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The Influence of the Creative Economy Ecosystem on the Formation of Young Entrepreneurial Startups

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ABSTRACT

The creative economy has become a leading sector in Indonesia, contributing 7.8% to national GDP in 2023 and absorbing more than 22 million workers. Despite this potential, Indonesia's young-entrepreneur ratio remains low at 3.47%, or about 6.1 million of the total population, far behind neighboring countries such as Singapore (8.5%) and Malaysia (4.7%). This research analyzes the influence of the creative economy ecosystem on the formation of young entrepreneurial startups in Indonesia. The creative economy has become a leading sector contributing 7.8% to national GDP in 2023 and absorbing more than 22 million workers. Despite this, Indonesia's young-entrepreneur ratio remains low at 3.47%, or about 6.1 million of the total population. The research method used a quantitative approach and survey techniques to examine 300 young entrepreneurs in Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bandung. Data analysis uses structural equation modeling to examine the relationships among variables in the creative economy ecosystem and startup formation. The results show that the creative economy ecosystem has a positive and significant effect on the formation of young entrepreneurial startups, with an R^2 of 74.2%. Digital technology and business incubator factors are the most dominant drivers of startup formation. This study recommends strengthening digital infrastructure and developing business incubation programs to improve the quality of young entrepreneurs in Indonesia.

Keywords: Creative Economy; Startup; Young Entrepreneurs; Business Ecosystem; Digital Technology

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is facing a golden period with a potential demographic bonus that will peak in 2030 (Nugraha, 2025; Rosani et al., 2025; Santosa & Barirohmah, 2021; Tawil et al., 2025). Its young generation, numbering more than 144 million, comprising 74.93 million Generation Z and 69.38 million millennials, is a strategic asset in the digital economic transformation. However, reality shows that Indonesia's entrepreneurship rate lags behind, reaching only 3.47%, compared to Singapore's 8.5% and Malaysia's 4.7%. This situation is paradoxical, given that Indonesians have a high level of interest and motivation for entrepreneurship, at 47.7%, according to data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. The creative economy sector has demonstrated encouraging performance, contributing 7.8% to Gross Domestic Product in 2023, equivalent to IDR 1,414.77 trillion. This achievement exceeds the government's target and demonstrates the sector's resilience amidst global economic turmoil. Three main subsectors culinary, fashion, and crafts contribute 75% of the total GDP value of the national creative economy. Creative industry exports in the third quarter of 2023 reached USD 17.4 billion, with the fashion subsector contributing USD 9.88 billion and crafts USD 6.26 billion.

The creative economy is defined as a new economic era powered by information and creativity, where ideas and human knowledge are the primary factors of production. Florida (2002), in his theory of the creative class, explains that the creative economy comprises individuals whose primary work involves creating ideas, technology, and creative content. Howkins (2001) expands on this concept by emphasizing that the creative economy encompasses industries based on creativity, skills, and talent that have the potential to generate wealth and jobs by exploiting intellectual property.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2018) defines the creative economy as an evolving concept based on creative assets that have the potential to generate economic growth and development. This concept positions creativity and intellectual capital as key assets that can provide a competitive advantage. Indonesia adheres to this definition by developing 16 subsectors of the creative economy, including culinary arts, fashion, crafts,

music, film, animation, photography, architecture, interior design, visual communication design, product design, television and radio, advertising, interactive games, performing arts, and publishing.

Landry (2000) emphasized that creative cities have characteristics that support the development of the creative economy through hard infrastructure, such as information technology, and soft infrastructure, such as social networks and a culture of innovation. This theory is relevant to the development of the startup ecosystem in Indonesia, where Jakarta has become one of the best ecosystems in the world through a combination of technological infrastructure and a supportive business culture.

