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From Entrepreneurship Education to Entrepreneurial Intention: The Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Readiness and Gender Differences

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship education is widely recognized as an important factor in fostering entrepreneurial intention, yet the mechanisms underlying this relationship remain insufficiently understood. This study examines the mediating role of entrepreneurial readiness and whether the relationships among entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial readiness, and entrepreneurial intention differ by gender. Entrepreneurial readiness is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial attitude, and entrepreneurial competence. Using survey data from 2,082 students at two public universities in Jambi, Indonesia, the model was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), while gender differences were examined using Partial Least Squares Multi-Group Analysis (PLS-MGA). The results show that entrepreneurship education positively affects entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial readiness. Entrepreneurial readiness also positively affects entrepreneurial intention and significantly mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. Gender differences were found only in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness, whereas the relationships involving entrepreneurial intention did not differ significantly between male and female students. These findings position entrepreneurial readiness as a multidimensional mechanism linking entrepreneurship education to entrepreneurial intention and indicate that gender differences are more evident in the development of readiness than in entrepreneurial intention itself.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education; Entrepreneurial Readiness; Entrepreneurial Intention; Gender Differences

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PENDAHULUAN

. Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a key driver of economic growth, job creation, and social welfare. Beyond contributing to productivity and innovation, entrepreneurship plays an important role in addressing global challenges, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and strengthening economic resilience in the face of various crises (Hill et al., 2024). Accordingly, promoting entrepreneurship has become a policy priority in many countries, particularly as a means of encouraging new business creation and supporting sustainable economic development (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018; Hill et al., 2024; Naiborhu & Susanti, 2021).

In Indonesia, however, efforts to strengthen entrepreneurial activity continue to face considerable challenges. In May 2026, Indonesia's open unemployment rate stood at 4.68%, with university graduates accounting for 6.13% of the unemployed population (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2026). This situation is further reflected in Indonesia's relatively low level of entrepreneurial activity. According to the Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) index, Indonesia ranked 36th among 49 countries (Hill et al., 2023). Although the Indonesian government established a target entrepreneurship rate of 3.95% through Presidential Regulation No. 2 of 2022 on National

Entrepreneurship Development for 2021–2024, the rate reached only 3.32% in 2025, remaining below that of several ASEAN countries, including Malaysia and Singapore (Sandi, 2025).

These conditions highlight the continuing need to promote entrepreneurial activity through the creation of new businesses. Within entrepreneurship research, entrepreneurial intention has long been regarded as a key construct for understanding the process through which individuals develop the motivation to establish a new venture (Ahmed et al., 2020; Anwar et al., 2022; Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018; Ben Youssef et al., 2021; Puni et al., 2018). Entrepreneurial intention refers to an individual's commitment and motivation to engage in entrepreneurial behavior and reflects the extent to which individuals are willing to exert effort toward starting a new business (Hisrich et al., 2017; Krueger & Carsrud, 1993).

A review of the literature on entrepreneurial intention identifies entrepreneurship education as an important factor in shaping individuals' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship. Previous studies suggest that entrepreneurship education can strengthen entrepreneurial intention by developing entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Jiatong et al., 2021; Martínez-Gregorio et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2023; Uddin et al., 2022). However, empirical evidence remains mixed. Several studies have reported a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention (Jiatong et al., 2021; Nowiński et al., 2019; Saeed et al., 2019; Soomro & Shah, 2022; Uddin et al., 2022), whereas others have found no significant or even negative effects (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Mukhtar et al., 2021; Oosterbeek et al., 2010; Patricia & Silangen, 2016). These inconsistencies suggest that the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention may involve intervening psychological and cognitive mechanisms that remain insufficiently understood.

Entrepreneurial readiness offers a potential mechanism for explaining how educational experiences are translated into entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurial readiness reflects an individual's preparedness to engage in entrepreneurial activities and encompasses motivational, attitudinal, and competency-related dimensions (M. Hasan et al., 2024; Kallas, 2019). Previous studies have shown that individuals with higher levels of entrepreneurial readiness tend to report stronger entrepreneurial intentions (Kallas & Parts, 2021; Schillo et al., 2016). In Indonesia, Arifin et al. (2024) found that entrepreneurship education and the social environment significantly influence entrepreneurial intention and readiness, while also suggesting a potential reciprocal relationship between readiness and intention. Nevertheless, entrepreneurial readiness has generally been examined either as an antecedent or as an outcome of other variables, rather than as a mediating mechanism linking entrepreneurship education to entrepreneurial intention (Antonius & Handoyo, 2024; Arifin et al., 2024; Dora, 2019; Irsyada et al., 2018), Consequently, limited empirical attention has been given to how entrepreneurial readiness mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. This represents an important gap in the existing literature.

Gender represents another relevant dimension in entrepreneurship research because gendered social and cultural experiences may shape how individuals respond to entrepreneurship education and develop entrepreneurial intention (Contreras-Barraza et al., 2021; Gomes et al., 2021; Gurel et al., 2021; Kong & Kim, 2022; Vamvaka et al., 2020). Previous studies have reported that women often exhibit lower levels of entrepreneurial intention than men (Armuña et al., 2020; Dabic et al., 2012; Santos et al., 2016) particularly in highly knowledge-intensive business sectors (Dilli & Westerhuis, 2018). However, evidence from Indonesia provides a different pattern. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor reported that women's total early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA) exceeded that of men in Indonesia in 2023 (Hill et al., 2023). These contrasting findings suggest that gender differences in entrepreneurship may depend on the specific context and stage of the entrepreneurial process. Accordingly, examining gender differences in the relationships among entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial readiness, and entrepreneurial intention may provide a more nuanced understanding of how entrepreneurial intentions are formed.

