



The effectiveness of a program based on differentiated instruction strategies to develop entrepreneurial skills among students

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the effectiveness of a program based on Differentiated Instruction (DI) in developing entrepreneurial skills among third-grade female students. A quasi-experimental design with experimental and control groups was used to achieve this objective. The study sample consisted of 60 randomly selected students: 30 students in the experimental group and 30 students in the control group. The study tools included a DI-based program of 15 sessions with three sessions dedicated to each skill (planning, decision-making, team management, innovation and responsibility) for the experimental group. In addition, an entrepreneurial skills test comprising 25 items distributed across five main skills was used. The study results show statistically significant differences at 0.05 between the mean scores of the students in the entrepreneurial skills test in favor of the experimental group after calculating the validity, reliability, difficulty, and discrimination indices. This result indicates the program's effectiveness in developing entrepreneurial skills among third-grade female students. The study recommends the inclusion of entrepreneurial skills in the curricula of the early grades in elementary education and the employment of DI strategies in the educational process. The findings highlight the potential for early introduction of entrepreneurial education and provide actionable recommendations for integrating such skills into elementary curricula.

Contribution/Originality: This study is original in its application of DI to develop entrepreneurial skills among third-grade students, an area not extensively explored in early elementary education. The study offers a novel approach to fostering essential skills at a young age by integrating entrepreneurial education through DI.

1. INTRODUCTION

The current era of knowledge and economic competition requires preparing a generation equipped with skills to manage financial crises, foster self-reliance, and find sources of income. Education must align with labor market needs and focus on developing entrepreneurial skills among young people to ensure a decent livelihood. Entrepreneurship is vital for economic and social development, fostering initiative, innovation, and competition. Instilling an entrepreneurial mindset from early education is crucial for nurturing competitiveness in a rapidly evolving global environment (Abu Saif, 2016; Al-Bajouri, 2017).

Embedding entrepreneurship concepts in education has been recognized for its numerous benefits, including economic growth, job creation, and enhanced societal resilience (EU Skills Panorama, 2015; Lackéus, 2015). As scientific advancement and economic developments necessitate creativity and innovation both developed and

developing countries are increasingly valuing entrepreneurship (Lichtenstein & Lyons, 2010). Entrepreneurial education plays a crucial role in fostering community development and nation-building (Arasti, Falavarjani, & Imanipour, 2012; Imam, 2019). Traditional methods are insufficient to effectively teach entrepreneurial skills. Active and learner-centered approaches are essential for equipping students with the practical skills required for today's labor market (Gautam & Singh, 2015). DI, which adapts to diverse learning styles and abilities offers a promising strategy to meet educational challenges and advancements (Ambo Saidi, 2018; Mavidou & Kakana, 2019).

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of DI by exploring its role in developing entrepreneurial skills among young students. It provides practical insights into integrating entrepreneurship into elementary education, addressing diverse student needs and enhancing teaching practices. The findings demonstrate how DI fosters entrepreneurial competencies, offering valuable guidance for curriculum developers and teachers. Additionally, this study encourages further research into the intersection of DI and entrepreneurship, helping teachers implement strategies that reflect students' interests and learning styles. The study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the effectiveness of a program based on DI in developing planning skills among third-grade female students?
2. What is the effectiveness of a program based on DI in developing decision-making skills among third-grade female students?
3. What is the effectiveness of a program based on DI in developing team management skills among third-grade female students?
4. What is the effectiveness of a program based on DI in developing innovation skills among third-grade female students?
5. What is the effectiveness of a program based on DI in developing responsibility skills among third-grade female students?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. *Differentiated Instruction*

DI is an educational approach designed to accommodate the diverse needs of students by modifying curricula, instructional practices and tools to match individual learners' needs, styles and interests (Smeeton, 2016). This method involves adapting elements of instruction such as content, process or product based on students' interests, readiness and learning styles (Mohammed, 2015). The primary goal is to elevate all students to achieve common educational outcomes while acknowledging and addressing their varying abilities, experiences, and learning preferences (Al-Jaadi, 2022). DI aims to maximize learning opportunities and ensure that educational goals are accessible to everyone by tailoring lessons to each student's unique needs.

The theoretical foundation of DI is supported by several key educational theories. The constructivist theory, rooted in cognitive science emphasizes that learners build knowledge through active interaction with materials and mental adaptation. This approach focuses on understanding individual differences and promoting social collaboration in the learning process (Tomlinson, 2014). Vygotsky's social constructivist theory supports this concept by highlighting the role of social and cultural interactions in cognitive development which aligns with DI and addresses different readiness levels and diverse cultural contexts (Fadel, 2018). Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences asserts that intelligence is multidimensional and that students learn most effectively when instruction targets their unique strengths, further supporting the focus of DI on individualized learning (Hussein, 2009; Tomlinson, 2014). These theories call for a flexible and diverse teaching approach that accommodates the different learning needs of students.

