

# EFL Students' Entrepreneurial Tendencies: Is It a Misdirected Issue?

Isna Humaera<sup>a</sup>, Ahmed Sardi<sup>b</sup>, Fitri Amaliah Akbal<sup>c</sup>, Ali Syahban Amir<sup>d</sup>, Ruslan Hasyim<sup>e</sup>, & Nurdin Noni<sup>f,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup>IAIN Kendari, Indonesia

<sup>b</sup>STKIP Darud Da'wah Wal Irsyad Pinrang, Indonesia

<sup>c,f</sup>Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

<sup>d</sup>STIE Yapti Jeneponto, Indonesia

<sup>e</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong, Indonesia

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## Abstract

This paper examines the EFL students' tendencies toward entrepreneurship and whether this phenomenon is misdirected or not. It was investigated by using descriptive qualitative through thematic analysis. The findings showed that the EFL students had run some businesses and planned to run self-employed businesses shortly. This resulted in most students having run businesses that support their field of knowledge. These businesses are English language courses, translation or editing services, and private classes. This tendency made them have challenges in business competitiveness. Whether it was misdirected or not, that depended on the EFL students' career opportunities. Thus, some of them tended to choose to open culinary businesses, online shops, and clothing stores that are more likely.

*Keywords:* EFL Students, entrepreneurial tendencies, misdirected issue.

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## 1. Introduction

In the digital age, many English language students are taking advantage of their English skills to run an online or offline business. The online or offline businesses run by English language students vary, ranging from translation services, and website development, to online retail stores. English language students running these businesses can use their English skills to communicate with customers or colleagues from various countries. Online or offline businesses run by English language students can provide many benefits, especially for the students themselves. In addition to helping to increase income, online or offline businesses can also improve their English skills and provide valuable business experience. However, not all English language students who run an online or offline business are successful. Many factors influence the success of online or offline businesses run by English language students, such as the right marketing strategies, good English skills, and the quality of the products or services offered.

As cited in Riyanti (2003), entrepreneurship is a term derived from the language French "entreprenile" which means running, doing, and attempting. This term was first introduced by Richard Cantillon and is increasingly popular when used by experts Jean Baptise Economist Say to describe the entrepreneurs who can move economic resources from a level of low productivity to a higher level of productivity. In contrast, Suryaman (2006), defines entrepreneurship as a person who can start and or run a business (Budiati et. all, 2012). Wibowo (2011) said that an entrepreneur must have the character to grow mentally, by having a mentality and behavior; a person will have a great passion for financial independence. Some of the main characteristics that characterize the entrepreneurial mentality are first confidence where an entrepreneur works with confidence.

Second is oriented to tasks and results where an entrepreneur can meet their needs of achievements obtained, namely profit or advantages from his business, he must be diligent and patient, work hard, and have initiative. The third is brave to take risks and like challenges. The fourth is leadership spirit, namely, an entrepreneur must be open-minded to suggestions and criticisms, and easy to mingle and cooperate with others. The last one is thinking towards results (benefits) where an entrepreneur is required to think creatively and innovatively so that the products produced are unique to consumers. Next, Darpujiyanto (2010) divides entrepreneurial factors into two, namely external and internal factors. Internal factors are factors that arise due to the influence of stimuli from within the individual himself, while external

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\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [nurdinnoni@unm.ac.id](mailto:nurdinnoni@unm.ac.id)

factors are those that affect the individual due to influence from the outside. While internal factors consist of the need for income, self-esteem, and feelings of pleasure while external factors consist of family, community environment, and opportunity.

Three theories may help us to understand the interests of students in the field of education in English in starting a business. One theory that may be relevant is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which proposes that individuals have a hierarchy of needs that must be met for them to reach their full potential. According to Maslow, the highest level of needs is self-actualization, which includes the desire to achieve one's full potential and make a contribution to the world. Starting a business can be a way for individuals to fulfill this need by using their skills and talents to create something that adds value to the world and allows them to achieve their full potential. Another theory that may be relevant is Self-Determination Theory, which proposes that individuals have three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Starting a business can help individuals fulfill these needs by giving them the autonomy to make their own decisions and control their work, the opportunity to develop and use their skills and competencies, and the chance to connect with others and build meaningful relationships. The last theory is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Raguz and Matics (2011) claimed that studies of entrepreneurial interests often use TPB theory to explain the relationship between the influence of personal factors and entrepreneurial interests.

