

Strategies for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities to Expand Their Businesses: A Multi Method Study

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Abstract

This multi method study seeks to identify and rank strategies for entrepreneurs with disabilities (EWDs) to expand their businesses. Sixteen EWDs were interviewed, and the themes identified became feeder for the first round Delphi method which involved 26 non-EWDs experts. A total of 51 keywords which were then consolidated into eight strategies. In the second round of the Delphi method, the eight strategies ranked by 22 experts based on order of importance from highest (most important strategy) to lowest (least important strategy) are as follows: 1. Business fundamental, 2. Ecosystem, 3. Collaboration, 4. NGO and government agencies, 5. Digital transformation, 6. New business venture, 7. Education and training, and 8. Personality development. The researchers recommended an integrated approach for key stakeholders, as well as policymakers, to develop an inclusive and caring eco-system, while developing structured intervention programs to monitor and mentor promising EWDs so that they can realise their full potential. *In addition, policies on disabled persons in Malaysian need to be reformed to be comparable to those in advanced economies.* Further action research and tracer studies could be conducted to better understand the phenomenon. Finally, comparative research on EWD programs and policies with other neighboring countries, as well as more complex and advanced qualitative analyses involving moderators and mediators are recommended accordingly.

Keywords: Entrepreneurs with Disabilities, Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance, Sequential Multi Method, Thematic Analysis

Introduction

Entrepreneurs with Disabilities (EWDs) has evolved into an emerging force that highlights persons with disabilities who are actively involved in entrepreneurial initiatives. EWDs contribute beyond typical business tactics by providing a unique perspective on the entrepreneurial landscape and using their creativity and inventiveness to address social

challenges and stimulate economic growth (Jammaers & Zanoni, 2020; Othman & Ab Wahid, 2014). To build a culture of comprehensive and all-encompassing entrepreneurship, EWDs must overcome numerous challenges and difficulties that require careful consideration. Many successful EWDs globally, such as Richard Branson of Virgin Group (dyslexic), Max Ash of Max'is Creations (dyslexic), Bram Cohen of BitTorrent Inc (Asperger's Syndrome), Sangita Desai of RawNature Company (Symbrachydactyly, which causes limb abnormalities), and Charlotte Jones, a high-profile handbag designer (chronic fatigue syndrome), as well as local EWDs such as Lee Thiam Wah of 99Speedmart (physical disability) and Nizam Zainordin of The Lorry (paraplegic) have shown that disabilities do not have to be a barrier to success. Despite the numerous obstacles they encountered, they overcame challenges, harnessed their unique insights, and made significant contributions to their disciplines and society.

Literature Review

Previous researchers Caldwell et al (2020); Tihic et al (2021); Tihic et al (2022) have used a variety of related theories and conceptual models, as well as qualitative and quantitative methods, to investigate EWD issues. The frameworks linked with EWDs emphasised entrepreneurial traits, socioeconomic factors, and education and training elements. To begin, Renko et al (2016) discovered that while EWDs were more likely than other types of entrepreneurs to start a business, they were less likely to be able to sustain it over time due to critical variables such as the requirement for start-up money and EWD-specific training or education. The study found that education and information, access to capital and asset development, as well as support and networking, are all critical to the success of self-employment.

Most research focuses on the social attitudes and expectations that people with disabilities face when starting their own businesses. People with disabilities frequently confront societal stigmas and biases that limit their access to equitable opportunities in a variety of settings, including commercial initiatives (Victor-Aigbodion, 2023). This psychological conflict might have an impact on their decision-making, risk-taking ability, and general entrepreneurial confidence. Furthermore, research indicates the intricate relationships between psychological resilience and the route of EWDs. EWDs' resilience is more than just a result of their personal traits; it is also a psychological coping strategy developed through overcoming the hurdles given by both disability and cultural bias (Berglund, 2023). Their ability to face adversity and rebound from setbacks displays the tremendous psychological fortitude that underpins their entrepreneurial endeavors.

