

The determinants of self-employment intention among public universities students towards sustaining financial capacity



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Abstract This study investigates the determinants of self-employment intention among public university students in Malaysia. The study aims to understand the factors influencing students' inclination towards self-employment, with a focus on attitude towards behaviour, perceived behavioural control, and entrepreneurial education as potential determinants. This study utilised a cross-sectional design and quantitative approach to investigate the self-employment intentions of 377 students from public universities in Malaysia. Stringent measures, such as pilot testing and reliability analysis, were implemented to ensure the reliability of the data. Statistical analysis, conducted using SPSS, explored the associations between various factors and self-employment intentions through descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis. Attitude towards self-employment and perceived behavioural control play a significant role in influencing self-employment intention among public university students in Malaysia. Entrepreneurial education does not have a direct influence on self-employment intentions among public university students in Malaysia. This study addresses the necessity of identifying the key determinants that have a notable impact on shaping the self-employment intention of public university students. The result will assist policymakers and higher education institutions in formulating an appropriate policy and program to encourage self-employment among public university graduates.

Keywords: self-employment intention, graduate employment, Malaysia University, technopreneurship

1. Introduction

Recent graduates in Malaysia are grappling with a tough job market despite declining overall unemployment rates amid the Covid-19 endemic (Morden, 2022). The issue, as highlighted by Nordin (2022), stems from heightened competition with individuals laid off during the pandemic. The job market saturation worsens over time as new graduates enter an already strained employment scene, creating challenges emphasised by Diana (2022). Businesses' preference for fresh graduates exacerbates the problem, putting financial strain on recent grads dealing with education-related obligations like loan repayments (Pui Pui, 2023). The evolving labour landscape due to technological shifts adds another layer of complexity (Heng et al., 2022). The confluence of these factors presents a significant hurdle for young individuals starting their professional journeys.

Self-employment is frequently advocated as a solution to unemployment, particularly among the youth. According to Hossain (2020), it involves working independently, offering a potential avenue for young individuals to reduce unemployment by starting small businesses. Nations grappling with high unemployment often employ targeted strategies to promote self-employment, especially among university graduates. Paradoxically, those with higher education face increased unemployment rates compared to less-educated counterparts (Al-Qadasi et al., 2021). The imperative for authorities is to address this challenge and provide diverse employment opportunities for graduates.

The pursuit of self-employment is recognised as a crucial driver of economic growth, serving as a strategic approach to alleviate poverty and unemployment, especially among graduates. Governments worldwide acknowledge the significant contribution of self-employment and are implementing programs to promote it (Yahaya et al, 2023). Entrepreneurship education is integrated into strategic plans and curricula to support and foster entrepreneurial endeavours (Kisubi et al., 2021). In Malaysia, the Entrepreneurship Action Plan of Higher Education Institutions (2016-2020) emphasizes the importance of nurturing and supporting students' entrepreneurial initiatives, resulting in structured entrepreneurship education within Malaysian Higher Education Institutions, with all students required to complete at least one entrepreneurship course (Imm Song et al., 2021).



Entrepreneurship is often equated with self-employment, the latter serving as a prominent measure in literature (Feki & Mnif, 2019). This study employs the term “self-employment intention” to signify entrepreneurial aspirations (Dueby, 2022). Understanding graduates’ attitudes toward self-employment is crucial for addressing unemployment, emphasizing the importance of promoting entrepreneurship among young people. Previous research highlights the link between personal intentions and entrepreneurial decisions, urging policymakers to explore factors influencing self-employment intentions in the youth for effective strategies (Al-Qadasi et al., 2021). The surge in research on determinants of self-employment intentions underscores its growing significance.

Students in Malaysia are becoming aware of self-employment, influenced by educational programs, technology trends, and changing cultural perspectives. The growing accessibility of entrepreneurial tools, platforms, and governmental assistance has rendered self-employment an appealing choice for several students. Nonetheless, obstacles such as risk aversion, insufficient practical expertise, and restricted access to money persist as impediments. To cultivate a more entrepreneurial attitude, it is essential to persist in including practical entrepreneurship education and offering enhanced access to funding and mentorship opportunities for students throughout Malaysia. In a favourable atmosphere with adequate assistance, self-employment can serve as a vital avenue for Malaysian students to attain financial stability and enhance the nation’s economic development.

