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THE EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, POSITIVE EMOTIONS, NEGATIVE EMOTIONS ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTEREST MEDIATED BY SELF-EFFICACY FOR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT
This study investigates the effects of emotional intelligence, positive emotions, and negative emotions on students' entrepreneurial interest, with self-efficacy serving as a mediating mechanism. Addressing a gap in prior research that predominantly examines psychological determinants in isolation, this study proposes an integrated cognitive–affective model within the context of vocational high school (VHS) education. A quantitative explanatory design was employed using survey data from 187 twelfth-grade students of SMK Negeri 1 Giritontro. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that emotional intelligence and positive emotions exert significant positive effects on self-efficacy, whereas negative emotions have a significant negative effect. Self-efficacy significantly predicts entrepreneurial interest and mediates the effects of emotional intelligence and positive emotions, but not negative emotions, on entrepreneurial interest. Theoretically, this study advances the integration of the Theory of Planned Behavior and Social Cognitive Theory by empirically demonstrating the central role of self-efficacy as a psychological conduit linking emotional factors to entrepreneurial interest. Practically, the findings underscore the importance of entrepreneurship education that systematically cultivates emotional intelligence, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy to foster entrepreneurial interest among vocational students.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as a strategic driver of economic growth, job creation, and sustainable development. Strengthening entrepreneurial interest among young people has therefore become a global priority, particularly in countries facing structural labor market challenges. Adolescence represents a critical developmental stage in which cognitive, affective, and motivational factors interact to shape future career orientations, including entrepreneurial pathways. Consequently, understanding the psychological determinants of entrepreneurial interest among students is essential for designing effective entrepreneurship education.

In the Indonesian context, this issue is particularly salient for vocational high school (VHS) students, who are expected not only to enter the labor market but also to contribute to job creation through entrepreneurship. However, national labor statistics indicate that vocational education graduates consistently contribute a relatively high proportion to the Open Unemployment Rate (*Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka*, TPT). This condition highlights a structural mismatch between vocational education outcomes and labor market absorption, underscoring the urgency of fostering entrepreneurial interest as an alternative career pathway for vocational students. Entrepreneurship education thus plays a strategic role in reducing youth unemployment and supporting national economic resilience.

Previous studies have demonstrated that entrepreneurial interest is influenced by various psychological factors, including emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and affective states. Emotional intelligence has been shown to enhance individuals' ability to manage uncertainty, regulate emotions, and maintain motivation in entrepreneurial contexts. Similarly, positive emotions such as optimism and enthusiasm contribute to opportunity recognition and risk-taking, whereas negative emotions such as anxiety and fear may inhibit entrepreneurial motivation. Self-efficacy, as a belief in one's capability to perform entrepreneurial tasks, has consistently emerged as a strong predictor of entrepreneurial interest and intention.

Despite the growing body of international literature, existing studies tend to examine these psychological factors in a fragmented manner. Research frequently focuses either on emotional intelligence or on affective dimensions, while positioning self-efficacy primarily as a direct predictor rather than as an explanatory psychological mechanism. Moreover, empirical evidence integrating emotional intelligence, positive emotions, and negative emotions within a single structural model—with self-efficacy as a mediating variable—remains limited, particularly in the context of Indonesian vocational high school students.

Therefore, this study addresses a clear research gap by proposing and empirically testing an integrated cognitive–affective model of entrepreneurial interest among vocational students in Indonesia. By replacing macro-level entrepreneurship indicators with labor-market-relevant evidence from the Open Unemployment Rate (TPT), this study anchors its contribution in a contextually meaningful national issue. Specifically, this research examines how emotional intelligence, positive emotions, and negative emotions influence entrepreneurial interest through the mediating role of self-efficacy. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the integration of the Theory of Planned Behavior and Social Cognitive Theory, and practically to the development of entrepreneurship education strategies aimed at reducing youth unemployment among vocational graduates**.**

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LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Interest in Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial interest can be understood as a person's internal awareness and attraction to engage in entrepreneurial activities, reflected in the desire, attention, and pleasure in choosing business as their field of activity. Within the framework of entrepreneurial intention, this interest is the initial stage that directs an individual's attention and motivation before forming a stronger intention to actually start a new business. (Gunawan, 2024.; Hamdani & Sari, 2023; Setyawati et al., 2023) Various studies explain that entrepreneurial interest is the tendency or attraction to start a new business, which serves as a psychological foundation before someone enters the phase of entrepreneurial intention and actual action. This interest serves as an initial trigger that directs the thought process, information search,

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and opportunity evaluation. Therefore, without a strong enough interest, an individual is unlikely to progress to the intention and business establishment stages. (Neneh & Dzomonda, 2024).

