

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reflect-Act-Transform:Digital Entrepreneurship as a Learning Tool for the 21st Century Graduate

HUSNA BUDIN & NURAZZURA MOHAMAD DIAH

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

ABSTRACT *In today's rapidly evolving digital economy, higher education institutions face the growing challenge of bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical applications to prepare graduates for the demands of the modern workforce. Literature emphasizes the importance of developing an entrepreneurial mindset in the digital age while noting that traditional teaching methods often fall short in cultivating real-world readiness. Experiential learning is viewed as vital for students' development, and studies highlight both strengths and gaps in Malaysian entrepreneurship education. Therefore, this study explores how digital entrepreneurship acts as a dynamic experiential learning platform that fosters critical reflection and perspective transformation. Grounded in Jack Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, the study adopted a qualitative design involving 20 purposively selected student entrepreneurs from various academic disciplines. Data collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation were transcribed and thematically analyzed. Findings show that sustained engagement in digital entrepreneurship promotes deep self-reflection, challenges existing assumptions, and cultivates adaptive thinking and behavior. Participants noted the improvements in skills that are frequently undeveloped in traditional classroom learning, including crisis management, independent decision-making, creativity, intercultural communication, and self-confidence. The findings show that digital entrepreneurship is a life-changing educational experience rather than just a way of developing skills. With practice through real-world challenges and interactions, students develop the motivation to experience mindset transformations. This approach not only increases comprehension but also fosters hands-on experience and higher-quality education, which encourages lifelong learning, boosts marketability, graduate competitiveness, and enables rapid curriculum development. This paper advocates embedding experiential digital entrepreneurship in higher education curricula to better equip graduates as reflective, proactive, and resilient contributors in the 21st-century digital economy.*

Keywords: *Digital Entrepreneurship, Experiential Learning, Transformative Learning, Education*

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving digital economy, higher education institutions face the growing challenge of bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical applications to prepare graduates for the demands of the modern workforce. As information technology infrastructure rapidly expands to meet education and economic needs, new expectations are placed on the skills and adaptability of the workforce. According to Oviawe and Uwameiye (2020), the need for professionals who are adaptable and flexible has increased because of globalization. Employers are increasingly seeking candidates who can solve problems, think creatively and

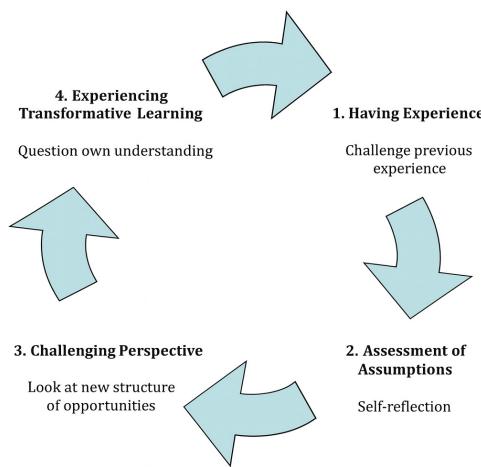
easy to work with others in addition to being digitally proficient. The literature highlights the importance of developing an entrepreneurial mindset in the digital age while noting that traditional teaching methods often fail to foster real-world readiness. Entrepreneurial mindset, according to Cui et al. (2021), is the capacity to recognize opportunities through information processing, pattern identification, and knowledge, which appears to be the secret to success. Students are better prepared for the workforce when this kind of thinking is fostered in them. Yet theoretical knowledge alone is not enough to develop such a mindset. In order to address the shortcomings and strengths of Malaysian entrepreneurship education, experiential learning is therefore regarded as crucial for student growth. This approach promotes active participation and critical thinking, which offers a promising approach. However, its integration into entrepreneurship education in Malaysia remains limited.

