The Impact of Cognitive Factors on Entrepreneurial Intention: A Perspective of Hospitality Educational Institutions

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is essential for students to gain knowledge about entrepreneurial skills, attitudes, and intentions. The purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of cognitive factors on students' entrepreneurship intentions at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). This quantitative study included 217 respondents from six (6) UiTM branches in the provinces that offer hospitality programmes. The data were analysed using partial least squares methods. The current study's findings reveal that entrepreneurship education encourages hospitality students to become entrepreneurs through the discovery of a positive relationship between

entrepreneurship education programmes and students' entrepreneurship intentions. This finding extends the conclusion of previous studies on the influence of cognitive factors as entrepreneurship education is found to have a positive impact on students' entrepreneurial intention, especially to start a business. Therefore, there is a need for institutions and educators to deliver learning programmes and extracurricular activities that can arouse and cultivate student interest in entrepreneurship. This approach provides students with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they will require to start and manage their own businesses. As the hospitality students in the current study concurred that encouraging entrepreneurial intentions requires entrepreneurship education, this study concludes that entrepreneurship education is important in encouraging students to become entrepreneurs in the future.

Keywords: cognitive factors, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, hospitality students

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a driver and a crucial source of economic growth that has a significant impact on the socioeconomic well-being of a society (Abuzhuri & Hashim, 2017). Over the years, academic and international communities have largely agreed on the importance of entrepreneurship. However, entrepreneurial activities are driven by individual interests. The myth that entrepreneurs are born rather than made discourages people, particularly students, from taking the risk of starting their own business (Shamsuddin et al., 2018; Astiana et al., 2022). In the present day, research on its relevance in uncertain and adverse situations is scarce (Branzei & Abdelnour, 2010 in Hernández-Sánchez et al., 2020).

Efforts to ensure that students are interested in becoming successful entrepreneurs in the future are delivered through entrepreneurship education. Astiana et al. (2022) concur that the desire, spirit, and entrepreneurial behaviour of the younger generation must be fostered through entrepreneurial education. This is due to the fact that a shared passion for starting a successful business comes from education (Fatoki, 2014). Iswahyudi and Iqbal (2018) contend that offering entrepreneurship education or training could result in the creation of more entrepreneurs (Astiana et al., 2022). According to Astiana et al. (2022) and Harianti et al. (2020), claim that students' knowledge of the value of entrepreneurial education alters their mindset and behaviour in favour of entrepreneurial success and piques their interest in the field.

Recognising the importance of entrepreneurs in the development of Malaysia's knowledge-based economy, efforts should be made to foster entrepreneurship at all levels. To be more successful and viable in the field, the Malaysian government has encouraged the development of entrepreneurship education in Malaysia. Hence, Higher education institutions (HEIs) are identified as one of the most important sectors to achieve the goal. As a result, the purpose of this paper is to discuss the impact of cognitive factors on the entrepreneurial intention of Malaysian hospitality students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), with a particular emphasis on entrepreneurship education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is traditionally defined as education that imparts the skills required to start a new business (Lajin et al., 2022). From the viewpoint of professors, researchers, and university administrators, entrepreneurship education is an important activity (Colombelli et al., 2022). Astiana et al. (2022) believe that educating young entrepreneurs can help a country to become more competitive in terms of starting their businesses and contributing to the development of a creative nation, particularly because entrepreneurial education changes people's mindsets and attitudes towards entrepreneurship (Maneaa et al., 2019; Hassan, 2020). It is widely acknowledged that learning about entrepreneurship improves students' ability to approach business situations and identify new opportunities (Popescu et al., 2016). Wu and Wu (2017) mention that entrepreneurship education has become a crucial field of study for both community and individual entrepreneurs. For

instance, entrepreneurial education can improve the lives of students (Maneaa et al., 2019) because entrepreneurship education teaches students to think creatively, be innovative, be confident, and have strong discipline when it comes to starting and running their business.

