



Social Cognitive Career Theory on Entrepreneurial Intention of Vocational Students

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to determine the role of the mediating effect of Outcome Expectation and Self-Efficacy on the effect of Entrepreneurial Knowledge on Entrepreneurial Intention of vocational students. The number of samples used was 150 SMK students. A questionnaire technique was employed to gather data. The study's hypothesized link was examined using Smart PLS 3.0's structural equation modeling technique and the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as the theoretical basis. The present investigation results in the following findings: 1) Entrepreneurship knowledge positively impacts entrepreneurial intention; 2) Self-efficacy mediates the effect of entrepreneurship knowledge on entrepreneurial intention; 3) Outcome expectation mediates the effect of entrepreneurship knowledge on entrepreneurial intention. The study's conclusions add to the body of knowledge by highlighting the applicability of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) to comprehend entrepreneurial purpose. The practical implication of this research is to create an effective entrepreneurial ecosystem in the school environment as a strategy to encourage increased interest in entrepreneurship among vocational students.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Intention, Entrepreneurship Knowledge, Outcome Expectation, Self-efficacy, Social Cognitive Career Theory*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vocational High Schools (SMK) have a significant chance to contribute to the economic system's growth by using the teenage development stage and encouraging students to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors (Aprilianty, 2012). Based on (Permendikbud, 2018), the competencies of SMK graduates include creativity and entrepreneurship. This implies that for students to be valuable, they must be able to generate original ideas and use all resources. These skills demonstrate that SMK is a key location for developing future business owners.

Entrepreneurship significantly impacts a nation's economy by driving sustainable growth and enhancing public welfare (Jamaaluddin & Fernando, 2018; Khamimah, 2021; Krueger & Brazeal, 1994) through job creation, which serves as an alternative solution to unemployment (Barbara Bernhofer & Li, 2014; Fajri, 2021; Niode, 2007). Indonesia faces similar challenges as many countries compete to stimulate economic activity through entrepreneurship. Data from (BPS, 2023) highlights a notable level of open unemployment among SMK graduates over the past three years (2021-2023). Promoting entrepreneurial understanding and encouraging students to consider entrepreneurship a viable career path after graduation is essential. Cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset is a promising alternative for SMK students, who can choose from various post-graduation paths, including employment, further education, or entrepreneurship (Nurbayan et al., 2021; Widiyarini, 2018). Increased student entrepreneurial interest could help reduce unemployment rates (Liñán et al., 2011; Pramuki et al., 2019).

In recent years, several researchers have investigated the causal factors of entrepreneurial intention with systematic literature reviews (Donaldson, 2019; Douglas, 2020; Maheshwari et al., 2023; Pérez-Macías et al., 2022). Based on the outcomes of these investigations, most studies use two main theories to explain entrepreneurial intention, which are The Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) by (Shapiro & Sokol, 1982) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by (Ajzen, 1991). To gain a deeper understanding, (Donaldson, 2019) suggests utilizing more complex theories and contextual models. One such theory is the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), pioneered in 1994 by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (Lent et al., 1994), which has been used to analyze entrepreneurial intent and career choices (Blaese et al., 2021; Duong, 2023; Duong & Tran, 2024; Liguori et al., 2020). SCCT highlights how self-efficacy and outcome expectations influence career interests and intentions, emphasizing the importance of career interests in decision-making.

According to SCCT, self-efficacy and outcome expectation are the components that affect career interest. Self-efficacy and outcome expectations are affected by a learning experience (Lent et al., 1994). Self-efficacy has a robust predicting impact on establishing entrepreneurial intention (Chien-Chi et al., 2020; Ding & Ding, 2011; Liu et al., 2019; Salami, 2019). Outcome expectations also impact entrepreneurial intentions (Blaese et al., 2021; Liguori et al., 2020), with self-efficacy playing a role in shaping these expectations (Wöhrmann et al., 2013). However, findings on the impact of outcome expectations on entrepreneurial intention are mixed, with some studies indicating a significant effect (Caines et al., 2019) while others do not (Lanero et al., 2016). Additionally, socio-cultural factors that affect entrepreneurial intention include the knowledge acquired through education. Implementing entrepreneurship education early in vocational schools effectively boosts students' entrepreneurial intentions (Darmawan & Martdianty, 2022; Harianti et al., 2020; Shinnar et al., 2014). It boosts entrepreneurial knowledge, thereby increasing students' entrepreneurial intentions (Daneshjoovash & Hosseini, 2019).

