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The Influence of the Digital Entrepreneurship Education Ecosystem on Generation Z's Entrepreneurial Readiness Through Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy: An Experiential Learning Perspective

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of the digital entrepreneurship education ecosystem through digital entrepreneurship literacy on the entrepreneurial readiness of Generation Z. In the digital era, Generation Z has great potential for entrepreneurship, but often the lack of understanding regarding the basics of entrepreneurship and digital technology hinders their readiness to start a business. This study adopted a quantitative approach using a questionnaire as a data collection instrument, which was distributed to 420 Generation Z students in Makassar City who had participated in digital entrepreneurship education. Data analysis used was path analysis using several software for data processing such as Microsoft Excel 2010, SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solution) version 20.0, and Partial Least Squares (PLS) techniques using SmartPls (version 4.0). The results of the study indicate that digital entrepreneurship learning and digital industry collaboration significantly influence digital entrepreneurship literacy and entrepreneurial readiness. In contrast, digital entrepreneurship training and digital business incubators did not significantly influence these two variables. This study suggests the need to improve the quality of digital entrepreneurship learning and collaboration with industry to strengthen the entrepreneurial readiness of Generation Z. Furthermore, digital business training and incubators should be optimized by aligning the materials with the latest technological needs.

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Keywords: Digital Entrepreneurship Education Ecosystem, Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy, Entrepreneurial Readiness, Generation Z.

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, the rapid evolution of communication and information technology has ushered in a new era, impacting various aspects of society, most profoundly in the fields of education and entrepreneurship. The generation born in this digital environment, generally referred to as Generation Z, was born between 1995 and 2012 and has extensive access to information. Being born in the digital era, Generation Z has a highly entrepreneurial, creative, and open-minded mindset, more advanced than other generations (Cirstea & Anagnoste, 2023). However, to harness this potential, a supportive entrepreneurship education ecosystem is needed that is significant to their needs and characteristics.

The digital entrepreneurship education ecosystem encompasses various indicators, such as digital entrepreneurship learning, digital entrepreneurship training, digital business incubators, and digital industry collaboration. A literature review by Jacobs, V (2014) shows that the use of digital platforms, such as online learning platforms, has significantly contributed to increasing the effectiveness of entrepreneurship learning. This not only enriches the learning experience but also prepares them with relevant practical skills for the future.

Furthermore, digital entrepreneurship training plays a crucial role in equipping Generation Z with the skills necessary to start and manage a business. Digital entrepreneurship training is one way to improve their quality, fostering an entrepreneurial spirit with the hope of a brighter future, and leading them toward positive use of technology that generates benefits for themselves and others. This demonstrates that appropriate training can be a bridge for Generation Z to enter the world of entrepreneurship.

Thus, digital business incubators are crucial structures capable of fostering entrepreneurship, technology, and innovation. The development of digital business incubators is crucial for supporting entrepreneurship, business growth, and the connection between academia and industry (Sansone et al., 2020). Research (Vaz et al., 2023) emphasizes the importance of collaboration between educational institutions and the industrial sector, which can create an ecosystem that supports innovation and entrepreneurship. By leveraging digital technology, this model provides the necessary resources, training, and support, enabling them to more easily access relevant information and technology to enhance Generation Z's entrepreneurial readiness.

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Collaboration between educational institutions and industry creates digital industry partnerships, which are key to creating an effective digital entrepreneurship education ecosystem. Research (Garnov et al., 2020) highlights the importance of digital industry partnerships for improving efficiency and competitiveness. In the digital era, collaboration between members is key to leveraging new technologies and innovations that can boost revenue. This collaboration allows Generation Z to gain hands-on experience and build networks that can support their entrepreneurial readiness.

Furthermore, in building a digital entrepreneurship education ecosystem, it is important for Generation Z to understand the role of digital entrepreneurship literacy as a supporter in developing the skills and knowledge needed by Generation Z who are preparing for entrepreneurship. According to Young et al. (2020), entrepreneurial literacy is closely related to openness, adaptability, agility, risk appetite, and initiative, highlighting important competencies that optimize digital information processing. Digital entrepreneurship literacy leads to the potential of individual abilities and knowledge related to the use of digital technology, communication tools, preparing and evaluating information in a healthy and legal manner, enabling people to use technology responsibly (Kuratko, D. F., & Hornsby, J. S. (2020). This provides great opportunities for the younger generation, especially Generation Z, who have grown up amidst technological advances.

