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Shaping Future Entrepreneurs: The Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Interest And Mental Readiness For Global Challenges

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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

This study examines the influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness for global business challenges among university students. Employing a quantitative explanatory approach, data were collected from 155 respondents between September and October 2026 and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that entrepreneurship education positively influences entrepreneurial interest ($\beta = 0.708$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.502$) and mental readiness ($\beta = 0.766$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.587$). Both hypotheses were supported. The study contributes to entrepreneurship education research by highlighting entrepreneurial interest and psychological preparedness as complementary educational outcomes. These findings emphasize the importance of strengthening experiential learning, resilience, and adaptability in entrepreneurship education.

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has become an increasingly important pathway for young people seeking economic independence, meaningful employment, and opportunities to contribute to business innovation. However, entering the entrepreneurial world involves more than identifying profitable opportunities or developing the intention to establish a business. Rapid technological changes, intense market competition, financial uncertainty, and shifting consumer expectations require prospective entrepreneurs to develop both practical capabilities and psychological preparedness. Within higher education, entrepreneurship education is therefore expected to cultivate not only entrepreneurial knowledge but also the confidence and adaptability necessary to navigate uncertain business environments. Zhang et al. (2022), through a meta-analysis involving 29,736 students, identified a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention while demonstrating that national contexts influence the strength of this association. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education should be understood within the broader economic and social conditions confronting future entrepreneurs, rather than being assessed solely through students' willingness to establish businesses.

The growing emphasis on entrepreneurship education raises an important question concerning the extent to which educational experiences prepare students for the realities of entrepreneurial life. Students may express strong enthusiasm for business ownership while remaining uncertain about their ability to manage financial losses, recover from unsuccessful ventures, or respond to unpredictable market conditions. Entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness consequently represent related but conceptually distinct outcomes of the educational process. Xanthopoulou and Sahinidis (2024), in their systematic literature review, identified contextual, motivational, and personal background factors as important influences on students' entrepreneurial intentions, illustrating the complexity of entrepreneurial decision-making. Nevertheless, understanding why students are interested in entrepreneurship does not necessarily explain whether they feel psychologically prepared to confront its challenges. This distinction is particularly important in Indonesia, where entrepreneurship education is expected to encourage young people to pursue business opportunities while developing the personal capabilities needed to sustain entrepreneurial efforts under competitive conditions.

Research conducted in Indonesian higher education has provided empirical support for the relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' entrepreneurial intentions. Astuti and Anindya Putri (2023) found that entrepreneurship education positively influenced entrepreneurial intention among university students, with perceived behavioral control contributing to the relationship. Their findings reinforce the importance of educational experiences in shaping students' perceptions of entrepreneurship as a viable career choice. However, emphasizing entrepreneurial intention and perceived behavioral control leaves additional questions regarding students' willingness to tolerate uncertainty, confront failure, and maintain psychological stability when

entrepreneurial expectations are challenged. Such concerns deserve greater attention because entrepreneurial enthusiasm may diminish when students encounter the financial, emotional, and operational difficulties associated with establishing a business. Accordingly, the existing evidence provides a foundation for examining entrepreneurship education beyond motivational outcomes by considering whether students also develop the mental preparedness required to engage with uncertain business environments.

Theoretical and empirical developments further indicate that the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial outcomes remains sensitive to educational design and individual characteristics. Hestiningtyas et al. (2023), through a systematic review, emphasized the need to connect theoretical instruction with practical entrepreneurial learning and a supportive educational ecosystem. In another Indonesian study, Ilhami and Rikah (2023) found that entrepreneurial mindset did not mediate the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention, indicating that the psychological mechanisms associated with entrepreneurial learning cannot always be assumed to operate consistently. These findings reveal an important conceptual limitation in approaches that treat the development of entrepreneurial interest as sufficient evidence of educational success. Although entrepreneurial mindset, self-efficacy, and intention have received attention in previous research, mental readiness to confront entrepreneurial challenges warrants more explicit examination as an educational outcome. In particular, readiness expressed through risk tolerance, perseverance following setbacks, technological adaptability, and responsiveness to market changes may provide additional insight into how students perceive their preparedness for entrepreneurship.

An additional research gap concerns the relevance of entrepreneurship education to students studying within regional higher education environments in Indonesia. Differences in access to entrepreneurial networks, business mentoring, digital infrastructure, and practical learning opportunities may shape how students interpret the value of entrepreneurship education, although such differences require direct empirical investigation rather than assumption. Reffandi and Sulistyowati (2024) reported a positive relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention among Indonesian vocational students, demonstrating the continuing relevance of educational support across learning contexts. However, evidence concerning entrepreneurial intention among vocational learners cannot automatically explain the psychological readiness of university students to face complex business challenges. This distinction provides a rationale for examining entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness as separate outcomes within university entrepreneurship education. Against this background, the present study aims to examine the relationships between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial interest, and between entrepreneurship education and mental readiness to face global entrepreneurial challenges among university students.