There is a lack of research on entrepreneurial intention utilizing Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), particularly regarding university students' real-world applications. Several research has not thoroughly examined how self-efficacy and outcome expectations mediate the effect of entrepreneurial knowledge on entrepreneurial intention, although this theory offers a framework for comprehending entrepreneurial intention. The high unemployment rate among graduates of vocational schools underscores the pressing need for better entrepreneurial education initiatives. Graduates of vocational schools frequently encounter challenges while trying to break into the workforce, and the literature to date has not provided a comprehensive explanation of the psychological aspects of this process, including self-efficacy and outcome expectations.

By concentrating on the function of outcome expectations and self-efficacy in moderating the impact of entrepreneurial knowledge on entrepreneurial intention, this study seeks to close the knowledge gap. This study aims to provide deeper and

practical insights for designing more effective entrepreneurship education programs. This is crucial to boosting students' interest in entrepreneurship and lowering unemployment among recent graduates of vocational schools. As a result, this study not only advances theories already in existence but also offers pertinent answers to problems encountered by graduates of vocational schools.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial knowledge is important because it is expected to provide a theoretical basis for entrepreneurship, forming an entrepreneur's social patterns, attitudes, and behaviors (Kurnia et al., 2018). Entrepreneurial knowledge is closely related to entrepreneurial intention. According to (Ajzen, 1991), intention is the best predictor of planned behavior; therefore, strong entrepreneurial knowledge can increase one's intention to become an entrepreneur. Someone who knows entrepreneurship tends to put that knowledge by starting a new venture in the business world. Several empirical studies state that entrepreneurial knowledge affects entrepreneurial intention (Hendrawan & Sirine, 2017; Suratno et al., 2020; Hasniati, H. & Syahrudin, 2022; Karyaningsih et al., 2020; Pham et al., 2023). Based on the findings of several empirical studies, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

H1: Entrepreneurship Knowledge has a positive impact on Entrepreneurial Intention

The Mediating Role of Self-efficacy on Entrepreneurship Knowledge Towards Entrepreneurial Intention

Based on the SCCT, self-efficacy is a crucial construct for predicting career interest (Lent et al., 1994). Self-efficacy is an individual's belief about their ability to perform certain actions to achieve their goals (Bandura, 1986). A person with strong self-efficacy will likely attempt harder to accomplish difficult tasks and, therefore, be more inclined to launch a business (Maheshwari, 2021). Several empirical studies have shown that self-efficacy has a positive influence on the formation of entrepreneurial intention (Hoanget al., 2021; Islam et al., 2020; Setiawan et al., 2020; Waldyatri et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022). Based on the findings of several empirical studies, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

H2: Self-efficacy mediates the effect of entrepreneurship knowledge on entrepreneurial intention

The Mediating Role of Outcome Expectation on Entrepreneurship Knowledge Towards Entrepreneurial Intention

In addition to self-efficacy, outcome expectations also affect performance attainment (Lent et al., 1994). Outcome expectation is individuals' thoughts about the good and negative implications of participating in a specific activity (Lent & Brown, 2013). When individuals perceive entrepreneurship outcomes as favorable, their interest will increase. Otherwise, if they perceive the outcome of entrepreneurship as detrimental, their interest tends to decrease. The empirical research results show that outcome expectancy significantly predicts entrepreneurial intention (Blaese et al., 2021; Santos & Liguori, 2020). Based on the findings of several empirical studies, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

H3: Outcome expectation mediates the effect of entrepreneurship knowledge on entrepreneurial intention.