Research by Abdul Ghani Azmi (2021) identifies that one of the main causes of graduate unemployment is the misalignment between industry demands and academic curricula. Nor et al. (2021) express concern about the low degree of entrepreneurship among Malaysian youth. One reason for this gap, according to Zainol et al. (2021), is the continued reliance on traditional teaching approaches in Malaysian educational institutions, where theoretical foundations dominate. As Pamungkas et al. (2021) observe, students often struggle to translate such knowledge into action. Scholars stress the significance of teaching strategies that address students' needs, experiences, and emotions while providing them with pertinent skills in order to address this (Smith, 2012, as quoted in McDonald, 2020). In this situation, education ought to go beyond theory-based classroom instruction and incorporate practical exercises that stimulate students' bodies and minds. An increasingly experiential learning strategy promotes active student involvement throughout the educational journey, which strengthens their sense of accountability and ownership in the learning process, according to Noor et al. (2020). According to Daspit et al. (2021), experiential learning is crucial for cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset since it improves skills and changes how people see and seize opportunities. However, due to a lack of institutional support and a lack of educator expertise, university entrepreneurship instruction is still less effective (Hua & Ren, 2020). These gaps are critical since graduates who lack entrepreneurial abilities frequently hold low-paying occupations and are more likely to suffer in unstable economies (Johnson, 2020). Rethinking entrepreneurial education in a way that encourages experiential learning and mindset change is necessary to address this problem.

While existing studies highlight the benefits of experiential learning and the importance of cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset, little is known about how digital entrepreneurship functions as a dynamic experiential learning platform. In particular, the tools through which digital activities foster critical reflection, applied knowledge, and mindset transformation remain underexplored, especially in the Malaysian context, where graduate unemployment and skill gaps persist. Therefore, this study explores how digital entrepreneurship acts as a dynamic experiential learning platform that fosters critical reflection and perspective transformation. This study is grounded on Jack Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, with Figure 1 presenting the adapted stages of transformative learning as conceptualized

in this research framework. This study adds significantly to the body of knowledge by providing fresh perspectives on the difficulties facing education, especially when it comes to teaching and learning in the digital era. It offers a more practical method that enables students to use their theoretical understanding while adjusting to the rapid advancement of technology. Additionally, this study supports the goals of UNESCO's 2030 Education Agenda, which highlights the significance of high-quality, inclusive education. This study also supports the objective of giving future generations the values, information, and abilities necessary to live with dignity, fulfil their goals, and contribute to society by encouraging creative and pertinent teaching methods. It further reinforces the commitment to ensuring inclusive, lifelong learning opportunities for all by the year 2030.

Figure 1. Mezirow's Transformative Learning Stages Adapted for this Study



Experiential Learning and Graduate Readiness

Experiential learning actively engages learners in meaningful experiences, followed by reflection to foster new skills, behaviors, and mindsets. Its core aim is to drive transformative change by enhancing students' knowledge, competencies, and attitudes while leveraging their existing strengths (Pamungkas et al., 2021). Experiential learning dramatically raised the potential of students' work, according to one research done at a Midwestern institution in the US with 22 business management students and 13 industry experts who were asked to assess the students' performance (Hsiao et al., 2020). Furthermore, Trongtorsak et al. (2021) showed that activities like simulation, interaction, and application improve learning efficacy across disciplines in a study that involved 21 specialists with at least three years of expertise in related domains. These results support the idea that experiential learning fosters flexibility and problem-solving abilities in addition to technical skill development. Scholars point out that context and facilitation play a major role in experiential learning. According to Jonathan and Laik (2024), teachers should act as facilitators who guide the students through experience rather than just imparting knowledge, whereas Nabaz and Govand (2021) emphasize the necessity of establishing inclusive and supportive settings. Taken together, they demonstrated that experiential learning is most effective

when supported by institutional frameworks and active instructor participation. However, theory-driven approaches still dominate entrepreneurial education, exposing a significant gap in applied, experiential learning.

