



The Role of Entrepreneurship Education in Developing the Spirit of Entrepreneurship among University Students

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ABSTRACT: The high unemployment rate among college graduates demands a transformation in mindset from job seekers to job creators through effective entrepreneurship education. This qualitative descriptive study aims to analyze the role of entrepreneurship education in fostering entrepreneurial spirit among 53 students at Sanata Dharma University. Data were collected using questionnaires related to the learning process and elements of the entrepreneurial spirit. The results show that the structured learning process, through Semester Learning Plans, teaching materials, and Learning Management System (LMS)-based business simulations, provides a strong foundation for students. Students demonstrated significant development in entrepreneurial spirit, characterized by a need for achievement, a desire for autonomy, innovative creativity, courage to take calculated risks, and a high internal locus of control. The integration of theory and practical experience successfully developed a strong mental capital for students to become agents of economic change. Universities are advised to strengthen learning-by-doing methods and synergize with practitioners to enhance students' real-world competencies in managing the uncertainties of the business world.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of open unemployment among college graduates has become a serious concern that demands immediate attention. By 2025, the unemployment rate for college graduates in Indonesia is projected to be 5.21 percent, reflecting a mismatch between graduate competencies and job market needs. Many students remain trapped in the practical mindset that the primary purpose of higher education is to facilitate job search as civil servants or private sector employees, rather than to create jobs. This situation is increasingly pressing given that Indonesia will face a demographic bonus in 2025-2030, where a productive-age population without adequate job opportunities could become a national economic disaster if not addressed promptly through the transformation of skilled and independent human resources.

Embracing an entrepreneurial spirit for students is not merely a prerequisite for building a business, but a crucial foundation for developing an adaptive and innovative mindset in an era of disruption. Students with an entrepreneurial spirit tend to have sharper problem-solving skills, the courage to take calculated risks, and the independence to navigate the increasingly competitive job market. In line with this, entrepreneurship education in higher education should transform students' intentions from mere job seekers to job creators. This will directly contribute to national economic growth through knowledge-based innovation.

Beyond the economic aspect, an entrepreneurial spirit also plays a crucial role in developing students' soft skills and leadership character. An entrepreneurial spirit encourages students to always seek opportunities amidst limitations and view failure as a valuable learning process. Integrating entrepreneurial values into the college curriculum will effectively enhance students' professional competence and job readiness by training them to think critically and proactively in the face of rapid global

environmental change. Thus, students will not only graduate with intellectual excellence but also with high resilience and creativity in responding to the challenges of the times.

Entrepreneurship education has emerged as a strategic solution to foster students' interest and entrepreneurial spirit in order to reduce unemployment. Entrepreneurship is essentially an art that can be learned and developed through appropriate education and training. At the university level, the focus of this education goes beyond simply teaching how to run a business, but also on developing entrepreneurial character, mindset, and behavior, encompassing creativity, risk-taking, and the ability to transform opportunities into added value that benefits society (European Commission, 2008). In fact, developing this entrepreneurial spirit is crucial for all professions because it teaches individuals to be proactive, innovative, and able to manage resources efficiently in any field they pursue (Susilaningsih, 2015).

Although numerous entrepreneurship programs have been implemented, current learning practices are still not optimal in actually increasing students' entrepreneurial intentions. Many entrepreneurship curricula in higher education remain textual and dominated by cognitive knowledge transfer rather than practical experience (learning by doing). Furthermore, much of the learning tends to be oriented toward materialism and individual financial gain (*homo economicus*), neglecting social concerns and the common welfare.

Various empirical studies consistently demonstrate that entrepreneurship education has a significant impact on developing entrepreneurial capacity and mindsets. Comparative research in the United States and South Korea demonstrates that students who take entrepreneurship courses experience significant increases in entrepreneurial intentions, self-confidence, and technical knowledge and skills compared to those who do not (Fayolle & Gailly 2013).

In Europe, the German experience demonstrates that an integrated curriculum framework can effectively support students' career planning and entrepreneurship through hands-on practice in student mini-enterprises (Darmawan et al., 2021). Similar findings were found in studies in Tanzania and South Africa, where entrepreneurship education had a strong positive correlation with students' entrepreneurial spirit. Furthermore, an entrepreneurial development program in Morocco has been empirically proven to improve students' vocational maturity and non-cognitive competencies, equipping them for a productive professional future (Muskin, 2012). The success of these various entrepreneurship education models reinforces the urgency of transforming higher education in Indonesia to be more proactive in producing graduates who act as job creators rather than mere job seekers.

