Prima Magistra: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan
Volume 7 – Number 4, October 2026, pp 868-879
https://doi.org/10.37478/jpm.v7i4.9056
Open Access: https://e-journal.uniflor.ac.id/index.php/jpm/article/view/9056

ISSN 2721-8112 (print)
ISSN 2722-4899 (online)

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL VALUES THROUGH INFORMAL LEARNING IN JUWANA FAMILY BUSINESSES

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Article History
Received : 11/08/2026
Revised : 28/09/2026
Accepted : 14/10/2026

Keywords:
Entrepreneurial values, Informal learning, Family businesses, Intergenerational learning, Social construction.

Abstract. Family businesses provide an informal educational environment for developing entrepreneurial values across generations. This study examines the social construction of entrepreneurial values through informal learning within six family businesses in Juwana, Central Java, Indonesia. A qualitative multiple-case study design was employed, drawing on interviews, observations, documentary materials, and a focus group discussion reported in the research. Within-case and cross-case analyses were conducted using Berger and Luckmann's concepts of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. The findings reveal that quality and responsibility remain relatively consistent across generations, whereas predecessors emphasize hard work and perseverance, and successors prioritize creativity, efficiency, and adaptability. Entrepreneurial values are introduced through role modeling and practical participation, institutionalized through work standards and family norms, and reinterpreted through successors' experiences and aspirations. The findings further demonstrate that value transmission does not necessarily require occupational succession or the reproduction of inherited business practices. This study contributes to informal entrepreneurship education by explaining how family-based learning supports moral continuity, knowledge transmission, and successor autonomy within changing socioeconomic contexts. The findings also provide a conceptual foundation for contextual learning in social studies education.

How to Cite: Oktavianti, I., Banowati, E., Atmaja, H. T., & Arsal, T. (2026). SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL VALUES THROUGH INFORMAL LEARNING IN JUWANA FAMILY BUSINESSES. *Prima Magistra: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan*, 7(4), 868-879. https://doi.org/10.37478/jpm.v7i4.9056

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Publisher:
Program Studi PGSD Universitas Flores. Jln. Samratulangi, Kelurahan Paupire, Ende, Flores.
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INTRODUCTION

The business family is a primary socialization arena that shapes the orientation, values, knowledge, and identity of entrepreneurship between generations. Through observation, example, conversation, and involvement in daily economic activities, children learn production skills as well as the meaning of work, trust, discipline, and responsibility. The perspective of family embeddedness places entrepreneurial activities in the relationship between individuals, families, and business organizations (Aldrich et al., 2023). Regular family interactions can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and socialization of entrepreneurship (Wang et al., 2023), the formation of successor roles (Ge et al., 2024), and the inheritance of tacit knowledge and relational ties (Hu et al., 2024). Thus, the business family is an informal educational environment that connects economic experience with value formation.

Entrepreneurial inheritance does not occur automatically through descendant relationships. Experience of involvement and affective commitment are related to succession intentions (Gimenez-Jimenez et al., 2021), while attachment to family and business can result in a choice between continuing the business or establishing an independent business (Hahn et al., 2021). Identity negotiations and intergenerational relationship rules also play a role in succession (Sallay et al., 2024). Parental support and work experience are related to girls' succession intentions, with opportunities influenced by social and gender norms (Clinton et al., 2024). The findings demonstrate the importance of learning, family relationships, and decision-making space in understanding entrepreneurial inheritance.

Juwana, Pati Regency, has a variety of businesses based on local potential, such as baked batik, milkfish processing, shrimp paste, seafood crackers, household food industry, and coastal businesses. Batik, for example, contains symbols and cultural narratives of the local community

(Supriyadi et al., 2024). In the business family, knowledge about materials, quality, customer service, and risks is learned through direct involvement. McAdam et al. (2024) view family business as a community of practice, where practices and identities are formed and transformed across generations. Family heritage also includes the process of accepting, rejecting, and reinterpreting values (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024).

Technological developments, education, markets, and the aspirations of young generations present a tension between continuity and change (Serhan et al., 2023). Family support and legitimacy play a role in the formation of succession intentions (Saeed et al., 2024), while the involvement of young generations can support digital transformation (Del Vecchio et al., 2025). Business model updates can also go hand in hand with family non-financial goals (López-Nicolás et al., 2024). Therefore, maintaining the value of quality, responsibility, and reputation does not necessarily mean maintaining the entire old way of working.

