



Development Of Student Entrepreneurship Skills Through The Independent Entrepreneurship Program At Gadjah Mada University 2023

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in driving economic growth and creating new jobs. Therefore, the development of entrepreneurial skills among students is very important. This study aims to analyze the development of student entrepreneurship skills through the Wirausaha Merdeka program at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in 2023. The Wirausaha Merdeka program is a national program that aims to create resilient and financially independent young entrepreneurs. This research uses a qualitative approach method. Data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews with students participating in the Wirausaha Merdeka program at UGM. The results showed that this program has successfully developed various entrepreneurial skills of students, such as managerial, marketing, financial, leadership, and communication skills. Through a series of training, mentoring, and hands-on practice in building a business, students can apply the knowledge gained in real terms. The positive impact of this program can be seen from the increase in students' interest and motivation for entrepreneurship, as well as the emergence of new innovative business ideas. However, there are also challenges such as lack of initial capital and difficulties in reaching a wider market. This research contributes to providing insight into the role of the Wirausaha Merdeka program in developing students' entrepreneurial skills and provides recommendations for future program improvements.

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has a very important role for students, not only in the context of creating jobs but also developing skills and mindsets that are useful in various aspects of life. First, entrepreneurship helps students to become more financially independent. By starting their own business, students can generate additional income in addition to scholarships or other financial aid. This provides economic freedom and reduces dependence on parents or loans (Rae, 2007). Secondly, entrepreneurship teaches students to develop important skills such as leadership, decision-making, risk management, and interpersonal skills. In the process of building and running a business, students must learn to manage time, make strategic decisions, communicate effectively with customers and business partners, and deal with challenges and uncertainties (Kuratko, 2016).

Third, entrepreneurship encourages students to think creatively and innovatively. Creating a unique and valuable product or service requires the ability to identify opportunities, understand market needs and develop innovative solutions. This process helps students hone their critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Bygrave & Zacharakis, 2011). Fourth, entrepreneurship provides a real and practical learning experience. Through entrepreneurship, students can apply the knowledge gained in class to actual business practices. This helps students understand real-world challenges and develop the skills needed to succeed in their future careers (Baumol, 2010). Finally, entrepreneurship can be an attractive career choice for students. By starting their own business, students have the opportunity to create new jobs, not only for themselves but also for others. Entrepreneurship also provides the freedom to determine working hours, work environment, and business direction according to each individual's interests and passions (Rae, 2007). Thus, entrepreneurship provides significant benefits for students in developing skills, mindset, and career opportunities.

The Wirausaha Merdeka program is a government initiative that aims to encourage entrepreneurship among university students and create resilient and financially independent young entrepreneurs. The program has a significant role

in developing various entrepreneurial skills that are needed for students to start and run their own businesses. One of the main roles of the Wirausaha Merdeka program is to provide comprehensive training and mentoring related to managerial skills. Through this program, students are equipped with knowledge on business planning, operational management, human resource management, and business strategy. They are also taught how to manage finances, prepare budgets, and analyze financial reports (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, 2022).

In addition, the Merdeka Entrepreneur program also helps develop marketing skills that are vital to the success of a business. Students are trained to understand consumer behavior, identify target markets, develop effective marketing strategies, and utilize digital technology and social media to promote their products or services (Kuratko, 2016). Leadership skills are also a focus in this program. Students are encouraged to develop the ability to lead teams, motivate employees, and make the right decisions in challenging situations. They are also trained to communicate effectively, both with internal teams and with business partners, customers, and other stakeholders (Rae, 2007). Through the Merdeka Entrepreneur program, students also gain hands-on experience in building and running a business. They are guided in developing business ideas, developing business plans, finding funding sources, launching products or services, and managing daily operations. This experience provides valuable learning and prepares students to face the real-world challenges of entrepreneurship (Bygrave & Zacharakis, 2011). In addition, the Wirausaha Merdeka program also provides a network of mentors and successful entrepreneurs who can provide guidance, advice, and new perspectives for students. These connections can help students develop broader business insights, build professional relationships, and gain moral support and motivation to continue to grow (Baumol, 2010).

This research aims to analyze the role of the Wirausaha Merdeka program in developing student entrepreneurship skills at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in 2023. More specifically, this research has the following objectives: *Pertama*,

Identifying the main entrepreneurial skills developed through the Merdeka Entrepreneur program at UGM. These skills can include managerial, marketing, financial, leadership, communication, and other skills relevant to building and running a business (Kuratko, 2016). *Kedua*, evaluate the effectiveness of learning methods and approaches used in the Merdeka Entrepreneurship program at UGM. This includes analysis of the training curriculum, mentor assistance, hands-on practice, and other supporting facilities provided by the program (Rae, 2007).

