

# Transitioning from a Mindset to Realization: An Exploration of the Triggers of Online Entrepreneurship

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**Abstract:** There is a significant literature gap pertaining to entrepreneurial triggers. Research shows that culture, the entrepreneurs' own characteristics, prevailing economic conditions, the entrepreneurial ecosystems, and programs geared at promoting online business all have an influence on generating new business ideas. To realize a business concept, entrepreneurs that are driven by necessity or opportunity typically use a method that is either causal, effectual, or bricolage. This study seeks to develop an in-depth understanding of how entrepreneurs generate and implement ideas related to online businesses. Interviews were conducted online (because of the geographic spread of the entrepreneurs), based on themes derived from an exhaustive review of literature, that focused on the entrepreneurial mindset and theories of idea realization. Respondents were divided into two groups, based on whether their business had a product focus or service focus and whether they were doing entrepreneurship locally or globally. Analysis of the data gathered reveals that effectual entrepreneurship was the most used strategy and opportunity entrepreneurship prevailed amongst the respondents. Results of the study further indicate that family and friends are the most likely source of inspiration for an entrepreneur to generate ideas for an Internet based business. Personality traits may inspire an entrepreneur to transform a hobby into a business idea and economic conditions have a significant influence on the formation of an online business.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial triggers, online entrepreneurship.

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## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a driver of economic growth and development. Although, the discipline of entrepreneurship is not new, however, lately it has been receiving increasing interest from today's youth. This is perhaps, because the realm of traditional business is oversaturated and difficult to enter because of high capital demands. Therefore, a convenient path, most new entrepreneurs are following is that of

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launching their start-ups online. Online businesses are excellent examples of scalable businesses in which exponential growth does not result in equivalent capital expense. However, unlike traditional business owners, entrepreneurs face immense risks when they attempt to capitalize on a market opportunity. As the nascence of an entrepreneurial start-up is riddled with uncertainty and risk, therefore entrepreneurs require tremendous support and need to exercise high creativity at the early stages of their start-ups. Other factors driving interest in online business include an overabundance of information on how to launch one, availability of numerous inspiring start-ups that have become great successes, and a promise of overnight success. Despite its popularity, however, there is still a dearth of literature on online entrepreneurship, the rationale for pursuing online entrepreneurship and how entrepreneurs transform an idea into reality.

This study utilizes semi-structured in-depth interviews with the founders of eight online entrepreneurial businesses about how they got the idea of starting online and how they went from idea to setting up the business. This study further advances the research on online entrepreneurship by exploring entrepreneurial triggers that lead to idea generation, necessity of launching an online start-up, and the process of putting the idea into action. The purpose of this research is to develop an understanding of triggers and to explore the role of necessity and opportunity-centred entrepreneurship in an online entrepreneurial setup. Specifically, we aim to answer the following interrelated research questions:

The research question(s) of this study are:

RQ1: How does an entrepreneur acquire the idea to start an online business?

RQ2: How and why does aspiring entrepreneurs choose online entrepreneurship as a career pathway? And,

RQ3: How does an entrepreneur establish an online business?

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: in the next section, we present the relevant literature review followed by an explication of research methodology. Afterwards, we present the findings of our research and discuss them. In the end, we offer our conclusion.

## 2. Literature Review

The literature reviewed for this study was gathered using the following keywords “entrepreneurship”, “entrepreneurship venture”, and “entrepreneurial mindset” to search for relevant research papers using the HEC digital library. The databases used included Emerald Insight, Science Direct, Springer, SAGE Journals, Wiley Online Library, IISTE, and Taylor & Francis Online. Recent publications were given preference. Interconnections amongst the various publications were explored using Connected Paper. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were based on a systematic process of scanning the title, reading the abstract, skimming over the headings, tables, and figures, and finally reading the conclusion. While selecting articles, metadata was stored in a table (this is reproduced in the annexure). Qualitative works were prioritized as limited research has been conducted on entrepreneurial triggers and, therefore, it was felt that an exploratory study would be most beneficial.

2.1 Defining Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is an essential source of job creation, poverty reduction, innovation, societal development, and economic competitiveness (Linan, Rodriguez-Cohard & Rueda-Canuche, 2011; and Wu, Kuo, & Shen, 2013). Therefore, for social wellbeing and economic development, steady growth of business creation is necessary. The fundamentals of entrepreneurship assume a high level of uncertainty, novelty, and dynamism involved in the entrepreneurial process. Since the global economic crisis of 2007-2008, economic growth has been slow. To overcome such crisis, policymakers are seeking ways to increase entrepreneurial activities within society.

Hansmark (1998) argues that the terms entrepreneur or entrepreneurship are often confusing. “Entrepreneurship” can be defined in varying ways, each presenting a different viewpoint. It may be argued that a unified definition of entrepreneurship is elusive and that it is challenging to define (Kao, 1989). Table 1 gives an overview of how different authors have defined entrepreneurship in the literature.

*Table 1: Definitions of Entrepreneurship*

Hisrich (1990)	Defines an entrepreneur as someone who demonstrates initiative and creative thinking, can organize social and economic mechanisms to turn resources and situations to practical account and accepts risk and failure.	“Initiative”, “Creative thinking”
Penrose (1959/1980)	Entrepreneurial activity involves identifying opportunities within the economic system.	“Opportunity identification”,
Drucker (1985)	The entrepreneurship is an innovation act who presupposes the endowment of the existing resources with the capacity of producing wealth.	“Wealth generation”
Kaish and Gilad (1991)	The entrepreneurship is first a discovery process and secondly is the process of acting on an opportunity of lack of balance.	“Discovery”, “Opportunity Utilizing”
Shane & Venkataraman (2000)	The field of entrepreneurship involves the study of sources of opportunities; the processes of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities; and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate, and exploit them.	“Opportunity discovering”, “Opportunity Evaluation”, “Opportunity exploitation”
Commission of the European Communities (2003)	Entrepreneurship is the mindset and process to create and develop economic activity by blending risk-taking, creativity and/or innovation with sound management, within a new or an existing organization.	“Risk-taking”, “Creativity”, “Innovation”
Maritz et al. (2015)	Entrepreneurship and innovation are creation of value.	“Value creation”
Barot (2015), Hessels (2019)	Entrepreneurship definition is generating jobs opportunities and lead to economic development.	“Generating Jobs”
Hessels (2019)	Entrepreneurship is closely linked to opportunity recognition and emphasizes the importance of knowledge and skill as the basic entrepreneurial ability.	“Opportunity recognition”

Shane & Venkataraman’s (2000) definition of entrepreneurship (see table 1) is adopted as the working definition for this study as it entails both the environment and the individual engaged in an entrepreneurial endeavour.