The 21st Century Entrepreneurial Mindset

The entrepreneurial mindset appears in an expanding body of literature as an essential skill in dealing with the uncertainties of the twenty-first century. According to Korte (2018), agility, adaptability, creativity, and social influence are the key characteristics, while Kooskora (2020) contends that adjusting to new difficulties demands a change in how people think and behave. Despite the theoretical centre placed on the entrepreneurial mindset in these studies, empirical data indicates that entrepreneurship education can foster these qualities. For instance, Wardana et al. (2020), in a study of 390 participants in East Java, found that entrepreneurship education positively shaped students' self-efficacy, attitudes, and mindset, whereas Saptono et al. (2020) show that such education not only enhances knowledge and skills but also fosters the motivation to embrace an entrepreneurial mindset. Despite these contributions, most approaches remain theory-driven and classroom-based. Digital entrepreneurship has received little attention as a medium for experiential learning that could more actively encourage an entrepreneurial mindset. By investigating how digital entrepreneurship offers a dynamic platform for experiential learning and identifying the digital activities that support university students' development of an entrepreneurial attitude, this study seeks to close this gap.

Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative approach to explore how digital entrepreneurship serves as a dynamic experiential learning platform that fosters critical reflection and perspective transformation among university students. A qualitative design was chosen because it emphasizes how individuals perceive and assign meaning to their experiences. According to Liebenberg and Hall (2024), qualitative research is particularly suited to investigating complex, nuanced, and subjective experiences that are often not captured through quantitative methods. To achieve the study's objectives, two methods were employed, which are in-depth interviews and participant observation. Interviews allowed participants to articulate their lived experiences of engaging in digital entrepreneurship, while observations enabled the researchers to witness entrepreneurial practices directly in participants' online business environments. In some cases, the researchers engaged as customers to better understand the dynamics of participants' entrepreneurial activities. Together, these methods provided complementary insights into how digital platforms facilitate experiential learning and entrepreneurial mindset development. By utilizing this method, the research objective was met, as the data gathered was descriptive and non-numerical in nature.

Purposive sampling was used to choose the participants. A list from the IIUM Entrepreneurship Development Centre (EDC) was used to start the participant selection process. Some of the potential participants who were contacted did not fit the requirements. Snowball sampling was therefore used after students who fit the requirements were referred. Twenty people from a variety of academic fields, including the human sciences, economics, pure science, engineering, and

medicine, took part in the study as a result of this approach. They were 20 to 24 years old Malaysians from the International Islamic University Malaysia who managed online businesses while pursuing degrees. The following criteria were used to recruit them: (1) gender, (2) academic year, (3) business kind, and (4) duration of experience with online business. There was a gender imbalance in the sample, with 15 females and 5 males. This distribution occurred because only five male students met the inclusion criteria and consented to participate, whereas a larger number of female students were actively engaged in digital entrepreneurship, reflecting actual participation trends at IIUM. Participants' engagement in digital entrepreneurship varied. Some ran businesses linked to their coursework or university-supported programs, while others operated independently. In accordance with this diversity, the study was able to gather a wide range of perspectives on how digital entrepreneurship facilitates experiential learning. With one to five years of entrepreneurial experience, participants managed businesses on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and e-commerce platforms.

Zoom and Google Meet were used for online interviews in order to suit participants' schedules. The semi-structured framework of each session, which lasted roughly an hour, allowed freedom in investigating participants' experiences while keeping the research aims front and centre. With the participants' permission, audio and video recordings of every session were made. Online interviews were the most efficient approach because data collection was conducted over the extended semester break, when all IIUM students were off campus. To guarantee systematic analysis, the researchers went over the verbatim transcriptions of the recorded interviews several times. Ethical concerns such as informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for the privacy and autonomy of participants were carefully taken into account throughout the study. To find patterns in the data and analyze how digital entrepreneurship promotes experiential learning and the growth of an entrepreneurial mindset, this study applied thematic analysis. Since it enables researchers to methodically examine recurrent experiences, concepts, and behaviors within the data, thematic analysis is ideally suited for qualitative research (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Findings and Discussion

The results of this study show three main themes that demonstrate how digital entrepreneurship fosters the growth of an entrepreneurial mindset and provides an interesting experiential learning environment. Through these experiences, they are able to develop, adapt, and improve their entrepreneurial skills in practical settings. The first theme, which is learning by doing, demonstrates how people gain information and abilities by actively participating in their businesses. Participants emphasized that practical experience helped them grasp the reality of entrepreneurship and gradually improve their talents, as opposed to merely depending on theoretical studies. As Anis explained,

“At first, I started with selling makeup products, then I stopped and tried to be a scarf founder, but then I because I still lacked knowledge on managing it. I try to follow my friend to sell health products and become an agent. I started with a small amount of capital, and slowly, until now, I managed to upgrade my level to a leader position”.

