

Prospects and challenges in establishing entrepreneurship in post COVID-19 language and culture-related tourist attractions

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Abstract: This study discusses prospects and challenges facing start-up entrepreneurs in language and culture-related tourist attractions in Lombok, Indonesia. Data were collected by observing the operations of tourism entrepreneurs and interviewing the owners, workers, clients, and authorities in the industry. The data were analyzed using a mixed method where tourism sales over one year of business experience were quantitatively analyzed and where prime causes leading to profits and losses were qualitatively explicated. The findings identify six prospective opportunities and five challenges in sustainably establishing language and culture-related tourist attractions as core entrepreneurial businesses. This study enriches our understanding of what micro and small entrepreneurs experience at the early stages of business start-ups and how they respond to uncertainties facing them. The study also provides readers with an understanding of the prospects and the challenges facing small tourist-related entrepreneurs in operations at early start-up stages and serves as a reminder to small businesses about the potential challenges in their business operations. The article also recommends viable management plans to refer to as contingency strategies for probable future challenges. Furthermore, this study attempts to fill a gap in the literature on start-up entrepreneurship in language and culture-related tourist attractions.

Keywords: prospects; challenges; start-up; entrepreneurship; tourism; tourist attraction

1. Introduction

This article deals with prospects and challenges facing young entrepreneurs on the island of Lombok, Indonesia, in planning and starting up entrepreneurial enterprises in the business field related to language practices and cultural attractions. We observed the operations of 131 tourism-related small business start-ups, talked to the owners, the workers, and the customers, and analyzed the information obtained with content analysis. The study offers insights into business challenges facing beginners in tourism entrepreneurs and potential business opportunities presented to them when the challenges have been successfully overcome. The study also provides management strategies for evading potential future challenges.

The beginning of business enterprises is jarring, not only full of promising opportunities but also uncertainties. Schick et al. (2002), Slávik et al. (2002), and Voinea et al. (2019), and Zamzami and Effendi (2023) have exemplified how individuals make decisions to become entrepreneurs, what conditions that support

business start-ups, and what impacts entrepreneurship has on the economy of the region and the nation. They reported that few studies have actually described how business start-ups have been managed at their early stages prior to the business establishment, particularly management of the business of environment. Reporting on an empirical study into start-up processes, they have discovered how opportunities have been implemented for more sustainable business practices as early as the beginning of new business ventures. Involving a wide range of start-up-related samples (i.e., conventional and ecological entrepreneurs, business advisers, and financing bankers), the study has identified the key points where environmental management could be incorporated into the startup process. The study shows that starting new business ventures is a complex process where start-up entrepreneurs have to comply with a variety of external demands. The study has also indicated that market conditions have been perceived by business advisers and financing bankers as the main interference to the pursuit of locally-based entrepreneurship. As information about how to start business ventures in ecologically available opportunities, the study concludes that the most essential success-determining factors for conventional and ecological entrepreneurship are the entrepreneurs themselves.

Other researchers have further developed crucial personal factors for success in entrepreneurship start-ups. Estay et al. (2013) and Kim et al. (2018) have suggested personal needs for self-development and financial and material independence as the key motivating factors enabling entrepreneurs to be committed to and creative in the organization and valorization of their businesses. To Estay et al. (2013) and Kim et al. (2018), entrepreneurs' competence and creativity are crucial to the future success or failure of businesses, while others have seen other dimensions as essential as well that is the ability to respond to external factors: political uncertainty (Than et al., 2022), to consumer wariness (Kerr et al., 2014), economic turbulence (Yasir and Majid, 2017), changes in customer demand (Aldianto et al., 2021; Bergmann and Utikal, 2021; Saddique et al., 2023), changes in customer behavior (Wulantika and Zein, 2020), government regulation (Kaplan et al., 2011; Tamrin et al., 2024), and mutual benefits for tourists and hosts (Poitras and Donald, 2006; Ahmad et al., 2024).

The self-development motives for financial independence and the factors above can lead to both prospects and challenges to entrepreneurship in general and tourism-related ones in particular. Surveying available resources and evaluating entrepreneurship in the world for ten years, Amorós et al. (2013) found factors such as basic requirements, enhancers, and sustainability of entrepreneurship. Basic requirements for entrepreneurship include supporting government and business institutions and infrastructures, macroeconomic stability, and health and primary education while factors that can enhance entrepreneurship are quality higher education and training, efficiency in the provision of goods, labor and funding, advancement of technology, and the expanding size of the market. The sustainable development of entrepreneurship is based on entrepreneurial funding, government policies, government entrepreneurship programs, entrepreneurship education, transfer of research knowledge for entrepreneurship development, commercial and legal infrastructure for entrepreneurship, local open markets, road and transport infrastructures, and socio-cultural norms. They also stipulated that entrepreneurship survival is determined by entrepreneurs' attitudes to perceived opportunities and self-

capacities, their activities in the early, persistence, and exit stages of the entrepreneurial business, and their aspirations for self-economic growth, innovation, and creation of new added social values to available potentials. Together with established firms, at macroeconomic levels, entrepreneurial businesses can contribute to national economic growth in addition to the creation of jobs and technological innovations.

Just like established enterprises, start-up entrepreneurship always faces challenges for existence in the business world. Vesper (1990) reported that one in every three start-up entrepreneurial businesses fail at its early stages and a number of reasons have been found to be responsible. Johnston (2010a), Johnston (2010b), and Salamzadeh and Kawamorita (2015) mentioned internal and external challenges to the development of tourism-related entrepreneurial business start-ups. The biggest challenges are financial and entrepreneurs have to negotiate with family and friends, seek angel investors, present valued business plans to prospective investors, or venture capital for business expansion with greater investors. There are also challenges in resources. Usually, entrepreneurship is initiated by one founder or some co-founders and expanded with help from experts who develop prototypes and minimum viable products before a team is formed and employees are hired. Note that cultural knowledge, social experiences, and management skills of working with people are the keys to the entrepreneurs' success. Other challenges lie in the lack of entrepreneurship support mechanisms such as a lack of angel investors, hatcheries, incubators, science and technology parks, accelerators, small business development centers, and venture capitals. Salamzadeh (2015a) and Salamzadeh (2015b) note that lack of access to such supports increases the risk of failure. Finally, there are challenges from external ecological and environmental elements such as a lack of entrepreneurs' attention to trends, market limitations, available services (e.g., accommodation and transportation), legal issues, government support, geopolitical conditions (e.g., war or terrorism), natural disasters (e.g., earth-quake or hurricane) and socio-cultural issues (e.g., riots or social restriction). According to Bruton and Rubanik (2002) and Van et al. (2006), start-ups are more critical to ecological cases than established firms.

