

Business Trend of Entrepreneurs During Pandemic COVID-19: Selangor State Studies

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Abstract— The purpose of the study is to evaluate the business development trends of guided entrepreneurs (GE) in Selangor State during the pandemic of 2021. As actual interviews were prohibited owing to the pandemic, the data was gathered through a survey utilising survey questionnaires and phone calls. COVID-19. This study employed quantitative research methodologies, conducting virtual and in-person interviews with 149 entrepreneurs in Selangor state. Business clusters, yearly earnings, marketing sources, certification, and business level increase were the parameters gathered. Through the analysis done, the bakery product is the largest cluster (24%), followed by the frozen food cluster (16%), and the snack and traditional food cluster (15%). From the analysis, it was also found that 51% of GE is at level 4. The retail market is the highest market platform recorded (94%), followed by the online market (47%), export (39%), and supermarkets (36%). More than 50% of GE are Halal certified, 36% are MeSTI certified, 24% are GMP certified, 7% are HACCP certified, 1% are MyGAP certified and Made in Malaysia, and 2% are other certified.

Keywords— Guided Entrepreneur, MARDI Selangor, Business Trend, COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

The world was stunned in early 2020 by the Corona Virus Disease Pandemic (COVID-19), which infected nearly everyone on the planet (Al-Balas et al., 2020; Nasution et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic not only affects the health sector, but it also benefits Malaysia's economy. The Malaysian Agriculture Research and Development Institute (MARDI) were in charge of conducting entrepreneur development operations at the state level through the Technology Transfer and Entrepreneur Development Center (TE) of Selangor. There will be 149 Selangor MARDI Guided Entrepreneurs as of December 2021. (GE). MARDI Selangor GE is made up of a variety of enterprises and clusters, including food-based industry (IAT), crops, and livestock. Small and medium-sized businesses are the main sector in this economic shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; the lockdown condition has abruptly halted economic activity, resulting in a fall in demand and interfering with the supply chain. (Handayanto & Herlawati, 2020). The COVID-19 epidemic poses a number of challenges for small and medium-sized businesses and cooperative practitioners (Ramdani, I. 2020). Many government rules are being developed to save small and medium-sized enterprises from failing; however, there are other areas in the small and medium-sized enterprise space that are flourishing in this pandemic circumstance, such as masks, health utilities, plants, vitamins, and many more (Ramdani, I. 2020). The Malaysian government has implemented a

number of strategies to combat the epidemic, some of which have had a positive impact, while others have had a negative impact due to the slowing of Malaysia's economic development. Short-term solutions include monetary assistance in the form of soft loans or cash transfers, including the direct engagement of the private sector. Meanwhile, the long-term aim is to incorporate and employ digital technology in order to prepare for Industrial Revolution 4.0. (Pakpahan, 2020). Therefore, the study was conducted to evaluate the business development trends of guided entrepreneurs (GE) in Selangor State during the pandemic of 2021.

METHODOLOGY

This is a quantitative study based on primary data collected from 149 local entrepreneurs in Selangor. This method was designed to provide a detailed description and visualisation of how the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 affected the revenue growth of small and medium-sized businesses.

In-depth interviews were done with respondents about their company efforts based on the needed parameters of business clusters, yearly earnings, marketing sources, certification, and expanding at the business level. The business level of MARDI guideline was income range annually in RM as follows:

- Level 1: 0 – 50,000
- Level 2: 50,001 – 100,000
- Level 3: 100,001 – 300,000

- Level 4: 300,001 - 5,000,000
- Level 5: 5,000,001 – 15,000,000
- Level 6: 15,000,001 – 50,000,000

This research enlightens and informs the readers. Primary data and data obtained through an interview were used in this study, and the data was organised in various formats depending on the information source. The data was then evaluated and presented in the form of narrative prose in a descriptive way.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Figure 1 depicts the proportion of GE in Selangor by cluster. The bakery product cluster led with 24%, followed by the frozen food cluster with 16%. With 1% each, cattle, jam and paste, pickles and fermented items, noodles, and pastries were the clusters with the lowest proportion.

