

Nurturing human compassion through social entrepreneurship: Evident from Malaysian university

Hariyaty Ab Wahid^{1*}, Noraini Hashim¹, Mad Ithnin Salleh¹, Subramaniam Kolandan¹, Denok Sunarsi²

¹ Faculty of Management and Economics, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris

² Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Pamulang

Correspondence: Hariyaty Ab Wahid (email: hariyaty@fpe.upsi.edu.my)

Received: 27 February 2025; Accepted: 11 July 2025; Published: 20 August 2025

Abstract

This study determines how social entrepreneurship learning using “Social Entrepreneurship: Module from the University to the Disabled Community,” helps nurturing the compassion of Malaysian university students. The module includes ten units designed to give students hands-on experience with social entrepreneurship activities. 240 students in total are divided into two groups. 112 students are placed in a control group and 128 in a treatment group. While the control group followed traditional teaching methods, the treatment group was treated using the aforesaid social entrepreneurship module. An independent sample t-test was used to compare the social entrepreneurship levels between the two groups, showing a significant improvement among the students in the treatment group. Additionally, regression analysis highlighted the positive influence of specific module content on the compassion of participants in the treatment group. Notably, Unit 1: Introduction to Social Entrepreneurship ($\beta = 0.339$, $p < .05$) and Unit 8: Finance and Financing of Social Entrepreneurship Projects ($\beta = 0.243$, $p < .05$) accounted for a 4.4% variance in participants' altruism levels [$F(2, 125) = 21.594$, $p < .05$]. It is strongly recommended that this module be incorporated into Malaysian university curricula to nurture socially entrepreneurial and compassionate graduates.

Keywords: Compassion, learning approach, modular, social entrepreneurship

Introduction

Social entrepreneurship education in Malaysia is currently experiencing significant growth and development, reflecting a broader global trend towards integrating social impact with entrepreneurial education. It is one of the effective platforms for nurturing opportunity identification, social innovation and entrepreneurial attitudes among university students (Ab Wahid et al., 2024; Ilyas et al., 2023). This is in line with the government initiatives that actively support the expansion of social entrepreneurship education (Ab Rahman & Raman, 2024; Izzati et al. 2023). Therefore, Malaysian universities and institutions are strongly encouraged to integrate social entrepreneurship into their curricula.

A 2023 report by the Malaysian Higher Education Ministry revealed that over 40% of universities now offer courses or programs centered on social entrepreneurship, a notable increase from 25% in 2018. This growth has led to more students actively participating in social entrepreneurship activities (Bikar et al., 2023; Zulkifli & Aziz, 2023). Students who joined these programs showed a 20% boost in their commitment to social causes and a 15% improvement in entrepreneurial skills compared to those who did not participate (Usman et al., 2022; Bazan et al., 2020). Developing the key entrepreneurial traits such as opportunity recognition, creativity, innovation, risk-taking, problem-solving and making timely decisions are crucial among the future graduates (Bodolica et al., 2021). This highlights the importance of creating and implementing effective teaching materials to help graduates acquire the skills needed for social entrepreneurship success (Shahid & Alarifi, 2021; Kickul & Lyons, 2020).

In addition, students in higher education are required to nurture compassion to embrace challenging future careers. Students might encounter a wide range of social and global challenges that require not only technical expertise but also a deep sense of compassion. Compassion is essential for building meaningful relationships, taking responsibility for societal issues and tackling problems like inequality, mental health and community well-being (Huda et al., 2019). Students need to build stronger connections with others, to create positive change to the environment. In result, graduates who are proficient in their fields will also be concerned about the emotional and social dynamics around them. In this context, it is crucial to recognise the challenges faced by marginalised groups such as Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Despite various national policies promoting inclusion, individuals with disabilities continue to face significant barriers to employment and meaningful social participation, often due to systemic discrimination and lack of empathy within society. A study by Arshad, Rahim and Yaacob (2025) underscores the importance of decent work and purposefulness in boosting the engagement and well-being of PWDs in Malaysia. Integrating such social realities into university-level social entrepreneurship education can enhance students' empathy and sense of civic responsibility while contributing to more inclusive community development.

However, the accurate methods for teaching the subject effectively still undermine it (Pischetola & Martins, 2021). In ensuring the success of entrepreneurship education, Cascavilla et al. (2022) and Ndou (2021) recommended that modules be used as effective teaching aids by teachers and students. A module can be considered a media unit in a teaching plan to facilitate student understanding. A module also refers to a structured teaching and learning unit designed to systematically and sequentially address a specific topic, enabling students to independently master the content with ease and accuracy (Tabuenna & Villareal, 2024). The fundamental knowledge and skills related to social entrepreneurship education can be taught effectively through modules, textbooks, or reference materials (Fassbender et al., 2022; Roslan et al., 2022).

