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Cultivating An Entrepreneurial Mindset In Early Childhood Through The Role-Play Method: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education in early childhood is a strategic effort to cultivate the character traits and competencies required to address the challenges of the twenty-first century. One of the most effective approaches is the role-play method, as it aligns with children's developmental characteristics, which emphasize learning through play and direct experience. This study aims to analyze the role of the role-play method in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among young children from the perspectives of educational psychology and developmental psychology. The study employed a library research approach by reviewing ten relevant scientific articles. Data were collected through a literature search of Google Scholar, Scopus, ERIC, and DOAJ databases and were subsequently analyzed using content analysis techniques. The findings indicate that entrepreneurial role-play activities contribute positively to the development of creativity, independence, responsibility, communication skills, collaboration, problem-solving abilities, and self-confidence among young children. Furthermore, role play provides meaningful and contextual learning experiences that support children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. Therefore, the role-play method can be regarded as an effective instructional strategy for cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age while promoting holistic child development as a foundation for future life and career readiness.

Keywords: entrepreneurial mindset, early childhood, role play, entrepreneurship education, educational psychology.

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education serves as a crucial foundation for the development of character, skills, and competencies that influence individuals throughout their lifespan. Early childhood is widely recognized as the *golden age* because brain development occurs rapidly during this period, and children possess a remarkable capacity to absorb experiences from their surrounding environment. Therefore, positive values related to personality development, social competence, and life skills should be instilled from an early age so that they become an integral part of an individual's character in adulthood (Santrock, 2018).

One competency that has received increasing attention in contemporary education is entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is not merely defined as the ability to establish and manage a business for economic gain; it also encompasses creativity, innovation, independence, decision-making skills, problem-solving abilities, and responsibility for assigned tasks (Hisrich et al., 2020). These characteristics represent essential competencies required to navigate the challenges of the twenty-first century, which is characterized by rapid social, economic, and technological changes.

The importance of entrepreneurship education in early childhood is based on the view that entrepreneurial attitudes and characteristics are more effectively developed through habituation and early experiences rather than being introduced only in adulthood. Children who are accustomed to thinking creatively, taking initiative, and acting responsibly from an early age are more likely to be better prepared to face future life challenges. Consequently, entrepreneurship education for young children focuses primarily on character development rather than on the mastery of complex business concepts (Nugrahani et al., 2020).

Within the context of early childhood education, learning activities should be aligned with children's developmental characteristics, which emphasize play as a primary means of learning. Through play, children gain direct experiences, develop imagination, build social interactions, and acquire a more concrete understanding of their environment. One play-based learning approach considered effective for cultivating entrepreneurial values is the role-play method (Monika, 2020).

Role play is a learning activity that provides children with opportunities to assume specific roles in situations that resemble real-life experiences. In these activities, children may act as sellers, buyers, cashiers, customers, or other simple business actors. Through such simulations, children gain firsthand experience with economic activities presented

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in an enjoyable and engaging manner, making the learning process more meaningful (Solikhah et al., 2025).

From a developmental psychology perspective, the role-play method is highly relevant to the characteristics of young children. According to Piaget (1952), children aged two to seven years are in the preoperational stage, during which they begin to use symbols, language, and imagination to understand the world around them. Role-playing activities enable children to develop these symbolic abilities by representing various social and economic activities encountered in their daily lives.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory emphasizes that children's cognitive development is strongly influenced by social interaction. Through role play, children interact with peers and teachers in situations that encourage communication, collaboration, and perspective-taking. Consequently, entrepreneurship learning through role play not only promotes cognitive development but also supports children's social and emotional growth.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the significant contribution of role-play activities to the cultivation of entrepreneurial values among young children. Solikhah et al. (2025) found that role-playing activities enhanced children's communication confidence, sense of responsibility, and creativity. Children involved in buying-and-selling simulations exhibited improved social interaction skills and began to understand basic entrepreneurial concepts through direct experience.

