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The Role of Opportunity Recognition in Mediating the Effects of Self-Efficacy and Teacher Support on Junior High School Students' Entrepreneurial Intentions

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the mediating role of opportunity recognition in the effects of self-efficacy and teacher support on students' entrepreneurial intentions at SMP Negeri 2 Malalak. This study uses a quantitative design, and data collection is conducted through a questionnaire administered to students selected as the research sample. The analysis was conducted using SEM-PLS (Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares) to test the proposed relationships between variables. The results show that self-efficacy and teacher support have a significant effect on opportunity recognition. In addition, self-efficacy directly affects students' entrepreneurial intentions, whereas teacher support does not. However, opportunity recognition significantly influences entrepreneurial intention and serves as an important mediating variable, strengthening the effects of both self-efficacy and teacher support on entrepreneurial intention. These results underline the crucial role of opportunity recognition in fostering entrepreneurial intentions among students. Theoretically, this study supports the relevance of Social Cognitive Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior in explaining the development of entrepreneurial intention, particularly within the context of entrepreneurship education at the junior secondary school level.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords:
entrepreneurial intention; opportunity recognition; self-efficacy; teacher support

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship values instilled through education are attitudes such as self-confidence, responsibility, and independence, as well as character traits such as creativity, risk-taking, and an innovative mindset. This attitude is essential in dealing with business problems from an early age. Entrepreneurship education develops creative and independent thinking and encourages a solution-oriented attitude when students encounter problems in learning activities and entrepreneurial practices in school (Listyaningsih et al., 2024; Rosário & Raimundo, 2024). In addition, through entrepreneurship learning, students are strengthened in work ethic, leadership spirit, and adaptability, which are important assets when they carry out practical activities that are not only part of the learning process but also preparation for the competencies needed in the world of work and for independent living in the future (Kurniawan et al., 2024).

According to Prabowo and Sutianingsih (2024), entrepreneurship education in Indonesia still receives insufficient attention from the education sector and society at large. To date, entrepreneurship education in schools has largely focused on introducing norms and values but has not yet reached the level of internalization and concrete action in everyday life. Entrepreneurship education is a structured process that cultivates entrepreneurial values, attitudes, and ways of

thinking through formal education and supporting institutions, including training programs and skill-development workshops, to foster and strengthen students' inclination toward entrepreneurial activities.

Opportunity recognition research at the junior secondary school level is necessary because students' ability to identify business opportunities is a significant basis for the development of Entrepreneurial Intentions, especially when supported by self-efficacy and teachers. Opportunity recognition is a mental process in which individuals identify and evaluate potential business ideas. Without this skill, students' entrepreneurial intentions often do not translate into real action because they do not recognize or utilize opportunities in their environment (Khalid et al., 2025; Putra et al., 2025). Previous studies show that self-efficacy strengthens the link between the desire to become an entrepreneur and the ability to recognize opportunities. Students who feel more confident in their abilities are more likely to notice and evaluate business opportunities effectively (Fitrianingsih et al., 2023). In addition, teacher support in the form of inspiring instruction and mentoring can enhance students' awareness and readiness to seize entrepreneurial opportunities, ultimately fostering their Entrepreneurial Intentions from an early stage at the junior secondary school level (Saragih et al., 2024).

Entrepreneurial Intentions among students are an important aspect in preparing an independent young generation able to create their own economic opportunities. However, at SMP Negeri 2 Malalak, students' entrepreneurial intentions are still relatively low. This is shown by students' limited interest in entrepreneurial activities, a lack of creativity in designing simple products or business ideas, and a lack of motivation to pursue entrepreneurship. The factors that influence this condition are the low level of student self-efficacy in facing entrepreneurial challenges and the suboptimal teacher support as mentors and motivators in entrepreneurship learning. This condition underscores the need to understand better how students recognize business opportunities as a link between self-efficacy, teacher support, and Entrepreneurial Intentions. Understanding these relationships is useful for improving entrepreneurship programs and student coaching at SMP Negeri 2 Malalak.