Therefore, more empirical research needs to be done on social entrepreneurship in Malaysia (Mohd Noor & Mukri, 2022). Future studies are expected to advance the understanding of social entrepreneurship education, particularly across multiple disciplines, with a strong emphasis on educational fields (García-González & Ramírez-Montoya, 2021). In line with that, the construction and assessment of a social entrepreneurship education module for students in higher education is relevant for fostering social entrepreneurship awareness among students. Therefore, this study tries to (1) identify the significant differences in social entrepreneurship between the control and treatment groups and (2) determine the impact of the social entrepreneurship module on the compassion of the treatment group. The article is organised into

five sections namely, introduction, literature review, method, results and discussion and conclusion.

Literature review

The Social Entrepreneurship Theory ignites innovative solutions to societal problems through the entrepreneurship approach. This theory promotes the integration of experiential learning in the context of social entrepreneurship education. Kolb (1984) emphasizes learning through experience, so-called experiential learning, that reflects and applies in real-world contexts. Through this approach, social entrepreneurs are inspired to engage directly with the social challenges to be addressed. Experiential learning theory helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. For instance, a study by Teasdale et al. (2021) highlights that students who engage in experiential learning are better equipped to identify and implement sustainable solutions for social issues.

Experiential learning in real-world community settings helps build entrepreneurial resilience and practical knowledge among students (Kamaruddin et al., 2019). Furthermore, the incorporation of experiential learning in social entrepreneurship education cultivates entrepreneurial competencies in dealing with social problems in the community. This is in line with Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory that asserts learning is a social process, and observation or participation in real-life contexts can significantly advance the students' understanding and motivation. The exposure to social enterprises is believed to develop the students' social responsibility and altruism which are both critical in creating a lasting social impact in the communities (Smith & Stevens, 2019).

On the other hand, human empathy benefits other human beings and acts as the main motivation to churn an altruistic person out. The term "altruistic" itself refers to actions that are stimulated by the ultimate goal of enhancing the welfare of other persons. In other words, the attitude of individuals who are selfless and always think of helping others in their actions is the foci of altruism (Miyazono & Inarimori, 2021). Altruistic persons are often motivated to foresee the well-being of others and act wisely to enhance the welfare of others (Arman, 2023).

Similarly, social entrepreneurship is motivated by compassion too (Luc, 2021). Compassion is a three-stage process involving the recognition of others' suffering, the development of empathetic concern and the initiation of actions to address their distress (Yitshaki, Kropp, & Honig, 2022). As a social entrepreneur who is sensitive to the welfare of the community around him or her, he or she will identify any opportunity to help improve the economic and social well-being of the community (Ranville & Barros, 2022; Diaz Gonzalez & Dentchev, 2021). Waqar et al. (2021), Karim (2020) and Setiawan et al. (2023) agreed that social entrepreneurship has emerged as a complex and innovative approach to addressing social issues and alleviating poverty. It is recognised as a method to tackle problems such as unemployment, poverty, hunger and social fragmentation while striving for universal social justice. However, despite its global advancement, the social entrepreneurship movement in Malaysia remains relatively nascent and has not yet gained widespread traction among local youth (Che Nawi et al., 2022). Tertiary education students are encouraged to prioritise the needs and benefits of others over personal agendas (Ab Wahid et al., 2024).

The experiences obtained from engaging in social entrepreneurship projects play a pivotal role in igniting future social entrepreneurial interests and career aspirations in social

entrepreneurship (Hussain et al., 2022). To effectively integrate experiential learning in the social entrepreneurship module, reflection and action in the learning process need to be embedded. Kolb (2014) emphasises The Experiential Learning Theory as a continuous process that develops the experience. The theory comprises main stages such as i) concrete experience, ii) reflective observation, iii) abstract conceptualisation and iv) active experimentation. By incorporating all those stages into the social entrepreneurship module, an impactful learning environment can be materialized with authentic educational programs. This is in line with the British Council (2020) reports that insist social innovation teaching be increased over time to cater the undergraduates. Most teaching activities involving module formats are suggested in the curriculum content or the pedagogical approaches.

In the first stage, called concrete experience, students engage in various activities such as volunteering in community projects, conducting field research in underserved areas, or working with local non-government organisations (NGOs). These experiences expose students to real-world social issues and challenges (Morris, 2020). In the second stage, called reflective observation, students reflect on their experiences in the previous activities. To plan and execute solutions to the community pressing problems, students are encouraged to consider the broader impact in each of their action. Through social entrepreneurship process, they are expected to grow personally (Stirzaker et al., 2021; Kickul & Lyons, 2020). Later, the abstract conceptualisation appears as the third phase of this learning process. In this phase, students will reflect on their social entrepreneurship experiences to obtain the meaningful principles of being compassion in dealing with real world issues. In this stage, they delve into theories related to sustainable development goals, social innovation and entrepreneurship practices (Anggadwita et al., 2021). Finally, the active experimentation will help students integrating the knowledge, skills and insights they have obtained through reflection and conceptualization to real-world social entrepreneurship landscape.

