

Digital Entrepreneurship Among Higher Education Students

Khemaalatha Gunaseelan¹, Tamil Selvan Subramaniam², Lai Chee Sern³, Mohd Khata Jabor⁴ & Geetha Rathakrishnan⁵

^{1,2,3}Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education, University Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia,

⁴Department of Technical and Engineering Education, Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, ⁵Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v12-i9/14842> DOI:10.6007/IJARBS/v12-i9/14842

Published Date: 09 September 2022

Abstract

Since the digital entrepreneurship and the industry 4.0 have been considered as the emerging technologies in the Malaysia, their emphasis to ascertain the exposure of the students in the Malaysian higher education will suffice. The digital entrepreneurship has faced several challenges such as lack of proper skills by the staff and lack of proper facilities to assist in the instruction process. However, the policies proposed and the increased number of universities and colleges in Malaysia appreciating the program have emphasized its adoption. The implementation of the Higher Education Entrepreneurship Development Policy has contributed to many benefits. The paper focusses on the digital entrepreneurship appreciation in the Malaysia higher education mostly by students and the intensification by the ministry of higher education.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Digital Entrepreneurship, Higher Education, Education, Students, Skills

Introduction

Entrepreneurs have mastered that art of incorporating the digital technology and innovative infrastructures in their businesses. Since there is a transition in the enterprises, adhering to the changes assist the entrepreneurs to develop perfectly and ascertain the achievement of the daily objectives (Bagheri & Pihie, 2011). The pursuit of the business and economic opportunities using digital technology has assisted the entrepreneurs to adapt to the technologically oriented market (Oppong et al., 2020). The higher education students have engaged in the digital entrepreneurship to boost their income and supplement their daily operations. The ministry of higher education in Malaysia incorporated the digital entrepreneurship into the ongoing entrepreneurship program in the schools (Anim-Yeboah et al., 2020). There was a realization that graduates do not obtain the employment opportunities due to the lack of soft skills such as entrepreneurship. With the rapid technological development and the need for an adherence to the transitions, the ministry of

education believed that incorporating the entrepreneurship skills in the higher education will equip students with perfect skills that they will apply after graduation. According to Zainal & Yong (2020) the proliferation of the websites and the social media into the market also prompted the Ministry of education Malaysia to include the digital entrepreneurship into the module to allow the adherence and the improved knowledge on marketing using the latest technological innovation (Zainal & Yong, 2020). Since the digital entrepreneurship and the industry 4.0 have been considered as the emerging technologies in the Malaysia, their emphasis to ascertain the exposure of the students in the Malaysian higher education will suffice. The belief that entrepreneurship skills can be obtained through education has contributed to the intensification of this concept among students. The paper focusses on the digital entrepreneurship appreciation in the Malaysia higher education mostly by students and the intensification by the ministry of higher education.

Literature Review and past exploration of the digital entrepreneurship among higher education students in Malaysia

According to Zainal & Yong (2020) the accounting students at the Malaysian higher education have stated that they are required to learn the digital entrepreneurship to assist in the understanding of the societal trends in accounting (Zainal & Yong, 2020). After acquiring the critical thinking and problem-solving skills there is a need for an acquisition of team building skills, lifelong learning and information management skills, communication skills, ethics, moral and professional skills, leadership skills and entrepreneurship skills. The inclusion of the social media and other technological invention such as websites to create viability and allow perfect interaction has assisted the accounting students in making perfect decision amend securing the job opportunities regardless of the competitiveness of the market (Ismail et al., 2019). The more the accounting students are gearing towards acquiring the entrepreneurship skills and merging it with the latest technological innovations, the more the mu ministry of higher education is emphasizing on the proper inclusion of the digital entrepreneurship into the modules. The situation has placed Malaysia in a perfect position of achieving its goals of ensuring technological innovation use in the education sector.

