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Co-Curricular Entrepreneurship Learning for Fostering Independence and Creativity among Elementary School Students

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Abstract

This study investigates the implementation of co-curricular entrepreneurship learning in fostering independence and creativity among fourth-grade students at SD Inpres Bertingkat, Gowa Regency, Indonesia. The study responds to the need for entrepreneurship education in elementary schools that moves beyond conceptual explanation and provides concrete learning experiences through planning, production, marketing, and reflection. A descriptive qualitative design was employed from February to April 2026. Seven informants participated in the study, consisting of the school principal, two fourth-grade teachers, and four fourth-grade students. Data were collected through non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Data trustworthiness was strengthened through source, technique, and time triangulation. The data were analyzed through reduction, display, and conclusion drawing, supported by thematic coding procedures consisting of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The findings show that co-curricular entrepreneurship learning enabled students to design simple products, use recycled materials, work in groups, market their work, and evaluate their learning process. These activities strengthened students' independence, responsibility, creativity, problem-solving capacity, risk-taking courage, motivation, interest in entrepreneurship, and work ethic. However, the implementation still faced uneven student confidence, limited product variation, unequal guidance needs, and weak parental involvement. The study concludes that co-curricular entrepreneurship learning can serve as a practical character-building model in elementary

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education when supported by teacher facilitation, school commitment, project variation, reflective learning, and gradual mentoring.

Keywords: co-curricular learning; entrepreneurship education; independence; creativity; elementary school; qualitative research.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship education has become an important agenda in elementary education because it helps students build practical life skills, initiative, responsibility, and creative problem-solving from an early age. In the Indonesian context, the Merdeka Curriculum gives schools wider space to design contextual and project-oriented learning (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2021). This direction is relevant to entrepreneurship learning because students need direct experience, not only definitions, concepts, or teacher explanations. Entrepreneurship becomes meaningful when students can identify simple opportunities, create products, make decisions, communicate value, and reflect on the consequences of their choices.

At the elementary school level, entrepreneurship education should not be reduced to small selling activities. Its pedagogical value lies in the process through which students learn to plan, produce, collaborate, market, face feedback, and improve their work. Such activities can develop independence and creativity because students must choose ideas, manage time, use available materials, solve practical problems, and take responsibility for the product they create. These processes also train students to understand that effort, patience, and revision are part of learning.

The preliminary context of this study shows that entrepreneurship learning at SD Inpres Bertingkat, Somba Opu District, Gowa Regency, has been integrated into co-curricular activities. The school uses entrepreneurship projects to complement classroom learning and to provide students with practical experiences. Nevertheless, the implementation has not fully met the expected standard. The school still faces limitations related to facilities, teacher creativity in designing varied projects, and uneven student participation. Some students are active and confident, while others still hesitate to propose ideas or offer their products.

Co-curricular entrepreneurship learning offers a strategic response to these issues. Co-curricular learning is linked to formal learning objectives, but it provides more flexible space for practice, exploration, and contextual experience. In entrepreneurship learning, this approach enables students to engage in product planning, production, simple marketing, and evaluation. It

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also allows teachers to connect entrepreneurship with mathematics, environmental awareness, communication, and character education. This integration makes learning more authentic because students apply knowledge to real tasks.

Theoretically, this study is informed by entrepreneurship and creativity perspectives. Kirzner's (1973) view of entrepreneurship highlights alertness to opportunities, while Amabile's (1996) creativity theory emphasizes the role of environment, task motivation, and idea development in creative performance. At the school level, these ideas suggest that students require a supportive environment where they can notice opportunities, try ideas, revise products, and receive constructive feedback. The teacher's role is therefore not limited to explaining entrepreneurship, but also includes designing opportunities for students to experience entrepreneurial behavior.

Previous studies cited in the research source also show that entrepreneurship learning can improve independence, creativity, and entrepreneurial motivation when students engage in projects and practice-based activities (Sukmawati, 2022; Mulyono, 2021; Fuziani, 2024). However, empirical descriptions of how co-curricular entrepreneurship learning works in elementary classrooms remain important, especially in local school settings that face resource constraints. This study therefore focuses on the implementation of co-curricular entrepreneurship learning in fostering independence and creativity among fourth-grade students at SD Inpres Bertingkat, Gowa Regency.

