

ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG ORANG ASLI YOUTH IN MALAYSIA: THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAITS AND TENDENCIES

Siti Hajar Zakariah^{1*}, Nur Ainaa Syifaa Annuar², Nor Aziah Ahmad³, Lisa Mariam Syawal Ismail⁴

Department of Vocational Education, Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education,
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Johor, Malaysia^{1,2,3,4}

hajarz@uthm.edu.my¹, syifaa9666@gmail.com², naziah@uthm.edu.my³, lisa@uthm.edu.my⁴

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as an important driver of economic development and an avenue for improving the quality of life among marginalized communities. However, the involvement of Orang Asli youth in entrepreneurial activities in Hulu Perak remains limited. This study aims to measure the levels of entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth and to examine the relationship between these variables. A quantitative research design was employed using survey questionnaires distributed to 97 Orang Asli youths from two villages in Hulu Perak. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the levels of entrepreneurial traits and tendencies, while Spearman's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables. The findings indicate that both entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies were at a high level. Passion was identified as the dominant entrepreneurial trait among the respondents. In addition, the results showed a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies. These findings suggest that Orang Asli youth with stronger entrepreneurial traits tend to demonstrate higher entrepreneurial tendencies. The study provides policymakers and stakeholders with useful insights for developing appropriate programs and initiatives to encourage entrepreneurial involvement among Orang Asli youth. Further research is recommended to examine the causal relationship between the variables and the effectiveness of entrepreneurship interventions.

Keywords: creativity, passion, self-confidence, desire, entrepreneurial tendencies, indigenous youth

INTRODUCTION

Economic development is a crucial pillar for national prosperity and in Malaysia, entrepreneurship plays a key role in economic growth and poverty reduction (Abdullah et al., 2020). The government's push for entrepreneurship began with the Privatization Policy (1983)

and has since expanded to include initiatives such as the National Entrepreneurship Policy (DKN) 2030, which aims to create a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem and position Malaysia as a global entrepreneurship hub (Kementerian Pembangunan Usahawan dan Koperasi, 2023).

DKN 2030 focuses on seven key strategic pillars, including strengthening the digital economy and supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (SMEs). Special attention is given to marginalized groups such as youth, women and the rural Orang Asli community, who often face economic and educational barriers (Ismail et al., 2021). Entrepreneurship is seen as a solution to poverty among the Orang Asli, particularly as they face challenges such as limited access to education and economic resources (Rahman & Abdullah, 2022). However, they possess strong potential in producing traditional crafts, ethnic foods, and herbal products, which can be commercialized (Ali et al., 2020). The government has introduced training programs, financial aid and infrastructure development to encourage their participation in entrepreneurship.

Beyond economic benefits, entrepreneurship also helps preserve Orang Asli culture. For example, their crafts and traditional products attract both local and international tourists (Ramli et al., 2021). Special initiatives also aim to empower Orang Asli women, recognizing their role as key change agents in their communities (Zainal & Hamzah, 2023). Despite their potential, Orang Asli entrepreneurs face multiple challenges, including low education levels, poverty, high unemployment, and limited access to business networks (Roddin et al., 2020). The Orang Asli Act 1954 protects their land rights and traditional resources, but economic dependence on subsistence activities remains a barrier to growth.

The Malaysian government has allocated RM333 million in Budget 2024 to support the Orang Asli community, focusing on socio-economic development, infrastructure improvement, and entrepreneurship programs (Rosnon, 2023). Investments in entrepreneurship are expected to reduce poverty, provide better financial access, and create more economic opportunities for Orang Asli youth (JAKOA, 2023). Thus, entrepreneurship among the Orang Asli has the potential to improve their economic status while preserving cultural heritage. However, additional support through training, financial aid and networking opportunities is needed to sustain their businesses. By fostering entrepreneurial creativity, resilience and innovation, Orang Asli entrepreneurs can achieve greater economic independence and contribute to national development.

Background of Problem

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic development, creating job opportunities, fostering innovation, and supporting business growth. In Malaysia, efforts to cultivate entrepreneurship among communities, including the Orang Asli, have been promoted through policies such as the New Economic Policy (NEP) and the National Development Policy (DPN) (JAKOA, 2019). However, the participation of Orang Asli youth in entrepreneurship remains a significant challenge.

Orang Asli youth face multiple and interconnected barriers that limit their engagement in entrepreneurship. These include limited access to quality education, financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and restricted exposure to business networks and opportunities.

Geographical isolation from urban centers further exacerbates these challenges, reducing their access to market information, entrepreneurial training, and support systems (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020). In addition, cultural and language differences, as well as social stigma and discrimination, hinder their integration into mainstream economic activities (Salleh et al., 2019; Zulkifli et al., 2021). Collectively, these factors contribute to low entrepreneurial participation and limit their ability to sustain business ventures.

While existing initiatives, such as entrepreneurship training programs and financial assistance schemes, have attempted to address these barriers, their effectiveness remains limited. Many programs are primarily designed to improve external conditions, such as access to funding and infrastructure, but often fail to consider the internal factors that influence entrepreneurial engagement. As a result, participation rates among Orang Asli youth remain low, and the long-term sustainability of such initiatives is questionable (Ahmad et al., 2023; Zulkifli & Hassan, 2024).

In particular, entrepreneurial characteristics such as creativity, self-confidence, and motivation play a crucial role in shaping an individual's inclination towards entrepreneurship. However, these internal attributes are often overlooked in the design and implementation of development programs targeting Orang Asli youth. Limited access to education and experiential learning opportunities further constrains their ability to develop creative thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for entrepreneurial success (Salleh & Ismail, 2021; Mohamad & Yusof, 2025). Additionally, financial insecurity, lack of role models, and insufficient business exposure negatively affect their self-confidence and motivation to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Rahman et al., 2023; Mohamed & Che Omar, 2019).

