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Indonesian Student Entrepreneurial Intention in Cirebon: The Influence of Entrepreneurial Competence, Motivation, and Innovation

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Keywords

Entrepreneurial competence, entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial innovation, entrepreneurial intention.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of entrepreneurial competence, motivation, and innovation on the entrepreneurial intentions of students in *Cirebon*, Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach with a survey-based design, this study involved seventh-semester students from various universities in the region. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression. The findings show that entrepreneurial competence, motivation, and innovation each have a statistically significant and positive effect on students' entrepreneurial intentions, both individually and simultaneously. Among these factors, competence and innovation emerged as the most dominant predictors. In contrast, motivation shows a comparatively weaker impact when it is not supported by strong entrepreneurial skills and innovative thinking. These results underscore the importance of targeted educational interventions to strengthen entrepreneurial potential among students and support the development of a more innovation-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem in higher education. In addition, the study contributes to the growing literature on entrepreneurship in developing countries, highlighting how practical competence and creativity play a more decisive role than intrinsic drive alone. Higher education institutions are encouraged to integrate real-world entrepreneurship training and an innovation-based curriculum to better prepare students for the demands of modern entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship holds an important position in driving economic growth, especially in developing countries like *Indonesia*. Entrepreneurs are able to turn ideas into real opportunities through innovation and creativity, which in turn contributes to job creation, increased community income, and national development. Joseph Schumpeter (1934) emphasized that entrepreneurial activities encourage the dynamics of the productive sector in an economy.

Some recent research reinforces this basic view. For example, a study by Mujtaba et al. showed that entrepreneurial inspiration, skills, and awareness significantly influence students' entrepreneurial intentions in *Pakistan*. Notably, entrepreneurship education acts as a major mediating factor shaping their perceptions, attitudes, and readiness to pursue entrepreneurship as a career path, although the study was geographically limited to final-year students in *Punjab* (Mujtaba et al., 2025).

In a broader context, *Naudé* underlined that entrepreneurship is an important element of economic development that is not only influenced by development dynamics but also has both

positive and negative impacts on them. This underscores the need for further interdisciplinary research using evolving empirical data to fully capture the multifaceted role of entrepreneurship in development (Naudé, 2025).

Further evidence from Southeast *Vietnam* emphasizes the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises (*SMEs*). *PHAM et al.* found that the quality of human resources, particularly the technical qualifications and education of the workforce, had a stronger positive impact on economic growth from 1996 to 2019 than either the size of the workforce or financial capital. These findings highlight the importance of prioritizing workforce quality in SME policy strategies to support sustainable regional growth (PHAM et al., 2021).

Similarly, a study on rattan-based SMEs in *Aceh* by *Safrianti, Sukardi, and Djatna* identified several barriers to innovation, including limited raw materials, restricted access to finance, and weak management and marketing capabilities. These challenges stem from inadequate knowledge transfer among *triple helix* actors (universities, industry, and government). As a solution, the researchers recommend transforming universities into entrepreneurial institutions and establishing business incubators and science parks to sustainably increase the competitiveness of SMEs (Safrianti et al., 2021).

In the *Indonesian* context, entrepreneurship hashown a promising upward trend, especially with the emergence of a younger generation eager to pursue business ventures. This shift is reflected in the increasing number of early-stage entrepreneurs recorded every year.

Figure 1. Early-Stage Entrepreneurial Growth in Indonesia, 2020–2024
Source: <https://goodstats.id/article/menilik-jumlah-wirausaha-indonesia-dari-tahun-ke-tahun-NjSqK>

This national trend is also seen at the local level. For example, *Cirebon* City has experienced consistent growth in the number of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (*MSMEs*) over the past few years. This increase reflects the growing interest in entrepreneurship among locals and highlights the city's potential as a hub for small business development.

