"Altruistic Fervour" Enhances Entrepreneurial Intention: The Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Passion Among University Students in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT
Entrepreneurial Passion is widely recognized as a key driver of Entrepreneurial Intention, yet limited attention has been given to understanding its antecedents, particularly Passion for People, in the context of tertiary-level education. This study aims to identify the role of Passion for People as a motivational antecedent to Entrepreneurial Passion and the relationship that influences Entrepreneurial Intention among university students in Malaysia. This study also assesses the influence of Entrepreneurial Passion as a mediating role between Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Intention. The data were retrieved from 369 students using a self-administered questionnaire from students enrolled in entrepreneurship courses at five public universities. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) 4.0. The study's findings revealed that Passion for People significantly influenced Entrepreneurial Passion, but it did not directly influence Entrepreneurial Intention. The result also indicated Entrepreneurial Passion mediates the relationship between Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Intention. Thus, it is apparent that entrepreneurial passion is a bridge connecting the relationship of the variables. This study contributes to the existing literature by extending the antecedents of Entrepreneurial Passion and shed light into other form of passion help in the formation of Entrepreneurial Intention among university students. The current study will be helpful for policymakers and educators focusing on fostering entrepreneurial mindsets and entrepreneurial careers among university students.

KEYWORDS: Passion for people, Entrepreneurial passion, Entrepreneurial intention, Altruistic fervor

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fostering economic growth, enhancing societal prosperity, and creating jobs are also well-known as indispensable forces in the global economic landscape. Notwithstanding, entrepreneurship is not merely a significant resource but a critical driver of economic development worldwide. The global entrepreneurship landscape has exploded in the last 15 years, with approximately 594 million entrepreneurs worldwide in 2023 (GEM, 2021). Recently, Malaysia has significantly focused on entrepreneurship as a major contributor toward economic development. There are numerous initiatives and programs that have been planned and launched to foster and encourage the growth of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). According to SME Corp., entrepreneurship contributes to an important avenue in providing employment opportunities in Malaysia, particularly for fresh graduates and youths, with a million workers employed by SMEs in Malaysia.

Respectively, in 2023, to support initiatives towards the growth of entrepreneurship programs, the Malaysian government provided significant financial assistance to encourage entrepreneurs and implement various programs to promote entrepreneurial growth and success. Subsequently, focused on people empowerment and economic reformation to support start-ups, SMEs, and micro, small, and medium entrepreneurs (MSMEs) in the 2024 Budget under the Madani Economic Framework with a RM44 billion budget, including financial support and resources (Malaysian Budget Report, 2023).

Furthermore, for the education sector, the majority of

Malaysian universities have taken proactive steps to encourage students by incorporating entrepreneurship education into their curricula. This pivotal step aligns with the Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2015-2025, which has a goal to cultivate entrepreneurial graduates. The goal is to shift the mindset of Malaysian graduates from "seekers" to "creators" of jobs with the objective of leading to 60% of graduates finding employment or being able to generate income through entrepreneurship. Hence, to advance the plan, the Entrepreneurship Action Plan for Higher Education Institutions (EAP-HEIs) 2021-2025 was formed to reinforce this effort towards entrepreneurship education. Particularly, the effort of embedding entrepreneurship into the educational landscape within Malaysian universities and support through initiatives by the government and institutions is believed to be a solid foundation for addressing the issue of unemployment among graduates.

Hence, with the goal of advancing this plan and initiative further, policymakers and higher education institutions should strengthen the skill development of the students. Considering of previous research mentioned the lack of employment opportunities available to the graduates and mismatch of skills (Jeffri & Abdul Rahim, 2023). Therefore, to overcome the issue, it is crucial to comprehend the initial stages of determining a university student's entrepreneurial intention towards an entrepreneurship career. Nevertheless, previous research found entrepreneurship has grown in popularity among undergraduates globally, including in Malaysia (Maheshwari et al., 2022).

The level of entrepreneurial intention among young people in Southeast Asia varies greatly. For instance, Indonesia leads the world in young people expressing a desire to become entrepreneurs, with 36% of them, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2021). Following closely, Thailand, with an entrepreneurial intention rate of 32%, is not far behind. However, Malaysia and Singapore, on the other hand, have lower rates of 23% and 17%, respectively. However, Malaysia's rate is higher than Singapore's, but it falls short of its regional counterparts. This implies that although young people in Malaysia are becoming more interested in starting their own businesses, the overall momentum remains shaky and undeveloped. Nevertheless, various initiatives from the projection of government grants, incubation programs, and university entrepreneurship education were expected to increase entrepreneurial motivation and venture creation to 12% by 2023. However, it remains precarious (Saoula et al., 2023).

