https://doi.org/10.35719/gns.v6i1.207

GENIUS: Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood Education
Volume 6, Issue 1, 2025, Page 71-88
Available online at: https://genius.uinkhas.ac.id/index.php/gns/index

Fostering Professionalism in Prospective Early Childhood Teachers through Practice-Based Edupreneurship

Syifauzakia
Universitas Negeri Jakarta/UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon
syifauzakia@gmail.com

M. Syarif Sumantri
Universitas Negeri Jakarta
mohamadsumantri@gmail.com

Nurbiana Dhieni
Universitas Negeri Jakarta
ndhieni@unj.ac.id

Sri Wulan
Universitas Negeri Jakarta
sriwulan@unj.ac.id

Article Information

Article History:
Received: May-2025
Revised: June-2025
Accepted: June-2025
Keywords:
Professionalism of Early Childhood Teachers; Edupreneurship; Practice-Based Learning.

Abstract

This study evaluates a practice-based learning model within the Edupreneurship course aimed at enhancing the professionalism of prospective Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers. Employing a qualitative evaluative approach, data were gathered from 38 students through pre-tests, observations, project documentation, and reflections over 16 sessions. Thematic analysis revealed five key transformations: a shift in perception and motivation toward edu-preneurship, improved practical competence in educational media production, mastery of digital literacy, strengthened collaboration, and heightened resilience in real-world challenges. These findings demonstrate that integrating entrepreneurial projects into the curriculum develops students' technical and managerial skills and fosters adaptive, creative, and reflective professional identities. The study recommends institutionalizing such models within ECE programs to cultivate socially responsive and innovative educators equipped for 21st-century demands.

How to Cite:
Syifauzakia, S., Sumantri, M. S., Dhieni, N., & Wulan, S. (2025). Fostering Professionalism in Prospective Early Childhood Teachers through Practice-Based Edupreneurship. *GENIUS: Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood Education*, *6*(1), 71–88. https://doi.org/10.35719/gns.v6i1.207

INTRODUCTION

The demands of 21st-century education require Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers to be more than pedagogically competent; they must also possess creativity, innovation, leadership, and adaptability in designing learning experiences that align with dynamic societal needs and children's holistic development. In this evolving landscape, edupreneurship has emerged as a transformative concept that integrates educational values with entrepreneurial thinking to transform and improve learning. It encourages prospective ECE teachers to act as creative change agents, capable of developing educational solutions that are both pedagogically meaningful and socially impactful (Kovalevska et al., 2024). Developing such edupreneurship competencies within teacher education programs is increasingly essential to producing resilient, resourceful, and future-ready educators.

Unfortunately, in many higher education institutions, entrepreneurial skills are still not the primary focus in the education of prospective ECE teachers. The curriculum emphasizes normative pedagogic aspects and tends to ignore the aspects of innovation, managerial, and digital literacy that are demanded today. In practice, ECE teachers often face limited resources, lack of technical support, and demands to develop creative teaching materials with limited funds. In this context, prospective teachers without entrepreneurial spirit and skills will have difficulty adapting to the field (Sukarno et al., 2024). Universities need to design learning strategies that shape academic competencies and train students to become innovative, collaborative, and economically productive educator educators.

Preliminary findings from initial observations in the Edupreneurship course show that most prospective ECE teacher students have a limited understanding of entrepreneurship in education. The analysis showed that 75% of respondents had never received material about entrepreneurship or edupreneurship. In addition, almost the majority of respondents, 83.8% of students, have never been involved in business activities or independent projects, even though as many as 94.6% expressed their desire to have their own business in the future. This fact reflects the gap between the potential entrepreneurial motivation and the real capacity of students to implement edupreneurship practices relevant to early childhood education.

Several previous studies have shown the urgency and effectiveness of implementing the edupreneurship approach in teacher education. A study by Pamungkas et al. revealed that project-based learning models can increase students' creativity and independence in developing educational products (Pamungkas et al., 2024). Oksanen et al. also showed that a collaborative approach in entrepreneurial practices helps increase prospective ECE teachers' confidence and innovative abilities (Oksanen et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the study conducted by Sulistianingsih emphasizes the importance of mastering digital skills in supporting the successful implementation of social media-based edupreneurship (Sulistianingsih, 2023). A study by Bates et al. proves that social entrepreneurship-based training can strengthen teachers' professional identity in marginal areas (Bates et al., 2024). Finally, research by Lapolla dan Copeland confirmed that students' involvement in online bazaars and sales projects significantly

improved their problem-solving and team collaboration skills (Lapolla & Copeland, 2023). However, these studies have not explicitly highlighted student professional identity changes due to the practice-based learning process.

While existing literature acknowledges entrepreneurship education's technical and motivational benefits, limited research explores how practice-based edupreneurship reshapes future teachers' professional identities, primarily through integrative frameworks. Previous studies have not systematically addressed how hands-on entrepreneurial projects, embedded in real-life learning experiences, influence students' perceptions of their roles as educators and edupreneurs.

