

Catalyzing Social Entrepreneurship: Unraveling the Challenges Faced by Indigenous Youth in Malaysia

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Abstract: Social entrepreneurship has been recognised to produce job creators among youth and contributes to communities' socio-economic development. However, this aspiration might pose challenges to youth from marginalised communities, such as the indigenous community, as entrepreneurial activities from this minority group are still at their infancy level and very limited. This study explores the challenges in fostering social entrepreneurship among youth from the indigenous community in Malaysia. A qualitative approach was used for data collection from 17 participants comprised of indigenous youth leaders, academics, parents of youth from the indigenous community, social entrepreneurs, officers from government bodies, and indigenous individuals. The data were collected through a combination of observation and semi-structured interviews and analysed thematically. The findings revealed that the main challenges are categorised into internal and external challenges. Therefore, this study provides novel insights into the challenges in fostering social entrepreneurship among indigenous youth in Malaysia.

Keywords: Challenges, Indigenous, Malaysia, Marginalised Community, Social Entrepreneurship, Youth

1. Introduction

In the vibrant landscape of contemporary Malaysia, social entrepreneurship has emerged as a powerful force for economic and societal transformation. As the nation strives for sustainable development and inclusive growth, the potential of social entrepreneurship to bridge gaps in resource allocation, employment opportunities, and community development cannot be overstated. Sustainable development seeks economic growth to achieve social progress without harming the environment through the principal support of institutions (Diaz-Sarachaga & Ariza-Montes, 2022). This holds particular significance for the indigenous communities that are integral to Malaysia's rich cultural tapestry. Furthermore, with a history deeply rooted in tradition and an enduring connection to the land, Malaysia's indigenous people offer a unique perspective on social entrepreneurship. This avenue holds promise for their economic empowerment and heritage preservation.

The indigenous communities of Malaysia, including diverse ethnic groups such as the Orang Asli, Dayaks, Kadazans, and others, have long faced the brunt of socio-economic disparities, marginalisation, poverty, lack of basic rights, and poor health and nutritional status (Chew et al., 2022).

Despite their invaluable contributions to Malaysia's cultural mosaic, they often find themselves on the fringes of the nation's economic prosperity. Nevertheless, within these challenges, there exists a wellspring of untapped potential. Indigenous youths, armed with education and a commitment to their communities through education, have the capacity to emerge as catalysts for change through social entrepreneurship ventures that are not only economically viable but also culturally and environmentally sensitive.

In alignment with the broader national agenda, the government of Malaysia has articulated a clear commitment to encouraging entrepreneurship among its youths. As an example, the government aims to encourage graduates in Malaysia to pursue entrepreneurship as their preferred career choice through entrepreneurship policies. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has set various aspirations, including the Entrepreneurship Action Plan and the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education, HE), to develop graduates with a balanced and holistic approach and also cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset in them. The goal is to nurture individuals who can create and provide job opportunities rather than solely seek employment. In addition, MOHE aims to produce entrepreneurs with strong entrepreneurial values, attributes, and resilience in the global market, thereby contributing to the country's economic growth. Research findings highlight that entrepreneurial resilience tends to be stronger qualitatively and quantitatively in less developed areas than in well-developed areas, mainly due to the lack of entrepreneurial initiatives (Ignat & Constantin, 2020). However, this only applies to youths of HE, such as graduates, in anticipation that they will be creating more job opportunities for themselves and others as they venture into entrepreneurship. Moreover, the Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2021-2025 agenda has suggested that HE institutions cultivate entrepreneurship aspects in the curriculum, promoting entrepreneurship as a career opportunity. This provides assistance and support to start a business and highlights graduate entrepreneurship success stories. Additionally, youths from marginalised communities, such as from the indigenous community, should also be given the same chance as those in the HE institutions.

