Creation of a Mudra batik business in the Wirausaha Merdeka Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of the Wirausaha Merdeka program was motivated by the rising unemployment rate in Indonesia, which prompted the government to make a breakthrough by encouraging student interest and enthusiasm in entrepreneurship, instilling a mindset and fundamental competencies in the field of entrepreneurship, encouraging more entrepreneurial experience among students, boosting student employability and assisting in the development of university graduates' capacity and quality. The method used is a combination of learning by doing, training, and mental empowerment of student business. The activities were carried out in an engaging, participatory manner, with Field Supervisors (DPL) and one Mentor from UMKM partners accompanying each group of five students. In conclusion, the Wirausaha Merdeka program can effectively increase motivation, increase competence and foster entrepreneurial interest. There were significant improvements both before and after the Wirausaha Merdeka program was implemented.

Keywords
Batik
Business creation
Program
Wirausaha merdeka

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is one of the biggest problems that every country always faces, especially developing countries like Indonesia (Prakoso, 2020). This is due to an imbalance between the number of employees and available employment possibilities, where the workforce is rising yet there are very few jobs available (Indriyani & Subowo, 2019). Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of unemployed in Indonesia in August 2022 reached 8.4 million
people. According to education level, unemployment was dominated by Vocational High Schools (SMK) at 9.42%, followed by High Schools (SMA) at 8.57%, Junior High School (SMP) at 5.95%, Undergraduate at 4.80%, Diploma at 4.59%, and Elementary School and below 3.59% (BPS, 2022).

One of the reasons for the increasing number of unemployed in Indonesia is the high rate of educated unemployment (Lestyorini & Wibowo, 2022). The high rate of educated unemployment is caused by the many challenges faced by students after they graduate, including not having the skills, knowledge, and competencies in work (low employability rate), and also the unavailability of jobs compared to the number of graduates each year (Arsyad et al., 2023). In addition to limited employment opportunities, other factors such as skills mismatch with the criteria of labor market needs can affect the level of educated unemployment (Iskandar & Sudarwadi, 2020; Maryati, 2015; Setyanti & Finuliyah, 2022; Srijahyuni, 2021).

One way to reduce the high unemployment rate among educated graduates is to develop an interest in entrepreneurship as early as possible. The interest in entrepreneurship can be increased through entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurial interest in this case is defined as an individual’s willingness to demonstrate entrepreneurial behavior, engage in entrepreneurial activities, become an entrepreneur, or build new businesses (Komara & Bagus Setiawan, 2020; Sholeh & Yusuf, 2020). Government support is required to improve student employability rates and to encourage the development of independent entrepreneurial ventures to overcome these issues.

Observing these issues is extremely crucial to the government’s MBKM program, particularly the Wirausaha Merdeka program. The Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta is one of the Universities implementing the Wirausaha Merdeka Program (WMK) as appointed by the Executive of the Wirausaha Merdeka Center in 2022. Entrepreneurial activities at UMS were attended by 876 student participants from 68 universities throughout Indonesia who joined the WMK program (A. Sulistyanto, Suranto, 2022). Wirausaha Merdeka is part of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program which aims to provide opportunities for students to learn and develop themselves as potential entrepreneurs through activities outside of class (Ardini et al., 2021). As a result, students will have the chance to develop their managerial, soft, and entrepreneurial abilities, as well as support more student entrepreneurship experience. Entrepreneurial MBKM learning is specifically designed to help young people develop their entrepreneurial potential which is based on the belief that entrepreneurship is a skill that can truly be learned and developed (Permatasari & Agustina, 2018; Suwinardi, 2019; Tan & Prasastyo, 2019). The Wirausaha Merdeka Program invites students to collaborate, take action, and serve the country in the economic development of Indonesian society (Setyobakti et al., 2022).

The Wirausaha Merdeka program is a program initiated by the Ministry of Education and aims to encourage student interest and enthusiasm in entrepreneurship, instill a mindset and fundamental competencies in the field of entrepreneurship, encourage more entrepreneurial experience among students, improve student employability, and assist college students to increase their capacity and quality (Chayo et al., 2022). Through the Wirausaha Merdeka program, it is expected that students, particularly those who have completed this program, will be able to become entrepreneurs in the future and create a large number of employment opportunities for the community and support government efforts to increase the community’s potential to achieve a higher standard of living. The purpose of this activity is to follow the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) numbers 4 and 8, namely quality education, decent work, and economic growth (Khalil & Aras, 2018).

