Assessing Employability Skills Acquired Through Digital Entrepreneurship Education: A Case Study of Entrepreneurship Week (EntrepWeek)

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ABSTRACT
This research evaluates the impact of digital entrepreneurship education on the employability skills of students participating in Entrepreneurship Week (EntrepWeek) at the Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Utilizing a qualitative research approach, the study investigates the experiences and skill development of 30 students enrolled in the ENTR 3303 entrepreneurship course during the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. The LinkedIn profiles of these students were analyzed to identify a total of 25 employability skills, categorized into hard skills, soft skills, and a combination of both. The findings reveal that EntrepWeek effectively enhances students' competencies in digital marketing, entrepreneurship, financial reporting, communication, leadership, and customer service, demonstrating the significant role of digital platforms in bridging the gap between academic learning and the demands of the digital business era.

Keywords: *Digital Entrepreneurship, Employability Skills, Entrepreneurship Education, Digital Marketing, Soft Skills, Hard Skills, Higher Education*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship Week (EntrepWeek) at Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences (KENMS), International Islamic University Malaysia, aims to foster entrepreneurship among students. Initially established as a physical bazaar in 2013, the event adapted to a hybrid format, incorporating both physical and online elements during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This evolution has allowed EntrepWeek to stay relevant and accessible, meeting the needs of students in a rapidly changing environment.

With these changes, EntrepWeek is designed with clear objectives to empower KENMS entrepreneurship students. It provides a practical platform for students to showcase and market their entrepreneurial ventures through an online bazaar. This setup allows students to gain real-time learning experiences and develop essential skills in areas such as social media advertising, business planning, and financial statements. These modules not only contribute to their academic progress in KENMS' Entrepreneurship courses but also equip them with practical skills vital for entrepreneurial success (Suib et al, 2024).

On the other hand, the employability of fresh graduates, even from reputable universities, remains a significant concern (Rajaendram & Menon, 2022). To address this issue and promote an entrepreneurial mindset, Malaysia has mandated compulsory entrepreneurship courses for all university students, as outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education). This initiative aims to provide graduates with the skills necessary for financial independence and success, particularly when traditional employment opportunities are scarce.

In this context, EntrepWeek plays a crucial role by proactively identifying and addressing key challenges such as the lack of employability skills and limited work experience. By tackling these obstacles, EntrepWeek seeks to create an environment that supports and nurtures entrepreneurial growth and employability skills among students via its digital module.

The objective of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of digital entrepreneurship modules in enhancing the employability skills of students enrolled in the ENTR 3303 entrepreneurship course during EntrepWeek at the Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. This study aims to assess how these modules contribute to the development of practical skills and competencies necessary for students to succeed in the job market and entrepreneurial ventures. By focusing on the impact of digital marketing tools, the research seeks to provide insights into their role in improving students' readiness for employment and their ability to navigate the complexities of the business world.

THE ROLE DIGITAL PLATFORM IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

In recent years, the integration of digital technologies into educational frameworks has profoundly influenced the way entrepreneurial skills are taught and developed. Primario, Rippa, and Secundo (2022) emphasized that incorporating digital tools into online entrepreneurship courses substantially boosts students' confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities and their propensity to engage in entrepreneurial activities. This revelation underscores the importance of revamping educational strategies to better align with the digital age.

The role of digital platforms extends beyond the confines of traditional education, serving as a nexus connecting the realms of science, education, and entrepreneurship. Dubko (2021) highlighted that these platforms are not just educational tools but catalysts for innovation, aiding young, enterprising individuals in nurturing their ventures and enhancing the vitality of small business ecosystems. Similarly, Linzalone, Schiuma, and Ammirato (2020) pointed out that while digital platforms offer a promising avenue for bridging the gap between academia and the corporate sector, the success of such endeavors hinges on meticulous design and execution to facilitate effective knowledge exchange and stakeholder engagement. In the context of specific applications, Launchpad Albania stands out as a prime example of a digital platform's potential to foster entrepreneurship among university students. Pano and Gjika (2020) noted that this platform not only encourages students to conceive innovative business ideas but also plays a pivotal role in connecting them with like-minded individuals and resources necessary for crafting detailed business plans. This initiative underscores the digital platform's capacity to mold the entrepreneurial landscape within academic settings.