Similar findings were reported by Hasmawaty et al. (2026), who found that group business simulations conducted through role-playing activities increased children's interest in entrepreneurship from an early age. Moreover, these activities fostered creativity, teamwork, and social skills, all of which constitute important forms of capital for participation in society and future employment contexts.

Nurhayati and Millenia (2024) demonstrated that integrating craft-making activities with role-playing as sellers and buyers fostered various entrepreneurial values, including independence, perseverance, honesty, and curiosity. These findings suggest that firsthand experiences in producing and marketing simple products help children understand the meaning of enterprise and the value of hard work from an early age.

Another study conducted by Monika (2020) revealed that role-play learning centers provide authentic experiences that help children understand the functions of money, transaction processes, and communication in economic activities. These experiences not only foster entrepreneurial characteristics but also support cognitive development, particularly numeracy skills and basic problem-solving abilities.

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In addition to role play, several schools have implemented *market day* programs as a form of entrepreneurship education for young children. Studies by Meilasari and Munastiwi (2024) and Rahayu and Munadi (2025) found that market day activities enhanced children's sense of responsibility, confidence in public performance, communication skills, and independence. These programs provide children with authentic opportunities to interact with consumers and manage simple business activities.

A systematic review conducted by Fatimah and Widhiasih (2025) concluded that role-play methods provide extensive benefits for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. Skills such as cooperation, empathy, problem-solving, and self-confidence developed through role play constitute essential foundations for entrepreneurial character formation. These findings reinforce the argument that entrepreneurship education in early childhood extends beyond economic learning and contributes to children's overall psychological development.

Despite the growing body of evidence supporting the benefits of role play in entrepreneurship education, studies that integrate empirical findings with developmental and educational psychology perspectives remain relatively limited. Most existing research focuses on program implementation within specific educational settings without providing a comprehensive theoretical synthesis of the psychological mechanisms underlying the effectiveness of role-play methods. This gap highlights the need for a more in-depth literature-based analysis.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the role of entrepreneurial role-play activities in cultivating entrepreneurial values among young children through a review of relevant literature and the theoretical perspectives of educational and developmental psychology. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the advancement of early childhood entrepreneurship education research and to serve as a reference for educators in designing effective learning strategies for fostering entrepreneurial character from an early age.

METHODS

This study employed a library research approach. This approach was selected because the purpose of the study was to comprehensively examine the role of entrepreneurial value cultivation in early childhood through the entrepreneurship role-play method based on findings from previous studies as well as theories of educational and developmental psychology. According to Zed (2014), library research refers to a series of activities involving the collection, reading, recording, and analysis of documentary and

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bibliographic sources without direct field data collection. Therefore, the primary focus of this study was a critical analysis of relevant scholarly literature.

The data sources consisted of both primary and secondary materials. Primary sources included national and international journal articles addressing early childhood entrepreneurship education, role-play methods, child development, and educational psychology. Secondary sources comprised textbooks, conference proceedings, and other scholarly documents that supported the analysis. The literature search was conducted through scientific databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, ERIC, and DOAJ, using the keywords *entrepreneurship in early childhood*, *role-play method*, *early childhood education*, *entrepreneurial values*, and *child development psychology*. The selected articles were published between 2019 and 2026 and demonstrated direct relevance to the research topic.

The research procedure involved several stages, namely literature identification, article selection, data organization, and content analysis. During the identification stage, relevant sources related to the research topic were collected. The selection process was subsequently carried out based on thematic relevance, publication quality, and alignment with the focus of the study. Data extracted from the selected articles were organized into major thematic categories, including creativity development, independence, communication skills, collaboration, and entrepreneurial character formation. The analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques to identify patterns, relationships among findings, and connections with theories of developmental and educational psychology (Krippendorff, 2018).

The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through source triangulation and rigorous literature examination. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from different studies and theoretical perspectives to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. In addition, repeated readings and systematic documentation of each source were undertaken to enhance the accuracy of data interpretation. The findings were subsequently presented using a descriptive-analytical approach to illustrate how entrepreneurship role-play methods contribute to the cultivation of entrepreneurial values among young children.

