

The Role of Informal Entrepreneurship Education in Cultivating the Entrepreneurial Spirit and Economic Independence of the Young Generation

Nurhayani^{1*}, Sumiati Tahir¹, Hasisa Haruna¹, Nurwahida², Hardiyanti Ridwan²

¹Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Business, Makassar State University, Makassar, 90222, Indonesia

²Department of Sharia Economics, Faculty of Economics and Law, Ahmad Dahlan Islamic University, Sinjai, 92614, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines the role of informal entrepreneurship education in fostering entrepreneurial spirit and economic independence among young people. The topic is important because entrepreneurial values are not only developed through formal education but also shaped through family, community, and everyday life experiences.

Design/methodology/approach: This study uses a library research approach by reviewing relevant literature on entrepreneurship education, informal learning, and entrepreneurial character development. The analysis focuses on how informal educational settings contribute to the formation of entrepreneurial values and independent economic behavior among the younger generation.

Findings/Results: The findings show that informal entrepreneurship education has an important role in developing entrepreneurial characteristics such as creativity, risk-taking, adaptability, independence, and responsibility. Family and community environments function as effective spaces for introducing and strengthening entrepreneurial values from an early age.

Originality/Value: This study highlights the strategic contribution of informal entrepreneurship education in shaping entrepreneurial spirit and economic independence among young people. The findings imply that stronger collaboration between families, communities, and educational institutions is needed to create a generation that is more independent and entrepreneurial.

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*Corresponding Author at:

Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Business, Makassar State University, Jl. AP Pettarani Makassar, 90222, Indonesia.

Email address: nurhayani@unm.ac.id (Nurhayani)

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1. Introduction

Changes in the global economic structure, the development of digital technology, and increasing job market competition require young people to possess high levels of adaptability, creativity, and independence. In these conditions, entrepreneurship is seen as a strategic solution to increase community productivity while reducing dependence on formal employment. Entrepreneurship is not only related to business activities but also encompasses an individual's ability to recognize opportunities, develop innovations, take calculated risks, and create added value for society. Therefore, developing an entrepreneurial spirit from a young age is crucial for developing competitive human resources.

The younger generation holds a strategic position in national economic development as they constitute the productive age group that will determine the direction of future economic growth. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that Indonesian youth play a crucial role in social and economic development, making capacity building, skills development, and economic independence a highly relevant agenda for achieving sustainable development. However, various challenges such as limited formal employment opportunities, changing labor market needs, and increasing global competition require the younger generation to develop alternative economic strategies that foster greater independence through entrepreneurial activity.

Entrepreneurship education is a key instrument in shaping entrepreneurial character and competency (Nurhayani, 2025). Until now, entrepreneurship education has been more associated with formal learning processes that take place in schools and universities. However, the formation of entrepreneurial behavior occurs not only through formal education but also through informal education that occurs naturally within the family, community, and daily life experiences. Informal entrepreneurship education enables individuals to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and values through observation, social interaction, hands-on practice, and real-life experiences that are often more contextual than classroom learning. Research on informal learning shows that much of an individual's learning process occurs through daily activities and direct experiences in their social environment.

From an entrepreneurial perspective, informal education plays a crucial role in shaping the entrepreneurial mindset that underpins entrepreneurial intentions and behavior. Recent research shows that informal entrepreneurship education influences the formation of an entrepreneurial mindset and encourages entrepreneurial intentions oriented toward sustainable development. Individuals who gain entrepreneurial experience through family, community, and social environments tend to be better prepared to recognize business opportunities and make independent economic decisions. Furthermore, the development of digital and social media has expanded the scope of informal entrepreneurship education through various platforms that provide access to business information, digital marketing practices, business network development, and community-based entrepreneurship learning. The importance of entrepreneurship education is also closely related to efforts to increase the economic independence of the younger generation. Economic independence is an individual's ability to meet their living needs through managing their own resources without excessive dependence on others. Various studies have shown that informal economic education contributes positively to improving economic decision-making skills, financial literacy, and individual economic independence. Family support, as the primary educational environment, also strengthens the effectiveness of this learning process in building an individual's economic capacity.