Furthermore, the significance of digital platforms extends to the broader sphere of lifelong learning, especially in preparing students for the ever-evolving technological landscape and the uncertainties of the job market. Hamburg (2021) underscored the necessity of integrating digital learning and entrepreneurship education, ensuring that students are well-equipped to navigate and thrive in a labor market that is increasingly reliant on technological proficiency and innovation.

DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ENHANCING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS
In the dynamic landscape of the modern job market, digital entrepreneurship emerges as a powerful force in enhancing employability skills, bridging the gap between traditional education and the demands of the digital business era. The intersection of innovative training methodologies and digital platforms is reshaping the way employability skills are developed and valued.

Pardo-Garcia and Barac (2020) have illuminated the profound impact of innovative training itineraries in higher education, particularly in fostering creativity and entrepreneurship. These training programs, deeply rooted in sustainable development principles, are instrumental in equipping students with the skills necessary to navigate and thrive in the contemporary job market. The emphasis on creative problem-solving and sustainable practices underscores a forward-thinking approach to education, aligning closely with the evolving needs of industries. Further emphasizing the role of digital platforms in skill development, Vučeković, Medić, and Marković (2020) highlighted the transformative potential of e-learning in honing entrepreneurs' competencies. E-learning platforms are not merely informational repositories but are dynamic environments where young individuals can acquire and refine digital skills, thereby enhancing their prospects in the digital business landscape. This evolution in learning modalities signifies a shift towards more accessible, flexible, and relevant educational experiences.

Furthermore, echoing the sentiments of the transformative power of e-learning, Mittal and Raghuvaran (2021) pointed out the significant role these courses play in mediating and enhancing students' employability. By focusing on sustainability-specific entrepreneurship skills, e-learning courses align educational outcomes with the needs of a rapidly evolving job market, ensuring that learners are well-equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of

the future. In the quest to define the essential skills for the digital business era, Suarta and Suwintana (2021) proposed a new framework that integrates digital generic skills with personal attributes. This framework goes beyond technical prowess, emphasizing the importance of honesty, integrity, and strong work ethics. Such a holistic approach recognizes that the fabric of employability in the digital age is woven not only with technical skills but also with the threads of personal character and ethical conduct.

THE OVERVIEW OF ENTREPWEEK'S MODULES

Integrating university training programs into core curricula effectively enhances students' entrepreneurial skills and transversal employability competencies, demonstrating the value of such initiatives (Laguna-Sánchez et al, 2019). While digital entrepreneurship education boosts undergraduates' soft skills, particularly in IT, leadership skills show the least improvement (Zainal & Yong, 2020). The implementation of a digital entrepreneurship learning model has proven effective in inspiring students to start IT-based businesses, fostering an entrepreneurial spirit and enhancing 21st-century literacy skills (Erdisna, Ridwan, & Syahputra, 2022).

EntrepWeek's training modules cover a comprehensive range of skills essential for entrepreneurial success. These modules significantly impact the assessment of KENMS entrepreneurship students, forming a major part of their evaluation. They are also used to educate public entrepreneurs in need through training sessions.

The program begins with a module on digital marketing, teaching students how to design business advertisements using CANVA. This hands-on training emphasizes creating visually appealing and effective promotional materials, crucial for a compelling brand image. Another essential aspect of starting a business is understanding the legal registration process. EntrepWeek collaborates with Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia (SSM) to train participants in business registration, ensuring they are well-versed in legal compliance and ethical practices (Suib et al, 2024).

A strong digital presence is vital for entrepreneurial ventures. EntrepWeek offers training on content creation through Blogger at www.entrepweek.com, teaching participants to establish a professional online presence. Additionally, training on scheduling business advertisements via Facebook Meta Business equips participants with skills for effective advertising campaigns on social media platforms.

