

An Exploratory Study on the Factors That Influence the Declination of Women Entrepreneurship

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Abstract: Since, early 1970s, there are more female involved in conventionally male dominated and task oriented occupation. The obligation of female has extended from families to society. They are motivated from employee to entrepreneur. Female are playing a role in driving the economy to move forward. They contribute in developing world economy through poverty elimination, encourage creativity and innovation and create job. However, there are always unseen and potential barriers that prevent female to start-up a business. In this study, there are four barriers have been identified which may have influence female in deciding to become an entrepreneur. The four barriers identified in this study consist of fear of failure, lack of resources, family concern and traditional society. To investigate the relationship of each barrier towards female entrepreneurial inclination, the study aims to office ladies as targeted respondents. The results collected shows that three of the hypotheses are supported. Fear of failure is found to be not a significant factor that influences the declination of women entrepreneurship. Lack of resources, family concern and traditional society are found as factors that influence women entrepreneurship declination. There are some major key findings obtained from this study. Overall, most women have the desire to become entrepreneur. Profit making is their trigger. However, majority respondents cannot find balance between their career and family. Most of them choose to give up family when there is conflict with their working.

Key words: Women entrepreneurship, obligation, barriers, fear of failure, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

In mankind's history, men were more prone to be suppliers and women were the parental figures (Watson and Newby, 2005). This status-quo occurred for thousands of years. On the other hand with advancement of human civilisation, most witnesses concurred that the custom has changed in early 1970s. In Western culture, more female included in traditionally male-controlled and task-oriented occupation (Auster and Ohm, 2000). The commitment of females has stretched out from families to society and they were enthused from being a worker to an entrepreneur. Undeniably, the participation for female in workforce is a need and a trend. Published by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of United States, The World Fact Book indicated that, the gap of gender ratio is getting closer. In 2002, the gender ratio for world population is 106 males to 100 females. But the difference was lessening until 101 males to 100 females in year 2011. The world no longer depends mainly on male for development. In contrast, women's empowerment has enhanced the economic efficiency. The female involvement in economy is unquestionable because they are the catalyst for economy advancement, stimulate innovation and job

creation (Gorman *et al.*, 1997). As the world realises the massive power and influence from the females, studies on women's social and economic roles have never stopped.

Nevertheless, with numerous researches conducted, economy experts are still lacking back in understanding thoroughly on the female entrepreneurial behavior and intention.

Based on a research by Davidson and Burke (2004), female entrepreneur is progressively expanding. Understanding female entrepreneur is important due to the new job that they are creating. A large portion of females begin their profession from small to medium size businesses. Furthermore, entrepreneurial activity is the generator of development and advancement in free market economy in long term. Entrepreneur chooses the future development, growth and monetary profit. These entrepreneurs do not limit on running business as usual, they are the type who have demand in their quality of goods or services and consequently improve the standard living of consumers in the long run. In short, entrepreneurship pushes quality improvement as well. Thus, in place of country's future decider, it is important for the government to recognize and take

interest on the development of women entrepreneurship. This also may be applied in Malaysia.

In Malaysia, there are ample of supporting components and strategies to boost and help female for a business startup. The Third Malaysia Plan which was established for the development of the country from year 1976-1980, was the first policy focusing on participation and contribution of female to the economy. In 1989, National Policy on Women (NPW) was encircled to start gender equality and women's empowerment. At that point, it became a premise for some ensuing plans and programmes, particularly Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-1995), which has a complete section with programmes that decidedly sanction women development. As stated in the Report of Measuring and Monitoring Gender Equality from Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development of Malaysia, National Policy on Women is built up to ensure adjusted portion in the accomplishment of monetary reserves, properties and information, chances and welfares of advancement for men and women, encourage participation of women in every aspect of national development as per expertise and needs so as to the end goal to eradicate poor, lack of awareness and absence of education and thusly make a diplomatic, congruous and prosperous nation.

The assistant minister in Chief Minister's Department (Bumiputera Entrepreneur Development), Naroden concurred that there are more women holding position in senior and top administration levels in Malaysia. As reported by Companies Commission of Malaysia 2003, there were 49,554 units of women-owned organizations enrolled in 2000 and 54,626 units in 2001 which was 10.23% growth in 1 year (Teoh and Chong, 2008). Certainly, to accomplish that, the credit goes to the founding of Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCDD) in year 2001. The ministry is established to lead and accomplish gender uniformity, create amicable family organization and liberal as well as caring society towards the objective of a cultured nation. The exertion from MWFCDD can be demonstrated through government allotted RM 2.11 billion in Budget 2012 for women empowerment and RM 50 million in Budget 2013 to support the double roles played by women who contributes towards the economic development. In Malaysia Budget 2013, 500 women will be trained as board members, single mothers will be given advisory services and training in entrepreneurship and 50,000 small women entrepreneurs will be benefited in promoting business online.

