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Factors determining entrepreneurial career choices between migrants and indigenous people: Evidence from Papua – Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Little is known about the factors that determine entrepreneurial career choices among migrants and indigenous people in Papua Province, Indonesia. The objective of this study is to analyze the influence of entrepreneurial leadership, work culture, and cognitive learning on entrepreneurial career choices among migrants and indigenous Papuans (OAPs), with entrepreneurial intention as a mediating variable and decision-making process as a moderating variable. Data were collected using questionnaires distributed to 450 respondents of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Sentani City, Jayapura City, and Arso City. This data was then analyzed by applying a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. The results reveal that entrepreneurial leadership, work culture, and cognitive learning have a positive and significant influence on the entrepreneurial career choice of SMEs in Papua. Entrepreneurial intention was found to mediate the relationship between the three variables partially. The decision-making process significantly moderated the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and the entrepreneurial career choice of SMEs in Papua. This study makes concrete contributions not only to the existing body of knowledge related to factors determining entrepreneurial career choices but also to policies for the central government of Indonesia and the regional government of Papua in improving entrepreneurship programs, particularly for the OAPs, as they have significant differences in skills, knowledge, and other socio-economic and cultural backgrounds vis-à-vis the migrants in Papua.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature related to factors determining entrepreneurial career choices, but also to policies for the central government of Indonesia and the regional government of Papua in improving entrepreneurship programs better, particularly for the indigenous Papuans.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial career choices in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) among migrants from outside Papua and the Indigenous Papuans (OAPs) are influenced partly by cultural backgrounds, education, and access to resources available in the province of Papua, Indonesia. Field observations indicate a gap in the entrepreneurial success of SMEs between migrants and OAPs in Papua. Batz Liñeiro, Romero Ochoa, and Montes de la Barrera (2024) indicate that migrants from outside Papua are relatively successful due to their previous business experience, ability to read opportunities, and adaptability and resilience in the face of pressure.

Nguyen, Huynh, Lam, Le, and Nguyen (2021) suggest that one of the main factors determining entrepreneurial

success is leadership style. Entrepreneurial leadership styles that focus on innovation, opportunity recognition, and self-empowerment have been demonstrated to significantly contribute to business sustainability (Mendo et al., 2023). While Bagheri and Harrison (2020) considered that effective entrepreneurial leadership plays an important role in building resilient SME business activities, especially in complex and uncertain environments. Good entrepreneurial leaders can help SMEs adapt to changes in the market and technology, enabling them to remain competitive (Pauceanu, Rabie, Moustafa, & Jiroveanu, 2021).

Apart from leadership style and its effectiveness, work culture also influences entrepreneurial career orientation and success. The present work culture fosters support for collaboration, risk-taking, and innovation. These conditions enhance individuals' capacity to manage businesses (Jardim, Bártolo, & Pinho, 2021) and support the exploration of one's endeavors (Shiferaw, Birbirsa, & Werke, 2023), encouraging business owners to undertake bolder and more innovative initiatives, which can subsequently improve their business performance (Arabeche et al., 2022).

Other than leadership style and work culture, cognitive learning is a significant aspect (Kakouris & Liargovas, 2021). The dimensions of cognitive learning include understanding, reflection, and the application of knowledge within the context of entrepreneurship. This form of learning is crucial for enhancing business competencies (Kakouris & Liargovas, 2021). However, many entrepreneurship training programs in Papua are short and overly general, which limits their effectiveness in improving skills and confidence necessary for becoming SME entrepreneurs, especially for OAPs. Therefore, creating a motivating learning experience is essential for OAPs to effectively apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they acquire in real-life entrepreneurial situations (Liguori, Bendickson, & McDowell, 2018; Venesaar, Malleus, Arro, & Toding, 2022).

In Papua, OAPs tend to have limited access to business information, technology, and management practices, which hinder their cognitive ability to identify and capitalize on business opportunities. Existing training programs also do not largely focus on local wisdom, do not encourage diversification and innovation, and are not adapted to current technological developments. As a result, many local SME entrepreneurs are not up to date in understanding and utilizing rapidly developing digital technology to improve their business competencies.

A good cognitive learning experience includes activating prior knowledge, discussion, and reflection on experiences (Venesaar et al., 2022). In this case, the migrant community has practical experience in running businesses, which often becomes a source of effective learning, both from positive experiences and failures. Meanwhile, the OAPs community is still limited in its use of technology and online learning to broaden its business horizons (Kozlinska, Rebmann, & Mets, 2020).

The intention to become an entrepreneur is the main predictor of an individual's decision to choose an entrepreneurial career. Research shows that a strong intention tends to lead individuals to take concrete action (Batz Liñeiro et al., 2024; Meoli, Fini, Sobrero, & Wiklund, 2020). However, intention alone is not sufficient. De Winnaar and Scholtz (2020) and Lent and Brown (2020) suggest that rational and intuitive decision-making processes, as well as external factors such as risk and social perception, influence the decision to start a business. Additionally, individuals with high intentions will immediately decide to start a business, while others who are more cautious will weigh the risks more carefully (Killingberg, Kubberød, & Blenker, 2021). Conversely, individuals with low intentions tend not to choose this career, even when they are in a supportive environment. Thus, the decision-making process is key in bridging intentions with actual entrepreneurial action (Marshall & Gigliotti, 2020).

Based on the previous empirical literature and field phenomena, this study attempts to contribute to knowledge and policies in realizing the entrepreneurial success programs of SMEs in the province of Papua. Specifically, it aims to examine the influence of entrepreneurial leadership, work culture, and cognitive learning on entrepreneurial career choices, with entrepreneurial intention as a mediating variable and decision-making process as a moderating variable, particularly among migrants and OAPs in Papua. By examining this issue, this study is expected not only to contribute a new framework that can be adapted in studies of community-based and minority entrepreneurship but also to highlight a shortcoming of the government in Indonesia in the development of entrepreneurship in Papua.

Additionally, it is expected that the government of Indonesia will improve factors found in this study that need to be given attention in entrepreneurial career choices for OAPs who have significant differences in skills, knowledge, social interactions, and perceptions with the migrants in Papua.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Variable Definitions

2.1.1. Entrepreneurial Leadership

Entrepreneurial leadership is a combination of managerial and entrepreneurial skills that enable a leader to not only maintain business continuity but also create innovation and new opportunities in a dynamic environment (Gupta, MacMillan, & Surie, 2004). Entrepreneurial leadership is a concept that combines the visionary qualities of entrepreneurship with the strategic leadership skills needed to manage and direct organizations in the face of business complexity (Joel & Oguanobi, 2024).

