

International Conference on Small and Medium Enterprises Development with a Theme
“Innovation and Sustainability in SME Development” (ICSMED 2012)

Women Entrepreneurs: Making A change From Employment to Small and Medium Business Ownership

Siri Roland Xavier^{a*}, Syed Zamberi Ahmad^b, Leilanie Mohd Nor^a, Mohar Yusof^a

^a*Bank Rakyat School of Business and Entrepreneurship, University Tun Abdul Razak, Block C & D, Capital Square, No.8, Jalan Munshi Abdullah, 50100, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.*

^b*Management & Marketing Department, College of Business Administration, Prince Sultan University, P.O. Box 66833, Riyadh 11586, Saudi Arabia.*

Abstract

This study explored women entrepreneurs who made a change from salaried employment to ownership of small and medium businesses. The study used a convenience sample comprising 153 women started their own businesses. The study focused on; first, the factors that cause women to leave employment for business ownership; second, their personal and entrepreneurial characteristics and; last, the challenges they faced during the transition from salaried employment to business ownership. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed by hand, email and fax. The main factors identified to have spurred women to leave employment for business ownership were a need to achieve personal growth, independence and the economic payoff. Passion for the business, listening and communication skills, and self discipline were among the most common personal skills. The prime entrepreneurial skills that were indicated include confidence, leadership, creative thinking in problem solving, being efficient and effective in executing plans, entrepreneurial and business knowledge, being analytical, balancing skills between personal and business life, and flexibility. The challenges faced by the respondents were a shortage of professional staff, shortage of general staff, issues of development and growth, financial constraints due to high overheads and a lack of consultation advice from experts.

© 2012 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).
Selection and peer-review under responsibility of Parahyangan Catholic University.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurs; Employment; Small and Medium business ownership; Entrepreneurial characteristics.

* Corresponding author. Tel: 7627 7000 DL: 7627 7128 Fax: 7627 7130, Mobile: 012 202 4577,
E-mail address: roland@unirazak.edu.my.

1. Introduction

Over the last 20 years women in Asia are making less of a choice for salaried employment at the start of their careers and are even giving up salaried employment for business ownership. In Malaysia, the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM, 2011), reported that 49,554 units of women-owned businesses were registered in 2000, and the number has increased to 98,786 units in 2009. Both in South East Asia and globally it is clear that the number of women entrepreneurs continues to increase steadily worldwide. Women represent more than one-third of all people involved in global entrepreneurial activity (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2010).

Why are women leaving employment for business ownership? There are several reasons why women become entrepreneurs. In examining different theories and the reasons why women become entrepreneurs, there is no set and standard profile that can be predictably applied. For every woman who is an entrepreneur or wants to become one there is a different set of reasons, motivating factors and many of these cannot be categorized or 'labeled' (Kamal, Wojoud and Rana, 2009). Helm (1997) argues in her paper that men and women have different reasons for entering business and that women have "internal-stable reasons ("I want to be my own boss"), while men have external-stable reasons ("I saw a terrific market opportunity"). This study also seeks to identify the entrepreneurial characteristics, the challenges as well as the problems of these women entrepreneurs in Klang Valley, Malaysia.

The purpose of this study is to investigate why women leave seemingly stable and gainful employment to become entrepreneurs. In this regards it focuses on the factors that spur them into business ownership; characteristics of women entrepreneurs; and studies the challenges and problems they face. The objectives of the study are:

- (i) To identify the factors that spur employed women who opt for small and medium business ownership.
- (ii) To identify the "entrepreneurial characteristics" of such women.
- (iii) To identify the key challenges and problems faced by these women entrepreneurs .

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- (i) What are the factors that cause gainfully employed i.e. salaried women to undertake small and medium business ownership?
- (ii) What are the entrepreneurial characteristics of such women entrepreneurs?
- (iii) What are the challenges and problems faced by these women entrepreneurs?

2. Significance of the Study

Such a study can provide a list of factors that spur women into starting their own businesses, and the entrepreneurial characteristics of such women. The information obtained will serve as a guideline in determining the factors and the characteristics of women entrepreneurs more accurately. It also intends to bring to the surface information about the challenges and problems faced by women entrepreneurs. With these findings, it is believed that the study can help deliver a profile of women entrepreneurs to new and aspiring candidates who wish to become entrepreneurs. It may also be used as input to influence government policies when formulating guidelines to support women entrepreneurs.

3. Factors that spur employed women to undertake business ownership

Moore and Buttner (1997) acknowledged that many of the reasons women gave for making the leap to entrepreneurship were also evident in studies of men; however, "other reasons appear special to women" (p.50). Although there is considerable overlap in motivations and aspirations, they posit that gender only occasionally makes a difference in the form of discrimination. The Woman-Led Businesses in a Massachusetts research study conducted by The Center for Women's Leadership at Babson College (2006) and The Commonwealth

Institute shattered the perception that the ‘glass ceiling’ is a major reason women leave the corporate world. The two key factors that compel women to become entrepreneurs based on that study are personal achievement and autonomy.

