

Digital Marketing Capability and Self-Efficacy in Enhancing Entrepreneurial Intention Among Students at Private Universities: The Moderating Role of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines the effects of Digital Marketing Capability and Self-Efficacy on the Entrepreneurial Intention of students at private universities in Bandar Lampung and tests the moderating role of perceived university Entrepreneurial Ecosystem support.

Design/methodology/approach – This study employed a quantitative approach using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. Data were collected through a seven-point Likert-scale questionnaire from 240 students at private universities in Bandar Lampung. The analysis tested the direct effects among the constructs and the moderating effects of perceived university Entrepreneurial Ecosystem support.

Findings/Results – Digital Marketing Capability had a positive and significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intention. Unexpectedly, Self-Efficacy had a significant negative effect. Perceived university Entrepreneurial Ecosystem support significantly strengthened the Digital Marketing Capability–Entrepreneurial Intention relationship but did not significantly moderate the Self-Efficacy–Entrepreneurial Intention relationship.

Originality/Value – This study shows that university entrepreneurial ecosystem support does not uniformly condition the relationships between individual capabilities and Entrepreneurial Intention. The significant moderation of Digital Marketing Capability, contrasted with the non-significant moderation of Self-Efficacy, provides a post hoc empirical insight into how technical and psychological capabilities may interact differently with contextual support.

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1. Introduction

Private universities (PTS) play a strategic role in fostering young entrepreneurs who can adapt to the changing times. Amid economic challenges and increasingly fierce job competition, students are no longer merely being prepared as job seekers but also as job creators. However, the reality on the ground shows that students' interest in entrepreneurship has not grown evenly. Some students are still hesitant to start a business, even though opportunities and campus facilities are relatively available (Jayaun, 2024; Soputan, Mamuaja, Ohy, & Krisnanda, 2020).

The digital transformation that has taken place over the past decade has significantly changed marketing practices. Students who want to become entrepreneurs must be able to leverage social media, marketplaces, and other digital platforms to reach consumers (Yusa, Utami, & Rahayu, 2024). For students, this ability is not just a technical skill; it also builds their confidence that the business they've built can compete in a broad market with efficient promotional costs.

Students' digital marketing skills are key to entrepreneurial success. Proficiency in social media, copywriting and data analysis enables them to reach a wide market in real time, build a strong brand and boost sales even with limited capital. The growth in digital marketing skills amongst students at private higher education institutions (PTS) has a positive impact on their interest in and performance in entrepreneurship. Around 50.5 per cent of motivation for digital entrepreneurship is determined by the level of digital literacy. Universities support this development through their curricula and strategic programmes such as P2MW (Sembiring, Kristin, Lubis, & Kinanti, 2026).

Although the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a well-established framework for explaining behavioral intention through attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, the present study does not empirically test the complete TPB model. Instead, TPB is used as an interpretive foundation for understanding how perceived capabilities may relate to Entrepreneurial Intention. The study focuses on Digital Marketing Capability and Self-Efficacy as capability-related predictors and incorporates perceived university entrepreneurial ecosystem support as a contextual moderator. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory complements this interpretation by explaining how institutional resources, mentoring, infrastructure, and entrepreneurial networks may facilitate or constrain the translation of individual capabilities into entrepreneurial intention.

Psychological factors play an equally important role. Many students have good business ideas but lack the self-confidence to put them into practice. The concept of self-efficacy explains how an individual's belief in their own abilities influences their decisions and actions (Babcicky & Seebauer, 2020; Pang, Tan, & Lau, 2021). Students with high self-efficacy tend to be more willing to take risks, resilient in the face of failure, and consistent in their endeavours, whilst low self-efficacy is often the main barrier to an interest in entrepreneurship. Students' confidence and self-belief in pursuing entrepreneurship remain low due to a fear of failure, a lack of experience, limited capital, or a tendency to opt for formal employment. These barriers often lead students to remain in their comfort zone despite their potential (Rahma, Putri, & Wahidiyah, 2024; Sianturi, Fauziah, Sahira, & Kelaury, 2025; Soomro & Shah, 2021).

Digital skills and self-efficacy do not develop on their own the university environment forms part of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Cerchione, Passaro, Quinto, & Sicardi, 2026; Qin, 2026;

Stam & Ven, 2021). Support from business incubators, mentoring, entrepreneurship training, access to industry networks, and a pro-entrepreneurial campus culture can either strengthen or weaken students' interest in entrepreneurship. Universities with a supportive ecosystem tend to produce students who are better prepared and more confident in setting up their own businesses.

Previous research has shown that self-efficacy has a positive effect on an interest in entrepreneurship (Febriani, Suhardi, & Amin, 2026; Frastiwi, Mulia, Nasution, Yunita, & Sabrina, 2026; Tendel, Amelia, & Syahputri, 2025). Other research also highlights the importance of digital skills in improving business performance (Nurdyanto, Ismail, & Muhtar, 2024; Putri & Iffan, 2024; Syafitri, 2026). However, research that specifically integrates digital marketing capability and self-efficacy into a single model, whilst also examining the moderating role of the university's entrepreneurial ecosystem amongst students at private universities, remains relatively limited. Yet the context of private universities has its own distinct characteristics, both in terms of resources and institutional support (Febriani et al., 2026).

The research gap therefore concerns how Digital Marketing Capability and Self-Efficacy are associated with Entrepreneurial Intention and whether perceived university entrepreneurial ecosystem support changes the strength of these relationships. Rather than assuming that ecosystem support affects all capability–intention relationships in the same way, the present study tests the two moderation effects separately.

