Say You, Say Me: On Entrepreneurship Education as a Differentiation Strategy

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This study is built around a Malaysian private university's quest to differentiate itself using entrepreneurship education in the nation's competitive higher education industry. Students' views on Bachelor of Business Administration and Bachelor of Management (Entrepreneurship) are drawn through personal interviews and focus group to answer two main questions; how does entrepreneurship education differ from business education? And how can the university improve its entrepreneurship education? The research uncovered four basic points in which the university's two programs part ways that is in terms of program content, mode of delivery, lecturers and program outcome. The students interviewed generally perceive Bachelor of Business Management (Entrepreneurship) as a specialized program meant to create business founders whereas Bachelor of Business Administration is seen as a mould for industry-ready worker.

Field of Research: Business strategy, entrepreneurship education

1. Introduction

In its Latin origin, the word university (*universitas magistrorum et scholarium*) denotes the congregation of teachers and scholars implying that at every university's crux lay the noble quest for knowledge. However in the 21st century, liberalization (Marginson, 1997) and globalization (Vaira, 2004; Hagen, 2002) have reduced the pursuit of knowledge to 'traditional mission' (Wong, 2005). Instead, survival is now higher learning institutions' (HEI) main priority. To withstand the intensified competition resulting from the market reforms, Whisman (2009) suggested that HEI have to strategize just like their counterparts in the corporate sector. Unfortunately literature on strategies for the former is rather scant (Shirley, 1983). Efforts to enrich the body of knowledge in the field seemed to focus on branding (see for example Bunzel, 2007; Ivy, 2001), strategic alliances (Worasinchai, Ribiere and Arntzen, 2008; Dooley and Kirk, 2007; Gerhard and Mayr, 2002) and merger (Harman, 2002; Fielden and Markham, 1997).

Following the suggestion of Handy (2008) on differentiation strategy as a possible formula for HEI sustainability, this case study seeks to enrich knowledge on strategies of universities in general and to assist the university under study to improve its strategy in particular. The research documents a Malaysian private university's attempt at using entrepreneurship education as a mean to distinguish itself in the market. Specifically, the research intends to answer two main questions; does entrepreneurship qualify as a differentiation strategy or is it merely a generic business education re-branded?

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Secondly, what do students need to start their own business venture? Parallel to the second question, this research sees entrepreneurial education from the lens of small business formation instead of wealth creation (Katz, 2003). Since the research is qualitative and exploratory in nature, this article begins by introducing the context of the research followed by a review of relevant literature. The conduct of the study is then detailed out prior to discussion on findings and conclusion. Limitations of the study are also outlined to caution readers on the generalizibility of the findings.

1.1 The University

Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (Unirazak) operates in a very competitive local scene that is characterized by an inflated number of players[i] bidding for a small market[ii]. Realizing the need to create its own blue ocean, in January 2008 the university changed its focus from being a virtual university to being one that concentrates on entrepreneurship and leadership (Yusof, Mohd Nor, Tasnim and Samah, 2009). In line with the strategic move, the university has committed a significant amount of resources into its entrepreneurship school. This includes a new city campus in the heart of Kuala Lumpur and an alliance with Babson College, USA. The collaboration with the college among all entails the university bringing over experts from the college a few times annually to conduct trainings in Malaysia.

The Bank Rakyat School of Business and Entrepreneurship (BRSBE) was set up in December 2007 and began admitting students in July 2008[iii]. In March 2010, after more than a year and a half of operation the school's golden child, Bachelor of Business Management (Entrepreneurship) (BBME) only has thirteen students from two intakes. In contrast, an older sister faculty, Faculty of Business Administration (FBA), has maintained its position as the faculty that attracts the most enrollment. FBA's best selling program, Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) has attracted 362 students in year 2009. This discrepancy leads to a question of whether the university has employed the correct strategy.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Differentiation Strategy

Differentiation strategy is generally and commonly described as providing unique products at a premium price (Jongbloed, 2002; Mazzarol and Hosie, 1996) to a large market segment (Card and Card, 2007). The uniqueness can lie for instance, in product features, superior service, reputation and brand image (Stimpert, 2004). However to make the strategy workable, White (1986) and Dickson and Ginter (1987) stressed that differentiation strategy must be anchored to customer wants and needs. Customers are not going to absorb the higher price unless they are offered something which they perceive as unique and worth paying for (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2008).