Based on this, this study will reveal the influence of the digital entrepreneurship education ecosystem through digital entrepreneurship literacy on the entrepreneurial readiness of Generation Z. In reality, many Generation Z entrepreneurs run businesses only as owners, and lack understanding of the basics of entrepreneurship and digital knowledge (Rodriguez, S., & Lieber, H. (2020). So this lack of understanding often makes Generation Z feel less confident to dive into digital entrepreneurship (Secundo, G., Rippa, P., & Cerchione, R., 2020). Thus, a more specific study is needed to see the influence of the digital entrepreneurship education ecosystem through digital entrepreneurship literacy on the entrepreneurial readiness of Generation Z.

This study will more specifically look at the digital entrepreneurship education ecosystem through digital entrepreneurship literacy towards Generation Z's entrepreneurial readiness from the perspective of Experiential Learning theory which emphasizes the main role played by experience in the learning and development process.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research method uses a quantitative approach. In this study, digital entrepreneurship learning (X1), digital entrepreneurship training (X2), digital business

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incubators (X3), digital industry cooperation (X4) are independent variables, generation Z's entrepreneurial readiness (Y) is the dependent variable, and digital entrepreneurship literacy (Z) is the moderator variable. Data were collected through questionnaires given to Generation Z. Furthermore, the study determined each construct using a five-point Likert scale from not relevant at all (1) to very relevant (4).

The sample selection technique for this study was non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method. The population in this study was Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, who had experience and had participated in digital entrepreneurship education programs at educational institutions. In determining the sample size, this study used the Cohen approach, which considers statistical power and effect size when determining sample size (Hair et al., 2013). The researcher expected a significance level of 0.05 (5%) and a minimum R2 of 0.50, therefore the minimum sample size in this study was 420 respondents.

The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique using SmartPls (version 4.0). SEM-PLS is a statistical analysis method used to test and model the relationships between variables in a study (Hair & Sarstedt, 2019). This method is used to analyze complex models involving latent (not directly measurable) and measurable variables (Memon et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the sample characteristics. A table of descriptive statistics can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Respondent Criteria

Aspect	Quantity	Percentage
Gender		
Man	161	38,33%
Woman	259	61,67%
Age		
12-20 years	102	24,29%
21-27 years	318	75,71%

Source: Data Processing Results (2025)

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Table 1 provides sample characteristics. Participants in this study were Generation Z students in Makassar City, aged 12–27, predominantly female. The age group 21–27 years old accounted for 75,71%.

Assessment of Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The assessment of the measurement model aims to evaluate its validity and reliability, by ensuring that the observed variables accurately reflect the latent constructs related to digital entrepreneurship literacy, entrepreneurial readiness, and indicators of the digital entrepreneurship education ecosystem. The table below presents the results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which includes factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR).

Table 2. Model Constraints

Laten Construct	Code	Factor Loadings	AVE (>=0.50)	CR (>=0.70)
Digital Entrepreneurship Learning	DEL1	0.740	0.675	0.861
	DEL2	0.888		
	DEL3	0.830		
Digital Entrepreneurship Training	DET1	0.853	0.694	0.871
	DET2	0.750		
	DET3	0.889		
Digital Business Incubator	DBI1	0.825	0.722	0.912
	DBI2	0.841		
	DBI3	0.851		
	DBI4	0.881		
Digital Industry Cooperation	DIC1	0.757	0.692	0.899
	DIC2	0.817		
	DIC3	0.896		
	DIC4	0.851		
Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy	DEL1	0.829	0.704	0.905
	DEL2	0.849		
	DEL3	0.821		
	DEL4	0.857		
Entrepreneurial Readiness	ER1	0.818	0.668	0.889

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	ER2	0.806		
	ER3	0.822		
	ER4	0.823		

Source: Data Processing Results (2025)

The factor loadings for all observed variables in each latent construct showed high and statistically significant values, above 0.70, indicating strong convergent validity. The average variance extracted (AVE) also exceeded the recommended minimum limit of 0.5, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. Furthermore, a composite reliability (CR) value of more than 0.7 indicates that the internal consistency reliability is at an acceptable level.

