

The Perceptions of Public University Students of Entrepreneurship Education in Malaysia

Norasmah binti Othman and Siti Hanisah Othman
Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 45600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract: Entrepreneurship education provides enormous opportunities to university students to deepen their knowledge of entrepreneurship while providing valuable learning experiences. These programs develop the entrepreneurial mind-sets of students and the confidence to choose entrepreneurship as a career. Moreover, the formation of entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviours makes students more resilient and competitive in the business world and it is hoped that this will help solve the problem of unemployment among graduates in Malaysia. However, entrepreneurship education is still undervalued by most students. Thus, this study aims to examine student perceptions of entrepreneurship education. A total of 500 undergraduate, public university students participated in a questionnaire on entrepreneurship education. A stratified random sampling method was used in the data collection. The findings showed that student perceptions of entrepreneurship education in public universities are actually moderately positive, but further improvements are required to improve student awareness and understanding of entrepreneurship education.

Key words: Entrepreneurship education, university students, public universities, entrepreneurial careers, entrepreneurial mind-sets

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of entrepreneurship education in Malaysian universities by the government was done to expose students to career opportunities in business. These courses are steadily expanding their infrastructure to prepare students with the relevant knowledge and skills to create economic opportunities and business careers (Couetil, 2013). Universities play a major role in the task of maintaining growth in Malaysia's economy through entrepreneurship by providing a safe platform from which graduates can launch their business careers (Fatoki and Oni, 2014). The role of the universities is the same as that of the entrepreneurship courses, namely, to produce skilled students while creating job opportunities (Pihie *et al.*, 2002). University programs are a good way to introduce entrepreneurship skills to students. In 2013, a study by the Strategic Entrepreneurship Plan for Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) was conducted to strengthen and ensure that university entrepreneurship education was effective. The improvements made increased the percentage of students who had the opportunity to study entrepreneurship from 16.7% in 2011 to 34.6% in 2013 (Economic Plan Unit, 2015). Although, entrepreneurs tend to have inherent qualities and life experiences that make them effective in business, it is possible to develop these traits through education (Cheng *et al.*, 2009). The Education Development Plan's

2013-2025 report stated that one of the aspirations of Malaysia's educational system was improving student access to success. The objective is for 100% enrolment in all educational levels without discrimination based on ethnicity, economic background and student background.

To fulfil this aspiration, the number of IHEs had to increase. The increasing number of IHEs in Malaysia in recent years has led to an increase in the total number of graduates in the job market (Ahmad, 2013). Tracer study Report 2006-2014 for undergraduate graduate students, 957,956 students from year 2006-2014 had completed their studies. Although, the number of graduates is inconsistent each year, it is clear that the number of graduates with degrees entering the job market is increasing. This trend is parallel with the government's plan to increase the rates of student enrolment in public and private universities. The target enrolment rate under Malaysian Development Plan (Higher Education) is up to 53% from the previous 36%. This rate is predicted to increase even further to 70% in 2025. The changes regarding IHEs in Malaysia can be observed not only in their increasing number, but also in the quality of the graduates based on expanding higher educational opportunities (Yusof *et al.*, 2013a, b).

The increasing number of graduates has led to increasing competition in the job market (Othman *et al.*, 2012). This sudden increase of graduates means that

employers will choose only the most competitive and skilled graduates. However, based on the information gained from the industry involving the market value of graduates, many employers state that current graduates do not meet expectations regarding attitudes, personal attributes and skills, motivation, ability to “think outside the box”, problem-solving skills, communication skills, ability to work on a team and independently, as well as ability to communicate in English, the latter of which is said to be a short-coming of most Malaysian graduates (Economic Plan Unit, 2015; Pua, 2014; Amin *et al.*, 2013). The unemployment problem amongst Malaysian graduates has become a major issue facing the country (Hamzah *et al.*, 2011; Ahmad, 2013; Shahari, 2013). The issue of graduate unemployment is closely linked to the market value of graduates from both private and public Malaysian universities (Yussoff and Sidin, 2008). This unemployment problem is not only inconvenient, it is detrimental to the country, especially from the perspective of the cost and time required to earn a university degree (Yussoff *et al.*, 2008). According to the labor statistics of November 2015 issued by Malaysia Statistic Department, 453,000 graduates were unemployed, compared to 375,100 in the previous year. The rate of unemployment increased from 2.8% in 2014 to 3.3% in 2015. If this issue is not addressed, it could result in negative side effects; for example, unemployment may cause an increase in civil unrest. The current inconsistent state of the economy, the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the high housing cost, the burden of The National Higher Education Fund Corporation debt and the high cost of living put considerable pressure on unemployed graduates. Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2015) Report (Economic Plan Unit, 2015) stated that in 2013, the percentage of graduates involved in business increased to 2% compared to 1.4% in 2012. However, 58.2% of graduates still tend to work as employees of businesses or companies owned by others. Exposing opportunities for enrolment in entrepreneurship courses may improve opportunities for the students who are interested in pursuing a business career. Moreover, students who are new to the field still need to be made aware of the opportunities that exist. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine undergraduate student’s perceptions of entrepreneurship education in public universities.