Similarly to most countries across the world, Malaysian women had lower status than men and confronted with dreadful predisposition and separation

(Leedy and Ormrod, 2007). Consequently, it is essential for government to start in establishing right and empowerment for Malaysian women. In the meantime, the exertion of government has been enhanced by the dynamic support and exercises of women's NGOs in the nation. For an instance, different social, economic and training have been executed to decrease destitution rates among women, particularly single mothers. These supports, aids and acknowledgments are part of the effort in urging female to be included in the workforce, as well as inspiring them to be an entrepreneur. Although, Malaysia has putting enormous and impressive efforts in women's empowerment and entrepreneurship development for decades, but their ability, potential and talent are still remained unexploited in the country.

To understand women entrepreneurship, there are thousands of resources readily available. In any case, from existing researches on entrepreneur, most are inclining towards recognizing identity of entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs. Be that as it may, the discoveries stay uncertain (Kim, 2008). Variables determining entrepreneurial is more engaged than hindrances affecting entrepreneurial in a large portion of business studies. Additionally, studies done on female entrepreneur at start-up period of business are much more constrained. In addition, as indicated by Wang and Wong (2004) present studies are additionally assessing on respondents' state of mind or discernment on entrepreneurship in developed countries. In other words, there were absence of studies accentuation on developing countries, for example, Malaysia. Study on female entrepreneurs in developing countries in regards to hindrances is required in light of the fact that the discoveries may vary. As known, developed countries have more abilities to deliver strong support and quality education which are more radical and therefore, separating conceivable and shrouded boundaries (Wang and Wong, 2004). In this manner, a noteworthy variety between developed countries and developing countries exists. In addition, the majority of existing studies conducted in Malaysia with respect to entrepreneurship, the propensity is more on male respondents. Initially, these studies are targeted for both genders however, in fact, there is constantly more than half of them are male. With the circumstance where male entrepreneurs outnumber female entrepreneurs in the country, it is difficult to get precise and mean conclusion on this subject matter.

Consequently, a study simply concentrate on female respondents is considered suitable in achieving the objective to distinguish, comprehend and assess women entrepreneurship.

Malaysian government has made uncountable pledges to enhance the position of women in the country, however the advancement stays moderate. Anwar (2011) stated that there is a disengagement between the standard of training Malaysian women obtained and their achievements in the financial and political fields. In spite of the fact that the imbalance gender equality in Malaysia has improved, yet Malaysia is still positioned adjacent to Arab and African nations in the Global Gender Gap Index of year 2010. This circumstance is not permitted in light of the fact that Malaysia is a high middle income country and aim to be a developed nation by 2020. The general public are aware that women develop a large portion of the potential ability base of the nation. With that, the support provided may not the requirements for female entrepreneurs. The vast majority of individuals emphasize on entrepreneurial inspiration thus hindrances faced are ignored. In contrast, comprehend the complications before providing aid is important in this regard. In addition, most of the existing researches studied on motivation of women entrepreneur, how women become successful or what actions can be taken to encourage more female entrepreneurial actions. This is noticeable in research conducted by Alam *et al.* (2011). The study trend is understandable, because female-owned businesses indeed have gradually increased from 18.0% in 2000-27.8% in 2003. However, the latest research conducted by World Bank indicates 15% of female entrepreneurs only in total for year 2012. The declination of women entrepreneurship is obvious. Therefore, those optimistic researchers in past are no longer suitable to be describe Malaysia situation today.

Although, there are many studies have been conducted to explain the women entrepreneurship, no matter in terms of motivation or barriers, implemented in overseas or domestic but, studies on declination of women entrepreneurship are still insufficient. Therefore, the research questions can be developed as below:

- Does fear of failure have relationship with declination of women entrepreneurship?
- Does lack of resources have relationship with declination of women entrepreneurship?
- Does family concern have relationship with declination of women entrepreneurship?
- Does traditional society have relationship with declination of women entrepreneurship?