This theory is considered a better and more complex model for explaining and predicting entrepreneurial or business interests than other models. This theory explains that interest is positively influenced by behavioral attitudes, meaning that the stronger (positive) an individual's assessment of whether or not the impact of being an entrepreneur will strengthen the individual's desire to work independently (self-employed) or run his own business. In this case, the stronger the attitude towards entrepreneurship, the stronger their interest in becoming an entrepreneur is (Budiati et. all, 2012). Therefore, the researchers conclude that the TPB suggests that an individual's intentions to engage in a particular behavior are influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the case of starting a business, a student in the field of education in English may have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and see it as a way to use their skills and make a positive impact, may feel a sense of social pressure or support from their peers or mentors to start a business, and may feel confident in their ability to successfully start and run a business.

Three researchers conducted a study on factors that influence students in running a business. First, a study conducted by Suhartini (2011) investigated the factors that affect students' interest in entrepreneurship at PGRI Yogyakarta University. She examined the elements that influenced students' interest in entrepreneurship, and she determined which factor is most important for students in running their businesses. 100 students become the sample of her study and she used a questionnaire to gather the data. The results revealed that: (1) elements related to earnings, emotions, family environment, and education had a positive influence on students' interest in entrepreneurship; and (2) the earning factor was the most important in influencing students' interest in entrepreneurship. Second, a study was done by Amrullah and Anggrismono (2018) who analyzed students' interest in business at higher education at Amikom Yogyakarta University. This study aimed to give an illustration of students' interest in the Informatics study program and information systems based on students' competence namely in the field of Information and Computer Technology (ICT). The researchers used questionnaires and interviews to collect the data. Based on their interview with the students, the researchers found two students already running their businesses based on their field of study. For example, one student already has a business in the field of multimedia-based creative or interactive information products like print media advertisements, and one student has a business in website programming and web E-commerce.

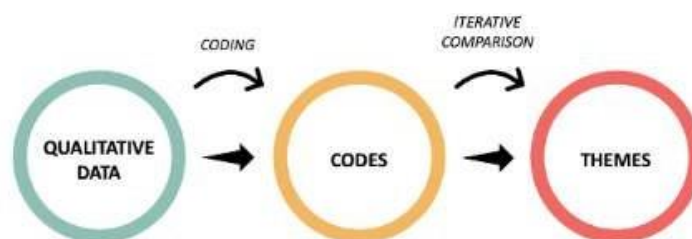
However, the result shows that more than 50% of student's interest in the business for Informatics study program and information systems did not relate to their field of expertise, which is ICT. The last study was done by Subroto and Aghniya (2021) who explored the factors that influenced students in higher education to become an entrepreneur. It aimed to find out what factors can influence students' interest in entrepreneurship. The subject of their study was economic education students' study program at UNESA University and the researchers used questionnaires to collect the data. Based on the result, it shows that Factors Entrepreneurship education does not influence the growth of entrepreneurial interest. While the expectation factor Income has a positive effect on entrepreneurial interests, this is proven by the majority of respondents' answers stating that they wanted to obtain greater income and not be a worker; this is a form of motivation for students' interest in entrepreneurship.

Some researchers had conducted a study on students' interest in running a business (Suhartini, 2011; Amrullah and Anggrismono, 2018; and Subroto and Aghniya, 2021). However, no study focuses on exploring students' perceptions of their interest in running their business either online or offline, particularly for students who enrolled in English Education study programs. Therefore, the researchers interested conducted this study entitled "EFL students' Entrepreneurial Tendencies: Is it a misdirected issue?" where the main issue of this study is mostly the students enrolled

in English study programs had ability in English but they did not take an opportunity to use their skills in running their business. The purposes of this study are to explore and to find out what kind of business the students had running, the reasons and the challenges while running their business so far, the student's plans to make a business in the future, and the students' perceptions as English education students to take an opportunity in running a business. It is important to note that every individual is unique and may have motivations and factors that influence their interests in entrepreneurship.