This illustrates how iterative practice, experimentation, and persistence enable skill growth and business acumen. Similarly, Zulaikha, a business administration student, noted that engaging in digital entrepreneurship helped her to overcome shyness and improve communication skills:

“From doing business, I learned. I start to make videos in 2021. I tried it slowly and step by step, from video tutorials to sharing tips and so on. At first, I was really shy to show up, but along the way, I learned how to adapt to it, how to smile, and more content ideas, and as we can see now, much content has been created. The same goes for copywriting. I make stories every day and learn how to engage with customers. In the beginning, my words were kind of formal but now are more relaxed and informal. I learned slowly”.

Despite being a business student, Zulaikha admitted that hands-on, real-world experiences had a greater influence and increased her confidence. Her reaction aligns with a study conducted in Taiwan by Liao et al. (2022), which found that digital experience improves communication skills, autonomy, and authenticity. Additionally, because technology is growing fast, there is a need for student entrepreneurs to stay up to date in order to avoid falling behind. Participants in all cases emphasized the need for ongoing education and adaptation to market and technology shifts in digital entrepreneurship, which is consistent with Mezirow’s (1997) concept of transformative learning, which holds that critical reflection on experiences results in a change in perspective.

Shiha also has the same opinion as Sarah’s perspective, emphasizing that hands-on practice is essential for entrepreneurs to enhance and refine their skills. This approach, rooted in learning by doing, reflects a natural and effective way humans learn. The participants’ responses support this view, as many shared that their involvement in online business has enabled them to acquire new skills and strengthen existing ones through direct experience. Proven by Aiman, he said:

“From my online business, I learn how to do graphics, websites, colour combinations, and how to deliver content. The online business makes us do all these things. It is very useful for us in the future, not only in business but on other occasions also. Want it or not, digital entrepreneurship helps us to develop an entrepreneurial mindset by giving us experiences”.

Engaging directly in meaningful experiences, followed by reflection, allows individuals to critically assess their assumptions and adapt their perspectives. By navigating real-world challenges, participants recalibrate their understanding of entrepreneurial processes and build adaptive, reflective, and resilient mindsets, which are the core components of Mezirow’s theory. Moreover, participants pointed out that developing critical and creative thinking abilities was advantageous from experience. For instance, Nurul and Yamni discussed how running internet enterprises helped them become more resilient, approach work realistically and use leadership abilities under duress. The findings support the work of Norris (2018), who found that people with an entrepreneurial mindset had high improvisational skills and creative and critical thinking abilities that allow them to generate new ideas. All participants believed that real-world practice helped develop mindsets more successfully than classroom-based learning alone, despite differences in the kinds of businesses undertaken and the rate at which skills were acquired. To sum,

findings show that experiential learning not only improves their skills but also assists in forming their personalities, especially in how it influences their thoughts and actions. Such personal development is difficult to attain through theoretical learning alone. The experiences shared by the participants bring into line with the discussion of Pamungkas et al. (2021), who stated that experiential learning can enhance an individual's knowledge, abilities, and existing skills. Through consistent practice, participants observed noticeable improvements in their competencies and capabilities.

The second theme, reflective learning, indicates that participants regularly evaluate their actions, learn from successes and failures, and adjust their strategies to improve performance, fostering self-awareness and critical thinking. This process aligns with Mezirow's theory, which posits that critical reflection enables learners to examine assumptions, reinterpret experiences, and transform perspectives. Nuh highlighted this adaptive process:

“The market will keep changing, and we cannot keep on sitting in our comfort zone. We need to reflect on our skills; we cannot just depend on what we have”.