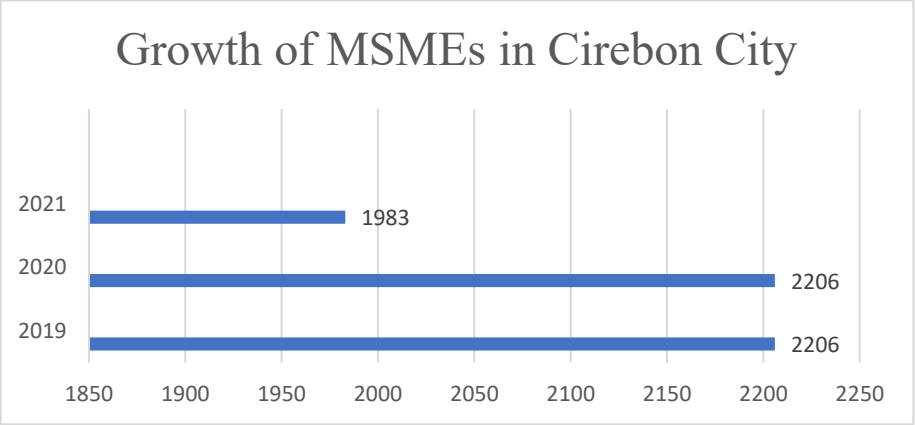

Figure 2. MSME Growth in Cirebon City, 2019–2021
Source: Central Statistics Agency (BPS) Cirebon City

Despite these encouraging developments, *Indonesia* still faces critical challenges in achieving a healthy entrepreneurship ratio. According to the World Bank, at least 4% of a country's population must be involved in entrepreneurial activities to support sustainable economic development. As of October 2024, *Indonesia*'s entrepreneurship rate remains at 3.35%, lagging behind the benchmark and behind neighboring countries such as *Malaysia* (4.74%), *Singapore* (8.76%), and the *United States* (12%) (Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, 2024).

Previous studies provide further insights into structural challenges and opportunities in *Indonesia*'s entrepreneurial landscape. For example, *Yuldinawati & Yelliantty* (2024) found that entrepreneurial competence significantly drives business success, with learning competence being the strongest predictor. Although the ethical dimension has a relatively weaker impact, this study emphasizes the importance of strengthening all dimensions of competence to support sustainable youth entrepreneurship. However, it should be noted that this study is geographically limited to *Bandung*.

The strategic role of entrepreneurship in overcoming economic challenges has also been highlighted by *Perkasa* (2020), who noted that during the 1998 global economic crisis, *MSMEs* based on entrepreneurial practices proved to be more resilient than other sectors. However, public interest in entrepreneurship in *Indonesia* remains relatively low due to constraints such as limited access to capital, inadequate support, and a low level of innovation. This challenge is reflected in *Indonesia*'s position as the second lowest entrepreneurship ranking in *ASEAN*.

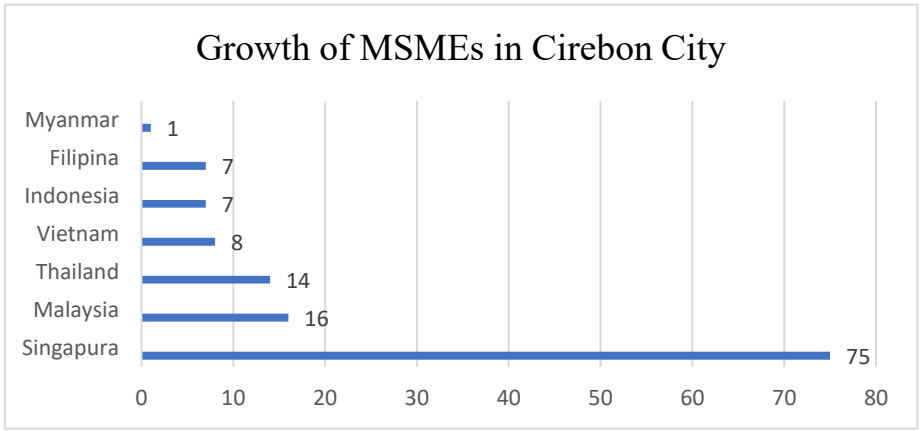

Figure 3. Entrepreneurship Rankings in Southeast Asia in 2018
Source: https://databoks.katadata.co.id/ekonomi-makro/statistik/3ed0ecc3b7b0265/peringkat-kewirausahaan-indonesia-nomor-dua-terendah-di-asean

More recent research continues to explore the factors that influence entrepreneurial intent. For example, *Sunanto et al.* (2023) revealed that entrepreneurial intentions (*EI*) among professional pharmacists in *Jakarta* were significantly influenced by entrepreneurial education (*EE*), entrepreneurial self-efficacy (*ESE*), and entrepreneurial attitudes (*EA*), with *ESE* emerging as the most dominant determinant. In addition, *ESE* indirectly affects *EI* through partial *EA* mediation. These findings suggest that improving *EI* requires targeted efforts to strengthen managerial *ESE*, affective *EA*, and skill-based *EE*.

