# INFORMATION
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# Research Article
# Connection between Student's Entrepreneurial Team Values and Student Entrepreneurial Character Building (SeCB) in Nurturing Entrepreneurial Intention

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## Abstract

In today's more challenging working environment, organization needs excellent team leaders and team players. Universities are responsible to produce graduates with the preferred team values, behaviors and attitude. This is to ensure that they have better chance to get employed because they meet the personality standards required by the organization. Students Character Building (SCB) was adapted from student development theories that focuses on human growth and environmental influences in promoting student's learning and maturation, both in and outside of class. Most educators agree that assisting students in building their characters is a worth while effort. The study is relevant and important because it helps to advance student learning, helps students meet the challenges of university and hence enhances the quality of the student's life. Furthermore, the researcher will have the data collected as a tool to recommend entrepreneurial programs for the students to improve the least developed entrepreneurial team values. The study focuses on students currently studying in UniKL BMI who have involved in various entrepreneurial activities. Data and information are gathered through questionnaires, interviews, readings, experiences and observations. The instrumentation is based on 5 likert scale to support the findings. The findings of the study would be useful for the university policy makers to enhance the current approach in implementing student character building in the university. The researchers aim to recommend solutions to the identified entrepreneurial team problems and hence to assist the students to develop the preferred entrepreneurial team values for the purpose of nurturing their entrepreneurial intention.

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## INTRODUCTION

There are various challenges that the researchers faced towards nurturing the entrepreneurial intention and one of them is the student's attitude or characters. Therefore, the researcher took the responsibility to do a thorough analysis on how to overcome these circumstances that provide the best solutions to the problem.

The reason why university introduce the SeCB to the students are due to the demand from today's industries that require team leaders and team players to be excellent to cope with the challenges in the global business environment. The team leader must clarify the objectives and targets to the team players and the team players will have to recognize roles that contribute to the overall success. They must accept the ownership for areas of responsibility and support each other's function by Hadzima[1]. Therefore it is crucial for the university to produce students with preferred team character building based on the said reason. In addition, it is also an important input to the students if they wish to set up their own company in the near future.

The researchers hope that by recommending solutions to the students, it will prepare them to become more successful in their entrepreneurial job or in the company they work for. This is due to the fact that across organizations and industries, working in teams has increasingly retained as a mean to increase productivity, competitiveness and innovation.

The aim of this study is to look into the existing student development and campus lifestyle division (SDCL) initiatives so that appropriate team characters could be recommended for development of SeCB at UniKL BMI. The objectives of this study are as followed:

- To identify the preferred student's team values to be developed
- To relate team values to entrepreneurial intention through SeCB activities
- To identify entrepreneurial team potentials among the students
- To recommend improvement plans for student's with least developed entrepreneurial team values

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Student's entrepreneurial team values student's entrepreneurial team can consist of a number of interdependent students with shared commitment to accomplish common entrepreneurial goal. To produce an effective entrepreneurial team, students will need a team with excellent entrepreneurial team values. Sometimes the entrepreneurial team is less successful just because the team members do not fit well into the team. Successful teams have to share the same culture so that they are moving in the right direction towards achieving intended entrepreneurial and educational goals.

Effective teams can depend on the size of the teams. Goodman *et al.*[2] suggested that an effective team consists of 2-16 members. However, it all depends on the team's purposes. In one hand, if the entrepreneurial venture is bigger in scope, then it may need more team members in order to get diverse ideas and opinions from the team members. On the other hand, a large entrepreneurial team will also be exposed to integration problems because it is difficult to manage due to communication breakdowns between the leader and the team members. In short, high-performance entrepreneurial teams are teams that can handle constructive conflicts and teams that can discourage destructive conflicts among the team members.

