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THE INFLUENCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION, ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET AND PEER GROUPS ON ENTREPRENEURIAL READINESS OF SMK STUDENTS THROUGH MEDIATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-EFFICACY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the effect of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, and peer group on entrepreneurial readiness of vocational students with mediation of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Primary data in this study were obtained through non-probability sampling technique with purposive sampling method, where respondents were selected based on certain criteria. The research sample consisted of 280 students of class XII of state vocational schools in Bekasi Regency who had received entrepreneurship education. Data collection was conducted through an independent survey using an online questionnaire. The research method used is descriptive quantitative with Structural Equation Modelling-Partial Least Square (SEM) approach. The results showed that entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, and peer group have a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial readiness of vocational students. In addition, entrepreneurial self-efficacy was shown to act as a mediating variable in the relationship between the independent variables and entrepreneurial readiness. The findings emphasise the importance of entrepreneurship education as well as psychological and social factors in enhancing vocational students' entrepreneurial readiness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocational high school (SMK) students, aged between 16 and 19, are in a critical developmental phase where they explore personal identity and make career decisions Budi & Hairunisya, (2020). In Indonesia, SMK graduates are expected to transition into one of three pathways: employment, higher education, or entrepreneurship, a concept widely known as BMW Bekerja, Melanjutkan Studi, dan Wirausaha Mayandari et al., (2024). The SMK system, with its emphasis on practical skills aligned with industry needs, is positioned as a strategic solution to address youth unemployment and drive national economic growth Maknun et al., (2021).

To support this goal, the Merdeka Curriculum was introduced to promote flexibility, project-based learning, and contextual entrepreneurship education. This curriculum encourages students to develop 21st-century competencies such as innovation, collaboration, and independence (Prasetyo & Hamami (2020); Farida & Setiawan, (2022). Through activities such as industry internships, competency certification, and real-world business projects, SMK students are equipped with not only technical skills but also entrepreneurial mindsets. The learning trajectory begins from opportunity recognition and continues through business execution and evaluation, as defined in the structured Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP) for entrepreneurship education.

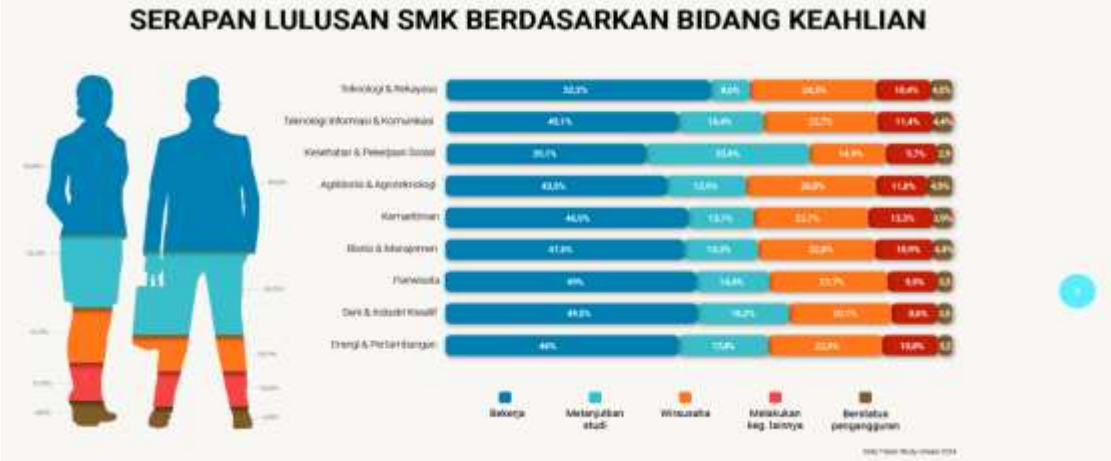
Figure 1. Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP) Pendidikan Kewirausahaan



Source: Merdeka Mengajar: https://guru.kemdikbud.go.id/

Despite these progressive policies, recent data from BPS (2024) highlights a persistent problem: the open unemployment rate (TPT) for SMK graduates remains the highest among all educational levels, reaching 8.62% in February 2024—significantly above the national average. This problem is even more pronounced in industrial zones like Kabupaten Bekasi, a major manufacturing hub in West Java. In this region, mismatch between graduate competencies and industrial needs, combined with limited absorption capacity in formal employment, exacerbates youth unemployment Luhung & Yuniasih (2023).

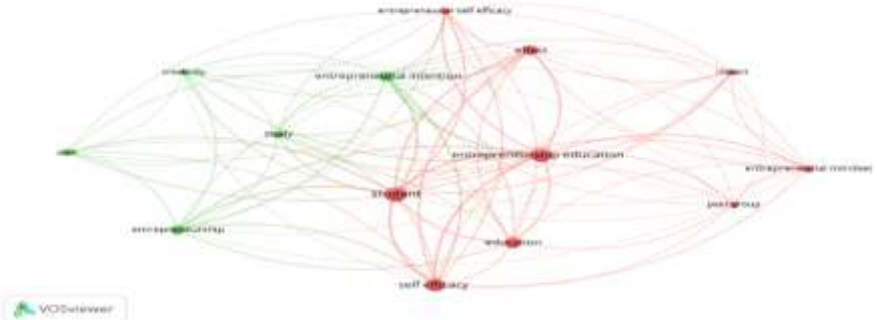
Figure 1. Tracerstudy of Vocational School Graduates 2024



Source: https://tracervokasi.kemdikbud.go.id/

Based on the 2024 Vocational Tracer Study, the proportion of SMK graduates pursuing entrepreneurship remains low ranging from 14% to 26% depending on their field of expertise. Agribusiness & Agrotechnology recorded the highest rate (26.8%), while Health and Social Work was the lowest (14.9%). This disparity reflects differences in entrepreneurial potential across competencies. Despite the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on contextual and project-based learning, many students still feel unprepared to start their own businesses. The gap is driven by low financial literacy, limited access to capital and mentors, and weak social support. These findings highlight the urgent need for stronger practice-based entrepreneurship education, industry collaboration, and targeted support systems such as student business units and business incubation programs.

