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"Why Do Students Save Less?" A Study of the Determinants of Saving Intentions and Behaviours Among Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

Despite the issue of low savings being a serious concern, limited research has been conducted on students' saving behaviour in Malaysia, especially when it comes to private universities. This research focuses on examining factors that affect saving behaviour among undergraduate students at a private university in Malaysia, in reference to the Theory of Planned Behaviour. A mixed-method design was applied. Quantitative research was conducted, in which 122 valid responses were collected via an online survey and analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). In addition, qualitative research with 11 respondents was conducted, and the data were analysed using thematic analysis. Quantitative findings indicate that attitude, social influence, and self-efficacy significantly affect saving intention, and that saving intention significantly affects saving behaviour. Perceived financial literacy, however, was found to be insignificant for students' saving intention, highlighting that behavioural and motivational factors can be more influential than technical financial knowledge. Qualitative findings showed that five themes emerged from the interviews. This study is novel in its use of mixed methods to reveal that behavioural factors outweigh financial literacy in influencing saving intentions among private university students in Malaysia.

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1.0 Introduction

As the world is experiencing rapid developments in financial systems, saving and proper financial management have become more important than ever. Saving is important for both individuals and economies, as it helps counteract the impact of global shocks and economic crises when people face declining or even lost income (Gilenko & Chernova, 2021; Cruz et al., 2025). On an individual level, saving fosters a sense of financial security, which reduces economic stress and enables people to manage their resources and utilise them effectively in the future (Hutabarat, 2025). However, Malaysia has been struggling with the issue of low savings with 61% reporting difficulty to secure RM1,000 in emergency cash (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2024). Specifically, youth in Malaysia continue to face challenges in their ability to manage finances and do not consistently raise proper savings, with many having equal or even higher spending than savings (Isa & Kim, 2024). A survey by *Perbadanan Insurans Deposit Malaysia* (PIDM) showed that for the age group of 18-24, 24% of the respondents reported not having any savings at all; and the majority of them exhibited inconsistent saving habits (PIDM - Savings report, 2022). On the other hand, there are also problems related to financial literacy in Malaysia, with one in every three Malaysians indicating a low self-assessed level of financial literacy (Malaysia National Strategy for Financial Literacy, 2019).

When it comes to saving behaviour, many previous studies in Malaysia have focused on households (Ahmad et al., 2021), employees (Ismail et al., 2020), or, more generally, youth saving behaviour (Isa & Kim, 2024), yet there have been few attempts to understand students' saving behaviour. Even with the few studies on students, such as those by Nur et al. (2023) and Jaffar et al. (2022), the research focused on public universities, leaving a gap in understanding regarding private universities. Therefore, this research examines the effects of attitude, social influence, self-efficacy, and perceived financial literacy on undergraduate students' saving intention and behaviour at a private university in Malaysia, in reference to the Theory of Planned Behaviour. To further enhance the robustness and credibility of the quantitative findings, this research also examines the practices of the aforementioned variables from the perspective of undergraduate students using a qualitative method.

2.0 Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Underlying Theory

This study is driven by the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which posits that people's behaviour is motivated and directed by their intentions, which are, in turn, shaped by three main factors: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). This theory extends the Theory of Reasoned Action by adding perceived behavioural control to improve the prediction of behaviours that lack complete volitional control (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). It suggests that perceived behavioural control, along with intentions, can predict actual behaviour. According to the theory, favourable attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control lead to a stronger intention to perform the behaviour. People are then more willing to put in more effort to engage in the behaviour, making them more likely to perform it (Ajzen, 1991).

Attitude concerns people's evaluation of behaviour, whether positive or negative; their beliefs about the outcomes of that behaviour influence their attitude towards it (Ajzen, 1991; Kebede, 2023). Subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure individuals experience regarding whether to perform the behaviour. Social influence based on subjective norms refers to the referent group's influence on individuals. In other words, people's behaviour tends to be influenced by those deemed important, mainly family and friends (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioural control is the ease or difficulty with which a person views themselves as able to perform the behaviour. Self-efficacy is a person's perceived control over the behaviour, indicating the degree at which a person believes themselves to be able to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Hagger et al., 2022).

