Enhancing Entrepreneurship Intentions through Communication Activities

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Abstract: *At the Language Centre NDUM, the students have initiated an entrepreneurial business company which offers English language related services to the public and the name of the company is The English Language House or TELaH. An example of these services is the online public speaking course which has been offered for more than a year now. This study analyses Communication Apprehension (CA) in students who run TELaH and investigate if CA influences their Entrepreneurship Intentions (EI) in becoming entrepreneurs once they have graduated. The study also sees whether demographic factors such as age, gender, education level and grades, work and business experience, and family background affect EI amongst university students, and whether there is any relationship between CA and EI. This is a quantitative study where an adapted questionnaire which tests samples' CA and EI is used in data collection. It also uses convenient sampling and data are analysed using* ***Pearson Correlation*** *using SPSS version 23.0. Samples are 65 Language Centre's undergraduate students who are involved with TELaH's activities such as trainings and courses which involved group discussion, meeting skills, interpersonal, and public speaking. This study supports that good communication skills can contribute to an increase in entrepreneurial intentions amongst graduates. In a way, it implies that people with good communication skills will be inclined to start up own business and succeed at it. Therefore, if universities in Malaysia want to facilitate in promoting entrepreneurship or producing future entrepreneurs, students' communication skills should be cultivated and enhanced.*

Keywords: communication apprehension, entrepreneurship intention, TELaH

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a catalyst for any country's economic growth and is seen as an important field in Malaysia. Hence, the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia has taken the initiative by making entrepreneurship courses compulsory to all students where students are encouraged to take part in the many entrepreneurship activities such as trainings, seminars, short courses, conferences, and entrepreneurship events; with an aim in producing employable graduates. The entrepreneurial activities are considered to be activities that should be encouraged for their crucial contribution to the economic and social development of a given area, a way for creating employment, and an essential means to achieve high levels of competitiveness and innovation in the market [1][2][3][4]. According to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) [5], behavioural intentions have been identified as the most accurate predictor of actual behaviour. Therefore, when investigating individuals' Entrepreneurship Intentions (EI) to start a business, indirectly this will raise an important question: what are the factors that affect an individual's EI? To answer this question, this study builds on the existing literature on entrepreneurship and communication.

This study attempts to analyse students' communication skills to see whether it is a necessary condition or factor for students in becoming entrepreneurs. Specifically, it looks at the effects of Communication Apprehension (CA) in undergraduates' intention and choice to be entrepreneurs. CA refers to lack of communication skill due to fear, anxiety and having less confidence, when an individual communicates with other people. There are four types of CA: group discussion, meeting skills, interpersonal, and public speaking. On the other hand, EI refers to a state of mind that leads an individual's attention and action towards the endorsement of entrepreneurial behaviour, building new business concept, and undertaking in entrepreneurial career.

The objectives of the study are: to investigate to what extent CA increases the intention of undergraduates to be entrepreneurs, and to what extent CA, increases the choice of undergraduates to be entrepreneurs [6].

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is derived from Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by [5] and [6]. TPB states that it would be feasible to predict and educate human behaviour in a certain situation, as well as foresee non-voluntary behaviours. TRA was able to anticipate behaviours, but the simple knowledge of intention was insufficient to do so. As a result, perceived behavioural control is included, which is produced by control beliefs and results in the perception of ease or difficulty in doing the behaviour. It implies that people are expected to turn their intentions into actions if they have a sufficient level of actual control over their actions. Thus, intention is assumed to be the direct antecedent of behaviour, guiding the behaviour in a controlled manner [7].

Theoretically, TPB is linked to perceived self-efficacy, which is defined as perceived behavioural control. It may be applied to almost all voluntary behaviours [8][9]. TPB, according to [10], offers a substantial possibility for better understanding and prediction of entrepreneurial behaviours; empirical data has demonstrated that TPB is a valuable model because the entire model was significant. It enables researchers to get a better understanding and prediction on entrepreneurial intention by considering not only personal but also social factors. TPB has been widely utilised to predict and explain both intention and actual behaviour in numerous areas [11], including social psychology, marketing, and information technology adoption. TPB's validity in understanding entrepreneurial ambition across cultures has been proven in previous study. It may be concluded that the stronger a person's intention toward entrepreneurship is, the more favourable their attitude and subjective norm are, and the larger their perceived behavioural control is. TPB is used in this investigation due to its widespread endorsement [12][13][14]. This study represents an effort to investigate the determinants of EI by referring to the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

