

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AMONG MICRO ENTERPRISES IN PERAK

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Abstract: *Micro-enterprises play a vital role in promoting economic growth, employment creation, and business sustainability. However, despite their significant contribution to the economy, many micro-enterprises continue to face managerial challenges that affect their long-term competitiveness and survival. This study aims to investigate the organizational management practices adopted by micro-entrepreneurs in Perak, Malaysia. Specifically, it examines the extent to which micro-entrepreneurs implement organizational management practices related to strategic planning, goal setting, performance monitoring, decision-making, resource management, and problem-solving. A quantitative research approach employing a survey design was adopted. Data were collected from 102 micro-entrepreneurs operating in the districts of Muallim, Perak Tengah, and Kinta using a structured questionnaire comprising eight adapted measurement items. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that the respondents demonstrated a high level of organizational management practices ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.80$). Among the dimensions examined, taking immediate corrective action when business problems arise recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.12$), indicating strong organizational agility and proactive decision-making. Conversely, setting clear short-term business goals recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 3.54$), suggesting inconsistencies in formal planning practices among micro-enterprises. Overall, the findings indicate that while Malaysian micro-entrepreneurs exhibit strong operational management capabilities, greater emphasis should be placed on*

strengthening systematic goal setting and strategic planning to improve business performance and sustainability. This study contributes to the entrepreneurship literature by providing empirical evidence on organizational management practices within the micro-enterprise context and offers practical implications for policymakers and entrepreneurship development agencies in designing targeted managerial development programmes to enhance the resilience, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability of micro-enterprises.

Keywords: *Organizational management practices; Micro-enterprises; Micro-entrepreneurs*

Introduction

Micro-enterprises play a critical role in economic development, employment generation, poverty reduction, and community sustainability, particularly in developing countries. Across emerging economies, micro-entrepreneurs contribute significantly to national gross domestic product (GDP) and provide employment opportunities for vulnerable and low-income populations (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2022). In Malaysia, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) account for more than 97% of business establishments and are recognized as important contributors to economic resilience and inclusive growth (SME Corp Malaysia, 2023).

Despite their importance, many micro-entrepreneurs continue to face substantial challenges in sustaining and expanding their businesses. The post-pandemic business environment has intensified issues related to financial instability, rising operational costs, digital disruption, limited managerial capability, and market uncertainty (UNDP, 2022). These challenges are particularly critical among youth and novice entrepreneurs who often possess limited experience in managing business operations strategically.

Business management practices are increasingly recognized as essential determinants of entrepreneurial success. Effective organizational management, marketing practices, financial management, human resource management, and operational planning are often associated with higher business survival, improved performance, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability (Roman, 2026; Wike-Young, 2024; Ahmad et al., 2018). However, the research on organizational management practices among micro-entrepreneurs remains fragmented across different contexts, industries, and theoretical perspectives (Meier, 2025; Beatrice & Hapompwe, 2025; Gonzalez-Varona et al., 2024). Moreover, empirical evidence on organizational management practices among Malaysian micro-enterprises remains limited despite their distinctive characteristics, including limited financial resources, informal organizational structures, and owner-managed decision-making processes (Saarela & Simunaniemi, 2025; Storey, 2016). This lack of context-specific evidence constrains the development of targeted managerial interventions and entrepreneurship policies tailored to the unique needs and operational realities of micro-enterprises (OECD, 2023; SME Corp Malaysia, 2023). Additionally, the rapid advancement of digital technologies has fundamentally reshaped entrepreneurial activities, creating new demands for managerial competencies, digital capabilities, and strategic adaptability among entrepreneurs (Camps et al., 2026; Dana et al., 2024).

Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the organizational management practices adopted by micro-enterprises. Specifically, it examines the extent to which micro-entrepreneurs

implement organizational management practices, including strategic planning, goal setting, performance monitoring, decision-making, resource management, and problem-solving, in managing their businesses. By providing empirical evidence from the micro-enterprise sector, the study seeks to enrich the literature on entrepreneurial management while offering practical implications for entrepreneurship development programmes and policy interventions aimed at strengthening managerial competencies and enhancing business sustainability.