In the context of higher education, institutions using differentiation strategy are likely to raise their entry requirement to project the exclusivity of their product which warrants higher fees (Card and Card, 2007). Card and Card (2007) also highlighted that to the

students-customers, exclusivity simply means quality. This strategy, according to Mazzarol and Hosie (1996), is recommended for a maturing market where more rivals are available and students' switching cost reduces. In their 2008 study, Mazzarol and Soutar found that 70% of the 258 Australian education institutions surveyed employ one or a combination of the generic strategies in response to the increased competitiveness in their industry. Differentiation strategy, albeit being applied by only 12% of the respondents, was found to lead to better organizational performance than cost leadership strategy. This may indicate that students value uniqueness more than they are price sensitive.

2.2 Entrepreneurship Education

The concept of entrepreneurship education is grounded on the belief that entrepreneurs can be made. Such conviction is contrary to the view of traits theories which dominated the entrepreneurship education field in its earlier stage (Schwarz, Wdowiak, Almer-Jarz and Breitnecker, 2009). Trait theorists basically contend that entrepreneurship is the birth right of selected few that have certain personalities and characteristics (Gartner, 1989). Proponents of the behavioral school on the other hand, argue that being an entrepreneur is a planned action that is influenced by many factors (Yusof et. al, 2009) including education. Hence, training can enhance one's entrepreneurial tendency and capability. This is consistent with Fayolle et al's. (2006) definition of entrepreneurship education as any pedagogical program or education process that builds entrepreneurial attitudes and skills and Cameron and Frost's (2003) focus on the kindling of innovation, opportunity recognition and risk taking.

Entrepreneurship education as a discipline is still relatively young compared to a more established fields in the social science like leadership or motivation. The first entrepreneurship course, according to Kirby (2004) was introduced in 1947 in Harvard University. Cheung (2008) categorized entrepreneurship education into education for entrepreneurs and education about entrepreneurship. The former has traditionally been about feeding students with the skills to start a business whereas the latter (and a more current view) aims at equipping students with other knowledge, skills and attitude to help them succeed in their life. Clearly, a critical underlying assumption in the education about entrepreneurship is that entrepreneurship skills are useful even when an individual is in paid employment.

According to Matlay (2008), a vast proportion of entrepreneurship programs in universities across the industrialized countries is designed, delivered and accredited in the business schools but entrepreneurship education is different from the typical business education. The latter aims at equipping students with business management skills, whereas entrepreneurship education's core objective is to generate ideas to take advantage of business opportunities and to give students the ability to start their own business. Vesper and McMullan (1988) and Solomon et al. (2007) similarly, viewed entrepreneurship education as the classes in which students are taught the skills to draw a path for a new business venture by combining knowledge from functional disciplines and the dynamic external environment. According to Bridges (2008), entrepreneurship education is a life long process. Taking into account the lengthy

period is perhaps why Henry and Leitch (2005a) posited that entrepreneurs' education requirement should vary according to the stages of students' development. This in turn hints that differences in the courses and programs are to be expected. Critically, according to Henry and Leitch (2005a), not much uniformity was found with the stages of students' development. The diversity was also reported by Mohd Jani et. al in Malaysia, Solomon et. al (2007) in the USA and Cameron and Frost (2003) in New Zealand.

A qualitative research of Johnson et al. (2006) on the other hand, found that entrepreneurship in the higher education context can be grouped according to academic discipline. For professional discipline majors like pharmacy and accountancy, they found that entrepreneurship is taught in applied setting whereby students worked in their professional field before venturing out on their own. For the invention-based discipline however, entrepreneurship education should focus more on intellectual property protection as well as feasibility analysis but for industry-based ventures students are required to be alert to entrepreneurial opportunities. Their findings led them to recommend that curriculum should be developed based on the need of the discipline.

Objective of the entrepreneurship education is also known to be the basis on which the curriculum or teaching method is derived. Heinonen (2007) for example, stated that there are three different objectives of entrepreneurship education programs: to understand entrepreneurship, to become entrepreneurial and to become an entrepreneur. Jameison (1984) likewise classified entrepreneurship education into three groups namely education about enterprise, education for enterprise and education in enterprise. Education about enterprise aspires to create awareness so students are taught the theory on how to start and manage a business. The second category on the other hand, is meant for encouraging participants to start up and run their own business. Therefore, it contains practical skills for small business start-up and management. Education in enterprise conversely is delivered with the objective of ensuring business growth. As such it focuses on management skill development, growth training and product development.

