

Entrepreneurship Education: The Case of *Universiti Utara Malaysia*

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**ABSTRACT**

Early exposure to knowledge and entrepreneurial skills are important considerations in developing successful entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship training and education programs in universities are a step towards inculcating the entrepreneurial spirit among students. This paper examines the approach taken by *Universiti Utara Malaysia* (UUM) in promoting the study and practice of entrepreneurship amongst its students. The university has introduced four entrepreneurial educational or training programs, including (i) the Student Entrepreneurship Program (SEP), (ii) a 3-credit hour entrepreneurship course (iii) the entrepreneurship co-curricular program, and (iv) an undergraduate degree program, that is, the Bachelors of Entrepreneurship with Honours, BEnt (Hons). Firstly, we examine the four different entrepreneurship programs in terms of objectives, duration, target population, learning strategies and methods, and program facilitation. Finally, we document part of our research findings of UUM graduates who were participants of the Student Enterprise Program. Among others we examined whether the SEP had an impact on their chosen careers. Inputs and suggestions from the participants may help improve the SEP.

*Keywords: entrepreneur, entrepreneurship training, entrepreneurship education, college students*

## 1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Entrepreneurship education has experienced unprecedented growth over the last twenty years. This can be seen in the growth of positions, organizations, research and publications devoted in the area of entrepreneurship. Among entrepreneurship researchers, the role of entrepreneurship education has been recognized as one of the crucial factors that help youths to understand and foster an entrepreneurial attitude (Gorman et al., 1997; Kourilsky and Walstad, 1998).

Consequently, the impact of education on the creation of future entrepreneurs and the link between university training and the success of the new ventures have been the subject of much discussion in the academic community<sup>1</sup>. Hornaday and Vesper (1982) found that students who elected to take a single course in entrepreneurship were much more likely to subsequently start their own business (21.3 percent were full-time self-employed, 12.4 percent part-time self-employed vs. a control group who had not taken the course, where only 14.2 percent were full-time self-employed and 2.5 percent part-time self-employed). Of those who had taken the course prior to starting a business, 66 percent felt the course had affected the direction of their careers. Clark, Davis and Harnish (1984) found that 76% of 892 non-business owners taking the “Your Future Business” course subsequently opened a business; stating that the entrepreneurship course had a “large effect” or a “very large effect” upon their decision to start their venture. An Irish program (Conner, 1985) involved 830 young people under 25 years of age; 67 percent subsequently became self-employed.

McMullan, Long and Wilson (1985) report a high rate of new venture creation among MBA students who attended more than three entrepreneurship-related courses at a Canadian university. A review of a graduate enterprise program in the UK suggests that the program provided an incentive to more than half of the participants to start their business sooner than intended. Thus, this initiative had an enabling and accelerating impact on the graduates’ founding activities (Brown, 1990). Irish students who participated in a student enterprise award indicated that the initiative had a “very important” impact on their subsequent career choice (Fleming, 1994). Finally, Vesper and McMullan (1997) show that entrepreneurship courses help alumni to make better decisions in the start-up process.

Wyckham (1989) examined the characteristics of university-based entrepreneurial education programs and suggested that universities make a good location for entrepreneurial support systems. However, most universities were established mainly to prepare students for careers in large organisations. Nonetheless over the years, there is some evidence of change where there exists awareness and acceptance of small business as an important component in the economy as well as a source of many new jobs. A

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<sup>1</sup> A review of the entrepreneurship literature reveals contradictory findings (see for a literature-review Gorman, Hanlon and King, 1997). The results suggest researchers to differentiate between general business and specific entrepreneurship education when exploring the role of university programs.

growing number of universities are getting involved in entrepreneurship education, research and publication. For example, Levie (1999) found that universities in the U.S., U.K., and Australia offer courses in the study of entrepreneurship. This may help create awareness amongst students that entrepreneurship is an alternative as a career possibility (Ronstadt, 1987).

