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THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL (FAMILY AND PEERS) SUPPORT ON
ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS OF UNDERGRADUATES AT UNIVERSITI
PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS (UPSI)



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I, LEONG CHING YEE (D20201093992) from FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS (PLEASE INDICATE STUDENT'S NAME, MATRIC NO. AND FACULTY) hereby declare that the dissertation / thesis for Final Year Project titled THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL (FAMILY AND PEERS) SUPPORT ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS OF UNDERGRADUATES AT UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS (UPSI) is my original work. I have not plagiarised from any other scholar's work and any sources that contains copyright had been cited properly for the permitted meanings. Any quotations, excerpt, reference or re-publication from or any works that has copyright had been clearly and well cited.

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I declare that this thesis entitled “The Effect of Social (Family and Peers) Support on Entrepreneurial Intentions of Undergraduates at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI)” is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.



08 FEBRUARY 2024

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the effect of social (family and peers) support on entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduates at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). The study uses quantitative and deductive approaches. The sample of the study consisted of 107 undergraduates who were selected using systematic sampling method. Data is collected using questionnaires as instruments. The data collected were analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the demographic of respondents. Multiple Linear Regression was used to test the effect of family and peers support on the intention to pursue entrepreneurship. The findings of the study show a significant effect of social support including family and peers support on the entrepreneurial intention among the undergraduates. The findings of this study are expected to suggest both policymakers and universities raise awareness among students and shape their entrepreneurial intention in order to address youth unemployment concerns.

Keywords: Social Support, Entrepreneurial Intention, Undergraduates, Multiple Linear Regression

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk menentukan kesan sokongan sosial (keluarga dan rakan sebaya) terhadap niat keusahawanan di kalangan mahasiswa/i Sarjana Muda di Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dan deduktif. Sampel kajian terdiri daripada 107 mahasiswa/i yang dipilih menggunakan kaedah pensampelan sistematik. Data dikumpul menggunakan soal selidik sebagai instrumen. Data yang dikumpul dianalisis menggunakan perisian Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Analisis deskriptif digunakan untuk menganalisis demografi responden. Regresi Linear Berganda digunakan untuk menguji kesan sokongan keluarga dan rakan sebaya terhadap niat untuk mengejar keusahawanan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan kesan yang signifikan daripada sokongan sosial termasuk sokongan keluarga dan rakan sebaya terhadap niat keusahawanan di kalangan pelajar Sarjana Muda. Hasil kajian ini dijangka memberi cadangan kepada pembuat dasar dan universiti untuk meningkatkan kesedaran di kalangan pelajar dan membentuk niat keusahawanan mereka bagi menangani kebimbangan mengenai pengangguran di kalangan belia.

Kata Kunci: Sokongan Sosial, Niat Keusahawanan, Mahasiswa/i, Regresi Linear Berganda



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ SYMBOLS

EI	-	Entrepreneurial Intention
FS	-	Family Support
ISM	-	Bachelor's Degree
ISMP	-	Bachelor of Education
PS	-	Peers Support
RH	-	Research Hypothesis
RO	-	Research Objectives
RQ	-	Research Questions
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TPB	-	Theory of Planned Behavior
UPSI	-	Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research and the framing of the problem statement. It also includes the formulation of research objectives, research questions and research hypothesis. A conceptual framework will be attached to represent the relationship between both dependent and independent variables. The benefits and implications of this study underscore the significance of study and the weaknesses within the study will represent in the scope of study section. The operational definitions of the independent and dependent variables are also outlined in this chapter. This research aims to explore how social support including family and peers support affects entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduates at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI).

1.2 Background of Study

In recent decades, global concerns about rising unemployment rates have become increasingly prominent, particularly in developing nations such as Malaysia. According to recent data from the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2023), the unemployment rate stands at 3.4%, reflecting a total of 577,300 individuals unemployed as of August 2023. Additionally, during the second quarter of 2023, the Statistics Department indicated that the youth unemployment rate of 10.7% covers population aged 15-24, corresponding to 307,700 individuals. This data underscores a heightened level of unemployment among the youth population compared to the overall unemployment rate. Despite a significant output of graduates from both public and private institutions in Malaysia, the proportion of graduates successfully securing employment remains relatively low (Arshad et al., 2023). According to Higher Education Ministry (2023), a total of 29,000 graduates, or 9.8 percent of the 295,962 graduates in 2022, had not found a job in six months after graduating.

