

# Issues and Challenges in Nurturing Young Entrepreneurs: A Study with Entrepreneurship Students

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**Abstract.** Many countries, particularly developing ones, have recognized the value and the growing role entrepreneurship as drivers of growth and job creation, and as effective tools for poverty alleviation. As such, entrepreneurship has become a catchphrase in almost everywhere, particularly in the business and management area. Governments worldwide have now increasingly recognized their interest in entrepreneurship education and have introduced it to variety of settings, not only among the officials but also schools, colleges and universities. In most colleges and universities in Malaysia for example, students are compulsory to take entrepreneurship introductory courses during their college years and even can take other more advance entrepreneurship courses. In fact, some colleges have started to offer a degree or certificate in entrepreneurship. This is to provide the students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success and finally become a job creator rather than a seeker. Despite the initiatives given, not many students, particularly those who are majoring in entrepreneurship, have really embarked being entrepreneurs. Thus, to understand these scenarios, this paper aims to explore what are the factors that motivate and hinder these students to be entrepreneurs. Thirty-three students who recently finished their Bachelor degree in entrepreneurship and innovation (BEI) were surveyed. Almost half of the students wanted to be entrepreneurs, however, their main concern is about having cash. Surprisingly, some are not really sure if they really want to be entrepreneurs. Most students opt to work first but at the same time try to find what to sell or offer to customer. In addition to the survey, ten of the surveyed respondents who available were called for semi-structured interviews to understand the issues being studied. The study raises a number of additional findings that are of interest but not directly related to this work.

**Keywords:** Effectiveness · Entrepreneurship · Entrepreneurship Education · Higher Learning Institution · Malaysia

## 1 Introduction

A topic which attracts the most attention among academicians and journalists is Entrepreneurship. Researchers have been focusing on the function of an entrepreneur which is to serve the economy (Sugiato et al., 2014; Shane et al., 2003). The concept of entrepreneurship can be understood as a process of vision, change and creation. The act of entrepreneurship needs a certain amount of energy and passion to create and

implement new ideas. There seems to be an agreement that the act of entrepreneurship involves creating something new (Jolanda, 2008). In addition, entrepreneurship can be interpreted as a “process” rather than one-time event, action or decision. It is all based on the level of creativity a person has to uncover new ideas and also to arrange the resources in ways that have not been done before (Sugiato et al., 2014). Based on Malaysia SME statistics 2019, there are 907,065 establishments and 98% of this establishments are micro enterprises or small businesses (SMECorp, 2019). There is less known on how many entrepreneurs actually in the country currently; however, Ridzwan et al. (2017) reported that there are 2.6 million of entrepreneurs in 2014. The prosperity of a country can be achieved if the country has at least 2% of entrepreneurs in their country’s population (Ridzwan et al., 2017)

Entrepreneurship is an important concept for discovering opportunities and stimulating growth. It has become a powerful tool for creating jobs and improving economic power in the labour market and economy as a whole (Byun et al., 2018). This is more obvious with the advent of the fourth industrial revolution, a variety of competencies such as creativity, innovation, and agility are required for start-ups (Kim et al., 2017). In addition, Omoruyi et al. (2017) found a positive relationship between entrepreneurship and economic development, and they suggested in order to decrease unemployment rate and stimulate economic growth in a country, entrepreneurial spirit should be fostered from an early age. As such, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship courses have been introduced to nurture students to be future entrepreneurs. In fact, most institutions currently provide entrepreneurial training programs with the belief that the importance of entrepreneurship and the knowledge and skills needed to become an entrepreneur can be taught, and the proportion of policy support toward entrepreneurship education has been increasing in many countries around the world (O’Connor, 2013; Walter and Block, 2016). Following the same vein in other countries, Malaysian government has taken an active role in the establishment of entrepreneurship education (Rahim et al., 2015). Many initiatives have been designed to encourage nation, particularly students to venture out or set-up their business. All universities in Malaysia are now offered entrepreneurship courses in line with the government aspiration to have more success entrepreneurs and a true entrepreneurial nation by 2030 as stated in Malaysian National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 (NEP 2030) that was launched on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

