


Intention to Choose Education Course in UiTM Using Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) †

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Abstract: In line with the offering of a Master's of Education as a new course in UiTM Kelantan, this study was conducted to investigate the willingness of the community to enrol into the course based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The influences of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control towards intention were studied. A total of 347 data elements were obtained from employees working in both public and private sectors in Kelantan and Terengganu. The data were analysed using SmartPLS. The findings reveal a significant influence of attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on the intention of the respondents to enrol into an education course offered at UiTM. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to identify the factors that influence the intentions of the community members, in particular public servants, to choose courses offered at UiTM Kelantan.



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1. Introduction

The importance of education in increasing the productivity of individuals, workplaces and countries is undeniable since education is an ongoing process throughout a person's life. The learning process is not confined to only children and the working groups, but it also covers other community members including housewives, retirees, the disabled and the elderly. The ultimate goal of education is to improve the life quality of individuals and society; thus, the country is in dire need of knowledgeable human capital. Knowledge needs to be updated in order to produce human beings that are relevant to the progress and development of the nation [1]. A study by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) found that educational programs provided to all community members in the developing countries has fostered progress in the respective countries' development. As such, lifelong education has been recognized by the United Nations (UN) as the key to human resource development. Subsequently, the government has taken proactive measures in the education system to produce high quality human capital that can move towards the global economy era of knowledge-based communities [2]. All of these measures are designed to fulfil the country's aspirations to produce balanced, high quality and knowledgeable human capital from all angles.

The rapid growth of education has indirectly created many opportunities for school students and workers in both public and private sectors to pursue studies into higher education. As a result, the process of selecting higher education institutions and courses is increasingly difficult due to the existence of various public and private institutions of higher learning that offer a wide selection of quality and competitive programs [3]. This

has created intense challenges and competitions among public and private institutions of higher learning to attract the public in choosing the courses offered. As such, there is a need to understand the tendency of the public and private employees to pursue higher education and to identify the factors influencing the intention to continue their studies. In addition, the absence of studies conducted to determine the community's interest in pursuing education-related courses at UiTM Kelantan makes this study very significant. Therefore, this study is conducted to provide an accurate and recent perspectives of their intention to choose educational courses offered at UiTM Kelantan.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Intention to Enrol in Course

In social science, intention is an important indicator of an individual's readiness to accept a behaviour [4,5]. It is an aspect of motivation that affects one's behaviour and an indication of the willingness to perform an action or plan the effort required to perform an action [6]. In addition, a person's tendency to perform an action increases with the strength of one's intention [7].

This study involved the variables of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control as factors that determine one's intention to perform an act or behaviour. The choice of these three factors is based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The theory postulates that the more important one's intention to do something is, the higher the probability of an action being taken. With the support of previous studies, it is expected that attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control will influence the intention to choose an education course at UiTM Kelantan.

2.2. Attitude

Attitude is an internal factor of an individual which is defined as the positive or negative level of a person's feelings towards a particular desire or behaviour [4]. According to [8], the students' perceptions of a domain often influence their choice of a particular subject. This means that students with negative attitudes toward a particular subject will avoid choosing it while positive students will have a positive commitment towards the subject. In relation to this study, attitude is required in the decision-making process so as to continuously and consistently choose the course offered.

Previous studies have proven the influence of positive attitude on the choice of various courses such as language [9,10], accounting [11] and entrepreneurship [12–14]. The analysis of these studies found that attitude towards certain subjects has a significant relationship with the formation of behavioural intention. Considering these findings, it is expected that a positive attitude towards an education course will also reflect the same effect on the intention to choose an education course at UiTM Kelantan. As such, the first hypothesis is presented as:

H1. *Attitude positively influences the intention of choosing an education course at UiTM Kelantan.*

2.3. Subjective Norm

Subjective norm is a part of external motivation that plays a role in persuading a person to do an important action. It also refers to a person's perception of social pressure placed on them from a particular parent, friend or community so as to perform or not to perform the desired behaviour [15]. In the context of this study, this represents a person who has the impression that individuals influence him or her, such as family, employers, friends and community, and may encourage him or her to make a choice and be motivated to do the action. In other words, subjective norm determines an individual's action.

The results of previous studies support subjective norm as one of the important factors in choosing a college or university course. Social factors which consist of family and peers are seen to be the major factors influencing the selection of a course [16,17]. A study by [17] on student selection at a university in Indonesia found that the family factor is one of the five important factors besides funding fees, reputation, distance factor and

career prospects. Therefore, individuals are expected to choose the course offered at UiTM Kelantan if they are encouraged by the important individuals around them. This leads to the second hypothesis which is:

H2. *Subjective norm positively influences the intention of choosing an education course at UiTM Kelantan.*

2.4. Perceived Behavioural Control

Perceived behavioural control is an individual's perception according to which performing a behaviour is within his or her control and is often assessed by the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour [18]. It is an internal motivation that influences one's intention and action which then enables a person to set goals for action [18]. In this study, a person with high expectations for his or her behaviour will be more likely to choose a course of action despite facing various problems such as lack of interest, course information or confidence in his or her own ability and limited economic resources.

