



Stimulating the Spirit of Digital Entrepreneurship through Business Economics and Digital Subject: A Mixed-Method Approach

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Abstract

In the increasingly dynamic digital era, instilling a digital entrepreneurial spirit from an early age is a crucial strategy in facing the challenges of the working world. This study aims to analyze the integration of Business Economics and Digital subject from the perspective of student perceptions and campus support for stimulating digital entrepreneurship. The method used was Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods, with the research sample consisting of students in Economics Education Study program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, who had taken the subject in the Even Semester of the academic year 2024/2025 at Patompo University. Data were collected through a triangulation method, where quantitative data were analyzed using multiple linear regression, while qualitative data were reduced, sorted, and presented in narrative text. The results of this study indicate that student perceptions of the Business Economics and Digital subject have a positive and significant influence on increasing student entrepreneurial spirit. This is inversely proportional to campus support. Meanwhile, these two variables jointly influence digital entrepreneurial intentions. The findings also demonstrate the importance of strengthening theoretical, practical, and networking aspects in adaptive and integrated learning to encourage the emergence of innovative young entrepreneurs in the era of digital transformation. that students' pedagogical competence can fully meet the expected standards.

INTRODUCTION

The growth of the digital economy has brought about significant transformations in the global economic order, including in Indonesia. One key impact is the opening of opportunities for individuals, particularly young people and students, to start businesses based on digital innovation and technology. However, despite the continued growth of opportunities in the digital economy, the level of intensity and realization of digital entrepreneurship among students still shows a gap between potential and actual readiness. This condition indicates a fundamental problem in the process of developing digital entrepreneurial intentions and competencies in higher education. Therefore, universities have a strategic role in developing students' entrepreneurial spirit through integrated education that is relevant to the dynamics of the digital economy, particularly through digital entrepreneurship.

The Theory of Planned Behavior explains the process of forming digital entrepreneurial intentions and behavior. This theory explains that behavioral intention is influenced by three main factors: (1) attitude toward the behavior, (2) subjective norms, and (3) perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of entrepreneurship education in higher education, these three factors are greatly influenced by students' learning experiences, perceptions of the courses they take, and the available institutional environmental support.

Currently, universities across the world are accelerating the digital transformation of entrepreneurship curricula, not only by adding information and communication technology (ICT) courses, but also by integrating business content, marketing, business models, and finance with digital practices such as e-commerce, analytics, and social platforms. In this digital age, the use of AI and TikTok has been shown to have a positive impact on students' entrepreneurial knowledge, experience, and digital business performance (Sirait et al., 2025).

A cross-university study shows that effective digital entrepreneurship curricula typically combine project-based learning, industry collaboration, and the use of campus digital ecosystems (incubator, marketplace, content lab). Recent findings in the UAE confirm that this integration enhances students' readiness to initiate digital ventures through exposure to real-world contexts, tools, and networks, rather than just theory. (Syed et al., 2024). Another finding in Tiongkok showed that perceived university support had a positive effect on students' entrepreneurial intentions (Song & Lu, 2024). Similarly, in Vietnam, it was found that students' perceived desire played a significant role as a link between university support and students' intention to start a digital company (Ngo et al., 2025).

The process of stimulating students' motivation to take entrepreneurship education subject will have an impact on attitudes and behavioral control towards entrepreneurship itself (Prabandari & Sholihah, 2015). Students' views on entrepreneurship subject have a positive and significant impact on their interest in entrepreneurship. (Puspitasari et al., 2024). Where, entrepreneurship education at universities influences students' entrepreneurial intentions (Dotong & Manalang, 2023). In addition, students' entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by the ecosystem environment and entrepreneurial support services available at the university (Makai & Dory, 2023). Parents also have a contribution in creating an environment that supports and encourages an entrepreneurial spirit (Fitria et al., 2025). Whether we realize it or not, digital entrepreneurship education is very important in increasing digital entrepreneurship knowledge and self-efficacy (Vu et al., 2024). Therefore, it is necessary to plan entrepreneurship education programs that enhance university entrepreneurship by creating cohesive programs and supporting institutions (Anjum et al., 2024).