The social construction theory of Berger and Luckmann (1966) explains the formation of reality through externalization, objectification, and internalization. Externalization occurs when the predecessor expresses values through actions and examples; objectification when repeated practices gain recognition as common standards and norms; internalization when the successor understands and relates these values to his or her identity and experience. Primary socialization becomes the context of early learning in the family. Tessema et al. (2025) identify the transmission of values through example, communication, education, and relational attachment, while Bagherian et al. (2025) emphasize family communication in the formation of entrepreneurial identity. Luft et al. (2025) show that family values can be reshaped through mutual recognition and reinterpretation.

Although previous research has discussed succession, family learning, and value transmission, there is still a need for an explanation of how values gain legitimacy as work norms and are reinterpreted in different local business sectors in a single socio-cultural context. This study aims to analyze (1) the entrepreneurial value constructed in the Juwana business family, (2) its socialization and internalization mechanisms, and (3) the continuity and reinterpretation of values by successors. The focus of the analysis is values, norms, and moral identity, not the transfer of social capital or business ownership. Its contribution to social studies education lies in understanding the family and local potential as sources of contextual socio-economic learning.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a focused analysis of the research findings, using a constructivist-interpretive paradigm and a qualitative multiple-case study approach. This design allows contextual understanding and comparison between cases (Yin, 2018; Eisenhardt, 2021; Mtisi, 2022). The unit of analysis is six business families in Juwana District involving at least two generations: bakaran batik (K1), milkfish and processed fish (K2), shrimp paste (K3), seafood crackers (K4), soy sauce or household food industry (K5), and ponds and coastal businesses (K6). The selection purposively considers cross-generational involvement and variations in business sectors (Campbell et al., 2020).

The research involved 18 informants: six predecessors (OT1–OT6), six successors (AN1–AN6), and six supporting informants from community leaders, associations or business centers, and related agencies. The recapitulation recorded 30 interview sessions, 18 observation sessions, 36 documents or artifacts, and one confirmation FGD. The number of sessions is not the number of unique informants. The interviews trace experiences, values, and changes in roles; observations and documents provide context for business practices.

Information from the predecessor generation is used to trace business history, work values, and how responsibilities are introduced. Successor perspectives are used to understand learning experiences, value acceptance, role negotiation, and orientation changes. Supporting informants provide socio-economic and institutional context. The use of different types of sources is directed to compare cross-generational narratives with business practices and supporting documents; the suitability of and contradictions between sources are interpreted. The

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adequacy of information is assessed based on the depth and diversity of contexts, not solely the number of data collection sessions.

The analysis used a table of findings, a description of the results, a case code, and an analytical conclusion documented in the research. The interactive framework of Miles et al. (2014) was used for condensation, presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The deductive sensitizing categories include externalization, objectification, internalization, and primary socialization; variation in experience remains open to observation (Bingham, 2023; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Intracase analysis maintains the context of each family, then cross-case analysis identifies patterns and differences. The adequacy of information is not determined solely by the number of informants (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

This research reported triangulation of sources and methods, member checking, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and audit trails. These strategies are relevant to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Johnson et al., 2020; Schlunegger et al., 2024). Epistemological reflexivity and coherence need to be maintained (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023), while member checking is not a universal guarantee of validity (Motulsky, 2021).

The implementation of the research is systematically designed through a qualitative approach with a multi-case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the social construction of entrepreneurial values in informal learning of business families. The research stages include preparation, purposive selection of cases and informants, data collection, intra-case and cross-case analysis, interpretation based on the perspectives of Berger and Luckmann, and examination of validity and reporting of findings. This series of stages allows the tracing of the process of formation, institutionalization, and internalization of entrepreneurial values and variations in their meaning between generations in six local potential-based business families in Juwana. The research flow is systematically presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Research Flow of the Social Construction of Entrepreneurial Values in Informal Learning within Business Families

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Entrepreneurship as a source of livelihood and responsibility between generations

The six predecessors (OT1–OT6) interpreted business as a main or important source of family livelihood. In K2, K3, K4, and K6, the availability of raw materials, market demand, and natural conditions formed the context of business uncertainty. The five predecessors (OT1–OT5) viewed good name, skills, customer relations, and knowledge as non-material inheritance. OT6 shows a more flexible orientation towards the form of successor involvement. Thus, the meaning of business is not only related to income, but also to the continuity of knowledge and family responsibility. In the processed fish, shrimp paste and seafood crackers sector, order

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fulfillment and production continuity are related to the availability of materials and customer demand. In the pond and coastal business, natural conditions are also a consideration in maintaining livelihoods. The meaning of business as a family inheritance in OT1–OT5 includes things that go beyond physical assets: the ability to process products, knowledge accumulated through experience, and the good name that has been built. The difference in OT6's emphasis is not enough to form two definitive family typologies, but it is important to show the variation in the meaning of sustainability.