Social entrepreneurship, a type of entrepreneurship, has been recognised to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. The interest in social entrepreneurship has grown exponentially in Malaysia. However, it is still considered new and uncommon among Malaysians as the business model for this type of entrepreneurship is based on applying business solutions to social problems. Although social entrepreneurship is rather new in Malaysia, various government and non-government agencies have begun to realise the importance of social entrepreneurship activities to the socio-economic development of the country (Adnan et al., 2018). Furthermore, the Malaysian government has expanded its focus on social entrepreneurship through strategic plans. This includes the National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 (NEP 2030) and the PENJANA stimulus. With the uncertainties in economic and financial activities, Malaysians consider social entrepreneurship as either their fixed or side income.

Particularly, the rising youth unemployment rates in Malaysia present a pressing issue, shedding light on the overarching challenges related to marketability and employability in the country. In response to this concerning trend, young individuals are compelled to explore alternative career paths. One such alternative gaining traction is social entrepreneurship. As traditional employment avenues become more uncertain, youths are driven to be more creative and innovative. This motivation prompts them to channel their efforts into creating social innovations that benefit their communities and serve as a constructive response to the unemployment problem. Moreover, the shift toward entrepreneurship as a perceived buffer for potential unemployment and a means of social mobility is reinforced by findings such as those discussed by Patuelli et al. (2020).

Social entrepreneurship shares similarities with traditional business entrepreneurship and spans various fields of study. However, there is still a lack of research specifically focused on social entrepreneurship, particularly in Malaysia. Existing studies indicate a moderate level of social entrepreneurship activity in the country. This is an indication that further investigation on this issue is deemed necessary. Additionally, by highlighting the dearth of research specifically focused on social entrepreneurship within the Malaysian context, the study acknowledges an existing gap in the knowledge landscape. It contends that while existing studies indicate a moderate level of social entrepreneurship activity in the country, further investigation into this issue is imperative.

Therefore, the paper's structure is crafted to investigate these objectives thoroughly, comprising several sections that include an introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

Works of literature pertaining to social entrepreneurship activity research are still limited globally, including in Malaysia. The term 'social entrepreneurship' is still uncommon in Malaysia. Nonetheless, its execution can be traced long through the establishment of cooperation between urban and rural dwellers (Rahman et al., 2016). Meanwhile, social enterprise is defined as organisations that use business opportunities to attain social goals. Social enterprise has a unique entrepreneurial identity defined by a combination of mission, activity, governance, performance, and accountability, which helps to explain its crucial role in promoting development and change in society (Gesso, 2019).

The term 'social entrepreneurship' was created by William Drayton and others to describe businesses that have the purpose of helping people who are left out and giving power to certain groups of people who face disadvantages (Drayton, 2006; Leadbeater, 1997). According to Drayton (2002), social entrepreneurs notice something in society that is not functioning properly and imagine a big change that will enable them to transform society into a new and improved state. According to Roberts and Woods (2005), social entrepreneurship is about recognising, evaluating, and pursuing opportunities to bring about significant social changes. It is conducted by visionary individuals who are deeply committed to their cause. Unlike traditional or business entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs prioritise their explicit and central social mission when considering opportunities. Moreover, they assess the impact of these opportunities based on how they align with their mission rather than solely focusing on creating wealth.

While social entrepreneurs view wealth creation as a means to accomplish their mission, business entrepreneurs perceive wealth creation as the ultimate goal (Dees, 2001). In 2018, the Prime Minister of Malaysia announced a fund of RM20 million in support of this, albeit the number of social enterprises that emerged as a result was relatively low. This is with only over 20,000 compared to neighboring countries like Thailand and the Philippines, which have over 700,000 and 30,000, respectively (British Malaysia, 2018). This suggests that social enterprises in Malaysia are not widely recognised yet and should be taken seriously. Hence, it is crucial to acknowledge their potential as a source of employment and sustainable support, with the backing of the government and society (Malay Mail, 2020).

Education in HE institutions should extend beyond academics and encompass real-world experiences. Fitzgerald et al. (2016) emphasised the importance of students engaging with diverse social issues and developing skills through university-community partnerships, enabling them to impact society positively. Therefore, introducing social entrepreneurship education in higher learning institutions is crucial in fostering innovation and empowering communities (Halberstadt et al., 2019). Social entrepreneurship courses have been introduced in many universities to ensure fresh graduates' employability while equipping them with practical skills, experiences, and insight into social entrepreneurship (Roslan et al., 2019). Notably, the growth of social entrepreneurship in HE will have more impact on society.