Building on these gaps, this study proposes a model in which entrepreneurship education influences entrepreneurial intention through entrepreneurial readiness, conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising entrepreneurial motivation, attitude, and competence. In

contrast to previous studies that have predominantly examined entrepreneurial readiness as an antecedent or outcome, this study positions readiness as a mediating mechanism through which educational experiences may be translated into entrepreneurial intention. The study further extends the analysis by examining whether the structural relationships among these constructs differ between male and female students. By integrating the mediating role of entrepreneurial readiness with a gender-based multi-group perspective, this study seeks to advance understanding of the mechanisms through which entrepreneurship education contributes to entrepreneurial intention and to provide implications for designing entrepreneurship education that is responsive to differences in students' entrepreneurial readiness.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Intention

Education plays an important role in developing students' knowledge, skills, and capabilities to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Handayati et al., 2020). In particular, entrepreneurship education provides students with knowledge and practical experiences that can strengthen their motivation and ability to pursue entrepreneurial careers. It can shape students' entrepreneurial intentions by fostering entrepreneurial motivation, developing relevant skills, expanding social networks, and providing opportunities to gain practical experience (S. M. Hasan et al., 2017). Entrepreneurship education also facilitates access to valuable resources through the acquisition and transfer of entrepreneurial knowledge and information. For instance, entrepreneurship courses can provide students with opportunities to develop relationships with peers and other stakeholders, which may facilitate the promotion and development of their business activities (Zeng & Honig, 2016). Empirical evidence generally supports a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. Exposure to entrepreneurship education can enhance students' self-confidence, opportunity recognition ability, and preparedness to engage in entrepreneurial activities, thereby strengthening their intention to start a business (Jiatong et al., 2021; Martínez-Gregorio et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2023; Uddin et al., 2022). These findings suggest that entrepreneurship education does not merely provide students with theoretical knowledge but can also develop the cognitive and behavioral capabilities necessary for entrepreneurial action. Accordingly, students who receive greater exposure to entrepreneurship education are expected to develop stronger entrepreneurial intentions. Based on the theoretical arguments and empirical evidence discussed above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on students' entrepreneurial intention.

Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Readiness, and Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial readiness refers to the extent to which an individual is prepared to initiate and engage in entrepreneurial activities. Kallas (2019) conceptualizes entrepreneurial readiness as a multidimensional construct comprising three interrelated dimensions: entrepreneurial motivation, attitude toward entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial competence. These dimensions collectively reflect an individual's preparedness to pursue entrepreneurship. An individual can be considered entrepreneurially ready when they possess the motivation to become an entrepreneur, a favorable attitude toward entrepreneurial activities, and the competencies required to identify opportunities, mobilize resources, and manage a business (Kallas, 2019; Kallas & Parts, 2021).

Entrepreneurship education represents an important antecedent of entrepreneurial readiness. Through formal learning and experiential activities, students can acquire knowledge, practical experience, and skills that contribute to the development of entrepreneurial motivation, positive attitudes, and competencies. Previous studies have shown that entrepreneurship education can strengthen entrepreneurial motivation (Hassan et al., 2021; Solesvik, 2013; Sun et al., 2023), foster positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Kim, 2017; Su et al., 2021; Wardana et al., 2020), and develop the competencies required to recognize opportunities and manage entrepreneurial activities (Kim, 2017; Lv et al., 2021; Xiang et al., 2023).

Because these dimensions constitute the foundation of entrepreneurial readiness, improvements in motivation, attitudes, and competencies are expected to enhance students' overall readiness to engage in entrepreneurship. Consistent with this argument, previous empirical studies have reported a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness (Jiatong et al., 2021; Lv et al., 2021; Wardana et al., 2020).

Entrepreneurial readiness may also play an important role in the formation of entrepreneurial intention. The decision to pursue entrepreneurship is influenced not only by an individual's desire to become an entrepreneur but also by their perceived preparedness to undertake entrepreneurial activities (Kallas, 2019; Kallas & Parts, 2021; Khetarpal et al., 2025). Entrepreneurial motivation can strengthen individuals' willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option, while a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship can increase the perceived attractiveness and desirability of entrepreneurial activities (Al-Jubari et al., 2019; Liñán & Chen, 2009; Su et al., 2021; Wardana et al., 2020). Meanwhile, entrepreneurial competence can provide individuals with a greater sense of preparedness to recognize opportunities, mobilize resources, and address challenges associated with starting and managing a business (Kim, 2017; Lv et al., 2021; Sánchez, 2013). The combination of these motivational, attitudinal, and competency-related dimensions may therefore strengthen an individual's readiness to pursue entrepreneurship, which in turn can contribute to stronger entrepreneurial intention (Kallas & Parts, 2021).

Taken together, these arguments suggest that entrepreneurship education may influence entrepreneurial intention not only directly but also indirectly by strengthening students' entrepreneurial readiness. Entrepreneurship education provides the learning experiences through which students can develop the motivation, attitudes, and competencies necessary for entrepreneurial engagement, while entrepreneurial readiness represents the internal condition through which these educational experiences may be translated into entrepreneurial intention. Based on this theoretical framework and the supporting empirical evidence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2. Entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on entrepreneurial readiness.
H3. Entrepreneurial readiness has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.
H4. Entrepreneurial readiness mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention.

The Role of Gender in the Relationship Between Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Intentions

Gender represents an important contextual factor in understanding the formation of entrepreneurial intention. Social feminist theory suggests that differences between men and women are shaped, in part, by socialization processes that influence their values, beliefs, and behavioral orientations (Ahl, 2006; Shirokova et al., 2015). Consistent with this perspective, social role theory proposes that societal norms and expectations shape gendered stereotypes regarding occupational roles considered appropriate for men and women (Eagly & Wood, 2012). In the context of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial roles have traditionally been associated more strongly with masculine characteristics, whereas women may experience greater pressure to conform to socially prescribed roles (Karimi et al., 2016; Thébaud, 2010). Such gendered expectations may create additional social and psychological barriers for women considering entrepreneurship as a career option (Minniti & Naudé, 2010; Thébaud, 2010; Wu et al., 2019). Women may also approach entrepreneurship within a broader network of family, community, and work relationships (Behr & Xi, 2025; Deng et al., 2025), potentially placing greater emphasis on social support, caregiving responsibilities, and work–family balance than men (Zhang et al., 2014).

