

Assessing the Capacity Building Programs of the Involvement of TVET Graduates in Business After Graduation: Comparative Study between Malaysia and Indonesia

Abd. Rahman S.T., M.T.
Mechanical Engineering
Department,
Politeknik Negeri Medan
abdulrahman19590712@polmed.ac.id

Berta Br. Ginting M.T.
Mechanical Engineering
Department,
Politeknik Negeri Medan
berthalinagt@gmail.com

M. Syahrudin
S.T.,M.T.,Ir.
Electrical Engineering
Department,
Politeknik Negeri Medan
syahrudin@polmed.ac.id

Rokimah bt. Mohamad
Malaysian Technical Doctorate
Association
rokimahmohamad@gmail.com

Zaiton bt. Sujak
Politeknik Nilai, Negeri
Sembilan
zaiton@pns.edu.my

Quyru Zeta bt. Ishak
Politeknik Nilai, Negeri
Sembilan
quyrul@pns.edu.my

ABSTRACT

It has been an overwhelming alert from educational point of view to embark on effort in nurturing business and entrepreneurship talent amongst the students, in the essence of producing more self-employed or business graduates. This scenario has been extensively discussed and implemented by numerous educational institutions at various levels, including TVET institutions. Thus, the objective of this study is to identify the capacity building programs that strengthen and inhibit TVET graduates' involvement in business as their job after graduation. It focuses on understanding the factors by which TVET graduates obtain, improve and sustain the knowledge and skills to run their business successfully, as well as exploring on the obstacles that demotivate the graduates to get involve in doing business as their earning for life. This is the qualitative study that used structured interview technique to collect data from TVET graduates in Malaysia and Indonesia. Five respondents from Malaysia and five respondents from Indonesia have been interviewed and findings were being recorded digitally. The respondents are TVET graduates who are currently doing their own business. Findings exhibit that inner self-motivation becomes the core strength for them to get involve in doing own business. Other factors such as family and friends support, own and friends' experiences, continuous learning from on-going training resources, as well as formal learning from former institutions develop their self-strength and confident to run a business. Apart from that, the informal learning seems to contribute higher impact in building entrepreneurship capacity. The findings provide beneficial insights for both countries, particularly for Polytechnic Medan and Polytechnic Nilai, and related TVET organization and policies.

Keywords: Capacity building, entrepreneurship, TVET, education and training, structured interview

1. INTRODUCTION

The challenge of unemployment and its concomitant socio-economic problems is widely evident currently throughout the globe. In the Malaysian Education Plan 2020, it has made entrepreneurship training as a compulsory course for all higher education students irrespective of their area of specialization. However, studies have shown that the programs have yet to be reviewed and revisited as the number of graduates unemployed and remain unemployed long after graduation is increasing from time to time. The labour market is no longer becoming as a promising place for graduates to earn for living, thus self-employment appears to be the choices for them. Self-employment or doing own business has been in the limelight for many youth or graduates. It is a good endeavor and effort for job creation and solving the unemployed phenomena that might trigger other social and economic shortcomings.

Entrepreneurship aims to build a learning culture that would empower the youth to take responsibility for their own future (through doing business activities). Thus, a process of educating self-awareness and the development of individual capacity for appropriate transfer of knowledge, skills and building of business and entrepreneur mindset should be an integral education and training programs in schools, colleges and universities (Ikebuaka & Dinbabo, 2018). However, scholars like Suatet (2013) argued that positive impact of entrepreneurship training during college life need further attention, particularly from the lens of capability building approach.

Since this study was done across the geographical boundaries, that is comparing between Indonesia and Malaysia, more or less it reflects the differences in culture, educational system, people characteristic, way of thinking and doing things in their life. It is expected that by making a comparative study between Malaysia and Indonesia would generate a meaningful finding that would lead to a better understanding of the phenomena under study and resonate to a better resolution for the research problems. Richer data might be engendered from the two countries that would provide a different outlook for further improvement.

