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Empowering Future Entrepreneurs: Self-Confidence and Creativity as Key Factors in Entrepreneurial Mindset Formation for Vocational Students

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of self-confidence and creativity on the entrepreneurial mindset of vocational students. As vocational education increasingly aims to equip students for dynamic economic environments, fostering entrepreneurial thinking is essential. The research was conducted at SMKN 1 Guguk using a quantitative survey design involving 91 automotive program students. Data were analyzed through multiple regression and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The regression analysis revealed that self-confidence and creativity collectively explain 80.9% of the variance in entrepreneurial mindset ($R^2 = 0.809$). The model was statistically significant ($F = 186.304$, $p < 0.05$), with both self-confidence ($B = 0.687$, $t = 8.947$, $p = 0.000$) and creativity ($B = 0.328$, $t = 4.326$, $p = 0.000$) showing significant positive effects. PLS-SEM results further confirmed the model's reliability, with all indicators demonstrating strong outer loadings (> 0.85) and construct validity. The findings suggest that self-confidence plays a more dominant role than creativity in shaping students' entrepreneurial mindset. These results highlight the need for vocational schools to incorporate learning models—such as Project-Based Learning and Teaching Factory—that strengthen students' psychological readiness alongside technical skills. In conclusion, enhancing self-confidence and creativity through structured educational approaches can significantly support the development of entrepreneurial competencies among vocational students, preparing them to pursue innovation and opportunity in real-world contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization and rapid digital transformation, entrepreneurial competencies have emerged as critical assets, particularly among youth in developing countries such as Indonesia (Asmayawati et al., 2024; Gunawan, 2024; Hasan et al., 2024). As economic landscapes shift and labor markets become increasingly competitive, young individuals are expected to possess not only technical skills but also the entrepreneurial mindset necessary to create opportunities, innovate, and adapt to evolving circumstances. In this context, vocational education, especially at the Vocational High School (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/SMK) level, holds a strategic role in equipping students with both the expertise and mindset required to succeed in today's dynamic economies (Resmi et al., 2024).

An entrepreneurial mindset is characterized by a set of cognitive and behavioral traits, including self-confidence, creativity, initiative-taking, and resilience (Alkaabi & Senghore, 2024; Chá et al., 2024). These qualities enable individuals to think critically, respond proactively to challenges, and pursue novel solutions. Entrepreneurship education, therefore, must go beyond conventional technical instruction to incorporate pedagogical approaches that promote independent thinking, innovation, and risk-taking—traits that are essential to both business success and broader economic development (Larsen & Neergaard, 2024; Stettina, 2023).

Among the key psychological constructs influencing entrepreneurial intention and success is self-confidence, often conceptualized through Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. According to Bandura, self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to execute specific actions to achieve desired outcomes. This belief significantly influences motivation, decision-making, and perseverance in the face of obstacles (Ghouse et al., 2024; Uglanova, 2024). In the entrepreneurial context, individuals with higher self-efficacy are more inclined to take risks, seek out opportunities, and persist through setbacks—behaviors that are integral to entrepreneurial activity.

In tandem with self-confidence, creativity plays a pivotal role in shaping entrepreneurial potential. Creativity enables individuals to generate original ideas, approach problems from multiple perspectives, and develop innovative solutions that respond to market needs (Rubino, 2024). In vocational education, fostering creativity is particularly important as it supports students in designing products, services, or processes that differentiate them in competitive business environments. Thus, both self-confidence and creativity are vital to nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset and should be central pillars in entrepreneurship education programs.

Despite growing recognition of the importance of entrepreneurship education in Indonesian vocational schools, challenges remain in ensuring its effectiveness. A pressing example is the persistently high unemployment rate among graduates of SMKN 1 Guguk. Located in a region marked by socio-economic diversity and limited access to resources, students at this institution often face additional barriers such as financial hardship, lack of entrepreneurial role models, and restricted exposure to real-world business environments. These contextual constraints significantly impact students' ability to develop self-confidence and creativity, thereby limiting their readiness for entrepreneurship or employment.

