

Hospitality-Preneur: From Employability to Independent Professionalism in Hospitality Education

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Abstract. The tourism and hospitality industry is among the largest global employers, engaging over 270 million workers, or approximately 8.2% of the world's labor force (ILO, 2023). However, hospitality education remains largely oriented toward an employability paradigm, positioning graduates primarily as prospective corporate employees. This approach is increasingly contested amid the rise of the gig economy, digitalization, and the growing prevalence of self-employment in service industries such as hospitality. This conceptual article introduces the term hospitality-preneur to capture a new paradigm in hospitality education—one that frames knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) as core assets for building independent professional pathways without reliance on formal corporate structures. Drawing on classical entrepreneurship theories (Schumpeter, Baumol) and contemporary literature on the gig economy, this article proposes a conceptual framework that highlights the shift from job-ready employees to life-ready independent professionals. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by expanding the definition of entrepreneurship in the hospitality context. Practically, it offers direction for reorienting tourism education in Indonesia to produce graduates who are work-and life-ready and capable of professional self-reliance..

1 Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the most dynamic yet vulnerable sectors of the global economy. According to the International Labour Organization [1] more than 270 million individuals—representing approximately 8.2

This significant growth underscores two realities: first, that tourism has recovered from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and has once again become a driver of global economic activity; second, that the demand for hospitality workers is rising steadily, ranging from entry-level positions such as housekeepers and front office agents to stewards, gardeners, concierge staff, and guest relations officers. Hospitality education thus plays a strategic role in preparing a new generation of professionals to meet these workforce demands. Nevertheless, the prevailing approach to hospitality education in many countries, including Indonesia, remains anchored in the employability paradigm. Students in tourism schools are typically trained to become job-ready employees who are expected to immediately fill roles in hotels, restaurants, or travel agencies. While this orientation is not inherently problematic, it is reductive; it positions students merely as “future employees” dependent on corporate structures

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rather than as independent professionals capable of leveraging their skills and knowledge to generate value autonomously.

Global economic transformations suggest a more fundamental shift in the economy. The gig economy and the rise of self-employment increasingly shape labor markets, including hospitality. The gig economy transforms workers into “commoditized workers” who operate on short-term demand through digital platforms [2]. This is described as the emergence of a “just-in-time workforce,” dominated by project-based, short-term, and freelance arrangements [3]. A study of Uber demonstrates how algorithmic management and digitalization reshape labor relations while simultaneously creating new professional opportunities outside traditional corporate frameworks [4]. This transformation is also evident in the hospitality industry. In the analysis of hospitality’s future of work, it is argued that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift toward gig-based models, where hospitality professionals are increasingly seen not only as hotel or restaurant employees but also as freelancers offering their skills independently [5]. In Europe, for instance, freelance bartenders, independent chefs, and personal concierges operate through digital platforms and community networks.

These changes are particularly relevant in Indonesia. As one of the fastest-growing tourism markets in Southeast Asia, the country continues to produce large numbers of hospitality graduates, who are predominantly directed toward careers in star-rated hotels, cruise ships, or large restaurants. However, few are encouraged to envision hospitality skills as the foundation for independent professional practice. Meanwhile, urban society demonstrates a high demand for independent hospitality services, ranging from private event catering and personal concierge work to independent housekeeping. These trends indicate a significant potential for reframing hospitality education.

It is within this context that the concept of hospitality-preneur gains importance. The term emphasizes that hospitality skills are not merely “entry-level jobs” within corporate hierarchies but can also constitute independent professional practices with economic value. For instance, a housekeeper need not be confined to hotel employment but may establish a professional cleaning service for homes, villas, or apartments. Similarly, a concierge can transition from the hotel lobby to offering personal concierge services to independent travelers or expatriates. Even the skills of gardeners or stewards can be repositioned as independent professions when integrated with community services or event management. This paradigm shift has profound implications for education. While hospitality students have traditionally been trained to serve corporate employers, the Hospitality-preneur paradigm prepares them to become life-ready professionals—individuals capable of building independent livelihoods through their knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes. This aligns with Gijbels et al. (2005), who emphasized problem-solving approaches that foster student autonomy, as well as [6], who highlighted the significance of problem-based learning in professional education.