Various studies show that entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by internal factors such as self-efficacy and emotional intelligence, as well as external factors such as social support and educational environment. (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015; Ukil et al., 2025) emphasizes that emotional aspects, both positive and negative, also influence entrepreneurial intentions through changes in attitudes and perceptions of behavioral control. In line with this, (McLaughlin, 2019) suggests that perceptions of emotional intelligence also significantly contribute to increased interest in entrepreneurship. Emotional intelligence, which encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own and others' emotions, can enhance an individual's ability to manage stress and navigate uncertainty in the entrepreneurial world. Ajzen in the Theory of Planned Behavior states that interest in entrepreneurship is influenced by attitudes, social norms, and self-control over this behavior. (Ajzen, 2020).

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is generally understood as an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions, as well as recognize and respond appropriately to the emotions of others. (Stein & Deonarine, 2015). EI plays a vital role in decision-making, stress management, and building healthy interpersonal relationships—all of which are necessary skills in entrepreneurship. (Bibi et al., 2020). Emotional intelligence contributes to students' interest in entrepreneurship, with studies showing a contribution of 48.9%. (Arif et al., 2022). Emotional intelligence also underlies the influence of management knowledge on entrepreneurial interest among students. (Siagian, 2023) There is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial motivation, with emotional intelligence contributing 20.5% of the variance in entrepreneurial motivation. (Irawati & Fauziah, 2020) Nwibe and Ogbuanya (2024) found that EI positively influenced students' entrepreneurial intentions, with multidimensional self-efficacy acting as a mediator. This suggests that EI helps increase self-confidence in overcoming entrepreneurial challenges, which in turn increases the intention to start a business.

Positive and Negative Emotions in Entrepreneurship

In addition to emotional intelligence, emotions also play a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurship involves a complex interplay of positive and negative emotions that significantly influence entrepreneurial behavior, decision-making, and overall success. Positive emotions, such as joy and satisfaction, play a crucial role in motivating individuals to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Positive emotions increase the likelihood of setting ambitious goals and pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities. (Othman & Othman, 2021) Positive emotions, such as enthusiasm, optimism, satisfaction, and passion, have been shown to encourage the emergence of creative ideas, increase the courage to take risks, and strengthen confidence in achieving business success. (Baron, 2008; Ukil et al., 2025).

On the other hand, negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, self-doubt, and worry can hinder entrepreneurial intentions because they create a greater perception of risk. (Shepherd, 2011) However, negative emotions can also act as a warning signal in decision-making. Therefore, it is important to analyze both types of emotions simultaneously within the framework of entrepreneurial intention theory. Ukil et al. (2025) integrated positive and negative emotions into the TPB framework and found that positive emotions have both direct and indirect influences on entrepreneurial intention, while negative emotions only have an indirect influence. This finding confirms the important role of the affective dimension in shaping entrepreneurial intention.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her ability to organize and carry out the actions necessary to achieve a particular goal. (Bandura, 1997) In the context of entrepreneurship, self-efficacy has three main indicators, namely perceived competence, perceived control, and perceived persistence. (Nwibe & Ogbuanya, 2024) Perceived competence reflects confidence in one's own ability to manage a business, perceived control relates to the perception of one's ability to control business outcomes through one's own efforts, while perceived persistence relates to

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perseverance and tenacity in the face of difficulties. These three indicators are important aspects in explaining how self-efficacy mediates the influence of EI on entrepreneurial intentions.

Self-efficacy has also been confirmed in several recent studies to have a significant influence on entrepreneurial interest. (Doanh & Bernat, 2019; Naktiyok et al., 2010; Pihie & Bagheri, 2013; Tiwari et al., 2017) Self-efficacy belief (SEB) is defined as an individual's assessment of the extent to which he or she is able to overcome obstacles and achieve set goals. (Mouton et al., 2013). In the context of entrepreneurship, self-efficacy reflects the belief that one has the ability to engage in and succeed in a business venture. (Saraih et al., 2018) Pihie and Bagheri (2013) explained that self-efficacy increases students' interest in entrepreneurship by strengthening their sense of control over all entrepreneurial activities, their attitudes toward entrepreneurship, and their capacity to manage the process. In entrepreneurship, self-efficacy plays a crucial role because it influences an individual's perception of the opportunities, risks, and obstacles faced in starting a business. (Shinnar et al., 2012).