Ketiga, identifying supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the Independent Entrepreneurship program at UGM. These factors can include internal aspects such as student motivation and readiness, as well as external aspects such as infrastructure support, access to capital, and supporting policies (Baumol, 2010). *Keempat*, analyzing the impact of the Merdeka Entrepreneurship program on student interest and motivation for entrepreneurship. This research will investigate whether this program is successful in increasing students' desire to start their own business and become successful entrepreneurs (Bygrave & Zacharakis, 2011). *Kelima*, evaluate the contribution of the Wirausaha Merdeka program in generating new and innovative business ideas among UGM students. The research will explore the extent to which this program is able to encourage creativity and innovation in developing valuable new products or services (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

Keenam, exploring the perceptions and experiences of students involved in the Independent Entrepreneurship program at UGM. This will provide in-depth insight into the challenges, opportunities, and benefits felt by students while participating in the program (Rae, 2007). *Ketujuh*, provide recommendations for the improvement and development of the Merdeka Entrepreneurship program at UGM in the future. These recommendations will be based on research findings and input from students, mentors, and other relevant parties involved in the program (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022).

METHOD

This research focuses on analyzing the development of student entrepreneurship skills through the Independent Entrepreneurship program at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in 2023. This research will be conducted at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), specifically involving students who participate in the Independent Entrepreneurship program in 2023. UGM was chosen as the research location because it is one of the leading universities in Indonesia that is active in implementing entrepreneurship programs for its students. For data collection, researchers used the observation method which was carried out directly to see the UGM student MSME program. As for interviews, the researcher conducted them to students participating in the independent entrepreneurship program at UGM. The interviews will focus on uncovering their experiences in developing entrepreneurial skills, challenges faced, benefits gained, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the program. In addition, for the documentation method by collecting and studying documents such as guidelines for implementing the Independent Entrepreneur program, activity reports, business plans submitted by students, and other relevant documents. As for data analysis, this research uses the concept of Miles and Habermes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Merdeka Entrepreneur Program

Program Wirausaha Merdeka is a national program initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) to encourage entrepreneurship among students. The program aims to help students develop entrepreneurial skills, facilitate the establishment of new businesses, and create financially independent young entrepreneurs. The Wirausaha Merdeka program has several main components, including:

a. Entrepreneurship Training

Students participating in this program will receive comprehensive entrepreneurship training, covering topics such as business idea development, business plan development, financial management, marketing,

leadership, and other relevant skills (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, 2022).

b. Mentor Assistance

Each student or business team will be accompanied by a mentor who is experienced in the field of entrepreneurship. These mentors are tasked with providing guidance, advice, and support to students in developing and running their businesses (Rae, 2007).

c. Business Development

The Merdeka Entrepreneurship Program provides facilities and support for students to start and develop their businesses. This can include access to start-up capital, business networks, and business incubation (Kuratko, 2016).

d. Business Competition

To motivate students and hone their entrepreneurial skills, the program also organizes business competitions at the regional and national levels. Participating students have the opportunity to present their business ideas and compete for prizes and business support (Bygrave & Zacharakis, 2011).

e. Entrepreneurial Network

The Merdeka Entrepreneurship Program facilitates the establishment of entrepreneurial networks among students, both at the local and national levels. This network allows students to share experiences, collaborate, and support each other in building their businesses (Rae, 2007).

Through these components, the Wirausaha Merdeka program is expected to provide solid provisions for students to start and run a successful business. In addition, this program also aims to create a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem in the university environment. Since its launch in 2020, the Wirausaha Merdeka program has involved more than 2,000 students from various universities across Indonesia. Some of the successes of this program include the emergence of new and innovative business ideas, the establishment of new businesses run by students, and increased student interest and motivation for entrepreneurship (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and

Technology, 2022). Although still relatively new, the Wirausaha Merdeka program has shown great potential in encouraging entrepreneurship among students and creating resilient and financially independent young entrepreneurs.

Portrait of Independent Entrepreneur Program at Universitas Gadjah Mada

The Merdeka Entrepreneurship Program implemented at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in 2023 has a significant impact in developing students' entrepreneurial skills. Through a series of structured activities, this program provides a comprehensive learning experience for students to prepare themselves to become successful entrepreneurs. One of the main impacts of this program is the improvement of students' managerial skills. Through training and mentoring, students are taught how to manage resources effectively, make careful business plans, and make the right decisions in the face of dynamic situations. These managerial skills are essential for entrepreneurs to run business operations efficiently and sustainably (Kuratko, 2016).