Not only at the beginning, are continual processes of business enterprises full of challenging situations. Foris et al. (2022) and Kei and Ahmed (2022) have presented cases of business closure due to pandemic health hazards and slow reopening after all odds of hurdles have been removed. Keys to such revivals were management strategies that not only retain the business during hard times but also prepare contingency plans for probable crises in the future. Kei and Liao (2021) found that quality of services and attention to clients' convenience are the prime factors for expansion in mainland Chinese medical tourism. While businesses expand, as Getz and Carlsen (2005) show, tourism-related businesses are mostly run by small family-based entrepreneurs and the success or failure of the enterprises is very much dependent upon the roles and responsibilities of the family in addition to the development of their communities. Such enterprises, according to Ciolac (2012) and Zhao et al. (2011), rely very much on the cognitive social capital of the family members, that is, their ability to anticipate trends in tourism industries and the types of services they require.

Prospects and challenges in establishing material-based entrepreneurship and nature and hospitality tourism businesses, as shown above, have been widely studied

and reported in the literature of business start-ups. Yet, not much has been identified within those related to special interest tourism particularly when local language and cultural attractions are presented as tourist attractions. The study fills the gap by investigating three types of language and culture-related tourism entrepreneurs (i.e., traditional village and cultural festival tourism, virgin coconut oil-making cultural attractions, and stick-fighting cultural sports events) and by reporting on the prospects and the challenges facing them in making the businesses profitable. Since this has not been widely studied, at least in the specific nature of the enterprises under study, the article will provide valuable scientific contribution to the field.

2. Materials and methods

The study is qualitative in nature but quantitative data are presented for qualitative and descriptive purposes. The study involved 601 respondents (131 start-up entrepreneurs and workers, 442 tourists, 5 tourism experts, 5 bankers, 6 private investors, 6 government agents, and 5 tourism practitioners) purposively selected for success, expertise and professional involvement in the businesses. The start-up entrepreneurs involved in language and culture-related attractions found in Lestari and Yusra (2022) and these start-ups deal with event tourism (i.e., Nyongkolan and Sorong Serah, and stick fighting), experiential tourism (i.e., cloth weaving, seaworm catching, and traditional cooking classes), cultural tourism (i.e., Bayan, Desa Belek, Ende, and Segenter) and culinary tourism (i.e., fried rice, fried noodle, satay and various types of soup).

Data were collected through observation of the tourist objects and attractions where interviews with the business owners and the customers were also conducted (see Appendices). Questionnaires were distributed to the entrepreneurs (see Appendix A) and the tourist clients (see Appendix B). Information obtained from the observation and interviews was analyzed with content analyses while that from the questionnaires was manually quantified and ranked in frequencies and in percentages of respondents' answers in order to tease out trends and counter-trends in categories and sub-categories of business prospects and challenges in the data before drawing on plausible conclusions. The information and the conclusions were then used in follow-up interviews and focused group discussions (see Appendix C) as a means of enriching information and explanation as well as validating the findings in focused group discussions with the respondents, the experts, and the government agents involved as samples in the study. Chi-square was used as non-parametric measures of non-normally distributed differences among the quantitative data. In this way, prospects and challenges were elucidated from those non-prospective and non-challenging dimensions. The results are presented below.

3. Results

The results of the study focus on prospects of developing tourism based on language and cultural practices identifying challenges in so doing and recommending actions to facilitate these prospects.

Before these factors are presented, let us observe the background of the 131 tourism entrepreneurs as the subjects under study (see **Figure 1**). In terms of the age

range, the majority of the entrepreneurs are at a young age between 26 to 30 years old (48.85%) and between 21 to 25 years old (26.72%), and thus almost 75% of them are at the prime age for entrepreneurial activities. In terms of education and entrepreneurial training, the majority (around 60%) of them have obtained higher education (college 24.43% university 36.64%) although around 25% of them obtained basic education (primary 21.37% secondary 1.53%) and around 16% were self-educated and self-trained for the entrepreneurship. Further analyses with Chi-square (where the observed frequencies are those in the data and the expected frequencies are the number of samples (i.e., 131) divided by the number of factors (i.e., 5) equaling to 26 and Chi-square value (df (4 lines-1 = 3) × (5 columns-1 = 4) = 12) of 21.03, we found that the age of the entrepreneurs (26–30 years’ old) and the lack of experiences (less than a year) and business and entrepreneurship trainings were significantly different across the entrepreneurs’ background while others were not. While these factors can be challenging, entrepreneurs established other ways and resources for compensating these weaknesses and survive in the business.

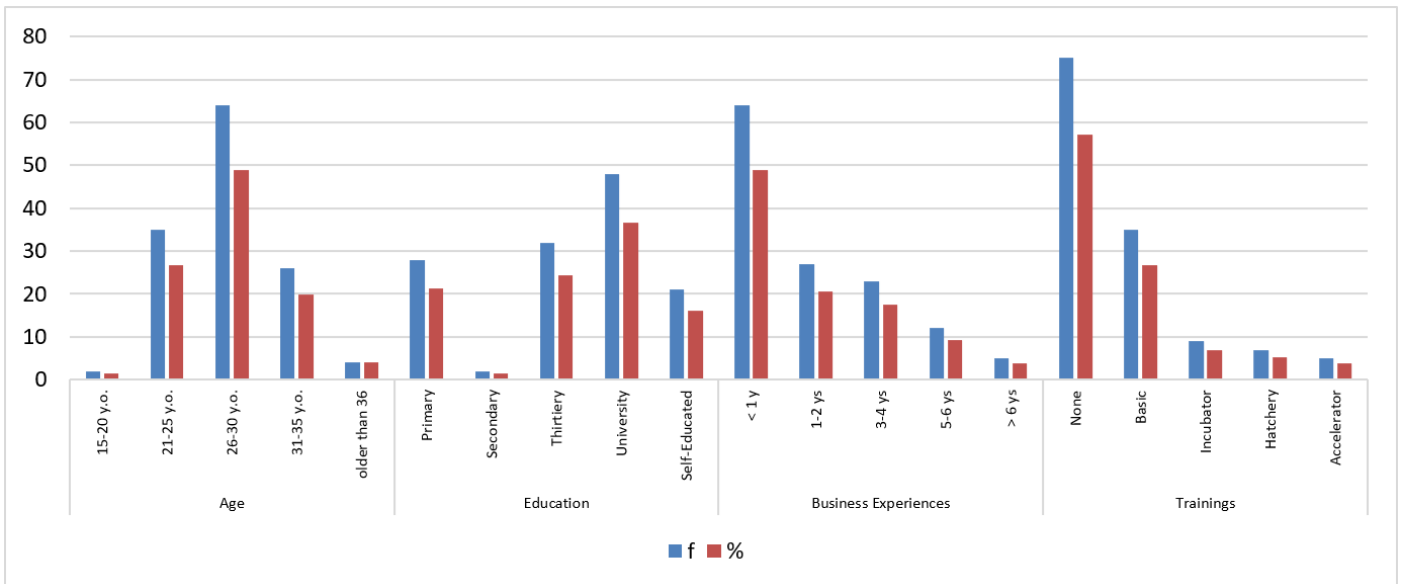


Figure 1. Background of tourism entrepreneurs.