The core problem is that existing support initiatives, such as JAKOA's Entrepreneur Mentorship Assistance Program, have been ineffective because they are primarily structural and lack cultural sensitivity (Ahmad et al., 2023; JAKOA, 2023). Most training frameworks utilize a "one-size-fits-all" approach that fails to foster innate entrepreneurial creativity and motivation within the cultural context of the Orang Asli (Mohamad & Yusof, 2025). While past studies have documented the economic and infrastructure deficiencies of the Orang Asli, there is a lack of empirical research on how their internal individual characteristics correlate with their actual entrepreneurial tendencies.

Without a clear understanding of this relationship, policymakers will continue to design programs that align poorly with the community's mindset, resulting in low participation and wasted resources. Therefore, this study addresses this critical gap by examining the specific relationship between entrepreneurial characteristics (creativity, spirit, self-confidence, and ambition) and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak.

The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between characteristics and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak. The following are three (3) main objectives outlined to achieve the study's goals:

- i. Examine the characteristics of entrepreneurship among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak.
- ii. Examine the entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak
- iii. Examine the relationship between characteristics and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak.

Thus, this study aim to address the following research questions :

- i. What are the entrepreneurial characteristics among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak?
- ii. What are the entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak?
- iii. Is there a significant relationship between entrepreneurial characteristics and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak?

To statistically test the relationship in the third research question, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial characteristics and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial characteristics and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge and practice in several ways, particularly in theoretical, practical, and social aspects.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the development of entrepreneurship literature by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between entrepreneurial characteristics and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth. While previous studies have largely focused on external factors such as financial support, infrastructure, and policy initiatives, this study emphasizes internal factors, including creativity, self-confidence, and motivation.

Additionally, this research extends existing entrepreneurship theories by contextualizing them within an indigenous community setting, specifically among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak. This provides a more nuanced understanding of how entrepreneurial characteristics influence behavioural tendencies in a marginalized and underrepresented population.

Practical Contribution

The findings of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers, government agencies, and practitioners such as the Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) and entrepreneurship development organizations. By identifying key entrepreneurial characteristics that influence entrepreneurial tendencies, this study can inform the design of more effective training and development programs.

Specifically, the results can help shift the focus from purely financial and infrastructural support towards enhancing internal capabilities such as creativity, confidence, and motivation.

This enables the development of targeted intervention programs that are more aligned with the needs of Orang Asli youth.

Social Contribution

This study also contributes to social development by supporting efforts to improve the socio-economic status of Orang Asli communities. By promoting entrepreneurship among youth, the study supports income generation, reduces poverty, and enhances community resilience.

Furthermore, strengthening entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth can empower them to participate more actively in the modern economy while preserving their cultural identity. This aligns with national development goals aimed at inclusivity and reducing socio-economic disparities among marginalized groups in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship is a crucial element in economic growth and social development in Malaysia, serving as a catalyst for job creation, innovation, and improved quality of life. Over the past decades, the Malaysian government has adopted an integrated approach to entrepreneurship development as part of its national strategy to achieve developed nation status (Abdullah et al., 2019; Ismail et al., 2023). Entrepreneurial activities are projected to enhance global economic development, as entrepreneurship is widely recognized by researchers and practitioners as a key driver of socio-economic progress (Edwards-Schachte et al., 2015). Consequently, entrepreneurship in Malaysia has a rich and diverse history, reflecting the social, economic, and political changes that have shaped the nation. The historical development of entrepreneurship in Malaysia can be categorized into several key eras: the pre-colonial era, the colonial era, the post-independence era, and the modern era. Each of these periods has distinct characteristics that have influenced the evolution of entrepreneurship in Malaysia.

During the colonial era, European powers such as the Portuguese, Dutch and ultimately the British exerted control over key regions of Malaysia. The British significantly transformed Malaysia's economic system by introducing an export-oriented economy, with tin mining and rubber plantations emerging as dominant industries. Additionally, the British facilitated the influx of Chinese and Indian immigrants to work in these sectors. These immigrants not only served as laborers but also established small businesses, particularly in trade and retail. The entrepreneurial influence of Chinese and Indian communities has persisted in Malaysia to this day (Drabble, 2000).

Subsequently, the British introduced large-scale mining techniques such as dredging and hydraulic mining, which significantly increased the efficiency and output of tin extraction (Drabble, 2000). Dredging involved using massive floating excavators to scoop up tin-bearing alluvium from riverbeds and floodplains, which was then processed to extract tin ore. This method enabled the exploitation of deposits that were previously inaccessible (Tate, 1996). Hydraulic mining utilized high-pressure water jets to dislodge tin ore from soil and rock formations. This technique was particularly effective in areas where traditional mining methods were impractical (Yip, 1969).

Following Malaysia's independence in 1957, the government prioritized economic and entrepreneurial development as a means to improve the welfare of its citizens. The New Economic Policy (NEP), introduced in 1971, was a pivotal initiative aimed at reducing poverty and restructuring Malaysian society. The NEP provided greater economic opportunities for the Bumiputera community through various programs and incentives (Faaland, 2005). Bumiputera entrepreneurs received support in the form of loans, training, and mentorship, which helped address economic disparities among ethnic groups and strengthened the national economy.

