

Bridging Digital Literacy and Entrepreneurship: Empowering High School Students through Social Media Utilization in a Community Service Program

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Abstract

This community service program aims to enhance the entrepreneurial mindset of high school students through the utilization of digital platforms, particularly social media as a marketing tool. The background of this program is based on the low level of students' understanding of entrepreneurship and the suboptimal use of social media for productive purposes. The method used in this program is a participatory approach combined with experiential learning, implemented through training sessions, hands-on practice, and mentoring activities. The program was conducted in several stages, including needs assessment, entrepreneurship and digital marketing training, content creation practice, and evaluation. The results show a significant improvement in students' understanding of entrepreneurship, digital marketing skills, creativity in content creation, and self-confidence. In addition, students began to realize that social media can be used not only for entertainment but also as a potential tool for business development. Therefore, this program can be considered effective in fostering students' entrepreneurial mindset through a simple yet practical approach.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Digital Marketing, High School Students, Community Service, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology in recent years has significantly influenced various aspects of life, including the economic and entrepreneurial sectors. The presence of the internet and digital platforms such as social media and online marketplaces has changed the way people conduct business activities. Nowadays, marketing strategies are no longer limited to conventional methods, but have shifted towards digital approaches that are more flexible, efficient, and capable of reaching a wider audience (Dwivedi et al., 2021). High school students represent a generation that is highly familiar with digital technology. They are active users of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, and they adapt quickly to technological changes. However, most students still use social media mainly for entertainment and social interaction rather than for productive or economic purposes. This condition shows a gap between students' digital literacy and their ability to utilize digital platforms effectively for entrepreneurship. In fact, when used properly, social media can become a powerful tool for building a business, promoting products, and expanding market reach (Kraus et al., 2022).

In this context, community service programs conducted by university students play an important role as a bridge between knowledge and practical application. University students act not only as facilitators but also as mentors who guide high school students in understanding and practicing entrepreneurship, especially in the digital context. The approach used in this program is experiential learning, where students actively participate in the learning process through direct practice. This method is considered more effective compared to conventional lecture-based learning because students can gain deeper understanding through real experiences.

Previous studies indicate that practice-based entrepreneurship education can improve creativity, confidence, and entrepreneurial intention among students (Ratten & Jones, 2021). In addition, integrating digital technology into learning activities can enhance essential 21st-century skills such as creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. Based on this background, this community service program aims to develop the entrepreneurial mindset of high school students through the use of social media as a digital marketing tool. It also aims to improve students' skills in creating promotional content and understanding basic marketing strategies.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service program was designed as an educational intervention aimed at enhancing high school students' understanding of entrepreneurship and their ability to utilize digital media productively. The program adopted a participatory approach combined with experiential learning methods, emphasizing active student involvement throughout the learning process. By positioning students as active participants rather than passive recipients, the program sought to foster critical thinking, creativity, and practical skills relevant to today's digital economy. The participants consisted of high school students who demonstrated an interest in entrepreneurship and digital media, making them a suitable target group for capacity-building activities. The overall structure of the program was systematically organized into several stages, including needs assessment, training, hands-on practice, mentoring, and evaluation, each designed to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable learning experience.

Needs Assessment Stage

The initial phase of this community service program focused on identifying the participants' baseline knowledge and needs, particularly in relation to entrepreneurship and the use of social media. This stage was conducted through simple observations and informal discussions, allowing for a more natural and context-driven understanding of students' conditions. Such an approach enabled the facilitators to capture authentic insights into students' perspectives, habits, and prior exposure to entrepreneurial concepts. The findings revealed that most students possessed a relatively limited understanding of entrepreneurship, both in terms of theoretical knowledge and practical application. In addition, social media usage among students was predominantly oriented toward entertainment purposes rather than productive or business-related activities. Another key observation indicated that students lacked prior experience in developing promotional content, highlighting the need for an intervention that integrates both conceptual learning and hands-on practice.

Training Stage

The training phase was designed to provide participants with a foundational understanding of entrepreneurship and digital marketing. The sessions were delivered by university students using an interactive learning approach that encouraged active participation, ensuring that the learning process was not merely one-directional. The materials covered included an introduction to entrepreneurship, the significance of creativity and innovation in business development, basic digital marketing principles, and the strategic use of social media for business promotion. To enhance comprehension, the training employed a combination of methods such as group discussions, simple case studies, and experience sharing. This approach aimed to make the material more relatable and easier to understand, while also stimulating students' critical thinking and creativity in identifying potential business opportunities within their environment.



Hands-on Practice Stage

The practical stage served as the core component of the program, emphasizing experiential learning where students actively applied the knowledge they had acquired. Rather than focusing solely on theoretical understanding, this stage allowed participants to engage directly in real-world activities, thereby strengthening both their skills and confidence. During this phase, students were involved in developing simple business ideas aligned with their interests, capturing product photos using smartphones, and creating visually appealing promotional content. They were also guided in writing engaging and persuasive captions to enhance marketing effectiveness. To foster collaboration and peer learning, students were divided into groups, creating an environment that encouraged idea exchange, teamwork, and collective problem-solving.