This research centers on assessing the determinants of self-employment intention among public university students. Our investigation explores the influence of attitudes toward behaviour, perceived behavioural control, and entrepreneurial education to the self-employment intention. We aim to answer the following research questions: (a) What are the determinants of self-employment intention among public university students, (b) what is the relationship between determinants of self-employment intention among public university students and their self-employment intention, and (c) what is the most critical determinant of self-employment intention among public university students?

The subsequent section presents a concise review of literature on the conceptual and theoretical review of the study. The following section outlines the outcomes of a quantitative study in which the researchers identified the determinants of self-employment intention, their relationships, and the most critical determinant. The implications derived from these findings are discussed, offering insights for policymakers and public universities to create a suitable strategy and initiative to promote self-employment.

2. Conceptual framework, theoretical review, and hypothesis development

2.1. Self-employment intention

Self-employment offers a compelling alternative for university students, allowing them to pursue freelance work or start their own businesses instead of navigating the competitive job market. Tun Hamiruzzaman et al. (2020) propose entrepreneurship as a solution to Malaysia’s high unemployment among recent graduates. Ayalew and Zeleke (2018) note a global shift toward cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset in universities to enhance graduates’ employability. Entrepreneurship not only addresses unemployment but also contributes to economic growth by creating jobs, fostering competition, and boosting productivity (Abd Rahman, 2020). Research by Mahajan and Gupta (2018) explores the motivations and characteristics influencing individuals in entrepreneurial ventures.

Ajzen (2019) argues that intention is the precursor to behaviour, signalling an individual’s readiness for a specific action. In the entrepreneurial context, self-employment intention, defined as the desire to establish an independent business in the future (Debelo & Ram, 2021), emerges as a pivotal factor. Debelo and Ram (2021) stress its significance as the primary predictor of actual self-employment behaviours, particularly noteworthy among university students. Alkhatib et al. (2020) emphasize the foundational role of entrepreneurial intentions in initiating business ventures. Furthermore, Tun Hamiruzzaman et al. (2020) suggest that researching entrepreneurial intention provides valuable insights for understanding the entrepreneurial process and predicting behaviours effectively by identifying influencing factors.

In this study, the concept of self-employment intention is defined as the predisposition and preparedness of individuals or a cohort of university students to pursue self-employment in the imminent future. The research focuses on three main independent variables, namely Attitude towards Behaviour (Self-employment), Perceived Behavioural Control, and Entrepreneurship Education as key factors expected to impact the inclination toward self-employment. These variables are integral components in understanding the motivational and educational aspects influencing individuals’ intentions to engage in entrepreneurial ventures (Chipunde et al., 2021).

2.2. Attitude towards self-employment

Attitude towards self-employment in this study, focused on self-employment, is rooted in the Theory of Planned Behaviour, reflecting the positive or negative value attributed to engaging in a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 2019). Individuals with a favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship exhibit stronger entrepreneurial intentions, emphasizing the importance of positive perceptions in shaping thoughts and behaviours related to business initiation (Phuong et al., 2020). To cultivate a

positive entrepreneurial attitude among students, it is crucial to implement training and skill development initiatives that nurture personal abilities and interests (Tun Hamiruzzaman et al., 2020).

The development of creative and high-achieving individuals is closely linked to various domains, with attitude playing a pivotal role in fostering entrepreneurial behaviour (Rahman et al., 2020). A positive attitude towards entrepreneurship is associated with a higher likelihood of engaging in self-employment (Agolla et al., 2019). This connection between attitude and entrepreneurial intention is evident among engineering students in Ethiopia as well, emphasizing the impact of a positive attitude on the inclination towards self-employment (Ayalew & Zeleke, 2018). Overall, a favourable disposition towards entrepreneurial endeavours signals a greater readiness among students to invest time and effort in establishing new businesses (Kobylińska, 2022).