Entrepreneurship education in higher education is a planned effort to develop entrepreneurial capacity and mindsets in students. Fundamentally, this education encompasses an individual's ability to transform ideas into action through creativity, innovation, and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects to achieve specific goals (European Commission, 2008). As a crucial instrument for economic growth, entrepreneurship education aims to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to identify market opportunities and manage these resources for broad societal benefit (Bakar, 2015).

Entrepreneurial spirit is understood as the energy and spirit that activates human potential to innovate, invent, and work with a strong desire to pursue a vision despite facing various challenges and risks (Ahsan et al., 2016). Key characteristics of this spirit include high motivation, a strong need for achievement, a desire for independence or autonomy, creative tendencies, and calculated risk-taking. Organizationally, the entrepreneurial spirit is the embodiment of the vision and strong will of individuals who are able to move other elements around them to respond to opportunities spontaneously and innovatively.

The impact of entrepreneurship education on students is often analyzed using the theoretical framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior, where entrepreneurial interest and passion are influenced by attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Fayolle & Gailly, 2013). Effective educational programs have been empirically proven to influence students' attitudes and intentions to choose an entrepreneurial career path as a viable and valuable option. Entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in improving students' perceptions.

In an effort to instill an entrepreneurial spirit, universities must shift from traditional lectures to action-based learning approaches that actively engage students. Experience-oriented teaching methods, such as business simulations, business planning workshops, and learning-by-doing, are considered far more effective in developing entrepreneurial thinking skills than mere theory (European Commission, 2008). Through interaction with business practitioners and participation in realistic entrepreneurial environments, students can hone the functional skills and courage needed to manage uncertainty in the business world (Fayolle & Gailly, 2013).

The synergy between comprehensive entrepreneurship education and the development of a strong entrepreneurial spirit is key to producing university graduates with an entrepreneurial spirit. By integrating a solid theoretical foundation and interactive learning methods, universities can transform students' potential into real, competitive competencies. The sustainability of this spirit depends not only on the formal curriculum but also on institutional support that encourages students to continuously innovate and take an active role as agents of future economic change.

II. METHOD

The research method used in this study was descriptive qualitative. The study was conducted on a single group of

students taking an entrepreneurship course. The subjects of this study were 53 students at Sanata Dharma University taking the Entrepreneurship course. The object of the study was the students' entrepreneurial spirit. Data on entrepreneurial spirit were collected using a questionnaire. The learning process questionnaire contained information on the completeness of course materials, such as the Semester Learning Plan, teaching materials, learning strategies, and learning evaluations prepared by the lecturer. The questionnaire on entrepreneurial spirit included statements such as: need for achievement, desire for independence or autonomy, creative tendencies, calculated risk-taking, and locus of control. The data collection results were processed qualitatively to examine the entrepreneurial learning process and the tendency for students' entrepreneurial spirit to increase after attending the entrepreneurship course.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning Process

The entrepreneurship learning process is structured through various mutually supportive components to build a comprehensive learning ecosystem. Lecturers have carefully prepared Semester Learning Plans, teaching materials, learning strategies, and evaluations for entrepreneurship learning. The Semester Learning Plan (RPS) and syllabus serve as the main foundation of the learning process. Students find it very helpful because the learning process is explained transparently from beginning to end. The entrepreneurship learning process is designed to suit student needs and the realities of the business world.

The prepared teaching materials contain not only theory but also practical insights regarding management, marketing, business skills, financial strategies, and product development. The teaching materials are presented in a concise and easy-to-understand manner, and are available for review through a learning management system (LMS). The learning strategies implemented include: (1) developing business proposals as an effective way to train creativity, innovation, and business planning; and (2) business projects and simulations that enable collaboration between students and interaction with practitioners; and (3) analysis of entrepreneurial figures that examines the success stories and tenacity of local and global entrepreneurial figures. The lecturers provide evaluation and feedback on each assignment and lecture process, helping students identify areas for improvement and development in the entrepreneurial process.

Development of the Spirit of Entrepreneurship

Regarding the drive to achieve, the majority of respondents viewed personal development as essential to avoiding burnout. While many people desire secure employment, a monotonous routine can lead to boredom, necessitating challenges to foster creative thinking. Respondents stated that challenges are essential for developing creative thinking. Developing self-potential is crucial for future preparation, enabling them to solve unprecedented problems.

