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ANALYZING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AMONG UITM STUDENTS

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Abstract: *This study aims to investigate the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions among students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), focusing on the influence of attitude, perceived behavioural control (PBC), subjective norms, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect data from 65 students. The data were analysed using SPSS, with reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, regression analysis and correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationships between the variables. The results indicate significant relationships between the independent variables and entrepreneurial intentions, with attitude and PBC being the strongest predictors. While self-efficacy and emotional intelligence were not statistically significant predictors, their moderate correlations with other variables suggest they may play indirect roles. The study*

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concludes that creating a supportive environment that fosters positive attitudes and perceived control is crucial for developing future entrepreneurs.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Intentions, Attitude, Perceived Behavioural Control, Subjective Norms, Self-Efficacy, Emotional Intelligence.*

Introduction

Entrepreneurial intentions (EI) has emerged as a critical area of study in entrepreneurship research, particularly within the context of higher education. Defined as the conscious state of mind that precedes action toward starting a new business, EI is influenced by a variety of personal, educational and contextual factors. This study investigates the key factors that shape entrepreneurial intentions among UiTM students. By examining key psychological factors, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the determinants of EI among UiTM students. The findings of this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and offer insights for policymakers and educators to foster entrepreneurial mindsets in higher education.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial intentions (EI) is a widely studied construct in entrepreneurship research, particularly in the context of higher education. EI is influenced by a complex interplay of psychological, educational, demographic and environmental factors. This literature review synthesizes recent empirical studies and theoretical frameworks to identify the key determinants of EI among university students, with a focus on entrepreneurship education, demographic variables and institutional ecosystems.

Theoretical Foundations of Entrepreneurial Intentions

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) is a key predictor of entrepreneurial behaviour and has been extensively studied within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). TPB suggests that intention is the most immediate antecedent of behaviour and is influenced by three core components: attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. In recent years, scholars have expanded this model by integrating additional psychological constructs such as self-efficacy and emotional intelligence, which offer a greater understanding of entrepreneurial motivation, especially among university students. A recent review by Springer (2023) highlighted that integrating self-efficacy and emotional intelligence into TPB significantly enhances its predictive validity in entrepreneurship research.

Attitude Toward Entrepreneurship

Attitude refers to the degree to which an individual holds a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of becoming an entrepreneur. It is consistently identified as a strong and direct predictor of entrepreneurial intention. According to Ajzen's TPB, individuals with a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship are more likely to form strong intentions to start a business. Recent empirical studies reinforce this assertion. For instance, Maheshwari et al. (2023) found that attitude significantly mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship education and EI among Southeast Asian students, suggesting that educational interventions that enhance students' perceptions of entrepreneurship can effectively boost their intentions. Similarly,

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Bazkiaei et al. (2020) found that attitude serves as a key mediator between personality traits and entrepreneurial intention, while Zhao et al. (2022) observed that students' academic disciplines influence their attitudes, with business and management students typically exhibiting more favourable views toward entrepreneurship due to greater exposure to entrepreneurial content. These aligns with findings by Nabi et al. (2017), who emphasized that early exposure to entrepreneurship education fosters positive attitudes through inspiration and experiential learning.

Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)

PBC reflects an individual's perception of their ability to perform entrepreneurial tasks and manage the challenges associated with starting a business. It encompasses both internal factors (e.g., skills, knowledge) and external constraints (e.g., access to resources). Within TPB, PBC not only influences intention but may also have a direct effect on behaviour, especially when actual control is high. Maheshwari et al. (2023) reported that PBC was the strongest predictor of EI in their regression model, surpassing both attitude and subjective norms. This finding is echoed by Lingappa et al. (2020), who demonstrated that students with high PBC are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities, particularly when supported by institutional resources.

Subjective Norms

Subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in entrepreneurial behaviour. While traditionally considered the weakest predictor in TPB, its influence may be more pronounced in society where family and societal expectations play a significant role in career decision-making. Mukhtar et al. (2021) found that in the UAE, subjective norms significantly moderated the relationship between entrepreneurship education and EI particularly among female students. Similarly, Maheshwari et al. (2023) noted that subjective norms were more influential in Asian contexts, where social approval and family expectations are deeply embedded in students' decision-making processes.

