

**THE INFLUENCE OF LIFELONG LEARNING  
CHARACTERISTICS AND TENDENCIES  
TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURIAL  
MOTIVATION AMONG STUDENTS IN A  
PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

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**MASTER OF SCIENCE  
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TENDENCIES TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURIAL MOTIVATION AMONG  
STUDENTS IN A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

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Thesis submitted to Centre for Graduate Studies, Universiti Pertahanan Nasional  
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## ABSTRACT

The value of entrepreneurship is reflected in the level of knowledge and skills acquired by individuals as well as in the quality of their lives. For entrepreneurs, lifelong learning is the basis of long-term success because it encourages them to become open, creative and innovative leaders. It is crucial for entrepreneur to have good empowerment of both entrepreneurship and lifelong learning. Therefore, this study aims to understand their entrepreneurial motivation in light of lifelong learning characteristics and tendencies or whether their motivation is influenced by it. This study adopted a quantitative research method. A total of 393 Bachelor's Degree students from a public university in Malaysia had involved as the respondents. They were selected through a random sampling method. Descriptive and inferential analysis was done by using Multiple Linear Regression and Simple Linear Regression. The result showed that the highest mean of Entrepreneurial Motivation sub constructs was Economic Core with value of (M=4.26, SP=0.60), followed by Entrepreneurial Core (M=4.25, SP=0.61), Work Core (M=4.21, SP=0.59), Individual Core (M=4.19, SP=0.67) and Social Core (M=4.02, SP=0.67). Inferential analysis showed that lifelong learning tendencies were statistically significant in predicting entrepreneurial motivation ( $\beta=0.902$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and was contribute 81 percent of variance towards the entrepreneurship motivation ( $R^2=0.813$ ). Therefore, it is hoped that this study can be a guide to organizations involved in higher education in order to produce quality graduates who are able to become successful entrepreneurs.

## ABSTRAK

Nilai keusahawanan dicerminkan berdasarkan tahap pengetahuan dan kemahiran yang diperoleh oleh individu serta kualiti hidup mereka. Bagi seorang usahawan, pembelajaran sepanjang hayat adalah asas kepada kejayaan jangka panjang kerana ia mendorong mereka menjadi pemimpin yang terbuka, kreatif dan inovatif. Adalah penting bagi seorang usahawan untuk mempunyai pemerksaan diri yang baik bagi kedua-dua nilai keusahawanan dan pembelajaran sepanjang hayat. Oleh itu, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk memahami motivasi keusahawanan mereka berdasarkan ciri-ciri dan kecenderungan pembelajaran sepanjang hayat atau sama ada motivasi mereka dipengaruhi oleh pembelajaran sepanjang hayat. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah penyelidikan secara kuantitatif. Seramai 393 orang pelajar Ijazah Sarjana Muda dari sebuah universiti awam di Malaysia telah terlibat sebagai responden. Mereka dipilih melalui kaedah persampelan rawak. Analisis data secara deskriptif dan inferensi dilakukan dengan menggunakan analisis Regresi Linear Berganda dan Regresi Linear Mudah. Hasil analisis menunjukkan nilai min paling tinggi bagi sub konstruk Motivasi Keusahawanan ialah Teras Ekonomi ( $M=4.26$ ,  $SP=0.60$ ), diikuti oleh Teras Keusahawanan ( $M=4.25$ ,  $SP=0.61$ ), Teras Kerja ( $M=4.21$ ,  $SP=0.59$ ), Teras Individu ( $M=4.19$ ,  $SP=0.67$ ) dan Teras Sosial ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SP=0.67$ ). Analisis inferensi menunjukkan bahawa kecenderungan pembelajaran sepanjang hayat adalah signifikan dalam meramalkan motivasi keusahawanan ( $\beta=0.902$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) dan menyumbang 81 peratus daripada varians terhadap motivasi keusahawanan ( $R^2=0.813$ ). Justeru, kajian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi panduan kepada organisasi yang terlibat dalam pendidikan tinggi agar dapat melahirkan graduan berkualiti yang mampu menjadi usahawan berjaya.

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## **APPROVAL**

The Examination Committee has met on **7<sup>th</sup> October 2022** to conduct the final examination of **Irmohizam bin Ibrahim** on his degree thesis entitled **‘The Influence of Lifelong Learning Characteristics and Tendencies towards Entrepreneurial Motivation among Students in a Public University’**.

