



**Faculty of Technology Management and
Technopreneurship**

**THE ROLE OF MICROCREDIT FINANCING ON WOMEN
EMPOWERMENT IN MALAYSIA**

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**THE ROLE OF MICROCREDIT FINANCING ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT
IN MALAYSIA**

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**A thesis submitted
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “The Role of Microcredit Financing on Women Empowerment in Malaysia” is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

Signature :

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Date :

APPROVAL

I hereby declare that I have read this thesis and in my opinion this thesis is sufficient in terms of scope and quality for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signature :

Supervisor Name :

Date :

DEDICATION

This thesis is exclusively dedicated to my beloved family members especially my parents Sayed Ali Hussein and Fadah Binti Abdullah for their love, endless support, and prayers. Special gratitude go to Mrs Nurulizwa Rashid for knowledge sharing and encouragement during accomplishment PhD journey.

ABSTRACT

Microcredit has become a buzzword in the credit markets as an effective tool to deliver financial services to deprived women in the absence of conventional credit markets. The underlying logic is that through extending microcredit, women will be able to participate in economic market through forming their micro and small businesses. Consequently, they will gain incomes and contribute to their household supports to reduce their vulnerability and empower them. Although microfinance has reached the peak of momentum, recent literature documented conflicting evidence and demonstrated that empowerment may not or may only be partially achieved, especially in the Muslim community. Therefore, this study examines the effect of microcredit on Malay Muslim women empowerment in urban Selangor and Melaka. An explanatory mixed method was employed for the study. In the first step, a cross-sectional survey was distributed to 500 respondents to examine the effect of microfinance on women livelihood and decision-making process in intra-household as well as business. A multi-stage random sampling was used to collect data from urban areas in Selangor and Melaka. The time of joining AIM scheme was used to determine the type of treatment and control members, where 360 of current clients who spent three years in the AIM scheme are referred to as the treatment group and 140 of new clients who just joined the AIM scheme and have not yet used their loans are referred to as the control group. In the second step, 32 semi structured interviews were performed to deeply explain how access to AIM affects women empowerment. The logistic regression result shows that AIM has positive effect on women livelihood and decision-making process and resources controlling in intra-household as well as business. The finding of qualitative content analysis also confirms the impact of AIM on women empowerment. It also explains how access to microfinance shifts the strategy of decision-making process from solely husband or family base to self or jointly decision-making base. Moreover, the content analysis results show how access to microfinance empowers women in their community. Despite the significant impact of AIM on women empowerment, there are internal as well as external challenges faced by women borrowers which impede their sustainability and growth that need to be addressed by future researches. Therefore, this research recommends the policymakers to continue support poor and low income women and protect their micro and small businesses from massive competition and market monopoly as well as diversify their product and redesign microcredit disbursement and repayment process

ABSTRAK

Mikro kredit telah menjadi satu topik yang hangat diperkatakan dalam pasaran kredit sebagai alat yang berkesan untuk menyampaikan perkhidmatan kewangan kepada kepada golongan wanita serba kekurangan sekiranya tiada pasaran kredit konvensional. Logik asas adalah bahawa melalui perlanjutan mikro kredit, wanita akan dapat mengambil bahagian dalam pasaran ekonomi melalui pembentukan perniagaan mikro dan kecilan. Dengan adanya perniagaan tersebut, mereka mampu menjana pendapatan dan menyumbang ke arah bantuan isi rumah, mengurangkan kecemasan dan memerkasakan diri. Walaupun mikrokewangan telah mencapai tahap kemuncaknya, penulisan terkini mendokumenkan bukti yang bercanggah dan menunjukkan bahawa pemerksaan mungkin tidak atau mungkin hanya sebahagiannya tercapai terutamanya dalam komuniti Islam. Oleh itu, kajian ini mengkaji kesan pinjaman mikro kredit kepada bangsa Melayu dalam memerksakan wanita Islam di bandar Selangor dan Melaka. Kaedah penjelasan gabungan telah digunakan untuk kajian ini. Dalam langkah pertama, tinjauan keratan lintas telah diedarkan kepada 500 responden untuk meneliti kesan mikrokewangan terhadap mata pencarian kaum wanita dan proses membuat keputusan dalam isi rumah dan perniagaan. Satu kaedah persamplean pelbagai peringkat telah digunakan untuk mengumpul maklumat daripada kawasan bandar di Selangor dan Melaka. Saat penyertaan dalam skim AIM digunakan untuk menentukan jenis ahli pemprosesan dan kawalan di mana 360 daripada pelanggan sedia ada yang menyertai skim AIM selama tiga tahun merujuk kepada kumpulan pemprosesan dan 140 pelanggan yang baharu menyertai skim AIM tetapi belum menggunakan pinjaman mereka merujuk kepada kumpulan kawalan. Dalam langkah kedua, 32 temu bual separa berstruktur telah dijalankan bagi menjelaskan secara mendalam bagaimana akses kepada AIM mempengaruhi pemerksaan wanita. Hasil keputusan regresi logistik membuktikan bahawa AIM menunjukkan kesan positif terhadap terhadap kehidupan kaum wanita serta proses membuat keputusan dan pengawalan sumber dalam isi rumah dan perniagaan. Dapatan analisis kandungan kualitatif juga mengesahkan kesan AIM terhadap pemerksaan wanita. Ia juga menjelaskan bagaimana akses kepada pembiayaan mikro kredit mengubah strategi proses membuat keputusan - daripada tanggungjawab suami semata-mata atau berdasarkan keluarga kepada membuat keputusan tersendiri atau secara bersama. Selain itu, kandungan keputusan analisis menunjukkan bagaimana akses kepada pembiayaan mikro memberi kuasa kepada wanita dalam komuniti mereka. Walaupun terdapat kesan yang ketara AIM terhadap memerksakan wanita, terdapat cabaran dalaman dan luaran yang dihadapi oleh peminjam wanita yang menghalang kelangsungan dan pertumbuhan mereka yang perlu ditangani oleh kajian masa depan. Oleh itu, kajian ini mencadangkan pembuat untuk meneruskan sokongan terhadap wanita miskin dan berpendapatan rendah serta melindungi perniagaan mikro dan kecil mereka daripada persaingan besar dan monopoli pasaran.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MFI-	Microfinance Institutions
AIM-	Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia
GDP-	Gross domestic product
NU-	United Nation
NEP-	New Economic Policy
MEs-	Micro Enterprises
SLA-	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
UNDP-	United Nations Development Programme
CARE-	Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere
DFID-	British Department for International Development
VSLA-	Village Savings and Microcredit Association
BRAC-	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
SHGs-	Self-Help Groups
IA-	Impact Assessment
PLI-	Poverty Line per Income
GTP-	Government Transformation Programme
ADB-	Asian Development Bank
RM-	Ringgit Malaysia

USAID-

United States Agency for International Development

CIMB-

Commerce International Merchant Bankers

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