Digitalization further reinforces the urgency of this shift. The concept of smart tourism, which integrates technology, big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT), has created new tourism ecosystems [7]. These systems benefit large corporations and open opportunities for small-scale and independent actors to deliver personalized services. Through digital platforms and social networks, hospitality-preneurs can directly market their services to consumers, expanding their reach beyond traditional employment channels. Philosophically, this concept challenges the traditional definitions of entrepreneurship. Positioned entrepreneurs as agents of innovation [8], while [9] distinguished between organizing and innovating entrepreneurs, both largely situated within formal business contexts. In contrast, hospitality-preneurs expand the notion of entrepreneurship to include independent professionalism, where hospitality skills become viable sources of livelihood without the necessity of formal business creation. Accordingly, this study seeks to:

1. Critically examine the employability-focused paradigm of hospitality education.
2. Propose a conceptual framework for Hospitality-preneur that positions hospitality skills as independent professions.
3. Highlight the pedagogical implications for tourism education, particularly in Indonesia.

The main contribution of this study lies in broadening the definition of entrepreneurship in hospitality: beyond establishing hotels, restaurants, or travel agencies, to include building independent professional careers rooted in hospitality skills. In other words, hospitality-preneurs reframe the educational journey from producing “work-ready” graduates to cultivating “life-ready” professionals.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Classical Theories of Entrepreneurship

The concept of entrepreneurship has a long intellectual lineage in economic theory. In *Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en Général*, was among the first to introduce the term “entrepreneur” [10]. He described entrepreneurs as risk bearers—those who purchase goods at a known price and sell them at an uncertain price in the future [11]. This definition emphasizes that speculation and risk are central to entrepreneurial activity. This definition highlights the entrepreneur as an agent who reallocates resources from lower to higher productivity [12]. Say underscored a coordinating role: entrepreneurs combine factors of production to create new value [12].

The most influential conceptualization emerged from those who identified the entrepreneur as an innovator [8]. In *The Theory of Economic Development*, Schumpeter defined entrepreneurs as individuals who introduce “new combinations” through product innovation, new methods of production, new markets, new sources of raw materials or new industrial organizations. His notion of creative destruction underscores entrepreneurship as an engine of structural transformation within the economy. Building on this, the critiqued narrow definitions that equate entrepreneurship exclusively with business ownership [9]. He distinguished between organizing entrepreneurs, who establish and operate ventures without necessarily innovating, and innovative entrepreneurs, who introduce fundamentally new ideas or practices. Entrepreneurial activity can be productive, unproductive, or even destructive, depending on the institutional context [9].

Critique: While foundational, these classical theories have limitations when applied to the hospitality industry. First, they remain largely anchored in the paradigm of firm creation: entrepreneurs as business founders, managers of production factors, or economic innovators. Such framing does not easily accommodate hospitality professionals, such as housekeepers or concierges, whose skills can constitute independent livelihoods without the necessity of establishing a hotel or restaurant. Second, Schumpeter’s focus on innovation assumes organizational settings for entrepreneurial activity. However, in today’s digital economy, innovation can emerge at the level of independent professionals. For instance, a freelance concierge leveraging digital platforms to provide personalized services for independent travelers represents an innovation in service delivery without formal business formation. These gaps suggest that classical theory must be expanded to incorporate entrepreneurship as a form of professional independence.

2.2 Entrepreneurship in Tourism and Hospitality

Research on entrepreneurship in tourism has gained momentum since the 1990s, reflecting the sector's reliance on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Emphasized the need for contextualizing entrepreneurship, noting that entrepreneurial practices in tourism often take specific forms shaped by cultural and industrial contexts [13]. Many family run tourism enterprises, though informal or small-scale, embody entrepreneurial characteristics, even if they diverge from classical definitions. In a study in Sweden, the role of entrepreneurship in sustainable tourism development was highlighted [14], and it was demonstrated that innovation in nature-based tourism often arises from small-scale individual or family initiatives rather than from large corporations.