Overall, entrepreneurship education is considered a platform for developing new entrepreneurs (Lajin et al., 2022). According to a study conducted by Mahmood et al. (2021) discovers that students are assisted in running their businesses by the university's entrepreneurship curriculum more effectively because of the knowledge and skills they gain (Song et al., 2021). In light of the widely acknowledged importance of entrepreneurship among university students to the advancement of social and economic development, universities and governments are currently considering ways to increase their commitment to these issues (Hassan, 2020). Besides that universities have started promoting subjects that provide future-oriented, positive, and proactive information that are extremely useful to entrepreneurs in their daily endeavours (Maneaa et al., 2019), universities have also incorporated entrepreneurship subjects into their curricula. Studying entrepreneurship too has been suggested as a direct conceptualisation of the relationship between entrepreneurship, labour markets, and career options (Burton et al., 2016 cited in Maneaa et al., 2019). Hence, there has been a sharp rise in the number of curricular and extracurricular offerings in entrepreneurship globally (European Commission 2008; Kuratko 2005; Morris et al. 2013). Extracurricular activities provide students with real-world experiences that will prepare them to be entrepreneurs.

As a result, this study is worthwhile because it is related to entrepreneurship education and the potential of future UiTM graduates to pursue entrepreneurial careers.

2.2 Entrepreneurial Intention

Intentions are the key predictor of any planned behaviour, which includes entrepreneurship (Peng et al., 2012; Sharaf et al., 2018; Bilgiseven & Kasımoğlu, 2019). Entrepreneurial intention is defined as a mental orientation, such as a desire, wish, or hope, that influences a person's decision to start a new business venture (Peng et al., 2012). It is influenced by motivation and cognition and includes an individual's skills, ability, and knowledge (Marina, 2013; Jiatong et al., 2021). Based on this information, the current study focuses on how entrepreneurial education, which is a part of an individual's cognition, influences their entrepreneurial intention.

2.3 Cognitive Factors

Several factors including beliefs, values, habits, and needs are connected to intentions. This includes cognitive factors (also called personal factors) that can strengthen or weaken an individual's intentions (Hernández-Sánchez et al., 2020). The term cognitive factors refer to knowledge, expectations, and attitudes. Zhang et al. (2020) discover that theoretical knowledge is critical to improve undergraduates' skills, knowledge, and attitude. Accordingly, social learning theory (SLT) classifies theoretical enhancement as a cognitive factor. The theory believes that humans are inherently social and enjoy interacting with other humans. Therefore, entrepreneurial intentions can be realised through education (Bandura, 1986, as

cited in Zhang et al., 2020). In this case, the social learning theory provides the best explanation of how education influences entrepreneurial intentions (Bandura, 1986; Bandura & Walters, 1977; cited in Tam et al., 2021). Henceforth, education must be recognised as critical in instilling entrepreneurial intent among students (Gurel, Altinay, & Daniele, 2010, as cited in Zhang et al., 2020).

It is also worth noting that organising entrepreneurship programmes can help students develop positive characteristics, foster an entrepreneurial culture, and create an exciting learning environment (Daniel et al., 2017). To support this finding, universities should encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities such as practicum or internship, small business talks and discussions, and community service, so that students can be exposed to the realities of business and entrepreneurship (Nwokolo, 2018). Tang (2019) concurs that learning consequences associated with soft skill development should be emphasised to increase student employment (Tang, 2019). This is critical for HEIs, particularly those that place a high value on student practice because an individual's attitude towards entrepreneurship cannot be evaluated without considering the types and standards of opportunities provided by the market and the economy.

2.3.1 Empirical Training

Empirical training has a significant impact on students' entrepreneurial intentions, but scholars still debate the variables of the training (Zhang et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the training enables students to identify business opportunities by maximising the elements of creativity and psychology (Li & Liu, 2016), which are beneficial in instilling their entrepreneurial intent. As a result, government, HEIs, and training centres should work together to encourage major stakeholders, such as employers and industry players, to contribute to educating entrepreneurship to students through training programmes (Puad, 2016). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a significant positive relationship between empirical training and entrepreneurial intention.

