

Evaluation of Entrepreneurial Intention among Vocational High School Students in the Context of Entrepreneurship Education Implementation in South Sulawesi

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the level of entrepreneurial intention of Vocational High School (SMK) students in South Sulawesi Province. Entrepreneurial intentions are an important indicator in measuring students' readiness and interest in entrepreneurship as one of the alternative career options after graduation. This research is motivated by the importance of entrepreneurship education in vocational schools in supporting the creation of new jobs and reducing the unemployment rate among vocational education graduates. The research method used is a descriptive quantitative approach. The sampling technique was carried out using multistage sampling through three stages, namely: (1) determination of the population of all state vocational schools in 24 districts/cities in South Sulawesi, (2) random selection of two districts/cities, namely Makassar City and Gowa Regency, and (3) purposively selection of each of three vocational schools based on the school's involvement in entrepreneurial activities through the School Production Unit (UPS). The number of respondents in this study was 275 students. Data was collected using a questionnaire instrument that measures the dimensions of entrepreneurial intention, including entrepreneurial interest, motivation, and readiness to start a business. Data analysis was carried out descriptively using frequency distribution. The results of the study show that the level of entrepreneurial intention of vocational school students in South Sulawesi Province is relatively high, with the majority of students showing a strong desire to be entrepreneurial after completing their education. No students were found in the low or very low category of entrepreneurial intentions. These findings indicate that entrepreneurship education in vocational schools, especially through entrepreneurial practice activities within



UPS, has contributed positively to building an independent mindset, risk-taking courage, and students' confidence to become young entrepreneurs. This research makes a theoretical contribution to the development of literature on entrepreneurship education in the context of vocational education, as well as a practical contribution for education policymakers in designing learning programs that are oriented towards strengthening students' entrepreneurial spirit

Keyword: Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Intention, and Vocational education

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education has a strategic role in preparing human resources who are ready to enter the world of work, both as skilled workers and as independent entrepreneurs. In the context of national economic development, Vocational High Schools (SMK) are expected to function not only as a ready-to-use workforce printing institution, but also as a vehicle for the formation of entrepreneurial character for the younger generation (Hermannsson et al., 2023). One of the main goals of vocational education is to produce graduates who are able to create new jobs, not just job seekers (Tobing & Manurung, 2021). Therefore, entrepreneurship education in vocational schools is an important aspect in supporting economic transformation based on creativity and independence (Willyarto & Mustikasiwi, 2020).

However, the reality on the ground shows that most vocational school graduates still tend to be oriented towards finding a formal job rather than taking the initiative to open their own business. This phenomenon reflects the gap between the goals of entrepreneurship education and the results achieved. The low number of vocational school graduates who are entrepreneurs can be caused by various factors, such as lack of practical experience, lack of environmental support, limited access to capital, and low confidence to start a business (Anthony et al., 2017). In this context, entrepreneurial intention is one of the important variables to understand students' readiness to take the entrepreneurial path (Delza et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial intention reflects an individual's intention or desire to become an entrepreneur, which in the Theory of Planned Behavior is the main predictor of actual entrepreneurial behavior.

Entrepreneurship education at vocational schools is expected to be able to foster this intention through various learning approaches, such as entrepreneurial project activities, management of School Production Units (UPS), to internships in the business world and the industrial world (Anthony et al., 2017). The existence of UPS is a strategic forum in training students to understand the production process, marketing, financial management, and business



decision-making. Through this hands-on experience, students are expected to develop attitudes, motivation, and self-confidence that support the birth of innovative and resilient young entrepreneurs (Cao et al., 2022). Thus, measuring students' entrepreneurial intentions is an important step to assess the extent to which the implementation of entrepreneurship education in vocational schools has been effective.

South Sulawesi Province is one of the regions that has great potential in the development of vocational education and entrepreneurship. With the number of vocational schools spread across 24 administrative regions (21 districts and 3 cities), this province is one of the centers of vocational education in the Eastern Indonesia region. Various entrepreneurship programs have been implemented, both through curriculum, extracurricular activities, and the development of school business units (Indriaturrahmi & Sudiyatno, 2016). However, the extent to which these efforts have succeeded in fostering students' entrepreneurial intentions still needs to be empirically proven. This is important considering that differences in regional characteristics, resources, and socioeconomic environment can affect students' motivation and intention to be entrepreneurs (Li et al., 2024).