Robinson and Sexton (1994) note that the economic impact of companies founded by university alumni are more significant. Many surveys (Clark, Davis and Harnish, 1984; McMullan, Long and Wilson, 1985) show that entrepreneurship education encourages graduates to start their own business. Clark et al. (1984) document that almost 80 percent of students who enrolled in an introductory entrepreneurship course actually set up their own business. More than three-fourths of the respondents stated that the entrepreneurship course had a large or a very large effect on their career decision. McMullan et al. (1985) report a high rate of new ventures being created by MBA students who attended several entrepreneurship-related courses at a Canadian university. In the U.K. a graduate enterprise program provided an incentive for participants to start their business sooner than intended (Brown, 1990). Universities are also seen as an important source for future entrepreneurs in the areas of information technology and biotechnology (Luthje and Franke, 2002).

## **2. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Institutions of higher learning in Malaysia, both private and public, offer various programs of study in the area of entrepreneurship to cater to the demands from the government and the public. *Universiti Utara Malaysia* (UUM<sup>2</sup>), one of the public university, is among the first to offer several programs related to the area of entrepreneurship. The university provides four initiatives to stimulate students to act in an entrepreneurial manner: Students may choose to participate in the Student Enterprise Program (*Program Siswaniaga*), register for four credit hours of the extra-curricular entrepreneurship course (*Ko-K Keusahawanan*), or they may enroll in the Bachelor of Entrepreneurship with Honours, BEnt (Hons) Entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, every

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<sup>2</sup>Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) is the sixth university in Malaysia. It is situated in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia on a 1,061-hectare campus. Set up on 16 February 1984 UUM was temporarily located in *Bandar Baru Darulaman* (Darulaman New Township) but later moved to the present campus in Sintok in September 1990. UUM was formed to develop and excel in management education. For this purpose UUM has introduced many courses in her degree programs relevant to management. There are 13 faculties in the University: the Faculty of Business Administration, the Faculty of Accountancy, the Faculty of Finance and Banking, the Faculty of Information Technology, the Faculty of Quantitative Sciences, the Faculty of Technology Management, the Faculty of Economics, the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Education, the Faculty of Human and Social Development, the Faculty of Communication and Modern Languages, the Faculty of International Business, the Faculty of Public Management and Law, and the Faculty of Tourism, Hospitality and Environmental Management. As of December 2005/06, over 18,000 students are enrolled at UUM (for further information see [www.uum.edu.my](http://www.uum.edu.my)).

student enrolled at UUM must pass a basic course in entrepreneurship (*Asas Keusahawanan*) which is offered as a core university subject.

The purpose of this paper is twofold. Firstly, it describes the efforts, activities and UUM's contributions in promoting an entrepreneurial culture among its students. We assess the philosophy of entrepreneurial education at UUM, present an overview of the four entrepreneurial education programs, and analyze each of these programs by examining the program features in terms of their (i) duration, target population and structure, (ii) objectives and content, (iii) learning strategies and methods, and (iv) program facilitation.

Finally, we document our study on career choices of university alumni who were involved in the SEP during their university years. The study traces and reviews the outcomes of participants of the Student Enterprise Program (SEP) of UUM. Given the concern over unemployment among university graduates where a large number are identified as lacking skills in certain aspects such as information technology, the study poses the following major research questions. We examine the general characteristics of SEP participants of UUM, namely, background, education, gender and business ideas. We examine if these characteristics differ among SEP participants who are self-employed (either full-time or part-time) as compared to those who are organizational employees. The specific objectives of the study are to: (i) provide a profile of the SEP participants who are self-employed, and (ii) identify motives (particularly, financial factors) behind SEP participants' career choice.

The motivation of the current study is the lack of research pertaining to the SEP and the program's success or failure in producing entrepreneurs as set out in the mission statement. The initial impetus of the study is the desire to identify career directions of graduates who were involved in the SEP. The research investigates whether their experience as student-entrepreneurs under the SEP influence their career choice. The current paper adds to the literature that analyzed the relationship between the formal study of entrepreneurship and subsequent venture development activity. Hornaday and Vesper (1982) report that graduates who took entrepreneurship courses are much more likely to subsequently start their own business. If this is the case, then a larger number of participants of the SEP would be self-employed. The study also provides a case study of an actual entrepreneurship program that provides "hands-on" experience to its participants.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 1 provides the background and briefly reviews the relevant literature. Section 2 provides the scope and objectives of the study. Section 3 discusses the philosophy of entrepreneurship education at UUM and the four entrepreneurship-education programs offered at the university. In Section 4 is an assessment of the four programs. Section 5 provides the research design for the study while Section 6 presents part of the findings and results. Section 7 provides the major conclusions for the research.

