

From Enterprise Intention to Enterprise Creation: An Experimental Study with special reference to People with Disabilities

By

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Abstract

In the last few decades, there has been an acceleration in the research exploring the phenomenon of entrepreneurship. Researchers explored entrepreneurship among various segments and tried to understand the heterogeneity at various levels. Recently, scholars have identified people with disabilities (PwD) as one such segment and have discussed the socio-economic challenges of PwD that push them towards entrepreneurship. However, the research in the area is at a nascent stage. Current literature has been broadly silent about their journey of enterprise creation. With the help of longitudinal design, our study tries to unfurl the journey of people with disability from entrepreneurial intention to enterprise creation. The study explores the impact of experiential-based capacity-building programmes on entrepreneurial behaviour through pre-test and post-test analysis. We further investigate the impact of mentoring and handholding on enterprise creation. Meanwhile, we capture the reason for entrepreneurial action failure among people through narrative analysis.

Keywords: People with disabilities, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial behaviour, enterprise creation

Introduction

We as humans are prevalent throughout this globe with a cumulative count of eight billion (United Nations, 2022), which is growing with every passing year. Throughout these centuries, human civilisation has evolved and cultured various divides and hierarchies among the human race. Not only divided, but we created hierarchies within each segment through complex stratification; ethnic minority, social class, rural/ tribal/ backward population, gender, queer, and people with disabilities. This study zooms into a particular stratum, the people with disabilities and describes their journey from entrepreneurial intention to enterprise creation while exploring the entrepreneurial behaviour and actions among them.

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As of now, there are approximately one billion people with disabilities, i.e., 15 percent of the world's population ([World Health Organisation 2011](#)). Out of which, a big chunk lies in the working age group. It took centuries to consider and include the people with disabilities in a population. People came a long way to have equal rights, facilities, support, and opportunities. After 1980s, the criteria of inclusion widened from social to economic inclusion. Nations revised the policies and included provisions for employability among people with disabilities ([U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1974](#)). People with disabilities were not considered suitable for the employment. Such incidents led to the formation of new policies like Disability Discrimination Act in Australia and Europe. Countries also focused on vocational rehabilitation and employment services for people with disabilities that provided training, counselling, and search assistance for job that could develop capabilities among people with disabilities to compete and facilitate inclusion in labour market.

However, as per various studies and international reports, there is high unemployment rate among people with disabilities ([Norstedt & Germundsson, 2021](#); [Bialik & Mhiri, 2022](#); [Shaw et al., 2022](#); [Yusupov & Abdukhilov, 2022](#); [Ernest Nkansah-Dwamena, 2022](#)). The working age people with disabilities experience much higher unemployment when compared to the working age group of non-disabled people. United Nations CRPD Committee has shown various concerns regarding implementation of policies. As per the committee reports and feedbacks, many national policies regarding anti-discrimination, equality, education, and work and employment are not being implemented properly ([United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Australia, 2019](#); [United Nations Committee on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, India, 2019](#)).

Most of the policies focus on increasing the employability among people with disabilities. However, employability among people with disabilities has not been very supportive throughout these years that became a push factor for entrepreneurship among people with disabilities. Many push factors are discussed by various researchers that encourage people with disabilities to start their own enterprise ([Hofstede et al., 1999](#); [Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2017](#); [Saxena & Pandya, 2018](#)). [Norstedt & Germundsson \(2021\)](#) discusses various factors that motivate people with disabilities to start their own business: economic motives, flexibility and self-determination, avoidance of discrimination, and personal development and contribution of something. We are not unfamiliar with the fact that many people intend to start the enterprise, but very few are able to actually create one. Few researchers tried to understand the challenges faced by people with disabilities in creating their enterprise. However, the literature is not sufficient to understand the exact problem and what interventions are required to support people with disabilities who intend to start an enterprise ([Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2017](#); [Norstedt & Germundsson, 2021](#); [Palma & Molina, 2019](#)).

For that, we need to understand the process right from the thought to start one till its creation. Few scholars have discussed the process of enterprise creation among people. However, no such research exists for people with disabilities. For understanding of this phenomenon, this research experiments the role of capacity building and mentoring & handholding in the journey of enterprise creation among people with disabilities. As longitudinal research, it further tries to understand the reason behind entrepreneurial action failure while on the journey of enterprise creation. The research endeavour revolves around three major questions.

