

## Entrepreneurial Intention among University Students Majoring in Non-Business Studies



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**ABSTRACT:** This study is aimed at determining the relationship between subjective norms, attitude, perceived of behavioral control and entrepreneurship tendencies towards students majoring in non-business studies. Data of the study was collected through questionnaires from 318 students at National University of Malaysia (UKM). Based on regression analysis, study found that attitude towards entrepreneurship has the strongest effect on entrepreneurship tendency among students majoring in non-business. The finding of this study provides information to higher institutions on improving strategies to increase entrepreneurial intention among students majoring in non-business.

**KEYWORDS:** Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intention, non-business, Theory of Planned Behavior

### I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has played an important role in economic growth and social stability in many developed countries. In Malaysia, there is a growing wave in the development of entrepreneurship among the population over the years. Entrepreneurship includes the process of planning, launching, managing and running a new business, for example a start-up company that offers a product, process or services [1]. Entrepreneurship is applied with the intention of taking possible risks when managing a business aimed to gain profit. An entrepreneur is also known as a leader in business and a creator of new business ideas and strategies. Entrepreneurs perceive new business opportunities as a new market and they often show a positive bias in their perception for example a bias towards finding new possibilities and unmet market needs and a risk-taking attitude that makes it easier for them to exploit those opportunities [2].

The role of entrepreneurship in the economic growth of a country is a statement that has been supported by evidence and empirical data such as increased employment opportunities, reduced unemployment rates, increased exports, increased competitiveness and stability of the economic base. In fact, entrepreneurship has a strategic role in supporting Malaysia's goal of becoming a developed country based on innovation and knowledge by creating job opportunities and increasing income among the people [3]. The effect of the creation of new job opportunities will be better if done by graduates of higher education including technical training centers who have just graduated because this group is usually labeled as job seeker rather than job creators. This situation can help reduce economic pressure caused by limited existing job opportunities [4] due to the dependence of higher education graduates on existing job opportunities in the public and private sectors [5]. Therefore, increasing the number of higher education graduates who become entrepreneurs is a national agenda that is receiving the government's main attention based on the large amount of allocation channeled for this goal. In addition to benefiting the Malaysian economy, entrepreneurship allows individuals to achieve self-satisfaction in achieving personal goals [6] including financial goals. This has been proven in a comparative study which found that graduates who became entrepreneurs earned a higher monthly income compared to graduates who became employees in fields that were not same as their specialists' qualifications [7].

To encourage entrepreneurial participation among the people, various strategies were carried out by the government such as applying entrepreneurship as a subject in every course where most program targets higher level students [8]. This is because students who will graduate will need a job. When the job opportunity market is getting more challenging, early exposure to students to become entrepreneurs after finishing their studies is a proactive approach. Apart from that, the study of entrepreneurial tendencies among students at the higher education level allows individual tendencies to be identified at an earlier stage and intervention actions can be taken to ensure that the agenda of producing more entrepreneurs can be taken to ensure that the agenda of producing more entrepreneurs can be realized. Intervention at an earlier stage for an individual will be able to increase the possibility for the individual to choose entrepreneurship as a career [9]. Compared to students at the level of after

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school, interventions for students at the secondary and primary school levels may be less appropriate because students at this level are considered immature in assessing challenges and issues related to the real world of entrepreneurship [10].

This study is significant for institutions of higher education because it is an institution that plays an important role in providing an ecosystem that is suitable for training and sparking entrepreneurial interest among students [11]. Institutions of higher education that can play an effective role in encouraging students to enter the field of entrepreneurship can help the agenda of the Malaysian Education Development Plan (2015-2025) for National Higher Education. The plan puts one of the leaps to be achieved is to have graduates who are holistic, entrepreneurial and balanced. This surge aims to produce more alumni who are job creators.

This research was conducted on undergraduate students who are studying in the field of computer science, engineering and architecture. According to [12], research on the factors of youth entering entrepreneurship field is a research gap that has not been fully filled. In addition, entrepreneurship among higher education graduates is the current focus of the government in producing more job providers instead of job seekers. As a study on entrepreneurial tendencies that uses individuals as the unit of analysis, [13] asserts that the success of a country's entrepreneurial agenda is the reflection of the level and activity of entrepreneurship at the individual level website.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### a. Entrepreneurial Tendency Factors

The literature on individual tendencies towards entrepreneurship can be divided into two main trends based on the causal factors studied, namely individual factors and environmental factors [14]. According to [8], environmental factors are not factors causes of entrepreneurial tendencies among students. Hence, this focuses the review on the individual factors that influence entrepreneurial tendencies namely subjective norms, entrepreneurial attitudes and perceived behavioral control.

