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Entrepreneurial Knowledge and Perceptions of Entrepreneurship on Entrepreneurial Interest with Support for Self-Efficacy as a Mediating Variable in Sukabumi City Students

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effect of entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial perceptions on entrepreneurial interest with self-efficacy as a mediating variable in final year undergraduate students in Sukabumi City. Quantitative approach was used with survey method through questionnaires to 180 students from various universities. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the help of SmartPLS 4 software. The results showed that entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial perceptions have a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial interest. Self-efficacy also proved to play a significant mediating role in strengthening the relationship between the independent variables and entrepreneurial interest. This finding confirms the importance of increasing knowledge capacity and positive perceptions of entrepreneurship, supported by self-efficacy in encouraging students' intention to become entrepreneurs. This research provides practical implications for higher education institutions in designing entrepreneurship programs that are able to foster entrepreneurial interest from an early age.

Keyword: Entrepreneurial knowledge, entrepreneurial perceptions, self-efficacy, entrepreneurial interest, Sukabumi students

INTRODUCTION

The level of entrepreneurship in Indonesia is still relatively low, reaching only 3.47% of the total population (Oktaviani, 2023), even though the number of college graduates continues to increase every year. The high unemployment rate of educated people, including university graduates, shows the low interest in entrepreneurship among students (Marimin et al., 2024). This is an important challenge because unemployment has the potential to trigger social and economic problems (Siwiyanti & Ramdan, 2020). Higher education is expected to be able to encourage the birth of entrepreneurs through increasing students' knowledge, perceptions, and self-efficacy. Entrepreneurial interest is influenced by various factors, including self-confidence and experience (Sabrina, 2024), entrepreneurial knowledge (Rahmatullah et al., 2023), and perceptions of the entrepreneurial profession (Wibowo & Agus, 2017). The local

context in Sukabumi shows that most students are still trapped in formal work orientation and social values that value the status of civil servants or permanent employees more than entrepreneurial professions. The collective culture in the community also tends to instill an attitude of caution in taking risks, which has an impact on the lack of courage in pioneering independent businesses. This is exacerbated by the lack of exposure to direct entrepreneurial experience and the lack of successful entrepreneurial role models in the environment around the campus or local community.

In Sukabumi City, out of 16,705 undergraduate students, the unemployment rate of university graduates reached 1,536 people (BPS, 2023), while pre-research results showed that only 12% of students were interested in entrepreneurship. Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze the effect of entrepreneurial knowledge and perceptions on entrepreneurial interest, with self-efficacy as a mediating variable.

Some previous studies show different results (empirical gap) regarding the effect of knowledge and perceptions on entrepreneurial interest. In addition, there is a theoretical gap (research gap) in understanding the role of self-efficacy as a mediating variable. Therefore, this study was conducted to further examine the relationship between entrepreneurial knowledge, entrepreneurial perceptions, self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial interest among final year students in Sukabumi City. This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How does entrepreneurial knowledge affect self-efficacy?
2. How does entrepreneurial perception affect self-efficacy?
3. How does self-efficacy influence entrepreneurial interest?
4. How does entrepreneurial knowledge affect entrepreneurial interest?
5. How does entrepreneurial perception affect entrepreneurial interest?
6. How does entrepreneurial knowledge influence entrepreneurial interest through self-efficacy?
7. How does entrepreneurial perception influence entrepreneurial interest through self-efficacy?

METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with descriptive research. The study population was 16,705 final year undergraduate students in Sukabumi City, with a sample of 180 respondents determined through cluster sampling technique. Variables in this study include Entrepreneurship Knowledge (X1), Perception of Entrepreneurship (X2) as independent variables, Self-efficacy (M) as mediating variable, and Entrepreneurial Interest (Y) as dependent variable.

The population in this study amounted to 16,705 undergraduate students registered with PDDIKTI. Determination of the sample size uses the approach of Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (Muliana & Mansyur, 2022) is the number of indicators that can be multiplied by 5-10, namely:

$$n = 5 \times 36 = 180 \text{ respondents}$$

Data collection is done through observation, questionnaires with Semantic Differential scale (1-7), and literature study. The data analysis technique used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (SmartPLS). Model testing includes validity and reliability tests on the measurement model (outer model) as well as R-Square, F-Square, and hypothesis testing on the structural model (inner model), with significant criteria p-value <0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