Youths play a significant role in communities and are crucial for the future of community development. Ogamba (2019) suggested that young people can drive innovation in profitable business ventures. For example, young entrepreneurs in Africa have the potential to identify untapped opportunities and create groundbreaking innovations that benefit consumers. This not only adds value to the market but also generates employment, increases government revenue, and promotes economic growth and sustainable development (Ogamba, 2019). Chigunta (2002) categorised youth entrepreneurship into three groups: pre-entrepreneurs, budding entrepreneurs, and emergent entrepreneurs. Pre-entrepreneurs, typically teenagers aged 15–19, are inexperienced and lack business ownership knowledge or experience.

Damoah (2020) presented a different perspective, stating that being born into entrepreneurial families significantly increases the likelihood of young individuals considering entrepreneurship an attractive life path. However, exploring how youth entrepreneurs can elevate social entrepreneurship to impact communities is crucial. Countries like the USA and Canada have already started focusing on social entrepreneurship education, and the demand for it is growing. Specifically, there is a focus on

cross-campus programs that highlight the demographics of students in higher learning institutions (Solomon, Alabduljader & Ramani, 2019). The authors argued that social entrepreneurship education should address key questions such as: (1) who are social entrepreneurs; (2) what factors contribute to the success of social entrepreneurs; (3) what benefits and challenges are associated with different organizational models; and (4) how to identify and capitalize on various social opportunities.

2.1 Social Learning Theory

This study draws support from the Social Learning Theory (SLT) proposed by Bandura (1977). SLT plays a significant role in understanding how entrepreneurial behaviours develop and has implications for organisations aiming to encourage individual entrepreneurial behaviour and proactive change (Scherer et al., 2007). Observational learning, a specific aspect of SLT, highlights its explanatory potential (Scherer et al., 2007). Using SLT as its underpinning theory, this study aims to enhance understanding of how marginalised youth and relevant stakeholders learn about social entrepreneurship. According to SLT, individuals can learn by observing the behaviour of others, known as models. Furthermore, they observe the models engaging in different social behaviours and take note of the rewards or reinforcements these behaviours receive (vicarious reinforcement). If the observer values the reinforcements received by the model, then the observer will attempt to replicate the model's behaviour and obtain similar reinforcements (Bandura, 1977). Moreover, the SLT provides a useful framework to explore how observing entrepreneurial role models can shape the development of social entrepreneurs. By equipping these youths with knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship, they can improve their own lives, support their families, and contribute to the well-being of their community.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant need to focus on catalyzing social entrepreneurship among indigenous youths in Malaysia. The existing literature on social entrepreneurship activity research remains limited globally, including in Malaysia, indicating a gap in understanding and addressing the challenges faced by indigenous youths in this sphere.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach where the data collection was conducted in two phases: 1) observations and 2) semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders.

3.1 Sampling and Population

The population comprised of participants from the indigenous communities in Malaysia, particularly the indigenous communities concentrating on areas in three states in Malaysia, namely Kedah, Perak, and Kelantan. These identified areas are centered in Gua Musang and Jeli in Kelantan, Gerik and Lenggeng North of Perak, and Baling and Yan in Kedah. Since it is beyond reachable areas, approval, assistance, guidance, and training were sought from the Department of Orang Asli (indigenous) Development. From this department, the key persons for the Orang Asli communities were identified, and contacts were established with them through the department's officers. Due to the limited access to indigenous settlements, a snowball sampling technique was used. The participants were gathered from HE institutions, from the heads of villages, and by word-of-mouth. Additionally, the Semang tribe, also known as the Northern Aslian or Sakai, was one of the sampling targets. Meanwhile, the low-land Semang tribes are also known as Sakai, although this term is considered to be derogatory by the Semang people and is normally found in the northern part of Peninsular Malaysia. They are concentrated in the highlands of Kelantan, Terengganu, and the northern regions of Perak, Kedah, and Pahang.

