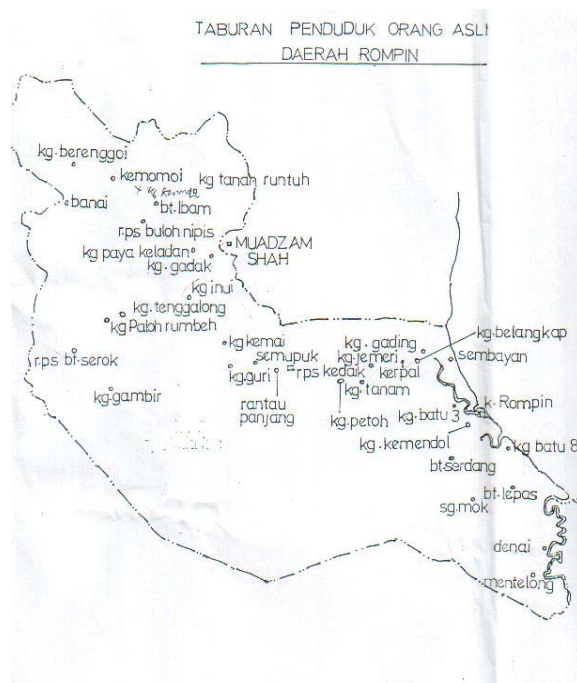
³ See Appendix I

⁴ A language belonging to the Mon Khmer Family

which is claimed to be the most ancient language in mainland Southeast Asia" (Gianno, 2002).

The Semelai people focussed their lives around the lake, Tasek Bera. Gianno (2002) also mentioned that the Semelai people also like to be called "Semaq Tasik" or in other word the "lake people" (Gianno, 2002). From an interview with the SABOT⁵ representatives, (2002) it was found out that, "the Semelai people in Tasek Bera believes that there are giant cobras which inhabited the lake of Tasek Bera and some places at the Tasek Bera is prohibited to go and they offer offerings to the spirits so that they will not be cursed"

⁶Location of Aboriginal Settlements in Rompin, Pahang.



The Economics Activities of the Proto Malays.

A pilot study in 1998 entitled "*Pahang Aborigines' Involvement in Businesses*", shows that the Orang Asli are gradually discarding their primitive economic activities in favour of retailing. According to the study, out of 34 samples, 97 percent of Orang Asli entrepreneurs are in the small retailers⁷ industry, with a start-up capital of less than RM1,000.00 (Man, 1998).

However, a majority of the people still depends on

the forest in order to survive, but this is gradually changing as awareness of the world outside and the new demands of the economy grows. From the interviews conducted, we have identified Jakuns and Semelai who have entered into diverse business areas such transportation,

⁵ Semelai Association for Boat and Tourism - fully owned and managed by the Semelai; as a community effort to ensure that tourism at Tasek Bera will benefit the Semelai and that income will be shared more equally in the community.

⁶ Map contributed by En Asri Bin Yusof (Assistant Social Development Officer of Department of Orang Asli Affairs in Rompin)

tourism, small auto workshops, restaurants, logging and manufacturing, in response to the changes brought about by the new millennium.

The middlemen that involved businesses with the Jakuns, especially, are Chinese, and their frequent interaction with the Orang Asli sometimes lead to intermarriage (Abdul Jamak, Mohd Dali, Ahmad, & Yusuf, 2002).

The characteristic traits of the Proto Malays indigenous people in Malaysia.

The major characteristic which is found in the Jakun and Semelai aborigines are that they are self-reliant. Studies confirm this self-reliance, and dislike of being controlled by others (Tachimoto, 2001, Man, 1998). This self-reliance is what leads the Jakuns and Semelai not rely on subsistence agricultural products but instead generate cash from the harvests of the forests. Achom Luji, in a Forum entitled "*Aborigines Towards Vision 2020. We Are Not Anti Development*", mentions that the aborigines should be free from developing an over-dependence on outside assistance, whether it be from the government or other parties (Ibrahim, 1996). Majid Suhut, the President of Persatuan Orang Asli Semenanjung Malaysia (POASM)⁸ or the Society of Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia, mentions that the involvement of Orang Asli in the Department of Orang Asli Affairs is very minimal, and this impedes government efforts to develop the Orang Asli (John & Sabaratnam, 2002).

The Proto Malays cultures in Rompin.

In a research of "Entrepreneurship among the Orang Asli Jakun (2002)"⁷ revealed that the Proto Malays people have no religion but only a small portion were converted to Muslim and a few others converted to Chinese traditions due to intermarriages. Almost all of them are

⁷ Small Scale Sundry Shops.

⁸ The Orang Asli Association of Peninsular Malaysia was established in 1980. Its functions are to promote Orang Asli interests in matters of education, regroupment schemes, land rights, marriage registration, representation by an Orang Asli in the Senate, and Orang Asli identity.

