



**Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development**

**THE ENTREPRENEUR'S PRODUCTIVITY PERFORMANCE  
DURING COVID-19 IN PPR HILIRAN AMPANG.**

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**Bachelor of Science with Honours (Human Resource Development)**

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**THE ENTREPRENEUR'S PRODUCTIVITY PERFORMANCE  
DURING COVID-19 IN  
PPR HILIRAN AMPANG**

**NUR ALIA EMIRA BINTI ZULKIFLI**

This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Bachelor of  
Science with Honours (Human Resource Development)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK (2021)

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Final Year Project Report

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE ENTREPRENEUR'S PRODUCTIVITY PERFORMANCE DURING COVID-19 IN PPR HILIRAN AMPANG.**

**Nur Alia Emira Binti Zulkifli**

The discovery of COVID-19 that spread all around the world have led many governments to take drastic measures. The movement control order and the lockdown of large parts of society and economic life has shocked many economic actors including SMEs as the largest contributor to GDP in Malaysia. The existence of COVID-19 and the new normal directed by the government to all sectors has presented new challenges to entrepreneurs to operate businesses. Since the issues received by entrepreneurs during pandemic are unforeseen problems, entrepreneurs take various business operations management measures. The challenges received during the pandemic have developed the potential of entrepreneurs to be into the context of human development. The purpose of this study is to learn the entrepreneur's productivity performance during COVID-19 in PPR Hiliran Ampang. This study was carried out by using qualitative methods to explore the impact received by entrepreneurs as well as action to re-strategize the business. Entrepreneur's skills in changing environment are also discussed in this study by interviewing five (5) entrepreneurs who actively conducted SMEs during the pandemic. All informants from PPR Hiliran Ampang were selected by using purposive sampling. The data obtained from the interview sessions were analysed through transcribe data analysis.

*Keywords: Covid-19, government restrictions, entrepreneur productivity, issues, re-strategize action, skills.*

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

The core of this research focuses on the success of The Entrepreneur's productivity performance during COVID-19 in PPR Hiliran Ampang. This chapter consists of several sections. The first section describes the background of the study and the second section describes the problem statement. The third section addresses the research objectives and research questions. Next, the fourth section describes the conceptual framework of this study. The importance and limitations of the study and some important terms also be discussed in the fifth section.

### **1.1 Background of Study**

Entrepreneurs are individuals who have the courage to get involved in the process of setting up a business, taking on financial risk with the expectation of profit from capital investment. Entrepreneurs have similarities with self-employed as they have people who work with an entrepreneur to achieve business goals and entrepreneur serve as a leader to the business operational (Srivatsa, 2020). To ensure business profitability, entrepreneurs need to manage productivity effectively so that their products are accepted by the community. Entrepreneurs have critical thinking, creative, risk-taking and foresight that makes them more advanced in the business world. However, entrepreneurs have to prepared for any contingency controls that may affect business productivity performance (Ward, 2020).

Late of 2019, the entire country globally has been shocked with a virus that harms many people known as Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Many business institutions received government directives to close business premises for a certain period of time through the lockdowns and Movement Control Order (MCO) including Small and Medium Enterprise

(SME). The advent of COVID-19, many restrictions through The New Normal were imposed by the government to reduce people's movement due to concerns of the spread of COVID-19 that may causes human death. These restrictions have severely affected the profits of entrepreneurs from Small and Medium Enterprise (Marie, 2020). Entrepreneur productivity performance went down due to low customer demand, negative cash flow, limited raw materials and working hours restriction. The markets are negatively affected by the COVID19 and has weakened many entrepreneurs in the country thus, giving a negative impact on the country's economy (Erdem, 2020).

This study focused on entrepreneurs of SME living to survive in changing times. There are things that exist are out of reach and happened quickly causes the organization need to re-strategize their business as a feedback to the external environment. Many organizations created proactive steps forward to survive in a competitive business environment (Thomas G. Cummings, 2008). Organizational change has been practiced by entrepreneurs as a result of accepting an unexpected environment that requires them to change management and overcome challenges in COVID-19. According to Leeman, (2018) organizational able to change management style as an effort to achieve the desired future from their current situation. Therefore, entrepreneurs started to re-strategize their business operation to build and maintain the organization resilience.

