

AN ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRACTION MODEL OF UNIVERSITY
ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE FOR WEB CONTENT

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my beloved family especially my parents, my dearest wife - Najmeh, my lovely son - Mohammadsadra, and my most supportive supervisor – Assoc. Prof Dr. Mohd Zaidi Abd Rozan. Thank you very much for being supportive, helpful and understanding.

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ABSTRACT

University Entrepreneurship Centres (UEC) portray their organizational identity to potential students through their website in order to attract them to enroll in their entrepreneurship educational programs. Thus, UECs need to identify the influence of each organizational identity factors as their website content in creating the ideal attitudes in students as to attract them to their programs. The objectives of this study are, firstly, to identify the importance of UECs website content that leads to organizational attraction. Secondly, to propose an organizational attraction model for the university entrepreneurship centre web content to reflect on the influence of identified website content factors on the UEC's organizational attraction. And thirdly, to evaluate the influence of identified website content factors on UEC's organizational attraction. This research applied a quantitative method approach following a positivistic paradigm. Several models of organizational identity, image and attractiveness were employed and a research model was then developed based on a comprehensive literature review. A questionnaire was designed to enable the survey to be included as part of the data collection method. With 445 returned questionnaires in hand, the collected data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique. The results showed that the organizational attractiveness of UEC was affected by students' attitude toward UEC as an organization, which itself was affected by UEC's website design (WD), UEC's identity (UECI) Perception, and Students attitude toward website (SATW). The results of this study showed that Industry Interaction (II), Producing Highly Qualified Graduates (PHQG), Team Working (TW), and Risk Taking (RT) are empirically proven to be the effective factors on Students Attitude Toward UEC as an Organization (SATO). Meanwhile, Innovativeness (INNO), Attracting Entrepreneurial Faculty (AEF), and Consultation (CONS) are empirically proven to be the effective factors on SATW which indirectly affect the SATO. Finally, the effectiveness of Proactiveness (PA) on SATW and SATO was not proven to be effective. These findings can be of pioneers in the field of UECs online attractiveness, and they contribute to the Organizational Impression Management. The proposed model in this study can be used by universities' corporate office managers and web designers to enhance their UEC's organizational attraction in the World Wide Web.

ABSTRAK

Pusat Keusahawanan Universiti (UEC) menggambarkan identiti organisasi kepada pelajar melalui laman web mereka untuk menarik pelajar mendaftar dalam program pendidikan keusahawanan mereka. Oleh itu, UEC perlu mengenal pasti kesan setiap faktor identiti organisasi sebagai kandungan laman web mereka dalam mewujudkan sikap yang ideal dalam kalangan pelajar bagi menarik mereka ke program mereka. Objektif kajian ini adalah, pertama, untuk mengenal pasti kepentingan kandungan laman web UEC yang membawa kepada tarikan organisasi. Kedua, untuk mencadangkan satu model tarikan organisasi untuk kandungan web pusat keusahawanan universiti untuk mencerminkan pengaruh faktor kandungan laman web yang dikenal pasti sebagai daya tarikan organisasi UEC. Dan ketiga, untuk menilai pengaruh faktor isi laman web yang dikenal pasti sebagai daya tarikan organisasi UEC. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kaedah kuantitatif paradigm positivistik. Beberapa model identiti organisasi, imej dan daya tarikan telah digunakan dan model penyelidikan kemudiannya dibangunkan berdasarkan tinjauan literatur yang komprehensif. Soal selidik direka untuk membolehkan kajiselidik dimasukkan sebagai sebahagian daripada kaedah pengumpulan data. Dengan 445 borang soal selidik yang dipulangkan, data yang dikumpul dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik Kuasa dua Terkecil Pemodelan Persamaan Struktur (PLS-SEM). Keputusan menunjukkan daya tarikan organisasi UEC dipengaruhi oleh sikap pelajar terhadap UEC sebagai sebuah organisasi, yang terpengaruh oleh reka bentuk laman web UEC, Persepsi Identiti UEC (UEC) dan sikap pelajar terhadap laman web (SATW). Keputusan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa Interaksi Industri (II), Pengeluaran Graduan Berkelayakan Tinggi (PHQG), Kerjasama Berpasukan (TW), dan Pengambilan Risiko (RT) secara empirikal terbukti sebagai faktor yang berkesan terhadap Sikap Pelajar Terhadap UEC sebagai sebuah Organisasi (SATO). Sementara itu, Inovasi (INNO), Menarik Keusahawanan Fakulti (AEF), dan Perundingan (CONS) secara empirikal menjadi faktor yang berkesan terhadap SATW yang secara tidak langsung mempengaruhi SATO. Akhirnya, keberkesanan *Proactiveness* (PA) pada SATW dan SATO terbukti tidak berkesan. Dapatan ini boleh menjadi perintis dalam bidang keusahawanan khususnya tarikan atas talian, dan ia menyumbang dalam Pengurusan tanggapan Organisasi. Model yang dicadangkan dalam kajian ini boleh digunakan oleh pengurus pejabat korporat universiti dan pereka web untuk meningkatkan daya tarikan organisasi UEC mereka di web seluruh dunia.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEF	-	Attract Entrepreneurial Faculty
CON	-	Consultation
II	-	Industry Interaction
IM	-	Impression Management
INNO	-	Innovativeness
IS	-	Information Systems
MCDM	-	Multi-Criteria Decision Making
OA	-	Organizational Attraction
PA	-	Proactiveness
PHQG	-	Producing Highly Qualified Graduates
RT	-	Risk Taking
SATO	-	Student Attitude toward Organization
SATW	-	Student Attitude toward Website
TOPSIS	-	Technique for order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution
TW	-	Teamwork
UEC	-	University Entrepreneurship Center
UECI	-	University Entrepreneurship Center Identity
WA	-	Website Aesthetics
WD	-	Website Design
WU	-	Website Usability

