



Fortifying student engagement throughout online learning in Entrepreneurship subject during Covid-19 pandemic

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is important to economic advancement, employment as well as a solution to the excessive number of university graduates and social problems. Even more, it is important to know the factors that influence students' engagement in entrepreneurship learning. Why so? It will build profound understanding about entrepreneurship, and if it is possible student will do small business simulation to experience their theories to launch new start-up business. Moreover, due to special circumstances happened nowadays, Covid-19 pandemic need special treatment to keep student vibrant and captivating about their study. Online classes acquire smart and efficient strategies to provide effective learning experiences to the students. The study that conducted by Suryaningsih (2021) had discovered by providing group discussion session, lecturer has generated enthusiasm for learning and student's interaction during online learning. The grounded questions are about how lecturers generate students' enthusiasm and interaction during online learning entrepreneur subject, how student fortify their soft skill along online learning entrepreneurship subject and how about the satisfaction and competencies of students by engaging the class of entrepreneurship subject. This study is quantitative descriptive research. It is applied through questionnaire by having open and close question. The result of this study, lecturers generate students' enthusiasm and interaction during online learning entrepreneurship subject in many ways. The most way that lecturer utilized is giving the interactive learning method example by utilizing youtube, video, etc). Student fortify their soft skill along online learning entrepreneurship subject by fulfilling the assignment and being active in FGD and class discussion. After taking the Entrepreneurship subject online learning, students could optimally train their soft skill in the class and their soft skill increases. Therefore, students recommend the learning strategy in this class to be adopted by other Entrepreneurship's classes.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, student engagement, online learning

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nowadays, entrepreneurship has been given serious devotion due to its importance on economic growth, job creation, sources of innovation and productivity (Urbano & Aparicio, 2015).

The same research from (Singer, et al., 2015) stated that entrepreneurship has been viewed as a

critical contributor in fostering economic growth and development. In Indonesia, students encourage to be involved in entrepreneurship and consider entrepreneurship as a career choice. It is widely known that in the future, undergraduates are the important source of nascent entrepreneurship. Government takes part to instill entrepreneurial spirit among university students is to let entrepreneurship subject compulsory to all students regardless of their field of study. Entrepreneurship is important to economic advancement, employment as well as a solution to the excessive number of university graduates and social problems. Therefore, it is important to know the factors that influence students' engagement in entrepreneurship learning. Why so? It will build deeper understanding about entrepreneurship, and if it is possible student will do small business simulation to experience their theories to launch new start-up business.

According to Al-Mamun (2012) soft skills is crucial for the enhancement of employment performance and career prospects. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are confronted with the challenge of producing graduates who meet the needed skills of employers. Therefore, the development of soft skills in a study plan is extremely needed. 21st century graduates are required to be equipped with skills that include in a set of diverse areas for examples collaboration, critical thinking, leadership, communication, group decision- making, negotiation skills, conflict resolution, team motivation skill, social skills, understanding of diversity, responsibility, accountability and others. Providing teamwork skills is becoming increasingly crucial for preparing them to succeed in today's complex and knowledge-driven economy and society. Effective teamwork requires knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) in a set of diverse areas including leadership, communication, group decision-making, negotiation skills, conflict resolution, team motivation, social skills, understanding of diversity, responsibility and accountability. Instructors use teamwork not only in class projects that aim to mimic real-life problems but also as a learning paradigm (collaborative learning). The accreditation boards, such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), require evidence that students are acquiring teamwork KSAs. In real life, employers continuously rank the ability to work in a team setting as among the most important attributes that they look for in new graduates.

The expansion of online education has brought new challenges for teaching and assessing teamwork KSAs. One of the concerns is that online programs emphasize technical skills but overlook the professional skills development of students to some degree (Pienaar, Wu, & Adam,

2015; Barberà, Layne, & Gunawardena, 2014). Researchers discuss that integrating teamwork into online classes can increase students' teamwork KSAs as well as their satisfaction with online learning experiences (Biasutti, 2011; Myers, et al., 2014). Meanwhile, employers are still have negative perceptions about online programs which the students lack soft skill compared to offline learning. This pre-notion is not grounded in empirical data, as the literature lacks studies comparing soft skills of face-to face and online students. However, it should be noted that several studies suggest that face to-face soft skill training programs are more effective than online ones (Piyawan, et al., 2016).