Joseph Schumpeter's theory of creative destruction explains that entrepreneurs are agents of change who create innovation and destroy old economic structures to create new ones. This concept is highly relevant to the phenomenon of startups using technology to disrupt traditional industries. Schumpeter (1942) emphasized that entrepreneurship is a process of creative destruction that drives economic growth through innovation. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) define entrepreneurship as the process of discovering, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities to create future goods and services. They emphasize the importance of individual abilities in recognizing and capitalizing on business opportunities in the surrounding environment. This theory explains why young entrepreneurs with access to digital technology can create innovative startups. Blank (2013) developed the lean startup concept, emphasizing the importance of validating business ideas through direct customer interaction. This methodology is very popular among technology startups because it allows for the development of products tailored to market needs at minimal cost. Ries (2011) complements this concept with the build-measure-learn cycle, which serves as a guide for modern startup development.

Isenberg (2011) defines an entrepreneurial ecosystem as a set of elements that interact to support the creation and development of startups. These elements include government policies, funding sources, culture, supporting institutions, human resources, and markets. Moore (1993) uses the analogy of a biological ecosystem to explain how various actors in a business ecosystem are interdependent and co-evolve. Mason and Brown (2014) identify that successful entrepreneurial ecosystems possess characteristics such as the availability of venture capital, the presence of research universities, a concentration of talent, and a culture that supports risk-taking. Stam (2015) developed a model of the entrepreneurial ecosystem that combines framework conditions, such as formal and informal institutions, with systemic conditions such as networks, leadership, funding, talent, knowledge, and supporting markets. Spigel (2017) emphasizes that entrepreneurial ecosystems are local and formed through complex interactions between actors, organizations, and institutions within a geographic region. Research across countries shows that a strong ecosystem can significantly increase the survival and growth rates of startups.

The digital-native generation has an advantage in adopting and using technology to drive business innovation. Prensky (2001) explains that digital natives are the generation born and raised in the digital technology era, thus possessing intuitive technology skills. These characteristics provide a competitive advantage in developing technology-based startups. Tapscott (2009), in his research on the Net Generation, demonstrated that the younger generation possesses characteristics such as quick thinking, multitasking abilities, and a collaborative orientation that support the development of innovative businesses. This generation is also more open to change and risk-taking, which are important traits in entrepreneurship.

Potts and Cunningham (2008) explain that the creative industry has characteristics conducive to startup development, including low barriers to entry, high levels of innovation, and flexible business models. The creative sector also has a high adaptability to technological changes and market trends. Caves (2000) identified that the creative industry has a unique

market structure dominated by innovative small and medium-sized enterprises. This structure creates opportunities for young entrepreneurs to compete with large companies through product differentiation and creative approaches. De Propris (2013) added that creative clusters can increase knowledge spillover and collaboration, supporting the emergence of innovative startups.

Employment in the creative economy sector reached 24.92 million people, demonstrating its ability to create productive jobs. Young people dominate the creative workforce, as evidenced by the 120 Indonesian animation studios employing 5,771 creative workers, with an estimated total of 24,000 workers in the animation sector. This phenomenon indicates a conducive ecosystem for the development of young talent in the creative sector. Jakarta has been named the second-best startup ecosystem in the world after Mumbai, according to the Startup Genome report. This achievement is supported by adequate technological infrastructure, a population with strong purchasing power, and economic stability. Indonesia has successfully produced five unicorn companies in the last decade, each valued at billions of dollars, including Gojek at USD 11 billion, Tokopedia at USD 7 billion, and Bukalapak at USD 12 billion.