Such reflections allowed participants to differentiate between prior knowledge and insights gained through active engagement in digital entrepreneurship. Nadirah exemplified this reflective adaptation:

“From the beginning, I have been really into business. I feel like I have many opportunities and should not give up. I will always use my mistakes and failures today as a lesson and improve them to make them better in the future”.

Similarly, Najwa emphasized problem-solving development through reflective practice:

“By doing online business, I gain problem-solving skills. I experienced it by myself where that time I thought that people would not buy my product, so how am I going to finish it up? Then, I learn by looking at others' achievements and personal experiences”.

Reflection also extended to creativity and differentiation in product design. Nurul explained how critical evaluation of her offerings led to innovative outcomes:

“Try to make fun of your product, which makes it different from others. Like my business, I try to make my product different from those you can get from Shopee or another place. The quality and design need to be unique. Need to be creative and avoid laziness”.

The following examples show how reflective learning in digital business helps learners acquire knowledge from experience, modify their actions, and improve their thinking skills. Looking through Mezirow's concept, students not only recognize their knowledge limitations but also change their way of seeing opportunities and challenges. By examining consumer preferences, assessing operational efficacy, and learning from both triumphs and failures, participants practiced critical thinking, creativity, and decision-making skills, which are necessary for a mindset of entrepreneurship. Reflection in digital entrepreneurship is therefore not a passive process; rather, it is a type of experiential learning that improves adaptability and promotes long-term business growth.

The third theme, which is learning from crises, shows how participants react and

make choices in response to difficulties, including internal failures, competition, and customer problems, which boosts resilience, problem-solving abilities, and entrepreneurial optimism. In line with Mezirow's concept, which stresses learning through the analysis of difficult circumstances, review of presumptions, and adjustment of viewpoints, these experiences stimulated critical thinking and adaptive decision-making. For instance, Nuh, who oversees a website services company, explained how he handles client emergencies:

"We will try our best to find the best solution to meet our customers' needs. For example, a customer requests to complete it at a specific time, but we know that we cannot, so we try to find the best solution to meet the customer's need without losing the customer".

Similarly, Shuhada highlighted strategies for managing customer dissatisfaction:

"When dealing with a mad customer, there is a technique on how to overcome their temper. If they want their parcel immediately but we cannot do so because it is out of stock, usually, I will find a way to tackle their mood using certain words that could twist their attention. That is how I overcome problems and handle my customers".

Participants also reported learning from competitive pressures, demonstrating strategic adaptation and creative problem-solving. Shiha noted:

"I have three competitors. I have to think about how to make more sales like them. How am I going to compete with their sales that reach thousands while I am just a student? So, I came up with gift ideas or do free COD".

Sarah echoed this, emphasizing the importance of proactive engagement:

"Competitors are always a risk. We need to think about how to engage more on social media and need to be very good at marketing, not only focusing on our circle only".

These experiences illustrate that confronting crises facilitates transformative learning. As Motta and Galina (2023) argue that students need practical learning experiences that expose them to real-world situations, such as dealing with issues involving customers and competitors helps them learn more effectively than just studying theories. In accordance with Mezirow's, reflecting on these crises allows students to examine assumptions, generate innovative solutions, and change behaviors, all of which strengthen cognitive and metacognitive abilities. Experiencing these difficulties directly can enhance their business abilities. A smart entrepreneur must think critically, be innovative in coming up with solutions, and be open because issues are a natural part of running a business. This is how developing an entrepreneurial mindset is aided by experiential learning in digital entrepreneurship.