Literature debates that successful entrepreneurs are individuals who can detect business opportunities [15] and wisely manage risks to achieve profit goals to meet market needs. The variety of definitions about entrepreneurs are not opposed to each other, rather the variety of definitions shows that entrepreneurs are individuals who have various characteristics that can be identified either in the orientation of thinking and behavior. The implication of the definition of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship research is that entrepreneurial characteristics in individuals are often used as independent variables in predicting the choice of entrepreneur as a profession.

A study among university students, [16] found that a student's decision to become an entrepreneur is greatly influenced by their attitude and intention towards entrepreneurship. The predictor variables in their study were a person's intention such as the intention to choose an entrepreneur as a profession is influenced by attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms and perceived of behavior control.

In addition to the Theory of Planned Behavior, entrepreneurship studies also use Theory of Event by Shapero and Sokol published in 1982. Intention is also reported to be a strong factor in influencing an individual's decision to become an entrepreneur [17,18]. Besides, intention shapes the thoughts, feelings and actions of an individual in making the choice to become an entrepreneur [18]. The individual factors of choosing entrepreneurs as a profession have been extensively [6,8,11,16,19]. This is because, individual characteristics influence their decision to become entrepreneurs [6]. The literature also shows various demographic factors being the focus of researchers in seeking certainty about the factors that can predict individuals choosing entrepreneurs as a profession. This includes gender [19], ethnicity [10], family [11], religious believes [6] and many more. Based on the criticisms given to trends that study demographic factors as a factor in entrepreneurial tendencies, this study is based on the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior that examines individual attitudes as determinants of entrepreneurial tendencies. Studying individual attitudes related to entrepreneurial tendencies are more appropriate approach compared to studying the relationship between demographics and entrepreneurial tendencies [4].

### b. Subjective Norms towards Entrepreneurship

Subjective norms are reflection of the individual's perception of the social influence formed by the surrounding people in deciding to perform an action. If the people around have a positive impression of the individual who ventures into entrepreneurship, then the individual's tendency towards entrepreneurship will increase. This is also acknowledged by studies that found the absence of social encouragement from people around is one of the reasons why individuals are not interested in becoming entrepreneurs [14]. On the other hand, individuals who receive social support are significant factor in forming a tendency towards entrepreneurship [20]. The influence of subjective norms that most influence entrepreneurial tendencies is family, important individuals in a person's life including friends, reference models and mentors [21].

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### c. Attitude towards Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial attitude describes an individual's feelings towards entrepreneurship whether positive or negative. In other words, individuals who have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship will be more likely to become entrepreneurs. This is also acknowledged in previous studies that individuals are not interested in entrepreneurship because they think the process of establishing a business is difficult [14]. Entrepreneurial attitudes influence entrepreneurial intention among students. This is supported by [16] that concluded in the study on Indian students. The attitude towards entrepreneurship is something that can be formed through the application of entrepreneurial elements in the curriculum followed by students [22]. This is because an entrepreneurial attitude is a view or behavior formed based on past experience towards things that will be done in future [23].

### d. Perceived of Behavioral Control

The perception of behavioral control is linked to the individual's perception of obstacles and difficulties that need to be faced to do a task. For individuals with a high perception of behavioral control, this is seen as a positive challenge. Those individuals believe that entrepreneurship allows them to prove their ability to be leaders, perform strategies to achieve personal goals and challenge their own potential [24]. To become an entrepreneur, the obstacles that must be overcome especially among new entrepreneurs are a normal thing. For example, the lists of barriers to set up a business is access to financial assistance and important information related to the business venture, high operating costs including labor costs and fluctuating inflation as well as insufficient knowledge in business management. In addition, personal obstacles towards becoming an entrepreneur are the attitude of being satisfied with the current paid income, preferring a fixed paid job, having no interest in becoming an entrepreneur and not having the knowledge to start a business [14].

### e. Entrepreneurship Tendencies

Previous studies have described the concept of entrepreneurial tendencies which is used as a basis for evaluating the behavior of individuals who have not yet earned the title of entrepreneur. Thus, entrepreneurial tendency refers to an individual's conscious thinking about planning, decision making and action towards becoming an entrepreneur in the future [25]. A person who has an entrepreneurial tendency that has desire and hope will be motivated to become an entrepreneur later on [26]. Most previous studies that research the issue of entrepreneurial tendencies develop research models based on the Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen 1991, in line with the approach taken in this study. Although the studies build a theoretical framework based on the same theory, there are variations in the findings of the study results, making the issue of studying entrepreneurial tendencies an issue that still requires further research. Although entrepreneurial tendencies cannot guarantee the actual participation of individuals to become entrepreneurs, the literature summarizes that there is a strong relationship between tendencies and actual actions [27].

