

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This study demonstrates the differences among women entrepreneurs involved in sole proprietorship and copreneurship based on their implementation on innovation management in enterprise. The implementation of the different types of innovation is based on the issues and challenges arising from sole proprietorship and copreneurship respectively in enterprise. The innovation management process was implemented differently among women entrepreneurs based on the nature of business involved, business structure, demographic profile, family situation and personal characteristics. By comparing the distinction of innovation management carried out by sole proprietors and copreneurs, some family conflicts and relationship issues were revealed. Further, the findings also indicated that product innovation, service innovation and administrative innovation were popular practised by women entrepreneurs. This chapter summarises this study, spells out the contribution of this study and the limitations faced by woman entrepreneurs. On top of that, potential areas of further research in this study also being recommended.

5.1 Summary of Research

From the findings of this study, it is revealed that the respondents have varied entrepreneurial intention to be involved in entrepreneurship. Most of the respondents have stated that the major motive to be self-employed is to generate more and/or better income. Therefore, entrepreneurship is recognized as a source of financial support to the family especially for the married women entrepreneurs and copreneurs. The findings from previous studies have stated that both women and men believed that establishing their own businesses would generate income and provide personal fulfillment because they desire autonomy and control. (Joan Winn, 2004). Besides, it conformed to the views of Morrison (2000) that societies with strong individualistic values would support individual health creation through involvement in entrepreneurship, for example, North America and Australia.

Secondly, it is found that most of the respondents and/or interviewees especially married woman entrepreneurs prefer to establish their own business due to the flexibility of working hours. This was supported by Scott (1986) who mentioned that establishing own business has long been perceived as more compatible with women's role in child-nurturing due to better flexibility. Thus, the results from the interviews displays family commitment among women entrepreneurs because flexible working hours enable the women entrepreneurs to make a balance between work and family. Therefore, copreneurs would like to involve in enterprise due to family factor because they need to take care of their children compared to sole proprietors.

Thirdly, it is also found that women entrepreneurs displayed personal characteristic such as independence in their business especially for sole proprietors. This is comparable to the study found by Brodsky (1993). Brodsky (1993) who indicated that women entrepreneurs were more independent and less trusting of others than those in corporate management positions but the researcher mentioned that this may be an effect of sole proprietorship. Moreover, the respondents from this study were also recognized as risk takers because they were willing to take risks when they implement innovation process for the first time. In addition, it was noted that women entrepreneurs also showed dynamic and risk-taking behaviour in this study.

It is identified that innovation has been one of the major drives for women entrepreneurs to be involved in entrepreneurship. Some of the respondents revealed that they would like to try something new which differs from their ordinary working life. This finding is agreeable to the previous research conducted by Schumpeter (1934) who stated that innovation was the real origin of the entrepreneurial activity.

In this study, it is revealed that women entrepreneurs faced a lot of challenges and issues in the enterprise. This is relatively similar to the problems faced by women entrepreneurs in other region such as Sri Lanka, Uganda and other Africa countries as stated in the literature review. The major problems would be financial factors which include start up finance and finance for growth. Additionally, it was recognized that this financial factors would be categorized as innovation barriers which are similar to the previous study by Oakley (1997).

It is found that women sole proprietors and copreneurs implemented innovation management differently based on their business structure. Sole proprietors would have to look for financial aid such as government agencies and relatives to start their businesses, whereas copreneurs could deal with financial problems internally among themselves by venturing into business gradually in order to stabilize financial status.

Besides, recruitment of staff is also being highlighted by the respondents as one of the biggest challenge they faced in entrepreneurship. This is problematic for women sole proprietors because they depend on manpower in business. In addition, skilled labour is considered as one of the innovation barriers which was identified by Freel (2000) in his study. However, copreneurs were not very dependable to staff especially major staff in copreneurship which they have spouses to assist. Therefore, copreneurs were quite independent when they deal with staff problems compared to women sole proprietors.

Further, challenges from the aspects of products and cost also arose among women sole proprietors especially small scale business. Some of the sole proprietors could not raise the price of the products in order to keep customers. However, there is no such issues for copreneurship in this study because the raise of price by the professional field such as dental and medical would be agreeable by the customers if good service was provided. In addition, Poor management skills due to lack of experience and training among the respondents affects the effectiveness of innovation management in entrepreneurship as mentioned by Barber *et al.* (1989) in the previous research.

Moreover, gender issues were also being addressed when the respondents revealed collection problems in enterprise. However, it is in contrast to the research conducted from the previous study where Ayadurai (2004) stated that women entrepreneurs faced difficulty in obtaining loans from the financial institution due to inequality bias faced by woman entrepreneurs in accessing business network and financial institution. In this study, most of the respondents did not use the proper channels to seek financial aid when they started their business due to a lack of awareness of local organizations which offer financial aids to women entrepreneurs.

From the results gathered, it was revealed that women entrepreneurs faced gender issues such as harassment from customers in the nature of the business that women sole proprietors involved such as salon. In contrast, copreneurs did not face this challenge in their businesses.

Respondent B who is a sole proprietor also faced criticism from customers who were lack of confidence in them. However, consumers have more confident towards women entrepreneurs in copreneurship compared to sole proprietors in this study because consumers have positive mindset towards family business.

In addition, work balance conflict does not exist in this study as compared to previous literature. For copreneurs, respondents were satisfied with their business and family as well. It is because women entrepreneurs involved in copreneurship were able to maintain the balance between work and family in this study.

