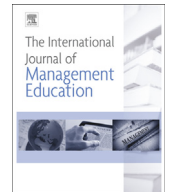


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Examining the entrepreneurship curriculum in Malaysian polytechnics



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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to empirically examine the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship curriculum used in Malaysian polytechnics in respect of students' entrepreneurial tendencies. Of 600 questionnaires distributed, a total of 506 students completed the General Enterprising Tendency (version 2) Test (GETv2) survey, which gave a valid response rate of 84.3 per cent. The study identifies that the entrepreneurship syllabus in polytechnics is not effective and that students are not imbued with entrepreneurial knowledge, skills or attributes during their studies. The teaching approaches appear inappropriate and the instructors do not possess the requisite entrepreneurial skills, knowledge or training. The outcome of this study will be used by researchers, institutions of higher education and policy makers to improve the state of entrepreneurship education and to employ effective teaching methodologies in the area of entrepreneurship education in Malaysia. This is one of the first comprehensive studies to explore how the entrepreneurship curriculum is delivered within Malaysian polytechnics.

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship scholars highlighted that entrepreneurial activities are considered crucial for the economic progress and development of nations in both developing and developed countries (Acs, 2006; Acs & Szerb, 2007; Ahmad, 2013; Lourenço, Taylor, & Taylor, 2013; Mei, 2012; Nabi, Holden, & Walmsley, 2006). In particular, entrepreneurship education (EE) has been considered as being one of the key instruments to increase the entrepreneurial attitudes of both potential and nascent entrepreneurs (Auken, 2013; Matlay & Carey, 2007). Realising the importance of this element, efforts have been taken by many governments to nurture EE development at all levels as it can bring important returns to the society (Audretsch, 2007; Hall, Daneke, & Lenox, 2010; Lourenço, Jones, & Jayawarna, 2012; Mok, 2012; Mueller, 2007). As a consequence, institutions of higher education are beginning to respond to this growing interest in EE (Henry, 2013). The institutions of education have come under increasing pressure to embed entrepreneurship within their various curricula, making it accessible to all students, regardless of their area of discipline, including such institutions of higher education in Malaysia (Ahmad, 2013; Ahmad & Baharun, 2004; Bagheri & Lope-Pihie, 2013; Cheng, Chan, & Mahmood, 2009; Jafaar & AbdulAziz, 2008).

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2. Background

In Malaysia, in order to allow students to receive early exposure to an entrepreneurial environment, the governments have made entrepreneurship courses compulsory for all students at the higher learning institutions (Jafaar & AbdulAziz, 2008). In order to enhance the entrepreneurship programme, in February 2010, the Malaysian government further strengthened institutions with the launching of the Higher Education Entrepreneurship Development Policy (HEEDP). This had the primary

Table 1

List of Malaysian Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) offering courses in entrepreneurship.

Names of public HLIs	Detail of entrepreneurial studies in the academic programmes
Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) <i>formerly known as Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia (KUIM)</i>	Entrepreneurial studies is one of the areas at the Masters and PhD level offered by the Economic and Muamalat Faculty.
Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) <i>formerly known as Kolej Universiti Kejuruteraan dan Teknologi Malaysia (KUKTEM)</i>	Entrepreneurial studies is offered as a foundation programme and as an elective for the following programmes: a. Entrepreneurs and Business is a core course for the Bachelor Degree in Chemical Engineering (Biotechnology); b. Entrepreneurship and Business is a core course for the Bachelor Degree in Mechanical Engineering; c. Cyber Entrepreneurship is a core course in the Diploma of Computer Technology (Software Engineering); and d. Entrepreneurship is an elective for the Bachelor of Electrical Engineering (Electronic).
Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) <i>formerly known as Kolej Universiti Teknikal Kebangsaan Malaysia (KUTKM)</i>	Entrepreneurial skills are offered as a core subject in the Faculty of Information Technology and Communication. The subject is offered in the Bachelor degree of Software Development, Computer Networking, Base Data, and Interactive Media. In addition, entrepreneurship is also offered as a specific programme for the Master's programme, i.e. Master for Entrepreneurial Science. For the Doctoral degree, entrepreneurship is one of the research areas.
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) <i>formerly known as Kolej Universiti Teknologi Tun Hussein Onn (KUiTTHO)</i>	Entrepreneurship as a subject is a core course for the following faculties: a. Business and entrepreneurship is a core subject in the diploma programme offered by the Faculty of General Engineering and Environment b. Basic Business and Entrepreneurship is a core subject for the diploma offered by the Mechanical Engineering and Manufacturing Faculty.
University Islam Antarabangsa (UIAM)	The subject of entrepreneurship is an elective for the Bachelor degree programme in Business Administration offered by the Economics and Management Science Faculty.
University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	Entrepreneurship is an elective subject for the Bachelor degree course in Business Administration offered by the Economics and Business Faculty. Entrepreneurship is a minor programme for the Bachelor degree course in Administrative Management offered by the Education Faculty. It is also one of the research areas in the Education Faculty for Maths and doctoral candidates.
University Malaya (UM)	Entrepreneurship, which focuses on management, is an elective subject for the Bachelor of Business Administration course. It is an elective subject for the Master's programme in Business Administration offered by the Policy and Business Strategy Department, Business and Accountancy Faculty. Entrepreneurship is a research area for a doctoral programme and is offered by the Policy and Business Strategy Department, and Business and Accountancy Faculty.
Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)	Entrepreneurship is a core subject for the Bachelor degree of Business with credit and Bachelor for Economics degree with credit majoring in entrepreneurship offered by the School of Business and Economics. It is also one of the research topics for the Master and Doctoral degrees offered by the School of Business and Economics.
University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)	Entrepreneurship is one of the major subjects in the Masters for Corporate Management Business Administration course (CMBA). It is also one of the research areas for the Master's and Doctoral degrees for the Business and Economics Faculty.
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI)	Entrepreneurship is one of the major areas for Bachelor of Business Administration with credit offered by the Economic and Management Faculty. It is also one of the research areas for Master's and Doctoral degrees offered by the English Studies Faculty. Established Small Business Development Centre.
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	Entrepreneurship is a minor subject in the Bachelor of Management course offered by the Centre of Management Studies. Established Centre for Policy Research (SMEs Research Group).
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	Entrepreneurship and Marketing is one of the elective subjects for Bachelor of Management (Marketing) with credit offered by the Human Resource Development Faculty. It is one of the research areas in the Master's and Doctoral programmes.
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)	Entrepreneurship is a core subject in all diploma courses except for the Business Study Diploma.
Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	Malaysian Entrepreneurship Development Centre (MEDEC). Basic entrepreneurship is a core subject in the university, in which entrepreneurship is a core subject for all programmes under the Business Management Faculty except for the Bachelor of Entrepreneurship with credit. In addition, it is also a core subject for the Bachelor of Tourism Management with credit and the Bachelor of Educational Management. Established Entrepreneurial Development Institute (EDI).
Politeknik, Ministry of Higher Education	Entrepreneurship is compulsory for commerce students. Co-curriculum module is compulsory for all students, and entrepreneurship is one of the chapters incorporated in the module. Entrepreneurship is offered as an elective module for all students.

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