This study addresses that gap by offering two original contributions. First, it examines how engagement in authentic edupreneurship activities—such as product design, branding, digital marketing, and public exhibitions—can transform students' competencies and self-conceptions as early childhood professionals. Second, it introduces an integrated theoretical lens by combining Transformative Learning (Mezirow), Experiential Learning (Kolb), and Project-Based Learning (Thomas) to analyze the dynamic learning processes involved. By doing so, the study provides both pedagogical insight and theoretical enrichment to early childhood teacher education.

Therefore, this study aims to evaluate how practice-based edupreneurship fosters the development of professionalism among prospective ECE teachers through transformative, experiential, and contextualized learning approaches.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a contextual evaluative design to explore the transformation process of the professionalism of prospective Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers through practice-based learning in the Edupreneurship course. This design enables the researcher to examine student perceptions, practical competencies, and professional identity changes through direct engagement in authentic and contextual learning experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The participants were 38 sixth-semester students from the Early Childhood Islamic Education Study Program at one of the Indonesian State Islamic Universities who enrolled in the Edupreneurship course during the even semester.

Data were collected from multiple sources, including initial classroom observations, weekly project progress reports, group product documentation, digital promotional media, and individual student reflection narratives at the end of the course. All data were gathered online via Google Forms and shared digital folders. The data types included students' initial perceptions, practical experiences during the project, and personal reflections after completing the course.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis based on the six-phase process proposed by Braun & Clarke, including data familiarization, initial coding, theme searching, theme reviewing, theme defining/naming, and reporting (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The coding process was inductive, with themes emerging naturally from the data rather than using a predefined

codebook. The analysis resulted in five main themes: (1) transforming perception and motivation, (2) improving practical competence, (3) mastering digital skills, (4) strengthening collaboration, and (5) developing resilience and problem-solving skills.

To ensure the confirmability of the data, the study applied source triangulation by comparing multiple data types (e.g., reflections, project outputs, and digital content). It maintained a basic audit trail documenting the sequence of analytic steps and decisions made throughout the research process. Although member checking was not conducted, transparency and consistency were ensured through systematic documentation. The interpretation of results was framed by three complementary learning theories: Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 1991), Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984), and Project-Based Learning (Thomas, 2000), which collectively explain the dynamics of professional change experienced by the students. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of changing student professionalism in the context of educational practice-based learning.

RESULT

To provide a comprehensive understanding, the presentation of research results is arranged based on three main stages of learning, namely: (1) Planning, which includes initial activities, theoretical materials, and the preparation of project plans; (2) Implementation, in the form of the implementation of student business plans in the form of production and marketing; and (3) Results that show the impact and changes that occur on students after participating in the entire learning series. These three stages are presented narratively based on data analysis and accompanied by direct quotes from students to describe their dynamics and reflections authentically.

1. Planning Stage: Initial Exploration, Theoretical Learning, and Project Formulation

The planning stage began with an initial observation and pre-test conducted during the first meeting. Students participated in a course orientation and filled out a pre-test designed to map their perceptions of edupreneurship and its relevance to the profession of early childhood education (ECE) teachers. The results revealed a significant gap—while many students aspired to become entrepreneurs, they had a limited understanding of how entrepreneurial principles connect with the responsibilities and roles of ECE educators. This stage reflects Mezirow's disorienting dilemma, which triggers students to reassess their assumptions and become more receptive to the transformative perspectives of the ECE profession.

In meetings 2 to 5, students engaged in a series of theoretical lectures on edupreneurship, focusing on Islamic educational values, business ethics, characteristics of edupreneurs, and the foundational concepts of teamwork. This sub-stage aimed to build a strong conceptual understanding of educational entrepreneurship rooted in pedagogical and ethical principles. Through this phase, students progressed to Kolb's abstract conceptualization and Mezirow's critical reflection, forming initial ideas about integrating entrepreneurship into their future roles as educators and educational innovators.

The next sub-stage, conducted in meetings 6 to 8, guided students to conduct mini-market research on early childhood needs and to translate those findings into practical business plans. They learned how to identify customer segments, design products with educational value, and formulate branding and sales strategies. Product ideas ranged from healthy snacks and custom children's hijabs to sensory educational crafts and Islamic-themed learning kits. Students aligned their ideas with values relevant to the ECE field, ensuring their ventures upheld educational and moral purposes. This phase illustrates Kolb's active experimentation and reflects Thomas's notion of contextual planning within project-based learning.

In meeting 9, students moved to team formation and task distribution, organizing themselves into collaborative units with clear roles in production, promotion, finance, and logistics. This hands-on experience managing a simulated educational business encouraged students to develop leadership, communication, and collaborative problem-solving skills. This final sub-stage of planning reflects Kolb's reflective observation and Thomas's principle of participatory roles, where students take ownership of their learning by engaging in authentic social interactions. The planning process concluded with teams preparing for the implementation stage, including creating operational plans and a sales roadmap for upcoming live-streaming and bazaar events. Throughout this planning process, students developed technical plans and underwent "perspective transformation" (Mezirow), embracing a broader, more entrepreneurial understanding of their future professional identities.

