A Cross-Culture Study of Entrepreneurial Intention: The Moderating Role of National Culture

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Abstract: The effects of entrepreneurship are many and multifaceted; they include the creation of new employment possibilities, the effective and efficient use of national resources and a positive improvement in the general well-being of the country residence. Various studies conducted on the Entrepreneurial Intention (EI); however, student EI are very fascinating and still demanding. Moreover, entrepreneurial cross-culture studies provide broad understanding about the EI internationally. Hence, this study is conducted on the EI of the university students in Pakistan and Malaysia. Its major goal is to pinpoint the factors that influence the EI of the university students of the emerging and developing countries. A quantitative research method is used for the data analysis. The data were collected from the public sector universities of Pakistan and Malaysia. A total number of 328 questionnaires were used for the data analysis. The hypothesis testing and empirical analysis are performed by the Smart PLS-SEM version 4.0. The findings of the research reveal that TPB equally affected the EI of the university students of Pakistan and Malaysia with the exception of subjective norms variable, which had a negative effect on Malaysian students. Moreover, the culture variable did not moderate the relationship between TPB and EI of the Pakistani students, although it is partially moderate the relationship of TPB and EI of the Malaysian university students. As a result, the research findings are crucial for policymakers in emerging and developing countries to comprehend and promote entrepreneurship both locally and internationally.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Intention, TPB, University Student, Cross-Culture, Entrepreneurship

1.   Introduction

Entrepreneurship has a significant role in job creation and overall economic development which is universally evidenced (González-Serrano *et al*., 2021). The impact of entrepreneurship is diverse and multidimensional such as it creates new employment opportunities, effectively and efficiently utilized national resources and positively enhance the overall well-being of the country residence (Ceresia & Mendola, 2020). Moreover, it supports in poverty reduction and fill the gap between rich and less marginalized people. Hence, importance of entrepreneurship studies is undisputed and priority area for the researchers (Audretsch, 2022).

Particularly, in developing countries its role has become more important which is also documented by the previous researchers (Ezeh *et al*., 2019). The basic trigger in entrepreneurship research is the understanding of when people decide to become an entrepreneurial (Lee *et al.,* 2006). Although previous research studies find entrepreneurial as a planned action which is the result of intention (Kautonen *et al*., 2015). Similarly, Ajzen (1991) proposed an entrepreneurial intention theory namely called it theory of planned behavior which is widely used in entrepreneurship research studies.

Consequently, most of the research scholars preferred the theory of planned behavior for entrepreneurial studies. According to research the theory of planned behavior better explains the EI as compared to the other theories Kautonen *et al*., (2015). Similarly, Liñán *et al*., (2013) proposed another theoretical model, EI model while adding the demographic variables in the theory of planned behavior.

The decision to become an entrepreneur is not only affected by the behavioural factors, but also by the prevailing culture norms and practices. The national culture of the country also played a significant role in developing EI and new business creation (Bogatyreva, *et al*., 2019). Culture affect the entrepreneurial manners, which make a contribution to entrepreneurial evolution. Hence, the current study explores intentions to become an entrepreneur in two countries drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as one of the best-established theories to predict intentions and Hofstede national culture dimension of individualism (Farrukh *et al*., 2019).

Various studies conducted on the EI however, student EI are very fascinating and still demanding González-Serrano *et al.*, (2021). The prime focus on youth entrepreneurial studies are to overcome the challenge of unemployment among the future generation. Hence, the policymakers and government institutions are formulating policies and creating entrepreneurship awareness in the university students (Farooq *et al.*, 2018). The business graduates are more likely to join entrepreneurship activities due to their particular skills and business understanding (Su *et al.*, 2021). Thus, the main focus of the study are the business graduates of public sector universities.

Previous research studies explained various aspects of EI with respect to the country of origin. However, only limited number of studies have focused on the comparative research studies (Díaz-Casero *et al* 2012). Every country has distinguished features which directly and indirectly influence the EI. The nature of entrepreneurship is heterogeneous among various countries due to its particular features, cultural and socio-economic conditions. Similarly, previous studies further empathized to conduct research on the underdeveloped and developing countries (Al Bati, 2021). Moreover, Farrukh *et al.*, (2019) and Naqvi & Siddiqui, (2020), also suggested conducting a multi-country study to gain more generalizable and holistic results. Hence, while considering the dare need this study focused on the EI of the university students of Pakistan and Malaysia. In this research we conducted survey from 328 business administration students at degree to master level in Malaysia and Pakistan to test the theory of planned behaviour. The cross-cultural research will disclose that entrepreneurial intention are affected or not by the country of origin.

