

Exploring the Students' Perceptions of Entrepreneurship Courses at Indonesian Higher Education

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education serves as an essential foundation within the mission of entrepreneurial universities. It plays a pivotal role in shaping students' mindsets and competencies. Achieving this objective also requires effective entrepreneurship teaching and curriculum design to align with the main goals of its implementation. The present study seeks to explore the overall students' perceptions on the entrepreneurship courses. This is important to evaluate the course curriculum, delivery and other considerations to effectively facilitate students' competencies, motivation and mindset to pursue entrepreneurship. Quantitative approach using survey method was employed to a small sample of 35 students (m=9, f=26) of undergraduate program of Management at Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia. The findings from the quantitative descriptive analysis reveal positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship courses, with students acknowledging their effectiveness in enhancing knowledge, fostering creativity and innovation, and increasing motivation towards entrepreneurship. This study recommends that entrepreneurship educators, instructional designers, and faculty members should carefully consider the selection of learning materials, teaching methods, and evaluation tasks. Additionally, facilitating or encouraging students to engage in extracurricular activities and providing counseling services are essential steps to involve students in practical, real-life entrepreneurial scenarios.

Keywords: entrepreneurial education; entrepreneurship course; students' perceptions; higher education

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Introduction

Entrepreneurship education has widely been recognized as a vital component in entrepreneurial university development (Maritz et al., 2022), which is in accordance with the university's mission to foster students' entrepreneurial culture, mindsets, intention and competencies (Rodrigues, 2023). This mission serves as a support in addressing today's societal and economic issues. Hence, higher education plays a crucial role in equipping students and future graduates to contribute meaningfully to society by fostering creativity, innovation, and self-initiative.

The role of entrepreneurship education is not only aimed at developing students' personal skills, but also in the long run it contributes to societal and economic growth. As universities embrace their role as drivers of entrepreneurship and innovation, understanding student perceptions of entrepreneurship courses becomes increasingly important for curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and program evaluation. In this regard, entrepreneurship courses should not only serve as an additional offering in the higher education curriculum, particularly as a complementary course in disciplines other than entrepreneurship and business. In other words, their instruction should be grounded in an awareness of the course's role in fostering critical thinking, creativity, and innovation among students to provide value to society. This is also closely related with the impact of entrepreneurship on innovation and value creation (Banha et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, entrepreneurship course has been introduced in higher education as a compulsory subject in most majors. This is also in line with the Government's awareness and

mission to cultivate a greater number of entrepreneurs in Indonesia, especially among the youth. In addition, having entrepreneurial mindsets and competencies are beneficial for their personal development and future career. However, Indonesia is relatively new to incorporating entrepreneurship courses into its higher education institutions, and previous studies has pointed out the ineffectiveness or poor quality of its instruction (Amalia & von Korfflesch, 2021). In addition, there remains a lack of studies evaluating students' perception on the entrepreneurship courses in Indonesian higher education.

The present study seeks to explore the overall students' perceptions on the entrepreneurship course. This is important to evaluate the course curriculum, delivery and other considerations to effectively facilitate students' competencies, motivation and mindset to pursue entrepreneurship. This study is expected to provide overall view on the current entrepreneurship course at higher education, particularly to re-evaluate the curriculum, teaching method, and involve the students in activities that develop their entrepreneurial mindsets and competences.

Method

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach using a survey method. The online survey was developed using Google Forms and distributed through the WhatsApp group of a fourth-year E-Business classroom at the Department of Management, Faculty of Economics, Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia. The participant group consisted of 35 students who were enrolled in three different classes with various lecturers during their Entrepreneurship course in the previous year.

Before completing the survey, participants provided voluntary consent by agreeing to a consent form. They were also requested to reflect on their experiences in taking the Entrepreneurship course. The survey comprised three sections: demographic questions, four multiple-choice questions, and six 4-point Likert scale items. The Likert scale items were designed with response options of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Agree), and 4 (Strongly Agree). The use of a 4-point Likert scale, also known as an even Likert scale, aimed to accommodate potential undecided responses from participants (George, 2024).