Personal freedom, security, and satisfaction were the primary goals for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan (Shabbir & D’Gregorio, 1996). Similarly, at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Conference on Women Entrepreneurs in SMEs (2000), it was suggested that women entrepreneurs were closer to being ‘growth-oriented women entrepreneurs’, rather than ‘lifestyle’ entrepreneurs. It becomes more evident that a gap can be seen between previous, present and future women entrepreneurs and the reasons they pursue their business.

Aminah (1998) in a study of selected successful career women in Malaysia revealed that changing attitudes of parents and husbands towards a more positive trend were perceived to be related to higher educational attainment of women, which in turn could influence women's participation in the setting up of their own businesses.

4. Entrepreneurial challenges and problems

In Malaysia, women entrepreneurs faced a shortage of peer support networks compared to men, as stated by the Women Institute of Management (2012). Even though various women entrepreneurs and industry associations have been formed (FEM, NAWEM, USAHANITA), they generally serve as a platform for women entrepreneurs to establish networks and exchange information and experiences. They may also conduct training programmes, seminars and workshops on motivation, leadership and entrepreneur development. However, women are overloaded with business as well as family responsibilities and may not have the time to join these beneficial associations (Kim Klyver, 2007, Amzad Hossain, 2009 and Julie R, 2009). This inadvertently reduces the women entrepreneurs’ knowledge of their surroundings, limits their networks and opportunities to exploit advantages, which can make a difference between success and failure; stagnation and growth of their small and medium businesses.

The above are the common challenges faced by women entrepreneurs which produce the following statistics in Malaysia. In 1980, women accounted for only 7% of employers in the economically active population of Malaysia. In 1984, 8% of working Malaysian women were classified as entrepreneurs and employers, while 16% were classified as ‘own-account’ workers. The percentage rose to only 8.5% in 1990, with men still comprising the vast majority with employer status (Women's Aid Organisation, 2001). Less than 10% of the total number of all employers was women (Jamilah, 1992). Thus women are certainly an untapped source of entrepreneurship in Malaysia specifically and, if one extrapolates that, in Asia as a whole.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

A survey method was employed whereby questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the state of Selangor and the federal capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. The respondents were asked to provide responses to items on a five-point Likert scale to measure the strength of their opinion. The research used a quantitative method to gather the information regarding key points.

5.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study includes all women entrepreneurs who left employment to set up their own small and medium- sized businesses within the state of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. The sample for the study

comprised 153 such women who participated in the survey.

5.3 *Entrepreneurship Definition*

Entrepreneurship refers to “one who reforms or revolutionizes the pattern or production by exploiting an invention, or, more generally, an untried technological possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way, by opening up a new source of supply of materials or new outlet for products, by reorganizing an industry and so on” (Schumpeter, 1934, p. 132). For our purposes we will adopt a broader and incremental definition, a Kirznerian approach that can encompass the challenges (i.e. education and infrastructure) of rising (a more appropriate word today compared to ‘developing’) Asian nations and one that can provide a step by step way forward for progress in entrepreneurship. As such in this study we define entrepreneurship as “a way of thinking, which by the organizing of knowledge and resources, results in an enterprise that looks to add value by the creation of something new or filling gaps, and gaining a profit and or achieving a social goal therefrom” (Xavier, S.R., 2008, p.42).

5.4 *Women Entrepreneurs*

Women entrepreneurs are those who have initiated businesses and have been actively involved in managing it; own at least 50% of the firm, and have been in operation for one year or longer (Moore & Butter, 1997, p.13).

5.5 *Instrumentation*

A self-administered questionnaire consisting of two sections was designed. Section A began with general items querying the respondent’s background, experience and qualifications, career experiences, business attempts and most importantly the reasons they left salaried employment into the business world. In Section B, the items elicited information regarding the motivating or driving factors for venturing into business, their personal and entrepreneurial characteristics, challenges and problems, faced by these business women. To obtain the most truthful feedback and to encourage better responses, participants were requested to respond in anonymity.

5.6 *Reliability and Validity*

Two of the most important criteria for ensuring an effective measuring instrument are reliability and validity. Reliability is assessed primarily with statistical indices while validity provides an overall value judgment. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha at two points of time, one after the pilot testing and another after the real study. The validity of the instrument was determined using expert judgment upon the items by the supervisor and other experts.