Similarly, purely economic approaches to entrepreneurship often neglect the social, cultural, and contextual dimensions of practice. This critique is particularly relevant to tourism, where social interactions and cultural exchange are integral to entrepreneurial activities. More recently, [7] introduced the concept of smart tourism, emphasizing the integration of information technology, big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT) in destination and visitor experience management. This digital transformation creates opportunities for individuals to offer hospitality services independently, such as virtual tour guiding or personalized concierge services.

Critique: Despite this growing body of literature, most studies remain focused on SMEs, such as boutique hotels, family owned restaurants, and small travel agencies. Very little attention has been given to individual professionals (housekeepers, stewards, and gardeners) as entrepreneurs in their own right. Consequently, basic hospitality skills continue to be framed as mere “jobs” rather than as potential independent professions. This reveals a conceptual gap that hospitality-preneurs seek to address by positioning hospitality skills as legitimate foundations for independent entrepreneurship.

2.3 The Gig Economy and Independent Professions

The gig economy has become central to contemporary labor discourses. It describes gig workers as “commoditized workers” who engage in short-term, on-demand assignments through digital platforms [2]. This is due to the emergence of a “just-in-time workforce” [3]. In an ethnographic study of Uber, demonstrates how algorithms simultaneously allocate work and reshape power relations between platforms and workers [4]. Within hospitality, [5] analyze the post-pandemic future of hospitality. They found that COVID-19 accelerated the shift toward project-based employment, with many hospitality workers pursuing freelance or short-term contracts. Examples include freelance bartenders for private events and independent chefs providing personalized dining experiences.

Critique: Although the gig economy opens significant opportunities for hospitality professionals to pursue independence, it also poses risks. One concern is the commoditization of skills, where workers are reduced to interchangeable “service units” with limited protection. This raises a dilemma: on the one hand, the gig economy facilitates the emergence of hospitality-preneurs; on the other, it may weaken workers’ bargaining power. Therefore, the challenge lies in reframing gig-based work through the lens of professionalism and self-reliance, ensuring that it transcends mere labor market flexibility.

2.4 Hospitality Education and the Employability Orientation

Traditional hospitality education is rooted in vocational models that emphasize practical skills to meet industry demands. In the work on problem-based learning, it was argued that professional education must cultivate autonomy rather than only technical competence [6]. A

meta-analysis confirmed that problem-based learning fosters deeper conceptual understanding and critical thinking [15]. In tourism education, it has been observed that social media and digital technologies have transformed learning landscapes, yet curricula remain slow to adapt. Hospitality programs still prioritize job placement outcomes over preparing graduates for independent professional practice. Critique: The current employability-driven model is fundamentally supply oriented; it prepares students for industry placement but not necessarily for life beyond corporate employment. Students may graduate as job-ready but not life-ready. This gap provides an entry point for reframing hospitality education through the hospitality-preneur paradigm.

2.5 Literature Gaps and the Position of Hospitality-preneur

From the review above, several conceptual gaps can be identified.

1. Classical entrepreneurship theories inadequately explain individual, skill-based independent professions.
2. Tourism entrepreneurship studies still prioritize SMEs rather than individual professionals.
3. The gig economy offers opportunities but risks reducing workers to commoditized roles.
4. Hospitality education remains oriented toward employability rather than fostering self-reliance.

Against this backdrop, the hospitality-preneur emerges as a bridging concept. It situates hospitality skills as the basis of independent professional practice, offering a contemporary entrepreneurial framework that aligns with digitalization, the gig economy, and the demand for self-reliant careers in the hospitality industry.

2.6 Conceptualization of Hospitality-preneur

2.6.1 Conceptual Definition

The term hospitality-preneur is proposed to shift the prevailing perception of hospitality education and professional practice. Traditionally, hospitality curricula have been designed to produce “job-ready” graduates prepared to assume positions in hotels, restaurants or travel agencies. In contrast, the Hospitality-preneur paradigm emphasizes that each hospitality skill can constitute an independent profession capable of generating sustainable livelihoods. A housekeeper, for instance, need not await recruitment by a luxury hotel but may instead establish a private cleaning service for villas and apartments, operating with the professional standards learned during training. Similarly, a concierge may reposition themselves as personal guides or assistants for independent travelers and expatriates. Thus, a hospitality-preneur is defined as a hospitality professional who mobilizes knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) to create independent forms of livelihood outside formal corporate structures. This definition broadens the scope of entrepreneurship. Conventionally, entrepreneurship is equated with business formation, that is, the creation of firms or ventures. However, hospitality-preneur reframes entrepreneurship as a form of independent professionalism in which individual expertise itself becomes the principal asset for generating both economic and social value.

