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How Far Do Malaysian University Students Intend to be The Entrepreneur? A Structural Equation Modelling

Nor Azilah Husin[1]*, Eka Mariyanti[2], Aznita Ahmad[3], and Suria Abu Basar[4]

[1]School of Business and Social Sciences, Albukhary International University, 05200, Alor Setar, Kedah, Malaysia
[2]Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Dharma Andalas, Padang, West Sumatera, Indonesia
[3]Faculty of Business and Accountancy, Universiti Selangor, 40000 Shah Alam, Malaysia
[4]Department of Accounting, Management and Muamalah, Faculty of Business and Accountancy, Universiti Selangor,
Malaysia

azilah.husin@aiu.edu.my

Abstract

Introduction/Main Objectives: The goal of this study is to investigate the level of entrepreneurial intention and the factors in fostering students' entrepreneurial intentions by looking at the elements of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and entrepreneurial knowledge. Data has been collected from students enrolled in Malaysian universities. The responses were obtained from 200 respondents selected through the convenience sampling technique. The Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique was utilised to measure the model using Smart PLS software. The respondents were asked to indicate their perception level on a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). This study found a significant positive relationship between attitude, subjective norms, and entrepreneurial knowledge towards entrepreneurial intentions. The respondents consider entrepreneurship to be a highly desirable career alternative for people with their education. However, perceived behavioural control does not significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions. Remarkably, most Malaysian university students have a high level of entrepreneurial intention to start up their businesses after completing their studies. The findings of this study prove direct implications for entrepreneurship educators regarding the profile of students who likely have higher entrepreneurial intentions on stimulating start-up business activities for students.

Keywords: *Attitude, Entrepreneurial intention, Entrepreneurial knowledge, Perceived Control Behaviour, Subjective Norms*

Abstrak

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengetahui tahap niat keusahawanan dan faktor-faktornya dalam memupuk niat keusahawanan di kalangan pelajar dengan melihat unsur-unsur sikap, norma subjektif, yang dirasakan kawalan tingkah laku, dan pengetahuan keusahawanan. Data datang daripada pelajar yang mendaftar di universiti Malaysia. Maklum balas diperoleh daripada 200 orang responden dipilih melalui teknik persampelan mudah. Teknik Partial Least Squares (PLS) digunakan untuk mengukur model menggunakan perisian Smart PLS. Responden diminta untuk menunjukkan tahap persepsi mereka pada Likert 5 mata Skala, bermula dari Sangat Tidak Setuju (1) hingga Sangat Setuju (5). Kajian ini mendapati hubungan positif yang signifikan antara sikap, norma subjektif, dan pengeahuan keusahawanan ke arah niat keusahawanan. Responden menganggap keusahawanan menjadi alternatif kerjaya yang sangat diingini orang dengan pendidikan mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, tingkah laku yang dirasakan kawalan tidak mempengaruhi niat

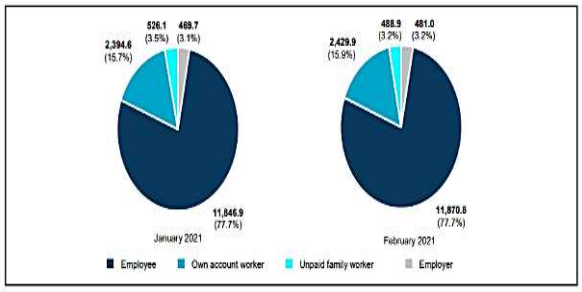
keusahawanan. Hebatnya, kebanyakan pelajar universiti Malaysia mempunyai niat keusahawanan yang tinggi untuk memulakan perniagaan mereka perniagaan selepas menamatkan pengajian mereka. Penemuan kajian ini membuktikan implikasi langsung kepada pendidik keusahawanan mengenai profil pelajar yang berkemungkinan mempunyai lebih tinggi niat keusahawanan untuk merangsang permulaan perniagaan pelajar.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been considered one of the significant strategic directions in many countries around the world, including Malaysia. In facing the current unpredicted situation, entrepreneurship development has been identified by the Malaysian Government and politics as a unit source of sustainable employment creation. The successful initiatives provided by the Government to help entrepreneurs can be seen in the trend of own-account earnings in Malaysia. According to Malaysia's Department of Statistics (DOSM), own-account workers comprised 15.9 per cent, augmented to 2.43 million persons in February 2021 (January 2021: 2.39 million persons) (Figure 1). This group consists primarily of small business operators, micro-businesses, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Figure 1

Employed person by status in Employment, January 2021 and February 2021



Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia (2021)

The Malaysian Government also supports youth enterprises by encouraging students to accumulate and leverage entrepreneurship skills and knowledge to increase self-employment and new venture creation. A series of entrepreneurship development programs have been implemented in the country's higher education institutions (HEIs) to assist in the growth of entrepreneurship among fresh Malaysian graduates. Studying how nurturing risk-taking intention and behaviour among students is considered one of the most rewarding research areas in the study of entrepreneurship (Müller, 2016). This research gap can mainly be observed within the area of entrepreneurial intention; therefore, many researchers propose focusing more on internal factors that promote entrepreneurial intention. Being an entrepreneur is crucial, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in an adverse economic situation; graduate unemployment in Malaysia appears to be increasing yearly (Husin et al., 2021). In light of this scenario, academic research on entrepreneurship acquires value in having scientific data supporting the way to achieve a greater boost in entrepreneurship.