3.1. Prospects

Although untrained and lack of business experiences and trainings, entrepreneurs have reported these six major prospects motivating and pushing them into tourism entrepreneurship (see **Figure 2**): (1) motivated by self-interest in the business, (2) experiences of working with tourists as the learning curve, (3) experiences running the entrepreneurship, (4) financial supports from self and family, (5) availability of governmental supports in entrepreneurship operations, management and expansion, and (6) availability of culturally skilled work forces. These factors might vary from one business context to others and they, thus, need explanation in the light of the article.

Self-Interest: Theoretically, as shown previously, one getting into entrepreneurial businesses might be either motivated by economic and political stability and infra-structural development or pulled by programs, supports and incentives from governments. Our study, nonetheless, show that these were not the prime factors

pushing and pulling the start-up entrepreneurs into tourism business. Though untrained (almost 60%), a great majority (around 70%) of the entrepreneurs believe that they have been driven into the tourism businesses by the establishment of reliable transportation systems to and from tourism objects to tourism business sites and availability of tourism accommodation in the sites enabling tourists to stay and await upcoming tourism attractions. Other factors such as economic and political stability and provision of better transport and commercial infrastructures were not found to be significant in the entrepreneurs’ decision to participate in tourism entrepreneurial industries. With Chi-square analyses, we found that the availability of accommodation and transport in local tourist objects significantly affects the entrepreneurs’ decisions to start-up the business ($df = 12$, Chi-square, $p > 0.01$) whereas other factors do not.

By the same token, the decision was enforced by self-interest to personal economic gain unaffected by governmental programs, supports and incentives. Nearly 60% of the start-up entrepreneurs reported to have been compelled by their own desire to invest in tourism entrepreneurship whereas the contribution of the governmental supports was found to be insignificantly below 10%. With Chi-square analyses, we found the effect of self-interest to be significantly strong ($df = 12$, Chi-square, $p > 0.01$).

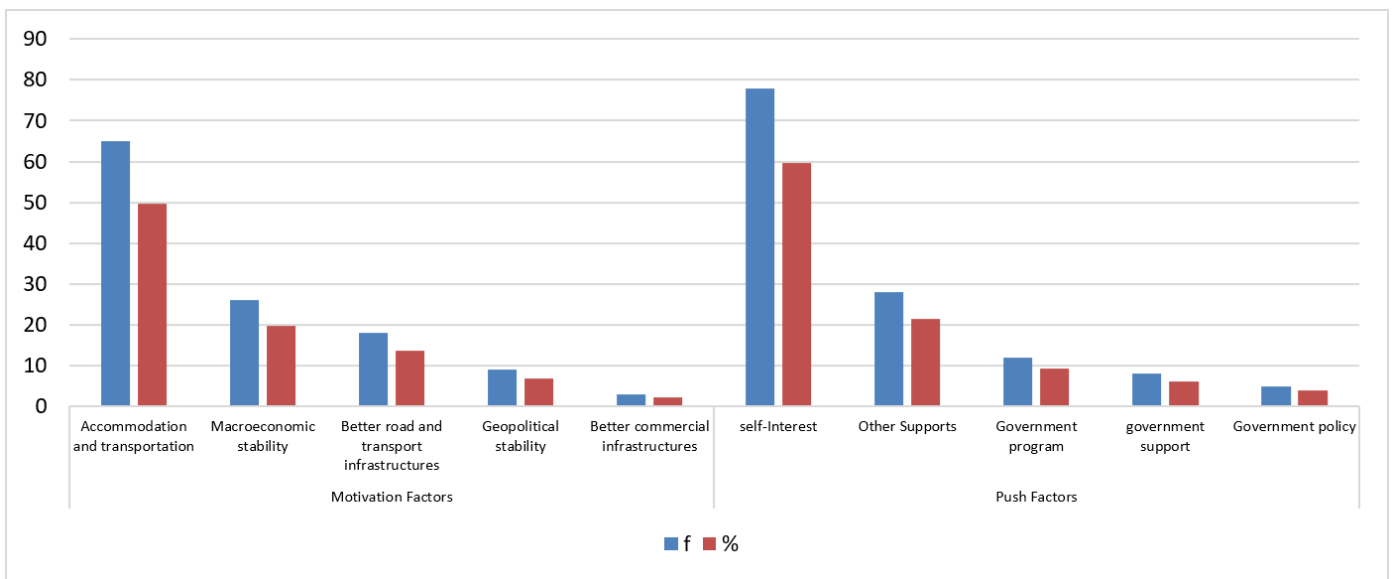


Figure 2. Motivation and pushing factors for entrepreneurship.

Experience with Tourism Industries as the Learning Curve: In addition to self-interest, there are also other pushing factors for tourism entrepreneurship (see **Figure 3**). After years of working in the tourism industry, more than 60% of the entrepreneurs reported to have successfully learnt how to provide convenience to tourists as their customers. The majority (more than 60%) of the entrepreneurs reported that the key to their survival in the industry as through their capability to pay close attention to tourists’ convenience as their business clients. Included in these factors were careful attention to healthy services and cleanliness in the entrepreneurship sites which were assumed to be essential to the increasing number of tourist visits. Although new in the business (almost 70% below two-year experience) and untrained with professional entrepreneurship (more than 80%), more than 65% of them reported to have learned

valuable survival lessons from the industry. The manager of a family-run bakery shop at a busy beach resort succinctly summarized this situation when she said,

“(My husband and) I was really nervous when opening the shop. My husband learnt to bake at a local college and I learnt tourists’ culture and expectation at a local university. Years passed, we learn better ways of serving our tourist customers. Quality of food and services and cleanliness has helped us, thank God, arrived at where we are now” (Rati, 25, a bakery manager).

This experience is also echoed in other types of tourism entrepreneurship. In event tourism, cultural event organizers reported sale drop after customers complaining cleanliness and waste management and, in the words of the respondent “only after appropriate measures were taken that the business can return to normal” (Icha, 28, Stick fighting organizer). A similar case was reported by entrepreneurs selling cultural tourism in the traditional villages complained for presenting attractions staged for tourist entertainment while the tourists expected to see actual day-to-day life of the people (Lale, 28, Sajang cultural tourism). In experiential tourism, tourists initially complaining hot weather had opened up new cultural products (i.e., sandal wood or songket handwoven manual fan) (Warni, 35, Sukarara cloth hand weaving tourism). Success and failure take turn in the business and innovation has form a learning curve for the entrepreneurs to be better and better day by day. Nonetheless, with Chi-square, we found that the only influential experience in determining success in the business is attention to customers’ convenience ($p > 0.05$) while the contribution of others in **Figure 3** such as being innovative and adding tourism values to available cultural potentials is not significant.

