

Digital-Based Informal Entrepreneurship Education: Transforming Social Media into a Business Learning Space

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Abstract: The development of digital technology has driven transformations in various aspects of life, including entrepreneurship education. This study examines how social media can be utilized as an informal learning space to support digital-based entrepreneurship education without being limited by space and time. Using a qualitative approach and literature review, this article explores the role of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube in disseminating entrepreneurial knowledge, building business communities, and creating flexible and accessible learning ecosystems. The results show that social media is not only a means of business promotion but also plays a role as an interactive and inspiring educational medium. The use of experience-based content, tutorials, and entrepreneurial success stories is a key strategy in educating audiences, both informally and formally. This article recommends optimizing the use of social media by educators, MSMEs, and entrepreneurial communities to expand access to relevant and contextual business learning in the digital era.

Keywords: *entrepreneurship, informal education, social media, digital, business learning*

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INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving digital era, the boundaries between social and educational spaces are increasingly blurred. One tangible impact of this phenomenon is seen in how individuals informally acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and skills through digital platforms, particularly social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook (Sirait et al., 2025). These platforms have evolved from mere entertainment and communication tools into dynamic and interactive learning spaces. Through content such as educational videos, community discussions, business tutorials, and even success stories, people, especially the younger generation, can learn directly from the real-life experiences of entrepreneurs (Rohm et al., 2021; Oliver & Oliver, 2022). This phenomenon demonstrates the shift in the role of social media from a mere communication tool to a potential educational medium. Entrepreneurship education, both formal and informal,

can give birth to new entrepreneurs (Nabi et al., 2017; Wasim et al., 2024). MSMEs, content creators, and even young entrepreneur communities like Makassarpreneur and Startup Weekend Makassar are concrete examples of how social media is being used to encourage practice-based learning.

In Makassar City, one of the metropolitan cities in eastern Indonesia, digitalization has spurred the growth of various local business initiatives, particularly among young people and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Amid limited access to formal entrepreneurship education, Makassar residents have begun utilizing social media as an informal, open, and flexible learning space (Rauf et al., 2021; Isma, 2024). Furthermore, the number of MSMEs in Makassar has grown rapidly. However, despite the large number of MSMEs, their contribution to exports remains low. The Makassar City Government, through the Appakabaji MSME program, seeks to improve the quality and competitiveness of MSMEs by providing business incubators, training, and banking access, aiming to create an inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Social media is no longer just a means of communication and entertainment; it has also transformed into an effective business learning space (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2016; Isma, 2025). Various educational content on entrepreneurship, such as marketing tips, branding strategies, business financial management, and inspirational stories from young entrepreneurs, is widely available and easily accessible. This phenomenon demonstrates that social media has opened up new opportunities for millennials and Gen Z to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge in a practical, interactive, and flexible manner.

In today's digital era, market share increases when a product is introduced through social media, so it's no surprise that social media plays a crucial role (Appel et al., 2023; Soelaiman et al., 2023). This involves a strong belief in the ability of digital platforms and technology to generate creative and profitable business prospects (Nambisan, 2017; Li et al., 2018; Tomy & Pardede, 2020).

This digital-based informal entrepreneurship education offers advantages in terms of accessibility, affordability, and relevance of the material to market needs. Various online business communities, webinars, podcasts, and social media-based online classes can reach individuals from diverse backgrounds, without the constraints of space and time. Furthermore, the participatory and collaborative learning process on social media fosters the creation of a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem. Studies of informal economic education also refer to entrepreneurship education within families who inherit businesses. According to Kubiček & Machek (2019) and Pozzi et al. (2023), the study of gender differences between the previous and next generations in family businesses is an interesting topic to study, particularly regarding women's participation in family businesses. In many family businesses, sons are considered more capable of running the family business than daughters.

However, challenges remain, such as information validity, lack of content curation, and the potential for lower material depth compared to formal education. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed to determine how social media can truly be utilized as an effective and sustainable informal entrepreneurship education tool with significant potential for producing young entrepreneurs who are adaptive, creative, and ready to compete in the digital economy.

Conventional entrepreneurship education, typically structured and based on formal institutions, often fails to reach all levels of society, especially those in remote areas or with limited access to higher education. Social media, on the other hand, offers easy access, flexible scheduling, and a variety of content that can be tailored to users' needs. This makes social media a potential and inclusive alternative for entrepreneurship learning. This is in line with research (Wang et al.,

2017; Georgescu & Herman, 2020; Diawati, et al, 2024) which examined the influence of entrepreneurship education and family experience on students' entrepreneurial intentions, through the perspective of social learning theory and intention theory.

