



Factors Inhibiting Entrepreneurship in Fashion Students

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Abstract

Fashion student entrepreneurship has an important for the growth of the creative industry and the regional economy. However, limited evidence exists regarding the specific barriers faced by fashion students in vocational higher education in Indonesia. This study aims to identify the dominant entrepreneurial barriers among students of the Fashion Study Program at UNY. A quantitative descriptive approach was employed using an online questionnaire administered to 41 students selected through purposive sampling. Instrument quality was confirmed by validity testing, with all items meeting the required criteria, and reliability testing, which showed acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.715). Descriptive analysis revealed that limited business capital (M = 3.5) was the primary barrier, followed by limited access to production technology (M = 3.4), limited business networks and support (M = 3.3), and market competition (M = 3.0). The novelty of this study lies in providing an empirical description of entrepreneurial barriers specific to fashion students within the context of vocational education. The findings contribute to entrepreneurship education by offering evidence to support the development of targeted institutional strategies. Universities should strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem by improving access to funding, production facilities, business mentoring, and industry collaboration to better prepare students for sustainable entrepreneurial careers.

Keywords

entrepreneurial barriers; entrepreneurship; fashion education; vocational education; university students

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is one of the main drivers of economic growth, job creation, and increased competitiveness through innovation and new business development (K & Dwivedi, A. K & Aashish, 2024). Universities have an important role in fostering an entrepreneurial culture through education, competency development, and the creation of

an ecosystem that supports the birth of young entrepreneurs (Thai et al., 2023). Students are seen as a group that has great potential to become entrepreneurs because they have creativity, learning skills, and access to academic resources (Wardoyo et al., 2023). However, this potential has not always been followed by the ability to realize business ideas into sustainable businesses (Maheshwari et al., 2023).

Various studies report that students still face various obstacles in starting a business (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2024). These obstacles include limited capital, lack of business experience, lack of business networks, limited access to technology, and high perception of the risk of failure (Maheshwari et al., 2023). In addition to individual characteristics, the quality of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in higher education also affects the success of students in developing businesses (Correia et al., 2024). Institutional support, access to mentors, production facilities, and market opportunities have been proven to contribute to the success of new entrepreneurial formation (Mago & van der Merwe, 2023). Therefore, identifying the factors that inhibit entrepreneurship is an important step in formulating a more effective entrepreneurial development strategy in the higher education environment (Thai et al., 2023).

In the context of vocational education, Fashion Designers students have different characteristics compared to students in other fields of science. The learning process not only emphasizes mastery of technical skills in fashion design and production, but also requires the ability to manage a business, understand market needs, utilize production technology, and build networks with suppliers and consumers (Wardoyo et al., 2023). The fashion industry is one of the creative industry subsectors that is developing very dynamically so that business actors are required to be able to adapt to changing trends, technological developments, and increasingly competitive market competition (Correia et al., 2024). This condition causes Fashion Designers students to face more complex challenges when starting or developing a business (Maheshwari et al., 2023). Similar tensions are also found in the context of higher education, where design and fashion students need a balance between technical-creative competence and entrepreneurial self-efficacy so that entrepreneurial intentions can be realized into real actions (Christensen et al., 2023).

Although previous studies have widely examined entrepreneurship among university students, the existing literature has primarily focused on entrepreneurial intention,

entrepreneurship education, and factors that encourage entrepreneurial behavior (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2024). While these studies have enhanced understanding of students' entrepreneurial readiness, they provide limited evidence regarding the specific barriers that prevent students from translating entrepreneurial intentions into actual business activities. Moreover, previous research has generally investigated entrepreneurship across diverse student populations without considering the distinctive characteristics of vocational fashion education, where entrepreneurial success depends not only on business knowledge but also on production capabilities, access to technology, industry networks, and creative market adaptation. Empirical studies examining entrepreneurial barriers among fashion students in the Indonesian vocational higher education context therefore remain scarce (Correia et al., 2024).

