

C-EDU-124: School Youth Entrepreneur Program in Kubang Pasu Kedah

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Abstract

Studies have shown that countries with many entrepreneurs are more developed. Therefore, exposure to entrepreneurship knowledge should be encouraged from the school at an early stage i.e. primary level. However, the existing entrepreneurial programs have less impact on adolescents. In addition, the problem of unemployment among youth after SPM deepened, especially among high-risk youth, whereas students have the potential to contribute to the local community in particular and the country in general. Thus, the School Youth Entrepreneur Program (PURSe) has been designed to help address the problem. The objective of this program is to create awareness about the importance of entrepreneurship, enculturation of school students with hands-on entrepreneurship and cultivate the aspirations of entrepreneurship as a career choice among students after graduation. In this program students are exposed to the concept of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities by combining theory and practice through training, consultation and close monitoring. The program consists of six phases and adds value to existing entrepreneurship programs in schools through hands-on entrepreneurial activities. It has succeeded in creating entrepreneurial awareness and competence among school youth, start-up micro businesses in and outside the school and managed to build human capital by developing entrepreneurship characteristics and positive attitude of school youth such as leadership, integrity, commitment, desire, realistic, teamwork skills and self-confidence.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship Education, School Students, School Entrepreneurship Programs*

1. Introduction

The development of entrepreneurs needs to start from primary school level. At this level, students need to be exposed to entrepreneurial knowledge, values and characteristics in order to be aware and interested in venture creation. The Malaysian Ministry of Education has taken initial step by introducing Commerce and entrepreneurship element in Living Skill subjects at secondary school level where theoretical aspects of entrepreneurship elements are taught in the classroom. These required reasoning and cognitive ability among the students. Also, teachers need to use creative teaching approaches in order to create entrepreneurial awareness (Boon & Bohari, 2010).

1.1. Problem Statement

Research has shown that countries with many entrepreneurs are more developed (Frederick & Kuratko 2010). The exposure to entrepreneurial knowledge and skill should be inculcated into school children in the early stage of their primary education. The existing entrepreneurship program such as “Young entrepreneurs Program” is not effective in developing youth entrepreneurs and has been terminated in certain states. Hence, there is a need to develop more effective, meaningful entrepreneurship youth program such as the “Program Usahawan Remaja Sekolah or PURSe”. This effort could help to reduce unemployment rate among the school leavers especially after finishing Form Five by creating jobs through venture establishment. This self-employment is hoped to benefit high risk students more who are normally inclined towards involvement in social vices. In fact these youth groups are more interested in hands on activities rather than just classroom activities. The

objectives of this program are to create entrepreneurial awareness and educate secondary school students through hands-on entrepreneurial activity and also complement current entrepreneurship subjects taught at secondary school level. In this program, students were exposed to theoretical and practical aspects through training, coaching, mentoring, and close monitoring of their business start-up activities.

1.2 Objectives

The main objective of this paper is to share the experience in conducting the PURSe program and also to assess the effectiveness of enculturation of the entrepreneurship knowledge and skill among the youth at secondary school who participated in this program.

The specific objectives are:

1. To assess the achievement of the objectives of PURSe program.
2. To investigate the implementation process of this program.
3. To find out the perception of students towards this program.
4. To assess overall effectiveness of this program on school youth.

1.3 Significance of the program

This program has created entrepreneurial awareness and competencies among the students involved. It has also benefited the community in term of increasing their quality of life through job creation. The participants of this program are expected to start their enterprise even during their studies or after leaving school consequently, help in reducing unemployment among the secondary school leavers.

The implementation of PURSE program also benefits academicians involved through developing case study of school youth start-up and basic entrepreneurship training modules. This program also enhance entrepreneurship education for secondary school.

More so, the program was also a good training ground for graduate interns as it gives them the opportunity to acquire entrepreneurship knowledge and skill through the transfer of this knowledge to the targeted group. Moreover, these graduate interns were transformed to be more entrepreneurial and acquired entrepreneurship characteristics. Through this program, they were trained to be trainers and business coaches. In short, PURSe program create knowledge not only

for students but also for graduate interns, which will increase their employability.

