



The influence of entrepreneurial engagement on entrepreneurial intention through entrepreneurial self-efficacy

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Article Info	Abstract
Keywords: Entrepreneurial engagement, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial self-efficacy	Entrepreneurial intention plays a crucial role in preparing vocational high school students for future career opportunities and entrepreneurial activities. This study aimed to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial engagement and entrepreneurial intention, with entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a mediating variable, among vocational high school students in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. A quantitative ex post facto research design was employed, involving 292 students selected through proportional cluster random sampling. Data were collected using the Entrepreneurial Engagement Scale (EES), Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ), and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy Scale (ESES). Mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS Macro Model 4 in SPSS 25 with bootstrapping. The results indicated that entrepreneurial engagement was positively associated with entrepreneurial self-efficacy ($\beta = .53, p < .01$) and entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = .25, p < .01$). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy was also positively associated with entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = .43, p < .01$). Furthermore, a significant indirect association was identified through entrepreneurial self-efficacy ($\beta = .23, 95\% \text{ CI } [.16, .29]$), with the model explaining 35% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention. These findings highlight the mediating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and suggest the importance of integrating experiential entrepreneurship activities and self-efficacy development into school career guidance programs.

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Introduction

Entrepreneurial engagement refers to an individual's active participation in entrepreneurial activities, such as starting and running a business, investing in entrepreneurial ventures, or joining entrepreneurial networks. This has been referred to as entrepreneurial engagement (Thorgren et al., 2013). Entrepreneurial engagement also encompasses involvement, commitment, and dedication to the process of establishing, developing, and growing a business until it reaches fruition. Engagement is at the heart of entrepreneurship Hessels et al., (2011) because entrepreneurship is a challenging process that requires engagement, commitment, and dedication to achieve success (Tunio et al., 2021; Urbano et al., 2019).

To et al., (2020) emphasize the importance of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and perceived opportunities as determining factors in driving entrepreneurial engagement. Similarly, Brieger & De Clercq, (2019) emphasize the dynamic nature of entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a determinant of entrepreneurial engagement and examine how it evolves throughout the venture creation process. Entrepreneurial engagement indirectly provides students with experience and knowledge in working and entrepreneurship. In addition to learning entrepreneurial theory, they also learn how to find work. They are taught how to find work relevant to their talents, interests, and potential, as well as how to work or become an entrepreneur independently. Therefore, with the experience gained by students who have taken entrepreneurship courses and fieldwork experience, it is hoped that they will develop a stronger interest in entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial intention relates to initiative behavior, the ability to manage resources, both human and natural, in various situations to generate profit, and the courage to take risks (Gbande & Akuhwa, 2015). The

stronger the entrepreneurial intention, the higher the probability of entrepreneurial activity (Esfandiar et al., 2019). Cultivating entrepreneurial intention in students is not easy, especially when it comes to practicing it in everyday life by starting a business. However, this does not mean it is impossible. Currently, several efforts are needed to train students' character to prepare them for entrepreneurship (Winarsih & Yono, 2021).

Entrepreneurs also play a crucial role in the innovation development process related to creating a competitive future and ensuring sustainable growth. Individuals will become entrepreneurs only when they demonstrate sufficient intensity or level of intention toward entrepreneurship, which is then referred to as Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) (Koe, 2016). Several factors influence a person's interest in entrepreneurship, as explained by Indarti dan Rokhima Rostiani et al., (2008), who defines entrepreneurial interest as consisting of three factors: personality factors such as the need for achievement and self-efficacy; environmental factors such as contextual elements: access to capital, information, and social networks; and demographic factors such as gender, age, educational background, and work experience. Furthermore, Sutanto et al., (2020) explains that entrepreneurial interest can arise due to external influences or extrinsic factors, including family environment, community environment, opportunities, and education.