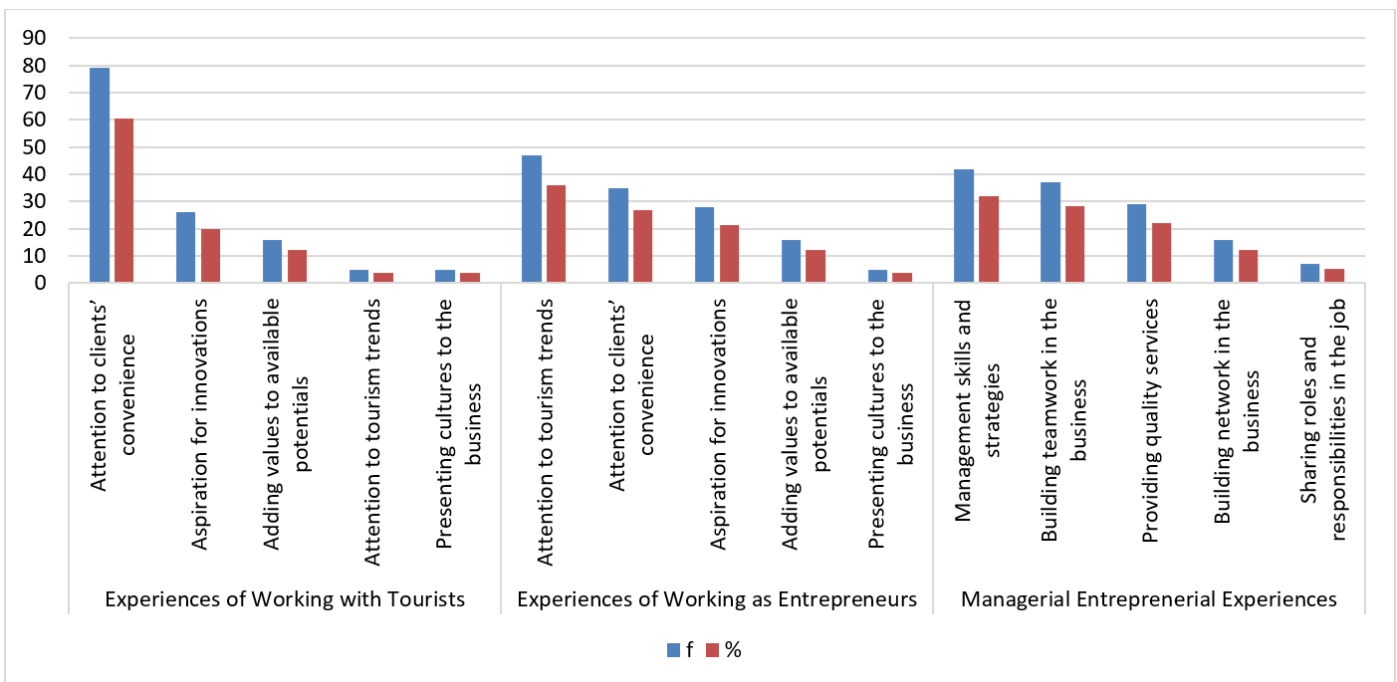


Figure 3. Experiences with tourism industries and skills.

Tourism Entrepreneurial Skills as a Learning Curve: Aside from experiences in working with tourists, entrepreneurial experiences in the business have also contributed to the learning curve. Our data show that these entrepreneurial skills have

developed due to engagement in the business: following tourism trend (around 35%), serving clients' convenience (around 25%), being innovative (around 20%), expanding cultural potentials (around 10%), and remodeling cultures for tourism businesses (below 5%). While all these factors are considered essential skills in managing tourism businesses, our analyses indicate that the skills of being adaptive and paying close attention to tourism trends on weekly or monthly bases are statistically proven to contribute significantly to progress in the business ($p > 0.05$). A manager of a local hospitality industry raised this issue when he narrated his route to the current success in the business when he said,

“Tourists with special interest like culture or events do not come in daily bases. [They] follow holidays and seasons in the countries of the tourists. Knowledge of these holidays and seasons is important and internet skills in communicating with them are very essential” (Harmuz, 57, a guide, a hostel manager).

Though happy with the current improvement, all entrepreneurs understudy consider that their experiences in managing entrepreneurial business are still lacking and the frequency of respondents reporting the essence of these managerial skills to success in the business is not statistically significant. The entrepreneurship skills are in essence challenges and entrepreneurs feel the need for improvement: skills and strategies in managing the business (more than 30%), building team work (around 30%), providing quality services (around 20%), building business networks (around 10%), and sharing roles and responsibilities in workplace situations (around 5%).

Self and family funding: Other promising prospects of tourism entrepreneurship in Lombok come in the forms of supporting factors in the operation, the management, and the expansion of the business. As shown in **Figure 4**, the majority of tourism entrepreneurs under study were self-funded (around 50%), family funded (around 20%) or funded through personal loans (around 20%). All of the entrepreneurs were expected to obtain joint funding for business expansion, but only less than 2% of them were able to operate under such joint venturing capital. At the current level, however, self or family funded tourism entrepreneurship is expected for sustainable growth of the business. With Chi-square analysis, we found that only self-funded entrepreneurs were found to be significant in contribution to success ($p > 0.05$). There were substantial amounts of successful entrepreneurs run through personal loans from the banks, funding by angel investors and joint ventures but the contribution of these sources of funding was found to be statistically insignificant ($p < 0.05$). Several entrepreneurs we interviewed reported hardship and failure in running business with loan and venture money due to low margin of return and they favored personal or family investment with assistance from angel investors. An owner of currently flourishing local burger company, narrated how he escaped financial trouble and obtained current gain he enjoyed when he said,

“My burger business flourished at the previous location, but the land lord increased the rent every year. I had to find a new place. It was not easy. A friend of a friend offered this place for free use and, thank God, I do not loss my customers, the business is still up and running, my staff still get jobs to do. My wife and I still have better hopes for our children” (Syahdan, 50, burger manager).