This study underlines the complexity of the factors that influence entrepreneurial intentions, particularly the relationships between cognitive, affective, and educational dimensions. It also reflects a broader shift in entrepreneurial research towards understanding how psychological and educational variables interact to shape behavior and decision-making.

These findings are in line with a broader scientific consensus. Several studies have identified entrepreneurial competence, internal motivation, and innovation capacity as the main determinants of entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurial competencies are not innate, but can often be developed through higher education and professional training that help students feel better prepared to start and manage business ventures. At the same time, motivation and innovation act as the main psychological drivers for building a resilient and adaptable company (Kumalasari, 2022).

Recognizing the strategic value of entrepreneurship development, especially among youth, has become a national priority. According to the Deputy of the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture (2023), "Youth have great potential to advance *Indonesia* if they want to be independent, become entrepreneurs, and dare to do business." The World Economic Forum (2019) also noted that 34.1% of *Indonesian* youth expressed a desire to pursue entrepreneurship in the future, which is a substantial opportunity for targeted educational interventions.

With the expansion of the digital ecosystem and the increasing presence of startups, entrepreneurship education is becoming increasingly important. In response, the Ministry of Cooperatives and *SMEs* has encouraged universities to integrate entrepreneurship into their curricula to better prepare students for global competition. This policy direction reflects a growing awareness that universities are not only centers of learning but also engines for entrepreneurial transformation. This is in line with the context of this research, which focuses on seventh-semester students at several universities in the *Cirebon* area. These students, who are currently immersed in higher education, represent an important demographic for nurturing future entrepreneurs.

Previous studies have also provided supporting evidence in the context of *Cirebon*. Entrepreneurial competence, especially in fields such as management and finance, has been proven to have a positive impact on the performance of *MSMEs* supported by the local Trade, Cooperatives, and *SMEs* Office (S. and Fauzan, 2020). Other research further confirms that entrepreneurial competence, motivation, and self-efficacy significantly affect entrepreneurial intentions among *Generation Z* students in *Indonesia* (Ingsih et al., 2024). *Judijanto et al.* (2025) highlight the importance of entrepreneurship education, creativity, and intrinsic motivation in forming intentions, with self-efficacy as the main mediating factor. Similarly, *Melinda et al.* (2023) emphasize that creativity and motivation play an important role in developing entrepreneurial interests. *Soekarno and Rasmini* (2024) added that motivation and interest are very important for entrepreneurial success, with entrepreneurial competence acting as a central mediation mechanism.

Together, these findings provide a strong empirical foundation for further investigation. They also point out the importance of designing holistic and context-sensitive entrepreneurship programs, especially in regional areas such as *Cirebon*, where the entrepreneurial potential of youth is still underutilized.

Given this literature, the current research seeks to explore how entrepreneurial competence, motivation, and innovation affect the entrepreneurial intentions of seventh-semester students in *Cirebon*. The study also aims to provide actionable insights to improve entrepreneurship education and training programs across higher education institutions in *Indonesia*.

METHODS

Learning Area

This research took place in *Cirebon*, which is located in *West Java* Province, *Indonesia*, with seventh-semester students from *Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati* (*UGJ*) *Cirebon* as the research population. *Cirebon* was chosen as the research location because of its dynamic growth in the creative economy sector in *West Java* and significant student attendance, making it a suitable location for entrepreneurship-related studies.