**METHOD**

The method of implementing the Wirausaha Merdeka program is a combination of learning by doing, training, and mental empowerment of student businesses. Learning by doing is carried out to provide an understanding of the importance of students carrying out direct business actions and making real products. Training is a direct activity of doing business from the start of making product plans, production, packaging, and marketing (A. Sulistyanto, Suranto, 2022). Empowerment is carried out to explore the potential and strengthen directly doing business. The activities are carried out in an interactive participatory manner where students per group consisting of 5 people are accompanied by Field Supervisors (DPL) and also 1 Mentor from UMKM partners. The output of the Wirausaha Merdeka Program is in the form of a business plan and marketable products. The sequence of activities for the Wirausaha Merdeka program can be seen in Figure 1.

![Figure 1](https://example.com/figure1.png)

**Figure 1.** The sequence of activities for the Wirausaha Merdeka program
The implementation period for the Wirausaha Merdeka program was from September 3 to December 15, 2022. The Wirausaha Merdeka program was implemented over four months, with four stages: 100 hours of workshops and training, 70 hours of apprenticeship at UMKM, 70 hours of manufacturing product prototypes, and 40 hours of product marketing. The event took place in four different sites: The major venue for the Wirausaha Merdeka implementation was at the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta where a variety of public events ranging from acceptance administration activities, talk shows, and the final close were held. The second location was PT. Danar Hadi Batiks, where an internship was held in October. The product was manufactured at the home of one of our group members in Dibal village, RT03/08 Ngemplak, Boyolali as the third location. As a closing program for this activity, the fourth location of the business expo activities was separated into two locations: EXPO 1 took place at the Colomadu District Office, and EXPO 2 took place at GOR Campus 2 Muhammadiyah University Surakarta.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Wirausaha Merdeka Internship Program in 2022 took place from 3 September 2022 to 15 December 2022. The activities carried out in the first month were workshops that lasted 4 (four) weeks and were held from 3 September to 28 September 2022 offline at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, namely in the Siti Walidah Main Building and the Postgraduate Building, and online through the Zoom Meeting media from 8 AM to 3.40 PM. This workshop is one of a series of Free Entrepreneur activities where Free Entrepreneur participants were given the material on methods, tips, and tricks, as well as steps to starting a business by presenters who are experts in their fields. The workshop was packed with various materials, namely about SWOT, BMC, and making their own Business Plan. Furthermore, participants received material on how to determine product cost and cost of goods sold. Participants were also given some practice in using digital marketing and social media. Students were then asked to create advertisements on various platforms, for example on Tiktok and Shopee.

In the workshop activities held in September, the authors gained new knowledge and experience from various resource persons or presenters who are experts in their fields. In this series, the authors found a variety of resources and motivations for starting, operating, and even growing a business. By participating in this workshop activity, participants gain a new perspective and acquire abilities that will help them deal with challenges in the future (Ashlihah Nanik Tri; Asaroh, Sefina Isna, 2021; Putra et al., 2021; Wibowo et al., 2022). The materials given and taught include strategies such as understanding the company market through SWOT analysis and analyzing consumer demands, as well as business development through the social media market and how to survive in the global industry and digital market. They were also taught about having the bravery to start a business, having the knowledge to grow it, having a consistent attitude in running a business, working hard, and having faith in Allah as the giver of sustenance. Seminar workshop activities are presented in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Workshop Seminar Activities](image-url)
HRD, Accounting, and Warehouse divisions. Observation, work practice, data recording, data input, learning batik production, written batik practice, and documentation are the primary activities at PT. Danar Hadi batik. We were allowed to directly practice making written batik assisted by employees in the production department at PT. Danar Hadi Batik. Several types of batik are produced including written batik, stamped batik, and combinations. PT. Danar Hadi Batik is one of the oldest and most well-known batik businesses in the city of Solo. Batik Danar Hadi Solo has 19 stores spread around Indonesia and has even entered global export markets because of its quality and consistency. There is a business idea from PT. Batik Danar Hadi which the author implements as a prototype to then become a business product.

