



Student Entrepreneurship Coaching Using the Smart Entrepreneur Model (SEM) For Strengthening Entrepreneurial Character in The Digital Era

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Abstract: Student Entrepreneurship Coaching Program with the Smart Entrepreneurial Model (SEM) is designed to strengthen students' entrepreneurial character through an integrated approach. The primary goal of this program is to develop students with an innovative, resilient, and adaptive entrepreneurial mindset, enabling them to respond to market changes and global economic challenges. The urgency of this program lies in the pressing need to create a young generation prepared to face economic disruptions, particularly in the digital era and during industrial transformation. Students, as future entrepreneurs, require a solid entrepreneurial character to take calculated risks, communicate effectively, and manage sustainable businesses. The stages of building entrepreneurial character through SEM include: Phase 1: Pre-test (Psychometric testing); Phase 2: Participant classification and SWOT analysis; Phase 3: Workshops; Phase 4: monitoring and mentoring. The coaching activities based on the Smart Entrepreneurial Model (SEM) have demonstrated a positive impact on shaping students' entrepreneurial character. This program successfully enhances students' growth mindset, communication skills, leadership abilities, and strategic analysis capabilities through a combination of training, business simulations, role-playing, and mentoring.

Keywords: Student entrepreneurship; Smart Entrepreneurial Model (SEM); Entrepreneurial character; Digital era.

Introduction

The digital era has significantly influenced changes in various aspects of life, including the field of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs are required to possess strong character, innovative thinking, and adaptive capabilities in utilizing technology for digital transformation. Digital transformation involves integrating digital technology into daily life, driving automation, artificial intelligence, and global connectivity as part of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2017). The Fourth Industrial Revolution offers immense opportunities for innovation and economic growth but also poses serious challenges that necessitate collaborative and strategic approaches to address them

(Xu et al., 2018). This technology must be used ethically and inclusively to ensure its benefits are accessible to all layers of society.

In the context of entrepreneurship, digital transformation through the utilization of business-supporting technologies opens opportunities for communities, especially intellectually young individuals such as students. Research in Indonesia highlights that digital transformation plays a critical role in fostering business sustainability (Avita et al., 2023; Hapriyanto, 2024; Marhawati et al., 2023; Marpaung et al., 2023). Other related studies conclude that digital transformation is a complex process requiring a holistic approach (Florek-Paszkowska et al., 2021; Gurbaxani & Dunkle, 2019; Morakanyane et al., 2020; Sagala & Öri,

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2024; Schwertner, 2017; Vogelsang et al., 2018; Wolf et al., 2018).

Students, as the younger generation, play a vital role in entrepreneurship in this digital era filled with opportunities and challenges. They act as agents of change in entrepreneurship due to their access to education, technology, and extensive social networks, making them highly potential entrepreneurs. Universities can function as business incubators through programs such as start-up incubators, entrepreneurship competitions, and business coaching, which are crucial factors. Hisrich (2020) asserts that universities can serve as catalysts for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship through systematic approaches and integrated ecosystem support.

However, despite the high potential students possess, they also face challenges in developing entrepreneurial capabilities. One of the primary challenges is their weak entrepreneurial character. Based on preliminary identification of the target group, most students exhibit a lack of entrepreneurial mentality, such as risk-taking courage, resilience to failure, and strategic thinking skills.

Students tend to have creative ideas but struggle to develop systematic business plans, understand financial management, or conduct effective marketing in the digital era. This indicates that students often use technology for personal purposes without realizing its potential in building and managing a business. Moreover, reliance on external mentoring shows that they are not yet independent in running businesses. They often wait for support from others, such as lecturers or mentoring institutions, resulting in a lack of continuity in business development.

Entrepreneurship training and mentoring programs must not only equip students with knowledge and skills but also instill a resilient entrepreneurial character that adapts to change. This approach can address various challenges students face. Several academic studies on entrepreneurial development models, particularly in higher education environments, have attracted researchers in countries such as Canada (Béchar & Grégoire, 2005), Finland (Tautila, 2010), Iran (Dehghanpour Farashah, 2013), South Korea (Byun et al., 2018), and globally (Boldureanu et al., 2020; Nabi et al., 2017). Meanwhile, Yosephine & Ghina (2017) and Ostrovska et al. (2021) emphasize the need for innovative and relevant entrepreneurial education models to support success in the digital economy era.