Literature Review

Some studies have been carried out to identify the level of entrepreneurial intention (Rodrigues et al., 2023; Sampene et al., 2023; Hutasuhut et al., 2020; Ahsan & Faletehan, 2021; Supardi et al., 2022), especially among students. Norhatta et al. (2015) and Bahrein et al. (2016) discovered the same direct level of entrepreneurial deliberation among open and private college understudies. Another investigation conducted by Nuringsih et al. (2019) among private college understudies illustrated that the level of entrepreneurial intention was high. Masri et al. (2021) found that entrepreneurial intention among vocational college students was moderate. Thus, this study has two-prong objectives: to find out the determinants of entrepreneurial intention and its level among public and private Malaysian university students.

In a recent Guess global report, Sieger et al. (2018) analysed the entrepreneurial spirit of university students separated by

country. They found that men dominate the gender gap in entrepreneurship. It was revealed that the research field is relatively narrow. Ajzen's (2002) Theory of Planned Behavior model determines intentions by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Previous empirical studies suggested that each element of the Theory of Planned Behavior is believed to affect entrepreneurial intentions significantly (Karimi et al., 2016; Tiwari et al., 2017). TPB reinforces how cognition and feasibility are affected by auras such as education and experience and how entrepreneurial motivation influences, influences, or acts on the perception of feasibility. It also provides information and insights on how to (Ahmed et al., 2020). We added another variable of entrepreneurship knowledge as it is a potential determinant of entrepreneurial intention (Bae et al., 2014; Othman et al., 2020). The following sub-sections discuss these four determinants briefly.

Attitude

Attitude toward the behaviour refers to how the individual holds an overall positive or negative personal valuation about being an entrepreneur (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). Attitude plays the most prominent role (Husin et al., 2022). Attitude toward entrepreneurial behaviour exerts a significant link to the entrepreneurial intention of university students (Barba-Sánchez et al., 2022). According to Ajzen (1991), the more favourable the attitude toward the behaviour, the more robust the individual's intention to complete the behaviour. Ajzen (2005) claimed that people grow attitudes based on their beliefs about the consequences of performing the behaviour. Such impacts include intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, such as financial rewards, independence/autonomy, and personal rewards, which influence favourably the intention to commence a business (Vanevenhoven & Liguori 2013).

Another study was done by Boubker et al. (2021) on the effect of students' entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions in Laayoune Higher School of Technology, Morocco, suggested that entrepreneurial intention is supposed to depend on four variables, specifically: entrepreneurship education, attitude towards entrepreneurship, perceived subjective norms and perceived entrepreneurial capacity. Their findings indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between management students' entrepreneurship education, attitude towards entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial intention. In a similar vein, Miranda et al. (2017) suggested that attitude is the most vital factor affecting entrepreneurship intention among students from Spanish Universities. Based on these propositions, therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H_1: There is a positive relationship of attitude toward the entrepreneurial intention

Subjective Norm

Subjective norm alludes to social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In entrepreneurship, social forms indicate the discernment of what a person's "reference group," such as family, companions, or critical others, would think almost performing entrepreneurial behavior or whether they favour or dislike the entrepreneurial choice (Khuong & An, 2016).

Past literature suggests that social norms are positively related to entrepreneurial behaviour (Liu et al., 2022; Asimakopoulos et al., 2019; Nazri et al., 2016). Similarly, Utami (2017) revealed that a factor affecting entrepreneurship intention is a social norm whereby the family's confidence role can help start a business. In Malaysian public universities, all three elements (attitude, social norm, and perceived behavioural control) affect entrepreneurial intentions with the most vital factors of social norms (Soon et al., 2016). Expanding the discussion to Malaysian universities and consistent with the findings of previous studies, this study conjectures that subjective norm is crucial for determining entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, it is assumed that:

H_2: There is a positive relationship between subjective norms toward the entrepreneurial intention

Perceived Behavioral Control

Ajzen (2002) reiterated that perceived behavioural control is one's belief and confidence in their capability to perform as an entrepreneur and realise control and success in entrepreneurial activity. Previous studies suggest that perceived behavioural control positively and significantly affects entrepreneurial intention among graduating students at Debre Berhan University (Baciu et al., 2020; Adhikusuma & Genoveva, 2020). This study is in line with Masoomi et al.'s (2016) research that demonstrates that perceived behaviour control is strongly linked to students' entrepreneurial intentions in agriculture at the University of Shiraz, Iran. Further, Utami (2017) also found that perceived behavioural control affects entrepreneurial intentions, justifying that starting a business can prompt someone to be creative. Based on this discussion, this study assumes that perceived behavioural control is crucial for determining entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, it is predicted that:

H_3: There is a positive influence of perceived behavioural control on the entrepreneurial intention

