



DEVELOPING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS BASED ON INTERNSHIPS AND DIGITAL MARKETING LITERACY

Hari Mulyadi¹, Ikaputera Waspada², Asep Ridwan Lubis³

¹²³Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

Correspondence Email: harimulyadi@upi.edu

ABSTRACT

This research aims to develop digital-based young entrepreneurs (digitalpreneurs) through internship programs in creative industries and digital marketing literacy training. The problem behind this research is the low digital skills, work experience, and digital marketing knowledge among young entrepreneurs. The method used was an andragogy approach with training, discussion, and internship strategies. The research subjects were 20 young entrepreneurs from Karang Taruna Indonesia in Melong Village, South Cimahi District, Cimahi City. The results showed that the internship program and digital marketing literacy training can improve participants' knowledge, skills, and business experience in running a digital-based business.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Industry 4.0 era is characterized by increased connectivity and interaction between humans, machines, and other resources through information and communication technology (Herlinda, 2017). Technological developments have driven digital transformation in various business sectors, changing ways of working, communication, and consumer behavior patterns (McDonald & Rowsell-Jones, 2012). However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is still being felt by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Putri Anggia (2020) reported that 68% of MSMEs experienced a decline in sales, 12% had capital difficulties, and 10% faced distribution problems. This situation triggers the need for digitalization as a solution for businesses to survive and thrive. Young entrepreneurs in Melong Village, South Cimahi District face various challenges in developing their businesses, including low digital skills, limited work experience, and lack of digital marketing knowledge. Although most already own digital devices such as mobile phones and laptops, their utilization for business development is still not optimal.

The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has significantly changed the business landscape, especially in terms of marketing and consumer interaction. Digital marketing allows businesses to reach a wider audience at a more efficient cost than traditional methods (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). However, to capitalize on this potential, entrepreneurs need to have adequate digital literacy. Digital literacy encompasses the ability to locate, evaluate and utilize digital information effectively (Ng, 2012). Lack of digital literacy can be a significant obstacle for young entrepreneurs in developing their businesses in the digital era.

In addition to digital literacy, practical experience in the business world is also an important factor in the development of young entrepreneurs. Internship programs provide opportunities for individuals to gain hands-on experience in a real business environment, which can enhance their practical skills and knowledge (Gault, Leach, & Duey, 2010). Internships can also help young entrepreneurs build professional networks that are essential for their business growth. However, in many areas, including Kelurahan Melong, opportunities to join relevant internship programs are limited.

The integration of digital literacy and internship experience can be an effective strategy in empowering young entrepreneurs. By improving digital literacy, young entrepreneurs can leverage technology to optimize their business operations and marketing. Meanwhile, through internships, they can gain practical insights into business dynamics and build networks necessary for long-term success. Therefore, collaborative efforts between the government, educational institutions, and the private sector are needed to provide digital literacy training programs and internship opportunities for young entrepreneurs, especially in areas that are still lagging behind in terms of technology adoption.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research applies an andragogy approach that emphasizes participants' active participation in the learning process. The andragogy approach, which is focused on adult learning, emphasizes the importance of experience and active involvement of participants in the learning process (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2015). The research subjects were 20 young entrepreneurs who are members of Karang Taruna Indonesia in Melong Village, South Cimahi District. The selection of these subjects was based on the need to increase the capacity of young entrepreneurs in facing the challenges of the digital era.

The program is implemented through three main strategies:

1. **Training/Counseling:** This activity aims to improve participants' knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship and digital marketing. The training materials include basic concepts of entrepreneurship, digital marketing strategies, use of social media for business, and digital literacy. The training was conducted using participatory methods, where participants were invited to actively discuss and share experiences. According to research by Kamil (2010), participatory learning methods are effective in improving participants' understanding and skills.
2. **Discussion:** Discussion sessions were facilitated to encourage interaction between participants and collaborative learning. Discussion topics include challenges faced in running a business, effective marketing strategies, and utilization of digital technology in business. Group discussions allowed participants to share experiences, provide feedback, and find solutions to problems together. This approach is in line with andragogy principles that emphasize the importance of experience and collaboration in adult learning (Knowles et al., 2015).
3. **Creative Industry Internship:** The internship program is designed to provide participants with practical experience in a real business environment. Participants are placed in various creative industries in South Cimahi District for two months (August-September 2024). During the internship, participants are involved in various business activities, including production, marketing, and operational management. The internship provided an opportunity for participants to apply the knowledge they had gained during training and discussions, as well as develop practical skills relevant to their business field. According to research by Gault, Leach, and Duey (2010), internship experiences can improve participants' practical skills and job readiness.

Stages of program implementation include:

- **Problem Identification:** This stage involved collecting data on the challenges and needs of young entrepreneurs in Melong Village. The methods used included surveys, interviews, and observations. The data collected included information on the level of digital literacy, business experience, and obstacles faced in developing a business. The results of problem identification were used as the basis for designing a program that suits the needs of the participants.
- **Formation of the Implementation Team:** The implementation team consists of facilitators, mentors, and resource persons with expertise in entrepreneurship, digital marketing, and creative industries. Facilitators are responsible for program planning and coordination, mentors provide guidance and support to participants, while resource persons deliver training materials and share practical experiences. The formation of a competent and experienced implementation team is important to ensure the quality and success of the program.