Literature review

Entrepreneurship education in public universities:

Entrepreneurship courses play an important role in expanding the economy and generating employment opportunities for Malaysia’s populace. These university

courses focus on the development of entrepreneurial knowledge, capacities, skills, attitudes and trends that are congruent with the needs of the economy (Lorz, 2011). Their implementation in universities has contributed to studies covering the various aspects related to global entrepreneurship. Based on the statement in Eleventh Malaysia Plan Report, entrepreneurship courses will be included as an important component of curriculum in IHEs to nurture an entrepreneurial mindset and equip students with business skills (Economic Plan Unit, 2015). In addition, entrepreneurship courses will be introduced as professional courses similar to those in the fields of engineering, architecture, pharmacy and medicine (Economic Plan Unit, 2015).

University entrepreneurship education is seen as one of the solutions to the unemployment problem that is occurring not only in Malaysia, but in many other countries as well Burton *et al.* (2016) as it is capable of changing negative student perceptions of entrepreneurial careers and has been shown to encourage students to choose entrepreneurial careers (Solesvik *et al.*, 2014; Othman *et al.*, 2012). Entrepreneurship education is important in encouraging students to become more independent and create jobs and thus pushes the government to prioritize small and medium entrepreneurial industries as major contributors to job creation (Pihie *et al.*, 2002). However, entrepreneurial careers have not been considered as a first choice for undergraduate students in Malaysia as they see this career as a second or last choice and tend to prefer to work as wage earners (Ishak 2009; Economic Plan Unit, 2015). Therefore, universities are responsible for creating attractive and accessible entrepreneurial education courses for students. These statements reflect the opinion of Solesvik *et al.* (2014) who stated that an accessible educational environment is needed in order to develop student entrepreneurial skills and qualities from the outset. The willingness of students to learn and the availability of quality entrepreneurship education classes in public universities will determine the success of entrepreneurial students (Othman *et al.*, 2012). According to Prodromou (2009), without a strong entrepreneurship education, it may be challenging for graduates to establish a profitable business due to a lack of basic business skills. Hence, an understanding of generating business ideas and opportunities (Molaei *et al.*, 2014), financial management, business planning and market research in this field is essential. Molaei *et al.* (2014) stated that university students commonly face two situations when entering the job market: self-employment or working for someone else. However, due to the current competitiveness of the job market, graduates will face great challenges if they are

seeking employment as salaried workers. Thus, the formation of an entrepreneurial drive among university students has become an important goal of universities. University students belong in the group of potential entrepreneurs (Remeikiene *et al.*, 2013) and should be encouraged to open new businesses. Entrepreneurship starts with opportunities and ideas (Hayton and Cholakova, 2012). Excuses such as not having business ideas are often used by university students with low-level entrepreneurial skills (Molaei *et al.*, 2014). Financial management knowledge that can be acquired in entrepreneurial courses during their university studies can help students manage their finances in the future. Mamat Zambri explain that financial management courses helps students with financial planning. Students have the chance to learn how to budget and divide money for expenses and savings. Constant monitoring to control financial flow requires a dynamic and a well-planned process. Failure to manage their income will cause students to face financial crises. Manaf *et al.* (2012) stated that participation of entrepreneurs in business is related to various factors, including the desire to achieve freedom, satisfaction, helping to support their family, wealth, ambition, independence and the refusal to work as a salaried worker. Record and finance management, planning skills, marketing skills and entrepreneurship education are factors that contribute to an entrepreneur's success.