In the midst of the pandemic, the government has issued a policy to empower small and medium enterprises, such as (a) providing monetary assistance to vulnerable small and medium enterprises (b) providing a tax incentive for small and medium enterprises (c) providing credit relaxation and restructuring for small and medium enterprises (d) expanding capital financing aid for small and medium enterprises (e) providing e-learning training. (Ramdani, I. 2020).

The organisation might give online training on service standards and prizes and awards to employees who deliver excellent service (Simbolon & Sutawidjaya, 2021).

Figure 2 depicts the percentage of people still employed at the MARDI Selangor GE level. Level 4 has the largest proportion (51%), while Level 6 has the lowest rate (1%). Countries with a negative agri-food trade balance may be more vulnerable to any crisis, especially if trade restrictions are imposed.

Emerging economies and developing countries are particularly vulnerable to such catastrophes. Raw materials and perishable items were hit worse than processed or less perishable goods at the commodity level (Mizik, T. 2021).

The latest pandemic's impact cannot be properly assessed due to a lack of available data for study. However, the many lockdown measures and limitations hampered the agri-food trade. Emerging markets and

underdeveloped countries were hit the hardest, particularly if they export perishable goods (World Bank 2020). During the COVID-19 epidemic, the firm should develop a new incentive programme that lets employees earn a commission every month in order to boost employee motivation and excitement at work and compensate for the loss of various perks received before the pandemic (Simbolon & Sutawidjaya, 2021).

Table 1 depicts the marketing source variety of MARDI Selangor GE during the monitoring visit, demonstrating that all entrepreneurs dominate the local market through the retail and distributor markets, accounting for 94% of the total. As many as 47% were successful in promoting their items online, while 36% were successful in expanding their product market to supermarkets such as Kedai Mesra, Econsave, Tesco, and others.

For the export market, 39% of entrepreneurs successfully export products to countries such as Singapore, China, and Europe. Because technology is the result of today's most sophisticated labor, every individual, particularly consumers, has used digital apps not only in personal matters such as learning, but also in making transactions and purchases, particularly if the world is secure (Endrawati et al., 2022).

The issue that businesspeople confront when they must embrace digital applications to advertise their products is that not all businesspeople utilise apps; in other words, they must seek better human resources to use this application in order to become excellent at it (Endrawati et al., 2022).

Figure 3 depicts MARDI Selangor GE's degree of accreditation. The trend of halal food companies is currently facing a number of challenges during the pandemic. It is predicted that halal food vendors will be able to survive the epidemic (Fredy Setyono, 2021).

In terms of premises certification, 56% of businesses' premises have Halal certification, 36% have MeSTI certification, 24% have GMP, 7% have HACCP, 5% have ISO, 1% each have MyGAP and Made in Malaysia, and 2% have other certifications.

The global awareness of halal food fulfilment is growing in tandem with the rise of global halal tourism because it is not limited to the tourism destination sector associated with religious sites but also the fulfilment of tourism demands (Fredy. S, 2021).