To address specific social issues and contribute to positive social changes, a lot of sacrifice, motivation and strategic planning must be propelled and promoted (Roslan et al., 2022; Ndou, 2021). By engaging in real-world challenges, students are expected not only to gain true compassion, but to develop authentic social entrepreneurs capacity. Therefore, embedding social entrepreneurship education into higher learning institutions is believed not only nurtures empathy among students but also empowers them to address real-world social challenges within their communities (Idris & Akhir, 2022). Students became more compassionate after engaging in inclusive community projects (Suraiya et al., 2015). This aligns with Arshad et al. (2025), who asserted that meaningful engagement and access to decent opportunities are crucial for ensuring the inclusion, motivation and productivity of vulnerable groups such as Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The integration of compassion-based social entrepreneurship modules not only benefits student development but also strengthens the social well-being of marginalised communities in Malaysia. This supports the idea that universities are well-positioned to act as agents of change through curricula that integrate theoretical knowledge with societal engagement.

Method

This study employs a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design to determine the social entrepreneurship modular learning approach to nurture compassion among Malaysian university students. A quasi-experimental design was administered to non-equivalent groups to test the module's influence on the students' compassion. Quasi-experimental designs are valuable

in educational research to help establish causal relationships and assess the effects of interventions. They are particularly effective in understanding how social entrepreneurship modules can influence students' compassion. As postulated by Prysmakova (2024) and Åstebro & Hoos (2021), experimental designs play an important role in evaluating the effectiveness of educational interventions and provide solid evidence for their impact. This methodology ensures a thorough analysis of how the module contents may enhance students' sense of compassion and supports their social entrepreneurship endeavour.

Therefore, the module's content was tested through a quasi-experimental study involving 586 university students enrolled in the Social Entrepreneurship course at one of Malaysian public universities. Basically, the focus universities aim to balance academics with practical, industry-relevant skills and contribute positively to society. This alignment with both academic rigor and practical application highlights the institution's commitment to producing well-rounded graduates who are prepared to make meaningful contributions in both local and global contexts.

Table 1. The population and sample size

Group	Population size	Sample size
1	116	
2	125	
3	128	128
4	112	112
5	105	
Total	586	240

According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table, for a population of 586, a sample size of 234 is required. Consequently, a random sampling method was employed in this study, selecting two out of five groups (Groups 3 and 4) at random. In this design, the participants in both selected groups, namely the control group (consisting of 112 students) and the treatment group (consisting of 128 students), were all taken as the experiment sample. Both groups underwent a pre-test and post-test using a perception assessment. Both groups of students underwent a pre-test at the beginning of the study, which was before the implementation of the intervention to identify students' attitudes towards understanding social entrepreneurship. Next, the researcher conducts treatment, which is the implementation of module-based teaching and learning for 14 weeks on students who follow the "Social Entrepreneurship: From University to the Disabled Community" module, which contains 10 study units as follows (see Table 2). The novel module was developed based on the research findings obtained from a Fundamental Research Grant Scheme project entitled "Developing a Social Entrepreneurship Module from University to the Disabled Community".

Table 2. The contents of Social Entrepreneurship Module from University to the Disable Community

Week	Social Entrepreneurship: From University to the Disable Community Module
1	Unit 1: Introduction to Social Entrepreneurship
2	Unit 2: Characteristics of Social Entrepreneurs and Compassion
3	Unit 3: Theory of Change
4	Unit 4: Getting to Know the Disabled Community
5	Unit 5: Design Thinking in Social Entrepreneurship
6	Unit 6: Identifying Social Entrepreneurship Opportunities
7	Unit 7: Social Enterprise Model Canvas (SEMC)
8	Unit 8: Finance and Financing of Social Entrepreneurship Projects
9	Unit 9: Social Entrepreneurship Project Implementation
10	Unit 10: Social Entrepreneurship Presentation Canvas (SEPC)

The aforesaid social entrepreneurship module has been conducted using a modular experiential learning approach to the treatment. The learning strategy applies to help students build the necessary social entrepreneurship skills and compassionate characteristics in dealing with and accomplishing the social entrepreneurship project. The contents of this module were constructed and compiled to teach university students to conceptualise the idea of social entrepreneurship and enable them to execute social entrepreneurship projects towards helping the disabled community, as the beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, the control group is essential to assert the difference or strength of the tested relationship. Thus, the control group was exposed to a traditional social entrepreneurship project, whereby they worked on planning and forming a small start-up enterprise to help the needy with the profit that they managed to earn. Fundamental business skills including business planning, management, digital social marketing, production and finance have been taught. This traditional entrepreneurship teaching has been applied to social entrepreneurship projects.