In the modern era, the Malaysian government has continued to reinforce the entrepreneurial sector through various initiatives. Technology and innovation have become primary focal points, with numerous programs and incubators established to foster entrepreneurship in the technology sector. Various financial assistance schemes, including grants and loans, have been introduced to support emerging entrepreneurs, particularly among the Bumiputera community. Training and educational programs have also been expanded (SME, 2023). The history of entrepreneurship in Malaysia demonstrates significant progress from pre-colonial trade to today's technology-driven enterprises, supported by various policies and initiatives that empower local entrepreneurs (MIDA, 2022).

The Malaysian government has also placed considerable emphasis on the development of entrepreneurship within the Orang Asli community. Various programs have been implemented to empower both Bumiputera and Orang Asli entrepreneurs, including initiatives led by agencies such as the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE), which provides training, financial assistance and mentorship (MATRADE, 2021). Additionally, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a critical role in promoting indigenous entrepreneurship, contributing to community development through entrepreneurial activities (Muhammad & Ismail, 2020; Abdullah & Suhaimi, 2023).

Consequently, multiple policies and initiatives have been introduced to support entrepreneurship among the Orang Asli community in Malaysia. These include government-led programs aimed at empowering Bumiputera and Orang Asli entrepreneurs (MATRADE, 2021), as well as NGO-driven efforts to promote entrepreneurship within indigenous communities (Muhammad & Ismail, 2020). These initiatives seek to enhance community development through entrepreneurship (Abdullah & Suhaimi, 2023) and to empower the Orang Asli through entrepreneurial programs (Nordin & Wahab, 2019). For instance, the Malaysian government has introduced various initiatives to strengthen the capabilities of Bumiputera and Orang Asli entrepreneurs. MATRADE plays a crucial role in these efforts by offering numerous programs designed to assist Bumiputera and Orang Asli entrepreneurs in reaching wider markets, including international trade. These initiatives provide financial aid, training, and mentorship to enhance entrepreneurs' efficiency and competitiveness in the global marketplace (MATRADE, 2021).

Entrepreneurship has long been recognized as an important mechanism for economic growth, social mobility, and community empowerment, particularly among marginalized and indigenous populations. In Malaysia, entrepreneurship development has become a national priority through initiatives such as the National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 (DKN 2030), which emphasizes inclusive economic participation among youth and rural communities. However, despite extensive governmental support, entrepreneurial participation among Orang Asli youth remains relatively limited due to multiple structural and socio-cultural challenges. Entrepreneurs in Malaysia continue to face numerous challenges, including limited access to

capital, intense market competition, and rapid technological advancements (Ramli & Osman, 2017). However, with continued support from the government and the private sector, along with a strong entrepreneurial spirit among Malaysians, the future of this sector holds promising potential (Ahmad et al., 2022).

Previous studies consistently suggest that entrepreneurial traits are significant predictors of entrepreneurial tendencies and entrepreneurial intention. Traits such as creativity, passion, self-confidence, and desire are commonly associated with entrepreneurial readiness, opportunity recognition, innovation capability, and risk-taking behavior (Kuratko, 2017; Bandura, 2019). Entrepreneurial individuals with high self-efficacy are generally more confident in managing uncertainty and initiating business ventures. Albert Bandura further emphasized that self-efficacy influences individuals' motivation, persistence, and behavioral outcomes, particularly in challenging environments.

Several empirical studies support the positive relationship between entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies. For instance, Abdul Rahman et al. (2024) found that self-efficacy, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms significantly influenced entrepreneurial aspirations among rural youth in Malaysia. Similarly, Derani et al. (2023) reported that attitude, subjective norms, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency positively contributed to entrepreneurial behavior among indigenous communities in Malaysia. These findings indicate that psychological and motivational factors play a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial participation among marginalized youth.

In addition, studies focusing on entrepreneurship education revealed that entrepreneurial exposure, social support, and self-confidence significantly enhance entrepreneurial intention among Malaysian youth. Gunasegaran et al. (2025) found that entrepreneurship education and social support positively influenced students' entrepreneurial intentions through the mediating role of self-efficacy. Likewise, Noor et al. (2023) highlighted that institutional support and entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly contribute to venture performance among young entrepreneurs in Malaysia. These findings suggest that entrepreneurial development is not solely dependent on individual personality traits but also influenced by environmental support systems.

Nevertheless, contradictory findings also exist within the literature. While many studies report a strong relationship between entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies, other researchers argue that entrepreneurial characteristics alone are insufficient to explain entrepreneurial participation among indigenous communities. Some studies found that external factors such as financial limitations, lack of infrastructure, limited educational opportunities, geographical isolation, and weak market access exert stronger influence on entrepreneurial behavior than individual traits alone. This suggests that entrepreneurial intention among Orang Asli youth cannot be understood solely from a personality-based perspective.

Furthermore, previous studies on indigenous entrepreneurship in Malaysia have largely focused on economic participation, poverty reduction, and government assistance programs, with relatively limited emphasis on the psychological dimensions of entrepreneurship among Orang Asli youth. Existing research also tends to adopt descriptive approaches with limited critical comparison between entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies. Consequently, inconsistencies in previous findings indicate the need for further investigation

into how entrepreneurial traits influence entrepreneurial tendencies within the specific socio-cultural context of Orang Asli communities in Hulu Perak.