Previous studies have reported gender differences in entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial self-confidence, with women often exhibiting lower levels than men (Dempsey & Jennings, 2014; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015; Nowiński et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2016). These differences have been associated with gender stereotypes and social and structural barriers that may constrain women's participation in entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006; Byrne & Fayolle, 2010; Gupta et

al., 2008; Verheul et al., 2012). However, the role of gender may not be limited to differences in entrepreneurial intention itself. Entrepreneurship education may provide learning experiences that help reduce some of the barriers associated with entrepreneurial engagement. Indeed, several studies suggest that women may experience stronger gains from entrepreneurship education in terms of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, attitudes toward entrepreneurship, opportunity perceptions, and entrepreneurial intention (Chowdhury et al., 2019; Kong & Kim, 2022; van Ewijk & Belghiti-Mahut, 2019).

These findings suggest that gender may influence not only the level of entrepreneurial intention but also the way in which entrepreneurship education is translated into the psychological and cognitive conditions underlying entrepreneurial intention. In particular, differences in socialization, perceived roles, confidence, and access to support may shape how male and female students respond to entrepreneurship education and develop entrepreneurial readiness. Accordingly, examining gender differences in the structural relationships among entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial readiness, and entrepreneurial intention can provide a more nuanced understanding of whether the entrepreneurial education process operates similarly across gender groups. Based on this theoretical framework and the supporting empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5. The relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention differs significantly between male and female students.
H6. The relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness differs significantly between male and female students.
H7. The relationship between entrepreneurial readiness and entrepreneurial intention differs significantly between male and female students.

Figure 1 presents the proposed research framework, illustrating the hypothesized relationships among entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial readiness, and entrepreneurial intention. The framework depicts both the direct and indirect relationships among the study variables, including the mediating role of entrepreneurial readiness and the potential differences in these relationships across gender groups.

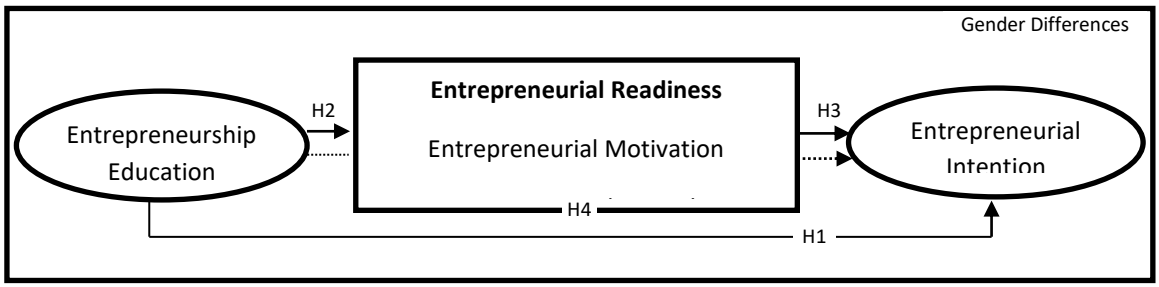


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the hypothesized relationships among entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial readiness, and entrepreneurial intention. The study also examined whether these structural relationships differed between male and female students. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a cross-sectional survey design. The research model specified entrepreneurship education as the independent variable, entrepreneurial readiness as the mediating variable, and entrepreneurial intention as the dependent variable. Entrepreneurial readiness was modeled as a higher-order construct comprising three dimensions: entrepreneurial motivation, attitude toward entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial competence. Gender was

included as a grouping variable to assess potential differences in the structural relationships among the study constructs.

Population and Sample

The population comprised currently enrolled students at Universitas Jambi and Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi who were in their sixth to tenth semesters and enrolled across various faculties. The minimum sample size was determined using the inverse square root method, which is applicable to PLS-SEM and considers the minimum expected path coefficient in the structural model (Hair et al., 2022; Kock & Hadaya, 2018). Participants were selected using convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly employed in social and educational research when access to the target population is constrained by time, cost, or logistical considerations (Winton & Sabol, 2022). Convenience sampling has also been widely applied in entrepreneurship research, including studies examining entrepreneurial intention (Anwar et al., 2022; Batool et al., 2011; Nowiński et al., 2019). Data were collected from students who met the study's inclusion criteria. After screening for completeness and eligibility, 2,082 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis. This sample size exceeded the minimum requirement established through the inverse square root method and provided an adequate basis for estimating the structural model using PLS-SEM and conducting multi-group comparisons between male and female students using PLS-MGA. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of the Research Sample

Universitas Jambi			**Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin State Islamic University**		
	f	**%**		**f**	**%**
Faculty			***Faculty***		
Economics and Business	252	17%	Arts and Humanities	21	3%
Law	125	8%	Islamic Economics and Business	270	44%
Medicine and Health Sciences	142	10%	Science and Technology	10	2%
Teaching and Education	494	34%	Syariah	106	17%
Agriculture	136	9%	Education and Teacher Training	204	33%
Animal Science	32	2%			
Science and Technology	290	20%			
Total	1471	100%	Total	611	100%
Semester of Study			***Semester of Study***		
6th Semester	1159	79%	6th Semester	287	47%
8th Semester	312	21%	8th Semester	192	31%
			10th Semester	132	22%
Total	1471	100%	Total	611	100%
Gender			***Gender***		
Male	736	50%	Male	305	50%
Female	735	50%	Female	306	50%
Total	1471	100%	Total	611	100%

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online through Google Forms to students who met the established eligibility criteria. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were informed about the purpose and objectives of the study and assured that their responses would be treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes. During the data collection period, the researchers monitored the number of responses and distributed reminders to eligible respondents until the targeted sample size was achieved. Because the study also examined differences between male and female students, the data collection process was monitored to ensure sufficient representation of both gender groups for the subsequent multi-group analysis. After data collection was completed, all responses were screened for completeness and eligibility. Data cleaning was then conducted to identify incomplete or inconsistent responses. Only responses that satisfied the established inclusion criteria were retained for the subsequent analysis.