The principal contribution of this study lies in broadening the evaluation of entrepreneurship education from the development of entrepreneurial interest toward a more comprehensive understanding of students' perceived preparedness for entrepreneurial challenges. By distinguishing entrepreneurial interest from mental readiness, the study seeks to clarify whether educational experiences are associated with both the desire to pursue entrepreneurship and the perceived capacity to respond to its uncertainties. This perspective does not assume that an intention to establish a business necessarily reflects psychological preparedness to manage its practical demands. Academically, the study contributes to discussions on entrepreneurial learning by positioning mental readiness alongside entrepreneurial interest as a relevant outcome for evaluating entrepreneurship education. Practically, its findings are expected to inform universities, entrepreneurship educators, and curriculum developers in strengthening learning experiences that encourage entrepreneurial aspirations while addressing risk management, resilience, digital adaptation, and market uncertainty. Ultimately, the study seeks to support a more human-centered understanding of entrepreneurship education, in which preparing future entrepreneurs means developing not only the motivation to start a business but also the mental resources to confront the challenges that accompany it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship Education and Experiential Learning

Entrepreneurship education is increasingly understood as a learning process that develops students' ability to recognize opportunities, make decisions, and respond constructively to uncertainty. Rather than limiting entrepreneurial learning to business planning and theoretical instruction, contemporary educational perspectives emphasize experience, experimentation, reflection, and engagement with real business problems. Neck et al. (2024), in Entrepreneurship: The Practice and Mindset, conceptualize entrepreneurship as a practice-oriented discipline in which entrepreneurial capabilities emerge through action, feedback, and continuous learning. This perspective is consistent with experiential learning principles, which recognize that knowledge becomes more meaningful when individuals actively apply and reflect upon their experiences. Martínez-Gregorio et al. (2021), through a meta-analysis of entrepreneurship education interventions, found positive but relatively small effects on entrepreneurial intention and self-efficacy, with program duration influencing the magnitude of educational outcomes. These findings suggest that entrepreneurship education may stimulate entrepreneurial aspirations, although educational participation alone does not guarantee substantial psychological or behavioral development. In the present study, entrepreneurship education is therefore conceptualized as an educational experience that potentially strengthens students' entrepreneurial interest while contributing to their perceived readiness to face business challenges.

Entrepreneurial Interest and the Theory of Planned Behavior

Entrepreneurial interest reflects an individual's attraction toward entrepreneurial activities, including the willingness to explore business opportunities and consider entrepreneurship as a future career. Its theoretical explanation can be linked to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which proposes that behavioral intention is shaped by attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Ajzen (2020) explains that these components influence individuals' willingness to perform particular actions, while perceived control also contributes to understanding whether intended behavior is likely to occur. Applied to entrepreneurship education, this perspective suggests that learning experiences may strengthen favorable perceptions of entrepreneurship, improve students' confidence in undertaking business activities, and encourage interest in entrepreneurial careers. Empirical evidence from Fan et al. (2024), involving 347 university students in China, demonstrated that entrepreneurship education was positively associated with entrepreneurial intention, with entrepreneurial attitude and self-efficacy serving as mediating mechanisms. Nevertheless, entrepreneurial interest should not be treated as identical to behavioral intention because being attracted to entrepreneurship does not necessarily imply a definite commitment to establish a business. Accordingly, the present study uses TPB as a theoretical foundation for explaining why entrepreneurship education may strengthen entrepreneurial interest without assuming that such interest necessarily results in entrepreneurial action. Based on these theoretical arguments and empirical findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Entrepreneurship education has a positive influence on entrepreneurial interest among university students.

Entrepreneurship Education and Mental Readiness for Global Business Challenges

Mental readiness for entrepreneurial challenges concerns individuals' perceived capacity to respond constructively to uncertainty, setbacks, competitive pressures, and changing business conditions. Within entrepreneurship, such readiness involves the willingness to tolerate calculated risks, maintain determination following difficulties, adapt to technological developments, and respond to unfamiliar market situations. Although these characteristics are related to entrepreneurial self-efficacy and psychological resilience, they should not be considered interchangeable with either construct. Wang et al. (2023), examining 757 university students through structural equation modeling, found that entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediated the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention, while psychological capital strengthened the relationship between self-efficacy and intention. Their findings demonstrate the relevance of psychological resources in entrepreneurial development but primarily explain motivational outcomes rather than mental readiness as a distinct educational outcome. Similarly, Barrera-Verdugo et al. (2024) examined resilience and perceived social environment in relation to students' intentions to establish sustainable ventures,

highlighting the importance of psychological and contextual resources in entrepreneurial decision-making. These studies suggest that entrepreneurial education should be considered not only in relation to students' enthusiasm for entrepreneurship but also in relation to their perceived capacity to manage difficult entrepreneurial circumstances. This distinction provides the conceptual basis for examining mental readiness as a separate dependent variable in the present research. Building on this conceptual foundation, the following hypothesis is formulated:
H2: Entrepreneurship education has a positive influence on students' mental readiness to face global entrepreneurial challenges.

Research Gap and Conceptual Integration

The literature indicates that entrepreneurship education is associated with entrepreneurial motivation, attitudes, self-efficacy, and intention, although the strength and pathways of these relationships vary across educational settings. Anubhav et al. (2024), through a technology-oriented systematic literature review, identified the diversity of research themes and theoretical perspectives within entrepreneurship education, illustrating the need to examine entrepreneurial learning in relation to changing educational and technological environments. Meanwhile, Udekwe and Iwu (2024) emphasized the interconnected roles of digital technology, innovation, entrepreneurship education, and entrepreneurial motivation, suggesting that the relevance of entrepreneurial learning extends beyond conventional business knowledge. However, these perspectives leave an important distinction between students' interest in entrepreneurship and their perceived psychological preparedness to encounter entrepreneurial difficulties. The principal gap addressed in this study is therefore not the absence of research connecting education with entrepreneurial intention, but the limited integration of entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness as two distinct outcomes within a focused educational framework. Examining these outcomes together provides a more comprehensive basis for understanding whether entrepreneurship education is associated with both the attraction of entrepreneurial opportunities and preparedness for the uncertainties surrounding them. This conceptual distinction is particularly relevant for higher education institutions seeking to prepare graduates who are not only interested in entrepreneurship but are also more capable of confronting its practical challenges.