DI can be implemented through several methods, each designed to address specific aspects of learners' needs. For example, teaching using multiple intelligences involves customizing lessons to align with various strengths,

such as linguistic, logical-mathematical, or spatial intelligence (Khafaf, 2011). Kinesthetic, visual, and auditory methods are used to adapt to learning preferences. Another strategy for DI is cooperative learning where students work in small, diverse groups with tasks and roles assigned based on their abilities and interests.

The process of implementing DI involves several key steps. First, assessment identifies each student's skills and needs forming the basis for lesson objectives and evaluation criteria (Al-Tuweiri, 2012). Next, teachers select appropriate teaching strategies tailored to individual or group needs. Finally, tasks are designed to align with educational objectives while accommodating students' diverse abilities, ensuring personalized and inclusive instruction that promotes engagement.

The advantages of DI are well-supported by research. Studies indicate that DI benefits high-ability students and those with varying levels of disabilities (Mahmoud, 2017). DI encourages greater responsibility for their learning by offering students choices in how they learn. Additionally, classrooms enriched with DI typically increased student engagement, often leading to reduced behavioral issues. DI plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges posed by diverse student populations, ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities and supporting personal and academic growth (Al-Badarin, 2021; Razo, 2021). This approach not only enhances academic performance but also equips students with the skills necessary to succeed in a continuously evolving world (Bondie, Dahnke, & Zusho, 2019; Parrish & Lanvers, 2019).

2.2. Differentiated Instruction in the Educational Process

The educational process has faced challenges represented by globalization, competitiveness, the information revolution, and rapid scientific development which require the implementation of modern educational strategies to keep pace with these changes. One of the greatest challenges facing teachers is the significant diversity among learner levels especially considering the various aspects of this diversity, such as differences in home environment, culture, experience, and response to study requirements (Al-Badarin, 2021). The concept of DI emerged and received considerable attention from educational systems in developed countries recognizing these challenges. The Dakar Conference in 2000 recommended education for excellence and excellence for all, taking into account the differences among learners. It emphasized that students learn in different ways and that it is essential to diversify curricula and teaching methods to ensure all students receive an education tailored to their characteristics, enabling each to achieve the highest levels of success and achievement within their capabilities.

DI offers numerous advantages to the educational process. It ensures learning occurs for all students according to their preferred learning styles and enhances their academic performance (Razo, 2021). Butler and Lowe (2010) posit that the learning strategy addressing student differences is DI allowing students to learn in ways that suit their capabilities and potential. DI provides opportunities to explore each student's unique abilities. This approach allows teachers to strategically plan to meet the individual needs of learners, starting from their current level and providing various techniques for understanding, acquiring, and applying knowledge, unlike traditional teaching methods. In the context of DI, all learners grasp the same concepts, skills, and principles through different methods (Bondie et al., 2019). Parrish and Lanvers (2019) assert that if learners are consistently taught using the same method, they may become discouraged from continuing their education, failing to recognize their unique needs. This affects students' motivation to learn subsequently impacting their achievement and test results, as their motivation and interest are closely linked to their performance and achievement.

Mohammed (2022) indicated that using DI in the educational process is not optional. It has become a necessity imposed by differences in abilities, interests, and individual differences. Every individual has the right to learn in a way that suits their inclinations, abilities, and interests. Many studies focus on it as a fundamental approach to teaching. Al-Alai and Al-Mahrizi (2017) investigated the impact of using DI strategies in teaching mathematics on the achievement of eighth-grade students in the unit of rational numbers and the development of the academic self-concept.

2.3. Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship skills involve purposeful attempts to enhance the acquisition of specific abilities such as identifying and seizing opportunities, making informed decisions to create innovative and new ideas, and developing a spirit of innovation and initiative in individuals. This is achieved through participating in knowledge building by acquiring, generating, analyzing, processing, and structuring information to take a creative, calculated risk stance. This approach aims to make individuals proficient in their environment, allowing them to provide valuable business proposals for themselves and their communities and to seek to benefit from good opportunities (Al-Saeed, 2015).

Al-Hadidi and Saad (2018) emphasized the responsibility and importance of universities in building and activating the entrepreneurship ecosystem as a strategic partner. Therefore, the university's mission seeks to support its students, encourage them, develop their capabilities and inclinations and help them achieve a quality of life that aligns with their desires, serving their families and communities. This effort instills in them a social awareness for addressing community issues, thus fostering a social movement to promote entrepreneurship. Lindner's (2018) study indicated that entrepreneurship education is an urgent requirement for sustainable future development. Entrepreneurship plays an active role in all subsystems of society, including the economy, science, politics, learning, and sports. Entrepreneurs are the key drivers of the dynamics of economic and social life.

Developing entrepreneurship skills has become essential as it contributes to the development of individuals' academic inclinations, enables individuals to manage correct interactions with others and their environment and society and encourages skill advancement to open new horizons for work and life management. It helps individuals adapt to changes, meet life demands, solve life problems and engage in various thinking processes.

