

# The Relationship between Entrepreneurship Skills Among UTHM Students and the Importance of Entrepreneurship Course for Students

Nur Emylia Natasha Mohamad Hasni<sup>1</sup> & Anim Zalina Azizan<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Business Management, Faculty of Technology Management and Business, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), 86400 Parit Raja, Batu Pahat, Johor, MALAYSIA.

\*Corresponding Author

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**Abstract:** Entrepreneurship is one of the sectors that help grow a country's economy. One way to achieve so is to provide proper and good education to polish entrepreneurship skills, especially among younger generations. So it can be said that providing education on entrepreneurship can build and improve new skills that indirectly help the country's development. Therefore there is a need for a country to have a firm base of entrepreneurship. This study aims to determine the level of entrepreneurship skills that UTHM students have, the level of importance of entrepreneurship courses and the relationship between entrepreneurship skills of UTHM students and the matter of entrepreneurship courses for students. The method used in collecting data for this study is quantitative. A set of questionnaires was distributed to 283 University Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia students in their 2nd, 3rd and 4th year of the program. This study's key is finding if entrepreneurship courses play a role in students' entrepreneurship skills.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship skills, Entrepreneurship education, an Entrepreneurship course

## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship can be generally defined as the ability and readiness to organize and run a business. Therefore, entrepreneurs are the people who attempt to make a start to enable entrepreneurship to happen. This section will explain the main components of this study, such as the research background, problem statement, research questions, research objectives, the scope of study and significance.

### 1.1 Research Background

Entrepreneurship has a significant impact on a country's economy and economic progress. In one of the research articles in the American Journal of Applied Sciences, an original article by Leow Meng Chew (2016), T.W. Schultz, an economist of Renowned American, once defined entrepreneurship as a process of an individual adjusting to society. However, as time goes by, the word's meaning turns into a more specific definition. Therefore, entrepreneurship can also be defined as what entrepreneurs do.

### 1.2 Research Background

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"Entrepreneurs use their initiative and take calculated risks to launch new businesses by raising funds to implement inventive new ideas that solve issues, address difficulties, or meet the needs of a clearly defined market." (Gibb, 2005; Kuratko, 2005). Given the correct environment, knowledge and abilities in entrepreneurship may be taught and improved, according to the literature (Gibb, 2005; Kuratko, 2005). Education plays an important role in developing entrepreneurial potential (Hannon, 2006). Entrepreneurship skills can be defined as persistent intervention by educators to students to polish entrepreneurial qualities and skills to prepare students for the future if there might be anywhere near the world of business. Suggests by Gibb (1999, 2005) states that there are three main goals for entrepreneurship education: to develop a broad understanding of entrepreneurship (Chen *et al.*, 1998; Jack & Anderson, 1999); to develop an entrepreneurial mindset (Hytti & O'Gorman, 2004; Loudon & Smither, 1999); and learn how to start and operate a business effectively (Solomon *et al.*, 2002). So this research is conducted to identify the relationship between entrepreneurship skills and entrepreneurship courses for students.

### 1.3 Problem Statements

Entrepreneurship entails more than just starting a company. Therefore, the need of the hour is to instil an entrepreneurial mindset in pupils through entrepreneurship education. In the twenty-first century, entrepreneurship education is one of the essential aspects that may impact students' future job decisions. (Fayolle, 2013; Wei Xingjian *et al.*, 2019; Robert *et al.*, 2018; Franke & Luthje, 2004; Wei Xingjian *et al.*, 2019; Wei Xingjian *et al.*, 2019; Wei Xingjian *et al.*, 2019).

