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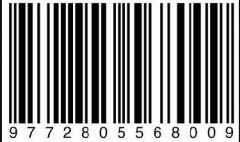
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Changing Lives
and **Empowering
Humanities**

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Pemangkin Idea

Empowering Youth

through Technology Literacy and Entrepreneurship for a Brighter Future



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In Malaysia youth are defined as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 or 15 and 29 years old. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, the youth population constituted a significant portion of the total population. In 2020, it was estimated that the youth population in Malaysia was approximately 15.5 million, making up about 47% of the total population (Economic Planning Unit, 2015). In light of this theme “Changing Lives and Empowering Humanity”, this article focuses on the potential of youth to improve the standard of living of their family, community and contributing to the development of economy through utilizing technology and digital literacy and entrepreneurship. The need for entrepreneurial education to be incorporated in learning environments is conveyed by (Ahmad, 2013) as entrepreneurship requires talents, skills and knowledge. Youth can start their entrepreneurial journey by launching small-scale ventures that require minimal investment and risk. Likewise, knowledge in technology offers numerous opportunities for youth entrepreneurs to reach a wider audience. They can utilize various social media platforms, e-commerce websites, and digital marketing tools to promote their products or services, interact with customers. Their digital skills and creativity can also develop new innovations and possibly would combine the idea of businesses in the digital platform. In line with this issue, technical and vocational education training (TVET) in particular, aimed to provide workforce with the competences and skills needed for a diverse market economy (Sharifah Kamaliah, Samsilah Roslan, Ab Rahim Bakar, & Zeinab Ghiami, 2018). Hence, youth in Malaysia can grab this opportunity and need support to transition from what they have learned to transform as a job or career. They need to understand how the changing requirements of the modern economy affect their future workplace.

Youth play an important role in the development of the country as future leaders and as agents of change who will determine Malaysia’s identity and drive national progress. It may however be

noted that according to Statista (2024) in 2023, the youth unemployment rate in Malaysia increased by 0.3 percentage points (+2.89 percent) since 2022. In total, the youth unemployment rate amounted to 10.66 percent in 2023 as depicted in Figure 1. The findings of this report suggest that unemployed youth would not be able to contribute effectively to national economic development. Unemployment could unpleasantly affect the disposable income of families, weaken the purchasing power, diminish employee morale, and reduce an economy’s output. Youth unemployment has also been shown to have lifelong effects on income and employment stability. They have less confidence about the future, are more likely to turn to drugs, think that there is nothing to look forward to and sense that their life has no direction. Hence, preparing them with technology and knowledge in entrepreneurial can reduce the unemployment rate. Youth can start by identifying their interest, unleash their potential and initiate a small business. Technopreneurship is one of the examples in which youth can start their business relies on the technology advancements.



Figure 1: Youth unemployment rate from 2004-2023 (Statista, 2024)

Moreover, according to Statista Research Department, Aug 3, 2023, in 2022, Figure 2 evident the poverty rate of the urban population of Malaysia was at 4.5 percent, while rural poverty was at 12 percent. In Malaysia poverty rate for 2022 was 0.00%, a 2.3% decline from 2021. Malaysia poverty rate for 2021 was 2.30%, a 2.3% increase from 2020. As shown in Figure 2, the findings from this data clearly reveals that the poverty rate of rural areas in Malaysia is at the high rate. Subsequently, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the learning journey of many youths worldwide, especially those belonging to vulnerable communities. In Malaysia, many youths living in poverty come from B40 households. The rural poverty still continues to be the focus of government and the urban poverty also needs urgent policy attention as well. In response to the country's youth unemployment, the government has embarked on an education reform program by investing in education and skill development to empower youth. In addition to a slight transformation on the education sector, the increased focus was put on career guidance and early access to vocational education. The target groups include different categories of youth including the unemployed, students, rural youth and dropouts.