The entrepreneurial leadership variables in this study are derived from the theory developed by Gupta et al. (2004). They view that five main dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership are important in the business development process. However, in the context of SMEs, these five dimensions are adapted and developed more operationally into four more applicable dimensions. A practical approach to entrepreneurial leadership places greater emphasis on behavioral dimensions that can be measured operationally by small business owners (Bagheri & Harrison, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021; Pauceanu et al., 2021). These four dimensions are as follows.

a. Framing the challenge Innovation and creativity: Bagheri and Harrison (2020) explain that innovation and creativity are key competencies that entrepreneurial leaders must possess to survive. Innovation is linked to framing the challenge and the spirit of value creation in a dynamic environment. Furthermore, innovation is considered an asset in building and maintaining small-scale business growth (Joel & Oguanobi, 2024).
b. Absorbing uncertainty Measured risk-taking: This is a direct elaboration of absorbing uncertainty, namely, how leaders can manage risk and uncertainty strategically. As explained by Pauceanu et al. (2021), in strategic decision-making, a combination of intuition and risk calculation is an important asset for entrepreneurs. In the context of entrepreneurial leadership, the ability to take calculated risks is an important aspect. The risks taken must be based on careful analysis and precise calculations, so as to maximize profits and minimize potential losses (Nguyen et al., 2021).
c. Path clearing and specifying limits . Resource management: This is closely related to path clearing and specifying limits, which aim to create paths and allocate resources effectively and efficiently (Gupta et al., 2004). The article by (Nguyen et al., 2021) highlights the importance of organizational capabilities in optimally utilizing resources to support entrepreneurial leadership. Thus, effective resource utilization directly contributes to improving the innovation performance of SMEs (Al-Sharif, Ali, Jaharuddin, Abdulsamad, & Jandab, 2023).
d. Building commitment Providing vision and inspiration: Providing vision and inspiration is related to building commitment, where leaders become a source of motivation and direction for their followers (Pauceanu et al., 2021). According to Gupta et al. (2004), an effective entrepreneurial leader not only focuses on short-term results but also has a long-term vision. Inspiration through communication skills is the main characteristic of a successful entrepreneurial leader (Bagheri & Harrison, 2020). This suggestion was also supported by Pauceanu et al. (2021), who indicate that inspirational leadership can improve business sustainability and motivate teams collectively.

2.1.2. Work Culture

The second independent variable is work culture. Schein (2010) defines work culture as a basic pattern of assumptions shared by members of an organization or group, developed and accumulated as they learn to overcome

external and internal challenges. A positive work culture is a supporting factor that enables SMEs to build cooperative relationships and exchanges in entrepreneurship, which in turn can improve business performance (Arabeche et al., 2022; Armenakis, Brown, & Mehta, 2011). Following Schein's work, the cultural framework (Schein, 2010), work culture has three main levels. The first is artifacts, which are cultural elements visible or observable directly, such as office layout, systems, technology, symbols, and clothing. Artifacts reflect the norms and values held by an organization but do not always describe the entire work culture because they only show the external aspects of the culture. Hogan and Coote (2014) suggest that for an entrepreneur, artefacts include everything that is physically and behaviorally visible in their environment, how they interact with customers and teams, their communication style, and their daily work routines. Entrepreneurs need to realize that these artefacts are outward signs of their work culture and can be powerful communication tools for stakeholders (Hogan & Coote, 2014).

The second is espoused values (principles, philosophies, or beliefs) that guide the behavior of an organization or group to achieve organizational goals or respond to specific situations. This espoused value may include a focus on cooperation, innovation, and quality (Hogan & Coote, 2014) or innovation, honesty, customer service, or sustainability plans (Akkermans, Collings, da Motta Veiga, Post, & Seibert, 2021). These values help align team behavior and guide decision-making (Arabeche et al., 2022). However, it is important to ensure that these values are not merely slogans but are truly reflected in everyday business practices (Arabeche et al., 2022; Armenakis et al., 2011).

The third is a basic assumption that is deeply rooted in the organization and accepted without question. These assumptions form the core of the work culture that shapes the way members of the organization think and act, such as views on time, belief in team collaboration, or approaches to risk-taking (Akkermans et al., 2021). Due to their deep-rooted and unconscious nature, basic assumptions are often difficult to change and take a long time to form or alter (Schein, 2010). In SMEs, the adaptation of this model is considered relevant, as shown in a study by Arabeche et al. (2022), which states that if this work culture in SMEs is maintained consistently, it plays a significant role in influencing entrepreneurial orientation and business performance.

2.1.3. Cognitive Learning

The third independent variable is cognitive learning, which refers to Bandura (1986). Bandura (1986) identified three main dimensions that influence each other, namely environment, cognition (personal/cognitive factors), and behavior. These three dimensions are known as Triadic Reciprocal Causation. The three dimensions of Triadic Reciprocal Causation are:

a. Environmental factors are elements that encompass all external influences capable of affecting an individual's behavior and cognitive processes. Belchior and Lyons (2021) indicate that these environmental factors include physical conditions, social situations, culture, and the people surrounding the individual. Regarding entrepreneurship, these factors include the availability of resources, social support, business opportunities, and the work culture present in a location, which can influence a person's decision to become an entrepreneur or not (Bacq, Ofstein, Kickul, & Gundry, 2017).

b. Cognitive/Psychological factors that refer to mental processes and individual beliefs, including thoughts, perceptions, motivations, and self-beliefs about one's abilities (Liguori et al., 2018). Bandura (1986) emphasizes that individuals' belief in their abilities (self-efficacy) has a strong influence on their actions. In entrepreneurship, individuals with high self-efficacy will be more willing to take risks and face challenges than individuals with low self-efficacy (Belchior & Lyons, 2021).

c. Behavioral factors relate to observable actions or reactions of individuals, which are often influenced by cognitive and environmental factors (Harinie, Sudiro, Rahayu, & Fatchan, 2017). In the context of cognitive learning, behavior that is observed or imitated from others can also influence a person's learning. For example, aspiring entrepreneurs can learn from the successes or failures of other entrepreneurs in their environment

and then form certain patterns of behavior (Liguori et al., 2018).