Fourteen respondents participated in a pilot study, while the actual study comprised 153 respondents. The Cronbach Alpha for the pilot test as well as the actual study is depicted in Appendix A (Table 1: *Reliability of the instrument*). Looking at the figures for reliability, from 0.814 to 0.953, it is safe to assume that the instrument had good reliability in this study.

Descriptive statistics were used to explore the research questions related to the study. Descriptive statistics, being significant for describing the data, offers a powerful set of conceptual tools which one would be able to use in order to extend a better understanding of data in a number of important ways. Percentages and medians

were used to analyze the data of the study. Medians were used in this analysis to obtain central tendency as the data was ordinal and the medians can provide good, representative value for this research purpose.

As shown in Appendix B (Table 2: *Statistical Analysis Employed*) the techniques chosen to answer the research questions were percentage distribution and the median for Question 1, 2 and 3 while the Kruskal Wallis Test was performed to answer Question 4. Based on the results of the analysis, reasonable conclusions were drawn and recommendations pertaining to the research problem were made.

6. Data Analysis and Results

From the 172 sets of questionnaires distributed, 153 sets of answered questionnaires were returned, making the valid number of respondents 153. The profile of the respondents is summarized in Appendix C (Table 3: *Respondents according to Race*). There were 39 Malay respondents (25.5%), 54 Chinese respondents (35.3%), and 60 Indian respondents (39.2%) in this study. In Appendix D (Table 4: *Respondents according to Age Group*) shows that a major group of the respondents (39.2%) falls under the 36 to 45 years age group, followed by 31.4% respondents falling under the 46 to 55 years age group. About 12% of the respondents are aged more than 55 years. 17.7% of the respondents were aged between 25 and 35 years.

In Appendix E (Table 5: *Respondents according to Highest Academic Qualification*), it can be seen that many of the respondents are well educated with 35.3% holding a first degree while another 19.6% hold post graduate degrees. About 26% respondents are diploma holders while 20% are SPM (high school certificate) holders. A big group of the respondents (45.1%) seem to possess less than 10 years working experience as shown in Appendix F (Table 6: *Respondents according to Working Experience*). Appendix G (Table 7: *Respondents according to Last Job Category*) indicates the last job category of the respondents while they were in employment before becoming women entrepreneurs. About 45 % of the respondents held management posts, while another 41.2% of them held executive posts. It can also be seen that only about 6% of the respondents were holding clerical positions. As indicated in Appendix H (Table 8: *Respondents according to Type of Former Organization*), about 63% of respondents were attached to national organizations prior to becoming entrepreneurs, while 37% were in international organizations before they chose to become entrepreneurs. Appendix I (Table 9: *Respondents according to Type of Sector they were attached to before*) depicts that majority of the respondents (82.4%) were initially attached to the private sector. Only 17.6% respondents were from the public sector prior to moving into own business.

In view of the respondents' attempts at venturing into business Appendix J (Table 10: *Respondents and their Attempts into business ownership*) shows that 82.4% indicated that this was their first attempt at becoming entrepreneurs while 15.7% respondents mentioned that this was their second attempt. Only 2% said that this was their third attempt at becoming entrepreneurs.

• Research Question 1: What are the factors that cause gainfully employed women to undertake small and medium business ownership?

The above research question is answered using percentage distribution of the responses and the median (according to the scale 1-5). A number of factors that could have driven or motivated the respondents to become entrepreneurs were presented in the questionnaire and the respondents' responses are presented in percentages in Appendix K (Table 11: *Percentage Distribution of the Responses regarding the Drive towards Entrepreneurship*). Among the main factors identified in sequence are: (1) Personal achievement i.e. interest (88.2%), (2) Personal growth (84.3%), (3) Job satisfaction (76.5%), (4) Independence (76.5%), (5) Flexibility (74.6%), (6) Autonomy (70.6%), (7) Presence of business opportunity (64.5%), (8) Putting passion/knowledge into use (64.5%), and (9) Economic payoff (56.9%). All these factors were found to fall at the median value of four, indicating the shift of the responses towards the higher side (quite true and very true) of the scale.

Family support and co-operation (47.0%), Recognition (45.1%), Family commitment (39.2%), supplement

incomes for the family (38.8%), Balancing career and family (31.3%) seem to be the motivator factors with a median value of 3. The next levels of drivers with a median value of 2 are family business (19.6%) and political and social factors (2.0%).

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

- **Research Question 2: What are the characteristics of entrepreneurial women?**

This study also attempts to investigate the characteristics that these women entrepreneurs possess. The characteristics were studied using two dimensions namely, personal skills and entrepreneurial skills. Sixteen personal characteristic variables and twenty five entrepreneurial characteristic variables were examined. This research question is answered using percentage distribution and the median.

