

# Entrepreneurship challenges for persons with disabilities: A bibliometric analysis

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## ABSTRACT

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Entrepreneurship offers a vital pathway for economic independence and social inclusion among persons with disabilities (PWDs). However, PWD entrepreneurs often face multifaceted barriers that limit their participation and success in the entrepreneurial landscape. This bibliometric study analyzes the scholarly literature on the challenges and barriers encountered by PWD entrepreneurs, using Scopus-indexed publications from 2000 to 2025. The analysis identifies key publication trends, influential authors, countries, institutions, and thematic clusters. The findings reveal an increasing scholarly interest in the topic, with research primarily concentrated in Western countries and dominated by qualitative approaches. However, significant gaps remain, particularly in exploring intersectionality, regional contexts in the Global South, and the role of digital technologies. The study highlights the need for more inclusive, data-driven, and context-sensitive research to inform effective policy and practice. It concludes by proposing future research directions and policy implications to support a more equitable and enabling ecosystem for PWD entrepreneurs.

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## 1. Introduction

The entrepreneurial potential of persons with disabilities (PWD) has increasingly attracted scholarly attention as both a means of social inclusion and a driver of broader economic growth. Several studies have shown that entrepreneurship can provide PWD a pathway to overcome labor market discrimination, limited job opportunities, and the societal stigma that often restricts access to employment and financial resources (Rolle et al., 2020; Caldwell et al., 2019). These works suggest that while PWD frequently encounter systemic barriers, such as limited startup capital, inadequate training, and lack of tailored support, their

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engagement in entrepreneurship can foster personal economic independence and contribute to social cohesion by integrating inclusivity into local economies (Rolle et al., 2020). Research highlights the need for an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Integrating PWD into mainstream economic activities through specialized training programs, adaptive technologies, and targeted policy interventions is argued to alleviate the obstacles hindering their entrepreneurial endeavors (Jiya et al., 2021). For instance, initiatives focused on entrepreneurial education have been shown to enhance business management skills, financial literacy, and resilience among PWD, helping turn perceived vulnerabilities into competitive advantages (Nghah et al., 2023). The development of experiential learning methods can further build confidence, enabling PWD to navigate business complexities and adapt to market challenges—especially when traditional employment opportunities are lacking (Nghah et al., 2023). Moreover, the dual perspective of individual empowerment and macroeconomic benefit is recognized in the literature. Inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems can improve the livelihoods of individual PWD while also fostering innovation and economic performance at the community and national levels (Caldwell et al., 2019; Rolle et al., 2020). Policy-oriented studies indicate that addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by disabled entrepreneurs requires a combination of legislative reform and the promotion of social innovation strategies that create supportive environments for PWD in entrepreneurial pursuits (Jasiyah & Suriadi, 2024; Maâlaoui et al., 2023). Comprehensive educational models and public-private partnerships are identified as crucial mechanisms for bridging existing gaps in the entrepreneurial landscape for PWD (Maâlaoui et al., 2023). Collectively, the literature supports the notion that entrepreneurship is not merely an economic activity for PWD; it serves as a powerful avenue for social empowerment, capable of transforming individual challenges into collective social benefits. This emerging body of research underscores the necessity for bibliometric analyses to map trends and identify thematic gaps, thus informing nuanced policy interventions and institutional support systems that leverage entrepreneurial opportunities for economic independence and social inclusion.

## 2. Literature review

Research on entrepreneurship among persons with disabilities (PWD) highlights various challenges—sociocultural, economic, psychological, and educational—that shape their entrepreneurial journey (Bahry et al., 2023; Hueso et al., 2020; Pérez-Macías et al., 2021). PWD face systemic barriers, including social stigma and misperceptions about their abilities, which discourage entrepreneurial participation (Bahry et al., 2023; Kašperová, 2021). These external issues are often compounded by internal challenges such as low self-efficacy and reduced personal agency (Hueso et al., 2020; Powers et al., 2020), creating a complex environment for PWD entrepreneurs (Pérez-Macías et al., 2021; Bahry et al., 2023). Negative cultural attitudes and deep-rooted stigma further undermine the potential of PWD in business (Bahry et al., 2023; Kašperová, 2021). These beliefs often portray PWD as incapable or dependent, limiting public and institutional support (Kašperová, 2021). As a result, PWD are excluded from business networks and financial systems (Bahry et al., 2023; Pérez-Macías et al., 2021). Financial exclusion is a major issue. Banks and investors often discriminate against disabled entrepreneurs, viewing them as high-risk (Usman & Projo, 2021). Inadequate support structures and limited income potential further reduce their chances of accessing capital (Usman & Projo, 2021; Pérez-Macías et al., 2021). Education and technology play a vital role in addressing these challenges. Inclusive and innovative entrepreneurship education can boost self-efficacy and skills among PWD (Lv et al., 2021; Gao & Xiao, 2022). Digital integration into curricula enhances both entrepreneurial and digital competencies, preparing PWD for the modern economy (Gao & Xiao, 2022; Lv et al., 2021). Empirical studies support the importance of education tailored for PWD. Gao and Xiao (2022) found that combining entrepreneurial and tech skills increases perceived capability. García and Capitán (2021) emphasized that inclusive education helps counter skill gaps and stereotypes. Thus, curricula that combine digital and entrepreneurial training are essential (Lv et al., 2021; Gao & Xiao, 2022; García & Capitán, 2021). The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is widely used to understand entrepreneurial intentions among PWD. It focuses on attitudes, norms, and perceived behavioral control (Hueso et al., 2020). Wibowo et al. (2022) extended this theory by including factors like religiosity. Pérez-Macías et al. (2021) validated TPB's relevance in this context, especially highlighting the role of self-

