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The Effect of Motivation and Knowledge on the Entrepreneurial Interest of FEBI Students at Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi

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Abstract

The low level of entrepreneurial interest among university students remains a significant challenge for higher education institutions in Indonesia, as many students continue to prefer becoming job seekers rather than job creators. This study examined the partial and simultaneous effects of motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge on entrepreneurial interest among students at the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business, Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. A quantitative approach with an associative research design was employed, involving 95 students selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed through partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4. The findings revealed that motivation had a positive and statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial interest, with a path coefficient of 0.638 and a T-statistic of 15.757. Entrepreneurial knowledge also had a positive and statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial interest, with a path coefficient of 0.450 and a T-statistic of 9.078. Collectively, motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge explained 80.2% of the variance in students' entrepreneurial interest,

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while the remaining 19.8% was attributable to factors outside the research model. These findings demonstrate that motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge are important determinants of entrepreneurial interest. This study contributes empirical evidence to the entrepreneurship education literature and provides practical implications for higher education institutions seeking to strengthen entrepreneurship curricula and development programs that foster independent, innovative, and competitive young entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Interest; Entrepreneurial Knowledge; Entrepreneurship Education; Motivation; University Students

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has become one of the most important driving forces of economic growth, employment creation, and social welfare improvement, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia (Deti et al., 2024). As one of the most populous countries in the world, Indonesia continues to face significant employment challenges due to the limited availability of jobs compared to the rapidly increasing labor force (Agusra et al., 2019). This condition has been further exacerbated by the growing number of university graduates, which is not accompanied by proportional growth in employment opportunities, resulting in an imbalance between labor demand and labor supply (Muhtarom et al., 2021). Consequently, educated unemployment remains a persistent issue that requires comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

One of the most strategic approaches to addressing this problem is through the development of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is not merely viewed as an economic activity aimed at generating profit but also as an innovative process that requires creativity, risk-taking abilities, and the capacity to identify and exploit business opportunities (Deti et al., 2024). Entrepreneurship has significantly contributed to economic development by creating employment opportunities, increasing community income, stimulating production and consumption activities, and promoting national economic growth (Yuritanto & Armansyah, 2021). Therefore, fostering entrepreneurial values and behaviors has become a crucial agenda in developing human resources, particularly among younger generations.

In this context, university students constitute a strategic group that is expected to become future entrepreneurs because they possess intellectual capabilities, creativity, and adequate access to knowledge and information (Nur Ilmi et al., 2025). The development of

entrepreneurship among university students is increasingly important considering that micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction (Hayati & Ramli, 2024). The existence and sustainability of MSMEs largely depend on the availability of human resources who possess adequate knowledge, motivation, and readiness to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Consequently, higher education institutions are not only expected to produce graduates who are ready to enter the labor market but also graduates who are capable of creating employment opportunities for others.

Despite the increasing emphasis on entrepreneurship education in universities, empirical evidence indicates that students' entrepreneurial interest remains relatively low. Many students still prefer becoming job seekers rather than job creators because they perceive salaried employment as offering more stable income, greater job security, and lower risks (Hidayati & Rosmita, 2022). This phenomenon demonstrates a discrepancy between the ideal expectations of entrepreneurship education and the actual entrepreneurial intentions of university students.

Entrepreneurial interest refers to an individual's desire and tendency to choose entrepreneurship as a future career option. It is reflected in an individual's willingness, readiness, and commitment to establish and manage a business independently (Mokosandib & Nuringsih, 2024). Entrepreneurial interest is considered a crucial antecedent of entrepreneurial behavior because it represents the initial stage before an individual actually engages in entrepreneurial activities. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence students' entrepreneurial interest is essential to encourage the emergence of new entrepreneurs among young generations.

