



What Drives Entrepreneurial Intentions in University Students? The Impact of Gender, Age, Business Experience, Duration of Business Activity, Family Background.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions among university students, with a focus on gender, age, business experience, duration of business activity, and family background. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 129 agribusiness students at Diponegoro University who had completed an entrepreneurship course. The research employed multiple linear regression analysis to assess the influence of the identified variables on students' entrepreneurial intention. The results reveal that gender, age, business experience, and family background significantly affect entrepreneurial intention, while the duration of business activity does not. Business experience and family background emerged as the strongest predictors, suggesting that real-world exposure and familial influence are key drivers of entrepreneurial motivation. In contrast, the quality of business engagement appears more impactful than its duration. These findings highlight the importance of experiential learning, inclusive education strategies, and supportive environments in nurturing entrepreneurial aspirations among students. The study underscores the need for entrepreneurship education programs to foster reflective, hands-on experiences and address gender disparities to create more equitable entrepreneurial ecosystems in higher education.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Intention, Business experience, Family background, University students, Entrepreneurship education

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is increasingly seen as an important part of economic growth and job creation in many countries, both developed and developing (Mari, Madsen, & Rasmussen, 2016). Besides helping drive innovation and competition, it also supports local and global economies (Lindh & Thorgren, 2016). However, becoming an entrepreneur is not just about economic opportunities; it also depends on personal motivation and internal factors that shape someone's interest or intention to become an entrepreneur. One of these internal factors is education. In particular, universities are expected to play a big role in encouraging students to think entrepreneurially. Many higher education institutions now offer specific courses, programs, and activities related to entrepreneurship. Frank, Korunka, Lueger, and Mugler (2005) highlighted that education can help develop entrepreneurial thinking. This idea has also been supported by policy initiatives like the European Union's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, which encourages the integration of entrepreneurship education (EE) into school and university curricula (Secundo, Mele, Vecchio, & Elia, 2015).

As a result, many universities around the world have introduced EE programs aimed at improving students' knowledge and encouraging them to consider starting a business (Abou-Warda, 2016). Still, some researchers argue that focusing only on the course content is not enough. Farashah (2013), for instance, argued that it is important to examine whether these programs actually influence students' intentions to become entrepreneurs. A lot of previous research on individual entrepreneurial orientation (IEO) has looked at people already working in companies or in leadership roles, linking IEO to business performance (Davis, Bell, Payne, & Kreiser, 2010). However, there has not been as much focus on IEO in university students. This shows there is still a gap in understanding how the university experience affects young people's desire to become entrepreneurs (Taatala & Down, 2012). Apart from education, previous experience in entrepreneurship also seems to matter. Students who have tried running small businesses, joined internships, or taken part in business competitions often feel more confident about starting their own ventures (Krueger, 2007). These experiences help them apply what they have learned in the classroom to real situations and increase their belief that they can succeed as entrepreneurs.

Family background is another factor that can shape entrepreneurial intention. Students who come from business families or who have entrepreneurial parents often get exposed to business ideas early on (Carr & Sequeira, 2007). Support from family can also make students more open to taking risks and being independent two qualities that are important in entrepreneurship. Lastly, gender differences have been widely discussed in relation to entrepreneurship. Studies show that male students often report higher levels of entrepreneurial intention than female students. This is sometimes linked to confidence levels and how each gender views the challenges of entrepreneurship (Wilson, Kickul, & Marlino, 2007). Cultural and social expectations may also play a role, making entrepreneurship appear to be more of a male-dominated field (Shinnar, Giacomini, & Janssen, 2012). Understanding these differences is important so that entrepreneurship education can be more inclusive. This study aims to explore the factors that influence entrepreneurial

intentions among university students, including education, prior experience, family background, and gender. While many studies have already looked into some of these areas, there is still more to learn about how they work together to shape students' interest in becoming entrepreneurs.