## 2. Methodology

This study was conducted using a qualitative descriptive research method by extracting information from various respondents on different campuses. Respondents were English language education students from various institutions taken purposely. Data collection is carried out by distributing an open-ended questionnaire to students through a Google form link consisting of nine questions. The data collection technique of this study was through purposive sampling technique on 30 respondents from various campuses.



**Figure 1.** Thematic Analysis

As described, the instrument used is an open-ended questionnaire accessed through a Google form from each student's device. Then, the data analysis technique of this study uses thematic analysis. One method of data analysis that aims to detect themes or patterns in data that have been gathered by researchers is thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach is highly useful if a study wants to carefully examine the qualitative information, they have to identify relationships between phenomena and describe how widely a phenomenon occurs (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This thematic analysis is the ground or foundation for the aim of analyzing qualitative research, according to Holway & Todres' 2003 study. First, the themes or subjects were used to arrange and code the data. Second, the data were analyzed and connected to the earlier discoveries and literature review. After the initial coding, the data were reviewed again until it became evident that no new themes were developing. The coded files were printed after the coding was finished and kept in folders that were labeled with each code name. This is best illustrated by the figure 1.

## 3. Findings and Discussions

The thirty EFL students from different universities in Indonesia who have run and planned a business provided the data for this study through an open-ended questionnaire. The 30 EFL students' placement sites are spread out in different territories. As a result, the items were submitted via a Google form link. The respondents' categorization and coding of the data are shown on Table 1.

Regarding the data found that there are 30% of students are running a business while studying; almost all respondents have plans to start a business, either in the near future or after graduation. In accordance with the business items to be carried out, only one respondent does not yet have a plan. Their responses were mixed. There are 12 respondents who will open English language course services, 3 respondents who will become translators, and the rest will become online booksellers, culinary takers, clothes takers, content creators, and editors.

Next is the type of business that will support their abilities as English language education students are English language course services (9 respondents), tour guides (6 respondents), and various others by each respondent such as authors, translators, booksellers, endorsers, content creators, App installers, and interpreters. But there are still six respondents who have not given a decision.

Last but not least is a business opportunity for English language education students. Uniquely, there were 28 respondents who believed that they had the opportunity to open or start a business with their language skills. However, there were two respondents who gave a negative basis to the entrepreneurial opportunity. The following discussions are to see how this data analysis is best illustrated.

**Table 1.** Data Categorization and Coding on the EFL Students' Entrepreneurship

| No | Sample | Items  |   |   |
|----|--------|--|---|---|
|    |        | 4. In case you're an English department student, is there any business that you want to run relating to your field (English Education)? What is the kind of business? Describe in short!<br>Code= BR and KB = bold words and underline | 5. Business that improve their capability as an English Education Students<br>Code: BIEE =red colour<br>No idea= green colour | 6. Do you think most English Education Students have good opportunities to run a business? Why do you think so?<br>Code =OB=NOB (negative) = italic bold red colour<br>POB (Positive)= bold italic blue colour      |
| 1  | S1     | No (BR)  | To be a lecture on the course, be a writer or translator Service  | <i>I don't think so</i> , in my opinion the people who has qualify of course he has good opportunity  |
| 2  | S2     | Translator (KB)  | Working as a tutor will be the place for me to learn English more, because to teach English, I should master it first.        | <i>Of course, they have capability.</i> They can get involved in various kinds of business that they like   |
| 3  | S3     | <u>English course</u> (KB) is the best one for me. I want to make an offline course which has dorms for English area.  | Translation services  | <i>Ofc, because there are still so many students out there who don't understand English and we as English Education students must be able to help them, and teach them so that they can speak English fluently.</i> |
| 4  | S4     | <u>translation services</u> and <u>private lessons</u> (KB) for elementary school, because I want to hone my skills in improving reading, speaking and increasing vocabulary.  | Tourism because we can talk with foreign people (interpretation: Tour Guide)  | <i>Yes, because with english we can expand our bussiness overseas</i>   |
| 5  | S5     | English language courses (KB)  | business in the field of course services, because they can still add insight and train us.                                    | <i>for being able to speak English and being able to teach it to others.</i>  |
| 6  | S6     | Open <u>an English course</u> (KB) for students whom can help them improve their English.  | I don't know  | <i>Maybe, because we can meet foreign people and taking English course can make our communication run well</i>  |
| 7  | S7     | No (BR)  | English course because its related with my major  | <i>Of course, cause English is global language</i>  |
| 8  | S8     | English course (KB)  | Open an English course because it will help me to always speak English so, I won't forget what I have studied before.         | <i>Yes, because they have a skill so they can have a good opportunities to run a business</i>   |
| 9  | S9     | I choose to open a <u>course</u> . (KB)  | Selling English book, and then I should master the  | <i>Yah, because every person has their own way to run the business</i>  |