Figure 2. VoS Viewer Analysis



Source: Researcher created using VosViewer application

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Given these challenges, this study addresses a critical research gap: although many studies have examined entrepreneurship education or self-efficacy in isolation, there is limited empirical research exploring the interplay between education, entrepreneurial mindset, peer influence, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy in shaping SMK students' readiness for entrepreneurship particularly in urban-industrial regions like Bekasi. A 2024 keyword analysis using Publish or Perish and VOSviewer also shows that while terms like "entrepreneurship education" and "self-efficacy" are frequently studied, concepts like "peer group" and "vocational entrepreneurship" remain underrepresented in academic literature.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by developing an integrative model that examines the influence of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, and peer group on entrepreneurial readiness, with entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a mediating variable. By focusing on SMK students in South Bekasi Regency, this research not only contributes new theoretical insights but also offers practical policy recommendations for improving the effectiveness of vocational entrepreneurship programs in Indonesia's rapidly industrializing areas.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Grand Theory

This research is based on a number of key theories that explain the relationship between entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, peer group, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy in shaping entrepreneurial readiness of vocational students. Social Learning Theory Bandura (1989) emphasises that students acquire entrepreneurial knowledge through observation, experience and social interaction, such as with peers, teachers and school entrepreneurship programmes. Meanwhile, Self-Efficacy Theory Bandura (1977) explains that confidence in entrepreneurial ability - formed through positive experiences and social support plays an important role in students' readiness to start a business. The Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (1991) adds that entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived self-efficacy, of which self-efficacy is an important component. In addition, Social Capital Theory by Coleman (1988) highlights the influence of social relationships, particularly peer groups, in providing support and motivation for entrepreneurship. Finally, the Entrepreneurial Mindset Theory McGrath & MacMillan (2000) explains the importance of a risk adaptive, innovative and opportunity-focused mindset, which can be shaped through education and a supportive social environment.

2.2 Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepeneurial Self-Efficacy and Entrepreneurial Readiness

Entrepreneurship education has a strategic role in shaping self-efficacy and increasing entrepreneurial readiness of vocational students. A study conducted by Muslim et al. (2020) shows that although entrepreneurship subjects have been given since grade 10 to instil values such as self-confidence, creativity, motivation, and attitude towards risk, the level of students' readiness for entrepreneurship is still relatively low. This indicates that the learning approach used needs to be improved. This research recommends the use of more contextual and applicable methods, such as business centre-based learning, internship programmes, as well as extracurricular entrepreneurship activities that can give students real-life experience.

Furthermore, the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial self-efficacy has received significant attention in studies conducted by Lestari & Setiawan (2021) and Tanumihardja & Slamet (2023). Lestari & Setiawan (2021) found that entrepreneurship education not only improves students' entrepreneurial skills but also increases their confidence in their ability to start and manage a business. Self-efficacy, in this case, functions as a partial mediator linking entrepreneurship education with entrepreneurial intentions. Meanwhile, Tanumihardja & Slamet (2023) added that social support from the surrounding environment, such as from family and friends, also increases students' self-efficacy in engaging in entrepreneurship. These findings indicate that the success of entrepreneurship education in shaping self-efficacy is also influenced by supportive external factors.

Overall, the analysis of these studies indicates that entrepreneurship education has a strong impact on increasing students' self-efficacy and entrepreneurial readiness, especially when combined with a practice-based learning approach and a supportive social environment. This provides an important basis for designing more effective and appropriate strategies for teaching entrepreneurship in vocational schools. Based on this interpretation, this study proposes the following hypotheses.

H1: Entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

H5: Entrepreneurship education has a direct positive effect on entrepreneurial readiness.

2.3 Entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial readiness

Entrepreneurial mindset is shown to play a central role in shaping entrepreneurial self-efficacy as well as individual readiness to start a business. Research conducted by Jiatong et al. (2021) shows that the combination of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, and creativity significantly promotes the increase of entrepreneurial intention. In this relationship, entrepreneurial self-efficacy acts as a partial mediator, which strengthens the effect of mindset and creativity on entrepreneurial intention. This confirms that a strong entrepreneurial mindset can shape one's confidence in entrepreneurial ability, which in turn increases the drive to start a business. In contrast, Jalam & Adamu (2021) developed a conceptual framework that places self-efficacy, creativity, entrepreneurial skills and improvisation ability as factors that predict the formation of an entrepreneurial mindset.

They asserted that entrepreneurship education plays a fundamental role in instilling this mindset, especially in developing countries. Thus, an entrepreneurial mindset is not only influenced by an individual's internal factors but also nurtured through systematic entrepreneurial learning and experiences.

Furthermore, a study by Ayma et al. (2020) highlighted the impact of a global mindset on self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention. The results showed that a global mindset significantly influenced self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention, with self-efficacy acting as a mediator in the relationship. However, entrepreneurial motivation did not have a significant effect on self-efficacy or entrepreneurial intention. This suggests that a broad and open mindset has a greater impact on increasing entrepreneurial confidence than motivation alone. Meanwhile,

Rodriguez and Lepper (2020) showed that entrepreneurship education can improve high school students' entrepreneurial mindsets, particularly in terms of communication, collaboration, opportunity recognition, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Cultivating this mindset positively contributes to students readiness to face future career challenges. Overall, the results of these four studies confirm that developing an entrepreneurial mindset through education and experience has a significant impact on increasing entrepreneurial effectiveness and students' readiness to enter the labor market or start an independent business.

H2: Entrepreneurial mindset has a positive effect on entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

H6: Entrepreneurial mindset has a direct positive effect on entrepreneurial readiness.

2.4 Peer Group, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial readiness

Peer groups have a significant role in shaping students' self-efficacy and entrepreneurial readiness, both through social support and influence on entrepreneurial attitudes and mindsets. Research by Indah Utama & Syaiful (2020) revealed that the intensity of interaction with peers and student attitudes significantly contribute to increasing entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Self-efficacy in this case mediates the relationship between peer groups and the entrepreneurial spirit of vocational students. This suggests that social support from peers not only provides external motivation but also helps build students' self-efficacy in facing entrepreneurial challenges. In the context of career adaptability, research by Agoes Salim et al. (2023) found that support from peers has a positive impact on career adaptability through increased self-efficacy in decision making. This finding strengthens the position of self-efficacy as an important internal factor in bridging the influence of the social environment on individual readiness to face career transitions or the business world. In other words, external support from peers needs to be balanced with strong self-efficacy in order to produce optimal readiness.