2. Literature Review

Prior research has shown that prior entrepreneurial experience significantly shapes an individual's intention to pursue entrepreneurship. (Krueger, 2007) emphasizes that students who have participated in entrepreneurial activities such as managing small businesses, internships, or business plan competitions often develop a stronger belief in their ability to succeed as entrepreneurs. These experiences enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy by allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts. Another important factor is family background. (Carr and Sequeira, 2007) note that exposure to entrepreneurial family environments can foster positive attitudes toward business ownership from an early age. Family support plays a key role in encouraging independence and risk-taking—traits commonly associated with entrepreneurial success.

The influence of gender on entrepreneurial intention has also received considerable attention. Research by (Wilson, Kickul, and Marlino, 2007) found that male students tend to report higher levels of entrepreneurial intention, a phenomenon often linked to greater self-confidence and fewer perceived social or cultural barriers. (Shinnar, Giacomini, and Janssen, 2012) further highlight how gender stereotypes and societal expectations can shape young women's perceptions of entrepreneurship as a male-dominated field, which may discourage them from entrepreneurial pursuits. Meanwhile, entrepreneurship education (EE) continues to be widely studied as a driver of entrepreneurial intention. (Frank, Korunka, Lueger, and Mugler, 2005) point to the important role of universities in shaping entrepreneurial mindsets through structured academic programs. Secundo, Mele, Vecchio, and Elia (2015) support this by referencing policy initiatives like the EU's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, which advocates for the integration of entrepreneurship education across all levels of the academic system.

However, scholars such as (Farashah, 2013) argue that the effectiveness of these programs cannot be assessed by curriculum content alone. He suggests that it is necessary to evaluate whether educational experiences genuinely translate into increased entrepreneurial intention. This view is echoed by (Abou-Warda, 2016), who stresses the importance of examining the real impact of entrepreneurship education on students' attitudes and behaviors. While much of the literature on individual entrepreneurial orientation (IEO) has focused on managerial or organizational settings, its application in university contexts remains relatively underexplored. (Davis, Bell, Payne, and Kreiser, 2010) link IEO to business performance in corporate environments, but (Tautila and Down, 2012) emphasize the need to investigate how IEO develops within student populations, particularly in relation to educational and experiential factors. Finally, the broader role of entrepreneurship in economic development continues to be a foundational argument for promoting entrepreneurial intention. Mari, Madsen, and Rasmussen (2016) describe how entrepreneurship supports economic growth across both developed and developing countries, while (Lindh and Thorgren, 2016) underline its importance for driving innovation and competitive advantage.

3. Methods

This study employs a quantitative research approach using a survey method to examine the influence of entrepreneurship education, prior business experience, family background, age, and gender on students' entrepreneurial intentions. The research was conducted among undergraduate students of the Agribusiness Study Program at Diponegoro University who had completed the entrepreneurship course as part of their curriculum. The target population of this study includes all Agribusiness students at Diponegoro University who have taken the entrepreneurship course. A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents who met the criteria of having completed the course. A total of 129 valid responses were collected and used for analysis. The dependent variable in this study is entrepreneurial intention, defined as a student's interest or desire to start their own business. The independent variables include gender, age, prior business experience, duration of business activity, and family background. Gender is treated as a dummy variable (male = 1, female = 0), while age is measured in years. Prior business experience is measured based on students' involvement in business-related activities such as internships, competitions, or running a small business. Duration of business activity refers to the length of time a student has engaged in such entrepreneurial activities. Family background is measured as a dummy variable (entrepreneurial family = 1, non-entrepreneurial family = 0). Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed both online and offline. The questionnaire included items related to demographic information, entrepreneurial experience, and a series of Likert-scale questions designed to measure students' entrepreneurial intention. The questionnaire was developed based on validated instruments from previous research, and a pilot test was conducted to ensure reliability and clarity of the items. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis to assess the simultaneous and individual effects of the independent variables on entrepreneurial intention. The regression model is formulated as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y = entrepreneurial intention

X_1 = gender

X_2 = age

X_3 = business experience

X_4 = duration of business activity

X_5 = family background

ε = error

This methodological framework allows the study to systematically assess how a combination of demographic and experiential factors particularly within the context of agricultural business education influence the entrepreneurial intentions of university students. By applying this regression model, the research provides a structured means of identifying which personal and contextual variables play the most significant roles in shaping students' aspirations to pursue entrepreneurial careers in the agricultural sector.

