

## The Relationship between Attitude, Intention, and Entrepreneurship Career Choice among Malaysian Indian Undergraduates

### Hubungan Sikap, Keinginan, dan Pemilihan Kerjaya Keusahawanan dalam Kalangan Prasiswazah India Malaysia

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#### ABSTRACT

*Entrepreneurship involves processes of starting and managing a venture and business of a company or organization. The entrepreneurs are responsible in developing their own business plan, acquire human and other available resources. Entrepreneurship is an essential field for a nation's economic development because it creates job opportunities and brings wealth to the people. Despite being fanned around the globe, entrepreneurship is taken lightly in Malaysia especially among the Indian graduates. In order to highlight this problem, this study was designed to identify the relationship between attitude and intention towards an entrepreneurial career choice among the Indian undergraduates. A total of 315 Indian undergraduates from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Tenaga Nasional, and Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur were selected as respondents for this study. In this survey method study, a set of questionnaires were distributed online to the respondents and data obtained were analyzed using descriptive, regression, and ran using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 19.0. The findings show that, intention is highly correlated with an entrepreneurship career choice ( $r=0.854$ ) while attitude possessed milder effects with a moderate correlation ( $r=0.510$ ) at a significant level of 0.05. These findings suggest that attitude and intention influence an entrepreneurship career choice. Education is well known in contributing to attitude and intention development. Attitude and intention at higher education institutions are very important in predicting students to choose entrepreneurship as a career. Thus, education is a powerful tool to enhance attitude and intention in favor of choosing entrepreneurship as a career.*

*Keywords: Attitude; intention; entrepreneurship; Indian undergraduates; career choice*

#### ABSTRAK

*Keusahawanan melibatkan proses memulakan dan menguruskan usaha dan perniagaan syarikat atau organisasi. Usahawan bertanggungjawab dalam membangunkan pelan perniagaan mereka sendiri, memperoleh sumber manusia dan sumber-sumber lain yang ada. Keusahawanan adalah satu bidang yang penting untuk pembangunan ekonomi negara kerana ia mewujudkan peluang pekerjaan dan membawa kekayaan kepada rakyat. Walaupun mengipasi di seluruh dunia, keusahawanan diambil ringan di Malaysia terutamanya dalam kalangan graduan India. Dalam usaha untuk mengetengahkan masalah ini, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti hubungan antara sikap dan niat ke arah pilihan kerjaya keusahawanan dalam kalangan mahasiswa India. Seramai 315 pelajar India dari Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Tenaga Nasional dan Universiti Infrastruktur Kuala Lumpur telah dipilih sebagai responden kajian ini. Dalam kajian ini kaedah tinjauan iaitu satu set soal selidik telah diedarkan secara atas talian kepada responden dan data yang diperolehi dianalisis dengan menggunakan perisian Pakej Statistik untuk Sains Sosial (SPSS) dengan melakukan analisis deskriptif dan regresi. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa, niat mempunyai hubungan yang kuat dengan pilihan kerjaya keusahawanan ( $r=0.854$ ) manakala sikap mempunyai hubungan yang sederhana ( $r=0.510$ ) pada peringkat signifikan 0.05. Penemuan ini menunjukkan sikap dan keinginan mempengaruhi pilihan kerjaya keusahawanan dalam kalangan prasiswazah India.*

*Pendidikan merupakan penyumbang kepada pembangunan sikap dan niat. Sikap dan keinginan di institusi pengajian tinggi adalah sangat penting dalam meramalkan pelajar untuk memilih keusahawanan sebagai kerjaya. Oleh itu, pendidikan adalah alat yang ampuh untuk meningkatkan sikap dan keinginan dalam memilih keusahawanan sebagai kerjaya.*

*Kata kunci: Sikap; keinginan; keusahawanan; prasiswa India; pemilihan kerjaya*

## INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship opens a wide door of opportunities for people to realize their passion and gain profit from what they love to do (Norasmah & Sumathy 2012). It is not only vital for the business itself but also to the national economy. It has become the biggest contributor to the economic development of a country in this 21st century. Entrepreneurship creates job opportunities and increases the people's income which directly contributes to the regional economic development. However, this field has never been a primary option for a career choice (Hoe 2006), especially among Indian graduates in Malaysia.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Hoe (2006) has clearly figured the small number of Indian students participating in the entrepreneurship field. This is due to the graduates' negative perceptions of a career prospect in this field. This situation is apparent when most of them consider entrepreneurship as a secondary or the last option in their career choice (Hoe 2006). A study conducted among students of Universiti Utara Malaysia in 2000, revealed only 0.4% of graduates was found involved in businesses and ventures (Hoe 2006).