In the context of this study, variables have been drawn from the Theory of Planned Behaviour, identified as attitude, social influence, self-efficacy, saving intention, saving behaviour, and perceived financial literacy. Perceived financial literacy refers to the knowledge, skills, and other factors related to making sound financial decisions (OECD, 2023). Perceived financial literacy has been recognised as an important driver of financial behaviour (Patel & Nayak, 2023) and is believed to positively influence

financial management among students (OECD PISA, 2025); hence, it is included in this research as an additional variable that influences saving intention.

2.2 Attitude and Saving Intention

The Theory of Planned Behaviour, along with previous studies, suggests that attitude influences saving intention. A study on Pomak households' saving behaviour in Greece by Satsios and Hadjidakis (2018) indicated that attitude had a significant positive impact on the intentions of households' heads to save. Research on youth's saving behaviour in Vietnam by Van et al. (2024) found that attitude strongly affects saving intention, noting that people with a positive attitude had a clearer intention to save. In Malaysia, a study on youth's saving behaviour concluded that attitude was statistically significantly positively related to saving intention (Isa & Kim, 2024). Among Malaysian students, Munikrishnan et al. (2023) found a slight positive relationship between attitude and saving intention. Finally, Nizar et al. (2021) discovered a significant positive relationship between attitude and saving intention among community college students in Malaysia. Therefore, it can be assumed that attitude can significantly affect saving intention.

H1: Attitude positively affects saving intention among undergraduate students.

2.3 Social Influence and Saving Intention

Social influence based on subjective norms is believed to affect saving intention. A study on Pomak household saving behaviour in Greece found that subjective norms and influences had a significant direct impact on saving intention, marking it as the strongest predictor of intention (Satsios & Hadjidakis, 2018). Another study on youth in Vietnam showed that social influence from friends, family, and teachers had a significant positive impact on saving intention (Van et al., 2024). Regarding youth in Malaysia, a study by Isa and Kim (2024) found that peer influence had a direct positive relationship with the youth's intentions to save. Relating to students' saving behaviour in Malaysia, a study by Munikrishnan et al. (2023) concluded that there was a moderate positive relationship between social influence and intentions to save. Finally, a study by Nizar et al. (2021)

indicated that social influence had a significant positive impact on the saving intention of community college students in Malaysia. Therefore, it can be concluded that social influence can significantly impact saving intention.

H2: Social influence positively affects saving intention among undergraduate students.

2.4 Self-efficacy and Saving Intention

Self-efficacy based on perceived behavioural control is thought to influence saving intention. A study by Satsios and Hadjidakis (2018) found that perceived behavioural control had a significant positive effect on the saving intention of Pomak households in Greece. Moreover, another study by Do et al. (2024) indicates that perceived behavioural control had a significant impact on the saving intentions of university students majoring in business and economics in Vietnam. In Malaysia, perceived behavioural control showed a significant positive impact on saving intention among community college students, indicating that the saving intentions increase when students view saving behaviour as easy (Nizar et al., 2021). On the contrary, results from a study by Isa and Kim (2024) indicated that the relationship between self-efficacy and saving intention among Malaysian youth was insignificant and negative. Finally, another moderately positive relationship was found between students' perceived behavioural control and saving intention in a study by Munikrishnan et al. (2023) conducted in Malaysia. Therefore, it can be summarised that self-efficacy has a significant effect on saving intention.

H3: Self-efficacy positively affects saving intention among undergraduate students.

2.5 Perceived Financial Literacy and Saving Intention

Perceived financial literacy is considered one of the factors influencing saving intention. A study on employees' saving behaviour in Sri Lanka indicated that perceived financial literacy had a direct positive impact on saving intention, concluding that higher financial knowledge leads to a greater intention to save (Peiris, 2021). Another study of workers

in Indonesia by Widjaja et al. (2020) found a direct, positive, significant relationship between perceived financial literacy and saving intention. Regarding young people, Van et al. (2024) found that perceived financial literacy positively influences saving intentions among Vietnamese youth. However, Do et al. (2024) found that financial knowledge had no impact on saving intention among university students majoring in business and economics in Vietnam, likely because the study sample had a certain level of financial literacy. Finally, a study by Munikrishnan et al. (2023) on students' saving behaviour in Malaysia showed that financial literacy had a significant positive effect on saving intention, meaning that higher financial literacy is associated with a higher intention to save. Therefore, financial literacy is expected to have a significant effect on saving intention.

H4: Perceived financial literacy positively affects saving intention among undergraduate students.