AN1, AN2, AN4, and AN5 link business sustainability to more organized division of labor, technology utilization, and efficiency and quality of life. In Q3, AN3 highlights the dependence of shrimp paste production knowledge on OT3 experience. In Q6, AN6 considers diversification in response to the uncertainty of coastal businesses. This orientation reflects differences in the meaning of responsibility and sustainability, rather than evidence that work system changes or efficiency improvements were implemented in all cases.

These differences in orientation appear when business continuity is understood through forms of responsibility that are not entirely the same. In the AN1, AN2, AN4, and AN5 groups, management adjustments are seen as a way of maintaining the business while reducing dependence on work patterns that rely solely on physical involvement. In AN3, the attention to production knowledge inherent in the predecessor places quality control and knowledge transfer as important issues. In AN6, natural conditions and livelihood uncertainty are considered in assessing business alternatives. Thus, the six cases show variation in learning experience and economic orientation, with continuity of value as a common issue, rather than uniformity of development strategies.

Core values and forms of behavior learned

Quality and responsibility are relatively consistent values across six generational pairs. Quality is reflected in the inspection of materials and production output, while responsibility is reflected in order completion and complaint handling. Predecessors are more explicit in emphasizing diligence and direct involvement; successors place more emphasis on creativity, efficiency, and adaptability. Table 1 summarizes the reported patterns.

Consistency of quality values does not mean that standards or production techniques are the same in every sector. In batik, processed food, and coastal businesses, the knowledge to assess the results of work is related to the characteristics of each activity. Responsibility also has different contexts, including the accuracy of order fulfillment, complaint resolution, and maintenance of obligations in business relationships. The similarity reported lies in the importance of meeting these standards and responsibilities. In this research, the emphasis on hard work among predecessors is related to perseverance, direct involvement, and willingness to assume responsibility. The emphasis on creativity and adaptation in successors is related to marketing updates, recording, packaging, or work arrangements. This difference is presented as an emphasis pattern, not a measurement of frequency or strength of value.

Table 1. Synthesis of entrepreneurial values in six families

Value dimension	Reported practices	Intergenerational emphasis
Quality	Inspecting materials/results and rejecting products that do not meet standards	Affirmed in all generational pairs
Responsibilities	Completing orders and responding to customer complaints	Affirmed in all generational pairs
Hard work	Intense involvement in work and perseverance	More explicit among predecessors
Creativity/adaptation	Marketing, note-taking, packaging, working systems	More prominent among successors

Table 1 shows that differences in emphasis on values do not necessarily mean a rejection of family values. The difference is mainly seen in the way the next generation interprets and carries out business responsibilities.

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Externalization, objectification, and internalization in the business family

Externalization is seen in example, instructions, work correction, and the involvement of successors in material selection, product inspection, customer service, and order fulfillment. Objectification is seen in routines, quality standards, division of duties, and business reputation. In K1–K5, reputation is more related to the name of the business or family; in K6, recognition is more attached to the track record of transactions and personal relationships. In K6, the written answer of the predecessor noted that children were introduced to pond work through fish feeding and salt extraction assistance (OT6, answer OT-04, August 23, 2026). The successor explained that the initial involvement was in the form of seeing and assisting light work, then developed into activities of checking water, feeding, and helping with harvesting (AN6, answer AN-01 and AN-02, August 23, 2026). The series of experiences provides concrete examples of learning that move from observation to work participation.

The recognition of value through everyday practice shows how predecessors associated work with rigor and responsibility. Corrections to products that do not meet standards, for example, link work results with the obligation to maintain quality. In service practice, order settlement and complaint handling link economic actions with responsibility to customers. Through the repetition of these activities, standards become common guidelines in the family. Reputational variations between K1–K5 and K6 show that social recognition does not always depend on the name of a well-known business; the track record of relationships and transactions also plays a role in reputation formation. These findings provide context to the mechanism of objectification presented in Table 2.