In online classes, collaborative learning and teamwork can help to reduce the sense of social limitation, which is one of the factors contributing to the low retention rate among online students (Baker, et al., 2016), increase students' successes (Kurucay & Inan, 2017) and promote students' engagement with the course content, which is another predictor of dropouts in online programs (Choi & Park, 2018). Effective teamwork can also promote critical thinking in online classes (Tseng & Yeh, 2013).

1.2 Questions of the study

The issue of how to effectively engage students in online courses raises more questions than answers. Moreover, due to special circumstances happened nowadays, Covid-19 pandemic need special treatment to keep student vibrant and optimistic about their study. Online classes need efficient strategies to provide effective learning experiences to the learners (Chen, et al., 2010). The following research questions guided the study:

- (1) How lecturers generate students' enthusiasm and interaction during online learning entrepreneur subject?
- (2) How student fortify their soft skill along online learning entrepreneur subject?
- (3) How is the level satisfaction and competencies of students by engaging the class of entrepreneurship subject?

To answer the research questions, a thorough and systematic research of relevant literature was conducted.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Student Engagement

Student engagement is essential in learning activity to put better understanding about the subject. By engaging student into learning process, students more likely involve and habituate the soft skill that required when students jump into working life afterward. Soft skills are crucial for the enhancement of employment performance and career prospects (Al-Mamun, 2012). The study that conducted by Suryaningsih (2021) had discovered by providing group discussion session, lecturer has generated enthusiasm for learning and student's interaction during online learning. To strengthen student engagement, enhancing students' soft skill along online learning during Covid-19 pandemic, this study found by optimizing the usage of media and method of learning; up to date Semester Learning Plan (SLP), integrated the Learning Management System (LMS) - ilearn with Whatsapp function through Collaborative Learning. In detail aspect, the other study conducted by Suryaningsih & Alfitman (2021) found that by implementing mini-case discussion by using small-team WAG in course's hour as the instructional design to implement case base method (CBM), it is effective for student engagement particularly to train about being active, time management, critical thinking, presentation skill, public speaking skill, and problem solving.

1.3.2 Online Learning

The situation with the COVID-19 outbreak outdared universities all over the world and compelled them to shift from traditional learning mode to online teaching and learning overnight (Dhawan, 2020). Universities faced challenges such as accessibility, affordability, flexibility, learning pedagogy, readiness and management of quality. Martin (2020) stressed on the importance of quality management program and continuous development for the success of online learning and preparing everyone to be ready for any interrupted situation. Dhawan (2020) stated that The World Economic Forum reported there was a need for people to be ready for challenging circumstances, as the COVID 19 pandemic enforced many of them to change the way they perceive education. Ayebi-Arthur (2017) illustrated that by the example of New Zealand when seismic activities happened and the educators tried to overcome the barriers, they suggested robust Information Technology infrastructure as a prerequisite for online learning.

In fact, in the time of COVID 19, educators had not been concerned much about the quality of education rather they were busy with the adoption of online learning (Martin, 2020; Mhlanga

& Moloi, 2020). The name of educational institutions was under inquiry. They had to maintain the quality of education and performance in the interrupted circumstances. Dhawan (2020) stated that each of these educational institutions was trying to find a suitable alternate to manage these challenging situations. Technical difficulties, students' and teachers' barriers, and preparedness were of many reasons for making the shift was challenging (Al Meajel & Sharadgah, 2018; Parkes, Stein, & Reading, 2014). Therefore, educational institutions should innovate solutions to deal with the challenging context during the COVID 19 period (Liguori & Winkler, 2020). Taken an example, China was the first country to deal with this overnight shift from offline to online classrooms that was, educators had changed their instructional methodology to deal with new circumstances and adapted to the situation of uncertainty (Yen, 2020). To face difficult circumstances, the educational institutions prepared a complete guide for students and instructors to ease the matter and helped everyone to access to online LMSs platform (Yen, 2020).