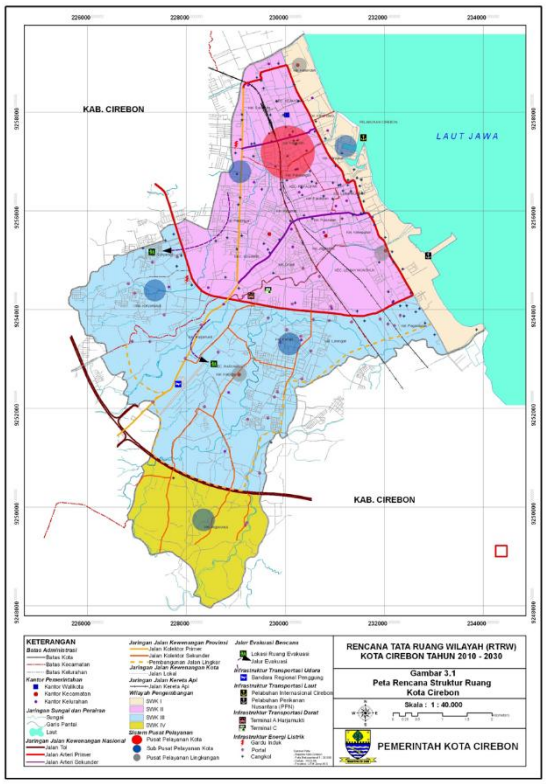

Figure 4. Map of Study Area – Cirebon City, Indonesia

Data Collection

This study uses a quantitative method with a descriptive verification approach. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure three independent variables: entrepreneurial competence, entrepreneurial motivation, and entrepreneurial innovation, and their influence on the dependent variable, entrepreneurial intention of students. The instrument uses the Likert scale and is distributed to a representative sample of students who have participated in an entrepreneurship course or program.

Data Analysis

To test the proposed hypothesis, data were analyzed using variance-based Structural Equation Modeling (*SEM*), specifically the Partial Least Squares (*PLS*) technique. The analysis was carried out

using the latest version of *SmartPLS* software. This method was chosen because of its suitability for complex models and its ability to handle both reflective and formative constructs in exploratory research.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study consists of all active students in the seventh semester at *Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati* (*UGJ*) *Cirebon*. Non-probability sampling techniques, particularly quota sampling, are used. This method involves selecting participants based on predetermined characteristics—in this case, enrollment status and participation in entrepreneurship-related courses—until the required number of responses is obtained.

Sample sizes were determined based on guidelines for *SEM-PLS*, which recommend using 5 to 10 times the number of indicators in the measurement model (Hair et al., 2019). With a total of 51 indicators, this study required a minimum of 255 respondents. However, in this study, we obtained 178 respondents. According to applicable rules, with these numbers, the results obtained are still acceptable and valid. In this study, the measurement model included a total of 51 indicators, consisting of:

a. 18 indicators of entrepreneurial competence,
b. 11 indicators of entrepreneurial motivation,
c. 15 indicators of entrepreneurial innovation, and
d. 7 indicators for entrepreneurial intentions.

Thus, a minimum of 300 respondents would be required to fully meet the *SEM-PLS* criteria. This sampling strategy ensures adequate statistical power for hypothesis testing and improves the generalization of findings in the target population.

Data Types and Sources

This study utilizes both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly through the distribution of a structured questionnaire to student participants, focusing on their perceptions of entrepreneurial competence, motivation, innovation, and intention. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from relevant scientific sources, including national academic journals, textbooks, and previous research publications that discuss the theoretical foundations of entrepreneurship and its related variables.

Instrumentation

The study used a structured questionnaire as the primary measurement tool, combining a 5-point Likert scale to capture respondents' level of agreement. The scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Each item was expressed as a declarative statement, and respondents were asked to choose a number that best reflected their opinion or experience regarding each statement.

Before administering the questionnaire, the researcher provided clear verbal and written instructions explaining how to respond using the Likert scale. This included examples and clarification that 1 means strong disagreement, 3 indicates neutrality, and 5 means strong agreement. Respondents were assured that there are no right or wrong answers and that their honest perspective is critical to the accuracy of the research.