2.3.2 Theoretical Enhancement

Developing a person's competence such as positive psychological capital and positive entrepreneurial attitude are the advantages offered by theoretical enhancement and empirical training education (Zhang et al., 2020). Theoretical enhancement training provides professional knowledge that can help improve students' capability to identify opportunities. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is proposed:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): There is a significant positive relationship between theoretical enhancement and entrepreneurial intention.

2.4 The Relationship Between Cognitive factors and Entrepreneurial Intention
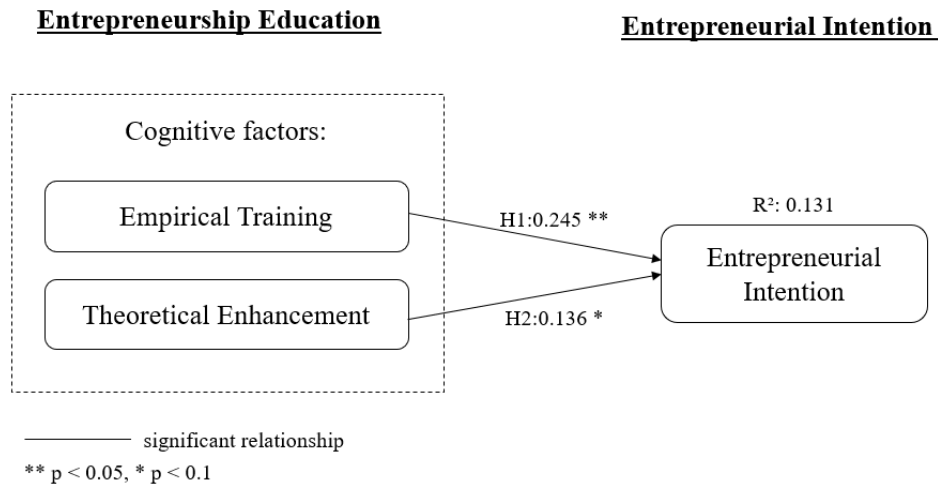

Figure 1. Research model

The current study's framework is depicted in Figure 1. The exogenous variables, according to the framework, are theoretical enhancement (TE) and empirical training (ET). Entrepreneurial intention (EI) is the endogenous variable. The current study specifically investigates the impact of cognitive factors on entrepreneurial intention among HEIs students, with a focus on UiTM.

UiTM was selected because the university provides entrepreneurship education courses that educating students to become entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the entrepreneurship education at UiTM was the primary entry point for students to become entrepreneurs in the future. UiTM was also supported by the Malaysian Academy of SME and Entrepreneurship (MASMED) which offered entrepreneurship units. The Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR) was used to select the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management (UiTM) under public higher education institutions (PHEIs). As a result, the data were gathered from six (6) branches that offered hospitality programmes, which were: UiTM Cawangan Selangor in Puncak Alam, Selangor, UiTM Cawangan Terengganu in Dungun, Terengganu, UiTM Cawangan Pulau Pinang, in Permatang Pauh, Pulau Pinang, UiTM Cawangan Melaka, UiTM Cawangan Sabah in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, and UiTM Cawangan Sarawak in Samarahan 2, Sarawak were included in the study. The respondents were full-time final-year students enrolling in Hospitality Programmes such as Hotel Management, Food Service Management, Tourism Management, Culinary Arts, and Food Technology.

3. Methodology

The data and methodology used to achieve the study's objectives are discussed in this section, with a focus on the partial least squares (PLS) method.

3.1 Data Collection and Sample

In the current study, a quantitative research method was chosen because the interpretation of

the results saves the researchers time and effort in explaining the study's findings because quantitative research deals with quantifiable statistical data. Additionally, employing a quantitative research method allows for some degree of generalisation.

Because questionnaire-based surveys are common and have been used for decades to obtain information describing the characteristics of a large sample of individuals, this study used an online survey design (Ponto, 2015). On Google Forms, a twenty-three-item questionnaire with a multiple-choice response structure for demographic profiles and a numerical Likert scale response structure ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was created to answer this research question. The questionnaire was adopted from the work of Zhang et al. (2020). Section A included nine questions about respondents' demographic profiles. Section B contained ten items on cognitive factors: six items on empirical training (6) and another four items on theoretical enhancement (TE). Section C contained four items on entrepreneurial intention.

