



## The Role of *Ambition for Freedom* in Entrepreneurship Learning as Student Motivation to Become Entrepreneurs (Phenomenological Study on Vocational High School Students in Mojokerto)

Dwi Santoso<sup>1\*</sup>, Irma Suryandari<sup>2</sup>, Sudarmiatin Sudarmiatin<sup>3</sup>, Rizky Firmansyah<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1-4</sup> Business and Management Education Study Program, State University of Malang

Email : [dwi.santoso.2404158@students.um.ac.id](mailto:dwi.santoso.2404158@students.um.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>, [irma.suryandari.2404158@students.um.ac.id](mailto:irma.suryandari.2404158@students.um.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

Author Correspondence: [dwi.santoso.2404158@students.um.ac.id](mailto:dwi.santoso.2404158@students.um.ac.id) \*

**Abstract.** This research aims to understand the role of *Ambition for Freedom* in entrepreneurship learning as a motivation for students to become entrepreneurs at SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto. Using a phenomenological approach, this research explores the subjective experiences of students involved in entrepreneurial learning and how *Ambition for Freedom* contributes to shaping their motivation to enter the world of entrepreneurship. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 10 students of SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto who had an interest in entrepreneurship, as well as observations of entrepreneurial learning activities in class. Research findings show that students who feel freedom in determining their business tend to have higher motivation to become entrepreneurs, especially because they feel empowered to explore creative ideas and make decisions independently. *Ambition for Freedom* was found to be an important factor that encourages students to overcome challenges and start businesses. This research contributes to the understanding of how elements of freedom in entrepreneurship education can increase students' interest and readiness for entrepreneurship, and suggests integrating aspects of freedom in the design of the entrepreneurship curriculum at SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto.

**Keywords:** *Ambition for Freedom*, entrepreneurship learning, entrepreneurial motivation, phenomenology, students of SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship learning at SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto plays a very important role in preparing students to face the challenges of the economy and the ever-evolving world of work. With the increasingly tight competition in the world of work, entrepreneurship is considered an alternative to creating jobs and increasing individual competitiveness. Entrepreneurship learning at SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto not only provides technical skills, but also non-technical skills such as creativity, adaptability, and risk management that are very much needed by students to overcome challenges in the business world. Entrepreneurship education is expected to prepare students to become individuals who are not only able to work, but also able to create business opportunities and innovation. Research (Kirana Dewi & Prianthara, 2022; Rauf et al., 2021; Sulistyowati et al., 2023 ) shows that good entrepreneurship education can equip students with the skills needed to innovate and work independently.

However, although entrepreneurship has been introduced in many SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto, the main problem that is often faced is the low motivation of students to become entrepreneurs. Many students of SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto prefer to work in the formal sector as employees after graduating, on the grounds that they feel safer and more stable than starting their own business. This happens because most students do not see entrepreneurship as a profitable option or they feel they lack the knowledge and skills to start their own business. This is in line with the findings of (Tomy & Pardede, 2020; Trisiana et al., 2020) which show that low motivation to become entrepreneurs among students is caused by misperceptions about entrepreneurship, such as fear of failure and high uncertainty.

In this context, the concept of *Ambition for Freedom* becomes relevant. *Ambition for Freedom* refers to an individual's desire to control their life, including in terms of finances and business decisions. This concept is closely related to the understanding that entrepreneurship can provide the freedom to innovate, determine one's own business direction, and overcome challenges independently without being tied to a rigid organizational structure. According to (Amofah & Saladrigues, 2022; Shpeizer, 2019), this freedom provides a strong motivation for individuals to start a business, because they can plan and execute their ideas more flexibly and creatively. This is in accordance with the view of (Küttim et al., 2019 ) who emphasize that the freedom to innovate is the essence of entrepreneurship, which encourages individuals to overcome limitations and take advantage of existing opportunities.

However, even though entrepreneurship provides opportunities for freedom, students of SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto still face challenges in finding motivation to enter the business world. External factors such as support from family, social environment, and teachers greatly influence students' decisions to start a business. Research (Lackéus, 2020; Martínez-Gregorio et al., 2021 ) shows that strong social support can increase students' self-confidence to become entrepreneurs. In addition, entrepreneurship learning based on real experiences, such as internships or practical work, can provide a clearer picture of the challenges and opportunities in the business world. Therefore, this study focuses on understanding how *Ambition for Freedom* can be a motivational factor that influences the entrepreneurial interests and actions of students of SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto, and how this can be applied in the design of more effective entrepreneurship learning.