Next, knowledge gained from entrepreneurship education will increase student understanding of the attitude, behaviour and personality necessary for an entrepreneurial career. According to Ishak (2009), a change in attitude toward entrepreneurship as a career choice is related to the perception of the individual. This perception is closely related to their values and beliefs. If their values and beliefs are positive, their perception will also be positive. In addition, entrepreneurship education is capable of increasing the understanding of the importance of entrepreneurship to society and individuals. Tunggak and Salamon (2011) argued that entrepreneurs contribute to the continuing success of the national economy. Thus, nurturing good attitudes and efficient behaviours will ensure that entrepreneurs act effectively. At the same time, entrepreneurs can draw upon Islamic ethics and values in order to develop a business. Faith in God will mold attitudes and thoughts that spark awareness among entrepreneurs to contribute to society. Such awareness will increase the understanding of the motives for engaging in entrepreneurial activity and thus foster entrepreneurial behaviours such as risk-taking, innovation, steadfastness,

internal locus of control, competitiveness, vision, ambition, confidence and foresight (Wahid, 2014; Hirschi and Fischer, 2013; Hashim, 2009; Ishak, 2009). Entrepreneurship education will help students to develop a clear understanding of economics, politics and culture to ensure that they are able to play their part effectively and efficiently (Tunggak and Salamon, 2011). Knowledge, attitude, personality and entrepreneurial behaviour will encourage students to network and connect with other entrepreneurs. Lorz (2011) explains that entrepreneurs need to interact with multiple sources of information, financial resources and support to build a successful business. Social interaction can be fostered in class with the assistance of entrepreneurial lecturers and classmates. According to Kickul and Fayolle (2007), individuals responsible for teaching entrepreneurship education need to be more proactive and innovative in planning and organizing entrepreneurial programs. Their ability to change the classroom environment to become more creative will inspire the entrepreneurial mindsets of students. Kickul and Fayolle (2007) also emphasized the fact that concepts and fieldwork should be taught to students so they can apply what they have learned to the development of their management and business skills.

The effectiveness of entrepreneurship education:

Effective implementation of entrepreneurship education in universities can increase student's perception of entrepreneurship. Several previous studies have examined the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education among students (Cheng *et al.* 2009) and the impact of entrepreneurship education on student's entrepreneurial aspirations (Pihie *et al.*, 2002). These studies on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education are able to give the government and universities an idea of the impact of exposing entrepreneurship education to students, regardless of whether it is successful or not. Cheng *et al.* (2009) reported that entrepreneurship education programs in Malaysian universities are not successful in matching the expectations of the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills with the actual entrepreneurial skills acquired. Fatoki and Oni (2014) stated that entrepreneurship education is effective in certain aspects, such as encouraging students to choose entrepreneurial careers and master entrepreneurial skills such as preparing business plans. However, entrepreneurship education is not effective in helping students to meet with people to propose good business ideas. Lekoko *et al.* (2012), who reviewed the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in universities in Botswana, showed that there was little influence from entrepreneurship education in developing

entrepreneurial mindsets and creating corporate culture among students. This is because the programs were too focused on the transfer of theoretical knowledge than the practical aspects of entrepreneurship.

Apart from the abovementioned negative findings, researchers have also presented positive results. Dutta *et al.* (2011) stated that entrepreneurship education encourages students to establish new businesses. As a result, entrepreneurship education has a significant relationship to the establishment of new businesses (Chamey and Libercap, 2000). Overall, the implementation of entrepreneurship education in universities has garnered both positive and negative results.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design, population and sample: The objective of the current study was to identify student perceptions of entrepreneurship education in Malaysian public universities. A questionnaire was used as the main method of data collection. It was divided into two parts: Part A and Part B. Part A collected the respondent’s personal information and included the following five items: gender, age, major, family background and business experience. Part B measured student’s perceptions of entrepreneurship education and included 20 items. This questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. To assess student perceptions of entrepreneurship education, an adaptation of the mean score interpretation from Othman (2002) was used. The highest level showed a positive perception of entrepreneurship education, while the lowest level showed a negative perception. Table 1 represents the mean score interpretation.

The participants were 500 students enrolled in entrepreneurial courses at public universities in Malaysia. The study focused on undergraduate students in public universities because the researchers agree with Othman and Harun (2007)’s findings that this particular group represents the majority of Malaysian students. Based on National Education for the High Education sector report in 2013, the number of undergraduate students in Malaysia was 331,410 in 2013.

