



The Tendency of Co-Curriculum Students towards Entrepreneurship Careers At Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia

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Abstract: Due to the highly competitive job market, each student needs to have the readiness towards the entrepreneurship careers. Students should be the 'job creators' and not the 'job seekers' that only wait for job offers after graduating. This study is to identify students' environmental factors in the tendency to become entrepreneurs and to identify the level of entrepreneurial readiness amongst the students. This descriptive study applies the non-experimental quantitative approach design. The respondents of this study consist of 73 co-curriculum students of Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) who enroll in the entrepreneurship club in which are drawn from a simple random selection. The result from the current study showed that students have the tendency to become entrepreneurs because they were willing to take the risks. The result also showed that students have a medium level of tendencies towards the entrepreneurship careers. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOE), the university, lecturers, parents and the communities should give their co-operation to foster the awareness among the students that the entrepreneurship could be a career choice.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, career, co-curriculum

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurial activities are the catalysts for a country's economy. Economic activities have been carried out since ancient times through the barter system (exchange of goods). Small business activities had grown into international trades through the arrival of foreign traders at the Malacca Sultanate (Buang 2002; Zafir & Mohamad, 2003). The New Economic Policy (1971- 1990) was carried out by the government to restructure the society through the establishment of the Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial Community. (Faaland, 2005).

Vision 2020 which consists of economic, political, social, spiritual, psychological and cultural aspects was developed as the country vision. The Eleventh Malaysia Plan (11MP), 2016-2020, aimed at the prosperity and well-being of the people is emphasizing the people's economic development through the implementation of high impact programs (Malaysia Plan, 2016). Malaysia, through the transformation of the economy into a developed nation in 2020 requires human capitals that are innovative, creative, quality and competitive (Mutalib, 2013), Government policies are also strengthened through the enhancement of people's economy in the field of entrepreneurship. Among the target groups were students and youth (Mohd Salleh et al., 2005).

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The Higher Education Entrepreneurship Development Policy was launched by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to promote entrepreneurship education and development to students (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). Increasing the number of entrepreneurs for post-secondary institutions of higher learning is the target towards transforming the country's economy. According to Buang (2002), an entrepreneur is a smart individual seeking for opportunities, visionaries, leaders' souls, brave to take risks and creative in producing something valuable. Entrepreneurs are amongst the important people in the society that able to develop the country's economy (Yusof, 2010). Hence, entrepreneurship career should be chosen as a job opportunity by the students after they graduated (Nasharudin & Harun, 2010).

The aim of the entrepreneurship education is to mold the students to become the potential, competitive, and innovative inventors. At the university level, lecturers play an important role that is responsible for teaching, influencing and stimulating students' interest in entrepreneurship (Bennet, 2006). This is in line with the establishment of the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development which aimed at developing entrepreneurial interest among students, universities, and society (Bukryman et al., 2008).

Therefore, the co-curriculum is an effort to produce holistic students encompassing spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social aspects (Laporan Jawatankuasa Kabinet, 1979). Co-curriculum provides opportunities for students to improve their skills, knowledge, and values (Omar & Ab. Manaf (2002). Co-curriculum courses offered at UTHM are under the General Studies and Co-Curriculum Credit Courses (KKB). There are 10 cores under the co-curriculum, namely entrepreneurship, efforts and innovation, liberal literature, public speaking, community service, leadership, vocational skills, sports, culture, and volunteerism (Esa et al., 2016). According to Othman (2008), co-curriculum is a group activity and active participation can help students improve their soft skills. Moreover, the co-curriculum course can uncover the hidden talents of students comprising various fields of study at the higher institutions. Unfortunately, most people do not see the entrepreneurship as an appropriate career alternative. Therefore, a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship is crucial for students.

The main purpose of this study is to identify the tendency of students to venture into entrepreneurship field. The objectives of this study are: to determine students' environmental factors in the desire to become entrepreneurs and to identify the level of entrepreneurial readiness amongst the students.

2. Methodology

This study applies a descriptive design with the non-experimental quantitative approach. The data were collected through the survey using a validated questionnaire. The data were then encoded into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program version 22.0 and were analysed using descriptive statistics. The questionnaire forms are divided into three sections such as Part A, Part B and Part C. Part A contains demographic factors, Part B is environmental factor and factor C is the tendency of entrepreneurs.

2.1 Sample

The population of this study consists of co-curricular students of entrepreneurship course (UQW 10101) at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM). The samples are the final year students of the entrepreneurship course, whereas the number of respondents of this study consists of 73 students (25 males and 48 females) that are obtained through simple random sampling.

2.2 Measures

The instrument is validated by 3 experts in terms of the face and content validity. The questionnaire is divided into three-part items. Part A is the demographic factors, Part B contains questions on the environmental factors and Part C is about the readiness of entrepreneurs. The questionnaire items use the 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree.