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Academic Session : **2021/2022**

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

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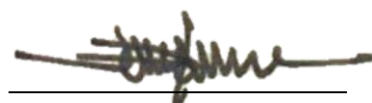
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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATION**

NEP	National Entrepreneurship Policy
UPNM	Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Entrepreneurship has entered the period of the entrepreneurial society as a result of globalization, where knowledge-based entrepreneurship is a new source of competitive advantage in addition to mastering production variables. Entrepreneurship is described as a dynamic system comprising a person's causally interconnected personality traits, motivation, cognition, goals, emotions, abilities, learning, skills, and behaviour (Schimperna, 2021). The process of beginning a business is included in entrepreneurship, which has been idealized as one of the pillars of a prosperous capitalist economy. It is recognised as a key mechanism for enhancing jobs, competitiveness and innovation, and as a force for social change (Song et al., 2021). Our tomorrow is built by entrepreneurs; thus, it is our duty to understand and respect what they do. It is interesting to observe how many publications and policies emphasize the importance of entrepreneurship.

Despite economic uncertainties and challenges on a global scale, the government remains committed to promoting economic growth in the country. The education sector has prepared human resources for employment in this sector. To encourage them to excel in their education, the graduates' motivation to enter entrepreneurial sectors must be high. Entrepreneurial motivation is defined as an integrated function of the entrepreneur's characteristics, their environment at home,



their personal goal, the concept behind their company and its surroundings, as well as extrinsic and intrinsic factors (Naffziger et al., 1994). Therefore, it could be said that entrepreneurial motivation is still something that drives business owners to put forth their best effort and determination in achieving their goals. These motivating factors have an impact on the level of entrepreneurial behaviour that propels business owners to pursue their goals. These variables also influence an individual's entrepreneurial intentions, which in turn affect how they behave with the business process. Given that entrepreneurship is a highly interactive and action-oriented system, entrepreneurial motivation is the primary factor determining a person's active participation in the entrepreneurial process (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). Therefore, for entrepreneurship to be possible in this goal-oriented process, the willingness to serve the purpose is crucial.

To be a successful entrepreneur, the motivation to learn and move forward must be incurred among the students. For that, they need to constantly learn new things with new entrepreneurship skills. Not only that, employers need to learn and relearn to compete with employees with multiple skill sets. This is why lifelong learning is an important skill for an entrepreneur to master. Lifelong learning skills have become increasingly important in recent years, according to several frameworks and case studies. Traditional usage of the term "lifelong learning", which has a variety of meanings, referred to systems and processes that support learning across the whole of adulthood and the working years. One interpretation of lifelong learning is that it refers to an individual process by which adults learn and develop as they move through different stages of life (Billett, 2010). Another definition refers to the chances to take advantage of educational opportunities that are largely fueled by investments in human capital, influenced by the market, and connected to the commoditization of education and skills (Vargas, 2017).

The definition of lifelong learning is deliberate learning to improve the quality of life. Students are in charge of their education (Dunlap & Grabinger, 2003). According to the Faure Report, "A master concept for educational policies in the years to come for both developed and developing countries" is lifelong education (Friesen

& Anderson, 2004). The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) (2020), with a focus on adult learning, lifelong learning, literacy, and non-formal basic education, embraces the idea that this attribute should be a goal for education worldwide. It is a resource for opening opportunities for lifelong learning as well as the realisation of the potential, rights, and democratic ideals of people. A competency-based learning environment enables students to apply knowledge from transferred knowledge that is supported by reflective practice and to go beyond it (Sloep et al., 2011).

Lifelong learning has been the habit of successful people since the beginning of time. In Higher Education, lifelong learning seeks to explore how universities and colleges can prepare their students for this concept of learning. Not only through continuing education and specialised courses for adults, but also through traditional teaching programmes. Therefore, lifelong learning does not have to be limited to informal learning. It is usually understood as a voluntary concept aimed at achieving personal fulfilment, which could be accomplished through either formal or informal education.

UNESCO (2013) elaborated lifelong learning as a concept that is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults and the elderly, girls and boys, women and men) in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community, workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal), which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands.

