Adopting real life entrepreneurs' experiences into youth entrepreneurial learning process model

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Abstract

Most entrepreneurship education emphasizes on teaching and learning about entrepreneurship with business plan and entrepreneurial characteristics or personalities as the popular topics. Whilst learning to become entrepreneurial still needs further improvement in the teaching and learning process. Entrepreneurship education therefore could adopt the process of how entrepreneurs develop their entrepreneurial attitude, behaviour and skills in their real lifelong learning experiences. This research aims to develop a model for entrepreneurial learning process based on the real lifelong entrepreneurs' learning experiences. The research covers the literature review on the concept of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial learning, and the field work. The social constructivist and interpretive approach are used as qualitative research. The research used a semi structured and direct interviews with Indonesian entrepreneurs to analyse rich qualitative data on the real lifelong entrepreneurs' learning experiences. The analysis on entrepreneurs' narratives identified important learning experiences which can be classified into the 5 basis or pillar of youth entrepreneurial learning process. The findings and supported by the literature reviews are therefore used to conceptualize a model for entrepreneurial learning which consists of starting up and nurturing learning stages as well as five elements of teaching and learning process such as learning goals, learning contents, learning strategy and methods, learning contexts, and learning assessment. The entrepreneurship educators can adopt the model to improve their entrepreneurship teaching methods and approaches to a more contextual and students' centred learning process.

Keywords: entrepreneurship education, nurturing, starting up, entrepreneurs' narratives

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has become an important new and unique discipline within the social sciences, and its study involves a multidisciplinary approach. The multidisciplinary perspectives throw up different interpretations and definitions of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur, and yet they identify entrepreneurship as a dynamic and evolving field of research (Sharma and Chrisman, 1999; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Ucbasaran et.al.,2001). The dynamic perspective of the psychological and social view, as well as the shift of focus to the individual level of entrepreneurship research leads one to recognise entrepreneurial learning as a new and interesting field. In addition, the important role of entrepreneurship in economic developments such as the creation of SMEs and self-employment clearly indicates that entrepreneurship, its understanding and development is vitally important for inclusion in formal education where most youth people learn to develop their competencies.

However as most entrepreneurship education in Indonesia is still emphasized on knowledge acquisition and lacks of entrepreneurial attitude and behaviour development in its learning process, the learning goals particularly at a tertiary level mostly focus in developing a business plan.

2. Understanding entrepreneurship

2.2 Personality traits approach

The entrepreneurship research on this psychological dimension argued that entrepreneurs were a group of people different from the rest of the majority (Murphy, et.al.2006), and try to answer the question: who is an

entrepreneur? (Chell, 2008). Accordingly, David McClelland popularized the concept of the "need for achievement motive" as the hallmark of entrepreneurship (Landström, 2005). In addition to the "need for achievement" (NAch), Rotter's "locus of control" (LOC), and "risk taking propensity" characteristics are blended together as the Big Three (Chell, 2008). The personality approach still gains support from a number of researchers who set out to explain the entrepreneurship phenomenon (Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003; Cantner et.al., 2011; John et.al., 2008). However, some scholars disagree with this approach. Drucker (1985) argues that entrepreneurship pertains to behavioural notion rather than to traits. Gartner (1989, p.48) early criticised the personality traits approach and asserted that "who is an entrepreneur" was the wrong question instead the question should be 'why'an entrepreneur creates a new venture. Personality traits is "a static analysis approach" and lacks general application (Kobia & Sikalieh, 2010, p.116); they may be too simple to describe entrepreneurs who create business ventures in a dynamic and various circumstances (Okhomina, 2010). Volkman, et.al. (2010, p.10) reiterates that studying the entrepreneur's behaviour and actions is more meaningful than profiling a successful entrepreneur with characteristics. Furthermore, Davidsson (2007, p.293) argues that those characteristics cannot predict the unique entrepreneurial behaviour and are not easily "teachable and learnable".

2.3 Behavioural approach

Intensifying critics on personality traits approach has led to the development of entrepreneurial behaviour research (Jones & Wadhani, 2007), and to focus the research more on the environment and social background which influence entrepreneurial behaviour rather than on individuals (Llwellyn & Wilson, 2003), or shifting from personality traits to entrepreneurial process in the social context (Bygrave & Hofer, 1991). Being an entrepreneurial process the behaviour manifests the entrepreneur's responses and reactions to the contextual environment, it describes the dynamic nature of entrepreneur's behaviour compared to the static nature of the so called entrepreneur's traits. Based on the action rather than on the doer, some researchers propose definitions of "entrepreneurial behaviour". It is what entrepreneurs perform (Mair, 2002), in forms of entrepreneurial actions (Bateman & Crant, 1993).