*animists*⁹. Their lives are influenced by nature-based superstitions, such as the hills, rivers, stones, and caves. They believe good and evil spirits rule the Proto Malays world and they believe that their villages will be in catastrophe if they do not follow, or if they go against, their traditional customs or what the Malays call "*pantang larang*" (Abdul Jamak, Mohd Dali, Ahmad, & Yusuf, 2002).

The implementation and progress of government serial development programmes for the Proto Malays.

The Malaysian government, through its Department of Orang Asli Affairs, has implemented several development programmes in line with its vision of an Orang Asli community that enjoys the same level of socio-economic well-being as enjoyed by other communities, with strengthened ethical values and cultural identity. The programmes aim to achieve the following: -

- To reduce, and subsequently eliminate, poverty among the Orang Asli;
- To improve the quality of life of the Orang Asli;
- To improve the health of the Orang Asli community;
- To cultivate self-confidence, self-reliance and good ethics;
- To protect and promote the art and culture of the Orang Asli;
- To increase their participation in industry and commerce [12].

One of the plans being implemented is the Regroupment Resettlement Plan (RPS¹⁰) which was started since 1976 and implemented according to phases, budget and implementation abilities. The objective of this program is to increase the number of aboriginal settlements in Malaysia. According to OBA, approximately 17 Regroupment Resettlement Plan involving

⁹ believe that non-human objects have spirits

¹⁰ RPS stands for an acronym of Rancangan Pengumpulan Semula.

14,253 people has taken place, with the plan involving administration centers, infrastructural facilities and *economic project developments*¹¹ (OBA, 2002).

The Regroupment Resettlement Plan, however, did not achieve its targets as its failed to achieve all of its objectives mainly due to the slow speed of its implementation. There are two reasons for the slow implementation of the Regroupment Resettlement Plan, covering security and social welfare factors, as well as cost and suitable land factors (OBA, 2002). In order to rectify problems that arises from the Regroupment Settlement Plan, the government introduced a new plan called "Penyusunan Semula Kampung". In this plan, the Orang Asli will be able to get their land titles for the land¹² given in the economic development programs (Abdul Jamak, Mohd Dali, Ahmad, & Yusuf, 2002). Focusing only on Rompin, we managed to interview Naziah Othman (JHEOA District Officer) and Asri Bin Yusof (JHEOA Assistant Social Development Officer) of the Department of Orang Asli Affairs to gather information on all the implementation programmes which have taken place or are being implemented. The findings could be summarised in the table below: -

Table 1: The implementation of Aborigines Development Programmes in Rompin, Pahang.

Year	Implementation of Aborigines Development Programmes	Objectives of Programme	Programme Effectiveness
1986	Regroupment Settlement Plan Kedaik. Approximately 1746 ha. 644 ha being utilised. Land economic development done by FELCRA.	Regroup the Aborigines into one area.	An increase in the income of the Orang Asli especially from the oil palm projects.
1986	Regroupment Settlement Plan Bukit Serok. Approximately 644.01ha. 179.23ha being utilised. Land economic development done by FELCRA.	Regroup the Aborigines into one area.	An increase in the income of the Orang Asli especially from the oil palm projects.
1980s	PPRT (Program Perumahan Rakyat Termiskin)	To provide housing settlements to the Orang Asli and the impoverished to eradicate poverty	Many Jakuns received housing through this scheme.
1980s	PPRT (ASB ¹³) in term of shares.	To increase awareness and to promote investment in Orang Asli	Get annual income from investment and open their minds on the importance of investment.

¹¹ Agricultural subsistence products

¹² According to En Asri Bin Yusof (Assistant Social Development Officer of Department of Orang Asli Affairs in Rompin) the land given will not exceed 6 acres of economic lots and 1/4 acre house lot.

¹³ ASB stands for Amanah Saham Bumiputra

Entrepreneurship Among Orang Asli 9

1997	PSK Tenggalung. Approximately 127 ha are utilised for 52 families. 36 units are PPRT houses. Land economic development done by RISDA.	To get full land title.	The participants had already obtained commercial income from the oil palm economic land.
1999	PSKBuluh Nipis. Approximately 600ha has been utilised from a total of 1281.71 ha. Land economic development done by RISDA.	To get full land titles.	The participants did not receive the commercial income from the oil palm economic land other than salary.
2000	PSK Jemeru. Approximately 208 ha being utilised for 94 families. 16 units are PPRT houses. Land economic development done by RISDA.	To get full land titles.	The participants did not receive the commercial income from the oil palm economic land other than salary.

From the RPS and PSK plans, we could see that physical infrastructures are vigorously erected such as schools, hostels, village clinics, fields, halls, mosques, and entrepreneur business shop lots. Despite the physical development as shown in the above table, the Department of Orang Asli Affairs also attempt to develop the spirit and mind of the Orang Asli through seminars, courses and training programmes. In the 70's, the focus was more towards attitude development of the Orang Asli in education, health, economy and social interaction aspects. The new millennium demands a new direction for the Orang Asli, and the Department of Orang Asli Affairs has rolled out a new programme, entitled "Pembukaan Minda" or Mind Exposure.