The study addresses two research questions. First, how is co-curricular entrepreneurship learning implemented to foster student independence in grade IV? Second, how is co-curricular entrepreneurship learning implemented to foster student creativity in grade IV? By answering these questions, this article contributes a practice-based account of entrepreneurship learning as a medium for character development in elementary education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship learning refers to educational activities that develop students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to opportunity recognition, creativity, decision-making, responsibility, and value creation (Hartono, 2020; Hermawan, 2020). In elementary schools, entrepreneurship learning should be adapted to students' developmental stage. It should avoid complex business logic and instead emphasize simple activities such as identifying needs, using available materials, producing useful objects, presenting ideas, and learning from failure. This orientation positions entrepreneurship education as a character-building process rather than

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merely a business lesson.

Co-curricular activities strengthen learning because they connect classroom objectives with concrete and contextual practice (Mulyono, 2021; Suherman, 2021). Unlike extracurricular activities that may stand outside the formal curriculum, co-curricular learning supports curricular goals through applied experiences. In entrepreneurship education, co-curricular projects can include making crafts from recycled materials, preparing simple food products, creating packaging, presenting products, conducting small market simulations, and evaluating project outcomes. These activities provide students with repeated opportunities to act, decide, communicate, and reflect.

Independence in this study refers to students' ability to manage tasks, make simple decisions, regulate time, complete responsibilities, and reduce excessive dependence on teacher direction (Suherman, 2021). Independence does not mean that students work without guidance. Rather, it means that teachers provide scaffolding while still giving students room to choose, try, and solve problems. This form of guided autonomy is important in elementary classrooms because students are still developing confidence and self-regulation.

Creativity refers to the ability to generate ideas, vary product design, use materials in new ways, and find alternative solutions when difficulties occur (Amabile, 1996). Creativity in entrepreneurship learning is not only visible in the final product. It also appears in the process of deciding what to make, how to make it, how to improve it, and how to present it to others. Thus, the creativity developed in co-curricular entrepreneurship learning is both practical and reflective.

The success of entrepreneurship learning depends on several supporting factors. These include teacher competence, school support, adequate facilities, a learning environment that values ideas, access to relevant materials, and opportunities to interact with real or simulated markets (Gibb, 2002; Sutrisno, 2020). Barriers may include limited resources, students' low confidence, limited product variation, weak family support, and teacher difficulty in designing innovative tasks, while digital media can help stimulate innovation when used purposefully (Agustina, 2022; Sutrisno, 2020). These factors shape the quality of co-curricular entrepreneurship learning and influence its impact on independence and creativity.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative design. The design was selected because the research aimed to understand the implementation of co-curricular entrepreneurship learning through the experiences, views, and practices of school actors. The study was conducted at SD

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Inpres Bertingkat, Somba Opu District, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The location was selected because the school had implemented co-curricular entrepreneurship learning, while still facing implementation challenges relevant to the research focus. The fieldwork was conducted in the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, from February to April 2026.

The participants were selected through purposive sampling. Seven informants were involved, consisting of the school principal, two grade IV teachers, and four grade IV students who participated in co-curricular entrepreneurship activities. The principal provided information about school policy, support, and program direction. The teachers provided information about instructional strategies, mentoring practices, and classroom implementation. The students provided information about their learning experiences, motivation, independence, creativity, problem solving, and confidence during entrepreneurship activities.

Table 1. Participants and data contribution

Participant group	Number	Main data contribution
Principal	1	School policy, program support, life-skill orientation, and institutional challenges.
Grade IV teachers	2	Instructional strategy, project implementation, mentoring practice, media use, and classroom challenges.
Grade IV students	4	Learning experience, motivation, independence, creativity, problem solving, risk-taking, and work ethic.
Total	**7**	**Qualitative evidence from observation, interviews, and documentation.**

Data were collected through non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to record classroom and co-curricular activities without researcher intervention. Interviews were used to explore informants' explanations and reflections on the implementation of entrepreneurship learning. Documentation was used to support the

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data through school documents, learning artifacts, interview records, and activity evidence. The main research instrument was the researcher, supported by observation guides, interview guidelines, and documentation checklists.

Data trustworthiness was strengthened through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from the principal, teachers, and students. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing observations, interviews, and documentation. Time triangulation was conducted through data checking at different times and situations during the research process. These procedures were used to reduce bias and strengthen the credibility of the findings.