Given the circumstances, there is a pressing need to investigate other factors that shape entrepreneurial intention among university students and to understand antecedents that motivate them to pursue entrepreneurial career path(Siriattakul & Jermsittiparsert, 2019; Valdez-Juárez & García Pérez-de-Lema, 2023). Although entrepreneurial intention research has become a major concern in the field of entrepreneurship research, it remains underdeveloped, inconsistent, and incomplete (Donaldson et al., 2023). As explained by Anjum et al., (2021), Entrepreneurial Passion has been identified as a crucial element for fostering entrepreneurial careers. However, there has been limited focus on understanding what contributes to the development of entrepreneurial passion(Cardon et al., 2017; Lex et al., 2020; Neneh, 2022). Therefore, this study seeks to explore the gaps by examining the influence of the Passion for People on Entrepreneurial Intention among university students, as well as examine the roles of Entrepreneurial Passion as a potential mediating variable in the study (Cardon et al., 2017; Riar et al., 2023)

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Underpinning Theory

The theory of self-determination (SDT) was introduced in the 1980s to describe human motivation and behaviors. This theory explains three essential elements, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT distinguishes between intrinsic motivations that rely on interest and enjoyment. Eventually, SDT portrays the essential element in the theory when exploring the motivation behind PFP and EI. Based on the theory, the three elements (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) are interrelated with the variables in this study. First, to have the gut of control over individual choice and action refers to autonomy. Next, the skills and effective capability feeling individual have represented competence. Meanwhile, the relatedness is more on the connection and interactions with others. For the current study, the theory suggests that individuals who perceive themselves as having the elements of autonomy, competence, and relatedness a likely to exhibit a strong intention to become entrepreneurs and embark on entrepreneurship (Al-Jubari et al., 2018).

2.2 Altruistic Fervour

The term "altruistic fervor" refers to an intense intrinsic feeling and motivation to build a positive difference in others' lives and society. It refers to the desire to create a positive social impact. It is essential in entrepreneurship as it contributes to shaping a healthy society and adding value in life (Kaushal & Mishra, 2013). Notwithstanding, university students who have an altruistic fervor increase their Entrepreneurial Intention. Those individuals with an altruistic fervor intensely desire to support people's well-being and interests, to upgrade human welfare through their work, and to contribute to positive differences in the lives of others (Skeja et al., 2023). Similarly, in entrepreneurship research, Tan et al., (2005) mentioned that entrepreneurs who are driven by altruistic values, care, and concern for their

communities' manifest stronger intentions towards sustainable entrepreneurship. Thus, having an altruistic fervor reflects Passion for People as a deep emotional commitment and desire to connect with, serve, and positively impact others. For university students, altruistic fervor could influence passion for creating socially focused ventures(Israr & Saleem, 2018). This manifests empathy, compassion, and an orientation towards providing a sense of purpose and contributing to good impact through the venture creation. Hence, passions enhance motivations for entrepreneurship among students (Murnieks et al., 2020).

2.3 Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial Intention is often regarded as the major determinant for actual entrepreneurial actions and also a driving force for the global economy (Batista-Canino et al., 2024) . In general, intention is considered the initial point toward achieving individual goals and objectives. Entrepreneurial Intention refers to an individual's involvement or attempt to start out an entrepreneurial endeavor (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). By creating new ventures, they attempt job creation, innovation of new products, and lead towards the expansion of economic (Tekic & Tsyrenova, 2024) It is crucial to understand an individual decision to pursue an entrepreneurial career instead of a regular job route (Syed et al., 2020). Therefore, exploring the Entrepreneurial Intention of individuals is crucial to delving more thorough insight into the decision-making process involved in starting new businesses (Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011; Rodrigues et al., 2023). Previously, studies on Entrepreneurial Intention uncovered the variables including locus of control and need for achievement (Uysal et al., 2022), fear and anxiety of COVID-19, and opportunity recognition (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023), personal attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, inspiring role models (Aga, 2023; Duong, 2023), entrepreneur attitude (Bosma & Schutjens, 2011; Soleimanof et al., 2021; Vargas-Martínez et al., 2023). This exploration of entrepreneurship intention is broadly researched by scholars to determine the future entrepreneurial action to set up a new venture (Almeida et al., 2021; Bachmann et al., 2024; Riar et al., 2023b), entrepreneurial education (Duong et al., 2024; Overwien et al., 2024).