Hence, this study is a debut of research endeavor with the aim to assess the entrepreneurship capacity building programs focusing on the strengths and weaknesses that infers the TVET graduate's involvement to form and run the business. It also depicts the way they obtain, improve and sustain their capability in running and continuing their business.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Capacity Building

Capacity building is defined as the art of enhancing new and improved skills (Hassan, Mata & Sagagi, 2016). It is a process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives (UNDP, 1997). Capacity building consists of activities designed to increase the competence and effectiveness of individuals and organizations (Stryk, Damon & Haddaway, 2011).

According to ESRC (2012), capacity building is a process where individuals, groups, networks, and organisations are encouraged and facilitated in enhancing their knowledge and skills so as to increase their ability to perform tasks. It can be defined narrowly as training-increasing knowledge and skills in general.

To be a successful businessman/entrepreneur, individuals must build capacities in a few key strategic areas to provide the ingredients for a great entrepreneurial success. Some of these capacities are gained through experience during their career, while others are learned through educational avenues. Some successful entrepreneurs are born with strong personality traits, and some behaviors are strengthened through learned responses in the business environment.

2.2 Strength and Inhibiting Factors for Involvement of TVET Graduates in Business/ Entrepreneurship

Before beginning the discussion of the study, primarily the term entrepreneurship will be defined. There are many definitions of entrepreneurship in the literature. One of the most referred to is from Kirby, Livett and Rindl (1991), which said that entrepreneur is an undertaker - someone who undertakes to make things happen, and thus is likely to be regarded as a change agent. Some of the more recent definitions suggest that entrepreneurship term refers to one's own business and involves broad concepts such as work attitude that emphasizes self-reliance, initiative, innovativeness and risk-taking (Bryat & Julien, 2001). Entrepreneurship leads to the enhancement of skills to serve consumers and is viewed as a process of innovation, which creates new ventures (Kuratko & Hodgett, 2004). In recent decades, entrepreneurship is considered as the main driver of economic growth in most countries.

There are many factors that can describe the reasons for TVET graduates involve in doing business/entrepreneurship. The reasons might be positive or negative, or the strength and inhibiting factors that become the determinant for graduates to get involve in business. Muhammad, Akhbar & Dalzed (2011) elaborate that these factors develop the entrepreneurial personality traits or demographic characteristics or entrepreneurial attitude . Thus, strengthening and inhibiting factors are regarded as strong intention for someone resulted from attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms towards doing or not doing entrepreneurship (Linan et.all, 2011).

With regard to strengthening and inhibiting factors, an education that supports an entrepreneurial attitude definitely helps in consolidating a healthy business environment in any economy (Van Gelderen, et all (2008). At government level, more and more programs are launched to support entrepreneurial endeavors through educational institutions and schools.

However, research on the entrepreneurial drive is looking for more measurable factors that can explain the entrepreneurial motivation. Among others, age, gender, role models, and institutional factors are some of those factors considered to have considerable influence on motivation to become entrepreneurs (Dvoulety, 2017). Nonetheless, education is considered as an important factor to shape desirability of people towards entrepreneurship, and later transform this desirability towards actions such as to form a new companies/business.

The likelihood of expressing entrepreneurial intentions is significantly and positively affected by prior qualifications and training (Singh, Verma & Rao, 2015). Some authors even prove that having studied entrepreneurial courses can incline students towards entrepreneurship. Learning leads to developing self- confident. In another study done by Ooi, Selvarajah & Meyer (2011) mentions that entrepreneurial confidence is investigated as potential construct for entrepreneurial motivation. ‘Starting and owning a business typically is riskier and more demanding than paid employment, and we should expect that an entrepreneurial livelihood would attract, and indeed depend on, individuals with a well-developed sense of confidence, energy, and adaptability’ (Pruett et all, 2009). Confidence gains as a result of education, and confident was developed when someone underwent certain form of learning. Thus, students gain confident after they learn, and also gain competences that would help them in their entrepreneurial endeavors. Confidence also is a sub-conscious effect of the business education, as well as a sub-conscious effect of the cultural support for entrepreneurship

Another shaping perception is contextual factors, favoring or not their transformation into concrete actions. Negative impact of administrative barriers, for example, expressed as start-up costs or amount of procedures required to establish an enterprise may inhibit entrepreneurial endeavors (Ooi, Selvarajah & Rao, 2011) For example, one of the contextual factors is culture. Cultural support has been seen as one of the major contributors to entrepreneurial intention, and cultural support for entrepreneurship has a direct influence on the student’s intention to start a business (McElwee & Al-Riyami, 2011).