This questionnaire addressed four main variables:

1. Entrepreneurial Competencies (dimensions: personal, managerial, and entrepreneurial competencies) – adapted from *Kristanto* (2009)
2. Entrepreneurial Motivation (dimensions: the need for achievement, power, and affiliation) – based on *McClelland*'s theory in *Suryana* (2006)

3. Entrepreneurial Innovation (dimensions: product, administration, continuum, process, and technical innovation) – adopted from *Rusdiana* (2014)
4. Entrepreneurial Intention (dimension: intrinsic motivation) – based on *Ermawati* (2016)

Each dimension was measured through several indicators presented as statements in the questionnaire and aligned with the construct being measured.

Procedure

The data collection process in this study followed several systematic steps to ensure the validity, reliability, and completeness of the data:

Instrument Development and Validation

The questionnaire was developed based on established theory and previous research, covering four main variables: entrepreneurial competence, motivation, innovation, and intention. Content validity was ensured through expert judgment by academics familiar with entrepreneurial research, who reviewed each item for clarity, relevance, and consistency with the construct being measured.

Pilot Testing

Before the main distribution, the questionnaire underwent a trial involving 30 respondents with the same characteristics as the target population. The goal was to identify ambiguities and assess the reliability of the instrument. Feedback from the pilot was used to revise and refine the questionnaire.

Questionnaire Distribution

After validation, the final version of the questionnaire was distributed online via *Google Forms*. The link was shared through *WhatsApp* groups and academic communication channels with seventh-semester students at *Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati* (*UGJ*) *Cirebon*. Respondents were provided with informed consent information, instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire, and clarification on the Likert scale format (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Response Monitoring and Data Collection

Data collection was carried out over a two-week period. Regular reminders were sent to ensure an adequate response rate. A total of 178 complete and valid responses were collected, meeting the minimum requirements for *SEM-PLS* analysis based on the number of indicators used.

Data Cleansing and Preparation

The responses collected were checked for completeness and consistency. Incomplete or duplicate entries were excluded. The clean dataset was then exported to *Microsoft Excel* and subsequently imported into the *SmartPLS* software for further analysis.

Data Analysis Methods

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (*PLS-SEM*) to explore the structural relationships between latent variables. This method was chosen because it is suitable for complex models, does not require the data to satisfy the assumptions of multivariate normality, and is appropriate for relatively small sample sizes (Ghozali, 2014).

The analysis began with evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) to assess the validity and reliability of the indicators through loading factors, Average Variance Extracted (*AVE*), and Composite Reliability (*CR*). Thereafter, the structural model (inner model) was assessed by examining the relationships between latent variables using path coefficients, the determination coefficient (R^2), and the significance of effects, as shown by the t-statistics and p-values. Finally, hypothesis testing was performed to determine the statistical significance of each proposed relationship (*H1*, *H2*, and *H3*) in the research model.

RESULTS

Validity Convergence

To assess the convergent validity of the measurement model, two main indicators are used: outer loading and Average Extracted Variance (AVE). The results of the analysis using SmartPLS showed that all indicators had an outer loading value greater than 0.50, indicating that each item observed was highly representative of the underlying construction. This means that all measurement items are statistically valid and capable of capturing the intended latent variable. Details of the outer loading values for each construction are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Outer loading value for each construction (source: SmartPLS data output).

Indicator	Innovation	Entrepreneurial Intent	Competence	Motivation
x1.1 - x1.18	–	–	0,674 – 0,810	–
x2.1 - x2.10	–	–	–	0,693 – 0,813
x3.1 - x3.15	0,736 – 0,830	–	–	–
y.1 - y.7	–	0,760 – 0,824	–	–

In addition to the outer loading value, the AVE value for each construction is also analyzed. All constructions exceeded the minimum AVE threshold of 0.50, as shown in Table 2. It confirms that more than 50% of the variance of each indicator is explained by its respective construction, further reinforcing the convergent validity of the model.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity (Source: SmartPLS Data Output).

