The 4th International Conference on Family Business and Entrepreneurship

EMPOWERING COLLEGE STUDENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP DURING THE PANDEMIC FOR ECONOMICS SUSTAINABILITY BY MAXIMIZING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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ABSTRACT
It is the first time ever in the world that the pandemic of Covid-19 highly contributes to the “limp” of almost all sectors including economics and education. College students are one of the “victims” that are now struggling with the challenges of online learning. As learning from home has been stipulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, they have to welcome digitalization. In this case, they could make use of digitalization to actualize entrepreneurship to survive in this uneasy situation. Many positive things they could try to give small positive contributions to economics sustainability. This article aims at figuring out the student’s motivation in joining entrepreneurship Development Program (PPK) of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Universitas Muria Kudus, how to empower college students entrepreneurship by maximizing digital technologies during the pandemic, and what business choices that the students choose and why. The participants are 20 college students from respective faculties. Survey, workshops, coaching and monitoring, and interview are used. An online survey was administered to figure out the students’ motivation to join the program. Then a series of online workshops were provided to facilitate the participants to set up new businesses. Coaching and monitoring have been done since the selection of business type, business set up, production, and marketing by maximizing digital marketing. Interview was conducted to know the students’ reasons in deciding business types. From the whole participants, there are 8 businesses were launched. The few numbers of new entrepreneurs implies that motivation matters.

Keywords: college students, entrepreneurship, economic sustainability, digital technologies.

Introduction
The team of Entrepreneurship Development Program (PPK) of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Universitas Muria Kudus has been running the second year grant. This year seems not easy to execute the program because of the pandemic. Students of college do not go to campus for learning. It surely restricts face to face communication, coordination, and else which are supposed to be better managed when offline meeting takes. These barriers are challenging and the team has adjusted to the situation. The positive sides are that students might have chances to take part by joining this program. Online mode makes it easier to
In the first year, 2019, succeeded in promoting several tenants with 5 business fields. The tenants run various businesses; among others are sushi and steak (Juu Go) food court, adenium cultivation (DB Flora), mushroom cultivation (Rumah Jamur), SEKOPPI (A Cup of Coffee for Inspirational Seekers) and screen printing (USAB). From the five businesses, the two of them, mushroom cultivation and screen printing, seem to fail to survive. Based on the reflection and investigation, it is figured out that the problems why they could not sustain their businesses are because of some factors such as mindset, lack of self-motivation and poor teamwork.

Mindset is the most important factor in setting up a business for new entrepreneurs. In this case, students of college surely focus on their study. In fact, establishing a business or having a part time activity as entrepreneurs needs a strong serious intention. When the mindset is not really well-shaped, it can cause an unstable desire of making a business happen. The mindset of the college students are mostly still about being an employee after leaving college. They just try to start a business and think that it will run smoothly and do not have a long term plan for the business. A study revealed that relevant skills and mindset acquired for entrepreneurship can be prepared by giving appropriate education at university levels (Glinik, 2019). In addition to mindset, motivation is also a necessary factor in starting and running a business for it influences the business in the long run. Motivation is kind of desire that defines human behaviours (Alexandre & Kharabsheh, 2019) One with high motivation tends to be persistent and successful in running a business. And, different individual motivation contributes to teamwork performance. Individual motivation is combination of some factors including need for independence, need for achievement, an inclination toward risks, and else (Alexandre & Kharabsheh, 2019). When a team faces problems and cannot solve them well, this will affect their performance in running a business. It appears that the most important thing is self-motivation. With high self-motivation, each individual will become a good team member and can run a business together.

Teamwork is the third problem which is indicated from the first program of PPK. Effectiveness of teamwork is one of challenges to effective crisis response (Alves et al., 2020). The students mostly did not realize the importance of teamwork. The sense of individualism is still high and triggers selfishness. It then causes poor coordination and even miscommunication. They might not have ideas on how to build communication instead of face to face communication. In fact, social media can be used as an alternative for effective communication (Alves et al., 2020). Working together and collaborating nowadays is actually a good way to start setting up a new business. Share mission, vision, and passion can strengthen teamwork. Passion is believed to be one indicator of the motivation of entrepreneurs to work seriously and succeed with their business (Cardon et al., 2017). This idea has not been understood and applied by the students yet.