Furthermore, research by Narmaditya and Wibowo (2021) shows that peer group influence, combined with family economics education, contributes to improving students' economic knowledge and entrepreneurial intentions. Students' participation in entrepreneurship workgroups provides a space for positive interactions with their peers, which increases motivation, enhances their economic understanding, and supports their readiness to start a business. Meanwhile, Lingappa et al. (2020) used the Theory of Planned Behavior approach to analyze the entrepreneurial intentions of engineering students in India. Their results showed that peer influence is closely related to positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship, supportive social norms, and perceived behavioral control. These findings confirm that the social environment, particularly peer groups, can create a climate conducive to entrepreneurial decision-making.

Overall, these findings emphasise the important role of peer groups in enhancing students' entrepreneurial readiness through strengthening self-efficacy, positive social influence, and the formation of conducive entrepreneurial attitudes and mindsets. Interaction with peers who have an entrepreneurial orientation can be a source of inspiration and motivation that strengthens students' confidence in preparing for the business world.

H3: Peer group influence has a positive effect on entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

H7: Peer group influence has a direct positive effect on entrepreneurial readiness.

2.5 Entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial readiness

Research conducted by Muspawi & Yunita (n.d.) emphasises that entrepreneurship has an important role in creating new employment opportunities. However, the reality in the field shows that most graduates still tend to choose to work as employees in companies rather than starting their own businesses, even though they have received entrepreneurship lessons. This study explores the influence of various intrinsic factors - including creativity, self-efficacy and motivation - on students' readiness for entrepreneurship. The results indicate that all three factors contribute significantly to improving entrepreneurial readiness.

Furthermore, Yunita (2020) revealed that the number of entrepreneurs in Indonesia is still relatively low, one of which is caused by the lessthan optimal implementation of entrepreneurship education programmes in arousing students' interest in entrepreneurship. The study, which was conducted at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Jambi University, also found that creativity, self-efficacy, and motivation have a significant influence-both individually and simultaneously-on students' readiness to start a business.

Overall, both studies show that entrepreneurship education alone is not enough to foster entrepreneurial readiness. Support from internal factors such as creativity, self-efficacy, and strong motivation is needed so that students and university students are more ready and brave to enter the world of entrepreneurship.

H4: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy has a positive effect on entrepreneurial readiness.

2.6 The role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy in mediating entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, and peer group on entrepreneurial readiness

Widati et al. (2024) underlined the low level of entrepreneurial skills in Indonesia, as well as the important role of entrepreneurship education in equipping vocational students to be ready for the business world. Based on the results of the analysis using the SEM-PLS method, it was found that entrepreneurship education has a direct impact on students' intention and readiness for entrepreneurship. In addition, self-efficacy is also proven to contribute to strengthening students' entrepreneurial readiness. Similar findings were revealed by Lestari & Setiawan (2021), who examined university students in China and found that entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions. In the study, self-efficacy acted as a full mediator in bridging the effect of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention, while experience in entrepreneurship competition was a moderating factor that strengthened the relationship. Overall, these two studies show that entrepreneurship education not only directly impacts entrepreneurial readiness, but also indirectly through increasing students' self-efficacy in facing the challenges of the business world.

Furthermore, Aima et al. (2020) identified that global mindset plays an important role in increasing entrepreneurial self-efficacy and interest in going into business, while entrepreneurial motivation did not show a significant effect on these two variables. Interestingly, self-efficacy only mediated the relationship between global mindset and entrepreneurial interest, but not the relationship with entrepreneurial motivation. On the other hand, Rodriguez & Lieber (2020) found that entrepreneurship education can directly strengthen the entrepreneurial mindset of high school students, particularly in the development of skills such as communication, collaboration, opportunity recognition, critical thinking, and problem solving. Improvements in these aspects are positively related to students' preparedness for future careers. Both studies confirm that an entrepreneurial mindset developed through formal education and practical experience is critical in shaping an individual's self-efficacy and readiness to start a business.

H8–H10: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between the three independent variables—entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, and peer group and entrepreneurial readiness.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative approach with a questionnaire design to examine the influence of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, and peer groups on vocational high school students' entrepreneurial readiness, with entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a mediating variable. The study was conducted on twelfth-grade students from three public vocational high schools in the southern region of Bekasi Regency, West Java, Indonesia. These students had completed formal entrepreneurship education courses as part of their curriculum.

3.1 Research Design and Sample

The population of this study consisted of 936 12th-grade students from three public vocational high schools: SMKN 1 Cibarusah, SMKN 1 Cikarang Selatan, and SMKN 1 Cikarang Pusat, all located in the southern region of Bekasi Regency, West Java, Indonesia. A sample of 280 students, representing approximately 30% of the total population, was selected using purposive sampling based on inclusion criteria such as completion of entrepreneurship education and enrollment in the final year of vocational study. The southern region of Bekasi was intentionally chosen due to its unique socio-economic profile, which combines rapid industrial development with a growing need for youth self-employment. This area is part of the Bekasi-Cikarang industrial corridor, which hosts numerous national and multinational companies but faces persistent challenges in formal youth employment absorption. Therefore, students in this region represent a relevant and strategic demographic for studying entrepreneurial readiness, particularly in contexts where vocational education is expected to serve both as a workforce feeder and a catalyst for entrepreneurship. The sample was proportionally distributed across the three schools to ensure representative coverage: 108 students from SMKN 1 Cibarusah, 108 from SMKN 1 Cikarang Selatan, and 64 from SMKN 1 Cikarang Pusat. The total sample size was calculated using the Taro Yamane formula with a 5% margin of error, thus maintaining statistical rigor and external validity. While the results are contextualized within southern Bekasi, they may be transferable to other semi-urban or industrializing regions with similar educational, economic, and demographic characteristics in Indonesia or other developing countries.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of participants.

