

# Inspirational Hospitality Entrepreneurship Model In Cultivating The Entrepreneurship Education Among Malaysian Higher Institutions Hospitality Students

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**Abstract:** The Graduates Statistics 2020 data from the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) reported a 4.4 per cent increase of graduates from 5.13 million in 2019 to 5.36 million students in 2020. However, in the same year, the Ministry of Higher Education revealed that the marketability of Malaysian graduates had declined from 86.2 per cent in 2019 to 84.4 per cent in 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Aligned with the issues, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education has endorsed entrepreneurship education in all higher education institutions as an initiative to encourage students to enrol in entrepreneurship courses and activities. This prompted the current study, which sought to determine the relationship between psychological capital (PsyCap), higher education institutions (HEIs), and entrepreneurial intention (EI) among Malaysian hospitality students. In the first phase of the current study, a quantitative study employing the sequential explanatory mixed method design was conducted via an online survey at five (5) public HEIs in Malaysia, yielding a total sample size of 297 participants. Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) software was used to analyse the study's data structuring obtained via probability sampling. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted in the second phase of the current study to get in-depth view of the relevant skills of successful entrepreneurs. The data were analyses using NVIVO 12. The study has successfully purposed a model for entrepreneurship education, the Inspirational Hospitality Entrepreneurship Model (IHEM), which highlights the eight relevant skills to being a successful hospitality entrepreneur. Overall, the current study discovers that PsyCap has an impact on students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship. This study perhaps could benefits to stakeholders, specifically those in higher institutions, by validating the emerging need for hospitality students to be equipped with high spirit, high creativity, and a wealth of new ideas to produce more young hospitality entrepreneurs for Malaysia to be resilient in the future.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Education, Entrepreneurial Intention, Hospitality Students, Psychological Capital

## 1. Introduction

The intention to start a business and become an entrepreneur is cultivated through knowledge, particularly that is attained through entrepreneurial education (Fatimah & Purdianto, 2020). Entrepreneurial education includes the process of generating knowledge and skills needed to run a business, which helps to improve individuals' abilities to generate business ideas. In short, the importance of education, specifically entrepreneurial education, in instilling entrepreneurial intent in students should be acknowledged (Gurel, Altinay, & Daniele, 2010, as cited in Zhang et al., 2020), especially because entrepreneurial education has an effect on entrepreneurial intent.

Meanwhile, entrepreneurship education is a teaching effort aimed at improving business ability and individual characteristics. It is specifically incorporated into the prevailing curriculum and made more appealing in its delivery to foster students' entrepreneurial intention to become an entrepreneur (Fatimah & Purdianto, 2020). At the institutional level, the Ministry of Higher Education has urged HEIs to establish or define policies and lines of responsibility that involve synergy interactions between involved parties to stimulate bright career pathway policies and support academics who are involved in the entrepreneurship education (Higher Education Malaysia, 2021). In short, HEIs are expected to continue improving entrepreneurship education in order to encourage more students to pursue their entrepreneurial intentions.

According to Zhang et al. (2020), entrepreneurial intention enables students of tourism and hospitality to translate their intentions into deeds, which subsequently results in the creation of more employment opportunities and an uptick in the economy (Altinay, Madanoglu, Daniele, & Lashley, 2012). Four (4) categories of psychological capital (PsyCap) – positive, theory-based, measurable, developmental, and performance-related – have been identified by prior research to be the best requirements for inclusion (Badran & Youssef-morgan, 2015). Luthans (2002) defines PsyCap as the positive psychological state of development of an individual that includes four (4) components, namely self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency. The importance of PsyCap is supported by a previous study, which mentioned that psychological encouragement could impact people to lean towards entrepreneurship (Prabhu, 2019). However, empirical research on the application of PsyCap to entrepreneurs is limited (Mahfud et al., 2020).

In this regard, researchers sought information regarding the programmes or the departments that monitored and performed entrepreneurship activities in a number of respective institutions. This is prior to Boldureanu et al. (2020), who have highlighted that entrepreneurship programmes organised by institutions may influence students' attributes towards entrepreneurship. In addition, other research quoted in Liu et al. (2019) reveals that entrepreneurship education helps students develop entrepreneurial skills by equipping them with the necessary entrepreneurial abilities, such as the ability to deal with environmental uncertainty and face new challenges (Brian and Norma, 2010; Seikkula-Leino, 2011; Premand et al., 2016). Different HEIs have different entrepreneurship departments which are in charge with entrepreneurship education and programmes, namely: Malaysian Academy of SME & Entrepreneurship Development (MASMED), Centre of Entrepreneurial Development and Graduate Marketability (CEM), Malaysian Graduate School of Entrepreneurship and Business (MGSEB), Co-operative and Entrepreneurship Development Institute (CEDI), and Entrepreneurship Research and Development Centre (ERDEC). Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationship between psychological capital and entrepreneurial intention among students majoring in hospitality studies in order to fill in the gap in the literature on entrepreneurship education, as well as to investigate the moderating effect that HEIs have on the stated relationship.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)**

According to Chiamaka and Aguanunu (2014), studies on entrepreneurial intentions have laid the groundwork for a more in-depth examination of people's intentions. This is because entrepreneurial intention enables individuals to create new products by seizing opportunities and encourages risk-taking business behaviours (Ramayah and Harun (2005), cited in Astiana et al. (2022)), It is also the driver of entrepreneurial activities because entrepreneurial activities are the result of an individual's interests. Therefore, people with no entrepreneurship intent are unlikely to become entrepreneurs. For instance, the strength of a person's intention to become self-employed would be determined by their risk tolerance and preference for independence (Hernández-Sánchez et al., 2020).