An entrepreneur initially engages in an intentional process to create and develop an idea. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1985, 1991) is a psychological theory explaining and predicting human planned behaviours. Most human behaviours are planned and are led by some intentions. Moreover, action is central to entrepreneurship (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006), and entrepreneurs need to create something of value after identifying an opportunity. The process of initiating an entrepreneurial venture depends on the individuals in a community and their willpower, which is made up of their aspirations, discipline, and wisdom. It requires risk-taking, courage, flexibility, continuous struggle, disciplined life, years of wisdom, and experience (Gilder, 1971, p. 258).

### 2.2 Entrepreneurial Mindset

*Mindset* is a crucial element that differentiates an entrepreneur from others to act and innovate. Along with improving skills, this change also inspires an entrepreneur's way of thinking. Thus, aspiring entrepreneurs need to tap into three distinctive aspects of an entrepreneurial mindset: cognitive, behavioural, and emotional (Kuratko, 2020). The cognitive aspect relates to the thought process of decision-making by connecting previously scattered pieces of information, skills, and resources. The behavioural aspect relates to entrepreneurial action, driven by cognition (knowledge) and motivation (individual's strategy and desirability). Entrepreneurial hustle (Fisher et al., 2020) is one such example of a behaviour aspect where an entrepreneur addresses some challenges in a state of urgency and uncertain conditions. Venture creations go beyond the process of identifying and capturing an opportunity to include emotions, impulses, and physiological responses. The emotional aspect relates to pleasure, enthusiasm, surprise, anticipation, or stress created from uncertainty and cushioning these feelings to sustain a business venture. All these three aspects of entrepreneurial mindset – thoughts, action, and feelings interact and augment each other to hone the personal effectiveness of an entrepreneur in each setting.

Davis et al. (2016) defines the entrepreneurial mindset as the constellation of motives, skills, and thought processes that distinguish entrepreneurs from others and contribute to entrepreneurial success. An entrepreneurial education track may facilitate building this entrepreneurial mindset. The literature agrees that entrepreneurship can be taught and learned. We can use self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's confidence in his or her ability to successfully perform entrepreneurial roles and tasks (Shinnar et al., 2014), in evaluating entrepreneurial education. Pedagogical intervention methods can help identify entrepreneurial opportunities, improve entrepreneurial creativity, and enhance risk management capabilities. Unlike the traditional pedagogical approach of a control group that fails to develop a mental framework for entrepreneurial behavior, the pedagogical intervention components positively impact entrepreneurial mindset. Intervention components like action-oriented and self-directed learning are integrated into "active," "experimental," and "entrepreneurial" elements of entrepreneurial education programs (Fayolle, 2013). Findings by Lindberg et al. (2017) indicate that a blend of creative activities and exercises to build self-efficacy can enhance entrepreneurial mindset and designing courses that allow students to experiment and reflect on their actions can enhance high-potential opportunities identification.

The research findings of Barot (2019) identify two types of entrepreneurships: necessity and opportunity-centered entrepreneurship. The motive of a start-up has two main drivers: necessity and opportunity-centered entrepreneurship. Basic economic needs drive "necessity entrepreneurs": they are unemployed or

unsatisfied with their present work and have no better option (Verheul et al., 2010). Whereas opportunity-centered entrepreneurs take a start-up initiative for self-realization and business opportunity exploitation (Williams and Round, 2009). Opportunity-centered entrepreneurs often have employment but enter entrepreneurship out of personal interest.

**a. Drivers of Idea Generation**

Creative idea generation has resulted in various innovations and insights – earlier research links to divergent thinking as the source of idea generation (Guilford 1950, 1967). Divergent thinking refers to responding to an open-ended problem that leads to multiple solutions and stresses novelty within the solutions. The “Retrieval”, “Integration/Simulation” and “Evaluation” (RISE) model proposed by Benedek (2018) states that a ‘problem’ is initially defined to frame an appropriate ‘strategy’ for idea generation. Then, the strategy results in the ‘retrieval’ of unrelated concepts to produce novel representation using ‘integration and simulation’ processes. At last, ‘Evaluation’ of potential ideas takes place to ensure the desired task goal is met and ready to be reported. The RISE model is highly interactive and iterative that helps in explaining the idea generation process.

Creativity being a fundamental prerequisite for innovation (Anderson et al., 2014; Revilla & Rodriguez-Prado, 2018, and Sarooghi et al., 2015), contributes to novel and valuable ideas. At least fifty different creativity techniques are available to practice (Geschka, 1983). However, from an inexperienced user’s perspective, in early-stage entrepreneurs, a few of them help generate ideas. Geschka’s (ibid) creativity techniques framework exhibits eleven techniques perceived as most helpful, easy to use, and widely practiced among them all. Table 2 discusses these creativity techniques with a brief description.

*Table 2: Overview of Geshchka’s (1983) Eleven Creativity Techniques*

<b>Brainstorming</b>	Free flow of ideas by each member of the group in pursuit of solving an unstructured problem. Criticism is avoided and every kind of idea is welcomed which may be carried forward after some improvements.
<b>Brain writing</b>	It overcomes the reluctance to speak by allowing each member to write three ideas in a specific time frame on their worksheets and swap sheets until each sheet has all members idea written down.
<b>Speed-dating</b>	Team members sit in pair to share and discuss ideas. The discussion is recorded with diagrams, keywords, and sketches on a sheet. After a specific time, the pair is exchanged, and a new round begins. It is completed when each member has paired with all participants for idea generation.
<b>Stimulating word analysis</b>	Topic unrelated terms are prepared by, using random words from dictionary, terms with initials same as participants first name, etc. Term’s association of nearness, similarity or contract is developed with the problem statement for idea generation.
<b>Semantic intuition</b>	A group of participants develop ideas by combination of terms using concept driven pictorial representation of various objects/sounds in the surrounding.
<b>Provocation technique</b>	Suggesting irrelevant and absurd ideas by neglecting existing assumptions and relations to use the movement (associated principles) for radical solutions to a problem.
<b>Morphological tableau</b>	An analytical approach to idea generation by first defining individual parameters of the problem/task and then suggesting possible solution to each parameter. An optimum line

