
From School to Business: A Study of Private University Student's Motivation Determinant and Intention to be an entrepreneur

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Abstract – Malaysia ranked 14th in entrepreneurship in 2021. This shows that the Malaysian government has promoted entrepreneurship at the tertiary level. Not all graduates become entrepreneurs. Instead of starting a business, graduates take low-paying jobs unrelated to their skills. This study examined private university students' intentions to become entrepreneurs and their motivation, creativity, attitude, ability, and university ecosystem. Additionally, this study examined the mediating effect of motivation on creativity, attitude, ability, university ecosystem, and entrepreneur intention among private university students. SPSS was used to analyse the 215 samples of private university students in the northern region of Malaysia. Findings postulate that only motivation and attitude affect a student's intention to become an entrepreneur. Motivation mediates between students' attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions. This study helps institutions, teachers, and policymakers understand what makes private university students want to start their own businesses. This means that strategies and policies can be changed in the future to encourage private university students to go into the entrepreneurship field.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial intention, creativity, motivation, attitude, university ecosystem.

1. Introduction

More than 3,000 institutions worldwide offer entrepreneurship education programmes (OECD, 2019; Fretschner & Weber, 2019) as a solution to improve the economy

well-being. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), which took effect on January 1, 2016, is a framework for addressing poverty, economic prosperity, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and peace (Sharma, 2021). Malaysia's SDG 2030 framework lays the entrepreneurial groundwork for SDG 4, which aims for inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning by 2030. This goal will improve youths' technical and vocational skills for employment, decent work, and entrepreneurship. SDG 8 promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all through development-oriented policies that foster productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018). These goals emphasise education to build a knowledge-based economy. Researchers say entrepreneurship creates jobs, money, and growing economies (Kania, et al., 2021; Haugh, 2020). Entrepreneurship is vital to political and economic growth (Al-Suraihi, et al., 2020; Ismail, et al., 2019).

Studies link entrepreneurship education (EE) to growth and innovation (Paray & Kumar, 2020; Sirelkhatim & Gangi, 2015; Hamburg, 2021). The debate has shifted from whether EE is useful to how it should be taught in higher education (HE) to help real-world entrepreneurs (Wenninger, 2019). More than 20 public universities and the Malaysian Department of Polytechnics and College Community Education (DPCEE) have integrated five focus elements in entrepreneurial education over the past two decades (Wright & Mustar, 2019; Fox, Pittaway, & Uzuegbunam, 2018): entrepreneurship integrated curriculum, student entrepreneurial activities, student entrepreneurship development programme, and entrepreneur mentorship (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2020).

Malaysia's Ministry of Higher Education requires all public-school students to take entrepreneurship courses to boost business and the economy. Training, seminars, short courses, conferences, and entrepreneurship events are encouraged. As part of the nation's goal to produce 5% entrepreneurs from local graduates, these entrepreneurship exposures help students develop entrepreneurial attitudes and mindsets (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2020). This may lead to fewer jobless graduates and more economic opportunities, helping Malaysia become a developed nation.

According to a study, motivation is the key to starting a business (Raza et al., 2018; Schlaegel and Koenig, 2014; Bird, 1988). Motivation and entrepreneurship are linked (Raza et al., 2018; Zhang and Yang, 2006). Opportunities and entrepreneurship aren't enough (Malebana, 2014). It solidifies plans (Raza et al., 2018; Fayolle et al., 2014). Internal and external factors influence motivation and action (Raza et al., 2018; Locke and Latham, 2004). Entrepreneurial motivation affects startup desire (Raza et al., 2018; Kuratko and Hodgetts, 2007). Entrepreneurial ambition, creativity, university environment, and attitude affect private university students (Malebana, 2014; Raza et al., 2018). (Mustafa, M. B., 2021; Mohd. Hassan, 2007).

Entrepreneurship education helps startups. It could help with future endeavours. Scholars in industrialised countries have historically focused on graduate-level entrepreneurship (Sofian & Mukhtar, 2021). Entrepreneurs aren't all graduates. Graduates take low-paying, unrelated jobs instead of starting businesses. Figure 1 shows 2020 graduation and Malaysian unemployment. Graduates' skill-related underemployment rose from 26.7% in 2019 to 31.2% in 2020. (Malaysia Statistics 2020). 2021, 2020, and 2019: 4.8%, 4.5%, and 3.3% unemployment in Malaysia. Studies show few Malaysian graduates are entrepreneurial (Nawi, et al., 2021). These empirical findings suggest more research is needed to determine what influences a student's decision to pursue entrepreneurship, which led to unemployment rate declines the following year. Abd Rahman et al. (2020) predict graduate unemployment will decrease if graduates create their own jobs. Various jobs are available. Universities should encourage entrepreneurship.