2. Literature review

This section discusses definitions of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, and the development of entrepreneurship in Malaysia.

2.1 Entrepreneurship Definition

Recent years have witnessed a well-documented surge in entrepreneurship as a research theme. There is also wide acceptance of the legitimatisation of entrepreneurship as an area of academic and research inquiry (Bygrave, 2004; Kuratko, 2006; Vesper, 2004). Research in entrepreneurship is also fun and fascinating because of the richness of entrepreneurship that spans across many disciplinary areas, theoretical perspectives and methodologies.

Entrepreneurship can be classified according to the level of analysis of the study involved, namely micro and macro levels of entrepreneurship (Verheul, et. al., 2001). In addition, there are several schools of entrepreneurial thought coined by the entrepreneurship scholars to understand the entrepreneurial process which ultimately produce divergent meanings of entrepreneurship. For example, Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) classify entrepreneurship into six schools: great person, psychological characteristics, classical, management, leadership and intrapreneurship.

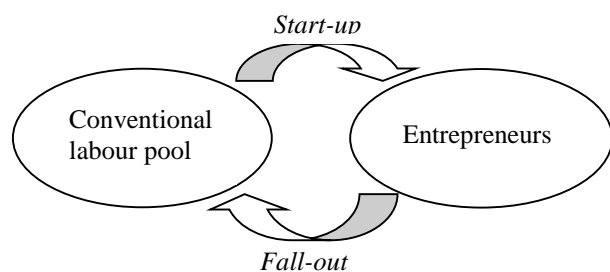
Meanwhile, Kuratko and Hodgetts (2007) pointed out that entrepreneurship can emanate from the macro and micro views, which can be categorised into six distinct schools of thought, namely environmental, financial/capital, displacement, entrepreneurial traits, venture opportunity and strategic formulation.

In defining entrepreneurship, many entrepreneurship scholars have conceptualised the term 'entrepreneur' largely according to their domains of enquiry. According to Kuratko and Hodgetts (2007, p. 4), entrepreneurs are 'individuals who recognise opportunities where others see chaos or confusion'. Drucker (2005) describes an entrepreneur as 'someone who always searches for change, respond to it and explain it as an opportunity.'

Ibrahim and Ellis (1993, p. 15) define an entrepreneur as 'an individual who sees an opportunity that others do not, and marshals the resources to exploit it.' Hence, they argue that an entrepreneur is one who creates a business in the face of risk and uncertainty. Entrepreneurs are also seen as those who

exist for the purpose of achieving profit and growth by identifying opportunities and assembling the necessary resources to capitalise on them (Scarborough and Zimmerer, 2003). In summary, entrepreneurship is defined as a process of creating and running a new venture and an entrepreneur is someone who aspires to do this (Edwards and Muir, 2006). Previous studies have also found that entrepreneurs can be classified into different categories. In their seminal article on entrepreneurship across five large developing and transition countries, Djankov et al. (2004) suggest that there are two mainstreams of entrepreneurs: entrepreneurs by opportunity and entrepreneurs by necessity. The former are always aware of the existing business opportunities and seize and/or exploit an opportunity which is congruent with the Schumpeterian theory of true entrepreneurs. The necessity entrepreneurs largely exist as a result of economic downturn, loss of jobs or unemployment upon graduation.

Wickham (2004) points out that an individual moves to consider entrepreneurship as viable career option mainly to meet the three main needs: economic, social and development needs. He further postulates that an individual has two choices to decide whether to become an entrepreneur or become an employee which involve start-up and fall-out process. The former happens when an individual moves from the conventional labour pool to become entrepreneur and the latter from entrepreneurship to Conventional labour pool, as shown in Figure 2.1.



