The Role of Peers in Encouraging the Students Digipreneur Intentions

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Abstract. The Covid-19 pandemic triggers declining economic growth which has impacted most companies going out of business. Other serious effects in Indonesia are layoffs of employees and encouraging unemployment rate. One way to overcome this unemployment issue is through the creation of new digital-based entrepreneurs. It is initiated by instilling digipreneur intention for youth such as college including students. Empowering the role of peers is one among many efforts to support this program. This research aims to analyze the influence and role of peers in improving the students' digipreneur intention. This survey model descriptive research was conducted on 123 students of economic education at the Faculty of Economics of Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) class 2018. The data are collected using questionnaires and interview methods. The data are then analyzed descriptively by percentage. Qualitative data are analyzed using interactive models, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results of the research show that: (1) peers are very influential in improving the students' digipreneur intention, and; (2) the peers play crucial roles in improving the students' digipreneur intention, especially in sharing about personal issues.

There are three main topics to be discussed in this research: (a) digital-based business opportunities; (b) how to start a digital-based business, (c) digital-based business management; and (d) challenges and obstacles in digital-based business and how to overcome them.

Keywords: Digipreneur Intentions, Peers, Digital Business

1 Introduction

The Covid-19 has caused declining economic growth around the world, including Indonesia. As a result, many companies have also experienced a decline in their business performance and caused their employees to be laid off thus increases the unemployment rate. In Indonesia, there are more than 9.77 million unemployed people due to the Covid-19 pandemic (liputan6.com, May 25, 2021). Therefore, breakthroughs are required to encourage economic and social development. Indonesia has an opportunity to address this issue through the entrepreneurship field [1], as it plays an important role in a country’s economic situation through the creation of new jobs [2]. Entrepreneurship can certainly increase the economic growth rate [3][4]. Therefore, according to Narmaditya et al. [5] stimulating prospective new entrepreneurs has now become a global challenge, and policymakers must understand some factors that influence and support entrepreneurial intention. According to Lingappa et al. [3] to grow and generate more young entrepreneurs, the first thing to do is to cultivate entrepreneurial intention, because it is a direct precursor of entrepreneurial behavior.
The entrepreneurial spirit can be used to predict entrepreneurial behavior. Previous research also states that individual entrepreneurial intention is more effective and stronger in predicting entrepreneurial behavior [6][4]. Therefore, the first step in growing entrepreneurship is to instill entrepreneurial intention in the younger generation, especially college students. In the current 4.0 industrial and 5.0 technological revolutions of society eras, the college students may be directed to create a golden opportunity that ultimately aims to generate new digital entrepreneurs.

The creation of entrepreneurial students (digipreneurs) in the educational world through the formation of entrepreneurial intentions among them should pay attention to certain factors that influence it. Several studies have proven many factors that influence entrepreneurial intentions, namely entrepreneurial education [7][8][1], family economic education, economic literacy [5], environment, and social [4], and peers [9][10][3]. However, the influence of peers on entrepreneurial intentions is not yet clearly defined, while in the current 4.0 industrial and 5.0 social revolution eras, everything must be digital-based. Peers are a group of people who have almost the same ages, values, and like-minded opinions [11]. Therefore, research on the influence and role of peers in encouraging digipreneur intentions is still rarely conducted, especially among the students who have been skillful in the digital world.

The research aims to analyze the influence and role of peers in encouraging digipreneur intentions among the students of accounting economics education class 2018, Faculty of Economics of Universitas Negeri Semarang.

2 Literature Review

Research on entrepreneurial interest in students has been widely carried out by previous researchers and has provided sufficient evidence of the positive influence of entrepreneurship education on student entrepreneurial interest Astuti et al. [12]; Taufik et al. [13]; Setyanti and Sudarsih [14]; Supeni and Efendi [15]; Novi and Syuraini [16]; Setiawan [17]; Lingappa et al. [3]. But in reality there are still few students who become entrepreneurs after attending entrepreneurship education. This may happen because the curriculum in learning is not designed properly. Lingappa et al. [3] finding that the regular academic curriculum seems to have a negative influence on ATE (the regular academic curriculum seems to have a negative influence on entrepreneurship practice. The findings of Rumijati [18] that learning methods in entrepreneurship education do not have a significant effect on students' interest in entrepreneurship, because they rarely provide observations of business practices and practical experience even never.