In accordance with the quasi-experimental research, the threat from the subject and instrument used can be reduced by utilising sufficient intervention time (Innab et al., 2022; Kim et al. 2020). Therefore, this study has executed 14 weeks of intervention. On top of that, the testing threat can be reduced by printing both research instruments in different sizes. Also, there is no extreme post-test score found to deal with the regression statistical effect. All precautionary steps were taken to ensure all threats, such as threats from subjects and instruments, threats of morality and drop-out, threats of testing, threats of statistical regression effects, threats of instrument decay, threats of operators and data collectors and the threat of extraneous variables, were addressed.

Furthermore, an independent sample t-test was run to examine differences in social entrepreneurship between both control and treatment groups. The treatment group completed a post-test to assess the effectiveness of the social entrepreneurship module contents in enhancing their compassion. Additionally, regression analysis was utilised to examine whether the module's content had a significant impact on the compassion of the treatment group. Regression analysis is widely known as a powerful statistical method used for both prediction and forecasting.

Results and discussion

Table 3 shows the respondent's profile, consisting of gender, ethnicity, study program and faculty of study. 67.9% (n = 163) of the respondents involved in the study were female students, while 32.1% (n = 77) were male. Of 240 respondents, 78.3% (n = 188) are Malays, 4.1% (n = 10) are Indians, 3% (n = 7) are Chinese and 14.6% (n = 35) are other ethnicities. 85.9% (n = 206) of them are undergoing social sciences programs, compared to 14.1% (n = 34) in science. Most of the respondents are from the Faculty of Management and Economics, 65.5% (n = 157), followed by the Faculty of Art, Sustainability and Creative Industry, 14.5% (n = 35), the Faculty of Science and Mathematics, 12.1% (n = 29), the Faculty of Language and Communication, 3.3% (n = 8) and the Faculty of Human Development. 2.6% (n = 6) and 2% (n = 5) from the Faculty of Human Sciences.

Table 3. Respondent's profile

Profile	Category	Control group frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Control group:		
	Male	47	19.6
	Female	81	33.8
	Treatment group:		
	Male	30	12.5
	Female	82	34.1
Total		240	100
Ethnicity	Control group:		
	Malay	86	35.8
	Chinese	4	1.7
	Indian	0	0.0
	Others	22	9.2
	Treatment group:		
	Malay	102	42.5
	Chinese	3	1.3
	Indian	10	4.1
	Others	13	5.4
Total		240	100
Study program	Control group:		
	Science	29	12.1
	Social Science	83	34.6
	Treatment group:		
	Science	5	2.0
	Social Science	123	51.3
Total		240	100

Faculty of study	Control group:		
	Language & Communication	7	2.9
	Science & Mathematics	29	12.1
	Art, Sustainability & Creative Industry	25	10.4
	Management & Economics	51	21.3
	Human Sciences	0	0.0
	Human Development	0	0.0
	Treatment group:		
	Language & Communication	1	0.4
	Science & Mathematics	0	0.0
	Art, Sustainability & Creative Industry	10	4.1
	Management & Economics	106	44.2
	Human Sciences	5	2.0
	Human Development	6	2.6
Total		240	100

To address the first research question, 'Is there a significant difference in the mean social entrepreneurship post-test scores between the control and treatment groups?', an independent sample t-test analysis was conducted to test the following research hypothesis: H1: There is a significant difference between the control and treatment groups on social entrepreneurship. Table 4 indicates the mean score of social entrepreneurship is 3.08 for the control group and 3.91 for the treatment group. The results of the independent t-test indicate a significant difference in social entrepreneurship between the two groups. ($t = -9.717$, $df = 238$, $p < .05$). The result empirically proved that the treatment group outperformed the control group.

Table 4. Independent T-test analysis of social entrepreneurship for the control and treatment groups

Group	Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	Significant
Control	3.076	0.765	-9.717	238	0.01
Treatment	3.910	0.523			

*significant value $p < 0.05$

The above findings postulate that the level of social entrepreneurship for the treatment group, which scored higher than the control group on the post-test. It proves that students who engage in social entrepreneurship can build a wide network and relationships, open more extensive job opportunities and become more prominent in the job market (Hidalgo et al., 2024; Ko & Liu, 2021; Stirzaker et al., 2021). Social entrepreneurship is seen as a platform that allows students to improve soft skills to make them more competitive in the job market. Student involvement in social entrepreneurship is crucial for developing skills and enhancing marketability. This not only hones their communication skills, problem-solving skills and politeness but also opens the door to new knowledge and practical experience in dealing with real issues.

