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Youth Entrepreneurship Intentions: Insights from Surabaya's Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial role model, entrepreneurial orientation, and entrepreneurial intention using path analysis. The respondents of this study were 158 students from a university in Surabaya who had completed the entire entrepreneurship curriculum. The researcher used SMART PLS 4 in the data processing. The results showed that entrepreneurship education affects entrepreneurial orientation. This study also showed that entrepreneurial role model affects entrepreneurial orientation. Furthermore, these results indicated that entrepreneurship education also affects entrepreneurial intention. Additionally, entrepreneurial role model influences entrepreneurial intention. Likewise, entrepreneurial orientation affects entrepreneurial intention. This study shows that entrepreneurial orientation acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial intention, as well as mediating the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. This indicates that entrepreneurial orientation as a mediating variable can be further explored, as previous studies did not show similar result.

Keyword: Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Role Model, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Entrepreneurial Intention.

INTRODUCTION

Based on data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report (Global et al., 2024), it is stated that entrepreneurship contributes significantly to job creation and economic growth in both developing and developed countries. A nation's economic growth and competitiveness greatly depend on its citizens' capacity to create jobs and innovate through entrepreneurial activities. Amid globalization dynamics, digital disruption, and uncertainties in the formal labor market, entrepreneurship is not only an alternative option. It is also a strategic solution to drive sustainable economic development. Research conducted by (Novandari et al., 2023), states that small and medium enterprises are one of the main pillars expected to contribute optimally to the national economic recovery process. Furthermore, research conducted by (Mujianto et al., 2023) in (Sjahruddin et al., 2024) indicates that in Indonesia, the MSME sector can absorb around 94% of the total workforce and contribute up to 61.4% of total investment. The views of young entrepreneurs play a crucial role because they are seen as driving forces for innovation

and economic growth, with a passion for bringing positive change to society. In this context, entrepreneurship education plays a key role as the foundation in shaping a young generation with an entrepreneurial mindset, business skills, and the courage to take risks. Entrepreneurship education not only provides theoretical knowledge but also practical experiences and character-building needed to face the complexity of the business world.

Furthermore, based on research conducted by (Hassan et al., 2021), entrepreneurship education has proven to increase entrepreneurial intention, which is the intention of someone to start their own business and is an early predictor of the formation of actual entrepreneurial behavior. Through experience-based approaches such as business projects, business simulations, and startup incubators, this education can shape a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship. The greater the number of entrepreneurs, the more positive impacts on the national economy, such as increasing foreign exchange, creating new jobs, and reducing unemployment rates.

According to Landa Fournais & Landa Lizarralde (2024), individuals who are familiar with entrepreneurial figures are up to 2.9 times more likely to become new entrepreneurs compared to those who do not have role models. Thus, in an effort to build a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem, the presence of entrepreneurial role model plays an important role in shaping a new generation of entrepreneurs. Amid global economic challenges and limited formal job opportunities, successful role models in the business world can become sources of inspiration, motivation, and real-life learning for individuals considering the entrepreneurial path.

Although there are studies stating that entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial role model have a positive impact on entrepreneurial intention, which helps increase entrepreneurship in a country, many studies have found different results. Some studies even found insignificant results, creating a research gap. Based on research by Hutasuhut et al. (2024); Khalil et al. (2024), entrepreneurship education significantly influences entrepreneurial intention because this education equips individuals with practical skills, business knowledge, and hands-on experience that strengthens their preparedness for entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education not only enhances conceptual understanding of the business world but also fosters confidence and the ability to identify and evaluate business opportunities. Meanwhile, articles written by Muna & Sri Subawa (2022), Widyaningrum et al. (2024) state that entrepreneurship education has no effect on entrepreneurial intention. This is because the entrepreneurship education process provided has not been able to directly encourage students' entrepreneurial intentions. This can occur because theoretical education without direct practice is not sufficient to form a positive attitude and strong social norms.