However, despite this significant potential, there are few in-depth scientific studies examining how social media can be optimized as a tool for informal entrepreneurship education. The use of social media as an educational tool is often sporadic, without a clear pedagogical framework. Therefore, a more systematic exploration of social media's role in developing entrepreneurial literacy and skills among the wider community is needed. Yet, today's younger generation is already very familiar with technology and social media, making digital approaches more readily accepted and applied (Kessler, 2018; Iivari et al., 2020; Montiel et al., 2020).

This article aims to analyze how social media can function as an informal learning space in entrepreneurship education and identify effective strategies for transforming these digital platforms into impactful educational tools. Understanding these dynamics will hopefully lead to the creation of new approaches to entrepreneurship education that are more relevant, adaptive, and empowering in the digital age.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method to understand the phenomenon of digital-based informal entrepreneurship education through social media. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the process, meaning, and impact of using social media as an informal and flexible business learning space.

This research began with a comprehensive literature review of academic and practical sources, including books, scientific journals, articles, research reports, and official documents related to entrepreneurship, informal education, and digital technology. This literature review aimed to develop a conceptual framework and obtain a theoretical understanding of the role of social media in informal entrepreneurship education.

Qualitative data was obtained through observations of social media content (such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube) related to entrepreneurship education in digital communities. Observations were conducted on the type of content, user interactions, and the informal delivery of entrepreneurship materials. Furthermore, the research involved in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship education content creators active on social media to gain first-hand perspectives on the benefits and challenges of using social media as a business learning space.

The collected data was analyzed descriptively and qualitatively using content analysis techniques. This analysis was conducted to identify key themes, communication patterns, material delivery strategies, and the learning impacts of social media. The results were then synthesized with a literature review to strengthen the findings and develop recommendations regarding the use of social media in informal entrepreneurship education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

This study revealed that social media has played a significant role as a resource for informal entrepreneurship learning. Based on observations and interviews, most respondents stated that digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube provide a variety of practical content on entrepreneurship. This content includes digital marketing strategies, how to start a

business with minimal capital, and business financial management. Short videos presented in an engaging format are considered easier to understand and can be directly applied in everyday practice.

One key finding is that social media facilitates access to educational content without time and place constraints. Users can learn independently through various content formats such as video tutorials, live streaming, infographics, and success stories. This diversity of formats makes the learning process more engaging and understandable, especially for the younger generation, who tend to be more adaptable to digital technology.

Furthermore, social media also functions as an interactive platform, allowing users not only to passively receive information but also to actively participate through comment sections, discussions, and collaboration between entrepreneurs. This enriches the learning experience by enabling a two-way dialogue that helps clarify entrepreneurial concepts and find solutions to problems encountered in business practice.

In the context of Makassar City, social media has become a crucial bridge for MSMEs to overcome limited access to formal education and resources. Many respondents reported gaining a wealth of entrepreneurial knowledge that was previously difficult to obtain through formal training. For example, digital marketing techniques, simple financial management, and creative product development are delivered easily and practically through social media content.

Second, varying levels of digital literacy among entrepreneurs pose a challenge. Although social media is easily accessible, not all users are able to utilize its features to their full potential to gain entrepreneurial knowledge. Some MSMEs still have limited access to content and maximize digital interactions, thus suboptimal informal learning.

This study also found that digital communities and entrepreneurial influencers play a crucial role in strengthening the informal learning ecosystem. Communities like Makassarpreneur and inspirational figures who consistently share educational content can motivate members and followers to be more active in learning and innovating in their businesses. Learning models based on real-life experiences and storytelling have proven effective in building motivation and deepening understanding. A conceptual approach in digital entrepreneurship literature encompasses trends, methodologies, and theoretical foundations (Kraus et al., 2019; Steininger, 2019; Fernandes et al., 2024). Furthermore, the transformation of entrepreneurial concepts toward technopreneurship in the digital era, with a focus on adapting technology-based business models, significantly encourages individuals to develop their entrepreneurial spirit (Rohman et al., 2023).

