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IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP INITIATIVES BY UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA PERLIS (UniMAP) FOR SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PERLIS

Nor Syamimi Mohamed Adnan[1]*, Mohd Kasturi Nor Abd Aziz[2], Noor Farahhein Johari[3], Masturah Sabri[4], Suzana Sulaiman[5], Jasin Abd Halim[6]

[1]Faculty of Business and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Malaysia
syamimiadnan@unimap.my https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1849-9732
[2]Faculty of Business and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Malaysia
kasturi@unimap.edu.my https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4932-1142
[3]Faculty of Business and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Malaysia
farahhein@unimap.edu.my https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3969-373X
[4]Faculty of Business and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Malaysia
masturahsabri@unimap.edu.my https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8166-9096
[5]Faculty of Business and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Malaysia
suzanasulaiman@unimap.edu.my https://orcid.org/0009-0009-0903-2125
[6]Faculty of Business and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Malaysia
jasinhalim@unimap.edu.my https://orcid.org/0009-0001-7646-3517
*Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

This research examines how Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) organises social entrepreneurship initiatives to address socioeconomic needs in Perlis. It focuses on the practical arrangements through which university expertise, resources, and community relationships support these initiatives. A qualitative case study was conducted with ten purposively selected participants: three university administrators, two faculty members, two students, a local business owner, a government official, and a community leader. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis provided the evidence for thematic analysis. Four implementation strategies emerged: incorporating social entrepreneurship into the curriculum through project-based and

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experiential learning; developing partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, and local businesses; supporting initiatives through funding, incubation, and mentorship; and involving communities in training, workshops, and outreach. Together, these findings describe an implementation approach that connects teaching and institutional support with external collaboration and community participation. The study offers a context-specific account of university-led social entrepreneurship and its role in addressing local socioeconomic priorities.

Keyword:

Implementation Strategies; Perlis; Social Entrepreneurship; Socioeconomic Development; Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP).

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Introduction

Social entrepreneurship connects entrepreneurial activity with efforts to address community needs. Its relevance to socioeconomic development lies in the use of business innovation to pursue social objectives alongside economic activity (Saebi et al., 2024). These initiatives can respond to challenges involving poverty, unemployment, and environmental sustainability while supporting community empowerment and economic resilience (World Economic Forum, 2025). Social enterprises may also complement government and private-sector activities by developing responses to social problems (Pinto & Almeida, 2024).

Universities contribute to social entrepreneurship through teaching, research, and engagement with external stakeholders. They provide opportunities for students and community partners to develop relevant knowledge and skills and access resources needed for entrepreneurial activities (Saebi et al., 2024). Academic programmes and community collaborations can also support the establishment and development of social enterprises (Pinto & Almeida, 2024). Incorporating these activities into university structures can strengthen their contribution to social and economic development (Guerrero et al., 2024).

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This study focuses on Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP), a technical university located in Perlis. It examines how the university brings together academic activities, institutional resources, external partnerships, and community participation to implement social entrepreneurship initiatives. Attention is given to the arrangements used to connect university capabilities with local socioeconomic needs. The purpose is to understand how these initiatives are implemented and how participants describe their contribution to socioeconomic development in Perlis.

Problem Statement

Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) provides a relevant setting for examining how a university implements social entrepreneurship initiatives in response to local socioeconomic needs. Through its academic expertise, institutional resources, and relationships with external stakeholders, the university can support knowledge sharing, skills development, and community-based entrepreneurial activities. However, these resources alone do not explain how initiatives are organised or how communities participate in their implementation.

Although previous research has discussed social entrepreneurship and university–community engagement in Malaysia, further examination is needed of the arrangements through which universities put these initiatives into practice. In particular, the relationship between curriculum activities, institutional support, stakeholder partnerships, and community participation remains an important area of investigation in the Perlis context.

This study therefore examines the strategies used by UniMAP to implement social entrepreneurship initiatives that support socioeconomic development in Perlis. A qualitative approach allows the study to explore participants' experiences and the institutional and community arrangements involved in implementation.

Research Objective

To examine the strategies used by Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) to implement social entrepreneurship initiatives that support socioeconomic development in Perlis.

Research Question

What strategies does Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) use to implement social entrepreneurship initiatives that support socioeconomic development in Perlis?

Significant of Study

This study contributes to academic understanding of how universities organise social entrepreneurship initiatives within a regional setting. Previous studies have examined university–community engagement in Malaysia (Azman et al., 2016; Ramli et al., 2013). The present research builds on this discussion by focusing on the implementation strategies used by UniMAP and the connections between academic activities, institutional support, external partnerships, and community participation. It also relates to discussions of universities' wider contribution to society beyond teaching and research (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000).

