

**STRENGTHENING MALAY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH  
BUSINESS INTELLIGENT**

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## **Abstract**

In general, the development of women entrepreneurship, as well as important to other business sector, has been growing rapidly in Malaysia. The significant importance of women entrepreneurship especially Malay women entrepreneurship to the growth of overall Malaysia's economy is proved by the variety of initiatives, policies and organization that established for women entrepreneurs. These are including venture capital, financial funding, training, physical infrastructure such as entrepreneur incubator and laboratory, business consultant, an organization of National Women Entrepreneurs, USAHANITA's, and so on. However, contribution of Malay women entrepreneur is still not really discussed intensively and to the best of knowledge, the improvement of business performance has not tested well because of some issues and challenges in the marketplace. Thus, the main objective of this paper is discussing the challenges that faced by Malay women entrepreneur such as identified as local and global based issues. Thus, the need to strengthening Malay women entrepreneur competitive level is a vital important to fostering the greater capacity of them, especially for achieved global standard of technological and innovation. Strategically, this paper is focused on business intelligent resources as information technology strategy for strengthening Malay women entrepreneurs' to positioning them into competitive advantages on the marketplace. Business intelligent is not really explored to apply in contact of Malay women entrepreneur strategy because of some limitations. Finally, some aspect of information strategy planning is discussed for establish business intelligent within Malay women entrepreneur firms, because key success factors of business intelligent implementation in started from strategy planning point of view.

Key Word: Malay Women Entrepreneurship, Business Intelligent

## **INTRODUCTION**

In general, the development of women entrepreneurship, as well as important to other business sector, has been growing rapidly in Malaysia. The significant importance of women entrepreneurship especially Malay women entrepreneurship to the growth of overall Malaysia's economy is proved by the variety of initiatives, policies and organization that established for women entrepreneurs. These are including venture capital, financial funding, training, physical infrastructure such as entrepreneur incubator and laboratory, business consultant, an organization of National Women Entrepreneurs, USAHANITA's, and so on. Sarri and Trihopoulou (2005) identified that entrepreneurship is a decisive factor in order for today's economy of knowledge to attain its competitive and dynamic character. It is the driving force for the achievement of economic development and job creation, contributing at the same time to personal development and effectively dealing with numerous pathogenic social phenomena. Similarly, Thurik and Wennekers (2004) claimed that in today's world small businesses, and particularly new ones, are seen more than ever as a vehicle for entrepreneurship, contributing not just to employment and social and political stability, but also to innovative and competitive power.

Starting a new firm is a very important decision to an individual, which is become the focal point in the investigation of entrepreneurship regarding individual's qualities as an entrepreneur. According to Davidson and Burke (2004) firms that has owned by women entrepreneurs are growing phenomenon around the world today. For instance, in 1992 women accounted for 38 percent of small business ownership in the USA, double the number of women entrepreneurs

found in the same country in the early 1980s. McKay (2001) cited that in 1999 women accounted for almost half of all small businesses in the USA. Similarly, Still and Timms (2000) discussed that women have played a major part in this growth in the number of small business in Australia. Furthermore, by the mid-1990s, Fielden, Davidson, Dawe and Makin (2003) was estimated that women-owned firms in the UK accounted for between a quarter and a third of all business. In France, women represent 26 percent of entrepreneurs as cited by Orhan and Scott (2001) and in Greece about one in every two women participates in the country's work force and 21.3 percent are self-employed as well as published in Eurostat (2001). The above indicates that today, a growing percentage of small businesses in different parts of the world are owned independently by women entrepreneurs and Malaysia is no exception.

