

Community Empowerment Program Based on Strengthening Entrepreneurial Competencies and Character

Widia Lasri¹, Asmar Yulastri², Ernawati³, Yuliana⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

Correspondence email: widialasri@gmail.com

Article history

Submitted: 2025/03/22; Revised: 2025/05/20; Accepted: 2025/07/31

Abstract

One of the potentials of Nagari Maninjau is the potential of the region and the existence of its MSMEs. However, understanding of the competencies and characteristics of MSME entrepreneurs is still relatively low. In this era of global economic competition, a need to strengthen entrepreneurial competencies and characters. The purpose of this community service is to provide education on the urgency of strengthening entrepreneurial competencies and characters. The method used in this service is participatory action research (PAR) for a full month at the service partner of Nagari Maninjau, Agam. Direct community involvement is seen in several community service activity programs, including, as many as 20 business actors and MSMEs participated in training activities. The results of this service are increased confidence in running a business, several MSME products have been able to carry out digital promotions, improved sales strategies and customer service.

Keywords

Business Success, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Competencies.



© 2025 by the authors. This is an open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY SA) license, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is becoming an increasingly important topic in today's global economic context. More and more individuals are interested in becoming entrepreneurs and creating their own jobs. According to Ayu et al. (2022), an entrepreneur is someone who is free and has the ability to live independently in carrying out their business activities or their life. They are free to design, determine, manage, and control all their efforts, while entrepreneurship is a mental and spiritual attitude that is always active or creative, empowered, creative, initiative, and humble in trying to increase income in their business activities or their role.

According to the Entrepreneurship book Bygrave et al. (2024), entrepreneurship is usually defined as a soul, attitude and ability to create experiences or something new and valuable for oneself and others. This definition clearly shows that entrepreneurship contains 2 things, namely the ability to create and be useful. Thus, entrepreneurship is an effort to create something new and valuable for its users. Both of these things can be beneficial for himself and others. Because this entrepreneurial activity not only provides jobs and makes money, but is also expected to be useful for others. One of the benefits of the business mentioned can be the availability of new jobs because the business can absorb labor. In addition, with the existence of this business, the local community can benefit from the business (Yang et al., 2025)

Those who have entrepreneurial characteristics are called entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are those who can see opportunities and use them to generate economic value for themselves and many people (McMullen et al., 2024)

An entrepreneurial spirit fosters a positive outlook for the future, fostering self-confidence and a drive to grow (McMullen et al., 2024). However, behind the attractive potential for profit comes significant responsibilities and risks, requiring mental preparedness, skills, and a well-developed strategy to face the challenges of running a business independently (Li & Kang, 2025; Maurer et al., 2025; Watson & Minns Lowe, 2024).

Entrepreneurial success can be achieved by the following individual aspects: the ability to identify business opportunities, an optimistic attitude to achieve success, the ability to communicate and negotiate, and tenacity and resilience in carrying out all activities in their business. Furthermore, entrepreneurial success is achieved if entrepreneurs use innovative products, processes, and services as tools to explore change. (Aly et al., 2021; Jardim, 2021; Zhao et al., 2021)

2. METHODS

This community service activity uses a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. This approach was chosen because it emphasizes the active involvement of the community as the primary subject in every stage of the activity, from problem identification and solution formulation, action implementation, and evaluation of results. Through this approach, the entrepreneurship training and mentoring process is not merely top-down, but collaborative and transformative.

According to Salman & Ramsis (2025), PAR is research that positions the community not merely as the object of research, but also as the actors, researchers, and beneficiaries of the research. This approach is highly relevant in the context of strengthening the entrepreneurial competencies and characteristics of MSMEs in Nagari Maninjau, as it directly involves them in the learning and change process. The training activities included outreach, core training, field practice, and evaluation. The training was conducted over a one-month period, from August 3rd to 25th, 2024, by lecturers, students, MSME partners, and local facilitators.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Community service activities, implemented through entrepreneurship training and mentoring, aim to strengthen the entrepreneurial competencies and character of MSMEs in Nagari Maninjau. However, in its implementation, several important points require further critical examination.

