Investigating the perceived university support and the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention

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Abstract: Currently, Malaysia is being faced with a high rate of unemployment among the graduates emerging from the higher educational institutions. This is one of the main social development problems facing by the Malaysian government. Graduates preference for paid employment over self-employment intention is one of the contributing factors to this current problem. The roles of universities promoting entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial skills to the students are increasing. This study is to analyse to moderate factor of university support to the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention. Several studies were selected for review, the findings of the study are supported by the application of relevant theories. The findings of this study can be used as a reference for future researchers to get an initial picture related to this issue.

Keywords: self-employment intention, entrepreneurship education, higher education, university support

INTRODUCTION
This education is essential, not only to shape the mindsets of the youth but also to provide the skills and knowledge that are central to developing an entrepreneurial culture particularly among the educated youths. Literature has shown that universities play an important role in fostering entrepreneurship (Viviers et al., 2013; Nik Nurharlida et al., 2021). Its teaching practices vary from work-based learning to theoretical models and it cuts across psychology, economics, finance and social studies (Schuh et al., 2015; Norazmi et al., 2020; Norazmi et al., 2019; Zaid et al., 2020; Zaid et al., 2021). This suggests that it is interdisciplinary in nature (Mkwanazi and Mbohwa, 2018). The teaching and learning of this subject drive entrepreneurial action which rises from the intention of the recipients of the lessons to start new enterprises or to provide solutions and pioneer programme on entrepreneurship was first present in 1945 by Myles Mace at the Harvard Business School (Mwasalwiba, 2010). Thus, the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship are vital to understanding economic opportunities and to finding ways to best explore them (Jensen, 2014).

Universities have been identified as a viable platform to play a major role in the task of maintaining growth in Malaysia’s economy through entrepreneurship by providing a safe platform from which graduates can launch their business careers (Fatoki & Oni, 2014; Azlismatch et al., 2021; Firkhan et al., 2021) and university programmes have been identified as a good way to introduce entrepreneurship skills to students (Othman & Othman, 2017). It is seen as one of the solutions to the unemployment problem that is occurring not only in Malaysia but also other developing countries because it is capable of changing negative student perceptions about entrepreneurial careers (Othman & Othman, 2017; Zaid et al., 2020; Een et al., 2021). Zaid et al. (2020) and Rosnee et al. (2021) highlight the possibility of the role of entrepreneurship education in influencing an individual’s decision to become an entrepreneur.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Ooi et al. (2011) investigated the inclination towards entrepreneurship among university students in the northern region of peninsular Malaysia where their study specifically examined the relationship between entrepreneurship education and inclination towards entrepreneurship, also the influence of demographic characteristics and family business background on university students’ inclination towards entrepreneurship is also being examined. Their result finding shows that two entrepreneurship education variables are found to have statistically significant relationship on the inclination towards entrepreneurship. At the meantime, two demographic variables and a family business background variable have an effect on university students’ inclination towards entrepreneurship.

Rahimah et al. (2019) study examined the impact of entrepreneurship education on students’ entrepreneurship interest, intentions and competencies by implementing fashion entrepreneurship program. The samples used...
were selected among undergraduate students who enrolled in Entrepreneurship Courses in First Semester (2016/2017) at Universiti Putra Malaysia for a period of five months. Screening process comprises interviews method and basic sewing test were conducted to select 40 students as the respondents of the program. Their program emphasized mentor-mentee system which involved 10 fashion entrepreneurs from the community. Respondents were exposed to entrepreneurship seminars, business and skills trainings, e-marketing workshops, sewing classes as well as evaluation sessions. The results of their findings indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between entrepreneurship interests with entrepreneurship intentions. However, their findings showed no significant relationship between fashion entrepreneurship program with entrepreneurship intentions and competencies, respondents’ perceptions towards their interest, intentions and competencies at the end of the program are high. Literature reviews revealed that more research works are needed in examining the determinants of entrepreneurship intentions of students.

A study by Ng et al. (2018) determined the relationship between student’s entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurship intention. A total of 450 self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the students of the various faculties, races and student seniority at Malaysian Public University using the convenient and structured sampling method. After distribution of the questionnaires, 413 duly completed questionnaires were returned and used during data analyses. Their result findings using correlation analysis and regression analysis showed that strength of motivation in choosing entrepreneurship as a career option among the students is related with entrepreneurship intention.