The practice of lifelong learning among students nowadays is a wise strategy for any education institution especially those in a higher education institution. This includes identifying the lifelong learning characteristics among the students. When it comes to characteristics, up until this day, there are a few unified view on the characteristics of lifelong learning among learners (Love, 2011). Various scholars from around the world have published a long list of lifelong learning characteristics based on their research outcomes. Nevertheless, following the existing characteristics as guidance in exploring this matter is justified. One of the established lifelong learning

characteristics among students was proposed by Kirby et al., (2010). The dimensions of lifelong learning characteristics proposed include (1) goal-setting; (2) application of knowledge and skills; (3) self-direction and self-evaluation; (4) information location; and (5) learning strategy adaptation.

## **1.2 Research Background**

One opinion offered by experts on how to lower unemployment is that high-educated job seekers can find solutions through entrepreneurial development. The second viewpoint holds that entrepreneurial skills must be developed consciously beginning at a young age. As a result, the younger generation started to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career option. This decision proved crucial for ensuring the future welfare of the country (Nurfitriana et al., 2018). According to that entrepreneurial intent, a nation's success in terms of people's lives, businesses, and individuals is very important. According to Zahra et al., (2004), entrepreneurship can boost economic growth and national competitiveness by generating jobs and bringing innovation into the marketplace (Shane & Venkataraman, 2007). The development of a nation's economy and non-economic sectors have benefited greatly from entrepreneurship. Among them are making people's lives better, starting businesses, and creating jobs. The belief that entrepreneurship is essential for a few desired social outcomes, such as economic growth, decreased unemployment, and technological modernization, accounts for this tendency. When someone is interested in an entrepreneurial field, their entrepreneurial interest can develop. People who are interested in being entrepreneurs will conduct themselves in a way that inspires desire by taking risks and acting quickly when presented with opportunities (Atmaja, 2016). With this in mind, entrepreneurship has become important for future generations as part of their professional development.

Concerning future job challenges, wherein the world's economy has begun to move forward, there is concern about the availability of jobs for everyone. Population increases create a demand for jobs, increasing the demand for employment. Multiple types of research have been done due to these issues and the solution has been

concluded to be entrepreneurship (Alam et al., 2019; Fadillah & Thamrin, 2019; Minh Hue et al., 2022; Mulyapradana & Anjarini, 2020; Munawar & Suryana, 2020; Sutela & Adnyani, 2021). Despite this, entrepreneurship has been taken for granted, especially by students whereby students have been reported to have a low interest in entrepreneurship (Munawar & Suryana, 2020). Furthermore, research focusing on the factors that motivate students to pursue entrepreneurship careers and how they can be influenced by education are still scarce (Yi & Duval-Couetil, 2018). There is, however, a paucity of research on entrepreneurial motivation (the desire to become an entrepreneur) (Lu et al., 2021).

Entrepreneurship is the act of starting a business to fulfil a previously unmet need for originality and creativity (Gholami & Karimi, 2014). A desire to learn is called motivation, and it typically refers to students' interests or what is known as intrinsic motivation (Abdullah & Yih, 2014). A person's motivation can be seen as an encouragement to carry out tasks as well as accomplish personal objectives in the form of accomplishment (Ajiwibawani et al., 2017). A person who is generally motivated is more likely to persevere, and typically have the resources necessary to withstand the hostile competition that arises in the entrepreneurial environment. This to be mentioned, shows how important for graduates to have high entrepreneurial motivation as its effect their survival in becoming an entrepreneur.

Motivation can be the keyword to have entrepreneurship as the solution to job independence among students. Nevertheless, in reality, it is quite different, given that entrepreneurial motivation is not encouraged well. Kanama (2021) reported that there has not been enough effort put into motivating the youth to embrace the entrepreneurial spirit within the country. Agreeing with this, Lu et al., (2021) stated research on the role of entrepreneurial motivation (i.e., the drive to become entrepreneurs) is still relatively scarce. Consequently, the need for research into entrepreneurial motivation is vital to advance understanding and provide new insights into the field. This can be explained further by past research that reported the lack of entrepreneurship education leads to psychological fluctuations and mood swings among young people, which leads to a loss of faith in entrepreneurship (Shi & Wang, 2021). Nevertheless, it is well

established within psychology literature that intention plays a significant role in predicting behaviour. It is important to understand how intention takes place in order to understand behaviour toward entrepreneurship (Alam et al., 2019).

