



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Challenges and Implications of Entrepreneurial Motivation and its Relationship with Lifelong Learning

Norhasni Zainal Abiddin^{1*}, Ihsan Ro'is²¹ National Defence University of Malaysia, Malaysia² Universitas Mataram, Indonesia**ARTICLE INFO**

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Lifelong learning and entrepreneurial motivation have significant implications for student performance, both in terms of academic achievement and broader personal development. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, these two factors are becoming increasingly vital in shaping how students approach their studies, tackle challenges, and prepare for their future careers. This study aims to examine the impact of lifelong learning on entrepreneurial motivation among students in public higher education institutions in Malaysia. A quantitative approach, utilizing a survey method, was employed with 393 respondents who hold Bachelor's Degrees from a public university in Malaysia. Descriptive analysis (frequency and mean) and inferential analysis (ANOVA) were applied to analyze the data. The findings reveal that lifelong learning tendencies significantly predict entrepreneurial motivation ($\beta = .360, p < .000$), while lifelong learning characteristics did not show a significant predictive effect on entrepreneurial motivation ($\beta = .037, p = .491$). The study concludes that entrepreneurial motivation is influenced by students' lifelong learning tendencies, suggesting that understanding these tendencies can enhance motivation. This research provides new insights into factors influencing entrepreneurial motivation and highlights the relevance of lifelong learning for improving entrepreneurship education. It also fills a gap in the literature, offering a novel connection between lifelong learning and entrepreneurial motivation and its challenges. Furthermore, the study has implications for the development of entrepreneurship within the context of Malaysia's educational policies.

***Corresponding Author:**

norhasni@upnm.edu.my

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a crucial driver of economic growth. In Malaysia, as in many emerging economies, entrepreneurship has been prioritized by the government to foster economic development. Despite global economic challenges, the Malaysian government has been committed to creating a conducive environment for entrepreneurship (Gbenga & Abiddin, 2013a, 2013b). The World Bank ranks Malaysia 12th globally in terms of ease of doing business, a significant improvement from 15th in 2018, reflecting the country's efforts to enhance its business ecosystem (Song et al., 2021). Since the 1980s, the Malaysian education system has increasingly emphasized entrepreneurship education, which has contributed to its rapid development (Rahim et al., 2015). However, studies such as those by Yusoff et al. (2015) highlight challenges in entrepreneurship education in Malaysia, including deficiencies in essential soft skills like communication, leadership, marketing, business knowledge, and networking skills vital for entrepreneurs, especially in the digital era (Jardim & Albright, 2021). Recognizing the importance of these competencies, the Malaysian government has made entrepreneurship a key area of focus in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). The integration of entrepreneurship

education with modern technologies has proven effective in enhancing entrepreneurial skills among students (Din et al., 2020; Gbenga & Abiddin, 2013a).

For students to succeed as entrepreneurs, motivation plays a critical role. Entrepreneurial motivation is shaped by multiple factors, including personal characteristics, goals, environmental influences, and both intrinsic and extrinsic drivers (Naffziger et al., 1994). For students aspiring to become successful entrepreneurs, continuous learning is vital. Entrepreneurs need to acquire and constantly update skills to stay competitive. Therefore, lifelong learning is an essential trait for entrepreneurs, enabling them to keep up with changing demands and innovations. Malaysia has developed a strategic framework for promoting lifelong learning, highlighted in the Blueprint on Enculturation of Lifelong Learning for Malaysia (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2011), which is aligned with national education and development plans. The importance of lifelong learning is further reinforced by the inclusion of lifelong learning as a key educational strategy in the 12th Malaysia Plan (Government of Malaysia, 2021). While numerous studies explore factors influencing entrepreneurial motivation, the role of lifelong learning in this context remains underexplored. Research by Samad et al. (2019) indicates that students with a strong inclination toward lifelong learning exhibit higher entrepreneurial motivation compared to other student groups. This study seeks to investigate the impact of lifelong learning on entrepreneurial motivation among students in Malaysian public universities, focusing on lifelong learning characteristics and tendencies as independent variables. The research questions and hypothesis were as follow:

