

Training to Build a Creative and Innovative Young Entrepreneur Mindset

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ABSTRACT

The community service activity Training to Build a Creative and Innovative Entrepreneurial Mindset for Young Entrepreneurs aimed to enhance innovation and creativity among beginner entrepreneurs in Banda Aceh. The program involved 100 participants and was conducted using the service learning method, which included practical sessions, group discussions, and business simulations. Pre-test and post-test evaluations showed an average improvement of 40% in understanding innovation concepts, technology adoption, and strategic business planning. Despite challenges such as limited digital infrastructure, the results demonstrated that participants were able to develop innovation-driven business plans. This program contributes to achieving the SDGs, particularly in the areas of decent work and economic growth, as well as industry, innovation, and infrastructure. It is hoped that this activity can serve as a model for future community service programs focused on entrepreneurial development.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is undergoing a significant transformation in the era of globalization driven by the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Mardiana et al., 2024). Digitalization, automation, and technological innovation create new opportunities and challenges for entrepreneurs, especially the younger generation (Fossen & Sorgner, 2021; Huda, 2021; Mavlutova et al., 2020; Tugiah & Jamilus, 2022). Around the world, the development of young entrepreneurs is the backbone of

driving a sustainable, creative, and innovative economy (Chauhan & Aggarwal, 2017; Prajanti et al., 2021; Riswanto et al., 2023; Shkabatur et al., 2022; Utami et al., 2023). However, amid this rapid change, many budding entrepreneurs still experience obstacles in developing a creative and innovative entrepreneurial mindset (Afshan et al., 2021; Saputri & Himam, 2015). Such constraints include limited access to structured entrepreneurship training, lack of knowledge about innovation strategies, as well as difficulties adapting technology in business (Aulia et al., 2023; Hadjimanolis, 1999; Rajagukguk, 2024; Talegeta, 2012).

In Indonesia, this problem is in line with the UN targets related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially point 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and point 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) (Amornkitvikai & Pholphirul, 2023; Moya-Clemente et al., 2020; Wartoyo & Haida, 2023). According to Wahyudi et al. (2024), budding entrepreneurs play an essential role in job creation and innovation, but they often need help to utilize this potential optimally. That requires immediate and effective intervention, given the critical role of young entrepreneurs in realizing inclusive and sustainable economic growth (Davis, 2002; Kebede, 2023). The gap between the potential and capabilities of budding entrepreneurs needs to be addressed through new approaches that are more relevant and technology-based (Ahn et al., 2022; Halim, Anggraeni, et al., 2024).

Theoretical studies show that the development of a creative and innovative mindset in entrepreneurship is strongly influenced by targeted and quality training (Cui et al., 2021; McGrath & MacMillan, 2000; Roffe, 1999). Recent studies have revealed that young entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial training and mentorship tend to adapt more quickly to new technologies and have higher innovation capabilities (Eliakis et al., 2020; Halim, Kesuma, & Siregar, 2023; Halim, Kesuma, Siregar, Amir, et al., 2024; Mulyany et al., 2023; Renko et al., 2009). Publications of previous community service activities also support the importance of entrepreneurship training targeting increased creativity and innovation (Halim, Kesuma, Siregar, Faisal, et al., 2024; Halim, Kesuma, Siregar, Riyaldi, et al., 2023; Halim, Kesuma, Siregar, Syahrizal, et al., 2023; Halim, Novindra, Maisaroh, Fadhil, et al., 2024; Halim, Permata, Kesuma, Siregar, et al., 2024; Halim, Ramadhani, Kadriadi, Aziz, et al., 2024; Riyaldi et al., 2024; Yusrizal et al., 2024). However, gaps are still evident in adopting technology and implementing innovative strategies in start-up businesses, emphasizing the need for immediate solutions.

To answer this problem, the training offered in this community service activity brings a new approach by combining the concepts of innovative entrepreneurship and technology utilization in business. This activity provides theoretical understanding and directs participants to practical application through technology-based simulations and case studies on the needs of today's business world.