The program also includes modules on dynamic social media marketing using Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook Page Marketing, helping participants create engaging content and build a robust online presence. Brand identity is emphasized through a module on brand logo and product labeling, focusing on visual elements that enhance brand recognition.

Further, EntrepWeek covers multimedia proficiency with video editing using CAPCUT, financial management through Financial Management in Excel, Operation Management, Human Resource Management and the art of Business Pitching, culminating in a competitive Business Pitching Competition. Business planning is integral, with modules on Business Model Canvas, Financial Management and Business Plan guiding participants in developing sustainable business concepts (Suib et al, 2024).

Recognizing social impact potential, EntrepWeek includes a module on Social Enterprise, promoting a holistic entrepreneurial approach that considers societal needs. Effective written communication is addressed with a Copywriting module via ChatGPT. Finally, collaborating with the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), EntrepWeek provides insights into leveraging digital platforms for e-commerce through the Go-Ecommerce Portal module (Suib et al, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

This research investigates the impact of digital marketing platforms on skill development in entrepreneurship education of EntrepWeek. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study examines the experiences and skills of students, focusing on the influence of EntrepWeek's modules within a real educational context. The target group consists of 30 students enrolled in the ENTR 3303 entrepreneurship course during the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year at the Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The study analyzes these students' LinkedIn profiles to assess the employability skills developed through their real business projects during EntrepWeek.

Data collection involves web scraping the students' LinkedIn profiles, and coding for hard and soft skills as shown in Table 1. Analyzing these profiles further enriches the data, highlighting how students display their digital marketing and entrepreneurial skills on a professional platform. The researcher evaluates the skill listings on LinkedIn to understand how academic skills are translated into the professional realm.

Data analysis is conducted using ATLAS.ti software, which organizes and interprets the extensive qualitative data collected. This analysis identifies patterns and themes, focusing on how EntrepWeek's real business projects influence students' employability skills. The process is thorough, ensuring a deep and meaningful interpretation of the data in line with the study's objectives.

Ethical considerations are a top priority. Participants are fully informed about the study's nature and their rights, and their privacy is protected by replacing real names with unique nicknames to maintain anonymity. The study's credibility is enhanced through the use of multiple data sources and a consistent approach to data collection and analysis. This triangulation ensures the findings are robust and reliable, offering valuable insights into the intersection of digital marketing and entrepreneurship education.

RESEARCH FINDINGS
The Overview of Codes and Its Categories
This research successfully evaluates the LinkedIn profiles of 30 students, focusing specifically on their skills sections. Across these profiles, a total of 25 employability skills were identified. These skills are categorized into three groups: hard skills (HS), soft skills (SS), and a combination of hard and soft skills (HSS), as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Categorization of Employability Skills Codes Identified from EntrepWeek Participants' LinkedIn Profiles

Category 1: Hard Skills (HS)	Category 2: Soft Skills (SS)	Category 3: Hard and Soft Skills (HSS)
Administration	Communication	
Advertising	Customer Service	
Analytical	Human Resource	
Canva	Leadership	
Copywriting	Presentation	
Customer Service	Problem-Solving	
Design	Sales	
Digital Marketing	Team Management	
Entrepreneurship	Teamwork	
Financial Reporting	Time Management	

Human Resource	
Marketing	
Microsoft Excel	
Operation	
Sales	
Social Media	
Video Editing	

Source: Analysis derived from Atlas.ti

Category 1, Hard Skills (HS), includes technical abilities essential for specific job tasks. This category lists a variety of skills such as Administration, Advertising, Analytical, Canva, Copywriting, Customer Service, Design, Digital Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Financial Reporting, Human Resource, Marketing, Microsoft Excel, Operation, Sales, Social Media, and Video Editing. These skills are crucial for performing specific business-related tasks and technical functions.

Category 2, Soft Skills (SS), focuses on interpersonal and personal attributes that facilitate effective interaction and collaboration in the workplace. Skills in this category include Communication, Customer Service, Human Resource, Leadership, Presentation, Problem-Solving, Sales, Team Management, Teamwork, and Time Management. These skills are vital for managing relationships, leading teams, and ensuring efficient personal and group productivity.