The objective of this paper is to determine the factors that influence women achieving their full opportunity in the entrepreneurial field. Hence, the main objectives of this study are:

- To determine the relationship between fear of failure and declination of women entrepreneurship
- To investigate the relationship between lack of resources and declination of women entrepreneurship
- To identify the relationship between family concern and declination of women entrepreneurship
- To examine the relationship between the traditional society and declination of women entrepreneurship

Literature review

Declination of women entrepreneurship: Declination of women entrepreneurship is used to describe the decrease of intention towards entrepreneurship or intention venture business (Low and Macmillan, 1988). Theory of entrepreneurial expectation is a procedure driven theory (Bandura, 1991). Bandura contemplated that, behavior is reliant upon an individual's observation that they can complete the proposed action. As per the procedure driven theory, external environment impact considerations which shape disposition and form expectation, which if sufficiently solid leads one to action (Bird, 1992). Today, entrepreneurship has been considered as an essential and viable component in financial development and national growth by government and authorities, particularly women's entrepreneurship. However, studies have outlined that there are loads of elements that put off women from perceiving their maximum capacity abilities to turn into an entrepreneur while they could have imperative commitments to the general public's advancement and get socially and financially free (Halimi *et al.*, 2011).

Fear of failure: An overall overview from Global Entrepreneurial Monitor demonstrates that fear of failure is the top explanation behind aspiring entrepreneurs from not beginning a business (Bosma and Schutjens, 2007). Research from Henderson and Robertson (1999) in UK Universities demonstrated that students who were not entrepreneurially motivated were not certain to take risk or fearful of failure. As there is a relationship between identity characteristics, for example, fear of failure and self-assurance, the women's level of self-assurance has an immediate impact on job of women and their occupation position. However, Kourilsky and Walstad (1998) proclaimed that females are less keen on propelling a business and less certain about their abilities. In addition, low-level of risk taking attribute among women is an essential variable which affects women's likelihood to venture into new businesses (Kihlstrom and Laffont, 1979). Fear of failure is influential. If an entrepreneur fails, it will make him or her perceive negative image towards

success story. This is because failure affects one's self esteem and trust on one's ability (Bandura, 1991). Consequently, it affects his or her entrepreneurial future and intention.

Lack of resources: Resources incorporate physical innovation, financial funding, information, social network, and human capital. Availability of information is not equivalent between men and women in a few countries and fundamental education are not still feasible for women (Halimi *et al.*, 2011). This is specifically a predicament in creating economies in which the general public structure and economy factor led women to surrender education even at the fundamental level. Conversely, women's absence of learning about their individual, family, career and social rights and absence of exposure in professional and industrial organization, cultural and political happenings are illustrations of unequal chances to women in most developing nations, for example, Iran. As indicated by Ramayah and Harun (2005), openness of capital is the most difficult variable to the advancement of entrepreneurial endeavors. The issues constantly confronted by entrepreneurs are financing in banking system and obtaining fund (Walters and Buchanan, 2001). Absence of women entrepreneurs' assistance by financial institutions may be an issue because of gender stereotyping and segregation (Carter, 2000). Jones (2000) believe that social networking is essential in early phase of business particularly there is absence of interior resources.

Family concern: Some women entrepreneur who were part of some studies saw that family is one of the factors prevent them from progression (Itani *et al.*, 2011). Based on prior studies, marital status has additionally affected the women employment in a manner that single women has more flexibility to take part in economic and social undertakings instead of wedded ones. As indicated by a study by Itani *et al.* (2011), women in UAE may be permitted to work in certain occupation, however in the event that any of their career conflicting with their parenting role then it is more prone to be forgone. Also, in Iran, women are required to be a decent mother and a decent wife as opposed to a successful entrepreneur. Women do not possess adequate opportunity to take an interest in social and economic exercises. With that, their position as entrepreneur lack of attention in the society. Contrast with Malaysia, an examination ought to be done because of diverse cultural background. A study conducted by Sander and coauthors found out that married women have the lowest labour force participation. The study concluded that Malaysian women need to care

for their children due to their high fertility. Besides, the study also found out that the age group of women who are married and leave the labour market, are within the age of 20-55. They are at the age of having full energy and expertise to contribute to the country. Unfortunately, the country could not retain them in the process of economic growth.

