

GRIT CHARACTERISTICS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: THE RELATIONSHIP WITH ENTREPRENEURIAL TENDENCY

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Abstract: *Entrepreneurship education at the university level holds significant importance in today's dynamic and rapidly evolving economic landscape. Entrepreneurship education could encourage students to think creatively and develop innovative solutions to real-world problems. Fostering innovation through entrepreneurship education nurtures a mindset of seeking opportunities for new products, services, and business models. Entrepreneurial activity plays a vital role in boosting a country's economy as it creates job opportunities for the community and society. In university, as students are exposed to various activities and equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to launch and grow ventures, grit can influence attitudes toward persistence and effort in pursuing long-term goals. Grit is considered an essential trait for achieving long-term success in various domains, including education, career, sports, and entrepreneurship. Individuals with high levels of grit may have positive attitudes toward working hard. This research studies the entrepreneurial tendency among students after going through the learning process in entrepreneurship classes at the university, based on the type of learners and grit characteristics.*

Keywords: *Grit Characteristic, Entrepreneurial Tendency, Types of Learners, Entrepreneurship Among Students, University Student*

Introduction

Entrepreneurship activity plays a vital role in boosting a country's economy as it creates job opportunities for the community and society. In the university all over the world, entrepreneurship education has been taken seriously and been adapted into the diploma and bachelor programme. In the university, students are exposed to all the activities and equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to launch and grow their ventures (Motta & Galina, 2023). Entrepreneurship education also imparts a wide range of skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, negotiation, leadership, and project management. These skills are transferable and valuable in various career paths. The campus entrepreneurship programs provide training for students, faculty, researchers and business leaders to drive positive, disruptive change to society by building scalable enterprises. These programs teach entrepreneurial leadership, strategy, venture financing and startup skills. All of these skills are important in molding youngsters to be adaptable and resilient in facing challenges and uncertainty. Through entrepreneurship education, students learn to handle failure, manage risk, and bounce back from setbacks. Besides that, even if students do not start their businesses, an entrepreneurial mindset benefits any profession. It encourages individuals to approach problems with a proactive and innovative attitude, driving positive change within established organizations as well.

According to Freiling and Harima (2019), previous studies show that the tendency to develop entrepreneurship is triggered by economic pressures on an individual who seeks to create employment. Many people try to avoid unemployment, alleviate frustration from a former job (Duan et al., 2020), and seek a better life with different results regarding success in entrepreneurship (Covin et al., 2020). Besides that, the students who study at the university have their unique type of learning styles. The variety of these differences impacts the students' pattern in getting as much experience and gaining knowledge. Entrepreneurship education brings the students knowledge and experiences in entrepreneurship based on what type of learners they are. The research is to study whether there is a significant effect on the type of learners and the tendency to be involved in entrepreneurship among the students. Based on the past review, there are three major types of learners, namely Audio, Visual, and Kinesthetic.

This research studies the relationship between the type of learners, grit characteristics, and entrepreneurial tendency among students after going through the learning process in the entrepreneurship class at the university. Many universities in Malaysia offered entrepreneurship courses to fulfil the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) in the ten-shift outlines. The first shift is to produce holistic, entrepreneurial, and balanced graduates. It is important to ensure that the entrepreneurship program can cultivate and boost the entrepreneurial tendency among university students.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial tendency among university student

Some common traits associated with entrepreneurial tendencies include creativity, risk-taking, adaptability, perseverance, and a willingness to learn and grow from failure. These traits can be cultivated and developed over time, and many successful entrepreneurs have honed their skills through education, mentorship, and practical experience (Motta & Galina, 2023). Entrepreneurial tendency among university students refers to the inclination or willingness of students to engage in entrepreneurial activities, start their businesses, or pursue innovative and enterprising ventures. Many universities worldwide recognize the importance of fostering an

entrepreneurial mindset and providing opportunities for students to develop their entrepreneurial skills and aspirations.