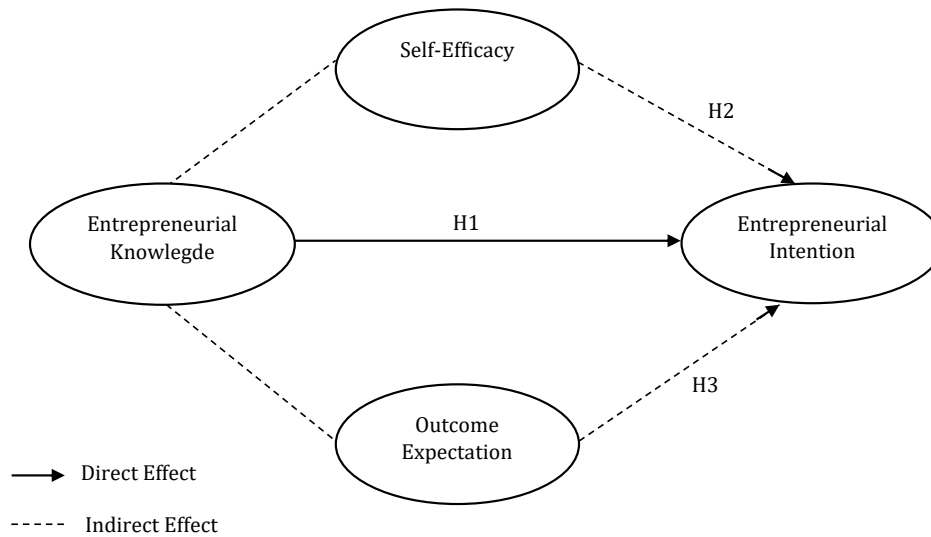


Figure 1. Research Framework

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative confirmatory technique, a research methodology designed to examine hypotheses derived from preexisting ideas. The sample was collected from 150 students of the Marketing Department at SMKN Palembang. This study employed primary data from five-point Likert scale surveys submitted via Google Forms. The researcher used a 5-point rating system, with one being strongly disagreed and five being firmly concurred, to gauge the respondents' agreement with the things they submitted.

The measurement of this research variable is adapted from the previous. Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) is measured using four dimensions adapted from (Shirokova et al., 2016): desires, preferences, plans, and behavioral expectations. Entrepreneurship Knowledge (EK) is adapted from research (Setiawan et al., 2020), which is measured as the ability to manage and organize a firm and an understanding of the business to be established, roles and duties, personality, and abilities. Self-efficacy (SE) is adopted from research (Bandura, 1998) and is measured by three dimensions: level or magnitude, strength, and generality. Outcome Expectation (OE) is measured by indicators of (Lanero et al., 2016): acquiring work autonomy and independence, personal fulfillment, challenging work, interesting work, performing various tasks, learning opportunities, job satisfaction, and self-image.

In this study, the validity test in the instrument trial at least used content, predictive, and construct validity. Reliability tests are used to evaluate the measurement's accuracy and the consistency of the data collected. Data analysis involved inferential and descriptive statistical methods, utilizing frequency distribution tables for each variable. This study also detailed the Structural Equation Model with Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) utilizing SEM-PLS 3.0 software to propose a model and validate the hypothesis. The methods created by (Hair et al., 2013) are referred to as SEM-PLS stages in this study. These processes comprise model measurement (outer model), structural model estimation (inner model), model fit testing, and hypothesis testing.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULTS

Outer Model

The test of the outer model validity will look at two things. These are the cross-loading (discriminant validity) and loading factor (convergent validity) values. Convergent validity measures the degree of correlation between research constructs and question items. If the correlation between the individual reflexive measure and the construct to be measured is more than 0.7, it is considered correlated. Factor loading and reliability metrics such as composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and average variance were extracted to assess the measurement model. Figure 2 displays the loading factor measurement model findings.