Each institution has its own LMS to manage the learning environments. In Andalas University, the LMS is named i-learn. LMS provides communication and collaboration that are featured in discussion boards or forums. LMS has been reported to be incapable of supporting interaction and communication and therefore this has led educators to utilize other applications as a replacement for a built-in discussion forum in LMS such Social Networking Sites (SNSs). The example of SNS is Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Whatsapp, etc. This also confirms the weaknesses of i-learn itself. I-learn has own discussion or forum features, but it is not real time basis and hinge on the network circumstances and number of users. Under the conditions of covid-19 pandemic, it is totally online learning, number of users increase significantly, this LMS often collapses. Of course, it might not effective for learning process. Mostly many researchers in the field of education have looked into the potential of adapting SNSs in their teaching and learning process (Marijana, et al., 2011). This has left a gap in the body of knowledge on how SNSs can be integrated into LMS platform to facilitate Online Collaborative Learning (OCL) which would promote the development of soft skills. Therefore, with the signal availability problem as stated, then the study to propose effective online learning environment that can facilitate Collaborative Learning is significant. This point of view is supported by studies conducted by Thoms & Eryilmaz (2014), Iahad & Rahim (2012) where integration of LMS with SNSs functions can increase the quality of online learning. To provide the effective online learning environment, Whatsapp is chosen as SNS platform to bridge these weaknesses. Whatsapp is

everyone's SNS, it is user friendly, and embedded by some features supported for learning such as Whatsapp Group (WAG) that can be utilized as media to have small group discussion.

Why we need the online platform like LMS? Because we need to make sure, students still could hone their soft skill. According to Al-Mamun (2012) soft skills is crucial for the enhancement of employment performance and career prospects.

What are soft skills? They are the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and abilities possessed by an individual that define personality characteristics and are often used to facilitate success in the workplace. Sociologists Bowles & Gintis, introduced the concept of soft skills in 1976 to bring light to personal factors other than those measured by academics. Soft skills are commonly contrasted, in the professional world, with cognitive 'hard skill' abilities in the areas of mathematics, literacy, or science tested by measurable academic assessments. In academia, hard skills are often the objective of an intuition's existence, but soft skills are becoming increasingly important, if not more important, than cognitive skills or intelligence, based on academic and employment deliverables (Gutman & Schoon, 2013).

Soft skills can be defined by a wide range of characteristics. Examples of these skills may include self-direction, motivation, communication, critical thinking, innovation, or initiative. A 2010 American Management Association Critical Skills Survey of 2,115 managers and executives valued communication skills (80.4 percent), critical thinking (72.4 percent), collaboration (71.2 percent) and creativity (57.3 percent) – the 4 Cs – as the soft skills they desired the most in employees (Shrader & Finkle, 2015).

Collaborative Learning (CL) has been proven to promote soft skills (Lee & Lim, 2012). Previous literature (Hennessey & Dionigi, 2013) and this study preliminary findings show that CL has been widely implemented in teaching and learning. Then again, question arises as to why students' mastery of soft skills is reported to be low. This indicates that although CL is implemented widely in the teaching and learning process, it does not often naturally happen in a group. Andresen (2009) stated that the evaluation of students' contributions in group work encourage them to participate actively in group activities. This is also helpful in overcoming the free rider issue which is often mentioned by previous researchers (Mohamad, et al., 2013). Here arises the importance of online platform for the facilitation of CL environments. Research by Sancho, Torrente, Marchiori, & Fernández-Manjón (2011) showed that CL promotes the development of soft skills. However, if collaboration does not happen in a group, the

development of soft skills will not happen. Therefore, educators must properly design their online platforms to make sure that it can facilitate Online Collaborative Learning (OCL). Some studies indicated that online learning is proven to be more effective than traditional learning (Nurbiha, 2012). Hangman, Almaenkinders, & et.al (2003), while suggesting the interweaving of soft skills in existing courses, describe two processes which were designed to integrate soft skills development in different academic settings. Encouraging lessons and insights for learning participation have also been presented by them.

1.3.3 Entrepreneurship

Policy-makers tend to agree that entrepreneurship is instrumental for economic growth and technological progress (Fellnhofer & Kraus, 2015). Therefore, uncovering what leads people to undertake entrepreneurial activity has been the topic of research for over thirty years. Understanding these mechanisms is important for the creation of a good policy mix that supports start-up activity (Nowiński, et al., 2019).

2. METHOD

This study is quantitative descriptive research. It is applied through questionnaire by having open and close question.

Population and sample for this survey is only limited for student who take the online learning entrepreneurship subject in the year of 2019 and 2020 students. In total population is 272 students. At least half of total population will be the sample. Total sample is 140 students. Creation of appropriate survey items stems from previous literature. Some of our survey items can be selected from the existing scales from prior studies. Further, some items may be developed from discussions on the relevant topics from different pieces of literature (Lewis, et al., 2005).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before commenting the main results of the research, we will describe the profile of the students which fill the questionnaire form.