Previous studies have examined individual capabilities and entrepreneurial support, but relatively limited attention has been paid to whether university ecosystem support changes the strength of the relationships between different types of individual capabilities and Entrepreneurial Intention. The present study therefore tests two a priori moderation hypotheses: whether perceived university entrepreneurial ecosystem support moderates the effect of Digital Marketing Capability and whether it moderates the effect of Self-Efficacy. Any difference between the two moderation results is interpreted in the Discussion as an empirical pattern that may inform future theory development, rather than as an asymmetry that was fully predicted before the analysis.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the direct effects of Digital Marketing Capability and Self-Efficacy on students' Entrepreneurial Intention and to examine whether perceived university entrepreneurial ecosystem support moderates these relationships. The proposed model should be understood as a partial, capability-focused model inspired by TPB rather than as an empirical test of the complete TPB model.

2. Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

2.1. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen in 1991 (Ajzen, 1991) explains behavioral intention through three canonical antecedents: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. The present study does not directly measure all three antecedents and therefore does not claim to empirically test the complete TPB model.

In this study, TPB is employed as an interpretive foundation for understanding the role of perceived capability in the formation of Entrepreneurial Intention. Digital Marketing Capability and Self-Efficacy are treated as capability-related constructs that may contribute to students' perceptions of whether entrepreneurial activities are feasible and manageable.

Perceived university entrepreneurial ecosystem support is incorporated as a contextual factor that may alter the extent to which these capabilities are translated into Entrepreneurial Intention. This positioning recognizes that entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norm, and a direct measure of perceived behavioral control remain outside the present model.

TPB is relevant to the present study as an interpretive framework because both Digital Marketing Capability and Self-Efficacy concern students' perceived ability to perform tasks related to entrepreneurship. However, these constructs are not treated as substitutes for the canonical TPB variables. The study therefore uses TPB only to interpret capability-related perceptions associated with Entrepreneurial Intention.

Perceived university Entrepreneurial Ecosystem support is incorporated as a contextual moderator because access to mentoring, infrastructure, networks, training, and other university-based resources may facilitate or constrain the translation of individual capabilities into Entrepreneurial Intention. The model does not assume in advance that the two capability relationships must be moderated differently.

Because entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norm, and a direct measure of perceived behavioral control are not included, the model should be understood as a partial, capability-focused framework inspired by TPB rather than as a test of the complete TPB model.

The moderation hypotheses were specified before examining the interaction results. Based on prior arguments that contextual resources can facilitate entrepreneurial action, the study tests whether perceived university entrepreneurial ecosystem support strengthens both the Digital Marketing Capability–Entrepreneurial Intention relationship and the Self-Efficacy–Entrepreneurial Intention relationship. Any difference between the two interaction results is interpreted post hoc in the Discussion.

2.2. Digital Marketing Capability Influences Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial Intention is based on attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Digital Marketing Capability (DMC) can be explained through the dimension of Perceived Behavioural Control, which refers to an individual's perception of their ability to carry out a particular action. An individual who possesses the ability to manage a business's social media, create digital content, utilise online marketplaces, run digital advertising campaigns and make use of digital analytics will feel more capable of running a business than an individual who lacks these abilities. Consequently, their level of perceived behavioural control increases, fostering an interest in entrepreneurship. In other words, the higher an individual's Digital Marketing Capability, the greater their confidence that a business can be run and developed effectively, thereby increasing their interest in entrepreneurship (Newman, Obschonka, Schwarz, Cohen, & Nielsen, 2019). The following hypothesis is therefore proposed:

H1: Digital Marketing Capability positively influences Entrepreneurial Intention.

2.3. Self-efficacy Influences Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intention is an important predictor of an individual's participation in entrepreneurial activities. Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) is one of the most significant predictor of entrepreneurial intention; referring to individual's perceptions of their ability to execute a specific action. (Ajzen, 1991). Self-efficacy is used in entrepreneurship research as an alternative to perceived behavioural control. People who are confident in their entrepreneurs skills (ability to spot opportunities, deal with risks and run a business) are more likely to be interested in entrepreneurship than people who are not confident. Hence, the higher the people's self-efficacy, the more they are sure they would make good entrepreneurs, and so the

more interested they are in entrepreneurship (Roundy, Bradshaw, & Brockman, 2018). The following hypothesis is therefore proposed:

H2: Self-Efficacy positively influences Entrepreneurial Intention.

2.4. The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Moderates the Influence of Digital Marketing Capability on Entrepreneurial Intention

Digital marketing capability refers to an individual's ability to utilise digital technology to support marketing activities and business development. This capability can boost interest in entrepreneurship, as individuals feel better equipped to reach markets, build brands and manage their businesses effectively. However, the effectiveness of digital capabilities is not determined solely by individual factors, but is also influenced by the entrepreneurial environment. According to Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory (Roundy et al., 2018), An environment that provides access to capital, mentors, training, business networks and institutional support can enhance the use of digital capabilities in entrepreneurial activities. Consequently, the better the entrepreneurial ecosystem an individual has access to, the stronger the influence of digital marketing capability on Entrepreneurial Intention.

A Study (Roundy et al., 2018) found that the entrepreneurial ecosystem is capable of strengthening the relationship between individual resources and entrepreneurial activity. Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Perceived university Entrepreneurial Ecosystem support positively moderates (strengthens) the effect of Digital Marketing Capability on Entrepreneurial Intention.