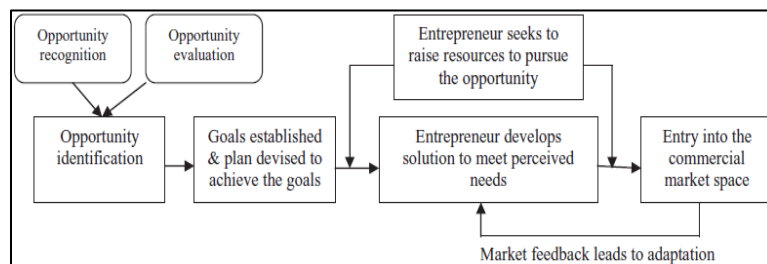
	(zigzag) results in combination of solutions.
<b>Programming</b>	The relevant information collected from interviews, lectures, workshops, etc. are recorded on info cards in form of a heading and picture, followed by short explanation. All participants have visibility of info cards to gather the elements and create a link between information to generate new ideas.
<b>Six thinking hats</b>	It allows for a structured parallel thinking that takes skepticism and emotions into consideration. Each of the six colored hats represent a certain personality. The final thoughts help in better decision making.
<b>TRIZ</b>	A Russian acronym for the “Theory of Inventive Problem Solving”, comprising of preconditioned principles and their standardized solutions. A specific problem (technical or physical contradict) is discovered in TRIZ general problems database and then its general solution is identified for adapting a specific solution.
<b>TILMAG</b>	After defining the problem, ISEs (Ideal Solution Elements) are found, and association matrix is made to pair elements. Elements of the problem are transferred to commonality matrix are the results are connected to generate ideas.

A study conducted by Wohler and Reinhardt (2021) indicates that Brainstorming is fun, discussion-stimulating, and goal-oriented, which helps non-experts generate initial ideas that are more novel whereas, TRIZ further develops and evaluates existing ideas and are more valuable. Furthermore, it also revealed that the Six Thinking Hats (Gocmen & Coskun, 2019) and Provocation technique produce abstract ideas, especially when users lack domain-related knowledge.

**b. Behavior of Entrepreneurs**

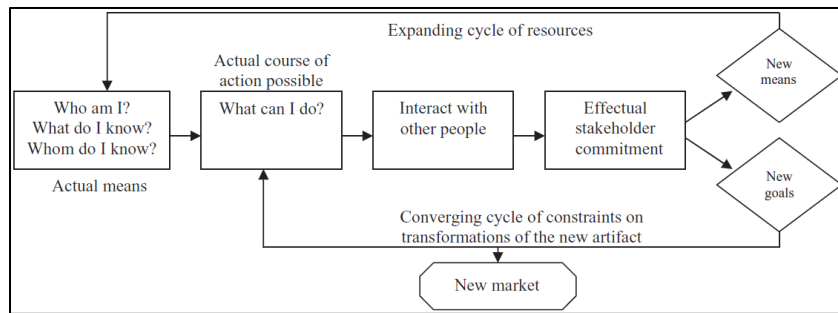
The process of initiating an entrepreneurial business has been analytically described from a variety of theoretical approaches. In contrast to the traditional (causation) entrepreneurial behaviour model, the emerging theoretical perspectives include effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001), entrepreneurial bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005), the creation perspective (Alvarez & Barney, 2007), and user entrepreneurship (Shah & Tripsas, 2007). Effectuation and entrepreneurial bricolage, discussed below, are widely cited emerging theoretical perspectives.

The traditional approach is called the “causal approach” by Sarasvathy (2001). An entrepreneur sets predetermined goals in a causation model and then selects the means required to achieve the goal (Sarasvathy, 2001). This model is linked to searching and exploiting existing markets by predicting future trends, resources supply-demand and expected returns. Figure 1 represents its process flow.



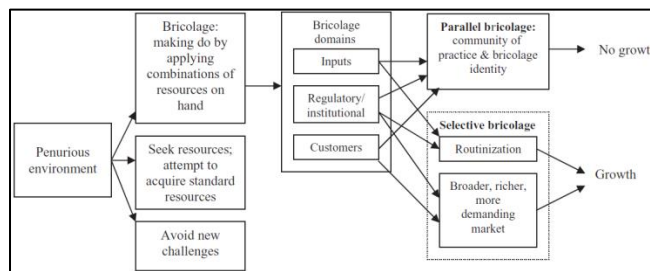
**Figure 1:** Classic Approach to Entrepreneurship by Shah & Tripsas (2017)

The highly unpredictable and dynamic entrepreneurial environment leaves very little room for sufficient data collection to identify and exploit an opportunity. Therefore, the effectuation theory by Sarasvathy (2001, 2008) proposes a model under such conditions. The effectuation model suggests that the decision logic of utilizing the set of available means (resources) drives an entrepreneur, where the goals are constructed and shaped over time, and contingencies are exploited rather than being avoided. Regarding investment, affordable loss is practiced, and relationship building with individuals and organizations are capitalized. Entrepreneurs engage in an ongoing process of exploration (March, 1991) that results in experimental and iterative learning (Ries, 2011) to re-evaluate the available options, and in the process, new markets with high levels of uncertainty are found. Figure 2 represents the process flow of effectual model.



**Figure 2:** Effectual Approach to Entrepreneurship by Sarasvathy & Dew (2005)

In innovation literature, bricolage explains how uncertain environments create robust designs (Ciborra, 1996; Garud & Karnoe, 2003). In the bricolage theory of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs use the resources at hand initially designed for a different purpose to create something for a problem solution or opportunity uncovering (Baker & Nelson, p. 33). These resources domain include physical inputs, labor inputs, skills inputs, customers/markets, and institutional & regulatory environment. Entrepreneurs overcoming limitations in particular fields create unique services that promote growth, while immense bricolage in multiple domains can result in a trap that locks the development. Table 3 represents the process of entrepreneurial bricolage.



