

# INDUSTRI PELANCONGAN MAH MERI KE ARAH KEUSAHAWANAN TEKNO DI MALAYSIA

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## Abstrak

Industri pelancongan merupakan antara penyumbang utama kepada pertumbuhan ekonomi negara. Sumber manusia industri pelancongan memainkan peranan utama dalam pembangunan industri pelancongan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneroka sumber manusia Industri Pelancongan Mah Meri ke arah teknousahawan di Malaysia. Kajian kualitatif digunakan sebagai pendekatan kepada kertas kerja ini, reka bentuk menggunakan kajian kes tunggal. Semasa pengkaji menggunakan pendekatan ini, pengkaji adalah instrumen yang merupakan responden yang aktif dalam proses penyelidikan ini. Temu bual diadakan bersama orang asli iaitu orang Mah Meri yang berkecimpung dalam industri pelancongan. Seterusnya, data juga dikumpul menggunakan pemerhatian dan dokumen daripada JAKOA, KPWK, Kraftangan Malaysia dan lain-lain. Triangulasi digunakan. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Berdasarkan penyelidikan ini, hasil yang diperolehi boleh membantu wanita orang asli lain yang ingin diperkasakan ke arah teknousahawan dan membentuk komuniti berkemahiran sedia untuk bekerjasama. Tambahan pula, bagi sesebuah organisasi, kajian ini akan berkesan dalam pengurusan sumber dan mampu bekerjasama dengan organisasi lain untuk mencapai matlamat yang sama.

**Kata Kunci:** Industri Pelancongan, Mah Meri, Orang Asli, Sumber Manusia, Teknousahawan.

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# MAH MERI TOURISM INDUSTRY TOWARDS TECHNOPRENEURSHIP IN MALAYSIA

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## Abstract

*The tourism industry is one of the major contributors to the country's economic growth. Human resources of the tourism industry play a major role in the development of the tourism industry. This study aims to explore the human resources of the Mah Meri Tourism Industry towards technopreneurship in Malaysia. Qualitative research is used as an approach to this paper, the design is using a single case study. As we are using this approach, the researcher is instruments which are researcher as an active respondent in this research process. The interview is held with aboriginal people which is the Mah Meri people who are in the tourism industry. Furthermore, data were also collected using observation and documents from JAKOA, KPWKM, Kraftangan Malaysia etc. Triangulation is used. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This research, this is may help other aboriginal women who want to be empowered towards technopreneurship and form a skilled community ready to work together. Furthermore, for an organization, this study will be effective in resource management and able to work with other organizations to achieve the same goals.*

**Keywords:** *Aboriginal People, Human Resources, Mah Meri, Technopreneurship, Tourism Industry.*

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## 1.0 Introduction

The tourism industry is a service-oriented service industry (Tuan and Ngan, 2021; Harvey et al., 2017) and one of the contributors to the country's economic growth (Tee et al., 2020). The human resources of the tourism industry play a major role in the development of the tourism industry. The tourism industry needs competent human resources. This is because competent human resources can make the tourism industry competitive and continue to contribute to the country's economic growth. Talking about competencies, Brophy and Kiely (2002) define competencies as skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Arango-Morales et al., (2020) also mention in their research about competency, they define competency as a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. While competency is discussed, let's talk about tourist arrivals in Malaysia. Based on statistics according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia in September 2022, more than 100,000 visitors arrived than August 2022 in Malaysia. In addition, Abd Rashid et al., (2020) also mention in their research that this industry is one of the government's important agendas in the National Key Economic Areas (NKEA). Increasing tourist arrivals every year increases job opportunities and economic growth (Peristiwo, 2020; Khan et al., 2020). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2021) explained that the Travel and Tourism industry (including its direct, indirect and induced impacts) had 10.4% of global GDP (US\$9.2 trillion) and accounted for 1 in 4 of all new jobs created across the world, 10.6% of all jobs (334 million).