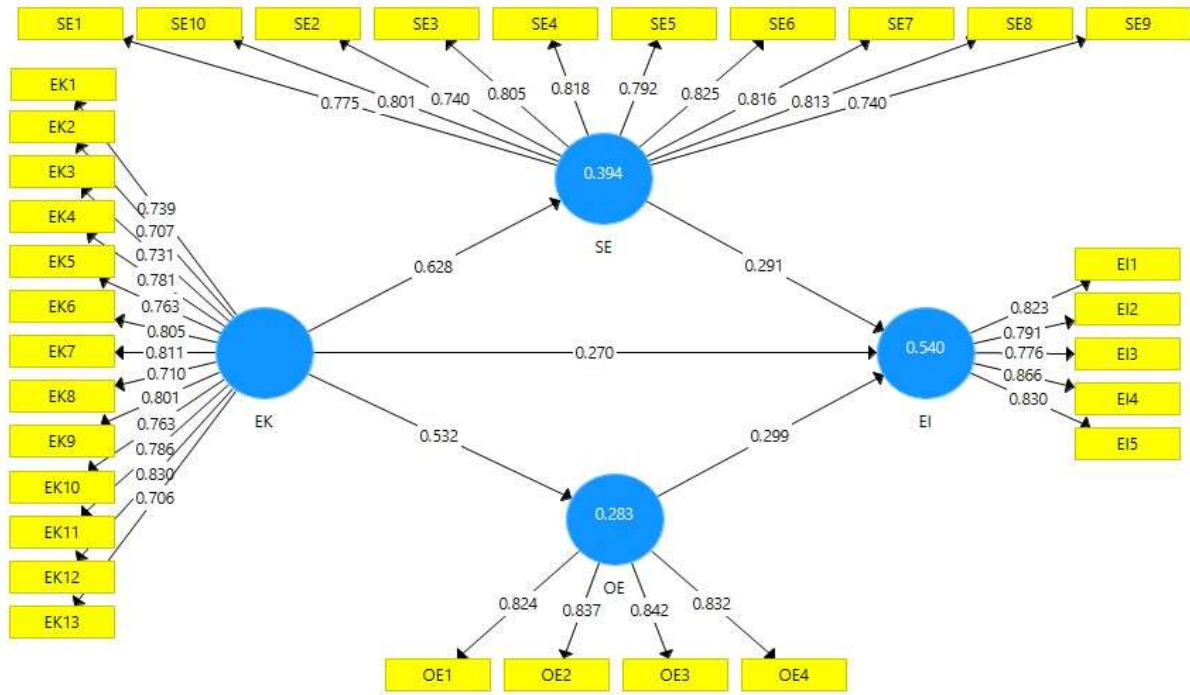


Figure 2. Loading Factors

Table 1 / Measurement Model

Construct	Item	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Loading
EK	EK1	0,586	0,948	0,941	0,739
	EK2				0,707
	EK3				0,731
	EK4				0,781
	EK5				0,763
	EK6				0,805
	EK7				0,811
	EK8				0,710
	EK9				0,801
	EK10				0,763
	EK11				0,786
	EK12				0,830
	EK13				0,706
SE	SE1	0,629	0,944	0,934	0,775
	SE2				0,740
	SE3				0,805
	SE4				0,818
	SE5				0,792
	SE6				0,825
	SE7				0,816
	SE8				0,813
	SE9				0,740
	SE10				0,801
OE	OE1	0,695	0,901	0,854	0,824
	OE2				0,837
	OE3				0,842
	OE4				0,832

EI	EI1	0,669	0,91	0,876	0,823
	EI2				0,791
	EI3				0,776
	EI4				0,866
	EI5				0,830

Source: Data Processed (2024)

Table 1. shows that the measures' convergent validity was achieved by meeting all suggested reliability levels. The discriminatory validity is also evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criteria, displayed in Table 2. The square root of the AVE should be more than the construct correlations, and the factor loading of the variables should be bigger than all cross-loadings (Chin, 1998; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The criteria mentioned earlier were satisfied, demonstrating the discriminant validity of our measurements.

Table 2 / Fornell-Lacker Result

Item	EI	EK	OE	SE
EI	0.818			
EK	0.612	0.765		
OE	0.623	0.532	0.834	
SE	0.646	0.628	0.618	0.793

Source: Data Processed (2024)

Inner Model

The inner model test is conducted to calculate the coefficient of determination (R^2) and hypothesis testing by comparing t-statistical and p-values. The R^2 test measures how much the independent variable can influence the dependent variable. Table 3 presents that the R^2 value for the entrepreneurial intention is 0,540, which means that the Entrepreneurship Knowledge, self-efficacy, and outcome expectation variable can explain the entrepreneurial intention by 54%. According to (Chin, 1998), the model is moderate. With an R^2 value of 0,540 for entrepreneurial intention, Entrepreneurship Knowledge, self-efficacy, and outcome expectation can explain entrepreneurial intention by 54% (moderate model).