To address these gaps, this study investigates the entrepreneurial barriers experienced by students of the Fashion Study Program at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY). Specifically, it examines four key dimensions: limited business capital, limited business networks and support, limited access to production technology, and market competition. Unlike previous studies that predominantly emphasize entrepreneurial intention or entrepreneurship education, this study provides an empirical understanding of the practical barriers encountered by fashion students during the entrepreneurial process. The findings contribute to entrepreneurship education literature by extending knowledge of entrepreneurial barriers within vocational and creative education contexts. Furthermore, the study offers practical implications for universities in designing evidence-based entrepreneurial support programs through improved access to funding, production facilities, business mentoring, and industry collaboration.

THEORETICAL SUPPORT

This study is grounded in the entrepreneurial barriers perspective to explain the internal and external constraints that may hinder students from initiating and developing entrepreneurial activities. To provide a more comprehensive conceptual framework, the study also draws on the entrepreneurial ecosystem perspective and human capital theory. The entrepreneurial ecosystem perspective emphasizes the importance of institutional support, access to resources, and collaboration with external stakeholders in facilitating entrepreneurial activities, whereas human capital theory highlights the role of knowledge,

technical competence, and entrepreneurial skills in overcoming business challenges. Integrating these perspectives enables the study to explain entrepreneurial barriers as the result of interactions between individual capabilities and the surrounding educational and institutional environment. Based on this framework, entrepreneurial barriers are operationalized into four dimensions: limited business capital, limited business networks and support, limited access to production technology, and market competition.

Entrepreneurial Barriers

Entrepreneurial barriers are various factors that can hinder individuals from starting, developing, or maintaining a business (Yusriani et al., 2025). These barriers can come from internal factors, such as lack of confidence, limited experience, and fear of failure (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2024). On the other hand, barriers can also arise from external factors, such as limited capital, difficulty in accessing resources, restrictive regulations, and high market competition (Maheshwari et al., 2023). In addition to being influenced by individual characteristics, various studies show that entrepreneurial barriers are also influenced by the social environment, economic conditions, and institutional support that shape an individual's perspective on business opportunities and risks (Tetteh et al., 2024; Thai et al., 2023). Thus, an understanding of the different forms of entrepreneurial barriers is essential for designing strategies and programs that can increase the success of aspiring entrepreneurs, especially in the college environment (Correia et al., 2024).

From a student's point of view, the barriers to entrepreneurship become more complicated because they need to balance academic activities with business development. Limited business experience, lack of access to funding sources, and a lack of strong professional networks often cause students to experience difficulties in realizing their business ideas. Therefore, identifying the inhibiting factors is an important step in designing the right entrepreneurship program to meet the needs of students.

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

The understanding of *the entrepreneurial ecosystem* explains that achievement in entrepreneurship is not only determined by individual skills, but also by the quality of the ecosystem that supports the process of forming and developing a business (Thai et al.,

2023). An entrepreneurial ecosystem is a network consisting of various elements that interact with each other, including educational institutions, government, industry, financial institutions, mentors, business networks, and access to technology and markets (Correia et al., 2024). The synergy between these elements has an important role in creating an environment conducive to the birth of new entrepreneurs, as well as increasing the chances of success of the business (Mago & van der Merwe, 2023).

In the context of higher education, universities play a role as one of the main actors in building an entrepreneurial ecosystem by carrying out entrepreneurship education, providing business incubators, conducting mentoring programs, establishing partnerships with the business world, and providing facilities and access to funding sources (Correia et al., 2024). A solid entrepreneurial ecosystem is believed to reduce the various barriers faced by students so that they have a greater chance of starting and developing businesses sustainably (Thai et al., 2023). This research is in line with a recent study by (Somià et al., 2024), which shows that a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem is essential for sustaining entrepreneurial intentions in higher education.

Limited resources are also one of the factors that can hinder entrepreneurial activities because the success of a business is highly dependent on the availability of resources owned by prospective entrepreneurs (Maheshwari et al., 2023). This perspective explains that an individual's ability to build and develop a business is influenced by their access to financial resources, physical assets, technology, and social networks that can be used to support business activities (Tetteh et al., 2024). For Fashion Designers, limited resources are a significant challenge, because the production process requires raw materials, sewing equipment, adequate technology, and access to suppliers and customers. This condition causes students to often delay business development even though they already have technical competence in the field of fashion.