Various studies in human behaviour underscore the key role of attributes in entrepreneurship. Shi, Yuan, Bell, and Wang (2020) found a significant positive correlation between entrepreneurial attitude and intention among Chinese university students. This trend holds true in diverse contexts, such as Oman (Shah et al., 2020), Vietnam (Trang and Doanh, 2019), Tran (Karimi, 2019), Yemen, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Italy. Across these studies, there is a consistent and notable positive relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and intention (Al-Jubari et al., 2018; Farrukh et al., 2019; Ahmed et al., 2020; Ferri et al., 2019).

In this study, the perception, desirability, and evaluation of the respondents towards self-employment are tested under attitude towards self-employment. Therefore, it is proposed that:

H1. There is a significant relationship between attitude towards self-employment and self-employment intention.

2.3. Perceived behavioural control

Perceived behavioural control is a key component in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2019), reflecting an individual's belief in their capacity to execute a specific behaviour. According to Kobylińska (2022), beliefs about control, especially in overcoming business challenges, significantly influence perceived behavioural control. Adu et al. (2020) support this, emphasizing the impact of expertise, personal experience, and obstacle assessment on perceived control. Al-Jubari et al. (2018) propose that an individual's decision-making is influenced by their perception of the complexity or ease associated with the required actions for a particular behaviour.

In the realm of self-employment, perceived behavioural control is crucial, reflecting an individual's confidence in skills, knowledge, and capability for entrepreneurial success (Phuc et al., 2020). Notable studies in Malaysia (Mahmood et al., 2019) and Pakistan (Ahmed et al., 2020) reveal a positive influence of perceived behavioural control on pre-start-up behaviour and entrepreneurial behaviour among university graduates, respectively. This association is consistently supported by various researchers, indicating a significant and positive correlation between perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial intention (Zulfiqar et al., 2018; Farrukh et al., 2019; Trang & Doanh, 2019; Karimi, 2019; Al-Jubari et al., 2018; Doanh & Bernat, 2019; Ahmed et al., 2020; Shi et al., 2020).

In the context of this study, the belief and confidence of the respondents in their abilities such as skills and knowledge and their feelings of the difficulty level of pursuing self-employment are being tested under perceived behavioural control. Thus, it is suggested that:

H2. There is a significant relationship between perceived behavioural control and self-employment intention.

2.4. Entrepreneurial education

Entrepreneurship, as described by Oguntimehin and Oyejoke (2018), is a key driver of economic wealth and national development. Prajapati (2019) underscores the impact of entrepreneurship education on shaping students' attitudes and behaviours towards entrepreneurial intentions through supportive academic environments and diverse courses. In response to global challenges like unemployment and poverty-driven crimes, governments, as noted by Omar et al. (2019), have recognised the importance of entrepreneurial education, allocating increased resources to promote initiatives and advancements in this field. Entrepreneurial education is one of the government agenda in supporting the Sustainable Development Goal of zero rise poverty and improving the work and economics growth (Aziz et al, 2019).

Exposing university students to well-structured entrepreneurial education is crucial for enhancing their motivation for entrepreneurship and addressing graduate unemployment issues. In Malaysia, most universities incorporate entrepreneurship courses, engaging students in both theoretical and practical aspects. This approach not only fosters interest in entrepreneurship but also significantly impacts students' confidence and active involvement in entrepreneurial pursuits. Research emphasizes the pivotal role of entrepreneurship education in shaping students' attitudes, intentions, and skills, contributing to their active participation in various entrepreneurial roles and processes (Alyammahi et al, 2019). Ultimately, this approach equips students with the necessary skills and mindset for entrepreneurial success, positively impacting employment prospects and economic growth (Omar et al., 2019; Oguntimehin & Oyejoke, 2018; Wu et al., 2022).