2.6.2 Theoretical Foundations

The conceptualization of hospitality-preneur draws upon several theoretical bases:

1. Schumpeterian Innovation.
The characterized entrepreneurs as innovators who introduce “new combinations” [8]. In hospitality, such innovation does not always entail building new hotels or restaurants. However, innovation may occur at the individual level. For example, a freelance steward who integrates service expertise with eco-conscious event management practices demonstrates a new form of innovation that is aligned with sustainability.
2. Baumol’s Typology.
The distinguished between organizing entrepreneurs, who establish and manage enterprises, and innovating entrepreneurs, who create novel practices [9]. Hospitality-preneurs can occupy both roles simultaneously: they organize themselves as independent service providers while innovating with unique service designs and delivery methods.
3. Contextualization of Entrepreneurship.
The emphasized the need to view entrepreneurship through the specific lens of its industry [13]. Within hospitality, roles such as gardeners or security staff are seldom recognized as entrepreneurial roles. However, when practiced independently, these roles embody entrepreneurial agency by combining personal skills with service delivery.
4. Gig Economy and Self-Employment.
The highlighted of the gig economy’s potential to expand opportunities for service-based professions [2] [3]. Within this landscape, hospitality skills can be marketed directly to consumers through digital platforms, bypassing traditional corporate intermediaries. Taken together, these foundations demonstrate that hospitality-preneurs do not reject classical entrepreneurship theories but rather extend them. It repositions entrepreneurship as grounded in individual professionalism, where the value of knowledge, skills, and attitudes is leveraged beyond conventional organizational frameworks.

3 Research Method

The conceptual framework of the hospitality-preneur is structured as a transformational pathway. It begins with three fundamental inputs—Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude (KSA)—and progresses through the processes of professional reframing and value creation toward the output of independent professions. These outputs then generate two parallel outcomes: self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods.

1. Input: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude.
Knowledge encompasses technical and procedural expertise, such as housekeeping standards or front office protocols. Skills refer to practical and interpersonal abilities, ranging from culinary techniques to guest relations and stewardship. Attitude represents professional values, such as empathy, service excellence, and integrity. For instance, a housekeeping trainee may master hotel SOPs, an F&B student may refine mixology techniques, and a front office trainee may demonstrate patience and courtesy when handling guest complaints.
2. Transformation: Professional Reframing and Value Creation.
The process begins when individuals reconceptualize themselves not as future employees but as independent professionals (professional reframing). For example, a tourism

graduate with housekeeping expertise may establish a private cleaning service for villas and apartments. Value creation follows the monetization of these reframed identities. A freelance bartender offering mobile bar services for weddings or a personal concierge creating tailored travel itineraries exemplifies this stage.

3. Output: Independent Professions.
The result is the emergence of self-sustaining professional identities. These include freelance stewards supporting community events, community gardeners managing urban farming initiatives, and guest service agents offering services to private villa clients.
4. Outcomes: Self-Reliance and Sustainable Livelihood.
The dual outcomes are mutually reinforcing. Self-reliance refers to an individual’s autonomy in managing their time, career direction, and decision-making, such as a freelance guest service agent in Bali specializing in digital nomads. Sustainable livelihood emphasizes long-term economic and social viability, such as youth groups in tourist villages offering guiding services that generate income, strengthen local economies, and preserve cultural identity.

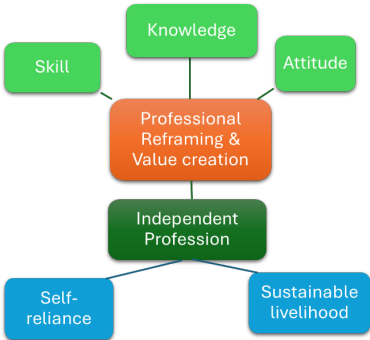


Figure 1. Hospitality-preneur conceptual framework

Thus, the Hospitality-preneur framework represents not only a technical pathway but also a transformative journey—from foundational KSA, through reframing and value creation, to independent professions that support both personal autonomy and community sustainability.