Based on these conditions, this study was conducted to analyze the level of entrepreneurial intention of vocational school students in South Sulawesi Province and describe its tendency and distribution among respondents. This research is also expected to provide an overview of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education carried out through the School Production Unit (UPS) in shaping students' mental readiness and entrepreneurial behavior. The results of this research are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of entrepreneurship education literature in the field of vocational education, as well as provide practical implications for schools, local governments, and other stakeholders in designing policies and programs that can strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem in vocational schools. Thus, this research is an important step in supporting the grand vision of vocational education to produce graduates who are independent, creative, and highly competitive.

METHOD

1. Types and Approaches to Research

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive-verifiable type of research. This approach is used to describe the level of entrepreneurial intensity of vocational school students and test the extent to which these tendencies can be interpreted based on empirical data. Data collection was carried out through a survey using a closed-ended questionnaire with



a five-point Likert scale, which was compiled to measure various indicators of students' entrepreneurial intensity.

2. Population and Sampling Techniques

The population in this study is all students of State Vocational High Schools (SMKN) in the administrative area of South Sulawesi Province, which consists of 24 administrative regions (21 districts and 3 cities). The sample determination was carried out using a multistage sampling technique, which was carried out through three stages as follows:

Stage 1: Population Determination

The target population is set at all SMKN in South Sulawesi Province spread across 24 administrative regions. This stage aims to identify the entire area of research coverage before the sample selection process is carried out.

Stage 2: Random Sampling of Districts/ Cities

Of the 24 administrative regions, two regions were randomly selected, namely Makassar City and Gowa Regency. This random selection was carried out to provide equal opportunities for each district/city to become a research location and to ensure the representation of urban areas and districts.

Stage 3: Purposive School Selection

In the next stage, from each selected district/city, three SMKNs were selected purposively based on certain criteria, namely schools that have carried out entrepreneurial activities through the School Production Unit (UPS). This purposive selection was carried out with the consideration that schools that have UPS show real implementation of entrepreneurship programs in the school environment, so that they are relevant to the research objectives.

Thus, the total number of schools that are the location of the study is six vocational schools, consisting of three schools in Makassar City and three schools in Gowa Regency. From the six schools, the number of respondents was 275 students, who were selected proportionally from each school according to the number of students involved in entrepreneurial activities.

3. Research Instruments

The research instrument used was a closed questionnaire with a four-level Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). This questionnaire contains statement items that measure indicators of entrepreneurial intention, including aspects of intention, motivation, readiness, and confidence of students in starting a business. Before use, the



instrument is validated through a content validity test by an entrepreneurial expert and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to ensure internal consistency.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was analyzed in a quantitative descriptive manner by calculating the average score, median, mode, standard deviation, and frequency distribution to describe the level of entrepreneurial intensity of students. Furthermore, a score categorization analysis was carried out to determine the classification of the level of entrepreneurial intensity (very low, low, medium, high, and very high). The results of this analysis are the basis for the discussion of findings, theoretical contributions, and practical implications of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

a. Description of Data Statistics

Before entering the discussion of the research results, it is necessary to first present an overview of the description of the data obtained from the respondents. This statistical description aims to provide an initial understanding of the tendency of students' answers to the indicators of entrepreneurial intensity measured through six statements. This descriptive analysis includes mean values, medians, modes, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values, and total scores obtained from all respondents. Through the presentation of this data, it can be known in general the extent of the entrepreneurial intensity of vocational school students in South Sulawesi Province, which then becomes the basis for interpreting the results of the research in more depth in the next part of the discussion.