| No | Sample | Items   |
|----|--------|---|
|    |        | <p>4. In case you're an English department student, is there any business that you want to run relating to your field (English Education)? What is the kind of business? Describe in short!<br/>Code= BR and KB = bold words and underline</p> <p>5. Business that improve their capability as an English Education Students<br/>Code: BIEE =red colour<br/>No idea= green colour</p> <p>6. Do you think most English Education Students have good opportunities to run a business? Why do you think so?<br/>Code =OB=NOB (negative) = italic bold red colour<br/>POB (Positive)= bold italic blue colour</p> |
| 10 | S10    | <p>I want to <u>sell English book (KB)</u></p> <p>book first and I will make others interested in that book</p> <p>Endorse product using english in social media or real-life action. It improves our public speaking skill</p> <p>(interpretation: marketing ????)</p> <p><i>Yes. Because with the ability to speak english well, they can communicate in a large community</i></p>  |
| 11 | S11    | <p>Promoting make through worldwide.</p> <p>Because with English we can improve our business not just in this city or in this country, although in another country or can be go international business.</p> <p><i>Yes, Cause with the opportunities with able to make our business to go international.</i></p>   |
| 12 | S12    | <p>Something <u>like corn dog but the is nasi kepal (KB)</u> (culinary????)</p> <p>open an English course because this is the background of our major</p> <p><i>yes, because English majors have opportunities, such as opening courses, translation services, and so on related to English</i></p>   |
| 13 | S13    | <p>apart from <u>opening a clothing store</u>. I am also interested in opening <u>an English course (KB)</u> for elementary school children</p> <p>Tour Guide (Tour guide is quite a fun job. Just imagine, you only work to guide people around and you get paid.</p> <p><i>Yes (because they can speak English</i></p>  |
| 14 | S14    | <p>English Course (KB)</p> <p>In my point of view, the kind of business or entrepreneurship that can improve the capability as an English education student is anything those relatable in English language but specially for me is English course.</p> <p><i>Yes, I think so, because I think most of English education student at least have their own basic skill in English language and also their own way to use their basic skill.</i></p>   |
| 15 | S15    | <p>it will be an English learning place, let's say like <u>English course (KB)</u> or something</p> <p>Running english course business because it is a business but I still can teaching and by teaching I can also learning and upgrade english skill</p> <p><i>Yes, I do. Because an english student should be capable to run a business anywhere and they should capable communicate with everyone, make their promotion</i></p>   |

| No | Sample | Items  |   |  |
|----|--------|--|---|--|
|    |        | 4. In case you're an English department student, is there any business that you want to run relating to your field (English Education)? What is the kind of business? Describe in short!<br>Code= BR and KB = bold words and underline | 5. Business that improve their capability as an English Education Students<br>Code: BIEE =red colour<br>No idea= green colour   | 6. Do you think most English Education Students have good opportunities to run a business? Why do you think so?<br>Code =OB=NOB (negative) = italic bold red colour<br>POB (Positive)= bold italic blue colour   |
| 16 | S16    | I have a plan to run an <u>english course</u> (KB) business one day  | Yes of course because I wont make go to internasional   | become more interesting and promote their product abroad<br><i>I think is good</i>   |
| 17 | S17    | <u>English course</u> (KB) cause its relate with my major  | English course cause we can learning by doing   | <i>Yes because 449nglish is a global language now</i>  |
| 18 | S18    | I would like to try opening an <u>English Course</u> (KB) near to my house   | Tourism<br>(Interpretation: Tour Guide)   | <i>Yes, i think is good</i>  |
| 19 | S19    | Other than that, I would also like to try becoming a <u>freelance translator</u> (KB) or do some journaling activity like become a <u>Content/Copywriter</u> (KB) or an editor (KB)  | In my opinion, become a Content Creator of English Contents might be one. It's because in this digital era, being a fast and practical person is a must. So, by becoming one, we are not only improve our ability and capability as an English Education Student, but we also run a business or entrepreneurship which can give us profits if we succeed. | <i>I do. according to me, having the ability to speak English itself is a poin plus that may guaranteed us for better opportunities.</i>   |
| 20 | S20    | I don't think so. (BR)   | I have no idea  | <i>As an English Education Student, I think if I am given an opportunity to take some courses or get new insights on how to apply English in the office world, then I will take them because they would be beneficial opportunities for me and I may be able to compete more and be better in mastering the use of English in the place where I work later on.</i> |
| 21 | S21    | English course (KB) I maybe do it because i am capable English, to sharpen my English as well.   | Tour guide<br>It will improve my speaking, remembering speaking is the most vital skill in real life.   | <i>Yes, I think so. Because when we want to make an event for example, we start from make a bazaar first. So, from it, I can see that in english department can run a business too.</i>  |