### **3. THE PHILOSOPHY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AT UUM**

In line with her philosophy and objective of generating capable managers and entrepreneurs, UUM has, thus far, since established four different programs in entrepreneurship education and training. The variety of entrepreneurship programs offered at UUM is a result of the interaction of the environmental influences and the processes of planning, researching and developing entrepreneurial education and training. The programs are also in line with government policies such as the New Economic Policy and the National Development Policy that emphasise the importance of entrepreneurs in shaping the Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial Community (BCIC) toward achieving the objectives of national development. In 1992, UUM received a high acclaim when it was identified as the centre for entrepreneurship in Malaysia.

To ensure that all students in the university gain some knowledge of entrepreneurship, UUM provides four initiatives to stimulate students to act in an entrepreneurial manner. The four programs (as shown in Figure 1) are further explained in the following sections. The units discharged with the responsibilities to carry out these tasks include the Faculty of Business Management, the Co-Curricular Unit, the Student Affairs Department and the Institute of Entrepreneurial Development. The Faculty of Business Management offers the Bachelor of Entrepreneurship with Honours, BEnt (Hons) Entrepreneurship as well as the PE1013 Basic Entrepreneurship Course.

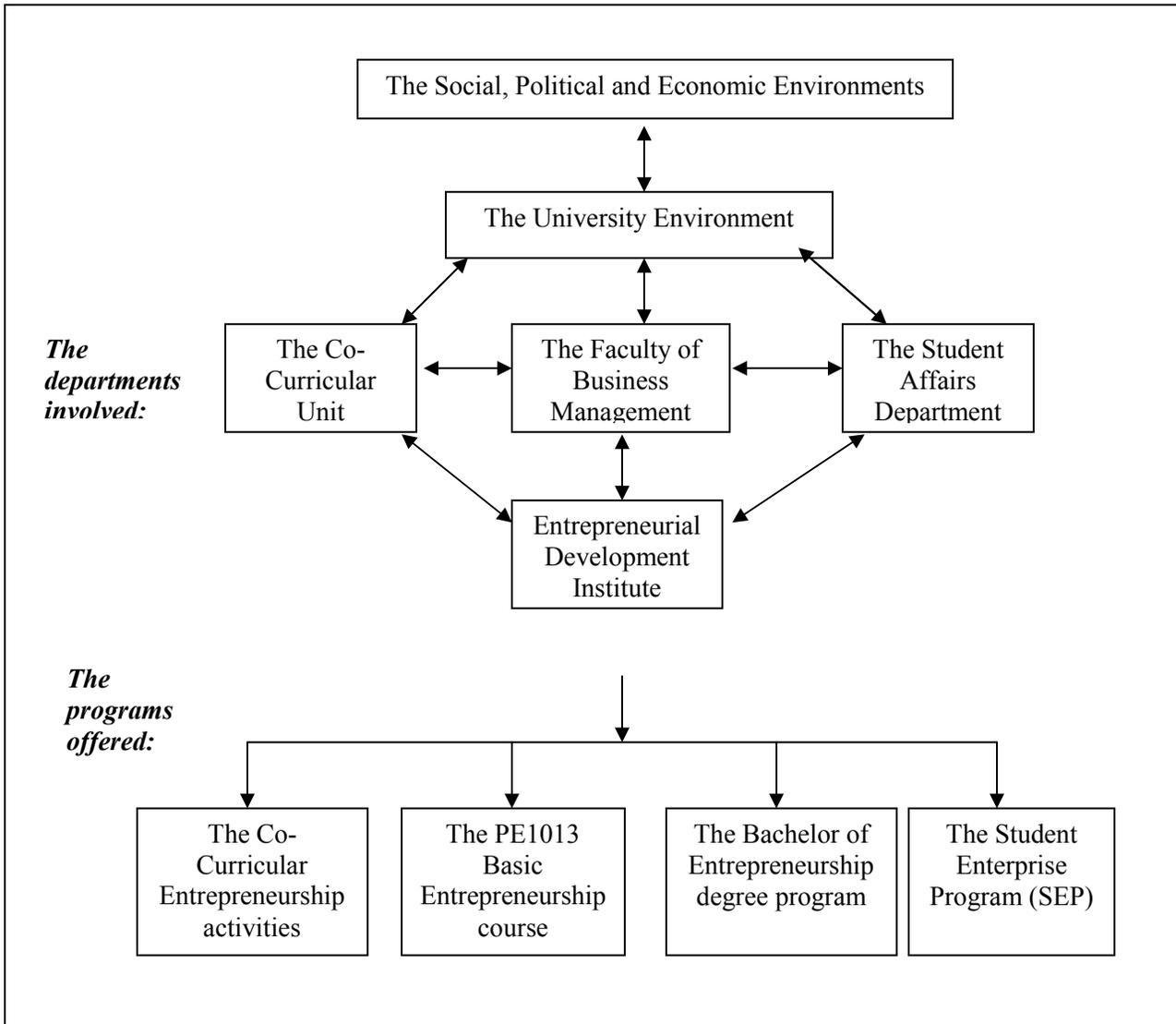
#### **A. THE STUDENT ENTERPRISE PROGRAM, SEP (*PROGRAM SISWANIAGA*)**

As early as December 1986 (after only two years since being established), UUM introduced an entrepreneurship program targeted for students. The entrepreneurship program, named *Program Siswaniaga*, or the Student Enterprise Program, was developed to increase the number of entrepreneurs in Malaysia by inculcating entrepreneurial values amongst students. In particular, UUM's objectives of introducing the program are: (1) to train students to become business entrepreneurs and to allow them to experience real-world business practices, (2) to inculcate entrepreneurial skills amongst students, and (3) to train students to be independent and confident to start his own business.

Basically, a student who wants to operate a business under the Enterprise program must satisfy the following criteria:

- a. The student must currently be enrolled as a student in UUM. He can only participate in the program beginning in his second semester until his seventh semester of study.
- b. The business must be in the form of at least a partnership or a company. The business cannot be operated as a sole proprietorship.

**Figure 1**  
**Entrepreneurial Education at UUM**



- c. The partnership or the company must comprise of students from different programs of study and ethnic groups.
- d. Participants must maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of at least 2.5 every semester to remain in the entrepreneurship program.

The SEP was initially placed under the Center for Research and Consultancy and was handled by a technical committee. In April 1988, the program was placed under the Student Affairs' Department. A new technical committee responsible for planning,

monitoring, and evaluating businesses under the program, and to also act as an advisory body was formed. The program was later handed over, in 1993, to the Business and Entrepreneurship Development Center (BEDEC)<sup>3</sup> to be enhanced following the promising performance of participants in the program. As of November 1, 1993, BEDEC changed its name to the Entrepreneurial Development Institute, EDI, (*Institut Pembangunan Keusahawanan*) as it is known today. Among others, EDI's activities comprise of research, consultancy, training and disseminating information to local entrepreneurs and agencies. These activities are channeled through its four sections namely: (i) the Entrepreneurship Consultancy Unit, (ii) the Entrepreneurship Training Unit, (iii) the Centre of Information, (iv) the Student Enterprise Program.

During the initial set-up of the Student Entrepreneurship Program, a committee comprising of ten members was formed. The committee was then headed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs). Its function was: (i) to formulate and coordinate the student entrepreneurial activities, and (ii) to study the needs of the program in the form of its duration, *modus operandi*, application, the physical facilities and other related aspects. In 1988 a new committee comprising of twelve members was formed and was headed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Affairs). The committee focused on the planning, organising and supervision of the program. Today the Student Enterprise Programs remains under the supervision of the Student Affairs department.