Research Background

The role of micro-entrepreneurs in economic development has gained increasing scholarly and policy attention over the past decade. Governments and development agencies worldwide have implemented various entrepreneurship development initiatives to strengthen micro-enterprises because of their significant contributions to employment creation, economic resilience, innovation, and inclusive growth. Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are widely recognized as the backbone of both developed and developing economies, contributing substantially to job creation, local economic development, and sustainable livelihoods (OECD, 2024; United Nations, 2022). Furthermore, entrepreneurship has been identified as a key driver of innovation, competitiveness, and economic transformation, particularly in emerging economies seeking to enhance resilience in an increasingly digital and uncertain business environment (Raman, 2025).

In Malaysia, the development of MSMEs is strongly aligned with national economic agendas such as Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, MyDIGITAL, and the National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030. However, despite continuous support, many micro-enterprises struggle to survive beyond the early years of business operations (SME Corp Malaysia, 2023). Research indicates that weak business management capability remains one of the primary contributors to business failure among small businesses (Noe et al., 2020).

Previous studies suggest that entrepreneurs who adopt stronger management practices demonstrate greater adaptability, improved business growth, enhanced customer relationships, and superior financial performance. Effective strategic management, organizational capabilities, and performance management enable MSMEs to respond more effectively to changing market conditions while achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Vuong et al., 2025; Beatrice & Hapompwe, 2025).

In addition, previous studies have also emphasized that entrepreneurial competencies and effective managerial capabilities are fundamental to business sustainability and long-term entrepreneurial success (Samsudin et al., 2022; Ahmad et al., 2020; Zainol et al., 2018). Entrepreneurship education further contributes to strengthening these competencies by enhancing entrepreneurs' planning, decision-making, and business management skills (Adnan et al., 2020; Samsudin et al., 2019).

However, micro-entrepreneurs continue to face major challenges in ensuring business sustainability and achieving entrepreneurial success in increasingly dynamic and uncertain business environments. Although governments and entrepreneurship agencies provide various forms of financial and training support, many micro-enterprises still experience low survival rates and weak business performance (OECD, 2023).

Furthermore, many previous studies focus primarily on SMEs in general, rather than specifically examining micro-entrepreneurs. Micro-enterprises possess distinctive characteristics, including limited financial resources, informal organizational structures, owner-managed decision-making, and constrained managerial capabilities, which influence the adoption and effectiveness of management practices. Consequently, findings derived from SMEs may not be directly applicable to micro-enterprises, highlighting the need for more context-specific research on this important yet underrepresented group of businesses (Saarela & Simunaniemi, 2025).

Collectively, many studies suggest that organizational management practices contribute positively to business performance. However, the existing literature reports considerable variation in the dimensions of management practices examined, measurement approaches employed, and business contexts investigated. As a result, there remains limited consensus regarding which organizational management practices are most consistently adopted by micro-enterprises operating under resource-constrained environments. This inconsistency highlights the need for further empirical evidence focusing specifically on micro-enterprises rather than SMEs in general.

Consequently, there is a need for a more focused investigation of organizational management practices among micro-entrepreneurs, particularly within the Malaysian context. Given the unique characteristics and resource constraints of micro-enterprises, understanding how entrepreneurs implement organizational management practices is essential for enhancing business sustainability and competitiveness.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey research design. The population of this study consisted of micro-entrepreneurs operating in selected districts in Perak, namely Muallim, Perak Tengah, and Kinta. The sample size for this study was 102 micro-entrepreneurs.

