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Measuring and Comparing the Functional Business Skills and Knowledge of Entrepreneurs: Evidence from the Asnaf Community in Malaysia

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This study aims to determine the distribution of the components of functional business skills and knowledge among entrepreneurs living across different geographical districts, using Asnaf Entrepreneurs of Kelantan, Malaysia as a data source. The study employed a cross-sectional approach and quantitative data were collected from 800 respondents in Kelantan, Malaysia. Based on the reliability and validity testing, this study finalized the instrument to 34 items yielding five factors, i.e., Financial Skills (3items), Technical Skills (5 items), Communication Skills (3 items), Market Orientation (14items),and Networking Skills (9 items). Findings of the study revealed that the level of business knowledge among the Asnaf entrepreneurs is moderately low. Furthermore,it was found that the distribution of 'financial skills', 'technical skills' 'communication skills', 'marketing skills', and 'networking skills' are significantly different across the districts of Kelantan. Policy makers and other developmental organizations should therefore focus on interactive programs in order to increase the level of knowledge and skills among the Asnaf entrepreneurs particularly in the district of Jeli, as knowledge is crucial to entrepreneurship, which in turn is vital for economic growth and development.

Keywords: Financial Skills; Technical Skills; Communication Skills; Market Orientation; Networking Skills

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Introduction

The issue of poverty remains a crucial component of developing countries, particularly in Malaysia (Hussain et al., 2014). This controversial issue is mostly confronted in rural areas (Solaymani et al., 2014). Failure to earn enough to fulfill basic survival needs such as food, shelter, and clothing, is illustrated as being poor. However, in the context of Malaysia, it has been reported that the average monthly household income has increased by more than twenty times from RM264 in the year 1970 to RM6, 141 in 2014. At the same time, the median income has also increased from RM166 to RM4, 585. According to the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (RMK11), the poverty rate in the country has reduced to 0.6% in the year 2014. It shows a great difference when compared to the year 1970 when it was 49.3%.

Some issues of poverty alleviation are challenges for poor communities in rural areas. One of the strategies in tackling the poverty issue is promoting entrepreneurship activities among the poor together with government intervention programmes. In such a context,micro-entrepreneurship, as a form of entrepreneurship among the underprivileged, plays the role of a powerful tool for combating poverty and empowering the poor economically (Basargekar, 2011), particularly in Malaysia where a significant proportion of such underprivileged micro-entrepreneurs operate within the informal economy of the country (Al-Mamun et al., 2016).Perhaps this is the reason the policies and programmes of the Malaysian Government along with other development organizations in the country have been nurturing an entrepreneurship supportive environment in order to promote entrepreneurial activities among low-income and underprivileged entrepreneurs (Al-Mamun & Ekpe, 2016).

Entrepreneurship is perceived as a behavioral characteristic of individuals including an input and an output where entrepreneurial behavior requires entrepreneurial skills and qualities (Wennekers & Thurik, 1999). Therefore, to be an entrepreneur, an individual needs the ability to generate ideas and knowledge, as entrepreneurship involves the development of skills to grow a business along with the personal competencies of the entrepreneur to transform it into a successful venture (Cooney, 2012). On the other hand, Entrepreneurial Knowledge is considered the factor through which entrepreneurs distinguish themselves

from their competitors and thereby transform poorly organized businesses into well-organized ventures (Omerzel & Antončič, 2008). According to research, knowledge is an important tool for strengthening a firm's competitive advantage (Hsu, Lawson, & Liang, 2006).Particularly in the context of developing economies, a recent study found that knowledge of business has the tendency to bring about development among rural entrepreneurships (Afrin et al., 2010).Thus, before the Governmental or Non-Governmental intervention is introduced to any group, the level of knowledge on the functional skills of the target group should be identified, so that the developmental programs can be planned and arranged accordingly.