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence, Positive Emotions, and Negative Emotions on Self-Efficacy

Emotional intelligence is an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own and other people's emotions effectively. (Mayer et al., 2008). Individualwith high emotional intelligence, they are able to manage stress, build healthy social relationships, and increase self-confidence when facing challenges. (Daniel Goleman, 1998)In the context of entrepreneurship, this ability is very important because entrepreneurs are required to remain calm, focused, and optimistic amidst business uncertainty. (Bibi et al., 2020). Emotional intelligence plays an important role in strengthening self-efficacy, becauseindividualThose who are able to manage their emotions well tend to have higher self-confidence (Ahmetoglu et al., 2011).

Research by Nwibe and Ogbuanya (2024) shows that emotional intelligence has a significant positive influence on students' multidimensional self-efficacy, particularly in the context of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, positive emotions such as optimism, enthusiasm, and happiness can strengthen a person's confidence in their abilities, thus encouraging increased self-efficacy. (Hayton & Cholakova, 2012) On the other hand, negative emotions such as fear and anxiety can reduce self-confidence and give rise to perceptions of incompetence.facechallenge (Lerner et al., 2006) However, Shepherd (2011) emphasized that well-managed negative emotions can act as alert signals that encourage individuals to be more prepared to face risks.

Based on the theory and results of previous research, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1:Emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on self-efficacy.

H2:Positive emotions have a significant positive effect on self-efficacy.

H3:Negative emotions have a significant negative effect on self-efficacy

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence, Positive Emotions, Negative Emotions, and Self-Efficacy on Interest in Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial intention is defined as an individual's readiness to start a new business and is the main predictor of entrepreneurial behavior. (Krueger & Carsrud, 1993). Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2020) Entrepreneurial intentions are formed through three main components: attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Emotional intelligence influences entrepreneurial intentions through the ability to manage emotions in the face of risk and pressure, as well as the ability to think clearly in decision-making.(Mortan et al., 2014) According to McLaughlin (2019), students with high emotional intelligence demonstrate a stronger interest in entrepreneurship due to their strong emotional regulation and social empathy. Furthermore, positive emotions have been shown to play a significant role in fostering entrepreneurial interest. Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory explains that positive emotions broaden thought patterns, enhance creativity, and strengthen motivation to act.

Research by Foo et al. (2009) and Ukil et al. (2025) shows that positive emotions significantly increase entrepreneurial intentions by increasing optimism and perceived behavioral control. Conversely, negative emotions such as fear of failure and anxiety can hinder entrepreneurial intentions by reducing motivation and perceived control

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over the situation.(Lerner et al., 2006)However, Baron (2008) added that constructively managing negative emotions can encourage caution in business decision-making. Thus, the second hypothesis proposed is:
H4: Emotional intelligence has a significant positive influence on interest in entrepreneurship.
H5: Positive emotions have a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial interest.
H6: Negative emotions have a significant negative effect on entrepreneurial interest.
H7: Self-efficacy has a positive influence on interest in entrepreneurship

Self-Efficacy as a Mediator between Emotional Intelligence, Positive Emotions, and Negative Emotions on Interest in Entrepreneurship

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to plan and carry out actions to achieve success.(Bandura, 1997). Within the framework of Social Cognitive Career Theory(Lent et al., 2023)Self-efficacy functions as a psychological mechanism that bridges the influence of personal factors on a person's interests and career choices. Individuals with high self-efficacy are better able to overcome emotional obstacles and make bold decisions about starting a business.

Research by Zhao et al. (2005) and Doanh and Bernat (2019) found that self-efficacy is an important mediator in the relationship between personal factors and entrepreneurial interest. High emotional intelligence strengthens an individual's belief in their own abilities, which in turn increases entrepreneurial interest.(Nwibe & Ogbuanya, 2024). Similarly, positive emotions can increase self-efficacy because individuals feel more confident and optimistic about the results they will achieve.(Hayton & Cholakova, 2012)On the other hand, although negative emotions can hinder motivation, students with high self-efficacy are still able to channel emotional stress into a drive to achieve.(Shepherd, 2011)Based on the theoretical basis and empirical findings, the following hypothesis can be formulated:
H8: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial interest.
H9: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between positive emotions and entrepreneurial interest.
H10: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between negative emotions and entrepreneurial interest

