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Influence Digital Literacy, Creativity and Entrepreneurial Education to Entrepreneurial Intention with Self Efficacy as a Mediating Variable (Study on Vocational High School Students in Malang City)

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

We used the Partial Least Square method to analyze the data. Using proportionate stratified random sampling, 176 students were selected from a total population of 322 for this study. Both the direct and indirect effects of entrepreneurial education on self-efficacy, as measured by entrepreneurial intention, were positive and statistically significant. The intention to start a business was not positively and significantly affected by either digital literacy or creativity. In addition, research has shown that self-efficacy mediates, to a lesser extent, the connection between entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial intention, and creativity. Conversely, there is no evidence that digital literacy partially mediates the connection between the two variables entrepreneurial intention and digital literacy.

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a popular career choice among Indonesia's youth, as the number of successful and inspiring young entrepreneurs increases. The government supports the development of micro and small businesses through policies such as Government Regulation No. 47 of 2024 concerning the Elimination of Bad Debts for MSMEs in various sectors. However, high unemployment rates indicate limited job opportunities, making entrepreneurship education crucial for fostering independence and creating new job opportunities.

Vocational High Schools (SMK) play a strategic role in preparing graduates who are work-ready and entrepreneurial. In Malang City, there are 51 vocational high schools (SMK) with over 34,000 students equipped with entrepreneurial and digital competencies through various majors such as Digital Business, Accounting, and Multimedia. However, although most students demonstrate entrepreneurial intentions, many are still unprepared to face real-world challenges such as legal aspects, taxes, and business risk management.

A pre-survey of 12 vocational high school students in Malang City showed that 83% had entrepreneurial intentions, with varying business interests, particularly in creative fields such as fashion and culinary arts. The primary factor driving this intention was self-motivation, not environmental or family influences. This phenomenon demonstrates the importance of self-efficacy in strengthening students' confidence to start a business.

In addition, digital literacy**,** Creativity and entrepreneurship education are important factors believed to encourage entrepreneurial intentions in the digital era. Nevertheless, prior studies have either ignored certain characteristics altogether or have focused solely on college students. To address this knowledge vacuum, this study investigates how vocational high school students in Malang City's digital literacy, creativity, and entrepreneurship education programs affect their entrepreneurial intention as measured by self-efficacy.

Using primary data from a pre-survey is what makes this research unique, which directly reflects the actual entrepreneurial intentions and readiness of vocational high school students. These findings are expected to form the basis for developing practical entrepreneurship education strategies and improving digital literacy to foster a resilient and adaptive generation of young entrepreneurs in the age of technological revolution.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), an expansion of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen, 1991), is the overarching idea that this research is based on. A person's motivations for engaging in particular actions can be better understood with the help of the TPB. Attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are the three main factors that impact an individual's behavioral intentions and actions.

From (Ajzen, 1991), TPB is particularly suitable for explaining behaviors that involve deliberate planning, such as entrepreneurship. As cited by (**Joni et al., 2022)**, "*Entrepreneurship and any other action requiring forethought can be adequately*

explained by the TPB." Using TPB, we can understand how students' entrepreneurial aspirations influence their viewpoints, attitudes, and belief in their own talents to launch a firm.

This research also cites social cognitive theory (SCT), which was initially established by (Bandura, 1986). According to social cognitive theory, there is a complex web of interplay between an individual's behavior, their environment, and their own internal states (including their thoughts, feelings, and biology). Theory tenets include self-efficacy (self-assurance is the belief that one can successfully complete a task), modeling, reciprocal determinism, and observational learning.

According to (Bandura, 1986) and colleagues have shown that self-efficacy is a key factor in determining one's motivation, mental processes, and behavioral outcomes in many domains, including education and business (Ahlin et al., 2024; Nisula & Olander, 2023). As a result, SCT provides theoretical evidence in favor of the mediating factor of self-efficacy in this study, and TPB directs the whole behavioral framework.