Findings of previous studies on the choice of accounting and entrepreneurship courses showed the influence of perceived behavioural control on the intention to choose such courses [12,14]. The study of [14] showed that a student's self-confidence is one of the major sources of motivation to choose an accounting course and pursue a career in that field. As such, one is expected to choose an education course offered at UiTM Kelantan if he or she has the confidence to face various difficulties. In relation to that, the third hypothesis is written as:

H3. *Perceived behavioural control positively influences the intention of choosing an education course at UiTM Kelantan.*

3. Research Framework

The selection of Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) [18] as the model of this study is based on the ability of this theory to explain the intention of choosing an action or behaviour. Several previous studies using the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) have provided strong empirical support on the two variables of attitude and subjective norm [15]. Nevertheless, this initial theory (TRA) was criticized by scholars for its lack of factors that could explain one's self-control in performing an action [18]. Furthermore, the variable perceived behavioural control is included in the model which describes the person's actual intention and behaviour. The rationale for choosing this variable is due to the fact that a person's behaviour is usually influenced by one's confidence in the ability to perform an action. The higher the expectation for behavioural control, the higher the intention to do an action which leads to high performance [18]. In particular, attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control are expected to be positively related to the intention to choose an education course offered at UiTM Kelantan.

4. Methodology

This study used a quantitative research approach through simple random probability sampling technique. The population of the study was employees working at public and private sectors in Kelantan and Terengganu. The number of the study sample was accurately described using the G*power software [19] (Version 3.1.9.6, University Kiel, Germany) which resulted into a minimum of 77 samples required for this study.

Data were obtained through questionnaire distribution using a 7-point Likert scale. A preliminary test was performed to confirm the item reliability of the study. The analysis found that the values of Cronbach's alpha for all variables exceeded 0.6, which were beyond the level suggested by [20]. Data collection was completed with a total of 355 questionnaires obtained from 400 questionnaires distributed to the respondents in the states of Kelantan and Terengganu. However, after the data cleaning process, a total of 347 data elements were usable for analysis in this study. The strength of the analysis was further enhanced by

using two stages of Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis, namely measurement model and structural model.

5. Findings

The demographic analysis of the respondents included 248 (71.5%) women and 99 (28.5%) men who are currently working in various public and private sectors in Kelantan and Terengganu. The majority of the respondents (84.7%) were from Kelantan while only 15.3% of them were from Terengganu. A total of 46 respondents (13.3%) were in the age group of 29 years, 106 (30.5%) were aged 30 to 39 years, 111 (32.0%) were aged 40 to 49 years and 84 respondents (24.2%) were over 50 years old. Most of the respondents earned over Ringgit Malaysia RM 6000 per month (43.8%), followed by an income between RM 5000 and RM 6000 (16.7%), RM 4001 and RM 5000 (17.3%), RM 3001 and RM 4000 (7.2%), RM 2001 and RM 3000 (5.8%) and less than RM 2000 (9.2%). The mode of study that the respondents chose was part-time for 209 respondents (60.2) followed by full-time for 138 (39.8%) respondents. The respondent’s choice of education course at UiTM Kelantan was driven by the following reasons: being near to home (72.1%), low costs (62.9), appropriate environment (27.4%), family support (24.4%) and others (8.1%).

5.1. Measurement Model Analysis

The evaluation of the measurement model involves convergent validity and reliability. Convergent validity refers to the level of agreement of several items or indicators in measuring the same concept or construct [21]. The results in Table 1 show that all items exceeded the 0.6 value for item reliability (factor loading) [22], the 0.7 value for rhoA path coefficient [23], the 0.5 value for AVE (Average Variance Extracted) and the 0.7 value for CR (Construct Reliability) [24]. All the values obtained exceeded the minimum requirement of convergent validity [25].

Table 1. Convergent validity analysis.

Construct	Item	Loading	Cronbach	rho _A	CR	AVE
ATT	D1	0.907	0.971	0.971	0.971	0.847
	D2	0.930				
	D3	0.916				
	D4	0.918				
	D5	0.942				
	D6	0.909				
SN	E1	0.954	0.956	0.956	0.956	0.843
	E2	0.903				
	E3	0.896				
	E4	0.918				
PBC	F1	0.871	0.885	0.886	0.885	0.794
	F2	0.911				
INT	G1	0.955	0.957	0.962	0.959	0.824
	G2	0.945				
	G3	0.927				
	G4	0.912				
	G5	0.791				

ATT: Attitude, INT: Intention, PBC: Perceived Behavioural Control, SN: Subjective Norm, rhoA: Reliability indicator, AVE: Average Variance Extracted, CR: Construct Reliability.

