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**ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON SELF EMPLOYMENT INTENTION
AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITI TEKNIKAL
MALAYSIA MELAKA**

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**This report is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a
Bachelor's degree in Technopreneurship**

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DECLARATION

“I hereby declare that the work in this report is my own except for summaries and quotations which have been duly acknowledged.”

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First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Almighty Allah for enabling me to complete this report on “Entrepreneurship Education on Self-Employment Intention Among Undergraduate Students of UTeM” for this academic research study.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of entrepreneurship education on undergraduate students' intention to being self-employed during studying or after graduation. Self-employment intention among students is identified based on the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) where it tests the effect of a person's attitude toward entrepreneurial behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on self-employment intention. Besides that, this study would also like to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention to see if it plays any major role in affecting the undergraduate students' decision-making process. TPB is a very useful approach in predicting students' acceptance of being self-employed in a sample of 300 students. Through this research, the researcher will resolve the most significant driving factor of self-employment intention while investigating the effect of entrepreneurship education and find the relationship between each variable and entrepreneurship education.

Keyword: entrepreneurship education, self-employment intention, undergraduate students, TPB

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menerokai tentang kesan pendidikan keusahawanan ke atas niat seseorang mahasiswa/mahasiswi sarjana muda untuk ke arah bekerja sendiri semasa pengajian atau selepas tamat pengajian. Niat mahasiswa/mahasiswi untuk bekerja sendiri dikenalpasti melalui penggunaan teori kajian iaitu teori tingkah laku yang dirancang (TPB) dimana ia mengkaji tentang impak sikap seorang pelajar universiti terhadap bidang keusahawanan, norma subjektif dan kawalan atas tanggapan tingkah laku seseorang ke atas niat berkerjaya sendiri. Selain itu, kajian ini juga akan menyelidik hubungkait antara pendidikan keusahawanan dan niat bekerja sendiri bertujuan untuk melihat sama ada ia memainkan peranan utama dalam memberi sebarang kesan kepada proses pelajar membuat keputusan. Teori yang diaplikasikan amat berguna untuk menganggar tahap penerimaan seseorang pelajar itu kearah bekerja sendiri dengan menggunakan unit sampel sebanyak 300 mahasiswa/mahasiswi. Melalui kajian ini juga, penyelidik akan dapat merungkai faktor yang paling memberi kesan ke atas niat bekerja sendiri sambil menyelidik tentang kesan pendidikan keusahawanan serta hubungkait antara faktor-faktor yang telah disebut dan pendidikan keusahawanan.

Kata kunci : Pendidikan keusahawanan, niat bekerja sendiri, mahasiswa/mahasiswi sarjana muda, TPB

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship education is the principal focus of the education system that involves the possession of knowledge, skills and behavioural aspects to empower the decision-making skills and creative thinking skills to ensure students are able to make wise choice to recognize updated trends and opportunities that are available in order to face the hard challenges in life (Brown, 2010). Entrepreneurship education has a high impact on the whole education system that in today's generation, entrepreneurship has become one of the most liberal means in ensuring the nation's long term economic growth (Okereke, 2019). Entrepreneurship education is provided for students at higher level institutions to let them gain skills, ideas, management skills, and having a strong self-employment intention rather than being paid employed or a job seeker (Osuala, 2008).

Self-employment intention can be described as the intention of starting own business, the intention of having own business and also the intent to be self-employed (Ismail et al., 2013). According to Atnafu(2016), a university is a place where the students will decide where will their career start right after graduation. Autio et al., (2007) claimed that undergraduate students can be swayed with guidance, to choose self-employed to be their career preferences as self-employment intention can bring positive remarks to undergraduate students before or after graduation.

1.0. Background Study

1.0.1 Ministry of Higher Education(MOHE) Initiative

As stated by Rozana Sani, (2017) in her most recent write up on the Ministry of Education's role in encouraging the entrepreneurship culture among university students, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) begins to take various initiatives to foster entrepreneurial behaviour and mindset in the younger generation .towards seeking for graduate entrepreneur MOHE took its own actions by providing a platform for those who are interested in becoming an employer or an entrepreneur via the Entrepreneurship Action Plan of Higher Education Institutions (2016-2020). This approach aims to stimulate entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship development in higher-level education in Malaysia.

