Motivation and Self-Concept as Predictors of Creativity and Entrepreneurial Interest among Vocational High School Students

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Abstract
Motivation in entrepreneurship education fosters the generation of new ideas. This study aims to analyse the influence of motivation and self-concept on the creativity and entrepreneurial interest of students at a vocational high school located in Banda Aceh. Employing a quantitative correlational approach, data were collected via an online questionnaire designed to investigate entrepreneurial behavioral choices among students who had either started a business or intended to do so; the survey involved 40 Grade XII students who had completed entrepreneurship education and fieldwork practice. Analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression with RStudio software. The results indicate that motivation significantly influences creativity ($\beta = 0.539$; $p < 0.05$) and entrepreneurial interest ($\beta = 0.500$; $p < 0.05$). Similarly, self-concept has a significant influence on creativity ($\beta = 0.408$; $p < 0.05$) and entrepreneurial interest ($\beta = 0.510$; $p < 0.05$). R-square values of 0.859 for creativity and 0.880 for interest demonstrate that the variables of motivation and self-concept explain a substantial portion of the variation in both creativity and entrepreneurial interest. Findings from a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted with five students from each department to explore entrepreneurial motivation in greater depth revealed that 70% of students were able to identify new market opportunities aligned with their skills, whereas 30% had not yet conceived a business idea. The study concludes that motivation and self-concept are crucial factors for fostering creativity and enhancing entrepreneurial interest among vocational high school students. The research implications highlight the importance of applying behaviourist learning theories in entrepreneurship education to strengthen creative mindsets, risk-taking courage, and student readiness for the business world.

1. Introduction

Vocational high schools are designed to produce graduates ready for employment or entrepreneurship; however, in reality, vocational high school graduates account for the highest open unemployment rate in Indonesia reaching 7.74% in February 2026 surpassing that of general high school graduates 6.23% and university graduates 6.13% (BPS, 2026). This disparity indicates that most vocational high school students are still inclined to seek employment as wage earners rather than create their own jobs through entrepreneurship, even though entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic growth. This situation underscores the urgent need to foster an interest in entrepreneurship during the vocational high school years, given that such interest can stem from both internal and external factors. Although personal traits such as the fear of failure and risk propensity are known to influence entrepreneurial interest, the ability to manage risk and make effective decisions remains crucial in cultivating that interest (Wang, Mumi, & Issarapaibool, 2025).

From a scientific perspective, motivation, self-concept, and creativity are three interconnected psychological factors that shape entrepreneurial interest. Entrepreneurial success and failure serve as fundamental bases for entrepreneurial interest in achieving desired outcomes Wardana et al. (2020), while attitudes toward entrepreneurship and personal traits such as risk-taking propensity, creativity, and self-confidence also influence this interest (Martinez-Gregorio., Badenes-Ribera, & Oliver, 2021). Creativity reinforces positive attitudes and self-confidence while aiding in the resolution of entrepreneurial challenges, thereby boosting interest in launching new ventures (Anjum, Farrukh, Heidler, & Tautiva, 2021); it also acts as an essential factor in generating the inspiration needed to transform the form or quality of products, services, and processes (Nguyen & Do, 2023). Entrepreneurial intention itself represents an individual's conviction to prepare for and act upon plans to start a new business (Somià, Pittaway, & Benedict, 2024; Stenholm, Ramström,

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Franzén, & Nieminen, 2021); consequently, strong motivation and self-concept serve as prerequisites for the development of creativity and, ultimately, tangible entrepreneurial interest.

Numerous prior studies consistently affirm the role of motivation in the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. In the context of entrepreneurship education, motivation plays a crucial role in fostering the ideas and behaviours necessary for entrepreneurship, thereby strengthening students' entrepreneurial interest, behaviour, and performance (Chauhan et al., 2024). The decision to establish a business is influenced by levels of motivation, which lead to intention and, subsequently, to concrete action (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2017; Murnieks, Klotz, & Shepherd, 2020; Širec, Šarlija, & Crnogaj, 2025). Consequently, motivation is considered the most critical factor in the successful development of new ventures (Alzahrani & Bhunia, 2024). Beyond internal factors, an individual's decision to engage in entrepreneurship is also influenced by the behaviour and opinions of others. Many entrepreneurs report that their decisions are shaped by other entrepreneurs who serve as role models Bosma, Hessels, Schutjens, Praag, and Verheul (2012); Xuan and Yankai (2025), while the entrepreneurial mindset cultivated through entrepreneurship education further drives such intentions (Batz Liñeiro, Romero Ochoa, & Montes de la Barrera, 2024) .