SMP Negeri 2 Malalak is located in a rural area of West Sumatra, where economic activities are still agrarian and based on small-scale trade. The socio-cultural context surrounding SMP Negeri 2 Malalak influences students' career aspirations in a specific way. In comparison, the Minangkabau culture has historical links to trading traditions. Contemporary educational practices at the junior secondary level tend to prioritize academic achievement over entrepreneurial experimentation, thereby limiting students' participation in structured processes for recognizing opportunities. Furthermore, inadequate school resources, limited access to entrepreneurial role models, and a curriculum that may focus on theoretical knowledge rather than experiential learning can impede the transformation of self-efficacy into concrete entrepreneurial actions. This context is crucial, as it suggests that opportunity recognition is not simply an individual cognitive skill but is socially constructed through pedagogical interaction, cultural values, and institutional support. Thus, examining teacher support not only as motivational encouragement but as a strategic pedagogical mechanism that activates students' contextual opportunity recognition enhances the theoretical contribution of this study. It situates opportunity recognition as a context-sensitive mediating construct, bridging psychological factors (self-efficacy) and structured educational influence (teacher support) within a localized socio-cultural educational setting.

Entrepreneurial intentions are defined as the willingness to work diligently and persistently to achieve business objectives, the readiness to assume various risks associated with entrepreneurial activities, and a strong determination to be self-reliant or to fulfill personal needs without fear of potential risks, while also incorporating lessons learned from failure. Entrepreneurial Intentions is

one of the factors that emerge from the education of entrepreneurial values (Muhmidayely, 2017). Low levels of students' Entrepreneurial Intentions indicate a tendency for limited engagement in entrepreneurship after graduation. If this condition persists, it may contribute to increasing unemployment as the number of graduates rises while job opportunities remain limited. Therefore, efforts to enhance students' Entrepreneurial Intentions are necessary. Nurriski (2025) explains that there are three indicators of Entrepreneurial Intentions. The first is feelings of enjoyment and attraction, whereby individuals who enjoy and are interested in entrepreneurship are enthusiastic about learning entrepreneurial concepts, enjoy entrepreneurship-related activities or subjects, and are attracted to becoming entrepreneurs. The second is the desire to learn, which relates to the motivational drive that encourages individuals to study entrepreneurship. The third indicator further reflects the intention to demonstrate entrepreneurial desire through concrete actions.

One factor influencing students' Entrepreneurial Intentions is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy means believing in one's ability to handle problems in different situations and to figure out the steps to take to complete tasks (Caliendo, 2023). This belief helps people overcome challenges and achieve their goals. In short, self-efficacy is the confidence that one can do what is needed to achieve good results. According to Caliendo (2023), self-efficacy is measured by looking at four main factors: past performance, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological or emotional cues. Nikmah et al. (2024) states that teacher support can be considered a beneficial condition obtained from trusted others, through which individuals perceive that others care for, value, and support them. Teacher support, like social support, is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing both functional and structural dimensions and involves behaviors or actions through which individuals receive assistance from others. Teacher support specifically refers to students' perceptions of receiving attention and assistance from teachers. According to Yusuf (2021), the dimensions and indicators of teacher support comprise emotional support, appraisal support, instrumental support, and informational support.

According to Baron and Ensley (2006), opportunity recognition is the process of identifying potential business opportunities arising from an understanding of the market, consumer needs, and environmental changes. This process involves creativity, knowledge, and individual experience in interpreting available information to generate new business ideas. The ability to recognize opportunities provides a basis for individuals to build confidence in initiating entrepreneurial activities. If individuals can see unmet market needs or innovation potential that can be developed, this awareness stimulates curiosity and a willingness to try, thereby fostering Entrepreneurial Intentions to grow. Opportunity recognition is a fundamental capability that positively affects Entrepreneurial Intentions. Individuals who can recognize and evaluate opportunities effectively are more likely to pursue new ventures because they feel they have a strong basis. This process not only encourages risk-taking courage but also increases confidence and motivation to pursue entrepreneurship. Therefore, developing opportunity recognition capabilities for students and prospective entrepreneurs is crucial for fostering a young generation with strong Entrepreneurial Intentions (Sari et al., 2023).