RQ1: Does intervention of capacity building impact enterprise creation among people with disabilities having entrepreneurial intention?

RQ2: Does intervention of mentoring and handholding after capacity building impact entrepreneurial actions, leading to a higher rate of enterprise creation?

RQ3: Why people with disabilities cannot succeed in completing entrepreneurial action, and what challenges did they face in the process of enterprise creation?

Review of Literature and Development of Hypotheses

The enquiry of this research concentrates on the phenomenon of enterprise creation among people with disabilities, taking into account a comprehensive picture of conception, gestation, and birth of an enterprise. To understand this phenomenon extensively, we must start from the roots, i.e., beyond conception. We need to enquire about things from the point when they were at the cognitive level, and for this, we need to understand the cognitive phenomenon behind entrepreneurial thinking that leads to actions for creating an enterprise. This calls for an enquiry about intention-behaviour and how that lead people with disabilities towards enterprise creation.

In the entrepreneurship literature, studies focusing on intent are rooted in the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Shapero Entrepreneurship Event (O’Gorman, 2019). However, the majority of them have used the theory of planned behaviour, especially studies focusing on entrepreneurship intent (O’Gorman, 2019). Shapero Entrepreneurship Event comes from the domain of entrepreneurship research, and the theory of planned behaviour has its roots in social psychology. Both the models are statistically fit and apt in predicting the behaviour; however, Ajzen’s theory of planned behaviour (1985, 1991) is comparatively well tested and validated (Krueger et al., 2000).

We can apply theory of reasoned action whenever dealing with behaviour which is purely volitional. However, when behaviour does not have a perfect subjective probability and actual control, we have to consider the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). In our case, the predicted outcome is the enterprise creation, which is highly imperfect in subjective probability and volitional control. Therefore, theory of planned behaviour is better suited for the research enquiry. The process of enterprise creation starts with intention to start an enterprise and recognition of the opportunity. As a whole, enterprise creation is a social-psychological process (Shaver, 2003). In this case, theory of planned behaviour (a social psychology theory) is best suited for our enquiry.

Enterprise Creation

Enterprise creation is process that involves events before it becomes an organisation. These events leads the process of starting an enterprise (Carter et al., 1996). Scholars have used various other terms in literature like, organisational emergence (Gartner, Bird, and Starr 1992), pre-organisation (Katz and Gartner 1988; Hansen 1990), the organisation in vitro (Hansen and

Wortman 1989), pre-launch (McMullan and Long 1990), gestation (Reynolds and Miller 1992; Whetten 1987), and start-up (Van de Ven, Angle, and Poole 1989; Vesper 1990).

The process includes three stages; conception, gestation, and birth. Conception can be the point when an individual (or a team) start giving a serious thought towards starting a new enterprise. It can also be defined as the point of time when first action is taken by an individual towards starting a new enterprise. Conception is basically the start of gestation period. Gestation is the period prior to birth in which individual perform actions to establish the enterprise. The end of gestation period is termed as enterprise/ organisational birth (Cardon et al., 2005; Reynolds & Curtin, 2008; Schoonhoven et al., 2009).

Entrepreneurial Behaviour

According to King (2020), behaviour is everything that we do and can be directly observed. In social psychology, the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1985, 1991) has conceptualised the behaviour. The theory proposed framework for understanding, predicting, changing the human behaviour. Ajzen has also discussed about prediction failure of actual behaviour in case of verbal attitudes. According to him human actions are better predictors of actual behaviour. Hence, actions of individuals should be considered to predict actual behaviour rather than observable verbal attitude or individual's perception.

An enterprise is created with the actions of entrepreneur. According to (Bird et al., 2012) no enterprise can come into existence without entrepreneurs taking action. These actions/ activities are accumulatively the entrepreneurial behaviour (McMullen, 2015; McMullen & Shepherd, 2006). Therefore, research on enterprise creation or new venture creation has major emphasis on entrepreneurial behaviour (Gardner et al., 2010; Shaver, 2005; Gartner et al., 2004).

H1: Enterprise creation is an outcome of entrepreneurial behaviour.

Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intention has been considered an important variable in the research of enterprise creation. As mentioned earlier, the concept of enterprise creation is understood through entrepreneurial actions. Entrepreneurial intention precedes entrepreneurial actions and is a good predictor of these actions (N. F. Krueger & Carsrud, 1993; N. F. Krueger et al., 2000; N. F. Krueger, 2007; Thompson, 2009; O'Gorman, 2019). The research on enterprise creation has emphasised on entrepreneurial behaviour, which is understood through the entrepreneurial actions of individual. Behind every entrepreneurial action lies the entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, the intentionality of would-be entrepreneurs has been highly stressed upon and is considered an important variable in understanding the process of enterprise creation.

