

The Role of Digital Marketing and Product Branding in Developing Successful Women Entrepreneurs

Shamsul Huda Abd Rani^{1*}, Bidayatul Akmal Mustafa Kamil¹ and Norhayati Ali²

¹ College of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 01000, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

² Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah, 05150, Alor Setar, Kedah, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study involved collaboration between researchers at Universiti Utara Malaysia, Women Development, Health, and Senior Citizens Division at Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah, and Kedah Women Development Office. This study is particularly aimed at examining the impact of digital marketing and product branding on entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs are always considered weak and do not have the power of awareness to change their fate towards a better standard of living. Women entrepreneurs often face problems such as a lack of training and exposure to aspects related to entrepreneurship. Previous studies have shown that women entrepreneurs are the most affected, not only due to the lower size and age of the business but also because the business sector they engage in is also severely affected by the phenomenon of COVID-19. Therefore, it is hoped that the study might help to provide entrepreneurial motivation, expose women to contemporary entrepreneurial knowledge, and educate and provide guidance towards becoming successful female entrepreneurs. The research design for this study is quantitative. The questionnaires were prepared using two languages, which are English and Bahasa Melayu, using back-to-back translation. A total of 44 participants were involved in the study. The findings also show that variables such as digital marketing and product branding have a significant impact on entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs. In conclusion, women entrepreneurs must always be prepared to ensure the sustainability and continuity of their businesses. They also need to be more adaptive in facing the challenges that occur in the entrepreneurial environment.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Entrepreneurial Success, Product Branding, Women Entrepreneurs

1. INTRODUCTION

The involvement of women in the national workforce is very important to change the country from the status of a developing country to a developed country (Rani & Hashim, 2018; Hassan & Yusof, 2015). According to Thuaibah et al. (2007), nowadays, women are able to place them as leaders in many critical areas such as business, medicine, law, business, politics and others. Based on 2015 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report, entrepreneurial field which involves women become a great contribution to poverty reduction and economic development around the world. Furthermore, several factors have also been identified to help improve business performance, namely digital marketing and product branding. In facing the current of modernity parallel to Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0), entrepreneurs need to equip themselves with contemporary entrepreneurial knowledge so that they are better prepared for the changes that occur in the entrepreneurial world which are certainly difficult to predict.

*Corresponding Author: shuda@uum.edu.my

1.1 Problem Statement

More than 190,000 women entrepreneurs who are mostly involved in micro businesses and the service sector are also affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Abd Rahman & Ridzuan, 2021). Entrepreneurs need to be wise to organise new strategies to continue to earn income even though the country is still facing this crisis. It is not easy to continue a planned business strategy let alone survive, but entrepreneurs should remain positive and not give up. The world is now changing towards digitisation. Thus, it is necessary to provide knowledge about it to women entrepreneurs. Moreover, the previous research found that most of women entrepreneurs run a business that has a low age and in a small or small-scale business size. Therefore, they need more attention and assistance in order to sustain their business.

Women entrepreneurs also need a lot of patience and fill the time by improving knowledge and knowledge in entrepreneurial skills in addition to strengthening physically and mentally to face this global challenge. It is important to ensure that efforts to improve women entrepreneurs can be implemented so that they can achieve success. Moreover, several aspects need to be paid attention to by micro-entrepreneurs who still ignore the attractive factors of the product, including less attractive packaging and the absence of a halal certificate.

Therefore, this study was conducted to help women entrepreneurs continue to survive and grow their business by applying digital marketing techniques and a contemporary business approach especially is the post era COVID-19 phenomena. This phenomenon has impacted certain challenges for women entrepreneurs where most businesses involving entrepreneurs are disproportionately affected due to the economic recession.