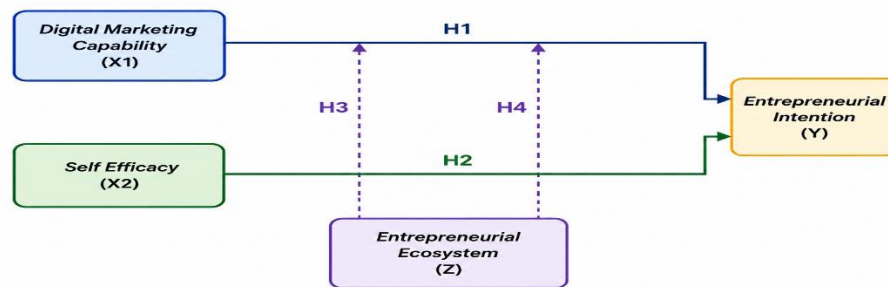
2.5. The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem moderates the influence of self-efficacy on Entrepreneurial Intention

TPB explains that perceived behavioural control is influenced not only by an individual's internal capabilities, but also by external factors that may facilitate or hinder a particular behaviour. In this study, these external factors are represented by the entrepreneurial ecosystem, which comprises: entrepreneurship education, business incubators, access to capital, business mentors, entrepreneurial communities, government support, and market access. When the entrepreneurial ecosystem is strong, individuals perceive the barriers to starting a business as lower and the chances of success as higher. When the entrepreneurial ecosystem is strong, students possess: high self-efficacy, support from mentors, access to capital, a business community, and incubation programmes. Consequently, the influence of self-efficacy on Entrepreneurial Intention becomes stronger. If the entrepreneurial ecosystem is weak, students possess high self-efficacy but lack mentors, access to capital, and environmental support. Consequently, perceived behavioural control does not develop optimally, leading to lower interest in entrepreneurship. It is therefore proposed that the entrepreneurial ecosystem reinforces the influence of self-efficacy on interest in entrepreneurship, in line with the research (Darmawan & Martdianty, 2022). The following hypothesis is therefore proposed:

H4: Perceived university Entrepreneurial Ecosystem support positively moderates (strengthens) the effect of Self-Efficacy on Entrepreneurial Intention.

Based on the hypothesis outlined above, this study proposes the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Research Model



3. Methodology

This study is an associative-causal study employing a quantitative approach. Data were collected through a field survey using Google Forms from active undergraduate students enrolled at private higher education institutions in Bandar Lampung who had previously taken an entrepreneurship course. Non-probability purposive sampling was used, resulting in 240 respondents from six institutions. Because respondent distribution across institutions is uneven, the sample is more precisely characterized as a purposive multi-university sample dominated by respondents from IIB Darmajaya rather than as an evenly representative sample of all private universities in Bandar Lampung.

The population for this study consists of students at private higher education institutions in Bandar Lampung. The sampling technique employed was non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. The sample size for this study comprised 240 respondents. The criteria for respondents in this study are as follows: active undergraduate (S1) students at private higher education institutions in Bandar Lampung who have previously taken an entrepreneurship course.

Each indicator was measured using a seven-point Likert scale. Digital Marketing Capability was measured using items adapted from (Hat et al., 2025), while Self-Efficacy was measured using items adapted from (Hien, Luu, Ghi, & Nguyen, 2026). Entrepreneurial Intention was measured using items based on (Anggraini, Sakti, & Fitrayati, 2026; Castro & Georgina, 2021). The ecosystem construct is interpreted in this study as perceived university entrepreneurial ecosystem support, namely students' perceptions of entrepreneurial resources and support available in their university environment, rather than as an objective system-level measure of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This distinction is important because the data were collected from individual students and analyzed at the individual level.

Digital Marketing Capability (DMC) was measured using five items adapted from (Hat et al., 2025). The original indicators were formulated primarily at the business or organizational level, as reflected in the use of the referent "your business." Because the unit of analysis in the present study is individual university students, the items were adapted by changing the organizational referent into an individual capability referent while preserving the substantive meaning of the original indicators.

Specifically, the original item "Your business creates and manages durable customer relationships through digital media" was adapted to reflect the student's perceived ability to create and manage long-term customer relationships through digital media. The second item, which originally assessed a business's ability to predict changes in customer preferences

through digital media, was adapted to assess the student's perceived ability to identify and anticipate changes in customer preferences using digital media. The third item concerning channel bonding with wholesalers and retailers was adapted to assess the student's ability to build and maintain relationships with distribution partners through digital channels. Similarly, the fourth item concerning durable supplier relationships was adapted to assess the student's ability to establish and maintain relationships with suppliers through digital platforms. Finally, the fifth item regarding customer retention was adapted to assess the student's perceived ability to use digital marketing activities to maintain and retain customers. Accordingly, Digital Marketing Capability in this study is conceptualized as an individual-level perceived capability to perform digital marketing activities relevant to entrepreneurial and business contexts, rather than as a firm-level organizational capability. The adaptation involved changing the subject or referent of the items from "your business" to "I am able to" or an equivalent individual-level formulation, while retaining the original functional dimensions represented in the source scale.

Self-Efficacy was measured using three items adopted from Hien et al. (2026) (Hien, Luu, Ghi, & Nguyen, 2026): confidence in performing well across a wide range of tasks, confidence in successfully completing difficult tasks, and confidence in achieving the majority of personally established goals. Unlike the DMC scale, these Self-Efficacy indicators were already formulated at the individual level using first-person wording. Therefore, no change in the level of analysis from organization to individual was required.

The data analysis carried out in this study utilised Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS software, version 4.0. SEM (Structural Equation Modelling) is a statistical technique capable of analysing the patterns of relationships between latent constructs and their indicators, between latent constructs themselves, and measurement error directly. SEM enables the direct analysis of relationships between several dependent and independent variable (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014).