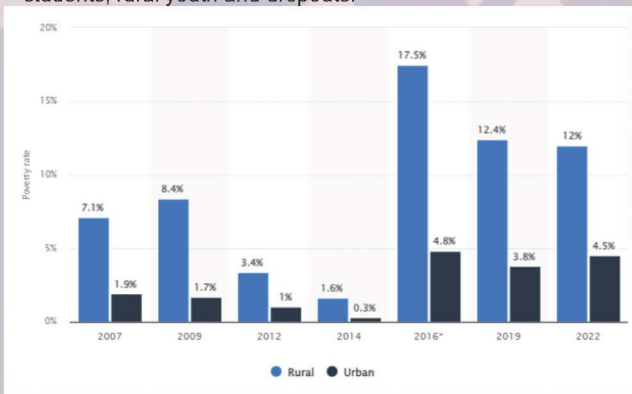


Figure 2: Poverty rate of rural and urban areas in Malaysia from 2007-2022 (Statista, 2024)

Therefore, from the above mentioned highlighted scenario, it is significant to encourage youth to contribute to their family and helping them to lessen the burden of their parents. This could involve selling homemade products such as crafts, baked goods, or artwork, or providing services like tutoring or gardening within their community. Encouraging youth to excel in their education can lead to better job opportunities in the future. Hence, emphasis on the participation of youth in the fields of ICT and entrepreneurship can help to lessen the poverty issue and increase the level of education among the poor. Through education, children in poor communities will have a better chance to get a high-paying job or start a business.

In order to survive in the challenging world, young people nowadays tend to start up their own businesses. However, not all people can become successful entrepreneurs, as some of them lack of entrepreneurial skills, and these days, due to the technological advancements, a new approach to marketing emerges. According to Martins et al. (2023), the success of the business depends on the entrepreneurial intention of an individual. Entrepreneurial education plays a vital role in developing entrepreneurial intentions among young people (Israr & Saleem, 2018). It is believed that by having such education as a basis for conducting a business could instil entrepreneurial motivation among students. Programs, courses, and seminars that are related to entrepreneurship provided by higher institutions could equip students with the ability and preparedness for the business world (Martins et al., 2023). All the knowledge that they learned enhanced their entrepreneurial skills. In addition, students who possess prior business management experience are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship compared to those who lack such experience (Israr & Saleem, 2018). Every individual has their own strength and personal traits that could drive them to pursue entrepreneurship. Research that had been done by Israr & Saleem (2018), suggests that extroverts have more desire and capability than introverted people. Moreover, an individual with more willingness to experience new things is the

most influential factor contributing to entrepreneurial intention as they are more curious and imaginative about certain things. Personal elements of an individual, like self-efficacy and not being afraid to take risks, could also drive a person to perform entrepreneurship roles better (Martins et al., 2023).

Other than entrepreneurial education and personal traits, information technology knowledge is vital in business. With the emergence of technology, businesses can be performed online, which could encourage or assist young people who want to start their own businesses. One method is using social media platforms to promote and market the products. Examples of social media are Facebook, Instagram (Syaifulah et al., 2021), Tiktok, and many more. Social media has become one of the most popular marketing strategies due to the variety of features they can offer. The platform is not only limited to marketing the products but also to fostering communication among customers and suppliers. There are several factors that contributed to the success of the usage of social media platforms and according to Jami Pour et al. (2021), content is one of the main factors. Content can be divided into two areas which are in terms of the visual design that is attractive and pleasing to look, and offering creative content to the customers. Moreover, Syaifulah et al. (2021) identified that the use of social media was determined by compatibility, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use. Individuals could also develop personal branding and become social media influencers. The challenge is attracting and maintaining relationships with customers to buy the products. Other than communication skills, they should be able to deliver information regarding the products, entertain the customers, and most importantly, influence the customers to buy the products they are promoting (Joshi et al., 2023). Due to these benefits, the use of social media to operate a business is necessary nowadays.



In conclusion, youth are agents of change, and young people's inclusion in the workforce and economic development of our nation is critical. Youth can play a proactive role in improving their family's standard of living and creating a brighter future for themselves and their loved ones. One of the survival strategies for young people to overcome poverty and unemployment issues is to run a business. However, operating a business without proper knowledge and skills is useless. Young people should ensure that they have entrepreneurial education and technology skills. Entrepreneurial education can be gained through undergoing any programs and workshops organized by any institutions and companies. Meanwhile, technology skills are the basic skills that they must acquire, especially current trends in doing business online, and using social media platforms is the best option. Overall, inclusion of creative, fresh and energetic of young generation can contribute to the development of Malaysia and the world at large.

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