In the case of Women entrepreneurs of Malaysia, specifically on skills and entrepreneur development, training programs have been established to enable women to improve themselves and take advantage of the opportunities in the job market. In this regard, courses in areas such as business and organizational and financial management were implemented. Skills training programs provided by the Center for Instructor and Advanced Skills Training were expanded and resulted in an increase of 19.4 percent in the female enrolment between 1995 and 2000. Measures were also undertaken to facilitate the involvement of women in business through the provision of easy access to capital. The Women's Entrepreneurs Fund was established in 1998 with an allocation of RM 10 million. A total of 12 projects amounting to RM 9.5 million were approved under the Fund. Through the Small Entrepreneur Fund, a total of 6,000 women entrepreneurs obtained loans amounting to RM 65 million (approximately US\$171,052) (EPU 2001). However, ironically, the role of the government is very important in fostering private sector entrepreneurship in Malaysia. Nevertheless, although there are many programs and financial support systems for entrepreneurs, they have not been as effective as they should be. Here, the paper is suggest to Malay women entrepreneurs of Malaysia to used business intelligent as one of solution for strengthening them self for faced the current challenges of business pressures, both in the local and global landscape.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER**

The main objective of the paper is to discuss the challenges that faced by Malay women entrepreneur such as identified as local and global based issues. Secondly, the paper is introduced business intelligent (BI) as technological invention to strengthening Malay women entrepreneur competitive level as a vital important platform to fostering the greater capacity of them, especially for confront with local and global issues of technological and innovation.

### **THE CHALLENGES OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL BASED ISSUES**

The current trends of business are that have significant relation with competitive advantages because the latest trends will affect the entrepreneurs on how to decide and replicate the decision from one place to one place, to make the entrepreneurs closer to the new environment. Obviously, Abdul Manaf Bohari (2008) discussed that there are sixth current trends that the entrepreneurs must take care, such as the ones stated below:

- Increasing awareness toward environmental issues as well as air and water pollutions, global warming, acid rains, and so on.
- Changing pace and location of people's real life as well as migration of rural people to urban areas, changing of physical, geographical, life styles, and many more.

- Changing household composition and family values, such as tendencies toward luxury products, increase in income, decrease of nuclear family, and so on.
- Growing health consciousness around the world and many people are well aware of healthcare problems and solutions.
- Expanding worldwide market, in local-based demands surrounding the world.
- Increasing diversity of workforce, market and societal norms. These even will create new cultural norms accepted by various people.

In fact, the societal environment is very close to women entrepreneur’s trends that occur and change from time to time. Here, women entrepreneurs must take care and consider environmental aspects as vital facts into decision making process. Basically, societal environment is divided into four (4) main categories, such as economic, technological, political and socio-cultural. Suppose, the women entrepreneurs must not be selective to any singles even because all of these factors are much related with each other. As trends change, societal environment will follow the sequence. As a result, women entrepreneurs need to analyze every component of societal environment because it’s vital to be used in designing and creating organizational competitive advantages. Therefore, all of the components are shown in *Figure 1* and this figure is quite important when we want to know what the insights of competitive advantages forces are.

**Figure 1: Specifies Components of Organizational Societal Environment.**

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Technological</b>	<b>Political &amp; Legal</b>	<b>Social &amp; Cultural</b>
-Economic development -Per capita income -GDP trends -Currency rates -Unemployment level -Wage levels -Nature of competition -Membership in Trade Organization -Outsourcing capability	-Technology transfer -Energy cost/price -Natural resource -Skills level -Knowledge level -Internet technology -ICT worldwide infrastructure -Patent/Trademark -Intellectual capital -Rapid change of technology -Mobile devices used widely -Wireless applications exits	-Political ideology -Tax laws -Migration of people, resources and skills -Stability in government -Trade regulations -International relationship -Foreign policies -Legal system -Regulation on foreign ownership of assets -Negative activities	-Language -Demographics -Lifestyle -Religious beliefs -Literacy level -Norm & value -Human rights -NGOs activities -Environmental issues -Status symbols -Family institutions -Education & training level - Attitudes toward foreigners

Sources: Abdul Manaf Bohari (2008).

In regard with Figure 1, particularly, what are some of the complexities of international business environment for women entrepreneur’s firm? What are the factors that they consider when operating a business in a foreign country? Actually, doing business internationally is very different than doing business here in Malaysia because different countries have different rules and regulations regarding business routine transactions. It is very important that women entrepreneur’s firms are cognize of the local laws and tariffs involved including the schemes and policies. This is to ensure that international shipping companies have to pay tariffs, custom duties, and need to make sure they have their clearance. For instance, maybe women

entrepreneur's firm use information technology to give them a competitive advantage by linking their information systems with their clients such as corporate people, business executives, lecturers, and so on. By doing it in this way, perhaps information exchange will flow-in and flow-out from and to the firm that finally make them to achieved high accessibility to valuable information. Ultimately, the women entrepreneur's firm will be more knowledgeable and drive them on to achieve the highest level performance compared to last year or before.