Table 1
Planning Stage: Initial Exploration, Theoretical Learning, and Project Formulation

Meeting	Sub-Stage	Activities	Key Learning Outcomes	Theoretical Annotation (Kolb, Mezirow, Thomas)
1	Initial Observation and Pre-Test	Mapping student perceptions of entrepreneurship and early childhood education	Students realize the disconnection between their career goals and entrepreneurship mindset.	Mezirow: Disorienting Dilemma
2–5	Theoretical Learning on Edupreneurship	Sequential lecture covering Islamic values in edupreneurship, business ethics, and team building	The conceptual foundation of ethical and Islamic-based edupreneurship	Kolb: Abstract Conceptualization; Mezirow: Critical Reflection
6–8	Market Research and Business Planning	Conducting mini research on the ECE market, ideating products, planning operational strategy	Ability to connect theory with real market needs and align edupreneurship ideas with ECE values	Kolb: Active Experimentation; Thomas: Situated Learning, Contextual Planning

Meeting	Sub-Stage	Activities	Key Learning Outcomes	Theoretical Annotation (Kolb, Mezirow, Thomas)
9	Team Formation and Task Distribution	Forming teams and allocating production, finance, marketing, and logistics roles	Collaboration and leadership skills development in a simulated business environment	Kolb: Reflective Observation; Thomas: Relational Responsibility and Participatory Roles

2. Implementation Stage: Edupreneurship Project Implementation

The implementation stage marked the transition from conceptual planning to real-world practice. Beginning in meetings 10 to 13, students entered a structured mentoring phase focused on developing their products, identifying suppliers, and preparing operational strategies. Each group of 4–5 students formed a mini-business aligned with their creative interests, producing educational media, healthy snacks, customized hijabs, or learning kits. This stage represented Kolb's active experimentation, where students began applying theoretical knowledge through hands-on entrepreneurial experience.

Each team organized its internal workflow into four main divisions: production, digital marketing, financial operations, and logistics. This systematic role distribution mirrors Thomas's project-based learning principle of participatory roles in authentic settings. Students conducted supplier research, analyzed the market, finalized cost structures, and determined pricing strategies based on educational value. Through this process, students developed managerial, planning, and teamwork skills. They also experienced challenges such as inconsistent participation and material delays, sparking open discussions that nurtured Mezirow's critical reflection and transformation in their professional responsibility.

Meeting 14 was dedicated to live digital selling, primarily using TikTok and Instagram. Students created promotional content, scheduled uploads, and engaged customers through real-time interaction. Although technical difficulties arose, such as poor signal quality or production limitations, most teams overcame these issues collaboratively. They enhanced their adaptability, resilience, and public communication, deepening their professional identity as proactive and technologically literate educators. These experiences illustrate Kolb's concrete experience and Thomas's emphasis on contextual digital learning.

The highlight of this stage occurred in Meeting 15, the Edupreneurship Expo. This event held offline on campus, required students to design booths, present their products directly to visitors, and articulate the educational value embedded in their offerings. This face-to-face engagement provided students with firsthand sales and service experience. It also served as a platform to test leadership, interpersonal communication, and the ability to adapt marketing strategies in dynamic environments, qualities emphasized in Mezirow's transformative learning and Kolb's reflective observation.

Finally, Meeting 16 was used for final reporting and individual reflection. Students evaluated their learning journey, including processes, challenges, and personal growth. These reflections revealed a shift in mindset from viewing entrepreneurship as a separate career path to integrating it with their identity as early childhood educators. The integration of theory and action, struggle and resolution, self-awareness, and community dialogue during this stage solidified the transformative and developmental impact of practice-based learning. That embodies the synergy of Kolb's experiential learning cycle, Mezirow's transformative perspective, and Thomas's contextualized project pedagogy.

Table 2
Implementation Stage: Edupreneurship Project Execution and Reflection

Meeting	Sub-Stage	Activities	Key Learning Outcomes	Theoretical Annotation (Kolb, Mezirow, Thomas)
10–13	Project Development and Mentoring	Mentoring on product refinement, supplier outreach, and task execution across business functions	Students develop problem-solving and strategic thinking through feedback and peer collaboration	**Kolb**: Active Experimentation; **Mezirow**: Reflective Discourse; **Thomas**: Guided Facilitation
14	Digital Selling Implementation	Live-selling via TikTok/Instagram, digital marketing execution, and real-time sales interaction	Increased confidence in digital promotion and customer engagement strategies	**Kolb**: Concrete Experience; **Thomas**: Real-World Application
15	Edupreneurship Expo (Offline)	Booth design, product display, direct sales, and customer interaction	Strengthening communication, presentation skills, and real market exposure	**Kolb**: Reflective Observation; **Mezirow**: Perspective Transformation
16	Final Reflection and Reporting	Submission of reports and personal reflection on learning outcomes, challenges, and insights	Internalization of professional values: resilience, creativity, and entrepreneurial mindset	**Mezirow**: Self-Examination and New Meaning Perspective; **Kolb**: Abstract Conceptualization

3. Outcome Stage: Transformation of Student Professionalism of Early Childhood Education Teacher Candidates

The study results show that students experience a transformation in perception and increased motivation to become edupreneurs. Previously, some students had not seen the relevance of entrepreneurship in the role of ECE teachers. However, after undergoing a real project, there was a paradigm shift. Edupreneurship is an expression of innovative, solution, and impactful teacher professionalism. One student stated, *"Through hands-on experience in*

creating and selling educational products, I realized that a teacher can be an innovator, a problem solver, and a creator of meaningful educational businesses. This experience has inspired me to become a more professional and creative educator". This quote reflects the integration of understanding and a new spirit in seeing one's potential as an educator and an educational business creator.

