

Building a Malaysian Entrepreneurial Culture in Social Cognitive Context

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini memerihalkan pembelajaran tingkah laku usahawanan di Malaysia dalam konteks kognitif sosial untuk transformasi negara bagi memungkinkan kesejahteraan psikologi, meningkatkan kualiti hidup dan menjayakan pembangunan negara yang mampan. Dengan demikian, sorotan literatur ini, menggambarkan kesesuaian kognisi sosial untuk membekalkan satu kerangka konsep bagi memupuk individu ke arah menjadi usahawanan yang berkemampuan. Selain itu, cabaran yang dihadapi dalam mendidik usahawanan dan saranan berkaitan juga dibincangkan dalam konteks kognitif sosial.

INTRODUCTION

Social cognition provides insights for learning entrepreneurial behaviour among individuals. The learning of entrepreneurial behaviour facilitates the building of the entrepreneurial culture which is documented in the Tenth Malaysian Plan (Malaysia, 2010a) and officially promoted by the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) of Malaysia (Malaysia, 2010b) for transforming Malaysia into a high-income country by 2020. Here, entrepreneurs refer to the individuals who have the abilities to use opportunities for establishing new businesses or conduct innovations in order to earn higher incomes (Baron & Shane, 2008); whilst an entrepreneurial culture encompasses the entrepreneurs' way of life that is associated with identifying opportunities for inventions or innovations that lead to increases in productivity and incomes of people in a country (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2007).

On these grounds, this research review addresses the social cognitive context for enabling individuals to learn about the entrepreneurial culture for sustainable development in Malaysia. In addition, this research review explores the psychology of social cognition for engaging Malaysians in building an entrepreneurial culture that is endorsed by the Tenth Malaysian Plan for "supporting innovation-led growth" in Malaysia (Malaysia, 2010a, p.81) which is needed to drive the productivity, income creation, competitiveness, economic and social development in Malaysia.

Accordingly, this research review is not intended to discuss on the methods of instruction for building an entrepreneurial culture. However, this research review attends to the social cognitive context for learning about entrepreneurial behaviour in order to gain insights into a Malaysian entrepreneurial culture.

SOCIAL COGNITIVE LEARNING OF ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOUR

The realm of social psychology encompasses social cognition. The application of social cognition to the learning of entrepreneurial behaviour among individuals is expected to manifest entrepreneurship in a community (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2007). According to contemporary social psychologists, the social cognitive context provides an enabling framework for integrating the individuals' cognitive learning with their social environment (Bandura, 1986; 2001; Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2007; Feldman, 2009; Kenrick, Neuberg, & Cialdini 2007). Accordingly, these experts posit that the learning of the cognitive tasks of entrepreneurial behaviour is contextualised in the social environment of the learners (Table 1). In this way, individuals can learn about entrepreneurial behaviour by behaviour modelling or observational learning (Bandura, 2001).

The contextualising of the cognitive tasks of entrepreneurial behaviour in the social environment facilitates behaviour modelling or observational learning among learners as shown in Table 1. Found in Table 1 are the cognitive tasks of entrepreneurial behaviour that are listed as: to motivate thinking as entrepreneurs; to create new ideas, processes or inventions and to innovate something new from existing ideas or processes or resources (Bandura, 1986; Baron & Shane, 2008; Kuratko, 2009; Quek, 2008).

The learning of these cognitive tasks does not take place in a vacuum. More importantly, the learners of entrepreneurial behaviour have to make sense of these cognitive tasks in a social context. For example, in creative problem solving the family can encourage and stimulate children as learners to identify problems and to explore

possible solutions. In addition, the school can engage learners in transferring their learning to outcome as in creating new ideas, processes or inventions as in innovations.

With reference to Table 1, the learning of cognitive tasks of entrepreneurial behaviour can be facilitated in the social context of curriculum and instructional designs in schools, which support creative and innovative thinking towards building entrepreneurship in the community. It is also important that the learning of entrepreneurial behaviour is validated by government policies and regulations which endorse inventions and innovations (Baron & Shane, 2008; Kuratko, 2009). In a sense, this public support of entrepreneurship serves to promote institutions of education such as, schools, colleges and universities as favourable environments for learners to participate in creative or innovative activities and become entrepreneurs (Lee, Quek & Chew, 2001). This makes the outlook for the future of entrepreneurship as hopeful particularly in the private sector of the community. In turn, the business organisations in the community would also recognise inventions and innovations as accomplishments and reward appropriately the inventors and the innovators.

When considering the social cognitive context for the learning of cognitive tasks of entrepreneurial behaviour, it is reported that some learners experience the added advantage of applying self-efficacy to facilitate the attaining of the intended learning outcomes (Bandura, 1986; 2001). Here, self-efficacy is operationalised as the belief that learners hold concerning their ability to learn and perform entrepreneurial behaviour (Quek, 2005; 2008). The assumption underlying self-efficacy in the learning of entrepreneurial behaviour is that individuals are guided mentally to set beliefs of attainable goals in accordance with the entrepreneurial programmes that are designed to escalate the learners' entrepreneurship.