Locally, Malaysia has a vibrant entrepreneurial base with a huge potential to become a global player. Indeed, past and current policies to create a class of entrepreneurs have succeeded in the sense that there are more Bumiputeras involved in business and entrepreneurship now compared to before. Non-Bumiputera (mainly Chinese) companies are spreading their reaches overseas, proving that Malaysian companies can succeed in the global arena. Nevertheless, as evidenced by the drastic decline in Bumiputera businesses and corporate equity following the economic crisis, the quality and level of competitiveness of the majority of Bumiputera companies could be improved so that they are more resilient to the ups and downs of economic cycles (Mohamed Ariff & Syarisa Yanti, 2004). Considering the effect of global issues, perhaps the time is ripe to begin to expand the new hope of Malay women entrepreneurship to become successfully, as achieved by non-Malay women entrepreneurship of Malaysia. Hence, there is a need for utilizing the business intelligent sophistications as a solution for strengthening their position in the local and global marketplace.

### **BUSINESS INTELLIGENT RESOURCES AS A SOLUTION**

Strategically, this paper is focused on business intelligent (BI) resources as information technology strategy for strengthening Malay women entrepreneurs' to positioning them into competitive advantages on the marketplace. BI is not really explored to apply in contact of Malay women entrepreneur strategy because of some limitations. In fact, the women entrepreneurs firms need to think about capability of information system resources as well as business intelligent resources that potentially to apply in their organization. BI has capabilities support the strategy implementation and make our strategy more effective to them. However, women entrepreneurs' must know what capabilities of BI that businesses must have to survive in the knowledge age? For that, the BI must also be reliable and user friendly to every party and be updated from time to time. If BI system is not user friendly, then, employees as well as customers will not use it. This situation can create nonsensical situation that has potentials to create negative image to an organization.

In this knowledge age, women entrepreneurs' must realize that an information system by itself can rarely provide a sustainable competitive advantage for those who know how to use an IT strategy in the right way, place and time. Besides that, a competitive advantage provided by BI is rarely sustainable because most information systems can be duplicated by our competitors and there is no guarantee that an advantage will last indefinitely. One of the best ways to settle this problem is by establishing BI department in the firm. Similarly, from a business point of view, BI will help the women entrepreneurs' manager to perform better in environmental scanning, and make the process be more systematic and precise. This will happen because BI deals with strategic factors getting to corporate and business level planners and then, directly to decision makers in a timely manner. For a particular purpose, a computerized BI can be used to develop a series of likely data industry scenarios as well as a number of alternative strategies and

implementation programs. So, the efficiencies are coming from integrated BI that allows the firm to share the knowledge with customers and suppliers. By this way, the company 'fights' as well as has a competitive secret weapon in a dynamic marketplace. To the extent that a firm has a completely design the integrated BI, it is a strength that can provide a significant competitive advantage for a long time in business strategic planning.

Some of women entrepreneurs' firm maybe has the first time to hear BI. Is BI similar to the movie entitled "Artificial Intelligent"? Basically, BI can help the women entrepreneurs' firm in decision making process and establish or strengthen the competitive advantages by integrating the external and internal information into a whole set of knowledge based information (Laudon & Laudon, 2007). Also, BI can allow different business units to share information in the firm of women entrepreneurs' core competencies. Simply, BI is defined as human based systems that are made by extracting the information from the external and internal of an organization (O'Brian, 2007). The information is retained and stored in the systems and so, by establishing certain systems designs, the business intelligent will react and function as well as a human. It means that the BI system will have similar characteristics and thinking systems such as how the humans think and act in the real life (Turban, McLean, & Wetherbe, 2007). It is clear that BI systems are a special systems design, based on human specification intelligence and sometime called as an expert system.