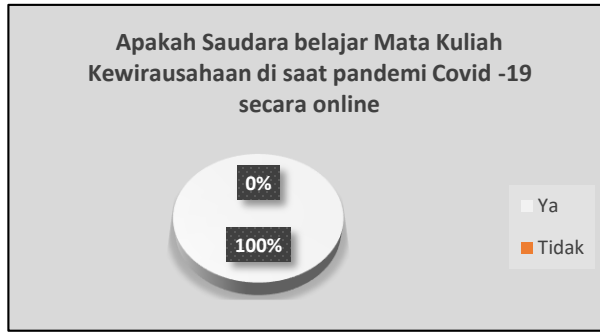


Figure 1. Conformity of taking class
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The sample of these students is asking whether they took the online class or not. All of the respondent responded all of them took Entrepreneurship subject in online learning.

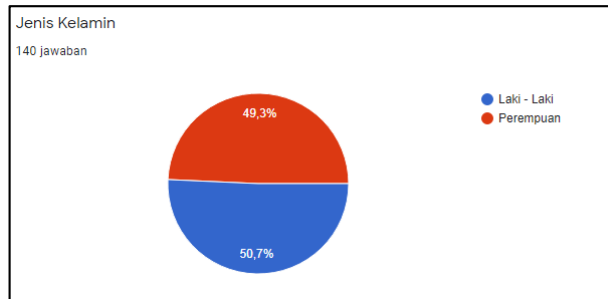


Figure 2. Conformity gender
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

Next on, students asked about the student ID number and gender. Respondents consist of 50.7% male and 49.3% female. It means almost in equal composition.

There are several lecturers who in charge at Entrepreneurship Class. Pak Danny Hidayat led the class at the most.

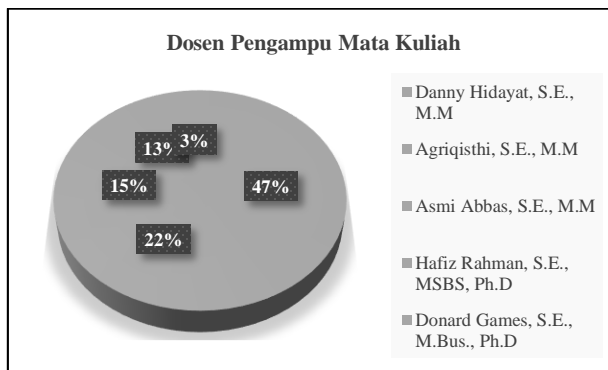


Figure 3. Lecturers in charge

Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The first question is “What has been done by lecturers to generate students’ enthusiasm and interaction in online learning? This initial description of the respondents’ answer shows the diverse methods to create students’ enthusiasm and interaction. 35% of students answer by giving the interactive learning method example by utilizing youtube, video, etc). Secondly lecturers gave motivation during the class.

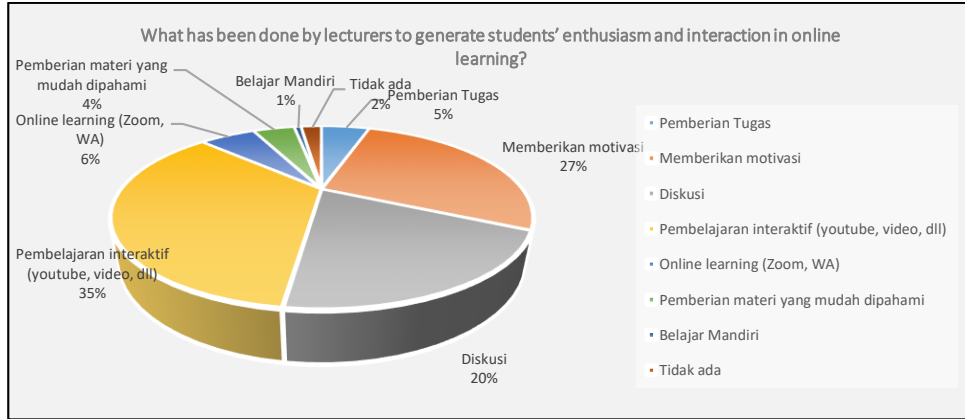


Figure 4. Lecturer generates students’ enthusiasm
Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The second question is “In your opinion, what is an effective way for lecturers to generate students’ enthusiasm and interaction in Entrepreneurship Course - online learning?” 26% of students expect lecturer to give the interactive learning method example by utilizing youtube, video, combination etc). Secondly students expect lecturer to facilitate the discussion in class and third expectation is lecturer gives them motivation regarding life, best business practices from others, and many.