Recent research has increasingly explored the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions. Studies by Hou et al. (2019); Mei et al. (2020), and Zhang and Huang (2021) highlight a significant positive influence on students'

inclination towards entrepreneurship. Additionally, Hassan et al. (2020) note the pivotal role of both entrepreneurship education and financial support in fostering the entrepreneurial mindset among young individuals. Faloye and Olatunji’s (2018) study on Nigerian graduates further supports this, revealing a substantial influence of entrepreneurship education on recent graduates’ inclination to start their own businesses. These findings underscore the crucial role of education in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. In some cases the method of delivering entrepreneurial education became more broader as online learning emphasize the effectiveness of the delivering even for the student to experience entrepreneurial education through online learning (Yahaya et al., 2024).

Research by Bui et al., (2020) reveals that Vietnamese university graduates exposed to entrepreneurship courses are more likely to pursue entrepreneurial paths. Mahmood et al., (2021) find that university-level entrepreneurship curriculum significantly aids students in managing businesses, citing acquired knowledge and skills. The human capital theory, entrepreneurial self-efficacy theory, and self-determination theory Boldureanu et al. (2020) support a positive link between entrepreneurship education and students’ entrepreneurial intentions. Phuc et al. (2020) emphasize that entrepreneurship education’s main objective is to equip students with practical skills, fostering an entrepreneurial culture and enabling them to seize opportunities. Hence, it is postulated that:

H3: There is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial education and self-employment intention.

2.5. Theoretical Review

Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is a widely utilised model for studying self-employment intentions, noted by Debelo and Ram (2021). TPB explores cognitive processes influencing decision-making, emphasizing individual willpower in shaping behaviour (Zhang, 2018). Unlike other theories like locus of control, TPB considers a broader range of factors, supported by empirical research (Frew, 2023), establishing it as a widely referenced explanation for self-employment behaviour.

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB), which builds upon the theory of reasoned action (TRA), proposes that an individual’s intention can be predicted by their attitude towards a specific behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. When combined with perceived behavioural control, intention can further predict actual behaviour (Nguyen, 2020).

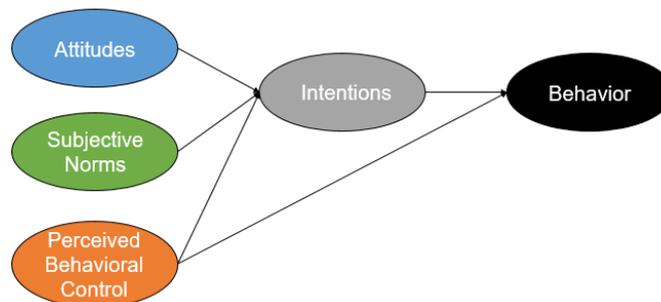


Figure 1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).
 Source: (Worthington, 2021).

The model in question uses concepts such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control to anticipate human intention and behaviour in specific contexts. Positive attitudes, supportive social influences, and a sense of control contribute to a higher likelihood of engaging in a behaviour (Nguyen, 2020). However, the impact of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on predicting intentions can vary, with attitudes sometimes playing a more dominant role, while subjective norms may have minimal effects (Worthington, 2021).

The TPB model has emerged as a valuable and comprehensive tool for researchers studying entrepreneurial intention, with empirical evidence supporting its utility across diverse cultural contexts (Tun Hamiruzzaman et al., 2020). Studies by Gieure et al. (2019) and Jadir et al. (2022) reinforce TPB’s reliability in assessing individuals’ intentions and behaviours related to starting new businesses. However et al. (2018) caution that the relative significance and influence of TPB factors can vary across different situations and countries, emphasizing the need for context-specific considerations.

This study employs the TPB model, focusing on attitude towards behaviour and perceived behavioural control as independent variables. The study focused on the personal beliefs or confidence in their ability to perform the behaviour, therefore the subjective norms is excluded, this is supported by Ajina (2019). Decision and influence from external factor should be minimised as the self-employment should be decided by the individual itself. The TPB suggests a link between university students’ positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship and their perceived ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities, predicting stronger intentions for self-employment. Building on this, the study investigates the potential influence of entrepreneurship education on developing fundamental beliefs identified in previous research as crucial determinants of students’ intentions to pursue self-employment.