This research is very relevant to identify and understand the motivational factors that can encourage students to become entrepreneurs, especially through the concept of *Ambition for Freedom*. By understanding how the concept of freedom in entrepreneurship can affect students, this research is expected to contribute to the development of a more inclusive entrepreneurship curriculum and empower students to take the initiative in entrepreneurship. This approach is expected to increase students' motivation to see entrepreneurship not only as a path to achieving financial freedom, but also as a means to express their ideas and creativity and achieve a better future.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Entrepreneurship Concept in Vocational High School Education**

Entrepreneurship is a process that includes the ability to identify opportunities, plan, organize, and manage a business to achieve certain goals, often with risk and uncertainty. In the context of vocational high school education, entrepreneurship is an integral part of learning that aims to prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed to become successful entrepreneurs. In Indonesia, entrepreneurship education in vocational high schools is increasingly important to equip students with practical skills that are relevant to the business world and industry. By teaching entrepreneurial skills, such as business planning, marketing, financial management, and innovation and creativity, vocational high schools are expected to produce graduates who are ready to create jobs, not just look for jobs (Younis et al., 2020). The approach to entrepreneurship education in vocational high schools can vary, from a theoretical approach that prioritizes knowledge of the basics of entrepreneurship, to a practical approach that provides students with the opportunity to interact directly with the business world through internship programs or small business projects. According to (Melugbo et al., 2020), effective entrepreneurship education must involve the development of practical business skills and strategic thinking that enable students to think creatively and solve problems innovatively. Thus, entrepreneurship in vocational schools not only teaches theory but also involves direct experience that can increase students' motivation to enter the business world.

### **Motivation Theory in Entrepreneurship**

Motivation is the main factor that influences a person's decision to act in achieving their goals, including in entrepreneurship. In the context of entrepreneurship education, motivation theory can be explained through various approaches, one of which is Maslow's theory of needs.

Maslow (1943) stated that individual motivation comes from hierarchical needs, starting from basic needs such as food and shelter, to the need to achieve self-potential (self-actualization). In the context of entrepreneurship, the need to achieve self-potential is often the driving force for individuals to become entrepreneurs, because entrepreneurship gives them the freedom to realize their own ideas and ambitions. In addition, Herzberg's motivation theory which emphasizes motivating factors such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility is also relevant in entrepreneurship. According to Herzberg (1959), these motivators can encourage individuals to seek challenges and opportunities in entrepreneurship. In entrepreneurship education, teaching that prioritizes the development of ideas and creativity can serve as a significant motivating factor for students to start a business. One of the motivational concepts that is increasingly attracting attention in the world of entrepreneurship is *Ambition for Freedom*, which refers to the drive of individuals to seek freedom in making decisions and designing their own future. According to (Husain, 2022), *Ambition for Freedom* in the context of entrepreneurship includes not only financial freedom, but also freedom in thinking and acting, which allows individuals to develop their potential. This concept is very relevant in entrepreneurship education at SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto, where students often look for ways to overcome the limitations that exist in the traditional education system or the world of work. By developing *Ambition for Freedom*, students can be more motivated to start their own businesses, despite the challenges and uncertainties they may face.

### **Phenomenology in Educational Research**

Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that focuses on understanding individuals' lived experiences from their own perspectives. Phenomenology was first introduced by Edmund Husserl (1931), who focused on subjective experiences and the meanings constructed by individuals in their social contexts. In educational research, the phenomenological approach is very useful for gaining an in-depth understanding of students' experiences, especially in understanding more complex phenomena such as entrepreneurial motivation. The application of phenomenology in research on entrepreneurial motivation allows researchers to understand how vocational high school students feel and interpret the drive to become entrepreneurs in their lives. Through in-depth interviews or observations, researchers can explore students' more personal experiences, such as how they see entrepreneurship as a path to freedom or how they overcome obstacles and challenges in realizing their entrepreneurial ideals. For example, research by (Pérez-