## **2 Background: Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship**

There are many discussions on entrepreneur and entrepreneurship. Several theories have been put forward by scholars to explain these concepts. These theories have their roots in many topics such as economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and management. Among the earliest discussion on entrepreneur was put forward by Cantillon in the early 1700's who described an entrepreneur as someone who bearing risk by buying at certain prices and selling at uncertain prices (Carton et al., 1998). Following Cantillon, according to Carton et al (1998), Jean Baptiste Say broadened the definition to include the concept of combining factors of production, also noting that the entrepreneur must have special personal qualities (Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990). The entrepreneur is the individual or team that identifies the opportunity, gathers the

necessary resources, creates and is ultimately responsible for the consequences of the organization (Carton et al., 1998). Among the prominent concept of entrepreneurship was introduced by Schumpeter (1934) who defined entrepreneurs as follows:

“The carrying out of new combinations we call “enterprise”; the individuals whose function it is to carry them out we call “entrepreneurs.”... But whatever the type, everyone is an entrepreneur only when he actually “carries out new combinations,” and loses that character as soon as he has built up his business, when he settles down to running it as other people run their businesses (p.74).

While entrepreneur is someone who locates the need of society and tries to meet the same, with his/her innovative idea (Schumpeter, 1934), entrepreneurship is about a process of establishing a business entity, intending to get profit, as a return in the future (Surbhi, 2019). The term entrepreneurship is derived from the French verb “entreprendre” and German word “unternehmen,” both of which translate to “undertake” (Cunningham and Lischeron, 1991). Carton et al. (1998) argued that there are two distinctly different approaches to define entrepreneurship. The first approach is to define what an entrepreneur is and then observe them. Based upon the observations, entrepreneurship would be defined inductively in terms of what the individuals do. The second approach is to an a priori definition of entrepreneurship and its related behaviours, and thereby define entrepreneurs as those who engage in entrepreneurial activity.

Three thinkers were central to the inclusion of entrepreneurship: Joseph Schumpeter, Frank Knight, and Israel Kirzner. Joseph Schumpeter propounded the well-known innovative theory of entrepreneurship (Śledzik, 2013). He suggested that entrepreneurs – not just companies – were responsible for the creation of new things in the search of profit. Schumpeter takes the case of a capitalist closed economy which is in stationary equilibrium (Śledzik, 2013). He believed that entrepreneurs disturb the stationary circular flow of the economy by introducing an innovation and takes the economy to a new level of development. The activities of the entrepreneurs represent a situation of disequilibrium as their activities break the routine circular flow (Carton et al., 1998).

Knight focused on entrepreneurs as the bearers of uncertainty and believed they were responsible for risk premiums in financial markets (Emmet, 2010). He distinguished between risk and uncertainty. According to Knight, “risk” refers to a situation in which the probability of an outcome can be determined, and therefore the outcome insured against. “Uncertainty,” by contrast, refers to an event whose probability cannot be known. Knight argued that even in long-run equilibrium, entrepreneurs would earn profits as a return for putting up with uncertainty (Emmet, 2010).

Kirzner thought of entrepreneurship as a process that led to the discovery. The basic concept in Kirzner’s theory of entrepreneurship is alertness. Alertness leads individuals to make discoveries that are valuable in the satisfaction of human wants. The role of entrepreneurs lies in their alertness to hitherto unnoticed opportunities (Fu-Lai Yu, 2001). Through their alertness, entrepreneurs can discover and exploit situations in which they are able to sell for high prices that which they can buy for low prices.

Kirzner (1973) argues that the existence of disequilibrium situations in the market implies profit opportunities. Entrepreneurs endeavour to exploit these opportunities, thus eliminating errors, so that the economy moves towards equilibrium (Fu-Lai Yu, 2001).