Another widely researched theme is the role of active entrepreneurship education in fostering creativity and entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurship education in vocational schools can adopt active learning approaches engaging students directly in creative activities, business simulations, and entrepreneurial projects to enhance entrepreneurial intention Alhadihaq, Zakiah, Sudjatmoko, Winarno, and Hermana (2024); Pattnaik, Mmbaga, White and Reger (2024), thereby creating jobs, products, and services that support national economic growth (Liu, 2024; Guanfeng & Ziyi, 2025; Tekic & Tsyrenova, 2024). Research by Jiatong et al (2021) demonstrates that entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, and creativity have a positive and significant impact on entrepreneurial intention, while Ratten and Usmanij (2021) highlight current trends in entrepreneurship education and suggest directions for future research. Meanwhile, Ferreira-Neto, de Carvalho Castro, de Sousa-Filho, and de Souza Lessa (2023) utilise the Theory of Planned Behaviour as a tool to understand the cognitive foundations of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship education is considered an effective way to stimulate entrepreneurship-related skills and foster students' entrepreneurial intentions. It entails developing competencies grounded in experience, intrinsic motivation, and socio-cultural readiness, alongside the contextual integration of theory and practice. Active learning is employed to shape adaptive and innovative entrepreneurs (Feola, Crudele, & Celenta, 2024; Liszt-Rohlf, Büker, & Kamsker, 2025). Vocational schools serve as a bridge, providing both practical and field-based knowledge.

Behaviourist learning theory emphasises the importance of reinforcement and repetition. Previous research indicates that repeated experiences through experiential learning programs can enhance students' entrepreneurial mindsets and attitudes (Bernardus et al., 2024) Repetitive practice and reinforcement within entrepreneurship programs not only facilitate the learning process but also help foster an entrepreneurial orientation, encouraging students to make actual entrepreneurial decisions and participate in job creation (Fatma & Ezzeddine, 2019; Sá, Cowley, & Husain, 2024; Thanapornsangsuth, 2024)

This study focuses on strengthening entrepreneurial capabilities through repetitive practice, with the aim of fostering entrepreneurial interest and generating business ideas. This reinforcement is grounded in behaviorist learning theory, as illustrated in the following Figure 1:

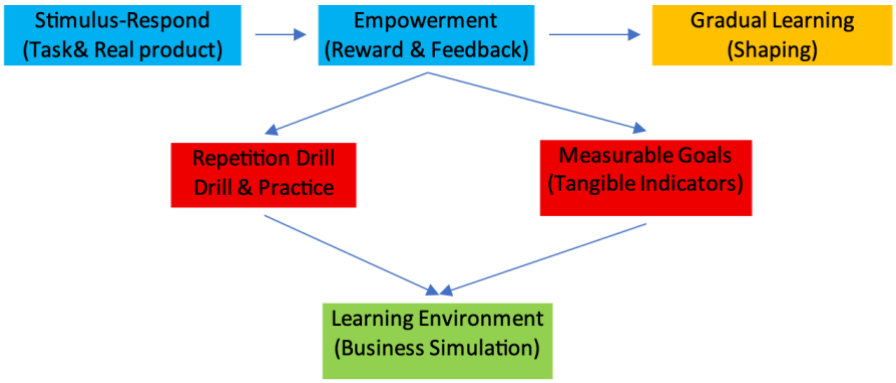


Figure 1. Application of Behaviourist Learning Theory

Although the aforementioned studies offer valuable insights into motivation, self-concept, creativity, and entrepreneurial interest, most have been conducted within higher education settings or among the general population, often employing theoretical frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ferreira-Neto et