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
School Name		
SMKN 1 Cibarusah	118	43
SMKN 1 Cikarang Selatan	106	37
SMKN 1 Cikarang Pusat	56	20
Gender		
Female	120	42
Mal0065	160	58
Competence		

Akuntansi Keuangan Lembaga (AKL)	72	26
Teknik Kendaraan Ringan (TKR)	66	24
Teknik Pengelasan (TP)	36	13
Teknik Elektronika Industri (TEI)	20	7
Teknik Komputer Jaringan (TKJ)	28	10
AXIOO	18	6
Mitsubishi	20	7

Based on Table 4.1 Respondent Profile, this study involved students from three schools, namely SMKN 1 Cibarusah, SMKN 1 South Cikarang, and SMKN 1 Central Cikarang. The total number of respondents was 280 students, consisting of 120 female students and 160 male students. SMKN 1 Cibarusah had a total of 118 respondents, consisting of 54 females and 64 males. Respondents came from various majors, regular classes and industrial classes, regular classes consisted of Financial and Institutional Accounting (AKL), Welding Engineering (TP), Air Management Refrigeration Engineering (TPTU) Panasonic Industrial Classes were all from class XII. SMKN 1 Cikarang Selatan contributed 106 respondents, consisting of 66 females and 40 males. The majors followed by the respondents were Computer and Network Engineering (TKJ) regular class, Financial and Institutional Accounting (AKL) and AXIOO industrial class also from class XII. SMKN 1 Cikarang Pusat had 56 respondents, consisting of 56 males. The respondents were from the Industrial Electronics Engineering (TEI), Light Vehicle Engineering (TKR) and Mitsubishi industry classes, all from grade XII. These respondents were selected to provide a diverse picture in terms of gender, department, and class, in order to provide representative data in accordance with the research objectives.

3.2 Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed either directly by the researcher or through digital platforms such as Google Forms or email. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to capture respondents' perceptions across all variables. The instruments were developed based on established theoretical constructs and validated through factor analysis.

3.3 Operationalization of Variables

The research model includes five core variables: entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, peer group, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial readiness. Each construct was operationalized through specific indicators derived from the literature. For instance, entrepreneurial readiness was measured through indicators such as entrepreneurial intention, opportunity recognition, managerial skills, and confidence. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy was assessed based on students' confidence in identifying opportunities, decision-making, managing operations, and overcoming challenges. All constructs were tested for validity and reliability using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM).

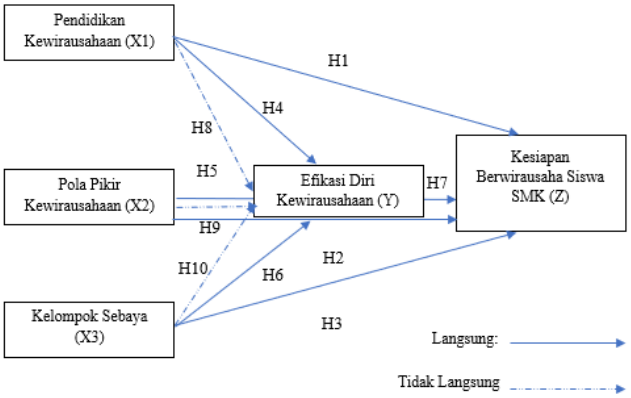
3.4 Instrument Validity and Reliability

The outer model analysis indicated that most indicators met the minimum threshold for factor loadings (>0.7), while indicators with low loadings were dropped. Composite reliability scores for all constructs exceeded 0.90, indicating strong internal consistency. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values also surpassed the 0.50 benchmark, confirming convergent validity. These results suggest that the measurement instruments are both valid and reliable.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling with Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) via Smart PLS 4.1.0. The analysis included evaluation of both the measurement model (to assess reliability and validity) and the structural model (to test hypothesized relationships). The structural model's quality was assessed through R-square and Q-square values. R-square values above 0.50 were considered moderate to strong, while Q-square values above 0 indicated predictive relevance. Hypothesis testing was conducted using path coefficient estimates and p-values, with a significance threshold of 0.05.

Figure 3. Research framework.



Source: Rodriguez & Lieber, (2020b), Jiatong et al, (2021), Narmadtya & Wibowo, (2021), Elnadi & Gheith, (2021), Ogunlana, (2018);

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Outer Model Prediction

Based on Hair (2011), the data analysis in this study followed the outer model evaluation stages using the PLS-SEM approach. The first step was to test the convergent validity of each construct used in the model. According to Hair (2021), a construct indicator is said to meet convergent validity if the factor loading value of each item is above 0.70, indicating that the indicator significantly reflects the construct being measured. Based on the results of the measurement model test, all constructs in this study, including Entrepreneurial Readiness (ER), Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Entrepreneurial Mindset (EM), Peer Group (PG), and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE), met the reliability and convergent validity criteria required in SEM-PLS analysis. This is indicated by the loading factor (λ) values for each indicator that are all above the 0.70 threshold, indicating that each indicator has a significant contribution in representing the measured construct. The Cronbach's Alpha (α) value for all variables is above 0.87, while the Composite Reliability (CR) value all exceeds 0.88, which indicates that the internal consistency between indicators is very good. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all constructs is above 0.50, indicating that each variable is able to explain more than 50% of the variance of its indicators, thus fulfilling the criteria for convergent validity. Furthermore, the average score (mean) of respondents' answers on each indicator is in the range of 3.65 to 4.09, with a relatively small standard deviation, which reflects the positive and homogeneous perceptions of the students towards each construct. In particular, the Entrepreneurial Readiness (ER) variable has an AVE of 0.618 and a CR value of 0.873, with indicators Z1 to Z6 indicating a fairly high perception of students' entrepreneurial readiness. Meanwhile, Entrepreneurship Education (EE) also showed excellent reliability (CR = 0.900; AVE = 0.622), with relatively high average indicator scores, reflecting positive entrepreneurial learning experiences. Similarly, the Entrepreneurial Mindset (EM), Peer Group (PG), and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) variables also showed very strong and valid measurement results.