2.4 Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Intention

Passion for People refers to the positive relational emotions and excitement that individuals experience when engaging with others (Cardon et al., 2017). It cultivates passion by providing enthusiasm for entrepreneurial attitudes (Cardon et al., 2013). Through the process of entrepreneurship, Passion for People primarily engages through collaborating with family, meeting customer needs, and fostering strong relationships with employees, suppliers, or affiliates (Cardon et al., 2017). The connection of passion with strong emotional commitment toward people fuels the desire to create meaningful relationships with others. Based on the previous study, it suggests that Passion for People does not primarily revolve around a passion toward specific activities (founding, developing, inventing) but rather encompasses a different aspect altogether which focuses on emotional aspects(Cardon et al., 2013, 2017; Hou et al., 2023). Moreover, the study by Murnieks et al., (2020) mentioned that the construct of passion could be directed towards an object, or another individual, or could be an idea, cause, or goal. Therefore, it focuses on the interpersonal aspect of entrepreneurship by developing relationships, leading teams, and serving customers. Subsequently, the prior study on Passion for People subjected within entrepreneurs was examined through who exhibited a strong dedication to working with people through interaction with their families, ensuring customer satisfaction, and fostering a positive connection with vendors and partners(Soleimanof et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2021). Within the context of Passion for People, it is translated into the desire to serve others, including customers and their needs (Cardon et al., 2017). It also prioritized customer needs, building good relationships with customers, creating a positive and supportive work environment, and engaging with social impact through their venture. Therefore, the study investigates Passion for People in the context of university students in an effort to determine how their altruistic fervor strengthens their decision to pursue the entrepreneurship career path (Georgescu & Herman, 2020; Xiao & Fu, 2022). This represents an important topic to study because passion related to people is a new domain with less explored studied potential (Cardon et al., 2017).

H1: Passion for People has a significant relationship on the Entrepreneurial Intention university students.

2.5 Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Passion

Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Passion are closely related but conceptually represent different constructs that contribute uniquely to entrepreneurial behavior (Cardon et al., 2017). Passion for People is an individual emotional connection and commitment to the people around them (family, customers, employees, vendors, stakeholders). This form of passion is longing for meaningful relationships and a desire to create meaningful impacts on other's lives. Specifically, the Passion for People center on social relationships and emotional fulfillment from engaging with others. As identified by Vallerand & Verner-Filion, (2013) passion for people acts as a powerful motivator for an individual to pursue ventures that focus on social impact, human connection, and relational fulfillment (Cardon et al., 2017). Thus, entrepreneurs who have a strong passion for involving people tend to stimulate a high level of empathy and commitment to the people who are part of their businesses (team, clients, community). This form of passion focuses on the emotional foundation of

building good relationships with others and the benefits of emotional support to motivate an entrepreneur when facing challenges also strengthens their commitment to the business goals (Biraglia & Kadile, 2017).

In contrast, Entrepreneurial Passion emerges as a key motivational drive that fuels individuals toward pursuing entrepreneurship and is more focused on the entrepreneurial process (Cardon et al., 2017). Entrepreneurial passion is defined as an intense positive feeling and strong dedication toward entrepreneurial activities, particularly in founding, developing, and inventing (Cardon et al., 2009). Specifically, this form of passion focused on the process of entrepreneurial tasks (starting ventures, business growth) not people. On the other hand, this interplay between passion is a value that holds significant meaning to people or activities that an individual enjoys doing as it gives the feeling of fulfillment and joy. The connection of people and entrepreneurial passion builds a desire for a meaningful relationship and how it translates into an entrepreneurial venture. According to Stenholm & Nielsen, (2019), stronger emotional support from other people positively correlated with greater levels of entrepreneurial passion among passionate individuals. Moreover, Entrepreneurial Passion is a significant predictor as it can stimulate positive emotion, motivate individual creativity, and enhance personal desires (Biraglia & Kadile, 2017; Neneh, 2022). Although Entrepreneurial Passion has become a vital component in establishing new ventures, little attention has been given to explore the antecedents of entrepreneurial passion to help the formation of Entrepreneurial Intention (Karimi, 2019). Besides, in the Entrepreneurial Passion context, Passion for People indicates the desire or strong feeling toward meaningful relationships among people surrounded with entrepreneurial activities. According to Stenholm & Nielsen (2019), having the right people to follow and collaborate increases and boosts good feelings among nascent and potential entrepreneurs. Thus, making them more motivated to engage actively (Choukir et al., 2019). Additionally, previous research by Ma et al., (2017) in China found that encouragement from other people, particularly family members, helps nascent entrepreneurs or individuals who have not yet become entrepreneurs to have a positive thought about the future. Hence, the hypothesis for the current study is:

H2: Passion for People has a significant influence on Entrepreneurial Passion of the university students