Hypothesis Test Results

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

Track	Path Koefisien	T Statistic	P values	Provision
Digital Entrepreneurship Learning -> Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy	0.332	2.546	0.011	0.05
Digital Entrepreneurship Learning -> Entrepreneurial Readiness	0.138	0.800	0.423	0.05
Digital Entrepreneurship Training -> Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy	0.213	1.468	0.142	0.05
Digital Entrepreneurship Training -> Entrepreneurial Readiness	0.230	1.594	0.111	0.05
Digital Business Incubator -> Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy	-0.055	0.256	0.798	0.05
Digital Business Incubator -> Entrepreneurial Readiness	-0.108	0.645	0.519	0.05

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Digital Industry Cooperation -> Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy	0.465	2.439	0.015	0.05
Digital Industry Cooperation -> Entrepreneurial Readiness	0.451	2.753	0.006	0.05
Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy -> Entrepreneurial Readiness	0.283	1.562	0.118	0.05

Source: Data Processing Results (2025)

From the results of Table 5 above, it can be concluded:

a. The Digital Entrepreneurship Learning Path -> Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy obtained a p-value of 0.011 < 0.05, therefore H1 is accepted, namely that digital entrepreneurship learning has a positive and significant effect on digital entrepreneurship literacy.
b. The Digital Entrepreneurship Learning Path -> Entrepreneurial Readiness obtained a p-value of 0.423 > 0.05, therefore H2 is rejected, namely that digital entrepreneurship learning has no effect on entrepreneurial readiness.
c. The Digital Entrepreneurship Training Path -> Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy obtained a p-value of 0.142 > 0.05, therefore H3 is rejected, namely that digital entrepreneurship training has no effect on digital entrepreneurship literacy.
d. The Digital Entrepreneurship Training Path -> Entrepreneurial Readiness obtained a p-value of 0.111 > 0.05, therefore H4 is rejected, namely that digital entrepreneurship training has no effect on entrepreneurial readiness.
e. The Digital Business Incubator Path -> Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy obtained a p-value of 0.798 > 0.05, therefore H5 is rejected, namely that digital business incubators do not affect digital entrepreneurial literacy.
f. The Digital Business Incubator Path -> Entrepreneurial Readiness obtained a p-value of 0.519 > 0.05, therefore H6 is rejected, namely that digital business incubators do not affect entrepreneurial readiness.
g. The Digital Industry Cooperation -> Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy pathway obtained a p-value of 0.015 < 0.05, therefore H7 is accepted, namely that digital industry cooperation has a positive and significant effect on digital entrepreneurship literacy.

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h. The Digital Industry Cooperation -> Entrepreneurial Readiness pathway obtained a p-value of 0.006 < 0.05, therefore H8 is accepted, namely that digital industry cooperation has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial readiness.
i. The Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy -> Entrepreneurial Readiness pathway obtained a p-value of 0.118 > 0.05, therefore H9 is rejected, namely that digital entrepreneurship literacy does not affect entrepreneurial readiness.

DISCUSSION

The influence of digital entrepreneurship learning on digital entrepreneurship literacy

Entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in preparing young people to enter the business world and create new job opportunities. Amidst globalization and rapid technological advancements, traditional learning approaches are no longer sufficient to meet these needs (Jacobs, V, 2014). Digital-based learning requires adequate skills to utilize technology. Therefore, Generation Z needs to be equipped with digital entrepreneurship literacy to effectively utilize digital learning.

The results of the first hypothesis test indicate that digital entrepreneurship learning influences digital entrepreneurship literacy. Stated that literacy plays a crucial role in human survival, such as solving problems, analyzing, and understanding information. This study's findings corroborate several previous studies showing that digital entrepreneurship learning contributes to improving digital entrepreneurship literacy, which can develop practical skills that are essential in the world of entrepreneurship (Cirstea, P., & Anagnoste, S. (2023). The growing use of digital platforms in entrepreneurship learning, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), mobile applications, social media, and various online collaborative tools, has become very useful in teaching entrepreneurial concepts to Generation Z. Through this digitalization, the learning materials presented make the learning process more engaging. Furthermore, high literacy skills can provide Generation Z with practical experience in managing businesses, making decisions, and facing real-life challenges.

