

# ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTION MODELS: THE ROLE OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CAREER CHOICE AS A MEDIATION VARIABLE

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## Abstract

**Objective** - The study of the process that occurs between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action in the context of creating a new organization, the entrepreneurial intention-entrepreneurial action gap is a relatively new field of study even though entrepreneurial intention does not always lead to entrepreneurial action. This study aims to determine the factors that influence entrepreneurial action. **Design / methodology / approach** - This study used primary data by distributing questionnaires. The population in this study were high school and vocational students in the city of Semarang. The sample after the random sampling technique was applied consisted of 326 students. PLS SEM data analysis was used in this study with the help of SmartPLS 3.0 software. **Results** - Emotional intelligence has a positive influence on students' entrepreneurial action in. In addition, entrepreneurial career choice and motivation can mediate the influence of emotional intelligence on students' entrepreneurial actions. **Originality/Value** - This study uses entrepreneurial career choice and motivation as mediating variables. The use of these variables is based on the lack of involvement of students' psychological factors in influencing student entrepreneurial action so that it becomes a special interest in this study.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Action, Emotional Intelligence, Entrepreneurial Career Choice, Motivation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is associated with the creation of new organizations (Gartner, 1989) and entrepreneurs are agents of creative action as distinct from other creative acts who act because they are based on the ability to exploit the social, economic and/or cultural values of the ideas that exist at the origin (Martin et al. , 2013). Meanwhile, it can be said to be entrepreneurial if one of the following conditions is met, such as the formation of a new organization, the creation of a new income center in a pre-existing organization or the creation of a business resulting from the process of acquiring new skills (Gartner, 1985). In addition, entrepreneurship is also a process of multidimensional interaction that develops over time in a specific and dynamic context (Audretsch, 2012). The study of the process that occurs between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action in the context of creating a new organization, the entrepreneurial intention-action gap, is a relatively new field of study (Kautonen et al., 2015; Van Gelderen et al., 2015). According to the literature, all theoretical models assume that entrepreneurial intention is an entrepreneurial action directly or indirectly, although entrepreneurial intention does not always lead to entrepreneurial action (Townsend et al., 2010). Problems will appear if the entrepreneurial action is intentionally not carried out, if new restrictions appear, or if individual preferences change (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). In other

circumstances, the lack of entrepreneurial action means entrepreneurial intention that is not achieved (Wilson & Martin, 2015; Oliveira & Rua, 2018). The relationship between individual entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action is widely demonstrated in the literature (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). However, understanding what drives or hinders the creation of entrepreneurial action requires an understanding of how individual entrepreneurs understand and perceive opportunities to achieve them, because the perception of these opportunities is a process based on entrepreneurial intention. (Do Paço et al., 2015; Joensuu-Salo et al., 2015). Previous research has suggested that the factors influencing entrepreneurial action are still an under-researched area (Ripollés & Blesa, 2023). It is especially surprising to assume that the field of entrepreneurship only revolves around the relationship between entrepreneurial opportunities of enterprising individuals and stakeholders (Kuratko et al., 2021; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Therefore, this logic highlights the need to study the factors that influence entrepreneurial action especially among students without action, students will never make a business (Cui & Bell, 2022). Scholars have provided empirical evidence on the effects of different individual characteristics such as whether students have established businesses before (Hahn et al., 2020), if they have attended entrepreneurship courses (Lyons & Zhang, 2018), if they have a family business background ( Bae et al., 2014), if they have previously been exposed to entrepreneurship (Tingting et al., 2022), if they have an entrepreneurial mindset (Cui & Bell, 2022) or their initial level of entrepreneurial intention (Tingting et al., 2022). In addition, there is research showing that entrepreneur success can be influenced by personal characteristics, and several psychological/cognitive factors have been associated with the development of entrepreneurial intentions and the entrepreneurial process itself (Ferreira et al., 2012; Rodrigues et al., 2019). Several studies have shown that psychological factors play an important role in developing alternative models for the entrepreneurial process (Gelard & Emamisaleh, 2014). However, there is still little research dedicated to exploring how individual differences in emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial career choice, and motivation relate to entrepreneurial action.