Universities often provide students with opportunities to network with mentors, successful entrepreneurs, investors, and other professionals. These connections can help students gain insights, receive guidance, and establish valuable partnerships for their entrepreneurial endeavours. Providing students with access to experienced mentors and advisors who can guide them through the complexities of entrepreneurship is essential. Mentorship helps students navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and develop a realistic understanding of what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur. It is important to provide the students with hands-on experience in the real world (Motta & Galina, 2023). Besides that, the cultural and regional context can influence entrepreneurial tendencies among university students. Universities located in regions with a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem may have a more significant impact on fostering entrepreneurial aspirations. Nurturing entrepreneurial tendencies among university students involves creating an ecosystem that encourages innovation, provides resources, and supports students in their journey to becoming successful entrepreneurs.

Type of Learners

A learning style is an individual's preferred, most effective method of absorbing new information and learning new skills. It is also referred to as Thinking Styles, Cognitive Styles, or Learning Modalities. Learning Styles can be fluid, changing depending on the task to be accomplished. It is not a measure of someone's ability or intelligence, but rather a preference for one mode over another. In a university setting, you will encounter a diverse group of learners, each with their unique characteristics, motivations, and learning styles. Understanding the types of learners in a university can help educators and students create more effective learning environments. The three major and common types of learners are known as Auditory, Visual, and Kinesthetic Learners (Fleming & Baume, 2006).

Auditory Learners

Auditory learners learn best through listening. They tend to excel in lectures, discussions, and audio-based materials. They may benefit from recording and replaying lectures or discussions to reinforce their understanding. Auditory learners, who prefer to learn through listening and verbal communication, can bring unique qualities and strengths to their entrepreneurial endeavours. Auditory learners excel in verbal communication, which is a crucial skill in entrepreneurship. They are often articulate, persuasive, and skilled at conveying their ideas, whether in pitching to investors, negotiating with partners, or communicating with team members. Auditory learners are typically good listeners, which can help them better understand customer feedback, market trends, and the needs of their target audience. This active listening can lead to improved product development and customer satisfaction.

Entrepreneurs often need to build extensive networks of contacts and partners. Auditory learners can thrive in networking situations, as they are comfortable engaging in conversations and making meaningful connections with others in the business world. Auditory learners also can use their strong verbal skills to make compelling and persuasive presentations. They can convey their passion and vision effectively, which is important when seeking investors or customers.

While auditory learners have distinct strengths in entrepreneurship related to communication and interpersonal skills, it is important to recognize that not all successful entrepreneurs are

auditory learners. Successful entrepreneurship requires diverse skills and competencies, and individuals with different learning styles can thrive in the business world. To be effective entrepreneurs, auditory learners should also be aware of potential challenges associated with their learning style, such as a potential preference for verbal information overwritten or visual data. Being open to different learning modalities and seeking to incorporate a variety of approaches can enhance their overall entrepreneurial abilities. Ultimately, adaptability, resilience, and a deep understanding of the market and industry are key factors in entrepreneurial success, regardless of one's learning style.

Visual Learners

Visual learners prefer to learn through images, diagrams, and spatial representations. They often benefit from seeing information presented in charts, graphs, or videos. Visual learners may have a strong spatial awareness and remember things by creating mental images. Visual learners, who prefer to learn through images, diagrams, and spatial representations, can have a unique approach to entrepreneurship and business endeavors. Visual learners often have strong visualization skills, which can be a valuable asset in entrepreneurship. They can envision product designs, marketing strategies, and business processes in a vivid and detailed manner, helping them plan and strategize effectively. Visual learners also tend to think in images and patterns. This creative thinking style can be beneficial when it comes to solving complex problems or developing innovative business solutions. They may be more likely to come up with unique and visually appealing product or service ideas.

Visual learners are skilled at conveying ideas through visual aids such as charts, diagrams, and infographics. In the business world, clear and effective communication is crucial. Visual learners can create compelling presentations and marketing materials that resonate with customers and investors. On the other hand, visual learners can create visually appealing pitch decks or business models to engage potential partners or investors.

