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# Entrepreneurial Intention among Vocational High School Students in Cirebon: A Need for Achievement Perspective

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to examine the influence of the need for achievement on students' social entrepreneurship intentions by considering the mediating role of perceived desirability and perceived feasibility based on Intention Theory in Shapero's Entrepreneurial Event Model. This study is motivated by the critical importance of developing social entrepreneurship mindsets in the younger generation, particularly among vocational high school (SMK) students, as an effort to create competent individuals who are not only oriented toward economic gain but also deeply concerned with solving complex social problems in society. The research method used is an explanatory survey design utilizing a quantitative approach. The research sample consisted of 195 vocational high school students in Cirebon, selected from the total population using a purposive sampling technique. Data collection was carried out by distributing structured questionnaires compiled comprehensively based on the specific indicators of each research variable. Furthermore, the collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the help of SmartPLS software version 3. The results showed that the need for achievement has a positive and significant direct effect on students' social entrepreneurship intentions. This means that the higher students' inner drive for achievement, the higher their tendency to intend to become social entrepreneurs. Furthermore, perceived desirability and perceived feasibility were statistically proven to partially mediate the relationship between need for achievement and social entrepreneurial intention. Based on these empirical findings, this study concludes and recommends the urgent need for entrepreneurship curriculum renewal by integrating core social entrepreneurship values, experiential learning, structured internship programs, and strengthening business incubator activities within vocational schools.

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## ■ INTRODUCTION

High unemployment persists as a formidable challenge for many developing economies, Indonesia being no exception. The ramifications of this phenomenon transcend economic sectors, inducing multifaceted social dilemmas (International Labour Organization, 2024; World Bank, 2023). Elevated unemployment stifles macroeconomic growth by depressing public productivity, eroding purchasing power, and diminishing labor-driven contributions to national development. Concurrently, it correlates with rising poverty, systemic social inequality, and heightened vulnerability to social unrest and crime. Over time, these economic constraints impede human capital development by restricting public access to advanced education and technical training, rendering unemployment a critical issue that necessitates urgent intervention from policymakers, academic bodies, and civil society.

In Indonesia, the vocational high school (SMK) demographic consistently registers the highest open unemployment rate relative to other educational cohorts. The Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) documented this trend in August 2022, noting a 9.42% open unemployment rate among vocational alumni. Although subsequent years saw marginal

contractions, vocational graduates stubbornly spearhead national unemployment metrics. Latest empirical data from BPS (2025) reveals an 8.63% unemployment rate for this sector, sustaining its position as the highest across all tiers. This reality underscores the ongoing mismatch between vocational educational outputs and the fluid dynamics of contemporary industries (BPS, 2025).

A synthesis of structural and institutional variables drives this high unemployment trend among vocational cohorts. Quantitative and qualitative deficits in vocational teaching staff serve as primary impediments to optimizing graduate quality (Mukhlason et al., 2020). This is compounded by regional disparities in institutional quality, specifically regarding obsolete learning infrastructure, rigid curricula, and deficient educational management. Crucially, weak institutional ties with the business and industrial world (DUDI) hinder the efficacy of "link and match" initiatives. Driven by rapid technological disruption, industrial digitalization, and macroeconomic shifts, structural skill gaps expand, leaving graduates ill-equipped to navigate the highly competitive labor market.

A strategic avenue to offset these labor market inefficiencies is promoting entrepreneurship as a mechanism for socioeconomic mobility. Entrepreneurial initiatives possess the capacity to stimulate job creation, enhance market productivity, and catalyze localized innovation. Research indicates that scaling the entrepreneurial base yields substantial dividends for economic growth and aggregate labor absorption (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018). Consequently, embedding entrepreneurial competencies within the youth demographic, particularly vocational students, represents a critical intervention for cultivating self-reliant, innovative graduates. Vocational curricula must transcend the traditional paradigm of producing wage-earners, shifting focus toward empowering sustainable job creators.