2.6 Saving Intention and Saving Behaviour

Saving intention is thought to influence saving behaviour. Results from Peiris (2021) suggest that saving intention positively influenced employees' saving behaviour in Sri Lanka. Moreover, Widjaja et al. (2020) found a direct, significantly positive relationship between saving intention and saving behaviour among workers in Indonesia. Another study on saving behaviour among youth in Vietnam showed that saving intention had a significantly positive impact on saving behaviour (Van et al., 2024). In Malaysia, a study by Isa and Kim (2024) indicated that saving intention has a significant positive effect on youth saving behaviour, displaying that saving intentions are necessary to achieve saving behaviour. Finally, research by Munikrishnan et al. (2023) confirmed a moderate positive relationship between saving intention and saving behaviour among Malaysian students. Therefore, it can be concluded that saving intention significantly affects saving behaviour.

H5: Saving intention positively affects saving behaviour among undergraduate students.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the present research.

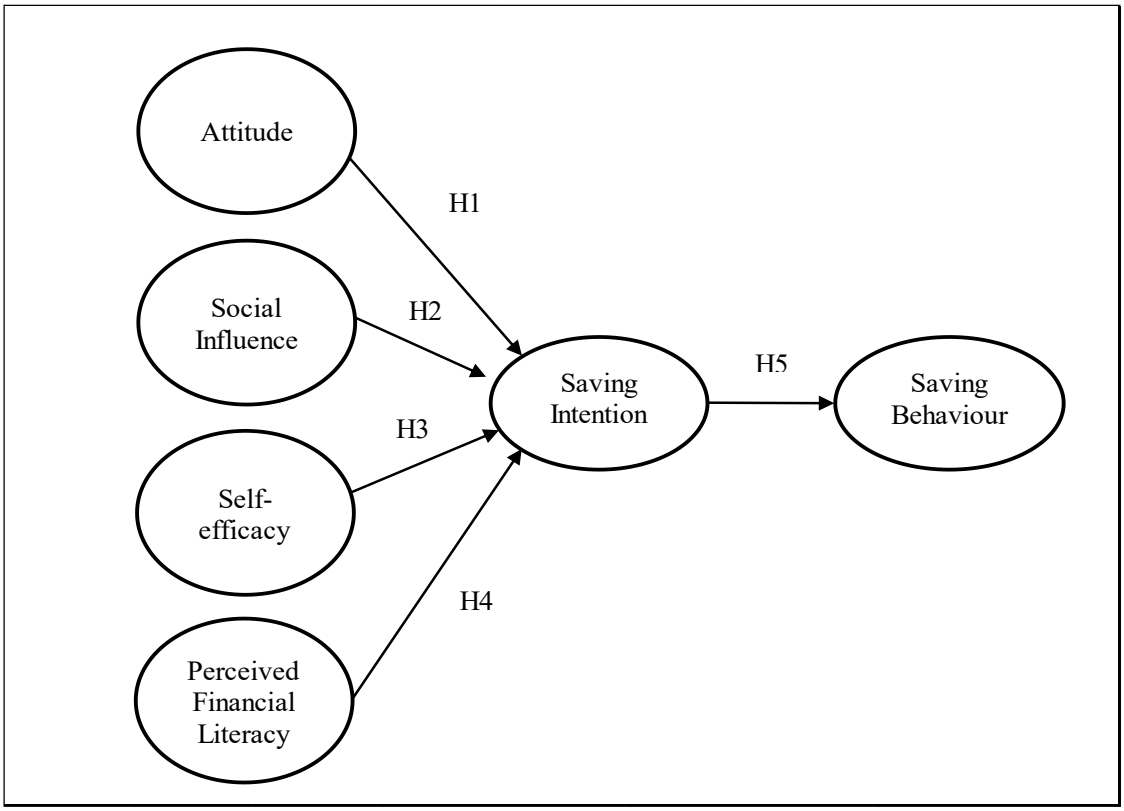

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Procedure

This study employs an explanatory sequential mixed method design. A survey was used to examine the cause-effect relationships between students' saving behaviour and the factors of attitude, social influence, self-efficacy, perceived financial literacy, and saving intention. Additionally, the perspectives of students' practices towards factors affecting their saving intention and behaviour were gathered through interview. For this study, data were collected using an online self-administered questionnaire and online semi-structured interview. A judgemental sampling technique was used for both designs to ensure data accuracy and adequate representation of the targeted population (Etikan et al., 2015), which consists of full-time undergraduate students at a private university

located in Cyberjaya, Malaysia serving as the inclusion criteria. Non-probability sampling was chosen due to restricted access to the full student population.