In response to the escalating unemployment dilemma, particularly among the youth population, notably the graduates, there is a critical need for alternative solutions. Entrepreneurship emerges as a pivotal avenue to address unemployment challenges, playing a significant role in fostering economic growth. Entrepreneurship is seen as a strong weapon for social and economic transformation since it not only encourages economic development and market innovation, but also creates more jobs to enhance employment. The encouragement of individuals to initiate new businesses aligns with global efforts to attain wealth and alleviate poverty (J. Xu et al., 2023). Nations worldwide are encouraged to increase their entrepreneurship rates in order to promote social and economic well-being (Abdullahi et al., 2021).

However, the current scenario in Malaysia reveals a notable disparity between the government's aspirations and the actual involvement of graduates in



entrepreneurship. A considerable number of Malaysian graduates seem to eschew entrepreneurship as a viable career path, displaying a preference for traditional job-seeking rather than venturing into the realm of job creation. This inclination has given rise to an alarming increase in graduate unemployment. Recognizing the severity of the issue, the Malaysian government has accorded high priority to the matter of graduate unemployment, identifying entrepreneurship as a promising solution.

Entrepreneurship, as a catalyst for economic growth and innovation, is integral to Malaysia's pursuit of sustainable development and competitiveness. Over the years, several studies have established a relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth and transformation (Amofah & Saladrighes, 2022). Against this backdrop, it is imperative for academic institutions, policymakers, and educators to comprehend the intricate factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions, particularly among undergraduates. These individuals, poised at the threshold of their professional journeys, represent a crucial talent pool for future entrepreneurial endeavors. Consequently, gaining insights into the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions is essential for fostering a conducive environment for entrepreneurship.

Thus, this study aims to unravel the complexities surrounding entrepreneurial intentions, focusing on social support factors because it is considered an important effect in the entrepreneurial intention among the undergraduates. Recognizing the significance of social support in shaping the entrepreneurial landscape, the research endeavors to contribute valuable insights that can inform strategies for educational institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders in nurturing a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem. By exploring the interplay between social support and entrepreneurial intentions, this study seeks to pave the way for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics that drive the entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduates at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) in Malaysia.





1.3 Problem Statement

Youth unemployment remains a critical issue in Malaysia, due to the high reliance on permanent job with salary and the lack of involvement in entrepreneurship among the youth. In a concerted effort to alleviate youth unemployment, particularly within the 15-24 age group, a range of initiatives and programs has been implemented by government, as reported by The Star, (2023). However, these efforts have yet to see a great impact. Therefore, to address the problem of unemployment among youth in Malaysia, this study is undertaken to explore how entrepreneurial intention could be incorporated among undergraduates.

Several scholarly journals and previous research have explored entrepreneurial intentions, with a focus on various factors such as personality, education, society, and social networks. However, a noticeable gap in the existing literature prompts this study to address the issue by emphasizing social support as a primary determinant of entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates. Hence, this research aims to examine the effect of social support on entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates. The key point of this study is to understand how family support and peer support contribute to the creation and enhancement of entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates.

Previous research studied by Al-Mamary et al. (2020), incorporated different variables, including attitudes toward behavior, social norms, self-efficacy, autonomy, innovativeness, risk-taking, pro-activeness and competitive aggressiveness. However, the findings of this study indicated that social norms are not significant to entrepreneurial intention among the university students, contrasting with the majority of previous studies on the same topic (Arshad et al., 2023); (Bu et al., 2023); (Martins et al., 2023); (Abdullahi et al., 2021); (Lingappa et al., 2020); and (Al-Jubari, 2019)). Perhaps, the study conducted by Al-Mamary et al. (2020) was situated in a developed country, Saudi Arabia. Consequently, the research findings in the context of developed





countries are difficult to adapt completely in the developing countries like Malaysia due to environmental differences. Hence, this study aims to bridge this gap in research and contribute insights specifically relevant to the Malaysian context. Therefore, this research will focus on the effect of two social supports: family and peers support on entrepreneurial intentions among UPSI undergraduates in Malaysia.

1.4 Research Objective

RO1: To determine the effect of social (family and peers) support on entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduates at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI).



RQ1: Does social (family and peers) support affect entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI)?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

RH1: Family support has a significant effect on entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI).

RH2: Peers support has a significant effect on entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI).



