

## **The Role of Education Support in Enhancement of Entrepreneurial Intentions Amongst Undergraduates in Malaysia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Entrepreneurship has long been a topic of interest for many researchers. The economy being volatile has impeded job opportunities for many, particularly amongst youths. In Malaysia specifically, where unemployment has been increasing over the years, measures have been taken by the government to promote entrepreneurship to youth and undergraduates to make them more entrepreneurially inclined. Despite the numerous incentives and programs by the government to encourage youth to be entrepreneurial inclined, the unemployment rate is still high in many countries, particularly Malaysia. This research aims to offer a systematic literature review on the growing role of education support in promoting entrepreneurial intention amongst undergraduates in Malaysia. This research will highlight the increasing importance of education in fostering entrepreneurial intentions amongst undergraduates in Malaysia over the last five years. Through the compilation of past literature and research, this study aims to contribute to entrepreneurship research by discussing the impact of education support as well as highlighting ongoing discussions on education support in nurturing undergraduate entrepreneurial intention.*

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurial Intention; Undergraduates; Education Support*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Entrepreneurship is more than a pure business creation. Entrepreneurs are those who are willing to take risks and grow them outside their comfort and safety zone. Due to the competitive environment, the limited opportunities for the jobs sought (Keat et al., 2011) and the complexities revolving around essential jobs (Ferreira et al., 2012) have caused both developed and developing countries to be more reliant on a higher level of entrepreneurship to achieve personal objectives and economic growth (Oosterbeek et al., 2010). It is, therefore, not surprising that scholars, practitioners, and policymakers need to step up their efforts to promote the entrepreneurial mindset in society (Davey et al., 2011). Malaysia is continuously striving to improve its entrepreneurial environment as a developing country. One of the goals of Malaysia's New Economic Model (NEM) is to turn the country into a developed nation by 2020. The Malaysian government has introduced numerous incentives to encourage our graduates to be more entrepreneurially inclined. Despite these attempts to promote entrepreneurship,

Ismail et al., (2009) identify that pursuing enterprise in Malaysia is still, at best, marginal. In April 2010, the MoE launched a policy to create Entrepreneurship Development Institutes in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This policy aims to promote a holistic approach to HEIs in education, growth, and entrepreneurship (National Higher Education Action Plan (PSPTN), 2007). As a spinoff from the strategy of educating and promoting entrepreneurship, the government has extended its efforts to increase graduate participation in the entrepreneurship sector. Under the Transformation Program (GTP) of the Malaysian Government, the Ministry of Education has launched a Critical Agenda Project (CAP) aimed at entrepreneurial education and development. This CAP within the 2011-2015 PSPTN sought to increase the number of students becoming entrepreneurs from 1.6% to 5% over the 2011-2015 PSPTN period.

This article focuses on the growing importance of education support in enhancing entrepreneurial intentions among the undergraduate in Malaysia over the last five years ranging between the year 2015 and 2019. The article also discussed the impact of education support throughout the five years and lastly to focused on the ongoing discussions on education support in nurturing undergraduate entrepreneurial intentions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Narrative literature will be used for this study. It has, however, many limitations and is subject to critiques. For this reason, the present paper uses a systematic literature review (SLR) to help analyse the literature concisely and clearly. This approach is categorised by transparency, clarity, equality, and accessibility, unified and focused (Thorpe et al., 2006).

Depending on the research, the SLR is carried out in stages. Table 1 will outline the six stages within SLR literature. Without a doubt, there have been several past articles dealing with the provision of funding for education through entrepreneurship and educational journals. Hence, to further explore the topic of education support, the SLR approach will use a broader range of articles from various fields, including the journal of social science, business, and education.

The keyword searches resulted in 85 articles (44 articles from WOS and 41 articles from SCOPUS), which were then added to Mendeley for further screening process through the abstract and full text. The selected papers are between 2015 and 2019 because of the constant emphasis on the entrepreneurship field, particularly in Malaysia. The articles are then screened for duplications, of which after removing duplicates, only 13 articles were shortlisted. The 13 articles are then filtered to ensure that the content was relevant to the aim of the study. The filtration is done by going through the title of the article, abstract, and full text. The articles considered for review should include peer-reviewed journals and conference papers, journals published in the English language, and those that are focused on education support and entrepreneurial intentions only.