Build	Alfa Cronbach	Composite Reliability	AVE
Entrepreneurial Innovation	0,957	0,962	0,626
Entrepreneurial Intent	0,897	0,919	0,618
Entrepreneurial Competencies	0,958	0,962	0,582
Entrepreneurial Motivation	0,927	0,938	0,580

Compatibility Benefits (GoF)

To evaluate the overall quality of the model, a Goodness of Fit (GoF) index is calculated. The GoF index is the geometric average of the average value of AVE and the mean of R^2. In this study, the mean AVE was 0.602, and the mean value of R^2 was 0.770. Thus, the GoF value is: GoF = AVE × R2 = 0.602 × 0.770 = 0.6808

This result exceeded the threshold of 0.36, which according to Wetzels et al. (2009), indicates a strong model fit. In other words, the model fits well with empirical data and is suitable for further interpretation.

Table 3 AVE and R^2 Average (Source: SmartPLS Data Output).

Variable	AVE	R^2
Entrepreneurial Innovation	0,626	–
Entrepreneurial Intent	0,618	0,770
Entrepreneurial Competencies	0,582	–
Entrepreneurial Motivation	0,580	–
Middle	**0,602**	**0,770**

Determination Coefficient (R^2)

The value of R^2 reflects the percentage of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable. In this study, the R^2 value for Entrepreneurial Intention was

0.770. This shows that 77% of the variation in entrepreneurial intentions among students can be explained by three independent variables: innovation, competence, and motivation. This is considered a strong explanatory force, as R^2 values above 0.75 are generally considered substantial.

Table 4 R^2 Values for Endogenous Variables (Source: SmartPLS Data Output).

Variable Dependency	R^2
Entrepreneurial Intent	0,770

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

To assess the predictive relevance of the model, the Q^2 value was analyzed using the blindfold technique. A Q^2 value above 0 indicates that the model has predictive relevance. As shown in Table 5, the Q^2 value for Entrepreneurial Intent is 0.431, which is well above zero. This implies that the model can adequately predict data and has strong predictive capabilities for dependent variables.

Table 5 Predictive Relevance (Q^2) (Source: SmartPLS Data Output).

Variable Dependency	Question ²
Entrepreneurial Intent	0,431

Hypothesis Testing

To test the research hypothesis, the bootstrapping method is used. The results are presented in Table 6. The findings show that:

a. H1: Entrepreneurial Innovation had a significant positive effect on Entrepreneurial Intent (β = 0.424; p = 0.001), indicating a strong and meaningful relationship.
b. H2: Entrepreneurial Competency also had a significant positive impact on Entrepreneurial Intent (β = 0.163; p = 0.000), although the effect size was simpler.
c. H3: Entrepreneurial Motivation, however, does not significantly affect Entrepreneurial Intent (β = 0.317; p = 0.146), as its p-value exceeds the standard threshold of 0.05.
d.

Table 6 Hypothesis Test Results (Source: SmartPLS Bootstrapping Output).

Hypothesis	Connection		Line Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Conclusion
H1	Innovation Entrepreneurial Intent	→	0,424	3,480	0,001	Important
H2	Competencies Entrepreneurial Intentions	→	0,163	12,175	0,000	Important
H3	Motivation Entrepreneurial Intention	→	0,317	1,454	0,146	Insignificant

In summary, the results of the study show that the research model is statistically strong and has good validity and reliability. Innovation and Entrepreneurial Competence have been shown to have a significant effect on students' entrepreneurial intentions, while Entrepreneurial Motivation does not show a significant direct impact. These findings provide a strong empirical foundation for further discussion, especially regarding how innovation and competence can be emphasized in entrepreneurial education efforts.

The Influence of Entrepreneurial Innovation on Entrepreneurial Intentions

The analysis showed that Entrepreneurial Innovation had a positive and significant influence on students' entrepreneurial intentions (β = 0.424; p < 0.05). This indicates that the more innovative

a student is, the higher his desire to start a business. Innovation allows students to identify unmet market needs and propose creative solutions, which form the basis for entrepreneurial activities.

Previous studies support these findings, showing that innovation and e-commerce positively and significantly affect students' entrepreneurial interests, whereas gender has no significant impact (Maisan & Nuringsih, 2021). This reinforces the idea that innovation is one of the key variables that influence students' interest in starting a business.