Digital Literacy on Entrepreneurial Intention

Digital Literacy is regarded as a key competence in the digital economy era, enabling individuals to utilize technology effectively to identify business opportunities, manage operations, and market products online. Digital literacy has a beneficial effect on entrepreneurial ambition, according to previous research (Chaniago, 2023; Ching Yin, 2024). Hence, we suggest H1 as:
H1: Digital Literacy has a positive and significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intention among vocational high school students in Malang City.

Creativity on Entrepreneurial Intention

In order to come up with fresh, appealing company concepts, creativity is seen as an essential quality. Students who are able to think outside the box are more likely to inspire entrepreneurship by coming up with novel solutions to problems and ideas for businesses. Two recent studies (Abdelfattah et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2021) research has demonstrated that innovation significantly impacts the propensity to start a business, both directly and indirectly. Thus:
H2: Creativity has a positive and significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intention among vocational high school students in Malang City.

Entrepreneurial Education on Entrepreneurial Intention

In order to foster an entrepreneurial spirit in pupils, entrepreneurial education programs equip them with theoretical background, practical skills, and real-world examples. Opportunities, management, and taking risks in company are all made more apparent. Several studies have shown that teaching people to be entrepreneurs increases their likelihood of actually starting their own businesses (Yan et al., 2023; Haque et al., 2024). Therefore:
H3: Entrepreneurial Education has a positive and significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intention among vocational high school students in Malang City.

Self-Efficacy on Entrepreneurial Intention

The confidence in one's own abilities to achieve one's objectives and overcome obstacles is known as self-efficacy. Those who have faith in themselves are more likely to run their companies wisely and take reasonable risks as entrepreneurs. Studies by (Saraih et al., 2021; Ying & Yaakob, 2025) found that self-efficacy directly influences entrepreneurial intention. Hence:
H4: Self-Efficacy has a positive and significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intention among vocational high school students in Malang City.

Digital Literacy on Self-Efficacy

Furthermore, Digital Literacy is believed to enhance students' self-efficacy by increasing their confidence in using technology for learning and business purposes. (Ameen et al., 2023; Yuan et al., 2024) state that self-efficacy was positively correlated with digital literacy. Thus, the next hypothesis is:
H5: Digital Literacy has a positive and significant effect on Self-Efficacy among vocational high school students in Malang City.

Creativity on Self-Efficacy

Creativity is also associated with higher levels of self-efficacy. When students successfully realize their creative ideas, their belief in their own abilities grows stronger. This is supported by (Sun., 2024), who discovered a positive relationship between creativity and self-efficacy. Thus:
H6: Creativity has a positive and significant effect on Self-Efficacy among vocational high school students in Malang City.

Entrepreneurial Education on Self-Efficacy

The use of real-world projects in entrepreneurial education also helps students feel more capable of taking charge of their own learning, business simulations, and other forms of experiential learning. Research by (Saptono et al., 2021; Mullion et al., 2023) has shown that self-efficacy is positively impacted by entrepreneurship education. Hence:
H7: Entrepreneurial Education has a positive and significant effect on Self-Efficacy among vocational high school students in Malang City.

Self-Efficacy mediates between Digital Literacy and Entrepreneurial Intention

Self-Efficacy is also investigated as a moderator in this study. Higher levels of digital literacy are associated with a higher interest in entrepreneurship among students since it indicates that they are more comfortable and competent with technology. The desire to establish a business and one's level of digital literacy are mediated by one's self-efficacy, according to the research (Hutagalung & Zahra., 2023; Mullion et al., 2023) among other things. Thus:
H8: Self-Efficacy mediates the relationship between Digital Literacy and Entrepreneurial Intention among vocational high school students in Malang City.