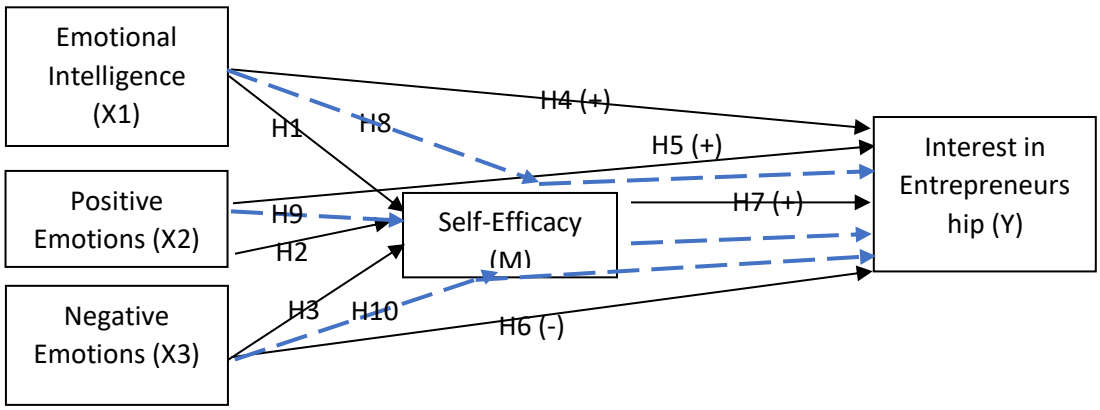

Figure 2.2. Hypothesis Framework Image

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the structural relationships among emotional intelligence, positive emotions, negative emotions, self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial interest. Data were collected using a survey method and analyzed through Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is appropriate for testing complex models involving mediation effects and latent constructs. PLS-SEM

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was selected due to its suitability for prediction-oriented research and its robustness with relatively moderate sample sizes.

The research sample consisted of 187 twelfth-grade students from SMK Negeri 1 Giritontro. The sample was determined using a proportional random sampling technique, ensuring that each student had an equal probability of being selected while maintaining proportional representation across study programs. This sampling approach enhances the generalizability of the findings within the vocational school context.

Measurement instruments were adapted from established and validated scales in previous studies. Emotional intelligence was measured using items adapted from prior emotional intelligence frameworks, while positive and negative emotions were assessed using affective dimension scales commonly employed in entrepreneurship research. Self-efficacy was measured using a multidimensional entrepreneurial self-efficacy scale, and entrepreneurial interest was assessed through indicators reflecting students' attraction, intention, and willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and anonymity was ensured by excluding any personally identifiable information. The study complied with fundamental research ethics principles, including respect for participants, data confidentiality, and responsible data use.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

*Convergent Validity*A validity test is used to measure how well the statement items in a research questionnaire work. Convergent validity is tested by examining the outer loading values of each construct indicator or each statement item within a variable. A measurement is considered valid if the outer loading value is >0.70.(Hair et al., 2020). In addition to the factor loading parameters, this convergent validity test also uses the AVE value test which has a rule of thumb >0.5.

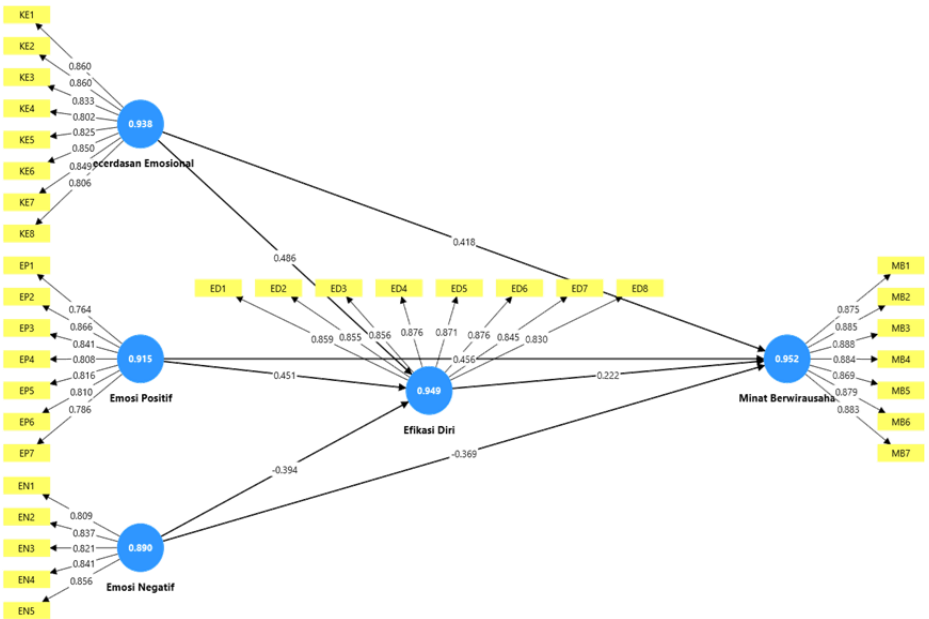

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Figure 1. Outer Loading Results