From a theoretical perspective, this study is supported by Social Cognitive Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Social Cognitive Theory explains that behavior is influenced by reciprocal interactions between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavioral experiences. Meanwhile, TPB emphasizes that entrepreneurial intention is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Recent studies continue to validate the importance of these theoretical frameworks in predicting entrepreneurial intention among youth and indigenous populations (Abdul Rahman et al., 2024; Derani et al., 2023). Therefore, this study attempts to bridge the existing research gap by examining the relationship between entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak. Understanding this relationship is important for developing culturally appropriate entrepreneurship interventions that strengthen entrepreneurial participation, economic resilience, and sustainable community development among indigenous youth in Malaysia.

Entrepreneurial Traits

Entrepreneurship is a crucial element in economic and social development. Success in entrepreneurship is often associated with various personal traits that distinguish entrepreneurs from other individuals (Zani et al., 2016). In this study, the key entrepreneurial characteristics include creativity, passion, self-confidence and the desire to excel, which are essential traits for the Orang Asli in venturing into entrepreneurship. The relationship between these entrepreneurial traits significantly influences the involvement of the Orang Asli in entrepreneurship.

Creativity

Entrepreneurship requires individuals to possess a high level of creativity in strategizing, innovating, and optimizing available resources. Furthermore, entrepreneurs must have the ability to identify potential opportunities, accompanied by an optimistic attitude toward success achieved through systematic and continuous efforts (Prince et al., 2021; Alvarez & Barney, 2020). Creativity refers to the ability to generate novel and useful ideas and to solve problems innovatively. In the entrepreneurial context, creativity is a crucial factor in developing new products or services that meet market demands. Creative entrepreneurs can identify opportunities where others see only challenges.

According to Norazah et al. (2020), adapting natural resources to create unique commercial products reflects the ability of individuals or communities to apply creativity and innovation in entrepreneurship. This not only strengthens the local economy but also promotes cultural identity and heritage in broader markets (Kamarulzaman, 2012; Ahmad et al., 2021). Aziz and Jamil (2018) further emphasize that cultural and traditional elements are essential in marketing, enhancing the appeal of products to tourists. Products that integrate cultural and traditional aspects often provide an authentic experience, fulfilling both economic needs and heritage preservation. With effective marketing strategies, entrepreneurs can leverage these values to expand into larger markets while maintaining product authenticity.

Moreover, Yusof et al. (2019) report that using modern tools to process traditional herbs increases productivity and adds value, allowing these products to be marketed more competitively. Similarly, Samsudin et al. (2021) highlight that commercializing forest resources such as honey and rattan opens avenues for creative entrepreneurship based on local resources. Rahman et al. (2023) emphasize the vital role of Orang Asli women in entrepreneurship, particularly in traditional handicraft production. Ahmad et al. (2024) further argue that entrepreneurial education enhances students' creativity, which serves as the foundation for new business opportunities.

According to the Che Mat and Ismail (2020), assert that community support and cultural heritage act as catalysts for creativity in Orang Asli entrepreneurship. Traditional values embedded in their heritage serve as a foundation for developing unique products and services, which not only introduce their culture to the broader society but also add value to their businesses. The integration of traditional elements, such as natural materials, cultural motifs in packaging and heritage-based products, enhances market demand while preserving their cultural legacy.

Passion

Entrepreneurial passion is characterized by dedication and commitment, driving entrepreneurs to pursue their goals despite challenges (Kuratko, 2017; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Gartner and Shaver (2015) emphasize that passion is crucial when starting a new venture, as successful entrepreneurs consistently strive for achievement and transform their interests into profitable businesses. Rosli et al. (2010) further highlight that a strong desire for success strengthens an entrepreneur's determination to overcome obstacles and attain financial independence.

Moreover, Orang Asli entrepreneurs demonstrate remarkable resilience in overcoming business obstacles, supported by strong familial and communal networks (Abdullah et al., 2016). Social networks are crucial in securing resources and business opportunities (Hassan & Ali, 2020). Community support and aspirations for a better standard of living are key motivators in fostering entrepreneurial spirit (Rajoo & Tan, 2021). This encouragement instills confidence, prompting individuals to engage in business activities and take calculated risks for economic progress.

While formal education has a moderate impact on entrepreneurial spirit, practical experience proves more effective in shaping business acumen (Ismail et al., 2018). Hands-on exposure fosters a deeper understanding of real-world business dynamics, empowering individuals to take risks and make informed decisions. Access to financial capital is another crucial determinant in promoting entrepreneurial endeavors among the Orang Asli (Zainal & Mustaffa, 2017). Additionally, entrepreneurial success in Hulu Perak is influenced by community support, cultural heritage, abundant natural resources, and governmental and non-governmental economic initiatives (Salleh et al., 2023; Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020).

Lastly, cultural values and traditions play an integral role in shaping entrepreneurial decisions. Deep-rooted cultural beliefs guide business ventures, leading individuals to establish enterprises that align with their identity and inherited traditions (Ali, 2020). This culturally

driven entrepreneurial spirit fosters innovation, ensuring both economic success and the preservation of heritage.

Self-Confidence

Self-confidence plays a critical role in entrepreneurial success, as it reflects an individual's belief in their abilities and potential (Ayus & Amir, 2016). Entrepreneurs with high self-confidence demonstrate resilience in facing challenges, a greater willingness to take calculated risks, and a proactive approach to achieving business goals (Hasnah, 2010; Rahman & Hassan, 2021). This confidence is often developed through personal experiences, external feedback, and overcoming obstacles (Taramisi, 2009). Bandura (2019) highlights that high self-confidence correlates with greater proactivity, enabling entrepreneurs to make swift, effective decisions. Moreover, self-assured entrepreneurs are more likely to explore new markets and seize emerging opportunities (Rauch & Frese, 2020).

