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From Science to Action: The Role of Student Entrepreneurship in Youth Unemployment Reduction Strategy

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ABSTRAK

Pengangguran usia muda di Indonesia masih menjadi tantangan struktural yang memengaruhi daya saing bangsa. Perguruan tinggi diharapkan menjadi motor penggerak transformasi lulusan dari pencari kerja menjadi pencipta lapangan kerja. Penelitian ini merupakan bagian dari studi longitudinal selama tiga tahun yang bertujuan menganalisis efektivitas Program Wirausaha Dahlan Muda Universitas Ahmad Dahlan (UAD) sejak akhir tahun 2024 dalam membentuk kesiapan kewirausahaan mahasiswa. Penelitian tahap pertama ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan eksploratif terhadap 35 responden yang juga merupakan penjaga 35 booth. Instrumen terdiri dari 26 pertanyaan pada 4 dimensi kewirausahaan, diukur dengan skala Likert 1-4. Data dianalisis menggunakan SPSS menguji validitas, reliabilitas, normalitas, dan statistik deskriptif (mean, median, modus). Hasil menunjukan bahwa "Jiwa Wirausaha" merupakan dimensi tertinggi (mean-3,78), sementara "Pengambilan resiko" terendah (mean=3,54). Analisis SWOT dan strategi COWS mengindikasikan perlunya intervensi berbasis simulasi bisnis dan mentoring. Temuan hasil penelitian ini mengarah pada pembentukan kerangka teoritis baru yang dirumuskan berupa Profil Kesiapan Asimetris. Artikel ini menjadi dasar arah penguatan kurikulum dan pengukuran longitudinal tahap selanjutnya.

Keyword: Kewirausahaan Mahasiswa; Strategi Kampus; Pengangguran Muda; Longitudinal; Validitas Instrumen

ABSTRACT

Youth unemployment in Indonesia remains a structural challenge that impacts the nation's competitiveness. Higher education institutions are expected to be the driving force behind the transformation of graduates from job seekers to job creators. This research is part of a three-year longitudinal study aimed at analyzing the effectiveness of the Young Dahlan Entrepreneurship Program at Ahmad Dahlan University (UAD) since the end of 2024 in shaping students' entrepreneurial readiness. This first phase of research used a descriptive quantitative method with an exploratory approach to 35 respondents who also served as booth attendants. The instrument consisted of 26 questions on four dimensions of entrepreneurship, measured on a Likert scale of 1-4. Data were analyzed using SPSS to test validity, reliability, normality, and descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode). The results showed that "Entrepreneurial Spirit" was the highest dimension (mean -3.78), while "Risk Taking" was the lowest (mean = 3.54). The SWOT analysis and COWS strategy indicated the need for interventions based on business simulations and mentoring. The findings of this study led to the formation of a new theoretical framework formulated as an Asymmetric Readiness Profile. This article forms the basis for the direction of curriculum strengthening and subsequent longitudinal measurement.

Keyword: Student Entrepreneurship; Campus Strategy; Youth Unemployment; Longitudinal Study; Instrument Validity

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Open Unemployment Rate (OER) in Indonesia is still a significant structural challenge, especially in the young age group. Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), as of February 2025 the number of unemployed reached 7.28 million people with 16.1% of them coming from the 15-24 age group, making it the age group with the highest unemployment rate nationally (Emily Zakia, GoodStats, 2025). Although the national unemployment rate has decreased to 4.76% from 4.82% in 2024, the increase in the number of new labour force has not been fully matched by the availability of formal employment (Izzul Wafa, GoodStats, 2025). This was exacerbated by the wave of layoffs that occurred in various industrial sectors with more than 24,000 (twenty-four thousand) workers affected in just the first four months of 2025 (Infographic, www.msn.com).

The high rate of open unemployment among young people in Indonesia, especially university graduates, raises concerns about the fit between the education system and labour market needs. Data from BPS (2023) shows that more than 18% of unemployment in Indonesia comes from the productive age group of university graduates, emphasising the urgency of systemic reform in higher education. This phenomenon raises concerns about the effectiveness of the higher education system in preparing adaptive and economically independent graduates. Many graduates are still dependent on the formal sector and do not have the readiness to create their own jobs. Therefore, a paradigm shift from "education for employment" to "education for job creation" is highly relevant (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Gibb, 2002).