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Respondent Description

The profiles of the respondents in this study, broken down by gender, university, university accreditation, degree programme, degree programme accreditation and year of intake, are shown in the table below:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics of Students at Private Universities		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	111	46.25%
	Female	129	53.75%
	Total	240	100%
Year of Intake	2021	4	1.7%
	2022	26	10.8%
	2023	90	37.5%
	2024	48	20.0%
	2025	72	30.0%
	Total	240	100%
Higher Education Institutions	Institut Informatika dan Bisnis Darmajaya	148	61.7%
	Universitas Malahayati	62	25.8%
	Universitas Sang Bumi Ruwa Jurai	4	1.7%

Characteristics of Students at Private Universities		Frequency	Percentage
Higher Education Accreditation	Institut Maritim Prasetya Mandiri	12	5.0%
	Universitas Mitra Indonesia	12	5.0%
	Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia	2	0.8%
	Total	240	100%
	Very Good	166	69.2%
	Good	62	25.8%
	Not Accredited	12	5.0%
	Total	240	100%
	Accounting	64	26.7%
	Management	89	37.1%
Degree Programmes	Information Systems	40	16.7%
	Visual Communication Design	35	14.6%
	Public Administration	2	0.8%
	Entrepreneurship	10	4.2%
	Total	240	100%
	Excellent	113	47.1%
	Very Good	78	32.5%
	Good	49	20.4%
Study Programme Accreditation	Total	240	100%

Source: Data Processed, 2026

Table 1 summarizes the respondent characteristics. The sample consisted of 111 male students (46.25%) and 129 female students (53.75%). By year of intake, the largest group was the 2023 cohort (90 students; 37.5%), followed by 2025 (72; 30.0%), 2024 (48; 20.0%), 2022 (26; 10.8%), and 2021 (4; 1.7%). The institutional distribution was highly uneven: IIB Darmajaya contributed 148 respondents (61.7%), Universitas Malahayati 62 (25.8%), Institut Maritim Prasetya Mandiri 12 (5.0%), Universitas Mitra Indonesia 12 (5.0%), Universitas Sang Bumi Ruwa Jurai 4 (1.7%), and Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia 2 (0.8%). Therefore, the findings primarily reflect a purposive multi-university sample dominated by IIB Darmajaya respondents. The accreditation frequencies represent respondents enrolled at institutions or study programs within each accreditation category; they do not represent the number of accredited institutions or study programs.

4.2. Outer Model Result

The validity test results in this study utilised a convergent validity test, measured by the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value. The AVE value is considered valid if it is greater than 0.5 (Hair Jr, J. F., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Gudergan, 2017).

Table 2. Outer Loading

	Digital Marketing Capability (DMC)	Self- Efficacy (SE)	Entrepreneurial Intention (MU)	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (EC)	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem x Digital Marketing Capability	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem x Self- Efficacy	Result
DMC1	0.899						Valid
DMC2	0.821						Valid
DMC3	0.913						Valid
DMC4	0.871						Valid
DMC5	0.818						Valid

	Digital Marketing Capability (DMC)	Self-Efficacy (SE)	Entrepreneurial Intention (MU)	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (EC)	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem x Digital Marketing Capability	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem x Self-Efficacy	Result
SE1		0.776					Valid
SE2		0.837					Valid
SE3		0.893					Valid
MU1			0.827				Valid
MU2			0.832				Valid
MU3			0.855				Valid
MU4			0.842				Valid
MU5			0.870				Valid
MU6			0.854				Valid
MU7			0.807				Valid
EC1				0.874			Valid
EC2				0.870			Valid
EC3				0.801			Valid
EC4				0.869			Valid
EC5				0.769			Valid
EC6				0.853			Valid
EC7				0.865			Valid
EC8				0.775			Valid
EC9				0.833			Valid
ECxDMC					1.000		Valid
ECxSE						1.000	Valid

Source: Output PLS, 2026

Table 2 shows that the outer loading values for each variable are valid. The loading factor (LF) values for all item statements exceed 0.70; thus, it can be concluded that all items demonstrate convergent validity. Convergent validity is determined by the correlation between item/instrument scores and their respective construct scores, based on the loading factor criteria for each instrument. The convergent validity analysis indicates that all indicators for every construct possess a loading factor value greater than 0.7, and their AVE values exceed 0.5.

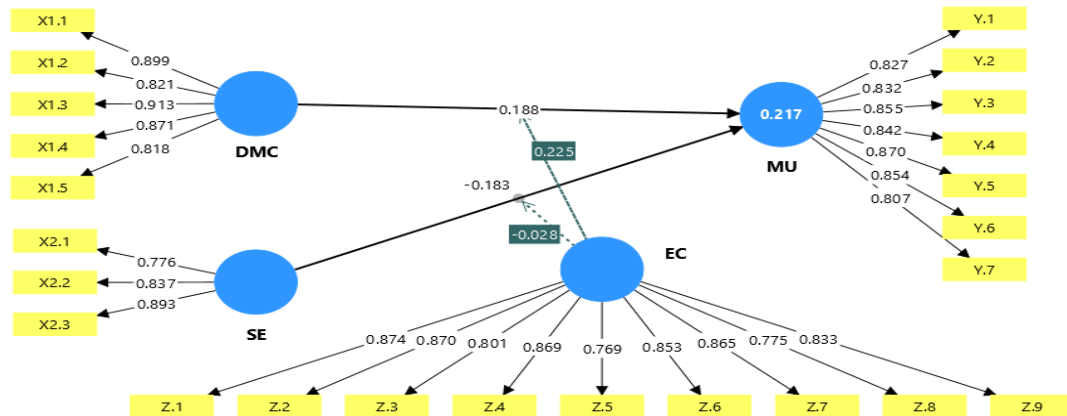
Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Result

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Result
Digital Marketing Capability	0.748	Valid
Self-Efficacy	0.700	Valid
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.707	Valid
Entrepreneurial Ecosystem	0.698	Valid

Source: Output PLS, 2026

Table 3 shows that all AVE values for each construct are equal to or greater than 0.5. It can therefore be concluded that all constructs have good validity, in line with the established minimum threshold.