Research objectives

1. To analyse the demographic profiles of pure¹⁵, mixed-blood¹⁶ Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurs in Rompin, Pahang.
2. To determine the relationship between entrepreneurial characteristics and cultural factors among the Proto Malays.
3. To assess the impact of demographic profiles on entrepreneurial characteristics and cultural factors that may have affected business progress.
4. To establish ranking on the Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurial characteristics and cultural factors.

5. To evaluate the levels of dependency and improvements made by the government's development projects in terms of the Proto-Malays' standard of living and entrepreneurial capabilities.

The importance of this Proto-Malays entrepreneurial research.

This research may be used as a stepping stone towards more enriching information on the aboriginal people, information that can help relevant bodies take positive steps to develop the aboriginals' entrepreneurial capabilities. Hence, the purpose of this research is to determine the level of the Proto-Malays' entrepreneurial capabilities, and their depth of interest in pursuing their entrepreneurial aspirations, in line with Vision 2020.

Research method

In this study, achievement and motivation are measured against four different dimensions, which are: demographic profiles, characteristic traits, cultural impact, and government assistance.

The survey contains questions to get the Proto-Malays entrepreneurs' point of views on certain issues. The information was obtained using structured questionnaires and personal interviews by the authors.

With the assistance¹⁴ of an aboriginal guide, the authors went to see the Proto-Malays entrepreneurs at their settlements or business premises throughout the Rompin District of Pahang for a period of 15 days and managed to meet with 91 respondents. It is estimated about seventy per cent of the *Orang Asli kampungs* or settlements in Rompin were visited by the authors.

As this is a descriptive study, there are obviously many limitations. The main one is that at the time of the authors' visit some respondents are not available at their homes or business

¹⁴ Also acted as an interpreter and introducer.

premises. Some *kampungs* that had not been visited were too deeply isolated that they could only be reached by river or through thick forests without proper roads.

Results

Analysis of Surveys

The questionnaires consist of four major sections that are divided into sections A, B, C, and D. The first section is the demographic profile followed by the entrepreneurial characteristics section, cultural factors section and lastly the government assistance section. With the exception of demographic profile, all sections utilise a 5-point likert scale for measurement.

The questionnaires' content and design were determined by consulting Tok Batin, an official from the Department of Orang Asli Affairs, and several other influential persons to validate the suitability of the questions within the context of the aboriginal environments.

The data were analysed using SPSS 10.0. Among the techniques used are data descriptives, variance analysis, regression, cross tabulation and correlations analysis.

A. Demographic profiles of pure and mixed-blood Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurs.

The general demographic profiles of both Jakun entrepreneurs with that of Semelai are summarised into eight different areas: gender, income, number of working days per month, educational background, religion, registration of business, preferred way of life and involvement in type of business.

Statistically, all eight areas of their profiles are in Appendix 1. As can be summarised from appendix 1a and 1b, both types of Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurs belong to the same average age category of 41-50 years old, with male entrepreneurs outnumbering female entrepreneurs. In appendix 1c the findings show that 73 per cent of pure Jakuns and 90 per cent of Semelai have a monthly income of less than RM 1000.00, with a median income of between

RM500 – RM1000, but the mixed-blood Jakuns enjoy a better median income of between RM1000 – RM2000 per month.

Appendix 1g shows that more than 90 per cent of respondents of both Jakuns and Semelais worked at their business between 25 – 30 days monthly.

Appendix 1h shows that most respondents have a low educational background with the majority (73 per cent of the respondents) reaching only primary 6 education or below and three mixed Jakun respondents who have attained higher levels of tertiary education. The majority (90 percent) of the Proto Malays are practising their own ancestors' beliefs - *animism* -and only a few of them are Muslim and Chinese.

Appendix 1e indicates 25 respondents (55 per cent) of pure Jakun heritage have registered their business licenses, whereas 14 respondents (70 per cent) of Semelais and almost all (92 per cent) mixed-blood Jakuns have registered their business.

In appendix 1f, about 70 per cent of all respondents preferred doing business and regard being entrepreneurs as a preferred way of life as compared to being farmers, hunters, fishermen or forest harvesters. Only one Jakun entrepreneur would prefer to be a hunter, and two stated that they would rather source for forest-related products as preferable way of livelihood.

Appendix 1i compares the type of businesses that the respondents are involved in. The majority of them, about 56 per cent (or 51 out of 91) are involved in retailing (sundry shops) at their own village or settlement. As many as 15 out of 71 respondents collect and sell agricultural and forest-related products as their sources of income.

B. Relationship between entrepreneurial characteristics and cultural factors with type of Proto Malays.

Tables 2 and 3 show the results of regression analysis, where heritage (pure blood or mixed blood Jakun and Semelai) is the dependent variable. The ANOVA test of regression

analysis between the dependent variable and the independent variables of entrepreneurial characteristics and cultural factors.