For determining the sample size for the quantitative design, the sample-to-variable ratio of 20:1 was selected as it is strongly preferred in the field of survey research (Hair et al., 2019) hence, a minimum of 120 observations were required. After drafting the survey questions and prior to administering the online questionnaire, expert led pre-testing was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire items (Saunders et al., 2019). The questionnaire was examined by two subject matter experts in the areas of economics and behavioural science to guarantee that the survey questions successfully and relevantly capture the constructs of interest in this research. Pilot testing was carried out with responses collected from 30 undergraduate students to evaluate the clarity and reliability of the questionnaire. The Cronbach Alpha results for the pilot test exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.7 for all the variables, demonstrating an acceptable level of internal consistency in the questionnaire.

During the quantitative phase, a total of 139 responses were initially collected from November 2025 to January 2026 and data screening and cleaning were conducted. After filtering, Excel was used to remove any responses displaying suspicious patterns, and SPSS was used to remove outliers. At the end, only 122 responses were deemed valid and were used for the analysis. The sample size of 122 is considered adequate for this study, providing reasonable basis for the analysis and statistical accuracy of true effect (Memon et al., 2020). Next, descriptive analysis for demographic profile was obtained using SPSS and data analysis was done using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling, also known as PLS-SEM, and utilizing SmartPLS software. This model is most suitable for this research, as it uses two different stages (measurement model and structural model) when assessing the complex cause-effects relationship models, allowing for rigorous analysis and findings (Hair & Alamer, 2022). Additionally, the study is concerned with testing a theoretical framework of Theory of Planned Behaviour from a prediction perspective, hence, the method is appropriate (Hair et al., 2019).

In the qualitative phase, data were collected from five female and six male respondents in January 2026. Interview saturation was reached after 11 respondents. The

interviews were conducted online using Google Meet and Microsoft Teams, with each session lasting 15 minutes. Saturation is considered the cornerstone of rigor in determining sample sizes in qualitative research (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022); hence, 11 respondents were sufficient. The interview questions were reviewed by two subject matter experts to ensure their appropriateness and alignment with the research objectives. Thematic analysis was used in information extraction, and manual coding was used due to the small dataset (Wicks, 2017). Member checking was conducted to ensure the credibility of the research's findings.

3.2 Research Instrument

To measure the variables in this research during the quantitative phase, various items were adapted from multiple relevant previous studies. For attitude, five items were adapted from each of Ismail et al. (2020), Jonathan and Bertuah (2025), and Boonroungrut and Huang (2021) including items such as "Saving money makes me feel good". For social influence, nine items were adapted from Alshebami and Aldhyani (2022) and Jonathan and Bertuah (2025) with statements like "People close to me expect me to save regularly". For self-efficacy, seven items were adapted from Ismail et al. (2020), Nizar et al. (2021), and Boonroungrut and Huang (2021), assessing confidence with items such as "I believe that I am capable of saving for the future". For perceived financial literacy, seven items were adapted from Do et al. (2024) and Alshebami and Aldhyani (2022), with statements such as "I have a good understanding of how to manage my finances". For saving intention, six items were adapted from Satsios and Hadjidakis (2018), Do et al. (2024), and Boonroungrut and Huang (2021), such as "I plan to have some money left at the end of the month". Finally, for saving behaviour, eight items were adapted from Alshebami and Aldhyani (2022) and Nizar et al. (2021), with items like "I regularly put money aside for the future". All items were measured in 5-point Likert scales ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

In the qualitative phase, seven semi-structured interview questions were developed, covering demographic profiles, attitude, social influence, self-efficacy, perceived financial literacy, saving intention, and saving behaviour. The open-ended

questions were developed and intended to elicit the views and opinions of respondents on these variables.

4.0 Quantitative Results

4.1 Demographic Profile

A summary of descriptive statistics about the demographic profile of the respondents is provided in Table 1. Out of 122 responses, 80 (65.6%) respondents were female and 42 (34.4%) were male. For financial sources, most respondents indicated relying on family allowance with 92 (75.4%) responses, while a minority of only 3 (2.5%) relied on job. When it comes to estimated monthly savings, less than RM100 was the most common with 65 (53.3%) responses, followed by RM100 to RM300 at 43 (35.2%) responses, and the least common was more than RM1,000 at only 1 (0.8%) response. Majority of respondents were in their first year of study with 47 (38.5%) responses, closely followed by 44 (36.1%) who are in their third year of study, and a minority of 5 (4.1%) were in their fourth year of study. In terms of age, most participants were 20 - 21 with 56 (45%) responses and the least response was 25 and above with 1 (0.8%) response.

