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The Influence of Family Background, Psychology and Perceived University Support Towards Self-Employment Intention among Public University Students in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The current economic situation with increasing unemployment among graduates is ever important. The government of Malaysia has been promoting the entrepreneurship education among university students to overcome this problem. However, for this program to be effective, it is pertinent to look at the demand side of this program, the student's and their intentions towards being self-employed.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A set of questionnaires with five-point Likert scale was distributed to 320 respondents from 5 public universities in Malaysia via internet and mail. SPSS was used to analyze the results. Results and analyses were derived by multiple regression analysis and the hypothesis were testing using the Pearson's correlation matrix.

Findings: The multiple regression result shown that there is no significant relationship between family background (the significance is $p = 0.493$ or $p>0.05$), and perceived university support (value of $p= 0.228$) towards self-employment intention.

Research Practical and Social Implications: Therefore, the importance of this study is to investigate the influence of family background (FB) and perceived university support (PUS) on the self-employment intention among public university students in Malaysia.

Originality/Value: This study focused only on two variables only. Further studies with other variables can be tested to obtain significant results.

Keywords: Family Background (FB), Perceived University Support (PUS), Self- Employment Intention

Introduction

According to Ahmad (2013), graduate unemployment has become a significant problem in Malaysia in recent years. According to Lebusa (2011), a growing percentage of graduates are currently unemployed as a result of the dearth of public employment prospects for people with higher education credentials (Aladejebi, 2018). Despite the Malaysian government's implementation of commendable policies that encourage graduates to

choose self-employment as their preferred career path, such as the National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 and Malaysian Higher Education Blueprint 2015–2025, the government is still having difficulty fulfilling the aspirations of unemployed graduates who prefer seeking paid employment rather than self-employment (Y).

The importance of entrepreneurship as an engine of economic growth, a novel strategy for addressing the growing number of university graduates, and societal issues has increased recently. It provides potential solutions through encouraging self-employment and entrepreneurial vocations (Othman et al., 2017). Recognising the value of entrepreneurship education, the Malaysian government has actively promoted it, especially among students enrolled in public universities. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend the elements that affect students' aspirations to launch their own firms or engage in entrepreneurship. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how family background and perceived university support relate to Malaysian public university students' intents for self-employment. It is well known that a person's decision to pursue self-employment is significantly influenced by familial influences. Individuals' levels of confidence, attitudes, behaviours, creative ability, and inclination for taking risks are all influenced by their families.

According to Lingappa et al. (2020), family members have a substantial impact on entrepreneurship, especially in societies with collectivist traditions where their opinions are highly valued. Family engagement in business can provide beneficial early exposure and a knowledge advantage that may improve opinions of one's own efficacy. However, educational institutions may have limited options for encouraging students to explore technological entrepreneurship when they are expected to take over a family firm that is non-technical in character.

Additionally, Moreno-Gomez et al. (2019) assert that family members, particularly parents, act as role models and have the power to affect the intents of their children to take risks. Pham et al. (2019) expand on the discussion of family roles by stating that parents play a variety of roles as their children learn and develop, including serving as role models during early childhood, advocates for them in school, and mentors and problem solvers during venture formation and management. As a result, the family plays a critical role throughout the entire entrepreneurial process.

Additionally, perceived university support refers to how students assess the support their university provides for their entrepreneurial endeavours. Universities are essential in creating entrepreneurial curriculum and material, which attracts students to this career path. As they prepare students to launch their own firms and so contribute to economic growth and job possibilities, they have the ability to play a key role in identifying and cultivating entrepreneurial abilities and inclinations in them. In order to effectively contribute to the economy and society, colleges must position themselves as centres for supporting the development of new businesses and an entrepreneurial environment (Wei et al., 2019).

Therefore, examining the effect of family background and perceived university support on the aspirations of Malaysian public university students to engage in self-employment might provide insightful and useful information for both theory and practise. The study's results can also help governmental organisations, agencies, academic institutions, and advisors, consultants, and educators that work with entrepreneurs to determine the best ways to encourage entrepreneurship in universities and, by extension, throughout society.

Theory Of Planned Behaviour

According to Ambad & Damit (2016), Badariah et al. (2016), Israr & Saleem (2018), and others, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) is a well-known and commonly applied paradigm for understanding intents, particularly entrepreneurial intentions of various groups including students. This study employed the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which was first developed by Ajzen (1991) as an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), to assess the effects of family background and perceived university support on entrepreneurial ambitions.