According to Din et al (2020), the Malaysian government through the ministry of higher education has incorporated the development of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) to ascertain a higher income society. Since students are perceived as the future of the economic development. Exposing them to the entrepreneurship soft skills will ascertain the stability in the market and the entire Malaysian society (Din et al., 2020). The fact that the ministry is gearing towards a holistic educating with the inclusion of the entrepreneurial skills and the inclusion of technology in assuring the adaptation to the technological transition has contributed to the emphasis on the entrepreneurship model. Every country wishes to churn out graduates with the skills that can assist in the development of a country (Arokiasamy, 2012). Malaysia is such a country. It has achieved the entire situation by motivating students to take the entrepreneurship education coupled with digital infrastructures and invention such as the social media and websites (Mamun et al., 2017). The case has exposed the Malaysia students into believing in perfection and acquisition of skills to assist in establishment of their business set up after graduation. Since there are few opportunities for jobs in the country, the Malaysian students can enjoy the self-employment in the entrepreneurship sector after graduation.

According to Din et al (2020) several higher education centres in Malaysia such as UKM has introduced the online business simulation as a method of teaching the students the digital entrepreneurship. The program assists the students to learn the business skills and participate fully in the learning process (Punadi & Rizal, 2017). The situation has exposed the Malaysian students to the international activities involving the business studies and the marketing skills. The program further exposes the students to the global business environment where they gain confidence in the market due to the interaction with people from different nations more so the United States of America (Saibon et al., 2019). Since they are in a pole position to learn from others, they replicate the ideologies learned and practice them in their daily operations (Din et al., 2020). Such a situation prepares the students body to a competitive business skill after the acquisition of the entrepreneurial skills. Since the program is on the online platform, it is a form of digital entrepreneurship since students will learn the viral means of communicating with the people in the entire marketing environment (Lima & Baudier, 2017). Such a level exposure contributes to the perception that the Malaysian society forms a perfect background for the students to apply the digital entrepreneurship skills.

Vejayaratnam et al (2019) say that Malaysian government has developed a plan referred to as Malaysia Plan (RM Ke-11) to equip the higher institution students with the entrepreneurial skills that will assist them in competing with the global business players (Vejayaratnam et al., 2019). The program contributes to the realization of 10,000 young entrepreneurs in 2020. The situation is an achievement since the business environment and market in Malaysia is booming resulting from the more emphasis on the digital entrepreneurship. According to the study conducted that involves 420 participants from Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and Universiti Utara Malaysia, the profit orientation (81%) was a determinant factor in the choice of entrepreneurial career (Vejayaratnam et al., 2019). Since Malaysia is technologically growing nation, the ministry has also included digital entrepreneurship skills in the entrepreneurship programs to create the skills that would ensure the adaptation to the innovative ideas in the current market. The Malaysian society is willing to allow the students to be proactive in acquiring the business skills and support them through forming an education committee to provide the digital resources that can assist in achieving the goals (Kamaruddin et al., 2021). The Malaysian students in the higher education has achieved and mastered the business entrepreneurial skills and including the digital infrastructure in their daily academic learning of the business skills.

According to Kamaruddin et al (2021) all the students in Malaysia are facing a perfect time in ensuring the adaptation to connectivity, speed, breadth and depth of transformation as forms of the fourth industrial revolution contents. The Malaysian government has exposed the learners to the use of the fourth industrial revolution contents in learning the business skills that will expose them to market changes and skills needed in the survival to the entrepreneurship field (Kamaruddin et al., 2021). The Malaysian government has introduced the massive open online courses (MOOCs) to introduce the students to the business skills learned in the global front. Such online programs have contributed to the acquisition of the business skills and the technological expertise that will assist the students after graduation to invent the business jobs for their survival and the improvement of economic income (Kamaruddin et al., 2021). The more the society is trying as much possible to alert students

about the digital entrepreneurship, the more the students are being equipped with high level skills in managing the daily business more so in the entrepreneurial sector.

