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# PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: THE MEANING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR COMMERCIAL EDUCATION ALUMNUS FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS STATE UNIVERSITAS NEGERI MALANG

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#### **Abstract**

Seeing the important role of entrepreneurship in the Indonesian government's economy, universities in Indonesia have provided education on entrepreneurship for their students. It is intended that their students can become entrepreneurs after graduating from college. However, becoming an entrepreneur is not easy, because it requires strong motivation from within a person to start their own business. The decision to become an entrepreneur is also not popular because of the large responsibilities that must be borne by business owners. Therefore this study wants to see the meaning of entrepreneurship for an alumnus of Business Administration Education. This research was conducted using a qualitative phenomenological method. The results of this study state that several attitudes must be owned by an entrepreneur, challenges that must be faced by an entrepreneur, and the benefits of entrepreneurship. The subjects of this study were alumni of the Universitas Negeri Malang Faculty of Economics and Business Commerce Education who already have their businesses. This research is also expected to be able to provide additional contributions to material about entrepreneurship.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, the study of entrepreneurship.

#### INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is an interesting subject discussed in various studies because entrepreneurship has an important impact on the economy of a country. Fachmy et al., (2021) revealed one of the roles of entrepreneurship, which is to increase employment and help reduce unemployment. In addition, the existence of entrepreneurship can reduce social inequality because of the equal distribution of business throughout the region. Frinces (2010) reveals that several developed countries such as Singapore, the United States, and South Korea can become developed countries because many of their citizens have their businesses. This is in line with the statement from Sarfiah et al., (2019) which revealed that the Gross Domestic Product will increase along with the increasing number of entrepreneurs. In addition, entrepreneurship can also absorb more workers. To foster an entrepreneurial spirit, the Indonesian government provides a lot of support in the form of financial support. According to Frinces (2010), the Indonesian government has prepared a budget allocation that is used to support increased entrepreneurship. This is done because of the large role of entrepreneurs in overcoming the problems of economic development in Indonesia. This budget is used to provide direct financial assistance, training, and seminars, as well as various activities that serve to foster the entrepreneurial spirit of the Indonesian people.

Even though there is a lot of assistance that has been provided by the government, there are still many people who prefer to be employees. This is due to the feeling of stability when being an employee. Meanwhile, to become an entrepreneur, they are still not ready to face the various risks they face. Ciputra in Amina et al., (2018) stated that to become a prosperous country, at least the number of entrepreneurs must reach 2% of the total population. Chrysnapoetra and Pangestuti (2021) revealed that to become a developed country, at least 14% of the total population is needed. Meanwhile, Azzahra et al., (2021) stated that only 3.1% of the total population in Indonesia are entrepreneurs. Therefore, Indonesia is currently only classified as a developing country. Indonesia's entrepreneurial ratio is still low when compared to our neighboring countries, namely Malaysia and Singapore, where the entrepreneurial ratio in these countries has reached 5% and 7% of their total population.

By seeing the importance of the role of entrepreneurship, many universities in Indonesia include entrepreneurship as a subject that must be taken by students. After taking the entrepreneurship course, it is hoped that students will be able to foster entrepreneurial desires. Ayu and Rara (2019) revealed that student entrepreneurship ideas will increase after taking entrepreneurship courses. Amrina et al., (2018) suggested that various entrepreneurial skills and ideas that were introduced to students could make them desire to open their businesses which in turn could have a positive effect on the nation's economy. Novriansyah et al., (2021) suggest that entrepreneurship education needs to be taught from an early age so that millennials can be oriented towards creating their jobs instead of having to become employees in a company. The entrepreneurship curriculum provided at lectures answers the doubts of Vanesaar et al., (2006) who revealed that a lack of knowledge and expertise can cause a person to fail in entrepreneurship. One of the entrepreneurship education programs is also carried out by the Universitas Negeri Malang through Commerce Education. Even though Commerce Education has an orientation for graduates to work as teachers, they have been introduced to the world of entrepreneurship which is expected to generate a desire for entrepreneurship.