- **Coordination with Related Parties:** Coordination is conducted with various parties, including local governments, creative industry associations, and local businesses. The purpose of coordination is to gain support, establish partnerships, and ensure the availability of internship places for participants. Cooperation with various parties allows the program to run more effectively and provide wider benefits to the community.
- **Training and Internship Implementation:** Training is conducted in the form of workshops, seminars, and practical sessions. After the training, participants take part in an internship program in a predetermined creative industry. During the internship, participants are accompanied by mentors who provide guidance and periodic evaluations. The implementation of the program is designed in such a way as to ensure integration between theory and practice, so that participants can develop comprehensive skills.
- **Evaluation and Monitoring:** Evaluations are conducted periodically to assess the progress and effectiveness of the program. Evaluation methods include observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Aspects evaluated include active participation of participants, increase in knowledge and skills, and application of skills acquired in their businesses. Monitoring is conducted to ensure the program is running according to plan and identify areas that require improvement. The results of evaluation and monitoring are used to make adjustments and improvements to the program in the future.

The internship program was carried out for two months (August-September 2024) in the creative industry of Cimahi Selatan District. The creative industry was chosen because this sector has high growth potential and is relevant to the interests and needs of young entrepreneurs. During the internship, participants are involved in various business activities, including production, marketing, and operational management. This experience is expected to improve participants' practical skills and understanding of business dynamics in the creative industry.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that the internship program and digital marketing literacy training succeeded in improving the capabilities of young entrepreneurs in several aspects:

1. Digital Literacy Improvement

This program helps participants optimize the use of digital devices they already have for business purposes. This is in line with Suryana's (2014) opinion that entrepreneurship is the ability to create something new and different.

2. Practical Experience

Through internships, participants gain hands-on experience in:

- o Understand the production process and product quality
- o Familiarity with technology and organizational methods
- o Understanding the product market
- o Identify and solve business problems

3. Digital Marketing Skills Development

Participants gained understanding and practical skills in marketing products digitally, in accordance with the demands of the Industrial Age 4.0 (Herlinda, 2017).

Discussion

Increasing digital literacy among young entrepreneurs is very important in facing increasingly fierce business competition in the digital era. According to research by Indrawati et al. (2020), digital literacy plays a significant role in improving the performance of young entrepreneurs. With good digital literacy skills, young entrepreneurs can utilize information technology to grow their business, such as using social media for marketing, conducting online transactions, and managing customer data effectively.

The practical experience gained through the internship program provides direct insight into day-to-day business operations. This is in line with the findings of Gault, Leach, and Duey (2010) who state that internship experiences can improve participants' practical skills and work readiness. Through internships, participants can understand market dynamics, production strategies, and effective business management. This experience also helps participants to identify and overcome problems that may arise in their business operations.

Digital marketing skills development is crucial in the Industry 4.0 era. According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), digital marketing allows businesses to reach a wider audience more cost-efficiently than traditional methods. With good digital marketing skills, young entrepreneurs can increase the visibility of their products, attract more customers, and ultimately increase sales.

Overall, the internship and digital marketing literacy training program has had a positive impact on improving the capabilities of young entrepreneurs. With better digital literacy, relevant practical experience, and proficient digital marketing skills, young entrepreneurs are better prepared to face business challenges in the digital era.

4. CONCLUSION

A youth entrepreneurship development program that integrates internships and digital marketing literacy has proven effective in improving the capabilities of young entrepreneurs. The combination of theoretical training and practical experience through internships has a significant positive impact on participants' knowledge, skills and experience in running a digital-based business.

Digital literacy training enables participants to understand and optimally utilize information technology in their business operations. According to Indrawati et al. (2020), improving digital literacy among young entrepreneurs plays an important role in adapting to technological developments and increasingly fierce market competition. With good digital literacy, young entrepreneurs can access the latest information, manage business data, and communicate effectively with customers through digital platforms.

The practical experience gained through an internship program provides first-hand insight into the dynamics of day-to-day business operations. Gault, Leach, and Duey (2010) state that internship experiences can improve participants' practical skills and work readiness. Through internships, participants can understand production processes, operational management, marketing strategies, and human resource management. This experience also helps participants to identify and overcome problems that may arise in their business operations.

The integration of digital literacy training and internship experience creates synergies that strengthen the capabilities of young entrepreneurs. The training provides the necessary theoretical knowledge base, while the internship provides a practical context for applying that knowledge. This combination allows participants to develop comprehensive skills, from business planning to the implementation of digital marketing strategies.

In addition, the program also contributed to the participants' increased confidence in running their businesses. With better knowledge and skills, young entrepreneurs feel more prepared and confident in facing business challenges in the digital era. This is in line with Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick's (2019) findings that a good understanding of digital marketing can increase the effectiveness of business strategies and competitiveness in the market.

Overall, the internship-based youth entrepreneur development program and digital marketing literacy made a significant contribution in equipping young entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills and experience needed to be successful in running digital-based businesses. Therefore, it is recommended that similar programs continue to be developed and implemented widely to support the growth and sustainability of young entrepreneurs in the digital era.

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