Creswell (2014) explained that the sample size can be acquired in the following two ways: a sample size determination table or through statistical methods. Referring to the sample size determination table and statistical formulas by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the sample size for this study was 384 students. However, the researchers selected 500 respondents as according to

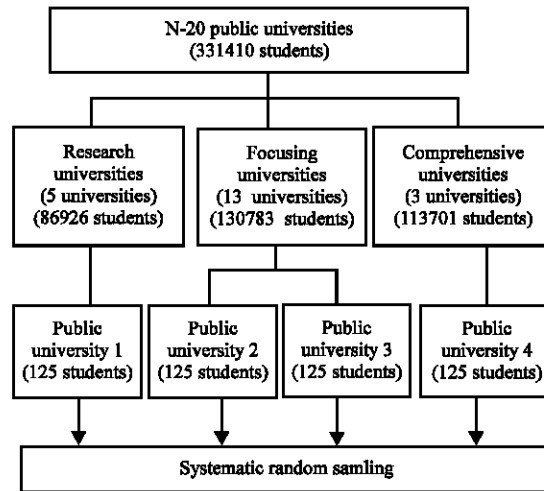


Fig. 1: The sample via the random sampling method

Table 1: Mean score interpretation

Mean score	Level
1.00-2.00	Low/negative
2.01-3.00	Below average
3.01-4.00	Moderately high
4.01-5.00	High/positive

Adaptation mean score interpretation of Othman (2002)

Lin *et al.* (2013); a large sample provides the opportunity for better results but will cause problems if it is too large. Disproportional stratified sampling was used for the sample selection. The sampling technique ensures that the number selected for each subset is sufficient (Ishak, 2010).

There are around 20 public universities in Malaysia that are categorized as research universities, comprehensive universities or focused universities. First, the researchers randomly chose two universities to represent the focused universities, since there are 10 universities in the group. This step was taken to ensure a balance in the sample selection as the comprehensive universities and research universities comprise only five and three universities, respectively. Second, the researchers randomly selected respondents from each public university. Figure 1 shows detailed information on the selection process using stratified random sampling.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic analysis: The 500 respondents comprised 196 male students and 304 female students. The majority of the respondents were aged 20-25 year old (455 people or 96.3%). The respondent’s courses of study were as follows: science (52 people or 10.4%), technical studies (160 people or 32%), social sciences (84 people or 16.8%)

and others (204 people or 40.8%). The data also showed that most of the respondents had a family background of non-entrepreneurs (374 people or 74.8%) but had some business experience (270 people or 54%). Table 2 displays the respondent's profiles. The questionnaire consisted of a total of 20 questions adapted from Lorz (2011) to assess the level of student's perception of entrepreneurship education. Table 3 shows the results. Student opinions of their entrepreneurship education programs are evaluated regarding various criteria related to entrepreneurship. The concepts and knowledge of entrepreneurship including ideas and business opportunities, environmental assessment, financial management, business planning and market research derived from entrepreneurial courses were

assessed in items B1-B5. Attitudes and behaviours of entrepreneurship were assessed in items B6-B8. Values and motives for starting a business were assessed in items B9 and B10. Social interaction provided by entrepreneurship education was assessed in items B11-B15. Finally, the techniques, skills and abilities to start a business were assessed in items B16-B20.

Overall, the mean student perception of entrepreneurship education in public universities was found to be at the moderately high level of 4.00. This shows that the execution of entrepreneurship education in public universities is perceived well by students. Moreover, it shows visible evidence of student entrepreneurial awareness as well as the potential to increase their understanding of entrepreneurial knowledge (Lima *et al.*, 2015). However, entrepreneurship education still has room for improvement. Key items such as the course contents, objectives, teaching methods, impact indicators and entrepreneurial activity planning must be revised (Mwasalwiba, 2010). These improvements should be made to improve student inclinations to choose entrepreneurship as a future career. This statement is consistent with the findings of Burton *et al.* (2016) who argued that entrepreneurship education plays an important role in improving the inclination of young people to choose entrepreneurship as a career option.

Student confidence to choose entrepreneurship as a career after graduation could contribute to the development and stability of the economy. As the number

Table 2: Respondent's profiles

Respondent's profile categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	196	39.2
Female	304	60.8
Age (years)		
<20	9	2.2
20-25	455	96.3
>25	36	1.4
Major		
Sciences	52	10.4
Technical	160	32.0
Social sciences	84	16.8
Others	204	40.8
Family background		
Entrepreneur	126	25.0
Non-entrepreneur	374	74.8
Business experiences		
Yes	270	54.0
No	230	46.0