1. **RQ (i):** Does lifelong learning characteristics predict entrepreneurial motivation among students?
Ho: Lifelong learning characteristics does not predict entrepreneurial motivation among students
Ha: Lifelong learning characteristics does predict entrepreneurial motivation among students
2. **RQ (ii):** Does lifelong learning tendencies predict entrepreneurial motivation among students?
Ho: Lifelong learning tendencies does not predict entrepreneurial motivation among students
Ha: Lifelong learning tendencies does predict entrepreneurial motivation among students

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial motivation has traditionally been associated with the pursuit of wealth, but as research has deepened, it is clear that various factors contribute to the entrepreneurial drive. Studies such as those by Su et al. (2020) highlight how entrepreneurs' emotions and positive feelings can significantly impact their motivation and entrepreneurial processes. Furthermore, Bartha et al. (2019) found that social purpose and societal contributions are key motivators for entrepreneurs in Central and Eastern Europe. Other studies, like those by Rajabi et al. (2018), indicate that entrepreneurial motivation is positively linked to business growth, which is crucial for long-term success. Shi & Wang (2021) argue that while wealth is a central motivator, a diverse range of factors drives entrepreneurial activity, with motivations evolving over time and across different economic contexts.

Lifelong learning is characterized by a commitment to continuous personal and professional development. Researchers like Kirby et al. (2010) have identified several key characteristics of lifelong learners, including goal-setting, the application of knowledge, self-direction, and the ability to adapt learning strategies. These characteristics emphasize curiosity, active engagement in learning, and the application of new knowledge to enhance personal and professional growth. Lifelong learning is not just about personal development; it is an essential building block for thriving, resilient communities. It creates a dynamic, adaptive society where individuals feel empowered, engaged, and connected, driving both personal and collective progress (Abiddin & Ro'is, 2023; Abiddin et al., 2022).

Lifelong learning tendency refers to an individual's inclination to engage in continuous learning. Coşkuna & Demirel (2010) identified several dimensions of lifelong learning tendency, including motivation, persistence, and curiosity. Motivation in this context includes the drive to learn new skills for personal development, while persistence refers to the ability to continue learning despite challenges. Studies have shown that individuals with strong lifelong learning tendencies tend to

invest more time in learning activities, seek opportunities for growth, and demonstrate resilience in their educational pursuits (Ayçiçek & Karafil, 2021). Previous research has demonstrated that lifelong learning tendencies positively impact various outcomes, such as critical thinking skills and information technology literacy (Ünveren Bilgiç et al., 2021). Furthermore, demographic factors and the learning environment can influence these tendencies, as shown in studies by Aras-Tosun & Küçük-Biçer (2021) and Şentürk & Duran (2020), indicating that lifelong learning tendencies are closely related to both personal characteristics and external influences.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on students enrolled in Bachelor's degree programs at a public university in Malaysia for the 2021/2022 academic session, with a total student population of 3,060. According to Krejcie & Morgan (1970), the required sample size for this population is 341 students. A purposive random sampling method was utilized to select participants for this study, ensuring that the sample was representative of the target population.

For this research, three different sets of established questionnaires were adapted as the primary research instrument. These instruments have been widely used in previous studies, making them suitable for adaptation in this context, as noted by Daunert & Seel (2020). While these instruments have been tested in previous research, a pilot study was still conducted to assess their reliability and validity for this particular study. The analysis resulted in a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.82, which signifies excellent reliability, confirming that the instrument is appropriate for use. The research instrument comprised four sections: Demographics, the Entrepreneurial Motivation Scale (Vijaya & Tj, 1998), the Lifelong Learning Questionnaire (Kirby et al., 2010), and the Lifelong Learning Tendency Scale (Coşkuna & Demirel, 2010). The instrument contained a total of 71 items, which addressed various aspects of the study's research objectives.

