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The impact of family on gender: Women entrepreneurs in the construction industry

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Abstract

The first objective of this study is to explore the gender of women construction entrepreneurs (WCEs), while the second objective is to identify the influence of family on WCE via statistical analyses, including descriptive analysis, cross tabulation, and median split method. As a result, a majority of these WCEs with the gender of masculinity were raised in a large family, grew up under stringent discipline, and were exposed to open-minded parenting style. In conclusion, most WCEs seem to be raised in a large family under the authoritarian parenting style, with more than two siblings with the age spacing of 1-4 years.

Keywords: Women Construction Entrepreneurs, Gender, Family.

El impacto de la familia en el género: Las mujeres empresarias en la industria de la construcción

Resumen

El primer objetivo de este estudio es explorar el género de las mujeres empresarias de la construcción (WCE), mientras que el segundo objetivo es identificar la influencia de la familia en WCE mediante análisis estadísticos, incluido el análisis descriptivo, la tabulación cruzada y el método de división de la mediana. Como resultado, la mayoría de estas

WCE con el género de masculinidad se criaron en una familia numerosa, crecieron bajo una disciplina estricta y fueron expuestas a un estilo de crianza de mente abierta. En conclusión, la mayoría de los WCE parecen ser criados en una familia numerosa bajo el estilo autoritario de crianza de los hijos, con más de dos hermanos con un intervalo de edad de 1 a 4 años.

Palabras clave: Mujeres empresarias de la construcción, género, familia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women are not deprived from a particular occupation anymore, which are supposed to be too perilous or otherwise inappropriate for women. However, sex racism still occurs. The construction site has been assumed suitable only for men and this concept has affected the industry, especially where women are discouraged from getting involved in this domain (Aboagyenimo et al., 2018). Sometimes, ‘employers and employees tend to construct gendered work environments through organizational practices and by acting on stereotyped assumptions. This is because; this particular industry is defined by masculine work environment, along with lengthy and difficult work tasks. In addition, WCEs seems to be under-represented in the construction arena. The issue of the under-representation of women in construction happens worldwide. This is probably due to the influence of gendering amongst workers. Khairul Firdaus asserted that although the number of women in the Malaysian industry appeared to have increased from year to year, the contribution of women within the construction industry is under-represented.

The social constructivism theory describes gender as what is considered as masculine or feminine and it is separate from one’s

biological sexuality. Masculinity and femininity are considered to be outcomes of nurture or how individuals are grown up. Gender involves cognitive construction and transmitted from the family to children through the processes of learning and identification. Next, the social cognitive theory argues that gender characteristics and role behavior are the outcomes of a large network of public influences, including both familiarly and in the many societal systems encountered in daily life. With that, this study assessed the role of the family in transmitting gender identity into the next generation. The way people behave and think is the final product of socialization. From the moment one is born, he or she is molded into being what the society wants him or her to be (Andersen et al., 2008). Through socialization, people learn both what is appropriate and improper for both genders (Andersen et al., 2008). As children move from childhood into adolescence, various factors influence their attitudes, behaviors, and characters in relation to their gender roles. These factors include the child's peers, school experiences, and television viewing. Media, such as television, are able to construct feminine identity in a postmodern culture (Damean, 2006). According to Rose and Rudolph, the peers of a child may influence his or her emotional and behavioral development. However, the strongest influence on gender role development seems to occur within the family setting, with parents passing on to their children their own beliefs, both overtly and covertly.