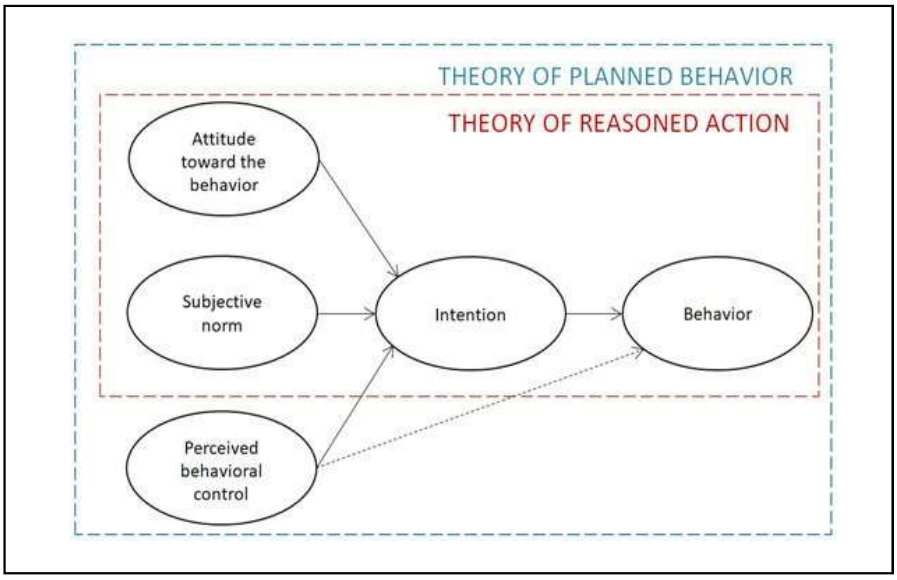

Figure 1: Model of Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)
Source: Ajzen, I. (1991). Theory of planned behaviour. Organisational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes, 50, 179–211 [5]

2.2 Entrepreneurship

What is entrepreneurship? Entrepreneurship is the practice of starting a business. The entrepreneur is frequently viewed as an innovator, a source of fresh concepts for products, services, businesses, and operational methods. Entrepreneurs are essential to any economy because they have the knowledge and drive to foresee requirements and sell viable new ideas. Entrepreneurship that succeeds in assuming the risks involved in founding a firm is rewarded with money, notoriety, and chances for future growth. Failure in entrepreneurship leads in losses and diminished market presence for individuals engaged.

Entrepreneurial skills are a critical component in the path to sustainable development, their development in the adolescent population should be viewed as a complex phenomenon involving personal development, a transforming attitude, and an innovative vision that allow them to actively participate in society until they are able to enter the labour market with the necessary skills [15]. Using the TPB, students' EIs, after they took part in the many entrepreneurship activities such as trainings, seminars, short courses, conferences, and entrepreneurship events, can be predicted.

This study attempts to fill the research gaps by differentiating between the intentions and communication apprehension which lead to the actual choice to become an entrepreneur. The analysis includes the effects of entrepreneurship intention and communication skill. Data analysis using paired t test was carried out to a sample of 65 undergraduate students of the English Language House (TELaH), a business company initiated by the students of Language Centre.

2.3 Entrepreneurship Intentions (EI)

Despite the fact that the Malaysian government has adopted a variety of incentives to boost entrepreneurial activity, the predicted benefits have yet to be realised. Malaysian entrepreneurs

are still at a low level when compared to other developed countries. Only 4.9 percent of Malaysians aspire to start a business, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), putting the country in 64th place out of 65 countries. One of the most effective ways to enhance future entrepreneurial activities is to cultivate entrepreneurial inclinations amongst university students.