Category 3, Hard and Soft Skills (HSS), comprises skills that blend technical expertise with interpersonal capabilities. The skills listed in this category are Customer Service, Human Resource, and Sales. These hybrid skills reflect the need for technical knowledge combined with the ability to interact effectively with customers and manage human resources.

Frequencies of Codes and Categories
This research results continue with the number of codes for each category and its associated skills. Table 2 offers a detailed breakdown of the various employability skills students acquired during EntrepWeek, classified into three main groups: Hard Skills (HS), Soft Skills (SS), and a combination of Hard and Soft Skills (HSS).

Table 2: Frequency of Employability Skills Codes from EntrepWeek Participants' LinkedIn Profiles

Category and Skills	Total Codes
Category 1: Hard Skills (HS)	**175**
Administration	31
Advertising	2
Analytical	1
Canva	6
Copywriting	1
Design	2
Digital Marketing	32
Entrepreneurship	32
Financial Reporting	29
Marketing	5
Microsoft Excel	1

Operation	27
Social Media	5
Video Editing	1
Category 2: Soft Skills	**39**
Communication	11
Leadership	8
Presentation	4
Problem-Solving	2
Team Management	3
Teamwork	3
Time Management	5
Category 3: Hard and Soft Skills (HSS)	**71**
Customer Service	8
Human Resource	31
Sales	32

Source: Analysis derived from Atlas.ti

Category 1, Hard Skills (HS), includes specific, technical skills directly related to performing job tasks. A total of 175 codes were identified in this category. Among the hard skills, administration was coded 31 times, highlighting its importance and frequency. Digital marketing and entrepreneurship both had 32 codes each, indicating a strong focus on these areas. Financial reporting was also significant with 29 codes. Other hard skills noted include operations with 27 codes, Canva with 6 codes, marketing with 5 codes, social media with 5 codes, and lesser frequencies for advertising, analytical skills, copywriting, design, Microsoft Excel, and video editing.

Category 2, Soft Skills, encompasses interpersonal and personal skills that are crucial for workplace success. A total of 39 codes were identified in this category. Communication skills were the most frequently coded soft skill, with 11 codes. Leadership followed with 8 codes, indicating its critical role in entrepreneurship. Presentation skills received 4 codes, while problem-solving had 2 codes. Team management and teamwork both had 3 codes each, emphasizing the importance of collaboration. Time management was also highlighted with 5 codes, underscoring the need for effective time use in entrepreneurial activities.

Category 3, Hard and Soft Skills (HSS), includes skills that overlap between technical and interpersonal domains. A total of 71 codes were identified in this category. Human resource skills were the most frequently coded, with 31 codes, reflecting their dual nature in technical and interpersonal contexts. Sales skills followed closely with 32 codes, illustrating their critical role in business ventures. Customer service skills were also significant with 8 codes, highlighting the importance of maintaining good customer relations in entrepreneurial success.