H2. Entrepreneurial intention is the predictor of entrepreneurial behaviour.

Capacity Building

Capacity building is the process through which individuals, teams, or organisations can build the capacity to take actions. It is not just the knowledge to do something but the capacity to use the new knowledge into task performance or action. It links the knowledge and skills with action through capability development (Morrison, 2001). Over the years, the literature of entrepreneurship has tried to understand how an individual can learn to see opportunities and develop entrepreneurial skills that would help them in performing entrepreneurial actions more effectively. In line with this enquiry researchers like Nicole Peterson have found that entrepreneurship training programmes can influence the entrepreneurial intention and the process of enterprise creation (Krueger, 2003; Sánchez, 2011; Fayolle & Liñán, 2014; Nabi et al., 2017).

H3. Capacity building positively impacts the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behaviour.

Mentoring and Handholding

Mentoring and handholding is completely different from capacity building, which is mostly focused on skill and knowledge building. Mentoring is the support and assistance given by experts (or entrepreneurship professionals) to the nascent entrepreneurs through their insights and learnings from previous experience (Sullivan, 2000; St-Jean and Mitrano-Meda 2018). Handholding is slightly different than mentoring. It is the step-by-step guidance and support provided to the nascent entrepreneurs in the process of enterprise creation.

Researchers have claimed that experience is the main source of learning of entrepreneurs (Choueke & Armstrong, 1998). This is one of the reasons why we use experiential model of learning in entrepreneurship capacity building training. Experience is something novice entrepreneurs lack. Through mentoring entrepreneurs get a chance to get alligned with the experience that they get from the experts (or mentors) which highly impacts their entrepreneurial actions, especially novice entrepreneurs (Berger & Soubaya, 2019). That is the reason why mentoring and handholding is crucial.

H4. Mentoring and handholding positively impacts the relationship between entrepreneurial behaviour and enterprise creation.

