DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AMONG MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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By
AFSANEH BAGHERI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family and friends whose support has carried me here. To my mother and father who have shown unconditional love and were my first and most inspiration to further my studies. To my husband who has sacrificed a lot when I was far from the family for more than four years. To my daughter whose love, passion, and patience has forever inspired me. To my sisters and brother who have supported me all through the journey of my studies.
Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chairman : Prof. Zaidatol Akmaliah Lope Pihie, PhD
Faculty : Educational Studies

Recent developments in entrepreneurial leadership raised many questions about how to develop entrepreneurial leadership competencies particularly, in university students as prospective entrepreneurial leaders. In particular, there is not enough knowledge on the specific competencies enabling university students to lead entrepreneurial activities, factors motivating them to learn and develop their entrepreneurial leadership competencies, the process of their entrepreneurial leadership competencies, and the roles that university entrepreneurship programs play in developing the students’ entrepreneurial leadership competencies.

This research attempted to answer these questions through employing qualitative research method. A sample of fourteen undergraduate entrepreneurial leaders defined as students successfully leading the university entrepreneurship clubs and
activities for more than two semesters and four university entrepreneurship program coordinators was purposefully selected as the participants.

The main technique for data collection was semi-structured interviews. The interviews lasted between 50 to 110 minutes and were recorded in a digital audio recorder. Once the interviews were conducted, they were labelled and transferred to NVIVO 8 software to be transcribed. The interviews transcribed in 48 hours after the actual interview was conducted. Then, the transcriptions were sent to the participants for content validity.

Analysis of the data including the interview transcriptions and documents provided by the universities was carried out in two main phases. First, preliminary data analysis that was the process of data analysis conducted after obtaining each data. Second, thematic data analysis carried out by coding the data through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Analysis of the data revealed that student entrepreneurial leaders had two specific competencies that enabled them to lead university entrepreneurship clubs and activates including personal competencies and functional competencies. The dominant personal competencies of the student entrepreneurial leaders were: proactiveness, innovativeness, self-efficacy, love of challenges, and versatility. Functional competencies enabling student entrepreneurial leaders to successfully lead entrepreneurship clubs and activities were ability to create a caring interpersonal relationship, employing an enabling task delegation approach, and building self-confidence of their group members.
Two main factors emerged as the significant motives for the student entrepreneurial leaders to learn and develop their entrepreneurial leadership competencies including internal factors which are personal interest and self-development and external factors including entrepreneurial learning opportunities and programs, entrepreneurial leadership task demands and expectations, problems and opportunities, and significant others.

Student entrepreneurial leaders’ entrepreneurial leadership competencies developed through a continuous and gradual process of learning, change, and maturity in personal and interpersonal competencies that occurs through involvement in practicing leadership roles and tasks and requires executing a lot of endeavour, ambition, and perseverance.

Thirty eight roles emerged as contributions of university entrepreneurship programs in developing student entrepreneurial leaders’ entrepreneurial leadership competencies which were organized in two clusters including student-related and program-related roles. Student-related roles contained enhancing personal and functional competencies of the students. Program-related roles reflected providing entrepreneurial learning opportunities (experiential learning, social interactive learning, observational learning and reflective learning), liking students to entrepreneurial industries, and having a holistic approach to develop students’ entrepreneurial competencies.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia Sebagai memenuhi Keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

PEMBANGUNAN DAN KECEKAPAN KEUSAHAWANAN DI KALANGAN PELAJAR UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA

Oleh

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Perkembangan bidang kepemimpinan keusahawanan dewasa ini telah mencetuskan banyak persoalan tentang bagaimana untuk membentuk kompetensi kepemimpinan keusahawanan khususnya, dalam kalangan pelajar universiti sebagai pelapis pemimpin keusahawanan. Malah, secara spesifiknya masih kurang ilmu berkaitan kompetensi yang membolehkan pelajar pemimpin keusahawanan untuk menerajui aktiviti-aktiviti keusahawanan, proses perkembangan kompetensi kepemimpinan keusahawanan, dan peranan yang dimainkan oleh program keusahawanan universiti dalam membangunkan kompetensi kepemimpinan keusahawanan pelajar.