Top Skills for Each Category
Figure 1 visualizes the most prominent hard skills gained by students during EntrepWeek, as identified from their LinkedIn profiles. This diagram illustrates the flow and frequency of each skill, providing a clear representation of the emphasis placed on various technical competencies within the EntrepWeek program.
Figure 1: Top 5 Hard Skills Acquired from EntrepWeek
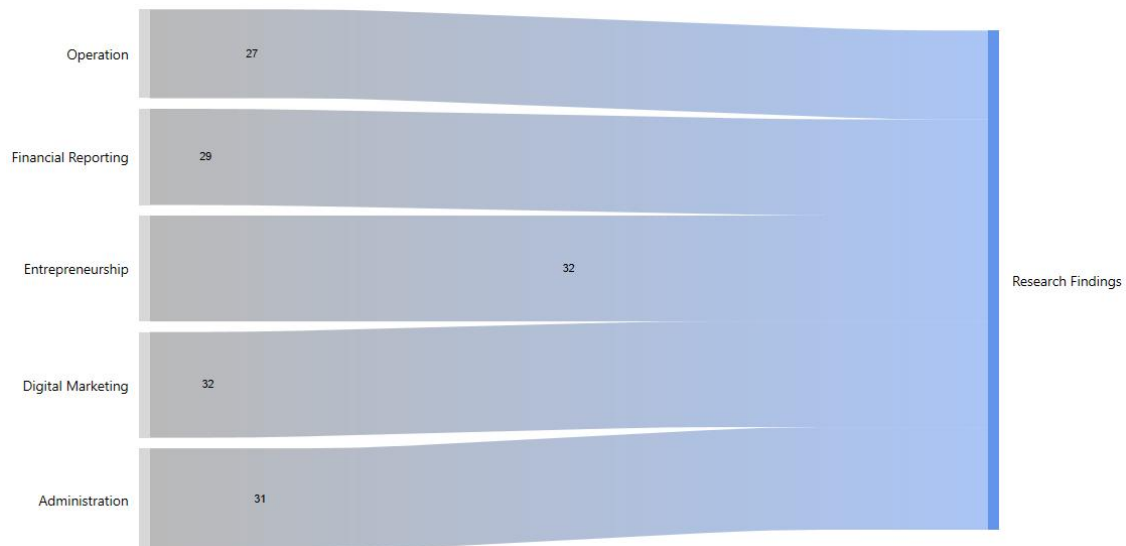
Source: Analysis and Diagram derived from Atlas.ti

The first skill highlighted is Operation, with 27 codes. This skill involves the management and oversight of business operations, ensuring that all processes within a business run smoothly and efficiently that connects with the overall business operation modules in EntrepWeek. The frequency of this skill underscores its importance in the practical management of entrepreneurial activities.

Financial Reporting is the second skill, identified with 29 codes. This skill pertains to the preparation and analysis of financial statements and reports in EntrepWeek in order to complete business plan, which are crucial for tracking a business's financial health and making informed decisions. The significant number of codes for financial reporting indicates a strong emphasis on financial literacy and accountability in the curriculum.

The third skill, Entrepreneurship, is prominently featured with 32 codes. This skill emphasizes the ability to start, develop, and manage new business ventures. The high frequency of entrepreneurship codes reflects the core objective of EntrepWeek to instill entrepreneurial spirit and capabilities in students.

Similarly, Digital Marketing also appears with 32 codes, highlighting its critical role in modern business practices. This skill focuses on the use of digital channels to promote products and services. The equal emphasis on digital marketing and entrepreneurship indicates the program's recognition of the importance of online presence and digital strategies in today's business environment.

Lastly, Administration is represented with 31 codes, covering the organizational and administrative tasks necessary for running a business. The high number of codes for this skill suggests that administrative efficiency is vital for business success, reinforcing the need for students to be proficient in these tasks.