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For policymakers, the findings offer a context-specific account of how university resources can be connected with local development priorities. Understanding these implementation arrangements may inform decisions about support for university–community partnerships and the coordination of social entrepreneurship programmes. The study provides insights into the role of higher education institutions in addressing regional socioeconomic needs.

For university administrators and community partners, the research identifies approaches that may inform programme planning and implementation. Its findings can guide discussions about integrating social entrepreneurship into learning activities, coordinating stakeholder involvement, and providing institutional support. These insights may help participants clarify their responsibilities and strengthen collaboration.

The study also provides a basis for further research on the outcomes of university-led social entrepreneurship. Its qualitative findings describe implementation practices and participants' perspectives; they should not be treated as direct measurements of reductions in poverty or unemployment. Further outcome-focused research could examine whether these initiatives produce sustained improvements in community livelihoods and well-being.

Literature Review

Concept of Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship applies entrepreneurial approaches to activities whose central purpose is to address social needs. Financial viability remains important because it enables these activities to continue, but the social mission guides their priorities and decisions (Dees, 2001). Such initiatives operate across areas including education, healthcare, poverty reduction, and environmental protection (Mair & Martí, 2006).

Three connected features help explain this approach: innovation, sustainability, and attention to social outcomes. Innovation involves developing products, services, or organisational arrangements that respond to unmet needs (Zahra et al., 2009). Sustainability concerns the ability to maintain activities and their social purpose over time, including the resources needed to support continued operation (Yunus et al., 2010). Assessment therefore considers the social changes associated with an initiative alongside its financial performance (Nicholls, 2010).

These features provide a foundation for examining university-led initiatives. They direct attention to how universities identify community needs, organise resources, and support activities that combine entrepreneurial practice with social objectives.

The Role of Universities in Social Entrepreneurship

Universities can support social entrepreneurship by connecting learning and research with opportunities to address community needs. Training, mentorship, and access to resources can help participants develop ideas and translate them into practical activities (Tracey & Phillips, 2007). Research can also contribute knowledge that informs entrepreneurial learning and practice (Rae, 2010).

Examples discussed in the literature include Stanford University's Center for Social Innovation and the University of Oxford's Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, which illustrate

institutional involvement in social innovation and entrepreneurship (Bornstein & Davis, 2010). In Malaysia, entrepreneurship incubators at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) have been discussed as a means of supporting students' involvement in enterprise development (Shahrir et al., 2022).

These examples suggest several possible forms of university support, including educational activities, mentoring arrangements, research, and collaboration with external organisations. For the present study, the central concern is how such forms of support are organised within UniMAP and connected with community needs in Perlis.

Socioeconomic Development and Its Key Indicators

Socioeconomic development encompasses improvements in people's economic circumstances and their opportunities to lead fulfilling lives. It includes income and employment, as well as education, health, and access to essential services (Sen, 1999). Examining development therefore requires attention to both economic conditions and social well-being.

Employment provides information about access to work and participation in economic activity (Todaro & Smith, 2020). Household income offers another perspective on living conditions and the resources available to meet every day needs (World Bank, 2023). Education, healthcare access, and broader measures of quality of life complement these economic indicators (UNDP, 2022). Together, these dimensions provide a wider understanding of development than any single measure.

Malaysia's Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 places regional inequalities within the national development agenda (Economic Planning Unit Malaysia, 2021). Within this context, university-led social entrepreneurship may provide opportunities to connect academic capabilities with local priorities. Higher education institutions can contribute through knowledge sharing, research, and engagement with communities and other stakeholders (OECD, 2022).

In this study, socioeconomic development provides the context for examining UniMAP's implementation strategies. The analysis focuses on how initiatives are organised and how participants describe their contribution to local needs. It does not directly measure changes in state-level income, employment, or poverty indicators.

UniMAP's Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives

The university has been actively involved in entrepreneurial initiatives in order to support local communities, matching this with the wider aim of promoting regional socioeconomic development. By means of education, programmes aimed at boosting business activity, and various social welfare initiatives, UniMAP uses its resources, research skills, and expertise to develop sustainable answers to the problems faced by communities. A major area of emphasis is educational outreach, since UniMAP has arranged a number of training workshops and skill-development sessions aimed at empowering young people, disadvantaged groups and aspiring entrepreneurs in Perlis (UniMAP, 2022). These programmes improve digital literacy, technical skills and employability, thus helping to build a knowledge-based society. Furthermore, UniMAP's commitment goes beyond education by widening the scope of social entrepreneurship through its business empowerment programmes.