The establishment of the Higher Education Entrepreneurship Development Policy in 2010 by the Malaysian government contributed to the perfection and more benefits offered. The policy has contributed to several changes in the Malaysian education system (Kamaruddin et al., 2021). Almost 19 institutions of higher learning have introduced entrepreneurial education as a compulsory subject. The policy has further contributed to a push in the Strategic Plan on Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (Santoso et al., 2021). The policy has further contributed to the formulation of the programs such as Malaysia Entrepreneur (1MET), Program Usahawan Bimbing Usahawan, Business Design Workshop and Business Facilitator, Graduate Entrepreneur Scheme (SIS), Program Galakan Perniagaan and Program Pembudayaan Keusahawanan (INSKEN 2015). Also, the policy prompted Malaysian government and the ministry of education to formulate MSC Malaysia, Meet Your Experts (ER360), Majlis Amanah Rakyat, Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Corp Malaysia, and Ministry of Domestic Trade (Kamaruddin et al., 2021). To cover most students in the higher education instructions and ascertain perfection in acquisition of skills the government has formulated Cooperatives and Consumerism (KDNKK) and Perbadanan Nasional Berhad (PNS), Satu Daerah Satu Industry program (SDSI), Youth and Entrepreneurship Program (Business and Agriculture Business), Economic Transformation Program and Automotive Workshop Modernization or ATOM.

Role of Higher Education and Challenges for students who become entrepreneurs after being exposed to Digital Entrepreneurship Program

The effort by the government and the higher education is perfect and beneficial. The implementation of the Higher Education Entrepreneurship Development Policy has contributed to many benefits. The schools are in a pole position to produce graduates with high level entrepreneurial skills that would be in a perfect position to fend for themselves. Also, their increased income level has contributed to the increased income nationally. The Malaysia has achieved transition in the national income since it prepares students to obtain skills that can assist in the sole development of their expertise as far as the business expertise is concerned (Ishak et al., 2018). Also, the policy has assisted in the technological inclusion in the entrepreneurship module and learning. The choice made by the government to introduce the online business simulation in learning of the business skills in the higher education centers is also ideal. It has contributed to the need for the perfection and acquisition of the business skills that can contribute to the perfect competition in the online front and the global front. The Malaysian students engaged in this program have shown the improved concentration and perfection skills to do with the international business standards (Bagheri & Pihie, 2011). Such a case explains the main importance of the policies witnessed and the programs placed to ensure the perfection in the digital entrepreneurship. The government is doing as much as possible by incorporating the ministry of education committee to assist the students in managing their skills and acquisition of the soft entrepreneurial skills that would assist them in perfect survival in a transitioning market.

Accounting is one of the majors in the higher institution of education that contributes to the understanding of the financial situation of a country or a firm or an individual. The incorporation of the digital entrepreneurship among students with higher expertise in

accounting is the ideal factor that every government that value its progress can undertake (Zainuddin & Rozaini, 2010). The more the Malaysian countries intend to produce accounting experts with knowledge in the current technological innovation, the more the resources they will use to realize the objective. The situation has contributed to emphasizing on the continued inclusion of the technological innovation in the higher education to assist the accounting students to gain the digital expertise on solving the financial issues and playing with numbers (Wu et al., 2019). The case contributed to the perfection aspect of the government in ensuring the stability as far as its income is concerned. Students whose aims are to assist a society in realizing high-level potential in its finances will be ready to acquire the digital accounting skills. The fact that it makes work easier and leads to efficient exposes the government perfect roles in ascertaining the stability in the market and ensuing the entire societal stability.

Not all students who are exposed to the digital entrepreneurship become the entrepreneurship after graduation. The program just aims at equipping students with skills that can assist them in organizing their lives. According to the study conducted among the Malaysian students of higher education and alumni, there was an indication that only 10 % of the graduates pursue entrepreneurship after graduation (Hassan et al., 2020). The situation shows that every individual has a career path that can be pursued regardless of engaging in the entrepreneurship. Students have no mandatory to pursue entrepreneurship regardless of their wish. The case has exposed the Malaysian government and the institution of higher education to providing the autonomy to students to choose the career path regardless of the compulsory nature of the entrepreneurship education. The autonomy has further assisted the students to understand that the government value their welfare. They intend to pursue other career and increase the national income through paying taxes and their mandates (Henry & Lewis, 2018). Also, all the students have not engaged in the entrepreneurial career but they have mastered the art of survival through use of the technological innovation discussed in the process or the programs. Such achievements have exposed the students to adapting in the environment and ensuring they are at par with the global market regardless of their failure to pursue entrepreneurial career after graduation. The case leads to the explanation that not all people can conform to the dictates to the program all their lives. The autonomy allows students to pursue their career without barriers.