Likewise, for the relationship between entrepreneurial role model and entrepreneurial intention, there is inconsistency. Entrepreneurial role model positively influences entrepreneurial intention because the presence of a role model can shape individual perceptions, motivation, and self-confidence to pursue the entrepreneurial path. Based on research by Clarissa Cahyadi & Selamat (2023), entrepreneurial role model influence entrepreneurial intention by providing a real picture of how someone can succeed in business through innovation, proactivity, and measured risk-taking. On the other hand, research by Efrata et al., (2021) found that entrepreneurial role model do not significantly affect entrepreneurial intention because not all individuals perceive the presence of role models as a relevant factor in making entrepreneurial decisions. Differences in background, social context, and personal perceptions cause some individuals not to feel inspired or motivated by others' experiences.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991) can bridge this inconsistency by explaining that entrepreneurial intention is formed through three main determinants: attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. According to Lihua (2022); Tsordia & Papadimitriou (2015) and Lihua (2022), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is used to explain entrepreneurial intention because this theory states

that a person's intention to perform a certain behavior, such as starting a business, is determined by three main factors: attitude toward behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Attitude reflects how positively an individual views entrepreneurship, subjective norms measure social influence from close people, and perceived behavioral control reflects the belief in one's ability to run a business. TPB is relevant because entrepreneurial intention is a form of behavioral intention that can be predicted from these three factors, as confirmed by various studies including Ajzen (1991) and subsequent research in various cultural and educational contexts.

In this context, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial role model may not always directly influence entrepreneurial intention because their effect highly depends on the extent to which both are able to shape a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship, create supportive social pressure, and increase individuals' self-confidence in running a business. According to research by Efrata et al. (2021), it requires the variable entrepreneurial orientation, which reflects mental readiness and strategic characteristics such as innovation, proactivity, and willingness to take risks. According to Alaka & Okogua (2022), entrepreneurial orientation itself is a concept that describes the process of creatively exploring entrepreneurial opportunities without relying on the type or amount of resources available. Therefore, entrepreneurial orientation plays a crucial role. Thus, TPB provides a strong conceptual framework to understand that the effects of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial role model on entrepreneurial intention are contextual, not always direct, and are strongly influenced by how individuals internalize entrepreneurial values and beliefs, that's why Entrepreneurial orientation as variable mediation influence by other variable to become one construct that influence entreprenurial intention.

Research by Clarissa Cahyadi & Selamat (2023), shows that Entrepreneurial Role Model positively influences Entrepreneurial Orientation. The presence of successful entrepreneurial role model provides inspiration and increases individuals' perceptions of their capacity to face business challenges innovatively and proactively. Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), the influence of entrepreneurial role model can be explained through the three main determinants of behavioral intention: (1) attitude toward behavior, where the success of a role model forms a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship; (2) subjective norm, where the role model acts as a strong social reference that influences individual decisions; and (3) perceived behavioral control, where the success of the role model strengthens individuals' belief in their ability to replicate and realize entrepreneurial actions. Therefore, the entrepreneurial role model not only provides emotional motivation but also forms cognitive and social frameworks that strategically support the development of entrepreneurial orientation.

H_1 = Entrepreneurial Role Model positively influences Entrepreneurial Orientation.

Research conducted by (Efrata et al., 2021), and (Hutasuhut et al., 2024) shows that entrepreneurship education positively influences entrepreneurial orientation. This education equips individuals with knowledge, skills, and an entrepreneurial mindset that encourages innovation, risk-taking, and proactivity. Within the context of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), this influence is reflected through the formation of positive attitudes toward business activities (attitude), support from the social environment (subjective norms), and belief in self-ability in entrepreneurship (perceived behavioral control). These three elements encourage individuals to develop stronger entrepreneurial orientation.

H_2 = Entrepreneurship Education positively influences Entrepreneurial Orientation.

Research conducted by Hutasuhut et al. (2024) and Triyono et al. (2023) entrepreneurial orientation positively affects entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurial orientation reflects strategic dimensions of entrepreneurship such as innovation, proactivity, and risk-taking that

shape individual readiness to start a business. Individuals with a high level of entrepreneurial orientation generally have a mindset responsive to opportunities, willing to face uncertainty, and actively create new business value. In this context, entrepreneurial orientation is not only an indicator of entrepreneurial behavior but also a motivational and cognitive driver that strengthens the intention to engage in the business world. Readiness to face challenges, tendency to act independently, and the courage to take business initiatives become key factors that strengthen entrepreneurial intention. Thus, the higher a person's entrepreneurial orientation, the stronger their entrepreneurial intention to start and run a business independently.