Kajian ini cuba untuk menjawab segala persoalan ini melalui kaedah kajian kualitatif. Sampel 14 pelajar sarjana muda yang terdiri daripada pemimpin keusahawanan yang dikategorikan sebagai pelajar yang berjaya mengetuai kelab dan
aktiviti keusahawanan universiti melebihi dua semester pengajian dan koordinator bagi empat program keusahawanan universiti telah dipilih sebagai peserta kajian ini. Teknik utama bagi pengumpulan data merupakan temuramah separa struktur. Temuramah yang dijalankan adalah dalam tempoh masa 50 sehingga 110 minit dan direkodkan dalam pita rakaman digital. Setelah temuramah dijalankan, hasil rakaman dilabel dan dipindahkan ke dalam perisian NVIVO 8 bagi tujuan transkripsi. Ia dilakukan setelah 48 jam temuramah sebenar dijalankan. Setelah itu, segala transkrip dihantar kepada para peserta untuk kesahan kandungan.

Analisis data yang merangkumi transkripsi hasil temuramah dan dokumen yang disediakan oleh pihak universiti telah dijalankan dalam dua fasa utama. Pertama, data analisis saringan yang merupakan proses yang dijalankan setelah setiap data dikumpulkan. Kedua, analisis data utama yang dijalankan dengan mengkodkan data melalui pengkodan terbuka, pengkodan berpaksi, dan pengkodan terpilih. Analisis data menunjukkan pelajar pemimpin keusahawanan mempunyai dua kompetensi khusus yang membolehkan mereka menerajui kelab dan aktiviti keusahawanan universiti, meliputi kompetensi peribadi dan kompetensi berfungsi.

Kompetensi peribadi utama pelajar pemimpin keusahawanan adalah: proaktif, inovatif, efikasi kendiri, sukakan cabaran dan serba boleh. Kompetensi berfungsi yang membolehkan pelajar pemimpin keusahawanan untuk menerajui kelab dan aktiviti keusahawanan merupakan keupayaan untuk membina hubungan interpersonal yang baik, mengaplikasikan pendekatan pembelajaran dan pembangunan terhadap kumpulan tugas, serta membangunkan keyakinan diri ahli-ahli kumpulan.
Dua faktor utama yang muncul sebagai motif yang signifikan bagi pelajar pemimpin keusahawanan untuk belajar dan membangunkan keupayaan kepemimpinan keusahawanan mereka adalah merangkumi faktor dalaman iaitu minat peribadi dan pembangunan peribadi, manakala faktor luaran meliputi peluang dan program pembelajaran keusahawanan, permintaan tugas dan tanggapan terhadap kepemimpinan keusahawanan, masalah dan peluang, serta lain-lain lagi.

Seterusnya, kepemimpinan keusahawanan pelajar pemimpin keusahawanan dikembangkan melalui proses pembelajaran yang berterusan dan beransur-ansur, perubahan, dan peningkatan kompetensi peribadi dan interpersonal melalui penglibatan dalam mempraktikkan peranan dan tugas kepemimpinan yang memerlukan perlaksanaan usaha, impian, dan keteguhan diri.

Tiga puluh lapan peranan muncul sebagai sumbangan program keusahawanan universiti dalam membangunkan kompetensi kepemimpinan keusahawanan pelajar pemimpin keusahawanan yang dikategorikan dalam dua kluster, merangkumi ‘student-related’ dan ‘program related’. Peranan ‘Student-related’ merangkumi peningkatan kompetensi peribadi dan fungsional para pelajar. Peranan ‘Program-related’ meyediakan peluang-peluang pembelajaran keusahawanan (pembelajaran berpengalaman, pembelajaran interaktif sosial, dan pembelajaran reflektif), motivasi untuk belajar dan membangunkan kompetensi kepemimpinan keusahawanan, minat pelajar terhadap industri keusahawanan, dan pendekatan secara keseluruhan untuk membentuk kompetensi keusahawanan pelajar.
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I have watched my family quietly suffer as I became more and more engrossed in my studies. To my mother whose prayers have kept me going and my father who was the first inspiration of me to further my studies up to this level. I recognize how hard this past three years have been on them in particular my husband Jafaar Mansouri whose support never wavered and my daughter Negar Mansouri, my never-ending source of pride. Thank you for your patience. This is our achievement. I would never have completed this work without the encouragement and support I received from my sisters, brother, and my lovely nephew, Kiarash Torabian who made me not to feel lonely when I was far from the family. Thank you all.