Individuals who have business experience, managerial skills, creativity, and technical skills tend to be better prepared to overcome obstacles in starting and developing a business (Samuvel et al., 2024). In the scope of higher education, *human capital* is developed through the learning process, entrepreneurial training, practical experience, and mentoring to improve students' competence in managing businesses (K & Dwivedi, A. K & Aashish, 2024). In the context of vocational education, Fashion Planning students already have technical competencies in the field of fashion design and production, but these

competencies need to be supported by entrepreneurial skills, such as business management, marketing, financial management, and business network development to be better prepared to build a business.

The four indicators employed in this study were selected based on the convergence of findings reported in recent entrepreneurship literature. Limited business capital represents financial resource constraints that frequently hinder business start-up activities (Maheshwari et al., 2023). Limited business networks and support reflect insufficient social capital and institutional assistance that restrict access to business opportunities and mentoring (Correia et al., 2024; Thai et al., 2023). Limited access to production technology captures technological and physical resource limitations that are particularly relevant in vocational education, where production facilities are essential for transforming creative ideas into commercial products (Tetteh et al., 2024). Finally, market competition represents external environmental pressure that influences business sustainability and entrepreneurial decision-making (Maheshwari et al., 2023). Collectively, these four indicators represent resource-related and environmental barriers that are highly relevant to entrepreneurial activities in vocational fashion education.

Drawing upon the entrepreneurial barriers perspective, entrepreneurial ecosystem perspective, and human capital theory, this study conceptualizes entrepreneurial barriers as multidimensional constraints arising from both individual and environmental factors. Within the context of vocational fashion education, these constraints are represented by four dimensions: limited business capital, limited business networks and support, limited access to production technology, and market competition. These dimensions constitute the conceptual foundation for developing the research instrument and guiding the descriptive analysis. The framework assumes that stronger resource availability, institutional support, and entrepreneurial competencies are associated with fewer perceived barriers, thereby providing a theoretical basis for interpreting the empirical findings.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design to identify and describe the entrepreneurial barriers perceived by students in the Fashion Study Program at Yogyakarta State University (UNY). A descriptive design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to provide an empirical overview of the dominant

barriers to entrepreneurship rather than to examine causal relationships among variables. The research population consisted of all students enrolled in the Fashion Study Program. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on the criteria that they were active students who had completed at least three semesters, ensuring sufficient exposure to entrepreneurship-related courses and practical learning experiences. Based on these criteria, 41 students participated in the study. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to select respondents with characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Etikan, 2016). Considering that this study employed descriptive statistical analysis rather than inferential modeling, the sample size was considered adequate to provide an empirical description of the entrepreneurial barriers experienced by the target population.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument was developed based on the entrepreneurial barriers literature and measured four dimensions: limited business capital, limited business networks and support, limited access to production technology, and market competition.

Table 1. Instrument Characteristics

Dimension	Questionnaire Item	Scale
Limited business capital	B1	Likert 1–5
Limited business networks and support	B2	Likert 1–5
Limited access to production technology	B3	Likert 1–5
Market competition	B4	Likert 1–5

Prior to data analysis, the instrument was evaluated for validity and reliability. Item validity was assessed using the Corrected Item–Total Correlation, while instrument reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha. The detailed results of the instrument testing are presented in the following tables.

Tabel 2. Validity Test Results of Entrepreneurial Barriers Instrument

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	r Tabel (n = 42; $\alpha = 0,05$)	Sig.	Keterangan
B1	0,511	0,304	<0,001	Valid
B2	0,758	0,304	<0,001	Valid
B3	0,340	0,304	0,028	Valid
B4	0,477	0,304	0,001	Valid

Testing Criteria:

- *Corrected Item-Total Correlation* > 0.30 or *r calculated* > *r table* (0.304)
- *Sig.* < 0.05
- *Conclusion: All items meet the validity criteria.*

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	Value
Cronbach's Alpha	0,715
N of Items	4

Table 4. Item-Total Statistics

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
B1	10,52	2,81	0,511	0,678
B2	10,36	2,64	0,758	0,562
B3	10,74	3,05	0,340	0,731
B4	10,48	2,89	0,477	0,691