Regardless of how researchers debate, discuss and critics about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, it is commonly accepted that an entrepreneur is a person who sets up a business with the aim to make a profit, while entrepreneurship is about getting out into the world, doing it and makes it happen (Di Meglio, 2013). Entrepreneurship is not only simply researching, writing or reading (Di Meglio, 2013). It is the process of designing, launching and running a new business, which is often initially a small business. The people who create these businesses are called entrepreneurs. In order to be aspiring entrepreneurs, ones need to acquire knowledge, both explicit and tacit knowledge (Byun et al., 2018). With these knowledge, entrepreneurs can spot opportunities, act on it, and make profit out of it (Fernandes, 2019).

Entrepreneur can be a person who first sells its products/services, or someone who sets up first online store on the side or a freelancer just starting out. He/she can also be someone who starts a side hustle that eventually can create a full-time, sustainable business with employees. In addition, an entrepreneur also is someone who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise (Merriam-Webster, 2019). A good thing is entrepreneurs see possibilities and solutions, found an idea and turn it to a business (Drucker, 2007), while an average person does not. Entrepreneurs are the doer rather than observer. They capture an idea and execute it. In fact, they are the leaders that strike out on their own to improve society (Drucker, 2014; Fernandes, 2019). Thus, understanding what an entrepreneur is can help more people recognize the value they contribute to the world.

## 2.1 Entrepreneurships Educations

Entrepreneurs have much to give to society. Their contribution to the welfare of society is of high order (Rahim et al., 2015). A business person, explicitly an entrepreneur, apart from making money for him or herself also helps the society in many ways in terms of financially and socially. He/she moves various resources, both tangible and intangible, promoting capital formation (Kennedy, 2013). In a market full of uncertainty, it is the entrepreneur who can actually help clear up uncertainty, as he makes judgments or assumes the risk (Fernandes, 2019). Recognising the importance of entrepreneurship for the economy, government in both developed and developing nations have moved a lot of their policies from being directed towards a managed economy to an entrepreneurial economy (Omoruyi et al., 2017). In addition, the inability of some graduates of the educational system to get proper jobs of their qualification has encouraged government everywhere to introduce entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities (Byun et al., 2018). Part of the reasons is to spark all these graduates not only as a job seeker but at the same time to have a courage to become a job creator. It is believed that through this effort can lead to less unemployed graduates and an increase in business opportunities, which will have a direct impact to the economy, particularly on achieving the developed nation status (Omoruyi et al., 2017) as envisioned by many developing countries such as Malaysia.

Paolucci et al. (2019) advocate that entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. It prepares people to be responsible and enterprising individuals. In addition, it also helps people develop attitudes necessary to achieve the goals they set out for themselves (Omoruyi et al., 2017). Furthermore, entrepreneurship education also focuses on the development of skills or attributes that enable the realization of opportunity, which are divergent from management education that focused on the best way to operate existing hierarchies (Paolucci et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship education is not only important for economic development, but also in improving the quality and quantity of future entrepreneurs (Syed et al., 2011). Evidence shows that people with entrepreneurial education are more employable than those who are not (European Commission, 2019).

In Malaysia, the Malaysia Ministry of Higher Education has taken the initiative by making entrepreneurship subjects compulsory to all students in the public universities. Higher Education Entrepreneurship Development Policy was launched on 13th April 2010 by the Ministry of Education (MOE) with the aim to boost the development of more holistic and well-organized entrepreneurship programs. Specifically, the implementation of the policy aims to produce graduates from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with thinking and entrepreneurial attributes as well as to increase the number of entrepreneurs among graduates who are engaged in businesses as a catalyst for the achievement of economic transformation in the country (Rahim et al., 2015). It is also aim to increase number of people from a middle to a high income economy and at the same time to produce more academics with values, skills, thoughts, and entrepreneurship qualities. In addition to the policy, the Entrepreneurship Action Plan of Higher Education Institutions (2016-2020) (MOHE, 2019) was rolled out by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in 2016 to promote entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship development in institutions and instil entrepreneurial mind-sets and behaviours into all students as well as those seeking to become graduate entrepreneurs (Sani, 2018). The four initiatives include high impact education practices, a job creator framework, improving the student entrepreneur development support ecosystem and strengthening the entrepreneur teaching force competency. Recently, the Malaysian government has launched the National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 (NEP 2030) and it is aimed at empowering the B40 (refers to the bottom 40% of households with monthly income of RM3900 and below) by inculcating a culture of entrepreneurship. This has even strengthen the needs of having entrepreneurship education in the early years.