Among Orang Asli youth, self-confidence significantly enhances entrepreneurial success, fostering a positive attitude towards risk-taking and overcoming socio-economic barriers (Zainab & Osman, 2018). Formal and informal education, along with targeted entrepreneurship training, has been instrumental in building confidence and equipping individuals with practical business skills (Mohammad & Ibrahim, 2020). Social support from family and community also plays a crucial role, as encouragement and guidance strengthen confidence and drive entrepreneurial participation (Rani & Zulkifli, 2017). Additionally, social entrepreneurship provides a platform for young Orang Asli entrepreneurs to gain self-assurance by contributing to their communities, thereby reinforcing their sense of purpose and social recognition (Salleh & Mohd Ali, 2021).

Empirical studies suggest a strong correlation between self-confidence and business sustainability, where entrepreneurs with greater confidence exhibit higher success rates in small and medium enterprises (Tan & Lee, 2019). Practical business experience further enhances self-efficacy, as individuals develop a deeper understanding of market dynamics and risk management (Nasir & Aida, 2020). Entrepreneurial training programs have also proven effective in strengthening confidence, enabling participants to make informed decisions and navigate business challenges more effectively (Wahid & Rahman, 2018). Ultimately, self-confidence emerges as a fundamental determinant of entrepreneurial success among Orang Asli youth, with those exhibiting greater belief in their abilities demonstrating higher potential for long-term business sustainability (Nordin & Shamsuddin, 2022).

Desire

Desire plays a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial characteristics, as it is closely linked to intrinsic motivation, perseverance and risk-taking key elements for achieving business success (Misra et al., 2018; Smith & Jones, 2021). Research suggests that this strong sense of desire enables Orang Asli entrepreneurs to sustain their businesses in competitive industries through continuous innovation and product quality improvement (Latif & Ibrahim, 2020). Additionally, preserving traditional values serves as a strategic advantage, allowing entrepreneurs to market their products with a strong cultural identity (Abdullah & Salleh, 2021).

Moreover, desire serves as a driving force for innovation, as entrepreneurs who are deeply passionate about their fields are more inclined to generate and implement novel ideas that bring positive transformations to their businesses (Drnovsek et al., 2010). Passion for entrepreneurship is strongly correlated with cognitive and behavioral qualities that propel individuals toward success (Melissa et al., 2009). Furthermore, incorporating cultural traditions into business models enhances brand identity, making products more appealing to consumers who value authenticity (Zainal et al., 2022).

Desire also fosters resilience and long-term commitment to entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs with a strong sense of purpose are more likely to navigate market challenges effectively, as they remain motivated and dedicated to their business vision (Rahim et al., 2023). This persistence is particularly vital for Orang Asli entrepreneurs seeking to expand their market reach while maintaining their cultural heritage. Additionally, an enduring passion for entrepreneurship drives individuals to seek continuous improvements, refine products, and introduce innovative solutions (Mustapha, 2020).

The role of desire extends beyond business success, as it also contributes to personal fulfillment. Entrepreneurs who find meaning in their work experience greater satisfaction and a sense of contribution to their communities (Ahmad & Hashim, 2021). Building a strong personal brand, driven by passion and commitment, enhances credibility and trust among customers and investors, further solidifying an entrepreneur's reputation (Zulkifli et al., 2023).

Furthermore, desire is a key factor in social entrepreneurship among the Orang Asli. Many young entrepreneurs are motivated by the aspiration to improve their standard of living and uplift their communities (Salman & Isa, 2020). A strong entrepreneurial drive often stems from the desire to provide financial security for their families, reinforcing their dedication to business success (Hassan & Bakar, 2018). However, limited exposure to market trends and modern technology has resulted in lower levels of entrepreneurial ambition among some Orang Asli entrepreneurs (Latif & Ibrahim, 2020). Similarly, financial and institutional support constraints have contributed to a lack of motivation for business ventures among certain groups (Siti & Sharifah, 2020).

In conclusion, desire is a fundamental determinant of entrepreneurial success among the Orang Asli. It fuels motivation, fosters innovation, enhances brand identity, and sustains long-term business commitment. Given the challenges some Orang Asli youth face in sustaining their entrepreneurial aspirations, targeted interventions such as education, mentorship, and financial support are essential to nurture and strengthen their entrepreneurial drive.

Entrepreneurial Tendency

According to the Nawang and Mamat (2019), identified financial resources, role models, barriers, social identification, social norms, entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial skills as primary factors influencing entrepreneurial inclination. Among these, entrepreneurial skills emerged as the most significant determinant. Furthermore, Amiruddin et al. (2014), examined the effectiveness of a foundational entrepreneurship module incorporating mastery-learning strategies in shaping the entrepreneurial behavior of Orang Asli students. Their

findings revealed that students in the mastery-learning group demonstrated greater improvements in entrepreneurial behavior compared to those in traditional learning settings.

Entrepreneurial tendencies have also been explored within prison populations. According to Roszlan (2017) found that entrepreneurial inclination among inmates is influenced by multiple factors, including skill training and family support, both of which ranked highly. Meanwhile, entrepreneurial traits and financial assistance were moderately high, whereas societal perception was relatively low. Notably, male inmates exhibited a higher tendency towards entrepreneurship compared to female inmates, though demographic factors such as age, number of siblings, and marital status had no significant impact. The study also established a significant relationship between entrepreneurial traits, skill training, financial aid, family support, and societal perception in shaping inmates' entrepreneurial tendencies. Among these, entrepreneurial traits exerted the strongest influence, followed by skill training and family support. These findings underscore the importance of a holistic approach in fostering entrepreneurship, particularly among incarcerated populations (Prince et al., 2021; Alvarez & Barney, 2020).