According to the TPB, human social behaviour is controlled, planned, and reasoned in order to take into consideration the possible consequences of carefully thought actions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). This model has been successfully used to forecast a variety of human behaviours, such as voting intentions and intentions to stop smoking, and it provides a useful framework for examining how participants' entrepreneurial behaviour may be influenced by their entrepreneurship education. As a result, from this angle, entrepreneurship education

has an impact on attitudes and intentions regarding self-employment.

The TPB was chosen because it has received widespread approval as a useful measure for assessing entrepreneurial ambitions for more than 20 years (Sun et al., 2017). Studies done in the past by academics have confirmed its value in determining career intentions. This definition of intention refers to a conscious mental state that guides thoughts, feelings, and deeds towards a predetermined objective. The advantages of using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to investigate the development of self-employment intentions and how family background and perceived university support may impact and modify that process have been shown in several contributions and research projects.

Self-Employment Intention

Self-employment, according to Farrington, Grey, and Sharp (2011), involves "owning and managing one's own small business," whereas Moy, Luk, and Wright (2003), quoting Bird (1989), define it as the "process of deciding to begin and continue operating as an entrepreneur." Self-employment is commonly used as an indicator for entrepreneurship, and the terms self-employment and entrepreneurship are frequently used interchangeably (Bjuggren et al., 2012). The rise in self-employment is influenced by a variety of individual and environmental factors, including entrepreneurship education and training, past entrepreneurial experience, and demographic characteristics (Lee et al., 2011). Students are getting more interested in pursuing self-employment as a preferred career path, per studies (Zellweger et al., 2010). Therefore, understanding the factors that affect people's decisions to become self-employed and why some choose to work for someone else rather than opening their own firm may be helpful for policymakers.

Family Background and Self Employment Intention

The influence of one's family environment is significant in determining one's propensity for self-employment. Strongly professional parents are increasingly encouraging their kids to pursue self-employment, and empirical research has shown that a person's family history has a major impact on their entrepreneurial goals (Georgescu and Herman, 2020). Students' willingness to pursue an entrepreneurial career has been proven to be positively impacted by elements like family history, education, and personality factors that support entrepreneurial thinking.

Having a self-employed parent nearly doubles the likelihood that a kid would also become self-employed, demonstrating the strong relationship between family background and self-employment intention (Andersson and Hammarstedt, 2011). Researchers have talked a lot about how families may encourage self-employment and entrepreneurship. Hout (1984) claimed that both direct and indirect socialisation processes play a role in how parents affect their kids' decision to become self-employed. According to Nguyen (2018), they can grant access to businesses through the transfer of social and financial resources. According to Shen et al. (2017), parents can also act as role models by imparting important information and influencing their kids' enthusiasm in pursuing self-employment.

Zarina (2017) used a survey method in a case study of engineering students from Malaysian Polytechnics to examine the connection between entrepreneurship programmes, own business experience, and employment goals. The research found a strong relationship between employment goals and experience in owning and operating a business in the family. However, it was discovered that there was little association between entrepreneurial programmes and employment goals. We can measure and analyse the effect of family circumstances on the transmission of the intention to be self-employed by utilising the Theory of Planned Behaviour as an expression of the intents of self-employed people. As a result, we propose the following theories:

H1: There is a significant relationship between family background and self-employment intention.

Perceived University Support and Self-Employment Intention

In order to prepare students to launch their own businesses and so contribute to economic growth and job possibilities, universities play a critical role in discovering and nurturing entrepreneurial tendencies and

inclinations in them (Ilyas et al., 2015; Zaring et al., 2019). In order to effectively contribute to the economy and society, colleges must position themselves as hubs for promoting the development of new businesses, cultivating an entrepreneurial environment, and doing so (Wei et al., 2019; Md Yassin et al., 2011).

Prior studies have emphasised the value of entrepreneurship training and perceived university assistance in forming favourable perceptions of competence for start-up businesses and self-employment. Effective entrepreneurship education programmes and supportive measures from universities are efficient ways to disseminate crucial entrepreneurship knowledge and encourage young people to consider pursuing an entrepreneurial career (Saeed et al., 2013).