Recent studies have examined the factors that encourage students to become entrepreneurs. Creativity, ability, university ecology, and attitude (Hassan, 2020; Mustafa, 2021). Several factors affect private university students' entrepreneurship (Raza et al., 2018; Malebana, 2014). Talent, inventiveness, university environment, and attitude are determinants (Raza et al., 2018). (Mustafa, 2021; Hassan, 2007) Few studies examine how these elements affect motivation and entrepreneurialism. As few academics focus on the Malaysian entrepreneur census, entrepreneurship scholars struggle to collect data on recent graduates. This study aimed to examine Malaysian private institutions' entrepreneurial goals and factors that motivate and inspire students to be entrepreneurs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Entrepreneurship Intentions

Intention is a mental state that refers to someone's attention, experience, and action toward a specific object or behaving method. (Wegner et al., 2019). The intention summarizes the motivational variables that impact conduct, demonstrating how much effort people would put out to carry out the behavior (Wegner et al., 2019). According to the research of Wegner et al., 2019, the authors said that the Entrepreneurial event model (EEM) states that starting an entrepreneurial business requires a personally meaningful opportunity, which is the outcome of perceived desire and feasibility. The emotional and social appeal of beginning a business is called desirability, whereas the degree to which someone believes competent of doing so is called feasibility. As a result, the EI directs and guides the individual's actions toward the creation and implementation of a new business concept (Wegner et al., 2019). Individuals will activate their entrepreneurial potential if they recognise they genuinely have the capacity, that there are environmental opportunities, and that there is social support. (Wegner et al., 2019), "EI has shown to be a primary predictor of future entrepreneurial conduct. Students' EI refers to their likelihood of starting a new enterprise (Wegner et al., 2019). A desire to operate autonomously, a willingness to innovate and take risks, and a tendency to be aggressive against competitors, as well as

being proactive regarding marketplace opportunities are all characteristics of a high EI (Wegner et al., 2019).

2.2 University Ecosystem

Many higher education institutions support government programs to change student mindset from job seeker to job creator (Kusmintarti, et al., 2017). Referring to the study of Anjum et al., (2021), universities are viewed as a source of encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. Universities can play an important role in positively influencing students' intentions and efforts toward entrepreneurship and preparing them to start a new business. They also believe that universities serve as a hub for cultivating entrepreneurial motivation in students. It is critical to investigate the extent to which educational institutions influence students' entrepreneurial intentions. This could be accomplished by looking into the perception that university support has an impact on a student's EI. Universities can help in specific ways by teaching skills and knowledge of essential business. Universities can also offer business required assistance to the students. The business required assistance may include assistance with concept development and business development (Anjum et al., 2021).

As a research paper's result of (Anjum et al., 2021), it showed that the university ecosystem has a significant effect on entrepreneurial intentions. Academics have proposed that the developing world's concerns include generating graduate entrepreneurs and providing suitable and supportive ecosystems for entrepreneurship growth. The university ecosystem can provide unique circumstances that encourage students' creative trends and excitement for entrepreneurship, particularly when these essential factors are recognised. Universities should focus more on the creation of entrepreneurship ecosystems within their institutions, launch or expand training programmes or courses that address various areas of entrepreneurship, and conduct seminars on successful business.

Ezeh et al., (2019) assumed that educational support is an effective approach to gain the essential entrepreneurship knowledge. As a result, the university ecosystem plays a vital role in encouraging young people to pursue entrepreneurial careers. There is a strong positive association between university ecosystem and entrepreneurial intention in Nigeria. Many studies have demonstrated that educational programmes have a good impact on entrepreneurial motivation. As a result, the research paper discovered that active-based entrepreneurship education increases entrepreneurial potential while lecture-based coursework decreases it. Finally, Ezeh et al, (2019) found that Perceived educational support has a significant effect on students' entrepreneurial intention. Thus, it is suggested that the greater the ability of a teacher to teach and encourage the students towards entrepreneurship, the greater the entrepreneurial intention.

