

DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A STUDY OF THE SUCCESS FACTORS OF DIGITAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS FROM MELAKA SUBURBAN AREA

Norzaimah Zainol¹, Maryam Mohd Esa², Nurulhayah Muhamad³, Siti Syuhadah Mohamad⁴

¹Lecturer at Faculty of Information Technology and Digital Media, Universiti Melaka.

^{2,3}Lecturer at Faculty of Business Innovation and Technology, Universiti Melaka.

⁴Lecturer at Universiti Utara Malaysia

Corresponding author email : norzaimah@unimel.edu.my

Article History :

Received : 17 December 2022

Accepted : 19 January 2023

Published : 29 January 2023

ABSTRACT

From the perspective of women entrepreneurs from suburban areas in Melaka, the success of women entrepreneurs demonstrates those who are able to identify opportunities, have high resilience, and are competitive in the face of challenges in order to produce maximum profits and have a positive impact on the global community. This paper identifies the relationship of success of women entrepreneurs, namely digital entrepreneurship, digital marketing, and government support. Using an online survey, the study collects data from suburban areas in Melaka from 310 respondents among women entrepreneurs. Researchers used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to test the correlation between dependent variables and independent variables. The results analyzed by correlation analysis show that all factors are positively significant. But only two out of three factors which are digital entrepreneurship and digital marketing have a moderate significant relationship on the success of women entrepreneurs. While government support has a weak significant relationship. Mastering in digital marketing and digital entrepreneurship and government support, help entrepreneurs become successful and competitive in industry.

Keywords: success of women entrepreneurs, digital entrepreneurship, digital marketing, government support.

KEUSAHAWANAN DIGITAL: KAJIAN FAKTOR KEJAYAAN USAHAWAN DIGITAL WANITA DARI KAWASAN PINGGIR BANDAR MELAKA

ABSTRAK

Dari perspektif usahawan wanita dari kawasan pinggir bandar di Melaka, kejayaan usahawan wanita menunjukkan mereka yang dapat mengenal pasti peluang, mempunyai daya tahan dan daya saing yang tinggi dalam menghadapi cabaran bagi menghasilkan keuntungan maksimum serta memberi impak yang baik kepada masyarakat dunia. Kertas kerja ini mengenal pasti hubungan kejayaan usahawan wanita, iaitu keusahawanan digital, pemasaran digital, dan sokongan kerajaan. Menggunakan tinjauan dalam talian, kajian mengumpulkan data seramai 310 responden dalam kalangan usahawan digital wanita di pinggir bandar Melaka. Penyelidik menggunakan perisian Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) untuk menguji korelasi antara pembolehubah bersandar dan pembolehubah tidak bersandar. Keputusan yang dianalisis dengan analisis korelasi menunjukkan bahawa semua faktor adalah signifikan secara positif. Tetapi hanya dua daripada tiga faktor iaitu keusahawanan digital dan pemasaran digital mempunyai hubungan signifikan yang sederhana terhadap kejayaan usahawan wanita. Manakala sokongan kerajaan mempunyai hubungan ketara yang lemah. Menguasai pemasaran digital dan keusahawanan digital serta sokongan kerajaan, membantu usahawan menjadi berjaya dan berdaya saing dalam industri.

Kata kunci: *kejayaan usahawan wanita, keusahawanan digital, pemasaran digital, sokongan kerajaan*