Table 1: The social cognitive context of promoting entrepreneurial behaviour

Cognitive tasks of entrepreneurial behaviour	Promoting entrepreneurial behaviour in social cognitive context
To motivate thinking as entrepreneurs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The community including families that encourage and stimulate children in creative problem solving. 2. Institutions of education such as, schools that teach and motivate students in creative and innovative thinking.
To create new ideas, processes or inventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The family links with the schools as community agents to imbue students with values for innovativeness and inventiveness. 2. Business organisations that recognise inventions and innovations as accomplishments and reward appropriately the inventors and the innovators
To innovate something new from existing ideas or processes or resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government policies and regulations which endorse inventions and innovations. 2. Other examples are curriculum and instructional designs in schools for supporting creative and innovative thinking.

ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE AND MALAYSIA

A review of social cognitive literature reports that the influence of self-efficacy in enabling the individuals to learn about entrepreneurial behaviour for understanding the milieu required to engage in entrepreneurial activities such as, to recognise opportunities for exploiting ideas commercially (Baron & Shane, 2008; Krueger, 2007; Kuratko, 2009; Quek, 2009; Shane 2000; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Here, the individuals' learning about entrepreneurial behaviour enables them to understand and share their experiences of entrepreneurial behaviour (Krueger, 2007; Kuratko, 2009). More importantly, it is the understanding and the sharing of experiences of entrepreneurial behaviour among individuals that builds the milieu for escalating an entrepreneurial culture (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

The virtues of building an entrepreneurial culture are exalted as enabling citizens to enjoy better psychological well-being and a better quality of life through improving their productivity, income-earning capacity and thereby contributing to sustain the national development of a country (Krueger, 2007 ; López-Claros & Mata, 2011; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). This is illustrated by Korea's entrepreneurial culture that spearheaded its transformation from an agricultural society to a highly technological economy from the start of 1960s to 2011 which spanned 40 years (López-Claros & Mata, 2011).

Another illustration of having an entrepreneurial culture is the global success of Samsung as a Korean brand with its products' niche found in more than 50 countries (López-Claros & Mata, 2011). In turn, the entrepreneurial culture has also earned Korea in 2011 the 11th position out of 131 countries on the World Innovation Capacity Index. One other case is the meteoric rise of China which started from 1990 with a GDP of less than 7.5 per cent to achieve a GDP of 10.3 per cent in 2011 (Agence France-Presse). More importantly, this earned China the ranking as the world's second biggest economy in 2011 and thereby broke Japan's 42-year record as the world's second largest economy (López-Claros & Mata, 2011).

Viewed this way, building an entrepreneurial culture brightens the outlook of a country which is seeking for sustainable development for its people and nation. On these grounds, in Malaysia the government policies strongly endorsed publicly the building an entrepreneurial culture (Malaysia, 2010a; 2010b). More importantly, the entrepreneurial culture is aspired to drive innovation-led growth in Malaysia (Malaysia, 2010a) for sustaining the country's development.

Much thought has already been given to the recent decline in the competency to innovate or innovation capability of Malaysians which was attributed to the decrease of researchers per 10,000 labour force in 2004 from 21.3 per cent to 20.3 per cent in 2008 (Malaysia, 2010a). This gap in the innovation capability of Malaysians is closely associated with the decrease in the total gross expenditure (GDP) on research and development (R&D) from 0.69 per cent in 2004 to 0.21 per cent of GDP in 2008 (Malaysia, 2010a).

In tandem with improving entrepreneurship in Malaysia and also to increase the components of knowledge and skilled workers in the labour force, the Government allocated a budget for Malaysia to raise the rate of total expenditure on R&D to 1 per cent of GDP by 2015. In turn, public attention is focused on building of an entrepreneurial culture by strengthening the business environment, particularly in establishing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as an driver of growth and innovation (Malaysia, 2010a). These entrepreneurial activities are estimated to double the income per Malaysian of RM23,700 in 2009 to more than RM48, 000 in 2020 (Malaysia, 2010b).

In the light of educating individuals towards building of an entrepreneurial culture for sustaining national development, some of the challenges and the recommendations are presented in the social cognitive context as follows:

1. Providing Entrepreneur-Friendly Learning Environments

From the social cognitive context, the learning environment is reported to facilitate individuals so as to attain learning outcomes (Bandura, 1986; Baron & Shane, 2008; Kuratko, 2009). Here, the challenge is for schools and instructors to provide learners with the entrepreneur-friendly environments so as to motivate and engage learners in creative and innovative activities. In this direction, it is recommended that teachers and school administrators must be assisted (for example, through professional education and training) in providing the entrepreneur-friendly environments for engaging learners in creative and innovative activities.

