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## Perceptions of non-economics and business primary students toward the mandatory entrepreneurship course: Have the learning outcomes been achieved?

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### Abstract

Entrepreneurship contributes to economic growth, making it a crucial factor in advancing society and the economy in the present era. The significance of innovation and entrepreneurship today underscores the need for the younger generation to comprehend these principles, often facilitated through entrepreneurship courses at the tertiary education level. Consequently, several universities have implemented policies designating entrepreneurship courses as mandatory for all students. This research aims to delve into students' perceptions. Specifically, those not majoring in economics, management, business, or social sciences, regarding entrepreneurship courses and university policies mandating their completion. Employing a qualitative approach based on Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the researcher and five students from the same university discussed the learning outcomes of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course and the university's policy regarding the mandatory nature of this course. The FGD yielded several points related to course outcomes, including students' abilities to understand entrepreneurial concepts and principles, generate ideas for business creation, develop innovative business plans, and the appropriateness of the mandatory nature of studying Innovation and Entrepreneurship for all students, including those outside economic, management, business, or social sciences programs.

Keywords: course learning achievements, entrepreneurship, students' perception

### 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship plays an exceptionally vital role in the contemporary era. In the age of globalization and technological advancement, entrepreneurship is a key pillar in accelerating economic growth through job creation, innovation, and more (Ruslan, 2017; Sri & Ahmad, 2017; Windusancono, 2021). Concerning job creation, entrepreneurs establishing new ventures tend to generate employment opportunities. These entrepreneurs recruit labor to aid in their business operations, reducing unemployment rates within a country. The more job opportunities are created, the more income is generated by workers, contributing to economic growth (Bhegawati et al., 2022; Fajri, 2021; Hull, 2009). Additionally, regarding innovation and enhanced productivity, entrepreneurs often introduce innovations in products, services, or more efficient and effective business models. These innovations boost productivity (Prasetyo et al., 2018; Sakti & Prasetyo, 2018), enhance competitive advantages (Mastarida, 2022; Rahmasari, 2019), and yield more significant profits (Haji et al., 2017; Wiyono et al., 2020). Higher business growth, in turn, can propel overall economic expansion. Therefore, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in advancing society and the economy in the present. Entrepreneurship can create a more sustainable, inclusive, and competitive world by fostering innovation and economic growth.

The importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in the present era underscores the need for the younger generation to understand these disciplines, mainly through entrepreneurship courses in higher education. By engaging in entrepreneurship courses, students can acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to initiate and manage businesses (Siswadi, 2013; Wardhani & Nastiti, 2023; Wiratno, 2012). Students also have the opportunity

to learn about aspects such as business planning, marketing strategies, finance, and leadership (Mursito, 2020; Putri et al., 2021; Wiratno, 2012). These skills are valuable not only for those aspiring to become entrepreneurs but also in their careers and daily lives, as they teach innovation, creativity, and a proactive mindset. Furthermore, through entrepreneurship courses, students can develop the ability to identify business opportunities (Saefuloh, 2020; Wiratno, 2012). They are taught to perceive problems or needs around them as opportunities to create solutions and add value. This understanding helps them think creatively, innovate, and develop businesses that can positively impact society.

The knowledge acquired in entrepreneurship courses can encourage students to become independent (Harianti et al., 2020; Ismiyanti et al., 2021; Wiratno, 2012). They are taught to take initiative, manage their time, take calculated risks, and adapt to changes. In a rapidly changing environment, this independence is crucial for success in both career and life. Additionally, through entrepreneurship course learning, students can develop the ability to identify problems and find innovative solutions (Harianti & Margaretha, 2015). Students are trained to think critically, face challenges, and seek new ways to solve problems. These skills are valuable in various life contexts, whether in business, education, technology, or other fields. Thus, entrepreneurship course learning can provide broad benefits, ranging from developing relevant skills and knowledge to identifying opportunities, innovating, and making positive contributions to society and the economy. This prepares them to face future challenges and create positive change in a continually evolving world.