Despite this enormous potential, young Indonesian entrepreneurs face various obstacles in developing their startups. Lack of entrepreneurial skills and education, limited experience and resources, and limited networks and family support are major obstacles. Geographical disparities are also evident, with the majority of provinces outside Java having a proportion of young entrepreneurs below 1%. This situation has the potential to hinder regional economic development and equitable distribution of prosperity. The government has demonstrated a strong commitment through various policies, such as Presidential Regulation No. 2 of 2022 on National Entrepreneurship Development, which targets an entrepreneurship ratio of 3.95% and new-entrepreneur growth of 4% by 2024. The allocation of IDR 123.46 trillion in funds for the National Economic Recovery Program for MSMEs and the Creative Business Incubator program at the Bali Creative Industry Center demonstrates the government's commitment to developing an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The digital transformation accelerated by the pandemic has fundamentally changed the business landscape. Digital platforms and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and blockchain are opening significant opportunities for young entrepreneurs to develop innovative products and services. More than 20.1 million MSMEs have entered digital platforms, demonstrating their rapid adaptation to changing business paradigms. This study aims to analyze the influence of the creative economy ecosystem on the formation of young entrepreneurial startups, focusing on factors that influence the success of young entrepreneurs in developing technology-based businesses. A deeper understanding of the dynamics of the creative economy ecosystem is expected to yield appropriate policy recommendations to improve the quality and quantity of young Indonesian entrepreneurs as they face global competition.

Previous studies on entrepreneurial ecosystems and startup formation have been conducted across various contexts. Isenberg (2011) and Stam (2015) developed entrepreneurial ecosystem models emphasizing the interaction between framework conditions and systemic conditions. Spigel (2017) emphasized that entrepreneurial ecosystems are local and formed through complex actor interactions within a geographic region. Mason and Brown (2014) identified key characteristics of successful ecosystems, including venture capital availability, research universities, talent concentration, and risk-taking culture. However, these studies remain limited in several aspects: they were primarily conducted in developed countries, focused on high-tech startups rather than the creative economy sector, and did not specifically examine the relationship between creative economy ecosystems and young entrepreneurial startup formation in the Indonesian context. Additionally, most previous research has not

simultaneously analyzed the influence of ecosystem dimensions such as digital infrastructure, incubators, and human resources on startup formation using structural equation modeling in the creative economy sector.

The novelty of this research lies in examining the influence of the creative economy ecosystem on young entrepreneurial startup formation in Indonesia, focusing on the creative sector that has been underexplored in entrepreneurial ecosystem literature, while employing SEM to simultaneously test six ecosystem dimensions on startup formation across three major cities Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bandung representing varying ecosystem maturity levels. This study aims to analyze the influence of the creative economy ecosystem on the formation of young entrepreneurial startups, specifically addressing whether the ecosystem significantly affects startup formation, which dimensions most dominantly influence it, and whether regional differences exist. The research is expected to provide theoretical benefits by enriching entrepreneurial ecosystem studies in the creative sector and developing countries, while offering practical benefits as evaluative material for policymakers in formulating targeted entrepreneurial programs, a reference for incubator managers and startup communities, and a foundation for future researchers studying entrepreneurial ecosystems and creative economy development across Indonesian regions.

METHOD

This research used a quantitative, explanatory design to examine the causal relationship between the creative economy ecosystem, the independent variable, and the formation of young entrepreneurial startups, the dependent variable. The choice of a quantitative approach was based on the research objective of measuring the influence and predicting relationships between variables in an objective, generalizable manner.

The research population was young entrepreneurs aged 18-35 who are developing startups in the creative economy sector in Indonesia. Based on 2024 data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), approximately 6.1 million young entrepreneurs are in the target population. The sampling technique used was stratified random sampling, dividing the population based on geographic region and creative economy subsector. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, yielding a minimum sample size of 400 respondents. However, to anticipate non-response and increase statistical power, this study used 500 respondents across Jakarta (200), Surabaya (150), and Bandung (150). These three cities were chosen because they have relatively mature startup ecosystems and are representative of the development of Indonesia's creative economy.