efficacy and social pressures. Intrinsic motivations, such as personal values and lived experiences, also influence entrepreneurial intention (Hueso et al., 2020; Powers et al., 2020). Powers et al. (2020) stressed that self-efficacy rooted in disability experience is crucial. Support from family and communities further enables success (Hueso et al., 2020; Powers et al., 2020; Pérez-Macías et al., 2021). Health is another key factor. Good physical and mental health boosts confidence and supports entrepreneurial efforts (Maâlaoui et al., 2023). Health intersects with self-efficacy and plays a protective role against adversity (Maâlaoui et al., 2023; Powers et al., 2020). Integrated policies combining healthcare and entrepreneurship training are therefore important (Maâlaoui et al., 2023; Pérez-Macías et al., 2021). Digital entrepreneurship offers new opportunities by removing many physical barriers (Paul et al., 2023). These platforms provide more inclusive options for PWD, though digital access and literacy remain challenges (Lv et al., 2021). Still, digital models help PWD gain visibility and reshape business ecosystems (Paul et al., 2023; Lv et al., 2021). Mentorship and role models are critical. Experienced disabled entrepreneurs offer guidance and help navigate societal and institutional barriers (Powers et al., 2020; Kašperová, 2021). These networks improve resilience and strategy among new PWD entrepreneurs (Powers et al., 2020; Pérez-Macías et al., 2021). Social entrepreneurship is another promising avenue. It emphasizes community-focused business models that include PWD as both participants and beneficiaries (Ravesangar et al., 2023). This model supports diversity, combats exclusion, and builds long-term sustainability (Ravesangar et al., 2023; García & Capitán, 2021). Finally, economic discrimination is still one of the most cited barriers. Many financial institutions deny resources to PWD due to perceived risk (Usman & Projo, 2021; Bahry et al., 2023). Without inclusive financial services, PWD remain excluded from entrepreneurial opportunities (Usman & Projo, 2021; Pérez-Macías et al., 2021). Overall, integrating health, education, digital access, mentorship, and inclusive finance is key to empowering entrepreneurs with disabilities. A supportive ecosystem can help overcome both structural and personal barriers (Maâlaoui et al., 2023; Powers et al., 2020; Pérez-Macías et al., 2021).

### 3. Methods

The study methodology involved two primary analyses: statistical assessment of datasets derived from the Scopus database and network analysis using VOSviewer 1.6.19. This combination enabled a comprehensive examination of the research landscape on entrepreneurial intention. For the statistical analysis, we utilized Scopus, a widely recognized and comprehensive database, to analyze various aspects of the research corpus, including documents categorized by source, year, topic, type, country, author, affiliation, and funding support. This provided a structured overview of the field's development and scholarly contributions. In addition, we employed VOSviewer, a specialized software tool, to conduct a network analysis of the retrieved datasets. This tool facilitated the examination of co-citations, co-occurrences, and collaborative networks within the research dataset. By using VOSviewer, we visualized the relationships and interactions between publications, authors, and research institutions, enabling the identification of key contributors, research clusters, and emerging trends in entrepreneurial intention studies. This approach offered valuable insights into the knowledge structure and thematic patterns within the literature. The integration of statistical analysis from Scopus and network analysis from VOSviewer provided a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the current state of research on entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, this methodology offered a broad overview of the field's evolution, research collaborations, and emerging areas of interest, allowing for meaningful conclusions and significant implications to be drawn from the analyzed data. In line with previous studies, study followed Zakaria et al. (2021) in using Scopus as the primary data source for present research.