The questionnaire was developed by adapting validated measurement items from previous studies on entrepreneurship, strategic management, and organizational management. The adaptation process involved selecting relevant items, modifying their wording to suit the context of Malaysian micro-enterprises, and ensuring conceptual consistency with the organizational management construct. Specifically, the items were adapted from the works of Chandler and Hanks (1993), Yusuf (1995), Dean and Sharfman (1996), Papadakis et al. (1998), Locke and Latham (2002), Delmar and Shane (2003), Zahra et al. (2006), Rauch et al. (2009), Brinckmann et al. (2010), and Teece et al. (1997). The final instrument comprised eight items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 1: Interpretation of Mean Score Levels

Mean value	Level
1.00 – 1.80	Very low
1.81 – 2.60	Low
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
3.41 – 4.20	High
4.21 – 5.00	Very high

Source: Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric Theory* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

To assess the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was conducted. The organizational management construct, comprising Item 1 to Item 8, achieved a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.926, indicating excellent internal consistency. This value exceeds the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019), demonstrating that all eight items consistently measure the same underlying construct. Therefore, the instrument is considered highly reliable and suitable for subsequent statistical analyses.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows that the Organizational Management Practices recorded an overall mean score of 3.86 (SD = 0.80), indicating a high level of organizational management practices among the respondents. This finding is consistent with recent studies highlighting that effective organizational management practices, including strategic planning, performance monitoring, and informed decision-making, are fundamental determinants of business sustainability and competitiveness among micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). For example, Vuong et al. (2025) found that strategic management practices significantly enhance organizational creativity and financial performance among SMEs, enabling firms to respond more effectively to environmental changes. Similarly, Chiluba and Hapompwe (2025) reported that structured business management practices positively influence the operational and financial performance of SMEs, emphasizing that enterprises with systematic planning and managerial control are better positioned to achieve sustainable business growth. Furthermore, González-Varona et al. (2024) argued that the increasingly dynamic and digital business environment requires MSMEs to strengthen their organizational capabilities, managerial competencies, and decision-making processes to improve organizational effectiveness and long-term competitiveness. Collectively, these findings reinforce the present study by demonstrating that sound organizational management practices are essential for enhancing business resilience, improving performance, and sustaining competitive advantage among micro-enterprises.

Among the eight items, Item 8 (*Taking immediate corrective action when business problems arise*) recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.89$), indicating that respondents are highly proactive in responding to operational and managerial challenges. This result reflects the importance of timely decision-making and problem-solving in sustaining business operations within the dynamic business environment. In addition, this finding suggests that timely decision-making and rapid problem-solving are regarded as essential practices for maintaining business continuity and responding effectively to an increasingly dynamic business environment. This is consistent with Citrawati et al. (2026), who argued that corrective action is a fundamental component of organizational control, enabling firms to monitor performance, address operational deviations promptly, and achieve organizational objectives. Similarly, Navarro Arvizu et al. (2025) emphasized that contemporary business strategy requires continuous adaptation rather than rigid planning, with managerial responsiveness serving as a key capability for sustaining competitiveness. Supporting this view, Vuong et al. (2025) found that effective strategic management enhances organizational performance by strengthening firms' ability to respond rapidly to environmental changes, while González-Varona et al. (2024) identified adaptive decision-making and organizational agility as critical competencies for MSMEs operating in dynamic business environments. Overall, the findings indicate that Malaysian micro-entrepreneurs place considerable emphasis on proactive problem-solving and timely corrective action, reflecting strong organizational agility. Such

capabilities are increasingly recognized as essential drivers of business resilience, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability among micro-enterprises.

Conversely, setting clear short-term business goals recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.22$), although it remained within the high category. The relatively large standard deviation indicates considerable variation in how micro-entrepreneurs establish and implement short-term business objectives. This finding suggests that while many respondents recognize the importance of setting business goals, the degree to which these goals are formally planned and consistently implemented differs substantially across micro-enterprises. The finding is consistent with Navarro Arvizu et al. (2025), who reported that many MSMEs operate with varying levels of strategic maturity, with micro-enterprises frequently exhibiting only partial implementation of formal strategic planning processes. The absence of standardized planning systems often results in inconsistent goal setting and performance monitoring across firms. Similarly, Citrawati et al. (2026) argued that short-term business goals are primarily associated with daily operational activities, such as managing cash flow, purchasing raw materials, and meeting labour expenses. However, the highly uncertain business environment often requires entrepreneurs to continuously revise these goals, causing many micro-enterprises to adopt a more reactive than proactive approach to business management.