Internalization is seen in the acceptance and reinterpretation of values. In K1, K4, and K5, quality and responsibility are maintained along with marketing or management updates. In K3, the need for standard documentation shows possible changes in the way of learning production knowledge. Table 2 presents a synthesis of the three moments of social construction.

In K3, quality learning is related to the mastery of production experience that was previously largely attached to OT3. In K3, the need for documentation is seen as a possible way to clarify standards for successors. In K1, K4, and K5, marketing or management updates are examples of how the principles that are maintained can be realized through different practices. The comparison shows that internalization can include the acceptance of value goals as well as the reassessment of the means to achieve them.

Table 2. Mechanisms of social construction of entrepreneurial values

Construction stage	Empirical manifestations	Analytical meaning
Externalization	Examples, instructions, corrections at work	Value is expressed through action
objectification	Quality standards, routines, division of duties, reputation	Values become rules that are considered reasonable
Internalization	The successor accepts the value objectives and changes how they are implemented	Values are interpreted and re-realized

The three moments are interconnected: values introduced through action gain recognition as work guidelines and are then reinterpreted by successors.

Negotiating the values and autonomy of the next generation

Family expectations include product quality, good name, core competencies, customer continuity, and the ability to grow. AN1, AN2, AN4, and AN5 are reported to have gained space to update business management. In K3, recognition of AN3 develops gradually through mastery of quality and knowledge of shrimp paste production. The need for standard documentation shows the importance of knowledge transfer that still depends on OT3's experience. In K6, the inheritance of value does not require the continuation of identical work. In the interview answer sheet, OT6 said that successful inheritance includes understanding knowledge, skills, experience, and values, not just taking over the business; because the successor already has his own job and is no longer directly involved (OT6, OT-16 and OT-18 answers, August 23, 2026). AN6 describes the learning experience through parental observation, practice, and direction as well as acceptance of the values of hard work, patience,

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responsibility, and perseverance (AN6, answers AN-03 and AN-04, August 23, 2026). The K3 and K6 variations show the difference between the inheritance of values, the mastery of knowledge, and the decision to continue the parent's profession.

The OT6 answer document also states that changes in the way technology is managed and used are acceptable as long as the basic values and family experience are maintained (OT6, OT-15 answer, August 23, 2026). This information is documentary evidence of the inheritance orientation in K6. The differences between the two cases help to distinguish involvement in the learning process from the final decision regarding the continuation of work.

Discussion

The meaning of business and sustainability of value

The meaning of business as a source of livelihood as well as a non-material inheritance shows the interconnectedness of individuals, families, business organizations, and social contexts (Aldrich et al., 2023). Economic importance goes hand in hand with identity, reputation, emotional bonds, and intergenerational responsibilities. This is in line with D'Allura et al. (2025), who link corporate heritage with identity and reputation, and Fox et al. (2024), who emphasize the diversity of the meaning of family heritage. Radu-Lefebvre et al. (2024) expand this understanding through the dimensions of parties, objects, mechanisms, and the context of inheritance. In Juwana's case, work experiences built to meet family needs acquire normative meaning as the result of joint work that is worth maintaining. Thus, the business family is a value-forming environment as well as an economic institution. The continuity of inheritance does not require a uniform intergenerational orientation. In the framework of Berger and Luckmann (1966), the experience of predecessors acquires a position as a common guideline when the practice is habituated and acknowledged. Tessema et al. (2025) show that family and business values are transmitted through relationships, example, communication, and learning; McAdam et al. (2024) show that business practices are shaped and transformed in the community of practice. The difference between OT1–OT5 and OT6 shows that the sustainability of values can go hand in hand with changes in roles or job choices. This is in line with the negotiation of identity and intergenerational relationships (Sallay et al., 2024) as well as the re-establishment of values through mutual recognition (Luft et al., 2025). This variation is an inheritance orientation in the case studied, not a basis for establishing two definitive family typologies.

Relatively consistent quality and responsibility between generations can be understood as values that gain legitimacy through habituation. Inspection of materials and production results and fulfillment of obligations to customers combine technical skills with moral orientation. Trust and reputation are important resources in family business relationships with stakeholders (Chaudhary et al., 2021), while shared examples and experiences support the transmission of integrity, responsibility, commitment, and adaptability (Tessema et al., 2025). These findings show that the value of quality and responsibility is not just operational standards, but a guideline of action that links the learning of successors with social recognition of family businesses.