Source: Wickham, (2004)

Figure 2.1: Dynamics of entrepreneurial supply

2.2 Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurial education is an education process that intends to influence attitude, behaviour, value and individual entrepreneurial inclination to choose entrepreneur as a future career option. Entrepreneurial education has been defined as a lifelong process to acquire knowledge, skill and entrepreneurial value through formal or informal education (Nor Aishah,

2006). The objective of formal entrepreneurial education is to change one's mind-set to become entrepreneur. Informal entrepreneurial education can be acquired through exposure and individual daily interactions with environment of entrepreneurial activity.

The development of nation rely on the role played by entrepreneurship, hence, entrepreneurship education and training play vital role to produce new entrepreneurs (Zaidatol & Habibah, 1997). Entrepreneurial education also aims to increase students' potentials towards becoming more creative, proactive and wise in making decision of their future career. At the same time, entrepreneurial education also promotes a person ability to identify and seize opportunity in the environment. It helps to transform ideas into reality and also increase ability to manage changes and uncertainty (Nor Aishah, 2002).

Model by Miller (1983) shows stages and processes of becoming entrepreneur and this model stressed on the entrepreneurial education as a lifelong learning. Ashmore (1989)'s model also showed that entrepreneurial education is one of the lifelong education process that begin from primary school to various educational levels. According to Mohd Salleh (1992), entrepreneurial formation from the perspective of human resource development stresses on the process to cultivate entrepreneurship culture from school level. For example, study by Ura Pin (2012) on Program Perintis Usahawan (PPU) at primary school in Malaysia found that minimum monitoring process occurred. In terms of assessment of output, he found that minimum or seldom monitoring on sale activities outside school compound. On the other hand, in terms of outcome, the participants showed changed in attitude, knowledge and entrepreneurial skills. Nevertheless, the study show insignificant changes in aspiration of entrepreneurs as career option among participants of PPU.

2.3 Entrepreneurial Educational Development in Malaysia

Entrepreneurial education in Malaysia already received attention of governments through Rahman Talib's report in year 1960 and Education Act of 1961. At that time, entrepreneurial education only managed by Department of Technical Education which was established in year 1964. Cabinet report in 1979 had insisted on education of the lower secondary school. However, entrepreneurship education implementation had been given serious attention since then. As a result, Living Skills subject was introduced in primary school curriculum. The purpose of this subject is to cultivate pupils' interest in entrepreneurship through

involvement into different kinds of entrepreneurial activities that suit their ability and interest. Through this, several skills such as planning skills were acquired. Apart from that, entrepreneurial activity also carried out informally through Entrepreneurship Day. Through this activity, students were trained to sell variety of goods at school compound or at school canteen.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of entrepreneurial education curriculum were still less in primary school curriculum. According to Ashmore (1990), several studies has proven that majority of successful entrepreneurs were those taking technical and vocational field at school level. As such, a new subject, Study of Entrepreneurship was introduced at vocational and technical Secondary School in 2003.

Program Usahawan Muda (PUM) or Young Entrepreneur Program was introduced in year 1989 which was being managed by the shareholders of school cooperative and teachers serving as advisors. They were responsible for the implementation of the program in the respective school. To serve as advisors, teachers were chosen and trained three times before they were assigned to deliver courses and training to students. Nevertheless, PUM Program which was managed by Institut Keusahawanan Negara cooperation has been postponed recently. Consequently, there is the need to introduce another program such as PURSe as a replacement which will aid in nurturing entrepreneurial culture among students.

2.4.1 The Development of Entrepreneurial Education at Secondary School.

Entrepreneur is very important career in this country. Realizing this, the Malaysian Education Ministry has shown their commitment towards implementation of this entrepreneurship education since it educates students with opportunity and potential to choose career as entrepreneurs. As entrepreneurs, who establish small medium enterprises, could create a lot of job opportunity and consequently helping country's economic expansion in the 21 century. Various efforts have been done to achieve these objective, among them are specific efforts of the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Education. The introduction of several subjects that integrate entrepreneurship element such as mathematics, integrated living skill, commerce, fundamental of economics, and principles of accounting which already started years ago. These enculturation effort and encouragement have increased students' potentials to become entrepreneurs.