Modern socioeconomic dynamics highlight the critical need to cultivate entrepreneurial intentions within the student body. As a psychological construct, this intention encapsulates an individual’s internal drive and preparedness to launch future business ventures. Ajzen's foundational theory posits that intention serves as the primary gateway to actual behavior, including entrepreneurial action. Consequently, students possessing robust intentions typically exhibit a higher propensity for risk-taking, greater self-confidence, and a proactive stance toward market opportunities (Ajzen, 1991). Recent empirical evidence further indicates that this mindset is shaped by an interplay of psychological and contextual elements, including the need for achievement, creativity, self-efficacy, social support, and formal entrepreneurship education (Batz Liñeiro et al., 2024; Steenkamp et al., 2024). For vocational students, nurturing this drive is pivotal to forging an independent, innovative, and resilient mindset ready for shifting labor market demands. Beyond economic gains, developing such intentions can catalyze social entrepreneurship, directly address community problems, and foster empowerment. Educational institutions must therefore architect learning environments that champion this developmental path through hands-on business practices, project-based learning, business incubators, and strategic industry collaborations.

The broader ramifications of high unemployment severely destabilize a country's socioeconomic fabric. It stifles economic growth, dampens educational attainment due to fiscal constraints, deepens poverty, and often correlates with escalating crime rates. A striking example of this challenge is found in the Indonesian context; data from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) revealed that Vocational High Schools (SMK) bore the highest open unemployment rate (OUR) at 9.42% in August 2022. This troubling metric stems from a confluence of systemic barriers: quantitative and qualitative deficits in teaching staff, subpar institutional quality among SMKs, weak ties with industrial sectors, and a fundamental mismatch between graduate competencies and employer demands (Mukhlason et al., 2020). Expanding the entrepreneurial ecosystem offers a viable countermeasure to this crisis, as a higher density of entrepreneurs directly broadens the labor market and opens new job channels (Baraba, 2021). Intensifying entrepreneurial intent among students, particularly within the SMK ecosystem, has thus moved from a policy recommendation to an urgent structural necessity.

To this end, entrepreneurship education serves as a fundamental vector for driving intentionality. The emergence of entrepreneurial intentions is catalyzed by external environmental parameters including capital availability, social networks, and structural infrastructure juxtaposed against intrinsic personality constructs like self-efficacy, risk propensity, locus of control, and achievement orientation (Diyah Lestari & Achadi, 2022). This duality corresponds with Alma’s (2016) taxonomy, which bifurcates

intentional drivers into personal attributes and proximal environmental factors. The former regulates distinct psychological dynamics, whereas the latter represents external contextual architectures that cultivate interest. Within this matrix, intrinsic personality traits, particularly the need for achievement, remain critical in consolidating entrepreneurial intentions due to their direct regulatory control over individual motivation and vocational behavior.

The discourse surrounding the need for achievement remains a cornerstone of entrepreneurial behavioral literature. (McClelland, 1987) famously operationalized this construct as a defining attribute of successful innovators, characterized by heightened accountability, independence, moderate risk propensity, and goal-centricity. In the contemporary era, macroeconomic transitions, digitalization, and evolving workplace dynamics have recalibrated this achievement orientation. Beyond the classical paradigm of individualistic striving against standardized benchmarks, the modern manifestation of this drive emphasizes meaningful, adaptive, and socially conscious success. This is particularly evident among Generation Z and millennial cohorts, who prioritize purpose-driven employment, societal recognition, work-life balance, and innovative agency over mere capital accumulation (Burlea-Schiopoiu & Popovici, 2024; Steenkamp et al., 2024). Crucially, empirical consensus regarding the direct trajectory from an achievement orientation to entrepreneurial intentionality remains elusive. Divergent findings illustrate this fragmentation: several studies validate a robust, positive correlation (Pérez Fernández et al., 2021; Saputro et al., 2022), whereas alternative inquiries observe a negligible impact (Putra & Oknaryana, 2023; Tan et al., 2021). This empirical polarization implies that the nexus is non-linear and mediated by proximal cognitive mechanisms.

Cognitive and socio-psychological frameworks suggest that entrepreneurial intentions are co-determined by stable personality dispositions and dynamic perceptual lenses. According to the Entrepreneurial Event Model (Shapero, 1982), systemic intentionality is contingent upon perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. While perceived desirability denotes the valence of an individual's attraction to entrepreneurial initiatives, perceived feasibility reflects localized self-efficacy regarding venture execution. Given that a pronounced achievement orientation inclines individuals toward formidable challenges and intrinsic validation (McClelland, 1987), it inherently elevates the perceived attractiveness of entrepreneurship while reinforcing confidence in operational success. These interrelated perceptions are therefore theorized to structurally mediate the operationalization of entrepreneurial intent.