Table 1. Data Description of Indicators of Entrepreneurial Intention

Data Description	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Total
Mean	16,95	16,32	16,24	15,72	16,24	16,05	97,51
Median	17,00	16,00	16,00	15,00	16,00	16,00	97,00
Modus	15,00	15,00	15,00	15,00	15,00	15,00	92,00
Std. Deviation	2,17	2,14	2,15	2,17	2,15	2,24	10,16
Minimum	10,00	10,00	5,00	10,00	10,00	10,00	78,00
Maximum	20,00	20,00	20,00	20,00	20,00	20,00	119,00
Sum	4660,00	4487,00	4465,00	4323,00	4465,00	4414,00	26814,00

Criteria Score	5500,00	5500,00	5500,00	5500,00	5500,00	5500,00	33000,00
Total	84,73	81,58	81,18	78,60	81,18	80,25	81,25

Table 1 presents the results of a descriptive analysis of six statements used to measure the entrepreneurial intensity of vocational school students in South Sulawesi Province. The statistics presented include the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and total score of each item. Based on the results of the analysis, the average value of each item is in the range of 15.72 to 16.95 with an average total value of 97.51. This score shows that in general, the level of entrepreneurial intensity of students is relatively high, because it is close to the maximum limit of the ideal score (20 per item). A median value ranging from 16.00 to 17.00 indicates that more than half of the respondents have a strong tendency to entrepreneurial intentions. This is reinforced by the mode value of 15.00 on all items, which indicates that a score of 15 is the most frequently appearing value.

The standard deviation value for each item ranged from 2.14 to 2.24, indicating that the distribution of data was relatively homogeneous—there was no extreme variation among respondents. This means that students' perceptions of entrepreneurial intentions tend to be uniform and stable across the sample. The minimum value of each item of 10.00 and the maximum of 20.00 showed that the range of responses given by respondents was quite wide, but remained in the medium to high category.

When compared to the ideal criterion score (5,500 per item), the score obtained (ranging from 4,114 to 4,660) resulted in an average percentage of 81.25% of the maximum score. Based on the assessment criteria (interval 81–100% = very high category), the entrepreneurial intention of vocational school students in South Sulawesi Province is in the very high category. Thus, these descriptive results illustrate that most students have a strong desire to be entrepreneurial after completing their education at SMK. This shows that there is great potential for the development of entrepreneurship education programs in vocational schools as a vehicle for the formation of young entrepreneurial candidates.

b. Frequency of Distribution Data

The main purpose of presenting this table is to illustrate the proportion of students' interest and intention tendencies in entrepreneurship, so that it can be known which group is the most dominant and how the general pattern is formed from the data. By understanding this distribution, the next discussion can be directed to an in-depth interpretation of the factors that affect the intensity of entrepreneurship and its implications for the development of

entrepreneurship education programs in the vocational school environment.

Table 2. Criteria for Classification of Entrepreneurial Intention Score

No.	Category	Interval	Frequency	%
1	Very Low	30,000 - 36,030	0	0,00
2	Low	36,030 - 62,010	0	0,00
3	Moderate	62,010 - 87,990	53	19,27
4	High	87,990 - 113,970	207	75,27
5	Very High	113.970 - 120,000	15	5,45
	Total		275	100

Based on the results of the frequency distribution analysis in the table above, it can be seen that out of a total of 275 respondents of vocational school students in South Sulawesi Province, there are no students who have a level of entrepreneurial intensity in the very low or low category (0.00%). Most of the students, 207 (75.27%), were in the high category, which shows that the majority of students have a strong tendency to become entrepreneurs after completing their education. Meanwhile, there were 53 students (19.27%) who were included in the medium category, and only 15 students (5.45%) were in the very high category. These results indicate that in general, the entrepreneurial intensity of vocational school students in South Sulawesi Province is relatively high, reflecting a positive attitude, mental readiness, and strong motivation in choosing an entrepreneurial path as an alternative career in the future.