The lack of enough and skilled staff who can teach, promote and create awareness on the digital entrepreneurship has contributed to the drawback to the perfect learning of the concept. The case contributes to the weakness in the efficiency since the targeted learners are not befitting fully from the program (Olorundare & Kayode, 2014). Also, the staff has shown the low commitment toward the proper implementation of the program. The situation affects the students' need for grasp of the content that will allow high-level perfection in applying the digital entrepreneurship concepts in their future careers (Sanchez et al., 2017). The application of the traditional methods of teaching entrepreneurship has contributed to the poor method with the inclusion of the technological innovation in teaching the digital entrepreneurship a (Rahim et al., 2015). Such a factor leads to the lack of proper skills among students in adapting to the technological transition needed in the entrepreneurship sector or career. The situation has further contributed to low mastery of the skills required to ascertain the perfection as far as digital entrepreneurship is concerned.

The universities have failed to fully promote and incorporate the entrepreneurship culture into the learning institutions (Othman et al., 2012). The problem arises due to the less infrastructure and lack of full government support. The government has been failing to fully support this program contributing to the frustrations and the reluctance aspect of the ministry of higher education quest to ascertain perfection in this program (Othman et al., 2012). The more the students and teachers are willing to learn the digital entrepreneurship, the more there should be high-level perfection and endurance. However, the lack of proper digital facilities to assist in the proper implementation of this program has created reluctance among the instructors and the learners whose aims are to instruct and acquire skills respectively on matters digital entrepreneurship (Ferreira et al., 2016). The observation lead to the lack of the proper achievement of the students' body who has the skill to pursue digital entrepreneurship (Farid & Rahman, 2020). The challenges have exposed the weakness of this program in institutions of higher education in Malaysia.

Conclusion

Digital entrepreneurship has been a major factor of development in the Malaysian higher education. It exposes the students to the entrepreneurial skills and the technological innovation that act as a path towards self-employment, improvement of the expertise and an opportunity to gain employment after graduation. It further contributed to the adaptation to the technological transition and incorporating the skills into the market. The more the society is willing to adopt this program, the more the Malaysia students in the higher institutions of learning will be well equipped to ensure perfection in handing the market changes. The digital entrepreneurship has faced several challenges such as lack of proper skills by the staff and lack of proper facilities to assist in the instruction process. However, the policies proposed and the increased number of universities and colleges in Malaysia appreciating the program have emphasized its adoption. Digital Entrepreneurship has been a program that will place Malaysia in a map of the global market and stability in the economy due to the productivity of the graduates and the undergraduate students.

Corresponding Author

Tamil Selvan Subramaniam

Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM),
86400 Parit Raja, Batu Pahat Johor, Malaysia

Email: tselvan@uthm.edu.my

References

- Arokiasamy, A. R. (2012). The influence of globalization in promoting entrepreneurship in Malaysia. *South East European Journal of Economics and Business*, 7(2), 149-157. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10033-012-0021-7>
- Bagheri, A., & Lope Pihie, Z. A. (2011). Entrepreneurial leadership competencies and motivation to learn: A focus on student entrepreneurial leaders. *Research Handbook on Entrepreneurship and Leadership*, 345-373. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781783473762.00024>
- Din, W. M., Wahi, W., Zaki, W. M., & Hassan, R. (2020). Entrepreneurship education: Impact on knowledge and skills on University students in Malaysia. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(9), 4294-4302. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.080956>