1.7 Conceptual Framework

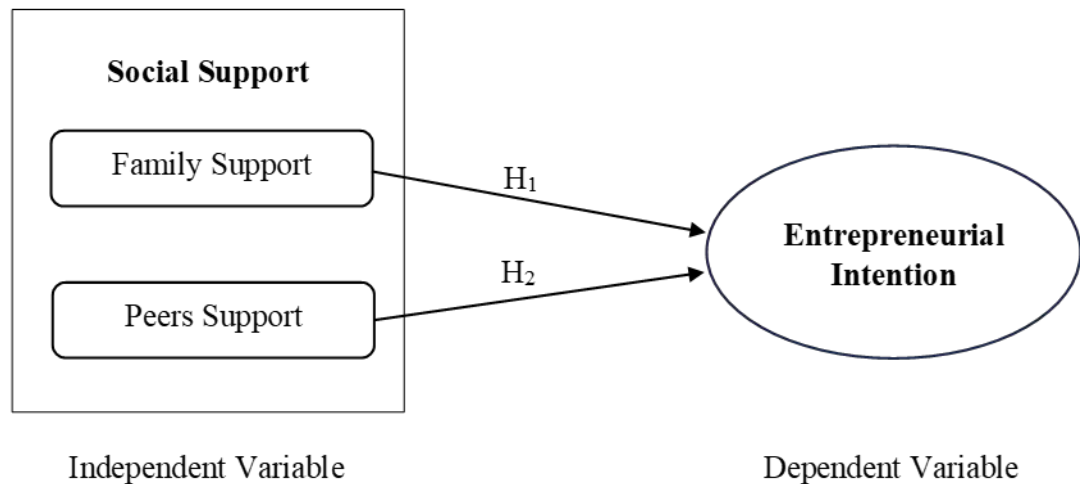


Figure 1.1. Research Framework

Figure 1.1 presents the proposed conceptual framework developed for the current study.

In this case, the research questions guided the present study in finding the relationship between social support and entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates. The independent variable is social support, which consists of two dimensions: family support and peers support. While the dependent variable is entrepreneurial intention. A brief research framework was developed to illustrate the correlation between independent and dependent variables. As a result, the present study has presented a conceptual framework to answer the research questions.

1.8 Significance of Study

This research study on the effect of social (family and peers) support on entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduates at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) will benefit various stakeholders, including academia, policymakers, educational

institutions, and aspiring entrepreneurs. Besides, the significance of this study is that it may provide an understanding of how these two social supports tend to affect entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates, which, in turn, can contribute to reducing youth unemployment.

First and foremost, researchers in the future can benefit from this study as it fills a crucial gap by emphasizing the role of social support in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. Unlike previous research that focused on academic and personal factors, this study broadens our understanding of how social support affects the desire to start a business. By exploring this aspect, it adds depth to our knowledge. Future researchers can use these findings to compare and enhance the accuracy of theoretical frameworks, providing a more complete understanding of what drives entrepreneurial intentions.

In addition, this research gave information to the policymakers, both within the academic and governmental spheres. These parties can draw upon the research findings to formulate policies that foster a supportive environment for entrepreneurship among undergraduates. Recognizing the impact of social support, policymakers can design initiatives that encourage collaboration between educational institutions, families, and peers to create a holistic support system for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Finally, the study's findings can help educational institutions like UPSI improve their support for undergraduates who want to start businesses. By understanding how different forms of social support influence entrepreneurial intentions, institutions can strategically integrate measures to enhance support into their curriculum, mentorship programs, and overall initiatives. This research not only guides the creation of interventions within the institutions but also prompts self-reflection among students. It encourages undergraduates to actively leverage existing social support networks, fostering a more conducive environment for aspiring entrepreneurs within the academic setting.



1.9 Scope of Study

The present study selected one of the public universities as the study area. This research is conducted in Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), which is a public university in Perak, Malaysia. The main reason for choosing this study area is the prevalent issue of high unemployment rates among the youth in Malaysia. Additionally, another compelling reason for choosing UPSI as the study area is the university's distinctive features and its unique academic environment, which can contribute valuable insights to the research.

The next concern refers to the data collection method. This study adopts a quantitative method, utilizing a questionnaire survey as the research instrument. The survey involves a total of 15 items sourced from the studies by Ahmed et al. (2021), Al-Jubari (2019), Bu et al. (2023) and Mensah et al. (2023). The questionnaire contains the items related to the respondents' demographics, two social support dimensions (independent variable), and entrepreneurial intention (dependent variable). The sample that has been chosen for this research was from the undergraduates from UPSI.

Moreover, the theoretical framework of this research draws upon Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social (family and peers) support and entrepreneurial intention. This research is covered in a public university in Perak. This study includes a total population of all the undergraduates who study in Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris in Perak, Malaysia.



1.10 Operational Definition

Operational definitions serve as a basis for better understanding the meaning of words. The following are the operational definitions of the terminology and ideas that will be utilized throughout the current investigation.