Nevertheless, empirical scrutiny of the mediating functions of perceived desirability and feasibility remains remarkably scarce within the vocational high school (SMK) demographic. The academic novelty of this investigation lies in its explicit structural evaluation of how these dual perceptual dimensions mediate the transmission of achievement motivation into social entrepreneurial intentions. This study addresses this theoretical oversight by utilizing the Entrepreneurial Event Model to isolate indirect behavioral paths. While Farrukh et al. (2018) established that behavioral attitudes and perceived behavioral control served as robust mediators under the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework in Pakistan, contemporary evidence from Tan et al.(2021) in Vietnam indicated that desirability and feasibility exhibited no such mediating influence. Such theoretical variance confirms the critical need for context-specific empirical validation within vocational educational spheres.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to examine the effect of need for achievement on entrepreneurial intention through perceived desirability and perceived feasibility among vocational high school (SMK) students. The hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H1: Need for achievement has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.
H2: Perceived desirability has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.
H3: Perceived feasibility has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.
H4: Need for achievement has a positive effect on perceived desirability
H5: Need for achievement has a positive effect on perceived feasibility.

## ■ METHOD

### Participants

The research population comprised students from public vocational high schools (SMKN) in Cirebon City. The selection of vocational high school students in Cirebon was driven by the expectation that graduates would become future entrepreneurs, given that Cirebon is widely recognized as a city with a robust handicraft-based entrepreneurial activity. Data and official local government documents

indicate that the craft entrepreneurship sector and creative MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) in Cirebon are developing rapidly and serve as one of the regional economic pillars. According to official data from the Cirebon City Department of Cooperatives, Small, Medium Enterprises, Trade, and Industry (DKUKMPP), the number of MSMEs in Cirebon City has consistently increased from year to year. In 2022, there were 2,276 recorded MSMEs, which increased to 2,426 in 2023, 2,687 in 2024, and reached 5,353 MSMEs in 2025 (DKUKMPP Kota Cirebon, 2026). Furthermore, research documents mapping the creative industry in Cirebon City indicate that the craft subsector is one of the dominant creative economy subsectors in the region. The document titled "Mapping the Creative Industry in Cirebon City" explains that the government classifies the creative economy based on data from MSME actors and industries recorded by the Department of Industry and Trade (Disperindag) and sub-district governments. The craft subsector is identified as a leading regional creative economy sector due to its strong local cultural potential and its role as a vital source of livelihood for the community (Wartoyo & Haida, 2023).

The target population for this study consisted of 393 students across public vocational high schools in Cirebon City who met the criterion of having completed entrepreneurship courses. The population distribution included 69 students from SMKN Kedawung, 232 students from SMKN Jamblang, and 92 students from SMKN Susukan, resulting in a total population of 393 students. The sampling technique employed in this research was probability sampling using a simple random sampling method. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula, yielding 195 respondents, distributed proportionally across the participating schools.

**Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive-verificative method with a quantitative approach. This approach was considered appropriate as it allowed the researcher to describe the condition of vocational high school (SMK) students and to test the proposed hypotheses statistically. The research focused on examining the effect of need for achievement on entrepreneurial intention through perceived desirability and perceived feasibility.

**Data Collection Technique**

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates “strongly disagree” and 5 indicates “strongly agree.” The questionnaire was designed as a closed-ended instrument to measure the research variables, including need for achievement, perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and entrepreneurial intention.

**Research Instruments**

The measurement of variables in this study was based on established indicators adapted from prior research. The need for achievement was adapted from Chye Koh (1996), initially comprising 7 items; however, following validity testing, 1 item was found to be invalid, leaving 6 items for further analysis. The adapted items are as follows: (1) I enjoy facing challenges because they motivate me to work harder. (2) I prefer high-paying jobs if they provide satisfaction and a sense of achievement. (3) I want to earn a sufficient income to live comfortably. (4) I do not mind performing routine tasks as long as the compensation is good. (5) I always strive to complete my work with the best possible results. (6) I prefer to hire individuals based on their loyalty rather than their competence.

Perceived desirability was adapted from Emin (2003) using 4 items, all of which were declared valid. The adapted items include: (1) I feel that I possess an entrepreneurial spirit. (2) I am enthusiastic about starting my own company. (3) I feel that my surrounding environment supports me in starting a business. (4) I want to realize new business ideas.

Perceived feasibility was also adapted from Emin (2003), consisting of 4 items, all of which met the validity criteria. The items are as follows: (1) Starting a business feels feasible and possible for me. (2) I am confident that my company can succeed in the future. (3) I am confident in my ability to build and manage a company. (4) I believe that success depends entirely on my personal determination.