2.1.4. Entrepreneurial Intentions as a Mediating Variable

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) can be defined as the conscious state of mind that precedes action and directs attention toward entrepreneurial behaviors, such as starting a new business and becoming an entrepreneur (Moriano, Gorgievski, Laguna, Stephan, & Zarafshani, 2012). This condition arises when individuals have a positive perception of opportunities and are motivated to act by establishing a new business. This concept is built based on a model of thinking or perception known as the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM). This model explains that the intention to become an entrepreneur is formed in response to an event or important occurrence in an individual's life that causes a change in perception of entrepreneurship as a career alternative (Liguori et al., 2018; Shapero & Sokol, 1982). Further, Delanoë-Gueguen and Liñán (2019) highlighted that the EEM theory also emphasizes the importance of displacement events, which are events that cause a person to reconsider their career direction or future actions, such as job loss, graduation, or personal experiences. Each component in the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) is as follows.

a. Perceived desirability, that is, the extent to which a person feels desire or interest in entrepreneurial activities. This desirability is influenced by personal values, culture, social norms, and support from the surrounding environment (Niţu-Antonie, Feder, Niţu-Antonie, & György, 2023). Thus, if someone sees that entrepreneurship is an attractive career path that aligns with their values, then this appeal will encourage them to consider entrepreneurship as their desired career choice (Uctu & Al-Silefanee, 2023).
b. Perceived feasibility, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to start and run a business, is a crucial component of entrepreneurial intention. Koe, Omar, and Sa'ari (2015) point out that this component involves an individual's perception of the resources, skills, and support available to realize their entrepreneurial intentions. The greater the perceived feasibility, the higher a person's intention to try and pursue a career in entrepreneurship (Joshi, Joshi, & Pathak, 2020).
c. Propensity to act, which refers to a motivating factor that drives a person to take concrete action. This component includes an individual's readiness and courage to overcome risks and uncertainties in entrepreneurship (Niţu-Antonie et al., 2023). While Liguori et al. (2018) suggest that the propensity to act is influenced by psychological factors such as motivation, attitude towards risk, and self-efficacy, individuals with a high propensity to act tend to move more quickly from intention to actual action (Liguori et al., 2018).

The EEM can also be used as a conceptual framework to understand the role of intention as a mediating variable (Niţu-Antonie et al., 2023; Uctu & Al-Silefanee, 2023). As highlighted by Uctu and Al-Silefanee (2023), this model helps identify psychological and environmental factors that strengthen or hinder an individual's intention to become an entrepreneur, as well as explain differences in entrepreneurial intentions among individuals. Thus, this study considers entrepreneurial intention as a mediating variable of entrepreneurial career choices.

2.1.5. Decision-Making Processes as a Moderating Variable

Mintzberg and Westley (2001) viewed decision-making as a complex process influenced by various factors, including how individuals process information, understand situations, and assess risks. The process of decision-making is not only linear and rational but also includes intuitive and improvisational thinking styles. There are three approaches in the decision-making process as follows.

a. Rational approach (Thinking first): This approach involves systematic, logic-based analysis. In this approach, decision-makers carefully collect and process information, weigh various alternatives, and evaluate the consequences of each option before making a final decision (Cunha, 2007). However, this approach is typically used in structured situations and when the necessary data is available. The rational approach in the context of entrepreneurship helps individuals assess business risks, project outcomes, and make measured decisions. This

approach is consistent with the human thought process, which uses conscious reflection in information processing to avoid cognitive biases and improve decision quality (Lent & Brown, 2020).

b. Intuitive approach (Seeing first) refers to a decision-making process that is based more on intuition or a quick understanding of the situation without going through a lengthy analysis process. In this process, decision makers use previous experience or instinct to assess the situation and make immediate decisions (Cunha, 2007). Lent and Brown (2020) show that intuitive approaches are often used in complex and ambiguous situations, where complete information is not available and decisions must be made quickly. In the context of entrepreneurship, Gati and Kulcsar (2021) suggest this approach is relevant because entrepreneurs often have to respond to uncertain situations and take advantage of opportunities quickly. Decision-making with this approach reflects the process of active exploration of information that is not always structured (Gati & Kulcsar, 2021; Lent & Brown, 2020).

c. Experimental approach (doing first) relates to the process where individuals immediately try or experiment without much prior planning or analysis. Cunha (2007) indicates that this process is often iterative, where decisions are made while continuing to learn from the results of the actions taken. This approach is appropriate in situations of uncertainty, where information is limited and immediate action is required to understand the situation (De Winnaar & Scholtz, 2020). In the context of entrepreneurship, this approach can be a way to test new business ideas or strategies through small experiments.

2.1.6. Entrepreneurial Career Choices

The choice of an entrepreneurial career is formed through the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (1985). This theory explains that an individual's motivation to choose an action or career path is greatly influenced by their basic psychological needs to feel competent, have relationships, and have autonomy (Baluku, Balikoowa, Bantu, & Otto, 2020). Al-Jubari, Hassan, and Liñán (2019) further shows that individuals are more likely to decide to pursue a career as an entrepreneur when they feel motivated from within (intrinsic motivation) rather than from external pressure (extrinsic motivation). There are three main constructs in making entrepreneurial career choices. The first is competence. This refers to the need to feel capable, empowered, and skilled to achieve desired results. In the context of entrepreneurship, competence relates to an individual's ability to manage and run a business with confidence (Baluku et al., 2020). Whereas Al-Jubari et al. (2019) define competence as individuals who feel they have sufficient skills or are confident that they can learn and develop further. They tend to be more motivated to choose an entrepreneurial career path because they feel capable of overcoming the challenges involved.

The second is autonomy. This refers to the need for individuals to feel that they have control over their own choices and actions. To entrepreneurship, autonomy is one of the main reasons why people choose to become entrepreneurs, as they feel they have the freedom to set their own goals, strategies, and ways of working (Cnossen, Loots, & van Witteloostuijn, 2019). The choice of an entrepreneurial career is often driven by the desire to break free from the constraints of formal employment and to have the freedom to determine the fate of one's own business (Al-Jubari et al., 2019). The third is relatedness, that is, the need to feel accepted, connected, and valued by others. Concerning entrepreneurship, this relatedness can come from social support, business networks, or communities that share the same values and goals (Baluku et al., 2020). Individuals who feel supported by their social environment or believe that their efforts contribute positively to the community are more likely to be motivated to pursue a career as an entrepreneur (Cnossen et al., 2019). This study applied the SDT as the theoretical basis for the entrepreneurial career choice variable. The application of this theory can provide a deeper understanding of the motivational factors that influence individuals to choose an entrepreneurial career path, as well as examine how variations in these psychological needs affect a person's decision to become an entrepreneur.