H_3 = Entrepreneurial Orientation positively influences Entrepreneurial Intention.

Research by (Efrata et al., 2021) states that entrepreneurial role model positively influences entrepreneurial intention. Successful role models in the business world play an important role in shaping individuals' positive perceptions of the value, meaning, and success potential in running a business. From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), this influence occurs through three main pathways: (1) attitude toward behavior, where the success of a role model forms a positive attitude toward entrepreneurial activity; (2) subjective norms, where role models provide social pressure or support that encourages the decision to become an entrepreneur; and (3) perceived behavioral control, where real examples from role models increase individuals' belief in their capacity to face business challenges. Thus, entrepreneurial role model not only provide inspiration but also shape belief systems that strengthen individuals' intention to engage in entrepreneurship.

H_4 = Entrepreneurial Role Model positively influences Entrepreneurial Intention.

According to Suryani et al. (2023), entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention. Through entrepreneurship education, individuals gain conceptual knowledge, practical skills, and field experience that enhance their readiness to run a business. Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), entrepreneurship education contributes to the formation of the three main determinants of behavioral intention: *attitude toward behavior*, through the formation of a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship; subjective norms, through social encouragement from academic and practitioner environments; and perceived behavioral control, through increased confidence and perception of ability in facing business challenges. Activities such as real business projects, incubation programs, and startup competitions serve as effective platforms to strengthen these three aspects. The higher an individual's perception of value, social support, and control over entrepreneurial behavior, the greater their intention to start a business.

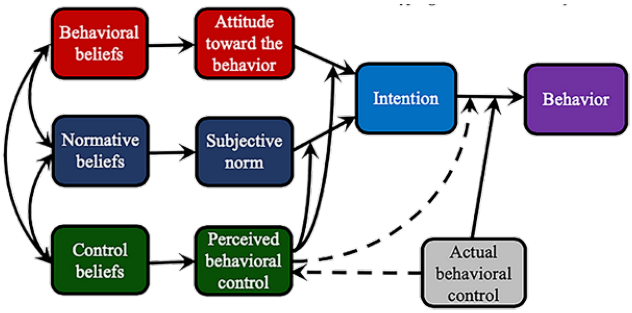
H_5 = Entrepreneurship Education positively influences Entrepreneurial Intention.

METHOD

This study was conducted using a quantitative method and processed using PLS-SEM 4.0, then analyzed using mediation and path analysis. Data has been collected using questionnaires and has been analyzed according to the SEM approach. This study involved students from a university in Surabaya who had completed the 6-semester entrepreneurship curriculum in full and had never taken academic leave. This study used the purposive sampling method because the respondents were gathered in one auditorium during the data collection process by the researcher, making the data collection process more efficient. A total of 158 respondents were collected as the research sample. The research sample is a part of many people selected from the population members, representing all members of the population (Suryani et al., 2023.)

The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents that already met the criteria, such as active students at University X Surabaya, had taken entrepreneurship courses for 6 semesters,

had never taken leave, and they are founder of the business, not just continuing their parent business. The research object was measured using a Likert scale, with the ranging from one to five. The data were processed using SmartPLS 4.0, and the significance level was set at 95%. To analyze entrepreneurial intention, each variable has its own indicators. These indicators were developed based on variables in the model, which integrates the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), as shown in Figure 1.



Source: (Ajzen, 1991)

Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behavior Model (Ajzen, 1991)

The entrepreneurship education variable has 5 indicators, adopted from (Khalil et al., 2024). The entrepreneurial role model variable has 5 indicators, adopted from (Maziriri et al., 2024). The entrepreneurial orientation variable consists of 4 indicators, adopted from (Triyono et al., 2023). Lastly, the entrepreneurial intention variable consists of 7 indicators, and also adopted from (Triyono et al., 2023).