The notion of stimulating greater entrepreneurial activities has emerged as a prominent goal for several national governments across the globe as a response to the current economic challenges confronted by them (Cooney, 2012). Moreover, contextually, in case of the Asnaf entrepreneurs (those who receive financial assistance for entrepreneurship from the state Zakat organization in Malaysia), most capital assistance is found to end in failed ventures despite providing training, facilities, and monitoring (Ramli et al., 2011; Muhamat et al., 2013). In this regard, a recent research had conveyed that capital coupled with courses, training, and knowledge is important to poor entrepreneurs, such as the Asnaf, helping the zakat recipients succeed in their businesses (Muhamat et al., 2013).Thus, answering the significant and timely call of research, this study was conducted to identify the level of entrepreneurship knowledge among entrepreneurs and to investigate the distribution of such entrepreneurial knowledge across different geographical districts, using the Asnaf entrepreneurs of Kelantan, Malaysia as a data source.

Literature Review

Knowledge of functional skills refers to the skills that a person has in terms of existing talents or natural skills. It is perceived that knowledge of functional skills influences entrepreneurial success, as a socially embedded activity, wherein the idea underlines the significance of skills and knowledge related to dealing with other parties (Pyysiainen et al., 2006). Knowledge is considered the factor through which entrepreneurs distinguish themselves from their competitors and thereby transform poorly organized businesses into well-organized ventures. Knowledge

acts as a significant source for the organization and it is evident that entrepreneurs with more knowledge will be less uncertain of their effectiveness and will be able to learn and notice market changes faster (Omerzel & Antončič, 2008). Earlier, Gibb (1987) forwarded the claim that training and education consistently influence the entrepreneurial role, acquired both experimentally and culturally. Therefore, it has been strongly argued that the traditional approach to entrepreneurship needs to change and the relevance of entrepreneurship training and education must be expanded. Recently, Cooney (2012) echoed that the concept of entrepreneurship involves more than just business start-ups; rather, it includes the development of skills required to grow a business along with the personal competencies necessary to make it a successful venture.

Empirical evidence upholds that enterprises with entrepreneurs nurturing their own skills and knowledge are more likely to have superior profitability and growth compared to firms run by entrepreneurs lacking such attributes (Omerzel & Antončič, 2008). Research extends the fact that entrepreneurs' knowledge influences organizational performance and the construct has emerged as an important tool for strengthening a firm's competitive advantage (Hsu et al., 2006). In the context of developing economies, a recent study found that knowledge of business has the tendency to bring development, particularly among women rural entrepreneurships in Bangladesh (Afrin et al., 2010). Particularly in the perspective of Asnaf entrepreneurs (the zakat recipients), a recent research has conveyed that capital assistance coupled with courses, training, and knowledge is important to the Asnaf entrepreneurs, in helping them succeed in their businesses (Muhamat et al., 2013).On the contrary to the above, a lack of skills has been found to lead businesses into failure (Longenecker, Simonetti, & Sharkey, 1999). Norfadhilah and Norasmah (2012) posited that the increasing demand for skills among entrepreneurs has influenced the global economy dramatically as entrepreneurs confront problems over the lack of basic skills required for an efficient day-to-day running of a business - keeping records, managing inventory, product pricing, and credit control. Extending this, Acemoglu and Zilibotti (2001) inferred that a country with less skilled workers would have greater difficulties in implementing effective technologies belonging to the innovation possibilities frontier, because of the derived lack of absorptive capacity.

Previous literature reports that there is no prevalent measure for entrepreneurial knowledge (Omerzel & Antončič, 2008). Nevertheless, the existing literature has been found to be fragmented regarding the indicators of business knowledge wherein majority of authors concentrate on the concept of knowledge in the context of entrepreneurs' characteristics (Lynskey, 2004). Recent relevant study recognizing the requirement of utilizing an action oriented, group-work and mentoring approach towards entrepreneurship to ensure greater learning effectiveness, forwarded that problem solving and critical thinking are key entrepreneurial skills, along with innovation, risk-taking, creativity and collaborative skills, developing all of which needs to be valued more (Cooney, 2012). According to Omerzel and Antončič (2008), in the paradigm of entrepreneurial practice, the dimensions of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills include self-confidence, education, and functional knowledge, particularly in the context of small to medium sized firms; the most significant components of entrepreneur skills and knowledge are analytical/critical thinking; leadership abilities; and finally knowledge of company management and organization. Based on the above, the present study therefore, in an effort to measure functional business skills and knowledge among the entrepreneurs, confines its discussions within the constructs of the immediate interest and thereby extensively defines, describes, and signifies financial skills, technical skills, communications skills, market orientation, and networking as dimensions of knowledge and skills.

