

Presenting a Paradigmatic Model for Empowering Entrepreneurial Skills with a Special Focus on People with Physical and Motor Disabilities

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to present a paradigmatic model for empowering entrepreneurial skills of people with physical and motor disabilities. The research method is fundamental in terms of its purpose, and qualitative in terms of its implementation method. The statistical population of the study is 14 academic experts, welfare experts, and disabled people with entrepreneurial capabilities in Kermanshah province. The samples were selected using purposive sampling. Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews. The data analysis and coding method and MAXQDA software were used to analyze the research data. The results of the study showed that the model designed with 21 indicators, including causal conditions (networking and innovation, financial and legal support, appropriate facilities and infrastructure, education and skills training), background conditions (economic changes, awareness and acceptance, government policies and laws, socio-economic), intervening conditions (environmental and natural factors, civil institutions, individual and psychological factors, social and cultural changes), the central category (empowering the entrepreneurial skills of people with physical and motor disabilities), strategies (assessment programs, designing for specific markets, developing soft skills, promoting cooperative models and creating specific platforms), and consequences (increasing economic independence, improving the quality of life, and economic developments) explained the factors affecting the empowerment of the entrepreneurial skills of people with physical and motor disabilities. The results of the study showed that empowering the entrepreneurial skills of people with disabilities can be carried out through targeted and comprehensive training programs, which leads to the promotion of technical and managerial skills, strengthening soft skills, and improving entrepreneurship in people with disabilities.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Employment is often considered one of the most central areas for creating social security and participation of people with disabilities in society. However, people with disabilities are often far from the labor market around the world (Norstedt & Germundsson, 2021). According to the International Labor Organization, people with disabilities constitute approximately 15 percent of the world's population, and approximately 80 percent of them are of working age. The lack of access of many people with disabilities to higher education or entrepreneurial opportunities has led to their exclusion from social, economic, and political activities (Hsieh et al., 2019). Furthermore, the first World Disability Report published by the World Bank and the World Health Organization indicates that people with disabilities face higher rates of poverty and fewer economic opportunities than people without disabilities (Mang'eni, 2021). Since people with disabilities often face challenges in entering the labor market, entrepreneurship is often seen as an opportunity for them to gain employment and income (Norstedt & Germundsson, 2021). Over the past two decades, entrepreneurship has received serious attention as a poverty alleviation approach to address the prevalence of unemployment and underemployment among people with disabilities. According to statistics, a higher percentage of people with disabilities are engaged in entrepreneurial activity compared to the general population. The reason for the tendency of people with disabilities to entrepreneurship and self-employment is the lack of alternative employment opportunities (Caldwell et al., 2016).

According to statistics from the General Welfare Department of Kermanshah Province, 46,000 disabled people live in Kermanshah Province, which is higher than the national average. Of these, 24,975 live in urban areas and the rest in rural areas. Of these, only a small number, 1,587 or 4 percent, are employed, while the rest, 2,350 or 6 percent, are disabled, 203 or 0.5 percent are retired, and the majority, 27,712 or 68.83 percent, are unemployed (Kermanshah Welfare Department, 2018). These statistics indicate that the unemployment rate of disabled people in Kermanshah Province is disproportionately high, and disabled people face greater challenges and obstacles to employment and entrepreneurship due to limited job and entrepreneurship opportunities and deprivations from financial and development resources and facilities. Therefore, despite the attention paid to the issue of entrepreneurial empowerment of the disabled at the global level and the conduct of some research in this field, studies in this field have been neglected at the domestic level, and except in a few cases, the issue of entrepreneurial empowerment of the disabled and the identification of its enabling factors have not been studied and investigated. Thus, the weakness of systematic and exploratory studies using a qualitative approach in this field is evident, and this indicates a major theoretical and research gap in this field. On the other hand, studies in the field of entrepreneurial empowerment of the disabled show that a comprehensive model that includes all the factors in this field has not been conducted so far, and conducting this research can reduce the theoretical gaps in this field and enrich the research literature in it. The present study was conducted with the aim of systematically examining and presenting and explaining a comprehensive paradigmatic model. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer the question: What are the main influential components, consequences, and strategies for empowering the entrepreneurial skills of people with disabilities? What is the paradigmatic model for empowering the entrepreneurial skills of people with disabilities?