As of April 2020, the theory of planned behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991, 2012) has undergone empirical examination in over 4,200 publications indexed in the Web of Science bibliographic database, establishing it as one of the most utilized theories in the social and behavioral sciences. The Theory of Planned Behavior posits that human behavior is influenced by three types of considerations: beliefs regarding the probable outcomes of the behavior (behavioral beliefs), beliefs concerning the normative expectations of others (normative beliefs), and beliefs about the existence of factors that may facilitate or hinder the execution of the behavior (control beliefs).

The influence of attitude toward the conduct and subjective norm on intention is reduced by the notion of behavioral control. Generally, a more favorable attitude and subjective norm, along with more perceived control, should correlate with a stronger intention to engage in the specified conduct. The theory of planned behavior is a valuable framework for research in the social and behavioral sciences. The research demonstrate the persistent interest in employing the Theory of Planned Behavior to elucidate and forecast behavior across diverse domains. Simultaneously, they indicate that the theory remains a work in progress as researchers persist in examining the complexities of the structural model, such as the moderating effects of perceived behavioral control, and in suggesting supplementary components to elucidate the intricacies of human behavior.

The upcoming section details the research methodology employed to assess our hypotheses. We explore key determinants influencing self-employment intention among public university students in Malacca. We collected data using online questionnaires and tested our proposed model through quantitative analysis.

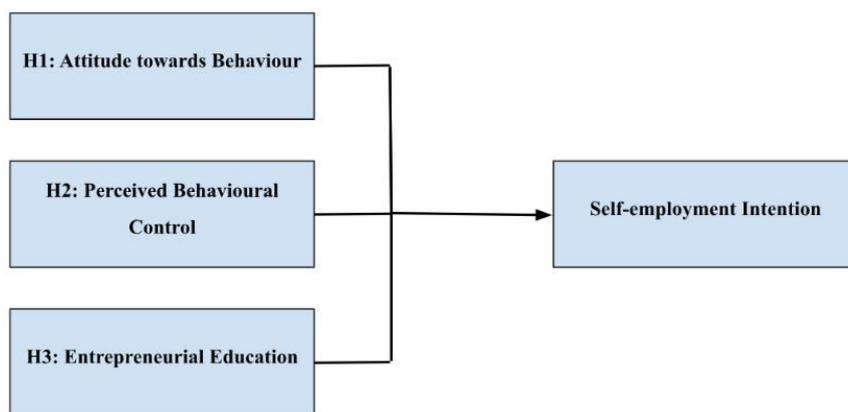


Figure 2 Conceptual Framework.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

In this study, a cross-sectional and explanatory research design is employed to investigate the relationships among attitudes towards self-employment, perceived behavioural control, and entrepreneurial education with respect to self-employment intention among public university students. The research adopts a quantitative approach to collect and analyse data, aiming to establish statistical relationships between variables and validate theories through hypothesis testing. Both primary and secondary data sources are utilised, with primary data obtained through a survey involving the distribution of self-administered questionnaires to public university students in Malacca. The questionnaire comprises three sections: Section A focuses on gathering demographic information, Section B addresses self-employment intention, and Section C explores determinants such as attitude towards self-employment, perceived behavioural control, and entrepreneurial education. Secondary data are derived from pertinent papers, academic publications, journal articles, and relevant websites. The study employs probability sampling, specifically simple probability sampling, to randomly select respondents for data collection. To uphold the ethical integrity of this study, the participants are informed of the study's goal, advantages, and risks before to consenting or declining to participate.

3.2 Demographic profile of participants

The study participants are public university students in Malaysia. A total of 377 public university students participated in the study. Demographic details collected from the questionnaire revealed that the majority of participants fell within the 21-23 age bracket (56.5%), with 51.5% identifying as female. The current academic undertaking predominantly included bachelor's degree (59.9%), followed by diploma (21.2%), master's degree (15.9%), and postgraduate (2.9%). Most of the participants enrolled in business program (52.8%), while 47.2% enrolled in non-business program. Among the respondents, 64.5% are from an entrepreneurial family, whereas 35.5% are not.