According to Rahim et al. (2015), the entrepreneurship education in Malaysia is moving forward towards the right direction. Students are not only encouraged to participate in class but also to take part in many entrepreneurship activities at their respective universities - training programs, seminars, short courses, conferences and entrepreneurship events. In fact, study by Badariah et al. (2016) advocated that entrepreneurship education program which have been offered by the Malaysian public university are very effective in enhancing the entrepreneurial skills of students. Thus, it is expected that there should be more graduates become entrepreneurs now and that they are doing well. However, despite this promising anecdote, not many graduates are really embarking themselves as entrepreneurs. Some issues and challenges still persist and researchers still try to understand the real issues behind it. Thus, this paper aims to understand what are the issues and challenges that these graduates faced – i.e. are they

really want to be entrepreneurs, are the courses designed for them are good enough and what sorts of motivations do these potential entrepreneurs needed to become real entrepreneurs, and also what are the factors that inhibit them of doing so.

## **2.2 Bachelor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation (BEI)**

This programme was launched in Faculty of Economics and Management (FEP) in 2013/2014 session with 27 students as a first cohort in joining this programme. The objectives of the programme are to i) educate and produce graduates who are able to create their own job opportunity, ii) instill entrepreneurial qualities and innovative characteristics among graduates, iii) inculcate leadership and managerial skills among graduates, and also iv) produce graduates who are experts in negotiation and promote business ideas to the market (FEP, 2019). The duration of the study is six semesters (three years) for full time students. Students are needed to complete all 122 credit hours to full the requirements for graduation. They need to complete the university and faculty compulsory courses within these three years and at the same time need to complete 22 of entrepreneurship and innovation courses (approximately 70 hours) that were designed to them by few experts previously. Before they can take these 22 courses, students are needed to enrol in LMCW1022 – Introduction to entrepreneurship course.

Three cohorts of students have completed the study. One more cohort (Cohort 4) will be attending their graduation this November, while currently cohort 5 and 6 are still pursuing their degree. Analysis from students that have graduated (Cohort 1, 2 and 3) shows most of them are working, few continues to do their master degree but only small number of students embark as entrepreneur. Majority of them are working in any agency regardless their area of study. The recent cohort who just completed their degree are still waiting whether to set-up a business, to work or to continue their study. Many are still waiting to attend the convocation ceremony which will be held in UKM in November 2019. It is expected that some of them has started their business or be an entrepreneur since they have completed all the entrepreneur courses. However, it is still unknown to what extent they have embarked being an entrepreneur or working for others. Thus, this study intends to understand their current situation, issues and challenging about this programme and the courses. It is hoped by doing this, more improvement can be made and more issues can be solved.

## **3 Methodology**

The research was designed as both quantitative and qualitative study. Quantitative approach purports to be focused more on discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships, including classifications of types of phenomena and entities (Goerten, 2017). It is the systematic empirical investigation of observable phenomena via statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques (Lisa, 2008). In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were also being carried-out to understand the issues or challenges faced by the respondents. This method allows researchers to question interviewees closely on the major constraints and incentives encountered.