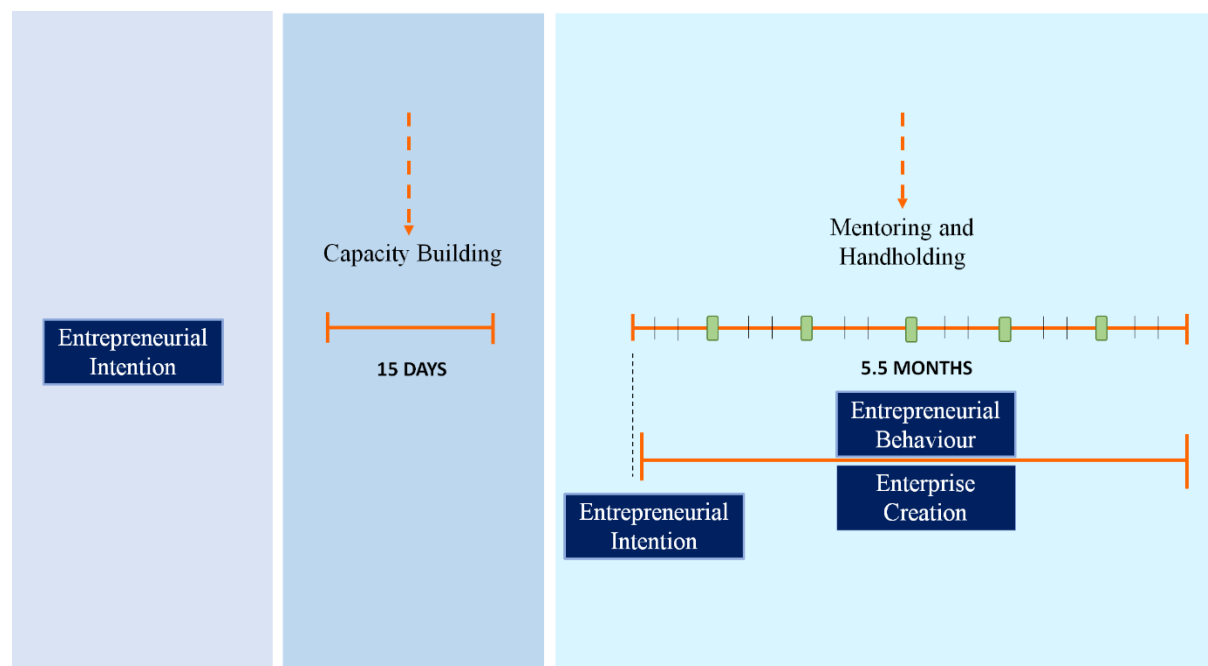
Research Methodology

The research will investigate the process of enterprise creation as a social psychological phenomenon among person with disability at individual level. The process consists of entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behaviour leading towards enterprise creation. This research tries to eliminate the drawback of cross-sectional studies and tries to understand the whole process right from intention till enterprise creation. This drives our work towards longitudinal research.

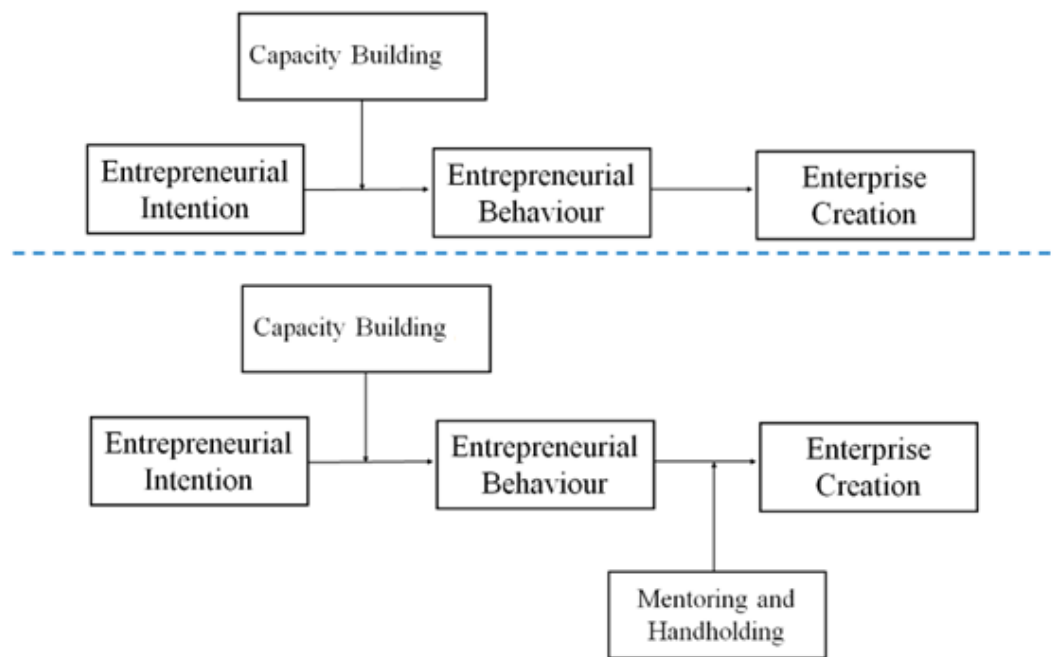
Moving further towards the method of research, our research enquires the influence of capacity building and mentoring & handholding while going through the process of enterprise creation. It understands the variation in process through the presence (or absence) of mentoring and handholding in the process. The enquiry points towards multiple group pretest-posttest analysis, making experimental design suitable for this research.

The research also tries to understand why some individuals stop trying (or fail) to create an enterprise. Research like Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics (PSED) have done extensive work on enterprise creation. They have also distributed the results into individuals who were successful in creating enterprise, individuals who gave up in the middle of the process, and those who were still trying to create an enterprise. According to (Carter et al., 1996), individuals who were still trying after (in process even after eighteen months) to create an enterprise had been involved in lesser entrepreneurial activities. They concluded that these individuals were not putting enough efforts. However, involving in lesser activities/ actions does not conclude that they were not putting enough efforts. There could be many other reasons behind fewer activities. Through our research we would fill this gap by understanding the issues faced by individuals while doing an entrepreneurial action, whether they were able to complete that action or not. For this we would use the qualitative technique, i.e., the narrative analysis. Overall, this would be a mixed methodology research (quantitative-qualitative research).