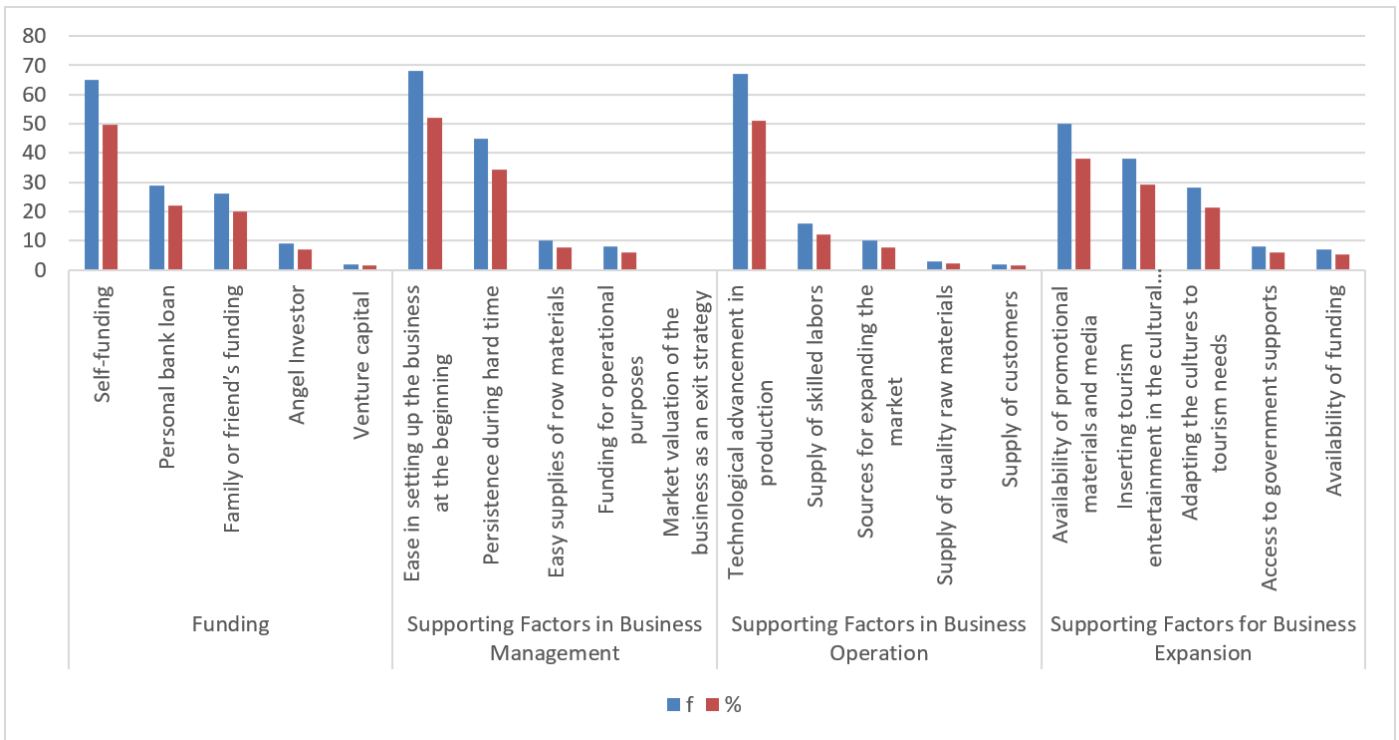


Figure 4. Funding and other supports.

Supports in entrepreneurship operations and management: Despite all the financial hardships, entrepreneurs were satisfied with the way the business has been running. Two factors were identified as the prime causes of success: the continued supply of customers and the availability of cheap culturally skillful labors. The local governments assisted the entrepreneurs in business management, operation and expansion. In business management, the governments eased in the procedure for business setting up, assistances in supply of raw materials, provision of managerial supports during hard time, provision of financial assistance for entrepreneurship start-up and operation, and assistance in valuing the entrepreneurship when the entrepreneurs intended to sell the business. While the managerial and financial supports were valued by the entrepreneurs under study, we identified that only assistance in the start-up contributed significantly to the business ($p > 0.05$). In business operation, the entrepreneurs had enjoyed governmental assistance in technological advancement in production, supply of culturally skillful labors, supply of resources for expanding the market, supply of quality raw materials, and supply of customers through scheduled cultural events. Nonetheless, our analysis designated that only the technical assistance in production was significant ($p > 0.05$) while others, though rather high in frequency, were not statistically significant.

Supports in entrepreneurship Expansion: In business expansion, the governments assisted the entrepreneurs with promotional materials and media, promoted cultural traditions as tourism attractions, reframed cultural traditions for tourism needs and informed them of governmental managerial and financial supports. Again, while all the factors were viewed as important, our study displayed that only the assistance in promotion was statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Other factors such as easy access to raw materials and financial resources for expansion were also reported but the

percentage is limited and negligible. They value persistence, particularly in hard times during the series of earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic hitting the island between 2018 and 2022, and the supply of good services as key management factors enabling them to arrive at current financial stability. Nevertheless, they expect to expand the venture, and these strategies are assumed to be essential: provision of the promotional materials, promotion in the local media, creation of more cultural festivals for tourist entertainment, and accessibility to the government supports for funding and promotions.

In short, these are the prospects of tourism entrepreneurship in Lombok. The entrepreneurs are motivated by self-interest in the business. They use the experiences of working with tourists as the learning curve. They learn from experiences running the entrepreneurship. They obtain financial supports from self and family. There are also sets of governmental supports for business starts-up, operations and expansions. There are also groups of culturally skillful work forces readily available for timely demanded cultural shows.

3.2. Challenges

Though promising, the tourism entrepreneurship under study also face at least five challenges summarized and presented in **Figure 5**. In general, the challenges were connected with business management, operation and expansion as well as obstacles in access to financial supports, operational assistance and guaranteed sustainability from the governments.