| No | Sample | Items  |  |  |
|----|--------|--|--|--|
|    |        | 4. In case you're an English department student, is there any business that you want to run relating to your field (English Education)? What is the kind of business? Describe in short!<br>Code= BR and KB = bold words and underline   | 5. Business that improve their capability as an English Education Students<br>Code: BIEE =red colour<br>No idea= green colour  | 6. Do you think most English Education Students have good opportunities to run a business? Why do you think so?<br>Code =OB=NOB (negative) = italic bold red colour<br>POB (Positive)= bold italic blue colour |
| 22 | S22    | I have an idea to build a place where people can enjoy a fun atmosphere of study. I plan <u>to build a coffee shop (KB)</u> , inviting language and literature community to come, install shelf of books, make an event like book review or something like that, so the people can sharing what they think about particular topic or issue   | I am not really sure but I think if you have a business that connects you with people from other countries, it will gives you improvements in language, experience, and networking   | <i>I think so. They are able to run any business with using English language their second language to promote their business.</i>  |
| 23 | S23    | <u>Teaching Technology (KB)</u> , because I have more impact on my field and still do what I like  | Teaching Technology or media of teaching   | <i>Of course, we have. with the information that flows swiftly nowadays. Everyone have the chance to be a successful businessman</i>   |
| 24 | S24    | Yes (BR), this business is in the <u>service sector (KB)</u> . We teach children who can't speak English   | In my opinion, in the service sector. That way, we can hone our English skills too.  | <i>I don't think so, most of English education students after their graduated from college more prepare to be just a teacher and didn't think about run a business</i>   |
| 25 | S25    | As I stated, I have plan to build <u>an English Course and Uniform shop (KB)</u> for all of education levels. Why? Because as we know that English is Important in this era. We need to show the students about that. How the future condition without knowing any international language. So, I intent to build it for students, especially Elementary School. Then, I'd love to have a Uniform Shop. So, The Villagers don't need to go city anymore for | Beside as Teacher, in Economic side is not enough for fulfill our daily life. one of additional activity that we can do is build a course, can get everything. Besides, you earn a lot money, you will practice your English automatically and learn other skills. | <i>I think so, because some of us are running businesses right now</i>   |