Integrating entrepreneurship into educational systems is one strategy to foster a culture of entrepreneurial thinking. Some educators believe that incorporating entrepreneurship into the school curriculum will help kids achieve better academic results while exposing them to the possibility of owning a firm once they graduate from high school or college. Students' perceptions of entrepreneurship, and their understanding of different career options, might be influenced by introducing the concept of enterprise and entrepreneur approaches in higher education. (Kubberod & Petterson, 2017; Kassar. *et al.*, 2015). Cheung (2008) claims, In Hong Kong, secondary school entrepreneurship education programmes were beneficial in increasing students' knowledge of the commercial world and establishing personal characteristics. Entrepreneurship skills can embrace a broad range of various skills such as leadership, creative thinking, business management, communication skill, technical skill, thinking skill, information technology skill, time management skill and also planning abilities. Gaining entrepreneurial talents might entail developing various skill sets that can be applied to multiple professional roles and industries. For a successful business owner, the abilities of business management are needed. Building and maintaining successful project teams might need to improve other skills like leadership and communication. Learning about a specific knowledge, ability, or experience required to transform ideas into action is referred to as entrepreneurial skills

acquisition (Oduma, 2018). Amadi (2012) states that it is a process in which a person obtains or learns a specific skill or kind of behaviour required in the workplace through training or education. Acquisition of skills is one element that makes the entrepreneurship trainee become a successful entrepreneur. It is feasible to teach higher education students how to be entrepreneurs by assisting them in developing the entrepreneurial skills required to transform ideas into action. It concerns that students nowadays seem to be lacking in additional skills that might be very useful for them in the future to succeed and to make it in the corporate world. According to Aniedi & Basse (2020), in a journal titled World Journal of Interactive Research, people with the requisite entrepreneurial skills can create wealth and help the state and country attain economic prosperity and job creation. Therefore, students need to acquire entrepreneurial skills to be independent, generate income, live a responsible life and contribute to the development of society.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

There are a few research questions in carrying out this research;

- (i) What is the level of entrepreneurship skills among students?
- (ii) What is the level of importance of entrepreneurship courses for students?
- (iii) What is the relationship between entrepreneurship skills and entrepreneurship courses for students?

#### 1.5 Research Objectives

The objective of this research are;

- (i) To assess the level of entrepreneurship skills among students.
- (ii) To identify the level of importance of entrepreneurship courses for students.
- (iii) To study the relationship between entrepreneurship skills and entrepreneurship courses for students

#### 1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this research is that students in their 2nd year and above from University Tun Hussein Onn are chosen because students in their 2nd, 3rd and 4th year had already enrolled in the university's entrepreneurship course.

#### 1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to have a clearer view of providing entrepreneurship education, such as making it compulsory for university students to enrol themselves in entrepreneurship courses, which would help improve and polish their entrepreneurship skills.

## 2. Literature Review

The literature review section discusses all relevant literature and variables important to this investigation to determine the relationship between entrepreneurship courses for students and entrepreneurship skills, level of entrepreneurship skills among students and entrepreneurship courses. The variables further explained in this section are entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship skills and entrepreneurship education.

### 2.1 Entrepreneurship

Leedy and Ormrod (2009) define entrepreneurship as finding a need, satisfaction, or opportunity and turning it into a valuable thing, product, or service. It can also refer to the process and activities entrepreneurs engage in to capture the value associated with business possibilities. It is fairly explained as a process driven by the desire to innovate, which leads to producing new goods, services, processing or approaches or improving existing ones and profit from it. Reynolds (2005) stated that

entrepreneurship could be defined as discovering new opportunities and establishing new enterprises or organizations. It is a major source of employment generation and economic growth. When a person tries to innovate something, and it turns out to be a success, job opportunities and new business ideas form from there. It fosters the growth of new businesses, employment, and markets, as well as the development of new skills and capacities. Entrepreneurship has evolved into a concept with a high priority on economic growth and long-term viability. Entrepreneurship is a strive where one is engaged with the trial of making and dealing with an undertaking for a reason. The reason might be close to home, social or formative. Again, the entrepreneurial approach tends to be accomplished within the organizational context. So, entrepreneurship is not only associated with small businesses or start-ups; it can occur in organizations of all types and sizes. Fernald (2011) considers entrepreneurship a developing topic of study and a realm of human endeavour that piqued academics, researchers, and policymakers' curiosity. Not only is entrepreneurship considered a viable means of tackling unemployment, poverty, and underdevelopment in developing nations, but it is also seen as a viable means of promoting economic growth, as well as a plan for both industrialized and emerging countries to achieve rapid economic development. Runyan-Ge, Dong and Swinney (2012) see entrepreneurs as individuals who identify an opportunity somewhere in the economy, gather resources needed and successfully fully utilize the opportunity and create and deliver value in an economic system. The development of entrepreneurship can lead to economic growth, employment generation and also sustainable development of the economy.