Figure 2. Model Structural (Model 1)



Source: Output SMART PLS

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variable	Digital Marketing Capability (DMC)	Self-Efficacy (SE)	Entrepreneurial Intention (MU)	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (EC)
DMC	0.865			
SE	0.032	0.837	-0.208	-0.247
MU	0.221		0.841	0.281
EC	-0.076			0.835

Source: Output PLS, 202

Based on Table 4 Fornell–Larcker Criterion, each latent variable in this study demonstrates good discriminant validity. The diagonal values in the table, which are the square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), are 0.865 for Digital Marketing Capability (DMC), 0.837 for Self-Efficacy (SE), 0.841 for Entrepreneurial Intention (MU) and 0.835 for Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (EC). These values are higher than the correlations between the relevant latent variables, for example, DMC with SE, MU and EC; SE with DMC, MU and EC; and so on. This indicates that each variable is more strongly associated with its own indicators than with those of other variables, thereby fulfilling the criterion for discriminant validity. Consequently, each construct within the research model is capable of distinguishing itself from the other constructs, supporting the reliability of the interpretation of the relationships between variables in this study.

Table 5. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variable	Digital Marketing Capability (DMC)	Self-Efficacy (SE)	Entrepreneurial Intention (MU)	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (EC)	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem x Digital Marketing Capability	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem x Self-Efficacy
DMC				0.120		
SE	0.082		0.238	0.289		
MU	0.193			0.221		
EC						
ECxDMC	0.232	0.154	0.263	0.090	0.098	
ECxSE	0.181	0.023	0.086	0.083		

Source: Output PLS, 2026

Table 5 reports HTMT values only for the substantive latent constructs. Interaction terms used in moderation analysis are analytical products and are therefore not interpreted as ordinary conceptual constructs for discriminant-validity assessment. All reported HTMT values among Digital Marketing Capability, Self-Efficacy, Entrepreneurial Intention, and perceived university entrepreneurial ecosystem support are below the stated threshold, supporting discriminant validity among the primary constructs.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). Values of 0.70 or higher were considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 6. Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Result
Digital Marketing Capability	0.925	0.989	0.937	Reliable
Self-Efficacy	0.788	0.816	0.875	Reliable
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.931	0.935	0.944	Reliable
Entrepreneurial Ecosystem	0.950	0.989	0.954	Reliable

Source: Output PLS, 2026

Table 6 shows that Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for all constructs exceed 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency reliability.

Table 7. Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.086	0.085
d_UIS	2.203	2.181
d_G	1.344	1.348
Chi_Square	1.473,362	1.467,187
NFI	0.726	0.727

Source: Output PLS, 2026

Table 7 reports the model-fit indices generated by SmartPLS. The SRMR values are 0.086 for the saturated model and 0.085 for the estimated model, which are slightly above the commonly cited 0.08 guideline. Accordingly, model fit should be interpreted cautiously rather than described as optimal. In PLS-SEM, structural interpretation is considered together with measurement quality, explanatory power, and hypothesis-testing results.

4.3. Inner Model (Measure of Fit Structural Model)

Having established that each research instrument is valid and reliable, the next stage is to conduct an Inner Model test (Measure of Fit for the Structural Model) using SmartPLS 4.0. Table 7 shows the r-squared values.

Table 8. R-Square Value

Variable	R-Square	R-Square adjusted
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.217	0.200

Source: Output PLS, 2026

According to Table 8, the R-squared (R^2) value for the dependent variable 'Entrepreneurial Intention' is 0.217, whilst the adjusted R-squared value is 0.200. This indicates that approximately 21.7 per cent of the variation in students' Entrepreneurial Intention can be

explained by the independent variables, comprising Digital Marketing Capability, Self-Efficacy, and the moderating effect of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem. These values are classified as low to moderate; therefore, although the model is able to explain some of the variance in Entrepreneurial Intention, there are still other factors outside the model that influence students' Entrepreneurial Intention. Consequently, although R^2 is not particularly high, the model can still be used to analyse the relationships between variables, with interpretations that take into account validity, reliability and hypothesis testing.

Table 9. F Square Value

Relationship	f^2
Digital Marketing Capability -> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.041
Self-Efficacy -> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.039
Entrepreneurial Ecosystem x Digital Marketing Capability -> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.073
Entrepreneurial Ecosystem x Self-Efficacy -> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.001

Source: Output PLS, 2026

Table 9 shows small effect sizes for Digital Marketing Capability ($f^2 = 0.041$) and Self-Efficacy ($f^2 = 0.039$) on Entrepreneurial Intention. The Digital Marketing Capability $\times$ Entrepreneurial Ecosystem interaction has an f^2 of 0.073, whereas the Self-Efficacy $\times$ Entrepreneurial Ecosystem interaction has a negligible effect size ($f^2 = 0.001$). Importantly, f^2 reflects the magnitude of an effect and does not indicate its direction; the positive or negative direction must be interpreted from the corresponding path coefficients. These results also suggest that additional determinants outside the model may contribute to Entrepreneurial Intention.

Table 10. Hypothesis Testing Results: Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision
H1 : Digital Marketing Capability -> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.188	0.205	0.061	3.077	0.002	Supported
H2 : Self-Efficacy -> Entrepreneurial Intention	-0.183	-0.185	0.062	2.950	0.003	Not Supported (significant negative effect)

Source: Output PLS, 2026

The structural model shows that Digital Marketing Capability has a positive and significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intention ($\beta = 0.188$, $T = 3.077$, $p = 0.002$), supporting H1. In contrast, Self-Efficacy has a statistically significant negative effect on Entrepreneurial Intention ($\beta = -0.183$, $T = 2.950$, $p = 0.003$). Because H2 predicted a positive effect, H2 is not supported despite the statistical significance of the coefficient. This negative direction is treated as an unexpected empirical finding.