Macías et al., 2022 ) shows that entrepreneurship can be seen as a subjective process influenced by an individual's desire to achieve freedom through innovation. In this study, phenomenology allows a deeper understanding of how SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto students feel and interpret *Ambition for Freedom* as their driving force in entrepreneurship. Thus, phenomenology becomes a very relevant approach in entrepreneurial motivation research, because it allows researchers to uncover students' subjective experiences in a broader social and cultural context. This approach can provide new insights into how internal factors such as *Ambition for Freedom* can influence students' entrepreneurial actions, as well as how entrepreneurship education can be adapted to enhance their motivation.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological approach to understand the subjective meaning given by SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto students to their experiences in entrepreneurship learning, especially related to *Ambition for Freedom* as an internal drive to become an entrepreneur. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore students' life experiences in depth and understand how they interpret entrepreneurship and the freedom they want to achieve through their efforts. According to (Creswell, 2019a), the phenomenological approach provides a rich understanding of how individuals understand their experiences in their social context. Therefore, phenomenology is very relevant in exploring the thoughts and motivations of SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto students regarding entrepreneurship, which is often influenced by the desire to achieve financial and personal freedom through entrepreneurship.

This research was conducted at SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto, East Java, which has an entrepreneurship learning program. This location was chosen because SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto is an educational institution that plays an important role in preparing students for the world of work or becoming entrepreneurs. The subjects of the study were students who took entrepreneurship learning, with a focus on those who had an interest or experience in entrepreneurship. The determination of this subject was carried out by selecting students who could provide in-depth insights into their motivations for entrepreneurship, which were believed to be able to make a significant contribution to the understanding of this research. The phenomenological approach allows the selection of fewer subjects but with more in-depth information, in accordance with the

theory (Creswell, 2019a ) which states that the focus of qualitative research is on in-depth understanding, not on a large number of subjects.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 students to explore students' views on entrepreneurship and *the Ambition for Freedom* they felt. These interviews were semi-structured, giving students the freedom to express their views on entrepreneurship and the underlying motivations. (Creswell, 2019a ) states that in-depth interviews provide space for researchers to explore individual subjective experiences in more detail. Participant observation was also used to observe student interactions in entrepreneurship learning activities, with the aim of seeing how they apply entrepreneurial concepts in practice and respond to activities involving entrepreneurial freedom. Documentation in the form of teaching materials and entrepreneurship projects worked on by students was also collected to provide further context regarding the material taught and how students applied their knowledge in entrepreneurship projects.

The collected data will be analyzed using phenomenological analysis techniques, by adapting Colaizzi's method which is often used in phenomenological research (Colaizzi, 1978). The analysis process begins with transcription of interviews and observation notes which are then coded to identify important elements related to students' experiences in entrepreneurship and *Ambition for Freedom* . These codes will be grouped into larger themes, which are then analyzed to understand the meaning contained in students' experiences. This analysis aims to explore deeper meanings about how students interpret freedom in entrepreneurship and how it motivates them to get involved in the business world. (Creswell, 2019b) emphasizes the importance of self-reflection in phenomenology, so that researchers will continue to reflect on the influence of personal views on data analysis and strive to maintain objectivity in understanding students' experiences.

With this approach, it is expected that this study can provide deeper insight into how students of SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto interpret *Ambition for Freedom* in the context of entrepreneurship and how it can influence their motivation to start a business. This study also aims to contribute to the development of entrepreneurship education at SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto by identifying motivational factors that can increase students' entrepreneurial interests and actions.

## **4. RESEARCH RESULT**

### **Description of Phenomenon**

In this study, the experience of SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto students who participated in entrepreneurship learning showed that *Ambition for Freedom* played a very important role in shaping their entrepreneurial motivation. Most of the students involved in this study expressed that they were interested in entrepreneurship because of the desire to gain financial and personal freedom. They see entrepreneurship as a way to avoid the limitations commonly found in conventional jobs, such as strict working hours or dependence on superiors. This is in accordance with the theory of intrinsic motivation which states that the freedom to manage time and business decisions can increase a person's satisfaction and motivation to become an entrepreneur (Ristovska & Blazheska, 2021).

In addition, students described entrepreneurship learning as an opportunity to explore their own business ideas, develop skills that could give them more control over their lives, and achieve their personal goals. Several students also mentioned that they felt motivated to start their businesses as an effort to achieve financial freedom, which not only provided economic independence but also increased their self-confidence. Most students saw entrepreneurship as a more open and flexible path to achieving their dreams, compared to more structured formal employment.