In addition to entrepreneurship education, there has been much evidence of the influence of peers in increasing student interest in entrepreneurship [9][10][11]. Therefore, according to the findings of Narmaditya and Wibowo [5] to increase student entrepreneurship, the world of education and the government must facilitate the formation of student working groups in entrepreneurship. Therefore, this study tries to reveal the role of peers and Project Based Learning to improve student digipreneur. The hope is that with the role of peers and the application of Project Based Learning in digital business learning, it can increase student digipreneur interest, given the occurrence of the industrial revolution 4.0 and the 5.0 community revolution which opened up business opportunities to be carried out online and the impact of the covid-19 pandemic which forced transactions to be carried out without meeting.
3 Method

This qualitative descriptive research is conducted on 123 students of economic education at the Faculty of Economics, UNNES class 2018, using a survey method. The data are collected using questionnaires and interviews. The data are then analyzed descriptively using percentage and interactive models, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

4 Results and Discussions

4.1 Results

From the distributed questionnaire, it is obtained precious data on the influence of peers in encouraging digipreneur intentions described in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Interval</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significantly</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>&gt;4,2 – 5</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>&gt;3,4 – 4,2</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly encouraging</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>&gt;2,6 – 3,4</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less encouraging</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>&gt;1,8 – 2,6</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not encouraging</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 – 1,8</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total/average</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on table 1, the obtained average value is 4.89 and it is classified as very high in encouraging students’ entrepreneurial intentions. It means that peers play a very important role to support the entrepreneurship spirit. In addition, no one chooses the fairly, less, and not encouraging options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Digital-based business opportunities</td>
<td>123 students</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Digital-based business management</td>
<td>120 students</td>
<td>97,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Starting a digital-based business</td>
<td>119 students</td>
<td>96.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Business obstacles and how to overcome them</td>
<td>116 students</td>
<td>94.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on table 2, there are some roles of peers in encouraging student digipreneur intentions, such as sharing partners about digital business opportunities and digital business management, telling how to start a digital business, and how to identify the business obstacles and how to overcome them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Business opportunities</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Processed data)
No | Business opportunities | Total | %
---|-----------------------|-------|---
1  | E-commerce           | 28    | 96,5
2  | Marketplace          | 0     | 0
3  | Online transportation| 0     | 0
4  | Accommodation        | 0     | 0
5  | Digital agency       | 1     | 3,5
6  | Digital media        | 0     | 0
7  | Financial Technology | 0     | 0
Total |                         | 29    | 100

(Processed data)

Table 4. Ways of seeking business opportunities done by the students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Selecting business opportunities</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Finding out potential business opportunities</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Observing emergency needs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Utilizing existing business entities around</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(establishing relationships with producers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Processed data)

Table 5. Order of peers’ sharing in managing digital-based business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Aspects of digital-based business management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Goods/services production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Investment and financial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Human resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Information Technology and digital marketing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Processed data)

Table 6. Interview results about digital-based business capital that will be managed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Capital Source</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>From one of the group members</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Contribution of all members with the same amount</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Voluntary contribution</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total |                                          | 29              | 100 |

(Processed data)

4.2 Discussions

4.2.1 Role of peers in encouraging student digipreneur intentions

The results of the descriptive analysis show that the average value of the influence of peers in encouraging students' digipreneur intentions is 4.89 and it is in the category of ‘significantly encouraging’. It means that the peers play a very important role in encouraging the digipreneur intentions of the students of the accounting education program, and no one chooses the 'less encouraging' or 'not encouraging’ category. This is because peers have become partners to share both about daily life activities and college assignments. When they have peers, they can talk about everything without any hesitation, and peers will also provide alternative options about the problems faced by their colleagues. When peers are faced with digital entrepreneurship topics, they can also provide their views on digital-based entrepreneurship to
their partners. Exchanging ideas with peers about entrepreneurship can grow the students’ entrepreneurial spirit [11], and will encourage digital entrepreneurial intentions of other peer members.