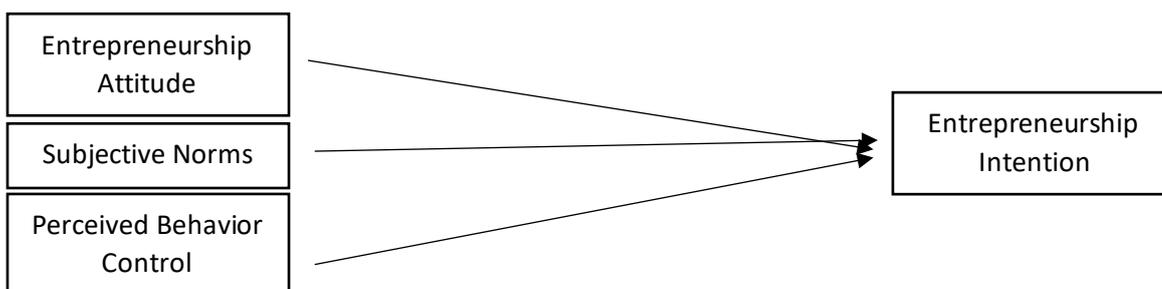


Diagram 1. Theory of Planned Behavior Ajzen 1991

## III. RESEARCH METHOD

The sample of this study consisted of 318 final year students of science computer and engineering students. The selection of final year students is appropriate because this group has followed most of the activities and curriculum to participate in, as well as being in the last phase before stepping into the job market. Distribution was made using convenience sampling according to students who agreed to participate in this study. The response received was 100% considering that the administration of the survey was done by the researcher herself. The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from [28], [29]. All items for variable measurement are measured using 5-point Likert scale with 1 being the most disagree and 5 being the most agree. The score for each variable is measured by calculating the average value of the score for the items that represent the variable in question.

Below are sample items in the questionnaire:

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Variables	Number of items	Example of item
Subjective norms towards entrepreneurship	5	Encouragement of family members, friends and close individual
Attitude towards entrepreneurship	8	Entrepreneurship enables entrepreneurs provide employment opportunities
Perceived behavioral control	8	Entrepreneurship give self-satisfaction
Entrepreneurship tendency	7	Prefer to be an entrepreneur compared to working under people

### IV. DISCUSSION

Descriptive and frequency analysis was conducted to identify the characteristics of the respondents of this study. It involves age, gender, faculty, name of program and family background of having a business. According to [30], the objective of frequency analysis is to study the number of different respondents with different values that can be represented by percentage. Total of the respondents for this study, 48.7% or 155 respondents were male, and 51.3% or 163 respondents were female. Based on [31], gender is not a difference factor which is significant in assessing entrepreneurial tendencies. Most respondents are from the Faculty of Engineering and Civil Engineering (FKAB) where a total of 182 respondents are equivalent 57.2%, followed by 136 respondents equal to 42.7% from the Faculty of Science and Information Technology (FTSM). As for the name of the program, 47 respondents (14.8%) were from the architecture program, while 67 respondents (21.1%) were from the computer science program, 69 respondents (21.7%) were from the information technology program and 135 respondents (42.5%) were from the engineering program. Based on the findings, a total of 203 respondent that is 63.8% stated that their families do not have a business and 115 respondents that is 36.2% are from families that have a business.

**Table 1. Respondent's Profile**

Item	Label	Frequency (N=318)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	155	48.7
	Female	163	51.3
Faculty	Faculty of Science and Information (FTSM)	136	42.7
	Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (FKAB)	182	57.2
Name of Program	Bachelor of Computer Science with Honours	67	21.1
	Bachelor of Information Technology with Honours	69	21.7
	Bachelor of Software Engineering (Multimedia System Development) with Honours	-	-
	Bachelor of Software Engineering (Information System Development) with Honours	-	-
	Engineering Program	135	42.5
	Architecture Program	47	14.8
Family owns a business	Yes	115	36.2
	No	203	63.8

### Reliability test

Reliability tests were performed based on the Cronbach alpha value indicator to determine the level of internal consistency of the research instrument used. The results of the analysis as reported in table 2 show that the instrument used to measure all the variables meet the recommendations of the literature [32], which places a benchmark of 0.60 as the lowest acceptable level, especially in studies that have small samples.