Table 3 / Determination Coefficient

Variable	R Square
SE	0,394
OE	0,283
EI	0,540

Source: Data Processed (2024)

Furthermore, this study assesses the effect size (f^2) using the general rule of thumb from (Hair et al., 2017). (Hair et al., 2017) states that small, medium, and strong effects are represented by f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively. If the f^2 value is less than 0.02, then exogenous constructs do not affect the variation in endogenous constructs. The effect of entrepreneurial knowledge and self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intention is 0,091, as seen in Table 4, indicating a small effect. The effect of outcome expectation on entrepreneurial intention also has a value of 0,114, indicating a small effect.

Table 4 / F-Square Test

Variable	ER
EK	0,091
SE	0,091
OE	0,114

Source: Data Processed (2024)

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5 illustrates the hypothesis testing process. A hypothesis is accepted if the significance test value is 0.05. The criteria for acceptance are a t-statistic > 1.96 and a p-value < 0.05, indicating significance.

Table 5 / Direct and Indirect Effects

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values
Direct Effect					
EK -> EI	0,270	0,274	0,088	3,077	0,001
Indirect Effect					
EK -> OE -> EI	0,159	0,157	0,048	3,296	0,001
EK -> SE -> EI	0,183	0,183	0,053	3,462	0,000

Source: Data Processed (2024)

Based on the test results, the results of hypothesis testing are as follows:

Table 6 | Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Result	Description
H1. Entrepreneurship Knowledge has a positive effect on Entrepreneurial Intention	Koef Beta = 0,270 T-statistik = 3,077 > 1,96 P-values = 0,001 < 0,05	Accepted
H2. Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy mediates the effect of Entrepreneurship Knowledge on Entrepreneurial Intention	Koef Beta = 0,159 T-statistik = 3,296 > 1,96 P-values = 0,001 < 0,05	Accepted
H3. Outcome Expectation mediates the effect of Entrepreneurship Knowledge on Entrepreneurial Intention	Koef Beta = 0,183 T-statistik = 3,462 > 1,96 P-values = 0,000 < 0,05	Accepted

Source: Data Processed (2024)

4.2 DISCUSSION

Entrepreneurship Knowledge has a positive impact on Entrepreneurial Intention

The data analysis showed that the relationship between entrepreneurship knowledge and entrepreneurial intention had a beta coefficient value of 0,270, a t-statistic of 3,077, and a p-value of 0,001. These results indicate that the t-statistic is significant (greater than 1.96) with a p-value less than 0.05, so the first hypothesis is accepted. This means that entrepreneurial knowledge has a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention. In other words, the more students comprehend the concept of entrepreneurship, the greater their interest in it. However, when entrepreneurship is poorly understood, interest in it decreases.

The outcomes of this investigation align with the conclusions of earlier studies. Numerous empirical investigations carried out by (Karyaningsih et al., 2020; Iriani, 2022; Ruswanti, 2016; Waldyatri et al., 2021; Hendrawan & Sirine, 2017; Suratno et al., 2020; Hasniati, H., & Syahrudin 2022; Karyaningsih et al., 2020; Pham et al., 2023) demonstrate that the development of entrepreneurial intentions is positively impacted by entrepreneurial knowledge. Entrepreneurship knowledge is an integral part of the entrepreneurship education program organized in educational institutions to foster an optimal understanding of entrepreneurship among students. Entrepreneurship education can improve students' entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, attitudes, and personal qualities (Wu et al., 2022).

Entrepreneurship education is realized through the subject of Creative Products and Entrepreneurship in vocational high school, intended to foster students' courage in creating jobs for themselves and others. Through this subject, students can enhance their competence to start businesses with a resilient attitude and mentality and increase their interest in entrepreneurship. It helps nurture students' interest in developing entrepreneurship and prepares them to face challenges in entrepreneurship independently after graduation. By equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills, educational institutions can significantly enhance their students' entrepreneurial mindset and drive toward creating new businesses.

Self-efficacy mediates the effect of entrepreneurship knowledge on entrepreneurial intention

The path coefficient of the effect of entrepreneurial knowledge on entrepreneurial intention mediated by self-efficacy is 0,159, with a p-value of 0,001 and a t-statistic value of 3,296. The test results show that p-values <0,05, and t-statistic > 1,96, so the second hypothesis is accepted. This means that self-efficacy mediates the effect of entrepreneurship knowledge on entrepreneurial intention. Because of increased self-efficacy, a gain in entrepreneurial knowledge typically increases entrepreneurial intention. On the other hand, because of low self-efficacy, a decline in entrepreneurship knowledge tends to lower entrepreneurial intention.