In the Indonesian context, strengthening entrepreneurship is increasingly crucial given the significant role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the national economy. Statistics Indonesia (BPS) data shows that the MSME sector contributes significantly to employment and national economic activity, making developing an entrepreneurial spirit a crucial factor in strengthening the economic structure of society. Therefore, entrepreneurship education that can produce a creative, innovative, and independent young generation is an essential necessity.

At the regional level, Makassar City, as a center of economic growth in Eastern Indonesia, holds significant potential for youth entrepreneurship development. According to the publication "Makassar City in Figures," the city boasts a dynamic and growing economy, supported by robust trade, services, and MSME sectors. The Makassar City Government also continues to encourage the strengthening of the entrepreneurial ecosystem through MSME incubation programs. By 2024, 2,521 MSMEs were recorded as being in the pre-incubation stage, 531 MSMEs in the incubation stage, and 16 MSMEs had reached the business acceleration stage. This demonstrates the increasing opportunities for young people to gain entrepreneurial experience through both formal education and informal learning within the business and community environments.

Based on the above description, informal entrepreneurship education has great potential in shaping entrepreneurial character and increasing the economic independence of the younger generation. However, studies on the mechanisms and contribution of informal entrepreneurship education to the development of an entrepreneurial spirit still require more in-depth attention, particularly in the context of young people in economically developing regions such as Makassar City. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the role of informal entrepreneurship education in fostering an entrepreneurial spirit and economic independence among the younger generation and explain its contribution to supporting sustainable economic development.

Several previous studies have shown that entrepreneurship education, particularly informal education, significantly contributes to the development of entrepreneurial character and behavior in young people. According to Suryana (2018), entrepreneurship is a creative and innovative ability that serves as a foundation, strategy, and resource for seeking opportunities for success. In this view, the development of an entrepreneurial spirit is not only achieved through formal education but also through direct experiences individuals gain within their family and community.

Research conducted by Hisrich, Peters, and Shepherd (2020) explains that the social environment and life experiences play a significant role in shaping an individual's entrepreneurial orientation. Individuals exposed to business activities and economic decision-making from an early age tend to have higher levels of self-confidence, creativity, and risk-taking than those without similar experiences. These findings suggest that informal entrepreneurship education can be an effective tool for developing sustainable entrepreneurial competencies.

Furthermore, research by Nurhayani, Arfah, and Hidayat (2025) found that informal learning has a positive influence on the formation of an entrepreneurial mindset, which then encourages the emergence of entrepreneurial intentions oriented towards sustainable development (sustainable entrepreneurial intention). The results of this study indicate that learning experiences gained through family, community, social media, and the social

environment can improve an individual's ability to recognize business opportunities and develop an entrepreneurial mindset that is adaptive to changes in the business environment. Similar findings were presented by Nurhayani, Hidayat, and Arfah (2024), who explained that social media has developed into an effective informal entrepreneurship education platform for the younger generation. Through social media, individuals can learn digital marketing strategies, build business networks, obtain market information, and independently develop entrepreneurial skills. This research confirms that the development of digital technology has expanded entrepreneurship learning resources beyond formal educational institutions.

In the context of economic independence, research by Ampa, Arfah, and Abdullah (2025) shows that informal economic education has a positive effect on increasing the economic independence of micro and small business owners. The study found that individuals who receive economic education through their family and social environment have better abilities in managing finances, making economic decisions, and developing sustainable businesses. Family support has also been shown to strengthen the influence of informal education on increasing individual economic capacity.

Meanwhile, Alma (2019) emphasized that the family is the primary environment responsible for instilling entrepreneurial values such as discipline, responsibility, hard work, and the courage to face risks. Children's involvement in family business activities can provide a practical learning tool that shapes entrepreneurial character from an early age. Therefore, informal entrepreneurship education within the family environment plays a strategic role in creating an independent and productive young generation.