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample

The population of this project consist of Form Four students from three secondary school in the district of Kubang Pasu, Kedah. The schools were chosen according to their location namely, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) Hosba, Changlun; Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tunku Bendahara, Kodiang; and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Seri Mahawangsa, Jitra. In the beginning, 589 students attended the first workshop and answered psychometric test which consist of 223 students of SMK Hosba, 192 of SMK Tunku Bendahara and 192 students from SMK Seri Mahawangsa. From that total, only 116 students which consist of 41 students from SMK Hosba, 39 students from SMK Tunku Bendahara, and 36 from SMK Seri Mahawangsa were found to have high entrepreneurial potentials as such, they were selected to attend interview session

Form four students were chosen for this project because they are not involved in national examination and as initial step to mitigate unemployment among youth after leave school by giving entrepreneurship knowledge and skill. This project targeted high risk students who are not expected to continue their study after form five. Only those who were really interested and willing to commit themselves to this program were selected through interview to participate in PURSe. The total of 84 participants were choose at initial stage namely 28 students from SMK Hosba SMK, 28 students from SMK Seri Mahawangsa and 28 students from SMK Tunku Bendahara. After going through second to sixth phase only 83 participants completed the program successfully (27 students from SMK Hosba, 25 students from SMK Seri Mahawangsa and 31 students from SMK Tunku Bendahara.

3.2 Program Implementation

For effective result, this program use multiple methods such as workshop, questionnaire, tests, interview, coaching and mentoring. This programme segmented into six phases. First phase is Basic Entrepreneurship Workshop I, II and III. The objective of these workshop were to create awareness and motivation about entrepreneurship. Psychometric test were carried out to identify high entrepreneurial inclination students and then interviewed for final selection of the participants. Only those who showed good potential of becoming entrepreneurs were selected to participate in the PURSe program.

In the second phase, participants attended workshop on Identifying Business Opportunity with objectives to provide exposure on the concepts and steps of finding business opportunities in the local environment. Students were introduced to the concepts and practical through group assignment and presentation.

While in the third phase, participants were expected to produce simple business plan which they will going to implement in this program. In the Business Plan I session, participants were taught about marketing concept and organizational management. Then in the Business Plan II, the focus was on operation management and finance aspects of business plan writing.

The fourth phase was focused on Business Pitching. Students were trained to perform business pitching and business pitching competition and exhibition was held in Universiti Utara Malaysia. Each of the group presented their own business plan, and they finally competed up to the final round. This event had positive impact on students' spirit and entrepreneurial motivation.

In the fifth phase the participants of the program need to implement their business in their own respective environments. Graduate interns monitored their progress in nine visit to the sites. The monitoring helped students to solve problems encountered and giving morals support for students to actively involve in the business. The students also actively communicate with graduates interns to get advice through various channel i.e. telephone, and social media such as Facebook. Assessment survey carried out based on particular aspect namely feasibility study, location, initial selling, organisational management, marketing aspects, operational management, financial management, identify business problems and internal barrier and preparation of financial report.

In the sixth phase, the final phase, students presented their financial report and did the post PURSe psychometric test to assess the effectiveness of the program.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Outcome for the community

The Program Usahawan Remaja Sekolah (PURSe) has been successfully implemented according to phases designed and has given positive impacts on targeted community, minimum 25 students from each secondary school were involved.

In the first phase of the program, students and teachers were able to identify their potential and inclination towards entrepreneurship. Through this

phase they acquired basic knowledge about entrepreneurship and instilled the interest towards entrepreneurs as a career option. Students were exposed to real business trading in the post examination (PMR) activity in one of the school. Students also have increased their awareness towards entrepreneurship after attended workshop I.