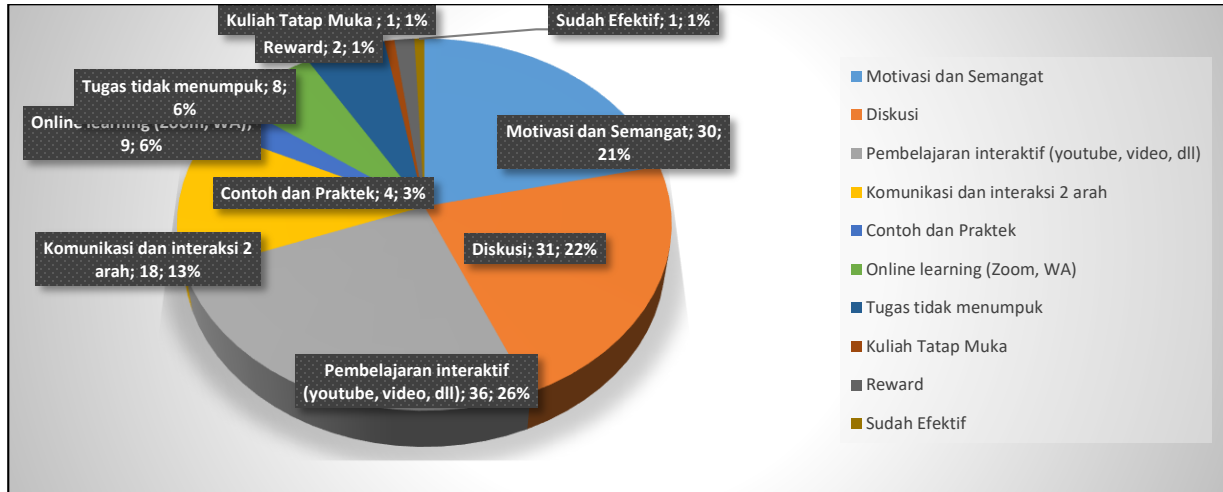


Figure 5. Student perspective about generates students' enthusiasm
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The third question is “does existing RPS - Entrepreneurship Course state clear learning method to accommodate the needs of online learning?” 91% of students agreed the existing RPS - Entrepreneurship Course state clear learning method to accommodate the needs of online learning.

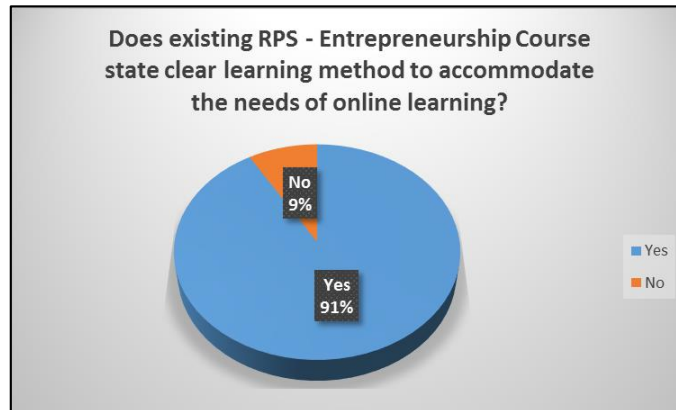


Figure 6. RPS states clearly online learning method
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The fourth question is “In entrepreneurship subject online learning, determine the level of platform usage as follow: Zoom, LMS-ilearn, WAG Class, WAG FGD and ilearn - forum. The most utilization platform is LMS - ilearn. WAG class is the second most used platform. It is followed by Zoom and ilearn - forum.

