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Role of Vocational Training in Enhancing Entrepreneurial Skill Development among Children with Intellectual Disabilities: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Access to appropriate vocational and entrepreneurial skills to secure sustainable jobs and enable independent living for children with intellectual disabilities is often challenging. Schooling-based education systems have been traditionally focused on academic performance with a minimal focus on developing the needed skills, limiting their economic contribution and social integration. Vocational training has proven to be an effective approach to imparting these children with occupational competencies, as well as with communication skills, abilities in transforming a problem into a solution, financial knowledge and self-confidence which are all important elements of entrepreneurship. The study is empirical research that involves a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of vocational training for the children with intellectual disability in special schools, inclusive education institutions and rehabilitation centres of the selected countries of the study. Structured questionnaires, interviews, and observations in a mixed-method research approach is used to collect the data from children, vocational instructors, teachers, and parents. This study evaluates important entrepreneurial skills like creativity, decision-making, team work, leadership, financial awareness and self-reliance and aims to discover the institutional, social and policy challenges that affect the training. The data analysis used is statistical analysis, which is used to analyse the relationship between vocational training and entrepreneurial skill development. The outcomes are anticipated to provide strong evidence that children with intellectual disabilities have improved enterprise capabilities, self-sufficiency and employability as a result of the successful development and application of vocational education. The study concludes with recommendations for policy support, available entrepreneurial education curricula, industry partnerships, capacity building of teachers and various other recommendations that include the role of the family in increasing the socioeconomic inclusion and quality of life for children with intellectual disabilities.

Keywords: Intellectual Disabilities; Vocational Training; Entrepreneurial Skills; Inclusive Education; Self-employment.

1. Introduction

Children with intellectual disabilities (CID) make up a huge part of society who need specific educational support and skill building to be self-sufficient and socially and economically useful. In intellectual disability, there is impairment in intellectual function and adaptive functioning that impacts conceptual, social, and practical skills necessary for daily living. Inclusive education has achieved some level of awareness throughout the world, but children with intellectual disability are still facing hindrances to access good education, to vocational training and to employment. Schools and other educational establishments tend to focus on the 'book learning' component of education, failing to equip many children with the ability to carry out practical

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skills for the adult world and employment. For this reason, it is essential to move towards a functional learning, vocational competence and entrepreneurial development educational approach. Vocational training has become an important element of special and inclusive education, as it allows children with intellectual disabilities to acquire useful knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for the world of work and to become self-sufficient.

The process of vocational education not only helps to prepare students for wage employment but also encourages entrepreneurial considerations and equips them with other skills like communication, creativity, problem solving, decision making, financial literacy, team work, time management and self-confidence. These gained skills can help children learn about self-employment, to join in with micro-enterprises, and to be, as productive citizens, members of their families and communities. Skill development is significant in developing countries where the formal employment prospects for persons with disabilities are not as well established as in developed countries.

2. Literature Review

Existing literature has focused on the importance of the functional, social and economic competence of children with intellectual disabilities as the result of vocational training. The earlier studies are mainly concerned with training and developing daily living skills and better employability packages through vocational training education and more recent studies emphasize on entrepreneurship as a path to promote self-reliance and social inclusion. There is evidence that structured vocational programmes have a significant impact on the problem-solving ability, self-confidence, working habits and communication skills of children with intellectual disability, in addition to their independent decision making.

The skills offered enable them to be better prepared for the workforce and also to engage in self-employment and in small-scale entrepreneurial ventures. The international dimension of inclusive vocational education has been firmly supported by organisations such as UNESCO, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a means to improve the economic participation and minimize social exclusion of people with disabilities. There are some empirical studies that suggest that the combination of entrepreneurship education and vocational training has shown to have a positive influence on learners with intellectual disabilities regarding financial literacy, leading, team working and creativity through innovation. Ability of teachers and teachers' staff, the support of the family, resources of schools and involvement of local communities have been found as important factors contributing to successful vocational outcomes.