At the same time, large-scale quantitative research shows that digital entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on digital entrepreneurial intentions, primarily through improved attitudes and perceived behavioral control. A multi-sample study (>1,600 college students) found that explicit instruction on digital entrepreneurship, platform literacy, and online commercial practices increased entrepreneurial intentions; the effects tended to be stronger on attitudes and perceived environmental control than on subjective norms (Syed et al., 2024). This pattern is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior framework that forms the basis of many recent empirical tests.

In the past five years, digital entrepreneurship has shifted from being an elective topic to becoming mainstream in business and management curricula. Universities are integrating classic business economics content with digital competencies. Therefore, the presence of Business Economics and Digital courses has become a key element in higher education curricula, providing theoretical and practical understanding of market mechanisms, business planning, and the use of digital technology in entrepreneurship.

However, various studies have also identified obstacles in implementing entrepreneurship courses, particularly related to understanding the material and the gap between digital entrepreneurship theory and practice (Mahmudi et al., 2025). This situation indicates that the effectiveness of Business and Digital Economics courses is not yet optimal in stimulating the emergence of digital entrepreneurship among students, especially when student perceptions of the course's relevance and campus support are still varied.

Students' perceptions of the Business Economics and Digital course can shape attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, which ultimately influence their intentions and behaviors regarding learning or pursuing digital entrepreneurship. Based on Expectancy-Value Theory, students' perceptions of a course are also significantly influenced by their perceived value and expectancy (Gladstone et al., 2022). The same thing is expected to happen in this study. If students perceive entrepreneurship training or courses as effective and relevant, they will be more motivated to translate that knowledge into concrete actions, such as digital entrepreneurship (Utami, 2020). Self-efficacy and entrepreneurial spirit provide various mediating effects on the relationship between cyber entrepreneurship courses and entrepreneurial intentions (Li, 2025).

Based on the above description, the research problem is formulated on the suboptimal role of the Business and Digital Economics course in increasing students' enthusiasm and intention to become digital entrepreneurs, particularly in terms of students' perceptions of the course and campus support. Therefore, this study was conducted to empirically examine the influence of the Business and Digital

Economics course on students' intention to become digital entrepreneurs in the context of higher education as the research location.

Specifically, the aim of this study is to analyze the extent to which the Business and Digital Economics course influences students' enthusiasm and intention to become digital entrepreneurs, as well as to map the role of student perceptions and campus environmental support in the process of forming these intentions.

METHODS

This research uses an explanatory sequential design, which is a form of mixed methods that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches sequentially. (Creswell & Clark, 2018). This method is also known as explanatory sequential mixed methods, where qualitative methods are used to complement, expand, and deepen quantitative data (Sugiyono, 2018). This approach was chosen because it provides a comprehensive picture, with quantitative data answering what relationships exist, while qualitative data explains why and how those relationships occur in the real-world context of students. Thus, this research is not only verifiable, but also interpretive and contextual.

Quantitative data collection used a questionnaire as an instrument to measure variables such as student perceptions of the Business Economics and Digital subject, campus environmental support in the learning process, and student intentions to become digital entrepreneurs. Data were obtained through a questionnaire measured using a Likert Scale with five levels of assessment and then analyzed using multiple regression.

Participants in this study were students of Program Studi Pendidikan Ekonomi FKIP Universitas Patombo, who had taken the Business Economics & Digital subjek in the even semester of the academic year 2024/2025. The population in this study was 46 students. The sampling technique used saturated sampling, namely sample determination when all members of the population are used as samples (Sugiyono, 2019).

After conducting quantitative research, we continued with qualitative research, where participants were selected using purposive sampling from quantitative respondents based on varying scores (high, medium, low) on their intention to become a digital entrepreneur. Six students participated in the in-depth interviews.

The in-depth interview guide, contains in-depth questions related to students' perceptions of the Business Economics and Digital subject, factors driving and inhibiting digital entrepreneurship intentions, and recommendations for developing digital entrepreneurship learning. Information analysis in qualitative studies is conducted during the information collection process and after completion. During the interviews, the researcher analyzes the responses of the informants. If, after analysis, the informant's responses are deemed inadequate, the researcher will continue with additional questions until a certain level of validity is reached.

Data obtained in the field were then analyzed through data reduction, which selected key points relevant to the research. The data were then presented in narrative text format. The next step was drawing conclusions and verifying causal, interactive, and structural relationships between students' digital entrepreneurship interests, their perceptions of the Business Economics and Digital subject, and the supportive campus environment for learning.