From various explorations carried out by reading journal articles, researchers found that there was still little research using phenomenological qualitative methods that discussed the meaning of entrepreneurial motivation. Meanwhile, Bergund (2015) argues that the phenomenological method is the right method for developing new insights and giving new nuances to research that has been done, whereas previous research was mostly normative and more structure-oriented. Maryetti et al., (2019) revealed that there is still a lack of research on entrepreneurship, so further research is needed. Airport et al., (2018) stated that the results of previous research regarding entrepreneurship education and interest in entrepreneurship from students were still inconsistent. Therefore, further research is still needed to enrich previous studies. Higgins and Elliot (2011) revealed that existing studies have not been able to provide consistent results due to a lack of understanding of the definition of entrepreneurship. Through the various explanations and research gaps above, this research will focus on entrepreneurship motivation for alumni of the Commerce Education Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang, which is carried out using phenomenological studies.

#### 2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

## Entrepreneur

Shane et al., (2003) define an entrepreneur as someone who can make different decisions when faced with the same opportunity. Dollinger in Frances (2010) reveals entrepreneurship as an activity to build a business that is economical and profit-oriented and can take risks and deal with existing uncertainties. Meanwhile, Amrina et al., (2018) revealed entrepreneurship as a process of creating something new and ready to face various existing risks, while entrepreneurship is defined as an innovator who can develop something unique and different.

## **Entrepreneurship Motivation**

Ngundiati and Fitrayati (2020) reveal entrepreneurial motivation as a desire that arises from within a person to make him a competent human being. Hrehova (2013) reveals motivation as an inner state that can provide energy when a person performs an activity and directs and channels behavior to achieve the goals that have been set. Then, Rahmawati (2013) defines motivation as a person's desire and choice to perform a certain behavior. From the three definitions above, it can be concluded that entrepreneurial motivation is a choice based on the desire to obtain something or achieve a goal.

## **Entrepreneurship Learning**

Atmaja and Margunani (2016) revealed entrepreneurship education as an effort by universities to prepare graduate students with an entrepreneurial spirit. The research results of Vanesaar et al., (2006) found that according to economics and logistics students, the subjects that provide knowledge for starting a business are marketing, entrepreneurship, business communication, accounting finance, business administration, and logistics. Novriansyah et al., (2021) stated that exposure to entrepreneurship can increase student motivation and confidence to start entrepreneurship. Toding and Vanesaar (2018) argue that the goal of entrepreneurship education is not just to be an engine driving economic growth through job creation, but also to develop individuals to understand the entrepreneurial process and have entrepreneurial abilities and ways of thinking.

#### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

# Approach and Type of Research

This study uses a qualitative method. Strauss and Corbin (2017) describe qualitative research as research whose findings do not use statistical calculation methods or other forms of calculation. Qualitative research seeks and discovers phenomena by mingling with research subjects so that they can understand and interpret the problem under study. After that, from the results of existing research, researchers can translate these results using scientific words. To better understand the phenomena that occur in research, the phenomenological method is used. Neubauer et al., (2019) revealed phenomenological research as research that focuses on individual life experiences in the world. So by choosing the phenomenological method, it is expected to be able to obtain a clear and indepth picture of the meaning of motivation that plays a role in the decision of a Commerce Education alumnus to become an entrepreneur.

#### **Researcher Presence**

The presence of researchers in a qualitative study is very important because researchers can supervise informants directly when carrying out entrepreneurial activities. The presence of this researcher can also aim to increase the credibility and quality of research results because the data obtained is the result of direct observation.

#### **Research Locations**

In this study, the selected locations were Malang, Pasuruan, Jombang, Kediri, and Blitar. The reason for choosing the research location was because in that area there were business activities from alumni of the Universitas Negeri Malang of Business Administration Education Program as subjects in this study. The selection of this location is also based on considerations of attractiveness, uniqueness, and suitability with the research focus so that meaningful and new things can be found.