Since 1993 all business, both at the Mall and residential colleges, were placed under the supervision of EDI. A major change occurred in year 2002 where administration and supervision of business at the Mall was handed over to the Student Affairs' Department, while ten outlets at the residential colleges was initially taken over by *Kedai Koperasi Semua Pelajar* and handed over to Uniutama Management Holdings Sdn. Bhd. (UMSB), a subsidiary of the university, in April 2003. These ten outlets are no longer operated by students but are run by full-time employees of UMSB. In June 2003, the number of business premises run by students increased to 70 units upon the completion of a new shopping mall and two new residential colleges.

## **B. THE CO-CURRICULAR ENTREPRENEURSHIP COURSES**

As part of the university requirement, a student from any program must earn at least four credit hours of co-curricular activities. UUM's co-curricular activities was introduced along with her establishment in 1984 and placed under the Co-curricular Unit. Each co-curricular activity carries one university credit per semester.

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<sup>3</sup> UUM established the Business and Entrepreneurship Development Center (BEDEQ) on March 1, 1990. The center's mission is to develop a community of entrepreneurs specifically in the northern region, who are both progressive and competitive; and to enhance both the students' and academic staffs' careers through practical exposure and experience in business.

Currently UUM has sixteen co-curricular divisions, each with its own sub-units, that students may choose to enrol in. Beginning May 1997, entrepreneurship was offered as one of the sixteen co-curricular activities. The objective is to create awareness in the study of entrepreneurial and business administration to students from any degree program. The Entrepreneurial Co-Curricular division is further sub-divided into six sub-divisions: (i) entrepreneurship, (ii) franchising, (iii) catering, (iv) beauty school, (v) interior decorating, and (vi) tailoring. The Centre opens up forty seats per sub-division every semester and thus far has reported full registration since the entrepreneurship activities were offered.

The long-term objective of the Co-curricular Centre is to introduce the element of entrepreneurship into all its curricular activities. Take the self-defense unit as an example. Students may choose to register for karate do, taekwondo (International Taekwondo Federation and World Taekwondo Federation), *silat cekak*, *silat gayong* or *silat olahraga*. Aside from the benefits of learning self-defense, students are encouraged to see these activities as potential, viable business opportunities which they can venture into after graduation, perhaps by opening up self-defense schools, or coaching self-defense classes.

### **C. PE1013 BASIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP COURSE**

Beginning in academic year 2003/04, to graduate from UUM, every student must register for a basic course in entrepreneurship, that is *PE1013 Basic Entrepreneurship*. This one-semester course in entrepreneurship carries three credit hours. Offered as a university core course, it must be taken by every student under every degree program. In this manner, each and every student of UUM is exposed to the study of entrepreneurship. If a student chooses to further his or her knowledge in the area of entrepreneurship, he or she may do so by choosing from many of the other avenues made available by the university (such as participating in the Student Enterprise Program or taking credits under the Co-Curricular Entrepreneurship unit).

The Entrepreneurship Department under the Faculty of Business Management is responsible for the overall monitoring of the course. However it becomes every faculty's duty to register its own students for the course as well as to provide its own lecturers to conduct the course. However, lecturers from faculties outside of the Faculty of Business Management must undergo training under the Entrepreneurship Department before they are qualified to teach the course. So far, one training session has been conducted by the department.

### **D. THE BACHELOR OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH HONOURS DEGREE PROGRAM, BEnt (Hons) Entrepreneurship**

Much earlier, the study of entrepreneurship was offered as an elective course to students in three different programs, that is, the business administration, the management

education, and the tourism, hospitality and environmental management degree programs. Realizing that a single course is not sufficient, the faculty decided to offer a full-fledged degree program, particularly since the objective of the university is to educate a majority of all "potential entrepreneurs" about entrepreneurship (Ronstadt, 1987).

As a result, since 2004, the Faculty of Business Management offers a bachelors degree in entrepreneurship under the Department of Entrepreneurship. Students who graduate from this program would earn a Bachelor of Entrepreneurship with Honours, BEnt (Hons) Entrepreneurship. The degree program is the first ever program offered in Malaysia. To graduate, the student must earn 127 credit hours. This includes a practical training stint for a period of four months in which she can either start up her own business, or enter a workplace involved in entrepreneurial activities.