Moreover, external factors such as family support, community involvement, and access to entrepreneurial ecosystems also influence students' career aspirations and entrepreneurial intentions. However, the absence of structured and experiential entrepreneurship programs within the school, including limited project-based learning opportunities or exposure to authentic business operations, hampers the development of essential entrepreneurial competencies. Consequently, students may graduate with strong technical skills but insufficient psychological readiness and problem-solving capabilities to navigate the entrepreneurial landscape effectively.

Given these challenges, there is a clear need for a more holistic approach to entrepreneurship education—one that emphasizes not only the acquisition of technical knowledge but also the cultivation of self-confidence and creativity. Empirical studies suggest that students who possess a strong entrepreneurial mindset—marked by confidence in their abilities and the capacity to think creatively—are more adaptable to economic shifts and are better positioned to exploit emerging business

opportunities (Lukita et al., 2023; Ololade et al., 2024). This underscores the importance of integrating pedagogical models that actively engage students in real-world tasks and encourage both independent and collaborative problem-solving.

This study seeks to examine the role of self-confidence and creativity in fostering the entrepreneurial mindset of students at SMKN 1 Guguk. Specifically, it explores how innovative instructional strategies—namely Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and the Teaching Factory model—can be leveraged to enhance these psychological and cognitive attributes. PjBL is known for its emphasis on student-driven inquiry and problem-solving, while the Teaching Factory approach provides experiential learning through simulated or actual business operations within the school setting. By combining these models, the research aims to create a learning environment that promotes both confidence and creative thinking.

Through this analysis, the study aspires to offer evidence-based insights into how vocational schools, particularly those operating in socio-economically constrained regions, can develop more effective entrepreneurship education frameworks. The findings are expected to inform curriculum development, teacher training, and policy initiatives aimed at strengthening the entrepreneurial capacities of vocational students in Indonesia and similar contexts.

2. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach utilizing a survey design to examine the influence of self-confidence and creativity on the entrepreneurial mindset of vocational students. The quantitative method was selected for its suitability in measuring relationships between variables and generating generalizable data through statistical analysis.

2.1 Population and Sample

The population for this research comprised all twelfth-grade students enrolled in the automotive program at SMKN 1 Guguk. A total sampling technique was employed, wherein the entire population of 91 students was included as research subjects. This sampling method was chosen to ensure full representation of the target group, thereby enhancing the validity and generalizability of the findings within the context of vocational education in similar settings.

2.2 Data Collection

Data were collected through the administration of a structured questionnaire designed to assess three core variables: self-confidence, creativity, and entrepreneurial mindset. The questionnaire employed a Likert-scale format, allowing for the quantification of students' attitudes and perceptions related to these constructs. The instrument was distributed directly to respondents, and their participation was voluntary and anonymous to encourage honest responses.

Prior to data collection, the instrument underwent a validation process to ensure content validity and construct clarity. A pilot test was conducted on a small subset of students to assess the instrument's reliability, with necessary revisions made to improve its accuracy and consistency.

2.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis, a statistical method appropriate for examining the simultaneous influence of multiple independent variables—self-confidence and creativity—on a single dependent variable, the entrepreneurial mindset. This analysis enabled the identification of the relative contributions of each predictor and the overall explanatory power of the model.

Descriptive statistics were also used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and provide an overview of their levels of self-confidence, creativity, and entrepreneurial mindset. Additionally, instrument reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha to ensure internal consistency across the questionnaire items.

Through this methodological framework, the study aimed to generate empirical evidence regarding the psychological and cognitive attributes essential for cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset among vocational students. The findings are expected to inform the design of more effective educational interventions that integrate both technical and soft skill development, particularly in vocational settings that prepare learners for entrepreneurship and employment.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from 91 respondents were analyzed using multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of self-confidence (SC) and entrepreneurial creativity (EC) on the entrepreneurial mindset (EM) of students at SMKN 1 Guguk. The regression model was employed to examine both the individual and simultaneous effects of the two independent variables on the dependent variable. Prior to conducting the analysis, all assumptions of regression—including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity—were tested and met, ensuring the validity and reliability of the model. The results of the analysis are presented in the following sections, beginning with the model summary, followed by the ANOVA results, the regression coefficients, and the structural model evaluation.