A systematic search using the phrases "entrepreneurship education", "academic support", "education support" and "entrepreneurial learning" through entrepreneurship journals. The journals were then reviewed and downloaded to Mendeley for further screening of abstract and full text. The journals are then expanded using systematic review processes.

**Table 1: Stages of the SLR Process**

Stage	Description
1	Key journals were identified relating to entrepreneurship. The earlier papers were used only for the creation of keywords and search strings. Subsequently, more comprehensive searches involving the research area were done in Scopus and Web of Science.
2	A total of 85 journals were identified, using searched words and phrases "education support", "academic support", "entrepreneurship education", and "entrepreneurial learning". All article that includes, abstract, citation, and text were downloaded into Mendeley, and, after finalising on the articles, 13 articles were found.
3	Mendeley was used to identify keywords; 4 identified to relate to education support and entrepreneurial intention directly.
4	The search strings and keywords include (e.g., Entre* AND / OR role models NOT SME learning). This process identifies 85 articles, which were narrow down to 18 articles at the end.
5	For other disciplines such as non-business, keywords were created to search using search strings (e.g., entre* AND education support OR entrepreneurship education OR entrepreneurship academics)
6	The journals were evaluated against the additional criterion, which includes: "undergraduates as an entrepreneur not an organisation"; "entrepreneurship education not enterprise or business education" and "educational programmes on university level only". At the end of this stage, there were 13 articles.

## THE REVIEW FINDINGS

### Publication Source and Number of Publication by Journal

This section presents the systematic review findings of the 13 articles based on empirical studies. Table 2 presents an outline of the selected articles by journals. The distribution of articles retrieved from journals amounted to 13 total articles, of which the majority with 2 articles were published in the Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences and 2 articles in the Journal of Social Sciences Research, and the remaining journals are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Selected Online Database**

Year	Type	Journal / Source	Country
2019	Journal Article	Journal of Nusantara Studies-Jonus	Malaysia
2018	Journal Article	Journal of Social Sciences Research	Malaysia
2018	Journal Article	Journal of Social Sciences Research	Malaysia
2017	Journal Article	Journal of Education for Business	Malaysia
2016	Journal Article	Journal of Entrepreneurship in emerging economies	Malaysia
2016	Journal Article	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	Malaysia
2016	Journal Article	Asian Social Science	Malaysia
2016	Journal Article	Polish Journal of Management Studies	Malaysia
2015	Journal Article	International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	Malaysia
2015	Journal Article	Education and Training	Malaysia
2015	Journal Article	Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences	Malaysia
2015	Journal Article	International Education Studies	Malaysia
2015	Journal Article	Mediterranean Journal of Social Science	Malaysia

## DISCUSSION

The whole 13 articles were reviewed. This section will discuss the definition of entrepreneurial intention and education support. It will also discuss articles and studies done on the impact of education support to nurture the entrepreneurial intention of undergraduates in Malaysia. This analysis

is detailed in the following sections. The section will discuss the detailed findings and followed by the final section, which is conclusions.

### **Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)**

Entrepreneurial intentions are defined as "the planning and implementation of business ideas, which orientates by a mental process" (Boyd & Vozikis, 1994; Gupta & Bhawe, 2008). Within the literature, entrepreneurial intentions have been defined in either broad (Krueger, 1993) or narrow terms (Bosma & Harding, 2007). Since a person's intentions precede actual behaviour, entrepreneurs may decide to start a business before actually discovering the specific business opportunity or choosing the particular type of business they wish to engage in (Brockhaus, 1987).

### **Education Support (ES)**

Entrepreneurship education is a lifelong learning curriculum designed to continually improve entrepreneurial knowledge and skills from primary education to adulthood. Given the extent of its importance to economic and technological repercussion, the relevance of entrepreneurial universities to society has been increasingly recognised (Audretsch, 2014; Guerrero & Urbano, 2012). Education institutions are regularly seen as a place that nurtures a student's behaviour and to encourage them to be entrepreneurially inclined. Entrepreneurial education was described as "any pedagogical (programme) or process of education to foster entrepreneurial attitudes and skills" (Fayolle et al., 2006, p. 702).