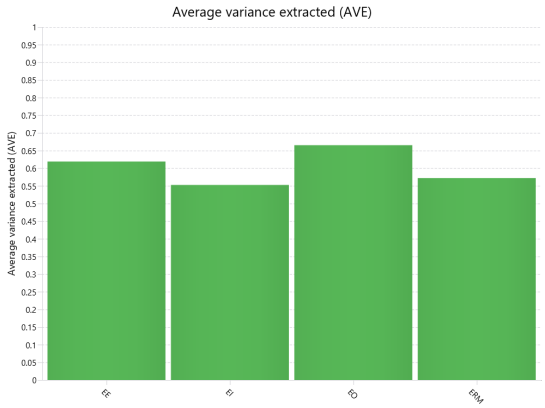
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Table 1, the Outer Loadings show that all indicators from each variable (ERM, EE, EO, EI) have a loading factor value above 0.6, making them valid and none were eliminated. According to Hair Jr et al. (2010), the generally acceptable threshold is 0.7 and above, while >0.6 is still acceptable. Therefore, it can be stated that the loading factor validity passed.

Table 1 Outer Loadings Result

	EE	EI	EO	ERM
M.1.1			0.827	
M.1.2			0.845	
M.1.3			0.794	
M.1.4			0.795	
X.1.1	0.838			
X.1.2	0.823			
X.1.3	0.735			
X.1.4	0.830			
X.1.5	0.697			
X.2.1				0.770
X.2.2				0.786
X.2.3				0.784
X.2.4				0.680
X.2.5				0.755
Y.1.1		0.625		
Y.1.2		0.644		
Y.1.3		0.807		
Y.1.4		0.754		
Y.1.5		0.796		
Y.1.6		0.778		
Y.1.7		0.778		

Source : (Author's findings, 2025)



Source: (Author's findings, 2025)

Figure 2 Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Diagram

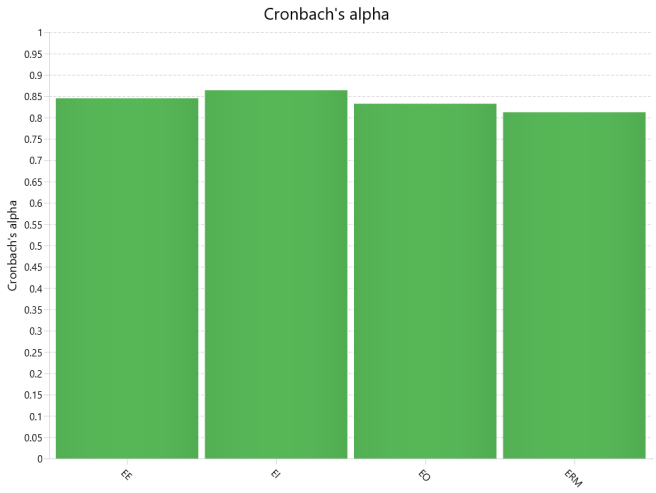
Furthermore, Figure 2 show validity results based on AVE are support the loading factor result from the PLS Algorithm Calculation, which shows that each variable has an AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value more than 0.5, the minumum threshold for AVE is 0.5 (Kwong & Wong, 2015). From the validity results, it can be concluded that all operational items are valid for the study.

Table 2 Cross Loading Result

	EE	EI	EO	ERM
M.1.1	0.467	0.591	**0.827**	0.512
M.1.2	0.455	0.594	**0.845**	0.408
M.1.3	0.453	0.580	**0.794**	0.483
M.1.4	0.405	0.505	**0.795**	0.384
X.1.1	**0.838**	0.505	0.430	0.402
X.1.2	**0.823**	0.476	0.471	0.531
X.1.3	**0.735**	0.386	0.384	0.417
X.1.4	**0.830**	0.501	0.517	0.512
X.1.5	**0.697**	0.411	0.325	0.428
X.2.1	0.485	0.494	0.375	**0.770**
X.2.2	0.478	0.409	0.349	**0.786**
X.2.3	0.491	0.513	0.434	**0.784**
X.2.4	0.302	0.413	0.441	**0.680**
X.2.5	0.445	0.499	0.467	**0.755**
Y.1.1	0.318	**0.625**	0.366	0.319
Y.1.2	0.311	**0.644**	0.482	0.317
Y.1.3	0.520	**0.807**	0.586	0.559
Y.1.4	0.441	**0.754**	0.487	0.467
Y.1.5	0.415	**0.796**	0.567	0.476
Y.1.6	0.405	**0.778**	0.531	0.479
Y.1.7	0.564	**0.778**	0.573	0.545