Students felt that pursuing self-development aspirations provided a greater inner satisfaction than routine work. Personal development brought greater enthusiasm and more interesting challenges than routine work, which they considered boring. Students acknowledged that this required a long process of honing skills through aspirations to become courageous and independent individuals. Some respondents chose personal development for various reasons, such as choosing this path so they wouldn't always follow orders but instead be the one giving them orders. Another reason for disliking routine was a preference for freedom and flexibility in time.

However, not all respondents chose one extreme. Some argued that both have value: self-development provides meaning in life, while a steady, regular job guarantees financial security. Therefore, a balance is necessary. Some respondents viewed a steady job as a starting point for personal development during their free time.

Spirit in entrepreneurship is defined as the "soul" or "energy" that activates human potential to innovate and work hard to pursue a vision despite challenges (Ahsan et al., 2016). Respondents who reject routine demonstrate entrepreneurial characteristics that reject the status quo, believing that routine without challenges offers little benefit for personal change. The "visionary" and "opportunity-seeking" entrepreneurial character is evident in respondents who consider aspirations "provisions for the future." Individuals with a high need for achievement work not only for current wages but also to build greater personal capacity. This aligns with the entrepreneurial spirit element of "seeking improvement," or the willingness to continuously raise personal standards (Darmasetiawan et al., 2023).

The desire to "rule" rather than "be ruled" reflects one indicator of entrepreneurial behavior, namely the need for autonomy (Fayole et al., 2015). This passion is part of the need for achievement, where individuals desire complete control over their own destiny and achievements (locus of control) (Lee et al., 2005). Respondents' choice to leave the comfort zone of a secure job for "significant growth" demonstrates optimism and a readiness to face uncertainty (Ahsan et al., 2016).

In entrepreneurial theory, this drive prevents individuals from giving up easily and encourages them to continue striving despite uncertain outcomes. Students' view that aspiration is a "long process" demonstrates that achievement is not simply about the end result, but about developing a resilient character and disciplined hard work. This aligns with the basic elements of the entrepreneurial spirit, which include discipline, persistence, and hard work (Darmasetiawan et al., 2023). Overall, respondents' preference for personal development and aspirations is a strong indicator of an entrepreneurial spirit driven by the need for

achievement. They see challenges not as burdens, but as “fuel” to keep moving forward and achieve higher standards of excellence.

Regarding the desire for independence or autonomy, most respondents firmly chose to work independently for reasons of efficiency and freedom of ideas. They chose to work independently because they felt group work was often hampered by members who were absent or difficult to engage in discussions, making working independently faster. By choosing to work independently, they would have full control over setting their own priorities and agenda. Respondents viewed working independently as a means to further explore their abilities without relying on others. However, some respondents still preferred group work but emphasized the aspect of active contribution. Arguments underlying the importance of working in groups included gaining input and discussing ideas.

In entrepreneurship literature, autonomy is often measured by a person's desire to "be their own boss" (Fayolle et al., 2015). The respondents' preference for working independently to avoid "dependence on others" is a clear manifestation of this need for autonomy. This is in line with the basic values of entrepreneurship which emphasize the ability to stand alone and not depend on external parties (Ahsan et al, 2016).

Respondents who chose the independent path demonstrated a high level of confidence in their problem-solving abilities. This aligns with the research findings of Darmasetiawan et al. (2023), which stated that success in solving a problem is determined, in part, by a person's independence. The spirit of entrepreneurship involves qualities such as courage and self-confidence, which cannot always be taught but must be learned through practical action (Thyil et al., 2006). Choosing challenges independently demonstrates that respondents possess the energy to activate their potential to pursue their vision despite the risk of failure (Ahsan et al., 2016).

The respondents' reasons for choosing independent work to be "faster" and "more effective" relate to the entrepreneurial element of "seeking improvement" (Darmasetiawan et al., 2023). Individuals with this spirit tend to seek higher quality standards and are disturbed by the inefficiencies that often arise in slow group dynamics. This desire for independence is also the “soul” that drives a person to innovate and work hard (Ahsan et al, 2016). In the context of Indonesian culture, the value of autonomy (autonomous spirit) is considered an original character that must be revived to face global challenges, where individuals are required to be job creators rather than mere followers.

The "tough" and "outcome-oriented" characteristics of entrepreneurs are evident in their willingness to shoulder heavy workloads independently to ensure the final result meets their own expectations. Overall, respondents' preference for working independently is not simply a matter of technical task completion, but rather a reflection of the deep need for autonomy that is at the heart of the entrepreneurial spirit. The desire to maintain full control over the work process and results is the primary fuel for innovation and economic independence.