Table 6. ANOVA^a

	Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.424	1	8.424	34.105	<.001 ^b
	Residual	31.121	126	.247		
	Total	39.545	127			
2	Regression	10.155	2	5.077	21.594	<.001 ^c
	Residual	29.391	125	.235		
	Total	39.545	127			

a. Dependent Variable: Total_Mean_Post_Compassion

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_Unit 1

c. Predictors: (Constant), MEAN_U1_Post, MEAN_U8_Post

Table 7. Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	.462 ^a	.213	.207	.49699
2	.507 ^b	.257	.245	.48490

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_U1_Post

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_U1_Post, Mean_U8_Post

c. Dependent Variable: Total_Mean_Post_Compassion

Table 8. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.919	.317		6.060	<.001
	MEAN_U1_Post	.433	.074	.462	5.840	<.001
2	(Constant)	1.410	.361		3.903	<.001
	MEAN_U1_Post	.318	.084	.339	3.789	<.001
	MEAN_U8_Post	.231	.085	.243	2.713	.008

a. Dependent Variable: Total_Mean_Post_Compassion

To answer the second research question, 'Is there a significant impact of the social entrepreneurship module on the treatment group's compassion?', regression analysis was conducted to address the following research hypothesis: H2: There is a significant effect of social entrepreneurship module contents on the treatment of students' compassion. The regression analysis indicated that for the treatment group respondents (n = 128), two out of ten social entrepreneurship module predictor variables, namely Unit 1 and Unit 8, are the predictors of the respondents' compassion. Tables 5 and 6 significantly show that Unit 1 [$F(1,126) = 34.105, p < .05$] contributes 2.13 percent of the variant percentages ($R^2 = 2.13$) in the respondents' compassion within 14 weeks of the study. These results show that Unit 1 ($\beta = 0.462, p < .05$) was the main indicator that affected the respondents' altruism. Tables 7 and 8 exhibit the combination of Unit 1 ($\beta = 0.339, p < .05$) and Unit 2 ($\beta = 0.243, p < .05$) has added 4.4 percent to the variance ($R^2 = 0.257$)

in the criterion variable predictor of compassion [$F(2, 125) = 21.594, p < .05$]. Based on the analysis, both Unit 1 and Unit 8 are the predictor variables for the students' compassion who used the aforesaid module. The study's findings indicate that, overall, the level of social entrepreneurship is high while the level of student compassion is at a moderate level.

The results of the t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in social entrepreneurship scores between the control and treatment groups, indicating the module's effectiveness in fostering entrepreneurial skills. In the post-test, students from the treatment group demonstrated a noticeable increase in altruistic behaviour, suggesting that the module positively influenced their social awareness and commitment to societal improvement. The regression analysis further confirmed that the module's content had a strong, positive impact on the students' level of altruism, reinforcing the idea that targeted educational interventions can promote social responsibility. These findings highlight the importance of integrating practical social entrepreneurship education into university curricula to cultivate socially conscious future leaders.

Increased efforts are necessary to enhance students with social entrepreneurship skills and values. The findings suggest that direct interventions that introduce students to the social entrepreneurship concept and context and the finance and financing of each social entrepreneurship project be taught to elicit an increase in their altruism. Thus, students need to be encouraged in the social entrepreneurship programs that instill the components of service learning, volunteerism and hands-on projects in the real disabled community. After participating in the social entrepreneurship experiential learning module, students are expected to enhance the problem-solving skills: Through hands-on activities and reflective practices, students develop their ability to identify and analyse complex social problems. They become skilled at devising innovative solutions that address root causes and promote sustainable change (Barnett et al., 2020; Hermann & Bossle, 2020).

Furthermore, engaging directly with communities and stakeholders deepens students' appreciation for diverse perspectives, communities and stakeholders. As a result, they learn to approach social issues with sensitivity, respect and consideration (Khilji 2022). Besides, their critical thinking and reflection skills emerged due to the experiential learning gained that encourages students to critically evaluate the impact of their experiences. Students learn to evaluate different viewpoints, make adjustments and take actions as needed (Chan, 2023; Bell & Bell, 2020). Finally, they advocate successful social entrepreneurship projects with a wide range of stakeholders like community members, local governments and private companies.