In response to these challenges, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan (UAD) initiated the Young Dahlan Entrepreneurship Programme since 2022 as part of a strategy to strengthen the character and economic independence of students. This programme not only provides business capital assistance, but also requires academic output in the form of scientific publications and project-based entrepreneurship training (Kompas.com; 2025). In its implementation, this programme carries the character values of "Dahlan Muda Tangguh" (Piety, Amanah, Nalar, Gesit, Gembira, Ulet, Humanis) which are integrated into activities such as Business Model Canvas (BMC) training, digital branding, and Saudagar Dahlan Muda expo (Kumparan.com;2025). Ahmad Dahlan University through the Young Dahlan Entrepreneurial Programme, in addition to character strengthening strategies, also seeks to develop the entrepreneurial character of students from an early age. The programme combines project-based curriculum, MSME digitalisation coaching, and incubation of student business ideas that have been implemented since 2022 (UAD 2023). Within the framework of three years of continuous research, this study is the initial foundation to assess the effectiveness of the programme based on clear quantitative indicators.

More than just an incubation programme, Wirausaha Dahlan Muda is also part of the campus strategy in aligning the curriculum with the needs of business and industry (DUDI). This activity has involved students from study programmes and encouraged them to be active in national competitions such as P2MW and the Entrepreneurship Student Creativity Programme (PKMK). According to the Head of Student Affairs and Alumni Bureau of UAD, the programme aims to produce graduates who are not only academically competent, but also able to become job creators amidst the uncertainty of the job market (Kompas.com; 2025).

Within the framework of three years of continuous research, this study is the initial foundation to assess the effectiveness of the programme based on measurable quantitative indicators. This research not only aims to measure students' entrepreneurial readiness, but also to develop a longitudinal data-based programme development strategy that can be used as a basis for campus and national policy making in slowing down the rate of youth unemployment.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses descriptive quantitative. The first phase of a three-year longitudinal research whose main objective is to systematically analyse the initial condition of students' entrepreneurial readiness after participating in an entrepreneurship-based campus programme based on indicators measured through standardised instruments. This approach was used because it is suitable for describing trends, tendencies, and intensity of student involvement in campus entrepreneurship programmes, (Sugiyono, 2021). As part of a three-year longitudinal study, this first phase of research is exploratory, capturing the initial conditions of students after participating in the Dahlan Muda Entrepreneurship Programme in 2024.

The findings from this study will serve as a baseline for measuring the impact of the programme in years two and three. Respondents were taken from participants of the Young Dahlan Entrepreneurship Programme with a sample of 35 booths who filled out the questionnaire 1 child per booth. The respondents were from several study programmes, namely PBSI, PG PAUD, Medicine, Hadith Science, Electrical Engineering, Public Health, Food Technology, Management, English Literature, Law, Development Economics, Industrial Engineering, Accounting, Arabic Language, Communication Science, and Food Service Business which were determined by purposive sampling due to their direct involvement in the programme. The

characteristics of the respondents were distributed into 21 females and 14 males with a birth range of 2001-2004.

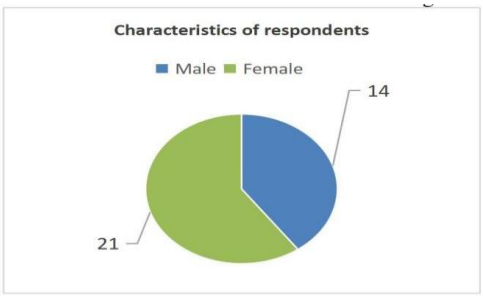

Figure 1. Pie Diagram of respondents' gender

This research instrument is based on four dimensions, namely Entrepreneurial Spirit (6 items), Attitude towards Career (6 items), Risk Taking (7 items) and Ability to Access Scarce Resources (7 items). The question items were prepared based on theory and Fayolle & Gailly (2015), Lumpkin & Dess (1996), Baron & Markman (2000), Yayasan Rumah Perubahan (2010) with a total of 26 questions. Likert measurement scale 1-4 (STS to SS). The use of data analysis using SPSS 25 includes: Descriptive statistics (mean, median and mode), Pearson product-moment validity test. Criteria: f count> 0.3 items are declared valid (Azwar, 2018. Cronbach's Alpha reliability test with a value> 0.7 indicates that the instrument is reliable (Sugiyono, 2021). And the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test with the condition p> 0.05 to state the normal distribution.