Although previous studies have shown that self-efficacy predicts Entrepreneurial Intentions, there is a lack of studies that integrate opportunity recognition as a mediating mechanism between self-efficacy and teacher support within a comprehensive model, especially among junior secondary school students. Most previous studies on self-efficacy and Entrepreneurial Intentions have treated them separately, without positioning opportunity recognition as a central cognitive pathway that explains how students translate confidence and educational support into the identification of business opportunities (Cárdenas-Figueroa & Olmedo-Navarro, 2024). Moreover, contextual factors such as school curriculum, cultural characteristics, and institutional support are rarely incorporated, even

though they may shape the relationships among self-efficacy, teacher support, opportunity recognition, and Entrepreneurial Intentions (Ummah et al., 2025). Studies also predominantly emphasize family support, leaving teacher support underexplored as a direct antecedent of opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial intention within formal school settings (Fauziah et al., 2023; Fitriani, 2024; Rosniawati & Yunizar, 2025). Although research acknowledges the joint influence of self-efficacy and opportunity recognition on entrepreneurial intentions, the potential role of teacher support as a driving or moderating force in this relationship remains insufficiently examined, especially at the junior secondary level, where teachers exert substantial educational influence (Pech et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2023).

Existing research also tends to emphasize entrepreneurship education as the primary predictor variable, without explicitly distinguishing how teacher support through mentoring, active learning, or feedback contributes to students' opportunity recognition beyond formal instruction alone (Herlina, 2025; Tananda et al., 2025). This highlights an important gap in the literature: teacher support functions not only as a form of social support but also as a facilitator of cognitive processes that enable students to recognize business opportunities, thereby enhancing their Entrepreneurial Intentions more effectively.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research design with a descriptive-causal approach to examine the relationships between the investigated variables (Kittur, 2023). The primary method used is Total Sampling, as the entire student population is included in the study (Ahmed, 2024). This method was chosen because the population is manageable and specific, allowing a complete assessment of the target group without the usual problems of sampling error or selection bias in smaller sample subsets. The core objectives of this methodological framework are to ensure the highest possible representativeness and to achieve a high level of generalizability of the findings. By including all 90 students registered at SMP Negeri 2 Malalak for the 2025/2026 academic year, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the variables under investigation. This comprehensive approach ensures that the collected data accurately reflect the overall characteristics of the population, providing a solid foundation for testing the research hypotheses.

The research employed a structured questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection, directly targeting the study participants to obtain first-hand information (Permatasari et al., 2025). Each item in the questionnaire was operationalized using a Likert scale ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement, allowing respondents to express varying degrees of opinion or perception (Koo & Yang, 2025). The Likert scale is particularly beneficial in social and educational research, as it enables the measurement of subjective attitudes and perceptions, making them quantifiable and analyzable. Moreover, the standardized, structured format of the Likert scale promotes consistent responses, thereby minimizing bias and improving measurement reliability. This approach enables researchers to detect subtle differences in the variables of interest, providing a solid basis for further statistical analysis and interpretation. In summary, the application of this instrument enables the accurate collection of data while maintaining the validity of the constructs under investigation.

For data analysis, this study employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. The PLS-SEM technique is particularly advantageous for this research due to its robustness in handling smaller sample sizes (N = 90) while effectively analyzing complex and simultaneous relationships among latent constructs (Kono & Sato, 2023). The analytical procedure of SEM-PLS is systematically carried out in two major stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). The measurement model

assessment is important to ensure that each observed indicator can reliably and validly measure the latent construct. This stage is to determine key metrics such as Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's Alpha (CA), and Composite Reliability (CR). An indicator is said to have satisfactory convergent validity if the factor loading is greater than 0.70 and the AVE is greater than 0.50, while a construct is said to be reliable if the value of CR and Cronbach's Alpha are greater than 0.70.

