

Empowering Malaysian Women Entrepreneurs in Small Enterprises Through Institutional Support

Nurul Fadzilla Mohd Aris¹, Siti Sarah Omar¹, Noor Aslinda Abu Seman¹ and Dahlia Fernandez²

¹Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), Batu Pahat, Malaysia

²Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Bangi, Malaysia

fadzillaris@gmail.com

sarah@uthm.edu.my

naslinda@uthm.edu.my

dahlia@ukm.edu.my

Abstract: Women-owned small businesses are essential to Malaysia's socio-economic growth. However, they face challenges such as limited access to funding, education, and industry connections. Although institutional support is available, it often lacks a gender-focused approach and does not fully address the unique struggles women entrepreneurs face, particularly within patriarchal cultural systems and male-dominated industries. This study explores how institutional support can empower women entrepreneurs by using institutional work theory through the aspects of create, maintain, and disrupt to examine how formal and informal systems help them succeed. Through a detailed review of academic research, policy documents, and international case studies, this study is a conceptual paper that identifies key gaps in financial aid, mentorship, training, and networking opportunities. It compares Malaysia's efforts with global best practices to highlight areas that need improvement. The findings show that women entrepreneurs require targeted, gender-specific programs to overcome the barriers they face. Many existing programs do not consider the social and structural challenges that make it harder for women to grow their businesses. Beyond financial support, this study highlights the importance of mentorship, policy changes, and skills training in promoting gender equality and inclusive economic growth. These elements are crucial for helping women entrepreneurs succeed and expand their businesses. Additionally, this study calls for policy reforms that focus on gender-inclusive strategies within Malaysia's entrepreneurial ecosystem. By closing the gap between available support and the real needs of women entrepreneurs, this research offers practical recommendations for policymakers, business leaders, and support organizations. Strengthening institutional frameworks will not only help women entrepreneurs but also drive economic progress and sustainable development in Malaysia. Overall, this study emphasizes the need for a more inclusive and structured approach to supporting women entrepreneurs. By aligning policies with global best practices, Malaysia can create a fairer and more supportive business environment, allowing women entrepreneurs to thrive and contribute more effectively to national development.

Keywords: Institutional Support; Women Entrepreneurs; Gender-focused; Entrepreneurial Development; Sustainable Economic.

1. Introduction

According to Darnihamedani and Terjesen (2022), there is evidence indicating that women-owned firms demonstrate higher rates of both business growth and job growth than enterprises held by men. Like other small business owners, women entrepreneurs had to face the possibility of a high failure rate despite this growth rate and economic impact. Gender bias and a lack of support targeted at women entrepreneurs are two major obstacles they face (Md Isa et al., 2018). Ahmad and Ali (2024) and Md Isa et al. (2018) emphasised the need for stakeholders to focus on implementing sustainable business management practices and addressing the important discussions around policies supporting women-owned enterprises' growth.

Research has found that institutional support, such as from government agencies or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), is associated with reducing gender disparities among small business owners. Specifically, this support is linked to narrowing the gaps between men and women in terms of the size of their businesses and their aspirations for growth (Basit et al., 2020). The Malaysian government has allocated RM230 million in Budget 2022 to support women entrepreneurs and facilitate the growth of their enterprises (MOF, 2021). Given the substantial financial support offered, the success of women entrepreneurs is of paramount significance.

Nevertheless, small businesses in Malaysia encounter challenges in maintaining their existence, with many ceasing operations during the initial five years (Ambad et al., 2020). Identifying the availability of assistance programs for small firms, especially those run by women, is challenging, and the financial resources provided to them are often inadequate (Ariffin et al., 2020). Hence, the sustainability of small firms owned and controlled by women entrepreneurs is compromised due to gender bias and a lack of entrepreneurial leadership (Adom & Anambane, 2020).