Table 3 shows that the type of aborigine (Proto Malays) has no significant value at 0.231 ($p > 0.05$ which is larger than standard deviation of 0.05) with the variables of entrepreneurial characteristics. However in Table 2, the cultural factors variable (0.047) is highly significant in relation to type of Proto Malays. As can be seen that the variables of “The business is not against my beliefs (0.046)”, “My village people did not prevent me from doing business (0.040)” and “Should there be bad signage/symptoms, I might stop doing business” (0.039) have strong relationship with the type of Proto Malays.

Table 2: ANOVA for Cultural factors with type of aborigine

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	11.52	10	1.15	1.98	0.047*
Residual	46.61	80	0.58		
Total	58.13	90			
Dependent Variable: Type of aborigine					

Variables of Some Cultural Factors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	0.345	0.628		0.548	0.585
The business is not against my culture/beliefs	-0.423	0.208	-0.349	-2.031	0.046
My village people did not prevent me from doing business	0.416	0.199	0.353	2.091	0.040
My village people always encourage me to do business	0.072	0.061	0.125	1.190	0.237
I must take leave.to attend any society activities or festivities	0.001	0.052	0.003	0.029	0.977
If my people ask me to stop doing business, I will not listen to them and will continue with my business	0.032	0.069	0.050	0.471	0.639
The business does not stop me from pursuing my hobby/interest.	0.001	0.067	0.002	0.020	0.984
I like to have my wife and children assist me in the business	-0.019	0.098	-0.020	-0.191	0.849
I believe there are days when doing business is prohibited	0.013	0.119	0.012	0.107	0.915
I believe there are places where doing business is prohibited	0.009	0.094	0.014	0.091	0.928
Should there be bad signage/symptoms, I might stop doing business.	0.246	0.117	0.333	2.100	0.039
Dependent Variable: Type of aborigine					

Table 3: ANOVA for Entrepreneurial Characteristics with type of aborigine

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.43	5	0.887	1.404	0.231

Residual	53.70	85	0.632		
Total	58.13	90			

C. Impact of demographic variables on the entrepreneurial characteristics and cultural factors of Jakun people.

The Spearman's rho (rs) Correlation Test between demographic profile and entrepreneurial characteristics are laid out in Table 4 and summarised as follows: -

- i) There are positive and strong relationships (at the 0.01 level) between the variables of:
 - a. Income group and the characteristic "Try to improve and be more successful" (-0.334**).
 - b. Age group and "Try to improve and be more successful" (0.280**)
 - c. Level of education and the characteristic "What I have achieved is good enough and there's no need for improvement" (0.360**)

Thus, the income level, age group and level of education of the Proto Malays have the greatest impact on the need for successful achievement.

- ii) There are positive but weak relationships (at the 0.05 level) between the variables of: -
 - a) Age group and the characteristic "My achievement is good enough and there is no need for improvement" (-0.230*).
 - b) Level of education and the attribute "Try to improve and be more successful" (-0.239*).
 - c) Income group and the characteristic "What I have achieved is good enough and there's no need for improvement" (0.248*).

Thus, the age group, level of education and their income have a positive impact in determining the personal characteristics of entrepreneurs.

The relationship between demographic factors and cultural aspects are laid out in table 5, and summarised as follows: -

- i) There are positive and strong relationships (at the 0.01 level) between the variables of:
 - a) Gender and "The business will not stop me from my interest" (0.272**).

- b) Age group and “My village people always encourage me to do business”(-0.261**).
- c) Type of aborigine and “Should there be bad signage, I might just stop doing business” (0.370**).

Similarly, gender has demonstrated significant correlation with their interest or hobbies and also the type of aborigine has strong impact on beliefs or prohibition (or pantang larang).

- ii) There are positive but weak relationships (at the 0.05 level) between the variables of:
- a) Type of aborigine and “I believe there are places where doing business is prohibited” (0.264*).
- b) Type of business and The business will not refrain me from my interest (0.255*).

Table 4: Correlations among Demographic factors and Entrepreneurial Characteristics.

Spearman's rho		Gender	Age group	Type of aborigines	Income group	Education background	Your type of business
Nothing has changed since I started my own business	Correlation Coefficient	-0.155	0.150	0.051	0.202	0.189	-0.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.142	0.157	0.630	0.055	0.073	0.572
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
I try to improve and be more successful	Correlation Coefficient	-0.022	0.280**	0.096	-0.334**	-0.239*	0.088
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.839	0.007	0.364	0.001	0.022	0.408
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
The business will not stop me from pursuing my own interests	Correlation Coefficient	0.351**	-0.163	-0.186	0.082	0.095	0.365**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.123	0.078	0.440	0.368	0.000
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
What I have achieved is good enough and there is no need for improvement	Correlation Coefficient	0.069	-0.230*	-0.213*	0.248*	0.360**	-0.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.513	0.028	0.042	0.018	0.000	0.902
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
I always discuss business matters with family members	Correlation Coefficient	0.115	0.115	0.134	-0.059	-0.143	0.032
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.280	0.278	0.206	0.580	0.177	0.761
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
I don't care about the competition. I just concentrate on my own business	Correlation Coefficient	0.073	-0.026	0.014	0.073	0.152	0.064
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.492	0.805	0.892	0.493	0.150	0.546
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5: Correlations among Demographic Profile and Cultural Factors