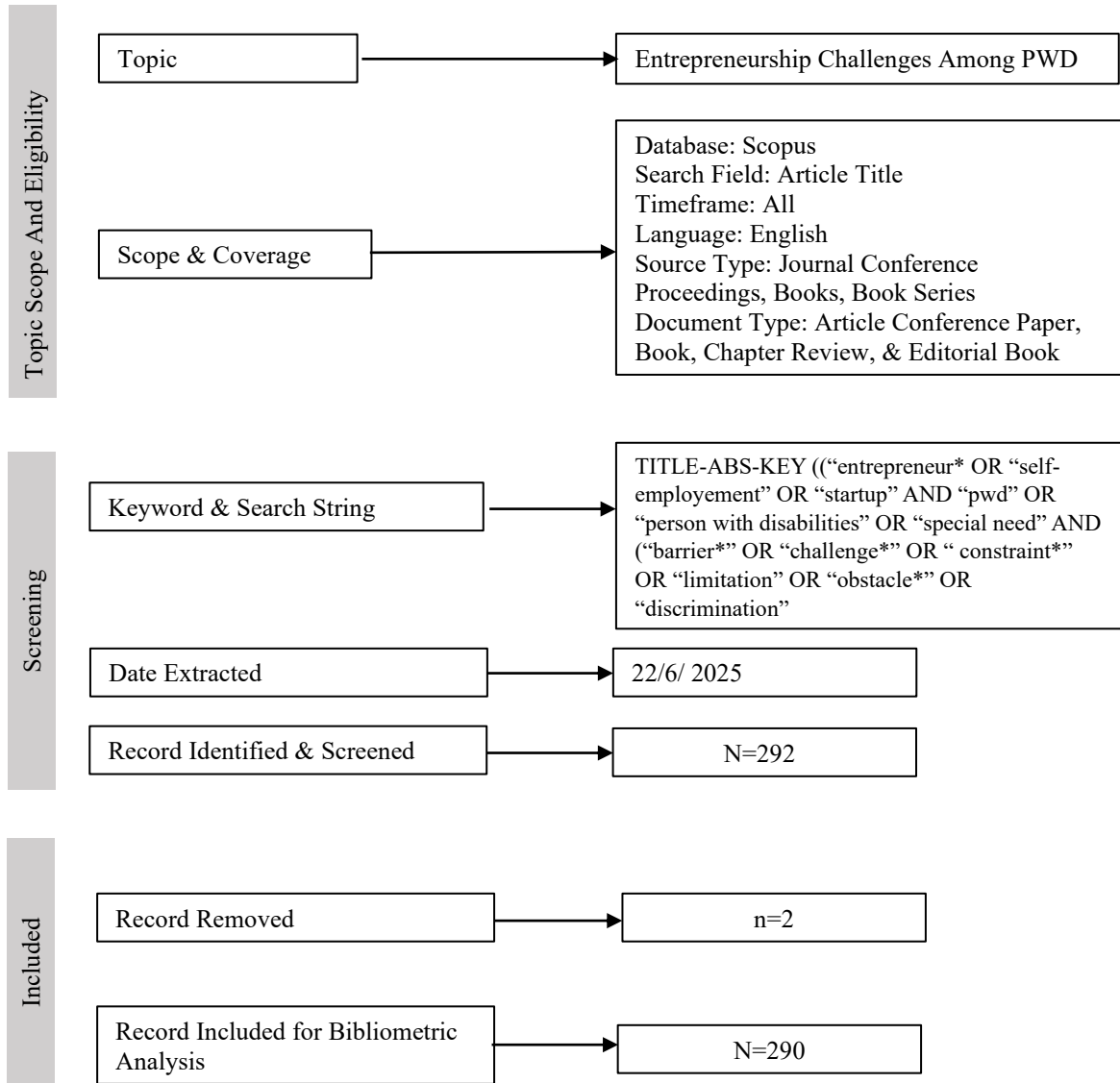


Figure 1: Flow diagram of search strategy

We searched for articles from 2004 to 2025 using keywords like "entrepreneurship", "challenge," and "pwd" yielding 292 publications without restrictions on language or country, ensuring diverse perspectives.

### 3.1 Primary database

We utilized Scopus, a widely used global database known for its extensive array of scholarly publication encompassing various subjects. Scopus stood out as the most comprehensive database compared to Google Scholar and Web of Science, making it the optimal selection for our analysis.

### 3.2 Keywords and search criteria

Present study searched for articles from 2004 to 2025 using keywords like "entrepreneurship", "challenge," and "pwd" yielding 292 publications without restrictions on language or country, ensuring diverse perspectives.

Table 1. Fundamental keywords and limits

Fundamental Keywords	Publication Year	Publication Stage
Entrepreneurship AND Challenges AND PWD	1970-2025	Final

Thus, the search query used for the analysis is as follows:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (("entrepreneur\*" OR "self-employment" OR "startup" OR "business creation" OR "venture creation") AND ("disabilit\*" OR "persons with disabilities" OR "PWD" OR "physically challenged" OR "special needs") AND ("barrier\*" OR "challenge\*" OR "constraint\*" OR "limitation\*" OR "obstacle\*" OR "discrimination"))

A search string was applied to the Article title database to find key studies. Clustering techniques identified relationships between publications through direct citations. Bibliographic data was then imported into VOSviewer to generate network maps showing author and country co-authorships, as well as keyword co-occurrences.