The second key finding highlights enhancing students' practical competence through their direct engagement in producing educational products and developing business plans. Students learned to design, create, and market various items, such as learning media, healthy snacks, and children's accessories. They were also responsible for managing financial records, calculating the cost of production and margins, and compiling financial statements. This involvement offered them valuable insight into entrepreneurial practices relevant to early childhood education. As expressed by one student: *"Developing a business plan helped me understand the fundamentals of starting a business. It supported my early learning in becoming an entrepreneur."* Such experience embodies Kolb's Concrete Experience stage and reflects Thomas's emphasis on authentic, practice-based learning for professional growth in educational entrepreneurship.

The third finding illustrates a significant improvement in students' digital skills, particularly in creating promotional content, managing online campaigns, and conducting live selling through platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. For many students, this marked their first experience leveraging digital media for educational product marketing. The learning process pushed them beyond their comfort zones and fostered confidence in using technology for public engagement. One student reflected: *"Live streaming helped me practice speaking in public and boosted my confidence."* Another noted the creative challenges involved: *"It was tiring to design content, but I learned how to create attractive and cohesive Instagram feeds for our products."* These reflections indicate that students developed digital competence and began to internalize the importance of branding, visual coherence, and audience interaction—core elements in modern edupreneurship. This learning aligns with Kolb's Active Experimentation and Thomas's technology integration framework in experiential learning.

The fourth key finding highlights strengthening collaborative skills through structured teamwork experiences. Students were organized into groups with defined roles—production, marketing, finance, and logistics—which mimicked real-world entrepreneurial teams. This setting exposed them to the authentic dynamics of collaboration, including dealing with differing opinions, managing unequal workloads, and maintaining consistent communication across tasks. One student reflected: *"Learn leadership and tough management because a person's nature and character are different."* This quote underscores the students' awareness of interpersonal diversity and the leadership competencies needed to navigate group challenges. Through these experiences, students did not merely complete assignments but cultivated essential soft skills such as empathy, coordination, conflict resolution, and shared responsibility—qualities aligned with Mezirow's dialogic learning and Thomas's collaborative learning environment.

The final significant finding emphasizes the development of students' resilience and problem-solving abilities as they confronted real-world challenges throughout the project. These included technical difficulties during live streaming, time limitations, unbalanced team contributions, and low product sales. Despite these setbacks, students demonstrated emotional endurance and a growth mindset. One student candidly reflected: *"I am the first one to livestream. It is exhausting but happy, even if no one checks out. Maybe it is natural because my life skills have to be honed again."* This expression reflects the student's ability to process failure not as a defeat but as part of an iterative learning experience. Such reflective acceptance illustrates Mezirow's concept of critical self-reflection, while the adaptive responses mirror Kolb's reflective observation and reinforce the importance of learning through real-life entrepreneurial application. Edupreneurship, therefore, is no longer viewed merely as a pursuit of profit but as a platform for building the professional and personal resilience essential to becoming effective and innovative early childhood educators.

Table 3
Outcome Stage: Transformation of Student Professionalism of Early Childhood Education Teacher Candidates

Outcome Domain	Description	Supporting Evidence (Student Reflections)	Theoretical Annotation (Kolb, Mezirow, Thomas)
1. Transforming Perception and Motivation	Students experienced a shift in mindset, recognizing edupreneurship as a form of teacher professionalism.	"Through hands-on experience in creating and selling educational products, I realized that a teacher can be an innovator, a problem solver, and a creator of meaningful educational businesses. This experience has inspired me to become a more professional and creative educator."	**Mezirow**: Perspective Transformation; **Kolb**: Reflective Observation
2. Practical Competence Development	Students gained hands-on experience in product creation, financial management, and business operations.	"Developing a business plan helped me understand the fundamentals of starting a business. It supported my early learning in becoming an entrepreneur." " The process of selecting the product to sell, creating and packaging the product, and taking part in the bazaar."	**Kolb**: Concrete Experience; **Thomas**: Authentic Practice-Based Learning
3. Digital Skills Mastery	Students learned to promote via social media, create content,	"Live streaming helped me practice speaking in public and boosted my confidence."	Kolb: Active Experimentation; Thomas: Technology Integration in Learning