Promoting entrepreneurship requires providing support programs and encouragement for entrepreneurial activities as a viable career option for individuals. It also necessitates qualified human resources at the technical and administrative levels leading to the development of business organization and management. Education is a crucial tool for achieving this and fostering a culture and behavior of entrepreneurship, especially among students. Targeted educational programs facilitate the development of entrepreneurial capacities and skills and help present entrepreneurial activities in a positive way (Ramadan, 2020).

Entrepreneurship involves identifying opportunities, generating and formulating ideas and translating these ideas and opportunities into added value for society. One of the most important factors for economic and social progress is the efficient management of resources which also involves introducing new things or innovating new administrative and economic activities that bring greater economic efficiency. Therefore, entrepreneurship is a vital concept for both developed and developing countries. It encompasses three sub-concepts:

1. Innovativeness: Refers to creative and unconventional solutions to problems.
2. Risk-taking: Represents the willingness to invest in opportunities while bearing responsibility.
3. Proactiveness: Relates to execution while ensuring that actions are characterized by initiative (Gibson, Harris, & Sadighian, 2011).

2.4. Importance of Developing Entrepreneurship Skills in Early Childhood

The Saudi government has prioritized diversifying income sources and reducing dependence on a single resource to avoid economic instability. To achieve this goal, the government has focused on creating a conducive investment environment, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, localizing technology, developing economic sector systems, training creative human resources and pioneering individuals capable of presenting innovative projects and ideas. These efforts aim to lead to technological products and inventions with economic and social returns adding value to the national economy (Al-Mutairi, 2021). Kobia and Sikalieh (2010) highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship and the necessity of teaching it to students. The study found that preparing students through a blend of theoretical and practical aspects allows them to explore the most successful

entrepreneurial opportunities in the business world and learn problem-solving methods for challenges that new businesses might face.

Acquiring entrepreneurship skills in early childhood is crucial as it helps children gain knowledge and information related to entrepreneurship, creates a generation of young individuals capable of establishing new economic projects, and enhances their minds by providing opportunities to be more innovative. Developing entrepreneurship skills in children refines and shapes their personalities, making them more ambitious, responsible, and capable of planning, decision-making, and team management. Additionally, it fosters positive tendencies in children towards initiating and thinking about starting new projects (Atta & Shahat, 2022).

2.5. Entrepreneurial Skills

Entrepreneurship is an important skill as it creates opportunities for a new generation. This research adopts the following skills for their importance in early childhood: planning, decision-making, team management, innovation, and responsibility:

Ali (2021) defined planning as a mental framework that represents a solution to a practical problem involving outlining steps to complete a project or achieve a specific goal before starting the research or the actual task. It is also considered a self-organized mental process that involves selecting the best response to the conditions that form a dynamic environment and scheduling tasks and activities to enhance the ability to face challenges and difficulties to achieve the best results (Khalifa, 2021). Abu Taleb (2021) pointed out that planning is a crucial skill that children must acquire as it helps them set goals and the means to achieve them. Effective planning involves thinking ahead according to available resources to achieve desired goals. Therefore, children should be trained early on planning skills for any task they undertake by first determining their goal and then developing a plan to achieve it using all available resources.

Decision-making is an expanded, deliberate, analytical, and logical study of all aspects of the problem or subject under consideration to choose the best decision from several alternatives (Al-Oqaily, 2018). It is the conscious and aware selection among available alternatives in a given situation, choosing the best option after studying the consequences of each alternative and its impact on the desired goals. The selection is based on information obtained from various sources aiding in achieving the best results (Habib, 2007). Decision-making is a complex skill requiring continuous training. Developing the ability to make decisions is crucial, as human life is full of daily decisions. Therefore, teachers must prepare children to face life requirements, making them aware and capable of organizing their lives better. Decision-making can be defined as the behavior of children expressing their opinions on matters related to their daily lives (Abu Taleb, 2021). It is essential in entrepreneurship as the success of any startup depends significantly on decision-making. Any project is influenced by daily decisions that must be made based on accurate and realistic studies since they will undoubtedly impact the project's success or failure positively or negatively. Therefore, children must be trained on how to make the right decisions and implement them effectively (Darwish, 2023). The decision-making process is influenced by various factors including information availability, lack of experience, ignorance of decision-making skills and procedures, personal factors such as motivations, value conflicts, interests, abilities, multiple talents, anxiety, low self-confidence and low self-efficacy (Al-Zghloul, 2023).

Team management is the ability of an individual to influence and control group members making them cooperate to achieve desired goals. A leader capable of managing a team is characterized by self-confidence, time management, planning, cooperative work, flexible thinking and problem-solving (Al-Bakatoshi & Ahmed, 2018). Al-Juhani (2019) added that it involves influencing people and getting them to collaborate to achieve a shared goal. A child who manages a team must be highly organized, dividing time to guide others toward achieving desired objectives. It involves individual traits such as direction, organizing peers, offering suggestions, helping others, and

distributing roles in an organized and intentional manner by the teacher, giving every child a chance to play the leader's role to gain life experiences that enable them to manage teams skillfully in the future.