2.2. Variables Relationship, And Hypothesis Development

2.2.1. Entrepreneurial Leadership and Entrepreneurial Career Choices

As mentioned previously, entrepreneurial leadership is the ability of a leader to inspire, motivate, and empower individuals to innovate, take risks, and pursue business opportunities (Gupta et al., 2004). This factor plays an important role in influencing a person's career choice to become an entrepreneur through various mechanisms (Nguyen et al., 2021). A successful entrepreneurial leader who runs his business and actively stimulates his team creates an environment that builds the confidence of team members to start their own businesses (Pauceanu et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial leadership encourages individuals to believe in their abilities through support, guidance, and constructive feedback (Al-Sharif et al., 2023). A person's belief in their abilities is a key factor influencing their decision to take action. Successful entrepreneurial leaders who demonstrate their ability to overcome challenges can set an example that boosts individuals' confidence in choosing an entrepreneurial career path (Bagheri & Harrison, 2020). Following these studies, we hypothesize that:

H_1: Entrepreneurial leadership positively and significantly affects entrepreneurial career choices.

2.2.2. Work Culture and Entrepreneurial Career Choices

Work culture refers to the patterns of values, norms, and habits that exist within an organization or community, influencing how individuals interact, collaborate, and complete tasks (Schein, 2010). In the context of entrepreneurship, work culture plays an important role in motivating individuals to choose the entrepreneurial path. This is because a work culture that supports or hinders creativity, innovation, and risk-taking will influence a person's career choice to become an entrepreneur (Arabeche et al., 2022). A work culture that accepts and even encourages risk-taking can influence a person's decision to become an entrepreneur. Individuals who operate in a work culture that supports risk-taking tend to be more courageous in becoming entrepreneurs. This is because they feel that risk is part of the journey to success (Chakraborty, Thompson, & Yehoue, 2016). Also, a work culture that prioritizes continuous learning and skills development can improve individuals' readiness for entrepreneurship (Yun, Zhao, Jung, & Yigitcanlar, 2020). In light of this understanding, we assume that:

H_2: Work culture positively and significantly affects entrepreneurial career choices.

2.2.3. Cognitive Learning and Entrepreneurial Career Choices

Studies that confirmed the relationship between cognitive learning and entrepreneur career choice have been advanced in the literature (Anjum, Díaz Tautiva, Zaheer, & Heidler, 2024; Kozlinska et al., 2020; Liguori et al., 2018; Zhao, Yang, Hughes, & Li, 2021). Liguori et al. (2018), for example, it revealed that cognitive learning enables individuals to internalize skills and experiences that increase their confidence that they can succeed in entrepreneurship. This belief is a key element that drives a person to choose an entrepreneurial career path (Chen, Shen, Tan, & Liu, 2022). High self-confidence makes individuals more likely to take risks and try new things, including starting a business. Cognitive learning also helps individuals identify the skills they have and how to use them to achieve success in entrepreneurship (Anjum et al., 2024; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Based on this explanation, we hypothesize that:

H_3: Cognitive learning has a positive and direct influence on entrepreneurial career choices.

2.2.4. The Relationship of Entrepreneurial Leadership, Work Culture, Cognitive Learning, and Career Choices in Entrepreneurship Mediated by Entrepreneurial Intentions

Entrepreneurial intention can mediate entrepreneurial leadership, work culture, and cognitive learning in career choices in entrepreneurship. The number of studies supporting this relationship includes Ip, Liang, Lai, and Chang (2021); Delanoë-Gueguen and Liñán (2019); Hussain and Li (2022); Danish, Asghar, Ahmad, and Ali (2019), and Iwu et al. (2021). Entrepreneurial intention bridges the influence of external and internal factors on entrepreneurial action

(Ip et al., 2021). The intention to become an entrepreneur is formed when individuals perceive entrepreneurship as an attractive career path that aligns with their personal values and aspirations (Delanoë-Gueguen & Liñán, 2019). This perception of attractiveness is further influenced by external factors such as entrepreneurial leadership and a supportive work culture. Entrepreneurial leadership motivates inspiration and sets an example, thereby increasing the attractiveness of entrepreneurship (Hussain & Li, 2022). A work culture that supports creativity and risk-taking also enhances individuals' perception that entrepreneurship is an attractive option (Danish et al., 2019). The intention to become an entrepreneur is also influenced by perceptions of feasibility, which is a person's belief that they have the ability and resources to succeed in entrepreneurship. These perceptions can be reinforced through cognitive learning processes, such as learning from experience, training, or observation (Iwu et al., 2021).

Concerning cognitive learning, this factor increases individuals' confidence in their abilities, which, in turn, strengthens their intention to become entrepreneurs (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). In addition, entrepreneurial leadership that provides guidance and training enhances individuals' perception that they are capable of overcoming entrepreneurial challenges (Nguyen et al., 2021). The intention to become an entrepreneur is a key component in understanding how environmental and psychological factors motivate individuals to choose entrepreneurship as a career path (Marshall & Gigliotti, 2020). Entrepreneurial intentions formed from perceived desirability and feasibility can mediate the relationship between environmental values and sustainable entrepreneurial intentions (Niţu-Antonie et al., 2023). This model helps identify psychological and environmental factors that strengthen or hinder an individual's intention to become an entrepreneur, as well as explain differences in entrepreneurial intentions among individuals (Uctu & Al-Silefanee, 2023). Based on this explanation, we formulate the research hypothesis as follows:

H_4: Entrepreneurial intention mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and entrepreneurial career choices.

H_5: Entrepreneurial intention mediates the relationship between work culture and entrepreneurial career choices.

H_6: Entrepreneurial intention mediates the relationship between cognitive learning and entrepreneurial career choices.

