Asian Management and Business Review, Volume 4 Issue 2, 2024: 221-240

# Emotional and spiritual intelligence impacts on entrepreneurial intention: Serial mediation of creativity and proactive attitude

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**Article History**
Received : 2024-02-20
Revised : 2024-06-06
Accepted : 2024-06-06
Published : 2024-08-15

**Keywords:**
Emotional intelligence; spiritual intelligence; creativity; proactive attitude; entrepreneurial intention.

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**DOI:**
10.20885/AMBR.vol4.iss2.art4

**Abstract**

This study investigates the relationship between emotional and spiritual intelligence from an Islamic perspective, with creativity and proactive attitude as mediating variables. The research utilized a survey among students at several private Islamic universities in Medan City. These universities were selected due to their Islamic vision and the presence of central business incubators or entrepreneurship centers. Students who carried out entrepreneurial activities from semester 3 to semester 7, totaling 120 people, were selected as sample size sufficiently representative of the population using a simple random sampling method. Data analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) from the statistical software package LISREL 8.80. The results showed that all the hypotheses tested in this study were supported, meaning that the Islamic perspective on emotional and spiritual intelligence was proven to encourage entrepreneurial intentions at Islamic universities in Medan City with creativity and proactive attitude as a serial mediator. Creativity and proactive attitudes mediate the relationship between emotional and spiritual intelligence towards entrepreneurial intention. Creativity and proactive attitudes reinforce the relationship between emotional and spiritual intelligence toward entrepreneurial intention. The better the creativity and proactive attitudes of the respondents, the stronger the relationship between emotional and spiritual intelligence towards entrepreneurial intention.

## Introduction

Indonesia, renowned for having the largest Muslim population globally, grapples with numerous social challenges, including corruption, unemployment, and poverty. In 2020, the Central Statistics Agency reported a 2.6% rise in unemployment from the previous year, bringing the rate to 9.78%. This increase means about 26.42 million people are unemployed, with Muslims constituting the majority. Further analysis shows that around one million university graduates in Indonesia join the ranks of the unemployed each year. Unfortunately, the Global Entrepreneurship Index ranks Indonesia at 94$^{th}$, below countries like Singapore, Malaysia, and others, indicating a low level of entrepreneurship. Researchers have found that one contributing factor to this low entrepreneurial intention is the education system's failure to encourage students to pursue business ventures from the outset (Yeke, 2023).

Previous studies indicate that 82.2% of university graduates aspire to become employees, while the remaining 17.8% work in other sectors, including entrepreneurship. These facts underscore the need for evaluation to address unemployment and poverty issues in Indonesia. Researchers believe fostering entrepreneurial intentions among students from an early stage can change this situation (Sitepu, 2020). As institutions that generate new resources for Indonesia, universities must concentrate on making progress and enhancements. They must adjust their curriculum to meet the needs of the entrepreneurial world, thereby strengthening entrepreneurial

E ISSN 2775-202X

intentions among students and producing human resources ready to become entrepreneurs (Zhu et al., 2021).

Being passionate about entrepreneurship is essential for laying the groundwork for a thriving business. This journey demands dedication, perseverance, and boldness to embrace risks (Lee et al., 2022). Cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset is the foundational step towards launching a business, which typically involves a long-term commitment. Entrepreneurial intention involves being motivated, showing interest, and accepting oneself to pursue entrepreneurial activities. It entails seizing available opportunities, confronting associated risks fearlessly, and aiming to create value-added outcomes (Krueger et al., 2000). Embarking on entrepreneurial pursuits with a long-term vision driven by motivation, interest, and self-acceptance, leveraging available opportunities while boldly confronting risks to yield meaningful outcomes, signifies entrepreneurial intention (Rosado-Cubero et al., 2022).

Recognizing the factors that influence entrepreneurial intentions is crucial as it is a significant predictor of entrepreneurial pursuits (Bilgiseven & Kasimoğlu, 2019), with personality playing a more prominent role in the entrepreneurial journey compared to broader business success, acting as a significant catalyst in shaping entrepreneurial pathways (Naz et al., 2020). Additionally, emotional intelligence and an entrepreneurial mindset influence entrepreneurial intentions (Ngah et al., 2016), fostering an entrepreneurial spirit stemming from internal and external influences. This dynamic energy is sparked by personal attributes, attitudes, ambitions, and skills intertwined with the impact of family, society, and business environments (Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022).

Emotional intelligence stands as a vital inner asset for entrepreneurs. It encompasses identifying, comprehending, and adeptly handling emotions, facilitating emotional and intellectual growth (Afshar & Rahimi, 2016). A different study has highlighted the pivotal importance of emotional intelligence in attaining business success (Alzoubi & Aziz, 2021). Entrepreneurs must cultivate emotional intelligence to spot and capitalize on new business opportunities. This skill is vital for managing emotions and ensuring a positive outlook on entrepreneurial ventures. Those with heightened emotional intelligence are more inclined to tackle obstacles, chase opportunities, and exhibit proactive behaviors. They also tend to show greater personal initiative and actively seek out information.

Furthermore, attaining entrepreneurial success demands a blend of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual acumen. Intellectual intelligence, often measured through intelligence quotient (IQ) tests, reflects an individual's cognitive abilities and problem-solving skills (Yeke, 2023). However, emotional and spiritual intelligence are equally essential in entrepreneurial endeavors, serving as the foundation for creativity and a proactive approach to identifying opportunities that lead to success. Creativity involves generating novel and valuable ideas, while a proactive attitude entails actively responding to environmental changes. Ecological support factors also play a significant role (Bourmistrov & Åmo, 2022).