In Appendix L (Table 12: *Percentage distribution of Personal Skills possessed by respondents*) the personal skills that scored a median of 4 and 3 were sequenced so as to provide a better view of the respective skills. Among those skills, Passionate/interest in the business (82.4%) seems to be the number one skill, followed by Listening skills (78.4%) and Communication skills (78.4%). Hardworking (78.4%) comes as the fourth ranking skill which is then followed by Perseverance (66.6%), Self-management (62.8%) and Self Discipline (62.7%) respectively. The least possessed skill indicated by these women entrepreneurs were (1) Being Obsessed, (2) Acquainted networking and collaboration skills, (3) Community service by creating employment and (4) Ability to manage stress.

Twenty five skills were identified as entrepreneurial skills. It was found in Appendix M (Table 13: *Percentage distribution of Entrepreneurial Skills possessed by respondents*) that the 10 prime Entrepreneurial Skills that are indicated as strongly and very strongly possessed by the women entrepreneurs are: (1) Showing confidence, courage and strong will power (78.6%), (2) Decision-making skills (72.6%), (3) Leadership skills (66.7%), (4) Creative thinking in problem solving (64.7%), (5) Being efficient and effective in executing plans (62.8%), (6) Leveraging personal accumulation of knowledge, skills and relationship (62.8%), (7) Entrepreneurial/business knowledge (62.7%), (8) Being analytical (58.9%), (9) Balancing skills between personal and business life (58.8%), and (10) Flexibility and ability to change (58.8%). Among the six least possessed entrepreneurial skills include (1) computer knowledge (37.2%), (2) Enhanced competitiveness in the market (41.2%), (3) Risk taking (41.2%), (4) Good strategic management & planning practices (43.1%), and (5) Controlling productive resources and (6) Good marketing strategies i.e. products and services promotion (45.1%).

- **Research Question 3: What are the challenges and problems faced by these women entrepreneurs?**

The term 'challenges/problems' in this study encompasses hardships and limitations faced by the women entrepreneurs. There were 18 challenges/problems proposed to the respondents via the questionnaire. The challenges/problems were later ranked according to their median scores to gauge the most and the least of the challenges/problems that the respondents face. Among the challenges /problems indicated by the respondents as quite and very true, as shown in Appendix N (Table 14: *Percentage distribution of Challenges/Problems faced by Respondents*) below are (1) Shortage of professional staff (35.3%) (2) Shortage of staff (35.2%); (3) Issues of development and growth (29.4%); (4) Shortage of committed/sincere staff (29.4%); (5) Low management practices/systems (23.5%); (6) Financial constraint due to high overheads (23.5%); (7) Lack of start-up capital (17.7%); (8) Isolation of taking decisions alone (17.6%); (9) Shouldering heavy workloads (17.6%); and (10) Less consultation help from experts (15.7%). On the other hand, the least of the challenges/problems encountered by the respondents include (1) Engaged in too many businesses (4.0%); (2) Unattractive remuneration package (7.9%); (3) Lack of support from business partners (9.8%); (4) Lack of

family support (13.7%); (5) Shortage of peer support due to family commitment (13.8%).

7. Findings and Discussion

This study aimed to explore the phenomenon of women leaving salaried employment to start their own business. As for the factors that spur employed women into business ownership, the above data analysis suggests that Malaysian women entrepreneurs leave their career for their self development, independence, flexibility, autonomy and passion which upholds their own interest as the main reasons. It appears a new pool of women entrepreneurs is forming today, as more women opt to leave employment to chart their own destinies.

This study also investigated the characteristics that these women entrepreneurs possess. The characteristics were studied using two dimensions namely, personal skills and entrepreneurial skills. It is well accepted that the surest way to succeed in any business is to try to match inherent skills and natural interest and passion with the kind of business selected. Drawing from this study on personal skills, the researcher found that more than 70 percent of the women entrepreneurs chose the business they desired which enabled them to sustain their businesses.

Among the ten prime entrepreneurial skills possessed by the women entrepreneurs were showing confidence, courage and strong will power, decision-making skills, leadership skills, creative thinking in problem solving, being efficient and effective in executing plans, leveraging personal accumulation of knowledge, skills and relationship, entrepreneurial/business knowledge, being analytical, balancing skills between personal and business life, and flexibility.

The study highlighted that the five least possessed entrepreneurial skills were computer knowledge, enhance competitiveness in the market, risk taking, good strategic management & planning practices, controlling productive resources and good marketing strategies. However, contradicting this study, Masud et al. (1999) in a study on micro-enterprise project through 319 women in Peninsular Malaysia discovered that women gained knowledge through their projects in managing and controlling productive resources, skill, and experience, and an increase in their ability to source relevant information and solve problems that equip them to become successful entrepreneurs. Thus, as the respondents in this study were involved in businesses which did not require high capital and in which they had prior expertise and experience, we can infer that they could also acquire the requisite skills as their businesses grow.