In UniKL, we believe that students must be engaged in conducting various entrepreneurial activities in order to prepare them with appropriate student entrepreneurial character building (SeCB). It is our vision to make sure that our students and graduates are instilled with the preferred values, which can further be polished as SeCB, hoping that they will be nurtured to have an entrepreneurial intention to embark themselves in real money generating entrepreneurial ventures in the future.

In this study, we want to propose the following significant entrepreneurial team values to be enhanced in any of the entrepreneurial activities conducted in the university environment. The preferred entrepreneurial values are as follows:

- Creativity
- Innovativeness
- Experience
- Passion and determination
- Drive and initiatives
- Ideas
- Attitude
- Inspiration
- Teamwork
- Responsibility and commitment

**Creativity:** According to McClelland[3], entrepreneurial behaviour is displayed by taking responsibility for own decisions and by creatively solving problems. Creativity in

solving existing problems will result in a new way of doing something and thus it will create an innovation for the benefits of mankind. Kay[4] suggested that creativity plays a great role in entrepreneurial decision-making and Hills *et al.*[5] concluded that 90% of their survey respondents said that creativity is very important for opportunity identification. However, it is worth remembering that creative ideas may or may not necessarily result in producing more sophisticated goods. Instead, most of the time consumers and users prefer to have simple and user-friendly products and services. Combination of individual creativity within a team context will collectively identify problems, generate ideas and then propose solutions to the problems[6]. Needless to say, a team creativity is going to be much better than an individual creativity. In UniKL, we wish to guide the students to be creative in generating a simple business idea and yet has great market potential. So, it is hoped that the student entrepreneurial team is capable of proposing creative ideas that can solve the identified problems, so that later it can be commercialized.

**Innovativeness:** If people is creative, they can be guided to come up with new and unique ways of doing something, called innovation. Normally an innovation requires people to capitalize a business opportunity for the sake of producing a more user-friendly products and services. Innovators must be encouraged to utilize the latest technology in the process of developing the new products and services. Otherwise, the products might not have a long life cycle. This is in line with Drucker's idea that have identified innovation as the main factor to sustain a business[7]. If innovators decide to continue with an established entrepreneurial venture, then they have to think of how to improve the existing goods and services by applying more advanced technology. According to Anderson *et al.*[8], innovation may use new knowledge or reuse existing knowledge and by combining resources to deliver value to the customers. In UniKL, our students are mostly technical students with engineering knowledge. In essence, it is hoped that they should not have much problems to be innovative because they have the advantage to apply their technical knowledge and utilize the available resources in their effort to create new goods or services in an entrepreneurial team.

**Experience:** Past experience can be a valuable quality that shapes someone's behaviour and thinking. Often those people who were born in a business family are more inclined to also somehow involve in business as well. But most of the time, people obtain experiences from the previous company. If we can get people with past working experiences, it can be beneficial because the they can creatively adapt valuable knowledge and previous practices in the current company[9]. In a university environment, ideally we want our students to open their own small entrepreneurial business or kiosk. From the entrepreneurship engagement, they can experience for themselves in how to manage a business and learn how to make decisions and take certain risks because after all, entrepreneurship is about risk-taking. Their experience in planning for the business resources, communicating with suppliers and customers, monitoring the staff and controlling the whole business processes are going to be priceless experiences.

**Passion and determination:** Engaging in entrepreneurship is risky. However, if someone is very passionate and determined to be in the business, chances are they can be unexpectedly successful. McClelland[3] emphasized that individuals with high determination or a strong need for achievement are more likely to behave entrepreneurially. But the question is, how to make people especially the students to be really interested and passionate about involving in a nontechnical field, namely entrepreneurship. This is not easy. Therefore it is our challenging task and responsibility as educators to polish student's entrepreneurial abilities. They have to understand that entrepreneurship is a promising profession and there are a lot of opportunities out there that can be grabbed. And not surprisingly, in entrepreneurship they can apply their engineering knowledge to generate a lot of money for themselves.