Based on the reflection above, the emerging factors were addressed in this second year program by framing them into the workshops. The target in this second year is to produce new tenants with strong entrepreneurial fields in accordance with the current situation by addressing mindset, motivation, and teamwork. During this pandemic, those problems are getting challenging and more complex since there are lots of limitations in many activities, including business and entrepreneurship. Students of college do not have enough access directly to the university and become quite passive in taking parts in academic and non academic activities including entrepreneurship. Business and entrepreneurship significantly shows stagnant development, many unemployment, etc. There are several business fields that cannot and are even difficult to be realized because of the movement’s restriction enacted by the government.
Therefore, it is necessary to have a suitable plan and strategy in implementing the program. To make this happen, activities related to workshops are in the form of webinars.

Why student of college needs to be empowered to be entrepreneurs is because as agent of change they have personal and social responsibilities to take parts in economic sustainability in this pandemic. As educated persons, they are supposed to do positive measurable action to cope with this situation. They have to train themselves to be independent, tough, and highly motivated to keep going through. By starting a new business, they have a chance for self-actualization. Many researchers are investigating how entrepreneurship may contribute to the shift to a sustainable economy as entrepreneurship has been indicated as a motor for economy moves from one technological to another (Kardos, 2012).

The objectives to be achieved is to provide students of college business platforms based on their interest suits this pandemic situation to be still productive and takes part in economics sustainability by maximizing technologies. There are three specific research questions in this research, they are: 1) what are the students’ motivation in joining this PPK program?; 2) How to empower the students of college entrepreneurship during the pandemic for economics sustainability?; and 3) What choices of business do the students consider and why?.

**Literature Review**

Entrepreneurship is the ability to create new things that have economical values. Daryanto (2012:1) said that entrepreneurship is the ability to innovate and think critically to have chances. He further explained that “Entrepreneurship is not only born but also made”. It means that entrepreneurship can be taught and developed. It is not merely an inheritance. It can be learned formally in schools and informally through training or workshops. Entrepreneurship as a process of recognizing and exploiting opportunities, and creating goods (Filser et al., 2019). A previous study stated that students of college are at risk when they are not equipped with entrepreneurship at this entrepreneurial era (Morris & Kuratko, 2014). Becoming an entrepreneur is greatly influenced by students’ motivation since in running a business, a student must make a risky choice. Some previous research shows that entrepreneur program is very crucial in shaping students’ skill to run a business and solve problems that they face (Hisrich, 2014:32). It means that entrepreneurship program plays a very important role to build students’ motivation to do entrepreneurship and support them in sustaining their business.

When the world sees entrepreneurship as a force for commercial and social innovation, job generation, and economic growth, universities seemed fail to keep up. They have not maximized in designing curricula or research agendas that enable more entrepreneurial students (Morris & Kuratko, 2014). Yet, Universitas Muria Kudus (UMK) as a formal higher education institution still concerns in preparing its graduates to be entrepreneurs as its slogan “courteous, intelligent, and entrepreneurial spirit”. To realize this slogan, UMK designs the curriculum by obliging all students to enrol *Ketrampilan Wajib Kewirausahaan* (compulsory course Entrepreneurship) with zero credit. It becomes one of the requirements in completing a study in UMK. By joining this course, the students are trained to be creative and survive in their life, in terms of financial matters. As entrepreneurs, they must think critically and undergo maximum effort to get wealth in their future (Hendro, 2011: 30). Meanwhile, Azwar (2009:4) said that building entrepreneurship to students may become one of alternatives to decrease unemployment, especially from higher education levels.

Although building entrepreneurship program remains challenging, Universitas Muria Kudus has committed to solve the unemployment problem by designing its curriculum as relevant as possible to industries. *Ketrampilan Wajib Kewirausahaan* can be an alternative to
prepare UMK students to choose entrepreneurs as their profession. This course is managed by UPT MKU (a unit which coordinates general courses in UMK). It is aimed at guiding students to acquire entrepreneur skills. It also has a duty to build students’ motivation and support them to be entrepreneurs. This entrepreneurship program is also supported by the government through various grants of entrepreneurship programs; one of them is the current program, Entrepreneurship Program Development.