Numerous research endeavors have delved into the determinants shaping entrepreneurial aspirations, underscoring the significance of individual characteristics, self-assurance, and the mindset toward entrepreneurship (Mortan et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2022; Bilgiseven & Kasimoğlu, 2019). Entrepreneurship education, family background, age, gender, university environment, and training are factors that influence entrepreneurship (Küttim et al., 2014; Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2016; Adekiya & Ibrahim, 2016; Barral et al., 2018). Gender, age, career choice, and parental occupation positively correlate with students' entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, research suggests a compelling correlation between emotional intelligence and creativity. Emotional intelligence's profound influence on entrepreneurial aspirations and creative endeavors cannot be overstated (Darvishmotevali et al., 2018). Moreover, students with elevated levels of emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate stronger entrepreneurial ambitions and heightened creativity. This research seeks to enrich the existing body of knowledge by incorporating the element of a proactive attitude, specifically targeting students from Islamic universities in Medan. By investigating the interplay between emotional intelligence, creativity, and a proactive mindset, this study provides fresh perspectives on the factors influencing entrepreneurial aspirations among students. This research

stands out due to its exclusive focus on students from Islamic universities, setting it apart from prior studies that consider students from diverse educational contexts.

Moreover, spirituality is pivotal in driving the creative process, catalyzing creativity and innovation. Furthermore, spiritual intelligence, encompassing essential factors like self-awareness and enthusiasm, has been identified as a key determinant of student creativity (Rodrigues et al., 2019). A conceptual framework highlights the crucial role of Islamic spiritual and emotional intelligence in fostering entrepreneurial creativity. Both spiritual and emotional intelligence play vital roles in fostering and amplifying creativity and innovation within entrepreneurial contexts. Additionally, studies indicate that students' emotional intelligence influences their proactive attitudes (Wang et al., 2022).

Numerous studies explore the link between emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and entrepreneurial intentions, particularly focusing on creativity and proactive attitudes as mediating factors (Farahbod et al., 2013; Hu et al., 2018). Findings indicate that student creativity does not mediate the relationship between emotional and spiritual intelligence and entrepreneurial intentions. However, a proactive attitude does play a mediating role in this relationship (Rodrigues et al., 2019). This study addresses gaps in previous research, which primarily examined non-Islamic influences on students' entrepreneurial intentions, by investigating a mediation model that connects emotional and spiritual intelligence with entrepreneurial intentions through creativity and proactive attitudes. The goal is to assess the effectiveness of these factors as mediators and contribute to the literature on Islamic influences in this field.

The research investigates the impact of Islamic elements such as religious values, spirituality, and religious practices on students' entrepreneurial interests within Islamic higher education institutions. It examines how emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, creativity, and proactive attitudes affect students' entrepreneurial interests. Using emotional intelligence as a conceptual framework, the study explores the complex relationships among emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, creativity, proactive attitudes, and entrepreneurial interests. Additionally, it evaluates the appropriateness of various tools and methodologies for measuring these factors in Islamic higher education institutions. The study also examines whether students' creativity and proactive attitudes can mediate the impact of emotional and spiritual intelligence on their entrepreneurial interests while considering factors that may enhance or weaken these connections.

## Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

### Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intention centers on generating market value through innovative resource combinations to maintain a competitive edge. Entrepreneurship entails launching new ventures that deliver value, demanding significant time and effort, and embracing financial, physical, and social risks. It also offers rewards, personal satisfaction, and a sense of independence (Buzza & Mosca, 2009). Entrepreneurship, at its core, involves taking risks to establish one's enterprise, leveraging existing opportunities to launch new ventures, or employing innovative approaches to foster the growth of managed businesses and ensure their competitiveness in the market. Becoming an entrepreneur invariably begins with entrepreneurial intent (Huang et al., 2022).

The term 'intent' refers to how determined someone is to take action or adopt a particular behavior. Successful entrepreneurial efforts depend on having the intent to ensure that entrepreneurial activities are consistently carried out. Entrepreneurial intention motivates individuals to start businesses (Elnadi & Gheith, 2021). It reflects the propensity of students to establish new enterprises following their academic pursuits (Adekiya & Ibrahim, 2016).

### Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence embodies an individual's extraordinary capacity for self-motivation, resilience-building amidst adversity, emotion regulation, delayed gratification, and holistic well-being. It encompasses the ability to recognize, comprehend, and skillfully utilize the depth and nuances of emotions as a fundamental human asset for vitality, understanding, connection, and

impact (Pekaar et al., 2020). Cultivating emotional intelligence entails being attuned to one's emotions, discerning and empathizing with personal and others' emotional states, and responding adeptly by effectively managing emotional energy in daily interactions (Brundin et al., 2022).

### Spiritual Intelligence

In the study by (Zohar & Marshall, 2004), spiritual intelligence is the capacity to tackle and resolve matters of meaning and purpose, especially by placing actions and life itself within a broader, more profound context. This form of intelligence emphasizes a deeper examination of human behaviors and lifestyles, beyond what other types of intelligence offer. It involves using our intellect to forge a connection with the divine. The potential for spiritual intelligence is immense, transcending genetic predispositions, environmental factors, or any other physical limitations (Skrzypińska, 2021). By adhering to steps and thoughts aligned with human nature, individuals can achieve completeness, nurture a monotheistic mindset, and act solely for the sake of Allah (Shaari & Matore, 2019).

Spiritual intelligence serves as the bedrock of our cognitive abilities, aiding in comprehending our identity. It facilitates comprehensive self-development by tapping into our inherent capabilities. Acting as a compass during life's most challenging existential dilemmas transcends expectations, norms, past experiences, and encountered barriers (Satpathya & Samanta, 2022).

### Creativity

Creativity is a process of human or national efforts to develop oneself in various aspects of one's life. The goal of self-development is to enjoy a better quality of life. Creativity is coming up with something new without previous examples. Creativity involves generating new ideas, tackling problems, and applying existing solutions within a social context (Carmeli et al., 2014). Other experts say creativity is a process that produces new works that can be accepted by specific communities or recognized as valuable. Creativity is something new for oneself and does not have to be something new for others or the world; for example, a student creates a new relationship with other students/people (Rahimi & Shute, 2021). An entrepreneur must have new ideas resulting from creativity.

Creativity greatly influences entrepreneurship, which improves cognitive abilities to process information and turn it into valuable business knowledge. Creativity fosters the generation of innovative and beneficial ideas for business development. An entrepreneur with creative thinking can identify opportunities unseen by competitors and find solutions to customer problems, thereby meeting market demands. Consequently, creativity plays a crucial role in shaping an entrepreneur's interest in pursuing their goals.