**Drive and initiatives:** Successful entrepreneurs are normally those who are energetic and never give up. They have the drive and initiatives to take the risk, to act on opportunities and to overcome all uncertain challenges. Entrepreneurial teams must be enthusiastic and have the energy to go extra miles or to do more than just their job description or routines. Dingee *et al.*[10] emphasized that one of the traits for successful entrepreneurs is when they have the ability to work long hours for sustained period of time. Lachman[11] suggested that people who have the entrepreneurial characteristics will be more likely to perform entrepreneurial acts. They are willing to take the responsibility for their own actions and to take ownership on all emerging problems. In other words drive, initiatives, attitudes and beliefs are primary determinants to entrepreneurial intention. And the intention will lead to the practice of entrpreneurship. In UniKL BMI, we really need to give our students the opportunities to share the responsibility in organizing entrepreneurial projects and to show their

total dedication to organize the activities because these characteristics can stimulate them to have the intention to be entrepreneurs later.

**Ideas:** To generate a lot of good ideas, it may require people to do a lot of readings. Observation and personal experiences may also help people to be exposed to some real situations that can help them to make comparisons and thus come up with new ideas on how to improve the situations. Obviously, if the entrepreneurial team consists of individuals from different background, it can be beneficial to the team. Individuals with diversity can contribute by giving different kinds of ideas and opinions from different perspectives. They can also argue and object on certain things that a homogeneous team does not discuss[12]. Hence together, they can actually have a great synergy to propose convincing business ideas to be commercialized. According to a study by Bridge[13], the most important criteria for a good business idea is when the idea can actually solve a problem. In other words, an idea generation must start by identifying a problem and then come up with a solution to the problem. Best idea must be simple and do not have to be complicated. It must also be practical and have market potentials. Gilson and Madjar[14] suggested that ideas can be in the form of modifications to the existing products or significant breakthrough. It is recommended that if the students are to organize an entrepreneurial activities, they need to propose an idea that can solve a problem and to also analyse the market for the products or services. And we need to inform them that a simple idea to be proposed is merely upgrading existing products and services instead of inventing a totally new solutions.

**Attitude:** According to Helen Keller, who was an American author, political activist and lecturer, excellence is not a skill. It is an attitude that an individual possesses. In other words, in order to be successful and excellent in a job that we do, we have to have the best attitude. It is because it is more costly for the organization to change someone's attitude.

Skill set can be learned and developed, but mindset and negative attitude may be very difficult to change. Previous study by reed recruitment indicated that graduates with desired mindset was chosen by 96% of the employers. The right mindset can consequently lead to the development of the required skills. A positive attitude is a real selling point for the graduates to get the job timely.

**Inspiration:** To set up an entrepreneurial venture, it requires the team to have an inspiring team leader. The leader have to respond to other's request positively and try hard to assist the team members. They must have the ability to influence others to do the entrepreneurial tasks. It is the responsibility of the leader to clarify the methods to be used and empower the team because each and every team members is unique and has his or her own strengths. A good leader must inspire confidence in the team and recognize all the contributions made by the team members. Focus on what they can do rather than complaining on what they cannot do. By doing this, the leader can indirectly motivate them to perform well. As student leaders, sometimes it is very difficult for them to influence the other fellow friends or team members. They perceive that they are all the same. So, to inspire the other students will definitely take a lot of courage. It is believed that good relationship with the team members for example by listening to other's needs and problems can help the leader to be inspirational. Furthermore, it is also recommended that the entrepreneurial leader to really participate in doing the tasks together with the others to show concerns for them.

**Teamwork:** Now a days, most successful organization accomplishes challenging and difficult tasks by working in a group and better if they can work in a team. Working in a team can result in a team synergy because team members will support each other and thus can finish the assigned tasks better and more satisfactorily. Weaknesses in some group members can be compensated by the other group members[10]. This is obviously the beauty of working in a team. They can even finish the work faster compared to if they work alone. Ideally, heterogeneous team comprises of people with diverse background such as from R and D, marketing, operations, engineering, sales, finance and account, management, administration and legal are needed to support a complete entrepreneurship endeavour. As for entrepreneurial activities conducted in campus, it is advisable that the student group is to be made up of those with different interests and skills. They can complement each other well and get the best outcomes out of everyone. The leader will have to know everyone's strengths so that he can delegate suitable tasks to the right persons.