The influence of digital entrepreneurship learning on the entrepreneurial readiness of generation Z

Entrepreneurship learning can improve the mindset of the younger generation, focusing on career readiness for entrepreneurship (Rodriguez & Lieber, 2020). However, the results of the second hypothesis test in this study indicate no effect between digital

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entrepreneurship learning and entrepreneurial readiness among Generation Z. Readiness is a level of development of maturity or adulthood that is beneficial for practice.

Although digital entrepreneurship learning is designed to improve entrepreneurial readiness, it cannot fully influence Generation Z's entrepreneurial readiness if the strategies used in presenting the learning are not relevant to real-world needs, including the practical requirements. This makes Generation Z feel unprepared to start a business. However, entrepreneurial readiness depends not only on maturity but also on other factors that can influence Generation Z's entrepreneurial readiness, such as entrepreneurial motivation, the environment, and entrepreneurial experience.

The influence of digital entrepreneurship training on digital entrepreneurship literacy

Based on the analysis, digital entrepreneurship training had a weak effect on digital entrepreneurship literacy, with an effect size of 0.058. Furthermore, the hypothesis test results showed that digital entrepreneurship training had no significant effect on digital entrepreneurship literacy (p-value = 0.142 > 0.05). This indicates that the training materials and methods provided did not optimally improve participants' digital entrepreneurship literacy. Factors such as a lack of emphasis on digital technical skills, the relevance of training content to practical needs, or limited training duration may contribute to this weak impact. Therefore, training needs to be designed with a greater focus on practice-oriented and needs-based learning for participants to improve their literacy.

In line with these findings, revealed that well-designed entrepreneurship education and training programs can have a significant impact on entrepreneurs' perceptions and attitudes. This emphasizes the importance of a more comprehensive and holistic approach to designing digital entrepreneurship training, one that focuses not only on improving digital literacy but also considers external factors and social support that can foster entrepreneurial success.

The influence of digital entrepreneurship training on the entrepreneurial readiness of Generation Z

The analysis also showed that digital entrepreneurship training had a weak effect on entrepreneurial readiness, with an effect size of 0.091. Hypothesis testing confirmed that this effect was insignificant (p-value = 0.111 > 0.05). This means that the training provided did not significantly impact participants' readiness to start a business. One possible reason is the lack of practical components in the training that teach business

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strategy, decision-making, and risk management in the context of digital entrepreneurship. For training to be more effective, it is important to include hands-on experiences such as business simulations, case studies, or mentorships that can provide participants with practical experience in facing entrepreneurial challenges.

On the other hand, shows that students' job readiness is not solely influenced by self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, which relates to an individual's belief in their own abilities, does play a role, but it is not the sole factor influencing job readiness. For vocational high school students, for example, their job readiness is influenced by other factors such as entrepreneurial experience, industrial work experience, and mastery of digital literacy. Students' confidence in their abilities is often influenced by direct experience, both personal and that of others. However, this experience has been less than optimal during the Covid-19 pandemic, when learning is conducted online with limited teacher supervision. As a result, many students are less enthusiastic and less serious about learning, which impacts their lack of experience and confidence. Furthermore, this study also suggests the possibility of bias in completing the self-efficacy questionnaire, which could influence the study results.

The influence of digital business incubators on digital entrepreneurship literacy

Kolb, D. A., et al (2014) asserted that the success of digital business incubators lies in their ability to integrate entrepreneurship training with access to technology and industry networks. The results of the hypothesis test in this study indicate that there is no effect of digital business incubators on digital entrepreneurship literacy. This is due to the ability of Generation Z to master the quality of the material taught, teaching methods, and access to technology outside the incubator program. In other words, the success of digital business incubators in improving digital entrepreneurship literacy is highly dependent on the quality of the incubator program, teaching methods, and support provided outside the incubator program.

The influence of digital business incubators on the entrepreneurial readiness of Generation Z

One of the goals of implementing business incubators is to help young people, especially Generation Z, start businesses. However, the results of the hypothesis test in this study indicate that there is no effect of digital business incubators on Generation Z's entrepreneurial readiness. Therefore, it can be said that incubator programs are not always successful in making Generation Z truly ready for entrepreneurship.