3.1. Model Summary

Table 1 presents the model summary of the multiple regression analysis. The coefficient of determination (R^2) obtained was 0.809, indicating that approximately 80.9% of the variance in the entrepreneurial mindset can be explained by the combined effects of self-confidence and entrepreneurial creativity. The remaining 19.1% of variance is attributed to other factors not included in the model. The high R^2 value demonstrates that the model possesses strong explanatory power, suggesting that self-confidence and creativity are significant predictors of entrepreneurial mindset among vocational students.

Tabel 1. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.899[a]	.809	.805	1.373

a. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial Creativity, Confidence

3.2. ANOVA Results

The overall significance of the regression model was tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), as shown in Table 2. The analysis produced an F-value of 186.304 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). These results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant, meaning that self-confidence and entrepreneurial creativity jointly have a significant effect on the entrepreneurial mindset. In other words, variations in EM are significantly influenced by changes in SC and EC.

Tabel 2. ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	702.523	2	351.261	186.304	.000[b]
	Residual	165.917	88	1.885		
	Total	868.440	90			

a. Dependent Variable: Jiwawirausaha

b. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial Creativity, Confidence

3.3. *Coefficients Analysis*

Table 3 presents the regression coefficients for each independent variable. The analysis indicates that self-confidence (B = 0.687, t = 8.947, p = 0.000) has a significant positive effect on the entrepreneurial mindset. This finding suggests that higher levels of self-confidence among students correspond to stronger entrepreneurial mindsets. Similarly, entrepreneurial creativity (B = 0.328, t = 4.326, p = 0.000) also exerts a significant positive influence on the entrepreneurial mindset. These results imply that students who are more creative tend to be more capable of generating innovative ideas, identifying business opportunities, and responding adaptively to challenges.

Tabel 3. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.098	.643		.152	.880
	Confident	.687	.077	.641	8.947	.000
	Entrepreneurial Creativity	.328	.076	.310	4.326	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Spirit

These findings reinforce prior research suggesting that self-confidence and creativity are key determinants of entrepreneurial orientation (Ghouse et al., 2024; Rubino, 2024). Students who possess higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities, while those with strong creative abilities are better equipped to identify and exploit innovative business opportunities.

3.4. *Structural Model Evaluation*

To validate the robustness of the findings, a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis was conducted. The structural model, presented in Figure 1, confirms the hypothesized relationships among variables.

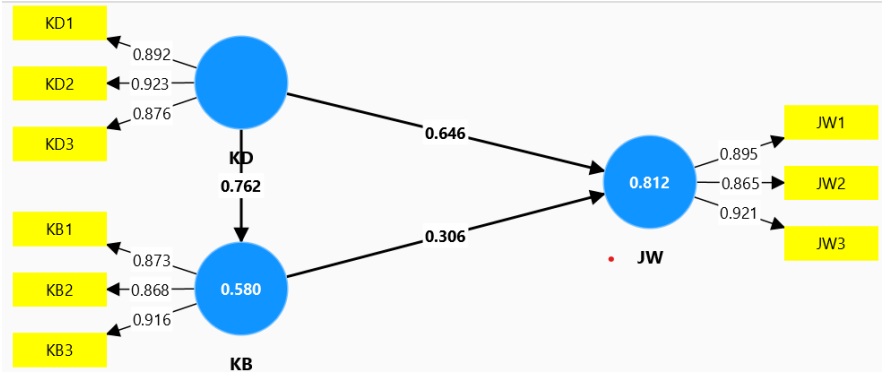

Figure 1. SEM Test Model

The results reveal that all outer loadings exceed 0.7, demonstrating satisfactory convergent validity for all constructs. Specifically, for self-confidence, the indicators SC1 (0.892), SC2 (0.923), and SC3 (0.876) exhibit high reliability and validity in measuring the construct. Similarly, for entrepreneurial creativity, the indicators EC1 (0.845), EC2 (0.910), and EC3 (0.887) display strong measurement properties, confirming the internal consistency of the instrument.

