



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS OF MALAYSIAN SMALL
AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES IN FOOD AND
BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY***

LEE CHUN HUI

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BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY**

By

LEE CHUN HUI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

November 2017

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS OF MALAYSIAN SMALL AND MEDIUM- SIZED ENTERPRISES IN FOOD AND BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

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November 2017

Chairman : Yee Choy Leong, PhD
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Although more studies focused on strategic management in SMEs recent years, exploration on successful small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) remains scarce. It is evident in the literature that SMEs especially those operating in food and beverage (F&B) manufacturing industry facing many challenges and obstacles to be successful and how SMEs succeed in the F&B manufacturing industry has remained a black box. This research suggests the critical success factors (CSF) approach in answering the broad research question of this study, how do SMEs in F&B manufacturing industry achieve success? Thirteen research questions are formulated to aid the answering of the broad research question. This study employed multiple case study methodology. Based on purposive sampling, this study selected 10 SMEs based on six selection criteria. These include continuous profitability and growth rate exceeding 10% for at least five consecutive years, the owners are satisfied with the SMEs financial and non-financial performance, and perceived the firm as top performers or market leaders, and lastly, the interviews with owners and top management are allowed. This study achieved data triangulation through collecting data through in-depth interviews, company documents, and direct observations during case visits. The researcher completed individual case reports before conducting within-case and cross-case analyses. In this study, all 10 SMEs identified three to five CSFs individually. Nevertheless, these SMEs achieve success with different combinations of CSFs. This research identified 18 CSFs from 10 cases, namely, value differentiation strategy, cost leadership strategy, human resource management, innovation, networking, effective quality management system, effective food safety management system, financial management, entrepreneurial orientation, business experience, integrated supplier management, entrepreneurial competencies, Halal accreditation, business

diversification, attractive product packaging, flexible manufacturing system, high online visibility and effective foreign worker management. The study reaffirmed some of the CSFs investigated in previous studies while Halal accreditation, business diversification, attractive product packaging, flexible manufacturing system, high online visibility and effective foreign worker management are CSFs that emerged from the case studies. The study concludes that CSFs among successful F&B manufacturing SMEs in this study are multidimensional and complex in which SMEs have different approaches in the same CSF and each CSF led to success different ways. This research implies that CSF is a useful approach to understand the strategic management of successful SMEs in F&B manufacturing industry and suggest researchers and practitioners focus on these identified CSFs to improve competitiveness and business performance. Although the findings may be criticized because they are based on 10 companies, the study gained robust and in-depth insights into the CSFs of the F&B manufacturing SMEs through theoretical saturation and replication logic. The researcher suggests further research on the development of a new measurement instrument based on current findings. Also, this study recommends some future research directions, which includes longitudinal research on CSFs of F&B manufacturing SMEs, the comparison between successful and less successful SMEs, cross-sectional study in other industry, and further research on the impact of individual CSFs identified from this study in other industries.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**FAKTOR KEJAYAAN KRITIKAL PERUSAHAAN KECIL DAN
SEDERHANA MALAYSIA DALAM SEKTOR PEMBUATAN
MAKANAN DAN MINUMAN**