Table 1
Profile of participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender Male	9	25.7	25.7
Female	26	74.3	100.0
Total	35	100.0	

Results and Discussion

1. Participants

The study sample consisted of 35 students enrolled in the third year of the undergraduate management program, comprising 9 males and 26 females. While all students were together in the same classroom during their seventh semester, it's noteworthy that they were distributed across different classrooms when undertaking the entrepreneurship course in their fifth semester. Additionally, the data revealed that 16 students (45.7%) had previous entrepreneurship experience, whereas only 6 students (17.1%) were currently engaged in entrepreneurship activities during their studies.

Table 2
Entrepreneurship experience

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Past experience as an entrepreneur	Yes	16	45.7	45.7
	No	19	54.3	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	
Currently an entrepreneur	Yes	6	17.1	17.1
	No	29	82.9	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	

2. Student’s perception of Entrepreneurship Course

This section investigates the participants’ perceptions based on their experience taking the courses in the previous year using the Likert scale. The set of items in this section is to explore their perceptions based on the course delivery and to what extent the courses affects their entrepreneurial competences and motivation, including creativity and innovation.

Based on the data illustrated in table 2, it reveals that students mostly rated the delivery of the entrepreneurship course highly, with a mean score of 3.46 out of 4. This indicates that the majority of students perceived the course delivery as effective and satisfactory. In addition, Students reported that the course significantly enhanced their knowledge and skills relevant to their major, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.66 out of 4. This suggests that the course content was perceived as valuable and beneficial to their academic development.

The entrepreneurship course was perceived to provide practical knowledge conducive to fostering creativity and innovation in real-world business settings, with a mean score of 3.80 out of 4. This highlights the perceived relevance and applicability of the course content to entrepreneurial endeavors. This finding aligns with a previous study by Rodrigues (Rodrigues, 2023), which also observed a positive impact of entrepreneurship courses on students’ creativity and innovation

Overall, the relatively low standard deviations across most items indicate a high level of agreement among students in their perceptions of the entrepreneurship course. This suggests a consistent and positive overall evaluation of the course content, delivery, and outcomes among the student population.

In light of this result, it is also important to acknowledge that extracurricular activities and university supports to encourage and develop students’ entrepreneurial competences. In this context, previous study (Kusio & Fiore, 2020) found that some activities, such as internships, company visits, and other activities that could generate business ideas can strongly influence students’ entrepreneurial motivation and skills.

Regarding the course content, it is found that on average, 28.6% of the participants (N=10) perceived that the entrepreneurship course was entirely theoretical. Meanwhile 71.4% (N=25) of the participants said that it was combination of theory and practice. This means that combining theory and practice in the course is expected to not only boost their theoretical knowledge, but also motivate them in initiating their venture (Machmud et al., 2022).

Table 3
Likert Scale: Students' perceptions of Entrepreneurship course

No	Items	Frequency	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	The course was well delivered.	35	3	4	3.46	.505
2.	The course improves the knowledge/ skill in my major.	35	3	4	3.66	.482
3.	The course provides practical knowledge for enhancing creativity and innovation in business application.	35	3	4	3.80	.406
4.	The course was delivered interactively.	35	2	4	3.51	.562
5.	The faculty should offer entrepreneurship coaching/ mentoring.	35	3	4	3.46	.505
6.	After taking the course, I feel more motivated to be entrepreneur.	35	3	4	3.43	.502

3. Students' expectations from taking the Entrepreneurship course

In this section of the survey, as can be seen in Table 4, the respondents were given a list of items to be answered in multiple response format. The data shows that 15 students (22.4%) expressed the expectation of becoming successful entrepreneurs shortly after graduation. This response accounted for 42.9% of all responses, indicating that a significant proportion of students aspire to achieve entrepreneurial success in the near future.

Meanwhile, 25 students (37.3%) indicated the expectation of acquiring skills in running a business through the Entrepreneurship course. This response constituted 71.4% of all responses, reflecting a strong desire among students to develop practical business skills. Similarly, 25 students (37.3%) expressed the expectation of enhancing their creativity and innovation through the course. This response also accounted for 71.4% of all responses, indicating a high priority placed on fostering creativity and innovation among students.