Wardani and Dewi also found that motivation, creativity, innovation, and capital collectively have a significant and positive impact on students' entrepreneurial interests. (Wardani & Dewi, 2021). Similarly, Putri, Satoto, and Wibowo concluded that the higher the level of student innovation, the greater their interest in entrepreneurship (Putri et al., 2024).

In the context of students in Cirebon, the ability to create unique products or services, adapt to digital trends, and solve problems innovatively seems to be very important in forming entrepreneurial intentions. These findings show that students are not only encouraged to start a business but also strive to generate added value through innovation.

The implication is that the university's entrepreneurship curriculum should emphasize the development of creative thinking and innovative design skills. Higher education institutions must go beyond teaching basic business knowledge by equipping students with critical thinking and solution-oriented skills that are aligned with today's market dynamics and consumer demands.

The Influence of Entrepreneurial Competence on Entrepreneurial Intentions

The analysis revealed that entrepreneurial competence had a positive and significant effect on students' entrepreneurial intentions, albeit with a smaller coefficient than innovation ($\beta = 0.163$; $p < 0.05$). This shows that students' technical skills and business management remain important factors in fostering the intention to pursue entrepreneurship.

A study by Nurhasanah et al. supports these findings, showing that entrepreneurial competence, along with motivation and creativity, significantly influences students' desire to become entrepreneurs (Nurhasanah et al., 2023). Similarly, Listyaningrum concludes that the overall entrepreneurial variable creates positive opportunities for Generation Z to build a business in the future (Listyaningrum, 2023).

Furthermore, Chandra and Budiono found that entrepreneurship education significantly affects entrepreneurial intentions, with self-efficacy as a mediating factor (Chandra & Budiono, 2019). This is in line with Ekawarna's findings, which observed that entrepreneurship education and self-efficacy, directly or indirectly, affect entrepreneurial motivation and intention through increased entrepreneurial motivation. (Ekavarna, 2022).

Listyaningrum also noted that educator competence and entrepreneurship education significantly impacted entrepreneurial intentions, while curriculum relevance did not show a significant effect. However, simultaneously, the three variables of entrepreneurship education, curriculum relevance, and educator competence have a significant influence (Listyaningrum, 2023).

These findings imply that, in addition to innovation, educational institutions must provide comprehensive entrepreneurship training to improve students' competencies not only in creativity but also in technical and managerial aspects. Strengthening these competencies is essential to prepare students for real-world business challenges.

The Unimportance of Entrepreneurial Motivation on Entrepreneurial Intentions

In contrast to the other two variables, entrepreneurial motivation did not have a significant effect on students' entrepreneurial intentions ($\beta = 0.317$; $p = 0.146$). Although theoretically,

motivation is considered a crucial driver in the decision to start a business, in the context of students in Cirebon, motivation is not strong enough to directly influence their intentions.

These findings are in line with research by Steven and Widjaja, who found that personality traits and entrepreneurial education significantly affect entrepreneurial intentions, while motivation does not (Steven & Widjaja, 2023). Similar results were reported by Perta, which stated that motivation, personality, and entrepreneurial knowledge did not have a significant effect on students' entrepreneurial interest (Perta, 2019). Ramadhani, Mulyati, and Mulyati also found that although entrepreneurial motivation and literacy collectively affect entrepreneurial interest, motivation alone does not have significant individual effects. This is often attributed to the fact that students tend to engage in entrepreneurship programs primarily to meet academic requirements rather than from a genuine interest in starting a business (Desi Ramadhani et al., 2024).

This difference can be influenced by several factors. One of them is that student motivation in a local context such as Cirebon may not be fully developed and tends to be temporarily driven by the social environment, media influence, or short-term involvement in campus entrepreneurship programs. In addition, motivation without appropriate innovative and technical competencies often fails to translate into a serious commitment to entrepreneurship. Willpower alone is not enough without adequate ability. In addition, socio-economic background can also play a role. In societies with high formal job opportunities or a culture that emphasizes job stability, entrepreneurial motivation can be overshadowed by safer career paths.

Thus, in this context, entrepreneurial motivation does not have a significant effect on students' entrepreneurial intentions. Therefore, entrepreneurial development programs should be designed not only to inspire motivation but also to strengthen students' innovation competencies and skills to better prepare them for entrepreneurial decision-making.