Entrepreneur Motivation

According to Rusdiana (2012), motivation is giving or occurring motive that drives someone to do something or a situation which supports something to happen. She further explains that entrepreneur motivation is motivation which stimulate a person to do something for achieving his/her goal. Sardiman (2009) in Rusdiana (2012) states that entrepreneur motivation has 3 functions, i.e.: 

1. Supporting people to reach their purpose
2. Driving the ways to achieve the goal
3. Selecting things to do which are relevant to the goal

Those 3 functions play a very important role in pursuing the goal which have been targeted. When a university student is highly entrepreneur motivated, s/he will do much effort to be successful in running his/her business.

Rusdiana (2004) in Hendrawan and Sirine (2017) writes that here are 3 indicators of entrepreneur motivation, they are:

1. material motivation
2. rationale-intellectual motivation
3. emotional-social motivation

Material motivation deals with the things that drive people to get wealth or materially rich. When people have a goal to be financial freedom, not depending on parents or others, they will undergo several actions to achieve it. One of them is by running a business or as an entrepreneur. While, rational-intellectual motivation has a close relationship with knowledge, skills and competencies to catch opportunities of yielding profit from the business people establish. And emotional-social motivation is personal’s belief that he or she can produce things which are unique, distinguished and have additional values compared to those in markets. Those indicators of entrepreneur motivation determines how tough a person struggle in running a business.

Economic Sustainability

Term sustainability generally refers to environmental, social and economic sustainability. Here, economic sustainability is a bit explored to provide review of literature for this article. Economic sustainability is associated to both environmental and social sustainability. It means that economic will not be sustainable when natural resources are massively used and the population growth is higher. People will consume more, and it will cause the decline in the environment, economy, and society (Reddy et al., 2015). Nowadays, the population growth in Indonesia are getting bigger, and the available resources are getting less, it might be a signal that the issue of economic sustainability has to be one of concerns of
many parties, including the government in making policies dealing with the issue. Indonesian government has shown its concern on economic sustainability by supporting SME (Small and Medium Enterprises). Also, Indonesia is recognized to introduce creative economy in responding economicsustainability.

It is mentioned that innovation and competitiveness are criteria of economic sustainability (Spangenberg, 2005). Of course, there are not limited to the two criteria. Yet, in simply it can be understood that by creating innovation and being competitive can be indicators of supporting economic sustainability in this pandemic era. Entrepreneurship is such an indication of real action is answering the issue of economic sustainability. Today, entrepreneurship and innovation has been the primary catalyst of the economic development in the world including Indonesia(Morris & Kuratko, 2014). Entrepreneurship and innovation are significantly related to each other and necessary to the success of an organization (Filser et al., 2019). Therefore, entrepreneurship program can be said as a vehicle to support economic sustainability.

Digital Technologies

Since the beginning of 2020, Covid 19 pandemic has occurred and spread all over the world. This pandemic has affected many fields, especially the economy. Many companies, industries and small businesses got bankrupt due to people interaction limitation. Social distancing and physical distance are ruled in most places. Therefore people cannot go anywhere free. Pandemic has impacted culture of place, culture of customers and change the structure of the market. This condition triggers people to do everything via online especially for selling and marketing products. Digital marketing can be an alternate solution to do economic activity in pandemic. It can be defined as any electronic media that connects producers and consumers to have economic transactions such as email, mobile phone, websites, and so on. Digital marketing is undergone to promote products to customers and attract them to purchase them. By utilizing digital technology, producers may communicate with their customers to have economic transactions. Technology connects people and makes economic activities easier. With technology, distance and time limitation can be solved and the product promotion can possibly be held to attract customer’s attention. Some benefits of using digital marketing are economic prices, targeting various potential customers at once, providing products and services comfortably, and allow customers to easily research them to speed up purchasing decisions. Those advantages can maximally take place when people choose appropriate online media based on the target market they want to address (Junusi, 2020).