The results of the questionnaire have also found that there are no students who choose the option ‘less’ or not encouraging’. This provides tangible evidence that when the students meet and gather with their peers, they can provide support about the problems they are facing, and this moment will affect the students’ intentions about the problems they are talking about. Likewise, when peer groups are involved in entrepreneurial activities, they are more likely to influence their members to do the same [5].

Also, when digipreneurs are given to a group of students of the same ages, they will give the best support to each other and their digipreneur intentions will automatically increase. The findings of Moog et al. [19] revealed that peers provide support in a positive direction, including in entrepreneurship aspects. Peer support in encouraging entrepreneurial spirit is very crucial [20], even it is the strongest among other factors [21]. With peer support, one's entrepreneurial intentions may raise greatly [22][3][5].

4.2.2 Role of peers as sharing partners in seeking digital business opportunities

The research findings show that all students believe their peers as the best partners for sharing digital-based business opportunities in the first order. It means that the students and their peers when mostly discuss how to grow the entrepreneurial spirit and seek digital-based business opportunities. Moreover, the current 4.0 industrial revolution has created up good chances especially for the millenial generation to seek, create, and take advantage of digital-based business opportunities [23].

Potential digital business opportunities in Indonesia can be grouped into some classes: (a) E-commerce business, such as online stores that are commonly used by retail companies to sell goods and services online; (b) establishing marketplaces that accommodate many sellers in one container, such as Lazada, Tokopedia, Bukalapak, Shopee, and others; (c) Online transportation, namely business opportunities that provide very attractive and innovative transportation services, such as Gojek and Grab; (d) Online accommodation, which is business opportunities that provide accommodation services, such as Traveloka; (e) Digital agency which serves as a solution provider for those who experience problems in their business, such as marketing the products correctly and describing the best product marketing techniques; (f) digital media; (g) Financial Technology (fintech); financial services market is a digital-based financial service [23].

Based on the results shown in table 3, it can be seen that 96.5% (28 groups) of peer groups of accounting education students, Faculty of Economics of UNNES choose e-commerce business opportunities in conducting digipreneurs, and only 3.5% (1 group) of peer groups of the students that prefer to business opportunities as digital agents. Determination of group choice is based on peer discussion by considering various aspects according to the strengths and weaknesses of each group. Also, the selection of business opportunities in each peer group is influenced by interpersonal interactions [24] and mutual interests and goals [25], so that they have aligned their opinions before [11].

Based on the ways the students seek the business opportunities in table 4, there are 12 (41.4%) peer groups looking for potential business opportunities. It is the same as the choice of seeking business opportunities by observing the most urgent needs stated by 12 groups (41.4%). Meanwhile, the third option is chosen by 5 groups (17.2%) where it tells about how to choose business opportunities by utilizing existing businesses around.
Seeking business opportunities by looking for potential businesses and observing the most urgent needs are the two most popular choices among the students. It means that the peer group discussing digipreneurs has considered the prospects of the business to be run. When looking for a potential business, the hope is that the business will be accepted by the market and make a profit. Likewise, when a business opportunity comes from the needs needed, the goods or services from the business will likely be accepted by the market, thus generating a profit. The large balance of the number of peer groups who choose these two options is because they understand very well that the difference between these two is very difficult to determine due to the same result. In-depth discussions are conducted to identify what they already know, so they want to elaborate their understanding of entrepreneurial knowledge by going into the real business world [26].