2.3 *Creativity*

According to the research of Kusmintarti et al., (2017), the authors said that it is essential for an entrepreneur to be creative, otherwise that person is just like an ordinary merchant. So they assumed that creativity is one critical personal characteristic of an entrepreneur. Creativity is defined as the ability to develop new ideas and to find new ways of looking at problems and opportunities. However, the finding showed that creativity being directly related to entrepreneurial intention, but creative character has no substantial impact on students' entrepreneurial intentions. Based on the average score, it appears that the majority of respondents are capable of developing alternate solutions and activities. (Kusmintarti et al., 2017)

An entrepreneur must be able to create, invent new forms, and bring something new into reality. This capacity is not something that is inherited or comes naturally to a person, but rather something that must be learned. According to Mazla et al. (2020), it has been proven that creativity is common among humans, and that everyone is born with skill to varying degrees. The term "creativity" can be defined in a number of different ways. The fundamental concern of an entrepreneur is the development of new products, the processor market, and the ability to break through a highly competitive market. Besides that, Creativity is a continuous process that requires both parties to work hard and constantly enhance their concepts and ideas and solutions. A creative person will put forth a lot of effort through creating, gradually altering and refining their work. Entrepreneurial creativity is also called the ability to think outside of the box. (Mazla et al., 2020)

Based on other research papers, the authors interpreted that the creative process is complex because it involves several factors such as individual knowledge, cognitive issues and abilities, motivations or environmental factors (Rosique-Blasco et al, 2018). According to the literature, creativity is linked to innovation and entrepreneurship. In reality, two attributes that differentiate an entrepreneur from a small business owner are innovation and creativity (Rosique-Blasco et al, 2018).

Besides that, the findings of another research paper argued the idea that one's perception of creativity has an impact on one's entrepreneurial attitude and intention. According to Anjum et al., (2021), creativity is the outcome of a variety of behavioural attributes as well as a mixture of sociated creative skills. In the entrepreneurial process, an entrepreneur has to be creative in identifying and exploiting the opportunities to start a new venture. Individuals with higher creativity levels will trend to self-employment. Creativity motivates someone with self-confidence and positive attitude to start a new venture.

2.4 Attitudes

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Attitude is one of the factors that determines the intention (Kusmintarti, et al., 2017). Mustafa et al., (2021) defined attitude as one's emotional reaction toward something. It includes emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes. In the research paper of Kusmintarti, et al., (2017), the study emphasises attitude as the variable of entrepreneurial intentions (EI). Attitudes that having a positive mindset on entrepreneurship could be a career option for students will lead to EI. The result of this research paper showed that attitudes have positive effects on EI. If someone has a positive attitude, then they will have high chances and self-confidence to start a new venture. A positive attitude toward entrepreneurship is reflected in a desire for being the boss of one's own business and a desire for flexible working hours, while a willingness to work hard to start a business usually leads to the establishment of a new business in the future.

Rosique-Blasco et al., (2018) stated that attitude toward entrepreneurship refers to the degree to which a person has a good or negative perspective of pursuing an entrepreneurial activity based on other study studies. This attitude encompasses both affective and evaluative elements, such as preferences and benefits and drawbacks. According to the literature, one of the most important elements that contribute to the desirability of starting a business is one's attitude toward entrepreneurship. Finally, the findings of this study revealed that there are significant links between entrepreneurial intention and attitude toward entrepreneurship.

However, attitude is found to have no significant impact on entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates in a Muslim community, Negeria (Ezeh et al., 2013). "A lot of Nigerian youths count on government aid," President Muhammadu Buhari said in a speech at the Commonwealth Business Forum in Westminster on April 18, 2018. Thus, the data for this study was based on the perceptions of the respondents; there may be a possibility of difference between "perceptions" and "reality".

2.5 Motivation

Herdjiono et al, (2017) defined that motivation is the encouragement to work hard in order to achieve a variety of goals, such as profit, freedom, personal goals, and independence. This advantage can be obtained by always providing excellent customer service and developing a more efficient working system in order to generate creative and innovative products. The greater the entrepreneur's motivation, the greater the chance of business success. Because higher motivation will enable a person to overcome any difficulties and also to devise a solution.