Self-Efficacy mediates between Creativity and Entrepreneurial Intention

Creativity may influence entrepreneurial aspirations in a roundabout way through one's sense of self-efficacy. People who are confident in themselves and

have a creative mind are more inclined to start their own businesses. Studies by (Bellò et al., 2023; Mahmood et al., 2022) lend credence to this mediating aspect. Therefore:
H9: Self-Efficacy mediates the relationship between Creativity and Entrepreneurial Intention among vocational high school students in Malang City.

Self-Efficacy mediates between Entrepreneurial Education and Entrepreneurial Intention

Finally, by fostering a sense of self-efficacy, Entrepreneurial Education has the potential to elevate entrepreneurial aspirations. Students gain self-assurance when it comes to launching and running their own enterprises after participating in entrepreneurship classes and events. This is supported by (Uzkurt et al., 2025; Xie & Wang, 2025; Mulyadi & Wijaya, 2025). Accordingly:
H10: Self-Efficacy mediates the relationship between Entrepreneurial Education and Entrepreneurial Intention among vocational high school students in Malang City.

After the hypothesis section, if your study is quantitative, please provide a contextual framework here, or your mind map, if qualitative.

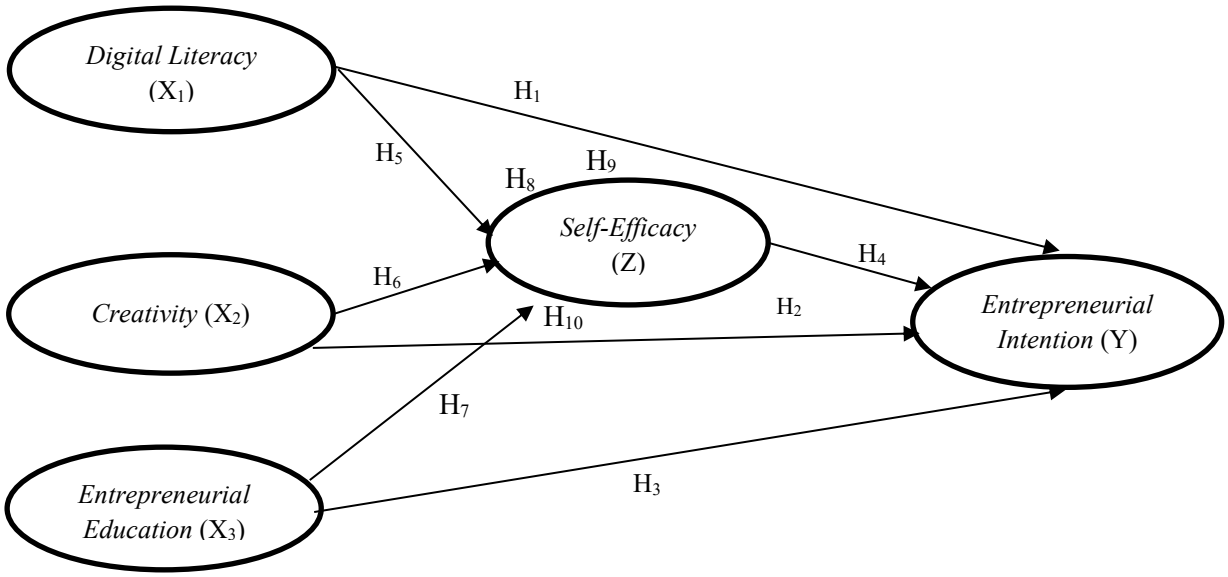


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research strategy is utilized in this work. From (Creswell, 2008).quantitative research is a subset of educational research that involves focusing on a single topic, developing limited research questions, collecting quantitative data from participants, and drawing conclusions using statistical analysis. Specifically, in quantitative research, which is a subset of educational research, the researcher selects the variables to study, formulates focused questions, conducts surveys to collect measurable data, draws conclusions through statistical analysis, and remains objective and impartial throughout the investigation.