Outcome Domain	Description	Supporting Evidence (Student Reflections)	Theoretical Annotation (Kolb, Mezirow, Thomas)
	and perform live selling.	“It was tiring to design content, but I learned how to create attractive and cohesive Instagram feeds for our products.”	
4. Collaboration and Teamwork	Students developed leadership, conflict management, and cooperative planning within group settings.	"learn leadership and tough management because a person's nature and character are different."	Mezirow: Dialogic Learning; Thomas: Collaborative Learning Environment
5. Resilience and Problem Solving	Students handled real challenges such as live stream issues and low sales, building emotional endurance.	"I am the first one to livestream. It is exhausting but happy, even if no one checks out. Maybe it is natural. My life skills have to be honed again."	**Kolb**: Reflective Observation; **Mezirow**: Critical Self-Reflection

DISCUSSION

Practice-based learning through the edupreneurship project in this course has significantly transformed the professionalism of prospective ECE teachers. This transformation is reflected in five key domains: transforming perception and motivation, developing practical competence, mastering digital skills, strengthening collaboration and teamwork, and fostering resilience and problem-solving. Unlike Pamungkas et al., who focused on creativity and autonomy in educational product development (Pamungkas et al., 2024), this study reveals a more comprehensive shift—from changes in mindset to the internalization of professionalism through an entrepreneurial identity. While Haara & Jenssen emphasized digital skill acquisition (Haara & Jenssen, 2019), our findings demonstrate that students also cultivated emotional resilience and strategic communication skills through real-world challenges such as live selling and social media content creation—core components of the project-based approach.

The course enhanced students' entrepreneurship competence by integrating hands-on experience, critical reflection, and collaborative engagement inherent in project-based learning. It deepened their understanding of edupreneurship as a professional and ethical extension of the ECE teaching role. The ability to confront authentic challenges, design marketable educational products, and function effectively in teams signifies a holistic transformation beyond technical skill acquisition (Batat, 2024; Larson et al., 2020). In contrast to earlier studies that tended to isolate either instructional strategy or single-skill outcomes, this study highlights the multifaceted value of project-based edupreneurship in shaping innovation, collaboration, resilience, and a renewed sense of teacher professionalism.

A study conducted by Suhendro confirmed that practice-based learning through the edupreneurship project is crucial for prospective early childhood teachers to develop business ideas in the field (Suhendro, 2022). Similarly, another study stated entrepreneurship education is crucial for developing entrepreneurship features in prospective early childhood teachers (Kaya-Capocci, 2022).

The following section presents an in-depth analysis of the five transformational domains, supported by student reflections and framed through the theoretical lenses of Kolb, Mezirow, and Thomas. Here is an in-depth discussion of each research finding.

1. **Transforming Perception and Increasing Motivation to Become an Edupreneur**

The transformation of students' perceptions regarding the ECE teaching profession from a conventional classroom educator to an edupreneur who creates both educational and economic value—reflects the process of transformative learning as articulated by (Mezirow, 1991). Students' direct involvement in designing and marketing educational products constitutes a *disorienting experience* that prompts critical reflection and reshapes their professional worldview. One student expressed, *"Through hands-on experience in creating and selling educational products, I realized that a teacher can be an innovator, a problem solver, and a creator of meaningful educational businesses."* This statement highlights how students began to see the teaching profession not as static or limited but as dynamic and innovation-driven. The experience also aligns with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984)—through which students construct a more profound understanding and professional identity. Supporting this perspective, Haara & Jenssen found that integrating entrepreneurship into teacher education significantly enhances professional awareness (Haara & Jenssen, 2019), particularly in viewing teaching as an adaptive and creative field.

Moreover, the student's engagement in practice-based learning aligns with the principles of project-based learning (PjBL) as described by Thomas, who emphasizes that PjBL promotes active participation, problem-solving, and real-world relevance key factors that support the development of professional competence and autonomy (Thomas, 2000). Through the process of planning, creating, and reflecting on their educational products, students experienced authentic learning that mirrors the demands of professional practice, which aligns with Darling Hammond et al.'s framework of 21st-century teaching competencies collaboration, innovation, adaptability, and contextual responsiveness (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In Islamic education, such motivation is further enriched by spiritual purpose and communal benefit values. As Maruntelu asserts, the ideal edupreneur is not driven solely by profit but by the desire to contribute through educational services and transform the learning process rooted in social value (Maruntelu, 2023). Therefore, practice-based learning serves not only to enhance entrepreneurial skills but also to nurture reflective, socially engaged, and value-driven ECE professionals, as articulated by the interconnected theories of Mezirow, Kolb, Thomas, and Darling-Hammond.

2. Improving Practical Competence

The second finding shows that students' direct involvement in developing a business plan and producing educational media significantly contributes to improving their practical competence. Students participated in various essential entrepreneurial activities, such as budgeting, conducting market research, calculating production costs, and independently testing their products—a learning process that aligns with (Fontana et al., 2023; Kolb, 1984) Experiential Learning theory. According to Kolb, effective learning occurs through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The educational product development project allowed students to build knowledge through real-world challenges, enabling them to integrate theory with practical application. One student wrote, *"Developing a business plan helped me understand the fundamentals of starting a business. It supported my early learning in becoming an entrepreneur."* Another reflection stated, *"The process of selecting the product to sell, creating and packaging the product, and taking part in the bazaar."* These reflections illustrate how concrete experiences and real-world tasks became meaningful learning processes that fostered students' practical skills and confidence.

