

Entrepreneurship as a career option among graduates during pandemic: Necessity or opportunity efforts

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a profound and damaging impact on the global economy, including rising unemployment rates. One of the key trends that emerged from the pandemic crisis is the decline of graduate recruitment volumes due to the closure of several business activities among employers. As a result, more graduates are likely to find it difficult to enter the labour market and earn a living. In Malaysia, the government and universities have made concerted efforts to instil entrepreneurial mindsets and competencies in graduates, with the goal of preparing them with entrepreneurial qualities to become independent and resourceful individuals upon graduating. This study explores to what extent the pandemic crisis has influenced the graduates of the Entrepreneurship Program in Universiti Malaysia Sabah to choose entrepreneurship as a career after six months of graduation and what drives their choices. The results of 108 graduates found that more than half of them chose for self-employment after graduation during the pandemic crisis, mainly take up their own businesses and perceived themselves as opportunity-driven (e.g. to take advantage of business opportunities), while the remaining are necessity-driven (e.g. to help family, to earn money, lack of other options). The study provides insights on entrepreneurship as a viable and significant source of income for graduates, as well as the various motives that influence their career decisions. This paper sheds light for further studies on the influence of opportunity-necessity motivation towards entrepreneurial sustainability.