Comparison Before and After Training

Based on initial observations before the training, the majority of MSME partners in Nagari Maninjau did not fully understand the concept of entrepreneurial competencies, such as managerial skills, product innovation, digital marketing, and simple financial management. Bernadó & Bratzke (2024) explain entrepreneurial competencies drawn from management and entrepreneurship literature and applicable to various systems, from the very broad to the more specific. There are four important aspects of competency, which also serve as definitions of competency, as follows: 1) Competence encompasses the overall characteristics of an individual related to their effective performance of a given job; 2) Competence is manifested in individual behavior and is therefore observable and measurable; 3) Competence facilitates the achievement of goals and objectives; 4) Competence is an organizational resource that can be developed.

Furthermore, entrepreneurial characteristics such as self-confidence, risk-taking, and innovative thinking are not fully reflected in daily business practices. Entrepreneurial characteristics are generally described as someone who is

hardworking, innovative, self-confident, responsible, willing to take risks, has emotional control, and is independent (Salman & Ramsis, 2025; Zhao et al., 2021). Steps to achieving entrepreneurial success must be based on entrepreneurial competencies (Pratikto et al., 2023); 1) Using one's own knowledge and skills; 2) Examining opportunities or chances that can be exploited; 3) Preparing a budget for specific investments or executions; 4) Preparing the necessary facilities and infrastructure; 5) Hiring workers if several people are needed; 6) Marketing unique products or services.

Entrepreneurial competence can also be achieved through education because entrepreneurship education helps shape entrepreneurial competence in individuals, namely relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes, and understanding. Individuals who receive entrepreneurship education have a strong foundation to become successful entrepreneurs (Bauman & Lucy, 2021). Entrepreneurial competence serves as a benchmark for the abilities that entrepreneurs must possess, so that those who desire or have the intention to become entrepreneurs can mature each dimension of entrepreneurial competence (Zulfiqar et al., 2025). Likewise, knowledge in entrepreneurship needs to be improved and requires the role of educational institutions in it (Uddin et al., 2022). For someone who has comprehensive entrepreneurial knowledge, it will run linearly with self-strengthening in choosing a career as an entrepreneur (B. Hamrick et al., 2025). Skills are one of the important elements in it, such as managerial abilities, financial management, and creative and innovative thinking (Abdo & Edgar, 2025). By possessing these skills, entrepreneurs will strive to optimize their abilities so that they become productive potential and encourage themselves to enter entrepreneurship.

Following training and mentoring, there were indications of improved conceptual understanding based on group discussions and case simulations (Santana-Domínguez et al., 2022). However, the evaluation of the activity results was unable to quantitatively demonstrate whether the partners' knowledge and skills had actually improved, as it lacked systematic measurement instruments (McGuier et al., 2023). Pennetta et al. (2024) emphasizes that entrepreneurial competency can be developed through structured training, particularly in technical and managerial skills. However, in this activity, mentoring has not been comprehensively implemented in the field, so the transformation process from understanding to practice cannot be observed concretely (Tiainen & Lutovac, 2024). This suggests that training without ongoing mentoring risks not producing significant behavioral changes.

Comparison with Previous Research

Several previous studies have shown that strengthening entrepreneurial

competencies and characteristics through training and mentoring can improve business performance. Yustian et al. (2021) demonstrated that entrepreneurial competency significantly influences business success. This means that higher entrepreneurial competency increases business success. Conversely, lower entrepreneurial competency decreases business success. Kyal et al. (2022) found that entrepreneurial motivation and competency simultaneously influence MSME performance. However, entrepreneurial intention alone is insufficient without practical skills (Tomy & Pardede, 2020). Therefore, entrepreneurial competency is dynamic and can change according to developments in the business world, and entrepreneurs are required to adapt to these developments (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). The more entrepreneurial competencies they master, the more they determine their business performance and success. Furthermore, in line with changing times, to master business in today's digital era, entrepreneurs are also required to master digital competencies. Digital-based entrepreneurial skills, known as digital entrepreneurial competencies, comprise four competencies: understanding business opportunities through the internet, understanding the benefits of websites for a business, understanding how business interactions work through the internet, and creating product ideas that can sell well in the internet market Ikenga & Egbule (2024).

Ayu et al. (2022) stated that entrepreneurship does not emerge spontaneously, but rather through a learning process. The need for entrepreneurship education for everyone includes the following: 1) Entrepreneurs possess extraordinary abilities. Therefore, it is only natural to provide every individual with the opportunity to develop an entrepreneurial personality. Entrepreneurial skills can be developed, trained, educated, developed, and increased; 2) A person with an entrepreneurial spirit is themselves a person with a superior personality and character, providing the ability to eliminate negative mental attitudes and increasing competitiveness and fighting spirit to achieve progress; 3) An entrepreneurial spirit is one of the provisions a person needs in life; 4) Entrepreneurship is a source of improving personality and business skills. The pursuit of entrepreneurship is absolutely desired by everyone.

