

Entrepreneurial Interests and Talents of College Students: A Qualitative Study of STIE Ganesha Students

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Abstract

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This study aims to analyze the entrepreneurial interests and talents of STIE Ganesha students and to identify the gap between high theoretical interest and practical implementation in the field. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach conducted over five months, from March to July 2024. The research subjects involved 50 active students of STIE Ganesha selected purposively. Data were collected through closed and open-ended questionnaires covering the assessment of the entrepreneurship curriculum and the effectiveness of institutional support, complemented by documentation studies. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that student satisfaction with the entrepreneurship curriculum is remarkably high (82% expressed very satisfied) and the interest in entrepreneurship reaches 94%. However, field implementation remains relatively low, evidenced by only 20% of students having established their own business, while 68% are still at the comprehension stage without tangible action. The primary obstacles identified are office work commitments (72%) and the need for more applicable business incubation programs. Although institutional support through Ganesha LabPreneur is considered adequate, optimizing mentorship programs, structured entrepreneurial internships, and the continuous strengthening of soft skills and hard skills are essential to bridge the gap between interest and actual business implementation among students.

Keywords: Interests and Talents; Student Entrepreneurship; STIE Ganesha; Interest-Action Gap; Higher Education.

INTRODUCTION

Universities have a strategic role as institutions that produce creative and innovative human resources. The existence of higher education institutions is not only oriented towards mastering knowledge but is also expected to stimulate national economic growth through the creation of various innovative works. As stated by (Marlinah, 2019), Universities are required to produce graduates with a technopreneurial spirit, individuals who can identify business opportunities, conduct business, and develop competencies by leveraging technological advances. Unfortunately, the number of technopreneurs in Indonesia remains relatively low, and Indonesia is unable to compete optimally with other developing countries. Therefore, strengthening technology-based (IT) entrepreneurship is a necessity in facing the era of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0.

The advent of digitalization in Indonesia has brought logical consequences for a shift in the economic base, from resource-based to knowledge-based. In this context, technopreneurs play a role as job creators, actively promoting Indonesia's strong economic foundation and global competitiveness. Inclusive economic growth and sustainable development (Sustainable Development Goals/SDGs) require synergy from various parties, including the government, the private sector, the community, and academia. Conducive government policy support is essential for universities to optimally fulfill their role in developing young innovators and entrepreneurs.

One of the crucial issues underpinning the urgency of entrepreneurship education in higher education is the high rate of open unemployment, particularly among undergraduate graduates. This situation is caused by two main factors: the persistence of the job-seeker paradigm and the mismatch between graduate competencies and the needs of the business and industrial world. (Soeprapto, n.d.).

Various efforts have been made to foster an entrepreneurial culture among students, such as establishing business units, business incubation programs, and integrating entrepreneurship courses into the curriculum. However, a fundamental issue that often arises is the sustainability of the programs. Developing an entrepreneurial culture cannot be achieved overnight; it requires a continuous process involving multiple stakeholders. Therefore, the Triple Helix concept, which synergizes academics, the business world, and the government, is an ideal solution to ensure the sustainability of entrepreneurship development programs.

According to (Hardana, 2018), entrepreneurial interest is a psychological phenomenon that drives a person to focus and act on entrepreneurial activities with a feeling of pleasure because it is perceived to bring benefits. This interest is defined as the desire to be self-employed or run one's own business. To foster an entrepreneurial spirit, universities can implement several strategies, including entrepreneurship courses, business-based Community Service Programs (KKN), entrepreneurial internships, and the Student Creativity Program (PKM). The Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs notes that Indonesia needs approximately 20 million new entrepreneurs to reduce unemployment and create jobs. Increasing the number of undergraduate entrepreneurs will directly reduce the labor burden and encourage national economic growth. Hardana also emphasized that the entrepreneurial development model should not be based solely on theory but must be integrated with Micro, Small, and Medium

Enterprises (MSMEs), government institutions, and the private sector, which serve as the axis of change for university graduates.

STIE Ganesha, as a higher education institution, is actively involved in developing young entrepreneurs. This is evidenced by the Ganesha LabPreneur Unit and active participation in the Student Entrepreneurship Development Program (P2MW) organized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Saefullah et al., 2022). However, initial observations indicate a gap between students' high interest in entrepreneurship and their actual business establishment. Therefore, this study is crucial to conduct an in-depth analysis of STIE Ganesha students' entrepreneurial interests and talents, as well as identifying supporting and inhibiting factors.