Figure 2: Figure 2: Top 3 Soft Skills Developed from EntrepWeek
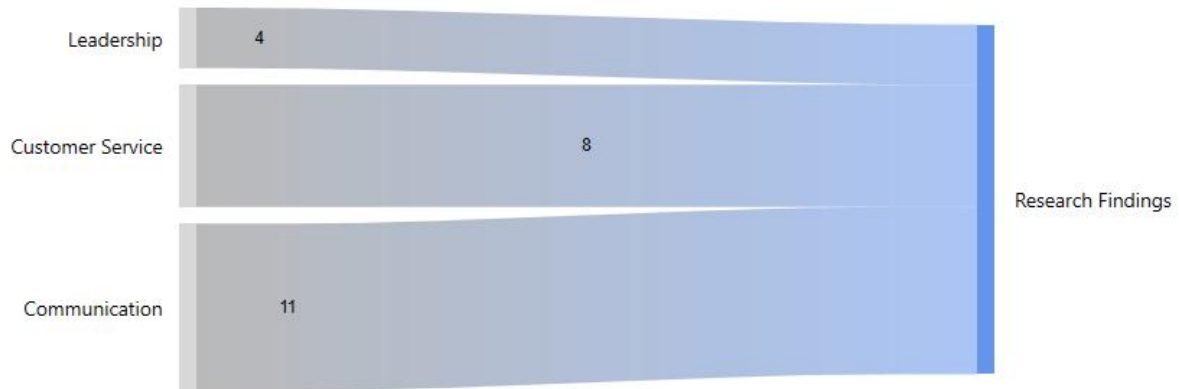
For Soft Skills, Figure 2 visualizes the three most prominent soft skills gained by students during EntrepWeek, based on their LinkedIn profiles. The diagram illustrates the flow and frequency of each soft skill, providing insights into the emphasis placed on interpersonal and personal competencies within the EntrepWeek program.
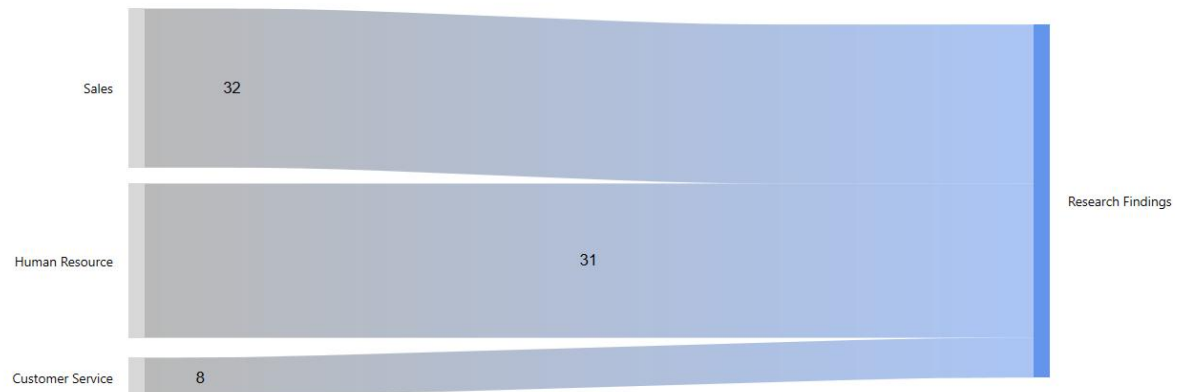
The first skill highlighted is Leadership, with 4 codes. This skill involves the ability to guide, inspire, and manage teams effectively. The presence of leadership, though less frequent compared to other skills, indicates its significance in fostering the ability to lead and make strategic decisions in entrepreneurial settings.

Customer Service is the second skill, represented with 8 codes. This skill is crucial for managing customer interactions, ensuring customer satisfaction, and maintaining good client relationships. The emphasis on customer service underscores its importance in building a successful business, highlighting the need for students to develop strong customer-oriented skills.

The third skill, Communication, is the most frequently coded with 11 entries. This skill pertains to the ability to convey information clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing. Effective communication is essential for all aspects of business operations, from team collaboration to client negotiations. The high frequency of communication codes reflects its critical role in the success of entrepreneurial ventures.

Certain skills fall into the category of both hard and soft skills, and their frequencies are depicted in Figure 3. This figure highlights the primary skills that merge technical (hard) and interpersonal (soft) elements, as identified from the LinkedIn profiles of EntrepWeek participants. The diagram illustrates the distribution and occurrence of each skill, offering a clear view of the blended competencies that the EntrepWeek program emphasizes.

Figure 3: Key Hard and Soft Skills Developed from EntrepWeek

Source: Analysis and Diagram derived from Atlas.ti

The first skill highlighted is Sales, with 32 codes. This skill involves both technical knowledge of sales strategies and the interpersonal ability to engage and persuade customers. The high frequency of sales codes indicates its critical importance in entrepreneurial success, emphasizing the need for students to master sales techniques and customer interaction.

Human Resource is the second skill, represented with 31 codes. This skill encompasses the management of employee relations, recruitment, and organizational development, requiring both administrative expertise and strong interpersonal skills. The significant number of human resource codes reflects the importance of effective people management and organizational behavior in business operations.

