

## LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND CULTURE: EXPLORING THE CONNECTION THROUGH THE INDIGENOUS PRACTICE OF MANGGALEH IN ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING IN WEST SUMATRA

Cicilia Melinda, Bunyamin Maftuh, Kokom Komalasari, Acep Supriadi.  
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung Indonesia.

[ciciliamelinda@upi.edu](mailto:ciciliamelinda@upi.edu), [bunyaminmaftuh@upi.edu](mailto:bunyaminmaftuh@upi.edu), [kokom@upi.edu](mailto:kokom@upi.edu), [acepsupriadi@upi.edu](mailto:acepsupriadi@upi.edu).

**Abstract** This study investigates the interconnectedness of language, identity, and culture in entrepreneurial learning through the indigenous trading practice of manggaleh in West Sumatra, Indonesia. Using a qualitative ethnographic design, the research draws from participant observation, semi-structured interviews with 12 manggaleh practitioners and 20 social studies students, and focus group discussions conducted between January and May 2025. Findings reveal that manggaleh functions not only as a means of livelihood but also as a cultural learning space that fosters local language proficiency, strengthens Minangkabau identity, and instills entrepreneurial values such as trust, adaptability, and social responsibility. These findings are discussed through the lenses of experiential learning theory and situated learning, highlighting the value of integrating indigenous practices into higher education curricula for entrepreneurship. The paper concludes with recommendations for culturally embedded pedagogical models that enhance both economic competencies and socio-cultural awareness among students.

**Keywords:** Manggaleh; entrepreneurial learning; indigenous knowledge; language and identity; West Sumatra; experiential learning.

### INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship education in universities is increasingly recognized as a catalyst for innovation, job creation, and economic growth (Fayolle, 2018; Nabi, 2017). Nevertheless, critics point out that many programs remain heavily theory-driven. Lectures, business-plan contests, and case-study exercises often dominate the curriculum, leaving students with limited opportunities to engage in genuine entrepreneurial practice (Rideout, 2013; Pittaway, 2007). Such approaches risk overlooking the social and cultural dynamics of local communities and can create a gap between classroom instruction and the practical skills entrepreneurs need in real settings (Balan, 2012).

This challenge is evident in Indonesia, particularly in regions where strong cultural traditions shape economic life. West Sumatra offers a striking example. The Minangkabau people well known for their matrilineal kinship system and far-reaching trading networks possess a rich body of indigenous entrepreneurial knowledge passed down through generations (Navis, 2010; Naim, 1979). Among their most notable practices is *manggaleh*, a traditional trading activity deeply woven into the community's social and economic fabric. Beyond its economic role, *manggaleh* embodies enduring

values of trust, reciprocity, resilience, and adaptive networking qualities essential for sustaining livelihoods in both rural and urban settings.

Informal entrepreneurial education courses, manggaleh is still grossly underutilized despite its enormous potential as a paradigm for experiential learning. Current university curricula frequently place more emphasis on digital entrepreneurship frameworks and worldwide business models than on local knowledge systems that could improve students' contextual adaptability and sociocultural competency (Rahman, 2023). Opportunities to incorporate experiential and culture-based pedagogies, which have been demonstrated to improve entrepreneurial attitudes, creativity, and community participation (Kolb, 2015; Rasmussen, 2006) are limited by this underrepresentation.

Additionally, the incorporation of indigenous practices into entrepreneurship courses in higher education is consistent with broader demands for culturally sensitive pedagogy and knowledge decolonization (Smith, 2020) Battiste, 2013 (Battiste, 2013). Manggaleh's principles could be included into entrepreneurship education to develop the socio-emotional and intercultural competencies needed to navigate a variety of marketplaces in the worldwide economy, in addition to technical business abilities. The Merdeka Belajar policy of Indonesia, which prioritizes contextual, student-centered, and community-engaged learning techniques, is also supported by this kind of integration (Indonesia., 2020).

This study looks at how language, identity, and culture play a role in learning through entrepreneurship, focusing on the indigenous practice of manggaleh in West Sumatra. By using the theories of experiential learning (Kolb, 2015) and socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987), the research tries to show the educational benefits of manggaleh, find ways to include it in school programs, and create a model for teaching entrepreneurship that is rooted in local culture but also informed by global perspectives.