However, Mah Meri Tourism Industry in Malaysia's human resources also comes from heads of household women. According to Idris and Selvaratnam (2012) in the poverty dimension, women who are single mothers are among the groups involved in the poor category, including indigenous people. It is even sadder if the aboriginal woman becomes the head of a household belonging to the poor. Based on the study of Kamaruddin et al., (2021), poor motivation and not well organised time can cause this woman's life stress at the workplace. Women becoming heads of households are due to; divorce, the death of a husband, being abandoned, the husband unable to work, the husband engaging in criminal activity and being imprisoned, or the husband moving to another country. In addition, Orang Asli women who are heads of households based on the Department of Orang Asli Development (2019) are unmarried women but the main breadwinners for the household, as well as women who are married to outsiders (other than Orang Asli).

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Aboriginal People (Mah Meri) as Part of Human Resources of the Tourism Industry

In Malaysia, the human resource of the tourism industry is made up of various ethnic groups, whether Bumiputera or non-Bumiputera. This is because Malaysia is a nation of many races and religions. Bumiputera according to the laws of Malaysia includes the Malays, natives of Sabah, Sarawak natives and all the tribes of the Orang Asli in Malaysia. They are human resources of the tourism industry. Aboriginal People in Malaysia are divided into three, namely the Negrito, the Proto Malays, and the Senoi. The Negrito people are divided into 6 tribes, namely, Kensiu, Kintak, Lanoh, Jahai, Mendriq, and Bateq. Proto Malays were divided into 6 parts, namely, Temuan, Semelai, Jakun, Orang Kanaq, Orang Kuala and Orang Seletar. The Senoi were divided into 6 tribes, namely, Temiar, Semai, Semoq Beri, Jah Hut, Mah Meri, and Che Wong (Roddin et al., 2020). According to Article 160 (2) of the Constitution, Aboriginal people are defined as "Aboriginal" means natural persons of the Malay Peninsula. According to Section 3 of the Aboriginal Act 1954 (Act 134), Aboriginal people are those whose parents are members of the Aboriginal ethnic group, who speak

Aboriginal languages and are traditionally aboriginal and have Aboriginal beliefs and include a descendant through that man (JAKOA, 2016).

Hence, based on JAKOA (2016), any person from any ethnic background who was adopted as a Native child by a Native and who was raised as a Native, usually speaks the Orang Asli language, in the manner of the Aboriginal way of life and the customs of the Aboriginal people and becomes members of an Aboriginal community. Subsequently, the child of any union between an Aboriginal woman and a man of another race, provided that the child is generally fluent in the Aboriginal language and Aboriginal beliefs and is still a member of an Aboriginal community. Today, Aboriginal people in Malaysia are developing. According to the Strategic Plan of the Aboriginal Development Department 2016-2020, in line with the mission of the Aboriginal Development Department (JAKOA) is to implement inclusive development to improve the socio-economic status and quality of life through advancing the Aboriginal heritage of the Aboriginal people. But according to Besar et al., (2020), the Aboriginal community faces problems with a declining supply of natural resources. This gives the impression that the Aboriginal people have a hard time finding the right source of resources and that their ability to use them is also low and this situation make youngster emigrates.

## **2.2 Technopreneurship in Malaysia**

The problem becomes more serious when there are also women who are less aware of the assistance provided to them by the government in reducing the pressure they are facing (Zakaria et al., 2018). It is therefore very important to find an approach to solve or at least reduce the burden of poverty experienced by these women. Technopreneurship is seen as one of the solutions to empower them. Technopreneurship comes from two words which are, technology, and entrepreneurship (Kurniashi, 2022). It is a kind of entrepreneurship in the technology's path. Having good knowledge of new technology, creative, innovative individuals who have a knack for taking a calculated risks, unlike entrepreneurship. Furthermore, Olusegun et al., (2019) mention in their research as Technopreneurship has become a pull factor of creativity and innovation in businesses today. This is why we as researchers attracted to explore the human resources of the Mah Meri Tourism Industry towards technopreneurship in Malaysia.

