

THE ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT LEARNING PROGRAM ON CAMPUS IN SHAPING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM IN UNIVERSITIES

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Article Info

Article History:

Received 2 Okt, 2023

Accepted 15 Nov, 2023

Keywords:

Entrepreneurship,
Entrepreneurship
Ecosystem,
Entrepreneurship
MBKM

ABSTRACT

In 2020, the Indonesian minister of education, Nadiem Makarim, launched the MBKM (Merdeka Learn Campus Merdeka) program to prepare higher education graduates demanding to face change. Through the MBKM Program, students have the opportunity for one semester or the equivalent of twenty credits to study outside the study program at the same University and a maximum of two semesters or the equivalent of forty credits of studying in the same study program at different universities, looking in various study programs at multiple universities, and learning outside the university. To give birth to prospective entrepreneurs, universities must create a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem for students (Mack & Mayer, 2016). The role of each component in the ecosystem, such as faculty, according to Hayter (2016), is needed in adding to the social network of prospective entrepreneurs. Autio et al. (2014) revealed that policymakers are a more dominant factor in creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Mueller and Toutain (2015) explain that schools are the right environment to foster cultural creativity, self-confidence, and development freedom. Various internal and external elements must be involved in forming an entrepreneurial ecosystem in higher education. This research is an early stage of research to identify multiple inputs owned by universities in shaping their entrepreneurial ecosystem through the MBKM Entrepreneurship program. The method used in this study is a qualitative method using a participatory action research (PAR) approach. The research results are expected to help universities map the factors that can support the formation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem through the MBKM program carried out by universities.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the Indonesian Minister of Education, Nadiem Makarim, launched the MBKM (Merdeka Learning Independent Campus) program to prepare higher education graduates demanding to face change. Through the MBKM Program, students have the opportunity for one semester or the equivalent of twenty credits to study outside the study program at the same university and a maximum of two semesters or the equivalent of forty credits of studying in the same study program at different universities, looking in different study programs at other universities; and learning outside the university.

The MBKM program is also in line with the government's program for establishing an entrepreneurial ecosystem. The government is currently focusing on how education, significantly higher education, has a strategy that can create students who have the ability in the form of knowledge, skills, and attitudes and can apply digital technologies such as AI, IoT, DATA, IM, and VM. One of the efforts that can be made to improve this ability is to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the campus environment. Entrepreneurship is an alternative strategy that can be used to reduce the number of unemployed in a country. A study says that if a government wants to progress economically, it must have at least 14% of entrepreneurs from the total population. Based on existing data, Indonesia currently only has 3.1% entrepreneurs, so universities are one of the institutions that have a significant role in giving birth to new entrepreneurs. The role of universities as centers of knowledge growth are considered to be able to make a very high contribution to developing various strategies that can encourage new entrepreneurs in Indonesia.

To produce prospective entrepreneurs, universities must create a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem for students (Mack & Mayer, 2016). The role of each component in the ecosystem, such as faculty, according to Hayter (2016), is needed in adding to the social network of prospective entrepreneurs. Autio et al. (2014) revealed that policymakers are a more dominant factor in creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem. More comprehensively (Mueller & Toutain, 2015) explains that schools are the right environment to foster cultural creativity, self-confidence, and development freedom. Various elements, both internal and external, need to be involved in forming an entrepreneurial ecosystem in higher education. This research is an early stage of research to identify various inputs owned by universities in shaping their entrepreneurial ecosystem through the Merdeka Learning Campus Merdeka (MBKM) program. The results of this study are expected to be used by stakeholders at Atma Jaya Unika to develop learning programs that can support the formation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

The business ecosystem generates a competitive advantage for each partner in the ecosystem (Clarysse *et al.*, 2014). Cooperation and productive relationships between different organizations are the defining characteristics of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. In many countries, these relationships exist between startups, large corporations, universities, and research institutes. In dynamic ecosystems, people and ideas flow between these organizations, starting new ventures, joining existing companies, and linking innovations together (Auerswald, 2015).