Theoretically, entrepreneurial interest does not emerge spontaneously but is influenced by various internal and external factors. One of the most influential internal factors is entrepreneurial motivation. Motivation refers to the psychological drive that encourages individuals to perform certain actions to achieve specific goals, including the desire for independence, achievement, and self-actualization (Nur Ilmi et al., 2025). Students who possess strong entrepreneurial motivation tend to exhibit higher entrepreneurial interest because they are more willing to face the challenges and risks associated with business activities (Wijayangka et al., 2018). Entrepreneurial motivation, therefore, serves as an

internal force that shapes students' readiness and willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

In addition to motivation, entrepreneurial knowledge is another essential factor that contributes to the development of entrepreneurial interest. Knowledge, in general, represents an individual's understanding of particular phenomena and circumstances obtained through learning and experience. Entrepreneurial knowledge specifically encompasses an understanding of entrepreneurial principles, business planning, opportunity recognition, business management, and decision-making processes in entrepreneurial activities (Trisnawati, 2017). Adequate entrepreneurial knowledge increases students' confidence and preparedness in starting and managing a business, thereby positively influencing their entrepreneurial interest (Rizqy et al., 2025). Consequently, motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge are considered two critical determinants that potentially shape students' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship.

Preliminary observations conducted among students of the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business at Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi revealed that entrepreneurial interest among students remains suboptimal. Survey findings indicate that the proportion of students who are uncertain or unwilling to choose entrepreneurship as their primary career option is greater than those who express positive intentions toward entrepreneurship. This condition suggests that entrepreneurship has not yet become the preferred career choice for the majority of students.

Further findings from interviews indicate that many students still prefer to seek employment after graduation rather than establishing their own businesses because they lack confidence, experience, and courage to deal with entrepreneurial risks and uncertainties. Some students also perceive that they have insufficient knowledge regarding capital management, business planning, marketing strategies, and competition management, which discourages them from pursuing entrepreneurial activities. These findings indicate that both entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge among students need to be strengthened in order to foster stronger entrepreneurial interest.

The issue of low entrepreneurial interest among university students becomes increasingly relevant when viewed from the national entrepreneurial perspective. Prior to 2024, the number of entrepreneurs in Indonesia was estimated at approximately 56.56 million individuals, while young entrepreneurs constituted only around 6.1 million or less than eleven

percent of the total number of entrepreneurs nationwide. This condition demonstrates that the participation of young generations, including university students, in entrepreneurial activities remains relatively low. Therefore, universities have a strategic role in promoting entrepreneurial values and creating an ecosystem that supports the development of young entrepreneurs.

From the perspective of Islamic teachings, entrepreneurship possesses a strong normative foundation. Islam encourages its followers to work diligently, become self-reliant, and engage in lawful economic activities as part of fulfilling their worldly and spiritual responsibilities (Himam & Tidjani, 2025). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of earning a living through one's own efforts and considered business activities as honorable and recommended endeavors (Rahmani et al., 2023). The Prophet himself was known as an honest and trustworthy merchant, making him an exemplary figure in entrepreneurship. Islamic entrepreneurial values, such as honesty, responsibility, hard work, and social concern, are closely aligned with the concepts of entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge, which are considered essential in fostering entrepreneurial interest.

The importance of entrepreneurial interest among university students has attracted considerable attention from scholars. Several previous studies have investigated the determinants of entrepreneurial interest and produced diverse findings. Hasniati & Syahruddin (2022) found that entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge significantly influenced students' entrepreneurial interest. Similarly, Rahmansyah et al. (2021) reported that both variables had significant partial and simultaneous effects on entrepreneurial interest among university students. Liao et al. (2022) also demonstrated that entrepreneurial knowledge is a significant antecedent of entrepreneurial intention and plays a critical role in shaping entrepreneurial behavior. Furthermore, Alam et al. (2019) revealed that entrepreneurial motivation significantly influences entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behavior among engineering students.