Social entrepreneurial intention was adapted from Chen et al. (1998) and used 6 items, all of which were confirmed valid. The items consist of: (1) I am interested in becoming an entrepreneur. (2) I intend to become an entrepreneur. (3) I am ready to start my own business. (4) I am inclined to become an entrepreneur. (5) I am willing to work hard to become an entrepreneur. (6) I plan to become an entrepreneur in the near future. Following the validity testing, a reliability analysis was conducted. The evaluation indicated that all research variables demonstrated acceptable internal consistency and were declared reliable.

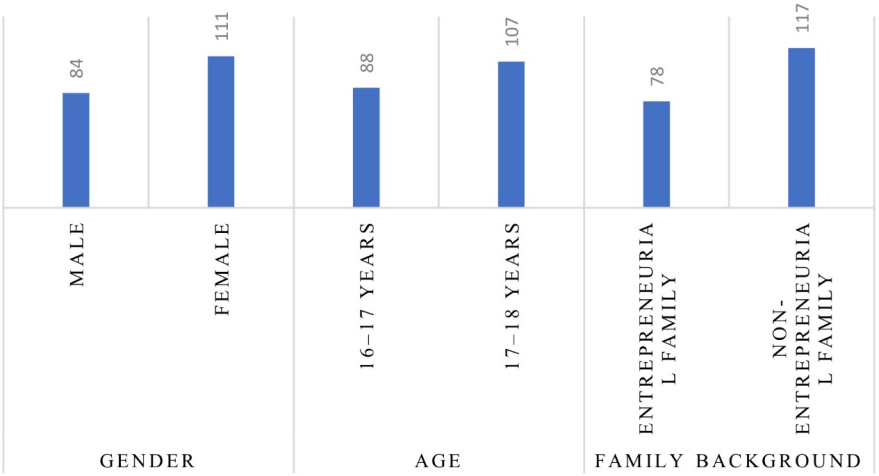



**Figure 1.** Respondent demographic data

### Data Analysis Technique

This study used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as the data analysis technique. PLS-SEM is suitable for this research because it allows the analysis of complex relationships between latent variables and does not require strict assumptions such as normal data distribution (Ghozali, 2014). In addition, PLS-SEM is effective for predictive and exploratory research, especially when the theoretical foundation is still developing.

The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS software version 3.2.7 developed by Hair et al. (2022). The evaluation of the model consists of two stages: outer model and inner model assessment. The outer model evaluation includes tests of convergent validity (factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted), discriminant validity (cross-loadings and Fornell-Larcker criterion), and reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability). The inner model evaluation includes assessing R-square ($R^2$), effect size ($f^2$), predictive relevance ($Q^2$), goodness of fit, and path coefficient analysis to test the proposed hypotheses.

## ■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic profile of respondents shows that the majority are female students, accounting for 56.92% (111 respondents), while male students represent 43.07% (84 respondents) as shown in Figure 1. This indicates that female students dominate the sample, suggesting that entrepreneurial intention among SMK students in this study is more represented by female perspectives. In terms of age, most respondents are between 17–18 years old (54.87%), followed by those aged 16–17 years (45.12%). This distribution reflects that the respondents are in late adolescence, a critical period for career decision-making, including the formation of entrepreneurial intention. Regarding family background, 60% of respondents come from non-entrepreneurial families, while 40% have entrepreneurial family backgrounds. This finding indicates that the majority of students do not grow up in an entrepreneurial environment, which may influence their exposure to business activities and potentially affect their entrepreneurial intention.

### Outer Model Evaluation

To assess the adequacy of the measurement model, this study evaluates construct validity (convergent and discriminant validity) and reliability. Convergent validity is used to examine the relationship between indicators and their respective constructs through loading factor values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Chin et al. (2008), convergent validity is considered acceptable if the loading factor exceeds 0.60 and the AVE is greater than 0.50.

Furthermore, the AVE values for all constructs, Need for Achievement (NA), Perceived Desirability (PD), Perceived Feasibility (PF), and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI), exceed the minimum threshold of 0.50. This indicates that all constructs have adequate convergent validity. Discriminant validity is assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014). The results shown in Table 2 indicate that the square root of the AVE for each construct is higher than its correlations with other constructs. This confirms that each construct is distinct and measures different concepts. Therefore, all reflective constructs demonstrate good discriminant validity.