Thirty-three students in Bachelor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation (BEI) are the main respondents of this research. They were chosen because they have just completed

their undergraduate studies and at the same time, their mind is still fresh with the topics and courses that they have taken. A questionnaire with 34 items were design in Google form was sent to them via email. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), questionnaire through the Internet is the most convenient way to get feedback as they are much simpler and cheaper to reach respondents. Through a link that provided by this software, respondents can reach and answer the online survey provided they have access to the internet from various platforms such as email, website, and even in the Facebook (Nagalakshmi and Treved, 2015). Data update from respondents can be seen live and results are processed automatically by the application (Harrison, 2016). Many researchers have started using this Google form to gather data from wide geographical survey (Nagalakhmi and Trevedi, 2015; Harrison, 2016).

All thirty-three students completed the questionnaire. Ten respondents who are available were called to attend for short interview sessions. Semi-structured interviews were used. All these interviews were tape recorded using a smart phone recorder, and were then transcribed. Quotes that were relevant to issues being studied were selected.

#### **4 Findings and Discussions**

Four parts were developed in the questionnaire for data collection. All the data were analyzed using the Excel and also Statistical Packages for the Social Science (SPSS) software.

##### ***Respondent Profile.***

As mentioned earlier, 33 respondents have posted their answers on Google form link. Most of the respondents used smart phones and most of them were using iPhone, Samsung or Huawei to answer the survey. Some of the respondents have more than one phone and some of them have a dedicated phone for social networking activities, particularly on Instagram. As expected, most of them are very young since they are all undergraduate students, age between 21 to 27 years old, and majority are Malays. Their source of income while studying is mainly from loan such as The National Higher Education Fund (PTPTN) and government loan. Not many are self-funded or parents' sponsored. Table 1 displays the respondent characteristics.

Table 1 depicts the respondents' characteristics. Majority of the respondent age 22 years old, which is expected as they left school at the age of 18, joined Matriculation for a year and registered as university students and graduated after three years. Interestingly, there are at least two important distributions in this respondent profile – gender and household income. As most other universities in Malaysia, there is more female than male students. Female now has taken role in not only universities, but also in elsewhere. There are more female now working in both public and private sectors as well as being entrepreneurs. As expected, majority of the respondents come from the B40 income group of which their parents' monthly household income is less than RM4000. This group of income is considered under poverty and get most support from the government policies such as the Life Support Programme, e-Kasih, fuel subsidies. In order to get these support, people in this group of income need to show proofs of their salary and registered with the government. Usually they were given an ID card and with this card that can get the subsidy that the Malaysia government granted.

**Table 1.** Respondents’ characteristics (N=33).

<b>Age</b>		<b>Source of income</b> Loan Parents’ sponsored Others	
21	9.1%		
22	60.6%		78.8%
23	18.1%		
24	6.2%		18.2%
25	3%		3%
27			
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Parents’ monthly household income</b> Less RM1000 RM1000-RM2000 RM2001-RM3000 RM3001-RM4000 More than RM4000	
Male (9)	27.3%		8%
Female (24)	72.7%		13%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			25%
Chinese	12.2%		32%
Malay	84.8%		22%
Indian and others	3%		

**Student Involvement in Business.**

Majority of the respondents did not have a business yet, which is considerably acceptable because there are still students and will be attending their convocation soon. One interesting fact is that although they are still students, more than 30% of these respondents have their own business, whether they start a small business of their own or they become an agent of stockist or *dropshipper* for other products. Although this program does not require students to own a business, but some of these respondents have taken initiatives to do so. Interestingly, some of them have been able to make sales upto RM3000 a month.

*“I sell all kind of things on Lazada and Shoppe. I become an agent for several products to earn some income. I am glad I manage to do, at least I do not need to ask for my parents for allowance.”*

*Respondent A*

*“I own a business with my friends in Bangi. We give services on design and all sort of things on media. So far so good. I need to expand my business after I finish this programme.”*

*Respondent B*

There are sixteen respondents that claim that their parents own a business. However, eleven of these respondents do not interested to continue with their family business. Most of them want to experience working in a company or find their own path. Only five of them consider to join their parents’ business. Interestingly, 15% of the



respondents who their parents did not own any business or they never have experienced in business before, own a business.