There are four motivations to be an entrepreneur, which are profit, freedom, personal dream, and independence. Profit can motivate someone to be an entrepreneur because an entrepreneur has the right to determine how much profit he wants, the benefit received, and how much the cost will be paid to other parties or employees. The freedom to manage time, make rules/intervene, and be free of cultural rules in an organization or company. A personal dream is something that a person desires, such as the freedom to achieve the expected life standard and tired routine work because he has to follow vision, mission, and other dreams. The reward will be used to determine the company's vision, mission, and dream. Because of the absence of being dependent on others, independence can motivate a person to pursue entrepreneurship. Independence can instil a sense of pride because it fosters self-sufficiency in all areas, including capital, management, and supervision, as well as the ability to manage oneself (Herdjiono et al., 2017).

The findings of Herdjiono et al., (2017) show that motivation has a significant and positive impact on the desire to start a business. Motivation is critical because it encourages people to work hard in order to achieve their goals, such as the desire to be a successful entrepreneur, and it can help people respond positively to possibilities to make wealth and become imaginative. Such an advantage can be gained by constantly striving to improve productivity in order to provide creative and innovative items. Previously, motivation has been introduced as independent variable (IV) and lack of studies introduced as mediating variable (Hassan et al., 2021)

3. Methodology of Study

This study utilizes a quantitative method of research design whereby the primary data was collected from private university student in northern region. A set of questionnaires consisting of 22 statements were adapted from Hassan (2020), Entrialgo et al., (2020) and Kusmintarti, et al., (2017) in measuring the entrepreneurship intention, university ecosystem, attitude4s and motivation. The demographic section covered gender, race, and year of study. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed randomly at the private university in Kedah to attain the specified respondents through a self-administered study. A response rate of 61% was obtained consisting of 215 datasets. The data was cleaned from any missing values and outliers before analyzing them using SPSS Version 22.

4. Findings

4.1 Descriptive Findings

Findings postulates about 60.9 percent (131) of the 215 respondent who answered the survey are women. On the other hand, 84 of the respondents are men, which is 39.1% of

the total number of respondents. There are a total of 117 respondents, and 117 of them, or 54% of the total, are Chinese. For the Indian race, 86 people answered, which is 40%. For the third age group, 51–70 years old, there are only 13 respondents, or 6%. In this study, most of the respondents are from year 3, and 73 of the total respondents, or 34%, are from that year. The second largest group of respondents is from year 4, with 62 people answering (28 percent). The other two groups of respondents are 38 students from Year 1 and 42 students from Year 2. Their share of the total number of people who answered is 17.7 and 19.5%, respectively. Additionally, seventy-three percent of those who answered, or 157 people, said they did not own their own business. The other 58 people who answered said that they had their own business, which is 27%. Thirteen percent of respondents have been in business for less than six months, seven percent have been in business for between six months and one year, 2.8 percent have been in business for between one year and two years, and only 4.2 percent have been in business for more than two years. In short, most of the people who answered the survey and have their own business have been running it for less than 6 months. Out of the 215 people who answered, 88 said they had a family business and the other 127 said they did not. Their proportions are 40.9% and 59.1%, respectively.

4.2 Inferential Analysis

This study attempts to identify any of the relationships between independent variables (attitude, creativity and university ecosystem), mediator (student's motivation) and dependent variable (entrepreneurial intention). Hair et al. (2006) have proposed the guidelines in examining the strength of relationship. Correlation coefficients between ± 0.91 and ± 1.00 are considered "very strong", correlation coefficients between ± 0.71 and ± 0.90 are considered "high", and correlation coefficients between ± 0.41 and ± 0.70 are considered "moderate". Meanwhile, correlation coefficients between ± 0.21 and ± 0.40 are considered "small but definite relationships", and finally, correlation coefficients between ± 0.01 and ± 0.20 are considered "sight, almost negligible".