Based on the Social Cognitive Career Theory, self-efficacy is an important construct for predicting career interest in this study. Self-efficacy is an individual's beliefs about their ability to perform goal-directed actions (Bandura, 1986). Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to strive to complete challenging tasks and thus have a higher intention to start a business (Maheshwari, 2021). This study's findings confirm previous research results (Hoang et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2022) show that the relationship between entrepreneurship knowledge and intention is mediated by self-efficacy. An entrepreneur requires confidence to carry out business operations while launching a company, and self-efficacy is a source of drive and a strategy for acting to seize opportunities (Oyugi, 2015). Strong self-belief, often derived from knowledge and experience, tends to foster students' enthusiasm for entrepreneurship (Urban & Galawe, 2020). This shows that gaining self-efficacy from education and experience boosts people's confidence and inspires them to take advantage of business possibilities more seriously.

Therefore, the main focus of an effective entrepreneurship education program should be on improving students' self-efficacy, as this can magnify their entrepreneurial intentions and increase their chances of success in starting and managing a business. This study explains how self-efficacy serves as a mediator in the relationship between entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial intention. Moreover, it highlights the importance of self-efficacy in entrepreneurship education, emphasizing its role in motivating students to pursue and take advantage of business opportunities more seriously.

Outcome expectation mediates the effect of entrepreneurship knowledge on entrepreneurial intention

The path coefficient of the effect of entrepreneurial knowledge on entrepreneurial intention mediated by self-efficacy is 0,183, with a p-value of 0,000 and a t-statistic value of 3,462. The test results show that p-values <0,05 and t-statistic > 1,96, so the third hypothesis is accepted. This means that outcome expectation mediates the effect of entrepreneurship knowledge on entrepreneurial intention.

Outcome expectations are beliefs about the positive and negative consequences of participating in a particular activity. When individuals anticipate positive outcomes from entrepreneurship, they are more motivated to pursue entrepreneurship (Liguori et al., 2020). While entrepreneurial knowledge indirectly influences entrepreneurial intention, outcome expectancy plays a significant role in shaping it. The results of this study are supported by several findings (Blaese et al., 2021; Duong et al., 2024; Santos & Liguori, 2020), which indicate that expectations for entrepreneurial outcomes influence the association between entrepreneurial knowledge and intention. This implies that students will become more interested in entrepreneurship when they have confidence in their ESE and a favorable opinion of the results of entrepreneurship.

5. CONCLUSION

This study broadens our understanding of how SCCT affects entrepreneurial intention. The findings show that 1) Entrepreneurship knowledge positively impacts entrepreneurial intention; 2) Self-efficacy mediates the effect of entrepreneurship knowledge on entrepreneurial intention; and 3) Outcome expectation mediates the effect of entrepreneurship knowledge on entrepreneurial intention. The study's consequences will provide valuable insights into how entrepreneurial knowledge, self-efficacy, and outcome expectation foster entrepreneurial intention among vocational students. Therefore, schools can focus on integrating comprehensive entrepreneurship education into the curriculum and creating a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem to increase students' self-efficacy and align their expectations with realistic career outcomes. By implementing these strategies,

schools can play an important role in nurturing and developing students' entrepreneurial intentions.

6. LIMITATION AND IMPLICATION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion of the mediating effect of self-efficacy and outcome expectation on the effect of entrepreneurial knowledge on entrepreneurial intention in vocational students, the implications of this study can be used as a reference in developing strategies or policies to increase students' entrepreneurial intention, such as developing an entrepreneurship education curriculum and creating a school ecosystem that supports entrepreneurs. The limitations of this study are that the factors evaluated were entrepreneurial knowledge, self-efficacy, outcome expectation, and entrepreneurial ambition. Other variables, such as entrepreneurship education and the entrepreneurial ecosystem, can be used in future studies to assess entrepreneurial intention. This study focuses on SMKN Palembang students; additional research should look into other things that can explain the influence of factors from different perspectives. This will provide the opportunity to get a more comprehensive understanding and various viewpoints on the influence of variables.

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