However, not all studies have reported consistent findings. Safitri and Ridho found that entrepreneurial motivation significantly influenced entrepreneurial interest, whereas entrepreneurial knowledge did not have a significant effect (Safitri et al., 2024). Other empirical studies have also reported that entrepreneurial motivation does not always significantly determine entrepreneurial intentions. These inconsistencies indicate that the

relationship between entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial knowledge, and entrepreneurial interest remains inconclusive and warrants further investigation.

The research gap of the present study lies in the inconsistency of previous empirical findings regarding the effects of entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge on entrepreneurial interest. In addition, studies focusing specifically on students of the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business at Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi are still limited. The unique academic and religious characteristics of students in Islamic higher education institutions may produce different empirical findings compared with previous studies conducted in other educational contexts.

The novelty of this study is reflected in its attempt to re-examine the influence of entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge on students' entrepreneurial interest within the context of an Islamic higher education institution while integrating Islamic entrepreneurial values and the Theory of Planned Behavior as its theoretical framework. The Theory of Planned Behavior proposed by Ajzen explains that an individual's intention to perform a particular behavior is influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial motivation can be associated with students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship, whereas entrepreneurial knowledge contributes to perceived behavioral control by increasing individuals' confidence in their ability to establish and manage a business. Therefore, the integration of these variables provides a more comprehensive explanation of the formation of entrepreneurial interest among university students.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the effects of entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge on the entrepreneurial interest of students at the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin State Islamic University of Jambi, both partially and simultaneously. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of entrepreneurship literature, particularly in supporting the Theory of Planned Behavior in explaining entrepreneurial interest among university students. Practically, the results are expected to provide valuable insights for universities and policymakers in designing entrepreneurship education programs and policies that effectively encourage the emergence of young entrepreneurs who are independent, innovative, and socially responsible.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using an associative research design. Quantitative research is grounded in the positivist paradigm, in which empirical data are expressed numerically and statistically analyzed to test predetermined hypotheses (Sihotang, 2023). The associative design was selected because the study sought to examine the relationships and causal effects among several variables (Abdullah et al., 2022). Specifically, this study investigated the influence of entrepreneurial motivation (X_1) and entrepreneurial knowledge (X_2) on entrepreneurial intention (Y) among students of the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business, Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi (Machali, 2021).

An explanatory survey design was adopted to explain the causal relationships among the research variables through hypothesis testing. Entrepreneurial motivation was operationalized through five indicators, namely independence, financial goals, self-confidence, achievement orientation, and entrepreneurial initiative. Entrepreneurial knowledge was measured through indicators consisting of entrepreneurial concepts, business opportunities, creativity and innovation, business management, and entrepreneurship in the digital era. Entrepreneurial intention was assessed through five indicators, including interest in entrepreneurial activities, intention to establish a business, seriousness in business planning, readiness to choose entrepreneurship as a career option, and commitment to pursuing entrepreneurial activities in the future. These indicators were developed based on the theoretical framework employed in the study and were subsequently transformed into questionnaire items.

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business, Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, located on Jambi–Muara Bulian Road KM.16, Muaro Jambi Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia. The research was carried out over a ten-month period, from September 2025 to June 2026, covering instrument development, data collection, data analysis, and report preparation.

The population consisted of all active students enrolled in the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business, totaling 1,894 students. This population was selected because the students had been exposed to entrepreneurship-related courses and possessed substantial potential to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Due to limitations related to time, financial resources, and research efficiency, it was not feasible to involve the entire population in the

study (Sihotang, 2023). Therefore, a representative sample was determined using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 10%, resulting in a minimum sample size of 94.98, which was rounded to 95 respondents.

The study employed probability sampling using a stratified random sampling technique. This method was chosen because the population comprised several study programs with different characteristics; therefore, stratification ensured proportional representation of each subgroup. The final sample consisted of 35 students from the Islamic Economics program, 11 students from Islamic Banking, 22 students from Islamic Accounting, and 27 students from Islamic Financial Management. This sampling strategy was expected to provide an objective and representative description of the population.