The businesses they engage in are also exposed to the risk of business closure. Next, in the COVID-19 phenomenon that resulted in the closure of schools and the care of older family members, has caused female entrepreneurs to be more inclined to pay attention to the family, while at the same time they have to try to save their business (Manolova et al., 2020). In the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, business innovation including digital marketing, creative packaging, as well as product branding techniques are seen to help advance an entrepreneur's business. Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah is one of non-governmental organisational in the state of Kedah consists of several portfolios including women entrepreneurial welfare. There are numbers of women entrepreneurs joining this portfolio and they are lacking of contemporary approach in sustaining and developing their business. Therefore, this study looked at the digital marketing impact on women entrepreneurial success. Other than that, this study also examines the impact of product branding on women entrepreneurial success.

1.2 Research Objectives

There are two research objectives in this study. The first research objective is to examine the impact of digital marketing on entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs. The other objective is to examine the impact of product branding on entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section elaborates more on the constructs and the context of the study. The following section starts with the elaboration of entrepreneurial success, digital marketing, product branding, women entrepreneurs and also about Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah. The following section is hoped to give more understanding about the study conducted.

2.1 Entrepreneurial Success

Entrepreneurial success can be referred to the achievement of goals and outcomes by individuals or teams who have started and managed business or ventures. Entrepreneurial success can be divided into objective measure or financial measure and also subjective measure which is known as non-financial measure. According to Cheung and Halpern (2010), successful women are known as the one who can equalise family and work, where they are still able to spend time with their family even after a long hour of work. Additionally, the success of entrepreneurial women has been determined based on the identification they gain.

2.2 Digital Marketing

Marketing is an activity carried out by a company to put its products or services in the hands of potential customers. To do better than competitors, a business must know everything about their customers' needs, as well as how they can meet them. Digital marketing is referred to as the customer centric approach. Among the benefits of digital marketing are cost efficiency, interactive, compact and user-friendly content. Digital marketing is term for focused and marketing the goods or services interactively using digital technology to access and retain customers (Zahay, 2021).

Digital marketing covers the terms of interactive marketing, measurable, and also targeted goods and also services in order to by using technology to the targeted customers. The aim of the usage in digital marketing is to help promoting the particular branding, improving sales as well as shape the customer preferences via the digital marketing platform and also techniques. Digital marketing term can be interchangeably used with the terms of web marketing, internet marketing and also online marketing (Shaltoni, 2016).

The usage of the internet facility is emerging now and the allocation time by the customers spent online is also increasing (Bhagat et al., 2019). Marketing of products produced by micro and small businesses through traditional marketing methods is always a problem for these women entrepreneurs because market forces are constantly changing as well as consumer demands and they fail to keep up with the dynamic market. They are required to be innovative in their marketing strategies if they want to succeed. Due to lack of marketing knowledge, delivery, distribution and network weaknesses, they are unable to produce and promote products and services in a dynamic market.

2.3 Product Branding

A brand is a symbol, sign, logo, name, word, or sentence that companies use to distinguish their products from others (Sultan et al., 2019). A combination of one or more of these elements can be used to create a brand identity. Brand identity can be defined as a set of brand associations to aspire the brand strategist to maintain the product (Aaker, 1996). The legal protection given to a brand is known as a trademark. A brand consists of three things: what the company sells, what the company does, and the company itself. A brand represents a set of promises that imply trust, consistency, and defined promises. A strong brand has a unique position in the consumer's mind. Therefore, in order to maximise customer brand relationships, companies should understand how customers think, act, perceive, and make purchasing decisions (Davis, 2000). Product or service branding is seen as one of the company's most valuable assets. It represents the company's image, logo, slogan, or sign that the public recognises with the company (Sultan et al., 2019). The market is flooded with millions of products, names, symbols, signs, products, services, logos, people, or other entities. Therefore, it is very important for a product to be differentiated from other products through branding and positioning.

Most companies now realise that leveraging a brand can help a company or entrepreneur

achieve long-term growth objectives faster and more profitably. Entrepreneurs and companies need to see products and services as more than just products that customers buy. This is because the brand represents the total perception of the public towards customer service, reputation, advertisements and company logos (Sultan et al., 2019). When all these business elements work well, it will form a strong brand and a product that has a trusted image.