To evaluate the reliability of the

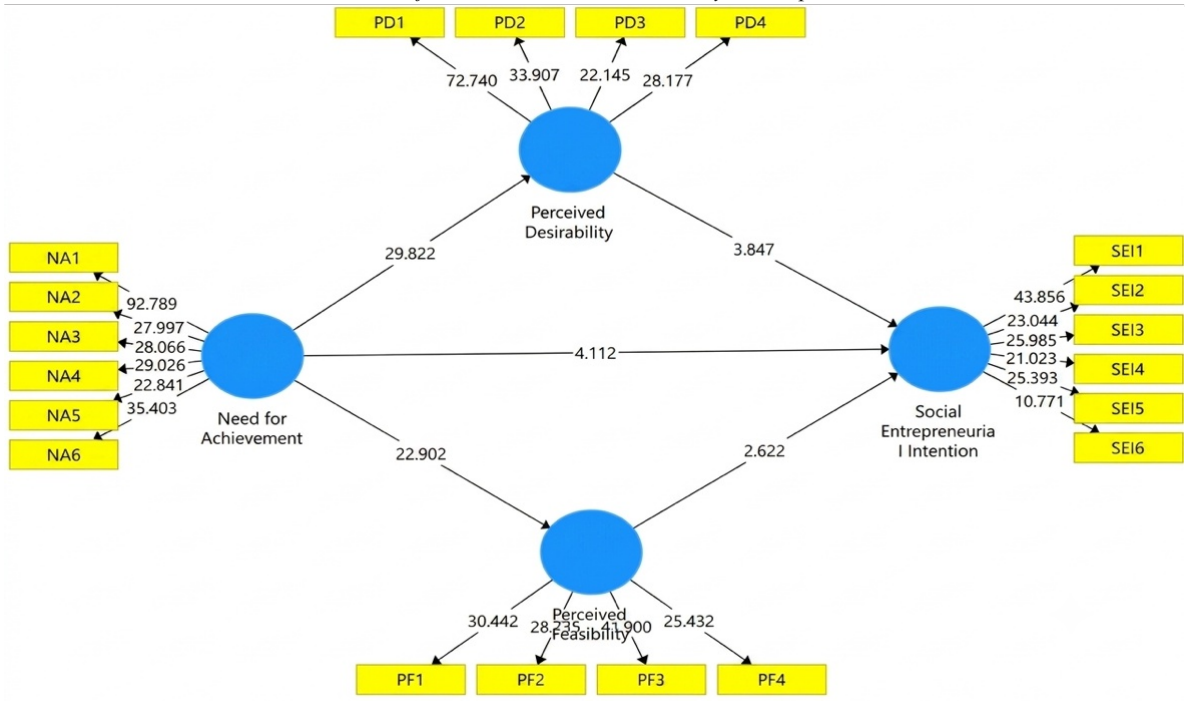



**Figure 2.** Research model

measurement model, this study uses both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). A construct is considered reliable if both values exceed 0.70 (Ghozali, 2014). In addition, Yamin & Kurniawan (2011) suggest that a construct may still be considered reliable if Cronbach's alpha is below 0.70 but composite reliability exceeds 0.70. The results presented in Table 1 show that all constructs have CR values above the minimum threshold, indicating satisfactory reliability. Therefore, the measurement instruments used in this study are considered reliable and capable of consistently measuring the constructs.

The following presents a summary of the indicator conditions for each variable, including loading factor, composite reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), as shown in Table 1.

Discriminant validity is presented to ensure that each construct within the latent variable model is distinct from the others. Validity testing is conducted to determine how accurately a measurement instrument performs its intended function (Ghozali, 2014). The results of the data analysis using SmartPLS 3 are presented in Table 2.

In this study, Table 3 is used to present the structural model measurements required to evaluate the R Square values. This model aims to understand the extent to which the R Square values of the dependent variables provide a clear explanation of the model's explanatory power. Based on Table 3, the R Square values obtained are 0.653 for PD, 0.585 for PF, and 0.693 for EI. Referring to the guidelines of