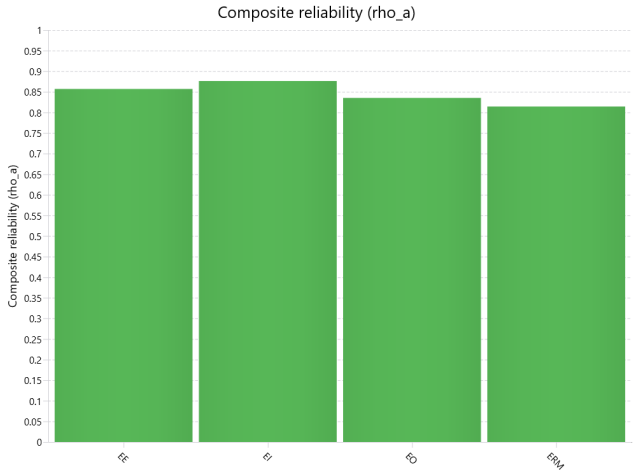
Source : (Author's findings, 2025)

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the cross-loading values of each corresponding variable are the highest compared to the values on non-corresponding variables. Based on that table, all the indicators can measure its variables.



Source: (Author's findings, 2025)

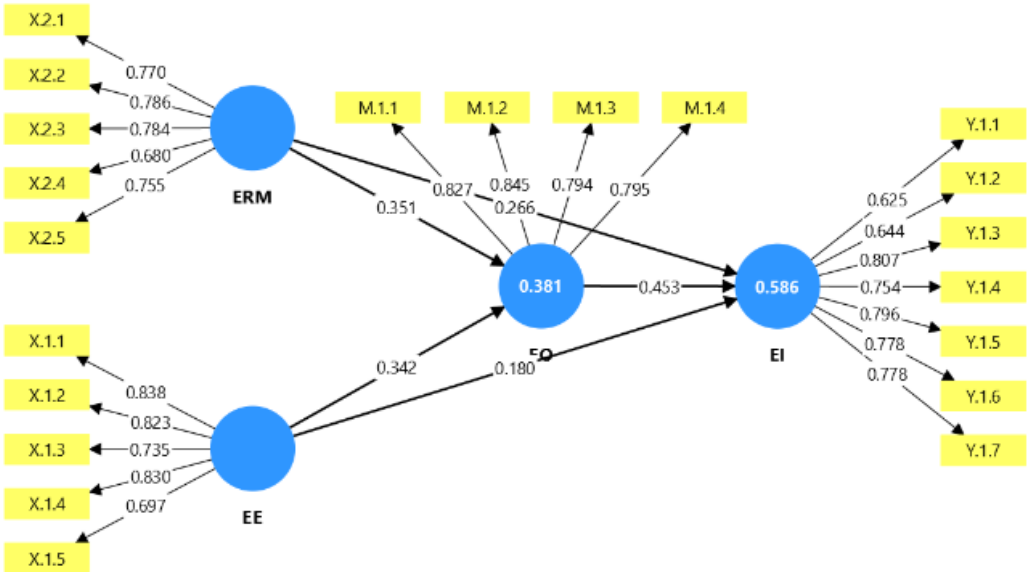
Figure 3 Cronbach's Alpha Diagram



Source: (Author's findings, 2025)

Figure 4 Composite Reliability Diagram

Reliability testing was also conducted using the results from the PLS Algorithm Calculation. Based on the reliability and construct validity results, the Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable are shown in Figure 3: a) entrepreneurship education: 0.845; b) entrepreneurial intention: 0.864; c) entrepreneurial orientation: 0.832; d) entrepreneurial role model: 0.812. All are above 0.7, so it can be concluded that all variables are reliable. The Composite Reliability test results are shown in Figure 4: a) entrepreneurship education: 0.857; b) entrepreneurial intention: 0.876; c) entrepreneurial orientation: 0.835; d) entrepreneurial role model: 0.814.



Source: (Author's findings, 2025)

Figure 5 Final SEM-PLS Result

After conducting the outer model test, i.e., validity and reliability, no indicators were eliminated.