Spearman's rho		Gender	Age group	Type of aborigine	Income	Education background	Type of business
The business is not against my culture/beliefs	Correlation Coefficient	0.080	0.014	-0.173	-0.073	-0.007	0.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.449	0.892	0.101	0.493	0.945	0.706
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
My village people do not stop/prevent me from being an entrepreneur	Correlation Coefficient	-0.006	0.044	0.037	-0.163	-0.004	0.006
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.955	0.681	0.728	0.122	0.972	0.958
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
My village people always encourage me to do business	Correlation Coefficient	0.175	-0.261**	0.110	0.129	-0.001	0.123
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.097	0.013	0.299	0.223	0.993	0.245
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
I must take leave from my business to attend social activities	Correlation Coefficient	-0.045	0.041	0.058	-0.030	0.154	-0.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.675	0.700	0.584	0.781	0.144	0.444

	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
Should my village people ask me to stop doing business, I will not do so	Correlation Coefficient	-0.022	-0.017	0.096	0.133	0.248*	0.024
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.839	0.871	0.366	0.208	0.018	0.820
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
The business will not stop me from pursuing my own interests	Correlation Coefficient	0.272**	-0.053	0.000	0.061	0.132	0.255*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.009	0.617	0.999	0.564	0.214	0.015
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
I like to have my wife and children assist me in doing business	Correlation Coefficient	-0.040	0.026	0.014	0.071	0.097	0.102
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.709	0.804	0.893	0.503	0.363	0.334
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
I believe there are days when doing business is prohibited	Correlation Coefficient	-0.148	-0.051	0.154	0.071	0.162	0.009
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.161	0.631	0.146	0.504	0.125	0.935
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
I believe there are places where doing business is prohibited	Correlation Coefficient	0.107	-0.046	0.264*	-0.087	-0.237*	0.010
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.313	0.662	0.012	0.413	0.023	0.922
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91
Should there be bad signage/symptoms, I might just stop doing business.	Correlation Coefficient	0.119	-0.012	0.370**	0.016	-0.101	0.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.262	0.912	0.000	0.883	0.341	0.834
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

D. Ranking on the aspects of Proto Malays Entrepreneurial Characteristics and Cultural Factors.

In tables 6 and 7, ranking was analysed using descriptive statistics for the mean and standard deviation. The interpretation for the mean scores of aspects of characteristics and cultural factors is based on the table below:-

<u>Mean score</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly agree
1.81 – 2.60	Agree
2.61 – 3.40	Maybe agree/disagree
3.41 – 4.20	Disagree
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly disagree

From table 6, Proto Malays entrepreneurs are more inclined to “...try to improve and be more successful” (mean score of 1.97) rather than have the attitude that “What I have achieved is good enough and there is no need for improvement” (mean score of 3.06). However, there is no focus on any variable as the standard deviation scores for all are more than one.

From table 7, it can be seen that the Proto Malays are no longer believers of *Pantang-Larang* (the Malay phrase for prohibition), “prohibited days” (mean score of 4.79), “prohibited places” (4.31) and “bad symptoms or signs” (4.31) in doing business. Again, however, the standard deviation scores of more than one illustrate lack of focus.

To the entrepreneurs, doing business is not a barrier to their interests or way of life, and they would still continue being entrepreneurs even if their community or village peers don’t give sanction. The respondents strongly feel that the wife and children should be helping them in the business.

Table 6:

Entrepreneurial characteristics

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Nothing has changed since I started my own business	3.02	1.41
I try to improve and be more successful	1.97	1.00
The business does not refrain me from farming/hunting/etc	1.95	1.18
What I have achieved is good enough and there is no need for improvement	3.26	1.36
The business will not stop me from pursuing my own interests	3.97	1.36
I don't care about the competition. I just concentrate on my own business	2.13	1.19

Table 7:

Cultural factors

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The business is not against my culture/beliefs	1.22	0.66
My village people do not stop/prevent me from being an entrepreneur	1.19	0.68
My village people always encourage me to do business	2.20	1.38
I must take leave from my business to attend social activities	3.36	1.59
Should my village people ask me to stop doing business, I will not do so	1.97	1.24
The business will not stop me from pursuing my own interests	1.96	1.25
I like to have my wife and children assist me in doing business	1.34	0.86
I believe there are days when doing business is prohibited	4.79	0.75
I believe there are places where doing business is prohibited	4.31	1.28
Should there be bad signage/symptoms, I might just stop doing business.	4.47	1.09

E. The level of dependency and positive impact of the government’s development projects on the Proto Malays’ standard of living and in instilling entrepreneurial capabilities.