In addition, a discriminant validity test was performed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion. The analysis was performed to detect the presence of a collinearity issue or a cross-loading conflict in the research items. According to [25], HTMT is the latest criterion in SmartPLS software (SmartPLS GmbH, Version 3.3.9, Boenningstedt, Germany) that can accurately determine discriminant validity. Through this test, a construct value greater than 0.85 indicates discriminant validity has been fulfilled [20]. The analysis for this study found that all constructs had values below the HTMT value of 0.85, which is the

maximum value for discriminant validity. As such, discriminant validity of all constructs was achieved as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Discriminant validity analysis.

	ATT	INT	PBC	SN
ATT				
INT	0.775			
PBC	0.726	0.781		
SN	0.835	0.778	0.808	

ATT: Attitude, INT: Intention, PBC: Perceived Behavioural Control, SN: Subjective Norm.

Figure 1 shows the SmartPLS measurement model results. The R^2 value of business success was 0.704, suggesting that 70.4 percent of the course selection intention can be explained by the three independent variables. Once the evaluation of the measurement model was completed, a further analysis was carried out which included structural model analysis for hypothesis testing.

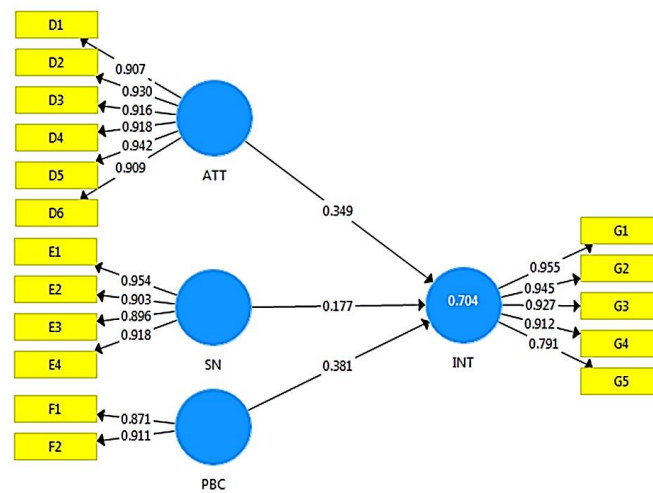


Figure 1. Measurement model.

5.2. Structural Model Analysis

Prior to the structural model analysis, a lateral collinearity test was performed. Even though discriminant validity and HTMT ratio showed no collinearity issue for all research constructs, conducting lateral collinearity testing is necessary. This is because the existence of this type of collinearity may impede the research findings, since it has a tendency to disrupt the causal relationship between the predictors and the dependent variables of the research model. This occurs when two variables that are fundamentally related to each other are found to measure the same construct [26].

Table 3 depicts the results for the lateral collinearity test. The Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) values for all independent variables (ATT, SN and PBC) were lesser than five [27], which indicated that lateral collinearity was not an issue in this study.

Table 3. Lateral collinearity analysis.

Construct	Intention (VIF Value)
ATT	2.93
PBC	2.32
SN	3.59

$VIF \leq 5.0$ [27].

This study developed three hypotheses in determining the direct relationship between the constructs of the study. According to [24], a research hypothesis can be determined

through bootstrapping analysis using 5000 sampling methods in SmartPLS software. The findings show that all three research hypotheses were supported by *t* values greater than or equal to 1.645 with attitude (ATT) ($\beta = 0.349, p < 0.01$), subjective norm (SN) ($\beta = 0.177, p < 0.05$) and perceived behavioural control (PBC) ($\beta = 0.381, p < 0.01$) positively influenced course selection intention while the number of variance explained by these three variables accounted for 70.4%. Therefore, H1, H2 and H3 were fully supported. The R^2 value of 0.704 exceeded the value of 0.26 as proposed by [28] which showed that ATT, SN and PBC influence the intention to choose an education course at UiTM Kelantan. The structural model of hypothesis analysis is presented in Figure 2.

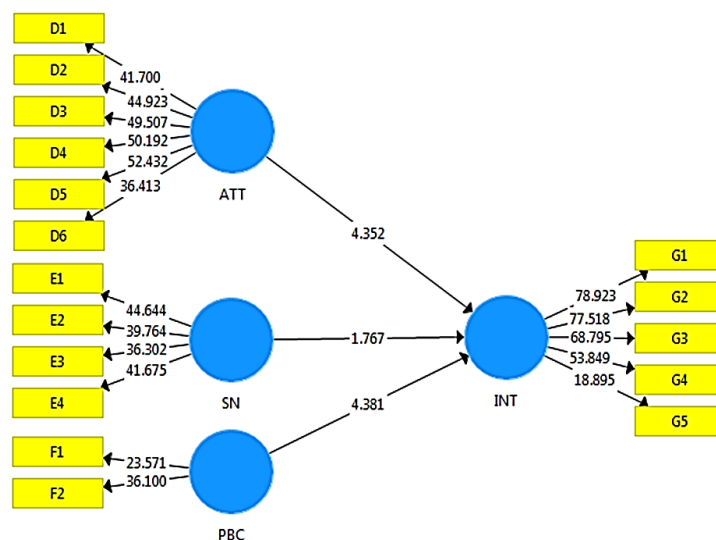


Figure 2. Structural model.