4. Results

This study employed multiple linear regression analysis to examine the influence of gender, age, business experience, duration of business activity, and family business background on students' entrepreneurial intention. The analysis was conducted on a sample of 129 Agribusiness students from Diponegoro University who had completed an entrepreneurship course. Prior to analysis, all assumptions for linear regression were tested and found to be satisfactory. The multiple linear regression model derived from the analysis can be expressed as follows:

$$Y = 0.458 + 0.243X_1 - 0.016X_2 + 0.318X_3 - 0.010X_4 + 0.267X_5 + \varepsilon$$

In this equation, Y represents the students' entrepreneurial intention, while X_1 through X_5 correspond to gender, age, business experience, duration of business activity, and family background, respectively. The constant term of 0.458 indicates the predicted value of entrepreneurial intention when all independent variables are held at zero. While this scenario is theoretical, the intercept offers a baseline from which the effect of each variable can be measured. The coefficient for gender (X_1) is 0.243, suggesting that gender has a positive association with entrepreneurial intention. This implies that students from a particular gender group (for instance, males coded as 1) are more likely to exhibit higher entrepreneurial interest than others. Age (X_2), on the other hand, shows a slight negative relationship with a coefficient of -0.016. Although the direction of this influence is negative, its effect appears to be minimal and statistically insignificant, indicating that age differences among the students do not substantially influence their entrepreneurial drive.

A stronger predictor is business experience (X_3), which carries a coefficient of 0.318. This result supports the notion that students who have been involved in prior business activities tend to express a greater intention to pursue entrepreneurship. Such experiences may enhance confidence, skill acquisition, and motivation toward self-employment. The duration of business activity (X_4) was found to have a negligible and negative coefficient of -0.010. This suggests that the length of time spent running a business, by itself, does not significantly impact entrepreneurial intention. In contrast, family background (X_5), with a coefficient of 0.267, emerged as a positive and relatively strong contributor. Students with entrepreneurial family backgrounds are more likely to be inspired or encouraged to follow similar paths, potentially due to inherited values, exposure, or role modeling.

Overall, this regression model provides insight into the individual contributions of each variable, with business experience and family background standing out as meaningful predictors of entrepreneurial intention. Meanwhile, factors like age and duration of business engagement play less significant roles. These findings highlight the importance of experiential and environmental influences in shaping students' entrepreneurial aspirations, rather than demographic characteristics alone.

Tabel 1. t-Test (Partial Coefficient Significance Test)

Variable	t	Sig
Y (Entrepreneurial Intention)	1.016	.312
X1 (Gender)	2.730	.007
X2 (Age)	3.383	.001
X3 (Business Experience)	3.035	.002
X4 (Duration of Business Activity)	-0.282	.778
X5 (Family Background)	3.161	.002

Source: Primary data (2025)

Further examination of the **t-tests** for individual coefficients provides a more nuanced understanding of which variables significantly contribute to the model. Four out of the five predictors are statistically significant at the 5% level. These include **gender** ($t = 2.730$, $p = 0.007$), **age** ($t = 3.383$, $p = 0.001$), **business experience** ($t = 3.035$, $p = 0.002$), and **family background** ($t = 3.161$, $p = 0.002$). These findings suggest that both personal and contextual factors play a substantial role in shaping entrepreneurial intention. Four variables are significant: Gender, Age, Business Experience, and Family Background. One variable is not significant: Duration of Business Activity. This shows that personal traits (like age and gender) and contextual influences (such as experience and family background) are more critical in shaping entrepreneurial intention than merely how long someone has been in business. These insights can be valuable for policymakers, educators, and entrepreneurship programs aiming to foster entrepreneurial intention in specific demographics.

Tabel 2.F-test (model feasibility)

Model	F	Sig
Regression	12.617	0.000

Source: Primary data (2025)

The **F-test result** ($F = 12.617$, $p < 0.001$) confirms the overall significance of the model. This finding implies that the combination of the independent variables, when considered together, significantly predicts students' entrepreneurial intention. In other words, the model as a whole is statistically valid for drawing conclusions about factors influencing entrepreneurial aspirations among the student population studied.