2.4 Entrepreneurial learning

Entrepreneurial learning is fundamental to the process of entrepreneurship development (Deakins et al, 2000), either for training existing entrepreneurs to develop their business (Lalita Rani, 1996), or educating potential entrepreneurs whilst in formal education. As suggested by Gartner (1989), that entrepreneurship research shift from studying who are entrepreneurs to what they do or how they act, the analysis then focuses on entrepreneurial behaviours that can be learned and taught. Most researchers refer to entrepreneurial learning as linked up to the behavioural approach of entrepreneurship process such as the concept of 'venture creation' or 'opportunity recognition and exploitation'.

2.5 Behavioural learning

Entrepreneurship education is about changing or developing students' behaviour as Scheiner (2009). Fayolle and Kyrö (2008) adds that building students'awareness and interest are crucial prior to entrepreneurial action. Developing students' entrepreneurial behaviour in a learning environment is not teaching about entrepreneurial traits to the students. These learning processes for developing an entrepreneurial attitude and behaviour cannot be done in isolated classroom activities but it needs students' involvement in a broader context and environment; it needs to adopt inclusive perspectives that portray how entrepreneurs "live and learn" (Gibb, 2002, p.135), it cannot be done devoid of "social context" (Rae, 2003, p.543), or industry liaison (Carsrud, 2009, p.47).

3. The research methodology.

This research is to answer "what can be adopted from entrepreneur's real experiences into youth entrepreneurial learning process?"

Ten people with various business activities ranged from 25 to 69 years of ages were directly interviewed in their

premises using a semi structured interview. The social constructivist and interpretive approach are used as qualitative research to acknowledge what actually 'out there' exists as the entrepreneurs' learning in their social and cultural environment. This existence presumably creates new knowledge of entrepreneurial learning, particularly in the local social and cultural context. Based on the biographical interview used as the research method, the analysis and interpretation of the entrepreneurs'learning are summarized and categorized under the important headings as basis for entrepreneurial learning process.

4. Findings from the narrative interpretations.

The entrepreneurs'accounts were recorded, transcribed and then analysed through relevant key words identification and cross cases analysis. Furthermore the interpretation on the entrepreneurs 'narratives resulted in five distinct learning process elements i.e: learning goals, learning contents, learning strategy and method, learning contexts, and learning resources as shown in Table 4.1

Table 4.1
Entrepreneurial learning process elements

Elements	Entrepreneur's learning experiences
Learning contents	Practices: communication (understanding customers, build relationship), functional skills (selling, marketing, finance, human resources), technical skills
	Attitude : courage, self confidence, hardworking, opportunity alert, smart, reliable, economical
Learning contexts	Hardship during the childhood, social and business networking, routine business operation, handling problems
Learning approach or methods	Effectuation, bootstrapping, trial & error, learning by doing, problem solving, DIY, self study, observation, action learning, experiential learning, social learning, opportunity centred learning
Learning stages	Nurturing (help parent's business, respond to difficult life, make money by selling); Starting-up (DIY, saving, direct selling, bootstrapping)
Learning resources	Family (through mentoring, parent support, family business skills training); Network (friends, communities, business association) Education (education level, extracurricular activities)

5. Conceptualization of the learning process model.

The findings on the learning process elements above as revealed from the narrative analysis and interpretation (see Table 4.1) and supported by related references are used to develop the model for entrepreneurial learning as follow. The central point of the model is "the youth entrepreneurial learning process" covering "the nurturing stage" and the "starting-up stage" which represent the learning stage. The learning processes in each stage incorporate the essential five elements or "pillars" .

Learning goals.

The first essential pillar is learning goals which guide stakeholders and those who are concerned with the entrepreneurship education to progress on the right direction. The common goal of an entrepreneurship education is to increase start-up venturing by new entrepreneurs. But for an entrepreneurship education at a formal education it could be one of the goal sets, as Hytti (2002, p.5) classifies three types of goals: "learning to become entrepreneurial, learning to understand about entrepreneurship, and learning to become an entrepreneur". Kirby (2007, p.31) also proposes three goals of the entrepreneurship education: "teaching about entrepreneurs.... teaching for enterprise...and teaching through enterprise". Likewise Liñán (2004, pp.10-12) suggests four levels in entrepreneurship education: "entrepreneurship awareness education; education for start-up; education for entrepreneurial dynamism; and continuing education for entrepreneur". These aims or types of entrepreneurship education in this study will be called "learning goals" to emphasize that the students

are aware of, and own, the learning process. The learning goals are blended together or "co-exist" (Hytti 2002, p.14) in whole contents of entrepreneurship education.
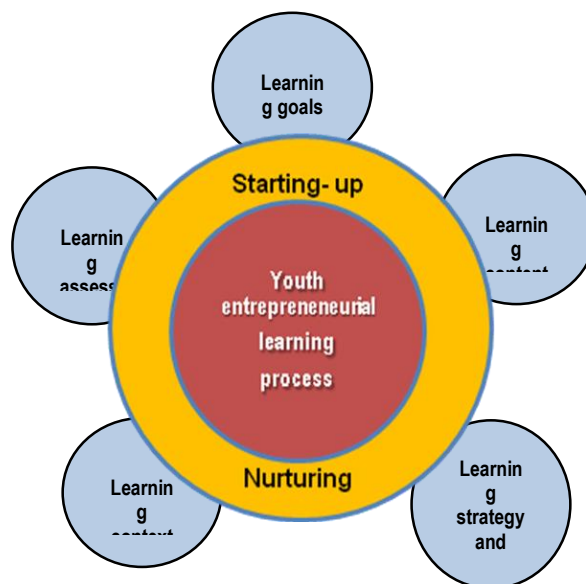

Figure 5.1
Five pillars model for youth
entrepreneurial learning x

Learning content.

