

Self-employment among graduates during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Necessity or opportunity entrepreneurship driven

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a profound and damaging impact on the global economy, including the rise in unemployment. One of the significant trends that emerged from the pandemic is the decline of graduate recruitment volumes due to the closure of several business activities among employers. As a result, more graduates are likely difficult to enter the labour market and not able to earn a living. In Malaysia, the government and universities have put concerted efforts to inculcate entrepreneurial mindset and competencies among graduates, intending to prepare them with entrepreneurial qualities to become independent and resourceful graduates. This study explores to what extent the Covid-19 pandemic has influenced the graduates of the Entrepreneurship Program in Universiti Malaysia Sabah to become self-employed, after 6 months of their graduation, and what drives their choices. The results of 108 graduates found that more than half of them choose for self-employment after graduation during the pandemic, mainly take up their own business and perceived themselves as opportunity-driven (to take advantage of business opportunities), while the remaining are necessity-driven (to help family, to earn money, lack of other options). The study also provides insights that venturing into entrepreneurial activities is a significant strategy for livelihood among graduates. This paper would shed light for further studies on the influence of opportunity and necessity motivation towards entrepreneurial opportunity among graduates.