Given that the COVID-19 situation contagious across the countries and seems to continue for years, researcher have interest to explore more about the issues faced by entrepreneurs of SME and action taken by them to survive the business (Ahmad Daflis Che Omar, 2020). The actions that have been taken by entrepreneurs to address the accepted problems are also important in this research as many business institutions received a significant

impact on the drastic changes in the business environment. In addition, the skills of entrepreneurs to survive in changing environment were also explored. This study able to open the eyes of future readers on the impact that entrepreneurs received during COVID-19 and how entrepreneurs able to develop themselves to be more productive through strategies taken to maintain business existence.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The COVID-19 pandemic affects entrepreneurs nationwide regardless of business size. Although entrepreneurs receive positive and negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, an inclination is more to negative effects. Entrepreneur of SMEs faced different issues with a certain degree of losses. This situation also depends on the resilience of business operations and the ingenuity of the entrepreneur to re-strategize the business during COVID-19.

According to Noor Fzlinda Fabeil (2020), the Movement Control Order (MCO) and the lockdown by the government makes entrepreneur faced the main business problem which is the fall in profits earned than before. The decline in business profits was a result of disrupted supply chains due to the closure of the support sector and distribution restrictions of raw materials. The closure of the support sector has forced entrepreneurs to limit business output and this directly affects business profits (Agus Purwanto M. F., 2020). Other than that, payment delays from customers occurred when the product or service cannot be provided to the customer in the desired time. It gets worse for entrepreneurs who lose profits when customers continue to delay purchase decisions and cancel purchases due to MCO and lockdown. The cash flow cycle is clearly disrupted by the presence of COVID-19 followed by problems to pay for the running costs of the business (Ute Stephan, 2020).



Entrepreneurs also faced difficulties in getting customers during COVID-19. According to Morgan (2020), all human faces their own challenges. There are many possible reasons of low demand from customer. Some customer might have financially fragile, jobs and businesses losses, health problems, anxiety and emotional impact and trust issues on product safety. Besides, customers prefer to meet their core needs while indoors by using social media and making online retail purchases due to movement restrictions. As many products and services have been promoted online, the business competition became too strong.

The new normal by government such as new business operating hours that intended to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission also contributes to the difficulty of entrepreneurs to get customers (COVID-19 MCO: Business Operating Hours In Malaysia, 2020). New business hours must be applied to all businesses during a pandemic. If the business does not comply with new business hours, then the business must be restricted from day-to-day business operations and the entrepreneur is unable to conduct business for weeks even losing trust from customers. (COVID-19: Impact on Malaysian businesses, 2020).

The MCO has caused business hours to be tightened by the government. Entrepreneurs are unable to conduct business activities flexibly and safely as before. To minimize the risk of infection, SMEs were urged to adhere Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) during the MCO such as limiting customer entry, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), social distancing, regular sanitisation and disinfection, new business hours. According to Teng (2020), entrepreneurs need to comply with this SOP to avoid business being closed for a long time due to COVID-19 which causes customers to lose faith in business safety. If this happened, the entrepreneur has to close the business and loss connection with the supplier chain and customer until permission to start the business operation is given. As happened in March

2020, many business industries were closed for a long time due to the lockdown and MCO (Asia, 2020). Once permission to conduct business operations is granted, entrepreneurs need to rebuild their business by reconnecting with customers and suppliers to make up for lost time in business.

### **1.3 Objective Study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

To explore the issues and challenges faced by entrepreneurs to maintain and build productivity performance during pandemic

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To explore the issues faced by entrepreneurs during COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To know entrepreneur's action to re-strategize when dealing these issues.
3. To explore the skills needed by entrepreneurs to withstand these challenges during COVID-19.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the issues faced by entrepreneurs during COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What are the actions taken by entrepreneurs to re-strategize when dealing with these issues?
3. What are the skills needed by entrepreneurs to withstand these challenges during COVID-19?

## 1.5 Conceptual Framework

This research focus on the implications of COVID-19 pandemic on entrepreneurial productivity performance. Below is a conceptual framework that briefly describes the scope of the study.