A lot of research mention about attitude that drive people to do or not to things. Linan *et.al* (2011) describe attitude as the degree to which the individual holds a positive or negative personal valuation about being someone, in this case being an entrepreneur. Attitude which indicate by perceived behavioural control refers to the capacity to fulfil the things one’s have to do, in this case the entrepreneurial endeavour requirements (Nguyen, 2018).

Role model becomes another contributing factor to motivate individual to run the business. This is because through role model of entrepreneurs among family members and of being exposed to entrepreneurship experience in the family nurtured a resilient behavior. This constitute important determinant on entrepreneurial intention. Having parents with a self-employment history: create management expertise for the future own business, determine the desire to start a business, or leading to a greater tendency to choose a self-employed career (Nguyen, 2018).

Healthy entrepreneurship ecosystem in a given country, both the quality of entrepreneurship and the extent and depth of the supporting entrepreneurial ecosystem also plays a role in developing many entrepreneurs. In the Global Entrepreneur Index (GEI), which composed of three building blocks or sub- indices: entrepreneurial attitudes (what do you think about it), entrepreneurial abilities (can you do it?), and entrepreneurial aspirations (do you want to do it?), it indicates the level of entrepreneurship achievement of the country (Acs, Szerb & Lloyd, 2017) Hence education, especially postsecondary education, plays a vital role in teaching and developing entrepreneurial skills. It is widely held that entrepreneurs with higher education degrees are more capable and willing to start and manage high-growth businesses (Nguyen, 2018).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This is a qualitative descriptive study, that employ structured interview technique as a medium for data collection. Qualitative method is used to explore and interprets a contextual phenomenon of the respondents, and to understanding people’s experiences related to the phenomenon that occurs (Sekaran, 2003). Sekaran defines qualitative research as a research that

intends to understand the phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, etc. holistically by describing in the form of words and language, in a special context that is naturally utilizing various natural methods.

Data collected was recorded, transcribed and interpreted manually using thematic approach. Since this is an early research effort that will be followed by future study, the number of sampling is decided to be around 10 respondents, the manual way of analyzing data is still acceptable. Since qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting, the number of respondents would depend on the objective of the research (Sekaran, 2003). Data processing from the two countries will be analyzed together in a descriptive analysis to answer the research questions submitted.

3.2 Sampling

Five respondents were selected using purposive sampling technique from Polytechnic Medan (POLMED) graduates and five from Polytechnic Nilai (PNS) graduates whom are currently running their own businesses. They were voluntarily willing to be interviewed. Some respondents (POLMED) were already graduated almost 20-30 years and are now successfully building up their businesses. They were being interviewed using structured interview questions that consist of 10 questions, and were being digitally recorded.

4. FINDINGS

Findings from the study were analyzed according to five main themes. There are:

- 4.1 Personal background
- 4.2 Business background
- 4.3 Strengthening and inhibiting factors for involvement in business
- 4.4 Sustainable factors
- 4.5 Other factors

The findings are summarized and presented in the following paragraphs and tables.

4.1 Personal background.

From POLMED, five graduates that has been selected as respondents for this study were ranging between 29 to 59 years old, and live in various places in Sumatra Indonesia. This means that they have left POLMED long time ago, and have gone through various experiences as employed workers in government or private sectors, as well as started up their own business and running the business until present time. Most of them initiated building their own business with fresh experiences, and only two of them have family business experiences. However, the family and friends support play an important role for them to succeed in their business endeavor.

Nonetheless, five PNS graduates that were selected as respondents were much younger ranging from 21 to 29 years old, live in the nearby area of PNS. All of them were from family business background, thus, at the very young age they already own a business. Two of them already started their business during studying at PNS, and all of them except one started their business upon completing their studying. Strong family and friends support do motivate them to succeed in their businesses.