In addition, this program also has a positive impact on the development of students' marketing skills. They are taught effective marketing strategies, from identifying target markets, establishing product or service positioning, to applying appropriate promotional techniques. These marketing skills enable students to build brand awareness and reach a wider range of customers (Bygrave & Zacharakis, 2011). Another important aspect developed in this program is financial skills. Students are equipped with knowledge about business financial management, bookkeeping, financial analysis, and funding strategies. These skills help students make the right financial decisions, optimize the use of financial resources, and ensure business sustainability (Baumol, 2010).

In addition to technical skills, the Merdeka Entrepreneur program also focuses on developing students' leadership and communication skills. Leadership skills help students lead teams, motivate members, and make wise decisions. Meanwhile, communication skills enable students to effectively convey business ideas, build networks, and negotiate with business partners (Rae,

2007). Another visible impact of this program is the increase in students' interest and motivation for entrepreneurship. Through hands-on experience in building a business, students can experience the challenges and satisfaction of being an entrepreneur. This encourages them to continue developing innovative and sustainable business ideas.

The implementation of the Wirausaha Merdeka program at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in 2023 cannot be separated from various challenges and opportunities that need to be considered. Identifying these challenges and opportunities is important to ensure the success of the program and provide recommendations for future improvements. One of the main challenges faced is the issue of funding. Many students experience difficulties in obtaining seed capital to start their businesses. Limited financial resources can hinder the development of potential business ideas (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, 2022). Therefore, there is a need for broader and more accessible funding schemes for students, such as grant programs or soft loans with affordable terms.

Another challenge faced is the lack of experience and business networks that students have. As budding entrepreneurs, they often face difficulties in building relationships with suppliers, business partners or potential customers. This can be an obstacle in effectively marketing their products or services (Kuratko, 2016). The Merdeka Entrepreneurship Program needs to facilitate students to develop networking skills and build relationships with more experienced business people. On the other hand, this program also has great opportunities to grow and have a positive impact on students and the surrounding environment. One of the main opportunities is the potential to encourage innovation and develop creative business ideas. With the right support and guidance, students can explore innovative solutions to real problems in society (Rae, 2007). This not only provides economic benefits, but also contributes to sustainable development.

Another opportunity that needs to be taken advantage of is collaboration with various parties, both from the private sector, government, and non-profit

organizations. These strategic partnerships can expand the reach of the program, provide access to wider resources and networks, and increase the resulting social and economic impact (Bygrave & Zacharakis, 2011). Universities can act as facilitators in building these mutually beneficial partnerships. In addition, the Merdeka Entrepreneur program also has the opportunity to contribute to local and regional economic development. By encouraging students to establish businesses in their home regions, the program can create new jobs and boost economic growth in these areas. This is in line with the government's efforts to promote equitable economic development across Indonesia (Baumol, 2010).

Outcome Analysis Of Student Entrepreneurship Program At UGM

Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) is one of the leading universities in Indonesia that is committed to supporting and developing entrepreneurship among its students. One of UGM's real efforts in realizing this commitment is by implementing the Independent Entrepreneurship program initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek). The Independent Entrepreneurship Program at UGM is implemented by the Directorate of Student Affairs which is tasked with designing, coordinating, and managing entrepreneurship programs for students, including the Independent Entrepreneurship program (Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2022). In its implementation, the Independent Entrepreneurship program at UGM includes several main components, such as:

a) Entrepreneurship Training

Students participating in this program will receive comprehensive entrepreneurship training, covering topics such as business idea development, business plan development, financial management, marketing, leadership, and other relevant skills. The training aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to start and run a business.

b) Mentor Assistance

Each student or business team will be accompanied by a mentor who is experienced in the field of entrepreneurship. These mentors are tasked with

providing guidance, advice and support to students in developing and running their businesses. This mentor assistance aims to ensure students get the right direction and can overcome the challenges faced during the process of building a business.

c) Business Incubation

UGM provides business incubation facilities for students involved in the Wirausaha Merdeka program. This business incubation provides support such as access to start-up capital, business networks, and other resources needed to start a new venture.

d) Business Competition

To motivate students and hone their entrepreneurial skills, UGM also organizes an annual business competition where students participating in the Wirausaha Merdeka program can present their business ideas and compete for prizes and business support.