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire distributed to the selected students. Secondary data were obtained from institutional reports, academic records, books, and scientific publications relevant to the research topic (Ghozali, 2016). The questionnaire served as the primary research instrument and consisted of closed-ended statements measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Prior to data collection, the research instrument underwent validity and reliability testing. Validity testing was conducted to ensure that each item accurately measured the intended construct, whereas reliability testing aimed to determine the consistency of the instrument when administered repeatedly. The data processing stage involved editing, coding, and tabulation procedures. Editing was conducted to verify the completeness of respondents' answers, coding transformed responses into numerical data, and tabulation organized the data into a format suitable for statistical analysis (San Putra dkk., 2023).

Data analysis was performed using inferential statistics through the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with the assistance of SmartPLS software and RStudio. PLS-SEM was selected because it can simultaneously estimate relationships among latent constructs and their indicators, does not require multivariate normality assumptions, and can be effectively applied to relatively small sample sizes.

The analysis involved two stages, namely the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). The outer model assessment included

convergent validity through outer loading values, discriminant validity through cross-loadings and the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and construct reliability using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The structural model was evaluated by examining the coefficient of determination (R-Square) to determine the explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variable (Sihombing et al., 2024). Finally, hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure to generate t-statistics and p-values, which served as the basis for determining the acceptance or rejection of the proposed hypotheses (Setiabudhi et al., 2025).

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 95 active students from the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin State Islamic University of Jambi. The respondents were selected using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique to ensure that each study program and cohort was proportionally represented.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Study Program

No	Study Program	Population	Percentage (%)	Sample	Percentage (%)
1	Islamic Economics	702	37,1	35	36,84
2	Islamic Banking	226	11,9	12	12,63
3	Islamic Accounting	423	22,3	21	22,11
4	Islamic Financial Management	543	28,7	27	28,42
Total		1894	100	95	100

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by Study Program shows that the sample distribution was proportionally selected according to the population size of each study program using a stratified sampling technique. The largest proportion of respondents came from the Islamic Economics program, with 702 students (37.1%) in the population and 35 respondents (36.84%) in the sample. This was followed by Islamic Financial Management with 543 students (28.7%) and 27 respondents (28.42%), Islamic Accounting with 423 students (22.3%) and 21 respondents (22.11%), and Islamic Banking with 226 students (11.9%) and 12 respondents (12.63%). These proportions indicate that the sample adequately represents all study programs in the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business (FEBI), UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi.

To provide a more comprehensive description of the respondents, the distribution of participants based on their year of entry (cohort) is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Cohort

No	Cohort Year	Population	Percentage (%)	Sample	Percentage (%)
1	2022	748	39,49	38	40
2	2023	702	37,06	35	36,84
3	2024	444	23,44	22	23,16
Total		1894	100	95	100

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents by Cohort shows that most respondents were students from the 2022 cohort (40%), followed by the 2023 cohort (36.84%) and the 2024 cohort (23.16%). This finding indicates that the majority of respondents had relatively extensive academic experience and had already been exposed to entrepreneurship-related courses, making them suitable participants for examining entrepreneurial interest.

After describing the respondents' characteristics, the next stage involved testing the measurement and structural models using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS version 4.

Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The measurement model evaluation was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The PLS-SEM model used in this study is presented in Figure 1.