2.6 Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial passion has been extensively researched to prove that it significantly influences the intention (Bignetti et al., 2021; Karimi, 2019; Muzaffar, 2023). The term passion refers to a strong feeling towards activities that people would like to attain together with their willingness to spend their time and effort (Carbonneau et al., 2008). Moreover, a strong force to complete specific tasks is often driven by a strong feeling of passion (Montiel Campos, 2017). Thus, the element of Entrepreneurial Passion based on a previous study by Cardon et al. (2013) mentioned three different components to be considered. The main component of Entrepreneurial Passion focuses on the passion for inventing, with emphasis on identifying, inventing, exploring, and utilizing new opportunities. The second component, passion for founding, is related to behavioral activities such as the establishment of new businesses, marketing, and opportunity tracking. Thirdly, the components of passion for developing involve care, development of business venture, expansion strategy, and taking after actual business ventures are established (Cardon et al., 2009). Based on Cardon et al. (2009), Entrepreneurial Passion is an overwhelming feeling that individuals experience throughout their involvement in entrepreneurial activities, which energizes good motivation for potential entrepreneurs to have more confidence in creating ventures. Prior studies indicated that having a strong entrepreneurial passion helps people spot new business opportunities and innovation. Specifically, students who are very enthusiastic and dedicated to entrepreneurship are more inclined to start their own businesses (Murad et al., 2021). Meanwhile, a study in 2017 discovered that individuals who have a stronger passion for entrepreneurship are strongly inclined to actually start a business (Biraglia & Kadile, 2017). In other words, the more passionate someone is about starting a business, the greater their chances of actually doing it in the future. In addition, Neneh, (2022) showed that entrepreneurial passion positively influences the intention to pursue entrepreneurial activities and that Entrepreneurial Passion has a good impact on the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. This means that having a strong passion for entrepreneurship makes it more likely that a person will intend to start or engage in entrepreneurial ventures.

H3: Entrepreneurial Passion has a significant influence on the relationship of Entrepreneurial Intention among university students.

2.7 Mediating Role of EP

Over the years, Entrepreneurial Passion has performed as a "fire," burning up the motivation of individuals toward their intention for entrepreneurship. When starting a new venture, cognitive and behavioral factors are crucial to be considered. As a motivational factor, passion involves cognitive, behavioral, and affective components that influence the behavioral of an individual (Majeed et al., 2021). Previously, studies have shown that Entrepreneurial Passion has a strong influence on Entrepreneurial Intention (Biraglia & Kadile, 2017). It has been suggested that Entrepreneurial Passion is established as a strong motivation toward entrepreneurial activities(Dwi Lestari, 2022; Flores

Pérez & Guevara, 2023; Onwe et al., 2024). However, Karimi, (2019) stated that the influence on individual activities and behaviors is still outset. Additionally, it is also supported by previous research by demonstrating that limited attention is given to understand the approach of individuals in decision-making for entrepreneurship (Hati et al., 2023; Nguyen Thi Loan, 2023). Therefore, the study highlights Passion for People as the motivational dimension of passion in the sense of achieving Entrepreneurial Intention among university students. As previous studies mentioned, students with a higher Entrepreneurial Passion would have a positive entrepreneurial attitude and perceive themselves as more capable of becoming entrepreneurs (Karimi, 2019). Hence, this study wanted to investigate how Entrepreneurial Passion can connect the antecedents of Passion for People as a motivational dimension to choose entrepreneurship as a career in the future.

H4: Entrepreneurial Passion mediates the relationship between Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Intention of university students

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Many entrepreneurs tend to develop their intentions and initiate business activities early in life. Prior study has mostly focused on university students, especially undergraduates, due to their excitement in creating an innovative idea and inclination towards entrepreneurial activities (Maheshwari et al., 2022). In this study, entrepreneurship students from public universities were selected as they were considered highly relevant to understanding the factors influencing entrepreneurial intention among university students due to their direct exposure to entrepreneurial education. There were five (5) listed universities that offered well-established Bachelor's Degrees in Entrepreneurship studies (Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia). These universities were chosen due to their strong commitment to entrepreneurship education and their prominence in Malaysia's public university system. Moreover, by focusing on students enrolled in entrepreneurship programs, this study aims to gain insights into the factors influencing entrepreneurial intention within this specific group. The sample size was determined through G*Power analysis. Based on an effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$ (medium effect), a significance level of 0.05, and a power of 0.80, a minimum of 90-100 respondents would be enough, however, a sample of 369 comfortably exceeds this threshold, ensuring sufficient statistical power. Data from the university students were gathered using a cross-sectional approach and a self-administered questionnaire survey. The selection of a descriptive quantitative technique was influenced by its capacity to efficiently collect data from a diverse group of participants spread across various locations while maintaining economically viable (Taherdoost et al., 2016). Since it is not feasible to establish the population size and sampling frame of students taking entrepreneurship courses due to university confidentiality, an appropriate sampling method was adopted to achieve the objectives of the study.