3.3 Scales and measures

The survey captured student perceptions regarding their intention to be self-employed. Students reported their self-employment intention (i.e. I intend to start my own business after completing my studies). Attitude towards self-employment was measured by asking students their agreement level with certain items (i.e. Being an entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages for me). To capture perceived behavioural control, students expressed their agreement with the related statements (i.e. Opening and operating a business are easy/not difficult for me). Meanwhile, the influence of entrepreneurial education was measured using items such as “In order to create a company, it is necessary to study entrepreneurship at universities”. All items utilised a 5-point Likert-type scale.

4. Results

4.1. Respondents’ Profile

A total of 377 questionnaires were completed and submitted online. According to Krejcie and Morgan’s sample size decision table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), a sample size of 377 is recommended when the total population is up to 20,000. The analysis of the descriptive statistics revealed that most of the participants, accounting for 51.5% of the total respondents, are female. Among the 377 respondents, 21.5% are aged 18-20 (81 individuals), 56.5% fall within the 21-23 age group (213 individuals), 18.3% are between 24 and 26 (69 respondents), 2.9% are in the 27-29 range (11 individuals), and 0.8% are 30 and above (3 respondents). In terms of current academic undertaking, the survey revealed that the majority of respondents, comprising 59.9%, are pursuing a bachelor’s degree, with 21.2% engaged in diploma programs, 15.9% pursuing a master’s degree, and the smallest percentage, 2.9%, undertaking postgraduate studies, particularly a PhD. When asked about types of programs, the highest percentage, at 52.8%, indicated that they are enrolled in business programs. Regarding the belonging of an entrepreneurial family, 64.5% reported that they are not part of an entrepreneurial family.

4.2. Reliability Analysis

Table 1 presents the reliability analysis conducted on the dependent variable, namely self-employment intention, and the independent variables (attitude towards self-employment, perceived behavioural control, and entrepreneurial education). The Cronbach’s Alpha value for self-employment intention falls within the range of 0.886 (considered good). The value of Cronbach’s Alpha for attitude towards self-employment is 0.867 (considered good). As for perceived behavioural control, the Cronbach’s Alpha value is 0.901, falling within the range considered excellent. The reliability analysis for Cronbach’s Alpha pertaining to entrepreneurial education is 0.856, indicating a good reliability range.

Table 1 Reliability analysis of dependent and independent variables.

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Status
Self-employment intention	5	0.886	Good
Attitude towards self-employment	5	0.867	Good
Perceived behavioural control	5	0.901	Excellent
Entrepreneurial education	5	0.856	Good

4.3. Pearson’s Correlation Analysis

Table 2 presents the outcomes of a correlation analysis, where the strength of correlation between pairs of variables was determined using correlation coefficients (r values) for each variable. In general, all independent variables (attitude towards self-employment, perceived behavioural control, and entrepreneurial education) demonstrated a significant positive relationship with self-employment intention, as indicated by a p-value of below 0.001. The highest correlation coefficient was observed between attitude towards self-employment and self-employment intention, with an r value of 0.903, signifying a strong positive correlation. Following this, perceived behavioural control also exhibited a robust positive correlation with an r value of 0.825, and entrepreneurial education showed a slightly lower level of correlation with an r value of 0.775.

Table 2 Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient between dependent variable and independent variables.

Variables	Self-employment intention	Attitude towards self-employment	Perceived behavioural control	Entrepreneurial education
Self-employment intention	1	0.903**	0.825**	0.775**
Attitude toward self-employment	0.903**	1	0.810**	0.829**
Perceived behavioural control	0.825**	0.810**	1	0.775**
Entrepreneurial education	0.775**	0.829**	0.775**	1

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

4.4. Multiple Regression Analysis



Multiple regression analysis is employed to evaluate the independent variables' role in predicting the dependent variable through regression coefficients. This analysis is instrumental in testing all hypotheses. It enables the researcher to pinpoint the independent variable with the most significant impact on the dependent variable. Based on the data provided in Table 3, this study suggests that not all independent variables contribute to influencing the intention to engage in self-employment.