The traditional society: Various studies have uncovered that individuals usually see business as a more male-related idea and consider it to be a manly area (DiMaggio, 1997). The general public perception about women as mothers and wives instead of successful business owner is more often another boundary for women entrepreneurship. Based on a study by Achtenhagen and Welter, Asian culture has impression that women ought not to be business owner due to that women are less proficient, less apparent and less competent. Based on previous studies, most men mainly refrain trusting the financial independence of their wives since they assume that independent women are a challenge to be controlled (Munachonga, 1988). Nonetheless, the vast majority of studies are conducted in prior years. These outcomes may not be strong because of changes happened over years and diverse level of openness in today's society such as Malaysia.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Figure 1 shows the research framework of this study. The framework has been implied to identify the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. The independent variables consist of fear of failure, lack of resources, family concern and the traditional society. The dependent variable for this study is declination of women entrepreneurship. From this research framework, testable hypotheses can be developed to examine the validity of their relationship. Hence, all the testable hypotheses are shown as follows:

- H₁: There is a significant relationship between fear of failure and declination of women entrepreneurship
- H₂: There is a significant relationship between lack of resources and declination of women entrepreneurship
- H₃: There is a significant relationship between family concern and declination of women entrepreneurship
- H₄: There is a significant relationship between the traditional society and declination of women entrepreneurship

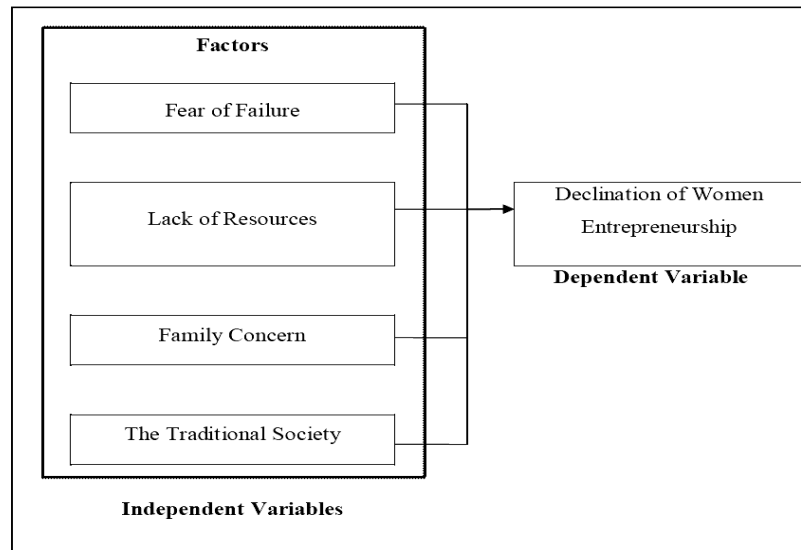


Fig. 1: Research framework

Paper pencil questionnaires are used in this study, because it is time and cost effective, as the questionnaires are sent to a large pool of respondents at one time. Other than that, respondents have a tendency to be more honest and legitimate while offering an explanation to the questionnaires concerning debatable issues because of the way that their answers are unidentified (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). In order to rectify the issue of distance, a web based questionnaire is designed and implemented, where deemed to be time effective and cost saving. This method involve sending the respondents the questionnaire via email along with an address link that lead the respondent to a website to answer the questionnaire. With that, these are the two data collection method that deemed to be suitable for the purpose of this study. The type of questions that were developed in the questionnaire are closed-ended questions. The respondents of the questionnaire are asked to select their answers from a set of choices provided by the researcher. The target respondents for the purpose of this study consist of women working in offices in Malaysia. Besides that, another criterion as a respondent of this study is working women with full time occupation. The respondents for this study spanned from various races and states in the country. Data analysis is the procedure of presenting and analyzing mathematical data. For this research study, the analyses were consisting of descriptive, reliability and correlation analysis. The study is guided by the findings that are related to the research questions as well as the objective of this study. The data obtained is were analyzed in order to identify, describe

and explore the relationship between declination of women entrepreneurship and the four selected factors (fear of failure, lack of resources, family concern and traditional society). The study used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0 to analyze the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

From Table 1 there were 103 respondents in total, 47 responses were collected through paper pencil questionnaire method and 53 responses from web-based questionnaire method. Meanwhile, the usage of computerized questionnaire method was slightly higher than the other, which recorded 54 and 46%, respectively. The usage of each data collection method was purposely controlled by researcher. This is to avoid the risk of date method could be an influence in this study.