Internal difficulties also surfaced as significant educational opportunities. For instance, Liana lacked confidence in her ability to manage challenging circumstances at first, but she progressively gained resilience by thinking back on each setback and implementing constructive techniques. Alia outlined a similar path, gaining perseverance and flexibility via numerous encounters with unsatisfied customers. Despite facing numerous challenges, the participants shared how they managed to

overcome obstacles to sustain their performance and position in business. These difficulties described are aligned with the study by Samara and Terzian (2021), which outlined common challenges in digital entrepreneurship. The findings indicate that crisis-based learning in digital entrepreneurship promotes critical thinking, creativity, and emotional regulation, contributing substantially to the cultivation of an entrepreneurial mindset. By navigating both external and internal challenges, participants transform their perspectives, enhance problem-solving skills, and develop the resilience necessary for sustained entrepreneurial growth.

This research also identified several activities relevant to digital entrepreneurship that are well-suited for student entrepreneurs to practice. These activities were drawn from the participants' own experiences and recommendations, particularly in relation to supporting other students aspiring to become future entrepreneurs. The identified activities are categorized into three categories, which are operational planning, market assessment, and professional skill development. Creating a business plan or using tools like the Business Model Canvas (BMC) are examples of structured business preparation that fall under operational planning. Participants suggested that planning helps create basic knowledge, lowers risk, and offers a clear roadmap upon starting a business. Melur and Nadirah stressed that the BMC enables them to model business processes and determine their strengths and limitations. BMC lists important components like as revenue, target clients, goods, and expenses. It gives student entrepreneurs a formal framework to plan and improve their business operations, and it is widely employed by start-ups.

Similarly, Adam responded:

“There is one method that can be used, which is to create the BMC first. From it, we can see the path of our business in terms of our suppliers, our main business, and many other things”.

These practices align with research by Saputra and Yustitia (2022) and Fitriani et al. (2020), who note that BMC promotes structured decision-making and operational efficiency. Market assessment emerged as the second category that is considered as a critical activity in digital entrepreneurship, encompassing trial-and-error experimentation, engagement with professional entrepreneurs, and collaboration with peers. Participants underlined that, especially in the early phases of reselling or small-scale ventures, testing goods or services in the market enables businesses to determine trends, assess consumer demand, and improve strategies while lowering financial risk. For example, Shiha pointed out that starting with existing products offers useful insights that subsequently will support the development of original offerings. Najwa also stated that a trial-and-error strategy is also useful to see the potential of the products in the market. Significantly, participants stressed that mentorship programs, online business courses and advice from other business owners are the best ways to aid trial and error practice. According to Alia, Yamni, and Liana, who pointed out that interactions with peers and professionals offer insightful viewpoints and speed up learning, Amsyar underlined that expert consultation improves decision-making and aids in navigating unclear or inadequate market information. Yamni said:

“Sometimes we can get free online coaching from leaders and educators; don’t miss it because that is a big chance for us. That experience and sharing will teach us, and

when we apply it, it will be more effective and have a huge impact on our business because their vibes and energy are so powerful. This is what I do”.

Liana affirmed this:

“I learn by asking other entrepreneurs. I asked them how they run their business, and I also joined some free online business classes too. For me, it is useful because in the beginning we never know much about online business, but having the right circle and coaching helps me a lot. Besides, I also learn from my friends who already run their businesses”.

Mezirow's theory, which stresses experience reflection, critical evaluation of presumptions, and adoption of new viewpoints, is analytically consistent with these patterns of conduct. Working with others provides a variety of viewpoints that question presumptions, and participants can learn about market preferences and develop their own company plan through trial and error. Participants engage in transformative learning through reflection and consultation, which helps them in strengthening an entrepreneurial mindset by promoting adaptability, strategic thinking, and evidence-based decision-making. The benefits of digital market assessment activities align with the findings of Trongtorsak et al. (2021); collaboration, consultation, and engaging with other entrepreneurs are essential 21st-century practices that promote mutual learning, knowledge sharing, and skill development. By integrating reflective practice with real-world engagement, students develop the capacity to navigate dynamic markets and adaptive business decisions, highlighting the theoretical and practical significance of market assessment in experiential entrepreneurial learning.