The term "entrepreneurial intentions" (EI) refers to a person's or a group of people's plans to start a new company or project. An intention of this kind is a pre-action conscious mental state that focuses attention on the objective of starting a new business. EI can be characterised as a position that leads to business ownership or self-employment. EI is also regarded as a personal direction that could result in the formation of a venture. The phrase "the conscious state of mind that precedes action and leads attention towards entrepreneurial behaviours, such as beginning a new firm and becoming an entrepreneur," is another definition of EI.

There is broad consensus regarding the necessity of fostering entrepreneurship in both developed and developing nations. Entrepreneurship has traditionally been viewed in sophisticated industrialised nations like the United States as a means of promoting innovation and technological advancement, fostering competition, and creating jobs, all of which contribute to economic growth and national prosperity [16]. More governments in less developed nations view entrepreneurship as a means of promoting economic growth and addressing significant social and economic problems. Due to escalating international competition, rapidly evolving technology, and emerging market economies, entrepreneurship has gained increased attention from researchers and governments worldwide over the past few decades. Due to the growing perception that entrepreneurship is a means of addressing global concerns, it is relevant to understand how young people might develop into entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) is said to be derived from perceived desirability (a person's desire to start their own business), perceived feasibility (the amount to which individuals believe they are capable of starting their own firm), and a proclivity to act if opportunities arise [17]. It was considered that a negative or positive external occurrence, the "trigger event," which modifies an individual's status or future goals, and changes inertia in human behaviour (e.g. choice of future employment).

2.4 Communication Apprehension (CA)

Communication apprehension (CA) is described as “an individual’s level of fear or anxiety with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” [18]. It is one of the negative outcomes from unsuccessful communication experiences. In association with ‘shyness’, CA is defined as “the tendency to behave in a shy manner (talk less) because of fear or anxiety) [19]. CA can happen in four different contexts: discussions, meetings, conversations and public speaking [20]. The causes of CA are well researched on and some of them are: low intellectual skills, speech skill deficiencies, voluntary social introversion, social alienation, communication anxiety, low social self-esteem, and ethnic or cultural divergence in communication norms [21]. Scholars suggested that CA influences interpersonal communication, motivation, and behaviour [22][23] and this may illuminate on the possible correlation between CA and EI.

2.5 Research Question

This study has two (2) research questions as given below:

RQ1: Does demographic profile affect Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) of students?
RQ2: Is there any significant relationship between Communication Apprehension (CA) and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)?

2.6 Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant relationship between Communication Apprehension (CA) and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI).

The Conceptual Framework for this study is as below:

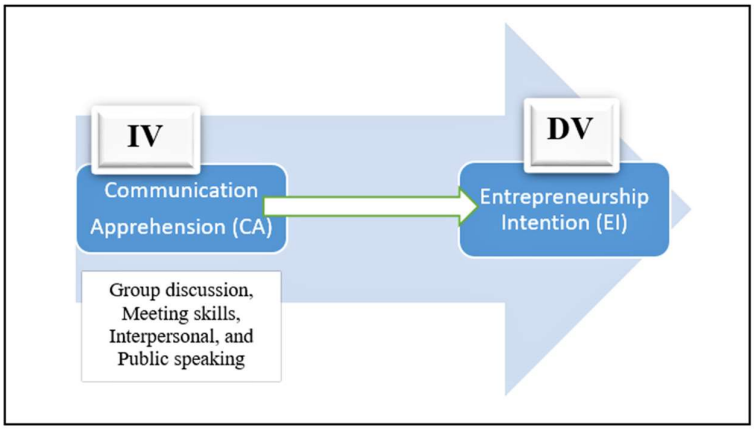

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Students at TELaH had the opportunity to be involved in group discussions, meetings, activities related to interpersonal skills, and teach school students public speaking. While doing these activities, students have to actively communicate, both among themselves and the school students. This study tries to see whether having CA has effects on their EI.

3. Data Analysis, Findings, and Discussion

The statistical analysis of the data in this study is done with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23.0. The statistical analysis was broken down into three categories: descriptive, reliability, and inferential analyses.

3.1 Descriptive Analysis/ RQ 1: Does demographic profile affect Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) of students?
Descriptive analysis was used to characterise the findings by converting raw data into simple statistics that help with comprehension. Frequencies, percentages, and the mean were the fundamental statistics used in this study. Frequency and percentage are presented in tables as the summary of data, and it shows the most and least frequent answer. They were used to measure quantitative demographic variables in Section A of the questionnaire such as gender, year of study, experience in business, motivation in joining TELaH, and confidence in doing business after joining TELaH.