Parents are important influences on children's behavior, and this influence is likely to be a function of parenting styles and practices. Parenting styles describe how a parent communicates with his/her child. Four parenting styles have been known: authoritarian (demand obedience), authoritative (demanding and responsive), permissive (acquiesce to child's

demands), and uninvolved (low on both demanding and responsive) (Jago et al., 2011). Parenting actions explain context-specific treatments, such as what a parent does to assist physical task. Such varied parenting styles largely affect not just how a child grows up and socializes, but also on how they acquire skills. The various styles dictate how children fit in teaching methods in schools and how they communicate with their classmates. Sibling relationships play an important role not only in the family life, but by influencing the way that the family functions within the society. Sibling connection offers a significant context for the improvement of children's perception of their public, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive perspectives (Carpendale and Lewis, 2004). Especially, siblings have a vital action in the improvement of children's perception of others' mentalities, namely their perception of emotions, thoughts, purposes, and opinions. Siblings seem to demonstrate an understanding of others' minds during real-life interactions long before they show this understanding of more formal assessments. Studies related to siblings mostly focus on status impacts, such as birth order, gender, age spacing, and number of siblings. Jalali defined entrepreneurship as a process of extracting profit from new, unique, and valuable combinations of resources in an uncertain environment. A gender-based research indicated that the similarities between male and female entrepreneurs would result in similar profit outcomes for their ventures. Nonetheless, researches on female entrepreneurs suffer from a number of shortcomings, such as the one-sided empirical focus; the lack of theoretical grounding; the neglect of structural, historical, and cultural factors; the use of male-gendered measuring instruments; the absence of perspective on power; and the lack of explicit feminist analysis (Jaafar et al., 2014).

Prior studies on women in the construction industry have displayed little attention on women entrepreneurs. The literature reveals a number of studies on women participation in the built environment, such as those undertaken by (Byrne et al., 2005). Studies on women, generally in Malaysia, focus on many other things (Alam et al., 2011). examined successful women entrepreneurs, while Khairul Firdaus looked into the challenges faced by women in the built environment. Given that just a handful of studies have probed into this topic within the context of Malaysia, there is knowledge gap in the literature concerning gender development amongst WCEs and the role of the family in transmitting gender identity to WCEs from the light of psychological and behaviouristic theories. Hence, this study determined the gender identity amongst WCEs and explored the role of the family in creating gender identity amongst WCEs. Gender can be transmitted from family to children. With that, this study proposes a framework on the role of family on gender development. The use of variables and dimensions had been based on the above discussion and illustrated in Figure 1.

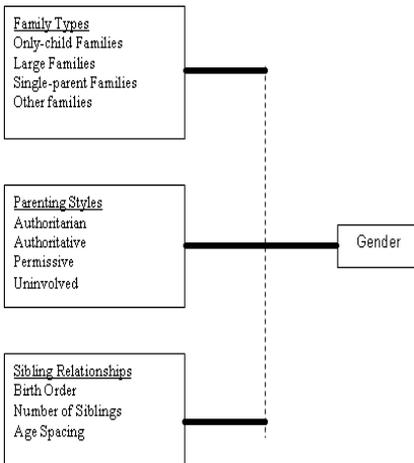


Figure 1. Propose Framework on the Influence of Family on Gender Development of women entrepreneur

Jaafar et al. (2014) argued that the number of companies owned by women in the Northern region of Malaysia was 3362 from Grades 1 until 7. Based on the size, Grade 7 shows the biggest construction enterprises in Malaysia. This study involves construction firms from Grades 5 until 7 where the total number of construction companies ran by women entrepreneurs were 444. After the screening process, phone calls were made to all the companies so as to ascertain the existence of these companies. The cluster sampling method was applied to spread the questionnaires to 194 WCEs in the Northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. In attaining face and content validity, the drafted questionnaire was pre-tested with six WCEs in the Malaysian construction industry via personal contact and visits to their firms.

A total of 34 completed questionnaires were returned, indicating an entire participation rate of 18%. The low response rate could be due to time and financial constraints. The survey was conducted only in interval of two-month period. The data analyses were composed of several statistical analyses, including descriptive analysis and cross tabulation, via statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). An issue related to survey methodology is non-response bias. Stanley and Wisner stated that there is a requirement to compare the participants of the second wave with those of the first wave, as well as all the survey items. In this case, the researcher divided the questionnaires into two groups based on the dates returned. The first wave group had 19 participants, while 15 for the second wave group. The t-tests showed no statistically significant result applied to these two groups.