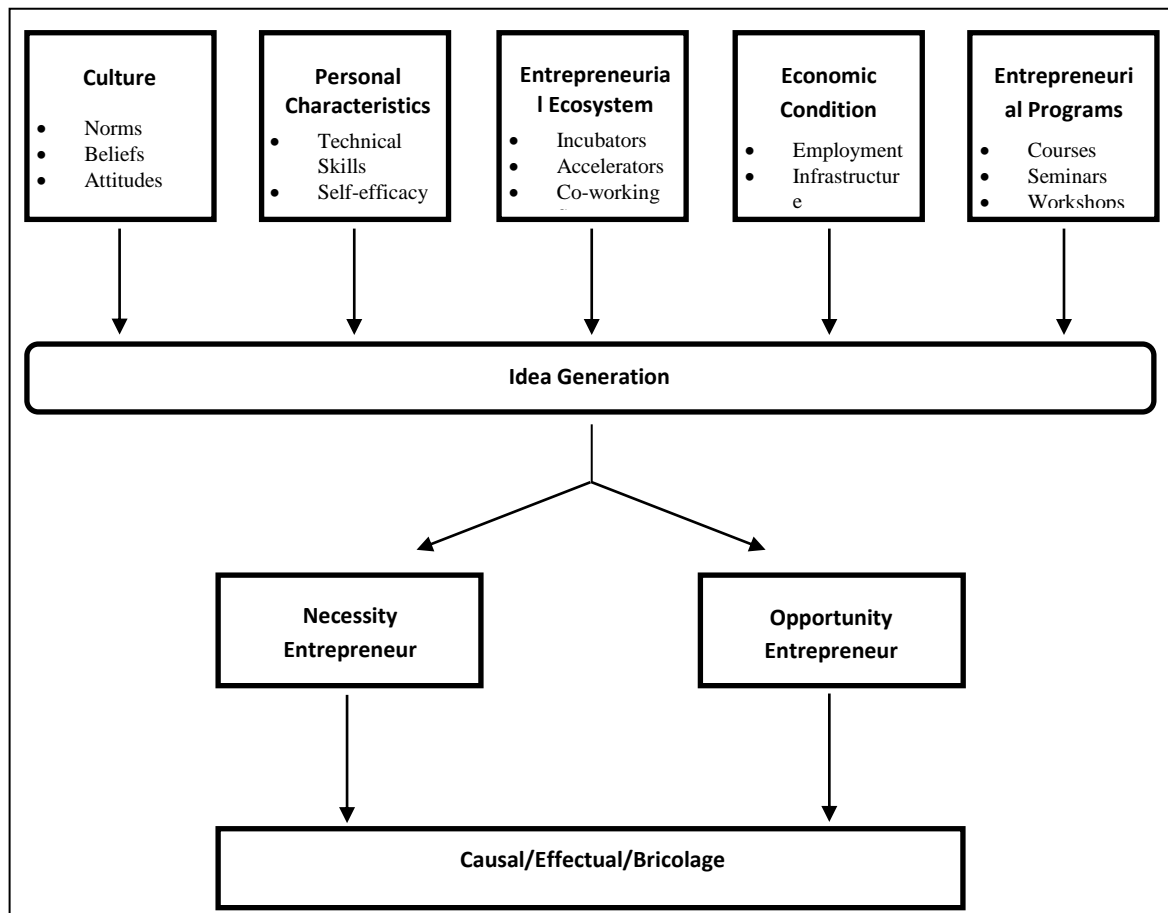
**Figure 3:** Bricolage Approach to Entrepreneurship by Baker & Nelson (2005)

Entrepreneurial behavior is “distinct units of individual activity that an audience acknowledges” (Bird & Schjoedt, p. 335). Resource constraints, action, creativity, and opportunity-oriented ventures point towards entrepreneurial bricolage and effectuation model. Research findings on web-based enterprises suggest that elements of computer code, which give the ease for programming to be created and modified without any

significant costs incurred, provides the logic of experimentation, affordable loss & flexibility in forming a venture (Fisher, 2012).

c. Conceptual Framework

Figure 4 represents a framework that summarizes the key elements responsible for bringing a new venture into existence.



**Figure 4:** Conceptual Framework: Transitioning from Mindset to Realization of a Business Venture

The triggering elements of entrepreneurship include Culture, Personal Characteristics, Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Economic Conditions, and Entrepreneurial Education Programs. These elements are employed individually or collectively with the primary aim of initiating the process of idea generation followed by inception of necessity or opportunity entrepreneur. An entrepreneur then establishes a venture by using one of the entrepreneurial approaches i.e., causal, effectual or bricolage entrepreneurship.



### 3. Research methodology

This study follows an exploratory design since it intends to reveal information and explore the phenomena of entrepreneurship in the context of online business. This study aims to improve our understanding of how to establish an internet business. As a result, we believe that a qualitative technique would be the most effective method to address responses to the study questions. Each of the three research questions is explained in detail below to help readers understand the question aims and the relevant responses sought.

*RQ1: How does an entrepreneur acquire the idea to start an online business?*

Every business venture started with an idea. As technology has evolved, there has been a strong emphasis on online businesses. In contrast to a traditional business, the research question will identify how an entrepreneur is prompted to develop an idea for his or her online business. This will aid in revalidating the triggering elements mentioned in our literature as well as identifying any additional elements.

*RQ2: How and why does aspiring entrepreneurs choose online entrepreneurship as a career pathway?*

Because of the prospects of online businesses, aspiring entrepreneurs are looking at this route. This research question highlights the main factor(s) that drives an entrepreneur to pursue online entrepreneurship.

*RQ3: How does an entrepreneur go about establishing an online business?*

Our examination of the literature reviewed revealed three major approaches that an entrepreneur takes to capitalize a business idea. The research question here investigates the approaches taken by an entrepreneur to transform a concept into an online business.

Robert K. Yin's (1994) case study method aids in comprehending complicated social phenomena by examining in-depth on a "case" to maintain a true perspective, as in our case understanding the triggering elements that drive an entrepreneur to establish an online business. Online businesses are a relatively recent phenomenon in the business world, having gained prominence only in recent years. As a result, it meets Yin (1994)'s criterion for case study technique, "Focus on contemporary phenomena". Case study method is most suited for "how" and "why" inquiries, which is why our research questions are structured in this manner.

Table 3 displays the multiple-case design followed in the study. The integrated multiple-case study design will be used. Multiple-case (or "relative") studies are frequently viewed as more persuasive and robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983). Each unit of analysis represent a case. All four of the cases are differentiated based on online product and service-based businesses, in the context of local and international market. We allocated two respondents to each case to maintain a balance.

The respondents are young entrepreneurs. With two respondents in each case, a total of eight entrepreneurs were interviewed, and each of these entrepreneurs created their own internet business for responses to be relevant. As the respondents in our study are very specific, therefore, purposive sampling was used for ensuring relevancy.