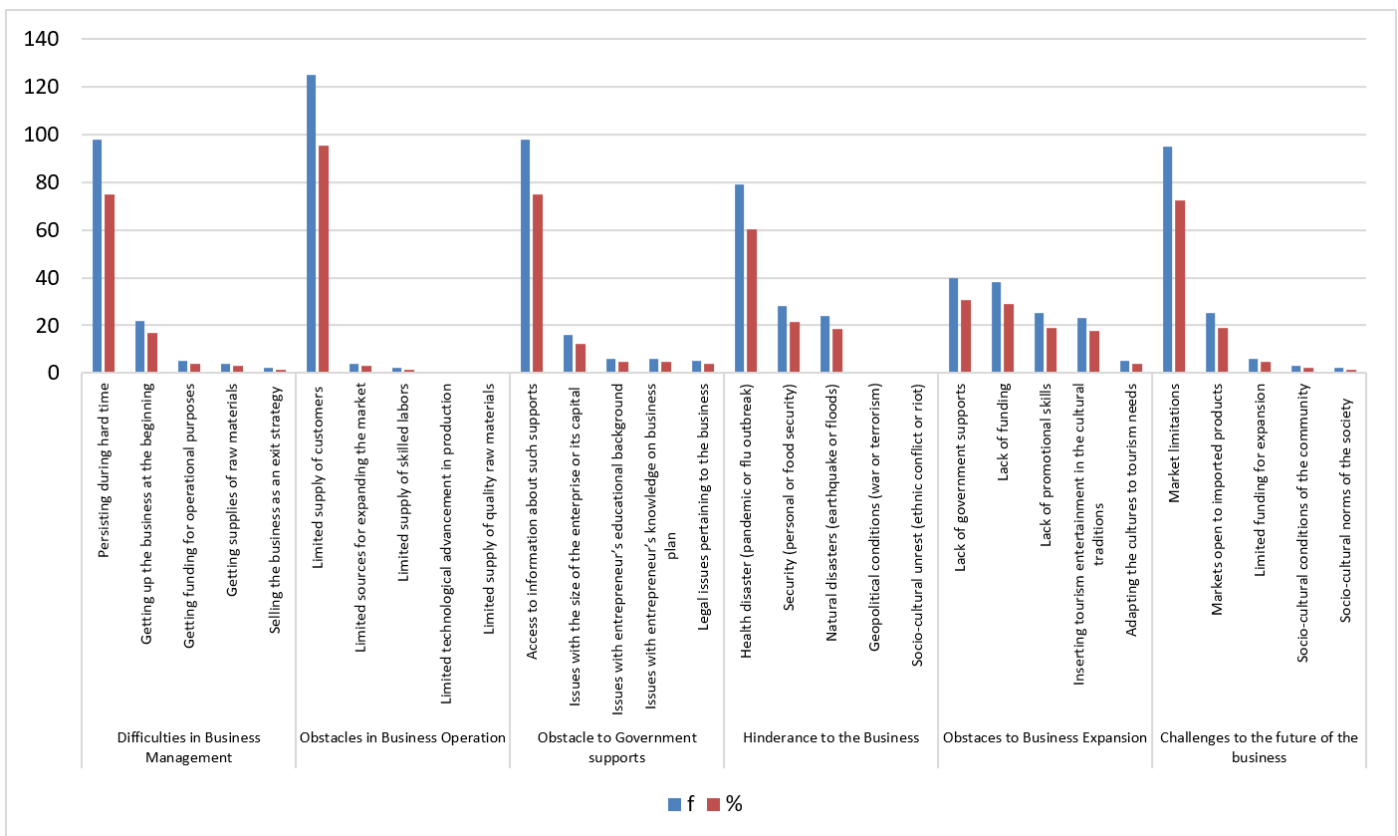


Figure 5. Challenges.

Persisting during hard time: In the management of the business, as exhibited in **Figure 5**, entrepreneurs faced these difficulties: setting up the business, obtaining funding for operational purposes, maintaining the business during hard time, obtaining reliable supply of raw materials, and selling the business as an exit strategy. Our data displayed that the majority of the entrepreneurs (around 75%) had troubles maintaining the business during low seasons and other hard times. Around 17% of them had problems when setting the business up and running, whereas around 6% of them were challenged in obtaining funding and raw materials for running the business and around 2% of them faced difficulties in selling the business. Our statistical analysis, nonetheless, demonstrated that persistence during low seasons and other hard times was significantly the greatest obstacle to most entrepreneurs ($p > 0.01$). Though high in frequency and percentage, the challenging contribution was statistically proven insignificant. In the face of the challenges, entrepreneurs employed various strategies including diversifying products and targeting varied customers according to seasons or using the low seasons for promotional and other purposes.

Limited supply of customers: There were also obstacles in business operation in the forms of limited supply of quality raw materials, technological advancement in production of goods and services, certified labors, sources for expanding the market, and supply of customers. As exhibited in **Figure 5**, limited supply of customers was the biggest challenge of all and this was threatening more than 95% of all the entrepreneurship under study and found to be significantly different from other business operation obstacles ($p > 0.01$). Other challenges were present, but they were not seen to be statistically different.

Access to information about governmental supports: Although governmental supports played significant roles in assisting the entrepreneurship, there were nevertheless problems related to the matter. Firstly, information about the supports were not equally available to all entrepreneurs. Secondly, the supports were dependent upon the size of the entrepreneurship: the smaller the enterprise the smaller the amount of financial and other supports it can obtain. Next, there were also problems with entrepreneurial skills: most of the entrepreneurs worked outside of the scope of their educational trainings. Due to these backgrounds, the entrepreneurs were met with difficulties in planning, managing and expanding the business and these skills were essential for writing up business plans which were necessary for procuring bank loans or joint ventures. From all these obstacles, difficulties in obtaining information about governmental supports were seen as the greatest obstacles and these variables were perceived to be statistically different from other obstacles ($p > 0.01$).

Health disaster: There were challenges to the running of the entrepreneurship in general. Local socio-cultural unrest created by interethnic conflict, global geopolitical conditions resulting from wars and terrorism, natural disasters caused by earthquake, floods or land slide, personal security of tourists hindering them from visiting or making them to cancel purchase, food insecurity prohibiting tourists to purchase local food and beverage, and outbreak of flu and other pandemic remained the major hurdles to the smooth running of the entrepreneurship. To the eyes of the entrepreneurs, conversely, the biggest threats were health disaster (around 60%), personal and food security (more than 20%), and social and natural disaster (around 20%). Our statistical

analysis, though, displayed that health disaster was the most significant challenge of all ($p > 0.01$).

Market limitations: There were also problems regarding the expansion and the future of business. Around 30% of the entrepreneurs complained about the lack of governmental supports and around 30% of them faced funding problems. Around 20% felt that they had limited promotional skills and required trainings and around 20% again felt the need for training adapting cultural traditions, food and beverages and other cultural products to suitable needs of international tourists. Expectations for such trainings were varied and offered no statistical differences among them.

Though prospective from revenue points of view, the entrepreneurs were nervous with the future of their businesses. Some of them (around 2%) were worried about the socio-cultural norms of the society which rejected the idea of selling the culture and the cultural products and events for tourism purposes. Others (around 2%) were anxious about unruly socio-cultural conditions in the community and in the cultural events where unrest might erupt and the conditions might affect rate of return and promotion of the events for future purposes. Still others (around 5%) were uncertain about funding for future business expansion. A great proportion of others (around 20%) especially those selling local cultural products were uneasy with massive incoming of cheaper but higher quality of imposter imported products from other parts of Indonesia or the world. However, the majority (more than 70%) of them were encountered with market limitations and, thus, felt urgent needs for market promotion and expansion. With Chi-square analyses, we established that market limitations were statistically significant obstacles to further development of the business ($p > 0.01$).

In short, the entrepreneurs under study faced these obstacles: difficulties in maintaining the business during low tourist seasons, difficulties in gaining reliable tourist customers over time, difficulties in obtaining information for support in hard times due to low seasons, social, natural and health disasters, lack of social and political supports from the governments and limitations of the market that hindered feasible development. Whether such situations can also be found elsewhere will be discussed below.

4. Discussion

Let us now compare the findings above with those of others in other tourism business contexts. The study contributes several factors posing projections and obstacles to language and culture-related business starts-up. This is the scientific gap that it intends to fill as previously stated.

The study found that the entrepreneurs are in their prime age range (21 to 40 years) and this might enable them to work physically hard and gain success in business. Schick et al.'s (2002) study has shown that starting and maintaining tourism-related business is not at all easy. Complying with external demands and market conditions, entrepreneurs have to rely physically and mentally on themselves as the most essential capital. Thus, personal knowledge, work experiences, and professional training are essential human capital for entrepreneurs. Self-education, self-training, and self-exposure to new experiences become central strategic actions for the future development of the business. This is in line with what Estay et al. (2013) have

suggested that entrepreneurs should continuously be committed to self-development for competence, creativity, and innovations as ways of responding to political insecurity (Than et al., 2022), consumer circumspection (Kerr et al., 2014), economic instability (Yasir and Majid, 2017), shifts in customer behavior (Aldianto et al., 2021; Wulantika and Zein, 2020), and new government regulation (Kaplan et al., 2011).