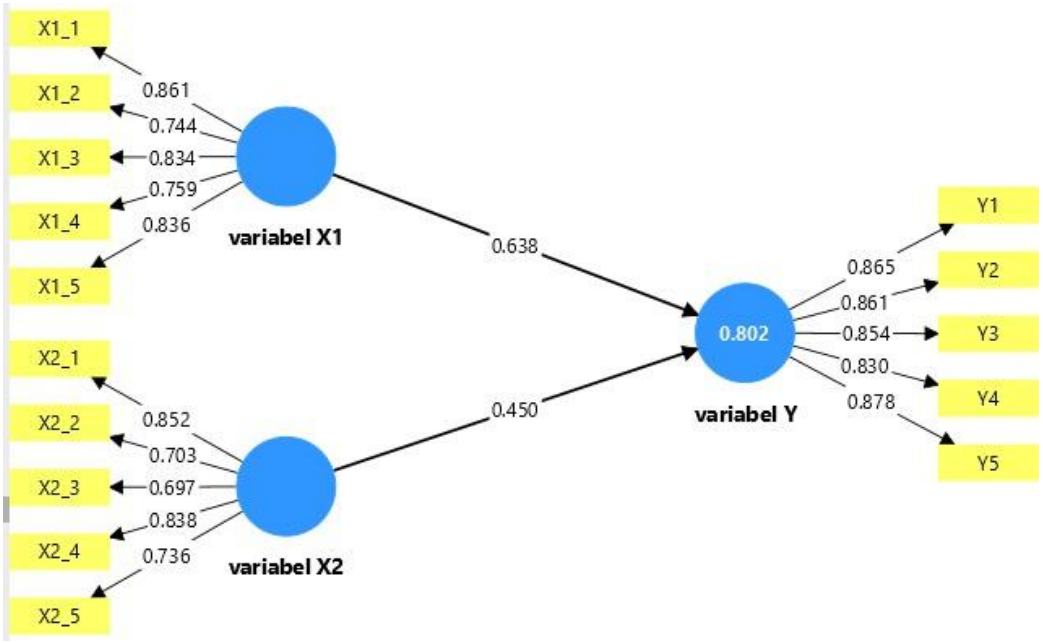


Figure 1. PLS-SEM Research Model Using SmartPLS 4

Figure 1 PLS-SEM Research Model Using SmartPLS 4 shows the structural relationships among Entrepreneurial Motivation (X1), Entrepreneurial Knowledge (X2), and Entrepreneurial Interest (Y). The model illustrates the hypothesized direct effects of the two exogenous variables on students' entrepreneurial interest.

The first step in evaluating the measurement model was assessing convergent validity through loading factor values.

Table 3. Loading Factor Results

Outer loadings - Matrix

	variabel X1	variabel X2	variabel Y
X1_1	0.861		
X1_2	0.744		
X1_3	0.834		
X1_4	0.759		
X1_5	0.836		
X2_1		0.852	
X2_2		0.703	
X2_3		0.697	
X2_4		0.838	
X2_5		0.736	
Y1			0.865
Y2			0.861
Y3			0.854
Y4			0.830
Y5			0.878

Outer loadings - List

	Outer loadings
X1_1 <- variabel X1	0.861
X1_2 <- variabel X1	0.744
X1_3 <- variabel X1	0.834
X1_4 <- variabel X1	0.759
X1_5 <- variabel X1	0.836
X2_1 <- variabel X2	0.852
X2_2 <- variabel X2	0.703
X2_3 <- variabel X2	0.697
X2_4 <- variabel X2	0.838
X2_5 <- variabel X2	0.736
Y1 <- variabel Y	0.865
Y2 <- variabel Y	0.861
Y3 <- variabel Y	0.854
Y4 <- variabel Y	0.830
Y5 <- variabel Y	0.878

Table 3 Loading Factor Results shows that all indicators have loading factor values ranging from 0.697 to 0.878, indicating that all measurement items meet the recommended threshold for convergent validity and are therefore considered valid indicators of their respective constructs.