Table 4
Multiple response: Students' expectation from Entrepreneurship course

Students' expectation after taking the course	Responses	Responses		Percent of Cases
		Frequency	Percent	
To be a successful entrepreneur shortly after graduation.	15	22.4%	42.9%	
To be skillful in running a business.	25	37.3%	71.4%	

	To be creative and innovative.	25	37.3%	71.4%
	Just to attend the compulsory course.	2	3.0%	5.7%
Total		67	100.0%	191.4%

Therefore, the result indicates that the majority of students showed their motivation and intention to develop practical business skills through the Entrepreneurship course. Moreover, there is a significant emphasis on fostering creativity and innovation among students, indicating recognition of the importance of these qualities in entrepreneurial success. It is also important to highlight that according to UNESCO (2021) entrepreneurial education would enhance employability opportunities and entrepreneurial behavior regardless of commercial intent. However, considering that the entrepreneurship course is typically a mandatory component within non-entrepreneurship and business programs, students should also understand that not all of their expectations can be met by a single course. Hence, it is also necessary to communicate the outcome of the course in order to prevent misconception among students about the course (Harima et al., 2021), especially those with high expectation to be a successful businessman by following the class of entrepreneurship at their study program.

4. Teaching and learning activities

Entrepreneurship lecturers play a vital role in promoting entrepreneurship to their students (Lahikainen et al., 2022). Therefore, this study also investigates the classroom activities from the students' experiences. In terms of teaching and learning activities within the entrepreneurship classroom, respondents predominantly indicated experience with lecture and discussion methods compared to other options. The survey presented five options representing the most commonly employed teaching activities within this department. Despite offering an "other" option, none of the participants reported engaging in alternative teaching and learning activities within their entrepreneurship classrooms. In this respect, 29 responses (27.9% of total responses) indicated that the lecturers used the lecture method. This method was reported to be employed in 82.9% of cases related to classroom activities. While 30 responses (28.8% of total responses) highlighted the use of the discussion method. This method was reported to be utilized in 85.7% of cases related to classroom activities. 20 responses (19.2% of total responses) mentioned the inclusion of student presentations. This activity was reported to be part of 57.1% of cases related to classroom activities.

Although the university incorporates book and article review activities in all of the courses' curriculum, there are only 22 responses (21.2% of total responses) that indicated the use of article and/or book reviews in their entrepreneurship courses. This activity was reported to be incorporated into 62.9% of cases related to classroom activities.

In light of this data, it is crucial for entrepreneurship educators to carefully consider and prepare the course curriculum and its effective delivery, particularly in accordance with the learning goals and institutional mission. Doing so can aid instructors in selecting appropriate teaching methods for entrepreneurship classes and ensuring the effectiveness of the teaching process (Esmi et al., 2015). While basically, the course should facilitate students on the understanding of entrepreneurship concept and encourage them to be aspiring entrepreneurs (Mani, 2015).

Table 5
Teaching & learning activities

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Classroom activities	Lecture method	29	27.9%	82.9%
	Discussion method	30	28.8%	85.7%
	Student presentation	20	19.2%	57.1%
	Article and/or book review	22	21.2%	62.9%
	Role play	3	2.9%	8.6%
Total		104	100.0%	297.1%

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to explore overall students' perception of the undergraduate students in Management on the entrepreneurship course. In conclusion, the findings reveal positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship courses, with students acknowledging their effectiveness in enhancing knowledge, fostering creativity and innovation, and increasing motivation towards entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the diversity of teaching and learning activities employed, including lectures, discussions, student presentations, and article/book reviews, underscores the importance of interactive and experiential learning approaches in entrepreneurship education. This study recommends that entrepreneurship educators, instructional designers, and faculty members should carefully consider the selection of learning materials, teaching methods, and evaluation tasks. Additionally, facilitating or encouraging students to engage in extracurricular activities and providing counseling services are essential steps to involve students in practical, real-life entrepreneurial scenarios. This also underscores the importance of engaging students in entrepreneurial activities, as they play a crucial role in realizing the concept of entrepreneurial university (Katja et al., 2021), particularly in alignment with Universitas Negeri Medan's commitment to fostering an entrepreneurial culture among academia.

This study is subject to limitations due to the small sample size of respondents and its exclusive focus on students from the Department of Management at Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia. Therefore, while providing a general overview of the current state of entrepreneurship classes, the findings may not be fully representative of all higher education institutions. In the realm of entrepreneurship classroom, future research should explore the relationship between students' expectations when taking entrepreneurship classes and the instructional design or teaching method of the course. Such research could benefit from a larger sample size and a more comprehensive investigation into curriculum design, teaching methods, and classroom activities within entrepreneurship courses.

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