Financial Skills

A review of literature has identified financial skills as a vital requirement for managers that directly affect organizational success and profitability by enabling managers to better manage their businesses as a whole (Burgess,2007). Traditionally, financial skills are referred to as recording functions, being more analytical and supportive, including tasks of creating reports, explaining trends and variances, and forecasting potential future performance (Scapens & Jayazeri, 2003). With the developments in systems, the processing aspects of financial skills are reduced and the generic business management aspects have increased (Palmer et al., 2004). Accountants need more commercial awareness and need to act more like business advisors (Tamkin, 2005), with much more emphasis on a team approach (Scapens & Jayazeri, 2003). According to research, the present day financial competencies comprise of three levels

of management, and refer to skills such as cost control, accounting and budgeting, control processes and mechanisms, financial management, analysis, resource utilization, and risk assessment (Burgess, 2007). Scapens and Jayazeri (2003) stress that the constant evolution of management accounting indicates that line managers are now required to possess greater financial information and knowledge and need to be more accountable for their actions. Research has also extended that managers can be more effective in their management of operations and in customer relationships (DeSouza & Awazu, 2004) only if they possess accurate knowledge and possess better financial skills in order to constantly control the operations by effectively utilizing the acquired information. Improved financial skills could also enhance commitment towards the organization (Subramaniam et al., 2002) and therefore managers with good financial skills are more likely to achieve organizational success (Harper et al., 2005).

Technical Skills

Technical skills refer to knowing and understanding complex technologies and being able to access and leverage such knowledge (Bassellier, Reich, & Benbasat, 2001). According to research, entrepreneurial roles reflect a pattern whereby much emphasis is found on technical knowledge particularly in carrying out lower-level roles such as innovation (Hayton & Kelley, 2006). Technical skill is important for development in entrepreneurship, particularly in rural areas. The study done by Afrin et al. (2010) points out that technical knowledge of business is among the factors that contribute towards the development in women's rural entrepreneurship in Bangladesh. Technical knowledge or "know-how" possessed by the managers is vital in today's business environment and the construct could be represented by the dimension of "experience"(as a proxy for tacit knowledge) where the execution of a task goes beyond the simple requirement of a broader awareness, and attention is sought towards non-task-specific competences wherein awareness refers to a "familiarity with the capacities, advantages, limitations, and impact of innovative technologies"(Bassellier et al., 2001).

Communication Skills

High capabilities in social interaction and communication, particularly in the forms of higher trust, learning capability, and networking competences are known to be significantly associated with the social and

economic success of an enterprise (Morgan &Cooke, 1998). In terms of entrepreneurship, high levels of internal communication coupled with coordination and integration are more likely to facilitate corporate entrepreneurship by reinforcing the exercise of a competent behaviour (Morris, 1998; Hayton & Kelley, 2006). According to research, communication skill is one of the factors that guide the development, selection, and evaluation of entrepreneurship simulation activities whereby the credibility of such simulation activities depends, in part, on unambiguous communication (Honig, 2004). In the context of a work setting, communication skills remain the most significant for teams typically needing to reach outside their projects and engage in a mix of communications with various individuals and groups within the organization, which is particularly important for projects demanding a greater breadth of knowledge and involving highly complex tasks (Hayton & Kelley, 2006). Research further conveys that communication networks are formed and cultivated over time, and are vital for leveraging the strengths of different organizations (Hayton & Kelley, 2006).

Market Orientation

Market orientation could be defined as an organization's orientation towards promoting and supporting the activities of collection, dissemination, and responsiveness towards market intelligence in order to fulfill the needs of both existing and potential customers and thereby leading the firm towards high quality performance by offering hiked attention towards individuals and the departments for their efforts and projects within the firm (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Market-driven entrepreneurial activities will foster the success of entrepreneurs, resulting in overall national economic growth (Suntornpithug & Suntornpithug, 2008). Abdul-Mohsin et al. (2012) highlight that market orientation is composed of behavioural dimensions including customer orientation and competitor orientation. Customer orientation is one of the dimensions of market orientation that necessitates a culture where every employee puts the customer's satisfaction first in their day-to-day activities. Competitor orientation, on the other hand, involves active monitoring of all existing and potential competitors in the market place, and collects competitive intelligence to differentiate the competitor's approaches. Narver and Slater (1990) describe market orientation as an organizational culture, which most efficiently generates the much needed behavior to create superior value for buyers, thereby leading the

organization towards continuous superior performance. To meet the current needs, market orientation motivates and supports the refinements and adaptation of existing innovations (Atuahene-Gima & Ko, 2001). Previous relevant literature further upholds that market orientation is an adaptive ability through which enterprises react or respond to changing conditions within the market environment (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Narver & Slater, 1995).