### 3.3 Initial search outcomes

Upon searching the Scopus database using relevant keywords, we found a significant number of publications. These publications were then analyzed based on their languages, providing valuable insights into the distribution of scholarly work across different linguistic domains. The data for the study was derived from a total of 290 publications collected on March 30, 2025. After an initial round of cross-validation, a total of two papers were deemed not suitable for inclusion. The study analyzed Scopus database for entrepreneurial intention publications, finding that the majority are primarily in English, with 275 publications represent 97.21%, indicating English as the primary language for sharing research insights on this subject.

## 4. Results

The data for this study was derived from a comprehensive search of the Scopus database. After an initial cross-validation and exclusion of non-English publications, the final dataset was analyzed to provide insights into various aspects of entrepreneurial intention research.

#### 4.1 Document and source types

Among the papers included in Table 2, a total of 202 papers, accounting for 69.66% of the overall distribution, were classified as articles. Articles are commonly regarded as comprehensive research papers that provide novel discoveries, approaches, and analyses. The abundance of articles suggests a significant focus on empirical research and intellectual contributions in comprehending the process of entrepreneurial intention.

Table 2. Document type

Document Type	Total Publication	Percentages
Article	202	69.66
Conference Paper	24	8.28
Book Chapter	34	11.72
Review	16	5.51
Conference Review	4	1.38
Book	8	2.76
Short Survey	1	0.34
Editorial	1	0.34

Conference papers account for 8.28% of the total publications, serving as platforms for presenting early research findings and fostering academic discussions. Book chapters make up 11.72%, offering in-depth examinations of entrepreneurial intention. Review articles represent 5.51%, summarizing existing research and identifying gaps in the literature. Conference reviews contribute 1.38%, providing insights into emerging trends and developments. Books constitute 2.76% of the total publications, offering comprehensive perspectives on entrepreneurial intention. Short surveys and editorials, each at 0.34%, add expert opinions and insights to the field. In conclusion, journal articles and conference papers dominate the research landscape on entrepreneurial intention, focusing on empirical studies and knowledge dissemination. Meanwhile, book chapters, reviews, and books provide deeper analyses, contributing to a broader understanding of the topic.

Table 3. Source type

Source Type	Total Publication	Percentages (%)
Journals	216	74.48
Conference Proceedings	23	7.93
Books	31	10.69
Book Series	20	6.90
Total	290	100%

Table 3 shows that journals (74.48%) dominate entrepreneurial intention research, ensuring quality and dependability through rigorous peer-review procedures. Conference proceedings account for 7.93% of publications, presenting research on entrepreneurial intention. Books, accounting for 10.69%, offer comprehensive coverage and in-depth analysis of the topic, providing holistic perspectives, theoretical frameworks, and practical insights on entrepreneurial intention among SMEs. The inclusion of books indicates a desire to present a comprehensive comprehension of the subject, possibly aimed at a broader audience than the academic community. Book series, comprising multiple volumes or editions, account for 6.90% of the total publications on entrepreneurial intention among SMEs. These sources offer in-depth examinations from various perspectives, with journals and conference proceedings dominating the landscape. Books and book series provide comprehensive coverage and analysis, targeting both academic and non-academic audiences.

#### 4.2 Year of publications/evolution of published studies

Table 4: Publication trend by years

Year	Publication	Percentage (%)
2025	7	2.41
2024	52	17.93
2023	36	12.41
2022	26	8.96
2021	21	7.24
2020	27	9.31
2019	26	8.96
2018	17	5.86
2017	9	3.10
2016	10	3.45
2015	11	3.8

Table 4 shows the annual growth of publications over the past ten years. The year 2024 has the highest number of publications (52), followed by 2023 (36) and 2020 (27). The cumulative percentage indicates that a significant portion of the research on entrepreneurial intention has emerged in recent years. More than half of the articles (approximately 56.51%) were published in the last five years (2020-2024), highlighting the dynamic and evolving nature of this research field.

### 4.3 Subject area

Table 5. Subject area

Subject Area	Total Documents	Percentage (%)
Business Management & Accounting	89	30.69
Social Sciences	139	47.93
Medicine	76	26.20
Economics, Econometrics & Finance	63	21.72
Health Professions	76	26.21
Computer Science	24	8.28
Engineering	28	9.66
Psychology	25	8.62
Environmental Science	15	5.17
Art & Humanities	12	5.17
Others	12	4.7

