

Leveraging E-Commerce Platforms: Enhancing Student Entrepreneurship Skills in Indonesia's MBKM (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka) Program



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ABSTRACT

This article examines the role of e-commerce platforms in enhancing entrepreneurship skills among students within Indonesia's Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program. As a pivotal initiative aimed at reforming higher education, MBKM emphasizes independent learning and practical experience, particularly in entrepreneurship. The rise of digital technology and e-commerce presents unique opportunities for students to engage in entrepreneurial activities that foster critical skills such as innovation, financial management, and marketing. This study highlights how online shopping platforms enable students to create and manage their own businesses, providing hands-on experience and exposure to real-world market dynamics. Through a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews with students and educators, the findings reveal that leveraging e-commerce not only enhances students' entrepreneurial competencies but also encourages networking and collaboration within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. However, challenges such as limited digital literacy and market competition are identified, necessitating targeted support and training. The article concludes that integrating e-commerce into the MBKM framework can significantly improve students' readiness for the business world, aligning educational outcomes with industry demands. Recommendations for educators and policymakers are provided to optimize the use of digital technology in entrepreneurship education, ultimately fostering a new generation of skilled entrepreneurs in Indonesia.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving global economy, entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a critical driver of innovation, job creation, and economic development. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2020), entrepreneurial activity is vital for fostering competitiveness and resilience in national economies. The integration of digital technology has further transformed the entrepreneurial

landscape, enabling startups and small businesses to reach broader markets and operate more efficiently through online platforms. As businesses navigate challenges such as economic fluctuations and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for a skilled and adaptable workforce becomes ever more pressing (World Economic Forum, 2021).

In an increasingly globalized economy, entrepreneurship has emerged as a vital



component of economic growth and innovation. Recognizing this, the Indonesian government launched the Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program, which aims to revolutionize higher education by promoting independence and practical experiences among students (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020). One of the key pillars of the MBKM initiative is entrepreneurship education, which is critical for equipping students with the skills necessary to navigate the complexities of the modern business landscape. This initiative also emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurship education as a cornerstone of the learning experience, equipping students with the skills necessary to thrive in a competitive business environment. Moreover, the MBKM program encourages universities to integrate real-world experiences, such as internships and entrepreneurial projects, into their curricula, reflecting the changing demands of the labor market (Suryadi & Noor, 2021).

Meanwhile, the rise of digital technology, particularly e-commerce, presents unique opportunities for Indonesian students to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Indonesia's e-commerce market is projected to reach USD 82 billion by 2025, driven by increasing internet penetration and smartphone usage (Statista, 2021). E-commerce platforms allow students to create and manage their own online businesses, providing hands-on experience that fosters essential skills such as innovation, financial management, and customer engagement (Rachmawati et al., 2021). However, challenges persist, including limited digital literacy and intense market competition, which can hinder students' entrepreneurial success (Yudhani et al., 2021).

Digital technology, particularly e-commerce platforms, plays a transformative role in

enhancing entrepreneurship skills. E-commerce has rapidly gained traction in Indonesia, fueled by increased internet penetration and a growing smartphone user base. According to Statista (2021), Indonesia's e-commerce market is projected to reach USD 82 billion by 2025, highlighting its significance in the economy. This digital landscape offers students unique opportunities to engage in entrepreneurial activities, allowing them to create and manage online businesses. Such experiences not only provide practical knowledge but also cultivate essential skills such as innovation, financial management, and customer engagement (Rachmawati et al., 2021).

Moreover, leveraging e-commerce platforms facilitates networking and collaboration among students and industry professionals, further enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies (Indriyani & Sumarno, 2021). However, challenges remain, including limited digital literacy among students and intense market competition, which can impede their ability to succeed in the online business environment (Yudhani et al., 2021).

This article explores the role of e-commerce platforms in enhancing entrepreneurship skills among students within the MBKM program. By analyzing both the opportunities and challenges presented by digital technology, this study aims to provide insights that can inform future educational practices and policy decisions, ultimately contributing to the development of a skilled entrepreneurial workforce in Indonesia

2. METHOD

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to explore how e-commerce platforms enhance entrepreneurship skills among students in Indonesia's MBKM program. By integrating both



quantitative and qualitative methods, the research offers a well-rounded analysis, capturing both numerical data and personal insights from students and educators. Data were collected through online surveys and in-depth interviews. The survey, distributed to 300 students across various universities, examined their experiences with e-commerce, skill development, and entrepreneurial intentions. In addition, interviews with 15 students and 5 educators provided deeper qualitative insights into the challenges and benefits of using these platforms for entrepreneurship education.

Participants in the study were undergraduate students enrolled in entrepreneurship courses. The sample was purposively selected, focusing on those with experience using e-commerce platforms like Shopee, Tokopedia, and Instagram for their entrepreneurial projects. The majority of respondents were aged between 19 and 24, with around 60% female and 40% male, representing diverse universities across Indonesia.

Data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Survey data were examined using descriptive statistics and inferential tests, such as t-tests and ANOVA, to explore differences in skill development based on variables like gender, age, and e-commerce experience. Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which identified recurring themes related to students' experiences with e-commerce and the MBKM program.