Accordingly, the decision to use the nonprobability method and specifically using purposive sampling was found suited to this study because the respondents had to meet the prerequisites(Thomas, 2022). The respondents must be undergraduate students enrolled in entrepreneurship programs at public universities in Malaysia. The purposive sampling method was chosen because it allows for a more focused group of students with a strong interest in entrepreneurial education. Each question in this study was evaluated using a seven-point scale ranging from 7 (strongly agree) to the opposite end (strongly disagree). All constructs employed in this investigation were established based on measurements derived from prior research studies. To be more precise, the assessment of Passion for People in this study draws on procedures previously used by (Cardon et al., 2017). The Entrepreneurial Passion variable evaluation follows Cardon et al. (2013) approach, while the Entrepreneurial Intention metrics are based on research by (Liñán & Chen, 2009). Additionally, to facilitate access and efficient data collection across universities, the data was administered through online platforms (Google Docs, email, WhatsApp). The data collection procedure begins with the collaboration between lecturers and student representatives to assist in the distribution process of the questionnaire through a unique link (QR-code) provided by the researcher. These collaborations helped to engage with the respondents and maintain the response rate of the data. The conceptual framework for this study is presented in **Figure 1**. It showed a conceptual framework built on the key insight from literature, this study proposes a conceptual framework to understand the relationship between Passion for People, Entrepreneurial Passion, and Entrepreneurial Intention.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data analysis for the study was utilized using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) version 4.0 to analyze the relationship between the latent variables of Passion for People, Entrepreneurial Passion Entrepreneurial Intention. As explained by Hair et al. (2019), PLS-SEM is robust for analyzing and estimating relationships between constructs that are not directly measurable such as these study constructs of passion and intention that cannot be directly measured. Additionally, PLS-SEM can provide reliable insights into the direct and indirect effects among the key variables by giving clear, trustworthy results on how

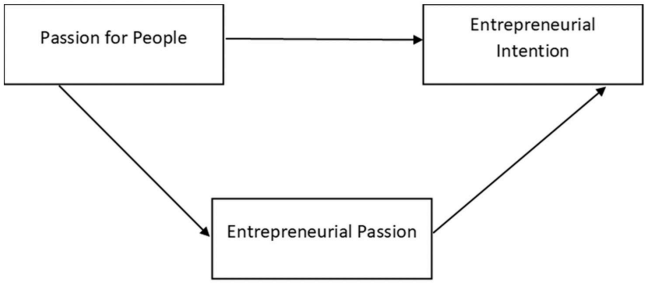


Figure 1: *Conceptual framework*

variables affect each other. Furthermore, PLS-SEM works well in handling smaller sample sizes, non-normal data distributions, and reflective and formative indicators. For reflective indicators, the variable is measured through its outcomes, and for formative indicators, where the variable is defined by several different factors. By using PLS-SEM, it can effectively capture the complex interactions among the key variables while maintaining accuracy and statistical power, making it appropriate for this study. Moreover, PLS-SEM can handle measurement errors, which often occur when assessing psychological and behavioral constructs like passion and intention, ensuring more accurate results(Hair et al., 2019). For this study, 374 respondents were retrieved, however, five were excluded from the analysis due to unmatched criteria based on filtered questions. As a result, the final sample size for the study was 369 respondents.

The data analysis of the study reported on the path coefficients that represent the strength and direction of the relationships between the constructs, p-value indicates the significance of the relationships. The path coefficient of H1 indicated a positive but showed a weak relationship between Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Intention a p-value of 0.078, which was not significant for the study. Next, H2 indicated a path coefficient of 0.792, suggesting a strong positive relationship between Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Passion, and the p-value of 0.000 indicates a significant value for the study. For H3, the path coefficient indicated a strong positive relationship between Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial Intention, and the p-value of 0.000 indicated a significant value of the study. **Table 1** shows the result of the reliability and validity of the constructs that were tested using several key indicators including Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The result indicated all the constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency with the range above 0.7 (EI-0.956, EP-0.966, PFP-0.846), the AVE also showed above threshold of 0.5 (EI-0.819, EP-0.713, PFP-0.764) suggest excellent convergent validity. Following that, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) was used to evaluate discriminant validity. All HTMT values were less than the conservative criterion of 0.85, indicating that the constructs in the model are empirically distinct.