The BEnt (Hons) degree program was developed with the university's vision, mission and objectives as guiding principles, with entrepreneurship and management as two major foci. A market research (Bakar et al., 2004) was conducted while perspectives from various market captains were also sought. Other entrepreneurship education and training programs already existing in the university such as the Entrepreneurship Program and co-curricular entrepreneurship activities were taken into consideration in designing the BEnt (Hons) program structure.

Giving equal attention to theoretical as well as the practical approaches to the study of entrepreneurship, students graduating from the BEnt (Hons) degree program are expected to:

- (i) Have a high propensity towards entrepreneurship, with favorable attitudes and skills to become successful entrepreneurs,
- (ii) Become excellent intrapreneurs through appropriate education and training in entrepreneurship,
- (iii) Have the ability to give consultation, guidance and advice to entrepreneurs and prospective entrepreneurs,
- (iv) Be able to work as managers in financial institutions, government and non-government departments rendering services to entrepreneurs,
- (v) Be skilled trainers in entrepreneurship, being able to provide educational and training in educational organizations.

It is expected that the BEnt (Hons) program will turn out graduates with strong entrepreneurial skills and knowledge. This becomes a necessity as it is believed that entrepreneurship is a catalyst to spur the economic growth of the country.

#### **4. AN ANALYSIS OF SOME ISSUES CONCERNING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

##### ***(1) OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMS***

All four programs share some common goals. In general, it is possible to identify four objectives common to all four programs evaluated. Firstly, they create awareness of entrepreneurship as a career possibility. University students are highly encouraged to view entrepreneurship as a viable option to becoming self-employed. Secondly, such programs teaches students on the preparation of business plans for new business ventures, focusing on issues critical to implementing a business venture such as setting-up a business, legal issues, market research, and financing the business. Finally, such programs help identify potential entrepreneurs. In particular, during semester breaks, the Entrepreneurial Development Institute offers additional training workshops for students (potential business founders).

##### ***(2) DURATION OF THE PROGRAMS***

The programs vary in length, ranging from a semester (fourteen weeks of classes), under the *PE1013 Basic* Entrepreneurship course, to four semesters of theory-cum-practical training under the co-curricular entrepreneurship courses, to six semesters of hands-on experience under the Student Enterprise Program, to a full-fledged degree program.

The *PE1013 Basic* Entrepreneurship course offered to all students during their fifth or sixth semester may well achieve the university's objective of creating awareness of entrepreneurship to students. However, it would be better to allow students to sit for the course much earlier during their studies, preferably, as early as during their third semester allowing them time to take more entrepreneurial courses and other related courses, if they wish to do so.

##### ***(3) TARGET POPULATION***

Offering four different types or channels to the study of entrepreneurship as the case at UUM may well serve to capture a wide range of students. Firstly, the co-curricular entrepreneurship course may be selected as an area of study by any student from any degree program. Secondly, the *PE1013 Basic* Entrepreneurship course will be taken by every graduating student. Furthermore, the SEP is open to any student interested in learning the ropes of running an actual business within the university campus. If the objective is to create awareness of entrepreneurship among the population of UUM students, then it can be said that UUM has met this objective.

However only students entering the Student Enterprise Program need to have an existing idea of what business to carry out prior to participating in the program. Generally, three categories of students are catered for those:

- (1) who have no prior knowledge of entrepreneurship, and no business project in mind, and is not expected to begin a business venture,
- (2) who have no business project on hand (and/or no prior knowledge of entrepreneurship) but will be able to get hands-on experience and is not expected to begin a business venture,
- (3) who already have a project idea and gets to run their business.

Some of the programs give greater emphasis to the educational process whereas others give more emphasis to the training dimension. In particular the Student Enterprise Program teaches competence and skill development within a group-learning situation where a business can only be set up as a partnership.

#### **(4) *LEARNING STRATEGIES AND METHODS***

The analysis of the four entrepreneurial programs show that basically, they give students knowledge on issues such as the development of autonomous behaviour, the taking of risks and acceptance of responsibilities. Methods employed include lectures, handout materials, and video presentation. Two of the programs try to develop the effectiveness of students as entrepreneurs where students acquire relevant information through learning and practicing it.