**Responsibility and commitment:** Other important team values are responsibility and commitment. The entrepreneurial team leader as well as the team members really have to be responsible individuals. Since entrepreneurship is a risky endeavour, high commitment by all is crucial. Entrepreneurs must work days and nights especially during the early years of the venture, when the business is still new and in the process of picking up. Having

people who can coordinate and accept responsibilities can ensure long term success of the entrepreneurship. Otherwise the lifecycle of the entrepreneurial venture might be very short, which means it will experience its decline stage very soon. With uncertain risks in entrepreneurship, all workers have to be highly committed and willing to devote their time doing the research and development to get market information about the new products or services, doing aggressive promotion to introduce the products and then continually trying to improve and differentiating the products or services from their competitors. With this commitment, the business will last longer and be able to make a lot of sales and profit. Organizing entrepreneurial programs in the campus can actually teach the students to be responsible and committed to ensure the success of their programs.

Student entrepreneurial character buiding (SeCB) is meant to be a more specific element in student character building (SCB) originally proposed by student development and campus lifestyle division (SDCL) of UniKL. The major purpose of proposing SCB is for proper development of the university student's characters. The original SCB emphasizes on physical, intellectual, spiritual and emotional of the students. However, this study highlighted and detailed out the entrepreneurial elements, to support the UniKL vision in producing enterprising global technopreneurs.

The preferred SCB has to be instilled in the students through their studies in UniKL. Based on Subari[15] proposal, the three SCB outcomes are what students are able to do, knowledge, what students know and characters, the kind of persons the students will become. Partly, SDCL wish to build a meaningful campus life to help students polish their entrepreneurial and leadership traits.

In short, UniKL SCB emphasizes on social, physical, intellectual, spiritual, career and emotional elements as the main traits to be instilled in the students. The element of entrepreneurship has to be developed as one of the main characters for students to have during their stay at UniKL to prepare them for an entrepreneurial job in a technical field. Under the social element, one of the skills that students need to have is entrepreneurial competencies.

Therefore, in order to support the SDCL initiatives, the UniKL educators and administrators are responsible and highly committed to give students the opportunity to conduct entrepreneurial programs as well as to support them morally and financially. This is to ensure that the SDCL initiatives is implemented at campus level to expose the students to some entrepreneurial challenges and problems and more importantly to develop their preferred entrepreneurial team values. Later, with these entrepreneurial team values, it is hoped that the students will have the intention to involve themselves in the real entrepreneurship engagement.

**Entrepreneurial intention:** Basically entrepreneurship is the process of introducing new products or services or a new method of doing something by using new or more advanced technology. Furthermore, entrepreneurial intention in this context is the interest of someone to get involved in a new business venture, whether by entering in new or established markets with new or modified products or services. So, the aim is not just on starting a business from scratch, but it can also a continuation of an existing entrepreneurial venture as initially proposed by Gartner *et al.*[16]. Bird[17] suggested that entrepreneurial intention is a state of mind that guide people to develop and implement new business concepts. Pribadi[18] mentioned that entrepreneurial intention is a determinant for an entrepreneurial behaviour.

The UniKL is one of the universities that has a very high commitment to prepare the students for an entrepreneurial engagement to encourage them to pursue jobs in entrepreneurship when they graduate. Once the students are well equipped with the entrepreneurial team values and characters, hopefully they will have the intention to seek challenges in entrepreneurship.

In this study, we would like to explore the connection between student's entrepreneurial team values and student entrepreneurial character building (SeCB) in nurturing entrepreneurial intention among UniKL BMI students.