**Table 1.** Measurement model evaluation (outer model)

| Variable | Indicator | Description | Loading Factor | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Need for Achievement (NA) | NA1 | Enjoys facing challenges | 0.932 | 0.931 | 0.692 |
| | NA2 | Strives to achieve accomplishments | 0.817 | | |
| | NA3 | Seeks to achieve many accomplishments | 0.792 | | |
| | NA4 | Prefers challenging jobs with good rewards | 0.801 | | |
| | NA5 | Performs tasks with excellence | 0.783 | | |
| | NA6 | Employs others based on competence | 0,856 | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived Desirability (PD) | PD1 | Has an entrepreneurial mindset | 0.922 | 0.906 | 0.709 |
| | PD2 | Enthusiastic about starting a business | 0.834 | | |
| | PD3 | Intends to start a socially valued business | 0.772 | | |
| | PD4 | Interested in realizing new business ideas | 0.833 | | |
| Perceived Feasibility (PF) | PF1 | Starting a business seems feasible | 0.823 | 0.892 | 0.673 |
| | PF2 | Confident in future business success | 0.802 | | |
| | PF3 | Capable of creating a new business | 0.854 | | |
| | PF4 | Success depends on personal determination | 0.802 | | |
| Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) | EI1 | Willing to do anything to become an entrepreneur | 0.866 | 0.900 | 0.643 |
| | EI2 | Career goal is to become an entrepreneur | 0.749 | | |
| | EI3 | Will make every effort to start a business | 0.794 | | |
| | EI4 | Determined to establish a company in the future | 0.799 | | |
| | EI5 | Seriously considers starting a business | 0.798 | | |

(Ghozali & Latan, 2015), there are several categories for assessing R Square values, namely 0.75, which is considered strong, 0.50, which is considered moderate, and 0.25, which is considered weak. Therefore, the R Square values in this study indicate that the model falls into the moderate category. The results show that the Need for Achievement (NA) variable contributes to explaining Perceived Desirability (PD) by 65.3%, while the remaining 34.7% is explained by other variables outside the model. Furthermore, NA explains Perceived Feasibility (PF) by 58.5%, while the remaining 41.5% is explained by other variables outside the model.

In addition, NA and PF jointly explain Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) by 69.3%, while the remaining 30.7% is explained by other variables outside the model. Therefore, this study indicates the need to include additional variables that may better explain SEI. The results are presented in the following table.

Moreover, to assess the model fit, the author employed several indicators, including the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and RMS Theta. To obtain a well-fitting model, these indicators must meet the required criteria, namely SRMR < 0.08, NFI > 0.90, and RMS Theta approaching zero.

Based on the output presented in Table 4, the SRMR value is 0.054, which is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a good model fit. The NFI value is 0.883, which is slightly below the recommended cut-off value of 0.90, while the RMS theta value is 0.145, which is considered close to zero. Overall, these indicators suggest that the proposed model meets the acceptable goodness-of-fit criteria and is adequate for explaining the relationships among variables.

In this study, hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether the proposed

**Table 2.** Discriminant validity (fornell–larcker criterion)

| | NA | PD | PF | EI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **NA** | **0.832** | | | |
| **PD** | 0.808 | **0.842** | | |
| **PF** | 0.765 | 0.775 | **0.821** | |
| **EI** | 0.785 | 0.774 | 0.748 | **0.802** |

**Table 3.** R square values

| Variable | R Square | R Square Adjusted |
|---|---|---|
| Perceived Desirability | 0.653 | 0.651 |
| Perceived Feasibility | 0.585 | 0.583 |
| Entrepreneurial Intention | 0.693 | 0.688 |

**Table 4.** Model fit indices

| Fit Indices | Saturated Model | Estimated Model |
|---|---|---|
| SRMR | 0.054 | 0.062 |
| d_ULS | 0.544 | 0.739 |
| d_G | 0.285 | 0.315 |
| Chi-Square | 313.301 | 333.729 |
| NFI | 0.883 | 0.875 |
| RMS Theta | 0.145 | — |

relationships among variables are statistically significant. A one-tailed test was employed, indicating that the hypothesized relationships are directional, specifically assuming positive effects between variables. Hypothesis significance was evaluated using T-statistics and p-values, where a T-statistic greater than 1.65 at a 95% confidence level and a p-value less than 0.05 indicate statistical significance.

The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 5, which provides information on whether the relationships among variables are statistically supported.

Path analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the proposed direct effect hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5). The results presented in Table 6 indicate that the main factors of the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM), namely *Perceived Desirability*, *Perceived Feasibility*, and the additional factor *Need for Achievement*, are included in the analysis as follows.

This study provides empirical evidence supporting the relationship between the personality trait of need for achievement and entrepreneurial intention among vocational high school (SMK) students in Cirebon. The results presented in Table V indicate that all proposed hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5) are statistically significant. The discussion of each hypothesis is elaborated as follows.