The difference in emphasis on hard work and creativity does not necessarily indicate a conflict of values. Generational orientation can shape innovation decisions, while excessive emphasis on tradition under certain conditions can limit change (Meroño-Cerdán, 2024). Del Barone et al. (2026) also show variations in innovation after succession related to the influence of predecessors and the autonomy of successors. In Juwana's case, the acceptance of quality and responsibility can be accompanied by a reinterpretation of hard work through creativity, efficiency, and adjustment of practices. Moral continuity therefore needs to be distinguished from uniformity of ways of working. This study does not measure the level of innovation or economic success, so the relationship is understood as a variation in orientation, not a causal influence.

Social construction through informal learning

Value externalization occurs when the economic actions of the predecessor become a learning experience for the successor. Examples, communication, correction, and direct

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involvement allow the successor to relate the action to its consequences. Ge et al. (2024) emphasize socialization in daily practice, while Pipatanantakurn and Ractham (2022) identify observation, mentoring, work learning, and decision involvement as knowledge transfer mechanisms. Tessema et al. (2025) place example and communication as channels of value transmission, and McAdam et al. (2024) explain the formation of practices and identities through cross-generational participation. In the Juwana family, the activities of selecting materials, checking quality, and fulfilling orders are not only skill exercises, but also learning experiences regarding customer responsibility, rigor, and trust. This is the character of informal education inherent in family routines. Objectification explains how repetitive practices become quality standards, work rules, division of responsibilities, and expectations that are considered reasonable. Standards are not always written; correction, supervision, and social recognition can maintain norms. In K1–K5, reputation is more related to business or family names, while in K6 recognition is more attached to personal relationships and transaction track records. This difference shows that the institutionalization of values can take the form of collective identities and interpersonal beliefs. These findings are in line with the role of reputation and business heritage in building external relationships (Chaudhary et al., 2021; D'Allura et al., 2025), as well as the negotiation of family rules and values (Luft et al., 2025; Sallay et al., 2024). From an educational perspective, work standards become an informal curriculum that brings together family norms with the real experience of successors. Standards that have become habitual can be understood without assuming the existence of written rules. In business families, expectations about quality and service acquire normative force through correction, supervision, and assessment of the results of work. The difference between business identity-based reputation in K1–K5 and interpersonal reputation in K6 shows that the institutionalization of values does not have to produce uniform symbols. Its analytical contribution is to distinguish values that are considered mutually valid from external forms of recognition that reinforce those values.

Internalization is not passive copying but a recurring process of meaning-making (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Bika et al., 2019). Successors can understand the rationale behind family standards and develop new ways of carrying them out. The need for quality documentation in K3 shows the possibility of transforming knowledge inherent in the experience of predecessors into more explicit learning resources. Marketing and management updates in other cases also show that the acceptance of values can be accompanied by practice adjustments.

Learning in a business family thus has social and moral dimensions beyond the transfer of production procedures. First, value becomes visible through the actions and feedback that the successor receives. Second, the routine allows the standard to gain a standing as a shared expectation. Third, the successor connects the standard to experiences, aspirations, and changes in the environment. Those three dimensions do not always run in the same order; examples can be repeated when new practices are introduced, and norms that are considered established can be renegotiated.

Negotiation of values, autonomy, and practice change

The orientation of AN1, AN2, AN4, and AN5 towards technology, efficiency, and division of labor can be understood as a reflective internalization of the value of hard work and responsibility. Tirdasari et al. (2026) identified efficiency, time saving, productivity, and competitiveness as reasons for the adoption of digital technology in Indonesian family businesses. Del Vecchio et al. (2025) showed the role of the younger generation in digital transformation and business resilience, with variations in organizational readiness. Juwana's findings add a dimension to informal education: successors not only learn how to work, but assess the suitability of old practices with new needs. The reinterpretation opens up the possibility of linking hard work to effectiveness, distribution of responsibilities, quality of results, and family life balance. However, the orientation of renewal is not the same as evidence that technology has been applied or that efficiency has improved.