INTRODUCTION

Nobanee & Dilshad (2020), mentioned that entrepreneurship contributes significantly to an economic landscape and digital advancement acts as a catalyst for innovation for entrepreneurs. Digital technologies have enabled entrepreneurs to use strategic ways to develop their startups. Digital entrepreneurship intricately connects entrepreneurs across various platforms and provides them with several opportunities. Sahut et al. (2019) explain that academic research is focusing on identifying reasons and circumstances that may promote digital entrepreneurship and guide public policies coupled with business practices. This may eventually lead to more job creation in this competitive global market and stimulate economic growth. Kollmann (2006) defined the phenomenon of Digital Entrepreneurship: "E-entrepreneurship refers to establishing a new company with an innovative business idea within the net economy, which, using an electronic platform in data networks, offers its products and/or services based upon a purely electronic creation of value. Essential is the fact that this value offer was only made possible through the development of information technology". In order to maintain and enhance the sustainability indicators of competitive advantage in organisations and businesses, some scholars have concentrated on the notion of "entrepreneurship" (Tajeddini, 2010). By generating new employment and income opportunities, entrepreneurship is acknowledged as being crucial to improving the economic condition (Chitsaz, Tajpour, Hosseini, Khorram & Zorrieh, 2019). Women's entrepreneurship is a developing phenomena around the world that has received a lot of study attention in recent years (Henry, Foss, & Ahl, 2016). It offers a valuable focus for coordinated scholarly research because it not only benefits economies in terms of job creation and economic growth (Kelley, Bosma, and Amoros, 2010), but it is also acknowledged as a source of growing entrepreneurial diversity in a variety of economic contexts (Verheul et al., 2006).

In addition, according to Sri Ayu Kartika Amri's article (2020), there were 907,065 registered small and medium businesses (SME) entrepreneurs in Malaysia as of mid-2020, and 186,855 of them, or 20.6%, were women SME entrepreneurs. Therefore, it is impossible to dispute that the rise of women entrepreneurs has boosted the country's economy. To develop and compete in the digitised business world, suburban women entrepreneurs undoubtedly confront a variety of difficulties. In early 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak did certainly halt the global economy, according to Forbes Magazine. It is a blessing in disguise for companies that rely on the internet to attract customers, though. This is due to the fact that demand for physical goods, services, and digital goods has surged 4-6 times since

COVID-19. Without a doubt, Malaysia as a whole suffers as a result of this problem. It is said that this is a chance to investigate a novel creative process in the area of digital entrepreneurship.

However, this study looks at the variables that affect the success of digital entrepreneurship among women business owners in Melaka State's suburbs. putting a focus on four crucial elements: the sort of technology, social media, digital marketing, and government backing.

Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to :

1. To examine the relationship between digital entrepreneurship towards the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.
2. To examine the relationship between digital marketing towards the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.
3. To examine the relationship between government support towards the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.

Research Hypothesis

The study is related to Digital Entrepreneurship: A Study of The Success Factors of Digital Women Entrepreneurs from Melaka Suburban Area. The following are the hypotheses formed referring to the source Mahmud (2020).

1. Relationship between digital entrepreneurship and the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.
H₀: There is no relationship between digital entrepreneurship and the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.
H₁: There is a relationship between digital entrepreneurship and the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.
2. Relationship between digital marketing and the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.
H₀: There is no relationship between digital marketing and the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.
H₂: There is a relationship between digital marketing and the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.
3. Relationship between government support and the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.
H₀: There is no relationship between government support and the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.
H₃: There is a relationship between government support and the success of suburban women entrepreneurs.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The concept of digitization is not new to the global community. Urban and suburban populations are affected by the digital era in different ways. Urban towns are undoubtedly more likely to be impacted by the internet's and technology's rapid development than are suburban areas, which are less likely to embrace such advancements. Ade Kusuma et al. (2019) claim that their research indicates that the lack of a broad support economy results in the village's women's economic activities being few and far between. Additionally, the involvement of digital entrepreneurship in suburban areas is less welcome due to the lack of digital expertise and technology in the company, particularly in the area of marketing that can reach consumers outside.

According to data released by DOSM (2020), the unemployment rate grew marginally from October to November by 0.1 percentage points to 4.8 percent. To reach 764.4 thousand, the number of unemployed climbed by 2.2 percent, or 16.2 thousand persons (October 2020: 748.2 thousand people). It also makes reference to Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, which is the fifth Sustainable Development Goal. A legislative framework for promoting, enforcing, and monitoring equality and non-discrimination based on gender equality is indicated by indicator 5.1.1. This study therefore complies with the requirement for data and analysis to assist the government and stakeholders in increasing the participation of women in digital entrepreneurship.