Discriminant validity is a critical step in evaluating the measurement model, as it ensures that each construct is empirically distinct from the others in the model. This study assesses discriminant validity in addition to convergent validity by applying two main approaches: the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The Fornell-Larcker criterion confirms adequate conceptual separation by checking if the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is higher than its correlations with other constructs. Furthermore, the HTMT ratio is used as a more sensitive measure to identify potential issues with discriminant validity, with recommended threshold values below 0.85 for stringent validation (Hair et al., 2022). Through this comprehensive and rigorous assessment procedure, the study ensures that all measurement instruments demonstrate satisfactory levels of validity and reliability. By establishing both construct validity and reliability, the SEM-PLS approach enables a more precise examination of causal relationships among latent variables, thereby strengthening the methodological rigor and credibility of the research findings.

Once the measurement model satisfies all required criteria, the analysis proceeds to the structural model to test the proposed hypotheses and examine the relationships among latent variables. This evaluation involves analyzing path coefficients, which indicate the direction and magnitude of the relationships, while their statistical significance is determined through t-statistics and p-values. The model's explanatory power is assessed using the R-squared (R^2) value, which reflects the proportion of variance in the endogenous variables explained by the exogenous constructs. Furthermore, the effect size (f^2) is calculated to determine the relative contribution of each construct to the overall model. To enhance the robustness and reliability of the estimation results, the bootstrapping technique is applied as a resampling procedure that generates more stable parameter estimates. As noted by Hair et al. (2021), SEM-PLS is particularly suitable for analyzing complex models with relatively small sample sizes, making it an appropriate and effective method for testing causal relationships in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting the hypothesis testing, the validity and reliability analysis is a very important preliminary step. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that each indicator in the research construct meets the required statistical criteria, so that the instrument is proven to measure the intended variables properly and consistently. By conducting this procedure, the quality of the measurement tool is confirmed before further analysis. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 1.

Table1. Construct reliability and validity

Variable	Composite reliability	Convergent validity	
		AVE	CA
Teacher Support	0.974	0.722	0.972
Self-efficacy	0.961	0.751	0.958
Entrepreneur Intention	0.948	0.654	0.974
Opportunity Recognition	0.960	0.755	0.959

The analysis results indicate that all constructs reach the set thresholds, where Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.50, Composite Reliability (CR) > 0.70, and Cronbach's Alpha (CA) > 0.70. Furthermore, Discriminant validity was analyzed to determine that each construct has a distinct conceptual differentiation and to protect the integrity of the measurement model before testing causal relationships in the structural model. To increase the rigor of this assessment, discriminant validity was further examined using two additional methods to detect potential overlapping or discrimination issues among latent variables. Collectively, these findings confirm that the constructs satisfy the recommended standards for both convergent validity and reliability, in line with the guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2021).

Table 2. Discriminant validity with the Fornell-Lecker criterion

Variable	Entrepreneur Intention	Opportunity Recognition	Self-efficacy	Teacher Support
Entrepreneur Intention	0.795			
Opportunity Recognition	0.848	0.675		
Self-efficacy	0.832	0.771	0.767	
Teacher Support	0.757	0.665	0.783	0.840

Table 3. Discriminant validity Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Variable	Entrepreneur Intention	Opportunity recognition	Self-efficacy	Teacher support
Entrepreneur Intention				
Opportunity recognition	0.835			
Self-efficacy	0.846	0.803		
Teacher support	0.784	0.796	0.823	

Overall, all inter-construct correlation coefficients in this model are below the 0.85 threshold, indicating that each latent variable maintains clear conceptual boundaries and does not substantially overlap with others. This condition provides strong evidence that the model satisfies the criteria for discriminant validity, ensuring that each construct represents a distinct concept. Maintaining inter-construct correlations below 0.85 is essential in structural model analysis (Henseler et al., 2015; Hilkenmeier et al., 2020). These results demonstrate the research instrument's ability to consistently and precisely represent the constructs. So all variables in the model are valid, reliable, and feasible for further analysis. The relationships among the research variables in the inner model were explored using SmartPLS. This evaluation has emphasized the R-square value, path coefficient, and t-statistic.