To verify the unexpected Self-Efficacy result, the authors re-examined the original SmartPLS output, indicator coding, path coefficients, and bootstrap results. The negative coefficient was confirmed, and no reverse-coded indicators or scoring inconsistencies were identified. The result is therefore retained and interpreted cautiously as specific to the present sample and measurement.

Because the Self-Efficacy scale measures general task-related confidence rather than entrepreneurship-specific self-efficacy, the negative coefficient should not be generalized as evidence that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is detrimental to Entrepreneurial Intention.

4.3. Moderation Test Results

Table 11. Moderation Test Results

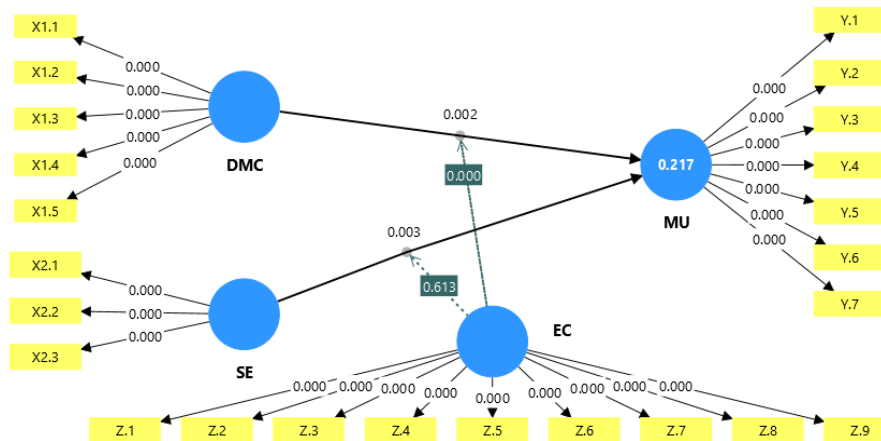
Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision
H3: Entrepreneurial Ecosystem x Digital Marketing Capability -> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.225	0.210	0.055	4.117	0.000	Supported
H4 : Entrepreneurial Ecosystem x Self-Efficacy -> Entrepreneurial Intention	-0.028	-0.036	0.055	0.506	0.613	Not Supported

Source: Output PLS, 2026

Table 11 shows that the Digital Marketing Capability $\times$ Entrepreneurial Ecosystem interaction is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.225$, $T = 4.117$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. By contrast, the Self-Efficacy $\times$ Entrepreneurial Ecosystem interaction is negative but not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.028$, $T = 0.506$, $p = 0.613$); therefore, H4 is not supported. These results indicate that perceived university entrepreneurial ecosystem support strengthens the relationship between Digital Marketing Capability and Entrepreneurial Intention but does not significantly change the Self-Efficacy–Entrepreneurial Intention relationship.

Accordingly, the hypothesis decisions are H1 supported, H2 not supported because the observed significant effect is opposite to the hypothesized positive direction, H3 supported, and H4 not supported.

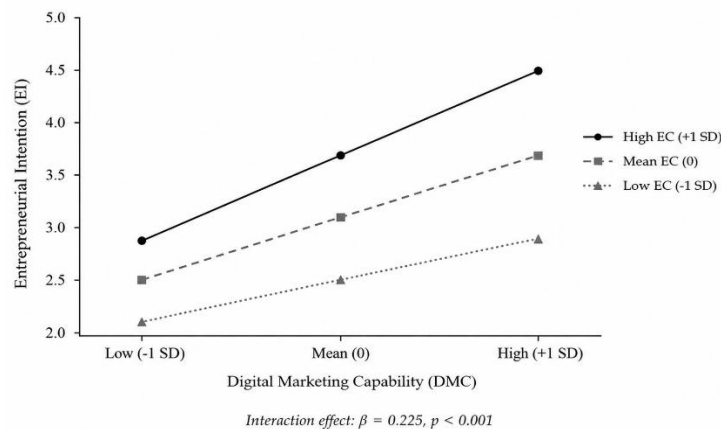
Figure 4. Bootstrapping Model



Source: Output PLS, 2026

Based on the data above, a graph illustrating the moderation can be produced as follows:

Figure 5. The Moderating Effect of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem on the Relationship between Digital Marketing Capability and Entrepreneurial Intention



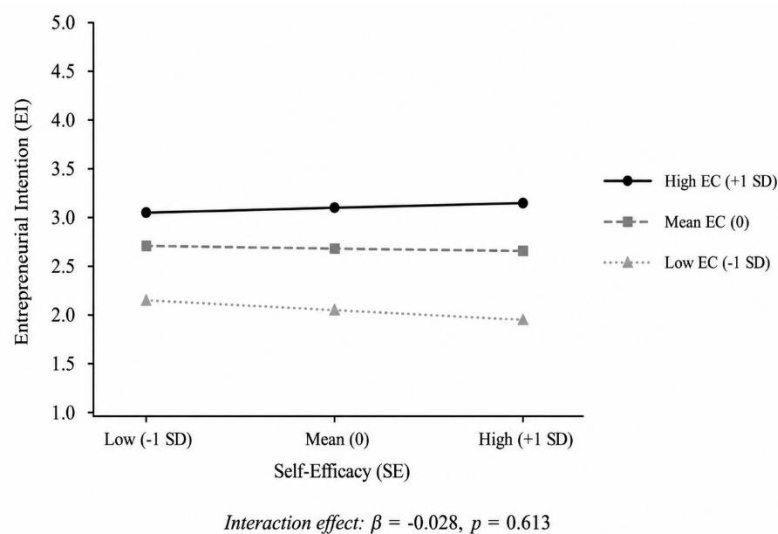
The positive Digital Marketing Capability $\times$ Entrepreneurial Ecosystem interaction ($\beta = 0.225$, $T = 4.117$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that the relationship between Digital Marketing Capability and Entrepreneurial Intention becomes stronger as perceived university entrepreneurial ecosystem support increases.