Entrepreneurial education and training that holistically integrate character development, skills, modern technology, and business strategies through the Smart Entrepreneurial Model (SEM) have become a focus of studies in Indonesia by Dewi (2020), Yulastri (2020), and Darmawan & Pamungkas (2021). SEM has

proven effective in helping students develop the entrepreneurial character, attitudes, and skills necessary for business success (Dewi, 2020; Yulastri, 2020). SEM training plays a significant role in fostering entrepreneurial attitudes that support students participating in entrepreneurship programs (PMW) to manage and operate businesses independently and sustainably. This highlights the relevance of SEM as an effective entrepreneurial training method (Darmawan & Pamungkas, 2021).

Based on the above discussion, the selection of the Smart Entrepreneur Model (SEM) as the coaching model in this program is grounded in its effectiveness in building entrepreneurial attitudes, enhancing innovative skills, and boosting participants' confidence in independently and sustainably managing businesses in the digital era. The proposed solution systematically applies SEM to address identified issues within the target group.

Method

This coaching is focused on students from the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Mataram who are members of the Entrepreneurship Student Activity Unit (UKF Kewirausahaan), ensuring its relevance to the theme of the activity, as shown in (Figure 1). The coaching approach, based on the Smart Entrepreneur Model (SEM), aims to guide students in understanding and internalizing entrepreneurial character through a personalized approach. Developing students' entrepreneurial character requires a comprehensive approach to shaping mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors that support success in entrepreneurship.



Figure 2. Breafing for Coaching Participants:
Location: Amanah Indonesia Foundation

The concept introduced to coaching participants is the Smart Entrepreneur Model (SEM). SEM, as an

entrepreneurial education and training concept, integrates character development, skills, technology, and modern business strategies holistically. This is implemented through several approaches, including intensive coaching, case study simulations, role-playing, direct mentoring, hands-on simulations/practical exercises, and self-leadership training.

In general, the summary of the stages undertaken and the target outcomes for this activity is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Stages of Building Entrepreneurial Character in Students with SEM

Stage	Description	Outcome
Phase 1: Pre-test (Psychometric Test)	Conducting initial assessment to measure participants' entrepreneurial mindset and readiness	Establish baseline data for character traits and entrepreneurial readiness.
Phase 2: Participant Classification (SWOT Analysis)	Analyzing students' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.	Identifying key areas for personal and entrepreneurial growth.
Phase 3: Workshop	Hands-on workshops focusing on developing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.	Enhancing practical skills such as business planning, marketing, and financial management.
Phase 4: Monitoring and Mentoring	Ongoing support through guidance and feedback to foster continuous improvement.	Ensuring continuous development and application of entrepreneurial skills

This process is designed to build entrepreneurial character gradually, from self-development to practical application in the real world.

Result and Discussion

At each stage of this coaching activity, Stage 1, based on psychometric test results involving assessments of personality traits, mindset, and essential skills relevant to entrepreneurship:

First, personality traits indicate that most participants have positive characteristics for entrepreneurship. Participants demonstrated high motivation, with 80% scoring above average. In terms of creativity, they showed good capability in generating innovative ideas. Florek-Paszkowska et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of business innovation and success factors in the digital transformation era. Coaching results reveal participants have started

leveraging digital innovation for marketing strategies, aligning with this perspective. Additionally, participants showed adequate collaboration skills, though improvement is needed. A small portion of participants exhibited hesitancy in taking risks, which became a focus area for training.

Second, in terms of mindset, 74% of participants demonstrated a growth mindset, showing readiness to learn and develop, while the remaining 30% were still stuck in a fixed mindset, particularly when dealing with failures. This highlights the need for a tailored approach to transform the fixed mindset participants to become more open to challenges. Dehghanpour Farashah (2013) explains the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial perceptions and intentions. The coaching, particularly in shifting a fixed to a growth mindset, supports findings that intensive training can influence participants' mindset and entrepreneurial intentions.

Stage 2, SWOT analysis results reveal: Strengths: Participants possess basic entrepreneurial skills, creativity, and high motivation to start or expand businesses. Some participants also have access to certain resources, such as community networks or family support, which can be foundational for building and growing their businesses.