Compared to these community service activities, there is strong evidence that partners experienced significant improvements in their entrepreneurial practices, including marketing strategies, business management, and innovative skills. This highlights the gap between conceptual training and actual implementation in the field.

Implications and Suggestions for Improvement

Mentoring should continue intensively for at least one month after training, with field visits, mentoring, and structured evaluations; Knowledge and skills evaluation

instruments should be developed, such as pre-tests/post-tests, interviews, and direct observations; It is recommended to use a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to enable MSME partners to be more actively involved in the planning, action, and evaluation processes, and to develop critical reflection on their competencies.



Figure 1. strengthening entrepreneurial competencies and character

Meanwhile, factors that influence success in running a business Bandhu et al. (2024), namely: Motivation; Motivation is born internally from within oneself to achieve a certain goal or can also arise due to the influence or encouragement of others. Age; The older an entrepreneur is, the more knowledge and science he has. This knowledge can also be obtained from experiences experienced individually or experiences obtained from others. Experience; Experience refers to knowledge or skills that have been mastered by someone as a result of actions that have been carried out for a long time. Education Education can be seen through formal education obtained in school schools and non-formal education obtained during training that has been attended.

Entrepreneurial competence can positively influence business success. Alves & Yang (2022) entrepreneurial competence can have a positive and significant effect on business success. This means that the higher the entrepreneurial competence, the greater the business success. Conversely, the lower the entrepreneurial competence, the greater the business success will decrease.

In the context of entrepreneurship development, various articles highlight four essential competencies that every entrepreneur should possess. First is technical competence, which involves having the necessary skills in areas such as product design and production techniques relevant to the chosen business field. Second is marketing competence, which includes the ability to identify market opportunities, understand customer needs, and ensure business sustainability through effective marketing strategies. Third is financial competence, referring to the ability to manage

cash flow, maintain accurate financial records, and analyze profit and loss. Fourth is human relations competence, which involves building strong networks, fostering partnerships, and maintaining productive interpersonal relationships to support business growth.

Entrepreneurial competence can also be achieved through education because entrepreneurship education helps shape entrepreneurial competence in individuals, namely knowledge, skills, attitudes, and relevant understanding, individuals who receive entrepreneurship education have a strong foundation to become successful entrepreneurs (Soomro et al., 2024).

Entrepreneurial competence is a reference for the abilities that must be possessed by entrepreneurs so that those who wish or have the intention to become entrepreneurs can mature every dimension in entrepreneurial competence (González-López et al., 2021). As with knowledge in entrepreneurs, it needs to be improved and requires the role of educational institutions in it. For someone who has comprehensive entrepreneurial knowledge, it will run linearly with self-strengthening in choosing a career as an entrepreneur. Skills are one of the important elements in it such as managerial skills, financial management and creative and innovative thinking. By having these skills, entrepreneurs will try to optimize their abilities so that they become productive potential and encourage themselves to become entrepreneurs.

Interest in entrepreneurship is a drive, a sense of interest and availability from within an individual to undertake a business without feeling afraid of the risks that will occur and interest in entrepreneurship is influenced by internal and external factors where internal factors are personality and motivation while external factors are family, education and environment (Merung et al., 2024)

Entrepreneurial competence can also be influenced by environmental and social factors. According to Haque & Pant (2022) if you want to be successful then you have to hang out with successful people so that you can get infected, likewise with entrepreneurship, you have to hang out with entrepreneurs then in the near future you will soon have the desire to be an entrepreneur.

In addition, along with the development of the times, in mastering business in the current digital era, an entrepreneur is also required to master digital competencies. Digital-based entrepreneurial skills are known as digital entrepreneurial competencies, there are four abilities, namely having the ability to understand business opportunities via the internet, understanding the benefits of websites for a business, understanding how the business interaction process is via the internet and being able to create product ideas that can sell well in the internet market (Gerlich et

al., 2023).

