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Abstract

This study aims to determine the effect of religious beliefs and entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial action in the context of the people with disabilities (PWDs) specifically students with disabilities (SWDs). To conduct this research, quantitative approaches was adopted. Structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis was performed to analyze the data, which gathered from a cluster sampling of 265 students with disabilities (SWDs) from selected public universities in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The findings reveal that entrepreneurship education induces entrepreneurial action. On the other hand, religious beliefs do not have any significant effect on entrepreneurial action. This study provide information to the universities, curriculum developers and the related ministries to improve the present entrepreneurship curriculum to cater the specific needs of SWDs as well as effective efforts or programs that aim to inspire and encourage SWDs towards entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Religious Beliefs, Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Action, Economic Inclusion, SWDs, PWDs.

Introduction

Despite the population of people with disabilities (PWDs) has increased significantly, their access to the wealth and prosperity of the country has often been ignored and neglected. Considering that entrepreneurship could ensure the economic inclusion of PWDs, efforts should be made to promote entrepreneurship among the university students with disabilities (SWDs). Given that, the concept of entrepreneurship and SWDs is still new, the research that has tackled the issues is hard to find. Thus, this study seeks to determine the relationship between religious beliefs and entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial action.

Research Statement

The population of people with disabilities (PWDs) may be small (Abdullah & Arnidawati, 2013), but the number is on the rise. Based on the statistic released by the Department of Social Welfare (2015), the registered PWDs have increased from 264,448 in 2013 and increase to 365,677 in 2015. Despite that they are minority as part of the community in the society, they deserve equal rights and opportunities to live a life like other members of the community. They must be at par in terms of education and employment and be able to take advantage of the welfare and prosperity of the country.

However, to date, the rights of the PWDs have been ignored and neglected. In practices, they are excluded from the labour force. Based on the statistics, most of the PWDs are unemployed, which resulted in the higher poverty level among the PWDs.

In order to address the unemployment problems, various efforts have been made to increase and enhance the skills and knowledge of the PWDs. As a result, the number of PWDs that has been employed increases from 65,372 in 2013 to 74,324 in 2015 (Department of Social Welfare, 2015). However, due to the skeptical of the community, the cases of PWDs discrimination at workplace also increase.

Accordingly, entrepreneurship has been raised as one of the effective ways to achieve faster and better economics inclusion of the PWDs. Nonetheless, entrepreneurship among SWDs is still a new concept that requires wide exploration and depth understanding for the benefits of SWDs and PWDs as a whole. Thus, this study will investigate what does religious beliefs and entrepreneurship education contribute to entrepreneurial action in the context of the SWDs, and hence proposed research model.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Formulation

Religious Beliefs

Religion plays a major role in influencing people and their lives. It promotes societal and economics advancement. The theory of Max Weber states that religiosity is the push factor of entrepreneurship (Weber, 2009). In particular, it was highlighted that religiosity breeds entrepreneurial mindset. From the Islamic religion, productive and entrepreneurial activities are highly encouraged and even demanded for the Muslim to engage in. In fact, every Muslim is obligated to earn a living in order to support oneself, family and society. Thus, by engaging in entrepreneurial activities, Muslim can fulfil their religious obligation. Accordingly, religion plays a vital role to induce involvement in entrepreneurial activities.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education provides students with entrepreneurial competencies, skills and knowledge in pursuing entrepreneurial career (Fayolle, Gailly & Lassas-Clerc, 2006); (Ekpoh & Edet, 2011). Past studies have shown that entrepreneurship education does impact entrepreneurial activities, which consequently trigger economic growth and employment (Rauch & Hulsink, 2015). Besides, it has been revealed that entrepreneurship education serves as the pertinent factor to promote self-employment among students with disabilities (Dakung et al., 2017; Viriri & Makurumidze, 2014).

Entrepreneurial Action

Entrepreneurship occurs when entrepreneurs make an effort to pursue business opportunities (Bird, Schjoedt, & Baum, 2012). Such effort or action might relate to activities or tasks that entrepreneurs engage in when initiating, managing and sustaining a business (Kessler & Frank, 2009; Lichtenstein, Dooley, & Lumpkin, 2006). Furthermore, entrepreneurial actions could involve decisions such as which opportunity to pursue, how to raise funds, which form to fill in, where to seek information and support, and who to employ to make up a team.