Innovation is crucial due to its strong connection with our society. Today's advancements and developments are the result of someone's creative concept. Innovation is the right and natural path to progress and development, helping improve what exists and turn imagination into reality through innovative thinking. All the ideas that ancient people dreamed of now exist due to innovation. The importance of innovation lies in improving product quality and developing children's thinking skills through social interaction, brainstorming, and problem-solving (Abdulhamid & Al-Namrawi, 2019).

Responsibility is a fundamental skill for training individuals to be self-reliant, essential for supporting mental health and creating a conscious generation capable of setting and pursuing their goals. Children should be accustomed to self-reliance in eating, drinking and choosing their clothes to develop their personalities and participate in tasks like setting the table and making their beds. Children need to learn to take responsibility in a safe environment. Parents should avoid treating the child like a puppet, controlling all aspects of their life which can lead to frustration and a feeling of incompetence. It is important to involve children in decisions to help them feel responsible (Samir, 2013). Responsibility is crucial for building self-motivation and self-reliance which should be instilled in children and developed with positive attitudes. Initially, children should be taught and trained to take responsibility for themselves and then for others, learning to handle life situations, manage time, and effectively cooperate with others (Al-Bakatoshi & Ahmed, 2018).

2.6. Foundations for Achieving Entrepreneurship in Early Childhood

Shibli, Jebran, and Jebreel (2020) emphasize the importance of several foundational elements to enhance entrepreneurship in early childhood. One critical aspect is the implementation of innovative teaching methods aimed at developing entrepreneurial traits in young learners. These methods include brainstorming, discovery, cooperative learning and engaging in creative projects to encourage risk-taking and adventure. Additionally, integrating metacognitive strategies and contemporary approaches is vital for fostering an entrepreneurial mindset from a young age. Another essential element is storytelling which can effectively shape children's entrepreneurial attitudes. Children can find inspiration and motivation by sharing stories of successful entrepreneurs and their experiences in various fields. Storytelling not only fosters a sense of responsibility and initiative but also encourages perseverance in the pursuit of personal growth and entrepreneurial aspirations. Moreover, nurturing diverse entrepreneurial thinking skills is crucial, including creativity, self-management, calculated risk-taking, self-motivation, time management, planning, independence in achievement, and critical thinking. Children become more capable of recognizing and seizing opportunities, solving problems, and managing resources effectively by developing these competencies. Finally, cultivating a culture of entrepreneurial thinking is essential. This culture embodies a positive social attitude towards personal initiative and supports risk-taking, independence, achievement, and innovation. We create an environment that values and promotes entrepreneurial activities, ultimately contributing to a more dynamic and innovative society by instilling these values in children.

It is evident from previous studies that entrepreneurial skills in early childhood have not been addressed, even though these studies recommend entrepreneurial education and its role in community development. This has led the researcher to develop a program that includes skills suited to the characteristics of early childhood children. Such a program plays a role in honing children's skills, enhancing their social and economic awareness, and preparing a generation capable of creativity, innovation, and project establishment. Moreover, entrepreneurship is one of the most important competencies in every individual's life. According to Bartulović and Novosel (2014) it is important to start teaching entrepreneurship in the early grades of elementary school. Martin Lackeus (2014) also suggested that a broader introduction to entrepreneurship should begin at an early age, ideally included in the curriculum at the preschool and elementary school levels. The skills addressed in the study will also be presented.

There is a notable gap in integrating these two areas effectively while substantial literature highlights the benefits and theoretical foundations of DI and entrepreneurship education. Existing studies primarily focus on the application of DI in general education settings and the importance of entrepreneurship skills separately. However, limited research explores how DI can be utilized specifically to enhance entrepreneurship education in early childhood. This study aims to fill this gap by developing and evaluating a DI program tailored to foster entrepreneurship skills in young children. This approach will provide insights into how DI strategies can be effectively combined with entrepreneurship education to address diverse learning needs and promote early entrepreneurial development.

3. METHODS

3.1. Research Design

The current research adopted a quasi-experimental method based on pre- and post-measurement of the research variables, utilizing a design with both experimental and control groups as it aligns with the research objectives.

3.2. Research Population

The research involved two distinct samples. The exploratory sample comprised 15 female third-grade elementary students, selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research sample in the main study. This group was utilized to evaluate the psychometric properties of the entrepreneurship skills test. The sample included 60 female students from the third grade at Al-Ufuq School for Early Childhood in 1444/1445. These students, aged between eight and nine years were randomly chosen as this age group is particularly suitable for exploring entrepreneurial skills. At this developmental stage, children demonstrate cognitive growth and increasing awareness coupled with a supportive educational environment, enabling them to grasp and engage with entrepreneurial concepts effectively.