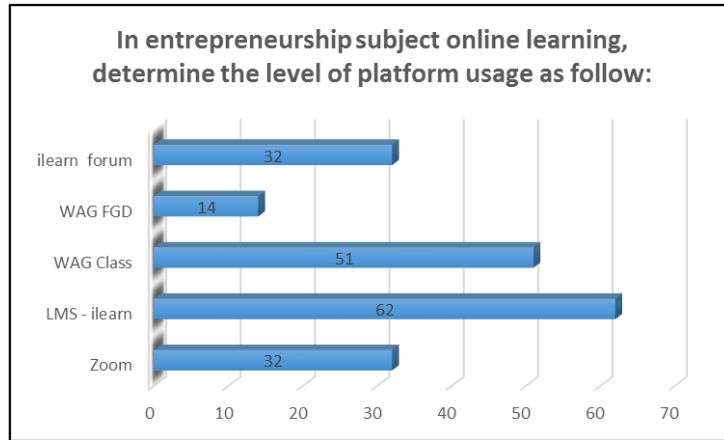


Figure 7. Platform used in online learning
Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The fifth question is “Mentions the other platform used (if any)”. Students answer the most platform used is youtube, email and google meet.

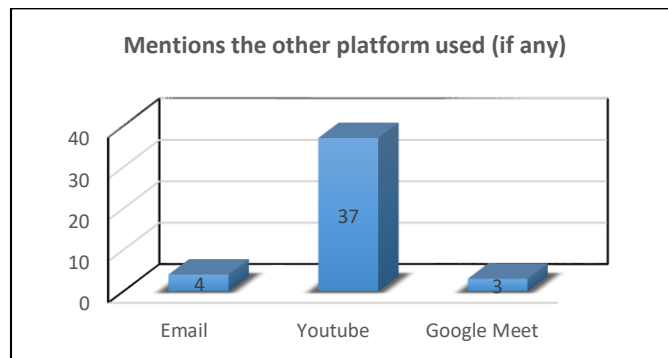


Figure 8. Other platform used in online learning
Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The sixth question is “Compare to offline learning, what are the advantages by getting online learning?”. Students answer the same proportion which is 86% of students choose location flexibility and also more independent in learning as the most advantages getting online learning. In second tier, students choose being more creative and active in discussion are taking the big advantage of online learning as well.

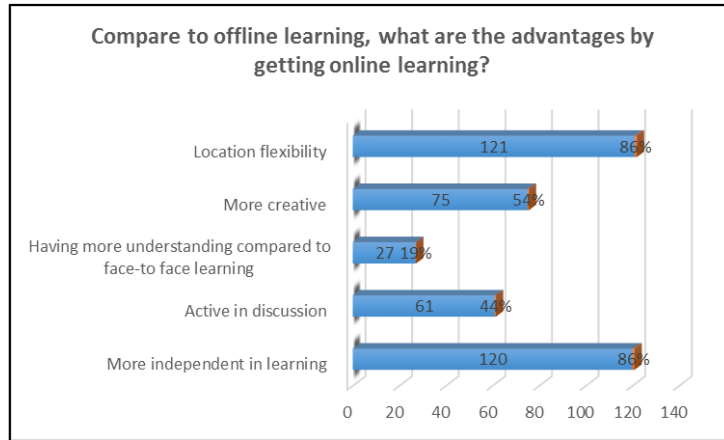


Figure 9. Advantages of online learning
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The seventh question is “What is your expectation in online learning, especially in Entrepreneurship Subject?”. 52% of the students answer to get the knowledge and horizon about entrepreneurship, 29% of the students answer tips and trick being entrepreneur as their expectation in online learning.

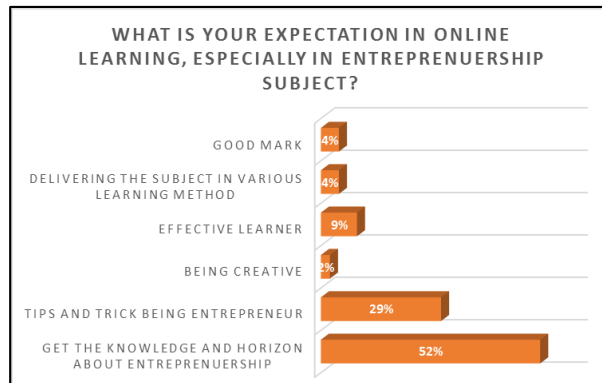


Figure 10. Expectation in online learning
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The eighth question is “By utilizing LMS platform – ilearn, does all information needed could be updated in ilearn?”. 89% of students agreed by utilization LMS platform – ilearn, all information needed could be updated in ilearn.