The distribution of research publications across diverse subject areas provides valuable insights into the interdisciplinary nature of entrepreneurial intention studies. As shown in Table 5, the majority of publications (47.93%) fall under the category of Social Sciences, reflecting the field's focus on understanding human behavior and societal influences in entrepreneurial activities. Business, Management & Accounting accounts for 30.69% of the total publications, highlighting the central role these disciplines play in shaping research related to entrepreneurship. Medicine (26.20%) and Health Professions (26.21%) indicate significant research interest in the intersection of healthcare and entrepreneurship. Economics, Econometrics & Finance constitute 21.72%, emphasizing the financial aspects of entrepreneurship, such as funding, investment, and market dynamics. Meanwhile, Engineering (9.66%) and Computer Science (8.28%) underscore the growing intersection of technology and entrepreneurship, where innovation and digital transformation are critical factors in business success. Psychology (8.62%) and Environmental Science (5.17%) suggest a focus on the psychological determinants of entrepreneurial behavior and the increasing relevance of sustainable entrepreneurship. Arts & Humanities contribute 5.17%, reflecting niche but emerging interests, particularly as entrepreneurship extends its reach into diverse sectors. This data highlights the breadth of research contributing to a holistic understanding of entrepreneurship across multiple disciplines. The high concentration of publications in business-related fields and social sciences reflects the importance of understanding both organizational and human factors in entrepreneurship, while

the growing attention to technology and engineering underscores the evolving landscape of digital entrepreneurship.

#### 4.4 Most active source titles

Table 6. Most active source titles

Sources Title	Total Publications	Percentage (%)
Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation	14	4.83
Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies	5	1.72
Journal Of Enterprising Communities	5	1.72
Disability And Society	4	1.38
Journal Of Entrepreneurship Education	4	1.38
Sustainability Switzerland	4	1.38
Routledge Companion To Disability And Work	3	1.03
Making It Work Employment Of People With Disabilities	3	1.03
Journal Of Business Ethics'	3	1.03
International Small Business Journal Researching Entrepreneurship	3	1.03
International Journal Of Entrepreneurial Behaviour And Research	3	1.03
Industrial Robot	3	1.03
African Journal Of Disability	3	1.03
ASEE Annual Conference And Exposition Conference Proceedings	3	1.03
ACM International Conference Proceeding Series	3	1.03

Table 6 presents a variety of sources contributing to research on entrepreneurial intention, including journals and conference proceedings. The most active source is the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, with 14 publications (4.83%), followed by Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies and the Journal of Enterprising Communities, each contributing 5 publications (1.72%). Other key sources include Disability and Society, Journal of Entrepreneurship Education, and Sustainability Switzerland, each with 4 publications (1.38%). Additionally, several sources have published three papers (1.03%) each, including Routledge Companion to Disability and Work, Making It Work: Employment of People with Disabilities, Journal of Business Ethics, International Small Business Journal Researching Entrepreneurship, International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research, Industrial Robot, African Journal of Disability, ASEE Annual Conference and Exposition Conference Proceedings, and ACM International Conference Proceeding Series. These diverse sources highlight the broad range of platforms researchers

use to explore entrepreneurial intention, spanning various disciplines such as business ethics, disability studies, engineering, and entrepreneurship education.

#### 4.5 Keywords analysis

Table 7. Keywords Analysis

Author Keyword	Total Publication	Percentage (%)
Disability	88	30.34
Human	66	22.76
Entrepreneurship	62	21.38
Employment	44	15.17
Article	42	14.48
Self Employment	67	23.10
Female	31	10.69
Male	28	9.66
Adult	28	9.66
Disabled Person	64	22.07
Vocational Rehabilitation	22	7.59
Middle Aged	21	7.24
Social Entrepreneurship	20	6.90

The author keyword analysis, as shown in Table 7, highlights the most frequently used terms in research related to entrepreneurial intention. The most commonly occurring keyword is Disability, appearing in 88 publications (30.34%), reflecting the significant focus on the role of disability in entrepreneurship. Self-Employment is another prominent keyword, found in 67 publications (23.10%), underscoring interest in entrepreneurship as a viable career path for individuals with disabilities. Similarly, Human (66 publications, 22.76%) and Disabled Person (64 publications, 22.07%) further indicate a strong emphasis on the human and social aspects of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship itself is mentioned in 62 publications (21.38%), confirming the centrality of the subject, while Employment appears in 44 publications (15.17%), signifying the broader discussion on work opportunities for disabled individuals. Vocational Rehabilitation is featured in 22 publications (7.59%), suggesting research interest in rehabilitation programs aimed at integrating disabled individuals into the workforce. Social Entrepreneurship (20 publications, 6.90%) points to the growing intersection between entrepreneurship and social impact initiatives. Additionally, gender-related terms such as Female (31 publications, 10.69%) and Male (28 publications, unspecified percentage)



barriers and policy-oriented solutions. This trajectory demonstrates the field's movement toward a more holistic and actionable research agenda.