The research results also demonstrated a high level of flexibility in social media-based entrepreneurship learning. Nearly all respondents emphasized the ability to learn anytime and anywhere. This advantage is a major attraction of informal education, especially for those with limited time or unable to attend more structured and more expensive formal education.

However, the research also revealed several challenges in utilizing social media as a learning platform for entrepreneurship. First, the quality of educational content varies, with not all disseminated information being accurate or in-depth. This has the potential to lead to misconceptions or suboptimal business practices. Therefore, more systematic curation and mentoring are needed to ensure educational content is more structured and reliable.

Despite these challenges, the positive impact of digital-based entrepreneurship learning is significant. Several respondents admitted to being motivated to start businesses after seeing success stories of young entrepreneurs shared on social media. Many also dared to innovate by

following market trends that went viral on social media. Thus, social media serves not only as an educational platform but also as a catalyst for creativity and courage in taking business risks.

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the view that social media has transformed from a mere means of communication into an effective learning space. In the context of informal entrepreneurship education, social media offers a learning model suited to the learning styles of the digital-native generation: fast, visual, practical, and interactive (Ay & Caner, 2025). The shift in preference from lengthy text to audio-visual content demonstrates that people's learning patterns have also changed with the development of digital technology (Nicolaou, 2021).

Furthermore, the existence of digital communities as collaborative platforms emphasizes the importance of the social aspect in entrepreneurship education. Learning entrepreneurship involves more than just understanding theory; it also involves building networks, sharing experiences, and collaborating with others (Liu et al., 2017). Thus, social media serves as a bridge to create an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem, where anyone can learn and contribute regardless of educational background or social status.

The primary advantage of informal digital-based entrepreneurship education is its accessibility. Everyone can access learning content with just a simple device and an internet connection (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). This makes social media a democratic learning space, unlike formal education, which is often limited by cost, curriculum, and location. This is what makes social media so attractive to young people who want to learn business independently.

However, this study also highlights a significant weakness: the issue of information validity. Social media content is often produced by individuals without adequate academic background or business experience. As a result, some learners are trapped in shallow and inapplicable knowledge. In this regard, the role of digital literacy becomes crucial. Without the ability to filter information, social media-based entrepreneurship education can lead to misperceptions or even business failure.

This phenomenon opens up opportunities for the government, academics, and practitioners to play a strategic role. Formal educational institutions can collaborate with social media platforms to create credible educational content and provide digital mentors to guide learners. This way, informal learning remains flexible and enjoyable, while ensuring greater quality and validity.

Furthermore, it's important to view social media not only as a complement to formal education, but also as an equal alternative. For those without access to higher education, social media can be a pathway to acquire business knowledge, build business networks, and even launch an entrepreneurial career. If utilized effectively, digital-based informal entrepreneurship education can contribute significantly to the creation of new jobs and the growth of the creative economy.

Overall, this discussion confirms that social media holds significant potential in informal entrepreneurship education. Its advantages in terms of flexibility, accessibility, and collaborative nature make it a relevant learning tool in the digital age. However, challenges regarding the validity and depth of the material need to be addressed with appropriate strategies so that social media can truly function as an effective and sustainable business learning space.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that social media plays a crucial role in supporting informal entrepreneurship education. First, social media serves as a source of practical knowledge that is easy to understand and immediately applicable, particularly through short video and visual content. Second, social media also serves as a collaborative platform, enabling interaction, discussion, and collaboration between entrepreneurs, aspiring entrepreneurs, and the business community. Furthermore, digital-based informal entrepreneurship development programs must integrate social media as a primary tool for disseminating education, while simultaneously building community networks that support continuous learning. Local governments and educational institutions need to provide in-depth digital literacy and entrepreneurship training so that entrepreneurs can maximize the use of social media as a learning and business development platform.

Furthermore, social media offers high flexibility and accessibility, allowing anyone, anytime, and anywhere to access it, without the constraints of cost or formal classrooms. Another positive impact is the increased motivation, courage, and creativity of young people in starting businesses after being exposed to entrepreneurial content on social media. However, significant challenges remain, including low content validity and a lack of information curation. Much content is superficial, unscientific, and even misleading. Therefore, digital literacy is a crucial competency for entrepreneurship learners to be able to filter information wisely.

Therefore, it can be concluded that informal digital-based entrepreneurship education through social media has great potential to complement, or even replace, formal education, particularly in producing a generation of adaptive, creative, and competitive entrepreneurs in the digital economy era.

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