Self-Efficacy

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to successfully perform entrepreneurial roles and tasks. It is conceptually related to PBC but focuses more on internal confidence and task-specific capabilities. Self-efficacy has been widely recognized as a critical determinant of both entrepreneurial intention and behaviour. Cuong (2025) demonstrated that self-efficacy strengthens the intention-action relationship, particularly when supported by goal orientation.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EIT) refers to the ability to perceive, understand and manage emotions in oneself and others. EIT has gained increasing attention as a psychological trait that supports entrepreneurial behaviour. Entrepreneurs often operate in high-stress, uncertain environments where emotional regulation, empathy and interpersonal skills are critical. Schlaegel et al. (2021) found that EIT significantly contributes to EI, particularly when combined with traits like innovativeness and risk-taking. EIT enhances resilience and adaptability, which are essential for navigating entrepreneurial challenges. Derre et al. (2025) emphasized that entrepreneurial education designed through a design-science approach fosters the mindset and capabilities needed to thrive in uncertain and complex environments. EIT has also been linked to skills that

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are vital for entrepreneurial success such as improved decision-making, leadership, and conflict resolution. Cardella et al. (2024) further emphasized that psychological resilience and emotional regulation are critical for sustaining entrepreneurial motivation, especially in uncertain environments.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative, descriptive research design to explore the factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions among UiTM students. The investigation for this study is correlational and explanatory, aiming to determine the strength and direction of relationships between the independent variables which are attitude, perceived behavioural control (PBC), subjective norms (SN), self-efficacy (SE), and emotional intelligence (EIT)—and the dependent variable, entrepreneurial intentions (EI).

The study utilized survey-based data collection and statistical analysis to test hypotheses and draw conclusions. The unit of analysis was individual students from UiTM, specifically those in their fifth semester of diploma and bachelor's degree programs. These students were selected because they had completed entrepreneurship-related courses, making them suitable for evaluating the impact of such education on entrepreneurial intentions. A cross-sectional time horizon was employed, with data collected over a period of two to three weeks. The target population comprised 6,049 students from UiTM Dungun. A convenience sampling technique was used due to time and resource constraints. The required sample size was 361 students, determined using the Krejcie and Morgan Table (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). However, due to time and logistical constraints, only 65 valid responses were collected.

Questionnaire Design

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire divided into two parts. Part A collected demographic data such as gender, age, faculty and entrepreneurship course attendance. Part B consisted of 27 items measuring the independent and dependent variables using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree). The items were adapted from validated sources: attitude, subjective norms, PBC and EI items were drawn from Chen (2009); emotional intelligence items from Wong and Law (2002); and self-efficacy items from Kickul and D'Intino (2005) and Ya Weng et al. (2020). Data were collected using Google Forms distributed via WhatsApp and Telegram to ensure accessibility.

Several statistical tools were employed to analyse the data. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the scales, with all variables demonstrating excellent reliability ($\alpha > 0.8$). Descriptive statistics summarized demographic and variable distributions. Correlation analysis examined the relationships between variables, while multiple regression analysis tested the predictive power of the independent variables on entrepreneurial intentions. Additionally, t-tests and ANOVA were used to assess group differences based on demographic factors. The following section discusses these findings in the context of existing literature and theoretical frameworks.

Findings

This section presents the results of statistical analyses that explore the relationships between the independent variables—attitude, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence—and the dependent variable, entrepreneurial intentions.

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Descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and regression outputs are used to highlight the most influential predictors of entrepreneurial intentions among UiTM students.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis of Respondents

Demographic Factor	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	50 (76.9%)
Female	15 (23.1%)
Age	
18–20 years	4 (6.2%)
21–23 years	56 (86.2%)
24–27 years	5 (7.7%)
Current Education Level	
Diploma	10 (15.4%)
Bachelor's Degree	55 (84.6%)
Faculty of Study	
Business Management	44 (67.7%)
Finance	7 (10.8%)
Hotel and Tourism Management	3 (4.6%)
Mechanical Engineering	3 (4.6%)
Accounting	3 (4.6%)
Chemical Engineering	2 (3.1%)
Computer and Mathematical Sciences	2 (3.1%)
Electrical Engineering	1 (1.5%)
Entrepreneurship Course Attendance	
Yes	60 (92.3%)
No	5 (7.7%)

The demographic profile of the respondents (N = 65) reveals that the majority were male (76.9%), aged between 21 and 23 years (86.2%), and pursuing a Bachelor's degree (84.6%). Most participants were enrolled in the Faculty of Business Management (67.7%), and a substantial proportion (92.3%) reported having attended at least one entrepreneurship course. These findings are consistent with Maheshwari et al. (2023), who emphasized that demographic factors such as age, gender and academic background significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions. The high rate of entrepreneurship course attendance reflects the growing integration of entrepreneurship education (EE) in Malaysian higher education institutions (Hahn et al., 2020).