Integration of Findings and Practical Implications

This research shows that a holistic approach is needed to develop entrepreneurial intentions among students. Innovation and competence are not only complementary, but are also important elements that reinforce each other in shaping entrepreneurial behavior. Therefore, educational institutions must design entrepreneurship programs that not only inspire but also equip students with the tools and mindset needed for real-world entrepreneurship. Approaches such as project-based learning, real-life business challenges, and structured mentoring can help effectively integrate these two aspects into higher education.

This perspective is supported by various previous studies. For example, Suparno et al. argue that education and entrepreneurial creativity are the main drivers of product innovation, especially when creativity serves as a mediating factor (Suparno et al., 2024). This shows the importance of integrating creativity into the learning process as a bridge between knowledge and entrepreneurial outcomes.

Expanding on this further, Pasic et al. used machine learning to analyze the dimensions, resources, and demographics of entrepreneurial mindsets across EU countries and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Pasic et al., 2025). Their findings highlight how these diverse factors shape students' entrepreneurial intentions, offering valuable policy and educational insights to support inclusive and context-based entrepreneurial development across different regions.

In the Indonesian context, Judijanto et al. show that Entrepreneurship Education, Creativity, and Intrinsic Motivation significantly affect students' Entrepreneurial Intentions. Self-efficacy plays an important mediating role, highlighting the importance of improving entrepreneurial competence,

fostering creativity, and increasing students' confidence in their abilities through targeted educational interventions (Judijanto et al., 2025).

A similar emphasis was found in a study by Priyono et al. which revealed that creativity and motivation to learn significantly influenced the entrepreneurial intentions of vocational school students majoring in fisheries (Priyono et al., 2024). This underscores the need to strengthen these two factors: creativity, and motivation through entrepreneurship education programs tailored to students' specific fields and career readiness.

Meanwhile, from a comparative cultural perspective, Kristiansen and Indarti found that individual perceptions of self-efficacy and instrumental readiness were the most significant determinants of entrepreneurial intentions among college students. Notably, Indonesian students show higher entrepreneurial intentions than their Norwegian counterparts, due to differences in cultural values and economic contexts (KRISTIANSEN & INDARTI, 2004). These findings underscore the importance of considering socio-cultural factors when designing entrepreneurial education policies.

Taken together, these insights affirm that while motivation can serve as an initial spark, it is a combination of competence and innovation strengthened through education and experience that truly equips students to act entrepreneurially. Therefore, universities should focus not only on inspiring students' interest in entrepreneurship but also on building their capacity to innovate and execute entrepreneurial ideas effectively. These efforts will foster a generation of entrepreneurs who are not only visionary but also able to navigate complex business environments both locally and globally.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted, this study concludes that entrepreneurial competence and innovation have a significant and positive impact on the entrepreneurial intentions of seventh-semester students in *Cirebon*. In other words, students who possess stronger personal, managerial, and entrepreneurial abilities, when accompanied by enhanced innovative capacities, tend to show a greater tendency to engage in entrepreneurial endeavors. In contrast, entrepreneurial motivation did not show a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intent. These findings suggest that although intrinsic motivation can play an initial role in stimulating interest, it is not sufficient on its own to encourage a strong intention to become an entrepreneur. Without the support of real competence and innovation skills, motivation alone is unlikely to translate into entrepreneurial action. Taken together, the results indicate that students' decisions to pursue entrepreneurship are rooted more in their ability to execute ideas than merely their desire to do so. Thus, the research model demonstrates a high level of suitability and shows substantial predictive power in explaining entrepreneurial intentions among students. Therefore, universities, especially those in developing regions such as *Cirebon*, must strategically enhance their entrepreneurship programs. These programs should not only aim to inspire students through motivational efforts but also equip them with practical and real-world skills and encourage innovative thinking. Integrating experiential learning, mentorship, and creativity-based projects can significantly improve students' readiness for the complexities of modern entrepreneurship. In conclusion, such a comprehensive effort is essential to cultivate a new generation of entrepreneurs who are not only ambitious but also competent and innovative—able to navigate the local and global business landscape with confidence and resilience.

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