Networking Skills

Existing literature addressing the concept of entrepreneurial networking has been found to be soaring in terms of both scope and sophistication (Dodd, Jack, & Anderson, 2006). The term network could be regarded as a linkage either between social and economic dimensions of human behavior, or between different types of discipline and methodology, or between the scholarly community and the world of practice. Entrepreneurial network provides the framework for different processes, which aims at organizing resources according to opportunities (Johannisson & Mønsted, 1997). Larson (1992) argues that entrepreneurial dyadic ties are the building blocks of networks that are built upon a history of preconditions for exchange, including both organizational and personal reputation along with prior relations. In the context where entrepreneurship represents change, entrepreneurs need to create change and respond to change, and thereby networking in such scenarios emerges as the mechanism for not only dealing with the environment and the conditions of entrepreneurship but also for coping with such change; and it is thus that the network and the nature of networking contacts has been found to significantly impact start-ups, growth, and developmental stages of an enterprise (Dodd et al., 2006)

Methodology

In quantitative research especially in social science, a study that analyzes data collected from a population, or a representative subset, at a specific point in time is known as a cross-sectional study. Generally, through the cross-sectional study, the sampling unit for this study was identified and focused on the bottom 40 percent group, which is measured by each individual who intends to do business. Researchers had approached the Kelantan Islamic Religious Council (MAIK) to obtain a list of the Asnaf group and the Federal Development Department (JPP) for e-Kasih members. Concerning the Kelantan state, which encompasses Bachok,

Tumpat, Jeli, and Gua Musang districts, there is a sampling frame of about 2358 persons registered under these agencies and about 800 persons were selected as the sample size for this study. Therefore, in order to gather data for this study, the researchers prepared a structured questionnaire that attributes to three sections namely the demographic profile, psychological characteristics, and knowledge about functional skills.

Results And Discussion

The findings of the study were divided into three sub-sections: (1) validity and reliability test results, (2) demographic information of the respondents, and (3) the respondents' level of functional business skills. Details of the finding are in the following sub-sections.

Validity and Reliability

To test the internal consistency of the items in measuring the variables, the validity and reliability tests were conducted. For such an assessment, the first and foremost criterion is typically the internal consistency reliability where Cronbach's alpha presumes that all the used indicators are uniformly reliable (Hair et al., 2013). The result showed (see Table 1 below) that the Cronbach's alpha values for Financial Skill, Technical Skills, Communication, Market Orientation, and Networking Skills ranges from 0.863 to 0.938. The values exceed 0.6 as the suggested value (Sekaran&Wagner, 1980). Thus, the measurement instrument used in the study is considered reliable.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Financial Skill	3	0.888
Technical Skills	5	0.875
Communication	3	0.863
Market Orientation	14	0.938
Networking Skills	9	0.934

The common method variance test was conducted before analyzing the model further. The common method variance test was performed to test the validity of the data collected. The result of the test is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings				Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %		Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	15.88	46.70	46.70	15.88	46.70	46.70		7.26	21.35	21.35
2	3.12	9.17	55.87	3.12	9.17	55.87		5.92	17.42	38.77
3	1.57	4.63	60.50	1.57	4.63	60.50		3.98	11.70	50.47
4	1.52	4.47	64.98	1.52	4.47	64.98		3.30	9.70	60.17
5	1.05	3.10	68.07	1.05	3.10	68.07		2.69	7.91	68.07
6	0.99	2.91	70.98							
7	0.87	2.56	73.54							
8	0.70	2.05	75.59							
9	0.67	1.96	77.55							
10	0.55	1.62	79.16							
11	0.53	1.55	80.72							
12	0.50	1.46	82.17							
13	0.46	1.35	83.53							
14	0.45	1.31	84.84							
15	0.43	1.27	86.11							
16	0.41	1.20	87.31							
17	0.39	1.14	88.45							
18	0.36	1.05	89.50							
19	0.31	0.91	90.42							