The questionnaire was distributed via social media platforms, at random, to final-year hospitality undergraduates in six (6) branches of UiTM from the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management. The simple random sampling technique provided each university student an equal chance of becoming a survey participant. The actual sample obtained for this study exceeded the required minimum sample size. The population of UiTM was 1409 students. Based on G* Power calculation, the minimum number of samples required was 165 students. However, the study obtained data from 217 students, which was better.

3.2 Statistical Tools and Methods

The analysis was carried out using SPSS software and SmartPLS 3.0. Using SPSS, the demographic profile was examined. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the demographic data and characteristics of the samples. The study model was tested using the partial least squares method. By minimising the error variance, this technique evaluated the measurement model and the structural model at the same time. The relationship between the variables was examined using SmartPLS version 3. To determine the significance level of the paths, a Bootstrapping function with 500 resamples was used.

4. Findings

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

This study collected 217 questionnaire responses from UiTM Hospitality students, as 217 completed online questionnaires were returned. Because a sample size of 30 to 500 people is considered adequate in social science research, the number met the requirement to be analysed using SmartPLS.

The descriptive statistics of the respondents' demographic profiles are shown in Table 1. There were 217 respondents, with 25 male students (21.9%) and 192 female students (78.1%). It was discovered that 45 respondents were between the ages of 18 and 20 (24.2%), 133 respondents were between the ages of 21 and 23 (53.9%), and 39 respondents were over the age of 24 (21.9%). According to the respondent characteristics, the majority of the

respondents had working experience (67.7%), while 121 respondents had experience participating in a university-organised entrepreneurship programme (54.2%).

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

Respondent Characteristics	Total	Percentage
Age	18 – 20: 45 students	18-20: 24.2%
	21 – 23: 133 students	21-23: 53.9%
	Above 24: 39 students	Above 24: 21.9%
Gender	Male:25 students	Male: 21.9%
	Female:192 students	Female: 78.1%
Program Mode	Diploma: 46 students	Diploma: 29.0%
	Degree: 171 students	Degree: 71.0%
Participation in the Entrepreneurship Club	Yes: 50 students	Yes: 30.3%
	No: 167 students	No: 69.7%
Participation in a university-organised entrepreneurship programme	Yes: 121 students	Yes: 54.2%
	No: 96 students	No: 45.8%
Working Experience	Yes: 161 students	Yes: 67.7%
	No: 56 students	No: 32.3%
Family Entrepreneurial Background	Yes: 100 students	Yes: 47.1%
	No: 117 students	No: 52.9%

Source: Data processing results (2021) *Frequencies analysis: SPSS output.

4.2 Data Analysis PLS

To analyse the hypotheses developed, Smart PLS's variance-based structural equation modelling (SEM) was used. To determine the significance level of loadings, weights, and path coefficients, the bootstrapping method (500 resamples) was used. In the data analysis, the measurement model was evaluated first, followed by the structural model. Figure 2 shows the Structural Model.

