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Survival of young agropreneur business sales towards post pandemic: Selangor state experience

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the business sales trends of young agropreneurs in Selangor State towards the post-pandemic period of 2019 to 2021. The study was conducted with deep interviews with respondents about their company efforts based on the needed parameters of business clusters, yearly earnings, marketing sources, and expanding at the business level through a survey utilising survey questionnaires. This study employed quantitative research methodologies, conducting physical and in-person interviews with eight agropreneurs in Selangor State. Business clusters, gender, yearly earnings, marketing sources, and business income increase were the parameters gathered. Through the analysis, the female entrepreneur was dominant with 62.5%. Paste and sauce was the most profitable product from respondent 6, with positive sales survival annually of RM 420,000.00, RM 444,000.00, and RM 517,000.00 for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021. The respondents with the highest annual percentage of annual sales during the pandemic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 are respondents 2 and 1, with 100% and 87.5%, respectively. Extended research is required to gain data on sales and business status for non-food agropreneurs to get updated research findings.

Keywords: Selangor, young agropreneur, survival, post pandemic, sales

1. Introduction

The Corona Virus Disease Pandemic (COVID-19) rocked the world in early 2020, infecting practically everyone on the earth (Al-Balas *et al.*, 2020; Nasution *et al.*, 2020) ^[1, 15]. The COVID-19 pandemic helps Malaysia's economy as well as the health sector. The Malaysian Agriculture Research and Development Institute (MARDI) was in charge of Young Agropreneur (YA) development activities at the state level via the Selangor Technology Transfer and Entrepreneur Development Centre (TE). By December 2022, there will be 22 Selangor MARDI Young Agropreneurs. MARDI Selangor YA is comprised of a diverse range of firms and clusters, including food-based industry (IAT) and agricultural agriculture. The COVID-19 outbreak has primarily impacted and startled small enterprises. The post-COVID-19 outbreak presents a variety of issues for small and medium-sized firms and cooperative practitioners (Ramdani, I. 2020) ^[18]. According to the findings of the study (Miyakawa *et al.*, 2020) ^[14], the rise in business departures during the COVID-19 epidemic is mostly attributable to a fall in predicted sales growth rate rather than an increase in uncertainty. A national communicative intervention campaign was designed to prevent the COVID-

19 outbreak by diagnosing the situation, planning, organising expert teams, producing appropriate information, and disseminating it through social networks, mass media, and interpersonal communications. This information was received and exchanged by extension personnel, several important institutions, the majority of key rural informants, local leaders, facilitators, farmers, and nomads. Furthermore, this study shows that salesperson bricolage is positively related to sales performance under conditions shaped by the COVID-19 disruption, with salesperson bricolage becoming more strongly related to sales performance when sales environments are more severely disrupted by the pandemic (Epler & Leach, 2021) ^[3]. As a result, the study was carried out to assess the business sales patterns of young agropreneurs (YA) in Selangor State from the post-pandemic era of 2019 to 2021.

2. Methodology

As of December 2022, there are a total 22 Selangor MARDI young entrepreneur was monitored. This is a quantitative study based on primary data collected from 8 out of 22 entrepreneur that positively response during the interview (Table 1).

Table1: Respondens products cluster that positively cooperate during interviews

Respondent	Name Of Entreprenauer	Business Name	Products Types
1	Suraya	Sorrellicious Legacy Enterprise	Drinks
2	Azizi	Xzis Resources Enterprise	Paste And Sauce
3	Farhan	Mobico Fresh Milk Enterprise	Drinks
4	Liyana	Dinda Delights Enterprise	Bakery
5	Zahlelawati	Dapur Mak Ngah Niene Enterprise	Snack
6	Kairul Matori	Karl Azman Enterprise	Paste And Sauce
7	Fadzli	Hanna's Kitchen Enterprise	Frozen Food
8	Fatimah	Seedak Enterprise	Frozen Food

This technique was created to offer a thorough description and visualisation of how the Post-COVID pandemic in 2022 influenced small firms' revenue growth. Respondents were interviewed in-depth about their firm activities based on the required factors of business clusters, yearly earnings, marketing sources, and business expansion. This study both informs and inspires the reader. This study employed primary data gathered through an interview, and the data was structured in a variety of forms depending on the information source. The data was then reviewed and described in narrative writing.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 2 displays the gender distribution of YA respondents in Selangor. Female entrepreneurs took the lead with 62.5%, followed by men entrepreneurs with 37.5%. Gender variations in competition and risk-taking appear to contribute considerably to the gender gap in latent and embryonic entrepreneurship (Bönte W, & Piegeler M, 2013)^[2]. Gender status views may be viewed as an essential "Demand-Side" mechanism contributing to gender discrepancy in aggregate entrepreneurship rates, as well as a micro-level factor influencing the possibility of a new and unique organisation emerging and surviving (Thébaud., 2015)^[20].

Table 2: Entrepreneurs gender percentage guided by Mardi Selangor as 2022.