Table 3 Outer Loadings Result from Bootstrapping

	T statistics	P values
EE -> EI	2.216	0.027
EE -> EO	4.302	0.000
EO -> EI	6.928	0.000
ERM -> EI	3.445	0.001
ERM -> EO	4.464	0.000

Source: (Author's findings, 2025)

Table 4 Indirect Result from Bootstrapping

	T statistics	P values
ERM -> EO -> EI	3.555	0.000
EE -> EO -> EI	3.915	0.000

Source: (Author's findings, 2025)

From Table 3, it can be seen that EE → EI, EE → EO, EO → EI, ERM → EI, and ERM → EO are all accepted because the t-statistics exceed 1.96 and p-values are below 0.05. These results also show that, after the researcher conducted indirect effects or mediation testing, it can be seen in Table 4 that EO mediates the relationship between ERM and EI, as well as mediates the relationship between EE and EI.

Table 5 R Square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
EI	0.586	0.578
EO	0.381	0.373

Source: (Author's findings, 2025)

From Table 5, EO is influenced by EE and ERM by 38.1%, and EI is influenced by EE, ERM, and EO by 58.6%.

Based on the data analysis results, it can be seen that ERM (Entrepreneurial Role Model) influences EO (Entrepreneurial Orientation). This is consistent with the research by (Clarissa

Cahyadi & Selamat, 2023). ERM significantly influences EO because successful entrepreneurial figures can shape students' mindset, motivation, and courage to be innovative, proactive, and ready to take risks, which are the main components of EO. In Surabaya, a city with a well-developed entrepreneurial ecosystem, many universities actively invite successful business actors to serve as mentors, guest lecturers, and speakers in incubation programs and entrepreneurship lectures. The presence of these role models is highly relevant to the current socio-economic conditions of Surabaya, which is the second-largest trade and industrial center in Indonesia, with the MSME sector employing about 97% of the workforce. Amid intense job market competition and increasing needs for self-employment creation, students who are directly exposed to inspirational figures tend to be motivated to imitate entrepreneurial mindsets and attitudes, especially in responding to challenges and opportunities in their environment. In Surabaya's dynamic, egalitarian, and change-embracing social context, the role of a role model becomes a crucial trigger in forming a resilient entrepreneurial orientation among the younger generation. Therefore, the strategic involvement of entrepreneurial role models in higher education not only enriches students' academic learning but also acts as a transformative driver that strengthens their entrepreneurial orientation, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more innovative and self-reliant workforce in the future. This means the first hypothesis in this study is accepted.

Not only that, it is also seen that EE (Entrepreneurship Education) affects EO. This is in line with research by (Efrata et al., 2021). EE significantly affects EO because, through an experiential learning-based curriculum that includes innovation, risk-taking, and proactivity, students can form a strong entrepreneurial mindset and behavior. In Surabaya, universities have implemented incubation programs, industry collaborations, and real projects that directly enhance students' EO. This is relevant to the city's economic and social conditions as an industrial and trade hub with the second-largest port in Indonesia and significant economic value. Surabaya provides various real opportunities that encourage students to think innovatively and be ready to take risks. This is relevant to the city's economic and social conditions as an industrial and trade center with the second-largest port in Indonesia and significant economic value. Surabaya offers various real opportunities that encourage students to think innovatively and be ready to take risks. In addition, the high unemployment rate and the dominance of the MSME sector create strong social motivation for the younger generation to become entrepreneurs rather than merely job seekers. This combination of applicable entrepreneurship education and a local ecosystem rich in opportunities makes entrepreneurial orientation the main foundation that guides Surabaya students to develop the intention and readiness to start a business. Furthermore, the integration of entrepreneurship education into the academic framework not only equips students with essential entrepreneurial competencies but also fosters a proactive mindset that aligns with the dynamic and opportunity-rich environment of Surabaya, thereby amplifying their capacity to translate entrepreneurial orientation into tangible business initiatives. The second hypothesis in this study is accepted.