Data analysis followed qualitative procedures of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The analysis also used thematic coding logic. Open coding was used to identify important statements from interview transcripts and observation notes. Axial coding was used to group related codes into broader categories. Selective coding was used to develop core themes explaining how co-curricular entrepreneurship learning fostered independence and creativity. The thematic structure was then organized into a qualitative model that connected school support, teacher facilitation, project-based practice, student experience, learning outcomes, and implementation constraints.

RESULTS

The findings show that co-curricular entrepreneurship learning at SD Inpres Bertingkat was implemented through practical projects that involved planning, making, presenting, and marketing simple products. The projects were connected to classroom learning and supported by teachers through explanation, media use, group work, guidance, and reflection. Entrepreneurship activities included making crafts, using recycled materials such as plastic and paper, designing simple products, and introducing students to product presentation and marketing. The findings are organized into five main themes.

Table 2. Thematic coding framework

Parent theme	Subthemes	Analytical meaning
Implementation of entrepreneurship learning	Co-curricular projects, direct practice, subject integration, learning media	Forms of entrepreneurship learning in grade IV.
Teacher role	Facilitator, motivator,	Teacher mediation of student

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	mentor, feedback provider	experience.
Independence	Decision-making, time management, task completion, responsibility	Development of guided autonomy and responsibility.
Creativity	Product ideas, design variation, recycled materials, marketing strategy	Student ability to turn ideas into useful products.
Problem solving and risk-taking	Failure, solution seeking, product repair, trying again	Student readiness to face simple uncertainty and improve outcomes.
Implementation constraints	Low confidence, limited innovation, uneven guidance, parental support	Areas that require program strengthening.

First, school support and teacher facilitation formed the foundation of implementation. The principal viewed entrepreneurship learning as a way to develop life skills, responsibility, confidence, and student independence after limited social interaction during the pandemic period. Teachers translated this direction into classroom activities by integrating entrepreneurship with subject matter, especially mathematics through the concept of money value, and environmental awareness through recycled materials. Teachers also used visual media, including smart TV and learning videos, to stimulate student ideas.

Second, project-based practice fostered student independence and responsibility. Students were given opportunities to choose product ideas, prepare materials, complete tasks, manage time, and present their work. Teachers provided guidance without taking over the whole process. This helped students experience decision-making and responsibility. Students stated that they felt more independent because they could choose what to make and sell, organize tasks, and complete projects on time. However, independence was not evenly distributed. Some students already showed initiative, while others still needed closer teacher support.

Third, entrepreneurship projects encouraged student creativity. Creativity appeared in product ideas, material selection, product design, modification, and marketing strategies. Students produced crafts, used recycled materials, made simple products, and tried to improve their designs when the first result was not satisfactory. Teachers stimulated creativity by showing examples of products and giving students freedom to explore ideas. Nevertheless, creativity still

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required strengthening because some students tended to imitate examples and produced limited variations in product design and promotion.

Fourth, the activities strengthened motivation, entrepreneurial interest, problem-solving capacity, risk-taking courage, and work ethic. Students became motivated when their products were accepted by friends or other people. They also felt interested because entrepreneurship learning was practical and enjoyable. Problems during production and marketing encouraged students to discuss, observe peers, watch learning videos, repair products, and try different designs or materials. Students also learned that failure or unsold products were not final results, but learning experiences. This built courage to try again and work harder.

Table 3. Cross-informant thematic pattern

Informant group	Dominant theme	Pattern of finding
Principal	School support, life skills, responsibility, risk, time management	Entrepreneurship was viewed as a medium for character and life-skill formation.
Grade IV.A teacher	Subject integration, recycled materials, visual media, individual responsibility	Practice-based learning emphasized creativity and responsible task completion.
Grade IV.B teacher	Healthy competition, independent decisions, improvisation, hard work	Students were encouraged to try, make decisions, and improve results.
Grade IV.A students	Motivation, independence, trying, learning from failure	Students experienced entrepreneurship as enjoyable and challenging.
Grade IV.B students	Creativity, work ethic, product presentation, new solutions	Students showed involvement in selecting ideas, solving problems, and improving products.