20	0.30	0.87	91.29						
Component	**Initial Eigenvalues**			**Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings**			**Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings**		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
21	0.29	0.85	92.14						
22	0.28	0.84	92.98						
23	0.26	0.77	93.75						
24	0.25	0.75	94.49						
25	0.24	0.71	95.21						
26	0.23	0.67	95.88						
27	0.23	0.66	96.54						
28	0.22	0.64	97.18						
29	0.21	0.60	97.78						
30	0.19	0.57	98.35						
31	0.16	0.46	98.82						
32	0.16	0.46	99.28						
33	0.14	0.40	99.68						
34	0.11	0.32	100.00						

KMO and Bartlett's Tests

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.96
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	22002.44
	Df	561.00
	Sig.	0.00

The test was conducted using SPSS 23, into which 34 items from 5 constructs, were entered to run the factor analysis. The result suggested 5 factors and the variance explained ranges from 7.91% to 21.35% with the total variance explained in the model being 68.07%. The result in Tables1 and 2 reveal that there is no indication of multicollinearity. Therefore, there is no requirement for the discriminant analysis test to be conducted.

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component					Factor and factor loading
	1	2	3	4	5	
1	0.548					Market Orientation (0.61)
2	0.704					
3	0.615					
4	0.452					
5	0.319					
6	0.605					
7	0.726					
8	0.442					
9	0.755					
10	0.732					
11	0.557					
12	0.787					
13	0.755					
14	0.592					
15		0.656				Networking Skills (0.669)
16		0.658				
17		0.743				
18		0.496				
19		0.734				
20		0.731				
21		0.761				
22		0.718				
23		0.527				
24			0.670			Financial Skill (0.717)
25			0.695			
26			0.786			
27				0.665		Technical Skills (0.646)
28				0.799		
29				0.367		
30				0.795		
31				0.604		
32					0.587	Communication Skills (0.65)
33					0.672	
34					0.690	

Demographic Profile

The number of total respondents was 800. The data were collected from the Asnaf (needy) registered with the Religious Authority and Federal Development Agency in Kelantan, covering four districts in Kelantan namely, Bachok, Tumpat, Jeli, and Gua Musang. The number of respondents was equally distributed among the districts with 200 respondents from each district.

Table 4: Demographic Profile

	N	%			N	%
Gender				*Age*		
Man	256	32.00		< 31	81	10.13
Woman	544	68.00		31-45	250	31.25
				46-55	178	22.25
Monthly Income (RM)				> 55	291	36.38
> 500	414	51.75				
501 – 1000	332	41.50		*District*		
1001 – 1500	42	5.25		Bachok	200	25.00
1501 – 2000	4	0.50		Tumpat	200	25.00
2001 – 2500	7	0.88		Jeli	200	25.00
Above 2500	1	0.13		Gua Musang	200	25.00

Table 4 presents the profile of the respondents. The information is presented in actual figures and percentages for ease of interpretation. The majority of the respondents are female (68%) while the rest are male (32%). Regarding age, the majority of respondents were aged between 46 years and above 55 years (58.63%). Concerning education, 21.8% of the respondents obtained primary school education, 9.6% a Form 3 secondary school, 1.5% no education and other qualifications. 51.75% earned less than RM500 a month, 41.5% earned RM5010 to RM1000 a month.

Level of Skills

This study is to measure the level of knowledge of the respondents. The measurement uses the five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). To capture the level of knowledge, the mean score of below 4 is considered Low as it is reflects neither ‘agree nor disagree’, on the items that the measurement used in this study.

Table 5: Mean Construct

Construct	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Financial Skill	800	3.256	1.158
Communication Skill	800	3.956	0.703
Technical Skill	800	2.877	1.082
Marketing Skill	800	3.727	0.671
Networking Skill	800	3.521	0.777

This study dwells on the theory of poverty and entrepreneurship theories. According to the World Bank, poverty reflect conditions when people have no access to education resulting in groups of people with very low knowledge. Based on this definition and the theory of poverty, this study strongly argue that knowledge, particularly in terms functional business skills is crucial for poor entrepreneurs, such as Asnaf members involved in entrepreneurial activities.. On the other hand, entrepreneurship theories posit that a successful venture is influenced by managerial capabilities (financial, technical, communication, market, and network knowledge) related to business environments, such as the market demand, competition, technology development, product development, social, and networking.