**Theoretical framework:**
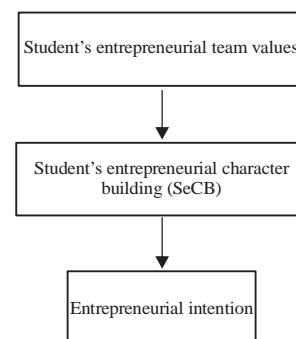


**Sample and data collection method:** Undergraduate students majoring in Engineering Technology from Universiti Kuala Lumpur British Malaysian Institute (UniKL BMI) in Malaysia were the focus of this study. Data were mainly

Table 1: Instrumentation of the study variables

| Study variables | No. of items | Source of scale | Type of scale |
|---|---|---|---|
| Technoprenerial intention | 13 | Ajzen and Fishbein[19] and Zaidatol[20] | 5-points likert scale |
| Technopreneurial self-efficacy | 10 | Wilson *et al.*[21] | 5-points likert scale |

gathered from a survey as well as from interviews, readings, observations and experiences. Data were obtained using a set of 5-points likert scale questionnaire measuring the relationship between student character building and SeCB in driving entrepreneurial intention. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the dean of UniKL BMI. Data was collected by the researchers who had been trained to properly conduct a good quality research.

**Instrumentation:** Table 1 indicates the measures of the variables used in the study. The instrument items were adopted with modifications from previous studies by Ajzen and Fishbien[19], Zaidatol[20] and Wilson *et al.*[21]. The measurement of items in the survey questionnaire was based on 5-points likert scale with 1 demonstrating "Strongly disagree" to 5 demonstrating "Strongly agree".

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Findings:** The result of the study is given as:

| Team value | Mean |
|---|---|
| Teamwork | 4.76 |
| Drive and initiative | 4.42 |
| Innovativeness | 4.38 |
| Responsibility and commitment | 4.34 |
| Passion and determination | 4.26 |
| Ideas | 4.25 |
| Attitude | 4.19 |
| Creativity | 3.84 |
| Inspiration | 3.77 |
| Experience | 3.64 |

The study indicated that majority of the students agree that SeCB activities in the university have improved and increased their teamwork, drive and initiative, innovativeness, responsibility and commitment, passion and determination, ideas and attitude in driving entrepreneurial intention. The study also showed that SeCB activities do not give much improvement in their team creativity, inspiration and experience.

Based on these observation as lecturers and advisors in UniKL BMI, it showed that team creativity do not give much improvement because in order to be creative the team members have to spend sometimes together brain storming and thinking of creative ideas. Due to time constraints and other responsibilities, team members would have no time to get together for the creativity session. Other barriers to creativity might be lack of collaboration and culture. Besides, in order to be creative there are some techniques that can be used and lacking of these knowledge may hinder the team to be creative.

The study also showed that team experience does not give much improvement maybe because team members do not have enough experience in conducting the group activities. Besides, the group's life span is very short, which is less than one semester which prevents them to gain much experience.

It also showed that the team inspiration does not improve much mainly because team members have no or a lack of inspiration. In order to get inspired, they should do a lot of readings especially on inspiring charismatic leaders and their achievements. Other than inspiring leaders, inspirations can also be gained through reading success stories.

**Recommendations:** We would like to suggest recommendations to improve the above problems. Recommendations are specifically related to students of UniKL BMI based on our experiences and observation as lecturers and advisors.