2.4 Women Entrepreneur

To date the number of registered SME entrepreneurs in Malaysia is 907,065 companies and of that number, 186,855 or 20.6 percent are women SME entrepreneurs. These women entrepreneurs are always considered weak and do not have the power of awareness to change their fate towards a better standard of living. According to Rani and Hashim (2018) and Rahayu (2012) women entrepreneurs often face problems such as lack of training and exposure to aspects related to entrepreneurship. In addition, this group also faces the problem of lack of knowledge about business opportunities as well as various government assistance schemes. Previous studies have shown that women entrepreneurs are the most affected not only due to the lower size and age of the business, the business sector they engage in is also severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (Manolova et al., 2020). This group is also said to not have a business opportunity to market the products as well as the services they produce.

2.5 Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah

Thus, this study involves knowledge transfer that covers important aspects of business through a new norm approach in conducting business involving women and single mothers registered under Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah Kedah. Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah is a charitable foundation established to help communities in need. Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah has two main roles, namely as an agent of change in social work through education, community development, health, youth and youth as well as training initiatives (Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah, 2020). Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah also plays a role in providing financial grants to other charitable organisations in the state of Kedah to help them carry out their activities. Apart from the Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah Kedah, the Kedah State Women's Development Department is also involved in this study.

3. METHODOLOGY

This section highlights the related aspect of methods in this study.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Positivism research paradigm was adopted. This research paradigm refers to an epistemological position that advocate the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond (Bryman, 2008). Thus, there is a body of literature variables as well as theories to support the work in this study.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative research design. The preparation of the items of measurement was performed. The reliability score was determined and a survey was conducted. Finally, the quantitative data was analysed, interpreted and discussed in response to the research problems. The next section highlights the detail of research methodology which are the population and sample, data collection and data analysis.

3.3 Population and Sample

The population in this study are women entrepreneurs in Kedah registered under Yayasan

Sultanah Bahiyah are 50 people. In terms of determining the sample size, several sample size tables had been referred. Based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size for a population of 50. In this study, a sample of 44 women entrepreneurs registered under the Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah Kedah were selected to participate in this study. The quantitative study in this research involved women entrepreneurs who are registered under the Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah Kedah.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The probability sampling was used in this study. Furthermore, the sampling technique that was used is a simple random sampling technique since the sampling frame is available. Probability sampling technique are identified as more suitable technique for research aiming at generalising the results to the population of the study. The sampling of probability in need of a list of elements of the studied population known as the sampling frame. The sampling frame was accessed through a directory of women entrepreneurs that was provided by Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah Negeri Kedah. The criteria are the sampling frame need to have the detail of members of the targeted population. Then, it needs to be complete as well as updated. Finally, not more than once should an element be listed. From the list, the questionnaires were distributed to the participant using the simple random sampling technique.

3.5 Measurement of the Items

The questionnaires were prepared using two languages which are in English and Bahasa Melayu using back-to-back translation. A cover letter was attached with each questionnaire to notify the respondents about the research information and assurance on confidentiality as well as anonymity in the study.

The questionnaire used in this study consists of two sections. First section represents the background and the profile of the respondents whereas the second sections highlight the question related to digital marketing, product branding and also entrepreneurial success. The item measured for digital marketing consists of 6 items, product branding consists of 5 items and entrepreneurial success consists of 9 items.

3.6 Data Collection

Data collection is carried out through a questionnaire that were developed. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents during an entrepreneurial programme conducted under Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah Foundation in the collaboration with Universiti Utara Malaysia and Women Development Department. This study applied a cross-sectional design as an extensive amount of data is needed to test the model and hypotheses. A survey can be defined as a systematic process of reviewing, designing, collecting, analysing and reporting facts in details.