From table 8, it can be seen that the government’s development projects have improved the income level of the Proto Malays (mean score of 1.81). Proto Malays entrepreneurs are still

hoping that the government may continue helping them to improve their standard of living (mean score of 1.49). Meanwhile, less favourable responses are given to the statement “The government always gives attention and assistance” calculate to a mean score of 3.32. For “I always refer to government officials when I have any problems with government assistance” (mean score of 3.27). Proto Malays entrepreneurs seemed to be less dependent on their chief villagers or Tok Batin (4.05).

Table 9 shows that Proto Malays entrepreneurs would like to apply for assistance from the government (mean score 3.72) and also wish to go for training and improve their skills if offered by the government (3.31).

Table 8:

Yes, I received Govt. assistance (37 respondents)		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
The govt scheme helped to increase my income	1.81	1.00
I hope the scheme may continue to help raise my income.	1.49	0.84
I still need govt assistance to increase my income and skills.	1.92	0.89
The govt always gives attention and assistance.	3.32	1.33
I refer to Tok Batin for any problems concerning government assistance	4.05	1.25
I refer to government officials for any problems concerning government assistance	3.27	1.69

Table 9:

No, I did not receive any assistance (54 respondents)		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
I don't know of any such scheme or programmes run by the govt.	3.52	1.46
I don't like to apply for government assistance	3.72	1.37
I do not wish to join any skill/training courses offered by the govt	3.31	1.49
The govt always encourage me to improve my livelihood	3.65	1.53
The govt always encourage me to attend entrepreneurial training programmes	3.76	1.33

Discussions

1. Characteristics of Proto Malays entrepreneurs.

In general, Jakun and Semelai (Proto Malays) entrepreneurs are hardworking people who are willing to spend more time working, between 25 to 30 days every month. There are only eight of them working less than 25 days monthly, and even this is due to their nature of business, such as contract work, and seasonal searching of forest-related products.

Mixed-blood Jakun entrepreneurs have achieved more than their pure-blood brethren and Semelai, based on their higher median income of RM1,000 – RM2,000, and their high percentage (92%) of business registration.

Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurs are interested in doing small-scale retail business (56 per cent of the total respondents), followed by agriculture and forest-related products (17 per cent), contract works, small manufacturing of forest-related products, food stalls, tailoring, vehicle workshops, and fish pond rearing.

The majority (74 per cent) have only basic (Primary 6 and below) education, and this contributed to their limited capabilities and lack of entrepreneurial drive.

2 The Relationship between entrepreneurial characteristics, cultural factors and the type of Proto Malays entrepreneurs.

There is no relationship between the entrepreneurial characteristics and the type of Proto Malays entrepreneurs. Cultural factors bear strong links with the type of Proto Malays entrepreneurs. Based on the significant value of 0.047 arrived at by the ANOVA test in regression analysis, pure and mixed Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurs show similarities in their cultural practices despite the different ethnic backgrounds. After the second and third generations, mixed blood Jakuns don't differ much from the pure-bloods and Semelai in terms of cultural practices, beliefs and way of life, as the effects of ethnic differences diminish. There are two variables of cultural factor which have strong relationships with pure and mixed Jakuns and Semelai, and they are the beliefs that "There are places where doing business is prohibited" and "Should there be bad signage/symptoms, I might just stop doing business". These two variables have close relationships with the type of Proto Malays, because they share the same strong beliefs in these *pantang-larang* (prohibition) carried down from their ancestors.

3. *Impact of demographic profiles on entrepreneurial characteristics and cultural factors.*

It is obvious that educational background and income group plays an important role in determining the Proto Malays' entrepreneurial characteristics as reflected in the variables "Nothing has changed since I started my own business", "I try to improve and be more successful", "What I have achieved is good enough and there is no need for improvement", and "I don't care about the competition. I just concentrate on my own business", which showed positive relationships in the Spearman's Correlation Test. As can be seen from appendix 1, the majority (74 per cent) of Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurs were only educated up to Primary 6 or below, and the lack of educational exposure has affected their motivation and attitude towards business.

4. *Ranking aspects of Jakun entrepreneurial characteristics and cultural factors.*

From the mean scores of their cultural factors or beliefs, the new generation of Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurs no longer have unnatural or superstitious beliefs that may influence their business development.

The new generation of Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurs show desire for success, and are not content to do business just to fulfil their basic requirements.

5. *Level of dependency and improvements made by the government's development projects.*

The 37 of the 91 respondents who received assistance from the government agreed that the projects have improved their skills and standard of living. The respondents are still depending on the government help and assistance in improving their livelihood and standard of living. The majority (54 respondents) of Proto Malays who did not receive any government assistance willing to participate in any training or entrepreneurial development programme organised by the government.

Conclusions

The research findings provide important new information on the characteristics and cultural development of Orang Asli Proto Malays entrepreneurs to parties who are concerned about their progress.

The findings have insightful implications for government administrators especially those who are attached to institutions that help the government formulate plans and policies to help the Orang Asli.