### 3.1 Research Design

An unstructured interview technique (also known as “in-depth interview”) was used to collect responses from young entrepreneurs involved in internet-based businesses. To conduct the interview, internet-based software (Skype) was used as our respondents includes both local and overseas residents, so the geographical dispersion limits us from face-to-face interview.

*Table 3: Embedded Multiple-Case Design*

Online Businesses	Product based	Service based	
Local	Unit of analysis	Unit of analysis	
		1	4
International		2	3
	Unit of analysis	Unit of analysis	

Invitation for interview was sent through email and in case of any unforeseen circumstances, interviewee was notified of the reschedule. While conducting the interview, we asked for respondent’s permission before recording. If a respondent felt uncomfortable with the recordings, we stopped recording and took notes in a notepad. Respondents identify was kept anonymous at their request by assigning a code to the respondents rather than using their real name or the real name of their business.

Being an unstructured interview, open-ended questions were asked to go in flow with interviewee’s response. To ensure that we do not miss out on any important information, we developed some themes using the theoretical framework. The proposed themes are as follows: “start-up idea sources”, “drivers of online entrepreneurship”, and “realization approaches”.

The three themes for interview are also in alignment to our research questions. After transcribing the interview responses, the reports were shared with each of the respected interviewee to ensure authenticity of our information.

The deductive approach helped us to analyse our responses. The information gathered during interviews was condensed to highlight the main points. The themes developed from our theoretical framework were used to categorize data into groups using the summary report. This helped identify the analytical

connections. Data from all entrepreneurs was juxtaposed to form the intra group analysis of each case study (see table 3). Cross-case analysis was used for comparison of different cases.

#### 4. Data Analysis

Interviews were taken using internet calls and notes were taken as most of the respondents were not comfortable with recording. The respondent also wished for anonymity. Assigning codes to the respondents does not affect our findings, therefore their views will be honored by using the codes schema below.

Respondent Codes:

- RPL-1                      Respondent, Product based, Local, respondent number
- RPI-1                      Respondent, Product based, International, respondent number
- RSL-1                      Respondent, Service based, Local, respondent number
- RSI-1                      Respondent, Service based, International, respondent number

Businesses owner of various types were interviewed to develop a broader perspective. Most of the respondents were entrepreneurs in early stages of their businesses, which helped in gathering clear and appropriate responses regarding our interview aim, i.e., why they started their business. Table 4 represents the outline of the interview, along with the respondent’s code.

**Table 4:** Research Respondents

#	Respondent	Business Category	Business Type	Origin	Interview Medium	Date, Time (PKT)	Duration
1	RPL-1	Hand Embroidery	Product	Pakistan	Online audio call	08/07/2021, 5:00 pm	27 mins
2	RPL-2	Leather Products	Product	Pakistan	Online audio call	19/07/2021, 3:35 pm	39 mins
3	RPI-1	Medical Painting	Product	Algeria	Online audio call	10/07/2021, 12:00 am	1 hr and 12 mins
4	RPI-2	Artisan Jewelry	Product	Turkey	Online audio call	16/07/2021, 9:40 pm	44 mins
5	RSL-1	Marketing Agency	Service	Pakistan	Online audio call	16/07/2021,	48 mins

12:45 am							
6	RSL-2	Amazon Services	Service	Pakistan	Online audio call	29/07/2021, 2:43 pm	22 mins
7	RSL-1	IT Services	Service	UK	Online audio call	26/07/2021, 10:17 pm	33 mins
8	RSL-2	Graphic Designing	Service	Pakistan	Online audio call	28/07/2021, 7:46 pm	41 mins

The research draws analysis using “Thematic Network” proposed by Attride-Stirling (2001). The notes from the interviews were condensed to highlight the main points and identify themes. The themes were then classified as “basic themes”, “organizing themes” and “global themes” (see table 5). The “Basic themes” were developed by combining theories and abstractions of the respondents into a single phenomenon.

Evidence of basic themes is reflected in the subsections. Section 4.1 will present the findings of the organizing theme, “Idea generation.” The second organizing theme, “Drivers of online entrepreneurship,” is described in section 4.2. Section 4.3 reports the last organizing theme, “realization approaches”. The global theme, “triggering elements of online entrepreneurship” will highlight the relationships between the three organizing themes.

*Table 5: From Basic to Organizing to Global Themes*

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Theme
1. Culture		
2. Personal Characteristics		
3. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem	Idea Generation	
4. Economic Condition		
5. Entrepreneurial Program		
6. Necessity Entrepreneurship	Drivers of Online	Triggering Elements of
7. Opportunity Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship	Online Entrepreneurship
8. Causal Entrepreneurship		
9. Effectual Entrepreneurship	Realization Approaches	
10. Bricolage Entrepreneurship		

#### 4.1 Idea Generation

An idea is produced in several ways. Sometimes an idea is attributed with a single occasion in time, while other times it is the result of a collaborative effort of many thoughts, events, and experiences. While interviewing we discovered several factors for idea creation and classified them as culture, personal characteristics, entrepreneurial ecosystem, economic condition, and entrepreneurial program. These classifications are our basic themes, which together form our organizing theme, idea generation. Apart from these common classifications of idea generation, which are also evident in literature, we uncovered certain distinguishing factors as well in a few respondent’s reports.

Table 6 shows the responses for basic themes which are attributed to idea generation for each respondent. This section goes through the facts and evidence for each basic theme in great depth. Verbatim quotes are also used to convey complex concepts in a straightforward manner.

*Table 6: Idea Generation Theme Responses*

Respondent	Culture	Personal Characteristics	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem	Economic Condition	Entrepreneurial Programs
RPL-1	Encouraging	Passionate, Self-learner	Not Availed	Weak	Acquired
RPL-2	Encouraging	Dedicated, Self-learner	Not Availed	Weak	Acquired
RPI-1	Discouraging	Experimenting, Self-Efficacy	Not Availed	Weak	Not Acquired
RPI-2	Encouraging	Passionate, Eager to learn	Not Availed	Weak	Not Acquired
RSL-1	Discouraging	Extrovert, Quick learner	Not Availed	Weak	Acquired
RSL-2	Encouraging	Risk taker, Resilient	Availed	Moderate	Acquired
RSI-1	Encouraging	Hard working, Optimistic	Availed	Weak	Acquired
RSI-2	Encouraging	Introvert, Online learner	Not Availed	Weak	Acquired

The beliefs and attitudes of an individual are influenced by family, friends, role models, education, and many others. Regarding culture, the interviews revealed that the parents were the most supportive ones in most of the cases:

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[RPL-2] "I had the complete support of my family, and they encouraged me despite the fact that the majority of my family members are in the medical field."