2.2. Measuring instrument

Classification of Bem et al. (1976) was applied in this study to measure the masculinity and femininity aspects. Each respondent was asked to describe themselves based on each item presented related to masculinity and femininity, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), the gender of each respondent was described based on the median split method of classification. The median scores based on the masculinity and femininity characteristics of the respondents were separated into different categories of undifferentiated (low femininity- low masculinity), feminine (high femininity- low masculinity), masculine (low femininity- high masculinity), and androgyny (high femininity- high masculinity). The respondents were also requested to describe their family (large family, the only child in the family, single parents family, etc); their birth order and age spacing with their siblings; and their parents' parenting styles (authoritarian, permissive, or both).

3. RESULTS

3.1 Background profile of the respondents

Statistics found that among 34 respondents, 19 held the position of director, while another 15 were the owner. Most of the participants (10) begin their job as a company founder, followed by supervisor (7), administrator (6), while others include draughtsman and quantity surveyor (6), senior manager (2), technician (2), and consultant (1). The majority of the respondents (18) claimed to have entrepreneurship experience of 6-10

years; followed by 11-15 years (6), below 5 years (5), 16-20 years (4), and 21-25 years (1). Based on their highest formal education received, 14 respondents had earned their diploma, followed by degree level (12), secondary school (4), and master's degree (3). Only one respondent declared unknown for academic qualification. The highest number of participants (12) were majored in construction, followed by management or business (10), architecture, planning or surveying (5), accounting (4), and administration (3). The majority of participants has 11-15 years of experience, followed by five years of experience.

3.2 Family background

It had been fascinating that most of the respondents came from the large family type (26); while only one respondent was the one child in her family and from single-parent family type each; and the rest chose medium-sized family. The largest birth order for the participants had been the eldest in the family (12), six were from both third and last child, respectively, four were the second child, followed by fourth child (3), two persons were the fifth child, and finally, only one respondent was the eighth child. As for the number of siblings, most of them had more than two siblings (30), three had two siblings, and one had no sibling. The findings indicated that all the participants had better relationships with their sisters (ranked 3 and above), while those without a sister answered 'not applicable'. The highest age spacing between the respondents and their siblings were 1-4 years (29), four respondents with 5-8 years of age spacing between their siblings, and the respondent who was the only child answered 'not applicable' (Antawati & Nurdibyanandaru, 2019).

3.3 The gender of WCEs

The gender construct had been assessed using Bem Sex Role Inventory Analysis Score Sheet (BSRIASS). The score obtained by the WCEs for masculinity scale was (3.94), which was higher than that retrieved for femininity scale (3.14). The results are further illustrated in Figure 2. WCE gender classification identity can be categorized as masculine.

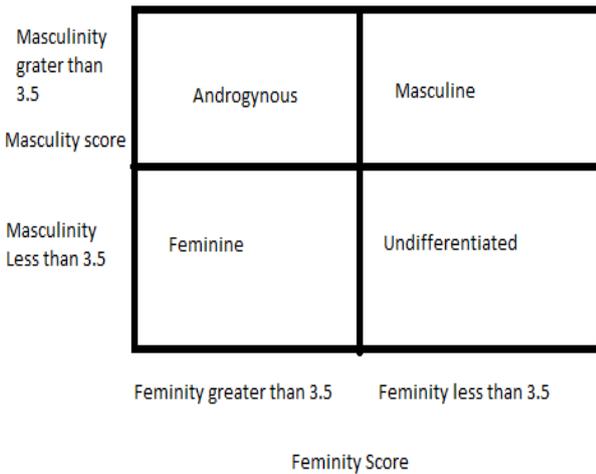


Figure 2. Classification of Gender Identity Based On the Four-Quadrant Classification

3.4 Cross tabulation between family types, gender identity, and parenting style

Table 1 presents that a majority of the participants (76%) were from large families. Most of them were from masculine and androgynous (60%) categories. Table 2 shows that 47% of the respondents were raised by authoritarian parenting style with androgynous and masculine participants forming the largest number; eight and four participants, respectively. However, seven participants from the masculine category were raised via a permissive parenting style, and four androgynous respondents claimed to have been raised using both parenting styles.