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Finally I would have had a heavy burden to carry if it was not for the support I got from my friends. They all did but Dr. Mah Lok Abdullah and his wife and Susan Zhalehpour more than most. Thank you.
I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 2/3/2011 to conduct the final examination of Afsaneh Bagheri on her thesis entitled “Entrepreneurial Leadership Competencies Development among Malaysian University Students” in accordance with Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy of Educational Administration.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of Supervisory committee were as follows:

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

AFSANEH BAGHERI
Date: 2 March 2011
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xviii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>xix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Background of the study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 Entrepreneurship education in Malaysia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 Researches on entrepreneurship education in Malaysia</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Problem statement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Research questions</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Significance of the study</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Limitations of the study</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Definition of terms</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Summary</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Introduction</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Who is an entrepreneur?</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Entrepreneurship and leadership: commonalities and differences</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Entrepreneurial leadership definition and competencies</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Entrepreneurial leadership models</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1 Competencies model of entrepreneurial leadership</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2 An integrated model of entrepreneurial leadership</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3 Enactment model of entrepreneurial leadership</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Motivation and entrepreneurship</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1 Motivation to become an entrepreneur</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.2 Motivation to learn and develop in entrepreneurial contexts</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 The process of entrepreneurial competencies development</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 Role of university entrepreneurship education programs in developing entrepreneurial competencies of students</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.8.1 Entrepreneurship education and students’ awareness of their entrepreneurial competencies 54
2.8.2 Entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and leadership self-efficacy 57
2.8.3 University entrepreneurship programs and developing students’ entrepreneurial innovativeness and creativity 71
2.8.4 Entrepreneurship education programs and provision of learning opportunities 73
2.9 University entrepreneurship education programs and students’ entrepreneurial leadership competencies development 88
2.9.1 Challenges of embedding entrepreneurship education in universities 90
2.9.2 Evaluating the roles of entrepreneurship education programs 94
2.10 Research theoretical framework 94
2.11 Research conceptual framework 95
2.12 Summary 100

3 METHODOLOGY
3.1 Introduction 101
3.2 Basis for the use of a qualitative methodology 103
3.3 Research qualitative approach 104
3.4 Researcher as the main research instrument 105
3.5 Data collection 107
3.5.1 Interview protocols 110
3.5.2 Research questions 111
3.5.3 Pilot interviews 111
3.5.4 Data recording 113
3.6 Sampling strategies 113
3.7 The site for data collection 116
3.8 Data analysis 117
3.8.1 Preliminary or during data collection analysis 118
3.8.2 Thematic or post data collection analysis 122
3.8.3 Writing memos 126
3.9 Validity and reliability of research findings 127
3.9.1 Credibility 127
3.9.2 Transferability 130
3.9.3 Confirmability 130
3.10 Ethics to do a qualitative research on university students 131
3.11 Summary 132
4 RESULTS
4.1 Introduction 133
4.2 Student entrepreneurial leaders’ background information 134
4.3 University entrepreneurship program coordinators’ background information 140
4.4 What are university students’ entrepreneurial leadership competencies? 142
  4.4.1 Personal competencies of university student entrepreneurial leaders 142
  4.4.2 Functional competencies of university student entrepreneurial leaders 163
4.5 What motivates university student entrepreneurial leaders to learn and develop their entrepreneurial leadership competencies? 173
  4.5.1 Personal motivation factors 174
  4.5.2 Environmental motivation factors 178
4.6 How do university student entrepreneurial leaders’ entrepreneurial leadership competencies develop? 190
  4.6.1 Gradual and continuous learning, change, and maturity 191
  4.6.2 Involvement in practicing leadership roles and tasks 194
  4.6.3 Executing a lot of endeavour, ambition, and perseverance 195
4.7 What is the role of university entrepreneurship programs in developing university student entrepreneurial leaders’ entrepreneurial leadership competencies? 197
  4.7.1 Student-related roles of university entrepreneurship programs 197
  4.7.2 Program-related roles of university entrepreneurship programs 211
4.8 Summary 246

5 SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
5.1 Summary 248
5.2 Discussion 251
  5.2.1 Competencies of student entrepreneurial leaders 252
  5.2.2 Factors motivating student entrepreneurial leaders to learn and develop their entrepreneurial leadership 260
  5.2.3 The process of entrepreneurial leadership development among student entrepreneurial leaders 266
  5.2.4 Role of university entrepreneurship programs in developing student entrepreneurial leader’s entrepreneurial leadership competencies 268
5.3 Conclusion

5.4 Implication of the findings

5.4.1 Implication of the findings for improving entrepreneurship education

5.4.2 Implication of the findings for entrepreneurial leadership practice and theory development

5.5 Recommendations for future research

REFERENCES

APPENDICES

| Appendix A1 | 318 |
| Appendix A2 | 320 |
| Appendix B1 | 321 |
| Appendix B2 | 322 |
| Appendix C1 | 323 |
| Appendix C2 | 324 |
| Appendix C3 | 325 |
| Appendix C4 | 326 |
| Appendix D1 | 329 |
| Appendix D2 | 333 |
| Appendix D3 | 335 |
| Appendix D4 | 337 |

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

xvi