Entrepreneurship Knowledge

Entrepreneurial knowledge is described as the concepts, skills, and mentality that entrepreneurs use or should use (Jack & Anderson, 1999). Entrepreneurship education provides knowledge and affects students' mindsets (Hutasuhut, 2020). The premise for encouraging acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge can contribute to students' entrepreneurial attitudes, abilities, and skills and enhance their intentions to launch new ventures (Piperopoulos & Dimov, 2015). Previous studies prove that entrepreneurship knowledge may influence entrepreneurial intentions (Hutasuhut, 2020; Hutasuhut, 2018; Jakopec & Sušanj, 2013). Ambad and Ag Damit (2016) discovered that entrepreneurial knowledge significantly increased the perceived feasibility of starting a business, which implies that entrepreneurial knowledge can enhance entrepreneurial intention. Besides, researchers suggest that entrepreneurial knowledge constitutes the heart of entrepreneurship (Jebarajakirthy and Thaichon, 2015) and significantly affects venture creation decisions and intentions. Many recent pieces of research have also confirmed that entrepreneurship knowledge positively influences entrepreneurial intention (Anwar et al., 2020; Anwar et al., 2018; Martin et al., 2013). Based on these propositions, therefore, it is assumed that:

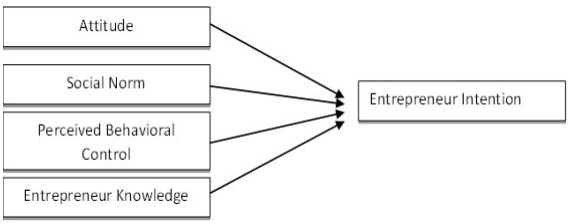
H_4: There is a positive influence of entrepreneurial knowledge on the entrepreneurial intention

Method, Data, and Analysis

This section describes the method used to evaluate the measurement and structural model. Below is the framework of this study, using entrepreneurial intention as the dependent variable and attitude, social norm, perceived behaviour control, and entrepreneurial knowledge as the independent variables.

Figure 2

Research framework



Data Collection Method and Sample

Today, Malaysian universities can be seen as a powerful source of knowledge advancement and entrepreneurial opportunities. Universities in Malaysia seek to provide multiple university policies and appropriate environments to explore, evaluate, and harness the knowledge that the university community can transform into new ventures. For this reason, it makes sense to look up intent in this knowledge context for the university students as the respondents.

This study uses a quantitative rather than a qualitative approach to find empirical support for hypotheses developed from previous literature. The data collected and the results of the survey predict the expected relationships between the variables. The questionnaire has been translated into the original language to avoid losing meaning. In addition, it did not infringe on the privacy of survey participants. In addition, respondents were previously guaranteed anonymity in data collection. All respondents were informed that participation was voluntary and confidentiality was guaranteed.

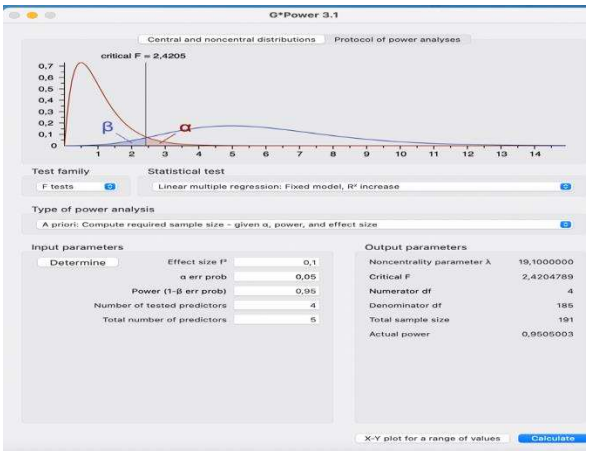
Sampling Method

We chose the research sample because it was representative of the general population. To enable this criterion, the sample size was determined concerning Test power calculations (G*Power 3.1.9.2; Erdfelder et al., 1996), showing that the sample size was sufficient to detect a medium effect (w = 0.10) with alpha = 0.05 and power = 0.95. G*Power is a software package for sampling that addresses issues such as power values for specific sample sizes, impact measurement and alpha levels (post hoc power analysis), sample sizes for specific beta values, and alpha and beta/alpha ratios (compromising power analysis) (Erdfelder et al., 1996).

The software considers the margin of error, confidence level, and distribution response. It also shows the margin of error with various sample sizes. The sample in this study used non-probability sampling with purposive sampling method techniques. The sampling uses a non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling technique. The criteria for selecting the sample in this study were students from public and private universities. The second criterion is students who have taken entrepreneurship courses before. The effect size shows the standardized difference between the scores of the control and experimental groups. Effect Size is a standard unit, meaning that Effect Size can be compared between several different scales and between studies with different sample sizes. Based on the G power analysis with an effect size value of 0.1, a significance level of 95%, and a total number of predictors of 5, the total sample size was 200 respondents.