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Having websites is very popular among all types of organizations and acts as their virtual face in the World Wide Web. Organizations in both the private and public sectors use their websites to attract applicants more than for any other human resource management activity (Braddy et al., 2008). Universities' Entrepreneurship Centers (UEC) are among educational organizations which have now become widespread within the advanced industrialized countries as well as developing countries, and have attracted increasing attention due to increasing rate of unemployment in all over the world (Tijssen, 2006; Wong et al., 2007; Ahmad Bustamam et al. 2015; Boh et al., 2016). Role of UEC in universities is very important to teach students the initial phases of entrepreneurship in order to make them more entrepreneurial (Boh et al. 2016; Kamariah et al. 2015; Todorovic et al. 2011). UECs need to attract students to their educational programs by presenting their organizational identity to students through their official website as their virtual face and the very first source of gaining information. (Meyer, 2008; Morgan, Walker et al., 2011; 2013; Adekiya and Ibrahim, 2016; Barba-Sánchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018).

This study focuses on UECs' website content factors that influence UEC organizational attraction from students' perspective.

1.2 Background of the Study

Considerable research (e.g. Martin, 2006; Lubbe, 2013; Coloma, 2012) have been done on identifying the website content factors which attract students to educational organizations via web-based attraction. Despite the common usage of web attraction in different organizations, some researchers have noted the necessity of more empirical researches on evaluation of how the organizational websites content factors are related to website visitors' attraction (Cober et al., 2004; Stone et al., 2005; Allen et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2008; Braddy et al. 2009; Lyons and Marler, 2011; Gregory et al., 2013). Some researchers have focused on this gap to address which website contents factors and attributes are the organizational attraction constructors (e.g. Tsai and Yang, 2010; Lyons and Marler, 2011; Gregory et al., 2013). The studies directed by Braddy et al. (2009) and Tsai and Yang, (2010) discovered that providing organizational identity information on an organization's website positively relate to attitudes towards a website and organizational attraction. Lyons and Marler, (2011) and Gregory et al., (2013) suggested that by presenting a pleasing web design features such as website usability and website Aesthetics, and customized organizational identity information, individuals will have a better attitude toward website and organization itself and will be attracted to the organization.

The website of universities' entrepreneurship center (UEC), as the very first resources for students to acquire information about it and what they can learn about entrepreneurship should be attractive to students (Boh et al. 2016). Based on signaling theory, image of a UEC can affect its students' perceptions of feeling oneness with the UEC and can make students to accept and support its identity by contributing and getting involved in the UEC's educational programs. The power of organizational website content and its unique attributes to create organizational image are already discussed by many researchers.

Although there are many studies on university image for attracting and enrolling new students, only a few have tried to propose a model that attracts the enrolled students to join specific departments or centers of university. For example, in case of UECs, they need to attract students to engage with their activities to learn

about entrepreneurship to gain more entrepreneurial skills (Kamariah et al, 2015, Todorovic et al, 2011). The present research theoretically develops and empirically tests a model predicting the effect of UEC website content factors on students' attraction to UECs. The model can be used by planners to control UEC website contents to increase their organizational attraction between students.

1.3 Problem Statement

As the Ministry of Education of Malaysia (formerly known as Ministry of Higher Education) states, currently there are two crucial concerns about Graduate entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial graduates because of the increasing rate of unemployment in Malaysia (Ahmad Bustamam et al. 2015, Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). Nowadays the labor market highly needs multidisciplinary engineers which have additional skills such as entrepreneurial skills additional to other skills to their own. Universities therefore faces new challenges, and these include equipping students with greater entrepreneurship education (Ahmad Bustamam et al. 2015, Barba-Sánchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018). The rate of students' participation in universities' entrepreneurship center programs is low as stated by (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015; and European Pact for Youth Leaders, 2017).

