

# Teacher's Entrepreneurial Pedagogical Content Knowledge Roles in Human Resource Development

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**Abstract:** Among one of the strategic plan that's being enforced by Malaysia in generating a creative and innovative human resource is by strengthening the entrepreneurship education. This effort is in line with the aspiration of Malaysia's Innovation Human Capital Development Plan, which emphasized entrepreneurship as an added value to alumnus employability, hence brought forth more quality human resources. However, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) showed that there is a gradual decrease in the entrepreneurial intention indicator among Malaysians since 2012. The decrement is a negative indication in Malaysia's effort to achieve its vision of becoming a developed nation by the year 2020. Accordingly, Malaysia needs to reassess the planning and development of human resources. This paper discusses the views on the enforcement of teacher's pedagogical content knowledge in entrepreneurship education which can contribute to the success of the human capital development in Malaysia.

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## **1. Introduction**

The ongoing dynamic changes that are taking place in the global economy have necessitated the efficient use of limited resources by competing organisations or nations, and this had led to the paradigm shift especially in human capital development (Fayole, 2007; Innocenti, et al., 2012). There is a growing recognition that entrepreneurship can play a vital role in economic growth and regional development. Accordingly, entrepreneurship education could help to develop more entrepreneurs and/or entrepreneurial-minded individuals.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan (10MP) for the period 2011 to 2025 highlighted significant reforms in the system of Technical and Vocational Education Training (TEVT) in Malaysia (Economic Planning Unit, 2010). One of the important agenda is to create and promote entrepreneurial culture. Entrepreneurial skills not only help graduates to better perform in their careers but also improve organisational performance. At national level, entrepreneurial activity has a notable impact on economic progress. The past decades have seen an massive changes in the emerging economies such as the BRICs – Brazil, Russia, India, and China – driven by the determined entrepreneurs.

Consequently, the development of an entrepreneurial mindset in human resources plays a vital role in translating a developing country to a higher income nation (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2014). There are three main reasons for this claim. First, empirical evidence shows that entrepreneurship often leads to economic growth and regional development (Ahmad and Xavier, 2012; Gorman et al., 1997; Naude, 2011). Entrepreneurial activity is seen as a vital element in economic progress since new business creation naturally creates job opportunities. As the businesses grow, the market competition becomes intensified, which naturally force existing players and new players to increase productivity and innovate. Second, studies found that an increase in entrepreneurship could lead to an increase in national happiness (El Harbi and Grolleau, 2012; Oswald, 1997). This can be attributed to the job creation by entrepreneurship since unemployment is one of the main causes of unhappiness. Furthermore, some researchers found that entrepreneurs are generally happier than non-entrepreneurs (Naude, 2011; Oswald, 1997). Third, there is a growing expectation for entrepreneurial solution to solve global issues such as climate change and poverty (Naude, 2011). Therefore, to build an excellence human capital, entrepreneurship education should be introduced during the early stage of education. Fayolle (2007) highlighted that the design of Entrepreneurial Pedagogy Methodology (EPM) at the elementary school level was instrumental in facilitating entrepreneurial learning at a young age. The new approaches in the instruction and delivery of

entrepreneurship courses will be helpful in incorporating entrepreneurial thinking to all levels of education.

## **2. The Human Resource Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed the impact of globalisation on human life characterised by worldwide competition, unpredictable, unexpected and constant changes (Mohammad, 2001). In meeting the challenges of globalisation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a new dimension is imperative, which strategically position human resource development at the centre of achieving developmental goals (Farazmand, 2004). Human resource development has been identified as pivotal for any nation to transition from developing to a developed economy. Accordingly, the success of a nation in developing its human capital will be evidenced in the quality of skills and knowledge of highest creativity, resilience and responsiveness. This calls for attention to education and training.

Mark Casson established a theoretical link between entrepreneurship and human capital. In his book, *The Entrepreneur: An Economic Theory*, Casson (1982: 10) stated that: "Human capital is often assumed to reflect technical skills acquired through education and training, but it may also reflect the underlying entrepreneurial abilities of the population". This implies that we all acquire entrepreneurial abilities; but to be a true entrepreneur, we need to develop our skills via education and training. Furthermore, human capital theory suggests that individuals who possess greater level of knowledge will perform better than those who acquire lower levels of skills and other competencies (Unger et al., 2011). Common measures of human capital include educational background, work experience, and other life experiences.