The Relationship Between Entrepreneurial Traits and Entrepreneurial Tendencies

According to Ali (2020), emphasized that entrepreneurial traits play a crucial role in shaping an individual's inclination to start and expand a business. However, Zainal (2019) found no significant relationship between creativity often considered a key entrepreneurial trait and entrepreneurial tendencies among the Orang Asli. Instead, factors such as limited formal education and restricted access to economic resources were identified as more dominant influences on their decision to pursue entrepreneurship.

Siti (2021) reported a strong correlation between entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies among rural youth, while Idris (2023) found no significant relationship in rural communities. Wan (2021) identified a moderate relationship between these factors among young entrepreneurs, whereas Lee (2022) observed a strong and significant connection in the same demographic. Additionally, Harun (2022), established a significant relationship between entrepreneurial traits and the tendency to start a business among the Orang Asli.

In summary, previous studies present contrasting perspectives: some indicate a strong relationship between entrepreneurial traits and tendencies among the Orang Asli, while others suggest no significant correlation. These findings highlight the complexity of factors influencing entrepreneurship in indigenous communities.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of the study is developed to guide researchers in conducting this research. The main objective is to identify whether there is a relationship between entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies among indigenous youth in Hulu Perak. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study. It shows that the focus of the study is to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies among indigenous youth in Hulu Perak. The independent variable in this study, namely

entrepreneurial traits, includes creativity, passion, self-confidence and desire. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is entrepreneurial tendency.

This study is also supported by Social Cognitive Theory introduced by Bandura (2019), which emphasizes that individual behavior is influenced by personal beliefs, self-efficacy and environmental factors. In the context of entrepreneurship, individuals with higher confidence, motivation and creativity are more likely to demonstrate entrepreneurial tendencies. However, environmental support such as education, training opportunities and access to resources also play an important role in shaping entrepreneurial behavior among Orang Asli youth.

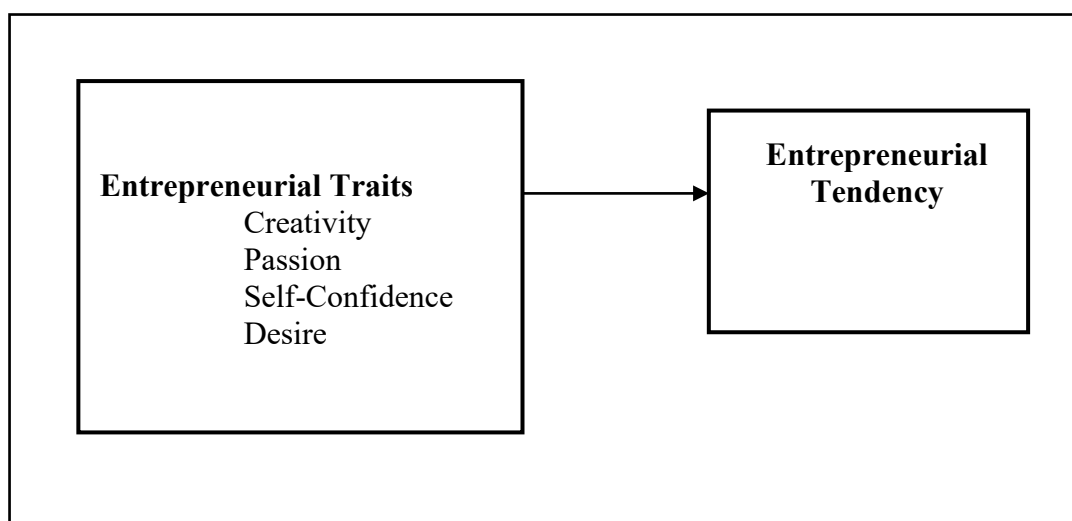


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Study

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative survey design to examine entrepreneurial characteristics and tendencies among Orang Asli youth. A systematic approach was adopted to ensure the rigor and validity of the findings, as detailed in the following sections.

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was utilized, as it allows for the collection of primary data directly from the target population to provide a snapshot of current trends (Creswell, 2014). This design is particularly effective for describing the characteristics of the Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak in relation to their entrepreneurial inclinations.

Population

In this study, the population refers to the youth of the Orang Asli community in Hulu Perak. The population consists of 161 youths from two (2) villages Kampung Orang Asli Sungai Raba,

Rancangan Penempatan Semula (RPS) Air Banun and Kampung Orang Asli Pengkalan Permai, RPS Air Banun as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Population of Study

No	Village	Population
1.	Kampung Orang Asli Sungai Raba, RPS Air Banun	113
2.	Kampung Orang Asli Pengkalan Permai, RPS Air Banun	48
Total		161

Sample

In this study, the researcher used a sample based on JAKOA statistics (2023), the population of two (2) Orang Asli villages in the Hulu Perak District was 161 indigenous youth. Therefore, the Sample Determination Table from Isaac and Michael was used. The minimum sample size required in this study is 114 Indigenous youth.

Instrument

The questionnaire is a research instrument used to collect data needed to answer research questions and test hypotheses (Abu Bakar, 2020). It plays an important role in helping researchers obtain accurate and reliable findings related to the study (Ary et al., 2002). This questionnaire was adapted from previous studies and modified according to the research objectives of study. The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from the previous researchers such as Mohd Nor (2017) and Alias (2004). The instrument consists of three sections: Part A (Demographics - 7 items), Part B (Entrepreneurial Characteristics - 44 items), and Part C (Entrepreneurial Tendencies - 10 items), adapted from Mohd Nor (2017) and Alias (2004).