Entrepreneurship Action Plan of Higher Education Institutions is aligned with the implementation of major shifts of the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education). This is to ensure that the higher-level education system is set along to the Industrial Revolution 4.0. The new education system involves the concept of re-engineering the education landscape, delivery, and content. The Entrepreneurship Action Plan intent to achieve at least 15% of university students to be associated in entrepreneurship activities and 5% of the graduates will have entrepreneurship as a career choice as of 2020. MOHE pushes the higher-level education institution to be more self-sustainable without having to rely on the government's power as much.

MOHE also helped to allow students to be involved in the actual business environment by organizing Siswapreneur Programme. Students are able to conduct businesses within their surrounding areas such as the university's ground, polytechnic and community colleges while having fellow students be their customers. MOHE has also been organizing a few entrepreneurial competitions from the year 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2016 to accommodate the recent education system where these competitions act as a catalyst to a conducive ecosystem towards the entrepreneurship development in Malaysia.

1.0.2 Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is defined as the contemporary learning process of fostering the entrepreneurial culture mostly among the university students. {Formatting Citation} described that the entrepreneurship education given by the higher-level institutions helps students to adapt real-life situation confidently and at the same time enhancing the creative thinking skills the students. This is also an enabler for the students who aspire to be an entrepreneur to recognize and pursue any business opportunities that allow them to grow in whichever field they undertake (Ayalew & Zeleke, 2018). Entrepreneurship education starts off from a various range of details such as idea generation, start up, growth and innovation. Entrepreneurship education was first introduced and discovered by Shigeru Fijii who started his lectures on this topic during his time at Kobe University, Japan back in the year of 1938(Del Giudice, 2014). In the year of 1947, Myles Mace introduced the first course in entrepreneurship at the Harvard Business School, USA. Davidsson, (2008) stated in his study that entrepreneurship then gained attention from many different levels of institutions including colleges, business schools, and even postsecondary schools and later got spread to other parts of the world such as India. India welcomed entrepreneurship education by going to the extent of providing short- and long-term programme for innovation, incubation, and entrepreneurship at their educational institutions to promote the entrepreneurial culture among their students.

Despite receiving positive reactions from institutions all around the world, there are some who opinionated that entrepreneurship cannot be taught but only were trained psychologically and that entrepreneurs are born to be entrepreneurs. Krueger et al., (2000) Koe et al, (2012) argued that there is always a way to ensure a successful entrepreneurship education such as applying an effective way to manage the teaching techniques and to identify what is the best approach to help students to be able to understand entrepreneurship in a simpler and systematic way. With all the doubts on the teaching and training skills, studies have shown that entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and attitude can be instilled in young entrepreneurs (Mwasalwiba, 2010). Entrepreneurship education must be able to let students make use of their creative thinking skills so that they can turn their ideas into actions.

1.0.3 Self-Employment Intention

Self-employment intention among undergraduate students is widely expressed in this era. Self-employment intention can be defined as a state of working for oneself rather than an employer. Umar G. Isah (2015) posited that self-employed or otherwise known as an entrepreneur becomes a popular choice among people of all ages nowadays that positively shows a decrease in the unemployment rate in multiple countries. People especially university students are encouraged to become an entrepreneur once they graduate (Ooi, Yeng Keat, Shuhymee Ahmad, 2012). This is for the benefit of their future since a lot of younger people prefers to be self-employed rather than being paid as an employee after years doing theoretical practice during their studying days.

There are plenty of circumstances that highlight the intention of undergraduate students to be self-employed such as family background, innovativeness, risk-taking readiness level, supportive environment, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship barrier (Shamsudin et al, 2017) Demographic factors such as family backgrounds encompass their job status and working experience motivates undergraduate students to want to be self-employed especially in the entrepreneurship field that is vital for job creation and economic growth (Nguyen, 2018). Baron & Tang (2011) expressed that innovativeness is distinguished as an element that will allow undergraduate students to convert their ideas to a business venture. Innovativeness also acts as the basis for having self-employment intention and a successful business.

In relation to risk-taking readiness level, Panopoulos et al., (2018) self-employed come with a variety of risks such as financial, social and also health risks. Risk-taking readiness level or otherwise known as the risk-taking propensity is defined as the tendency to take or avoid risk (Panopoulos et al., 2018).

A supportive environment can also be the catalyst as to why students will want to be self-employed as supported by Hopp & Stephan, (2012). In their studies that show supportive environment positively affiliated of students' self-employment intention. They stated that with a supportive environment, students will be exposed to greater performance and opportunities.