Tabel 3. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

R	R Square
.643	.413

Source: Primary data (2025)

The significance of gender suggests that there are observable differences in entrepreneurial intent between male and female students. This could reflect sociocultural expectations, confidence levels, or access to entrepreneurial role models that differ across genders. Similarly, age appears to be a meaningful factor; although the direction of the effect was modest, older students may possess more maturity or practical exposure, contributing to stronger entrepreneurial motivations. The positive and significant effect of business experience aligns with prior literature indicating that firsthand involvement in entrepreneurial activities enhances self-efficacy and the desire to pursue business ventures. The significance of gender suggests that there are observable differences in entrepreneurial intent between male and female students. This could reflect sociocultural expectations, confidence levels, or access to entrepreneurial role models that differ across genders (Zhao et al., 2005). Similarly, age appears to be a meaningful factor; although the direction of the effect was modest, older students may possess more maturity or practical exposure, contributing to stronger entrepreneurial motivations (Linan et al., 2011).

Students who have previously engaged in business are more likely to have developed essential skills, such as risk-taking, problem-solving, and opportunity recognition, which could enhance their intention to continue in this path. Additionally, the role of family background is significant and positive, implying that students from entrepreneurial families may benefit from both tangible and intangible support systems. These could include early exposure to business practices, encouragement from family members, or even access to capital and networks factors that cumulatively build a favorable environment for entrepreneurial aspirations. Interestingly, the only variable that did not demonstrate a statistically significant relationship with entrepreneurial intention is the duration of business activity ($t = -0.282$, $p = 0.778$).

The positive and significant effect of business experience aligns with prior literature indicating that firsthand involvement in entrepreneurial activities enhances self-efficacy and the desire to pursue business ventures (Krueger, 2007). Students who have previously engaged in business are more likely to have developed essential skills, such as risk-taking, problem-solving, and opportunity recognition (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), which could enhance their intention to continue in this path. This suggests that merely spending more time in business does not necessarily equate to stronger entrepreneurial motivation. It is possible that the quality of experience, rather than its length, plays a more critical role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. For example, short but intense or successful business experiences may have a more profound psychological impact than longer but routine or non-rewarding ones. Taken together, the findings emphasize that entrepreneurial intention is a complex construct influenced by a combination of individual traits and experiential factors. The significance of gender, age, prior business involvement, and family background highlights the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurial development.

Meanwhile, the non-significance of business duration raises important questions about what aspects of experience truly matter in fostering entrepreneurial motivation. These insights can inform the design of entrepreneurship education programs. Emphasis should be placed not only on increasing business exposure but also on fostering meaningful and reflective entrepreneurial experiences. Furthermore, recognizing and addressing gender-based differences, as well as leveraging students' family backgrounds, may help cultivate more inclusive and effective entrepreneurial ecosystems within university environments.

5. Conclusions

This study investigated the factors influencing entrepreneurial intention among Agribusiness students at Diponegoro University, focusing on variables such as gender, age, business experience, duration of business activity, and family background. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis show that the model is statistically significant and capable of explaining 41.3% of the variation in students' entrepreneurial intentions. Among the five predictors, gender, age, business experience, and family background were found to significantly influence entrepreneurial intention. Business experience and family background were particularly strong contributors, indicating that real-world exposure and familial support can meaningfully boost students' confidence and motivation to pursue entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, gender differences revealed a tendency for male students to show higher entrepreneurial intent, likely influenced by social norms and confidence levels. Interestingly, the duration of business activity did not show a significant impact, suggesting that the quality of experience may be more important than its length. Short but meaningful engagements such as competitions or internships could provide more substantial entrepreneurial learning than prolonged yet passive involvement. Overall, the findings underscore the need for entrepreneurship education programs to go beyond classroom teaching by promoting reflective, hands-on experiences and addressing gender

disparities. Supporting students from diverse backgrounds with tailored opportunities can help build a more inclusive and effective entrepreneurial ecosystem within the university environment.

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