The data analysis also shows that EO influences EI. This is in line with the study by (Hutasuhut et al., 2024). EO directly affects entrepreneurial intention because it builds self-confidence and readiness to execute opportunities. In Surabaya, this orientation is further reinforced by the local economic and social conditions as a metropolitan city with a PPP GDP reaching USD 150 billion (2023) and a population exceeding 3.1 million. The broad market potential encourages students to design businesses that are relevant to the real needs of the city. On the other hand, Surabaya's unemployment rate of around 6.76% in 2023 creates pressure for young prospective entrepreneurs to choose the entrepreneurial path rather than relying on job-seeking. Additionally, the MSME sector, which absorbs 97% of the local workforce, has demonstrated post-pandemic recovery capabilities—supported by social networks and digitalization—further strengthening students' belief that entrepreneurial orientation can be transformed into real intention. This aligns with university programs in Surabaya, such as

incubators, local market exposure, and collaboration with stakeholders. EO serves as a bridge that transforms attitude and preparedness into concrete intention to start a business. Consequently, fostering a strong entrepreneurial orientation among students not only enhances their confidence and opportunity-seeking behavior but also ensures that their entrepreneurial intentions are deeply rooted in the practical realities and economic opportunities of Surabaya's vibrant business ecosystem. Therefore, the third hypothesis in this study is accepted.

After the researcher conducted data analysis, it can be seen that ERM influences EI. This is consistent with the study by (Clarissa Cahyadi & Selamat, 2023). ERM affects EI because the presence of a successful role model can build the perception that entrepreneurship is a viable, realistic, and achievable career path—especially for students who are still in the process of discovering their identity and future direction. In Surabaya, educational institutions regularly invite alumni and local entrepreneurs to serve as speakers, mentors, and facilitators in entrepreneurship programs. This direct exposure stimulates students' motivation and confidence that they too are capable of building their own businesses, especially when supported by a curriculum that emphasizes real-world practice and industry collaboration. Economically, Surabaya has a large market, a dominant MSME sector, and a relatively high youth graduate unemployment rate, all of which encourage students to see entrepreneurship as a self-reliant solution to employment challenges. Socially, the culture of Surabaya's society known for being bold and open to change makes the influence of role models highly effective in shaping EI, as students can easily identify with the figures they admire and follow in their footsteps. Thus, the strategic utilization of entrepreneurial role models in academic and community settings not only inspires students but also transforms that inspiration into concrete entrepreneurial intentions that are relevant across various economic conditions and social environments. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis in this study is accepted.

Furthermore, the data analysis also shows that EE influences EI. This is in line with the study by (Khalil et al., 2024). EE has a significant effect on EI because, through both theoretical and practical approaches, students gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to start a business. In Surabaya—a city that serves as the center of education and business in East Java—educational institutions have designed entrepreneurship curricula based on experiential learning, mentoring, and business incubation programs that encourage students to think creatively and act with solution-oriented mindsets. This aligns with Surabaya's economic conditions, which include large market potential, a dominant MSME sector, and intense job market competition—factors that motivate students to view entrepreneurship as a rational and strategic career choice. Therefore, EE not only shapes business understanding but also drives the formation of EI to enter the entrepreneurial world as a solution to the current economic and social challenges. Consequently, entrepreneurship education serves as a catalyst that transforms academic learning into actionable entrepreneurial intentions, enabling students to respond effectively to a wide range of economic and social challenges. Thus, the fifth hypothesis in this study is accepted.

This study provides an important contribution to understanding the factors that influence students' entrepreneurial intention, by emphasizing the role of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial role model in shaping entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial intention. Theoretically, this research strengthens the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior in the context of entrepreneurship education in Indonesia and addresses the previously identified research gap. Practically, the findings can be utilized by educational institutions in designing entrepreneurship programs that are more applicable, inspiring, and relevant to local socio-economic conditions, in order to encourage the emergence of a new generation of young entrepreneurs.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that all hypotheses are accepted Future research should include qualitative studies to obtain more in-depth responses and consider additional variables such as entrepreneurial motivation and self-efficacy. Studies could also involve respondents from universities outside Surabaya Suggestions for future research include conducting qualitative studies to obtain more objective and in-depth responses. In addition, future research may consider other variables that influence Entrepreneurial Intention, such as Entrepreneurial Motivation and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy. Other suggestion is to conduct the study for other responden criterion such us university outside Surabaya.

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