1.0.4 Entrepreneurship Education in Malaysia

According to Director of Research, Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, Michael Camp, entrepreneurship has become one of the most sought-after areas of study among business students. Graduates of entrepreneurship programmes are gradually increasing and capable to understand market, technology and management leadership. They continue to define the standard for business innovation and keeps altering the competitive landscape for the future enterprise by grasping their own perceived opportunities (Alberta Charney, 2006). In a simpler way of understanding, entrepreneurship education is described as a learning process that enhanced skills needed to start up a business (Rahim et al., 2015).

Entrepreneurship education is very encouraged for undergraduate students in Malaysia because the anticipation for a future business venture to be led by self-employed in small firms by students. (Ibrahim et al., 2015). They also agreed that students will want to partake in the entrepreneurship industry after graduating and refrain themselves from having a salaried job if they are exposed to entrepreneurship. Based on past study by Ibrahim et al., (2015), entrepreneurship education in Malaysia was executed to fulfil the needs for the Outline Perspective Plan (OPP 3rd) and Malaysia (2006) stated that the government aims to see the rise in a more capable human resources, an increase in technology and innovation and to achieve business-related goals by 2020. According to Ministry of Higher Education (2007), they had invested in a large number of resources to ensure a smooth experience that includes proper facilities, sufficient financial resources, qualified educators and also research and development platforms.

There is also an institution named the National Youth Skills Institute (NYSI) that does research on the entrepreneurship subject by exposing entrepreneurship using the same module without taking course type and level of study into account. Students who are involved in the entrepreneurship education were able to learn a few bases of business such as entrepreneurial motivation, business data documents and its accounting, marketing and effective communication. NYSI targets to cultivate the entrepreneurial potential in those undergraduate students so that they can be interested in having self-employment intention as their future career option (Ibrahim et al., 2015)

1.1 Problem Statement

Future graduates faced a serious concern of unemployment issues that can be avoided by opting for other options such as self-employment job. Numerous undergraduate or freshly graduate students acquired the skills and knowledge that are required to set up their own business yet only a few of them chose to be self-employed right after graduating from colleges or universities. The study shows that this is mainly caused by the fact that the students are lacking self-confidence, encouragement or reassurance that diving into self-employment or entrepreneurial field will guarantee success. There are a few students that show great potential and talent to become an entrepreneur however they have no exposure as to what career options that are available for them. Since undergraduate students are most welcomed to start up their own business using the available sources, this has induced the researchers to collect data and gather details on the effect and influence of entrepreneurship education among undergraduate students that lead them to have self-employment intention.

Entrepreneurship education has been provided in various developed higher-level education institutions to ensure that the students will be encouraged to learn more about entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitude. The government allocated a remarkable amount of funds to develop a practical and systematic entrepreneurship education so that the students are more interested in being self-employed. In spite of the effort and attempt to inspire students to be their own boss, they seem to lose interest in self-employment or entrepreneurship after around 3 years of undergoing entrepreneurship-based programmes. But it is hard to determine whether it is because of the education system or mainly because of their personality traits. Hence, this study aims to examine the variables such as educational, attitude and behaviour factors that affect the students' behaviour of having self-employment intention.

Undergraduate students can opt for choosing self-employed or paid-employed as for their future career prospect. Given the entrepreneurship education in our current education syllabus, this research is determined to identify the driving factors of self-employment intention among undergraduate students of a public university.

The factors that influence students the most are the family background, level of innovativeness, risk-taking readiness level, supportive environment, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship barrier. There are past studies made on factors that allows students to be self-employed after they graduated however not all factors guarantees success in their business venture that soon leads to the students feel discouraged to start up a business hence as to why they need the proper entrepreneurship education so that will influence them to be a better leader career-wise. Thus, this research is made to investigate what are actual factors that create a need for undergraduate students to have self-employment intention.

Entrepreneurship education needs to be implemented not only because it is one of the strategies in the Action Plan for Higher Level Institutions but also because younger generations need to keep up with the pace as the technology and innovation are getting more and smarter as days go by. This shows that the undergraduate students need to have the will to be self-employed to set up their own business and it gets better if technology and innovation are involved since the world wants to be faster, better and more efficient at all times even at doing daily routine chores. Entrepreneurship education provides the students with proper information by qualified and certified staff to ensure that students received accurate knowledge, skills and educational support to being self-employed. They have to master the basics given examples like accounting, financial, human resources, rules and regulations and many more. This research is carried out for the purpose of finding the relation between entrepreneurship education and the factors that drives the students to achieve self-employment intention. For example, in Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL), there are subjects on business administration for management and entrepreneurship education and in Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM), there are Technology Entrepreneurship subject that promotes the entrepreneurship development for their students.