Pilot Study

In this study, pilot study was conducted with 30 Orang Asli youth in Pengkalan Hulu to test the instrument's internal consistency. A pilot study consisting of 30 Orang Asli youths in Pengkalan Hulu, Perak District, in particular 15 indigenous youths in Kampung Orang Asli Bukit Asu and 15 indigenous youths in Kampung Orang Asli Air Bah 1. The results of Cronbach's Alpha analysis indicated that the reliability of the research instrument is very good for Part B and acceptable for Part C. Therefore, this research instrument can be used when collecting data for the actual study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data for this study were obtained through feedback from questionnaires distributed and filled out by indigenous youth in Hulu Perak from two villages in Hulu Perak, Perak. After collecting data, the researcher analyzed the study data using SPSS software version 29.0.

Demographics

The findings of the study indicate that 45 Orang Asli youth (46.4%) were male, while 52 were female, representing (53.6%). This demonstrates that the number of female Orang Asli youth exceeded their male counterparts. Additionally, the marital status of the respondents revealed that 37 individuals (38.1%) were single, whereas 60 respondents (61.9%) were married. Referring to the Table 2, the study findings indicate that 72 Orang Asli youth (74.2%) were unemployed, while 25 respondents (25.8%) were employed. Furthermore, regarding the occupation of the respondents' mothers, 89 mothers or (91.8%), were unemployed, while only 8 mothers (8.2%), were employed. As for the fathers, 51 fathers (52.6%) were employed, while 46 fathers (47.4%) were unemployed. In terms of age distribution, the highest number of respondents fell within the 20 to 24-year-old category, comprising 37 Orang Asli youth (38.1%). Conversely, the lowest number of respondents were in the 25 to 29-year-old category, with only 11 individuals (11.3%). Lastly, in terms of education level, the highest number of respondents had completed secondary school, totalling 54 individuals (55.7%), while the lowest number had attained higher education, with only two respondents (2.1%).

Table 2. Frequency distribution and percentages distribution for respondent demographics.

		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	45	46.4
	Female	52	53.6
	Total	97	100.0
Marital Status	Single	37	38.1
	Married	60	61.9
	Total	97	100.0
Employment Status	Unemployed	72	74.2
	Employed	25	25.8
	Total	97	100.0
Mother's Occupation	Unemployed	89	91.8
	Employed	8	8.2
	Total	97	100.0
Father's Occupation	Unemployed	51	52.6
	Employed	46	47.4
	Total	97	100.0
Age	15-19	15	15.5
	20-24	37	38.1
	25-29	11	11.3
	30-40	34	35.1
	Total	97	100.0

Education Level	No Formal Education	17	17.5
	Primary School	24	24.7
	Secondary School	54	55.7
	Higher Education Institution	2	2.1
	Total	97	100.0

Entrepreneurial Traits

The analysis of entrepreneurial traits encompasses key elements such as creativity, passion, self-confidence and a strong desire to succeed. This study focuses on Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak, a crucial group for understanding the entrepreneurial potential within minority communities (Abdullah, 2020).

Creativity

As a results, item BK8, "I seek creative ways to preserve the Orang Asli cultural heritage through my business," recorded the highest mean value ($M=4.19$, $SD=0.776$) compared to the other 13 items. Meanwhile, the item with the lowest mean value within the high-level category was BK1 ($M=3.82$, $SD=1.066$), "I utilize my community's traditional skills to create unique products."

According to the table, highlights two items with identical mean values. Item BK5 ($M=4.12$, $SD=0.721$), "I strive to find creative solutions to ensure my products or services remain relevant in the market," and item BK7 ($M=4.12$, $SD=0.882$), "I explore new ways to introduce my community's products to a broader market. Overall, the findings indicate that entrepreneurial traits related to creativity among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak are at a high level ($M=4.05$).

According to Zulkifli et al. (2021) highlight that the high level of creativity observed among Orang Asli youth engaging in entrepreneurship is often deeply rooted in their inherited traditional knowledge, passed down through generations. Finally, the study by Siti Nurhasimah et al. (2019) highlights the role of technology in enhancing creativity in traditional handicraft production. The findings indicate that the integration of modern technology, such as machinery and computer-aided design, can improve the quality and competitiveness of Orang Asli products without compromising their cultural value. This further reinforces the notion that the synergy between traditional elements and innovation, including technological advancements, is crucial in ensuring that Orang Asli products remain relevant in the market while preserving their rich cultural heritage.

Passion

The study finding indicate that item BS9, "I frequently think of innovative ways to enhance my business performance," recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 4.153$) compared to the other 13 items. Among all the items, the lowest mean score within the high-level category

was observed in item BS7, "I feel happy when given the opportunity to manage and expand my business," which had a mean score of ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.910$).

Furthermore, there are three items share the same mean value. Item BS7 ("I feel happy when given the opportunity to manage and expand my business") recorded a mean score of ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.910$), alongside item BS11 ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.884$). Additionally, item BS13 ("I feel motivated to overcome failures and rise again in business") also reported a mean score of ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.858$). Overall, the findings indicate that entrepreneurial traits related to passion among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak are at a high level ($M = 4.13$).

According to the Nordin et al. (2021), highlights that Orang Asli youth possess a strong entrepreneurial passion and determination to advance their businesses, despite facing numerous challenges such as limited access to financial resources and formal education. They actively strive to enhance their skills in pursuit of success, aligning with the findings of this study. According to the Zawawi et al. (2020), reveals that Orang Asli youth in Peninsular Malaysia exhibit a strong determination to improve themselves, particularly in the field of entrepreneurship. They actively seek to overcome economic and social challenges by thinking innovatively and working diligently to elevate their standard of living through business ventures.