Aside from the differing objectives and the variety of focus, scholars are also debating on the pedagogical approach to entrepreneurship. Jones and English (2004) argued that entrepreneurial education needs to be taught in a different learning environment. They advocated a teaching style that is action-oriented, problem-based, supportive of experiential-learning and project-based. Their qualitative research on students taking entrepreneurship major in University of Tasmania showed that students' acceptance of student-centered learning is high regardless of their intention to become entrepreneurs upon graduation or not. While surveying higher education institutions in the UK, McKeown et al. (2006) discovered that despite the focus given by existing literature on the non traditional methods of teaching, 36% of institutions in the UK still used the traditional method. Only 1% was found to use action-based, 2% utilizing experiential-learning and the remaining 43% reported the application of mixed-method. The so-called mixed method however, is also equally traditional as it referred to the combination of lecture, workshop and seminar.

According to Fuchs et al. (2006), entrepreneurship education is an active form of learning which should be based on the learners' requirements, strengths and weaknesses. The personalized education will help the learners to make their own decisions, challenges their mind and allow them to make their own mistakes. These will help them to be more aware of their ability hence overcoming their shortfalls and ultimately readying them to take risks. Their comparative study on Germany and Swedish school systems found that students in Sweden are more likely to go into self employment as compared to their German counterparts. Nonetheless the study failed to draw a conclusive result as to which educational method actually relates to the propensity of students too choose self employment over salaried jobs. Given the development of pedagogical tools which are IT-based, studies have also been done on the IT utilization in entrepreneurship education. Heinonen (2007) for example, reported that, students who were taught corporate entrepreneurship in a course that used a combination of empirical case study take home examination facilitated by WebCT and group activities claimed that such mixture assisted their learning process.

Lewis and Massey (2003) however, opined that the efficient delivery of entrepreneurship education depends on the synergy between resources and objective. Their study on the participants of Young Enterprise Scheme is New Zealand revealed that teachers were seen as the primary influence on whether the program was successfully delivered. Teachers have the most contact and established relationship with the participants of the program. Hence, their action, attitude and enthusiasm influence the participants' perception. Sexton and Bowman (1984) in parallel highlighted the role of lecturers or facilitators in influencing entrepreneurship education. He argued that in the absence of a clear understanding of entrepreneurship, professors' personal preference will be the determinant of the education content.

3. Methodology

As this research is regarded to be exploratory, research questions are favored (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998) over hypotheses. This research aims to find out the difference between entrepreneurship education and a general business education. The answer to such query lies in the perception of the students cum clients. Students' input is critical since their predisposition determine their choice of college (Hemsley-Brown, 1999). Data for the study are gathered from six personal interviews and two focus groups. The personal interviews were conducted between March to April 2009, almost one year before the focus groups. The time lapse between the two data collection point was intentional, to give respondents more time to "experience" their educational programmes.

According to Mason (2002), interviews are built on the premise that knowledge can be constructed by listening and interpreting what others are saying and how they say the words. The guided conversation between interviewer and interviewee can reach into the subjectivity of lived experiences (Rapley, 2007). Since lived experiences are critical components to form perception, interview is a practical technique to unfold complex issues (Macnaghten and Myers, 2004). Similarly, focus group also draws its data from conversation with a purpose that is determined by the researcher. Focus group

however, can replicate group dynamics (Hyde, Howlette, Brady and Drennan, 2005; Kitzinger, 1994) making interviewees' answers more natural. This is especially true when the group comprises of people who know each other (Kitzinger, 1994). Likeness and common ground in the group are therefore welcomed (Morgan, 2004). Homogeneity also eases comparison between groups but it has to be used with caution as interviewees who share the same traits may leave some facts unsaid as they understand each other too well (Macnaghten and Myer, 2004). Taking the above arguments into consideration, a fine balance of resemblance and heterogeneity was maintained when selecting the participants for the focus groups. For easy comparison, the groups were set up based on program of study, BBA and BBME. Gender, race and cumulative grade point average (CGPA) were selected as the indicators for variety within the groups.