The Second Pillar is the "learning content" that comprises firstly *Entrepreneurial attitude* to be develoved and embraced in all activities. Entrepreneurial learning activities should trigger and shape positive learners' attitude toward entrepreneurship career and self employment. Athayde (2009) revealed in a study that an entrepreneurship program can improve students' positive attitude toward self-employment. Secondly *Productive skills* which can be improved through fostering the students' hobbies or interests, a reasonable extension of the do-it-yourself (DIY) culture as Bartel (2004, p.21) describes : DIY life styles as " making – and teaching others to make – soap, lip gloss, candles, bags, food, clothing – the list goes on and on". This DIY skill should be fostered in entrepreneurial learning process as in Germany it is categorized as the shadow economy that can create 5% of GDP (Buehn et al., 2009). The third content is ICT skill by which young people as potential entrepreneurs could take advantage of technology for doing business. Forth content is *Business and economic skills* in which students can practice market research, financial literacy, selling and marketing, communication, leadership, organizational skills.

Learning strategy and methods.

Dansereau (1985, p.210) defines learning strategy as "a set of steps or processes that can facilitate the acquisition, storage /or utilization of information". Soni (2004, pp.5-1) sees from the teaching side as "a broader outline of arranging instruction using a variety of methods, techniques and communication media resources" Banthiya (in Soni, 2004, p,5-10) defines the method "as an arranging of learning events adopted by the teacher to facilitate learning to occur in the students or trainees". The 'learning strategy' should be inquisitive or inductive in nature by using various learner-active methods such as action learning, experiential learning, social learning, and opportunity centred learning, trial and error, and learning by doing.

Learning contexts.

The Fourth Pillar is "learning contexts" in which entrepreneurial learning must take place. Traditional teaching and learning activities put most emphasis on the cognitive aspect, by which students learn the theory inside the classroom detached from the real world outside the classroom. This cannot be done in entrepreneurship education, because as Malmberg (2004 in Nyseth & Viken, 2009) argues, that the entrepreneurial process takes place within the social, cultural, industrial context, legal and regulation context in which entrepreneurs are engaged.

Learning assessments

The teacher makes the formative assessment during the learning process to ensure the student can achieve the best. While the summative assessment is generally conducted at the end of the course programme in order to evaluate the students' attainment. For cognitive learning achievements, the teacher together with investors can evaluate the students' work on a project document, such as Business Plan, but for affective domain assessment, such as entrepreneurial attitude, this may involve using a particular test model to measure achievement, personal control, creativity, leadership, and intuition (Athayde, 2009). However, the summative assessment in entrepreneurship education, researchers argue, is not to focus of the course programme, rather formative assessment is recognized as more important for evaluating the needs for learning; a shift from "assessment of learning" to "assessment for learning" (Lans & Gullicker, 2010, p.54). The business mentor can take part in formative assessment to provide valuable and expert feedback for the students. In addition peer assessment can be used to improve students' performance (Wood, 2005) within the group which is mostly the format of a project work. Peer assessment is important in the learning process, as "it shifts the learning and assessment focus from lecturer-centred to student-centred" (Jones & English, 2004, p.421).

6. Conclusion.

The model derived from this research is clearly different in prescribing how to teach and get students learn and engage in entrepreneurship education especially in Indonesia as an emerging economic country. Even though the model developed and recommended here seems to be generic and does not provide detailed description in each pillar, it easily helps the teacher or user to grasp an inclusive framework of an entrepreneurial learning that empirically based on the entrepreneurs'experiences.

As far as entrepreneurship education concerned the teacher need to keep up with the more developed and effective teaching and learning strategies and methods. The model proposed here invite the teachers now to emphasize more on students' active learning process. Based on the model, the teacher or users need to develop relevant teaching and learning process that is suitable for the changing environment – an adoption process. However there is a challenge that through an entrepreneurship education the learners should not only be able to respond to the environment but also change the environment, as Cope argues (2005, p.392) that Entrepreneurial learning does not happen in static and predictable circumstances, but rather in disruptive and unstable situation. Thus, this notion should inspire the teacher or user to involve the stakeholders particularly the entrepreneurs to update the learning process that endow the learners' creativity to change the environment at their best.

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