2. Literature review

Early in the 1700s, the concept of entrepreneurship first appeared. Schumpeter, (1954) has defined and described entrepreneurship in terms of context and environment. The definition of entrepreneurship given by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2022) is "Any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organization, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business."

2.1 Entrepreneurial Intention

Remeikiene and Startiene (2013) defined EI as an active state of mind that motivates people to look for new business possibilities or advancements in the existing industry described EI. According to Bird (1988), is essentially the first step in the decision-making process for launching a new business. It primarily forecasts the expected entrepreneurial behavioral commitment. Different models of EI were provided by previous researchers, including theory of self-efficacy, the entrepreneurial event model and theory of planned behavior. But according to Yazdanpanah and Forouzani (2015), one of the most significant and frequently applied theories for forecasting people's behavior is the idea of planned behavior.

According to the TPB, PBC and subjective norms are additional factors that influence behavioral intentions in addition to attitudes (Ajzen, 1991, p. 182). Young people's intent to start their own businesses are thus influenced by their own admiration of entrepreneurship, the expectations of their closest friends and family, and their own perceptions of their entrepreneurial potential. We may build a model that assumes entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived control influence EI by integrating the theory of planned behavior and the notion of the indirect impact of individualism.

2.2 Theory of planned behaviour

According to Ajzen (2005), the theory of reasoned action (TRA) served as the theoretical foundation for the theory of planned behavior (TBP), which was first put forth by Ajzen and Fishbein in 1980. The link between attitude, intentions, and behavior was the primary goal for establishing the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein, 1967). With the addition of a new construct for perceived behavior control and a second aspect of behavioral intention, the "theory of reasoned action" was expanded to better explain how much control individuals have over their actions. According to Rogers et al. (2008), people base their decisions on the results they anticipate from carrying out specific behavioral tasks. Three key factors perceived behavioral control, subjective norms and attitude towards behavior are maintained by the "theory of planned behavior" and together they make up the EI (Ali *et al.*, 2023).

2.2.1 Attitude towards behaviour

According to Shane and Venkataramam (2000), the study of entrepreneurship focuses on how one might look for opportunities to learn about both explicit and implicit goods and services while assessing and exploring available resources. Gaining the anticipated future opportunities and advantages heavily relies on the entrepreneur's perception.

The beliefs that people hold when engaging in a particular conduct serve as the foundation for attitude. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (2005), behavioral beliefs, expected results, or benefits and costs are considered to constitute the outcomes of behavior. Similar to how Krueger et al. (2000) confirmed Ajzen's perspective on entrepreneurial intention, they concluded that favorable attitudes among people foster entrepreneurship, which makes the intentions useful for carrying out entrepreneurial behavior. Alharbi *et al*. (2020) research also showed that people's attitudes had a beneficial impact on their intention to start a business.

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between (ATB) and the EI of the university students.

2.2.2 Subjective norms

According to Azjen (2005), a Subjective Norms (SN) is a social force that people draw from society and that has a significant impact on whether they engage in or refrain from a particular behavior. Individual family members, relatives, coworkers, colleagues, and fellows are among the other important people. They may also be experts in the behavior of interest (Perveen, 2015). Usman (2019) asserts that people experience pressure from society to engage in behaviors that are expected of them and that they feel compelled to do so.

Various management researchers have supported the prominent role played by SN upon intentional behavior to commence a new business venture (Otuya *et al*., 2013). The study of Malebana (2014) also advocated the positive participation of SN towards enhancing EI. Therefore, based on the results of earlier studies, it can be deduced that the majority of people decided to start a business whenever members of their immediate social group acknowledged and encouraged them while engaging in such unusual economic activities.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between SN and the EI of the university students.

