International Journal of Management and Commerce Innovations ISSN 2348-7585 (Online)
Vol. 14, Issue 2, pp: (65-70), Month: October 2026 - March 2027, Available at: www.researchpublish.com

Understanding Entrepreneurial Intention among Indonesian University Students: A Multidimensional Perspective

Dr. Geetha Govindan K Gopalakrishnan

UNIES Business School

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23532470

Published Date: 21-October-2026

Abstract: **Entrepreneurship is widely promoted across Indonesian higher education as a response to graduate unemployment and a driver of economic development, yet the psychological and contextual pathways that lead a student toward entrepreneurial intention remain fragmented across separate strands of literature. This paper synthesises existing Indonesian and comparative research on entrepreneurial intention to build a multidimensional conceptual perspective. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and complementary streams on entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, individual dispositional traits, and institutional and social context, the paper argues that entrepreneurial intention among Indonesian students is better understood as the joint product of cognitive-attitudinal, dispositional, educational, and contextual dimensions rather than any single determinant. The paper reviews the mixed and sometimes contradictory findings reported across Indonesian campuses, proposes an integrative conceptual model, and offers testable propositions together with a proposed research design and implications for curriculum design, university policy, and future empirical research.**

Keywords: **Entrepreneurial Intention, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Entrepreneurship Education, Self-Efficacy, Indonesia, University Students.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's higher education system has, over the past two decades, positioned entrepreneurship as a core response to persistently high graduate unemployment and as a lever for national economic competitiveness. Entrepreneurship courses, incubators, business-plan competitions, and campus start-up support units have proliferated across public, private, and vocational universities. Underlying this policy push is an implicit assumption: that exposing students to entrepreneurial knowledge and role models will translate into a greater intention to start a business, and that intention will, in turn, translate into actual venture creation.

Entrepreneurial intention is generally understood as the cognitive orientation that precedes and predicts entrepreneurial behaviour — the conscious state of mind that directs attention, experience, and action toward starting a new venture (Ajzen, 1991). Because intention is the most proximate and measurable antecedent of actual start-up behaviour, it has become the dominant dependent variable in student entrepreneurship research, both globally and within Indonesia.

Yet a review of the Indonesian literature on this topic reveals a fragmented and at times contradictory picture. Studies applying Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) across different Indonesian universities have found that the model's explanatory power varies considerably by institution, with subjective norms sometimes dominant and perceived behavioural control occasionally showing an effect opposite to theoretical expectation (Astuti & Martdianty, 2012; Rumangkit et al., 2025). Other studies foreground entrepreneurship education (Indriyarti et al., 2025), dispositional traits such as self-efficacy and risk tolerance (Wibisono & Supriyono, 2018), or the broader academic and social support environment, often without reference to one another. This paper argues that these separate strands are better read together, as complementary dimensions of a single underlying phenomenon, than as competing explanations.

The purpose of this paper is therefore threefold: (i) to synthesise the principal theoretical and empirical strands of Indonesian entrepreneurial intention research; (ii) to propose an integrative, multidimensional conceptual model that situates these strands relative to one another; and (iii) to derive propositions, a proposed research design, and practical implications for entrepreneurship education and policy in the Indonesian context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Theory of Planned Behaviour as the Dominant Lens

The Theory of Planned Behaviour, originally developed by Ajzen (1991), remains the most widely applied theoretical foundation for entrepreneurial intention research in Indonesia. The model proposes that intention is jointly shaped by attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Astuti and Martdianty (2012) tested this model across six state universities spanning Northern Sumatra, Western Sumatra, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Eastern Java, and Southern Sulawesi, using a sample of roughly six hundred final-year students. They found that the TPB model held simultaneously across the sample, with subjective norm emerging as the strongest predictor overall. Notably, however, Astuti and Martdianty (2012) also found that the model's explanatory power differed sharply by campus: it performed well at some universities and failed to reach significance at others, suggesting that unmeasured local or cultural factors moderate how the standard TPB variables operate.

Utami et al. (2022) similarly applied the TPB framework to final-year management students at a private university in Bandung, examining how attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control shaped intention, and reported that all three constructs exerted a positive effect — reflecting the continued relevance of the standard model to single-institution Indonesian samples. More recent multilevel research by Rumangkit et al. (2025), drawing on 344 students from twenty-one Indonesian higher education institutions, found that attitude and subjective norm supported the expected TPB pathway, but that perceived behavioural control exhibited a negative rather than positive relationship with entrepreneurial intention — a result at odds with the theory's original formulation. Rumangkit et al. (2025) further found that the process of enacting an entrepreneurial plan negatively mediated the relationship between intention and longer-term commitment, implying that intention alone is a weak proxy for sustained entrepreneurial follow-through.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while the TPB provides a useful and replicable starting framework, its Indonesian application is neither uniform nor complete (Astuti & Martdianty, 2012; Rumangkit et al., 2025; Utami et al., 2022): local institutional culture, risk perception, and downstream commitment processes all appear to condition how the model's core constructs translate into intention and behaviour.

