

**THE FACTORS INFLUENCING
ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION:
CASE STUDY AT TWO GRADUATE SCHOOLS OF BUSINESS
MANAGEMENT IN MALAYSIA**

KHO NGEE LIANG

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ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION:
CASE STUDY AT TWO GRADUATE SCHOOLS OF BUSINESS
MANAGEMENT IN MALAYSIA

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Business Management
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by
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**Fakulti Pengurusan Perniagaan
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ABSTRAK

Pelbagai pengukuran yang berkaitan dengan keusahawanan, terutamanya kecenderungan keusahawanan dan faktor-faktor penyebabnya telah dilakukan di peringkat institusi pengajian tinggi. Kajian ini menerima pengukuran yang telah dibentuk oleh penyeledik-penyeledik sebelum ini. Pengukuran-pengukuran terhadap keupayaan mengenalpasti peluang, kecenderungan, keyakinan diri dan kepekaan terhadap keusahawanan, masing-masingnya dibentuk oleh McCline et al. (2000), Chen et al. (1998), De Noble et. al. (1999) serta Hills dan Shrader (1997). Kesemua pengukuran ini diterimakai dan sesuai bagi konteks kajian tempatan dengan tahap *reliability* yang tinggi. .

Sebagai tambahan kepada tujuan utama untuk menguji kemungkinan hubungan antara keempat-empat pengukuran keusahawanan utama, faktor demografi, latar belakang dan pengalaman kerja serta latar belakang dan pencapaian akademik turut diuji untuk mengenalpasti kemungkinannya sebagai faktor-faktor penyebab.

Analisis kajian adalah berdasarkan kepada maklumbalas daripada 125 responden dari Sekolah Siswazah Universiti Utara Malaysia (GS-UUM) dan *International Business School*, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (IBS-UTM). Kedua-dua institusi ini dipilih berdasarkan kepada objektif program keusahawanan yang ditawarkan, di mana kajian ini dapat menilai kesan pembelajaran keusahawanan terhadap keupayaan mengenalpasti peluang dan kecenderungan keusahawanan. Analisis dilakukan pada peringkat individu bagi kedua-dua kes yang dipilih serta pada peringkat agregat. Kelemahan kajian di mana kadar jawapan yang lebih rendah diatasi dengan menggunakan analisis *non-parametric*.

Secara umumnya, kajian mendapati kencenderungan keusahawanan adalah selaras dengan keupayaan mengenalpasti peluang keusahawanan. Namun, kajian mendapati kecenderungan keusahawanan tetap tinggi walaupun pencapaian akademik adalah rendah, tahun bersama dengan organisasi sekarang adalah pendek, pengalaman lepas adalah kurang serta *hookup* industri dan *hookup* jabatan adalah jarang.

Penemuan kajian ini yang selebihnya hanya boleh digunakan pada skop yang terbatas. Bagi GS-UUM, keyakinan diri keusahawanan adalah selaras dengan kecenderungan keusahawanan walapun ianya bercanggah dengan kepekaan keusahawanan. Bagi IBS-UTM pula, kepekaan keusahawanan menyumbang secara positif kepada kedua-dua keupayaan mengenalpasti peluang keusahawanan dan kecenderungan keusahawanan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan salah satu daripada keupayaan mengenalpasti peluang keusahawanan atau keyakinan diri keusahawanan tidak dapat memberi ramalan yang menyeluruh terhadap kecenderungan keusahawanan. Keupayaan ramalan yang terhad ini mungkin dapat dijelaskan dengan perbezaan kes kajian dari segi faktor-faktor demografi dan latar belakang kerja. Hasil kajian ini juga menimbulkan persoalan berkenaan dengan keperluan untuk membentuk model kecenderungan keusahawanan yang bersifat *situational* dan *contingency*.

ABSTRACT

Various entrepreneurship measurements especially on intention and its determinants had been done at tertiary education level. This study adopts the previous specifically developed instruments on opportunity recognition, intention, self-efficacy and alertness for entrepreneurial research. The mentioned instruments were developed by McCline et al. (2000), Chen et al. (1998), De Noble et. al. (1999) and Hills and Shrader (1997) respectively. All instruments were adopted and proven suitable for local context with high reliability.

In addition to the major objective to test of possible relationship between the four major measurements, demographic factors, working background and experience as well as academic background and performance are also being tested to identify its possible role as the determinants.

The analysis was based on total of 125 respondents from Graduate School of Universiti Utara Malaysia (GS-UUM) and International Business School of University Technology Malaysia (IBS-UTM). These two institutions were selected based on their entrepreneurship programmes' objectives, so as enable the research to measure the effect of educational intervention on entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial intention. The analysis was done at both individual level of the two cases and at aggregate level to facilitate the comparison. Despite the slightly lower than expected respondent rate, the drawback was mitigated by applying non-parametric and small sample size alternatives.

Generally, higher entrepreneurial opportunity recognition capability leads to higher entrepreneurial intention. However, research findings shows lower academic performance, lesser number of years with current organization, lesser number of years of prior experience, lesser industry hookup and lesser industry hookup contribute to higher entrepreneurial intention.

Other research findings could only be applied on a more confined scope. At GS-UUM, the higher the entrepreneurial self-efficacy, the higher the entrepreneurial intention, but lower in term of entrepreneurial alertness. At IBS-UTM, entrepreneurial alertness contributes positively to entrepreneurial opportunity recognition capability, which again leads to higher entrepreneurial intention. These indicate that the prediction power of either the entrepreneurial opportunity recognition or entrepreneurial self-efficacy is not universal. The limited prediction power may be explained by the respondent groups' differences in term of demographic and working background. It raises the question of the need to establish contingency or situational entrepreneurial intention model.

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Next, I'll like to thank Professor Dr. Ismail b. Rejab - the director of International Business School of University Technology Malaysia for his permission to carry out the necessary field work. His permission enabled access to the information needed and to complete the fieldwork in time. Not forgetting also all the lecturers who permitted me to borrow a few minutes before lecture started to explain to the respondents the research work, as well as the management staff that helped a lot in providing the necessary information and in collecting back the completed questionnaires.

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Kho Ngee Liang
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30 APRIL 2004

DEDICATION

To my parents
For your concern, understanding and support

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GS-UUM	Graduate School of Universiti Utara Malaysia
IBS-UTM	International Business School of University Technology Malaysia
UTM	University Technology Malaysia
UUM	Universiti Utara Malaysia

CHAPTER 1

PRELIMINARY

1.1 Introduction

The development of entrepreneurial talent is important to sustain a competitive advantage in the global economy that is catalysed by innovation (Rasheed, 2002). The notion that bigness was not necessarily better, and that perhaps smaller was better, began to reach certain maturity in the early 1970s. (Blawart, 1998). Macrae (1976), an editorial writer for The Economist, made a number of observations concerning his perception of forthcoming entrepreneurial revolution which included evolve of large corporations into confederation of entrepreneurs.

From the 1970s onwards, many western countries have shared the same experience where large established firms can no longer create a net increase in employment. This has resulted in permanently high levels of unemployment and/or in an increasing relative importance of small and new firms as creators of new jobs (Aigner & Tichy, 1991; Davidsson, 1995a; 1995b; Davidsson, Lindmark & Olofsson, 1995).

Not only does the re-emergence of entrepreneurial effort promise to create a new economy, but also it is identified as the accompanying agent of change in what

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