Training and development programs emerge as critical drivers of EWDs' entrepreneurial success. Access to specialised training programs targeted to the unique needs and challenges of individuals with disabilities can provide them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to successfully pursue entrepreneurship (Krüger & David, 2020). Effective training not only improves their entrepreneurial skills, but it also fosters a sense of self-efficacy, which is essential for overcoming perceived obstacles and uncertainties (Setiawan et al., 2022). Furthermore, creating a culture of continuous learning through skill-building seminars and mentorship programs enables EWDs to adapt to changing business landscapes and capitalise on emerging possibilities.

Financial assistance is vital for EWDs who want to manage and sustain their own businesses. Adequate access to funding sources, grants, and loans targeted to EWDs' individual financial needs could help overcome the constraints posed by limited resources (Prijadi et al., 2020). Ensuring equitable access to financial support not only promotes

business growth, but also boosts EWDs' confidence in undertaking entrepreneurial projects (Tihic et al., 2021). Furthermore, tailored financial literacy programs empower EWDs with the information they need to manage their financial resources properly, encouraging sustainability and resilience.

The attitude and mindset of EWDs have a significant impact on their entrepreneurial journey. A positive attitude, along with a growth mindset, enables EWDs to see failures as opportunities for growth rather than impassable obstacles (Sethi and Shashwati, 2019). Developing resilience, adaptability, and a drive to learn from failures fosters the entrepreneurial spirit in EWDs (Kouakou et al., 2019). Addressing self-limiting beliefs and fighting cultural stereotypes are essential steps towards developing an empowered mindset that leads EWDs to success in the face of adversity. In addition, EWDs benefit greatly from the support of family and friends. Their presence not only provides practical assistance, but it also strengthens the entrepreneur's sense of belonging, purpose, and accomplishment. According to research, family and friends can offer emotional support Boehm & Carter (2019), motivation and confidence, practical help, and networking opportunities. Furthermore, family and friends provide financial support, advocacy, flexibility and adaptation, skill development, and assistance in combining work and personal life. Finally, family and friends are welcomed to celebrate triumphs, develop resilience, comprehend the cultural and social context, and envisage EWDs' long-term goals.

As such, a series of research questions were formulated to identify strategies for EWDs to improve their businesses: How accurate is the assertion that funding, training, family, and attitudinal factors are most vital factors in strategy formulation among EWDs? Should any additional factors be considered? If so, how consistent are all these factors ranked? To answer these questions a sequential multi method will be used accordingly.

Methodology

Qual → qual method or sequential multi method (Ide et al., 2020; Morse & Niehaus, 2009) was employed, beginning with interviews with EWDs to identify strategies and followed by the Delphi method to confirm the strategies with expert feedback. In addition, Kendall's W, a non-parametric test, was employed to confirm the consistency of expert rankings (see Figure 1).