In the workshop II, students gained and understand the entrepreneurship definition, goal of becoming entrepreneur, the importance of entrepreneurs to society and country, successful entrepreneurs among teenagers and youth, and also they identified their readiness towards entrepreneurship. After that in workshop III, students were interviewed according to criteria such as entrepreneurship attitude, readiness, entrepreneurial desire and entrepreneurial thinking aspects. These to qualify them to participate in Program Usahawan Remaja Sekolah (PURSe) and to increase their self-confidence, brave, generate creative and innovative thinking, sensitive towards environment and so on.

Through Workshop of Business Opportunity Recognition, students we more exposed to entrepreneurial knowledge like business opportunity concept, needs and wants of humans, steps in identifying suitable business opportunities in local environment. Thus, students could generate and evaluate business ideas that they wanted to start. After this phase, students were advised to start their business so that they could learn from their experience. This method were known as experiential learning and the most suitable approach of teaching entrepreneurship.

In the Phase 3: Business Plan I and II, are the most important phases where the student could relate their practical experience in conducting business with the theory and concepts discussed in the workshop. Students gained knowledge in the implementation of the functional skill such as marketing and preparing simple financial report based on their business activities. They learnt also from mistake. At the end of this workshop, students produced business plan that was designed for their business expansion.

On the impact of Business Pitching workshop and competition, students gained knowledge through practical approach. Through the presentations session, students were not only trained the right ways of doing the presentation but also developed self-confidence and public speaking skill. The business plan presentation competition was held in Universiti Utara Malaysia with involvement of all PURSe participants from three schools. Through this activity, indirectly students developed team spirit, leadership skill, commitment, patient, and others.

In the implementation phase and nine times monitoring sessions, students were motivated and successfully implemented their business. In motivation

session with participants, graduate interns doing the coaching and mentoring session gave advice to the students. The students were motivated and their spirit and morals were increase whenever the graduate interns visited the business site. The social interaction through other channel such as social media has increase the students' relationship with graduate interns and eased the monitoring process.

However, the students became less active in their business in form five, or in the second year of the program since they need to focus on their study for SPM examination. Consequently, the financial performance presentation could not be implemented. Only the assessment through post program psychometric test were carried out. Overall, the students has shown increase in entrepreneurial competency and orientation. In fact, they are almost ready to become entrepreneurs. A few of the participants still continue their business despite focusing on their academic activities. Even one of them, already identified by his family to become the successor for family business right after completing form five.

4.2. Impact on University

The impact of PURSE program, on university, particularly University Utara Malaysia. The program has also established good relationship among Kubang Pasu District Education Office (PPD), SMK Seri Mahawangsa, SMK Hosba and SMK Tunku Bendahara. In relation to these, it was easy for the program to be implemented with the assistance of teachers, the school authorities and also PPD. This program has given UUM opportunity to involve in entrepreneurial activity at the school level and help to prevent the high risk school students from involving in social problem. This program also has increased the knowledge, skill and entrepreneurial competencies among the graduate interns. In facts, this program has developed entrepreneurial mind-set not only among the students, but also among the teachers and graduate interns involved. This experience has given the opportunity for academicians to publish their experience and also produce case study of youth or students micro enterprise. The outcome of this program are training modules for secondary school students which were adapted from training modules of university students.

4.3. Impact on Human Capital Development

Undoubtedly, this program has successfully developed entrepreneurial knowledge, skill, attitude and mind-set of those who directly involved such as

graduate interns, students and teachers. This program had given experience to graduate intern in handling certain program and give positive impact in developing individual to be more productive, systematic, and proactive. Students are more ready to become entrepreneurs even right after leaving school. In short, this program has successfully developed human capital through transfer of knowledge from academicians, to graduates interns and to the school community namely students and teachers.

4.4. Indirect Impact on Community

Students were the main target group for this project has benefited directly and indirectly. The impact of this programme are developed awareness on important of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial knowledge and competency, change of attitudes, team work, creativity, business management skill and problem solving skill; positives qualities such as leadership, integrity, commitment, and self-confident. They also learned how to manage time effectively and increased self-confident. Students also able to do trading on line besides doing business in school as part of the cocurriculum activity and outside school in the real business environment.