This service activity aims to build the creative and innovative mindset of young entrepreneurs so that they can compete in the digital era by utilizing technology and innovative strategies. This article aims to document the process and results of the training and provide a scientific contribution to the development of science in the fields of entrepreneurship and technology. In addition, this article contributes to the achievement of SDG goals, especially in creating inclusive economic growth and encouraging innovation among young entrepreneurs.

2. Methods

The target community in this community service activity is 100 young budding entrepreneurs. These participants come from creative economy backgrounds, mainly in the early stages of business development. These budding entrepreneurs face challenges in building a creative and innovative mindset, especially related to the utilization of technology in their business. Their involvement in this activity is as direct beneficiaries of the training, where they will follow a series of activities to increase their entrepreneurial capacity.

This activity involves several institutions and experts who are essential in implementing the training. First, the Inkubator Kewirausahaan Universitas Syiah Kuala and Pusat Riset Komunikasi Pemasaran, Pariwisata, dan Ekonomi Kreatif Universitas Syiah Kuala are responsible for planning and implementing activities. Second, the USK Press and Program Studi Ekonomi Islam, Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Syiah Kuala, provided facilities and academic support. Third, Unit Inkubasi, Hilirisasi, dan Komersialisasi (IHK) FTIP Universitas Padjadjaran contributed through experts, namely Dr. In-In Hanidah, S.TP., M.Si., who has expertise in business and technology innovation.



Figure 1. Speaker Present the training material

Implementing this service activity uses a service learning approach, which emphasizes learning through direct practice (Agus Afandi et al., 2022). Activities are divided into several stages:

1. Preparation Stage: Identifying the needs of participants through initial surveys and discussions to understand their constraints in innovating.
2. Implementation Stage: Training sessions consist of theoretical material on creative and innovative entrepreneurial mindsets, case studies, and business simulations. This approach aims to strengthen participants' ability to develop creative and innovative ideas relevant to market needs.
3. Evaluation Stage: Participants were asked to create a business plan based on the material provided, which was then evaluated by the training team to measure their understanding and application of innovative entrepreneurship concepts.

In this activity, participants were introduced to several key concepts of innovative entrepreneurship, including digital technology in marketing and business management. Social media, e-commerce, and marketing automation were the main focus introduced to help budding entrepreneurs improve their competitiveness in the digital era.

Some instruments used in this activity include training modules, case studies, and evaluation tools such as pre-test and post-test questionnaires. Other materials used include presentation materials on entrepreneurial innovation, technology-based business simulation tools, and practical guidance on using digital media for business.



Figure 2. Awarding of certificates of appreciation to speaker

Data was collected through two main methods. First, questionnaires were given to participants before and after the training to measure the improvement of their knowledge and skills. Second, direct observation of the participants' active participation during the activities, including their interaction in business simulations and group discussions.

The success of this service activity is measured based on several leading indicators, namely:

1. Increased participants' understanding of creative and innovative entrepreneurship (measured through pre-test and post-test results).
2. Participants' ability to develop innovation-based business plans that can be applied in their business fields.
3. Participants' active participation level in training sessions and discussions.

The data obtained were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results of the pre-test and post-test questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to see the increase in participants' knowledge. Meanwhile, qualitative data from participants' observations and business plans were analyzed thematically to evaluate participants' understanding of applying the concepts taught.

3. Result and Discussion

The entrepreneurship training aims to build a creative and innovative mindset among young budding entrepreneurs. The training results showed a significant increase in participants' understanding and ability to apply the concept of innovation in their businesses. Based on the analysis of the pre-test and post-test results, the average increase in participants' understanding reached 40%, as shown in Figure 3 below.