The entrepreneurial ecosystem shows an interconnected community of various components that support each other in giving birth to new entrepreneurs. New

entrepreneurs can emerge and develop not only because individuals (entrepreneurs) are heroic, talented, and visionary. New businesses also emerge because they are in an environment or "ecosystem" that allows them to be accessible and supportive in starting a business. According to (Spiegel, 2005), studies that focus on the role of ecosystems in entrepreneurship are similar to studies based on industrial cluster theory. These studies show that companies in industrial clusters will benefit from a network of various companies that work together and compete in one supply chain. Industry clusters will benefit from knowledge turnover. On the other hand, the entrepreneurial ecosystem allows the sharing of knowledge, technology, and innovation, as well as business networks, from one institution to another. Spiegel (2005) identified three main components in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, namely cultural, social, and material. Isenberg, 2010-2011 explains that the entrepreneurial ecosystem consists of a set of individual elements (such as leadership, culture, human capital, markets, and others), which are combined in a complex way. This can be understood as a service network, where entrepreneurship is the focus of action and a measure of success.

The entrepreneurial ecosystem is an adequate framework for studying the interdependence and relationships between various actors interacting in a complex economic system, such as individuals, organizations, entities, local, regional, and national institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders in a regional context (Cohen, 2006) (Nambisan & Baron, 2013; Morris *et al.*, 2015; Neumeyer & Santo, 2018; Purbasari *et al.*, 2020). The hallmark of any entrepreneurial ecosystem is the symbiotic relationship between different stakeholders (Xavier *et al.*, 2013; Neumeyer & Corbett, 2017; Purbasari *et al.*, 2019). The results of several empirical studies conducted by (Fritsch & Michael, 2012 Purbasari *et al.*, 2019) show how an excellent entrepreneurial ecosystem enables the creation of quality entrepreneurship and competitive value creation at the regional level.

Entrepreneur University

Entrepreneur University is a university that has an entrepreneurial spirit (entrepreneurship) with which the university is moving to become independent and autonomous, not dependent on government subsidies (Transformation, 2003). Entrepreneurship implies a profit-oriented activity carried out by the campus without losing its function as an educational institution. The concept of an entrepreneur university arises due to an imbalance between high public demand (demands over-load) for universities and the university's limited responsiveness. Demands overload is the character of the modern university. Institutional (university) responses are needed in developing capacity and demand forms. For that, we need an approach to organizational components, high confidence in universities, and entrepreneurship (entrepreneurs). Clark offers three critical elements in the implementation of the EU, namely strengthening the core management of institutions, increasing the role of peripheral institutions, and diversification based on financing. All of this is intended so that universities can improvise optimally in finding sources of funds to finance the implementation of their education. In the context of national education in Indonesia, the entrepreneurial spirit has been initiated several other times with the launch of BBE-LS (Broad Based Education - Life Skills) or broad-based education and life skills (Sumahamijaya, 2003). The BBE-LS itself is in line with the government's policy, as stated in Kep. Minister of National Education No. 232/U/2000 and No. 04 5/U/2 002 regarding CBC-SBM (Competency Based Curriculum - School Based Management) or competency-based curriculum and school-based management (Soewono, 2002).

To go to an Entrepreneurial University and build an entrepreneurial ecosystem, higher education needs to transform its role as an education provider and creator of knowledge. This effort can be done by adding the role of commercialisation of knowledge and contributing to company development. Building links with industry and increasing research needs to be done to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem that can encourage the formation of an entrepreneurial university.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this study is a qualitative method using a participatory action research (PAR) approach, which is often also called action research (AR). This approach is an approach whose process aims to learn to solve problems and meet the community's practical needs. Data were collected using in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation.

The research was conducted at AJCUI, especially at the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB). In-depth interviews were conducted with three heads of study programs in FEB using a question guide compiled by researchers. The results of the interview are used to make a descriptive conclusion. The literature review is also used in this study to strengthen the findings of in-depth interviews conducted by researchers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

AJCUI is a higher education institution with long-run MBKM programs, such as inter-university student exchanges (UAJ students study at other universities or vice versa), internship programs, and cross-study learning programs. Learning courses outside the study program have also been implemented, such as in Pharmacy, which has social entrepreneurship courses as a subject outside the study program, and Engineering, which also has entrepreneurship courses as courses outside the study program. The ethics course is one of the courses managed by the personality development course unit (MPK) AJCUI, and this course is mandatory for all students. This shows that Atma Jaya Unika always opens itself up to students who desire to gain knowledge or new learning outside their chosen study program.

The Faculty of Economics and Business AJCUI is quite active in implementing the MBKM program launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Several activities similar to the MBKM activities that FEB has launched include student exchange activities, which last for one semester. Implementing these activities before the MBKM program has not been recognized as converting twenty-credit courses. The pre-determined credit weighting for internships is three credits, and student exchange is a maximum of nine credits.

