

Entrepreneurship for Language Students: A Case at English Letters Department of Universitas Ma Chung

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the development of a set of elective concentration named Entrepreneurship for Language Students at Universitas Ma Chung. It starts with the rationale of developing the program. Then, it discusses the challenges in delivering the course, which includes the necessary qualifications of the lecturers, and the students' readiness. To make concurrent improvement, the lecturers attended training and obtained certification to enhance their knowledge of entrepreneurship. After two detailed syllabuses are presented, the paper proceeds with comparison to other universities which also conduct the entrepreneurship program. At least, a few studies have been indicating several impediments to the entrepreneurship courses. The paper ends with a future perspective that considers the current condition and the ever-changing business landscape.

INTRODUCTION

Universitas Ma Chung, founded in 2007, has long featured entrepreneurship as one of its characteristics. It is the spirit of entrepreneurship, which was strongly embodied in many of its founders, that has enabled them to gather enough funding and strong will to establish a university; thus, it is understandable that they aspire to instill that spirit in the young generation of Indonesia who study at Universitas Ma Chung. The spirit is also aligned with Indonesian government's intention to strengthen entrepreneurial spirit in the university graduates so that instead of seeking for job opportunities they would create jobs for others. At Universitas Ma Chung on the institutional level, entrepreneurship is one of the compulsory courses worth 2 credit hours for every department. In addition to Mandarin and English, it has armed the graduates with a considerable entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. Thus, every student of Universitas Ma Chung must take these courses.

The English Letters department of the university decided to strengthen even more the entrepreneurship skills in its students. So, at the beginning of 2018 a curriculum for entrepreneurship concentration was created and the courses began to be offered at the odd semester of 2018– 2019 in addition to the existing compulsory 2-credit hour course. The entrepreneurship concentration packs 20 credit hours with the following classes: Introduction to Graphic Design, Public Speaking; Entrepreneurship for Language Students, Introduction to Communication; Leadership for Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurship Project.

The concentration was deemed important for preparing the young generation for the challenges in the real-world jobs. It was believed that entrepreneurship would not only teach them how to promote and sell products or service but also instill in them creativity, resilience, grit, and interpersonal skills. In fact, a recent study by Selvaratnam (2021) showed that students who were taught entrepreneurship subjects learned the values of perseverance, collaboration, and strategic thinking. In another study, Sobir & Syah (2022) found good impact of an entrepreneurship course featuring 4C (Collect, Connect, Create, Contribute) on the cognitive and psychomotor skills of the students. These findings provide empirical support to the rationale of establishing the Entrepreneurship concentration.

THE COURSES

By the end of 4th semester, students can choose one of two different concentrations, namely Entrepreneurship for Language Students and Tourism. Usually, students taking Entrepreneurship for Language Students have always been fewer than those who take Tourism concentration. Those who take the former then proceeds to take these following subjects:

TABLE 1. The Courses

Courses	Credit hours
Introduction to Communication	2
Introduction to Graphic Design	2
Public Speaking	4
Entrepreneurship for Language Students	4
Leadership for Entrepreneurship	4
Entrepreneurship Projects	4

The main objective of Introduction to Graphic Design is to teach the students the basic knowledge and skills of designing logos, pictures, banners, and brochures. These skills are deemed useful for them when it comes to designing their visuals for their promotion. The next subject, Public Speaking, is aimed to equip them with techniques for making effective and engaging presentation and other types of public speaking. The next subject, Entrepreneurship for Language Students, deepens their knowledge about the fundamental aspects of entrepreneurship. Students learn the basic concepts of entrepreneurship, identification of market, marketing (including digital marketing), promotion, market research, branding, business plan, recruitment, leadership, and Business Model Canvass (BMC). This course is offered at the same semester as Leadership for Entrepreneurship, which introduces the concepts of leadership that suits the entrepreneurial world. Finally, they finish off the whole package by taking Entrepreneurship Project class which gives them hands-on experience in setting up a small business and dealing with all the related aspects and tasks.

The Challenges

The English Letters Department had 7 lecturers, three of whom are in the field of literature, three in English language education, and one in tourism. So, it was obvious that one of the challenges was the absence of lecturers who could teach entrepreneurship. Thus, for the new concentration to start running, a decision was made to organize the lecturers as shown in the following table:

TABLE 2. The Courses and The Lecturers

Course	Lecturer
Introduction to Graphic Design	A full-time lecturer from Design and Visual Communication department from Universitas Ma Chung
Introduction to Communication	A full-time lecturer of English Letters department of Universitas Ma Chung
Public Speaking	A full-time lecturer of English Letters department of Universitas Ma Chung
Entrepreneurship for Language Students	A full-time lecturer of English Letters department of Universitas Ma Chung
Leadership for Entrepreneurship	A full-time lecturer of English Letters department of Universitas Ma Chung
Entrepreneurship Project	Two full-time lecturers of English Letters department of Universitas Ma Chung

These full-time lecturers then learned their respective courses independently to the point of acquiring the competence for teaching the courses. While this was arguably not an ideal condition, it was also a proof that they were all committed to teaching entrepreneurship by going all the way to equip themselves with the new science. Their efforts to learn the new course included reading books on entrepreneurship, finding online materials from the Internet and studying them on their own, and learning from YouTube. This complies with Article 1 paragraph 10 of the Law number 14 years 2005 about Teachers and Lecturers which states that lecturers must have the necessary competence to do their professional work.