The 60 students were randomly assigned to two classes using a computer-generated randomization process to ensure comparability between the experimental and control groups. This approach aimed to minimize pre-existing group differences such as prior knowledge or skill levels. The experimental group consisting of 30 students, participated in the entrepreneurship skills intervention while the control group also comprising 30 students, followed the standard curriculum. Ethical considerations were prioritized including obtaining consent from guardians for their children's participation and ensuring the confidentiality of student data which would be used solely for research purposes.

3.3. Instrument

3.3.1. Entrepreneurship Skills Test

Following a review of the theoretical framework and relevant previous studies on entrepreneurship skills and DI (Al-Abdulmohsen, 2023; Khalifa, 2021) a test was developed to assess the impact of DI strategies on enhancing entrepreneurship skills among third-grade elementary students. This assessment involved comparing the average scores of both the experimental and control groups. The test comprised 25 questions with approximately five dedicated to each skill area. It utilized objective multiple-choice questions, selected for their efficiency and reliability as they require minimal time and effort to administer, conform to the criteria for a good test, and yield consistent results irrespective of the examiner. Scoring was straightforward, with one point awarded for each correct answer and zero points for incorrect responses.

3.4. Entrepreneurship Skills Program

The program was constructed and prepared after reviewing the theoretical framework and previous studies by Abu Taleb (2021); Al-Bakatoshi and Ahmed (2018) and Al-Jafiliyah and Shahat (2023). It was based on the characteristics, needs, and requirements of the target age group, the study sample, and the data derived from the entrepreneurship skills questionnaire prepared for the pre-survey. Based on the obtained data, the entrepreneurship skills that needed to be developed and the training needs were identified. These skills were then formulated into educational units containing sessions that include the three aspects of learning (cognitive, skill-based, and affective). Each session was given a title, objective, content, teaching methods and assessment methods. Various references were used to prepare the content. The program includes 15 sessions with each session lasting 45 minutes, conducted at a rate of four sessions per week over four weeks.

3.4.1. Program Introduction

Learning entrepreneurship is a process through which an individual acquires a skill or a certain type of behavior necessary for work through training or education to identify and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities for self-employment. Empowering individuals with entrepreneurship skills is an absolute necessity for the economic and social development of both developed and developing countries especially given the vast amount of problems that have started to impose themselves due to the knowledge explosion in various fields. Students can come up with innovative entrepreneurial ideas that contribute to research, discovery, reflection, and providing solutions to problems and challenges by developing concepts and skills in entrepreneurship. The program was built on DI to develop entrepreneurship skills given that DI uses models that match various levels and learners' skills allowing them to work individually and encouraging them to create their product tasks.

3.4.2. General Objective of the Program

To develop entrepreneurship skills using DI strategies among third-grade elementary school girls.

3.4.3. Program Procedural Objectives

From the general objective of the program, a set of procedural objectives emerged described in detail in the program sessions and related to entrepreneurship skills. The sessions were constructed according to the entrepreneurship skills outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Outline of titles and objectives for entrepreneurship skills program sessions.

Session no.	Skills	Title	Objectives
1.	Planning	My daily schedule	The student plans her daily schedule and prioritizes daily tasks.
2.		My valuable time	The student identifies steps to invest time effectively.
3.		My allowance	The student discovers how to manage money positively.
4.	Decision-making	Let's go shopping	The student selects the best product from the available alternatives, gathers information about product quality before making a decision, and compares options to choose the best product.
5.		Visiting my friend	The student determines the appropriate time to visit her friend, chooses suitable attire for the visit, and discusses with her siblings to choose a suitable gift for her friend.
6.		My healthy meal	The student learns about the nutritional value of foods, selects high-nutritional-value foods from the available options, and determines the appropriate food to eat according to the meal.
7.	Team	Our small project	The student practices team leadership distributes roles

Session no.	Skills	Title	Objectives
	management	(Greening our school)	among team members to accomplish the tasks of the greening project, and comes up with solutions to overcome problems faced during the project.
8.		Summer vacation	The student participates with her family members in choosing the place to spend the summer vacation and holds meetings with her siblings to determine the travel necessities.
9.		Classroom library	The student forms a team of her classmates to establish a class library and guides team members on collecting books according to specified criteria.
10.	Innovation	My creativity in my room	The student shapes decorative items with ceramic dough to decorate her room.
11.		I love my teacher	The student designs a gift for her teacher and transforms the idea into a product.
12.		Recycling environmental waste	The student creates a product from local environmental materials, collaborates with her classmates in producing their items, and evaluates her classmates' products.
13.	Taking responsibility	My family	The student lists her duties towards her family and cooperates with her siblings to accomplish household chores.
14.		My beautiful school	The student ensures the cleanliness of the school by placing waste in designated areas and taking care of the school's public property.
15.		I am responsible	The student infers the skill of taking responsibility through the electronic story and commits to performing group work with her classmates.