The question of challenges/problems faced by these women entrepreneurs found some evidences in the form of shortage of professional staffs, shortage of staffs, issues of development and growth, shortage of committed/sincere staffs, low management practices/systems, financial constraint due to high overheads, lack of start-up capital, isolation of taking decisions alone, shouldering heavy workloads, and lack of consultation help from experts. This indicates a need for management skills training, networking and governmental support structures for both consultation and continued funding of viable small and medium businesses.

Lessons can be drawn and observed from the first question and third question of this research that family commitment is not a hurdle for women to enter business ownership contrary to common perception. However in Malaysia, the Women Institute of Management (1997) suggested that women entrepreneurs faced a shortage of peer support networks compared to men and that they do not join these associations as they might be overloaded with business and family responsibilities. This would limit the women entrepreneurs' ability to seek informal advice and peer financing as well as the information networks needed for survival and growth.

Due to the limited number of variables in the questionnaire, it would be presumptuous to conclude that the study's findings can adequately explain the major challenges and problems faced by women entrepreneurs. To make reasonable conclusions, more data is required. Hence, it is recommended that additional issues be raised by future researchers.

8. Recommendation For Future Researchers

Based on the findings of this research, the following suggestions are recommended to future researchers.

- (i) A rigorous research comprising bigger sample is recommended.
- (ii) A qualitative study or a mixed mode might be necessary to find out more accurately the exact challenges and problems these women entrepreneurs face.

9. Concluding Comments

The study demonstrated that corporate women entrepreneurs did not enter the business world due to family commitments but rather due to personal achievement, independency and autonomy which seems to parallel the pull factors theory. The findings provide new insight on the personal and entrepreneurial characteristics of women taking up business ownership. Passion for their desired business, courage, confidence and strong will power were their strongest skills. It is also evident from this research study that women entrepreneurs use their vast working experiences and inherent strength to overcome many shortcomings and hurdles along the path to pursue their dreams.

There have been various debates over the past decade on the performance of women entrepreneurs, their management practices and effective networks among women entrepreneurs. However, very little research was done on salaried women making a leap to business ownership in Malaysia. As such, the collection of data on the profile, working experience, education, management skill, sector, personal and entrepreneurial characteristics and, the factors that spur corporate women into entrepreneurs and, challenges and problems faced by them is crucial. This provides information to policy makers and women associations to identify the reasons women leave employment, thus allowing for more effective nurture and support of these women. Without these supports, the efforts in creating quality, resilient and successful women entrepreneurs in all sectors of the economy would be uncertain. Providing strong support for women entrepreneurs will maximize their full potential thus contributing to the country and global economy. This is echoed by the Asian Development Bank which is promoting “gender equity” as ‘one of the 5 drivers of change in Strategy 2020’ and it, ‘recognizes that without harnessing the talents, human capital and economic potential of women, the region’s goals of poverty reduction and sustainable development will not be met’ (Asian Development Bank, 2012).

The benefits of networking will engage these women entrepreneurs in entrepreneurial activities such as scanning for, recognizing and exploiting business opportunities besides enhancing management and financial skills. Additionally, these women need to have an acute understanding of the entrepreneurial orientation in order for them to succeed in their ventures. These orientations included risk taking, creativity and innovativeness, manpower problem solving skills and multi-tasking. These can be gained through workshops, training programmes, mentoring or self-advancement courses. The governments of Asia and Women’s business associations in their respective countries should play an active role in nurturing these skills within these women to mould successful women entrepreneurs. Whether or not the businesses of these individual women entrepreneurs will flourish and succeed is uncertain; but what is certain is that the governments of Asia can no longer ignore the growing importance of women within their economies.

References

- Aminah, A. (1998). *Women in Malaysia*. Retrieved April 20, 2011, from http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Country_Briefing_Papers/Women_in_Malaysia/women_malaysia.pdf.
- Amzad H, (2009). Factors Influencing Women Business Development in the Developing Countries: Evidence from Bangladesh, *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 202-224, Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Asian Development Bank (2012), Gender and Development, Retrieved: 20th Feb, 2012 from <http://www.adb.org/themes/gender/main>.