In the study of Hamidon (2015), entrepreneurship education ecosystem in Malaysia are divided into two main elements; the external and internal as summarized in Figure 2.3. The external factors consist of business environment, support from government (agencies and Ministry of Higher Education) corporate sector, NGO, society and funding institutions. While the internal factor comprises of support from HLIs’ top management, academic and non-academic staff, effectiveness of education programmes, development of student entrepreneurs, competency of educators and readiness of students. Davey et al. (2011) mentioned that small, medium and multinational enterprises cannot miraculously emerge; they must be created by human beings who develop such intention. Thus, people with entrepreneurial capabilities and skills were believed to create benefits at various levels of the society.

Badariah et al. (2016) evaluated the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education program in Malaysian public universities using 320 final year students in Bachelor of Entrepreneurship program from six public universities in Malaysia. The results of their study suggest that an increase in business plan, risk thinking, locus of control and self-achievement lead to increase the level of effectiveness of the entrepreneurship program.

Khadeeja et al. (2017) in their study corroborated the factors affecting entrepreneurial intentions of university students in Malaysia constructed on empirical reviews. The result of their findings found that innovation, entrepreneurship training and education, family background, entrepreneurial characteristics, participation of micro, small and medium enterprises, government support program, social entrepreneurship, women participation, individual youth empowerment, collaboration of government university-industry is the key tool for entrepreneurship development also found in their study is a strong relation among students entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control.

According to Yusoff et al. (2015), the main objective of entrepreneurship education in public Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) is to produce entrepreneurial graduates as well as graduate entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship education has been promoted based on the belief that entrepreneurship can be nurtured and learnt. In addition, continuous exposure to entrepreneurship activities can enhance students’ inclination to venture into these activities. In addition to a students’ acquiring the entrepreneurship knowledge and experience, their family backgrounds, personal experiences, and external environment were also found to influence their intentions towards involvement in entrepreneurship activities Yusoff et al. (2015).

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

this study made use of quantitative methods in the analysis of the quantitative data collected. This method of analysis allows a researcher to set an understanding of a number, resulting in good decision making (Cooper and Schindler, 2014, Babbie, 2010). The choice of this method is based on its ability to find the best solution and determine a concept or idea with more credibility than other research methods (Anderson, Sweeney & Williams, 2004) coupled with the fact that it is suited to previous unrevealed study and would be able to give an understanding of the phenomena studied (Creswell, 2009).

In order to gain data collection in line with the methods explained in above discussions, data collection for this study will be done through survey using questionnaire. The survey method according to Sekaran and Bougie (2016) and Roszi et al. (2021) has the ability to collect various types of data from large sample sizes with cost and time advantage. Furthermore, survey method provides the basis for making a decision on the overall population sample. It is best used by researchers to look at the relationship between variables as well as to study people’s perception about a particular phenomenon. The use of the survey questionnaire is widely accepted in business and management (Rowley, 2014) because it ensures confidentiality of respondents' backgrounds. In
addition, Rowley (2014) and Babbie (2010) posited that its use ensures getting fast feedback in large populations and more comprehensive data collected when compared with using other methods.

To focus on the findings of the study, the researcher set the objective of the study as follows, namely, to analyze the moderating role of perceived university support on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention. This study was also conducted to answer the research question, namely, how perceived university support moderates the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention? To further strengthen the findings, the initial prediction through hypothesis setting is done as follows:

i. H1 showed significant moderating role of university support between the relationship of Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Employment Intention

ii. H2 showed significant moderating role of family background between the relationship of Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Employment Intention

**FINDINGS**

This study has further tested the moderating role of perceived university support as the moderator variables between the relationship of entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention. The results revealed that all the moderating hypothesis are supported. Table 1 below shows the results of moderation. H1 showed moderating role of university support between the relationship of Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Employment Intention, based on the findings of the data it was seen that the beta value was 0.090 and t value for the relationship was 4.166 (p-value 0.000). H2 showed moderating role of family background between the relationship of Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Employment Intention, based on the findings of the data it was seen that the beta value was 0.107 and t value for the relationship was 4.954 (p-value 0.000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hyp</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>T Values</th>
<th>P Values</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>FB*EE → SEI</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>4.166</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>US*EE → SEI</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>4.954</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the recommended value for t=1.64 and p=0.05