The findings revealed that e-commerce platforms play a crucial role in helping students develop essential skills. Approximately 70% of students reported launching their own online stores, while 30% used the platforms to promote products for existing businesses. Key features utilized included social media integration for

marketing and customer engagement, and digital payment systems, which 85% of respondents had successfully navigated.

Several critical skills were developed through students' engagement with e-commerce, including financial literacy, marketing, and problem-solving. Around 65% of participants noted improvements in their financial management abilities, while over 75% reported gaining valuable marketing skills, particularly in social media marketing and customer outreach. The dynamic and competitive nature of e-commerce also enhanced students' problem-solving abilities and adaptability.

Interviews with students highlighted both positive and challenging experiences. Many students expressed feelings of empowerment and increased confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities. They appreciated the supportive learning environment of the MBKM program, which fostered collaboration and mentorship. However, challenges such as limited digital literacy, difficulties in using complex e-commerce tools, and competition from established businesses were also reported.

In conclusion, e-commerce platforms have proven to be valuable tools in enhancing entrepreneurship skills among students in Indonesia's MBKM program. Despite some challenges, students' experiences illustrate the potential of these platforms to foster the necessary skills and confidence for future entrepreneurial success.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the role of e-commerce platforms in enhancing entrepreneurship skills among students in Indonesia's MBKM program. This discussion interprets these findings in the



context of existing literature, explores the implications for entrepreneurship education, examines the challenges faced by students, and considers how these insights can inform future practices within the MBKM program.

Interpretation of Findings in Context

The study's findings align with existing literature emphasizing the importance of experiential learning in entrepreneurship education. Nabi et al. (2017) highlight that hands-on experiences foster critical skills such as problem-solving, creativity, and adaptability, which are essential for entrepreneurial success. The significant improvement in financial literacy and marketing skills reported by students in this study echoes the work of Rachmawati et al. (2021), who found that engaging with e-commerce provides practical opportunities for skill development that traditional classroom settings may lack.

Furthermore, the integration of e-commerce into entrepreneurship education reflects global trends where digital platforms are reshaping how businesses operate (Khan et al., 2020). As Indonesia's e-commerce market continues to grow, the ability to navigate these platforms becomes increasingly relevant for aspiring entrepreneurs, supporting the need for educational programs to adapt to digital transformations.

Implications for Entrepreneurship Education

The implications of leveraging e-commerce in entrepreneurship education are profound. By incorporating digital tools and platforms into the curriculum, educators can provide students with practical experience that enhances their employability and readiness for the workforce. This aligns with the goals of the MBKM program, which seeks to bridge the gap between education and industry needs (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020).

Moreover, the collaborative environment fostered within the MBKM framework can enhance learning outcomes. By encouraging students to work together on e-commerce projects, educators can create a supportive ecosystem that facilitates knowledge sharing and

innovation. This communal approach not only prepares students for real-world business challenges but also builds essential soft skills such as teamwork and communication.

Challenges Faced by Students and Potential Solutions

Despite the positive findings, students reported several challenges in their e-commerce endeavors. Limited digital literacy emerged as a significant barrier, particularly for students from less privileged backgrounds (Yudhani et al., 2021). To address this issue, educational institutions should consider implementing targeted training programs focused on digital skills, ensuring that all students can effectively utilize e-commerce platforms.

Additionally, the competitive nature of the e-commerce landscape poses challenges for student entrepreneurs. To combat this, universities could provide mentorship opportunities with experienced entrepreneurs who can guide students in developing unique value propositions and effective marketing strategies. Encouraging partnerships with local businesses may also provide students with practical insights and resources, enriching their learning experience.

Informing Future Practices within the MBKM Program

The findings from this study suggest several directions for future practices within the MBKM program. Firstly, incorporating more structured e-commerce modules into entrepreneurship curricula could enhance students' readiness for the digital marketplace. Workshops on digital marketing, financial management, and consumer behavior tailored to e-commerce could be beneficial.

Secondly, fostering a culture of innovation and experimentation among students can encourage them to explore various business models and strategies without the fear of failure. Creating platforms for students to showcase their e-commerce projects can provide them with valuable feedback and recognition.

Finally, ongoing assessment and adaptation of



the MBKM program based on student feedback and emerging trends in e-commerce will be essential for its long-term success. Continuous engagement with industry stakeholders can ensure that the program remains relevant and responsive to the evolving business landscape.

In summary, the findings of this study highlight the significant potential of e-commerce platforms to enhance entrepreneurship skills among students in Indonesia's MBKM program. By addressing challenges and implementing supportive measures, educational institutions can foster an environment that nurtures the next generation of skilled entrepreneurs.

4. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the vital role that e-commerce platforms play in enhancing entrepreneurship skills among students participating in Indonesia's Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program. Key findings reveal that students actively engage with e-commerce to launch and manage online businesses, significantly improving their financial literacy, marketing skills, and problem-solving abilities. While students reported positive experiences, challenges such as limited digital literacy and market competition were also noted, highlighting the need for targeted support.

Integrating e-commerce into entrepreneurship education is crucial in preparing students for the increasingly digital economy. As the e-commerce landscape in Indonesia continues to expand, equipping students with the necessary skills and experiences through practical engagement with digital platforms is essential for fostering entrepreneurial readiness and resilience.

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