### Proactive Attitude

Attitude is the primary factor influencing behavioral intention. It reflects a person's positive or negative belief in engaging in a specific behavior. These beliefs, known as behavioral beliefs, shape an individual's intention to act. When people view the behavior favorably, they are more likely to intend to perform it (Govaerts & Ottar Olsen, 2023). Generally, the definition of attitude has in common that attitude is defined as an evaluation of a person. An attitude is a form of reaction of a person's feelings towards an object, either feeling supportive (favorable) or not supportive (unfavorable), taking sides or not taking sides, liking or disliking so that it creates a specific influence on a person's behavior (Sweetman et al., 2019).

Proactivity implies a willingness to be involved and take the initiative to identify and contribute to various activities and situations (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). Proactive behavior fundamentally differs from affective traits, such as well-being, and cognitive characteristics, such as locus of control. Proactive behavior involves taking the initiative and maintaining actions that transform the environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993). However, the main criterion for identifying proactive behavior is not role or extra-role but whether one anticipates,

plans, and strives to create future outcomes that impact oneself or the environment (Bourmistrov & Åmo, 2022).

**Emotional Intelligence and Creativity**

Emotional intelligence is pivotal in nurturing students' creativity. Students with high emotional intelligence are adept at recognizing and navigating their strengths and weaknesses, which fuels their ability to generate innovative ideas. Research by (Silva & Coelho, 2019) and (Rodrigues et al., 2019) demonstrates that students with heightened emotional intelligence exhibit exceptional self-awareness. This self-awareness allows them to effectively manage their emotions and abilities, bolstering their confidence to create and innovate. Therefore, our hypothesis is:
$H_1$: Emotional intelligence influences creativity.

**Emotional Intelligence and Proactive Attitude**

Emotional intelligence significantly impacts students' proactive attitudes. Highly emotionally intelligent students are intrinsically motivated to explore new concepts and grow. This motivation fosters a proactive mindset for developing creative ideas and new business opportunities. Studies by (Parker et al., 2006) and (Edgar et al., 2012) show that elevated emotional intelligence positively shapes students' attitudes, encouraging proactive behaviors that can lead to innovative and entrepreneurial endeavors. Therefore, our hypothesis is:
$H_2$: Emotional intelligence influences proactive attitude.

**Spiritual Intelligence and Creativity**

Spiritual intelligence greatly enhances students' creativity. Students with high spiritual intelligence are inclined to think progressively and are motivated to explore their passions and express themselves creatively. Research by (Sheikhi, 2012) indicates a positive and significant correlation between spiritual intelligence and creativity, suggesting that higher spiritual intelligence fosters greater creativity. Therefore, our hypothesis is:
$H_3$: Spiritual intelligence influences creativity.

**Spiritual Intelligence and Proactive Behavior**

Spiritual intelligence is essential in shaping students' proactive behavior. Those with high spiritual intelligence develop profound self-awareness understanding their potential, values, and life goals. This deep understanding cultivates a proactive mindset. Research by (Farahbod et al., 2013) highlights a positive and significant connection between spiritual intelligence and proactive behavior. Spirituality provides a comprehensive view of life's meaning and purpose, driving students to proactively pursue their goals and values. Therefore, our hypothesis is:
$H_4$: Spiritual intelligence influences proactive behavior.

**Emotional Intelligence and Entrepreneurial Intention**

Emotional intelligence profoundly impacts entrepreneurial intent. Aspiring entrepreneurs face numerous challenges, uncertainties, and competition. Effective emotional management enables students to navigate these obstacles, make informed decisions, and enhance their entrepreneurial intent. Research by (Mortan et al., 2014) suggests that emotional intelligence influences entrepreneurial intent by improving adaptability, resilience, and the ability to recover from setbacks. Therefore, our hypothesis is:
$H_5$: Emotional intelligence influences entrepreneurial intention.

**Spiritual Intelligence and Entrepreneurial Intention**

Spiritual intelligence significantly impacts entrepreneurial intent. Students with high spiritual intelligence often exhibit courage, leadership qualities, and adaptability, essential for successful entrepreneurship. Research by (Cai et al., 2023) suggests a strong link between spiritual intelligence

and entrepreneurial intent. Spiritual intelligence empowers students with the confidence and courage to step out of their comfort zones and tackle the uncertainties of starting a business. Therefore, our hypothesis is:
$H_6$: Spiritual intelligence influences entrepreneurial intention.

### Creativity and Entrepreneurial Intention

Creativity plays a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial intent. Creative students are adept at spotting business opportunities that others might miss. Creativity helps students turn opportunities into viable business ideas by identifying and addressing challenges. Research by (Zampetakis & Moustakis, 2006) and (Hu et al., 2018) indicates that creativity boosts entrepreneurial intent among students. Creativity is associated with risk-taking, a key aspect of entrepreneurship that involves uncertainty. Creative students are more willing to take risks and explore new ideas, motivating them to start businesses. Therefore, our hypothesis is:
$H_7$: Creativity influences entrepreneurial intention.

### Proactive Behavior and Entrepreneurial Intention

A proactive attitude significantly shapes entrepreneurial intent. Students with a proactive attitude are driven to continuously learn, refine their skills, and maintain a positive outlook. Proactivity fosters ongoing innovation in business development. Research by (Ng et al., 2021) and (Kumar & Shukla, 2023) confirms that proactive behavior significantly impacts entrepreneurial intention. A proactive attitude enhances decision-making skills, enabling entrepreneurs to make swift and accurate decisions. They are willing to take calculated risks and adapt to market changes. Therefore, our hypothesis is:
$H_8$: Proactive behavior influences entrepreneurial intention.