Entrepreneurial actions play important roles to cater the needs and welfare of the PWDs. It was raised that promoting entrepreneurship among PWDs could narrow the employment rates gap between disabled and non-disabled people and prevent social exclusion (Wennekers, Van Wennekers, Thurik, & Reynolds, 2005; Viriri & Makurumidze, 2014). Thus, entrepreneurial action for SWDs is critical to be utilized frequently in order to help SWDs to gain employment and self-sufficiency (Burchardt, 2003).

Religious Beliefs and Entrepreneurial Action Relationship

In recent years, greater attention has been paid in understanding the role of religion beliefs in shaping entrepreneurial action (Dana, 2010; Audretsch, 2014). According to Garba, Djafar, and Mansor (2013) and Nikolova and Simroth (2013), religion is essential in promoting entrepreneurship as an individuals' career choice. However, it has been revealed that different religious backgrounds could have different emphasis on the importance of entrepreneurial activities. In particular, it was highlighted that Islam and Christian promote entrepreneurship, while Hinduism provides less encouragement. To date, specific research on the effect of religious beliefs has been limited. What is more, research that seeks the relationship between religious beliefs of PWDs and entrepreneurial action is hard to find. Based on the recent study, it has been showed that religious beliefs turn out to be the important predictor of entrepreneurial action of disabled students Dakung et al. (2017). Therefore, it could be expected that there is a positive link between religious beliefs and entrepreneurial action. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_1: Religious belief is positively related to entrepreneurial action of the SWDs.

Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Action Relationship

Entrepreneurship education is defined as the scope of curriculum, lectures or courses that provides students with entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and competencies to pursue entrepreneurial career (Ekpoh & Edet, 2011; Keat, Selvarajah, & Meyer, 2011). Previous studies have been extensively conducted on the ability of entrepreneurship in creating new jobs and the importance of entrepreneurship education in producing potential entrepreneurs (Venkatachalam & Waqif, 2005; Kuratko, 2005).

To this end, universities and other institutions of higher learning have been given the mandate to play a leading role in inculcating students with the entrepreneurial knowledge and skills that will be useful in their future career (Nurmi & Paasio, 2007). According to Kearsley and Schneiderman (1999), education is one of the key factors that contribute to students' intention on entrepreneurship and quality entrepreneurial education leads to

higher level of students' entrepreneurial actions. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship education program, the academicians must design effective learning styles with strong theoretical base that will accommodate all learners including those persons with disabilities. However, there has been little discussion in terms of the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial action of the SWDs. Nevertheless, based on the recent study by Dakung et al. (2017), it has been revealed on the significant of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial action of disabled students. Therefore, there is a need to examine how entrepreneurship education could influence the SWDs to involve in entrepreneurship. Drawing from the empirical studies, we hence hypothesized as follow:

H_2: Entrepreneurship education is positively related to entrepreneurial action of the SWDs.

Research Methodology

This study incorporates descriptive, quantitative and deductive methods and employs cross-sectional design. A total of 265 disabled students from tertiary education institutions were selected using cluster sampling. Data was collected using questionnaire as an instrument. All the measurement items were adapted from the previous studies. Specifically, religious beliefs were measured using six items from Rietveld and Van Burg (2013), entrepreneurial education using four items adapted from Walter and Block (2016) and entrepreneurial action using 15 items adapted from Ajzen (2002). A Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique was utilized to perform the required statistical analysis of the data from the survey. Exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis to test for construct validity, reliability, and measurements loading were performed. Having analyzed the measurement model, the structural model was then tested and confirmed.

A Research Model

Based on literature review, previous studies did explore the effect of religious beliefs and entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial action. This research aims in finding the relationship between religious beliefs and entrepreneurship education towards entrepreneurial action among the PWDs students in selected tertiary education institutions in Malaysia. The research model is presented in Figure 1.

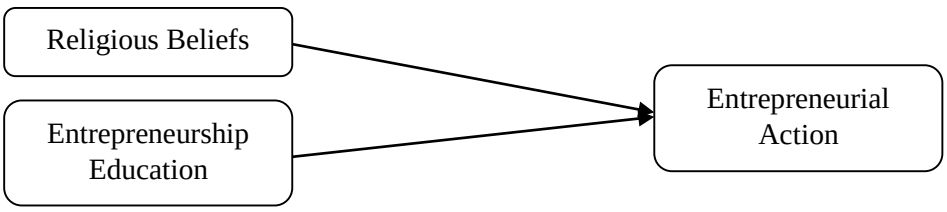


Figure 1: Research Model

Findings

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Using principal component analysis (PCA) extraction technique with Varimax rotation, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed for each construct to confirm on the

dimensions (Hair *et al*., 2010). In other words, it corroborates the dimensions of religious beliefs, entrepreneurship education, and entrepreneurial actions so that the underlying items for the extracted component structure of the variables can be verified. According to Hair *et al.* (2006), the accepted threshold valued of standardized factor loading is above 0.50, while Cronbach's Alpha value is normally above 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

As can be seen from the estimates at Table 1, The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of the sampling adequacy index for the factor was 0.908 and Cronbach's Alpha was above 0.70, which indicates the appropriateness of the data for the factor analysis. Table 1 also shows that the factor loading through the principle components of the items ranged from 0.647 to 0.902, which is above the threshold of 0.50 as recommended by Hair *et al*. (2006).