Weaknesses: Challenges include a lack of business experience, limited knowledge of digital marketing, and low confidence in risk-taking. Time management and financial management issues were also identified. These weaknesses require attention through training, mentoring, and appropriate simulations.

Opportunities: The digital environment presents significant opportunities for participants to utilize technology for marketing, such as e-commerce and social media. Market trends show increasing demand for unique local products and innovations. These opportunities can drive business growth if participants effectively leverage technology and market trends. Hapriyanto (2024) outlines innovative strategies for enhancing competitiveness in the digital era. This aligns with findings that participants are beginning to build networks and utilize social media for business promotion.

Threats: Major challenges include increasing competition, rapidly changing consumer preferences, and limited startup capital. Some participants struggle to keep up with rapidly evolving technology. These threats necessitate mitigation strategies such as enhancing competitiveness through innovation, effective financial management, and equipping participants with technological knowledge.

During the coaching session, after delivering material on the growth mindset, practical simulations using case studies indicated improved understanding of

the importance of embracing failure as part of the learning process. Approximately 85% of participants successfully identified lessons from simulated business failures, reflecting a positive shift in mindset. Growth mindset materials and mentoring in the coaching align with the training model proposed by Yulastri, A. (2020).

Participants were also able to systematically analyze real cases, particularly in understanding market opportunities and business strategies. Entrepreneurial learning models in higher education should involve real case studies and business simulations to enhance students' analytical and creative abilities (Boldureanu et al., 2020). This aligns with coaching outcomes that demonstrate participants' improved case analysis skills.

In the role-playing and public speaking sessions, designed to develop communication, leadership, and networking skills, participants showed increased confidence. Around 83% of participants reported feeling more confident in public speaking after role-playing activities. They could present business ideas more clearly and persuasively. In entrepreneurship education, experiential learning approaches are essential to build entrepreneurial mindsets (Bécharde & Grégoire, 2005; Nabi et al., 2017).

The simulation and role-playing approaches in this coaching align with experiential learning methods recommended by these scholars. Bécharde & Grégoire (2005) and Nabi et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of entrepreneurship education in fostering positive impacts on entrepreneurial mindsets and skills. This coaching supports such views by increasing participants' confidence through simulation, role-playing, and mentoring.

In communication skills mastery, participants improved their persuasive communication abilities, particularly in influencing others and conveying business visions. They also began understanding leadership roles, such as making strategic decisions and motivating teams in business scenario simulations.

Final phase, monitoring and mentoring provided participants with intensive guidance to implement the skills learned during training. Results showed that most participants successfully applied their entrepreneurial skills in small business projects, such as digital marketing strategies or basic financial management. Reflecting on their progress during mentoring, most participants acknowledged increased self-awareness and motivation to continue learning. They also created improvement plans based on reflections, such as enhancing time management or expanding market targets. Most participants reported feeling more confident in independently developing their businesses while adhering to mentor guidance. Participants actively built professional networks, such as joining

entrepreneurship communities or leveraging social media for business promotion.

As highlighted by Avita et al. (2023), business development strategies in the digital transformation era emphasize technology use, such as e-commerce and social media, as foundational to enhancing competitiveness and relevance for trainees. This study reinforces findings that digital opportunities can be optimally utilized if participants understand market trends and leverage technology effectively.

Conclusion

The coaching activity based on the Smart Entrepreneur Model (SEM) has had a positive impact on building the entrepreneurial character of students. This program successfully enhanced students' positive mindset (growth mindset), communication skills, leadership, and strategic analysis abilities through a combination of training, business simulations, role-playing, and mentoring.

However, despite the positive results, there are still areas that need further attention to improve its effectiveness. Therefore, several recommendations for improvement and enhancement in the future include strengthening digital and technological facilities, personalizing mentoring to match the needs and types of businesses of the students. Additionally, it is necessary to develop more varied materials to better prepare students for complex business challenges. This program would be more optimal if it involved more practitioners and entrepreneurship experts from various sectors to provide a broader perspective.

With these improvements, the coaching activity can have a more significant and sustainable impact on students, not only during the program but also in the long term, as competent and innovative entrepreneurs in the digital era.

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