

Determinants of The Intention in Becoming an Online Entrepreneur Among Online Distance Learning Students in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study is aiming to evaluate of entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy and social influence on attitude and direct effect of attitude on intention to become online entrepreneur among students in online distance learning (ODL) higher institutions in Malaysia. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) technique was employed to analyse the casual relationships among entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy, social influence, attitude and intention. Partial Least Square (PLS) procedure was used to analyse the developed model by assessing the data obtained from a questionnaire survey that produced 272 usable questionnaires. The results showed that entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy and social influence have a positive and significant influence on attitude and attitude has a positive and significant influence on intention among students in Malaysian ODL tertiary institutions. The results suggest that ODL institutions should give greater emphasis on strengthening entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy, social influence, attitude to ensure their ODL students have strong intention to become online entrepreneur.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, entrepreneurship activities have become the engine growth of the country's economic growth. It is mainly due to the advantages and its positive effects to the nation, by stimulating wealth and

job creation (Guroi & Atsan, 2006). Further, entrepreneurship is deemed as main element in robust economy because of small medium enterprise creativity and innovativeness in operating their businesses (Fueglistaller, Klandt, Halter, & Müller, 2008). To success in the entrepreneurship world, the person should acquire certain qualities that necessary in business. According to Murnieks, Mosakowski, and Cardon (2014), risk taking, visionary, intellectual curiosity and forward looking are the important criteria that an entrepreneur should acquire. As an entrepreneur, only calculated risk business opportunity should be taken into consideration and the objective must be achievable (Segal, Borgia, & Schoenfeld, 2005). The development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has caused people to shift the way they are doing their business and caused the change of doing business around the world (Carrier, Raymond, & Eltaief, 2004). Besides technology, other factors which are deemed to play important role in influencing the individual to venture in online entrepreneurship are entrepreneurial education, attitude, social influence and self-efficacy. For online distance learning (ODL) students, since they have been exposed and involved in online activities in their study activities, it is vital to look whether there is an inclination among them to become online entrepreneur. Therefore, the aim of this study is to look whether entrepreneurial education, attitude, social influence and self-efficacy have influence on intention among online distance learning students to become online entrepreneur in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004), entrepreneurship education involves a process where an individual or individuals' groups identify creative and innovative ideas which have potential to become opportunity if implemented in various social, cultural and economics context. Entrepreneurship education is a vital element and has positive

impact on entrepreneurial attitude and intention to become entrepreneur (Souitaris, & Al-Laham, 2007). Lecturers should be trained with latest skills and knowledge towards entrepreneurship. By doing so, they will be able to mould the attitude of the students by providing conducive learning atmosphere and innovative course curriculum to develop students' entrepreneurial skills and competencies. Tiwari, Bhat, and Tikoria (2017) in their study on 200 students at a premier higher education institute of India have found that entrepreneurial education has a significant and positive influence on entrepreneurial education. Ajike, Kelechi, Hamed, Onyia, and Kwarbai (2015) conducted a study on final year business Administration and Marketing students from selected private Universities in Nigeria have revealed that entrepreneurial education has a strong positive and significant on entrepreneurial intention. A study conducted on 387 Bangladeshi business graduate students by Kabir, Ahasanul, and Abdullah (2017) have found that developing entrepreneurial mind through education is important for the development of entrepreneurial culture. This is because entrepreneurial education will provide skills and knowledge that might help the students to change their typical mind-set from searching job to creating jobs. According to Gelard and Saleh (2011), entrepreneurial education can strongly affect the students' inclination to become entrepreneur as their career.

Bandura (1997) has introduced self-efficacy overall concept and suggested that self-efficacy indicates the belief on how a person's ability to gain knowledge or carry out behaviours at certain level. Shelton (1990) proposed self-efficacy is a sign of a person's conviction relating to their ability to achieve objectives and to solve the problems that they face every day in anticipation to perform the given behaviour successfully. A person self-efficacy is similar to that of one's self-confidence relating to self-perception in

respect of skills and capability to complete the task given (Wilson, Kickul, & Marlino, 2007). Bandura (1997) mentioned that people who maintain strong self-efficacy in performing a specific task, more likely have more interest to do and follow up with the respective task. Nevertheless, previous studies had mentioned that self-efficacy elements had been established in the field of management studies, specifically focused on entrepreneurship especially entrepreneurial intention (Wilson et al., 2007, Urban, 2010).