Kinesthetics Learners

Kinesthetic learners are hands-on learners who learn best through physical experiences and tactile activities. They may benefit from actively engaging with the subject matter through experiments, simulations, or practical applications. Kinesthetic learners, who prefer hands-on learning experiences and physical engagement with the material, can bring unique qualities and tendencies to their entrepreneurial pursuits.

Kinesthetic learners thrive on taking action and learning through doing. In entrepreneurship, this proactive approach can lead to hands-on experimentation and rapid prototyping of business ideas, products, or services. Kinesthetic learners may have a natural inclination to solve problems by physically trying out different solutions. This can be a valuable skill in entrepreneurship, where adaptability and the ability to pivot in response to challenges are critical. Entrepreneurs often need to create physical prototypes or test their products in real-world settings. Kinesthetic learners are well-suited for this aspect of entrepreneurship, as they enjoy building and refining tangible creations. Kinesthetic learners may excel in face-to-face interactions with customers or users. They can gather feedback through hands-on product demonstrations, focus groups, or user testing sessions, leading to valuable insights for product improvement.

When conducting market research, kinesthetic learners may prefer immersive experiences, such as visiting physical locations or participating in events related to their industry. Kinesthetic

learners may develop a strong sense of resilience through their willingness to try, fail, and try again. This resilience can be a valuable asset when facing the inevitable challenges and setbacks in entrepreneurship. Kinesthetic learners often acquire practical skills, which can be beneficial in entrepreneurial endeavors. Whether it's building a website, creating marketing materials, or developing prototypes, their hands-on skills can save time and resources.

While kinesthetic learners have distinct strengths related to their active, hands-on approach, it's essential to recognize that successful entrepreneurship requires a broad range of skills and competencies. Entrepreneurs need to balance their action-oriented tendencies with adequate planning, research, and strategic thinking. To be successful entrepreneurs, kinesthetic learners should also be open to incorporating other learning modalities and strategies, such as reading, research, and data analysis, to complement their hands-on approach. Adaptability and a well-rounded skill set are key factors in entrepreneurial success, regardless of one's learning style.

Personality and Entrepreneurial Tendency

Personality and entrepreneurial tendency are closely related, as an individual's personality traits can have a significant impact on their likelihood to become an entrepreneurs and succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavors. Some of the key personality traits associated with entrepreneurship include creativity, risk-taking, resilience, persistence, and a willingness to embrace uncertainty and ambiguity. Entrepreneurs must be creative in identifying new opportunities and developing innovative solutions to problems. They must also be willing to take calculated risks and persevere through setbacks and failures.

The Five-Factor Model (FFM), also known as the Big Five personality traits, is one of the most widely used frameworks for assessing personality. It has been studied extensively in the field of psychology, and many studies have found support for the existence of these five dimensions. A study published in the journal *Psychological Bulletin* analyzed data from over 200 studies and found consistent evidence for the five-factor model across different cultures and languages (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The study by Zhao, Seibert, and Hills (2005) examined the relationship between personality traits and entrepreneurial intentions. The researchers surveyed a sample of 322 undergraduate students and found that openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion were all positively related to entrepreneurial intentions. Specifically, the study found that individuals who scored higher on measures of openness were more likely to express interest in starting their own business, as they tend to be more creative, imaginative, and willing to take risks. Additionally, individuals who scored higher on measures of conscientiousness were more likely to have the necessary organizational and planning skills required for starting and running a business. Individuals who scored higher on measures of extraversion were more likely to possess the social skills and confidence needed to network and market their business.

Other personality traits that can be beneficial for entrepreneurs include a strong sense of self-efficacy and a proactive mindset. Entrepreneurs must believe in their own ability to succeed and take the initiative to pursue their goals. They also need to be able to adapt to changing circumstances and think outside the box to find new solutions. While not all successful entrepreneurs possess the same personality traits, research suggests that individuals who score high on measures of extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness are more likely to be successful as entrepreneurs.