Thus, this entrepreneurial competence is dynamic and can change according to developments in the business world and an entrepreneur is required to be able to accompany it because the more entrepreneurial competences an entrepreneur masters or has, the more it determines the performance of the business towards the success of his business. This is in accordance with Fazal et al. (2022) in their research concluding that entrepreneurial competence has a positive and significant effect on business performance, entrepreneurial motivation does not affect business performance while entrepreneurial intention has a positive but not significant effect on business performance.

4. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this community empowerment activity is to strengthen entrepreneurial competencies and character among community groups through a series of mentoring, training, and practical sessions. The activity was conducted over a period of one month with active participation from local youth and aspiring entrepreneurs. Through the program, participants showed an increase in their understanding of key entrepreneurial aspects such as financial literacy, product marketing, digital entrepreneurship, and value-based character development including creativity, responsibility, and perseverance.

The results of the activity indicate that structured and sustained mentoring significantly contributes to improving entrepreneurial mindset and readiness to start or improve a business. Participants expressed increased confidence in developing business ideas and applying marketing strategies introduced during the sessions. For future service programs, it is recommended to continue with long-term mentoring, establish partnerships with local business incubators, and integrate digital tools in training modules. Post-activity follow-up will be carried out through regular check-ins, digital communication groups, and mini business exhibitions to ensure the continuity and impact of the empowerment efforts.

REFERENCES

- Abdo, S. S., & Edgar, D. (2025). Nurturing green behaviour: Exploring managerial competencies for effective green human resource management in hotels. *Cleaner Production Letters*, 9, 100102.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clpl.2025.100102>
- Alves, J., & Yang, W. (2022). Cognitive Mechanisms in Entrepreneurship Competence: Its Implication for Open Innovation. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 8(2), 65. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc8020065>

- Aly, M., Audretsch, D. B., & Grimm, H. (2021). Emotional skills for entrepreneurial success: the promise of entrepreneurship education and policy. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*, 46(5), 1611–1629.
- Ayu, Y., Smk, N., & Ilham, B. (2022). *Peran Pendidikan Dalam Pembentukan Jiwa Wirausaha: Pendidikan Kewirausahaan* (Vol. 1).
- B. Hamrick, A., Murnieks, C. Y., & A. Waddingham, J. (2025). Exploring my entrepreneurial self at work: How entrepreneurial identity aspiration influences employee intrapreneurial behaviors and work performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 188, 115078. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.115078>
- Bandhu, D., Mohan, M. M., Nittala, N. A. P., Jadhav, P., Bhadauria, A., & Saxena, K. K. (2024). Theories of motivation: A comprehensive analysis of human behavior drivers. *Acta Psychologica*, 244, 104177. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104177>
- Bauman, A., & Lucy, C. (2021). Enhancing entrepreneurial education: Developing competencies for success. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 19(1), 100293. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2019.03.005>
- Bernadó, E., & Bratzke, F. (2024). Revisiting EntreComp through a systematic literature review of entrepreneurial competences. Implications for entrepreneurship education and future research. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 22(3), 101010. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2024.101010>
- Bygrave, W. D., Zacharakis, A., Wise, S., & Corbett, A. C. (2024). *Entrepreneurship*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Fazal, S. A., Al Mamun, A., Alshebami, A. S., Muniady, R., Ali, M. H., Al Shami, S. S. A., Al Marri, S. H., Seraj, A. H. A., Thomran, M., & Algobaei, F. (2022). Entrepreneurial motivation, competency and micro-enterprise sustainability performance: Evidence from an emerging economy. *Sustainability*, 14(19), 12615.
- Gerlich, M., Elsayed, W., & Sokolovskiy, K. (2023). Artificial intelligence as toolset for analysis of public opinion and social interaction in marketing: identification of micro and nano influencers. *Frontiers in Communication*, 8, 1075654.
- González-López, M. J., Pérez-López, M. C., & Rodríguez-Ariza, L. (2021). From potential to early nascent entrepreneurship: the role of entrepreneurial competencies. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 17(3), 1387–1417.
- Haque, A., & Pant, A. B. (2022). Mitigating Covid-19 in the face of emerging virus variants, breakthrough infections and vaccine hesitancy. *Journal of Autoimmunity*, 127, 102792.