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationships between entrepreneurship education and two key outcomes: entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness for global business challenges. Drawing on experiential learning principles and the Theory of Planned Behavior, the framework proposes that entrepreneurship education positively influences students' entrepreneurial interest (H1) and their mental readiness to navigate entrepreneurial uncertainties (H2). These relationships are presented in Figure 1.

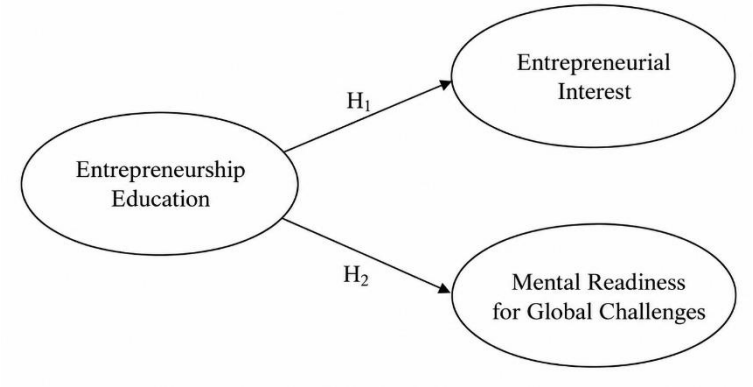


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Approach

This study employed a quantitative explanatory approach using a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships between entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial interest, and mental readiness for global business challenges among university students. The quantitative approach was selected because the research sought to evaluate theoretically established relationships between measurable constructs through systematic statistical analysis. A cross-sectional design was considered appropriate for capturing students' perceptions and educational experiences within a defined observation period. Creswell and Creswell (2023) emphasize that quantitative research provides a structured framework for examining relationships among variables through standardized measurement and hypothesis testing. The conceptual model comprised entrepreneurship education as the exogenous construct (X), entrepreneurial interest as the first endogenous construct (Y1), and mental readiness for global business challenges as the second endogenous construct (Y2). Two direct relationships were specified, corresponding to H1 (X → Y1) and H2 (X → Y2). Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was selected as the analytical framework because it enables the simultaneous evaluation of construct measurement quality and hypothesized structural relationships. The research design focused on identifying statistically supported associations rather than establishing definitive causal effects.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

The target population comprised university students in Indonesia who were considered relevant to the study of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial interest, and mental readiness for global business challenges. The research used 155 questionnaire responses collected between September and October 2026 through an online survey. The study was positioned within the context of Indonesian higher education, with particular academic relevance to entrepreneurship education in regional universities. A non-probability sampling framework was considered appropriate for analyzing the available responses, with convenience sampling representing the closest methodological

classification where participants were reached through accessible online distribution channels. However, because the original recruitment procedure and respondents' institutional affiliations were not recorded in the dataset, the sampling technique cannot be established independently from the questionnaire records. Saunders et al. (2023) explain that survey-based business research requires clear alignment between the target population, sampling procedures, and research objectives to support meaningful interpretation. The study included students from different academic semesters and educational backgrounds, regardless of whether they had previously completed an entrepreneurship course, enabling an examination of varying perceptions of entrepreneurial learning. All available responses were considered for analysis subject to data screening, and no additional observations were introduced to increase the sample size. Sample adequacy was assessed in relation to model complexity, the number of structural predictors, and statistical power, rather than assuming a universal requirement of 200 observations. Given the non-probability nature of the available sample, the findings were intended to explain relationships within the observed student population rather than support unrestricted generalization to all Indonesian university students.

Data Collection and Research Instruments

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed electronically using Google Forms. The instrument consisted of respondent characteristics and 12 substantive statements representing three research constructs. Entrepreneurship education (X) was measured through four indicators addressing curriculum relevance, instructional quality, project-based learning, and institutional support for entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurial interest (Y1) was measured through four indicators covering interest in establishing a business, exploration of entrepreneurial opportunities, preference for entrepreneurial careers, and positive expectations concerning entrepreneurial outcomes. Mental readiness for global business challenges (Y2) was measured through four indicators reflecting financial risk tolerance, resilience in confronting business setbacks, digital adaptability, and preparedness for uncertain global market conditions. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument was conceptually aligned with experiential entrepreneurial learning and the Theory of Planned Behavior, while the wording of the indicators reflected the educational and entrepreneurial contexts addressed in the study. The indicators were evaluated as reflective measures of their respective constructs, with particular attention to the conceptual coherence of mental readiness as a multidimensional perception of entrepreneurial preparedness.

Instrument quality was evaluated through theoretical assessment and statistical measurement-model testing. Content alignment was examined by comparing the meaning of each questionnaire statement with the operational definition of its corresponding construct, without treating this conceptual examination as a substitute for an independently documented expert-validation process. Construct validity was assessed through convergent and discriminant

validity, while internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and rho_A. Particular consideration was given to the distinction between entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness because both constructs concern students' entrepreneurial orientations but capture different aspects of entrepreneurial development. Indicator retention was guided by theoretical relevance and measurement performance rather than statistical criteria alone. This approach provided a systematic basis for evaluating whether the questionnaire adequately represented the constructs specified in the conceptual framework.