Intention will guide individuals, enabling them to engage seriously in various activities that support their future endeavors (Saunders & Wong, 2020). This view concludes that strong entrepreneurial intention and mature self-efficacy will encourage individuals to develop their entrepreneurial abilities. Students with high self-efficacy can design career plans and demonstrate persistent effort. However, this efficacy is not always present in every student, as many students experience difficulties in making career decisions (Munir et al., 2021). Previous research confirms that entrepreneurial intention is highly effective in predicting entrepreneurial behavior and attitudes toward entrepreneurship (Dusek et al., 2016). Therefore, individuals with low entrepreneurial intention will have an impact on inconsistency in entrepreneurship and low commitment to starting a new business. Therefore, entrepreneurial intention is a central issue that needs to be considered in understanding the entrepreneurial process of establishing a new business, necessitating identification related to entrepreneurial intention.

According to social cognitive theory, the gap between knowing what to do and doing something according to one's knowledge is largely controlled by thought processes that consider one's own abilities. A significant factor in this consideration is self-efficacy, where an individual assesses their own abilities and then determines the course of action they will take. This self-assessment process also determines an individual's persistence when faced with obstacles. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is defined as the belief that an individual is capable of carrying out specific activities related to entrepreneurship, such as marketing, finance, innovation, communication, and risk management (Mei et al., 2017). According to Mollica et al., (2017), ESE is influenced by strategic decision-making that triggers an entrepreneur's experiences, such as (1) an individual's direct experience when carrying out relevant entrepreneurial tasks, (2) experiences observing or interacting with others that cause an individual to change their beliefs, (3) verbal and non-verbal encouragement, and (4) physiological and affective states.

Previous studies on ESE have focused largely on its influence on an individual's entrepreneurial intention (Alamsyah et al., 2020). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks and roles related to entrepreneurial outcomes and is crucial in determining whether an individual chooses to pursue an entrepreneurial career. Adeniyi, (2023) research found that ESE successfully acted as a mediator between self-efficacy and EI. Therefore, students' self-efficacy for entrepreneurial tasks can influence EI solely through entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their ability to successfully engage in essential entrepreneurial behavior, namely starting a new business.

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) is a related variable and is useful for enhancing Entrepreneurial Intention (EI). Individuals who have confidence that they can carry out various tasks as entrepreneurs also have a strong intention to choose entrepreneurship as a career in the future. The extent to which individuals believe in their potential and are confident in their abilities influences their intention to become entrepreneurs. In line with the theory of planned behavior, researchers have found a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention in high school students.

Increased entrepreneurial self-efficacy influences the effort expended on tasks and persistence in carrying out those tasks, thus indirectly influencing students' entrepreneurial intentions. This is consistent with research by Barbosa et al., (2007), which demonstrated a positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention. Individuals with high entrepreneurial self-efficacy are more likely to have an increased entrepreneurial intention. This is consistent with previous research by Chen et al., (1998), which showed that self-efficacy plays a significant role in the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, research by Zhao et al. (2005) also found that entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly influences an

individual's interest in starting a business. Research by (Belchior & Lyons, 2021) also showed that self-confidence in one's abilities is a key predictor of entrepreneurial decisions.

These findings reinforce the role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a key determinant in the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. Individuals with high confidence in their abilities are more confident in making decisions to start a business. This research focuses on understanding how student engagement in entrepreneurial activities can shape entrepreneurial intentions, considering the role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a mediator. The focus is on vocational high school students to support career readiness through entrepreneurial pathways and contribute to the development of entrepreneurship-based career guidance and counseling services in vocational education.

Method

The study used a quantitative approach with an ex post facto design on 292 state vocational high school students in Bandar Lampung, selected through proportional cluster random sampling. The data collection instrument used was the Entrepreneurial Engagement Scale (EES) developed by Rothenberg et al., (2026) consisting of 11 items. After being tested, there was 1 invalid item, thus only 10 items remained. The scale has 4 answer options, namely: 1 = Strongly Disagree (STS), 2 = Disagree (S), 3 = Agree (S), 4 = Strongly Agree (SS). The results of the reliability test on the entrepreneurial engagement variable obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.677.