RESULTS

The cultivation of entrepreneurial values in early childhood has become an important strategy for preparing a generation that is independent, creative, innovative, and capable of adapting to future challenges. During early childhood, children are in a

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developmental stage that is highly responsive to environmental stimulation, making it possible to instill various positive values and character traits through learning activities that align with their developmental characteristics. One of the methods widely used in early childhood education to foster an entrepreneurial spirit is the role-play method. This approach enables children to gain direct learning experiences through simulations of various economic activities and simple business practices presented in the form of enjoyable play activities.

The study conducted by Solikhah, Munawaroh, and Hidayat (2025) demonstrated that role-playing activities implemented at TK Al-Madina Wonosobo were effective in cultivating entrepreneurial values among young children. Through buying-and-selling simulations, children had the opportunity to act as sellers and buyers, allowing them to learn responsibility, communication skills, and creativity in offering products. The findings revealed that children became more active in interacting with peers and showed greater interest in simple entrepreneurial activities. These results suggest that direct experiences gained through role play help children understand fundamental entrepreneurial concepts more concretely than verbal explanations alone.

Similar findings were reported by Hasmawaty, Manga, Sidiq, and Rusliana (2026), who developed a group business simulation using role-play activities. Their study indicated that children's participation in business simulations increased their entrepreneurial interest from an early age. In addition, children demonstrated improvements in creativity and teamwork skills. During the activities, children learned to plan simple business operations, divide responsibilities, and collaborate with peers to achieve common goals. These findings suggest that role play serves not only as an introduction to entrepreneurship but also as a medium for developing social competencies that are essential for future entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, Nurhayati and Millenia (2024) integrated handicraft-making activities with role-play experiences in which children acted as sellers and buyers. The results showed that the combination of these activities fostered entrepreneurial values such as independence, curiosity, perseverance, and honesty. Children not only learned how to create simple products but also gained experience in marketing their products to peers. This process provided children with an understanding that products possess value that can be offered to others, thereby introducing the concepts of production and marketing at an early age.

The study conducted by Nugrahani, Munastiwi, and Suhendro (2020) further emphasized the importance of role-play methods in entrepreneurship education for young

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children. The researchers argued that strategies for developing entrepreneurial values should be adapted to children's developmental characteristics through contextual and experiential learning approaches. In this context, role play is considered an effective method because it allows children to understand entrepreneurial activities through experiences closely related to their everyday lives. Children can safely explore various social and economic situations through structured play activities.

These findings are consistent with the research of Monika (2020), who examined entrepreneurship learning through role-play centers at TK IT An-Najah. The study found that role-playing activities provided children with direct experiences in buying-and-selling transactions, enabling them to understand the functions of money, simple transaction concepts, and the importance of communication in economic activities. In addition, children learned basic negotiation skills and developed numeracy abilities while conducting transactions, indicating that entrepreneurship education can simultaneously support cognitive development.

The systematic review conducted by Fatimah and Widhiasih (2025) revealed that role-play methods provide broad benefits for early childhood development. In addition to contributing to social and emotional development, role play enhances problem-solving abilities, empathy, cooperation, and self-confidence. These competencies constitute essential foundations for entrepreneurial character because entrepreneurs are expected to think creatively, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others.

The implementation of entrepreneurship education in early childhood settings is also commonly carried out through market day activities. Research by Meilasari and Munastiwi (2024) demonstrated that children's involvement in buying-and-selling activities during market day programs helped instill responsibility, improve communication skills, and build confidence in public interactions. Through these activities, children had opportunities to introduce and promote products to consumers, thereby learning direct interaction skills in situations resembling real business environments.

Comparable findings were reported by Rahayu and Munadi (2025), who found that market day programs contributed to the development of work orientation and entrepreneurial attitudes among young children. Experiences involving simple business practices enabled children to gain a more concrete understanding of economic processes while enhancing social skills and independence. These activities also provided opportunities for children to make decisions and take responsibility for assigned tasks.