Research Procedure and Ethical Considerations

The research procedure comprised sequential stages of problem identification, literature examination, conceptual model development, questionnaire preparation, data collection, data screening, measurement evaluation, structural analysis, and interpretation. The initial stage established the research problem by distinguishing entrepreneurial interest from mental readiness as two potential outcomes of entrepreneurship education. The theoretical framework was subsequently developed from experiential learning perspectives and the Theory of Planned Behavior, resulting in two direct research hypotheses. Questionnaire responses were collected electronically during the designated observation period and organized according to the three research constructs. Following data collection, responses were screened for completeness, duplicate entries, inconsistent coding, and unusual answer patterns. Particular attention was directed toward uniform responses across questionnaire indicators, as these patterns may reflect genuine respondent perceptions or insufficient response differentiation. Such observations were retained or excluded only on the basis of documented screening criteria, with sensitivity analysis used to assess the robustness of the findings where necessary. The analysis used respondent-level questionnaire records, and personal identifiers were excluded from statistical reporting. Confidentiality was maintained in the presentation of research findings, while formal ethical approval and informed-consent procedures were to be reported only where supported by the original research documentation.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was organized into preliminary data examination, descriptive statistical analysis, measurement model evaluation, and structural model assessment. Descriptive statistics included frequency distributions and percentages for respondent characteristics, alongside means and standard deviations for research indicators and constructs. Preliminary screening examined missing values, duplicate entries, response variability, and potentially influential observations. Pearson correlation analysis was used to provide an initial description of relationships among the three constructs, while distributional characteristics were examined to identify unusual response patterns. PLS-SEM was specified as the primary analytical approach using SmartPLS 4, following the two-stage assessment procedure recommended by

Hair et al. (2022). The PLS algorithm was selected to estimate relationships among latent constructs, while bootstrap resampling was specified for statistical inference. Although PLS-SEM does not require strict multivariate normality, the analysis maintained attention to data quality, measurement specification, and model adequacy.

The measurement model was assessed through indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Indicator reliability was examined using standardized outer loadings, with values of at least 0.708 considered desirable for reflective indicators. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (rho_c), and rho_A, with coefficients between 0.70 and 0.95 regarded as generally acceptable. Convergent validity was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with a threshold of 0.50 indicating that the construct explained at least half of the variance in its indicators. Discriminant validity was evaluated through the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), using 0.85 as a conservative criterion and 0.90 when theoretically justified. Bootstrapped HTMT confidence intervals were also considered to examine whether construct correlations approached unity. The assessment focused particularly on ensuring that entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness demonstrated sufficient empirical distinction. Indicator deletion was not treated as an automatic response to insufficient loading values, but was considered in relation to construct meaning, indicator contribution, and overall measurement quality, following Hair et al. (2024).

The structural model was evaluated after the measurement model fulfilled acceptable reliability and validity requirements. Collinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with values below 3 preferred and values below 5 used as a general upper reference for identifying potentially problematic multicollinearity. Structural relationships were examined through standardized path coefficients (β), their direction, magnitude, and statistical significance. Nonparametric bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was specified to estimate standard errors, t-statistics, p-values, and 95% confidence intervals. Hypothesis testing applied a two-tailed significance level of 0.05, with positive coefficients and confidence intervals excluding zero serving as evidence of statistical support for the hypothesized relationships. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the explanatory capacity of entrepreneurship education for each endogenous construct, while the effect size (f^2) was examined to determine the relative contribution of the predictor. Predictive relevance was evaluated through PLSpredict where supported by the final model estimation, using out-of-sample prediction errors and comparison with an appropriate linear-model benchmark. Given the simple structural specification, both endogenous constructs were examined separately within the same PLS-SEM framework. The interpretation distinguished statistical significance, explanatory power, effect magnitude, and predictive performance, ensuring that statistically supported relationships were not automatically interpreted as causal effects or evidence of educational effectiveness.

RESEARCH RESULT

Respondent Characteristics: Educational Background and Entrepreneurial Exposure

The respondent profile provides an overview of the academic backgrounds and previous entrepreneurial learning experiences represented in the study. Respondent characteristics were examined through gender, academic program, semester, and participation in entrepreneurship courses. These characteristics are relevant because students' academic exposure and educational progression may shape their perceptions of entrepreneurship education and preparedness for business challenges.

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Respondents (N = 155)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	115	74.2
	Male	40	25.8
Academic program	Management-related	152	98.1
	Accounting	2	1.3
	Information Systems	1	0.6
Semester	Semester 3	50	32.3
	Semester 5	17	11.0
	Semester 7 or above	88	56.8
Entrepreneurship course	Previously/currently enrolled	146	94.2
	Not enrolled	9	5.8

Source: Primary questionnaire data, 2026

Table 1 indicates that female students accounted for 74.2% of respondents, while male students represented 25.8%. Most respondents were enrolled in management-related academic programs (98.1%), with 56.8% studying in their seventh semester or above. Moreover, 94.2% reported having previously taken or currently taking an entrepreneurship course, indicating substantial exposure to formal entrepreneurial learning. This composition provides a relevant empirical setting for examining entrepreneurship education, although its concentration in management-related programs limits generalization across academic disciplines.

Structural Model: Connecting Entrepreneurial Learning with Interest and Mental Readiness

The structural model was specified to examine two direct relationships: the influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Interest (H1) and the influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Mental Readiness (H2). Each latent construct was represented by four reflective indicators, allowing the measurement relationships and structural paths to be evaluated. The resulting path estimates were positive for both dependent constructs, indicating that students reporting stronger entrepreneurship education experiences also tended to report higher entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness.