Table 1. Correlation analysis (n =215)

	EI	ATT	CRE	USS	MO T
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	1.00				
	0				
Attitude (ATT)	0.77	1.00			
	3	0			
Creativity (CRE)	0.60	0.68	1.00		
	6	2	0		
University Support System (USS)	0.39	0.45	0.53	1.00	
	8	7	6	0	

Motivation (MOT)	0.81	0.76	0.68	0.49	1.00
	6	1	8	8	0

From the result of Table 1, all the independent variables, (creativity, attitude and university ecosystem) and moderator variables, (Motivation of private university student to become entrepreneur) were positively significant with the dependent variable, entrepreneurial intentions at significance level $p > 0.05$. Although all the independent variables were positively significant with the entrepreneurial intention, the pearson correlation results depicted the strength of the relationship were different. Motivation of private university student to become entrepreneur and attitude found to have a high strength at $r = 0.816$, $p < 0.01^{**}$ and $r = 0.773$, $p < 0.01^{**}$ respectively. Creativity was significant at $p < 0.01$, where $r = 0.606$ which means that the strength of relationship was moderate. Meanwhile, for the university ecosystem, as the result of $r=0.398$, it denotes the common variance is a small but definite relationship. Table 2 shows the results of the two models for hierarchical regression analysis. The first model is a basic reference model that excludes any effect of motivation. The second model adds the mediation effect of motivation on attitudes, creativity, and university ecosystem in H5, H6, and H7. The summary of the models indicate that model 2 has a significantly better fit than model 1 (a model that has the constraints of no effects of motivation on other variables). The R square test shows a significant improvement in the R² of model 2 (R-square =0.723, df = 1, $p < 0.001$) with respect to model 1 (R-square =0.609, df = 3, $p < 0.001$).

Table 2. Hierarchical Regression Analysis.

	Variable	Beta	T	Sig
Model 1	Attitude	.669	11.240	.000
	Creativity	.142	2.258	.025
	University Ecosystem	.016	.309	.758
Model 2	Attitude	0.142	-0.183	.855
	Creativity	0.016	-1.087	.278
	University Ecosystem	0.016	-1.087	.278
	Motivation	.564	9.278	.000

	Model 1	Model 2
R ²	0.609	0.723
Adj R ²	0.603	0.717
F value sig	109.540(p>.001)	86.090 (p>.001)
N	215	

The analysis of motivation as a mediator of entrepreneurial intentions (EI) was conducted using this coefficient table. Regarding the model, we can see that the coefficients corresponding to the direct effects of motivation on attitudes and creativity are also positive and significant. The results showed that the attitude significantly affects the motivation of private university students to become entrepreneurs with a coefficient of 0.373, and then the motivation of private university students affect the EI with a coefficient of 0.564. However, the creativity and university ecosystem did not significantly affect entrepreneurial intentions with coefficients of -0.010 and -0.048 respectively. Based on the analysis, the motivation can be interpreted as a full mediation to the influence of attitude on EI.

5. Discussions

The findings postulated that entrepreneurial intentions among Malaysian private university students is at moderate level. This finding indicated about half of Malaysian private university student have intention to pursue their career as entrepreneurship. Therefore, this finding also consistent with previous findings of there is low uptake of entrepreneurial career among graduate students (Nawi et al., 2021). Hence, there is urgent need where government, university, and agency or NGO like SME-Corp, TEKUN, and MAGiC to take initiatives in encouraging student to pursue career in entrepreneurship through collaboration programme and assistance.

This study found that motivation has a positive significant relationship with private university student's intentions to become entrepreneurs. Mahendra et al., (2017) also found that there is a relationship between motivation and entrepreneurial intentions. It is also found that the higher students' entrepreneurial motivation, the higher students' entrepreneurial attitude toward entrepreneurship. Both entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial attitude were found to directly influence entrepreneurial intention. The study of Raza et al., (2018) highlights the role of different behavioural factors that affect the intentions and motivation to become an entrepreneur among university students in

Pakistan. Raza et al., (2018) support that the positive entrepreneurial motivation creates higher intention to become an entrepreneur.