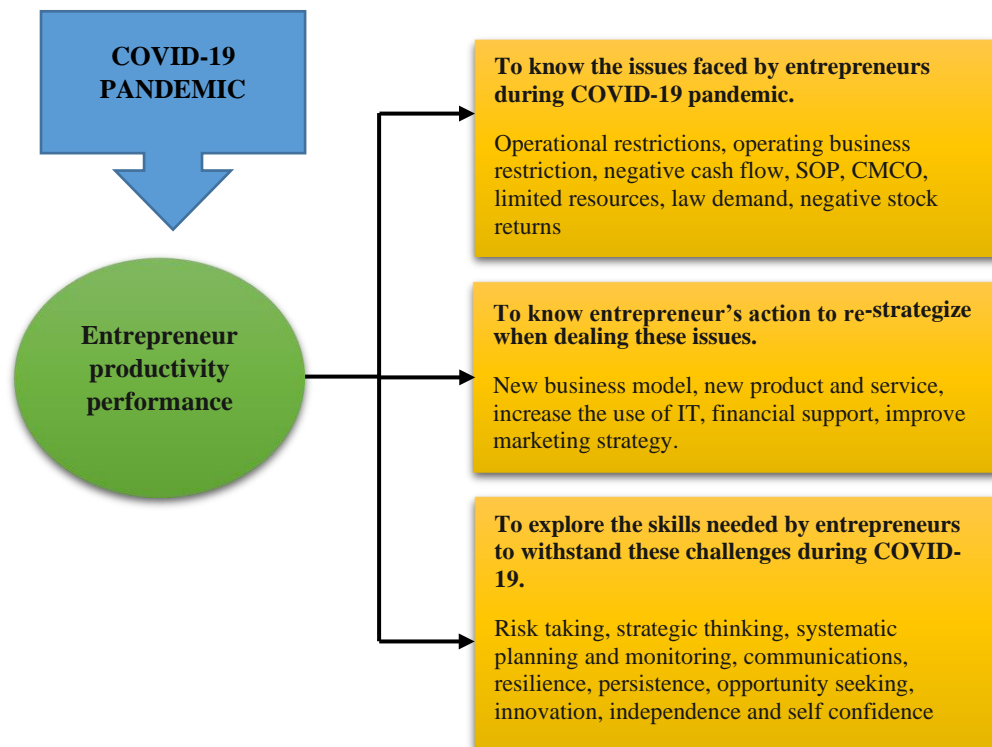


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Based on the above conceptual framework, COVID-19 represents the external environmental pressures that impact entrepreneurial productivity performance. This study focuses on three specific objectives which are to know the issues faced by entrepreneurs during pandemic, to know entrepreneur's action to re-strategize when dealing with these issues and to explore the skills needed by entrepreneurs to withstand these challenges. For each variable, there are factors that will be taken into account in this study. Conceptual framework as a research guideline for researcher to achieve specific objective.

## **1.6 Significant of Study**

This research is significant as it able to contribute to different aspects. Firstly, the research of Entrepreneur productivity performance during the COVID-19 pandemic in PPR Hiliran Ampang has not been conducted. Therefore, this research can help future researchers to explore the problems faced by entrepreneurs to manage their SME productivity effectively during COVID-19. Strategies and skills to cope with unexpected changes from the environment are also presented in this study which shows how entrepreneurs develop their skills and knowledge while facing many challenges during a pandemic. In addition, this research can help to expose future entrepreneurs to the knowledge that should be possessed by those who have intention to build career in the field of entrepreneurship. They can be prepared with all the possibilities in the business world.

Secondly, the outbreak of the COVID-19 cases has shocked many entrepreneurs as it never happened before. Uncertainty occurred on what vaccine able to totally eliminate the COVID-19 pandemic and when it can stop spreading nationwide. All government across the country are taking emergency measures such as lockdowns, travel restrictions, quarantining and economic packages to stop the spreading of pandemic. The drastic action of the government has an impact on the productivity performance of entrepreneurs (Ahmad Daflis Che Omar, 2020). For example, the receipt of raw materials from other countries or even from other regions in a country is limited. This directly affects the country's economy to decline. This study has clarified the strategies that entrepreneurs need to take into account to remain competitive in a challenging business environment.

Thirdly, the spread of pandemic nationwide has impacted in many industries growth. This crisis has dramatically affected entrepreneurial finance all over the world (Ross Brown, 2020). Many entrepreneurs are forced to lay off their employees and close their business premises because of not being able to rolling business capital (Fairlie, THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS:, 2020). This study became significant as it produces findings on actions to re-strategize the business and also the skills needed among entrepreneurs to be prepared in changing environment. Its beneficial for entrepreneurs to improve the techniques and manage business productivity performance efficiently. This research able to fulfil the knowledge needed by an entrepreneur to develop a human potential to stay competitive in business environment.