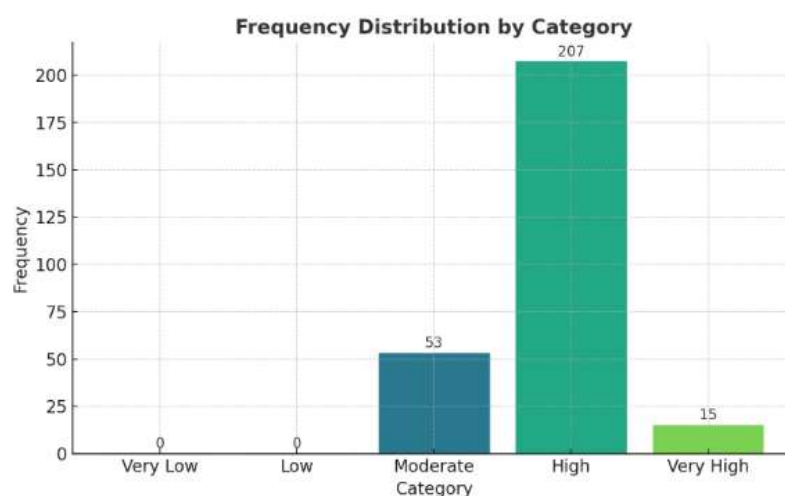


Figure 1. Frequency of Distribution Graph



DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis and frequency distribution that have been presented previously, it can be concluded that the level of entrepreneurial intensity of vocational school students in South Sulawesi Province is in the high category. The majority of students, namely 75.27%, showed a strong tendency to be entrepreneurial, while a small percentage (5.45%) were in the very high category and 19.27% were in the medium category. No students were found in the low or very low categories, which means that all respondents had a positive interest and intention in entrepreneurial activities. These results show that entrepreneurship education applied in vocational schools has been able to foster awareness and internal encouragement for students to make entrepreneurship a promising career alternative (Mack et al., 2019).

The main findings of this study show that vocational school students in South Sulawesi have good motivation and readiness to start a business, both in terms of intention, positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, and confidence to manage a business in the future (Fourrage, 2025). This is in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) theory which explains that intention or intention is the main predictor of actual behavior, in this case entrepreneurial behavior. Positive attitudes, social support from the environment, and belief in self-efficacy are the driving factors that strengthen the intensity of entrepreneurship. Thus, entrepreneurship education in vocational schools not only functions as an additional subject, but also as a medium for forming entrepreneurial character and mentality in students (Alonzo et al., 2024).

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of entrepreneurship literature in the field of vocational education, especially in the regional context of South Sulawesi. The results of this study reinforce the view that practice-oriented vocational education and real work experience are able to foster strong entrepreneurial intentions in students. These findings can be used as a reference for further research to identify specific factors (such as teacher roles, curriculum, industrial environment, and family support) that have the most influence on the formation of such intentions (Ariza, 2023).

The practical implication of this research is the need to strengthen entrepreneurship programs in vocational schools through a more applicative and contextual approach. Schools can increase entrepreneurship project-based activities, develop student business units (student companies), and establish partnerships with local business actors as a means of internships and direct learning. In addition, these results are also an input for regional education policymakers to support the birth of a young entrepreneurship ecosystem through training, mentoring, and access to capital for vocational school graduates. Thus, the findings of this study not only provide





an empirical picture of the condition of students' entrepreneurial intensity, but also offer a policy direction and strategy for the development of vocational education that is more oriented towards economic independence and the creation of new jobs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the level of entrepreneurial intensity of vocational school students in South Sulawesi Province is in the high category. This shows that most students have a strong desire, motivation, and readiness to start a business after completing their education at SMK. These findings show that the entrepreneurship education process in the vocational school environment has been running quite effectively in fostering a positive attitude, self-confidence, and orientation towards the business world. The absence of students in the low or very low category indicates that entrepreneurship has become one of the career choices that students are interested in.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the view that vocational education has a strategic role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions through a learning approach that emphasizes practice, experience, and independent competency development. Meanwhile, practically, these results provide a basis for schools, local governments, and other stakeholders to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem at the vocational school level through training activities, business mentoring, and collaboration with the industrial and business worlds. Thus, this study emphasizes that efforts to strengthen entrepreneurship education in vocational schools have great potential in creating a young generation that is independent, innovative, and ready to become local and national economic drivers.

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