Table 1. Convergent Validity-AVE

	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Information
Self-Efficacy	0.737	Valid
Negative Emotions	0.694	Valid
Positive Emotions	0.662	Valid
Emotional Intelligence	0.699	Valid
Interest in Entrepreneurship	0.775	Valid

(Source: Primary Data processed: 2025)

Another validity test is discriminant validity. Two commonly used approaches to assess discriminant validity are cross-loading analysis and the Fornell-Larcker criterion.Based on the results of Discriminant Validity – Cross Loading, it can be seen that all indicators have the highest loading values on the constructs they are supposed to measure. For example, indicators on the Self-Efficacy construct (M1–M8) have loading values between 0.845 and 0.876 on the Self-Efficacy construct, and these values are higher than the loadings on other constructs such as Positive Emotions, Negative Emotions, Emotional Intelligence, and Entrepreneurial Interest.

Similarly, the indicators for the constructs Negative Emotions (X3.1–X3.3), Positive Emotions (X2.1–X2.7), Emotional Intelligence (X1.1–X1.7), and Entrepreneurial Interest (Y1–Y8) showed higher loading values for their respective constructs compared to the other constructs. This indicates that each indicator is able to reflect the construct it measures well and there are no multicollinearity problems between the latent constructs. Thus, the results of the crossloading analysis show that all constructs in this study have met the discriminant validity criteria, where each indicator represents its own variable better than other different variables.

In addition to cross-loading, discriminant validity was also tested using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. This criterion states that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each construct must be greater than the correlation between the other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2. Discriminant validity results of the Forner-Larcker Criterion

	Self-Efficacy	Negative Emotions	Positive Emotions	Emotional Intelligence	Interest in Entrepreneurship
Self-Efficacy	0.859				
Negative Emotions	-0.481	0.833			
Positive Emotions	0.545	-0.065	0.814		
Emotional Intelligence	0.596	-0.119	0.142	0.836	
Interest in Entrepreneurship	0.737	-0.449	0.539	0.527	0.880

(Source: Primary Data processed: 2025)

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Based on the results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion test in the table above, the square root of the AVE value (shown on the diagonal) for each construct is higher than the correlation value between the constructs below it. For example, the square root of the AVE value for Self-Efficacy of 0.859 is greater than its correlation with Negative Emotions (-0.481), Positive Emotions (0.545), Intelligence (0.545), and Intelligence (0.545).Emotional (0.596), and Interest in Entrepreneurship (0.737).

The same thing is seen in the Negative Emotion construct with an AVE root value of 0.833, which is higher than its correlation with other constructs. The Positive Emotion construct also has an AVE root value of 0.814, greater than the correlation with other constructs such as Negative Emotion (-0.065) and Self-Efficacy (0.545). Similarly, the Emotional Intelligence construct shows an AVE root value of 0.836, which exceeds the correlation between other variables. Finally, the Entrepreneurial Interest construct has an AVE root value of 0.880, which is also higher than the correlation with other constructs. These results indicate that all constructs in the research model have a good level of discriminant validity because each construct is able to clearly distinguish itself from other constructs.

Reliability Test

The construct reliability test is assessed using two main measures, namely Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (rho_c). The Cronbach's Alpha value

Table 3. construct reliability results

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Information
Self-Efficacy	0.949	0.957	Reliable
Negative Emotions	0.890	0.919	Reliable
Positive Emotions	0.915	0.932	Reliable
Emotional Intelligence	0.938	0.949	Reliable
Interest in Entrepreneurship	0.952	0.960	Reliable

(Source: Processed primary data, 2025)

Based on the test results shown in the table above, the values obtained were *Cronbach's Alpha* and *Composite Reliability* for all constructs has a value above 0.70. According to Hair et al. (2021), the value*Cronbach's* Alpha and Composite *Reliability* value exceeding 0.70 indicates that the construct has good reliabi y. Thus, all variables in this study meet the reliability criteria because they have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values greater than 0.70. This indicates that each indicator used to measure the constructs of Self-Efficacy, Negative Emotions, Positive Emotions, Emotional Intelligence, and Entrepreneurial Interest has a high level of consistency, so the data obtained are reliable and suitable for use in further analysis.

R-Square (R^2)

Based on the results*test*R-Square Overview, the following results were obtained:

Table 4.R-Square Results

Endogenous Variables	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted	Category
Self-Efficacy	0.725	0.721	Strong
Interest in Entrepreneurship	0.645	0.637	Moderate–Strong

(Source: processed from primary data: 2025)

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Self-Efficacy has an R^2 value of 0.725, which means that 72.5% of the variability of Self-Efficacy can be explained by the variables of Emotional Intelligence, Positive Emotions, and Negative Emotions, while the remaining 27.5% is explained by other factors outside the research model. This value is included in the strong category, so it can be concluded that the three exogenous variables have a substantial influence on the formation of student self-efficacy.