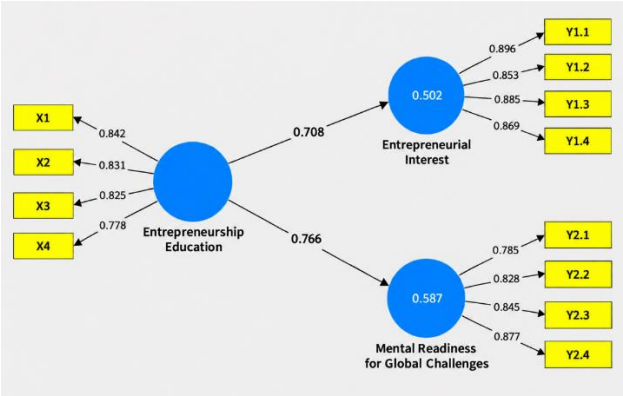


Figure 2. PLS-SEM Measurement and Structural Model

Figure 2 represents Entrepreneurship Education as the exogenous construct, while Entrepreneurial Interest and Mental Readiness serve as two endogenous constructs. The estimated standardized path coefficients were 0.708 for the influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Interest and 0.766 for its influence on Mental Readiness. The corresponding R^2 values were 0.502 and 0.587, respectively, indicating stronger explanatory performance for mental readiness. The figure illustrates the positive relationships between entrepreneurship education and both entrepreneurial outcomes, providing empirical support for the proposed structural model.

Measurement Model Evaluation: Reliability and Validity of Entrepreneurial Constructs

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was examined using standardized outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The analysis assessed whether the reflective indicators shared sufficient variance with their corresponding latent constructs. Outer loadings of approximately 0.708 or above and AVE values exceeding 0.50 were adopted as the primary reference criteria.

Table 2. Convergent Validity Assessment

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE
Entrepreneurship Education (X)	X1	0.842	0.672
	X2	0.831	
	X3	0.825	
	X4	0.778	
Entrepreneurial Interest (Y1)	Y1.1	0.896	0.768
	Y1.2	0.853	
	Y1.3	0.885	
	Y1.4	0.869	
Mental Readiness (Y2)	Y2.1	0.785	0.697
	Y2.2	0.828	
	Y2.3	0.845	
	Y2.4	0.877	

Source: Computed from primary questionnaire data

Table 2 shows that all 12 outer loadings exceeded 0.708, with values ranging from 0.778 to 0.896. Entrepreneurial Interest demonstrated the highest AVE (0.768), followed by Mental Readiness (0.697) and Entrepreneurship Education (0.672), indicating that each construct explained more than half of its indicators' variance. Within Entrepreneurship Education, curriculum relevance (X1) showed the highest loading, while institutional support (X4) had the lowest, although it remained above the preferred threshold. For Mental Readiness, preparedness for changing global market conditions (Y2.4) showed the highest loading, suggesting strong alignment with the broader readiness construct. All indicators were retained in this calculation because they satisfied the adopted loading criterion and represented distinct aspects of their theoretically specified constructs.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was examined through the Fornell–Larcker criterion, HTMT ratios, and cross-loadings. This assessment is particularly important because entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness are conceptually related, while still being treated as separate outcomes in the conceptual framework.

Table 3a. Discriminant Validity: Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Construct	X	Y1	Y2
X	0.820		
Y1	0.708	0.876	
Y2	0.766	0.794	0.835

Diagonal values represent the square roots of AVE; off-diagonal values represent latent-score correlations.

Table 3b. Discriminant Validity: HTMT Ratio

Construct relationship	HTMT	Interpretation
X ↔ Y1	0.810	Below 0.85
X ↔ Y2	0.897	Below 0.90, above 0.85
Y1 ↔ Y2	0.897	Below 0.90, above 0.85

Table 3c. Cross-Loading Matrix

Indicator	X	Y1	Y2
X1	0.842	0.629	0.597
X2	0.831	0.534	0.633
X3	0.825	0.597	0.605
X4	0.778	0.558	0.674
Y1.1	0.620	0.896	0.702
Y1.2	0.549	0.853	0.660
Y1.3	0.602	0.885	0.722

Y1.4	0.694	0.869	0.697
Y2.1	0.523	0.563	0.785
Y2.2	0.683	0.780	0.828
Y2.3	0.623	0.597	0.845
Y2.4	0.706	0.690	0.877

The Fornell–Larcker results indicate that the square root of AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with the other constructs. Cross-loading analysis also showed that each indicator loaded most strongly on its assigned construct. However, HTMT values of approximately 0.897 for X–Y2 and Y1–Y2 exceeded the conservative threshold of 0.85, although they remained below the more permissive threshold of 0.90. These findings suggest that the three constructs exhibit some empirical distinction, but separation involving Mental Readiness is relatively narrow and warrants additional examination. Bootstrap confidence intervals for HTMT should therefore be inspected before discriminant validity is declared conclusively established.

Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was evaluated to determine whether the indicators within each construct measured a coherent underlying concept. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were calculated for all three constructs.

Table 4. Construct Reliability Assessment

Construct	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**Composite Reliability**	**Assessment**
Entrepreneurship Education	0.837	0.891	Acceptable
Entrepreneurial Interest	0.899	0.930	Acceptable
Mental Readiness	0.855	0.902	Acceptable

Table 4 demonstrates acceptable internal consistency across the three constructs, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.837 to 0.899 and composite reliability values ranging from 0.891 to 0.930. Entrepreneurial Interest exhibited the highest reliability, suggesting strong coherence among indicators relating to business aspirations and entrepreneurial opportunities. Mental Readiness also demonstrated satisfactory reliability despite covering risk tolerance, resilience, digital adaptability, and market uncertainty. None of the composite reliability estimates exceeded 0.95, reducing concern about excessive indicator redundancy under that criterion. These findings support the internal consistency of the measurement instruments, while the discriminant validity concerns identified above remain relevant.