The data integration stage is the final interpretation stage. Data integration is carried out using a merging model, which juxtaposes quantitative and qualitative results in the discussion to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

1. Quantitative Approach

In this study, it was found that there is a fairly strong (positive) relationship between the variable of interest in digital entrepreneurship and the two variables, namely student perceptions of business economics and digital subject and campus environmental support in the learning process.

Table 1. Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.642 ^a	.412	.385	1.79772

$R = 0.642$, indicating a multiple correlation coefficient between Y and both variables X . This means that there is a fairly strong (positive) relationship between student perceptions of the Business Economics and Digital subject and campus environmental support together with digital entrepreneurship intentions. $R^2 = 0.412$ means that 41.2% of the variation in digital entrepreneurship intentions can be explained by the combination of the two independent variables (student perceptions and campus environmental support). The remaining 58.8% is influenced by other factors outside the model. Meanwhile, the regression model involving student perceptions of the subject and campus environmental support is able to explain around 38–41% of the variation in digital entrepreneurship intentions with a fairly strong level of relationship.

Table 2. Anova Test Results

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	97.489	2	48.744	15.083
	Residual	138.968	43	3.232	
	Total	236.457	45		

a. Dependent Variable: Y
b. Predictors: (Constant), X_2 , X_1

Based on the results of the anova test, F value of 15.083 was obtained with a significance value of 0.000. This significance value is smaller than 0.05, so statistically it can be concluded that the regression model containing the variables of student perception and campus environmental support has a significant effect simultaneously on the intention to become a digital entrepreneur. In other words, the two independent variables together are able to explain the variation in the dependent variable. The Sum of Squares value of 97.489 indicates the portion of the variation in Y that can be explained by the model, while the value of 138.968 is the variation that is not explained by the model (error). Overall, these results indicate that the regression model is suitable for analyzing the influence of the two variables on the intention to become a digital entrepreneur.

Table 3. Model Regresi

Model	Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.059	2.564	2.753	.009
	X_1	.661	.163	.673	.000
	X_2	-.054	.200	-.045	.788

From table 3, it is known that the regression model formed is as follows:

$$Y = 7.059 + 0.661 X_1 - 0.054 X_2$$

The constant value of 7.059 indicates that if the student perception variable and campus environmental support are zero, then the digital entrepreneurship intention value is estimated at 7.059. The coefficient value for the student perception variable is 0.661 with a sig. value of 0.000, meaning that the student perception variable towards the Business Economics and Digital subject has a positive and significant effect on digital entrepreneurship intention. This indicates that every one unit increase in student perception will increase digital entrepreneurship intention by 0.661, if other

variables are considered constant. In addition, the t value of 4.044 ($p < 0.05$) further strengthens that the effect is significant.

In contrast, the coefficient for the campus environmental support variable is -0.054 with a significant value of 0.788. Because the significance value is much greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the campus environmental support variable has no significant effect on digital entrepreneurship intentions. A negative coefficient value indicates an inverse relationship, but because it is not significant, the relationship cannot be statistically justified.

In conclusion, students' perceptions of the Business Economics and Digital subject partially have a positive and significant influence on their intention to pursue digital entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, campus environmental support does not significantly influence this variable.

2. Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research involving six student respondents indicates that the Business Economics and Digital subject plays a significant role in fostering digital entrepreneurship. Overall, respondents assessed that the learning experience not only enhanced theoretical insight into digital business dynamics but also fostered the courage to explore technology-based entrepreneurial practices.

a. Increasing digital literacy

Four out of six respondents stated that the Business Economics and Digital subject was a way to learn about the use of digital technology in the business world. Topics related to e-commerce, digital marketing, and online market trend analysis were considered helpful in broadening students' perspectives on business opportunities. This aligns with Expectancy-Value Theory, where students' perceptions of the benefits of a subject influence their enthusiasm for applying the knowledge in everyday practice (Gladstone, J. R., Wigfield, A., & Eccles, 2022).

b. Building adaptive and creative attitudes

Respondents also revealed that the project-based learning method in this course helped them develop creativity in generating digital business ideas. Two respondents specifically stated that the simulation of developing an online store and implementing digital marketing motivated them to be more prepared for technological changes. Therefore, this subject serves not only as a medium for imparting knowledge but also as a means of experiential learning that shapes digital entrepreneurial thinking.