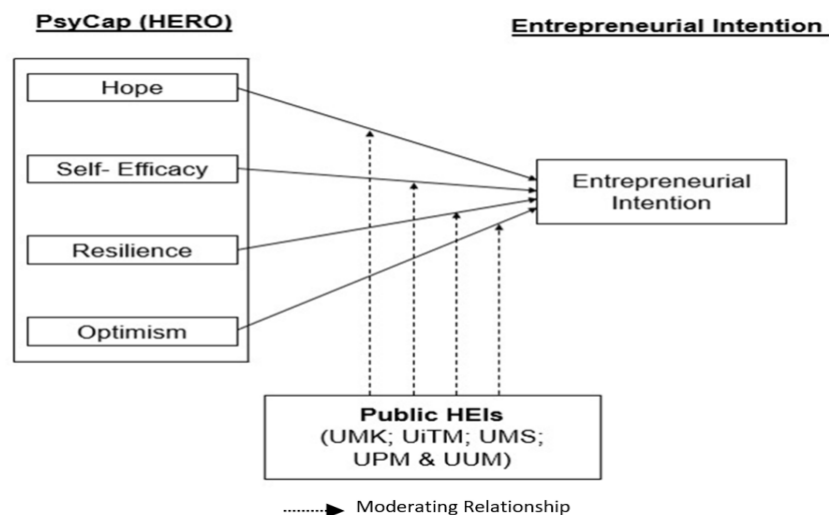
### **2.2 Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education increases people's desire to become entrepreneurs (Cheng et al. 2009). The findings of previous research has found that entrepreneurship education and training promote an entrepreneurial mindset in students and equip them with requisite entrepreneurial attributes and skills upon graduation (Nwokolo, 2018). This is because when students receive necessary entrepreneurial skills, obtained through entrepreneurship education, they feel motivated to pursue entrepreneurship as a career in the future (Fatoki and Oni 2014 in Shah et al., 2020). The positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions has been discovered by previous scholars (e.g., Costa et al. 2016 as cited in Shah et al., 2020). Other scholars, including Shah et al. (2020), Packham et al. (2010), and Mushtaq et al. (2011), have also found a positive correlation between entrepreneurship education and the intention to start new businesses. Jaafar and Abdul Aziz (2008) reached the similar conclusions as they found that taking entrepreneurship courses have a significant impact on one's intention to start new businesses later in their careers. However, various encouragement and training programmes, as well as the implementation of entrepreneurship courses in institutions, face a low rate of success in entrepreneurship education and its exposure in developing economies (Peters et al., 2018; Ibidunni et al., 2020). Previous studies have mentioned that inculcating entrepreneurial skills in university curricula is essential for the development of future entrepreneurs (Din et al., 2017) to ensure that the graduates meet the professional expectations and requirements of their respective fields (Malaysian Qualification Agency, 2019). Therefore, all university students' curricula should include at least one core module focusing on entrepreneurship. For example, all university students should be introduced to the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and its significance (Gamede & Uleanya, 2018), including how entrepreneurship produces more job opportunities and contributes to the progressive quality of life and economy of a country by producing creative, innovative, and resourceful young entrepreneurs to better the country's future. HEIs need to restructure their curricula to mandate entrepreneurship education in all disciplines, thereby transforming the country into an entrepreneurial nation by creating an innovative and entrepreneurial culture that permeates all aspects of society (Nwokolo, 2018)

In addition, entrepreneurship allows for the creation of new job opportunities and a reduction in unemployment because of the positive correlation between employment and entrepreneurial businesses (Otache, 2021). Hospitality operators who manage to establish enterprises are considered successful entrepreneurs. Therefore, Rae and Woodier-Harris (2013) suggest the need to strengthen the potential of hospitality entrepreneurship education to boost the career opportunities and employability of graduates, either by enabling them to build careers as self-employed (Otache et al., 2021) or entrepreneurs (Fabeil et al., 2022), or by growing their future value as an entrepreneurial team member. HEIs should form collaborations with their students and business communities to promote self-employment as a career path. Policymakers in Malaysia should revise regulations and legislation to boost private sector participation and contribution to the progression of local education

and training institutions. In short, a country significantly depends on the involvement of business and industry players to continuously produce high-quality and skillful workforces and labours (Puad, 2016). Therefore, it is prominent that the government, HEIs, and training centres collaborate with major stakeholders, namely employers and industry players, to encourage their contribution to entrepreneurship training programmes aimed at educating and training future entrepreneurs (Puad, 2016). Entrepreneurship education provided through the training programmes has the potential to stimulate business success, which necessitates entrepreneurial intention and behaviour required of future entrepreneurs (Usman & Yennita, 2019). Moreover, an entrepreneur is considered to have entrepreneurial intention following their ability to acknowledge their intentions to start a new business venture in the future and proactively prepare for it (Thompson, 2002 cited in Ip et al., 2021). Zhang et al. (2020), in their study, specify that entrepreneurial intention and consciousness are channelled into entrepreneurial behaviour, which will eventually be beneficial to the economy, particularly in terms of job creation (Altinay et al., 2012). Because of this, entrepreneurial intention is thought to be one of the best indicators of entrepreneurial behaviour (Tsai et al., 2016). As a consequence, enhancing the entrepreneurial intentions of hospitality students is crucial for the present and future development of the hospitality industry (Tsai et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2020).

The current study used the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), social learning theory (SLT), and positive psychological capital (PsyCap) to measure EI. This study focused on the EI among final-year hospitality students. A specific group of students was chosen because recognising the influencing factors of a particular group's decision to pursue entrepreneurship as a career, especially the motives influencing their career path and motivation when faced with setbacks, is critical. The COVID-19 pandemic had negatively impacted unemployment rates which have also affected hospitality students. As the current study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic was considered a setback. In light of this, the role of PsyCap on the relationship between EI and hospitality students was thoroughly examined in the current study. Given the importance of new businesses to the economy and society, this topic should be acknowledged and researched further.