Later in 2021, The English Letters department was fortunate enough to secure a funding in the PKKM program worth 1.03 billion rupiah. Some of the fund was used to send two of its lecturers to internationally-acknowledged courses that refined their knowledge and skills in teaching entrepreneurship and leadership courses. The courses, which lasted 6 weeks, were Business Development from Business School at University of Amsterdam, and Business Leadership from Harvard University. At the end of the programs, certificates of completion were awarded to the two lecturers, making them legally entitled to teach entrepreneurship courses at Universitas Ma Chung. The completion of the courses by the lecturers complies with the regulation stated in Article 28 paragraph 3 and 9 by the Minister Of Education And Culture number 3 year 2020 on The National Standard For Higher Education. The paragraphs of the article essentially postulate that lecturers with certificates of competence are entitled to teach the courses deemed relevant to the department/study program.

Another challenge lies in the fact that most students taking the course did not have an operational business which could have enabled them to apply the entrepreneurship principles to their own business operations. Most had to quickly make impromptu businesses like selling game tokens, selling accessories, selling drawing through online network, and the like. On the other hand, this could be regarded as an ideal starting point because all the course topics are suitable for persons who have to start a business from scratch. At some points during the course, however, it was felt that with such meagre business operations, the students could hardly apply the business principles to a full extent. Other institutions which also conduct similar courses are more fortunate to have students who have been running businesses of their own. Another department at Universitas Ma Chung also have the students do internship at some established private businesses.

The Syllabus

Only two syllabuses, namely, Entrepreneurship for Language Students and Entrepreneurship Project, are presented here as they are considered to represent the core topics of entrepreneurship. The courses are worth 4-credit hours; the class meets twice a week, with each meeting lasting 150 minutes.

TABLE 3a. The Syllabus of Entrepreneurship for Language Students

Meeting	Topics	Activities
1	Introduction to the concept of entrepreneurship	Students listen to the lecturer's explanation, then engage in question answer session.
2-3	Choosing products and market	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session. Students are assigned to decide on a certain product/service, and decide the suitable market type.
3	Marketing	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session. Students present briefly their products and their steps for marketing them.
4	Networking	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session.
5	Market Research	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session. They are then assigned to conduct a small survey as part of a market research.
6	Obtaining Capital/Funding	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session. Students share their ideas about how to obtain funding.

Meeting	Topics	Activities
7	Creating websites	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session. Students are assigned to create their own websites.
8	Content writing	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session. Students are assigned to practice writing their own content.
9	Copywriting	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session.
10	Branding and brand management	Students do an individual assignment of creating their copywriting. Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session.
11	Recruiting workers	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session. Students engage in a simulated job interview and apply the principles they have learned.
12	Leadership	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session. Students discuss cases of leadership.
13	Business Plan and Pitch Deck	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation (delivered through Moodle LMS) before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session.
14	Final Examination	Students make a preliminary draft of a business plan or pitch deck. Students present their written business plans or present orally their pitch deck.

TABLE 3b. The Syllabus of Entrepreneurship Project

Meeting	Topics	Activities
1	Introduction to the concept of project	Students listen to the lecturer's explanation, then engage in question answer session.
2-3	Designing products/services	Students decide on their product/service and then present it to the class for feedback. Students are assigned to decide on a certain product/service, and decide the suitable market type.
4-5	Minimum Viable Product	Students continue designing and refining their product/service and then build an MVP. Students gather potential customers' responses toward the MVP.
6	Quiz	Students do a small test/quiz about the topics they have been learning.
7-8	Students learn Business Model Canvas	Students watch a recorded video of the lecturer's explanation before class, and then discuss the topic more deeply with the lecturer in the class session.
9-11	Elements of BMC	Students learn and practice 3 elements of BMC (Value propositions; Key activities; Customer segments)
12-14	Elements of BMC	Students learn and practice 3 elements of BMC (Distribution channel; Key resources; Key partners)
15-17	Elements of BMC	Students learn and practice 3 elements of BMC (Revenue streams; Customer relationship; Cost structure)
18	Case Method	Students discuss to offer solutions to actual cases
19-20	Competitor Analysis	Students learn and apply the technique of competitor analysis
21	Introduction to Digital Marketing	Students learn the introduction to digital marketing
22- 23	Building Websites and Measuring Performance	Students build their websites, determine KPI, and measure their effectiveness
24	Search Engine Optimization	Students learn SEO and practice making materials that are SEO-friendly
25 - 26	Social media	Students learn the power of social media for business
27	Performance Marketing	Students learn performance marketing and apply it.

Meeting	Topics	Activities
28 - 30	Email and Content Marketing	Students learn email and content marketing and apply the principles.
31	Online PR	Students learn online PR and apply the principles
32	Project-Based Examination	Students present their entrepreneurship project.