Mentoring Stage

The mentoring stage functioned as a supportive follow-up to the practical activities, ensuring that students received continuous guidance throughout the learning process. In this phase, university students acted as mentors who provided direct assistance, both technically and conceptually. The mentoring process aimed not only to refine students' outputs but also to deepen their understanding of marketing strategies and entrepreneurial thinking. Through this guidance, students received constructive feedback on their work, including suggestions for improving visual content quality and strengthening the effectiveness of their promotional messages. Mentors also helped students identify areas for improvement and maximize the potential of their business ideas. As a result, the mentoring stage contributed to a more structured and meaningful learning experience.

Evaluation Stage

The final stage involved evaluating the overall effectiveness of the program and assessing the extent to which its objectives were achieved. A combination of evaluation methods was employed to ensure a comprehensive assessment of both learning outcomes and participant experiences. These methods included direct observation of students' outputs, group discussions as a form of reflection, and simple questionnaires to capture participants' feedback and level of understanding after the program. The evaluation results provided insights into improvements in students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward entrepreneurship and the productive use of social media. Furthermore, the findings served as a basis for refining and enhancing future implementations of similar programs to ensure greater relevance and impact.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Improvement in Entrepreneurial Understanding

Following the implementation of the program, a notable improvement was observed in students' understanding of entrepreneurship. Initially, most participants perceived

entrepreneurship in a narrow sense, primarily limited to the act of selling products. However, after engaging in a series of structured learning activities, students began to develop a more comprehensive perspective. They demonstrated an increased awareness that entrepreneurship involves a combination of creativity, innovation, opportunity recognition, and problem-solving skills. This shift in understanding reflects the effectiveness of integrating conceptual knowledge with practical exposure. Through interactive discussions and real-life examples, students were able to connect theoretical concepts with everyday situations, making the learning process more meaningful. As a result, entrepreneurship was no longer seen as a distant or complex concept, but rather as an accessible and applicable skill set that can be developed from an early stage.

Improvement in Digital Marketing Skills

In addition to conceptual understanding, the program also contributed significantly to the development of students' digital marketing skills. Prior to the intervention, participants had minimal experience in creating promotional content or utilizing digital platforms for business purposes. However, after participating in hands-on practice sessions, students were able to produce various forms of basic promotional materials. These outputs included more visually appealing product photographs, simple yet engaging short videos, and captions designed to attract audience attention. The improvement in these skills indicates that experiential learning activities played a crucial role in enhancing students' technical abilities. Moreover, the use of familiar tools such as smartphones and social media platforms made the learning process more relevant and easier to adopt, thereby increasing students' confidence in applying these skills independently.

Increased Creativity and Confidence

Another significant outcome of the program was the enhancement of students' creativity and self-confidence. Throughout the activities, students became increasingly active in expressing their ideas and participating in group discussions. The collaborative learning environment encouraged them to explore new perspectives, experiment with different concepts, and take initiative in completing assigned tasks. Furthermore, the opportunity to present their work in front of peers contributed to the development of communication skills and self-assurance. Students who were initially hesitant gradually became more confident in sharing their ideas and showcasing their outputs. This transformation suggests that a supportive and participatory learning environment can effectively foster both creative thinking and personal development.

Change in Mindset

One of the most critical impacts of the program was the shift in students' mindset regarding the use of social media. Before the program, social media was predominantly viewed as a platform for entertainment and social interaction. However, after participating in the training and practical sessions, students began to recognize its potential as a strategic tool for business promotion and digital marketing. This change in perception is particularly important in the context of the digital economy, where social media plays a vital role in business development. By understanding how to utilize these platforms productively, students are better prepared to adapt to current technological trends. The transformation in mindset also indicates that educational interventions can effectively reshape students' attitudes toward technology, turning passive consumption into active and productive engagement.

Table 1. Comparison Before and After the Program

Aspect	Before	After
Entrepreneurial Understanding	Low	Good
Digital Marketing Skills	Low	Moderate
Creativity	Low	Improved
Self-confidence	Low	Improved

DISCUSSION

The findings of this program highlight that practice-based learning approaches are highly effective in enhancing both conceptual understanding and practical skills among students. This outcome aligns with experiential learning theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is constructed through direct experience and active engagement. By involving students in real-world tasks, the program successfully bridged the gap between theory and practice, resulting in more meaningful and retained learning outcomes. Additionally, the integration of social media as a learning tool significantly contributed to student engagement. Since social media is already embedded in students' daily lives, its use in educational activities created a familiar and motivating learning environment. This relevance not only increased participation but also facilitated faster skill acquisition, particularly in digital marketing practices.

Despite these positive outcomes, several challenges were identified during the implementation of the program. Limited access to digital devices among some students posed constraints in fully participating in practical activities. Moreover, variations in students' initial abilities resulted in differing levels of progress, requiring more adaptive and individualized support. These challenges suggest that future programs should incorporate strategies to address resource limitations and provide differentiated mentoring. Continuous guidance and follow-up activities are therefore essential to ensure the sustainability and long-term impact of the program.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this community service program shows that the use of social media can be an effective strategy for developing entrepreneurial mindset among high school students. Through hands-on practice and mentoring, students not only understand the concepts but are also able to apply them. This program also demonstrates that social media can be transformed into a productive tool for economic activities. Future programs should focus on sustainability to maximize the impact.

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

The authors declare that this program was conducted collaboratively and there are no conflicts of interest related to this publication.

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