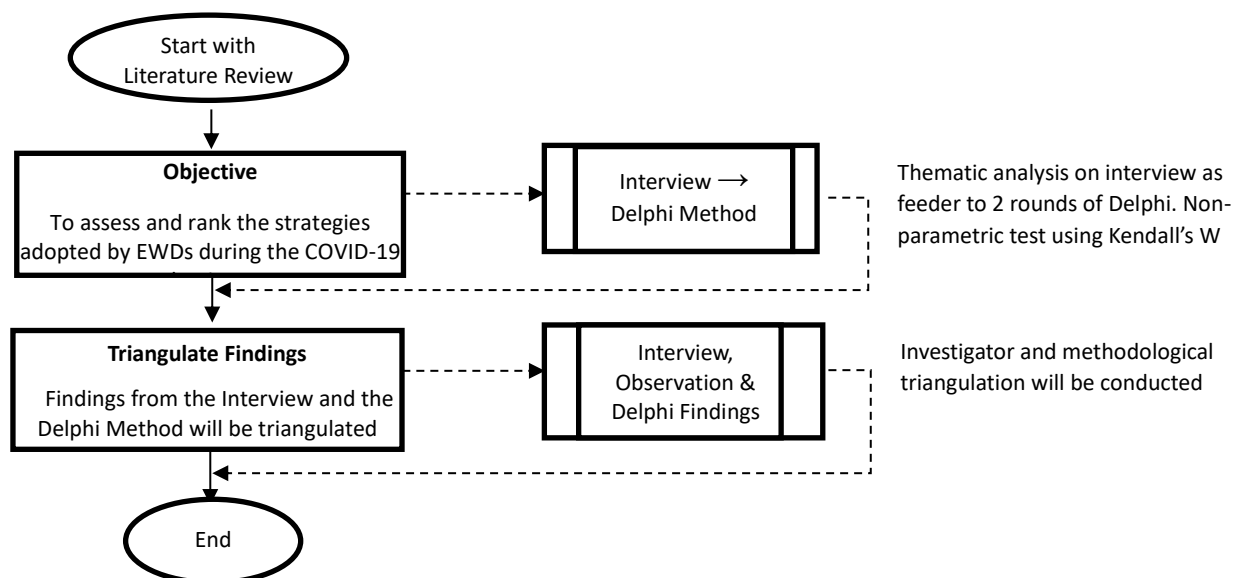


Figure 1 The Research Process Flow

Interview method

According to Table 1, 16 EWDs participated in the interview; most having physical impairments (7), followed by visual disabilities (3), and one each for hearing, learning, speech, and multiple. This preliminary finding reflects the characteristics of EWD population in Malaysia.

Table 1
EWDs who participated in the Interview

No.	Age	Experience (in years)	Type of Disability	Academic Qualification	Business
R1	52	14	Physical	SPM	Azizi runs a <i>daging salai</i> business in Dengkil
R2	36	4	Physical	Diploma	Hazma runs a tuition centre
R3	33	5	Physical	MSc	Ahmad Kamil runs a high-tech company
R4	57	30	Physical	SPM	Bonda Liezda makes cookies
R5	45	5	Physical	SPM	Are-Peet runs a food stall by the roadside
R6	39	5	Physical	Masters	Irwan runs a retail food store
R7	42	14	Physical	SPM	Mahmud makes cookies, COWAY & Tone Exce
R8	41	6	Visual	Degree	Affendi runs a woodworking workshop
R9	40	15	Visual	SPM	Arni owns a spa cum Massage Centre
R10	41	24	Visual	None	Azhar is a blind motorcycle mechanic
R11	51	21	Hearing	SPM	Bety makes cakes and cookies
R12	23	5	Learning	Diploma	Amir runs Dyslexia Café
R13	41	15	Speech	Diploma	Khadeejah is a tailor who works from home
R14	28	5	Multiple	SPM	Harith runs a coffee blended business
R15	21	7	Learning	PMR	Jamilah is a professional artist and gallery owner
E16	25	10	Learning	Diploma	Andi Miranti is a self-published comic artist

Delphi Method

According to Table 2, a total of 26 experts participated in the Delphi methodology. The researchers opted to recruit non-EWD experts and use the feedback from the 16 interviewed EWDs as a reference for the first round Delphi. This is to ensure that alternative perspectives are collected to supplement the techniques discussed previously in the interview. Based on the thematic analysis, additional opinions were gathered to support the strategies described earlier in the interview.

Table 2

Experts who participated in the Delphi method

No.	Background
E1	Dr. Ee (female) is a senior lecturer specializing in business and management
E2	Dr. Son (male) is a senior lecturer specializing on management
E3	Dr. Hani (female) is a consultant/trainer in Melaka
E4	Dr. Yo (male) is a businessman based in Malaysia and Indonesia
E5	Ms. Wan (female) is a senior lecturer specializing in entrepreneurship
E6	Ms. Um (female) is a senior lecturer specializing in social entrepreneurship
E7	Dr. Yam (female) is a senior lecturer specializing in finance and accountancy
E8	Dr. Baha (male) is a retired professor who runs a successful food-based business
E9	Ms. Min (female) is a PhD student doing research on corporate social responsibility
E10	Mr. Jam (male) is a successful businessman managing two Petronas outlets
E11	Dr. Onn (male) is a retired professor who provides consultancy on business coaching
E12	Dr. Rina (female) is an associate professor who specializes in business marketing
E13	Dr. An (male) is an associate professor who specializes in operation management
E14	Dr. Leh (male) is a retired professor who provides training and business coaching
E15	Dr. Zi (female) is a senior lecturer specializing in social entrepreneurship
E16	Mr. Ad (male) is an entrepreneur who exports his products abroad
E17	Dr. Mas (female) is senior lecturer who specialized in human resource development
E18	Dr. Yanti (female) is a senior lecturer who specializes in qualitative research
E19	Dr. Sara (female) is a senior lecturer who specializes in entrepreneurship
E20	Dr. Im (male) is an associate professor who specializes in economics and business
E21	Dr. Shaf (male) is an associate professor who specializes in education
E22	Dr. Bil (male) is a retired professor who specializes in education
E23	Dr. Haf (female) is a senior lecturer who specializes in IT
E24	Dr. Nina (female) is a researcher cum entrepreneur
E25	Ms. Sal (female) is a struggling entrepreneur
E26	Mr. Zam (male) is a professional musician cum businessman