3.4.4. Instructions for Implementing the Program

- Review the procedural objectives of the sessions.
- Prepare the necessary tools in advance.
- Provide a rich learning environment that helps students express their ideas freely and safely.
- Enhance students' knowledge and correct mistakes using simple and correct language.
- Reinforce students' behavior through actual practice during activities.
- Implement various group activities, including entrepreneurship skills such as team management, responsibility, and decision-making.
- Invite parents to participate in activities to emphasize entrepreneurship skills and reinforce practice at home.

3.4.5. Techniques and Tools Used in Implementing the Program

They included audio aids, audio-visual aids (e.g., electronic stories, video clips), models, picture cards, computer, and environmental materials.

3.4.6. Strategies Used in the Program

The following strategies were utilized: cooperative learning, dialogue and discussion, role-playing, learning through play, direct experience, practical performance, modeling, self-learning, brainstorming, and guided discovery.

3.4.7. Evaluation Methods

The following evaluation methods were used: Preliminary evaluation at the beginning of each session, formative evaluation during the session, summative evaluation at the end, and direct observation of students' practices of entrepreneurship skills in each session.

3.5. Validity and Reliability Tests

The program was reviewed by eight experts in early childhood education, elementary education, curricula, and teaching methods to assess the content validity of the program and the appropriateness of the strategies and evaluation tools. Their feedback was incorporated to improve the program. Similarly, the test was reviewed by a group of experts in early childhood education, curricula, teaching methods, and early grades teacher preparation. Their feedback and suggestions were taken into account.

3.6. Psychometric Properties of the Test

The test was applied to the exploratory sample consisting of 15 students to statistically analyze the test items in terms of difficulty and discrimination indices as well as to extract validity and reliability indicators as follows:

3.7. Difficulty and Discrimination Indices for the Entrepreneurship Skills Test

A. Difficulty Indices: The calculations were performed to measure the difficulty index for the test questions as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Difficulty index for the test questions.

Item no.	Difficulty index	Item no.	Difficulty index	Item no.	Difficulty index
1	0.67	10	0.67	19	0.50
2	0.50	11	0.58	20	0.58
3	0.58	12	0.67	21	0.67
4	0.50	13	0.58	22	0.58
5	0.67	14	0.58	23	0.67
6	0.58	15	0.50	24	0.58
7	0.67	16	0.67	25	0.50
8	0.50	17	0.50		
9	0.58	18	0.67		

Table 2 shows that the difficulty indices for the test questions ranged between 0.50 and 0.67. These items are considered acceptable and recommended to be retained in the test. The average difficulty of the test was 0.58, which is considered moderately difficult and regarded as a good test because it provides the highest variance.

B. Discrimination indices: The discrimination indices for each question in the entrepreneurship skills test for third-grade female students were calculated as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Discrimination indices for the questions in the entrepreneurship skills test for third-grade female students.

Item no.	Discrimination index	Item no.	Discrimination index	Item no.	Discrimination index
1	0.50	10	0.50	19	0.83
2	0.83	11	0.67	20	0.67
3	0.67	12	0.67	21	0.50
4	0.50	13	0.67	22	0.67
5	0.50	14	0.67	23	0.67
6	0.50	15	0.50	24	0.67
7	0.67	16	0.50	25	0.50
8	0.50	17	0.50		
9	0.67	18	0.67		

It is evident from Table 3 that the discrimination indices for the test questions ranged between 0.50 and 0.83. Any question with a discrimination index of 0.20 or higher is considered acceptable and recommended to be retained in the test.

3.8. Consistency Validity

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to measure the relationship between the score of each test question and the total test score by applying the test to the exploratory sample as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Pearson's correlation coefficients between test questions and the total test score.

Item no.	Correlation coefficient	Item no.	Correlation coefficient	Item no.	Correlation coefficient
1	0.698*	10	0.685*	19	0.981**
2	0.981**	11	0.806**	20	0.857**
3	0.857**	12	0.685*	21	0.685*
4	0.704*	13	0.793**	22	0.806**
5	0.631*	14	0.857**	23	0.751**
6	0.627*	15	0.704*	24	0.806**
7	0.751**	16	0.631*	25	0.755**
8	0.629*	17	0.704*		
9	0.857**	18	0.751**		

Note: **Significant at the level (0.01), * Significant at the level (0.05).

It is evident from Table 4 that the Pearson correlation coefficients between the scores of the test questions and the total test score are statistically significant at the significance level of (0.01) or (0.05). The correlation coefficients ranged from (0.627* - 0.981**) indicating that the test's validity is achieved for measuring what it was designed for.

The test was applied to the exploratory sample and the reliability coefficient values were calculated using Cronbach's alpha and the split-half reliability (Spearman-Brown) to calculate the reliability coefficient values of the test on the total test score. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5. Cronbach's alpha and split-half reliability (Spearman-Brown) coefficients of the test.