Based on the literature review and supported by previous studies, it is hypothesized that Digital Literacy, Creativity, and Entrepreneurial Education influence Entrepreneurial Intention, with Self-Efficacy acting as a mediating variable.

The population of this study comprises all students in the twelfth grade of vocational high schools (SMK) in Malang City with a focus on digital business expertise in the 2025/2026 academic year, totaling 322 students. The selection of students from SMKs specializing in Digital Business was based on the direct relevance of their field of study to the variables examined in this research, namely Digital Literacy, Creativity, Entrepreneurial Education, and Entrepreneurial Intention. The Digital Business program specifically equips students with skills in technology, digital marketing, and entrepreneurial practice, making them representative subjects for measuring Entrepreneurial Intention in a digital context.

Furthermore, the total population of 322 students across 9 schools provides an ideal and measurable size for quantitative research. Malang City was chosen because it is known as an educational hub that supports the development of youth innovation and entrepreneurship. Additionally, all SMK students in this population belong to the digital native generation, which tends to have high digital literacy and substantial potential to develop creativity and entrepreneurial interest.

The sample size for this study was determined to be 176 respondents using an online sample calculator. The method of sampling that was utilized was stratified random sampling with proportional allocation, in which the sample was selected proportionally and randomly (Creswell, 2021).

RESEARCH RESULT

This study uses the SEM-PLS method in order to investigate the connections between the variables Digital Literacy (X1), Creativity (X2), Entrepreneurial Education (X3), Self-Efficacy (Z), and Entrepreneurial Intention (Y) in twelfth-grade vocational high school (SMK) students in Malang City. The analysis procedure refers to the stages from (Schuberth et al., 2023):

1. (Outer Model),
2. Evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model),
3. Goodness of Fit Testing, and
4. Hypothesis Testing.

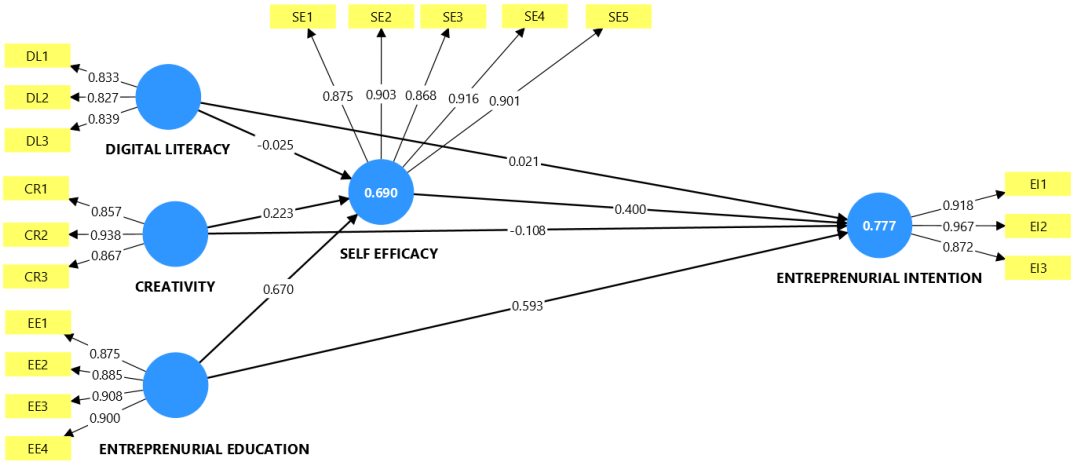


Figure 2. Model Struktural SEM-PLS

The figure 2 above illustrates the research model that examines the relationships of Digital Literacy, Creativity, and Entrepreneurial Education with Entrepreneurial Intention, both directly and indirectly through Self-Efficacy as a mediating variable.

Researchers ranked the independent variables' contributions to explaining the dependent variable by looking at their direct impacts, ignoring Self-Efficacy as a mediator. While Creativity and Digital Literacy have no effect on entrepreneurial intention, Entrepreneurial Education and Self-Efficacy have a favorable and substantial effect.