2. Developing Suitable Instructional Materials

The accessibility of instructional materials and the diversity of these materials to meet all individuals' needs are important to promote the learning of entrepreneurial behavioural and to build an entrepreneurial culture (Bandura, 1986; 2001; Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2007). Here, the challenge is concerned with developing suitable instructional materials to meet all learners' needs for the learning of entrepreneurial behavioural. In this direction, it is suggested that curriculum designers and planners work closely with various experts such as psychologists, counsellors, teachers, parents and school administrators to develop suitable instructional materials for all learners of entrepreneurial behavioural and entrepreneurship.

3. Educating All Learners

Educating all Malaysians is one way of improving the quality of human resources towards attaining the target of RM48, 000 as the income per Malaysian in 2020 (Malaysia, 2010b). Here, the challenges are concerned with educating all Malaysians including people with disabilities so as to contribute towards the building of an entrepreneurial culture. In this direction, it is suggested that school authorities and members of the community including non-governmental associations pull resources to find ways in facilitating learners in all their diversity to transform into educated human capital for building of an entrepreneurial culture in Malaysia.

4. Conducting Related Research and Development Activities

It is recalled that the learning of entrepreneurial behavioural does not occur in a vacuum. Due to the changes in the community (for example, the use of new technology in the workplace), gaps exist between the learning of knowledge that occurs in schools and changes in work demands (for example, the processing of producing goods and services) at the workplace (Soon & Quek, 2009). This challenges the quality of instruction and learning of entrepreneurial behavioural in schools. In this direction, it is suggested that related research and development activities be conducted for the updating of instructional materials as well as for the continuing improvement of the quality of instruction and learning of entrepreneurial behavioural in schools.

5. Continuing Support of Public Policies for Building an Entrepreneurial Culture

Public policies that endorse the building of an entrepreneurial culture form the rationale for educating learners to be entrepreneurs in the community (Malaysia, 2010a; 2010b). Here, the examination-oriented members of the community tend to emphasise on the academic performance of schools (Quek, 2003). Therefore, learners in schools are driven by scholastic interests so as to be top performers in academic examinations. This poses challenges to schools in promoting programmes on the learning of entrepreneurial behavioural. Towards this direction, it is recommended that public policies render continuing support to publicise the importance of learning entrepreneurial behavioural and the building of an entrepreneurial culture. In addition, public policies continue to facilitate entrepreneurial learning in schools in the forms of: sponsoring entrepreneurial projects; providing internships for learners to gain entrepreneurial experiences; funding competitions for inventors, designers and innovators; as well as holding exhibitions for sharing entrepreneurial research findings.

CONCLUSION

This research review focuses on the social cognitive context for enabling individuals to learn about an entrepreneurial culture for sustainable development in Malaysia. Here, the high merits of building an entrepreneurial culture are reported as enabling citizens to enjoy better psychological well-being and a better quality of life through improving their productivity, income-earning capacity and thereby contributing towards sustainable national development of a country.

Accordingly, this research review is a response to the call for engaging Malaysians in building an entrepreneurial culture that is that is endorsed by the Tenth Malaysian Plan for driving innovation-led growth and the transformation of Malaysia. On these grounds, this research review does not address the methodology of instruction for building an entrepreneurial culture but explores the social cognitive context for learning about entrepreneurial behaviour to develop insights into a Malaysian entrepreneurial culture.

Drawing evidence from related literature, it is argued that the psychology of social cognition empowers individuals to learn about an entrepreneurial culture. This is because the social cognitive context offers an enabling framework for integrating individuals' cognitive learning with their social environment. Here, the cognitive tasks of entrepreneurial behaviour pertain to motivate thinking as entrepreneurs; to create new ideas, processes or inventions and to innovate something new from existing ideas or processes or resources. In the social cognitive context, these cognitive tasks of entrepreneurial behaviour are contextualised in the social environment of the learners to facilitate their learning by behaviour modelling or observational learning.

Since learning of these cognitive tasks does not take place in a vacuum, learners are enabled in schools to identify problems and to explore possible solutions in entrepreneurial-friendly learning environment. Through self-efficacy these learners are enabled to understand the milieu required to engage in entrepreneurial activities such as, to recognise opportunities for exploiting ideas commercially. However, the building of an entrepreneurial culture in Malaysia presents challenges to education. Examples of these challenges and related recommendations are discussed under: (1) providing entrepreneur-friendly learning environments; (2) developing suitable instructional materials; (3) educating all learners; (4) conducting related research and development activities; and (5) continuing support of public policies for building an entrepreneurial culture. The success of building an entrepreneurial culture therefore, requires great ingenuity to seek for ways in facilitating all Malaysians to learn entrepreneurial behaviour and to share an entrepreneurial culture.

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