**Creativity:** To improve team creativity, we would recommend:

- **Foster collaboration:** In times of conflict, team members find it easier to avoid displaying creativity. Teams that are committed to collaboration must be dedicated to discovering conflict solutions that everyone can agree on. Collaboration can be generally results in innovative solutions to complex problems and hence promote creativity
- **Embrace diversity:** Group members should seek diverse perspectives and welcome the opportunity to listen to different views and approaches to problems. By embracing diversity, it gives chances to team members to voice out their creative ideas
- **Practice active listening:** Listen to what the others have to say. In active listening, we use time to ponder, interpret and contemplate what others have said, before formulating our response. Let others voice out their ideas and response with constructive responses

**Experience:** To improve team experience, we would recommend:

- **Trust and openness:** Team member's trust and openness to one another allow them to share their own ideas,

feelings and experiences. A sense of mutual trust develops only to the extent that everyone is willing to self-disclose and be honest yet respectful. Trust and openness allows team members to share their previous experiences in conducting previous groups and uses the shared experience to handle the current team

• **Encourage more team involvement:** To improve team experience, team members should be encouraged to get actively involved in many group establishments. By joining and managing more groups, it will increase the team member's experience and therefore would be crucial and useful tools in managing future teams

• **Knowledge of roles:** Team members should be given the chance to practice roles within a team such as facilitator, idea-generator, summarizer, evaluator, mediator, encourager and recorder. They are also willing to rotate roles to maximize their own and other's group learning experience. By doing this, every team members would be able to improve and increase their individual experience and hence the team experience

**Inspiration:** To improve team inspiration, we would recommend:

• **Promote team inspiration:** Inspire team members to share their curiosity, thought and story. Let them inspire other team members of their achievement and success story. The best way to inspire the team members is to share their story and your own story. Share what you have learnt and experienced as well as what achievement you have obtained. Hence, these sharing session is hoped to be inspiring to all

• **Find a role model:** One of the ways to inspire yourself as a person is finding a role model that you can look up to. It can be anyone that you admire and believe can be the best guide to an improved version of you. Whether it's you mother, father, sister, leaders or even favourite character from a book, they will motivate you and inspire you on managing and handling your team

• **Do a lot of readings:** To increase level of inspiration, one needs to do a lot of readings on inspirational leaders of the world. What their achievement and success are and how they achieved them. Besides, knows what their life and career philosophies are as a follower, we can adapt their philosophies and take them as guidance in managing teams

**Future research:** The future study is in progress and is also related to SeCB. It focuses on survey among UniKL BMI

students on the connection between SCB and the environment. The research would be on the topic of "The effect of environmental influences in fostering student's entrepreneurial activities: A study at UniKL".

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Since student character building is the heart and soul of SDCL, developing the preferred team values for the students as a team member during their student life is an initial effort that should be given priority. The traits are not something that can only be formally learned in class, but need to further be enhanced by getting the students engaged themselves in team activities outside of the class. The more the students involve in these kinds of team activities for example in entrepreneurial programs, the better they can develop themselves in terms of team characters.

Great team characters and skills are very important because in the real working environment, most of the time we would work as a team such as in a project and therefore team values are very important for team members to be able to accomplish their job successfully. Students who are still weak in their team skills and values need to be given the opportunity to improve themselves.

In conclusion, students should prepare themselves to be outstanding not only academically, but also distinctive in terms of their team attitudes and characters in their effort to search for a satisfactory job or to be an entrepreneur in the near future. It is more convenient for employees to upgrade and improve their academic qualification, but it is very difficult to improve their characters as these kinds of employees may have attitude problems that can result in low productivity and efficiency. Remember, technopreneurs will definitely have to work in team or group and they delegates roles and responsibilities. Therefore, team values and characteristics are very crucial in order to become excellent team leaders or team members.

University is the place where students gain knowledge, experience and build network. Events are activities that offer leadership skills and other positive traits that build the student's characters other than in classroom activities. Therefore, the importance of SeCB should be promoted in order to alleviate and improve student's team values with regards to entrepreneurship. Besides that, students with high level of team characteristics should be continuously nurtured so that they become better.

It is suggested that our proposed recommendation should be considered for future improvement in implementing student entrepreneurial character building

(SeCB) in UniKL to ensure its objectives to produce Malaysia's future entrepreneurs and technopreneurs could be achieved successfully.

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