Table 1: *Cronbach's Alpha, Construct Reliability (CR) and AVE*

Variables	Item	Cronbach's alpha	Cr	(Ave)
EI	6	0.956	0.964	0.819
EP	13	0.966	0.970	0.713
PFP	3	0.846	0.907	0.764

Figure 2 represent the structural analysis of this study. The result showed, the R2 value for the Entrepreneurial Intention variable is 0.699. It suggests that the exogeneous construct explained 69.9% of the variance in Entrepreneurial Intention. The Entrepreneurial Passion, has an R2 value of 0.627, meaning that the exogenous constructs explain 62.7% of the variance. All endogenous variable Q2 values are above zero, indicating the study model has considerable predictive power (Hair et al., 2014). The path analysis results presented in **Table 2** offer insights into the dynamics between the variables. The significant positive relationship between Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Passion (H2: $\beta = 0.792$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that individuals who are passionate about the relationship with people are more likely to develop a strong entrepreneurial passion. This finding aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurial passion in fostering entrepreneurial drive (Hou et al., 2023; Karimi, 2019; Qian et al., 2022). However, the non-significant relationship between Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Intention (H1: $\beta = 0.078$, $p > 0.05$) suggests that while passion for people may fuel entrepreneurial passion, it does not directly translate into entrepreneurial intentions without the mediating influence of Entrepreneurial Passion. The strong significant relationship between Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial Intention (H3: $\beta = 0.773$, $p < 0.001$) reinforces the idea that entrepreneurial passion is a critical determinant of entrepreneurial intentions. This finding is consistent with the theoretical framework that positions passion as a central motivator for entrepreneurial action. The results suggest that fostering entrepreneurial passion among individuals can be a key strategy for enhancing entrepreneurial intentions, which has important implications for entrepreneurship education and policy.

The finding of the mediation analysis is presented in **Table 3**. The study demonstrates that Entrepreneurial Passion mediates the relationship between Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Intention. The bootstrapping findings demonstrate the importance of the hypothesized relationship. Passion for People showed a significant positive correlation with Entrepreneurial Passion (β = 0.792, p < 0.001). Entrepreneurial Passion positively affects Entrepreneurial Intention (β = 0.773, p < 0.001). However, no direct effect of Passion for People on Entrepreneurial Intention was discovered, implying full mediation via Entrepreneurial Passion. Overall, the structural model analysis validates the expected mediated interactions between the constructs.

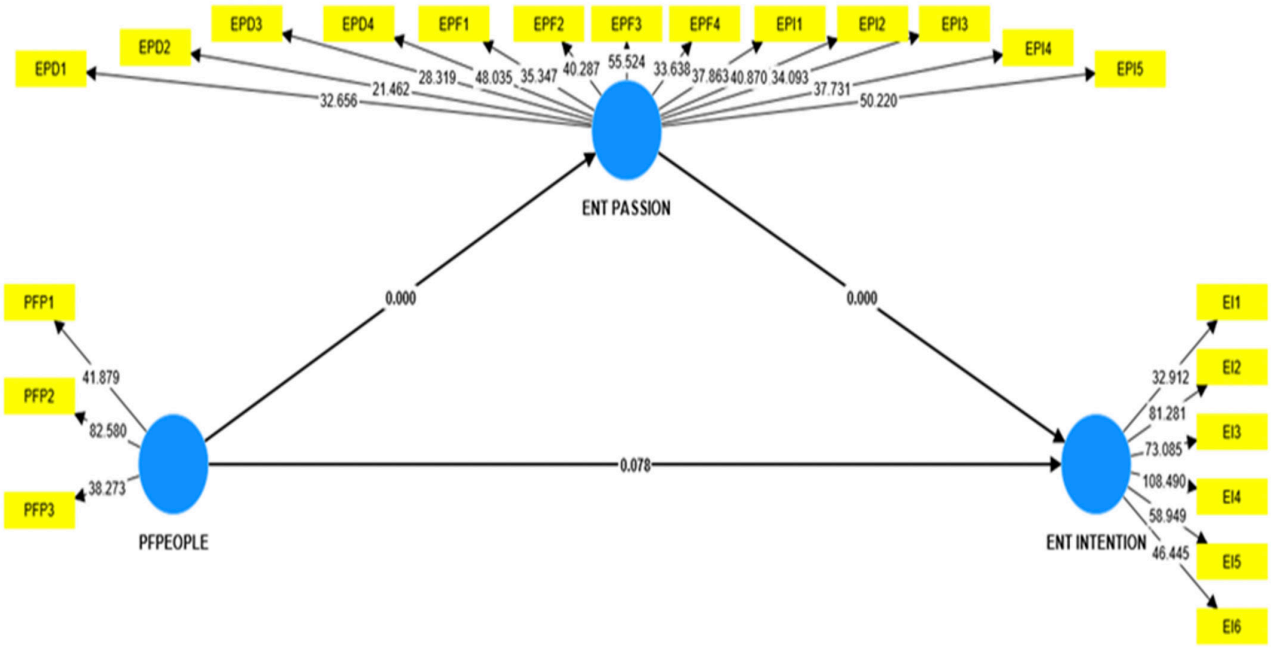


Figure 2: *Structural analysis result*

Table 2: *Path analysis results*

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta (β)	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	PFP – EI	0.078	0.055	1.416	0.078	Not Supported
H2	PFP – EP	0.792	0.028	27.986	0.000	Supported
H3	EP – EI	0.773	0.053	14.723	0.000	Supported