The independent variable in this study is the Creative Economy Ecosystem, measured through six dimensions. First, Digital Infrastructure encompasses the availability of high-speed internet, e-commerce platforms, and cloud computing services. Second, Government Support encompasses supportive policies, streamlined licensing, and capital assistance programs. Third, Access to Financing encompasses the availability of venture capital, angel investors, and financial institutions that support startups. Fourth, Incubators and Accelerators measure the availability of mentoring programs, co-working space facilities, and business networks. Fifth, Quality Human Resources encompasses the availability of creative talent, technical skills, and industry experience. Sixth, Supportive Market encompasses market size, consumer purchasing power, and consumption trends for creative products. The dependent variable is the Formation of Young Entrepreneur Startups, measured through four indicators. First, the number of startups founded in the creative economy sector between 2020 and 2024. Second, business growth is measured by increased turnover, number of employees, and market expansion. Third, product innovation, including new product development, technology adoption, and competitive differentiation. Fourth, business sustainability, measured by survival rate and market resilience.

The research instrument used a structured questionnaire with a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire consisted of 48 questions developed based on theory and previous research, with modifications to suit Indonesian conditions. Instrument validity was tested using the expert judgment of three entrepreneurship academics and two creative industry practitioners. Construct validity was tested through confirmatory factor analysis with a minimum factor loading of 0.5 and a minimum Average Variance Extracted of 0.5. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha with a minimum criterion of 0.7 for each variable dimension. A pilot test was conducted on 50 respondents outside the main sample to ensure the quality of the research instrument.

Data collection was conducted through an online survey on the Google Forms platform, distributed via social media networks, young entrepreneur associations, and startup communities. To increase the response rate, a personal approach was employed through email and direct messages to target respondents. The survey was conducted over three months, from March to May 2024. Secondary data was collected from various sources, including reports from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), industry reports from international consultants, and startup databases such as StartupBlink and Crunchbase. Secondary data was used to validate and contextualize the research findings.

Data analysis used Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS 24.0 software to simultaneously test the research model. The analysis phase began with descriptive analysis to characterize respondents and describe the distribution of responses. This was followed by SEM assumption tests, including normality, outliers, multicollinearity, and singularity. The measurement model was tested for construct validity and reliability using confirmatory factor analysis. The goodness-of-fit criteria used included Chi-square/df < 3, GFI > 0.9, AGFI > 0.8, CFI > 0.9, TLI > 0.9, and RMSEA < 0.08. The structural model was tested to evaluate causal relationships between latent variables using the same criteria. Additional analysis was conducted using multiple group analysis to test model differences across study areas. A moderating effect analysis was also conducted to examine the role of demographic variables, such as age, gender, and educational background, in the relationships among the main variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Of the 500 questionnaires distributed, 456 respondents provided complete responses, representing a response rate of 91.2%. Respondent characteristics indicated a predominance of the 25-30 age group (62.3%), followed by the 18-24 age group (23.7%), and the 30-35 age group (14%). The gender distribution was balanced, with 52.4% male and 47.6% female respondents, indicating equal participation between the sexes in creative entrepreneurship. Educational backgrounds were dominated by undergraduate degrees (68.2%), diplomas (18.4%), and postgraduate (13.4%). The most common fields of study were design and fine arts (31.2%), information technology (24.7%), economics and business (21.3%), and communications (22.8%). The dominance of creative and technological backgrounds demonstrates a match between competencies and the business fields being developed. The most popular business subsectors are culinary (28.3%), fashion (22.1%), creative technology (19.5%), music and entertainment (15.2%), and crafts (14.9%). This distribution aligns with national data, which shows culinary, fashion, and crafts as the largest contributors to Indonesia's creative economy. The average age of respondents' businesses was 2.8 years, with 73.4% of startups being under 5 years old.