Table 3: Student perceptions of entrepreneurship education

Items	Entrepreneurship education's components	Mean	Frequency			Level
			SD	MA	SA	
B1	Entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of generating innovative ideas	15	64	421	3.99	Moderately high
B2	Entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of an entrepreneurial environment	7	58	435	4.05	High
B3	Entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of financial provisions for entrepreneurship	14	76	410	3.97	Moderately high
B4	Entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of business planning.	8	72	420	4.05	High
B5	Entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of marketing research for entrepreneurship	9	81	410	4.03	High
B6	Entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of the attitude of entrepreneurs	15	70	415	4.02	High
B7	Entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of the importance of entrepreneurship to society and individuals	14	75	411	4.02	High
B8	Entrepreneurship education enhances my understanding of the characteristics of entrepreneurs	13	70	417	4.06	High
B9	Entrepreneurship education inspires the belief that entrepreneurship is possible for me	8	101	391	3.98	Moderately high
B10	Entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of the motives involved in entrepreneurial activities	10	72	418	4.08	High
B11	Entrepreneurship education increases my ability to build a network	13	93	394	3.95	Moderately high
B12	A creative entrepreneurship education inspires my entrepreneurial mindset	16	94	390	3.97	Moderately high
B13	The lecturer inspires my entrepreneurial mindset	11	91	398	4.03	High
B14	Guest speakers inspire my entrepreneurial mindset	13	87	403	4.07	High
B15	Successful local entrepreneur stories inspire my entrepreneurial mindset	13	68	419	4.13	High
B16	Entrepreneurship education increases my knowledge of how to build a business plan	19	105	376	3.89	Moderately high
B17	Entrepreneurship education increases my ability to manage business projects	14	93	393	3.95	Moderately high
B18	Entrepreneurship education increases my ability to handle risks and unpredictability	15	116	369	3.89	Moderately high
B19	Entrepreneurship education increases my ability to distribute provisions	17	95	388	3.94	Moderately high
B20	Entrepreneurship education improves my overall entrepreneurial skills	16	93	391	3.96	Moderately high
Overall					4.00	Moderately high

of young people involved in entrepreneurship increases, more changes can be made. As potential entrepreneurs, the development of the entrepreneurial mindset through mastery of entrepreneurial knowledge among university students is very important. Even if they do not become entrepreneurs, the ideas and entrepreneurial knowledge they acquire can still be distributed to other parties, such as small traders who wish to expand their business. Kirby (2007) stated that the education system needs to produce innovative human capital capable of seeing opportunities and bearing the responsibility of business planning in the process of bringing about economic growth.

This opinion is consistent with the current study's findings that show a high student opinion of various aspects of entrepreneurship education, as shown by responses to multiple questionnaire items. Among them are the following items: "entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of the entrepreneurship environment" (item B2/mean = 4.05), "entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of business planning" (item B4/mean = 4.05), "entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of marketing research for entrepreneurship" (item B5/mean = 4.03), "entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of the attitude of entrepreneurs" (item B6/mean = 4.02), "entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of the importance of entrepreneurship to society and individuals" (item B7/mean = 4.02), "entrepreneurship education enhances my understanding of the characteristics of entrepreneurs" (item B8/mean = 4.06), "entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of the motives involved in entrepreneurial activities" (item B10/mean = 4.08) and "the lecturer inspires my entrepreneurial mindset" (item B13/mean = 4.03). Finally, the item "guest speakers inspire my entrepreneurial mindset" (item B14) registered the highest mean of 4.13.

Knowledge acquired through entrepreneurship education increases student understanding and awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship. Students will be motivated to be more efficient in decision-making. Student awareness of financial management, business planning, market research and generating ideas and business opportunities are catalysts for students to become independent and self-employed. Linan (2007), in his study on the role of entrepreneurial education in the process of entrepreneurship, suggested that starting their own business in the beginning is the personal decision of each individual his decision is aided by the availability of entrepreneurship education in universities. The effectiveness of entrepreneurship education can be seen through the changes in the

attitudes and behaviours of students. Student perception of stories of successful local entrepreneurs and views from guest speakers inspire entrepreneurial mindsets, which gives the impression that students prefer fieldwork to classroom lectures. Therefore, the entrepreneurial mindset can be enhanced through the addition of special activities during an entrepreneurship course. Instructors need to take the initiative to implement activities that can develop an entrepreneurial mindset among students. This is consistent with the present study's finding regarding the student's perception of social interaction with lecturers and classmates which was moderately high. Thus, social interaction in entrepreneurship education still has room for improvement. Interaction between students and lecturers in making entrepreneurship education's objectives a reality are a determinant of the course's effectiveness. These findings are consistent with Ooi *et al.* (2014)'s findings, where moderately high evaluations gave a positive idea of how entrepreneurship instructors such as lecturers in universities play a major role in rousing the entrepreneurial potential of students. Lecturer's experiences are able to help students expand their networks with individuals involved in entrepreneurship. Fieldwork assigned by lecturers through an entrepreneurship course will boost student's entrepreneurial knowledge and real-life experiences. In addition, Norasmah and Faridah (2010) stated that entrepreneurship education would be more effective if the learning method utilized real experiences as an entrepreneur, for example, encouraging students to start businesses on or off campus.

