

Perception of Students on Entrepreneurship Education

Iklima Husna Abdul Rahim

Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy
Universiti Malaysia Sabah
88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah
Malaysia

Dzulkifli Mukhtar

Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan
16100 Kota Bharu, Kelantan
Malaysia

Abstract

Universities play an important role in helping to boost the Malaysian economy through entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education has been created by the government to expose students to career opportunities in business. The government's efforts are to help reduce the problem of unemployment that graduates face after they graduate. This is because the difficulty of finding a job is a problem for the country as the percentage of unemployment among graduate's increases every year. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine students' perceptions of entrepreneurship education in shaping entrepreneurial intention. Students' perceptions of entrepreneurship education are measured based on three variables: entrepreneurial curriculum, teaching methods, and university's role. The study design is a survey study where data is collected through the distribution of questionnaire forms. The questionnaire that was distributed is in the form of closed-ended questions with a 5-point Likert scale. A total of 114 students pursuing a Bachelor of Business (Entrepreneurship) degree were selected through the purposive sampling method. The study data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 23.0. The findings of the study show that the entrepreneurial curriculum and teaching methods indicated a significant relationship with entrepreneurial intentions. However, the university's role variable showed opposite results, that is, no significant relationship with entrepreneurial intentions. In conclusion, the curriculum in entrepreneurship education and teaching methods by the lecturers can help enhance the students' intention to venture into entrepreneurship. The results of this study are expected to assist universities and governments in improving entrepreneurship education in Malaysian universities.

Keywords: Perception, entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, student

1. Introduction

Today, we can see many graduates having problems finding jobs after they graduate. This problem is not only important to the graduates but also to students who have not graduated yet. This is because students who are still in the study session can see the problems that their seniors face after graduation. The large number of graduates are the reason many of them are unemployed, leading to rising unemployment over the years. In the first quarter of 2019, it recorded a total of 516, 000 unemployed people of whom 238, 286 were unemployed graduates (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). This large number is a concern to the country and will get more serious if not addressed immediately as it can have a negative impact on the country's progress and development.

One of the contributing factors to this growing problem of unemployment over the years is the attitude of students who want to be employed. Most students have set their goals to work as an employee after they graduate. This attitude has somewhat contributed to the increase in the country's unemployment rate. This is in line with a study by Abdul Karim (2016) which stated that students are more likely to be job seekers and to be employed than to be job creators. Most graduates also intend to earn high salaries in the public or private sectors upon graduation. They have never realized that there are sectors that will offer higher income than working in the private and public sectors (Din, Anuar, & Usman, 2016). The problem of unemployment is not only a problem for Malaysia, but also for other countries, such as Spain which show an unemployment rate that exceeds 25% of the general working population and more than 20% of them are graduates due to the current economic crisis which has led to very high unemployment in the country (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2014).

Therefore, most researchers find that one of the most effective measures to curb unemployment among graduates is through entrepreneurship education (Ab. Wahab, Buang, & Mustapha, 2007; Buang, 2005; Hoe, 2006; Mohd Zin, Arumugam, & Krishnan, 2006; Topimin, 2006).

Entrepreneurship education is very much emphasized by the government today so that graduates tend to choose entrepreneurship as their career after graduating from higher education and not just rely on being employed as a worker. This is because entrepreneurship education gives young people the opportunity to discover hidden talents that will reveal abilities and skills that they do not know of (Cheung, 2008). According to him, entrepreneurship education also has a positive impact on students' lives, whether they are entrepreneurs or not. Introduction to entrepreneurship education at the university has helped to eliminate the frustration of many parties, especially students and parents in producing more job creators than job seekers (Mohd Aziz, Harun, MohdEsa, Yaacob, & Ab. Rahman, 2018).

As such, the university plays a very important role in helping to realize the government's efforts in cultivating and stimulating entrepreneurial intentions among students to venture into business as their career after graduation. This is in line with the study by Mohd Aziz et al., (2018) which stated that entrepreneurship is one of the subject that students need to learn whether they are taking business or other programs at Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) to instil entrepreneurship in their daily lives through the curriculum at IHL. Introduction to the subject of entrepreneurship is intended to produce successful entrepreneurs as creators of work with strong foundations in knowledge, thinking skills, communication, creativity, innovative thinking, positive motivation, and good moral and ethical values in the entrepreneurial context.