3.1.1 Frequency and percentage

From frequency and percentage, there are 21.5% male and 78.5% female among samples. This is consistent with the gender ratio of the university where there are more female students than male students. Samples consist of 15.4% Year 1, 40.0% Year 2, and 44.6% Year 3. Total number of samples from the Language Centre was 65 students when the questionnaire was distributed. When asked about do they have experiences in doing business, 35.4 answered "Yes" and 64.6% answered "No". It can be seen that more than half of the total samples are still not familiar with entrepreneurship where 42 of them did not have any experience in conducting business. There are similar percentages for the reason or motivation in joining TELaH, 33.8% joined out of their own will, 35.4% were influenced by peers, and 30.8% were motivated by lecturers. The students can be motivated because of different reasons but being a student of the Language Centre, one is automatically a part of this company. 61.5 % of samples are confident to start up their own business after joining TELaH while 6.2% are not, and 32.3% are unsure. Based on the high number of students being confident to venture into entrepreneurship, it can be said that the company has successfully inculcated and instilled in the students some entrepreneurship experiences or exposures.

3.1.2 Compare mean score

Comparing Mean is best used when comparing several numeric variables with respect to one or more categorical variables. Here, the variables in demographic profile (gender, year of study, experience in business, motivation in joining TELaH, and confidence in doing business after joining TELaH) were compared to EI. It is especially useful for summarising numeric variables simultaneously across categories.

Table 1: Frequency, percentage, and mean score

GENDER						**COMPARE MEAN BETWEEN EI AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**		
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Mean	N	Std dev
VALID	Male	14	21.5	21.5	21.5	4.6190	14	1.27859
	Female	51	78.5	78.5	100.0	4.1264	51	1.04469
	Total	65	100.00	100.00		4.2325	65	1.10741
YEAR OF STUDY						Mean	N	Std dev
VALID	Year 1	10	15.4	15.4	15.4	3.9667	10	.90427
	Year 2	26	40.0	40.0	55.4	4.4103	26	1.24990
	Year 3	29	44.6	44.6	100.0	4.1648	29	1.04215
	Total	65	100.0	100.0		4.2325	65	1.10741
EXPERIENCE IN BUSINESS						Mean	N	Std dev
VALID	Yes	23	35.4	35.4	35.4	4.2705	23	.77548
	No	42	64.6	64.6	100.0	4.2116	42	1.26110
	Total	65	100	100		4.2325	65	1.10741
MOTIVATION TO JOIN TELAH						Mean	N	Std dev
VALID	Self	22	33.8	33.8	33.8	4.0202	22	1.25738

	Peers	23	35.4	35.4	69.2	4.3527	23	1.12748
	Lecturers	20	30.8	30.8	100.0	4.3278	20	.91232
	Total	65	100.0	100.0		4.2325	65	1.10741
CONFIDENCE IN DOING BUSINESS AFTER JOINING TELAH						Mean	N	Std dev
VALID	Yes	40	61.5	61.5	61.5	4.2639	40	1.23874
	No	4	6.2	6.2	67.7	3.9722	4	1.19110
	Unsure	21	32.3	32.3	100.0	4.2222	21	.83887
	Total	65	100.0	100.0		4.2325	65	1.10741

From the table above, it can be seen that:
The mean score for EI for male students (4.6190) is higher than female students (4.1264). Male students have higher intention for becoming entrepreneurs. Year 2 students have the highest intention of becoming entrepreneurs (4.4103), followed by Year 3 (4.1648) and Year 1 (3.9667) Those who have experience in business are more incline to become entrepreneurs when they graduate from the university. Those who are motivated to join entrepreneurship activities because of motivation from peers (4.3527) are most inclined to become entrepreneurs, and least are those from self-motivation (4.0202). Lastly, those who are confident in doing their own entrepreneurial business after joining TELaH are those with the highest intentions to become entrepreneurs and those who do not have the confidence, have the lowest level of entrepreneurial intentions.