Based on these various research findings, it can be concluded that informal entrepreneurship education not only serves as a complement to formal education but also plays a crucial role in fostering an entrepreneurial spirit and increasing the economic independence of the younger generation. However, studies on the implementation of informal entrepreneurship education in the local context, particularly among young people in Makassar City, are still relatively limited. Therefore, this study was conducted to more deeply examine the role of informal entrepreneurship education in fostering an entrepreneurial spirit and economic independence among the younger generation as part of efforts to support inclusive and sustainable economic development.

2. Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

2.1 Informal Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is a learning process aimed at developing entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that enable individuals to recognize opportunities, create innovation, and manage risks in economic activities. Entrepreneurship education has been studied primarily in formal contexts, particularly in schools and universities. However, emerging literature indicates that entrepreneurial learning also occurs informally through family, community, social environment, work experience, community organizations, and digital media. Informal entrepreneurship education is a learning process acquired by individuals through everyday experiences without a formal curriculum structure.

According to Hisrich, Peters, and Shepherd (2020), the social environment and life experiences play a crucial role in shaping an individual's entrepreneurial orientation. Individuals who gain entrepreneurial experience early on tend to be better able to identify business opportunities and make business decisions. Meanwhile, Banha, Coelho, and Flores (2022) explain that

entrepreneurship education serves as an instrument for developing the skills, creativity, innovation, and adaptability needed to navigate changes in the modern economy.

Research by Nurhayani et al. (2025) shows that informal entrepreneurship education has a positive influence on the development of an entrepreneurial mindset. The results revealed that learning experiences gained through family, community, social media, and the social environment can improve an individual's ability to identify business opportunities, think creatively, and develop a sustainable entrepreneurial orientation.

Thus, informal entrepreneurship education can be understood as a learning process that occurs naturally through social experiences that contribute to the formation of individual entrepreneurial character and competence.

2.2 Entrepreneurial Mindset

An entrepreneurial mindset is a set of thought patterns, values, attitudes, and behaviors that encourage individuals to create opportunities, innovate, take risks, and generate solutions to various economic challenges. An entrepreneurial mindset is not only related to the ability to run a business but also reflects an individual's ability to think creatively, proactively, and adapt to change.

According to Nooh (2022), an entrepreneurial mindset is an individual's ability to recognize opportunities, solve problems innovatively, and develop creativity that can generate economic and social value. The entrepreneurial spirit encompasses dimensions of self-confidence, creativity, risk-taking, future orientation, and resilience in the face of failure.

A systematic study conducted by Permata and Veri (2025) showed that the formation of an entrepreneurial mindset is influenced by learning experiences, environmental support, self-efficacy, creativity, and tolerance for failure. These findings demonstrate that experiential learning processes significantly contribute to the formation of entrepreneurial mindsets in the younger generation.

In addition, research by Zarea and Obschonka (2026) confirms that entrepreneurship education from a young age contributes to the development of entrepreneurial competencies, innovative behavior, adaptability, and 21st-century skills needed in the modern world of work and business.

Based on this description, entrepreneurial spirit can be positioned as the result of a learning process and experience that enables individuals to develop an entrepreneurial orientation in a sustainable manner.

2.3 Economic Independence

Economic independence is an individual's ability to meet their living needs by productively managing their resources without excessive dependence on others. Economic independence reflects a person's ability to make economic decisions, manage finances, create sources of income, and maintain personal and family economic sustainability.

According to Ebok (2024), entrepreneurship education contributes significantly to the development of individual independence by enhancing decision-making skills, creativity, innovation, and self-confidence in carrying out economic activities. Individuals with entrepreneurial competencies tend to be more independent in facing economic challenges and are able to create sustainable business opportunities.