- Companies Commission of Malaysia (2011), Retrieved: 8th Oct 2011, Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia, <https://www.ssm-einfo.my/#>
- Gartner, William B. 1989. "Who is an Entrepreneur?" Is the Wrong Question." *Entrepreneurial Theory and Practice* 13(Summer):47-68.
- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (2010). Retrieved: 20th Dec 2011 from <http://www.gemconsortium.org>.
- Helms, M. (1997) Women and Entrepreneurship: The Appealing Alternative. *Business Perspectives*. Vol. 10, 11 (pp. 16-19). Gale Group – Information Integrity.
- Jamilah, A. (1992). *Women & Development in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications (M) Sdn. Bhd.
- Julie R. Weeks. (2009) Women business owners in the Middle East and North Africa: A Five-Country Research Study, *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 2009, pp. 77-85, Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Kamal N, Wojoud R, Rana N, 2009, Factors that Affect Women Entrepreneurs: Evidence from an Emerging Economy, *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 225-247, Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Kim K, (2007), Shifting Family Involvement During the Entrepreneurial Process, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research* Vol. 13 No. 5, (pp. 258-117). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Masud, Jariah & Laily. (1997). The Economic Empowerment of Rural Women Through Involvement in Micro Enterprise. Retrieved: September 8, 2011, from <http://www.aseanfoundation.org/documents/homeworkers/Annotated>.
- Md. Nor Othman, Ezlika Ghazali, and Ong Chee Cheng (2004), *Demographic and Personal Characteristics of Urban Malaysian Entrepreneurs: An Ethnic Comparison*, in the Third International Conference on SMEs in a Global Economy Conference Proceedings, eds. Adnan A., Ismail A. W., and Za faran H., Shah Alam: Universiti Teknologi MARA and University of Wollongong, Australia, 509-529.
- Moore, D.P. & Buttner, E.H. (1997). *Women entrepreneurs: Moving beyond the glass ceiling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. 262.
- OECD, (2000), 2nd OECD Conference on Women Entrepreneurs in SMEs: Realising the Benefits of Globalisation and the Knowledge-based Economy Paris, 29-30 November 2000, Conference Centre of the French Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industry, Paris, France.
- Schumpeter, J.A., 1934, The theory of economic development, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, In Tang, L., and Koveos, P.E., 2004, Venture entrepreneurship, Innovation entrepreneurship and Economic growth, *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 9, 2; ABI/INFORM Global, pp. 132.
- Women and Entrepreneurship. Center for Women's Leadership. Babson College. MA, USA. (2006). Retrieved: 15th Dec, 2012 from http://www.house-works.com/literature_96683/TCT's_Top_100_Woman-Led_Businesses.
- Women's Institute of Management (2012), Women As Executives and Entrepreneurs. Retrieved: Feb 9, 2012, from <http://www.wimnet.org.my/>.
- Women's Aid Organisation (WAO). (2001). Women's Equality in Malaysia Status Report. Retrieved: June 7, 2011, from <http://www.wao.org.my/news/20010301statusreport.htm>
- Shabbir, A., & Gregorio, S.Di. (1996). An examination of the relationship between women's personal goals and structural factors influencing their decisions to start a business: The case of Pakistan. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 11 (6), 507-529.
- Xavier, S.R. (2008), *New Venture Development*, MBA Module Handbook, Open University Malaysia, p.42.

Appendix A

Table 1: Reliability of the instrument

Instrument		Cronbach's Alpha	
		Pilot Testing	Actual Study
		N=14	N=51
1.	Factors that spur women into business	0.773	0.814
2.	Personal skills of women entrepreneurs	0.934	0.876
3.	Entrepreneur skills of women entrepreneurs	0.973	0.953
4.	Challenges and problems faced by women entrepreneurs	0.910	0.873

Appendix B

Table 2: Statistical Analysis Employed

Research Questions	Statistical Analysis employed
(1) What are the factors that spur women from leaving the corporate world into business ownership?	Percentage distribution of factors and their Median
(2) What are their personal and entrepreneurial characteristics?	Percentage distribution of characteristics and their Median
(3) What are the challenges and problems they are facing, and	Percentage distribution of challenges/problems and their Median

Appendix C

Table 3: Respondents according to Race

Race	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Malay	39	25.5
Chinese	54	35.3
Indian	60	39.2
Total	153	100.0

Table 3. above shows the distribution of the respondents according to race. There were 13 Malay respondents (25.5%), 18 Chinese respondents (35.3%), and 20 Indian respondents (39.2%) in this study.

Appendix D

Table 4. Respondents according to Age Group

Age Group	No. of Respondent	Percentage
25 yrs and below	3	2.0
26 – 35 yrs	24	15.7
36 – 45 yrs	60	39.2
46 – 55 yrs	48	31.4
Above 55 yrs	18	11.8
Total	153	100.0

Appendix E

Table 5: Respondents according to Highest Academic Qualification

Highest Academic Qualification	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Masters/PhD	30	19.6
First Degree	54	35.3
Diploma	39	25.5
SPM	30	19.6
Total	153	100.0

Appendix F

Table 6: Respondents according to Working Experience

Working Experience	No. of Respondent	Percentage
More than 20 yrs	36	23.5
15-19 yrs	24	15.7
10-14 yrs	24	15.7
Less than 10 yrs	69	45.1
Total	153	100.0