2.2.5. The Relationship Between Entrepreneurial Intentions and Entrepreneurial Career Choices Moderated by the Decision-Making Process

As discussed, the decision-making process is a mechanism used by individuals to choose certain actions based on an evaluation of the situation, information, and objectives. This process can be carried out through a rational, intuitive, or experimental approach (Marshall & Gigliotti, 2020). In the context of entrepreneurship, the decision-making process can strengthen or weaken the influence of intentions on actual actions (Mintzberg & Westley, 2001). Rationally speaking, an individual with strong entrepreneurial intentions may delay starting a business because they want to ensure that every aspect, such as financial planning and market analysis, is perfect (Gati & Kulcsar, 2021). Individuals who use this rational approach systematically evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities and obstacles, which can strengthen the relationship between entrepreneurial intent and actual action when data and information support such decisions (Akkermans et al., 2021). An individual with a strong entrepreneurial spirit can immediately start a business based on a unique idea without in-depth market research because of their accurate intuition (Zhao et al., 2021). The decision-making process plays an important role in how individuals can transform their entrepreneurial intentions into concrete actions to pursue a career in entrepreneurship (Lent & Brown, 2020). The decision-making process can be part of a direct cause-and-effect chain that shapes an intention and can strengthen or weaken the relationship between intention and action, and is statistically tested as an interaction (moderation) (Cunha, 2007). In addition, the three approaches to decision-making show that entrepreneurs' decisions are not only based on logic but also rely on observation of the environment and the ability to act quickly (De Winnaar & Scholtz, 2020). Therefore, we posit that:

H_7: The decision-making process moderates the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial career choices.

2.3. Proposed Research Model

Considering the above theoretical framework and variable relationships, the proposed conceptual model in this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

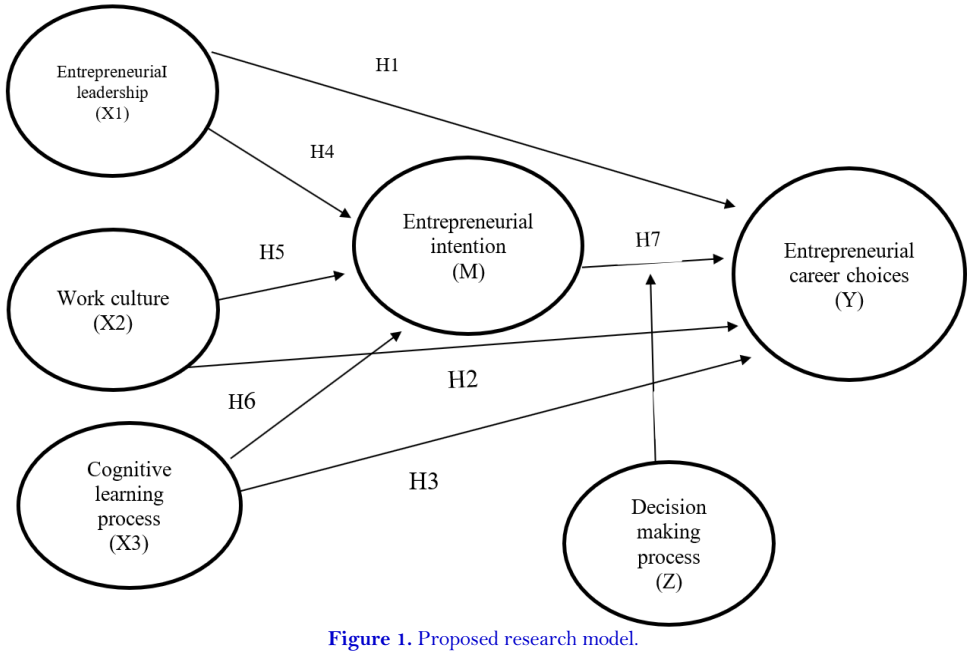

Figure 1. Proposed research model.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was a descriptive study that aimed to describe a phenomenon, including the relationship between one behavior and another. This research was designed as a cross-sectional study, with data collected simultaneously to study a particular phenomenon. Furthermore, this research used a quantitative approach, which involves numbers, from the data collection stage to the analysis stage.

The unit of analysis in this study was migrant communities and Indigenous Papuans (OAPs). The separation of these groups was based on a cross-cultural entrepreneurship approach, as suggested by Batz Liñeiro et al. (2024), which states that ethnic, cultural, and local value system differences influence perceptions of risk, motivation, and decision-making strategies in entrepreneurship. Therefore, the separation of groups is not merely an administrative categorization but a strategy to gain a more contextual understanding of entrepreneurial characteristics in Papua.

The sampling method employed was non-probability sampling, using a purposive sampling technique. Two criteria were used in selecting the respondents. First, respondents residing in the three areas of Jayapura City, Sentani City, and Arso City. Second, migrant communities and Indigenous Papuans (OAPs) operating businesses in the SME sector. Data collection was assisted by official staff of the Central Bureau of Statistics in Papua Province, as they maintain detailed records of SMEs in the research locations. The total number of respondents sampled across these three cities was 450. This sample size aligns with the recommended guidelines suggested by Sekaran (2006) and Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2019).

The dependent variable in this study was entrepreneurial career choices (Y). The independent variables in this study were entrepreneurial leadership (X1), work culture (X2), and cognitive learning (X3). The mediating variable was entrepreneurial intention (M), and the moderating variable was decision-making process (Z). It should be noted that this study did not contain any discriminatory elements. The objective of this study was to understand the differences in entrepreneurial behavior between migrant communities and Indigenous Papuans to develop more effective and inclusive policies and programs to support entrepreneurship in Papua. By focusing on empowerment and a deep understanding of the factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior, this study can help reduce disparities

and promote inclusivity in economic development in Papua.

In the context of data analysis, we applied Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis with Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) version 8.80. There were several key steps in this process. First, we conducted data validity and reliability tests. In this study, which involved 450 respondents, based on the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019), a minimum factor loading threshold of 0.30 was considered statistically acceptable. However, it was still recommended to use a higher cut-off loading, namely ≥ 0.50, to maintain construct strength and avoid semantic ambiguity between items. Construct reliability was assessed using two approaches: Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Second, we conducted hypothesis testing. The hypothesis testing was conducted by considering the t-value of each variable compared to its critical value (t-table). With a critical value (n greater than 30) and a significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, i.e., 1.96, the relationship is considered significant Hair et al. (2019). The hypotheses tested included: (1) the direct effect of each independent variable (X1, X2, and X3) on the dependent variable (Y), the direct effect of each independent variable (X1, X2, and X3) on the mediating variable (M), the direct effect of the mediating variable on the moderating variable (Z), the direct effect of the mediating variable (M) on the dependent variable (Y), and the direct effect of the moderating variable (Z) on the dependent variable (Y); (2) the indirect effect of the independent variables (X1, X2, and X3) on the dependent variable (Y) mediated by variable (M); and (3) the indirect effect of the mediating variable (M) on the dependent variable (Y) moderated by variable (Z).