Indian graduates do not possess a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, resulting in the failure for them to address the opportunities in this field (Nor Aishah et al. 2016). This situation is remarkable when the government's efforts in implementing various entrepreneurial programs and activities such as the Graduate Entrepreneur Scheme have failed to attract Malaysians to venture into this field at a satisfactory level (Hoe 2006). This problem has to be addressed in order to increase graduates' participation in entrepreneurship and simultaneously benefit Malaysian economic development by providing more job opportunities

and options. Increasing of job opportunities and options will directly improve people's incomes and directly enhance better lives for the people, thus bringing us a step forward in achieving our mission of becoming a high income nation by 2020.

According to Zaidatol (2007), attitude and intention at the higher education institutions are very important for students in choosing entrepreneurship as their career. Students who possess knowledge and entrepreneurial skills are more confident to venture and choose entrepreneurship as their career (Zaidatol 2007). Thus, institutions of higher learning should play an important role in entrepreneurship education programs by developing an entrepreneurial attitude towards a career choice (Nor Aishah, 2005; Salmah 2006) following the increase of graduate unemployment each year (Salmah 2006). This is especially true among Indian graduates where this issue can be resolved through disclosure of entrepreneurial education in higher education institutions.

## THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to identify the relationship between students' attitude, intention, and entrepreneurship career choice among Indian undergraduates in selected higher learning institutions around Bangi, Selangor. The selected institutions are Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), and Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IUUKL); and all are located in Bangi, Selangor. The study was conducted from January to May 2015. All 315 students involved in this study are Indian undergraduates from various fields of studies. All data collection method and analysis done in this study are relevant to the current temporal and spatial framework.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

A conceptual framework was built as a guide for this study based on psychological-economic models of Davidson (1995) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1991). Both models have used the approach to analyze the human behavior where by, the intention level would be the best predictors of survival for the expected behavior based on individual attitudes. Thus, the attitude towards entrepreneurship can be used to predict the level of intention to shape the behavior of an entrepreneurial career choice. Based on these models, the students' entrepreneurial career choice can be predicted based on their attitude. The same criterion is applied to intention which can predict the students' level of entrepreneurial career choice (Ajzen 1991). Attitude and intention are two indigenous variables for the study of their relationship with an entrepreneurship career choice (Diagram 1).

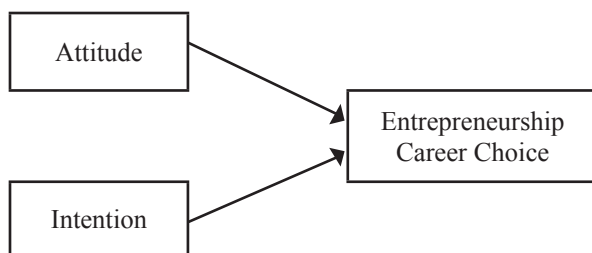


DIAGRAM 1. The conceptual framework adapted from the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1991) and harnessed with the theory of career choice by Holland (1973)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### ENTREPRENEUR AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

An entrepreneur can be defined by various disciplines and perspectives. According to Ravi and Nor Aishah (2015), entrepreneurs are individuals that are able to grab business opportunities that are not noticed by other people. They are also well prepared in taking risks (Norasmah & Salmah 2011) in starting and planning their businesses. In order to achieve this, they provide satisfaction to their customers (Norasmah & Salmah 2011).

From another perspective, Jones and Jones (2014), and Jones et al. (2011) also highlighted that entrepreneurs are individuals who step into the business environment regardless of the form

of business and continuously compete with others to strengthen their business. Meanwhile, Nor Aishah (2005) defines entrepreneurs as individuals who are successful in establishing and managing a business. She also made a remark that the main goal of entrepreneurs is to achieve success by making high profit and at the same time contributes to the development of the country. Hytti (2010) stated that an entrepreneur is a person who sets out to organize, manage and, take business risks. Entrepreneurs are also individuals who explore new businesses by taking risks, with a return of profits and also the development of the business.

### ENTREPRENEURIAL CAREER CHOICE

An entrepreneurial career choice is an action identified as a behavior which is associated with the formation of an organization (Hytti 2010). He also highlighted that a behavioral approach is more suitable for application in the study of the entrepreneurial phenomenon compared to the traits approach. Based on studies carried out by Davey et al. (2011), early exposure to the entrepreneurship field will drive attitude, personality, and the level of intention of an individual in determining behavior formation in choosing an entrepreneurial career.