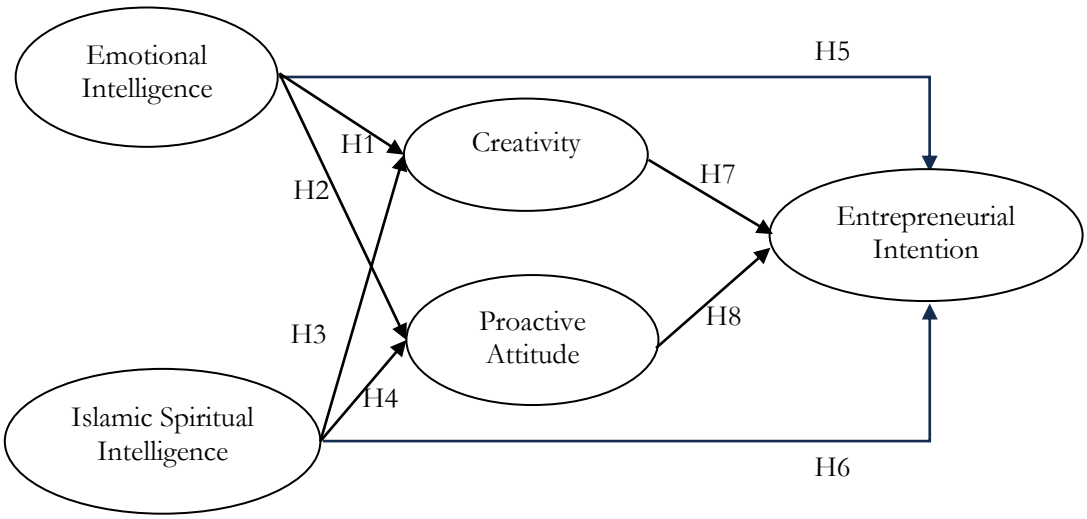


**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework

## Research Methods

This research utilizes an explanatory method to clarify the cause-and-effect dynamics among the study variables and test the hypotheses. The study population comprises entrepreneurial students or those already running businesses at Private Islamic Universities in Medan City, totaling 170 students from Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Universitas Muslim Nusantara, Universitas Al-Azhar, and Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara. Data were sourced from the Business Incubator Centers at these universities. Using the Slovin formula, a sample size of 119 students was determined. Data were collected primarily via questionnaires, with responses measured on an interval scale. The study encompasses 23 indicators representing various variables. The data collected were analyzed using SEM and LISREL application.

## Results and Discussion

### Descriptive Analysis of the Respondents

Most respondents are female, numbering 79 (66.40%), with 40 male respondents (33.60%). Most respondents are between 22-23 years old, with 51 respondents (42.90%). Regarding academic progress, most are in their 7th semester, totaling 84 respondents (70.60%). Regarding study programs, the largest group of respondents are from the accounting program, with 51 respondents (42.90%), followed by 46 respondents (38.70%) from the management program. This indicates a predominance of entrepreneurial intentions among students from the Faculty of Economics and Business. Most respondents are from Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, with 73 respondents (61.30%), followed by Universitas Al-Azhar with 21 respondents (17.60%), and the remainder from Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara (UISU) and Universitas Muslim Nusantara (UMN).

**Table 1.** Characteristics of Research Respondents

| | Category of Respondent Data | Frequencies (N = 119) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Sex* | Male | 40 | 33.60 |
| | Female | 79 | 66.40 |
| *Age (years old)* | 17 – 19 | 16 | 13.40 |
| | 20 – 21 | 50 | 42.00 |
| | 22 – 23 | 51 | 42.90 |
| | >23 | 2 | 1.70 |
| *Semester* | Fifth | 19 | 16.00 |
| | Seventh | 84 | 70.60 |
| | Ninth | 16 | 13.40 |
| *Department/Program* | Management | 46 | 38.70 |
| | Accounting | 51 | 42.90 |
| | Electrical Engineering | 4 | 3.40 |
| | Guidance and Counseling | 3 | 2.50 |
| | Public Administration | 3 | 2.50 |
| | Public Administration Studies | 3 | 2.50 |
| | Mathematics | 3 | 2.50 |
| | Communication Studies | 2 | 1.70 |
| | Islamic Banking | 2 | 1.70 |
| | Islamic Business Management | 1 | 0.80 |
| | Agricultural Technology | 1 | 0.80 |
| *Campus/College* | UMSU | 73 | 61.30 |
| | UISU | 16 | 13.50 |
| | UMN | 9 | 7.60 |
| | Al-Azhar | 21 | 17.60 |

### Exogenous Variable

### Measurement model validity analysis

The evaluation of the initial validity begins by checking the value of the factor or coefficient in the model. If the value is high, the observed iterative variable represents the icon of the underlying structure. Fill in the value; it is necessary to exceed the critical value. Verify the relationship between the variable and the icon of the defined structure.

The measurement criteria for the emotional intelligence variable are sourced from (Lajoie et al., 2020), and the assessment statements for the spiritual intelligence variable are modified from (Raza et al., 2023). A detailed overview of the measurements for each variable is provided in the table below.

As depicted in the table, the loading factor values surpass the 0.5 benchmarks, signifying their commendable adequacy in line with (Chin, 1998). Thus, it is safe to assert the validity of all indicator items.

**Table 2.** Validity Analysis

| Indicator | Theme of Measurement Statement | Loading Factor | Statement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Emo1 | Understanding emotions | 0.55 | Valid |
| Emo2 | Self-reflection | 0.57 | Valid |
| Emo3 | Self-ability | 0.64 | Valid |
| Emo4 | Managing emotions | 0.53 | Valid |
| Emo5 | Responding to criticism | 0.59 | Valid |
| Emo6 | Trying new things | 0.69 | Valid |
| Emo7 | Self-motivation | 0.61 | Valid |
| Emo8 | Attracting attention | 0.69 | Valid |
| Emo9 | Giving advice | 0.64 | Valid |
| Emo10 | Persuading | 0.79 | Valid |
| Emo11 | Problem-solving | 0.61 | Valid |
| Emo12 | Inspiring | 0.71 | Valid |
| Emo13 | Creating atmosphere | 0.79 | Valid |
| Spit1 | Adaptability | 0.51 | Valid |
| Spit2 | Accepting opinions | 0.55 | Valid |
| Spit3 | Being aware of position | 0.63 | Valid |
| Spit4 | Always praying | 0.53 | Valid |
| Spit5 | Ready to face trials | 0.67 | Valid |
| Spit6 | Being patient | 0.60 | Valid |
| Spit7 | Positive thinking | 0.69 | Valid |
| Spit8 | Accepting reality | 0.54 | Valid |
| Spit9 | Not procrastinating | 0.54 | Valid |
| Spit10 | Loving nature | 0.63 | Valid |

Note. Emo = Emotional Intelligence; Spit = Spiritual Intelligence

## Model reliability analysis

As explained by (Hair et al., 2014), a Construct reliability (CR) value of at least 0.60 is deemed a reasonable reliability standard.