Programmes that assist entrepreneurship also act as indicators of how desirable self-employment is on a social level. Such initiatives might encourage some students to seek entrepreneurial jobs or, at the absolute least, make them more aware of self-employment as a legitimate career choice. As a result, it can be concluded that university support is essential for boosting the effectiveness of entrepreneurship instruction and positively affecting students' intents for self-employment. Therefore, this study hypothesized that:

H2: There is a significant relationship between perceived university support and self- employment intention.

Methods/Research design

As its primary goal is to evaluate the relationship between family history and perceived university support regarding self-employment goals, the current study takes an explanatory research approach. Explanatory study is relevant, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), when a researcher wants to investigate the relationship between variables that represent a population or a specific situation.

Using a cross-sectional methodology, data for this study were gathered concurrently and during a non-multiple time period. This decision supports the claim made by Cooper and Schindler (2014) that cross-sectional investigations are less expensive and do not require extensive longitudinal studies that must be repeated over time. Survey questionnaires were used to gather the information. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) assert that the survey approach offers the benefit of acquiring a broad variety of data from a big sample size at a reasonable price and in a short amount of time.

The surveys were sent through mail and several internet channels. This method offers the advantage of higher response rates at lower costs, and both online and mail-in surveys showed good internal consistency (average Guttman split half above 0.7) and participant consistency in their responses (Cronbach's Alpha exceeding 0.7) for all items, meeting the recommendation by Pallant (2011).

Population and Sample Procedures

Undergraduate students at Malaysian public universities—which include a total of 20 government-owned institutions—make up the population under study. Five of these universities are research institutions, four are comprehensive, and eleven are specialised (Ahmad and Buchanan, 2015). All public universities in Malaysia offer entrepreneurship education, albeit in differing amounts, through various approaches, and in various formats.

Based on the researcher's level of trust in data collection, the measurable margin of error, the type of analysis to be done, and the potential for generalising survey results, the sample size for this study was chosen (Hair et al., 2015). A response rate of about 25% of the total survey forms given was the goal for the researcher. As a result, 320 to 320 respondents were chosen, and 1,280 questionnaires were given out. This is consistent with the 320 responders minimum sample size requirement listed in Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table.

Sample Design and Sample Size

Purposive sampling is used in this work as a non-probability random sample strategy. The study's focus on final-year students who have finished an entrepreneurship course and are prepared to start their jobs following graduation led to the selection of this sampling strategy. Purposive sampling, according to Hair et al. (2015), entails making educated decisions to choose groups that are thought to fairly represent the population.

Non-probability sampling has significant limitations due to its subjective nature and may not provide an accurate representation of the population, but it is still valuable. This is especially true when randomization is a challenge, which it is with extremely big populations rather frequently. Non-probability sampling is particularly useful in research with limited resources, time, and labour. Additionally, it can be used when the aim of the study is not to generate statistically significant findings or generalise to the entire population. As a result, it is acceptable to employ non-probability sampling techniques in this inquiry.

Survey Instrument

The survey questionnaire designed for this study included a cover letter and questions grouped into Parts A and B. The cover letter briefly outlines the study's goals, the confidentiality of the data collected, and instructions for filling out the questionnaires. The demographic information provided by respondents is covered in Part A. Examples include the name of the university attended, the course and degree attained, the respondent's gender, race, age, marital status, and size of household. The primary components studied in the current study, such as self-employment intention, perceived university support, and family background, are the subject of Part B of the questionnaire. According to their ambition to work for themselves and the influence of their family background and perceived university support, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement.

Questionnaire Design

The study's questionnaire design has gone through a number of steps. The principles of questionnaires should generally concentrate on the words or phrases from questions, how variables are associated and categorised, scales, and codes, after receiving feedback, as well as on the general appearance of the questionnaire. According to the research, removing bias from a study was the main issue that needed to be dealt with at the beginning (Sekaran & Bougie 2016). Three components made up the questionnaire. While Section B concentrated on the dependent variable of intentions for self-employment, Section A covered the respondents' demographic data. The independent variable in Section C, which was family background and perceived university support, came next.