## **2. THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 Entrepreneurial Action**

Entrepreneurial action involves individual efforts to be involved in processes that identify, develop, and carry out various activities, for example: (1) introduction of new goods and services in a period or process, (2) entry into new markets, (3) creation of new businesses, (4) the creation of a new economic world, and/or (5) individual and organizational learning (Venkataraman, 1997; Zahra et al., 2006; Dutta & Crossan, 2005). Because these things do not happen all at once, entrepreneurial action cannot be conceptualized as a single action, but rather as a process involving many actions that take place over time (Shepherd, 2015). Thus, it is consistent with current studies that entrepreneurial action is a process that involves goal-oriented individual cognitive and behavioral activities to involve perceptions of uncertainty in creating new ventures (Chen et al., 2018). Entrepreneurial action is thus conceptualized as a dynamic interactive process that includes cognition and behavior shaped by the environment

(McMullen & Shepherd, 2006). Behavior denotes the totality of interacting elements in a dynamic psychological field.

## 2.2 Emotional Intelligence

Emotions are defined as feelings, thoughts, and uniqueness in terms of individual psychological or biological tendencies (Goleman, 2005). Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to recognize, understand and express emotions (Hughes et al., 2013). Individuals with emotional intelligence are able to assimilate and balance their emotions when making decisions (Mayer et al., 2000). Scholars classify emotional intelligence as a factor in shaping positive attitudes, behaviors and outcomes. For example, individuals with high emotional intelligence show openness in their interactions with others and are able to manage their own emotions and those of others more efficiently to ensure desired goals can be achieved (Mayer et al., 2016). This research focuses on four dimensions of emotional intelligence, namely self-awareness, emotion management, empathy and social skills. Self-awareness is the key to emotional intelligence, where individuals who are self-aware try to understand the emotions, strengths, weaknesses and values of other individuals (Goleman, 2004). They are also able to control their emotions and act appropriately when working with others. Self-awareness can help individuals understand the factors in their environment that shape their values. Emotion management refers to a person's ability to manage his negative emotions in order to implement appropriate actions (Goleman, 2004). Emotion management can also be interpreted as how one handles feelings of anger, fear or anxiety during difficult times. Individuals who can manage their emotions efficiently usually have the ability to direct their emotions towards the desired behavior and maintain their effectiveness. Empathy is defined as an individual's ability to feel or understand the feelings of others. Empathic individuals are able to feel the emotions of others as their own (Corey, 2001). Finally, social skills refer to how individuals manage their social relationships. People with good social skills have an advantage because they can lead others to achieve the desired goals (Goleman, 2004). Thus, entrepreneurs with good social skills can effectively lead their employees to achieve organizational goals (Othman & Tengku Muda, 2018).

## 2.3 Entrepreneurial Career Choice

There is a relationship between entrepreneurial behavior and career choice, this study uses the theory of planned behavior (TPB). This theory also identifies attitudes, subjective norms and perceptions of behavioral control as determinants of intention (Tiwari et al., 2017). According to TPB, the influence of individual intentions in doing or not doing certain behaviors is due to the following factors:

- a) Personal attitudes toward certain behaviors, such as good or bad perceptions of those behaviors.
- b) Social pressure on individuals to perform or not perform the behavior.
- c) Personal perception of the individual's ability to perform the behavior.

There is a belief that when a person has developed an intention to perform a certain behavior, the behavior will manifest itself (Thoradeniya et al., 2015). However, this study only covers

the determinants of attitudes and perceptions of behavioral control and does not include the determinants of social norms. In this context, TPB is applied to examine the behavior of students' entrepreneurial career choices, which means their intention to cultivate entrepreneurship as a career choice.

Previous researchers have used the determinants of attitudes as indicators to explain personal perceptions among students about entrepreneurial career behavior (Thoradeniya et al., 2015; Tiwari et al., 2017)... The higher the positive attitude towards entrepreneurship among students, the higher the probability choosing entrepreneurship as a career (Othman & Tengku Muda, 2018).