3.2 Observations

The observations were conducted in the indigenous communities' settlements surrounding the areas. This process involved gathering direct information by closely observing the people, their environment, and their surroundings. This method was particularly useful for capturing the actual behaviours of individuals who face difficulties expressing their ideas, such as the Aborigines or Orang

Asli (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018). Through these observations, preliminary findings were obtained regarding the issues and challenges faced in fostering social entrepreneurship among the indigenous youths.

3.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

In this phase, findings from the observations were validated. From the observations that took place in the settlement areas, more specific robust questions were able to be generated and asked directly to the interviewees. Semi-structured interviews comprising various stakeholders were conducted. This includes academicians, other social entrepreneurs, government bodies (the Department of Orang Asli Development, Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, Ministry of Education leaders, and youth leaders from marginalised communities). A total of 17 participants participated in the study, and all the face-to-face interviews were conducted at specific meeting spots agreed upon by the interviewer and the interviewees. The composition of participants is as follows:

Table 1

Composition of research participants

No. of participant	Type of Participants
2	Parents of youth from the Indigenous community
2	Academics
2	Social entrepreneurs
2	Officers from the government body
2	Youth leaders
7	Graduates from the Indigenous community
Total	17

3.4 Data Analysis

The protocols of the interviews were developed based on relevant literature to understand how participants perceived social entrepreneurship and their opinions towards fostering it among indigenous graduates. All interviews were conducted in Malay language as participants felt more comfortable expressing their views in Malay, the national language of Malaysia. In this case, the Malay interview transcripts were first translated into English and later translated back into Malay to ensure that the original meaning of the data was preserved during the translation process. All translations produced similar meanings to the original Malay language interview transcripts. Furthermore, it is also crucial to highlight that excerpts from the interview transcripts included in this paper have maintained the original “Malaysian English”, which refers to the English language used by Malaysians in their daily communication. Therefore, no grammar or syntax corrections have been made. This practice ensures that the original meanings of the interviews are maintained. Moreover, all qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns. The data has provided valuable insights into the challenges and issues faced by the indigenous graduates, which were then triangulated with data from the observations. The findings are further discussed in the subsequent section.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the overall experiences and opinions of the participants, it can be established that the youths from the indigenous communities are willing to be social entrepreneurs. They are committed to changing their lives and communities by creating social innovations that can be achieved through social entrepreneurship activities. However, it is a challenging effort. A comprehensive understanding of the challenges concerning fostering social entrepreneurship among the indigenous youths in Malaysia can be represented in two categories: internal and external challenges.

4.1 Internal challenges

Knowledge

Most of the participants claimed that indigenous youths, in general, lack the knowledge of social entrepreneurship, and due to this, they become reluctant to venture into it. They claimed they were not confident enough to start such an enterprise as they were not good at it. In addition, they argued that they lack the specific skills required to become social entrepreneurs, which would enable them to do their business successfully. Although they have been exposed to entrepreneurial activities and curriculum at the university level, they felt that they still require more exposure and proper guidance from relevant parties. One of the participants mentioned that:

I think I am not good at doing business, and I feel that I am not ready to start my own business; although we did entrepreneurial activities at the university, but I feel I still lack the skills. I need someone to guide me. (P8)

Despite being exposed to entrepreneurial activities during their time at the university with various social entrepreneurship activities, the youths have limited knowledge of social entrepreneurship. This aligns with the perspective of Abdul Kadir (2014), who noted that although interest in social enterprise and social entrepreneurship has grown in Malaysia, the concept of social enterprise remains relatively unexplored. While the youths were aware of the concept of social entrepreneurship, they had not considered venturing into it as it was perceived as different from conventional business endeavours. In reality, youths lacked a solid understanding of the concepts of social entrepreneurship. Moreover, the knowledge acquired during the courses was not retained due to the absence of practical application stages (Türel & Gizem, 2021).