## 2.2 Entrepreneurship Skills

Entrepreneurship skills are the skills required by an entrepreneur. It can also be defined as a person's ability to put their thoughts into action. Creativity, innovation, risk-taking, and the ability to plan and manage projects to meet objectives are all examples of this. (European Commission, 2006). Entrepreneurship skills can be classified into technical, entrepreneurial, business management, and personal maturity skills. Technical skills are skills used to perform the practical task. Technical skills include organizing in a person, communication skills which are oral and written communication and technical management, which are controlling and managing the operation. Next is entrepreneurial skills.

As mentioned in the earlier part of the paragraph, entrepreneurial skills, which can also be called entrepreneurship skills is a skills that can turn concepts into a business plan. Entrepreneurial skills are opportunity recognition, environment scanning and a person's ability to access external competence. The third skill is business management skills. Business management skills are also known as managerial skills. Managerial skills include planning and organizing things that are business related. Entrepreneurs have to know and learn about problem-solving, the ability to deal with people and problems effectively, especially when it comes to customers, minimize and manage any possible risk and have the capability to put everything under control. Lastly is personal maturity. Personal maturity is described as self-awareness, when a person can reflect on what happened around them, recognizing if there needs to be any improvement on their weaknesses. It is also when a person feels responsible for resolving problems that arise at that moment. Entrepreneurial abilities, according to Entrialgo and Iglesias (2016), allow a person's ideas of entrepreneurial abilities are updated by offering knowledge about the hurdles of starting a project. Entrepreneurial skills, such as seeing, seizing, and altering possibilities, are essential for creating dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2012).

## 2.3 Entrepreneurship Education (Course)

Generally, entrepreneurship education is described as a course of study that teaches students how to start a new firm. Entrepreneurship education has grown to represent all types of information delivery aiming to equip individuals to produce economic wealth, boosting the nation's overall growth (Ekpoh & Edet, 2011). Generally, entrepreneurship education is a whole education and training process that helps to expand an individual's entrepreneurial intention and knowledge desirability. Entrepreneurship education allows individuals to recognize business opportunities, self-esteem, knowledge and skills to

practice them. It also includes instruction in opportunity recognition, concept commercialization, managing resources and initiating a business venture. According to the University at Buffalo's Centre of Entrepreneurial Leadership Clearinghouse, entrepreneurship education is defined as the process of imparting structural and formal entrepreneurial concepts, entrepreneurial behaviour, entrepreneurial culture, skills, and mental awareness to be used by students and individuals to develop their businesses and build connections with the business community with successful entrepreneurs. It is an essential component of university education that provides students with drive, self-efficacy, and confidence in their decision to pursue a career as an entrepreneur. In entrepreneurship classes, students are frequently graded on their development of entrepreneurial skills and mindsets rather than the course's outcome and the company plan. Changing the focus from the outcome to the process also changes what is rated. Rather than rating the business strategy, the process is now being placed. A learning log, also known as a reflection log, is an effective method of documenting the learning process (Robinson *et al.*, 2016). According to Fayolle (2006), creating new businesses is not the central focus but for students to develop their entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. It has also been suggested that entrepreneurship education be shifted from a teacher-centred to a student-centred model (Daniel, 2006; Robinson *et al.*, 2016). According to Neck and Greene (2011), entrepreneurship should be taught as a method rather than a process. Design thinking has also been proposed as a possible future of entrepreneurship education (Val *et al.*, 2017), with many similarities to the methodologies approach.