Findings**Interview findings**

Six themes were identified from the interview with the 16 EWDs: 1. Digital/Technology Transformation, 2. Collaboration, 3. New Business Venture and Approach, 4. Innovative Marketing Approach, 5. Research and Development, and 6. Involvement with SAY LEAD.

Round 1 Delphi method findings

The six themes highlighted during the interview served as the feeder for the first round Delphi. The researchers meticulously reviewed the replies from the first round of the Delphi Method and conducted a thematic analysis. The researchers used back-translation to assure correctness, as part of the responses were in Bahasa Malaysia. Keywords were produced and grouped into themes for ranking in the second round of the Delphi Method. The initial first round analysis yielded 130 keywords. When examined, several of the keywords are repeated and have similar meanings, while others are irrelevant. The researchers reviewed and confirmed 51 keywords, which were then consolidated into eight themes, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Grouping of Keywords into Themes based on Round 1 Delphi Method

Themes/ Strategies	Keywords	Keyword Counts
Business Fundamentals	Business/strategic planning, flexible work, agile management, stakeholder management, supply chain management, lean business process, financial access, customer service, trend analysis, unique value proposition, tax benefit/incentive, grants/microfinance, Work Life balance, Innovative Marketing Approach*, and R&D**	15
Digital/ Technology Transformation	Assistive technology, cloud management, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Search Engine Optimizer (SEO), convenience accessing information, data driven decision making, and social media self-branding	5
Collaborative effort	Network/Connection, Support & Resources, Online collaboration, and Green Alliance	4
New Business Venture & Approach	Industrial participation, Franchising, Diversification	3
Involvement with NGOs and Government Agencies	Government Support, Improved infrastructure, public awareness of success stories of disabled entrepreneurship, regulation and policies, awards, chambers of commerce	6
Education & Training	Internship, Focused training, education awareness, Coaching, Mentorship, experience sharing	5
Ecosystem	Supportive social environment, accessible workplace, sustainable social responsibility	3
Personality Development	Emotional intelligence development, Resilience, Goal setting, motivation, interpersonal skill, personal branding, adaptability, parental support, attitude building	9
Total keywords		51

*IMA comprise of the following sub keywords: online presence, aggressive marketing & promotions, niche market, customer/buyer awareness program, online market expansion, customer retention

**R&D comprise of the following sub keywords: innovative product & services and Intellectual property

The results in Table 3 were shared with the 26 experts again for feedback. Some keywords were rephrased, and some related terms were combined. To avoid misunderstanding among the experts during the second round of the Delphi method, the researchers ensured that the keywords were organised into the appropriate themes and that there were no overlapping themes or keywords. The topics are numbered 1 (least important).

Round 2 Delphi method findings

In the second round, 22 experts participated and ranked the 8 themes or strategies as shown in Table 4. The 15% attrition rate in this study falls within the acceptable range of 5%-28% (McIlrath et al., 2009; Harper et al., 2012; Gephart et al., 2013; Logue and Effken, 2013). The data was evaluated in the second round to obtain the mean ranking and group ranks in accordance with Okoli and Pawlowski's (2004) guidelines. The convergence of opinions was assessed using Kendall's coefficient of convergence W, as recommended by (Von der Gracht, 2012).