| No | Sample | Items  |  |  |
|----|--------|--|--|--|
|    |        | 4. In case you're an English department student, is there any business that you want to run relating to your field (English Education)? What is the kind of business? Describe in short!<br>Code= BR and KB = bold words and underline buy some uniforms for their children as well. | 5. Business that improve their capability as an English Education Students<br>Code: BIEE =red colour<br>No idea= green colour                        | 6. Do you think most English Education Students have good opportunities to run a business? Why do you think so?<br>Code =OB=NOB (negative) = italic bold red colour<br>POB (Positive)= bold italic blue colour               |
| 26 | S26    | Nothing (BR)   | Tourism because we can meet foreign people so we can speak improve our English<br>(Intpretation: Tour Guide)   | <i>Yes, I do. We are as an english education have a lot sector opportunities to run a business. Beside as a teacher, we can be as entrepreneur. Of course, with good english we can develop business</i>                     |
| 27 | S27    | I don't know, i have no idea. (BR)   | Sorry i have no idea   | <i>Yes, cause if you can speak in different language like english language, can easy to make relationship with other People, it make your business famous because you can promote your business in 2 different language.</i> |
| 28 | S28    | i would love to make an interpreter business or we know as a <u>translator</u> . (KB)  | according to me it can be interpreter as i said before, any tourism business so we can meet a lot of native speaker, course, private course and etc. | <i>Yes, because english is known as an internasional language so everyone need to learn english to face the world, and as an english student we need to see this as a business opportunity.</i>                              |
| 29 | S29    | open a <u>private english service</u> (KB)   | Open a translator service or become an English article writer  | <i>because students have English language skills that can add insight to employees because employees can access various information not only from Indonesia, but from other countries.</i>                                   |
| 30 | S30    | For now, I don't have any (BR)   | Interpreter, it can improve our capability in English and earn money in the same time.   | <i>Yes, I believe that all of my friends are able to run a business. They are capable in English and energetic</i>   |

Note:

S1, S2, So on : Student 1, student 2, So on  
BR : Business Run  
KB : Kind of Business



BIEE : Business Improve English Education

OB : Opportunities in Business

*a. EFL Students' Business Opportunities*

The business opportunities for English language education students are quite large. This is based on the language skills possessed in finding sources of information quickly in the business world. Businesses with the concept of edupreneurship strongly support their capabilities in creating and innovating. Sardi, et al (2017) said that the use of proper diction is one of the abilities possessed by those who have English skills along with educational experience. The most open opportunity is a service business related to interaction and communication. Then Raguz and Matics (2011) claimed that studies of entrepreneurial interests often use TPB theory to explain the relationship between the influence of personal factors and entrepreneurial interests. This will certainly encourage business actors such as students or alumni of English language education to be able to work and build jobs in accordance with their interests and fields needed by consumers.

*b. Entrepreneurship Tendencies on EFL Students*

The business trend of this study is divided into two based on the response of the English education student. The first is a tendency due to specialization in their field of knowledge. Then the second is the tendency because of their interest in themselves. However, the business that tends to be carried out and to be carried out is a business engaged in teaching and service services such as tutors or teachers in English language courses, owners/CEOs of private institutions, translators, interpreters, editors, and content creators. On the contrary, some students are more inclined to run and plan unique ventures from their field of knowledge. These businesses are online booksellers, culinary takers, clothes takers, content creators, and endorsers. This phenomenon is in accordance with the findings of Suhartini (2011) that English language education students tend to be entrepreneurial based on their talents or interests and adequate opportunities.

*c. Entrepreneurial Challenges/competitiveness*

Apart from the business opportunities and entrepreneurial tendencies owned by English language education students, there are also challenges or strict competitiveness in running or planning their business. The business challenge for EFL ii students is because there are already many alumni, teachers, and even institutions that have run English courses which is their passion for entrepreneurship. Limited funds and skills in marketing are one of their obstacles to going further. In addition, some respondents still doubt their English and public speaking skills. Budiati et. all, (2012) stated that the stronger the attitude towards entrepreneurship, the stronger their interest in becoming an entrepreneur is. When this negative mindset emerges, it makes these EFL students prefer to withdraw. In addition, their competition is getting tougher in the digital era where they have to be biased in combining their language skills with their digitalization skills.

#### **4. Conclusions**

To be concluded, the majority of the study's participants were English-speaking students, but they did not seize the chance to put their abilities to use in running their businesses. The goals of this study are to investigate and discover what kind of business the participants have been operating, the driving forces behind and difficulties encountered in doing so, their future plans for starting a business, and their perceptions of opportunities to do so as English education students. It is significant to remember that every person is different and that their interests in entrepreneurship may be influenced by a variety of circumstances and reasons. The results demonstrated that the EFL students have operated some businesses and are expected to do so in the near future. As a result, the majority of students own and operate businesses related to their area of study. These companies offer private lessons, English language courses, and translation and editing services. Due to this tendency, they struggle with being competitive in the marketplace. Hence, some of them decide to start more likely businesses like restaurants, internet retailers, and apparel stores.

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