Henderson and Robertson (2000) and others further added that entrepreneurial education programmes are the most effective means of providing students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes in seeking an entrepreneurial career (Souitaris et al., 2007). Also, Alain (2009) and Akudolu (2010) see entrepreneurship education as fostering entrepreneurship, attitudes, and skills that enable individuals to take care of the economic situation and recognise opportunities. In addition to educational assistance, academic institutions can further promote students' entrepreneurial ambitions by creating an environment favourable to entrepreneurship.

### **The Impact of Education Support and Entrepreneurial Intention**

The research was done by Buang et al. (2018) on 462 Bachelor of Engineering from Malaysian universities in the southern region, such as Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), and Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM). The findings suggest that the degree of entrepreneurial aim is close to that of respondents who have taken courses in entrepreneurship with groups that have never taken courses in entrepreneurship or the engineering students. From this study, it can be concluded there is no actual impact on entrepreneurship education to both students who underwent the course and those who did not experience an entrepreneurship education. Meanwhile, a study was also done by Mustafa et al., (2016) on 141 students attending an internationally renowned and entrepreneurial university in Malaysia. Results indicate that a proactive personality and concept development support have significant impacts on the entrepreneurial intentions of students. The results revealed that a proactive personality had a larger effect on entrepreneurial intentions than that of university support factors. Bakar et al., (2015) further supported these studies by suggesting that universities in Malaysia play an essential role in fostering the entrepreneurial spirit amongst students in developing micro-enterprises in larger firms that will support and contribute to the economy.

While a study by Omar et al., (2019) on 496 undergraduate students of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) suggests that entrepreneurial education may be useful in producing high entrepreneurial intentions among students enrolled in higher institutions of education in Malaysia, thus, it can be concluded from the findings that three critical drivers, self-efficacy, the need for independence, and motivation, are significant and are positively associated with entrepreneurial intention, particularly among students at higher institutions of learning. Ekpi and Razak (2015) suggested that skill acquisition, self-motivation, and social influence are other factors that need to be emphasised on top of education support. In addition, Ekpi and Mat (2016) surveyed 319 semester-5 university undergraduate students (student entrepreneurs) during the 2015/2016 academic session from three public universities in Peninsular Malaysia, using stratified proportionate random sampling. The results show no evidence to support the existence of causality among student entrepreneurs in Malaysia between academic performance and future group membership. While Gafar et al., (2015) presented in their studies that there are strong arguments for developing creative and innovative skills such as understanding of opportunities, creation of ideas, problem-solving, creativity and innovation; leadership; communication, and networking. These are factors required for the successful development of self-employment intention to venture into business/firm creation. Hence, further importance on these skills must be incorporated into the entrepreneurship education course content with a more holistic teaching approach.

Al Mamun et al., (2017) suggest that the government should work closely with higher education institutions in aiming to provide its young people with high-quality entrepreneurial courses and programmes to reduced hesitations towards setting up their own business and hence reduce unemployment. On the other hand, research was done by Maresch et al., (2016) on business students and engineering, and science students demonstrate a strong relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intent. Other studies showing a positive relationship between educational support and entrepreneurial intentions include the survey carried out by Mohamad et al., (2015) on the findings of 2300 undergraduates that clearly shows graduates exposed to education in entrepreneurship (formal and informal) have enormous potential to become entrepreneurs. Table 3 below shows the list of journal and whether the study in the journals has shown any impact on education support to entrepreneurial intention.