Venkatesh, Moris, Davis, and Davis (2003) suggested social influence can be depicted as the level on how a person perceives another person believes that he or she should utilize new technology or system. Venkatesh et al. (2003) also emphasize subject norms, image and social factors are similar constructs which sum up similar concept with social influence. Norms usually more powerful and consistently impact the individual's attitude and behaviour in online community (Zeng, Huang, & Dou, 2009). Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) proposed that online users will interact and converses among the members in the group so can form a shape that is a cohesive attitude of group. Luca Ferri, Gianluca Ginesti, Rosanna Spanò and Annamaria Zampella (2018) in their study on 441 Italian female students, also found that social pressure influences business students' intention to become entrepreneurs. Today, youth are using social networking services to communicate among them and treating it as a platform to be connected with their friends (Mohamed Haneefa & Sumitha, 2011).

Attitude is one of the most crucial elements that influences the person to become successful entrepreneur (Mohd. Salleh et al., 2005; Sudipa & Damodharan, 2012). Nandram and Samson (2006), and Jones, Miller, Jones, Packham, Pickernell, & Zbierowski (2011) suggested that attitude plays important role in determining whether the person will become an entrepreneur

and it depends on the positive attitude of the person towards entrepreneurship. Jones and Jones (2014) in their study revealed that entrepreneurial attitude can motivate the person to increase competency to make the latest market opportunity and get value for money. Nadia and Nawaz, (2017) in their study on 250 university students of Karachi concluded that individual attitude and perceived behavioural control were the two main determinants towards the intentions to become an entrepreneur. Ndubisi and Sinti (2006) cited in their study that element of attitude was explained as a feeling which is mainly originated from a person's physical expression. Steenkamp and Jong (2010) suggested that attitude is developed on the psychological perspective basis of the person.

Intention is the number of efforts placed by the person so that he or she will act in the certain way or show certain behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). George (2004) suggested that to fully understand an individual's behaviour, it is vital at the beginning stage to acquire knowledge on their intention to behave in that particular way. This is due to the individual's decision to act on certain behaviour based on their intention to carry out their anxious behaviour. As a result, many researchers have been studying widely to figure out what cause a person's intention to act in different ways (Mohamad, Lim, Yusof, & Soon, 2015; Herbst, Hannah, & Allan, 2013). Greater strength of behaviour will cause higher individual chances to be involved in entrepreneurship (Rae & Ruth Woodier-Harris, 2013; Hirschi & Fischer, 2013).

In view to the above conceptual development, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: There is a direct relationship between entrepreneurial education and attitude to become online entrepreneur among ODL students in Malaysia.

H₂: There is a direct relationship between self-efficacy and attitude to become online entrepreneur among ODL students in Malaysia.

H₄: There is a direct relationship between attitude and intention to become online entrepreneur among ODL students in Malaysia.

H₃: There is a direct relationship between social influence and attitude to become online entrepreneur among ODL students in Malaysia.

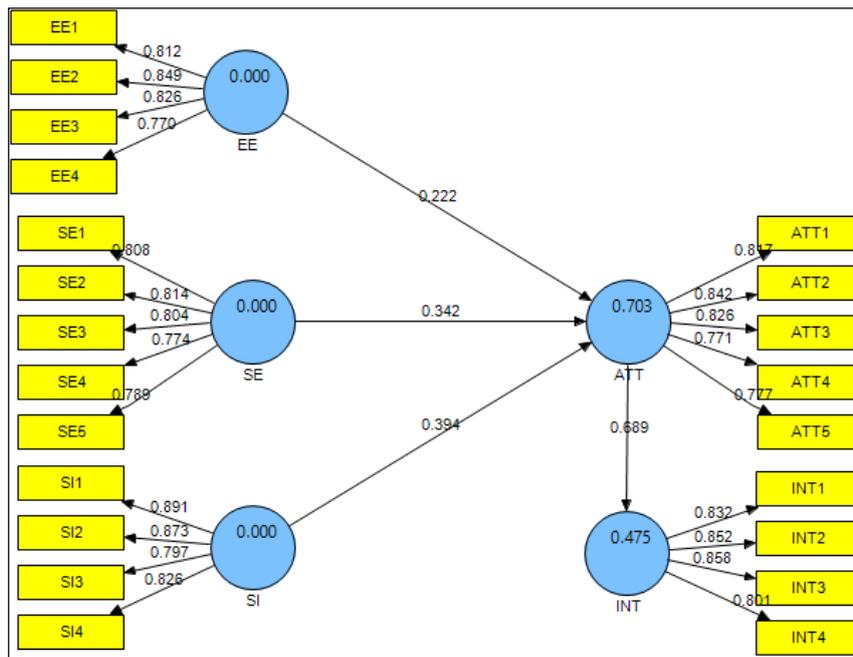


Figure 1 Research model

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts survey questionnaire which was designed by extensively evaluating literatures to find suitable scales that being used in the studies previously that have strong reliability and validity. There are 22 observed variables that made up the independent variable measurement of entrepreneurial education 4 items, self-efficacy 5 items, social influence 4 items, attitude 5 items and dependent variable of intention 4 items. Five-point Likert scale was utilized from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Students of local online distance learning institutions were the main respondents. From 384 questionnaire distributed, 331 were returned. This made up 86.2% response rate and it is adequate to do