Razak et al. (2024) have reported that women entrepreneurs in Malaysia exhibit a higher propensity for starting businesses than men. However, their study also addressed the obstacles encountered by women entrepreneurs in advancing their businesses to a more advanced level. The current situation has strengthened the points made by Ariffin et al. (2020) that women entrepreneurs require a supportive environment to ensure the long-term viability of their businesses, which, in this context, refers to practical institutional support. Ariffin et al. (2020) added that institutional support is a crucial component of a supportive system that women entrepreneurs need to have in order to successfully manage gender-specific challenges and align their strategies with emerging business trends.

2. Literature Review

Institutional support helps women entrepreneurs bridge resource gaps, enhance competitiveness, and achieve long-term success (Zaato et al., 2023). Its primary aim is to foster a supportive entrepreneurial environment (Ariffin et al., 2020). Kazumi and Kawai (2017) identified formal and informal support as key components of institutional assistance. Xie et al. (2021) also emphasized these categories in their study.

2.1 Formal Institutional Support

Institutional support is essential for empowering women entrepreneurs, but its effectiveness depends on targeted and well-coordinated measures, as highlighted by various studies. Kazumi and Kawai (2017) and Xie et al. (2021) identify key areas where formal institutional assistance provides substantial benefits, such as financial systems (grants, subsidies, and loans), educational resources (training and technical guidance), and government policies (gender equality measures and tax incentives). These supports create foundational resources that enable women to overcome systemic barriers and pursue sustainable business ventures. However, the scope of institutional support varies in its effectiveness depending on its alignment with the specific needs of women entrepreneurs.

In Malaysia, Bakar et al. (2020) identified significant gaps in institutional support, particularly in access to financial resources, which are critical for business growth. Women entrepreneurs often face significant challenges in securing business funding, including discrimination from financial institutions and complex loan procedures. A lack of initial capital can have long-term negative effects, as it limits their ability to produce new products, create jobs, or sustain their ventures (Bakar et al., 2020). Financial institutions often hesitate to provide large loans to women entrepreneurs, citing a lack of confidence in their business capacity. Even when loans are granted, short repayment periods and high interest rates create additional challenges, particularly since establishing a business typically takes at least a year. Furthermore, banks prefer funding businesses with a minimum two-year operational history, limiting opportunities for women in the start-up phase (Bakar et al., 2020).

Noor and Isa (2020) further highlight the role of government policies in creating an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs. Policies promoting gender equality, tax relief, and access to markets can make business opportunities more accessible. Noor and Isa (2020) also emphasize the value of mentorship programs and networking opportunities, which provide women with guidance from experienced professionals, enabling them to share knowledge, gain insights, and navigate challenges in their businesses. These relational supports complement traditional institutional measures by fostering confidence and practical skills.

In a complementary view, Ariffin et al. (2020) emphasize the need for inclusive policies to address structural barriers and promote gender equality in Malaysia. Their study calls for legislative measures that ensure equal access to resources, networks, and financing while addressing disparities in representation and opportunity. Such measures are essential for creating a fair and supportive environment for women entrepreneurs, enabling their active participation in the economy.

Regulatory frameworks also play a significant role in supporting women's entrepreneurial success. Yousafzai et al. (2015) argue that gender equality legislation and work-life balance policies empower women and enhance their leadership in business. Kazumi and Kawai (2017) add that interactions with government business officers help women entrepreneurs build confidence and establish formal networks, bridging the gap between policy and practical outcomes.

Historically, Malaysia has made notable progress in institutionalizing support for women entrepreneurs. During the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001-2005), the government began incorporating women's business involvement as a national objective (Mokhtar, 2020). Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), through its subsidiary, the Credit Guarantee

Corporation Malaysia Berhad (CGC), introduced a scheme to provide financing guarantees for women unable to secure loans from traditional institutions (Rashid, 2017).

Since then, government support has expanded through initiatives like the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015) and the Twelfth Malaysia Plan (2021-2025) (Rashid, 2017; UNDP, 2023). The latest plan focuses on empowering women entrepreneurs to promote gender equality and enhance their participation in the economy through initiatives like the sharing economy and entrepreneurship development (UNDP, 2023).