Table 4
Second Round of the Delphi Method Ranking Results

Experts	Themes/Strategies							
	BusFund	DigTran	Collab	NBV&A	NGO&GA	Educ&Tra	Ecosys	PersonDev
E1	8	7	4	3	6	2	5	1
E2	8	5	6	3	4	2	7	1
E4	5	6	7	3	4	1	8	2
E5	7	3	5	2	1	8	4	6
E6	8	6	4	3	5	1	7	2
E7	8	1	2	6	5	3	7	4
E8	8	3	5	4	2	1	6	1
E9	3	8	6	5	7	2	4	1
E11	8	5	4	7	3	2	6	1
E13	1	6	5	3	4	7	8	2
E14	3	2	4	6	7	5	8	1
E16	8	2	6	5	3	4	1	2
E17	8	4	6	5	3	2	7	1
E18	1	7	4	8	3	2	5	7
E19	8	5	2	3	4	7	6	1
E20	8	3	2	1	4	6	7	5
E21	7	1	8	2	5	4	6	3
E22	8	4	6	2	7	5	3	1
E23	8	5	7	6	3	4	1	2
E24	7	4	5	3	6	2	8	1
E25	7	1	4	6	8	2	5	3
E26	8	4	6	2	5	3	7	1
Mean	6.59	4.23	5.00	4.09	4.59	3.48	5.77	2.25

Group Rank	8	4	6	3	5	2	7	1
Kendall's W of 0.300; p-value of 0.000								

Note: BusFund = Business Fundamentals; DigTran = Digital/Technology Transformation; Collab = Collaborative effort; NBV&A = New Business Venture and Approach; NGO&GA = Involvement with NGOs & Government Agencies; Educ&Tra = Education & Training; Ecosys = Ecosystem; PersonDev = Personality Development

A Kendall's W value of less than 0.5 is thought to indicate low agreement (Schmidt, 1997). However, the researchers believe that a low Kendall's W value is acceptable depending on the context and application. In some circumstances, such as this preliminary study, a relatively low Kendall's W value may be acceptable, eliminating the need for subsequent rounds of the Delphi method. For example, Landis and Koch (1977) argue that fair agreement is reached when Kendall's W is between 0.2 and 0.40. The researchers believe that other more crucial investigations, such as medical diagnosis and pharmacological studies, may necessitate a higher level of agreement (Kok et al., 2023). Based on Table 4, the calculated Kendall's W of 0.300 and p-value of 0.000 indicate that the experts reached unanimity in their ranking. As a result, the most important strategies for EWDs to consider, in order of importance from highest (most important strategy) to lowest (least important strategy), are: 1. Business fundamental (6.59), 2. Ecosystem (5.77), 3. Collaboration (5.00), 4. NGO and government agencies (4.59), 5. Digital transformation (4.23), 6. New business venture (4.09), 7. Education and training (3.48), and 8. Personality development (2.25).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers conclude by discussion the eight strategies for EWDs to expand their businesses from the findings of this study. The discussion is organised in order of significance; mastering business foundations is the most critical strategy, while personality development is the least important.

Strategy 1: Mastering business fundamentals

Based on the Delphi study, mastery of business fundamentals is the most important strategy. The researchers agree with this finding as during the fieldwork, many of the EWDs are lacking in competencies related to financing, marketing, and research and development. Many of their businesses are registered as agencies thus depriving them of getting grants from the government. Many are operating from homes thus lacking proper system and process flow. Many entrepreneurs are unfamiliar with modern management approaches such as agile management and distinctive value propositions; worse, many lack a defined strategic plan that includes a vision, targets, and key performance indicators (Govindasamy et al., 2021; Harris et al., 2013).

The researchers also argue that training and education institutions should actively 'get on the ground' to find EWDs who need to enhance their business fundamentals. According to Ab. Hamid and Anuar (2023), this is part of our obligation to build an inclusive and caring society in Malaysia.

Strategy 2: Develop ecosystem for EWDs

The development of a healthy ecosystem is the second most critical approach for EWDs' growth. This study highlighted the following subthemes as critical to creating an ecosystem

for EWDs: a supportive social environment, an accessible workplace, and long-term social responsibility. Even though the entrepreneurial ecosystem for EWDs is not favourable Csillag et al (2019) the researchers believe that a healthy ecosystem for EWDs needs a supporting network of resources, relationships, and policies to advance their businesses. Additional relevant ecosystem components should include educational institutions that offer specialised entrepreneurship programs for disabled individuals Caldwell et al (2020), incorporating accessibility features, financial institutions that develop loan programs and financial services with considerations for disabled entrepreneurs Mogaji et al (2021), and business incubators and accelerators that create accessible programs to support disabled startup ventures.