Table 2. Measurement model

Item	λ	α	CR	AVE	Mean	SD
Entrepreneurial Readiness (ER)		0.871	0.873	0.618		
Z1	0.749				3,92	0,034
Z2	0.821				4,09	0,021
Z3	0.786				3,97	0,032
Z4	0.800				3,85	0,032
Z5	0.741				4,03	0,033
Z6	0.779				3,79	0,030
Entrepreneur Education (EE)		0.898	0.900	0.622		
X1.1	0.753				3,65	0,031
X1.2	0.812				3,94	0,027
X1.3	0.752				3,92	0,029
X1.4	0.792				4,01	0,030
X1.5	0.817				3,88	0,027
X1.6	0.800				3,98	0,027
X1.7	0.790				3,90	0,026
Entrepreneurial Mindset (EM)		0.887	0.888	0.558		
X2.1	0.770				3,89	0,025
X2.2	0.732				3,91	0,031
X2.3	0.726				3,99	0,034
X2.4	0.732				3,78	0,034
X2.5	0.761				3,74	0,031
X2.6	0.742				3,86	0,030
X2.7	0.762				3,98	0,026
X2.8	0.752				3,86	0,033
Peer Group (PG)		0.930	0.933	0.587		
X3.1	0.764				3,70	0,030
X3.10	0.790				3,95	0,025

X3.11	0.756				3,98	0,030
X3.2	0.771				3,94	0,026
X3.3	0.757				3,94	0,033
X3.4	0.721				3,87	0,038
X3.5	0.793				3,78	0,024
X3.6	0.749				3,82	0,048
X3.7	0.739				3,95	0,034
X3.8	0.817				4,05	0,021
X3.9	0.761				3,89	0,026
Entrepreneur Self-Efficacy (ESE)		0.938	0.939	0.608		
Y1	0.735				3,91	0,035
Y10	0.764				3,99	0,035
Y11	0.732				3,98	0,030
Y2	0.799				3,95	0,027
Y3	0.800				3,78	0,026
Y4	0.811				3,95	0,023
Y5	0.780				3,86	0,028
Y6	0.787				3,91	0,029
Y7	0.831				3,90	0,020
Y8	0.764				3,91	0,030
Y9	0.840				3,88	0,018

Note. CR=composite reliability, α = Cronbach's alpha, AVE =average variance extracted, λ = loading, SD=standard deviation.

Table 3. Discriminant validity

	ESE	ER	PG	EE	EM
ESE	0.786				
ER	0.683	0.780			
PG	0.782	0.587	0.766		
EE	0.687	0.627	0.624	0.788	
EM	0.816	0.703	0.706	0.730	0.747

Note. ESE =Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, ER =Entrepreneurial Readiness, PG =Peer Group, EE = Entrepreneurship Education, EM =Entrepreneurial Mindset

Table 4. Discriminant validity using HTMT.

	ESE	ER	PG	EE	EM
ESE					
ER	0.751				
PG	0.826	0.642			
EE	0.747	0.705	0.679		
EM	0.892	0.795	0.770	0.817	

Note. ESE =Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy, ER =Entrepreneurial Readiness, PG =Peer Group, EE = Entrepreneurship Education, EM =Entrepreneurial Mindset

Although cross-loading tests have been conducted, most researchers believe that the criteria of Fornell & Larcker (1981) and Chin (2009) should be supplemented with the criteria of Henseler (2017) and Schuberth et al. (2020), namely the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). Based on the results of the HTMT evaluation, the constructs ESE, ER, PG, EE, and EM have ratio values <0.90 to meet the threshold (Table 3).

The respondents in this study amounted to 280 grade XII students from three public vocational high schools (SMK) in the southern region of Bekasi Regency. Based on school origin, the majority of respondents came from SMKN 1 Cibarusah with 118 students (43%), followed by SMKN 1 Cikarang Selatan with 106 students (37%), and SMKN 1 Cikarang Pusat with 56 students (20%). In terms of gender, male respondents dominated with 160 students (58%), while female respondents totaled 120 students (42%).

In terms of skill programs, respondents were spread across various majors. The Department of Accounting and Finance Institutions (AKL) is the most followed by respondents, namely 72 students (26%). Followed by Light Vehicle Engineering (TKR) with 66 students (24%), Welding Engineering (TP) with 36 students (13%), Computer

and Network Engineering (TKJ) with 28 students (10%), and Industrial Electronics Engineering (TEI) with 20 students (7%). In addition, there are also students from industry collaboration programs such as AXIOO with 18 students (6%) and Mitsubishi with 20 students (7%). This composition shows that the majority of respondents come from engineering and business-oriented majors, which are relevant to the research theme of entrepreneurial readiness. It should be noted that respondents from other schools showed considerable diversity, with some institutions contributing a large number of responses, this study confirmed the fulfillment of convergent validity. In addition, the results of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test of the Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) variable have an AVE value of, Student Entrepreneurial Readiness (ES) of 0.608, Peer Group (PG) of 0.587, Entrepreneurship Education (EE) of 0.622. Thus, all latent variables in this study have a good ability to explain the variance of their respective indicators, so that convergent validity is declared fulfilled, which indicates that this study meets the criteria for discriminant validity. In addition, composite reliability is indicated by the CR score, which should be greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2020). As shown in the table, the CR values ranged from 0.895 to 0.931 and thus met the criteria for composite reliability.

4.2 The Structural (Inner) Model Estimation

Based on the Inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Values presented in the table, it can be concluded that the Entrepreneurship Education variable influencing Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy has a VIF value of 2.252; the Entrepreneurial Mindset variable affecting Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy has a value of 2.740; and the Peer Group variable shows a VIF value of 2.099 in relation to Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy. Furthermore, the VIF values for Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Mindset, and Peer Group influencing Entrepreneurial Readiness are 2.298, 3.622, and 2.712 respectively. The Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy variable influencing Entrepreneurial Readiness shows a VIF value of 4.080. Since all VIF values are below the threshold of 5.00, it indicates that multicollinearity is not present within the structural model.

After the VIF analysis, the next step is to conduct a t-test to determine the significance of the structural path coefficients. The critical t-values for a one-tailed hypothesis test are 1.65 (10% significance level), 1.96 (5%), and 2.58 (1%). The statistical significance of the relationships between latent variables is assessed through these t-values. The significance level of the path coefficients is calculated using the bootstrapping method. Bootstrapping is a non-parametric resampling technique used to test the significance of model estimates such as outlier weights, outlier loadings, and path coefficients by generating standard errors for these estimates. This technique allows for more robust validation of model parameters, and the results are typically presented through graphical output of the bootstrapping analysis.