4.3 The Measurement Model

Table 2 indicates that all loadings and AVE were above 0.5 with the composite reliability values being more than 0.7. Thus, based on Hair et al. (2019), the convergent validity is established.
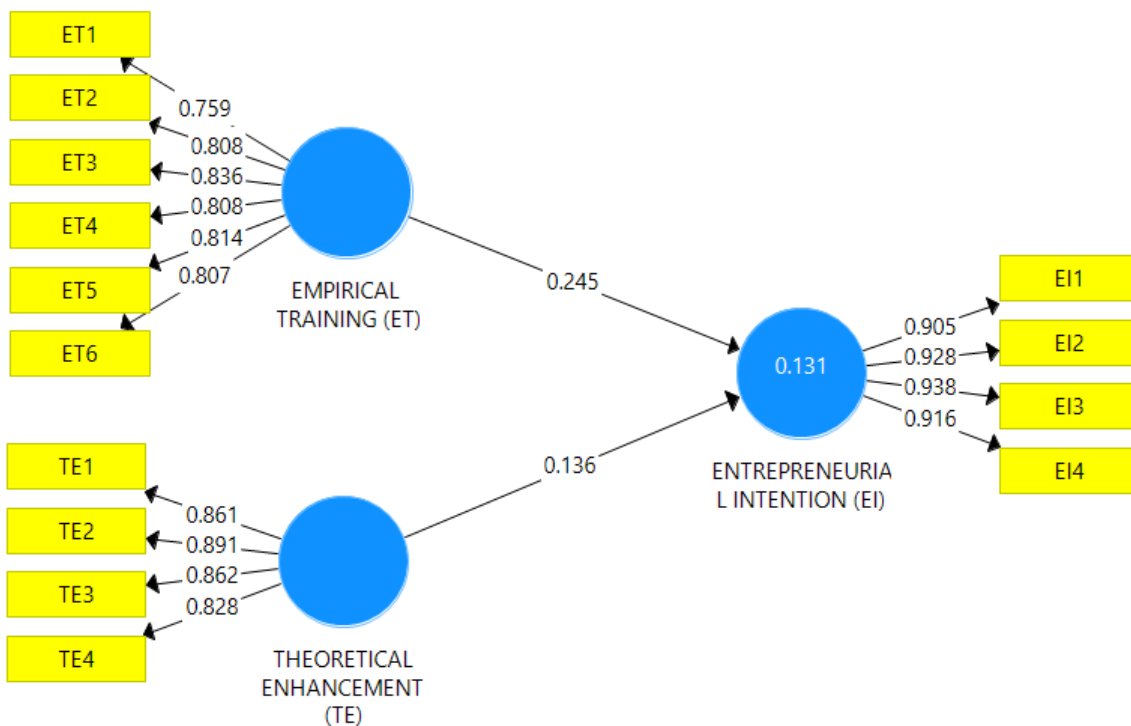
Figure 2. Structural Model PLS-SEM

Table 2. Result of the Measurement Model

Convergent Validity:						
Construct	**Indicators**	**Indicator Loadings**	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**CR**	**AVE**	**R-Square (R²)**
Empirical Training	ET1	0.759	0.893	0.917	0.649	
	ET2	0.808				
	ET3	0.836				
	ET4	0.808				
	ET5	0.814				
	ET6	0.807				
Theoretical Enhancement	TE1	0.861	0.941	0.958	0.850	
	TE2	0.891				
	TE3	0.862				
	TE4	0.828				
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI1	0.905	0.884	0.920	0.741	0.131
	EI2	0.928				
	EI3	0.938				
	EI4	0.916				

Note. CR-Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted.

Discriminant validity problems are present when HTMT values are high (Sarstedt et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2021). The square root of the AVE is compared to the correlations of the other constructs to address discriminant validity. Discriminant validity is then established if it exceeds its correlations with all the other constructs. Table 3 shows the current study's findings.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

	ET	EI	TE
Empirical Training (ET)	**0.806**		
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	0.351	**0.922**	
Theoretical Enhancement (TE)	0.784	0.328	**0.861**

Note. Diagonal elements marked in bold are the square root of average variance extracted (AVE).

Source: Data processing results, 2021.

Henseler et al. (2015) report that in a survey-based study, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings fail to consistently detect discriminant validity. As they propose a new technique based on the multitrait-multimethod matrix (HTMT) ratio. In addition, Henseler et al. (2015) suggest the cut-off point of 0.85 and 0.90 to establish discriminant validity between two reflective constructs, while HTMT 0.85 is the most conservative criterion. The discriminant validity of the two constructs is established if the HTMT ratio is less than 0.85.

According to the findings in Table 4, all HTMT ratios were less than 0.85, indicating no discriminant validity problem in the current study.

Table 4. Results of the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) analysis

	ET	EI	TE
Empirical Training (ET)			
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	**0.366**		
Theoretical Enhancement (TE)	0.892	**0.349**	

Source: Data processing results, 2021.