Oleh

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Kajian dalam kalangan PKS yang berjaya masih terhad walaupun lebih banyak kajian fokus pada pengurusan strategi dalam perusahaan kecil dan sederhana (PKS) sejak tahun-tahun kebelakangan ini. Kajian lepas telah jelas menunjukkan bahawa PKS khususnya yang beroperasi dalam industri pembuatan makanan dan minuman (F&B) menghadapi pelbagai cabaran dan halangan untuk berjaya, serta bagaimana sesetengah PKS mencapai kejayaan dalam industry tersebut kekal sebagai kotak hitam kajian. Kajian ini mencadangkan faktor kejayaan kritikal (CSF) sebagai pendekatan untuk menjawab soalan penyelidikan umum kajian ini iaitu bagaimanakah PKS mencapai kejayaan dalam industri pembuatan F&B? Tiga belas soalan penyelidikan juga dirumuskan bagi tujuan menjawab soalan penyelidikan umum. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kajian pelbagai kes. Berdasarkan persampelan bertujuan, kajian ini telah memilih 10 PKS berdasarkan enam kriteria pemilihan. Ini termasuk pencapaian keuntungan dan kadar pertumbuhan perniagaan melebihi 10% bagi tempoh melebihi 5 tahun secara berterusan, pemilik berpuas hati dengan prestasi kewangan dan bukan kewangan PKS dan beranggap PKS sebagai perniagaan berprestasi terbaik atau pemimpin pasaran dan akhirnya, membenarkan temu bual bersama pemilik dan pengurusan atasan. Penyelidikan ini telah mencapai triangulasi data dengan mengumpulkan data melalui temu bual secara mendalam, dokumen syarikat dan pemerhatian secara langsung semasa lawatan kes. Penyelidik menyiapkan laporan kajian kes individu sebelum menjalankan analisis dalam kes dan silang kes. Dalam kajian ini, setiap PKS telah mengenalpasti tiga - lima CSF. Walaubagaimanapun, semua PKS telah mencapai kejayaan dengan kombinasi CSF yang berlainan. Kajian ini telah mengenalpasti sebanyak 18 CSF, iaitu strategi pembezaan nilai, strategi kepimpinan kos, pengurusan sumber manusia, inovasi, rangkaian, pengurusan kualiti secara berkesan, sistem pengurusan keselamatan makanan secara

berkesan, pengurusan kewangan, orientasi keusahawanan, pengalaman perniagaan, pengurusan rantai bekalan berintegrasi, kecekapan keusahawanan, akreditasi Halal, sistem pembuatan secara fleksibel, kepelbagaian perniagaan, pembungkusan produk yang menarik, kebolehlihatan atas talian yang tinggi dan pengurusan pekerja asing secara berkesan. Kajian ini telah mengesahkan sesetengah CSF yang telah dikaji dalam kajian lepas dan akreditasi Halal, kepelbagaian perniagaan, pembungkusan produk yang menarik, sistem pembuatan secara fleksibel, kebolehlihatan atas talian yang tinggi dan pengurusan pekerja asing secara berkesan merupakan CSF muncul dari kajian kes dalam penyelidikan ini. Kajian ini membuat kesimpulan bahawa CSF dalam kalangan PKS yang berjaya di industri pembuatan F&B adalah multidimensi dan kompleks di mana PKS telah menggunakan pelbagai pendekatan dalam CSF yang sama dan setiap CSF membawa kejayaan dengan cara yang berbeza. Ini telah menunjukkan bahawa CSF merupakan pendekatan yang berguna untuk memahami pengurusan strategik dalam kalangan PKS yang berjaya di industri pembuatan F&B dan bercadang supaya penyelidik dan pengamal boleh membangunkan CSF yang telah dikenalpasti untuk meningkatkan daya saing dan prestasi perniagaan. Walaupun hasil kajian ini mungkin boleh dikritik atas sebab berdasarkan 10 syarikat, kajian ini telah mencapai penerokaan yang dalam dan mantap ke dalam CSF dalam kalangan PKS di industri pembuatan F&B melalui ketepatan teori dan logik replikasi. Dengan ini, kajian ini bercadang supaya kajian diteruskan dengan pembangunan instrumen pengukuran yang baru berasaskan hasil kajian ini dan turut bercadang agar pada masa hadapan kajian boleh mengkaji CSFs dalam kalangan PKS di industri pembuatan F&B dengan kajian longitudinal, perbandingan antara PKS yang berjaya dan kurang berjaya, kajian keratan rentas di industri berlainan dan kajian berterusan pada kesan CSF individu yang telah dikenalpasti dalam industri berlainan.