Productivity performance is determined by Human Resource Development (HRD) practices in the organization. HRD is defined as the process of activities and programmes of the organization to enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of everyone in a society to achieve the mission, objectives and goals (Muhammad Tariq Khan, 2012). This field is disseminated and integrated into various leadership and supervisory roles in business organization. It helps to produce positive change in the productivity of the organizations even in a challenging business environment. Entrepreneurs are a model of human development. All the challenges received cause entrepreneurs to seize all the existed opportunities to take proactive steps to defend the business. Through the challenges, actions and thoughts created to develop the business, it is synonymous with the context of human development (Gries & Naude, Entrepreneurship and Human Development, 2010).

Human elements in the organization need to be continuously educated and trained in line with the dynamics of both technology and workplace situations as relevant requirements

for entrepreneurial development. If the HRD element is ignored then the ability of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial knowledge is weakened (Adebusoye, 2019). Therefore, in order to maintain and improve productivity performance, entrepreneurs need to be concerned about the elements of human development in their business institutions. Strategies generated by human resources determine the success that organizations will achieve during the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategy used to deal with the issue of COVID-19 is based on the knowledge and skills possessed by the entrepreneurs themselves. HRD practices in the organization determined entrepreneurial action in response to overcome the crisis of COVID-19.

## **1.7 Definition of Term**

### **1.7.1 Entrepreneur**

#### **➤ Conceptual Definition**

- An entrepreneur defined as someone equipped with good judgment, perseverance, and knowledge of the business world (Thrane, 2018).
- The power to take risks is determined by self-confidence, willingness to use the ability to look for opportunities and possibilities for profit, the ability to realistically assess risk situations (Suliswiyadi, 2020).

#### **➤ Operational Definition**

- Entrepreneurs excel at managing their business creatively, innovatively and forwardlooking and have the courage to take risks.
- Always have a high level of self-esteem and always think of various alternatives to develop the products and become recognizable to the community.

### **1.7.2 Productivity**

#### **➤ Conceptual Definition**

- Productivity has obvious business cycle component whether productivity growth is low during recessions and high in the early stages of expansions when the economy is expanding rapidly (Charles Steindel, 2002).
- Productivity always defined as an evolution and a revolution and it is continuous improvement process for example when replacing a manual system by an automatic production system (Bjorkman, 2002).

#### **➤ Operational Definition**

- Productivity performance will receive a strong influence from their environment that is beyond their capabilities.
- Productivity is a measure of a person's achievement within the scope of work performed and for success individuals need to manage and improve their productivity achievement effectively.

### **1.7.3 COVID-19 Pandemic**

#### **➤ Conceptual Framework**

- Coronavirus are a group of highly diverse, enveloped, positive-sense and singlestranded RNA viruses and it cause several diseases involving such as respiratory, enteric, hepatic and neurological systems with vary severity among humans and animals (Feng He, 2020).

#### **➤ Operational Definition**

- Coronavirus is a disease that attacks the human respiratory tract and easily spreads from person to person.

#### **1.7.4 Crisis Management**

##### **➤ Conceptual Definition**

- Crisis management refers to the response activities designed to manage a threat and important as it have an operational aspect to solutions being needed to control a threat (Ratten, 2020)

##### **➤ Operational Definition**

- Crisis management occurs when individuals seek to organize strategies to deal with challenging situations whether new challenges or past challenges.

#### **1.8 Limitation of Study**

This research was meant to cover a small geographical area. Entrepreneur who managed their productivity performance in PPR Hiliran Ampang, Kuala Lumpur was chosen in this study. The data collected is entirely the result of interviews session between researcher and entrepreneur as informant in PPR Hiliran Ampang. Entrepreneur's information from different geographical area will not be considered in the research. This is to avoid the problems of the study due to the different views and understandings based on area.

In addition, the researcher asked all the research questions to each informant through face-to-face interaction and online platform only such as Zoom meeting, WhatsApp call and phone call. Each informant has been given time up to 40 minutes to answer all research questions. All research questions must to be answered during the interview process to avoid data analysis problems. If any question was not answered correctly, the researcher contacted the respondent only twice.