Measurement Instruments

The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire adapted from measurement scales previously developed and validated in the literature. The original items were translated into Indonesian and contextually adapted to the higher education setting in Indonesia while preserving the conceptual meaning of the original constructs. Linguistic and contextual adjustments were made to terminology and sentence structure to ensure that the items were clear and understandable to respondents without altering their substantive meaning. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Entrepreneurship education was measured using five items adapted from Mukhtar et al. (2021) based on the conceptual framework of educational support proposed by Denanyoh et al. (2015). The scale captures students' perceptions of the entrepreneurial learning support and experiences provided through higher education. Entrepreneurial intention was measured using the six-item Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ) developed by Liñán & Chen (2009). The EIQ has been widely used to measure individuals' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship across different cultural and educational contexts. Entrepreneurial readiness was modeled as a higher-order construct comprising three lower-order dimensions: entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial attitude, and entrepreneurial competence, following the conceptualization proposed by Kallas (2019) and Kallas & Parts (2021). Each dimension was operationalized using measurement items adapted from established instruments. Specifically, entrepreneurial motivation was measured using items adapted from Hassan et al. (2021), entrepreneurial attitude was measured using items adapted from Liñán & Chen (2009), and entrepreneurial competence was measured using items adapted from (Seraj et al., 2022). The items were translated and contextually adapted to reflect the experiences of university students while maintaining the conceptual meaning of the original measures.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software. PLS-SEM was selected because it is suitable for estimating complex structural models, including models involving higher-order constructs (HOCs), and is particularly appropriate for prediction-oriented research (Hair et al., 2022). In this study, entrepreneurial readiness was specified as a higher-order construct (HOC) comprising three lower-order constructs (LOCs): entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial attitude, and entrepreneurial competence. The HOC was estimated using the disjoint two-stage approach recommended by Sarstedt et al. (2019). The analysis proceeded in two main stages. First, the measurement model was evaluated to establish the reliability and validity of the constructs. Convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity were assessed using the recommended PLS-SEM criteria. After the measurement model satisfied the required criteria, the structural model was evaluated. The structural model assessment included collinearity diagnostics, the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance

(Q^2), and out-of-sample predictive ability using the PLSpredict procedure. The hypothesized direct and indirect relationships were tested using bootstrapping to assess the significance of the path coefficients and mediating effect. To examine whether the structural relationships differed between male and female students, Partial Least Squares Multi-Group Analysis (PLS-MGA) was conducted. Before comparing the two groups, measurement invariance was assessed using the Measurement Invariance of Composite Models (MICOM) procedure. MICOM involves three stages: assessment of configural invariance, compositional invariance, and equality of composite means and variances. Establishing the required level of measurement invariance provides a basis for meaningful comparisons of structural relationships across gender groups (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2016).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model Evaluation

Evaluation Lower-Order Constructs (LOC)

Following the disjoint two-stage approach, the first stage of the PLS-SEM analysis involved evaluating the measurement models of the lower-order constructs (LOCs) comprising entrepreneurial readiness, namely entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial attitude, and entrepreneurial competence. The measurement models were assessed in terms of convergent validity and internal consistency reliability. As presented in Table 2, all measurement items met the recommended criteria, with outer loadings exceeding 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50. In addition, both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values exceeded the threshold of 0.70. These results indicate that the three lower-order constructs demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity and internal consistency reliability, providing an adequate basis for proceeding to the subsequent stage of the HOC assessment.

Table 2. Lower-Order Construct Assessment

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI1	0.821	0.938	0.951	0.763
	EI2	0.845			
	EI3	0.892			
	EI4	0.898			
	EI5	0.887			
	EI6	0.894			
Entrepreneurship Education	EE1	0.899	0.948	0.960	0.827
	EE2	0.919			
	EE3	0.927			
	EE4	0.908			
	EE5	0.893			
Entrepreneurial Motivation	EM1	0.884	0.924	0.943	0.766
	EM2	0.902			
	EM3	0.873			
	EM4	0.883			
	EM5	0.835			
Entrepreneurial Attitude	EA1	0.851	0.929	0.947	0.780
	EA2	0.911			
	EA3	0.896			
	EA4	0.912			
	EA5	0.845			
Entrepreneurial Competence	EC1	0.862	0.958	0.964	0.748

EC2	0.870
EC3	0.871
EC4	0.869
EC5	0.866
EC6	0.860
EC7	0.865
EC8	0.868
EC9	0.851

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT), with a threshold of < 0.90. As shown in Table 3, all HTMT values were below the recommended threshold, ranging from 0.743 to 0.894. The highest value was observed between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial motivation (HTMT = 0.894), but it remained below the 0.90 criterion. These results indicate that all constructs demonstrated adequate discriminant validity and were empirically distinguishable from one another.

Table 3. Discriminant validity LOC Using HTMT.

	Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)
Entrepreneurial Competence <-> Entrepreneurial Attitude	0.819
Entrepreneurial Intention <-> Entrepreneurial Attitude	0.790
Entrepreneurial Intention <-> Entrepreneurial Competence	0.764
Entrepreneurial Motivation <-> Entrepreneurial Attitude	0.849
Entrepreneurial Motivation <-> Entrepreneurial Competence	0.856
Entrepreneurial Motivation <-> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.816
Entrepreneurship Education <-> Entrepreneurial Attitude	0.761
Entrepreneurship Education <-> Entrepreneurial Competence	0.743
Entrepreneurship Education <-> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.816
Entrepreneurship Education <-> Entrepreneurial Motivation	0.894

Next, the latent variable scores of the lower-order constructs were used as indicators of the higher-order construct (HOC) in the second stage of the analysis following the Disjoint Two-Stage Approach.

Evaluation Higher-Order Construct (HOC)

In the second stage, the measurement model of the higher-order construct (HOC), namely entrepreneurial readiness, was evaluated using the latent variable scores of the lower-order constructs (LOCs) as indicators. The results showed that all HOC indicator loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, while the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeded 0.50. In addition, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability (CR) values were all above 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency reliability. The Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT) values were also below the recommended threshold, providing evidence of adequate discriminant validity. Overall, the entrepreneurial readiness HOC satisfied the recommended criteria for convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity. Therefore, the construct was considered suitable for inclusion in the subsequent structural model assessment. Detailed results of the HOC measurement model evaluation are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Higher-Order Construct Assessment.