However, institutional support is not uniformly effective across all areas for women entrepreneurs. For instance, Kazumi and Kawai (2017) found that formal institutional support had minimal impact on enhancing women’s entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Similarly, Orobia et al. (2020) revealed that while access to capital and IT infrastructure significantly improves the sustainability of women-owned businesses, other forms of support, such as general education and broad government initiatives, demonstrated limited effectiveness. These findings highlight the need to prioritize high-impact areas of formal support like financial aid and digital infrastructure while acknowledging the influence of contextual factors such as geography and cultural norms on the success of support initiatives.

2.2 Informal Institutional Support

Informal institutional support, defined as unwritten social norms, values, traditions, and networks within a society, is a critical enabler for women entrepreneurs. Unlike formal institutions governed by laws and regulations, informal systems operate through social practices and interpersonal connections that influence entrepreneurial activities (Giménez & Calabrò, 2018). These institutions shape how women identify opportunities, access resources, and develop self-efficacy, which is a crucial element for entrepreneurial success. According to Harahap and Muchtar (2021), such support enables women to build networks, gain confidence, and overcome societal stigmas, encouraging them to take risks and initiate business ventures. Such support includes mentorship, peer networks, and community-based guidance, which foster trust, collaboration, and shared knowledge essential for business growth (Saleem et al., 2024).

However, women entrepreneurs often face unique challenges, such as balancing domestic responsibilities with business demands and navigating societal norms that question their leadership roles. Providing culturally sensitive solutions, like childcare facilities, could alleviate these burdens (Bakar et al., 2020). In Malaysia, associations like Persatuan Wanita Bumiputera Dalam Perniagaan dan Profesyen Malaysia (PeniagaWati), the Women’s Wing of the Malay Chamber of Commerce Malaysia, the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association Malaysia (FEM), and the National Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Malaysia (NAWEM) play a pivotal role in empowering women by offering skills training and creating platforms for collaboration (Rashid, 2017). Nevertheless, the absence of broader societal legitimacy and recognition can stifle entrepreneurial ambition, particularly in societies where gender stereotypes prevail (Muñoz & Kibler, 2016). Therefore, cultivating a “one-is-not-alone” culture, where entrepreneurial visions are legitimized and admired, is essential to increasing women’s participation in economic activities (Kazumi & Kawai, 2017). A deliberate focus on informal institutional support not only enhances women’s self-efficacy but also creates a more inclusive and resilient entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Giménez and Calabrò (2018) identified five key types of informal institutional support that are particularly relevant to women entrepreneurs: gender, social norms, family, religion, and codes of conduct. Table 1 below summarizes these types, detailing their definitions and roles in empowering women entrepreneurs, as outlined in the work of Giménez and Calabrò (2018).

Table 1: Key Types of Informal Institutional Support

Informal Institutional Support	Definition	Roles
Gender-focused	A social construct that differentiates between men and women in society.	Women entrepreneurs shape their identity based on societal gender roles, which influence their motivations, career choices, and family dynamics. <i>Challenges:</i> Masculine gender roles can create barriers in male-dominated industries like high-tech, hindering women’s participation and success.

Informal Institutional Support	Definition	Roles
Social norms	Social norms are shared beliefs that influence entrepreneurial attitudes and perceptions differently for men and women.	Gender stereotypes shape societal expectations, which can affect women's opportunities and access to start-up capital. <i>Challenges:</i> The media often portrays a masculine view of entrepreneurship by stereotyping and underrepresenting women entrepreneurs.
Family	A social structure and networks within a family unit that provide emotional, financial, and practical assistance to women entrepreneurs.	Family support helps women achieve work-family balance, positively impacting their venture performance. Women entrepreneurs are often driven by necessity, focusing on ventures with social and environmental value and seeking flexibility for family needs. <i>Challenges:</i> Women face difficulties managing both roles, particularly as their businesses grow.
Religions and ideologies	Religions and ideologies help explain aspects of society and culture, influencing the environment in which women entrepreneurs operate.	Religious and ideological norms influence women's entrepreneurial behaviours. Islamic values can motivate Muslim women to pursue business excellence. <i>Challenges:</i> In countries like Pakistan, traditional gender roles and mobility restrictions limit women's entrepreneurship.
Codes of conduct	Codes of conduct are unwritten rules that shape daily interactions and influence individual behaviour in economic, family, and organizational contexts.	Empowering women entrepreneurs involves increasing their awareness and learning from their environment. 1. Women benefit from being part of networks, with their businesses showing positive growth. 2. In male-dominated industries (e.g., high-tech, construction), women tend to have high self-efficacy and economic expectations, while in traditionally female industries (e.g., retail), they focus on work-family balance. 3. Women with high growth intentions are typically highly educated and motivated by financial success, self-realization, and recognition. <i>Challenges:</i> Women entrepreneurs may face pressure balancing high growth expectations, financial success, and family life.