- Ikenga, U. G., & Egbule, C. N. (2024). Strategic model for effective digital entrepreneurship for small business. In *New Strategy Models in Digital Entrepreneurship* (pp. 53–70). IGI Global.
- Jardim, J. (2021). Entrepreneurial skills to be successful in the global and digital world: Proposal for a frame of reference for entrepreneurial education. *Education Sciences*, 11(7), 356.
- Kyal, H., Mandal, A., Kujur, F., & Guha, S. (2022). Individual entrepreneurial orientation on MSME's performance: the mediating effect of employee motivation and the moderating effect of government intervention. *IIM Ranchi Journal of Management Studies*, 1(1), 21–37.
- Li, L., & Kang, J. (2025). Does the participation of female directors enhance corporate social responsibility and risk taking? *Finance Research Letters*, 84, 107767. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.frl.2025.107767>
- Maurer, J. D., Creek, S. A., Allison, T. H., Bendickson, J. S., & Sahaym, A. (2025). First impressions of digital pitches, innovation, and venture funding performance: An evolutionary psychology approach. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 10(2), 100672. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2025.100672>
- McGuier, E. A., Feldman, J., Bay, M., Ascione, S., Tatum, M., Salas, E., & Kolko, D. J. (2023). Improving teamwork in multidisciplinary cross-sector teams: Adaption and pilot testing of a team training for Child Advocacy Center teams. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 153, 107096. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2023.107096>
- McMullen, J. S., Fitzsimmons, J. R., Shetty, K., & Ramoglou, S. (2024). A temporal typology of entrepreneurial opportunities: Implications for the optimal timing of entrepreneurial action. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 39(1), 106356. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2023.106356>
- Mitchelmore, S., & Rowley, J. (2010). Entrepreneurial competencies: a literature review and development agenda. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 16(2), 92–111.
- Pennetta, S., Anglani, F., & Mathews, S. (2024). Navigating through entrepreneurial skills, competencies and capabilities: A systematic literature review and the development of the entrepreneurial ability model. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 16(4), 1144–1182.
- Pratikto, H., Winarno, A., & Restuningdiah, N. (2023). The role of entrepreneurial competencies: successful key SMEs a literature review. *International Journal of Professional Business Review: Int. J. Prof. Bus. Rev.*, 8(7), 1.

- Salman, M. Y., & Ramsis, M. (2025). Use of participatory action research (PAR) to develop participatory monitoring, evaluation, and learning practices. *Development in Practice*, 1–8.
- Santana-Domínguez, I., Ballesteros-Rodríguez, J. L., & Domínguez-Falcón, C. (2022). An application of training transfer literature to the analysis of training for entrepreneurship: A conceptual model. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 20(2), 100649. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2022.100649>
- Soomro, R. B., Memon, S. G., & Soomro, M. (2024). Impact of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and competencies on MSME performance: an evidence from a developing country. *Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 19(1), 42–72. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJIE-04-2023-0071>
- Tiainen, O., & Lutovac, S. (2024). Examining peer group mentoring in teaching practicum and its impact on the process of pre-service teachers' joint reflection. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 47(4), 676–694.
- Tomy, S., & Pardede, E. (2020). An entrepreneurial intention model focussing on higher education. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 26(7), 1423–1447.
- Uddin, M., Chowdhury, R. A., Hoque, N., Ahmad, A., Mamun, A., & Uddin, M. N. (2022). Developing entrepreneurial intentions among business graduates of higher educational institutions through entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial passion: A moderated mediation model. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 20(2), 100647. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2022.100647>
- Watson, E. E., & Minns Lowe, C. J. (2024). Exploring the experiences of UK-based private physiotherapists when running and progressing a physiotherapy business: a hermeneutic phenomenological study. *Physiotherapy*, 124, 40–50. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physio.2024.04.349>
- Yang, M., Ehrnström-Fuentes, M., & Wincent, J. (2025). Big things from small beginnings: Creating and scaling community-based opportunities for sustainable small and local businesses. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 40(5), 106522. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2025.106522>
- Yustian, O. R., Suryana, S., Furqon, C., & Hendrayati, H. (2021). The mediating role of competitiveness between entrepreneurial competence and business success. *Management Science Letters*, 11(1), 93–100.
- Zhao, H., O'Connor, G., Wu, J., & Lumpkin, G. T. (2021). Age and entrepreneurial career success: A review and a meta-analysis. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 36(1),

106007.

Zulfiqar, S., Sarwar, B., Huo, C., Zhao, X., & ul Mahasbi, H. (2025). AI-powered education: Driving entrepreneurial spirit among university students. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 23(2), 101106. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2024.101106>