Entrepreneurial Interest has an R^2 value of 0.645, which means that 64.5% of the variability in Entrepreneurial Interest can be explained by Self-Efficacy, Emotional Intelligence, Positive Emotions, and Negative Emotions, while the remaining 35.5% is influenced by other variables not included in the model. This value is included in the moderate to strong category, thus indicating that the model has a good ability to explain variations in students' entrepreneurial interest.

Effect size(f^2).

The effect size values in this study can be seen in the table below:

Table 5. Effect Size Test Results (f2)

	Self-Efficacy	Negative Emotions	Positive Emotions	Emotional Intelligence	Interest in Entrepreneurship
Self-Efficacy					0.038
Negative Emotions	0.555				0.141
Positive Emotions	0.723				0.202
Emotional Intelligence	0.830				0.144
Interest in Entrepreneurship					

(Source: processed from primary data: 2025)

Based on the test results above, it can be explained that the variables of emotional intelligence, positive emotions, and negative emotions have a significant influence on self-efficacy, while the influence on entrepreneurial interest is moderate. These findings underscore the importance of emotional management and emotional intelligence in improving self-efficacy, which can ultimately strengthen students' interest in entrepreneurship.

Predictive Relevance(Q^2)

Predictive evaluation was conducted to assess the ability of the PLS-SEM model to predict the value of endogenous constructs based on the Q^2predict coefficient value.

Table 6.PLS Predict LV summary results

	Q^2predict	RMSE	MAE
Self-Efficacy (M)	0.726	0.542	0.433
Interest in Entrepreneurship (Y)	0.626	0.625	0.487

(Source processed from primary data 2025)

Based on the Q^2predict table for Self-Efficacy (M) = 0.726. The Q^2predict value of 0.726 indicates that the model has very high predictive relevance for the Self-Efficacy variable. This means that the variables of emotional intelligence, positive emotions, and negative emotions are able to predict students' self-efficacy levels very well. Q^2predict for Entrepreneurial Interest (Y) = 0.626. The Q^2predict value of 0.626 indicates high predictive relevance for the entrepreneurial interest variable. This means that the combination of the variables of emotional intelligence, positive emotions, negative emotions, and self-efficacy is able to predict entrepreneurial interest very well.

Model Fit Test

Model fit testing was conducted to ensure that the structural model developed in this study aligns with the empirical data. In PLS-SEM analysis, the model fit criteria are less stringent than in CB-SEM, but indicators such as SRMR, d_ULS, d_G, Chi-square, and NFI are still used to provide an overview of the model's acceptability (Henseler et al., 2014). The results of this study's model fit test are shown in the following table.

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Table 7. Model fit test results

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.048	0.048
d_ULS	1,481	1,481
d_G	1,304	1,304
Chi-square	1,289,633	1,289,633
NFI	0.798	0.798

Based on all model fit indicators, including SRMR, d_ULS, d_G, Chi-square, and NFI, it can be concluded that this research model has a good level of fit and meets the fit criteria in the PLS-SEM analysis. The model built is able to adequately represent empirical data, so that the structural analysis conducted (path coefficient, R-square, indirect effect, and effect size) is reliable and worthy of further interpretation.

Hypothesis Test Results

Bootstrapping results of direct effect

The results of bootstrapping the direct effect can be seen in table 4.15 as follows:

Table 8. Results of Path Coefficient Bootstrapping direct effect

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values	Information
X1 -> M	0.486	0.486	0.040	12,042	0.000	Proven
X2 -> M	0.451	0.452	0.038	11,926	0.000	Proven
X3 -> M	-0.394	-0.393	0.040	9,863	0.000	Proven
X1 -> Y	0.310	0.310	0.054	5,801	0.000	Proven
X2 -> Y	0.355	0.357	0.063	5,610	0.000	Proven
X3 -> Y	-0.282	-0.281	0.059	4,759	0.000	Proven
M -> Y	0.222	0.221	0.083	2,692	0.004	Proven

(Source: processed from primary data: 2025)

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence (X1) on Self-Efficacy (M)

The test results show that Emotional Intelligence (X1) has a path coefficient of 0.486, which indicates a positive and strong influence on Self-Efficacy (M). This means that the higher a student's emotional intelligence, the greater their level of self-efficacy. The coefficient value of 0.486 indicates that changes in emotional intelligence make a significant contribution to increasing students' self-confidence in completing tasks and facing challenges. In addition, the effect size (f^2) result of 0.830 (large) confirms that Emotional Intelligence is the most dominant factor in influencing Self-Efficacy among other variables. Thus, hypothesis H1 is accepted.