This scenario echoes the SLT, emphasizing the impact of social interactions on knowledge acquisition. When the youths engage in conversations, collaborations, or discussions with relevant parties, such as successful social entrepreneurs or peers involved in social entrepreneurship, they are exposed to different perspectives and knowledge. These social interactions facilitate the exchange of ideas, experiences, and values, which can challenge or reinforce existing knowledge and lead to knowledge changes. Additionally, through conversations with social entrepreneurs or peers, youths can learn about innovative strategies, best practices, and real-life experiences related to social entrepreneurship. They can acquire new knowledge about addressing social issues, creating sustainable business models, and positively impacting communities. Accordingly, these interactions provide an opportunity for knowledge sharing and learning from others' expertise and insights.

Awareness

The participants are generally aware of and have been exposed to entrepreneurial activities. For example, some youths have experience helping their families clear land for agricultural activities such as growing crops. They also claimed that they would help their parents by collecting agricultural produce, and they would look for forest products to be sold. This indicates that their entrepreneurial skills have been nurtured by their parents. One of the participants highlighted that:

When I was little, I used to follow my father to the jungle or forest to find forest products and then sell them. The entrepreneurial trait is there, but we do not know how to maintain it, let alone to run a social enterprise. (P13)

The SLT suggests that having role models is essential for learning. In this context, parents and significant others play a role in fostering entrepreneurship among the youth. They are inspired and motivated by their significant others to participate in similar activities. Despite being exposed to entrepreneurial activities at an early stage, most of the participants in the study expressed a low level of awareness regarding social entrepreneurship. The main reasons associated with lack of awareness are exposure, job seeker mentality, and the risks associated with starting one's own business, particularly

economic and financial risks. This could be observed clearly during the interviews when the participants mentioned that:

I prefer to find a job with a fixed salary than starting my own business. It is very risky to start your own business. I do not mind how much I get monthly as long as I do not have to take the risks. (P10)

Therefore, it is apparent that the “job seekers” mentality is still strongly ingrained among the indigenous youths, thus providing limited opportunities for them to initiate their own social entrepreneurial projects or engage in community engagement initiatives. Therefore, by actively participating in projects that address social issues, they can develop a first-hand understanding of the challenges faced by social entrepreneurs. This experiential learning approach promotes awareness, empathy, and the development of problem-solving skills, aligning with the SLT’s emphasis on learning through social interactions and practical experiences.

Attitude

It was discovered that the youths from the indigenous community lack the right attitude to become social entrepreneurs. Inferiority complexes such as lack of confidence and low self-esteem are among the reasons contributing to the unfavorable attitude towards social entrepreneurship. Most of them felt that they did not have a passion for social entrepreneurship, as they claimed that it carries many responsibilities and is not easy. They would prefer to find something “easy”, and it is difficult to change their way of thinking. One of the participants claimed that:

I am a shy person, and I do not think starting a social enterprise suits me. I do not have the confidence. (P2)

Although many opportunities are provided to people from marginalised communities in Malaysia, such as the Orang Asli Education Transformation Program, to improve leadership and management skills, the indigenous youths are also unprepared to move forward and venture into something new. For example, indigenous youths are often perceived to have a considerably lower level of adaptability and a greater vulnerability to psychological challenges, including low self-esteem, when compared to their non-indigenous counterparts (Doreen et al., 2016). As a result of this insecurity, most of the indigenous youths prefer to go back to their families after graduating and live closer to their families. Hence, the opportunity to venture into entrepreneurial activities is restricted as the cities’ resources and supplies are more readily available. Furthermore, this is often due to the transition from the security of the home or education to the workplace. They tend to experiment with various activities before some attempt to set themselves up in business. According to one of the participants:

It is difficult to find social entrepreneurs among graduates from the indigenous community, mainly because it is difficult for them to work outside the area of their community. They would prefer to find something closer to their village and be close to their family. This kind of attitude is still strong among those who live in the Orang Asli villages. They still want to be in their comfort zone. (P7)

4.2 External challenges

Support

Through the establishment of the social entrepreneurial unit under the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Center (MaGIC), social entrepreneurs can take advantage of accessible financing opportunities, learn new skills, and engage in discussion services that MaGIC offers. Apart from this, the cooperation of Government Linked Corporation (GLC) and other private firms are involved in performing their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for high-impact social entrepreneurial projects (Rahman et al., 2016). The Department of Social Welfare Malaysia (Jabatan

Kebajikan Masyarakat-JKM) and the Department of Orang Asli Development (Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli-JAKOA) also actively assist the indigenous communities.