Significant points that can be drawn from the study are: -

The emergence of mixed-blood Jakun entrepreneurs who are more dynamic than the pure-blood Jakuns and Semelais in terms of entrepreneurial characteristics and interest. Although, mixed and pure Jakuns and Semelais share the same cultural and ethnic beliefs, the mixed blood Jakuns enjoy a better standard of living through their better understanding of business matters. In fact, some mixed Jakuns have improved largely due to inheritance, and taking over the family business. The achievement of mixed Jakuns in business is better than the achievement of the pure Jakuns and Semelais, as can be seen from their higher median income of between RM1,000 – RM2,000, and also from their higher rates of business registrations (24 out of 26 of them own registered businesses) . The mixed-blood Jakuns are more serious about pursuing an entrepreneurial track.

Another interesting finding is that even though mixed-blood Jakuns constitute only a small portion of the Orang Asli population, they have achieved more success in the business sense. However, these mixed-bloods are not expanding or diversifying into other areas or territories, even though these places may offer more and better business opportunities. This could be due to the fact that when their Chinese ancestors married Jakuns, they did not bring their family businesses outside of the settlement's perimeters, preferring instead to remain localised to

Orang Asli environments. The inter-marriages often occurred for “business practical” reasons to the Chinese, as like obtaining the rights to cultivate agricultural land or obtaining animal trading licenses. The lower cost of marriage to Orang Aslis also made inter-marriage more appealing.

Approximately 90 percent of Orang Asli entrepreneurs have an income less than RM2,000.00 per month, 75 per cent of these entrepreneurs earn less than RM1,000 per month, while 40% of them live on less than RM500.00 per month. One of the factors which contributes to the low income problem is the small population of a *kampung* (village). According to the data on population size (please refer to Appendix 2) of the Orang Asli settlement area for the Rompin district (December 2001), the Orang Asli population of a *kampung* is so small in number that the biggest population size is 1,328 people in RPS Bukit Serok and 1,158 in RPS Kedaik.

From the survey conducted we have identified that 56 percent of Orang Asli entrepreneurs venture into the small scale retail sector. The businesses conducted by Orang Asli entrepreneurs are very small in scale and relatively uneconomic to be sustained in the long run. Some of the retailers did not survive because of uncollected debt payments from the customers. This is because most of the Orang Asli retailers open the business in the settlement area due to social obligation rather than profit maximisation. Furthermore, with the tiny population size, the retailers have to compete with each other just to get a sliver of the small market. For example, there are 4 small shops in RPS Buluh Nipis, and a population of only 81 families (345 people).

The Orang Aslis prefer to venture into small-scale retail businesses (sundry shops), doing odd jobs or taking contract works within their settlement’s perimeter. They have the ambition and desire to move into bigger businesses but their business knowledge is insufficient and more importantly, they are not prepared to take the risk to realise their dreams of becoming successful entrepreneurs.

Our study strongly suggests that although Proto Malays entrepreneurs are willing to spend more time working, they still failed to progress further in business. The extra time does not translate to higher income, mainly due to lack of guidance in expanding and diversifying into other businesses or territories.

The Proto Malays have transformed themselves, being less dependent on forest-related products for their livelihood, and replacing this with their own businesses or doing contract work or odd jobs. The government development projects have introduced the Proto Malays to modern life (see appendix 1f). However, government initiatives to modernise the Proto Malays' lives have been implemented too rapidly, causing severe unwanted changes to a formerly primitive lifestyle, and failing to persuade them to accept the benefits of modern living. The Proto Malays refuse to be displaced from their present settlements and are not ready to diversify and expand their businesses to town or any urban areas. The government should extensively pursue programmes that allow for mental exposures of the Orang Asli to modernity, and include all layers of the community, not just the tok batins. Once the Orang Asli can appreciate the benefits of modern life, they will be more ready to compete with others and establish an independent society.

The Proto Malays still depending more help and assistance in terms of monetary and skill training from government agencies to ensure their business progress. Government assistance should not only be targeted to established entrepreneurs and Tok Batins but also be extended to all interested Proto Malays entrepreneurs of smaller rank. More exposures through entrepreneurial trainings and thinking seminars should be stressed as the Orang Aslis are lowly educated people.

Most tok batins are poorly educated themselves and hence the messages and training given by the government could not be properly delivered to the people including the

entrepreneurs. The strong relationship between entrepreneurial attitudes and motivations and educational levels highlights the importance of education. The Proto Malays have the ambition to move into bigger business but do not have the mental aptitude and education background to help them achieve their desires.

Nowadays, Proto Malays entrepreneurs are changed people; they are no longer influenced by superstitious beliefs in their daily business dealings. For their daily livelihood, they have set aside some cultural values, such as ignoring orders from their peers or heads to stop doing business (refer to table 7). A few of the older, pure Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurs still have the superstitious beliefs of prohibition (*pantang larang*) on days, places and signs but the younger and new generation of Jakuns and Semelais refuse to be influenced by such beliefs.