The Influence of Positive Emotions (X2) on Self-Efficacy (M)

Positive Emotions (X2) also showed a positive and significant influence on Self-Efficacy, with a path coefficient of 0.451. This value indicates that when students have a positive emotional state, their confidence in their abilities increases. Furthermore, the effect size result of 0.723 (large) indicates that the contribution of positive emotions to self-efficacy is very significant in the research model. Thus, hypothesis H2 is accepted.

The Influence of Negative Emotions (X3) on Self-Efficacy (M)

Unlike the two previous variables, Negative Emotions (X3) had a negative and significant effect on Self-Efficacy, with a path coefficient value of –0.394. This negative value indicates that an increase in negative emotions will reduce students' self-efficacy. Furthermore, the effect size (f^2) test result of 0.555 (large) indicates that negative emotions substantially influence self-efficacy, although the direction of the influence is downward. Thus, hypothesis H3 is accepted.

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The Influence of Emotional Intelligence (X1) on Interest in Entrepreneurship (Y)

The path coefficient of the influence of Emotional Intelligence (X1) on Interest in Entrepreneurship is 0.310. This figure indicates that the influence of emotional intelligence on interest in entrepreneurship is positive, meaning that the higher a student's emotional intelligence, the higher their interest in entrepreneurship. Thus, hypothesis H4 is accepted.

The Influence of Positive Emotions (X2) on Interest in Entrepreneurship (Y)

The path coefficient between Positive Emotions (X2) and Entrepreneurial Interest is 0.355. This value represents a positive influence and is categorized as quite strong, indicating that students with high positive emotions tend to have a greater interest in entrepreneurship. Thus, hypothesis H5 is accepted.

The Influence of Negative Emotions (X3) on Interest in Entrepreneurship (Y)

The path coefficient of the influence of Negative Emotions (X3) on Entrepreneurial Interest is –0.282. This negative value indicates that negative emotions have a negative and quite strong influence on entrepreneurial interest. This means that the higher the level of negative emotions in students, the lower their interest in choosing an entrepreneurial path. Thus, hypothesis H6 is accepted.

The Influence of Self-Efficacy (M) on Interest in Entrepreneurship (Y)

The test results show that the path coefficient between Self-Efficacy (M) and Entrepreneurial Interest is 0.222. This value indicates a positive influence, although in the moderate category, which means that students' confidence in their abilities encourages an increase in their interest in entrepreneurship. Thus, hypothesis H7 is accepted.

Bootstrapping results of indirect effects

The results of bootstrapping the indirect effect can be seen in table 9 as follows:

Table 9. Bootstrapping results of indirect effects

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values
X1 -> M -> Y	0.108	0.108	0.041	2,610	0.005
X2 -> M -> Y	0.100	0.100	0.039	2,599	0.005
X3 -> M -> Y	-0.088	-0.087	0.033	2,616	0.004

(Source: processed from primary data: 2025)

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Entrepreneurial Interest Mediated by Self-Efficacy.

These results indicate that emotional intelligence (X1) not only directly influences entrepreneurial interest but also through increasing students' self-efficacy. The indirect effect coefficient of 0.108 indicates that some of the influence of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial interest arises because students with high emotional intelligence tend to have greater self-confidence in their abilities, thus being more interested in entrepreneurial activities. Thus, Hypothesis H8 is accepted.

The Influence of Positive Emotions on Entrepreneurial Interest Mediated by Self-Efficacy.

The indirect coefficient of 0.100 indicates that positive emotions (X2) influence entrepreneurial interest through increased self-efficacy. This means that when students experience positive emotions such as enthusiasm, optimism, and positive energy, they have stronger self-confidence to try new things, including exploring entrepreneurial activities. Thus, hypothesis H9 is accepted.

The Influence of Negative Emotions on Entrepreneurial Interest. Mediated by Self-Efficacy.

The indirect effect value of -0.088 indicates that negative emotions (X3) reduce entrepreneurial interest through decreased self-efficacy. When students experience negative emotions such as fear, stress, and anxiety, their self-confidence weakens, thus decreasing their interest in entrepreneurship. Therefore, hypothesis H10 is accepted.

DISCUSSION

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The findings of this study demonstrate that emotional intelligence, emotional states, and self-efficacy play interconnected roles in shaping entrepreneurial interest among vocational high school students. Emotional intelligence emerged as a fundamental psychological resource that strengthens students' confidence in their ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Students who are able to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions tend to develop stronger self-belief, enabling them to cope more effectively with challenges and uncertainty. This finding extends prior research by empirically confirming that emotional intelligence functions not only as a personal competence but also as a critical antecedent of self-efficacy in the vocational education context, supporting the theoretical perspectives of Goleman (1995, 2005) and Bandura (1997).