Furthermore, previous studies suggest that although strategic planning contributes positively to organizational performance, its adoption among micro-enterprises varies considerably depending on managerial capability, resource availability, and environmental uncertainty (Navarro Arvizu et al., 2025; Vuong et al., 2025). Consequently, while the respondents generally acknowledged the importance of setting short-term business goals, the implementation and formalization of these planning practices remain inconsistent. This finding highlights the need for entrepreneurship development programmes to strengthen micro-entrepreneurs' planning capabilities by promoting more systematic goal-setting and strategic planning practices, thereby enhancing business performance and long-term sustainability.

Beyond demonstrating a generally high level of organizational management practices, these findings indicate that Malaysian micro-entrepreneurs have developed practical managerial capabilities that support day-to-day business continuity. Nevertheless, the relatively moderate emphasis on formal planning suggests that many entrepreneurs continue to rely on experiential knowledge and adaptive decision-making rather than structured management systems. This reflects the operational realities of micro-enterprises, where limited resources and rapidly changing market conditions often require flexible rather than highly formalized management approaches.

Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents exhibit a satisfactory level of organizational management practices, particularly in decision-making, resource management, and problem-solving. These managerial practices are widely recognized as essential capabilities that contribute to improved business performance, organizational resilience, and the long-term sustainability of micro-enterprises. This finding highlights the need for entrepreneurship development programmes to strengthen micro-entrepreneurs' planning capabilities by promoting more systematic goal-setting and strategic planning practices, thereby enhancing business performance and long-term sustainability.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Organizational Management Practices

Item	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
1	Setting clear short-term business goals	3.54	1.22	High
2	Setting clear long-term business goals	3.91	1.02	High
3	Regularly monitoring business performance	3.83	1.01	High
4	Making decisions based on relevant information	3.89	0.95	High
5	Planning business activities systematically	3.87	0.92	High
6	Having a clear business plan	3.82	0.93	High
7	Managing business resources in an organized manner	3.86	0.92	High
8	Taking immediate corrective action when business problems arise	4.12	0.89	High
	Overall Organizational Management Practices	3.86	0.80	High

Conclusion

This study examined the organizational management practices among Malaysian micro-entrepreneurs in the districts of Muallim, Perak Tengah, and Kinta. The findings revealed that micro-entrepreneurs generally demonstrate a high level of organizational management practices, particularly in decision-making, resource management, and proactive problem-solving. Among the practices examined, taking immediate corrective action when business problems arise emerged as the most frequently adopted practice, reflecting the importance of organizational agility and managerial responsiveness in sustaining business operations. Conversely, setting clear short-term business goals recorded the lowest mean score, indicating inconsistencies in formal planning practices across micro-enterprises. Overall, the findings suggest that while micro-entrepreneurs possess strong operational management capabilities, greater emphasis should be placed on systematic goal setting and strategic planning to further enhance business performance.

This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on organizational management practices among Malaysian micro-enterprises. It extends existing knowledge by offering context-specific insights into the managerial practices of micro-entrepreneurs. Practically, the findings provide useful guidance for policymakers and entrepreneurship development agencies in designing targeted programmes to strengthen strategic planning, decision-making, and organizational capabilities, thereby enhancing the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of micro-enterprises.

Limitation and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study captures organizational management practices at a single point in time and therefore does not allow causal relationships or changes in management practices over time to be examined. Second, the sample was limited to 102 micro-enterprises located in the districts of Muallim, Perak Tengah, and Kinta in Perak, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to micro-

enterprises operating in other regions or industries. Third, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be subject to response bias and social desirability bias. Finally, this study focused solely on organizational management practices and did not examine their direct relationship with business performance or other organizational outcomes.

Future research is encouraged to adopt longitudinal research designs to examine changes in organizational management practices over time and to establish potential causal relationships. In addition, studies should include larger and more diverse samples of micro-enterprises across different states in Malaysia to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Comparative investigations across industries and business sectors would also provide valuable insights into how organizational management practices differ according to business characteristics and operating environments. Furthermore, future research could extend the current study by examining the influence of organizational management practices on business performance, organizational resilience, and long-term sustainability using more comprehensive analytical approaches.

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