#### 4.6 Geographical distribution of publications - most influential countries

Table 7 presents the geographical distribution of research publications on entrepreneurial intention, highlighting the contributions of the top 10 countries. The United States leads with 86 publications (29.66%), reflecting its dominant role in entrepreneurship research. The United Kingdom follows with 30 publications (10.34%), while Spain ranks third with 20 publications (6.90%). Canada (17 publications, 5.86%) and Australia (15 publications, percentage not provided) also contribute significantly to the research landscape. India matches Australia with 15 publications (5.17%), showcasing the country's growing focus on entrepreneurial studies. The Netherlands (13 publications), Indonesia (11 publications, 3.79%), Belgium (8 publications, 2.76%), and Malaysia (8 publications, percentage not provided) further illustrate the global interest in this field. Other notable contributors include France (7 publications), South Africa (7 publications, 2.41%), Norway (6 publications), Sweden (6 publications, 2.07%), and Nigeria (5 publications, 1.72%). The data underscores the concentration of research output in Western countries, with the United States and the United Kingdom as leading contributors. However, the presence of Malaysia, Indonesia, and India highlights the increasing research interest in entrepreneurial intentions within emerging economies. Additionally, the diversity of contributing countries suggests a growing global collaboration in this research domain.

Table 7. Top countries contributed to the publications

Country	Total Publication	Percentage (%)
United States	86	29.66
United Kingdom	30	10.34
Spain	20	6.90
Canada	17	5.86
Australia	15	5.17
India	15	5.17
Netherlands	13	4.45
Indonesia	11	3.79
Belgium	8	2.76
Malaysia	8	2.76
France	7	2.41
South Africa	7	2.41
Norway	6	2.07
Sweden	6	2.07

Nigeria	5	1.72
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#### 4.7 Authorship

Table 8. Authorship list

Author Name	No of Documents	Percentage (%)
Caldwell, K. et al.	7	2.41
Renko, M.	7	2.41
Jammaers, E.	4	1.38
Ostrow, L.	4	1.38
Branzei, O.	3	1.03
Csillag, S.	3	1.03
Harris, S. P.	3	1.03
Pranksy, J.	3	1.03
Shepherd, D.	3	1.03
Svastics, C.	3	1.03
Yamamoto, S. H.	3	1.03
Zeyen, A.	3	1.03
Alverson, C. Y.	3	1.03

Table 8 presents the authorship details of researchers who have made multiple contributions to the field of entrepreneurial intention. The table highlights Caldwell et al. as the most prolific authors, each with 7 publications (2.41%). Other notable contributors include Jammaers, E. and Ostrow, L., both with 4 publications (1.38%). Several authors have contributed 3 publications each, including Branzei, O., Csillag, S., Harris, S. P., Pranksy, J., Shepherd, D., Svastics, C., Yamamoto, S. H., Zeyen, A., and Alverson, C. Y. The distribution of authorship in this research domain underscores the contributions of various scholars in advancing the study of entrepreneurial intention, particularly in the context of disability and entrepreneurship. The presence of multiple authors with relatively small but significant contributions suggests a broad and interdisciplinary interest in this field. Additionally, the network map visualization of these authors may reveal key collaborations and research clusters that shape the ongoing discourse in entrepreneurial studies.

#### 4.8 Most influential institutions

Table 9: Most Influential Institutions (minimum 2 publication)

Institution	Total Publication	Percentage (%)
University of Illinois at Chicago	10	3.45
Syracuse University	6	2.09
Universidad de Murcia	5	1.72
University of Oregon	5	1.72
Universiteit Hasselt	4	1.38
DePaul University	4	1.38
Ivey Business School	4	1.38
Martin J. Whitman School of Management	4	1.38
Kelley School of Business	4	1.38
Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha	3	1.03
Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen	3	1.03
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen	2	0.69
Royal Holloway, University of London	3	1.03
Indiana University Bloomington	3	1.03
University of California, San Francisco	3	1.03
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	3	1.03
Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem	3	1.03
McMaster University	3	1.03
Universidad de Sevilla	3	1.03
Sheffield University Management School	3	1.03

Table 9 presents the institutional analysis of research contributions in the field of entrepreneurial intention, highlighting institutions with a minimum of three publications. The University of Illinois at Chicago leads with 10 publications (3.45%), followed by Syracuse University with 6 publications (2.09%). Several institutions, including Universidad de Murcia and the University of Oregon, have contributed 5 publications each (1.72%), while Universiteit Hasselt, DePaul University, Ivey Business School, Martin J. Whitman School of Management, and Kelley School of Business each have 4 publications (1.38%). Additionally, various universities, such as Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen, Royal Holloway (University of London), Indiana University Bloomington, University of California (San Francisco), The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, McMaster University, Universidad de Sevilla, and Sheffield University Management School, each contributed 3 publications (1.03%). This institutional distribution highlights the diverse

academic landscape in entrepreneurial intention research, with contributions from universities across North America and Europe. The presence of multiple institutions with significant publications suggests a broad and interdisciplinary interest in this field, reflecting collaborations and academic investments in understanding entrepreneurial behavior.