The next stage of the test is the structural model, which examines how the constructs are related and how they affect each other. The effect of the exogenous construct is reflected in the R-squared of the endogenous construct. Using SmartPLS, these relationships were illustrated in the structural model. According to Figure 1, some indicators did not meet the validity requirements and must be dropped: Y12, Z10, Z11, Z12, Z13, Z14, and Z15.

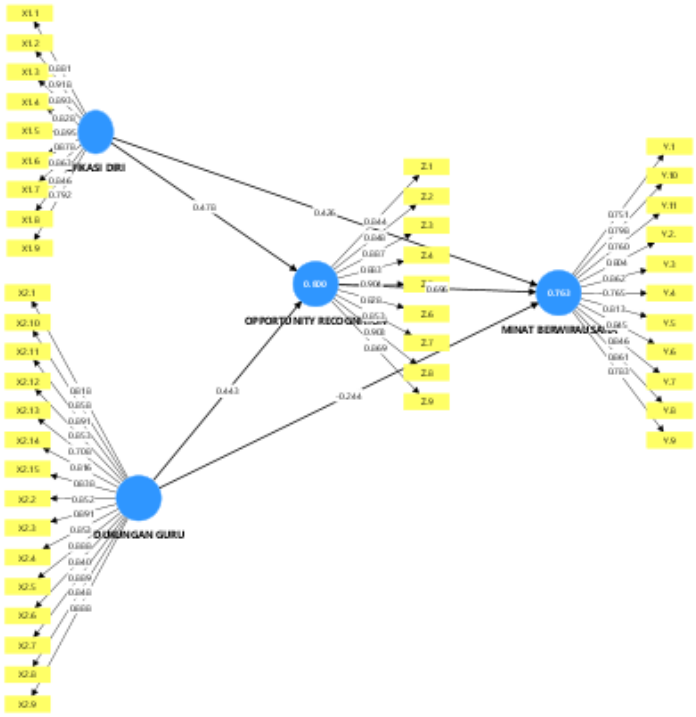

Figure 1. Inner Model

In PLS analysis, the R-square value reveals how much of the dependent variable's behavior is shaped by its independent variables. R-squared applies only to dependent (endogenous) variables. The R-squared results for the dependent variables examined in this study are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. R-square test

	R Square	Adjusted R-Square
Opportunity recognition	0.800	0.795
Entrepreneurial Intentions	0.763	0.755

The results indicate that the proposed model exhibits a strong capacity to explain variations in both Opportunity Recognition and Entrepreneurial Intention. The R^2 value for Opportunity Recognition (Z) is 0.80, suggesting that 80% of the variance in students' ability to identify opportunities is accounted for by the independent variables included in the model. In comparison, the remaining 20% is attributable to factors beyond the scope of this study. Similarly, the R^2 value for Entrepreneurial Intention (Y) is 0.763, indicating that approximately 76.3% of the variation in students' entrepreneurial intentions is explained by the model, with the remaining 23.7% attributable to external factors not examined here.

From a theoretical standpoint, self-efficacy is anchored in Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that individuals' belief in their own capabilities shapes their motivation and behavioral intentions. Within the Theory of Planned Behavior, self-efficacy corresponds to perceived behavioral control, thereby strengthening entrepreneurial intentions (Bosnjak et al., 2020). Furthermore, teacher support can play a pivotal role in enhancing self-efficacy through constructive feedback, opportunities for mastery experiences, and social persuasion, thereby reinforcing students' entrepreneurial intentions in the context of entrepreneurship education (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Collectively, these findings underscore the interconnectedness of personal beliefs, environmental support, and opportunity recognition in shaping students' entrepreneurial intentions.

The path coefficient, also known as the original sample value, can be either positive or negative, indicating whether variables move together or in opposite directions. Table 5 highlights the original sample values uncovered in this study.

