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**PERSONALITY TRAITS, ENTREPRENEURIAL DRIVE, CYBER**  
**ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION: LITERATURE REVIEWS**  
**AND MODEL CRAFTING**

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*Abstract*

With the steady rise of the internet at the global extent, cyber entrepreneurship is a newly emerging career choice among graduates. In Malaysia, the auspicious potential of cyber entrepreneurship is further enhanced as the driver of a nation's socioeconomic development. Although a substantial result obtained from various researches has advocated the importance of cyber entrepreneurship, studies that revolve around the intention to be involved in cyber entrepreneurship in the context of university students in Malaysia are relatively limited and inadequate. Prior studies have emphasized on the role of personality traits which act as one of the key determinants of cyber entrepreneurial intention. Other than that, the mechanism with which personality traits exert significant influence on cyber entrepreneurial intention is also scarce. On the other hand, entrepreneurial drive acting as the mediator in the relationship between personality traits and cyber entrepreneurial intention have not been intensively studied. Therefore, in tune with the findings from the previous studies, the aim of this study is to provide an assessment and synthesis of literature and subsequently craft a model linking personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) and the cyber entrepreneurial intention of university undergraduate students in Malaysia with entrepreneurial drive acting as a mediator.

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**Keywords:** Cyber entrepreneurial intention, personality traits, need for achievement, pro-activeness, entrepreneurial drive.



## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship helps improve overall quality of life, provide employment opportunities, boost the productivity of sectors, stimulate economic advancement, and encourage social mobility, all of which are instrumental in developing the socio-economy (Reynolds, 2007). Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs are deemed as highly crucial as the accelerator of a nation's economic growth (Mat et al., 2015). Policymakers regard entrepreneurship from the economic perspective and as the provider of job opportunities. Meanwhile, entrepreneurs view entrepreneurship as opportunity capitalisation that would grant attainment and a meaningful career (Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010).

In the era where the internet is practically accessible to the vast majority of the world's population, it is fitting for young people, especially graduates to take part in a business with Internet as the medium. This is because the internet would make it easier for them to communicate with people at every corner of the world while simultaneously making it a career choice. Since the rise of the technology innovation, choosing Internet based entrepreneur to be a possible profession should be obligatory to help in decreasing unemployment rates, parallel with the government's inclination for economic development (Ismail et al., 2012).

Zhao and Seibert (2006) posited that based on entrepreneurial research, individual factors are suggested as among the most important determinants of entrepreneurship with personality being one of the most significant factors. According to Sesen (2013), personality factors and attitudes have impactful outcomes on intentions to engage in entrepreneurial acts.

Various studies had examined the impact of individual qualities on entrepreneurial intention including the need for achievement (Kristiansen & Indarti, 2004), pro-active personality (Becherer & Maurer, 1999; Kickul & Zaper, 2000) and locus of control (Mazzarol et al., 1999). Based on numerous studies by researchers, two of the core personality characteristic which strongly influenced entrepreneurship are the need for achievement (Shane et al., 2003; Kristiansen & Indarti, 2004) and pro-activeness (Becherer & Maurer, 1999; Kickul & Zaper, 2000).

Entrepreneurial drive is another key individual factor that has been used to predict entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurial drive has been posited as the combination of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility (Florin et al., 2007). Students who reported to have higher perceived desirability and perceived feasibility are more inclined to venture into business as entrepreneurs (Solesvik et al., 2012). It is the driving force that would increase the intention of students to be entrepreneurs. The emergence and growth of technology have evolved various aspects of life, such as business affairs, communication, social activities, and others into a new spectrum (Karim et al., 2009). Thus, from the business perspective, there are fewer restrictions on rules regarding business activities (Rutkowski, 2000). Therefore, the aim of this paper is to review the literature and explore the potential role of two personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) and entrepreneurial drive on cyber entrepreneurial intention in the context of university undergraduate students in Malaysia.

## **2. Problem Statement**

### **2.1. Significant rate of graduate unemployment**

Based on the latest data available from the Higher Education Statistics 2018 provided by Ministry of Education (MOE), university graduates produced during the year 2018 by higher education institutions in Malaysia was 299,841. While the numbers vary according to different levels of study, the number of graduates in 2018 for the bachelor's degree level alone is 75,156 (MOE, 2019). For the students, to graduate is one thing, but to secure a job afterwards is a whole new challenge. This challenge is reflected in the high number of unemployed university graduates according to the data from the 2018 Graduate Tracer Study with 31,511 graduates being unemployed after graduation (MOE, 2019).