### **The Process and Role of Ambition for Freedom in Shaping Students' Entrepreneurial Motivation**

*Ambition for Freedom* acts as a strong internal drive in students' entrepreneurship learning. This process occurs in several stages. First, students begin to recognize that entrepreneurship gives them the freedom to determine their own destiny. They feel they can control their time, take advantage of existing market opportunities, and utilize existing resources according to their wishes. This supports the view that freedom in entrepreneurship gives students greater control over their lives, which is often a deep motivation (Wulandari et al., 2021). Students who have *Ambition for Freedom* are often more willing to take risks and have a greater sense of responsibility for their success.

One example found in this study is students who are involved in entrepreneurship projects that allow them to design and manage their own businesses, even on a small scale. They feel great satisfaction when they succeed in managing their businesses in their own way. Such experiences

strengthen their desire to continue to develop and improve their businesses, and increase their confidence in their ability to achieve the freedom they desire. This shows that the ambition to be financially and professionally independent is the main driver that directs students to be more serious in following entrepreneurship learning.

### **Thematic Analysis**

In the thematic analysis, several main themes were found that describe the relationship between *Ambition for Freedom* and students' entrepreneurial motivation. One of the main themes is *freedom in entrepreneurship as a trigger for internal motivation*. This freedom is not only limited to aspects of time or location, but also to independent business decision-making. Students who feel they have the freedom to choose their business path tend to have higher motivation to continue learning and innovating. This is in accordance with the theory of autonomous motivation in entrepreneurship, which states that when individuals feel free to make decisions and take responsibility for their actions, they are more likely to remain committed to long-term goals (Wishnu Wardana et al., 2021).

Another finding is that entrepreneurial freedom increases students' self-confidence. Students who have the freedom to manage their businesses feel more responsible for the success or failure of their businesses, which in turn motivates them to continue trying. This is in line with the view (Adeniyi et al., 2024) which states that entrepreneurship involves creating and managing change, where the freedom to explore new ideas is key to innovation and business growth.

### **Discussion**

The findings in this study show that *Ambition for Freedom* plays a major role in motivating students of SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto to enter the world of entrepreneurship. This is in line with the theory of motivation which explains that intrinsic factors such as freedom, control, and the opportunity to develop personal ideas are the main drivers that make students interested in entrepreneurship (Popkova & Sergi, 2020). Previous studies, such as those conducted by (Amofah & Saladrigues, 2022), also revealed that internal motivation related to freedom in entrepreneurship has a significant influence on a person's decision to become an entrepreneur.

From a practical perspective, these findings can be used as a reference for developing an entrepreneurship curriculum at SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto. Entrepreneurship education needs to emphasize more on the importance of giving students the freedom to manage their own projects, explore business ideas, and make decisions related to their businesses. Thus, students will be more



motivated to participate in entrepreneurship learning and develop the skills needed for entrepreneurship. The implication of these findings is the importance of creating a learning environment that gives students freedom and autonomy, and connects learning with real-world experiences, so that students can better understand the relevance of entrepreneurship in their lives. Learning that is more based on experience and exploration of business ideas will increase students' motivation to become entrepreneurs and be better prepared to face the challenges of the business world.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This study confirms that *Ambition for Freedom* plays a very important role in motivating students of SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto to become entrepreneurs. Students who have the ambition to achieve financial and personal freedom through entrepreneurship tend to be more motivated to learn and innovate. They see entrepreneurship as a way to control their own destiny, both in terms of time, decisions, and potential profits. This finding suggests that freedom in entrepreneurship not only increases students' intrinsic motivation, but also strengthens their confidence in taking risks and managing their businesses.