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This is because Generation Z feels that the theories presented by incubators tend to focus more on business technology and less on strategies for overcoming financial difficulties in starting a business. Liñán & Chen (2009) indicate that financial constraints are one of the main factors inhibiting entrepreneurial intentions and readiness. Therefore, digital business incubator programs must be carefully designed and implemented with strong support to have a real impact on Generation Z's entrepreneurial readiness.

The influence of digital industry collaboration on digital entrepreneurship literacy

Industrial collaboration in entrepreneurship is the ability to leverage digital technology to build a business. The results of the third hypothesis test in this study indicate an influence of digital industry collaboration on digital entrepreneurial literacy. Generation Z, who have the opportunity to access training and learn directly from experts in their fields, feel they receive the right support to develop their business ideas.

Neumeyer et al. (2021) stated that collaboration in technology can help overcome barriers to technology adoption for entrepreneurs, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This finding is supported by Zhao et al. (2023), who found that stories and narratives about digital entrepreneurship can help increase interest in the world of online business. Through collaboration, entrepreneurs gain easier access to resources, training, and mentors that can help Generation Z succeed in the digital age.

The influence of digital industry cooperation on the entrepreneurial readiness of Generation Z

In the era of young people growing up with digital technology, Generation Z has significant opportunities to connect with extensive networks and facilitate industrial collaborations. The results of the eighth hypothesis test indicate that digital industrial collaboration influences Generation Z's entrepreneurial readiness.

Secundo et al. (2020) demonstrated that technology integration in entrepreneurship education can improve entrepreneurial readiness. Digital industry collaboration can create opportunities for Generation Z to gain practical experience through internships and joint projects. These findings are reinforced by Elia et al. (2020), who emphasize the importance of building a digital entrepreneurship ecosystem that supports collaboration and access to information. Thus, appropriate support and guidance can prepare Generation Z to face the challenges of building and developing their own businesses.

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The influence of digital entrepreneurship literacy on the entrepreneurial readiness of generation Z

Based on the findings of the processed study data, digital entrepreneurship literacy does not significantly influence entrepreneurial readiness, meaning that digital literacy does not play a significant role in helping Generation Z start their own businesses. Therefore, mastering digital entrepreneurship literacy skills acquired in college will not help Generation Z prepare for entrepreneurship. This finding is inconsistent with previous research, which found that Generation Z's digital literacy level has a beneficial impact on entrepreneurial readiness in the digital era. Which stated that digital entrepreneurship literacy is crucial for business actors to compete. While digital entrepreneurship literacy plays a crucial role in improving individual technical skills in the business world, it does not guarantee entrepreneurial readiness.

Entrepreneurial readiness is more complex and is influenced by several factors, including psychological, social, and practical experience in running a business. Practical business experience is often a stronger indicator than digital literacy. This experience not only provides insight into operational processes but also helps Generation Z learn from mistakes and challenges faced in the real world. This suggests that while digital literacy can speed up and simplify various processes, without field experience, Generation Z still feels unprepared to take the entrepreneurial leap. To equip aspiring entrepreneurs with comprehensive readiness, entrepreneurship training and education programs should not only focus on mastering digital literacy but also include developing interpersonal skills, understanding the market, and strengthening an entrepreneurial mindset. With this holistic approach, Generation Z will be better prepared to face the challenges of the ever-evolving and competitive world of entrepreneurship.

CONCLUSION

From the research results above, it can be concluded that in terms of the structural model, the digital entrepreneurship education ecosystem indicator has a significant influence on the entrepreneurial readiness variable, with an adjusted R-square of 0.762, indicating that this model has good explanatory power. Meanwhile, for digital entrepreneurship literacy, this model has moderate explanatory power, with an adjusted R-square value of 0.666. Effect size analysis also shows that several factors, such as digital entrepreneurship learning and digital industry collaboration, have a moderate influence on digital entrepreneurship literacy and entrepreneurial readiness. On the other

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hand, digital entrepreneurship training and digital business incubators show a weaker influence on both variables.

The results of the hypothesis test indicate that digital entrepreneurship training has a significant influence on digital entrepreneurship literacy. Likewise, digital industry collaboration has been shown to significantly influence both variables: digital entrepreneurship literacy and entrepreneurial readiness. However, digital entrepreneurship training and digital business incubators did not significantly influence either variable.

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