**Table 3.** Reliability of Exogenous Variables

| Indicator | Standard Loading Factor (SLF) | Error | Construct Reliability | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | ∑ SLF | CR Score |
| Emotional Intelligence | | | | |
| Emo1 | 0.55 | 0.70 | 8.38 | 0.90 |
| Emo2 | 0.57 | 0.68 | | |
| Emo3 | 0.64 | 0.59 | | |
| Emo4 | 0.53 | 0.75 | | |
| Emo5 | 0.59 | 0.65 | | |
| Emo6 | 0.69 | 0.52 | | |
| Emo7 | 0.61 | 0.63 | | |
| Emo8 | 0.69 | 0.52 | | |
| Emo9 | 0.64 | 0.59 | | |
| Emo10 | 0.79 | 0.38 | | |
| Emo11 | 0.61 | 0.63 | | |
| Emo12 | 0.71 | 0.50 | | |
| Emo13 | 0.79 | 0.38 | | |
| Spiritual Intelligence | | | | |
| Spit1 | 0.51 | 0.74 | 5.85 | 0.84 |
| Spit2 | 0.55 | 0.70 | | |
| Spit3 | 0.63 | 0.60 | | |
| Spit4 | 0.53 | 0.72 | | |
| Spit5 | 0.67 | 0.55 | | |
| Spit6 | 0.60 | 0.64 | | |
| Spit7 | 0.69 | 0.52 | | |
| Spit8 | 0.54 | 0.75 | | |
| Spit9 | 0.54 | 0.71 | | |
| Spit10 | 0.63 | 0.60 | | |

The construct reliability (CR) value is computed for model precision, with Hair et al. (2014) indicating a CR of 0.60 or above as acceptable. In Table 3, the overall construct reliability for exogenous variables exceeds 0.60, with each surpassing 30%, indicating reliability rooted in the exogenous construct (Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence) evidenced by the data.

**Endogenous Variables**

**Measurement model validity analysis**

The metrics gauging entrepreneurial intent draw inspiration from the work of (Ramayah & Harun, 2005), while the criteria assessing Creativity stem from the research of (Haase et al., 2018) and (Zhu et al., 2021). A detailed breakdown of the measurements for each variable is provided in the subsequent table.

**Table 4.** Validity Analysis

| Indicator | Theme of Measurement Statement | Loading Factor | Statement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Int1 | Developing knowledge | 0.54 | Valid |
| Int2 | Strong will | 0.54 | Valid |
| Int3 | Self-confidence | 0.66 | Valid |
| Int4 | Being responsible | 0.65 | Valid |
| Int5 | Mental resilience | 0.58 | Valid |
| Int6 | Persistence | 0.65 | Valid |
| Int7 | Creative thinking | 0.60 | Valid |
| Int8 | Future-oriented | 0.70 | Valid |
| Int9 | Courage | 0.63 | Valid |
| Krea1 | Having new ideas | 0.64 | Valid |
| Krea2 | Trying new things | 0.74 | Valid |
| Krea3 | Being brave to try | 0.61 | Valid |
| Krea4 | Desire for success | 0.53 | Valid |
| Krea5 | Venturing into new ventures | 0.80 | Valid |
| Krea6 | Taking risks | 0.71 | Valid |
| Pro1 | Finding new ways | 0.62 | Valid |
| Pro2 | Constructive change | 0.62 | Valid |
| Pro3 | Ideas for change | 0.77 | Valid |
| Pro4 | Improving something | 0.72 | Valid |
| Pro5 | Making dreams a reality | 0.69 | Valid |
| Pro6 | Advocating for ideas | 0.70 | Valid |
| Pro7 | Identifying opportunities | 0.70 | Valid |
| Pro8 | Seeking solutions | 0.65 | Valid |
| Pro9 | Realizing ideas | 0.77 | Valid |
| Pro10 | Seeing opportunities | 0.71 | Valid |

Note. Int = Entrepreneurial Intention; Krea = Creativity; Pro = Proactive Attitude

As depicted in the table, the loading factor values surpass the 0.5 benchmarks, signifying their commendable adequacy in line with (Chin, 1998). Thus, it is safe to assert the validity of all indicator items.

**Model reliability analysis**

As described by (Hair et al., 2014), a Construct Reliability (CR) value of 0.60 is considered a reasonable threshold for reliability.

The construct reliability (CR) value is calculated to assess the measurement model's reliability. Hair et al. (2014) stated that CR value surpassing 0.60 indicates satisfactory reliability. Table 5 reveals that the overall construct reliability for endogenous variables exceeds this threshold, indicating robust reliability. Although not obligatory for assessing latent variables' reliability, each endogenous variable exceeds 30% variance extraction, further affirming model reliability.

**Table 5.** Reliability of Endogenous Variables

| Indicator | Standard Loading Factor (SLF) | Error | Construct Reliability | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | ∑SLF | CR Score |
| Entrepreneurial Intention | | | | |
| Int1 | 0.54 | 0.71 | 5.55 | 0.85 |
| Int2 | 0.54 | 0.71 | | |
| Int3 | 0.66 | 0.56 | | |
| Int4 | 0.65 | 0.58 | | |
| Int5 | 0.58 | 0.66 | | |
| Int6 | 0.65 | 0.58 | | |
| Int7 | 0.60 | 0.64 | | |
| Int8 | 0.70 | 0.51 | | |
| Int9 | 0.63 | 0.60 | | |
| Creativity | | | | |
| Krea1 | 0.64 | 0.59 | 4.03 | 0.83 |
| Krea2 | 0.74 | 0.45 | | |
| Krea3 | 0.61 | 0.63 | | |
| Krea4 | 0.53 | 0.72 | | |
| Krea5 | 0.80 | 0.36 | | |
| Krea6 | 0.71 | 0.50 | | |
| Proactive Attitude | | | | |
| Pro1 | 0.62 | 0.62 | 6.95 | 0.90 |
| Pro2 | 0.62 | 0.62 | | |
| Pro3 | 0.77 | 0.41 | | |
| Pro4 | 0.72 | 0.48 | | |
| Pro5 | 0.69 | 0.52 | | |
| Pro6 | 0.70 | 0.51 | | |
| Pro7 | 0.70 | 0.51 | | |
| Pro8 | 0.65 | 0.58 | | |
| Pro9 | 0.77 | 0.41 | | |
| Pro10 | 0.71 | 0.50 | | |