Strategy 3: Enhance collaborative effort

Enhancing collaboration efforts is the third most important strategy for EWD development. This study highlighted the following subthemes as significant for enhancing EWD collaborative efforts: network/connection, support & resources, online collaboration, and green alliance. Collaboration allows EWDs to gain access to critical resources, share information, and overcome hurdles. EWDs are urged to have mentors who can guide them based on their experience and network Lindsay et al (2016), as well as to investigate joint venture opportunities with others to complement and grow their enterprises (Devi & Rajamohan, 2020; Tracey et al., 2005). EWDs can also consider building a support network by establishing co-working spaces that provide accessible facilities and a community of entrepreneurs from which EWDs can learn and collaborate Smith (2023), as well as joining online communities, forums, or groups specifically for EWDs where they can share their experiences, ask questions, and find potential collaborators (Kemp, 2022). Finally, EWDs should learn how to use collaboration technologies such as project management platforms, video conferencing software, and other internet tools to efficiently engage with remote teams or partners, regardless of geography or handicap (Tang, 2021).

Strategy 4: Involvement with NGOs and government agencies

The fourth most important strategy for the growth of EWDs is the involvement of NGOs and government agencies. This study identified the following subthemes as important to improve the involvement of EWDs with NGOs and government agencies: government support, improved infrastructure, public awareness of success stories of EWDs, regulation and policies, awards, and chambers of commerce. NGOs and the government play varied responsibilities in supporting EWDs. Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) provide programs expressly geared to assist disabled individuals in starting and running enterprises (Ab Wahid et al., 2023), such as SAY LEAD in this study. Mentorship, business skill training, marketing, and financial management are all possible options. Furthermore, NGOs can connect EWDs with other entrepreneurs, possible investors, and mentors with disabilities (Bahry et al., 2023), roles played by the RISE Foundation in this study. NGOs can also provide resources such as grants, loans, or subsidised equipment to help EWDs overcome obstacles and launch their businesses. Finally, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can fight for policies that benefit people with disabilities, such as tax benefits and accessible workplaces.

Similarly, government agencies provide financing, programs, policies, and regulations, as well as statistics on disabled-owned enterprises, to help key stakeholders better understand the community's needs and implement focused programs and resources (Hwang & Roulstone, 2022).

Strategy 5: Embark on digital/technology transformation

The fifth most important strategy for EWD development is digital transformation. This study identified the following subthemes as critical for EWDs to embark on digital transformation: assistive technology, cloud management, enterprise resource planning (ERP), search engine optimisation (SEO), easy access to information, data-driven decision making, and social media self-branding. Digital transformation is a game changer for challenged entrepreneurs, offering several opportunities to level the playing field, increase accessibility, and achieve greater success. EWDs should collaborate closely with technology suppliers who create and market assistive technologies that can help EWDs in their business operations (Sodhi & Dwivedi, 2022). Digital tools and technologies enable remote employment, which can be highly useful for disabled entrepreneurs who may face physical limitations in traditional settings (Schur et al., 2020). Several software and hardware technologies can help EWDs overcome some limits, allowing them to do tasks they might otherwise struggle with. Text-to-speech software, for example, can help those with visual impairments, and voice recognition can empower those with restricted mobility, such as Arni, the blind masseur in this study.

Strategy 6: Explore new business venture and approach

This study highlighted the following subthemes as significant for helping EWDs explore new business ventures and approaches: industrial engagement, franchising, and diversification. While franchising is a viable option (Jacocks & Bell (2020)), it can be costly. Being an EWD can give strength and innovation. EWDs can turn their vision into a viable business by using their talents, discovering new ideas, and utilising available resources. EWDs should also consider starting small and focusing on low-barrier-to-entry enterprises (Norstedt & Germundsson (2023)), allowing them to test and perfect their concept before expanding. However, the researchers suggest that EWDs should first examine their current abilities, expertise, and passions, which might serve as the foundation for a new enterprise. At the same time, EWDs must undertake research on new trends and discover market gaps in which their unique competencies might provide a solution for the improvement of their businesses.