Since its launch, the Wirausaha Merdeka program at UGM has attracted many students from various faculties and study programs. Some of the successes achieved include the emergence of new and innovative business ideas, the formation of new businesses run by students, and increased student interest and motivation for entrepreneurship (Putra & Sari, 2023). Although there are still challenges such as limited resources and access to capital, the Wirausaha Merdeka program at UGM continues to grow and strives to create a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem on campus. With support from the university and other stakeholders, this program is expected to continue to encourage the growth of young entrepreneurs who are resilient and financially independent.



Gambar 1. *Opening Ceremony*



Gambar 2. *Outbound Pre-Immersion*



Gambar 3. *Market Visit Immersion*



Gambar 4. *Post-Immersion*

The Merdeka Entrepreneurship Program at UGM is designed to develop various entrepreneurial skills that are important for students in starting and running their businesses. Some of the main skills that are the focus of development in this program include:

a. Managerial Skills

One of the important skills emphasized in the Independent Entrepreneurship program at UGM is managerial skills. Students are equipped with knowledge and skills in business planning, operational management, human resource management, and business strategy. They are taught how to develop a solid business plan, allocate resources effectively, build a solid team, and monitor and evaluate business performance (Kuratko, 2016).

b. Marketing Skills

Marketing skills are also a major focus in this program. Students are trained to understand consumer behavior, identify target markets, develop effective marketing strategies, and utilize digital technology and social media to promote their products or services. Mastery of these marketing skills is crucial to ensure the success of a business in reaching and attracting customers (Bygrave & Zacharakis, 2011).

c. Financial Skills

Good financial management is key to the success of a business. Therefore, the Merdeka Entrepreneur program at UGM emphasizes the development of students' financial skills. They are taught how to manage cash flow, prepare budgets, analyze financial statements, and access appropriate funding sources to start and grow their businesses (Rae, 2007).

d. Leadership Skills

Leadership skills are also a concern in this program. Students are encouraged to develop the ability to lead teams, motivate employees, and make the right decisions in challenging situations. They are trained to communicate effectively, both with internal teams and with business partners, customers and other stakeholders (Kuratko, 2016).

e. Creative and Innovative Thinking Skills

In the dynamic world of entrepreneurship, creative and innovative thinking skills are essential to identify new business opportunities and develop unique solutions. The Merdeka Entrepreneurship Program at UGM encourages students to hone their ability to generate new ideas, think outside the box, and create innovative products or services (Bygrave & Zacharakis, 2011).

Through a series of training, mentor assistance, hands-on practice, and other activities, the Wirausaha Merdeka program at UGM seeks to develop these entrepreneurial skills comprehensively. This skill development not only aims to prepare students to start their own business, but also to increase competitiveness and adaptability in the dynamic world of work.

CONCLUSIONS

The Merdeka Entrepreneurship Program implemented at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in 2023 has an important role in developing students' entrepreneurial skills. Through a comprehensive approach, this program provides valuable learning experiences for students to prepare themselves to become successful entrepreneurs. This research reveals that the Wirausaha Merdeka program has successfully developed various entrepreneurial skills of students, such as managerial, marketing, financial, leadership, and communication skills. Through a series of training, mentoring, and hands-on practice in building a business, students can apply the knowledge gained in real terms. The positive impact of this program can be seen from the increase in students' interest and motivation for entrepreneurship, as well as the emergence of new innovative business ideas.

One of the keys to the success of this program is the holistic approach in developing entrepreneurial skills. In addition to technical skills such as managerial, marketing, and finance, the program also focuses on developing leadership and communication skills that are critical for entrepreneurs (Kuratko, 2016). This combination of skills enables students to build sustainable businesses that are able to compete in a dynamic market. Nevertheless, there are several challenges that need to be overcome in the implementation of the Wirausaha Merdeka program. Funding issues and lack of experience and business networks are obstacles for students in starting and developing their businesses. Therefore, a broader and more accessible funding scheme is needed, as well as improving students' networking skills (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, 2022).

On the other hand, this program also has a great opportunity to grow and have a positive impact on students and the surrounding environment. The potential to encourage innovation and develop creative business ideas is one of the advantages of this program. In addition, collaboration with various parties and contributions to local and regional economic development are also opportunities that need to be utilized (Bygrave & Zacharakis, 2011). Overall, the Wirausaha Merdeka program at UGM in 2023 has made a significant contribution in developing student entrepreneurship skills. By continuing to consider the challenges and opportunities that exist, this program has the potential to produce young entrepreneurs who are resilient and able to have a positive impact on Indonesia's economic growth (Rae, 2007; Baumol, 2010).

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