Another instrument used in this study was the Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ), and consisting of six items. This scale has four response options: 1 = Strongly Disagree (STS), 2 = Disagree (S), 3 = Agree (S), and 4 = Strongly Agree (SS). Reliability testing for the entrepreneurial intention variable yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.852.

The Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy Scale (ESES), another instrument used in this study, was developed by McGee et al., (2009) and consists of 19 items. After pilot testing, one item was found to be invalid, leaving 18 items. This scale has four response options: 1 = Strongly Disagree (STS), 2 = Disagree (S), 3 = Agree (S), and 4 = Strongly Agree (SS). The results of the reliability test on the Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy variable obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.911.

The research data obtained were then analyzed through hypothesis testing using moderated mediation analysis based on regression analysis carried out with the help of process model 4 in SPSS 25. To test the analysis of the indirect effect mediation variable, Bootstrapping N = 5000 was carried out with a 95% confidence interval (CI) (Borau et al., 2015). The mediator analysis aims to determine the indirect effect between variable X (entrepreneurial engagement) on variable Y (entrepreneurial intention) through variable Z or mediator entrepreneurial self-efficacy and to determine the direct effect of variable X on variable Y. The following is the output of the concept diagram of process model 4 in SPSS 25.

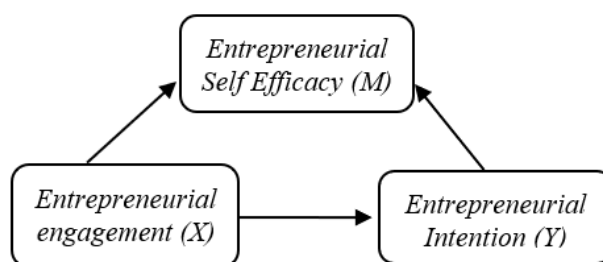


Figure 1. Conceptual Diagram of Process Model 4 for SPSS

Results and Discussion

The data collection results indicate that entrepreneurial engagement tends to be high ($M=30.63$, $SD=3.214$), entrepreneurial intention tends to be moderately high ($M=19.07$, $SD=3.023$), and entrepreneurial self-efficacy tends to be moderately high ($M=58.17$, $SD=4.922$).

Hypothesis testing using moderated mediation analysis based on regression was conducted using process model 4 in SPSS 25 with bootstrapping. Table 1 shows that entrepreneurial engagement significantly influences entrepreneurial self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.53$, $p < 0.01$). Entrepreneurial engagement significantly influences entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly influences entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < 0.01$). Then the results of the Bootstrapping mediation test showed a significant indirect effect of entrepreneurial engagement on entrepreneurial intention through entrepreneurial self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.01$), and a 95% confidence interval [BootLLCI 0.159; BootULCI 0.290]. Because the interval does not include zero, the mediation is partially significant. Therefore, entrepreneurial engagement

simultaneously influences entrepreneurial self-efficacy ($R = 0.28$ $p < 0.00$). Entrepreneurial engagement and entrepreneurial self-efficacy explain the variance of entrepreneurial intention ($R = 0.35$ $p < 0.00$).

Table 1. Results of Regression Analysis

Prediktor	β	SE	BC [CI 95%]		T	p	R	R ²	F	p
			LL	UL						
Criteria ESE							.53	.28	112.	.00
EE	.53	.11	.90	1.3	10.6	<0.01				
Criteria EI							.59	.35	79.1	.00
EE	.25	.05	.12	.31	4.4	<0.01				
ESE	.43	.02	.13	.22	7.7	<0.01				
T.Effect	.47	.05	.33	.51	9.1	<0.01				
Indirect	.23	.03	.16	.29						

Hypothesis testing using bootstrapping provides estimates of the magnitude of the indirect effect, the confidence interval, and the effect size. Decision-making regarding the direct effect hypothesis involves comparing the calculated significance value with the alpha significance value. If the calculated significance value is less than the alpha significance value (5%), then the direct effect hypothesis is accepted.