Additionally, the global COVID-19 problem, which has an effect on household income, and the opening of the internet world to women also contributed to an increase in household income. The limitations placed on them by their daily schedules as housewives and mothers, as well as the restrictions placed on their freedom to travel, are further reasons why these women do not pursue entrepreneurship. However, the availability of digitization tools has an impact on the realm of digital entrepreneurship in women. If properly applied, this digital entrepreneurship model can help women become successful business owners. The results of this study can, nevertheless, be used as a wager to guarantee that the existence of these women digital entrepreneurs is sustainable and has a significant impact on enhancing the national economy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Success of Women Entrepreneurs

Success is about happiness by accomplishment of goals. Women entrepreneurs involved in entrepreneurship to achieve flexibility and recognition and identity in society. Through their entrepreneurial activities, they want to achieve their aim to be recognized in societal, national and international level (Agarwal et al., 2018). According to Paige and Littrell (2002), the term “success” is defined by intrinsic criteria which includes freedom and independence, controlling a person’s own future, and being one’s own boss; and extrinsic outcomes such as increased financial returns, personal income, and wealth among others. A research by Masuo et al. (2001) established that business success can be defined in terms of economic or financial measures that include return on assets, sales, profits, employees and survival rates; and non-pecuniary measures, such as customer satisfaction, personal development and personal achievement.

Digital Entrepreneurship

Digital entrepreneurship is a phenomenon that arises through technological assets such as the internet and information and communication technology (Le Dinh et al., 2018). In general, any entrepreneurial activity that transfers assets, services or major parts of a business to digital can be categorized as digital entrepreneurship (Kraus, Palmer, Kailer, Kallinger & Spitzer, 2018). According to Murthy (2022) digital entrepreneurship is immensely creating innovative ventures and digitally transforming existing business to innovative digital business. Digital entrepreneurship may offer the promise of empowering people to do more in the universe by making new venture creation more inclusive and democratic. Digital technology includes social, mobile, analytic and cloud computing solutions etc.

Digital Marketing

Bhagat et al., (2021), revealed that women entrepreneurs are aware of the importance of using digital marketing as 75% of respondents were found to be using digital marketing in some or other form for their business marketing and communications. Most of the women entrepreneurs (80%) were running either small or micro business segments, and this finding is in line with the latest report by (MSME, GOI) and other previous studies in the literature (Singh, 2012; MOSPI, 2016). According to Onyango (2016) Digital Marketing is one of most effective strategies for small businesses creating prospects for the enterprises, efficiently connecting and engaging with clients, impacting all elements of business performance by improving revenues, market share and increased profitability. The findings indicated that enterprises who harnessed the power of digital marketing showed better performance claiming better returns, more customers and increased sales than those who merely used conventional marketing strategies. Women entrepreneurs should invest in learning digital skills to utilize digital marketing tools effectively and more actively to perform market needs. This will open avenues for businesses growth manifolds. (Bhagat et al., 2021). The involvement of women entrepreneurs in the field of digital marketing gives implications to the lives of women entrepreneurs to be more advanced and successful at the global level (Norzaimah et al., 2022). Digital marketing platform offers two-way communication between brands and target audience and strives to create new marketing models providing a potential medium for creating profitable business (Bhargava, 2016). Whereas, Sathya (2017) emphasized on the technical advancement in digital marketing techniques to be adopted by the entrepreneurs to create greater impact.