Table 3 Coefficients of Multiple Regression Analysis.

Model	Unstandardised Beta	Standardised Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
Attitude towards self-employment	0.705	0.686	16.368	< 0.001
Perceived behavioural control	0.272	0.275	7.406	< 0.001
Entrepreneurial education	-0.007	-0.006	-0.161	0.872

Dependent Variable: Self-employment Intention.

Significantly, the most influential predictor variable is the attitude towards self-employment, exhibiting a β value of 0.686, $t(377) = 16.368$, and $p < 0.001$. Furthermore, in comparison to other independent variables, the unstandardised beta (β) for the attitude towards self-employment is the highest, underscoring its notable positive correlation with the intention for self-employment.

Moreover, the significance of perceived behavioral control is underscored as a more potent predictor, evident in its β coefficient of 0.275, $t(377) = 7.406$, and $p < 0.001$. The unstandardized beta (β) for perceived behavioral control stands out with the second-highest positive value among the variables. These results suggest that perceived behavioral control holds the position of the second most impactful factor influencing self-employment intention.

Lastly, the examination of the results suggests that entrepreneurial education does not have a statistically significant impact on the intention to engage in self-employment. The unstandardized beta coefficient (β) is -0.007, indicating a negative correlation. The t-value of -0.161, with a degree of freedom of 377, is relatively low, and the p-value of 0.872 surpasses the conventional significance threshold.

The results indicate that the unique factors influencing the dependent variable are one's attitude toward self-employment and perceived behavioral control. These elements play a crucial role in predicting the intention to pursue self-employment.

4.5. Hypothesis Testing

The findings from the hypothesis testing are outlined in Table 4. The hypothesis is under evaluation to determine its acceptance or rejection, drawing conclusions from the conducted research. The outcome is established through a multiple regression analysis.

Table 4 Hypothesis Testing Result.

Independent Variables	P Value	Result
Attitude towards self-employment	< 0.001	H1 accepted
Perceived behavioural control	< 0.001	H2 accepted
Entrepreneurial education	0.872	H3 rejected

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate noteworthy associations between two independent variables and the dependent variable. Specifically, the results demonstrate that the significance values for both attitude towards self-employment and perceived behavioral control are below 0.001 ($p < 0.001$). This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) for both independent variables and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. In contrast, the significance value for entrepreneurial education is 0.872, indicating non-significance. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (H_3) related to entrepreneurial education is not supported and is rejected.

5. Discussion

By employing linear regression analysis, the researcher confirmed the support for all alternative hypotheses while rejecting null hypotheses. This indicated a noteworthy association between the independent variables (such as attitude toward self-employment, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial education) and the intention for self-employment. However, the results of multiple regression analysis only validated two alternative hypotheses (attitude toward self-employment and perceived behavioral control) and rejected one alternative hypothesis (entrepreneurial education). The result aligns with established research, indicating the consistent influence of attitude on the intention to engage in self-employment. This is supported by various studies, including those conducted by Trang and Doanh (2019), Karimi (2019), and Al-Jubari (2019), emphasizing the pivotal role of attitude in shaping the inclination towards self-employment. Similarly, prior research, exemplified by Doanh and Bernat (2019), Shi et al. (2020), and Farrukh et al. (2019), underscores the significant impact of perceived behavioural control on the intention to pursue self-employment. As for the result of entrepreneurial education, it also aligns with the cumulative evidence from previous studies, such as Sanyal and Al Mashani (2018), which suggests that



education in entrepreneurship does not substantially influence the inclination to pursue a career in entrepreneurship. Simultaneously, the examination of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient revealed a robust positive correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable in the study. Ultimately, the multiple regression analysis concluded that attitude toward self-employment emerged as the most influential factor determining self-employment intention.

6. Conclusion

The research successfully achieved its objectives by identifying determinants of self-employment intention among public university students. The study focused on attitude towards self-employment, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial education, exploring their relationships with self-employment intention. The researcher referred to the literature and confirmed the significance of these determinants. The first objective was realized through the identification of independent variables impacting self-employment intention. Notably, attitude, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial education were identified as key determinants, supported by studies such as Jalil et al. (2021), Tun Hamiruzzaman et al. (2020), Zaman et al. (2021), and Imm Song et al. (2021).