**Table 3: The Implications of Education Support**

Authors & Year	Journal	Title	Significance	Impact	No Impact
Omar, Shah, Hasan, & Ali (2019)	Journal of Nusantara Studies	The influence of Self-Efficacy, motivation, and Independence on Students Entrepreneurial intentions	The role of Higher education institutions in reviewing curriculums and making efforts to incorporate self-efficacy, independence, and motivation in university education programmes for entrepreneurship.	√	
Bakar, Islam, & Lee (2015)	International Education Studies	Entrepreneurship Education: Experiences in Selected Countries	Understanding the role of entrepreneurship and its function on economic growth and entrepreneurship education.	√	
Ekpe & Razak (2016)	Polish Journal of Management Studies	Effects of Skill Acquisition on Enterprise creation among Malaysian Youths	To prepare undergraduates mentally, apart from training them in skill acquisition, which covers enterprise creation and self-motivation.		√

Ekpe, Razak, Ismail, & Abdullah (2015)	Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences	Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition and Youth's Self-Employment in Malaysia: How Far?	Understanding efforts by the Malaysian government to induce entrepreneurship development programmes, which included entrepreneurship courses and establishment of entrepreneurship departments in various universities in Malaysia.		√
Ekpe & Mat, (2016)	Asian Social Science	Can Academic Performance Enhance Group Membership and Leadership among Student Entrepreneurs in Malaysia?	There was no evidence to support the existence of causality among student entrepreneurs between academic performance and future group membership in Malaysia.		√
Gafar, Yusoff, Kasim, & Martin (2015)	Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences	Attitude to Business Reality, Perceived Value Creation and Subjective Norms: How They Impact on Students of Higher Learning Institutions' Self-Employment Intentions in Malaysia	The implementation of entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions in Malaysia (HLIs) is designed to increase the employability of graduates		√
Mamun, Nawi, Mohiuddin, Shamsudin, & Fazal (2017)	Journal of Education for Business	Entrepreneurial intention and startup preparation: A study among business students in Malaysia	Giving researchers and academic leaders an insight into the success of Malaysia's entrepreneurial education in the way public universities plan and conduct it.	√	
Maresch, Harms, Kailer, & Wimmer-Wurm (2016)	Technological Forecasting & Social Change	The impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial the intention of students in science and engineering versus business studies university programmes	Entrepreneurship Education is commonly effective for students in business as well as in science and engineering.	√	
Mohamad, Lim, Yusof, & Soon (2015)	Education Training	Estimating the effect of entrepreneur education on graduates' intention to be entrepreneurs	Graduates who are exposed to entrepreneurship education (formal and informal) have better potentials to become entrepreneurs	√	
Mustafa, Hernandez, Mahon, & Chee (2016)	Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies	Entrepreneurial Intentions of university students in an emerging economy: the influence of university support and proactive personality on students' entrepreneurial	The role of academic support alongside a conducive environment for entrepreneurship will boost students' entrepreneurial intentions.	√	

		intention			
Abd Razak, Buang, & Kosnin (2018)	The Journal of Social Sciences Research	The Influence of Entrepreneurship Education towards the Entrepreneurial Intention in 21st Century Learning	The background of entrepreneurship education received will make a difference in nurturing entrepreneurial intention	√	
Liñán & Fayolle (2015)	International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	A systematic literature review on entrepreneurial intentions: citation, thematic analyses, and research agenda.	This study provides ideas and suggestions for entrepreneurs and future entrepreneurs on ways to enforce their entrepreneurial intention and turn them to successful behaviors.		√
Shifaâ, Abd Razak, Kosnin, & Buang (2018)	The Journal of Social Sciences Research	The influence of creativity towards entrepreneurial intention and the entrepreneurial career choice behavior in 21st century learning	This study demonstrates the role of creativity in shaping entrepreneurship intentions, hence choosing entrepreneurship as a career option.	√	

## CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to investigate the impact of education support on the entrepreneurial intention for undergraduate students in Malaysia over the last five years. Based on the SLR conducted, most research indicates a positive relationship between education support and entrepreneurial intention. However, despite numerous programmes being done by universities to nurture entrepreneurial intentions amongst students, some studies show that education support did not have much impact on undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions. Further research should be conducted to perhaps investigate the content and teaching methods relating to entrepreneurship education at the university level. Maybe policymakers need to consider incorporating entrepreneurship education as early as the tertiary level school to cultivate undergraduates' entrepreneurial behaviour. Other areas or factors that future researchers could consider to research would be the role of undergraduate personality and their motivation that impacts on their inclination towards entrepreneurship.

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