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Despite all support I have received, responsibility for any shortcomings in my master thesis is of course mine alone.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	:	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCA	:	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
APEC	:	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
B2B	:	Business-to-business
CSF	:	Critical success factors
DoSM	:	Department of Statistics Malaysia
EO	:	Entrepreneurial orientation
EU	:	European Union
F&B	:	Food and beverage
FSMS	:	Food safety management system
GDP	:	Gross domestic product
GMP	:	Good manufacturing practices
GVA	:	Gross-value added
HACCP	:	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HORECA	:	Hotel, restaurant, and catering
HR	:	Human resource
HRM	:	Human resource management
ICT	:	Information, communication, and technology
ISO 22000	:	ISO 22000:2005 Food Safety Management Systems
JAKIM	:	Department of Islamic Development Malaysia
KSF	:	Key success factors
MATRADE	:	Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation
MBV	:	Market-based view
MIDA	:	Malaysia Investment Development Authority
MNC	:	Multinational Corporation
PEMANDU	:	Performance Measurement and Delivery Unit
QSM	:	Quality management system
R&D	:	Research and development
RBV	:	Resource-based view
SBA	:	United States Small Business Administration
SCM	:	Supply chain management
SEO	:	Search engine optimization
SME	:	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SME Corp. Malaysia	:	Small and Medium Enterprises Corporation Malaysia
SOP	:	Standard operating procedures
UAE	:	United Arab Emirates
UK	:	United Kingdom
US	:	United States of America

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have increasingly significant contributions to global economic and social development. In the light of this, this study explores the critical success factors (CSFs) of SMEs in Malaysia that operate in food and beverage (F&B) manufacturing industry. This chapter aims to introduce the study by first outlines the background of the study and statement of the problem. Next, it presents the purpose of the study before stating the research question and research objectives. The chapter is followed by a brief explanation of the conceptual framework guiding this study and significance of the study. The chapter continues with the presentation of the overall thesis structure and chapter summary.

1.2 Background of the Study

According to the World Bank research conducted by Ayyagari, Demirgüç-Kunt, and Maksimovic (2011), SMEs made up more than 95% of enterprises across the world. More specifically, SMEs account for over 90% of the business establishments among the 21 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) participating economies including Malaysia (APEC, 2010). The strong presence of SMEs in the global economy is further evidenced by their contribution of at least 16% of gross domestic product (GDP) in low-income countries to as high as 51% of GDP in high-income countries (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants [ACCA], 2010). As case in point, SMEs in Australia contributed at least 60% to the country's industry value added in 2009 and 2010 (Australian Government, 2011). Likewise, 27 countries in the European Union (EU) have recorded 58% of gross value added (GVA) contributed by SMEs in 2012 (Wymenga, Spanikova, Barker, Konings, & Canton, 2012). Besides that, SMEs are more labor-intensive and create more jobs with lower capital costs (Wymenga, Spanikova, Derbyshire, & Barker, 2011; Dobbs & Hamilton, 2007).

Nevertheless, the current business environment is increasingly dynamic where changes are vast and rapid (Barreto, 2010). Researchers have suggested competitive advantage among business firms only exist for a short period (D'Aveni, Dagnino, & Smith, 2010; Wiggins & Ruefli, 2005). Also, SMEs are particularly vulnerable (Wiesner & Millett, 2012) due to their smaller structure and higher resource constraints as compared to large corporations (Desouza & Awazu, 2006). For instance, one in every 10 SMEs in the United Kingdom (UK) experienced business failure with less than five managed to survive for more

than four years (UK Office for National Statistics, 2016). Australia and United States of America (US) also reported similar failure rates. For instance, Australia recorded average 12% of business exit rate from 2014 to 2016 (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2017) while less than half of US businesses established between 2004 and 2013 survived after five years of operation (United States Small Business Administration [SBA], 2016).