However, it is important to note that personality traits are only one factor that contributes to entrepreneurial success. Other factors, such as access to capital, market conditions, and industry

knowledge, also play a critical role. A combination of genetic, environmental, and cultural factors shapes personality. While some aspects of personality may be innate or inherited, others may be influenced by life experiences, social interactions, and environmental factors. One of the most widely used frameworks in measuring personality is the Five-Factor Model (FFM), also known as the Big Five personality traits. The model identifies five broad dimensions of personality: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

The study by Zhao, Seibert, and Hills (2005) found that individuals who scored higher on measures of openness were more likely to express interest in starting their own business. There have been many studies conducted on the relationship between personality and entrepreneurial tendency. One of the most commonly used frameworks for assessing personality is the Five-Factor Model (FFM), which includes the following dimensions: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Ozer and Benet-Martínez (2006) published the Big Five and found that they were predictive of a wide range of outcomes, including academic achievement, job performance, and health. Furthermore, the FFM has been applied to the study of entrepreneurship in several studies. Zhao et al. (2005) found that openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion were positively related to entrepreneurial intentions

Studies have consistently found that individuals scoring high on extraversion and openness measures are more likely to be drawn to entrepreneurship. This is because these individuals tend to be more outgoing, sociable, and willing to take risks, which are important characteristics for starting and running a business. Conscientiousness is also a significant predictor of entrepreneurial success. Individuals who score high on this dimension tend to be organized, reliable, and responsible, which are critical qualities for running a successful business. In contrast, individuals who score high on neuroticism are generally less suited for entrepreneurship because they tend to be more anxious, sensitive, and prone to negative emotions. Some studies have suggested that agreeableness may be negatively related to entrepreneurship because highly agreeable individuals may be less likely to take risks or make decisions that could potentially conflict with the needs and interests of others. Grit is a personality trait that refers to an individual's perseverance and passion for long-term goals, even in the face of challenges and setbacks.

Grit and Entrepreneurial Tendency

Grit is a psychological trait that refers to a person's perseverance and passion for long-term goals. It involves the ability to maintain effort and interest over an extended period, even in the face of challenges, setbacks, and obstacles (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). According to Duckworth, Peterson, and Kelly (2007) grit is a crucial factor in determining long-term success and achievement, often surpassing the influence of intelligence or innate talent. Angela Duckworth's work has inspired educators, parents, researchers, and individuals interested in personal development to understand and cultivate grit as a trait that contributes to reaching one's goals and thriving in challenging situations. Grit is often characterized by perseverance and passion. Grit involves the willingness and determination to work through difficulties and maintain effort even when progress is slow, or obstacles arise. Individuals with high levels of perseverance tend to keep pushing forward in pursuit of their goals, regardless of external factors that may discourage them. Passionate individuals are not only motivated by external rewards but also have an internal drive to accomplish their objectives. This passion helps them stay focused and enthusiastic about their pursuits, even during challenging times (Disabato, Goodman & Kashdan, 2019).

Assessing and developing grit can be important for personal and professional growth. Strategies for cultivating grit include setting clear goals, maintaining a growth mindset, practicing resilience in the face of setbacks, seeking support and mentorship, and finding ways to sustain passion and interest in one's pursuits over time. Crede, Tynan and Harms (2017) found that grit was positively associated with entrepreneurial intention and action. The study surveyed over 400 undergraduate students and found that those with higher levels of grit were more likely to express an intention to start their own business and to take concrete steps towards that goal. Wei, Liu and Wu (2019) examined the relationship between grit and entrepreneurial success. The study surveyed over 200 entrepreneurs in China and found that those with higher levels of grit were more likely to report higher levels of entrepreneurial success, as measured by business performance and financial outcomes.

While this study focused on entrepreneurial intentions rather than actual entrepreneurial behavior, it suggests that certain personality traits are more likely to lead individuals to express interest in starting their own business (Mohamad, Wahab Yusuff & Omar, 2019). The relationship between grit and entrepreneurial tendency is significant, as both traits are closely linked and can play a crucial role in an individual's success as an entrepreneur. Gritty individuals are better equipped to bounce back from failures, learn from their mistakes, and use setbacks as opportunities for growth. This resilience is crucial for adapting and evolving their business strategies as needed. Gritty individuals are self-motivated and take initiative in pursuing their goals. On the other hand, gritty individuals are more likely to seek out new strategies and approaches when faced with challenges.