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI1	0.821	0.938	0.951	0.763
	EI2	0.845			
	EI3	0.892			
	EI4	0.898			
	EI5	0.887			
	EI6	0.894			
Entrepreneurship Education	EE1	0.900	0.948	0.960	0.827
	EE2	0.919			
	EE3	0.927			
	EE4	0.907			
	EE5	0.891			
Entrepreneurial Readiness	EM	0.954	0.910	0.951	0.910
	EA	0.964			
	EC	0.944			

Note. EM= Entrepreneurial Motivation, EA= Entrepreneurial Attitude, EC= Entrepreneurial Competence

Table 5. Discriminant validity HOC Using HTMT.

	Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)
Entrepreneurial Readiness <-> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.816
Entrepreneurship Education <-> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.816
Entrepreneurship Education <-> Entrepreneurial Readiness	0.797

Structural Model Evaluation

Collinearity and Common Method Bias Assessment

Before testing the hypotheses, the structural model was assessed for potential multicollinearity among the predictor constructs. As presented in Table 4, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranged from 1.000 to 2.335, all of which were below the threshold of 3.3. These results indicate that multicollinearity was not a concern in the structural model and that the predictor constructs did not exhibit problematic levels of collinearity. In addition, potential Common Method Bias (CMB) was assessed using the full collinearity assessment approach proposed by Kock (2015). The results showed that all full collinearity VIF values were below the recommended threshold of 3.3. This finding suggests that common method bias was unlikely to represent a substantial threat to the validity of the structural model estimates.

Structural model and testing of hypotheses

Hypothesis testing was conducted to examine the hypothesized relationships among entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial readiness, and entrepreneurial intention. As presented in Table 6, Hypotheses 1–4 were supported, with statistically significant path coefficients (β; $p < 0.001$). In addition, the corresponding 95% bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) confidence intervals did not include zero, providing further evidence for the significance of the hypothesized relationships. To complement the significance testing, effect sizes were also assessed to determine the magnitude of the relationships within the structural model. Specifically, Cohen's f^2 was used to assess the effect sizes of the direct relationships (Hair et al., 2022) whereas the v^2 measure was used to assess the magnitude of the mediating effects (Gaskin et al., 2023) These effect-size measures provide additional information regarding the substantive contribution of each relationship beyond statistical significance.

Table 6. Structural Model Assessment and Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	95% BCa CI		VIF	Effect Size (f^2/v^2)	Decision
					2.5%	97.5%			
H1	EE -> EI	0.438	12.377	0.000	0.368	0.506	2.335	0.255	Supported
H2	EE -> ER	0.756	48.544	0.000	0.724	0.786	1.000	1.335	Supported
H3	ER -> EI	0.441	12.565	0.000	0.372	0.509	2.335	0.258	Supported
H4	EE -> ER -> EI	0.333	11.857	0.000	0.278	0.389		0.333	Supported

Note. EI= Entrepreneurial Intention, EE= Entrepreneurship Education, ER= Entrepreneurial Readiness

The results of hypothesis testing are presented in Table 6. Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposed that entrepreneurship education (EE) is positively related to entrepreneurial intention (EI). The results supported H1, with a positive and significant path coefficient ($\beta = 0.438$; $t = 12.377$; $p < 0.001$; 95% BCa CI [0.368, 0.506]). The effect size ($f^2 = 0.255$) indicates a moderate effect, suggesting that entrepreneurship education makes a meaningful contribution to entrepreneurial intention. Hypothesis 2 (H2) proposed a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness (ER). The results supported H2 ($\beta = 0.756$; $t = 48.544$; $p < 0.001$; 95% BCa CI [0.724, 0.786]). The effect size ($f^2 = 1.335$) indicates a large effect, demonstrating a substantial contribution of entrepreneurship education to entrepreneurial readiness. Hypothesis 3 (H3) proposed that entrepreneurial readiness is positively related to entrepreneurial intention. The results supported H3 ($\beta = 0.441$; $t = 12.565$; $p < 0.001$; 95% BCa CI [0.372, 0.509]). The effect size ($f^2 = 0.258$) indicates a moderate effect, suggesting that entrepreneurial readiness makes a meaningful contribution to explaining entrepreneurial intention. Hypothesis 4 (H4) examined the mediating role of entrepreneurial readiness in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. The indirect effect was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.333$; $t = 11.857$; $p < 0.001$; 95% BCa CI [0.278, 0.389]), supporting H4. The v^2 value of 0.333 indicates a large mediating effect. Overall, the results indicate that entrepreneurship education is associated with entrepreneurial intention both directly and indirectly through entrepreneurial readiness.

Furthermore, the explanatory power of the structural model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), as presented in Table 7. Entrepreneurship education explained 57.2% of the variance in entrepreneurial readiness ($R^2 = 0.572$), indicating that a substantial proportion of students' entrepreneurial readiness was explained by entrepreneurship education, while the remaining variance was attributable to factors not included in the model. In addition, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness jointly explained 67.8% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention ($R^2 = 0.678$), indicating substantial explanatory power of the model. These results suggest that entrepreneurial intention is explained by both entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness, with the latter representing an additional explanatory mechanism within the structural model.

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) and Model Explanatory Power

Construct	R^2	Interpretation
Entrepreneurial Readiness	0.572	Entrepreneurship education explains 57.2% of the variance in entrepreneurial readiness, indicating that the structural model has moderate explanatory power.
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.678	Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness jointly explain 67.8% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention, indicating that the structural model has moderate explanatory power.