Integrating the above theories, the findings show that generally, the level of knowledge of the respondents is moderately low. The mean value as indicated in Table 5 reflects that the technical knowledge is the lowest among the five constructs (2.877). The highest score is recorded by communication skills (3.97), which show that respondents tend to have relatively higher communication skills compared to other functional skills. Perhaps, it is the skills derived from daily social activities. The following sub-sections will discuss further details.

Level of Education and Financial Skills

As for the level of education among the respondents, Bachok recorded the highest mean among the other districts, followed by Tumpat, Gua Musang, and Jeli, respectively. The chi-square test shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of education of the respondents across the districts in Kelantan, Malaysia (see Table 7).

Table 6: Mean Level of Education (District)

District	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Bachok	200	3.917	0.551
Tumpat	200	3.657	0.734
Jeli	200	1.837	1.017
Gua Musang	200	3.615	0.870

Table 7: Chi-square Test on the Level of Education

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	120.33	60	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	118.786	60	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.631	1	0.000

Based on the above Table 8, it is observed that financial skills are the highest among the respondents of Bachok with a mean rank of 533.10, followed by Tumpat, Gua Musang, and Jeli with the lowest mean rank of 158.47. Moreover, the Kruskal-Wallis Multiple test shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the financial skills of the respondents across the districts in Kelantan, Malaysia (Kruskal-Wallis Test Multiple Group, *p*-value: 0.000).

Table 8: Comparison of Financial Skills (Kruskal-Walis Test)

District		N	Mean Rank
Mean Financial Skills	Bachok	200	533.10
	Tumpat	200	467.05
	Jeli	200	158.47
	Gua Musang	200	443.39

Level of Communication Skills

As for the communication skills among the respondents, Bachok recorded highest mean among other districts, followed by Tumpat, Gua Musang and Jeli respectively (Table 9). As noted in Table 10, it is observed that communication skills is highest among respondents of Bachok with mean rank of 454.71, followed by Tumpat, Jeli, and Gua Musang with the lowest mean rank of 339.63. The chi-square test shows that there is a

statistically significant difference in the level of communication skills of the respondents across the districts in Kelantan, Malaysia (see Table 10).

Table 9: Mean Communication Skill (District)

District	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Bachok	800	4.152	0.474
Tumpat	800	4.097	0.433
Jeli	800	3.788	0.895
Gua Musang	800	3.788	0.807

Table 10: Comparison of Commutation Skills (Krustal-Wallis Test)

	District	N	Mean Rank
Mean Communication Skills	Bachok	200	454.71
	Tumpat	200	440.10
	Jeli	200	367.57
	Gua Musang	200	339.63
Test Statistic			
Chi-Square	39.424		
Df	3		
Asymp. Sig.	0.000		

Level of Technical Skills

As for the technical skills among the respondents, Bachok recorded the highest mean among the other districts, followed by Gua Musang, Tumpat, and Jeli, respectively (Table 11). As noted in Table 12, it is observed that technical skills is the highest among respondents of Bachok with a mean rank of 470.51, followed by Gua Musang, Tumpat, and Jeli with the lowest mean rank of 211.19. The Krustal-Wallis Test shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of technical skills of the respondents across the districts in Kelantan, Malaysia (see Table 12).

Table 11: Mean Technical Skills (by District)

	District	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Mean Communication Skills	Bachok	200	3.233	0.807
	Tumpat	200	3.093	1.118
	Jeli	200	1.979	0.967
	Gua Musang	200	3.203	0.879

Table 12: Comparison of Technical Skills (Krustal-Wallis Test)

	District	N	Mean Ranks
Mean Technical Skills	Bachok	200	470.510
	Tumpat	200	453.660
	Jeli	200	211.190
	Gua Musang	200	466.640
Test Statistic			
Chi-Square	180.356		
Df	3		
Asymp. Sig.	0.000		

Level of Marketing Skill

As for the marketing skills among the respondents, Tumpat recorded the highest mean among the other districts, followed by Gua Musang, Bachok, and Jeli respectively (Table 13). As noted in Table 14, it is observed that marketing skills are the highest among the respondents of Tumpat with a mean rank of 493.685 and the lowest among the respondents are from Jeli, with the lowest mean rank of 267.845. The Krustal-Wallis Test shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of marketing skills of the respondents across the districts in Kelantan, Malaysia (see Table 14).

