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Research Article

Co-curricular Activities Among Students at University Kuala Lumpur: Entrepreneurial Propensity

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Abstract

The involvement of students in co-curricular activities especially in entrepreneurship activities is not new. It is an important strategy in encouraging students to opt for the discipline of entrepreneurship as their vocation upon graduation. However, a study on the inclination of students towards co-curricular activities must be carried out in order to establish the factors that contribute to its effectiveness in encouraging students to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Students who embark on a business early during their campus stay demonstrate a greater potential to position their businesses as their vocation. These businesses could contribute to the national economy in terms of generating income and creating new job opportunities. The purpose of this study is to measure Universiti Kuala Lumpur student's propensity towards entrepreneurial activities based on several factors. About 133 students in the basic entrepreneurship and introduction to techno-entrepreneurship classes were randomly selected as the respondents in this study. The instrument used is the questionnaire method. The data are analysed by the descriptive statistics method using the statistical package for social science (SPSS version 19.0) and the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings show a positive inclination in the discipline of entrepreneurship. The findings also show that family support (CR = 4.2, $p = 0.000$) and idols (CR = 2.89, $p = 0.004$) are significant in a student's entrepreneurial interests. Lastly, an entrepreneurial aptitude model that fits the study data is constructed in this study.

Key words: CMIN, co-curricular activities, respondents, RMSEA, CR

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INTRODUCTION

Extra co-curricular activities are those educational activities conducted outside the classroom. Extra co-curricular activities is compulsory in the school system so as to provide students with the needed exposure and to create a balance between theory and practice. This applies also to institutions for higher learning because at this level, students are obliged to equip themselves with an assortment of knowledge and experience¹.

Experience and skills are important to students in developing their image and self-confidence, independence and in forging good relationships with their peers. States that co-curricular activities are educational activities that are planned and carried out outside the formal learning hours in or outside the classroom. Co-curricular activities are an extension to learning beyond school hours and must be constructive to students².

The education act (National curriculum, 1997) states that the national curriculum is an educational program consisting of the curriculum and co-curricular activities that encompasses all areas of knowledge, skills, values, elements of culture and beliefs to facilitate in the student's overall physical, spiritual, mental and emotional development. Universiti Kuala Lumpur also focuses on student's holistic physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual growth through its entrepreneurial activities³.

Entrepreneurial education in Malaysia is carried out as a strategy in the third long term plan (Third RRJP) with the aim of increasing the number of skilled, innovative and technologically adept manpower to boost businesses in order to achieve the objective of a commerce and industrialised society³ by the year 2020.

The involvement of students in entrepreneurial activities organised in the campus will expose them to various skills. Among the skills acquired from these entrepreneurial activities is the ability to identify business opportunities and the ability to chart business plans.

The entrepreneurial activities organised at Universiti Kuala Lumpur are aimed at propagating a culture of entrepreneurship and to augment student's already existent talents⁴.

Current work market demands call for students not only to possess a diversity of knowledge but also to exude a high level of confidence and credibility. Students are required to acquire as many skills possible and to possess a good personality so that they are capable of attaining a high level of endurance, quick to adapt to situations that arose and capable of managing stress.

Students of good character can adapt to any pressure and are able to establish good relationships in a connected working environment. Consequently, this leads to an increase in the quality of work and in productivity, as well as being competent at the international level⁵. Thus, students who involve themselves actively in co-curricular activities are preferably hired in the local and global job market.

The Ministry of Higher Education introduced the Institution for Higher Learning Entrepreneurial Development Policy (DPKIPT) on 13 April, 2010 to propel the development of human capital in a bid to generate entrepreneurial graduates equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and capabilities in coping with economic challenges.

A number of entrepreneurial activities have been organised in Universiti Kuala Lumpur such as the 'Let's Become Entrepreneurs Carnival (2JIU), the 'I Want o Be A Successful Entrepreneur Seminar' (SEDAYA), the Entrepreneur Development Course (LPU), Student Entrepreneurship Association (SEA), involvements in the UniKL Alumni Commerce Hall (DPAU, the Young Entrepreneurs Camp and Business Pairing between students and exterior entrepreneurs who are strategic partners of Universiti Kuala Lumpur.

These activities are congruent with efforts by the National Entrepreneurs Institute of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry since 1989 which aims to nurture an entrepreneurship culture at institutions for higher learning. The PKS comprises the Graduates Work Development Program, Graduates Basic Entrepreneurship Course (KAKS), Student Malls, the Graduates Entrepreneurship Carnival and Convention (KARNIAWAN) and Student in Free Enterprise (SIFE).

The involvement of students in the entrepreneurial activities organised by their campus exposes them to the various skills. The students will acquire specific entrepreneurial skills such as the ability to identify business opportunities and to chart business plans. Various entrepreneurial activities introduced in Universiti Kuala Lumpur seek to cultivate an entrepreneurial culture besides scouting for potentials already existent in the students.