## 2.4 Motivation

Individuals are driven to entrepreneurial activity by several motivations. This motivation also determines the attitude towards entrepreneurship. Someone has a positive or negative perception of entrepreneurial career development (Rosique-Blasco et al., 2018). Entrepreneurial motivation usually focuses on key economic and social characteristics (Lemeilleur et al., 2020).

**Pull motivations:** Some people are attracted to doing business from positive motivations, such as a belief in success. Additional reasons that act as pull motivations are as follows: Need for independence and professional autonomy, need for exploitative opportunities, transformation of a hobby or previous professional experience into a business, professional success, financial motivation (profits, increased income), etc. (Pliakoura et al. , 2022).

**Push motivation:** Many people are encouraged to develop a business for various reasons, such as the economic crisis, unemployment (or threat of unemployment), forced migration, minimal employment opportunities in the public sector, family needs and family burdens, etc. (Pliakoura et al., 2022).

The discrepancy between the opportunity versus need motive has been associated with pull versus push entrepreneurship (Van Gelderen et al., 2006). Pull factors attract entrepreneurs to create businesses and seize market opportunities (Matricano & Sorrentino, 2014), while push factors refer to external conditions that force people to become entrepreneurs, due to a lack of viable alternatives (Devece et al., 2016). It is generally accepted that entrepreneurs can be influenced by the push and pull that will determine and shape the business path they choose.

## 2.5 Hypothesis Development

### 2.5.1 Emotional intelligence and students' entrepreneurial action

Emotional intelligence is associated with creative and innovative attitudes among students (Othman & Tengku Muda, 2018). Individuals with high emotional intelligence are able to generate creativity which ultimately shapes their entrepreneurial characteristics, which ultimately leads to entrepreneurial behavior (Ngah & Salleh, 2015). Creativity is an important component of human behavior, and is undoubtedly a multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be discerned with a single approach (Hughes et al., 2013; Puhakka, 2012). It is one of the main cognitive tools that humans use in proactive behavior (Gilad, 1984). Recently, Carmeli et al.,

(2014) considered creativity as a process of generating ideas, solving problems and implementing current ideas or solutions in a particular social context. Individual creativity in organizations is a very interesting research area because of its contribution to individual and organizational success (Carmeli et al., 2014). Thus, it can also be an influential variable in the intention to take new actions or become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is a creative activity so to understand the behavior of individual entrepreneurs it is very important to consider the psychological abilities of entrepreneurs (Rodrigues et al., 2019). In this context, the entrepreneurial intention model must add a creative disposition (Hamidi et al., 2008).

Students' emotional intelligence can help them to develop some entrepreneurial characteristics and the possibility of having entrepreneurial behavior (Hassan & Omar, 2016). The importance of emotional intelligence when managing difficult moments in making the right choices for future professions (Othman & Tengku Muda, 2018). Emotional intelligence can be a way to manage feelings of disappointment and help restore the confidence needed to fight these feelings. The author argues that students with a low level of emotional intelligence lack enthusiasm for making career decisions because of the inability to maintain good social networks which can prevent them from getting the right information to make career decisions so that if there is action students will never make an effort (Cui & Bells, 2022).

**H1:** Emotional intelligence makes a positive contribution to student entrepreneurial action.

### **2.5.2 Emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial career choice and students' entrepreneurial action**

Emotional intelligence is seen as one way to support career development (Ellis & Ryan, 2005). Several studies have focused on the role of emotional intelligence in choosing a career, but emotional awareness and the ability to manage emotions also contribute to career development (Di Fabio & Blustein, 2010). The process of making career choices undoubtedly involves emotional factors and the interference of others (Brown et al., 2003). Sometimes, this process can lead to conflicts, for example between one's career interests, the current job market, and the interests of family or loved ones. Therefore, emotional intelligence is very important in the selection process. This opinion is supported by Young & Valach (2004) that emotions can also help in career development. Emotions can motivate and energize someone to take action. In choosing a future profession, one will experience difficult moments in making the right choice, and sometimes have to face feelings of disappointment. Emotional intelligence can help you regain the confidence needed to fight these feelings.