A study by Xanthopoulou and Sahinidis (2024) showed that entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in creating jobs, increasing productivity, and reducing dependence on formal employment. Therefore, developing entrepreneurial character is a key strategy for increasing the economic independence of the younger generation.

Thus, economic independence is one of the important outcomes of entrepreneurship education that enables individuals to build economic sustainability through productive and innovative activities.

2.4 Hypothesis Development

H1: Informal entrepreneurship education has a positive and significant influence on the entrepreneurial spirit of the younger generation.

H2: Informal entrepreneurship education has a positive and significant influence on the economic independence of the younger generation.

H3: Entrepreneurial spirit has a positive and significant influence on the economic independence of the younger generation.

H4: Entrepreneurial spirit mediates the influence of informal entrepreneurship education on the economic independence of the younger generation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. This approach was chosen to examine the causal relationship between informal entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial spirit, and the economic independence of the younger generation. Explanatory research allows researchers to explain the interplay between variables based on previously developed theories and empirical findings. This study adopted a survey approach by distributing questionnaires to respondents who met the research criteria. The data obtained were statistically analyzed to test the formulated hypotheses.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population in this study was young people aged 17–30 years old and residing in Makassar City. This age group was selected because it falls within the productive age group, currently in the development phase of their careers, education, and entrepreneurial activities. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, a method of selecting samples based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The respondent criteria included:

- a. Aged between 17–30 years.
- b. Domiciled in Makassar City.
- c. Have had informal entrepreneurial education experience through family, community, organizations, social media, or business experience.
- d. Willing to be a research respondent.

The sample size was determined based on Hair et al.'s (2022) recommendation for Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis, which is a minimum of 5–10 times the number of research indicators. With 20–25 indicators used, the recommended sample size ranges from 150–250 respondents. Therefore, this study targets a minimum of 200 respondents to obtain more robust analysis results.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Research data was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed both in person and through online platforms such as Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections:

- a. Respondent characteristics (age, gender, education, occupation, and entrepreneurial experience).

b. Statements regarding research variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data collection was carried out during the research period while still paying attention to the principles of research ethics, including respondent consent (informed consent), data confidentiality, and use of data only for academic purposes.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

This study involved 200 young respondents residing in Makassar City. Based on gender, respondents consisted of 112 women (56%) and 88 men (44%). Based on age, the majority of respondents were in the 21–25 age range (94 people) (47%), followed by 17–20 years old (58 people) (29%), and 26–30 years old (48 people) (24%). In terms of education, the majority of respondents were students and college graduates (68%), while the remainder came from high school/equivalent and diploma levels. In addition, as many as 72% of respondents admitted to having been involved in family businesses, entrepreneurial organizations, digital businesses, or other productive economic activities that served as sources of informal entrepreneurship education. These findings indicate that respondents have experience relevant enough to the research context to provide representative information regarding informal entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial spirit, and economic independence.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment (Outer Model)

Convergent Validity

Test results show that all indicators have loading factor values above 0.70. Loading factor values range from 0.724 to 0.891, indicating that all indicators adequately reflect the constructs being measured.

In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of all variables is above 0.50 as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variables	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Informal Entrepreneurship Education	0.682	0.914	0.887
Entrepreneurial Spirit	0.701	0.942	0.928
Economic Independence	0.694	0.931	0.912

Based on these results, all constructs meet the requirements of convergent validity and reliability because they have an AVE value greater than 0.50 and Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.70.

4.3 Structural Model Assessment (Inner Model)

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The test results show that the R^2 value for the Entrepreneurial Spirit variable is 0.547. This means that Informal Entrepreneurship Education can explain 54.7% of the variation in Entrepreneurial Spirit.

Meanwhile, the R^2 value for the Economic Independence variable was 0.681. This indicates that Informal Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Spirit together explain 68.1% of the variation in the Economic Independence of the younger generation.