The experiential learning approach in social entrepreneurship education is vital for preparing students to become effective change-makers and ethical leaders. By combining comprehensive knowledge, practical skills and an entrepreneurial mindset, this approach enables students to address social issues meaningfully and drive sustainable change. Engaging students in real-world, hands-on experiences enhances their abilities while fostering a strong sense of social responsibility and commitment to ethical practices. This research adds to the existing knowledge by demonstrating how experiential learning through structured modules produces tangible, impactful results in students' performance. This aligns with the findings of Thomsen et al. (2019), who highlighted the benefits of transitioning from traditional teaching methods to structured learning approaches that empower students to take ownership of their education, recognizing that their efforts can positively impact both organizations and the communities they serve.

The findings of this study are consistent with existing research, emphasizing the importance of enhancing social entrepreneurship education by exploring and utilizing diverse instructional materials. Experimenting with various teaching strategies is essential for identifying

methods that yield the best outcomes (Siddiky & Haque, 2024). Adapting and improving educational practices can greatly enhance the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship programs. Furthermore, implementing engaging and appropriate learning techniques plays a critical role in increasing students' motivation and participation in their studies. When students are actively engaged in their learning, they are more likely to perform well academically and develop a deeper commitment to social entrepreneurship. This not only benefits the students' personal and professional growth but also supports the larger goal of cultivating a new generation of leaders equipped to tackle complex social challenges with innovative and impactful solutions.

Conclusion

This study empirically demonstrates that university students exhibit a notable level of social entrepreneurship and compassion following their participation in social entrepreneurship modular learning regimes. The research highlights the potential of the module as educational teaching and learning material to serve as a robust foundation for students to engage in meaningful social entrepreneurship activities and contribute positively to their communities. The involvement of students in social entrepreneurship initiatives has been shown to significantly enhance their awareness and engagement in social entrepreneurship, resulting from altruistic values such as volunteering, compassion and willing-to-help behaviour. These traits are crucial in cultivating genuinely altruistic human capital. The study underscores the need for further exploration into the substantial impact of social entrepreneurship module content on Malaysian student altruism. Empirically, the findings reveal that the focus university students possess a strong sense of social entrepreneurship and compassion. To foster the development of more altruistic human capital in the future, it is essential to provide students with the necessary skills, exposure, and practical experience in social entrepreneurship. The study affirms that the social entrepreneurship module contents help spark effective Malaysian students' engagement in social entrepreneurship programs. This evidence that the module is recognised as one of the most effective materials for preparing students to contribute positively to society and address community needs. This indicates a positive trajectory towards fostering a robust ecosystem of social entrepreneurs in the country.

Acknowledgment

This study was generously supported by the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme provided by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) [Grant number: FRGS/1/2020/SS0/UPSI/02/22] and managed by the Research Management and Innovation Center (RMIC) at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). We sincerely extend our gratitude to both MOHE and RMIC for their invaluable support and funding, which made this research possible.

References

Ab Rahman, F., & Raman, A. (2024). Empowering youth leaders in B40 marginalized communities: An innovative approach to social entrepreneurship in alignment with National

- Entrepreneurship Policy 2030. *Mediterranean Journal of Social & Behavioral Research*, 8(1), 29-36.
- Ab Wahid, H., Hishamuddin, A. Z. & Abd Rahman, R. (2023). Social Entrepreneurship Approach Towards Leveraging Persons with Disabilities (PwD) in Malaysia. *International Business Education Journal*, 16(1), 85–97.
- Ab Wahid, H., Rahman, R. A., Mustaffa, W. S. W., Ahmad, N. L., Ramdan, M. R., & Muslimat, A. M. (2024). Best social entrepreneurship teaching and learning strategies for promoting students' social entrepreneurial minds: A scoping review. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 23(3), 23-47.
- Anggadwita, G., Dana, L. P., Ramadani, V., & Ramadan, R. Y. (2021). Empowering Islamic boarding schools by applying the humane entrepreneurship approach: The case of Indonesia. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 27(6), 1580-1604.
- Arman, M. (2023). Empathy, sympathy, and altruism—An evident triad based on compassion. A theoretical model for caring. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 37(3), 862-871.
- Arshad, R., Rahim, N. B., & Yaacob, Z. (2025). Kerja wajar dan kebermaknaan sebagai pemacu penglibatan kerja dalam kalangan pekerja Orang Kurang Upaya. *Geografia-Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 21(2), 141–155.
- Ashari, H., Abbas, I., Abdul-Talib, A. N., & Mohd Zamani, S. N. (2021). Entrepreneurship and sustainable development goals: a multigroup analysis of the moderating effects of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention. *Sustainability*, 14(1), 431.
- Åstebro, T., & Hoos, F. (2021). Impact measurement based on repeated randomized control trials: The case of a training program to encourage social entrepreneurship. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 15(2), 254-278.
- Aziz, K. A., Zulkifle, A. M., & Sarhan, M. L. (2023). Social entrepreneurship for sustainable community development: investigating the determinants for youths' readiness. *Journal of System and Management Sciences*, 13(1), 444-466.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Prentice Hall.
- Barnett, M. L., Henriques, I., & Husted, B. W. (2020). Beyond good intentions: Designing CSR initiatives for greater social impact. *Journal of Management*, 46(6), 937-964.
- Bell, R., & Bell, H. (2020). Applying educational theory to develop a framework to support the delivery of experiential entrepreneurship education. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 27(6), 987-1004.
- Bikar, S. S., Talin, R., Rathakrishnan, B., Sharif, S., Nazarudin, M. N., & Rabe, Z. B. (2023). Sustainability of graduate employability in the post-COVID-19 era: Initiatives by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education and Universities. *Sustainability*, 15(18), 13536.
- Bodolica, V., Spraggon, M., & Badi, H. (2021). Extracurricular activities and social entrepreneurial leadership of graduating youth in universities from the Middle East. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 19(2), 100489.
- British Council. (2020). Global Social Enterprise - Social innovation and higher education landscape in Malaysia. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/sihe-report-malaysia-final>.
- Cascavilla, I., Hahn, D., & Minola, T. (2022). How you teach matters! An exploratory study on the relationship between teaching models and learning outcomes in entrepreneurship education. *Administrative Sciences*, 12(1), 12.
- Chan, C. K. Y. (2023). *Assessment for experiential learning* (pp. 379). Taylor & Francis.