However, entrepreneurship education provided by universities is still underestimated by most graduates. In fact, most graduates do not see the business opportunities offered in entrepreneurship as a profession that can guarantee their future (Norasmah, 2011). The amount of unemployment seen today has yet to alleviate the concerns of all parties. The question is why do these problems exist? Is it because entrepreneurship education at the university has not been able to form entrepreneurial intentions in graduates to choose entrepreneurship as their career? What are the factors that can help to cultivate entrepreneurship among graduates through entrepreneurship education? Therefore, this study was conducted to examine students' perceptions of entrepreneurship education in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. Students' perceptions are measured through three constructs: entrepreneurship curriculum, teaching methods and university's role.

2. Literature Review

Perception

According to MohdandHassan (2005), perception is the interpretation of what the eyes see, or in other words, perception is the meaning given to what the eye sees. Gibson et al., (1989) pointed out that perception is a cognitive process used by individuals to interpret and understand the world around them. Gibson also explained that perception is a process of giving meaning to something within an individual's environment. Thus, each individual is seen to give different meanings to a stimulus even though the issue is the same (Jarimal@Safri, &Lajuma, 2014). Markus andKitayama (1991) explained that people in different cultures have different perceptions of themselves and others. Therefore, it can be concluded that perception is a person's opinion or interpretation of what they see and feel about something.

Entrepreneurship Education

One of the government's efforts to solve the problem of unemployment is to introduce entrepreneurship education at the higher education level. This is because entrepreneurship education is one of the important mechanisms to prepare students toward the modern economy where business skills are important in job marketability (Pittaway& Cope, 2007). According to Li (2011), entrepreneurship education is one of the key instruments for increasing entrepreneurial attitudes for potential entrepreneurs to enter the entrepreneurial field. This view is in line with the view of Souitaris,Zerbinati, and Andreas(2007) that entrepreneurship education is a factor in entrepreneurial attitude and overall intention to become an entrepreneur in the future. This view is supported by Kemat,Yusof and Edama (2011) who stated that entrepreneurship attitudes among students can be nurtured through entrepreneurship education. In addition, entrepreneurship education is the process of providing individuals with the ability and capacity to find and evaluate commercial opportunities, increase their self-esteem, knowledge, and skills to start a business (Liñán, 2008; Samwel, 2010; Othman & Poo, 2012).

Entrepreneurial Intention

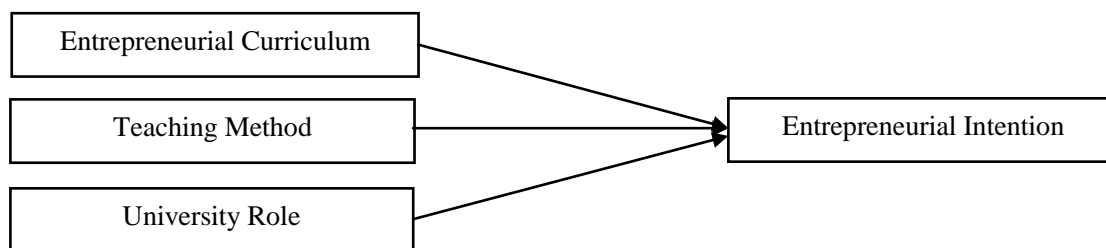
Intention is an element of the individual self that drives the desire for certain behaviours where consistent and strong intention can predict an individual's behaviour (Fayolle&Liñán, 2014; Krueger, Reilly, &Carsrud, 2000). According to Liñán (2004), entrepreneurship education is a factor in influencing entrepreneurial intentions. Therefore, entrepreneurial intention plays a very important role for one to become involved in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial intentions can be defined as mental orientation such as desires, wishes and hopes that can influence one's entrepreneurial choices (Peng, Lu & Kang, 2012).

It is supported by the study of Abd Hadi, Jabor, & Ali, (2014) that entrepreneurial intentions reflect the state of mind that initiates people to choose self-employment instead of choosing to be employed by an employer. Therefore, it can be concluded that entrepreneurial intention is the mindset and desire of an individual to go into business as their career.

