DETERMINANTS OF BUSINESS PERFORMANCE AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

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By

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ABSTRACT

Since several decades ago, women entrepreneurs in Thailand have been continuously encountering issues and challenges in business which could be divided into three important parts, namely personal (motivation & risk-taking), social (work-family balance) and organizational (management, marketing, financial and operational competencies) issues. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine the determinant factors that affect the performance of women entrepreneurs in the Southern region of Thailand. The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative approaches that comprised of a self-administered questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to gain a better understanding of the study context. The respondents were the Southern Thailand women entrepreneurs who were sole proprietors and had been operating their business for more than two years. About 330 usable questionnaires were used for the data analysis. This study also involved interview sessions with 21 selected women entrepreneurs from three districts, i.e. Hatyai, Songkhla, and Sadao, to probe for additional information. The findings discovered that risk-taking has a positive and significant relationship with business performance. Thus, only one out of seven linear relationships is found positive and significant. In addition, the qualitative results revealed that the main motivation for the women entrepreneurs to start their business is the positive advice from others, i.e. family and friends, and also their own personal desire to earn incomes to support their families’ expenditures. Most respondents seem to ignore the existence of risks, and in most cases they are able to resolve their business issues competently. They do not experience any family conflict; hence they are capable of balancing their work and family matters. Furthermore, they also do not face serious problems related to management, marketing, financial and operational competencies. The results of this study provide evidence and explanation of the determinants of business performance among women entrepreneurs in Southern Thailand, and also contribute some crucial insights to the policy-makers to further develop and improve the current policy and training programs or workshops for the Thai entrepreneurs.

Keywords: women entrepreneurs, success, business performance, business competencies
ABSTRAK


Kata kunci: usahawan wanita, kejayaan, prestasi perniagaan, kompetensi perniagaan.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction
Women entrepreneurs make an important contribution to employment, innovation and prosperity formation in all economies (Brush, Carter, Gatewood, Greene, & Hart, 2006). As reported by Kelley, Brush, Greene, and Litovsky (2011), in 2010, more than 52% of the world’s women entrepreneurs population started up new businesses in various fields, and the figure representing an additional of 83 million women who had launched their business at least three and a half years. The total of 187 million women exemplifies the contribution of women in the entrepreneurship and business ownership worldwide.

In Asia, women entrepreneurs have also marked their contribution. Studies in women entrepreneurs in Malaysia revealed that management skills (Md Isa, 2011), family support, inner drive and relationship in the society are the important factors that influence their business success (Alam, Jani, & Omar, 2011). In a different study done in Indonesia, marketing and financial were found to affect Indonesian women entrepreneurs’ success a great deal (Tambunan, 2007).

Although the rising significance of women entrepreneurs in the world is gradually recognized, only few studies are discussed in this area (Brush, de Bruin, & Welter, 2009). Similarly, in depth studies on women entrepreneurs in Thailand are also lacking (Kongsinsuwan & Johnsson, 2008; Pettie, 2002), thus this situation calls for more studies to be undertaken to fully understand the current phenomenon. In
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