4.2 Business background

The following are the summarize business data for five respondents graduated from POLMED and PNS.

Table 1 Business background of respondents from POLMED

Respondent	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5
Duration of business	6 years	10 years	8 years	5 years	2 years
Type of business	Construction	Engineering & equipment maintenance	Fabrication and waste compose	Online business - export fruits, selling cosmetics and wood based product	Selling birds and bird food

Number of staff	3 staff	5 staff	5 staff	No staff	No staff
Who manage the business?	Self manage	Self manage	Self manage	Self manage with wife	Self manage with wife
Sources of capital	Own fund and bank loan	Own fund	Own fund	Bank loan	Own fund
Business/ Financial status	Good	Financially stable	Financially good	Financially good	Good

Table 2 Business background of respondents graduated from PNS

Respondent	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5
Duration of business	2 years	6 years	2 years	2 years	2 years
Type of business	Online gadget and trends	Computer & services, insurance	Motorcycle accessories	Laundry	Marinated lamb and restaurant
Number of staff	4 staff	4 staff	No staff	No staff	No staff
Who manage?	Self manage	Self manage	Self manage	Self manage with father	Self manage with wife
Sources of capital	Own fund and bank loan	Own fund	Own fund	Bank loan	Own fund
Business/ Financial status	Challenging	Good	Financially good	Financially good	Good

4.3 Strengthening and inhibiting Factors for Involvement in Business

The following are the summarize of the interview findings on factors that strengthen and inhibit graduate's involvement in business.

Table 3 Strengthening Factors of POLMED graduates

Factors	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5
Motivation /strength factors	Working career has limitation, parents also encourage to do business.	Motivation from childhood already learned to earned own money, father's motivation	Previously worked in fabric industry but feel bored, Then started own business.	Motivation from the awareness that technology helps business a lot	Motivation from friends and informal learning.
Sources of knowledge from formal learning	Knowledge from POLMED	Gain knowledge from POLMED	Formal learning from POLMED as basic	Basic knowledge from POLMED that help alot, such as budgeting.	Formal learning help in giving technical skills, eg.. Birds warmer machine
Sources of knowledge from informal learning	Friends and working experiences, other sources from trainings	Working experiences, friends and other courses	Learn from working experience, friends, own motivation and own exploration	Learn from social media, and own informal learning.	Learn from friends, other courses and business networking
Mentoring	No mentor	No mentor	No mentor	No mentor	No mentor

Table 4 Strengthening Factors of PNS graduates

Factors	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5
Motivation /strength factors	Motivation from self-passionate and father	Motivation from father, self-motivation and keen on doing business.	Self- motivation, family and friends	Motivation from parents	Family motivation
Sources of knowledge from formal learning	Strong motivation from formal learning	Formal learning helps a lot	Formal learning give basic knowledge	Formal learning from PNS help understand to do business	Formal learning Helps a lot, especially practical project works
Sources of knowledge from informal learning	Spend more Money on attending courses/ seminars outside	Friends and family from childhood, an outside courses	Attending class entrepreneur online courses.	Learning from outside courses and friends	Online courses organized by outside
Mentoring	Entrepreneur icon - Faddy Ghazali	Father	Father	Parents	Family

4.4 Sustaining Factors in Doing Business

The following are findings on sustaining factors from both institutions.

Table 5 Sustaining factors of POLMED and PNS graduates

Respondents	Respondents 1	Respondents 2	Respondents 3	Respondents 4	Respondents 5
POLMED	Discussion with friends especially on regulations	Consistent and commitment in doing work.	Discussion with friends and own exploration	Self- accomplishment when customer satisfied with the service and product quality product, on-time delivery, fast and honest respond to customers, and always optimist to find new customers	Sustain motivation from friends, discussion with friends, finds information form own experience.
PNS	Family support and encouragement, need many interactions and networking	Self-discipline, independent, joint class, meet other business owner	Sustaining factor –self learning to increase knowledge.	Sustaining factor - attend online courses, e-entrepreneur	Sustaining factor -- continue learning from online, and attending courses

The following are findings on inhibiting factors from both institutions.