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Beyond buying-and-selling activities, entrepreneurial skills can also be developed through constructive play. The study by Ifriqia, Handini, and Dlis (2019) demonstrated that play activities encouraging children to create, solve problems, and make decisions positively influenced the development of entrepreneurial skills. Creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities fostered through constructive play are competencies that are highly relevant to entrepreneurship.

Overall, the findings from various studies indicate that role-play methods and other forms of experiential learning make significant contributions to the development of entrepreneurial values in early childhood. Through simulations of stores, markets, restaurants, and other simple business activities, children gain opportunities to directly experience entrepreneurial practices. Such experiences help children understand business concepts, develop social skills, enhance creativity, and build positive character traits such as responsibility, honesty, independence, and self-confidence. Therefore, entrepreneurship-oriented role play can be regarded as an effective learning approach that aligns with the principles of early childhood education in preparing a generation with an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age.

DISCUSSION

The cultivation of entrepreneurial values in early childhood through role-play methods can be explained from a developmental psychology perspective, which emphasizes the importance of direct experience in children's learning processes. During early childhood, cognitive, social, and emotional development occurs rapidly, requiring a stimulating environment to optimize developmental potential. According to Piaget (1952), children aged two to seven years are in the preoperational stage, during which they begin to use symbols, language, and imagination to understand the world around them. Within this context, role-playing activities enable children to utilize symbolic thinking to represent economic activities such as buying, selling, trading, and serving customers, making entrepreneurial concepts easier to comprehend.

The findings of Solikhah et al. (2025), which demonstrated improvements in children's communication confidence and sense of responsibility through role-playing activities, are consistent with Piaget's view that concrete learning experiences are more easily assimilated into children's cognitive structures. When children act as sellers or buyers, they do not merely memorize entrepreneurial concepts; rather, they construct understanding through authentic interactions that occur during play.

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From the perspective of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, role play is particularly important because it enables children to learn through social interaction. Vygotsky argued that cognitive development occurs through social mediation within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). During role-play activities, teachers and peers function as sources of scaffolding, helping children understand game rules, transaction procedures, and communication strategies. Through this process, entrepreneurial values emerge as meaningful outcomes of social interaction.

The findings of Hasmawaty et al. (2026) regarding improvements in creativity and teamwork can also be explained through Vygotsky's theory. When children participate in group business simulations, they must negotiate, share responsibilities, and develop simple strategies to achieve collective goals. Such activities foster collaborative skills, which are recognized as essential twenty-first-century competencies and key characteristics of successful entrepreneurs.

The development of independence identified by Nurhayati and Millenia (2024) can be understood through Erikson's (1963) psychosocial theory**.** Early childhood corresponds to the stage of initiative versus guilt, during which children begin to demonstrate initiative in carrying out activities independently. When provided with opportunities for exploration, children are more likely to develop confidence and initiative. Entrepreneurship-based role-play activities create opportunities for children to experiment with different roles, make simple decisions, and take responsibility for assigned tasks, thereby supporting the development of positive initiative.

Moreover, the curiosity that emerges during entrepreneurship activities reflects strong intrinsic motivation. According to constructivist theory, children are active learners who continuously construct knowledge through experience. When children create handicrafts and subsequently sell them to peers, they gain opportunities to understand the relationship between effort, production processes, and outcomes. These experiences form an early foundation for the development of an entrepreneurial mindset**.**

The findings of Nugrahani et al. (2020) regarding the effectiveness of contextual learning are also consistent with Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory**,** which posits that learning becomes more effective when individuals engage directly in experiences and subsequently reflect upon them to construct new understanding. Through simple business simulations, children do not passively receive information; rather, they actively experience entrepreneurial processes, making learning more meaningful.

The study conducted by Monika (2020)**,** which demonstrated improved understanding of money functions and simple transactions, suggests that

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entrepreneurship activities also contribute to cognitive development. From an educational psychology perspective, experiences involving counting money, setting prices, and conducting transactions represent forms of contextual mathematics learning. Learning experiences connected to real-life situations are generally easier for children to understand and retain than abstract instruction.