Table 5. Path Coefficient test

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV)	P Values
Self-efficacy (X1) -> *Opportunity recognition* (Z)	0.478	0.470	0.171	2.804	0.000
Self-efficacy (X1) -> Entrepreneurial Intentions (Y)	0.426	0.434	0.113	3.782	0.000
Teacher Support (X2) -> Opportunity recognition (Z)	0.443	0.453	0.173	2.568	0.010
Teacher Support (X2) -> Entrepreneurial Intentions (Y)	-0.244	-0.246	0.133	1.840	0.066
Opportunity recognition (Z) -> Entrepreneurial Intentions (Y)	0.696	0.691	0.102	6.791	0.000

The results in Table 5 indicate that all original sample values exhibit positive path coefficients, suggesting positive relationships between the variables investigated in this study. Furthermore, all t-statistics for the direct effects surpass the critical value of 1.96, offering robust empirical evidence in favor of the proposed hypotheses. Self-efficacy emerges as a significant predictor, positively affecting both opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial intentions. Its influence on opportunity recognition is evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.478, a t-statistic exceeding the threshold, and a p-value less than 0.05, thereby confirming the effect's statistical significance. Likewise, self-efficacy exerts a substantial positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions, with a coefficient of 0.428 and strong statistical support. Together, these findings underscore the significance of self-efficacy in entrepreneurship, indicating that students with higher self-efficacy are better at identifying potential opportunities and more likely to cultivate entrepreneurial aspirations.

Regarding teacher support, the analysis reveals a significant positive effect on opportunity recognition, with a coefficient of 0.443 and a t-statistic that satisfies the significance criterion. This suggests that teacher support can enhance students' ability to perceive and assess potential entrepreneurial opportunities. However, teacher support does not exert a significant direct influence on entrepreneurial intentions. While the coefficient is negative (−0.246), the t-statistic does not meet the necessary significance level, and the p-value exceeds 0.05, indicating that the proposed direct effect of teacher support on entrepreneurial intentions is not supported.

Furthermore, opportunity recognition itself exerts a strong, statistically significant influence on entrepreneurial intentions (path coefficient = 0.696), indicating its relatively high importance as a mechanism for converting internal and external factors into concrete entrepreneurial ambitions. The overall results demonstrate that although self-efficacy directly and positively influences both opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial intentions, teacher support can exert a predominantly indirect positive influence on entrepreneurial intentions by improving students' opportunity recognition ability, thereby indicating the mediating role of opportunity recognition in entrepreneurial development.

Table 6. Path Coefficient Mediation Test

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Self-Efficacy (X1) -> Opportunity recognition (Z) -> entrepreneurial intentions (Y)	0.333	0.326	0.132	2.516	0.012
Teacher Support (X2) ->Opportunity recognition (Z) -> entrepreneurial intentions (Y)	0.308	0.312	0.129	2.389	0.017

Table 6 highlights the pivotal mediating role of opportunity recognition in the relationships between self-efficacy, teacher support, and students' entrepreneurial intentions. Specifically, the indirect effect of self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intention through opportunity recognition is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.333$; $t = 2.516 > 1.96$; $p = 0.012 < 0.05$), providing strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Similarly, teacher support exerts a meaningful and significant indirect influence on entrepreneurial intention via opportunity recognition ($\beta = 0.308$; $t = 2.389 > 1.96$; $p = 0.017 < 0.05$). These findings suggest that opportunity recognition is a critical process for converting internal confidence and external encouragement into actual entrepreneurial intentions. More specifically, opportunity identification and exploitation are not only a reinforcing factor in students' self-efficacy but also a transforming factor, turning teacher-provided encouragement into active entrepreneurial motivation, suggesting the strategic role of opportunity recognition in the development and enhancement of entrepreneurial intention in the educational context.

The findings are that self-efficacy is not just a statistical variable but is a force in opportunity recognition. Self-efficacy is an inner spark that ignites the belief that one can plan, adjust, and courageously pursue aspirations. This confidence is a powerful engine for entrepreneurship. Students who believe in themselves are more likely to leap over obstacles, embrace uncertainty, and dive into new opportunities with gusto. Consistent with Imsuwan et al. (2025), they emphasized how higher self-efficacy sharpens the instinct to spot and seize opportunities. Beyond being a mindset, self-efficacy ignites the courage to explore, understand market needs, and craft inventive solutions with real entrepreneurial promise. Students with high self-efficacy are more resilient in the face of hurdles, perceiving challenges as opportunities to learn and develop skills rather than as barriers. Self-efficacy is therefore a major driver of the development of a proactive entrepreneurial mindset that recognizes opportunities.