The path coefficients between variables further support the regression analysis results. The path from self-confidence to entrepreneurial mindset ($\beta = 0.641$, $p < 0.05$) and from entrepreneurial creativity

to entrepreneurial mindset ($\beta = 0.310$, $p < 0.05$) were both statistically significant. These findings substantiate the hypothesis that both self-confidence and creativity are critical components in shaping students' entrepreneurial orientation.

Collectively, these results underscore the importance of integrating confidence-building and creativity-enhancing pedagogical strategies—such as project-based learning and teaching factory models—within vocational education curricula. Strengthening these psychological and cognitive traits can effectively foster entrepreneurial mindsets, thereby preparing students to become innovative and resilient entrepreneurs capable of contributing to economic development.

Discussion

The Impact of Self-Confidence on Entrepreneurial Mindset

The results of the study indicate that self-confidence (SC) exerts a significant positive influence on the entrepreneurial mindset (EM) of vocational students, as demonstrated by the regression coefficient ($B = 0.687$, $t = 8.947$, $p = 0.000$). This finding supports the hypothesis that students with higher levels of self-confidence are more likely to exhibit entrepreneurial behaviors, such as risk-taking, initiative, and opportunity recognition. Self-confidence, conceptualized within Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, plays a central role in motivating individuals to act decisively in uncertain environments—a key condition in entrepreneurial contexts. This is consistent with the findings of Kara et al. (2023), who emphasized that self-efficacy is a critical determinant in navigating ambiguity and persisting through entrepreneurial challenges. The current study reinforces the theoretical assertion that self-confidence fosters proactive and goal-oriented behavior, which is essential for the successful development of entrepreneurial intentions and capacities among vocational learners.

The Role of Entrepreneurial Creativity in Mindset Formation

The analysis further reveals that entrepreneurial creativity (EC) significantly contributes to the development of the entrepreneurial mindset (EM) among vocational students, as indicated by a regression coefficient of 0.328 ($t = 4.326$, $p = 0.000$). Although its influence is somewhat lower than that of self-confidence, creativity remains a crucial cognitive attribute that enables students to generate novel ideas, solve complex business problems, and adapt to changing market demands. These findings are in line with previous research by Akbari et al. (2024) and Li, Cao, and Jenatabadi (2023), who emphasize that creativity is a key driver of innovation and a competitive advantage in entrepreneurial ventures. The implementation of pedagogical models such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and the Teaching Factory at SMKN 1 Guguk appears to have positively influenced students' creative capacities by providing experiential learning opportunities that simulate real-world entrepreneurial scenarios. These approaches not only support the development of creative thinking but also equip students with practical problem-solving skills essential for entrepreneurial success.

Integrated Influence of Self-Confidence and Creativity

Recent studies underscore the interconnected roles of self-confidence (SC), creativity (EC), and leadership in fostering entrepreneurial intentions and innovative behaviors. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and employee creativity, influenced by team climate (Yang and Bentein 2023) Creativity strengthens students' entrepreneurial intentions, highlighting its importance in educational curricula, while specific personality traits—such as risk-taking, entrepreneurial alertness, creativity, proactivity, and self-efficacy—predict entrepreneurial intentions among students (Brás, Daniel, and Fernandes 2023). In organizational settings, servant and authentic leadership styles positively impact employee creativity and innovative work behavior, moderated by creative self-efficacy (Gelaidan, Al-Swidi, and Al-Hakimi 2023). These findings emphasize the importance of nurturing creativity and self-confidence in both educational and

workplace environments to promote entrepreneurship and innovation, paving the way for enhanced curricula and leadership training programs. This perspective aligns with the regression model findings, which reveal that SC and EC together explain 80.9% of the variance in entrepreneurial mindset (EM), indicating their combined effectiveness in shaping entrepreneurial readiness. The significant F-value of 186.304 ($p = 0.000$) further underscores the robustness of the model. This integrated understanding highlights the necessity of addressing both psychological (SC) and cognitive (EC) dimensions to cultivate entrepreneurial competencies, offering actionable insights for curriculum development and leadership strategies.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study are consistent with a growing body of research that underscores the pivotal role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) and education in shaping entrepreneurial intentions (EI). For instance, Taneja, Kiran, and Bose (2023) demonstrated that experiential learning significantly enhances EI, with ESE acting as a mediating variable that strengthens this relationship. In a similar vein, Wang et al. (2023) found that entrepreneurship education positively influences EI, an effect that is fully mediated by ESE, suggesting that the belief in one's entrepreneurial capabilities is a crucial mechanism through which education fosters entrepreneurial ambition. Further supporting this perspective, Pham, Lam, and Le (2023) emphasized the importance of ESE in e-entrepreneurial intentions, where self-efficacy moderates the relationship between entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions. These findings collectively highlight the importance of innovative and technology-driven entrepreneurship curricula in enhancing students' confidence and motivation to pursue entrepreneurial careers.