[RPI-2] "My grandma and uncle gifted me a glass furnace, the most expensive item of glassblowing equipment."

[RSL-2] "My family has always been supportive, due to the credibility that I had built over the years of working."

[RSI-1] "When the need arose, my brother and mother-in-law provided me with financial support for my internet business."

In most situations, respondents refrained from disclosing their business to their networks until it was considered a success. Several respondents concealed their business from friends and acquaintances for fear of being demotivated or even embarrassed if it failed:

[RPI-1] "Business is a risky profession and only a few succeed."

[RSI-1] "Always choose friends who encourage you."

[RSI-2] "I was disheartened when a friend of mine made fun of me for selling online. I learned a valuable lesson not to tell anyone about my graphic design business until I had my first online earnings."

It is worth noting that six out of the eight entrepreneurs had their business ideas influenced by friends or family members. In certain situations, the entrepreneurs' personal characteristics aided in developing ideas or further enhancing them based on an individual's personality traits. Some of these characteristics are highlighted Table 6. As a few of the respondents had no prior experience running a business, so they were uncertain of the market's response and lacked confidence.

[RPL-1] "I believed in myself but was unsure if it would work out."

[RPL-2] "When we were going to start this business, I was not sure if we would receive any orders. As no one opposed us, I felt it could be done."

One of the respondents correctly identified an entrepreneur's fear and emotional expressiveness in their early days:

[RSL-2] "Human psychology is based around pain and pleasure, so there is always an initial dread of conducting business, but as you progress, it fades, and you start loving it."

Five of the entrepreneurs transformed their passions into successful business ventures. RPL-1, for example, was enthusiastic about artistic works and ended up receiving online orders for customized hoops designs. RSL-1, on the other hand, liked dealing with people and had developed a big network before starting to offer digital marketing services to local businesses. Online business requires fast-paced learning as well as patience and persistence, as evident by the following statements:

[RSI-1] “I always go my own way and keep focused on my goals.”

[RPI-1] “I always considered myself a business-driven person, and instead of being frightened of the end, I made sure to enjoy the process.”

Each of the respondents' distinct personality qualities aided them in challenging themselves in the online competitive market and sustaining their companies. An entrepreneurial ecosystem also contributes to the development of a business idea, but in the case of our respondents, only two out of eight entrepreneurs were able to benefit from the services of incubators and co-working spaces. Because all the respondents were self-made entrepreneurs, they began their online businesses with minimal resources.

In Covid, traditional businesses declined while internet businesses prospered. This was viewed as an opportunity by six of the respondents. On the one hand, RPL-1, RPI-1, RSL-2, and RSI-1 had spare time to learn about and engage in internet businesses that they had been considering for quite some time. RPL-2 and RPI-2, on the other hand, received a torrent of online orders, boosting their confidence.

Although, seven of the entrepreneurs are from developing countries. They experience financial gateway challenges when routing international transactions, as evidenced by RSI-2's statement: “The lack of financial gateways such as PayPal in Pakistan has made money flow difficult, and as a result, I must pay additional fees.”

Six respondents said they have benefited from entrepreneurship programmes. RPL-1, RPL-2, and RSI-2 all have formal business qualifications that helped them in understanding the conditions under which an idea might be commercialized. RSI-1 and RSI-2 had attended a variety of business and entrepreneurial training/online courses to acquire the necessary skills. RSI-1 attended business courses as part of his earlier on-the-job training, which assisted him in customer relationship management while selling IT services online.

#### 4.2 Drivers of Online Entrepreneurship

There is an underlying motivation for an entrepreneur to act to execute his business idea. The respondents' interviews revealed two major motivating factors: necessity and opportunity-led entrepreneurship. The basic themes obtained for our organizing theme, drivers of online entrepreneurship, include both necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship. Table 7 shows the motivating factor for each respondent.

Three of the respondents stated that they pursued online businesses due to a lack of financial resources. It is evident from RPI-1's response “I want to have my medical residency overseas and had hoped to get a scholarship for it. Then I thought, why should I beg for money when I can make it and finance myself?” When commenting on the business venture, RSL-1 had a similar viewpoint, saying, “Only after someone has overcome their necessities is he/she in a position to consider working on something big.”

*Table 7: Drivers of Online Entrepreneurship Theme Responses*

Respondent	Necessity Entrepreneurship	Opportunity Entrepreneurship
RPL-1		✓
RPL-2	✓	
RPI-1	✓	
RPI-2		✓
RSL-1	✓	
RSL-2		✓
RSI-1		✓
RSI-2		✓

Five of the respondents cited the opportunity entrepreneurship as a reason to work on their business idea. Respondents saw the enormous potential of online businesses. This claim is supported by the following statements:

[RSL-2] "It gives financial independence quickly like none other, whereas jobs progress at a very sluggish pace."

[RSI-2] "It provides you location freedom and time flexibility, and I was looking for that sort of independence."

Aside from the future potential of an internet company, RPI-2 claims that she left her computer programming job because she was dissatisfied with her co-workers' overall conduct and had always desired to engage in creative art.

#### 4.3 Realization Approaches

Several theories have been developed to better comprehend the process of transforming a business idea into a reality. Entrepreneurs' responses identified three different processes: causal, effectual, and bricolage. The causal approach focused on accomplishing a certain objective by bringing in various resources required. The effectual approach focused on using the means and resources at hand to put ideas into action and evolve the business with the addition or subtraction of resources. The bricolage approach focused on attaining a specific objective by using the associated resources at hand.

*Table 8: Realization Approaches Theme Responses*

Respondent	Causal Entrepreneurship	Effectual Entrepreneurship	Bricolage Entrepreneurship
RPL-1			✓
RPL-2		✓	
RPI-1		✓	
RPI-2		✓	
RSL-1			✓
RSL-2	✓		
RSI-1		✓	
RSI-2		✓	



The causal, effectual, and bricolage entrepreneurship forms the basic themes for our third organizing theme, realization approaches. The strategies used by each respondent in implementing their business idea are depicted in Table 8.

[RSI-1] "In an online service-based business, your talents are your most valuable asset; financial resources come second."

[RSI-2] "You need time investment to locate clients/create followers, and talent investment, aside from these I barely placed a rupee into the business."