Figure 3

*G*power Sample Size*



Data is collected from November and December 2021. A total of 200 Malaysian HEIs responded to this study through an online survey. The convenience sampling method collects the data based on who is conveniently available to provide it (Sarstedt et al., 2018). However, some incomplete and erroneous questionnaires were excluded, and 200 usable questionnaires were finally selected to run the research model. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with a minimum of 30 respondents. Three (3) items (A2, EK3, SN1) were deleted due to lower loadings. The questionnaire is formulated based on specific research objectives. The approach to testing the hypotheses was based on what Hockerts (2017) used to test a social entrepreneurial intentions model. The questionnaire is divided into six main parts: Section A comprises the demographic profile of the respondents. The other five sections contain items related to dependent and independent variables. The set of questionnaires is formulated based on the chosen variables from the previous studies. The respondents were asked to indicate their perception level on a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

Data Analysis Method

A Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the Theoretical model. The first phase is conducted to validate the instrument using convergent validity, composite reliability, discriminant validity, and reliability. Further, the second phase shows the PLS-SEM to measure the relationships between four latent variables. The PLS-SEM method is the most suitable method to explore the relationship between targeted variables (Hair et al., 2019). Henseler and Chin (2010) suggested using 5000 replications of samples (i.e., bootstrapping theory) to assess the significant influence of the variables by estimating the t-statistics and Bootstrap-t values.

Result and Discussion

Respondents Profile

Figure 4 summarizes the sample characteristics. Figure 4a depicts females are more than males as 66% of the study's participants were female compared to 34% male. Further, figure 4b shows that the majority of the respondents are between 20 and 25 years old. They make up more than half (61%) of the total responses to the survey given. As depicted in Figure 4c, the respondents' ethnicity status shows that 167 (83.5%) of respondents are Malays, while non-Malays are only 16.5%. In terms of working employment (Figure 4d), only 15% of the respondents are self-employed, while the majority (85%) are currently working with others. However, Figure 2e shows that 17% of the respondents owned a business. Finally, figure 4f shows that 46% of the respondents studied business courses, indicating they know about entrepreneurship.

Figure 4

Respondents Profile

Figure 4a

Gender of Respondents

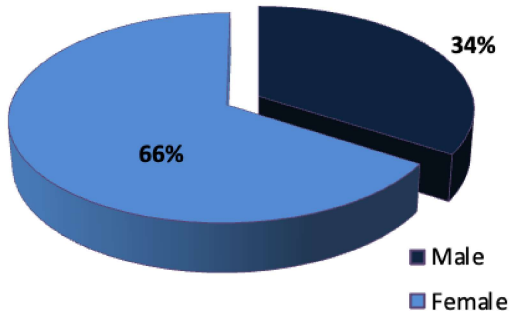


Figure 4b

Age Group of Respondents

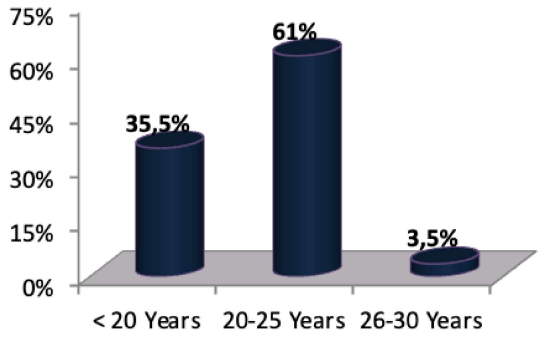


Figure 4c

Ethnicity of Respondents

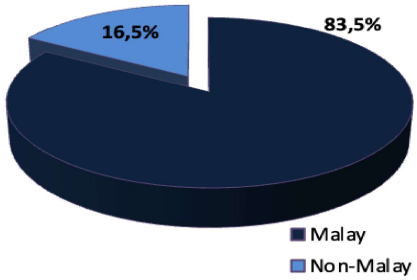


Figure 4d

Employment Status

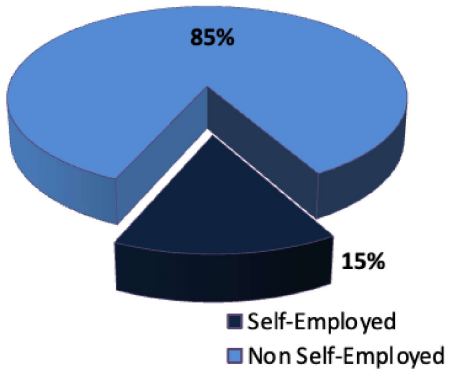


Figure 4e

Business Experience

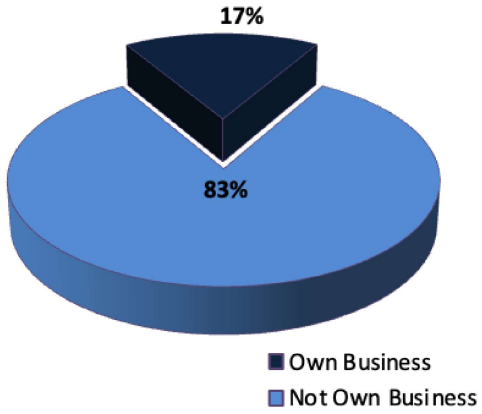
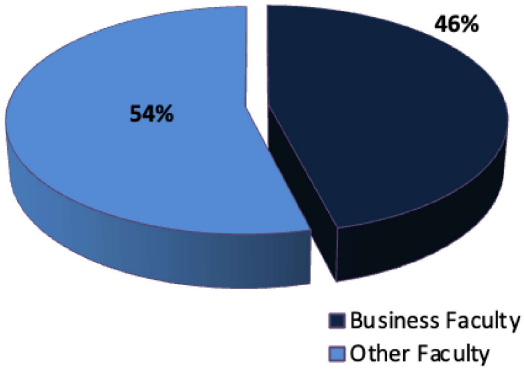


