



Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Spirit of Malaysian Immigrant Early Childhood through Entrepreneurship Education to Create an Independent Generation in the Future

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Abstract: Entrepreneurship education from an early age plays a strategic role in shaping children's independent, creative, and innovative character, especially for immigrant children who face social and economic challenges. This study aims to describe the importance of implementing entrepreneurship education for Malaysian immigrant early childhood children as an effort to create an empowered and independent generation in the future. The methods used include participatory, collaborative, and project-based learning approaches that integrate entrepreneurial values into children's daily activities. The results show that implementing entrepreneurship education can foster self-confidence, responsibility, communication skills, and a strong work ethic in children. Additionally, this program also increases parental involvement in the educational process and strengthens solidarity within the immigrant community. Despite persistent challenges such as limited resources, cultural differences, and limited policy support, entrepreneurship education has proven to be an effective instrument for child and community empowerment. Overall, early childhood entrepreneurship education not only prepares young generations for entrepreneurship but also builds the character and independence needed to face future global challenges.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Entrepreneurship Education, Independence, Malaysian Immigrants, Social Empowerment.

Introduction

The development of the global world in the 21st century is marked by extremely rapid changes in various fields of life, economic, technological, social, and cultural (Grinin et al., 2021; Purwanto et al., 2023). The advancement of information technology, the globalization of the labor market, and the dynamics of the creative economy have shifted the paradigm of human resource development from simply being academic-oriented to being life skills-oriented, encompassing creativity, adaptability, critical thinking, collaboration, and the courage to take initiative. In this context, education no longer serves solely as a means of transferring knowledge, but also as a platform for

character development and fostering entrepreneurial potential from an early age (Ahmad et al., 2023).

Entrepreneurship education is important because it prepares individuals to create opportunities, not just seek employment (Igwe et al., 2021). This aligns with the 21st-century education vision, which emphasizes the importance of developing innovative, productive, and independent characters (Sitaridis & Kitsios, 2024). Through entrepreneurship education, children are introduced to basic values such as responsibility, perseverance, courage to take risks, cooperation, creativity, and leadership. These values are not only relevant to the business world but also serve as an important foundation in one's social and personal life.

In the context of Malaysian immigrant children, the urgency of entrepreneurial education is becoming

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increasingly prominent. Children from immigrant families are often in a socially and economically vulnerable position. They grew up in environments with limited access to quality formal education, language barriers, cultural differences, and social stigma due to their families' immigration status. This condition can lead to feelings of low self-esteem, economic dependence, and difficulty adapting to the surrounding community.

Conventional education is often insufficient to address these challenges because it tends to focus on cognitive and academic aspects. Therefore, a more contextual and empowering alternative educational approach is needed. Entrepreneurship education emerges as a strategic solution that not only equips children with practical knowledge but also cultivates entrepreneurial attitudes and mindsets that can transform their perspectives on life and the future.

Through entrepreneurship education, Malaysian immigrant children can learn to discover their potential, develop self-confidence, and understand that they can create opportunities even within limitations. Entrepreneurial activities packaged in an educational way, such as role-playing as a seller, making simple products, managing creations, and working in teams, can be an effective medium for instilling values of independence and responsibility (Febriandika & Gaida, 2021).

Furthermore, entrepreneurship education at an early age also supports the strengthening of children's social character. They learn about empathy, cooperation, honesty, and ethics in their interactions with their friends. This is especially important for immigrant children who need to adapt to a new social and cultural environment. Through game-based learning and project-based learning activities, they not only gained a fun learning experience but also had the opportunity to interact across cultures and build inclusive social skills.

Additionally, entrepreneurship education for Malaysian immigrant children can play a role in improving social integration between the immigrant community and the local population (Hamid & Everett, 2023). By fostering creative, productive, and collaborative attitudes from an early age, children can become agents of social change capable of bridging differences and building harmony amidst diversity.

In the long run, fostering an entrepreneurial spirit from an early age will have a significant impact on the future of these children. They will not only grow into economically independent individuals but also become a resilient and competitive generation in the face of global competition. Entrepreneurship education can be a means to break the cycle of structural poverty, reduce dependence on social assistance, and create a more

productive and empowered ecosystem for immigrant families (Shepherd et al., 2021).

However, the successful implementation of early childhood entrepreneurship education for Malaysian immigrant children requires the support of various parties. The roles of teachers, educational institutions, parents, and the government are very important in creating a conducive learning environment. Teachers must be able to act as creative facilitators who can integrate entrepreneurship learning with children's play activities (Kurniawati et al., 2024). Parents need to be active partners in guiding their children to apply entrepreneurial values at home. Meanwhile, policy support from the government and social institutions will ensure the program's sustainability and equitable access to education for immigrant communities.