Finally, the model's out-of-sample predictive performance was assessed using the PLSpredict procedure by comparing the prediction errors of the PLS-SEM model with those of the linear model (LM) benchmark, as presented in Table 8. All indicators exhibited Q^2predict values greater than zero, indicating that the model demonstrated out-of-sample predictive

relevance. The comparison of prediction errors showed that the PLS-SEM model produced lower or comparable RMSE values to the LM benchmark for most indicators, although the relative predictive performance varied across individual indicators. Based on the overall PLSpredict results, the model demonstrates moderate predictive power, indicating that it provides a meaningful level of predictive accuracy for the endogenous constructs. Thus, the PLS-SEM model demonstrates adequate out-of-sample predictive capability in predicting entrepreneurial readiness and entrepreneurial intention (Hair et al., 2022; Shmueli et al., 2019) .

Table 8. Predictive Power Assessment Using PLSpredict

	Q^2predict	PLS-SEM_RMSE	LM_RMSE
EI1	0.382	**0.758**	0.758
EI2	0.364	**0.729**	0.729
EI3	0.461	0.675	0.675
EI4	0.513	0.660	0.657
EI5	0.470	**0.672**	0.673
EI6	0.521	0.652	0.647
Entrepreneurial Attitude	0.511	**0.700**	0.703
Entrepreneurial Competence	0.500	**0.707**	0.708
Entrepreneurial Motivation	0.546	**0.674**	0.676

Analysis of Gender Differences

Measurement Invariance of Composite Models (MICOM)

Following the MICOM procedure proposed by Henseler et al. (2016) measurement invariance was assessed in three stages: configural invariance, compositional invariance, and equality of composite means and variances. In the first stage, configural invariance was established because the male and female groups used the same model specifications, indicators, data treatment, and estimation procedures. In the second stage, the results of the compositional invariance assessment presented in Table 9 showed that the original correlations between the composite scores were 1.000 for all constructs, with permutation p-values greater than 0.05. These results indicate that compositional invariance was established across the male and female groups.

Table 9. Results of Compositional Invariance Assessment

	Original correlation	Correlation permutation mean	5.0%	Permutation p value
Entrepreneurial Intention	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.488
Entrepreneurship Education	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.441
Entrepreneurial Readiness	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.305

In the third stage, the results presented in Table 10 showed that equality of composite means was established for entrepreneurial intention (p = 0.670) and entrepreneurial readiness (p = 0.102), but not for entrepreneurship education (p = 0.026). Furthermore, equality of composite variances was not established for any of the three constructs, as all permutation p-values were 0.000. Because configural and compositional invariance were established, the results support partial measurement invariance across the male and female groups. Accordingly, comparisons of structural relationships between the two groups can be conducted using PLS-MGA, with the findings interpreted in light of the established level of measurement invariance (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2016).

Table 10. Results of Composite Means and Variances Equality Assessment

Equality of Composite Means					
Construct	Original difference	Permutation mean difference	2.5%	97.5 %	Permutation p value
Entrepreneurial Intention	-0.018	0.001	-0.080	0.088	0.670
Entrepreneurship	-0.096	0.001	-0.090	0.083	0.026

Education Entrepreneurial Readiness	0.070	0.001	-0.080	0.085	0.102
Equality of Composite Variances					
Construct	Original difference	Permutation mean difference	2.5%	97.5 %	Permutation p value
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.369	0.000	-0.135	0.137	0.000
Entrepreneurship	0.396	-0.001	-0.147	0.138	0.000
Education Entrepreneurial Readiness	0.401	-0.001	-0.142	0.141	0.000

Partial Least Squares Multi-Group Analysis (PLS-MGA)

PLS-MGA was conducted to examine whether the structural relationships differed significantly between male and female students. As presented in Table 11, a significant gender difference was found only in the relationship between entrepreneurship education (EE) and entrepreneurial readiness (ER). The difference in path coefficients between male and female students was 0.063, with a one-tailed p-value of 0.024 and a two-tailed p-value of 0.047. These results indicate a statistically significant difference between the two gender groups, supporting H6. The positive difference indicates that the EE → ER relationship was stronger among male students than among female students. In contrast, no significant gender differences were found in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention (EE → EI), with a path coefficient difference of −0.011 (one-tailed p = 0.560; two-tailed p = 0.880). Similarly, the difference in the relationship between entrepreneurial readiness and entrepreneurial intention (ER → EI) was not statistically significant (Δβ = 0.008; one-tailed p = 0.454; two-tailed p = 0.909). Therefore, H5 and H7 were not supported. Overall, the PLS-MGA results indicate that gender differences were specific to the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness. In contrast, the relationships of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness with entrepreneurial intention did not differ significantly between male and female students.

Table 11. PLS-MGA Results by Gender

Hypothesis	Relationship	Difference (Men - Women)	1-tailed (Men - Women) p value	2-tailed (Men - Women) p value	Decision
H5	EE -> EI	-0.011	0.560	0.880	Unsupported
H6	EE -> ER	0.063	0.024	0.047	Supported
H7	ER -> EI	0.008	0.454	0.909	Unsupported

Note. EI= Entrepreneurial Intention, EE= Entrepreneurship Education, ER= Entrepreneurial Readiness

The results indicate that entrepreneurship education has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. This finding suggests that entrepreneurship education serves not only as a means of transferring business-related knowledge but also as a learning context that can strengthen students' psychological and cognitive readiness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option. The moderate effect size further indicates that entrepreneurship education makes a meaningful contribution to the formation of entrepreneurial intention. This result is consistent with previous studies showing that entrepreneurship education can enhance entrepreneurial intention by developing entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, self-confidence, and opportunity-recognition abilities (Jiatong et al., 2021; Martínez-Gregorio et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2023; Uddin et al., 2022). Through concrete learning experiences and greater exposure to the processes involved in creating and managing a business, entrepreneurship education may reduce students' uncertainty about entrepreneurial activities and strengthen their perception that entrepreneurship represents a viable career option (Cui & Gu, 2024; Martínez-Gregorio et al.,

2021). This finding also provides a possible explanation for the inconsistent results reported in previous studies regarding the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Mukhtar et al., 2021; Oosterbeek et al., 2010; Patricia & Silangen, 2016). The differences across studies suggest that the contribution of entrepreneurship education may depend not simply on whether entrepreneurship courses are provided, but also on whether the learning experience develops the internal conditions that support students' consideration of entrepreneurship as a career choice. In this respect, entrepreneurship education may be more effective when it goes beyond knowledge transmission and provides learning experiences that strengthen students' motivation, attitudes, and competencies relevant to entrepreneurial activity.

