



Revitalizing intellectual entrepreneurship

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At one academic event titled Research Fest at the Australian National University in Canberra recently, there was one session called "How to get a job". Obviously, this session was intended for students who wanted to enter the job market after completing their studies.

At the event, I had a chance to speak with the organizer. What came out from this conversation was what students actually ought to learn more is not only on how to get a job, but how to create jobs.

It is commonplace for students to be educated on a particular subject of knowledge. By the time they finish their studies they are encouraged or even directed to get a specific job.

As a matter of fact, there is nothing wrong with this kind of education. But at the same time, it has a tendency to merely create a worker or employee, not a person who can create employment for others.

Many have argued that this type of educational is not entirely appropriate particularly for a developing country like Indonesia that still needs to struggle for its economic development. Like any other developing country, unemployment is a big issue in Indonesia. It almost becomes a rule that job seekers always outnumber job creators.

Therefore, what is really needed in the educational system is a strategy to produce as many entrepreneurs who can create jobs as possible.

For university students, be they at Bachelor's, Masters' or PhD level, it is perhaps timely to revitalize the concept of "intellectual entrepreneur".

The word "entrepreneur" itself is not something new for many. Recently more and more words have been added to it, such as "social entrepreneur", "creativepreneur", "technopreneur", and so forth.

In this regard, the intellectual entrepreneur concept can be reintroduced to university students. This concept itself was introduced a few years ago by the Graduate School's Intellectual Entrepreneurship Program at the University of Texas, Austin.

Thus, university students must empower their entrepreneurial skills, particularly by using their savvy earned at university. Certainly, their intellectual capacity differs from one another, and students therefore can explore the types

of entrepreneurship that fit what they are studying at university.

Another important thing is that university students should not wait to become intellectual entrepreneurs until they complete their studies. A number of success stories of young entrepreneurs reveal that their success came out of struggling while at school.

In other words, university students should explore all possibilities through learning from other people's success stories. Also bear in mind that failure is very normal for any business and therefore failure stories should be part of the learning process.

Another way of developing entrepreneurship is by working with others in part-time mode and at a later stage by trying to apply the earned working experience at the preferred business. At the same time it would be better to stick to the "intellectual entrepreneur" concept and therefore working in areas that utilize intellectuality should be made a priority.

Indeed, there is nothing wrong with working in a casual job as the formal requirements are not that demanding. Upon observation, Indonesian students in the United Kingdom and Australia tend to work in these areas. But no one can deny that this kind of job is physically demanding, particularly the jobs with working hours in the evening.

It is believed that there are huge opportunities for university students to work in part-time mode in areas where they can utilize their intellectual capacities. Jobs such as research assistant, mentor, tutor, lecturer are just a few. Students can also explore other jobs off campus, such as in NGOs, think-tanks and professional offices. Students may even try to start writing to the media such as The Jakarta Post. Writing is rewarding in both financial and credibility terms. At the same time, it improves one's intellectual capacity.

To conclude, there are abundant entrepreneurial opportunities if anyone wishes to explore. What matters is determination and a strong willingness to keep learning from all sources. Most importantly, do not wait too long. Think, plan and just do it now.

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