As it turns out, entrepreneurship education is the most crucial factor in determining whether or not students are inclined to establish their own enterprises. This study's findings provide credence to the idea that entrepreneurship-focused classroom instruction is crucial for piqueing students' interest in and preparing them for careers in the field.

Furthermore, there is a strong positive correlation between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention; in other words, students who have a higher opinion of their own abilities and strengths are more inclined to take the plunge and launch their own business.

When looking at the correlation between digital literacy, creativity, and the desire to start a business, no statistically significant association was found. Having strong digital abilities and creative ideas is great, but it won't be enough to fuel entrepreneurial intention without a solid foundation of self-confidence and entrepreneurial education.

Students' intents to start their own businesses are most affected by two things: entrepreneurial education and their level of self-efficacy. Therefore, it is critical to enhance entrepreneurial education and build self-confidence in order to produce a new generation of young people ready to launch their own companies.

DISCUSSION

This study's findings give light on what motivates SMK (vocational high school) students in Malang City to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors. In contrast

to digital literacy and creativity, entrepreneurial education and self-efficacy were discovered to significantly increase entrepreneurial intention. Both the correlations between creativity and entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention were found to be mediated by self-efficacy.

Through structured, practical learning experiences, one of the primary goals of entrepreneurial education is to equip students with the necessary skills to start their own firms. This discovery is in line with the study from (Nowiński et al., 2019; Fayolle & Gailly, 2015), which state that entrepreneurial education is vital for developing an entrepreneurial attitude, enhancing skills, and encouraging students to come up with new ideas for businesses. In general, students who participate in entrepreneurial learning activities are more equipped to seize opportunities, find creative solutions to difficulties, and develop the self-assurance to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors.

Also emphasized is the psychological component of students' self-efficacy that influences their intention to establish their own business. The SCT put out by (Bandura, 1986) states that an individual's confidence in their abilities influences their motivation and behavior. That theory is supported by this research. The risks, uncertainties, and challenges of entrepreneurship are better handled by people who have high levels of self-efficacy. In addition, the results support the statements put out by (Zhao, Seibert, and Hills, 2005), who argue that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of entrepreneurial intention and mediates the connection between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial action.

Conversely, there was no statistically significant relationship between digital literacy and the ambition to start a business. It appears that students' digital skills are still underutilized when it comes to entrepreneurship. Many students use digital skills primarily for communication and entertainment rather than productive activities such as business innovation or digital marketing. This finding differs from (Ng, 2012), who stated that digital literacy can enhance creativity and entrepreneurial innovation if supported by proper training and an entrepreneurial mindset. Thus, this study emphasizes the need to integrate digital literacy with an entrepreneurial curriculum so that students' technological skills can be directed toward productive and innovative activities.

Similarly, Creativity did not have a direct effect on entrepreneurial intention but influences it indirectly through Self-Efficacy. This means that students with high creativity will demonstrate entrepreneurial intention only if they have confidence in their ability to transform creative ideas into viable business opportunities. This finding supports (Amabile's, 1996) Componential Theory of Creativity, which asserts that creativity can lead to innovation only when individuals possess intrinsic motivation and self-confidence to implement their ideas. Therefore, creativity needs to be supported by self-efficacy and entrepreneurial experience to effectively contribute to the formation of entrepreneurial intention.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that entrepreneurial education and psychological empowerment through self-efficacy are the main factors that can strengthen SMK students' entrepreneurial intention. Educational