In terms of creative tendencies, several respondents considered alternative approaches key to quality and innovation. They argued that alternative ideas enhance flexibility and creativity, while innovative approaches provide more comprehensive solutions. Seeking alternative solutions allows them to identify the most relevant and efficient methods. Some respondents viewed alternative approaches as a "backup plan" if the initial method fails.

Theoretically, an entrepreneurial spirit fosters creativity and innovation, which are crucial for identifying market niches and creating new products (Dharmasetiawan et al., 2023). Respondents who chose "alternative approaches" demonstrated entrepreneurial characteristics of being "open to experience" and able to see things from unconventional perspectives. Creativity, in this context, is the ability to develop new ideas and new ways of solving problems (Soegiastuti et al., 2020).

Entrepreneurial spirit is associated with the concept of creative destruction, where entrepreneurs destroy inefficient methods and activate something creative and new (Wach et al., 2023). Respondents who sought alternative approaches were practicing this by not sticking to one old method if they felt there was a better alternative. Respondents' choice to work "as effectively and quickly as possible" relates to another element of the entrepreneurial spirit: discipline (Ahsan et al., 2016). Disciplined individuals create plans and act accordingly to achieve desired quality standards. In entrepreneurship, creativity without effective execution and discipline will not result in good business performance (Soegiastuti et al., 2020).

Entrepreneurial spirit is defined as the "soul" or "energy" that activates human potential for innovation. Respondents' desire to seek innovative (alternative) solutions amidst difficult challenges is a manifestation of this energy. This aligns with the view that creativity significantly influences a person's decision to run a business (Wach et al., 2023). Seeking alternatives is also a form of risk mitigation. Individuals with a strong entrepreneurial spirit do not easily give up when their first approach fails, but instead continue to seek new methods (persistence) until they show results. Respondents' answers about "backup plans" reflect a readiness to face uncertainty through creative thinking. Although respondents were divided between focusing on alternative ways of solving problems (creativity) and speed/effectiveness (execution), both are pillars of the entrepreneurial spirit. Creativity is needed to find innovative solutions, while effectiveness ensures that these innovations are implemented in practice through hard work and discipline.

In terms of measured risk-taking, respondents were faced with a situation where they were responsible for a challenging, important project but were unsure whether they could complete it on time. Then, someone else offered to complete the project,

eliminating the responsibility for potential failure. In this case, the respondents' commitment to personal responsibility was tested. The majority of respondents firmly refused to abdicate responsibility, even in the face of uncertainty about the outcome. Most respondents stated that they preferred to risk failure to learn their limits, as handing over the project meant not taking responsibility for their work.

Respondents viewed risk as a means of learning and growth. Some respondents viewed risky challenges as educational opportunities. One respondent argued that facing a challenging project is an opportunity for growth and learning, so they chose to remain committed to optimizing the chances of success rather than avoiding it. Another respondent added that even if they were to fail this time, they would use it as a stepping stone to success the next time.

However, a different perspective emerged from several respondents, stating that collaboration can still be achieved without relinquishing control. There is a perspective where assistance from others is still acceptable, but authority remains vested in the individual. Some respondents are willing to accept assistance from others as long as the task remains under their control and supervision, thus retaining the right to reject ideas that do not align with their vision. Others view third parties as "helpers or partners," but emphasize that the primary responsible party must maintain consistency to prevent project failure. Meanwhile, some respondents will first analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the offer. This is important because it will help predict whether the assistance will be successful.

Courage to take risks is at the heart of the entrepreneurial spirit. Respondents' responses reflect the psychological characteristics essential for entrepreneurs in managing uncertainty. The spirit of entrepreneurship is defined as the energy that activates human potential to pursue a vision despite challenges, obstacles, and risks (Ahsan et al., 2016; Agustina et al., 2021). Respondents' refusal to relinquish responsibility demonstrates a "soul" that resists the status quo (Darmasetiawan et al., 2023).

Risk-taking in entrepreneurship is not mere speculation, but rather a strategic decision-making process in which individuals assess potential outcomes and weigh rewards against potential losses. Respondents' responses emphasizing "knowing one's capabilities" and "profit-and-loss analysis" demonstrate an awareness of the need to optimally assess risk (Soegiastuti et al., 2020). One positive impact of calculated risk-taking is building resilience. Successful entrepreneurs view failure as a "trial and error" process essential for long-term success. This is clearly seen in arguments that see failure as a means to improve oneself in the future (Karan, 2024).