Fifth, the implementation still faced several constraints. Some students had low confidence when offering products. Product innovation was still limited in some groups. Guidance needs were uneven because students differed in independence, confidence, and readiness. The role of parents was also not yet visible as a strong support system. In addition, limited time

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reduced opportunities for deeper reflection after entrepreneurship activities. These findings indicate that the program needs more varied projects, gradual confidence-building strategies, stronger parental involvement, and structured reflection.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that co-curricular entrepreneurship learning can function as a character-building model in elementary education. The program did not only introduce students to simple business activities. It created a learning environment where students could plan, decide, produce, communicate, receive feedback, and revise their work. This confirms that entrepreneurship education at the elementary level should be understood as experiential learning that integrates knowledge, attitude, and skill formation (Hermawan, 2020; Sukmawati, 2022).

The development of independence was closely linked to guided autonomy. Students became more independent when teachers gave them trust to make decisions and complete tasks, while still providing direction when needed. This finding supports the view that independence in elementary learning emerges through structured opportunities. Students need freedom to choose and act, but they also need scaffolding so that independence grows safely and progressively. Excessive teacher control may limit independence, while the absence of guidance may leave students confused. The effective strategy lies in balanced facilitation.

Creativity also emerged as a process rather than only a final product. Students showed creativity when they selected materials, developed product forms, modified designs, and found solutions after failure. This result aligns with the idea that creativity requires a supportive environment, meaningful tasks, and motivation. However, the limited variation in some products suggests that creativity cannot be expected to grow automatically. Teachers need to design challenges that push students beyond imitation, such as product differentiation, packaging design, oral promotion, customer feedback, and problem-based product development.

The study also shows that entrepreneurship learning creates a productive context for problem solving and risk-taking. In this study, risk did not refer to large financial loss. It referred to pedagogical risks that were appropriate for children, such as trying a new idea, presenting a product, receiving criticism, or facing a product that did not sell. These small risks are educationally valuable because they help students build resilience, confidence, and reflective thinking. When teachers frame failure as feedback, students begin to see difficulties as part of the learning process.

The role of teachers was central in the model. Teachers acted as facilitators, motivators,

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mentors, and providers of feedback. They linked entrepreneurship with subject learning, provided media, encouraged discussion, and allowed students to try ideas. The principal's support also mattered because it gave legitimacy and direction to the program. These findings suggest that co-curricular entrepreneurship learning requires an ecosystem, not only a single classroom activity. School policy, teacher competence, learning media, student participation, and parental support need to work together.

The constraints found in this study provide important practical implications. First, student confidence needs gradual development. Students who are not ready to sell or present products can first take roles as designers, recorders, material managers, or product arrangers before moving to promotion roles. Second, project variation needs to be strengthened so students can create more diverse outputs. Third, reflection should become a routine part of each activity. Simple reflective questions can help students identify what worked, what failed, what they learned, and what they will improve. Fourth, parents should be involved as partners who reinforce entrepreneurship values at home.

The study has limitations. It focused on one elementary school and involved seven informants. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as a contextual qualitative account, not as a statistical generalization. Future studies may compare several schools, include longer observation periods, analyze student products more systematically, or combine qualitative findings with quantitative measures of independence and creativity. Despite these limitations, this study provides a clear description of how co-curricular entrepreneurship learning can support character formation in elementary education.

CONCLUSION

Co-curricular entrepreneurship learning at SD Inpres Bertingkat, Gowa Regency, contributed to the development of student independence and creativity through project-based practice. Students gained direct experience in planning, making, marketing, and evaluating simple products. This process encouraged them to make decisions, manage tasks, take responsibility, generate ideas, modify products, solve problems, take simple risks, and work persistently. The implementation was strengthened by school support and teacher facilitation, especially through guidance, motivation, media use, freedom to choose products, and reflection on failure.

The study also found several areas that require improvement. Student independence and confidence were not evenly developed. Creativity still needed stronger stimulation because some products remained similar to examples. Parental support was not yet fully integrated into the

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program. Reflection time also needed to be structured more consistently. Therefore, schools should improve co-curricular entrepreneurship learning by designing more varied projects, giving differentiated mentoring, involving parents, using creative media, and implementing regular reflection after each project. With these improvements, entrepreneurship learning can become a sustainable model for fostering independence, creativity, and entrepreneurial character in elementary students.

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