Measurement Scale

Using Likert scales, all constructs were operationalized. The fundamental benefit of Likert Scale questions is that they follow a standard way of data collection, making them simple to comprehend. Likert Scale is an interval scale that specifically employs the 5-point scale, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2016). A 5-point Likert-type scale was utilised in this study to boost response rates and response quality. This study used a scale with responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" since it had been highly suggested by experts in the area that it would reduce respondents' feelings of aggravation while increasing response rate and quality (Sachdev & Verma 2004). The number of items in the measurement scale for self-employment intention (20 items), perceived university support (5 items) and family background (4 items) respectively as listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Measurement scale

Constructs	No of Items	Scale
Self-Employment Intention	20 items	Five-Point Likert Scale
Perceived University Support	5 items	Five-Point Likert Scale
Family Background	4 items	Five-Point Likert Scale

Source: Sekaran and Bougie 2016

Data Analysis

Using SPSS (Version 24), descriptive statistics were carried out for this investigation. Before being processed, the obtained data were examined and validated for mistakes or failure to meet the statistical criteria. The Pearson's

correlation matrix was utilised to test the hypothesis while a multiple regression analysis was employed to show factors impacting self-employment.

Result and Discussion (Descriptive Analysis)

The socioeconomic makeup of the respondents is shown in Table 2, and the specifics of the descriptive analysis employed are described. The descriptive analysis assesses the variables' frequency and percentage. It is separated into two sections: the first is the demography, which describes the number of each item in the demographic section; the second is the average score (mean), which represents the average of each item in each variable. This can be used to visualise the samples used in the analysis based on the demographic data provided by the respondents, including their gender, age, educational institution, race, and other similar analysis used to measure all variables and support the fact as feedback to the research's questions.

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of respondents based on their age groups. The majority (49%) of the respondents are between the ages of 19 and 24, followed by 22% falling within the 31-36 age bracket. The third category comprises respondents aged between 25 and 30, making up 20% of the total. The average age of the respondents is 25 years old, with a standard deviation of 5. Furthermore, Table 2 presents the segmentation of respondents by gender, showing that the majority (72%) are male, while 28% are female. In terms of marital status, 87% of the respondents are single, with the remaining 13% being married. Table 3 demonstrates the distribution of respondents based on household size. The majority (87%) of the respondents have a household size of 1 member. Those with a household size of 2-3 members account for 10% of the sample. Respondents with a household size of 4 members and above make up the remaining 3%. The average household size is 1 member, with a standard deviation of 0.8. Finally, according to Table 2, the majority (61%) of the respondents identify as Malay, followed by 21% who are Chinese. Indians constitute 15% of the respondents, while individuals from other nationalities make up 3% of the sample.Table 2: Socio-economic demography of respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
≤18	19	6
19-24	157	49
25-30	64	20
31-36	72	22
37-42	6	2
43-48	2	1
Total	**320**	**100**
Gender		
Male	231	72
Female	89	28
Total	**320**	**100**
Marital status		
Single	277	87
Married	43	13
Total	**320**	**100**
Household size		
≤1	277	87
2-3	33	10
4-5	8	2

6-7	2	1
Total	**320**	**100**
Race of respondents		
Malay	195	61
Chinese	66	21
Indian	48	15
Other	11	3
Total	**320**	**100**

Perception of respondents on their family background (FB)

Table 3 presents the respondents' perceptions regarding their family background (FB). The mean values in the table offer a generalization of the respondents' perceptions, where the scale ranges from 1.00 to 5.00. Scores falling between 1.00 and 1.49 indicate "strongly disagree" (SDA), 1.50 to 2.49 indicate "disagree" (DA), 2.50 to 3.49 indicate "undecided," 3.50 to 4.49 indicate "agree," and 4.50 to 5.00 indicate "strongly agree" (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

As shown in Table 3, the respondents were undecided regarding the first item, which states "there are entrepreneurs among my relatives," with a mean perception of 3.43. For the second item, "mentor from my family would be of great help in assisting me in preparing for being an entrepreneur," the respondents generally agreed, with a mean perception of 3.54. The third item, "I will get full support from my family if I decide to become an entrepreneur," also received an undecided response, with a mean perception of 3.37. Similarly, respondents were undecided concerning the fourth item, "Starting a firm and keeping it working would be easy for me if I have support from my family," with a mean perception of 3.39. These results indicate that the respondents were generally neutral in their perceptions as the items were not directly related to themselves but rather associated with other parties.