3. Results

3.1 "What are the environmental factors in the desire to become an entrepreneur?"

Based on Table 1, the "risk" item has the highest mean score value ($M = 4.26$, $SD = .646$), followed by "culture" ($M = 4.03$, $SD = .577$), whereas "community" is the lowest mean score item ($M = 2.15$, $SD = .995$)

Table 1 - Mean and standard deviation of environmental factors

Item	Mean	Standard
Risk	4.26	.646
Culture	4.03	.577
Friends	3.25	.846
Environment	3.19	.811
Family	3.04	.809
Role	2.63	.890
Thoughts	2.51	1.029
Community	2.15	.995
	3.13	3.985

3.2 "What is the level of entrepreneurial readiness amongst the students?"

The level of entrepreneurial readiness amongst the students is at a moderate level ($M = 3.3412$, $SD = .27473$) as shown in Table 2. "Source" was the highest mean score item ($M = 4.30$, $SD = .701$), followed by "readiness" ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .595$) and the lowest mean score item is "firm" ($M = 2.10$, $SD = .819$).

Table 2 - Mean and standard deviation of entrepreneurial readiness

Item	Mean	Standard deviation
Source	4.30	.701
Benefits	4.08	.595
Determination	4.05	.743
Effort	3.95	.743
Goal	3.89	.809
Family	3.85	.794
Willingness	3.84	.866
Opportunity	3.79	.763
Benefit	3.75	.778
Friends	3.73	.712
Ready	3.56	.799
The process of formation	3.33	.708
Entrepreneurs	3.33	.800
Interest	3.14	.918
New Business	3.14	.962
Doubt	3.03	1.04
Business	3.03	.971
Other careers	2.68	.941
Less interest	2.60	.939
Confidence	2.21	.971
Interest	2.14	.769
Firm	2.10	.819
	3.34	.274

4. Discussion

The findings showed that the "risk" item was the common environmental factor that influences the students to become entrepreneurs. This is because, according to Idris (2003) & Naude, (2010), an entrepreneur is a trader who is innovative, creative and courageous to face the risk of improving social status in his life. An entrepreneur is someone who takes the

risks of their creative ideas, innovation and get the benefits from them (Tunggak, Salamon, & Abu, 2017). Pihie & Akmaliah (2009) defines entrepreneurs as individuals who identify opportunities by initiating and managing businesses to get the profits. This means that entrepreneurship is the initial process of an individual to try something new in which they dare to take the risks in order to yield the profits. Naude (2010) describes entrepreneurs as entrepreneurs and traders who are willing to take the risks through their innovating and creative ideas in raising the wealth.

On the other hand, there is not enough support from the community in which the students feel that community is not the real reason for them to become entrepreneurs. This interpretation differs from that of Abdullah et al. (2013) who argue that the university acts as a place that forms the culture and aspiration of entrepreneurship to its students. Thus, universities should play the roles in enhancing entrepreneurial characteristics among the students for example, by developing business communities that involve the students in the campus.

Students have a moderate level of readiness towards the entrepreneurship careers, which means that they still need encouragements from lecturers and the communities. At the university level, lecturers are the responsible group in influencing and stimulating students' interest in entrepreneurship (Bennet, 2006). This is in line with the establishment of the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development (KPU) which aimed at developing entrepreneurial interest among students, universities, and societies (Bukryman et al., 2008). Sufficient financial resources or capitals encourage students to venture into entrepreneurship field. According to Nawang et al., (2015), students will have a high level of confidence to start a business if only they get enough resources. In addition, capital, knowledge, and skill factors are the strengths that must exist in an entrepreneur (Khalil, 2003). However, the amount of capital will determine the type of business that can be run. It is hard for the individual to start a big business if the capital is small.

Sufficient capital is one of the basic elements that should be considered in every business. According to Storey, Sexton, & Landstrom (2000), a business will survive in a long period if it has a well-acquired capital. The involvement of individuals and communities in the field of entrepreneurship has a positive impact on improving the country's economy. In addition, engagement in the field of entrepreneurship will create job opportunities for the community. There are various efforts taken by the government to encourage the community to engage in the entrepreneurship field, for example, the establishment of SME Bank helps the entrepreneurs to develop and grow their businesses.

5. Conclusion

Based on the above discussions, students tend to take the challenges in taking the risks to become entrepreneurs. However, the level of the tendency among students towards the entrepreneurship careers is still at a moderate level. Hence, all parties such as parents, lecturers and higher learning institutions should play their role in encouraging students to venture into the entrepreneurship field as their career choice. Students should also be wise in choosing the right business options. Therefore, the entrepreneurship can be a career for the students so that they are "creating the job" instead of "finding the job". Entrepreneurs can contribute to the growth of the country's economy and achieve the goal of a developed nation by 2020. It is hoped that this study will help the stakeholders in the development and entrepreneurship education to provide more effective programs so that entrepreneurship can drive a dynamic economic growth.

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