However, the participants of this study felt that there was still a lack of support, particularly in terms of financial support. According to Mohd Hasril et al. (2020), the success of indigenous youth entrepreneurs is hindered by external factors, namely a lack of financial capital and the complexities of bureaucratic financial lending processes. Other concerns that are categorised as external challenges include technological support and promotional as well as marketing support. One of the participants claimed that:

The Department of Social Welfare can help new entrepreneurs to start up a business, but we still need a lot of capital, such as for supplies. This is very challenging for newcomers or young people like us, as we do not have a lot of support. (P16)

The government's Short-Term Economic Recovery Plan (PENJANA) includes a stimulus package emphasizing the importance of supporting social enterprises to diversify economic activities. This aligns with the theme of "Propel Businesses" and recognizes the significant role of social enterprises in creating employment opportunities in the country. As part of the PENJANA stimulus package, MaGIC has allocated RM10 million in matching grants for social enterprises. Moreover, these grants aim to support social projects that address challenges faced by specific communities in innovative ways. Accordingly, social enterprises can also crowdsource contributions and donations to fund these projects (MaGIC, 2020; Malay Mail, 2020).

Location

Location is determined to be one of the key challenges in fostering social entrepreneurship among youths from the indigenous communities in Malaysia since most indigenous communities' settlements are in rural areas with limited accessibility. This affects the transporting and delivery of goods and services as well as other resources into and out of the settlement areas. In addition, the digitalization of business transactions is also affected as wireless coverage and internet connection are limited in some places. Therefore, the indigenous communities who expressed a willingness to start their own businesses encountered difficulties in effectively marketing their products to clients residing outside their settlements. One of the participants argued that:

I live in a remote area of Perak. The location of my house is not suitable for me to run a business. We do not even have good internet connections. I have to go out from my area to find access to the Wi-Fi. (P5)

This echoes Doris, Abd Hamid, Norlida, Redzuan, and Siti Hajar (2012), who highlighted that despite the willingness of those from the indigenous communities to become entrepreneurs. They faced challenges in reaching and attracting customers beyond their immediate communities. Due to the location factor, it was discovered from the interviews that most successful youths, particularly the graduates who used to live in the villages of the indigenous community areas, would move away from the village to get better job opportunities. The economic development in their home settlements may be limited, leading them to seek better employment prospects elsewhere. Hence, these youths may choose to move to urban or more developed areas with more job prospects and career opportunities. One of the participants mentioned that:

In this village, the young people who completed their studies would look for jobs outside the village and would leave the village to get better opportunities. There are more opportunities and better facilities out there in the town or cities. (P16)

Tradition

It was discovered that indigenous people hold strong beliefs about their distinctive traditions and cultural identities. They highly look up to the Head of the indigenous community, also known as Tok Batin or the Village Head. The position of Tok Batin holds great importance in preserving and protecting the customs, culture, and traditional way of life of the Orang Asli community under their care (Alizah et al., 2020). Additionally, Tok Batin's role and responsibilities include various social tasks such as creating a village profile, registering births and deaths, supervising marriage registrations, documenting visits by government officials, monitoring the migration of non-aboriginal people to the villages, reporting on programs conducted by JAKOA, and providing monthly reports to the state JAKOA Director regarding any ongoing issues (Jabatan Kemajuan Malaysia, 2011).