2.2.3 Perceived behavioral control

Previous research studies confirmed that the majority of people decided to start a business whenever members of their immediate social group acknowledged and encouraged them while engaging in such unusual economic activities. According to Ajzen and Cote (2008), the personal evaluations by which people can learn about their capacities to act a specific behavior referred to as Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC). It can be determined from the control belief about the availability of circumstances that may facilitate or impair performance of the behavior. According to Linan *et al*., (2013), people are more at ease and driven to engage in entrepreneurial activities when other members of the community respect, value, and acknowledge their choices.

According to Linan *et al*. 2013, personal capability is the belief an individual has in his or her own ability to execute a given task. This belief has an impact on the emergence of entrepreneurial ambitions. The impression of entrepreneurial activities as being positive and significantly influenced by the social and internal environments, which in turn affects how control behavior is, regarded (Gieure *et al*., 2020).

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between PBC and the EI of the university students.

2.3 Culture and entrepreneurial intention

Academics scholars and researchers also recognized that culture has a significant impact on how people form their intents and behavior (Farrukh et al., 2019). Culture has a big effect in forecasting people's intentions to launch new businesses. The majority of research studies on entrepreneurship, like Farrukh *et al*. (2019), include the cultural variable that Hofstede (2001) suggested. Hofstede's seminal work identified how cultural can be expressed in various ways and how individual and community level cultural norms are influenced by national cultural.

After concluding the Hofstede cultural study (2001), it may be stated the popular features of "individualism" are likely to be extremely advantageous in resolving the question of why and how university student affiliate themselves among activities of entrepreneurship (Shirokova *et al*., 2018).

2.3.1 *Individualism*

Although the notion of collectivism provides importance to the benefits of holistic actions in order to win their support and loyalty, individuality indicates preferences of doing for the personal and near household interest. People in individualistic societies support and value entrepreneurs because they make creative decisions and maintain a high level of self-assurance (Mueller & Thomas 2000).

People in individualistic societies believed that they were more diversified, autonomous, and self-directed than people in collectivist societies. They value their own goals and interests over those of the group because they have self-confidence (Shinnar *et al.*, 2012). The decision to launch a new firm is primarily an individualized trait (Mitchell *et al.*, 2000). The person does not wish to join a formal institution where he or she is required to abide by set rules, regulations, and security measures. In civilizations that value individualism, researchers have discovered a stronger propensity for entrepreneurship (Shirokova *et al.*, 2018).

H4: The Hofstede national culture dimension of individualism positively moderate the relationship between TPB and EI of the university student.
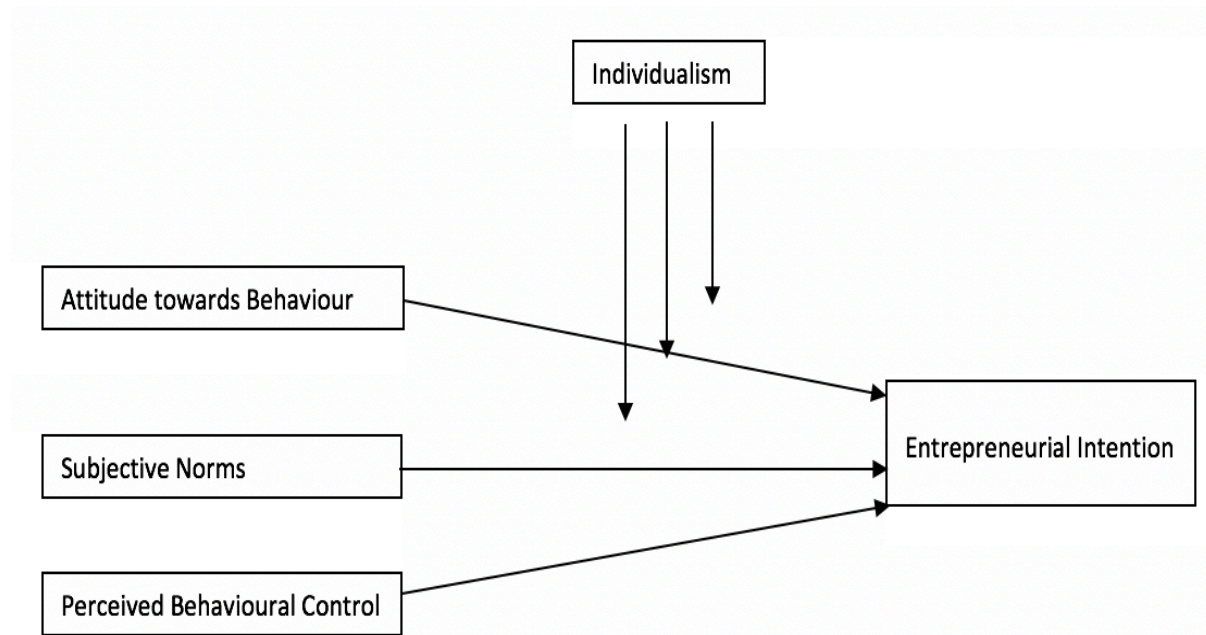