Hirschi and Fischer (2013) remarked that an entrepreneurship career choice is often influenced by the attitude and perception of an individual and the entrepreneur's success is dependent on the extent to which the behaviour adopted by them influences these actions. According to Hytti (2010), an individual who would like to venture into entrepreneurship is associated with combined factors of innovative behavior. This combined factor of behavior is known as entrepreneurial factor. This explains the situations of entrepreneurs who always strive to find the change which can be an opportunity for them despite facing certain risks.

Studies conducted by Jones and Jones (2014), suggested that an attitude of entrepreneurial motivation can increase the efficiency to exploit new market opportunities and improve value for money. In addition, originality of innovations can motivate an entrepreneur to be successful. In the meantime, studies conducted by Jones et al. (2011), state that the aspect of management of an organization has an essential influence in forming entrepreneurial behavior. Social-political support, facilities, and resource availability can

stimulate entrepreneurial behaviors among the population (Andringa et al. 2016). Therefore, an entrepreneurial career choice is included in the entrepreneurial process as a concept that can define entrepreneurship (Nor Aishah et al. 2016).

#### THE LEVEL OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION

Ajzen (1991) and Davey et al. (2011) define the behavior of an entrepreneurial career choice as one of the entrepreneurial actions in which its formation could be expected through the level of intention. Davey et al. (2011) suggest that the process of an individual to become an entrepreneur will begin with their intention. Intention has a deep personal impact and normally will determine the entrepreneurial behaviors such as self-employment and creating new ventures in their later days. The stronger the levels of intention, the higher the opportunity of an individual to venture into entrepreneurship field as a career (Rae et al. 2013; Hirschi & Fischer 2013). The level of intention includes motivational factors that will influence the displayed behavior of an individual to try and take various measures in planning and presenting entrepreneurship.

Studies conducted by Azjen (1991) and Mohamed et al. (2012) show that, using level of intention is the best method to predict behaviors through certain specific attitudes. In addition, studies on the level of entrepreneurial intention have been associated with attitude in choosing self-employment as a career choice (Mohamed et al. 2012). According to Sudipa and Damodharan (2012), attitude and entrepreneurial intention allow the creation of new ventures and added value to existing ventures in various ways. Thus, entrepreneurs who enter entrepreneurship career fields with different goals, admissions, and insistence on difference in strategy will shape the career experience faced by entrepreneurs in the future.

#### ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURIAL CAREER

Mohd Salleh et al. (2005), Sudipa and Damodharan (2012) state that attitude is one of the important factors in determining the success of individuals in entrepreneurship. This is due to the entrepreneurial career choice process which involves the

individual's attitude in deciding who he would like to become and whether to be involved or not, is based on the individual's positive attitude towards entrepreneurship (Nandram & Samson 2006; Jones et al. 2011). Surprisingly, Sudipa & Damodharan (2012) convey attitude as the best factor that affects the entrepreneurial process in a person. The lack of reason and weakness in personality characteristics or demographic factors are also identified in previous studies. In the meantime, Nandram and Samson (2006) found that attitude can be taken into account as a dynamic linkage because individuals are always linked to aspects of the attitude that changes from time to time. Thus, attitude is the best approach to forecast the level of entrepreneur career choice (Nandram & Samson 2006; Jones et al. 2011).

Besides that, according to Mohd Salleh et al. (2005), entrepreneurs are said to have chosen special features that differentiate them from others. The entry processes into entrepreneurial careers are very unique and complicated compared to other careers because it involves a decision making process to start and continue their efforts independently and individually (Wu & Li 2011).

According to Mohd Salleh et al. (2005), attitude is an element in personality that is important in determining the success of the entrepreneur's ventures and it can be strengthened with the cognitive and emotional components that lead to the formation of conduct which has the purpose of the trend of action, in which attitudes can exist separately in the individual self, but interconnected with other components within the individual self.

Generally, attitude of the individual is aroused feelings toward an object whether or not an individual enjoys strong belief in the object (Wu & Li 2011). The combination between thoughts and feelings towards an individual or an object will influence the actions taken in the choice of an entrepreneurial career (Sudipa & Damodharan 2012).

#### METHODOLOGY

In this study, researchers used a quantitative approach as the main approach. The process of data collection was made through sending the questionnaire via "Google form". In addition, the population for this study was 1,757 Indian

undergraduates from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IUKL), and Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN). Thus, the random sampling technique used was based on the recommendations by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) in Chua (2011) that is 315 respondents. The collected data were processed and analyzed using the *IBM Statistical Package for Social Science* (SPSS) version 19 and all the data were analyzed based on frequency, mean, and the correlation and regression statistical method. The

questionnaire was the main method in studying the relationship between attitudes towards desire in choosing an entrepreneurial career.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of the respondents' profile obtained is shown in Table 1. It covers the respondents' gender, age, educational institution, year of study, and field of study.