**Fig. 1** The Study Framework

### 2.3 Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

An individual's state of positive psychological development, known as positive psychological capital (PsyCap), is characterised by four psychological traits (Mahfud et al., 2020), namely hope, self-efficacy, resiliency, and optimism (Luthans, 2002). The components of PsyCap are able to gauge the level of individual's motivation (Zhang et al., 2020). According to Wernsing (2014), entrepreneurs should have all four psychological attributes of psychological capital (Ephrem et al., 2019). However,

information on the combination of attributes that influences a person's entrepreneurial intention is scarce (Ephrem et al., 2019).

According to the findings of a study that was carried out by Badran and Youssef-Morgan (2015), the hope agency may be able to contribute to the fight against indecision, procrastination, and apathy. This is because hope facilitates the process of discovering effective solutions to problems by increasing an individual's creativity, innovation, and motivation. In addition to that, hope saves individuals from feeling inadequate and frustrated in circumstances where goal frustration is prevalent, leading to more favourable appraisals and a greater degree of satisfaction (Kim-Prieto et al., 2005 in Badran & Youssef-morgan, 2015). Later studies by Jin (2017) and Mahfud et al. (2020) also discover that hope is the main motivating factor that influences an individual's intention to launch a business. As a result, the following hypothesis 1 is proposed: (H1a): There is a positive relationship between hope and entrepreneurial intention.

Possessing high self-efficacy is important to becoming a successful entrepreneur (Hunt et al., 2019). According to Ojiaku et al. (2018), self-efficacy is a strong belief held by a person that they will and should successfully execute the responsibilities assigned, which is the element directly associated with a person's decision to pursue entrepreneurship. Hunt et al. (2019), Bandura (1986), and Kirkwood (2009) simplify self-efficacy as a person's belief in their capacity to recognise and effectively perform responsibilities. In a study on self-efficacy, Zhao et al. (2000) as cited by Garaika and Margahana (2019) find that self-efficacy has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions. Therefore, it is believed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly influences a person's intention to start a business. Hypothesis 2 is then developed as follows: (H1b): There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention. Optimistic people strive to achieve their goals because optimism is the strongest predictor of success which can be learned and developed (Seligman, 1998, cited by Papanikos, 2011). Scheier and Carver (1992) mentioned in Papanikos (2011) support that an optimist would try to do their best, learn from mistakes, and usually hold positive views regarding the future. Scholars, through their studies, have proven that entrepreneurs are more optimistic than non-entrepreneurs (Sebora, 2011). In sum, these studies show that optimism positively drives entrepreneurial intention. In other words, it is expected that an entrepreneurship career will end up positively. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is offered as follows: (H1c): There is a positive relationship between optimism and entrepreneurial intention.

Based on previous research, one of the critical characteristics of a successful entrepreneur is resilience (Boldureanu et al., 2020). As an entrepreneur, one will confront hardships due to encounters with uncertain situations. Hence, resilience, which is the capacity to overcome adversity, conflict, and failure, as well as positive events, progress, and increased responsibilities (Luthans, 2002), is needed to be a good entrepreneur (Papanikos, 2011). In support of this view, resiliency can weather any business's ups and downs since a business venture does not always go according to plan (Abdullah et al., 2018), allowing entrepreneurs to emerge stronger than ever (Duchek, 2018). Therefore, hypothesis 4 is offered as follows: (H1d): There is a positive relationship between resilience and entrepreneurial intention.

### **3. Research Methodology**

Sequential explanatory mixed method design was chosen with the first phase using a quantitative method and the second phase followed by the qualitative method. To collect data, two methods of data collection were used: 1) an online survey on final-year students, and 2) semi-structured interviews with selected successful entrepreneurs. The data gathered from the online survey was analysed via Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) software and the data from interviews was analysed using NVIVO 12.

### 3.1 Quantitative Method

The quantitative method was utilised to investigate the interrelation between psychological capital and HEIs, as well as their relationship with entrepreneurial intention among Malaysian hospitality students. Full-time final-year hospitality students enrolled in hospitality programmes including Hotel Management, Food Service Management, Tourism Management, Culinary Arts, and Food Technology in 2020 at five (5) public HEIs in Malaysia: Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) participated in this study. The hospitality programmes offered in the selected five public HEIs were endorsed by the Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR). Students from the selected HEIs were chosen using a simple random sampling technique, allowing an equal chance for all students to become participants of the current study. As a result of using online software called G\*Power Sample Size Calculation, which allows complete control over the percentage of the margin of error to regulate the acceptable sample size, a total of 297 sample size was determined.

This study adopted two (2) constructs which were PsyCap and EI. To achieve the objectives of the current study, the study's questionnaire was developed based on the items in the study titled Critical Factors Identification and Prediction of Tourism and Hospitality Students' Entrepreneurial Intention in China by Zhang et al. (2020). However, the demographic items were modified and pilot tested according to the study's setting. The modified online self-completed questionnaire was distributed to the study's participants to analyse the participants' psychological capital and entre. Section A of the questionnaire consisted of five (5) items on student demographic profiles that were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (5). The probability sampling data structure was then analysed via the partial least squares-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) programme. Following a reliability test, psychological capital produced positive Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.901 for hope, 0.900 for self-efficacy, 0.848 for optimism, 0.882 for resilience, and 0.941 for entrepreneurial ambition. The results were considered high, hence acceptable to be used.