Previous research validated that emotional intelligence is another factor that helps students build their entrepreneurial characteristics, and ultimately develop entrepreneurial behavior and actions (Hassan & Omar, 2016). This is because individuals with emotional intelligence tend to build their own businesses. Research from Ingram et al., (2019) also supports the notion that emotional intelligence is significantly related to the tendency to become an entrepreneur. Thus, various factors can motivate students to become entrepreneurs. The reasons for students' interest in entrepreneurship need to be studied because entrepreneurship drives economic

change. In particular, it should highlight the impact of the emotional intelligence dimension on students' entrepreneurial career choice behavior. Another study conducted by Sternberg (2004) explains how successful intelligence can generate new kinds of contributions to entrepreneurial success.

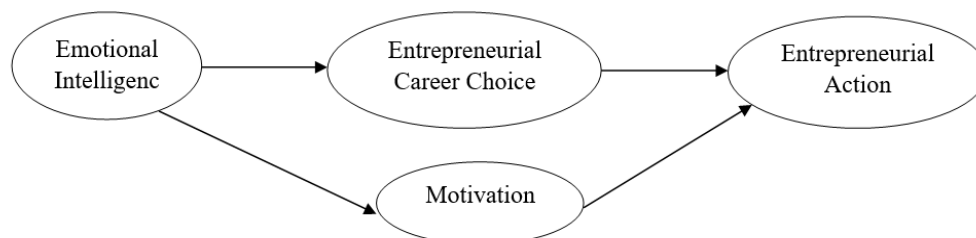
**H2:** Entrepreneurial career choice mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and students' entrepreneurial action.

### 2.5.3 Emotional intelligence, motivation, students' entrepreneurial action

Emotional intelligence can show excellent performance (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). High motivation can encourage individuals to try hard in carrying out any task (Othman & Tengku Muda, 2018). Previous research also shows that emotional intelligence is the most important factor in predicting success in an entrepreneurial career. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are usually highly motivated and understand other people (Brundin et al., 2008). As a result, this ability will influence individual interests and preferences for entrepreneurship. Individuals with high emotional intelligence will seize opportunities and think innovatively (Othman & Tengku Muda, 2018).

Successful entrepreneurs have higher social competence (Baron & Markman, 2003). Thus, four aspects of social competence were found to contribute to entrepreneurial success: social perception, which involves an individual's aptitude for understanding others; impression management, which involves techniques for eliciting positive reactions in others; persuasiveness, which involves the ability to change another person's views or behavior to produce a desired action; and social adaptability, which involves feeling comfortable in a variety of situations. Entrepreneurs from the cosmetics and high-tech industries to measure their ability to interact effectively with one another, and how these social competencies contribute to greater financial success (Baron & Markman, 2003). The results show a positive relationship between the accurate perception of others and financial success for entrepreneurs in both industries (Othman & Tengku Muda, 2018).

**H3:** Motivation can mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and students' entrepreneurial action.



**Figure 1: The form of the theoretical model with the hypothesis proposed by the researcher**



### 3. METHODS

#### Research Design and Measurement

This research is included in quantitative research with this research instrument adopting previous research. The entrepreneurial action variable instrument was adapted from (Ripollés & Blesa, 2023). The emotional intelligence instrument was adopted from (Othman & Tengku Muda, 2018), the entrepreneurial career choice instrument was adopted from (Baskaran et al., 2020), and the motivation instrument was adopted from (Taormina & Kin-Mei Lao, 2007). This instrument uses 5 Likert scales. The number of samples is 328 high school and vocational high school students in Semarang City with random sampling method as the sample. PLS SEM data analysis was used in this study with the help of SmartPLS 3.0 software. PLS is a 'soft' model without dispersion assumptions that can explain the structure of data diversity and a general method for predicting latent variable models that are measured indirectly by explanatory variables (Wigena and Alamudi, 1997). The results of calculations in the regression model using the least squares (OLS) regression method have several weaknesses. These weaknesses include symptoms of multicollinearity, inflexibility in application, the results obtained are not optimal when the amount of data is very large or very small and experiencing difficulties when the data is qualitative. This weakness is very appropriate if overcome by using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method. The reason why PLS is the right solution is because PLS is a flexible method that is soft on assumptions. That is, this method does not require assumptions about the distribution of the observed variables and the large number of variables used. In fact, because this method includes soft modeling, many researchers use it to solve several cases across fields. The model obtained with PLS can optimize the predictive relationship between the Y variable group and the X variable group. The process of determining the PLS model is carried out iteratively, each latent vector obtained is associated with a response and each reduction of the dependent variable is also associated with a response. Estimation of the next vector is done by connecting the calculations simultaneously (Wold, 1966). According to Irawan (2002) PLS has a structure of variance in Y which affects the calculation of components of linear combinations in X and vice versa, the structure of variance in X affects linear combinations in Y. The basic assumption of PLS modelling is that all information from explanatory variables is addressed to latent variables. The PLS model describes the relationship between the latent variable  $\xi$  from variable X and the latent variable  $\eta$  from variable Y. The model is:

#### 1. Model of internal relations

$\eta = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \xi + \vartheta$ , with  $\beta_0$  and  $\beta_1$  is the coefficient of the internal relations model, and  $\vartheta$  is the random factor.

#### 2. External relations model

$$X = \pi_0 + \pi_1 \eta + \varepsilon$$

$Y = (\pi_0 + \pi_1 \beta_0) + \pi_1 \beta_1 \xi + (\varepsilon + \pi_1 \vartheta)$ , with  $\pi_0$  and  $\pi_1$  is the coefficient of the external relationship model (loading) for X, and  $\varepsilon$  is the random factor.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Outer Model (Validity and Reliability)

**Table 1: Validity and Reliability Construct**

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<b>EAC</b>	0,991	0,997	0,915	0,705
<b>EI</b>	0,816	0,827	0,923	0,638
<b>ECC</b>	0,965	0,965	0,999	0,697
<b>MT</b>	0,988	0,989	0,915	0,741

Source: Data processed 2023

Note: EAC: Entrepreneurial Action. EI: Emotional Intelligence, ECC: Entrepreneurial Career Choice, MT: Motivation

Based on table 2, the AVE test results produced by all constructs meet validity because  $AVE > 0.50$ . The results of the reliability test on the variables in this study indicate that the variable meets internal reliability because Cronbach's alpha  $> 0.70$  and all variables meet composite reliability because composite reliability  $> 0.70$  so that all variables meet consistency and composite internal reliability, which means that all of these statements are able to measure a problem with a constant (constant) so that it can be said as a measuring tool that is reliable or reliable. After the questionnaire has been designed and is valid and reliable, it can then be used to measure variables.

### Inner Model

#### 4.2.1 R Square

The R Square value is used to explain the effect of certain exogenous latent variables on endogenous latent variables whether they have a substantive effect.

**Table 2: R Square**

	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Hasil
<b>EAC</b>	0.783	0.777	Strong
<b>EI</b>	0.780	0.765	Strong
<b>ECC</b>	0.872	0.868	Strong
<b>MT</b>	0.880	0.870	Strong

Source: Processed data, 2023

Based on the results shown in Table 2, the R Square value of each variable is in a strong category because the R Square value is  $> 0.67$ .

Note: EAC: Entrepreneurial Action. EI: Emotional Intelligence, ECC: Entrepreneurial Career Choice, MT: Motivation



#### 4.2.2 Predictive Relevance

Predictive relevance or the Q Square test is used to measure how well the observed values are generated by the model and parameter estimates. If the Q Square value > 0 indicates that the model has good predictive relevance and vice versa. Based on the calculation results, it is known that the value of Q2 Entrepreneurial Action is 0.96, then Q2 Emotional Intelligence is 0.984, Q2 Entrepreneurial Career Choice is 0.975, and Q2 Motivation is 0.955. From this value it shows that the number is > 0 (zero) so that the observation value generated by the research model has good predictive relevance.

#### 4.2.3 Quality index's

Quality index's used to determine the goodness of fit with the GoF index. The goodness of fit or GoF index is used to validate the outer model, the inner model and k is used to determine the goodness of fit with the GoF index. Goodness of fit or GoF index is used to validate the outer model, inner model and the overall model. To calculate GoF, it is calculated from the square root of the average AVE and average R Square values as follows throughout the model. To calculate GoF, it is calculated from the square root of the average AVE and average R Square values as follows

$$GoF = \sqrt{AVE \times R^2}$$

Based on the calculations, the resulting goodness of fit is 0.792 which indicates the large category. The goodness of fit number has good results to explain the relationship between latent variables and their assumptions.