Given the economic downturn in an unstable political condition, it is only natural that many employers refuse to employ new and inexperienced workers, thus resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate among these graduates. Therefore, exploring cyber entrepreneurial intention is a step in addressing this unemployment problem.

### **2.2. Lack of studies involving students within the Malaysian context**

There has been a dearth of studies of university students within the Malaysian context. Very few studies have been conducted on cyber entrepreneurial intention among students (Baharuddin & Lawrence, 2010). Moreover, though the subject of entrepreneurial intention has been the focus of numerous studies globally, only a handful have been done in the Malaysian context (Ismail et al., 2012). Therefore, it is timely for the researcher to investigate further into this area.

## **3. Research Questions**

- Do personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) affect cyber entrepreneurial intention?
- Does entrepreneurial drive affect cyber entrepreneurial intention?
- Does entrepreneurial drive mediate the relationship between personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) and cyber entrepreneurial intention?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

Based on the discussion made in the Introduction section, this study aims to review the extant literature and subsequently craft a model linking personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness), entrepreneurial drive and cyber entrepreneurial intention.

## **5. Research Methods**

Since the purpose of the study is to craft a model linking personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness), entrepreneurial drive and cyber entrepreneurial intention, a systematic review of the literature was conducted using an archival method to attain the stated purpose of the study and answer the research questions. This study was built on a robust theoretical framework combined with secondary data

and applied the methodology of reviewing articles cited in databases, namely, Elsevier, Science Direct, and Emerald Insight with the topic of personality traits and cyber entrepreneurial intention with entrepreneurial drive as the mediator.

## **6. Findings**

### **6.1. Personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) and cyber entrepreneurial intention**

#### **6.1.1. Cyber entrepreneurial intention**

Wang et al. (2016) provided the definition of cyber entrepreneurial intention where it was described as one's prediction on tendency in which the person would decide to establish an e-commerce venture. Cyber entrepreneurship can be postulated as any action taken by using the internet for business purposes, of which the primary intention is for financial gain (Baharuddin & Lawrence, 2010). Cyber entrepreneurship serves a crucial role in providing opportunities for youth to choose it as a source of income, especially for undergraduate university students (Nizam et al., 2011).

### **6.2. Personality traits**

#### **6.2.1. Need for achievement**

Need for achievement is a competitive conduct where individuals are influenced by a specific standard of merit. People who possess a strong desire for excellence are expected to become entrepreneurs since they usually have a high need for achievement (McClelland, 1961). The research on the correlation between need for achievement and entrepreneurial career choice can also be dated way back where Holland (1985), in his study posited that since the entrepreneurial surroundings would offer the satisfaction for people who are more eager for attainment, these people will tend to be interested in entrepreneurial career. Florin et al., (2007) uncover that need for achievement is the robust attribute of students in determining their tendency to be entrepreneurs. On the other hand, Taormina and Kin-Mei (2007) also supported the claim that need for achievement is one of the strongest factor in motivating individuals to be entrepreneurs.

#### **6.2.2. Pro-activeness**

Proactivity is the vigorous effort undertaken by individuals to make significant changes in their surroundings (Zampetakis, 2008). Lumpkin and Dess (1996) defined pro-activeness as one's ability to be ahead of other people in predicting and presenting new entrepreneurial outcomes and successfully becoming a market leader. Crant (1995) pointed out that a proactive personality alludes to how much people would act to control and manipulate their environments. According to Crant (1996), pro-active personality has an impact on entrepreneurial intention. Individuals with a pro-active personality would have higher intentions to venture into a new business and become self-employed, opting out from working for other people (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007). Based on this discussion, the first proposition is as follows:

*Proposition 1: Personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) are positively related to cyber entrepreneurial intention.*

### **6.3. Personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) and entrepreneurial drive**

Entrepreneurial drive can be described as one's assumptions whether the situations are feasible and desirable enough to prompted them in undertaking entrepreneurial actions to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities and then planning on how to exploit the situation to benefit them (Florin et al., 2007). Yan (2010), in his study, claimed that people who have a particular set of personality view entrepreneurial opportunities as more desirable and feasible compared to individuals who lack them.

McClelland (1961) stated that those who possess a higher need for achievement are more inclined to expect a greater chance of success, which subsequently drives them to venture into business. Florin et al., (2007) in their research on school students implied a relationship between students' achievement motivation and entrepreneurial drive where the students with high achievement motivation develop a positive attitude towards intention and behaviour when they receive support from their school since they perceive entrepreneurship as desirable and feasible.