Based on the validity test results using the Corrected Item-Total Correlation, all indicators possess a correlation value greater than the r-table value of \$0.304\$. The correlation values range from \$0.340\$ to \$0.758\$, indicating that all indicators are valid and suitable for measuring the entrepreneurial barriers construct. The reliability test results using Cronbach's Alpha demonstrated a value of \$0.715\$. This value exceeds the minimum threshold of \$0.70\$, indicating that the instrument maintains a good level of internal consistency (reliable). In addition, the *Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted* values indicate that removing any single item does not yield a significant increase in reliability; therefore, all indicators were retained in the research instrument.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. First, responses were coded and checked for completeness before being tabulated. Second, the mean score was calculated for each entrepreneurial barrier dimension to identify the dominant barriers perceived by students. Finally, the findings were interpreted by comparing the relative magnitude of each mean score to determine priority areas requiring institutional support. This analytical procedure enabled the study to provide an evidence-based description of entrepreneurial barriers within the context of vocational higher education. This study adhered to fundamental ethical principles for research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, respondents were informed of the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire, and informed consent was obtained electronically. Participants' identities were kept anonymous, and all responses were treated confidentially and used solely for academic research purposes

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 41 active student respondents from the UNY Fashion Study program who had taken semester 3. The following is the characteristic data of the respondents involved, presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Demographic Data			
No	Demographic Data	Total	Prosentase
1	Gender		
	Male	3	7,3 %
	Women	38	92,7 %
2	Semester		
	Semester 4	27	65,9 %
	Semester 6	14	34,1 %

Based on gender, the majority of respondents were female (92.7%), while male respondents were only 7.3%. Based on the semester level, the majority of respondents came from the fourth semester (65.9%), while the rest were sixth semester students (34.1%).

Factors Inhibiting Entrepreneurship

The results of the analysis show that the obstacles to entrepreneurship in students of the UNY Fashion Study Program include limited business capital, limited access to production technology, limited business networks, and market competition. The results of the analysis of the factors that inhibit entrepreneurship are presented in Table 2.

Table 6. Factors Inhibiting Entrepreneurship

Yes	Factors	Red	Rank	Interpretation
1	Limited business capital	3,5	1	Height
2	Limited access to production technology	3,4	2	Height
3	Limited network	3,3	3	Height
4	High market competition	3,0	4	Medium

The empirical results show that resource-related barriers represent the most substantial obstacles for fashion students. In contrast, external market factors, such as competition, are perceived as less dominant barriers at this stage of their entrepreneurial development.

Dominance of Financial Barriers in Fashion Student Entrepreneurship

The empirical finding that limited business capital (M=3.5) is the primary barrier aligns with the Resource-Based View (RBV), which positions financial capital as a fundamental "enabling resource" required to acquire other critical physical and human resources (Barney, 1991). In the fashion industry, financial barriers are magnified by extreme asset specificity. Unlike service or digital-based startups that operate with minimal overhead, fashion ventures demand significant upfront capital. Budding designers require commercial-grade machinery (such as industrial lockstitch, overlock, and digital embroidery machines), pattern-drafting software, and diverse raw textile inventories before a single product can be commercialized.

This capital bottleneck directly arrests the transition from entrepreneurial intent to real-world action, validating findings (S. Li, 2023; Wang et al., 2024), who argue that systemic financial deficits act as a hard barrier in student-led ventures. When academic programs demand high-quality physical output but fail to provide micro-funding channels, students encounter an immediate operational wall. While modern fintech and crowdfunding offer theoretical solutions, student entrepreneurs often lack the financial literacy or collateral to navigate these channels (Ling & Ling, 2025). This finding suggests that financial barriers are not merely an issue of liquidity, but reflect an institutional gap where university training fails to connect students with accessible, low-risk seed capital (Chen et al., 2023; Chen & Guo, 2024).

The Technological Gap as a Structural Constraint

Limited access to advanced production technology (M=3.4) was identified as the second most severe barrier, revealing a disconnect between individual human capital and physical infrastructure. From the perspective of Human Capital Theory, technical design proficiency remains a latent, unproductive asset if it is not supported by complementary physical capital (Teece et al., 1997). Fashion students at UNY are trained in advanced creative processes, yet they face severe structural constraints when attempting to scale production beyond basic studio equipment.