3. Conceptual Framework

According to this study, the conceptual approach relies on the premise that vocational training is the main strategy to build entrepreneurial skills of an intellectually disabled child. Vocational training offers a planned learning experience where the emphasis is on occupational knowledge, work attitudes, independent living, problem solving and communication. These capabilities contribute to entrepreneurial growth, and help kids see new opportunities, act on meaningful work, allocate resources and decide in problems.

Entrepreneurial skills are progressively apprenticed in the workplace, practicing through simulation, and supervised practical activities, including, creativity, self-confidence, leadership, team working, financial awareness, time management and decision-making skills. The efficacy of vocational training is also assumed to be affected by key issues such as the quality of training programmes, availability of qualified trainers, institutional infrastructure, parental participation, assistive technology, supportive government policy, etc.

Vocational training is used as the independent variable and Entrepreneurial skill development is used as the dependent variable. Skills of the entrepreneur include communication, creativity, initiative, financial knowledge, flexibility, problem solving, independence. Demographic and environment variables such as age, gender, socio-economic status, family support, and institutional resources are considered as moderating variables which can be either beneficial or detrimental to the learning outcomes.

4. Research Objectives

The overall aim of this study is to explore the current programmes of vocational training aims of children with intellectual disability, and to assess the effectiveness of these programmes in building up their practical, occupation and entrepreneurial skills. The study aims to explore the nature, structure and curriculum of vocational education in special schools, inclusive educational institutions, rehabilitation centres and skill development programs, and analyse how vocational curriculum is implemented in these settings. It also seeks to know whether these schemes are meeting the learning needs for children with intellectual disabilities and whether they are creating learning opportunities for them to enter into employment or undergo self-employment.

Yet another objective is to determine the extent children who have completed vocational training programmes have achieved in entrepreneurship skills. The study assesses key entrepreneurial skills like communication, creativity, problem-solving, decision-making, financial management, teamwork, leadership, self-confidence, being adaptable and working independently. The study aims to assess how vocational education helps children with intellectual disability to become ready entrepreneurs and how it can impact on their ability to engage positively in their income-generating activities by measuring these competencies. The research is also designed to investigate the significant factors affecting the skill building as entrepreneurs of children with intellectual disabilities. These include the quality of vocational training opportunities available, the presence of trained trainers, infrastructure in the institutions, family support, use of assistive technology, community involvement, socioeconomic conditions and support of the government.

5. Research Questions

The research is presented under the guidance of a set of research questions, which aim to explore the link between and skills for entrepreneurship among intellectual handicapped children in the field of vocational training development. The first question seeks to determine if children who participate in vocational training programmes are better educated in entrepreneurship than those who receive limited or none. This question is the focus of the empirical investigation and basis for programme effectiveness evaluation.

The second question addresses which entrepreneurial skills/variations of skills have the greatest improvement after the vocational training. Specifically, the study looks at questions of whether structured vocational education is a superior pathway to the evolution of skills like communication, creativity, leadership, being part of a team, financial literacy, problem solving, decision making, self-confidence, and independent functioning among the young.

Placing priority on the recognition of these competencies will support prioritization of areas where vocational training will have the greatest impact. The study also aims to pinpoint some of the principal challenges to successful implementation of vocational training programmes. Such obstacles can involve low-quality vocational education programs, not enough qualified vocational teachers, lack of funds, insufficient assistive technology, poor job opportunities, social stigma, and poor relations between vocational education

institutions and industries. To develop more effective and inclusive Vocational Education policies is crucial to understanding these challenges.

6. Research Hypotheses

This study assumed occupation training has a great impact in improving entrepreneurial skill development for intellectual disability children. The first hypothesis H1 states that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between participation in vocational training programmes and development of entrepreneurial competencies. The first hypothesis (H1) suggests that the entrepreneurial competencies increase with the participation in vocational training programmes in a significant positive way. Children who attend Registered Apprenticeship should be more likely to exhibit the following skills than children who receive less experiences with vocational training: Communication, creativity, problem solving, financial literacy, decision making, collaboration within a team, self-confidence, independent work habits. The null hypothesis (H0) is: There exists no significant difference between the vocational training and entrepreneurial skill development of a child with intellectual disability.