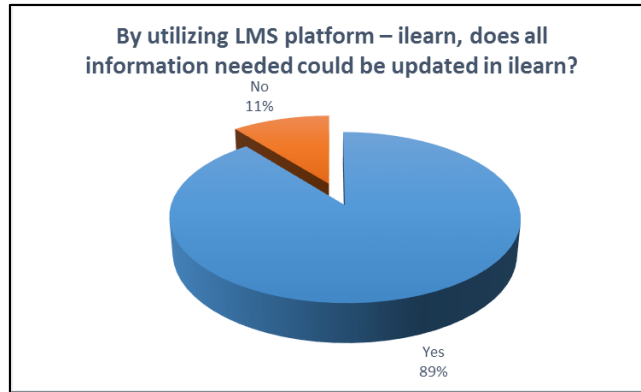


Figure 11. Conformity of ilearn utilization

Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The ninth question is “WA Class Group is used to bridge communication and real-time based information updates, is this platform optimal to accommodate this?” 96% of students answered WA Class Group is used to bridge communication and real-time based information updates.

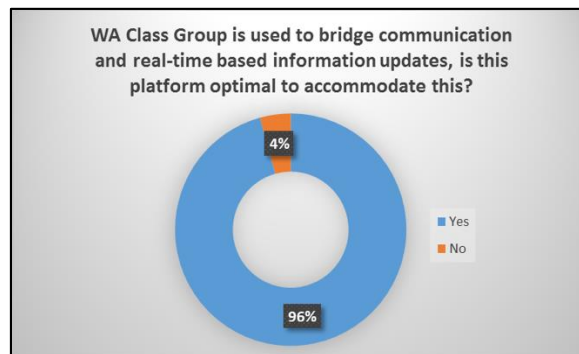


Figure 12. Conformity of i-learn utilization

Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The tenth question is “In Entrepreneurship online class, what are the lecturer’s strategies to facilitate the student being active?” 86% of students answered FGD and discussion is applied by lecturer to facilitate the student being active and 14% of students answer by utilization youtube as the lecturer’s strategy.

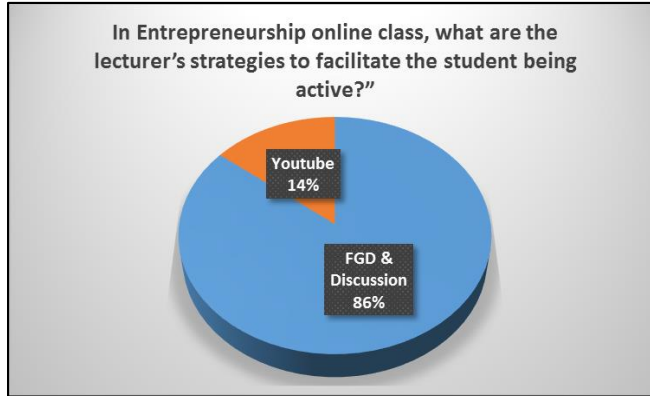


Figure 13. Conformity of active student
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The eleventh question is “What did you do to fortify your soft skill in Entrepreneurship subject online learning class?” 90% of students answer by fulfilling the assignment, following by 54.3% of students answer by being active in focus group discussion, 41.4% of students answer by being active to address the answer for lecturers’ question.

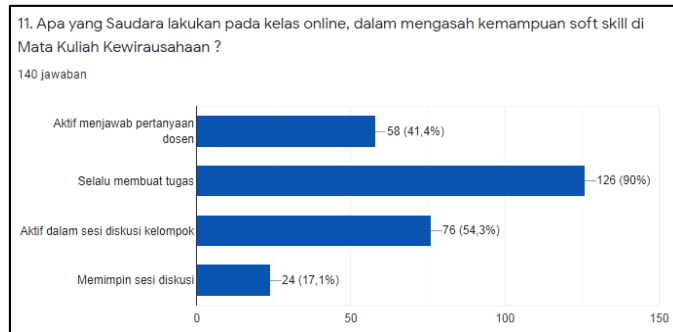


Figure 14. How to fortify soft skill
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The twelfth question is “The lecturer is trying the best to facilitate student for active learning”. 46.4% of students agree and 25.7% of students strongly agree about lecturer is trying the best to facilitate student for active learning.