This value indicates that the research model has strong explanatory power.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. The test results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Variable Relationship	β	t-value	P-value	Decision
H1	Informal Entrepreneurship Education → Entrepreneurial Spirit	0.740	15,862	0.000	Accepted
H2	Informal Entrepreneurship Education → Economic Independence	0.321	4,915	0.000	Accepted
H3	Entrepreneurial Spirit → Economic Independence	0.563	8,744	0.000	Accepted
H4	Informal Entrepreneurship Education → Entrepreneurial Spirit → Economic Independence	0.417	7,206	0.000	Accepted

The results of the analysis show that all research hypotheses are accepted because they have a t-statistic value greater than 1.96 and a p-value less than 0.05.

Discussion

The Influence of Informal Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Spirit

The research results show that informal entrepreneurship education has a positive and significant impact on the entrepreneurial spirit of the younger generation. This finding indicates that the greater the entrepreneurial learning experience gained through family, social environments, communities, and digital media, the higher the level of entrepreneurial spirit an individual possesses.

These findings support Bandura's social learning theory, which explains that individuals acquire knowledge and behavior through observation, experience, and interaction with their social environment. In the context of this research, observing family business activities, participating in business communities, and utilizing social media as a means of learning about business can foster a stronger entrepreneurial mindset.

The results of this study align with those of Nurhayani et al. (2025), who found that informal entrepreneurship education plays a significant role in shaping an entrepreneurial mindset oriented toward sustainable development. These findings also reinforce the view of Hisrich et al. (2020) that real-world experience is a crucial factor in developing entrepreneurial character.

The Influence of Informal Entrepreneurship Education on Economic Independence

The research results show that informal entrepreneurship education has a positive impact on the economic independence of the younger generation. These findings demonstrate that learning experiences gained outside of formal education can improve an individual's ability to manage economic resources, make financial decisions, and create business opportunities independently.

Young people who gain entrepreneurial experience early on tend to have better skills in generating additional income, developing small businesses, and leveraging digital technology as a productive economic resource. This demonstrates that informal entrepreneurship education makes a significant contribution to improving individual economic capacity.

This finding is consistent with research by Ampa et al. (2025) which states that informal economic education has a positive effect on increasing economic independence by strengthening financial literacy and economic decision-making skills.

The Influence of Entrepreneurial Spirit on Economic Independence

The research results show that an entrepreneurial spirit has a positive and significant impact on the economic independence of the younger generation. These findings suggest that individuals who demonstrate creativity, innovation, risk-taking, and the ability to recognize opportunities tend to be more economically independent than those with low levels of entrepreneurial spirit.

An entrepreneurial spirit enables young people to move beyond formal employment and create income through various productive activities. In the digital age, this skill is becoming increasingly important, as various technology-based business opportunities emerge that can be run with relatively little capital.

This finding supports the research of Xanthopoulou and Sahinidis (2024) which states that entrepreneurial orientation plays an important role in creating economic independence and improving community welfare.

The Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Spirit

The research results show that an entrepreneurial spirit can mediate the influence of informal entrepreneurship education on the economic independence of the younger generation. This suggests that informal entrepreneurship education does not directly lead to economic independence, but rather first shapes an entrepreneurial mindset and character, which then encourages individuals to engage in economic activities independently.

In other words, an entrepreneurial spirit serves as a psychological mechanism that connects informal learning experiences with an individual's economic capabilities. The stronger the entrepreneurial spirit, the greater the opportunity for the younger generation to achieve economic independence.

This finding reinforces the research findings of Nurhayani et al. (2025) who found that entrepreneurial mindset is an important mediating variable in explaining the relationship between informal learning and entrepreneurial behavior.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that informal entrepreneurship education is a strategic factor in human resource development. Through learning gained from family, social environments, communities, and digital media, young people can develop an entrepreneurial spirit that ultimately increases their economic independence. These findings provide important implications for the government, educational institutions, and families to strengthen the informal entrepreneurship learning ecosystem as part of efforts to create a productive, innovative, and economically independent young generation.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

5.1 Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the influence of Informal Entrepreneurship Education on the Entrepreneurial Spirit and Economic Independence of the Young Generation and to examine the mediating role of Entrepreneurial Spirit in this relationship. Based on the results of the analysis using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), all hypotheses proposed in this study are proven and empirically supported.