Perception of respondents on perceived university support (PUS)

The respondents' opinions on perceived university support (PUS) are displayed in Table 4. The mean perspective for the first question, "I know many people in my university who have successfully started their own businesses," is 3.42, which suggests that the respondents were unsure about their opinions. With a mean impression of 3.54, the respondents concur with the second item (a mentor or professor from my university would be of great help in supporting me in preparation for being an entrepreneur). The third item, which said that my university has a strong infrastructure in place to help new businesses get off the ground, again had a "disagree" response, with a mean perception of 3.40. The fourth item alsoreceived an undecided remark with a mean perception of 3.39 while the respondents agree with the fifth item (I will get full support of my university if I decide to become an entrepreneur) with mean perception of 3.85.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was utilised to look at how the research variables and hypotheses related to one another. This methodology is appropriate if more than one independent variable is used to estimate the dependent variable, which indicates that the estimation of the dependent variable depends on one or more factors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 5 summarises the results for the first and second hypotheses, which look at the relationship between family background and perceived university support for self-employment intentions. The initial goal of this study is to look into the direct relationship between family history and intentions for self-employment. The corresponding hypothesis is as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between family background and self-employment intention.

With a significance value of p = 0.493 (p>0.05), the multiple regression analysis shown in Table 5 reveals that there is no significant link between family background and plans to work for oneself. This association has a coefficient of = 0.031 and a t-value of t = 0.687. As a result, hypothesis one (H1) is disproved, indicating that aspirations to engage in self-employment are not significantly influenced by family background.

The second goal is to investigate how perceived university assistance directly affects plans for self-employment. The corresponding hypothesis is as follows:

H2: There is a significant relationship between perceived university support and self-employment intention.
However, the findings, as shown in Table 5, with a p-value of 0.228, suggest that there is no significant association between perceived university support and intentions for self-employment. The t-value for this association is t = 1.208 and the beta coefficient is = 0.063. As a result, hypothesis two (H2) is also disproved, indicating that intentions to pursue self-employment are not significantly influenced by perceived university assistance.

Correlation analysis was carried out to assess the degree and direction of the association between independent and dependent variables as part of the endeavour to understand the relationship between variables. This was accomplished by using Pearson correlation, whose values, which can vary from -1.0 to +1.0, show the strength and direction of the correlation (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).
The correlation matrix showing the connection between the variables is shown in Table 6. Perceived University Support (PUS) and Self-Employment Intention (SEI) have a correlation coefficient of 0.068 and 0.228, respectively, which indicates no meaningful linear relationship. Almost none (0.46%), according to the coefficient of determination, of the variation in perceived university support (PUS) can be attributable to self-employment intention (SEI), which has a value of 0.004624.
Similar to this, there is no discernible linear link between Family Background (FB) and Self-Employment Intention (EI), according to the correlation coefficient (r = 0.043, p = 0.446). With a coefficient of determination of 0.001849, it can be seen that almost none (0.18%) of the variation in family background (FB) is influenced by intention to work for oneself (EI).
However, a strong positive relationship is observed between Family Background (FB) and Perceived University Support (PUS), with a correlation coefficient of (r = 0.905, p = 0.000).

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that both hypotheses are not significant in relation to self-employment intention. Regarding perceived university support, the results suggest that students in public universities in Malaysia have not perceived strong educational, cognitive, and business development support from their institutions. This aligns with previous research that also found no significant relationship between perceived university support and self-employment intention (Ambad & Damit, 2016). A possible explanation for this result could be that entrepreneurship education in Malaysian public universities is still in the early stages of development and involves students from various faculties. Therefore, a collective effort may be required to enhance faculty support and promote entrepreneurship across disciplines. Additionally, public universities in Malaysia may benefit from developing a more competitive entrepreneurship-focused curriculum and recruiting faculty with an entrepreneurial orientation, while also establishing robust industry networks.

Regarding family background, the results do not support any significant influence on self-employment intention. This implies that family background may not play a significant role in influencing self-employment intentions, despite previous studies confirming the relationship between role models and entrepreneurship (Birley and Westhead, 1994; Crant, 1996; Tkachev and Kolvereid, 1999; McElwee and Al-Riyami, 2003; Fairlie and Robb, 2007). This finding contradicts earlier research that suggested a significant relationship

between family background and the intention to become self-employed (Shittu & Ayudole, 2014). While this study contributes valuable empirical results, it also has limitations. Only students from five Malaysian universities are included in the sample, which may not accurately reflect the country's whole student body. Future research could broaden the study to include students from a wider range of universities to improve generalizability. Further study is required to examine the association with other variables because the results conflict with many earlier studies.

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