The perception of students generated from visiting the University Entrepreneurship Centers (UEC) website, as the very first source of gaining information about university entrepreneurship and its programs and activities, has a very important role in making a good perception on their minds to pursue them to get engaged with their activities and programs. Students' perception of UEC website content, create organizational attraction which is an attitude toward UEC and viewing it as a desirable entity with which to have some relationship. University Entrepreneurship Centers need to have an attractive website content to motivate students to get engaged with their activities and programs. Although some researchers have tried to propose models to show the important website content factors that affect visitors' perception and lead to organizational attraction (For

example Braddy et al. (2009); and Gregory et al. (2013) in the field of “Organizational Recruitment Websites”, and Tsai and Yang (2010) in the field of Internet Banking), very rare studies (Nevado Gil, et al., (2019); Carvalho et al. (2019); and Fowle and Vassaux (2017)) have been conducted specifically for case of UECs to identify the effect of their identity factors as their website contents on their organizational attraction. And addition to this, each of these studies have investigated different aspects of UECs’ identity (UECI) factors which shows the lack of a comprehensive study to rank the UEC identity factors according to their importance. This study identifies and ranks the important UECs’ website content factors and investigates their effects on their organizational attraction (OA).

1.4 Research Questions

Considering the above-mentioned problem statement, the major question addressed in this research is “How does a UEC website content influence its organizational attraction?” To find the answer, this main question is broken down into three sub-research questions as follows:

1. What are the important UEC website content factors that lead to organizational attraction?
2. What is the model to reflect the influence of identified website content factors on UEC’s organizational attraction?
3. What is the influence of identified website content factors on UEC’s organizational attraction?

1.5 Objectives of the Research

The objectives of this research are as follow:

1. To identify the important UEC website content factors that lead to organizational attraction
2. To propose a model to reflect the influence of identified website content factors on UEC's organizational attraction.
3. To evaluate the influence of identified website content factors on UEC's organizational attraction.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study covers the following:

1. This study focuses on UEC websites of four best entrepreneurial universities in the world which are "Stanford Entrepreneurship Center", "MIT Entrepreneurship Center", "Harvard Entrepreneurship Center", and "Babson College Entrepreneurship Center". The reason of choosing these four UECs is explained in section 3.5.5.1, part c.
2. The focus of this study is on the students in Malaysia. Specifically, the undergraduate and post-graduate students currently studying in UTM. Inclusion of other universities' students in the sample would only raise the data collection time without adding to the quality of the findings. (full justification is given in Section 3.5.5.2).
3. A survey-based questionnaire is used in this study which targets the students whom have just visited the selected UEC's website before answering the questionnaire. This method is similar to the Braddy et al. (2006) and Braddy et al. (2009) which are similarly focused on organizational attraction by their websites.

4. The positivism approach is used in this research as its research paradigm, and to accomplish the main goal of this study, the quantitative method is applied.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The following paragraphs describe the main perspectives of this study's significances:

Firstly, this study is measuring the UEC's organizational attraction created by its website which is amongst the first survey-based studies in Malaysia. This study's findings would help to better understand the role of UEC's website factors' effect on UEC's organizational attraction from students' perspective. For this purpose, the unit of analysis is selected from 4 best University Entrepreneurship Centers in the world, and the respondents are chosen from undergraduate and postgraduate students in Malaysian universities which makes this study as an organization/firm analysis.

Secondly, in the field of organizational attraction theory, this research is among the pioneering works in the context of UECs in Malaysia. The theoretical contributions of this research provide information to understand different website content factors' effect on UEC's attraction among students in the context of Malaysia. The outcomes of this study can support website developer to design the website content for UECs.

Finally, the theoretical findings and the methodology employed in this research will be useful in the field of organizational Impression Management (IM). This research will identify the significance of different informative factors that can be considered in the development of UECs' website content and design to pursue the visitors especially students to get involved with UEC programs.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is consisted of six chapters, which are well related and complementary to each other. The short description of each chapter is as follow:

Chapter 1 includes a short introduction to the study subject, the study background, and the research problem statement. Later, this study's objectives, scope and significance of are stated. Eventually, the overall organization of thesis is presented.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on organizational identity, organizational image, website attribute relation with organizational image and organizational attraction. This is followed by an overall review of related theories. Based on the review of the literature and related models, a conceptual model of UEC website effect on its organizational attraction is then presented.

Chapter 3 describes the research paradigm and research approach that are relevant to this study. Then, the research design and all the steps involved in this study's operational framework, is provided.

Chapter 4 focuses on conducting a systematic literature review to discover University Entrepreneurship Center Identity (UECI) factors. Survey questionnaires based on "Technique for Order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution" (TOPSIS) method are distributed among UEC experts to select UECI factors. This chapter is completed by proposing research hypotheses.

Chapter 5 provides the relevant information regarding the main data collection and analysis. This includes detailed discussions about the assessment of the study's measurements and structural models using PLS-SEM. The final model of University Entrepreneurship Center Website Effects on its organizational attraction is presented at the end of this chapter as the main outcome of this research.

Chapter 6 highlights the key findings of this research and provides a conclusion to the study with a discussion of the objectives and outcomes. In addition, the implications and recommendations, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are also provided in the final chapter.

1.9 Summary

This chapter firstly provides an introduction and overview about the research subject. After that discusses the problem background of this study. Later, the discussion about problem statement is stated, which emphasizes the importance of the research and the gaps in existing literature. In addition, the research questions and the research objectives are stated. Afterward, this research scopes in units of analysis and research methods are explained. Finally, the significance of research following the overall organization of the current thesis is provided in this chapter.

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