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Business empowerment schemes are an important part of UniMAP's social entrepreneurship programme. In order to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs), especially those in areas such as agriculture and traditional crafts—sectors that are important to the local economy (Rahim et al., 2023)—the university has launched programmes including microfinance support, business mentoring and entrepreneurship incubators. These initiatives not only offer financial assistance but also give entrepreneurs the business knowledge and technological skills needed to succeed in competitive markets.

In addition to promoting economic empowerment, community support initiatives deal with important social issues including poverty reduction, gender inclusivity, and social innovation. Examples of projects designed to improve the situation of marginalized communities—such as supporting women who start their own businesses, helping people gain access to digital tools, and encouraging the adoption of environmentally sustainable business models—showcase UniMAP's dedication to promoting inclusive development (Hamzah et al., 2023). The way in which UniMAP combines academic work with community service enables it to play a key role in the region's socioeconomic advancement and thus supports the university's aim of producing real and long-term benefits for society (OECD, 2022).

Furthermore, UniMAP engages in active collaboration with a range of external stakeholders such as the Perlis state government, local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and members of the industry to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its social entrepreneurship activities. Through these partnerships, resource-sharing, co-funding possibilities, and policy support are made available, thus ensuring that the university's programmes correspond with the wider regional development objectives. For example, cooperation with government agencies has allowed the university to extend its microfinance initiatives, while collaborations with NGOs have enhanced its community outreach programmes aimed at underserved groups.

Research Methodology

The study makes use of a qualitative approach based on the case study method in order to investigate the strategies that UniMAP has employed in carrying out its social entrepreneurship initiatives. A qualitative design is suitable since it makes it possible to gain a thorough understanding of the processes, the motivations, and the difficulties associated with university-led social entrepreneurship (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study method allows for a detailed look at UniMAP's initiatives within their actual context, offering rich insights into their effects on socioeconomic development in Perlis (Yin, 2022). Through adopting this approach, the study seeks to obtain detailed views from a number of key stakeholders, such as university administrators, policymakers, community leaders, and the people who have benefited from UniMAP's programmes.

Sampling and Respondents

The study uses purposive sampling in order to choose 10 important stakeholders from UniMAP and the surrounding community, thus making sure that a wide range of views on the university's social entrepreneurship activities is obtained. The respondents will comprise administrators, since it is they who are responsible for carrying out the programs and making policy decisions; faculty members, because they provide specialist knowledge and act as mentors; students, as they take an active part in social entrepreneurship projects; local business owners, since they

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might collaborate with UniMAP or gain benefits from its initiatives; community members, as they are directly affected by these efforts; and government officials, since they offer regulatory and financial support for socioeconomic programs run by the university.

The reason for choosing 10 respondents is that it provides a reasonable yet varied representation of the main stakeholders. A sample of that size gives a thorough level of qualitative insights without going beyond what is possible within the study's boundaries. The research is able to obtain detailed views on the difficulties, achievements, and sustainability of these programmes by concentrating on people who have a direct role in UniMAP's initiatives (Patton, 2020).

The study applies purposive sampling in order to select those people who were directly involved in UniMAP's social entrepreneurship initiatives or in the social enterprise activities of UniMAP. To supplement the written description, Table 1 gives an overview of the respondents' roles, the institutions they are affiliated with, and the identifiers that were assigned to them during the data analysis.

Table 1: Profile of Respondent

No.	Respondent ID	Role	Affiliation
1	R1	Administrator	UniMAP
2	R2	Faculty Member	UniMAP
3	R3	Administrator	UniMAP
4	R4	Administrator	UniMAP
5	R5	Student	UniMAP
6	R6	Faculty Member	UniMAP
7	R7	Local Business Owner	Local SME
8	R8	Governement Official	State Government
9	R9	Community Leader	Local NGO
10	R10	Student	UniMAP

As shown in Table 1, the study included a total of ten respondents coming from a variety of stakeholder groups. Most of them were connected with UniMAP, comprising three administrators (R1, R3, R4), two faculty members (R2, R6), and two students (R5, R10). Furthermore, the external stakeholders were represented by a local business owner (R7), a government official (R8), and a community leader from a local NGO (R9). This kind of diverse group was intentionally chosen in order to make sure that the data captures a broad range of insights concerning the planning, implementation, and impact of UniMAP's social entrepreneurship initiatives.