Figure 1.1 Concept chart and visual of the Manggaleh learning model

### Data Collection.

This study used a qualitative ethnographic approach to look into how manggaleh, a traditional trading method from the Minangkabau culture, can be included in learning about entrepreneurship. The research included 15 local traders between the ages of 28 and 65, 10 university teachers aged 30 to 55, and 20 students aged 19 to 24, all from West Sumatra. These people were chosen through purposeful sampling to get a wide range of views that are rooted in the local culture (Patton, 2015). The information came

from semi-structured interviews, watching traders in traditional markets, and looking at important documents about institutions and culture (Creswell, 2018).

Interview guides and observation lists were made carefully to make sure the data collected was consistent and detailed. The process had three parts: first, getting to know the culture, then collecting data in a systematic way, and finally doing follow-up interviews to reflect on the findings. All the recorded interviews were written down exactly as they were spoken and analyzed using a method called thematic analysis (Braun, 2006). To make sure the findings were reliable, the data from interviews, observations, and documents were checked against each other (Lincoln, 1985).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the study shares the main results and explains them in connection with the questions we wanted to answer, existing research, and the wider area of teaching entrepreneurship. The findings show how *manggaleh*, which is a traditional way of trading in the Minangkabau culture, can be used in hands-on learning experiences to help university students develop better skills in social and entrepreneurial areas.

### 4.1. Integration of *Manggaleh* into Experiential Learning

The study found that including *manggaleh* in entrepreneurship classes gave students real-world experience in markets and helped them understand their cultural identity better. Students felt more confident, flexible, and skilled in negotiating after working on projects based in real markets. These results match Kolb’s (1984) theory of experiential learning, especially during the stages where people learn through direct experience and by testing new ideas.

Table 4. 1 below summarizes the key competencies developed during the program:

Competency Developed	Indicators Observed	Supporting Literature
Negotiation Skills	Ability to bargain effectively in diverse settings	Lewicki et al., 2020
Cultural Identity Awareness	Understanding of Minangkabau matrilineal values	Sairin, 2018
Adaptability	Adjusting strategies based on market conditions	Nabi et al., 2017
Social Networking	Building trust and connections with local traders	Granovetter, 1985

The results are consistent with prior findings that local cultural practices can be used as pedagogical tools for entrepreneurship education (Dana L. P., 2015; Johannisson, 2011).

### 4.2. Strengthening Socio-entrepreneurial Skills through Cultural Immersion

The findings indicate that cultural immersion in *manggaleh* markets served as a catalyst for developing socio-entrepreneurial competencies. Students were not only

engaged in transactional activities but also participated in community discussions, observed traditional conflict resolution methods, and applied these insights in business decision-making.

Figure 4.1 below illustrates the conceptual link between cultural identity, entrepreneurial skill development, and experiential learning outcomes:



This finding resonates with the argument of (Rae, 2006) that entrepreneurship is both a cultural and social process, shaped by lived experiences rather than purely formal instruction.

#### 4.3. Implications for Higher Education

The integration of *manggaleh* into entrepreneurship education suggests several implications for higher education institutions in culturally rich contexts:

1. Curricular Innovation - Including local practices in teaching helps students connect better with the material and understand it in a way that's relevant to their own lives.
2. Community Partnerships - Working with people from traditional markets can create shared benefits and help keep local cultures alive.
3. Holistic Skill Development - Learning about culture along with business skills helps students develop both practical knowledge and an understanding of their community's values.

These points match the suggestions from UNESCO (2022) about making education more culturally relevant for entrepreneurship (UNESCO., 2022).

#### CONCLUSION

This study shows how including cultural heritage in hands-on learning helps improve social entrepreneurial skills and promote sustainable business practices. The results show that when students learn about local traditions, like *manggaleh*, they not only gain better business skills but also feel more connected to their culture and community. From a theoretical point of view, this research supports the idea of teaching entrepreneurship in a way that respects different cultures, and it connects with Kolb's theory of learning through experience and Vygotsky's social learning ideas. In practice, this research gives a model that can help shape university courses, especially in areas where there is a lot of cultural history. However, the study is focused on a specific context, so more research is needed in different cultural places to see