As there have been studies that look for the factors that influence entrepreneurial motivation, the effect of lifelong learning per se on entrepreneurial motivation has not yet widely explored. As aforementioned, scholars and experts believed that lifelong learning is an important trait for a successful entrepreneur as this trait contributed to the constant exploration and desire to learn new things. Research by Samad et al., (2019) clearly shows that the level of entrepreneurship readiness for lifelong learning students is particularly high in terms of motivation. This interesting finding should be replicated to have a better understanding of the effect on entrepreneurial motivation by the lifelong learning elements.

Lifelong learning is not a new concept in the education system, especially in higher education. In the literature, it has been emphasized that higher education institutions are important in raising individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills for lifelong learning, and it has been stated that lifelong learning is an integral part of higher education (Ünveren Bilgiç et al., 2021). Being in the system for quite some time does not guarantee for this concept be problem free. Many researches had reported on the unfavorable conditions related to lifelong learning. Previous research had reported that the level of lifelong learning readiness among students is moderate when it comes to entrepreneurial knowledge, though the level of entrepreneurial knowledge itself is high (Ghazalan et al., 2018).

Students are also reported to have a low level of readiness for the Industrial Revolution 4.0 mobile learning, which is important for lifelong learning despite being technology-savvy learners (Ahmad et al., 2019). There are also reports on the low number of training provided that can promote lifelong learning skills in the education institution (Wang et al., 2019). Not only training, low usage of a teaching approach that can enhance lifelong learning including the usage of Moodle (Zainuddin et al., 2016) and implementation of Outcome Based Learning (Saman et al., 2017) were

reported as well. These types of teaching approaches support the development of future education that encourages the student to learn by themselves thus creating a student-centred learning approach which is one of the criteria of future education itself.

Furthermore, the latest study had as well reported a variety of challenges faced by students regarding lifelong learning. This includes a lack of several lifelong learning skills including digital literacy (Anthonysamy, 2020), reflective skills (Choy et al., 2021) and autonomy to be independent in learning (Sidhu et al., 2016). Lacking lifelong learning skills will not only jeopardize students' learning ability, but it will also make learning a harder process. Adding to the rapid development of technology, students have to acquire new knowledge and skills as they grow up. Unfortunately, research had indicated that there was a negative relationship between age and lifelong learning tendencies meaning that the older the person, the less they are towards lifelong learning (Lavasani & Khandan, 2020).

This uncertainty maybe due to the situation learners do not understand what type of lifelong learning characteristics they have. Not knowing who they are may lead to confusion that will not enhance lifelong learning among learners. Stoter et al., (2014) stated that to address the need of adult learners, their distinctive characteristics need to be taken into account. This is because character traits can help learners to make the decision that aligns with their values as well. Furthermore, developing a lifelong learning mindset enhances both objective and subjective career success (Drewery et al., 2020). The importance of characters in learners has been discussed thoroughly. Among others is that, character traits has been deem as one of the combination in encouraging innovation among learners, together with contextual aspect (Wijngaarden et al., 2021). Character trait that is valued with positive trait also theorized to has the potential for development, depending on individuals' experiences and environments (Lavy, 2019). Good or bad characteristics affect the development of learners as this character build values in the future. Thus, strengthening learner characteristics is important to improve the quality of the learning process. This is equally important for lifelong learning characteristics. Learner whom understand their lifelong learning characteristic may enhance their lifelong learning attribute. Nevertheless, this ideal

situation does not happen. De La Harpe and Radloff (2000) reported the critical situation whereby teachers often appear to ignore ways in which could help their students to develop effective lifelong learning characteristics and do not explicitly teach or assess these aspects of learning. Other research by Yasmin et al., (2021) also stated that not much attention is being paid towards character building in the education system despite being aware of the importance of learners' character in learning. Consequently, the full impact that cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and affective characteristics may have on student lifelong learning was not discovered (De La Harpe & Radloff, 2000). Not only that but the roles lifelong learning characteristics might have on the students' study across the program were also neglected.

On the other hand, the benefit of learning one's characteristics effect their tendencies as well since character strength may be driven by the inner tendencies (Lavy, 2019). This had developed a connection between characteristic and tendencies whereby it may affect one another. In lifelong learning, the lifelong learning characteristics and lifelong learning tendencies were related in a way that it can be studied together among learners. Nevertheless, lifelong learning tendencies among learners also had its own issues and problems. Since lifelong learning is a process that happens for a lifetime, a decreasing tendency may lead to bigger challenges as lifelong learning tendency can contribute to the sustainable development of an individual (Şen & Yildiz, 2021). The reason for this decrease however calls for further research for exploration. Since tendencies influence the decision-making process in reaching information (Yurtcu & Orhan-Karsak, 2021), the information on tendencies itself is crucial.