#### **(5) *PROGRAM FACILITATION***

The traditional instructor-centered approaches were evident under the Bachelor of Entrepreneurship with Honours, BEnt (Hons) Entrepreneurship as well as the PE1013 Basic Entrepreneurship course. The program content is still delivered through lectures and handout materials.

The Student Enterprise Program students handle their business situations themselves, be it internal or external matters. Students order their own inventories, set up their store, carry out their own promotion and advertising, to dealing with vendors and suppliers. Those that employ personnel to look after the stores deal with the problems of hiring and firing. University intervention is kept to a minimal. However, the university provides consultants for students who need advise. Nonetheless, students not involved in the SEP but plan to participate may seek out these consultants who offers ideas and suggestions on business plans and project ideas, and the assessment of the business plans.

## **5. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Participants for the study are UUM graduates who were enrolled in the Student Enterprise Programme (SEP) while registered as students at the university. A list of students' names and telephone numbers were collected from files at the Student Affairs Department and the Entrepreneurship Development Institute. Some old student records could not be traced. A simple random sample is used to identify the alumni included in the study. A total of 150 students were identified.

Survey questionnaires were mailed to the students based on the given addresses. The questionnaire is divided into four major parts. Part A contains some general questions to collect the demographics of the respondents. The potential respondents may be divided into three distinct groups:

- Group 1: Individuals who are self-employed
- Group 2: Individuals who are organisational employees and operate a business on a part-time basis
- Group 3: Individuals who are organisational employees

The study covers the period since 1991. To locate potential respondents, and increase feedbacks, telephone calls were made to the telephone numbers supplied by the students on their registration forms. Many of the students could not be traced since the addresses and telephone numbers were old. However, through relatives and friends we were able to locate a majority of the students

## **6. FINDINGS**

### **6.1 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS**

Of the 150 questionnaires mailed out to students who were participants in the SEP, twenty nine (or 20%) respondents returned the survey. Table 1 shows that twenty three of the respondents are male while the remaining six are female. Of the males respondents, a majority of them (11 or 38%) are between the ages of 25 to 30 years . Fourteen are married (five respondents did not state their marital status). Fourteen respondents are Malays while the remaining nine are Chinese. After graduation, only one male student went on to obtain his masters degree while another is presently pursuing his PhD.

A majority of the female respondents (four or 66.7%) are between the ages of 31 to 35 years old. One female respondent is married while another five remained single. Four of the female respondents are Chinese while another two respondents are Malay. After graduation, three of the female respondents went on to obtain their masters degree.

**Table 1**  
**Distribution of the SEP Alumni by gender, age and marital status**

Gender	No of respondents	Age			Marital status		Race		Highest level of education		
		25 – 30 years	31 – 35 years	> 35 years	Single	Married	Malay	Chinese	Bachelors degree	Masters degree	PhD
Male	23	11	8	4	4	14	14	9	21	1	1
Female	6	1	4	1	5	1	2	4	3	3	0
Total	29	12	12	5			16	13	24	4	1

Table 2 shows that while at UUM, a majority of these respondents (13 or 45%) were students from the Bachelors of Business Administration programme, BBA (Hons.). Of these thirteen students, five majored in finance. The others majored in banking, human resource management, marketing and production management. Five respondents were in the accounting programme while another five were in the information technology degree programme. The remaining respondents were registered under the economics, public management or banking programmes. Thirteen of the total respondents maintained an average cumulative grade point average of 3.00 and above upon graduation with a female student achieved a CGPA of 3.51 or higher.