3.1 Framework Components

To clarify, the main components of the hospitalitypreneur framework are as follows:

3.2 Framework Components

The Hospitality-preneur framework generates several theoretical and practical implications.

1. Revising Classical Definitions of Entrepreneurship.
Whereas classical theories emphasize entrepreneurs as firm founders or organizational innovators (Cantillon, 1755; Say, 1803; Schumpeter, 1934), Hospitality-preneur re-frames entrepreneurship as independent professionalism. In this sense, innovation is

Table 1. Summary of Hospitality-preneur Framework

Component	Description	Examples in Hospitality
Knowledge	Technical and procedural knowledge	Housekeeping SOPs, service standards
Skills	Practical and interpersonal abilities	Culinary, guest relations, gardening
Attitude	Professional values and ethics	Service excellence, empathy, integrity
Professional Reframing	Mindset shift: employee → independent professional	Housekeeper as private service provider
Value Creation	Monetizing KSA into market value	Independent concierge for travelers
Independent Professions	Standalone hospitality practices	Freelance steward, community gardener
Self-Reliance	Autonomy and livelihood security	Freelance steward, community gardener

not confined to launching new products or businesses but includes redefining one’s professional identity.

2. Introducing a New Paradigm in Hospitality Education.
Education is reoriented from employability to life-readiness. Students are no longer trained solely as corporate employees but are equipped with the mindset, competencies, and courage to sustain themselves independently.
3. Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
This model aligns with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), promoting dignified and sustainable forms of work. Independent hospitality professionals can create new jobs, strengthen local economies, and reduce dependency on corporate structures vulnerable to crises.
4. Encouraging New Ecosystems in Tourism.
Rather than competing with large corporations, hospitality-preneurs can act as strategic partners. Collaboration among hotels, restaurants, local communities, and independent professionals can yield more inclusive and resilient tourism ecosystems.

3.3 Practical Implications

The framework also has concrete implications for key stakeholders.

1. Educational Institutions.
Tourism schools can design new courses emphasizing self-employment. For example, housekeeping courses may include private cleaning business design, whereas F&B courses might simulate pop-up cafés or community catering ventures. Students learn not only technical skills but also how to monetize them.
2. Students.
Tourism schools can design new courses emphasizing self-employment. For example, housekeeping courses may include private cleaning business design, whereas F&B courses might simulate pop-up cafés or community catering ventures. Students learn not only technical skills but also how to monetize them.
3. Local Communities.
Villages and youth groups can leverage the model to strengthen community-based tourism. Housewives may become local caterers, while young people serve as independent guides or guest service providers, reinforcing economic empowerment and cultural preservation.

4. Industry.

Hotels and restaurants can collaborate with hospitality-preneurs. For example, hotels may hire freelance bartenders for special events, whereas restaurants can partner with independent pastry chefs to enrich seasonal menus.

5. Government.

Policy interventions could include certification schemes for independent hospitality professions, micro-finance support, and national digital platforms connecting hospitality-preneurs with markets. These measures provide legitimacy, protection, and expanded opportunities for self-employed professionals.

Together, these practical implications highlight that hospitality-preneurship is not a purely theoretical model but a framework that can be operationalized across multiple levels, from individual learning to national policy.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Academic Implications: Expanding Entrepreneurship Theory

Classical entrepreneurship literature has long defined entrepreneurs as innovators [8], coordinators of production factors [12], and risk-takers [11]. These perspectives remain dominant in contemporary scholarship, and most hospitality entrepreneurship studies continue to focus on firm creation, for example, the establishment of boutique hotels, family run restaurants, or travel agencies [13] [14]. The Hospitality-preneur framework extends these boundaries by conceptualizing entrepreneurship as independent professionalism. In this sense, entrepreneurship is not confined to organizational innovation but can also manifest at the individual level. For instance, an independent bartender who designs mobile craft cocktail services for private events is clearly engaging in entrepreneurial innovation despite not having founded a formal company.