Overall, this study provides an important contribution to the development of entrepreneurship education at SMKN 1 JETIS Mojokerto. One of the main findings is the importance of creating a learning environment that provides freedom and autonomy to students, allowing them to explore their own business ideas and make decisions independently. Thus, entrepreneurship learning can be more relevant and encourage students to be more serious in developing the entrepreneurial skills needed to succeed in the business world. This study also provides a basis for the development of a more experience-based entrepreneurship curriculum, which can increase student motivation and prepare them to face the challenges of the real business world.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adeniyi, A. O., Gamede, V., & Derera, E. (2024). Individual entrepreneurial orientation for entrepreneurial readiness. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-02728-9>
- Amofah, K., & Saladrighes, R. (2022). Impact of attitude towards entrepreneurship education and role models on entrepreneurial intention. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-022-00197-5>
- Creswell, J. W. (2019a). Choosing a mixed method design. In *Designing and constructing mixed methods research* (p. 427). Sage Publication. <https://books.google.nl/books?hl=nl&lr=&id=51UXBAAAQBAJ>
- Creswell, J. W. (2019b). John W. Creswell, Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. *Journal of Social and Administrative Sciences*, 4(June), 3–5.
- Husain, A. (2022). The influence of motivation, social media, and the social environment on interest in entrepreneurship. *Jurnal Economic Resource*, 5(1), 177–186. <https://doi.org/10.57178/jer.v5i1.286>
- Kirana Dewi, N. K. A., & Priantara, I. B. T. (2022). Assessing civil service agility ahead to work from anywhere (Study at: Education, Youth, and Sports Office of Bali Province 2022). *International Journal of Business Management and Economic Review*, 5(4), 199–207. <https://doi.org/10.35409/ijbmer.2022.3422>
- Küttim, M., Kallaste, M., Venesaar, U., & Kiis, A. (2019). Entrepreneurship education at university level and students' entrepreneurial intentions. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 110, 658–668. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.910>
- Lackéus, M. (2020). Comparing the impact of three different experiential approaches to entrepreneurship in education. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, 26(5), 937–971. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-04-2018-0236>
- Martínez-Gregorio, S., Badenes-Ribera, L., & Oliver, A. (2021). Effect of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurship intention and related outcomes in educational contexts: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Management Education*, 19(3), 100545. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2021.100545>
- Melugbo, D. U., Ogbuakanne, M. U., & Jemisenia, J. O. (2020). Entrepreneurial potential self-assessment in times of COVID-19: Assessing readiness, engagement, motivations, and limitations among young adults in Nigeria. *Ianna Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(1), 12–28.
- Pérez-Macías, N., Fernández-Fernández, J. L., & Vieites, A. R. (2022). Analyzing the past to prepare for the future: A review of literature on factors with influence on entrepreneurial intentions. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 20(1), 52–114. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-021-00289-5>

- Popkova, E. G., & Sergi, B. S. (2020). Human capital and AI in Industry 4.0: Convergence and divergence in social entrepreneurship in Russia. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 21(4), 565–581. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIC-09-2019-0224>
- Rauf, R., Wijaya, H., & Tari, E. (2021). Entrepreneurship education based on environmental insight: Opportunities and challenges in the new normal era. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2021.1945756>
- Ristovska, N., & Blazheska, D. (2021). The impact of emotional intelligence skills to entrepreneurial business success. *UTMS Journal of Economics*, 12(2), 171–185.
- Shpeizer, R. (2019). Towards a successful integration of project-based learning in higher education: Challenges, technologies, and methods of implementation. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 7(8), 1765–1771. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2019.070815>
- Sulistyowati, R., Mahendra, A. M., Maula, F. I., & Budy, S. (2023). Identifying the dimension of entrepreneurial ecosystem for promoting entrepreneurial intention: A study in five educational-based universities in Indonesia. *Journal of Business and Management Review*, 9(July), 134–142.
- Tomy, S., & Pardede, E. (2020). An entrepreneurial intention model focusing on higher education. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, 26(7), 1423–1447. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEER-06-2019-0370>
- Trisiana, A., Sutikno, A., & Wicaksono, A. G. (2020). Digital media-based character education model as a learning innovation in the midst of a Corona pandemic. *Webology*, 17(2), 103–117. <https://doi.org/10.14704/WEB/V17I2/WEB17019>
- Wishnu Wardana, L., Mukhtar, S., Wibowo, A., Shandy Narmaditya, B., Eka Suprajan, S., Subali Patma, T., & Martha Mahendra, A. (2021). Does the environment impact entrepreneurial business intention? *KnE Social Sciences*, 2021, 140–162. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v5i8.9355>
- Wulandari, A., Hermawan, A., & Mukhlis, I. (2021). Exploring determinants of entrepreneurial readiness on Sukses Berkah Community's members. *Journal of Business and Management Review*, 2(4), 303–317. <https://doi.org/10.47153/jbmr24.1332021>
- Younis, H., Katsioloudes, M., & Bakri, A. Al. (2020). Digital entrepreneurship intentions of Qatar university students: Motivational factors identification. *International Journal of E-Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 10(1), 56–74. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJEEI.2020010105>