TABLE 1. Analysis of the Respondents' Profile

Items	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	115	36.5
Female	200	63.5
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 21	120	38.1
21 -23	163	51.7
24 – 26	19	6.0
27 -29	13	4.1
>30	0	0
<b>Institution</b>		
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	117	37.1
Universiti Tenaga Nasional	93	29.5
Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur	105	33.3
<b>Year of Study</b>		
First Year	160	50.8
Second Year	77	24.4
Third Year	52	16.5
Fourth Year	26	8.3
<b>Field of Study</b>		
Natural Science	51	16.2
Social Science	60	19.0
Technical	123	39.0
Others	81	25.7



ATTITUDE PROFILE TOWARDS AN  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP CAREER

The overall mean score for attitude is 3.99 (Table 2). Findings for this section show that the participants have a high level of attitude in choosing entrepreneurship as a career. This situation shows

that they are confident in their decision to get involved in entrepreneurship. This finding is also consistent with the views of Mohd Salleh et al. (2005), which states that all things happening in the life of an individual is not only dependent on their fate, but it depends on the actions and their own behavior.

TABLE 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of Attitudes towards Entrepreneurship

Attitude Component	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
I feel great satisfaction when my work is the best.	3.43	1.63	High
I never postpone important things to a suitable time.	3.15	1.41	High
I believe that strong results are important in determining the success of a business.	3.60	1.36	High
I believe it is important to analyze your self-weaknesses about important matters.	3.90	1.29	High
I often sacrifice personal comforts for the benefit of good opportunities.	4.10	.95	High
I carry out any work earnestly and as soon as possible in order to achieve the targets set	3.97	.92	High
I carry out a business earnestly and meticulously to get the best out of my job.	4.09	.98	High
I feel proud when good work is done in projects that I run.	4.26	.67	High
I feel proud to see the results achieved in the activities of my business.	4.00	.91	High
I always make sure that any task given will be accomplished properly.	4.29	.64	High
I carry things that are meaningful when doing daily work.	4.14	.77	High
I feel satisfied when I have to work hard to develop myself.	4.27	.81	High
I could be satisfied from the efforts that I have to run.	4.37	.59	High
I always work hard to make myself the best in my field.	4.27	.82	High
Overall score for attitude	3.99	.59	High

Confidence is believed to motivate them in choosing to venture in entrepreneurship or not. Linan et al. (2011) and Zahariah et al. (2010) mentioned that attitude is an important element to determine the intention towards entrepreneurship in a person. Jones and Jones (2014), Ertuna and Gurel (2011), Nandram and Samson (2006) also mentioned that attitude and intention towards entrepreneurship have a significant relationship and play important roles in determining the level of choosing entrepreneurship as a career.

THE LEVEL OF INTENTION IN CHOOSING AN  
ENTREPRENEURIAL CAREER

The findings of this study show that Indian undergraduates in Bangi have a high level of intention in developing an entrepreneurial career choice, as shown by the total score for the level of intention which is 3.65 (Table 3). The finding of this study suggests that the respondents have a high entrepreneurial career choice level because of the intention within themselves.

TABLE 3. Mean and Standard Deviation for the Level of Intention towards Entrepreneurship

Intention Level	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of the Score Interpretation
I'm interested in doing business.	3.67	1.12	High
My main goal is to become an entrepreneur.	3.63	1.14	High
I am willing to do anything to become an entrepreneur.	3.42	1.13	High
Like to engage in business activities that are patterned.	3.56	1.00	High
Prefer to sell to get more pocket money.	3.83	1.02	High
Like to participate in the development of entrepreneurship such as seminars, workshops, and entrepreneurship training.	3.55	1.05	High
Fun to talk with colleagues about business issues.	3.60	1.02	High
Among the career options available, I am willing to venture into any field of becoming an entrepreneur.	3.79	1.02	High
Likes entrepreneurship courses.	3.83	1.13	High
A sense of entrepreneurship in line with my interests.	3.50	1.09	High
Likes finding a variety of business-related information in their leisure time.	3.73	1.02	High
I am less interested in starting a new business.	3.61	1.15	High
I am determined to carry on a business in the future.	3.74	1.04	High
I would like to start a business if given the opportunity and the resources required.	3.63	1.11	High
I will work hard to start and operate my business.	3.59	1.09	High
Total score for the level of intention	3.65	0.84	High

This situation is in line with the theory of planned behavior by Azjen (1991), Heuer and Kolvereid (2014) which highlighted that the level of entrepreneurship career choice is a result of the intention of an individual. It was difficult to anticipate a high level of intention and to ensure that the Indian undergraduates will choose entrepreneurship as a career. This is due to the different human factors that often make it difficult for an individual to determine whether or not to choose entrepreneurship simply based on the level of mere intention.