Table 1: Respondent's Demographic Profile

No	Demographic	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	42	34.4%
		Female	80	65.6%
2	Financial Sources	Family allowance	92	75.4%
		Job	3	2.5%
		PTPTN/Loans	18	14.8%
		Scholarship	9	7.4%
3	Estimated Monthly Savings	Less than RM100	65	53.3%
		RM100 to RM300	43	35.2%
		RM301 to RM500	8	6.6%
		RM501 to RM 700	3	2.5%
		RM701 to RM 1,000	2	1.6%
		More than RM1,000	1	0.8%

No	Demographic	Description	Frequency	Percentage
4	Age	18 - 19	29	23.8%
		20 – 21	56	45.9%
		22 - 23	26	21.3%
		24 - 25	10	8.2%
		25 and above	1	0.8%
5	Year of Study	First	47	38.5%
		Second	26	21.3%
		Third	44	36.1%
		Fourth	5	4.1%

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

Table 2 provides a summary of the measurement model evaluation, which includes assessment of indicator loadings, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Six items which are SN1, SN2, SN3, SE1, SE2, and SB5 were cut off due to out-of-range loadings (< 0.7), which improved the model's performance. The remaining outer loadings for all the constructs were between 0.632 and 0.895, which is acceptable given that the model meets the other requirements (CR > 0.7, AVE ≥ 0.5, and discriminant validity < 0.85) according to Hair and Alamer (2022). The CR for all constructs in this model is between 0.859 and 0.933 which is well above the threshold of 0.7, indicating good model consistency (Hair & Alamer, 2022). All AVE values meet the threshold criteria of being 0.5 and above, demonstrating sufficient reliability and acceptable convergent validity (Hair & Alamer, 2022). Additionally, the VIF values for the predictor variables did not exceed 5, indicating that collinearity issues were not present (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2: Convergent Validity and Reliability

Construct	Item	Loading	VIF	CR	AVE
Attitude	AT1	0.660	1.474	0.870	0.575
	AT2	0.871	3.189		
	AT3	0.803	2.853		
	AT4	0.793	1.801		
	AT5	0.637	1.328		
Social Influence	SN4	0.664	1.697	0.859	0.506
	SN5	0.645	1.477		

Construct	Item	Loading	VIF	CR	AVE
	SN6	0.749	1.704		
	SN7	0.776	1.949		
	SN8	0.779	2.204		
	SN9	0.637	1.406		
Self-efficacy	SE3	0.792	2.000	0.880	0.595
	SE4	0.752	1.859		
	SE5	0.836	1.840		
	SE6	0.750	1.733		
	SE7	0.722	1.599		
Perceived Financial	FL1	0.746	2.116	0.883	0.520
Literacy	FL2	0.795	2.284		
	FL3	0.646	1.603		
	FL4	0.642	1.470		
	FL5	0.737	1.661		
	FL6	0.660	1.759		
	FL7	0.802	2.336		
Saving Intention	SI1	0.833	2.509	0.933	0.698
	SI2	0.807	2.465		
	SI3	0.888	3.401		
	SI4	0.895	3.360		
	SI5	0.756	1.848		
	SI6	0.826	2.549		
Saving Behaviour	SB1	0.770	1.737	0.875	0.500
	SB2	0.725	1.704		
	SB3	0.714	1.649		
	SB4	0.660	1.522		
	SB6	0.632	1.384		
	SB7	0.772	2.031		
	SB8	0.666	1.554		

Discriminant validity was evaluated using Heterotrait-monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) as presented in Table 3. The results show satisfactory discriminant validity, with all values meeting the threshold of being below 0.85 and being adequately distinct (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

	ATT	FL	SB	SE	SN	SI
ATT						
FL	0.353					
SB	0.670	0.790				
SE	0.686	0.792	0.849			

	ATT	FL	SB	SE	SN	SI
SI	0.747	0.402	0.741	0.619		
SN	0.537	0.501	0.617	0.538	0.546	

4.3 Structural Model Assessment

Next, structural model was assessed to evaluate the inner relationship between endogenous and exogenous variables. Path coefficients and the coefficient of determination (R^2) were obtained using a bootstrapping sample of 5000 as recommended by Hair and Alamer (2022). Results shown in Table 4 display an R^2 value of 50.1% for saving intention, meaning that a substantial amount of the variation in saving intention can be explained by attitude, social influence, self-efficacy, and perceived financial literacy. Moreover, saving behaviour has an R^2 value of 45.1%, indicating that saving intention can explain a considerable amount of the variation in saving behaviour.