Government support

The government's efforts in inculcating the population of Malaysia toward engaging the entrepreneurial venture have seen success with an increasing number of entrepreneurs in Malaysia regardless of gender. (Abdul Mutalib et al., 2015). The Malaysian government is committed in their effort to create and develop quality, resilient, and successful entrepreneurs by cultivating an enterprising culture among women (Syed, Mohd. Fauzi & Nor Asiah, 2011). In Malaysia, various entrepreneur associations, corporations and programs have been established to provide networks, services and assistance platforms for SMEs development, specifically women entrepreneurs (Isa et al., 2021; Selamat & Endut, 2020). Among them is the National SME Development Council (NSDC), developed in 2004 to further enable SMEs to outgrowth overall national economic growth. Its agency, SME Corporation Malaysia (SME Corp. Malaysia), is the central coordinating agency (CCA) under the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives (MEDAC) responsible for coordinating the implementation of development programmes for SMEs across all 20 prominent members of related Ministries and agencies (SME Corporation Malaysia, 2021). These agencies play an important role in creating good networking and promoting and encouraging more successful and competitive Malaysian women entrepreneurs. In Malaysia diverse forms of support and assistance have been given by the government to nurture women entrepreneurship in the country. It ranges from formulation of national policy to encourage women's economic involvement to business advice, financial funding and entrepreneurial skill development (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2005). Therefore, to ensure the resilience of women entrepreneurs, government support is the main factor in the success of women entrepreneurs who have high resilience and competitiveness in facing any challenge in the economic cycle (Norzaimah et al., 2022).

METHODOLOGY

The research design used is a quantitative study using correlation analysis to determine the relationship between dependent and independent variables involved in this study, especially in looking at the awareness and exposure of women entrepreneurs in the field of digital marketing. The population for this study is women entrepreneurs in suburban areas. This location was chosen because the level of exposure or reach of digital marketing is lower than urban areas. Thus, this study can also help give exposure to suburban women entrepreneurs about the importance of digital marketing. The sampling method that will be used is purposive sampling since we want to focus on respondents who are women entrepreneurs and in accordance with the focus of this study.

Based on Krejcie and Morgan's sampling table, the number of respondents who involved in the study is 310 people. The respondents involved are among Women Entrepreneurs in suburban areas to see their awareness and their exposure to Digital Marketing. The research instrument, which is a questionnaire with several related constructs or variables, were prepared and interview or consultation methods were used involving all groups of Women Entrepreneurs identified in suburban areas in the State of Melaka. Data will be analyzed using SPSS software using descriptive analysis and correlation analysis method. This method is used to identify the determine the relationship between factors of digital marketing, digital entrepreneurship, government supports and the success of women entrepreneurs. Correlation analysis was used to achieve all the objectives of the study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Table 1 : Respondent Demographic Information (Age)

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
18 - 22	17	5.5
23 - 27	69	22.3
28 - 32	80	25.8
33 - 37	45	14.5
38 years and above	99	31.9
Total	310	100.0

The age distribution of respondents is shown in Table 1. Based on the analysis of the study, there are a total of 31.9 percent of women respondents aged 38 years and above involved in this study. Followed by 25.8 percent of women entrepreneurs aged 28 to 32 years, 22.3 percent aged 23 to 27 years, 14.5 percent aged between 33 to 37 years while the remaining amount consists of women respondents aged 18 to 22 percent which is 5.5 percent.

Correlation Analysis

Table 4 below shows the relationship between variables studied which is the relationship between Digital Entrepreneurship, Digital Marketing, Government Support and the Success of Women Entrepreneurs. The results of this study show that all the independent variables are in moderate and weak relationship strength according to Albert Davis' Relationship Strength Table (1971).

Table 2 : Variable Correlation with the Success of Women Entrepreneurs

Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Digital Entrepreneurship	.362**	.000
Digital Marketing	.398**	.000
Government Support	.182**	.001

The results of the study show that there is a significant positive relationship between Digital Entrepreneurship and the Success of Women Entrepreneurs ($r = 0.362$, $p < 0.01$). Based on the Albert Davis' (1971) strength of relationship range, the relationship between Digital Entrepreneurship and the Success of Women Entrepreneurs is a moderate relationship. The positive correlation shows that there is a positive relationship that the higher the Digital Entrepreneurship, the higher the Success of Women Entrepreneurs. The results of this study also support the first hypothesis of the study, which is that Digital Entrepreneurship has a significant positive relationship with the success of women entrepreneurs.