Consistent with social cognitive theory, emotional intelligence facilitates self-motivation, emotional regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness, all of which contribute to stronger perceptions of control and competence (Bandura, 1997). Previous studies have highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in entrepreneurial settings (Arce et al., 2023); however, this study extends prior research by demonstrating its indirect contribution to entrepreneurial interest through self-efficacy, emphasizing its role as a foundational psychological mechanism rather than merely a direct predictor.

Positive emotions were also found to play a significant role in enhancing self-efficacy and entrepreneurial interest. Emotional states such as enthusiasm, optimism, and enjoyment foster psychological energy that strengthens students' confidence and willingness to explore entrepreneurial opportunities. This finding extends prior research by empirically supporting Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory within the context of vocational education, indicating that positive emotions broaden students' cognitive perspectives and build enduring psychological resources, particularly self-efficacy. These results are consistent with Baron's (2008) argument that positive affect enhances creativity and flexible thinking, which are essential in entrepreneurial processes, as well as with Foo et al. (2009), who emphasized the role of positive emotions in encouraging opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial engagement.

In contrast, negative emotions were found to undermine both self-efficacy and entrepreneurial interest. Feelings of anxiety, fear of failure, and emotional distress weaken students' confidence in their own abilities and increase their perception of risk. Unlike previous studies suggesting that negative emotions may function as adaptive signals that promote caution and learning in entrepreneurship (Shepherd et al., 2015), this result indicates that among vocational high school students, negative emotions primarily operate as psychological barriers that suppress self-efficacy and entrepreneurial interest. This discrepancy may be explained by students limited entrepreneurial experience, which restricts their ability to transform negative emotional experiences into constructive coping strategies (Lazarus, 1991).

Self-efficacy emerged as a central predictor of entrepreneurial interest, reinforcing its pivotal role in entrepreneurial behavior formation. Students who believe in their competence, control, and persistence are more likely to express a strong interest in entrepreneurship. This finding is consistent with Bandura's (1997) assertion that self-efficacy influences behavioral choices, effort, perseverance, and responses to obstacles. Previous studies have also identified self-efficacy as a key determinant of entrepreneurial intention (Chen et al., 1998; Zhao et al., 2005). This study extends prior research by positioning self-efficacy as a psychological conduit that links emotional intelligence and emotional states to entrepreneurial interest, rather than treating it solely as an independent predictor.

Furthermore, the mediation analysis highlights the differential role of self-efficacy in explaining the effects of emotional variables on entrepreneurial interest. Self-efficacy was found to mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial interest, as well as between positive emotions and entrepreneurial interest. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence and positive emotions enhance entrepreneurial interest primarily by strengthening students' beliefs in their own capabilities. This finding extends prior research by providing empirical evidence for an integrated cognitive–affective pathway in entrepreneurial interest formation, aligning with both the Theory of Planned Behavior and Social Cognitive Theory.

However, self-efficacy did not mediate the relationship between negative emotions and entrepreneurial interest. Unlike previous studies that reported indirect effects of negative emotions through psychological resources, this result

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indicates that negative emotions exert a more direct and inhibitory influence that is not sufficiently buffered by self-efficacy. This suggests that strengthening self-efficacy alone may be insufficient if students' negative emotional states are not simultaneously addressed. Therefore, entrepreneurship education should incorporate emotional regulation and stress management strategies alongside efforts to enhance self-efficacy.

Overall, this study underscores that entrepreneurial interest among vocational students is shaped by a complex interaction between emotional intelligence, emotional experiences, and self-efficacy. By integrating these constructs into a single explanatory framework, this research extends prior literature by offering a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying entrepreneurial interest, particularly in the context of vocational education in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that emotional intelligence, positive emotions, and negative emotions play significant roles in shaping entrepreneurial interest among vocational high school students, both directly and indirectly through self-efficacy. Emotional intelligence and positive emotions enhance students' entrepreneurial interest by strengthening their confidence in their own abilities, whereas negative emotions tend to weaken self-efficacy and suppress entrepreneurial interest.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the entrepreneurship and educational psychology literature by integrating emotional intelligence, emotional states, and self-efficacy into a unified explanatory framework, thereby extending social cognitive theory in explaining entrepreneurial interest formation among vocational students.

Despite these contributions, this study is subject to methodological limitations, particularly its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported questionnaire data, which may limit causal inference and increase the potential for common method bias.

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