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	3	37.5
Female	5	62.5
Total	8	100

Women entrepreneurs in the region's food processing industry use a variety of cross-cutting techniques, such as the formation of economic organisations and entrepreneurship clubs, to address and mitigate socio-cultural problems (Kapinga & Montero, 2017)^[7]. Upscaling small-scale fermented food processing activities while improving functional food properties and fostering women's entrepreneurship contributes to food loss prevention, nutrition and health promotion, and entrepreneurial opportunities for current processors (Materia V, *et al.*, 2021)^[13]. Understanding the factors that influence the development of female entrepreneurial activities and exploring their potential variability across stages of economic development, according to Kobeissi (2010)^[9], could be useful for policymakers exploring effective incentive structures to promote gender entrepreneurship in their respective countries. The following factors influenced the business resilience of rural entrepreneur women:

external resources, internal resources, creativity, opportunity and adaptability, risk management, and family support.

Table 3: Marketing methods of young agropreneurs respondents in Selangor

Methods	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Online Only	2	25
Offline Only	5	62.5
Both Online And Offline	3	37.5

Table 3 displays the respondents' marketing approaches. Direct delivery, walk-in clients, and store displays have the highest percentage (62.5%), followed by a mix of online and offline (37.5%) and offline methods (25%). An examination of the most typical offline marketing strategies reveals that even forward-thinking organisations in the information and communication technology industry frequently employ such tools. The research findings imply that, while classic marketing principles are still applicable in Taiwan's cyber environment, Internet-based small businesses must employ new marketing approaches to adapt to and compete in the ever-changing Internet business environment (Siu. W, 2002)^[19]. In the midst of the pandemic, the government has issued a policy to empower small and medium-sized businesses, such as (a) providing monetary assistance to vulnerable small and medium-sized businesses; (b) providing a tax incentive for small and medium-sized businesses; (c) providing credit relaxation and restructuring for small and medium-sized businesses; (d) expanding capital financing aid for small and medium-sized businesses; and (e) providing e-learning training. I. Ramdani, 2020^[18]. To attain the best outcomes, entrepreneurs must learn to synergize their marketing efforts across both offline and online channels (Kingshott *et al.*, 2020)^[8].

Figure 1 depicts the yearly sales trend of respondents from 2019 to 2021 in the post-pandemic market. According to the results, respondent 6 (Karl Azman Enterprise, paste and sauce) has good sales survival with RM 420,000.00, RM 444,000.00, and RM 517,000.00 for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021. Meanwhile, respondent 4 has negative annual sales survival with RM400,000.00, RM 36,308.00, and 32,132.50 for the same time period. The causal model findings showed that the variables of marketing strategy, marketing mix, marketing tactics, business communication, business plan preparation abilities, and supporting policies are beneficial factors in building company resilience. COVID-19 also demonstrated that connections, as well as personal and socioeconomic aspects, are important in dealing with a crisis. Those of us in the agricultural extension and education professions must examine our personal and professional connections and understand both

their complexity and fragility. Consumers' eating habits and food purchase behaviour have been strongly changed by perceived risk and precautions connected to COVID-19, and these changes might be utilised by food producers to obtain a competitive advantage (Marinkovi & Lazarevi, 2021) [12]. The COVID-19 epidemic has induced significant changes in consumer behaviour, including more cautious purchasing decisions, greater interest in lower pricing, purchasing locally, and preferring fresh items over processed ones (Orindaru *et al.*, 2021) [16].

During the pandemic, the YA sales trend faced a variety of problems. During the outbreak, food producers were expected to confront a survival crisis. The average proportion of sales changes, as seen in Figure 2. Respondents 2 and 8 (Xzis Resources Enterprise and Seedak Enterprise) had negative sales percentages of -87.4% and -50% in 2020-2021, respectively, while respondent 4 (Dinda Delights Enterprise) had negative sales in the early phases of the pandemic (2019-2020) with -90.92%. Respondents 2 and 1 (Xzis Resources Enterprise and Sorrellicious Legacy

Enterprise) had the most surviving YA at the two periods of the pandemic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, with 100% and 87.5%, respectively. The COVID-19 pandemic reduced food accessibility and availability, changed dietary practises, and exacerbated food poverty, particularly in the most vulnerable regions (Jafri *et al.*, 2021) [23].

The pandemic altered consumers' shopping habits and food sources, lowering shopping frequency and increasing food purchased per trip, resulting in an increase in consumption of local food products due to food safety concerns (Hassen *et al.*, 2021) [6]. The pandemic has had an impact on production and marketing due to labour and logistical restrictions, while the negative income shock has limited access to markets and increased food commodity prices, influencing consumption patterns (Cariappa *et al.*, 2020) [21]. Diverging trends in all food categories were identified, with some persons lowering and others increasing their consumption frequencies, suggesting that the pandemic had diverse effects on people's lives and food consumption habits (Janssen *et al.*, 2021). [22]



Fig 1: Annual sales trend of respondents on 2019-2021 toward post-pandemic



Fig 2: Annual percentage sales of respondents on 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 toward post-pandemic

4. Conclusion

We may conclude from the data that the food-based product trend has an impact in post-pandemic conditions. The tendency of reducing income during the early epidemic and growing positively after the pandemic was shown to be reversed. The agropreneur takes a different strategy to increasing sales in order to secure the long-term viability of their business and products, whether through internet or direct client purchases. With a high degree of demand for their offering price, ready-to-eat items increased the income of small to medium-sized enterprises. This research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, thus more research is needed to get data on sales and business status for non-food agropreneurs in order to update the research conclusions. The following recommendation is to research the impact of government aid programmes on entrepreneur sales growth in order to enhance the economic development of community-based sectors, particularly in the post-pandemic era.

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