

## **Inculcating Undergraduates with Entrepreneurial Characteristics**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysian has published the Policy for Entrepreneurial Development in Higher Educational Institutions recently. This agenda was listed in the National Higher Education Strategic Plan as a Critical Agenda Project (CAP). The spirit of this agenda is especially to groom students with entrepreneurial criteria to prepare them for the real job tasks. The government hopes that graduates from local universities will be able to create their own business and create jobs for others with their entrepreneurial properties. Local universities have been given a heavy task in inculcating entrepreneurial characteristics among the students. To create entrepreneurial skills or characteristics among the under graduate students is a difficult task because entrepreneurial skills need a lot of practical exposure. Most of the universities in the country especially public universities adhere to two main approaches in inculcating entrepreneurial characteristics such as through academic and practical approaches. The practical approach can be further divided into two approaches namely academic practical and non-academic practical. Academic practical is stated clearly in the syllabus, while non-academic practical is done by students when they run the business in the campus. Some of the universities have created business environment or entrepreneurial environment in the campus such as Student Mall, Business Incubator, business kiosk, and others. We strongly believe that, we have not done enough? Have we practiced the right things? We believed we are doing the right thing but we have not accomplished enough. All the approaches that we have mentioned are actually in the academic framework or academic environment. They are not the real scenario, but only simulations. Normally students are unable to sustain what they have learnt in the universities to face the challenges in the real world after they graduated. Consequently, if we aim to succeed in inculcating entrepreneurial traits among the students so that they can become independent, a real business exposure should follow after they have completed their academic programme under university's supervision. The paper illustrates some approaches needed to equip students with knowledge and skills usually employed by businessmen in the real business world.

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Keywords: entrepreneurial attributes, entrepreneurial characteristics, entrepreneurial environment

## **Introduction**

The Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia has published a booklet on the Policy for Entrepreneurial Development in Higher Educational Institutions recently. This agenda was listed in the National Higher Education Strategic Plan as a Critical Agenda Project (CAP). The spirit of this agenda is especially to groom students with entrepreneurial attributes to prepare them for the real tasks ahead. The government hopes that graduates from local universities will be able to initiate their own business and create jobs for others with their entrepreneurial qualities. Local universities have been given a heavy task in inculcating entrepreneurial characteristics among the students. To create entrepreneurial skills or characteristics among science students is a difficult task because entrepreneurial skills need a lot of practical exposure. Most of the universities in the country especially public universities adhere to two main approaches in inculcating entrepreneurial characteristics such as through academic and practical approaches. The practical approach can be further divided into two approaches namely academic practical and non-academic practical. Academic practical is stated clearly in the syllabus, while non-academic practical is done by students when they run the business in the campus. Some of the universities have created business environment or entrepreneurial environment in the campus through Student Mall, Business Incubator, business kiosk, and others. Those approaches were believed to help in inculcating entrepreneurial skills among young people especially students (Norasmah, 2010). Vivek Wadhwa (2010) and Ying (2010) also believed that relevant practical knowledge is a key factor for creation success of the entrepreneurs. Watkins (2010) stated that, there is a strong evidence that educational programmes in entrepreneurship have a positive effect on developing individuals' entrepreneurial attributes, raising awareness of career attitude towards entrepreneurship.

### **Possessing the right business image**

Image is a first impression for the peoples to judge our personnel criteria's. Business image is very important not only to give confidence to the business counterpart but also to build self confidence while doing a business deal. Business image can be presented in various ways such as put a corporate dressing like putting on a suite with next tie, drive a big and branded car, staying in a big house, use a branded and latest model mobile phone, shopping at the luxury shopping mall and having a diner at the luxury restaurant. Business image will have to be displayed at all time not only during business dealing but also every time when you go out from the house. People especially in Malaysia will be more confidence and would be willing to do a business with the businessmen or women who putting on a corporate dressing, drive a big car, staying in a big house, use a branded and latest model mobile phone, shopping at the luxury shopping mall and having a diner at the luxury restaurant . Does not a matter whether the businessmen is a successful businessmen or not because for them the Business Image that the businessmen has have already shows that they are a genuine and successful businessmen and they have no doubt to do a business dealing.

### **Knowing the right 'channel'**

Success in business will also depend on your networking or in other word you know the channel. If you were to do a business deal or job tendering through proper ways with traditional way or just depend on your expertise and working experiences alone without knowing the right 'authority' or 'channel' you will left behind. Knowing the right person who will be able to make a decision on certain job or project is crucial to determine the success.

### **Business Deal**

Don't ever deal a business in your office because the nature of the human being is doing some things for the return. Normally, top businessmen clinching deals over dinner. So, to ensure the successfully of business deal you will have to deal a business either over a coffee, lunch, dinner or give away a present to the counterpart dependent on the size of the business deal. The venue or place of the business deal also very important and it is also depend on the size of the business deal but at least luxury coffee shop.

### **Ready to be Altruistic**

Businessmen must be ready to donate or be altruistic to the community even for small community and small event. Example, sponsored a soccer league in the community area or give donation to a mosque or "surau" for them to run religious activities. Businessmen also must be willing to spend to pay a cup of coffee for the villagers if he or she happens to pass by the coffee stall in the rural area. In addition, businessmen have to be sensitive to the people around them, if there is an emergency occurred among the people around them they will have to visit and give some donation in order to win their heart.

### **Conclusion**

For a successful entrepreneur the traditional academic approach with practical experiences is not sufficient but are required students to learn and practice actual business practices in the real world. This real world business game cannot be taught in the class room, it has to be in the system. Meaning that, enough room should be given for the students to excel in real world. What we should do is giving more priority to the community entrepreneurs and redesign a curriculum where students are allowed to run a business or working in the related area for at least one year after they completed the academic curriculum in the campus. For the four-year programme, three years are devoted for academic teaching and learning plus one year of running a real business outside the campus or working in the related sectors outside the academic environment. After one year of running the business the students will be awarded with a degree in respected fields and an entrepreneurial attribute award for those who succeed and for those who failed will only be awarded the degree that they have chosen to pursue.

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