Table 1: Gender Identity * Family Types Crosstabulation

Gender Identity		Family Types				
		Only Child in the Family	Large Family	Single Parents Family	Others	Total
Androgynous	Count	0	9	0	1	10
Masculine	Count	1	11	1	4	17
Feminine	Count	0	2	0	0	2
Undifferentiated	Count	0	4	0	1	5
Total	Count	1	26	1	6	34

Table 2: Gender Identity * Parenting Styles Crosstabulation

		Parenting style			Total	
		Authoritarian	Permissive	Both		
Gender Identity	Androgynous	Count	4	1	5	10
	Masculine	Count	8	7	2	17
	Feminine	Count	1	0	1	2
	Undifferentiated	Count	3	2	0	5
Total		Count	16	10	8	34

3.5 Cross tabulation between gender identity, sibling relationship, and age spacing have been conducted to see the relationship between gender and family characteristics.

Table 3 displays that 12 participants were the eldest in the household, followed by fourth and last child with six participants each, respectively. Having masculine respondents from the last, second, and first child (which is five, three, and five respectively) exhibited an unknown connection between these two variables. As for age spacing among siblings, 29 respondents had 1-4 years of gap. Table 4 shows that 15 participants among masculine and 7 participants among androgynous were in the class. Table 5 presents that 30 respondents had more than two siblings.

Table : 3 Gender Identity * Birth order Crosstabulation

			Birth order						
			First child	Second child	Third child	Fourth child	Fifth child	Eight child	Last child
Gender Identity	Androgynous	Count	4	1	2	2	0	0	1
	Masculine	Count	5	3	1	1	1	1	5
	Feminine	Count	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
	Undifferentiated	Count	3	0	2	0	0	0	0
Total	Count	12	4	6	3	2	1	6	

Table 4: Gender Identity * Age spacing

			Age spacing			Total
			Not applicable	1-4 years	5-8 years	
Gender Identity	Androgynous	Count	0	7	3	
	Masculine	Count	1	15	1	10
	Feminine	Count	0	2	0	17
	Undifferentiated	Count	0	5	0	2
Total	Count	1	29	4	5	

Table 5: Gender Identity * Number of sibling

			Number of sibling			
			Only child	Two sibling	More than two sibling	Total
Gender Identity	Androgynous	Count	0	0	10	10
	Masculine	Count	1	3	13	17
	Feminine	Count	0	0	2	2
	Undifferentiated	Count	0	0	5	5
Total		Count	1	3	30	34

4. DISCUSSION

The above analysis had determined the gender of women within the construction industry based on varying family factors. It was revealed that majority of the respondents with masculine gender identity derived from large families with authoritarian parents, first child of the family with more than two siblings, and 1-4 years of the gap with siblings. The significant finding indicated that the gender identity of the respondents could be grouped as masculine. This finding is in line with that reported by Neergaard and Ulhoi, wherein words that describe masculinity and entrepreneurs are indistinguishable, while femininity is their exact opposite. A number of feministic terms, including warm, sympathetic, affectionate, and understanding, as explained by Bem et al. (1976), have never been integrated in entrepreneurial studies. Ahl (2006) asserted that entrepreneurial and masculinity words are related directly to each other. The construction domain is closely linked with masculinity gender. Having responsibility in a project which is under the dominance of men is a strong description for WCEs to adapt their traits to be in line with the industry. However, in developing countries, the population of women entrepreneurs is far less than that found in developed countries, as most

women are engaged with clerical work, in comparison to construction site experts and entrepreneurs.