### 3. Research Methodology

In this chapter, there will be an explanation of the method adopted by this research. Furthermore, this chapter will explain every component involved in conducting this research, such as research paradigm, population and sample, data collection method, primary data, second data, data analysis, demographic analysis, descriptive analysis, pilot analysis, normality test analysis and inferential analysis.

#### 3.1 Research Paradigm

The term "research paradigm" refers to a mental model that shapes and impacts how to research community member's view their subject of study. It is a set of study methods and strategies that a researcher has chosen which allow the researcher to sharpen their research methods that are suitable to their research subject. The research paradigm is also known as research design. Research design can be classified into three ways which are the quantitative method, qualitative method and also mixed methods. In this research, where we are finding out about the relationship between entrepreneurship skills and entrepreneurship courses for students, the level of entrepreneurship skills among students and the level of entrepreneurship course, the method chosen to carry out this research is quantitative.

The quantitative method refers to collecting and analyzing numerical and countable data. The purpose is to find patterns and averages, make predictions, and visualize relationships. Quantitative research aims to determine the relationship between two variables available in the study: independent and dependent variables. The independent variable in this research is entrepreneurship courses for students, and the dependent variable is entrepreneurship skills. This research design can be either descriptive, which means subjects are usually measured once, or experimental, where issues are measured before and after a treatment or changes.

The size of the sample will be less than the total size of the population. There are two types of sampling that are probability sampling and nonprobability sampling. Probability sampling is the selection of participants from the people as the representative of the population. Nonprobability sampling is the selection of participants because of their availability and represents some characteristics the researcher wants to study.

The end goal of this study is to look at the relationship between entrepreneurship skills and entrepreneurship courses for students. Therefore, it can be said that this research is nonprobability sampling because, in UTHM, students enrolled in entrepreneurship courses are in their 2nd, 3rd and 4th

year of their programme. Therefore, the respondents fit the definition of nonprobability sampling, where participants represent the characters related to this research.

The population size of this research is total students of UTHM Parit Raja, which is around 15300, so the sample size for this research is 375.

### 3.2 Data Collection

The practice of acquiring and measuring information on variables of interest is known as data collection. It is a method for obtaining answers to research questions, testing hypotheses, and systematically evaluating study results. Quantitative data collection methods are commonly used because they are straightforward and measurable. A set of questionnaires will be distributed to sample this research via 'Google Form'.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis uses statistical and logical approaches to explain, illustrate, and analyze data. Data is collected from respondents that participated in any data collection method. As for this research, data is collected from respondents that have answered questionnaires distributed. *"Various analysis procedures "provide a way of drawing inductive inferences from data and distinguishing the signal which is the phenomenon of interest, from the noise (statistical fluctuations) present in the data."* (Shamoo and Resnik, 2003). There are two types of data analysis. They are demographic data analysis and descriptive data analysis.

Demographic analysis is the method used to know the age, gender, race and background composition of a population or the people involved. Demographic analysis population estimates are constructed using vital statistics records on birth and deaths. Usually, in questionnaires self-construct by students, the first part would be demographic questions such as age, gender, race or maybe some background information about the person answering the questionnaire. By using 'Google Forms', the demographic question in multiple choice form will be readily analyzed by the system and provide the researcher with percentages and a pie chart. For example, demographic questions in this study's questionnaire are gender, race, faculty and year of study.

Descriptive analysis is the starting point of any analytic process. It aims to answer the question of what happened. Descriptive analysis analyses data that helps describe and summarize data, such as patterns that might merge. Although it is vital to remember that this research will not help to predict future outcomes on its own, it will still help to organize data and prepare to conduct future analyses. This analysis also offers a notion of the data's distribution, assists in detecting outliers and mistakes, and allows for uncovering relationships between variables, preparing for further statistical analysis. In this research, the questions in the questionnaire are in the form of 5 points Likert- scale. Those five points consist of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. Likert-scale is ordinal data, and the method to analyze ordinal data is calculating median and percentage. The median is the value in the middle but not the median value of scale and can be calculated. The median and percentage are calculated to determine the result for the first and second objective, which is the level of entrepreneurship skills of UTHM students and the importance of entrepreneurship course for students.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Data Screening

Data screening in any multivariable analysis is crucial and is a base for any useful quantitative research output. Initial data screening quality determines the quality and outcome of the appropriate analysis. Understanding appropriate data screening and evaluation is the key to satisfying the assumptions of multivariate data analysis. As a result, the information gathered in this study will be examined with validity and missing values.

