

## **Entrepreneurship Education: Does It Helps University Graduates To Be Entrepreneurs**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Entrepreneurship is a knowledge discipline that can be taught and should be learnt by students nowadays. The skills of entrepreneurship are an advantage to graduates in developing their own career if they fail in searching a job. In economies transition, entrepreneurship education has become an integral part of the new curriculum in universities. Entrepreneurship education is also promoted as an effective way to facilitate the transition of a growing graduate population from education into work environment. This paper is concerned on whether entrepreneurship education is helping graduates to be entrepreneur. Although many universities have provide entrepreneurship education for their students, but the rate of unemployment rate among graduates is still higher. In addition to explore on how far entrepreneurship education helps in developing career of graduates, the research sought to examine whether the skills of entrepreneurship, the content of entrepreneurship education, and the experiences given through entrepreneurship education are adequate enough in influencing graduates to be entrepreneur.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to Birdthistle (2008), the economy needs enterprising people who have the willingness and ability to take control of their own lives due to rapid changes of the world. But the problem is how far entrepreneurship education helps students in their career development. The question whether the entrepreneurship education that has been given to graduates is adequate enough to create entrepreneurs among graduates is arise. In addition, the question on to what extent entrepreneurship education has exposed the graduates to the real world of business also should be considered.

Due to competitive environment, Malaysia has taken an action to transform the economy from production-based economy to the knowledge-based economy. Many universities and higher education institutions in Malaysia have started to introduce courses related to entrepreneurship or majors in entrepreneurship since the mid-1990s (Cheng, Chan, and Mahmood, 2009). Entrepreneurship studies have its importance in supporting the economic which is drive of the national economy, addressing the unemployment issues among graduates, and equipping the graduates with a variety of skills and knowledge in order to produce successful entrepreneurs who are not only competitive locally but also globally.

According to Taylor, Jones, and Boles (2004), delegates agreed that essential for entrepreneurs included problem solving and people management rather than specific knowledge related to marketing, accounting, and legal issues. As Rae (1997) has suggested "...the skills traditionally taught in business schools are essential but not sufficient to make a successful entrepreneur". While students still need to develop their business skills and understanding, more attention needs to be paid to the development of their entrepreneurial skills, attributes, and behaviours. This means introducing modules and courses specifically designed to develop in students the awareness and characteristics of the entrepreneur.

Learning by doing is essentially about getting involved in an activity and, through the process of doing this activity. From experience or learning by doing, student might prompt to think about the general nature of the activity. This learning can serve students to strengthen their own understanding of the activity through gaining practical, first-hand experience of the activity (Learning by doing, 2009). In addition, graduates should be

equipped with enough experiences regarding entrepreneurship. As discussed by Dhliwayo (2008), the entrepreneur provides the students the opportunity to learn the entrepreneur emotional, time, physical and intellectual inputs into the business on a day-to-day basis.

As cited by Taylor, Jones, and Boles (2004), tailoring course content to allow flexible delivery with emphasis on the personal qualities and individual skills of participants was also regarded as important. Fleming study (as cited in Birdthistle, 2008) in a study of Irish graduates, who had participated in entrepreneurship initiatives and programmes while at college, found that a comparatively high proportion (45 per cent) of the sample reported that the adequate content of entrepreneurship education had a positive effect on their subsequent career decision.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The population of this research covered full-time final years DPA student of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Kedah total 146 students.

The respondents of this research are 108 students out of 146 students of Diploma of Public Administration of Universiti Teknologi (UiTM), Kedah. The objectives of the study are as follow:

- To determine whether having entrepreneurship skills will influence graduates to become entrepreneur.
- To determine whether entrepreneurship education adequate enough to create entrepreneurs graduate.
- To determine whether entrepreneurship education has given enough experiences for graduates as a preparation to set up their own business.

### **Data Collection**

While this research was conducted, the data was collected through questionnaire that was distributed randomly to the population. The research will be taken place at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Kedah.

## Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a preformulated return set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives (Sekaran, 2008). Questionnaire can be personally administered, send through the mail or electronically distributed.

In this research, the questionnaire was divided into five sections which are section A until section E. in section A, all the questions are about the demographic information of respondents such as gender, age, and other relevance questions. In section B, all the questions are regarding entrepreneurs and motives for choosing entrepreneur as a career

In section C, the information about entrepreneurship and the importance of those skills was gathered. Meanwhile, in section D, the information about the experiences given through entrepreneurship education was collected. The last section covered the information about the content of entrepreneurship education.

## Data Analysis

The data in this research will be analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0. All the data gathered from questionnaires are entered into SPSS to be analyzed. In SPSS there are some statistical analyses to be performed.

### Cronbach's alpha

Cronbach's alpha is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another (Sekaran, 2003). It is computed in terms of the average intercorrelations among the items measuring the concept. The closer Cronbach's alpha is to 1, the higher the internal consistency reliability.

## Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics may be particularly useful if one just wants to make general observation about the data collected (Coakes, 2005). For example, number of males and females, and the age range.

## Pearson correlation

Pearson correlation coefficients describe the relationship between two continuous variables (Coakes, 2005). For example, to measure the relationship between entrepreneurship skills with the creation of entrepreneur among graduate.

## **RESULT**

According to Cheung (2008) entrepreneurship education is significant in many aspects. It can provide students with an understanding of business – its purposes, its structure, its interrelationship with other segments of the economy and society. Many studies have noted that an entrepreneurship course have positive impact on students' view of entrepreneurship. According to Waldmann (as cited in Cheung, 2008) entrepreneurship education at high school level will have a great impact on the number of students who would seriously consider starting a business sometime after graduation.

This study tries to investigate whether the entrepreneurship education is helping university graduates to be entrepreneur. This is to ensure entrepreneurship education is equipping the students with appropriate skills of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education might provide a meaningful form of learning for students. It also could be used to motivate and encourage students to joint the entrepreneurship field.

University has to reconsider what should be improved in the existing entrepreneurship education so that it can produce more entrepreneurs among

their students. They also must do something to expose the students to the real world of business so that the students can get a lot of experience which is meaningful to their future. Besides that the result of the study would provide guideline to educators when designing the programs to suit different need and demand of the students.

In addition, the study can give the benefits to the country. The country can regulate and relook the existing policy regarding entrepreneurship especially in term of the assistance to the young entrepreneurs. Through the better government assistance, it will produce more new entrepreneur in the country and in the same time will reduce the unemployment rate among graduates.

This paper aims to explore and examine whether entrepreneurship skill is influencing graduates to become entrepreneur, to examine whether entrepreneurship education is adequate enough to create entrepreneurs among graduate, and to examine whether students are given enough opportunities in experiencing entrepreneur's world in entrepreneurship education as a preparation to set up their own business.

## **CONCLUSION**

According to Birdthistle (2008), the universal aims of entrepreneurship education is to help students develop skills and attributes that allow them to be innovative and to identify, initiate and successfully manage personal and work opportunities, including working for themselves, which result in entrepreneurs being created. That means, entrepreneurs are created from adequate skills of entrepreneurship as well as good attributes that encourage them to produce creative and innovative idea in developing new products.

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