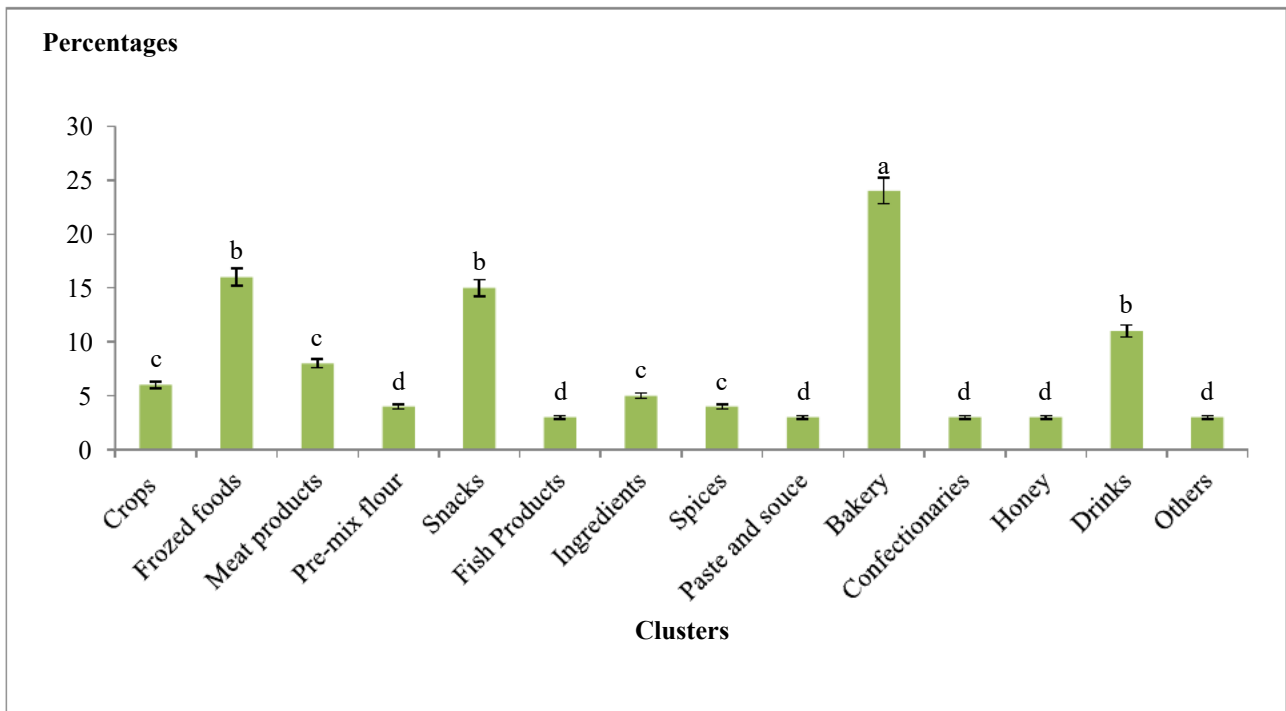


Figure 1: Entrepreneurs cluster percentage guided by MARDI Selangor on 2021.

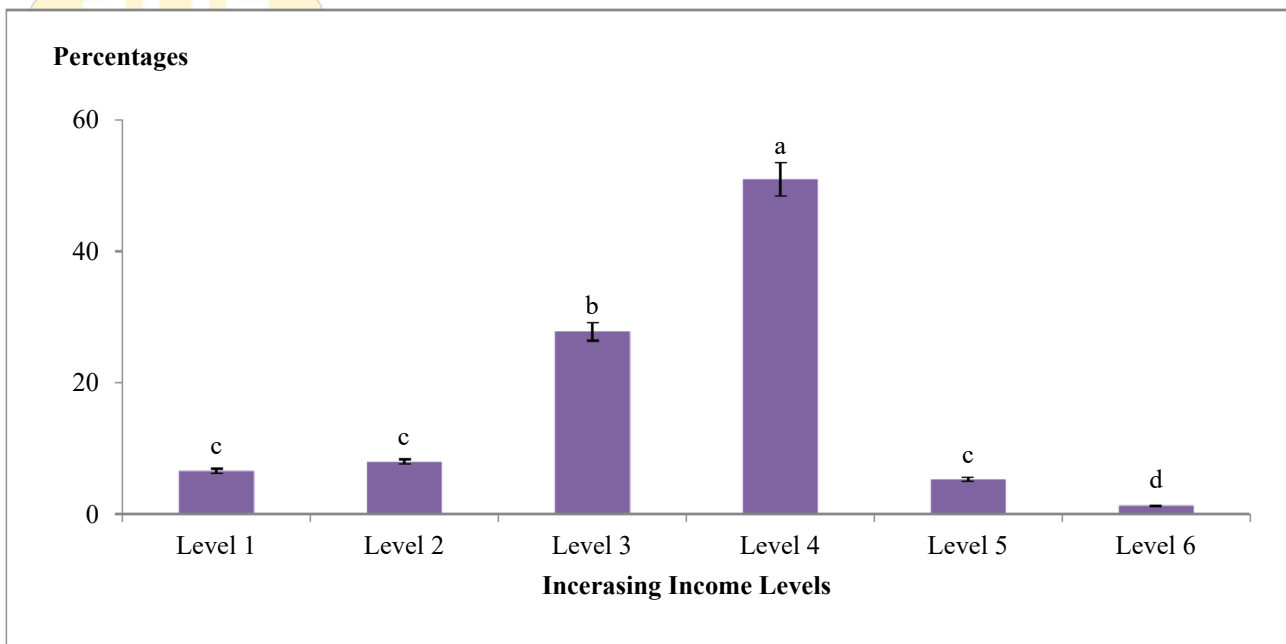


Figure 2: Entrepreneurs cluster income level increased guided by MARDI Selangor on 2021