#### **Data Sources and Collection**

The source of data in this research is primary data obtained directly from research subjects through interviews, observation, and audio-visual results. Sample selection was carried out using snowball sampling. The sample selection criteria are 2017 graduates of commerce education at Universitas Negeri Malang, who graduate in 2021/2022. The alumni have their businesses. Businesses run from small to medium levels. The research subjects who were used as key informants were as many as five people. Secondary data was obtained through entrepreneurship books, previous research articles, and business documents as research objects. Data collection is done using interviews, observation, and documentation the researcher will have the opportunity to gain a better and broader understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. As for the use of audio-visual is used to complement research results to make them more credible.

#### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis from this study was carried out during and after the collection took place. The analysis carried out during data collection was to see whether the answers given by the respondents were clear or not. If the answer is not clear, the researcher will continue to ask questions until an unambiguous answer is obtained. The data analysis used in this study uses the data analysis approach proposed by Creswell (2009), in which this study describes a linear and hierarchical approach from the bottom up. Therefore, this approach is seen as being able to explain qualitative research from the specific to the general.

## **Data Validity Checking**

The validity test was carried out to see whether the existing data was valid and reliable. The reliability test was carried out by re-checking the research results and ensuring that there were no errors in the data input, after which a coding process was carried out to ensure that there were no ambiguous terms. The validity test is carried out by triangulation steps, evidence of denial, audit trails, member checking, and peer de-briefing.

#### **Research Stage**

In this study there were four stages: the pre-field stage, the fieldwork stage, the data analysis stage, and the evaluation and report preparation stage.

#### 4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The results of interviews and observations were processed using NVIVO 12 pro software. NVIVO software is software that is used to see which material phenomena often appear so that researchers can conclude interviews, observations, and audio-visual recordings obtained. The results of this study are:

#### **Entrepreneurial Attitude**

From the results of data processing, it can be concluded that the entrepreneurial attitude that must be possessed by each entrepreneur is independence. The results of the interviews revealed that each informant expressed independence as an important point that must be possessed by entrepreneurs because they must be able to find solutions to the problems they face. They are also responsible for the level of income they get. In addition, another responsibility that must be fulfilled is to maintain the satisfaction of their customers so that they do not switch to competitors, which ultimately results in a decrease in revenue. Informants also believed that independence is a form of entrepreneurial strength in dealing with crises that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic. Entrepreneurs must be able to survive so that their businesses do not close. They are expected to be able to find various innovations so that their business can

continue. Entrepreneur is also expected to be able to continue learning to apply the new knowledge gained to improve their business.

In addition, an entrepreneur is expected to have a painstaking attitude and want to continue to develop. Because starting a business requires various processes so that the business can develop. The process that must be passed, of course, takes time and is not instant. In addition, the attitude to continue to develop is needed so that entrepreneurs continue to think of new ideas so that their businesses can grow and not stagnate. They are expected to be able to quickly capture market needs and innovate for the development of their business. Another must-have attitude is adaptability. To run a business, of course, will encounter various uncertainties, therefore entrepreneurs must adapt quickly so they will not be outdated which causes their business to lag. Communication skills are also needed to improve existing businesses. This communication is used to build relationships with consumers and business partners. If communication can run smoothly, then the relationship that exists with consumers will be strong. This communication is also a form of service provided to consumers, where consumers will feel satisfied if treated properly. Such good treatment will make consumers feel valued. Entrepreneurs are also expected to have high self-confidence. Where they must always be sure of the decisions they make and be ready to face any risks from those decisions. This confidence is also needed when an entrepreneur wants to open a new line of business or sell new products that they have never handled before. They must be sure that the expansion they are doing will be successful. Overall, there are 13 entrepreneurial attitudes found in this study, namely: independence, responsibility, having a strong mentality, ready to take risks, never stop learning, brave to try, commitment, painstakingness, communication, ability to adapt, ability to change failure become an opportunity, have a leadership spirit, and have selfconfidence.

#### Entrepreneurial Challenge

From the results of interviews and observations, the entrepreneurial challenge faced by entrepreneurs is losing time. The loss of time in question is the loss of opportunities to participate in various social and organizational activities on campus because you have to manage your own business. Another thing is the emergence of many competitors and capital. Currently, there are many new cafes in Malang that have resulted in a higher cafe business competition map. Entrepreneurs must be able to make strategies to survive in the competition. One of the efforts made by the informant is to offer lower prices compared to his competitors, so consumers will be more interested in buying products at his department store than making purchases at competitors. The challenge from the capital side is the lack of fresh funds to manage existing businesses. Where one of the informants said that if the cafe business being run requires large capital so he still has to work as an employee to increase business capital, even though he sacrifices rest time. This capital

aspect also affects operational costs. Where the operational costs of running a business are high and entrepreneurs must be able to manage income so that business operations can continue.