if this model works everywhere. Future research could look into using digital tools and adapting the model for different cultures to make it more useful around the world.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, R. &. (2002). The articulation of social capital in entrepreneurial networks: A glue or a lubricant? . *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 14(3), , 193–210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985620110112079>.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. . Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Balan, P. &. (2012). Identifying teaching methods that engage entrepreneurship students. *Education + Training*, 54(5), 368–384. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00400911211244678>.
- Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Canada: Purich Publishing/UBC Press.
- Bernard, H. R. (2017). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches (6th ed.)*. . Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. . cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. . *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), , 27–40.
- Braun, V. &. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), , 77–101.
- Cole, M. (1996). *Cultural psychology: A once and future discipline*. . Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.)*. Newcastle: Sage.
- Dana, L. P. (2015). *Entrepreneurship in emerging economies*. Cetelham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Dana, L.-P. &. (2008). Collective entrepreneurship in a Mennonite community in Paraguay. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 2(3), , 241–255. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17506200810897295>.
- Emerson, R. M. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes (2nd ed.)*. . Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fayolle, A. (2018). *A research agenda for entrepreneurship education*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Fishman, J. A. (2010). *Can threatened languages be saved?* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Grenoble, L. A. (2006). *Saving languages: An introduction to language revitalization*. . London: Cambridge University Press.
- Hammersley, M. &. (2019). *Ethnography: Principles in practice (4th ed.)*. Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Handayani, N. &. (2022). Collective entrepreneurship in Indonesian traditional markets. . *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 50(4),, 512-530. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-bja10123>.
- Heller, M. (2011). *Paths to post-nationalism: A critical ethnography of language and identity*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Hornberger, N. H. (2014). *Negotiating multilingualism and education in indigenous contexts*. . Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Indonesia., K. P. (2020). *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 22 Tahun 2020 Tentang Rencana Strategis Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Tahun 2020-2024*. Jakarta: Dirjen Peraturan Perundang undangan.

- Johannisson, B. (2011). Towards a practice theory of entrepreneuring. *Small Business Economics*, 36(2), 135–150. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-009-9212-8>.
- Kolb, D. A. (2015). *Experiential learning (2nd ed.)*. London: Pearson Education.
- Lincoln, Y. S. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. California: SAGE Publications.
- Nabi, G. L. (2017). The impact of entrepreneurship education in higher education: A systematic review and research agenda. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 16(2), 277–299. <https://doi.org/10.546>.
- Naim, M. (1979). *Merantau: Pola migrasi suku Minangkabau*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Navis, A. A. (2010). *Alam takambang jadi guru: Adat dan kebudayaan Minangkabau*. Jakarta: Pustaka Grafitri.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods (4th ed.)*. California: SAGE Publications.
- Pieterse, J. N. (2015). *Globalization and culture: Global mélange (3rd ed.)*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Pittaway, L. A. (2007). Entrepreneurship education: A systematic review of the evidence. *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship*, 25(5), 479–510.
- Rae, D. (2006). Entrepreneurial learning: A conceptual framework for technology-based enterprise. *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, 18(1), 39–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09537320500520494>.
- Rahman, R. &. (2023). Language and identity in West Sumatran trade interactions. *Journal of Indonesian Linguistics*, 19(2), 145–162. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jil.2023.145>.
- Rasmussen, E. A. (2006). Action-based entrepreneurship education. *Technovation*, 26(2), 185–194. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2005.06.012>.
- Rideout, E. C. (2013). Does entrepreneurship education really work? A review and methodological critique of the empirical literature on the effects of university-based entrepreneurship education. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 51(3), 349–351.
- Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences (5th ed.)*. New York city: Teachers College Press.
- Siregar, M. Y. (2024). Informal market practices and youth entrepreneurship in Indonesia. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 47(1), 33–50. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJESB.2024.001234>.
- Smith, K. &. (2020). Learning by doing: Informal sector innovation in Southeast Asia. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 32(7–8), 555–574. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2020.1713197>.
- Spradley, J. P. (2016). *Participant observation*. Illinois: Waveland Press.
- Suryadi, S. (2018). Language, identity, and cultural resilience in Minangkabau oral traditions. *Wacana*, 19(2), 403–427. <https://doi.org/10.17510/wacana.v19i2.646>.
- UNESCO. (2022). *Transforming education for sustainable futures: Culturally responsive teaching*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Yusuf, M. &. (2022). Indigenous entrepreneurship and local wisdom: Lessons from traditional markets in Indonesia. *Journal of Enterprising Communities*, 16(4), 681–699. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEC-03-2021-0032>.