SWOT analysis and COWS strategy formulation were used to develop recommendations for programme development. This instrument has been tested for validity and reliability. Data were analysed using a combination of manual tabulation (Excel) and SPSS v25 which included:

1. Descriptive statistics. This involved calculating the mean, median and mode for each dimension. Displaying the distribution of scores through tables and graphs.
2. SWOT analysis: Identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from the measurement results of each dimension.
3. COWS (Combining SWOT) strategy. That is, developing a development strategy based on a combination of internal and external factors.
4. Instrument feasibility test using SPSS output to assess instrument consistency.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study identifies the level of entrepreneurial readiness of students based on four dimensions using a total of 26 items on a Likert scale of 1-4. The following are the results of processed data:

Data were obtained from 35 respondents who have participated in the Dahlan Muda Entrepreneurship Programme. This analysis was conducted on the four dimensions of entrepreneurship using the following descriptive statistical formula:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x_i}{n} \quad (1)$$

Where:

$\bar{x}$ = average value

$\sum x_i$ = total number of dimension values

n = number of respondents

Descriptive Statistics Results

Table 1. Descriptive statistics results

Dimension	Mean	Median	Mode	General Interpretation
Entrepreneurial Spirit	3,78	4,00	4	Students have high self-confidence and entrepreneurial motivation.
Attitude towards career	3,69	4,00	4	Students have an independent and planned career orientation.
Risk taking	3,54	4,00	4	Still cautious in facing business uncertainty.
Acquisition of scarce resources	3,66	4,00	4	Able to utilise social relations for potential business opportunities

Notes: All medians and modes show central tendency at score 4, reflecting the consistency of entrepreneurial perceptions among respondents.

Results of validity, reliability, and normality analyses.

Validity test using Pearson Product Moment, declared valid if :

$r_{count} > r_{table}$ (df=n-2, α=0.05) → r_{table} =0.334.

All items have $r_{count} > 0.4$, indicating strong construct validity (Azwar, 2018).
Reliability test, using Cronbach's Alpha:
If $\alpha > 0.7 \rightarrow$ Reliable instrument

Table 2. Descriptive statistical results

Dimension	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Entrepreneurial spirit	0,856	Very reliable
Attitude towards career	0,801	Reliable
Risk taking	0,834	Highly reliable
Resource acquisition	0,794	Reliable

Normality Test.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov shows a p value of 0.05 for all dimensions. This means that the data is normally distributed so that the conditions for generalising the results are met.

Therefore, in critical theory, the results of this study reinforce the findings of Fayolle & Gailly (2015) who stated that entrepreneurship training can significantly increase affection and entrepreneurial intention, but the effect on risk-handling competence requires a reflective approach and hands-on experience.

An interesting finding in this study is the sharp contrast between high scores on the "entrepreneurial spirit" dimension (motivation) and moderate scores on the "risk-taking" dimension (reflective cognition). This research phenomenon led to the establishment of a new theoretical framework which the authors formulated as follows: Asymmetrical Readiness Profile. This is a condition in which students show high readiness in motivation and business affiliation, but are not psychologically ready to face risk, uncertainty, or failure. This

A. Relevance of Findings to the Literature

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This is a condition in which students show high readiness in motivation and business affiliation, but are not psychologically ready to face risk, uncertainty, or failure. This model extends the discourse of Lumpkin & Dess (1996) which states that entrepreneurship orientation is not only a matter of innovation courage, but also the courage to take risks in practice.