On further examination of the sample of Jakun and Semelai entrepreneurs, it was found that they have strong desires to improve themselves, and as such are willing to participate or apply for any government projects as long as it benefits their livelihood and hence, standard of living.

Repeated exposures to the government's previous programmes have impacted the Orang Asli to venture into entrepreneurship. Their awareness of the present economic environment has increased their willingness to readily accept change.

Since this is one of the few studies about entrepreneurship among Malaysian aboriginals, it is hoped that these results will form the basis for further research to enable more to be made known about entrepreneurship and the aborigines in Malaysia.

Appendix 1: Demographic profiles

a) Age group

Ethnic groups	21-30	31-40	41-50	51 above	Total
Pure Jakun	8	13	13	11	45
Mixed Jakun	3	10	8	5	26
Semelai	4	4	4	8	20
	15	27	25	24	91

b) Gender

Ethnic groups	male	Female	Total
Pure Jakun	28	17	45
Mixed Jakun	18	8	26
Semelai	14	6	20
	60	31	91

c) Income group (RM)

Ethnic groups	500 below	501-1000	1001-2000	2001-3000	3001-4000	Total
Pure Jakun	15	18	7	3	1	45
Mixed Jakun	4	7	11	4	0	26
Semelai	6	12	2	0	0	20
	25	37	20	7	1	91

d) Your religion/beliefs

Ethnic groups	Islam	Chinese	ancestors' believes	Total
Pure Jakun	2	1	42	45
Mixed Jakun	2	2	22	26
Semelai	2	0	18	20
	6	3	82	91

e) Yes, I have registered my business

Ethnic groups	sole proprietor	Partnership	Sdn. Bhd.	Total
Pure Jakun	20	4	1	25
Mixed blood Jakun	20	4	0	24
Semelai	12	2	0	14
	52	10	1	63

f) Preferable way of life

Ethnic groups	farming	Rearing	hunting	searching for forest products	fishing	doing business	Total
Pure Jakun	9	0	1	0	3	32	45
Mixed Jakun	3	1	0	2	1	19	26
Semelai	6	0	0	0	2	12	20
	18	1	1	2	6	63	91

g) Monthly working days

Ethnic groups	30-25	24-20	19-15	14-10	Total
Pure Jakun	41	2	1	1	45
Mixed Jakun	24	0	2	0	26
Semelai	18	2	0	0	20
	83	4	3	1	91

h) Education Background

Ethnic groups	no formal education	Primary school	secondary school	lower tertiary (stpm/dip)	High Tertiary	Total
Pure Jakun	13	19	13	0	0	45
Mixed Jakun	2	17	4	2	1	26
Semelai	8	8	4	0	0	20
	23	44	21	2	1	91

i) Your type of business

Ethnic groups	agric/forest-related products	Animals husbandry products	manufactured/processed products	middleman (retailer)	contractor (agric/building)	others	Total
Pure Jakun	11	1	1	21	2	9	45
Mixed Jakun	4	1	2	12	2	5	26
Semelai	0	0	0	18	0	2	20
	15	2	3	51	4	16	91

Appendix 2: Population Data of Orang Asli for Rompin District at at December 2001

No	Kampung Name	Estimated Number of Entrepreneurs	Estimated Number of Families	Estimated Population
1.	Mentelong	2	22	98
2.	Denai	2	27	186
3.	Bukit Lepas	1	35	86
4.	Sungai Mok	4	66	337
5.	Bukit Serdang	6	54	244
6.	Batu 8	7	133	527
7.	Kemendol	1	41	105
8.	Batu 3	2	109	455
9.	Sawak	1	5	20
10.	Sembayan	1	26	125
11.	Belebas	0	3	15
12.	Gading	0	10	47
13.	Belangkap	1	48	220
14.	Karpal/Pinang	1	90	502
15.	Jemeri	2	99	279
16.	Jemeras	1	24	53
17.	Tanam	2	58	145
18.	RPS Kedaik	9	246	1,158
19.	Petoh	1	24	124
20.	Kedaik Lama	4	55	169
21.	Rantau Panjang	2	57	218
22.	Semupuk	1	15	47
23.	Guri	2	25	110
24.	Kundang	1	24	70
25.	Teraling	0	3	10
26.	Langkap	0	44	128
27.	Tanah runtuh	1	31	190

28.	Batu 1, Ibam	1	5	25
29.	Ganuh	2	49	215
30.	Kemomoi	1	16	60
31.	Air Molek	1	11	127
32.	Mikang	1	89	131
33.	Kemara	0	11	42
34.	RPS Buluh Nipis	8	81	345
35.	Pelam	1	32	120
36.	Paya Keladan	1	13	65
37.	Gadak	2	65	212
38.	Inoi	3	55	280
39.	Tenggalong	3	54	180
40.	RPS Bukit Serok	8	285	1,328
41.	Gambir	1	13	51
42.	Banai	0	14	40
43.	Dong	0	7	33
	Total	88	2,174	8,922

(Sources from Department of Orang Asli Affairs Rompin 2000)

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