These data suggest that the quest for better business performance in the current dynamic environment remains a considerable challenge for scholars and practitioners specifically those involved in SMEs strategic management (Breznik & Hisrich, 2014). Although the majority of strategic management research focused on large corporations instead of SMEs (O'Regan, Ghobadian, & Gallear, 2006), strategic management is still significant among the SMEs as negligence in formal strategic management and low strategic planning capabilities are factors constrained SME from achieving high performance (Hudson-Smith & Smith, 2007). Many studies also emphasized that SMEs cannot merely adapt the large corporation strategies and practices on a reduced scale due to the differences in characteristics and challenges faced by these businesses (Kraus, Harms, & Schwarz, 2006; Jennings & Beaver, 1997). Furthermore, research on high-performing and high-growth SMEs remains scarce (Bamiatzi & Kirchmaier, 2014; Moreno & Casillas, 2007), mainly due to very few SMEs managed to sustain high business performance for an extended period (Bamiatzi & Kirchmaier, 2014; Parker, Storey, & Van Witteloostuijn, 2010). Until recently, researchers have attempted to identify factors that enable SMEs to increase their business performance and achieve success (Gray, Saunders, & Goregaokar, 2013; Simpson, Padmore, & Newman, 2012). However, these studies reported inconsistent findings. Also, early research on CSFs asserted CSFs is distinguishable into generic and context-specific (Geller, 1985), meaning some CSFs are common across industry and country while some success factors are only critical in particular company, industry or country and not equally significant in other settings. The notion inevitably creates the need for more investigations on CSF of SMEs in particular industry in a specific country setting to enhance the literature on successful SMEs.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Malaysia's manufacturing industry accounted for approximately 23% GDP in 2014 but manufacturing SMEs contribute only 7.8% GDP despite the fact that SMEs made up over 90% of the manufacturing sector in Malaysia (Small and Medium Enterprises Corporation Malaysia [SME Corp. Malaysia], 2015). Specifically, in F&B manufacturing, over 6000 SMEs are involved thus making F&B the manufacturing subsector with the second largest concentration of SMEs (Department of Statistics Malaysia [DoSM], 2011). With this number, SMEs dominated the F&B industry in Malaysia (Malaysia Investment Development Authority [MIDA], 2016). The Malaysian government has

implemented several initiatives along with the third industrial master plan (IMP3) 2006-2020 to strengthen the efficiency and competitiveness of the F&B manufacturing industry and reduce the dependence on food imports (Performance Measurement and Delivery Unit [PEMANDU], 2010). Nevertheless, Malaysia has remained as net food importer with increasing trade deficits for the past few years (MIDA, 2016).

As globalization has made the world a borderless marketplace, F&B manufacturers face not only rapidly changing consumer demands (Menrad, 2004) but also stronger competitions as they become part of the global food supply chain (Bigliardi & Galati, 2013; Matopoulos, Vlachopoulou, Manthou, & Manos, 2007). Furthermore, to ensure food safety and quality, governments imposed strict laws and regulations on all food manufacturers. For instance, Food Act 1983 and Food Regulations 1985 are food legislations governing food safety and quality in Malaysia while Companies Act 1965, Trade Descriptions Act 2011, and Factories and Machinery Act 1967 are laws governing the formation, trading, and operations of F&B manufacturers operating in Malaysia. Furthermore, Malaysia Standard 1500:2009 Halal Food Production, Preparation, Handling, and Storage General Guidelines (Second Revision) and Malaysia Protocol for Halal Meat and Poultry Productions 2011 are another two sets of mandatory guidelines applicable to F&B manufacturers with Halal accreditation (Department of Standards Malaysia, 2014; Halal Industry Development Corporation [HDC], 2010). In summary, SMEs in F&B industry are required to meet the same set of food safety and quality standards and compete with large corporations for the rapid switching consumer demands while possessing a smaller set of resources.

Concerning the large numbers of SMEs in the F&B manufacturing industry in Malaysia, SMEs need to achieve higher performance to strengthen the sector and reduce the country's food trade deficits. Strategic management is the essential area to help businesses achieve success in the current business world (Breznik & Hisrich, 2014). Despite the significance of SMEs and the challenges they face to excel in the F&B manufacturing industry, there has been limited research on strategic management among F&B manufacturers, let alone the narrower context of F&B manufacturing SMEs in Malaysia. To understand the strategic management among F&B manufacturing SMEs, specifically, to unveil the black box of strategies used by SMEs to overcome challenges and competitions, and achieve success in the F&B manufacturing industry, this study employed multiple case study method to identify and understand the CSFs of F&B manufacturing SMEs in Malaysia.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The overall research purpose of this study is to develop the understanding of the SME strategic management, particularly on the strategy and process of

attaining success among the Malaysian F&B manufacturing SMEs. This study employed multiple case study method, as it is an exploratory study on successful SMEs in the F&B manufacturing industry in Malaysia. Firstly, this study conducted a literature review of strategic management, entrepreneurship, SME, CSF and F&B literature to outline the list of potential CSFs of the F&B manufacturing SMEs in Malaysia. Then, the researcher conducted case studies to discover CSFs of successful SMEs and compared the results with existing literature. This study is broadly aiming to contribute to the existing body of knowledge of strategic management with case findings in the F&B manufacturing SME context.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the literature review, this research developed 13 research questions to aid in answering the broad research question of this study. The following presents the 14 research questions of this study while Chapter 2 Literature Review will elaborate the development of research questions in detail.