Hypothesis testing based on the path coefficients results indicates that H1, H2, H3, and H5 are supported, while H4 is not supported. Attitude has a significant relationship with saving intention ($\beta = 0.432$, $t = 5.440$, $p = 0.000$), meaning that students' personal thoughts about saving have a relationship with their saving intention. Social influence has a significant relationship with saving intention ($\beta = 0.179$, $t = 2.195$, $p = 0.028$), meaning that those close to the students have an impact on their saving intention. Self-efficacy has a significant relationship with saving intention ($\beta = 0.223$, $t = 2.112$, $p = 0.035$), meaning that students' confidence about their ability to save has a relationship with their saving intention. Saving intention has a significant relationship with saving behaviour ($\beta = 0.672$, $t = 12.255$, $p = 0.000$), meaning that students' willingness to save has a relationship with their actual saving behaviour. Perceived financial literacy, however, was found to have an insignificant relationship with saving intention ($\beta = 0.018$, $t = 0.224$, $p = 0.823$), meaning that students' financial knowledge and skills do not have a relationship with their saving intention. Hence, four out of the five hypotheses were empirically supported.

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing Results

Path	Std. Beta	*t*-value	*p*-value	R^2	Results
H1	0.432	5.440	0.000	0.501	Supported
H2	0.179	2.195	0.028		Supported
H3	0.223	2.112	0.035		Supported
H4	0.018	0.224	0.823		Not Supported
H5	0.672	12.255	0.000	0.451	Supported

As shown in Table 5, the effect sizes (f^2) indicating small to large contributions of independent variables to the dependent variables (Cohen, 1988). The Q^2 predict values for all paths are more than zero, suggesting that the model has sufficient predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017). The SRMR value in the present study is 0.075 indicates that the model has a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Table 5: Q^2 Predict, f^2 and Model Fit

Construct	Q^2 Predict	f^2	SRMR
Saving Intention	0.443		
Attitude		0.225	
Social Influence		0.045	
Self-efficacy		0.040	0.075
Perceived Financial Literacy		0.000	
Saving behaviour	0.430		
Saving intention		0.822	

5.0 Qualitative Results

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain extra insights about saving intention and behaviour among undergraduate students. Five themes emerged and are briefly shown as follows:

(1) Positive attitude towards saving: Nine students generally viewed saving as important for meeting future needs and handling emergencies. *"For me, saving is just something I should do, like in case something happens or I need money later."* (Respondent 4)

(2) Social influence from family and peers: Seven students explained that receiving

encouragement from close social circles motivated them to adopt saving intention and behaviours. *"My parents always tell me not to spend everything, so I kind of follow that without thinking much."* (Respondent 2)

(3) Self-efficacy in managing limited finances: Six students expressed confidence in their ability to control spending and allocate part of their allowance or income for savings. *"I don't have a lot of money, but I know how to control myself if I really want to save."* (Respondents 7 and 11)

(4) Limited role of perceived financial literacy: Most of the students possessed satisfactory financial knowledge, however, they believe that personal discipline and situational factors are perceived as more influential than technical financial knowledge. *"Honestly, I don't really use what I learned about finance. I save because I feel I should, not because of theory."* (Respondents 1 and 3)

(5) Saving intention translating into behaviour: Eight students agreed that clear saving goals and plans were more likely to encourage them to practice actual saving. *"If I plan to save, I'll keep the money first."* (Respondent 7)

6.0 Discussion

The quantitative findings of this research display that attitude has a significant relationship with saving intention, which aligns with findings from Isa and Kim (2024) and Nizar et al. (2021) who indicated the presence of a significant positive relationship. This addresses the first research objective, and H1 is accepted. Social influence was found to have a significant relationship with saving intention in this research. This aligns with findings from Isa and Kim (2024) and Nizar et al. (2021) where a significant positive impact was observed for subjective norms and peer influence on saving intention. This addresses the second research objective and H2 is accepted. Self-efficacy was found to have a significant relationship with saving intention in this research. This aligns with the results from past research by Nizar et al. (2021) and Do et al. (2024) where saving intentions increased when participants were confident in their ability to save. This addresses the third research objective and H3 is accepted.