The results further demonstrate that entrepreneurship education has a strong positive relationship with entrepreneurial readiness. This finding is consistent with Kallas (2019) conceptualization of entrepreneurial readiness as a multidimensional construct encompassing entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial attitude, and entrepreneurial competence. Through the learning process, students can acquire knowledge, experiences, and skills that strengthen their motivation to pursue entrepreneurship (Hassan et al., 2021; Solesvik, 2013; Sun et al., 2023), foster more positive evaluations of entrepreneurial activities (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Kim, 2017; Su et al., 2021; Wardana et al., 2020), and develop competencies needed to identify opportunities and address challenges associated with running a business (Kim, 2017; Lv et al., 2021; Xiang et al., 2023). Entrepreneurial readiness can therefore be viewed not merely as an inherent individual characteristic but also as a condition that can be developed through educational experiences. This finding extends previous research demonstrating the contribution of entrepreneurship education to entrepreneurial motivation, attitudes, and competencies (Hassan et al., 2021; Kim, 2017; Lv et al., 2021; Solesvik, 2013; Wardana et al., 2020), by showing that these dimensions can be understood collectively as components of entrepreneurial readiness.

Furthermore, entrepreneurial readiness has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. This finding indicates that students with higher levels of entrepreneurial readiness tend to exhibit stronger intentions to start a business. The result is consistent with the perspectives of Kallas (2019) and Kallas dan Parts (2021) who conceptualize entrepreneurial readiness as a condition reflecting an individual's preparedness to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurial readiness encompasses entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial attitude, and entrepreneurial competence, which together reflect an individual's psychological preparedness and perceived capability to consider entrepreneurship as a realistic career option (Kallas, 2019; Kallas & Parts, 2021). Students with stronger entrepreneurial motivation may be more inclined to consider entrepreneurship as a career path (Hassan et al., 2021; Saoula et al., 2023), while positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship can contribute to more favorable evaluations of entrepreneurial activities (Al-Jubari et al., 2019; Su et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial competence, in turn, provides individuals with the perceived capability to recognize opportunities, manage resources, and respond to challenges associated with entrepreneurial activity (Kim, 2017; Lv et al., 2021; Sánchez, 2013). The combination of these dimensions may create internal conditions that are conducive to the formation of entrepreneurial intention (Kallas, 2019; Kallas & Parts, 2021). This finding is also consistent with Khetarpal et al. (2025) who reported that individual readiness is associated with a stronger tendency to develop entrepreneurial intention. Thus, entrepreneurial intention may reflect not only the desire to become an entrepreneur but also an individual's perceived psychological preparedness and capability to pursue that choice.

An additional finding is that entrepreneurial readiness significantly mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. This result suggests that the influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention operates partly through the development of students' entrepreneurial readiness. Entrepreneurship education may provide knowledge and learning experiences that contribute to changes in students' internal conditions, including their motivation, attitudes, and competencies (Hassan et al., 2020; Martínez-Gregorio et al., 2021). These internal conditions, in turn, may strengthen students' readiness to engage in entrepreneurial activities and consequently support the

formation of entrepreneurial intention. Thus, exposure to entrepreneurship education alone may not be sufficient to explain students' intentions; the extent to which educational experiences contribute to students' perceived readiness may also be important. This finding extends previous research that has predominantly examined entrepreneurial readiness as an independent variable or as an outcome of other antecedents (Antonius & Handoyo, 2024; Arifin et al., 2024; Dora, 2019; Irsyada et al., 2018), By modeling entrepreneurial readiness as a multidimensional mediator, this study provides a more process-oriented explanation of how educational experiences are associated with entrepreneurial intention. In particular, the findings suggest that entrepreneurial readiness can serve as an intervening mechanism through which entrepreneurship education is translated into students' entrepreneurial intentions in the context of higher education in Indonesia.

The gender-based analysis revealed a significant difference only in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness. In contrast, the relationships between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention and between entrepreneurial readiness and entrepreneurial intention did not differ significantly between male and female students. These findings suggest that the role of gender is not uniform across the mechanisms underlying entrepreneurial intention formation but is more specifically associated with how educational experiences are translated into entrepreneurial readiness. In other words, gender differences appear to emerge at the stage of developing students' internal readiness rather than at the stage of forming entrepreneurial intention itself. The difference in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness can be interpreted through the perspective of social feminist theory, which emphasizes that socially constructed experiences, norms, and gender-role expectations can shape how men and women respond to their social environments and opportunities (Ahl, 2006; Byrne & Fayolle, 2010; Kong & Kim, 2022). In the present study, the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness was stronger among male students than among female students. This finding may indicate that male and female students do not necessarily translate entrepreneurship education into motivation, attitudes, and competencies in the same way. Previous research has similarly reported that gender may influence how students respond to entrepreneurship education and how educational experiences are translated into entrepreneurial readiness and related psychological outcomes (Ferreras-Garcia et al., 2021). Furthermore, studies have found that women may report lower perceptions of entrepreneurial competence than men even after participating in entrepreneurship education (Shirokova et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2007). These findings provide a possible theoretical context for understanding the gender difference observed in the present study, although the specific mechanisms underlying this difference were not directly examined.

However, the present findings differ from studies suggesting that women may derive greater benefits from entrepreneurship education in terms of entrepreneurial intention and related psychological factors, including entrepreneurial self-efficacy, attitudes toward entrepreneurship, and opportunity perceptions (Chowdhury et al., 2019; Kong & Kim, 2022; van Ewijk & Belghiti-Mahut, 2019). This discrepancy suggests that the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness may vary across contexts and gender groups. In the present study, the relationship was stronger among male students, although entrepreneurship education was positively associated with entrepreneurial readiness in the overall sample. One possible explanation is that the process through which educational experiences are internalized into motivation, attitudes, and competencies may be influenced by students' broader social and structural experiences. Because these factors were not directly measured in this study, this explanation should be regarded as a theoretical interpretation rather than an empirical conclusion.