The results of this study are in line with Keyhani and Kim (2021), who highlighted that teacher support plays a meaningful, statistically significant role in enhancing students' ability to recognize opportunities. In entrepreneurship education, teacher support is an important external determinant from an educational perspective. Teachers not only pass on knowledge but also fulfill several other complementary roles, such as motivator, facilitator, mentor, and role model. These roles allow teachers to help students recognize their strengths, build confidence, and adopt a proactive orientation to entrepreneurial activities. The results suggest that when students experience higher levels of teacher support, their ability to recognize and interpret potential business opportunities increases accordingly.

Moreover, the continuous assistance, positive reinforcement, and mentoring provided by teachers foster a dynamic environment that favors creativity and innovation. By sharing their own entrepreneurial experiences, involving students in real business practices, and modeling entrepreneurial behavior, teachers stimulate cognitive processes for identifying and assessing

opportunities. Consequently, teachers' greater engagement in entrepreneurship learning increases students' ability to identify, assess, and seize profitable business opportunities. Such assistance is essential to developing an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age, with teachers acting as motivational drivers, strategic advisors, and influential role models, helping students understand and navigate the complexities of business dynamics.

The results are strong enough to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, indicating that the relationship observed is not due to chance but a real, systematic effect in the sample. Additionally, the findings confirm that self-efficacy has a positive, statistically significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intentions. In practical terms, individuals with higher confidence in their own capabilities are more likely to show a greater inclination towards entrepreneurship as a career option. Self-efficacy is a significant internal motivator by boosting self-belief and optimism, and by improving the perception that entrepreneurial uncertainties, risks, and barriers can be managed effectively. Hence, individuals with high self-efficacy are likely to participate in entrepreneurial activities and remain persistent in the face of adversities. Students with high self-efficacy are more confident in establishing a business despite having limited capital or experience and are more likely to perceive failure as a learning process rather than an outcome. This perception increases Entrepreneurial Intentions as individuals feel that they have control over the factors that affect business success. These findings are consistent with Uma and Anasrulloh (2023), who found that self-efficacy influences Entrepreneurial Intentions, but differs from Putry (2020), who reported no significant effect. The contrasting findings suggest that although self-efficacy is generally recognized as an important predictor of Entrepreneurial Intentions, its influence may vary across contextual factors, sample characteristics, and research designs, thereby highlighting the need for further investigation to better understand the conditions under which self-efficacy most strongly shapes entrepreneurial intention.

The results suggest that teacher support does not directly and significantly affect entrepreneurial intentions. This implies that external encouragement from teachers alone is insufficient to stimulate students' intention to become entrepreneurs immediately. One possible explanation is that entrepreneurial intention is predominantly shaped by internal psychological factors, such as self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and students' personal evaluations of opportunities and risks. Without strong personal confidence and internal drive, students are unlikely to develop entrepreneurial aspirations, even with teacher guidance, motivation, or resources. In this context, teacher support acts as a facilitator or reinforcer rather than the primary driver of intention (William & Rodhiah, 2024).

This finding implies that teacher support may have an indirect effect, operating through mediating variables such as opportunity recognition or self-efficacy, rather than directly affecting intention. In addition, the support provided may be primarily academic rather than experiential, which can limit its effectiveness in shaping entrepreneurial career choices. These results contrast with Yu et al. (2022), who reported that teacher support significantly strengthens entrepreneurial spirit, but they are consistent with Padi et al. (2022), who found no significant direct relationship between support and Entrepreneurial Intentions. Teacher support should be combined with practical entrepreneurial activities, self-efficacy enhancement programs, and family or environmental encouragement to foster students' entrepreneurial intentions more effectively.