### 3.2 Respondents' Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows the participants' demographic information (N = 297). Participants aged between 21 and 23 accounted for 53.9 per cent of the total number of participants. The mode of the programme indicated that 71 per cent of the participants were degree students and 45.1 per cent of the participants majored in the hotel management programme. There were 69.7 per cent of the participants who did not participate in their university's Entrepreneurship Club. Thus, an overall of 30.3% were involved in an entrepreneurship programme organised by a university. In terms of student's family background, out of all participants, 52.9 per cent did not come from a family with entrepreneurial backgrounds. Last but not least, the majority of the participants (67.7 %) had prior working experience.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of participants

Demographic Variables	Categories	Per cent
Gender	Male	21.9%
	Female	78.1%
Age	18 – 20	24.2%
	21 – 23	53.9%
	24 and above	21.9%
Programme Mode	Diploma	29.0%
	Degree	71.0%

Demographic Variables	Categories	Per cent
Programme	All hospitality programme	100%
University affiliation	UMS	9.4%
	UPM	6.1%
	UMK	6.1%
	UUM	5.4%
	UiTM	73.1%

\*Source: Author's own conception

### 3.3 Measurement Tools

The partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to empirically examine the theoretical framework of the current study. According to Sarstedt et al. (2017), the use of PLS-SEM can facilitate data analysis with SmartPLS software by allowing access to the measurement and structural models for reflective constructs and controlling statistical analysis for reflective indicators. Also, the four items from the scale developed in earlier research were used to conduct an analysis of the interrelationship between psychological capital and entrepreneurial intention among students majoring in hospitality management. The list of methods used to quantify each construct is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Convergent validity results

(PsyCap) Construct	Item	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha > 0.7$ )	Outer Loading ( $> 0.7$ )	AVE ( $> 0.5$ )	Composite Reliability ( $> 0.7$ )
Hope	HO1	0.900	0.817	0.770	0.931
	HO2		0.888		
	HO3		0.913		
	HO4		0.889		
Self-Efficacy	SE1	0.901	0.855	0.771	0.931
	SE2		0.900		
	SE3		0.896		
	SE4		0.861		
Optimism	OP1	0.850	0.826	0.771	0.910
	OP2		0.916		
	OP3		0.889		
Resilience	RE1	0.883	0.890	0.811	0.928
	RE2		0.922		
	RE3		0.889		
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI1	0.941	0.908	0.850	0.958
	EI2		0.930		
	EI3		0.934		
	EI4		0.915		

The convergent validity analysis results revealed a high level of internal reliability and consistency based on the composite reliability values for all of the reflective constructs. Based on the details in Table 2, the coefficients alpha values for all constructs exceeded the minimum acceptable values, with hope having an alpha value of 0.900, self-efficacy having an alpha value of 0.901, optimism having an alpha value of 0.850, and resilience having an alpha value of 0.883. These findings demonstrated that each latent construct had good internal consistency, concurring with the findings in earlier studies (see Hussain et al., 2018).

In addition to the convergent validity analysis, the standardised factor loadings were employed to confirm the validity of all constructs (Hair et al., 2019; Bazkiaei et al., 2020). However, the scores showed that each loading of the reflective indicator factor was between 0.848 and 0.901, exceeding the recommended point of 0.50, hence establishing the convergent validity of each construct. Also, the validity of discrimination of all constructs was calculated using the AVE (Hair et al., 2019). The AVE ranged from 0.769 to 0.810.

### 3.4 Discriminant Validity

This study assessed the construct level validity using the Fornell-Larcker criteria. According to the criteria, the squared inter-construct correlation of each construct should not be greater than the AVEs of the other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In Table , the square roots of the AVE are shown in bold, with non-bold values representing the value of intercorrelation across constructs. The AVE's square roots should be greater than the off-diagonal sections' square roots. The findings satisfied Fornell and Larcker's requirements. As a result, the scales had sufficient discriminant validity. It is possible to conclude that the model's discriminant validity was established.

**Table 3.** Result of Discriminant Validity using Fornell Lacker

Latent construct	EI	HO	OP	RE	SE
<i>EI</i>	<b>0.922</b>				
<i>HO</i>	0.495	<b>0.878</b>			
<i>OP</i>	0.518	0.710	<b>0.878</b>		
<i>RE</i>	0.462	0.751	0.690	<b>0.900</b>	
<i>SE</i>	0.472	0.824	0.710	0.788	<b>0.878</b>

Notes: Entrepreneurial Intention (EI), Hope (HO), Optimism (OP), Resilience (RE), Self-Efficacy (SE)

\* The bolded diagonal elements show the square root of the extracted average variance extracted (AVE). These values should be greater than interconstruct correlations for the values to have adequate discriminant validity (off-diagonal elements). \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01

### 3.5 Qualitative Method

A qualitative method was employed to figure out the successful entrepreneurs' perspectives on the important skills that assist to become a successful entrepreneur. This study employed an asynchronous interview on respondents via Google form disseminated through focal person due to the inability to conduct face-to-face interviews during the pandemic. Furthermore, the respondents' email addresses were retrieved and their anonymity was specified in the introduction section. Asynchronous interviews are prevalent in qualitative research as it is cost-effective and provide in-depth information (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014). This study anticipated a small sample size using the purposive sampling technique to obtain industrial viewpoints. A collection of structured and semi-structured questions consisting of seven demographic questions, and five questions on their insights on hospitality graduates' employability during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was pilot-tested on three industry representatives and one academician to ensure expertise and clarity by Ahmad et al. (2017); Hossain et al. (2018); Abbas and Sagsan (2019); Tejan and Sabil (2019) and Lisá et al. (2019) studies on graduates' employability were empirically reviewed. Table 4 illustrates the interview questions utilised and referred to interview protocol refinement (IPR) as suggested by Castillo, 2016.