Table 1: Marketing sources diversity by GE of Selangor State

Market sources	Percentages
Local supermarkets	36
Export	39
Retailers	94
Online	47
Grand mean	54
C.V. (%)	2.9

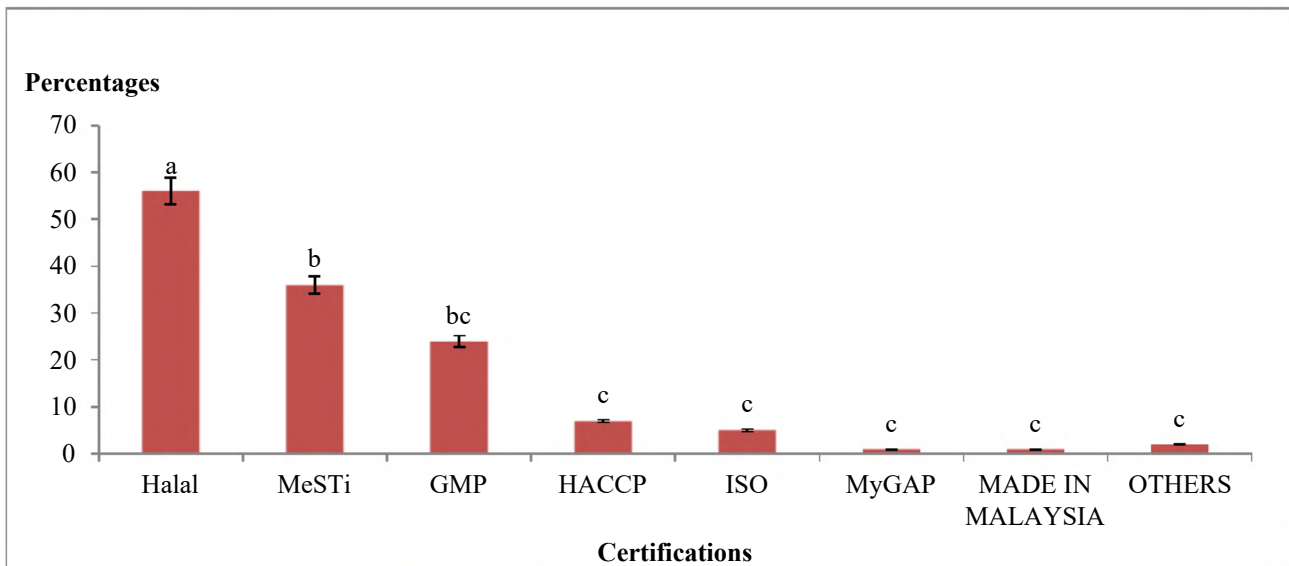


Figure 3: Percentages certifications of guided entrepreneur on 2021.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, we can conclude that the food-based products trend has the effect of increasing the income of small and medium entrepreneurs, whether through online or direct purchasing, despite the fact that the sector of small and medium entrepreneurship has been hit hard, as it has been in other countries, by the COVID-19 pandemics. The ready-to-eat company trend raises the revenue of small to medium-sized businesses, but high-level demand raises the offering price. This research was done during the COVID-19 pandemic, thus more research is required once the pandemic circumstances have passed so that the research findings are more current. The following advice is to investigate the influence of tourism destinations on the growth of entrepreneur sales in order to boost the economic development of community-based tourism villages, particularly once the pandemic is over. As a result, the economy will improve in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The dedication and close collaboration of all State TE employees and the State MARDI Director, backed and encouraged by the TE Center's top management, are the foundation of this successful study. Throughout the year 2021, the Selangor State MARDI TE Center has effectively undertaken activities oriented toward the TE Center's objective Key Performance Indicator (KPI).

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ISSN: 2582-6832