Research Method

This present research is a pre-experimental research, with one-shot research design. There are 22 students of UMK, 8 male and 14 female as the sample and they join this program from the beginning program up to now. They are from respective faculties and majors. PPK workshops and coaching are considered as the treatment that was given to the sample. The instruments used in this research were a questionnaire, interview guideline, and checklist of business plan completeness. They firstly filled out the online questionnaire that contained their personal information, whether or not they have a business, and their motivation joining this
program. After filling out the form, they joined a series of workshops covering some materials such as building entrepreneur motivation and mindset, choosing kind business, making a business plan, digital marketing, and financial management. The workshops were conducted online. Next, the students proposed a business plan. In this phase, not all students sent their business plan. Those who made the business plan were interviewed and visited. They were interviewed online and offline. Not all prospective tenants got a chance to be visited. It is due to the pandemic situation that prevents the team to do so. From the interview and home visit, there were 7 students. The data is then coded and analyzed qualitatively to draw some conclusions.

**Results and Discussion**

This section presents the obtained data from the survey, interview, workshops, coaching and monitoring.

**Entrepreneur Motivation after joining the PPK program**

Answering the research questions on the motivation of the students to join this program, the result can be seen in table 4.1 below:

| NO | Students’ autonomy | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|--------------------|----------------|-------|----------|------------------|
| 1. | I become more entrepreneur motivated after joining PPK | 77.3% | 22.7% | 0 | 0 |
| 2. | After joining PPK, I want to run my own business | 72.7% | 27.3% | 0 | 0 |
| 3. | I want to have freedom to manage my business | 63.6% | 26.4% | 0 | 0 |
| 4. | After joining PPK, I feel more confident to run a business | 54.5% | 45.5% | 0 | 0 |

From the table it is clearly shown that 77.3% of the students become more entrepreneur motivated after joining PPK and almost similar percentage that is 72.7% of the students want to run their own business. They want to manage their own business (63.6%). For confidence, more than a half of the students feel more confident to run a business. The students become
more highly motivated to be entrepreneurs after joining the program since there are a series of motivation workshops that might boost their motivation to run their own business. Also they want to have autonomy in managing business. Moreover, they feel more confident to run a business. Their responses of strongly agree proof that their autonomy after joining the program is good.

Table 4.2 Students’ motivation to be wealthy

| NO. | Students’ motivation to be wealthy | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----|----------------------------------|---------------|-------|----------|------------------|
| 1.  | Being entrepreneur may bring me to wealth in the future | 46.4%         | 63.6% | 0        | 0                |
| 2.  | By joining PPK I will get much more profit from my business | 50%           | 50%   | 0        | 0                |

There are two kinds of motivation to be wealthy; students are motivated to be wealthy and to get profit. The able shows that the students want to be entrepreneurs because they think that being entrepreneurs may bring them to wealth in the future. And they believe that by joining this program they will get much profit from their business.

Table 4.3 Students’ rational-intellectual motivation after joining entrepreneur development program (PPK)

| NO. | Students’ rational-intellectual motivation | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----|-------------------------------------------|---------------|-------|----------|------------------|
| 1.  | The PPK workshop contents help me to be a successful entrepreneur | 50%           | 50%   | 0        | 0                |
| 2.  | PPK program guides me to be competent entrepreneurs | 45.5%         | 54.5% | 0        | 0                |
| 3.  | PPK tutors’ coaching method makes me understand the concept of entrepreneur | 36.4%         | 63.6% | 0        | 0                |
| 4.  | With the knowledge I get from PPK, I’m sure I | 40.9%         | 59.1% | 0        | 0                |
5. I happily join PPK because I get skill & knowledge to run my own business

6. PPK programs build my hard & soft skill to be successful entrepreneurs

7. I think my leadership grew after joining PPK

The students’ rational-intellectual motivation covers 7 items as can be seen in the table. It is here explained from the highest percentage to the least. The table shows that the tutors’ coaching methods make them understand the concept of entrepreneur; the students are sure to develop their business after getting some knowledge from this program; the program has builds their hard and soft skills to be successful entrepreneurs; the program guides them to be competent entrepreneurs and they happily join the program because they get skill and knowledge to run their own business; the workshops of the program help them to be successful entrepreneurs and the students believe that their leadership grows after joining the program.