The third step involved testing the overall goodness of fit of the model. In this process, we estimated the Chi-square value, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the standardized average of all residuals or the Root Mean Square Residual (RMSR), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI). Details of the values for each goodness-of-fit index can be found in Hair et al. (2019).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Characteristics of Respondents

Based on the questionnaire analysis, the results revealed that the majority of respondents were male, accounting for 61% (273 people), while females accounted for only 39% (175 people). When categorized by social origin, 318 respondents (71%) were migrants, while 132 respondents (29%) were indigenous Papuans (OAPs). This indicates that migrant communities dominate as SME operators in the three study areas, namely, Jayapura City, Jayapura Regency (Sentani), and Keerom Regency (Arso). The distribution of business locations also shows the highest concentration in Jayapura City by migrant communities (34%), followed by Jayapura Regency by migrants (23%), and Jayapura City by OAPs (18%).

In terms of education, migrant respondents generally have upper secondary education, with a majority being high school/vocational school graduates (46%), followed by junior high school graduates (18%) and bachelor's degree holders (16%). There are no doctoral degree holders, but 2% hold master's degrees. Conversely, the majority of OAPs have lower educational backgrounds, with a majority being junior high school graduates (22%) and elementary school graduates (10%), while those with higher education, such as bachelor's degrees (11%) and master's degrees (1%), are very limited in number. This indicates a gap in educational qualifications between the two groups, which may affect their ability to access and manage businesses. In terms of age, most respondents are in the productive age range. The 21–25 age group dominates with 43%, followed by the 17–20 age group with 28%, and the remaining 24% are under the age of 17. In terms of business type, migrant communities are most active in the food industry (26%) and retail trade (25%), while OAPs tend to be active in the food industry (24%), agriculture (20%), and betel nut sales (11%). In terms of business duration, the majority of respondents (56%) have been operating their businesses for over five years, followed by 1–3 years (28%) and less than one year (16%), indicating the sustainability of businesses among most SME practitioners, particularly among migrants.

4.2. The Validity and Reliability Tests

The results of the validity test are shown in Table 1. As can be seen in this table, all indicators on the six main variables have CFA values that meet the criteria for convergent validity. This indicates that each indicator is able to adequately represent the dimensions of the construct. The Entrepreneurial Leadership variable (X1) has CFA values ranging from 0.39 to 0.57 (average 0.52), followed by Work Culture (X2) with a range of 0.37-0.56 (average 0.47), and Cognitive Learning (X3) with CFA values of 0.35-0.48 (average 0.42). Although some indicators are at the lower end of the range, all are still within the acceptable limit. The Entrepreneurial Intention variable (M) displayed the strongest results with CFA values of 0.51-0.70 (mean 0.64), indicating a high contribution of indicators in explaining entrepreneurial career choices.

As for the Decision-Making Process variable (Z), the CFA values ranged from 0.32 to 0.54 (average 0.45), while the Entrepreneurial Career Choice (Y) ranged from 0.31 to 0.50 (average 0.42). The lower CFA values than the minimum threshold of 0.50 may be due to various reasons (e.g., small sample size, redundant and/or similar items, inconsistent answers, ambiguity/unclear questions, etc.). However, as the items were established theoretically, CFA values less than 0.50 might be justified (Cattell, 1978).

Table 1. Validity test results.

Variables	Number of indicators	Min CFA	Max CFA	Average CFA
Entrepreneurial leadership (X1)	20	0.39	0.57	0.52
Work culture (X2)	15	0.37	0.56	0.47
Cognitive learning (X3)	15	0.35	0.48	0.42
Entrepreneurial intention (M)	15	0.51	0.70	0.64
Decision-making process (Z)	15	0.32	0.54	0.45
Entrepreneurial career choice (Y)	15	0.31	0.50	0.42

Source: LISREL primary data processing (2024).

For the reliability test results, the composite reliability (CR) value is close to 1.00, which, although very high, technically indicates very strong internal reliability (Table 2). However, it is necessary to be aware of the possibility of redundancy between indicators (indicators that are too similar), which can reduce the diversity of construct meaning, as suggested by Hair et al. (2019). Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value greater than 0.50 indicates that the construct is able to explain more than 50% of the variance of its indicators, so it has good convergent validity.

Table 2. Reliability test results.

Variables	CR	AVE	Reliability description
Entrepreneurial leadership (X1)	0.99	0.96	Very high reliability
Work culture (X2)	1.00	1.00	Very high reliability
Cognitive learning (X3)	0.94	0.83	High reliability
Entrepreneurial intention (M)	1.00	0.98	Very high reliability
Decision-making process (Z)	0.98	0.95	Very high reliability
Entrepreneurial career choice (Y)	0.97	0.92	Very high reliability

Source: LISREL primary data processing (2024).

4.3. The Results of Hypothesis Testing

As shown in Table 3, entrepreneurial leadership has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial career choices among migrants and indigenous Papuans (OAPs). This is because $\beta = 0.12$ is positive, and the t-value is $2.07 > 1.96$. Additionally, work culture has a positive and significant influence on entrepreneurial career choices among migrants and OAPs, with $\beta = 0.15$ and a t-value of $2.58 > 1.96$. Cognitive learning also has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial career choices among migrants and native people, with $\beta = 0.26$ and a t-value of $4.18 > 1.96$.

Table 3. Path hypothesis test results: Direct effect.

Variable relationship	Standardized values	t-value	Description
X1-→Y	0.12	2.07	Significant positive influence (H1 supported)
X2-–→Y	0.15	2.58	Significant positive influence (H2 supported)
X3-→Y	0.26	4.18	Significant positive influence (H3 supported)
X1-→M	0.36	6.92	Significant positive influence
X2-→M	0.31	6.22	Significant positive influence
X3-→M	0.23	4.23	Significant positive influence
M-➔ Z	0.50	9.07	Significant positive influence
M-→Y	0.18	2.39	Significant positive influence
Z-→ Y	0.36	6.39	Significant positive influence

Source: LISREL primary data processing (2024).