The empirical analysis reveals that H1 is statistically supported, confirming that the need for achievement exerts a positive and significant direct effect on students' social entrepreneurship intentions. This finding confirms that a psychological inner drive to excel is a powerful baseline determinant in shifting vocational high school students from passive job seekers to proactive opportunity creators. While this result aligns with classic entrepreneurial literature (Farrukh et al., 2018; Ferreira et al., 2012), simply matching this finding with prior citations understates the nuanced socio-educational dynamics of the surveyed population in Cirebon.

To interpret this deeply through Shapero's Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM), the need for achievement serves as an internal behavioral catalyst. However, in the context of vocational high school (SMK) students in Cirebon, this psychological trait does not operate in a socio-economic vacuum; rather, it is highly contextualized by the regional economic landscape. Cirebon is structurally defined as a bustling hub for creative MSMEs and cultural craft industries. Students with a high need for achievement exhibit a heightened sensitivity to these visible local entrepreneurial role models. When these achievement-driven students witness the tangible success of the local craft industry, their internal motivation to achieve success is translated into a localized ambition: solving community unemployment and preserving local heritage through creative social entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, this finding exposes a critical intersection with the current state of vocational education in Indonesia. Traditionally, SMK curriculums are strictly rigid, heavily engineering-oriented, and explicitly designed to feed industrial labor lines, a structure that often stifles individual agency. However, the significant direct path from the need for achievement to social entrepreneurial intention indicates that when students possess an innate psychological drive to achieve, they actively break through these institutional boundaries. Even when the formal school setting primarily prepares them for factory or corporate employment, students with high need for achievement look beyond the factory gates. They reframe their technical, vocational skills (such as craftsmanship, automotive, or digital technology) as tools for independent social venture creation.

This deep interpretation implies that while external educational infrastructures and curriculum delivery may still suffer from structural deficiencies (e.g., the suboptimal

**Table 5.** Direct effect hypothesis testing

| Hypothesis | Direct Effect | Original Sample (O) | T Statistics (\|O/STDEV\|) | P Values | Results |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $H_1$ | NA ---> EI | 0.361 | 4.158 | 0.000 | Significant |
| $H_2$ | PD ---> EI | 0.291 | 3.408 | 0.001 | Significant |
| $H_3$ | PF ---> EI | 0.246 | 2.649 | 0.008 | Significant |
| $H_4$ | NA ---> PD | 0.808 | 30.457 | 0.000 | Significant |
| $H_5$ | NA ---> PF | 0.765 | 24.985 | 0.000 | Significant |

**Table 6.** Indirect effect hypothesis testing

| Hypothesis | Direct Effect | Original Sample (O) | T Statistics (\|O/STDEV\|) | P Values | Results |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $H_6$ | NA --> PD ---> EI | 0.235 | 3.315 | 0.001 | Significant |
| $H_7$ | NA ---> PF --> EI | 0.189 | 2.566 | 0.011 | Significant |

"link and match" implementation), the psychological empowerment of students acts as a critical countervailing force. Therefore, relying solely on standard entrepreneurship textbooks is insufficient. The positive effect of need for achievement found in this study proves that vocational education must shift its pedagogical focus toward fostering psychological resilience, achievement motivation training, and experiential social problem-solving, allowing students' internal drive to effectively align with regional economic opportunities.

The findings also indicate that H2 is supported, showing that perceived desirability has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. This result is consistent with the Entrepreneurial Event Model, which posits that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by the attractiveness of entrepreneurial activities (Shapero Sokol, 1982; Mair & Noboa, 2004). This finding is in line with previous studies (Farrukh et al., 2018; Lu et al., 2021; Saeed et al., 2014; Vuorio et al., 2018), although it contradicts (Al Hafiz et al., 2022). Perceived desirability reflects the degree to which individuals are attracted to entrepreneurship, which is influenced by internal interest as well as external support such as family, peers, and social environment (Alferaih, 2022; Shapero, 1982; Tan et al., 2021).