Table 1: Factor loading and cronbach's alpha

No.	Items	Loadings	Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
1	RB1	0.647	Religious Beliefs	0.861
2	RB2	0.698		
3	RB3	0.707		
4	RB4	0.784		
5	RB5	0.801		
6	RB6	0.722		
7	EE1	0.711	Entrepreneurship Education	0.907
8	EE2	0.780		
9	EE3	0.790		
10	EE4	0.810		
11	EE5	0.776		
12	EE6	0.688		
13	EA1	0.829	Entrepreneurial Actions	0.951
14	EA2	0.851		
15	EA3	0.902		
16	EA4	0.893		
17	EA5	0.906		
18	EA6	0.872		

Although they were statistically significant under EFA, the items may be subject to modifications. In ensuring the data is free from outliers and non-normality, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on the three latent variables using AMOS 22.0, adopting a maximum likelihood estimation. The essence of this is to assess how closely the items are loaded in the three latent constructs. Model fit was assessed using the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the chi-square/ degrees of freedom ratio (Kline, 1998). CFI compares the hypothesized model with the independent model in which nothing is related (Byrne, 2001). A CFI of 0.95 or above indicates a good fit. The RMSEA estimates how well the model fits with the estimated population covariance matrix (Byrne, 2001). RMSEA should be well under 0.10 and preferably under 0.08

(Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). A good fitting model is assumed to be when the Chi-square is non-significant. However, the Chi-square is extremely sensitive to sample size. To minimise this problem, the chi-square is divided by the degrees of freedom with a Chi-square/*df* ratio of 3 or less indicating acceptable fit (Kline, 1998).

Based on Table 2, the initial model was below the acceptable fit. Several item such as RB1 and RB3 were removed due to skewness and kurtosis values did not fall within the acceptable range of ± 2, which indicated that they did not fit well in the model. The final model fit the data well (CFI = 0.951; RMSEA = 0.077; χ^2 = 257.116, *df* = 116, χ^2/*df* = 2.546).

Table 2: Fit indices

	Before modification	After modification	Recommended values
Chi Square (χ^2)	378.073	257.116	
df	132	116	
GFI	0.858	0.900	≥ 0.90
AGFI	0.816	0.847	≥ 0.80
NNFI (TLI)	0.920	0.942	≥ 0.90
CFI	0.931	0.951	≥ 0.90
RMSEA	0.084	0.077	≤ 0.08
NORMEDCHISQ (χ^2/df)	2.864	2.546	≤ 3.00
p-value	0.000	0.000	

Table 3 summarizes the results of internal reliability and convergent validity for the constructs. Convergent validity is the degree to which multiple attempts to measure the same concept are in agreement, which is assessed based on factor loading, composite reliability, and the average variance extracted (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 3: Results of CFA

Construct	Item	Loading	Convergent validity	
			AVE	CR
Religious Beliefs	RB2	0.64	0.564	0.836
	RB4	0.79		
	RB5	0.84		
	RB6	0.71		
Entrepreneurship Education	EE1	0.76	0.629	0.910
	EE2	0.84		
	EE3	0.84		
	EE4	0.83		
	EE5	0.80		
	EE6	0.68		
Entrepreneurial Actions	EA1	0.80	0.767	0.952
	EA2	0.82		
	EA3	0.90		
	EA4	0.91		
	EA5	0.93		
	EA6	0.88		

As can be seen in Table 3, the factor loading for all the items in this study exceeded the recommended level of 0.6 (Chin *et al*., 1997). Composite reliability (CR), which depicts the degree to which the construct indicators indicate the latent construct, ranged from 0.836 to 0.952 exceeding the recommended level of 0.7, which was suggested by Gefen *et al*. (2000). The values for average variance extracted (AVE), which reflects the overall amount of variance in the indicators accounted for by the latent construct, were in the range of 0.564 and 0.767, exceeding the recommended level of 0.5 as suggested by Hair *et al.* (2010). Therefore, the scales exhibit acceptable convergent validity.