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

Variables	IVA	IVSN	IVPBC	IVEI	IVSE
IVA	1	.568*	.665*	.469*	.427*
IVSN	.568*	1	.412*	.452*	.352*
IVPBC	.665*	.412*	1	.581*	.426*
IVEI	.469*	.452*	.581*	1	—
IVSE	.427*	.352*	.426*	—	1

*Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

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Correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships among the psychological constructs influencing entrepreneurial intentions. Notably, attitude (IVA) showed strong correlations with perceived behavioural control ($r = .665$, $p < .01$) and subjective norms ($r = .568$, $p < .01$), indicating that students with positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship are also likely to perceive greater control and social support. Similarly, perceived behavioural control was significantly correlated with emotional intelligence ($r = .581$, $p < .01$) and self-efficacy ($r = .426$, $p < .05$), suggesting that students who feel emotionally competent and self-assured are more likely to believe in their ability to succeed entrepreneurially. These findings reinforce the interconnectedness of psychological traits in shaping entrepreneurial intentions, consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior and supported by prior research (e.g., Hahn et al., 2020).

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.869[a]	.755	.735	.67018

Predictor: (Constant), IVSE, IVSN, IVPBC, IVEI, IVA

The regression model demonstrated an R^2 value of 0.755, indicating that approximately 75.5% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention could be explained by the independent variables: self-efficacy, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, emotional intelligence and attitude. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.735 further supports the model's robustness, accounting for the number of predictors in the model. These findings suggest a strong explanatory power and align with prior research that highlights the combined influence of psychological and social factors on entrepreneurial behaviour (Maheshwari et al., 2023).

Table 4: ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	81.810	5	16.362	36.430	< .001
Residual	26.499	59	0.449		
Total	108.309	64			

Dependent Variable: DVEI, Predictors: (Constant): IVSE, IVSN, IVPBC, IVEI, IVA

The ANOVA results confirmed the statistical significance of the regression model, with $F(5, 59) = 36.430$ and $p < .001$. This indicates that the combination of predictors—attitude, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence—significantly explains the variance in entrepreneurial intention among UiTM students. These findings reinforce the importance of psychological and social factors in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes, consistent with prior research (Hahn et al., 2020; Maheshwari et al., 2023).

Table 5: Coefficients Table

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-1.307	0.482	—	-2.714	0.009
IVA	0.475	0.126	0.363	3.758	< .001
IVSN	0.061	0.100	0.049	0.606	0.547
IVPBC	0.581	0.111	0.496	5.246	< .001
IVEI	0.035	0.122	0.027	0.289	0.774
IVSE	0.098	0.102	0.078	0.954	0.344

Dependent Variable: DVEI

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Further analysis of the regression coefficients revealed that perceived behavioural control (β = .496, p < .001) and attitude (β = .363, p < .001) were the strongest and statistically significant predictors of entrepreneurial intention. This indicates that students who feel confident in their ability to control entrepreneurial outcomes and who hold positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship are more likely to express entrepreneurial intentions. In contrast, subjective norms (β = .049, p = .547), emotional intelligence (β = .027, p = .774) and self-efficacy (β = .078, p = .344) were not statistically significant predictors. These findings highlight the importance of internal motivation and perceived control over external social influences, aligning with prior research that emphasizes the psychological dimensions of entrepreneurial behaviour (Hahn et al., 2020; Maheshwari et al., 2023).

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the psychological factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions among UiTM students. Consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the results confirm that attitude and perceived behavioural control (PBC) are the most significant predictors of entrepreneurial intentions. These findings align with prior research such as Hahn et al. (2020) and Maheshwari et al. (2023), which emphasize that students who perceive entrepreneurship positively and believe in their ability to influence outcomes are more likely to pursue entrepreneurial careers.

The correlation analysis further revealed strong interrelationships among the psychological constructs. Attitude was significantly correlated with both PBC and subjective norms, suggesting that students who hold favourable views toward entrepreneurship are also likely to feel supported by their social environment and confident in their entrepreneurial capabilities. Additionally, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy showed moderate correlations with other variables, particularly PBC, indicating their potential indirect influence on entrepreneurial intentions.

Interestingly, while subjective norms, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence were not statistically significant predictors in the regression model, their correlations suggest they may play mediating or moderating roles. These constructs could influence how students interpret their environment and assess their readiness for entrepreneurship, even if they do not directly predict intention.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that attitude and perceived behavioural control are the most influential factors shaping entrepreneurial intentions among UiTM students. These findings reinforce the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior and highlight the importance of psychological readiness in fostering entrepreneurial aspirations. While subjective norms, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence were not direct predictors, their interrelationships with key variables suggest they may still play important supporting roles.

To enhance entrepreneurial intentions among students, several recommendations are proposed. First, universities should focus on developing students' confidence and perceived control through targeted training in decision-making and problem-solving. Second, although not direct predictors, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy are important for navigating entrepreneurial challenges. Institutions should offer workshops and mentoring programs that build emotional

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resilience and self-belief. Further research could also examine the mediating or moderating roles of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in greater depth. By addressing these areas, educators and policymakers can more effectively cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets and capabilities among university students.

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