Furthermore, past research also had indicates several variables that relates to the lifelong learning tendencies. Lifelong learning tendencies is an essential requisite of the 21st century, and should be emphasized and conducted with a variety of variables (Kaya, 2020). Based on an article journal search from Google Scholar, more than 80 percent (45) of the results shows the study of lifelong learning only involves teachers or educators as respondent. Research that focuses on students' lifelong learning tendencies can be said to be scarce. Furthermore, Gür-Erdoğan et al., (2019)

has examined the impact of social entrepreneurship on lifelong learning trends and found a direct impact between both. This indicates that lifelong learning and entrepreneurship may influence one another in different ways depending on the variables. Not to mention, an entrepreneur is very sensitive to their environment and is therefore affected by the institutional and cultural context of their country (Brancu et al., 2012). Hence, to fill in this gap, research related to the lifelong learning tendency of students is necessary as a contribution to the body of knowledge.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Despite being said to be the solution to the narrowness of future job availability (Alam et al., 2019; Fadillah & Thamrin, 2019; Minh Hue et al., 2022; Mulyapradana & Anjarini, 2020; Munawar & Suryana, 2020; Sutela & Adnyani, 2021), entrepreneurship still does not get enough attention from the students, who are the future worker themselves. Past research had reported that students are lack motivation (Shi & Wang, 2021; Yi & Duval-Couetil, 2018) while research on the motivation factors also said to be scarce (Kirby et al., 2010; Lu et al., 2021). In fact, Lu et al., (2021) in their study had specifically mention that there has been no empirical study that examined predictors of entrepreneurial motivation. Munawar and Suryana (2020) had as well reported that entrepreneurial motivation variable has no significant effect on entrepreneurial intention variables meaning that entrepreneurial motivation is insignificant in entrepreneurship. This contradict to other studies that had emphasized the importance of entrepreneurial motivation as a mean to cater the unemployment issues through entrepreneurship as mention above. Nevertheless, learners must realize the importance of entrepreneurship in employing the ability of entrepreneurship to provide jobs shouldn't be underestimated. Future learners must be able to become the job provider, instead of depending to become the job seeker and one way to achieve this is by venturing into entrepreneurship. Therefore, learners must be kept with high entrepreneurial motivation to ensure they can become one upon graduation.

Entrepreneurial motivation among learners had reported several distinctive issues that calls for new researches. A developed country, Japan for instance, had done



research on entrepreneurial motivation and the result indicates that Japanese graduates are having low entrepreneurial motivation compared to other developed countries like America (Kanama, 2021). Despite the government high investment in entrepreneurship development at higher education level, the Japanese graduate still possess low level of entrepreneurial motivation. This had trigger a question whether entrepreneurship can really be taught in classroom and whether there is any influential factor that affect its effectiveness. Somehow related, Mulyapradana and Anjarini (2020) had reported that entrepreneurship subjects has no significant effect on entrepreneurial decision-making. However, a contradict result has been published in more recent time by Minh Hue et al., (2022) which stated that subjective norms have impact on both the business motivation and the entrepreneurial intention. This is critical findings since the government, especially through the Ministry of Education Malaysia, has continuously invest in the entrepreneurship education effortlessly. Therefore, studies that can contribute towards the improvement of entrepreneurship among graduates are plausible. This include entrepreneurial motivation.

Studies related to entrepreneurial motivation itself are widely done. However, studies that connect lifelong learning with entrepreneurial motivation are still scarce. This can be seen by the search result done by researcher using search engine Google Scholar, which only produce small amount of related article journals. This opens up new research opportunities to contribute to the body of knowledge. Nevertheless, the influence between lifelong learning and entrepreneurial motivation cannot be denied as lifelong learning is strongly agreed as one of the main characteristics of a successful entrepreneur.

Meanwhile, studies regarding lifelong learning had indicated several issues. Lifelong learning is one of the critical 21st century skills to be acquired by future learners. Not mastering it may lead to unemployment due to lack of readiness that is measured against knowledge, interest, motivation and abilities in the field of employment (Ghazalan et al., 2018). Drewery et al., (2020) had eventually reported that developing a lifelong learning mindset enhances both objective and subjective career success. Thus, lacking of it might cause an inversed effect. In the specific event,