During the UMKM internship activities, the author obtains firsthand knowledge of what the real world of work is like, as well as fresh insights and skills that may be applied later in the workplace. Most of this experience is not earned through lectures. Experience is knowledge or skills that have been dominated by learning and are obtained intentionally. In facing the world of work in the future, the authors conclude that soft skills and hard skills are needed. The soft skills needed to become competent resources later are leadership, problem-solving, time management, organizational management, critical thinking, teamwork, the ability to identify business opportunities and threats, marketing strategy planning, and creativity. As for hard skills, you need to be able to do work according to your field and expertise (Arisandi et al., 2022; Aswita, 2022; Firmansyah et al., 2022; Waskito et al., 2022). Internship activities are presented in Figure 3.

The activities carried out in the third month were product prototyping. The first step was to create a business proposal based on the group’s agreement and present it to the UMKM supervisor at PT. Batik Danar Hadi to solicit feedback on the product to be created. Following that, we presented it at a pitching activity hosted by Independent Entrepreneurs to see how feasible the product was so that funding according to the decision could be given. After that, we innovated fashion products made from batik combined with the current fashion trend, namely tote bags. Mudra Batik is a batik business that we have created which focuses on making tote bags with a combination of batik motifs. The tote bags developed serve two functions, mainly as a tote bag and a backpack, allowing them to be paired for a variety of styles. Our tote bag’s multiple compartments add to its usefulness since, in addition to being able to accommodate a lot of stuff, it also makes things neater and more organized. Our products are also combined with batik which adds a traditional impression as a form of cultural preservation but still looks contemporary and keeps up with the times. In the production process, we looked for our materials and worked with connection to sew them. The sales strategy used was online and offline. We implemented online sales through the Pre Order system, Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook, and Shopee. Offline sales were implemented through Expo activities held by the organizers of the Wirausaha Merdeka program. The product prototype is presented in Figure 4.
In the fourth month, there were product marketing expo activities. This expo program was held for 4 days, namely on December 10 to December 14, 2022, located at the Colomadu District Office and GOR FEB UMS. This expo activity was carried out to advertise and promote our group’s creative products, notably Mudra Batik, to consumers who visited our stand. The committee that visits the participant’s stand will also write an evaluation of any innovative products that are sold. The result of the expo was a significant increase in sales of innovative products made by students, especially Mudra Batik products.

The Wirausaha Merdeka Expo was able to give the author new experience in the first steps of opening a business. The author experienced firsthand the stages of equipment preparation, sales execution, and direct interaction with customers. The new experience in direct marketing is also a new thing that the author gets in this activity. Every day’s activities can be used as an evaluation the next day in terms of preparation, marketing, and product processing. In addition to the benefits, the other thing that the author obtained at the expo was an initial experience in opening a real business and market execution. Self-management and HR in dealing with problems that suddenly arise can be a test in starting a business. Product expo sales activities are presented in Figure 5.

There was considerable development between before and after the Wirausaha Merdeka program was implemented following every stage of activity. The MBKM Wirausaha Merdeka program has been proven to increase student interest in entrepreneurship (Darwis et al., 2021; Gohae, 2020; Walyuningsih, 2020). Students who have completed the Wirausaha Merdeka program can finally understand the purpose of the activity and state that they are ready to become an entrepreneur because, in principle, students have been provided with the knowledge and direct experience of
becoming an entrepreneur. Therefore, students can express a commitment to building a business in the future and meeting socio-economic and educational challenges in society.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Wirausaha Merdeka Program by the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta which was held in 2022 and was passed by students for four months has yielded results. As a result of business plan learning activities such as workshop seminars, UMKM internships, and product prototyping, students can analyze SWOT, and BMC, and create their business plans. Students also gained new experience by directly experiencing the processes of equipment preparation, sales execution, and direct engagement with customers, and students can sell their products both online and offline through expo activities. It can be concluded that the Wirausaha Merdeka program can effectively increase motivation and competence as well as foster entrepreneurial interest. It was found that there were significant developments before and after implementing the Wirausaha Merdeka program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you to WMK Merdeka Campus Center, WMK Muhammadiyah University Surakarta, all training and mentoring instructors, Field Supervisors, UMKM Mentors and PT. Batik Danar Hadi and all parties involved in the continuation of the Wirausaha Merdeka program.

REFERENCES