Business intelligence (BI) is an extensive category of methods, technologies and software for collecting, storing, structuring, analyzing, and accessing the data with the object of making better business decisions. We also can define business intelligence as business processes for accumulating and analyzing the business data from databases and data warehouses. Main business intelligence goal is to provide sufficient information for making business decisions. Depending on the aim of the business decision, business intelligence methods can provide information about company customers, market trends, effectiveness of marketing campaigns, companies competitors, or even predict future activities (Estart, 2010). Similarly, BI is define as computer-based techniques used in spotting, digging-out, and analyzing 'hard' business data, such as sales revenue by products or departments or associated costs and incomes. Objectives of a BI exercise include (1) understanding of a firm's internal and external strengths and weaknesses; (2) understanding of the relationship between different data for better decision making; (3) detection of opportunities for innovation; and (4) cost reduction and optimal deployment of resources. See also competitive intelligence (Business Dictionary, 2010).

They are four major advantages of applied the BI in business operation which finally contributes to the performance of today's business operations:

- BI is more permanent then other systems such as executive information systems, decision support systems, marketing information systems, and so on (Laudon & Laudon, 2007; Stir & Raymond, 2005). This is because managers, executives, workers and staff of any women entrepreneurs' can walk off the job, and when they do, they take their knowledge with them.
- BI is less expensive than other information systems. This is because of the others' approaches of information system development need the organization to hire, train, and pay employees for carrying out tasks and usually, employee will make a demand on salary according to their level of experience. But, BI is a man-based system and the entire human knowledge,

experience, and expertise are channelled to the 'body' of this system design (O'Brian, 2007; Parson, Oja, & Low, 1999). In short, BI has equal capabilities as what humans have.

- BI is consistent and thorough. Most of the times, BI will do a more than usual of what humans do. This is because BI is a system based, controlled by instructions, and can be programmed as what it requires to be. This means that this system will have consistency in actions, decision, thinking, and executions, in which the database is fully designed with human-related knowledge and skills (Turban, McLean, & Wetherbe, 2007; Hogg, 2002). Because of the consistency, we assume that the systems have fewer mistakes than what a human can do.
- BI can be duplicated easily. These bring hope to managers to reuse the system for an extended generation, with up-dated knowledge and skills inside it. With a BI system, users such as managers, executives, support staff, and many more will transfer the information and knowledge into the system (Abdul Manaf Bohari, 2008; Laudon & Laudon, 2007). By using these methods, BI has stored the knowledge from one generation and later be transferred to another generation.

Business intelligent has major advantages when the firm decided to use it in the organization. Besides that, it is needed to know what the disadvantages of this kind of system are. Here, are the lists of major disadvantages of BI:

- BI does only what it is programmed to do and it does not allow for creativity and new ideas when the users need it immediately. If the managers want to have new characteristics and information of the content, they need to redefine and redesign some of the parts of the systems. (Abdul Manaf Bohari, 2008; Laudon & Laudon, 2007). This process will take more time such as initiating of building new information systems in the organization.
- BI helps individuals to recognize relationships between things, objects well than what humans can do (Laudon & Laudon, 2007; Stir & Raymond, 2005). But, this could happen by resetting the new instructions and programming and for that, the organization must have good systems analyses to monitor and maintain the system performance.
- BI allows for input from a limited broader focus unlike a very broad focus for humans. For humans, inputs are generated and restored for every second, time and day. (Turban, McLean, & Wetherbe, 2007; Stir & Raymond, 2005). But for the system, these activities couldn't happen because the systems are not given the permission to its own systems to adapt and restore automatically all of the input surrounding them. It was based on human instructions and sometimes, the content of systems will be updated once a year.
- BI are increasing organizations competitive strength, enhancing adaptability and productivity of business activities, and enabling organizations to respond rapidly to changes on market, in financial conditions and customer demands. By improving the efficacy of business decisions, BI improves the overall performance of the company (Estart, 2010). Here, by utilize the BI software that allows to perform fast, or even real time business analysis with the help of newest data mining techniques.

After understand about the advantages and disadvantages of BI systems, now we must learn about some of its basic applications. Generally, typical uses or applications of BI include:

- Information access and navigation which are information access is today's major application of BI. It is done by using different search engines that are offered in an online mode by an international company.