Students' opinions

It was deemed wise to obtain some opinions from graduates' students who had taken the entrepreneurship courses and are currently doing their respective jobs in the real world. A brief survey was conducted early in this year, and below are some of their opinions.

"During my study at the English Letters department of Universitas Ma Chung, I had the opportunities to learn not only English but also communication, Mandarin, networking, and entrepreneurship. The knowledge I gained from these courses is applicable to my current job because communication in business is very important."

"The courses train us to be creative-preneurs who can communicate through English. The area has yet to be explored further."

"Entrepreneurship course is important but it should be related to languages. Thus, it can be related to translation business or branding agencies."

Essentially, our graduates appreciate the entrepreneurship courses but feel that the courses should be developed further with a view to making them relevant to graduates of language major. The survey also indicated that around 12% of the graduates feel that the entrepreneurship courses are suitable for their work. This figure is admittedly not substantial but at least it does indicate the usefulness of entrepreneurship courses for the graduates' careers.

Critiquing the Course

When it comes to evaluating the entrepreneurship courses that we have been teaching, there is a need to look to other institutions which have been conducting the same course. Widjatmaka and Praptiwi (2022) conducted an evaluation of the entrepreneurship course at their university and identified several weaknesses, which include weak student-centered learning duo to lack of practical experience, meager use of rubrics in the assessment phase, weak collaboration with a business incubation unit, lack of collaboration with the actual business world, and lack of strong management of the course at the university level. In another study, Taufik and Akmal (2019) also found similar findings at their college, reporting students' lack of enthusiasm, lack of actual practice, and difficulty in starting their businesses as factors that hinder the entrepreneurship course. The most recent study by Baharudin, Yahya, and Elpisah (2024) also shows similar weaknesses at their institution, which includes lack pf practice hours, unsupportive learning environment, and low readiness of the students in terms of their business experience.

The foregoing discussion suggests that the entrepreneurship courses for our language students fare a little better than those other institutions. Despite being small, the students have a stronger drive to study the new course. The main concern seems to be in the competence and experience of those lecturers assigned to teach the courses, and more connection to business network that would give the students more intensive hands-on practice of starting a business and making it sustainable.

Regarding the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka scheme (MBKM), the Entrepreneurship concentration has matched one of its requirements, namely, the Case Method and Team-Based Project. Each course in the Entrepreneurship concentration has the students solve actual cases in a class discussion, and complete a plan for a business project with their groups to be presented at the Final Examination.

Further development

On a global level, entrepreneurship has undergone significant changes. As Ratten (2023) argued, the rapid advance of digital technology and digital communication has changed the ways people communicate with each other. The globalized network has also opened new venues for offering goods or services and for buying and selling. The new landscape has given birth to new forms of businesses like born global and start-ups. In a nutshell, these changes have also changed the concept of entrepreneurship. It is now defined to cover all business venture done by individuals, corporates, or social communities. A number of different forms of entrepreneurship have also come into existence, which include artisan, base of the pyramid, corporate, COVID-19, craft, creative, cultural, developing countries, digital, education, emerging economics, entrepreneurial ecosystem, environmental, ethnic, family, female, fitness, fugal, gender, governmental, health, heritage, immigrant, international, LGBT, minority, music, poverty, small business, social, sport, sustainable, technological, and venture financing (Ratten, 2023).

A plan has been laid out to refine the existing entrepreneurship courses. The plan includes certification for other lecturers, and additional topics in the syllabus in keeping with the constant changes in the business world. The latter takes the form of adding topics like Business Model Canvass and digital marketing. Another plan is concerned with the quality of the course content and the teaching methods. A panel of experts who are experienced business lecturers and practitioners will be invited to evaluate the courses. The scope of the evaluation will cover the topics, the learning materials (textbooks and other Internet-based materials), the teaching methods, and the evaluation of the students' progress.

In keeping with the spirit of Liberated Learning (Merdeka Belajar), three of the courses, namely Entrepreneurship for Language Students, Leadership for Entrepreneurship, and Entrepreneurship Project, have incorporated case-study method and team-based project as the learning activities. The two methods promote a higher degree of students' active learning because they must actively seek solutions to the cases presented, voice their opinions, and engage in a teamwork to present their business ideas in a pitch deck presentation and business plan.

Conclusion

The paper has presented the development of Entrepreneurship course at the English Letters Study Program at Universitas Ma Chung. It was developed as an initiative to strengthen the students' entrepreneurial skills, which is in line with the spirit of the founding fathers of Universitas Ma Chung and accords with the government's encouragement toward creating jobs. Despite the lack of lecturers who specialize in entrepreneurship, the program began to be operational in 2018. The lecturers equipped themselves with the necessary knowledge of entrepreneurship and later attended formal training programs from prominent overseas universities. The syllabuses of two courses were also presented, followed by a self-evaluating discussion about the effectiveness of the course. Finally, an outlook for the future development was presented with a view to improving the course and bringing it in alignment with the current global development of entrepreneurship.

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