Table 4.4 Students’ emotional-socio motivation after joining entrepreneur development program (PPK)

| NO. | Students’ emotional-socio motivation | Strongly agree | agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------|------------------|
| 1.  | PPK makes me more optimistic to be successful entrepreneur | a 31.8% | 69.2% | 0 | 0 |
| 2.  | I feel enthusiastic joining PPK program | 50% | 50% | 0 | 0 |
| 3.  | Joining PPK inspires me to make unique product | 40.9% | 59.1% | 0 | 0 |
| 4.  | PPK programs develop my creativity | 36.6% | 63.4% | 0 | 0 |
| 5.  | Joining PPK triggers my creative ideas that | 45.5% | 54.5% | 0 | 0 |
want to realize
6. PPK programs develop my wild imagination that determine my success

| Response                                      | 36.4% | 63.6% | 0   | 0   | 100% |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|-----|------|

| 7. I run my business based on my passion as recommended by PPK tutors | 36.4% | 59.1% | 4.5 | 0   | 100% |

The table shows that the students feel more optimistic to be successful entrepreneurs in joining the program; the program develops their creativity and wild imagination; the program inspires them to make unique product and run their business based on their passion as recommended by the tutors; the program triggers their creative ideas that they want to realize; and they feel enthusiastic after joining the program.

In this research, the aspects of motivation are students’ self-autonomy, students’ motivation to be wealthy, students’ rational-intellectual motivation, and students’ emotional-socio motivation after joining the program. It is revealed that almost all of the students are highly motivated after joining the program. The students want to have their own business, be wealthy, become more enthusiastic, optimistic, have ideas to run a business, and others in positive senses. Hendrawan and Sirine (2017) reveal that self-autonomy and motivation do not correlate to the entrepreneurship interest, while the entrepreneurial knowledge variables affect student entrepreneur interest. It is similar to the present research findings that motivation does not correlate to the students’ entrepreneurship interest. Although almost all of the students are highly motivated after joining the program, it cannot be a predictor that they successfully set up new business or start to be entrepreneurs. It is proved by the small numbers of tenants who finally realize their businesses. There are only seven tenants out of 25 students. Yet, it is also questionable whether their failure to realize their businesses because of motivations or other variables. Since this research only focuses on the motivation after joining the program, the reasons why motivation does not in line with the business realization cannot be presented. Clearly, the findings show that the students are highly motivated after joining the program.

A previous research reveals that motivations for entrepreneurship are strongly correlated with sociodemographic characteristics such as age, education, and family income. The study also shows that considering being entrepreneurs is a way to overcome lack of employment opportunities (Mota et al., 2019). The college students in this research are around the same age and education, but different family income. It might influence their motivation for entrepreneurship. It might answer why motivation does not lead to the more number of business realization. Another previous research reveals that achievement motivation of entrepreneurial is higher than a manager. It implies that entrepreneurs or ones with strong intention in which the business they run are not inherited have greater motivation (Stewart & Roth, 2015). Students with strong intention in running the business are recognized to be more highly motivated in realizing their business.

**How to empower entrepreneurship for students of college**

The methods employed by the PPK team to empower the students to be entrepreneurs for economic sustainability are facilitating them with a series of workshops. All of the workshops were done online. The initial workshop was handled by alumni who have owned a business and labeled her business with “Femalepreneur”. One of the materials covered in workshop for starter is mindset shifting to Entrepreneurship. Making use of alumni as partner to give workshop is said to be the stronger integration between alumni and the current students as beginners in the knowledge transfer and the exchange of experience (Glinik, 2019). There are other five topics of the workshop for starter level. The team of the program and other faculty members also give workshops on writing a business plan, financial management, digital marketing, & business management. After the workshops were accomplished, the tenants were obliged to propose a business plan. The business plans were reviewed and nominated whether it would get fund support or not.
Surprisingly, it is only around 10 percents out of the whole number of the participants in the beginning of the program submitted business plan. It surely shows that the students’ motivation and persistence in joining the program does not stay the same since it is 40.7 percents of the participants want to set up a business and 45.5 percents want to gain knowledge and have experience in running a business. Yet, the number of the participants decreased when they have to submit their business plans. Some recognized factors of lack of accomplishment of business plan are the participants are less motivated, uncertain, unready, and hesitate to visualize their ideas. It is in line with the previous research stated that motivation, enthusiasm, preparedness, and commitment also contribute to the success of entrepreneurs (Cardon et al., 2017). The participants have not met the qualities that prevent them to be success entrepreneurs.