- Decision support and empowerment which are related to knowledge workers' needs for work support, especially in a decision-making process. For this, BI can facilitate decision-making activities and empower employees with the right ways of conducting the usual business transaction.
- Research and data retrieval. It is suitable to directly manipulate a distributed database system in a business setting that involves millions of information. These systems have the ability to perform the tedious, time-consuming, and repetitive tasks of searching informative sources and online databases, retrieving and filtering information from the surrounding the globe, and delivering results to the users through online systems such as the Internet, SMS, MMS, voice mail, and so on.
- Routine management activities are basically managing, controlling, monitoring and leading. For these common tasks, BI systems can even be used to assist advice and supervise the managers in performing their activities. Specifically, some management-oriented tasks that business intelligent systems can do include advise, alarm, alert, explore, broadcast, comment, deliver, list, argue, explain, protect, remind, mine, schedule, store, analyze, suggest, synthesise, summarize, learn, teach, transfer, translate, detect, and monitor.

### **INFORMATION STRATEGY PLANNING OF BUSINESS INTELLIGENT**

Some aspect of information strategy planning is important to discuss before the women entrepreneurs' established the business intelligent within their firms. It is needed to understand that key success factors of business intelligent implementation in started from strategy planning point of view. For a long term planning, the firm must have their information system strategic planning (Abdul Manaf Bohari, 2008). The women entrepreneurs' stakeholders for examples can use their strategic information systems to establish close linkages and networking with potential new customers and suppliers, and at the same time maintain their relationship with existing clients. The firm also can use their strategic information systems to create efficient customer feedback systems, establish good switching costs schema, maintain long term partnership with international companies, and in some instances, create stockless inventories of both products and services. By the ways, strategic information systems can help women entrepreneurs' to gain competitive advantage through their beneficial contribution to the strategic goals of business performance. These types of systems are also useful in terms of supporting the ability to review the long run of the integration between systems-business system and it's significantly to increase business performance and productivity by the time.

In fact, information system planning will lead to changes in goals, processes, products, or environmental relationships and finally help an organization gain a competitive advantage. Thus, the important things are how BI supports the strategic level of management and how BI creates long term benefits to business survival. Here, some of the ways that BI can support a strategic strategy of business are enabling new business models creatures, searching new markets with global penetration, fostering innovative of new ideas on products or services, enabling extension of existing products with new features, criteria, and attributes, allowing the differentiated of the uniqueness of products, and at the end, providing a computer-aided system for sales and marketing activities in organizations. Then, strategic information systems support and strengthen the higher level of strategies implementations of women entrepreneurs' firms (Abdul Manaf Bohari, 2008). Actually, strategic information systems have the ability and capability to significantly change the manner in which business is conducted in order to give the firm, a

strategic advantage continuously for a long time of business performance. Therefore, it is likely that any given strategic information systems will suffer a means of improving performance for a business goal. In addition, strategic information systems contribute to strategic goals and in doing this task, the systems must require a significant organizational change. So, it is often very difficult to quantify the impacts of strategic information systems in advance when there is so much unpredictable condition about the system. Here, strategic information systems are still the best option to get some advice and helps for women entrepreneurs' survival, both current and future terms.

In conclusion, BI systems will have a special ability and are well designed for supporting the process of managing in organization. Ultimately, this BI system will facilitate the managers to cope with the human based issues, phenomenon and any situations that needed for better information and advice. One specific tool of BI systems is the voice-activated interface agent that can function to reduce the burden on the users of having to explicitly command the computer. So here, BI systems could be a real time application to modeling the expertise, knowledge and information and then make it widely available for every level of management.

## **CONCLUSION**

Finally, new economy paradigm shift encourages the women entrepreneurs firm's to move faster than the old economy era, as discussed in early stage. The women entrepreneurs firm's must learn how to utilize the learning of scale, operational excellence, and global infrastructure to increase their future performance. They can constitute hard-to-duplicate competitive advantages that allow them to capture the rents on their innovation and research. Many have been trained to think that there is such a thing as a sustainable competitive advantage and they have been trained to think about innovation in products and technology, and no longer in innovation in business models. This is because of new requirements of business competition will change from time to time, without any announcements or signals.

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