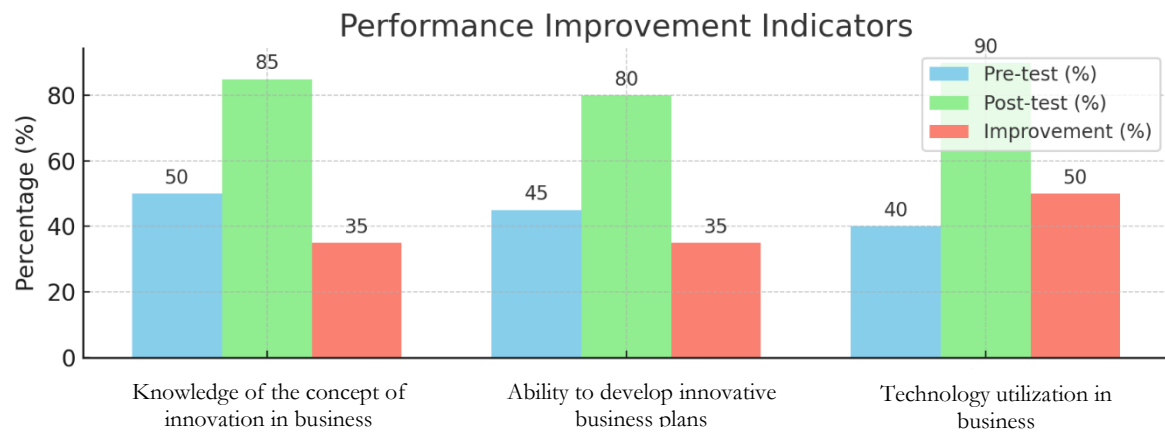


Figure 3. Data on the improvement of participants' knowledge

In addition, 85% of participants were able to develop an innovation-based business plan that utilizes technology by the material provided during the training. The observation results also showed the participants' high level of active participation, especially in simulation sessions and group discussions. The increase in participants' understanding from the pre-test and post-test results shows the effectiveness of the service learning-based training method in this activity. These results align with previous research showing that entrepreneurship training accompanied by case studies and business simulations can increase the creativity and innovation of young entrepreneurs (Adedeji et al., 2020; Fox et al., 2018; Rybnicek et al., 2015).

One significant success that can be used as a best practice is integrating digital technology, such as social media and e-commerce, in developing business plans. That improved participants' understanding of how technology can support their business innovation. This success contributes to the achievement of SDGs, especially points 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) because they can improve the skills of young entrepreneurs in creating innovative and sustainable businesses.

Compared to the service activities reported by Mulyany et al. (2023), which also focus on developing budding entrepreneurship, this training approach has advantages in utilizing technology-based simulations. The study reported that its service activities relied solely on lectures and discussions, resulting in lower knowledge gains than approaches involving hands-on practice. However, one of the obstacles faced in this activity was the limited training time, which made some participants need further assistance in implementing their business plans. In addition, participants limited access to digital infrastructure in their areas also posed a challenge to further application of the technology. These constraints are logical and supported by the literature, which shows that digital infrastructure barriers are often a barrier to the implementation of business innovations in less accessible regions (Aulia et al., 2023; Hadjimanolis, 1999; Rajagukguk, 2024; Talegeta, 2012).

4. Conclusion

The Training to Build a Creative and Innovative Mindset of Young Entrepreneurs successfully achieved the main objective of improving the understanding and ability of budding entrepreneurs to apply innovation and technology in their businesses. The pre-test and post-test results showed an average increase of 40% in the understanding of innovation concepts and the ability to develop innovative business plans. As many as 85% of participants successfully developed technology-based business plans relevant to business challenges in the digital era.

This activity significantly contributed to achieving the SDGs, particularly on points 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 9 (Industry et al.), by equipping young entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to develop their businesses creatively and innovatively. The service learning-based training approach combined theory and practice proved effective in improving participants' skills and motivation.

This activity implies that young entrepreneurs are expected to apply the knowledge gained to improve their business competitiveness and drive local economic growth through sustainable innovation. This training can also be a model for similar service programs in the future, especially those that focus on developing young entrepreneurs in the creative economy sector.

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