Another challenge is the lack of self-confidence because some informants said they did not feel confident because their competitors displayed poorer quality product photos but earned a higher income. Another challenge is laziness. As a human being, of course, sometimes you feel lazy to make changes, in other words, you are used to being in your comfort zone. Therefore, the informants felt that they had to fight the feeling of laziness. The next challenge is the lack of knowledge of financial management. The informants said that to manage a business, good bookkeeping skills were needed so that income and expenditure allocations could be seen clearly and in detail. From the various explanations above, it can be concluded that the entrepreneurial challenges faced by entrepreneurs in this study are: losing a lot of time, competitors, lack of entrepreneurial skills, having a main job, lack of confidence, capital, and problems with operational costs.

# **Entrepreneurial Benefits**

According to the informants, one of the benefits derived from entrepreneurship is that they can earn more income. With the additional income they earn, they can save their funds in the form of savings. Another benefit is that they can use their time more productively. Because the time they have can be used to make money. The ability to interact with consumers can be used as an additional skill when entering the world of work, especially those related to the field of marketing. Because entrepreneurs can handle various kinds of consumers well so that consumers feel satisfied and return to make purchases at their places. Another benefit obtained is the establishment of relationships with various parties involved in the business process. In addition, entrepreneurs can also help other entrepreneurs to sell their products. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the benefits derived from entrepreneurial activities are: increasing income, opening new jobs, adding relationships, a sense of satisfaction that arises from owning a business, having new experiences, and being productive.

#### **Research Findings**

Broadly speaking, the meaning of entrepreneurship is interpreted by Commerce Education alumni who do entrepreneurship in three ways, namely in the form of attitudes, challenges, and benefits. By interpreting entrepreneurship, it will be easy for an entrepreneur to achieve success. Entrepreneurial attitudes include being independent, responsible, having a strong mentality, ready to take risks, always wanting to learn, daring to try, committed, painstaking, communicative, able to turn failures into opportunities, having a leadership spirit, and confident. Entrepreneurial challenges that must be faced by entrepreneurs include losing a lot of time, competitors, lack of entrepreneurial skills, having a main job, feeling insecure, capital and operational costs, and feeling lazy. The benefits of entrepreneurship felt by alumni include increasing income, opening up jobs, increasing relationships, satisfaction as an owner, new experiences, and being productive.

#### Discussion

#### Entrepreneurial Attitude

The research results obtained have shown that the attitudes that must be possessed by an entrepreneur are following what was conveyed by previous researchers. An attitude of independence is needed to become an entrepreneur, this is in line with research from Arviana and Suroyo (2020) which reveals that an independent attitude will emerge along with a strong entrepreneurial attitude. Where businesses built by alumni are proof of their independence and pride. Having a responsible attitude is useful for taking on everything that happens to an alumnus' business. This is in line with the research of Chen and Lai (2010) which suggests that if a student has a good responsible attitude, an entrepreneurial attitude will also emerge. The next attitude to have is resilience. This finding is in line with research by Sari et al., (2021) which stated that an entrepreneur must have a strong mentality to be able to face challenges and whatever decisions are made. The attitude of entrepreneurs to continue to progress and develop is shown by the emergence of an attitude of wanting to learn. Suripto (2013) says that work patterns such as apprenticeships will train individual skill abilities in using computer and technology techniques or implementing communication strategies that will be useful for managing businesses. Trevelyon (2009) asserts that committed entrepreneurs are better able to develop new strategies. This is in line with research findings that reveal the importance of commitment for an entrepreneur. Soomro et al., (2020) argued that the courage to take risks is something that an entrepreneur must have. This is in line with research findings which reveal that the courage to take risks is an attitude that must be owned by an entrepreneur.