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

3. Research Methodology

The survey data were collected from the public sector universities of Pakistan and Malaysia. The research questionnaire was used from the previous research studies and the scale of 5-point Likert scale 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree were used to measure the constructs. The EI and TPB questionnaires adopted from the previous research study of Perveen, (2015). Similarly, the national culture dimension of individualism was adopted from the research of (Farukkh *et al.*, 2017). The data were collected through random probability sampling technique from the university students via google online data collection forms.

The respondents of this research study are the final year students of business administration departments from Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), Malaysia and Karakorum International University (KIU) Gilgit, Pakistan. The basic motivation of the selection of the last year students in this research was their certain position of entering in the practical life. In the final year most of the students decide their future plan and career intention (Perveen, 2016). The total number of 328 questionnaires were used for the data analysis 182 from KIU Pakistan and 146 from UTHM Malaysia. Moreover, the nature of the research was an exploratory study hence, the Smart PLS (SEM) was used for the data analysis as suggested (Zeb *et al.*, 2020).

4. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Attributes	Pakistan		Malaysia	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Gender				
Male	127	69.7%	84	57.5%
Female	55	30.2%	62	42.5%
Age				
21-25	95	51.5%	52.5	48.8%
26-30	63	26.2%	37.5	26.2%
31 & above	24	17.4%	10	17.4%
Program				
BBA	102	57.4%	54	36.5%
Master/MBA	74	32.8%	66	45.8%
MS/M.Phil.	06	9.60%	26	18.2%
Semester				
Second last	98	49.4%	98	67.5%
Last semester	80	50.5%	48	32.5%
University				
KIU, Pakistan	182	55.4%		
UTHM, Malaysia			146	44.5%
Father's occupation				
Government job	84	46.1%	84	36.5%
Private job	22	12.1%	22	38.5%
Own business	49	26.7%	49	16.5%
Agricultural work	27	14.9%	27	8.5%

The final number of respondents were 328, 162 from KIU Pakistan and 146 from UTHM Malaysia. The demographic analysis reveals that, the number of male students from Pakistan is higher than Malaysia. Similarly, most of the respondents age falls in the range of 21-25 both in Pakistan and Malaysia 51.5% and 52.5% respectively. Most of the Pakistani respondents were studying in the BBA program however the Malaysian students were in the program of MBA. The final semester students were 49.5% from Pakistan and 67.5% from Malaysia. The result of the father's occupation shows some unique information. In Pakistan majority of people employed in the govt. sectors 46.1%, however, in Malaysia most of the people in the private sector 38.5%. It shows the opportunities and the preference of the general public of Pakistan and Malaysia.

5. Measures

It is an exploratory research hence, the Smart PLS-SEM is used for the model testing and analysis of the hypothesis. The theory of planned behaviour variables; ATB, SN and PBC were measured by six items each having the Cronbach alpha value of 0.833, 0.732 & 0.791 respectively. Similarly, the moderating variable of individualism was measured by six items and having the Cronbach alpha value of 0.803. Finally, the dependent variable of EI was measure by five items having the Cronbach alpha value of 0.643. All the alpha values fall in the acceptable range of greater than 0.60 as suggested (Zeb *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, the reliability validity, Cronbach alpha, average variance extracted, and composite reliability were validated before the path analysis. The detailed results of the structural model are presented in the following table.