Design of Experiment



Source: Author's Framework



Source: *Author's Framework*

Participants

The study started in January 2023 and intend to complete by October 2023. The experiment will be conducted among two groups at four different locations (capacity building centres). The locations were chosen where the training programmes of the partner organisation were scheduled. The partner organisation mobilises in the selected sub-districts and make people aware about the upcoming capacity building programme for the people with disabilities. The interested individuals fill their forms for the programme. The specialised person in the partner organisation interviews the individuals and select people who have intention to create an enterprise.

The capacity building programme is for twelve days and the participants are ought to attend the training for minimum ten days, otherwise they will not be provided the certificate and will be dropped as sample. Till now the experiment is conducted on one group. The location of study was Vijapur in Mehsana district of Gujarat, India. Thirty-two people were selected for the capacity building training programme. Few people dropped out from the training and people with mental disability were dropped. There were twenty final candidates who attended the training.

Measures

Entrepreneurial intention

The entrepreneurial intention was measured with the help of Likert scale (Linan and Chen, 2009). Measurements were taken before the treatment and after treatment. After treatment we have a stretch of six months in which data will be collected at various intervals. After treatment,

intention was measured only once after fifteen days of the capacity building training completion.

Entrepreneurial Behaviour

Entrepreneurial behaviour will be measured through entrepreneurial actions. The list of entrepreneurial actions from PSED II study will be used. The accumulation of actions over the time period will define the entrepreneurial behaviour of an individual. It will be measured after treatment. After treatment, behaviour will be measured multiple times at the stretch of five and a half months.

Enterprise Creation

Enterprise creation will be measured with the help of entrepreneurial actions. It will be measured after the treatment at the stretch of five and a half months.

Capacity Building

Capacity building programme training will be provided to the two different treatment groups. The programme is designed by the specialised professors of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India.

Mentoring and handholding

Mentoring and handholding will act as an intervention at the time individuals are engaged in their entrepreneurial actions. It will be provided to one treatment group after the capacity building programme for the stretch of five and a half months. Candidates can research out the author and share their concern. The author will provide the required mentoring and handholding. If the issue requires some expert opinion, it will be provided by the domain experts at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India. Post training, a group will be created and regular online interactions will be done through which mentoring and handholding can be provided to the people.

Data Collection

The data was collected through survey with the help of questionnaires. The pre-test variable, i.e., entrepreneurial intention was collected in-person (or face-to-face) at the capacity building training centres. Post-test the data will be collected telephonically. There will be multiple follow-ups in the post-test stage. The post-test measurements will include two different instruments. One instrument will collect data for entrepreneurial behaviour and enterprise creation. Another instrument will collect the qualitative data to understand the problems faced by individuals while performing entrepreneurial actions.

Results and Analysis

Till now, the post-training intention is measured. An increase in the entrepreneurial intention has been observed. Pre-training the entrepreneurial intention of participants was 4.81 which

later increased to 6.12 post-training. There has been post-training change in entrepreneurial behaviour of participants. Few people have taken action towards enterprise creation. The entrepreneurial behaviour is still under measurement.

Contribution

The research will contribute to the literature of people with disability, education/ training/ rehabilitation studies among people with disabilities, enterprise creation. This research would be one pioneer work in entrepreneurship among people with disability. Being a longitudinal experimental study, the research will be a methodological contribution, especially in the field of entrepreneurship. Studies on entrepreneurship lack the experimental social psychological research (Shaver, 2003). This study would contribute to fill that gap by performing a social psychological experiment to understand the enterprise creation process among people with disabilities. Most of the research in venture creation have sample selection bias, as mostly those samples are taken who have successfully created a venture. However, the inferences from these studies would not be suitable for all who want to start the venture. The study will provide the insights about the practical aspects of venture creation process, especially among the people with disabilities. This would help the entrepreneurial institutes provide capacity building programmes to people with disabilities. They will be able to impart better training to people with disabilities, which would surely impact the rate of enterprise creation among people with disabilities.

The research will be a significant contribution to policy advocacy. Even in the past, research on empowering people with disabilities has provided significant input to international/ national governments and organisations. Through this, governments can frame more robust entrepreneurial policies for people with disabilities. Results from the qualitative analysis will provide a deeper understanding of issues faced at the time of particular entrepreneurial action, governments will get a clearer understanding of what type of intervention or policy design can solve such issues. At large, it will help the governments to create a favourable entrepreneurial ecosystem for people with disabilities.

Limitations

We would understand the process of enterprise creation and there could be individuals successful in establishing one. However, this research would not be able to discuss about how successful or profitable that enterprise would be in future.

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