Furthermore, all independent variables (X1, X2, X3) have significant indirect effects on Y through M (Table 4). Referring to the t-value, which is greater than 1.96, this indicates that the mediation relationship is significant. Entrepreneurial Leadership (X1) has the largest mediating effect ($\beta = 0.13$ with t-value = 4.10), followed by Work Culture (X2) ($\beta = 0.11$ with t-value = 4.03), and Cognitive Learning (X3) ($\beta = 0.08$ with t-value = 3.44).

Table 4. Path hypothesis test results: indirect effect.

Relationship between variables	Indirect effect	t-value	Description
X1 → M → Y	0.13	4.10	Mediation has a significant effect (H4 supported)
X2 → M→ Y	0.11	4.03	Mediation has a significant effect (H5 supported)
X3 → M → Y	0.08	3.44	Mediation has a significant effect (H6 supported)

Source: LISREL primary data processing (2024).

From the data results listed in Table 4, it can be seen that: Because the direct effect of X1, X2, and X3 on Y remains significant after the inclusion of the mediation variable (M), the mediation observed is partial (partial mediation). This indicates that X1, X2, and X3 continue to have a direct impact on Y, while their effects are also enhanced through the mediating variable of entrepreneurial intention (M). Entrepreneurial leadership (X1), work culture (X2), and cognitive learning (X3) still directly influence entrepreneurial career choice (Y), but entrepreneurial intention (M) also amplifies this relationship indirectly. Partial mediation demonstrates that both external factors and individual intentions collectively influence a person's decision to pursue an entrepreneurial career.

In terms of the results of path analysis of moderating variable effects, it can be seen in Table 5 that $\beta = 0.18$ and t-value = 4.83 are greater than 1.96. This indicates a significant relationship. This means that the decision-making process (Z) acts as a moderator variable in the relationship between entrepreneurial intention (M) and entrepreneurial career choice (Y).

Thus, hypothesis 7 is accepted. The indirect effect of 0.18 indicates that the effect of entrepreneurial intention on entrepreneurial career choice becomes stronger or weaker depending on the individual's decision-making process. Therefore, the better a person is in the decision-making process, the stronger the impact of entrepreneurial intention on their final decision to choose an entrepreneurial career. Hence, hypothesis 8 is accepted.

Table 5. Results of the path hypothesis test moderating effect.

Relationship between variables	Indirect effect	t-value	Description
M → Z → Y	0.18	4.83	Moderation has a significant effect (H7 supported)

Source: LISREL primary data processing (2024).

The results of the goodness-of-fit index of the model show that the minimum fit function of Chi-Square (χ^2) was

208.75 with a p-value of 0.00025 (<0.05), indicating the model does not fit. This means that the Chi-Square is significant, which conventionally indicates that the model does not fit the data. However, Hair et al. (2019) have previously stated that the Chi-Square value is very sensitive to large sample sizes. With 450 respondents, this value could be significant even if the model is quite good. Therefore, it is necessary to examine other fit indices to assess the model's adequacy.

The value of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.033, which is less than the cut-off value of 0.08, indicating a good model fit. RMSEA measures the degree of approximation error in the model. A value of 0.033 indicates a very good fit, meaning the model does not deviate significantly from the population data. The value of standardized RMR (Root Mean Square Residual) was 0.047, which is less than 0.05, indicating a good model fit. Standardized RMR measures the average difference between the estimated and observed covariance matrices. The value of 0.047 indicates a very small difference, suggesting the model is quite accurate in representing the data.

Also, the value of the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) was 0.95, which is greater than 0.90. The GFI measures the proportion of variance-covariance in the data that can be explained by the model. A value of 0.95 indicates that the model has a very good fit. The Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) obtained was 0.94, which is above 0.90, indicating a good model fit. AGFI is a version of GFI adjusted for the number of parameters in the model. A value of 0.94 suggests that the model maintains a good fit after adjustment for model complexity. The value of the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was found to be 0.99, which exceeds 0.90, indicating a good model fit. CFI compares the model with the baseline model without relationships between variables. A value of 0.99 indicates an almost perfect model fit. The value of the Normed Fit Index (NFI) was 0.97, which is greater than 0.95, indicating a good model fit. NFI measures the improvement in the fit of the model compared to the baseline model. A value of 0.97 suggests a very good fit. Additionally, the value of the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) was 0.99, which is above 0.95, indicating a good model fit. NNFI corrects the NFI bias against sample size. A value of 0.99 indicates that the model is very effective at explaining the relationships between variables (Table 6). Thus, the model has a very good fit. so that the research model was accepted.

Table 6. Overall model fit test.

No.	Goodness of fit index	Cut off value	Value	Notes
1	Minimum fit function chi-square (χ^2)	P > 0.05	208.75 p value= 0.00025	Not Fit
2	RMSEA	< 0.08	0.033	Fit
3	Standardized RMR	< 0.05	0.047	Fit
4	GFI	>0.90	0.95	Fit
5	AGFI	>0.90	0.94	Fit
6	CFI	>0.9	0.99	Fit
7	NFI	>0.95	0.97	Fit
8	NNFI	>0.95	0.99	Fit

Source: LISREL primary data processing (2024).

5. DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm that the three independent variables of entrepreneurial leadership, work culture, and cognitive learning have a significant effect on entrepreneurial career choices among both migrants and indigenous Papuans (OAPs). Entrepreneurial leadership is proven to have an important role in shaping internal motivation and individual readiness to enter the business world. This finding supports the previous studies conducted by Gupta et al. (2004) and Bagheri and Harrison (2020), which emphasize the importance of innovation, strategic vision, and risk-taking in entrepreneurial leadership. This leadership plays an important role in influencing one's career choice for entrepreneurship through various mechanisms (Nguyen et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial leadership is also related to the basic ability to capitalize on access to resources needed to start a business, such as knowledge, training, networks, and capital (Mendo et al., 2023). This vision provides clear direction on what can be achieved through

entrepreneurship and how the endeavor can positively impact both individuals and society (Joel & Oguanobi, 2024). The statistical result is also supported by respondents' views, where the majority of respondents rated resource management skills and the ability to identify opportunities as the most important aspects of an ideal entrepreneurial leader profile.