This technology gap has distinct industry-specific implications. Today's dynamic fashion market demands rapid prototyping, computer-aided design (CAD) software, laser cutters, and digitized sublimation printers to maintain competitiveness. Lacking access to

these industrial-grade tools, students are forced to rely on slower, high-cost manual techniques, which severely limits their market readiness. This finding supports (Ratten & Usmanij, 2022; Samuvel et al., 2024), who observed that creative technical skills are often bottlenecked by restricted access to industrial tools. The result is a structural efficiency gap: students possess the conceptual and technical knowledge to design competitive products but are structurally locked out of competitive market spaces due to production inefficiencies (Kurniati & Suryanto, 2023; Y. Li et al., 2025).

Social Capital Deficits and the Academic Ecosystem

The high ranking of limited business networks and support (M=3.3) highlights a key vulnerability in the academic entrepreneurial ecosystem. Within Social Capital Theory, professional networks are categorized into "strong ties" and "weak ties". While student designers maintain strong peer ties within the university, they lack the vital weak ties that facilitate resource acquisition, market validation, and business mentoring (Somià et al., 2024).

This network deficit isolates student entrepreneurs from the real-world value chain. In fashion, success depends on relationships with reliable textile mills, pattern grading services, CMT (Cut-Make-Trim) factories, and retail distributors. Without these connections, students struggle to navigate supply chains, leading to inflated material costs and inconsistent production quality. This aligns with findings (Correia et al., 2024; Ramsgaard et al., 2023), who argue that university ecosystems often prioritize generic business planning over the cultivation of specialized, industry-specific social capital. While academic business incubators exist, they rarely offer the deep, vertical-specific networks required to launch a specialized fashion brand (Koch et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2024).

Psychological Salience and the Perception of Market Competition

The finding that market competition (M=3.0) is interpreted as a moderate barrier and ranks lowest among the four dimensions reveals an interesting psychological boundary. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), an individual's entrepreneurial intention and behavior are driven by perceived behavioral control, which is shaped by immediate, proximal obstacles rather than distant, abstract threats. Because the majority

of surveyed students are in the ideation or pre-launch phase of their business, their focus is consumed by proximal resource deficits rather than distal market dynamics.

Consequently, market competition remains an abstract concern rather than a felt reality. This explains the findings (Alhadihaq et al., 2024; Pham et al., 2023), which show that internal self-efficacy and immediate resource control are far more predictive of early-stage entrepreneurial decisions than market pressures. However, this poses a long-term risk: if students launch businesses without a clear understanding of competitive pressures, they may face high failure rates once they transition from academic protection to the open, competitive market (Balgiu & Simionescu-Panait, 2024).

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study advances the entrepreneurship literature by integrating the Resource-Based View (RBV), Human Capital Theory, and Social Capital Theory within the distinct, asset-intensive domain of creative vocational education. Theoretically, the findings suggest that the conversion of creative human capital (design talent) into market-ready enterprise is not a linear pathway. Instead, it is highly contingent on the simultaneous availability of physical capital (production technology) and financial resources. This challenges generic entrepreneurial models that treat all student populations uniformly, demonstrating that vocational and creative design students face highly specialized, asset-specific barriers that require distinct conceptual frameworks.

For academic institutions, these findings indicate that traditional, lecture-based entrepreneurship curricula are insufficient. To effectively support fashion entrepreneurship, universities must transition from teaching generic business plans to establishing specialized, hands-on infrastructure. This includes integrating digital production technology into design studios, facilitating micro-finance channels tailored to creative prototyping, and actively bridging the gap between student designers and industrial manufacturing partners.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the dominant barriers preventing fashion students in vocational higher education from translating their creative ideas into commercial ventures. Based on empirical analysis, the primary barriers are structural and resource-driven, led by

limited business capital (M=3.5) and limited access to production technology (M=3.4), followed closely by limited business networks and support (M=3.3). In contrast, external market competition (M=3.0) is perceived as a secondary, less immediate threat. These results demonstrate that the central challenge in vocational fashion entrepreneurship is not a deficit in creative or technical talent, but a lack of structural mechanisms to support resource acquisition, physical production, and industry integration.

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