Table 6 Inhibiting factors of POLMED and PNS graduates

Respondents	Respondents 1	Respondents 2	Respondents 3	Respondents 4	Respondents 5
POLMED	Inhibit factors - Not having Networking, not having knowledge and capital	Inhibit factors –negative mindset and attitude, need to be educate not only through formal learning	Inhibiting factors - not enough knowledge to apply and approach jobs competition	Inhibiting factors - No distributor or networking, eg. Supplier with low cost price, and ready stock	Inhibiting factors - competitors, need to use social media
PNS		Inhibiting factors – self attitude and afraid to do business	Inhibiting factors – no body wants to motivate	Inhibiting factors – not interested in doing business because don't have knowledge how to start business. But more on online business	Inhibit factors – not enough capital and not willing to take risk

4.5 Other Factors

The following are findings on further suggestions for graduate's involvement in business.

Table 7. Other suggestions from POLMED and PNS graduates

Respondents	Respondent 1	Respondents 2	Respondents 3	Respondents 4	Respondents 5
POLMED	Exposes to other business/jobs, able to see opportunities, cost and profit Form a strong networking for alumni, those who look for big projects may seek info from big vendors from the alumni.	Need strong entrepreneur community from alumni, need to be matching between institution and industry, need transformation, suggest to have public lecture given by entrepreneur alumni sharing on regulations and business challenges once a month. Industry matching curriculum, sharing entrepreneurial experience is more important and effective way of learning , organize entrepreneur seminar to increase fund		Students can start business while studying, no limit for online business, organize sharing session with alumni Curriculum need to be reviewed and include more topic on strategic management, and marketing, form alumni consortium to share capital, products, etc. Strong networking with other entrepreneurs from alumni.	Need strong Will to do business, POLMED need to do curriculum review to include marketing aspects sharing session with success entrepreneur from alumni
PNS	Call business founders to share knowledge and motivation to students	Students need to have interest on doing business and starts business and do not give up. Polytechnic need to do more business start-up projects to give practical learning to students.	Do not hesitate to ask and learn from others, and don't be so egoistic	Once starts business, go ahead and don't turn back, don't give up.	Find right circle of friends to get support, and create harmonious environment.

5 DISCUSSION

From the interview, one important finding is those who comes from family who already own a business demonstrates that they have greater entrepreneurship capacity with more exposures and experiences prior to completing their study. Family encouragement is a strongest factor for any business endeavor, as the support is not only on money matters, but also on emotional, spirit, confident level, strategy and guidance. Linda *et al* (2016) in their research findings indicate that family social support and family cohesiveness are positively associated with the scope of start-up activities.

As for the business background, data implies that young entrepreneurs tend to venture into a trendier kind of business as compared to older and experienced entrepreneurs. Older entrepreneurs as demonstrated by findings from POLMED graduates have more courage to involve in bigger and higher-capital businesses. This might be due to the more knowledge and confidence gained through the business process and activities when they grew older in doing business. The interesting findings from each country is, most of them started business with own capital and very few seek help from bank loan. This positive perspective i.e. to build and grow business without depending and creating more liabilities might financially easier for their business to move forward. All of them manage their own business with few staff that implies less responsibility and also administration cost.

With regard to strengthening factors for doing business, many respondents from both countries mentioned that family and friends was the strong factor to get involve in business. Family with a business background often influence and motivate their family members to involve in entrepreneurial activity and they normally possess higher inclination to build a business in future (Van Auken et al., 2006). They further advocate that fathers have a stronger influence on their children's decisions to become entrepreneurs. Family encouragement have implication on emergence of new business, recognition of opportunity, start-up decisions and resource mobilizations (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Similarly, prior exposure to entrepreneurship from family has an impact on entrepreneurial intentions, those having their self-employed father are more inclined towards entrepreneurship.

Some respondents from POLMED graduates told that they want to venture into new career that could move them further in achieving their personal goals. Previous studies described the need for achievement and desire for independence as the most frequent mentioned factors to new business start-up. Xue, David & Liang (2011) described the need for achievement as an impetus drive in undertaking obligated responsibilities perfectly and achieving success. That is, individual who possess a high-level need for achievement has the higher probability to involve in entrepreneurial activity. Similarly, individuals who possess high need for independence will seek for careers with more freedom.