The variation between K3 and K6 shows two different negotiation contexts. In K3,

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reliance on the personal knowledge of predecessors drives the need for learning and standard documentation. Mentoring mechanisms, work procedures, and decision involvement are relevant for knowledge continuity (McAdam et al., 2024; Pipatanantakurn & Ractham, 2022). In K6, consideration of the uncertainty of coastal businesses and successor job choices shows that value internalization is not synonymous with business takeover. Livelihood diversification can be a response to vulnerability, but its success depends on context and capacity (Roscher et al., 2022). A study of the adaptation of small-scale fishers in Indonesia also linked adaptation strategies to subjective well-being that differed according to income (Rahman et al., 2023). Thus, intergenerational responsibility can be interpreted through quality maintenance, knowledge transfer, or consideration of risks and livelihood alternatives. These findings do not prove that diversification has been implemented or provided specific economic outcomes. In the case of shrimp paste, the need to reduce reliance on the personal experience of predecessors reveals an educational problem different from simply handing over ownership: how successors understand the reasons behind production standards and gain opportunities to develop skills. In contrast, in a farm business, learning about perseverance and responsibility can have meaning beyond the same work. These differences place career choice and knowledge mastery as two dimensions that need to be differentiated when assessing the success of family entrepreneurship education.

Implications of education and limitations

Theoretically, the findings clarify the difference between the inheritance of values and the inheritance of professions. Successors can acknowledge responsibility for quality and good name while updating their ways of working or choosing different jobs. K3 shows the need to make production knowledge more learnable, while K6 shows that family learning experiences remain meaningful even if the successor chooses his own work. For social studies education, the case of local businesses provides an empirical context to relate norms, family relationships, work, economic decisions, and social changes. Its use in formal education is a conceptual implication, not a learning model that has been tested for effectiveness. In the context of social studies education, the comparison of the two cases can be used to examine the relationship between norms, learning experiences, and economic choices. The case of K3 can be used to discuss how local skills become inheritable knowledge, while K6 provides context regarding livelihood risks and employment choices. This contextual learning can invite students to distinguish the continuity of values from the uniformity of professions, as well as examine how social and technological changes affect the way families actualize values.

The practical implication is the development of business regeneration through example, gradual mentoring, work experience, and the provision of responsibilities according to the readiness of the successor. Parents can be mentors who introduce production, customers, quality standards, and decision-making. This strategy is in line with the mechanism of knowledge transfer and the formation of an entrepreneurial identity through mentoring (Li et al., 2025; Pipatanantakurn & Ractham, 2022). Documentation of production procedures, quality standards, financial records, and customer service can help maintain knowledge that previously depended on personal experience. Formal and informal transfers need to be adapted to the stages of succession (Mansouri & Moufdi, 2026). At the same time, family support and room for autonomy are important in the formation of successor orientation (Del Barone et al., 2026; Saeed et al., 2024). Local regeneration programs should combine value preservation with opportunities to make relevant updates.

The findings are analytical generalizations of the six cases, not statistical representations of the entire Juwana entrepreneurial family. The contribution of qualitative research lies in the explanation of contextual mechanisms and relationships (Broderick et al., 2024). Some experiences are reconstructed retrospectively so they may contain memory bias, selectivity, and idealization of family relationships. Cross-checking interviews, observations, and documents is necessary to examine the consistency and possibility of alternative explanations (Schlunegger et al., 2024).

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The findings on value negotiation are also in line with research on parenting and family-led learning (Shanine et al., 2023; Tanan et al., 2023). A particular contribution of Juwana's case is to show that informal entrepreneurial learning can maintain a moral orientation while enabling practice change, without equating the success of family education with the obligation to continue the parent's profession.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The social construction of entrepreneurial values in Juwana's six business families took place through informal intergenerational learning. Quality and responsibility were relatively consistent, while hard work was emphasized by predecessors and creativity and adaptation were more prominent in successors. Externalization through example, objectification through work standards and norms, and internalization through acceptance and reinterpretation showed that the continuity of values could go hand in hand with changes in practices. The K3 and K6 variations emphasized that the inheritance of values is not synonymous with the continuation of work. The findings strengthen the understanding of the family as an informal socio-economic education space, with the limits of analytical generalization in the case studied. Business families are advised to develop gradual mentoring, knowledge documentation, and successor autonomy space. Social studies educators can use local business cases as contextual learning materials, without assuming that their effectiveness has been tested. Further research needs to use longitudinal approaches and cross-generational evidence reconciliation to deepen understanding of the relationship between values, practices, and business sustainability.

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