### Structural Model Analysis

After CFA computation and analysis, latent variables (LVs) can be determined for each dimension, simplifying them into indicators per variable. The structural model analysis encompasses various components, including:

### Overall model fit test

**Table 6.** The Goodness of Fit Structural Equation Model (SEM)

| GoF Measurement | Value | Match Level |
|---|---|---|
| $\chi^2$/df | 1.33 | Good Fit |
| Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) | 0.053 | Good Fit |
| Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) | 0.95 | Good Fit |
| Normed Fit Index (NFI) | 0.88 | Marginal Fit |
| Relative Fit Index (RFI) | 0.87 | Marginal Fit |
| Incremental Fit Index (IFI) | 0.95 | Good Fit |
| Comparative Fit Index (CFI) | 0.95 | Good Fit |

From Table 6, the Chi-square value ($\chi^2$/df) or following the statistical test about the significant requirements of $\chi^2$, expect the value of $\chi^2$ to be smaller so that the p-value is 0.05. The value of 1.33 is included in the good fit category because it is still below 5. The RMSEA value or the index value used to correct the Chi-square statistical value in a large sample, the NFI or the RFI, NNFI

or non-norm fit index, IFI or additional fit index, and CFI or Index Comparative fit all fall into the category of marginal fit (less suitable). If the criteria are CFI 0.9 or good fit (suitable) the requirements are 0.08 ≤ CFI 0.09. So, it can be concluded that the model's overall fit is good.

## Hypothesis Test

In the previous section, eight hypotheses were proposed regarding this study's direct effects under examination. These hypotheses underwent testing at a significance level of 5%, resulting in a critical t-value of ± 1.96. A t-value of 1.96 signifies the theory's validity, while a t-value below 1.96 indicates rejection. Refer to the table below for a comprehensive overview of the hypothesis testing process addressing all research inquiries:

**Table 7.** Hypothesis Testing – Direct Relationship

| Hypothesis | Statement | t-count | p-value | t-table | Beta Coefficient | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $H_1$ | Emotional intelligence → creativity | 4.42 | 0.000*** | 1.96 | 0.50 | Significant |
| $H_2$ | Emotional intelligence → proactive attitude | 3.61 | 0.001** | 1.96 | 0.38 | Significant |
| $H_3$ | Spiritual intelligence → creativity | 2.12 | 0.011* | 1.96 | 0.36 | Significant |
| $H_4$ | Spiritual intelligence → proactive attitude | 4.10 | 0.000*** | 1.96 | 0.46 | Significant |
| $H_5$ | Emotional intelligence → entrepreneurial intention | 1.96 | 0.012* | 1.96 | 0.23 | Significant |
| $H_6$ | Spiritual intelligence → entrepreneurial intention | 2.12 | 0.011* | 1.96 | 0.26 | Significant |
| $H_7$ | Creativity → entrepreneurial intention | 2.05 | 0.013* | 1.96 | 0.27 | Significant |
| $H_8$ | Proactive attitude → entrepreneurial intention | 2.13 | 0.012* | 1.96 | 0.26 | Significant |

Note. ***p<0.000; **p<0.01; *p<0.05

Additionally, this study explores five potential explanations for indirect effects. In scrutinizing these rationales, hypothesis testing was meticulously executed at a 5% significance threshold. The pivotal t-value for this scrutiny registers at approximately ± 1.96. A t-value hovering around 1.96 corroborates the hypothesis, whereas a t-value descending beneath 1.96 contradicts it.

**Table 8.** Hypothesis Testing – Indirect Relationship

| Hypothesis | Intervening | t-count | p-value | Intervening | t-count | p-value | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emotional intelligence → entrepreneurial intention | Creativity | 2.51 (1.96) | 0.001** | Proactive attitude | 2.55 (1.96) | 0.001** | Significant |
| Spiritual intelligence → entrepreneurial intention | Creativity | 2.05 (1.96) | 0.011* | Proactive attitude | 2.13 (1.96) | 0.002** | Significant |

Note. ***p<0.000; **p<0.01; *p<0.05

## Emotional Intelligence on Creativity

The analysis of the structural model's data revealed a t-value of 4.42. In Hypothesis 1, the t-value surpasses 1.96, indicating a significant positive influence of emotional intelligence on creativity. As a result, hypothesis 1 is affirmed, suggesting that individuals with heightened perceived emotional intelligence generally exhibit superior creativity skills.

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in the success of an entrepreneur. It enables them to manage their emotions effectively and generate innovative ideas. Entrepreneurs can overcome negative feelings that may hinder their creativity by developing emotional intelligence. This skill empowers entrepreneurs to take risks and implement more creative ideas and innovations.

Therefore, emotional intelligence significantly influences the enhancement of an individual's creativity.

The study results show a relationship between emotional processes and creative outcomes (Amabile, 1996; George & Zhou, 2002). Furthermore, it was revealed that individuals who have high emotional intelligence have the potential to have high creativity as well (George & Zhou, 2002). Meanwhile, previous researchers also found that students with good emotional knowledge could correctly identify and solve relevant problems in their start-up businesses. Another finding is that high emotional intelligence can lead to high creativity (Amabile, 1996). Silva and Coelho (2019) illuminated the constructive impact of emotional intelligence on creativity and assorted behavioral dimensions. Concurrent investigations by (Rodrigues et al., 2019) unveil that individual inclinations toward entrepreneurship and perceived behavioral efficacy serve as catalysts for entrepreneurial intentions, effectively mediating the sway of intelligence.

**Emotional Intelligence on Proactive Attitude**

Upon analyzing the structural model data, the study's t-value was determined to be 3.61. Further examination showed that hypothesis 2 had a t-value surpassing 1.96, indicating a notable positive influence of emotional intelligence on proactive attitude. Consequently, hypothesis 2 is corroborated, implying that respondents perceiving higher emotional intelligence levels tend to exhibit better proactive attitudes.