Self-Confident

The study finding indicate that the highest mean value item BY6 ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.806$): "I am confident that I can acquire the necessary resources to start and grow a business within my community." Conversely, the lowest mean value within the high-level category was found in item BY1 ($M=4.02$, $SD=0.803$): "I am confident that my community's traditional skills can be leveraged to establish a successful business."

There are two items with the same mean value were Item BY6 ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.806$) states: "I am confident that I can obtain the necessary resources to start and expand my business, even with limited resources." Similarly, item BY8 ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.742$) asserts: "I believe that the products or services created by my community hold significant market value." Overall, the study findings indicate that entrepreneurial traits related to self-confidence among Orang Asli youth are at a high level ($M=4.12$).

These findings align with the study by Yunus and Ahmad (2021), which also found that Orang Asli youth exhibit high confidence in accessing the resources needed for their businesses, despite facing resource limitations. Additionally, this study is consistent with the research by Rajoo and Tan (2023), which highlighted that Orang Asli youth believe in their ability to manage a business even when confronted with various challenges, including limited access to financial resources and infrastructure. This underscores their remarkable resilience in overcoming adversity.

Desire

The study finding indicate that the highest mean score is item BI2, "I am always excited to explore new opportunities in entrepreneurship that involve my community's traditions and

heritage," with the highest mean value ($M=4.26$, $SP=0.823$). Additionally, among the six (6) items, the lowest mean value within the high-level category is found in item BI5 ($M=4.02$, $SP=0.828$), "I am always motivated to strive harder in advancing entrepreneurial efforts that involve my cultural heritage."

There are two items share the same mean value, namely BI2 ($M=4.26$, $SP=0.823$), "I am always excited to explore new opportunities in entrepreneurship that involve my community's traditions and heritage," and BI4 ($M=4.26$, $SP=0.778$), "I feel fulfilled and passionate when I see my community's products or services being well received in the market." Overall, the study findings reveal that entrepreneurial traits from the perspective of desire among Orang Asli youth are at a high level ($M=4.15$).

The findings of this study align with the research conducted by Zainal et al. (2022), which highlights that a strong desire to preserve traditions and cultural heritage strengthens a business's brand and identity, making it more appealing to customers who value authenticity and quality. This indicates that among entrepreneurs, particularly the Orang Asli, the aspiration to uphold their cultural heritage not only enriches their business identity but also provides a competitive edge in the market. The commitment to preserving these cultural values enhances the attractiveness of their businesses to consumers who increasingly seek authenticity and quality in today's market.

Entrepreneurial Tendency

The study finding reveal that the highest mean score was recorded for item C4 ($M=4.31$, $SP=0.700$), which states, "I am excited about the idea of expanding a business based on Orang Asli culture and traditions." Additionally, among the ten (10) items, the lowest mean score within the high-level category was observed for item C7 ($M=3.93$, $SP=0.860$), which states, "One or both of my parents are entrepreneurs."

There are two items share the same mean score item C1 ($M=4.11$, $SP=0.956$), which states, "I believe that starting a business can benefit my Orang Asli community," and item C9 ($M=4.11$, $SP=0.853$), which states, "I frequently discuss business ideas with other community members to explore potential ventures together." Overall, the study findings indicate that entrepreneurial tendencies among the Orang Asli are at a high level, with a mean score of $M=4.15$.

According to the Abdullah et al. (2021), highlights that education and training in entrepreneurship can enhance the entrepreneurial tendencies of Orang Asli youth and expand their opportunities to leverage economic resources within their communities. This aligns with the findings of this study, which indicate that Orang Asli youth are interested in utilizing their traditional skills in business a potential that can be further strengthened through entrepreneurial education.

The Relationship Between Entrepreneurial Traits and Tendencies Among Orang Asli Youth in Hulu Perak

The results of Spearman Correlation analysis indicate that there is a relationship between entrepreneurial traits and tendencies among indigenous youth in Hulu Perak, $r = 0.81$, $p = <0.01$. This indicates a very strong and significant relationship between entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that a strong and significant relationship exists between the two variables.

As stated by Mohd Nor et al. (2021), positive individual traits such as self-confidence, creativity and entrepreneurial passion significantly enhance the likelihood of success in this field. Therefore, efforts to strengthen these qualities through training, education and continuous support should be an integral part of policies and programs aimed at developing Orang Asli youth (Ali et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study has successfully met its objectives, providing a clear understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurial traits and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth in Hulu Perak. The findings indicate that key entrepreneurial traits such as creativity, passion, self-confidence and desire play a crucial role in shaping their inclination toward entrepreneurship. Moreover, the study confirms a positive correlation between these traits and entrepreneurial tendencies, demonstrating that the stronger these characteristics are within an individual, the greater their likelihood of engaging in entrepreneurial activities.

However, this study also acknowledges certain limitations, such as a restricted sample size and external factors that may have influenced the results. Therefore, future research should adopt a more comprehensive approach, incorporating additional aspects such as social support, education, and an enabling economic environment to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. Therefore, future studies are recommended to expand the study population of Orang Asli youth throughout Malaysia and also investigate the differences in characteristics and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth. Besides, future study also may conduct a qualitative study to learn more about the characteristics and entrepreneurial tendencies among Orang Asli youth and investigate the challenges and obstacles of Orang Asli youth in venturing into entrepreneurship.

Ultimately, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a valuable guide for stakeholders in designing strategies and programs to empower entrepreneurship among Orang Asli youth. By doing so, this research aims to contribute to the community's economic development.

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