For BBA group, the researchers opted for final year students with the hope that they have a better idea of the program compared to freshmen and sophomores. Eight students gave their confirmation to participate but only five students actually turned up on the day of the group interview, two female and three male. Two of the males are Malays and the remaining three participants are Indians. All three males have CGPA of 3.50 and above. The girls have slightly lower CGPA. For BBME group on the other hand, such variety was not able to be obtained nor did the researchers have the freedom to pick their own respondents. All arrangements for the focus group for the BBME group were made by BRSBE faculty executive. Of the six BBME students promised by the executive, only four were present for the session. All were second year female students, and their CGPA is unknown to the researchers. Three of the students are Malays and the other is an Indian.

The interviews and the focus groups lasted between thirty minutes to one and a half hour. They were recorded using MP3 recorder and for the focus groups camcorder was used as well. Both the individual interviews and the focus groups were semi-structured. The researchers varied the sequence of the questions and rephrased the questions according to interviewees. Topics covered centered on the students' family background, courses that the students have taken and are taking, their intention (or the lack of it) to become entrepreneur and what they need in order to start their own business. All data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim by one of the researchers with the exception of the first individual interview (transcribed by a research assistant). Since the interviews were conducted in a mixture of English and Malay language, they had to be translated to English. This was done at the report writing stage. Data analysis was done on the non-translated transcripts using the constant comparative analysis (Glazer and Strauss, 1967 as cited in Ismail, Rasdi and Wahat, 2005) where they are organized into clusters, compared and categorized (Hyde et. al., 2005).

4. Results and Discussion

All interviewees are full time students aged between 20 to 33 years old. Two of them (from the individual interview) are non-Malaysians while thirteen others are Malaysians. One of the fifteen interviewees has working experience in the banking sector and is sponsored by his employer to study. Another three work part time while the others are

not working. All of them expressed strong intention to start their own business and three of them have actually established their own business venture in automotive (one) and retail (two). Two of the respondents have finalized their business plan (one in agriculture and another in beauty care) and in the process of getting the source of financing for the intended businesses. Majority of the interviewees reported to have immediate family members or relatives who are business owners, business founders or deriving their main income from business. Only three of them come from family with non-business background.

4.1 Entrepreneurship versus Business Program

Four themes outlining the differences between BBA and BBME emerged from the data. The themes are program content, teaching method, lecturers and program outcome.

Program Content
All respondents indicated that "seeking knowledge" was one of the key reasons why they have opted for university enrollment. The students critically expect that to get the knowledge which they were seeking regardless of their program of study. For these students, the "program content" was an important consideration when selecting a program for study. "Program content" refers to the courses that the students have to complete in order to graduate and how the courses are arranged in the program structure. BBME students seemed to have a clear vision of their program and how the courses are supporting each other to form a complete whole. The students described BBME as a program that "nurtures entrepreneurial spirit" and "entrepreneurial mindset". The so-called entrepreneurial mindset has been operationalized by many in the entrepreneurship literature in terms of risk taking propensity (Koh, 1996; Gurol and Atsan, 2006; Louw et. al. 2003), tolerance to ambiguity (De Pillis and Reardon, 2007; Gurol and Atsan, 2006, Koh, 1996), innovativeness (Frank, Leuger and Korunkas, 2007; Gurol and Atsan, 2006; Koh, 1996) and self confidence (Koh, 1996). Likewise, the BBME students also used similar terms to illustrate what they have learnt in the program, as the following BBME focus group exerts revealed:

P3: They were nurturing us on how to take risk

P2: ….it is building a mindset

P3:….how to generate idea. Be as creative as you can

The focused nature of the BBME program has also affected the students on a more personal level. Specifically, some of the students indicated that the program has allowed them to "develop" and "change", as the following focus group excerpts indicated:

P1: the classes in the first semester was purely on theory… … being introduced to business … so our feedback to the lecturers were limited … in semester five, we are more advanced

She further described their progression as follow:

> P1: … the first semester if we…talk about one idea we simply look at the general point of the idea but now … the way we discuss … how we finalize it is different

In contrast, the BBA students were less certain about their programme, in that many were uncertain of how the various courses they were asked to take as part of their graduation requirement were connected and related to one another. While some students understood the critical concepts within these courses, they were not able to comprehend how these courses could be applied in the real business world. This is reflected in the following discussion among students in the BBA focus group.