In the next step, the discriminant validity, which is the extent to which a measure is not a reflection of some other variable, was assessed. Discriminant validity can be established by noting low correlations between all the measures of interest and the measure of other constructs. Additionally, according to Fornell and Larcker (1981), when the square root of the average variance extracted is greater than its correlations with all the other constructs, discriminant validity is established. Based on Table 4, the discriminant validity is established. As a conclusion of the above discussion, the measurement model fitted the data well.

Table 4: Discriminant validity of constructs

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Entrepreneurship Education	**0.793**		
Entrepreneurial Actions	0.464	**0.876**	
Religious Beliefs	0.623	0.296	**0.751**

Structural Equation Model (SEM)

In this study, the relationship between religious beliefs, entrepreneurship education, and entrepreneurial action is analysed using structural equation modeling (SEM) following Bryne (2001). For this study, the SEM model that is estimated is shown in Figure 2. It consists of three latent variables: (i) religious beliefs, (ii) entrepreneurship education, and (iii) entrepreneurial action. This study analyses the effect of religious beliefs and entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial action.

Hypotheses Testing

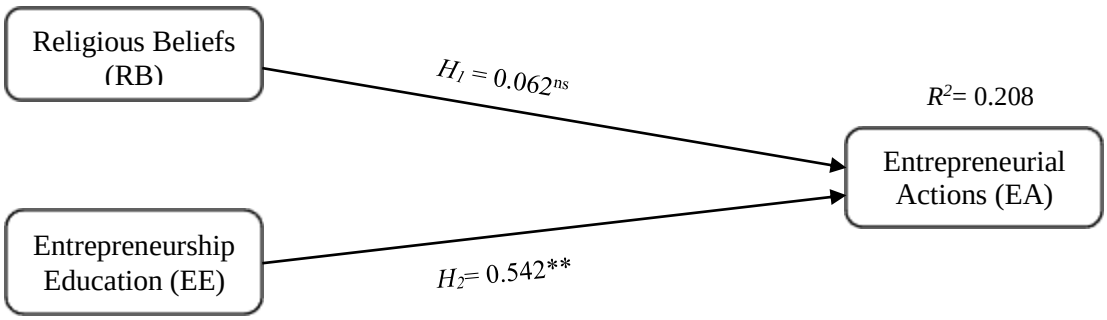
Table 5 and Figure 2 illustrate the summary results of the proposed structural model. The test of the overall model fit yielded a Chi-square of 259.832 with 98 degrees of freedom and a *p*-value equal to 0.000. All the fit indices were above the recommended values (AGFI = 0.861; CFI = 0.950; TLI = 0.938; RMSEA = 0.079; χ^2/df = 2.651). The R^2 value for the relationship between religious beliefs and entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial actions is 0.208, which indicates that 21 percent of the variance in entrepreneurial actions can be explained by religious beliefs and entrepreneurship education.

Table 5: Summary of the structural model

Path	Expected direction	Standardized estimate	t-value	p-value	Result
H_1: RB → EA	+	0.062	0.777	0.437	Not Supported
H_2: EE → EA	+	0.542	6.651	0.001	Supported

Two of the hypotheses, H_1 and H_2, expected that religious beliefs and entrepreneurship education have direct effect on entrepreneurial action. The influence of religious beliefs (β = 0.062, p > 0.001) and entrepreneurship education are (β = 0.542, p < 0.001) indicating that only H_2 is supported.

Figure 2: Test results for the proposed structural model



___ significant relationship

$^{***}p < 0.001$
^{ns}: Not significant

Conclusion

The finding of this study are to boost the confidence and capacity level of PWDs especially the SWDs to venture into business through entrepreneurship education. In this study, religious

belief is not the factor that triggers the SWDs to become an entrepreneur. On the other hand, entrepreneurship education is significant in influencing the SWDs to involve in entrepreneurship. Thus, this study provide information to the universities, curriculum developers and the related ministries to improve the present entrepreneurship curriculum in order to accommodate the specific needs of SWDs as well as effective efforts or programs that aim to inspire and encourage SWDs towards entrepreneurship. Academicians should also develop teaching strategies and conduct students' activities that can enhance the SWDs' interest, passion and skills in entrepreneurship. The knowledge and exposure to entrepreneurship skills will definitely facilitate them to start-up and manage their business after graduation. Moreover, the increasing activities on entrepreneurship will generate more job opportunities among the PWDs and hence microbalancing the economic development of the societies and nation.

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