#### 4.9 Citation analysis

Table 10 Highly cited articles

Authors	Title	Cited by
Haynie and Shepherd (2011)	Toward a theory of discontinuous career transition: Investigating career transitions necessitated by traumatic life events	191
Johnson (2019)	Inclusion and exclusion in the digital economy: disability and mental health as a live streamer on Twitch.tv	88
Renko et al. (2016)	Entrepreneurial entry by people with disabilities	82
Zissimopoulos and Karoly (2009)	Labor-force dynamics at older ages: Movements into self-employment for workers and nonworkers	67
Maritz and Laferriere (2016)	Entrepreneurship and self-employment for people with disabilities	54
Bakker and McMullen (2023)	Inclusive entrepreneurship: A call for a shared theoretical conversation about unconventional entrepreneurs	50
Nevala et al. (2019)	The Effectiveness of Rehabilitation Interventions on the Employment and Functioning of People with Intellectual Disabilities: A Systematic Review	47
Buehler et al. (2015)	Inclusion and education: 3D printing for integrated classrooms	46
Beatty (2012)	Career Barriers Experienced by People with Chronic Illness: A U.S. Study	45
Leichtenberg et al. (2016)	Determinants of return to work 12 months after total hip and knee arthroplasty	45

Table 10 presents the most highly cited articles in the field of entrepreneurship and disability, showcasing their significant impact on academic discourse. The most cited work, *Toward a Theory of Discontinuous Career Transition: Investigating Career Transitions Necessitated by Traumatic Life Events* by Haynie and Shepherd (2011), has been referenced 191 times. Other notable contributions include *Inclusion and Exclusion in the Digital Economy: Disability and Mental Health as a Live Streamer on Twitch.tv* by Johnson (2019), with 88 citations, and *Entrepreneurial Entry by People with Disabilities* by Renko et al. (2016), cited 82 times. Additionally, studies such as *Labor-force Dynamics at Older Ages: Movements into Self-employment for Workers and Nonworkers* by Zissimopoulos and Karoly (2009) with 67 citations, and *Entrepreneurship and Self-employment for People with Disabilities* by Maritz and Laferriere (2016) with 54 citations, reflect growing interest in inclusive entrepreneurship. Recent works, such as Bakker and McMullen's (2023) *Inclusive Entrepreneurship: A Call for a Shared Theoretical Conversation about Unconventional Entrepreneurs* (50 citations), highlight the evolving discourse on diversity in entrepreneurship. Moreover, research on employment interventions and career barriers also features prominently. Nevala et al.'s (2019) systematic review on the effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions for people with intellectual disabilities has been cited 47 times, while Buehler et al.'s (2015) work on *3D Printing for Integrated Classrooms* has 46 citations. Career challenges faced by individuals

with chronic illnesses, explored by Beatty (2012), and the determinants of return to work post-arthroplasty by Leichtenberg et al. (2016), both have 45 citations, underscoring the intersection between health, disability, and career progression. The citation patterns reflect the growing recognition of entrepreneurship as a viable career pathway for people with disabilities, with research spanning psychological, educational, and policy-related perspectives. These high-impact publications contribute to both theoretical advancements and practical applications, shaping discussions on inclusive entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for marginalized communities.

## 5. Discussion

This bibliometric review offers an in-depth analysis of the evolution of entrepreneurial research over the past century. By identifying key trends, influential publications, and emerging themes, it provides valuable insights and a roadmap for future research in the field.