In entrepreneurship education, Fontana et al. emphasized that students directly producing educational goods demonstrated significant improvements in technical skills such as production management, design innovation, and stock planning (Fontana et al., 2023). In addition, Sahputri et al. found that early childhood teacher education students who were directly involved in designing learning media showed stronger pedagogical abilities than those who only studied theory (Sahputri et al., 2024). These findings reinforce the importance of integrating production-based activities in teacher education to bridge conceptual understanding with applied skill development.

Furthermore, this learning process reflects Mezirow's Transformative Learning theory, in which meaningful learning occurs when students critically assess their assumptions through disorienting experiences (Mezirow, 1991). Engaging in business planning and operations was a new experience for most students, triggering reflection and reforming their professional identity. From the perspective of Thomas, the use of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in this context supports the development of integrated competencies through authentic tasks and interdisciplinary collaboration (Thomas, 2000). This competence development also aligns with the 21st-century teacher profile proposed by Darling-Hammonnd et al., who emphasize the importance of preparing future educators to be adaptive, creative, and capable of innovation amid the complexity of educational environments (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Through this project, students did not merely acquire isolated business skills. However, they developed the capacity to become creative professionals who bridge pedagogy and entrepreneurship, a role that is increasingly relevant in the field of early childhood education today.

3. Digital Skills Mastery

The third finding shows that students experienced a significant increase in their mastery of digital skills, particularly in utilizing platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Canva, and WhatsApp Business for promotional and sales purposes. That highlights the growing importance of digital literacy in 21st-

century higher education, especially for prospective early childhood education (ECE) teachers who are expected to be creative, adaptive, and technologically literate. Garcia-Perezet al. emphasize that the ability to manage technology is not merely an auxiliary skill but an essential component of professional competence for today's teachers (García-Pérez et al., 2021). Through project-based learning, students were encouraged to independently produce digital content, engage in live streaming, create promotional materials, and develop compelling educational narratives for target audiences. That aligns with Sulistianingsih's findings, which state that integrating digital marketing into entrepreneurial learning accelerates students' mastery of technology while fostering an entrepreneurship mindset based on digital media (Sulistianingsih, 2023).

Student reflections reinforce these outcomes. One student shared, *"Live streaming helped me practice speaking in public and boosted my confidence."* Another noted, *"It was tiring to design content, but I learned how to create attractive and cohesive Instagram feeds for our products."* These statements indicate that students were using technology functionally and beginning to internalize its role in educational and professional contexts. This hands-on experience reflects Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Gordon, 2022; Kolb, 1984) as students move through stages of real-world action, reflection, conceptual understanding, and experimentation. From Mezirow's perspective, the challenge of managing digital campaigns and presenting themselves to public audiences was a disorienting yet transformative experience, prompting new perceptions of their digital identity as future professionals (Mezirow, 1991). According to Thomas, authentic tasks within project-based learning frameworks enhance cross-disciplinary skills and, in this case, foster digital fluency within entrepreneurial and pedagogical domains (Thomas, 2000). Furthermore, the findings resonated with Darling-Hammond et al. call for preparing teachers who are digitally competent, communicative, and capable of innovation in a rapidly changing world (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). These experiences demonstrate that digital literacy is not simply a marketing tool but a vital medium through which ECE students begin to shape their professional identity as competent and connected educators in the digital era.

4. Strengthening Collaboration in Project Teamwork

The fourth finding reveals that students demonstrated a significant increase in collaboration skills, particularly when working in small teams responsible for managing all aspects of the edupreneurship project. Group dynamics, which required the division of roles in production, finance, marketing, and logistics, pushed students to engage in open communication, establish work agreements, and resolve conflicts constructively. This learning process strongly reflects the principles of Project-Based Learning, which emphasize the importance of collaborative work in solving real-world problems within authentic professional contexts (Thomas, 2000). Shvets et al. emphasize that collaboration in real projects enhances essential social competencies such as leadership, empathy, and team-based decision-making (Shvets et al., 2024). Similarly, Porkodi et al. concluded that collaboration-based entrepreneurial practice significantly improves students' interpersonal skills and readiness for professional teamwork (Porkodi et al., 2023).

Student reflections provide meaningful insight into the interpersonal learning that occurred. One student shared, *"I learned leadership and tough management because everyone has different personalities and characters."* Another student wrote, *"Our team had conflicts because of different schedules, but we learned to create a fair production and promotion schedule. That made me realize the importance of communication."* These reflections indicate that the collaboration process extended beyond technical coordination, fostering deeper professional values such as empathy, mutual respect, and shared responsibility. From Kolb's experiential learning perspective, students moved through authentic group-based challenges that prompted reflection and adaptation (Gordon, 2022; Kolb, 1984). The interpersonal struggles and team negotiations also served as disorienting yet transformative moments, aligning with Mezirow that transformative learning often arises from conflict and critical reflection on social interactions (Mezirow, 1991). Furthermore, these collaborative experiences align with Darling-Hammond et al. 's profile of the 21st-century teacher who must be capable of working in cross-functional, interdisciplinary teams involving fellow educators, parents, and communities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Thus, this project functioned as an entrepreneurial exercise and a powerful platform for social learning and the development of professional collaboration skills essential for future ECE educators.