This reorientation challenges the dominant firm-centric lens and opens pathways for research into hospitality entrepreneurship that recognizes skill-based independence. The contributions of this study are as follows.

1. Demonstrating that entrepreneurship is not inherently synonymous with firm creation.
2. Linking entrepreneurship with the dynamics of the gig economy, which increasingly shapes labor markets.
3. Providing a conceptual foundation for hospitality education research that emphasizes self-reliance and independent professionalism.

Such reframing enriches entrepreneurship theory by situating it within the contemporary transformations of work, particularly the growing demand for flexible, autonomous, and digitally mediated professions.

4.2 Pedagogical Implications: Reorienting Hospitality Education

Hospitality education has traditionally been constructed around the employability paradigm, training students to become ready-made employees in hotels, restaurants, and tourism organizations. Employability remains a benchmark for evaluating hospitality curricula globally [10]. However, the reliability of corporate employment has been increasingly undermined by crises, from economic downturns to the COVID-19 pandemic itself. The Hospitality-preneur model suggests a pedagogical reorientation toward life readiness. This does not reject employability but complements it by equipping students with the capacity to transform their knowledge, skills, and attitudes into independent professional careers.

4.2.1 Integrating the Entrepreneurial Mindset

Entrepreneurship education should not be confined to a single course. Instead, an entrepreneurial mindset can be infused into all subjects, from housekeeping to the front office. For example:

1. Housekeeping modules could require students to design business models for private cleaning services.
2. F&B courses might include projects simulating community catering or pop-up cafés.
3. Front office classes could involve creating independent guest relations services for long-stay travellers.

This integrative approach aligns with [16] argument that entrepreneurial learning must permeate the entire curriculum, fostering creativity, art of the possible, and resilience.

4.2.2 Project-Based and Experiential Learning

Problem-based learning [6] [15] has already proven effective in enhancing student autonomy and critical thinking. In hospitality, project-based tasks offer fertile ground for students to apply their skills in real-world contexts. For instance, students might be tasked with the following:

1. Operate a pop-up café for one week.
2. Organize a campus community tour.
3. Provide event stewarding for local festivals.

Such projects allow students to experience firsthand how professional independence can be operationalized, thereby linking theory with practice.

4.2.3 Digital Empowerment

Digital literacy is becoming increasingly indispensable. The Hospitality-preneur model requires students to learn how to:

1. Use online travel platforms to market value-added services.
2. Build professional social media profiles for independent bartending, concierge, or guest service work.
3. Engage with freelance marketplaces (e.g., Fiverr, Upwork) to offer virtual hospitality-related services such as itinerary design or virtual concierge support.

The integration of big data and IoT in smart tourism ecosystems makes digital empowerment a non-negotiable element in hospitality education [7].

4.2.4 Attitude as Intangible Capital

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of hospitality education is its emphasis on attitudes. Service excellence, empathy, and integrity—though intangible—constitute the “capital” that differentiates independent professionals from informal laborers. This highlights the role of professional attitudes as determinants of long-term career success in hospitality [17]. By embedding attitude-building deeply into curricula, institutions can ensure that hospitality entrepreneurs project professionalism that commands market trust.

4.3 Practical and Policy Implications

4.3.1 Educational Institutions

Schools and universities must expand their scope beyond preparing graduates for corporate employment. They can:

1. Develop curricula with explicit pathways for self-employment.
2. Establish hospitality incubators that provide mentoring, seed funding, and networking for independent projects.
3. Introduce “freelance internships,” where students gain credit for working as independent service providers under faculty supervision.

4.3.2 Government

The Hospitality-preneur model aligns with SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. UNWTO (2025) highlighted the importance of measuring not only jobs but also the quality and sustainability of work in tourism. Governments can support this agenda through the following:

1. Certification schemes for individual hospitality professions (e.g., Certified Housekeeper, Certified Concierge).
2. Access to microfinance for self-employed hospitality practitioners.
3. Development of national digital platforms connecting hospitality-preneurs with consumers.

4.3.3 Industry

The hospitality industry need not view independent professionals as competitors. Instead, collaboration can enrich ecosystems. For example:

1. Hotels may contract freelance stewards for special events.
2. Restaurants can partner with independent pastry chefs to diversify seasonal offerings.
3. Destination platforms can integrate freelance guides and concierges into their networks.