Strategy 7: Education and training

This study highlighted the following subthemes as significant for EWD education and training: internships, focused training, education awareness, coaching, mentorship, and experience sharing. Investing in education and training allows EWDs to overcome challenges, start successful businesses, and contribute significantly to the economy. EWDs can increase their chances of success by gaining knowledge and skills through education and training, which boosts confidence in their abilities (García & Capitán, 2021). Finally, as their businesses grow, disabled entrepreneurs can become bosses and create jobs for themselves and possibly others in the disability community (Jammaers & Zanoni, 2020). This study supports this view, as EWDs with higher levels of education have proven to be more successful.

Strategy 8: Improve personality development

The least significant strategy is to develop EWDs' personalities. This study highlighted the following subthemes as significant for EWDs' personality development: emotional intelligence development, resilience, goal setting, motivation, interpersonal competence, personal branding, adaptability, parental support, and attitude development. EWDs have unique problems, yet their personalities may also contain characteristics that assist them flourish. Awwad and Al-Aseer (2012) argue that the "Big Five" personality traits (OCEAN) are

significant for entrepreneurship. These characteristics include openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and low neuroticism.

Furthermore, the researchers believe that EWDs ability to develop resilience to overcome obstacles and setbacks is an important aspect of the entrepreneurial journey. People with disabilities frequently possess a significant potential for this, having overcome hurdles throughout their lives (Listman & Kurz, 2020). Finally, EWDs require determination and independence to succeed Norstedt and Germundsson (2023), as being one's own boss can be a great motivation.

Recommendations

The researchers believe that the EWDs who participated in this study should continue to receive aid and support because they have demonstrated the ability to contribute to society. They have demonstrated independence and sought recognition without bias or discrimination. In fact, because of their high level of technical competencies, experience, and capabilities, EWDs like Azhar can serve as outstanding trainers for other future non-visually impaired EWDs if given the right platform. This study has important consequences for social workers, government organisations, and training providers. The researchers propose an integrated approach for key stakeholders, as well as policymakers, to develop an inclusive and caring eco-system that will allow worthy EWDs who have long been marginalised to survive and grow their businesses. In addition, structured intervention programs Zhong et al (2020) should be developed to monitor and mentor these promising EWDs so that they can realise their full potential.

The researchers believe that policies on disabled persons in Malaysian need to be reformed to be more structured. Coopers (2022) demonstrated how Canada created structured intervention units to transfer law into practices. Furthermore, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications, as well as the 1998 Rehabilitation Act Amendments, are critical in promoting small businesses as viable employment outcomes under the State Vocational Services Program for people with disabilities (Tihic, 2019). The researcher argues that Malaysia should benchmark itself against Canada and the United States to ensure that policies and programs are developed for the long-term benefit of our EWDs.

Recommendation for Future Research

A longitudinal research approach in the form of tracer studies on both successful and unsuccessful EWDs is recommended for demonstrating the direction of the interplay of themes discovered in this study and providing researchers with a more in-depth understanding of the psychological and sociological factors that influence EWDs. Furthermore, action research could be used to better understand the phenomenon. Participatory or action research, according to Klangboonkrong and Baines (2022), is more appropriate for examining this topic because it incorporates people who would not be considered research "subjects". Other researchers can build on this study by defining the typology of enterprises and training programs that are most suited to entrepreneurs with impairments. Some intriguing new research questions could be addressed. For example, which businesses would be best suited to entrepreneurs with learning disabilities? What kind of training strategy should be developed for entrepreneurs with physical disabilities? To be effective, training programs for EWDs should be tailored to their specific needs and delivered

in small groups by appropriately experienced instructors. Profiles of specific tailor-built training programs must be made available to EWDs. A more scientific approach to training, such as conducting appropriate training needs analyses and improving the participant selection process, is long overdue. The appropriate training authorities should shift from mass training with many participants to customised training for a few EWDs who have been chosen based on merit and have undergone psychometric testing to assure training merit.

Finally, a quantitative investigation employing a survey questionnaire to assess the levels of the themes discovered in this study could supplement the findings. Furthermore, comparative research on EWD programs and policies with other neighboring countries, as well as more complex and advanced qualitative analyses involving moderators and mediators, might be done to bridge EWD knowledge gaps.

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