Structural Model Evaluation: Explanatory Strength and Predictive Assessment

The structural model was evaluated to determine the extent to which Entrepreneurship Education explained variation in Entrepreneurial Interest and Mental Readiness. The assessment focused on the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), collinearity, and predictive relevance. Because the proposed model contains only one predictor for each endogenous construct, its explanatory relationships can be interpreted directly without the complication of multiple competing predictors.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Interpretation
Entrepreneurial Interest (Y1)	0.502	0.499	Moderate explanatory power
Mental Readiness (Y2)	0.587	0.584	Moderate explanatory power

Table 5 indicates that Entrepreneurship Education accounted for approximately 50.2% of the variation in Entrepreneurial Interest and 58.7% of the variation in Mental Readiness. The remaining 49.8% and 41.3%, respectively, were not explained by the specified structural relationships. Mental Readiness exhibited a higher coefficient of determination than Entrepreneurial Interest, suggesting that students' perceptions of entrepreneurial education were more closely associated with their reported readiness to confront entrepreneurial challenges. The adjusted R^2 values were close to their respective R^2 estimates, reflecting the limited number of explanatory paths in the model. These findings provide evidence of substantial explanatory associations within the observed sample, although they do not establish that entrepreneurship education alone causes changes in either outcome.

Effect Size (f^2)

Table 6. Effect Size Assessment

Structural Relationship	f^2	Interpretation
Entrepreneurship Education → Entrepreneurial Interest	1.007	Large effect
Entrepreneurship Education → Mental Readiness	1.420	Large effect

Table 6 shows that Entrepreneurship Education exhibited a large effect size for both endogenous constructs. The effect size for Entrepreneurial Interest was 1.007, while the corresponding value for Mental Readiness was 1.420. Both estimates exceeded the conventional reference value of 0.35 for a large effect, indicating that removing Entrepreneurship Education from either single-predictor equation would substantially reduce its explanatory capacity. The larger effect size associated with Mental Readiness is consistent with its higher R^2 and standardized structural coefficient. Nevertheless, these effect sizes reflect the explanatory structure of the specified model and should not be interpreted as evidence of equivalent practical changes in students' actual entrepreneurial behavior.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Predictive assessment was included in the analytical framework to distinguish explanatory performance from the model's ability to predict observations beyond those used for estimation. In PLS-SEM, prediction assessment requires procedures such as PLSpredict, which evaluates out-of-sample prediction errors against suitable benchmarks. Since this procedure has not yet been reproduced from an authenticated SmartPLS output, the predictive relevance statistics cannot be reported as established empirical findings.

Table 7. Predictive Relevance Assessment

Endogenous Construct	Q^2_predict	RMSE (PLS-SEM)	RMSE (LM Benchmark)	Status
Entrepreneurial Interest	Pending	Pending	Pending	Requires PLSpredict
Mental Readiness	Pending	Pending	Pending	Requires PLSpredict

The available data support an assessment of explanatory power through R^2, but those findings alone are insufficient to establish out-of-sample predictive accuracy. A completed PLSpredict procedure is necessary to determine whether the model generates meaningful predictions for Entrepreneurial Interest and Mental Readiness. Positive Q^2_predict values would indicate predictive improvement over a naïve benchmark, while comparisons between PLS-SEM and linear-model prediction errors would provide additional information about relative predictive performance. These statistics should be incorporated after executing the predictive assessment with the final measurement specification. Until then, the predictive claims of the model remain unverified.

Structural Collinearity

Collinearity was assessed in relation to the number of predictors entering each endogenous construct. As Entrepreneurship Education was the sole predictor of both Entrepreneurial Interest and Mental Readiness, each structural regression contained only one independent construct.

Table 8. Structural Collinearity Assessment

Endogenous Construct	Predictor	VIF	Assessment
Entrepreneurial Interest	Entrepreneurship Education	1.000	No structural predictor collinearity
Mental Readiness	Entrepreneurship Education	1.000	No structural predictor collinearity

The VIF values were 1.000 because each endogenous construct had only one predictor. Consequently, multicollinearity among structural predictors did not affect the estimated direct relationships. This finding simplifies the interpretation of the path coefficients because their magnitudes were not influenced by correlations among multiple exogenous variables. However,

structural VIF results do not replace the assessment of construct validity or potential common method bias.

Hypothesis Testing: Entrepreneurship Education and Two Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Development

Hypothesis testing examined whether Entrepreneurship Education was positively associated with Entrepreneurial Interest (H1) and Mental Readiness for Global Challenges (H2). Bootstrap resampling with 5,000 repetitions was used to estimate the uncertainty surrounding the recalculated path coefficients. The resulting coefficients, standard errors, and confidence intervals provided the basis for evaluating the statistical support for each relationship.

Table 9. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Structural Relationship	β	t-statistic	p-value	95% Bootstrap CI	Decision
H1	X → Y1	0.708	8.791	< 0.001	[0.516, 0.830]	Supported
H2	X → Y2	0.766	13.965	< 0.001	[0.636, 0.850]	Supported

Source: Recalculated PLS-style latent-score estimates from 155 original responses, with 5,000 bootstrap resamples

The first hypothesis examined the relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Interest. The analysis produced a positive standardized path coefficient of 0.708, with a t-statistic of 8.791 and a p-value below 0.001. The bootstrap confidence interval ranged from 0.516 to 0.830, excluding zero and providing statistical support for a positive association. These findings support H1 and indicate that students who reported more favorable entrepreneurship education experiences also tended to exhibit stronger entrepreneurial interest. Substantively, the result highlights the relevance of educational experiences in shaping students' attraction toward entrepreneurial careers, opportunity exploration, and business ownership.