There is also a significant positive relationship between Digital Marketing and the Success of Women Entrepreneurs which is supported by the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.398$, $p < 0.01$). Based on the strength of relationship by Albert Davis' (1971), the relationship between Digital Marketing and the Success of Women Entrepreneurs is also a moderate relationship. The positive correlation shows that there is a positive correlation that is the higher the degree of Digital Marketing that is implemented, the higher the level of Success of Women Entrepreneurs in the business they are working on. The results of this study also support the second hypothesis, that is, Digital Marketing has a significant positive relationship with the success of women entrepreneurs.

Likewise, there is a significant relationship between Government Support and the Success of Women Entrepreneurs with a correlation coefficient ($r = 0.182$, $p < 0.05$). Based on the Albert Davis (1971) strength of relationship table, the *r* value shows that the relationship between Government Support and the Success of Women Entrepreneurs is a weak positive relationship. The results of this study also support the third hypothesis of the study, namely, Government Support has a significant positive relationship with the Success of Women Entrepreneurs.

DISCUSSIONS

The results of the research that has been carried out show that digital entrepreneurship has a relationship with the success of suburban women entrepreneurs as well as answering the first objective of the study. This shows that an entrepreneur's high inclination and interest in doing business digitally will contribute to the success of suburban women entrepreneurs. The results of this study are supported by Zhao et. al (2015) who stated that technology drives the digital economy by bringing a variety of new opportunities with many potential business values.

Based on the research findings that have been obtained, the second objective of this study has been achieved which is that there is a significant positive relationship between digital Marketing and the success of women entrepreneurs. This proves that the more women entrepreneurs use digital marketing platforms, the higher the chances of them being successful in their businesses. The findings of this study are also supported by Helm et. al (2013) carried out an online survey showing that business activities are going well as the overall strategic marketing strategy. Online services show a higher influence on users than traditional communication methods.

The third objective, which is to study the relationship between government support factors and the success of suburban women entrepreneurs, was also successfully proven by the results of the study. The encouragement and capital provided by the government through entrepreneurship programs to some extent help the success of women entrepreneurs in the suburbs. This finding is supported by Suriatie and Nor Aishah (2017) through their study which states that to ensure success in this industry, the synergistic relationship between entrepreneurs and the government must go hand in hand. Entrepreneurs are the leaders in this industry while the government provides continuous encouragement and support through effective programs and policies.

CONCLUSION

To ensure they are in line with the current market trend, women entrepreneurs today need to grasp vital skills like digital entrepreneurship and digital marketing. Less red tape in the application procedure for government financial aid will encourage more business owners to enter the market. Financial support will enable the entrepreneur to acquire better tools, training, and facilities to advance their digital talents. The way that governments support entrepreneurs financially needs to be improved. A large number of business owners can boost the economy and help more people live in better conditions.

This study provides information on digital entrepreneurship and marketing to women business owners in Melaka's suburban districts in general. Additionally, it motivates women business owners to become more knowledgeable about and prepared for digital entrepreneurship so they can maintain their operations during the unanticipated economic downturn in the COVID-19 era. This report also exhorts business owners to learn digital marketing techniques, particularly for the purpose of promoting their enterprises online. Additionally, this research can assist the Melaka State Government in offering programmes or financial aid to women business owners, particularly those impacted by the current COVID-19 situation. The expansion of the home economy is greatly aided by the businesses owned and operated by women entrepreneurs in Melaka's suburbs.