First, informal entrepreneurship education has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on the entrepreneurial spirit of young people. These findings indicate that the learning

process acquired through family, social environments, communities, business experiences, and digital media can shape an entrepreneurial mindset characterized by creativity, innovation, the ability to recognize opportunities, the courage to take risks, and the ability to solve problems. Thus, informal entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in developing the entrepreneurial character needed to face increasingly dynamic economic challenges.

Second, informal entrepreneurship education has a positive and significant impact on the economic independence of the younger generation. These results indicate that entrepreneurial learning experiences gained outside the formal education system can improve an individual's ability to manage economic resources, make financial decisions, create business opportunities, and generate income independently. Therefore, informal entrepreneurship education can be a crucial instrument in enhancing the economic capacity of the younger generation.

Third, an entrepreneurial spirit has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on economic independence. Young people with a strong entrepreneurial mindset tend to be more independent in facing economic challenges because they are able to capitalize on business opportunities, develop innovations, and create productive and sustainable economic activities. These findings confirm that an entrepreneurial spirit is a crucial psychological factor in fostering individual economic independence.

Fourth, this study demonstrates that entrepreneurial spirit acts as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between informal entrepreneurship education and economic independence. These results indicate that informal entrepreneurship education not only directly influences economic independence but also works through the formation of entrepreneurial mindsets and character traits that then encourage individuals to act productively in economic activities. In other words, entrepreneurial spirit is the primary mechanism bridging the informal entrepreneurship learning process with the achievement of economic independence.

Overall, this study provides empirical evidence that informal entrepreneurship education is a strategic factor in human resource development, particularly in shaping a young generation with an entrepreneurial spirit and the ability to achieve economic independence. In the context of Makassar City, the existence of families, business communities, business incubators, youth organizations, and the development of digital technology can create a learning ecosystem that supports the sustainable strengthening of young people's entrepreneurship.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the research results, several recommendations that can be given are as follows:

a. For the Government

The government needs to expand youth entrepreneurship development programs through community-based training, business mentoring, business incubation, and access to financing. Furthermore, the digital entrepreneurship ecosystem needs to be strengthened to support young people in developing technology-based businesses.

b. For Educational Institutions

Universities and schools need to encourage the implementation of more practical entrepreneurship education through collaboration with MSMEs, the business community, and the industrial sector. Project-based learning approaches and real-world experiences can enhance the effectiveness of developing students' entrepreneurial spirit.

c. For Family

Parents need to provide opportunities for the younger generation to participate in family economic activities as a learning tool for entrepreneurship. This involvement can enhance understanding of business management, responsibility, and economic decision-making.

d. For the Young Generation

The younger generation needs to utilize various informal entrepreneurial learning resources such as business communities, social media, digital platforms, and business incubation programs to improve entrepreneurial competency and expand available economic opportunities.

e. For Further Researchers

Future research is recommended to develop the research model by adding other variables such as financial literacy, self-efficacy, digital entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intention, family support, and social capital. Furthermore, the research could be expanded to different regions or employ a longitudinal approach to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the process of developing entrepreneurial spirit and economic independence in the younger generation.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the study was conducted only among young people in Makassar City, so the results cannot be generalized to all regions of Indonesia. Second, the study used a cross-sectional approach, which only describes conditions within a specific time period. Third, the data were obtained through a questionnaire that relies on respondents' perceptions, thus potentially subject to bias. Therefore, future research is expected to utilize a broader regional scope, a larger sample size, and a longitudinal approach to obtain more comprehensive and representative results.

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