- Che Nawi, N. R., Arshad, M. M., Krauss, S. E., & Ismail, I. A. (2022). Challenges faced by youth social entrepreneurs in Malaysia: career transition to become a social entrepreneur, *European Journal of Training and Development* 46(3/4), 317-336.
- Diaz Gonzalez, A., & Dentchev, N. A. (2021). Ecosystems in support of social entrepreneurs: A literature review. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 17(3), 329-360.
- Fassbender, U., Papenbrock, J., & Pilz, M. (2022). Teaching entrepreneurship to life-science students through problem-based-learning. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 20(3), 100685.
- García-González, A., & Ramírez-Montoya, M. S. (2021). Social entrepreneurship education: changemaker training at the university, *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*, 11(5), 1236-1251.
- Hanifah, M., Shaharuddin, A., Mohamad Suhaily, Y. C. N., & Noraziah, A. (2014). Education for sustainable development in Malaysia: A study of teacher and student awareness. *Geografia – Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 12(6), 77–88.
- Hermann, R. R., & Bossle, M. B. (2020). Bringing an entrepreneurial focus to sustainability education: A teaching framework based on content analysis. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 246, 119038.
- Huda, M., Jasmi, K. A., Embong, W. H. W., Safar, J., Mohamad, A. M., Mohamed, A. K., ... & Rahman, S. K. A. (2019). Nurturing compassion-based empathy: innovative approach in higher education. In *Social Issues Surrounding Harassment and Assault: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice* (pp. 144-163). IGI Global.
- Hussain, B., Zafar Sheikh, A., & Fatima, T. (2022). Learning social entrepreneurship: Experiences of sociology students. *Cogent Business & Management*, 9(1), 2032539.
- Innab, A., Alammam, K., Alqahtani, N., Aldawood, F., Kerari, A., & Alenezi, A. (2022). The impact of a 12-hour educational program on nurses' knowledge and attitudes regarding pain management: A quasi-experimental study. *BMC nursing*, 21(1), 250.
- Idris, A., & Akhir, N. M. (2022). The impacts of COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown on caregivers of family members with mental health issues: The untold story. *Geografia – Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 18(2), 187–199.
- Izzati, N., Tamyaz, P. F. M., & Kumar, S. (2023). Cross-country analysis of social entrepreneurship ecosystem and support system in India and Malaysia. *SCMS Journal of Indian Management*, 20(2).
- Kamaruddin, S. H., Mauzud, S. M., & Zin, N. A. M. (2019). Exploring the ecological assets of Tunas Mekar Project's graduate entrepreneurs. *Geografia-Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 15(4), 288–303.
- Karim, Z. (2020). Social entrepreneurship—the power of alleviating poverty: A review on social enterprises in Bangladesh. *The Jahangirnagar Journal of Business Studies*, 8(1), 57-73.
- Khilji, S. E. (2022). An approach for humanizing leadership education: Building learning community & stakeholder engagement. *Journal of Management Education*, 46(3), 439-471.
- Kickul, J. & Lyons, T.S. (2020). *Understanding social entrepreneurship: The relentless pursuit of mission in an ever-changing world*. Routledge.
- Kim, G., Kim, D., Lee, W. J., & Joung, S. (2020). The effect of youth entrepreneurship education programs: Two large-scale experimental studies. *SAGE open*, 10(3), 2158244020956976.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall.