4.4 The Structural Model

The relationship between the constructs that are hypothesised in the research framework is represented by the structural model. The variance explained (R^2) of the endogenous constructs and the importance of each path estimate serve to demonstrate the validity of the theoretical model. Then, the results of the R^2) and the path coefficients will indicate how well the data supports the proposed model (Hair et al., 2021). The results of the structural model from the PLS output are tabulated in Table 5. The findings that empirical training and

theoretical enhancement have a significant relationship with entrepreneurship intention (β = 0.245, p < 0.05; β = 0.136, p < 0.1 respectively), As a result, H1 and H2 of this study are supported.

The fascinating discovery of the current study is that cognitive factors are found to significantly influence entrepreneurial intention. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternate hypotheses H1 and H2 are strongly supported.

Table 5. Hypothesis results

Hypotheses		Coefficient	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	Results
H1	ET -> EI	0.245	0.087	2.829**	Supported
H2	TE -> EI	0.136	0.084	1.608*	Supported

Note. *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 *Source: Results from SmartPLS software 3.3.3.

A blindfolding procedure was used to evaluate the predictive relevance (Q^2) of the model fit. The Q^2 'represents an indicator of how accurately the model and its parameter estimates reconstruct observed values (Chin, 1998 in Song et al., 2021). Additionally, a model with Q^2 above zero suggests that the model has predictive relevance (Jorg Henseler et al., 2009). The blindfolding analysis result of the current study was Q^2 = 0.097 (see Table 6). The value meets the Q^2 criteria of $Q^2 > 0$. The Q^2 value greater than zero indicates that cognitive factors predict entrepreneurial intention. That is, the exogenous variables used to predict the endogenous variables are accurate. This value demonstrates that the developed model is predictive. The PLS path model's predictive relevance was determined using an omission distance of 7 (D = 7).

Table 6. Predictive relevance

	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Empirical Training (ET)	1,782.000	1,782.000	
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	1,188.000	1,072.838	**0.097**
Theoretical Enhancement (TE)	1,188.000	1,188.000	

*Source: Results from SmartPLS software 3.3.3.

The values of the distance measures can be compared to the threshold values advised by the literature in addition to the bootstrap-based test for overall model fit (Benitez et al., 2020). According to Table 7, the study model was 90.1% fit, with an NFI value of 0.901.

Table 7. The Model Fit SmartPLS

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.060	0.060
d_ULS	0.382	0.382
d_G	0.182	0.182
Chi-Square	307.635	307.635
NFI	**0.901**	**0.901**

*Source: Results from SmartPLS software 3.3.3.

5. Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education is one of the programmes whose impacts are not immediately visible due to the fact that it is a long-term investment. However, entrepreneurship education is the cornerstone for someone to later pursue a career in entrepreneurship. It has, thus, been the entrepreneurship education's goal in Malaysian higher education institutions (HEIs) to produce entrepreneurial students who have an entrepreneurial mindset and thus all of the attributes of entrepreneurs through learning programmes and extracurricular activities. Besides that, real-world theoretical activities provide motivation and the strong desire to become an entrepreneur. As a result, HEIs and educators should play their role by providing students with the necessary infrastructure to inspire and generate students' interest in student entrepreneurship.

The findings of the current study reveal the impact of cognitive factors on UiTM hospitality students. The study confirms the positive effect of entrepreneurship education on students' intention to start a business. The results of this study could assist various public authorities in developing measures and strategies to maximise and promote entrepreneurship. Given these findings, and in order to encourage entrepreneurship among hospitality students, entrepreneurship may be included as a new cross-sectional skill to be developed in hospitality management subjects. Furthermore, the study's findings could aid Malaysia's current policy to educate students to be entrepreneurs. Universities and other educational institutions should encourage students to learn about entrepreneurship because most of them are not exposed to entrepreneurship unless their families own businesses. This paper emphasises the practical value of entrepreneurship education in fostering entrepreneurial intention among UiTM final-year hospitality undergraduates. The current study's findings should be considered by relevant authorities, it is clear that entrepreneurial education policies among students, particularly those in higher education institutions, need to be improved and strengthened.

Acknowledgments

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