Ali et al. (2011) revealed that entrepreneurship is a deliberate process that emphasizes opportunities rather than threats. So entrepreneurs must be able to overcome threats or obstacles so that they become opportunities. This supports the research findings which found that entrepreneurs must be able to turn obstacles into opportunities that can

advance their businesses. In addition, Klimkowska (2014) revealed that an attitude associated with an entrepreneur is the ability to adapt to a changing environment. An entrepreneur who can adapt, especially in difficult times, will make it easier for him to manage his business better because when adaptation is successful, a sense of comfort will arise in entrepreneurship. This is also in line with the research findings. The results of the study reveal that an entrepreneur must be able to be communicative. Collot & Lefebvre (2015) also stated that communication can increase the entrepreneur's ability to demonstrate the validity and feasibility of business projects, at the same time demonstrating their credibility as reliable and consistent entrepreneurs. So an entrepreneur needs to have a good communication attitude and be able to influence others. The research results also reveal that an entrepreneur must have a leadership attitude. The spirit of leadership can be seen as being able to overcome problems with a cool head. Agreeing with this statement Sadq (2019) explains leadership is a contemporary skill that can influence leadership efficiency. The last attitude that must be possessed by entrepreneurs to the research results obtained is an attitude of confidence. Setiawan et al., (2022) emphasized that entrepreneurial self-confidence influences the orientation of entrepreneurial attitudes because self-confidence is closely related to self-awareness to behave according to one's abilities.

## **Entrepreneurial Challenges**

The results of existing research mention some of the challenges faced in entrepreneurship. First, losing a lot of time, an entrepreneur will pay more attention to the development of his business so that a lot of time is consumed. Second, capital and operating costs, this is in line with the findings of Strobl, etc. (2012) in their research also revealed the perceived obstacles when starting a business, namely bureaucratic obstacles and a lack of financial resources. Third, the decision to remain an employee. This decision makes entrepreneurs must be good at dividing time so that the business they are running can be managed. However, this decision was also chosen because it can provide additional capital for entrepreneurs. Fourth, some competitors make the business competition even tougher. Fifth, lack of knowledge in managing finances which results in unclear use of business funds. Sixth, feeling lazy due to continuous repetitive activities. Seventh, lack of self-confidence, this finding is in line with findings from Pihie & Bagheri (2010) mentioning moderate entrepreneurial self-efficacy, students may not have enough interest to be involved in entrepreneurial activities and may not feel confident enough to face challenges in the effort creation process.

#### **Entrepreneurial Benefits**

From the results of the study, there are several benefits of entrepreneurship, first, entrepreneurs have more income because they have their businesses, besides that the results of their efforts also tend to be greater than the salary they earn as employees. Second, use time more productively. This is in line with research by Wardana et al., (2020) which states that young entrepreneurs think they can make a lot of money by doing something productive. Someone entrepreneurial and active in his business activities means that he can use time productively so that it is not wasted. Third, have the experience that can be applied in the world of work, this is because entrepreneurs can handle various problems that occur in their businesses. Fourth, entrepreneurs can build a network of relationships, this network which in the future can be beneficial for the entrepreneur himself. Fifth, help to improve the surrounding economy, with the existence of entrepreneurs, new jobs will be created and can help other entrepreneurs to sell their products. Sixth, have the freedom to manage their own business. With entrepreneurship, an entrepreneur is not fixated on the rules that have been made by other people in running his business. They will carry out various innovations to improve and develop the business they have.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

From the various explanations above, it can be concluded that in entrepreneurship, several challenges must be experienced in doing business. Even though there are many obstacles faced, entrepreneurship has various benefits from entrepreneurial activities. From the results of the study, it was also concluded that several attitudes must be owned by an entrepreneur. While the advice that can be given by researchers is that entrepreneurs and prospective entrepreneurs are expected not to be afraid to make decisions to work as entrepreneurs. To help the Indonesian government create new entrepreneurs, universities are expected to be able to continue to increase the provision of material on entrepreneurship. Future researchers are expected to be able to add additional sources so that the data obtained is more diverse and detailed. Especially the sources who already have more than three years of entrepreneurial experience.

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