Thus, entrepreneurship education for early childhood is not just a pedagogical innovation, but also a transformative social strategy that has the potential to shape Malaysia's immigrant generation into independent, characterful, and highly competitive individuals in the future. Learning that starts with small things like recognizing the value of money, sharing artwork, or creating simple products will be a strong foundation for the growth of a true entrepreneurial spirit, namely, the courage to dream, work hard, and create positive change for oneself and one's environment.

Method

The implementation of entrepreneurship education for Malaysian immigrant children uses a participatory, collaborative, and contextual approach. The participatory approach emphasizes the active involvement of children, teachers, and parents throughout the entire learning process (Cumbo & Selwyn, 2022). The teacher acts as a facilitator, providing space for children to express their ideas and participate in real-world activities, such as mini craft projects, planting small plants, or selling simple creations. Parents were also involved through home-based child mentoring, while local business owners were invited to share their experiences as real-life inspiration for the children (Sholeh et al., 2024).

Additionally, learning is conducted through a project-based approach (Project-Based Learning), which provides children with the opportunity to learn directly from experience. For example, the "Children's Mini Market" activity, where children make, arrange, and sell their own products. Through this activity, children learn to count, communicate, cooperate, and understand simple economic processes. Teachers can also develop contextual themes such as "From Seed to Product,"

"Making and Selling Toys," and "Sharing and Collaborating" to instill values of creativity, responsibility, and empathy.

Entrepreneurial values are integrated into the early childhood education curriculum through routine activities without changing the existing learning structure. For example, in role-playing activities, children learn to be sellers and buyers; in art activities, they are encouraged to transform recycled materials into sellable works of art; and in counting activities, they are taught simple money management. Through this fun and contextual integration, entrepreneurial education becomes a natural part of the character-building process for children from an early age.

Result and Discussion

Impact on Children

The implementation of entrepreneurship education for Malaysian immigrant children shows a significant impact on their personality, social, and cognitive development. Based on the results of observations and interviews with teachers and parents, it is evident that children have shown improvement in terms of self-confidence, independence, and initiative-taking abilities. They became more confident in expressing their opinions in front of the class, sharing ideas during group activities, and were not afraid to try new things. This indicates that the participatory and project-based approach implemented was able to positively foster self-confidence and the courage to take risks (Boissier et al., 2023).

Additionally, the children also showed an increased sense of responsibility and discipline. Through activities like making simple products, maintaining tools and materials, and selling their creations at the "Children's Mini Market," they learn to follow rules, manage their time, and complete tasks according to agreements. The value of hard work and perseverance began to show in how the children tried to complete their products despite facing difficulties.

Cognitively, children begin to understand basic economic concepts such as the value of goods, the buying and selling process, and the importance of appreciating their own and others' efforts. Activities like these provide concrete learning experiences, making abstract economic concepts easier to understand (Zen et al., 2022).

From a socio-emotional perspective, entrepreneurial activities cultivate communication skills, empathy, and leadership (Bukhari et al., 2024). Children learn to work together in teams, share tasks, and take on roles in group activities (Lubis et al., 2023). In the social context of immigrant children who often face cultural and linguistic differences, this experience is

crucial for fostering adaptability and social integration skills. Thus, entrepreneurship education not only develops cognitive abilities but also builds balanced social and emotional character.

Impact on Families and Communities

The positive impact of entrepreneurship education doesn't stop with children; it also extends to the family and community levels. Immigrant families who were previously less involved in their children's education are now showing higher enthusiasm. Parents are starting to see their children's potential more broadly, not just through academic grades, but also through their children's ability to be creative, take initiative, and work together.



Entrepreneurship education encourages parents to become active partners in the learning process. They are involved in accompanying the children in making products, helping prepare materials, and even participating in exhibitions and bazaars showcasing the children's work. This involvement strengthens the emotional bond between parents and children, and fosters a new awareness that education is not only the responsibility of schools but also of families.

For the Malaysian immigrant community, children's entrepreneurial activities serve as a means of social and economic empowerment. Joint activities such as skills training, children's product exhibitions, and community work programs foster a spirit of collaboration and social solidarity. These activities strengthen social bonds between residents and cultivate a culture of mutual support amidst limitations (Engkizar et al., 2024).