The development of negotiation and communication skills during role-play activities can be explained through Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory**.** According to Bandura, human behavior develops through observation and imitation of models within the environment. During role-playing activities, children observe teachers or peers conducting transactions and subsequently imitate these behaviors in similar situations. Through this observational learning process, communication and social interaction skills gradually develop.

The review by Fatimah and Widhiasih (2025**)**, which reported improvements in problem-solving, empathy, and cooperation, further illustrates the broad social-emotional benefits of role play. According to Goleman's (1995) Emotional Intelligence Theory**,** the ability to understand one's own emotions and those of others is a crucial determinant of individual success. Children who regularly engage in role-play activities are more capable of understanding others' perspectives, regulating emotions, and developing positive social relationships.

The market day programs reported by Meilasari and Munastiwi (2024) also contribute to the development of children's self-confidence. Self-confidence is an important aspect of personality development and a fundamental characteristic of entrepreneurs. According to Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, individuals' beliefs in their capabilities are strengthened through direct experiences of success, known as mastery experiences. When children successfully sell products or interact with customers, these experiences reinforce their confidence in their ability to accomplish tasks.

The findings of Rahayu and Munadi (2025) regarding increased work orientation and independence suggest that entrepreneurship education can serve as a means of promoting early career readiness. Although children's understanding of careers remains relatively simple, exposure to various professions and business activities can broaden their awareness of the world of work. From the perspective of Super's (1990) Career Development Theory, childhood represents the growth stage, characterized by the development of interests, attitudes, and self-concepts related to future occupations.

The study by Ifriqia et al. (2019)**,** which found that constructive play enhances creativity and problem-solving abilities, further highlights the importance of developing

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higher-order thinking skills from an early age. Creativity is a core entrepreneurial competency because it is associated with generating innovative ideas and identifying solutions to challenges. Play activities that encourage exploration and innovation provide valuable opportunities for children to maximize their creative potential.

From an educational psychology perspective, role-play methods are also consistent with the principles of child-centered learning. Children are given opportunities to actively participate in learning, make decisions, and construct knowledge based on their interests and needs. This approach differs from traditional instructional methods that position children as passive recipients of information. Consequently, role play represents an effective strategy for developing a wide range of competencies required for future success.

Overall, the accumulated research findings demonstrate that role play as a medium for entrepreneurship education possesses a strong theoretical foundation in developmental and educational psychology. Piaget's theory explains its contribution to cognitive development, Vygotsky's theory highlights the importance of social interaction in learning, Erikson's theory accounts for the development of initiative and independence, Bandura's theory explains observational learning and self-efficacy, and Kolb's theory emphasizes the critical role of direct experience in knowledge construction. Therefore, cultivating entrepreneurial values through role-play activities not only develops basic economic skills but also contributes holistically to children's cognitive, social, emotional, and character development

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion presented in the introduction and the findings of the literature review, it can be concluded that entrepreneurship education in early childhood serves as a strategic effort to develop the character traits and competencies required to face future challenges. The cultivation of entrepreneurial values, including creativity, independence, responsibility, communication skills, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities, should begin during the golden age of development, a period in which children possess a remarkable capacity for learning and adaptation. Entrepreneurship-oriented role play emerges as a relevant and effective educational approach because it aligns with children's developmental characteristics, which emphasize learning through play and direct experience.

The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that role-playing activities provide children with concrete experiences related to entrepreneurial practices while

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simultaneously supporting their cognitive, social, emotional, and character development. Supported by the developmental theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, as well as by empirical findings from previous research, the role-play method not only helps children understand basic entrepreneurial concepts but also fosters the development of an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age. Through active participation in simulated economic activities, children learn to explore ideas, interact socially, make decisions, and take responsibility for their actions in meaningful and developmentally appropriate ways.

Therefore, studies examining the cultivation of entrepreneurial values through entrepreneurship-based role-play methods are essential for strengthening both the theoretical and practical foundations of entrepreneurship education in early childhood settings. Such efforts can contribute to the development of effective learning strategies that promote holistic child development while preparing future generations to become creative, independent, and adaptable individuals in an increasingly dynamic society.

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