The second objective was achieved through Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis, revealing positive correlations between the independent variables and self-employment intention. The strongest association was found with attitude towards self-employment, followed by perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurial education. This aligns with the findings of Al-Qadasi et al. (2021), Zulfiqar et al. (2018), and Tun Hamiruzzaman et al. (2020). However, the Multiple Linear Regression showed no significant relationship between entrepreneurial education and self-employment intention, suggesting that although education fosters interest and knowledge, it doesn't directly impact intention (Adu et al., 2020). An entrepreneurial education yields insignificant result, respondents of this study are among students in public university in Melaka, they are comprising of business and non-business students. Factors such as lack of curriculum emphasizing on the entrepreneurial education and low interest toward self-employment are contributed to the insignificant of the study. In addition, the study does not filter the year of study, junior student in year one might have low understanding about the interesting of entrepreneurship education toward self - employment. Future study suggests the expanded of the respondent to Malaysia context instead of focusing in a small state and should be answered by the final year student.

The third objective involved evaluating the most critical determinant, identified through Multiple Linear Regression as attitude towards self-employment. This result is consistent with Anjum et al. (2018), emphasizing the predominant impact of attitude towards entrepreneurship on entrepreneurial intention.

6.1. Limitation and future study

The study faced several constraints, with notable limitations including a time constraint that led the researcher to focus on only three independent variables (attitude towards self-employment, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial education). The researcher acknowledges the presence of other crucial factors influencing self-employment intention among university students. The study suggests that future research should adopt a more comprehensive approach by including a broader range of variables to improve the accuracy of results. Another constraint involves potential issues with respondent feedback, as some participants may decline to respond or struggle to comprehend survey questions adequately. The carefully crafted questionnaire aimed to address these challenges, but the data collected may lack sufficient evidentiary support regarding the determinants of self-employment intention. Consequently, the obtained data may not be robust enough to accurately represent all public university students in Malacca.

The current study on self-employment intention among university students utilizes a framework with three independent variables. The researcher suggests a future conceptual framework, acknowledging the likely existence of additional influential factors. To enhance understanding, subsequent studies could employ qualitative research methods. Mwitwa (2019) found that having self-employed parents significantly influences self-employment intentions, indicating a need for further exploration. Mahajan and Gupta (2018) connect the need for achievement to self-employment intention, emphasizing its consideration in future research. Israr & Saleem (2018) highlight the importance of openness to experience in entrepreneurial intention, urging its inclusion in upcoming studies on self-employment intention.

6.2. Implications

This study seeks to improve our understanding of the key factors influencing the intention to pursue self-employment among students in public universities, given the persistently high unemployment rate among graduates. Although the investigation focused on three specific determinants, the researcher suggests that there are likely additional variables affecting self-employment intention among university students. As a result, the researcher proposes a new framework for future studies.

To achieve the research objectives, the study involves a comprehensive review of existing literature, the analysis of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, and the application of Multiple Linear Regression analysis to test hypotheses regarding the relationships among independent variables (attitude towards self-employment, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial education). The findings indicate that self-employment intention among public university students is primarily

influenced by attitude towards self-employment and perceived behavioral control, with attitude towards self-employment being the most significant determinant. Conversely, entrepreneurial education is found to have no significant impact on self-employment intention and has been excluded from the model.

Recognizing the critical determinants influencing self-employment intention among public university students is crucial for authorities to implement effective measures encouraging self-employment among the younger generation, particularly university students. Self-employment plays a vital role in driving economic expansion, fostering innovation, and creating employment opportunities. For university students, engaging in self-employment provides independence and adaptability, serving as a bridge between theoretical learning and practical experience, promoting creativity and flexibility. Beyond financial benefits, involvement in self-employment equips students with essential skills needed to thrive in a constantly evolving job market.

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Ethical considerations

Consent was appropriately obtained from all respondents during data collections.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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