Sample Justification

In qualitative research sample size is usually decided on the basis of thematic saturation, meaning that this occurs when no further themes or insights appear as a result of the data being collected (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The present study considers that a sample of ten

respondents is enough to reach thematic saturation with regard to the implementation strategies of social entrepreneurship initiatives at Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP).

Thematic Saturation

The qualitative method enables a thorough examination of the participants' experiences and viewpoints. Throughout the interviews it became clear that the answers started to focus on major themes connected with UniMAP's social entrepreneurship programmes. The variety of insights given by the ten respondents—consisting of university administrators, faculty members, students, local business owners, community leaders, and government officials—made it possible to gain a full understanding of the strategies used by UniMAP. Since thematic saturation had been reached with this number of participants, the study was able to identify the essential aspects of the university's approach without needing a larger sample, as such a sample might result in diminishing returns regarding new information (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Stakeholder Diversity

It is important to select a wide range of stakeholders in qualitative research since this enhances the data and offers a broad perspective on the subject matter (Patton, 2020). In the present study, various stakeholders have been included—such as university administrators who are responsible for carrying out the programmes, faculty members who provide their specialist knowledge, students who take an active part in the initiatives, local business owners who work together with the university, community leaders who represent the interests of the local population, and government officials who offer regulatory support—so that the findings cover a wide variety of viewpoints. The diversity of perspectives enables a more detailed understanding of the difficulties, achievements, and effects of UniMAP's social entrepreneurship initiatives and thus results in more solid and practical insights.

To sum up, the sample of ten respondents is reasonable because of thematic saturation, which shows that this size is sufficient for identifying the key themes associated with UniMAP's social entrepreneurship initiatives. Moreover, the variety of stakeholders included guarantees thorough insights that improve the study's validity and make it more relevant to the socioeconomic situation in Perlis.

Data Collection Methods

The study uses two main methods of collecting qualitative data: holding semi-structured interviews and carrying out a review of relevant reports, strategic plans, policy documents, and earlier research.

Semi-structured interviews will be carried out with a number of stakeholders, such as administrators, faculty members, students, local business owners, members of the community, and government officials. This method enables a thorough examination of their experiences, views and insights concerning UniMAP's social entrepreneurship programmes. The flexibility afforded by semi-structured interviews means that the main topics can be addressed while at the same time allowing the respondents to go into more detail (Bryman, 2021).

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Document analysis will also be carried out on existing reports, strategic plans, policy documents and earlier research concerning UniMAP's social entrepreneurship programmes. This approach will enable the detection of patterns, trends and institutional frameworks which influence the implementation and impact of these initiatives (Bowen, 2009). The use of interviews together with document analysis will ensure a thorough understanding of UniMAP's contribution to regional socioeconomic development.

Data Analysis

The interview data were subjected to thematic analysis in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-step procedure, and the documents were examined in order to find information that supported and provided a contextual background for the themes that had emerged from the interviews. This method offered a systematic structure for identifying, analysing, and reporting the patterns and themes that occurred repeatedly in the qualitative data.

The analysis started with a stage of familiarisation in which the researchers went through the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews several times in order to get a thorough understanding of the participants' responses. Next, the initial codes were created by systematically identifying and assigning labels to the parts of the interview data that were relevant to the research question. The qualitative data analysis software was employed to help with the organisation and retrieval of the coded data.

The following step was to identify themes by looking at the original codes and grouping those that were related into wider patterns. These patterns were then turned into possible themes which would represent the main features of UniMAP's implementation of its social entrepreneurship initiatives. The themes were subsequently checked in relation to the coded extracts and the entire dataset to make certain that they were coherent, consistent, and relevant to the research objective.

When the themes had been finalised, they were defined and given names so as to clearly reflect their meaning and how they related to the research objective. The last stage was to produce the report, in which the themes identified were presented and backed up with appropriate quotations from the respondents. Further contextual information about UniMAP's social entrepreneurship initiatives and the socioeconomic situation in Perlis was obtained through document analysis.

In order to improve the credibility and consistency of the analysis, two researchers carried out the initial coding and identification of themes separately, after which they discussed the matter in order to reach agreement on their interpretations. Furthermore, the themes were reviewed and an extra point of view on the analysis was obtained from a third researcher who had specialist knowledge of qualitative research.

As a result, four main themes were found: curriculum integration, collaborative partnerships, institutional support, and community engagement. It was on the basis of these themes that the presentation and discussion of UniMAP's implementation strategies for its social entrepreneurship initiatives were carried out.