The third skill, Customer Service, appears with 8 codes. This skill is crucial for managing customer interactions, ensuring satisfaction, and maintaining positive client relationships. The dual nature of customer service as both a technical and interpersonal skill underscores its vital role in business success, highlighting the need for students to be adept in handling customer-related issues effectively.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION
The findings of this research highlight the significant impact of digital entrepreneurship education, particularly through the EntrepWeek modules at the Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences (KENMS), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The analysis of LinkedIn profiles revealed a comprehensive development of both hard and soft skills among the participating students, demonstrating the efficacy of integrating digital tools and platforms in entrepreneurship education.

Enhancing Hard Skills
The prominent hard skills identified include digital marketing, entrepreneurship, financial reporting, and operations. The high frequency of digital marketing and entrepreneurship codes reflects the program's strong emphasis on these critical areas. Students gained valuable hands-on experience in designing business advertisements using Canva, planning and executing social media campaigns, and utilizing digital tools for business operations. The training on financial reporting and business planning has equipped students with essential skills to manage and analyze financial data, a crucial competency for any business venture. These findings are consistent with the literature, which underscores the importance of

practical, tech-savvy training in modern entrepreneurship education (Vučeković, Medić, & Marković, 2020).

Developing Soft Skills

The soft skills of communication, leadership, and customer service were also notably enhanced through the EntrepWeek modules. Effective communication, the most frequently coded soft skill, is vital for successful business operations and team collaboration. Leadership skills, though less frequently coded, are essential for guiding and managing teams, a crucial aspect of entrepreneurial success. Customer service skills, highlighted by the training modules, underscore the importance of maintaining positive client relationships and ensuring customer satisfaction. This aligns with existing research indicating that e-learning and digital platforms can significantly improve interpersonal skills critical for business success (Mittal & Raghuvaran, 2021).

The Role of Blended Skills

The study also identified skills that blend both hard and soft elements, such as sales and human resource management. The high frequency of sales codes indicates the importance of mastering sales strategies and customer engagement. Human resource skills, involving both administrative tasks and interpersonal management, reflect the need for a balanced skill set in business. These blended skills are essential for holistic entrepreneurial development, as they integrate technical knowledge with interpersonal competencies.

Addressing Employability Concerns

The employability of fresh graduates remains a significant concern, and this research demonstrates how targeted entrepreneurship education can address this issue. By providing practical, real-world experiences through EntrepWeek, students are better prepared to navigate the complexities of the job market. The findings support the mandate outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education), which emphasizes the need for compulsory entrepreneurship courses to enhance graduates' financial independence and employability.

Implications for Future Education Strategies

The success of EntrepWeek in developing essential employability skills suggests that integrating digital entrepreneurship modules into university curricula can bridge the gap between academic learning and industry demands. The use of digital platforms not only makes education more accessible and flexible but also aligns it with the technological advancements shaping the modern business landscape. Future educational strategies should continue to incorporate innovative digital tools and methodologies to ensure that students are well-equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of the digital business era.

Limitations and Future Research

While this research provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of digital entrepreneurship education, it is limited by its focus on a single program within one academic institution. Future research could expand the scope by including multiple universities and programs to validate these findings. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking the long-term career outcomes of participants would provide deeper insights into the sustained impact of such educational initiatives.

In conclusion, the integration of digital entrepreneurship education through initiatives like EntrepWeek at IIUM significantly enhances students' employability skills. This approach not

only prepares students for the current job market but also fosters a proactive and innovative mindset essential for future business leaders.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. What is the primary aim of EntrepWeek at the Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences (KENMS) International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)?
2. How does the study assess the impact of digital entrepreneurship education on employability skills?
3. What are some of the key modules included in EntrepWeek, and how do they contribute to students' skill development?
4. What are the findings regarding the types of employability skills developed through EntrepWeek, as observed from the students' LinkedIn profiles?
5. What are the broader implications of integrating digital entrepreneurship education into university curricula, as suggested by the research findings?

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APPENDIX

Appendix I: LinkedIn Web Scraping and Coding Process in Atlas.ti