Since 2020, the Ministry of Education and Culture has offered eight Independent Campus Independent Learning activities. Universities can hold student exchanges, internships/work practices, teaching assistance in education units, research/research, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities., independent study/project, building a thematic actual work village/campus. This program can be done for one to two semesters, equivalent to twenty to forty credits. Study programs in each faculty at UAJ are given the authority to determine how many semesters the faculty will implement the MBKM program. The findings we got through interviews with three heads of study programs at the Faculty of Economics and Business, each head of the study program agreed to carry out the MBKM program for one semester or the equivalent of twenty credits. The three MBKM programs selected by the study program at the Faculty of Economics and

Business are student exchanges, internships/work practices, and entrepreneurial activities.

One of the MBKM programs chosen by students is entrepreneurial activity, a form of learning that encourages the development of student entrepreneurial interests with appropriate learning activity programs. Atma Jaya Unika chooses to learn entrepreneurial activities to be carried out at business incubator institutions; here, students learn how to start a sustainable and impactful business. The results of previous studies show that Indonesia only has a score of 21% of entrepreneurs from various fields of work or ranked 94th out of 137 countries surveyed (Global et al. (GEI), 2018) and 69.1% of millennials in Indonesia have an interest in entrepreneurship (IDN). Research Institute, 2019), higher education institutions need to consider the importance of entrepreneurial activities to students. The Merdeka Campus entrepreneurial activity program is designed based on the framework of the Merdeka Learning Entrepreneurship Program - Merdeka Campus process. Students are taught how to increase entrepreneurial competence, such as preparing entrepreneurial proposals, carrying out entrepreneurial activities under the guidance of an entrepreneurship supervisor or mentor, and evaluated at the end of the program. This entrepreneurship learning process by Atma Jaya Unika becomes blended learning entrepreneurship that can be converted into an agreed learning credit unit of twenty credits.

Implementing the MBKM program at the Faculty of Economics and Business begins when students receive an announcement from the Institute for Education and Learning Innovation. The first-year MBKM activity by the Faculty of Economics and Business attracted as many as 100 students from internal and external to participate in the MBKM activities offered. From the results of interviews that we have conducted, in its implementation in the first year, there are not many courses that can be converted into twenty credits. Although the converted courses did not reach twenty credits, the students were still enthusiastic about participating in these activities. This is shown through their achievements when participating in MBKM, including in MBKM entrepreneurial activities. Students participate in the incubation process at the incubator institution for approximately six months. At the end of the incubation process, they can present their business ideas. In youth entrepreneurship courses. Implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. A total of 10 student groups who participated in MBKM entrepreneurship activities at the Ministry of Youth and Sports have successfully entered the selection stage to obtain funds. Of the ten groups of students, three groups passed to get funds of ten million rupiahs for each group as initial capital to carry out entrepreneurial activities.

MBKM activities at AJCUI, especially in the Faculty of Economics and Business, further strengthen the formation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem at the University. The interest of students to become independent through their entrepreneurship development is obtained from learning through the MBKM program that they get from the companies where they do internships and incubators as a place where students learn how to start and run a sustainable business. The results of the interviews we conducted with students who took part in these activities showed their enthusiasm for participating in the MBKM activities offered by the study program, and this was because students felt they benefited from these activities. After all, they not only got learning experiences outside of campus, but they could also convert learning credit units so that it helps students accelerate their study period in college.

CONCLUSION

The results of the initial research conducted in the study showed enthusiasm from students to take part in MBKM activities; this was evident from the achievements they made in MBKM activities. The support from the Faculty, especially the study program, really helps them to be able to do external learning optimally and gain a lot of good experiences from this activity. Activities carried out through the MBKM program can have an impact on improving students' knowledge and skills for the better. They feel they could express themselves through the MBKM activities they choose.

The MBKM program also impacts increasing the capacity of lecturers; in this case, lecturers can collaborate directly with graduate users through students who do internships in companies or institutions. Universities also need to mitigate the obstacles that may arise in the process of implementing the MBKM program. This is necessary so that the objectives and benefits of programs carried out by students and universities can be adequately achieved optimally and sustainably.

LIMITATION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research is still a preliminary study, where researchers only take information from several sources who are involved in the implementation of MBKM program activities at AJCUI, especially the Faculty of Economics and Business. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out further research to obtain the results of MBKM activities that have been running in the formation of a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Considering that this MBKM activity has only been carried out for two semesters, further research is still being carried out on students who have graduated from this MBKM activity to measure the sustainability of this program and how the sustainability of the entrepreneurial ecosystem develops.

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