4.5 Analyses based on Program's Objectives.

The objectives of PURSe were first, to create awareness and interest on entrepreneurial field; second is to enculturate the secondary school students with hands on entrepreneurial activities; third, to develop aspiration of entrepreneurship as a career option.

The first objective was achieved as from the first phase 153 students were selected to be interviewed and only 119 were interviewed after screening done by school teachers. Out of that group only 28 were successfully selected from each school to join the program. The number of students has changed from respective school because some school students were unable to participate due to family problem but the final total numbers of participant were 83 students. The psychometric test showed moderate to high entrepreneurship readiness. The test encompassed 15 items of entrepreneurship attitudes readiness; 8 items of entrepreneurship learning readiness; 18 items of entrepreneurship intention and 15 items of entrepreneurial thinking items. The test was used to measure students' entrepreneurship readiness.

The second objective was also achieved as most of the students involved in hands on entrepreneurship activity

as early as second phase. The effectiveness of the business was measured through survey and observation and interaction with them. The questionnaire used measure effectiveness of the business with dimension of feasibility study (6 items), location suitability (3 items) initial sales (4 items), organisational management (7 items), marketing (5 items), operational management (3 items), financial management (5 items) and identify problems and internal business barriers (9 items). Based on analysis, using mean score of Likert scales used, all school indicated high score for business implementation effectiveness with SMK Tunku Bendahara (3.93), SMK Seri Mahawangsa (3.94) and SMK Hosba (3.89). This show that business implementation effectiveness was high.

The third objective was to develop aspiration of entrepreneurship as a career option. There were several approaches taken in order to know how far the students interested to make entrepreneurship as career choice. This was done through interview with parents, teachers involved and students and also psychometric test on entrepreneurial readiness (Post-PURSe).

Based on the interviews with parents, student's attitudes has shown positives changed. According to them, prior to the program, their children, always involved in unproductive activity such as spending a lot of time watching television, hang out, and these has changed to more beneficial activities such as doing business. Some of parents that are business owner, found that their children showed interest in family business compared to before attending the program. In fact, their children asked them for opinions regarding business. The students made extra effort to ensure that their business transaction are successfully carried out. According to teachers, PURSe students also frequently involved in business activities at school such as Cocurriculum Day, Teachers Day, Canteen Day and other school occasions.

The interviews with students also found that students become more creative and innovative in producing new product for their business. They also admitted that after this PURSe programmes, they become more motivated, confident, know their strength and weaknesses, willing to sacrifice, enjoy doing business, more responsible, able to identify business opportunities, increase skills, more diligent and active, able to manage time, willing to help parents, cooperate, dare to speak in public, risk taking, able to socialize better, better communication skill, and many other positives attitudes.

4.6 Problems and suggestions

Few problems were encountered during the implementation stages of this program such as time constraint from academia members, difficult to match suitable workshop time with school timetable. These problems effect the implementations of this program. In the second year of the program, when the students were in form five, the students hardly find time due to school school engagements and schedule. School principal become less cooperative. Also, some students had to leave the program due to family problems. It is hoped that, this program or similar entrepreneurship development program for secondary school students can be continued with more schools involvement. This program has successfully given positive impact on the students' development especially for those high risk students.

5. Summary

PURSe programme successfully developed students' entrepreneurship knowledge, skills and attitudes in the three school participated, namely SMK Seri Mahawangsa, SMK Hosba and SMK Tunku Bendahara. Apart from that, there are support from parents, teachers and school so that the participants will continue their involvement in entrepreneurship activity even after they leave school and make entrepreneurship as their future career choice. However, guidance and support need to be given for the students to sustain in their business. The implementation of PURSe programme is in line with Malaysia vision to become industrialised country which requires many entrepreneurs as the backbone of the business activities and job creators and this programme should be continued.

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