Based on Table 1 above, the test results indicate a direct effect ($\beta = 0.25$ $p < 0.01$), and an indirect effect ($\beta = 0.23$ $p < 0.01$), thus mediating. This means that entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the effect of entrepreneurial engagement on entrepreneurial intention.

The results of the bootstrapping mediation test show a 95% confidence interval [BootLLCI 0.16; BootULCI 0.29] that does not include zero. Therefore, the calculation indicates that entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Z) mediates the effect of entrepreneurial engagement (X) on entrepreneurial intention (Y). Therefore, the data support the hypothesis. The p-value is $0.00 < 0.05$, indicating highly significant significance. The following are the results of mediation process model 4.

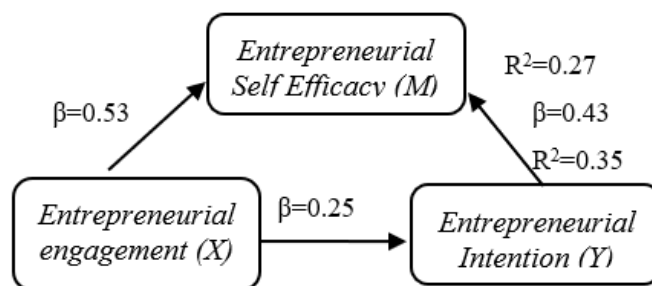


Figure 2. Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy Model Mediating Entrepreneurial Engagement Against Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial engagement, which involves involvement in entrepreneurial activities such as participating in business incubation programs, training, business simulations, entrepreneurial competitions, and fieldwork, provides individuals with the opportunity to directly experience the challenges and successes of the entrepreneurial process. Through this involvement, individuals develop a sense of their own abilities. Based on Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994), direct experience and active involvement in professional activities, including entrepreneurship, can shape an individual's perception of their ability to succeed in that field.

The results of this study indicate that entrepreneurial engagement (EE) has a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE). This finding suggests that the higher an individual's engagement in entrepreneurial activities, the greater confidence in their ability to carry out entrepreneurial activities.

The results of this study are supported by research by (Zhao et al., 2005) which found that the experience of entrepreneurial involvement has a positive effect on the development of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which ultimately increases entrepreneurial interest. One of the factors influencing concrete steps to achieve career goals is entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Students who have entrepreneurial self-efficacy will be better able to face challenges both academically and career after graduation. This study found that students who have a consistent

level of entrepreneurial involvement and a high belief in their abilities and potential will be more confident in making future career decisions after graduation. Active involvement in entrepreneurial activities is one of the key factors that builds an individual's confidence in their capacity to run a business.

The hands-on experience of this involvement provides practical learning that reduces uncertainty, builds self-confidence, and strengthens students' readiness to run a business after completing their studies.

Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) is an individual's belief in their ability to carry out the actions necessary to achieve a specific outcome. In the context of entrepreneurship, the higher self-efficacy, the more likely a person is to have the intention to become an entrepreneur. This is consistent with previous research by Chen et al., (1998), which showed that self-efficacy plays a significant role in the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, research by Zhao et al., (2005) also found that entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly influences an individual's interest in starting a business. Research by (Belchior & Lyons, 2021) also showed that self-confidence in one's abilities is a key predictor of entrepreneurial decisions. These findings reinforce the role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a critical determinant in the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. Individuals with high confidence in their abilities are more confident in making the decision to start a business.

Consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Chen et al., 1998), perceived behavioral control (represented by self-efficacy) is a key determinant in the formation of behavioral intentions. The greater an individual's belief in their ability to perform an entrepreneurial behavior, the greater their desire to pursue it. Reinforced by research Chen and colleagues in their recent research expanded the TPB model by including ESE as a reinforcing variable that clarifies the pathway between perceived behavioral control and intention. Self-efficacy provides confidence that individuals can manage risk, overcoming uncertainty, managing resources, and making decisions in the entrepreneurial process.

Barbosa et al., (2007) in their research demonstrated a positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention. Individuals with high entrepreneurial self-efficacy will have an impact on their entrepreneurial intention, or their intention to become entrepreneurs. This is supported by research by whose research at several European universities found that self-efficacy not only influences intention but also strengthens the relationship between attitude and intention. Students with high levels of self-efficacy are more consistent in actualizing their entrepreneurial intentions.

Based on the approaches of Social Cognitive Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory, individual engagement in relevant activities can strengthen self-efficacy, which in turn shapes the intention to act. In this context, student involvement in entrepreneurial activities is expected to increase their self-efficacy, ultimately encouraging the formation of intentions to become entrepreneurs.

Wang et al., (2023) found in this study that entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between experiential entrepreneurial engagement and entrepreneurial intention in business students. Consistent with the research of this study demonstrates the strong role of self-efficacy as a mediator in the relationship between entrepreneurial engagement and entrepreneurial intention in students in developing countries. This is in line with the research, which found that entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between exposure to entrepreneurial activities and intention to start a business. Research by (Zhao et al., 2005) also showed that self-efficacy is a significant mediating variable in the relationship between entrepreneurial experience and entrepreneurial intention.

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that the research findings are consistent with theory. These results confirm that entrepreneurial self-efficacy plays a mediator in the relationship between entrepreneurial engagement and entrepreneurial intention. This means that the higher the student's engagement in entrepreneurial activities, the greater their entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which ultimately drives entrepreneurial intentions. However, this study has several limitations, including the use of a cross-sectional design that cannot capture changes in the relationships between variables over the long term, and the limited sample size, which only included vocational high school students in Bandar Lampung City. Furthermore, the study did not include external factors such as social support, cultural values, or family environment. Therefore, it is recommended that future research use a longitudinal approach, expand the sample size to other regions and educational levels, and consider additional relevant variables such as grit, intrinsic motivation, fieldwork experience, and the role of social media in enhancing entrepreneurial self-efficacy. These findings can also be utilized by guidance and counseling teachers to design career guidance programs that encourage students' active involvement in real-life entrepreneurial activities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that entrepreneurial engagement influences entrepreneurial intention through entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Guidance and Counseling teachers can utilize this research

instrument to identify students' levels of engagement, intention, and self-confidence in entrepreneurship, and provide interventions that support the development of these three variables. Interventions can be implemented through reflection on successful experiences, entrepreneurial modeling, business simulations, coaching, and experiential training to increase students' confidence in entrepreneurship.

Guidance and Counseling teachers are advised to focus more on strengthening self-efficacy, career exploration, and active student involvement in entrepreneurial activities. Meanwhile, future researchers are advised to add other variables such as social support, intrinsic motivation, career exploration, or grit, and expand the sample size to other schools and regions to increase the generalizability of the results.

Author Contributions Statement

Dewi Rosita contributed to conceptualization, methodology, data collection, analysis, and manuscript drafting. **Dwi Yuwono Puji Sugiharto** provided supervision and methodological guidance. **Sunawan** contributed to data interpretation and manuscript review, while **Shania Dea Menany Soputan** contributed to literature review and editing. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

Declaration of Generative AI

ChatGPT was employed as a supporting tool during manuscript preparation to assist with language editing and the improvement of academic clarity. The authors evaluated the suggested revisions and retain full responsibility for the accuracy, interpretation, and integrity of the manuscript's content.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known financial or personal relationships that could be regarded as potentially influencing the research, the interpretation of its findings, or the conclusions presented in this article.

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