c. The courage to take risk

Interview results showed that half of the respondents stated that they were becoming more willing to make low-risk decisions, such as trying to market products online, despite limited funds. This encouragement emerged thanks to support from lecturers who offered opportunities to experiment and reflect on their experiences. This finding underscores the importance of the lecturer's role as a guide, providing not only theory but also practical guidance.

d. Collaboration and networking

Four respondents emphasized that the teamwork in this course enhanced collaboration skills. Students learned to share business ideas, conduct basic market research, and develop digital marketing strategies. This collaborative process reinforced the belief that digital entrepreneurship is not just about individuals, but also about building relationships and teamwork.

Furthermore, respondents emphasized the importance of conducting in-person visits to successful micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Through interactions with small and medium-sized business owners, students can observe firsthand how digital business management, marketing strategies, and how to build business networks are practiced. These visits not only provide inspiration but also create networking opportunities between students and established entrepreneurs. Thus, the learning process extends beyond the classroom and extends through relevant practical experiences in the field.

e. Obstacles and challenges

Two respondents noted a key issue, stating that the primary problem is the limited availability of business incubator facilities, which should serve as a platform for testing business ideas and prototypes. Incubators play a crucial role in providing guidance, mentorship, and technical support to help students better develop their digital business ideas.

Another obstacle is the lack of supporting facilities for entrepreneurship learning, such as business laboratories, digital marketing studios, or adequate access to e-commerce platforms. As a result, students struggle to fully implement the practical skills, leading to a focus on theory. Therefore, while a digital entrepreneurial spirit can be fostered, improved facilities and ecosystem support are essential to help students progress toward practical implementation.

Based on a qualitative study involving six participants, it can be concluded that the Business Economics and Digital subject has a significant influence on igniting digital entrepreneurship among students. The learning activities not only enhance understanding of digital technology, develop adaptability, and instill courage in the face of risk, but also stimulate collaboration and network building. Especially in terms of networking, students believe that the learning experience would be more valuable if enriched by visits to successful MSMEs, as this can provide real motivation, open up opportunities for business relationships, and broaden knowledge about the application of digital entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the entrepreneurial environment at Universitas Patombo by providing a business incubator, digital labs, and collaborations with local MSMEs and startups.

B. Discussion

Quantitative research findings indicate that students' perceptions of the Business Economics and Digital subject significantly influence their interest in digital entrepreneurship. These findings demonstrate that a positive learning experience, both in terms of teaching quality, material relevance, and project-based learning methods, has built students' confidence that the skills they have acquired can be directly applied in the digital technology-based business world. In other words, the higher students' perceptions of the utility value and competency of the Business Economics and Digital subject, the greater their tendency to develop digital businesses.

Quantitative research across multiple contexts shows that digital entrepreneurship education consistently contributes to increased digital entrepreneurial intentions among students. This occurs because the learning process focuses not only on understanding basic entrepreneurial concepts but also includes practical experience in the form of developing digital business models, utilizing e-commerce platforms, and utilizing social media as a marketing tool (Duong et al., 2024). Apart from the use of social media, creative experience also influences e-entrepreneurship intentions (Alferaih, 2022).

In line with this, a study titled "Are Students Ready for Digital Business?" emphasized that students who are accustomed to using digital technology in their learning process will more easily internalize digital skills as a provision for developing a business. (Wardoyo et al., 2025). in line with global practices that shift entrepreneurship learning to a blended-digital format (Rauf et al., 2024).

Entrepreneurial orientation can be enhanced through structured learning experiences associated with ICT self efficacy and real-life project experiences (Bachmann et al., 2024). A quantitative study in Malaysia showed that digital literacy and digital entrepreneurial competencies explained 37.3% of the variance in digital entrepreneurship, with government support strengthening the effect (Mohamad et al., 2025). This finding is reinforced by a meta-analysis of the effects of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions, which concluded that, in aggregate, entrepreneurship education interventions consistently increase students' entrepreneurial intentions (Martínez-Gregorio et al., 2021).

From the institutional support perspective, it shows that variables such as curricular content, learning facilities, and mentoring services (mentoring, competitions, incubators) are positively

correlated with students' digital entrepreneurship competencies, which in turn increases their intention to become digital entrepreneurs (Vicente-Ramos et al., 2024).