The study designates that success in entrepreneurial business must focus on what the entrepreneurs are personally interested in and what they can do best and providing the most convenient tourism experiences to the customers has been the core value that the entrepreneurs are proud of. Although there are still other aspects of the business services that are still in need of improvement, focusing on the personal strength and interest above has helped the business flourish. As Amorós et al. (2013) have argued, the survival of entrepreneurial enterprises is determined by the entrepreneurs' self-capacities when responding to business opportunities. According to Das et al. (2023), relying on self-interest and self-capability is one of the key survival factors in post-pandemic tourism businesses.

The study displays that success in tourism business is a result of experiences working with tourist as customers and experiences of running the business. This is by no means unique and studies on other contexts of tourism business starts-up have shown that learning by experiencing and learning from experiences are parts of useful strategies in setting up tourism businesses. Knollenberg et al. (2014) and Ratnasari et al. (2020) have shown that tourism entrepreneurs do not necessarily carry with them bunches of motivation, expertise and success stories before establishing tourism companies and, in fact, they can learn from them how to manage and innovate in them and compete with others while working with the staff, the customers, the governments, other business actors and the communities. In fact, building communication with tourists is one of the answers to the questions of building up tourism entrepreneurship where cultural heritage is presented as experiential tourism (Ramírez-Gutiérrez et al., 2018).

In the tourism businesses under study, we also identified that the learning curves in the tourist-entrepreneur interactions have helped them maintain good rapport and wide spread word-of-mouth promotion strategies and guarantee higher rate of returns but, at the same time, the entrepreneurs learned to manage the business at their best. Dimmock (2003) and Sotiriadis (2017) report that maintaining communication with tourist customers provide entrepreneurs with managerial skills and help them provide better company services to the customers. According to Svahn (2004), the learning curve of the management skills continues from tourism business with current networks to those with renewal and emerging networks. As the case of start-up businesses understudy, the learning focuses on the core value of the business production, on efficient delivery of tourism services and production, on incremental innovation on efficiency, coordination and cooperation between entrepreneurs, and orchestration of capabilities within the current business networks. Though basics, these managerial skills are novel to young business actors with education background and entrepreneurial experiences rather limited to the business at hand.

The study has also revealed that the successful entrepreneurs started their business out of personal expenses supported as well by family funding. Although some of the entrepreneurs have successfully obtained financial provisions from bank loan,

joint venture, and governmental supports, the factor decisive to the business accomplishment is personal and family funding. This is not exceptional but rather the norm, as Zhao et al. (2022) have exposed in their study of Chinese entrepreneurship, self-funding signals the entrepreneurs' confidence in their business plan and they, thus, can inspire the staff to work hard to the attainment of the business agenda and this, in return, conditions the business to successful stages. This success, according to Zhao et al. (2022), will not accumulate more personal funding for business expansion but it will also build trust to business partners and contribute in crowdfunding for joint venture. Owers and Sergi (2019) have reported a similar trend that successful business companies raised capital from private equity funding which continue to an extended span of business growth and revenue generation even when the companies have reached the unicorn stages. Keil (2021) provided reasons for this trend at personal level (i.e., more favorable business deal, more decision making power, and more flexibility in company operation) and business level (i.e., shorter fund crowding time, smaller number of equally-motivated business partners, higher return on invested capital and higher internal rate of return). The best method of attracting such funding, according to Angerer et al. (2017), is by communicating with potential partners through the internet and accomplishment in this attempt depends on pre-campaign preparation, interactive ongoing propagation, and post-campaign correspondence and advertising of the business. These processes were also implemented by the entrepreneurs under study indicating potential similarities of the situations across the globe.

The study also reveals that success in the entrepreneurship is associated with governmental supports in the starts-up, operations and expansions. The active roles of the government are also found elsewhere. According to Shockley and Frank (2011), the roles depend very much on the state capacity (higher or lower) and innovation locus (top-down or bottom-up). In the case of the entrepreneurship starts-up understudy, we identified that the state capacity is low and the government role is rather combination of bottom-up and top-down. Young entrepreneurs who have set up businesses or those who had promising business proposals were invited for trainings and start-up incentives were provided to successful trainees. Bozhikin et al. (2019) reported the dominant governmental roles in the business funding (i.e., funding, subsidizing, grants, vouchers, or tax reduction), operations (i.e., networking, training, promotion, and free lease of government spaces) and expansion (i.e., endorsing the companies through government websites, helping them for joint venture in wider business networking, and offering them for public procurement). To a great extent, these roles have successfully and collaboratively enacted by the governments which might have helped the young start-up entrepreneurs obtain the current achievement. To Amorós et al. (2013), these conditions might have also related with the macroeconomic stability of the nation.

The study has also explicated challenges in business management, operations and expansion as well as problems in finance, operation, and sustainability of the business. Such challenges are not unique to the studied starts-up and they are, in fact, wide spread elsewhere. These challenges, in the views of Johnston (2010a), Johnston (2010b) and Salamzadeh and Kawamorita (2015) and Vesper (1990), result from external challenges that interfere with the internal, financial conditions of the

enterprises. Being mostly self or family-funded or crowdfunded on family bases, the business start-up owners under study have to negotiate matters with family members and friends because, at this early-stage, investors and bankers as potential resources for funding will be reluctant to form joint ventures with the start-ups. In such situations, Salamzadeh and Kawamorita (2015) recommend entrepreneurs make use of cultural knowledge, social experiences, and communicative skills in negotiating with potential funders.

The study also indicates that at the management level, lack of funding, lack of government support, and market limitations are the main obstacles to business advancement. As Salamzadeh (2015a) and Salamzadeh (2015b) have noted, governments are always supportive of business start-ups, but the lack of access to such support increases business closure. Other challenges are found to be negligible, but, as Bruton and Rubanik (2002) and Van et al. (2006) have argued, start-up businesses are more sensitive to geopolitical and macroeconomic changes than established firms and they need to pay close attention to external factors for example by continuously following tourism trends, overcoming market limitations, government policies, geopolitical conditions, and sociocultural unrests. In these cases, as Kei and Ahmed (2022) and Kei and Liao (2021) have recommended, the entrepreneurs' skills in strategic management play essential roles both in maintaining the business during hard times and in preparing contingency plans when the same situations reappear in the future. These require what Ciolac (2012) and Zhao et al. (2011) call cognitive social capital.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings and the discussion sections above, there are a number of conclusions that can be drawn. The study has indicated that success in the entrepreneurship starts-up is due to the entrepreneurs' personal interest and investment in the business using the experiences of interacting with tourist customers as tools for learning to manage the business. Funding crowded from personal investment, family members and friends who become actors in the enterprises has empowered strong motivation for success in the business endeavor. Administrative, infrastructural, financial and promotional supports from governments have also facilitated smooth operation, management and expansion of the business starts-up. Availability of inexpensive culturally skilled workers and cultural events has also enabled the starts-up to operate and grow regularly.