Based on Table 1, there is no missing value among the data collected. Therefore, the value of the missing items is 0, and the valid total number of respondents is 356, which means 356 rows of data from respondents. Therefore, the number of respondents is 94.9% of the sample size, which is 375.

**Table 1: Result of data screening missing value**

Variables	Valid	Missing
Gender	356	0
Race	356	0
Faculty	356	0
Year Of Study	356	0
Recognition of opportunity	356	0
Development of new products and services	356	0
Creativity	356	0
Personal maturity (self-awareness)	356	0
Leadership and communication skills	356	0
Planning and organizing skills	356	0
Business management skills	356	0
Problem-solving and critical thinking skills	356	0
Networking skills and making professional contacts	356	0
Entrepreneurship education plays an important role in responding to the challenge of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment.	356	0
Introducing entrepreneurship helps young people be more creative and self-confident in whatever they undertake.	356	0
Entrepreneurship education should develop high levels of technical skills for global economic competitiveness	356	0
Entrepreneurship education should empower citizens to integrate into the global economy successfully	356	0
The development of entrepreneurship education should allow learners to choose the courses they like.	356	0
Parents should be actively involved in the entrepreneurship education of their children.	356	0

#### 4.2 Reliability Test

Table 2 shows the Cronbach's Alpha value of the data collected's dependent and independent variables.

**Table 2: Result of reliability test of data**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Entrepreneurship Skills Among UTHM Students	0.971
Importance of Entrepreneurship Course for Students	0.976

#### 4.3 Descriptive analysis

Based on Table 3, the number of male respondents is 83, 23.3%, and the number of female respondents is 273, 76.7%. Out of the total of 356 respondents, 255 are Malay respondents, which makes it 71.6%, 45 are Chinese, 12.6%, 34 respondents, which is 34% are Indian, and the remaining 6.2% are 22 respondents from other races. As for the faculty of respondents, 30 respondents come from FKAAB, which is 8.4%. 10.1% of the respondents, 36 of them are from FKMP, and 214 are from FPTP, representing 60.1%. There are 35 respondents from FPTV, which is 9.8%, and respondents from FSKTM, 2.0%, which is seven. The last component of demographic information is the year of study. 283 respondents in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the degree are eight respondents, which is 2.2% only. Respondents

that are in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year old 18.3%, which is 65 respondents. 283 respondents, 79.5% are respondents that are in their 4<sup>th</sup> year.

**Table 3: Summary of respondent demographic in categorical**

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	83	23.3
Female	273	76.7
Race		
Malay	255	71.6
Chinese	45	12.6
Indian	34	9.6
Others	22	6.2
Faculty		
FKAAB	30	8.4
FKEE	34	9.6
FKMP	36	10.1
FPTP	214	60.1
FPTV	35	9.8
FSKTM	7	2.0
Year Of Study		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	8	2.2
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	65	18.3
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	283	79.5

Table 4 shows the description of the demographic profile for continuous variables. The average of entrepreneurship skills is 3.1529, and the standard of the importance of entrepreneurship education is 1.9213.

**Table 4: Summary of respondent's demographic in continuous**

	Valid	Missing	Mean	Std. Dev	Min.	Max.
Entrepreneurship Skills	356	0	3.1529	0.46612	2.00	4.00
Importance of Entrepreneurship Education	356	0	1.9213	0.65043	1.00	5.00

#### 4.5 Normality Test

In Table 5, it is shown that the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used in this normality test because the number of respondents is more than 50. Based on the table above, the result shows that the significance or p-value of both variables is 0.000. The p-value of 0.000 is lower than 0.05, meaning the data is not normally distributed. Since the information is not normal, a non-parametric test will be used.