> P2: ya only that … other subjects, some are related … like business law, IB … strategic management …they all are … involved in entrepreneurship. I can like relate them … some are not related… subjects like … moral, business ethics
> P1: marketing
> P3: principles of marketing
> P2: .. principles of marketing … I learn … how … the 4Ps … are important for my business … but how I'm going to …
> P1: to apply
> P2: .. in which part … I need to apply this I don't know …
> P1: laugh
> Int: so only a few courses in the whole program that you think is relevant to you becoming a businesswoman or a businessman?
> P2: Mmm hmm, yes
> P3 & P1: compulsory subjects so we take them

It is worth noting that these students were all fresh students in that they had no business experience or having no involvement in business. BBA students who had business experience or involved in business nonetheless appeared to be more appreciative of their courses and could form the linkages between courses. This can be seen in the following focus group excerpts:

> P4: The more accounting, the … better for me because … the accounting subjects actually teaches us how to manage the money … so the more accounting the more familiar you'll be so the more you are supposed to understand the making of it
> *(BBA focus group)*

A similar view was uttered by respondent who was interviewed:

> I3: … I'm majoring in marketing. I learn advertising, pricing, branding … I do finance, accounting … we learn ethics so we know there're rights and wrongs in business … Yes. If you want to run a business you must have all those …
> *(Individual interview 3)*

When asked how the BBA program was different from BBME program, the BBA students in the focus group contended that that the former focused on breadth while the latter focused on depth. For these students, the breadth was better as they believed that this would given them career options; they can either be salaried employee or the can be the one paying salary:

> P5: … because entrepreneur means I just learn to become an entrepreneur
> P1: … because (in) BBA surely will learn many things … financing. accounting … but on the surface only … entrepreneurship you just know about entrepreneurship
> P1: ya too focused and too specialized
> P2: ya
> P3: … I will definitely choose BBA because it is very broad.
> Int: even though you want to become entrepreneur you still choose BBA?
> P3: yes. … if I can't open up my own business … I can go into other field …
> *(BBA focus group)*

BBME students who obviously want to become entrepreneurs on the other hand markedly value the "depth" offered by their program whereas BBA to them, is a bundle of theories without practice. This can be implied from the following passage:

> P1: (entrepreneurship) 50% theory…50% practical
> Int: business?
> PI: business 100% (theory)
> P3: …in theory…this problem…do this…sounds easy but in actual practice it is not easy at all
> P4: …when we are doing practical …it is like we are working…learning theory…we are …hopping on the surface
> *(BBME focus group)*

Teaching method

Mode of delivery matters not only in marketing but equally so in education. The traditional chalk and blackboard (or its predecessor marker pen and whiteboard), lecture-style teaching are fast becoming stories of a distant past. New teaching techniques like problem-based learning have time and again been reported to be more effective than the traditional method in stimulating creativity and encouraging spontaneity (Yeo, 2007). At the end of the day, what universities are accountable for is still "how much learning has occurred"? Both BBME and BBA students believed that more could be done to improve the mode of delivery. A critical complaint made by the two groups was that there are "too much theory" and "too little hands-on". Notwithstanding these similar beliefs, the BBME students seemed better off; they are exposed to a variety in teaching style compared to BBA students. This included field trips, having guest lecturers in classes and attending conferences For these students, variation in the teaching methodology was not only beneficial but also crucial in giving them more exposure to the world of entrepreneurship.

P1: … for some classes there're trips … to companies
P2: some lecturer bring other entrepreneurs to class
P1: … this Monday we are going to Bank Rakyat … one officer is going to take care of two students … to see how to prepare the business plan, how to get the micro financing
(BBME focus group)

The students also shared their experience attending a conference which their lecturer brought them to.