Figure 5 visually illustrates this strengthening pattern. The result suggests that students' digital marketing capabilities may be more strongly associated with Entrepreneurial Intention when accompanied by complementary university support such as mentoring, digital infrastructure, entrepreneurial networks, training, and incubation opportunities. These examples are interpretive implications and were not tested as separate interventions.

The difference between this significant interaction and the non-significant Self-Efficacy interaction is interpreted as a post hoc empirical pattern. It may indicate that technical capabilities are more dependent on complementary contextual resources than generalized psychological confidence, but this interpretation requires confirmation in future research.

The different moderation results for Digital Marketing Capability and Self-Efficacy are interpreted as a post hoc theoretical insight rather than as a pattern fully predicted a priori. The significant DMC $\times$ ecosystem interaction suggests that technical capability may benefit from complementary contextual resources such as infrastructure, mentoring, incubators, and networks. By contrast, the non-significant Self-Efficacy $\times$ ecosystem interaction indicates that the measured form of self-efficacy was not detectably strengthened or weakened by perceived ecosystem support in this sample. This asymmetric empirical pattern may motivate future research on capability–context alignment, but it should not be presented as confirmation of a theory established before the analysis.

Figure 6. The Moderation Effect Entrepreneurial Ecosystem on the Relationship between Self Efficacy and Entrepreneurial Intention



The Self-Efficacy $\times$ Entrepreneurial Ecosystem interaction is not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.028$, $T = 0.506$, $p = 0.613$). Therefore, the model provides no evidence that the relationship between Self-Efficacy and Entrepreneurial Intention changes systematically across levels of perceived university entrepreneurial ecosystem support.

Figure 6 shows relatively parallel lines across the High, Mean, and Low Entrepreneurial Ecosystem conditions, consistent with the non-significant interaction. This finding should be interpreted separately from the negative direct effect of Self-Efficacy: it indicates only that perceived ecosystem support does not significantly alter the Self-Efficacy–Entrepreneurial Intention relationship in this sample, not that ecosystem support is unimportant for entrepreneurship more broadly.

4.4. Discussion

Digital Marketing Capability is positively and significantly associated with Entrepreneurial Intention. Students who perceive themselves as more capable of managing customer relationships, anticipating customer preferences, maintaining relationships with distribution partners and suppliers, and retaining customers through digital channels tend to report stronger Entrepreneurial Intention. This result is consistent with the view that digital marketing capability provides practical tools for market access and business experimentation, particularly for students with limited physical resources (Apasrawirote & Yawised, 2022). However, variation in students' digital competence suggests that project-based practice, mentoring, and applied digital marketing activities may be useful areas for universities to

consider (Acayip, Kirselioglu, & Akel, 2025).

The interpretation of this result should remain at the individual level because the Digital Marketing Capability indicators were adapted from an organizational-level scale to assess students' perceived personal capability to perform digital marketing activities.

Self-Efficacy, however, shows a statistically significant negative association with Entrepreneurial Intention, contrary to the positive direction hypothesized in H2 and commonly reported in prior entrepreneurship research. This unexpected result should be interpreted in light of the measurement domain. The items adopted from (Hien, Luu, Ghi, & Nguyen, 2026) capture generalized task-related confidence rather than entrepreneurship-specific self-efficacy. Students with high general confidence may therefore feel capable of succeeding across multiple career paths, including professional employment, rather than necessarily preferring entrepreneurship.

Accordingly, the negative coefficient should not be interpreted as evidence that self-efficacy is inherently harmful to entrepreneurship. Instead, it highlights the importance of distinguishing general self-efficacy from entrepreneurship-specific confidence in opportunity recognition, venture creation, resource mobilization, financial decision-making, and risk management. Future studies should directly compare these forms of self-efficacy.

The third finding shows that perceived university Entrepreneurial Ecosystem support significantly strengthens the Digital Marketing Capability–Entrepreneurial Intention relationship. This suggests that contextual resources can facilitate the application of technical capability by providing access to mentoring, infrastructure, networks, training, and entrepreneurial opportunities. The ecosystem should therefore be understood as a contextual facilitator rather than a substitute for individual capability.

In contrast, the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem does not significantly moderate the Self-Efficacy–Entrepreneurial Intention relationship. This non-significant interaction does not imply that the ecosystem has no broader value. It indicates only that variation in perceived university support did not significantly change the relationship between the generalized Self-Efficacy measure and Entrepreneurial Intention in this sample.

Taken together, the two moderation results form an asymmetric empirical pattern that is interpreted post hoc rather than as confirmation of a theory fully specified before analysis. One possible explanation is that Digital Marketing Capability requires complementary external resources for practical activation, whereas generalized Self-Efficacy is a broader psychological belief that may be less sensitive to university ecosystem support. This interpretation is consistent with calls to examine the mechanisms through which entrepreneurial ecosystems influence entrepreneurial processes rather than assuming that visible ecosystem features automatically produce the same outcomes across contexts (Spigel & Harrison, 2018) and (Wurth & Spigel, 2021).

These findings also reinforce the positioning of the study as a partial capability-focused framework inspired by TPB rather than a complete test of TPB. Entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norm, and a direct measure of perceived behavioral control were not included, and the R^2 value of 0.217 indicates that substantial variance in Entrepreneurial Intention remains unexplained.