Emotional intelligence is vital in promoting proactive behavior, especially in entrepreneurs with better self-awareness. By effectively managing negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, and self-doubt, entrepreneurs are more likely to confidently tackle challenges and identify opportunities. Additionally, emotional intelligence enables entrepreneurs to build strong relationships with others and proactively solve problems. Therefore, emotional intelligence considerably impacts an entrepreneur's proactive stance.

The findings underscore a noteworthy correlation between emotional intelligence and proactive behavior. Investigations into emotional intelligence underscore its linkage to an individual's capacity to undertake designated tasks, particularly those associated with proactive conduct (Parker et al., 2006). Binnewies et al. (2007) further assert the pivotal role of personal initiative, closely intertwined with proactive behavior, particularly in the nascent stages of creative ideation. Moreover, studies examining the nexus between emotional intelligence and work outcomes indicate that individuals possessing heightened emotional intelligence recognize how achieving specific objectives influences their conduct, demonstrating greater aptitude in emotion regulation (Edgar et al., 2012). These findings echo the research by (Parker et al., 2006), elucidating the correlation between emotional intelligence and task performance concerning proactive behavior. Additionally, the outcomes highlight the significance of emotional and spiritual intelligence in fostering the creativity and innovation of entrepreneurs.

**Spiritual Intelligence on Creativity**

Based on the data analysis of the structural model, a t-value of 2.12 was obtained. Hypothesis 3 shows a t-value exceeding 1.96, indicating a significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and creativity. Therefore, hypothesis 3 confirms that individuals with higher spiritual intelligence tend to have improved creativity.

Developing spiritual intelligence can play a significant role in fostering creativity, particularly in entrepreneurship. When entrepreneurs have a deeper understanding of life's meaning and values, they can use this understanding to inspire creative ideas that align with honesty and integrity. A better understanding of religious context and spiritual intelligence can serve as sources for creativity development. Therefore, spiritual intelligence can greatly influence creativity and contribute to business success.

This study's results are supported by previous studies that found that spiritual intelligence affects creativity. Research conducted by (Sheikhi, 2012) shows a positive and significant influence of the spiritual intelligence variable on creativity, which means that the higher the student's spiritual

intelligence, the higher their creativity. Spiritual intelligence is the best predictor of creativity variable.

Meanwhile, Nggermanto (2002) emphasizes that the characteristics of people with high spiritual intelligence are having principles and visions that are essential and fundamental truths. Furthermore, someone with high spiritual intelligence can find the most profound meaning from the side of life. Individuals with high spiritual intelligence (SQ) can transform difficulties into a field of improvement and meaningful spiritual education.

**Spiritual Intelligence on Proactive Attitude**

According to the structural model's data processing, a t-value of 4.10 was obtained. Hypothesis 4 also shows a t-value exceeding 1.96, which indicates a significant positive impact of spiritual intelligence on proactive attitude. This confirms hypothesis 4, implying that individuals with higher spiritual intelligence tend to demonstrate better proactive attitudes.

Muslim entrepreneurs attribute significant value to spiritual intelligence as it enables them to align their business practices with the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. At the core of human cognition, spiritual intelligence fosters holistic development encompassing intellect, emotions, and spirituality. Integrating Allah SWT into entrepreneurial ventures exemplifies the practical application of spiritual intelligence in business. Entrepreneurs who view success and trials as tests from Allah SWT draw motivation from shari'a principles. Prayer to Allah for success becomes an integral aspect of their entrepreneurial endeavors. The study's results by Shaari and Matore (2019) shows that spiritual intelligence influences proactive attitudes.

**Emotional Intelligence on Entrepreneurial Intention**

Following data analysis, it was found that the structural model generates a t-value of 1.96. The significance of this t-value concerning hypothesis 5 indicates a notable impact of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, hypothesis 5 gains support, suggesting that heightened perceived emotional intelligence among respondents is linked to stronger entrepreneurial intention.

The number of failures among entrepreneurs is often considered normal in the business world. Several things are the cause, namely, the lack of awareness and responsibility of accounting education students in carrying out entrepreneurial practice assignments that teach the importance of taking entrepreneurship courses that take place on campus, lack of ability to recognize potential as prospective accountants to take advantage of opportunities to become an entrepreneur by utilizing the potential that exists. Owned, the existing resources in the surrounding environment, and the weak ability to collaborate and interact with entrepreneurship course lecturers to deepen their insight into becoming successful entrepreneurs. This shows that emotional intelligence is needed in building and developing a business.

Previous research also corroborates these findings. FakhrEldin (2017) underscores the connection between emotional intelligence and interest in entrepreneurship, emphasizing its positive influence on entrepreneurial interest. Additionally, Pekaar et al. (2020) propose exploring emotional intelligence's role in entrepreneurial potential while considering the impact of personality traits and demographic factors. Their study suggests that emotional intelligence enhances entrepreneurial self-efficacy, especially in regulating and utilizing emotions.

**Spiritual Intelligence on Entrepreneurial Intention**

After analyzing the data processing of the structural model, a t-value of 2.12 was derived. The t-value associated with hypothesis 6 falls below 1.96, indicating that while spiritual intelligence positively influences entrepreneurial intention, it lacks statistical significance. Consequently, hypothesis 6 is invalidated, suggesting that irrespective of an individual's perceived spiritual intelligence, its effect on entrepreneurial intentions is negligible.

Aspiring to become successful Muslim entrepreneurs, students at the Islamic religious college in Medan city attribute their achievements to the intervention of Allah SWT, alongside their

dedication and prayers. Despite recognizing the risks inherent in entrepreneurship, students from Medan city's Islamic higher education prioritize qualities like patience and resilience for success. A study by (Sitepu et al., 2020) underscores the significance of spiritual intelligence in entrepreneurship.

