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UNLEASHING THE POWER OF MIZAN PRINCIPLES: A CASE STUDY OF BUSINESS GROWTH OF RESILIENT WOMEN MUSLIMPRENEUR IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract**:** *This article investigates the influence of Mizan principles on the business growth and resilience of women Muslimpreneurs in Malaysia. The study aims to uncover how the application of Mizan principles which are al-huriyyah (freedom), al-ubudiyyah (self-service to Allah), al-syura (discussion), and al-musawah (equity) can enhance the entrepreneurial capabilities of Malaysian Muslim business owners, leading to sustainable growth and resilience in the face of challenges and crisis. By conducting a case study analysis of successful women Muslimpreneurs, this research seeks to identify the ways in which the Mizan principles have been instrumental in driving their business success and overcoming obstacles. The study adopts a qualitative research methodology and conducts in-depth case studies of three selected women Muslimpreneurs operating in service industry in the Malaysian context. For this paper, only one of the women Muslimpreneurs will be highlighted. The findings reveal that the Mizan principles serve as a foundational framework for the entrepreneur, guiding their decision-making processes and business strategies while maintaining alignment with their Islamic values. The principle of al-ubudiyyah instills a strong sense of purpose and spiritual grounding, which bolsters resilience and perseverance in the face of adversity. Al-huriyyah and al-musawah foster a sense of autonomy and fairness, enabling women Muslimpreneurs to pursue innovative business opportunities and create inclusive work environments. Meanwhile, al-syura promotes collaboration, networking, and knowledge-sharing, which are vital for business growth and adaptation. The study concludes that the Mizan principles play a pivotal role in unleashing the potential of women Muslimpreneurs in Malaysia, driving business growth and resilience in harmony with their religious beliefs and values. The findings have significant implications for policymakers, academicians, and business support organisations, emphasizing the need to integrating the Mizan principles into entrepreneurship trainings and programs as an initiative to better cater to the unique needs of Muslimpreneurs. By doing so, Malaysia can capitalize on the strengths of this growing segment of entrepreneurs and promote inclusive, sustainable economic development.*

Keywords**:** Muslimpreneurs, Mizan Principles, Business Challenges, Business Strategies

1. Introduction

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are critical to most economies, particularly those in growth, such as Malaysia. One of the global crises affecting most businesses is the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in new legal restrictions and orders imposed by many countries to cease the pandemic spread. Due to the fact that the majority of MSMEs continue to operate traditionally, when a social distance policy is implemented to reduce the frequency of spikes in the spread of Covid-19, conventional business activities will automatically halt. This has had a significant impact on Malaysia's MSMEs and makes it difficult for them to survive during the Covid-19 period. Even though the majority of MSMEs cater to domestic demand, the Malaysian government's standard operating procedures have had a significant impact on them. The financial impact on business has resulted in salary reductions and, in the worst-case situation, employee termination. Next, company operations and supplies have changed in terms of their duration, boundaries, and employee shortages (Che Omar et al., 2020; Hazirah et al., n.d.)

However, small business owners continue to engage in economic activity, and some of the small-medium sized businesses in this business sector seem to be more resilient. The resilience of these MSMEs should be used as a model of entrepreneurial resilience, thus it is critical that we understand the extent to which this resilience may be realized in MSME and what factors influence the resilience. The Mizan principles, derived from Islamic teachings, have been recognized as a powerful framework for guiding entrepreneurs in their pursuit of success. These principles, which include al-huriyyah (freedom), al-ubudiyyah (self-service to Allah), al-syura (discussion), and al-musawah (equity) (Azman Ab Rahman & Mahazan Abd. Mutalib, 2018). These principles have been instrumental in shaping the growth and resilience of women Muslimpreneur MSMEs in Malaysia. This study aims to gain an understanding of the success determinants of the three resilient women entrepreneurs who have managed to navigate this crisis. To achieve sustained growth and resilience in the face of difficulties and crises, the study intends to reveal how the implementation of the Mizan principles can improve the entrepreneurial skills of Muslim business owners. The study's findings may assist MSMEs in determining the optimum survival strategy for a variety of situations, particularly while facing any crises and upcoming environmental changes.