Descriptive Variable Analysis

The descriptive analysis results indicate that respondents' perceptions of the creative economy ecosystem are in the good category, with a mean score of 3.84 on a scale of 5. The digital infrastructure dimension received the highest score, with a mean score of 4.12, indicating that access to digital technology is adequate. This aligns with Indonesia's internet penetration rate of 77.02% and the rapid growth of e-commerce during the pandemic. The government support dimension received a score of 3.69, indicating room for improvement in government policies and programs for young entrepreneurs. Although various programs have been launched, such as the Creative Business Incubator and Micro-Business Productive Assistance, implementation at the regional level remains suboptimal. Access to financing received a score of 3.42, indicating limited capital sources for early-stage startups. The availability of incubators and accelerators received a score of 3.91, indicating encouraging progress. Jakarta had the highest score (4.18), followed by Bandung (3.87) and Surabaya (3.68), reflecting the concentration of supporting infrastructure in the capital. The quality of human resources received a score of 4.02, indicating that Indonesia's creative talent is sufficiently qualified. Market support scored 3.76, indicating significant domestic market potential, but still requiring consumer education.

Measurement Model Test Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis showed that all indicators had factor loadings above 0.5, ranging from 0.621 to 0.892. The Average Variance Extracted value for all constructs was above 0.5, indicating good convergent validity. Discriminant validity was met with a square root of the AVE value greater than the correlation between constructs. Construct reliability, as measured by Composite Reliability, was above 0.7 for all variables. Digital Infrastructure had the highest CR (0.89), followed by Human Resources (0.87), and Startup Formation (0.86). Cronbach's Alpha for all dimensions was above 0.8, indicating excellent internal consistency. The goodness-of-fit of the measurement model was satisfactory, with Chi-square/df = 2.14, GFI = 0.921, AGFI = 0.887, CFI = 0.946, TLI = 0.938, and RMSEA = 0.051. These values met the established cut-off criteria, indicating that the measurement model fit the empirical data.

Structural Model Test Results

The structural model demonstrated goodness of fit with Chi-square/df = 2.31, GFI = 0.912, AGFI = 0.878, CFI = 0.934, TLI = 0.927, and RMSEA = 0.054. The results of the hypothesis testing indicated that the creative economy ecosystem has a positive and significant effect on the formation of young entrepreneurial startups, with a path coefficient of 0.861 and a t-value of 12.47 ($p < 0.001$). The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.742 indicates that 74.2% of the variance in startup formation can be explained by the creative economy ecosystem, while 25.8% is explained by factors outside the model. This value indicates excellent predictive power and high theoretical relevance.

Analysis of the Influence of Ecosystem Dimensions

Analysis of the influence of each ecosystem dimension on startup formation shows that digital infrastructure has the largest influence, with a path coefficient of 0.284 ($p < 0.001$). This confirms the importance of access to digital technology in supporting startup development. Digital platforms enable young entrepreneurs to access broader markets, conduct online transactions, and use low-cost productivity tools. Incubators and accelerators rank second with a path coefficient of 0.227 ($p < 0.001$). Incubation programs provide mentoring, networking access, and business idea validation, which are crucial for early-stage startups. Research shows that startups participating in incubation programs have an 89% survival rate compared to 44% for those not participating.

Quality human resources had a path coefficient of 0.198 ($p < 0.001$), indicating the importance of talent in building a sustainable startup. The availability of competent programmers, designers, and digital marketers is a critical factor in executing business ideas. Market support showed a path coefficient of 0.171 ($p < 0.001$), reflecting the importance of strong consumer demand for creative products.

Access to financing had a path coefficient of 0.156 ($p < 0.01$), but although significant, its influence was relatively small. This can be explained by the characteristics of creative startups, which generally require relatively small initial capital compared to high-tech startups. Government support showed the smallest path coefficient (0.134; $p < 0.05$), indicating that while government policy plays a role, market and technological factors are more dominant.

Regional Differences

Multiple group analyses revealed significant differences in the structural models across the study regions. Jakarta demonstrated the highest R^2 (0.796), followed by Bandung (0.731) and Surabaya (0.682). These differences reflect the varying maturity of the ecosystems across regions. In Jakarta, digital infrastructure and access to financing have a particularly strong influence, reflecting the concentration of investors and technology companies in the capital. Bandung demonstrates advantages in human resources and progressive local government support. Surabaya benefits from local market support and strong community networks, but still has limited access to external financing.