The desire to maintain control reflects high levels of self-efficacy, indicating independence and self-confidence. Confidence in one's abilities has been shown to increase a person's propensity to take risks because they feel capable of managing these challenges (Lee & Wong, 2005; Fayolle & Gaily, 2015). Resilient entrepreneurs are those who are results-oriented and willing to bear the financial and non-financial risks of their ventures. By maintaining responsibility for projects that are threatened with failure, respondents demonstrate moral and professional integrity, key elements of the entrepreneurial spirit (Ahsan et al., 2016; Agustina et al., 2021; Darmasetiawan et al., 2023).

Respondents' preference to remain responsible amid the risk of failure demonstrates that they possess strong mental capital for entrepreneurship. They understand that risk is not an obstacle to success, but rather a challenge that must be managed to achieve personal growth and business sustainability.

The majority of respondents demonstrated a strong internal locus of control by choosing the business path. Respondents expressed interest in business because they believed their abilities and skills could yield results equal to, or even greater than, a fixed salary. Another argument stated that owning their own business provided flexibility and the opportunity to create jobs for others. Some respondents chose business because they sought new challenges. Some arguments cited by respondents included that business provides new and less monotonous experiences, allowing them to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Another argument revealed was the belief that earning money through a business provides a sense of satisfaction compared to the routine of a permanent job.

Most respondents firmly chose to start a business, even if it meant giving up other jobs, because they wanted to be the one "in charge" and not depend on others. This aligns with the view that the business process is a way to become a bold and independent individual. However, many respondents chose a middle path or prioritized security first. For example, some respondents believed that a secure job was necessary to meet their living expenses, but business development could still be pursued simultaneously.

Theoretically, locus of control is a person's belief that life events are under their control and they are responsible for every decision they make. Respondents who chose business demonstrated this characteristic; they believed that financial success was determined by "their own efforts and abilities," rather than external factors such as company policies or luck (Aprilia & Ardana, 2021; Roziki & Suyati, 2023).

Entrepreneurial spirit is the "soul" or "energy" that activates human potential to pursue a vision. Locus of control cannot be realized without this spirit. Respondents' responses emphasizing "determination and passion" indicate that this energy drives them to take risks despite uncertainty (Darmasetiawan et al., 2023). The desire to have complete control over one's destiny (to be one's own boss) is a strong indicator of an entrepreneurial spirit driven by an internal locus of control. Respondents' statements

about wanting to rule others rather than being ruled are a clear manifestation of this need for autonomy (Roziki & Suyati, 2023).

Successful entrepreneurs possess a visionary perspective and a strong achievement motivation. Respondents' responses about wanting to "create jobs" demonstrate that their locus of control is not solely for personal gain but also for broader social impact, a hallmark of a strong entrepreneur (Ahsan et al., 2016). Locus of control often plays a greater role in influencing entrepreneurial intentions than external factors such as formal education. This is evident from the respondents' answers who still have a strong desire to do business based on the skills they have honed themselves, indicating that internal motivation is the main key (Roziki & Suyati, 2023).

Respondents' preference for starting their own business indicates a high level of internal locus of control. The belief that they can control their future through their own skills is a key foundation for their entrepreneurial spirit. This significantly supports their ability to innovate and persevere amidst economic challenges.

IV. CONCLUSION

The high unemployment rate among college graduates demands a transformation from a job-seeker mindset to a job-creator mindset through effective entrepreneurship education. Research shows that a structured learning process with tools such as Semester Learning Plans, practical materials, and business simulation strategies can provide a strong foundation for students. Integrating feedback from lecturers and utilizing a learning management system (LMS) also facilitates practical insights that go beyond mere cognitive knowledge transfer to a more comprehensive learning experience.

The study revealed that students exhibited significant entrepreneurial spirit development, driven by a strong need for achievement and autonomy. Students demonstrated strong entrepreneurial characteristics, such as a creative tendency to seek innovative solutions, a willingness to take calculated risks as a learning tool, and a high internal locus of control, believing in their ability to control their future. Overall, students' preference for personal development and independence reflects a strong mental capital needed to become agents of economic change in the future.

Based on the findings that action-based learning (learning by doing) is highly effective in developing entrepreneurial character, universities are advised to continue strengthening interactive teaching methods that actively engage students in real-world projects and business simulations. Traditional textual and cognitive approaches should be reduced and replaced with a synergy between a solid theoretical foundation and direct interaction with business practitioners to hone functional skills and the courage to navigate the uncertainties of the business world. Furthermore, institutional support needs to be increased to encourage students to possess not only the intention but also the real competence to innovate and make a social impact through job creation.

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