The data was collected through an online survey conducted via Google Forms. The survey link was shared with Bachelor's degree students from all years (first-year to final-year) at a public university in Malaysia. A total of 393 students participated, resulting in a response rate of 79%. The high response rate can be attributed to the research team engaging with students during their lectures, with the lecturer's permission. A QR code linking to the online survey was projected on the lecture hall screen, allowing students to scan and complete the form on their mobile devices.

To ensure the integrity and completeness of the data, responses were cross-checked with the lecture attendance list. Although participation was voluntary, this method helped ensure that students filled out the survey promptly. The use of Google Forms facilitated efficient data collection by automatically recording responses, minimizing the chances of manual input errors, and saving time. Additionally, it significantly reduced the cost of data collection by eliminating the need for physical surveys and manual data entry. This study employs two types of statistical analysis: descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis is used to summarize the demographic data in terms of frequency and percentage. On the other hand, inferential analysis is utilized to identify predictors, specifically through the use of ANOVA (Analysis of Variance). ANOVA was chosen because it allows for predicting the dependent variable based on the independent variables (Kerr et al., 2002).

4. RESULTS

The majority of respondents in this study were male, comprising 64.6% of the total sample, while female students made up 35.4%. The distribution of respondents by their year of study include first-year students represented the largest group, accounting for 42.7% of respondents, followed by second-year students at 40.5%. Third-year students made up 12.7%, while fourth-year students accounted for just 4.1%. It is important to note that only students pursuing Bachelor's degrees participated in this study. ANOVA was conducted to determine whether the characteristics and tendencies of lifelong learning significantly predicted entrepreneurial motivation among the respondents. Table 1 shows the ANOVA results, which test the fit of the overall regression model for the data (Kerr et al., 2002). The analysis revealed statistical significance in predicting the dependent variable based on the independent variables $F(2, 390) = 32.88, p < 0.000$, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: ANOVA results

Model	Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.109	2	9.055	32.877	0.000
Residual	107.407	390	0.275		
Total	125.516	392			

Dependent variable: entrepreneurial motivation

Predictors: (Constant), lifelong learning tendencies, lifelong learning characteristics

The analysis further indicates that lifelong learning tendencies significantly predict entrepreneurial motivation ($\beta = 0.360$, $p < 0.000$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis for Research Question (RQ) (ii). However, lifelong learning characteristics did not significantly predict entrepreneurial motivation ($\beta = 0.037$, $p = 0.491$), leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis for Research Question (RQ) (i). As a result, the variable of lifelong learning characteristics was excluded from the final model due to its statistical insignificance. Table 2 presents the detailed analysis output for the significant variables.

Table 2: Analysis output based on significance level

Independent Variable (IV)	Dependent Variable (dv)	Unstandardized coefficients Beta (β)	Standardized coefficients Beta (β)	Sig.
Constant	Entrepreneurial Motivation	2.056		
Lifelong learning Characteristics		.069	.037	0.491
Lifelong learning Tendencies		.580	.360	0.000

5. DISCUSSION

The significance of lifelong learning in entrepreneurship is undeniable, as it equips individuals with the essential skills and knowledge to excel in their entrepreneurial ventures. Research has shown that adopting a lifelong learning mindset enhances both objective and subjective career success (Drewery et al., 2020). The findings of this study support the notion that tendencies toward lifelong learning positively impact entrepreneurial motivation among students. In other words, students who are inclined to continuously learn and expand their horizons are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship in the future. This is noteworthy as entrepreneurship itself is considered a key competence in lifelong learning (European Commission, 2014). Lifelong learning, characterized by sustained motivation and continuous self-improvement, is inherently tied to individuals' motivational dynamics, as pointed out by Pires (2009). Continuously acquiring skills such as marketing, innovation, and technical expertise is fundamental to becoming a successful entrepreneur. Therefore, it is logical to assert that students who embrace ongoing learning are better prepared to embark on entrepreneurial ventures. The motivation to learn new things and acquire diverse talents is a key motivational factor, as emphasized by Abiddin & Ismail (2014). This motivation encompasses efforts to gather information, improve oneself, and gain knowledge across various domains (Ayçiçek & Karafil, 2021; Ogbodoakum et al., 2022).