Following the assessment of convergent validity, discriminant validity was examined to ensure that each construct was empirically distinct from the others.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Results (Cross Loading)

Discriminant validity - Cross loadings

	variabel X1	variabel X2	variabel Y
X1_1	0.861	0.356	0.695
X1_2	0.744	0.331	0.641
X1_3	0.834	0.325	0.654
X1_4	0.759	0.161	0.551
X1_5	0.836	0.158	0.634
X2_1	0.178	0.852	0.504
X2_2	0.417	0.703	0.600
X2_3	0.224	0.697	0.428
X2_4	0.213	0.838	0.524
X2_5	0.214	0.736	0.449
Y1	0.616	0.551	0.865
Y2	0.710	0.546	0.861
Y3	0.723	0.581	0.854
Y4	0.591	0.642	0.830
Y5	0.733	0.528	0.878

Table 4 Discriminant Validity Results (Cross Loading) shows that each indicator has a higher loading value on its respective construct than on other constructs, demonstrating adequate discriminant validity and confirming that the constructs measure different concepts.

After confirming the validity of the measurement model, reliability testing was performed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha.

Table 5. AVE, Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha Results

Construct reliability and validity - Overview

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (r...	Composite reliability (r...	Average variance extrac...
variabel X1	0.866	0.870	0.904	0.653
variabel X2	0.825	0.830	0.877	0.590
variabel Y	0.910	0.911	0.933	0.736

Table 5 AVE, Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha Results shows that all constructs have Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50. These findings indicate that the constructs possess satisfactory internal consistency and convergent validity, suggesting that the measurement model is reliable and suitable for further analysis.

Having established the adequacy of the measurement model, the analysis proceeded to the evaluation of the structural model.

Structural Model (Inner Model)

The structural model was assessed by examining the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the significance of the hypothesized relationships among variables.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

R-square - Overview

	R-square	R-square adjusted
variabel Y	0.802	0.798

Table 6 Coefficient of Determination (R^2) shows that Entrepreneurial Motivation and Entrepreneurial Knowledge jointly explain 80.2% of the variance in Entrepreneurial Interest, while the remaining 19.8% is explained by other factors outside the research model. The R^2 value indicates that the model has substantial explanatory power.

After evaluating the explanatory power of the model, hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing Results

Path coefficients - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (ST...	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
variabel X1 -> variabel Y	0.638	0.638	0.041	15.757	0.000
variabel X2 -> variabel Y	0.450	0.451	0.050	9.078	0.000

Table 7 Hypothesis Testing Results shows that Entrepreneurial Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Entrepreneurial Interest ($\beta = 0.638$; $p < 0.05$). Likewise, Entrepreneurial Knowledge has a positive and significant effect on Entrepreneurial Interest ($\beta = 0.450$; $p < 0.05$). Based on the path coefficients, Entrepreneurial Motivation exerts a stronger influence on students' entrepreneurial interest than Entrepreneurial Knowledge. These findings suggest that internal and external motivational factors play a more dominant role in encouraging students to pursue entrepreneurship, although entrepreneurial knowledge also contributes significantly to shaping entrepreneurial intentions.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge are significant determinants of entrepreneurial interest among students of the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business, Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. The structural model evaluation revealed an R-Square value of 0.802, indicating that entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge jointly explain 80.2% of the variance in entrepreneurial interest. This result suggests that the proposed model possesses strong explanatory power and confirms that both psychological and cognitive factors play essential roles in shaping students' entrepreneurial intentions. The high explanatory value also indicates that entrepreneurial interest among university students cannot be separated from the interaction between internal encouragement and adequate entrepreneurial competence.

The first finding confirms that entrepreneurial motivation has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial interest, as indicated by the path coefficient value of 0.638, a T-statistic of 15.757, and a p-value of 0.000. This result implies that students who possess stronger motivation, such as the desire for independence, financial achievement, self-confidence, and self-actualization, tend to exhibit a greater intention to pursue entrepreneurship as a future career. Entrepreneurial motivation functions as an internal driving force that encourages individuals to perceive entrepreneurship as an attractive and feasible career option. Students with high entrepreneurial motivation are generally more willing to accept uncertainty, face business risks, and seek opportunities to develop their own ventures.