Table 5. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	EE	EM	PG	ESE	ER
EE				2.252	2.298
EM				2.740	3.622
PG				2.099	2.712
ESE					4.080
ER					

Note. ESE =Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, ER =Entrepreneurial Readiness, PG =Peer Group, EE = Entrepreneurship Education, EM =Entrepreneurial Mindset

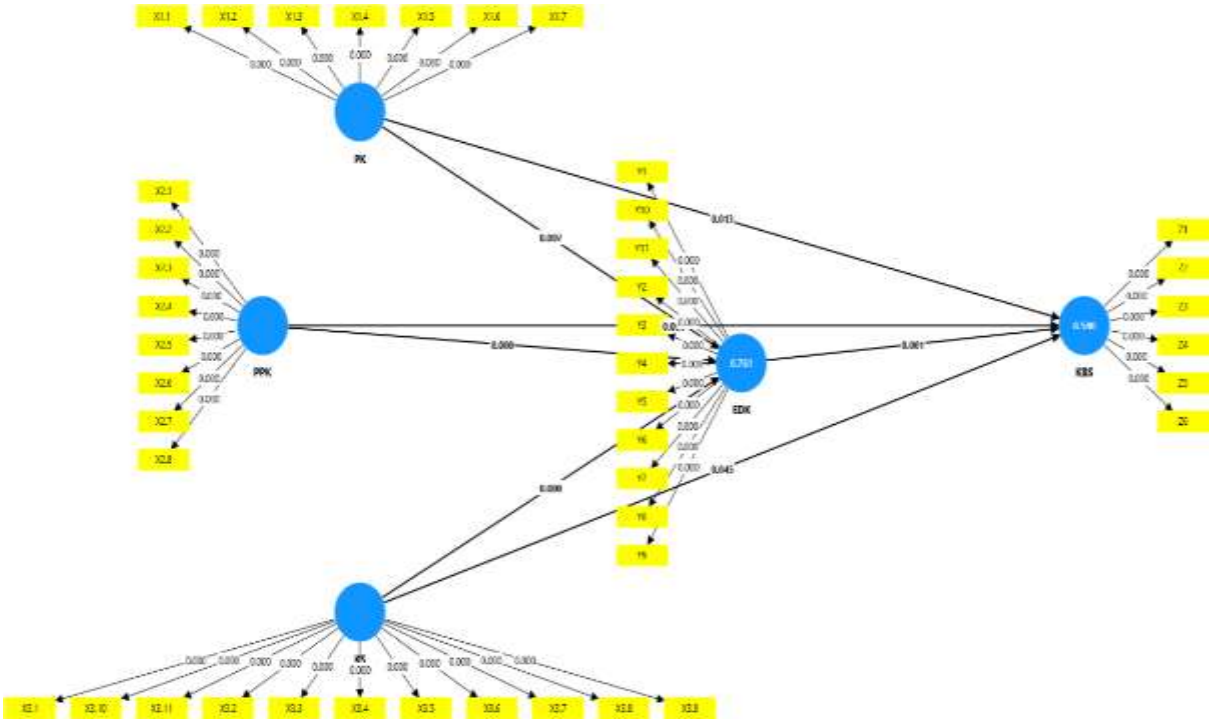
Table 6. R^2 estimation

	R^2	Category
ESE	0.755	Moderate
ER	0.546	Moderate

Note. ESE =Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, ER =Entrepreneurial Readiness

Table 7. F^2 estimation

	F^2	Category
EE -> ESE	0.020	Small Effect
EE -> ER	0.033	Moderate
EM -> ESE	0.322	Moderate
EM -> ER	0.068	Large Effect
PG -> ESE	0.292	Moderate
PG -> ER	0.018	Small Effect



ESE -> ER	0.034	Moderate

Note. ESE =Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, ER =Entrepreneurial Readiness, PG =Peer Group, EE = Entrepreneurship Education, EM =Entrepreneurial Mindset

Based on the multicollinearity analysis results shown in Table 5, all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for independent variables show numbers below the maximum tolerance limit, which is 5. The highest VIF value is recorded at 4,080 for the ESE variable on ER, while the lowest value is 2,099 for the PG variable on ESE. This indicates that there are no significant multicollinearity symptoms in the model, so the variables can be used simultaneously in structural regression testing without producing estimation bias. Furthermore, the estimated coefficient of determination (R^2) in Table 6 shows that the Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) variable has an R^2 value of 0.755, while the Entrepreneurial Readiness (ER) variable obtained an R^2 value of 0.546. Based on Chin's (1998) classification, the R^2 value between 0.33 to 0.67 is included in the moderate category. Thus, the model has a fairly good ability to explain variations in ESE and ER, which amounted to 75.5% and 54.6% respectively, while the rest is explained by other factors outside the model.

To determine the relative influence between variables in the structural model, effect size (f^2) testing was conducted as presented in Table 7. The analysis shows that Entrepreneurial Mindset (EM) has a moderate effect on ESE ($f^2 = 0.322$) and a large effect on ER ($f^2 = 0.068$), indicating that EM plays an important role in shaping both dependent variables. Peer Group (PG) exerts a moderate influence on ESE ($f^2 = 0.292$) and a small influence on ER ($f^2 = 0.018$). Entrepreneurial Education (EE) shows a small influence on ESE ($f^2 = 0.020$) and a moderate influence on ER ($f^2 = 0.033$). The variable ESE on ER provides a moderate influence ($f^2 = 0.034$). In general, these results confirm that EM is the most dominant variable in influencing ESE and ER, compared to other variables in the model.

4.3 Common method bias (CMB)

This is achieved by checking the SmartPLS output estimation results against the SRMR value. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is the average of the covariance residuals, based on the transformation of the sample covariance matrix and the predicted covariance matrix into a relationship matrix. If the obtained number is less than 0.10, it is considered appropriate (Henseler et al., (2014). The output results are as follows:

Table 8. Evaluation result of fit model

Output	*Saturated model*	*Estimated model*
SRMR	0.056	0.056
d_ULS	2.920	2.920
d_G	1.184	1.184
Chi-square	1744.896	1744.896
NFI	0.802	0.802

Figure 4. The result of structural model.

Note. SRMR = standardized root mean squared residual, d_ULS = the squared Euclidean distance, d_G = the geodesic distance, NFI = Normed fit index.

Figure 5 shows the results of the loading factor calculation, and the results obtained indicate that the loading factor value is above 0.70, so that the indicator has met the requirements of convergent validity and has the required validity based on the rules of thumb used in accordance with those that have been tested previously. For more details, see the following table.

4.4 Direct effects and indirect effects

Based on the analysis of Figure 5, most of the relationships between variables in the research model show Statistical significance is indicated by a p-value <0.05. This indicates that the proposed hypothesis is acceptable. For example, the relationship between Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Entrepreneurial Readiness (ESE → ER) has a T-statistic value of 3.121 and a p-value of 0.001, indicating a significant effect. Similarly, the relationship between Peer Group and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (PG → ESE) shows a T-statistic value of 5.973 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a highly significant relationship. However, the relationship between Peer Group and Entrepreneurial Readiness (PG → ER) shows a T-statistic value of 1.693 with a p-value of 0.045. Although below the significance limit of 0.05, its T-statistic value of less than 1.96 indicates that these results need to be interpreted more cautiously.