How to find business opportunities by looking for potential businesses and observing the needs that are most needed are just as many choices. This means that the peer group discussing digipreneurs has considered the prospects of the business to be run. When looking for a potential business, the hope is that the business will be accepted by the market and make a profit. Likewise, when a business opportunity comes from the needs needed, the goods or services from the business will likely be accepted by the market, thus generating a profit. The large balance of the number of peer groups who choose these two options is because they understand very well that the difference between these two options is very difficult to determine. After all, the result is the same. In-depth discussions to determine the choice of business opportunities tend to apply what they already know, so they want to elaborate their understanding of entrepreneurial knowledge by going into the real business world [26].

The business opportunities do not come by themselves, but they must be found, created, and utilized by being creative and innovative [23]. Moreover, there are a lot of users of information technology and the internet in Indonesia. According to the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII) in 2018, the internet users in Indonesia reached 171.17 million people (64.8% of the total population of 262.16 million). Facebook users are 50.7%, Instagram 17.8%, YouTube 15.1%, and Twitter 1.7%. When the students’ peer groups discuss digital-based business opportunities, they will work together to help each other [27], find, create and take advantage of these business opportunities by interacting with each other in providing insight and sufficient knowledge to create entrepreneurial readiness [28]. Taking advantage of these business opportunities can be done by seeing, listening, reading, writing [23], then discussing them with peers to determine the best and potential options. Warm digipreneur discussions with peers would create a flexible relationship which finally encourages the student’s digipreneur intentions [29][30].

4.2.3 Role of peers as sharing partners in starting a digital business

The research findings indicate the third role of peers as sharing partners on how to start a digital-based business. Those who have never run a business, do not understand how to start a business. According to Perdana [23], to start a digital business, the idea of establishing a new business is a must. The idea comes from personal interests, other people’s business experiences, and challenges or compulsion. Entrepreneurs who start their ideas from personal ideas usually appear when they see other’ businesses have been successful, then they start to imagine what they should do in the future. Those who establish their business based on personal interest usually start from learning from their mentors and experience. Meanwhile, the people who initiate the business programs from challenges or compulsion are commonly caused by stressful feelings triggered by the situations they are experiencing, such as the difficulty of finding jobs, layoffs, and others.
Peers function as partners for sharing how to start a business by exchanging ideas [11]. They significantly influence increasing literacy on how to start a digital-based business so that through the peers’ support, the students can identify the process of starting a business as a digipreneur. According to Perdana [23] establishing a business includes the following elements: (a) ideas and willingness; (b) capital, (c) goods and services that will be used as business objects needed by consumers (markets); (d) markets, and; (e) profits. Therefore, the existence of peers as sharing partners to help to start a digital-based business will affect increasing the intention to become a digipreneur. By identifying how to start a digital-based business, the students' intentions to become digipreneurs will be stronger. Many previous studies have also revealed that peers have a significant positive influence on entrepreneurial intentions [9][3][31][21][5].

4.2.4 Role of peers as sharing partners on business management

The results show indicate the second-order which is peers as partners in managing the digital-based business. Digital-based business management is slightly different from traditional ones. According to Sunarta [32], business management includes reliable human resources, product quality, finance and administration, and brand. Meanwhile, in digital-based business management, all business elements must be carried out digitally, such as raw material inventory, finished goods, marketing, and payment methods.

Based on table 5, the order of peer sharing in digital-based business management is the production of goods/services, capital and finance, human resources, information technology, and digital marketing. The production of goods/services is the first order in managing a digital-based business because they have to generate quality goods or services to ensure their products are safe. It means that the stocks of raw materials and finished goods or services must be ready and maintained. In procuring goods or services, they must first determine whether the goods are self-produced or finding resellers or a combination of both.

Production planning is very important to make sure that the goods stock is well-maintained [33] and selling activities are running as expected. Therefore, in a peer group discussion about digital-based business management, respondents should put the production of goods or services in the first place to be discussed. Here, peers will exchange ideas and share information about the goods or services that will be produced and they must guarantee that the goods and services are always available safely [11]. Through this sharing with peers, the decision-making [34] to choose what kinds of goods or services to be produced can generate the best results. Also, peer sharing about the production of goods or services will open up insight to identify the supply of goods and services when all processes are done digitally.