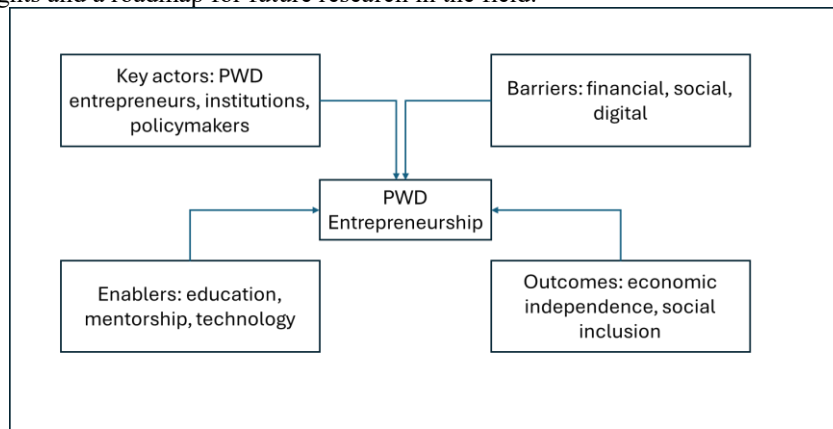


Figure 4: Complex system of PWD entrepreneurship

The proposed framework in Figure 4 conceptualizes PWD entrepreneurship as the core of a dynamic ecosystem that is simultaneously shaped by enabling and constraining forces. Enablers—such as inclusive education, mentorship, and technology—operate as positive drivers that expand opportunities and reduce systemic exclusion, while barriers—financial exclusion, societal stigma, and digital divides—exert opposing pressures that restrict entrepreneurial agency. These interactions are not linear but cyclical, producing a feedback loop where barriers can reinforce structural disadvantages while enablers create pathways for resilience and innovation. The role of stakeholders, including universities, policymakers, NGOs, and family networks, is pivotal in mediating these forces, either by amplifying support or perpetuating systemic inequities. By situating PWD entrepreneurship within this broader relational system, the framework highlights that entrepreneurial outcomes are the result of complex interdependencies rather than isolated factors. The ecosystem perspective also clarifies the link between stakeholder action and the outcomes of PWD entrepreneurship. Universities, for instance, are positioned as transformative actors capable of embedding inclusive entrepreneurship into curricula and fostering cross-sectoral collaboration, while policymakers are tasked with moving beyond symbolic legal compliance toward systemic reforms that address entrenched barriers. These efforts, when effective, lead to outcomes such as economic independence, social inclusion, and enhanced community development—outcomes that transcend individual success to generate collective social value. Conversely, when barriers remain unaddressed, they perpetuate cycles of exclusion that limit both entrepreneurial potential and societal progress. Thus, the ecosystem framework underscores that the empowerment of PWD entrepreneurs cannot be achieved in isolation but depends on the coordinated actions of multiple stakeholders who shape the conditions under which entrepreneurship is either constrained or enabled.

### 5.1 *Geographical and structural barriers: research concentration, contextual gaps, and systemic exclusion*

This bibliometric study reveals that leading contributions predominantly originate from developed nations such as the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia, reflecting stronger institutional frameworks and support mechanisms for PWD entrepreneurs. However, this concentration underscores a major geographical gap, as limited research from the Global South constrains the generalizability of findings. Socioeconomic contexts, policy environments, and cultural attitudes toward disability vary significantly across regions, making this imbalance problematic. Beyond geography, structural challenges remain entrenched—limited access to funding, insufficient inclusive training, infrastructural barriers, and societal stigma continue to impede PWD entrepreneurship. These findings are interrelated: the dominance of Western scholarship not only shapes the global discourse but also influences what kinds of structural barriers are emphasized, often sidelining region-specific issues in underrepresented contexts. Addressing these exclusions requires systemic responses, including tailored financing mechanisms, inclusive mentorship, and the active involvement of universities, NGOs, family networks, and community stakeholders in building enabling entrepreneurial ecosystems.

### 5.2 *Epistemic and conceptual gaps: lack of intersectionality and narrow narratives*

While the literature has expanded, it largely treats PWD entrepreneurs as a homogeneous group, neglecting the intersecting influences of gender, age, disability type, socioeconomic background, and digital literacy. This lack of intersectional analysis obscures how overlapping identities shape distinct entrepreneurial experiences—for example, women with disabilities or individuals in rural areas face compounded challenges that differ significantly from those of other subgroups. The thematic clustering and keyword analysis in this study do show a gradual shift toward more empowering narratives, emphasizing resilience, innovation, and social value creation. Yet without deeper engagement with intersectionality, these narratives risk remaining partial and overly generalized. Importantly, the epistemic gap interacts with geographical imbalances: the absence of Global South perspectives and intersectional insights together produce a constrained knowledge base, one that often amplifies Western, one-size-fits-all interpretations of PWD entrepreneurship rather than reflecting diverse lived realities.

### 5.3 *Methodological constraints: dominance of qualitative studies and limited participatory approaches*

The field is methodologically dominated by qualitative and conceptual studies, with relatively few large-scale, quantitative, or longitudinal investigations. This imbalance limits systematic evaluation of interventions and constrains understanding of long-term outcomes for PWD entrepreneurs. Mixed-methods and participatory approaches remain underutilized, despite their potential to capture richer, more inclusive insights—particularly when PWD individuals are involved as co-researchers rather than passive subjects. Methodological gaps also reinforce epistemic ones: reliance on small-scale qualitative work often perpetuates narrow case-specific insights, hindering the development of broader frameworks that account for intersectional identities or structural barriers across diverse regions. Moving forward, robust methodological pluralism is essential to generate evidence that not only describes challenges but also evaluates the impact of inclusive entrepreneurship policies on business outcomes, quality of life, and community development.

### 5.4 *Future directions: toward inclusive and context-specific knowledge*

Looking ahead, several research directions emerge as critical. First, studies must focus on underrepresented regions, particularly the Global South, to uncover context-specific challenges and solutions. Second, researchers should explore how digital tools, AI technologies, and the gig economy can reduce structural barriers for PWD entrepreneurs. Third, participatory research approaches are necessary to

center the voices of PWD entrepreneurs in both problem identification and solution design. Finally, future work should evaluate the long-term impact of inclusive entrepreneurship policies, extending beyond business metrics to consider broader quality of life and community resilience. Collectively, these directions highlight that a more inclusive future for PWD entrepreneurship is not only a matter of social justice but also a driver of innovation, resilience, and equity in entrepreneurial ecosystems worldwide.

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## Conflict of interest statement

The authors affirm that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

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