Theoretical Framework

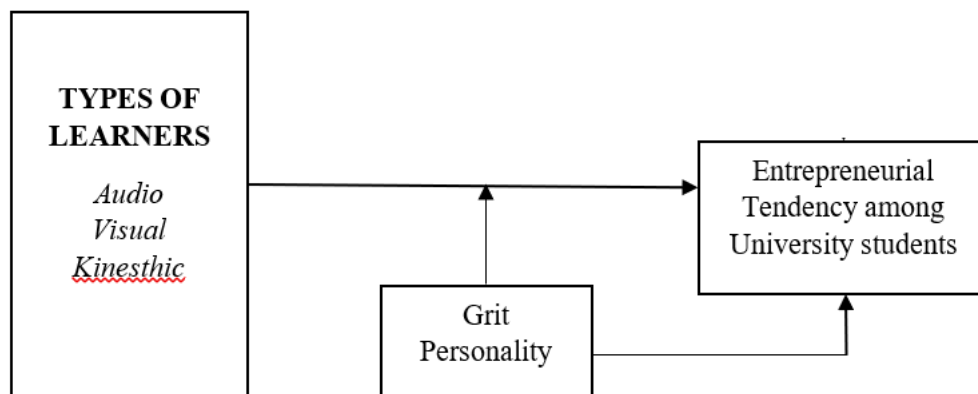


Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Framework

Source: adapted from Basuki, Widyanti & Rajiani (2021), Obschonka et al. (2019), Matos & Hall (2020)

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is a widely used theoretical framework in social psychology that explains how people's attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence their intentions and behavior. The theory was first proposed by Icek Ajzen in 1985 and has since been extensively researched and applied in various fields, including health, environmental, and consumer behavior. According to TPB, an individual's behavior is primarily determined by their intentions, which in turn are influenced by three factors, attitudes, subjective norm and the perceived behavioral control. The three factors interact to produce an individual's intention to perform a behavior. Specifically, a positive attitude towards the

behavior, perceived social pressure to perform the behavior, and a perception of high behavioral control all increase the likelihood of an individual forming a strong intention to perform the behavior. Intention, in turn, is a strong predictor of actual behavior. Overall, TPB provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and predicting behavior by taking into account both individual and social factors that influence people's actions.

Grit can be related to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which is a psychological theory that explains human behavior based on three key factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The TPB is commonly used to predict and understand how individuals make decisions and take actions in various contexts. While grit and the TPB focus on different aspects of behavior, there are potential connections between the two. In the context of the TPB, attitudes refer to an individual's overall evaluation of a behavior. Grit can influence attitudes toward persistence and effort in pursuing long-term goals. Individuals with high levels of grit may have positive attitudes toward working hard and persevering because they believe in the value of sustained effort for achieving success. Other than that, subjective norms in the TPB refer to an individual's perception of social pressure and the influence of others on their behavior. Grit could be influenced by social norms and expectations. For instance, individuals who grow up in environments that value hard work and perseverance may develop higher levels of grit due to the social influence of their surroundings. The perceived behavioral control in the TPB refers to an individual's perception of their ability to perform a behavior. Grit can impact an individual's perceived control over their ability to stick to long-term goals and maintain effort. Individuals with higher levels of grit are more likely to believe in their ability to persevere and overcome challenges, leading to a greater sense of control.

Significance of Study

This research theoretically describes and offer insights on the importance of grit personality, type of learners and entrepreneurial tendency among university students. This research also reinforces the significance of linkages between type of learners, grit personality and entrepreneurial tendency. This research is developed to provide relevant information about entrepreneurship education in Malaysia. This study will serve as a resource for researches, writers, or readers who might interested to study on grit personality and entrepreneurial tendency in the future. The finding of this study may provide significant contributions for future research in the entrepreneurship field mainly in entrepreneurship education.