A vital component of experiential learning in digital entrepreneurship is the third category, which is digital professional skills. Participants noted that strengthening skills such as communication, copywriting and media editing enhance customer satisfaction, foster trust, and preserve a company's reputation. For instance, participants mentioned that engaging directly with clients through live sessions or interactive content allows them to build rapport, convey positive ideals, and adjust their approach in response to quick feedback. Anis also underlined how important it is for business owners to have excellent communication skills since they help them draw in more clients and provide for greater flexibility when engaging with them. She stated:

“For me, we need to have many skills in running an online business. If we know how to handle customers, manage our platform, and twist people's mindsets, within any platform we can make money.”

In response to Mezirow's concept, these exercises can be seen as conscious attempts to test current knowledge and broaden skill sets via critical thinking and continuous practice. However, a few of the participants emphasized that communication is not just verbal exchanges. Written communication is also very important in the context of digital entrepreneurship. In particular, copywriting is thought to be one of the most significant skills in digital entrepreneurship since it is the main way to interact with clients and provide value online. As Melur mentioned:

“Focus on copywriting. You need to use correct words to attract your customer and make sure customers get the message”.

In addition, participants' engagement in self-directed learning such as exploring online tutorials, experimenting with digital tools, and applying knowledge to their businesses demonstrates a cycle of action, reflection, and skill adaptation, which is central to transformative learning. For instance, Shiha and Rauda described how pushing beyond their comfort zones facilitated the acquisition of editing, design, and content creation skills. Rauda said:

"We need to explore by ourselves, mastering skills such as editing skills. In these present days, there are many ways to edit videos with a variety of features, and if we don't try to use them and learn, we will never know. We need to try and master it".

Meanwhile, Zulaikha and Adam emphasized continual experimentation and refinement to improve product quality and market appeal, Zulaikha said:

"We can watch the video and learn certain skills, and then we can start to try. If we practice frequently, we can do it. For example, I start with editing with those cute-cute apps, and then I try Canva and am still learning. If we want to improve our sales, we need catchy posters that could attract people. When people see it, they will be like, 'Wow! So pretty!' like that".

Similarly, Adam mentioned:

"I study on YouTube and try to practice it. I learn how to handle my product to make sure it is of good quality. I also learn how to maintain quality, how to improve my sales, and how to handle my business. In the beginning, Google helps a lot, but when you grow bigger, you need a tutor, of course".

These practices underline the value of professional skills and indicate that they are essential to digital entrepreneurship. They develop resilience, problem-solving skills, and reflective and adaptive thinking, all of which are essential for developing an entrepreneurial mindset. The findings of this research match the study by Anggarini (2022), which revealed that the younger generation in the gig economy not only competes for job prospects but also have the potential and skills to create employment with technology. Additionally, this study highlights that mastering a skill requires consistent practice and gradual improvement over time. To develop these skills effectively, activities such as communication, media editing and design, copywriting, and other digital competencies must be regularly practiced in diverse and engaging ways. The results of this study further reinforce the findings of Ghafar (2020) and Isabelle (2020), who found that experiential learning activities significantly enhance entrepreneurial skills and lead to more effective and higher-quality learning outcomes. This study revealed that experiential learning activities in digital entrepreneurship encourage student entrepreneurs to engage more directly with real-world situations, thereby supporting the development of an entrepreneurial mindset and enhancing their overall learning process.

The findings show that digital entrepreneurship serves as a dynamic experiential learning platform that directly addresses the research goal while encouraging critical reflection and perspective transformation. Findings from this study demonstrate that in-depth reflection and development of thought and behavior can be fostered through consistent participation in digital entrepreneurship. Participants noted the improvements in skills that are frequently undeveloped in traditional classroom

learning, including crisis management, independent decision-making, creativity, intercultural communication, and self-confidence. On top of that, participants took part in digital entrepreneurship activities that enhanced their experiential learning process by successfully applying theoretical knowledge in practical settings.