2.2 Entrepreneurship Education and Institutional Support

A second strand of Indonesian literature examines entrepreneurship education as both an antecedent of, and a moderator on, the TPB pathway. Indriyarti et al. (2025) examined how entrepreneurship education, perceived behavioural control, and commitment jointly shape intention to create business start-ups among urban university students, finding that entrepreneurship education contributes positively to intention but does not moderate the education–intention link through commitment as hypothesised, and that prior nascent entrepreneurial activity does not reliably strengthen intention. The practical implication Indriyarti et al. (2025) draw is that entrepreneurship curricula deliver more value when integrated with project-based learning and structured mentoring than when delivered as standalone theoretical content.

This contextual dimension helps explain why campuses with similar curricula but different levels of institutional backing — incubators, seed funding access, alumni mentorship — appear to produce different intention outcomes even when individual-level attitudes are comparable, a pattern consistent with the cross-campus variability documented by Astuti and Martdianty (2012).

2.3 Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy as a Distinct Construct

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) — an individual's belief in their own capacity to successfully perform the tasks and roles associated with entrepreneurship — has developed into a research stream distinct from, though related to, the TPB's perceived behavioural control. The foundational formulation by Chen, Greene, and Crick (1998) conceptualised ESE across five task domains: marketing, innovation, management, risk-taking, and financial control, and demonstrated that the construct distinguished entrepreneurship students from students of management and organisational psychology. Because ESE is task-specific rather than a generalised personality trait, Chen et al. (1998) argue it is more responsive to educational intervention than broad dispositional measures, which strengthens the case for treating it as a primary lever for entrepreneurship curricula rather than only a control variable.

Chawla and Bhatia (2021) extended and adapted the ESE construct for emerging-economy settings, developing a comprehensive scale verified for reliability and validity through statistical testing. This body of instrument-development work provides the Indonesian research stream with validated tools that have, to date, been under-utilised relative to generic TPB attitude batteries.

2.4 Dispositional Factors and Antecedent Conditions

A third strand centres on individual dispositions and their joint effect with self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intention. Wibisono and Supriyono (2018) examined entrepreneurial self-efficacy, risk tolerance, and desirability of self-employment as antecedents of entrepreneurial intention among 190 students across eight universities in Bandung, West Java. They found that entrepreneurial self-efficacy and desirability of self-employment had a significant positive effect on intention, that desirability of working for others and risk-averse personalities acted as suppressor variables, and that risk-taker personality alone was not a significant predictor. This finding is instructive: it suggests that self-efficacy and the perceived desirability of self-employment carry more explanatory weight for Indonesian students than generalised risk-taking disposition, reinforcing the case made by Chen et al. (1998) for treating self-efficacy as conceptually distinct from broader trait measures.

3. TOWARD A MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The literature reviewed above can be organised into four broad dimensions that jointly, rather than independently, shape entrepreneurial intention among Indonesian university students:

- Cognitive-attitudinal dimension — attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, as specified by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).
- Dispositional dimension — entrepreneurial self-efficacy, risk tolerance, and the desirability of self-employment relative to paid employment (Chen et al., 1998; Wibisono & Supriyono, 2018), which condition how favourably a student appraises entrepreneurial attitudes and control beliefs in the first place.
- Educational and institutional dimension — the design and delivery of entrepreneurship curricula, mentoring, incubation, and campus-level entrepreneurial culture (Indriyarti et al., 2025), which shape both self-efficacy and perceived behavioural control over time.
- Contextual and social dimension — family background, peer and social support, and the broader economic environment, which supply the subjective-norm pressures and opportunity perceptions that feed into the cognitive-attitudinal dimension (Astuti & Martdianty, 2012).

Rather than positioning these as four competing explanatory models, this paper proposes that they operate sequentially and reciprocally: dispositional traits and contextual/social exposure shape the cognitive-attitudinal variables of the TPB; educational and institutional interventions act primarily on self-efficacy and perceived behavioural control; and the resulting intention, as the Indonesian multilevel evidence suggests (Rumangkit et al., 2025), does not automatically convert into sustained entrepreneurial commitment without continued institutional and social reinforcement after graduation.