RSL-2 was the only one who used the causal approach. His ambition to explore e-commerce led him to create a partnership with one of his former students. He had saved the necessary funds and had also enrolled in boot camp and a co-working space. The strategy of effectual entrepreneurship was most frequently noticed. This strategy was used by five of the respondents. RPI-1, for example, claimed that it is dependent on the business model chosen, which specifies the resources required to start a business. Family and friends were the first means they were able to hold on. They used the abilities they already had and improved them by watching YouTube and taking a few MOOCs. Some of them had already ran family businesses, so they were familiar with traditional business practices. The bricolage approach was used by RPL-1 and RSL-1. Both respondents had been carrying out certain activities that they loved doing, and given the conditions, they quickly transformed the activities into an internet business.

#### 4.4 Triggering Elements of Online Entrepreneurship

The three organizing themes i.e., idea generation, drivers of online entrepreneurship, and realization approaches, combine to form the global theme. According to the interview analysis, all ten main themes have a role in triggering an entrepreneur to start an Internet business in some way. The circumstances determine which basic themes will serve as triggers of online entrepreneurship. Culture, personal characteristics, entrepreneurial ecosystem, economic condition, and entrepreneurial program will function as triggering elements throughout the concept stage. Necessity entrepreneurship and opportunity entrepreneurship will act as triggering elements throughout the planning stage. Causal, effectual, and bricolage entrepreneurship will function as triggering elements throughout the transformation stage. Figure 5 below shows the relationships between basic themes, organizing themes and global theme.

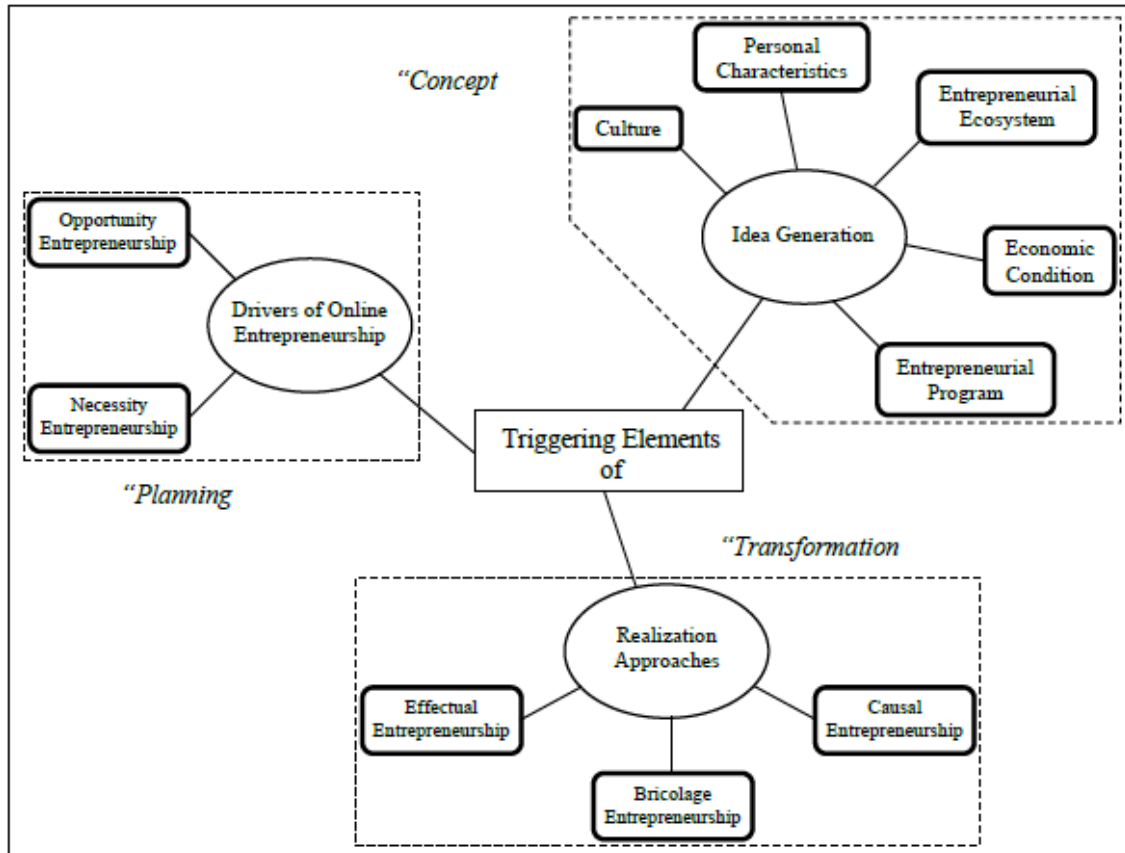
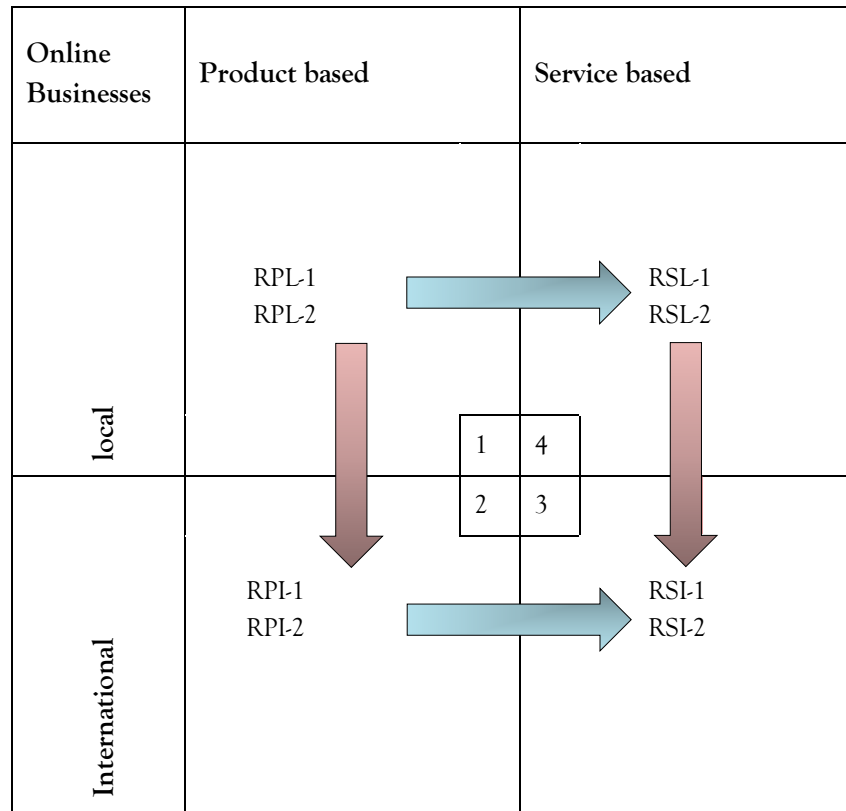