3. Methodology

This study reviews institutional support for women entrepreneurs through a systematic literature review using Google Scholar (2014–2024). Keywords included “institutional support,” “women entrepreneurs,” and “small enterprise sustainability.” Articles were selected based on relevance, peer review, and citation count, while studies lacking a gendered perspective or methodological rigour were excluded.

Additionally, the study analyzes official documents, academic reports, and government policies on women's entrepreneurship in Malaysia. This provides insight into the evolution of institutional support, highlighting key initiatives and strategic priorities aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs.

4. Conceptualizing Women Entrepreneurs' Empowerment Using Institutional Theory

According to Franco and Franco (2022), institutional theory is a broad and important framework that has developed as a result of the combined efforts of numerous academics and researchers over many years, such as Meyer and Rowan (1977), DiMaggio and Powell (1983), and Scott (2014). Institutional theory is a multidisciplinary approach since it originates in several academic disciplines rather than being the invention of a single person (Franco & Franco, 2022). This theory explores formal and informal institutions' role in influencing the actions of people and groups in society (Giménez & Calabrò, 2018). This theory has gained acceptance and respect in disciplines like sociology (Carvalho et al., 2017) and political science (Ilonszki, 2022), in which it has clarified the intricacies of institutional contexts and their effects on numerous aspects of interpersonal communication and organizational behaviour.

Coates et al. (2023) referenced Cai and Mehari (2015); there are three stages in the evolution of institutional theory: “Old Institutionalism Theory,” which emerged at the end of the 1940s; “New Institutionalism Theory,”

which developed at the end of the 1970s, and a variety of “New Perspectives,” which have been developing since the 1990s.

Within the context of women entrepreneurs and empowerment, modern institutional theory, also known as “new perspectives”, offers valuable insights, particularly through the concepts of institutional logics and institutional work.

4.1 The Insights of Modern Institutional Theory

In examining women entrepreneurs' empowerment, selecting institutional theory as the overarching framework can substantially impact the comprehensiveness and applicability of the study. Table 2 below shows the insights of modern institutional theory, outlining its focus, structural perspective and their applications.

Table 2: The Insights of Modern Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory	Focus of Theory	Structural Perspective	Source
Institutional Logics	Coexistence of multiple logics influencing behaviour at structural and macro levels.	Conflict resolution: Addresses competing logics in a stable framework. Relevant in studying how entrepreneurs balance diverse logics in their business operations.	Ponte and Pesci (2022)
Institutional Work	Social actors' influence on institutions.	Agentic: institutions could be changed by actors through creation, maintenance and disruption. The agency-focused theory is ideal for understanding how entrepreneurs actively adapt institutions for their benefit.	Beunen et al. (2017)

Institutional logics and institutional work offer complementary perspectives on business sustainability in women’s entrepreneurship.

Institutional logics, introduced by Friedland and Alford (1991) and refined by Thornton et al. (2012), define the principles and norms shaping decision-making (Mutch, 2021). Societal expectations, gender roles, and structural challenges influence women entrepreneurs' experiences (Glaser et al., 2016). Navigating competing demands, such as balancing family roles and business ambitions, remains crucial for sustainability (Schildt, 2022). Aligning profit, social responsibility, and environmental goals enables women entrepreneurs to build sustainable ventures (Perkmann et al., 2019).