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Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study concerning social entrepreneurship initiatives at Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) are given in this section, with the text looking at how the social enterprises set up by the participants were distributed and the strategic methods used by UniMAP to promote socioeconomic development in Perlis.

Distribution of Social Enterprises Established by Participants

A look at the social enterprises set up by the participants shows a wide variety of areas of focus, this being indicative of the distinct socioeconomic situation in Perlis. The categories mentioned below were determined on the basis of the data obtained from the respondents.

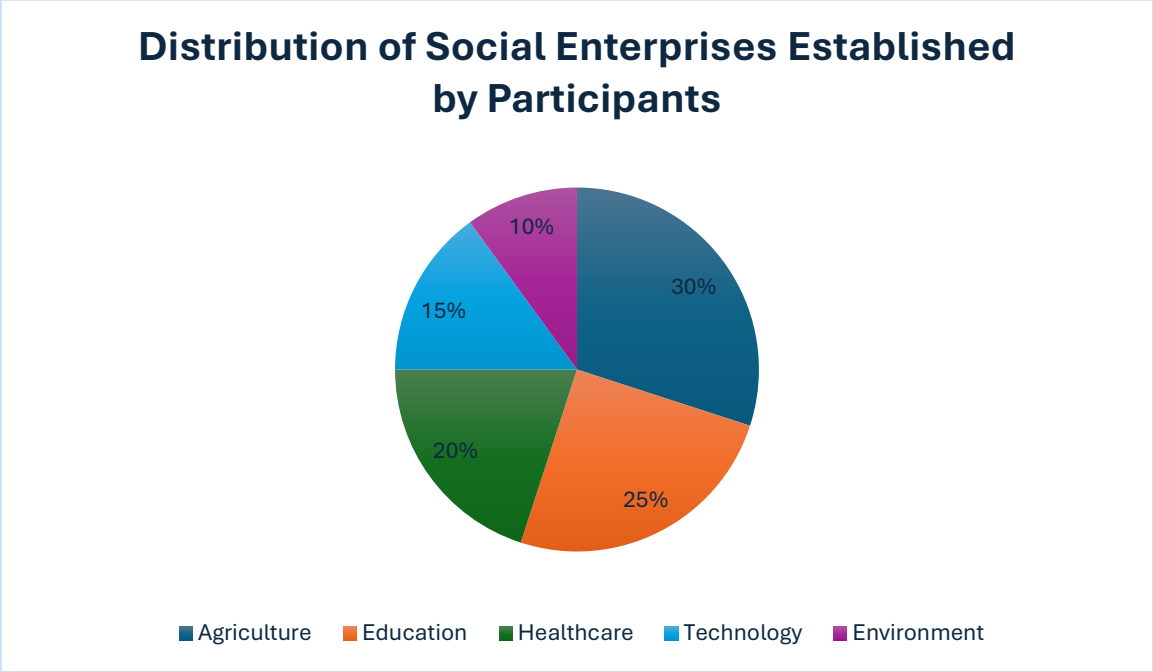


Figure 1: Distribution of Social Enterprises Established by Participants in Unimap's Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives

Figure 1 shows that the social enterprises set up by the participants are distributed across five main sectors: agriculture, education, healthcare, technology, and the environment.

Agriculture is the most important sector, making up 30% of all the enterprises. This is a sign of the importance of agriculture in the Perlis area and shows the opportunity for social entrepreneurship to deal with the sector's problems such as productivity, sustainability, and food security (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2023).

The education sector, which makes up 25 per cent, shows how committed participants are to enhancing both access to and the quality of education. The social enterprises operating in this field aim to deal with skill gaps, the scarcity of learning resources, and lack of educational accessibility, all of which are important factors in community development (Pinto & Almeida, 2024).

The healthcare sector, which accounts for 20 per cent, shows that the participants regarded it as important to improve health outcomes and access to healthcare services by means of entrepreneurial activity (World Bank, 2023).
The technology sector, which makes up 15 per cent, shows how the participants are using technological innovation to address social challenges. The fact that it focuses on this issue is in line with the global trends that stress the role of technology in achieving social impact (Guerrero et al., 2024).

The environmental sector, which makes up 10 per cent, shows a increasing emphasis on sustainability and ecological responsibility. Social enterprises in this sector promote sustainable practices that are beneficial to both the community and the environment (OECD, 2022).

The variety of social enterprises shows the different areas of focus of UniMAP's initiatives. By encouraging entrepreneurship in a number of sectors, UniMAP enables people and helps to tackle important social issues in the community. The fact that there is such diversity demonstrates the potential of social entrepreneurship to promote comprehensive socioeconomic development in Perlis.