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al., 2023). Research specifically examining vocational high school students particularly those at vocational high school in Banda Aceh, Indonesia through the lens of behaviourist learning theory remains very limited. Yet, the behaviourist approach, which emphasises reinforcement and repetition, holds the potential to explain more concretely how the motivation and self-concept of vocational students can be shaped through stimuli, fieldwork practice, and learning reinforcement to foster creativity and entrepreneurial interest. This gap underscores the need for further research focusing on vocational high school students in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

Based on the identified issues and research gaps, this study aims to analyse the influence of motivation and self-concept on the creativity and entrepreneurial interest of students at vocational high school in Banda Aceh, Indonesia employing a behaviourist learning theory approach to strengthen creative mindsets, risk-taking courage, and student readiness for the business world.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design with a correlational approach to analyze the influence of motivation (X1) and self-concept (X2) on the creativity (M) and entrepreneurial interest (Y) of vocational high school students in Banda Aceh. The research process involved identifying supporting data sources related to motivation, self-concept, creativity, and entrepreneurial interest such as locating relevant literature, developing research instruments, distributing questionnaires to respondents, organizing the data, and finally interpreting the results using multiple linear regression analysis.

The proposed relationships between motivation and self-concept as predictor variables and creativity and entrepreneurial interest as outcome variables are presented in Figure 2.

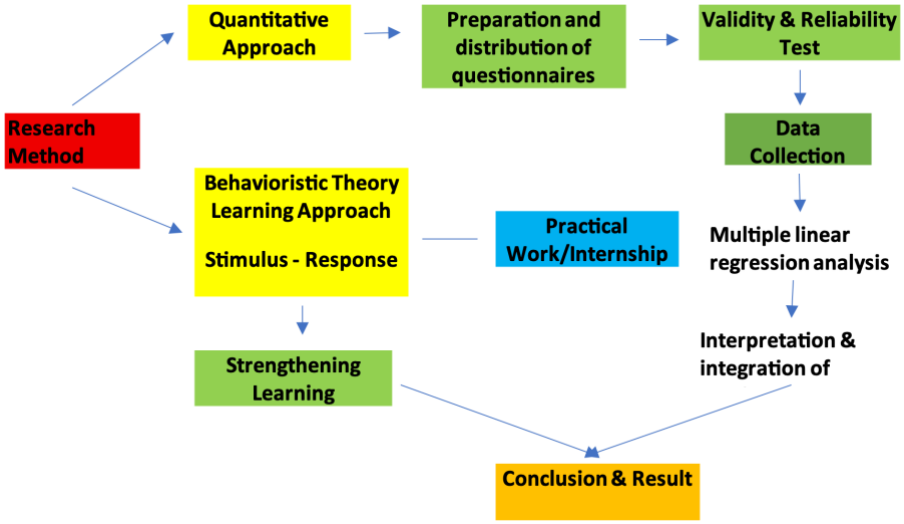


Figure 2. Quantitative Research Design Based on the Behaviourist Theory Approach

The operational definitions and roles of the variables examined in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Variables

Variable	Variable Type	Operational Definition	Source
Motivation	Independent	Internal and external Drive	
Self-Concept	Independent	Self-assessment/evaluation of oneself	(Lopes, Gomes, & Trancoso, 2024)
Creativity	Moderator	Generating New Ideas	
Entrepreneurial Interest	Dependent	Interest in or involvement in business/entrepreneurial	(Sá et al., 2024; Usman & Yennita, 2019)

2.2. Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of students from one of the private vocational high schools in Banda Aceh (see Table 2). A purposive sampling method Creswell (2014) was used to select a sample of 40 Grade XII students residing in Banda Aceh who were currently undergoing or had completed their internship and entrepreneurship education. Data collection was conducted via an online survey, with questionnaires distributed through WhatsApp groups a method considered highly effective and efficient (Fricker, 2017).