This finding supports the Theory of Planned Behavior proposed by Ajzen (1991), which explains that an individual's intention to perform a behavior is largely influenced by attitudes toward the behavior. In the context of this study, entrepreneurial motivation reflects students' positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship and their beliefs regarding the benefits that may be gained through entrepreneurial activities. When students perceive entrepreneurship as a means of achieving independence, economic success, and personal fulfillment, their entrepreneurial interest increases significantly. Therefore, entrepreneurial motivation can be considered an essential antecedent of entrepreneurial intention.

The result of this study is consistent with the findings of Hasniati & Syahruddin (2022), who reported that entrepreneurial motivation significantly influences students' entrepreneurial interest. Similar findings were also reported by Rahmansyah et al. (2021), who found that students with higher entrepreneurial motivation tend to demonstrate stronger intentions to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, Alam et al. (2019) concluded that motivation plays a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behavior among university students. The consistency of these findings indicates that motivation remains one of the most stable predictors of entrepreneurial intention across different educational and social contexts.

However, this finding differs from the study conducted by Griselda & Puspitowati (2024), which found that entrepreneurial motivation did not significantly affect entrepreneurial intention. In contrast, Astuti et al. (2024) reported that entrepreneurial motivation had a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention, whereas entrepreneurial knowledge did not significantly influence students' entrepreneurial intention.

These inconsistencies may be explained by differences in respondent characteristics, educational environments, and measurement indicators employed in each study. The respondents in the present study were students of an Islamic higher education institution who had already been exposed to entrepreneurship education and Islamic values emphasizing self-reliance and productive economic activities. Consequently, entrepreneurial motivation among these students may have a stronger influence on their entrepreneurial interest than in other educational settings.

From an Islamic perspective, entrepreneurial motivation reflects the values of diligence, independence, and optimism in seeking lawful sustenance. Islam strongly encourages individuals to work and earn a living through their own efforts. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that the best income is obtained through one's own work and business activities. Therefore, the strong relationship between motivation and entrepreneurial interest found in this study also illustrates the compatibility between entrepreneurial values and Islamic teachings that promote self-reliance and productive economic participation.

The second finding demonstrates that entrepreneurial knowledge positively and significantly influences entrepreneurial interest, with a path coefficient of 0.450, a T-statistic of 9.078, and a p-value of 0.000. This result indicates that students who possess better understanding of entrepreneurial concepts, business opportunities, creativity and innovation, business management, and digital entrepreneurship are more likely to develop entrepreneurial intentions. Knowledge provides students with the necessary information and skills to identify business opportunities and manage entrepreneurial activities effectively.

The positive influence of entrepreneurial knowledge can also be explained through the Theory of Planned Behavior proposed by Ajzen (1991). Entrepreneurial knowledge contributes to perceived behavioral control, which refers to an individual's perception regarding their ability to perform a particular behavior successfully. Students who possess sufficient entrepreneurial knowledge tend to feel more capable of starting and managing a business because they understand the processes, challenges, and strategies involved in entrepreneurial activities. Consequently, they become more confident and interested in pursuing entrepreneurship.

The findings of this study are in line with the results reported by Hasniati & Syahruddin (2022), who concluded that entrepreneurial knowledge significantly affects

entrepreneurial interest among university students. Similar findings were also obtained by Rahmansyah et al. (2021), who found that knowledge serves as an important determinant of entrepreneurial intention. In addition, the meta-analysis conducted by Liao et al. (2022) demonstrated that entrepreneurial knowledge significantly contributes to the development of entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behavior.

Nevertheless, this finding contradicts the study conducted by Safitri et al. (2024), which reported that entrepreneurial knowledge did not significantly influence entrepreneurial interest. The inconsistency may be attributed to differences in the operationalization of entrepreneurial knowledge. The present study employed broader indicators, including digital entrepreneurship and business innovation, which are highly relevant to contemporary entrepreneurial practices and the characteristics of university students in the digital era. Therefore, entrepreneurial knowledge in this study may provide a more comprehensive explanation of entrepreneurial interest.