Theoretical Framework

The World Health Organization defines disability as a complex phenomenon resulting from the interaction between individual characteristics and the social environment, and defines people with disabilities as people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Barba-Sánchez et al., 2024). Disability is both a cause and a consequence of poverty. People with disabilities are disadvantaged in terms of education and finding suitable employment, which results in poverty. The living conditions of poor people can also lead to some form of disability. People with disabilities may be of different types and have diverse abilities and interests; but they all experience a common problem, which is their economic deprivation due to disability. The adverse impact of disability on education and employment has been confirmed by various researchers, and encouraging entrepreneurship among people with disabilities has been suggested to achieve faster and better economic integration (Uddin & Jamil, 2020).

Vala et al., (2023), in examining the relationship between personal and environmental barriers and entrepreneurship among people with disabilities in Yazd province, concluded that personal and environmental barriers have a significant relationship with entrepreneurship among people with disabilities, and self-confidence plays a moderating role in the relationship between personal barriers and entrepreneurship among people with disabilities. According to Mang'eni (2021), the most important drivers of entrepreneurship growth among people with disabilities in Kenya are government support, entrepreneurship training, and social support; while lack of trust in government institutions, lack of infrastructure, and lack of financial support are the most important deterrents.

Barba-Sánchez et al., (2024), in their research, answered the question of how entrepreneurship creates life satisfaction among people with intellectual disabilities. They concluded that entrepreneurship of people with intellectual disabilities who have become entrepreneurs has a positive effect on their quality of life, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction.

Research Methodology

The present research is fundamental in terms of purpose and qualitative in terms of approach, and is exploratory and data-based. The research community consisted of academic experts, experts from the General Directorate of Welfare, and physically and motorically disabled entrepreneurs in Kermanshah province. To determine the research samples, a theoretical and purposive sampling method was used. The criterion for determining the sample size was the fulfillment of the theoretical saturation rule, which was achieved after 14 interviews. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were used to collect research data. Based on the data-driven method, the research analysis process was carried out simultaneously with data collection in three stages of open, axial and selective coding. In order to ensure the validity, validation, accuracy and robustness of the research data, Lincoln and Guba's four criteria were used (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To measure reliability, the test-retest reliability method was used.

Research findings

MAXQDA software was used to analyze the data through coding. The results of the research showed that the designed model with 21 indicators including causal conditions (networking and innovation, financial and legal support, appropriate facilities and infrastructure, education and skills training), background conditions (economic changes, awareness and acceptance, government policies and laws, socio-economic), intervening conditions (environmental and natural factors, civil institutions, individual and psychological factors, social and cultural

changes), the central category (empowering the entrepreneurial skills of people with physical and motor disabilities), strategies (assessment programs, designing for specific markets, developing soft skills, promoting cooperative models and creating specific platforms), and consequences (increasing economic independence, improving the quality of life and economic developments) explained the factors affecting the empowerment of the entrepreneurial skills of people with physical and motor disabilities.

Conclusion

The main goal of this study was to conceptualize, design, and explain a paradigmatic model for empowering entrepreneurial skills with a special focus on people with physical and motor disabilities, using a qualitative research method and a data-based approach. The results of the study showed that the model designed with 21 indicators, including causal conditions (networking and innovation, financial and legal support, appropriate facilities and infrastructure, education and skills training), background conditions (economic changes, awareness and acceptance, government policies and laws, socio-economic), intervening conditions (environmental and natural factors, civil institutions, individual and psychological factors, social and cultural changes), the central category (empowering the entrepreneurial skills of people with physical and motor disabilities), strategies (assessment programs, designing for specific markets, developing soft skills, promoting cooperative models and creating specific platforms), and consequences (increasing economic independence, improving the quality of life, and economic developments) explained the factors affecting the empowerment of the entrepreneurial skills of people with physical and motor disabilities. The results of this study are consistent with the evidence in the studies of Vafaei et al., (2021), Nakhaee et al., (2023), Vala et al., (2023), Talaie et al., (2023), Salamzadeh et al., (2020), Mang'eni (2021), Amwe & Dala (2023), and Barba-Sánchez et al., (2024).

Based on the research findings, practical suggestions are presented as follows. In order to apply and implement strategies to empower the entrepreneurial skills of the disabled, it is suggested that managers of responsible organizations such as the Welfare Department and the Relief Committee pay attention to the paradigmatic model extracted from the research and its components, especially the causal factors, contextual factors, and identified strategies. The results of this research can be a basis for managers and policymakers to plan to improve the entrepreneurial capabilities and skills of the disabled. Also, creating an online networking platform specifically for disabled entrepreneurs that includes discussion forums, online meetings, and training courses in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship can be productive in this regard. It is also suggested that a joint investment fund be launched in cooperation with the government and the private sector that specifically provides low-interest loans with long-term repayment to disabled entrepreneurs.