Appendix G

Table 7: Respondents according to Last Job Category

Last Job Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Clerical level	9	5.9
Executive level	63	41.2
Management level	69	45.1
Corporate level	12	7.8
Total	153	100.0

Appendix H

Table 8: Respondents according to Type of Former Organization

Type of Former Organization	No. of Respondents	Percentage
International	57	37.3
National	96	62.7
Total	153	100.0

Appendix I

Table 9: Respondents according to Type of Sector they were attached to before

Type of Sector	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Private	126	82.4
Public	27	17.6
Total	153	100.0

Appendix J

Table 10: Respondents and their Attempts into own business

Attempts	No. of Respondents	Percentage
First Attempt	126	82.4
Second Attempt	24	15.7
Third Attempt	3	2.0
Total	153	100.0

Appendix K

Table 11: Percentage Distribution of the Responses regarding the Drive towards Entrepreneurship

NO	ITEM	Not True at all (%)	Least True (%)	Some-what True (%)	Quite True (%)	Very True (%)	Median
1.	My motivator or drive to make a leap into business has been:						
	(a) the need to achieve personal growth	-	2.0	13.7	43.1	41.2	4
	(b) recognition	5.9	25.5	23.5	29.4	15.7	3
	(c) job satisfaction (sense of self-worth)	2.0	2.0	19.6	39.2	37.3	4
	(d) economic payoff	-	11.9	31.4	35.3	21.6	4
	(e) independency	-	3.9	19.6	41.2	35.3	4
	(f) the need for flexibility	2.0	2.0	21.6	37.3	37.3	4
	(g) family business.	41.2	19.6	19.6	13.7	5.9	2

NO	ITEM	Not True at all (%)	Least True (%)	Some- what True (%)	Quite True (%)	Very True (%)	Med ian
	(h) family commitments.	15.7	13.7	31.4	15.7	23.5	3
	(i) balancing career and family.	9.8	11.8	21.6	33.3	23.5	4
	(j) create supplement incomes for the family.	9.8	21.6	29.4	31.4	7.8	3
	(k) gender discrimination at work-place.	51.0	31.4	3.9	7.8	5.9	1
	(l) presence of business opportunity.	2.0	7.8	27.5	35.3	29.2	4
	(m) desire/passion to put knowledge and skills into use.	-	2.0	23.5	35.3	29.2	4
	(n) personal achievement (interest).	-	3.9	7.8	43.1	45.1	4
	(o) autonomy (freedom).	3.0	3.9	21.6	47.1	23.5	4
	(p) the demand of relocating of an executive position or husband position.	56.9	23.5	9.8	9.8	2.0	1
	(q) organizational dynamics dealt with power and politics.	41.2	31.4	27.5	-	-	1
	(r) social and political factor in the country	37.3	35.3	25.5	2.0	-	2
	(s) traumatic events- eg. divorcee, widower	66.7	15.7	17.6	-	-	1
2.	I started business out of frustration due to blocks to corporate advancement (Lack of career advancement and discrimination).	56.9	13.7	15.7	7.8	5.9	1
3.	I started business due to lack of mentors or role models in my earlier organization.	62.7	17.6	7.8	5.9	5.9	1
4.	I started business because I felt I did fit into the corporate culture.	52.9	27.5	5.9	7.8	5.9	1
5.	I started business because I get family support and co-operation.	23.5	7.8	21.6	17.6	29.4	3
6.	I started business because I find it difficult to balance career and family.	31.4	17.6	19.6	13.7	17.6	3
7.	I started business because of sexual harassment at the workplace.	84.3	9.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	1

Appendix L

Table 12: Percentage distribution of Personal Skills possessed by respondents

No.	Item	Not At All (%)	Least Possess (%)	Some-what Possess (%)	Strongly Possess (%)	Very Strongly Possess (%)	Median
5.	Passionate/interest in the business	-	-	17.6	41.2	41.2	4
3.	Listening skills	-	-	21.6	52.9	25.5	4
4.	Communication skills	-	2.0	19.6	52.9	25.5	4
16.	Hardworking	2.0	7.8	11.8	49.0	29.4	4
8.	Perseverance	2.0	2.0	29.4	49.0	17.6	4

Table 12. continued . . .