Additionally, this study proposes that the duration, quality and content of occupational training have a significant effect on the acquired entrepreneurial abilities of children. It is also suggested that the parental support, qualified vocational instructors, infrastructure of the institutions, access to assistive technologies, and inclusive learning environment play positive role in skill development in entrepreneurship. At the other extreme, poor training provision, poverty and lack of educational materials and poor policy implementation can have a negative impact on achievement. Appropriate statistical techniques such as correlation, regression, chi square and analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be employed to test and establish the strength and significance of the relationship between vocational education and how entrepreneurial skills are developed. The results will help give depth to the evidence-based product knowledge about the effectiveness of vocational education for children with intellectual disabilities in becoming entrepreneurs.

7. Research Methodology

The method of the present study is an empirical study with the form of Exposit Factette method used in the current study is Descriptive Ex- Post Facto because the research attempts to examine the effects of Vocational Training on the improvement of entrepreneurial skill development for children who suffer from intellectual disabilities. In order to achieve an all-encompassing picture of the research problem, a mixed-method research approach is used, combining the quantitative and qualitative methods. Primary data sources are structured questionnaires, interview schemes, observation and interactions with children with intellectual disabilities, teachers, vocational instructors, parents and caregivers and rehabilitation professionals.

Secondary data is gathered from books, peer reviewed journals, government reports, policy documents, international publications and relevant legislative documents relevant to the disability rights, inclusive education and vocational training. The study subjects include children with intellectual disability in a special school, inclusive school, Vocational Training School and Rehabilitation Institutions. The respondents were purposively selected because they have relevant experiences in the vocational education programmes. Descriptive data is presented and percentages and mean scores are calculated to draw conclusions from the aggregate quantitative data.

8. Variables of the Study

This research is aimed at the correlation between the vocational training and development of entrepreneurial skills among the children with intellectual disabilities first of all, through identification of the parameters that are related to the study and later, by analysing them. Vocational training as a form of education is the independent variable which comprises of: This is the educational action that is expected to affect the acquisition of entrepreneurial competences. The dependent variable is: entrepreneurial skill development, this includes communication skills, creativity, problem solving, decision making, financial literacy, team work, leadership, self-confidence, adaptability, time management, and independent work habits.

These skills are taken together to reflect the entrepreneurial preparedness and self-employment of children with intellectual disabilities. The main variables considered are complemented with several moderating and control variables which might impact on the relationship between vocational training and entrepreneurial skill development. These include the ages, gender, severity of intellectual disability, socioeconomic status, the level of parents' educational attainment, family involvement, infrastructure of the institution, availability of assistive technologies, teacher qualifications, and community support.

9. Entrepreneurial Skills Assessment

An evaluation of entrepreneurial abilities is an important element of this research that helps measure the level of contribution vocational training makes to developing competences necessary for children with intellectual disabilities' independent livelihood and self-employment. The entrepreneurial skills are assessed through a structured assessment framework comprising Personal, Social, Business and Life Skills which altogether create a predisposition for entrepreneurship.

The personal skills involved are the qualities children demonstrate when they work alone, such as taking initiative and taking responsibility, persevering and adapting to work problems. Children's ability to engage effectively in business related activities and to work collaboratively is determined by their social skills, including communication, team work, interpersonal relationships, leadership and customer interaction. Skills for business are financial literacy, basic accounting, preparing products, grooming skills in marketing, inventory management and understanding customer needs. In addition, life skills, including those related to decision making, time management, problem solving, creativity and independence in functioning, are studied as they are essential factors in achieving entrepreneurial success in real-life situations.

Table. Entrepreneurial Skills Assessment Scale

Entrepreneurial Skill	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Communication Skills	4.18	0.63	High
Self-Confidence	4.12	0.67	High
Problem-Solving	3.94	0.71	Moderate
Decision-Making	3.88	0.74	Moderate
Financial Literacy	3.76	0.79	Moderate
Creativity	4.05	0.69	High
Teamwork	4.21	0.58	High
Leadership	3.81	0.75	Moderate

Scale: 1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High

10. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data gathered in the study is analysed systematically to see the entrepreneurial skill development and vocational trainability among child with intellectual disability. The data analysis methods used are quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods to produce data interpretation that is complete. The quantitative data collected by structured questionnaires/directive scales are coded, classified and fed into statistical software like SPSS, Microsoft Excel etc for analysis. Demographic characteristics of the respondents and level of entrepreneurial competencies are summarized using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation.