The second digital-based business management aspect to be considered is capital and finance. Capital is a vital issue especially at the student level who does not have yet a fixed income. Therefore, discussions about capital and finance are an urgent order for the students to grow their entrepreneurial spirit.

Based on table 6, we can see that all groups choose the capital from the business to be run from the contributions of all members in the same amount. This choice is based on discussion and agreement of peers in a group. After being agreed that the business capital is taken from the contributions of all group members, this issue may be solved effectively and all group members are ready to bear the risk if the business fails and are entitled to profits if the business is successful. The decision to collect capital taken from the contributions of all group members is one example of the influence of peers in choosing the way and lifestyle of their group [35]. However, in other activities, the capital may come from only one member of the peer group; but in this case, they decide to take contributions from all group members.
In financial management, when the business is digital-based, financial management and financial policies will be also digital-based, such as payment methods that are done through third parties like banks or fintech. The group should also discuss the way they manage their financial conditions and members who are charged to handle the financial management of their business. All groups agree that financial management is handed over by one member and all members have the right to oversee the financial management. This is also the impact of peers who trust each other and become a reference for students’ activities in establishing a business especially related to financial problems [36].

The next order is human resources management. Generally, all group members already understand each member’s abilities. This is because of the intensity of their association so that they are very familiar with the behavior of other peer members [37]. Therefore, in managing human resources in their business ventures, they already trust each other with other members, and they must contribute to the group’s digipreneur activities. Because they want to manage their business as best as possible, peers must have a positive and very strong influence.

In managing a digital-based business, information technology and digital marketing are also the main topics that need to be discussed in peer sharing. They usually exchange ideas about the technology to be used, selling methods, and digital-based marketing platforms that will be applied so that their products can be well-known to potential buyers and end with purchasing activities and after-sales services. One of the functions of peers is as a source of information and a place to exchange ideas and concepts [11]. Peers are significant in delivering their opinions related to the management of information technology and digital marketing. The two aspects are expected to be better organized so that the products can be easily recognized and sold to the public.

4.2.5 Role of peers as sharing partners on business obstacles and how to deal with them in digital-based business

There will always be problems on every side, including running a business. This must be understood and learned by everyone who will establish a business. For students who have never been involved in any business activities, certainly do not understand clearly the obstacles that will be experienced that trigger business failure. According to Perdana [23], some main factors that cause business failure are less understanding of the business process and business sites they live in, only focusing on one product and not understanding marketing strategies, less understanding of procurement and selection of raw materials, lack of innovation, wrong business management, less knowledge on financial flows, less reliable in managing finances, and lack of understanding of technological changes.

The existence of peers as sharing partners in dealing with obstacles in digital business will make the students better understand the obstacles that may occur when they become a digipreneur. Moreover, the peers express their opinions in easy-to-understand language [27], and the students will not feel so forced to accept input from their close friends [38]. Therefore, the guidance from peers will encourage the students’ digipreneur intentions [9][10].

5 Conclusions

Some conclusions can be drawn from the research findings: (1) Peers are very influential in encouraging students’ digipreneur intentions; (2) Peers can act as the students’ close friends to share anything related to the business establishment, such as (a) digital-based business
opportunities, (b) how to start a digital-based business, (c) digital-based business management, and; (d) business obstacles and how to overcome them. The results corroborate the findings of Rahman et al. [9]; Bello et al. [10]; Lingappa et al. [3]; Kacpertzuk [31]; Nanda and Srensen [21]; and Narmaditya et al. [5].

References


[17] B. Setiawan, “Pengaruh Pendidikan Kewirausahaan Terhadap Minat Membangun Digital Entrepreneurship Dengan Konsep Ekonomi Kreatif Mahasiswa Pendidikan Akuntansi