Figure 4f

Education Background



T-test Analysis

An independent sample *t*-test was performed to compare the extent of entrepreneurial intention among respondents based on gender. The result in Table 1 shows a statistically significant difference in the scores of the entrepreneurial intention of respondents based on different gender (*t*-statistic = 2.564**), and it is significant at the 5 percent level. There was a significant difference between male ((M= 3.6789, SD= 0.858) and female (M= 3.4747, SD= 0.906), t(200) = 3.049, *p* = .013). The mean of Entrepreneurial Intention for males (M= 3.6789) was higher than for females (M= 3.4747). The result indicates that male students have slightly more intention to be an entrepreneur as compared to female students. The different intention of gender is consistent with those reported in the previous study by Justus (2021) and Vamvaka et al. (2020), which suggests that women less frequently than men translate entrepreneurial intention into entrepreneurial action.

Table 1

Entrepreneurial Intention shown by Respondent based on Gender

Gender	n	Entrepreneurial Intention		Independent Sample *t*-Test	
		Mean	SD	*t*-statistic	*p*-value
Male	68	3.6789	0.858	2.564	.013**
Female	132	3.4747	0.906		

Notes: Results were significantly different at the *** 1 per cent level and ** 5 per cent level, respectively, using two-tailed tests.

Measurement Model

This study ran Confirmatory Factor Analysis using SmartPLS version 3. Besides, convergent validity and discriminant validity were used to evaluate the measurement model. Table 3 shows the results of the measurement model. For secure

convergent validity, the statistics should meet the three permissible levels. First, all factor loadings should be bigger than 0.7 (Chin, 1998). Second, composite reliability (CR) should be more significant than 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and finally, the average variance extracted (AVE) of each latent variable should be bigger than 0.5 (Barclay et al., 1995). The results indicate that all factors' factor loadings and composite reliability exceeded 0.7. The lowest value of AVE was 0.687, while Cronbach's alpha values are larger than 0.7. These measurement model results denote that the items have adequate internal consistency, are reliable, and valid.

Further, multicollinearity between each independent variable should be confirmed before SEM analysis by checking the variance inflation factors (VIF) statistics. According to Hair et al. (2020), the VIF values of the model should be lower than 5.

Table 2 depicts that the VIF of the model was as follows: attitude 1.928, subjective norm 1.982, perceived behaviour control 1.651, and entrepreneurship knowledge 1.674. These results show that all VIF values were not greater than 5.

Table 2

The Measurement Model Statistics

Indicators & Items	Loading	AVE	γ	α	VIF
Entrepreneurship Intention					
My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur.	0.902	.773	.953	.941	
I am prepared all out to be an entrepreneur.	0.866				
Interested in being an entrepreneur.	0.886				
I will work very hard at becoming an entrepreneur.	0.902				
I will put every effort to start and run my own business.	0.896				
I will start my own business after completing my studies. Seriously	0.822				
Attitude Owning a business is the best way to take advantage of education.	0.734				
I am confident I would succeed if I started my own business.	0.883	.687	.897	.846	1.928
Personally consider entrepreneurship as a highly desirable career.	0.870				
It would be easy to have your own business.	0.821				

Subjective Norms					
Family support to become an entrepreneur.	0.886				
Friends support to become an entrepreneur.	0.884				
The government policy supports becoming an entrepreneur.	0.805	.730	.915	.877	1.982
The university supports becoming an entrepreneur.	0.840				
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.847				
I want to be my own boss.	0.897				
I wish to make my dream come true.	0.889				
I want to increase my prestige.	0.853	.763	.942	.924	1.651
I want my personal freedom.	0.881				
I want to have my own satisfaction.	0.847				
Entrepreneurship Knowledge					
An entrepreneur organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business.	0.855	.718	.911	.869	1.674
E-commerce via electronic systems on the internet and other computer networks.	0.830				
Communication is a vital aspect of the management process that is unavoidable for all managers.	0.869				
Innovation is the development process whereby an idea is translated into an application.	0.836				

Notes: AVE = Average Variance Explained; γ = Composite Reliability; α = Cronbach's Alpha; *p <.05.

Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity assessment aims to certify that a reflective construct has the most significant relationships with its indicators in the PLS path model (Hair et al., 2019). Traditionally, a commonly used analysis to assess discriminant validity is the Fornell-Larcker criterion. In assessing the discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE of each construct should be higher than the construct's correlation with any other constructs; this notion is identical to comparing the AVE with the

squared correlations between the constructs (Chin, 1998; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 3 presents that the square roots of the AVE for the reflective constructs are all higher than the correlations of these constructs with the other latent variables in the path model. This finding has proven that the constructs are achieving discriminant validity.