The results indicate that providing focused support to these sectors can improve the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship projects. If UniMAP matches its resources and training with the particular needs of each sector, it will be able to increase the impact of its programmes and help promote sustainable growth in the area.

To sum up, the range of social enterprises shows the diversity of focus areas that have been developed as a result of UniMAP’s social entrepreneurship programs. This variety is a sign of a comprehensive strategy for tackling community problems, for enabling individuals, and for promoting sustainable socioeconomic development in Perlis. In the end, these initiatives strengthen UniMAP's position as a catalyst for positive change in the region.

Strategic Approaches to Social Entrepreneurship at UniMAP

The study outlines the main strategies which UniMAP has used in promoting social enterprise, in keeping with its dedication to encouraging socioeconomic development in Perlis. These strategies include curriculum integration, external collaborations, institutional support, and community engagement, and together they make up a complete framework for sustainable social entrepreneurship.

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Table 2: Strategic Approaches Supported by Respondents

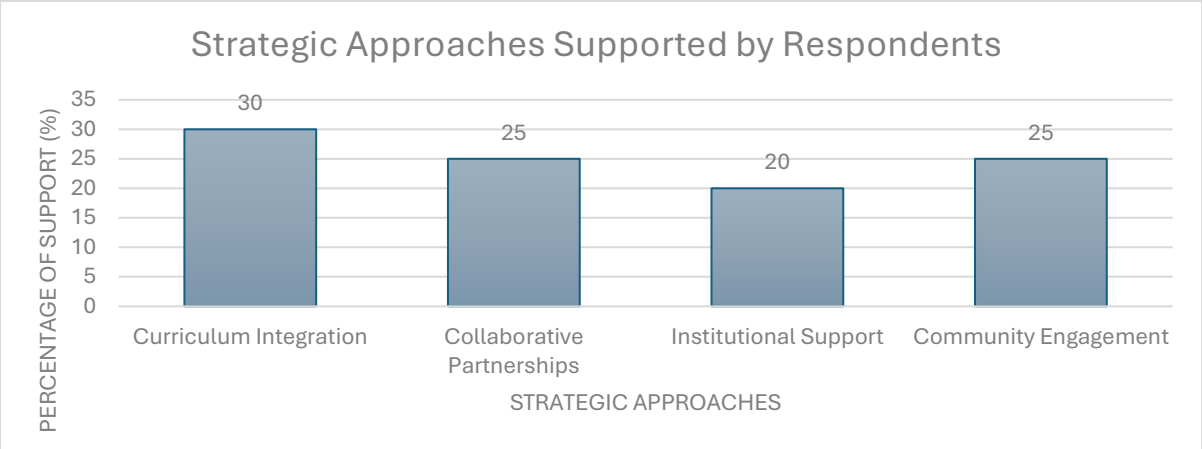


Table 2 shows that each of the ten respondents who were interviewed offered insights that corresponded to one or more of the strategic themes identified. The way the insights are distributed gives a clear account of stakeholder involvement in the four main strategies, illustrating the combined efforts behind UniMAP's social entrepreneurship initiatives.

The next sections explain each of these main strategies, starting with the way in which UniMAP incorporates social entrepreneurship into its academic curriculum.

Embedding Social Entrepreneurship in Academic Programs

UniMAP incorporates social entrepreneurship into its curriculum by using project-based learning and experiential methods, thus giving students the entrepreneurial skills and ability to solve problems. The combination of theoretical knowledge and practical application exposes students to real-world challenges and encourages them to come up with sustainable solutions. Respondents highlighted the effectiveness of this approach:

> *We don't merely treat social entrepreneurship as just a concept; instead, we include it in the student projects by requiring the students to deal with actual community problems.* (Faculty Member, R2)

> *Through its service-learning element, students are given the opportunity to work with local businesses, which helps them to develop sustainable business models.* (Student, R5)

This method helps to develop among students a creative and socially responsible attitude so that they may become effective entrepreneurs; yet in order for these initiatives to result in a wider impact in the community, UniMAP also stresses the need for strategic partnerships outside the university.

Strengthening Collaborations with Key Stakeholders

In order to improve the effect and long-term viability of its social entrepreneurship programmes, UniMAP enters into active partnerships with government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and local businesses. Through these collaborations, students and

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staff are given access to financial resources, industry expertise, and opportunities for mentorship, which enables them to develop social enterprises that are both viable and scalable. Respondents acknowledged the importance of these partnerships:

> *We have set up solid partnerships with local businesses so that students can put their ideas into practice in real situations.* (Administrator, R3)

> *Government support is essential; it is only by collaborating with state agencies that we will be able to extend our impact beyond the university.* (Government Official, R8)

By means of these collaborations, UniMAP makes sure that its initiatives stay relevant, practical, and responsive to changing socioeconomic challenges. In addition to these external partnerships, the university also strengthens its internal support systems in order to sustain entrepreneurial activities.