*“When I first join this programme, I have already known what I want. I just need time to gather things. That is why I try to arrange my class as minimum days as I can so that I can also concentrate on my business. But Doc, it is just a small business.”*

*Respondent C*

*“My parents did not pressure me on my career path. They allow me what I want do or venture out. They are my great supporters. I will make sure my business will fly high. But I don't know when this happen. Just need to try.”*

*Respondent B*

### ***Student Involvement in Activities.***

More than half of the respondents (57.6%) said that they benefited from the programme. They found that the programme has groomed them from someone who are novice to someone who have more knowledge about what entrepreneurship is all about. Majority of the respondents stated if they were given another chance to start their first year again, they wanted to perform better, they wanted to start their own business and they also wanted to join all sort activities designed for the student regardless whether it is inter-faculties programme or inter-universities. Many have regretted of doing so. Almost three quarters of the respondents stated:

*“We wish that we have started our business earlier. With the help of the lecturers and faculty we can grow faster and better.”*

*Respondent J*

*“We wish that we can think like this previously. There is so many opportunities in the university. But we don't really care because we thought life in university is just to study and pass the exam.”*

*Respondent H*

*“Our mistakes. Every weekend we think of going back to our hometown. We forgot to take up the opportunities here. It is hard but some of friends have made through. We are proud of them.”*

*Respondent B*

*“Hah! Can we just turn the clock back?”*

*Respondent F*

Interviewed respondents claim that during their first year, most of the entrepreneurship students are less receptive about the programme. They stated the first year of the entrepreneurship introduction course (LMCW1022) is so hectic because there are too many tasks to do. They need to make presentation, play business simulation games, attend seminar and talks, pitch their business, compete with other faculties and also sell. According to some of the interviewers, some student has become discourage with these kind of tasks because they have handful tasks to accomplish. On the other hand, some students which can be considered to have an entrepreneurial mind-set found the opportunity in this course but the number is too few. These students usually went to Centre for Entrepreneurship & SME’s Development (UKM-CESMED<sup>1</sup>) to seek for further help to attend more entrepreneur advance courses. At the same time, those who are majoring in entrepreneurship in FEP still need to continue with the programme because they are compulsory to take the course as part of the requirement to graduate. Altogether, there are 22 entrepreneurship courses these BEI students need to take after the introduction of entrepreneurship course. Although there are some issues and criticism about some of these 22 courses; interestingly, majority of the respondents asserted that all courses designed for them are suitable to prepare themselves to be entrepreneurs.

*“I wish to have more hands-on courses like these. It helps us to think more creatively and innovatively.”*

*Respondent G*

*“There are so many projects we need to handle; some are relevant but not others.”*

*Respondent B*

#### ***Lecturers’ Involvement in Activities with Students.***

Majority respondents agree lecturers play an important part of their journey in pursuing degree in entrepreneurship and to keep them motivated. Almost half of the respondents stated some lecturers delivered their course so traditional. Lectures in classroom are given weekly, no class activity but focus more on quizzes, assignments and exams. For these respondents, this type of approach is not suitable since they need more hands-on activities. Majority of the respondents needs activity outside classroom such as industrial visits, training, talks from succeed and experienced entrepreneur and also more networking. They stated that entrepreneurs do not seat in class but moving around with objectives. As such, they required more experience and motivated lecturers to handle these kind entrepreneurship courses. For them, *“chalk and talk”* does not work 100% in today’s education but more on meaningful learning experience entrepreneurial visits. Among the high-score courses which the respondents claimed benefited them most include (see Table 2):

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<sup>1</sup> UKM CESMED – centre that are responsible to provide services and advises to Academic entrepreneurs and Non-academic entrepreneurs for UKM.