Institutional work, introduced by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006), shifts the focus to individual agency in shaping or transforming institutions (Lawrence et al., 2013). Women entrepreneurs actively challenge gender norms, advocate for policy changes, and promote sustainability (Kaartemo et al., 2020). Unlike institutional logics, which highlight structural constraints, institutional work emphasizes dynamic efforts in reshaping business landscapes.

Highlighting women entrepreneurs' agency provides a strong framework for understanding their role in driving sustainability, influencing policy, and overcoming systemic barriers. This study adopts institutional work as a key lens, emphasizing the proactive role of women entrepreneurs in advancing sustainable business practices (Beunen et al., 2017; Lawrence et al., 2013).

4.2 Empowering Women Entrepreneurs Through Institutional Work

The concept of institutional work emphasizes the active role of individuals and organizations in shaping and influencing institutional structures (Gidley & Palmer, 2021). This perspective is particularly relevant to the business sustainability of small enterprises owned by women, as these businesses are not passive recipients of institutional pressures but active agents capable of initiating and driving change.

By applying institutional work, this study explores how small enterprises owned by women entrepreneurs can actively engage with sustainability-related institutions and contribute to the evolution of sustainability standards

and practices. The institutional work framework provides a lens to understand the dynamic interplay between entrepreneurial actions and institutional transformation.

Institutional work operates through three core dimensions: creating, maintaining, and disrupting elements (Beunen et al., 2017). These elements play a crucial role in empowering SWEs and fostering sustainable business practices. Integrating these components into strategic institutional support initiatives can effectively enhance the growth and sustainability of women-owned enterprises. Figure 1 illustrates the application of institutional support in empowering women entrepreneurs towards their business success.

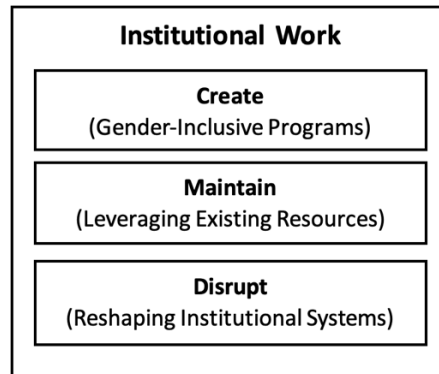


Figure 1: Institutional support elements (Adopted from Beunen et al. (2017) and Giezen (2018))

4.2.1 Create

The "create" component of institutional work, as defined by Beunen et al. (2017), involves establishing programs, norms, and policies that drive positive change. For Malaysian women entrepreneurs in small enterprises, this phase is crucial for promoting gender equality and business sustainability. Given persistent gender biases and structural barriers, strategic institutional support can help reshape the entrepreneurial landscape, fostering long-term success (Ariffin et al., 2020).

While formal institutional support, such as government policies and structured programs, plays a key role, its effectiveness must be critically assessed. Initiatives like TEKUN Nasional's Tekunita Financing Scheme and MARA's Women Entrepreneurs Development Programme (WEDP) provide targeted financial assistance, entrepreneurial training, and market access specifically designed to support Malaysian women entrepreneurs in starting, growing, and sustaining their businesses (Razak et al., 2024). However, without addressing structural challenges such as societal expectations and gender roles, these programs may unintentionally reinforce disparities. To ensure meaningful empowerment, institutional support must be both targeted and holistic, addressing financial and non-financial barriers to success.

4.2.2 Maintain

The "maintain" component of institutional work, as highlighted by Colombero and Boxenbaum (2019), focuses on leveraging existing resources to ensure stability in small businesses. Women entrepreneurs rely on established networks, institutional frameworks, and available resources to sustain growth and navigate systemic barriers such as gender biases, limited capital access, and societal expectations. While maintaining the status quo offers short-term stability, it risks reinforcing structural inequalities. Institutional support is crucial in mitigating these biases and enabling long-term business success.