2. Literature Review

The concept of Mizan Principles, rooted in Islamic teachings, holds significant relevance in guiding the business practices of women Muslimpreneurs in Malaysia. Mizan, derived from the Quran, signifies both the balance and scale of justice, emphasizing the need for ethical conduct and equitable relationships (Ibn Manzhur, n.d.). The principles of Mizan encompass al-ubudiyyah (self-service to Allah), al-huriyyah (freedom), al-syura (discussion), and al-musawah (equity) (Azman Ab Rahman et al., (2018). These principles have been instrumental in shaping the growth and resilience of women Muslimpreneurs in Malaysia, fostering ethical and responsible business practices rooted in Islamic values.

The Mizan Principles offer a comprehensive approach that merges religious principles with business success to help women Muslimpreneurs overcome the challenges of entrepreneurship while adhering to the precepts of their faith. In the context of entrepreneurship, the concept of Mizan Principles has garnered attention for its potential to drive business growth and resilience among women Muslimpreneurs in Malaysia. These principles have been instrumental in shaping the growth and resilience of women

Muslimpreneur MSMEs in Malaysia, as evidenced by previous studies. For instance, studies by Fitri Yunus et al., (2019) emphasize the importance of ethical practices and giving back to the community in line with al-ubudiyyah, while research by Azman Ab Rahman et al., (2018) highlights the significance of inclusive decision-making processes and creating equal opportunities in accordance with al-syura and al-musawah. These studies highlight the relevance and potential influence of the Mizan Principles in the context of entrepreneurship, laying the foundation for further study of their function in encouraging business growth and resilience among Malaysian women Muslimpreneurs.

3. Method

This qualitative research study employs an interpretative case study approach to explore the experiences and perspectives of women Muslimpreneur in the service sector of MSMEs. Data were collected through in-depth interview and observation, with the aim of gaining a deep understanding of the participant's experiences and the factors that influence their entrepreneurial journey (Yin, 2009). A purposive sampling technique were used to select participants for this study. This approach is appropriate for qualitative research, as it allows the researcher to select participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). In this case, the criteria for participant selection include women Muslimpreneur operating in the service sector of MSMEs who are willing to share their experiences and insights. In-depth interviews and observations were the primary data collection methods for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants, allowing for flexibility in the discussion and the opportunity to explore emerging themes in greater depth (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

4. Findings and Discussions

This section presents the findings of the interview with one resilient woman Muslimpreneur MSMEs. The business owner was asked to provide details of the business growth, and the influence of Mizan principles on the business growth and resilience will be discussed. Mizan principles are a set of Islamic ethical principles that can be applied to business. The term "Al-Mizan" is a phrase from the Quran that is used to characterise both this world and the hereafter. Additionally, it also refers to being considerate in interactions with Allah s.w.t. and creatures of all kinds. Islam exhorts its adherents to balance their pursuit of worldly success in this life with success in the hereafter. Islam has also taught people to conduct business in ways that are compliant with Islamic law rather than in ways that are dishonest or oppressive in other cultures (Al-Quran, Surah An-Nisa [4]: 29). These principles, which include al-ubudiyyah (self-servant to Allah), al-huriyyah (freedom), al-syura (discussion), and al-musawah (equity), have been instrumental in shaping the growth and resilience of Muslimpreneur MSMEs in Malaysia.

The principles of al-ubudiyyah (self-servant to Allah) emphasizes the importance of putting Allah first in all aspects of life, including business. It encourages businesses to be ethical and responsible, and to give back to the community (Fitri Yunus et al., 2019). Therefore, all decisions made within the business should be made with dedication to Allah SWT. This guideline must be followed to keep business transactions in check and to offer full glory to Allah. The al-syura concept is one decision-making concept that Islam supports. This idea emphasises how crucial consensus-building and consultation are when making decisions. It encourages businesses to be inclusive and include all parties in the decision-making process. This is because the syura members' participation and discussion raised the quality of

the results. The importance of this practise is emphasised throughout the Qur'an, and the Prophet Muhammad and his companions engaged in it. The al-Quran states that syura practising is one of a believer's characteristics and is to Allah SWT's pleasure (Al-Quran, Surah Al-Imran [3]: 159).

Islam upholds human freedom in all respects, including freedom of expression, of thought, and of the acquisition and possession of lawful property, as shown by the al-hurriyah principle. This idea places a strong emphasis on the value of freedom and justice in business. In terms of management, it leads to the endorsement of personal autonomy in carrying out responsibilities inside the organisation, such as expressing an opinion or concept. In terms of business, it gives women Muslimpreneur MSMEs the freedom to pivot their enterprises and find new ways to sustain them. Al-Musawah, or equality, is the last management principle in Islam that mandates that every person inside an organisation must be recognised and treated equally in accordance with the law or by rules. The significance of fairness and social justice in business is emphasised by this principle. Businesses are urged to be welcoming and to provide chances for everyone, irrespective of their background. Furthermore, everyone ought to have access to the same resources, chances, and privileges. The only thing that distinguishes employers from employees is their worship and devotion towards Allah SWT; both are granted the same rank. The al-Qur'an explains that under Syariah law, everyone is entitled to the same rights and services without distinction (Al-Quran, Surah Al-Hujurat [49]: 13).