PLS Model

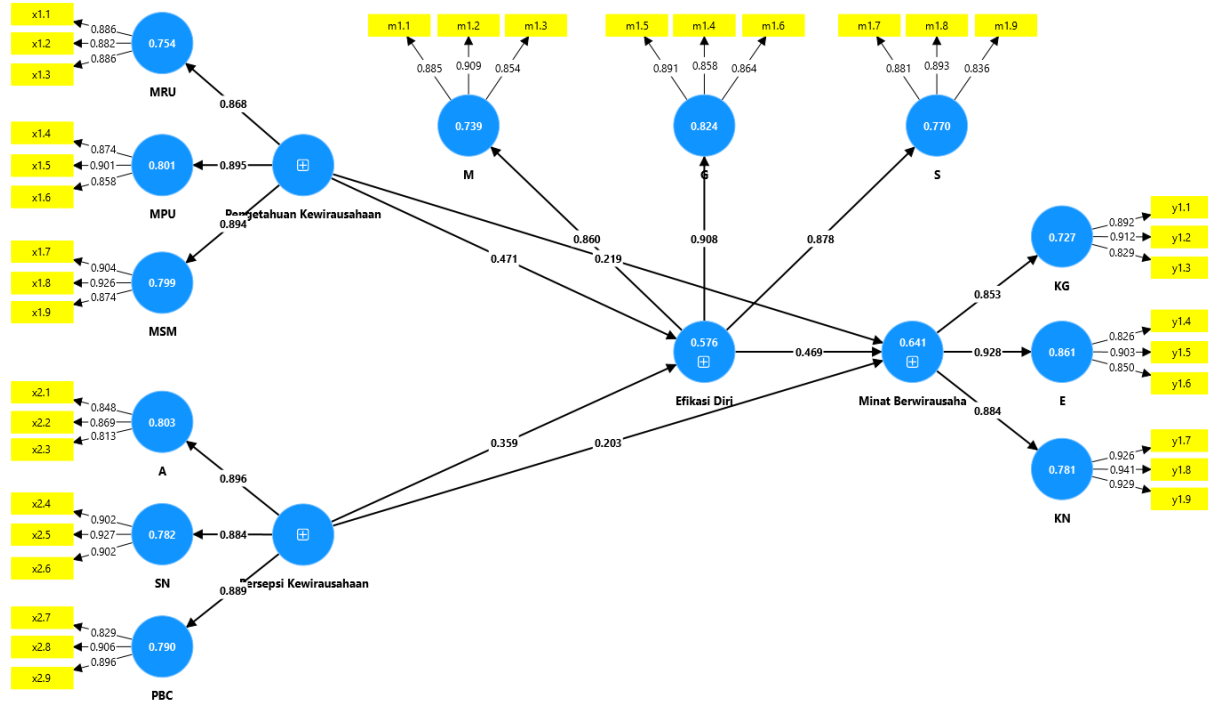


Figure 1. PLS Model

From the PLS output picture above, we can see the magnitude of the loading factor value of each indicator located above between the variable and the indicator, we can also see the magnitude of the path coefficient above the arrow line between the exogenous variables, namely Entrepreneurial Knowledge and Perceptions of Entrepreneurship, while the mediating variable is Self-Efficacy and the endogenous variable is Entrepreneurial Interest.

Convergent Validity (Outer Models)

Construct validity testing is done through Convergent Validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability analysis.

Table 1. Loading Factor Results

	Loading Factor	Loading Factor	P-value
X1 → X.1		0.886	0.000
X1 → X.2	0.858	0.882	0.000
X1 → X.3		0.886	0.000
X1 → X.4		0.874	0.000
X1 → X.5	0.858	0.901	0.000
X1 → X.6		0.858	0.000
X1 → X.7		0.904	0.000
X1 → X.8	0.869	0,926	0.000
X1 → X.9		0.874	0.000
X2 → X.1		0.848	0.000
X2 → X.2	0.875	0.869	0.000
X2 → X.3		0.813	0.000
X2 → X.4		0.902	0.000
X2 → X.5	0.840	0.927	0.000
X2 → X.6		0.902	0.000

X2 → X.7		0.829	0.000
X2 → X.8	0.861	0.906	0.000
X2 → X.9		0.896	0.000
M1 → M.1		0.885	0.000
M1 → M.2	0.851	0.909	0.000
M1 → M.3		0.854	0.000
M1 → M.4		0.891	0.000
M1 → M.5	0.900	0.858	0.000
M1 → M.6		0.864	0.000
M1 → M.7		0.881	0.000
M1 → M.8	0.901	0.893	0.000
M1 → M.9		0.836	0.000
Y1 → Y.1		0.892	0.000
Y1 → Y.2	0.832	0.912	0.000
Y1 → Y.3		0.829	0.000
Y1 → Y.4		0.826	0.000
Y1 → Y.5	0.922	0.903	0.000
Y1 → Y.6		0.850	0.000
Y1 → Y.7		0.926	0.000
Y1 → Y.8	0.822	0.941	0.000
Y1 → Y.9		0.929	0.000

Source: Processed by researchers (SmartPLS 4, 2025)

The results of convergent validity testing on the outer loading value of each dimension and indicator have a value of more than 0.7, so all items are declared valid.