Implications of the Findings

The dominant influence of digital infrastructure confirms Indonesia's economic transformation toward digitalization. Investment in broadband infrastructure, digital literacy, and e-commerce platforms is a strategic priority to support creative startups. The government needs to continue programs like the Palapa Ring and encourage the adoption of 5G technology to accelerate economic digitalization. The importance of incubators and accelerators demonstrates the need to expand entrepreneurial development programs beyond Jakarta. Models like the Creative Business Incubator need to be replicated in other major cities, adapting to local characteristics. Collaboration between local governments, universities, and the private sector can accelerate the development of a sustainable incubation ecosystem. The already high quality of human resources needs to be optimized through upskilling and reskilling programs tailored to Industry 4.0 needs. Programs such as the Digital Talent Scholarship and Pre-Employment Program can be expanded with a focus on creative and technological competencies. Collaboration with online learning platforms can improve the accessibility and quality of training.

Demographic Moderation Analysis

Moderation analysis indicates that age moderates the relationship between access to financing and startup formation. Entrepreneurs aged 25-30 demonstrate a better ability to access and manage external financing than those aged 18-24. This can be explained by their higher levels of business maturity and credibility. Gender does not show significant differences in the structural model, indicating that the creative economy ecosystem is relatively inclusive of female participation. However, a detailed analysis shows that female entrepreneurs tend to rely more on bootstrapping and are less likely to access formal financing than male entrepreneurs. Educational background moderates the relationship between human capital and startup formation. Respondents with an information technology background demonstrated greater ability to utilize digital infrastructure, while those with an art and design background excelled in product innovation.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the geographic focus on three major cities may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions in Indonesia, which have different ecosystem characteristics. Second, the cross-sectional approach cannot capture the dynamics of ecosystem change over time. Third, the use of self-reported measures may contain bias in respondents' perceptions, particularly in assessing their own startup performance. Fourth, the research model does not incorporate external variables such as macroeconomic conditions and industry competition, which can influence startup formation. Fifth, the definition of a startup is relatively broad and may include traditional businesses that use digital technology.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that the creative economy ecosystem has a positive and significant influence on the formation of young entrepreneurial startups in Indonesia, with a 74.2% effect size. This finding confirms the hypothesis that a conducive environment can encourage the emergence of innovative and sustainable young entrepreneurs. Digital infrastructure is the dominant factor, followed by the availability of business incubators and the quality of human resources. The creative economy's 7.8% contribution to national GDP and its employment of 24.92 million people demonstrate the sector's significant potential to drive inclusive economic growth. However, Indonesia's low youth entrepreneurship ratio indicates the need for more targeted and effective policy interventions. Ecosystem differences across regions underscore the importance of a decentralized approach to entrepreneurship development. Jakarta, with its mature ecosystem, can serve as a model, but adaptations to local characteristics are necessary for other regions. Bandung and Surabaya demonstrate significant potential that can be developed through infrastructure investment and appropriate mentoring programs. The pandemic-accelerated digital transformation has opened up significant opportunities for young entrepreneurs to thrive. Digital platforms enable broader market access, operational efficiency, and the development of innovative business models. However, the digital divide between regions and community groups requires special attention. Policy recommendations include: first, accelerating digital infrastructure development, especially outside Java, through the Palapa Ring program and the implementation of 5G. Second, expanding business incubator programs to major cities through public-private partnership models. Third, developing a creative entrepreneurship curriculum in universities and vocational schools. Fourth, increasing access to financing through soft loan schemes, government venture funds, and crowdfunding platforms. Fifth, strengthening the ecosystem through networking events, startup competitions, and mentoring programs. Sixth, harmonizing regulations to create a conducive business climate for creative startups. Further research is recommended using a longitudinal approach to capture the dynamics of ecosystem change over time. Geographical expansion to eastern Indonesia and comparative analysis with other ASEAN countries could provide a broader perspective. The development of more specific measurement instruments for the creative economy sector is also needed to improve the accuracy of the analysis.

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