#### 4.2.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing uses the bootstrap method. The bootstrap procedure uses the entire original sample for resampling. The decision rule for testing the hypothesis is that if the original sample value is positive followed by a t-statistic value > 1.96 or a p-value < 0.05, then the hypothesis is positive and significant. The following results of hypothesis testing are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Direct Effect**

	Original Sample	T Statistik	P-Values	Description
EI> EAC	0.794	10.627	0.000	Positive, Significant

Source: Processed data, 2023

Note: EAC: Entrepreneurial Action, EI: Emotional Intelligence.

Based on the statistical results of direct hypothesis testing in Table 3, it shows that the effect of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial action with an original sample of 0.794, p = 0.000 > 0.05 so that H1 is accepted. Students who have high emotional intelligence are able to produce creativity that shapes their entrepreneurial characteristics which ultimately lead to entrepreneurial behavior (Nghah & Salleh, 2015). Students with a low level of emotional intelligence lack the enthusiasm to make career decisions because of the inability to maintain

good social networks which can prevent them from getting the right information to make career decisions so that there are actions of students who will never make an effort (Cui & Bell, 2022).

### Analysis of Mediating Variables

The results of mediation testing or often called the indirect effect can be seen from the total effect. The results of the indirect effect can be seen in Table 4

**Table 4: Indirect Effect**

	Original Sample	T Statistik	P Values	Results
ECC> EAC	0.675	8.785	0.000	Accepted
MT> EAC	0.273	2.614	0.012	Accepted

Source: Processed data, 2023

Note: EAC: Entrepreneurial Action, ECC: Entrepreneurial Career Choice, MT: Motivation

Based on the statistical results of the indirect effect in Table 4, it shows that. Entrepreneurial career choice mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial action with an original sample of 0.675,  $p = 0.000 > 0.05$  so that H2 is accepted. Emotions can motivate and energize someone to take action.

In choosing a future profession, one will experience difficult moments in making the right choice, and sometimes have to face feelings of disappointment. Emotional intelligence can help regain the confidence needed to fight these feelings (Othman & Tengku Muda, 2018).

Previous research validated that emotional intelligence is another factor that helps students build their entrepreneurial characteristics, and ultimately develop entrepreneurial behavior and actions (Hassan & Omar, 2016). This is because individuals with emotional intelligence tend to build their own businesses. Research from Ingram et al., (2019) also supports the notion that emotional intelligence is significantly related to the tendency to become an entrepreneur.

Meanwhile, motivation mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial action with an original sample of 0.273,  $p = 0.012 > 0.05$  so that H3 is accepted. High motivation can encourage individuals to try hard in carrying out any task (Othman & Tengku Muda, 2018).

Previous research also shows that emotional intelligence is the most important factor in predicting success in an entrepreneurial career. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are usually highly motivated and understand other people (Brundin et al., 2008). As a result, this ability will influence individual interests and preferences for entrepreneurship. Individuals with high emotional intelligence will seize opportunities and think innovatively.

## 5. CONCLUSION, RESEARCH LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the results of the analysis to determine the factors that influence students' entrepreneurial action, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial career choice and motivation have a positive effect on entrepreneurial action. This shows that emotions can motivate and energize someone to take action in choosing a future profession so that it can encourage students to try hard in carrying out any task. This will affect students' interests and preferences for entrepreneurship. Like other studies, there are some research limitations. The first limitation is the sample selection.

This study used a convenience sample by selecting SMA and SMK students. Although this procedure is common in studies on entrepreneurship education (Smith et al., 2022; Yi & Duval-Couetil, 2022), it is difficult to generalize the results, the initial differences between the two groups cannot be controlled for (Rauch and Hulsink, 2015). From this, further research is to expand the object of research by comparing the two groups of public and private education. The second limitation is that it only involves one independent variable, and it is recommended for further research to include more independent variables or add variables according to current conditions so that new trends will be found and even solutions to increase student entrepreneurial action.

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