Research Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 below is the conceptual framework for this study. The conceptual framework of this study is based on the study model adapted by Rengiah (2013). Diagram 1 shows three independent variables, namely the entrepreneurial curriculum, teaching methods and the university’s while the dependent variable is entrepreneurial intention.

Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study was conducted using descriptive and inference-based survey methods. The type of survey used in this study is the current or cross-sectional survey that collects data only once from one sample at a time (Creswell, 2005). The study also used a quantitative approach where questionnaires are used as a tool to collect data from respondents. This questionnaire was used to gather students' perceptions of entrepreneurship program on entrepreneurship education.

3.2 Respondents and Study Location

The study respondents consisted of 114 final year students which were third year of final semester in Bachelor's (Entrepreneurship) at Universiti Malaysia Sabah. The sampling technique that was applied in this study was purposive sampling. This purposive sampling method was chosen because this study wanted to examine students' perceptions of entrepreneurship education, so only students with a bachelor’s degree (Entrepreneurship) was chosen as the respondents. This is because they are more exposed to entrepreneurship education than students pursuing other bachelor’s degrees.

3.3 Research Tools

The research tool used in this study is a set of closed-ended questionnaire forms adapted to the needs of the study from the questionnaire developed by Rengiah (2013). The questionnaire consisted of five sections: Part A (Respondent Profiles), Part B (University Entrepreneurship Curriculum), Part C (University Teaching Methods), Part D (University's Role in Promoting Entrepreneurship), and Part E (Entrepreneurial Intention). The contents of the questionnaire form section are as follows:

Table 1: Content of the Questionnaire Form

Part	Item	Number of Questions
Part A	Respondent Profile	7
Part B	University Entrepreneurship Curriculum	8
Part C	University Teaching Methods	9
Part D	University's Role in Promoting Entrepreneurship	9
Part E	Entrepreneurial Intention	9

Each section except section A of this questionnaire used a 5-point Likert Scale to obtain respondents' actual level of measurement for the relevant variables: entrepreneurial curriculum, teaching methods, university’s role, and entrepreneurial intention. All questions ranged from a scale of 1 to 5 where each scale has the answer scale of minimum to maximum levels. The variables measured which are entrepreneurship curriculum, teaching methods, university’s role, and entrepreneurial intentions are shown in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5.

Table 2: Measurement Items for the University Entrepreneurship Curriculum

No.	Item	Source
1.	This entrepreneurial course is organized in accordance with the curriculum criteria.	Rengiah (2013)
2.	I gained new experience through this entrepreneurial course.	
3.	I am more interested in learning about entrepreneurship than any other subject.	
4.	I can hone my entrepreneurial skills through this course.	
5.	I love to study while doing business as emphasized in this entrepreneurship course.	
6.	My knowledge of business has increased after taking this course.	
7.	I am interested in studying this entrepreneurial course as it relates to real-world situations.	
8.	This entrepreneurial course taught me to be tolerant in a variety of everyday situations.	

Table 3: Measurement Items for University Teaching Methods

No.	Item	Source
1.	Lecturers have successfully applied this entrepreneurial course to real-world situations.	Rengiah (2013)
2.	Lecturers are experienced in teaching entrepreneurship courses.	
3.	The way in which entrepreneurship courses are delivered by lecturers is not interesting.	
4.	Lecturers bring students to visit the industry to learn more about entrepreneurship.	
5.	I am interested in the subject of entrepreneurship because of the interactive way of learning.	
6.	Practical training helps a lot in understanding the subject of entrepreneurship.	
7.	Lecturers have the best way of delivering entrepreneurship courses.	
8.	Lecturers are good at engaging students in entrepreneurship courses through teaching methods.	
9.	The story of a successful entrepreneur is shown in a video in the lecture hall to motivate students to get involved in business.	