Participants appeared to pass through all four stages of the reflective learning cycle. According to Cranton (1994), Mezirow's theory provides a thorough and in-depth framework for comprehending how students interpret, evaluate, and reinterpret their experiences. This is clear from the outcomes, which show that participants first had actual experiences before assessing the level and quality of those experiences. As a result of this contemplation, they looked for greater opportunities for development and progress, which eventually caused them to reevaluate and reinterpret their own knowledge and viewpoints. Mezirow's theory asserts that individuals do not apply their existing understanding to new situations; instead, they need to look into different perspectives to develop a new understanding of the subjects as they keep moving forward. The findings demonstrate that aligning theory with practice enhances transformative learning, as participants reflected on their experiences and converted those reflections into significant actions, thereby validating the relevance of Mezirow's theory in practical learning environments.

The benefits identified in previous research become more relevant when participants of this study show positive results. They are able to achieve a more meaningful learning experience as they grow their skills and enhance their abilities. This illustrates how theoretical principles of experiential learning, including active involvement, reflection and application, result in measurable enhancements in graduates' performance and preparedness for twenty first century economy. Furthermore, these findings are in line with studies that suggest an entrepreneurial mindset enables individuals to focus on opportunities rather than obstacles and to approach the world from new perspectives, enhancing adaptability, creativity, and social impact. Importantly, these outcomes indicated that the objective of this study to explore how digital entrepreneurship serves as a dynamic experiential learning platform fostering critical reflection and perspective transformation, has been achieved. Beyond that, this study shows that experiential learning is an effective strategy for student entrepreneurs since it gives them firsthand knowledge and encourages personal growth by posing real-world problems. Experiencing digital entrepreneurship allows students to engage with reality rather than merely knowing theory alone, which emphasizes the importance and significance of developing an entrepreneurial mindset. This method connects theoretical ideas with real-world applications, improving students' flexibility and entrepreneurial abilities, which are the two qualities that are essential for succeeding in the digital age.

However, there are a number of limitations to this study. The study was restricted to one university, and the participants were selected from a narrow variety of academic fields. As a result, the results could not accurately reflect the larger group of student entrepreneurs in Malaysian universities. Additionally, there was a gender imbalance among participants, with female students outnumbering male students, which could have influenced the perspectives and experiences reported. Therefore, future research should aim to include a more balanced and diverse sample across multiple universities and academic disciplines, as well as ensure equitable gender representation, to provide a more comprehensive understanding

of how digital entrepreneurship fosters experiential learning and the development of an entrepreneurial mindset.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings show that digital entrepreneurship is a life-changing educational experience rather than just a way of developing skills. With practice through real-world challenges and interactions, students develop motivation for lifelong learning, experience mindset transformations. Additionally, the practice improves adaptability and resilience, which are the two qualities that are essential to compete in the current unstable economy. The entrepreneurial mindset, which is becoming more widely acknowledged as a fundamental skill for graduates prepared for the twenty-first century, is greatly influenced by digital entrepreneurship. From the findings, it is proven that digital entrepreneurship supports experiential learning in tangible ways. This approach not only increases comprehension but also fosters hands-on experience, and higher-quality education, which encourages lifelong learning, boosts marketability, graduate competitiveness, and enables rapid curriculum development. An entrepreneurial mindset is valuable for all individuals, not just entrepreneurs, as it cultivates essential skills such as problem-solving, creative thinking, and adaptability. Students with this mindset are more likely to view challenges as opportunities rather than difficulties.

To effectively support this development, universities and educators should design structured experiential learning programs, provide mentorship opportunities, integrate digital tools, and facilitate engagement with professional entrepreneurs, ensuring students apply theory into practice. Collaboration among all stakeholders, including students, educators, universities, families, and policymakers, is essential. Universities must take the lead in innovating learning environments that utilize digital tools and more experience-based learning. The key component of bridging theoretical knowledge with educational practices is by linking the classroom setting to real-world experience that promotes proactive learning and firsthand application. There is an inadequate amount of study on experiential learning in digital entrepreneurship. Therefore, to provide a better understanding and raise awareness on preparing students for the challenges of the twenty-first century, further research is necessary.

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