It is important to point out that entrepreneurship education is not limited to new venture creation; rather, it is about developing entrepreneurial abilities. Sardeshmukh and Smith-Nelson (2011), for instance, proposed that a combination of classroom exercises with experiential exercises could help students to develop opportunity-recognition ability, which could be applied in any career.

## **3. Entrepreneurship and Malaysia's Economic Status**

The meaning of entrepreneurship differs from person to person, and it also accepts different meaning and focus in diverse times and contexts (Gartner, 1990). From economic viewpoint, entrepreneurship functions as the catalyst for regional development (Gorman et al., 1997; Oswald, 1997; Naude, 2011). For Joseph Schumpeter, entrepreneurs innovate and most importantly, the innovations created by entrepreneurs often lead to "creative destruction" (Schumpeter, 1942). In this regard,

entrepreneur can be seen as a change agent who transforms or reinvents the less developed society into a thriving one. However, due to the multifaceted phenomenon of entrepreneurship, there are various definitions of entrepreneurship. Casson (1982) argued that not all entrepreneurs could innovate radically as Schumpeter maintained; for Casson, entrepreneur is a person for make “judgemental decisions about the coordination of scarce resources” (Casson, 1982: 23). Others, such as Low and McMillan (1988: 141) suggested that entrepreneurship could be defined as the “creation of new enterprise”. Putting these together, entrepreneurship can be viewed as new venture creation which facilitate economic growth and development in the region and initiate change to the entrepreneur at minimum and the society at large (Ahmad, 2012; Bruyat and Julien, 2000; Gartner, 1990).

Nevertheless, Malaysia is slowly trapped as a middle income nation (Majlis Penasihat Ekonomi Negara, 2011) due to the result of slower growth which was impacted by the Asian financial crisis in 1998. The 2012 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2012 Global Report showed that among the efficiency-driven economies in Asia Pacific, Malaysia ranked the lowest in entrepreneurial intention (13%), which is significantly lower than the mean score of entrepreneurial intention at 17% (Xavier et al., 2013). This issue has become more evident when it was discovered that, the entrepreneurial intention score by the Malaysians decreased to 11.8% in 2013 and 11.63% in 2014 (GEM, 2015). Ahmad and Xavier (2012) pointed out that inadequate entrepreneurship education and training is one of the challenges faced by the entrepreneurs in Malaysia. And thus, there is a need to reassess the education and training in order to promote entrepreneurial-mind Malaysians.

#### **4. Entrepreneurial Learning**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan had outlined the expansion in the supply of highly skilled manpower as one of the human resource's development aims (Economic Planning Unit, 2010). In line with this, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2012) has introduced “Entrepreneurship Programme” and launched Higher Education Entrepreneurship Development Policy in 2010 in order to increase the number of entrepreneurial-minded graduates as well as create and support entrepreneurial culture.

Mueller and Anderson (2014) noticed that entrepreneurship education typically put an emphasis on “experiential”, where students not only learn by doing but also learn from doing. However, as Mueller and Anderson (2014) pointed out, entrepreneurship could be a difficult topic to teach. The traditional approaches to deliver entrepreneurship courses rarely encourage the non-linear thinking patterns that are

important for entrepreneurship (Sardeshmukh and Smith-Nelson, 2011). For this reason, Powell (2013) suggests that guest lectures provided by entrepreneurs and professionals – such as legal practitioners and accountants – would be beneficial for the students. These experienced and knowledgeable guest speakers could offer realistic feedback to the students as well as share their experiences to the students. Powell (2013: 110) also maintained that entrepreneurship educators should play a role as a coach rather than a supervisor, so that the students could “develop more realistic understandings of their abilities, pursue the applied knowledge particularly useful to them, and learn to adapt rather than blindly imitate examples”. This statement amplifies the importance of embracing and implementing pedagogical content knowledge in teaching and learning especially in entrepreneurship education.