**Table 4.** Interview Questions with IPR

Category	Questions
<b>Industry background</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organisation type</li> <li>2. Hospitality sector [please state your business sector (Hotel, Cafe, Resort)]</li> </ol>



Category	Questions
<b>Hospitality graduate's employability during the COVID-19 pandemic</b>	3. Company name (you may exclude this question if needed)
	4. Job title (position)
	5. Gender
	6. Age
	7. Experience (years)
	1. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the hospitality graduates' employability in your establishment?
	2. Is your organisation hiring graduates during this COVID-19 pandemic?
	3. Could you elucidate the graduates' essential skills required during the COVID-19 crisis?
	4. Please indicate your overall opinion regarding the COVID-19 impacts on the hospitality industry towards hospitality graduates' employability?
	5. Please highlight an area in which higher learning institutions should focus to improve graduate employability?

Various qualitative research on the COVID-19 pandemic and the hospitality industry were reviewed and respective scholars have suggested that the number of respondents ranged between 14 to 30 (Yap & Ineson 2009; Phelan, 2015; Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021). Thus, 23 of the 50 targeted respondents consented to this study, yielding a 46 per cent response rate. The NVIVO 12 software was employed to analyse the transcripts, while the data was subsequently categorised, grouped, and tabulated. Table 5 depicts the respondents' demography.

**Table 5.** Respondents' profile

Participant coding	Organisation type	Hospitality sector	Organisational Designation	Age (in years)	Years of experience
P1	Private limited company	5 Star Hotel	HR Executive	25 – 31 years	6 – 10 years
P2	Sole-trader	4 Star Hotel	HR Manager	39 – 45 years	6 – 10 years
P3	Sole-trader	Food and Beverage	Director/Owner	39 – 45 years	>11 years
P4	Government Agency	State Tourism Office	Administrative Officer	39 – 45 years	>11 years
P5	Private limited company	4 Star Hotel	Front Office Manager	>46 years	>11 years
P6	Private limited company	Food and Beverage	Director/Owner	25 – 31 years	6 – 10 years
P7	Private limited company	5 Star Hotel	Training Manager	>46 years	>11 years
P8	Private limited company	Food and Beverage	Supervisor	25 – 31 years	6 – 10 years
P9	Private limited company	Cruise Ship	Restaurant Manager	25 – 31 years	1 – 5 years
P10	Private limited company	5 Star Hotel	Senior HR Executive	32 – 38 years	1 – 5 years
P11	Sole-trader	Food and Beverage	Owner	32 – 38 years	6 – 10 years
P12	Limited Company	4 Star Hotel	HR Assistant	25 – 31 years	1 – 5 years

Participant coding	Organisation type	Hospitality sector	Organisational Designation	Age (in years)	Years of experience
P13	Private limited company	Food and Beverage	Founder	25 – 31 years	6 – 10 years
P14	Partnership	Food and Beverage	HR Manager	25 – 31 years	1 – 5 years
P15	Private limited company	Food and Beverage	Barista (Owner)	25 – 31 years	6 – 10 years
P16	Sole-trader	Food and Beverage	Owner	32 – 38 years	6 – 10 years
P17	Sole-trader	Food and Beverage	Human Resource	25 – 31 years	1 – 5 years
P18	Private limited company	4 Star Hotel	Human Resources	39 – 45 years	>11 years
P19	Sole-trader	Food and Beverage	Co-owner	25 – 31 years	6 – 10 years
P20	Private limited company	Food and Beverage	Owner	25 – 31 years	1 – 5 years
P21	Other	Food and Beverage	Assistant Manager	25 – 31 years	1 – 5 years
P22	Private limited company	Food and Beverage	Owner	25 – 31 years	1 – 5 years
P23	Sole-trader	4 Star Hotel	HR Executive	32 - 38 years	6- 10 years

#### 4. Data Analysis

##### 4.1 The Path Analysis

The result of the path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) (see

Table ) reveals that the values had a standardised value between -1 and +1 (values from -0.014 to 0.491). The value indicates the relationship between variables with path coefficients that are close to +1 indicating a strong positive relationship, path coefficients that are close -1 indicating a weaker positive relationship, and path coefficients that are close to zero indicating a weaker positive relationship (Hair et al., 2017). The  $\beta$  of the current study showed that there was a positive relationship, whereby hope, self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience significantly and positively influence EI. However, based on the  $p$ -values, where  $p < 0.05$ , only optimism was supported.

**Table 6.** Path Coefficients, Observed T-statistics, and Significance Levels

Hypothesis path	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	T Values	P Values	Decision
H1a: HO -> EI	0.080	0.965	0.335	Not Supported
H1b: SE -> EI	0.017	0.166	0.868	Not Supported
H1c: OP -> EI	0.221	2.594	0.010	Supported
H1d: RE -> EI	0.041	0.463	0.644	Not Supported

Notes: Entrepreneurial Intention (EI), Hope (HO), Optimism (OP), Resilience (RE), Self-Efficacy (SE)

\*the path coefficients were significant at 95% confidence level (\*) if t-statistic > 1.96 ( $p < 0.05$ ) and the path coefficients was significant at 99% confidence level (\*\*) if t-statistic >2.58 ( $p < 0.01$ ). Note: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

## 4.2 Direct Path Analysis

According to the reflective analysis of the research model, only one out of four relationships is statistically significant (see Table 6). First, H1a and H1b were not supported because the  $p$ -value for hope was 0.335, which was higher than 0.05. However, H1c was supported because the  $p$ -value score was lesser than the  $p$ -value,  $p < 0.01$ , indicating a statistically significant relationship between optimism and entrepreneurial intention. Lastly, H1d was rejected as the analyses indicated  $p$ -value score of 0.644, which was more than  $p > 0.05$ .

## 4.3 Predictive Relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>)

Q<sup>2</sup> values determine the predictive relevance of a model. A model with Q<sup>2</sup> values greater than zero ( $> 0$  is good) is considered predictive because the values indicate well-reconstruction (Henseler et al., 2009). To calculate the Q<sup>2</sup> value in the current study, the procedure used was SmartPLS's blindfolding procedure. Meanwhile, to determine the predictive relevance of the PLS path model, blindfolding with an omission distance of  $D = 7$  was employed. As shown in Table 7, the Q<sup>2</sup> values were greater than zero, indicating that the factors (PsyCap and PHEIs) have predictive relevance to Entrepreneurial EI. As a result, the predictions made in the current study to determine endogenous variables using exogenous variables are accurate.