5.1 Measurement model

As mentioned earlier that the data were collected from Pakistani and Malaysian universities namely, KIU Pakistan and UTHM, Malaysia. The data were analyzed while applying the Smart PLS-SEM technique. First of all, the validity and reliability of the survey questionnaire was checked which shows the appropriate factor loading of more than 0.6 of all the constructs. Similarly, the Cronbach alpha values of all the dimensions are also more than 0.70 and the average variance extracted, and composite reliability are also meet their respective criteria of more than 0.70 and 0.50 accordingly. Hence, our research questionnaire meets the validity and reliability criteria presented in the Table 2 below.

Table 2: Reliability, consistency and validity

Constructs	Items	Factor loadings	Alpha value	AVE	C.R
Attitude Towards Behaviour			0.833	0.640	0.876
	ATB1	0.888			
	ATB2	0.843			
	ATB3	0.881			
	ATB4	0.925			
	ATB5	0.874			
Subjective Norms			0.732	0.626	0.833
	SN1	0.825			
	SN2	0.854			
	SN3	0.905			
	SN4	0.763			
	SN5	0.780			
Perceived behavioural control			0.791	0.600	0.856
	PCB1	0.714			
	PCB2	0.786			
	PCB3	0.877			
	PCB4	0.859			
	PBC5	0.868			
	PBC6	0.747			
Individualism			0.803	0.632	0.871
	IC1	0.844			
	IC2	0.897			
	IC3	0.818			
	IC4	0.834			
	1C5	0.749			
	1C6	0.846			
Entrepreneurial intention			0.643	0.770	0.877
	IE1	0.881			
	IE2	0.940			
	IE3	0.877			
	IE4	0.905			
	IE5	0.777			

5.1.1 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is a statistical tool that measures the degree to which a construct is distinct from other constructs, which are supposed to be disparate. According to Hair *et al*. (2014), the discriminant validity shows that how a particular construct is unique and covered phenomena not presented by other constructs of the model. Similarly, the discriminant validity is empirically calculated with the help of Fornell and Larker criteria.

Table 3: Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

Constructs	VIF	ATB	EI	IC	PBC	SN
ATB	3.07	0.906				
EI	3.89	0.883	0.878			
IC	2.28	0.243	0.327	0.832		
PBC	2.93	0.755	0.704	0.339	0.811	
SN	1.90	0.586	0.477	0.222	0.534	0.827

The above Fornell and Larcker criterion shows that each construct is dissimilar with the preceding constructs. As endorsed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), AVE values of all study constructs and their respective square root were greater than the correlations among constructs. Our results also show that all the constructs are well different and discriminant from each other. In addition to the discernment validity, the multicollinearity test also performed with the help of variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis. All the values of the VIF is greater 5.0, which reveals that there is no any multicollinearity issue among the different constructs.

5.2 Structural model

The second important phase of assessment is the structural model measurement. Coefficient of determination or commonly know it the R^2 is one of the crucial criteria in the assessment of the structural model in Smart PLS-SEM through bootstrapping. According to the Hair *et al*, (2017) the R-square and path analysis are the most important tool to assess the model inner evaluation. The vales of R^2 and path analysis presented in the following tables below.

Table 4: Coefficient of determination

Constructs	Values of R^2	
	Pakistan	Malaysia
Attitude towards behavior		
Subjective norms	0.343	0.823
Perceived behavioral control		
Individualism		

Cohen et al. (1989) recommended the acceptable values of R^2 which are 0.26, 0.13 or 0.02 respectively representing strong, moderate and weak effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable. The total effect of the exogenous variables on the endogenous variable is 0.343 of Pakistan and 0.823 of Malaysia. Both countries R^2 vales are greater than 0.26 as suggested (Cohen *et al*., 1989).

5.2.1 Path analysis

The last phase of structural model testing is to evaluate the proposed research hypothesis while performing the path coefficient analysis. The path coefficient explained the correlation among the independent, moderation and dependent variables of the theoretical model.