institutions, particularly vocational schools, are expected to design entrepreneurial learning programs that not only provide theoretical knowledge but also build students' confidence and offer direct experiential learning. Project-based learning, business simulations, and mentoring with practitioners can serve as effective strategies to bridge entrepreneurial knowledge with real-world action.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. Digital Literacy did not have a significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. It appears that students' access, comprehension, and usage of digital technology did not have a direct impact on their motivation to engage in entrepreneurial activity. Learning how to utilize technology effectively is still mainly focused on academic and leisure pursuits, rather than preparing people to take advantage of technological potential in the workplace.
2. Creativity did not have a significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. Students need to have faith in their own talents to fuel their entrepreneurial aim, even if they are creative thinkers and come up with novel concepts. If one wants to turn their creative potential into entrepreneurial aim, they need to hone their skills through education and work experience.
3. Entrepreneurial Education has a significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. An entrepreneurial attitude can be shaped through the knowledge, skills, and experiences provided by entrepreneurial education. Students can get the self-assurance they need to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors in the future through learning approaches that prioritize real-world application and making informed business decisions.
4. Self-Efficacy has a significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. A major psychological component that encourages students to want to launch a business is confidence in one's own talents. Students' willingness to take chances and seek out entrepreneurial opportunities is directly correlated to their confidence in their own talents.
5. Digital Literacy did not have a significant effect on Self-Efficacy. Students lack the necessary technical abilities to confidently navigate entrepreneurial environments. This states that there is a need to channel digital competence toward more useful uses in order to boost self-assurance and entrepreneurial preparedness.
6. Creativity has a significant effect on Self-Efficacy. Because they are good at solving problems and coming up with new ideas, creative people often have more faith in themselves. As a psychological component, creativity boosts self-efficacy, which may inspire an entrepreneur's desire to take risks.
7. Entrepreneurial Education has a significant effect on Self-Efficacy. One way to boost one's self-confidence is through the hands-on experiences that entrepreneurial learning processes offer. It is common for students to report higher levels of preparedness and confidence when confronted with business issues after engaging in entrepreneurial activities.

8. Self-Efficacy did not mediate the relationship between Digital Literacy and Entrepreneurial Intention. This indicates that students' digital skills are not sufficient to enhance entrepreneurial intention, either directly or through self-confidence.
9. Self-Efficacy fully mediates the relationship between Creativity and Entrepreneurial Intention. Students' trust in their own abilities to implement creative ideas is a prerequisite for creativity's potential to boost entrepreneurial intention.
10. Self-Efficacy fully mediates the relationship between Entrepreneurial Education and Entrepreneurial Intention. Thus, entrepreneurial education influences entrepreneurial intention not only directly but also indirectly by enhancing self-efficacy.

Overall, this study's results suggest that entrepreneurial intention among SMK students in Malang City is more influenced by educational and psychological factors, particularly entrepreneurial education and self-efficacy, than by technical factors such as digital literacy skills.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

If we want to comprehend the conclusions of a study more objectively and set the stage for future research, we must acknowledge the limits of that study. Remembering the study's limitations can help with future research planning.

First, this study was conducted only among vocational high school (SMK) students in Malang City, so the results may not be generalizable to other regions or educational levels. Future research could expand the study population to include different educational levels, such as university students or general high school students, to obtain more comprehensive findings.

Second, the data in this study were collected through perception-based questionnaires, making it impossible to completely avoid potential subjective bias from respondents. Subsequent studies are recommended to combine quantitative and qualitative methods (mixed methods) to achieve deeper and more contextual insights.

Third, the variables in this study were limited to Digital Literacy, Creativity, Entrepreneurial Education, Self-Efficacy, and Entrepreneurial Intention. Future research could include additional variables such as entrepreneurial motivation, social support, work experience, or digital technology factors to create a more comprehensive research model.

Fourth, this study was conducted within a single time frame (cross-sectional study), so it cannot explain changes in entrepreneurial behavior or intention over time. Future studies are encouraged to use a longitudinal approach to observe the development of entrepreneurial intention more dynamically.

By acknowledging these limitations, future research is expected to provide a broader and deeper understanding of the factors that drive entrepreneurial intention among young people, especially in facing the increasingly competitive digital era.

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