Providing Institutional Support through Funding and Mentorship

UniMAP promotes the development of social entrepreneurship by providing seed funding, running business incubation programs, and offering structured mentorship. This helps to enable both student entrepreneurs and community-led enterprises to achieve long-term sustainability. Respondents highlighted the significance of these support mechanisms:

> *Funding access has been a major turning point for a great many of our students who hope to set up social enterprises.* (Faculty Member, R6)

> *We also stress the importance of mentorship, which involves matching students and startups with experienced professionals in the industry to help them deal with various challenges.* (Local Business Owner, R7)

By pairing financial aid with expert advice, UniMAP enhances its entrepreneurial ecosystem and helps turn ideas into successful ventures. Having established this base, UniMAP then increases its outreach by getting actively involved with the local community.

Engaging Local Communities for Knowledge Transfer and Impact

UniMAP promotes involvement by local communities in its social entrepreneurship initiatives by organising training courses, workshops, and outreach activities. The aim of these efforts is to tackle important socioeconomic areas including the generation of employment, the development of small businesses, and the adoption of sustainability practices.

Respondents emphasized the relevance of community engagement:

> *Our programmes focus on important areas such as agriculture and small businesses, assisting local entrepreneurs in adopting innovative solutions.* (Community Leader, R9)

> *We make sure that our initiatives are impactful and relevant by involving the community in the decision-making process.* (Administrator, R4)

By adopting this approach, which is focused on the community, UniMAP strengthens its relationships with local stakeholders and makes sure that its social entrepreneurship initiatives respond to the actual needs of the community, thus helping to achieve genuine and sustainable socioeconomic development.

The key findings of the study presented in this chapter are the four strategic methods which UniMAP has used in carrying out its social entrepreneurship initiatives: curriculum integration, stakeholder collaboration, institutional support, and community engagement. Together, these strategies show UniMAP's commitment to tackling local socioeconomic challenges by means of a holistic and sustainable approach.

The evidence provided by respondents indicates that incorporating social entrepreneurship into academic courses leads to graduates who are more socially responsible, and that external partnerships help to improve resources and scalability. Further support for the entrepreneurial ecosystem is offered by institutional measures such as funding and mentorship, and active engagement with the community finally ensures that the initiatives stay based on actual real-world needs, thus contributing to long-term socioeconomic impact.

These findings together highlight the important role that universities play in promoting inclusive development by means of deliberate and strategic social entrepreneurship initiatives.

Comparative Analysis of Social Entrepreneurship Models

A comparative perspective is useful to highlight the distinctiveness of UniMAP's social entrepreneurship model. By comparing UniMAP with another Malaysian higher education institution, such as Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), it is possible to see how different institutional approaches align with their respective socio-economic contexts. While UiTM's initiatives are largely geared towards urban entrepreneurship through structured incubator programmes, UniMAP's strategies are rooted in addressing rural community needs in Perlis. This comparison provides valuable insight into how context-specific approaches can shape the design, implementation, and impact of social entrepreneurship initiatives.

UiTML: Entrepreneur Incubator Model

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) makes use of a robust incubator-oriented approach in promoting social entrepreneurship, especially in urban areas. The incubators offer students thorough support by giving them access to funding, mentorship, and special training courses in order that student entrepreneurs may turn their innovative ideas into viable businesses. This method focuses on structured business development, a feature that is appropriate for urban areas since markets and resources are more easily available there, thus allowing a greater variety of businesses to grow (Shahrir et al., 2022).

UniMAP: Community-Based Rural Development Model

On the other hand, Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) has arranged its social entrepreneurship programmes with a view to tackling the particular socioeconomic problems experienced by rural communities in Perlis. The university incorporates social entrepreneurship into its academic programme by means of project-based learning that centres on actual community issues. As a result, students not only acquire entrepreneurial skills but also gain a

thorough understanding of the local situation, which allows them to develop solutions that are appropriate and have a real impact on people in rural areas (Hamzah et al., 2023).

