

**DETERMINANTS OF BUSINESS PERFORMANCE
AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS
IN SOUTHERN THAILAND**

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**DETERMINANTS OF BUSINESS PERFORMANCE AMONG WOMEN
ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTHERN THAILAND**

By

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**Thesis Submitted to
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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

Sejak beberapa dekad yang lalu, usahawan wanita Thailand sering berhadapan dengan isu dan cabaran dalam perniagaan yang boleh dibahagikan kepada tiga bahagian penting iaitu; isu peribadi (motivasi dan pengambilan risiko), sosial (keseimbangan antara kerja dan keluarga) dan organisasi (kompetensi dalam pengurusan, pemasaran, kewangan dan operasi). Justeru, tujuan utama kajian ini ialah untuk mengkaji faktor penentu yang boleh mempengaruhi prestasi usahawan wanita di wilayah Selatan Thailand. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dan kualitatif yang merangkumi soal selidik dan temu bual separa struktur, bagi mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang konteks kajian. Responden kajian ialah usahawan wanita dari Selatan Thailand yang merupakan pemilik tunggal perniagaan, dan perniagaan mereka telah beroperasi lebih dari dua tahun. Sebanyak 330 soal selidik telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Bagi mengumpulkan maklumat tambahan, kajian ini juga turut melibatkan sesi temu bual dengan 21 usahawan wanita yang dipilih dari tiga wilayah iaitu Hatyai, Songkhla, dan Sadao. Penemuan kajian mendapati bahawa pengambilan risiko mempunyai hubungan yang positif dan signifikan dengan prestasi perniagaan. Maka, hanya satu daripada tujuh perhubungan linear yang didapati positif dan signifikan dalam kajian ini. Selain itu, penemuan kualitatif menunjukkan motivasi utama yang menyebabkan mereka memulakan perniagaan ialah nasihat positif dari orang lain seperti keluarga dan sahabat, serta keinginan untuk meraih pendapatan bagi membantu perbelanjaan keluarga. Kebanyakan responden tidak begitu mengendahkan kewujudan risiko perniagaan, dan dalam kebanyakan kes, mereka mampu menyelesaikan isu perniagaan dengan cekap. Mereka tidak berhadapan dengan masalah serius yang berkaitan dengan isu pengurusan, pemasaran, kewangan, dan operasi. Dapatan kajian ini menyediakan bukti dan penerangan mengenai penentu-penentu kejayaan perniagaan dalam kalangan usahawan wanita di Selatan Thailand, selain menyumbang maklumat penting kepada pembuat polisi bagi membangun dan memperbaiki polisi sedia ada, program dan bengkel latihan untuk usahawan Thailand.

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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