**Creativity on Entrepreneurial Intention**

The structural model's data processing yields a t-value of 2.05. With hypothesis 7's t-value surpassing 1.96, it signifies a notable positive influence of the creativity variable on entrepreneurial intention. Thus, hypothesis 7 stands validated, indicating a correlation between higher perceived creativity among respondents and stronger entrepreneurial intentions. Creativity is indispensable in entrepreneurship for recognizing opportunities that pave the path to success, involving generating fresh and valuable ideas, while a proactive stance entails actively adapting to environmental shifts.

Zampetakis and Moustakis (2006) establish a link between students' creativity perceptions and entrepreneurial intentions, underscoring creativity's pivotal role in entrepreneurial endeavors. Similarly, research of Wang et al. (2023) revealed a significant and positive impact of creativity on entrepreneurial intention. Likewise, Naz et al. (2020) echoes these findings, emphasizing the critical role of creativity in shaping entrepreneurial aspirations.

**Proactive Attitude on Entrepreneurial Intention**

The structural model's data processing reveals a t-value of 2.13. Hypothesis 8 exhibits a t-value surpassing 1.96, indicating a significant positive effect of the proactive attitude variable on entrepreneurial intention. Thus, hypothesis 8 stands supported, suggesting that respondents perceiving themselves as proactive tend to harbor stronger entrepreneurial intentions. These results imply that students with notably proactive dispositions are inclined towards high entrepreneurial aspirations. Hence, universities should factor in students' proactive personalities to enhance entrepreneurial intentions and nurture entrepreneurial development. A proactive mindset is essential for entrepreneurial triumph, providing the groundwork, direction, and resources to identify success-propelling opportunities. According to Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986), being proactive involves anticipating challenges, addressing diverse needs, and seizing future opportunities.

Research by Kumar and Shukla (2023) showed that a proactive attitude significantly shapes entrepreneurial intentions. Similarly, Ng et al. (2021) affirm that a proactive personality positively and significantly influences students' entrepreneurial intentions.

**Emotional Intelligence on Entrepreneurial Intention through Creativity and Proactive Attitude**

According to the analysis, the t-count value of 2.51 surpasses the threshold of 1.96, indicating that creativity and proactive attitude can positively influence the impact of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intention. This conclusion is further supported by the effect weight of 0.23.

Consistent with prior research, this study's results reveal a relationship between emotional processes and creativity (Amabile et al., 2005). Additionally, individuals with high emotional intelligence often demonstrate heightened creativity (Zhou & George, 2003). Moreover, findings suggest that students with strong emotional knowledge tend to adeptly address relevant issues within their start-up ventures (Lopes et al., 2006). Furthermore, higher levels of emotional intelligence are associated with increased creativity (Amabile et al., 2005). While several studies have explored the mediating mechanism linking emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intentions through creativity (Farahbod et al., 2013), it is worth noting that the findings indicate that student creativity may not necessarily serve as a mediator between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intentions (Rodrigues et al., 2019).

The table displays a t-count output value of 2.55, exceeding the threshold of 1.96, and an effect weight of 0.22. This indicates that cultivating a proactive attitude can effectively moderate the influence of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intentions, with a weight of 0.22.

Furthermore, the table reveals that the impact of spiritual intelligence on entrepreneurial intentions is mediated by creativity. The t-count output value stands at 2.05, surpassing 1.96, with an influence weight of 0.27. This suggests that creativity can be a positive mediator for the influence of spiritual intelligence on entrepreneurial intentions, with a weight of 0.27.

Numerous studies have delved into the connection between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intentions, particularly focusing on the mediating role of a proactive attitude (Lee et al., 2022). The findings highlight the significant mediating role played by a proactive attitude in the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intentions (Wang et al., 2023).

**Spiritual Intelligence on Entrepreneurial Intention through Creativity and Proactive Attitude**

The influence of spiritual intelligence on entrepreneurial intentions operates through the intermediary factor of creativity, as delineated in the table. The t-count registers at 2.05, surpassing the threshold of 1.96, with an associated influence weight of 0.27. This signifies a positive mediation effect of creativity, with a weight of 0.27, in facilitating the impact of spiritual intelligence on entrepreneurial intentions.

Various parallel investigations explore the mediation mechanism linking spiritual intelligence and entrepreneurial intentions via creativity (Farahbod et al., 2013). Notably, the findings indicate that student creativity does not mediate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and entrepreneurial intentions (Rodrigues et al., 2019).

The impact of spiritual intelligence on entrepreneurial intentions via proactive disposition is elucidated in the table, as well as the resultant output. The t-count value stands at 2.13, exceeding the critical threshold of 1.96, with a corresponding influence weight of 0.26. This suggests that a proactive attitude serves as a positive mediating agent, with a weight of 0.26, in facilitating the influence of spiritual intelligence on entrepreneurial intention.

Several other studies examine the mediating process that links spiritual intelligence and entrepreneurial intentions through a proactive attitude (Rosado-Cubero et al., 2022). The results showed that a proactive attitude significantly mediates the relationship between intelligence and entrepreneurial intention.

## Implication and Conclusion

Entrepreneurial intention manifests the desire, interest, and willingness to work independently and diligently to meet one's livelihood needs without fear of risks, thus becoming the driving force for entrepreneurship. This study concludes that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence directly influence entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, the better the respondents perceived emotional and spiritual intelligence, the stronger their intention to become entrepreneurs. Creativity and proactive attitudes mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence toward entrepreneurial intention. Creativity and proactive attitudes reinforce the relationship between emotional and spiritual intelligence toward entrepreneurial intention. The better the creativity and proactive attitudes of the respondents, the stronger the relationship between emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence towards entrepreneurial intention.

This research recommends challenging parents to increase support for their children in achieving their goals, especially for students, considering the high number of college graduates who struggle to find employment. Lecturers should avoid being overly competitive in theoretical teaching to foster an entrepreneurial spirit, considering the solid subjective norm indicators originating from lecturer encouragement. Therefore, it is essential to instill entrepreneurial spirit through various theories and practices. Supporting such programs would help students enhance their interest in entrepreneurship. The government can contribute to boosting teenage entrepreneurship interest in Medan City by organizing various training sessions, exhibitions, competitions, or events related to entrepreneurship, allowing teenagers to channel and develop their interests and talents accordingly. For future research, it is hoped that further exploration can delve deeper into the issues influencing entrepreneurial focus.

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