In this study, hypothesis formulation is carried out to test the direct effect between the independent variable and the dependent variable, either directly or through the mediating variable. Hypothesis testing refers to two basic decision-making (Haryono, 2017), namely based on the T-statistics value and p-value. The decision is determined with the following conditions: if the T-statistics value ≥ 1.96 then H_0 is rejected (meaning there is an influence), while if the T-statistics value < 1.96 then H_0 is accepted (there is no influence). Meanwhile, based on the significance value (p-value), H_0 is rejected if the p-value ≤ 0.05, which indicates an influence, and H_0 is accepted if the p-value > 0.05, which means there is no influence between the variables tested.

Table 9. Path coefficient.

	Path	B	SE	T-*Value*	*Confidence Interval* (BC)		Decision
					LL	UL	
H1	EE → ER	0.133	0.060	2.230	0.035	0.228	*Supported*
H2	EM → ER	0.330	0.075	4.422	0.198	0.445	*Supported*
H3	PG → ER	0.115	0.068	1.693	0.000	0.225	*Supported*
H4	EE → ESE	0.124	0.051	2.436	0.038	0.207	*Supported*
H5	EM → ESE	0.446	0.061	7.310	0.343	0.542	*Supported*
H6	PG → ESE	0.395	0.066	5.973	0.289	0.506	*Supported*
H7	ESE → ER	0.261	0.084	3.121	0.125	0.403	*Supported*
H8	EE → ESE → ER	0.032	0.040	1.859	0.042	0.175	*Supported*
H9	EM → ESE → ER	0.117	0.017	3.016	0.007	0.065	*Supported*
H10	PG → ESE → ER	0.103	0.039	2.563	0.054	0.182	*Supported*

Note. t-value >1.96, $p < 0.05$, BC = bias corrected, UL = upper level, LL = lower level, SE-standard error, β= path coefficient, EE = entrepreneurship education, ER = entrepreneurial readiness, ESE = entrepreneurial self-efficacy, PG = peer group, EM = entrepreneurial Mindset.

Based on the results of the path coefficient analysis shown in Table 9, all relationships between variables in model are significant and supported by the data, as indicated by T-values that mostly exceed the critical limit of 1.96 <0.05. Specifically, the relationship between Entrepreneurship Education (EE) and Entrepreneurial Readiness coefficient value of 0.133 with a T-value of 2.230, which indicates a positive and significant effect (H1). I Entrepreneurial Mindset (EM) on Entrepreneurial Readiness (ER) also shows a significant influence with a coeffic and a T-value of 4.422 (H2).

The relationship between Peer Group (PG) to Entrepreneurial Readiness (ER) has a T-value of 1.693 and 0.091; although slightly below the threshold T-value, the final decision shows this relationship remains supported (I because the p-value is close to 0.05 and supported by a positive confidence interval. Then, the relationshi Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) (H4), EM to ESE (H5), and PG to ESE (H6) all showed significant effects with h (2.436; 7.310; and 5.973, respectively).

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) was also shown to significantly influence entrepreneurial readiness coefficient of 0.261 and T-value of 3.121 (H7). Although the indirect path from EE through ESE to ER (H8) has 1.859, this value is still within the range of near significance and remains supported by the data. Meanwhile, the me from EM through ESE to ER (H9) and from PG through ESE to ER (H10) show strong significance with T-values 2.563 respectively.

Overall, these results support all hypotheses proposed in the structural model and show that both entr education, entrepreneurial mindset, and peer group directly and indirectly through entrepreneurial self-efficacy vocational students' readiness for entrepreneurship.

4.5 Discussion

The findings of this study have several important implications for vocational education and entrepreneurship development. The significant impact of entrepreneurship education on self-efficacy and entrepreneurial readiness highlights the critical role of a structured, experience-focused curriculum. This aligns with experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984), which emphasizes the importance of engaging with real-life work through business simulations and project-based learning. In this context, vocational schools represent strategic platforms not only for transferring skills but also for fostering the confidence and competencies needed to start a business. These findings are consistent with those of Saputono et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of contextual learning in fostering entrepreneurial intentions.

Equally notable is the strong impact of entrepreneurial mindset on both self-efficacy and readiness. This supports the argument by McGee et al. (2009) and Kuratko et al. (2023) that internal psychological traits such as resilience, persistence, and opportunity-seeking are foundational in driving entrepreneurial behavior. In the industrial corridor of Bekasi, students equipped with this mindset are not only more motivated, but also better able to navigate the uncertainties of post-school transitions. This suggests that mindset development should be viewed not as a byproduct of education, but as a central learning outcome in entrepreneurship programs.

However, a more nuanced interpretation is needed for the influence of peer group on entrepreneurial readiness. While the direct effect (PG → ER) was statistically supported ($p = 0.045$), the T-statistics value (1.693) was slightly below the conventional threshold of 1.96, indicating a borderline significance. This calls for cautious interpretation. One possibility is that peer group influence may be more indirect, operating primarily through self-efficacy—as evidenced by the strong and significant mediation effect (PG → ESE → ER). This finding is consistent with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1986), which posits that social influences affect behavior primarily by shaping beliefs in one's capabilities. Similar conclusions were drawn by Indah Utama and Syaiful (2020), who emphasized that peer support affects entrepreneurial motivation more strongly when it enhances students' confidence.

This divergence between direct and indirect influence suggests that peer groups may not directly push students toward entrepreneurial action but rather inspire and encourage them in ways that bolster internal belief systems. Therefore, interventions targeting peer-based entrepreneurship support should prioritize building positive, collaborative environments that reinforce entrepreneurial identity and self-efficacy.

Moreover, the mediation analysis confirms that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is not merely a secondary outcome, but a pivotal mechanism that translates educational and social experiences into entrepreneurial readiness. This aligns with Elnadi & Gheith (2021) and Costin et al. (2022), who found that self-efficacy functions as a cognitive filter through which knowledge and motivation are transformed into action. In vocational contexts often marked by limited access to capital or institutional support self-efficacy becomes an essential leverage point in enabling students to convert intentions into practical ventures.