**Table 7.** Q<sup>2</sup> Assessments of Structural Model for First Order Structural Model

	Endogenous LV	R <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>	Predictive Relevance
Exogenous Variables	PsyCap:			
	Hope	0.603	0.432	Sufficient
	Self-Efficacy	0.625	0.448	Sufficient
	Resilience	0.579	0.431	Sufficient
	Optimism	0.554	0.395	Sufficient
Exogenous Variables	EI	0.455	0.349	Sufficient

\*Source: Blindfolding procedure in PLS-SEM Analysis

## 4.4 Moderating Analysis

The results of the moderating analysis reveal the statistical significance of any interaction, with the moderating effect higher than 0.05 considered insignificant. However, the current study found the moderating analysis had a  $p$ -value of 0.239. Therefore, the relationship between PsyCap and EI was not moderated by the presence of HEIs ( $\beta = -0.117$ ,  $t = 1.120$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). These results indicate that HEIs do not positively affect the relationship between PsyCap and EI (see Table8).

**Table 8.** The moderating effect of HEIs between PsyCap and EI

	( $\beta$ )	SD	t-value	p-value	BootCI (2.5%, 97.5%)	Decision
HEIs -> EI	0.087	0.098	0.885	0.398	-0.169, 0.175	Not significant
MOD_PsyCap_EI -> EI	-0.117	0.104	1.120	0.239	-0.290, 0.157	Not significant
PsyCap -> EI	0.523	0.053	9.787	0.000	0.412, 0.617	Significant

Note: EA = Entrepreneurial Attributes; PsyCap: Psychological Capital; EI = Entrepreneurial Intention; SD = Standard Deviation; BootCI: = Bootstrap Confidence Interval

\*the path coefficients were significant at 95% confidence level (\*) if t-statistic  $> 1.96$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) and the path coefficients was significant at 99% confidence level (\*\*) if t-statistic  $> 2.58$  ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Based on Table 8, it is possible to conclude that there are significant relationship effects between the influence of PsyCap mediators' construct of optimism and EI among Malaysian hospitality students to become an entrepreneur in the near future. This is because, based on the Standardised Coefficients  $\beta$ , the effects of the influence are represented by the absolute value of the beta coefficient. Therefore, the high absolute value of the beta coefficient denoted a stronger effect on EI. It showed that the construct of optimism was the most significant. But for Malaysian hospitality students, HEIs did not play statistically significant role in moderating the relationship between psychological capital and entrepreneurial intention, indicating no moderating relationship between HEIs and hospitality students' EI.

## 4.5 Qualitative Results

### 4.5.1 Successful Entrepreneurs on Graduate Employability during the COVID-19 Pandemic

This study provided an opinion on hospitality graduates' employability from a successful hospitality entrepreneur. Datuk Seri Dr. Noraini Ahmad stated that the 2020 Graduate Tracer Study by MoHE indicated that the graduate employability rate decreased to 84.4% from 86.2% in 2019 (Bernama 2021, March 12). The COVID-19 implications on employability are varied, particularly among hospitality graduates. Employers expect graduates to prepare for the workplace after graduating and possess skills acquired through prior work experiences. This study depicted four prominent themes from the respondents' viewpoints on the COVID-19 impact on graduates' employability: (1) entrepreneurship skills, (2) analytical or critical thinking, (3) communication, and (4) teamwork. Most F&B directors or owners postulated that hospitality graduates should acquire entrepreneurship skills. Respondents also believed that entrepreneurship is the most vital skill that graduates should possess. The respondents' expressions are presented; *'Yes. In my company we inculcate 5 cultures. One of them is Entrepreneurs Mindset. This skill needed to instil in hospitality graduates to ensure they truly understand the situation happen right now. They should have entrepreneur's mindset in performing the duty in order they do the best for our guest in serving quality food and delightful experience based on company standard'* [P14]. *'Yes, it is very important. Entrepreneurial skills are a key element in keeping the business running smoothly'* [P21]. Besides, researchers further extend the question regarding their perspectives as an entrepreneur/executive in the establishment, do they think that hospitality graduates need to have entrepreneurship skills to endure during the COVID-19 crisis? Thus, respondents specified that *'In an uncertain and unstable economic situation, entrepreneurial skills are very important to convince customers to keep buying from our company. If employees are unable to convince customers, they're more likely to be financially prudent and only prepare their own meals at home; or get food from other restaurants'* [P21], in addition, respondents needed individual that exhibits *'Self-starter and problem solver. There are many unforeseen challenges that no amount of experience could have prepared businesses for today'* [P13]. Besides, *'With entrepreneurial skills, indirectly, other skills will also be manifested in (them)'* [P6].