P2: … there was a conference for entrepreneurs … we are given the chance to attend and there were lots of entrepreneurs
P1: yeah
P2: Everyone was like datuk datuk[iv] … we got the chance to … chit chat
P1: collect their business cards
P3: see their styles … they were surprise …   how students can be there
(BBME focus group)

Based on the following excerpt, it can implied that the variety in teaching style that is a common feature of BBME is hungered for by BBA students

Int: … was there any entrepreneur ever brought to your class to share his experience?
I3: … there was none. But I think it would be great if an entrepreneur comes … can listen to his story … how he started …his problems …   we'd also feel how hard it is to run a business … that is more motivating ..
(Individual interview 3)

Lecturers
Lecturers play a vital role in the success of academic programs and in the life of students. Not surprisingly, according to Robertson, Line, Jones and Thomas (2000) teacher quality is a well researched topic. Yeo (2007) posited that a facilitator has to have variety of skills to guide students. A good lecturer may inspire, guide, facilitate and make a lasting impression on a student. Students who experience good teaching have been found to have deep learning (Trigwell, Prosser and Blackwell, 1997). Good teaching on the other hand refers to teaching that involves giving helpful feedback, explaining well, being emphatic, making subjects interesting, showing interest in students' ideas, motivating as well as getting the best out of students (Trigwell, Prosser and Blackwell, 1997). BBME students spoke of a close relationship with and easy access to their lecturers. Although the room for improvement for the student-teacher tie is still opened, the interviewees mentioned how they have benefited from the relationship.

P3 : Here if you have any problem you can go straight to the lecturers … there is no barrier …

P1: … for me that have a business whenever I'm not happy with my company's account … I can ask for lecturer's help …let the lecturer review the company's performance
(BBME focus group)

BBME students also consider one of their lecturers as their mentor and role model. The students are confident of his guidance as he has his own business and he writes his own case studies instead of adopting cases from textbooks or from other countries. BBA students on the other hand do not share their counterpart's privileges. They seem to understand the condition and constraints faced by their lecturers hence do not expect extra attentions than what they are getting. This can be inferred from the following:

Int: can lecturers be the mentor?
I2: Have to increase their salary to ask them to do that
(Individual interview 2)

BBME students who have had the experience studying in Kelana Jaya campus also anticipate the inability of lecturers in the campus to provide the kind of relationship they enjoy with their lecturers in the city campus.
P1: But if I'm in KJ surely lecturers would not entertain since a class has 60 40 students … here only 10 of us so the lecturers can … sit with us for ½ hour and all
(BBME focus group)

Program outcome
Despite the consistency in the intention to become entrepreneur and the claim of having insufficient knowledge to start and manage a business among BBA and BBME students, there is a clear distinction between their opinions on their future career upon graduation. Given what they have learned and how they are taught, BBA students see themselves as being prepared to be salaried employees. The following transpired in the BBA focus group:

Int: so basically if you look at your current business program … it is not meant for those who seriously want to start a business? It is meant for someone who wants to work for someone else yes?
P2: yep
P1: yes … HOD …
P5: … more to executives, director, manager, HOD …
(BBA focus group)

For these students, becoming entrepreneurs may require a lot of hard work and effort. One concern that is of importance to these students is having the right contact and network. The belief amongst these students that should they be interested to be entrepreneurs, they have to make their own effort, as the following excerpts revealed:

Int2: How else do you think you can build up your..?
P5: contacts?

Int2; ya, the contacts?
P5: It is hard … I have to work part time to get my own contacts
(BBA focus group)

Yet another issue of concern is the financing options that are available to entrepreneurs. The BBA students were not certain if they could get financial backup.

P4: … students do not know where to actually get the financial backup. Banks are giving the financial assistance to the graduates
P1: yeah
P4: and to the business starters right?
P1: Yes
P4: but they only know how to form up a company … If they don't know where to get the financial backup there is no point of forming a company …
(BBA focus group)

The BBME students on the contrary are inspired, challenged and groomed to be business founders.
Int: You are sure that you won't be working for others?
Laughs
P3: Remember Dato' Zabid said I can't accept my students … to work for others?
P1: Let others work for you
P3: We felt challenged hearing that
(BBME focus group)

Apart from the conference, trips and connections with entrepreneurs provided by their lecturers, one of BBME students also confidently said:
P3: If we ever request … the university certainly can help .. to get mentor … they can bring entrepreneurs
(BBME focus group)

4.2 Nurturing Entrepreneurs

The university has singled out entrepreneurship to be its driver for the future. Although the declaration is not to be exclusively interpreted as being the training centre for entrepreneurs, the ability to do so would add value to the university. Figure 1 below summarizes the interviewees' suggestion to improve entrepreneurship education in the university.