Work culture as the second variable in the research model shows a significant influence on individual entrepreneurial decisions. Regression coefficients and t-calculated values indicate that a work culture that prioritizes innovation, cooperation, and tolerance for failure is an important factor in encouraging entrepreneurial orientation. These findings corroborate Schein (2010) theory of organizational culture, and expand the context of understanding into the social reality of Papuan society. This finding also aligns with the statement that in the context of entrepreneurship, work culture plays an important role in motivating individuals to choose an entrepreneurial path, as a work culture that supports or inhibits creativity, innovation, and risk-taking will influence one's career choice for entrepreneurship (Arabeche et al., 2022). Work culture plays a very important role in influencing entrepreneurial career choices (Jardim et al., 2021). By creating an environment that supports independence, risk-taking, learning, and collaboration, work culture can strengthen individuals' intentions to choose entrepreneurship as a career path (Danish et al., 2019). In practice, migrant communities exhibit a more systematic and efficiency-oriented work culture, while native Papuans emphasize collective work and gotong royong as the social basis for running a business.

Cognitive learning also proved to be significant in driving the propensity to choose an entrepreneurial path. This is in line with the Social Cognitive Theory framework (Bandura, 1986), which emphasizes the importance of learning through experience, observation, and social reflection. This result also reinforces the studies of Kakouris and Liargovas (2021) and Belchior and Lyons (2021), which emphasize that practical learning is more capable of forming an entrepreneurial mindset as a whole. Cognitive learning helps individuals identify the skills they possess and how to utilize them to achieve success in entrepreneurship (Anjum et al., 2024). Cognitive learning allows individuals to internalize skills and experiences that increase their confidence that they can succeed in entrepreneurship (Liguori et al., 2018). This finding suggests that cognitive learning derived from community, direct experience, and group discussions proved more effective than formal theoretical training, especially for the OAPs community.

Entrepreneurial intention serves as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between the three main variables and entrepreneurial career choice. This indicates that, while the direct effect remains significant, the presence of intention enhances the relationship. This aligns with the Entrepreneurial Event Model, Shapero and Sokol (1982), and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) where intention is influenced by perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and propensity to act. Intention arises when individuals feel interested, confident in their abilities, and encouraged to act (Delanoë-Gueguen & Liñán, 2019). Entrepreneurial leadership motivates, inspires, and sets an example, thereby increasing the attraction to entrepreneurship (Hussain & Li, 2022). A work culture that supports creativity and risk-taking also increases an individual's perception that entrepreneurship is an attractive option (Danish et al., 2019). In addition to attractiveness, entrepreneurial intention is also influenced by perceived feasibility, which is a person's belief that they have the ability and resources to succeed in entrepreneurship. This perception can be strengthened through cognitive learning processes, such as learning from experience, training, or observation (Iwu et al., 2021). These dimensions are built through exemplary leadership, a supportive work culture, and applicable cognitive learning.

Another important finding is the role of the decision-making process as a moderating variable that strengthens the relationship between intention and entrepreneurial career choice. This finding supports the views observed by Mintzberg and Westley (2001); Cunha (2007); Lent and Brown (2020); Gati and Kulcsar (2021) and Akkermans et al. (2021). This suggests that the decision-making process not only directs intentions into action but also plays a role in shaping thinking approach preferences: thinking first (analytical), seeing first (intuitive), and doing first (experiential).

6. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that this study makes an important contribution to understanding the dynamics of entrepreneurial career choice in Papua. The interaction between individual, social, and cultural factors suggests that intervention strategies cannot be uniform. Differences in learning patterns, leadership approaches, and work culture structures between migrant and indigenous communities demand differential policies and training programs. Thus, entrepreneurship capacity development in Papua needs to take into account the local context, encourage experiential community learning for native Papuans, and strengthen formal and analytical learning systems for migrant communities.

This research makes an important contribution to strengthening the theoretical model of entrepreneurship by integrating the theories of Entrepreneurial Leadership, Triadic Reciprocal Causation, Self-Determination Theory, Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM), and Decision-Making Theory into a unified conceptual framework. This model simultaneously positions entrepreneurial intention as a mediator and the decision-making process as a moderator in explaining the relationship between individual internal factors (entrepreneurial leadership, cognitive learning) and external factors (work culture) in entrepreneurial career choice. The local Papuan context enriches the perspective that career intentions and decisions are not solely determined by economic rationality but are also influenced by the social, cultural, and experiential context of the community, especially in underdeveloped and pluralistic areas such as Papua.

The findings also extend the understanding of entrepreneurial leadership theory and cognitive learning. In the context of leadership, the effectiveness of the leader's role is not universal but depends on the social and cultural structure of the community. Community-based approaches are more accepted by native Papuans, while migrant communities tend to respond to systematic leadership styles. Similarly, effective cognitive learning in the Papuan context cannot be separated from experiential learning and observational learning because the theoretical dimension of cognition is considered weak without being supported by direct experience. This expands the scope of learning theory from the individual realm to more contextualized social interactions. In addition, this study enriches the development of entrepreneurial intention theory by emphasizing that intentions will only be meaningful if individuals have a readiness to act that is strengthened by the decision-making process. The integration between intention (perceived desirability, feasibility, propensity to act) and decision-making approach (thinking, seeing, doing) is proven to explain how intention becomes real action. The evaluation of construct validity is also an important methodological contribution that confirms that the theoretical model is not only conceptually valid but also statistically consistent. Therefore, the findings offer a new framework that can be adapted in studies of community-based and minority entrepreneurship in other regions.

In terms of policy implications, the approach to empowering SMEs cannot be generalized but must be tailored to the socio-cultural differences between migrant and indigenous communities. Policies should be based on local data, consider community characteristics, and bridge the success gap through community-based training, legal support, and cross-group business collaboration. It is also necessary to strengthen the narrative of business self-reliance, replacing dependence on government assistance, with a knowledge-first approach and training based on real challenges. Local success stories and mentoring from senior entrepreneurs can serve as transformational inspiration in changing entrepreneurial mindsets and behaviors. Furthermore, strengthening the capacity of budding entrepreneurs can be done through mentoring, coaching, and business network support programs involving business incubators and local entrepreneurial communities. This approach is important in shaping the resilience of SME actors, especially OAPs, who need visual, narrative, and local figure-based learning methods. With the support of access to appropriate capital, strengthening financial literacy, and business digitalization, empowerment programs in Papua will become more impactful and sustainable in encouraging economic growth based on local independence and culture.

However, there are limitations to this study. First, the results were subject to the model developed. Second, it

was based on a non-probability sampling method, which means that the results cannot be generalized. Finally, this study was based on cross-sectional data, and the views or perceptions provided by the respondents may have strategic bias. Thus, caveats apply.

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