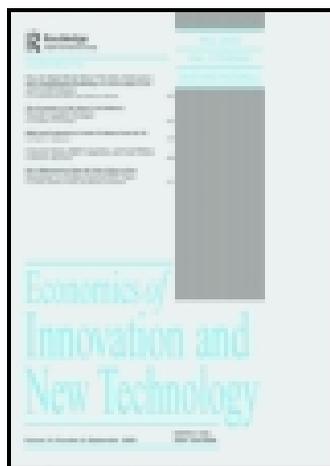


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Personal strategic alliances: enhancing the scientific and technological contributions of university faculty in Malaysia

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Personal strategic alliances: enhancing the scientific and technological contributions of university faculty in Malaysia

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Scientific and technological human capital is a critical element for the economic and social advancement of countries in the developing world. Using Malaysia as an example, this paper examines the relationship between the research productivity of university faculty and human capital development with a specific focus on personal strategic alliances. The results show that educational attainment, location at a designated research university, and consulting experience positively influence faculty publication productivity. Furthermore, alliances established through consulting, applied research, and entrepreneurial experiences are critical for the development of new technologies stemming from university research. Malaysia's experience may hold lessons for developing countries: the full development potential of human capital investments may only be realized by simultaneously strengthening and supporting personal strategic alliances with communities outside academia.

Keywords: strategic alliances; social networks; human capital; science and technology policy; universities; research productivity; Malaysia

1. Introduction

While Malaysia has enjoyed rapid and sustained growth for at least the past 40 years, a recent economic slowdown has ignited fears that the country is sliding toward a so-called 'middle-income trap' whereby developing countries fail to achieve high levels of productivity growth. In response to these concerns, Prime Minister YAB Dato' Sri Mohemmed Najib introduced an ambitious plan in 2010 to double Malaysia's per capita income in eight years, placing much emphasis on the role of Science and Technology (S&T). In the words of Dato' Sri Dr Zakri, Malaysia's Science Advisor:

It is increasingly realized that innovation, underpinned by science and technology is a major key to any country's economic prosperity and social wellbeing. Countries that spend less on research and development (R&D) risk relegation to the backwaters of under-development. (NSRC 2013)

The Prime Minister's S&T strategy has included substantial investments in human capital, including efforts to expand the number of PhDs educated in Malaysia and to increase R&D spending.

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