3.7 Data Analysis

The Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) software was used to analyse the data in this study. This study involved descriptive data analysis and also inferential analysis such as Pearson correlation analysis and Multiple Regression analysis. The rationale in conducting descriptive analysis is to highlight the respondents in terms of the demographic aspect. Inferential analysis on the other hand is a branch of statistics that involves making inferences based on a sample from the population. Inferential analysis is the fundamental of statistical analysis and is used to make predictions, hypotheses testing and generalise findings from a sample to a larger population.

3.8 Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical framework for the study. The independent variables consist of

digital marketing and product branding whereas the dependent variable is represented by entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs. These variables are then analysed in measuring the effect of digital marketing on successful women entrepreneurs and also product branding impact on entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs. Therefore, in this study there are two hypotheses posited.

H₁: Digital marketing has significant impact on entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs.

H₂: Product branding has significant impact on entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs.

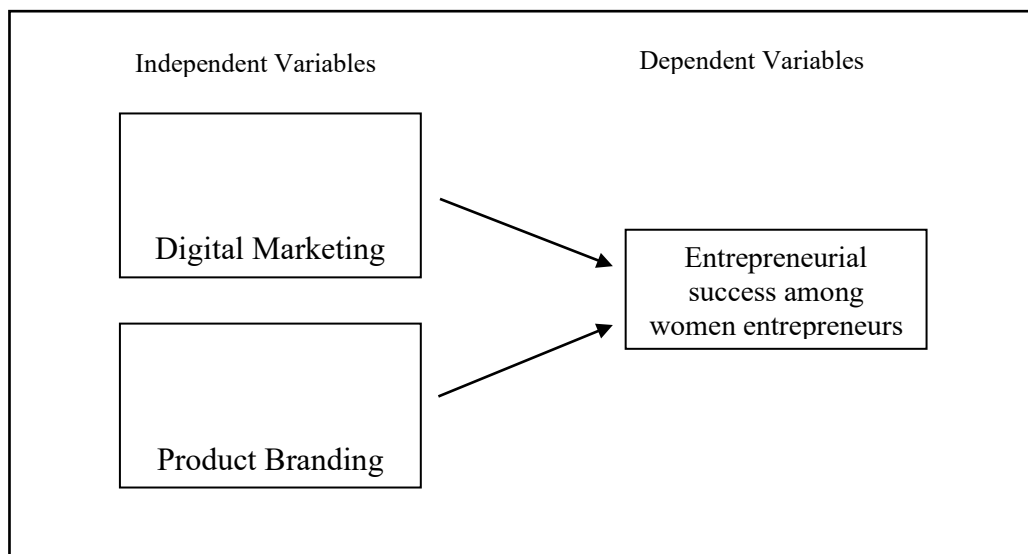


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

4. RESULTS

As for the results and discussion section, the descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, Pearson Correlation analysis as well as Multiple Regression analysis were explained. The detail of the discussion is elaborated in the following section.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 shows the mean value, standard deviation, skewness value and kurtosis value for the dependent variable which is entrepreneurial success and the independent variable which is digital marketing and product branding.

Table 1 Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis Values

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
<i>Dependent Variable</i>				
Entrepreneurial Success	4.25	0.462	-0.536	1.00
<i>Independent Variables</i>				
Digital Marketing	4.57	0.347	-0.163	-1.311
Product Branding	4.70	0.404	-0.861	-0.983

4.2 Reliability Analysis

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), the goodness of data with the instrument consistency and stability can be measured using the reliability analysis. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), also highlighted that the Cronbach's Alpha value which is near to 1 shows the high internal consistency reliability. It is considered reliable and acceptable if the Cronbach's Alpha value range between 0.7 to 0.9 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). However, it is considered a low reliability of the instrument when Cronbach's Alpha value is less than 0.7. Reliability analysis shows that for the dependent variable that is entrepreneurial success which contains 9 items, the Cronbach Alpha value is 0.819. While for the independent variable which is digital marketing which contains 8 items, the Cronbach alpha value is 0.770. Finally, for the branding variable, the total number of items used is 5 while the Cronbach Alpha value is 0.916.