Previous research indicates that entrepreneurship development strategies in higher education are generally pursued through the integration of entrepreneurship courses, business-based KKN (Community Service Program), internships, and student creativity programs (STMIK Mitra Karya Bekasi; Tri, 2008). However, their implementation still faces classic obstacles, such as student motivation that is more oriented towards academic grades than business practices, minimal responsibility, less intensive monitoring, and limited funding (Maryanti et al., 2017). Internal factors such as entrepreneurial knowledge, independent attitudes, subjective norms, self-efficacy, and willingness to take risks have been shown to significantly influence entrepreneurial interest *berwirausaha* (Septin Muji Rahayu & Purwidiyanti, 2022) (Tri, 2008). Meanwhile, research at STAIN Parepare revealed that only 9% of students have actually run businesses, with motivating factors including courses, seminars, religious approaches, development centers, cooperatives, financial cooperation, capital, lecturer competence, and part-time work. In general, entrepreneurship learning has a positive impact when supported by qualified lecturers and applicable teaching methods (Rahmiyanti & Nuraisiah, 2019).

Specifically, STIE Ganesha has demonstrated its commitment through the Student Entrepreneurship Development Program (P2MW), which has successfully mentored students in the culinary and handicraft fields. Although this program is still limited to those who already have businesses and needs to be expanded to students who are still in the early stages of interest (Saefullah et al., 2022). This aligns with the idea that mapping interests and talents is a crucial initial step before providing training interventions (Amin et al., 2020). To address these challenges, entrepreneurship education should ideally be designed in a long-term and gradual manner, by transforming higher education institutions into entrepreneurial universities with a focused curriculum, competent teaching staff, and a campus atmosphere that supports an entrepreneurial climate (Banten Jaya University). Therefore, the synthesis of these various studies provides an important foundation for research at STIE Ganesha to measure the gap between high student interest and the realization of independent businesses, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing curriculum and institutions.

Based on a review of various previous studies, it was found that most research focuses on institutional strategies or general determinants of interest. However, there is still a gap in the comprehensive analysis aspect that directly compares the level of curriculum satisfaction, institutional support, and student talent readiness in a single empirical research unit, especially in the STIE Ganesha environment. Although STIE Ganesha already has programs such as Ganesha LabPreneur and P2MW, few studies have quantitatively measured the extent to which

these programs are effective from a student perspective. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by collecting data from 50 STIE Ganesha students to determine their interest profiles, talents, and perceptions of the curriculum and institutions.

Specifically, this study aims to analyze the level of satisfaction of STIE Ganesha students with the curriculum of entrepreneurship-supporting courses, while also identifying the extent of their entrepreneurial interest and talent. Furthermore, this study also evaluates the effectiveness of institutional support—including the role of Ganesha LabPreneur—in fostering an entrepreneurial spirit among students. Based on these findings, this study is designed to formulate strategic recommendations focused on bridging the gap between high student interest and actual business implementation in the field.

METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods, aiming to provide an in-depth description of the phenomenon of entrepreneurial interests and talents among STIE Ganesha students. The study lasted for five months, from March to July 2024. The subjects were 50 active STIE Ganesha students who were purposively selected based on their availability and willingness to complete the research questionnaire. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire technique divided into two main parts: an assessment of the entrepreneurship curriculum and an assessment of the institution. The questionnaire combined closed-ended questions with a Likert scale and open-ended questions to gain more in-depth information about the program needs, obstacles, and support experienced by students. As a complement, the study also conducted a documentation study of campus entrepreneurship programs such as Ganesha LabPreneur. Data analysis techniques were carried out qualitatively through three stages: data reduction (summarizing and sorting important information), data presentation (organizing findings in the form of tables, graphs, and descriptive narratives), and drawing conclusions. Data from closed-ended questions were analyzed descriptively quantitatively in the form of percentages to strengthen qualitative interpretation, thus producing a comprehensive picture of curriculum satisfaction, level of interest and talent, and the effectiveness of institutional support at STIE Ganesha.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 50 active students at STIE Ganesha, consisting of 26 male students (52%) and 24 female students (48%). The primary objectives of the study were to measure satisfaction with the entrepreneurship curriculum, assess the effectiveness of institutional support, and identify gaps between student entrepreneurial interests and talents. Data were collected through closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires divided into two main sections: Curriculum Assessment and Institutional Assessment.

Based on the assessment of the five main curriculum criteria, students generally expressed very high appreciation. On average, 82% of respondents (41 students) stated they were "Very Satisfied" with the existing curriculum, while 18% (9 students) chose "Satisfied," and no students stated they were somewhat satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied. The indicators with the highest satisfaction were "Supporting Course Curriculum" (44 students were very satisfied) and "Mastery of Lecturers" (43 students were very satisfied). This indicates

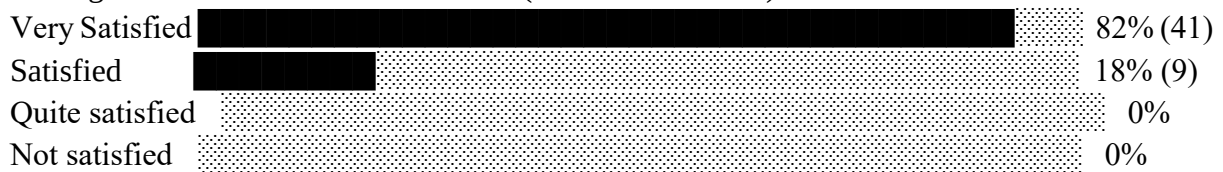
that in theory and substance, STIE Ganesha has a very capable entrepreneurship curriculum foundation and its excellence is recognized by students.