Part of entrepreneurship skill, this study has discovered three (3) attributes that advocates on the prominent theme for instance; able to seize the opportunity; able to adapt changes; and innovative. Owner and assistant manager that represent the F&B industry implies that *'During this hard time, they need to be able to seek for business opportunities and ideas. Don't have to be different but offering something that people need/can't reject. And there will be a lot of challenges so the need to be risk tolerant and do the best to survive'* [P16], *'Business opportunities usually change from time to time. Entrepreneurs must always be sensitive to ensure that products offered are always relevant and competitive'* [P21] and *'(They've to) practice knowledge learned well and see opportunities that can be taken or 'create demands' or build a brand and 'personal branding'* [P19]. Apart from that, industry personnel highlighted that as an entrepreneur they should be able to adapt with changes that occurs unexpectedly. Six respondents have agreed that they must be flexible and adaptable as the situation in running the business will be constantly changing and uncertain. Last attribute as entrepreneur in hospitality industry, one must be innovative. Few of respondents annotates that *'Give*

*suggestions & ideas, grooming themselves as the best they can through training, has owner mentality to control operation cost & expenses* [P14], and *Ideas and networking are essential on how to run the business* [P9]. Next is critical/analytical skill. The respondents suggested the graduates should have critical/analytical skill to endure during the pandemic unfortunate event. According to [P12] *Critical thinking skills is crucial especially in this pandemic situation. We have to expect the unexpected at any time*. Other respondents further identified *We need new hire that can actually think of solution as not everyone is allowed to work and be at their station all the time* [P1]. Besides, [P16] stated *Need to be able to think outside the box and together helping the company to survive* which in line with [P11] and [P8] suggest the graduates should know how to *Analyse problem and came out with better solutions*.

The third main skills which graduates should have during the COVID-19 crisis is communication skill. According to [P2] *Communication is key and vital for daily operation and smoothness of the organisation*. Moreover, with the given pandemic condition, [P10] has agreed that *The news, SOP keep changing and staff to be upkeep. Frequent communication is key to upkeep*. Meanwhile [P20] [P22] provided a useful thought on the importance of this skill, indicating that *communication is very important for them, including how to communicate in the cyberspace*. Teamwork is the subsequent skill that yielded among important skills needed throughout the pandemic crisis. Five respondents declared that *It is necessary to act wisely according to the situation* [P20] [P22]. Besides, *During the occurrence of the pandemic, teamwork is highly encouraged because, sometimes, in some places, (people) cannot go out to work. Therefore, some of workers who remain have to work together* [P18] and *During this critical situation, we prefer employees who are in the same boat with us & gone through this situation together.* [P14]. Lastly, [P13] includes that *It's imperative to be consistent with our brand despite challenging times. This is how we build long-term trust*.

## 5. Discussion

Thus, based on the analyses, PsyCap's role is statistically significant for only one variable inspected: H1c: optimism about the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and Malaysian hospitality students. On the other hand, H1a: hope, H1b: self-efficacy, and H1d: resilience, are not significant in entrepreneurial intention among Malaysian hospitality students. The results of the study confirm that among all the dimensions of PsyCap, only optimism has an influence on entrepreneurial intention, while the other dimensions have varying relationships. Thus, the statistically significant relationship between optimism (H1c) and entrepreneurial intention has theoretically clarified the influence of positive attitudes on Malaysian hospitality students. Scholars, through their studies, have proven that entrepreneurs are more optimistic than non-entrepreneurs (Sebora, 2011; Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). Overall, as cited by Abdullah et al. (2018) in Fredrickson's (2001) study, entrepreneurs' ability to learn from mistakes and see them as opportunities rather than failures is a sign of optimism. Optimistic people, for example, see opportunities in any situation, and they will take advantage of those opportunities by setting their goals high. They also believe that they are capable of achieving and can see a path to success.

Overall, positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship, such as a potential career choice and self-confidence, are found to be significantly related to entrepreneurial intentions. Positive relationships with entrepreneurial intent are significantly strengthened by optimism, emphasising the importance of understanding entrepreneurship (Hernández-Sánchez et al., 2020). Under this assumption, the major advantage of the optimistic explanatory style is that it is helpful in creating a sustainable positive appraisal system of different aspects of a job, interactions, successes, and achievements, thus increasing the feeling of satisfaction towards the job (Badran & Youssef-morgan, 2015). Nonetheless, there is no significant relationship between hope (H1a), self-efficacy (H1b), and resilience (H1d) and entrepreneurial intention. Thus, these three variables are not essential in influencing the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and Malaysian hospitality students.

The hypothesis also investigated whether HEIs moderated the relationship between psychological capital and entrepreneurial intention. Nevertheless, the findings of the current study

found that the relationship between PsyCap and EI is not moderated by HEIs. According to Brookes and Altinay (2015), entrepreneurship is an essential element in the hospitality industry because entrepreneurship has enormous economic and social values. Previous literature has stated that to extract meaning from professional activities throughout a career, continuous development of skills is crucial to ensure sustainable employability (De-Vos & Van-der Heijden, 2017). However, hospitality students rarely pursue entrepreneurship as a career path. Therefore, the current study aims to encourage hospitality students to consider entrepreneurship as a viable option for their future career path. Also, the current study will also help HEIs faculties to design hospitality-entrepreneurship-inspired programmes, thereby assisting the nation in moving towards a more advanced and wealthy economy. The potential policies and actions plan established as a consequence of the current study could assist policy makers, notably the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the Ministry of Human Resources, in strengthening the Malaysian economy. For example, policies designed to promote entrepreneur education and increase student involvement and participation in entrepreneurial programmes and activities can be introduced by MOHE to encourage hospitality students to launch their businesses. Furthermore, MOHE could strengthen entrepreneurship education implementation in Malaysian HEIs and ensure the success of the Entrepreneurship Development Policy for Institutions of Higher Learning. Last but not least, as the involvement of private sectors as business and industry players is significant to the continuous production of high-quality and skilled workforces and labourers in a country (Puad, 2016), the effort to advance local education and training institutions should include the revisions to regulations and legislation by Malaysian policymakers to encourage the participation and contribution of private sectors. Moreover, the results of the study on the relationship between EI and Malaysian hospitality students based on the role of PsyCap and the moderating effect of HEIs effect reveal that high levels of positive PsyCap among hospitality university students are positively associated with: 1) attitude, 2) future hope, 3) social relationships, and 4) self-sufficiency (Maslakci et al., 2020). One of the main activities that entrepreneurs participate in during the life of a business venture is to set targets and plans to achieve them. Individuals with higher hopes can change their behaviour when confronted with problems. However, scholars have debated that hope, which is understood as the sense of looking into the future through the establishment of goals and execution, requires measures to realise them.