Total degree	No. of questions	Cronbach's alpha	Spearman-Brown
	25	0.97	0.96

Table 5 shows that the overall test reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha was 0.97 and the split-half reliability of the test was 0.96. These values are high and suitable reliability coefficients for the study, indicating the test's reliability.

4. RESULTS

Table 6 shows statistically significant differences (0.05) between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the post-test for entrepreneurial skills in favor of the experimental group. The t-value was 8.973 with a significance level of 0.00, and the effect size was 0.617 indicating a large effect size. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted suggesting the effectiveness of a DI-based program in developing planning skills among third-grade female students.

Table 6. Independent t-test analysis (Planning).

Domain	Group	No.	M	SD	t	Df	Sig.	Effect size	Level
Planning	Control	30	5.63	1.789	-8.973-	59	0.000	0.617	High
	Experimental	30	10.00	1.721					

Table 7 shows statistically significant differences at 0.05 between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the post-test for entrepreneurial skills in favor of the experimental group. The t-value was (7.645) with a significance level of (0.00), and the effect size was 0.675 indicating a large effect size. Therefore, the

hypothesis is accepted suggesting the effectiveness of a DI-based program in developing decision-making skills among third-grade female students.

Table 7. Independent t-test analysis (Decision-making).

Domain	Group	No.	M	SD	T	df	Sig.	Effect size	Level
Decision-making	Control	30	1.781	4.16	-7.645-	59	0.000	0.675	High
	Experimental	30	1.749	09.01					

Table 8 shows statistically significant differences at the significance level (0.05) between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the post-test of entrepreneurial skills for the team management skill in favor of the experimental group. The t-value was (8.805) with a significance level of 0.00, and the effect size was 0.607 indicating a large effect. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted suggesting the effectiveness of a DI program in developing team management skills among third-grade female students.

Table 8. Independent t-test analysis (Team management).

Domain	Group	No.	M	SD	T	Df	Sig.	Effect size	Level
Team management	Control	30	4.46	1.474	-8.805-	59	0.000	0.607	High
	Experimental	30	7.54	1.036					

Table 9 shows statistically significant differences at 0.05 between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the post-test of the entrepreneurial skills test for the innovation skill in favor of the experimental group. The value of t was 10.107 with a significance level of 0.00 and the effect size was 0.671 with a large effect level. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted, indicating the effectiveness of a program based on DI in developing the innovation skill among third-grade female students.

Table 9. Independent t-test analysis (Innovation).

Domain	Group	No.	M	SD	T	df	Sig.	Effect size	Level
Innovation	Control	30	5.58	1.742	-10.107-	59	0.000	0.671	High
	Experimental	30	11.64	2.453					

Table 10 shows the presence of statistically significant differences at the 0.05 significance level between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the entrepreneurial skills test for the skill of responsibility in the post-test, in favor of the experimental group. The "T" value was 11.205 with a significance level of 0.00 and the effect size was 0.732 with a high level of impact. This supports the hypothesis indicating the effectiveness of a DI-based program in developing the skill of responsibility among third-grade primary school students.

Table 10. Independent t-test analysis (Responsibility).

Domain	Group	No.	M	SD	t	df	Sig.	Effect size	Level
Responsibility	Control	30	7.40	1.555	-11.205-	59	0.000	0.732	High
	Experimental	30	11.32	0.802					

5. DISCUSSION

The current study highlights the effectiveness of DI in enhancing various entrepreneurial skills among third-grade female students. The program successfully fostered skills in planning, decision-making, team management, innovation, and responsibility, aligning with existing research that emphasizes the advantages of such approaches.

Notably, planning skills showed significant improvement among students in the experimental group, indicating a strong impact of the DI-based program. The program's success can be attributed to its engaging activities which

encouraged students to set goals, devise actionable plans and use appropriate tools and materials. These activities connected students to their environment, increasing motivation and facilitating a better understanding of how to achieve objectives within designated timeframes. Furthermore, the program encouraged free expression and the generation of new ideas.

These results are consistent with Ali's (2021) findings which stressed the importance of planning skills in child development. Ali highlighted that guided activities are essential for cultivating these skills, reinforcing the current study's conclusion that a well-structured DI program can significantly improve planning abilities in early educational settings.

The study also observed considerable enhancements in decision-making skills among the experimental group. This result suggests that the DI program effectively nurtured decision-making capabilities. The various activities such as storytelling, role-playing, and cooperative learning enabled students to explore options and make informed choices. Continuous assessment and immediate reinforcement further supported their decision-making through timely feedback and encouragement.

These findings resonate with those of Kadwani (2018) and Fadel (2018) who demonstrated that DI and theatrical programs significantly boost decision-making skills. Kadwani (2018) emphasized the role of diverse instructional strategies in enhancing decision-making, while Fadel (2018) illustrated the superiority of DI over traditional methods in improving academic achievement and engagement. The current study reinforces these findings, affirming that DI effectively enhances decision-making abilities.