From a practical perspective, universities may consider creating more opportunities for students to apply digital marketing capabilities in entrepreneurial contexts through project-based learning, mentoring, business simulations, networking, and incubation activities.

Because these interventions were not directly tested, they should be treated as plausible implications rather than causal prescriptions.

The negative Self-Efficacy result further suggests that universities should not assume that general confidence alone will automatically translate into Entrepreneurial Intention. Entrepreneurship education may need to emphasize entrepreneurship-specific capabilities such as opportunity recognition, market validation, business planning, resource mobilization, and risk management.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

5.1. Conclusion

This study examined the direct effects of Digital Marketing Capability and Self-Efficacy on Entrepreneurial Intention and the moderating role of perceived university Entrepreneurial Ecosystem support among students at private universities in Bandar Lampung.

Digital Marketing Capability has a positive and significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intention ($\beta = 0.188$, $p = 0.002$), supporting H1. This finding indicates that stronger perceived digital marketing capability is associated with higher Entrepreneurial Intention.

Self-Efficacy has a statistically significant negative effect on Entrepreneurial Intention ($\beta = -0.183$, $p = 0.003$). Because H2 predicted a positive relationship, H2 is not supported. This unexpected result should be interpreted cautiously because the scale measures general task-related confidence rather than entrepreneurship-specific self-efficacy.

Perceived university Entrepreneurial Ecosystem support significantly strengthens the Digital Marketing Capability–Entrepreneurial Intention relationship ($\beta = 0.225$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. However, it does not significantly moderate the Self-Efficacy–Entrepreneurial Intention relationship ($\beta = -0.028$, $p = 0.613$); therefore, H4 is not supported.

Overall, the findings indicate that contextual entrepreneurial support may be particularly relevant for translating students' digital marketing capabilities into stronger Entrepreneurial Intention, whereas the relationship between generalized Self-Efficacy and Entrepreneurial Intention does not significantly vary across levels of perceived university ecosystem support. The contrast between the two moderation results should be viewed as a post hoc empirical insight that warrants further theoretical and empirical investigation.

These findings suggest that private universities may benefit from strengthening opportunities for students to apply digital marketing skills in practical entrepreneurial settings. Possible approaches include project-based digital marketing assignments, mentoring, entrepreneurial networking, digital business simulations, and incubation activities. Such initiatives are consistent with the observed Digital Marketing Capability and moderation results but were not directly evaluated as interventions in this study.

The results also suggest that entrepreneurship education should distinguish general confidence from entrepreneurship-specific competence. Practical learning that develops opportunity recognition, market validation, business planning, resource mobilization, and risk management may be particularly relevant for future program development and evaluation.

Accordingly, the study contributes by showing that selected individual capabilities and perceived university ecosystem support are associated with Entrepreneurial Intention in different ways, while also demonstrating the need for a more complete model incorporating additional psychological and contextual determinants.

5.2. Suggestion

- a. Private universities may strengthen practice-based opportunities for students to apply Digital Marketing Capability in entrepreneurial contexts, for example through project-based digital marketing assignments, market-validation projects, business simulations, and supervised incubation activities.
- b. Universities may expand access to mentoring, entrepreneurial networks, digital infrastructure, and collaboration with entrepreneurs or industry practitioners, because the significant Digital Marketing Capability × Entrepreneurial Ecosystem interaction indicates that contextual support can complement students' digital capabilities.
- c. Entrepreneurship programs should avoid assuming that general Self-Efficacy alone is sufficient to increase Entrepreneurial Intention. Training and mentoring may instead focus on entrepreneurship-specific competencies, including opportunity recognition, business planning, resource mobilization, financial decision-making, and risk management. The effectiveness of these initiatives should be evaluated in future research.

6. Limitations and Future Research

The practical implications of this study should be interpreted within the scope of the variables measured. The model examines Digital Marketing Capability, general Self-Efficacy, perceived university Entrepreneurial Ecosystem support, and Entrepreneurial Intention. It does not directly evaluate the effectiveness of specific university policies, financial-support mechanisms, incubator governance models, academic-credit conversion schemes, or startup-support interventions. Future research could test such interventions using experimental, longitudinal, or comparative designs.

This study has several limitations. First, the sample consists exclusively of students from private universities in Bandar Lampung and is unevenly distributed across institutions, limiting the generalizability of the findings to public-university students, other regions, or the broader population. Second, the model includes only Digital Marketing Capability and Self-Efficacy as predictors and perceived Entrepreneurial Ecosystem support as a moderator. Other determinants of Entrepreneurial Intention remain outside the model.

Future research should broaden the sample to include public and private universities, young entrepreneurs, and respondents from different regions and institutional contexts. Future models may incorporate Entrepreneurial Orientation, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Innovation Capability, Digital Literacy, Perceived Behavioral Control, Entrepreneurship Education, Social Support, entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, family business background, prior entrepreneurial experience, risk tolerance, and opportunity recognition as predictors, mediators, or moderators. Researchers should also compare general Self-Efficacy with entrepreneurship-specific self-efficacy. Finally, longitudinal designs are recommended to examine changes in Entrepreneurial Intention from university study through post-graduation and to provide stronger evidence regarding temporal and causal relationships.

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Declaration of AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process (if author[s] utilize AI)

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used ChatGPT solely to improve the grammar, language, and overall quality of the academic writing. The artificial intelligence tool was not used to generate, analyze, or interpret the research data, nor to formulate the study's conclusions. After using the tool, the authors carefully reviewed, edited, and verified the entire manuscript and accept full responsibility for the content of this publication.

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