Suggestions	Source
Incubator program through collaboration with the industry	P5 of BBA focus group
Collaboration with other universities (sharing of resources)	P1 and P3 of BBA focus group
The university as an intermediary or introducer of students to the potential business financier	I2 and P5 of BBA focus group
Soft skills training	I2, P1 of BBA focus group, P3 and P4 of BBME focus group
Students are asked to start their venture instead of going for the ordinary internship in firms	P1 of BBA focus group
The university provides seed capital for students who want to start their business	P1 of BBA focus group
University cooperative shop to give students real experience managing a business	I2 and I4
Events like open day where students can open their booth and sell goodies	!4

Figure 1: Suggestions to improve entrepreneurship education

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The success of differentiation strategy is dependent almost exclusively on the ability of a firm to offer differences that are both visible and valued by its clients. For sustained competitiveness, firms adopting differentiation strategy has to ensure that the distinguishing elements that set it apart from other players in the industry are inimitable. The findings of this study seem to point that Unirazak is heading in the direction of victory as students are able to see some distinctions between BBA and BBME. An issue worth pondering over nonetheless, is that the university's investment in a multimillion-Ringgit facility in the city campus and the campus itself was not discussed by BBME students (nor did they take the bait thrown by the interviewer during their focus group). Does this imply that students do not attach much value to the physical infrastructure compared to the non-physical ones like lecturers, teaching method, the academic program itself and its implication on their future career? Interestingly even BBA students who are based in the poorly equipped suburban campus are not suggesting nor emphasizing the physical infrastructure.

Another issue that should be of concerned to the university is to what extent can its competitiveness in entrepreneurship education be maintained? Program content can easily be emulated especially given the fact that program structure and course material are made available online and printed on other media especially for marketing purpose. Knowledge sharing is indeed noble but in the education industry where knowledge itself is the commodity of trade, sharing is a tricky business. Unirazak may have the right people to teach entrepreneurship on its pay but are they bound for life to the university? Given the interest shown by the government and other private universities on entrepreneurship education, lecturers who have the "right package" are fair game. Since teaching method is certainly non-patentable hence cannot be the weapon of choice to

gain a bigger market share, talent management should perhaps be on top of the university's agenda to remain in the race.

Having illustrated the above, another question mark worth finding the answer for is; to what extent can the divergence between BBA and BBME be sustained? The physical separation between the two indeed sends a clear signal to the naked eye that they are different but again, location and physical infrastructure do not seem to be high on students' priority list. BBME lecturers are viewed to be more specialized in their subject matter and able to tailor their teaching techniques to suit the market. Ironically, some of the lecturers are originally from FBA. Since the nature of the courses and programs in FBA and BRSBE are similar, lecturers from the two schools are attending the same trainings (including the one conducted by Babson College trainers) and some of them are teaming up for research work. The possibility of FBA lecturers to "measure up" to their peers in BRSBE therefore, exist. To make matters worse, some BBA lecturers are also teaching BBME program in the city campus. This can possibly blur the line between BBA and BBME further. Perhaps BBA students' suggestions of introducing BBA with specialization in entrepreneurship or a two-track entrepreneurship course in BBA (one for those who are keen at becoming entrepreneurs and another for those who are learning only because they have to)

6. Limitation and Suggestion for Future Research

The current study was carried out on a single case basis. Typical to the qualitative tradition, generalizibility is not the intention. Its findings therefore should be read in its context. Given the many question marks above, more studies need to be carried out to clarify the utilization of entrepreneurship as a differentiation strategy. One of the avenues which future research on this topic may want to pursue is to optimally rank the suggestions tabulated in Figure 1 using decision making methods like the analytical hierarchy process.

Endnotes

[i] The number of universities in Malaysia has escalated from a mere six public universities in the 1980s to 20 in 2010. There were also 21 private universities, 22 university-colleges and 402 colleges in operation in the country in the same period. Viewed on 10 April 2010,
<http://www.mohe.gov.my/web_statistik/statistik_pdf_2008_05/ipta_2-27.pdf >
[ii] Total students enrollment in 2009 for all higher learning institutions in the country only stood at 1,050,726. viewed on 26 December 2010,
<http://www.mohe.gov.my/web_statistik/statistik_pdf_2009/10_BAB_8_INDIKATOR_PENGAJIAN_TINGI.pdf>
[iii] Viewed on 9 April 2010
[iv] Datuk-datuk is the Malay word for dignitaries

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