Table 4: Measurement Items for the Role of Universities in Promoting Entrepreneurship

No.	Item	Source
1.	Entrepreneurship has frequently been a topic of conversation at my university.	Rengiah (2013)
2.	My university's focus is on entrepreneurship.	
3.	The subject of entrepreneurship should be made compulsory to increase the entrepreneurial spirit of the university.	
4.	The policy at my university promotes entrepreneurship education.	
5.	My university does not have enough facilities to promote entrepreneurship activities to students.	
6.	The university environment inspires me to develop innovative ideas for new business.	
7.	I think university is the best place to be trained about entrepreneurship.	
8.	The university provides resources to assist students in entrepreneurship.	
9.	In university, I had the opportunity to meet many people who have great ideas in business.	

Table 5: Measurement Items for Entrepreneurial Intention

No.	Item	Source
1.	Do you like being employed?	Rengiah (2013)
2.	Are you going to start a business after graduation?	
3.	I never thought of entrepreneurship as a career choice.	
4.	The chance of failure will be high if I work alone.	
5.	I have no money to start a business.	
6.	I cannot take the risk of being an entrepreneur.	
7.	Being an entrepreneur is the best way to get rich.	
8.	Entrepreneurs are born and cannot be formed.	
9.	I am amazed at the success of those with their own businesses.	

3.4 Analysis of Research Data

The data were analysed using two methods, namely descriptive and inference analysis using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0. Descriptive analysis was used to explain the characteristics of the respondents' profile and the level of entrepreneurial intention. Inference analysis is used to see the relationships and differences between the variables. Therefore, the one-way ANOVA statistical test was used to identify factors (entrepreneurial curriculum, teaching methods and university's role) that influence the dependent variable, which is the entrepreneurial intention.

4. Research Findings

4.1 Respondents' Demographic Profile

The respondents' demographic profile data were used to explain respondents' backgrounds such as gender, age, race, place of origin, educational funding, work experience, parents' work status and purpose of interest in entrepreneurship. Table 6 is a descriptive analysis performed to look at the frequency distribution of respondents' demographic profiles. Frequency distribution is one of the main tools that the researchers have used to validate raw data in the SPSS software (MohdZahari, Harun, & Raja Baniamin, 2017).

Table 6: Respondents' Demographic Profile

Demography	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	48	42.1
	Female	66	57.9
Age	18-20	3	2.6
	21-23	94	82.5
	24-26	17	14.9
Race	Malay	19	16.7
	Chinese	4	3.5
	Indian	12	10.5
	Bumiputera Sabah	68	59.6
	Bumiputera Sarawak	2	1.8
	Others	9	7.9
Place of Origin	City	44	38.6
	Rural	70	61.4
Working Experience	Yes	87	76.3
	No	27	23.7
Father's Work Status	Business	24	21.1
	Working Full-time	20	17.5
	Working Part-time	54	47.4
	Not Working	4	3.5
	Deceased	12	10.5
Mother's Work Status	Business	14	12.3
	Working Full-time	61	53.5
	Working Part-time	34	29.8
	Not Working	1	0.9
	Deceased	4	3.5

4.2 ANOVA Test Analysis

Table 7 below shows the results of the respondents' feedback obtained from each of the construct studied where the one-way ANOVA analysis was used to test the relationship between the three independent variables (entrepreneurial curriculum, teaching methods and university's role) and the dependent variable (entrepreneurial intention). The test results showed that the entrepreneurial curriculum and teaching methods were related because there were significant differences in each of the entrepreneurial intentions with values ($F = 2.212$, $\text{sig} = 0.07$, $P < 0.05$) and ($F = 2.390$, $\text{sig} = 0.04$, $P < 0.05$). However, the university's role was not related as there was no significant difference in entrepreneurial intentions ($F = 1.289$, $\text{sig} = 0.198$, $P < 0.05$).

Table 7: ANOVA results of the Relationship between the Entrepreneurial Curriculum, Teaching Methods, and the University's Role on Entrepreneurial Intention

Construct		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Entrepreneurial Curriculum	Between Groups	7.811	18	0.434	2.212	0.007
	Within Groups	18.641	95	0.196		
	Total	26.452	113			
Teaching Methods	Between Groups	7.865	17	0.463	2.390	0.004
	Within Groups	18.587	96	0.194		
	Total	26.452	113			
University's Role	Between Groups	6.554	23	0.285	1.289	0.198
	Within Groups	19.898	90	0.221		
	Total	26.452	113			

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that there is a significant relationship between the entrepreneurial curriculum and entrepreneurial intention. The findings of this study are consistent with the results of several previous study findings that the entrepreneurial curriculum can impact students' intentions towards entrepreneurship. This is in line with the findings of Abd Hadi (2014) who stated that engineering students exposed to entrepreneurship courses had more entrepreneurial intentions than engineering students who did not take entrepreneurship courses.