Entrepreneurship curriculum has been more diversified and potent now that it is a fundamental factor to let the undergraduate students consume basic knowledge on entrepreneurship. The educated lecturers have been implementing effective teaching methods in the students' coursework to drive the students into being self-employed.

Based on past research or case study, it has been mentioned that students have more tendency to becoming an entrepreneur after they graduate if they are motivated enough to do so. This research is made to find out what is the most notable factors that make the undergraduate students to have self-employment intention. Examples for entrepreneurship curriculum are content of entrepreneurship subject syllabus and the teaching strategy planned by the educators such as introducing contemporary business management and digital entrepreneurship as part of the syllabus.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the factors that influence undergraduate students of UTeM to choose self-employment as their career choice?
2. What is the relationship between the driving factors and self-employment intention?
3. What is the most significant factor that leads undergraduate students of UTeM to have self-employment intention?

1.3 Research Objectives

There are three objectives that need to be achieved through this study which are:

1. To determine factors that drive undergraduate students of UTeM into having self-employment intention.
2. To analyse the relationship between the driving factors towards self-employment intention among undergraduate students of UTeM.
3. To find the most significant factor that influences undergraduate students of UTeM to have self-employment intention.

1.4 Scope of Study

This study is designed to deduce the impact of entrepreneurship education that is a part of higher-level education syllabus on undergraduate students' intention of being self-employed. Therefore, this study intends to precisely discover the most significant factor that encourages students to have self-employment intention during study or after graduation. This study is conducted in Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) during the session of 2019/2020. Samples were taken from individuals from each faculty in the university comprises of 8 faculty which are Faculty of Technology Management and Technopreneurship, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Faculty of Electronic and Computer Engineering, Faculty of Manufacturing Engineering, Faculty Information Technology and Communication, Faculty of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering Technology and Faculty of Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technology.. Questionnaire surveys are given out to a sample of 320 undergraduate students with 40 students from each faculty to identify what are the driven factors for undergraduate students to choose self-employed as their career choice, how does entrepreneurship education affect the self-employment intention and discover the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention. The results gained from this study will be recorded and used for future reference to improve the entrepreneurship education in UTeM so more students will opt for having their own business. However, the results do not guarantee accurate data that it may or may not fully accommodate the entrepreneurship education system in UTeM. The limitations of this study are that it is carried out in a specific geographical area and the data collected is also limited due to the smaller scale of respondents.

1.5 Significant of Study

This study is beneficial to all educators that wish to urge university students to be self-employed after their graduation. This is also to improve the academic performance in educating the students on the entrepreneurial skills, attitude, and behaviour of an entrepreneur. Ministry of Education can also improve and introduce a new approach or module such as interesting and interactive activities among undergraduate students to enhance higher academic performance based on the results gathered from the study. This can be significant to lecturers so that they can implement effective learning while setting up different concepts in different situations so that the students are able to adapt to real-life situations in the future.

This study will also help students to realize the benefits of having self-employment intention while still studying or right after graduation since the students will get the chance to start and lead their own business at a young age to improve their creative thinking skills and add more innovation details to their products or services. Besides that, findings from this particular study may also allow the government institutions and the lecturers to learn the way students think and their opinion on the entrepreneurship education that they have received from UTeM in each faculty. It can also provide benefits to other researchers who are conducting a study on a similar research subject to avoid any risk or failure. Other researchers could also examine the results and compare to theirs to improve the reliability test and to contribute new knowledge to our economy and society. As for government institutions, they could use the results of the study to oversee additional options or programmes that can be held to promote entrepreneurship education to inculcate entrepreneurial mindset among youth.

Results from this study may also show a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and the factors that are affecting the self-employment intention among undergraduate students. This is so that the educators can play their role in engaging students into more entrepreneurship-based programmes to show that entrepreneurship is the best career choice there is for the future especially to keep Malaysian education system relevant and kept aligned with the Industrial Revolution 4.0.

This study is also carried out to yield systematic information on the current entrepreneurship education for future researchers and educators in Melaka or in Malaysia by compiling insights from undergraduate students of UTeM to seek the best option to improve the current entrepreneurship education in order to let university students to learn to set up, manage and operate their business with greater prospects and better competitive advantage. It is throughout this study, researchers and educators can find out if there is an existing relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention to devise any teaching and learning strategies for today's and future education.

1.6 Summary

This chapter contains the overview of the study which comprises of the background of the study of each element of the study, problem statement, research questions and objectives, the scope and limitations of the study and also the significance of the study.