Improvements in team management skills were also significant in the experimental group indicating a marked impact of the DI program on developing these capabilities. The program's design, featuring clear objectives, organized content, and varied learning resources, facilitated effective team management among students. Practical applications and diverse roles enabled students to experience different facets of team management, thus enhancing their skills in this area.

These results align with Darwish (2023) who found that structured learning environments significantly improve team management skills in kindergarten children. Darwish (2023) research underscores the effectiveness of organized learning settings which parallels the current findings that DI, through its diverse roles and practical applications, fosters team management skills effectively.

Additionally, the study revealed significant advancements in innovation skills among students in the experimental group, suggesting a substantial influence of the DI program on creative thinking. The program's engaging activities encouraged students to think outside the box and develop innovative ideas. This approach provided opportunities for students to practice and refine their innovation skills, leading to marked improvements.

These findings are consistent with Abu Taleb (2021) who noted that integrated programs significantly enhance entrepreneurial skills, including innovation. Abu Taleb's (2021) research illustrated that activities designed to stimulate innovation are particularly effective, supporting the current study's conclusion that DI can foster innovation skills in early education.

Lastly, significant improvements in responsibility skills were observed among the experimental group, indicating a strong positive impact of the DI program in promoting responsibility. The program utilized relevant educational activities, diverse learning resources and opportunities for choice and active participation, contributing to this positive outcome. The program encouraged students to take ownership of their learning and develop a sense of responsibility by accommodating individual differences and offering self-directed learning opportunities.

These results show the findings of Al-Bakatoshi and Ahmed (2018) who demonstrated that diverse teaching strategies for entrepreneurial skills lead to increased responsibility and ambition among children. Their research emphasized the importance of varied instructional approaches in fostering responsibility. The current study supports these conclusions illustrating that DI enhances responsibility and self-reliance in young learners.

6. CONCLUSION

The program based on DI strategies was highly effective in developing various entrepreneurial skills, including planning, decision-making, team management, innovation, and responsibility, among third-grade female students in Al-Ahsa Governorate. Each skill showed statistically significant improvements with large effect sizes indicating substantial impacts on the students' entrepreneurial development. The study was confined to the first semester of the academic year 1444-1445 AH which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other semesters or academic years. Also, the research was conducted at Al-Ufuk Elementary School for Early Childhood in Al-Hofuf, Saudi Arabia which defines its spatial boundaries and may affect the applicability of the results to other schools or regions. In addition, the study focused exclusively on third-grade female students establishing its human boundaries which may limit the ability to generalize the findings to male students or students of different grade levels. Moreover, the subject boundaries of the study were restricted to DI and the development of specific entrepreneurial skills, including planning, decision-making, team management, innovation, and responsibility which may not cover other relevant entrepreneurial or educational skills. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the results and applying them to broader contexts. In light of the results of the current research, several recommendations have been proposed. Firstly, there is a need to develop programs and activities aimed at enhancing entrepreneurial skills among students in both general and higher education. Additionally, it is important to provide a classroom environment that enables students to positively employ these skills in their school life. To support this, organizing workshops to train teachers in developing entrepreneurial skills is also recommended. For future research, it is suggested to explore the impact of using DI strategies on the development of scientific concepts among early-grade students. In addition, investigating the effectiveness of a program based on DI in developing entrepreneurial thinking skills among these students is crucial. Finally, identifying and addressing the obstacles to implementing DI strategies will further contribute to the advancement of this educational approach.

7. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The study highlights several key pedagogical implications for effectively developing entrepreneurial skills through DI. One crucial implication is the provision of diverse learning resources. Teachers can cater to different learning styles and needs ensuring that all students can engage with and understand the content by incorporating a variety of materials such as visual aids, interactive tools, and hands-on activities. This approach not only promotes inclusivity but also enhances overall comprehension as students can interact with the material in ways that best suit their individual learning preferences.

Another significant implication is the encouragement of student choice. Allowing students to select their learning activities or projects fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility. When students are given the freedom to make choices, they are more likely to feel motivated and engaged as their learning experiences are tailored to their interests and strengths. This autonomy supports the development of crucial skills such as decision-making and planning, which are essential for entrepreneurial success.

Active participation is also a key factor in the success of the DI-based program. Engaging students through interactive activities, group discussions, and project-based learning helps them apply and reflect on their knowledge, enhancing their overall engagement and skill development. Active involvement not only keeps students interested but also promotes critical skills like teamwork, problem-solving, and communication which are vital in the entrepreneurial field.

Finally, creating a dynamic learning environment that integrates diverse resources, student choice, and active participation, results in a more effective and stimulating educational experience. Such an environment is adaptable and responsive to various learning needs, fostering a positive and enthusiastic approach to learning. Teachers are encouraged to continuously assess and refine their teaching strategies to maintain an engaging and impactful learning atmosphere.

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