**Table 2**  
**Distribution of respondents by degree programmes and final CGPA**

	TOTAL	Degree programmes						Final cumulative grade point average			
		BBA	Information Technology	Accountancy	Economics	Public management	Banking	2.00-2.50	2.51-2.99	3.00-3.50	3.51-4.00
Male	23	9	5	4	2	2	1	5	9	9	0
Female	6	4		1		1			2	3	1

While under the SEP at UUM, a majority of the male respondents ran photocopy services (four respondents), computers/electronic goods (four respondents) or a photo studio (four respondents). Others were involved in business such as selling CDs, selling t-shirts and printing, operating a gift shop, hair salon, clothing store or bakery. Three of the female respondents ran gift shops as shown in Table 3 below. One operated a photo studio, another had a shop selling cosmetics and gifts while another ran a travel agent and provided ticketing services. When asked how long they participated in the SEP, respondents stated for a period of one year with four years being the longest length of participation.

**Table 3**  
**Types of business ventures while at UUM**

Male respondents		Female respondents	
Photocopy services	4		
Computers / Electronics	4		
Photo shop	4	Photo shop	1
Entertainment (selling of CDs)	3	Selling beauty products	1
Gift shop	1	Gift shop	3
Hair salon	1	Travel agent and ticketing	1
Clothing	1		
Selling religious items	1		
T-shirt, gifts and ticketing	1		
T-shirt and printing	1		
Food items, snacks	1		
Bakery	1		
	<b>23</b>		<b>6</b>

## 6.2 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

We were interested to learn if the respondents had used their experience which they acquired while under the SEP to start their own business ventures. Of the twenty nine respondents, seven are self-employed. All six are male respondents. Seventeen respondents are organisational employees working at either private or public companies in the country. The remaining five respondents are organisational employees but at the same time operate their own business ventures as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**Distribution of respondents by chosen careers**

	Male	Female	Total
Self-employed	7	0	7
Organisational employees	12	5	17
Organisational employees and self-employed	4	1	5

All the self-employed respondents are male between the ages of 27 to 34 years old. Five of the seven self-employed respondents are Malays with the remaining two being Chinese. One respondent started business straight out of university while the other six worked elsewhere before becoming self-employed. One respondent changed his job four times within a period of two years before opening up his own IT solution business.

The respondents have been in business between 1 to over 5 years. They were encouraged by either their spouse, parents, relatives to start their own business while another respondent, on his own initiative, started a construction business on a joint venture basis with his previous employer. A majority (86%) used their own savings as start-up capital while others used their own savings and money borrowed from family and friends. Six respondents started new business and another respondent bought over a business selling mobile phone accessories in his hometown.

Of the five respondents who are, at the same time, both organizational employees and self-employed were between the ages of 25 to 38. Four are Malays and two are Chinese. The types of business operated are laundry, food, cyber café and IT solutions.

Eight of these respondents start their own business ventures while the remaining four bought over their business from another party. The business are established as either sole proprietorships (58%) or partnerships (42%). A majority of these two groups of respondents are self-employed because they want to face the challenge of running their own enterprise, to do what they enjoy doing and the desire to be their own boss.

Table 5 shows three most important things that the SEP has helped them in becoming successful entrepreneurs. A respondent ranked “leadership” as the most important while another two ranked leadership third. Being able to assess the market was ranked as the most important by two respondents. Other items ranked as most important include “negotiation skills” and “gaining business knowledge”.

**Table 5**  
**Distribution of respondents by chosen careers**

Items	Ranking*
Market assessment	1, 1, 3
Financial analysis	1
Financial planning	2
Feasibility study skills	2
Problem-solving skills	2
Opportunity selection skills	2, 3
Leadership	1, 3, 3
Negotiation skills	1
Human relation skills	2
Self confidence	3
Motivation	2
Provide information/impart business knowledge	1, 3

\* From a list of items, respondents are asked to rank the three most important things the SEP has helped them in becoming successful with 1 being the most important.

## 7. MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

UUM has the responsibility to act as a conduit for the development of entrepreneurs. To achieve the objective, the university introduces various entrepreneurship education and training programs. Thus far it has introduced four different programs toward inculcating the entrepreneurial culture amongst students. Under the SEP, UUM provides the necessary infrastructure to facilitate entry into business ventures. Past participants of the SEP were found to start their own business ventures, while others manage to operate their own enterprise while being organizational employees at the same time. All of these respondents believe that the SEP at UUM, while a majority (eight or 75%) agreed that the SEP has helped them in running their current business ventures.

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