5. Resilience and Problem Solving in Facing Real Challenges

The fifth finding indicates that students demonstrated increased resilience and problem-solving skills while implementing the edupreneurship project. They encountered challenges such as limited production tools, unstable internet connections during live streaming, role conflicts within teams, and frequently adjusting marketing strategies. Despite these obstacles, students could adapt, identify solutions, and carry their projects to completion. That reflects the core ideas of *resilient pedagogy* (Clum et al., 2022), which emphasizes the importance of developing adaptive capacity and emotional strength through direct engagement with unpredictable and high-pressure learning environments. In the context of early childhood education (ECE), resilience and problem-solving are essential teacher competencies. As (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017) argued, 21st-century educators must be able to think reflectively, remain calm under pressure, and design solutions in uncertain and dynamic conditions. Similarly, (Dias et al., 2021; Kolb, 1984) highlight that entrepreneurial learning environments can trigger the development of personal resilience as students face failures, pressures, and unexpected events throughout the learning process.

Student reflections confirm these findings. One student shared, *"I am the first one to livestream. It is exhausting but happy, even if no one checks out. Maybe it is natural. my life skills have to be honed again."* This quote demonstrates how the student initially experienced disappointment but quickly moved toward acceptance, reflection, and a desire to improve. Rather than being discouraged, the student embraced the learning opportunity—a clear indicator of emotional resilience and a growth mindset. This learning trajectory reflects Kolb's experiential learning cycle, where the concrete experience of failure is followed by reflective observation, conceptual understanding, and active re-application (Kolb, 1984). Additionally, the

process aligns with Mezirow's transformative learning framework, in which discomfort and disorientation are catalysts for personal growth and professional identity formation (Mezirow, 1991).

The challenges students faced were not abstract or simulated but real-world obstacles that tested their capacity to remain composed, adapt strategies, and take responsibility for problem-solving. From the lens of Thomas, this experience illustrates the essence of Project-Based Learning (PjBL), where complex, authentic tasks such as managing live promotions and technical failures serve as meaningful contexts for developing higher-order thinking, emotional control, and collaborative problem-solving (Thomas, 2000). In doing so, the edupreneurship project provided an authentic space for students to develop professional dispositions such as perseverance, solution orientation, and reflective adaptability, key life skills for becoming competent and resilient ECE teachers.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to evaluate the process and impact of practice-based learning in the Edupreneurship course on the formation of professionalism of prospective ECE teachers. The results of the study indicate that the active involvement of students in educational entrepreneurship projects has formed a transformation in five main aspects: perception and motivation towards the teaching profession as an edupreneur, practical competence in producing educational media, mastery of digital skills, collaboration skills in teamwork, and resilience and problem-solving skills in facing real challenges. This transformation shows that students experience increased knowledge and skills but also experience forming a professional identity as prospective ECE adaptive, creative, and resourceful teachers. This project has succeeded in integrating entrepreneurial values with the context of early childhood education, building awareness of the role of teachers as social innovators and agents of change based on educational values.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the practice-based learning approach and educational entrepreneurship projects be an integral part of the ECE teacher education curriculum, especially in the context of courses that are applicative. For further development, research can be directed at longitudinal measurements of the long-term impact of edupreneurship projects on student performance in the workplace or field practice. In addition, an interdisciplinary approach that integrates digital technology, social entrepreneurship, and ECE pedagogy can be the focus of developing a curriculum model responsive to the challenges of the 21st century. Comparative studies across institutions are also needed to see the consistency and effectiveness of this approach in various teacher education contexts in Indonesia. This study proposes a replicable model for integrating edupreneurship into early childhood teacher training that fosters professional competence and a transformative mindset among future educators.

REFERENCES

Batat, Wided. (2024). Revolutionizing Business and Marketing Education: The MECCDAL Model and a Case Study from the American Institute of

Business Experience Design. *Journal of Macromarketing*, *44*(3), 590–601. https://doi.org/10.1177/02761467241244472

Bates, G., Fisher, R., Turner, K., Machirori, T. L., & Rixon, A. (2024). Raising the social status of teachers: teachers as social entrepreneurs. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, *51*(4), 1405–1424. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-023-00646-4

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Clum, K., Ebersole, E., Wicks, D., & Shea, M. (2022). A Case Study Approach to Exploring Resilient Pedagogy During Times of Crisis. *Online Learning Journal (OLC)*, *26*(2), 323–342. https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v26i2.2695

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective Teacher Professional Development*. Learning Policy Institute.