Predominantly driven by informal mechanisms, the "maintain" phase depends on mentorship, peer networks, and cultural associations Colombero and Boxenbaum (2019). In Malaysia, organizations like the Women Entrepreneurs Network Association (WENA) and the Women's Institute of Management (WIM) provide informal support that strengthens resilience, enhances skills, and fosters community (Rashid, 2017). These networks offer knowledge-sharing and emotional support but may unintentionally sustain power imbalances and fail to address systemic challenges. While informal support is essential, it should complement rather than replace formal institutional support. A balanced approach integrating both ensures a more equitable and sustainable entrepreneurial environment for women.

4.2.3 Disrupt

The “disrupt” phase in institutional work, as outlined by Beunen et al. (2017), focuses on reforming structures that sustain gender inequities, allowing women entrepreneurs in small businesses to overcome systemic barriers. In Malaysia, challenging entrenched norms is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and sustainable business ecosystem. Achieving this transformation requires support from formal and informal institutions, including government agencies, NGOs, and private sector actors, to create an equitable entrepreneurial environment.

Collaboration among multiple stakeholders is essential for meaningful disruption (Kazumi & Kawai, 2017; Orobia et al., 2020). Government policies, grassroots initiatives, and informal networks must work together to dismantle gender disparities. For example, the partnership between UNDP Malaysia and the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development showcases a concerted effort to embed gender equity in entrepreneurship policy (UNDP, 2023). Likewise, organizations like Persatuan Wanita (PEWANI) actively work to dismantle patriarchal norms by supporting women entrepreneurs in aligning their business ventures with Islamic values, thus addressing both cultural and religious barriers that hinder their progress (Sahari et al., 2023).

Sustained success in the “disrupt” phase depends on integrating formal and informal support structures. While policies provide financial and structural resources, grassroots advocacy and mentorship programs offer practical guidance and confidence-building. Ensuring inclusivity in these efforts is vital to prevent marginalization and conflicting agendas that may undermine systemic change. Strategic alignment of disruption initiatives is necessary to challenge power imbalances and drive lasting reform.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, institutional work theory offers valuable insights for empowering women entrepreneurs, particularly those in small businesses in Malaysia. The “create” phase emphasizes the role of formal institutional support, such as gender-inclusive policies and financing programs, in overcoming gender biases and promoting sustainable business practices. The “maintain” phase highlights the importance of informal support mechanisms, like mentorship and peer networks, which provide vital resilience and guidance but must complement formal support to avoid reinforcing gender inequalities. The “disrupt” phase calls for collaborative efforts from both formal and informal stakeholders to challenge and reform institutional structures that perpetuate gender disparities, fostering systemic change for gender equity.

Having said that, empowering women entrepreneurs requires a holistic approach that combines both formal and informal institutional support. By leveraging institutional work theory, women entrepreneurs can better navigate challenges, utilize resources, and engage in collective efforts to drive inclusive and sustainable business growth, creating a more equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

This study identifies opportunities for further exploration in several key areas, including evaluating the effectiveness of gender-inclusive policies on business sustainability for Malaysian women entrepreneurs and examining the interplay between formal support systems, such as government programs, and informal mechanisms, such as mentorship and networks, in fostering women’s entrepreneurial success.

Acknowledgement

This work is supported by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Malaysia under the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS) FRGS/1/2024/SS01/UTHM/02/4 Vot K521 through the Research Management Centre (RMC) of Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM).

Ethics Declaration

Ethical approval was not necessary for this study, as it did not involve human participants, the collection of personal data, or any interventions requiring oversight from any institutions.

AI Declaration

AI tools were used for language refinement, paraphrasing, and citation formatting, while all conceptual development, analysis, and source verification were conducted by the authors.