1.10.1 Social Support

Social support consists of a variety positive resources obtained from family, friends, managers, colleagues, and organizations (Gabert-Quillen et al., 2012). Another perspective defines social support as the individual's level of expected essential assistance from society or surroundings (Hockerts, 2015). In addition, Otache et al. (2021) discovered that family, colleagues, and society all apply influence on an individual's decision to pursue entrepreneurship. Therefore, in this study, social support refers to the assistance and encouragement received by undergraduates coming from various sources including family and peers.

1.10.1.1 Family Support

Family support serves as a consistent motivational factor influencing an entrepreneur's attitude and drive, thereby reinforcing the correlation between career versatility (Kolvereid, 1996). Besides, a study from Herrero and Hughes (2019), family support may come in various ways including provide unique skills and information bases, human resources, and material resources for entrepreneurs. In addition, family support contributes to enhanced entrepreneurial skills necessary for starting or growing a business (Martins et al., 2023). Therefore, in this study, family support can be defined as assistance and encouragement provided by family members. In conducting this study, the questionnaire in this study includes the items developed by Bu et al. (2023) and

Mensah et al. (2023) to measure family support. Specifically, two items adapted from Bu et al. (2023) focus on emotional encouragement and practical assistance while three items adapted from Mensah et al. (2023) focus on encouragement to choose entrepreneurship, pride in entrepreneurial activities and perception of entrepreneurship.

1.10.1.2 Peers Support

Peer support is characterized as the provision of assistance and encouragement by an individual considered as an equal (Dennis, 2003). Mead and MacNeil (2006) defined peer support is grounded in the notion that individuals with similar experiences can better connect and therefore offer more genuine empathy and validation. Accordingly, in this research, peers support refers to the assistance and encouragement that undergraduates receive from their peers. In conducting this study, the questionnaire includes the items developed by Mensah et al. (2023) and Ahmed et al. (2021) to measure peers support. Three items adapted from Mensah et al. (2023) focus on the encouragement and perceptions of friends towards entrepreneurship. Additionally, two items adapted from Ahmed et al. (2021), concentrate on the importance of peer opinions regarding entrepreneurship.

1.10.2 Entrepreneurial Intention

Intention refers to a crucial aspect in comprehending human actions and attitudes, as highlighted by Wardana et al. (2020). It can be simplified as a person's willingness to follow through with a deliberate plan or make a conscious decision, as pointed out by Saraih et al. (2018). In essence, intention captures the idea of someone wanting to do something on purpose or making a thoughtful choice. In the context of entrepreneurial intention, it includes the desire to get involved in entrepreneurial activities, exhibit entrepreneurial behavior, pursue self-employment, or start a new firm (Ni et al., 2012).

Badri dan Hachicha (2019) also stated that entrepreneurial intention refers to a personal dedication to a new business. Regarding this research, entrepreneurial intention can refer to an undergraduate's interest, willingness, and commitment to becoming involved in entrepreneurial activities or starting a new business in the foreseeable future. In conducting this study, the questionnaire includes the items developed by Al-Jubari (2019) to measure the intensity level of an UPSI undergraduate desire to engage in entrepreneurial activities. These items specifically focus on the intensity of their entrepreneurial intentions, reflecting their willingness, serious consideration, effort, professional aspirations, and determination to pursue entrepreneurship.

1.11 Structure of Study

This research report is structured into five chapters. Chapter 1 serves as the Introduction that provides an overview of this research. It introduces the issues related to the topic under this study and explains the basic idea of the research. Moving to Chapter 2, the Literature Review highlights previous studies that related to this topic. This chapter also discusses relevant theories and models that provide a theoretical framework for understanding the effect of social (family and peers) support on entrepreneurial intentions to fulfill the objectives and answer the research questions.

In Chapter 3, the research methodology is meticulously explicated, encompassing the research design, sampling strategy, sample size determination, and the chosen data collection method. Additionally, this section elucidates the instruments and scales employed for measuring both dependent and independent variables, along with a comprehensive overview of the data analysis process, including the statistical methods and software utilized.



Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study in a clear manner by using tables, charts, and graphs to illustrate key results. Finally, Chapter 5 includes discussion, implications, and limitations of the research. Here, the results compare the findings with existing literature and discuss the implications. Furthermore, this chapter acknowledges any limitations inherent in the study and proposes avenues for future research.

1.12 Summary

Chapter 1 briefly explains the situation that calls for a study to be conducted in relation to the effect of social support on the entrepreneurial intention among UPSI graduates in Malaysia. This chapter contains the background of study, the problem statement and research objectives. In addition, this chapter illustrates a conceptual framework with hypotheses to answer the research questions. Besides, it outlines the operational definition of each variable with the purpose of providing an overview of the current research. Furthermore, this chapter also describes the significance and scope of study. The following chapter will present further insights regarding the literature review and the research framework of this study.