The pro-active personality has been proven to affect small entrepreneurs' decision to embrace new strategies that would later be a drive to innovation (Kickul & Gundry, 2002). Zampetakis (2008) found that pro-activeness demonstrated constructive and notable correlation on the perceptions of attractiveness and viability. Given the result from the exploration, second proposition is as follows:

*Proposition 2: Personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) are positively related to entrepreneurial drive.*

### **6.4. Personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) and entrepreneurial drive**

Fitzsimmons and Douglas (2011) stated in their study that entrepreneurial drive plays an important role in influencing an individual's tendency to conduct entrepreneurship. Additionally, Liñán and Santos (2007) discovered that the level of viability and attractiveness of a situation will greatly affect someone's purpose. Besides, in Wang et al. (2011) study, they observed the importance of entrepreneurial drive in determining entrepreneurship tendency. Based on this discussion, the third proposition is as follows:

*Proposition 3: Entrepreneurial drive is positively related to cyber entrepreneurial intention.*

### **6.5. Personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) and cyber entrepreneurial intention with entrepreneurial drive as the mediator**

According to Florin et al. (2007), individuals who have a higher level of need for achievement or people who are known to be a high achiever tend to have a more intense entrepreneurial drive. They asserted in their study that entrepreneurial drive that comprises of perception of feasibility and desirability will be a mediating factor in the relationship between need for achievement and entrepreneurial tendency.

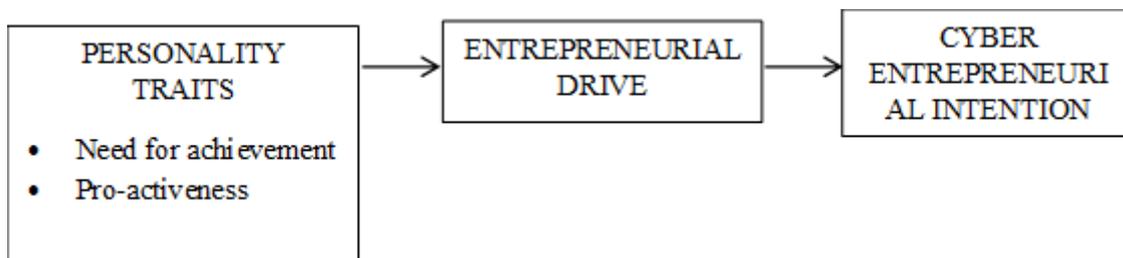
Pro-active personality has been shown to positively affect entrepreneurial intention (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007). Besides, a study by Zampetakis (2008) found that pro-activeness has a positive link with entrepreneurial drive. Ali et al. (2012) in their study observed the role of level of feasible and desirable perceptions as a mediating factor between personality traits and the inclination to conduct entrepreneurial activities. Based on this discussion, the fourth proposition is as follows:

*Proposition 4: Personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) are positively related to cyber entrepreneurial intention with entrepreneurial drive acting as the mediator.*

### 6.6. Underlying Theory

In this study, the fitting theory is the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model by Schneider (1987). ASA has been used to explore the role of personality traits in influencing entrepreneurial career intention, as the model posits that people usually prefer to choose to work in an environment with others that exhibit a matching personality to their own (Schneider, 1987). Şahin et al. (2019) proposed that entrepreneurs are individuals who tend to venture into business since they are expected to operate independently. Based on the model, Zhao and Seibert (2006) postulated that people with a particular personality would engage in entrepreneurship more than others and are more likely to be selected by the business negotiator involved in venture creation's affair. They also stated that these individuals are more strong-minded in creating a business and subsequently becoming entrepreneurs since they find entrepreneurial activities to be appealing.

Based on the review and synthesis of the extant literature, a model has been developed as shown in Figure 1, which highlights two key personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) as the independent variables, with the cyber entrepreneurial intention being dependent variable and entrepreneurial drive as mediating variable.



**Figure 01.** Crafted model

## 7. Conclusion

The young generation is one of the nation's most valuable asset. The increasing number of university graduates each year has led to a situation of a surplus of graduates. Meanwhile, demand for new workers is decreasing substantially. Given this worrisome state of unemployment involving youths in Malaysia, there is an urgent need for university graduates to start considering to be a prospective cyber entrepreneurs. The government, universities as well as students should work together in addressing unemployment issue so that the talents of young and fresh graduates and government resources are not wasted while simultaneously facilitating the country's socio-economic development. An extensive review of prior literature has demonstrated the significant role of personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) in influencing students' cyber entrepreneurial intention. Hence, a conceptual model has been crafted where two personality traits (need for achievement and pro-activeness) are postulated as the antecedents of cyber entrepreneurial intention. Also, since the nature of intention is not spontaneous, entrepreneurial drive has

been posited to be a possible mediator between the personality traits (need for achievement and proactiveness) and cyber entrepreneurial intention.

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