Table 3

Fornell-Larcker Criterion Discriminant Analysis for Measurement Model

	Entrep. Intention	Attitude	Subjective Norm	Behavioural Control	Entrep. Knowledge
Entrep. Intention	0.879				
Attitude	0.766	0.829			
Subjective Norm	0.600	0.659	0.854		
Behavioural Control	0.417	0.483	0.503	0.874	
Entrep. Knowledge	0.508	0.496	0.506	0.563	0.848

Notes: The diagonal (bold) value is a square root of the AVE of each latent variable, and the element off-diagonal value is the inter-correlation value between latent variables.

Structural Model

Figure 5 and Figure 6 show the findings for structural model assessment. The predictive power result shows that the four variables in the model were able to explain about 61.7 per cent of the variance explained toward the entrepreneurial intention. Conventionally, in business issues, R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 indicate substantial, moderate, or weak, respectively (Hair et al., 2019; Hensler & Chin., 2010). Therefore, the finding is considered the structural model's moderate predictive ability.

Figure 5

Loading Assessment

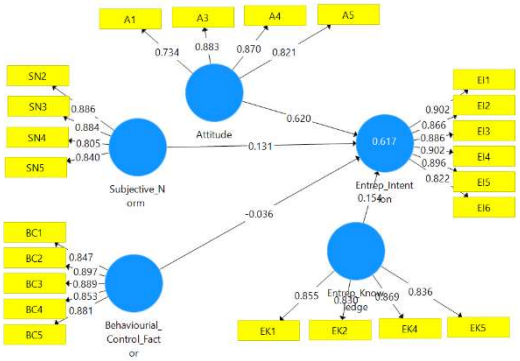
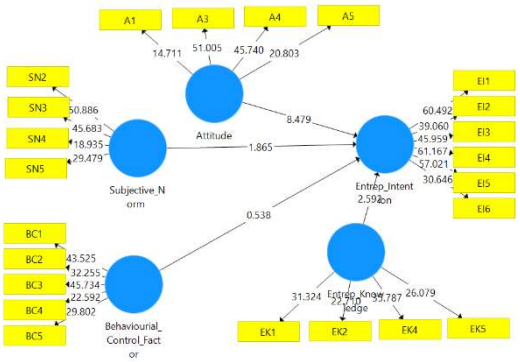


Figure 6

Bootstrapping Assessment



In the context of the causal relationship, the result in Table 5 confirms that attitude (β = 0.620, t = 8.479, p < .05) and entrepreneurship knowledge (β = 0.154, t = 2.592, p <.05) having a simultaneously positive significant effect toward entrepreneurial intention, and it is significant at 1 per cent level. Besides, the result also reveals that subjective norms affect entrepreneurial intention (β = 0.131, t = 1.865, p <.05), and it is significant at a 5

per cent level. These results indicate that if the average level of personal attitude, subjective norms, and entrepreneurship knowledge were good, then the intention to start a business would be high. On the contrary, the result depicts that perceived behavioural control (β = -0.036, t = 0.538, p = .591) has an insignificant effect on entrepreneurial intention. These results mean that an increment or decrement level of the perceived behavioural control variable will not affect the level of entrepreneurial intention. Table 5 suggests that H_1, H_2, and H_4 were supported.

The effect size (f^2), which measures the impact of a particular predictor construct on an endogenous construct, is also shown in Table 5. The f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects on an endogenous construct (Chin, 1998; Gefen et al., 2000). It was observed that the values obtained for the attitude variable had a large effect size on entrepreneurial intention. On the other hand, subjective norms and entrepreneurship knowledge variables had a medium effect size. Finally, the perceived behaviour control variable had a negligible effect on entrepreneurial intention.

Table 4

Structural Model Assessment

H	Path Estimate	β	t-statistics	p-value	f^2
H_1	Attitude →Intention	0.620	8.479	0.000***	0.521
H_2	Subjective Norms →Intention	0.131	1.865	0.042**	0.023
H_3	Behavioural control →Intention	-0.036	-0.538	0.591 NS	0.002
H_4	Entrepreneurship Knowledge →Intention	0.154	2.592	0.010***	0.037

Notes: NS = Not Significant; β = Standardized Beta Coefficient; f^2 = Effect Size

This section reports and discusses the findings related to the student's intention for entrepreneurship. One sample *t*-test was conducted to test whether the overall level of entrepreneurial intention is significantly equal to or different from a specified constant. Table 1 reveals the level of entrepreneurial intention perceived by all respondents participating in this study. Specifically, Table 6 shows the mean result of 3.5442 for entrepreneurial intention, indicating that most Malaysian university students have a high level of intention to become entrepreneurs. Overall, the students are most likely to have a lot of interest in being an entrepreneur and seriously think about starting their own business after completing their studies.

The Level of Entrepreneurial Intention

This section reports and discusses the findings related to the student's intention for entrepreneurship. One sample *t*-test was conducted to test whether the overall level of entrepreneurial intention is significantly equal to or different from a specified constant. Table 1 reveals the level of entrepreneurial intention perceived by all respondents participating in this study. Specifically, Table 6 shows the mean result of 3.5442 for entrepreneurial intention, indicating that most Malaysian university students have a high level of intention to become entrepreneurs. Overall, the students are most likely to have a lot of interest in being an entrepreneur and seriously think about starting their own business after completing their studies.