This layered structure is consistent with, and helps explain, the cross-campus variability reported by Astuti and Martdianty (2012): universities differing in institutional support and local social norms would be expected, under this model, to show different weightings of the TPB constructs even when using an identical survey instrument.

3.1 Propositions for Future Testing

- P1: The explanatory strength of the standard TPB model for Indonesian student samples is moderated by the level of institutional entrepreneurial support (incubation, mentoring, seed funding access) available on campus (cf. Astuti & Martdianty, 2012).
- P2: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates a larger share of the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention than generalised attitude toward entrepreneurship (cf. Chen et al., 1998; Indriyarti et al., 2025).
- P3: Perceived behavioural control is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention only above a threshold level of perceived resource adequacy (financial capital, family backing); below that threshold, perceived control may show a null or negative relationship, consistent with Rumangkit et al. (2025).
- P4: The gap between entrepreneurial intention and sustained entrepreneurial commitment is narrower for students who experience continued institutional contact (alumni networks, incubators) after graduation than for those who do not (cf. Rumangkit et al., 2025).

4. PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN FOR EMPIRICAL TESTING

To move the propositions in Section 3.1 from conceptual claims to testable hypotheses, this section outlines a research design suitable for future empirical work across Indonesian universities. The design is offered as a template for researchers wishing to build on this synthesis; it has not been fielded, and no data collection has taken place in preparing this paper.

4.1 Design and Sampling

A cross-sectional, multi-institution survey design is recommended, following the precedent set by Astuti and Martdianty (2012) and Rumangkit et al. (2025), whose multi-campus samples were able to detect the institutional-support moderation that single-campus studies such as Utami et al. (2022) and Wibisono and Supriyono (2018) could not test. A stratified sample drawing on public, private, and vocational universities across at least two regions (for example, Java and an outer-island province) would allow the urban-resourced-versus-peripheral contrast that the existing literature has not yet systematically tested. Final-year undergraduate business, engineering, and vocational students are the appropriate sampling frame, since entrepreneurial intention is most proximate to actual start-up decisions at the point of graduation.

4.2 Constructs and Measurement

TABLE I summarises recommended, previously validated instruments for each dimension of the proposed model, selected for their track record in entrepreneurship-intention research and, where available, prior use or adaptation in Southeast Asian samples.

TABLE I: PROPOSED CONSTRUCTS AND INSTRUMENTS FOR FUTURE EMPIRICAL TESTING

Dimension	Construct	Recommended Instrument	Source
Cognitive-attitudinal	Attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, intention	Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ)	Liñán & Chen (2009)
Dispositional	Entrepreneurial self-efficacy across marketing, innovation, management, risk-taking, financial control	ESE Scale	Chen et al. (1998)
Educational/institutional	Perceived quality and intensity of entrepreneurship education, mentoring, incubation exposure	Study-specific items, adapted	Indriyarti et al. (2025), adapted
Contextual/social	Family entrepreneurial background, peer support, perceived labour-market conditions	Study-specific items, adapted	Astuti & Martdianty (2012), adapted

4.3 Analytical Strategy

Consistent with the structural equation modelling approaches used by Astuti and Martdianty (2012) and Rumangkit et al. (2025), a two-step analytical strategy is recommended: confirmatory factor analysis to establish measurement validity and reliability for each construct, followed by structural path modelling to test the hypothesised relationships in Propositions 1 through 4. Given the institutional-moderation logic of Proposition 1, a multi-group or multilevel SEM specification — treating university or region as a level-2 grouping variable — is preferable to pooling all respondents into a single-level model, since pooling is precisely what obscured the cross-campus variability reported by Astuti and Martdianty (2012). Where longitudinal follow-up is feasible, a second wave administered six to twelve months after graduation would allow direct testing of the intention–commitment gap identified by Rumangkit et al. (2025).

Reliability should be assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, with a minimum threshold of .70 consistent with conventions in the ESE and TPB instrument-validation literature (Chen et al., 1998; Chawla & Bhatia, 2021); discriminant validity should be checked using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio given known overlap between perceived behavioural control and self-efficacy items.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

For entrepreneurship educators, the multidimensional perspective implies that curriculum design should not rely on attitude-change content alone (for example, lectures on the merits of entrepreneurship) but should deliberately target self-efficacy through experiential, project-based learning and mentorship, consistent with the recommendations arising from Indriyarti et al. (2025). For university administrators, the cross-campus variability documented by Astuti and Martdianty (2012) suggests that a single national entrepreneurship curriculum is unlikely to produce uniform intention outcomes; local institutional support structures need to be assessed and strengthened alongside, not instead of, classroom content.