Dias, T. R. F. V., Martens, C. D. P., & Lacerda, F. M. (2021). ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF FAILURE AND CREATION OF NEW BUSINESS. *Brazilian Creative Industries Journal*, *1*(1), Fabrício Martins Lacerda. https://doi.org/10.25112/bcij.v1i1.2687

Fontana, M. E., Nepomuceno, V. S., & Almeida, L. T. de F. (2023). The Skills Stimulated by Integrating Contents of Production Management in Higher Education in Engineering by Adapting 'The Paper Airplane Factory' Game. *BRAZILIAN SYMPOSIUM ON COMPUTER GAMES AND DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT (SBGAMES)*, *22*, 957–966. https://doi.org/10.5753/sbgames_estendido.2023.232574

García-Pérez, L., García-Garnica, M., & Olmedo-Moreno, E. M. (2021). Skills for a Working Future: How to Bring about Professional Success from the Educational Setting. *Education Sciences*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11010027

Gordon, S. P. (2022). Integrating the Experiential Learning Cycle with Educational Supervision. *Journal of Educational Supervision*, *5*(3), 1–34. https://doi.org/10.31045/jes.5.3.1

Haara, F. O., & Jenssen, E. S. (2019). The Influence of Pedagogical Entrepreneurship in Teacher Education. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.754

Kaya-Capocci, S. (2022). Entrepreneurship in Preschool Education: Turkish Preservice Teachers' Entrepreneurship Features, Comparison with their Lecturers' Views and Suggestions for Development. *Journal of Health and Medical Sciences*, *5*(4), 310–325. https://doi.org/10.31014/aior.1993.05.04.593

Kolb, D. (1984). Experiential Learning: Experience As The Source Of Learning And Development. In *Journal of Business Ethics*. Prentice Hall.

Kovalevska, N., Zimakova, L., & Pasichnichenko, A. (2024). FORMATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE TEACHERS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN. *THE SOURCES OF PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS*, *34*, 106–111. https://doi.org/10.33989/2075-146x.2024.34.318054

Lapolla, K., & Copeland, L. (2023). Industry scenarios in the classroom: A case for design and merchandising student collaboration. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, *16*(3), 266–274. https://doi.org/10.1080/17543266.2023.2173310

Larson, J., Barnard, W., Chandler, J., O'Donnell, M., W. Savenye, & Zapata, C. E. (2020). Moving Beyond Technical Skills: Fostering the Development of Essential Skills Needed for a Successful Career in Engineering. In *Geo-Congress 2020* (pp. 694–701). https://doi.org/10.1061/9780784482810.072

Maruntelu, C.-L. (2023). The Edupreneur: Empowering Education through Entrepreneurial Innovation. *"Ovidius" University Annals, Economic Sciences Series*, *XXIII*(1), 432–437. https://doi.org/10.61801/ouaess.2023.1.56

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. Jossey-Bass Inc.

Oksanen, L., Healey-Benson, F., & McCallum, E. (2022). Take a Chance on CPD! How One School Put its Faith in the EntreCompEdu CPD Programme and Developed Whole-School Collective Entrepreneurial Education. *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny*, 138–162. https://doi.org/10.31338/2657-6007.kp.2021-4.7

Pamungkas, A. S., Rukhmana, T., Zahlimar, Z., Kadirun, K., Zaini Dahlan, M., & Wardany, K. (2024). Implementasi Model Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek dalam Meningkatkan Kreativitas Mahasiswa. *Jurnal Test 2*, *6*(4), 19647–19656. https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v6i4.5991

Porkodi, S., Saranya, R., Sultana, A., & Mittal, P. (2023). Assessing the Impact of Collaborative Learning Practices on Competency Development in Entrepreneurship Program: A Study of Higher Education Students in Delhi NCR Region of India. *Journal of Information & Knowledge Management*, *22*(05), 2350021. https://doi.org/10.1142/S0219649223500211

Sahputri, D. N., Siswanto, D., Zamzami, Z., Nijal, L., Febriadi, B., & Agusviyanda, A. (2024). Creative Design Training in the Gen Z Era: Teacher Training at Vocational Schools Using Canva for Innovative Learning Media. *Dinamisia : Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, *8*(5), 1515–1522. https://doi.org/10.31849/dinamisia.v8i5.22078

Shvets, T., Shestakova, S., Kryvoshlykov, S., Lohvynenko, V., & Butrynovska, U. (2024). Enhancing students' social abilities via cooperative learning and project-based teaching methods: Pedagogical approaches and beneficial outcomes. *Multidisciplinary Reviews*, *7*, e2024spe022. https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2024spe022

Suhendro, E. (2022). Edupreneurship in Modern Era: A Lesson for Early

Childhood Studies. *Golden Age: Jurnal Ilmiah Tumbuh Kembang Anak Usia Dini*, *7*(3), 121–132. https://doi.org/10.14421/jga.2022.73-02

Sukarno, S., Haryati, S., Siswanto, S., Trisnowati, E., & Setiati, F. N. (2024). The Development of Entrepreneurship Courses for Prospective Teacher Students: Competency Analysis and Study Materials. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, *16*(3), 3350–3359. https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i3.5313

Sulistianingsih, S. (2023). Use of Digital Technology to Support the Entrepreneurship Education Process. *Indo-MathEdu Intellectuals Journal*, *4*(2), 347–361. https://doi.org/10.54373/imeij.v4i2.203

Thomas, J. W. (2000). *A Review of Research on Project-Based Learning*.