Table 2. AVE Results and Construct Reliability

Variabel	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Entrepreneurship Knowledge (X1)	0.619	0.936	0.908	Valid & Reliabel
Perception of Entrepreneurship (X2)	0.609	0.933	0.904	Valid & Reliabel
Self-efficacy (M)	0.595	0.930	0.909	Valid & Reliabel
Entrepreneurial Interest (Y)	0.625	0.937	0.917	Valid & Reliabel

Source: Processed by researchers (SmartPLS 4, 2025)

All AVE values are above the minimum limit of 0.50 (Riyanto & Setyorini, 2024), indicating that all constructs in this study have good convergent validity. In addition, the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values are above the specified threshold values (> 0.7 and > 0.6), which means that the constructs have consistent internal reliability (Saragih, 2019).

Structural Model (Inner Model)

Structural model assessment is carried out by looking at the R² and F² values as indicators of the accuracy of the model in explaining endogenous variables.

Table 3. R-Square Results

Variabel	R-Square	Description
Self-efficacy (M)	0.583	Medium
Entrepreneurial Interest (Y)	0.651	Medium

Source: Processed by researchers (SmartPLS 4, 2025)

The R² value shows that entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial perceptions are able to explain variations in self-efficacy by 58.3%. Meanwhile, the combination of self-efficacy, knowledge, and perceptions explains entrepreneurial interest by 65.1%. This indicates that the model has a fairly good predictive power.

Table 4. F-Square (Effect Size) Results

Variabel	F ²	Description
X1 → Y	0.286	Medium
X2 → Y	0.188	Medium
M → Y	0.260	Medium

Source: Processed by researchers (SmartPLS 4, 2025)

The F² value shows that each independent variable has a moderate influence on entrepreneurial interest. Entrepreneurial knowledge exerts a slightly stronger influence than entrepreneurial perceptions and self-efficacy.

Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis testing is based on the t-statistic and p-value (<0.05).

Table 5. Direct and Indirect Hypothesis Test Results

Relationship between Variables	T-statistic	P-value	Direct Influence	Indirect Effect	Total
X1 → M	5.056	0.000	0.468		0.468
X2 → M	4.333	0.000	0.362		0.362
M → Y	5.390	0.000	0.472		0.472
X1 → Y	2.445	0.015	0.213		0.213
X2 → Y	2.706	0.007	0.203		0.203
X1 → M → Y	3.526	0.000		0.221	0.221
X2 → M → Y	3.526	0.000		0.170	0.170

Source: Processed by researchers (SmartPLS 4, 2025)

All relationship paths showed t values > 1.96 and p < 0.05, which means all hypotheses in this study are significantly accepted. Self-efficacy proved to be an important mediator linking the effect of entrepreneurial knowledge and perceptions on entrepreneurial interest.

Discussion

Effect of Entrepreneurship Knowledge (X1) on Self-Efficacy (M)

The results of the analysis show that entrepreneurial knowledge has a significant effect on self-efficacy, with a t-statistic value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05. This indicates that the higher the entrepreneurial knowledge possessed by students, the higher their self-efficacy in facing entrepreneurial challenges. Entrepreneurial knowledge provides a basis for individuals to understand business concepts, business management, and innovative strategies, thus increasing self-confidence to plan and carry out entrepreneurial activities (Tahir, 2023) This finding

confirms the importance of strengthening cognitive aspects in shaping student entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

Effect of Perceptions of Entrepreneurship (X2) on Self-Efficacy (M)

The results of the analysis show that perceptions of entrepreneurship have a significant effect on self-efficacy, with a t-statistic value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 . This finding indicates that the more positive students' perceptions of entrepreneurship, the higher their self-efficacy in carrying out the role of an entrepreneur. This is in line with social cognitive theory which explains that perceptions of the situation affect self-belief to succeed (S. Gubik & Bartha, 2021). Positive perceptions provide psychological encouragement and strong internal control, so that students are more mentally and emotionally prepared for entrepreneurship. This study also supports the findings of (Sanjaya & Handoyo, 2024) that entrepreneurial perceptions can increase self-efficacy which in turn encourages entrepreneurial intentions.