Interestingly, institutional support had no impact on this study. Although theoretically, campus support such as the provision of business incubators, access to mentors, and practice-based learning facilities are believed to play a role in building an entrepreneurial ecosystem, in reality, this support has not been directly perceived by students as a determining factor in their intention to become digital entrepreneurs. This aligns with subjective norms in the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Where subjective norms are an individual's views about other people's support for an activity.

In this study, campus support was considered to be normative or administrative in nature and had not yet been translated into concrete experiences that students could utilize. Therefore, its influence on entrepreneurial intentions was insignificant. Similarly, in Turkey, campus environment and access to capital did not significantly impact students' interest in digital entrepreneurship (Maslakci et al., 2024). Rather than serving as the primary predictor, environmental variables only function as mediating variables. This means that even if a campus provides facilities, programs, or policies that support entrepreneurship, this does not necessarily increase students' intention to become digital entrepreneurs unless they possess self-confidence, social norms, and (Liu et al., 2022) learning experiences and role models in the surrounding environment (Gonzalez-Tamayo et al., 2024).

This finding can be understood through the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Based on this theory, a person's intention is influenced by three elements: attitude toward the action, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In this study, students' positive attitudes toward the Business Economics and Digital subject (as reflected in their perspectives) were the primary factor contributing to their intention. Support from the campus environment, as a subjective norm, was not strong enough to influence intention, perhaps because students perceived the support as formal and not meeting practical needs such as business incubation programs, intensive mentoring, or direct market access. Perceived behavioral control was more influenced by the practical learning experiences within the course.

From the expectancy-value theory perspective (Gladstone, J. R., Wigfield, A., & Eccles, 2022), students who perceive this course as beneficial (utility value), relevant to their future (achievement value), and confident in their ability to succeed (expectation) are more motivated to pursue digital entrepreneurship. The perceived insignificance of campus support suggests that intrinsic value and expectations of success are more influential for students than external support, which they do not directly experience during the learning process.

Thus, the results of this study indicate that internal factors stemming from a positive view of the learning experience play a more important role in increasing the intention to become a digital entrepreneur than external factors such as campus support. However, this does not mean that campus support is completely unimportant; rather, such support should be directed towards more practical forms, such as providing incubator facilities, access to MSME and startup networks, and integrating real digital business programs, so that the support can truly be felt by students.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

Combining quantitative and qualitative findings, it is clear that the stimulation of students' digital entrepreneurship is largely determined by positive perceptions of the learning experience, skill mastery, and self-confidence. The campus environment has not played an optimal role due to limited supporting facilities and business incubators. This underscores the importance of contextual, practice-based, and real-world learning strategies (e.g., MSMEs, startups, marketplaces), rather than relying solely on campus structural support. By strengthening theoretical, practical, and networking aspects, the Business and Digital Economics course has great potential to become a crucial tool in creating a generation of creative, adaptable, and competitive digital entrepreneurs in the digital economy era.

B. Suggestion

Based on the research findings, higher education institutions must shift their focus from simply providing physical facilities to supporting entrepreneurship to fostering more applied and

contextualized learning experiences. Courses in business economics and digital entrepreneurship have been shown to have a greater impact on encouraging students' desire to become entrepreneurs in the digital realm. Therefore, curricula should be designed with an experiential learning approach through real-world projects, business simulations, and hands-on practice, while also involving collaboration with industry professionals to provide students with relevant experience and boost their confidence.

Furthermore, lecturers responsible for the subject play a crucial role in shaping students' positive outlook. They are encouraged to employ project-based learning methods, case studies, entrepreneurial hackathons, and assignments on digital business prototyping. Interdisciplinary collaboration is also crucial for creating a more comprehensive learning process and providing experiences that reflect the complexities of the digital business world. This way, students not only learn theory but also gain practical skills that can boost their confidence and entrepreneurial intentions.

In the longer term, university leaders need to ensure that institutional support is truly integrated into the curriculum and learning environment. Rather than simply providing incubators or general seminars, universities should forge partnerships with startups, government, and industry partners so students can see the tangible connection between learning and business opportunities. Future researchers are also advised to examine mediating factors such as digital mindsets, which may strengthen the relationship between campus support and entrepreneurial intentions. This approach can enable institutional support to be delivered in a more effective, relevant, and sustainable manner, increasing digital entrepreneurship among students.

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