Efforts to nurture an entrepreneurial understanding among students of UniKL has been executed continuously to prepare them to be self-employed rather than being salaried which mentioned that entrepreneurial activities will transform the mentality of students to be self-employed rather than being salaried.

This study specifically analyses the relationship between entrepreneurial aptitude and family support, the relationship

between entrepreneurial aptitude and idols and produces a model that fits the study data.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

As many as 133 students participated in the survey by carefully answering a questionnaire form. This research employs the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The SEM is a multi-variate technique which combines multiple regression and factor analysis⁶. Two main aspects in the SEM are the causal process which is the structural equation (regression) and the structural relation which could be modeled graphically in order to get a clearer picture.

The research question is answered by determining the regression multiplier and the Critical Value (CR). If the value is more than 1.96 with a significant value $p \leq 0.05$, the value indicates that the forecasting variable contributes significantly towards the interaction of variables. The compatibility of the model was tested using various fit indexes such as CMIN, CFI and RMSEA. The hypotheses model is considered compatible with data from this study when the significant value for CMIN is larger^{7,8} than 0.05. The hypothesis model is also considered compatible when the CFI value is larger⁶⁻⁸ than 0.90. The RMSEA value is considered good if it is lower than 0.08 but it is still acceptable if less⁹ than 1.0. Knight *et al.*¹⁰ also suggested an acceptable CFI value if it is higher than 0.90. However, a CFI value between 0.80-0.89 is still within the acceptable range.

RESULTS

Gender respondent analysis: Based on Table 1, it is seen that the study involves 133 respondents. About 68 (51.1%) are male and 65 (48.9%) are female. This shows that the distribution of male and female respondents in this study are almost equal.

Analysis of respondent's place of origin: Based on Table 2, the division of respondents according to their place of origins show an almost similar percentage where 67 (50%) come from the town areas and 66 (49.6%) come from the rural areas.

Respondent study program analysis: Table 3 shows the frequency distribution and percentage of respondents according to the programs. The distribution shows that respondents from the bachelor programs are dominant in this study with a total of 108 persons (81.2%) while respondents from the diploma programs amounted to 25 persons (18.8%) only.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to gender

Gender	Frequency	(%)	Valid (%)	Accumulated (%)
Male	68	51.1	51.1	51.1
Female	64	48.9	48.9	100.0
Total	133	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to place of origin

Place of origin	Frequency	(%)	Valid (%)	Accumulated (%)
Towns	67	50.4	50.4	50.4
Rural areas	66	49.6	49.6	100.0
Total	133	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to study programs

Study Program	Frequency	(%)	Valid (%)	Accumulated (%)
Degree	108	81.2	81.2	81.2
Diploma	25	18.8	18.8	100.0
Total	133	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to entrepreneurial activity

Involvement in entrepreneurial activities	Frequency	(%)	Valid (%)	Accumulated (%)
Involved	75	56.4	56.4	56.4
Never involved	58	43.6	43.6	100.0
Total	133	100.0	100.0	

Activity involvement analysis: Based on Table 4, the division of respondents according to their involvement in entrepreneurial activities shows that 75 (56.4%) have been involved in entrepreneurial activities while (43.6%) have never been involved. Based on the open responses given by the students who have been involved in entrepreneurial activities, among the activities that they had participated in are the Entrepreneurial Development Training (course), I want To Be A Successful Entrepreneur (seminar) and the Rural Entrepreneurs Carnival (carnival).

Analysis of the relationship between family support and entrepreneurial interests: The hypothesis model was carried out twice to obtain fulfilling fit index results.

The findings of the study as shown in Fig. 1 show that there is a significant relation between entrepreneurial tendencies and the family (CR = 4.20, $p = 0.00$) and a significant relation between entrepreneurial tendencies and idols (CR = 2.89, $p = 0.004$). If the CR value exceeds 1.96 and the significant value $p \leq 0.05$, it shows that the forecast variable contributes significantly to the dependent variable.

The findings also show that the model produced is fit with the study data because it exceeds the fixed requirement which is CMIN = 453.051, $p = 0.000$, CMIN/DF = 2.01, CFI = 0.87. Knight *et al.*¹⁰ suggested that the acceptable value for CFI is more than 0.90. However, a CFI value between 0.80-0.89 is still within an acceptable range⁶⁻⁸. The