Based on the exposition regarding the importance of learning entrepreneurship courses, this course has become one of the mandatory subjects for students in higher education, including those who are not from economics, management, or business majors. This aligns with the policies of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology through the Merdeka Campus policy, which aims to increase students' entrepreneurial interest through appropriate learning activities, including entrepreneurship course learning (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020). Learning outcomes from entrepreneurship courses are related to students' abilities to understand the concepts and principles of entrepreneurship, generate ideas for creating business innovations, and develop skills in executing, designing, and formulating innovative business plans (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020; Harianti et al., 2020; Hongdiyanto, 2014). These achievements are hoped to create a young generation capable of playing a role in the country's economic growth through entrepreneurship. However, it is essential to understand how students, particularly those not from economics, management, or business programs, perceive entrepreneurship course learning and the extent to which achievements can be reached through this course. This is crucial because these students are studying a field different from their major in their study programs.

Research related to students' perceptions of entrepreneurship courses has been conducted by several researchers, including Mursito (2020), Faulina et al. (2021), and Rosmiati & Hutabarat (2021). However, the data on students' perceptions in those studies were obtained and presented quantitatively, leaving the in-depth understanding of students' true perceptions of entrepreneurship courses and the extent of achievements in entrepreneurship course learning undisclosed. Moreover, the respondents in those studies were students from the economics education program and the faculty of social sciences education. This implies that the respondents were students from the social sciences discipline with an affinity to economics. Therefore, there is a need for research capable of providing an in-depth understanding of students' perceptions, particularly those not from economics, management, business programs, or the social sciences discipline, regarding entrepreneurship course learning.

Based on that, this research aims to describe students' perceptions regarding entrepreneurship course learning, particularly those not from economics, management, business programs, or the social sciences discipline. The results of this research are expected to provide information for instructors of entrepreneurship courses to evaluate the teaching of this course. Additionally, the findings of this research are also likely to offer insights for universities that have policies designating entrepreneurship courses as mandatory or elective to evaluate such policies.

## 2. Method

This research employs a qualitative approach based on focus group discussion (FGD) intended to uncover and describe the perceptions of students, particularly those not from economics, management, business programs, or the social sciences discipline, regarding entrepreneurship course learning and the policy designating entrepreneurship courses as mandatory for all students. Data for this research were obtained from recorded FGD sessions between the researchers and the research subjects, consisting of five students. Two of them are from the geophysical engineering program (Informants 1 and 2), one from the mechanical engineering program (Informant 3), one from the electrical engineering program (Informant 4), and one from the computer science program (Informant 5). These five students are from the same academic year and have completed the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course in the fourth semester at a private university with the policy of making the system mandatory. The research subjects were selected based on their ability to express opinions to facilitate an effective FGD. The FGD was conducted online for 80 minutes with the assistance of the Zoom Meeting application.

The FGD was conducted based on the semester lesson plan (RPS), particularly focusing on the learning outcomes of the course. This course, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, was utilized in the academic year 2023/2024, where all five research subjects undertook the learning. The learning outcomes of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course specified in the RPS were as follows: 1) students are able to understand the concepts and principles of entrepreneurship; 2) students are able to generate ideas for creating business innovations; and 3) students are able to execute, design, and formulate innovative business plans. Given this, the discussion topics in the FGD included students' abilities to comprehend the concepts and principles of entrepreneurship, their capacity to generate ideas for creating business innovations, and their proficiency in executing, designing, and formulating innovative business plans. Additionally, the discussion topics were related to the students' opinions regarding the university's policy of mandating the study of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course.

The data analysis in this research was conducted through eight stages: 1) transcription, 2) coding, 3) categorization and grouping, 4) development of the analysis framework, 5) thematic analysis, 6) identification of patterns and relationships, 7) validation, and 8) formulation of findings. The initial stage of this research involved careful transcription of the FGD recordings to obtain accurate and complete textual documentation. Subsequently, the collected data were organized through the coding process, where main themes emerging from the FGD participants' interactions were identified and assigned codes. These codes were then organized into broader categories, forming the analysis framework as the interpretative foundation. Thematic analysis was conducted to delve into the underlying meaning of each theme while identifying patterns and relationships that emerged among them. This process was carried out to immerse the findings in the context and relevance to the research questions. The validity of the analysis was enhanced through third-party participation in the verification stage, involving a researcher who did not participate in the FGD. The main findings were systematically presented, referring back to the transcription. Conclusions and in-depth interpretations were provided to elucidate the