**Variance Explained (R²)**

In PLS, the coefficient of determination, denoted R2 and pronounced "R squared", is the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that is predictable from the independent variable(s) (Hair et al., 2013). The value of R2 is from 0.02 and 0.12 small, 0.13 to 0.25 moderate, and above 0.26 is regarded as large. Assuming the qualification of Hair et al. (2016), Researchers think that these measurements are based on the context of the objective. Figure 4.2 provides the R2 value for endogenous variables. Table 2 reports the R2 values. The R2 value for the entrepreneurial self-efficacy 0.085, which shows that the variance on self-efficacy is 8% explained by entrepreneurial education and similarly R2 for self-employment intention was 0.625, this shows that 62% of the variance on self-employment is explained by self-efficacy and entrepreneurial education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>R Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>0.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employment Intention</td>
<td>0.627</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Effect Size**

The impact sizes are shown in the current analysis. The P-value along with the importance of the analysis outcome should be stated as proposed by Sullivan and Feinn (2012). The studies stated that exogenous variables should be omitted in order to show the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The most widely used guides for impact size was suggested by Cohen in 1988. These parametric forecasts are based on the assumption that there is a strong association between any of these three variables. It is concluded that small impact size variables do not become less significant. An analysis should be undertaken cautiously by choosing appropriate testing instruments to figure out the precise extent of the effects of the different variables. The value of effect size is similar R2, 0.02 and 0.12 small, 0.13 to 0.25 moderate, and above 0.26 is regarded as large. Table 3 revealed the effect size of variable considered. The effect size shows the considerable change in the variable due to the other variable. Entrepreneurship education and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy have 0.104 and 0.1443 effect size on self-employment intention. However, entrepreneurship education has 0.093 effect size on entrepreneurial self-efficacy.
Table 3: Effect Size of the Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Self-Employment Intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship Education</td>
<td>0.093</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictive Relevance (Q²)
The parameter Q2 of the Stone-Geisser model may be helpful in evaluating the model predictive value. If the threshold is greater than zero, then the model is efficient in producing data points for the endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2013). To attain Q2 value, they applied Smart-PLS. After half of the exposure points were excluded from the reaction markers of the measured endogenous construct, an additional half of the blindfolding process were taken into account by the model. Smart PLS has learned to handle lost data points. A differentiation was made between the missing and forecasted values in order to approximate the mean of Q2 (Hair et al., 2013). The Q2 values for Entrepreneurial self-efficacy was 0.041 and self-employment intention was 0.318. A Q² value larger than zero for a certain endogenous latent variable indicates the PLS path model model has predictive relevance for this construct.

Table 4: Predictive Relevance (Q²)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>SSO</th>
<th>SSE</th>
<th>Q² (=1-SSE/SSO)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>3,492.00</td>
<td>3,349.98</td>
<td>0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employment Intention</td>
<td>7,760.00</td>
<td>5,296.01</td>
<td>0.318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION
Both the studies indicated a low involvement in entrepreneurial activities among students even with formal education and training in entrepreneurship. The findings reflected that the government’s expectation of high involvement in entrepreneurship had not materialized yet, revealing the existing gap of what was expected of the students by the government and the actual level of students involved in entrepreneurship, especially the Bumiputra students. And this among many others revealed that the majority of the students preferred to be hired rather than be self-employed.

Contradict to discussion above, more recent studies have found that entrepreneurship intention has increased over the recent years among university students in Malaysia. According to a study also conducted by Badariah et al. (2015), their study evaluates the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programmes on Malaysian university students, specifically at Universiti Utara Malaysia. The result of their study shows that the entrepreneurship programme which is offered by Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) is very effective in enhancing the entrepreneurial skills of the students. The findings also suggest a strong relationship between the business plan, risk thinking and also self-efficacy and effectiveness of the programme, while a moderate relationship is observed in need for achievement and locus control.

CONCLUSION
In this study, university students’ inclination towards entrepreneurship is examined together with several related variables. The results of the analyses indicated that two entrepreneurship education variables such as the university’s role to promote entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial curriculum and content along with gender, working experience and mother’s occupation are statistically significant. These results are anticipated to have certain implications to both universities and students alike. The changes of the recent roles played by universities, at one hand, are much needed in order to create an entrepreneurial environment in an effort to fostering entrepreneurship among students. On the other hand, students must be ready to be able to swift their current learning approach to a more practical way which is required in the entrepreneurial learning process. The findings of the study also shed some new insights to the current entrepreneurship literature particularly in Malaysian settings.

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