This study found that most of the respondents (64.7%) of masculine gender came from large families, who would have benefited from playing and learning from their siblings. The characteristics of children from larger families match some masculinity terms, such as competence, responsibility, and independent (Ahl, 2006). Children from larger families would need to compete with their siblings to attract their parents' attention, thus the development of masculinity behavior, such as independent, competitive, and being responsible. In addition, this study found that those with masculine identity were raised by authoritarian parents, while only a small number had permissive parents. Authoritarian parents indicate little passion and very directive. Those who grew up with authoritarian parents were competent, self-controlled, and independent, which describe masculinity. Nonetheless, the outcomes of this study seem to be inconsistent with that reported by Shaffer, who argued that children of permissive parents are quite low in independence and achievement, which are the characteristics of masculinity founded by (Bem et al., 1976).

Current study revealed that majority of the respondents with masculine and androgynous gender were the first child of the family, which is in line with that claimed by Abramovitch et al. (1986) that first-born engages in leadership and teaching roles, which reflect masculinity, as depicted by (Bem et al., 1976). The results are in agreement with the conceptualization of Hegar (2012), who suggested that first-born children tend to be more dominant. It can be said that first-born children are more isolated in their childhood which leads them to become entrepreneurs.

Most of the respondents with all classifications derived from families with more than two siblings. This finding is consistent with Weller that highlights the dynamic construction of gender and negotiation between masculinity and feminism as part of brothers and sisters' routine and trivial interactions with each other. Gender identity is shaped by and subjected to explicit and implicit affirmation and challenge, as part of everyday changes between brothers and sisters. There are some notable variances between our findings and other observations of sibling interaction. Abramovitch et al. (1986) did not find age spacing differences, as opposed to that discovered in this study since most of the respondents with masculine and androgyny characteristics had 1-4 years of an age gap with their siblings.

4.1 Theoretical implications

The first major implication of this study is the contribution to psychological and Behavioristic theories by indicating how family types in this research affected the gender identity of selected WCEs. Based on the psychological theories, gender has the cognitive construction transmitted from the family to children within the familial transmission model. This model accents on the creation of gender types among the family through the procedures of comprehending and recognition. The main associable procedures of gender construction are composed of argumentative practices that build daily communications and shape what is supposed to be knowledge and transformed as expertise and science.

4.2 Social and practical implication

This study showed that a female entrepreneur's gender recognition, not her gender directly, is connected to her purpose to select entrepreneurship as a job choice and family types might have limited women to a particular gender based on their treatment itself in the family firm. In addition, since most Malaysian parents practice authoritative parenting style and a large family with more children is a prosperous family, Malaysia has the potential to raise successful women entrepreneurs, particularly fit for the construction domain. Thus, it is concluded, in addition to obtaining exposure to building project-related courses, students should also learn management study, which are important factors in producing prosperous WCE. To prevent excluding the women from the construction industry, Malaysian policymakers are responsible for performing equivalent job selections policies in recruitment, salary, and work environments. Perhaps, the greatest challenge faced by the Malaysian authorities and the social partners in construction is to overcome the obstacles faced by women in the rural areas who live under patriarchal influence and to encourage them not to be shy to work in a male-dominated industry, such as construction industry, since those who score higher on measures of masculine traits need not score low on feminine traits.

5. CONCLUSION

Most WCEs seem to be raised in a large family under the authoritarian parenting style, with more than two siblings with the age

spacing of 1-4 years. As for gender identity and birth order, no consistent result was drawn from the study. The study outcomes serve as additional supporting information within the fields of entrepreneurship, gender development, and family treatment. The researcher suggests that future research may want to look into other agents of gender as a social construct. The lack of study on WCE within the construction industry highlights the significance of this research. Social development issues on gender are seldom given attention in the industry. Conducting a study on WCE in developing nations, such as Malaysia, has yet to receive complete support from the industry. The outcomes are significant in providing new inputs to the research landscape concerning WCE worldwide.

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