Table 5

The Level of Entrepreneurial Intention

			One-Sample T-Test	
	n	Mean	*t*-statistic	*p*-value

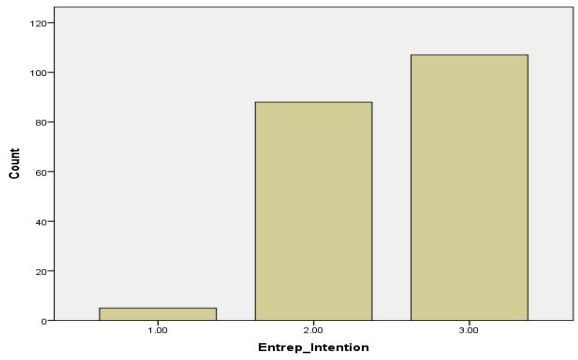
Entrepreneurial Intention	200	3.5442	56.128	.000***

Notes: The result is significantly different at *** 1% level and ** 5% level, respectively, using two-tailed tests.

For further analysis, Figure 7 depicts the level of students' entrepreneurial intention among 200 respondents. It is measured by dividing the entrepreneurial intention into three (3) levels: high, medium and low. The results revealed that only 5 (2.5%), with a scale of 0 to 1.66, indicate a low entrepreneurial intention. Further, the moderate level of entrepreneurial intention (scale between 1.67 and 3.34) has a moderate frequency of entrepreneurial intention. Finally, a total of 107 respondents (53.5%) have a high level of entrepreneurial intention (scale between 3.35 to 5). Overall, the majority of the respondents have a high level of entrepreneurial intention.

Figure 7

Level of Entrepreneurial Intention



Discussion

Through the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the role of attitude, subjective norms, and entrepreneurship knowledge have been found to influence entrepreneurial intention. This study is consistent with previous studies (Sampene et al., 2023; Barba-Sánchez et al., 2022; Boubker et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2022; Hutasuhut, 2020; Hutasuhut, 2018; Adebayo & Kavoss, 2016; Miranda et al., 2017; Sargani et al., 2018; Soria-Barreto et al., 2017). The way that students view entrepreneurship is important because it affects their intention to pursue entrepreneurship in the future (Rodrigues et al., 2023). The findings suggest that attitude is the most substantial influential factor with a large effect size, followed by knowledge and subjective norms, with both the medium-size effect size affecting students' intention in entrepreneurship. The respondents consider entrepreneurship to be a highly desirable career alternative for people with their education. A positive attitude that is effort, interest, working hard, and being ready to take risks become a significant motivation for them to start a business.

Besides, this study reinforces that entrepreneurship knowledge enhances self-employment intention, consistent with a finding of previous studies (Ambad & Ag Damit, 2016; Farani et al., 2017; Hutasuhut, 2018; Jakopec & Sušanj, 2013; Küttim et al., 2014). They probably believe that innovation is the development process whereby an idea is translated into an application. The entrepreneurship knowledge may be enough to boost students' aspirations in entrepreneurship to the maximum and transform that aspiration into entrepreneurial intention. As quoted by Junarsin (2010), there are six (6) Strategies that can be used to enhance service innovation: (1) formalising the process of innovation, (2) creating a new service charter, (3) increasing customer inputs to the overall process, (4) emphasising internal idea generation and concept development, (5) enhancing quasi-search quality, and (6) hiring and maintaining innovation champions.

Finally, similar to past literature, subjective norms such as support from family, friends, and university positively influence the entrepreneurial intention of the students (Asimakopoulos et al., 2019; Law & Breznik, 2017; Nazri et al., 2016; Soon et al., 2016). When the support is around, perhaps the students will be more confident about embarking on a business journey. Besides, the Government's availability of policies, grants, and incentives could reduce the financial burden for the youth to set up their business. However, the results showed that perceived behaviour control did not influence the intent of the students. In

contrast to previous studies (Adhikusuma & Genoveva, 2020; Ambad & Ag. Damit, 2016; Fantaye, 2019; Soon et al., 2016), respondents might have less confidence in their ability to perform entrepreneurial activities. They just simply do not want to be their own superior yet. They probably think that it is better for them to learn from others first in the infancy stage of the business, after a while, then only have their behaviour control. When they have experienced being employees, one day they become owners, they will have a strong moral identity and will evaluate the decision to terminate employees by considering compassion for employees (Paramita et al., 2022)

The present study contributes to two major streams of literature. First, this study contributes to the entrepreneurial intention literature by giving a nuanced understanding of the interpretation of entrepreneurial intentions in start-up exercises of understudy business people. On the individual level, this study focuses on essential personal characteristics, such as personal attitude and perceived behavioural control, in intentional entrepreneurship. The environmental perspective is considered by examining the role of the subjective norm and university context entrepreneurship knowledge) in the start-up process of student entrepreneurs. Second, this study supports the theory of planned behaviour within the business setting, uncovering the essential conditions for the eagerness to change into activities.