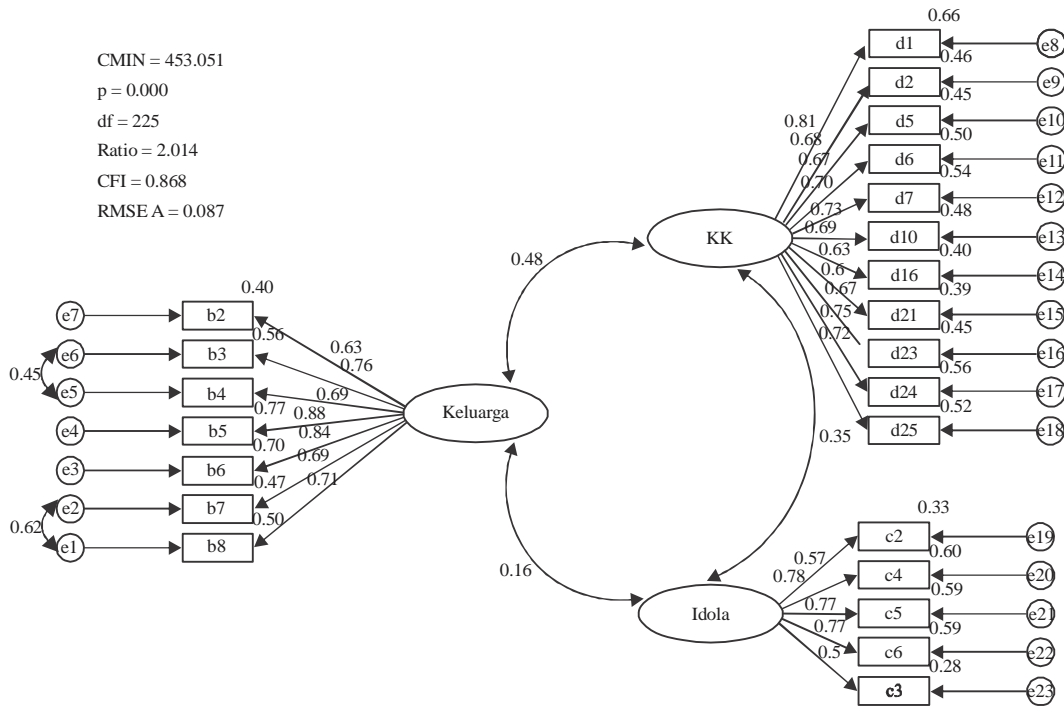


Fig. 1: Model of relations between study variables

RMSEA value is = 0.087 Although the RMSEA value is more than 0.08 according to Byrne⁹, the value is still acceptable if it is less⁹ than 1.0.

DISCUSSION

The study findings show that there is a significant and positive relation between family support and entrepreneurial tendencies. Thus, it can be assumed that family support has an influence on entrepreneurial tendencies among the students. This proves that family elements are important in order to develop entrepreneurial tendencies. Close-knit family elements do influence the behavior of a person in a negative or positive manner. In fact, the family is a powerful system in the formation of a new relationship and other relationships where the inter-dependent dynamics within are maintained¹¹.

A previous study by Neck and Greene¹² states that perceptions of Norwegian dealers involved in entrepreneurship are affected by several factors. Among these factors are cultural values, family support, teachings at school and the views of their peers. The findings show 70% of business founders have parents who are self-employed or run a business. Sabree¹³ also found that children of businessmen have a higher tendency to become businessmen. This is possibly due to the exposure that they have experienced since young. The child's perceptions of entrepreneurship are largely influenced by their parents.

A similar opinion which states that family support affects a person's decision whether to be self-employed or to be salaried. This is also supported by Greene and Saridakis¹⁴, Yasin *et al.*¹⁵, Buang and Yusof¹⁶ and Rajani and Sarada¹⁷, which state that family and social relationships are helpful support for an entrepreneur.

The findings from this study also show a significant relation between entrepreneurship tendencies and idols. Respondents who have their own idols are more likely to start a business compared to those who do not. This finding supports the social cognitive theory that idols indirectly affect a person when choosing jobs according to his self-efficacy, interests and the expected outcomes. According to Kennedy *et al.*¹⁸, students who are influenced by idols have a higher tendency to willingly set up a business compared to those who do not have idols.

According to Gibb¹⁹ and Neck and Greene¹², the role of idols in the field of entrepreneurship can be illustrated in a related four function form as follows, that is as a source of inspiration and motivation where idols create an awareness and motivate a person to start a business or to initiate an idea. Next, it increases one's self-confidence which means idols are capable of making a person to be confident in achieving his personal objectives. In learning through good examples idols have a role in providing guidance for the actions to be undertaken. Learning through support points to the role of the idols in providing continuous support and advice. This

statement is agreeable with a study by Bosma *et al.*²⁰ which states that idols may influence an individual's decision to set up a business.

Next, a model related to the entrepreneurial tendencies of students has been produced with consideration for the aspects of the family and idols. The produced model can be considered good and fits with the study data.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, family support and support from friends are very important to the individual who opts to be an entrepreneur. Peers, lecturers, successful entrepreneurs or anyone who can support and motivate someone to become an entrepreneur can be considered as the idol. They can act as teachers, coordinators or facilitators to encourage students to succeed in entrepreneurship based on their own experiences.

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