For policymakers concerned with graduate unemployment, the finding by Rumangkit et al. (2025) that perceived behavioural control can behave counter-intuitively when resource constraints are severe suggests that financial-access interventions (seed grants, microcredit linkages, campus-based venture funds) may do more to convert intention into behaviour than further attitudinal messaging. Finally, the weak linkage between intention and commitment observed by Rumangkit et al. (2025) indicates that success should not be measured by intention scores alone; longitudinal tracking of graduates into actual venture creation is needed to validate whether stated intention has any durable predictive value in the Indonesian context.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As a conceptual synthesis, this paper does not itself generate new primary data; its contribution lies in organising and integrating existing, independently published Indonesian findings into a coherent multidimensional framework. The studies drawn upon vary in sample composition, region, and analytical method — from multiple regression (Wibisono & Supriyono, 2018) to structural equation modelling using LISREL (Astuti & Martdianty, 2012) or PLS-SEM (Rumangkit et al., 2025) — which limits the precision of any direct comparison across them. Future research should test the propositions advanced here using harmonised instruments across a diverse set of Indonesian universities, incorporate longitudinal designs capable of tracking the intention-to-behaviour gap over time, and examine regional and rural-urban variation in entrepreneurial ecosystems that the existing literature, concentrated in major cities and well-resourced institutions, has not yet fully captured.

7. CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurial intention among Indonesian university students is shaped by an interlocking set of cognitive-attitudinal, dispositional, educational, and contextual factors rather than by any single determinant. Existing Indonesian research, largely anchored in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), has produced valuable but inconsistent findings (Astuti & Martdianty, 2012; Rumangkit et al., 2025; Utami et al., 2022) precisely because it has tended to isolate one dimension at a time. The multidimensional conceptual model proposed in this paper offers a way to read these findings together, generates testable propositions and a concrete research design for future empirical work, and points toward more targeted, self-efficacy-oriented approaches to entrepreneurship education and campus-level institutional support in Indonesia.

REFERENCES

[1] Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50(2), 179–211.

[2] Astuti, R. D., & Martdianty, F. (2012). Students' entrepreneurial intentions by using theory of planned behavior: The case in Indonesia. The South East Asian Journal of Management, 6(2), 100–112.

[3] Chawla, N. T., & Bhatia, H. (2021). Measuring entrepreneurial self-efficacy: A comprehensive scale. Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Emerging Economies, 7(2), 194–215. https://doi.org/10.1177/2393957521101 9605

[4] Chen, C. C., Greene, P. G., & Crick, A. (1998). Does entrepreneurial self-efficacy distinguish entrepreneurs from managers? Journal of Business Venturing, 13(4), 295–316. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9026(97)00029-3

[5] Indriyarti, E. R., Christian, M., & Dewi, Y. K. (2025). Entrepreneurial intention determinants for urban university students to create business start-ups: The impact of entrepreneurship education, perceived behavioral control, commitment, and nascent entrepreneurship behavior. Jurnal Ekonomi Pendidikan dan Kewirausahaan, 13(2).

[6] Liñán, F., & Chen, Y. W. (2009). Development and cross-cultural application of a specific instrument to measure entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 33(3), 593–617.

[7] Rumangkit, S., Hadi, A. S., Sentosa, I., & Ab Wahid, R. (2025). The determinants of Indonesian students' intention and commitment to entrepreneurship: A multilevel study. Multidisciplinary Reviews, 9(1), Article 2026041.

[8] Shapero, A., & Sokol, L. (1982). The social dimensions of entrepreneurship. In C. Kent, D. Sexton, & K. Vesper (Eds.), Encyclopedia of entrepreneurship (pp. 72–90). Prentice-Hall.

[9] Utami, S. I., RS, N. S. Y., Wijaya, F. R., Firdaus, A., Pitaloka, A. B., & Nilasari, I. (2022). Investigating the entrepreneurial intention of final-year university's students by using theory of planned behavior (case: Undergraduate students of management department Widyatama University Indonesia). Central Asia and the Caucasus, 23(1), 3379–3388.

[10] Wibisono, C., & Supriyono, F. X. (2018). Entrepreneurial intentions of university students in Bandung, Indonesia. GATR Journal of Business and Social Sciences Review, 6(1), 15–22.