Compared to previous studies, this research contributes by situating these relationships within a semi-urban, industrially dynamic context in Indonesia, an area that remains underexplored in the literature. The results demonstrate that psychological and social variables, often studied in Western university contexts, retain explanatory power even in resource-constrained vocational settings. However, the context-specific nature of this study also raises questions about generalizability. The unique socio-economic characteristics of South Bekasi such as industrial saturation and limited formal employment absorption may intensify the role of self-efficacy and peer support in ways not found in rural or more diversified regions.

In sum, the discussion reveals that fostering entrepreneurial readiness among vocational students requires more than curriculum design it demands an integrative approach that builds confidence, cultivates entrepreneurial values, and leverages peer-based support systems. The interplay between internal belief, mindset, and social context must be intentionally addressed in both policy and pedagogical frameworks.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

This study has empirically tested and confirmed the hypothesis that entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, and peer group dynamics significantly influence the entrepreneurial readiness of vocational students, with entrepreneurial self-efficacy acting as a key mediating variable. The use of Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) revealed that all independent variables not only have direct effects on entrepreneurial readiness but also indirectly shape it through enhanced self-belief and confidence in entrepreneurial tasks. These findings validate the proposed integrative model derived from Social Cognitive Theory and Social Learning Theory, thus strengthening its theoretical rigor and applicability within vocational education contexts.

What distinguishes this research from previous work is its simultaneous consideration of cognitive, affective, and social dimensions namely, how structured learning, psychological attributes, and peer environments interact to produce measurable improvements in entrepreneurial capacity. This multifaceted approach contributes a fresh perspective to entrepreneurship education literature, especially by emphasizing the central role of self-efficacy as a conduit between educational inputs and entrepreneurial outcomes. The study further advances understanding by applying this framework to a relatively under-researched demographic: vocational students in an industrially dynamic region of Indonesia.

Despite these contributions, the study is not without limitations. The sample was limited to Grade 12 students in public vocational schools in the southern region of Bekasi Regency, which may restrict the generalizability of findings to other regions or education levels. Additionally, the use of a cross-sectional design precludes any examination of changes in entrepreneurial readiness over time. Future research could adopt longitudinal or mixed method approaches to explore causal relationships and provide richer insights into students' developmental trajectories.

From an institutional and policy perspective, the results underscore the need for vocational schools to design entrepreneurship curricula that go beyond knowledge transfer, prioritizing experiential learning, mindset development, and peer support systems. Educational authorities should consider mandating collaboration between schools and local industries, expanding mentorship programs, and embedding entrepreneurial projects within the school year. At the systemic level, policymakers could integrate entrepreneurship readiness as a performance indicator in vocational school assessments, thereby aligning educational outputs with broader economic development goals particularly job creation and innovation among youth populations.

5.2 Implication

First, the entrepreneurial readiness of vocational students is indicated by the high entrepreneurial intention, which is influenced by entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, peer group, and high self-efficacy-signalling a strong drive for students to start a business after graduation. Second, in the aspect of entrepreneurship education, the indicators of collaboration with industry and the ability to manage risk received high ratings, indicating the importance of practical experience and readiness to face business challenges in the learning process. Third, in the entrepreneurial mindset, the indicators of perseverance and endurance in seeking opportunities are the strongest aspects, reflecting the persistent and adaptive character of students in facing the entrepreneurial process. Fourth, peer groups act as a source of inspiration and motivation, which encourages students' enthusiasm and confidence in starting a business. Finally, entrepreneurial self-efficacy is shown through students' confidence in overcoming challenges and failures, indicating that they have a positive mentality and are ready to face business risks. These five aspects are important to be maintained and developed in entrepreneurship education in vocational schools.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several targeted and actionable recommendations are proposed to strengthen entrepreneurial readiness among vocational students:

1. Strengthening Managerial Skills through Practical Simulation and Industry Mentorship

Given the low scores on managerial competence within entrepreneurial readiness, vocational schools should institutionalize *student-run business labs* where learners simulate managing a real business from budgeting and operations to sales and reporting. Schools can collaborate with local SMEs or alumni entrepreneurs to offer structured *mentoring schemes* where each student group is guided weekly over a semester. This will help bridge the gap between theoretical learning and real-world decision-making in business operations.

2. Enhancing Project-Based and Industry-Aligned Learning in Entrepreneurship Education

To address the lack of hand on experience in entrepreneurship education, it is essential to redesign the curriculum around *project-based learning (PBL)*. For instance, students can be required to complete a semester-long entrepreneurial project that involves real capital (school-funded or crowdfunded), market testing, and final product pitching to industry panels. Additionally, partnerships with business incubators or chambers of commerce can provide students access to co-working spaces and entrepreneurship bootcamps as extracurricular credits.

3. Promoting Action Orientation within the Entrepreneurial Mindset

To cultivate proactive behavior and action-taking, schools should implement *mini-venture challenges* where students are encouraged to start a micro-enterprise for 1–2 months, track their performance, and reflect on key learnings. Teachers can also embed *failure-based learning modules* that encourage experimentation, with structured debriefing sessions to reduce fear of failure and build resilience.

4. Developing Entrepreneurial Peer Networks and Digital Communities

Since peer-based information exchange remains limited, it is recommended to establish *school-based entrepreneurial clubs* that meet regularly to discuss trends, evaluate student business ideas, and invite external speakers. These clubs should be supported with *digital platforms* (e.g., WhatsApp groups, school LMS forums, or dedicated apps) where students can share opportunities, news, and collaborative projects. Peer mentoring schemes between senior and junior students can also facilitate knowledge transfer and boost confidence.

5. Building Confidence in Opportunity Identification through Structured Market Training

To improve entrepreneurial self-efficacy in identifying opportunities, entrepreneurship education must incorporate *market exploration assignments* such as local business observation reports, customer interviews, and competitor analysis. Guest lectures from market analysts or successful young entrepreneurs can complement this by sharing insights on spotting unmet needs and emerging trends. Furthermore, use of interactive case studies and role play scenarios simulating real business decisions can train students in recognizing viable entrepreneurial opportunities.

By operationalizing these strategies, vocational schools can more effectively transform entrepreneurship education into a dynamic, experiential, and socially embedded process that cultivates not only skills, but also sustainable entrepreneurial behaviors and aspirations

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