### **5. Teacher's Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Entrepreneurship Education**

The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (MEB 2013-2025) and the 10th Malaysia Plan (10MP) emphasised that the national growth will be driven by Malaysia's future education system, with the aim of nurturing the talents needed for an advanced nation (Ministry of Education, 2014; Economic Planning Unit, 2014). The 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan highlights that the quality of the teacher significantly affect students' performance. Moreover, studies have shown that entrepreneurial intentions can be influenced by education and training (Ahmad and Xavier, 2012; Coron, 2010; Fayolle et. al., 2006). However, as pointed out by Blenker et al. (2006), the conventional forms of teaching in business schools and universities somewhat inadequate in stimulate entrepreneurial mindset among students. In a similar vein, Powell (2013) pointed out the dilemmas in entrepreneurship pedagogy. For instance, a rigid pedagogical structure could help students to develop practical skills but the students may not be able to deal with uncertainty that they will face as entrepreneurs.

Educational system which provides enough knowledge and inspiration for would-be entrepreneurs will enable them to develop a better understanding of entrepreneurship as well as make better decisions in choosing different paths of entrepreneurial career (Powell, 2013), especially among younger generation. Entrepreneurship education could help would-be entrepreneurs in three ways: by encouraging them to think creatively; by equipping them with the necessary business know-how to identify and commercialise business opportunity; and by preparing them for the potential challenges and risks associated with entrepreneurship.

The key question is how to effectively equip students with entrepreneurial skills? Perhaps the answer lies in the teaching, so as the learning of the educators. Studies

(Darling-Hammond, 2001; Weinstein, 1989) have discovered that the understanding and perception of an educator have a major impact on how students learn. In 1986, Shulman introduced the notion of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) that includes pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge. While pedagogical knowledge refers to the teaching methods and techniques, content knowledge, on the other hand, refers to knowledge of the subject matter. In addition to specific subject matter, the development of pedagogical content knowledge revolves around the educators' understanding of how students learn -- or fail to learn -- in different circumstances. In short, pedagogical content knowledge is highly topic, person, and situation specific (Van Driel and Berry, 2012).

On this ground, the author feels that the teacher's pedagogical content knowledge in entrepreneurship education requires more attention and further study. From the author's view, a teacher who has mastered and developed strong pedagogical content knowledge in entrepreneurship would be able to deliver a firm and rich knowledge in the entrepreneurship's subject matter and field, which could increase the student's preference and intention to become an entrepreneur.

Educators serve as role models to their students. Entrepreneurship educators should be knowledgeable of their subject matters and related disciplines, especially creativity and innovation. Therefore, educators should adopt a more creative and non-linear thinking approach in deliver entrepreneurship courses. Learning by memorisation does not promote problem-solving skills or opportunity-recognition skills that are important for being an entrepreneur. It is equally important for educators to continuously enrich themselves and keep themselves up-to-date with the educational trend and changes in their teaching field (Elias et. al, 2000).

## **6. Conclusion**

An endeavour to create an entrepreneurial culture in Malaysian society had led to recent attention towards pedagogical content knowledge. All of the statements discussed above, have brought forth to the reconsideration of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education that is currently being implemented and towards the importance of entrepreneurship's pedagogical content knowledge in improving teaching and learning process within the entrepreneurship education thus increasing the students' entrepreneurial intention. Continuous efforts are needed to ensure that highly trained, entrepreneurial educators are employed to handle the facilitation of the learning process at all levels.

Further study focusing on teacher's pedagogical content knowledge in entrepreneurship is essential to investigate the real situation so that appropriate improvement could be suggested to the stakeholder, curriculum developer and policy maker of entrepreneurship education. In addition, those study also will be significant in helping teachers and others to understand their pedagogical content knowledge which is beneficial in improving entrepreneurship education, and, adding more quality in human resources. Moreover, entrepreneurial learning practice should be incorporated in the on-the-job training program, through the engagement of entrepreneurship educators in the efforts to instil the entrepreneurial traits in employees that did not obtain the skills through formal entrepreneurial education. With the assistance of qualified entrepreneurship educator who acquires pedagogical content knowledge, the author believes, there are possibilities that the numbers of professional and skilled human resources imparted with entrepreneurial traits will increase, making it possible for Malaysia to achieve its vision of becoming a higher income nation by the year 2020.

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