The findings highlight the important role of opportunity recognition in fostering students' entrepreneurial intentions. Students who are adept at recognizing and evaluating potential business opportunities are more likely to be entrepreneurial. The ability to identify opportunities boosts their confidence in their capacity to turn ideas into successful businesses, thereby increasing their motivation to pursue entrepreneurial goals. When students can identify unmet needs or emerging trends, entrepreneurship becomes more tangible and attainable. Furthermore, recognizing

opportunities can help students see entrepreneurship as a realistic and attractive career option. Developing this skill helps them evaluate risks, assess feasibility, and plan specific steps to start a business. This preparation provides them with both the cognitive readiness and psychological confidence to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations. These findings align with Sari et al. (2023) and Lwin et al. (2026), who similarly highlight the significant contribution of opportunity recognition in fostering stronger entrepreneurial intentions.

The statistical results provide strong evidence for the relationship between the variables under study. The data show that self-efficacy has a direct effect on Entrepreneurial Intentions and an indirect effect by improving the individual's ability to recognize and evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities. Thus, opportunity recognition serves as a crucial mediator, transforming personal confidence into intentional entrepreneurial activities. Higher self-efficacy increases the likelihood that individuals will seek information, observe environmental changes, evaluate new trends, and analyze market gaps. This proactive behavior enhances their ability to recognize viable and attractive business opportunities. High self-efficacy, on the other hand, increases Entrepreneurial Intentions by making entrepreneurship seem less ambiguous and more attainable. Collectively, these results indicate that high self-efficacy increases students' confidence in their ability to handle risk and ambiguity, as well as their opportunity recognition skills, both of which promote the development of Entrepreneurial Intentions. As a result, entrepreneurship education programs should deliberately develop self-efficacy and opportunity-recognition skills to strengthen students' entrepreneurial aspirations and intentions further.

Teachers' support can influence students' entrepreneurial intentions, particularly by helping them develop the skills to identify and assess opportunities. This impact is more profound as teacher support increases students' ability to identify opportunities, thereby increasing their motivation to become entrepreneurs. Practical examples of entrepreneurship, lessons in market analysis, and encouragement of idea generation have been shown to improve students' ability to identify potential business opportunities (Minarsih et al., 2022). By clearly identifying and assessing potential ventures, students develop a more concrete understanding of entrepreneurship, which increases their interest and commitment to pursuing entrepreneurial activities.

The development of entrepreneurial intentions is mediated by opportunity recognition, which is influenced by teacher support. Teacher support helps students not only stay motivated but also adopt a pragmatic, strategic entrepreneurial mindset by providing them with analytical tools to assess risks, identify opportunities, and evaluate feasibility. Students who recognize opportunities tend to exhibit higher levels of self-confidence and proactivity in engaging in entrepreneurial activities, thereby reinforcing their entrepreneurial intentions. This illustrates the dual role of teacher support: inspiring students and cultivating the cognitive skills needed to turn entrepreneurial aspirations into concrete goals.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that opportunity recognition plays a significant role in the development of students' entrepreneurial intentions. The findings show that both self-efficacy and teacher support have positive, significant effects on opportunity recognition, underscoring the importance of self-confidence and instructional guidance in helping students identify entrepreneurial opportunities. Moreover, self-efficacy and opportunity recognition have direct effects on entrepreneurial intentions, whereas teacher support does not. Instead, teacher support indirectly enhances students' ability to recognize viable opportunities. Mediation analysis shows that opportunity recognition significantly mediates the relationships between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions, and between teacher

support and entrepreneurial intentions. The results indicate that entrepreneurial intention is not only based on confidence or encouragement, but also on the ability to translate these into real opportunities. Theoretically, the results support the Social Cognitive Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior. Practically, the results suggest that entrepreneurship education should focus on developing self-efficacy, greater teacher involvement, and experience-based learning in opportunity identification to foster sustainable entrepreneurial intention among students.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

The authors declare that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used in the writing process of this manuscript.

CONFLICTING INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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