The study has also teased out challenges to further development of the starts-up. There are still difficulties in attaining tourists with special interest to language and culture-related enterprises particularly in low seasons and these as well as others should be considered if the businesses are expected to advance. In trouble times such social, natural and health unrest, the roles of the governments are crucial in ascertaining that all security and health protocols are served and the security of the entrepreneurs, staff, customers, cultural performers and onlookers is maintained. Limitation of the market due to special interest nature of the tourism requires massive advertisement of regularly scheduled cultural events and this can be guaranteed only by the involvement of all the governmental bureaucracy.

The study has opened up certain agenda for future research directions. While the study has shown how personal and family-based crowdfunding has empowered business progress, it is still unclear, though, how other sources of funding such as angel investors, private loans, bank loans and joint venture might affect entrepreneurs' behavior and this is indeed urgent for a scientific study. The entrepreneurs under study do not have sufficient education background for professional entrepreneurship and the role of this background into business conduct also deserves scientific investigation. Similarly, on-the-job trainings of managerial skills are highly demanded by entrepreneurs and the models, the methods and the strategies are required to be identified. By the same token, direct and indirect impacts of such trainings also merit academic attentions.

With regards to the current conditions of language and culture-related tourism entrepreneurship in Lombok, a number of sociopolitical actions should be taken. The study has exposed that entrepreneurs very much rely on their intuitions in doing business and continuous training is recommended particularly training in relation to job-related and management skills. Essential for such training are skills in organizing tourist attractions, adapting local cultures for tourist entertainment, preparing healthy and secure food and beverages, and the like. Lack of government support has been seen as one of the main causes of business failure and, although the government provides funding and training for business start-ups, such information rarely reaches young entrepreneurs in need of such support. Lack of financial support has been another form of complaint, but start-up entrepreneurs actually require fixed and reliable government policies and programs supportive of the operation of start-up entrepreneurship. Besides, the governments are expected to combine and coordinate regulatory mechanisms which might better enhance language and culture-related entrepreneurship. Sets of government policy are crucially required for developing the whole ecosystem of language and culture-related entrepreneurship including training and retraining of both cultural practitioners with socio-cultural capital and cultural entrepreneurs with social and managerial capital. The business models, the models for developing the entrepreneurship ecosystems, and the models for government support and subsidies are in urgent need of identification.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire to entrepreneurs

1. How long have you been involved in this business?
 - A. Less than 1 year
 - B. 1 to 2 years
 - C. 3 to 4 years
 - D. 5 to 6 years
 - E. More than 6 years
2. Which of the followings has motivated you to invest in the business?
 - A. Macroeconomic stability
 - B. Better road and transport infrastructures
 - C. Better commercial infrastructures
 - D. Geopolitical stability
 - E. Accommodation and transportation
3. Which of the followings has invited you to get involved in this business?
 - A. Government policy
 - B. government support
 - C. Government program
 - D. Self-Interest
 - E. Other supports
4. Which of the followings has hindered you in the business?
 - A. Natural disasters (earthquake or floods)
 - B. Geopolitical conditions (war or terrorism)
 - C. Socio-cultural unrest (ethnic conflict or riot)
 - D. Health disaster (pandemic or flu outbreak)
 - E. Security (personal or food security)
5. Which government's entrepreneurship training/funding did you receive for the business?
 - A. None
 - B. Basic
 - C. Incubator
 - D. Hatchery
 - E. Accelerator
6. Which of the followings hinders you from obtaining government's entrepreneurial supports?
 - A. Access to information about such supports
 - B. Legal issues pertaining to the business
 - C. Issues with entrepreneur's educational background
 - D. Issues with entrepreneur's knowledge on business plan
 - E. Issues with the size of the enterprise or its capital
7. Which of the followings are challenging to the future of your business?
 - A. Market limitations
 - B. Markets open to imported products
 - C. Limited funding for expansion
 - D. Socio-cultural conditions of the community
 - E. Socio-cultural norms of the society
8. As an entrepreneur, where do you usually obtain sources of funding?

- A. Self-funding
 - B. Family or friend's funding
 - C. Angel Investor
 - D. Personal bank loan
 - E. Venture capital
9. What is your age range?
- A. 15–20
 - B. 21–25
 - C. 26–30
 - D. 31–35
 - E. Older than 35
10. What is your education and training background?
- A. Primary school
 - B. Secondary school
 - C. College
 - D. University
 - E. Self-educated
11. What characteristics help you excel in the business?
- A. Aspiration for self-economic growth
 - B. Responsive attitudes to business opportunities
 - C. Confidence in self-capacities
 - D. Entrepreneurial skills
 - E. Attention to healthy services and environment
12. What skills do you think you have improved in the business?
- A. Attention to tourism trends
 - B. Aspiration for innovations
 - C. Attention to clients' convenience
 - D. Adding values to available potentials
 - E. Presenting cultures to the business
13. What skills do you think you need to improve for better business in the future?
- A. Attention to tourism trends
 - B. Aspiration for innovations
 - C. Attention to clients' convenience
 - D. Adding values to available potentials
 - E. Presenting cultures to the business
14. What do you think you need to improve in the business services?
- A. Management skills and strategies
 - B. Providing quality services
 - C. Building teamwork in the business
 - D. Building network in the business
 - E. Sharing roles and responsibilities in the job
15. What are the major obstacles in expanding the business
- A. Adapting the cultures to tourism needs
 - B. Inserting tourism entertainment in the cultural traditions
 - C. Lack of promotional skills
 - D. Lack of funding

- E. Lack of government supports
16. What are major difficulties in managing the business?
- A. Setting up the business at the beginning
 - B. Persisting during hard time
 - C. Getting supplies of raw materials
 - D. Getting funding for operational purposes
 - E. Selling the business as an exit strategy
17. What obstacles did you find in running the business?
- A. Limited technological advancement in production
 - B. Limited supply of skilled labors
 - C. Limited sources for expanding the market
 - D. Limited supply of quality raw materials
 - E. Limited supply of customers
18. What are the major supporting factors in expanding the business
- A. Adapting the cultures to tourism needs
 - B. Inserting tourism entertainment in the cultural traditions
 - C. Availability of promotional materials and media
 - D. Availability of funding
 - E. Access to government supports
19. What are major supporting factors in managing the business?
- A. Ease in setting up the business at the beginning
 - B. Persistence during hard time
 - C. Easy supplies of row materials
 - D. Funding for operational purposes
 - E. Market valuation of the business as an exit strategy
20. What supporting factors did you find in running the business?
- A. Technological advancement in production
 - B. Supply of skilled labors
 - C. Sources for expanding the market
 - D. Supply of quality raw materials
 - E. Supply of customers

Appendix B

Questions to tourists

1. What is your name? Where are you from?
2. How did you find out information about these attractions?
3. What did you enjoy in the attractions?
4. What do you expect to improve in the attractions?
5. Would you recommend the experiences to other tourists?

Appendix C

Questions for focused-group discussion

1. What is the current condition of Lombok tourism?
2. What is the current condition of language-related tourism in Lombok?
3. What recommendations should be done in order to improve the current condition of language-related tourism in Lombok?
4. What is the current condition of culture-related tourism in Lombok?
5. What recommendations should be done in order to improve the current condition of culture-related tourism in Lombok?