**Table 5: Test of normality**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Entrepreneurship Skills	0.381	356	0.000	0.779	356	0.000
Importance Of Entrepreneurship Skills	0.317	356	0.000	0.773	356	0.000



#### 4.6 Correlation Analysis

In correlation analysis, Spearman's rho correlation is used because the result of the normality test showed that data is not normally distributed. Table 6.0 shows Spearman's rho correlation coefficient between entrepreneurship skills and the importance of entrepreneurship skills. There was a weak, negative (inverse) correlation (correlation coefficient = -0.122,  $p = 0.10$ ) between entrepreneurship skills and the importance of entrepreneurship courses for students. When one variable increases, the other decreases, resulting in a negative correlation.

**Table 6: Result of correlation analysis**

Spearman's rho Entrepreneurship Skills		
Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significant value
Importance of entrepreneurship course	-0.122	0.10

#### 4.7 Discussion

The result from data collected has been analyzed and tabulated in SPSS and results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The result of significance is 0.000, which means data is not normally distributed, and the correlation analysis result shows a weak, negative correlation between the two variables of this research. It also explains that if the level of entrepreneurship skills among UTHM students is high, then there is less important for entrepreneurship education for the students. Therefore, this research has two hypotheses: null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). The hypotheses are:

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between the entrepreneurship skills of UTHM students and the importance of entrepreneurship courses for students.

$H_1$ : There is a significant relationship between the entrepreneurship skills of UTHM students and the importance of entrepreneurship courses for students.

So, the p-value, known as the significance value obtained, is 0.000, less than 0.05, which is statistically significant. Therefore, it provides strong evidence against the null hypothesis, which means there is less than a 5% probability that the null hypothesis is correct. Consequently, we are rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis. So, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship skills among UTHM students and the importance of entrepreneurship courses for students.

Based on the results from the questionnaire feedback, it can be derived that most of the respondents (students) have a high and very high aptitude for entrepreneurship skills listed in the questionnaire. The result shows that UTHM students have a good and high level of entrepreneurship skills. The results of having UTHM students have a high level of entrepreneurship skills show that it is less important for these students to get more education and knowledge in entrepreneurship since they already have high entrepreneurship skills and quite a strong basic understanding of entrepreneurship. So this answers the second objective of this research, which is to assess the level of importance of entrepreneurship courses for students.

#### 5. Conclusion

To conclude, based on the results obtained, the study shows that the level of entrepreneurship skills of UTHM students is high, thus making the level of entrepreneurship course's importance for the students low. As for the relationship between the entrepreneurship skills of UTHM students and the matter of entrepreneurship courses for the students, the higher the level of entrepreneurship skills that the students have, the less important it is to provide entrepreneurship education which is in the form of entrepreneurship courses for them.

This result also revealed that entrepreneurship programmes effectively develop entrepreneurship skills. The findings of this study back up prior research by various authors (Jain & Chaudhary, 2017; Henry & Lewis, 2018), proving that entrepreneurship education positively impacts students' entrepreneurial abilities. Lyon and Zhang (2017) stated that entrepreneurship positively has implications in the short run. The modest relationship between entrepreneurship abilities and the efficacy of the entrepreneurship programme demonstrates that these factors are related. The findings of this study contradict those of Jain and Chaudhary (2017), who found that entrepreneurship education negatively influences students' entrepreneurial intent. The upshot of looking into numerous predictors of the program's design should be a more positive output in the future.

As a recommendation, universities could pay more attention to providing students with entrepreneurship courses or any form of knowledge delivery method to teach and educate them on entrepreneurship as it helps them master basic and advanced entrepreneurship skills before they even graduate. Therefore, the entrepreneurship courses are important, as we can see from the results earlier; when there is an entrepreneurship course provided to students of UTHM, they already know and are good in basic entrepreneurship knowledge, and indirectly, it helps them prepare themselves early to be in the business industries and outside world.

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