10.	Self-management	2.0	2.0	33.3	51.0	11.8	4
13.	Self-discipline	-	3.9	33.3	45.1	17.6	4
1.	Proactive personality	-	7.8	29.4	39.2	23.5	4
2.	Set goals and action plan	-	2.0	35.3	45.1	17.6	4
6.	Persistent	2.0	3.9	31.4	43.1	19.6	4
9.	Good time management	5.9	3.9	33.3	49.0	7.8	4
11.	Good Instinct	2.0	3.9	39.2	43.1	11.8	4
14.	Able to managing stress	-	9.8	41.2	33.3	15.7	3
15.	Community service by creating employment	5.9	7.8	31.2	37.3	9.8	3
12.	Acquainted networking and collaboration skills	-	7.8	45.1	33.3	13.7	3
7.	Obsessed	15.7	15.7	41.2	17.6	9.8	3

Appendix M

Table 13. Percentage distribution of Entrepreneurial Skills possessed by respondents

Item No.	Entrepreneurial skills	Not at all (%)	Least Possess (%)	Some-what Possess (%)	Strongly Possess (%)	Very Strongly Possess (%)	Median
6.	Showing confidence, courage and strong will power.	-	-	21.6	45.3	33.3	4
15.	Coordinating business development	2.0	3.9	39.2	39.2	15.7	4
13.	Decision-making skills.	-	-	27.5	41.2	31.4	4
16.	Leadership skills	-	-	33.3	41.2	25.5	4
22.	Creative thinking in problem solving	2.0	2.0	31.4	47.1	17.6	4
7.	Being efficient and effective in executing plans.	-	2.0	35.3	37.3	25.5	4
4.	Leveraging personal accumulation of knowledge, skills and relationship.	2.0	2.0	33.3	47.1	15.7	4
1.	Entrepreneurial/business knowledge (products/services)	2.0	3.9	31.4	39.2	23.5	4
5.	Being analytical.	-	2.0	39.2	47.1	11.8	4
23.	Balancing skills between personal and business life	-	-	41.2	43.1	15.7	4
24.	Flexibility- adapt to changes	-	3.9	37.3	41.2	17.6	4
11.	Efficient in producing high quality product/services.	2.0	5.9	37.3	43.1	11.8	4
12.	Delegation of job responsibilities to staff.	2.0	5.9	37.3	39.2	15.7	4
14.	HR Management (recruiting, training and managing staffs)	2.0	7.8	35.3	37.3	17.6	4
18.	Team building & conducting meetings ability	-	3.9	43.1	37.3	15.7	4
19.	Creativity (venturesome) and systematic	2.0	9.8	39.2	35.3	13.7	3
20.	Financial Management – to manage monthly cash-flow	2.0	11.8	37.3	29.4	19.6	3
21.	Innovative behaviors	2.0	5.9	43.1	41.2	7.8	3
17.	Policy development and execution skills	-	3.9	49.0	31.4	15.7	3
9.	Good marketing strategies (promoting the products).	3.9	7.8	43.1	29.4	15.7	3
2.	Controlling productive resources	5.9	5.9	43.1	37.3	7.8	3
8.	Good strategic management & planning practices.	2.0	9.8	45.1	25.5	17.6	3
3.	Risk taking	5.9	7.8	45.1	27.5	13.7	3
25	Enhance competitiveness in the market	2.0	3.9	52.9	31.4	9.8	3
10.	Computer knowledge.	3.9	9.8	49.0	29.4	7.8	3

Appendix N

Table 14: Percentage distribution of Challenges/Problems faced by Respondents

No.	Item	Not at all (%)	Least Possess (%)	Some-what Possess (%)	Strongly Possess (%)	Very Strongly Possess (%)	Median
2.	Issues of development and growth	13.7	21.6	35.5	25.5	3.9	3
3.	Low management practices/systems	13.7	33.3	29.4	19.6	3.9	3
4.	Financial constraint due to heavy overheads	17.6	27.5	35.3	9.8	9.8	3
5.	Less consultation help from expert acquired	7.8	41.2	35.3	9.8	5.9	3
6.	Isolation of taking decision alone	13.7	27.5	41.9	13.7	3.9	3
13.	Shortage of staffs	15.7	27.5	21.6	17.6	17.6	3
14	Shortage of professional staffs	11.8	23.5	29.4	21.6	13.7	3
15.	Shortage of committed/sincere staffs	13.7	27.5	29.4	11.8	17.6	3
17.	Shouldering heavy workloads	21.6	27.5	33.3	9.8	7.8	3
1.	Lack of start-up capital	25.5	35.3	21.6	5.9	11.8	2
7.	Lack of confidence	27.5	47.1	11.8	5.9	7.8	2
8.	Lack of skills and training in business techniques	15.7	47.1	28.5	11.8	2.0	2
10.	Overloaded with family responsibilities/problems	27.5	33.3	25.5	7.8	5.9	2
11.	Lack of family support	45.1	25.5	15.7	9.8	3.9	2
12.	Shortage of peer support due to family commitment	35.3	27.5	23.5	11.8	2.0	2
16.	Lack of support from business partners	49.0	31.4	9.8	7.8	2.0	2
18.	Unattractive remuneration package	21.6	49.0	21.6	5.9	2.0	2
9.	Engaged in too many businesses	54.9	29.4	11.8	2.0	2.0	1