Additionally, the involvement of local business owners in sharing experiences and inspiration also broadens the community's understanding of economic opportunities in their surrounding environment. In other words, early childhood entrepreneurship education has become a social bridge that strengthens the relationship between schools, families, and communities within an inclusive and productive learning ecosystem.

Impact on the Social Environment

Early childhood entrepreneurship education also has a transformative impact on the broader social environment (Elder & Stordal, 2025; Klapper & Fayolle, 2023). Children who are accustomed to thinking creatively, independently, and solution-oriented grow into individuals who are more positive toward change. They don't just passively wait for opportunities, but actively create them. This kind of attitude indirectly influences the surrounding environment, as children begin to become positive role models for their peers and the community.

The community members who witnessed the children's enthusiasm and creativity in their activities began to see the immigrant community from a new perspective – no longer as a weak and dependent group, but as an empowered and productive community. This has the potential to reduce negative stereotypes and increase social acceptance of immigrant groups.



Furthermore, entrepreneurship education from an early age supports the development of a productive culture within society. When children grow up with values of responsibility, hard work, and innovation, they will carry that spirit into adulthood and contribute to social and economic progress in their environment. In the long run, this creates a positive cycle of social development based on independence, creativity, and cross-cultural collaboration.

Challenges and Strategies for Program Strengthening

Although it has a positive impact, the implementation of entrepreneurship education for Malaysian immigrant children is not without various challenges. The main challenges are the limitations of human resources and funding. Most educational institutions for immigrant children do not yet have educators who understand the concepts and methods of character-based entrepreneurship learning. As a result, implementation in the field is still simple and not sustainable.

Additionally, cultural and language differences between the child, teacher, and school environment also pose obstacles to the implementation of activities. Immigrant children who are still adapting to the local language sometimes have difficulty understanding

instructions, while teachers also need time to understand the cultural backgrounds of these children.

Another significant challenge is the lack of educational policy support from both the government and formal institutions. Entrepreneurship education at the early childhood level (PAUD) is still not considered an essential part of the official curriculum, but rather a mere supplementary activity. As a result, there is no systematic regulation to support funding, teacher training, or the development of early childhood entrepreneurship teaching materials.

Program Strengthening Strategy

To address these challenges, a comprehensive and sustainable strengthening strategy is needed. First, strengthening the capacity of teachers and facilitators is crucial. Through training and workshops, teachers can be equipped with an understanding of entrepreneurial philosophy, project-based learning techniques, and how to instill entrepreneurial values through games and thematic activities. Creative and trained teachers will be able to naturally integrate entrepreneurship education into children's daily activities.

Second, cross-sectoral partnerships are needed, involving educational institutions, the government, businesses, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This collaboration can create a stronger learning ecosystem – for example, through mini-internship programs, the provision of learning resources, or financial support for children's entrepreneurial activities. Local business owners can be inspiring mentors who introduce children to the world of work and simple business ethics.

Third, contextual and inclusive learning modules relevant to the socio-cultural conditions of Malaysian immigrant children need to be developed. This module not only contains simple economic activities but also connects them to life values, culture, and children's everyday experiences. By doing so, children feel that entrepreneurial activities are not something foreign, but rather a part of their own lives.

Fourth, it is important to create an inclusive and non-discriminatory learning environment. Children from diverse backgrounds should feel accepted, valued, and have equal opportunities to learn. This kind of environment will boost self-confidence and encourage children to interact socially without fear or feeling left out.



Finally, the sustainability of the program can be strengthened through progressive education policies from the government and relevant institutions. Integrating entrepreneurship education into the early childhood curriculum is necessary to ensure that this program is not just a temporary activity, but an integral part of character and competency development in children from an early age.

With these strategies, entrepreneurship education not only serves as a simple means of economic learning but also as a tool for social transformation, fostering the emergence of a generation of Malaysian immigrants who are independent, creative, adaptable, and ready to compete in future global life.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education for Malaysian immigrant children plays an important role in shaping a generation that is independent, creative, and competitive. Through a participatory, collaborative, and project-based approach, children not only learn simple economic concepts but also cultivate self-confidence, responsibility, and communication skills.

This program also has a positive impact on families and communities by encouraging parental involvement and strengthening social solidarity. Despite still facing challenges such as limited resources and policy support, entrepreneurship education has proven to be an effective strategy for the social and economic empowerment of immigrant communities. Overall, entrepreneurship education from an early age is a strategic step toward creating a future generation that is independent, innovative, and ready to face global challenges.

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