Perceived financial literacy was found to have an insignificant relationship with saving intention, which contradicts findings by Peiris (2021) and Van et al. (2024) where a significant positive relationship was found. However, there still are findings that align with the results of this research, such as the one by Do et al. (2024) where financial knowledge was found to have no impact on saving intention among university students majoring in business and economics since they are already of a certain level of perceived financial literacy. This could also be the case as with this research, since majority of responses were from students who are likely exposed to higher financial knowledge and education. This addresses the fourth research objective, and H4 is rejected.

Saving intention was found to have a significant relationship with saving behaviour in this research. This aligns with past studies by Munikrishnan et al. (2023) and Widjaja et al. (2020) where a significant positive relationship was found. This addresses the fifth research objective, and H5 is accepted. The R^2 value for saving intention confirms that attitude, social influence, self-efficacy, and perceived financial literacy drive a considerable amount of the variation in student's intention to save, while the R^2 value for saving behaviour demonstrate that saving intention is an effective predictor for saving behaviour among the students. The qualitative findings support the quantitative results by showing that students' saving intentions are largely shaped by attitude, social influence, and self-efficacy. Students expressed positive views towards saving, were influenced by family and peers, and felt confident in managing limited finances, which explains the significant relationships found. Interviews also confirmed that strong saving intentions led to saving behaviour. Consistent with the quantitative results, most of the students indicated that formal perceived financial literacy did not strongly influence their intention to save, instead emphasizing personal discipline and situational factors.

7.0 Implications, Conclusion, and Limitations

7.1 Theoretical Implications

One of the main contributions of this research is the validation and expansion of the Theory of Planned Behaviour in the specific context of saving behaviour among

undergraduate students at a Malaysian private university. The significance of attitude, social influence, and self-efficacy in relation to saving intention and the significance of saving intention in relation to saving behaviour reinforces Ajzen's (1991) belief that behavioural intentions and actions are shaped primarily by motivational, social, and cognitive factors. The theoretical insight uncovered by the insignificance of perceived financial literacy illustrates that while traditional economic points of view suggest that higher financial literacy leads to better financial management (OECD PISA, 2025), this might not be the case among the private university undergraduate students in Malaysia. For students in technology-driven and business-savvy environments, personal beliefs, social validation, and personal motivation are the primary drivers of saving behaviour rather than financial knowledge, which aligns with the effect observed before by Do et al. (2024).

7.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this research also provide valuable practical implications for the university and other higher education institutions aiming to promote positive saving behaviour among students. To create actual change in behaviour, these institutions should move from traditional information based financial literacy programs into behavioural intervention programs as technical knowledge alone might not be enough to directly influence students' saving behaviour. In light of this, financial education initiatives should include behavioural components that actively shape favourable attitudes, boost self-efficacy, and foster supportive social norms in terms of saving habits. Moreover, financial advocacy programs utilizing peer to peer mentoring and parental guidance can be particularly effective for normalizing saving behaviour (Alshebami & Aldhyani, 2022) as it has been found that social norms tend to significantly influence saving decision making among students. Finally, the significance of attitude and self-efficacy provides useful information for financial services providers. When it comes to the students, marketing and product development should stir more towards goal-oriented messaging and perceived sense of security rather than pure functionality as they would be more likely to resonate with students' personal evaluations and judgements (Jonathan & Bertuah, 2025).

7.3 Conclusion and Limitations

Findings of this research demonstrate that attitude, social influence, and self-efficacy have a significant impact on saving intention, and that saving intention has a significant impact on the saving behaviour as suggested by the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Perceived financial literacy was found to be insignificant in the case of saving intention, highlighting that financial knowledge and skills alone are not enough to motivate saving intention among the undergraduate students. The results of this study provide important insights to the private university and financial service providers hoping to motivate better saving practices among the students. One limitation of the quantitative study, however, is the reliance on self-reported information, which is subject to personal bias based on the participants' own perceptions of their behaviour, potentially resulting in over or under estimation of their saving habits. Another would be the use of non-probability sampling methods, which limited the participants in this research as they were not randomly selected. Consequently, these results are not generalizable to all students in Malaysia. Future research could address these limitations by employing probability sampling techniques, while expanding and diversifying the sample coverage across multiple universities.

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