Broad research question: How do SMEs in F&B manufacturing industry achieve success?

Research Question 1: Is competitive strategy a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 2: Is human resource management (HRM) a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 3: Is innovation a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 4: Is entrepreneurial competency a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 5: Is business experience a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 6: Is family capital a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 7: Is access to finance a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 8: Is entrepreneurial orientation (EO) a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 9: Is networking a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 10: Is effective food safety management system (FSMS) a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 11: Is implementation of quality management system (QMS) a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 12: Is supply chain management (SCM) a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME? How does it lead SME to success?

Research Question 13: Is there any other CSF for F&B manufacturing SME beside the above factors? If yes, how does it lead SME to success?

1.6 Research Objectives

This research has the main objective to identify the CSFs of Malaysian SMEs in F&B manufacturing industry. In order to support the main research objective, 14 specific objectives are included in this thesis:

- 1) To identify whether competitive strategy is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 2) To identify whether human resource management (HRM) is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 3) To identify whether innovation is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 4) To identify whether entrepreneurial competency is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 5) To identify whether business experience is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 6) To identify whether family capital is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 7) To identify whether access to finance is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 8) To identify whether entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 9) To identify whether networking is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 10) To identify whether effective food safety management system (FSMS) is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 11) To identify whether implementation of quality management system (QMS) is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 12) To identify whether supply chain management (SCM) is a CSF for F&B manufacturing SME.
- 13) To investigate whether there is any other CSF for F&B manufacturing SME beside the above factors.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significant of the study is manifested in both its theoretical and practical implications. Firstly, this present study aims to address the research gap by investigating the CSFs of successful SMEs in the Malaysia F&B manufacturing industry. This study would also contribute original and significant insights to the literature through the identification and understanding of CSFs of the Malaysian F&B manufacturing SMEs. As SME made up a major part of the F&B industry in Malaysia, this study expects to improve the understanding of this important yet under-investigated industry in Malaysia through exploring on successful SMEs operating in the industry.

Practically, this research seeks to provide suggestions and recommendations to stakeholders including SMEs owners and managers, entrepreneurs, the Government, policy makers, financial institutions, business and non-

government organizations to improve their policy and strategy formulation, and decision-making process to support F&B manufacturing SMEs to achieve high-performance and attain success.

Finally, yet importantly, this study becomes the foundation and opens up avenues for future research in strategic management, SME, entrepreneurship, and F&B literature. For instance, future research may focus on the impacts of individual CSFs identified from this study on firm performance in other industries or geographical settings. Future research might also focus on the Malaysian F&B manufacturing industry, for instance through longitudinal study or comparisons between successful and less successful SMEs.

1.8 Thesis Structure

This thesis contains five chapters as following:

The present Chapter 1 Introduction introduced the background of the study and outlined the statement of the problem for this thesis. The chapter is followed by the overview of the purpose of the study, research questions, and research objectives. Then, the chapters briefly presented the conceptual framework of this study. The chapter continues with the significance of the study and outlining the overall thesis structure.

The second chapter of this thesis, Chapter 2 Literature review will first outline the chapter structure with the literature review framework of this study. Then the chapter presents the extensive literature review of studies in strategic management, CSF and small and medium-sized enterprises. This chapter also introduces 12 potential CSFs of F&B manufacturing SMEs drawn from various fields. Finally, the chapter closes with the presentation of research questions and the list of potential CSFs of F&B manufacturing SMEs as the conceptual framework for this study.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology introduces the research methodology adopted for this study, the case study method. The chapter also describes the elements of the case study research design in details. This chapter intends to inform the methodology proposed for the empirical investigations of the answers for research questions formulated and addressing the quality of this research.

Next, the Chapter 4 Results and Discussions first presents the within-case analysis on the CSFs identified from each case study and the cross-case analysis that compares the case evidence to provide answers for each

research questions developed in Chapter 2. This chapter closes with a sharp summary of the research findings.

The final chapter, Chapter 5 Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research concludes the thesis with a summary of the research aims, findings, and implications of theory and practice. Furthermore, this chapter discusses limitations of this research before outlining recommendations for future research.



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