Table 13: Mean Marketing Skills

	District	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Mean Marketing Skills	Bachok	200	3.797	0.516
	Tumpat	200	3.979	0.394
	Jeli	200	3.304	0.805
	Gua Musang	200	3.830	0.695

Table 14: Comparison of Marketing Skills (Krustal-Wallis Test)

	District	N	Mean Ranks
Mean Marketing Skills	Bachok	200	412.143
	Tumpat	200	493.685
	Jeli	200	267.845
	Gua Musang	200	428.328
Test Statistics			
Chi-Square	101.908		
Df	3		
Asymp. Sig.	0.000		

Table 15: Mean level of Networking

	District	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean Networking Skills	Bachok	200	3.711	0.555
	Tumpat	200	3.818	0.472
	Jeli	200	2.837	0.823
	Gua Musang	200	3.716	0.764

Table 16: Mean level of Networking (Krustal-Wallis Test)

	District	N	Mean Ranks
Mean Marketing Skills	Bachok	200	455.448
	Tumpat	200	495.465
	Jeli	200	189.838
	Gua Musang	200	461.250
Test Statistic			
Chi-Square	226.113		
Df	3		
Asymp. Sig.	0.000		

Level of Networking Skills

As for the networking skills among the respondents, Tumpat recorded the highest mean among the other districts, followed by Gua Musang, Bachok, and Jeli, respectively (Table 15). As noted in Table 14, it is observed that networking skills are the highest among respondents of Tumpat with a mean rank of 495.47 and the lowest among the respondents of Jeli, with a mean rank of 189.84. The Krustal-Wallis Test showed that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of networking skills of the respondents across the districts in Kelantan, Malaysia (see Table 16).

Conclusion

The notion of stimulating greater entrepreneurial activities has emerged as a prominent goal for several national governments across the globe as a response to the current economic challenges confronted by them (Cooney, 2012). In such regards literature upheld entrepreneurial skills and knowledge as crucial components to determine success of businesses (Cooney, 2012; Omerzel & Antončič, 2008). Moreover contextually in case of Asnaf entrepreneurs of Malaysia, most capital assistance has been

found to end in failed ventures despite providing training, facilities, and monitoring (Ramli et al., 2011; Muhamat et al., 2013). According to recent research, capital coupled with courses, training, and knowledge is important for the success of poor entrepreneurs, such as the Asnaf members (Muhamat et al., 2013). Against such a backdrop, the present study measured and provided empirical evidence on the components of functional business skills and knowledge and their distribution among entrepreneurs living across different geographical districts, using Asnaf entrepreneurs of Kelantan, Malaysia, as a data source; concentrating on financial skills, technical skills, communication skills, market orientation, and networking skills as components of functional business skills and knowledge. Based on the reliability and validity testing, this study finalized the instrument to 34 items yielding five factors, i.e., Financial Skills, Technical Skills, Communication Skills, Market Orientation, and Networking Skills. Findings of the study revealed that the level of business knowledge among the Asnaf entrepreneurs is moderately low. Furthermore, it was found that Communication Skills are the highest skill possessed by the respondents, and significant differences in the distribution of business knowledge and skills exist across the districts of Kelantan. Policy makers and other developmental organizations should therefore focus on interactive programs in order to increase the level of knowledge and skills among the Asnaf entrepreneurs particularly in the district of Jeli. However, the findings of the present study are not without limitations. Although the sample size of this study is statistically adequate, however, data have only been collected from one state of Malaysia that might limit the generalibility of the study's findings. Moreover the reasons for such an unequal distribution of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills among respondents remain unanswered in this research. Therefore it is recommended that future studies could focus on the reasons for the unequal distribution, and identify key factors contributing to the low level of functional business skills and knowledge among different income groups living across the globe.

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