This paper highlights on Puan Ju, from Maniss Café, a woman Muslimpreneur, which has been operating her business since 2004. The primary economic activity are food and beverages. She did not start the business because she liked to bake cakes; rather, her husband encouraged her to enrol in a baking class. Over time, she started to show interest in the bakery industry. She initially only operated a part-time home business, but after a few years and after her business experienced a significant growth, she decided to devote all of her attention to it. After leaving her job as a lecturer at one of Malacca's colleges, she expanded her business by renting a shop lot and then creating a training centre for baking cakes. The Covid-19 pandemic started to have an adverse effect on her business, and when she began to grow it, her father and husband passed away. As a sole breadwinner for the family, she had to keep running the business. However, through her determination and trust in Allah, she managed to open three branches in Melaka: including a cake shop, a pastry and coffee shop, and a western food restaurant.

The findings of the Mizan principles from the woman Muslimpreneur's activities are shown in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Findings of Mizan Principles in Woman Muslimpreneur's Activities

No.	Principles	Woman Muslimpreneur's Activities
1	Al-ubudiyyah (self-service to Allah)	1. Believe in Allah's destiny in everything. 2. Dare to bear any risk by trusting in Allah. 3. Pay zakat and contributions to the society. 4. Using Islamic banking for business financing.
2	Al-huriyyah (freedom)	1. Open discussion with staffs. 2. Customers and employees freely expressing their opinions.

3	Al-syura (discussion)	1. Conduct meetings with stakeholders. 2. Ask opinions from partners before making decision.
4	Al-musawah (equity)	1. Equal opportunity for staffs to show their skills. 2. Provide employees with access to training and development opportunities.

According to Table 1 above, this woman Muslimpreneur's practises were generally in line with the Mizan principles. For instance, according to the al-ubudiyyah concept, the business owner is constantly having faith in Allah's plan for everything and be willing to accept any risks. Regarding the al-hurriyyah principle, all customers and staff members stated that they were given the freedom to express themselves. For the as-Syura principle was put into practise through regular meetings, especially when important decisions were to be made. In terms of al-musawwah, the company gave every employee the chance to pursue their interests in learning new skills. In other words, members had equal access to opportunities to improve their abilities. It was discovered that all four Mizan principles had been utilised by this woman Muslimpreneur MSMEs in running the business. These guidelines are also a useful resource for other women Muslimpreneurs who aspire to create long-lasting and resilient businesses. By adhering to the Mizan principles, women Muslimpreneurs can build enterprises that are not only successful, but also ethical and socially responsible.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the power of Mizan principles has been demonstrated to be a significant factor in the business growth of resilient women Muslimpreneur MSMEs in Malaysia. The Mizan principles provide a framework for women Muslim entrepreneurs who are resilient and is consistent with the Islamic values. The Mizan principles are based on Islamic beliefs, but they are also universal principles that apply to all businesses although the business's religion is different. All types of enterprises and industries around the world can use the concepts of Mizan principles which are al-huriyyah (freedom), al-ubudiyyah (self-service to Allah), al-syura (discussion), and al-musawah (equity). Muslimpreneur MSMEs in Malaysia have been able to achieve sustainable growth and resilience in the face of a variety of problems by following to Mizan principles.

The Mizan principles have the potential to inform broader discussions on ethical business practices and sustainable development. Al-ubudiyyah (self-service to Allah) and al-huriyyah (freedom) highlight the importance of businesses being ethical and responsible, whereas al-syura (discussion) and al-musawah (equity) point out the importance of businesses being inclusive and creating opportunities for all. Businesses can improve their relationships with their stakeholders and have a beneficial effect on their communities by following the Mizan principles. The Mizan principles can also help businesses to achieve sustainable growth and resilience in the face of various challenges and crises in the future. Future studies could focus on the applicability of the Mizan principles in numerous scenarios and industries, as well as the possibility that these principles could contribute to more broad discussions on moral business conduct and sustainable development.

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