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The Relationship Between Educational Support And Entrepreneurial Intentions in Malaysian Higher Learning Institution

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Abstract

A study was conducted to determine the relationship between educational support and entrepreneurial intention of MARA Professional College students. The psychological model based on Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour was used to identify the factors influencing the entrepreneurial intention of these students. The study analyzes the relationship between educational support towards entrepreneurial intention. Data were collected via questionnaire from 183 students of three different programmes offered in MARA Professional Colleges. The study utilized correlation and regression statistics to analyse the data. The finding of the survey shows that there is a significant relationship between attitudinal factor($r=0.5324$), behavioural factor ($r=0.5668$) and educational support($r=0.6241$) towards entrepreneurial intention. Educational support contributed **40.8%** to attitudinal factor and **57.6%** to behavioural factor. All three factors (attitudinal, behavioural and educational support) contribute **43.3%** towards entrepreneurial intention among MARA Professional College. It is suggested educational support through professional education in these colleges is an efficient way of obtaining necessary knowledge about entrepreneurship. The result of the study has valuable implications for policy makers in Higher Education Division, college administrators and educators.

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurial education has primarily occurred in Mara Professional College Malaysia. Students from various academic programmes are educated in the foundations of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes (Autio *et al* 1997; Gatewood *et al.*, 2002; Hisrich, Langan-Fox & Grant, 2007; Mumtaz *et.al.*, 2010). Significant amount of money have been spent to design a viable entrepreneurship education for the students enrolling to these colleges. The current situation is that after 3 years of following business and entrepreneurship based programmes, the students' interest in pursuing self-employment seemed to dissipate (Salmah *et.al* 2007; Zuraidah 2010 & Mumtaz *et al* 2010). However, it is unknown whether contextual founding conditions or rather personality traits that drive students' intention to self-employment . This factors mentioned above will be useful to policy makers to design effective programmes (Autio *et al* 1997). Further; none of the studies in Malaysia have established the relationship between the variables (educational support , attitudinal factors, behavioural factors) demonstrating a significant gap in knowledge.

Due to this current situation, there is a desire to address the following research questions :

- i. Does educational support contribute towards attitudinal factors (personality traits, locus of control, curiosity) to be an entrepreneur.
- ii. Does educational support contribute towards behavioural factors (risk taking and creativity) to be an entrepreneur.
- iii. Does attitudinal, behavioural and educational support contribute towards intention to be an entrepreneur.

2. Literature Review

An intention is an anticipated outcome that guided by planned actions. The theory of planned behaviour is linked between attitudes and behaviours (Ajzen 1991). Intentions predict deliberate behaviours because behaviour can be planned. Intention is assumed to take hold of emotional factors that influence behaviour and indicate one's effort to try to perform intentional behaviour. In the context of entrepreneurship, intention is identified as the important property for establishing an organisation (Kantz & Gartner 1988) and as a predictor of new reliable enterprise (Krueger 2000).

Many studies on college students' intention to be entrepreneurs have been conducted. Christian (2000) studied on Batakese students' intention to be entrepreneurs and found that a number of 65% respondent had intention to be entrepreneurs. Another study on Balinese students' intention found that out of 105 respondents, as much as 39.5% stated to intend to be an entrepreneur and as much as 35% stated to desire to be entrepreneurs (Lie 2004). Study by Christine (2004) on Chinese students' intention to be entrepreneurs found that out of 105 respondents, 33.66% stated to intend to be entrepreneurs and 13.86% stated to desire to be entrepreneurs. Similar study done by Gerald (2006) on Javanese students' intention to be entrepreneurs found that out of 194 respondents, as much as 30.4% stated to intend to be entrepreneurs and 22% stated to desire to be entrepreneurs.

The approaches of entrepreneurial intention studies focus on personal characteristics (risk-taking, propensity, tolerance for ambiguity, internal locus of control, innovativeness and independence) and motivational factors (love for money, desire for security and desire for status), rather than the differences in contextual factors (Ang and Hong 2000; Henderson and Robertson 2000; Wang and Wong 2004).

Enterprise education should develop entrepreneurial people and aspirations by equipping individuals with the appropriate knowledge and skills to initiate and sustain enterprises (Gatewood et al., 2002). There is a great variety in entrepreneurial education scope and structure among higher education in Malaysia. Entrepreneurship is likely to be useless unless the skill is developed through education and experience (KF, 2007; Hisrich, Langan-Fox & Grant, 2007).

Personality traits are becoming popular as an explanation of entrepreneurial behaviours and intentions. Personality traits describe as constructs to explain regularities in people behaviour. Contemporary theorist identifies five fundamental personality dimensions which are extroversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience. Individuals who have a strong need to achieve are among those who want to solve problems themselves, set targets and strive for these targets through their own efforts, demonstrate a higher performance in challenging tasks and are innovative in the sense of looking for new and better ways to improve their performance (Littunen, 2000; Utsch and Rauch, 2000).

The concept of locus of control refers to a generalized belief that a person can or cannot control his or her own destiny. In the study by Entrialgo et al. (2000) locus of control, need for achievement and tolerance for ambiguity are regarded as the determinants of the tendency for entrepreneurship. According to Rotter(1996) individuals vary in terms of how much personal responsibility they perceive and accept for their behavior and its consequences. Individuals with an external LoC believe circumstances beyond their immediate control such as luck, fate and other people affect their performance across a range of activities. Individuals with an internal LoC believe they personally control events and consequences in their lives (Koh, 1996; Riipinen, 1994; Hansemark, 1998). It is believed that entrepreneurs have an internal locus of control.

Risk taking propensity refers to the propensity of an individual to exhibit risk taking or risk avoidance when confronted with risky situations. Entrepreneurship is historically associated with risk taking. In the literature on entrepreneurship, thus, entrepreneurs are generally characterized as having a greater propensity to take risks than other groups (Cromie, 2000; and Thomas and Mueller, 2000; Teoh and Foo, 1997).

Curiosity is a motivational prerequisite for exploratory behaviour (Voss and Keller 1983). Curiosity has also been identified as a major motivator of behaviour in domains such as educational, occupational and recreational areas (Reio et al 2006). A study conducted by kashdan et al (2004) found that highly curious individual are more

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