Quantitative Data Table

No	Assessment criteria	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Not satisfied	Very Dissatisfied
1	Supporting Course Curriculum	44	6	0	0	0
2	Various types of supporting courses	40	10	0	0	0
3	Mastery of the Teaching Lecturer	43	7	0	0	0
4	PT Support in Increasing Talent Interest	41	9	0	0	0
5	Implementation of Theory and Practice	39	11	0	0	0

Bar Chart Visualization (Average Satisfaction Level)

Average Curriculum Satisfaction Level (out of 50 Students)



Visual Conclusion: 100% of students were at the Satisfied or above level.

Addressing the direct questions, an interesting shift occurred. Student interest in entrepreneurship was at a very high level, with 47 out of 50 students (94%) reporting a strong interest in becoming entrepreneurs. However, when asked about talent and readiness, only 12 students (24%) felt they "very much understand and are ready to take the plunge," while 34 students (68%) reported "some understanding but haven't yet dared or haven't had the opportunity to directly engage in the business world," and 4 students (8%) felt they lacked talent.

Regarding required programs, Field Work Internship (PKL) in the business field was the most popular suggestion (selected by 35 students), followed by an entrepreneurship simulation program (30 students), and a business idea proposal selection (25 students). Forty-eight students (96%) stated that field work internships are mandatory to gauge their talent. The largest source of support came from themselves (100%), followed by parents (84%), peers (76%), and the campus community (60%).

Quantitative Data Table

Question	Answer Categories	Number of Respondents		Percentage
Interest in Entrepreneurship	Very Interested	47		94%
	Interested	3		6%
Talent Readiness	Fully Understandable & Ready to Jump	12		24%
	Just Understand (Not Yet Involved)	34		68%
	Do not completely understand	4		8%
Need Field Practice?	Yes (Required)	48		96%
	No	2		4%

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

From an institutional perspective, structural support is very evident. Nearly all respondents (48 out of 50, or 96%) acknowledged that STIE Ganesha has a clear vision and mission in supporting entrepreneurship. The Ganesha LabPreneur Unit was also positively assessed by 46 students (92%) as a facility that supports talent development. However, data shows that 40 students (80%) do not yet have their own business, and 36 students (72%) who currently work in offices admitted this is a major obstacle to starting a business. Interestingly, 100% of respondents (50 students) agreed that campus programs and policies need to be expanded, and that both soft and hard skills are essential to transform interest into concrete action. This confirms that despite the good infrastructure, the entrepreneurial ecosystem still needs acceleration.

Quantitative Data Table

No	Assessment Aspects	Yes (Agree)	No (Disagree)
1	PT has an entrepreneurial vision and mission	48	2
2	Ganesha LabPreneur supports	46	4
3	Implementation of the curriculum in the field	45	5
4	There are difficulties in entrepreneurship at PT	8	42
5	Supportive home environment	43	7

6	The PT environment is supportive	47	3
7	Already have your own business	10	40
8	Working in the office (inhibiting business)	36	14
9	Need additional program from PT	50	0
10	Soft skills & hard skills are required	50	0



The Knowing-Doing Gap

The most critical finding in this study is the wide gap between enthusiasm and actual implementation. Although 94% of students expressed a burning interest and rated the curriculum highly satisfactory (82% were very satisfied), the fact remains that only 20% have actually started a business. This indicates that STIE Ganesha students are trapped in a comfort zone of "theoretical understanding" without a sufficiently strong "trigger" or incitement to action. This finding aligns with the statement (Santosa, 2014) that Indonesia faces a crucial challenge in addressing unemployment, and one solution is to increase the number of entrepreneurs. However, Santosa also identified several social, economic, and market structure obstacles that have not yet accommodated the growth of new entrepreneurs.

The main inhibiting factor is employment status; 72% of respondents who work in offices stated that fatigue and time constraints are the main obstacles. This condition is reinforced by the findings (Bhakti et al., 2022) which states that the obstacles to implementing the Independent Learning and Independent Campus (MBKM) program vary widely, depending on the type of learning activities implemented by the university, study program, lecturers, and students. In this context, office workloads are one operational obstacle that hinders student participation in practical entrepreneurial activities. In fact, (Baharuddin, 2021) emphasized that MBKM provides the right to study for three semesters outside of the study program, including a business internship that can be converted to 40 credits. However, field findings indicate that this program has not been optimally utilized by students who are already working, so this already excellent curriculum needs to be infused with "structured entrepreneurial internships" and "evening business incubation" programs that can accommodate students with limited time.