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Table 2. Demography Characteristics of the Respondents

No	Respondent Characteristics	Category	Total
1	Gender	Male	19
		Female	21
2	Age	15-16	4
		17-18	36
3	Internship Experience	Have Completed an Internship	40
	(Work Base Learning/Industrial Internship)	Have not complete	0
4.	Entrepreneurial Experience	Own a business	7
		Do not a business	33
5.	Study Program (Major)	Automotive Engineering	12
		Audio Visual Engineering	11
		Fashion Design	17

2.3. Research Instruments

All participating students were administered a questionnaire via the school's WhatsApp group. The questionnaire was designed to investigate entrepreneurial behavioral choices among students who had already started a business or intended to do so (Tables 3 and 4). The instrument employed was a structured questionnaire utilizing a Likert scale. In this study, the most relevant survey question concerns whether, upon completing high school, the respondents intend to immediately venture into business on their own or pursue office-based employment.

Table 3. Research Instrument

Variable	Description
Independent Entrepreneurial motivation Self-concept	Internal and external encouragement Self-belief and self-assessment
Dependent Entrepreneurial creativity Entrepreneurial interest	Innovation and problem-solving skill Entrepreneurial interest and behavior
Stimulus Entrepreneurship education Learning environment	

Table 4. Learning Process Indicators

Response	Interest	Creativity	Future Action
Positive Response	Students carry out practical work according to their abilities	Industrial work and the creation of products/services	Discovering one's true self and focusing of interest
Negative Respond	Asking about obstacle	It gets tedious when there's nothing new	Motivating student by assigning homework
Punishment	Question regarding Practical application	Keep doing it until you find something interesting	The student did not complain

3. Results and Discussion

Data processing in this study employed multiple linear regression analysis using RStudio software. The analysis utilised both t-tests and F-tests; the t-test was used to examine the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable on an individual basis, while the F-test was used to assess the relationship among the variables simultaneously. The application of Behaviourist Theory explains the mechanism of learning intervention through reinforcement and repetition. This learning process enhances learners' self-efficacy and subsequently strengthens their entrepreneurial mindset, ultimately increasing their entrepreneurial interest, business ideas, and entrepreneurial behaviour.

3.1. Reliability Test

The reliability of the research instrument will be assessed using the Cronbach's Alpha technique. If the measurement instrument yields a Cronbach's Alpha value of less than 0.6, it is considered unreliable. Conversely, if the reliability coefficient exceeds 0.6, the instrument demonstrates good reliability and is deemed trustworthy. The reliability test results for this study using Cronbach's Alpha showed a value of 0.983, which is greater than 0.6; therefore, the research instrument used is considered reliable and trustworthy.

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3.2. Product-Moment Correlation Validity Test

The validity of the research instrument was examined using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation technique, in which the score of each item was correlated with the total score of its respective variable. An item was regarded as valid if the resulting correlation coefficient (Pearson r) demonstrated a significant relationship with the total score, as indicated by a p-value below the 0.05 significance level (α = 5%). This procedure was applied to four research variables, namely Self-Concept, Creativity, Motivation, and Entrepreneurial Interest, with the results presented in Tables 5 to 8. The results presented in Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 show the relationship between individual item scores and the total score for each question category relative to its respective variable. All P-values are less than 0.05, indicating that all data are valid.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation for Self-Concept Items

Item	Pearson_r	p_value
k1	0.769292	0.00
k2	0.863735	0.00
k3	0.867276	0.00
k4	0.692269	0.00
k5	0.649452	0.00
k6	0.38986	0.01
k7	0.854785	0.00
k8	0.735384	0.00
k9	0.776907	0.00
k10	0.819627	0.00

Table 6. Pearson Correlation for Creativity Items

Item	Pearson_r	p_value
kr1	0.887443	0.00
kr2	0.909935	0.00
kr3	0.7743	0.00
kr4	0.880679	0.00
kr5	0.824766	0.00
kr6	0.898988	0.00
kr7	0.883598	0.00
kr8	0.874819	0.00
kr9	0.875176	0.00

Table 7. Pearson Correlation for Motivation Items

Item	Pearson_r	p_value
mo1	0.922029	0.00
mo2	0.910345	0.00
mo3	0.928288	0.00
mo4	0.917561	0.00
mo5	0.666125	0.00
mo6	0.867802	0.00
mo7	0.841148	0.00
mo8	0.819461	0.00
mo9	0.91785	0.00
mo10	0.915941	0.00
mo11	0.942827	0.00
mo12	0.896785	0.00
mo13	0.776398	0.00