One of the distinctive challenges faced by woman entrepreneur in copreneurship compared to sole proprietorship is the marital relationship between copreneurs may

deteriorate due to conflicts and arguments arising in copreneurship. This is supported by the study done by Joan Winn (2004) who mentioned that business conflicts in copreneurship would lead to eventual divorce. From this study, it is noticeable that women inherited Asian culture and they were in more masculine culture society, wife would tend to be agreeable in decision making in copreneurship. However, sole proprietors would be independent in decision making.

Besides, delegation of responsibilities among copreneurs is also considered as a great challenge faced by copreneurs. Women entrepreneurs who were engaged in copreneurship would tend to depend on their male partners when dealing with the delegation of responsibilities because they would tend to pass most of the responsibilities to their partners when they are in the same profession and/or skills. So, male partners would have to bear the major responsibilities in copreneurship. . Thus, it is inline with the research done by Fitzgerald and Muske (2002). In contrast, sole proprietor would be fully responsible and multitasking in the business.

Type of innovation was studied and derived from this study and it is shown that innovation management also depends on demographic profiles of respondents. Cost factor which relates to resource of the enterprise also affected the type of innovation management implemented among the women entrepreneurs. Most of the respondents informed that cost is the cause of greatest concern when they consider and plan for innovation in the organization. High cost will affect revenue of the business and respondents concluded that expenses must be able to be covered by cost in the process of the innovation.

Apart from the above findings, it is found that only one respondent has ventured into market innovation which brought additional revenue for the business. Market innovation is engaged at increased cost. Therefore, this study revealed that cost effectiveness is still the major concern innovation management either in sole proprietorship and copreneurship.

The trust element has been identified as the important factor to consider when people are involved in copreneurship. The respondents highlighted one of the greatest advantages involve in copreneurship is trust among partners that ease the innovation management in the business. Therefore, this kind of enterprise is a popular trend recently. Besides, copreneurs also stated that copreneurship also creates better understanding among the couples and they are financially more stable.

Furthermore, decision making through mutual consent and discussion among women entrepreneurs in sole proprietorship and copreneurship is also a major factor for the sustainability of the business involved. It is obvious that awareness of innovation among woman entrepreneurs is very limited because the respondents are unable to understand the concept and definition of innovation. Perhaps awareness campaign on innovation should be held to create a better understanding among women entrepreneurs. The importance of information which determines the appropriate and effective decision making will enhance innovation management in entrepreneurship as stated by Pineda *et al.* (1998).

5.2 Contribution of this study

This study is aimed at developing awareness among women entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship which reinforces the importance of innovation management in entrepreneurship. In the meantime, the findings also provide some suggestions which deal with preventive action for practitioners in entrepreneurship. It is therefore a beneficial guideline for women entrepreneurs who intend to involve in entrepreneurship.

From the challenges faced by the respondents, it is hoped to create awareness among women entrepreneurs in Malaysia in order to encourage them to go through the proper channels to obtain various forms of assistance such as resources, raw materials, microfinance, skills and training, technology assistance involved in entrepreneurship. In addition, more training and workshops should be conducted to train women entrepreneurs in the areas of technological skills and equip themselves to implement innovation in business.

It is believed that this study contributed to the innovation theory : entrepreneur paradigm as attempted by Schumpeter (1934) which explained that entrepreneurs were recognized as innovators who contribute to the economic growth of the nation. This element was shown from the feedback of respondents who were innovative in enterprise.

5.3 Limitation of the Study

The results indicated from the interviews may not be well represented as the eleven respondents were only involved in the personal interviews. Furthermore, it was found that respondents were too conservative to provide factual information to reveal real challenges faced in entrepreneurship when the interviews were conducted. There was a tendency of superficial answers given by the respondents.

Besides, the open-ended questionnaire was just a guideline for interviews purpose in this study. More relevant questions would be required to obtain from the respondents in order to get sincere answers regarding the business venture they are involved in. This is to extract more details regarding innovation management that women entrepreneurs implement in the enterprises.

5.4 Suggestions for Potential Areas of Further Research

In view of the above, a proposal for the use of observation and participation in this study should be included to improve the validity of the interview data derived from the transcription.

It is suggested that observation and participation to be conducted to generate the qualitative data in this research. This is to enable the researcher to observe the real environment of the business condition and nature of the business of the interviewees in order for the interviewer to be involved in the 'research' setting to obtain first hand knowledge of a range of elements that includes behaviour, social relationships, interactions and situational dimensions which are explained by Jennifer Mason. (Jennifer Mason, 2002, p.84).

In addition, the interaction with more people related to the interviewees may assist to interpret the most useful information to generate the data in order to provide 'more truth' in the study. The interviewer's participation in the enterprise of respondents to engage the real environment by interviewing the workers and customers of the respondents may assist in increasing the reliability of the methodology.

The integration of the above two methods : observation and participation enables the interviewer to conduct interviews in a more flexible and more free manner rather than in a planned and purposeful conversation. We address this method as observer-participant relationship. Data gathering could be done as the event or activity occurs and researcher could personally experience the real situation and/or context of the business nature to

capture the business situation without interrogation. Observation includes various monitoring conditions which comprises nonbehavioral and behavioral activities.

As a conclusion, it is suggested to recommend future research in respect of the following areas is recommended :

- (a) The impact of educational background of women entrepreneurs on the implementation of types of innovation in copreneurship; and
- (b) A study of women entrepreneurs based on leadership style in copreneurship; and
- (c) The impact of innovation management on organizational performance in copreneurship.

Finally, this study provides beneficial information to raise awareness and encourage the participation of women entrepreneurs in enterprise in Malaysia. It is hoped that more forms of assistance would be provided by the government for women entrepreneurs in rural areas.