The result of this research found that there is no significant relationship between the university ecosystem and student's intentions to become entrepreneurs. Hassan, H.K. (2020) also found that perceived university support is insignificant to social entrepreneurial intentions. In Bangladesh, the current course curriculum at the university level needs to be reformed as it does not motivate students towards entrepreneurship. Hence, it can be recommended that if a university is more supportive of providing better opportunities and knowledge for entrepreneurship, young generations will feel more interested in choosing entrepreneurship as a career and cannot develop an effective network. Academic institutions and decision-makers should offer entrepreneurial aid to graduates in alignment with their entrepreneurial ambitions

However, the previous research from Ezeh and et al., (2019) shows that entrepreneurial intention is taken as a function of educational support. The findings of Gelaidan et al., (2017) also found that the entrepreneurship intention among university students is strongly influenced by educational support. By offering detailed entrepreneurial education, universities can encourage the flow of creative ideas, essential entrepreneurial skills and adequate knowledge of entrepreneurship processes. Besides that, Mustafa, M.B (2021) stated that the relationship between university ecosystem and entrepreneurial intentions is moderate. This study shows that campus infrastructure is able to influence students' interest to go into entrepreneurship. A conducive university environment is an important element in influencing the entrepreneurship intention among students. Based on the findings of the study, it found that creativity has no significant relationship on private university student's intentions to become entrepreneurs. Our findings are consistent with the study of Del Campo, C. (2017) where they found that Spanish business students' entrepreneurial intentions are not conditioned by their creativity level. However, there are differences in creativity level by genders for their future ability to start-up a company.

According to Anjum et al., (2020), the study found that creativity has a positive influence on entrepreneurial intention. The results from the study of Entrialgo et al., (2020) also support the major role of creativity in entrepreneurial processes. Creativity has a strong direct effect on attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions and a significant moderating effect on the attitudes– entrepreneurship intentions causal relationship. From the opinions of Entrialgo et al (2017), creativity seems to be effective in boosting the influence of attitudes on entrepreneurial intentions. This moderating effect may arise from lessening the effects of those barriers that hamper the translation of positive attitudes into entrepreneurial intentions. Barriers such as a lack of business ideas and an inability to detect business opportunities can be overcome substantively using creativity. Besides that, Bellò and et al., (2018) found that entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between creativity and entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, defined as a young person's perception of being self-confident in building entrepreneurial intentions, which takes accountability of creativity on entrepreneurial intentions. Moreover, Kusmintarti and et al.,

(2017) proved that creative students tend towards establishing a new business in the future because creativity can build students' positive thinking toward entrepreneurship. Creativity helps the students be better able to acquire the skills of managing a business project. (Rosique-Blasco et al., (2018)

The result of this research found that there is a significant relationship between attitude and private university student's intentions to become entrepreneurs. According to Anjum et al., (2020), the authors proved that attitude has a positive influence on entrepreneurial student's intentions to become entrepreneurs. The results of previous study indicated the mediating effect of attitude toward entrepreneurship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention. (Rosique-Blasco et al., (2018)). A previous study conducted in Saudi Arabia proved that there is a significant relationship between attitude and entrepreneurial intentions according to TPB behaviour theory (Al-Mamary et al., 2020). Ayalew and Zeleke (2018) also supported that entrepreneurial attitude significantly predicts students' self-employment intention among engineering students in Ethiopia. The authors draw a conclusion that students who sought information and opportunity, took entrepreneurship education/training, set future goals, developed ability and skills on creativity and problem solving have a positive attitude towards self-employment.

The findings found that motivation has the significant mediating relationship between attitude and private university student's intentions to become entrepreneurs. The finding supported by previous study of Mahendra et al., (2017). Those authors also found that there is a relationship between motivation and entrepreneurial intentions. It is also found that the higher students' entrepreneurial motivation, the higher students' entrepreneurial attitude toward entrepreneurship. Both entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial attitude were found to directly influence the entrepreneurial intention.

The mediation finding indicates that the motivation to become entrepreneurs depends on the student's attitude itself. Although the entrepreneurial ecosystem and creativity is not significant with entrepreneurial intention, these findings can be related to the lack of entrepreneurial support and activities in private universities. Due to pandemic covid-19 also, students were stressed out with assessment burdens which hinder the creativity to emerge. These could be a solid reason why entrepreneurial ecosystem and creativity were not significant with entrepreneurial intention among private university students.

6. Conclusions

This study examined the mediating effect of motivation on creativity, attitude, ability, university ecosystem, and entrepreneur intention among private university students. SPSS was used to analyse the 215 samples of private university students in the northern region of Malaysia. Findings postulate that only motivation and attitude affect a student's intention to become an entrepreneur. Motivation mediates between students' attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions. This study helps institutions, teachers, and policymakers understand what makes private university students want to start their own businesses. This

means that strategies and policies can be changed in the future to encourage private university students to go into the entrepreneurship field.

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