In addition, the findings of Fayolle and Liñán (2014) made it clear that there are significant differences between students who pursue entrepreneurship subjects and those who do not. The results of their study found that students who took up the subject of entrepreneurship education were more prepared to face the challenges of the job market than those who did not. Therefore, it can be concluded that exposing students to the entrepreneurial curriculum can increase their entrepreneurial intentions to venture into business compared to those who are not exposed to entrepreneurship. However, the results of this study are contrary to Fayolle and Gailly's (2008) study which stated that entrepreneurs have unique values and attributes; therefore, cannot be trained in the classroom environment.

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that there is a significant relationship between teaching methods and entrepreneurial intentions. This finding is supported by Rafidah and Abdul Karim (2016) who stated that the relationship between curriculum method and entrepreneurial intentions among students is high. It shows that the curriculum method in entrepreneurial education can drive entrepreneurship intentions among students. According to Yusof, Mohd Nor, Abu Samah, and Tasnim (2009) on the other hand, the learning process has a positive and significant influence on entrepreneurial intentions. However, he also added that the influence of the learning process in determining entrepreneurship intentions among graduates to become entrepreneurs is weak.

This may be due to the additional elements that need to be studied and identified in the teaching methods, where his research focuses on only three elements: the methods of learning, the content of the course, and the role of the lecturer. The findings of the teaching methods in this study focus only on two elements, namely the teaching methods and the role of the lecturer which comprises the lecturer's own knowledge and experience. Therefore, future research is recommended to examine whether different learning environments and lecturer differences in faculty from aspects such as academic skills or background will provide different results to entrepreneurial intentions among students (Virginia & Carlos, 2018).

The findings on the university's role variable indicate that there is no significant relationship with entrepreneurial intentions. The role of universities such as adequate facilities, policies, resources, and environment in the university cannot help to create entrepreneurial intentions among university students.

This is probably because the role played by the university has not yet reached the level necessary to influence the entrepreneurial intentions of the students. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Nasharudin and Harun (2010) which found that the university environment is not conducive to inspire students to choose entrepreneurship as their future career.

However, these findings are inconsistent with previous studies that found campus infrastructure influences entrepreneurship interests and indicates that the university environment is an important element in influencing entrepreneurial intentions among students (Norashidah, 2009; Wahid, Hashim, & Ibrahim, 2017). These findings are also supported by the study of Mod Asri, Ahmad, and Ismail (2019) that found there is a significant and positive relationship between the environment and entrepreneurial support with entrepreneurial intentions among students. Therefore, for future research, researchers are suggested to engage more respondents that include all students taking entrepreneurship subjects at a university so that their findings can be generalized.

In conclusion, this study focuses on entrepreneurship education by examining the relationship of entrepreneurship curriculum, teaching methods, and the university's in influencing the entrepreneurial intentions of university students. The results show that only the entrepreneurial curriculum and teaching methods influence students in shaping entrepreneurial intentions but not the university's role. Although the entrepreneurial curriculum and teaching methods show a positive relationship to entrepreneurial intentions, universities and governments should not feel it is adequate with the preparedness thus far. Better and orderly improvements should be made to ensure that students' entrepreneurial intentions continue for future students to take up entrepreneurial education.

Therefore, the entrepreneurial courses offered should be taken seriously by the university as it can enhance the entrepreneurial attitude of students to enter the field. Lecturers should always be prepared in terms of the realization, attitudes, and knowledge appropriate to entrepreneurship education to apply in their teaching methods. Meanwhile, the role of universities should also be looked at by universities in Malaysia to identify deficiencies or weaknesses that need improvements while helping government efforts to encourage students to start their own businesses before they graduate (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015).

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