Effect of Self-Efficacy (M) on Entrepreneurial Interest (Y)

The results of the analysis show that self-efficacy has a significant effect on entrepreneurial interest, with a t-statistic value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 . This means that the higher the self-efficacy of students, the greater their interest in entrepreneurship. Self-efficacy reflects an individual's belief in their ability to start and run a business, which encourages the courage to take the initiative and face challenges (Fitriani & Hermawan, 2024). This research is reinforced by (Wirjadi & Wijaya, 2023) which show that high self-efficacy correlates with students' mental and technical readiness in starting a business, and significantly strengthens entrepreneurial interest.

Effect of Entrepreneurial Knowledge (X1) on Entrepreneurial Interest (Y)

The results of the analysis show that entrepreneurial knowledge has a significant effect on entrepreneurial interest, with a t-statistic value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 . This finding is in line with (Laksmono et al., 2024) which states that entrepreneurial knowledge increases entrepreneurial interest, especially in final year students. Adequate knowledge can foster self-confidence, reduce fear of failure, and form a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship (Salamzadeh et al., 2022). Thus, a strong understanding of entrepreneurship not only strengthens intention, but also encourages students' readiness to become independent and innovative entrepreneurs.

Effect of Perception of Entrepreneurship (X2) on Interest in Entrepreneurship (Y)

The results of the analysis show that entrepreneurial perceptions have a significant effect on entrepreneurial interest, with a t-statistic value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 . This means that students' positive perceptions of entrepreneurship encourage the formation of interest in entering the business world. This finding is in line with (Jassin & Dewi, 2023) who state that perceptions of entrepreneurship influence individual assessments of the benefits, challenges, and attractiveness of the entrepreneurial profession. Students who see entrepreneurship as a way to achieve financial independence, channel creativity, and gain work flexibility will be more encouraged to choose the entrepreneurial path as a future career.

Effect of Entrepreneurial Knowledge (X1) on Entrepreneurial Interest (Y) through Self-Efficacy (M)

The results of the analysis show that entrepreneurial knowledge has a significant effect on entrepreneurial interest through self-efficacy, with a t-statistic value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 . This finding indicates that entrepreneurial knowledge not only equips students cognitively, but also strengthens self-efficacy which is an important psychological factor in

encouraging entrepreneurial interest. Individuals with good entrepreneurial knowledge tend to be more confident in facing business challenges (Hasan et al., 2021). High self-efficacy makes a person more ready to take risks and motivated to start a business (del Brío González et al., 2022). Thus, self-efficacy becomes an important bridge in transforming knowledge into real intentions for entrepreneurship.

Effect of Perception of Entrepreneurship (X2) on Entrepreneurial Interest (Y) through Self-Efficacy (M)

The analysis shows that entrepreneurial perceptions have a significant effect on entrepreneurial interest through self-efficacy, with a t-statistic value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 . Positive perceptions of entrepreneurship encourage students' confidence to be able to run a business, thus increasing their interest in entrepreneurship. Perception gives a reason to start, while self-efficacy gives courage to act. This finding is in line with (Airent, 2025) who assert that self-efficacy is an important mediator in strengthening the relationship between entrepreneurial perceptions and entrepreneurial interest. Individuals with positive perceptions and high self-efficacy are more prepared to face risks and are more motivated to start a business.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion and data analysis that has been carried out, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a. This study shows that entrepreneurial knowledge (x1) has a significant influence on self-efficacy (m) in final year undergraduate students in Sukabumi City.
- b. This study shows that entrepreneurial perception (x1) has a significant influence on self-efficacy (m) in final year undergraduate students in Sukabumi City.
- c. This study shows that self-efficacy (m) has a significant influence on entrepreneurial interest (y) in final year undergraduate students in Sukabumi City.
- d. This study shows that entrepreneurship knowledge (x1) has a significant influence on entrepreneurial interest (y) in final year undergraduate students in Sukabumi City.
- e. This study indicates that entrepreneurial perception (x2) has a significant influence on entrepreneurial interest (y) in final year undergraduate students in Sukabumi City.
- f. This study shows that entrepreneurship knowledge (x1) has a significant influence on entrepreneurial interest (y) through self-efficacy (m) in final year undergraduate students in Sukabumi City.
- g. This study shows that entrepreneurial perception (x2) has a significant influence on entrepreneurial interest (y) through self-efficacy (m) in final year undergraduate students in Sukabumi City.

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