REFERENCES

- Abdul Jumaat B. M. (2012). Factors That Encourage Women Involvement in SMEs in Pahang, Malaysia. *The Journal of Human Resource and Adult Learning*, 8(2), December 2012.
- Abdul Mutalib, R., Arshad, R., Ismail, N. S. A., & Ahmad, Z. (2015). Women and entrepreneurship: An overview of women entrepreneurship programs in Malaysia. *Journal of Governance and Development*, 11, 15-14.
- Agarwal, S., Agrawal, V. and Agrawal, A.M. (2018) 'Motivational and success factors: through the lens of women entrepreneurship', *Int. J. Management and Enterprise Development*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp.307–328.
- Bank Negara Malaysia. (2005). Enhancing capacity and capability of SMEs. Retrieved 2 July 2014 from http://bnm.gov.my/files/publication/sme/en/2005/chap_5.pdf.
- Bhagat, R., Rajan, S. R., & Sambargi, S. (2021). Digital marketing strategies adopted by women entrepreneurs and its impact on business performance (In the context of micro and small enterprises). *International Journal of Management IT and Engineering*, 11(4), 56-77.
- Bharghav,K. (2009). "Marketing Strategies of Women Entrepreneurs", Navyug Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi.
- Isa, F. M., Nor, N. A. M., & Noor, S. (2021). Leadership and Decision-Making Style among Women Entrepreneurs: A Case of Malaysia. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 10(1), 68–79. [https://doi.org/10.30543/10-1\(2021\)-7](https://doi.org/10.30543/10-1(2021)-7)
- Kollmann, T. (2014). What is e-entrepreneurship? Fundamentals of company founding in the net economy. In *Handbook of Research on Techno-Entrepreneurship, Second Edition* (pp. 141-162). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Kraus, S., Palmer, C., Kailer, N., Kallinger, F. L., & Spitzer, J. (2018), "Digital entrepreneurship", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, doi:10.1108/ijeb-06-2018-0425.
- Le Dinh, T., Vu, M.C. & Ayayi, A. (2018), "Towards a living lab for promoting the digital entrepreneurship process", *International Journal of Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 1-17.
- Masuo, D., Fong, G., Yanagida, J. and Cabal, C. (2001), "Factors associated with business and family success: a comparison of single manager and dual manager family business households", *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 55-73.
- MOSPI, GOI. (n.d.) Sixth Economic census. Retrieved on 23 Dec 2020 from URL:<http://mospi.nic.in/> See more at- <http://www.governancenow.com/news/regularstory/factsheet-women-entrepreneurs-in-india#sthash.ZbTKrYPd.dpuf>
- Murthy, D. S., Subramanyachary, P., Naidu, N. G., Singh, S, Rathnam, N. V. (2022). Digital Entrepreneurship: An Aisle For Success Of Business Enterprises. *NeuroQuantology*, 20(8), 3224-3239.
- Norzaimah, Z., Maryam, M.E., Nurulhayah, M. & Siti Syuhadah, M. (2022) Factors Affecting The Success of Digital Entrepreneurship among Suburban Women: Malacca. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, Vol. 12, No. 12, hlmn 153-163.
- Nobanee, H., & Dilshad, M. N. (2020). Digital entrepreneurship: Concepts, applications, and future research agenda. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(19).
- Onyango,K. (2016). "Influence Of Digital Marketing Strategies On Performance Of Cutflowers Exporting Firms In Kenya", University Of Nairobi
- Paige, R.C. and Littrell, M.A. (2002), "Craft retailers' criteria for success and associated business strategies", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 314-331.
- Sahut, JM., Iandoli, L. & Teulon, F., (2019). The age of digital entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-019-00260-8>.Sathya, P (2017). " A study on digital marketing and its impact", *International Journal of Science & Research*, Vol. 6 (2).
- Selamat, N. H., & Endut, N. (2020). "Bargaining with Patriarchy" and Entrepreneurship: Narrati
- Singh, A. V., (2012). "Women and Entrepreneurship in India", Retrieved on 23th December 2020 from <http://www.womensweb.in/articles/women-entrepreneurship-in-india/>
- SME Corporation Malaysia. (2021). National Entrepreneur and SME Development Council (NESDC). Retrieved February 10, 2021, from SME Corporation Malaysia website: <https://www.smeinfo.com.my/nescd/background/>

- Syed Shah Alam., Mohd. Fauzi M. J. & Nor Asiah O. (2011). An empirical study of success factors of women entrepreneurs in the Southern Region in Malaysia. *International Journal of Economics and Finance*, 3(2), 166-175.
- Teoh W.M.Y. & Chong S.C. (2007). Theorising framework of factors influencing performance on women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Sustainability*. III (2)