## **3.0 Methodology**

This paper uses a qualitative approach using the case study method. This study is a study that involves case studies in the context of real life, contemporary or setting (Yin, 2012). This case can be a concrete entity, such as an individual, a small group, an organization, or a partnership. At a less concrete level, it may be a community, a relationship, a decision process, or a specific project (Yin, 2017). Stake (2005) states that case study research is not a methodology but a choice of what to study (that is, cases in a system limited by time and place) while others present it as a research strategy, methodology, or comprehensive research strategy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2017). While this method is used, there are 3 types of methods to collect the data which are an interview, observation, and document. The interview method is the main method while the observation method and the document collection method are the supporting methods. The use of these three methods of data collection allows duplication and strengthening of data until the data is saturated (Marohaini, 2001). Various data collection methods are used to obtain quality data to answer the research questions. In addition, data collection through the method can also be used for the reliability process through method triangulation techniques that can produce more accurate and convincing research findings about the aspects being studied (Lebar, 2018). Participants were selected using purposive sampling and the criteria of the selected participants consisted of Senoi indigenous women among the Mah

Meri tribe (Their names are listed on Kraftangan Malaysia's list as Craft Entrepreneurs). They are 5 participants who come from Mah Meri People of Pulau Carey in a semi-structured interview. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. From raw data, all the data was categorised, and the theme was come out after that.

#### 4.0 Data Analysis

From the data, they are individuals wanting to help themselves; this makes them believe they will empower their life.

"The motivation from myself is what makes me continue to weave". (PS1)

"I like and really have an interest in weaving and this dance". (PS2)

"First, follow my aunt, see how she does it, after marriage, I myself feel and want to do it". (PS3)

"I've been making it since I was little, but for the past few years I've only been interested in making it to sell seriously". (PS4)

The participants also work to help people near them and people around them together.

"I support myself. I'm helping my son, my grandson. Besides that, I really like to earn my own income, not expecting anyone. If I have a husband, I don't expect my husband. I must work on my own even though I am a housewife. When I was a housewife, I also earned money, planted trees, hired a hairdresser, shaved my eyebrows etc.". (PS1)

"There are many weavers here. We gather things here first and sell them to Gerai Orang Asli. They come once a month. It's like a cooperative. I help this indirectly". (PK1)

"We have a cooperation network. This year the cooperation is very good. We used to not know the Semai, and Temiar tribes and now we know them since we got involved in this handicraft. The relationship has become closer". (PK1)

From the data analysis, the theory of Level of Empowerment (Zimmerman, 2000) and theory of Women Empowerment (Kabeer, 1999) towards technopreneurship in the Mah Meri Tourism Industry, all the elements are concluded to summarize in the diagram below.

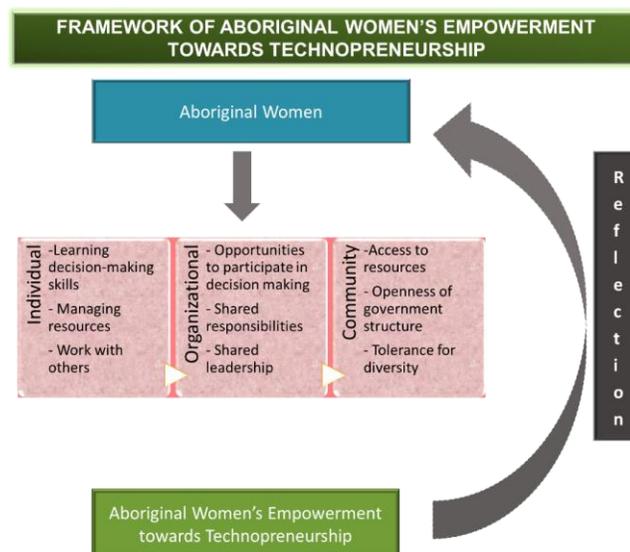


**Figure 1:** Elements of Framework of Aboriginal Women’s Empowerment Towards Technopreneurship

(Source: Zimmerman, (2000) and Kabear, (1999))

## 5.0 Conclusion

Mah Meri women show they work together not just for themselves, but with organization and community too. From this study, this study may contribute to individuals being motivated for themselves to continue to succeed, creating critical awareness, and forming a cooperative nature. For Orang Asli Community, this study will be a reference for indigenous tribes who want to be empowered towards sustainable family life, forming a skilled community that is ready to work together. In addition, for organizations, this study will be the reference for them to be more effective in resource management, and able to work with other organizations to achieve the same goals. Through the findings of the study, the researcher proposes a new framework, namely the Framework of Aboriginal Women’s Empowerment Towards Technopreneurship. We suggest interviewing other tribes who want to be as successful as the participants of this study after applying this framework. Another suggestion is that after 5 years they apply this new framework.



**Figure 2:** Framework of Aboriginal Women’s Empowerment Towards Technopreneurship

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