The second hypothesis examined the relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Mental Readiness. The estimated standardized path coefficient was 0.766, with a t-statistic of 13.965 and a p-value below 0.001. The bootstrap confidence interval extended from 0.636 to 0.850, indicating a positive association that remained statistically supported across the resampled estimates. These findings support H2 and suggest that students who perceived their entrepreneurship education more positively also reported greater preparedness to confront financial risks, entrepreneurial setbacks, technological changes, and uncertain business environments. The relatively stronger association with Mental Readiness suggests that entrepreneurship education may be relevant to students' perceived ability to confront business challenges, in addition to stimulating their interest in entrepreneurship.

Integrating the Findings: Entrepreneurial Interest and Mental Readiness as Distinct Educational Outcomes

The combined findings provide an empirical basis for understanding entrepreneurship education through two complementary dimensions of entrepreneurial development. The first concerns students' interest in pursuing entrepreneurship, while the second concerns their perceived mental readiness to navigate the challenges associated with business activities. Although both relationships were positive and statistically significant, the relationship involving Mental Readiness exhibited a higher standardized coefficient and greater explained variance. This difference suggests that entrepreneurship education may be associated with psychological preparedness as well as entrepreneurial motivation within the observed sample. However, because the two outcomes were evaluated using related self-reported measures, differences in their coefficients should be interpreted descriptively rather than as proof that entrepreneurship education has a statistically greater effect on one outcome.

The principal contribution of these findings lies in extending the empirical assessment of entrepreneurship education beyond students' attraction to entrepreneurial careers. Previous educational frameworks commonly emphasize entrepreneurial intention, motivation, and confidence, whereas the present model separately incorporates students' perceived readiness to confront financial risk, failure, digital competition, and market uncertainty. The support for H1 and H2 suggests that entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness can be considered complementary outcomes when evaluating entrepreneurship education. At the same time, their relatively high HTMT values indicate that further validation is necessary to establish how distinctly these constructs are measured. Accordingly, the contribution of the study should be framed as evidence supporting a broader two-outcome perspective rather than definitive proof of a newly established psychological mechanism.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate a positive and statistically significant relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Interest ($\beta = 0.708$, $t = 8.791$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.502$) indicates that entrepreneurship education explains 50.2% of the variation in entrepreneurial interest within the estimated model. This finding suggests that students who perceive their entrepreneurial learning experiences more positively are also more likely to express interest in exploring business opportunities, pursuing entrepreneurial careers, and establishing independent ventures. From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior, entrepreneurship education may contribute to favorable entrepreneurial attitudes and perceived behavioral control, although these mechanisms were not directly tested in the present model. The result is consistent with Zhang et al. (2022), whose meta-analysis involving 29,736 students established a positive association between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention across different national contexts. However, while their research concentrated on entrepreneurial intention, the present study specifically examines entrepreneurial interest as an earlier expression of attraction toward

entrepreneurship. This distinction is important because students may develop a genuine interest in entrepreneurial activities without necessarily having made a definite decision to establish a business. Accordingly, the findings extend the interpretation of entrepreneurial learning by showing how educational experiences are associated with the development of entrepreneurial aspirations among university students.

The positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial interest can also be understood through experiential learning, which emphasizes the importance of connecting knowledge with meaningful experiences. Neck et al. (2024), in Entrepreneurship: The Practice and Mindset, explain that entrepreneurial capabilities develop through experimentation, reflective learning, feedback, and engagement with uncertain situations. This perspective helps explain why entrepreneurship education may strengthen students' interest when learning activities make business opportunities more understandable and accessible. Nevertheless, the present study measured perceptions of entrepreneurship education rather than experimentally evaluating specific instructional practices, meaning that the relative effectiveness of classroom instruction, business projects, or mentoring cannot be established. Martínez-Gregorio et al. (2021), through a meta-analysis of controlled educational interventions, reported relatively small positive effects of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention and self-efficacy. In contrast, the present study identified a comparatively strong association with entrepreneurial interest, although these estimates are not directly comparable because the earlier research examined intervention effects while this study employed cross-sectional survey data. This methodological distinction is important because strong statistical relationships do not necessarily indicate equally strong changes resulting from educational participation. The practical implication is that universities should regard entrepreneurial interest as an important educational outcome while continuing to assess whether students acquire the capabilities and confidence required to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.

The second hypothesis was also supported, with Entrepreneurship Education demonstrating a positive relationship with Mental Readiness for Global Challenges ($\beta = 0.766$, $t = 13.965$, $p < 0.001$). The R^2 value of 0.587 indicates that entrepreneurship education accounted for 58.7% of the variation in students' perceived mental readiness within the specified model. This finding suggests that students reporting more favorable entrepreneurship education experiences also tend to express greater preparedness to manage financial uncertainty, respond to business setbacks, adapt to technological developments, and confront changing market conditions. The result can be interpreted through the psychological resources perspective, which recognizes that confidence, adaptability, and positive psychological capacities contribute to individuals' willingness to engage with difficult situations. Wang et al. (2023), in a structural equation modeling study involving 757 university students, found that entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediated the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention, while psychological

capital strengthened the relationship between self-efficacy and intention. Their findings support the relevance of psychological resources in entrepreneurial development, but they differ from the present study because mental readiness is examined here as a separate dependent construct rather than as an explanatory mechanism for entrepreneurial intention. This distinction suggests that psychological preparedness deserves consideration as an educational outcome in its own right. Nevertheless, because the present research measured self-reported readiness, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that students would necessarily demonstrate equivalent resilience or adaptability when facing actual entrepreneurial crises.