Reliability test is vital for a research to be sound, because it set the assessment free from bias and distortion. According to DeVon *et al.* (2007), reliability refers to the proficiency of questionnaire to constantly measure an element and how well the items fit together, hypothetically. One of the estimators of reliability that commonly used in research is internally consistency reliability. Internal consistency inspects the inter-item correlation within an instrument and points out how well the items fit together theoretically (Nunally and Berstein, 1994). Table 2 shows the result of Cronbach's alpha testing for each variable in this research.

Table 2 shows all variables are reliable. The declination of women entrepreneurship (0.634), fear of

Table 1: No. of respondents from paper-pencil question naire and web-based question naire

Type of question naire	No. of respondents	Percentage
Paper-pencil question naire	47	46
Web-based question naire	56	54
Total	103	100

Table 2: Reliability test

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	No. of item
Dependent variables		
Declination of women entrepreneurship	0.634	4
Independent variables		
Fear of failure	0.500	4
Lack of resources	0.706	4
Family concern	0.580	4
The traditional society	0.778	4

failure (0.5000), lack of resources (0.706), family concern (0.580) and traditional society (0.778). Although the Conbach's alpha value for both fear of failure and family concern stated the lowest, however it can still be accepted (Helmstadler, 1964).

The demographic data collected included of age group, cultural background, educational background, family background, occupation and gross monthly salary. The response is 100% which means all the participants responded to all the listed questions. There is no missing data for demographic section.

From Table 3, it indicates that majority of respondents were from the group age within 19-24 which has near to half of the overall respondents (48.5%). Chinese is the majority background of respondents. As shown in Table 3, there is 86.4% (89 respondents) of them followed by Malay (9.7%), Indian (1%) and other ethnics (2.9%). Educational background is essential because primary, secondary and tertiary education level has various degrees of assistance and exposure in entrepreneurship skill development. From Table 3, majority respondents (79.6%) have reached tertiary education which means university or college education. There is always a connection between family statuses that lead to entrepreneurship intention (Halkias *et al.*, 2011). Understanding the family background can help to explain the pattern of entrepreneurship intention. Hence, two sub questions are allocated under this aspect. The first question focus on husband and the second question concern on children. Table 3 shows that 26 of respondents are married (25.2%) while 77 (74.8%) are single. On the other hand, 17 of respondents have children and 86 of them are not having any children. Ten types of occupations are listed in the demographic section for participants to choose. This aspect is crucial because types of occupation can influence the development of entrepreneurship skills. The level of women to access training and advanced technology in different career will determine their entrepreneurship intention. From Table 3, most of respondents are from banking and finance field which records 23 in total

Table 3: Demographic profile of respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age group		
Below 18	0	0
19-24	50	48.5
25-30	30	29.1
31-35	13	12.6
36-40	3	2.9
Above 40	7	6.8
Total	103	100
Cultural background		
Chinese	89	86.4
Malay	10	9.7
Indian	1	1.0
Other	3	2.9
Total	103	100
Educational background		
Primary	0	0
Education		
Secondary	21	20.4
Education		
Tertiary	82	79.6
Education (College or University)		
Total	103	100
Family		
Yes	26	25.2
(Husband)		
No	77	74.8
Total	103	100
Family (Children)		
Yes	17	16.5
No	86	83.5
Total	103	100
Occupation		
Administration	16	15.5
Banking/Finance	23	22.3
Customer service	5	4.9
Education	13	12.6
Engineer	7	6.8
Manager	8	7.8
Sales/Marketing	10	9.7
Medical	1	1.0
Musician	0	0
Other	20	19.4
Total	103	100
Gross monthly salary		
= RM 1000	6	5.8
RM1001-2000	22	21.4
RM2001-3000	39	37.9
RM3001-4000	15	14.6
RM4001-5000	7	6.8
= RM 5001	14	13.6
Total	103	100

(22.3%). 20 respondents have occupation out of given, such as business consultant, business solution director, human recourse officer and information technology officer. One respondent works in medical field. In terms of gross monthly salary, the majority earn salary between RM 2001-3000 (39 respondents or 37.9%) and less than or equal to RM1000 stated 6 respondents (5.8%).