**Table 2.** Courses rated by respondents based on ranking (N = 33).

	Likert-scale (%)				
	5	4	3	2	1
Project Management	67.7	29.4	-	2.9	-
Planning and Starting New Business	58.8	32.4	5.9	2.9	-
Networking and Negotiation	55.9	38.2	-	6.1	-
Strategic Innovation Management	55.9	38.3	2.9	2.9	-
Community Entrepreneurship	52.9	44.1	-	2.9	-

5- Excellent, 4 - Very Good, 3 - Fair, 4 - Satisfactory, 5- Poor

*“These modules developed interpersonal skill such as creating a creative thinking skill and being proactive. The learning process and environment are efficient and the lecturers are competent and dedicated upon teaching the courses.”*

*Respondent I*

*“We have acquired a lot of experiences from these courses and we hope the lecturers maintain the way these courses were conducted.”*

*Respondent G*

*“For student entrepreneurs like us, we really need hands-on matters. Teaching traditionally mostly in classroom is not really relevant for us anymore.”*

*Respondent A*

*“Please, please, please! We need to meet more entrepreneurs in all sorts of industries. Can we get them in this programme? We also need encouragement how to register our company.”*

*Respondent D*

Despite the criticism imposed by the respondents, majority of the 22 courses offered in this BEI programme are rated as either very good or excellent (more than 75% of respondents rated the courses as in these two categories). For each course, not even 25% of the respondents claim that the course is satisfactory. This means that all courses offered in this BEI programme are considered being very good or excellent. Interestingly, none of the courses offered in this programme is rated as poor. Only a few respondents suggested that new courses such as industrial training, project paper, social business, and big data analysis should be introduced to them.

*“I think the courses in this programme should be revised. Please give an industrial training course like other programme.”*

*Respondent E*

*“I think courses like big data analysis and digital marketing should be introduced in this programme. We are talking doing business online nowadays. Thus, we demand this course in this programme.”*

*Respondent H*

### ***Students’ Opinion on the Programmes.***

Respondents were asked to state their opinions on anything they like or dislike about the programme. An open ended questions were given to them in the questionnaire. They were asked to state three things that they like about the programme and three things that they do not. More than 60 opinions on likes and dislikes were list down from all respondents. These responses were rearranged accordingly and those who stated their opinions in Malay language has been translated to English. There are five themes discovered in their responses:

#### ***Motivation.***

Majority of the respondents stated they needed some sorts of motivation to embark on their own business. They concluded that some lecturers motivate them quite well that they feel so many businesses they can venture into. At the same time, other group of these respondents stated that some lecturers are good in giving lectures but not in encouraging students to carry-out activities or even to start their business. In fact, according to them, some lecturers themselves were not motivated enough to teach some of these entrepreneurial courses. Part of the reasons is that the lecturer themselves have never owned or advised any business at all: *“A lot of theories. Students sit in the classroom and listen to the lecturer. Not interactive enough for two ways communication.”*

*“I enjoy class which is enthusiastic and lively. It motivates me to perform better.”*

*Respondent I*

*“Every time this lecturer enters our classroom, we already prepare to participate. And yes, there are so much sharing and stories. I need more.” Respondent J*

#### ***Industrial Engagement.***

More than half students stated that they are unclear about what they want to be after they finished their studies. Majority of them still wanted to look for a job, however, they felt that the degree they pursued in entrepreneurship and innovation is not suitable to work in company. They were still sceptical on what they can offered to the company. They felt that other students who majoring in other programmes are luckier since they have experienced industrial training. Some dislikes’ comments include: *“No industrial*

*offer in this programme. Should include industrial training. I want to have working experience”.*

*“We need industrial training courses in this programme. Not all of us wants to be entrepreneur. Thus, we need to get exposure to work in a company before we complete our study.”*

*Respondent E*

#### ***Classroom Setting.***

One of the comments that most respondents’ comments is about the classroom arrangement. They stated that classroom such as lecture halls are not suitable for entrepreneurial students. They claimed that as entrepreneur they need some sort of like laboratory and incubator style classroom where they can generate their ideas more creatively and efficiently. They wished that they can stay in a lab to do their projects and to put their ideas without having to move from classroom to another: *“Once the class finish, we need to go out. We need to book the classroom every now and then to work on our project. Ideas sometimes comes at night, no special room for us.”*