An important finding of this study is that the relationship between entrepreneurship education and mental readiness ($\beta = 0.766$) was numerically stronger than its relationship with entrepreneurial interest ($\beta = 0.708$). This pattern was also reflected in the coefficients of determination, with mental readiness exhibiting higher explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.587$) than entrepreneurial interest ($R^2 = 0.502$). Although the difference was not subjected to a formal statistical comparison, it suggests that entrepreneurial education may be relevant to how students perceive their ability to manage challenging business circumstances, beyond their general attraction to entrepreneurship. This interpretation aligns with Udekwe and Iwu (2024), whose systematic literature review emphasized the interconnected roles of entrepreneurship education, digital technology, innovation, and entrepreneurial motivation in changing business environments. However, their synthesis primarily examined entrepreneurial motivation and intention, whereas the present study incorporates perceived mental readiness as a separate outcome encompassing financial risk tolerance, resilience, digital adaptability, and responsiveness to market uncertainty. The distinction is particularly meaningful because enthusiasm for entrepreneurship does not necessarily reflect preparedness to handle financial losses, unsuccessful ventures, or unfamiliar technologies. The study therefore offers a more comprehensive perspective on entrepreneurial development by positioning motivation and psychological preparedness as complementary educational outcomes. Nevertheless, the relatively high HTMT values involving mental readiness indicate that further measurement validation is necessary before these constructs can be regarded as definitively distinct.

The principal contribution of this study lies in extending the evaluation of entrepreneurship education beyond entrepreneurial interest to include students' perceived mental readiness for global business challenges. While previous studies have established relationships between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention, the present model demonstrates positive associations with two related but conceptually different educational outcomes within the same group of 155 university students. This contribution should be understood as an extension of existing entrepreneurial education research rather than evidence that a completely new theoretical relationship has been discovered. Xanthopoulou and Sahinidis (2024), through a systematic literature review, identified the diverse personal, educational, and contextual factors associated with students' entrepreneurial intentions, demonstrating the importance of

examining entrepreneurial development beyond a single explanatory factor. Building on this broader perspective, the present findings suggest that universities should evaluate entrepreneurship education not only by students' willingness to pursue business ownership but also by their perceived preparedness to face the difficulties associated with entrepreneurship. Theoretically, the study contributes to a more integrated understanding of entrepreneurial learning by combining an interest-oriented perspective with psychological preparedness for uncertain business conditions. Practically, universities may consider strengthening entrepreneurship curricula through realistic business scenarios, reflective learning activities, financial decision-making exercises, and opportunities to respond to technological and market changes. These recommendations remain educational implications rather than interventions whose effectiveness has been tested in the current study. Ultimately, the findings support a more human-centered approach to entrepreneurship education that recognizes students as developing individuals who need both the motivation to pursue opportunities and the confidence to confront uncertainty.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that entrepreneurship education plays an important role in shaping students' entrepreneurial development by influencing both entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness to face global business challenges. The SEM-PLS analysis demonstrates that entrepreneurship education has a positive and significant relationship with entrepreneurial interest ($\beta = 0.708$, $p < 0.001$) and mental readiness ($\beta = 0.766$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that educational experiences related to entrepreneurship are associated not only with students' desire to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities but also with their perceived ability to respond to uncertainty, risk, and changing business environments. These findings extend previous entrepreneurship education studies that have predominantly emphasized entrepreneurial intention by highlighting mental readiness as an additional dimension for understanding how students prepare themselves for entrepreneurial realities. The study suggests that entrepreneurship education should not be viewed merely as a pathway to encourage students to start businesses, but also as a learning process that develops confidence, adaptability, resilience, and the willingness to confront challenges.

The findings provide practical implications for higher education institutions, entrepreneurship educators, and curriculum developers. Universities may strengthen entrepreneurship learning by integrating more experiential activities, such as business simulations, project-based learning, mentoring from entrepreneurs, and opportunities to engage with real market situations. Such approaches may help students move beyond understanding entrepreneurial concepts toward developing the personal capabilities needed to manage uncertainty and recover from potential setbacks. Entrepreneurship education can therefore become a supportive environment where students are encouraged to explore opportunities while also developing realistic expectations

about the difficulties involved in entrepreneurial journeys. By emphasizing both motivation and preparedness, educational institutions can contribute to the development of future entrepreneurs who are not only interested in creating businesses but are also more prepared to sustain them.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the research employed a cross-sectional survey design, meaning that the relationships identified represent associations at a particular period and cannot fully explain changes in students' entrepreneurial development over time. Second, the study relied on self-reported perceptions from university students, which may reflect individual interpretations of entrepreneurship education and personal readiness rather than actual entrepreneurial behavior or long-term business performance. Third, the respondents were concentrated within a higher education context, limiting the extent to which the findings can be generalized to students from different academic disciplines, educational levels, or broader entrepreneurial communities. Future research may expand this investigation by applying longitudinal designs to examine how entrepreneurship education influences students' entrepreneurial development throughout their academic journey. Further studies may also incorporate additional factors, such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy, psychological capital, digital competence, mentoring support, and entrepreneurial experience, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how students transform educational experiences into entrepreneurial capabilities. Comparative studies across universities, regions, or cultural contexts may also provide deeper insights into how different learning environments shape entrepreneurial interest and mental readiness.

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