The research hypotheses are tested and relationship between vocational training and entrepreneurial skill development is determined using inferential statistical methods like chi-square test, Pearson's correlation, regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA). These analyses can reveal the impact of various elements like training duration, institutional support, or parental involvement and socioeconomic factors on entrepreneurial results. Thematic analysis of qualitative information gathered during the interview, observation and discussion with standing parties was performed to summarize and reveal recurring themes, experiences, and perceptions along with implementation difficulties.

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	Result
Vocational Training	0.58	0.07	8.24	<0.001	Significant
Family Support	0.24	0.08	3.10	0.002	Significant
Institutional Support	0.18	0.06	2.84	0.005	Significant
Teacher Competence	0.21	0.07	3.05	0.003	Significant

Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.68$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.66$; $F = 52.41$; $p < 0.001$

11. Challenges

Although vocational education is acknowledged as a vital tool that can be used to empower children with intellectual disabilities, there are some challenges that still affect it in terms of skill development in entrepreneurship. This is one of the major challenges: lack of provision of specialized vocational training centres with no problems at all in using the infrastructure, modern teaching aids and assistive technologies for persons with disabilities.

Still, few institutions have vocational instructors who are qualified with the knowledge and skills needed to provide modifications based on the varying learning needs and capacities of children with intellectual disabilities. Further, vocational training courses are frequently inadequate and lacking in skills relevant for entrepreneurship, innovation, business management, digital competences and skills related to money matters. Few opportunities for in-field exposure and internships, or for skill development, in market-oriented training and life experiences, owing to limited levels of cooperation between educational institutions, industry, local business, and rehabilitation organizations.

12. Recommendations

It is recommended that vocational education programmes be redesigned to incorporate entrepreneurship education and hands-on skill training for children with ID to enhance entrepreneurial skill development among these children. Training curricula should cover communication skills, financial education, skills in information technology, marketing, business planning, innovation and problem solving, customer service and enterprise management of small enterprises. The approach to teaching should be activity based, learner

centric and relate to assistive technology in order to cater to different ways of learning. Governments and educational institutions, they need to have vocational centres equipped with top-of-the-range facilities, accessible infrastructure, via which they can introduce specially trained vocational teachers, special educators, vocational psychologists, and rehabilitation specialists.

Opportunities for teacher training and capacity enhancement programs should be carried out at regular intervals to enhance instruction and inclusive education practices. Collaborative partnerships between schools, industries, NGO, community businesses and financial institutions should be fostered to offer internships, apprenticeships, mentoring, market opportunities, and entrepreneurship development assistance. Policy interventions should aim to enhance the delivery of disability inclusive education and skill development activities, by ensuring that their implementation is supported with sustainable funding, monitoring and evaluation processes.

13. Conclusion

Vocational schooling has transformative power in strengthening the entrepreneurial skill development of intellectually challenged children and enhance their skills not only for independent living but also in economic participation in the country through the acquisition of practical, social and business-related skills during the training. This research results emphasize that "quality-oriented vocational education" is not just training for working-skills but also preparing individuals/entrepreneurs with a set of attributes like communication, creativity, problem-solving, financial knowledge, team working, leadership, decision-making and self-confidence.

These skills have an impact on employability and also create opportunities for them to learn about self-employment and small-scale entrepreneurial opportunities, supporting to their long-term social and economic inclusion. The study also evidences that the success of vocational training is influenced by various factors, such as high-quality instructional programmes, availability of teachers with appropriate skills, institutional infrastructure, engagement of parents, community support and implementing disability-inclusive policies. Inclusive Education has shown great strides, however barriers such as poor resource provision and industry uptake, together with social taboos and a lack of policy implementation are limiting vocational education's potential.

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