- Farid, S. M., & Rahman, S. A. (2020). Identifying the challenges of involvement in entrepreneurship activities among a group of undergraduates. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 7(2), 246-257. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.697597>
- Ferreira, A., Loiola, E., & Guedes-Gondim, S. (2017). Motivations, business planning, and risk management: Entrepreneurship among university students
- Hassan, H., Abu, B. S., & Rahman, M. S. (2020). Shaping entrepreneurial intention among youngsters in Malaysia. *Journal of Humanities and Applied Social Sciences*, 2(3), 235-251. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JHASS-02-2020-0029>
- Henry, C., & Lewis, K. (2018). A review of entrepreneurship education research: Exploring the contribution of the ORW1S34RfeSDcfkexd09rT2 Education + Training1RW1S34RfeSDcfkexd09rT2 special issues. *Education & Training*, 60(3), 263-286. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ET-12-2017-0189>
- Ishak, N. A. M., Abidin, N., & Rajadurai, J. (2018). Digital Green Entrepreneurial Competency among Gen Y Entrepreneur in Malaysia. *Global Business and Management Research*, 10(3), 948. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/digital-green-entrepreneurial-competency-among/docview/2159619494/se-2?accountid=45049>
- Ismail, A., Adnan, W. N., Masek, A., Hassan, R., Hashim, S., & Ismail, M. E. (2019). Effectiveness of entrepreneurship programmes in developing entrepreneurship skills towards quality TVET graduates. *Journal of Technical Education and Training*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.30880/jtet.2019.11.01.010>
- Kamaruddin, H., Hassan, R., Othman, N., Mimi Diyana Wan Zaki, W., & Md Sum, S. (2021). Meeting the needs of fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in entrepreneurial education in Malaysia: The government's role. *Circular Economy - Recent Advances, New Perspectives and Applications*. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.94919>
- Lima, M., & Baudier, P. (2017). Business model canvas acceptance among French entrepreneurship students: Principles for enhancing innovation artefacts in business education. *Journal of Innovation Economics*, 23(2), 159. <https://doi.org/10.3917/jie.pr1.0008>
- Mamun, A. A., Nawli, N. B., Mohiuddin, M., Shamsudin, S. F., & Fazal, S. A. (2017). Entrepreneurial intention and startup preparation: A study among business students in Malaysia. *Journal of Education for Business*, 92(6), 296-314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2017.1365682>
- Olorundare, S., & Kayode, D. (2014). Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities: A tool for national transformation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education*, 29
- Oppong, G. Y. S., Singh, S., & Kujur, F. (2020), "Potential of digital technologies in academic entrepreneurship – a study", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, Vol. 26 No. 7, pp. 1449-1476. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEER-06-2019-0401>
- Othman, N., Hashim, N., & Wahid, H. A. (2012). Readiness towards entrepreneurship education. *Education Training*, 54, 697–708. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00400911211274837>
- Punadi, R. P., & Rizal, A. M. (2017). Factors that Cultivate Youth Intention to Be Social Entrepreneur. *International Journal of Innovation and Business Strategy (IJIBS)/ Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2017, 1-10*
- Rahim, H. L., Abdul Kadir, M. A. B., Abidin, Z., Junid, J., Kamaruddin, M. L., Lajin, M. N. F., & Bakri, A. (2015). Entrepreneurship education in Malaysia: A critical review. *Journal of Technology Management and Business*, 2(02)

- Saibon, R. A., Kamis, A., & Zainol, Z. (2019). Entrepreneurship education: Unemployment issues, people's well-being and entrepreneurial intentions among TVET graduates in Malaysia. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 23(4), 953-965. <https://doi.org/10.37200/ijpr/v23i4/pr190423>
- Sanchez, J. C., Ward, A., Hernandez, B., & Florez, J. (2017). Entrepreneurship education: State of the art. *Propósitos y Representaciones*, 5(2), 401 - 473. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20511/pyr2017.v5n2.190>
- Santoso, R. T., Junaedi, I. W., Priyanto, S. H., & Santoso, D. S. (2021). Creating a startup at a University by using Shane's theory and the entrepreneurial learning model: A narrative method. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-021-00162-8>
- Vejayaratnam, N., Paramasivam, T., & Mustakim, S. S. (2019). Digital Entrepreneurial Intention among Private Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) Students. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(12), 110–120.
- Wu, W., Kao, H., Wu, S., & Wei, C. (2019). Development and evaluation of affective domain using student's feedback in entrepreneurial massive open online courses. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01109>
- Zainal, N. T., & Yong, K. (2020). Examining the digital entrepreneurship education effectiveness on soft skills among undergraduates. *MANU Jurnal Pusat Penataran Ilmu dan Bahasa (PPIB)*. <https://doi.org/10.51200/manu.vi.2112>
- Zainuddin, M. N., & Rozaini, M. R. (2010). Assessing "ME generation's" entrepreneurship degree programmes in Malaysia. *Education & Training*, 52(6), 508-527. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00400911011068469>