From the perspective of Islamic teachings, knowledge occupies a central position in human life and serves as a foundation for all productive activities, including entrepreneurship. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of knowledge and promises elevated status for those who possess it. In entrepreneurial activities, knowledge not only provides technical competencies but also guides individuals in conducting business according to ethical and religious principles. Therefore, entrepreneurial knowledge enables students to develop entrepreneurial intentions while maintaining moral and social responsibilities.

The structural model analysis further indicates that entrepreneurial motivation has a stronger effect on entrepreneurial interest than entrepreneurial knowledge. The path coefficient of entrepreneurial motivation (0.638) is substantially higher than that of entrepreneurial knowledge (0.450). This finding suggests that psychological readiness and internal encouragement are more influential than cognitive understanding in shaping students' entrepreneurial intentions. Although knowledge is important in increasing confidence and competence, entrepreneurial activities often begin with strong personal aspirations and motivation to achieve independence and success.

The high R-Square value of 0.802 also provides important theoretical implications. The finding empirically supports the Theory of Planned Behavior by demonstrating that entrepreneurial interest is formed through the interaction between attitudes toward entrepreneurship and perceived behavioral control. Entrepreneurial motivation represents

positive attitudes toward entrepreneurial activities, whereas entrepreneurial knowledge contributes to students' confidence in their ability to perform entrepreneurial behaviors successfully. The integration of these variables therefore provides a more comprehensive explanation of entrepreneurial intention among university students, particularly within the context of Islamic higher education.

Practically, the findings suggest that universities should not only focus on delivering theoretical entrepreneurial knowledge but should also strengthen students' entrepreneurial motivation through experiential learning activities, entrepreneurship training, mentoring programs, business incubators, and exposure to successful entrepreneurial role models. Educational institutions need to create a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem that encourages students to transform their entrepreneurial intentions into actual business activities.

This study also contributes methodologically by demonstrating the applicability of the PLS-SEM approach in examining entrepreneurial intention models among university students. The high reliability and validity of the measurement model indicate that the instruments employed in this study can be used as references for future entrepreneurship research in similar contexts.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the study was conducted only among students of the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business at one Islamic university, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Second, the cross-sectional design employed in this study cannot fully capture changes in entrepreneurial intention over time. Third, the research model explains 80.2% of the variance in entrepreneurial interest, indicating that 19.8% is influenced by other factors that were not included in the model, such as self-efficacy, family background, social support, and entrepreneurial environment. Future studies are therefore encouraged to incorporate additional variables and employ broader samples to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial intention among university students.

Overall, this study confirms that entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge are critical factors in shaping students' entrepreneurial interest. The findings contribute to the development of entrepreneurship literature by providing empirical evidence from the context of Islamic higher education and by reinforcing the explanatory power of

the Theory of Planned Behavior in understanding entrepreneurial intentions among university students.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the influence of entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge on the entrepreneurial interest of students at the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business, Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. The findings reveal that both entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial knowledge have positive and significant effects on entrepreneurial interest, both partially and simultaneously. Entrepreneurial motivation emerged as the most influential factor, indicating that internal drives such as independence, self-confidence, and achievement orientation play a crucial role in encouraging students to pursue entrepreneurship as a career option. Entrepreneurial knowledge also contributes significantly by improving students' understanding of entrepreneurial concepts, business opportunities, business management, and digital entrepreneurship.

These findings demonstrate that entrepreneurial interest is shaped not only by psychological factors but also by knowledge and competencies acquired through learning. The results support the Theory of Planned Behavior, which explains that behavioral intention is influenced by attitudes and perceived behavioral control. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on entrepreneurial interest among university students, particularly within the context of Islamic higher education. Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for universities to strengthen entrepreneurship education through more practice-oriented learning, training programs, mentoring, and the development of supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems. Future studies are recommended to involve broader populations, incorporate additional variables such as self-efficacy and social support, and employ more diverse research approaches to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing students' entrepreneurial interest.

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