Beyond lifelong learning, several other factors also influence entrepreneurial motivation and intentions. Studies have highlighted the positive roles of self-confidence, parental support (Annisa et al., 2021), and teacher professionalism in nurturing entrepreneurial motivation (Nasiri & Moradisafar, 2018). Furthermore, research by Mulyapradana & Anjarini (2020) discovered that both entrepreneurial motivation and family support are instrumental in students' decision-making processes related to entrepreneurship. In addition, Munawar & Suryana (2020) found that self-efficacy and entrepreneurship knowledge significantly affect students' entrepreneurial intentions,

suggesting that higher levels of these two factors correspond to stronger entrepreneurial intentions. Sudarmaji (2021) further confirmed the positive relationship between intelligence and entrepreneurial intentions, showing that greater adversity intelligence increases entrepreneurial intent. Entrepreneurial education has also been found to influence students' subjective norms (Minh Hue et al., 2022). The wealth of research on various factors that influence entrepreneurial motivation opens numerous avenues for further exploration, encouraging investigation from multiple perspectives. These factors, including the tendency for lifelong learning, should be incorporated into entrepreneurship curricula at all educational levels. To ensure the sustainability of the entrepreneurship model, it is crucial for the competence model to be continually refined based on the latest research and the evolving challenges of the future (Venesaar et al., 2022). Thus, these factors should be considered by stakeholders to ensure the long-term viability of entrepreneurship programs in educational institutions.

However, it is important to note that one of the independent variables in this study, the characteristics of lifelong learning, did not show a significant relationship with entrepreneurial motivation. This suggests that the specific characteristics of lifelong learning do not directly influence students' entrepreneurial motivation. It may be that characteristics are more influenced by the culture and environment of the institution itself, as noted by Doherty & Stephens (2019), and are more susceptible to organizational factors rather than personal motivational drives. Nonetheless, previous studies have indicated that certain entrepreneur characteristics can correlate with entrepreneurial success. For example, Seo (2020) found that institutional characteristics have a substantial effect on the success of entrepreneurial initiatives, although data limitations hindered exploration of how business characteristics impacted these outcomes. Similarly, research by Rahmi et al. (2022) showed that lifelong learning characteristics were not linked to entrepreneurial motivation or entrepreneurial intention, particularly among female entrepreneurs undergoing training. These findings suggest that characteristics associated with lifelong learning may not significantly impact entrepreneurial motivation, limiting their utility for motivating students toward entrepreneurship.

Further, Mulyapradana & Anjarini (2020) found no substantial evidence that entrepreneurship subjects significantly affect entrepreneurial decision-making. This reinforces the idea that entrepreneurial attributes are not solely found in students enrolled in entrepreneurship programs, highlighting the necessity for integrating entrepreneurship education into all academic disciplines to foster entrepreneurial attributes across the student body. Similar findings were reported by Purwana et al. (2018), where locus of control and entrepreneurship education did not significantly influence entrepreneurial motivation. However, these results do not diminish the importance of entrepreneurship education, as demonstrated by Kanama (2021), who observed that Japanese students felt their lack of business knowledge and competencies posed significant barriers to launching start-up ventures. This indicates that entrepreneurship knowledge is crucial for students who wish to pursue entrepreneurship, and that educational programs should emphasize entrepreneurial skills and knowledge. Lu et al. (2021) proposed that a curriculum offering a variety of entrepreneurship courses could cater to the different entrepreneurial profiles of students, helping to ignite interest in entrepreneurial ventures.