Table 2 Cronbach Alpha Values

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Entrepreneurial Success	9	0.819
Digital Marketing	8	0.770
Product Branding	5	0.916

4.3 Pearson Correlation

The analysis of Pearson's Correlation was conducted in order to investigate the direction and strength of the relationship with the independent variables namely digital marketing and product branding as well as the dependent variable; entrepreneurial success among women entrepreneurs. Salkind (2009) stated that a correlation between 0.8 and 1.0 is seen as very strong, while a correlation between 0.6 and 0.8 indicates a strong correlation, then between 0.4 and 0.6 is reflected as moderate and a correlation between 0.0 and 0.2 is considered as very strong. weak correlation. Findings from this analysis are used in testing the significance of the hypothesised relationship among the variables studied. Table 3 shows the digital marketing has a significant relationship which is strong with entrepreneurial success at a correlation coefficient (r) = 0.608. While for another independent variable which is product branding has a moderate significant relationship with entrepreneurial success at correlation coefficient (r) = 0.420 and 0.572.

Table 3 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	Entrepreneurial Success	Digital Marketing	Product Branding
Entrepreneurial Success	1	0.608**	0.572**
Digital Marketing	0.608	1	0.657**
Product Branding	0.572	0.657**	1

4.4 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis had been used to explain the contribution of the independent variables of digital marketing, creative packaging and product branding to the variance of entrepreneurial success. The results show that the regression equation with the predictor $R = 0.664$, $R^2 = 0.440$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.419$. This revealed that the predictors (independent variables: digital marketing, creative packaging and product branding) accounted for 41.9% of the variance level in highlighting entrepreneurial success. From the illustration of the table, the figures show that

digital marketing scores with a beta value (0.211) has more contribution in highlighting entrepreneurial success variance other than product branding with beta values equal to 0.130.

Furthermore, the regression analysis highlights the significant effect of digital marketing ($\beta = 0.211$, $t = 2.636$, $P < 0.05$) towards entrepreneurial success which is β -value equal to 0.211, t -value is 2.636 and significant p -value is 0.032 which is less than 0.05. In addition, product branding shows evidence of a significant relationship ($\beta = 0.13$, $t = 1.324$, $P < 0.05$), that is, the β -value is 0.13, the t -value is 1.324 and 0.049 is below than 0.05 for the p -value significant level. This, it indicates that digital marketing, and product branding have a positive influence on entrepreneurial success. Therefore, in this study both H_1 and H_2 are accepted.

Table 4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Model		B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.
1	Constant	3.421	1.491		2.295	.033
	Digital Marketing	.281	.442	.211	2.636	.032
	Product Branding	.148	.457	.130	1.324	.049
<hr/>						
R	=	.664				
R ²	=	.440				
R ² Adj.	=	.419				
Dependent variable: Entrepreneurial Success						
** $p \leq 0.05$						

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of the research conducted have shown that all the factors such as digital marketing and product branding have a positive relationship with the success of female entrepreneurs at Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah. These two factors are seen as important in helping women entrepreneurs succeed in this challenging era. Additionally, this study is expected to help increase the motivation and self-confidence of women entrepreneurs under the Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah Kedah. Entrepreneurial motivation and self-confidence of entrepreneurs need to be increased considering the effect of COVID-19 pandemic affecting their business performance.

6. CONCLUSION

Therefore, women entrepreneurs need to always prepare themselves to ensure the sustainability and continuity of their business. They also need to adapt to the changes that occur both in the internal and external environment. As for the government, non-profit organisations (NGOs), higher learning institution, etc., they might play the role in educating the women entrepreneurs especially in giving the knowledge on digital marketing and also product branding to strengthen their business. If this can be realised, of course it can help improve the national economy and further reduce the poverty rate in the country particularly in the state of Kedah.

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