The majority of the participants believed that the Village Head plays a vital role in helping promote entrepreneurial activities in their village, especially when the activities are held in the settlement areas. One of the participants mentioned that: "We follow our Tok Batin; he is like our leader, but most of the younger generation now choose to do their own things and not listen to the Tok Batin. This is fine with us as long as it is for something good and can benefit them." (P1)

The participant also claimed that they are still inclined towards maintaining the rich culture and tradition of the indigenous people especially in arts and craftworks. Nonetheless, there is still a lack of support in terms of funding, particularly in getting supplies and materials, which has affected their business. They added that most of the craftsmen use forest products such as wood, bamboo, rattan, mengkuang, pandan, bemban, and coconut shells to create a variety of weaves and crafts. However, in today's modern world, finding materials is sometimes challenging due to deforestation. In addition, the production of craftworks is based on demand, which means the income generated from this activity is not consistent and insufficient for them to sustain. One of the participants highlighted that:

Our people produce craftwork whenever there is a demand for it, but it is not sustainable and difficult to maintain. (P3)

The SLT suggests that having role models is essential for learning. In this study, it has been discovered that among the indigenous social entrepreneurs, "Tok Batin" strongly influenced their business. For example, when Tok Batin demonstrated a great commitment to social entrepreneurship in his community, his actions inspired and motivated others to participate in social entrepreneurship. This finding supports the idea that positive role models can encourage people to participate in similar activities.

5. Conclusions

The study participants' concerns, expectations, experiences, and reflections shed light on the actual needs and worries regarding social entrepreneurship among the indigenous youths. This study aimed to uncover the difficulties faced by youths from the indigenous community in fostering social entrepreneurship. The study discovered that indigenous youths face both internal and external challenges that limit their engagement in social entrepreneurial activities. Although they possess the willingness and commitment to create social innovation through entrepreneurship, these challenges must be addressed and minimised. HE institutes have also provided resources and support to encourage a culture of social entrepreneurship among students. Moreover, this study revealed that youth from the indigenous communities in Malaysia must acquire the right knowledge and skills, exposure, attitude, and support to foster any social entrepreneurship activities or projects.

The education platform is an important strategy aimed at mitigating the impact of economic instability by exposing youths, particularly those in the HE, to social entrepreneurial activities. Equipped with the knowledge and skills they acquire during their studies, supported by an entrepreneurial culture and environment on campus, students and graduates are more likely to consider social entrepreneurship a career option after graduation. Given the pressing issues of graduate employability, it is relevant to research the extent of students' willingness to create social innovations that benefit society rather than focusing solely on personal gain. Furthermore, educational institutions should implement more significant, practical and long-lasting efforts to promote the culture of social entrepreneurship in Malaysia, which could significantly influence graduates' career choices upon completing their studies.

Consequently, this study offers several notable contributions to the field of social entrepreneurship in Malaysia. Firstly, it seeks to identify and elucidate the key challenges confronted by youths hailing from marginalised communities, with a specific focus on the indigenous population within Malaysia. This ambitious objective is crucial in understanding the barriers that impede these graduates' active engagement in social entrepreneurship initiatives. Secondly, in light of the escalating issue of youth unemployment within the nation, the study advocates for social entrepreneurship as a pragmatic solution. This perspective not only addresses the growing unemployment problem among youths but also fosters a culture of entrepreneurship driven by social impact. Thirdly, the research endeavours to craft a social entrepreneurship learning model tailored for HE, envisioning its potential to nurture a generation of skilled and socially-conscious entrepreneurs while concurrently reducing unemployment rates. Furthermore, the study emphasises the significance of government-led initiatives, such as the Orang Asli Education Transformation Program, to enhance educational and leadership opportunities within marginalized communities. In alignment with the Malaysian HE Sector Blueprint, the research underscores its contribution to the overarching goals of education and skills development. The limitations of this study include the potential constraint of the sample size and representativeness of indigenous youths, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences among different indigenous communities in Malaysia.

6. Suggestions

Hence, future research could address this limitation by employing longitudinal approaches, conducting comparative studies across regions, and delving into qualitative exploration for a deeper understanding. Evaluating the effectiveness of policies and initiatives and exploring collaborative efforts between educational institutions and government bodies are avenues for future research to further enhance our understanding of social entrepreneurship among indigenous youth and marginalised communities.

7. Co-Author Contribution

The authors affirmed that there is no conflict of interest in this article. Faizahani carried out the field work and prepared the literature review. Nazahah wrote the research methodology, result and discussion. Azyyati wrote abstract and conclusion.

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