References

- Adom, K., & Anambane, G. (2020). Understanding the role of culture and gender stereotypes in women entrepreneurship through the lens of the stereotype threat theory. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 12(1), 100-124.
- Ahmad, N., & Ali, J. (2024). Phenomenological Study of Women Entrepreneurs and Their Impact on Socioeconomic Growth in Malaysia 1st International Conference on Islamic Economics, Business Development and Studies,
- Ambad, S. N. A., Andrew, J. V., & Awang Amit, D. H. D. (2020). Growth Challenges of SMEs: Empirical Evidence in Sabah, Malaysia. *ASEAN Entrepreneurship Journal (AEJ)*, 6(1), 8-.
- Ariffin, A. S., Baqutayan, S. M. S., & Mahdzir, A. M. (2020). Enhancing women entrepreneurship development framework: Policy & institution gap and challenges in the case of Malaysia. *Journal of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy*, 6(2), 22-33.
- Bakar, J. A., Mohamad, Z. Z., Sharmeela-Banu, S., & Ganapathy, T. (2020). Empirical Evidence of Obstacles of Women Entrepreneurship's Growth in Malaysia. *Journal of Business Management and Accounting*, 10(2), 67-84.
- Basit, A., Hassan, Z., & Sethumadhavan, S. (2020). Entrepreneurial success: Key challenges faced by Malaysian women entrepreneurs in 21st century. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 15(9), 122-138.
- Beunen, R., Patterson, J., & Van Assche, K. (2017). Governing for resilience: the role of institutional work. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 28, 10-16.
- Cai, Y., & Mehari, Y. (2015). The use of institutional theory in higher education research. In *Theory and method in higher education research* (pp. 1-25). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Carvalho, A. D. P., da Cunha, S. K., de Lima, L. F., & Carstens, D. D. (2017). The role and contributions of sociological institutional theory to the socio-technical approach to innovation theory. *RAI Revista de Administração e Inovação*, 14(3), 250-259.
- Coates, S. K., Trudgett, M., & Page, S. (2023). Indigenous institutional theory: a new theoretical framework and methodological tool. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 50(3), 903-920.
- Colombero, S., & Boxenbaum, E. (2019). Authentication as institutional maintenance work. *Journal of Management Studies*, 56(2), 408-440.
- Darnihamedani, P., & Terjesen, S. (2022). Male and female entrepreneurs' employment growth ambitions: The contingent role of regulatory efficiency. *Small Business Economics*, 58(1), 185-204.
- Franco, A. C., & Franco, L. S. (2022). An institutional theory investigation: Analysis of the main trends in innovation. *Brazilian Journal of Management and Innovation (Revista Brasileira de Gestão e Inovação)*, 9(2), 126-144.
- Gidley, D., & Palmer, M. (2021). Institutional work: A review and framework based on semantic and thematic analysis. *Management*, 24(4), 49-63.
- Giezen, M. (2018). Shifting infrastructure landscapes in a circular economy: An institutional work analysis of the water and energy sector. *Sustainability*, 10(10), 3487.
- Giménez, D., & Calabrò, A. (2018). The salient role of institutions in Women's entrepreneurship: a critical review and agenda for future research. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 14(4), 857-882.
- Glaser, V. L., Fast, N. J., Harmon, D. J., & Green Jr, S. E. (2016). Institutional frame switching: How institutional logics shape individual action. In *How institutions matter!* (pp. 35-69). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Harahap, A. U., & Muchtar, Y. C. (2021). Influence of institutional support and entrepreneurial self-efficacy on business performance of women entrepreneurs in Medan City. *Journal Of Management Analytical and Solution (JoMAS)*, 1(3), 134-148.
- Ilonszki, G. (2022). The Institutionalisation of Political Science in ECE: The Grounding of Theory. *Opportunities and Challenges for New and Peripheral Political Science Communities: A Consolidated Discipline?*, 25-50.
- Kaartemo, V., Nenonen, S., & Windahl, C. (2020). Institutional work by market-shaping public actors. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 30(4/5), 401-435.
- Kazumi, T., & Kawai, N. (2017). Institutional support and women's entrepreneurial self-efficacy. *Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 11(3), 345-365.
- Lawrence, T. B., Leca, B., & Zilber, T. B. (2013). Institutional work: Current research, new directions and overlooked issues. *Organization studies*, 34(8), 1023-1033.
- Md Isa, F., Jaganathan, M., Syazwan Ahmdon, M. A., & Mohamad Ibrahim, H. (2018). Malaysian women entrepreneurs: Some emerging issues and challenges of entering global market. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(12), 1596-1605.
- MOF, M. o. F. M. (2021). Budget 2022: RM230 mln to help women entrepreneurs <https://www.mof.gov.my/portal/en/news/press-citations/budget-2022-rm230-mln-to-help-women-entrepreneurs#:~:text=KUALA%20LUMPUR%2C%20Oct%2029%20%2D%2D,and%20Tekunita%20under%20Tekun%20Nasional>.
- Mokhtar, A. S. (2020). Women in senior management in Malaysia: An intersectional analysis
- Muñoz, P., & Kibler, E. (2016). Institutional complexity and social entrepreneurship: A fuzzy-set approach. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(4), 1314-1318.
- Mutch, A. (2021). Challenging community: Logic or context? *Organization Theory*, 2(2), 26317877211004602.
- Noor, S., & Isa, F. M. (2020). Contributing factors of women entrepreneurs' business growth and failure in Pakistan. *International Journal of Business and Globalisation*, 25(4), 503-518.