implications of the findings on relevant literature, making a significant contribution to understanding the concepts and phenomena under investigation.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The FGD conducted between the researcher and the research subjects discussed several topics related to students' perceptions of the learning outcomes of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course outlined in the RPS. Additionally, the discussion covered students' perspectives on the university policy that designates the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course as a mandatory subject. These topics included students' abilities to comprehend the concepts and principles of entrepreneurship, generate ideas for creating business innovations, execute, design, and formulate innovative business plans, and the obligation to study the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course. The results and findings from each of these topics are presented as follows.

#### **Students' Ability to Understand the Concepts and Principles of Entrepreneurship**

The first point of the learning outcomes of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course (CPMK-1) is that students can understand the concepts and principles of entrepreneurship. In this topic, the researcher and the five informants discussed the extent to which students understand the concepts and principles of entrepreneurship after completing the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course. All informants expressed that the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course provided them with knowledge about the ideas and principles of entrepreneurship. This was reinforced by how informants explained what is needed in planning a business. One informant could articulate why a business plan may be implemented differently than planned, connecting it to the entrepreneurship knowledge acquired from the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course. Thus, based on the FGD results, it can be concluded that students can understand the concepts and principles of entrepreneurship through learning in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course. This indicates that CPMK-1 has been fulfilled.

#### **Students' Ability to Generate Ideas for Creating Business Innovations**

The second point of the learning outcomes of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course (CPMK-2) is that students can generate ideas for creating business innovations. In this topic, the researcher and the five informants discussed the extent to which students can generate ideas for creating business innovations. All informants expressed that the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course enabled them to have the ability to generate ideas for creating business innovations. This was reinforced by how all informants narrated their ideas for creating a business. Two informants mentioned that the ideas they presented in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course assignments would be implemented if they had sufficient capital. Therefore, based on the FGD results, it can be concluded that students can generate ideas for creating business innovations through learning in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course. This indicates that CPMK-2 has been fulfilled.

#### **Students' Ability to Execute, Design, and Formulate Innovative Business Plans**

The third point of the learning outcomes of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course (CPMK-3) is that students can execute, design, and formulate innovative business plans. In this topic, the researcher and the five informants discussed the extent to which students can execute, design, and develop creative business plans. All informants expressed that the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course allowed them to execute, design, and formulate innovative business plans. This was conveyed by all informants in how they performed, designed, and formulated business plans through the completion of related assignments. All informants mentioned that in completing business plan design tasks, the instructor always provided students with opportunities to present the progress of their work and gave feedback on what they had done. This enabled them to have the ability to execute, design, and formulate innovative business

plans. Therefore, based on the FGD results, it can be concluded that students can execute, strategize, and develop innovative business plans through learning in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course. Therefore, based on the FGD results, it can be concluded that students can execute, design, and formulate innovative business plans through learning in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course. This indicates that CPMK-3 has been fulfilled.

#### **Obligation to Take Courses in Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

In this topic, students shared their views on the university policy regarding the obligation to study the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course. All informants expressed that this policy is appropriate as it benefits all students, including those not from economics, management, business programs, or the social sciences discipline. One informant conveyed that the knowledge gained from learning the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course is highly beneficial for them, as they have aspirations to build a business, which is fundamentally their passion, even though they are studying a major not originating from economics, management, business programs, or the social sciences discipline. Another informant also mentioned that the entrepreneurship knowledge acquired from the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course can serve as a foundation for designing a business related to the field, they are studying in the computer science department. Therefore, the policy that all students should take the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course is appropriate because it benefits students directly and indirectly. This could be a consideration for other universities to adopt a similar policy, namely the requirement for all students to study courses related to entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, this, of course, considers the characteristics of the institution and the students.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the presentation of results and discussion, it can be concluded that the learning outcomes of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course are fulfilled. Students have the ability to understand the concepts and principles of entrepreneurship, generate ideas for creating business innovations, and possess the skills to execute, design, and formulate innovative business plans. Furthermore, the university policy that mandates studying the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course is deemed appropriate as it provides benefits for all students, including those not from economics, management, business programs, or the social sciences discipline.

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