After the business plan was reviewed and the participants were interviewed, they get fund support in form of tools support. The fund is the grant from the government. The program is continued by giving assistance, coaching, monitoring, and evaluation. It is now when the article is written, the phase is at coaching and monitoring.

**Business choices and the reasons**

Choices of business that the tenants choose are culinary, art, and fashion. For trending culinary, it is crispy tofu. For art, they are murals, flower buckets, customized hand phone cases. For fashion, they are casual shorts production and a fashion shop. For detail, it can be seen in table 4.2 as follows.

| TENANT | BUSINESS CHOICE | REASON OF CHOOSING THE BUSINESS |
|--------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1      | Mobile phone case | People’s high interest and big market opportunities |
| 2      | Mural           | Passion, wants to introduce mural art to people |
| 3      | Flower bouquet  | Many college students and high school students like this project |
| 4      | Flower bouquet, profession doll, trophy doll | Hobby |
| 5      | Fashion         | Everyone needs fashionable clothes. Hobby |
| 6      | Gift box        | It’s long lasting, beautiful and easy to market |
| 7      | Fashion         | Many people love fashion |
| 8      | Crispy tofu     | There hasn’t been any competitors |

The reasons why they choose such businesses are varied but rooted from the same idea,
a business that can be run during the pandemic. Most tenants think that their choices satisfy people’s interest and need. Furthermore, it is their hobby and passion. Therefore, they run the business happily. The business are considered as small and simple in terms of capital and kinds of product or services. And this is quite surprising that the numbers of students who succeed starting a business are female students. Commonly, businesses owned by women are commonly small because of limited capital and are motivated by a lower need for affiliation (Solesvik et al., 2019). These female participants are future women entrepreneurs when they stay motivated to run the business. They are indicated as highly motivated tenants regarding to their involvement in this program from the beginning. In line with that, previous research suggested a strong and positive link between entrepreneurial motivation and the decision to become an entrepreneur (Solesvik et al., 2019). In this case, the participant’ motivation and their decisions to start the business are linked and matched. Previous research revealed that owning a business is a manifestation achievement, affiliation, autonomy, and dominance (Lee, 1997). By starting these businesses, the tenants have reached kind of achievement after some phases they have to pass through.

During the pandemic, the tenants maximize the use of technologies in marketing their products and services. They mostly do not need a certain place to run their business since the products and services they offer are things that do not need too much space. For fashion and crispy tofu the tenants consider to have space for direct selling. For marketing, all kinds of businesses are marketed online via social media, such as Instagram, WhatsApp, marketplace, Facebook, and else. Digital marketing has helped a lot to achieve marketing goals. It is user- centered, more scalable, ubiquitous, and interactive, and offers a lot of potential for new entrepreneurs. Digital marketing provides chances for businesses to get connected to stakeholder and customer (Junusi, 2020).

**Conclusion and Implications**

Empowering students of college entrepreneurship for economics sustainability in this pandemic takes huge and endless effort from many parties, especially the PPK team and the tenants themselves. With the result of reflections of the first year program, the team tries to encounter problems of mindset, motivation, and teamwork in this second year and frame them into the workshops. Those three problems are also inclusively addressed in coaching and monitoring. The decreasing number of the students enrolled in the initial program to the last phase of business realization has shown us the real students’ motivation to be entrepreneurs. Those who are serious are those who survive till the end of the program, and mostly female students. They have surely absorbed and implemented the materials during the program and noticeably perform their seriousness. They become more entrepreneur motivated after joining the program although the number of business realized are small.

The decreasing number of participants enrolled in the initial program to the next phase to the end of the phase becomes our next reflection to run the future program. Yet, to be compared with the first program, this second year program of PPK could be said as successful as the situation is more challenging. In this pandemic era, the students who have been successful to realize establishing a new business have taken part in economics sustainability by maximizing the use of technologies to reach their marketing goals. As the team, we are delighted to do our parts in empowering them to survive in this uneasy situation. For future research, it might address a more detail investigation on motivation of students of college to be entrepreneurs and to what extent the efforts they make to realize it.

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