- Orobia, L. A., Tusiime, I., Mwesigwa, R., & Ssekiziyivu, B. (2020). Entrepreneurial framework conditions and business sustainability among the youth and women entrepreneurs. *Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 14(1), 60-75.
- Perkmann, M., McKelvey, M., & Phillips, N. (2019). Protecting scientists from Gordon Gekko: How organizations use hybrid spaces to engage with multiple institutional logics. *Organization science*, 30(2), 298-318.
- Ponte, D., & Pesci, C. (2022). Institutional logics and organizational change: the role of place and time. *Journal of Management and Governance*, 26(3), 891-924.
- Rashid, U. (2017). The effects of entrepreneurial management, entrepreneurial orientation and ethics on the women-owned SMEs business performance in Malaysia (An unpublished doctoral dissertation submitted to Universiti Utara Malaysia). Universiti Utara Malaysia.
- Razak, N. A., Razak, N. A., & Rifim, S. A. M. (2024). Breaking Barriers: An Exploration of Women's Entrepreneur in Malaysia. *International Journal of Religion*, 5(1), 118-123.
- Sahari, S. H., Budin, H., Ismailly, N., Johari, A., & Perreau, M. E. (2023). Peranan Persatuan Wanita Dalam Pembangunan Insan. *Proceedings Borneo Islamic International Conference eISSN 2948-5045*,
- Saleem, F., Asif, M., & Lodhi, M. S. (2024). Fostering Women's Entrepreneurial Success: The Significance of Informal Institutional support in Venture Creation. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business Venturing*, 4(1).
- Schildt, H. (2022). The institutional logic of digitalization. In *Digital transformation and institutional theory* (pp. 235-251). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- UNDP, U. N. D. P. (2023). Gender Equality | United Nations Development Programme. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/malaysia/gender-equality#:~:text=The%20empowerment%20of%20women%20is>
- Xie, Z., Wang, X., Xie, L., Dun, S., & Li, J. (2021). Institutional context and female entrepreneurship: A country-based comparison using fsQCA. *Journal of Business Research*, 132, 470-480.
- Yousafzai, S. Y., Saeed, S., & Muffatto, M. (2015). Institutional theory and contextual embeddedness of women's entrepreneurial leadership: Evidence from 92 countries. *Journal of small business management*, 53(3), 587-604.
- Zaato, S. G., Uthamaputhran, S., Ismail, M., Parasuraman, B., Nawli, N. C., & Salmann, A. (2023). Malaysian Women Micro-Entrepreneur Performance, Role of Social Capital, Locus of Control, and Institutional Support on Entrepreneurial Orientation. In *Handbook of Research on Designing Sustainable Strategies to Develop Entrepreneurial Intention* (pp. 368-399). IGI Global.