Furthermore, H3 is supported, indicating that perceived feasibility has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. This finding is consistent with prior research (Autio et al., 2001; Dissanayake, 2014; Farrukh et al., 2018; Kolvereid, 1996), although it contradicts (Suryawirawan et al., 2022). Perceived feasibility reflects individuals' confidence in their ability to successfully start and manage a business, including their perceived access to resources, skills, and capabilities (Alferaih, 2022; Shapero, 1982). The results also confirm that H4 is supported, indicating that need for achievement positively influences perceived desirability. This finding suggests that individuals with a strong achievement orientation are more likely to perceive entrepreneurship as an attractive career option. This result is consistent with previous studies (Karabulut, 2016; Karimi et al., 2017a; Tan et al., 2021). Similarly, H5 is supported, indicating that need for achievement has a positive effect on perceived feasibility. Individuals with a high need for achievement tend to have greater confidence in their abilities and are more prepared to face challenges in entrepreneurial activities. This finding is consistent with prior studies (Farrukh et al., 2018; Karimi et al., 2017b; Uysal et al., 2022), although it contradicts the study by Tan et al (2021). In addition, Batz Liñeiro et al. (2024) found that individuals who believe they possess sufficient skills and resources are more likely to develop strong entrepreneurial intentions.

Regarding the mediating effects, the findings reveal that perceived desirability and perceived feasibility act as mediating variables in the relationship between need for achievement and entrepreneurial intention. This indicates that the influence of need for achievement on entrepreneurial intention is not purely direct, but also operates through cognitive perception mechanisms. In other words, individuals with a high need for achievement tend to develop stronger perceptions of attractiveness and feasibility toward entrepreneurship, which subsequently enhance their entrepreneurial intention. This finding supports the integration of personality theory and the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM), emphasizing that cognitive factors play a crucial role in translating personality traits into behavioral intentions. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence that the relationship between personality traits and entrepreneurial intention is mediated by perception-based variables.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that efforts to enhance entrepreneurial intention among students should not only focus on personality development but also on strengthening perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. Entrepreneurship education plays a critical role in this process, particularly in increasing students' confidence and exposure to entrepreneurial experiences. Previous studies indicate that entrepreneurship education can improve perceived behavioral control and self-efficacy (Karimi et al., 2013). Therefore, incorporating experiential learning, role models, and practical business activities into the curriculum is essential. Moreover, policymakers and educators should consider

that personality traits such as need for achievement can be developed over time (Hansemark, 1998; McClelland, 1987). However, current entrepreneurship education in Indonesia still faces challenges, particularly in terms of teaching methods, curriculum content, and evaluation systems (Yaghoubi, 2010). As a result, more innovative and practice-oriented teaching approaches are needed to effectively stimulate entrepreneurial intention and competencies among students.

## ■ CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence on the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among vocational high school (SMK) students in Cirebon by integrating the Need for Achievement (NA) personality trait with the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM). The findings confirm that all proposed hypotheses (H1–H5) are statistically supported. Specifically, Need for Achievement has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention, perceived desirability, and perceived feasibility. In addition, both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility also significantly influence entrepreneurial intention. These results indicate that students with a higher need for achievement are more likely to develop stronger entrepreneurial intentions, both directly and indirectly through cognitive perceptions. Furthermore, the mediation analysis demonstrates that perceived desirability and perceived feasibility play an important role in explaining how personality traits are translated into entrepreneurial intention. This confirms that entrepreneurial intention is not only shaped by personality factors but is also strongly influenced by individuals' perceptions of attractiveness and feasibility toward entrepreneurship.

Based on these empirical findings, several concrete policy recommendations and practical implications are proposed for vocational school administrators and the Regional Department of Education: (1) Curriculum Synchronization and Experiential Learning: The Department of Education should collaborate with the Department of Cooperatives and MSMEs (DKUKMPP) to design a synchronized entrepreneurship curriculum that incorporates Cirebon's local craft potential. Rather than focusing heavily on classroom-based business theories, schools must mandate project-based learning (PjBL) where students create, market, and manage actual creative micro-ventures. This direct exposure will substantially elevate students' *perceived feasibility* (self-efficacy). (2) Revitalization of School Business Incubators: Vocational high schools should establish and revitalize dedicated business incubators or "Teaching Factories." These spaces should act as safe trial zones where students can pitch creative ideas and receive structured mentorship from industrial partners (DUDI). Providing real business trial spaces will significantly boost students' *perceived desirability*, making entrepreneurship a highly attractive career path rather than a secondary alternative to formal employment. (3) Psychological and Achievement-Driven Workshops: Since the *Need for Achievement* acts as a vital baseline trait, counseling and entrepreneurship units in SMKs should systematically foster student motivation. This can be achieved by integrating achievement motivation training (AMT), hosting routine sharing sessions with successful young craft entrepreneurs, and organizing business model competitions. In conclusion, combining personality-driven motivation with an ecosystem-supported, experiential entrepreneurship education will effectively transform job-seeking vocational graduates into proactive job creators.

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