The foundation knowledge from previous Polytechnic formal learning provides baseline for graduates to start-up the business, and enhanced further by attending business / entrepreneurship courses from time to time by other organizers. Engaging in business networking is another strong motivational factor beside advices from friends who have succeed in business also come into account. Krueger and Brazeal (2001) has suggested that entrepreneurship courses, or training regarding starting of new business, do contribute towards starting a new business and it gives confidence and courage to them. They also recommended that education in entrepreneurship can improve the perceived feasibility for entrepreneurial business through increased knowledge base of students, confidence building and promoting self-efficacy. The theoretical insights about the business start-up process increases the graduate's confidence as it provides 'know-how' features for entrepreneurial learning, and linked to the development of entrepreneurial intentions (Souitaris, Zerbinati, and Al-Laham 2007).

Having a mentor is another strong point that heighten individual spirit to do business. Mentor is a means of coaching approach for individual and professional development and as such has become more prevalent in helping early start-up entrepreneur to build up the business in a likely correct way. From the findings, young entrepreneurs from PNS graduates were guided by a mentor particularly from their father or external business icon. However, this does not happen in graduates from POLMED. None of them have a mentor. This might indicate that veteran entrepreneur or individual who start-up business at older age possesses higher confident level to run the business independently as compared to young entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, different culture might also need to be considered when making a conclusion for this finding.

Entrepreneurs need to sustain their motivational level in order to success particularly in the long run. Most of respondents from both countries gave good remarks for the following factors to sustain in their business, there are: exchanging information and ideas with friends, family support, continuously attending learning programs and high commitment and self-discipline.

On the other hand, the following factors were perceived as inhibiting factors for graduates to get involve in doing business, they are: negative attitude towards business, lack of knowledge and motivation, not interested and not ready to take risk or business challenges.

Nevertheless, the respondents were very contented to offer good suggestions to encourage many graduates to involve in entrepreneurship. Among the points are: develop a strong entrepreneurship community among alumni, organizing sharing session via seminars or public lecture or mentoring by the successful alumni with current students, need to have strong perseverance in doing business, provide opportunities for students to start business while studying and the need for entrepreneurship curriculum to be regularly reviewed and matching with the market demand.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a conclusion, this study provides a glance on entrepreneurship capacity building programs that positively stimulate TVET graduates to start up their own business. Inadvertently, respondents from PNS and POLMED alumni were bigger in age gap. Thus, findings and comparison between the two generations need to be carefully concluded, particularly when comes to the point to understand the similarity and differences between the two countries and the two generations gap.

Findings from both countries indicate that family plays important role in developing entrepreneurs and further supporting towards attaining their business success. Friends networking is another supporting factor. Perhaps because Malaysia and Indonesia are high-context culture according to Edward Hall - an American anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher – stated that both countries are collectivist and highly value interpersonal relationships which create stable and close relationships with each other.

All respondents which are currently entrepreneurs have high interest in doing business, and they know how to manage business on their own, and handle business challenges in proper way. They also know how to equip themselves with appropriate knowledge by attending courses and seminars from time to time, thus help them to sustain better in running the business. All of them agree that strong alumni networking and developing strong alumni business community is very important for the existing and the future graduates to get involve in entrepreneurship.

This study should be continued and expand on the research focus to achieve better findings and hence will contribute to

improve capacity building programs in higher institutions for nurturing many entrepreneurs in a future.

However, the limitation of this study is, it has been done in a very short duration, thus the main limitation is on the depth and breadth of the study which reflected by the small number of respondents involved. Hence, future research should be undertaken to expand the research result into thorough investigation in the following areas: evaluate the strategic impact on each types of entrepreneurship program implemented in both Polytechnics, increase the number of respondents to increase validity and reliability taking into account the cultural aspect of both countries, zooming study on the greater factors that strengthen and sustain entrepreneur motivation as well as the opposite factors, using other kinds of research methodology (such as mix method) to gain better results and focus study on comparing between the young entrepreneur and veteran entrepreneur.

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