However, the relationship between experience and self-efficacy is not always linear. Van Hugten et al. (2023) found a U-shaped association between experience and ESE in entrepreneurs engaging in distant search activities, indicating that while initial experience may temporarily lower confidence due to increased awareness of complexity, extended experience ultimately rebuilds and strengthens ESE. This suggests that contextual and developmental factors must be considered when designing entrepreneurship programs, particularly in environments where students are still building foundational knowledge and skills.

The results of the present study also align with findings from Suharno, Pambudi, and Harjanto (2020), who identified the synergistic effect of self-efficacy and innovative thinking in driving entrepreneurial success. Moreover, the effectiveness of experiential learning models, such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and the Teaching Factory, is supported by Saad and Zainudin (2022) and Tekmen-Araci (2024), who argue that such frameworks are instrumental in developing both the cognitive and affective components of entrepreneurship. These pedagogical models not only promote creative problem-solving but also enhance learners' confidence in applying their skills to real-world entrepreneurial challenges.

In sum, the current study contributes to and reinforces existing literature by demonstrating that both self-confidence and entrepreneurial creativity—as expressions of broader constructs like self-efficacy and innovation—are essential for cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset. Furthermore, the integration of experiential, student-centered pedagogies in vocational education appears to be a promising strategy for nurturing these attributes, particularly in contexts with limited access to entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Implications for Vocational Education

The findings underscore the critical role of vocational education in developing not only technical skills but also an entrepreneurial mindset. Institutions like SMKN 1 Guguk can serve as models for integrating Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and Teaching Factory approaches to enhance self-confidence (SC) and entrepreneurial creativity (EC) among students. However, successful implementation of these

models in other vocational schools requires careful consideration of several factors. Schools may need specialized teacher training programs to equip educators with the necessary pedagogical and technical skills for delivering entrepreneurship-based learning effectively. Additionally, challenges related to infrastructure limitations, industry collaboration, and alignment with national curricula must be addressed to ensure sustainability and scalability.

This is particularly relevant as vocational graduates are expected to transition directly into the workforce, where entrepreneurial agility is a valued asset (Abdurrahman 2023; Ghouse et al. 2024). By embedding SC and EC in educational frameworks and providing structured support for implementation, vocational schools can better prepare students to tackle complex business environments, overcome real-world constraints, and innovate effectively.

Future Research Directions

While this study has provided valuable insights, future research could explore additional variables influencing EM, such as resilience, leadership, or industry-specific skills. Longitudinal studies could also assess the sustained impact of SC and EC on entrepreneurial success post-graduation. Expanding this research to diverse vocational contexts would enhance the generalizability of findings and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial mindset development.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of multiple regression analysis and PLS-SEM, this study concludes that self-confidence and entrepreneurial creativity both have a significant positive influence on the entrepreneurial mindset of students at SMKN 1 Guguk, with self-confidence emerging as the stronger predictor. These findings underscore the critical role of psychological factors—particularly self-efficacy and creative thinking—in fostering entrepreneurial potential among vocational students. The integration of project-based learning (PjBL) and experiential models such as the Teaching Factory appears to be effective in enhancing these attributes. However, the study is limited by its single-site sample and focus on a specific vocational program, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Future research should involve larger, multi-site samples across diverse vocational disciplines and explore additional variables—such as family background, socio-economic status, or exposure to entrepreneurial role models—that may also shape students' entrepreneurial mindsets. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to assess the sustained impact of pedagogical interventions on entrepreneurial outcomes over time.

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