Table 8. Pearson Correlation for Entrepreneurial Interest Items

Item	Pearson_r	p_value
m1	0.824273	0.00
m2	0.898452	0.00
m3	0.876082	0.00
m4	0.777058	0.00
m5	0.936527	0.00
m6	0.919124	0.00
m7	0.437204	0.00
m8	0.822385	0.00

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3.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis process was conducted after the questionnaire data had been collected and validated. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The measurement of each variable is presented in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9. Measurement of Creativity

Variable	Creativity		
	Coefficient	P value	T Test
Constanta	0.21578	0.532	0.630
Motivation	0.5393	0.000	5.499
Self-Concept	0.40819	0.000	3.694
R-square	0.859		
F-Test	0.000		

Based on the results in Table 9, the measurement of creativity indicates that the motivation variable is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. It means that for every 1% increase in motivation, the creativity variable increases by 0.539%; similarly, self-concept leads to an increase of 0.408%. Thus, the t-test results demonstrate that motivation and self-concept have a significant linear influence on creativity. The R-squared value is 0.859, indicating that the independent variables in this model explain 85.9% of the variance in the dependent variable.

The F-test analysis yielded a value of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating that the independent variables collectively have a significant effect on the dependent variable.

Table 10. Measurement of Motivation

Variables	Interest		
	coefficient	P value	T Test
Constanta	-0.08574	0.796	-0.260
Motivation	0.50063	0.000	5.305
Self-concept	0.51087	0.000	4.806
R-square	0.880		
F-Test	0.000		

Based on the results in Table 10, the motivation variable yielded a p-value of 0.00 (< 0.05), indicating that motivation has a significant influence on creativity; a 1% increase in motivation results in a 0.500% increase in interest. The self-concept variable yielded a p-value of 0.00 (< 0.05), indicating that self-concept has a significant influence on creativity, with a coefficient of 0.408; a 1% increase in self-concept affects the creativity value by 0.408%. The R-squared value is 0.880, meaning the independent variables in this model explain 88% of the variance in the dependent variable. The F-test yielded a value of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating that the independent variables collectively exert a significant influence on the dependent variable.

Changes in student behaviour were addressed through discussion groups involving 15 students divided into three groups of five. Reinforcement of the learning process through these FGDs was categorized into three response types: positive (score 80–100, 70%), negative (score 60–79, 20%), and punishment (score 40–59, 10%). These results indicate that positive responses predominated, reflecting effective student engagement and understanding, whereas the smaller proportions of negative responses and punishment point to limited involvement among a minority of participants requiring further follow-up.

Guided by this framework, a trial-and-error approach was employed to foster behavioural change through practice, wherein students were introduced to business opportunities and trained to identify new markets by leveraging and further developing their existing skills. Discussion results showed that 70% of students successfully identified market opportunities aligned with the skills acquired at school, while only a small number lacked ideas for starting a business based on their expertise, as assessed through the quality of their responses during group discussions

The results of the focus group discussion (FGD) indicate that the student learning process within the entrepreneurship specialisation can be characterised as follows. Students acquire knowledge and understanding that entrepreneurship necessitates a state of mental, physical, and psychological readiness, while concurrently expanding their comprehension of idea generation and new business venture creation through a behaviourist learning approach. Furthermore, this learning process is reflected in students' capacity to comprehend the instructions provided, their willingness to pose questions when confronted with a lack of understanding, and their persistence in attempting alternative approaches following instances of failure. Such

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persistence is further evidenced by students' sustained efforts to acquire new information and concepts, as well as by their engagement in the re-practice of previously undertaken activities, including industrial internships and practical training

Thus, the behaviourist approach allows for the observation of student activity and passivity during the learning process and fosters self-confidence in undertaking tasks independently. Learning objectives focus on what is to be measured and observed. Errors that are identified must be corrected immediately. A trial-and-error process is employed to shape the desired behaviour into a habit. The entrepreneurial environment has the greatest impact on behavioral choices; furthermore, direct experiences and trial-and-error in real-world work facilitate the development of entrepreneurial identity and self-confidence (Gabrielsson, Galan, & Politis, 2025).