In the Indonesian context, although male and female students may have relatively similar access to entrepreneurship education, traditional gender norms continue to position men as primary family breadwinners, while women are more often associated with domestic and caregiving responsibilities (World Bank, 2020). Such social expectations may create different conditions for the development of entrepreneurial capabilities, particularly when women face

greater constraints in accessing networks, resources, and time for entrepreneurial activities (Alibhai et al., 2023). This context is consistent with Makudza et al. (2024), who argue that in patriarchal societies, men may find it easier to develop entrepreneurial characteristics because of their socially constructed role as primary economic providers. Accordingly, equal access to entrepreneurship education does not necessarily imply identical conditions for translating educational experiences into entrepreneurial readiness. The observed gender difference in the EE → ER relationship may therefore reflect, at least in part, differences in the broader social contexts within which students interpret and apply their entrepreneurial learning. However, this explanation should be interpreted cautiously because the present study did not directly measure gender-role expectations, access to resources, or social constraints.

Overall, this study makes three main contributions to the entrepreneurship education literature. First, it reinforces the importance of entrepreneurship education as an antecedent of entrepreneurial intention while showing that its influence is not exclusively direct. Second, it conceptualizes entrepreneurial readiness as a multidimensional construct comprising entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial attitude, and entrepreneurial competence, and demonstrates its mediating role in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. This provides a more process-oriented explanation of how educational experiences may be translated into entrepreneurial intention. Third, the PLS-MGA results indicate that gender does not significantly differentiate all structural relationships in the model. Rather, the significant difference is confined to the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness, suggesting that gender differences are more apparent in the development of readiness than in the subsequent formation of entrepreneurial intention.

The findings also have practical implications for entrepreneurship education in higher education. Entrepreneurship programs should extend beyond the transmission of business knowledge and place greater emphasis on developing students' motivation, attitudes, and practical competencies. Experience-based learning activities, such as business projects, simulations, business-idea development, opportunity identification, mentoring, and participation in real-world entrepreneurial activities, can provide students with opportunities to apply entrepreneurial knowledge in practical contexts. Such approaches may help bridge the gap between classroom learning and the competencies and confidence required to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Accordingly, entrepreneurship education should balance theoretical instruction with practical and experiential learning opportunities.

The gender-related findings further suggest the importance of designing entrepreneurship programs that are responsive to the potentially different experiences and barriers faced by male and female students. Higher education institutions can seek to provide equitable access to entrepreneurial experiences, mentoring, business networks, resources, and opportunities for competency development. Equity, however, does not necessarily require identical interventions for all students; rather, program design can take into account differences in needs, experiences, and potential barriers across groups. Periodic evaluation of entrepreneurship programs by gender may also help institutions assess whether educational experiences contribute to comparable improvements in entrepreneurial readiness. In this way, entrepreneurship education can be directed not only toward strengthening students' intention to become entrepreneurs but also toward developing the readiness and capabilities needed to translate entrepreneurial intentions into future entrepreneurial action.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to explain how entrepreneurship education contributes to the formation of university students' entrepreneurial intentions through entrepreneurial readiness and to determine whether these relationships differ between male and female students. The findings provide evidence that entrepreneurship education contributes to entrepreneurial intention both directly and through the development of entrepreneurial readiness. This indicates that the formation of entrepreneurial intention is not solely a matter of students being exposed to entrepreneurship education, but also depends on whether educational experiences help students develop the internal conditions needed to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career choice.

Entrepreneurial readiness, encompassing entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial attitude, and entrepreneurial competence, therefore represents an important link between the educational environment and students' intention to pursue entrepreneurship. The principal contribution of this study is the positioning of entrepreneurial readiness as a multidimensional mediating mechanism rather than merely as an antecedent or outcome of other entrepreneurial factors. This perspective provides a more process-oriented explanation of how entrepreneurship education can be translated into entrepreneurial intention. The findings suggest that entrepreneurship education becomes more meaningful for intention formation when it contributes to students' motivation to engage in entrepreneurship, their positive evaluation of entrepreneurial activities, and their perceived competence to identify opportunities, manage resources, and address entrepreneurial challenges. In this respect, the study extends existing entrepreneurship education research by integrating these dimensions into a broader construct of entrepreneurial readiness and demonstrating its mediating role in the intention-formation process. The gender analysis provides a more nuanced understanding of this process. Gender differences were identified only in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial readiness, whereas no significant differences were found in the relationships between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention or between entrepreneurial readiness and entrepreneurial intention. Thus, gender does not appear to differentiate the entire process of entrepreneurial intention formation. Rather, the observed difference is concentrated at the stage through which educational experiences are translated into entrepreneurial readiness. This finding contributes to the gender and entrepreneurship literature by suggesting that attention to gender differences should not be limited to comparing entrepreneurial intentions themselves, but should also consider the processes through which educational experiences contribute to the development of readiness. The findings have practical implications for higher education institutions and entrepreneurship educators. Entrepreneurship education should extend beyond the transmission of theoretical business knowledge and provide learning experiences that systematically develop students' motivation, attitudes, and entrepreneurial competencies. Experiential approaches, including business projects, opportunity-identification activities, simulations, mentoring, and engagement with real entrepreneurial contexts, can be incorporated to strengthen students' readiness to undertake entrepreneurial activities. In addition, institutions should ensure equitable access to entrepreneurial learning opportunities, mentoring, networks, and resources while remaining attentive to the different experiences and potential barriers faced by male and female students. Future research could extend this model by examining additional factors that may explain gender differences in the development of entrepreneurial readiness, such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy, social support, access to entrepreneurial networks, perceived social norms, and gender-role expectations. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable for examining whether changes in entrepreneurial readiness subsequently translate into actual entrepreneurial behavior rather than intention alone. Such extensions would provide a deeper understanding of how entrepreneurship education can contribute to the transition from entrepreneurial learning and readiness to entrepreneurial action.

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