Table 4 shows the total average mean and standard deviation ranked from highest score to lowest. Declination of women entrepreneurship records 3.0389 mean and standard deviation of 1.13531. According to descending pattern on independent variables mean score, the sequence started with the variable lack of resources (3.4272), fear of failure (3.3738) family concern (3.3374) and

Table 4: Mean score analysis

Variables	Mean	SD
Dependent variable		
Declination of women entrepreneurship	3.0389	1.13531
Independent variables		
Lack of resources	3.4272	1.02965
Fear of failure	3.3738	1.02965
Family concern	3.3374	1.01694
The traditional society	3.0485	

Table 5: Summary of hypothesis result

Hypothesis	p-value	Finding
There is significant relationship between fear of failure and declination of women entrepreneurship	0.012	Not Supported
There is significant relationship between lack of resources and declination of women entrepreneurship	0.001	Supported
There is significant relationship between family concern and declination of women entrepreneurship	0.000	Supported
There is significant relationship between the traditional society and declination of women entrepreneurship	0.006	Supported

traditional society (3.0485). The result shows respondents tend to more agree with lack of resources as the most influential factor. Overall, women think that lack of resources is more likely the reason influencing their entrepreneurship declination.

As seen in Table 5, there is one hypothesis has been retained and three hypotheses have been rejected. Fear of failure does not influence the declination of women entrepreneurship. On the other hand, lack of resources, family concern and the traditional society does have influence on the declination of women entrepreneurship respectively.

The research found that there is no significant relationship between fear of failure and declination of women entrepreneurship. The result however contrasts with general perspective. Normally, one would think that fear of failure definitely is one of the highest barriers for women to start up own business. However, this factor is not solid in Malaysia. These fears can be mobilized people and hold them back from taking risk at something have never done before. But, as long as people are able to find inspiration, have positive attitude and have creative thinking do not fear to fail. As time goes by, Malaysian women have higher confidence and wiser mind towards being rejected.

The study found that lack of resources has positive relationship with declination of women entrepreneurship. For developing countries, the accessibility of information is not equal for men and women (Halimi *et al.*, 2011).

Hence, the resources in Malaysia could be relatively more difficult to be obtained by women compare to men. This conclusion is evident by the response from female participants which have tendency to agree the statement “existing resources such as training and subsidies hardly to reach me”. The study conducted by Nor'Aznin and Norehan regarding labor force participation of women in Malaysia also found that, women farmers are in disadvantage position in terms of access to resources and service.

The result of the study also supports that there is a significant relationship between family concern and declination of women entrepreneurship. In fact, women's low entrepreneurial spirit can attributed to lifetime choices between work and family. Malaysian women still place family before career, even more than other neighbouring countries. This is supported by the latest report of Malaysia Economic Monitor: Unlocking Women's Potential (2012) report. Atleast 500,000 and as many as 2.3 million Malaysian women are “absent” from the labour market which is the lowest participation in South East Asia. The reason for this to happen is that Malaysian women have difficulty in merging labour market activities with family obligations.

The relationship between the traditional society and declination of women entrepreneurship is proved in this study. To certain extent, Malaysia is still considered as Islamic society (Offenhauer, 2005). The women status in Islamic society is relatively lower than men. This does not mean women are not important in the society, it means that inclusion of male in economies activities is being promoted in community (Azam *et al.*, 2009). Hence, the nature of Islamic society causes Malaysian women has fewer opportunities in family and society since men is always the one being focused. Besides that, in the middle of liberal society and conservative society, Malaysian women tend to think that traditional masculine business culture is still dominant in the society. In Malaysia, there is only 7% of women are board members.

CONCLUSION

The result of this research is consistent with previous studies and parallel with current situation in Malaysia. Malaysian women do not see fear of failure as factor of not venturing entrepreneurial activities. In contrast, lack of resources, family concern and the traditional society are influential for them. The analysis presented in this study will serve as a guide to action for all those who discover. However, to become competitive country in the world, all the members of this society have the responsibility to build a growth model that places the

women entrepreneur at the heart of Malaysia economy in this century. Many factors can be identified in future studies as this research contented four factors only. The other possible factors include lack of ideas, lack of social network, lack of managerial skills and others may include and explore further. These factors could be influential in coming years. Besides that, future research can focus on pre-women entrepreneur. In another words, existing women entrepreneur should not be the target. By doing this, different angle of view can be interpreted from it. Furthermore, there is a need to study only the effect of government effort towards women entrepreneurship intention. This is because investment from government does not seem to have return. Moreover, it is recommended to increase and expand the size of sample in future study. The wider the study area, it is more likely to represent entire market. Besides, future research may include more countries. Hence, differences between them can better describe and understand the women entrepreneurship in different environment.

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