3.1.3 Mean score for items on CA and EI in the questionnaire
The mean or average, denoted by the letter x (x-bar), is a measure of a group of variables' central tendency. The mean of a group of variables is calculated by multiplying the total of the variables by the number of variables [24]. It is used to measure quantitative factors in the questionnaire, such as all of the closed-ended questions in Section B and Section C. The mean produced from the analysis is measured using seven levels of mean score.

Table 2: Mean Score and Level

MEAN SCORE	LEVEL (frequency/ agreement)
0.00 - 1.00	Very Low (strongly disagree)
1.10 – 2.00	Low (disagree)
2.10 – 3.00	Medium (somewhat disagree)
3.10 – 4.00	(neutral)
4.10 – 5.00	Medium (somewhat agree)
5.10 - 6.00	High (agree)
6.10 - 7.00	Very High (strongly agree)

Table 3: Mean score

		CA	EI
N	Valid	65	65
	Missing	0	0
Mean		3.9673	4.2325
Minimum		2.96	1.89
Maximum		5.96	6.56

The mean score for Communication Apprehension (CA) is 3.97, this shows that the level of communicative apprehension of the samples is at a neutral level so they do not feel that they are either very bad or good at communication. The mean score for Entrepreneurship Intention (EI) is 4.23 which is Medium level of agreement, which shows that samples do have a good level in becoming entrepreneurs.

Table 4: Mean score for items in questionnaire above 2.50

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Communication Apprehension (CA)					
B1	65	1	7	2.54	1.511
B2	65	1	6	2.77	1.559
B3	65	1	7	3.14	1.740
B4	65	1	7	5.14 (1)	1.345
B16	65	2	7	4.55 (3)	1.469
B17	65	1	7	4.55 (2)	1.358
B24	65	1	7	4.58	1.609
Entrepreneurship Intention (EI)					
C2	65	1	7	3.88	1.635
C5	65	1	7	4.09	1.627
C6	65	1	7	4.11	1.760
C7	65	1	7	4.31 (3)	1.550
C8	65	1	7	4.32 (2)	1.415
C9	65	1	7	4.77 (1)	1.721

All items showed the mean score is higher than 2.50 (medium/ somewhat disagree) and the highest mean score is 5.14 (high/ agree). The three highest mean scores for items under CA are: B4 with mean score 5.14 (high), B16, and B17; both with mean scores 4.55 (medium/ somewhat agree). The three highest mean scores for items under EI are: C9, C8, and C7, with mean scores 4.77, 4.32, and 4.31, all at the level Medium (somewhat agree).

The highest mean score for CA is B4: *I like to take part in group discussion*. Group discussion is seen as "an informal and voluntary meeting of people (in person, over the phone, or online) to exchange ideas, information, and proposals about issues, problems, topics, etc., of shared interest. Organising and conducting TELaH activities has exposed students to many group discussions, and in a way, build students' confidence and ease their nervousness of communicating with other people.

The highest mean score for EA is C9: *You can only make big money if you are self-employed*. This is unexpected as it shows that samples' EI is monetary based. Students should know that becoming an entrepreneur is unique. How hard one works and how much effort he puts in directly affects his income. The option to work as hard as his heart wishes is driven by his hunger for success, and maybe, the big money will follow.

3.2 Reliability Analysis

Likert scale is used to determine the relationship of the variables. It is a quantitative method that shows respondent's view using an interval scale which is a seven-point scale. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient is used to test the reliability of instrument which refers to the consistency or stability of a measure of behaviour [25]. If the coefficient value is equal to 0.9 or above, it is

considered as excellent reliability. However, a score of minimum 0.60 can be also considered as a sound level of internal reliability in the test. Variables below the value of 0.60 indicate poor and unacceptable level. In other words, the nearer the coefficient value to 1.0, the better the reliability is. The table below shows the rule of thumb of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Range [26]:

Table 5: The Range of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

CRONBACH'S ALPHA	INTERNAL CONSISTENCY
$\alpha \geq 0.90$	Excellent
0.80 to 0.89	Very Good
0.70 to 0.79	Good
0.60 to 0.69	Moderate
0.50 to 0.59	Poor

Table 6: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for items in questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.762	.753	33

The Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.762. This shows that items in the questionnaire have a sound level of internal reliability, which means the items produce consistent results across items within a test. A reliability analysis was carried out on the perceived task values scale comprising 35 items. Cronbach's alpha showed the questionnaire to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.762$.