Figure 5: Structure of Thematic Network

#### 4.5 Cross-case Analysis

For our study, we utilized thematic analysis as a tool to perform cross-case analysis. As discussed previously in section 3.2, case study helps to understand a phenomenon in-depth. The cross-case analysis is divided into two; Product and service-based internet businesses similarities and differences and local and international contexts internet businesses similarities and differences. Comparison was drawn using the organizing themes, idea generation, drivers of online entrepreneurship and realization approaches. To help you understand, Table 9 below displays a red arrow for Case 1 & 2 Vs. Cases 4 & 3, whereas the blue arrow represents Case 1 & 4 Vs. Case 2 & 3.

*Table 9: Cross-Case Design*



Economic conditions for product-based online businesses were weak in both the local and international contexts, and both opportunity and necessity entrepreneurship were present. Product-based local businesses had received entrepreneurial training, but international businesses had not, and effectual entrepreneurship was prevalent.

Economic conditions for services were mostly weak in both the local and international contexts, and all had gained entrepreneurial education. The most common driver for online businesses found was opportunity entrepreneurship. Table 10 rearranged the data from organizing themes.

Personal characteristics differed from person to person and are far too complicated to compare in this situation. Culture was more encouraging in local product-based businesses and international service-based businesses. Local businesses used all three realization approaches, bricolage, effectual, and causal, but international businesses exclusively used the effectual entrepreneurship approach. The culture was always discouraging toward necessity entrepreneurs and encouraging for opportunity entrepreneurs.

Table 10: Cross-Case Analysis

	RPL-1	RPL-2		RSL-1	RSL-2
<b>Idea Generation:</b>					
Culture	Encouraging	Encouraging		Discouraging	Encouraging
Personal Characteristics					
Entrepreneurial Ecosystem	Not availed	Not availed		Not availed	Availed
Economic Condition	Weak	Weak		Weak	Weak
Entrepreneurial program	Acquired	Acquired		Acquired	Acquired
<b>Drivers of Online Entrepreneurship</b>	Opportunity	Necessity		Necessity	Opportunity
<b>Realization Approaches</b>	Bricolage	Effectual		Bricolage	Causal
	RPI-1	RPI-2		RSI-1	RSI-2
<b>Idea Generation:</b>					
Culture	Discouraging	Encouraging		Encouraging	Encouraging
Personal Characteristics					
Entrepreneurial Ecosystem	Not availed	Not availed		Availed	Not availed
Economic Condition	Weak	Weak		Moderate	Weak
Entrepreneurial Program	Not Acquired	Not Acquired		Acquired	Acquired
<b>Drivers of Online Entrepreneurship</b>	Necessity	Opportunity		Opportunity	Opportunity
<b>Realization Approaches</b>	Effectual	Effectual		Effectual	Effectual

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The thematic analysis revealed that friends and family members influenced an entrepreneur's business idea the most. Although most of the respondents' family was supportive, a few of the respondent's parents were against the idea of internet businesses. Respondents also kept their internet business a secret because they found their friends to be unsupportive and, in some cases, discouraging. These observations reveal two possible premises. Internet businesses, especially service-based ventures, have no tangible proof; in fact, all activities are carried out virtually. Some parents find it challenging to comprehend, and even consider it less professional and unreliable for the respondents to pursue. Second, friends who had inspired and helped the respondents in establishing an internet business were supportive, whereas friends who had no stake or contribution in the internet business discouraged the respondents.

Some of the respondents, who were self-made entrepreneurs, had no prior business experience and were apprehensive of the market response. They gained confidence in their abilities and skills after receiving an affirmative response. These examples suggest that young entrepreneurs may require external validation to develop their self-belief skills. Even though two of the respondents, both from poor nations, had no entrepreneurial education or exposure to an entrepreneurial environment, they were able to effectively launch their online firms. This implies that online businesses are skill-centred, and while entrepreneurial education and ecosystem may enhance online businesses, they are not deemed essential.

The Covid had a negative impact on the global economy, which is why entrepreneurs in both product and service-based businesses regarded it as a favourable time to start an online business. This underlines the fact that internet businesses are mostly driven by opportunity entrepreneurship. Unlike a traditional business, an internet business has a low initial cost of setup and variable operating expenditures that only increase as the business grows. Therefore, effectual entrepreneurship is most favourable and dominant in our findings.

According to the findings of the study, the triggering elements of online entrepreneurship are drawn from three stages of a business's inception: concept, planning, and transformation. At the concept stage, their business ideas were influenced by culture, personality traits, the entrepreneurial ecosystem, the economic situation, and entrepreneurship programs. The motives for entrepreneurship were uncovered at the planning stage by opportunity or necessity entrepreneurship. The process of transforming an idea into an action was highlighted during the transformation stage using causal, effectual or bricolage approach.

The study attempted to discover the elements that inspire an idea for online businesses, the motivators that drive online entrepreneurship, and the strategies that entrepreneurs take to bring a business concept to life. We discovered that family and friends are the most likely to inspire an entrepreneur to generate a concept for an online business. Personality characteristics may persuade an entrepreneur to turn a hobby into an online business. The entrepreneurial environment, albeit less visible in our study, aids in the refinement of a business idea and its viability. Economic conditions, as evidenced by Covid, have a significant impact on the formation of an online firm. Our research also found that opportunity entrepreneurship is more common among online entrepreneurs who desired time and geographical flexibility. When it comes to techniques for developing their internet businesses, effectual entrepreneurship is exercised the most.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, novice entrepreneurs should pursue effectual entrepreneurship for internet-based businesses since they may encounter a discouraging culture and their fear of failure may be mitigated to a greater extent by affordable loss. Furthermore, the lack of entrepreneurial education or entrepreneurial ecosystem infrastructure should not prevent young entrepreneurs from starting internet-based businesses. If they believe it is required, they can obtain entrepreneurial education through online courses (MOOCs).

Future research could address the cultural awareness of online earnings and internet businesses seeking funding from venture capitalists in an entrepreneurial ecosystem to amplify the implications of these results.

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