The study findings indicate that behaviourist learning theory is highly relevant to the development of entrepreneurial behaviour. The principle of reinforcement enables learners to receive positive feedback on the entrepreneurial behaviours they exhibit, thereby encouraging the repetition of these behaviours until they become habits. Meanwhile, repetitive practice provides learners with opportunities to enhance their skills, self-confidence, and readiness to face the challenges of entrepreneurship.

These findings align with research by Bernardus et al (2024)), which states that repeated experiential learning can enhance entrepreneurial mindsets and attitudes. Furthermore, studies by Fatma and Ezzeddine (2019); Sá et al (2024); Thanapornsangsuth (2024) indicate that continuous reinforcement and practice of entrepreneurship contribute to the development of an entrepreneurial orientation, the courage to make business decisions, and readiness to create jobs.

In this study, reinforcement is implemented through the provision of motivation, feedback, and appreciation for achievements, alongside the habitual practice of entrepreneurial activities. This approach is expected to enhance interest in entrepreneurship while simultaneously stimulating the emergence of creative and innovative business ideas. Thus, behaviourist theory serves not only as a foundation for shaping learning behaviour but also as an effective strategy for developing entrepreneurial competence through a systematic process of habituation and reinforcement.

3.4. Implications

The findings of this study indicate that the formation of entrepreneurial behavior among vocational high school students does not depend solely on cognitive ability, but is also influenced by habituation, reinforcement, and the consistent provision of stimuli, in line with behaviorist theory.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the relevance of behaviorist theory in entrepreneurship education: motivation, constructive feedback, appreciation, and repeated practice have been shown to foster students' entrepreneurial interest and creativity.

Practically, teachers and schools are advised to design entrepreneurship instruction that goes beyond the mere delivery of material by providing sustained positive reinforcement through recognition of business ideas, feedback on business practice, and opportunities for repeated practice. Schools may also provide authentic platforms such as business projects, bazaars, business incubation programs, and innovation competitions to enable students to gain direct experience.

A further implication is that the entrepreneurship curriculum needs to integrate behaviorist principles with active learning, so that consistent reinforcement can promote the formation of sustainable entrepreneurial behavior.

3.5. Limitations

This study has three main limitations. First, the sample was limited to 40 students and thus does not yet fully represent the broader population of vocational high school students. Second, the study was conducted at only one vocational school in Banda Aceh, so the results may not necessarily apply to other schools with different characteristics. Third, the method employed was not able to test mediation effects, moderation effects, or nonlinear relationships between variables. Accordingly, future research is recommended to employ a larger and more diverse sample drawn from multiple schools, and to consider more comprehensive analytical methods, such as structural equation modeling (SEM), to examine the relationships between variables in greater depth.

4. Conclusion

The results of the study on the creativity and entrepreneurial interest of vocational high school students indicate that motivation and self-concept have a positive and significant influence on both creativity and entrepreneurial interest. Entrepreneurial interest can be explained by motivation and self-concept, with the remaining 14.03% attributed to factors not explained in this study. Similarly, creativity can be explained by

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motivation and self-concept, with the remaining 12% influenced by factors not explained by this study. These findings indicate that a learning process emphasising hands-on experience, habituation, and positive feedback plays a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial behaviour. Entrepreneurial interest develops not merely through the delivery of information or knowledge, but also through consistent learning experiences that are reinforced throughout the learning process. Based on the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) results, the response from vocational high school students was quite positive, with 70% of students demonstrating the ability to perform their tasks effectively during practical work training. Meanwhile, the remaining 30% lacked ideas for starting a business based on their acquired skills. However, the application of behaviourist theory has a limitation in that the evaluation conducted did not measure all aspects of the students. Therefore, it is recommended that future research aim to measure changes in behaviour and critical thinking skills among the students.

Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally to this paper. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/ or publication of this article.

Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/ or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration on AI Use

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) or AI-assisted tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

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