Unique Contributions of UniMAP to Rural Development

The fact that UniMAP is committed to rural development is shown by the various programmes it has designed for key areas including agriculture, education, and healthcare. By providing digital literacy and training in technical skills to young people and to individuals from low-income backgrounds, UniMAP improves the employability of the local workforce (Rahim et al., 2023). Furthermore, its efforts to promote business development—such as offering microfinance and providing mentoring to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—help to strengthen the local industries which are important to the economy of Perlis.

The university enhances its involvement in the community by means of collaborative projects which encourage social innovation and inclusivity. Because of this community-focused method, the university's initiatives are able to be sustained and match the hopes of the local population, thus further solidifying UniMAP's position as a catalyst for socioeconomic change in Perlis (Economic Planning Unit Malaysia, 2021).

In summary, although both universities play a role in the field of social entrepreneurship in Malaysia, UniMAP is distinguished by its emphasis on rural development and by incorporating social entrepreneurship into its academic programmes. This approach doesn't only tackle the immediate challenges faced by communities but also promotes long-term sustainable growth in underdeveloped areas, thus underscoring the important part that higher education institutions can play in achieving socioeconomic advancement in those regions.

Limitations

The study points out a number of limitations which might influence the results and their practical application. First of all, although the sample of ten respondents offers a variety of viewpoints, the number is relatively small and therefore may not fully represent the range of experiences and insights from all the parties taking part in UniMAP’s social entrepreneurship programmes. This limitation might prevent a thorough understanding of the different strategies used and their effectiveness in various situations both within the university and in the wider community.

Moreover, since the study is based on data obtained from interviews involving self-reporting, there is a possibility of bias. The respondents might have given answers that were socially desirable or might have been affected by the roles they held at the university, thereby distorting the results. This kind of bias could impact the genuine nature of the insights offered, since the participants might highlight the positive sides of the initiatives while minimizing the difficulties or faults.

Finally, the extent to which the findings can be applied is restricted because of the particular circumstances at UniMAP and the distinct socioeconomic situation in Perlis. Although the study provides useful insights into the implementation of social entrepreneurship projects at this specific institution, its results might not be directly transferable to other universities or to areas that have different socioeconomic conditions. It would be advantageous for future research to involve larger sample sizes, carry out longitudinal studies, and include comparative

analyses among different institutions in order to improve the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

Conclusion

The strategic promotion of social entrepreneurship at UniMAP is based on a thorough four-point framework which includes curriculum integration, partnership engagement, institutional support, and community involvement. This set of interrelated elements strengthens the university's standing not only as a centre of higher education but also as an active force for socioeconomic change in Perlis.

A major advantage of the way UniMAP operates is that it intentionally incorporates social entrepreneurship into its academic programme. Through hands-on learning, students are given the opportunity to develop practical skills and an entrepreneurial mindset, which enables them to deal with actual real-world problems. At the same time, the university works with government agencies and members of the industry to obtain funding, policy support and technical advice, thus making sure that the initiatives taken by the students are both feasible and can be expanded. Just as important is the creation of organised forms of support, such as incubators and mentorship schemes, which offer the necessary facilities for students to build up and keep going with their social enterprises. UniMAP also has a strong dedication to getting involved with the community; by including local stakeholders in the decision-making processes and designing its programmes to meet their needs, the university ensures that its activities stay relevant, inclusive and have a real impact.

In addition to these basic strategies, UniMAP also makes use of digital tools, e-commerce platforms, and virtual training in order to increase the reach of its programmes. Through this integration of technology, the institution is able to expand its activities and extend its impact beyond the regional area. By doing this, UniMAP puts itself in line with national development policies such as the Malaysia MADANI agenda and at the same time makes a contribution to the wider international objectives set out in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Although the study is specific to UniMAP, the insights it has produced provide a model which can be reproduced by other higher education institutions, especially those functioning in underserved or rural areas. The university's experience shows that it is possible to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and community development through proper strategic alignment, thus making a significant contribution to sustainable regional growth.

Yet the research has its limitations. Since it mainly used qualitative methods—which, although they offer a great deal of narrative depth—may not fully reflect the long-term or measurable effects of UniMAP's initiatives, further research could make use of longitudinal tracking, comparative case studies, or mixed-method approaches in order to verify and enhance the findings.

To sum up, UniMAP demonstrates the way in which universities can go beyond their traditional functions and instead act as catalysts for change. By means of socially responsive education, collaborations with a range of sectors, and practices rooted in the community, UniMAP shows the potential for higher education to make a transformative contribution to both the advancement of knowledge and to social well-being. This study adds to the existing discussion

on university-led social entrepreneurship and provides useful insights for institutions that wish to incorporate innovation and impact into their missions.

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