Furthermore, the findings of this study prove direct implications for entrepreneurship educators regarding the profile of students who most likely have higher entrepreneurial intentions on how to stimulate start-up business activities for students. The Malaysian Universities' management should improve the policy of developing entrepreneurial development programs by considering how to access resources and removing unnecessary conditions that hinder the development of entrepreneurs. Universities also should contribute beyond offering entrepreneurship courses. Instead, introducing targeted entrepreneurship programs and internships, creating business incubators, and creating industry and university partnerships can be very productive in nurturing the entrepreneurial intention among students. Interestingly, this study found out that the majority, more than half of the respondents, are highly motivated to be future successful entrepreneurs.

With respect to the practical implications of this study, the results support recommendations for encouraging university student entrepreneurship. Therefore, the results of this study show the association between attitude and entrepreneurial intention, subjective norms, entrepreneurial knowledge, and specific situations. In this case, the COVID-19 pandemic era needs to be considered. First, attitude and entrepreneurial intention are the most influential variables affecting students' intention to become an entrepreneur. They show a positive attitude towards starting their own business. Furthermore, they also consider entrepreneurship a highly desirable career, especially after this COVID-19 pandemic. The students find it interesting to be in a university that provides entrepreneurial advice and financial support services, continuously promotes the entrepreneurial atmosphere and culture at the university, and promotes entrepreneurial activity.

Our empirical results show that our respondents who have enrolled in a previous entrepreneurship course raised their level of entrepreneurial intention to a high level, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic era. The entrepreneurial intention has gender differences, and there are only three determinants that affect entrepreneurial intention. This paper contributes to the literature on entrepreneurial intention and provides empirical suggestions for maintaining and improving entrepreneurship. As a limitation of this study, we recognise that the entrepreneurial intention of Malaysian students may differ from the entrepreneurial intention of the general population in Malaysia or other countries. In addition, our methodological research approach used quantitative procedures. We recognise that adding another entrepreneurial knowledge variable to our study will allow us to measure participants'

intention to be an entrepreneur more accurately. The framework of this study provides insight into the influential factors of entrepreneurship education that contribute to theoretical studies on the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, it may also mean that students realise limited employment opportunities during COVID-19. As a result, they tend to have more creative and inspiring ideas for their own business.

The other implication is entrepreneurship study courses would be offered within schools and universities to promote the entrepreneurial culture at the national and international levels. Educators should provide assistance, conduct training programs for students, and encourage curriculum projects that raise useful personal abilities to create an entrepreneurial mentality at the university level. Third, according to this research, educators should provide students with online training and webinars that foster entrepreneurial purpose and urge them to start a new business while also considering the potential for future regret. Finally, entrepreneurial coaches should encourage aspiring entrepreneurs to think about the probability of regretting their inaction if it comes to pass.

In the context of entrepreneurship, the COVID-19 crisis poses a risk, but it is also an opportunity for those who can recognise and capture it. Therefore, the empirical part of this dissertation involves examining how perceptions of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis affected the intentions of Malaysian student entrepreneurs. The survey was conducted on students from various universities in December 2021, when the effects and results of the pandemic were still going on.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Investigating university students' entrepreneurial intention is thought-provoking, considering the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings show three (3) out of four (4) hypotheses are supported. By confirming these hypotheses, we can draw interesting conclusions about what is being promoted at Malaysian universities, especially through bachelor's degrees. In addition, this ground has developed rapidly at the university level in recent years. The attitude towards entrepreneurial intent has proved to be a fundamental theme of our model, as it is directly related to entrepreneurial intent. Attitudes are unique to the individual but can be externally stimulating. For example, holding lectures and seminars with entrepreneurs, visiting companies, contests, bidding on entrepreneurship (graduation awards, etc.), and holding entrepreneurship. These activities, as in our empirical analysis, may promote entrepreneurial attitudes when they cover all areas of knowledge rather than economics and accounting students. For these conclusions to be more consistent in the scientific field, the main weakness of this study, the generalisation of data, must be overcome.

Entrepreneurial intention is a road to achieving desirable economic growth and development. It is the most appropriate method for addressing unemployment for graduates. In conclusion, the study's goal was to identify the student's level of intention for entrepreneurship and determine the factors that affect entrepreneurial intentions. Results suggest that the majority of Malaysian university students have a high level of intention to become entrepreneurs. Also, results reveal that attitude, subjective norms, and entrepreneurship knowledge positively and significantly impact entrepreneurial intentions. Lastly, the relationship between perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial intentions was not significant. Perhaps the students still cannot view the ease or difficulty of carrying out a business as they have a lack of perceptions of the availability of resources, supports, or barriers until they become actual entrepreneurs. Therefore, Malaysian students' beliefs about their attitude, salient people's support, and knowledge involved in entrepreneurship play a more important role in predicting entrepreneurial intention than their perception of easiness or difficulty related to running their own business.

To conclude, our study showed that this might provide that attitude and entrepreneurial knowledge explain

entrepreneurial intentions. Taking needs differences into account, this study provides valuable new insights into entrepreneurship education research and evaluations. The findings may contribute to continuously evaluating the effectiveness of current university courses and policies for stimulating student entrepreneurship.

Future research may also consider longitudinal research on these investigated factors. A comparative study of entrepreneurial intention during or after a pandemic could also be proposed. Respondents from different professions, e.g., engineers, doctors, and civil servants, could also be interestingly tapped for their entrepreneurial intention.

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