#### ***Practical Tasks.***

Another substantial comment is about the practical tasks that students need to do. Majority respondents agreed that as an entrepreneur student, they needed to be hands-on and brush on their skills. As such, they needed active learning and more outside classroom activities such as industrial visits, attending seminar, training and others. Currently, not all of the courses offered active learning. Some courses still implement exams and even some lecturers are too rigid with their slide lectures: *“Some courses have no elaboration. Lecturers still read form slides. We want more practical stuff such as handling outside project or public speaking for us to be more confident.”*

#### ***Mentorship.***

Respondents also asserted that during their course they did not have a dedicated supervisor to guide them to be an entrepreneur. Currently, the faculty only assigns one academic member to at least ten faculty students regardless their background. Most of the assistance given to these respondents was about the planning of completing their studies or something to do with their academic. None of these academicians supervise them about the business they want to do. Most respondents either work on their own task or they seek help from the entrepreneur club advisors or the assistant dean. These are some support they got from the faculty. They wish to have a dedicated mentor for them to make sure their business proposal executes and the business becomes reality: *“I have no mentor to discuss my business. No dedicated staff to help me to run my business. We should have a success business person to be our mentor.”*

*“The club advisors give us support but they are also busy with other tasks. I am hoping to have a lecturer to be my advisor or my business partner.”*

*Respondent D*

## 5 Concluding Remarks

The results of this study has given some sorts of overviews about this entrepreneurship education programme running in the university. It indicates some issue should be addressed to keep the momentum of the students who choose entrepreneurship and innovation as their major. In general, most students are happy with the courses offered to them except three to four courses that they think need to be improvised. More digital courses and practical courses should be offered so that they are more hands-on to polish their skill. In addition, they also need some sort of public speaking and negotiating skills so that they can appear to be more confident.

Interestingly, some other findings emerge from this study. These include motivation, industrial engagement, classroom setting, practical tasks and mentorship. Some of other studies also found that mentorship and motivation need to be embedded in the programme to encourage students to embark in any business projects (These findings can help the course designers or the academicians to steer their programme towards what is needed by the students). Students also asserted that need information in setting-up their business as early as the first year of study. In addition to the finding, one implication that can be acknowledged that not only students need support in entrepreneurial skills, academician who taught these courses should also be expert on the subject matter both theories and practical. To do that, they need to attend courses on entrepreneurship, become members of some entrepreneurship societies, and even possibly own a business or work with the student to successfully execute the business. In addition, business talks and seminars with real entrepreneurs (whether a success or failure) and visits to entrepreneurs' sites should be more frequent so that more information and knowledge can be learnt and more experiences can be accumulated to prepare students to be real entrepreneurs.

Learning about entrepreneurship project is an important part in terms of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship projects such as talks; seminars or visits are made to enhance university students in entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, University students should be supported by positive learning environment so it can create independent character, initiative action, goal oriented, and collaborative personality students.

## 6 Future Research Directions

This study focuses only on BEI students in Faculty of Economics and Management. This programme has just been offered six years ago and only three cohorts have graduated. Thus, this programme is still new and more improvement should be made to strengthen the programme. The current study only focus to the fourth cohort who are graduating this coming November 2019. Many information has been gathered from this study which give a new, possibly fresher, certainly wider and more inclusive perspective to programme. Building on this present issue, there are opportunities for further work especially on the key issue of profiling students who choose to embark in this programme and how to help these students to achieve the country intention to have more future entrepreneurs.

This study adopts a small survey and interviews with students who are majoring in entrepreneurship and innovation. Further investigation is needed to investigate other entrepreneurship programmes in other universities and more entrepreneurship students should be involved. It is interesting to explore the characteristics of these students in general. Future research should also embark on more rigorous methodology such as longitudinal studies using multivariate statistical analysis as a tool to provide a stronger conclusion on the issues being investigated.

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