As previously mentioned, entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in the development of countries like Malaysia, as it offers a means to generate income and stimulate economic growth. It is essential that entrepreneurial skills be nurtured early among students through business and management education programs. The results of this study offer valuable insights for improving entrepreneurial motivation by presenting new perspectives on the factors that influence it. For business and management programs to enhance entrepreneurial motivation, they must incorporate these findings into their curriculum. Furthermore, the relationship between lifelong learning and entrepreneurial motivation suggests that business and management programs should place greater emphasis on lifelong learning to better equip students for entrepreneurial challenges. The research instrument used in this study allows for the assessment of both lifelong learning tendencies and entrepreneurial motivation, offering insights relevant to local contexts and providing a foundation for replication in other educational settings.

6. CONCLUSION

Lifelong learning is an essential component of Malaysia's education strategy, and public universities are central to this vision. Through flexible learning pathways, industry collaborations, and innovative educational models, Malaysian public universities are playing a vital role in fostering a culture of continuous learning. As Malaysia moves towards a knowledge-based economy, the emphasis on lifelong learning will be key to ensuring that individuals are equipped with the skills they need to thrive in an ever-changing world. Student entrepreneurship and lifelong learning go hand in hand, shaping the next generation of business leaders and innovators. As students embark on entrepreneurial ventures, they must recognize the importance of continuous learning to adapt to change, expand their skill sets, and build resilient businesses. By fostering a culture of lifelong learning, students can equip themselves with the tools they need to succeed, both as entrepreneurs and as individuals prepared for an ever-evolving world. Ultimately, the combination of entrepreneurial spirit and a commitment to lifelong learning can unlock boundless opportunities for personal, professional, and societal growth.

The direction of student entrepreneurship and lifelong learning in Malaysia is moving toward a future where young individuals are empowered to become innovative leaders. With strong government support, a growing entrepreneurial ecosystem, and a culture of continuous learning, Malaysia is creating an environment that nurtures student entrepreneurs. As students increasingly embrace entrepreneurship and commit to lifelong learning, they will not only contribute to the growth of the Malaysian economy but will also drive positive change in society. By equipping students with the tools, resources, and mindset to succeed, Malaysia is paving the way for a generation of entrepreneurs who are ready to thrive in an ever-changing global landscape.

The challenges faced by student entrepreneurs and lifelong learners in Malaysia are significant, but they are not insurmountable. Addressing these issues requires approach involving government policy, institutional support, cultural change, and access to resources. To truly nurture the entrepreneurial spirit and encourage lifelong learning, relevant parties must continue to invest in supportive infrastructure, accessible funding, and comprehensive mentorship programs. Educational institutions should integrate more practical entrepreneurial skills into their curricula and provide platforms for students to test their ideas in real-world environments. Furthermore, efforts must be made to change societal perceptions around entrepreneurship, highlighting the importance of resilience and learning from failure. With the right support and resources, Malaysian students can overcome these challenges, building businesses that not only benefit their personal growth but also contribute to the broader economy. The future of student entrepreneurship and lifelong learning in Malaysia holds great promise, one that can unlock the full potential of the next generation of innovators and leaders.

In the rapidly evolving educational and professional landscapes, lifelong learning and entrepreneurial motivation are becoming essential drivers of student performance. Both concepts influence how students approach their studies, tackle challenges, and prepare for their futures, equipping them with the necessary skills to excel in an ever-changing world. Lifelong learning encourages a mindset of continuous growth, adaptability, and resilience, while entrepreneurial motivation fosters creativity, initiative, and risk-taking. When combined, these qualities create a dynamic that enables students to excel academically and personally. Educational institutions that cultivate these traits in students can help prepare them not only for success in the university but also for future careers and lifelong success in a rapidly changing world.

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