- Kolb, D. A. (2014). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. FT Press.
- Krejcie, R. V. and Morgan, D. W. (1970) Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30, 607-610.
- Luc, P. T. (2021). A systematic literature review on personality traits in social entrepreneurship. *Ho Chi Minh City Open University Journal of Science-Economics and Business Administration*, 11(2), 172-189.
- Miyazono, K., & Inarimori, K. (2021). Empathy, altruism, and group identification. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 749315.
- Morris, T. H. (2020). Experiential learning—a systematic review and revision of Kolb’s model. *Interactive learning environments*, 28(8), 1064-1077.
- Ndou, V. (2021). Social entrepreneurship education: A combination of knowledge exploitation and exploration processes. *Administrative Sciences*, 11(4), 112.
- Othman, N., & Radin A. Rahman, R. S. A. (2021). The role of government and higher education In developing social entrepreneurship in Malaysia. *Entrepreneurial Activity in Malaysia: A Country Level Perspective*, 85-116.
- Pischetola, M., & Martins, L. de S. e S. (2021). Teaching social entrepreneurship in higher education: active pedagogy in a Deweyan perspective. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 15(2), 543–564.
- Prysmakova, P. (2024). Obtaining entrepreneurial skills, while preserving motivation: Quasi-experiment of social enterprise training effects. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 1-27.
- Radieah, M. N. & Norhidayati Nadiha, M. (2022). Social entrepreneurship in Penang, Malaysia: Appraisal of ending poverty programme (1AZAM). *Geografia–Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 18(4), 189–210.
- Ranville, A., & Barros, M. (2022). Towards normative theories of social entrepreneurship. A review of the top publications of the field. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 180(2), 407-438.
- Roslan, M. H. H., Hamid, S., Ijab, M. T., Yusop, F. D., & Norman, A. A. (2022) Social entrepreneurship in higher education: Challenges and opportunities, *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 42(3), 588-604.
- Setiawan, H. H., Yuda, T. K., Susantyo, B., Sulubere, M. B., Ganti, M., Habibullah, H. & Murni, R. (2023). Scaling up social entrepreneurship to reduce poverty: Exploring the challenges and opportunities through stakeholder engagement. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 8, 1131762.
- Shahid, S. M., & Alarifi, G. (2021). Social entrepreneurship education: a conceptual framework and review. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 19(3), 100533.
- Siddiky, M. R. & Haque, I. E. (2024). Factors affecting students' academic performance are mediated by their motivation for learning. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 20(1), 15-27.
- Smith, B. R., & Stevens, C. E. (2019). The distinctive challenges of educating social entrepreneurs: A model based on experiential learning. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 162(3), 503-516.
- Stirzaker, R., Galloway, L., Muhonen, J., & Christopoulos, D. (2021). The drivers of social entrepreneurship: Agency, context, compassion and opportunism. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 27(6), 1381-1402.
- Suraiya, M. S., Armanurah, M. A., Nor Azizah, D., & Aini, H. (2015). Keusahawanan sosial sebagai satu pendekatan inovatif ke arah transformasi sosial masyarakat: Kajian kes di Malaysia. *Geografia – Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 11(9), 79–88.

- Tabuena, A. C., & Villareal, E. G. (2024). Usefulness and challenges of clustered self-directed learning modules in entrepreneurship for senior high school distance learning. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 25(1), 155-178.
- Teasdale, S., Lyon, F., & Baldock, R. (2021). The role of social enterprise in the future of entrepreneurship education. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 15, e00245.
- Thomsen, B., Muurlink, O., & Best, T. (2019). Backpack bootstrapping: Social entrepreneurship education through experiential learning. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 12(2), 238-264.
- Usman, S., Masood, F., Khan, M. A., & Khan, N. U. R. (2022). Impact of empathy, perceived social impact, social worth and social network on the social entrepreneurial intention in socio-economic projects. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 14(1), 65-92.
- Waqar, A., Fadzil, A. F. M., Jamil, M., & Yaacob, M. R. (2021). Systematic literature review of social entrepreneurship phenomenon: Perspectives and theoretical lenses. *The journal of contemporary issues in business and government*, 27(2), 5216-5229.
- Yitshaki, R., Kropp, F., & Honig, B. (2022). The role of compassion in shaping social entrepreneurs' prosocial opportunity recognition. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 179(2), 617-647.
- Zulkifle, A. M., & Aziz, K. A. (2023). Determinants of social entrepreneurship intention: A longitudinal study among youth in higher learning institutions. *Social Sciences*, 12(3), 124.