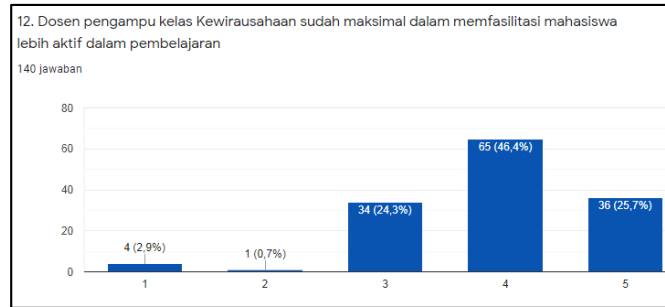


Figure 15. Conformity of active learning optimizing
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The thirteenth question is “After taking the Entrepreneurship subject online learning, I could optimally train my soft skill in the class?”. 39.3% of students agree and 33.6% of students being neutral in stating their opinion about the question related on students could optimally train their soft skill in the class after taking the Entrepreneurship subject online learning.

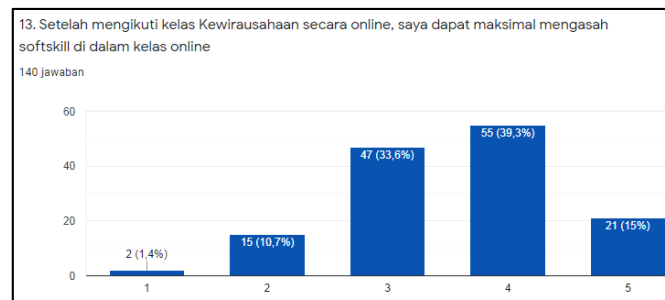


Figure 16. Conformity of soft skill fortifying
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The fourteenth question is “After taking the Entrepreneurship subject online learning, my soft skill increases.” 40% of students agree and 32.1% of students being neutral in stating their opinion about the question related on students’ soft skill increases after taking the Entrepreneurship subject online learning.

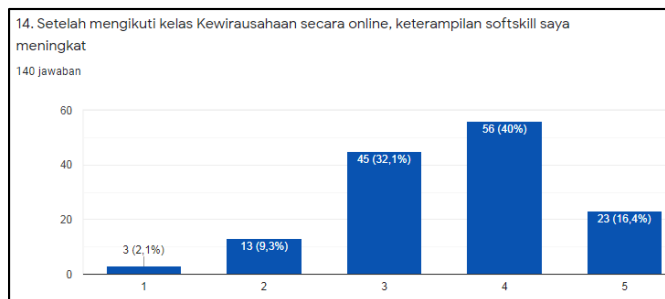


Figure 17. Conformity of soft skill increases
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The fifteenth question is “After taking the Entrepreneurship subject online learning, my friend has changed being more active”. Most of the students are neutral (30.7%), meanwhile 28.6% of students agree about their friend has changed being more active.

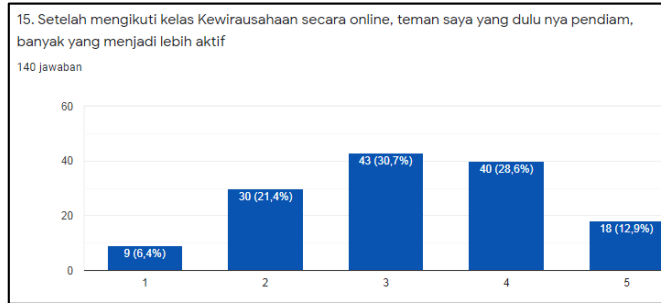


Figure 18. Conformity of active changing
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

The last question is “I recommend the learning strategy in this class to be adopted by other Entrepreneurship’s classes.”33.6% of the students strongly agree, followed by 30% of students agree to recommend the learning strategy in this class to be adopted by other Entrepreneurship’s classes.



Figure 16. Recommendation to other courses
 Source: Valeny Suryaningsih (2021)

4. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The result of this study, lecturers generate students’ enthusiasm and interaction during online learning entrepreneurship subject in many ways. The most way that lecturer utilized is giving the interactive learning method example by utilizing youtube, video, etc). Student fortify their soft skill along online learning entrepreneurship subject by fulfilling the assignment and being active in FGD and class discussion. After taking the Entrepreneurship subject online learning, students could optimally train their soft skill in the class and their soft skill increases.

Therefore, students recommend the learning strategy in this class to be adopted by other Entrepreneurship's classes.

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