**Table 2. Reliability results**

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Subjective norms towards entrepreneurship	5	1.07517
Attitude towards entrepreneurship	8	0.97370
Perceived behavioral control	8	1.10050
Entrepreneurship tendency	7	1.12848

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Correlation coefficient allows researchers to measure the strength of the linear relationship between pairs of variables. [32], suggested that if the correlation value is between 0.60 to 0.80, then there is a strong positive relationship between the variables. Therefore, the independent variable in this study has a strong relationship with the dependent variables. Another finding from the correlation analysis is that, among the independent variables, attitude towards entrepreneurship has the strongest relationship with entrepreneurial tendency.

**Table 3. Correlation Analysis Results**

		Entrepreneurship Tendency	Attitude towards Entrepreneurship	Subjective Norms towards Entrepreneurship	Perceived Behavioral Control
Entrepreneurship Tendency	Pearson Correlation	1	.946**	.706**	.704**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	N	318	318	318	318

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the regression analysis table, the largest beta coefficient is 1.173 which is attitude towards entrepreneurship. This means that this variable makes the strongest predictor for entrepreneurial tendency. The beta value for subjective norms towards entrepreneurship is the second highest with 0.331. Finally, the coefficient beta value for perceived behavioral control is the smallest with 0.062 and it shows that it contributes the least to explain entrepreneurial tendency in this study.

**Table 4. Regression Analysis Results**

	Beta (Standard)	t Value	Significant
(Constant)		-6.217	.001
Attitude towards Entrepreneurship	1.173	39.248	<0.001**
Subjective Norms towards Entrepreneurship	-.331	-7.472	<0.001**
Perceived Behavioral Control	.062	1.500	.135

Dependent variable: Entrepreneurship Tendency \*\*p < 0.001 R<sup>2</sup> = 0.918 F = 1180.430 (p < 0.001)

Independent t-Test was used to test H4 by analyzing the difference in entrepreneurial tendency between two groups of respondents, which is students with parents have business and students without a business background. There is a significant difference in entrepreneurial tendency for students whose family are involved in business (Mean = 4.02, SD = 1.44) and students whose family are not involved in business (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.73); t (316) = 0.607, p = 0.000). Based on the analysis, the mean for students who have a family with a business background has higher entrepreneurial intention to become an entrepreneur than students with non-business family background. This means that H4 is accepted because there are differences between the two groups regarding entrepreneurship tendency. The results as below:

	Family owns business?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Entrepreneurship Tendency	1 (Yes)	115	4.0167	1.44066	.13434
	2 (No)	203	3.9429	.72730	.05105

Mean Differences between two groups

Independent t-test between two groups based on entrepreneurship tendency\y

		Levene's test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	t	df
Entrepreneurship Tendency	Equal variances assumed	86.358	<0.001	.607	316
	Equal variances not assumed			.514	147.559

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		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Entrepreneurship Tendency	Equal variances assumed	.544	.07384	.12168
	Equal variances not assumed	.608	.07384	.14371

		t-test for Equality of Means	
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Lower	Upper
Entrepreneurship Tendency	Equal variances assumed	-.16556	.31324
	Equal variances not assumed	-.21016	.35784

Correlation analysis shows that there is a strong relationship between all factors and entrepreneurship tendency. Besides, regression analysis was conducted to identify the contribution of variables to entrepreneurship tendency and the individual effects of each factor on entrepreneurship tendency. The study found that attitude towards entrepreneurship has the strongest effect on entrepreneurship tendency among students majoring in non-business. The null hypothesis is rejected for H1, H2 and H3 because the study found that there is a significant positive relationship between attitude towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms towards entrepreneurship and perceived behavioral control. The study also found that there was a significant difference in entrepreneurship tendency between the two groups of respondents, where the mean for students whose family have business was higher than students who are not. Therefore, H4 is accepted.

### V. CONCLUSION

As a quantitative study, this study only investigates independent variables related to individual factors that have been discussed in the literature. It is possible that there are many other variables including variables related to environmental factors that can potentially influence entrepreneurship tendency among students majoring non-business. In exploring new possibilities, future studies should consider qualitative research methods such as focus groups or exclusive interviews to identify unique predictor variables of entrepreneurship tendency among students majoring non-business. Although the number of the samples analyzed in the study is adequate in terms of statistical requirements, a larger number of samples can provide more convincing results. Therefore, future studies should consider conducting studies on a larger scale.

Besides, this study focuses on entrepreneurship tendencies among students. The results of the study benefit educational institutions in designing curricular and activities that can increase entrepreneurship tendency among students based on the factors of attitude, subjective norms and behavioral control that were found to be significant in this study. The trend of this research issue is in line with the current focus of the Malaysian government towards encouraging entrepreneurial activities among students so that the percentage of people who venture into entrepreneurship can be increased.

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