data analysis using SEM analysis. From the 331 returned questionnaires, 326 were completed and after screening and removing outliers, 317 questionnaires were ready for analysis. This study employed Smart-PLS to perform data analysis to facilitate the evaluation of the model and to examine the hypotheses proposed for the study. The PLS-SEM technique was utilized in the study because of its capability to evaluate the overall model measurement and examine the latent variables and their measures relationship (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The study used PLS-SEM approach for measurement model assessment via PLS-SEM algorithm and then utilized bootstrapping procedure to evaluate the structural model and reported the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Common Method Bias

One main concern in management research is common method bias. This occurs when the variance is attributed to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures supposed to represent in the study. Full collinearity test was utilized to examine the bias of the measurement items in this study as proposed by Kock and Lynn, (2012). If the VIF is

higher than 3.3, it is an indication of collinearity issue, and a sign that a model may be affected by common method bias. In view of that, the model is deemed to be common method bias-free if all results of VIFs from a full collinearity test are equal to or less than 3.3. Table 1 depicts the VIFs acquired for all the latent variables by conducting a full collinearity assessment, that is, the common method bias test suggested by Kock and Lynn (2012). The full collinearity test procedure seems to be successful in indicating the model is free of common method bias.

Table 1 Full collinearity VIFs

	INT	ATT	EE	SE	SI
INT		2.054	1.855	2.01	1.953
ATT	3.079		2.89	2.678	2.521
EE	2.242	2.33		2.402	2.425
SE	2.081	1.85	2.058		2.133
SI	2.346	2.022	2.411	2.475	

Note: INT = intention, ATT = attitude, EE = entrepreneurial education, SE = self-efficacy, SI = social influence

Measurement Model

PLS-SEM Algorithm was use in this study to measure the structural model and to assess the construct measurement validity and reliability by using (Figure 1). For that reason, Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2017) propose that reliability and validity are the two main criteria applied in PLS-SEM analysis to evaluate the goodness outer model. As depicted in Table 2, the composite reliability ranged from 0.887 to 0.903 for the first order constructs, therefore fulfilled the requirement of 0.70 and above (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, the result showed that average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.637 to 0.718 which are all higher than of 0.50, therefore showed

the present of convergent validity for all the latent constructs (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012). In Table 3, the AVEs are showed on the diagonal side and the squared inter-construct correlations are off the diagonal side of the table. The result revealed that all the AVE square roots are higher than the correlations of each construct and justify the present of discriminant validity. To further substantiate the discriminant validity in this study, the item cross-loadings were evaluated. The result showed that all items' loadings were greater than their corresponding cross-loadings (Table 4). Therefore, this study proved the reliability and validity of the latent variables (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014).

Table 2 Indicators loading, average variance extracted (AVE) and internal consistency

	Item	Loading	AVE	CR
ATTITUDE	ATT1	0.817	0.652	0.903
	ATT2	0.842		
	ATT3	0.826		
	ATT4	0.771		
	ATT5	0.777		
ENTERPRENEURIAL EDUCATION	EE1	0.812	0.664	0.887
	EE2	0.849		
	EE3	0.826		
	EE4	0.770		
INTENTION	INT1	0.832	0.669	0.903
	INT2	0.852		
	INT3	0.858		
	INT4	0.801		
SELF-EFFICACY	SE1	0.808	0.637	0.898
	SE2	0.815		
	SE3	0.804		
	SE4	0.774		
	SE5	0.789		
SOCIAL INFLUENCE	SI1	0.891	0.718	0.911
	SI2	0.873		
	SI3	0.797		
	SI4	0.826		

Note: AVE = Average Variance Extracted, CR = Composite Reliability

Table 3 Square root of AVE against correlation of latent variables

	ATT	EE	INT	SE	SI
ATT	0.807				
EE	0.707	0.815			
INT	0.689	0.689	0.836		
SE	0.724	0.631	0.645	0.798	
SI	0.756	0.683	0.683	0.615	0.848