Furthermore, successful entrepreneurs suggested the entrepreneurship skills, analytical/critical thinking, communication and teamwork as important skills for a graduate to be possessed during the unfavourable pandemic crisis. Many of the skills identified above were rated as significant by the respondents and are considered essential for graduates to have amid the pandemic crisis. Despite having the majority of generic employability qualities, graduates still need to improve their communication, problem-solving, and analytical skills (Nadarajah, 2021). They are also fitfully regarded as spoiled and fragile by industry personnel. However, in the industry, the issue concerning continuing to pay staff despite there being less demand remains, and had become more prevalent during the COVID-19 (Gössling et al., 2021). Despite the gravity of the issue, limited empirical studies have been conducted to examine the impact of the pandemic on employment opportunities, including PsyCap factors (Boldureanu et al., 2020), of hospitality industry graduates. The combination of how hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism influence a person's entrepreneurial intention is not known (Ephrem et al., 2019). To fill in the gap in the literature, the current study studied entrepreneurship attributes and the influence of psychological capital on entrepreneurial intention among hospitality students in Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Henceforth, this study offers valuable successful entrepreneur's perspectives on the gap depicted with amalgamate PsyCap, and Entrepreneurs intention as the purposes Inspirational Hospitality Entrepreneurship Education Model in Figure 2 below.

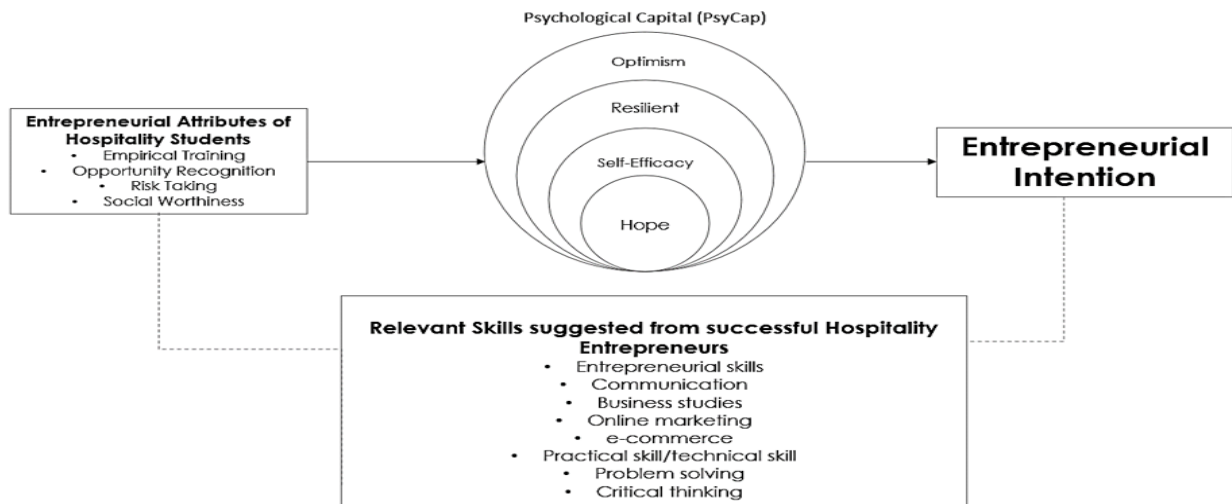


Fig 2. Inspirational Hospitality Entrepreneurship Model (IHEM)

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendation for Future Research

Entrepreneurial education for hospitality students is one of the programmes that cannot be directly observed since it is a long-term endeavour. Challenges and obstacles in the job market have affected many factors, including human behaviour. Pertaining to studies on human behaviour and social sciences, entrepreneurship studies are considered vast and massive. In addition, theoretical real-world actions also offer students the motivation and a strong desire to become entrepreneurs. The findings were contextually summarised into diagram form to provide the reader with expedient information. Thus, it is suggested that entrepreneurial intention must be instilled at an early age as it will determine the number of entrepreneurs in a country in the future. To provide real-world experiences to students, entrepreneurship education at universities must shift away from traditional paradigms and towards practical or project-based learning. It may be obtained through informal entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial extracurricular activities, such as internships, companies' visitations, meetings with successful entrepreneurs, as well as participation in various entrepreneurship seminars. Thus, it can be concluded that in today's education, universities constantly support their students, who wish to explore their entrepreneurial side, since it will eventually boost their marketability in the future. As far as this study is concerned, entrepreneurship skills; analytical or critical thinking; communication and teamwork are the practical descriptions of employability skills. Furthermore, as PsyCap goes beyond traits by focusing on the positive side of humans, it can be learned and developed. However, it is vital for students to have an optimistic attitude, positive disposition, self-efficacy, and be easily intimidated by barriers and problems in any endeavour in which they will engage after graduation. Similar findings supporting the role of psychological capital and the moderating effect of higher education institutions are also discovered among Malaysian hospitality students in Malaysia in the current study. Moreover, the current study provides new insights as it discovers the significant role of optimism in the confidence of future success among hospitality students. Besides, the successful entrepreneurs' viewpoint is regarded as critical to bridging the gap in extant knowledge between the current practice of Higher Learning Institution (HLI) and the future graduates produced with the specified prominent skills suggested by these employers or entrepreneurs.

## 7. Co-Author Contribution

The authors affirmed that there is no conflict of interest in this article. Author 1 and Author 2 contributed to the writing, data analysis, and interpretation of the qualitative data for the final

manuscript. Author 3 and Author 4 help with data collection, technical aspects, and material support. Author 5 and Author 6 were responsible for the critical revision of the concept and theories for reviewing the final manuscript.

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