It can be said that the new finding is that although the "entrepreneurial spirit" dimension is high, the disparity between spirit and risk readiness indicates that entrepreneurial readiness is asymmetrical-a new opportunity to build an "asymmetrical readiness model" framework in year 2 of the study. This could be a new theoretical offering from this longitudinal study.

B. Empirical Implications: Towards an Actionable Campus Strategy.

As a strategic programme of UAD, Wirausaha Dahlan Muda has succeeded in increasing the confidence and business orientation of students and building networks between participants and institutions. However, to answer the demand for real action in reducing unemployment, a more comprehensive approach needs to be developed, including:

1) Integration of risk-taking simulation in courses. That is by:
a) presenting real case studies such as student culinary business failures or digital startups.
b) Using tools such as decision tree or risk matrix in decision making.
2) Reflection-based entrepreneurial mentoring by:
a) Discussion sessions with alumni and entrepreneurs who experienced the trial - and - error journey.
b) Focus on mental resilience and growth mindset
3) Conversion of the programme to the MKWU Entrepreneurship module. That is, making the module official in the MKWU curriculum. And recognised as part of the graduate learning outcomes (GLOs) and MBKM.

C. Relevance to the problem of youth unemployment.

With youth unemployment reaching 16.1% (BPS, 2025), unemployment prevention strategies cannot rely solely on job creation by the state or formal sector. Students need to be positioned as agents of microeconomic change who are able to create new jobs from the results of campus learning.

If the pattern of "from knowledge to action" is facilitated in a sustainable manner by the campus, then students are not only job seekers, but also become locomotives for the absorption of local labour through digital-based MSMEs and young entrepreneurial communities.

D. SWOT Analysis of Student Entrepreneurship Readiness

Table 3. SWOT Analysis of Student Entrepreneurship Readiness

Aspects	Research findings
Strength	High entrepreneurial spirit, campus support, structured programme through UAD Wirausaha Dahlan Muda.
Weakness	Lack of risk reflection, failure avoidance tendency
Opportunity	Campus synergy with digital MSMEs and local startup communities
Threat	Inconsistency of guidance, academic load, and students' socio-economic dependency

E. COWS Strategy (SWOT Combination)

Table 4. COWS Strategy (SWOT Combination)

Strategy	Academic Implementation Direction
S-O	Increase the volume of students entered into the campus digital business incubator
W-O	Simulate risk taking through business games and real case studies
S-T	Annual Saudagar Dahlan Muda Digital competition that brings together student business ideas and the industrial world
W-T	Personal mentoring based on risk reflection and tiered coaching in the MKWU curriculum

4. CONCLUSION

There are several conclusions that can be put forward in this case:

1. The entrepreneurial readiness of Ahmad Dahlan University (UAD) students is high overall. Especially in the dimensions of entrepreneurial spirit (mean = 3.78) and attitude towards career (mean = 3.69). This shows that the young dahlan entrepreneurship programme effectively builds students' motivation, confidence, and career orientation towards creating their own business.
2. Although the readiness indicators were generally high, the risk-taking aspect had the lowest score (mean- 3.54), indicating a gap between entrepreneurial spirit and resilience in the face of business uncertainty. This finding gave birth to a new conceptual model called Asymmetrical Readiness Profile, which is an imbalance of readiness between affective and reflective aspects.
3. This research instrument is valid, reliable, and has a normal distribution so that it can be used as a basis for longitudinal measurement in the second and third years.
4. SWOT analysis showed that students have great potential (Strengths & Opportunities), but the main challenge lies in the lack of risk-taking and inconsistent coaching (Weaknesses & Threats). The COWS strategy advocates the use of simulation-based approaches, reflective mentoring, and integration of practice-based curriculum.
5. In practical terms, students as participants of the campus entrepreneurship programme can play an active role in reducing unemployment through the creation of micro-scale digital business units that have the potential to absorb local labour. In other words, this programme has long-term implications as a campus- based economic catalyst.
6. This research not only supports previous theories but also develops a new concept of asymmetric entrepreneurial readiness - which can be followed up in the next stage of longitudinal studies.

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