Table 4 shows the results of hypothesis analysis for this research model. The value $R^2 = 0.704$ indicates that 70.4% of the variance in the intention to choose an education course was explained by the three study variables of ATT, SN and PBC. According to [29] on the level of R^2 ($0.67 = \text{high}$; $0.33 = \text{medium}$; $0.19 = \text{low}$), the value for this study was considered high. In addition, as stated by [28] on the guideline of effect size (f^2) ($0.02 = \text{small}$; $0.15 = \text{medium}$; $0.35 = \text{large}$), this study had small and medium effect sizes since the values were between 0.023 and 0.166. Perceived behavioural control had a modest effect on the intention to choose an education course while attitude and subjective norm had little effect on the intention to choose a course. Prediction relevance value (Q^2) beyond the value of zero suggests that the variable has a predictive ability based on the intention to choose an education course [24]. The acceptable data-model fit is determined through the goodness-of-fit measures (*GoFs*) [29]. If the average square root value of AVE multiplied by R^2 exceeds the value proposed by [30] ($GoF_{\text{small}} = 0.01$; $GoF_{\text{medium}} = 0.25$; $GoF_{\text{large}} = 0.36$), the model fit of the study is achieved. The analysis found that the obtained value was high at 0.694, which exceeded the proposed value level.

Table 4. Hypothesis analysis.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	SE	T Value	Result	R^2	f^2	Q^2	GoF
H ₁	ATT → INT	0.349 **	0.08	4.352	Supported	0.704	0.122	0.526	0.694
H ₂	SN → INT	0.177 *	0.100	1.767	Supported		0.023		
H ₃	PBC → INT	0.381 **	0.087	4.381	Supported		0.166		

ATT: Attitude, INT: Intention, PBC: Perceived Behavioural Control, SN: Subjective Norm ** $p < 0.01$, t value > 2.33 ; * $p < 0.05$, t value > 1.645 .

6. Discussion

The objective of this study is to investigate the influence of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control on the intention to choose an education course at UiTM Kelantan. The findings support all the hypotheses of the study which demonstrates that attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control influence the intention to choose an education course. The main perceived contributor is behavioural control, followed by attitude and subjective norm.

It can be seen in this study that all factors collectively influence a person's intention to perform an action. All factors accounted for 70.4% of the variance in the intention to choose an education course at UiTM Kelantan. However, the strength of the relationship is different. Perceived behavioural control was found to significantly contribute to the intention of choosing education course as compared to the other two factors with a moderate effect size ($f^2 = 0.166$). This result is similar to previous studies that examined the relationship of perceived behavioural control with the intention to select language, accounting and entrepreneurship courses [9–14]. In other words, employees involved in this study tend to choose an education course offered at UiTM Kelantan despite facing challenges such as limited economic resources and lack of adequate information on the offered course. However, they are still unsure of their interest and self-confidence in choosing an education course since there is no relationship analysis of these two items with perceived behavioural control.

Positive attitude towards an education course is the second important factor that influences the selection of an education course at UiTM Kelantan. This finding is also parallel to previous studies which showed that attitude is an important factor in influencing respondents' choice of university courses [9,10,12–14]. Based on this result, the offering of an education course at UiTM Kelantan is very much anticipated, and especially at the undergraduate level since such course is not offered at any UiTM campuses, with the exception of UiTM's main campus in Shah Alam.

The last factor influencing the respondents' selection of an education course at UiTM Kelantan is subjective norm. The finding of this study corresponds with previous studies that viewed the family factor as a source of motivation for choosing such course [14,16,17]. In this study, the family is seen to be the main motivator for the respondents to choose the course, followed by the community, employers and friends. Family and community are key references in the selection of a course, which may be due to the experience of family members or successful community members in the education field.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, internal factors such as perceived behavioural control and positive attitude are significant factors that influence the selection of an education course in UiTM Kelantan as compared to external factors such as subjective norm. Despite the obstacles and challenges, the majority of the employees are positive towards choosing this course. Although subjective norm has the least influence within the research model, its influence is still significant since the existence of family members, friends and community is still relevant in the selection of an education course at UiTM Kelantan. Therefore, these three factors need to be taken into account as they greatly influence the intention to choose an education course offered at UiTM Kelantan.

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