



## A Cross-Cultural Insight into the Competency-Mix of SME Entrepreneurs in Australia and Malaysia

<sup>a</sup>Noor Hazlina Ahmad\*, <sup>b</sup>Carlene Wilson, <sup>c</sup>Liz Kummerow

<sup>a</sup>School of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia

<sup>b</sup>Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Adelaide, Australia

<sup>c</sup>Business School, University of Adelaide

**Abstract:** This paper attempts to unearth the competency-mix required by entrepreneurs in Australia and Malaysia in order to sustain their ventures. Based on this premise, the present study aims to identify, validate, and compare the competencies perceived to be important by SME entrepreneurs operating in both countries. This involved determining the psychometric rigor of the model and establishing the psychometric properties of the model of entrepreneurial competency using a sample of 391 SME entrepreneurs. Interestingly, it was found that some competencies are context-free while others are culture-specific. The identification of competencies that are highly prevalent in Australia and Malaysia would assist in the development of an assessment index that could be used in training and development programs for practicing as well as prospective SME entrepreneurs.

Keywords: cross-cultural study, competency-mix, SME entrepreneurs, Australia, Malaysia

### INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in research on entrepreneurship have seen increased attention given to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), largely due to the recognition that SMEs play a significant role in economic development in developed and developing countries. In a developed country like Australia, the entrepreneurial activities of SMEs serve as a means to revitalize stagnating industries (Thomas and Mueller, 2000), while in a developing country like Malaysia, they are seen as a mechanism to improve the distribution of income, to stimulate economic growth, and to reshape an economic structure which has been

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\* hazlina@usm.my 