Thus, this process requires various other factors, such as brining their behavior towards an entrepreneurial career choice in a positive attitude. This situation is in accordance with the

opinion of Nandram and Samson (2006), Halimah and Norfadhilah (2010) in which, the decision to venture into entrepreneurship is very closely linked to a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and also various other factors that motivate Indian undergraduates.

Furthermore, Sudipa and Damodharan (2012) addressed that the level of intention of an individual acts as a motivational factor. It also determines expected behaviors such as choosing entrepreneurship as a career. According to Mohamed et al. (2012), when one's level of intention is stronger, the stronger will be the implementation of such behavior. Zaidatol (2007) stated that a high level of intention is required to induce an individual's decision to become an entrepreneur.

Ertuna and Gurel (2011) and Jones and Jones (2014) proved that the level of entrepreneurship intention does not directly affect the selecting or making up of the entrepreneurial ventures because it is much influenced by other factors which are mostly composed of demographic factors. Therefore, the level of intention just acts as a catalyst or an intermediary in predicting an individual's actions in determining the choice for entrepreneurship.

ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES AND THE LEVEL FOR AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP CAREER CHOICE

The relationship between attitude and the level for an entrepreneurship career choice is represented by the value of the correlation ( $r = 0.510$ ) and the level of significance is 0.00, which is less than 0.05 (Table 3). The attitude of the Indian undergraduates in Bangi has been highlighted in contributing to the entrepreneurial career choice level, where it accounts for 51.0 % in developing of an entrepreneurial career choice among them. Therefore, it can be said that the Indian undergraduates' attitude is positive towards an entrepreneurial career.

TABLE 4. The Relationship between Attitudes and the Levels for an Entrepreneurship Career Choice

Variable	r	Sig.	The Level of Strength
Attitudes	.529	.000	Moderate

Significant level at 0.05

Therefore, this situation can be explained and reinforced through the findings of studies by Nandram and Samson (2006), Ertuna and Gurel (2011), Jones and Jones (2014). They stated that a positive attitude towards an entrepreneurship career choice is formed through entrepreneurship education, formally or informally. Therefore, this study has proven that, attitude is the most important factor in influencing the decision of Indian undergraduates in choosing an entrepreneurial career, as it has been proved through their perception and thus produce a high level of entrepreneurial career choice.

ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTENTION AND THE LEVELS OF AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP CAREER CHOICE

The data analysis shows that the value of Pearson correlation for the relationship between intention and an entrepreneurship career choice is high ( $r=0.854$ ). This suggests a significant relationship between both variables. This is supported by Hirschi and Fischer (2013) and Mohammad et al. (2012) which stated that intention as an essential element in motivating an individual to become an entrepreneur (Table 5).

TABLE 5. The Relationship between Intention and the Levels of an Entrepreneurship Career Choice

Variable	r	Sig.	The Level of Strength
Intention	.854	.000	High

Significant level at 0.05

Studies conducted by Halimah and Norfadhilah (2010) and Dehghanpour Farashah (2013) enforced the finding of this study by suggesting that intention has become the aspect for many individuals to get involved in entrepreneurship in order to achieve a better life and overcome their financial problems. Surprisingly, Sudipa and Damodharan (2012) stated that intention in entrepreneurship will not only ameliorate life quality but will directly contribute to the national economic development. Thus, Table 5 clearly shows that Indian undergraduates have a high level of intention in choosing an entrepreneurial career. This is due to their intention to increase revenue and overcome the unemployment problem. Hence, they believe that their involvement in entrepreneurship can improve their quality of life as well as contributing to the economic development of the country.

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the Indian undergraduates have a positive attitude and a high level of intention for entrepreneurial careers. Therefore, the opportunity for these participants to choose an entrepreneurship career is enormous. In order to ensure that this intention is achieved, the



emphasis on entrepreneurship education should be provided in our education system to focus more on entrepreneurship (Dehghanpour Farashah 2013; Rae et al. 2013; Heuer & Kolvereid 2014). This is essential to produce a competent, creative and innovative human capital which enables Malaysia's economic survival. In the future, a nationwide study on students will provide a better understanding on the relationship between intention and attitude with an entrepreneur career choice. In addition, samples from the future study can be segregated into several groups of students based on their field and level of study. Several variables such as existing entrepreneurship education and involvement can be included for a wider review.

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