Grit among youngsters, particularly in the context of education and personal development, refers to the ability of young individuals to exhibit perseverance, passion, and resilience as they pursue their academic and life goals. Grit is especially important during the formative years of adolescence and early adulthood, as it can have a significant impact on future success and well-being.

Academic Achievement

Gritty youngsters are more likely to excel in their studies. They exhibit a strong work ethic, remain focused on their studies, and are willing to put in the effort required to achieve their educational goals. They view challenges as opportunities for growth and are more resilient in the face of academic setbacks.

Long-Term Goal

Young individuals with grit are more likely to set and pursue long-term goals, whether they are related to education, career, or personal development. They have a clear sense of direction and are committed to working consistently over time to achieve their aspirations.

Resilience

Grit helps youngsters bounce back from failures, disappointments, and setbacks. They don't let initial failures deter them; instead, they learn from their experiences and adjust their strategies accordingly. This resilience is critical for maintaining motivation and self-confidence in the face of challenges.

Passion for Learning

Gritty youngsters often have a genuine passion for learning and self-improvement. They are curious, engaged, and eager to explore new subjects and activities. This passion drives them to seek out new opportunities for growth and development.

Time Management and Discipline

Gritty youngsters tend to be better at managing their time and staying disciplined in their daily routines. They understand the importance of consistent effort and are less likely to procrastinate or give in to distractions.

Overcoming Adversity

Grit can be particularly impactful for youngsters facing adversity or difficult circumstances. It empowers them to overcome challenges related to socioeconomic status, family situations, and other external factors. Gritty individuals are more likely to rise above their circumstances and create positive outcomes for themselves.

Understanding Market Dynamics

Entrepreneurs need to understand market trends, customer needs, and competitive forces. Entrepreneurship education teaches students how to conduct market research, analyze industry landscapes, and make informed decisions.

Ethical Considerations

Running a successful business goes beyond profits. Entrepreneurship education explores ethical considerations, corporate social responsibility, and sustainable practices, fostering a sense of responsible business leadership.

Global Perspective

Entrepreneurship education often exposes students to global business concepts, enabling them to think beyond their local market. This is crucial in an interconnected world where international business opportunities are abundant.

Economic Growth and Innovation Ecosystems

Entrepreneurship education contributes to the development of innovation ecosystems by promoting collaboration between academia, industry, and government. This collaboration fuels research, technology transfer, and economic growth.

Support for Startups

Universities can offer resources such as incubators, accelerators, funding, mentorship, and access to experts. These resources can significantly enhance the chances of success for student startups.

Cultural and Societal Impact

Entrepreneurship can address societal challenges and create positive cultural changes. Students exposed to entrepreneurship education may be more inclined to tackle issues like poverty, inequality, and environmental sustainability. While there are potential connections between grit and the TPB, it's important to note that grit is a relatively newer concept compared to the well-established TPB. Research exploring the specific relationship between grit and the components of the TPB is ongoing, and the extent of this relationship may vary depending on the specific context and individuals involved. Both concepts offer valuable insights into human behavior and decision-making, and their interactions could provide a richer understanding of how people approach and achieve their goals.

Conclusion

Educators, parents, and mentors play a crucial role in fostering grit among youngsters. By providing support, encouragement, and guidance can help young individuals develop the necessary skills and mindset to persevere, remain passionate, and succeed in their educational pursuits and beyond. Encouraging a growth mindset, teaching coping strategies, and celebrating effort and improvement can all contribute to the development of grit among youngsters. Networking Opportunities: Entrepreneurship education often involves interactions with experienced entrepreneurs, investors, mentors, and fellow students. These connections can lead to valuable collaborations, partnerships, and even funding opportunities. Grit is highly relevant to entrepreneurial success. Entrepreneurs with high levels of grit are better equipped to persevere through the challenges, failures, and uncertainties that come with building a business. Their passion, resilience, long-term vision, and self-motivation contribute to their ability to overcome obstacles and ultimately achieve their entrepreneurial goals

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