3.3 Validity

A factor analysis was conducted using the KMO and Bartlett's test.

Table 7: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.735
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1662.408
	df	528
	Sig.	.000

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is conducted to measure the suitability of sample data, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is executed prior to extraction or factor formation to ensure the suitability of data for exploratory factor analysis. In this study, the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is 0.735 and Bartlett's test of Sphericity was also significant ($p<0.05$). Therefore, the sample is appropriate and can be analysed further because the value of KMO is close to 1.0 and the significant value is close to 0.0. Table 7 shows the value of KMO and Bartlett's test.

3.4 Inferential Analysis / RQ2: Is there any significant relationship between Communication Apprehension (CA) and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)?

The third type of analysis in this research is inferential analysis which "includes methods to generalise data findings to the related populations with certain level of confidence and assurance of significance of results" [27]. Pearson Product Moment Correlation, r is used to test the proposed hypotheses in order to understand how well the independent variables and dependent variable of the research correlate with each other, and also to determine the strength for the correlation between the two variables.

A correlation of 0.00 indicates that there is no correlation between variables while the nearer the correlation to 1.00 (plus or minus), the stronger the correlation [25]. A positive correlation exists when one variable increases (Apprehension in communication) (decreases) as the other variable increases (Entrepreneurship intention) (decreases) while a negative correlation means that there is an inverse correlation between two variables, when one variable decreases, the other increases [25]. The significant value (2-tailed), p of Pearson correlation must be less than or equal to 0.05 (≤ 0.05) to indicate strong evidence towards the correlation, which indicates that the result is significant. However, Pearson correlation coefficient acts as a predictor and criterion variable, for whichever reason, consistently vary with each other. The independent variable of this study is Apprehension in communication and the dependent variable is Entrepreneurship Intention. The rule of thumb for Pearson correlation analysis is shown in the table below [28]:

Table 8: Description of Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Coefficient range	Strength of correlation
± 0.00 to ± 0.20	Slight
± 0.21 to ± 0.40	Low
± 0.41 to ± 0.70	Moderate
± 0.71 to ± 0.90	High
± 0.91 to ± 1.00	Perfect

Table 9: The Pearson Moment Correlation

		CA	EI
Communication Apprehension (CA)	Pearson Correlation	1	-.225
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.072
	N	65	65
Entrepreneurship Intention (EI)	Pearson Correlation	-.225	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.072	
	N	65	65

Thus, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) is used in this research to measure the correlation of the variables. The Pearson correlation only measures the strength of the relationship between the two variables. CA and EI were found to be low negatively correlated, $r(63)= .225$, $p= .071$. This means that when one variable (CA) decreases as the other variable (EI) increases. An individual is more open to starting their own business when their level of communication anxiety is low. Although the value of r is small (meaning low correlation), it does not mean that the importance of being able to communicate well should be overlooked. Boosting one's confidence to diminish CA apprehension is vital because only through meaningful and self-assured communication can one impart and exchange information; communication as an important entrepreneurship skill which is related to many other skills

such as the ability to organise, produce, manage technical business, coach, network building, monitor environment, ability to spot new trends, active listening, writing, and interpersonal skills.

4.0 Conclusion

The results demonstrated that the majority of respondents agreed that engaging in communication activities results in graduates who are entrepreneurial. Students got the chance to participate in communicative activities such group discussions, meetings, exercises that improve interpersonal skills, and public speaking while joining the entrepreneurial business TELaH at the Language Centre. These activities help students become more confident communicators and lower their CA, which is especially important if they want to become entrepreneurs after graduation.

Understanding the aspects that might be taken into consideration to create entrepreneurial intention among the students, such as improved communication skills, is made easier with knowledge of the students' entrepreneurial intentions. Future studies should focus on the temporal dynamics of the interactions between these variables and the impact of additional motivating variables on EI. The results of this study should aid in the creation of start-up policies, particularly university level start-up policies that aim to develop a pool of potential entrepreneurs among students.

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