Table 3: *Mediation analysis (Indirect effect)*

Hypotheses	Relationship	β	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
H4	PFP – EP – EI	0.612	0.050	12.238	0.000	Supported

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship plays a significant role in enhancing economic development and has been extensively researched in the existing literature. A previous study by Anh & Minh, (2022) explained theories related to intention, and Doan & Phan, (2020) focused on the educational impact on intention, finding a strong positive relationship, particularly among Vietnamese students. Additionally, Rodrigues et al., (2022) conducted a bibliometric analysis, highlighting the importance of factors such as attitude, learning, and personality traits in shaping Entrepreneurial Intention. Meanwhile, the empirical evidence of this study supports the research hypothesis. Thus, it is important to uncover different type of passion that shapes their decision and shed light on the underlying motivation that propels individuals to consider an entrepreneurial career path. The first research objective aims to highlight the influence of passion for people towards entrepreneurial intention. Notably, Passion for People is considered the "heart" of passion, and Entrepreneurial Passion refers to a "fire" of passion towards entrepreneurial intention.

Firstly, H1 in the study, discussed a direct significant relationship between Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Intention, not supported (p-value 0.078). The findings of H1 indicated that Passion for People has an exceed p-value of 0.05 and does not have a significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intention. Therefore, the study concluded, that passion for people on its own may not be a strong predictor of entrepreneurial intention among university students. The primary focus of passion for people is their emotional drive to build relationships related to individuals' interactions with others, building meaningful relationships, and demonstrating empathy and care for other individuals (Cardon et al., 2017). It is a deep-seated desire to understand, connect, and serve the needs of others, excluding any other factors such as ventures or entrepreneurship. Hence, Passion for People extends beyond the entrepreneurial domain as its broad range of activities, initiatives, and relationships revolve around understanding, connecting, and serving the needs of individuals and communities but may not directly translate into the venture creation. Thus, it concludes that students driven by Passion for People may not have a clear vision of how their altruistic passion aligns with specific venture paths and their ability to transform their high desire for people into a solid business idea. However, without "heart" or "fire" for entrepreneurship, they are not able to do that (Qian et al., 2022). It is aligned with the above result in H1, which stated that there is no significant hypothesis between the variables.

Secondly, H2 in the study, discussed how Passion for People positively influences Entrepreneurial Passion. The outcomes of H2 indicated Passion for People have a positive effect on Entrepreneurial Passion. The results correlate with the previous literature by Cardon et al. (2017), who mentioned people are one of the antecedents that positively contribute to passion related to entrepreneurship. In addition, to support the justification of H2, individuals who are passionate about relationships with others such as working with people, for example, business owners who love making customers happy, are potentially able to sustain longer entrepreneurship(Schellenberg & Gaudreau, 2020; Vallerand & Verner-Filion, 2013). Individuals who are highly motivated to succeed as entrepreneurs will concentrate, commit, and spend time doing so. To further prove the justification, a scenario example of students with an entrepreneurial background who come from a family of entrepreneurs may boost their confidence and belief in their ability to start a business (Deprez et al., 2021; Hussain et al., 2023). Hence, the students who developed a passion for people throughout their university program are potentially interested in venturing into business and are highly motivated to be entrepreneurs.

Thirdly, H3 discussed the significant direct relationship between Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial Intention. Since Entrepreneurial Passion is one of the key determinants of individual motivation to choose entrepreneurship as a career, it is essential to understand the influences on pursuing entrepreneurship (Biraglia & Kadile, 2017; Karimi, 2019; Kiani et al., 2021; Neneh, 2019). However limited attention has arisen to debate on Entrepreneurial Passion, which highlighted how it shaped because obviously it is not "born" together with an individual (Hou et al., 2023). The findings of this study supported earlier research, which showed that Entrepreneurial Passion positively influences the development of Entrepreneurial Intention even across diverse contextual settings. According to Biraglia & Kadile (2017), individuals' passion resulted in a strong feeling about the action of starting a new venture, which will enhance interest in entrepreneurship (Neneh, 2019). The result of the study indicated direct relationship between Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial Intention is strong enough to influence venture creation among university students.