Besides that, (Lestari & Anggraini, 2019) in his research, he found that the variables of interest and talent have an influence of 0.199 on entrepreneurial success, which means that interest alone is not enough if it is not supported by motivation (0.388) and mastery of science (0.270). Thus, the finding that only 20% of students have owned independent businesses emphasizes the need to strengthen motivation and technical skills so that high interest can be converted into real action.

The Dual Role of the Environment and Institutions

Environmental support (home and campus) reached above 86%, indicating a highly conducive sociological ecosystem. Interestingly, this finding differs from the research by Aristuti & Widiyanto (2019), which found that the family environment had a positive but insignificant partial influence on students' entrepreneurial interest. This difference indicates that in the context of STIE Ganesha, family support is actually very strong and serves as a key pillar in motivating students to pursue entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, campus support reached 94%, indicating that the academic atmosphere at STIE Ganesha is quite supportive.

However, students collectively (100%) demanded additional policy programs. This constitutes an "urgent call" for the university. The existing Ganesha LabPreneur (92% considered it supportive) needs to be expanded from a mere facility to a business development center that actively collaborates with banks and venture capitalists. This aligns with the recommendations (Sugita & Ansori, 2018) which states that efforts to increase student interest and motivation can be done through the creation of campus entrepreneurship study centers such as student cooperatives, which are expected to hold seminars, training, workshops, business practices, and business collaborations. Furthermore, Sugita & Ansori also emphasized the importance of improving lecturer competency through entrepreneurship training programs, seminars, workshops, lecturer internships in the business world, and coaching new lecturers. Thus, strengthening Ganesha LabPreneur is not only oriented towards students, but also on increasing the capacity of the academic community holistically.

On the other hand, Baharuddin (2021) emphasized that the MBKM curriculum adaptation must encompass structured planning, learning processes, assessment, and evaluation, including providing students with opportunities to gain learning experience at other universities and non-universities through business internships, student exchanges, thematic KKN (Community Service Program), and final assignments. These findings reinforce the urgency for STIE Ganesha to design collaborative programs that enable students to gain practical experience off-campus, while simultaneously addressing the 100% student demand for additional policy programs.

The Urgency of Strengthening Soft and Hard Skills

The 100% agreement on the importance of soft and hard skills indicates that students are aware of their limitations. They need not only management theory but also technical training such as digital marketing, simple financial reporting, and negotiation. This finding is highly relevant to Santosa's (2014) view that by improving educational policies, curricula, and learning systems (student-lecturer relationships) that can encourage innovation and creativity, barriers to entrepreneurship development can be overcome.

(Sugita & Ansori, 2018) explicitly stated that entrepreneurship lecturers have a decisive role in fostering students' entrepreneurial motivation, thus requiring them to possess entrepreneurial competencies and strong personalities. Therefore, it is recommended that certified workshops be integrated with entrepreneurship courses as a graduation requirement. Furthermore, research by Puji Lestari (2019) demonstrated that mastery of science (0.270) significantly influences entrepreneurial success, thus ensuring mastery of technical and scientific aspects must be a serious consideration in curriculum design.

Thus, strengthening soft and hard skills is not only a student need, but also an institutional responsibility to provide structured, sustainable, and relevant training programs to meet the demands of the business world. Integrating technical training, mentoring by competent lecturers, and strong institutional support will be key to bridging the gap between interest and actual business implementation among STIE Ganesha students.

CONCLUSION

Based on all the research findings, it can be concluded that STIE Ganesha has succeeded in building a very strong foundation in the entrepreneurship curriculum and fostering a high level of entrepreneurial interest among students. However, this success has not been accompanied by a significant conversion into the number of young entrepreneurs, due to the gap between theoretical understanding and field practice, and is hampered by students' busy work schedules. To bridge this gap, the researcher recommends three strategic steps. First, make the Field Work Practice Program (PKL) mandatory in MSMEs or Startups as part of the assessment for entrepreneurship courses. Second, initiate the "Young CEO on Weekend" program, which consists of intensive training every Saturday featuring successful business practitioners as mentors. Third, form a special team from Ganesha LabPreneur to provide assistance with business legality (NIB) and the opening of corporate accounts for students who already have business ideas, so that bureaucratic and licensing obstacles are no longer a reason to delay starting a business. With the implementation of these three recommendations, it is hoped that the entrepreneurial ecosystem at STIE Ganesha will continue to grow and be able to produce more young entrepreneurs who are ready to compete in the digital era.

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