However, the present study's findings show that item B16 ("entrepreneurship education helps to increase my ability to build business plans") and item B18 ("entrepreneurship education increases my ability to manage risks and unpredictability") recorded the lowest means of 3.89 each. These findings show the imperative of a balance between classroom learning and fieldwork. Some students failed to complete their assignments without the guidance of the instructor. This type of student needs to be guided and supported so that the objectives of entrepreneurship education courses are attainable for them. Observations should be conducted during learning processes and fieldwork excursions to avoid any students being left out. Students who are not inclined toward entrepreneurship and have non-entrepreneurial mindsets will need guidance and support if they are to successfully complete entrepreneurial education courses".

Next, the following questionnaire items recorded a moderately high level of agreement: "entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of generating

innovative ideas” (item B1/mean = 3.99), “entrepreneurship education increases my understanding of financial provisions for entrepreneurship” (item B3/mean = 3.97), “entrepreneurship education inspires the belief that entrepreneurship is possible for me” (item B9/mean = 3.98), “entrepreneurship education increases my ability to build a network” (item B11/mean = 3.95), “a creative entrepreneurship education inspires my entrepreneurial mindset” (item B12/mean = 3.97), “entrepreneurship education increases my ability to manage business projects” (item B17/mean = 3.95), “entrepreneurship education increases my ability to distribute provisions” (item B19/mean = 3.94) and “Entrepreneurship education improves my overall entrepreneurial skills” (item B20/mean = 3.96).

These findings also showed that student perceptions of entrepreneurship education are different because not all students are naturally inclined toward taking business courses. According to the findings related to the student family backgrounds, only 25% of the students had entrepreneurs in their family. However, students can be motivated through an awareness nurtured during entrepreneurship education. In addition, the differences in course departments and family backgrounds can influence student perception. These findings strengthen Izedonmi (2010) finding that involvement in entrepreneurship education does not ensure that an individual possesses an inclination toward entrepreneurship and will make them into an entrepreneur. On the contrary, these students can be trained and motivated to pursue this career. In sum, a positive perception of entrepreneurship education plays an important role in nurturing student inclinations toward pursuing a career in entrepreneurship. The government’s effort to foster an entrepreneurship culture and expose students to business opportunities and ideas are initiatives that should be harnessed to their full potential.

CONCLUSION

Student knowledge of entrepreneurship and awareness of its opportunities can be nurtured during university through entrepreneurship education programs. The objective of entrepreneurship education is to increase the number of individuals who possess a significant amount of knowledge about business, self-employment and entrepreneurship (Linan, 2007). University student’s entrepreneurial potentials can be nurtured through the teaching and learning process. Starting a small-scale business during the duration of university entrepreneurship education programs gives students the chance to experience the real challenges of being an entrepreneur (Othman *et al.*, 2012; Kirby, 2007). The ability of university students to be self-employed and

start a business depends on the success and the effectiveness of the training, as well as the knowledge of entrepreneurship that they receive through their program. The acquisition of the knowledge of business management, financial management and business planning will increase their confidence to start a business. This is why learning through experience is imperative. For example, learning theoretically about building business plans does not ensure a student’s ability to build a real business plan. On the contrary, if a student is assigned to complete a business plan according to an authentic format that can be used under the guidance of an experienced instructor, that particular plan could be useful as a reference material in the future. Strengthening and building an entrepreneurial attitude, personality, as well as behaviour should also be equally prioritized as the instruction of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. This is where researchers agree with the definition of entrepreneurship education (Hashim, 2009) which is, entrepreneurship education is any form of effort to build the potentials of entrepreneurship among IHE students in Malaysia whether through academic programs, curriculum or other activities that have the objective of giving knowledge and skills and develop entrepreneurial behaviours. Future studies should examine the effectiveness of entrepreneurship courses that include the generation of business ideas and entrepreneurial opportunities in their course outlines. This would benefit policy makers, universities, lecturers and students and help students to generate authentic business ideas after they finish their university studies.

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