Next, concerning H4, Entrepreneurial Passion mediates the relationship between Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Intention. The result showed Entrepreneurial Passion fully mediates the relationship between Passion for People and Entrepreneurial Intention. Obviously, Entrepreneurial Passion is needed, referring to H1 Passion for People was not significant in the relationship with Entrepreneurial Intention. It represents the need for Entrepreneurial Passion as connecting construct to influence the relationship(Khan et al., 2023). This shows that Entrepreneurial Passion affects how intentions are formed in the entrepreneurship context, as it is a powerful predictor of individual intentions to consider an entrepreneurial career (Anjum et al., 2023; Karimi, 2019). All in all, individuals need to have a passion for entrepreneurial activities for them to develop their intention for a venture. This finding is consistent with earlier research by Anjum et al. (2023) that highlights the body of research showing that the need to fulfill other people's needs and support from people influences an individual's propensity to jump into entrepreneurship in a direct and advantageous manner(Dheer & Castrogiovanni, 2023; Hendijani Fard et al., 2018; Porkodi & Saranya, 2023).

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study enhances our understanding of the previously unclear subdimension of Entrepreneurial Passion. While research on the antecedents of harmonious and obsessive passion has advanced, studies exploring the domains of Entrepreneurial Passion remain scarce. The knowledge obtained from this study helps to shed light on the individual passion preferences related to the entrepreneurial career. Secondly, this research theoretically highlighted the significant influence of Passion for People on Entrepreneurial Intention and the

mediation effect of Entrepreneurial Passion in a potential entrepreneurial landscape focusing on university students. Additionally, a deeper understanding of the motivational dimension of passion can provide insight into the underlying motivations that drive intention among students and clearly enhance understanding of why some individuals develop a strong desire to pursue entrepreneurial activities and vice versa. The implications from this study further provide insights for further theoretical exploration for the scholars by looking at its application toward entrepreneurship, especially among potential and nascent entrepreneurs. Besides, understanding their passion can help educators develop strategies to cater to and nurture entrepreneurial passion among students.

5.2 Practical Implications

From the practical point of view, the outcomes of the current study help to anticipate several practical implications for educators, policymakers, institutions, and researchers. Firstly, this research suggests that institutions and policymakers identify potential students for the course (entrepreneurship) through an assessment evaluation on the entry stage, improve entrepreneurship education, and develop more effective targeted programs to nurture different types of entrepreneurial passion among students. Secondly, educators can use insights from this research to design more engaging and effective entrepreneurial education programs that foster passion among students. Thirdly, Entrepreneurial Passion develops positive feelings and emotions to maintain and outperform activities that they are passionate about. In this study, the students increased their motivation for entrepreneurship through Passion for People and institutions programs such as entrepreneurship activities to stimulate their Entrepreneurial Passion and increase their intention for entrepreneurship.

5.3 Research Limitations and Future Recommendations

Despite providing valuable insights, this study has several limitations to be highlighted. First, since the sample is limited to entrepreneurship students, the findings are not generalizable to settings outside the scope of this study. Moreover, our study considers only one domain of passion. Future research is encouraged to explore another form of passion (social mission and competition) and not only focus on Passion for People. Nevertheless, future researchers could expand the research on Entrepreneurial Passion with other antecedents of entrepreneurial research. Future research may use other research sampling methods that could be more scientifically representative of the population. Moreover, future research could include other mediator or moderator variables to have a better understanding of the antecedents of the Entrepreneurial Passion context. In addition, future researchers could use longitudinal research and could provide greater insight into how passions influence intention and behaviours over time in different study settings. Lastly, our findings suggest that cultural factors may influence university students to engage in entrepreneurial activities. However, the findings may differ or be more comparable across other variables related to enhancing entrepreneurship among young people.

5.4 Conclusion

Overall, this study underscores the importance of cultivating passions among students to motivate entrepreneurial careers. Cultivating these motivations can empower university students to create innovative ventures (Porkodi & Saranya, 2023). This research finding not only aims to shed light on the motivations behind young individuals who aspire to create impactful ventures but also offers valuable perspectives on developing future career paths. Ultimately, this research indicated that entrepreneurial value should extend beyond profit-driven motivation and aim to impart values of empathy, accountability, and purpose, developing future leaders who are motivated to make a difference in the world through their entrepreneurial ventures. This study provides a deeper understanding of how entrepreneurial passion, particularly the passion for people, fosters entrepreneurial intentions among university students. Identifying the key motivational forces that influence students' desires to pursue entrepreneurship can better nurture future entrepreneurs who are not only driven by financial success but also by a deep-rooted desire to build meaningful relationships and serve others also create positive change in society. The findings underscore the importance of educators and institutions in fostering environments that cultivate this altruistic fervor, where students are empowered to channel their passions into ventures that aim to build good relationships with others, contribute to community well-being, and improve the lives of others through entrepreneurship.

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