Table 4 Items cross-loading

	ATT	EE	INT	SE	SI
ATT1	0.817	0.581	0.561	0.565	0.598
ATT2	0.842	0.592	0.595	0.560	0.624
ATT3	0.826	0.546	0.566	0.609	0.639
ATT4	0.771	0.555	0.487	0.558	0.572
ATT5	0.777	0.579	0.567	0.629	0.614
EE1	0.558	0.812	0.575	0.502	0.515
EE2	0.590	0.849	0.577	0.512	0.554
EE3	0.576	0.826	0.559	0.535	0.599
EE4	0.577	0.770	0.533	0.505	0.554
INT1	0.545	0.522	0.832	0.527	0.560
INT2	0.526	0.590	0.852	0.534	0.516
INT3	0.605	0.610	0.858	0.554	0.581
INT4	0.616	0.576	0.801	0.538	0.615
SE1	0.635	0.516	0.582	0.808	0.560
SE2	0.599	0.484	0.525	0.815	0.522
SE3	0.567	0.549	0.525	0.804	0.454
SE4	0.490	0.485	0.472	0.774	0.457
SE5	0.583	0.483	0.461	0.789	0.451
SI1	0.668	0.619	0.654	0.556	0.891
SI2	0.667	0.583	0.594	0.524	0.873
SI3	0.569	0.484	0.450	0.493	0.797
SI4	0.653	0.618	0.602	0.511	0.826

Structural Model

Path coefficient and the R^2 value (Hair et al., 2013) were used in this study assessed the structural model in this study. PLS bootstrapping was utilized with 500 subsamples to ascertain the significance of the path coefficients in the study. Table 5 shows the hypotheses test results, path coefficients and t -values. In Table 4, hypothesis 1 predicts a positive relationship between entrepreneurial education and attitude and the result shows that there is a positive and significant influence of entrepreneurial education on attitude ($\beta = 0.222, t = 4.974$). As a result, H1 is supported.

The result of H2 also reveals a significant and positive relationship between self-efficacy and attitude ($\beta = 0.342, t = 8.607$); thus, supporting H2. The H3 result also shows that there is a positive and significant relationship present between social influence and attitude ($\beta = 0.394, t = 9.383$); therefore, H3 is supported. Lastly, H4 result reveals that there is a positive and significant relationship between attitude and intention ($\beta = 0.689, t = 23.141$) and thus H4 is supported. This study also valued the R^2 of the endogenous construct of intention. The result shows moderate R^2 values which imply results meaningfulness for interpretation.

Table 5 Path coefficients and hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	T-value	Decision
H1	EE ≥ ATT	0.222	4.974	Accepted
H2	SE ≥ ATT	0.342	8.607	Accepted
H3	SI ≥ ATT	0.394	9.383	Accepted
H4	ATT ≥ INT	0.689	23.141	Accepted

DISCUSSION

This study intends to develop an understanding of direct effect of entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy and social influence on attitude and direct effect of attitude on intention to become online entrepreneur among ODL students in Malaysia. A review of past studies on entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy, social influence, attitude and intention was done. Based on preliminary findings, the model was formed, and it has shown that entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy and social influence have positive and significant influence on attitude and attitude has a positive and significant influence on intention. The proposed framework of this study is to empirically examine the direct effect of entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy and social influence on attitude and direct effect of attitude on intention. In order to achieve this goal, the PLS technique was utilized. Based on the above results, it obviously shows that social influence has the strongest impact on attitude of the ODL students to become online entrepreneur with path coefficient of 0.394. This shows how importance the social influence elements in determining the attitude of ODL students to be come online entrepreneur. The second strongest factor that has impact on attitude is self-efficacy, with the path coefficient of 0.342. This prove that belief on how a person’s ability to gain knowledge or carry out behaviours at certain level is very crucial in forming the entrepreneurial attitude of ODL students. The third strongest factor that has impact on attitude is entrepreneurial education with the path coefficient of 0.222. The ability of ODL students to identify creative and innovative ideas which have potential to become opportunity could form their

entrepreneurial attitude. The result also reveals that attitude has a strong impact on the intention of ODL students to become online entrepreneur with the path coefficient 0.689. This shows how attitude is very important and influence the intention of ODL students to become online entrepreneur. This study shows that it is very important to emphasize on social influence, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial education in forming the right entrepreneurial attitude which eventually will strengthen the intention to become online entrepreneur as their career.

CONCLUSION

This study concentrates on entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy, social influence, attitude, and intention of ODL students in online distance learning institutions in Malaysia. The results have shown that direct effect of entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy and social influence on attitude and direct effect of attitude on intention to become online entrepreneur were statistically positive and significant. Entrepreneurship educators and researchers need to apply the approach where entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy, social influence and attitude can be boosted which eventually strengthen the intention of ODL students to become online entrepreneur after their study.

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