4.3.4 Local Communities

Community-based tourism initiatives can be strengthened by adopting the hospitality-preneur framework. Youth groups can serve as independent guest service agents, and women’s co-operatives can provide catering for local events. These initiatives generate income while reinforcing cultural identity and local empowerment.

4.4 Critical Discussion

Despite its promising potential, the Hospitality-preneur paradigm encounters several implementation challenges that hinder its optimal application.

1. **Commoditization of Professions.**

The gig economy often reduces workers to interchangeable units of labor [3]. Unless regulated, hospitality-preneurs risk exploitation, insecure income, and a lack of benefits.

2. **Digital Divide**

Not all regions, particularly rural tourism destinations, have equal access to technology. Without intervention, digital inequality may exacerbate these disparities.

3. **Traditional Mindsets**

Many students—and their families—still equate success with formal employment in luxury hotels or cruise ships. National campaigns and educational reforms are required to shift societal perceptions toward valuing independent professionalism.

4. **Legal Recognition**

Many forms of independent hospitality work lack formal recognition under labor law. Policy frameworks must evolve to legitimize and protect these professions, ensuring fair treatment and sustainable careers.

4.5 International Cases: Global Inspirations

Several international cases illustrate the successful implementation of independent hospitality practices worldwide. In Japan, traditional ryokan culture demonstrates how hosts often operate independently while providing highly personalized services without formal employment structures. In Europe, independent tour guides and freelance hospitality providers have flourished on digital platforms and strong professional networks. Meanwhile, in Latin America—particularly in Mexico and Colombia—local communities have developed independent concierge services tailored to backpackers and community-based tourism, combining entrepreneurship and cultural solidarity. These global experiences demonstrate that independent hospitality professions are not merely theoretical but are already functioning in practice, providing adaptable models for Indonesia's hospitality industry.

4.6 Opportunities for Indonesia

Indonesia possesses three key assets for adopting the hospitality-preneur model:

1. **Demographic potential.** The country produces a large number of hospitality and tourism graduates annually.
2. **Market demand.** Urban centers and tourist destinations generate a continuous demand for independent hospitality services.
3. **Cultural capital.** Communal traditions, such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation), provide a strong foundation for community-based hospitality entrepreneurship.

Harnessing these assets, hospitality-preneurs can become a national strategy to reduce graduate unemployment, stimulate creative service industries, and strengthen Indonesia's position in the global tourism economy.

5 Conclusion

This study introduces hospitality-preneur as a new paradigm in hospitality education and practice. This concept emerges from the recognition that the tourism industry, employing more than 270 million workers worldwide [1], remains heavily dependent on conventional employability models that frame graduates primarily as corporate employees. In contrast, hospitality-preneur challenges this reductionist orientation by positioning hospitality skills—ranging from housekeeping and stewarding to concierge services, F&B, and gardening—as viable independent professions in their own right. Through a critical review of classical entrepreneurship theories [11] [12] [8] [8] [9], contemporary tourism entrepreneurship literature [13] [14] [14] [7], and studies of the gig economy [2] [3] [4], this article has argued that entrepreneurship must be understood not only as firm creation but also as independent professionalism. The conceptual framework of hospitality-preneurship reframes the journey from knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) as inputs, through professional reframing and value creation, toward the output of independent professions and the dual outcomes of self-reliance and sustainable livelihood.

Hospitality-preneur is more than an alternative educational concept; it is a paradigm shift attuned to the realities of the 21st-century labor market. In an era shaped by the gig economy, digitalization, and recurrent global crises, hospitality graduates cannot be prepared solely for employment; they must also be prepared for independence. At its core, this paradigm moves beyond the binary of “work-ready” to embrace “life-ready.” This affirms that every hospitality skill constitutes a potential profession and that professionalism, integrity, and innovation can sustain livelihoods without dependence on corporate hierarchies. If implemented strategically, hospitality-preneurs can cultivate a generation of independent, innovative, and resilient hospitality professionals—actors who are not merely participants in the industry but agents shaping a more inclusive, sustainable, and meaningful future for global tourism.

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