Table 5: The summary result of the path analysis

Hypothesis	Pakistan					Malaysia				
	Beta	Std	T-value	P-value	Decision	Beta	Std	T-value	P-value	Decision
H1	0.280	0.031	9.032	0.001	Supported	0.885	0.102	8.652	0.000	Supported
H2	0.356	0.054	6.614	0.000	Supported	0.103	0.141	2.893	0.004	Supported
H3	0.119	0.045	2.667	0.004	Supported	-0.02	0.154	0.082	0.934	Not Supported
The indirect effect of moderation										
H4	0.110	0.063	1.748	0.081	Not Supported	0.029	0.226	0.128	0.898	Not Supported

H5	0.040	0.059	0.678	0.498	Not Supported	0.157	0.151	1.042	0.297	Supported
H6	0.029	0.066	0.443	0.658	Not Supported	0.119	0.151	2.144	0.032	Not Supported

The path coefficient values of the variable ATB with respect to the EI on Pakistani (p = 0.646) and Malaysian (p = 0.646) students are significant, hence H1 is accepted in both cases. Similarly, the path coefficient values of the variable SN with respect to the EI of the Pakistani (p = 0.646) and Malaysian significant (p = 0.646) students are also significant, hence H2 is also accepted. Moreover, the path coefficient value of PBC with respect to EI on Pakistani students are significant (p = 0.646) however, the case of Malaysian students is insignificant (p = 0.646).

The indirect analysis showed that the moderating variable of individualism on the relationship between ATB and EI is insignificant in respect of the Pakistani (p-vale =.978) and Malaysian (p-vale =.978) students. Similarly, the moderating role of individualism on the relationship between SN and EI in respect of Pakistani students are insignificant (p-vale =.978), however, in the case of Malaysian students are significant (p-vale =.978). The third moderating role of individualism on the relationship between PBC and EI in respect of the Pakistani (p-vale =.978), and Malaysian (p-vale =.978) are insignificant.

6. Discussion

Through the identification of research gap from the relevant literature, this study tried to find the factors which effect the EI of the university students by proposing a comparative research model (González-Serrano *et al.*, 2021). The results reveal some interesting information regarding the EI. The three independent variables ATB, SN & PBC have a significant effect on the EI of the university students of Pakistan, however the result is different in the case of Malaysian students. Two variables namely ATB and SN has positive effect on the EI of the Malaysian students, however the independent variable of PBC does not play any significant role.

In addition, the moderating variable of individualism does not support the relationship between ATB, SN, PBC and EI of the university student of Pakistan. However, the results are different with the Malaysian university students. The moderating variable of individualism has a significant effect on the relationship between SN and EI. Although it does not affect the relationship of ATB, PBC and the EI of the Malaysian students. Additionally, this study supports the previous research notion of "the relationships among the TPB components are equally strong and comparable across Pakistani and Malaysian university student's cultures – the only exception being the relation of social norms with intentions". But as we observed that the moderating effect is partially different in the case of Pakistan and Malaysia.

7. Conclusion

Overall, this cross cultural study makes a theoretical and empirical contribution in the EI literature while studying the moderating role of national cultural on the relationship between TPB and EI of the developing country Pakistan and the emerging country Malaysia. Moreover, the results confirm that the TPB has significant impact in the development of the EI among the university students of Pakistan and Malaysia except the variable PBC which shows insignificant result. Similarly, there is no any moderating role of individualism on the EI of the university students in Pakistan. The results are consistence with the previous research studies conducted by (Naqvi & Siddiqui, 2020). However, the variable of individualism moderates the relationship between SN and EI of the Malaysian students. The dissimilar results are found due to the cultural and socio-economic difference, which exist between Pakistan and Malaysia. Hofstede's national culture categorize Pakistan and Malaysia as a collectivist culture country, but this study found difference between Pakistan and Malaysia.

The comparative study of Pakistan and Malaysia bring some new insights about the EI and role of national cultural. The govt. institution and universities can utilize this study to promote entrepreneurship in their respective countries. However, this study has some limitation in applying the findings. Like, the research did not use the random sampling and the data were collected from the university students only. Hence, the finding may not be equally applicable to the other sectors and participants. Further longitudinal studies give more understanding and clear picture of the process of transforming intention into actual action. Despite having certain limitations, this study still fulfilled the scientific requirements and provide new understanding about the EI.

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